



STUDY GUIDE FOR



PAKISTAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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PAKISTAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Introduction:

The National Assembly of Pakistan stands as the primary legislative body within the country's democratic framework, embodying the aspirations and representation of the Pakistani people. Established as a vital institution in the evolution of Pakistan's governance, the National Assembly plays a pivotal role in shaping laws, policies, and the direction of the nation.

The Pakistan National Assembly (PNA), as the directly elected lower house of Parliament, is central to the country's democratic framework. It was created under the 1973 Constitution to represent the will of the people, legislate on key national issues, oversee government functions, and ensure federal balance. The Assembly is vital because it provides a platform where diverse voices, across ethnic, linguistic, gender, and religious lines, come together to deliberate and create laws.

The need for the PNA arose from Pakistan's turbulent history of ethnic tensions, uneven power distribution, gender-based discrimination, and weak institutional accountability. By discussing topics such as ethnic identity crises and gender-based violence, the Assembly demonstrates its role in shaping policies that affect millions of citizens, promoting justice, and strengthening national unity.

Mandate:

The National Assembly's mandate revolves around enacting legislation, overseeing the executive branch, and representing the diverse interests of the Pakistani populace. As the lower house of the bicameral parliament, it addresses issues ranging from social welfare and economic development to foreign relations and national security. Through deliberation and debate, the assembly strives to establish a legislative framework that reflects the nation's needs and aspirations.

Legislative Leadership:

At its core, the National Assembly is a hub of legislative leadership. Elected representatives from across Pakistan gather to craft and enact laws that govern the country's affairs.

Representation and Inclusivity:

The National Assembly upholds the principles of representation and inclusivity, ensuring that the voices of all segments of society are heard. Elected members from diverse backgrounds, regions, and demographics converge to deliberate on matters that impact the lives of every Pakistani. The assembly serves as a platform for articulating concerns, advocating for change, and fostering unity through democratic discourse.

Policy Formulation and Oversight:

A significant role of the National Assembly lies in policy formulation and oversight. Through parliamentary sessions, question hours, and debates, elected representatives hold the executive branch accountable for its actions and decisions. This mechanism of checks and balances ensures transparency, good governance, and effective implementation of policies that serve the nation's best interests.

National Development and Progress:

The National Assembly plays a key role in driving national development and progress. By passing legislation that promotes economic growth, social welfare, education, healthcare, and infrastructure development, the assembly contributes

to building a stronger and more prosperous Pakistan. Its initiatives reflect the collective ambition to uplift the nation and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Democracy in Action:

The National Assembly serves as a beacon of democracy in action, exemplifying the principles of participation and representation. Through respectful debates, consensus-building, and respectful discourse, members collaboratively shape the future of Pakistan. The assembly embodies the spirit of democratic governance, where diverse perspectives converge to chart the nation's path forward.

TOPICS FOR PNA

This year at UMTMUN, the topics for this committee are the following:

- Legislation on Crimes of Passion: Honour Killings, Faith-based Killings, and Gender-based Violence.
- The Identity Crisis: Ethnic Conflicts, National Unity, and Centralization of Power.



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TOPIC A

LEGISLATION ON CRIMES OF PASSION: HONOR KILLING, FAITH-BASED KILLINGS & GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

Brief Introduction:

This agenda refers to laws and policies addressing violent crimes committed under the guise of personal emotions, cultural traditions, or religious beliefs. By discussing this topic, the committee aims to examine how Pakistan's legal system can prevent these crimes, close loopholes that allow perpetrators to escape justice, and strengthen protections for vulnerable groups.

Pakistan has enacted important reforms, such as the 2016 Offences in the Name or Pretext of Honour Act, which closed pardon loopholes, and provincial domestic-violence laws. However, weak enforcement, harmful customs, and social acceptance mean that these crimes persist. Constitutional guarantees of equality (Art. 25) and protections for women and minorities (Arts. 20 & 36) form the legal baseline, but translating them into lived reality remains the challenge.

Common Terminology (Quick Definitions):

- “Honour” Killing: Murder committed to “restore family honour,” often targeting women who marry by choice or are accused of transgression. Explicitly criminalized without pardon loopholes under the 2016 amendment.
- Faith-Based Killings: Extrajudicial attacks triggered by alleged religious offences, often related to blasphemy accusations.
- Gender-Based Violence (GBV): Harmful acts directed at individuals based on gender; includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence (WHO).
- Qisas & Diyat (PPC framework): Islamic law–inspired pardon/compensation provisions; previously misused to forgive honour killings until reforms narrowed their scope.
- Jirga/Panchayat: Informal councils that have at times ordered killings or forced marriages (*swara*). Declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 2019.

History:

A timeline of how these crimes evolved in Pakistan:

- Pre-State Customs: Practices like *karo-kari* (Sindh) and *siyahkari* (Balochistan) normalized the killing of women accused of dishonour.
- 1990 – Qisas & Diyat Ordinance: Incorporated into the Penal Code, allowing families to pardon killers. This loophole was often exploited in honour killing cases.
- 1999 – Samia Sarwar Case: A woman seeking divorce was murdered in Lahore, sparking national debate on honour crimes.
- 2000s – Rise in Blasphemy Violence: Strengthened blasphemy laws led to increased mob attacks on minorities and alleged blasphemers.
- 2016 – Qandeel Baloch Case: A social media star murdered by her brother “for honour.” Public outrage led to the 2016 Honour Killing Law, closing pardon loopholes.
- 2019 – Supreme Court Ruling: Declared *jirga* and *panchayat*-ordered punishments unconstitutional, aligning with international human rights obligations.

Context:

Despite reforms, honour killings, GBV, and faith-based killings continue due to:

- Patriarchal Norms: Society often blames women for dishonour, reinforcing inequality.
- Weak Enforcement: Police and courts frequently delay cases or bow to social pressure.
- Cultural Acceptance: Honour killings are still tolerated in rural areas; *jirgas* remain influential despite legal bans.
- Faith-Based Intolerance: Blasphemy allegations often trigger mob violence before courts intervene (e.g., Jaranwala attacks, 2023).
- Justice Delayed: Medical evidence like rape kits can be processed in hours, yet rape and DV cases drag on for months or years, dehumanizing survivors.

Funding & Past Notable Work

- Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act (2016): Established protection centers with monitoring systems; progress slowed by underfunding and political resistance.
- Provincial Women Development Budgets: Each province allocates funds to shelters, helplines, and survivor services.
- International Donors: UN Women, DFID, and the World Bank have supported programs for GBV prevention, awareness, and survivor rehabilitation.
- Parliamentary Role: The PNA has debated reforms after high-profile cases like Qandeel Baloch's murder, bringing GBV to national attention.

Laws & Frameworks

- Constitution of Pakistan (1973):
 - Article 25 – equality before law, with scope for affirmative action.
 - Article 20 – freedom of religion.
 - Article 36 – protection of minorities.
- Pakistan Penal Code (PPC):
 - §302 & §311 – murder laws; honour killings treated as *fasād-fil-arz* (crimes against society).
 - §295–298 – blasphemy provisions, prescribing severe punishments for religious offences.
- Criminal Law (Amendment – Offences in the Name or Pretext of Honour) Act, 2016:
 - Closed pardon loopholes; ensured honour crimes are prosecuted as societal offences.
- Provincial Domestic Violence Acts:
 - Sindh (2013)
 - Balochistan (2014)
 - Punjab (2016)
 - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (2021)

- Supreme Court Ruling (2019):
 - Declared *jirga/panchayat* punishments unconstitutional, in line with Pakistan's international treaty commitments.
- International Commitments:
 - CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) – ratified by Pakistan.
 - ICCPR & UDHR – binding obligations against extrajudicial killings and discrimination.

Current Situation:

- GBV Prevalence: The Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017–18 found significant rates of spousal violence against women.
- Honour Killings: HRCP's *State of Human Rights* (2024) reports hundreds of cases annually, with widespread under-reporting.
- Faith-Based Violence: The Jaranwala attacks (2023) showed the vulnerability of minorities in blasphemy cases.
- Recent News (2025):
 - Rawalpindi: 18-year-old girl killed for marrying by choice.
 - Quetta outskirts: couple murdered after video circulated of their marriage without family approval.

Case Studies:

1. Qandeel Baloch Murder (2016): Her death triggered national outrage and led directly to the 2016 honour-killing amendment.
2. Kohistan Video Case (2012–2020): Delayed justice in the alleged honour killings of several girls; highlighted systemic judicial failures.
3. Jaranwala Attacks (2023): Christian community targeted by mobs after blasphemy allegations; exposed gaps in state response.
4. Quetta Couple Killing (2025): Persistence of *karo-kari* despite existing laws; underlines enforcement challenges.

Committee Aims to Achieve:

- Eliminate legal loopholes that allow perpetrators of honour crimes and GBV to evade justice.
- Ensure timely justice with gender-sensitive policing, specialized units, and fast-track courts.
- Expand survivor support systems, including shelters, legal aid, and psychosocial assistance.
- Safeguard victims and families with witness protection programs.
- Prevent faith-based mob violence through police protocols and accountability for instigators.
- Challenge harmful norms by engaging religious leaders, educators, and media.
- Promote awareness and education at schools and community levels.
- Mandate oversight via parliamentary committees to track enforcement of GBV and honour-crime laws.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMA):

- How will authorities operationalize the 2016 honour-killing amendments (investigation standards, prosecution checklists, sentencing guidance)?
- What survivor services (shelters, hotlines, legal aid, psychosocial care) will be funded in each province—and by whom?
- How will police handle blasphemy-linked mobs (arrest leaders, protect accused, preserve evidence, prevent collective punishment)?
- What is the plan to penalize *jirga/panchayat* actors issuing violent “orders,” consistent with the SC ruling?
- How will the PNA standardize gender-sensitive policing and medico-legal procedures across provinces? (Training, SOPs, independent audits.)
- What data regime will track GBV, honour crimes, and faith-based attacks (disaggregated stats; HRCP coordination; open dashboards)?
- Which public awareness and education campaigns (with religious/community leaders) will challenge *karo-kari*, forced conversion/marriage, and mob incitement?

- How will witness protection and in-camera trials be activated for high-risk cases to prevent intimidation?
- What budget lines fund these measures, and what oversight (parliamentary committee, independent commission) will report progress quarterly?
- In what ways can the state provide protection and dignity to survivors during the legal process, so they are not dehumanized or forced into silence while waiting for justice?
- What reforms are needed to ensure that medical evidence is given timely weight in court decisions instead of being overshadowed by procedural delays?



TOPIC B

THE IDENTITY CRISIS – ETHNIC CONFLICTS, NATIONAL UNITY & CENTRALIZATION OF POWER

Brief Introduction:

This agenda addresses the challenges Pakistan faces in balancing its diverse ethnic identities with the goal of building a strong and united nation. Ethnic conflicts, rooted in language, culture, and disputes over resource distribution, have often tested national unity. At the same time, repeated attempts at centralization of power in the federal government have clashed with provincial demands for autonomy.

The 1973 Constitution established Pakistan as a federal state, while the Eighteenth Amendment (2010) devolved major powers to provinces and strengthened the Council of Common Interests (CCI) as a dispute-resolution forum. Yet, resource inequality, mistrust between provinces and the center, and cultural exclusion continue to fuel tensions.

By debating this topic, the committee seeks to explore how Pakistan can preserve unity without erasing diversity, ensure fair power-sharing, and promote inclusive governance.

Common Terminology (Quick Definitions):

- **Ethnic Conflict:** A conflict where groups mobilize around ethnic identity, often linked to language, culture, or resource control.
- **Federalism:** A system of shared governance between the central government and provinces, as enshrined in the 1973 Constitution.
- **Centralization:** The concentration of decision-making and fiscal control in the federal government, often at the expense of provincial autonomy.
- **Council of Common Interests (CCI):** Constitutional forum for center–province coordination on shared subjects (Arts. 153–155).
- **National Finance Commission (NFC) Award:** Formula for distributing federal revenues among the federation and provinces (Art. 160).

History

Key milestones in Pakistan's identity struggles:

- **1947–1952: Language Movement** – The imposition of Urdu as the sole national language led to Bengali protests, culminating in the 1952 Language Movement, where demonstrators were killed by police in Dhaka.
- **1971: Secession of East Pakistan** – Political marginalization, denial of Bengali majority rule, and economic disparities led to Bangladesh's independence.
- **1970s Onwards: Baloch Insurgencies** – Successive uprisings over autonomy and resource control, especially natural gas revenues, shaped center–province mistrust.
- **1980s–1990s: Karachi Ethnic Violence** – Migration-fueled clashes between Mohajirs, Pashtuns, Sindhis, and the state led to recurring urban violence.
- **2010: Eighteenth Amendment** – Abolished the Concurrent List, devolved 18 ministries, and reinforced provincial authority.

Context:

Despite constitutional federalism, tensions remain due to:

- **Unequal Resource Distribution:** Provinces like Balochistan argue they contribute more natural resources than they receive in development benefits.
- **Language & Cultural Recognition:** Urdu's dominance historically sidelined regional languages, fueling identity politics.
- **Fiscal Strains:** Smaller provinces fear marginalization in federal development priorities; NFC formulas remain contentious.
- **Centralization Pressures:** Federal governments and military regimes have historically overridden provincial autonomy.
- **Urban & Security Conflicts:** Karachi's unrest and counter-insurgencies in Balochistan highlight how unresolved grievances escalate into violence.

Funding & Past Notable Work

- 2009 NFC Award: Raised provincial revenue share from 37.5% to 57.5% of the divisible pool.
- Eighteenth Amendment (2010): Devolved health, education, environment, and culture to provinces.
- Parliamentary Oversight: PNA committees have debated water distribution, mega-projects like CPEC, and inter-provincial resource disputes.
- Donor-Supported Reforms: World Bank and UNDP projects have supported provincial governance capacity and fiscal reforms.

Laws & Frameworks

- Constitution of Pakistan (1973):
 - Arts. 141–159 – legislative powers of federation and provinces.
 - Arts. 153–155 – Council of Common Interests.
 - Art. 160 – National Finance Commission Award.
 - Art. 140A – local governments.
- Eighteenth Amendment (2010):
 - Abolished the Concurrent List.
 - Strengthened provincial legislative and fiscal autonomy.
 - Reinforced the CCI.
- NFC Award 2009: Established resource-sharing formula, giving more weight to population, poverty, and revenue generation.
- Provincial Local Government Acts: Operationalized Article 140A, mandating elected local bodies.

Case Studies:

1. Bengali Language Movement (1952): State refusal to recognize Bengali triggered violent protests; a turning point in identity politics.
2. Secession of East Pakistan (1971): A stark example of how ignoring ethnic grievances and centralizing too much power can fracture national unity.

- **Balochistan Insurgencies (1970s–present):** Demonstrates persistent conflict over autonomy and resources, requiring political—not just military—solutions.
- **Karachi Ethnic Clashes (1980s–90s):** Showed the dangers of urban marginalization and weak governance in multi-ethnic cities.
- **Eighteenth Amendment (2010):** A landmark in devolution; while celebrated, its implementation still sparks debate over provincial capacity and federal control.

Committee Aims to Achieve:

- Strengthen the CCI as the main dispute-resolution forum, with mandatory transparency and accountability.
- Promote equitable resource-sharing by reassessing NFC formulas and addressing provincial development disparities.
- Empower local governments under Article 140A to enhance service delivery and citizen trust.
- Preserve national unity by recognizing and celebrating Pakistan's linguistic and cultural diversity.
- Enhance parliamentary oversight of federal projects in provinces to ensure inclusivity.
- Foster inter-provincial cohesion through youth exchanges, cultural initiatives, and inclusive public narratives.

10 Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMA)

1. Which powers need further devolution, and which (if any) require central oversight?
2. How can the CCI be strengthened to resolve disputes fairly and promptly?
3. What triggers should require CCI review (e.g., energy, water, resource sharing)?
4. Should NFC Awards be updated more predictably, and how can poorer provinces be protected?
5. What guarantees ensure effective implementation of Article 140A and functioning local governments?
6. How should language rights and cultural representation be promoted to reduce grievances?
7. What mechanisms will audit federal projects for transparency and provincial consultation?
8. How can security operations in conflict-affected areas be monitored to protect civilian rights?
9. What constitutional remedies exist if provinces allege federal overreach?
10. How can public education, media, and inter-provincial exchanges foster national cohesion while respecting diversity?

References:

Legal Documents & Constitutional Provisions

- **Constitution of Pakistan (1973):**
 - Articles 20, 25, 36 (religious freedom, equality, protection of minorities).
 - Articles 141–159 (legislative powers of federation and provinces).
 - Articles 153–155 (Council of Common Interests).
 - Article 160 (National Finance Commission).
 - Article 140A (local governments).
- **Pakistan Penal Code (PPC):**
 - §§302 & 311 – Murder provisions; honour killings classified as *fasād-fil-arz*.
 - §§295–298 – Blasphemy-related provisions.

- **Criminal Law (Amendment – Offences in the Name or Pretext of Honour) Act, 2016.**
- **Provincial Domestic Violence Laws:**
 - **Sindh Domestic Violence Act (2013).**
 - **Balochistan Domestic Violence Act (2014).**
 - **Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act (2016).**
 - **KP Domestic Violence Act (2021).**
- **Eighteenth Amendment Act, 2010 – Devolution of powers and strengthening of CCI.**
- **National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, 2009.**
- **Supreme Court of Pakistan Judgment (2019): Declaring *jirga/panchayat* punishments unconstitutional (PLD 2019 SC 64).**
- **International Commitments**
- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979 – Ratified by Pakistan (1996).**
- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966 – Ratified by Pakistan (2010).**
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948.**
- **Reports & Surveys**
- **Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP): State of Human Rights in Pakistan (annual).**
- **Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 2017–18: National Institute of Population Studies & ICF.**
- **Amnesty International: Pakistan: Human Rights Concerns (2023/24).**
- **World Health Organization (WHO): Violence Against Women: Key Facts (2021 update).**
- **International Crisis Group (ICG): Pakistan: The Worsening Conflict in Balochistan.**
- **World Bank & UNDP Reports: Governance and fiscal federalism programs in Pakistan.**

- **Case Studies & News Sources:**

Topic A (GBV, Honour & Faith-Based Killings):

- **Qandeel Baloch Murder (2016), BBC News.**
- **Kohistan Video Case (2012–2020), The Guardian.**
- **Jaranwala Attacks (2023), Dawn News.**
- **Quetta Couple Killing (2025), Dawn News.**

Topic B (Ethnic Conflicts & National Unity):

- **Bengali Language Movement (1952), Britannica.**
- **Secession of East Pakistan (1971), Britannica.**
- **Balochistan Insurgencies (1970s–present), International Crisis Group.**
- **Karachi Ethnic Clashes (1980s–1990s), Dawn archives.**
- **Eighteenth Amendment & NFC Award (2010, 2009), National Assembly & Ministry of Finance documents.**