

**Changing Dynamics of Women’s Politics in Pakistan: A Comparative Analysis of
2002, 2008 and 2013 General Elections**

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Abstract

“Democracy, as an ideology, based on citizens’ equal participation in state affairs irrespective of class, creed, color and sex. It cannot be gender-biased. Women constitute more than 50% of the world population. Pakistan’s Constitution of 1973 guaranteed women’s political rights on equal footings with men. Pakistan’s electoral history manifests a pitiable picture of women politics. The 9/11 incident and assassination of Benazir Bhutto notoriously labeled Pakistani society as extremist, fundamentalist and modern terrorist one. The war on terror greatly affected the state where every-second family has faced causality. In spite of all these insurgencies and uncertainties, the general elections of 2002, 2008 and 2013 witnessed greater women’s political participation. The reports of FAFEN, IDEA, PILDAT and EU Observation Mission and Election Commission of Pakistan also acknowledged the truth that women’s political participation has been increased in Pakistan, tremendously. This paper has highlighted the accelerating trend in women politics by means of casting votes, launching elections campaigns and contesting elections on general seats”.

Keywords: Women as voters, Elections campaigners, and Elections contestants.

Introduction

“Women are half a nation and in democracy they do matter, definitely. Democracy based on mutual participation of its citizens and expression of opinion. If men have hujra for their mutual discussion then the women have water-place (Gu’dar-Ghara: Place) and bread-cooking place (Tanu’r: Place). Bacha Khan Baba says that if a nation lags behind it is because of its women, who are kept backward and suppressed or vice versa. Pakistan is 100 years back as compared to the developed democracies of the world and women, in Pakistani democracy, are further 100 years back to men. But the circumstances have been changing and women have become more

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dynamic in politics. However, gender equality, in general, and in politics, in particular, is highly desirable but as a nation we [women] are more active and more optimistic now” (Jamila: Ex-MNA). Jamila Gillani (Ex-Member of National Assembly - 2008-13).*

In the general elections of 2002, Pakistan achieved incredible progress in women's participation and representation in state's legislatures. The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM: 1995) ** also acknowledged the truth and placed Pakistan much higher, in regional and international rankings of states, on women's representation in states' legislatures. GEM index raised Pakistan from 100th on the list of 102 countries in 1999 to 58th position in 2003, even higher than that of the United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA) (UNDP, 2005). In the 12th National Assembly of Pakistan (2002-2007), women representation increased to 21.64% substantially as compare to meager representation of 11.1%, 1.8%, and 2.8% in the general elections (GEs) of 1988, 1993 and 1997, respectively (UNDP: 2005). Academicians have highlighted two factors which are primarily responsible for the greater representation of women in state's legislatures. At first, women reserved seats were not only revived but also increased in National Assembly (NA), four Provincial Assemblies (PAs), and ever-first in Senate with 17% quota through the Legal Framework Order of 2002. Secondly, in the 2002 GEs ever-highest number of women not only contested elections on general seats and but also won which are more significant than reserved seats. Therefore, women legislative representation stood more than 20%, which is one among the changing dynamics in the 21st Century's Pakistan (Mirza & Wagha, 2002-2007).

Pakistan's GEs history initiated in 1970. The 8th GEs were conducted on November 16, 2002, for the 12th Parliament of Pakistan. The 9th GEs were conducted on February 18, 2008, for the 13th Parliament of Pakistan. Initially, the 9th GEs were planned on January 08, 2008, due to a number of factors deferred to February 18, 2008. Similarly, the 10th GEs were conducted on May 11, 2013, for the 14th Parliament of Pakistan (Pildat, 2013).

*Jamila Gillani was born in 1960, in Mian Sahib Sarai, Bank Road Mardan. Her father, Mian Farid Khan, was an active political worker of Khudai-Khidmatgar movement. His hujra was a center for political gatherings and literary discussions. It is still situated on the same place, Bank Road Mardan.

**GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure) is a measure of inequalities between men's and women's opportunities in a country. It combines inequalities in three areas: political participation and decision making, economic participation and decision making, and power over economic resources. It was introduced in 1995 in the Human Development Report written by the United Nations Development Program.

In the political career of Pakistan, GEs have had always a chequered history. It is why, because these elections, on one hand, not only personify Pakistan's claim for a parliamentary democracy with an elected Parliament and four Provincial Assemblies, as a response on the will of the people, but on the other hand these elections led to the maturity of a fragile democratic system, processes and their need to reforms (Waseem & Yazdani, 2008). Similarly, the results of these GEs also dis-mantle the myth that women are either not ready or unwilling to come to mainstream politics or not yet able to shoulder the responsibilities of electoral politics at constituency, provincial or at national level.

Objective of the Study

To know about the changing patterns of women's politics in the traditional Pakistani society, the general elections of 2002, 2008, and 2013; have been taken for the comparative analysis by means of the following political dimensions:

- Women as registered voters and their turn-out;
- Women as elections Campaigners; and
- Women as contesting candidates on general seats.

Research Methodology

This paper is based on qualitative research with a deductive method of analysis. It has to explore the changing dynamics of women's politics in Pakistan through historical perspective and comparative analysis in the general elections of 2002, 2008, and 2013 in Pakistan.

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to make the analysis more specific, both primary and secondary sources of data are utilized. Interviews with Pakistan's female politicians, who contested elections on general seats and some also served on reserved seats; were conducted. Preferences were given to female politicians of Mardan, as these females were easily accessible. Snow-Ball Sampling method in interview was adopted. Furthermore, academicians like male and female professors of Political Science, who were serving in different colleges of district Mardan, were also interviewed. Available data on general elections, more particular, from the reports of International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Fair and Free Election Network (FAFEN),

Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT), European Union Observation Mission and Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) are being consulted.

Democracy and Pakistani Society

While discussing democracy and citizens' participation especially women folk of the society, Dr. Mehr-Taj-Roghani, ever-first Deputy Speaker of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly says that;

“Gender discrimination is mostly caused by deeply rooted social institutions, their code of conceptions, societal norms and values, and traditions, rather than religions. All the prominent religions show greater flexibility towards women's role in society. Until and unless, we would not use gender-lens we would have not be able to diminish gender discrimination. It depends upon the mind-set and we have to change our mind-set according to the prevailing circumstances” (Mehr-Taj: Ex-MPA).

By its definition, democracy could not afford to be gender-blinded. Democratic system demands citizen's participation in state affairs irrespective of their class, creed, color, and sex. Hence, each and every democratic framework shall be based on the principle of equal rights, including the granting and exercising of political rights of the citizens. Women constitute more than half of the world's population; therefore, their participation cannot be ignored. Any political agenda or development that does not include the views, perspectives and experiences of all those who will be affected is not credible and justified. We cannot perceive the erection of a democratic super-structure where half of its citizens is either ignored or under-represented in the formal political arena (NDI, 2014). The general scenario of women in Pakistan is still lagging behind men in terms of their ratio in education, health, and other services etc. Similarly, Pakistan also manifests a poor picture of women's political participation in state affairs. In recent years, however, Pakistan has made a significant development in --- women's representation and participation in legislative bodies since 2002. It has been observed that due to the change in the outlook of women and the reservation of seats (under the LFO 2002) at local bodies 33%, national and provincial assemblies' 17%, Pakistani women have taken part in political matters, effectively (UNDP, 2005).

As far as the women electoral history (participation and representation) is concerned, the 1977 GEs had a milestone pattern in the women's participation and representation in the political arena; as first woman was directly elected for the NA of Pakistan from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

(Ex-NWFP). This credit goes to Begum Naseem Wali Khan who contested elections on two general seats for NA (NA-4, Peshawar-IV, and NA-8, Mardan-III), and one seat for NWFP (Provincial Assembly) and had won the seats (Begum Naseem: Ex-MNA). Unfortunately, the newly elected Assembly which was supposed to be convened but could not materialize the spirit as the opposition started a movement against the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) government alleged rigging in the elections. The agitation resulted in Zia's martial law. The then General Zia-Ul-Haq promised for holding fresh elections within 90 days but latter on went back on his promise (Ayaz, 2008).

Being a Pashtun and first elected woman to Parliament, Begum Naseem Wali Khan expressed her views on women's politics in Pakistan as:

“Pashtun culture is very primitive, it runs back almost 5000 years. In the domestic life, if someone is needed something and the man was not at home to allow it, then his woman had full authority to do so. Similarly, side by side with men, women have fully supported their counterparts when they were provided opportunities. From day one, Pashtun women are actively involved in Pakistani-politics. It was General Zia regime when we [Pashtun's women] were on strike in Peshawar against the General Zia's policies and proved that we can shoulder our responsibilities and express our feelings in a better way if we are provided the opportunities” (Begum Naseem: Ex-MNA).

Women's Participation and Representation on Reserved Seats in the National Assembly (NA) and Provincial Assemblies (PAs) of Pakistan

Women participation and representation in NA have remained different from time to time, since 1947. The constitutions of 1956 and 1962 enabled the Pakistani women with 06 reserved seats in NA, equally divided between East and West parts of Pakistan. While the Constitution of 1973 provided 10 reserved seats for women for a period of 10 years from the day of commencing the Constitution. In 1985, General Zia increased the number of women reserved seats to 20. During the elections of 1988, 1990, 1993 and 1997, elected governments of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif (02 periods each served alternatively) lapsed reserved seats in legislatures. These elected governments could neither revive nor increased reserved seats but diminished it (Pildat: Paper). With the beginning of the 21st Century, the political participation of women accelerated with new patterns. The LFO of 2002 not only revised reserved seats in legislatures, from 10 percent in NA and 05 percent in PAs, but also increased these seats to 17 percent. Senate, Upper House of the

Parliament, was ever-first facilitated the women folk with 17% reserved seats in the electoral history of Pakistan (Constitutional Provision: 10% Seats). This reservation of seats benefited the women folk dualy: at first; the number of women increased in legislatures; and secondly, the enhanced-ratio encouraged the ordinary women in Pakistani politics.

In the GEs of 2002, 57 women contested elections for NA from 52 different constituencies and 131 women for four PAs from 120 different constituencies (General Elections, 2002). Out of these contestants, 13 women for NA and 11 women for four PAs (06 for Punjab, 03 for Sindh, 01 for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 01 for Baluchistan) came out victorious (Pildat, Paper). In the GEs of 2008, 75 women contested elections from 62 different constituencies for the NA and 126 women for four PAs from 112 different constituencies. Out of these contestants, 16 women for NA and 11 women for four PAs (09 for Punjab, 01 for Sindh, and 01 for Baluchistan) came out victorious. Similarly, in the GEs of 2013, 147 women contested elections from 105 different constituencies for the NA and 300 women for four PAs from 210 different constituencies. Out of these contestants, 09 women for NA and 12 women for four PAs (09 for Punjab, 02 for Sindh, and 01 for Baluchistan) came out victorious.

Since the 2002 GEs, women have 60 reserved seats in NA, 128 in four PAs (Punjab-66, Sindh-29, NWFP-22, and Baluchistan-11), and 17 seats in Senate. Furthermore, women contested the GEs of 2002, 2008, and 2013, enthusiastically; both on party tickets as well as independently; and won on the largest ever-number in Pakistan’s electoral history. The table No: 01, below has the detail of women’s representation in National Legislature of Pakistan from 1947 to 2013.

Table1: Women Representation in the NA of Pakistan

S.#	Legislature	Total Seats	Women Elected Directly	Women Elected on Reserved Seats	Seats held by women	
					Number	%age
01	1st Legislature Aug. 10, 1947 To Oct. 24, 1954.	30	-	-	02	6.7%
02	2nd Legislature May 02, 1955 To Oct. 07, 1958.	80	-	-	00	00%
03	3rd Legislature June 08, 1962 To June 12, 1965.	156	-	06	06	3.8%

04	4 th Legislature June 12, 1965 To March 25, 1969.	156	-	06	06	3.8%
05	5 th Legislature April 14, 1972 To Jan. 10, 1977.	144	-	06	06	4.2%
06	6 th Legislature March 26,1977 To July 05, 1977.	210	01	10	11	5.2%
07	7 th Legislature March 20, 1985 To May 29, 1988.	217	01	21	22	10.1%
08	8 th Legislature Nov. 30, 1988 To Aug. 06, 1990.	217	04	20	24	11.1%
09	9 th Legislature Nov. 03, 1990 To July 17, 1993.	217	02	-	02	0.9%
10	10 th Legislature Oct. 15, 1993 To Nov. 05, 1996.	217	04	-	04	1.8%
11	11 th Legislature Feb. 15, 1997 To Oct. 12, 1999.	217	06	-	06	2.8%
12	12 th Legislature Nov. 16, 2002 To 2007.	342	13	61*	74	21.64 %
13	13 th Legislature February 18, 2008.	342	16	60	76	22.23 %
14	14 th Legislature May 11, 2013	342	09	60+01**	70	20.17 %

Note. *Including one woman elected from seat Reserved for Non-Muslim.

**Including one woman as MNA on reserved seat for Minority in NA.

A: Women Registration as Voters and their Turn-Out

Wajeeha Abbas, 19 years old Islamabad based voter, says; “You don’t have the right to criticize your leadership if you don’t vote. I am so excited to see blue ink line on my thumb. It is a memorial day for me because as I enjoyed the power of my opinion today” (Imrana, 2015).

In state politics, various activities termed as “Political”. But voting is the most common political activity performed by citizens’ at large number in a Democratic setup of a government. Even that in the classical democratic states like America, voting percentage, sometimes, does not go beyond 50%. But it is very important activity through which people decide what type of governance they want and they choose representatives for their governments. It is voting through which people provide legitimacy to the authority of elected government and urge it (government)

to be responsible to them. Indirect Democracy, the most prevalent form of democracy, can be run only when the citizens vote and vote properly. In this regard, the foremost task is the registration of voters (now 18 years old citizen of Pakistan shall be the voter irrespective of gender-discrimination) and then casting votes in elections (Niroj, 2007).

At first, in the modern democratic world women constitute more than 50% of the state's population. But it is also a fact that there is a significant disparity between the number of men and women as registered voters in Pakistan. In the general elections of 2002, the total number of registered voters was 71.9 million. Among these registered voters, 38.8 million (53.9 percent) stands as male voters and 33.2 million (46.1 percent) stands as female voters (ECP Report: 2002). So, the gender disparity as voters ratio stands 5.6 million (7.6 percent) or fewer women were registered as voters. As far as the general elections of 2008 are concerned, the total number of registered voters was 120.7 million. Out of which 73.1 million were male voters and 47.6 million were female voters (ECP Report: 2008). Again, the gender disparity ratio stands 25.5 million, as fewer women were registered as voters. Similarly in the general elections of 2013, 37.6 million women were registered to vote nation-wide as compared to 48.6 million men. It stood with a percentage of 43.6% as female-voters and 56.4% as male voters. The gender disparity in vote's registration stands more than 10 million on women's part (Registration: Female voters). The two factors of: Floods in Pakistan (2010) and internally displaced people (IDPs) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) remained stagnant factors in voter registration, especially of female.

Secondly, since 1970 general elections in Pakistan have always been criticized with low turnout nationally and internationally. As far as female turnout in the general elections of Pakistan is concerned, it is never determined properly and has always been remained very low. As Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has never developed Gender-Segregated form (ECP issue Form-XIV for separate ballot-papers counting on gender basis) for vote's counting except in 2013 but the idea could not materialized well because the electoral staff was neither instructed nor trained for separate counting accordingly (AFP, 2013). However, the ratio of turnout in Pakistan is on decline at 61.5 percent since 1970s (Khan, 2009). The combined turnout of male and female in the last 10 general elections of Pakistan is given below in the Table No.02 (Sharp Increase, 2013).

Table 02: Last 10 General Elections And Turnout.

S. No.	General Elections	Turnout %age	Female %age
01	1970	61.45%	n.c.*
02	1977	61.77%	n.c.
03	1985	53.2%	n.c.
04	1988	40%	n.c.
05	1990	45.5%	n.c.
06	1993	40.51%	n.c.
07	1997	35.43%	n.c.
08	2002	40.69%	n.c.
09	2008	45%	**12.5%
10	2013	55.02%	**40%

*Note. *n. c. stands for not calculated separately. .*

***12.5 % of the 45% of the total and 40% of the 55.02% of the total votes, respectively.*

B. Women as Elections Campaigners

Election campaigning or political campaigning are organized efforts in which campaigners seek and influence the voters in favor to their particular political candidate, party or alliance. It is an organized mechanism in which an election's candidate or his/her colleagues try to influence an individual or group of individuals to get support of their political opinions on Election Day. General elections 2002 and 2008 were the first-two elections of 21st century, under the military junta, in which everyone was very enthusiastic for his democratic role to play. Therefore, men, women and political parties tried their best to launch affective campaigns (Dawn, 2008)*.

Rabia Mufti Advocate (NA-1, Peshawar-I), Kishwer Sultana (NA-16, Hangu), Maryam Bibi (NA-29, Swat-I), Mrs. Emaan Waseem (NA-59, Attock-III), Mrs. Sumaira Malik (NA-69, Khushab-I), Ms. Saima Akhtar Bharwana (NA-90, Jhang-V), Dr. Fehmida Mirza (NA-225,

*The Dawn, November 20, 2008. "Elections campaigning and People Enthusiasm",

The previous Constitutional provision for about 10 percent reserved seats for women in the National Assembly and 05 percent in the four Provincial Assemblies (none in the Senate) had expired after the 1988 general elections, thus there were no women on reserved seats in these assemblies till the enhanced reservation provision incorporated in 2002.

In the general elections of 2002, 188 women contested elections on general seats. Out of these 188 women, 24 won elections. This is significantly higher than the 1997 elections, during which 56 women contested general elections on general seats, 39 women were given tickets, and only 07 won elections.

Badin-II), and Mrs. Zubaida Jalal (NA-272, Kech-cum-Gwadar), Aneela Shaheen (NA-4, Peshawar-IV), Shazia Aurangzeb Khan (NA-09, Mardan-I), Mst. Nusrat Begum (NA-34, Lower Dir), Badam Zari ; ever-first female candidate from FATA (NA-44, Tribal areas-IX) and many others, not only contested elections for the National Assembly (in 2002, 2008, and 2013) but also enthusiastically launched their elections campaigns in their constituencies. They were also warmly well-coming by the voters and shared reciprocal views and willingness on issues. Similarly for the Provincial Assembly, Al-haja Ghazala Habib (PF-57, Mansehra-V), Sobia Nosheen (PK-13, Nowshera-2), Asma Shaheen (PK-35, Swabi-5), Dr. Faiza Bibi Rashid (PK-50, Haripur-2), Yasmin Sherazi (PK-3, Peshawar-III), Samina Naz (PK-17, Charsadda-I), Riffat Begum (PK-23, Mardan-I), Nusrat Ara (PK-24, Mardan-II), Lal Baha (PK-30, Mardan-VIII) and many others not only contested elections (in 2002, 2008 and 2013) but also launched elections campaigns in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Ex-NWFP). Female elections campaigns' shoulder dual responsibilities: at first, female contesting candidates played their role in democratic set-up positively; and secondly, female strata of the society were awakened for their political realization (Pildat: 1970-2013).

For the preparation of 2002 general elections, a number of political workers were busy in the elections campaigning in order to form '*political organizations*' in every Union Council. Farhat Khan (along with PPP workers) worked hard day and night in various Union Councils of Mardan, Nowshera, Kaka-Sahib, and at Pabbi. Her team was assisted by Aasma Jehangir of Peshawar, Mehr-Un-Nisa Afridi of Peshawar, Farakh Aslam of Prango-Charsadda, and Gulzara Bibi of Mardan who accompanied her in the election campaigning across the province (Mrs. Farhat: Ex-MNA). Once they were in the premises of Fazl-e-Haq College Mardan when she felt that majority of women around them were busy in membership's registration process of their party. All of them belong to middle and middle-lower class of the society. She realized the truth that upper-class women are privileged class, otherwise, for democracy the services of middle and lower-middle class are inevitable (Mrs. Farhat: Ex-MNA). From Mardan no woman contested election on general seat in 2002, however, two women for the PA of KP, both from Mansehra, and 03 women for NA, from Peshawar, Karak, and Hangu contested elections but only Al-Haja Ghazala Habib won the seat (ECP Report, 2002).

Similarly, Farhat Khan added that it was 2000-01 that we organized a political rally against the General Musharraf's dictatorial rule in Pakistan-Chowk, Mardan. I also invited the political women of Nawab and Khans Families (Feudal Classes of the Pakhtun society) of Mardan. On the very day of rally, I realized that the women of middle and lower-middle class enthusiastically participated and the rest were missing. Middle and lower-middle classes have always given their sacrifices and services and upper class only claimed their facilities and privileges. Until and unless, we (as women one nation) would have not discarded the class-discrimination we would have not achieved the gender equality (Mrs. Farhat: Ex-MNA).

C. Women as Elections Contestants

In the General Elections of 2002, there were 61 women who contested elections from 52 different constituencies for the National Assembly of Pakistan. Out of these 61 women's candidates, 35 women contested elections from Punjab, 21 women from Sindh, 03 women from NWFP, and 01 woman contested elections from Baluchistan. While party tickets are concerned, 38 women contested elections on party tickets and 23 contested elections independently. In the elections results, 13 women came out victorious, as successful candidates, 10 women stood as runner-up or on second position in constituencies and 02 on third position (Candidates List, 2002). As far as the general elections of 2008 are concerned, 75 women contested elections on 62 different constituencies out of 272 seats for the National Assembly (Candidates List, 2008). Only 36 women contested election on party tickets, and the remaining 39 contested elections independently. In the elections results, 16 women came out victorious, 09 women stood as runner-up or stood on second position in constituencies and 07 on third position (Candidates List, 2008). Similarly 147 women contested elections from 112 different constituencies in 2013 general elections. Out of these 147 women, 61 contested election on party tickets, and 86 women contested elections, independently. According to the 2013 elections results, 09 women came out victorious as successful candidates, 15 women stood as runner-up or stood on second position and 08 on third position in their constituencies (ECP Report, 2013).

Analysis

In the past 20 years, Pakistani Government, on behalf of donor organizations and civil society, has launched a number of initiatives for women empowerment and gender equality. It will be

difficult to discuss all those initiatives in detail; however, some of the significant ones are discussed in the following lines.

In 1998, the Government of Pakistan launched National Plan of Action based on the Twelve issues raised at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, at Beijing. Government planned to focus on education, health, economic empowerment, women role in the decision making processes, rights of the girl child, and many other issues that emerged from Beijing conference (NCSW, 2003). Similarly, National Commission on the Status Women (NCSW) was established in 2000 through an ordinance. The NCSW looked on the women's status and rights as a watchdog and it also reports to the government on discrimination against women. Since its creation, NCSW has given several worthwhile reports on violence against women, discriminatory laws, and such like other policies. It also interacts with other organizations (governmental, semi-governmental, and Non-governmental) to play their role in the agenda of women's emancipation and equal opportunities (NCSW, 2003).

In 2002, National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women was approved. It was based on the socio-economic and political empowerment of women along with recognition of women's economic contributions both in the formal and informal sectors of economy. Pakistani Government launched its second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP-II) and declared the recruitment of women to high positions in various state's services. After it, a number of women enjoyed and are enjoying ambassadorial positions in foreign services of Pakistan as well. Similarly, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar was appointed as Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (the ever-first woman). With government encouragement, a high number of women are now joining the civil services (as higher judiciary judges, Central Superior services etc.) and armed forces (army, air force, and navy services) (PRSP-II, 2010).

Furthermore, four key legislative bills on women's rights were introduced in NA in 2009, namely; *the Domestic Violence Bill* (which was passed by the lower house of the Parliament but Senate could not pass it), *the Nizam-e-Adle* was signed to implement Qazi Courts System in Malakand Division. It did not take into consideration the rights and freedom of women at risk at the hands of traditionalist mullahs and anti-women forces (HRCP Report, 2009). Similarly, *the Criminal Law Amendment Bill* (2010) was passed by the Parliament successfully and amended Pakistan Penal Code and Criminal Procedural Code to define sexual harassment more adequately to punish offender (HRCP, 2009). The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) was a scheme of

federal government which provides income support to women of household that fall below the poverty line. A woman is given Rs. 1,000 per month as supplementary income. Federal government allocated Rs. 70 billion in 2009 and Rs. 50 Billion in 2010. The scheme benefited poor women of Pakistan, dually. First, women were given additional income. And secondly, they were registered and received Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC), which was a pre-requisite for BISP as well as for voter registration process. These developments not only woke up Pakistani women to come to main stream politics but also compelled them to sense the feel of changing dynamics for their social and political realization.

General elections of 2002, 2008 and 2013 were held in an environment of uncertainty and insecurity, externally as well as internally. War on terror and influence of Talibans had bitterly affected the lives of Pakistanis, in general, and FATA and KP Province, in particular. Talibans had already threatened the politicians and especially women for their political campaigns. In spite of all these unfavorable developments, women's political participation was seemed more encouraging and more active as compare to the 20th Century general elections. A comparative assessment of the general elections of 2002, 2008 and 2013 reveals that with the beginning of 21st century women are more vocal, more enthusiastic, and more active in political domains. The reports of International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Fair and Free Election Network, Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, European Union Observation Mission and Election Commission of Pakistan also acknowledged the truth that women's political participation has been increased in 21st century. In the 12th Parliament (2002-2007), there were 213 women in the directly elected state's legislatures i.e. 73 women in NA (13 women were elected directly and 60 were on reserved seats) and 140 women were in four PAs (12 were elected directly and 128 were on reserved seats). The 13th Parliament (2008-2013) of Pakistan, which came into being as a result of 2008 general elections, there were 215 women in the directly elected state's legislature i.e. 76 women in National Assembly (16 women were elected and 60 were on reserved seats) and 139 women were in four Provincial Assemblies (11 were elected directly and 128 were on reserved seats). Similarly, the 14th Parliament (2013-2018) there are 228 women in state's legislatures' i.e. 70 women in National Assembly (09 are elected, one on minority reserved seat and 60 are on reserved seats), 17 women are in Senate, and 141 women are in four provincial assemblies (12 are elected and 129 are on reserved seats).

Elections turn-out, as a second changing dynamic, reveals that Pakistan has always recorded low turn-out in elections and, in female turn-out, it reflects more poor statistics. However, voting percentage in a classical democratic state like America, sometimes, does not go beyond 50%. Table No: 02, has the last 10 general elections turn-out data which is self-explanatory that in Pakistan general turn-out in elections are on declined. But female turn-out has been increased in the last three general elections. It is also a fact that Election Commission of Pakistan has neither instructed the elections staff strictly nor arranged any proper mechanism for male-female separate ballot papers counting. In general elections of 2013, Election Commission of Pakistan ensured Presiding Officers verbally to count females vote separately on Form-XIV "Statement of the Count of Used Ballot-Papers". But these Presiding Officers were neither given any proper training nor separate female polling stations. Similarly, due to social media and political socialization, women have become more active and dynamic in elections campaigns'. Female elections campaigns of the urban constituencies also inspired the ordinary women of rural constituencies to play their role in state affairs positively. These dynamics are now reshaping the politics of a developing country like Pakistan.

The general elections of 2002, 2008, and 2013 revealed the fact that women's representation was held on more than 20% and 17% and 19.5% in legislatures, respectively (Bilal, 2004). The 21st Century's Pakistan has the highest percentage of women's representation in legislature in South Asia followed by Bhutan and India with 9.33 and 8.84 percent respectively (Bilal, 2004). After the general elections of 2002, a countrywide survey was conducted and its findings ensured that there was a great optimism regarding women's representation in politics among the people and that general elections would have a positive impact on the fragile democratic system of the country. The ratio of these expectations were found high among women. What does this mean for a country which is alleged for rigid patriarchal structure where women were perceived with marginalized life? Another positive dimension of the general elections of 2002 and 2008 was observed in elections results which also dis-mantle the myth that women are either not ready or unwilling to come to mainstream politics or not yet able to shoulder the responsibilities of electoral politics at constituency, provincial or national level.

Interviews

1. Al-haja Ghazala Habib was the only woman elected to the KP Assembly (Ex-NWFP) in 2002 general elections from a general seat in Mansehra on the PPP Sherpao ticket. She is the daughter of Habib-Ur-Rehman Tanoli (twice MPA and Minister in NWFP). She said that she was not interested in politics, but when her father was arrested by the National Accountability Bureau, she had no option except to enter politics – being the eldest child of the family. She added that she did not face many problems, because it was her family constituency.
2. Begum Naseem Wali Khan was interviewed by the author on February 16, 2016, at Wali-Bagh Charsadda. Due to political clash with her step-son, Asfandiyar Wali Khan; she has separated her political party since 2006.
3. Dr. Mehr Taj Roghani (Deputy Speaker of KP Assembly) was interviewed by the author in the Deputy Speaker Lounge Peshawar on 09/03/2016. She is the ever-first women deputy speaker of the KPK Assembly in Pakistan's history.
4. Jamila Gillani, an Ex-MNA of Awami National Party on reserved seat for 2008-13, was interviewed by the author at Bacha Khan Markaz Peshawar, on February 20, 2016. She was also remained as Chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women. She was also an active member of the Women National Caucus. Still, she is an active and regular member of Bacha Khan Markaz, Peshawar.
5. Mrs. Farhat Khan (Ex-MNA of PPP on Reserved seat 2008-2013), was interviewed by the author on February 19, 2016, at her residence Islamabad.

Glossary

1. Gu'dar is traditionally used for fording place in water-way. Gu'dar-Ghara is a place from where women fetch water for their daily use.
2. Tanu'r is a furnace made of mud used jointly by the women of a village or locality for cooking bread.

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