



## ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

### Women and the Pakistani Government

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- ❖ The Constituent Assembly of the newly independent Pakistan was organized in 1947 with 69 members, one of whom was a woman.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ The 1956 and 1962 constitutions reserved 6 seats for women, the 1973 constitution reserved 10; the 1975 Constitution reserved 10.<sup>2</sup>
- ❖ Under the 1956 Constitution, the Pakistani Parliament was unicameral. There were 155 seats were allotted to each of West Pakistan and East Pakistan (later Bangladesh). Each wing of the nation had 5 seats reserved for women.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ The Women's Action Forum (WAF), established in September of 1981, was a lobby organization which sought to empower and give a voice in parliament to women who came from working-class backgrounds.<sup>6</sup>
- ❖ When General Zia-al Haq implemented the Hudood Ordinances in 1980, the WMA led a widespread educational and protest-based feminist movement against the ordinances.<sup>5</sup>
- ❖ As of 2014, the National Assembly consists of 342 seats, of which 20% are occupied by women. The set quota for women is 60 members, or 17%. The current quotas were put in place during the government of Gen. Pervez Musharraf in August 2000.<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ Pakistan has had female leaders in parliamentary, gubernatorial and ministerial positions. In 1988, Pakistan became the first Islamic State to be headed a woman -- Benazir Bhutto.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.na.gov.pk/en/index.php>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2241\\_arc.htm](http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2241_arc.htm)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=PK>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ibtimes.com/pakistani-women-politics-slow-progress-mighty-obstacles-1412134>

<sup>5</sup> <http://tribune.com.pk/story/764036/feminism-in-pakistan-a-brief-history/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2511>