



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Constitutional and Political Development in Pakistan: A Review of the Legislative Performance Of the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly(2013-2018)**

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**ABSTRACT**

During the tenure of 14th National Assembly of Pakistan many innovative laws and political reforms related to different disciplines of life were introduced and executed. The size of legislation was enlarged mainly due to the coordination and healthy consensus of both the treasury benches and opposition parties portraying a high level of their political maturity. In this tenure the PML-N-led Government incorporated five constitutional amendments. This period was also marked by efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, enhancing legislative frameworks, and addressing some ever-demanding socio-economic challenges. The current study provides a deep insight into performance and achievements by the National Assembly during this period and highlights some of the significant institutional and political developments and their impact on the progress and performance of the political system at large. It also examines the functioning of the Federal Legislature during the period of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) to assess whether the Assembly effectively represented the general will by formulating public policies or merely acted as a debating chamber. Furthermore, it presents an analysis of the effectiveness of the committee system and the growing role of the opposition, which not only significantly improved the legislative efficiency of the assembly but also fostered cooperation and trust between the government and the opposition parties. The study recommends that the footprints of the exemplary cooperation of the ruling elite exhibited during the time period under examination must be followed by future legislators to achieve an ever-prospering democratic Pakistan.

**Keywords:** 14th National Assembly, Constitutional Amendments, Pakistan, Parliamentary Oversight

**Introduction**

The 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly (2013-2018) seemed impressive because of its achievements regarding legislation on all department of life including eight (21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>) Amendments, operative committee system and their involvement in budget making process, increasing role of opposition and opposition leader in committee system specially in Public Account Committee (PAC), effective women participation in parliamentary matters and decision-making, Electoral Reforms and restructurings of Federal Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) and its consequent amalgamation into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and an improvised grant of provincial autonomy. Like its predecessor, the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly completed its five-year term and once again a nonviolent and smooth transition of power from one to the other civilian elected governments was seen which was only the second time in the history of country. These historic and landmark developments perceived as trend setter. This decade could be symbolized with democratic, political, financial and social improvement because of parliamentary continuity, albeit lot of challenges. The 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly passed the Elections Act, 2017, which aimed at reforming the criminal justice system by relaxing litigation costs, ensuring security to witnesses and quick disposal of law

suits. It also took serious measures regarding climate change, rights to information, and brought reorganizations in the institutions to make them autonomous as the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly did it in its tenure (Kanwal, 2017). Thus, the period of 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly regarding democratic progress happened to be unique in Pakistan's legislative history.

### **Literature Review**

Paasch & Dayo observe that decade from 2008 to 2018 was very impressive as regard to democratic development in Pakistan. They discussed that how National Assemblies (13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>) completed their tenures successfully after 1970. Later on, elections had been held in 2013 and 2018 without any delay or hurdle and power and control was shifted peacefully to the fresh governments without any conflict. They highlighted a better voter turnout that was observed in 2013 and 2018 elections. They talked about the eight Amendments that were considered as bench mark successes of 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> National Assemblies. They discussed the better working of committee system and effective role of women in the parliament during 10 years' decade of democracy which seemed to them very contrary to past (Paasch, Dayo, 2018).

Akram, Basit and Azhar hold that the effective as well energetic role played by the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly could be observed by its abundance lawmaking, raising of resolutions, asking of questions as a parliamentary monitoring and active role of committees which could testify the revolutionary accomplishments of this Assembly during its five years of the term. They also talked about role of various parliamentary committees and the performance of their extensive job dissimilar to the past. The authors also highlighted the legislative initiatives of this Assembly in detail (Akram, Azhar & Basit, 2020).

In another academic endeavor, Akram and Azhar highlighted the performance of Pakistan's parliament in empowering democracy during 2002-2018. The authors discussed the role of democracy and investigated the reasons and problems that affected the true spirit of democracy in Pakistan. They tried to suggest some important implications for the construction of parliamentary democracy in Pakistan. They believed that democracy is considered to be the highest, just and realistic political system which is most unanimously recognized in the contemporary world. Democracy first of all requires Parliament to be a powerful institution and the best platform to represent the people. Parliament is measured as the highest legislative body in the country and nations that have respected their parliaments, established an effective and viable democratic system and have been successful around the world (Akram & Azhar, 2022).

### **Election 2013 and Composition of 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly and Government**

The 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan consisted on 342 democratically elected members. There were 272 members; elected directly and 70 members elected against reserved seats (minorities and women quota). PMLN, PPP, PTI and MQM secured 182, 48, 32 and 24 seats respectively. After the general elections that were held in 2013, the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly started its work, performed well and then magnificently completed its five-year tenure dated on May31, 2018 (PILDAT, 2018). PML-N became the single largest party after gaining 163 seats in the general election. In the meanwhile, the members of the 14<sup>th</sup> National assembly took an oath on June 01, 2013 (PILDT, 2013). Mr. Nawaz Sharif became the Prime Minister of Pakistan for his third term as an outcome of General Election results (Hashmi, 2022). Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah elected as Leader of the Opposition in the House. Mr. Ayaz Sadiq and Mr. Nisar Ali Khan became speaker and the deputy Speaker of 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly respectively. The constitutional transition of power, without any conflict or impediments, from one elected government (democratically) to another had never been seen before this in the history of Pakistan (Akram & Azhar, 2022). Moving forward, the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan took innovative steps in almost all key areas and much focused on legislation during its five-year term.

## BILLS PRESENTED IN 14<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

During its five-year term, the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly unprecedentedly approved 205 bills (182 Government and 23 private members' bills) in different disciplines of life as compared to a total of 134 Government and 51 private members' bills passed by 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> National Assemblies collectively. The following table represents the year-wise break-up of said detail.

**Table 1**  
**Bills passed by 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly**

Parliamentary years	Bill passed by Government	Bill passed by private members	Total
1 <sup>st</sup> Year	11	0	11
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	16	0	16
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	59	0	59
4 <sup>th</sup> Year	50	09	59
5 <sup>th</sup> Year	46	14	60
Total	182	23	205

Source: Performance of 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan 2013-2018 (FAFEN, 2018)

### The 21<sup>st</sup> Constitutional Amendment

The Constitution (Twenty-First Amendment) Act, 2015, established military courts to put Islamist terrorists under trails as well as hold their heinous activities. The act of passing this amendment paved the way for establishing military courts seems as an unprecedented step of parliament of Pakistan to deal with the Islamist terrorists in Pakistan. The said Act not only modified the Article 175 of the constitution but also introduced amendments in its first schedule (such as XXX The Pakistan Army Act 1 952, VI of The Pakistan Air Force Act 1953, XXXV of the Pakistan Navy Ordinance 1961, and X of the Protection of Pakistan Act 2014) (Zahid, 2015).

Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah, the Leader of Opposition and a veteran leader from the Pakistan Peoples Party, while delivering speech in the National Assembly, said that "We have not been in favour of military courts in the past but the Pakistani public's safety is our priority and it is the government's responsibility to keep the masses safe in this country". He added, "No matter who it is, no one can speak against religion. The country has been a victim of terrorism for a long time. It is a sin for us to even pass laws here which go against the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)."

"The Parliament is going to vote to save Pakistan. The bitter pill of this new law is being swallowed for the security of Pakistan. Murdering one person is like killing all humanity," Shah said. "It doesn't matter if the person is from grammar school, Aitchison or a government school – there will be no differences between any terrorist" (Omair, 2015).

### The 22<sup>nd</sup> Constitutional Amendment

The Twenty-second Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016, aimed at bring modification in the criteria regarding appointment, qualifications and other requisites for electing the Chief Election Commissioner and four members of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for the composition of ECP (Constitution (Twenty-2nd Amendment) Act, 2016). The Twenty-Second Amendment looks one small ladder but in the accurate direction. It was very positive that four members of the ECP would be appointed from each of the four provinces of Pakistan with the aim of removing the provincial imbalances and disparities seen in the previous formations of the ECP. Although the said amendment brought much needed improvement in terms of qualification of ECP chief and its members

but this change could not work as it succeeded in meeting only one of many important needs whereas electoral reforms were still pending. This narrow approach to the said reforms presented a lack of necessary parliamentary attention to the issue. This was incorporated without vigorous debate inside the legislature, and the negative and unethical tendency to ignore the opinions of relevant stakeholders, members of civil society and the media, pose question to the credibility of Parliament (PILDAT, 2016).

### The 23<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment 2017

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Amendment extended the operation of military courts (against terrorists) for another two years till January 6, 2019. The 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment of 2015 created the military courts for the period of 2 years, which were expired on January 6, 2017 therefore 23<sup>rd</sup> Amendment was incorporated to re-establish the military courts for additional two years till 6 January 2019 (Constitution (Twenty-third Amendment) Act, 2017).

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) articulated grave concern and unease over the premeditated additional room (expansion) and declared the devise of military courts undemocratic and unconstitutional. It also cautioned that this extension would come at the price of restructuring the criminal justice system in Pakistan. The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), too, condemned and disparaged the military trial of civilians calling it as the disaster for human rights in Pakistan. The ECJ expressed concern as it was likely that the extension of military courts could become a permanent practice (Zubair, 2019).

### The 24<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment

The main subject of this amendment was redistribution of the seats of National Assembly of Pakistan among the Provinces on the basis of the population census of 2017 (Constitution of Pakistan, 1973).

#### 1. Modification in the Article 51 of the Constitution 1973

a) For clause (3) shall be replaced as given below.

“Seats in the National Assembly that are mentioned in clause (1) apart from as given in clause (4) shall be allocated to each province, Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Federal Capital as under:”

**Table 2**  
**Seats status in accordance with 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment.**

	General seats	Women seats	Total seats
Federal	03	-	03
Punjab	141	33	174
Sindh	61	14	75
Federally Administered tribal Areas (FATA)	12	-	12
Balochistan	16	04	20
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)	39	09	48
Total	272	60	332

Source: (Gazette of Senate of Pakistan, 2017).

The 24<sup>th</sup> amendment, *inter alia*, modified Article 51 of the constitution. According to above mention table, now Federal Capital, Punjab, Sindh, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) possessed 03,174,75,12,20 and

48 seats respectively, out of the total 332 seats in National Assembly of Pakistan (Gazette of Senate of Pakistan, 2017).

### The 25<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment

The 25<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment was approved by both the Parliament of Pakistan and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly in May 2018 hence became Act of the Parliament that is known as 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act 2018. According to this Amendment, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) shall be part of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) (Khan & Mahmood,2018). The 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment that was approved by the President of Pakistan on May 31, 2018, is considered as a landmark constitutional legislation which helped the Government to comprehensively plan regarding the people of Federally and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (FATA and PATA).

The main drive of 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment was integration and mainstreaming of tribal areas along with its people into the mainland of Pakistan. Eight Articles of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan had been altered to ensure this objective. It not only abolished the discriminatory status of FATA but also territorially assimilated it into KP, and PATAs into the provinces of Baluchistan and KP according to Article 1 and 246 respectively. Article 51 transferred the twelve reserved seats of FATA in the National Assembly to KP. Similarly, eight reserved seats of FATA in the senate, had been removed according to the description of Article 59. Intention behind the FATA's integration with KP and the increase in seats allocated to KP provincial assembly was to give adequate representation as well as provide due assistance to people of newly added areas in aforementioned province. The most important thing was the abolition of Article 247 in which FATA had previously been kept working under the Federal Government administratively, legislatively, financially and judicially. This Article was not only a hurdle against the jurisdiction and operation of the regular courts including the High Court and the Supreme Court of Pakistan in FATA, but also underprivileged its people in seeking judicial protection as their fundamental constitutional rights. In brevity, this Amendment brought complete integration of FATA into the province of KP so that mainstreaming of the said areas as well as their people could be ensured in Pakistan (Zubair, 2018).

The Amendment reduced the seats of Senate and the National Assembly from 104 to 96 and 342 to 336 (326.10 reserved seats for minorities) (General seats from 272 to 266) respectively. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly would now possess 145 seats (115 general, 26 reserved for women, and 4 reserved for minorities) and FATA would represent at 21 seats in the KP Assembly (16 general, 4 reserved for women, and 1 reserved for non-Muslims). The senators of ex-FATA would have to complete their six-year tenure and their separate representation would have to be eliminated on their retirement in 2024 (Wasim, 2018), henceforth, seats were increased from 48 to 55 that are given below in the table (25<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act, 2018).

Table 3  
Seats status in accordance with 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment

	General seats	Women seats	Total seats
Federal	03	-	03
Punjab	141	32	173
Sindh	61	14	75
Baluchistan	16	04	20
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)	45	10	55
Total	266	60	326

Source: Constitution (25<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act, 2018) (Senate Secretariat, 2018).

The amendment was passed when the term of the National Assembly was about to expire (only seven days left) and the 2018 general elections were around the corner, raising several questions on the democratic legitimacy of the said amendment. Despite all of this, the people of FATA still managed to obtain a better constitutional and legal deal because they were not a party to instituting or supporting it.

### **Working of Parliamentary Committees**

In Pakistan, the Parliament has two powerful instruments such as the Question Hour and Parliamentary Committees to check the performance and effectiveness of government. Well efficient and dynamic Committees are the attributes of any successful Parliament. Vibrant and strong committees are deemed as significant in dealing with the exact, multifaceted and diverse natured business of parliament. Now the parliamentary Committees have become an essential part of the legislative system as well as stand as check upon the work and efficiency of government departments. There is a standing committee for each ministry of the government. Standing committee plays a very decisive role as oversight of the working of the relevant ministry of the government. It stands as the brain, eyes, hands, and ears of the government particularly in the parliamentary democracies. In the wake of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, the number of committees that were functioning in the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly had been reduced. One Finance Committee, one Special Committee, three Parliamentary Committees, four Non-Ministerial Standing Committees and twenty-nine Ministerial Standing Committees were working in that Assembly (Akram, Azhar & Basit, 2020). These committees held a number of regular meetings and worked energetically. On average, 8.32 meetings of these Standing Committees were held in each year of the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly's tenure, and these committees prepared total 19 reports in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly but 10 out of them 19 reports were presented before the Assembly (Akram & Azhar 2022). The 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly had a total of 34 Standing Committees, which conducted 250, 318, 280, and 294 meetings in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> parliamentary years respectively. In the same way, 192 committee reports had been laid before the House all through the term of the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly (Pasch & Dayo, 2018).

The working of committees was upgraded during 5 years' tenure of the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly that brought empowerment regarding parliamentary oversight. The 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly set example about committee chairpersonship on the principle of the party representation in the house that increased the number of opposition chairs in standing committees. The 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly followed the tradition in this context. The appointment of Leader of the Opposition as a chairperson of PAC portrayed the fulfillment of the promise that was made under the Charter of Democracy. Increased number of meetings, the use of *Suo Moto* powers, and manner of site visits increased the efficacy of these committees. Moreover, senators were included in the most powerful Public Accounts Committee which established the Senate's role in pecuniary matters and enhanced its oversight. The structure and arrangement of the PAC were seemed as more authentic, responsible and influential institutional tools for exercising proper oversight. But citizen and media were not given access to the PAC openly nevertheless there was much need to offer them wider range access in the PAC affairs so that its effectiveness and performance could be improved. The parliamentary supervision regarding the budget seemed limited as seen in advanced countries. Also, these standing committees were given an inadequate role in evaluating the development budget of the ministries. The Council of Chairmen, though was formed in 2008, but seemed more vibrant during 2015–2018 in both houses of the parliament (Pasch & Dayo, 2018).

### **Representation of Women**

Despite all the barriers in the way of participation of women in political arena, 70 women politicians (60 on reserved women seats) which constituted almost 20% of the total

membership, entered as the legislator in the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly. Though a slight decrease was observed in terms of women's representation in Assembly of 2013 as compared to 2008, but the number was impressive. Many key women representatives from different parties appeared as a member of the National Assembly on quota seats, who worked collectively to develop political consensus to legislate on increasing women presence in the parliament. Moreover, women served as federal Ministers in key areas such as information and broadcasting, health, social welfare, especial education and foreign affairs which was a considerable achievement (National Assembly and Senate of Pakistan, 2018).

The general elections 2013 were witnessed as a milestone in the country's constitutional, democratic and political history as they were considered as the first-ever smooth and even conversion of control from one elected civilian government to another. The same democratic spirit was also seen in the Women's Parliamentary Caucus, where a new-fangled Working Council efficiently and productively replaced the older one. Parliamentary Caucus (2013–2018) supported some productive legislation but did not enjoy much support from the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (N). The two landmark laws such as The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2016 and The Criminal Laws Amendment Act, 2016 were passed in August 2016 by MNA Shaista Pervaiz Malik which made considerable contribution to address the issues of honor killings and rape. Members of the WPC shore up and introduced some other kinds of pro-women legislations such as Act 2018 as regards rights of the Persons with disabilities, Hindu Marriage Act, 2017; The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2017 to uproot the mishandling and exploitation of authority by the police in registering fictitious and forged FIRs; Bill, 2017 aimed at ensuring Birthing Centers and Hospital Maternity Services for women at basic health unit level and to disallow LHVs and paramedical staff to operate during delivery process in Islamabad; Bill, 2017 (Amendment) to deal with the legal practitioners and bar councils; Act, 2016 to stop electronic crimes; Bill 2015 to save the Health Workers from any harm (Women's Parliamentary Caucus 2013-18 ) (Commonwealth Organization, 2019).

Some notable female parliamentarians included Nafisa Shah, who belonged to the Pakistan People's Party, was the first journalist who wrote on honor killings. Being a member of Women's Action Forum (WAF), she organized the modern women's movement against the General Zia ul-Haq's policies on Islamization in 1980s. She had even worked as General Secretary of the first Parliamentary Women's Caucus (2008–2013). Moreover, Miss Shahnaz Wazir Ali (former advisor to Benazir Bhutto), Bushra Gohar, a quota seat-holder of the Awami National Party (ANP), and Sherry Rehman (PPP), all had worked actively through the platform of WAF (Khan & Naqvi, 2020).

In addition to the women specific legislation, general and mainstream legislation like the Elections Act, passed in 2017, ensured the women's political participation and devolved authority to ECP to declare the results invalid or unacceptable in those constituencies where the women voters' turnout is less than or equal to 10%. The Election Act 2017 also made it compulsory on the political parties to allocate 5% party tickets to women candidates so far the general seats are concerned. As a result of the provisions in aforesaid Act, more women candidates on party tickets took part in the general elections 2018 as compared to the general election of 2013. Moreover, the women voters' turnout had been seen higher than men in 22 constituencies (Jinnah Institute, 2018). In the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, women played energetic role as regards parliamentary oversight in particular but their performance in this regard was seen little less than 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly.

But women lawmakers elected on women reserved seats played only a figurative role rather than a dynamic part. However, the data regarding their parliamentary performance showed that they had performed better than their male counterparts in some disciplines in particular in private members' bills, attendance, and asking questions. Even though women parliamentarians' representation remained 20-22% during five years'

period of 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly (FAFEN, 2018), women representation as chairperson was seen very low in the parliamentary standing committees that resultantly deterred women to oversee the business of the government. During this democratic phase, almost 10 percent women lawmakers played a leadership role in the debates in Assembly (Pasch & Dayo, 2018). The outcome of the general elections in (2013-2018) could be depicted as a lack of will in political parties in awarding party tickets to women on winnable seats.

### Parliamentary Oversight

The parliamentary functioning works within Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business (code). This regulation not only helps in lawmaking process but it also offers an opportunity to intercede and talk on public subjects. After taking oath and receiving document of legislation, all legislators contribute through a variety of tools such as Questions (starred and un-starred), Calling Attention Notices, Resolutions, Point of Orders, and Motions etc. These lawmaking proceedings and dealings facilitate them to deal with the public reservations, worries and accountability regarding ruling executive. Furthermore, these strategies also help in evaluating the interest, awareness and performance of the members to run the parliamentary dealings and interactions (Jabeen & Muhammad, 2021). The 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly seemed remarkable in this regard during its five years' term which details are given below in the table:

**Table 4**  
**Use of Parliamentary oversight of assembly as a tool**

Agenda Items	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	4 <sup>th</sup> Year	5 <sup>th</sup> Year	Total
Sittings	99	92	99	97	108	495
Joint Sittings	01	17	04	05	02	29
Presidential Address in Parliament	01	01	01	01	01	05
Address by Turkish President	-	-	-	01	-	01
Address by Chinese President	-	01	-	-	-	01
Address by Indonesian President	-	-	-	-	01	01
Session	11	11	10	10	14	56
No. of questions starred	1890	1681	1987	1839	1321	8718
Unstarred questions	2084	980	1021	541	568	5194
Resolution on agenda (raised)	116	72	100	90	86	464
Resolution adopted (taken on)	56	34	44	40	36	210
Calling attention notice on agenda (raised)	128	91	127	89	98	533
Calling attention notice adopted (accepted)	104	70	111	74	69	428
Motion illustrated under rule 259	18	09	08	09	04	48

Source: Five Years Performance of 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly 2013- 2018 (FAFEN, 2018).

The House emphasized on the important issues such as internal security, health, foreign affairs, economy and education by adopting 209 resolutions. The 237 private members' bills were introduced in the Lower House and 23 were passed. Among the parliamentary parties, MQM lawmakers seemed as keen as they sponsored almost one-third (75) private members' bills while ruling party, PML-N, PPP and PTI lawmakers sponsored 53, 33 and 26 bills respectively. Legislators belonging to more than two political parties collectively sponsored 09 private members' bills. The lawmakers raised 13,912 questions while the government had responded to 10,926 (79%) questions. The lawmaker submitted 533 Calling Attention Notices whereas the House took up 428 (80%), and out of 329 Motions under Rule 259 had been moved but the House took up only 48 motions. The 306(89%) lawmakers vigorously contributed in the plenary discussions and in sponsoring agenda items during five years of the Assembly. Also, the Presidents of Turkey, Indonesia and China addressed to the Joint Sessions of both Houses of the Parliament (FAFEN, 2018).



## Conclusion

The 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly seemed impressive because of its achievements regarding legislation in all department of life including five Amendments, operative committee system and their involvement in budget making process, increasing role of opposition and opposition leader in committee system specially in PAC, effective women participation in parliamentary matters and decision-making, electoral reforms and restructurings as well as amalgamation of FATA into KP, and an extended exercise of provincial autonomy. Like 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, this 5-year period was exceptional in terms of legislation. The 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly completed its five-year tenure like its predecessor and power was peacefully transferred from one civilian elected government to the other second time in the history of country. This historic landmark development was perceived as trend setter. This period symbolized for the improvement of democracy because of parliamentary continuity despite it faced a lot of challenges. It also took serious measures regarding climate change, rights to information, and brought reorganizations in the institutions to make them autonomous as the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly did it in its tenure. The 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan took revolutionary steps in almost all disciplines and constantly focused on lawmaking. Successful and dynamic position of 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly and Senate was perceived as resolutions, parliamentary tools, and committees were vigorously utilized to oversee actions of government and its cabinet as well as the activities of parliamentarians.

The parliament is considered the best platform in which People represent their voices and get involved in governance through their representatives. Undeniably, Parliament of Pakistan is a distinctive representative institution as it carries out key role and actions such as making legislation, representation of the constituents, amending laws, highlighting the key challenges faced by the polity and aspirations of people through resolutions.

The majority party in the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly showed responsible attitude as it developed coordination with opposition parties by recognizing their due share particularly in committees that brought harmony in politics of Pakistan. The opposition parties also played their affirmative role to make stronger the democracy that's why the Parliament completed its five years' tenure. It introduced five constitutional Amendments such as 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup> that developed military courts and awarded extension to them for two years aimed at providing speedy trial against terrorists, bringing electoral reforms, ensuring the redistribution of National Assembly seats among provinces based on fresh census results, and making arrangements regarding the merger of FATA with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Strong criticism, however, surfaced against the establishment of military courts and their extension for the period of two years. In a nutshell, the performance of 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly had remained exemplary.

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