

## **Encouraging Trends of Women's Politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: A Comparative Assessment of 2002 and 2008 General Elections in Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

*Modern democratic age is based on the philosophy of "ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE". Women constitute more than 50% of the world population. Pakistan's Constitution of 1973 has guaranteed women's political rights, equally with men. The general elections of 2002 and 2008 witnessed greater women political participations compared to the elections of 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The 9/11 incident and un-natural death of Benazir Bhutto left society plagued with extremism, fundamentalism and terrorism. In many instances, the war on terror crossed 'Durand-Line' and affected Pakistan, especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA, where every second family faced causality. Vested interests and international media focused on the region and sketched it from darkness to table of discussion. The reports of FAFEN, IDEA, PILDAT, European Union Observation Mission and Election Commission of Pakistan also acknowledged the truth that political participation of women has accelerated in Pakistan tremendously by means of casting votes, launching elections campaigns and contesting elections on general seats.*

**Key Words:** Democracy, Women's Political Participation, Women as Voters, Elections Campaigners, and Elections Contestants on General Seats.

### **Introduction**

“Democracy is not only a political system of a country but it is a sense and system of serving humanity. Similarly, politics is not only a terminology used for the activities in state's participation but it is the name of serving humanity at a large. Humanity comprises upon males and females. It is the services of both for both. Then, why people are differentiating gender's role in politics?” (Saeed, 2014).

Primarily, democracy assures every individual certain political rights i.e. right to vote, launch elections campaign, and to contest elections; without any discrimination on the basis of class, creed, color, and sex. Women constitute more than 50 percent of the world's population but they are under-representation; either

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as voters, elections' campaigners, or elected officials. Democracy believes in the ideology of "ONE MAN ONE VOTE", then how world do democratic states can erect their political systems and deliver services to citizens truly where half of their citizens' are either ignored or under-represented. (National Democratic Institute, 2014).The political systems of advanced countries have revealed the truth that the women's participation in politics fruitful results. Pakistan, a third world democratic state, displays a poor picture in women's participation in state affairs. However, it has made a significant development in women's political participation and representation in state affairs since 2000. (UNDP, 2005).

It is generally perceived that "Politics" is connected to the "Public-Sphere" and by nature women belong to "Private-Sphere" and by this very analogy "Politics" is considered extra-terrestrial to women's nature. The societies of developing countries have also revealed the fact that politics is the domain of men and house-hold is the particular domain of women. (Begum, 2002).The political philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and J. J. Rousseau etc. have used different connotations and concluded that political activities are male prerogative and woman, being a weaker gender, is not fit to participate in the state affairs on equal footings with men. (Farzana, 2009). But the modern state-system introduced "Democracy", as political system, based on the philosophy of "One man – One vote" which not only challenged the above assumptions but also introduced many new norms and values in state affairs. Society can only develop properly where its citizens are treated equally and where there is no discrimination on sex, color, and creed. On democratic values, women constitute half of the world population and hold an equal importance with men. A conspicuous feature of a democratic framework is the principle of human rights, including the political rights of both gender (men and women). The level of development of nations is now expected to be measured by the role of women's participation in the state affairs. Any developmental project, political, social, or economic etc. that does not reflect the perspectives, opinions, views, and experiences of all those who will be affected, is not reliable one. (IDEA, 2005).This paper investigates the accelerated proportion of women's political participation in the state affairs by means of women: as registered voters and their turn-out in general elections, campaigners and contestants. In order to answer the question both primary and secondary sources of data are utilized.

## **Women Status and Pakistan's Political History**

Pakistan has a permanent and independent "National Commission on the Status of Women" in order to address women issues and report to the government in detail. Throughout the world, only 50 countries have established such commission. (Official Hand Book, 2003). Since its creation, Pakistan has a rich history of women's political participation in the state affairs. The Sub-Continent has remained a British colony up to August, 1947. British Government granted the

right of suffrage to its women in the beginning of twentieth century but the Sub-Continent, being a British colony, women were given reserved seats. (Kamal, 2012). Under the Indian Independence Act of 1947, Pakistani women were bestowed upon the right of suffrage. It is also worth mentioning here that during independence movement the Muslim women of Punjab had not only voted for the All India Muslim League but also orchestrated large scale political gatherings for national cause. Muslim women had always shown their strength and spirit when where and where ever they were given opportunities. (John, 2007).

In the 1956 Constitution of Pakistan, women were given the right to vote in national elections which re-affirmed their legal and political status in state's affairs. Similarly, they were also given 10 reserved seats out of the total 156 seats in national legislature. This might be a minimal ratio but also an impressive representation in the state's legislature (John, 2007). The Pakistan's constitutional history of 1956, 1962, and 1973, has been remained a witness on the representation of women through reserved seats in national and provincial legislature, accordingly. (Women Empowerment, 2014). Pakistan's political history reveals that the decade of 1980s is a well-known decade regarding women empowerment. Women's movement in Pakistan made a dramatic impact on its political scene and also shaped the women future prospects in the country. Under the De'Facto military regime, political parties were incapable to take any initiative in order to restore democracy in Pakistan. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Pakistani women's political participation remained shocking one due to the socio-economic factors. (Marian, 2002). However, the shocking trend of women's politics has been changing with the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Pakistan was experiencing the fourth martial-law when the dawn of 21<sup>st</sup> century knocked its doors. General Pervaiz Musharraf implemented Legal Framework Order 2002 (LFO implemented on August 21, 2002) which fixed the women reserved seats in Local Government Elections and state legislatures with a percentage of 33% and 17%, respectively. (National Commission, 2010). Under the LFO of 2002, women were given ever-first representation in the Senate (Upper House of Federal legislature) in the political history of Pakistan. These initiatives not only encouraged Pakistani women in state legislatures but also accelerated women politics in every constituency and Union Council of the state. The UNDP Report (2005) observed that in the Pakistan's political arena women's political participation is increasing at every level i.e. local, provincial and national level (UNDP, 2005).

## **Distinctive Aspects of 2002 General Elections**

Muhammad Waseem in his book "Democratization in Pakistan" explores the truth that elections in Pakistan are always interesting, and the general elections for national and provincial assemblies in 2002 are more interesting and multi-dimensional. In the first place, the 2002 elections were not only conducted to elect a government but also to 'civilianize' the military government of General Pervaiz

Musharraf as did by the 1985 elections which ‘civilianized’ Zia’s regime. From 2002-05, Pakistan was getting third-time experience in the transformation from a military to civilian rule. Secondly, those who were contesting the elections were not sure about the nature of the powers and privileges lying ahead of them in case of victory. Another unique dimension of the 2002 general elections of Pakistan was the US led war against terrorism after 9/11, in which Pakistan was made a non-NATO major ally. (North Atlantic Treaty, 1949). There could be seen positive responses and negative reactions to the election process from the world at large. These elections had also attracted the interests and activities of many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) at home and the donor community’s interest from abroad. Various training programs were launched for the purpose to spread political awareness among citizens, especially among women and members of various under-privileged communities (Mohammad, 2006).

### **Pre-General Election Scenario of 2002 VS 2008**

Before the general elections of 2002, General Musharraf promulgated Legal Framework Order (LFO), which introduced some positive provisions. It incorporated joint-electorate system, seats reservation in National Assembly (NA) and Provincial Assemblies (PAs) for Non-Muslims, universal adult franchise policy –as 18 years for vote qualification, increased the seats of legislative bodies, revised and also increased women reserved seats in NA, PAs, and Senate as 17 percent (for the ever-first time in the Senate). In spite of these developments, a new qualitative political-change was observed a highest-ever number of women had not only contested the general elections of 2002 but also won. Due to this election, women representation in legislatures had reached to 21.64%, almost (UNDP, 2005). This dimension of women participation in politics dispelled the myth that women are not ready or unwilling to come to mainstream politics or are not yet able to engage themselves in electoral politics at the either constituency, Provincial or National level.(UNDP, 2005).

On 10<sup>th</sup> October 2002, elections were held for NA and four PAs of Pakistan under the umbrella of LFO. For National and Provincial Assemblies, elections were held on the same day on 65,000 polling stations, from 08am to 05pm. Similarly, general elections of 2008 were planned on January 08, 2008. But due to a number of factors elections were postponed to February 18, 2008 (Fact & Figure, 2016). The general elections of 2002 were unique in many respects: as watchful scrutiny of military regime, multi-party democracy, formation of Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA)(General Elections, 2002) and National Alliance (Alliance of Four Parties) and most prominently Pakistan again returned to democracy. More than 70 political parties, big and small, contested the elections with full pledge campaigns and supported their candidates. In the Pakistan’s political history, six religious political parties emerged themselves into a grand alliance in the shape of

MMA. In the general elections of 2002 Islamic parties organized themselves into MMA and rose to a heavy weightage because domestic and external factors helped MMA's fortune and minimized the influence of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). But the general elections of 2008 returned the previous fortune of political parties (especially PPP) to its normal standings. (Pildat, 2013).

Before the general elections of 2008, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif came back to Pakistan after a decade of exile. But on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2007, the assassination of Benazir Bhutto at Liaqat National Bagh Rawalpindi changed the entire elections environment in the country (Benazir Bhutto, 2008). Similarly, Zill-e-Huma (a social activist) was assassinated publically which made the general elections atmosphere sad especially for women in Pakistan. Since October 18, 2007, the day Benazir Bhutto landed in Pakistan, to the polling day, 25 suicide attacks occurred across the country resulted in hundreds of casualties including the Benazir Bhutto's tragic death and Zill-e-Huma assassination. (Tahir, 2013). Nawaz Sharif landed to Pakistan on November 25, 2007 (Tahir, 2013). The death of Benazir Bhutto affected the elections environment and, therefore, Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) conducted a meeting in which it was decided that elections would be held on February 18, 2008 instead of January 08, 2008 (Fact & Figure, 2016). However, two political parties of Pakistan boycotted the general elections of 2008 on the ground that under the supervision of military leadership it would not be appropriate to contest the elections. The Tehreek-e-Insaf and Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Parties of Imran Khan and Mehmood Khan Achakzai's, respectively, boycotted the elections on the plea that these would be conducted under the supervision of military junta (Tahir, 2013).

### **Comparison of Women's Political Participation**

Comparative analysis of women politics in the general elections of 2002 and 2008, in terms of women as voters, as election campaigners and contestants, will be analyzed in the following pages. The facts and figures of the 1997 general elections are also highlighted. It is not part and parcel of this research article but included due to comparative assessment with the 2002 and 2008 general elections.

#### **Women as Registered Voters and their Turn-Out**

In the modern democratic era, women constitute more than 50% of the state's population. But it is also a fact that there is a significant disparity between the number of men and women as registered voters in Pakistan. In the general elections of 2002, the total number of registered voters was 71.9 million. Among these registered voters, 38.8 million (53.9 percent) stands as male voters and 33.2 million (46.1 percent) stands as female voters. Election Commission, 2002). So, the gender disparity as voters ratio stands 5.6 million (7.6 percent) or fewer women were registered as voters. As far as the general elections of 2008 are concerned, the total

number of registered voters was 120.7 million. Out of which 73.1 million were male voters and 47.6 million were female voters. Election Commission, 2008) Again, the gender disparity ratio stands 25.5 million, as fewer women were registered as voters.

PILDA this highlighted in its report that in Pakistan, in general, and in FATA, in particular, a major reduction occurred in the number of women as registered voters. Report declared that the number of female voters reduced to approximately 45 percent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) (Ex-NWFP), as compared to 3.92 million women voters in 2002, as there were only 2.17 million female voters in 2007. Due to military operation in FATA, following the 9/11 attacks, the internal displacement of people (IDPs) showed a decline of women voters as 96% (National Commission, 2010). Various factors like, security, law and order, political stagnation, and disappointment from political system also caused decline of female voters at 19% in Islamabad, 37% in Punjab, and 41% in Sindh. As far as male and female voters' comparison is concerned, it witnessed a reduction of 18% of male and 39% of female for 2008 general elections. If we compare the ratio of female voters in 2002 with 2008 general elections, it stands with a ratio of 40% and 30% respectively (FAFEEN, 2013).

In general elections, men and women vote separately but ECP announces elections results on combine vote counting as there was no separate counting mechanism for male and female voters and ECP has never recorded Gender-Segregated Data (on separate-form) on the votes polled. Although, ECP has issued the Gender-Segregated Form-XIV for separately counting but neither instructions nor arrangements are provided to electoral staff (Presiding Officer, 2015). In spite of the constant demands by women's rights groups in 2002 general elections, state authorities did nothing for the gender-segregated data regarding male and female votes polled. Therefore, it is not easy to determine the ratio and degree of women's participation, as actual constituents and voters, which is significant for any long-term planning in order to organize and encourage women as voters and campaigners' and renovate their vote bank into an effective woman constituency (General Election, 2002). The ECP has released the combine turnout percentage for the general elections of 2002 and 2008 as 41.68 and 45% respectively, for both the NA and PAs. But in some polling stations, especially in Islamabad, ECP and PILDAT calculated the data separately and then determined the percentage in the 2008 general election, approximately as shown in table No: 01 (General Election, 2002).

**Table No. 01 Comparison of Voters Registration and Turn-Out in General Elections through Final Electoral Rolls**

General Elections	1997	2002	2008
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Total Registered Voters	56.6 Million	71.9 Million	120.7 Million
Male Voters	28.06 Million (55.4%)	38.8 Million	73.1 Million
Female Voters	22.59 Million (44.6%)	32.2 Million	46.6 Million
Gender Disparity Gap	06 Million (11%)	5.6 Million (7.6%)	25.5 Million
<b>General Elections Turn-Out</b>			
Total Turn-out in %	35.43%	40.69%	45%
Female Turn-Out in %	N.C.*	N.C.	12.5%

**Note:** 1997 General Elections is part of the Research Article but it is included due to statistical comparison with 2002 and 2008 General Elections.

\*N.C. stands for "Not-Calculated" separately.

If we compare the female registration process with the general elections of 1997, so it is self-explanatory fact (shown in the above table) that more women are registered. The gender disparity ratio stands 25.5 million, as fewer women were registered as voters in 2007.

### **Women as Election Campaigners**

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

Rabia Mufti Advocate (NA-1, Peshawar-I), Kishwer Sultana (NA-16, Hangu), Maryam Bibi (NA-29, Swat-I), Mrs. Emaan Waseem (NA-59, Attock-III), Mrs. Sumaira Malik (NA-69, Khushab-I), Ms. Saima Akhtar Bharwana (NA-90, Jhang-V), Dr. Fehmida Mirza (NA-225, Badin-II), and Mrs. Zubaida Jalal (NA-272, Kech-cum-Gwadar), and many others, not only contested elections for the National Assembly (in 2002 and 2008) but also enthusiastically launched their elections campaigning's in their constituencies. They were also warmly well-comed by the voters and shared reciprocal views and willingness on issues. Similarly for the Provincial Assembly, Al-haja Ghazala Habib (PF-57, Mansehra-

V), Sobia Nosheen (PK-13, Nowshera-2), Asma Shaheen (PK-35, Swabi-5), Dr. Faiza Bibi Rashid (PK-50, Haripur-2) etc. not only contested elections (in 2002 and 2008) but also launched elections campaigns in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Ex-NWFP). Female elections campaigning's' shoulder dual responsibilities: at first, female contesting candidates played their role in democratic set-up positively; and secondly, female strata of the society were awaked for their political realization. (Pildat, 2013).

For the preparation of 2002 general elections, a number of political workers were busy in the elections campaigning in order to form '*political organizations*' in every Union Council. Farhat Khan (along with PPP workers) worked hard day and night in various Union Councils of Mardan, Nowshera, Kaka-Sahib, and at Pabbi. Her team was assisted by Aasma Jehangir of Peshawar, Mehr-Un-Nisa Afridi of Peshawar, Farakh Aslam of Prango-Charsadda, and Gulzara Bibi of Mardan who accompanied her in the election campaigning across the province. (Saeed, 2016). Once they were in the premises of Fazl-e-Haq College Mardan when she felt that majority of women around them were busy in membership's registration process of their party. All of them belong to middle and middle-lower class of the society. She realized the truth that upper-class women are privileged class, otherwise, for democracy the services of middle and lower-middle class are inevitable (Saeed, 2016). From Mardan no woman contested election on general seat in 2002, however, two women for the PA of KP, both from Mansehra, and 03 women for NA, from Peshawar, Karak, and Hangu contested elections but only Al-Haja Ghazala Habib. (KP Assembly, 2002) won the seat (Election Commission, 2002).

Similarly, Farhat Khan added that it was 2000-01 that we organized a political rally against the General Musharraf's dictatorial rule in Pakistan-Chowk, Mardan. I also invited the political women of Nawab and Khans Families (Feudal Classes of the Pakhtun society) of Mardan. On the very day of rally, I realized that the women of middle and lower-middle class enthusiastically participated and the rest were missing. Middle and lower-middle classes have always given their sacrifices and services and upper class only claimed their facilities and privileges. Until and unless, we (as women one nation) would have not discarded the class-discrimination we would have not achieved the gender equality (Saeed, 2016).

## **Women as Contesting Candidates**

In the General Elections of 2002, there were 61 women who contested elections from 52 different constituencies for the National Assembly of Pakistan. Out of these 61 women's candidates, 35 women contested elections from Punjab, 21 women from Sindh, 03 women from NWFP, and 01 woman contested elections



from Baluchistan. While party tickets are concerned, 38 women contested elections on party tickets and 23 contested elections independently. In the elections results, 13 women came out victorious, as successful candidates, 10 women stood as runner-up or on second position in constituencies and 02 on third position. (Election Commission, 2016). As far as the general elections of 2008 are concerned, 75 women contested elections on 62 different constituencies out of 272 seats for the National Assembly. (General Election, 2008). Only 36 women contested election on party tickets and the remaining 39 contested elections independently. In the elections results, 16 women came out victorious, 09 women stood as runner-up or stood on second position in constituencies and 07 on third position (General Election, 2008).

As far as the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Ex-NWFP) in the General elections of 2002 is concerned only 02 women contested elections on general seats from 02 different constituencies on party tickets. One woman came out victorious in the provincial elections result (General Election, 2002). Similarly in the General Elections of 2008, for the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Ex-NWFP) there were 12 women who contested elections on general seats from 10 different constituencies. Only 04 women contested elections on party tickets and 08 women contested elections independently. However, no woman came out victorious in the provincial elections result and only one woman stood 3<sup>rd</sup> in her constituency (General Election, 2008). In the general elections of 1997, 34 women contested elections on 37 different constituencies (General Election, 1997).

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

### **Table No. 02 Comparison of Female Contesting Candidates on General Seats**

General Elections	1997		2002		2008	
	NA*	PA-KP**	NA	PA-KP	NA	PA-KP
No. of Women Candidates	56	01	61	02	75	12
Issued Tickets	-	-	38	02	36	04
Independently	-	-	23	00	39	08
Winner	-	-	13	01	14	00
2 <sup>nd</sup> Position	-	-	10	00	09	00
3 <sup>rd</sup> Position	-	-	02	00	07	01
Women's Parliament %	2.8%	--	21.64 %	18.54%	--	--

Note: 1997 General Elections is part of the Research Article but it is included due to statistical comparison with 2002 and 2008 General Elections.

\*NA stands for National Assembly; and \*\*PA-KP stands for Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Ex-NWFP)

## Conclusion

In order to draw conclusion from the above discussion, it will be an appropriate that we should pre-suppose the nature of Pakistani politics which is patriarchal in character. Secondly, the traditional society of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is more patriarchal in nature as well as in character. In spite of all these facts, women politics in Pakistan, in general, and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in particular, has initiated with encouraging trends with the dawn of 21<sup>st</sup> Century. These encouraging trends manifest themselves as voters, elections campaigners and election contestants. Therefore, today's Pakistani women are more vocal, more active and more enthusiastic for their participation in state affairs as compared to 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

General elections of 2002 and 2008 were held in an environment of uncertainty and insecurity, externally as well as internally. War on terror and influence of Taliban's had bitterly affected the lives of Pakistanis, in general, and KP Province and FATA, in particular. Taliban's had already threatened the politicians and especially women for their political campaigns. In spite of all these unfavorable developments, women's political participation was seemed more encouraging and more active as compare to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century general elections. A comparative assessment of the general elections of 2002 and 2008 reveals that with the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, women are more vocal, more enthusiastic, and more active in political domains. The reports of International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Fair and Free Election Network (FAFEN), Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT),

European Union Observation Mission and Election Commission of Pakistan also acknowledged the truth that women's political participation has been increased in 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the 12<sup>th</sup> Parliament (2002-2007), there were 213 women in the directly elected state's legislatures i.e. 73 women in NA (13 women were elected directly and 60 were on reserved seats) and 140 women were in four PAs (12 were elected directly and 128 were on reserved seats). Similarly, the 13<sup>th</sup> Parliament (2008-2013) of Pakistan, which came into being as a result of 2008 general elections, there were 215 women in the directly elected state's legislature i.e. 76 women in National Assembly (16 women were elected and 60 were on reserved seats) and 139 women were in four Provincial Assemblies (11 were elected directly and 128 were on reserved seats).

Since 9/11, Pakistan, especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA regions, became the center of world's interest politically, socially, culturally, strategically, and statistically. The world's media also focused on this region and draw it from darkness to the table for discussions. Moreover, when the war on terror crossed the '*Durand Line*' Pashtun's dominated regions (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA) remained the most affected areas of Pakistan. Almost, every second family suffered casualties at the hands of the warring parties. With an equal strength to male population, Pashtun women were more affected by the emerged scenario as women are more sensitive to such issues; because of their sensitized social nature. These Pashtun women woke-up as mothers, sisters, daughters, and wives, when they were pushed against the walls bounced back with greater participation in the state affairs.

However, women generally in Pakistan and particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, performed their duties in male dominant culture for centuries. A number of factors were mainly responsible in the subjugate status of women in this region in which the political domains cannot be exempted. In traditional societies, the desire for gender equality and women's political empowerment are not easy tasks and achievements. It underscores that the need of hour is to keep the tools and debates on women's political participation alive. Otherwise, the achieved progress, spend over centuries, will be useless. In such a scenario, women representatives as well as political activists have to shoulder dual responsibilities. At first, they have to keep the mission of women's political participation alive. And secondly, if no progress is achieved further, they have to keep the statuesque and do not allow back pedals on promises and efforts already achieved.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been one of the most politically active region of Pakistan, whose electorates have been giving opportunity of governance to different shades of political parties. A closer look to its electoral history reveals that in different elections of 2002 and 2008, women's political participation has increased which is a quantum jump towards the goal of women's political empowerment. Full-swing women's political participation, on equal footings with men, is a long term objective of the democratic states' which cannot achieve at

once. However, initiative has taken place and for the full-swing participation the optimistic vision is not hopeless. According to Jamila Gillani (Ex-Member of National Assembly 2008-2013, on Awami National Party's reserved seat), during an interview with the author, says:

*“Gender politics in Pakistan reflects exactly the Machiavellian's ‘Power-Politics concept’ in domestic life. Every man wanted to control his woman in his house-walls. Pakistani democracy was 100 years behind than other democratic states of the world and women's political participation is further 100 years behind than Pakistani men. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, women are more vocal, more aware, and more active in their political spheres. We do not claim gender equality in politics yet, but improvements have taken place which are self—explanatory since 2000”*

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