



Women's Political Empowerment: A Historical Overview in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The present study is a historical overview of the process of women's political Empowerment in Pakistan. It is true that in Pakistan women are completely allowed political rights but practically they have to face number of socio-cultural and political hurdles that have presented challenges to participate in the political system.

Design/Methodology/Approach: According to the nature of study the article is based upon secondary information following evolutionary perspective with regard to socio-political growth, changes and development. For the source of data collection library method has been used.

Findings: The study concludes that the trends towards the political participation and political empowerment of women all through pre and post-independence of Pakistan and especially over the last ten general elections; it was very difficult for women to enjoy their equal political rights as compared to men in the mainstream politics. Initially only few seats were reserved for them but after introducing quota system their ratio of membership in parliament is enhanced which is still not satisfactory. Although after 1999 the majority of women come into politics however their role in the perspective of change for the political empowerment of women was very limited.

Implications/Originality/Value: So it is concluded that roots of different movements about the empowerment of women have same source but its time of occurrence is different because some areas these types of movements had happened centuries ago whereas in others it is recently happen. So it is proved from the above discussion concerning about women's political empowerment that in intimation about women's rights had been emerged earlier before the creation of Pakistan; while after independence different forces are creating hurdles but with the passage of time it will overcome by positive thinking.



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Introduction

To understand the concept of women's political empowerment in Pakistan we will have to visit the process of social transformation during the colonial period and chain of development which progressively provided somewhat open space for Muslim women in their domestic and public lives. The enhancement of awareness level among the Indian Muslim women and various movements for their emancipation were not an outcome of any accident of chance rather than it was planned, calculated and sustained process while through different stages; hence it is difficult to examine the nature of Muslim society in general and Muslim women in particular without understanding the said chains of development. In that context the response of Muslim society and Muslim women vis-à-vis these changes and challenges in the period preceding the creation of Pakistan.

Social Transformation and Political Empowerment of Women during Colonial Period

The second half of the 19th century witnesses some positive change accruing in the Indian society when several Hindu and Muslim reformists started speaking about women's rights especially related to issues of woman "infanticide, polygamy, child marriage, sati, veil (Purdah) and restrictions on the women education". They believe that social change cannot be affected unless women are provided equal opportunities to participate (Forbes & Forbes, 1999:18). The enactment prohibiting the exaction of sati in 1829 and passage of Widow Remarriage Act (WRA) in 1856 giving them the legal rights to remarriage while they outcome of various campaigns launched by these reformists (Sen, 2000:13) The period between 1869 to 1892 was quite significant in the context of women's rights. In response to the women's struggle against the old traditions restricting women's empowerment. The British government introduced various customary laws Related to Indian culture and civilization like the "Divorce Act", "Female Infanticide Act", the "Special Marriage Act", the "Married Women's Property Act", the "Guardians and Wards Act and the Marriage Validation Act" of 1869, 1870, 1872, 1876, 1890 and 1892 respectively (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987:37-39), whereas in 1885 a school "Anjuman-e-Himayate Islam" (A Society for the promotion of Islam) became established in Lahore; the main objective of this school was not only the protection of Muslim tradition but also gave the concept that education is more essential for Muslim women, this school played a vital role in the educational development of women (Patel, 2010:9).

Transformation Period 1886-1917

The period from 1886 to 1917 was considered as the most transformational for Muslim women because those women who belong to elite class or well families were not only getting modern education but also gradually taking part in politics and raised their voices for socio-political equality of women. Although during this period a strong position against this change came from some conservative and traditional Muslims elements nevertheless for the protection of women's right a great number of different schools and organizations were established in sub-continent (Khan, 1999:42). Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the only one who convinced the Muslims that the way of success and prosperity laid through acquiring western/modern education, surely bringing the advantage of employment in government and other professions and ultimate continued access to political power. On the other side Hindus were very clever they immediately adopted modern culture and education for the good-well of British Government. But initially Sir Syed Ahmad Khan also did not take attention to women's related issues including education, because at that time he might have believed that education for women was not important. Nevertheless, the transformative movement of this century gave a new vision of thought that an educated women may want to play a positive role in social awakening and economic development of sub-continent. That's why in 1886 at Lahore during Mohammadan Educational Congress (MEC) first time a resolution was presented by Sheikh Abdullah on the issue of Muslim women's education (Saigol, 2016:4)

In 1891 the annual meeting of Mohammadan Educational Congress (MEC) was held in Aligarh, again a voice was raised about the issue of women education, at last in December 1896, due to the countless efforts of Sheikh Abdullah a separate women wing was made in Mohammadan Educational Congress (MEC), and within three years women teacher training institute was also opened in Calcutta. Although gradually a social change occurred in sub-continent with the help of education but its speed was very slow (Salahuddin, 2005:58). With the start of 20th century, the concept of “new women” emerged in the sub-continent, which gave a new vision of thought especially to Muslim women; to connect with each other at outside of their houses, sharing their ideas, experiences and constraints, majority of them started speaking English which made possible for them to get rid of language barriers, to enhance the socio-political status of Muslim women lots of different English medium schools and organizations were established in sub-continent. In 1903 during the annual meeting of Mohammadan Educational Congress (MEC) in Bombay a Parsi women read an article titled “Importance of Education for Women” on the behalf of Chand Begum who belonged to Madras. In 1906 Sheikh Abdullah with the help of his wife Ala Bi opened first English medium school for Muslim girls; both husband and wife had to face criticism from traditional Muslims who intensely opposed this change.

In 1905 during All India Muslim Educational Conference (AIMEC) Maulana Altaf Hussian Hali paid a tribute to Muslim women by reading his rhyme “Chup ki dad” (A salient Appreciation) (Asghar, 2000:6). A quick change was also happened when a large number of Muslim women started out writing in different magazines and newspapers because at that time newspapers and magazines were considered as right way for the promotion and success of any movement.

In 1896, Syed Mumtaz Ali published a weekly magazine Tehzeeb-e-Niswan (Culture of women), in 1904 Sheikh Abdullah published a journal namely Khatoon (woman), Moulvi Syed Ahmad published Akhbar-e-Niswan (Woman Newspaper) from Lahore Moulvi Mehboob Alam published “Sharif Bibi” from Hyderabad Moulvi Muheeb-ul-Hussian published Moalam-e-Niswan (Teacher of women) and from Delhi Rashid-ul- Khari published a famous magazine Asmat (Honor/Respect)” in all these and many more also started writing in these magazines. Their writings were mostly to highlight about social issues i.e. dowry, false-beliefs or extravagance (Shaheed & Mumtaz, 1981:40-41). To work for the religious betterment of Muslim women Sir Muhammad Shafi established a society “Anjuman-e-Khawateen-e-Islam” (Muslim Women Organization) in 1908; it had two main objectives i.e. firstly to motive the woman of his own family to take part for the socio-political awareness of women about how to get their rights and secondly he raised his voice against two social evils like dowry and share of women in inherent property. Initially its members met mostly in each other’s houses but gradually these minor gatherings converted into large organizations and became the centers of women vision and opinion (Minault, 1998:59)

In 1913, a turning point came in the political history of the Indian Muslim women, when a “Women Conference” was held in Aligarh under the president ship of Begum of Bhopal, thousands of women were taking part from different cities of all India like Delhi, Mirth, Lucknow, Lahore and Muradabad and conference to be a political platform for women (Mirza, 1969:22-30). In 1920s many Muslim women give up observance of veil (Purdha) and practically performing their duties in different fields of life like school teachers, lecturers and doctors. Their literacy rate was also increased, in 1911 there was only 2 women were educated out of 1000 but in next ten years in 1924 the ratio was increased into 0.4% and in 1924 total literate Muslim women were 1,37,800 out of which 3,940 means 3% women got higher education (Sultana, 2008: 24).

After the enactment of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in 1919 a campaign for Indian women’s suffrage was launched so that women may play affective role in the politics, steps towards attainment of gender equality; consequently leading them to self-perception and encouraging

them to determine their destiny in personal and collective lives including their interests and activities providing them public reforms to influence the government and polity parties to support their cause. As noted by Indian Statutory Commission of 1930, it led to realization that India could not achieve its aspired position in the world unless the women were allow to plays their respective role as educated citizens (Indian Statutory Commission, 1930:58).

Women's Organizations

During 1915 to 1927, to enhance the concept of women's political empowerment in sub-continent three organizations were made by British women i.e. "Women's Indian Association" (WIA) 1915 by Queen Margaret's Cousin, "The National Council of Women in India" (NCWI) 1925 by Lady Tata and "All India Women's Conference"(AIWC) 1927 also made by Queen Margaret's Cousin (Basu & Ray, 1990). In 1925 women were granted the right to vote except in Orissa and Bihar but a special condition was also made by the government that only those men and women would use their right of vote who have their own property. In the first session of round table conference in 1930-1931, a resolution was presented by Mrs. Jehanara Shah Nawaz. She demanded socio-political rights for all Indian women without any discrimination of belief, color, class, and gender; in 1932 All India Muslim League also expressed its support on this issue and the problem was solved by the Government of India Act 1935, in both the houses i.e. "Council of State" (6 out of 150) and the "Federal Assembly" (9 out of 250) seats were reserved for women and almost sixty million women were given right to vote (Lateef, 1990:71).

Muslim Personal Law 1937

On 10th September 1937, "Muslim Personal Law" (MPL) was passed; it was another great achievement because through this law Muslim women get their right of share in inheritance (Asghar. 2000:147). Although this act was highly criticized by different schools of thought and said that the so called customary law was unacceptable; whereas on the other side this act was highly appreciated by Indian Muslim women because the act provided them with a light of hope for enhancing their social as well as the political status. This gradual and constant process of change which began with the right to education, increasing consciousness and after facing hardships was then converted into a fight for getting women's political rights in sub-continent (Serajuddin, 2011:14). In the elections of 1946, the All India Muslim League (AIML) gave tickets to Begum Salma Tassaduque Hussian and Mrs. Jehanara Shah Nawaz to contest elections; although All India Muslim League won the elections with historic victory but British government did not allowed forming the government, at that time five hundred women launched a protest rally against this act in Lahore; but when the level of activity increased and a large number of Muslim women were arrested including Begum Salma Tassaduque Hussian, Begum Kamal-uddin Ahmad from N.W.F.P (now Khyber Pushtoon Khawa) and Mrs. Jehanara Shah Nawaz, after that British government also banned the political activities of Muslim League Women Nation Guard. So it can be said that all these legal reforms were the step forward to create a sense of awareness for the socio-political transformation and empowerment of Indian women in general and Muslim women particular (Naheed, 2008:283).

The Indian freedom movement brought opportunities for women that they could play the collective role for achieving independence which definitely paid the way towards pave the way social, economic and political empowerment: hence Jinnah became the first supporter of women's empowerment when in 1944 he said that "no nation can rise to the height of glory unless their women are side by side with them, we are victims of evil customs. It is crime against humanity that our women are confined within the four walls of the houses as prisoners. There isn't any sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live; you want to take your women along with you as comrades in every sphere of life" (Mumtaz &Shaheed, 1987:7).

Political Empowerment of Women in Pakistan 1947-1999

After the creation of Pakistan, the history of women's political participation may be divided into two stages i.e. 1947-1999 and 1999 onwards. The first period started from independence of the country in the year of 1947 until the year 1999. During this period women representation in political forums remained marginal and did not progress much till elections in year 1997 (Mumtaz, 1998:319-369) while the second period started with the year 2001 to continuous till 2009.

Women in Politics during 1947 to 1969

In 1947, the first constituent assembly had only 2 women out of 79 members namely Shaista Ikram Ullah and Jahanara Shah Nawaz, nevertheless there was a demand for at-least 3% seats should be reserved for women in both the National as well as the Provincial assemblies. After the desolation of first constitutional assembly in 1954 and the second assembly was indirectly elected which as no representation of women; hence no female member could participate in the deliberation about in 1956 constitution (Mirza, 1977:87). But after imposing first martial law by General Ayub Khan in 1958 and under his 1962 constitution he declared that women might be elected through indirect elections because of this restriction only 6 women were elected within the assemblies; whereas the 1964 presidential election, which is regarded as the most significant event in the history of women's empowerment in Pakistan because Miss Fatima Jinnah, the sister of the Quaid-e-Azam contested of the presidency against an all-powerful army general Muhammad Ayub Khan (Ali, 1986:24).

Women in First General Elections 1970

The political history of Pakistan for 1947 to 1970 reveals that whereas the first constituent assembly of Pakistan was constituted from within the Indian legislature elected in 1946 elections whereas after its dissolution the second assembly came into being at the result of indirect election; nevertheless at provincial level elections on the bases of adult franchise were held in East-Bengal (after word East-Pakistan and now Bangladesh), Punjab, Sindh and NWFP (now Khyber Pushtoon Khawa) in 1954, 1951, 1951 and 1953 respectable. It was only in 1970 when after imposition of martial law 1969 General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan held election for national and provincial assemblies on the bases of adult franchise which were contested by 9 women as an independent candidates but all of them lost; however it was the first time that the women actively participated in the politics (Patel, 1979: 17-79).

Since 1970 elections, a total of 107 women took part in general seats but only 24 women candidates succeeded. They not only participated but also showed their trust on Pakistan People's Party (PPP) because Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto also raised his voice for the political empowerment of women and particularly for the poorer women of Punjab and Sindh. His slogan Roti, Kapra aur Makan made the women think that under Bhutto's leadership they could develop themselves as respectable human beings in their own lives hence became fairly fascinated (Burki, 1980: 51-130). It was for the first time in the electoral history of Pakistan, majority of women voted for the candidates of their own choice irrespective of their husband's desires. It turned into a big step for the political empowerment of women at the grassroots level. As for as women's representation was concerned no women could manage to be elected, however 6 of them were elected against the served seats in West-Pakistan (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987: 38)

Women in Politics after 1971 to 1988

After the separation of East Pakistan, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto took over as chief Martial law administrator on 20th December 1971; he gave top priority to reverting to parliamentary form of government and drafting a new constitution which was promulgated on 14th August 1973. It is very important to comment that three women members, "Mrs. Nasim Jahan", "Mrs. Qazi" and "Mrs. Ashraf Abbasi" contributed in the drafting of the 1973 Constitution as the same role that

“Begum Jahan Ara Shahnawaz” and “Begum Shaista Ikram Ullah” had played in 1956. It was largely due to the efforts of these women that the number of reserved seats for women was fixed at 10 in National assembly and 5 for each provincial assembly (Syed, 1982:68). During Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s era, women gained chances to push for more progressive measures, “Miss. Kaneez Yousaf” was appointed as Vice Chancellor of the Quaid-e-Azam University; while “Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan” turned into appointed as the Governor of Sindh (Safdar, 1990:805-920).

The first election under the constitution of 1973 was held in 1977, and for the first time Mrs. Nasim Wali Khan managed to win from two constituencies of N.W.F.P. (now Khyber Pushtoon Khawa) as general candidate. Although it was a great achievement for women, but the women reserved seats were not filled. The assembly could not run and an agitation was started against the government by opposition, PNAs (Pakistan National Alliance) claiming elections were rigged; hence on July 5, 1977 the assemblies were dissolved by general Zia-ul-Haq who imposed third martial law in Pakistan which continued till 1985 (Waddy, 1980:88-100). After assuming power Zia promised to hold elections within 90 days; but he never fulfilled his promise, and declared on 2nd February 1979 that the elections would be further delayed. To legitimize his era he took used religion and introduced Islamization with the help of two political parties, the Muslim League and the Jamate-e-Islami and tried to Islamize the society as a pre-condition to return to democracy. Whereas, his period is reflected the most complex era for women because under his government the so called Shariah laws marked a period of reversal for the political empowerment of women (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987:71). As some 40 women i.e. 15 for National Assembly, 10 for provincial assembly of Punjab, 13 for Sindh and 2 for N.W.F.P (now Khyber Pushtoon Khawa) contested the elections whereas only 1 of them could reach National Assembly and 2 were elected to the Punjab Assembly nevertheless 1 more succeed to win National Assembly seat in by-elections. But in 1985 the assemblies were dissolved in exercise of Presidential power under article 58-2(b) by Zia-ul-Haq, and elections were initially announced on non-party basis, but due to Zia’s sudden demise on 17th August 1988.

Women in Politics after 1988 to 1999

The situation changed and elections were held in October 1988, but before conducting elections almost all political parties challenged the announced non-part election in a supreme court. It became a direct contest between two important political parties i.e. Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) led by way of Benazir Bhutto and Pakistan Muslim League led by Nawaz Sharif who joined hands with other parties to form the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) participated in it. These elections have been important because it brought the new leadership to the fore that was to lead the political scene as much as the present. During this period the political parties had to make very extensive struggled for revival of the representative government; which was only in 1988 when “Benazir Bhutto” became the first woman prime minister of Pakistan and after she assumes the office, it was expected that she could prove to be custodian of women’s rights and a liberal society. Being daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto it was also expected by the women that she would revise such polices which would bring radical change for enhancement of women status and also will do away with discriminatory laws including those ordinances conflicted upon them during Zia’s regime (Syed, 1995:53, Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987:109-110, Zafar, 1991:38). Women participation during in these elections recorded slightly decreased to 38 which were 40 in 1977 elections. Of the 38, 17 were for national assembly seats and 13, 5, 2, 1 for Punjab, Sindh, NWFP (now Khyber Pushtoon Khawa) and Baluchistan assemblies respectively. Of the 6 seats won, 4 for National assembly, 1 Punjab assembly and 1 N.W.F.P. (now Khyber Pushtoon Khawa) assembly (National Commission on the Status of Women, 2010).

In 1990 and 1993 Pakistan became the part of two important international organizations “Vienna Declaration” and “The Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women”. To improve the social status of women some important steps were taken i.e. appointed female

judges, set up separate women police stations and the first women bank; whereas in some public universities, women's study centers were also established. (FLSAW) (PILAT, 2004); nevertheless the government did not have the required majority to amend any of the draconian laws which was passed by general Zia. In 1990 Benazir Bhutto's first government was dissolved by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan while exercising his powers under controversial article 58-2(b) of the 1973 constitution and announced to hold the elections throughout the country within 90 days (Syed, 1995:254).

The 1993 assemblies again was sent home through the use of article 58-2(b) for the third time. Even though the Supreme Court over ruled President's decision but Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif left his office and new elections were held. In the context of women representation, the 1993 elections observed a minor increase in numbers of general seats contested and won by women; total 41 women contested elections and only 7 out of 16 were succeed in national assembly, whereas 4 seats as well as 1 seat each of Punjab, Sindh, and N.W.F.P. (now Khyber Pakhtun Khawa) assemblies out of 8, 12 and 2 seats that were contested in those assemblies respectively (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987:103). In 1994, when Pakistan government was doing homework to submitting its national report in 1995 Beijing conference, a commission was established to review such laws which have been discriminatory barren the women to turn out to be identical citizens of Pakistan. The commission had Ulemas, Judges of the Supreme Court, journalists and women representatives on it who has those deal with issues like "family laws", "economic rights", "criminal laws", "Hudood Ordinance (1979)", "Law of Evidence (1984) and "law about violence against women". The report made for public in 1997. It was appreciated by women because the report contained comprehensive recommendations to enhance the social status of women and to remove all that misconception about Islam which confines women inside the house, provides inferior position, and restrains them from getting employment or running their own business. It is completely opposing to fact; the commission also suggested that all laws which are not according with the sprite of Islam ought to be abolished so that the real and fair concept of Islam may be introduced before the world (Asia Watch & WR project, 1992:60).

Benazir Bhutto's second term came to an end when her own party's stalwart President Farooq Laghari used article 58-2(b) of the constitution 1973, dissolved the assemblies and dismissed her government. The consequent general elections held in 1997, an impressive member of women contested for the elections which went up to 56: nevertheless the increase in the member of successful contestant went up by only 1. Out of 217 seats of National Assembly 7 women were elected, whereas only 1 female candidate could reach in the N.W.F.P. (now Khyber Pushtoon Khawa) assembly. In 1997 election 9 women contested as independent candidates while Pakistan People's Party, Pakistan Muslim League, Shaheed Bhutto Group (SBP), Pakistan Muslim League Junjo Group (PML-J), Awami National Party, and Khaksar Tehreek issued party tickets to 9, 9, 7, 7, 1 and 1 women respectively. However, the provision about women representation became ineffective in 1990; hence from 1990 to 1997 there were no women representatives in the elective bodies because no seats have been allocated for women in 1990, 1993, and in 1997 elected assemblies, neither at the provincial nor the national level; as a result of that women's representation became minimum i.e. 0.9% in 1990 and 1.8% in 1993 whereas it slightly increased to 2.8% in 1997 (Mumtaz, 1998:365). While at provincial level 18 women were contested elections (Punjab 7, Sindh 6, NWFP 4, and Balochistan 1). Out of these 18, 10 were independents and 11 had party tickets. A significant rise in the number of women candidates for the National Assembly that is 34 was quite encouraging from the perspective of their representation. As compared to that the provincial assemblies offered a very discouraging picture where number of female contestants and successful candidates fell down. Because of non-availability of the reserve seats, the assemblies from 1988 to 2001 had quite insignificant number of women representatives (Sibylla, (ed.), 2014).

In 1996 the name of “Ministry of Women Development” (MOWD) was modified and become “Ministry of Women Development Social Welfare and Special Education”; through this platform, steps had been taken for the development of women; however no legal reform turned into made towards the protection of rights and empowerment of women.

In Pakistan women have always been under-registered; hence the percentage of registered women is much lower than men. In 1950s, 1970s, 1988 and 1990s, the gap between men and women voter registration was 20%, 12%, and 8%, respectively, nevertheless 10% increase could be seen in between 1993-1997. The situation in FATA (Federally Administrative Tribal Areas) was even worse where the male-female ratio of voter registration was 75 and 25 whereas on all Pakistan level it was 55 and 45, because the women are excluded from public life even to the extent that they are not allowed to interact with men outside their home and cast their votes. In 2000 a survey was conducted by Asian Development Bank, during the 50 years span i.e. from 1947 to 1997, 113 women were elected to numerous national legislatures which includes the nominated Majlis-e-Shoora; whereas from the 1970 election till 1997 was 15 which comes to an average of 3 women in each election. In 1988 election 4 women reached the Nation Assembly which was the ever highest number of women representatives. However, the percentage of successful women contesting in the by election came down from 4% to 2% in 1988, 1% in 1990, which increased to 2% in the 1993 elections. This inconsistent rise and fall indicates that the factors barring women representation in the elected bodies at remained almost the same since the establishment of Pakistan (Country Briefing Paper, July, 2000:14).

Political Empowerment of Women in Pakistan 1999 to 2008

The military government of General Musharraf from 1999 to 2008 was encouraging for women’s political empowerment. As compared to the previous governments, his government took a few important measures for the active participation of women in all the socio-cultural and political sphere of life and his regime proved to be a political boom for the women. For empowering women he set up a National Commission in July 2000 by the presidential ordinance, with an objective to review all laws, rules and regulations which were affecting women’s status and rights (Saiyid, 2001:7). Under the Musharraf government, the 1st national policy for the development and empowerment of women was announced on March 2002, with the intension to enhance the level of social, political and economic empowerment among the women (Weiss, 2012:5).

For women’s uplifting at the national and local levels in 2000, he introduced a devolution plan; the local government ordinance 2000 provided 33% representation of women in all the tiers of local administration. Consequently a substantial number of women became members of union, town, tehsil and district councils (Yazdani, 2004:7).

During Musharraf regime i.e. from August 2001 to 2002, elections for local bodies were held in 5 phases. The first phase came to an end on December 31, 2000 with the election of 4857 women belonging to 956 union councils of 18 districts: which was unprecedented in the history of Pakistan because women were provided opportunity to contest district elections from joint electorates. They were given 33% representation on all levels i.e. the union, sub-divisional and district councils; moreover 16 women were elected as Nazims/Naib Nazims in 2000 elections (Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights, Periodic Report, 76). Though for the 2005 election, women seats in the union council were decreased i.e. 21 to 13 nevertheless over all quota of 33% was retained. In 2005 election, the number (36,000 in 2002) of women councilors dropped to 24,000 albeit the space for women participation at local politics was enlarged (Tabassum & Tabassum, 2015: 17-18). In Punjab, Sindh, NWFP (now Khyber Pushtoon Khawa) and Baluchistan, 2007 out of 20718, 5878 out of 6498, 5878, out of 3963 out of 5742, 2374 out of 3108 women were elected respectively. On August 21st, 2002, the Legal Framework Order (LFO) was promulgated by means of Pervez Musharraf which raised the status of women in political participation. In 2002 elections out of 1170 seats of legislators an overall women’s

representation came to 19.8% against the prescribed quota i.e. 33%. 74 against 342 (21.3%), 18 against 100 (18%), 73 against 371 (19.7%), 33 against 168 (19.6%), 23 against 124 (18.5%) 12 against 65 (18.5%), women were elected for the National Assembly, Senate, Punjab Assembly, Sindh Assembly, N.W.F.P (now Khyber Pashtun Khawa) Assembly and Balochistan Assembly respectively (Year Book, MOWD, 2003-2004: 29).

For the election of National Assembly, minimum and maximum number of votes was polled by Ms. Zubeida Jalal (NA-272) and Dr. Azra Afzal (NA-213) i.e. 43,670 and 74,461 respectively. At the Provincial level this ratio ranged in between 10,254 (Nasreen Rehman-PB-17) and N 37,326 (Maria Tariq, 113). One woman each was elected on general seat for the Balochistan and NWFP (now Khyber Pushtoon Khawa) Provincial Assemblies; whereas in the Sindh Provincial Assembly, a woman was elected for the office of Deputy Speaker. Moreover 2 women contestants each i.e. against 20 and 67 could make their way for the election of National and Provincial Assemblies respectively. This uplift i.e. women's nomination and election towards general seats in General Elections 2002 was neither total outcome of the efforts made by Government or Civil Society nor it was on Gender or personality based rather it heavily dependent on the political background of their families as well. As far as the 4 provincial assemblies are concerned, 140 women stood elected as independent or nominated contestants. Overall 12 i.e. 2 independents and 10 nominated women got elected against general seats. The number of minimum and maximum votes ranged between 10,254 and 37,326 as polled via Ms. Nasreen Rehman of Balochistan an independent candidate and Maria Tariq from Punjab of PML-Q, respectively. To begin with the Cabinet constituted on the bases of 2002 elections had only 1 lady minister and 1 advisor, while, by the end of the Parliamentary tenure the number rose to 6 i.e. 2 Federal ministers and 4 ministers of State. Moreover 6 (18%), 2 (5%), 3 (12%), females were appointed as parliamentary secretaries, Chairpersons of Standing Committees in National Assembly and Chairpersons of Standing Committees respectively. At the provincial level i.e. Sindh and Punjab, 1 out of 17 ministers was a woman (for population planning and women development), 6 out of 41 ministers and 1 was appointed as advisor to Chief Minister, However, there were no female ministers in either N.W.F.P (now Khyber Pushtoon Khawa) or Balochistan. Deputy Speaker in Sindh, which indicates that elected women had made a remarkable improvement for sharing post-election activates (Year book, MOWD, 2003-04:35).

The next general elections have been held on February 18, 2008, in national and provincial assemblies about 233 out of 1170 women were contested elections; however, the results show some fluctuating traits, out of these 233 contestants, 205 had been elected on general seats, 1 on non-Muslim and 27 on reserved seats (The News, 2008); whereas 63 out of 72 wined for National Assembly, 113 out of 120 in all four provincial assemblies, majority of them belong to Punjab i.e. 46 out of 49, Sindh 12 out of 15, N.W.F.P. (now Khyber Pushtoon Khawa) and Baluchistan have 3 each and a 2 for Islamabad.

In 2008, 34 women candidates were nominated by their political parties to contest election. Whereas the election of "Dr. Fahmida Mirza" as the first woman speaker of the National Assembly and "Shahla Raza" as Deputy Speaker of Sindh Assembly become a massive accomplishment in terms of women empowerment in Pakistan (<http://www.na.gov.pk/ministeries.htm>. Accessed on 25 January 2014). Initially, in the federal cabinet of 2008 only 2 women were added out of 15 members; Ms. Sherry Rehman was awarded with a portfolio of "Information and Broadcasting Ministry" and also gave the an additional portfolio of the "Ministry of Women's Development, Health and Culture", after that two more women i.e. "Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan" and "Samina Khalid Ghurki" were awarded with the ministry of "Population & Social Welfare" and "Special Education"; whereas "Mehreen Anwar Raja" (for parliamentary affairs) and "Shagufta Jarmani" (for spiritual affairs) had been appointed as ministers for a state, along with "Shahnaz Wazir Ali" and "Hina Rabbani Khar" they have been appointed as special assistants to the Prime Minister.

While in Punjab only 1 out of 41 members, (Ms. Neelum Jabbar was awarded with the ministry of Population Welfare); in Sindh 5 women i.e. “Shazia Marri” (for Information), “Sassi Palijo” (for culture and tourism), “Tauqeer Fatima” (for ladies development), “Nargis N.D. Khan” (for Social Welfare) and “Nadya Gabol” (for information era); in Baluchistan 5 out of 44 ministers, “Rubina Irfan” (for law and Parliamentary Affairs), “Ghazala Gola” (for women’s development), “Raheela Durrani” (for prosecution), “Ruqayya Hashmi” (for inter-provincial coordination), “Nasreen Rehman Khan Khetran” (for information technology) and “Shama Parveen” (for provincial coordination on NGOs Program National/ International & Universities); and in N.W.F.P. (now Khyber Pushtoon Khawa) 2 out of 44, “Uzma Piriizai” (guide to the Chief Minister on Education, Health & Social Welfare) and “Sitara Ayaz” (for Minister for Social Welfare and Women Development). Whereas several ladies were appointed as ambassadors to different countries, these formidable and fine steps provided a new direction inside the political participation of women in Pakistan (Zia, 2010:6).

Conclusion

It may be concluded that a process of social transformation has been observed in the socio-political status of women during the colonial period and chain of development which progressively provided somewhat open space for Muslim women in their domestic and public lives. It is true that different movements for their emancipation and political empowerment were not an outcome of any accident of chance rather than it was planned and sustained process which passes through different stages. Similarly the present study also provides a comparative analysis after the creation of Pakistan focusing on the different democratic and representative governments since 1947; where it can be seen a development in Ayub Khan’s regime, Z.A. Bhutto’s democracy, Gen. Zia-ul-Haq’s period and four democratic tenure Benazir and Nawaz Sharif and lastly some valuable work for the political empowerment of women during Parvez Musharraf’s military and democracy made in later period of 2000; different organizations were made for enhancing socio-political and education level of women. Whereas women were given rights to take decisions about change in constitution, with the help of such steps government empowered the women and many other women also inspired by them. So it can be said that Musharraf’s Era was one of the most successful regime for women’s political empowerment because his decisions about women’s empowerment was more liberal as compare to previous governments. And lastly it can be concluded that roots of different movements about the empowerment of women have same source but its time of occurrence is different because some areas these types of movements had happened centuries ago whereas in others it is recently happen. So it is proved from the above discussion concerning about women’s political empowerment that in intimation about women’s rights had been emerged earlier before the creation of Pakistan; while after independence different forces are creating hurdles but with the passage of time it will overcome by positive thinking.

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