

Participation of women in Politics: A Perceptive of Hurdles and Challenges

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Abstract

This interpretive qualitative study covers the research gap by exploring and discussing the obstacles and factors that limited women's participation in politics and the electoral process. Secondly, by making the comparative analysis of PTI and PML(N), this study discovers the difference between policies and strategies of newly emerging and already established party to address the issues of women's low participation and under - representation in parliament and the party system of Pakistan. Although at an individual level, both male and female encouraged women to take part in the political process, yet overall the collective patriarchal mind set of Pakistani society discouraged women to come forward and participate in the political process of Pakistan. Most of the interviewee pinpointed the hurdles and challenges faced due to patriarchal attitude of society which limit women's participation in politics and they told that participation of women in politics is connected to male's perception.

Keywords: Women's participation, political parties, strategies, patriarchal system, political and electoral process, comparative analysis.

This article can be cited as:

Sharif R., Hina G., (2018). Participation of women in Politics: A Perceptive of Hurdles and challenges Journal of Arts and Social Sciences, V (1), 68-95.

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Introduction

Susan Anthony said, “There never will be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect themselves” (1897).

The significance of women’s participation in politics and government is becoming more essential in all democratic societies of the world. In 21st century, almost 95% countries of the world have given women two basic rights: the liberty to cast their vote and to contest election. Efforts have been made all over the world to increase the participation of women in politics and the electoral process by introducing constitutional and legal measures. The factors and problems, which hindered women to participate in politics, may vary from country to country due to their different cultural, religious and socio- economic situation and norms prevailing in their societies (Asghar, Akhtar, 2012, & Shedova 2005).

Throughout the world women ‘s representation in decision making bodies is only 15% and only 12 countries are in the world which have granted 33% seats to women in their legislatures (UNDP Report ,2005). In Pakistan, women comprise more than 50 percent of the population, but they are not participating in the progress and development of the country due to fewer opportunities in politics and decision making of the government.

This study reveals the different factors behind the less percentage of women’s representation in politics and the electoral process by comparing two political parties PML (N) and PTI from Lahore city.

Patriarchal Social Structure

Patriarchy is a cardinal concept of the radical second-wave feminists, who define it as “a system of social structures, and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women” (Walby, 1990: 214).

Explanation

Patriarchy is a social system in which males hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and control of property.

Women’s political Participation in Patriarchal social system of Pakistan

In a patriarchal social system social relations are responsible for the inferior or secondary status of women. Patriarchal society gives absolute priority to men and to some extent limits women’s

human rights also. Patriarchy refers to the male domination both in public and private spheres. In this way, feminists use the term 'patriarchy' to describe the power relationship between men and women as well as to find out the root cause of women's subordination. Patriarchy, in its wider definition, means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that "men hold power in all the important institutions of society" and that "women are deprived of access to such power". In Pakistan women's participation in politics and decision making is linked with socio- cultural, economic and religious setup of society which is male dominated and patriarchal in the nature and restricted women's participation in politics. In Pakistan, most of the time patriarchal social system restricted women from contesting elections and participating in politics (Ahmad, Ibrahim & Naz, 2012, 164; Khan, 2011). Even if women have the abilities to contest elections and take part in the decision making of the government, they are discouraged and hindered to join politics.

Statement of Problem

This study observes the nature of women's political participation in Pakistan. The purpose of the current study is to explore the factors responsible for less participation of women in the political structure and the party system of Pakistan. With the case study of PML (N) and PTI this research also explores the strategies for women empowerment by political parties during the election campaign.

Argument of the study

In the political system of Pakistan, patriarchal social structure is the major impediment against women's participation in the electoral process and politics.

Research Design

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to conduct the present study and to explore all aspects of this research:

- Q # 1 What were the challenges and hurdles faced by female party workers of PML (N) and PTI in politics and electoral process of Pakistan who belonged to Lahore city?
- a. How did PML (N) and PTI devise strategies to increase political participation of women in politics and the election?
 - b. How did influential female political workers of these two political parties motivate

other female political workers to participate in the electoral process and party structure?

Objectives of the Study

General Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the women's political participation in politics and power structure of Pakistan.

Specific objectives of the study

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To analyse the campaign strategies of PML (N) and PTI regarding women's participation during.
- To identify the obstacles and hindrances which were faced by the female political workers of PML (N) and PTI in politics and during election?
- To explore the factors this facilitated the political system to increase the participation of women in the politics.
- To suggest suitable strategies to provide equal opportunities to female political workers to take part in the power structure and law making of the government.

Interpretive Qualitative Method

Existing literature shows that most of the researches have been conducted on the topic of women's participation in politics through quantitative techniques. However, this topic requires more details and in-depth understanding of the issues and challenges faced by women in the political arena of Pakistan. So in the present research, the interpretive qualitative method is used because interpretive method gives importance to the personal and life experiences of participants and when the researcher wanted to understand and explore a complicated and complex phenomenon from the participants' point of view (Creswell, 2007; Cohen, Manion, 1994:p .36 & Thanh, Thanh, 2015, p .23).

Sample Frame

For the completion of the research, it was very necessary to involve the experiences and point of view of all groups who were involved in politics and the electoral process of Pakistan. For this purpose, 11 female and 5 male respondents were selected from Lahore city, which included both public representatives and political workers from PML (N) and PTI. The decision to select

the city of Lahore was made mainly for the convenience. This city is also important because it has the largest provincial assembly, which has the maximum numbers of women politicians, and almost all provincial offices of political parties are situated in Lahore, which made the availability of women political workers and public representatives very easy to conduct this research.

Sources of data collection

- 1 Primary sources
- 2 Secondary Sources

Primary sources

Primary sources were consisted of semi-structured interviews of both male and female political workers of these two parties. For this purpose, interview of 16 respondents, including 11 women and 5 men from above mentioned political parties, who have contested elections in Lahore in Pakistan. One female political worker of PML (Q) who was an X party worker of PML (N) was also interviewed; the purpose of this was to know some discriminatory policies of political parties towards women.

Secondary Sources

As secondary sources, different academic and newspapers articles were examined and analyzed.

Validity of Sources

There are some aspects which need to be analyse on the issue of liability of the sources, used for the data collection. The first apprehension was that, political workers and public representatives from political parties have their own personal interest. The interviews were used as primary sources to collect data for this study because primary sources are more reliable than the secondary sources to get information. However, the secondary sources are used carefully because result by a different researcher is used as indicator of the phenomenon and not taking the results as reality or truth.

Method of Data Analysis

This research consists of data, including documents (newspaper and academic articles) and semi structured interviews. To analyse documents, method of document analysis is used in this research. Method of document analysis is used to review and evaluate, documents, both printed

and electronic (computer and internet transmitted) material. In qualitative research, document analysis examined and interprets the data to elicit meanings and understanding to get empirical knowledge (Corbian & Strauss, 2008; Rapely, 2007).

Narrative method of data analysis is used to analysis the interviews of respondent. The narrative analysis covers the study of experiences of single individual and explores the significance and real meaning of those experiences.

Limitations and delimitation of the study

Like all the qualitative researchers, the sample of the current study was not complete. The findings of the study were based on the sixteen in-depth semi structured interviews of male and female respondents. The results of the current study cannot be generalized to the larger population as being a qualitative study and due to non-probabilistic sampling methodology. The study was conducted in a single city of Lahore. Mostly the answers of the respondents were not explanatory rather they mostly criticized the male's behavior and attitude towards the female's political participation. Another main issue was that I interviewed the respondents in the Urdu language for their convenience, which made it difficult to transcribe their exact words and feelings in the English language to elicit a true sense and real feelings during analysing the data. The main problem and difficulty I found in this research was the availability of female public representatives for interviews who avoided giving time for interviews. The reason for this was that I limited the number of political parties which were present in the assemblies of Pakistan because most of the time the public representatives and main position holders of the political parties were not available for the interviews. The appropriate procedure would have been to involve all the political parties to get deep information and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Literature Review

Since the emergence of Pakistan, many laws have been made to protect women and to grant them equal rights for their protection and security (Weiss, 2012: 3).

Constitution of Pakistan Encourages women's participation in politics

The constitution of Pakistan 1973 was enacted with notable compromise to grant equal rights to all citizens. Particularly the Article 25(2) of the constitution states that:

“There shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex”.

Article 26(1) states that:

“There shall be no discrimination against any citizen on the ground of sex, religion, race, and place of birth (Abdullah & Aziz, 2012).

Butt & Zia 2012 explained that the constitution of Pakistan embodied the principles of non-discrimination and equality among all segments of society. As the constitution ensured it in article 25 that all citizens of Pakistan are equal and will be protected by law, it further mentioned that there should be no discrimination between man and women only because of sex. However, the constitution of Pakistan failed to define the nature and kind of discrimination against women. Though the constitution of Pakistan admitted the equality, liberty and respect of all citizens but, unfortunately the true implementation of the constitutional principles are still absent in the political arena of Pakistan. Women’s under-representation in politics and decision-making is the result of gender-discrimination and inequality that exists in the politics of Pakistan. In spite of the guarantee given by the constitution of Pakistan, women’s fundamental rights as equal citizen are always violated by society due to socio- cultural values of Pakistan. The issue of gender-discrimination may be solved by ECP by taking some legal measures to increase the representation of women in power structure and decision-making through political institutions like political parties (Butt & Zia, 2012).

For the practical implementation of the constitutional rules and laws, relating the equal participation of women in politics, Election Commission of Pakistan under took a number of steps (Common Wealth Report, 2013). Under the rules of constitution, The ECP has formulated a code of conduct for the peaceful electoral campaign by the political parties. The Election Commission of Pakistan issued this code of conduct to provide equal opportunity to all candidates and political parties (Amjad, Munawar & Usman, 2013, p. 109). Similarly, in the Election of 2013, Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has introduced a Code of Conduct for candidates and political parties, which was published and enforced on 28 Jan 2013. It introduced some new provisions about women’s political rights (FAFEN, 2013).

Code of conduct 2013 by the Election Commission of Pakistan mentioned that

Political parties and their political workers and candidates shall not propagate against any citizen to participate in the elections on the basis of gender and shall not support or enter into any agreement or arrangement which limit or debar women from contesting election (Para no.19, Code of Conduct 2013).

The political parties, contesting candidates and their supporters and other persons shall not encourage or enter into formal or informal agreement or understanding debarring women from becoming candidate for an election or exercising their right to vote in an election.

The political Parties shall encourage the women to participate in Elections (Para No. 20, Code of Conduct 2013).

All political Parties shall try to provide equal opportunities for both male and female to take part in election (Para No. 24, Code of Conduct 2013).

For the practical implementation of above mentioned rules and laws, The Election Commission of Pakistan undertook a large number of measures for the General Election 2013 to enhance participation of women in politics and the electoral process. As the result of those steps, the number of women voters increased as compared to election held in 2008 and a huge turnout of women voters was recorded. The number of women as independent candidates without support of any political party was also increased in election 2013. In this context, it is worth to mention that first time in the history of Pakistan a woman contested, election on general seat in the FATA, where women were not even allowed to vote. However, these advancements have been noticed, yet many things remained left to be done for gender-free political system of Pakistan. Further, it is also important to have a bleak side of this picture, the ratio of women contested election on general seats was only 3.4% of total seats. Even no woman is working on the administrative posts of election commission, which is the dire need of the current political situation. Only 1.8% women are part of full time employees of ECP, this inequality has been noticed by the ECP and it has formulated the policies to increase the number of women employees in ECP at by least 10%. Under the guidance of code of conduct by ECP for election 2013, all the political parties enacted their policies and manifestos to increase and encourage the participation and representation of women in politics and election (Post Election Review Report: General Election 2013, p. 96).

Prior to discuss the policies of PML (N) and PTI, it is necessary to highlight some prominent achievements and policies of the outgoing government of PPP during the period of 2008-2013 for the clear understanding of the present phenomenon.

Legal Framework Order (LFO)

On 21 August 2002, General Pervez Musharaf introduced and enforced the Legal Framework Order (LFO). This introduced some measures to reinstate women's quota, especially in politics and raised it to 33% in all legislative and decision-making bodies of the state. It increased the

number of general seats for women to 20% in the 12th National Assembly as compared to 1.4% in the 11th National Assembly (1991-999). According to this rule, 33% quota for women on reserved seats, in this way 60 out of 342 seats were reserved for women in the National Assembly, 17 out of 100 in the Upper House (Senate), 66 out of 137 in the Punjab assembly, 29 in Sindh assembly, 22 in NWFP and 11 out of in Baluchistan (Naz , R, 2014).

18th amendment

At the provincial level, the 18th amendment (2010) to the Constitution granted autonomy to the provinces in deciding the issues about the development of women along with other issues (Sanchita, 2014).

Data Analysis

After collecting the data findings and results were analysed on the basis of research questions of this study. Based on research questions and themes, the chapter on Data Analysis was divided into three parts. The first part of data analysis deals with the first aspect of this study to explore hurdles and problems which women faced in politics of Pakistan. In the second part some strategies and policies to increase women's participation in politics are recommended. The third part of data analysis deals with third research question, how women can be motivated for active participation in politics by analysing the recommendations given by participants of this study. For this purpose interviews and some secondary data was analysed.

Hurdles and Challenges

This part will deal with the research question which was about to discover and explore the problems and hurdles for women to participate in politics and elections from the perception of male and female political workers. During the research, it was observed that women were more enthusiastic to participate in elections and politics, but they were restricted due to some social, legal, and economic restrictions. Particularly patriarchal social system is the big hurdle for women in the field of politics. To get the complete understanding of the issue all relevant groups were included in the sampling of the research. So both male and female political workers of PML (N) and PTI were interviewed to understand all dimensions of research problem.

Hurdles and Challenges explored during interviews of both male and female participants Women's Perception Patriarchal Mind-set

Most of the female respondents were of the view that they are not allowed to join politics

because the general perception of the Pakistani patriarchal social system is that politics is the field only for men. In the society of Pakistan, mostly patriarchal norms and traditions are prevailing, which make men dominate over women in politics as well as in all fields of life. It also limited women's rights and liberty. It is believed that politics is best fit only for men because they can move everywhere without any restriction, they are financially independent and have more credibility to make decisions and manage their matters without any help and restriction. Contrary to this, women's mobility and decisions about their life mostly depends on the male members of their family.

The social system of patriarchy is practiced throughout Pakistan and affects all spheres of social life. As for women's participation and representation in politics of Pakistan are concerned; they are deprived of their political and social rights because of patriarchal socio-cultural norms and traditions (Shaeed, 2009:26). However, woman of Pakistan is struggling very hard to get the equal representation in the Assemblies (Aderinwale, 1997; Saleem, 2013; Naz, Ibrahim, 2012, p .164 & Saleem, 2013). As one of the respondents said that:

“Our social structure is responsible of this that women have to face problems in all fields of life, especially in politics” (Farzana Butt, MPA (PML (N))).

One more respondent said:

“Our society is patriarchal and male dominated. This is actually the influence of Hindu culture in our society, and women are not allowed to join politics. While now women are working on high positions in many departments” (Ramzan Sadiq Bhatti, PML (N)).

That is why they prefer to be tacit and there is no room for improvement, so their travesty becomes visible.

Class discrimination

The most important factor, which was explored during the interviews, was that women with political background have more opportunities to move forward in politics, because they are more familiar with the political process and have more resources to exist in politics. While the common woman who has no political background, is discouraged to join politics and decision-making institutions of Pakistan.

One of the respondents said that:

“Benazir became the Prime Minister of Pakistan because she was the daughter

of Zulfikhar Ali Bhutto (former P.M of Pakistan) otherwise she could not become the prime Minister as a common woman” (Dr. Murad Rass, PTI).

One more respondent said that:

“Women are brought in assemblies on reserved seats, but unfortunately these seats are granted only to relative women of party leaders and position holders of party” (Zahida Azhar, PML(N)).

One of the female respondents told that:

“In politics, political family background and relations are very necessary to get a seat in the assembly and success in politics; I got success in politics because my mother was in politics ... which makes it easy to exist in politics” (Syeda Majda Zaydi, PML(Q)).

Opposing this view one respondent said:

“G...I have no political back ground when I came into politics; I was just a common woman and political worker. Now I am MPA, I came at this position only because of my hard work not due to any relation” (Farzana Butt, PML(N)).

Discouragement of abilities

A group of female respondents expressed that in political parties and assemblies deserved women are neglected, and positions and party tickets are only given on the base of personal and family relations.

One of respondent told:

“I had been in PML (N) for thirty years but I have not been granted any authoritative position in the assembly or in party” (Farzana Butt, PML(N)).

To oppose this one respondent said that:

“In parties, loyalties are given preference, not the abilities because everybody who has the ability came into politics, but sincerity and loyalty is very rare in politics. Old workers are considered as the pillars of parties” (No-Suba-Akbar, PML (N)).

Similarly, Saloni Bukhari who is a very prominent party worker of PTI has been the member of party since 20 years but still she is only a party worker. Most of the respondents were of the view that positions and party tickets in elections are given only to family members of party leader, in spite of this; they had no ability and experience of politics. They were of the view that all these depict the negative behavior and patriarchal mind set of society, which considered women inferior to man.

Economic dependency and lack of financial resources

It was also observed during the data collection that lack of financial resources is a big hurdle for women to take part in politics. Financially, women depend on males because of the societal structure of Pakistani society which does not allow women to be independent and discourages them to join any profession or run any business for their economic empowerment. One of the interviewees even said that to contest in elections and to be elected as a member of assemblies, power, money and political influence are the main attributes, which are difficult and even impossible for women to possess in Pakistan.

However, denying this fact, one of the respondents said that:

“Saloni Bukhari provoked me to come into politics; she told me that a woman can achieve success in politics without money. I have no surplus money, but now I am MPA only because of my hard work” (Sadiah Sohail Rana, PTI).

Opposite to this one of respondent said:

“Money is very important in politics; we need money to move and to run election campaign. I owned a flat, which I sold to contest election. I think a woman should not come in politics that has no finance. If you want to become a leader than behave like a leader not like beggars” (No-Suba- Aknar, PML (N)).

PML (N) promised in its manifesto to empower women economically by giving them vocational training. The project of IT for girls is also included in the policies of PML (N) to empower women financially, particularly for those girls who could not continue their studies after matriculation (Qudratullah, 2012& Ayaz, 2008).

Constrained Mobility

Due to the patriarchal mindset of Pakistani society, women faced much restriction on their

mobility and movements, while the field of politics demands public relation and free mobility. However, traditional and narrow mindset of society does not allow women to go outside without any male member of her family, even for minor things. Which makes it difficult to attend election campaigns and meeting, because most of the males do not allow women to go in public places.

One of the respondents agreed with this by saying that:

“Women are working in every field but it becomes difficult for them to go from one place to another without any male member. If your husband is also politician, it would be easy for you to come in assembly or work on a high position; otherwise it would be difficult for a woman to handle big projects of government” (Shamsa Ali, PTI).

Family support

All female respondents were of the view that family support is very necessary for a woman to join politics. They were of the view that without family support a woman cannot survive in politics. Some of the respondents shared their experience by telling that often their husband and son refused to go with them in election campaign and party meetings because they feel uneasy when they are recognized with their reference”. While other group of respondents also told that, their father and husband fully supported them in their political career where they need their help.

One of the respondents shared her experience and said that:

“Women cannot survive in politics without family support, my husband supports me very much but told me some limitations; he said...you have to wear Chader whenever you go in public meetings. Look! If you are going out of home than family’s respect and honour depends on you. So, I think that it depends on woman, how to survive in politics” (Saloni Bukhari, PTI).

But another respondent said:

“My husband declared that my wife will not join politics and nobody will force her to come in politics. Even now when I was coming here for interview my son said mama why are you going there; what benefit you get from this. Not only had my husband yet my sons also restricted me to go outside in public and political meetings” (No-Suba-Akbar, PML (N)).

Therefore, it was concluded that non-cooperation and lack of support from family is a big challenge for a woman to come into politics.

Family responsibilities and Specific gender based Roles

Most of the female respondents agreed that women are only confined to their gender specific roles, which have been imposed on them by societal norms and traditions. They are expected to perform their specific traditional roles within the boundary of their homes. Due to the burden of family's responsibilities, which they are bound to perform. It becomes difficult for women to go outside and take part in politics. The female respondents also shared their personal experiences, they told that they firstly do their duties towards their children and husband and then they found it very difficult to bear the dual burden of home and politics. They said that both demand full time attention and responsibility. In addition, if they failed to satisfy their families due to their political activities then they faced marital abuse due to negative thinking of society.

One of the respondents said that:

“In our society women have their specific duties and roles towards their family. Even my husband asked me many times that you gave more time to politics than family, which made it difficult for me to manage both family and politics due to my gender based responsibilities” (Naseem Bano, PML(N)).

Similarly another respondent said that:

“I think the first duty of a woman is her home and family. I managed my home and career very smoothly. After preparing breakfast for my husband and children, I drop my children at school and then went to PML (N) house. I think if a woman is managing her home smoothly, she is running her country” (Nasreen Nawaz, PML(N)).

Therefore, this study concluded that the specific gender based responsibilities of women toward their family hindered them to participate in politics and the electoral process. It is because their family members are mostly suffused with the colour of male domination.

Sexual harassment

Some of the interviewees who belonged to PTI specially mentioned that women are only recognized as a symbol of sex in the male dominated society of Pakistan. Sexual aggravation

and nuisance in the electoral process like in jalsas and rallies have made it difficult for females to attend election meetings and campaign. They also told that after the happening of unpleasant incidents in the Jalsas of PTI, their families do not allow them to attend party meetings. Due to this uncivilized environment now, it has become a great challenge for women to come in the jalsa and meetings.

One of the respondents shared her views that:

“For a male, a female is made only for one specific purpose, so they treat woman only as a symbol of sex not more than this” (Robina Jamil, PTI).

Therefore, it was found during the research that the inability of political parties to introduce a mechanism to protect women is one of the greatest hurdles in the way of women’s participation in politics.

Limited knowledge about politics and the electoral process

During Interviews, it was also observed that most of the respondents have little knowledge about the policies and laws of political parties. They were even ignorant of policies of the parties to which they belonged. It was found that the reason of this was that parties do not involve them in policy-making of parties. They told that due to lack of information they wasted most of opportunities to make progress in politics, which deprived them of their rights.

One of the respondents said that:

“Experience and knowledge of politics is very necessary, which most of the women lacked. If you have experience of politics even as a worker, only then you will succeed otherwise you will face problems. I also started my political career as a councillor at Union Council” (No-Suba-Akbar, PML (N)).

Therefore, it was concluded after analysing the data that the lack of knowledge about their rights and political issues is the major cause of low representation of women in politics and elections.

Negative and Unfriendly attitude of political parties towards women

The female respondents from both parties were of the opinion that the attitude of political parties towards women is not friendly. They told that political parties hesitate to give opportunities to women and most of the time ignored women in party meetings and decision making. It was observed during the interviews that the main reason of this is that political parties are dominated

and controlled by male politicians, who are the main actors in making the policies of the parties and ignored women in decision-making.

One of the respondents shared her experience:

“I left PML (N) because there was negation of women’s rights. I was arrested; I faced physical torture in Jalsas of party... but what... happened...at the time of awarding tickets in local body elections, party ticket was given to a woman who was relative of Khawaja Ahmad Ahsan. I called Shabaz Sharif, who was in London at that time and told the situation. He said don’t worry, just file your paper. But when in next morning I went to file my paper, that lady was already standing in line. I came back and not filed my paper. It means Shabaz prefer Khawaja Ahsan than me... Only because I was a female” (Syeda Majda Zydi, PML(Q)).

So, it was concluded after examining the data that gender based discriminatory rules, absence of internal democracy in the political parties and unfair and non-transparent electoral process depicts the patriarchal and discriminatory attitude of political parties towards women.

Assassination of character

While sharing their experiences most of the participants were of the opinion that they faced problems from the very beginning of their political career. They shared their experiences by saying that people did not accept the domination and progress of women and tried to bar them from politics by assassinating their character in public places.

One of the respondents said:

“In politics only those women can exist who are very rich and have no self-respect because they did not bother about what people are saying about them” (Sydia Majda Zydi, PMI (N)).

Low confidence and self-esteem

It was also observed in the research that low self-esteem and lack of confidence is another reason less participation of women in politics.

Non-Corporation from male politicians

A group of female respondents highlighted the very bleak side of the political atmosphere in

Pakistan. In elections, political parties and male members do not cooperate with them. They also told that in assemblies when women try to speak on any issue concerning women they are stopped to speak by male politicians of their party. They do not show sobriety and do not hesitate to sled; they even try their level best to smite the woman members.

One of the respondents told that:

“Male do not consider women’s issues as the main issues of the government, even many liberal and educated male politicians oppose “women protection bill 2016” in the assembly. They even said we are giving unnecessary superiority to women, this shows the conservative and patriarchal mindset of male colleagues” (Sadiah Sohail Rana, PTI).

One more respondent said that:

“Our male colleagues do not encourage giving any main position to woman in the party or in politics. They do not allow us to speak in assembly and try to ignore our issues” (Farzana Butt, PML (N)).

Opposite to this one respondent said that:

“My husband allowed me to join politics because the male members of my party were very descent and cooperative” (Sadiah Sohail Rana, PTI).

Consider politics not fit for women

Some of the females told that politics demands free movement, boldness, and public relations but in patriarchal and male dominated society of Pakistan; it is very difficult for woman to maintain all these. In the patriarchal society of Pakistan if a woman move freely and have relations with the public, people defame her character and she has to face social abuse.

One of the respondents said that:

“Our society is very conservative and patriarchal in nature. People do not like women in politics; they think that if a woman is out of four walls of home ... she is doing something wrong. When we go in public gathering, people look at us as we are at a wrong place. A woman is only accepted, when she has secured her status in politics, for common woman, there is no place” (Robina Jamil,PTI).They were of the view that politics is not for women.

Male's Perception

Men as opinion makers

Most of the male respondents were of the opinion that women have less decision-making power and have no liberty to cast vote of their own choice because they vote according to the wishes of their male members. They supported this idea by saying that women have no knowledge about politics and candidates, that's why they let the man decide their vote.

One of the respondents said that:

“In many families, women are bound to obey their male members; they cannot even enter into politics without their permission. I think women have less knowledge about candidates and political parties that's why they accept the opinion of male members of their family” (Murad Rass,PTI).

Less interest in politics

Most of the male respondents expressed that most of the women are not interested in politics because of negative attitude towards politics and traditional roles which society has set for them. Generally, women considered politics as dirty game and did not like to come in public places.

Agreeing with this argument one of respondent said:

“Politics is a good thing; but tragedy is this that our patriarchal society considered it very dirty sphere for women. Whoever comes into politics, is regarded as a bad person, so people think that only bad women came in politics” (Sadiah Sohail Rana,PTI)

Men's Narrow Perception about women

During interviews the negative perception of males was found, male participants were of the view that it is not acceptable for most of the men to accept women in a superior or administrative position. They said in some families men could not accept that their females actively participate in politics.

One of the respondents shared his opinion and said:

“Yes...I agree with this, in many families ...even in educated and liberal families, males do not like to minimize their superiority. No matter they are at

home or in assemblies they feel their insult if a woman is on superior position” (Muhammad Madni, PTI).

Therefore, it was concluded that there was a need to educate men to accept women’s place in politics, which is necessary for national development and progress. Revulsion is the need of the hour, so that women can retrieve her self- respect and defeat the rampant and razor like mentality of man.

Uncertainty, insecurity, and anarchy do not allow women to participate in politics and electoral campaign

It was also observed during the study that most of the men do not allow their females to go in the election campaign and join politics because of lawlessness and insecure environment of the country. The security arrangements for female are not satisfactory due to increasing rape cases and terrorism.

One of the respondents agreed with this by saying that:

“At present insecure situation of Pakistan, it becomes difficult for women to go out of her home alone at late night and for a long time due to insecure environment in Pakistan” (Manzar Abass, PML(N)).

It was concluded that the prevailing situation of insecurity and terrorism has created hurdles for free and active participation of women in politics because most of the time it is misinterpreted in the name of religion.

Male’s self- esteem does not allow women to join politics

In male dominated society of Pakistan, men always think negatively about the abilities of women and try to create hurdles in their progress and empowerment. Even an educated and broadminded man does not like women’s freedom and independence, which he desires for himself. Men try to create such situation in which it becomes difficult for women to go out and work for the welfare of women (Abdullah, Arfan, Khataria & Usman, 2015, 209).

Agreeing with this point one of the respondents said that:

“When we were in Dubai, I was known as Mrs. Sohail which I liked, but now in Pakistan where I am a MPA, people recognized my husband as “he is the husband of Sadia Sohail Rana” which is not liked and even accepted by my

husband. I think that if a woman can be recognized by the name of male then why not a male can be” (Sadia Sohail Rana, PTI).

Sexual Deprivation

In the patriarchal society of Pakistan, sexual deprivation is prevailing at a high level due to which men tried to over-protect their women from this social evil.

Double Burden on Women

Male respondents expressed that due to the dual burden of family and politics it becomes difficult for women to give more time to their family. In this way both, her family and political career suffer very badly.

One of the respondents said that:

“A woman has to bear extra burden on her shoulders; she has to manage her home and her political responsibilities with the same consideration. However, it becomes difficult for her when she came late night at home during election campaign ...So, she faced family problems” (Muhammad Madni Khan, PTI).

Policies and strategies as recommended by Respondents

Respondents from PTI and PML (N) who were interviewed as primary source of data collection recommended following strategies and policies to enhance women’s participation in politics:

1. Establish women centre at local levels so that women can discuss their problems easily.
2. To educate women by providing them free education.
3. Provide professional and vocational education to women to make them financially independent.
4. Small business should be introduced for women to empower them.
5. To train women politically by providing them required skills and training to participate in politics and elections.
6. Provide them with security so they can move into their constituency, to become familiar with people and their problems.
7. Involvement of women workers in formulating the manifestos of political parties.
8. Revise Legislation and laws which violated women’s rights.
9. Establish special centres at local level for the fair implementation of those laws and legislation made to curb sexual harassment.
10. Political parties encourage law making to increase the representation of women in decision

making bodies. Quota system can be applied as a temporary measure until other hurdles for women to participate in politics are removed (Bano, 2009, p .19).

11. Within reserved seats, General Seats for women should also be increased because women elected on reserved seats have no authority to raise women's issues and they are bound to follow the policies of the party leadership.
12. Shadow ministry should be given to women in all ministries.
13. Acceptance and implementation of international laws and convention about political and social rights of women.
14. Discourage and snub the discriminatory attitude of political parties towards women by granting equal opportunities in party organization.
15. The selection system of candidates in the parties must be fair and non- discriminatory, based on merit not on sex.
16. Allocation of specific budget for the development of women by government.
17. Institutionalize the internal structure of equality in all segments of society.
18. Making and implementation of a code of conduct by political parties for the development and progress of female political workers.
19. It is very essential that code of conduct and mechanism of political parties must be available to the general public.

Motivation for women in politics

Participation in Legislation and decision-making

The study found that almost all female respondents agreed to encourage women's involvement in the decision-making processes and politics at all levels. They wanted to influence the policy outcomes and decisions of government and political parties to address the issue of low representation of women in politics.

One of the respondents said:

“If women come into politics only then they can influence the decision making of the government and will be able to solve their problems” (Saloni Bukhari, PTI).

Awareness about social issues

Female respondents were of the view that women should come in politics because in this way they will be aware of societal problems and issues and can effectively play their role in solving these problems.

One of the respondents said:

“Woman should join politics as social work because women issues and problems cannot be understood by any one. She must come into politics to solve the social problems of the common woman” (No-Suba- Akbar, PML (N)).

“Politics is the best platform to serve people because a common woman cannot go to assembly to address the problems of women” (Naseem Bano, PML (N)).

Confidence building

During research, it was found that female political workers were more confident than common women. Therefore, to make women confident it is necessary that they should come in politics to face the difficulties and hardships of life bravely.

One of the respondents said that:

“There is a huge difference between a common house lady and a female political worker because she has her own recognition in society. She can go anywhere... In police station or in offices to solve the problem of people because contact with the general public has made her more confident than common women” (Zahida Azhar, PML(N)).

Awareness of their Rights

Female respondents were of the view that the constitution and Islam has bestowed many rights upon women but they are ignorant of them. By participating in politics, women not only can raise voice for their rights but also will be part of the legislation of the country to get their rights.

One of respondents motivates other women by saying that:

“Women should come into politics for their rights because if they would be aware of their rights only then they can protect themselves from inequalities and brutality of society. So, they not only benefit themselves but the whole society” (Sadiah Sohail Rana, PTI).

Utilization of abilities

Nature has given all human beings equal abilities. However, if capable and talented women who wanted to join politics remain confined to the household chores within the four walls of

home, then how they can contribute to national progress? By participating in politics, they can take part in the development of the country side by side with men and can utilize their abilities more positively. Such as the efforts made by PTI's women, as one respondent Shamsa Ali has written a part of the party's constitution in which she demanded 33% of women's representation in party positions.

As one of the respondents said:

“When women asked me why you came into politics, I motivate them by telling that only to cook food and bringing up your children is not your responsibility; use your abilities and work for the welfare of people in the society... Ak ak katra mil k hi samandar banta ha” (Robina Jamil, PTI).

Findings

On the basis of research questions, the results and findings are concluded from the interviews of both male and female respondents, all of respondents advocated women's participation in politics and political parties.

The first research question was to explore the obstacles and factors, which restricted women to participate in politics and the electoral process in Pakistan. It was found during the research that women's access to the parliament and assemblies of Pakistan is very restricted due to the patriarchal social structure of Pakistan. The responses of all participants were similar to each other. All female respondents agreed that within the patriarchal social system, male domination, lack of economic independence, lack of family support, burden of family responsibilities, discriminatory attitude of political parties, traditional values and some psychological factors are main obstacles which limited women's participation in the election campaign and politics. One of the female respondents was of the view that women are treated in politics as gender stigma. Discussing the issue of support from family, most of the female respondents considered their husband as a barrier to their political career; only a few women agreed that their husband supports them in political affairs. They were of the view that family support, especially support from husband is very important for the success and survival in politics. After discussing the family support, almost all respondents expressed that money is the key factor for success in the election and politics. All women agreed that finance is a big problem that restricted women to join politics. They argued that to contest election and to run election campaign, large amount of money is required while financially a woman depends on the male. One group of respondents

including male and female agreed that family responsibilities consume most of the woman's time and they find it difficult to go out for political meetings and campaign after ignoring her family responsibilities. Male respondents also expressed that if women ignored her home and family; she suffered family abuse and destroyed her family life. Some of the respondents were of the view that low confidence and lack of political knowledge is a big hurdle for women to participate in politics. All male and few of the female participants expressed very sadly that security issues do not allow women to come out of homes without any male members. Due to this insecure environment, male members of the family do not permit women to go in public meetings. A group of female respondents also shared their views that if a woman goes outside of home without any male, society assassinates her character and does not like her. This patriarchal attitude of society discouraged women to participate in politics.

The focus of the second research question of this study was to examine what kind of strategies and policies are needed to be made to increase women's participation in politics and power structure of Pakistan. Numbers of the recommendation were given by both male and female participants. Female participants suggested that any single proven strategy should be introduced and implemented to address the problem of less participation of women. Sadia Sohail Rana (MPA, PTI) and Saloni Bukhari (president of Women Wing Punjab) suggested that political parties should change their discriminatory attitude and encourage women to come into politics by giving opportunities in party organization. A male respondent Murad Rass (MPA, PTI) suggested that general seats for women should be increased by the government in spite of reserved seats because through reserved seats women cannot exercise their authority, they are bound to obey party leaders who nominated them. All respondents agreed that the government should introduce plans and policies to make women financially empowered. Muhammad Madni (PTI) and Naseem Begum (PML (N), president Women Wing Lahore) suggested that legislative intervention should be made and implemented.

Therefore, it can be concluded that though at a personal level, all male and female respondents encouraged women's political participation but it was found that it is the patriarchal traditional mindset of society, which discouraged and restricted women and encouraged male dominance in the political sphere of Pakistan.

Conclusion

The importance of the present research lies in that "Neither man nor Woman could exist and

secure their full potential without other". The results of this study are of great importance because they are not only based on the personal experiences of female political workers but also are crossed analyses by the perception and experiences of male political workers. This study was conducted to understand the nature of women's political participation in the power structure and political party system of Pakistan. Based on the findings, this research concluded that the patriarchal social structure is the main hurdle for women to participate in the electoral process and politics. With this, controlled mobility, low confidence, weak decision-making power, household responsibilities, traditional attitudes towards women are the main social challenges which restricted women to come forward and be the part of politics in Pakistan. In spite of all the above-mentioned hurdles 17% women are still representing in all decision making bodies, yet it is a very low ratio as compared to their population size. In both parties, many women are working on main position as Zakia Shanawaz from PML (N) hold more than one ministry; similarly Ayesha Ghos is working as finance minister of Punjab. In the same way, Shiri Mazari and Fozia Kasori are the main pillars of PTI. The data derived from interviews of women participant also demonstrates the discriminatory policies and reforms of the government and unfriendly behavior of Pakistani society.

The findings of this study also explored that individual behaviour is favorable on the issue of women's political participation but the collective behaviour of society and government is multifaceted due to social set up. The findings of the study, which was about the comparative analysis of women's participation of PTI and PML(N) in the politics and electoral process also revealed that party affiliation does not matter to increase or decrease women's participation because women belonged to both parties shared the same issues and problems. It can be concluded on the basis of findings that the real factor behind the less participation and re-representation of women in politics is not the political system and party identification while it is the patriarchal societal mind set which is responsible for this issue. Many female respondents were of the view that without the participation of women in politics and decision making the problems of country's half population cannot be solved. They also expressed that without the inclusion of women in policy making no law and policies will work properly for the entire development of women and the country. It was explored from the data that though party support and affiliation is necessary for success in politics and the electoral process, but attitude of political parties is shaped by the social behaviour and norms and they show a negative attitude towards women in politics and party organization. Women respondent said that political parties do not encourage women

in party positions and politics due to the patriarchal mind set of society because people prefer male candidate than female in elections. Therefore, after analysing the collected data it can be concluded that with the help of government, political parties, and influential party workers, both men and women can play a great role to increase women's participation by encouraging and supporting them in politics and the electoral process. It was also found out that it has become more essential for political parties to set up mechanisms for interior equality in the organizational structure of the party. It was also found out that though there are many factors like economic, religious, and legal, responsible for less participation of women in politics, yet social pressure and societal norms are the root cause of all these factors. If women are empowered politically, economically and legally they can effectively contribute in the development of Pakistan.

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