

WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

A GENDER AUDIT OF WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES OF PAKISTAN



NED

WISE
Women in Struggle
for Empowerment

Disclaimer

This report was made possible with the financial support of National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The content and views expressed in this report are sole responsibility of WISE and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of NED.



FOREWORD

Women's chronic exclusion from political structures and processes in Pakistan is the result of multiple structural, cultural and political factors that vary in different social contexts. Like all societies the prevailing social and political relations are shaping the constraints being faced by Pakistani women in practical politics. The common patterns of women's political exclusion stem from (a) social and political discourses (b) political structures and institutions (c) the socio-cultural and functional constraints that put limits on women's individual and collective agency.

However, beyond these specificities of national and local contexts, there is a generic issue in women's political participation that relates to the wider context of national politics and liberal democracy. The conceptual basis of liberal theory is inherently gendered in ways, which perpetuates patterns of patriarchy and ignores gender subordination in both; polity and society.

The fact is when women enter politics within this patriarchal context of democracy, they are unable to play a role to radically change the dominated political patterns rather they largely play political roles on male's terms. Thus, the fundamental assumption in liberal democracies needs to be changed in order to create genuine political space for women.

Efforts to improve female representation in politics have often focused on quotas and reserved shares. What really needed is a nuanced approach that tackles the underlying, interconnected barriers that women face in getting nominated for elected office and conducting successful campaigns.

This report is our humble effort to highlight the gaps in the approaches of different political parties with regard to women political empowerment under reserve seats and the meaningful inclusion of women in organizational structures. This report is not just a compilation of specific and useful data on women's political participation in Pakistan, but it also aims at becoming an analysis, discussion and action tool for all individuals, from public organizations and civil society, who might be interested in political participation with a gender perspective.

Bushra Khaliq
Executive Director
December 2019

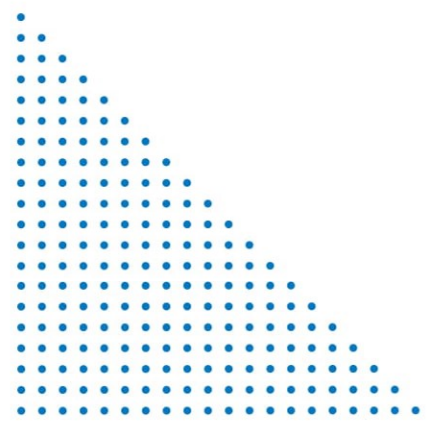
ABBREVIATIONS

ANP:	Awami National Party
CC:	Core Committee
CEC:	Central Executive Committee
CM:	Chief Minister
ECP:	Election Commission of Pakistan
IPU:	Inter parliamentary Union
KPK:	Khyber Pakhtoon Khawa
MQM:	Muthida Qumi Movement
MNA:	Member National Assembly
MPA:	Member Provincial Assembly
NWFP:	North-West Frontier Province
PM:	Prime Minister
PTI:	Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaaf
PPP:	Pakistan Peoples Party
PML-N:	Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz
PLGA:	Punjab Local Govt. Act



CONTENT

Women Political Participation - Global Perspective	1.
Women Political Participation in Pakistan – Background	4.
Women in Local Governance	8.
Women Contestants on General Seats	10.
Election Act 2017 and Political Parties	10.
Women Participation in General Elections	11.
Women's Membership of Political Parties	13.
Women in Federal and Provincial Cabinets 2018	15.
Women Political Marginalization	18.
Factors Hindering Women Political Participation	19.
Conclusion	21.
Findings	22.
Recommendations	23.
Bibliography	24.



WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION – GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

There is growing global recognition of the untapped capacity and talents of women and women's leadership. Over the last two decades, the 'rate of women's representation in national parliaments globally has increased incrementally from 11.8 percent in 1998 to 17.8 percent in 2008 and to 23.5 percent in 2018¹. Some regions have seen particularly dramatic increases, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, where in the last 20 years the number of women in parliaments has risen from 11 to 23.6 percent, and the Arab States region, which has seen an increase from 3.1 to 17.5 percent².

However, total global representation is still well below the 30 percent benchmark often identified as the necessary level of representation to achieve a "critical mass". The available data on the presence of women in parliaments and in governments show a positive trend, but much still remains to be done to ensure an equal presence of both genders in decision-making.

Table 01

Women as heads of State and Government 2019				
No.	Nature of Position	Women	Total	Women %
1	Heads of State	10	152	6.6%
2	Heads of Government	10	193	2%5.
3	Speakers of Parliament	55	279	19.7%
4	Deputy speakers of Parliament	180	638	28.2%

Source: IPU. Data provided by national parliaments. www.ipu.org, www.unwomen.org

As of February 2019, only 3 countries have 50 per cent or more women in parliament in single or lower houses: Rwanda with 61.3 per cent, Cuba with 53.2 per cent and Bolivia with 53.1 per cent; but a greater number of countries have reached 30 per cent or more. As of February 2019, 50 single or lower houses were composed of 30 per cent or more women, including 22 countries in Europe, 12 in Sub-Saharan Africa, 12 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2 in the Pacific and 1 each in Asia and Arab States; more than half of these countries have applied some form of quotas - either legislative candidate quotas or reserved seats - opening space for women's political participation in national parliaments.

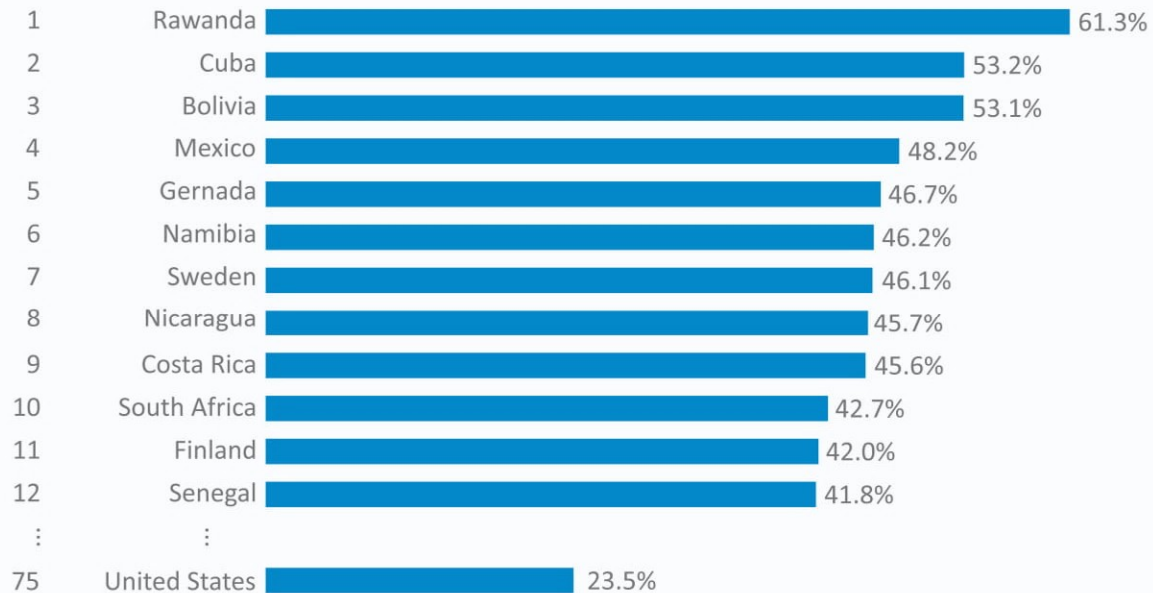
1. <https://womendeliver.org/2018/why-women-in-politics/>
2. *ibid*

- As of February 2019, only 24.3 % of all national parliamentarians were women, a slow increase from 11.3 % in 1995.³
- As of June 2019, 11 women were serving as Head of State and 12 as Head of Government.⁴
- Rwanda has the highest number of women parliamentarians worldwide, with 61.3 % of seats in the lower house.⁵
- Globally, there are 27 States in which women account for less than 10 per cent of parliamentarians in single or lower houses, as of February 2019.⁶

If we look at the top ten countries Rwanda is at the top of the list, with nearly two thirds of its parliamentary seats currently held by women (61.3%). Followed by Cuba (53.2%), Bolivia (53.1%), Mexico (48.2%), Grenada (46.7%), Nicaragua (45.7%), Costa Rica (45.6%), Namibia (46.2%), South Africa (42.7%) – and, perhaps unsurprisingly, Sweden (46.1%), the world's first self-proclaimed “feminist” government.⁷ Nepal has also advanced at 36 position with over 32%. While US stands at 75 position with 23.5% women representation.

Figure 01

Share of women in the lower house of parliament as of Dec. 1st, 2018*



* Based on the most recent election e.g. U.S. figure is based on 2018 Midterms.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union

3. Inter-Parliamentary Union. “Women in national parliaments,” as of 1 February 2019

4. UN Women calculation based on information provided by Permanent Missions to the United Nations. Some leaders hold positions of both head of government and head of state. Only elected Heads of State have been taken into account.

5. Inter-Parliamentary Union. “Women in national parliaments,” as at 1 February 2019.

6. *ibid*

7. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/02/chart-of-the-day-these-countries-have-the-most-women-in-parliament/>

Over the last two decades huge steps have been made towards greater female representation. In 1997 women only held more than 30% of seats in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands. Now there are 49 countries where that barrier has been broken. But since 2015 progress has stalled – and in some cases gone into reverse.⁸

The proportion of ministerial posts held by women remains stubbornly low, at one in five. France, Canada and Spain have all had cabinets with at least as many women as men. But they are exceptions rather than the rule. And even when women are promoted to cabinet, they are often given junior roles, and usually restricted to what UN Women calls the “soft issue” portfolios, such as social affairs and family.

If we look at the regional situation of South Asia, Maldives is on top with 28% women representation on ministerial positions, followed by India with 23.1%, Afghanistan 16.1%, Nepal 14.3%, Pakistan 12%, Bhutan 10%, Bangladesh 8% and Sri Lanka 6.7%.

Table 02

Women in Ministerial Positions in South Asia 2019					
No	Name of Country	Global Position	Gender Ratio		Percentage
			Women	Total ministers	
1	Maldives	51	7	25	28.0%
2	India	78	6	26	23.1%
3	Afghanistan	116	5	31	16.1%
4	Nepal	123	3	21	14.3%
5	Pakistan	136	3	25	12.0%
6	Bhutan	143	1	10	10.0%
7	Bangladesh	153	2	25	08.0%
8	Sri Lanka	160	2	30	06.7%

Source: IPU. Data obtained from national governments, permanent missions to the United Nations (www.ipu.org, www.unwomen.org)

More than half of the countries in the world have never had a female leader. But even having a woman at the top is no guarantee of greater representation. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka ruled by women leaders but the women representation in these countries remains very low. At South Asian level, Nepal is on top with 32.7% women representation in the Parliament, followed by Afghanistan 27.3%, Bangladesh 20.6%, Pakistan 20.2%, Bhutan 14.9%, India 12.6%, Sri Lanka 5.3% and Maldives 4.7%.⁹

8. *ibid*

9. inter-Parliamentary Union, UN Women, January 2019, <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=12&year=2019>

Table 03

Ratio of Women in Parliaments of South Asia 2019					
No.	Name of Country	Global Position	Gender Ratio in Parliaments		Percentage
			Women	Total Seats	
1	Nepal	36	90	275	32.7%
2	Afghanistan	60	68	249	27.3%
3	Bangladesh	97	72	350	20.6%
4	Pakistan	101	69	341	20.2%
5	Bhutan	136	07	47	14.9%
6	India	149	66	524	12.6%
7	Sri Lanka	183	12	225	5.3%
8	Maldives	184	04	85	4.7%

Source: IPU. Data provided by national parliaments. www.ipu.org, www.unwomen.org

WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN PAKISTAN - BACKGROUND

Glancing at the women political participation in Pakistan from historical perspective, one can find only two women sitting in the first Constituent Assembly that came into existence after the birth of Pakistan in 1947. While women got their right to vote in only 1951, after five years of the birth of Pakistan.

Fatima Jinnah (sister of Muhammad Ali Jinnah) or some other women actively participated in freedom movement during 1940s, but they could not attract rank and file women in the political mainstream. Thus, political activism on the part of these few women cannot be generalized with regard to Pakistani women participation in political process. The Muslim League political leadership at that time does encourage their ladies but made least efforts to encourage women in the political process.

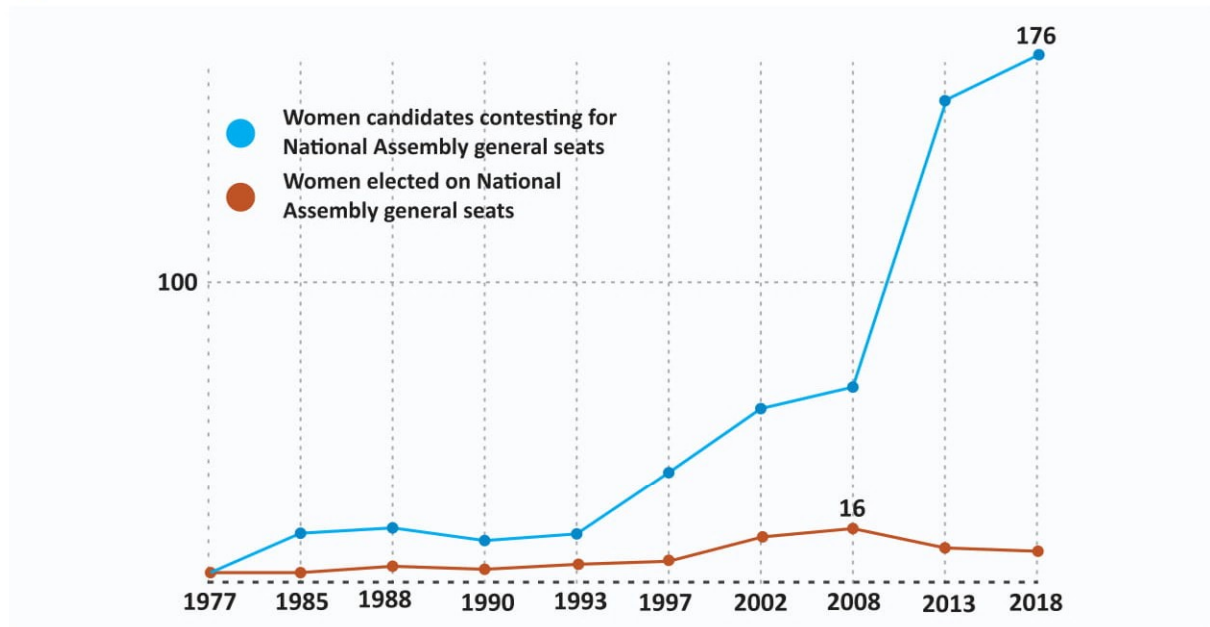
When the first Constituent Assembly was dissolved in 1954 and a new assembly elected through indirect elections in 1956, no woman was able to get elected. Consequently, there was no woman in the assembly who could have contributed to making the Constitution of 1956. However, the Constitution of 1956 accepted the principle of female suffrage and women's reserved seats. In the Constitution of 1962, Gen. Ayub Khan abolished female suffrage on the basis of women's territorial constituencies, and the women were to be elected by the assemblies through indirect elections. As a result, only six women were able to sit in the Assemblies.

The most important event, which changed the electoral landscape for women, was happened when Ms. Fatima Jinnah decided to contest the elections for the President's office in 1965. She was challenging the incumbent President Gen. Ayub Khan in the indirect elections. It is widely held that if the elections had been impartial, she would have won.

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT OF PAKISTAN

The number of women candidates contesting National Assembly general elections increased gradually from 1977 to 2008 but saw a massive rise in 2019. The number of women election to National Assembly general seats was highest in 2008.

Figure 02



SOURCE: HEINRICH BOLL STIFTUNG ELECTION COMMISSION OF PAKISTAN

The second major political breakthrough done by any woman in Pakistan was the charismatic entry of Bhutto ladies in political arena in late 1970s. After the hanging of ZA Bhutto by Gen. Zia-ul-Haq' in 1979, Nusrat Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto challenged Zia regime and earned massive following of working classes including women.

In 1970, nine women contested national elections but did not win any seats. Seven years later in 1977, only one woman, Nasim Wali Khan contested the elections in the NWFP and won. In 1985 one woman won from the 15 who took part in the 'party-less elections' held under military dictator Gen Zia ul Haq. In 1988, only four women won a seat in general elections, including former Prime Minister late Benazir Bhutto and her mother Nusrat Bhutto. Again in 1990 general elections only two women out of 13 candidates got victory.

In 1993 only four women, again including the two Bhuttos, won the elections, out of a total of 16 who contested. In the 1997 elections only 6 women out of 34 candidates were victorious. In view of women's invisibility in national politics, the provision of women's reserved seats in the Parliament existed throughout the constitutional history of Pakistan from 1956 to 1973.

Table 04

Gender-wise Representation in National Assembly of Pakistan ¹⁰ (1947-2018)				
Parliamentary year	Total Seats	Men	Women	Women percentage
1947-1954	79	77	2	2.5%
1962-1965	156	148	8	5%
1965-1969	156	150	6	4%
1972-1977	144	138	6	4.2%
1977-1977	216	205	11	5%
1985-1988	217	195	22	10%
1988-1990	217	212	24	11 %
1990-1993	217	215	2	0.9 %
1993-1996	217	213	4	1.8%
1997-1999	217	201	6	2.8%
2002-2007	342	274	69	20 %
2008-2013	342	282	75	21.92 %
2013-2018	342	272	70	20.50%
2018-till date	350	282	68	19.42%

The table above depicts the entire history of women political participation in national parliament of Pakistan. Two females were members of first constituent assembly of Pakistan. In next four constituent assemblies, the numbers of women parliamentarians were 8, 6, 6 and 10 respectively. The next two assemblies saw 22 women in 1985 elections and 24 women in 1988 elections came in National Assembly of Pakistan as women parliamentarians.

Contrary to this, a significant fall occurred in the number of women parliamentarians in the National Assembly in 1990 and 1997 as only 2 and 6 women entered parliament respectively. Interestingly, in 2002 elections due to constitutional changes and later, the presence of women parliamentarians in the National Assembly was significantly uplifted. It jumped from 6 members in 1997 to 73 members in 2002.¹¹

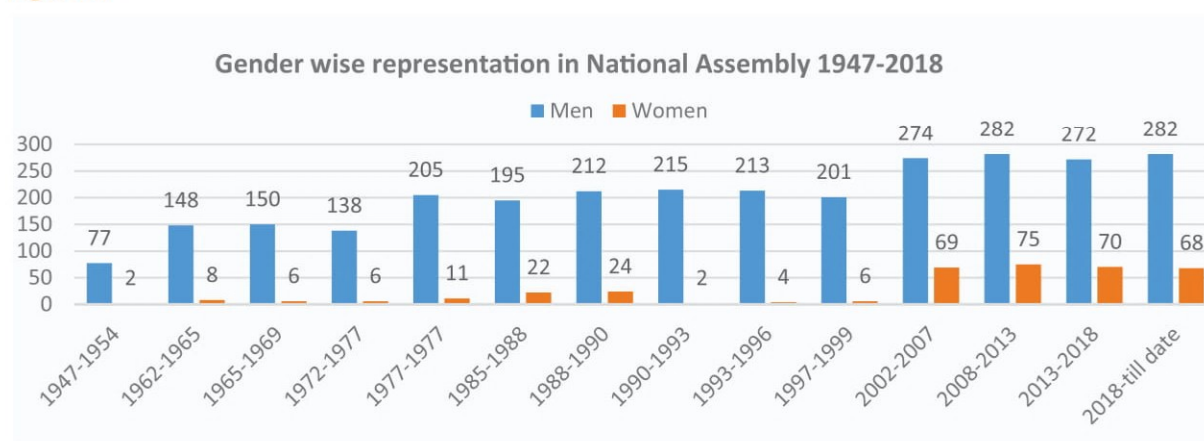
Gen. Parvez Musharraf regime took a landmark decision and ensured women's representation in political structures of the country through the reservation of 17% in the national and provincial legislatures. The reservation of seats for women brought in 2001 and 2005. There were 226 in the national and provincial assemblies and the Senate after 2008 elections. This resulted into increased awareness among them of their own gender identities as women. They were able to see the interconnection between public and private patriarchy.

Later the rise of PTI also encouraged particularly urban women and youth to join political discourse. Their gender consciousness, which evolved not necessarily within any feminist

10. Sources: national assembly of Pakistan:
<https://www.pildat.org/publications/Publication/women/WomenRepresentationInPakistanParliament.pdf>
 (women representation in Pakistan Parliament)
http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/history/PDF-FILES/18_56_2_19.pdf
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_Pakistan
 11. http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/history/PDF-FILES/18_56_2_19.pdf

framework, has brought them at least together as women. They realized that a lot of the problems/constraints they faced in order to perform their political role more effectively is primarily due to their gender identity as women.

Figure 03



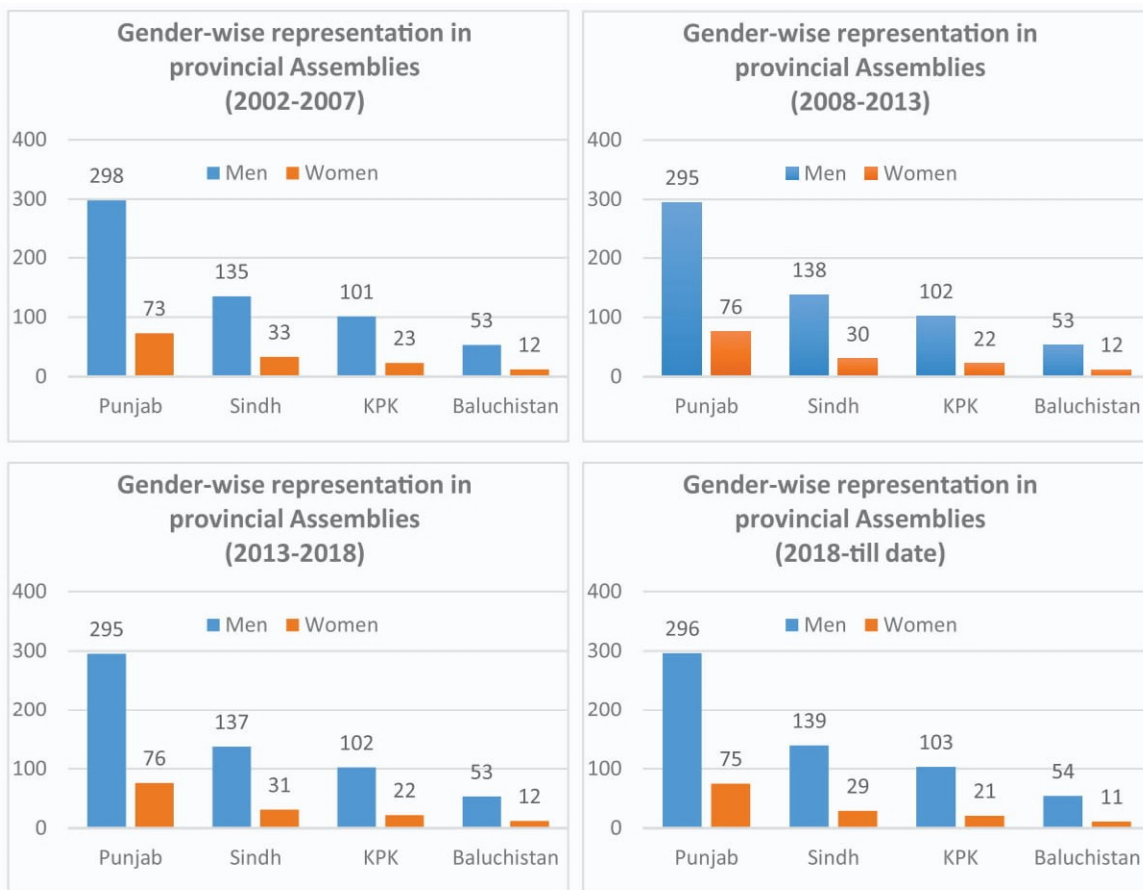
Pakistan saw record-breaking representation of female legislators in the last general elections 2018 which witnessed the highest number of female candidates running for parliament. However, only 8 out of 183 (about 4 percent) female contestants won seats in Pakistan's National Assembly.

Table 05

Gender-wise representation in provincial assemblies ¹² (2002-2018)					
Parliamentary year	Province	Total Seats	Men	Women	Women percentage
2002-2007	Punjab	371	298	73	19.7%
	Sindh	168	135	33	19.6%
	KPK	124	101	23	18.5%
	Baluchistan	65	53	12	18.5%
2008-2013	Punjab	371	295	76	20.5%
	Sindh	168	138	30	17.8%
	KPK	124	102	22	17.7%
	Baluchistan	65	53	12	18.5%
2013-2018	Punjab	371	295	76	20.5%
	Sindh	168	137	31	18.5%
	KPK	124	102	22	17.7%
	Baluchistan	65	53	12	18.5%
2018- till date	Punjab	371	296	75	20%
	Sindh	168	139	29	17%
	KPK	124	103	21	17%
	Baluchistan	65	54	11	17%

12. Source: NCSW: Gender review of political framework for women political participation. <http://www.ncsw.gov.pk/publicationslist>

Figure 04



WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

During the period of Gen Ayub (1958-69), women were mostly denied their political role at different level of representation. They were allowed controlled participation and kept away from vital process of decision making and exercise of authority. (Yousaf. 1998).

The 1973 constitution ensured local government system as provincial matter and later, the provincial governments made their own laws for the local government system. Under this system, special representation was given to women that were 5% only for Zila (District) and urban councils through reserved seats (Islam. 2012). But none of the province held local government elections during this period. In 1977 the Z.A Bhutto was ousted by Gen. Zia ul Haq martial law (Naz. 2005).

The major step to guarantee female representation in local government was taken in 1979, when the provincial governments were bound to keep seats for female in local councils. The ratio of reservation was to be decided individually by each province. At the union council level two seats and in district councils 10% seats (or minimum of 2 seats), town committee,

municipal committee and Municipal Corporation were kept for female. Three consecutive local government elections were held in the country in 1979, 1983 and 1987 respectively under these laws. (Jabeen and Jadoon 2005).

Table 06

History of women participation in local governments				
No	Period	Govt.	Women representation	Women Ratio
1	1958	Gen. Ayub Khan	No specific representation	
2	1971-77	ZA. Bhutto	No LG election held	
3	1977-88	Gen.Zia	2 seats at UC level	
4	1988-90	Benazir Bhutto	No LG election held	
5	1990-93	Nawaz Sharif	1991 local bodies elections were conducted in Punjab and in 1992 in Baluchistan	12.7% in Punjab, 25.8% in Baluchistan, 23% in Sindh and 2.09% in KP ¹³ .
6	1993-96	Benazir Bhutto	No LG election held	
7	1997-99	Nawaz Sharif	No LG Elections held	
8	1999-2008	Gen. Musharraf	LG polls held in 2001, 2005. 33% seats reserved for women	UC level: 28.5% Tehsil Council:21.35% Town Committee: 20.8% Zila Council: 22.6% Over all 27.7% ¹⁴
9	2008-2013	Yousaf Raza Gillani	No LG Elections held	
10	2013-2018	Nawaz Sharif	Elections held in Baluchistan in 2013, in Sindh and in Punjab 2015	Punjab: 20% Sindh: 22% KPK: 30% Baluchistan: 33% ¹⁵

In 2001 during Gen Musharraf period 33 % quota for women was introduced in local councils, which brought 36,105 women councilors in the local government system. Out of 36,066 seats reserved for women in 6,022 union councils, 32,222 were filled through direct election while 3,898 were at the tehsil and district level through indirect mode of election.

However, in 2005 a gender negative policy reversal was witnessed when the size of the union council was reduced and as a result of that the number of total seats for women in union councils was cut down from 36,000 to 24,000, at the lowest tier of the local government system¹⁶ (Pattan,1 2006).

13. In 1990 Nawaz Sharif became Prime Minister of Pakistan for the first time. In 1991 local bodies elections were conducted in Punjab and in 1992 in Baluchistan. In his first government the percentage of female reserved seats was kept similar as proposed by the 1979 ordinances. In 1993 Local Bodies were dissolved in Punjab. According to the statistical data 8,295 female members (10.4%) out of the total 79,155 were there nationally before the dissolution of the assembly. The province wise proportion was 11% in Punjab, 12% in Sindh, 1.32% in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 16% in Balochistan. In 1997 women representation in National Assembly fell to just 4% after the lapse of reserved seats, 2.4% in senate and 4% in the four provincial assemblies (Reys. idea).

<https://www.awkum.edu.pk/tdc/archives/Volume-03-Number-01-January-June-2017/105-115.pdf>

14. Source: Naeem Mirza Women's participation local government election 2000-2001. On contrary women were able to fill nearly 90% of the reserved seats in these union councils 96% in tehsil council, 1995 in Town council and 95.8% in district council.

15. Critical Analysis of Punjab Local govt. Act 1013, WISE, Jan 2017.

16. <http://www.ncsw.gov.pk/previewpublication> (Study on Local Bodies System and its Impact on Women, Nov 2010).

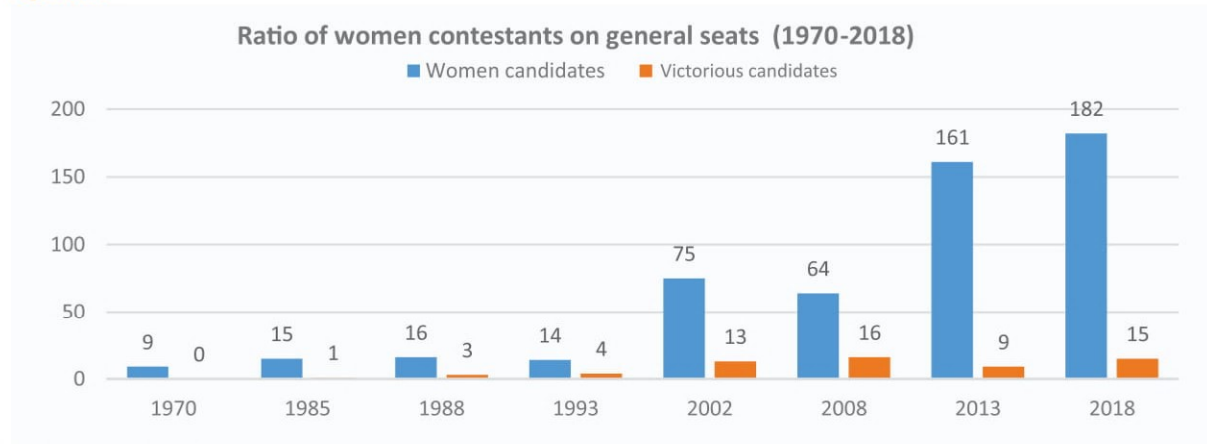
WOMEN CONTESTANTS ON GENERAL SEATS

In the 1997 elections, both the major parties of the country, the Pakistan Peoples Party and the Pakistan Muslim League, fielded few women for the elections. The PPP awarded tickets to only 9 women out of a total of 161 candidates, and the PML put up 6 female candidates out of a total number of 177 candidates. In the National Assembly elected in 1993, there were only 4 women in a house of 217 members, and in the Senate, only 2 out of 83 members.

Table 07

Ratio of women contestants on general seats (1970-2018)				
No.	General elections	Women candidates	Return candidates	Success ratio
1	1970	9	0	0%
2	1985	15	1	6.6%
3	1988	16	3	18%
4	1993	14	4	28.5%
5	2002	75	13	17%
6	2008	64	16	25%
7	2013	161	09	5.5%
8	2018	182	15	8.2%

Figure 05



ELECTION ACT 2017 AND POLITICAL PARTIES

The Election Act (2017) was a step forward to address the political marginalization of women. It criminalizes any effort to hinder female participation in elections, either as a voter or a candidate. The act also requires political parties to have a minimum of 5% of female candidates contesting in general elections for both national and provincial assemblies.

In the 2018 elections, all mainstream national parties kept close to the minimum percentage over 45 % of political parties did not field a single female candidate. Thus, while many

parties did not follow the Law, those that followed it chose female candidates just to meet the legal requirement. Most female candidates were strategically given tickets for constituencies in which the party had no chance of winning.

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN GENERAL ELECTIONS

General Election 2008: In general elections 2008, a total 192 women contested for 176 National and provincial assembly seats. Of these, 72 women vied for 63 National Assembly constituencies and 113 candidates contested in 120 constituencies in all four provincial assemblies. The highest number of women candidates i.e. 49 contested for 46 constituencies of the National Assembly in Punjab; 15 in Sindh for 12 seats, in KPK and Baluchistan 3 women each on 2 seats.

General Election 2013: In general elections 2013, only six women were originally elected. However, the number of women in the National Assembly on general seats increased to nine after several rounds of by-polls.¹⁷

General elections 2018: In general elections 2018, over 15 women win on General Seats in national and provincial assemblies. Of which 8 women politicians won a place in the National Assembly through direct elections and another 7 women won entry to provincial assemblies on general seats, according to Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) data. The number of directly-elected women MNAs in 2018 is two more than the previous general election.

According to the ECP in General Elections 2018, some 172 women were fielded by different parties for the National Assembly. Of these, 73 women were fielded from the Punjab, 48 from Sindh, 35 from KP and 16 from Baluchistan.¹⁸ In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan, not a single woman won the direct election. However, in Punjab, five women candidates were successful on general seats.

GENERAL ELECTIONS 2018 AND WOMEN

If we look at the more competitive National Assembly tickets in 2018 general elections alone shows that the three big parties needed to award at least 12 tickets to women. The PPPP fielded 19 women while the PML-N and PTI gave 13 and 14 tickets to women respectively. Except the PPPP, the other parties stayed close to the minimum.

17. <http://pakrtidata.org/2018/08/07/pakistan-elections-2018-women-general-seats-win/>

18. <https://newslinemagazine.com/magazine/women-for-all-seasons/>

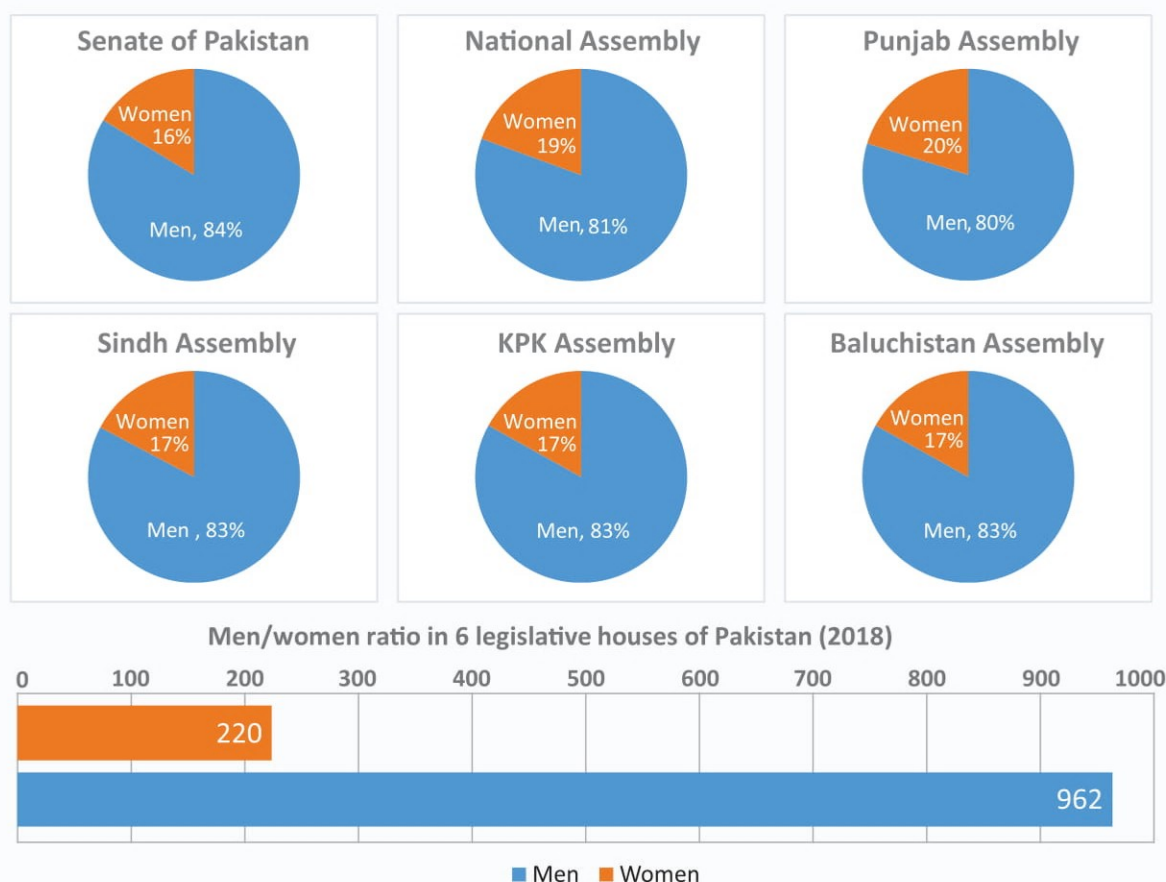
The primary purpose behind the imposition of 5% requirement was to bolster the number of women elected on general seats. It may only be achieved if parties prioritize to give women tickets in their strongholds. Critical analysis of profiles of these victorious women indicates that they have won with the blessing of influential feudal-cum-elitist background.

Table 08

Ratio of women representation in Senate, NA and 4 provincial assemblies (2018)				
Name of House	Total seats	Men	Women	Women %
Senate of Pakistan	104	87	17	16%
National Assembly	350	282	68	19%
Punjab Assembly	371	296	75	20%
Sindh Assembly	168	139	29	17%
KPK Assembly	124	103	21	17%
Baluchistan Assembly	65	54	11	17%
Total	1182	962	220	18.60%

Total number of seats in Punjab assembly are 371, including 297 general seats, 66 reserved for women while, 5 women won elections. Total number of seats in Sindh Assembly are 168, including 29 seats reserved for women. Total number of seats in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly are 124, including 22 seats reserved for women. Total number of seats in Baluchistan Assembly are 65, including 11 seats reserved for women.

Figure 06



WOMEN'S MEMBERSHIP OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties are increasingly referred to as gatekeepers of democracy. On account of their unique and fundamental role they play in the democratic process, parties represent the views and perspectives of citizens – both men and women – and channel these into appropriate public policy fora. Political parties also serve as the pipeline through which women and men emerge as elected representatives or political decision makers.

It is difficult to assess women's membership of mainstream political parties. Since all the major political parties do not maintain a proper record of their membership, the data on women as members of political parties are sketchy and incomplete. Women are the rank-and-file members and lack decision-making power within their parties. In the absence of regular elections within most of the parties, leaders usually nominate party activists on party positions.

In general, women wings are mainly utilized by the parties to mobilize womenfolk during elections. These wings work as polling agents in women's booths, and demonstrate on behalf of the party when directed by the party's high command.

Presently, all major political parties have specified women's wings. Women's wings of the political parties usually toe the party line, promote party agendas, and do not have any visible influence on the decision-making processes and political programs of their parties. Women representation in the core or central executive committee is negligible.

● Women in core committees of mainstream Political parties

PTI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has a core committee (cc) and a central executive committee (CEC) both highly male dominated. There is only one woman each among the 21-member Core Committee¹⁹ and 17-member central executive committee of PTI.²⁰

PPP: The Central Executive Committee (CEC) of PPP otherwise known as Core Committee (CC), is an apex and De jure supreme governing authority of PPP. The number of its members vary and the central executive committee does not have any limitations as it goes to the membership of the party.²¹ Currently there are 5 women in 41-member core committee.²²

PML-N: There are 2 women in the 27-member central executive committee²³ (CEC) and one woman among 16 senior vice presidents of the party.²⁴ Similarly, there are 3 women in the 27-member Central Working Committee (CWC).

PML-Q: Pakistan Muslim League (Qaid-e-Azam) has only one woman in 19-member core committee.

19. <https://nation.com.pk/04-Jul-2019/pti-constitutes-21-member-core-committee>

20. <https://www.insaf.pk/public/insafpk/notification/members-central-executive-committee-pti>

21. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Executive_Committee_of_the_Pakistan_Peoples_Party

22. <https://www.urdupoint.com/politics/party/pakistan-peoples-party-parliamentarians-2.html>

23. <https://92newshd.tv/pml-n-announces-27-member-central-working-committee/>

24. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1480008>

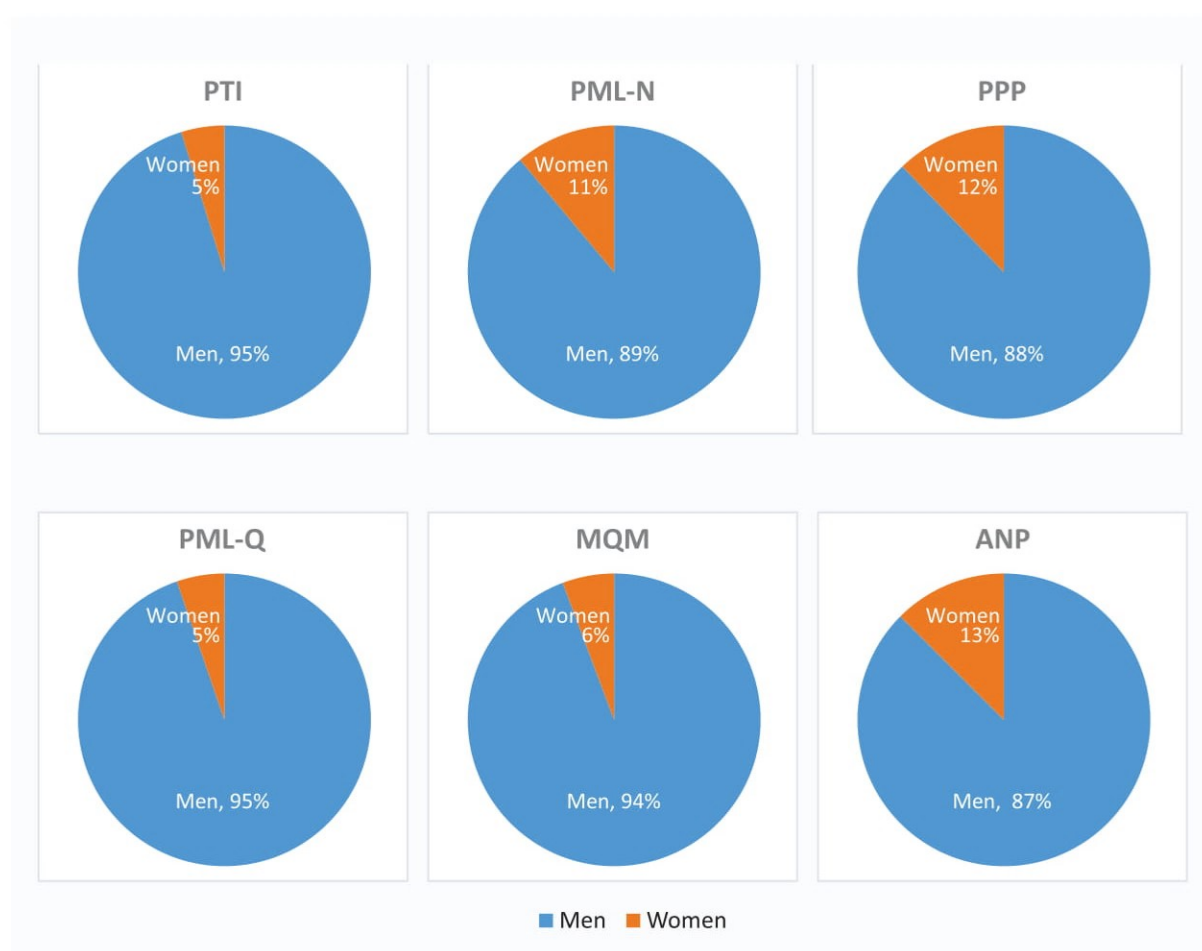
MQM: Muthuda Qaumi Movement has two women in 35-member central coordination committee.²⁵

Awami National Party (ANP): There are two women among 14-member core committee²⁶ of the Awami National Party.

Table 09

Ratio of women in core committees of mainstream political parties 2018					
No	Name of Political Party	Total members	Men	Women	Women Ratio
1	Pakistan Tehreek -e-Insaaf (PTI)	21	20	1	5%
2	Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)	41	36	5	12%
3	Pakistan Muslim League- (PML-N)	27	24	3	11%
4	Pakistan Muslim League- (PML-Q)	19	18	1	5%
5	Muthuda Qaumi Movement (MQM)	35	33	2	5%
6	Awami National Party (ANP)	14	12	2	14%

Figure 07



25. <https://www.mqmpakistan.org/central-coordination-committee/>

26. <https://www.urdupoint.com/politics/party/awami-national-party-4.html>

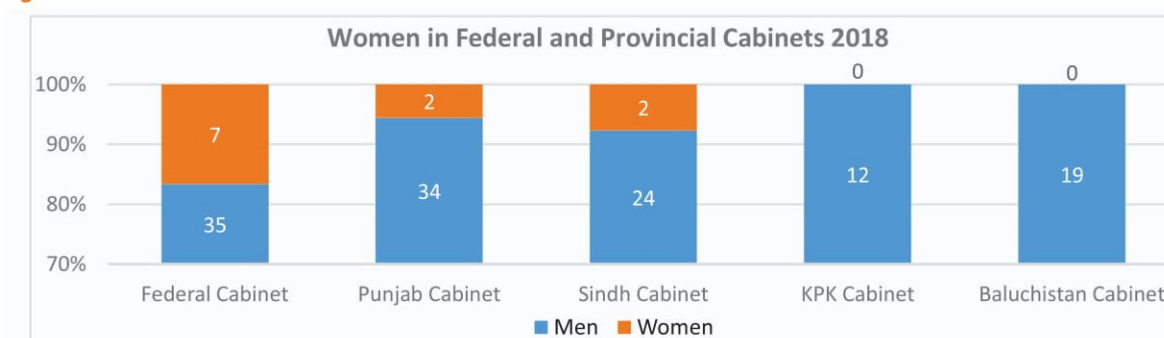
WOMEN IN FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL CABINETS 2018

The federal cabinet comprise 25 federal ministers, 5 ministers of State and 5 advisors, out of which 7 are women, making women ratio as 17%. In Sindh Cabinet there are 22 men and 2 women, followed by Punjab with 23 men and just 1-woman member. However, the provincial cabinets of KPK and Baluchistan have no woman members.

Table 10

No	Name of Cabinet	Total	Women	Ratio of women
1	Federal Cabinet	35	7	17%
2	Punjab Cabinet	34	2	6%
3	Sindh Cabinet	24	2	8%
4	KPK Cabinet	12	0	0%
5	Baluchistan	19	0	0%

Figure 08



● Women as Parliamentary Secretaries

Out of 35 federal Parliamentary secretaries, 13 are women, making the ratio as 37% representation. As far as women as provincial parliamentary secretaries are concerned, **in Punjab** there is no woman among 35 parliamentary secretaries appointed by the chief minister. **In Sindh** there are no parliamentary secretaries appointed by the chief minister.²⁷ However, among 12 special²⁸ assistants and coordinators there is only one woman.²⁹ **In KPK**, there are 7 women among 17 parliamentary secretaries³⁰ and **In Baluchistan** the list of parliamentary secretaries is not uploaded on website.

Table 11

Women as Parliamentary secretaries 2018				
No	Assembly	Total members	women	Ratio of women
1	National Assembly	35	13	37%
2	Punjab Assembly	38	0	0%
3	Sindh Assembly	12*	0	0%
4	KPK Assembly	16	7	43%
5	Baluchistan Assembly	0	0	0%

27. <https://www.pakistanatoday.com.pk/2019/01/29/punjab-cm-appoints-37-parliamentary-secretaries/>

28. <http://pabalochistan.gov.pk/new/chief-minister-appointed-parliamentary-secretaries/>

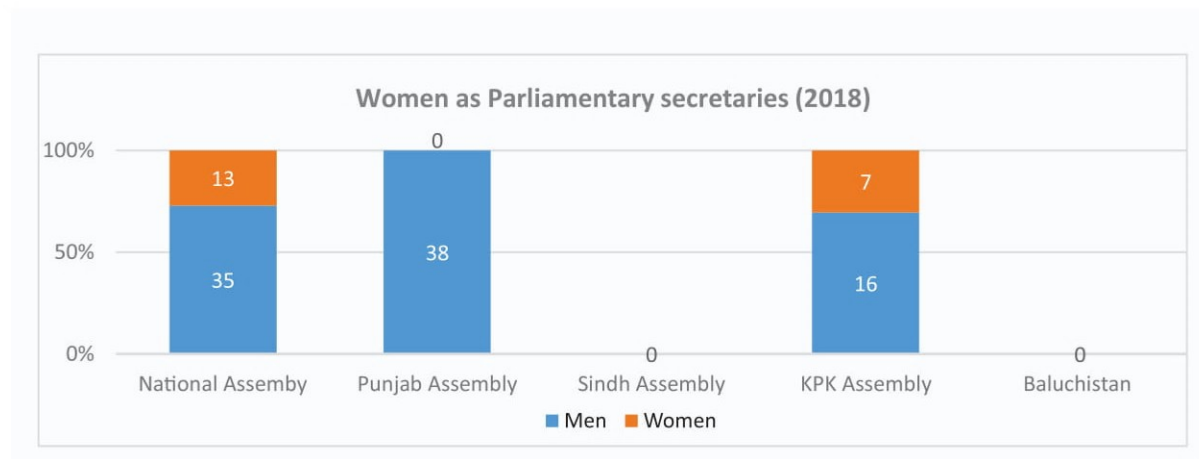
29. <https://www.sindh.gov.pk/dpt/services/cabinet.htm>

30. http://administration.kp.gov.pk/page/parliamentary_secretary_special_assistants

In Sindh there are no parliamentary secretaries but special assistants to CM Sindh.

KPK Assembly is on top 41% representation of women as parliamentary secretaries, followed by National Assembly with 37% representation. However, in Punjab Assembly there is no woman in the long list 35 parliamentary secretaries same is the case in Sindh where no parliamentary secretaries, but 12 special assistants to CM out of which there is only one woman.

Figure 09



This situation shows the women parliamentarians are less represented in the ministries, standing committees and parliamentary committees.

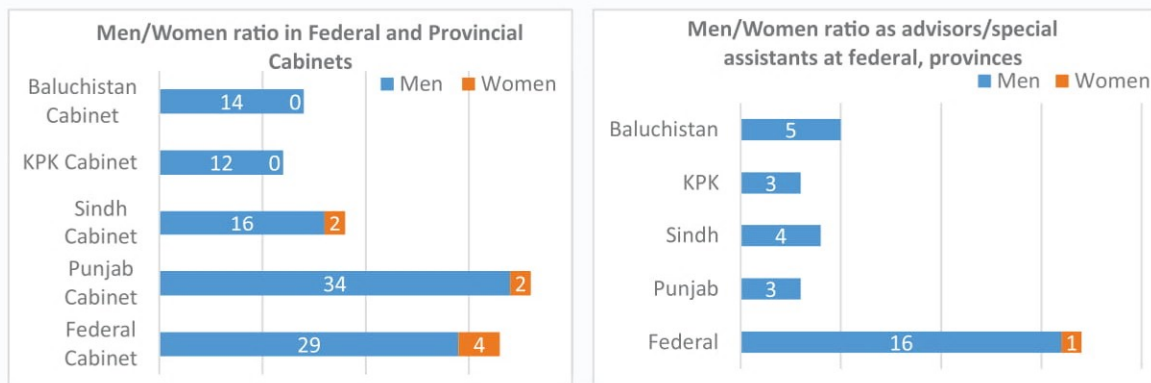
Table 12

Women as ministers, advisors, parliamentary secretaries & assistants (2018)												
Government	Ministers		Advisors		Parliamentary Secretaries		Special Assistants		Total		Over all %	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Federal	29	4	5	0	22	13	11	1	67	18	79%	21%
Punjab	34	2	3	0	38	0	5	0	80	2	98%	2%
Sindh	16	2	4	0	0	0	12	0	32	2	94%	6%
KPK	12	0	3	0	9	7	6	0	30	7	81%	19%
Baluchistan	14	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	100%	00%
Total	105	8	20	0	69	20	34	1	228	29	91%	11%

● **Overall Women Ratio as Ministers**

Women representation in federal cabinet is around 12%, followed by 11% in Sindh cabinet, around 6% in Punjab. While share of women in the provincial cabinet is 0%. However, over all women representation ratio in federal and provincial cabinets is around 5%, which means 6 ministers out of 105 ministers in entire Pakistan.

Figure 10



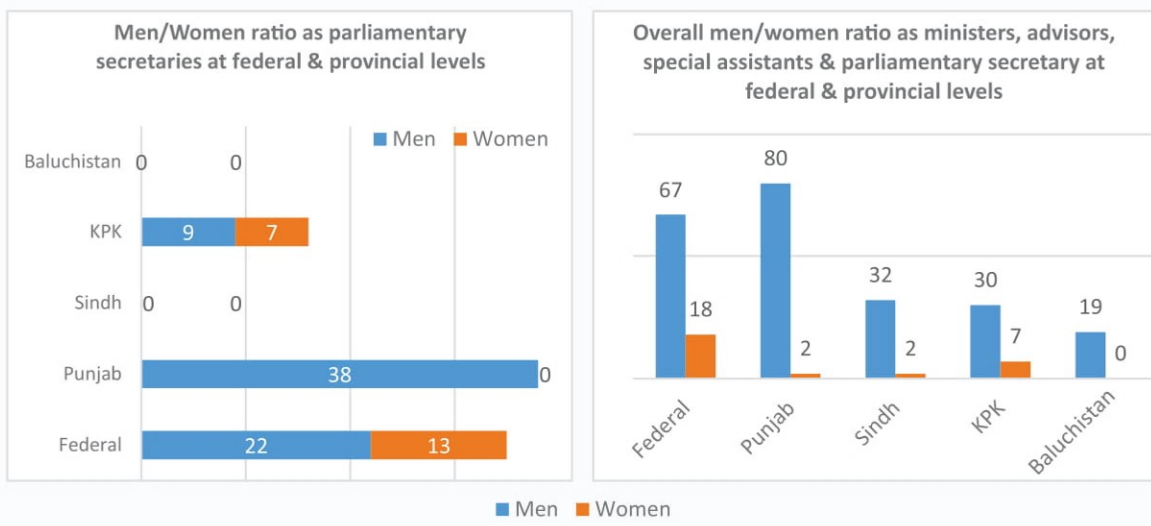
● **Women as Advisors/Special Assistants**

Out of total 20 advisors at federal and provincial levels there is no woman. While there is only one woman as special assistant to PM at federal level. But no woman among 34 special assistants to the CMs in four provinces.

● **Women as Parliamentary Secretaries**

At federal level, there are 13 women among 35 parliamentary secretaries, making women ratio as 37%, followed by KPK with 7 women among 16 members, making women ratio also 37%. However, sadly there is no woman among 38 parliamentary secretaries in Punjab. While in Sindh and Baluchistan, no Parliamentary secretaries has been appointed. Thus, over all among 89 Parliamentary secretaries, there are 20 women at federal and provincial levels, making the representation ratio as 22%.

Figure 11



The overall ratio of women representation in decision making positions at federal level is 21%, followed by 19 % in KPK, 6% in Sindh, 2% in Punjab and 0% in Baluchistan. The entire women ratio as ministers, advisors, special assistants and parliamentary secretaries, both at federal and provincial levels stands at around 11%.

But despite all of this one thing was very significant about women political participation that they gained a legitimate space in the local political institutions and got the opportunity to raise their position, although they were still a minority. The presence of women in these positions of representation was a step forward in changing the culture of political participation.

WOMEN'S POLITICAL MARGINALIZATION

Despite the fact women political leaders; like Ms. Fatima Jinnah and Benazir Bhutto, played a significant role in the politics of Pakistan, giving an impression of women strong political participation in Pakistan, the ground reality speaks contrary to this impression. The level of political participation of women always remains limited in Pakistan. In successive assemblies there have been women representatives, but the few that have managed to get there were from a very narrow privileged section of the society. Most of them have inherited their constituency from their family.

That is why since 1947, the representation of women in the legislative assemblies has never reached a double figure until year 2002, when Gen. Musharraf introduced 17 % quota for women in Assemblies and 33 % representation in Local government. The question then arises as to why women continue to be marginalized in the political process. The answer lies in the traditional cultural norms loaded with religious-cum-feudal notions of the male-dominated society, reflected in the very low literacy rate for women and the lack of political will of the successive governments to increase women's participation in the political process.

● **Disenfranchisement**

In Pakistan women have always been under-registered in voter lists, and the percentage of registered women voters continues to be much lower than that of men. The gap was 20% when adult franchise was adopted in the 1950s; it dropped to 12% just before the elections of 1970, and to 8% by the time of the 1988 elections. Between 1993 and 1997, the percentage of difference between men and women registered voters was increased to 10%. In 2013 elections about 43.62% of voters were female, which was reduced to 39.78% in the 2018 elections.³¹

● **Dynastic culture in political parties**

The dynastic culture in political parties support female politicians with a strong family background. Almost all of the elected women on general seats always belong to powerful political families. Largely speaking, the win of such female politicians is more for their families than their political parties. As such, these women may be more inclined toward maintaining the status quo, which is the concentration of power in dynastic political parties, rather than challenging the system to reduce the gender gap.

31. <https://southasianvoices.org/female-representation-in-the-parliament-what-pakistan-can-learn-from-india/>
Female representation in Parliament; what Pakistan can learn from India (July 12, 2019 by Fizza Batool).

- **Reserve seats**

A Constitutional provision was passed in 1973, provided for 10% reserve seats for women in the National Assembly and 5% in the Provincial Assemblies. However, this provision was expired in the 1990 and was not revised until year 2002. In 1985, the National Assembly elected through non-party elections doubled women's reserved quota (20 %) and declared that the time of 10 years or until the third general election to the National Assembly. The 1988 elections were held with provisions for women's seats remaining the same as in 1985.

FACTORS HINDERING WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The process for nominating candidates in the political parties is generally carried out by party leaders, mostly men. Male political leaders nominate other men and on some occasions women, but only because of their connection with influential politicians or political families. The political parties rarely try to adapt their structures and operations to women's needs and/or obligations. Moreover, very few women are part of the decision-making spheres in the political parties, which feeds male domination in the party structures.

Politics in Pakistan is generally considered a “dirty” world and there is a climate of political violence during electoral campaigns. Women who want to participate in politics have to suffer more discrimination than men. Criticism focuses more on these women's political actions than that of their male colleagues.

Like all societies, social and political relations are shaping the structural and functional constraints being faced by Pakistani women. The common patterns of women's political exclusion stem from (a) social and political discourses (b) political structures and institutions (c) the socio-cultural and functional constraints that put limits on women's individual and collective agency.

- **Ideological Factors**

Patriarchy as a system of male domination is a major factor, which shapes women's relationship in politics. It has transformed male and females into men and women and constructs the hierarchy of gender relations where men are privileged. This is one of the vital factors that shape the level of women's political participation in Pakistan. Women have to negotiate their entry into and claim on public space according to the discursive and material opportunities available in society. Although the gender role ideology is not static rather remained in a flux while intersecting with economic, social and political systems, women continue to be defined as private, which resulted in their exclusion from politics.

- **Political Factors**

Male domination of politics, political parties and culture of formal political structures is main factor that hinders women's political participation. Often male dominated political parties have a male perspective on issues of national importance that disillusions women as their perspective is often ignored and not reflected in the politics of their parties. Also women are usually not elected at the position of power within party structures because of gender biases of male leadership.

- **Socio-Cultural Factors**

The socio-cultural dependence of women is one of the key detrimental factors to their political participation in public political domain. Common women also find it hard to participate in politics due to limited time available to them because of their dual roles in society. The mechanisms of sex segregation and purdah in Pakistani society are used to restrict women mobility.

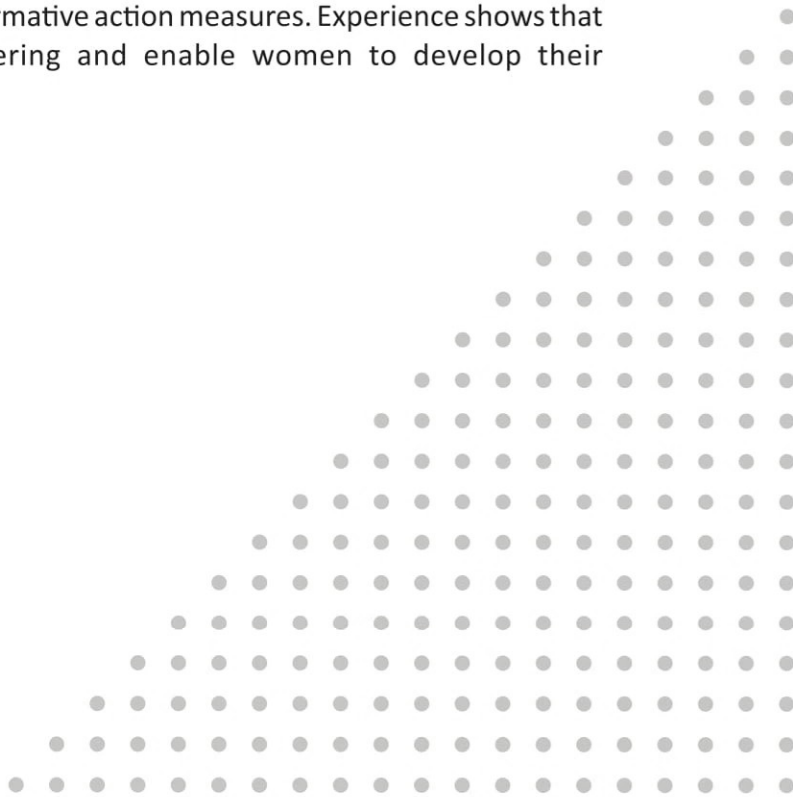
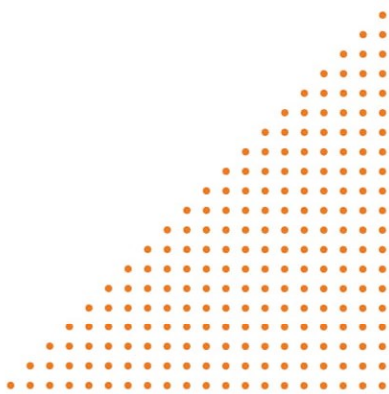
- **Economic Factors**

Politics is increasingly becoming commercialized. More and more money is needed to participate in politics. Most of Pakistani women lack access to and ownership of productive resources, limiting the scope of their political work. Women also lack social capital, resulting in the absence of constituency base for them and means of political participation such as political skills, economic resources, education, training and access to information.

- **Quota System**

Gender quotas are instituted within the context of gender disparities, which are structural and systemic. Without addressing the structural constraints to women's political exclusion, their inclusion through gender quota cannot lead to an effective representation. While quotas are important in addressing the exclusion of women from the public political sphere but it can only form one part of a multi-faceted strategy for empowering women, which must together with increased political participation also involve a redistribution of socio-economic resources within societies. Women who lack civil and economic rights are unable to exercise their political rights fully. The gender quotas, therefore, need to be linked with the social and economic justice in the society.

Simply bringing more women in the system cannot redress the gender gap in politics. It is also a policy and outcome issue, which cannot be addressed unless supportive mechanisms are put in place and provided with an enabling environment to work effectively. This makes the nature and process of quotas systems central to an affirmative action measures. Experience shows that quota modalities must be direct, empowering and enable women to develop their constituency.



CONCLUSION

In a true democracy, gender equality in political office does matter. Advancing democratic governance requires creating an environment for inclusive and responsive political processes – an environment that engages and empowers women on an equal footing with men.

In Pakistan, however, it is still more difficult for women to get equal rights and opportunities. The Constitution of Pakistan places no restriction on women's participation in politics; nevertheless, their presence in the political parties as well as in the political structures at local, provincial, and national levels remains insignificant due to cultural and structural barriers.

This minimal representation of women at all levels reflects the inadequacy of the commitment of political parties and the ineffectiveness of any attempts to mainstream women in politics. In order to improve women representation in the Assemblies and policy-making bodies, it is necessary to have greater and sustained affirmative action. The indirect method of elections of women for the reserve seats does not suffice the greater need of gender equality.

First and foremost, women themselves need to actively choose the political path; men cannot and should not make this choice for women. It is imperative that women belonging to different political parties should forge a common forum where women legislators could come together to combat the problems, share their experiences, learn from each other, find ways to become more effective in their newly assigned political roles, resist patriarchal backlash and assert themselves to have their right to access political power.

Besides, a strong women movement is pre-request for enabling environment that can influence the direction of politics and development in favor of women. Triple roles of women in productive, reproductive and community management spheres must keep in mind during the efforts for creating supportive environment for women's political participation.

Shaping positive public attitudes about increased women political representation is another important requirement. For which raising awareness among political stakeholders – including political party leaders and women politicians is a must – for benefits of greater gender equality in politics.

In nutshell, being a democracy, but female empowerment, however, is not simply about increasing the number of women in parliament.

FINDINGS

- At international level, Rwanda has the highest number of women parliamentarians worldwide with 61.3 % of seats.
- In South Asia, Nepal is on top with 32.7% women representation in the Parliament, followed by Afghanistan 27.3%, Bangladesh 20.6%, Pakistan 20.2%, Bhutan 14.9%, India 12.6%, Sri Lanka 5.3 % and Maldives 4.7%.
- With regard to women in ministerial positions, in South Asia, Maldives is on top with 28% women ministers, followed by India with 23.1%, Afghanistan 16.1%, Nepal 14.3%, Pakistan 12%, Bhutan 10%, Bangladesh 8% and Sri Lanka 6.7%.
- The ratio of women representation in National Assembly of Pakistan is decreasing in the last decade. For instance, during PPP tenure (2008-13), women were having 75 seats out of total 342 seats with a ratio of 21.9%, which decreased to 70 seats out of total 342 (20.5%) during PML-N tenure (2013-18). And this ratio has gone further down to 68 seats out of total 482 seats during PTI's on-going tenure (2018-till date).
- In provincial assemblies, except Punjab Assembly, where women representation is somewhat stable since 2002, rest of the three provinces witnessed decline in women seats. For example, in Sindh Assembly there were 33 women during 2002-2007 tenure, decreased to 30 in 2008-2013, 31 women in 2013-18 and then further reduced 29 in the current house (2018-ongoing).
- In glance the KPK assembly (2018 - ongoing), the situation is no different. In 2002-2007, there were 23 women seats, decreased to 22 in between 2008-2018 and further decreased to 21 in current assembly.
- In Baluchistan Assembly, there were 12 women seats during the last three tenures (2002-18), reducing to 11 seats in the present tenure (2018-till date).
- The average ratio of women representation at present in all the legislative houses including Senate is around 18.60%.
- Looking at the cabinet compositions, Federal cabinet was on top with 17% women representation (7/35), followed by Sindh Cabinet 8% (2/24), Punjab 6% (2/34). However, there was no woman among cabinets of KPK and Baluchistan.
- With regard to women as parliamentary secretaries, in KPK assembly there were 7 women (43%) among 16 secretaries, followed by National Assembly with 13 women (37%) among 35 secretaries. While in Sindh, Punjab and Baluchistan there were no woman as parliamentary secretary.
- Taking stock of the ministers, advisors, parliamentary secretaries and special assistants in federal as well as provincial govts. It makes total 257, out of which 29 are women, making the overall representation ratio as 11%.
- With regard to women representation in the core committees of the mainstream political parties, Awami National Party (ANP) was on top with 14% representation, followed by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), with 12%, Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) 11%, PTI, MQM and PML-Q all three with 5%.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Women's political participation and the wider goal of gender equality are closely interlinked, and therefore recommendations listed here as strategies to facilitate women's participation are integrated in a general way within the broader goal of gender equality:
- At least 33% Women representation in Parliament, Provincial Assemblies and Local Govt. institutions should be ensured.
- Political Parties should promote political participation activities for young and adolescent women and men. They should recruit women members and remove all barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against the participation of women.
- Political parties should mainstream women within their party from being member at different levels to office-bearers to end the situation of window dressing and promote women on decision-making positions to empower them.
- Government and political parties should launch a campaign to facilitate women to get National Identity Cards to narrow the gender gap among male-female voters.
- Election Commission of Pakistan should ensure strict implementation of Election Act 2017 to particularly ensure award of minimum 5% party tickets to women candidates.
- Election Commission of Pakistan should ensure more female-only polling stations and booths to facilitate women voters.
- Election Commission of Pakistan should utilize technical expertise to have all electoral process, rules and regulations gender-sensitive.
- Specific programs should be initiated aiming at promotion of political participation activities for women belonging to disadvantaged groups or groups meriting special attention.
- Political parties should introduce transparent internal rules on the allocation of political party funds and ensure gender-equal access to financial resources and campaign funds for the women candidates.
- Political parties should place women in constituencies which do not require enormous financial resources, ideally in safe seats or in high positions on party lists and provide financial assistance to female candidates.
- Encourage and support women within parties to advance their political careers through capacity-building and awareness activities on gender-sensitive policies and procedures.
- Political parties should institutionalize gender equality within party structures, processes, practices and develop rules guaranteeing representation of women in party decision-making bodies.
- Political parties should undertake a comprehensive gender audit not only at the national level, but also at regional or local party branch levels as well.
- Political parties must formulate policies to prevent discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex, introduce and inform party codes of conduct.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. National Commission on the Status of Women (2010): Gender Review of Political Framework for Women Political Participation. Review Report, Islamabad, <http://www.ncsw.gov.pk/previewpublication/13>, accessed on 22.10.2016.
2. Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency – PILDAT (2004): Women Representation in Pakistan's Parliament. Lahore, <http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/Women/WomenRepresentationInPakistanParliament.pdf>, accessed on 22.10.2016.
3. "The Awami National Party and Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf have awarded party tickets to two and five female candidates out of totals of 45 and 241, respectively, for general National Assembly seats." (Yusuf, Huma (2013): The evolving role of women in Pakistani politics. No ref Expert Analysis, The Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, 1f., https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/164192/c832356e4ede2cff568363e27bb152_b0.pdf, accessed on 22.10.2016.)
4. Election Commission of Pakistan (www.ecp.gov.pk)
5. Reviving Democracy: Emerging Role of Women in decision-making: SAP-PK
6. Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency:(www.pildat.org)
7. Women political Participation: Farazana Bari (EGM/WPD-EF/2005)
8. Women in Politics: Dr. Duskhya H. Syed
9. Women of Pakistan: Two steps forward, one step backward: Khawar Mumtaz & Farida Shaheen
10. Report of Commission of Inquiry for Women of Pakistan
11. Participation of Women in Local Bodies elections: Quarterly Newsletter Legislative Watch of Aurat Foundation)
12. Local Government in Pakistan: History & Analysis (Zahid Islam, South Asia Partnership, Pakistan)
13. Women win record seats but not activists' hearts: Muddassir Rizvi
14. Country briefing paper: Women in Pakistan
15. Quanta leap to women empowerment: Sher Bano
16. Sources: national assembly of Pakistan:
17. <https://southasianvoices.org/female-representation-in-the-parliament-what-pakistan-can-learn-from-india/>
18. <https://www.pildat.org/publications/Publication/women/WomenRepresentationInPakistanParliament.pdf> (women representation in Pakistan Parliament)
19. http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/history/PDF-FILES/18_56_2_19.pdf
20. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_Pakistan
21. http://www.na.gov.pk/en/mna_list_w2.php?list=women
22. <https://www.pap.gov.pk/members/listing/en/21?limit=40&bygender=Female>
23. <http://www.pas.gov.pk/index.php/home/en>
24. <https://www.pakp.gov.pk/about-assembly/an-overview/>
25. <http://pabalochistan.gov.pk/new/membership-statistics-2/>

An abstract graphic on the left side of the page, composed of numerous thin, overlapping white lines that form a complex, wavy, and layered structure, resembling a stylized figure or a series of overlapping planes.

Women in Struggle for Empowerment
Basement, Sufi Manion, 7-Egerton Road, Lahore, Pakistan
Ph: +92 42 36305645, info@wise.pk, www.wise.pk