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# Role and Performance

Assessment of Pakistani Women  
Parliamentarians 2002-2007

**Farzana Bari**

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## List of Abbreviations

AIML	All India Muslim League
ANP	Awami National Party
CAN	Calling Attention Notice
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
DOPP	Devolution of Power Plan
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IPU	International Parliamentary Union
JUI	Jamat-e- Islami
LFO	Legal Framework Order
MMA	Mutahidda Majlis-e-Amal
MNA	Member National Assembly
MPs	Member of Parliament
MQM	Mutahidda Quomi Movement
NA	National Assembly
NCSW	National Commission on the Status of Women
NGO	Non-government Organization
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
PFA	Platform for Action
PMB	Private Member Bill
PML (N)	Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz
PML (Q)	Pakistan Muslim League (Q)
PPP	Pakistan Peoples Party
PR	Proportional Representation
PR	Political Representation
PTCL	Pakistan Telecommunication Corporation Limited
SDPD	Strengthening Democracy through Parliamentary Development
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nation Development Fund for Women

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# Foreward

Democracy and governance will remain incomplete unless women fully participate in political decision-making as they constitute half of the world population. The countries where women's participation in public life is higher appear to be healthier societies. The Scandinavian countries are the success stories in this regard. The credit goes to the women's movements of these countries as they pushed for a gender-balanced approaches and equal participation of women in politics. The success spread and the demand for a women quota became popular across the world.

Pakistan has introduced a quota for women in all legislative bodies including the local councils in 2001-2002. Interestingly, less seats 17% were reserved in in the legislative bodies while 33% were reserved in the local councils. This elevated Pakistan's position on women's empowerment index substantively.

The representation in legislative bodies is a legitimate right of women. Once entered in the formal political system, the effective representation becomes their duty. The current study assess the role and performance of women parliamentarians. The study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods to assess the role and performance of the women MPs. Also the proceedings of the sessions of the National Assembly were thoroughly analysed in order to ascertain initiatives and interventions of the women MPs. We are pleased to report that despite a number of constraints

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women MPs faced, their performance appears to be more than satisfactory. Since, most women MPs were elected indirectly and did not have their specific constituencies, the study mainly focused on their participation in the National Assembly sessions.

Based on the findings of the study, we strongly urge the Parliament and the political parties to increase the gender quota from 17% to 33% in legislative bodies and the quota should be filled through direct elections. This is important to enhance the role of women MPs beyond the parliamentary debates and also to strengthen their connection with the electorates. This is a must for the improvement of governance and the deepening of democracy in Pakistan.

The study is the first of its kind and therefore it is humbly pioneering. We hope it will stimulate further interest in the subject. We hope scholars, political leaders, women and rights activists, civil society organizations, policy makers and above all the women of Pakistan will benefit from the study.

Sarwar Bari  
National coordinator  
Pattan Development Organisation  
February 2009

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# Acknowledgement

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First of all, our sincere thanks to Dr. Farzana Bari who despite her intense engagements agreed to undertake this research work. We are deeply indebted for her scholarly contribution in the form of this study.

Also, we are thankful to the team of research assistants, Ms Sara Shaukat, Mr. Muhammad Suhail, Ms. Sadaf Sheikh, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Noor-ul Rehman who worked hard to collect the data for the study.

We would like to thank Ms. Yameema Mitha who edited the manuscript voluntarily in spite of her illness and travel.

We are grateful to Ms. Nazish Brohi who read the draft of the report and gave us the valuable feedback.

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of Mr. Rizwan and Mr. Mustafa for data entry and Mr. William Parvaiz for designing the title page of the report.

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Last but not least, we are deeply indebted to Mr. Henning Effner and Mr. Abdul Qadir of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung for the sponsorship of the study. Without the financial support of the FES, the study could not have been initiated and completed.

Sarwar Bari



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# Introduction

Pakistani women gained the vote and the right to representation, when the country gained its independence from British colonial rule in 1947. Since that time, there has been no constitutional bar on the political participation and representation of women. However, their representation in political structures at the party and legislature levels remained insignificant until 2000. In 2001, the military regime of General Pervez Musharraf, through an affirmative action measure reserved 33 percent seats for women in the local government and 17 percent in the legislative bodies (National and Provincial Assemblies and the Senate), a substantial proportion. This has currently brought 28000 women into local government and 205 in the national and provincial assemblies and the senate. Prior to this, when there was no reservation of seats for women, representation was never more than 3% in the national legislature.

The gender deficit in the arena of formal politics is not peculiar to Pakistan, it is a global phenomenon. Women have been historically excluded from governance structures around the world. At present, with the exception of Rwanda (50% seats reserved for women), nowhere in the world are women equally represented in the legislatures of their countries. On average, there are only 18 percent women in world parliaments today. Out of 190 countries, women have served only in fifteen countries as presidents or prime ministers. Women's presence in the world's cabinets and as world mayors is also not more than seven and eight percent respectively (Paxton and Hughes, 2007).

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Women were denied the citizenship right by all societies and this can be seen throughout history particularly up to the 18th century. They were perceived by political philosophers and thinkers as lacking in reason and rationality, and physically unable to participate in public affairs. Two sets of dualities, nature/culture and public/private were central in shaping the conceptual basis of traditional western political thought. Since time immemorial, political philosophers and theoreticians including Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Rousseau and many others used different arguments to arrive at the common conclusion that politics is essentially a male prerogative and women are not physically or mentally fit to participate in politics on equal terms with men.

Women gained political rights all over the world through waging struggles. In most countries, women won their rights to vote and candidacy during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century after fighting long drawn battles for political rights. The suffragist movement was at the center of the stage during the first wave of feminism. Some countries in Western Europe granted political rights to women in the post First and the Second World War period. In Africa, Asia, Central and South America women won the right to vote as soon as these countries became independent from colonial rule (Lorber, 1998). Currently, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, where the right to vote is not granted to its citizens, there is no country in the world where formal political rights are not granted to its citizens. However, the fact remains that the formal political rights of women have not resulted in their descriptive or substantive representation in political structures around the world.

At present, the global debate on the significance of women's political participation/ representation has been surrounded by an intrinsic and an instrumentalist argument. The former argues for equal participation of women in politics from the democratic and human rights perspective. It contends that women constitute half

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of the world's population and they contribute more than men to the social and economic development of their societies by virtue of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. Therefore, it is only fair that women should have, at least an equal say in the use and distribution of national resources. Politics is an arena where such decisions are taken, therefore it is important that women are equally represented in formal political structures in their countries. This is a simple justice argument that contends that no country can claim itself truly democratic if half of its female population is not represented in its political institutions (Sawer 2002, Paxton & Hughes, 2007).

The instrumentalist approach to women's political participation pushes for their greater participation by using two different types of arguments: the utility and symbolic argument. The utility argument is based on the notion that women have different interests and different political priorities. Women across the world have shared experience that male dominated parliaments do not served the interests of women adequately. Ann Phillips in *The Politics of Presence* (1995) builds the case for women's representation . She asserts that "...there are particular needs, interests, and concerns that arise from women's experience, and these will be inadequately addressed in a politics that is dominated by men. Equal rights to a vote have not proved strong enough to deal with this problem; there must also be equality among those elected to office." (1995:66). Many empirical studies conducted in various social and political contexts upholds the theory of the politics of presence (Wangnerud, 2000, Young, 2000; Magsbridge, 2003).

Others used an essentialist argument that women have a different vision and concepts of politics owing to their roles as mothers, wives and caregivers. Therefore, it is expected that women's entry in politics will bring a special caring focus and humane values to mainstream politics. Also it is assumed that the diversity of

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life experiences of women in politics will improve the quality of governance.

The symbolic argument stresses the cultural impact of women's presence in public life. It holds that women in politics create role models that raise not only the status of women in society but also provide space and motivation to other women to aspire to be in politics (Sawer et al. 2006).

There are a number of research studies that support different rationales or theoretical approaches to women's inclusion in politics. Despite the differences on the theoretical basis of the need for women's political representation, the broad agreement that proponents of all the varied approaches have arrived at, is that women must be included in politics. This consensus on the need for women's political representation is now clearly reflected in several international conventions and covenants which include the Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Beijing Platform of Action, all of which guarantee equal participation and representation of women in politics. Gender quota is proposed as a fast track strategy to bridge the gender gap in politics.

At present, there are 99 countries where gender quotas are in vogue. In all the countries where the representation of women exceeds 30 percent in the national legislatures, there is some form of affirmative action measure. Different forms of constitutional, electoral, and political party quotas for women are in practice. In some countries there are constitutional/legislative quotas for national parliaments such as Rwanda, Argentina, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Iraq, Uganda, Taiwan, Serbia, France, Greece, Burundi, Tanzania. In other countries, quotas for women are adopted voluntarily by political parties such as Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands,

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Iceland, Germany etc. In countries like Belgium, Ecuador, Eritrea, Portugal, Philippines, China, Indonesia, Brazil etc. quotas for women are given through electoral laws. (see appendix 8.1 for political status of women in politics globally).

Electoral systems appear to be playing an important role in this respect. Proportional Representation (PR) systems have a global average of 20.7 percent of parliamentary seats held by women, compared to 13.3 percent in non-PR systems (UNIFEM, 2008/2009).

Pakistan is a signatory to these above-mentioned international conventions and covenants. Article 7 of CEDAW says, “State parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country...” Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) uphold women’s right to participate in public life on an equal basis. At the national level, commitment to women’s equal participation and representation in politics is reflected in articles 25, 32, and 34 of the Constitution of Pakistan,<sup>1</sup> in the National Platform for Action (PFA), the National Policy for Development and the Empowerment of Women (2002) and in the Annual Report of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW). In line with its national and international commitments, Pakistan adopted a gender quota policy in 2000 under the Devolution of Power Plan (DOPP) in order to facilitate women’s representation in local and national politics. The Musharraf regime reserved 33% seats in the local government and 17% seats for women in the national and provincial assemblies and in the senate to ensure their political representation. This has currently brought 28,550 women into the local government (2005), 60 in the national assembly, 128 in the

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1. Article 25 of the Constitution guarantees that “there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone and that the State shall make provisions for the protection of women”

Article 32 – “special representation shall be given to women in local government institutions (i.e., local bodies)”.

Article 34 – “steps shall be taken to ensure full participation of women in all spheres of national life”.

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provincial assemblies and 17 in the senate (2007). The breakdown of reserved seats for women in the national and provincial assemblies and the senate is attached as appendix 8.2.

Women's presence in formal political structures through the gender quota has given rise to a wider public debate on the impact of women on politics. What changes have women brought to politics? To what extent have women parliamentarians represented women's interests? How far have they succeeded in making women's concerns a part of public policy and debates?

This study is an attempt to respond to some of these queries. The key focus of this research is to assess the performance of women legislatures who served in the national assembly (2002-2007) with reference to their impact on politics and on gender issues. The data for the study has been collected through the use of multiple quantitative and qualitative research methods. Parliamentary debates/proceedings of 34 assembly sessions that took place over a period of four and half years (2002-2006) were reviewed to assess the performance of these women parliamentarians (MPs). Their performance has been assessed through the analysis of quantitative and qualitative aspects of their participation in the parliamentary proceedings, such as the number of times women spoke on the assembly floor, number of bills, resolutions and motions moved, the number of parliamentary questions asked, the number of call attention notices given, the types of issues raised, legislation drafted, passed, etc. Another key method used to collect data was in-depth interviews with women parliamentarians through the use of semi-structured questionnaire. Forty women parliamentarians belonging to different political parties were interviewed to gain an insight into issues and challenges faced by women parliamentarians in performing their roles effectively. These research methods were further combined with focus group discussions (FGDs) held separately with male and female parliamentarians.

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The findings of this study contribute to our understanding of the role and performance of women parliamentarians who entered politics through the gender quota. The study deliberates on the performance of these women parliamentarians with reference to the three key roles of the parliament i.e. Legislation, Representation and Oversight. The study addresses the issue of how far challenges faced by women parliamentarians relate to the wider social and political context and to what extent these are the result of the women's own capability and capacity. In addition, this research makes a contribution to the theoretical debate on the need and significance of women's presence in politics and addresses some thorny questions such as whether women parliamentarians can represent the interests of women who are divided as a social group along the lines of class, ethnicity, religion, race, language, age, and sexuality etc. Do women parliamentarians have distinctive political perspectives and different political priorities to male politicians? Do women bring any additional value to the political realm? To what extent do women parliamentarians succeed in reflecting women's concerns in public policy? Does the gender quota politically empower women? The study seeks to find answers to some of these empirical and theoretical concerns. Finally, the research has clear policy implications. A performance assessment of women parliamentarians highlights the factors that enable or constrain them in performing their role effectively. This should give us a road map with clear strategies and recommendations of how to remove these structural and functional barriers that hinder women's performance in formal structures of politics.

The study is organized in various sections. After the introduction, section two elaborates on research methodologies and on the demographic profile and political background of women parliamentarians. Section three of the study contextualizes the history of women's participation and representation in the various parliaments of the country and shows how the wider context of

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democracy and politics shapes and impacts on gender representation. Section four assesses the performance of women parliamentarians in relation to the three main roles of the parliament, that is Legislation, Representation and Oversight. The performance assessment of women parliamentarians in these three areas was made through a detailed analysis of parliamentary proceedings, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Section five demonstrates issues and challenges faced by women parliamentarians in performing their roles effectively. Finally the last part of the report suggests concrete steps, strategies and recommendations that are critically important in facilitating women parliamentarians to move beyond being a mere presence in politics to being substantive representatives who can transform politics.

# 2

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## Research Methods and Methodology

A mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to gather data for this study.

### **Literature Review**

A comprehensive literature review was conducted prior to the development of questionnaires for the semi-structured interviews and the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The literature review revealed that there was a paucity of research in this area. A few research reports/studies were found that were conducted by NGOs on the overall political participation and representation of women (Zia and Bari, 1999; UNDP; 2005; Shaheed, F et al, 1998). However there was hardly any in-depth research done on the subject. There are only a few articles that are written specifically on the performance of women parliamentarians in various parliaments since 1947 (Mumtaz, 1998; Afzal, 1999). The current study is a pioneering effort in systematically reviewing the performance of women parliamentarians in Pakistan.

### **Gender Review of National Assembly Proceedings**

A gender analysis of parliamentary proceedings has been conducted to assess how active women parliamentarians were in promoting women's interests in politics. There were a total of 45 sessions of the

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Assembly from 2002 to 2007. The proceedings of only thirty four sessions were reviewed because the proceedings of the remaining ten sessions had not yet been compiled at the time the research was being conducted.

### **Semi-Structured Interview**

The gender analysis of the parliamentary proceedings was combined with in-depth interviews using a semi-structured questionnaire and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). These were applied as primary research instruments to conduct a performance and need assessment of women parliamentarians in order to identify strategic areas of support that could make women parliamentarians more effective public representatives in the future.

### **Size and the Selection Procedure of the Sample**

Initially it was decided to interview all seventy-two women parliamentarians. But since the study was conducted at a time when the period of the parliament was ending and a new election was expected, most of the women parliamentarians were not in Islamabad. It was then decided to interview some of them on the phone. Despite the efforts of our research teams, some of them were not accessible. Finally it was decided to reduce the sample size. The research team was instructed to try all parliamentarians on their lists and interview all those who were available. As the study was getting delayed due to non-availability of some women parliamentarians, the research team was given a time frame in which they had to complete the interviews. The research team managed to interview forty women MPs by the deadline. A list of the women MPs who were eventually included in the study and their party affiliation is given below:

**Table 1: List of Women MPs Interviewed for the Study and Their Party Affiliation**

Sr. No	Name	Party	Sr. No	Name	Party
1	Ms. Ambreen Naeem	MMA	21	Ms. Razia Aziz	MMA
2	Ms. Bilqees Saif	MMA	22	Ms. Ruqia Khanam Soomro	PPPP
3	Ms. Nasim Akhtar Ch.	PPPP	23	Ms. Afsar Begum	MQM
4	Ms. Asiya Nasir	MMA	24	Ms. Madam Khurshed Afgan	PMLP
5	Ms. Syeda Farhana	MMA	25	Ms. Mehnaz Rafi	PMLQ
6	Ms. Shahida Akhtar Ali	MMA	26	Ms. Zubada Jalal	PMLQ
7	Ms. Rehana Aleem Mashadi	PMLQ	27	Ms. Riffat Jawad Kalo	PMLQ
8	Ms. Belum Hasnain	PPPP	28	Dr. Attiya Inayatullah	PMLQ
9	Ms. Jamila Ahmed	MMA	29	Ms. Samina Raheel Qazi	MMA
10	Ms. Shabina Talat	MQM	30	Ms. Rukhsana Zubari	PPPP
11	Ms. Kishwar Sultana	MQM	31	Dr. Donya Aziz	PMLQ
12	Ms. Nafeesa Munawar Raja	PPPP	32	Ms. Fouzia Wahab	PPPP
13	Ms. Gul-e-Farkhanda	PMLQ	33	Ms. Shakeela Rashid	PPPP
14	Ms. Fouzia Habib	PPPP	34	Ms. Inayat Bagum	MMA
15	Ms. Mamona Hashmi	PML(N)	35	Ms. Bushra Rehman	PML(Q)
16	Ms. Shahzadi Umarzadi	PMLQ	36	Dr. Rozina Tufail	PML(Q)
17	Ms. Ayesha Munawar	MMA	37	Ms. Aasiya Azeem	PML(Q)
18	Ms. Farzeen Ahmed Sarfraz	PMLQ	38	Ms. Yasmeen Rehman	PPPP
19	Ms. Rahila Yahya Munawar	PMLQ	39	Ms. Fouzia Habib	PPPP
20	Ms. Tahira Asif	PMLQ	40	Ms. Shagufta Jumani	PPPP

Out of forty women MPs, only 3 contested the election on general seats and all the remaining women MPs were elected on reserved seats for women. Since the ratio between those who were elected on reserved seats and those who were elected on general seats was uneven, the study refrained from making any comparative analysis between the performance of women MPs on general and on reserved seats.

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## **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

Two Focus Group Discussions were conducted, one with women parliamentarians and the other with an all-male group of parliamentarians belonging to various political parties.

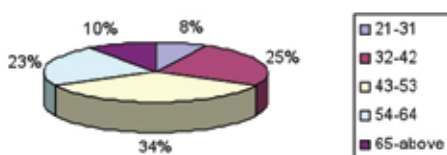
# 3

## Demographic Profile & Political Background of Women Parliamentarians

### Age

The majority of women members of the parliament were in the age cohorts of 43-53 and 54-64 years. This group constitutes about 59% of the respondents. Every fifth female MP falls in the age group of 25-42 and every tenth in the age category of 65 and above. The data on the age of female MPs shows that younger women are less likely to enter politics.

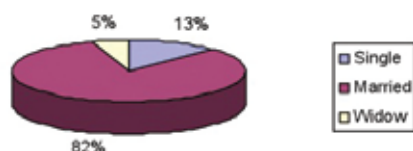
Figure 1: Age



### Marital Status

The majority of female MPs (82%) were married, 13% of them were single and 5% were widows at the time of interview.

Figure 2: Marital Status



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## Educational Status

The educational status of the respondents revealed that all female MPs were highly qualified. Graduation had been made a precondition for candidates in the general election 2002. Seventy percent of women MPs had education degrees higher than graduation.

It is interesting to note here that due to this condition, male members of some political dynasties could not contest as they had no males who were graduates. Consequently, many political families fielded women to contest the election on general seats.

Table 2: Educational Status of Women MPs

Education Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Graduate	12	30
Masters	20	50
Masters / M.Phil	6	15
Ph.D	2	5
Total	40	100

## Nature of Family Structure

The following table shows that slightly more than 57.3% of female MPs live in nuclear families, while 30% of them had an extended family arrangement. Ten percent of respondents did not respond to this question.

Table 3: Nature of Family Structure

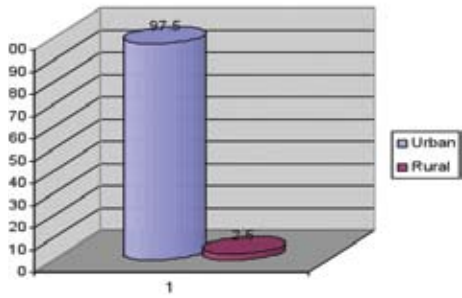
	Frequency	Percent
Nuclear	23	57.5
Extended	12	30
Total	35	90

## Place of Residence

It is interesting to note that as many as 97.5% of women MPs said they lived in urban areas while the majority of constituencies of the National Assembly of Pakistan fall in the rural areas of Pakistan.

This clearly shows that urban women are over represented in our parliament. It is a well-known fact that a large number of politicians are absentee landlords and most of these female MPs also belong to political dynasties. Land ownership and feudal and tribal socio-economic arrangements give them power and control over a vote bank. The majority of female MPs reside in urban areas while their constituencies are from rural areas.

Figure 3: Residence; Rural-Urban



### Class Background of Women MPs

The class background of women MPs was assessed through the occupational status of their husbands/fathers and the income level of the household. The researcher is fully aware that it is difficult to ascertain correct information from respondents about income and assets. The information given is not always reliable. With this caveat in mind, the class background of women MPs is assessed.

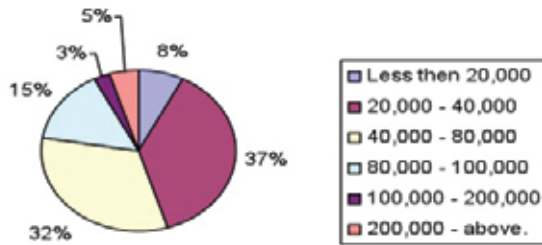
Almost one-third of husbands and fathers of women MPs were working as government officials at high posts and nearly one-fourth of husbands and fathers of female MPs belonged to the business class. Only 15% respondents reported that their husbands/fathers were landlords while 22.5% husbands and fathers of women MPs were working as professionals, i.e. doctors and engineers etc. Only 5% of the respondents said that their husbands/fathers belonged to the working class.

Table 4: Occupational Status of Husbands/fathers

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Business	9	22.5
Govt.Servant in BPS 17 and Above	13	32.5
Landlord	6	15
Professional	9	22.5
Labourer	2	5
Others	1	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

Only five percent respondents had an average monthly household income less than Pak Rupee 20,000 (US\$ 335). Thirty seven percent of women MPs reported that their household income was between Rs. 20,000-40,000, while 32% had an income of Rs. 80,000-100,000. Fifteen percent women MPs belonged to households where the monthly income was in the bracket of Rs. 40,000-80,000. Three percent reported an income of Rs. 100,000-200,000 while the remaining 5% had an income of more than Rs. 200,000.

Figure 4: Monthly Expenditure of Household



The occupational background of husbands/fathers of women MPs and the average monthly income of their households show that the majority of them came from the financial elite,

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## Political Profile

### Mode of Election

The parliament (2002-2007) had 74 female MPs. Sixty of them were elected through indirect elections on the gender quota seats, while the rest of them contested for general seats and won. The breakdown of the sample of women MPs for the research study is given in the table below:

Table 5: Mode of Election

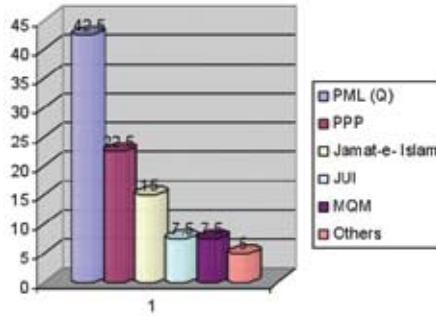
	Frequency	Percent
Through Quota	37	92.5
Direct Election	3	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

### Party Affiliations

All women MPs with no exception are affiliated with political parties. Since the gender quota was filled on the basis of a proportion of the number of directly elected MPs of each political party, it is obvious that they nominated women belonging to their political parties.

The following table shows the political affiliation of the respondents. 42.5% percent women MPs belonged to the ruling party (Pakistan Muslim League Q). 22.5% percent each belong to Pakistan Peoples Party and Mutahidda Majles-i-Amal (MMA) a coalition of six religious parties. Five women MPs (7.5%) had political affiliation to the Mutahidda Quomi Movement – a Karachi based Urdu-speaking ethnic party and 5% belonged to other parties.

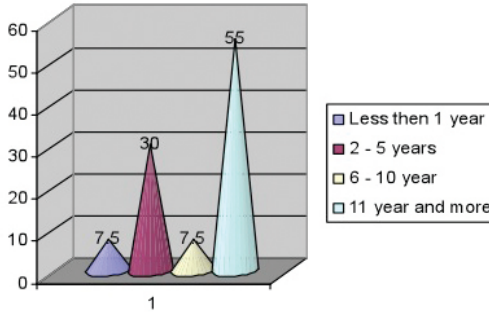
Figure 5: Party Affiliation



### Years of Affiliation and Holding of Party Offices

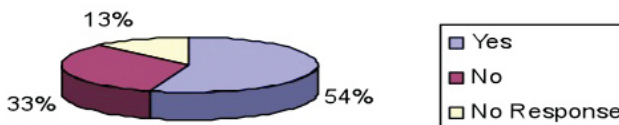
As many as 62.5% claimed that they had been members of their political parties for more than 6 years, while 35% have been members of political parties for less than 6 years.

Figure 6: Years of Political Party Affiliation



As far as holding of party office is concerned, 55% of female MPs said that they held some party office while 32.5% had never held any office in a political party.

Figure 7: Holding of Political Party Offices



## Participation in Elections

The majority of women MPs (72.5%) interviewed for the study had entered the national assembly for the first time. Two-third respondents had never contested elections in the past, while less than one-third said that they had contested some kind of election in the past.

Table 6: History of Contestation.

	Frequency	Percent
Reserved Seat	11	27.5
Direct Seat	29	72.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

Of the eleven who had contested an election in the past, 8 of them had contested local government elections, while only three of them had participated in any national or provincial elections. It appears that participation in local council elections might have provided women with some relevant experience and opportunity to graduate to the higher level of the national assembly. When they were asked whether they had won or lost in the elections in the past, seven out of 11 said that they had won elections in the past. Out of eleven respondents 8 of them contested election at the local government level. One woman had contested election on the national Assembly seat and two on the provincial assembly seat.

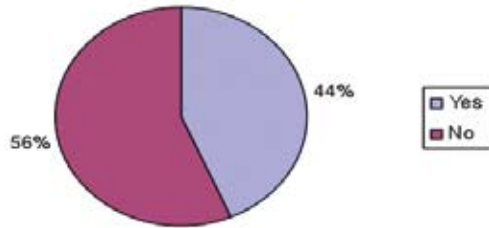
Table 7: Nature of Election Contest.

	Percent
National Assembly	1
Provincial Assembly	2
District Council	2
Tehsil Council	3
Union Council	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>

### Family Background in Politics

A significant number of female MPs (56%) belonged to families where no one had ever contested elections before while 44% said that someone in their families had contested elections before.

Figure 8: Political Background of Families.



When they were asked which seat their family members had contested elections for, 25% of them said it was the national and provincial seats, while 10% said that they had contested the district nazim seats. All of them reported that their family members won the election they contested.

### Participation in the Parliament

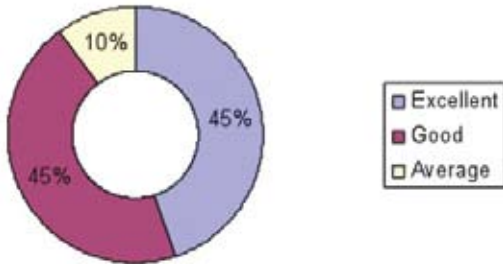
There is no gender disaggregated data available with the parliamentary authorities on the attendance of assembly session by MPs. What was obvious and frequently reported in the media was the issue of lack of quorum in parliamentary sessions. However, it was commonly observed that women MPs were more regular than male MPs in attending parliamentary sessions. Women MPs also came more prepared. A large majority (89%) of respondents said they had attended sessions of the parliament on a regular basis while only 11% said their attendance was not so regular.

Table 8: Attendance of Women MPs in the Parliament.

	Frequency	Percent
Regular	35.5	88.75
Irregular	4.5	11.25
Total	40	100

When they were asked to assess their own participation in the sessions of the parliament, 42.5% and 45% rated their performance excellent and good respectively, while 10% said that their performance was just average.

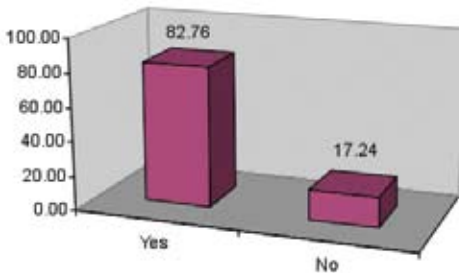
Figure 9: Quality of Participation in Parliamentary Debates?



### Capacities and Skills

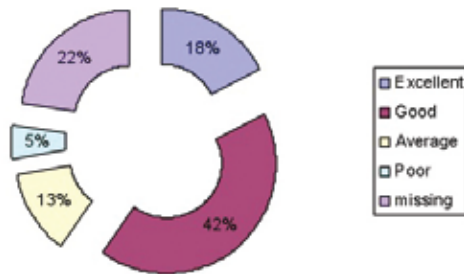
The study was conducted towards the end of the tenure of the Parliament. By that time female MPs had gone through a five-year long experience of being MPs. When they were asked to rate their performance as public representatives, a large majority (82.7%) of them said that they fully understood parliamentary functioning and had adequate skills to perform their responsibilities as members of the Parliament. Only 17.2% of them did not feel that they were well equipped to perform their roles as MPs.

Figure 10: Self-perception of Capacities and Skills



When they were asked to rate the political skills of their female colleagues in the parliament, 42% rated the political skills of their colleagues as good, while 18% felt that they were performing excellently. Thirteen percent rated the political skill of female MPs as average while only 5% said that their skills were poor.

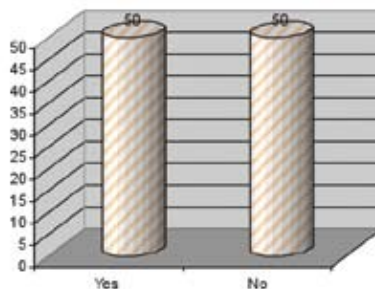
Figure 11: Political Skills of Women MPs.



### Training Input

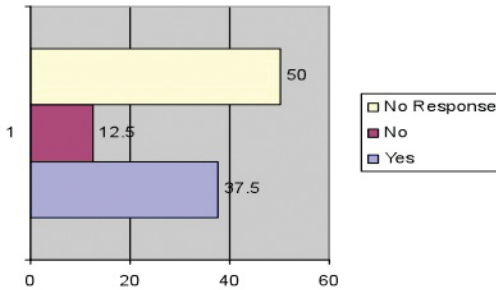
Fifty percent respondents reported that they had received some training after becoming members of the parliament.

Figure 12: Training Received after Becoming MP.



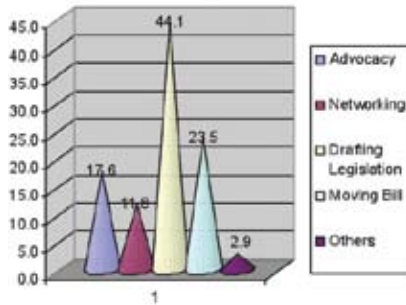
When they were asked to share their views about the quality of training, 75% of them said that they were satisfied, while 25% were not satisfied. No response in the following figure is actually from those who did not receive any training.

Figure 13: Satisfaction with Quality of Training



Despite the training and experience that they had gained over the last five years, the respondents identified areas where they would like to receive further training. Women MPs identified the areas shown in the figure below in which they lacked skills. The majority (37.5%) mentioned ‘drafting legislation’, followed by ‘moving bills’ by 20%. 15% and 10% mentioned advocacy and networking respectively.

Figure 14: Areas in Which Women MPs Lack Skills.



### Feminist Consciousness

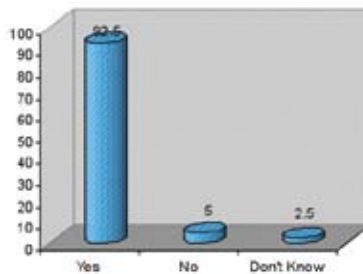
The quota debate is riddled with for and against arguments. Some argue that women’s presence in politics guarantees the protection and promotion of women’s interests while the other standpoint is that if women do not have a feminist consciousness then their descriptive participation through the gender quota will not make

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any difference to either politics or to women's interests. The study discusses the debate around the gender quota in detail later.

Several questions were included in the semi-structured questionnaire in order to ascertain the level of feminist consciousness. In response to a question as to whether they believed women have special interests, as high as 90% responded positively.

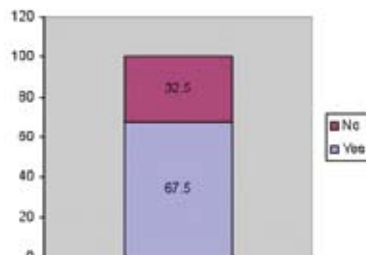
Figure 15: Views on Special Interest of Women to be Represented by Women.



However, not all of them supported the idea that only women could represent women's interests in a better way than men. The percentage drops from 90% to 70%, yet more than two-thirds asserted that women could represent women's interests better than men. Ten percent of them did not agree with the question and 20% took no position on the issue.

The majority of women MPs (57.5%) were in favor of the gender quota in politics, while 22.5% opposed and 20% were not sure.

Figure 16: Views on Gender Quota in Politics.



In order to assess the interest and commitment of women MPs to women’s issues prior to becoming MPs, a question was asked as to whether they had ever raised women’s issues in any forum. Slightly more than half of the MPs responded positively, while 45% of them had never participated in such activities.

Table 9: Role in Raising Women Issues.

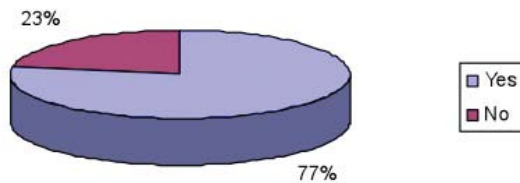
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	22	55
No	18	45
Total	40	100

### **Womens Solidarity and Cross-Party Womens Caucuses**

The debate in feminist literature has moved from universalizing women as a social category to recognize and accept difference and diversity among them that divides them along the lines of class, ethnicity, religion, race etc. Currently gender equality scholars and activists have developed a middle path out of these two extreme positions. Their standpoint is that women have interests in common and in conflict. They argue that women can develop ‘strategic essentialism’ to agree on issues of common interest and can engage in the politics of change together. The study attempted to discover what common interests women MPs had identified during their tenure to work on together, across party lines.

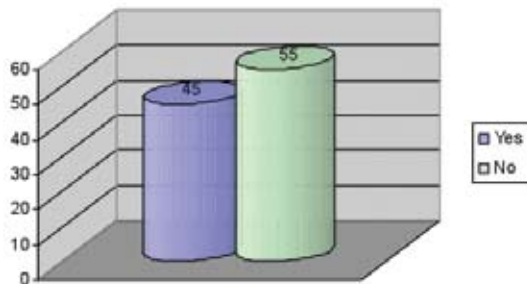
First of all, we were interested in finding out whether women MPs on reserved seats who expected to work towards women’s empowerment through parliament, felt any sense of solidarity among themselves. Despite serious party political divides, it was interesting to note that the majority of women (77%) said that they had a strong sense of solidarity with women MPs belonging to other parties than their own. Only 23% said that they did not feel any bond with other women MPs.

Figure 17: Solidarity among Women MPs on Women's Issues.



When they were asked whether they had any networking with male or female MPs belonging to different political parties, 55% of them responded positively. However, further probing of this question revealed that these links were at an informal level. There was no formal networking among women MPs across political parties.

Figure 18: Across Party Linkages with Female or Male Colleagues

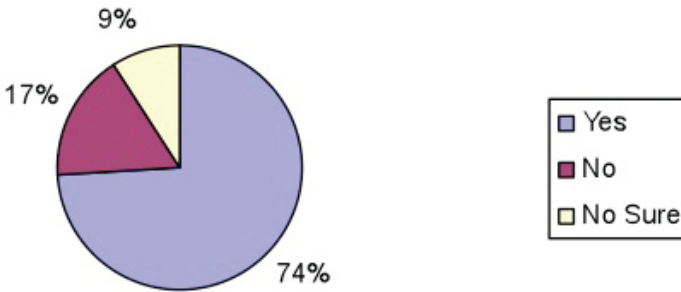


In response to a question about whether there was any effort to bridge party divides on women's issues by forming cross-party caucuses on these issues, nearly two-thirds of the female MPs mentioned that there were efforts while 15% said that they were not aware of any such attempt.

Formation of cross party caucuses on women's issues is one of the most successful strategies that has worked in many world parliaments to push a women's agenda in legislation and public policy. Women parliamentarians were able to bridge party divides and formed alliances on specific women's issue common to all. In

response to a question on whether they felt that women’s caucuses could help women parliamentarians to protect and promote women’s issues more effectively, 74% of them believed that this was the only way forward while 16% respondents did not feel that it could work and 9% were not sure about it.

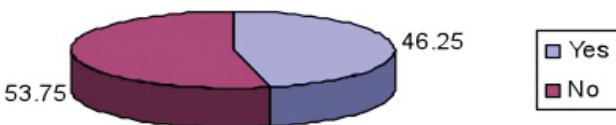
Figure 19: Views on Women Caucus



### Relationship with Civil Society

Networking within parliament, within and across political parties, with the women’s movement, with NGOs and civil society organizations outside the parliament is another proven strategy for pushing women’s interests in politics. In response to a question whether they had any networking with women’s rights groups/NGOs, 46% of them responded positively while 54% did not have any such contact or networking with women’s groups/NGOs outside the parliament. It appears that those women who had the experience of working with women’s rights groups or NGOs, became more active in raising women’s specific issues in the parliament.

Figure 20: Networking with Women’s Rights Groups/NGOs.





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## Contextualizing Women's Political Participation/Representation

Women's political participation and representation in the formal structures of politics are hugely shaped by the wider socio-cultural, economic, institutional and political frameworks of the society. The common pattern of women's political exclusion and participation often stems from socio-cultural and political discourses; structures and institutions and the personal and functional constraints that put limits on women's individual and collective agency. Beyond the specificities of the national and local contexts that impact on women's political participation and representation, the gendered nature of many issues of citizenship and democracy are generic, and are confronted in varying degrees by women all over the world. This section attempts to decode some of these broader social, political discourses in order to understand the nature of women's presence in the formal political arena.

### **Gender, Citizenship and Democracy**

Citizenship and Democracy are dynamic concepts that are constantly being revisited, contested, changed, and evolved. In the 19th and 20th century the major challenge to these concepts came from feminist political theorists. This section attempts to summarize the feminist debate on the gendered nature of citizenship and democracy.

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In the typology of rights developed by T.H. Marshall, civic, political and social rights constitute citizenship. Women have been historically denied these rights and the status of citizenship along with slaves, children, lower classes and immigrants (Roy, 2005:6). The exclusion of women from citizenship rights was justified through the theories of 'natural rights'. Rian Voet rightly points out that while 'natural rights' theories held a universal view of men having the same nature, rationality and same natural rights, it did make a distinction between men and women. The assumption was that the women were less rational and inferior to men. Sumi Krishna maintains that for the last 2000 years of human history, starting from the time of Aristotle, women have been excluded from citizenship due to the assumption that they lack rationality (Krishna, 2007).

Classical political thinkers and philosophers built their theories on public-private and nature-culture dichotomies. Plato argued in *The Republic*, that the female sex was created from the soul of wicked men and that women were, by nature, twice as bad as men (Okin, 1991). This contradicts Plato's own argument that given the same opportunities, girls and boys will perform equally. The inconsistencies in Plato's political ideas on women and family have been vigorously debated and discussed by feminists political theoreticians. What remain unchallenged in Plato's political philosophy is the nature and the role of women as different from men. Aristotle's theory asserts that women are a defective version of men, who lack virtue and reason (Paxton & Hughes, 2007, Sexonhouse 1991). He strongly believed in the sexual division of labor in which women were suited most to the private sphere of the family. Similarly, the Enlightenment philosophers, such as Hobbes, John Lock, Rousseau, Hegel also maintained the public/private divide in their political theories and philosophies. Men are seen as legitimate actors in public life, therefore eligible for citizenship rights. Women, in western political thought, are excluded not only from citizenship rights by virtue of their familial role in the private sphere of the

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home, their concerns are also seen as private and not public. (Meer and Sever, 2004).

Throughout Greek, Roman, medieval and modern times, women struggled to gain civil, legal and political rights. Women's groups started using the idea of the 'free and rational' individual promoted by liberal theory in the late 18th and early 19th century, to argue and demand equal political rights for themselves. The notion of universal citizenship and the discourse of human equality in liberal theory used by suffragists in the first wave of feminism to demand and win women's right to vote.

After the success of the suffragist movements around the world in the late 19th and early 20th century, it was assumed that women had become equal citizen as they now had the right to vote, as men did. However, women's de jure political rights proven to be insufficient to ensure women's de facto participation and representation in political processes and structures. Women continued to be treated as second class citizens and excluded from the political arena. This situation led many feminist political theorists to challenge categories of citizenship, politics and democracy as constructed in western political thought (Pateman, 1985; Randall 1999; Phillips, 1998; Arneil, 1999; Elstain 1981, Butler, 1992; Pitkin 1984)).

The most fundamental attack by feminist political thinkers was on the false dichotomy of public/private which formed the very foundation of those western political theories that led to the exclusion of women in the public arena of politics. As a result , not only were women's concerns ignored in public policies and political decision-making but "women's" issues, such as domestic violence, sexual abuse; reproductive rights etc. were also ignored in citizenship rights (Meer and Sever, 2004). Feminist academics challenged the conceptual boundaries of public/private and reconstructed it by highlighting the relational aspects between the two. Although

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feminist frameworks of citizenship differ and compete with each other, however, they share the common vocabulary of citizenship when it comes to inclusion of needs, interests and concerns of those who had been historically marginalized and excluded from the public domain. Despite their different approaches to the issue of gender equality, all feminist frameworks of citizenship are united in challenging the traditional divide of public/private that has undermined women's role and contribution to society.

Another important area of feminist critique of citizenships theories (communitarian, civic republican, neo-liberal and social liberal) relates to its use of citizenship as a gender neutral term. The notion of the universal citizen in classical political theory is based on male norms (Patman, 1988; Phillips 1992). Therefore, these theories chose to ignore the factors that position women as second class citizens in the society. Carol Patman (1988) contends that women's exclusion from politics and citizenship is due to the hidden 'sexual contract' in marriage which women enter into as subordinates. Men take control of their lives, labor and sexuality, which in fact provides the very basis of the social contract in liberal theory, in order to sustain itself. Rai maintains that the conceptual basis of liberal theory is inherently gendered in ways which perpetuate patterns of patriarchy and ignore gender subordination in both polity and society (Rai 2000:2). Feminist theorists challenge the notion of the abstract individual in liberal theory and rightly argue that the individual is not a gender-neutral category. That is why women, despite having the right to vote, are unable to impact on public policy and cannot bring the private sphere into the public domain. Therefore, any feminist rethinking on citizenship must address the issue of the unequal gender power relationship in order to remove structural barriers to women's democratic citizenship.

Democracy as a political system of good governance has historically served men better than women. Nearly three-quarters of people in

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developing countries live under democratic regimes, however their fundamental rights, particularly women's, children's and minorities', are consistently violated in democratic dispensations. Elite forms of democracy especially in South Asia continue to produce social and gender inequalities through their masculine policies and institutional structures. From ancient Greece to the modern times of the 21st century, politics continues to be defined as a male arena by the ideology of sexual division of labor. This is one of the reasons that various forms of democracy did not consider the private sphere as a political arena and made no efforts to recognize women as citizens. Thus they sidelined them and their concerns in theory and practice (Bathla, 1998:39).

Democratic systems function within state structures and feminists have remained fairly skeptical of the gender neutrality of the state, with the exception of liberal feminists who believed that the state is neutral. However, liberal feminists while recognizing that the state is dominated by men, believed that women's entry into state structures will transform its politics and the state will start acting on behalf of women as well. Radical, Socialist and Marxists Feminists viewed the state as essentially a patriarchal construct and an oppressive apparatus. Post-structural and Post-modern feminists do not view the state as a monolith. They believe that the state lacks coherence. It is a differentiated set of discourses, institutions, agencies and a network of power relations. Shirin Rai maintains that the state as a the network of power relations exists in cooperation and also in tension (Pringle and Watson, 1992; Rai, 1996). Theories of state, feminist perspectives and approaches to the state, are all constantly challenged and are constantly evolving. Within feminist state theories, there is a vibrant on-going debate among western and non-western feminists. Women living in post-colonial states accuse Western feminist state theories for ignoring the experiences of women from the Third World and for taking on universalizing language.

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The varied feminist perceptions and approaches to the state led to a debate among feminists whether to engage or disengage with the state. Those in favor of staying outside the state did not want women to enter politics. They argued that masculine institutions of the state will co-opt women and the feminist agenda, therefore, they should try to influence the state from outside. Feminists also raise the question of when nation states are forced to follow policies that create social and gender inequalities due to tremendous pressure from liberalization and globalization, is it then worth demanding women's representation in these oppressive structures of the state? (Rai, 2000, Staudt, 2000). Whereas another feminist standpoint on the issue is that women should enter politics and state structures by joining bureaucracies and try to influence and dent masculine ideologies of the state from within. They fear that the policy of disengagement with the state by feminists would lead to further marginalization. The nature of the state and the system of governance, impacts on women's engagement with the state. Women's experience with social democracies and with the women-friendly welfarist state, especially in Nordic countries, changed feminist perspectives on the state and their terms of engagement with the state. Whereas feminists belonging to liberal democracies in Western Europe remain uneasy with any possibility of engagement with the state. In the developing world, especially in the post colonial societies of South Asia where the state allows only an elite form of democracy, women not only have no choice, rather they have to face structural barriers in order to participate in politics and public life.

Feminist theorizing about the state brought government and governance under feminist scrutiny as well. Governments govern through the state institutions of the parliament, the executive, the judiciary and the media. Governments also operationalize themselves through other institutions such as the market, the community/civil society, the family/kinship. Naila Kabeer and Ramya

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Subrahmanian (2000) maintain that “although different organizations may operate with their own distinct way of doing things, there are certain common norms, beliefs and values which cut across the different institutional sites, leading to the systematic and widespread construction and reinforcement of certain social inequalities”. The gendered nature of institutions shapes policies and governance processes which create and recreate social and gender inequalities. Feminists have argued that due to the masculine nature of state institutions and government organizations, democracies have not served men and women equally. Even good governance would not necessarily result in gender equality. Therefore, it is imperative that women and other marginalized sections of society are brought to the center of governance structures and processes. Democracies as a political system of government need to be transformed into a more substantive and participatory system of governance. Unless space is created for the voice and the representation of all interests groups in governance, democracies will remain alien and irrelevant to people.

## **History of Women’s Political Representation in Pakistan**

The history of Pakistani women’s struggle for political rights and citizenship can be traced back to the colonial history of the Subcontinent. Women were living under seclusion and segregation. The conceptual boundaries of the public and private that defined women’s roles in the private arena of the home and men’s outside the home in the public sphere were strictly maintained physically through the institution of purdah by both Muslim and Hindu communities. Women were denied political rights in the public arena due to their status as private citizens in Indian polity. Indian men too lost the status of citizenship under British colonization.

In 1861 under the Indian Council Act, the British government allowed a limited number of 6-12 Indian men to become members

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of the Governors General's Council through nomination by the Governor General. The principle of representation and election was introduced by the British government in 1892 and the number was raised to 16 in the Legislative Council. Later, the Government of India Act 1909, increased the number to 60 in the Legislative Council. Women were not given the right of representation in the Council.

Interestingly, while the British colonial government denied political rights to women they selectively supported women's rights in the social arena to as part of the enlightenment of their superior culture over the 'uncivilized' natives. Governor-General Lord William Bentinck banned sati in 1829. The British government passed legislation to stop some cultural practices that were inimical to women such as the ill-treatment of widows, polygamy, child marriage etc. However, after 1857, the British in India decided, in their own political interest, not to pass any legislation that interfered with the religion and customs of Indian subjects, even those that were violating the rights of women (Saiyid, 1998).

When it came to the political rights of women there was a collusion of the patriarchal mindset of the colonizers and the colonized. The British colonizers denied the right to vote to women and there was no protest from the male leadership of the colonized. Although the Indian National Congress did endorse women's request for adult franchise, they did not place women's political rights in their demands while negotiating with the colonial government. It was women activists who took the initiative on their own and made an effort to seek an audience with the Secretary of State, Edwin Montagu, to discuss the issue of franchise for women in 1917.

The educated class of women became active in lobbying for their political rights in 1917 when the secretary of State, Edwin Montagu, visited India to finalize the reform proposal to establish responsible

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government in India. A fourteen member delegation, which included one Muslim woman (the wife of Maulana Hasrat Mohani) and headed by Sarojini Naidu, met him and demanded the right of vote for Indian women in the future constitution. Montagu-Chelmsford did not pay any heed to this demand. Women presented their case again later in front of the Southborough Franchise Committee, who had come to India to determine the issue of franchise. This Committee did not recommend the extension of franchise to women either.

Indian women's struggle to gain the right to vote met with some success with the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) that granted women the right to vote if they qualified according to certain criteria (education, property) laid down by the committee. However, the JPC left the matter to the discretion of the central and provincial legislatures. Women who were educated and possessed property were given the right to vote by some provincial legislatures. By 1923, seven out of nine provinces allowed women to become members of the provincial assembly (Khera, 1990). Women continued to argue their case for franchise at the Round Table Conferences (1930-31), in front of various committees (Lothian, Joint Select Committee) and Commissions (Simon). Their consistent demands for citizenship rights resulted in their representation in the State Council (6 out of 156) and the Central Legislative (9 out of 250) which was given to them through the reservation of seats in the Government of India Act 1935. There were six million women who fulfilled the property criteria and could therefore exercise their right to vote and contest elections from general seats as well (Constitutional Documents (Pakistan, Vol. II).

Muslim women, though less in number, were active in the struggle for franchise and representation (Anwari Begum; Geeti Ara; Jahan Ara Shahnawaz; Fatima Begum; Lady Hidayatullah etc.) in United India. They emerged as political actors and came out of the seclusion of their homes. When the All India Muslim League decided to mobilize

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women and students to join politics, Muslim women started organizing themselves under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah. The establishment of the Muslim League central, provincial and district subcommittees provided women with the space and the platforms to politically participate in the nationalist movement. They became active in mobilizing Muslim women around the country to join hands with the All India Muslim League (AIML). Women played a critical role in mobilizing support for the AIML from both urban and rural women. They traveled to every nook and corner of the country. They actively participated in organizing political meetings and events. Their number in the meeting that was held in Lahore in 1940 where the historic Lahore Resolution was adopted was unprecedented.

Women's political participation moved beyond mobilizing women voters and organizing political events into agitational politics when they came out on the streets to protest the arrest of Muslim leaders and the banning of the Khaksar (religious party) in ?? . Some of them were arrested by the police. They also demonstrated against the decision when the Muslim League was not allowed to form the government despite winning a majority in the provincial election (79 out of 150). Women's role in these protests was so daring and unwavering that the government had to ban the Muslim League National Guard and yet women continued to come out on the streets to protest and to demonstrate. They were arrested, baton charged and tear-gassed. Women also played an active role during the civil disobedience movement that was launched in Punjab and NWFP in 1947. The daring participation of pathan women in public protests despite the state violence surprised many. They formed a secret organization 'War Council' and set up an underground radio station (Mumtaz and Shaheed, 1987).

Since independence, there has been a wide gap between women's political participation and their representation. Universal franchise

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came as a gift of independence to all citizens in 1947. However, despite women's active role in the independence movement there were only two women, Begum Jahan Ara Shahnawaz and Begum Shaista Ikramullah who were elected to the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. This was quite a mis-match between women's political role and participation in the nationalist movement and their share of representation in the legislature of independent Pakistan. This clearly indicated the entrenched dualistic mindset of male leaders who considered the ultimate place for women to be within the four walls of the home and their primary role to be that of mother and wife. Mumtaz and Shaheed (1986) referred to this phenomenon as generic to many countries where women were called upon to play a political role side by side with men at times of crisis, war or the nationalist struggle but they were pushed back to their 'legitimate arena' of the home as soon as the crisis was over.

There was no woman in the second national assembly of Pakistan (1955-58). The Governor General, Ghulam Mohammad, dissolved the first national assembly on October, 24, 1954. Instead of holding fresh elections, members of the provincial assemblies elected members of the National Assembly and no woman was elected. The Constitution of 1956 provided 10 reserved seats for women for a period of ten years, 5 women from East Pakistan and 5 from West Pakistan, but no elections were held under this constitution.

The Constitution of 1962 reduced the number of reserved seats for women from ten to six, three from each province of West and East Pakistan. Thus in the second (1962-65) and third (1965-69) national assemblies, six women in each were elected through indirect elections, to the seats reserved for women.

Women's reserved seats were increased again from 6 to 13 in Legal Framework Order (1969), however, the fourth national assembly was convened only after East Pakistan had become the independent

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State of Bangladesh. Six women were elected on these reserved seats in the remaining part of Pakistan.

The Constitution of 1973 provided 10 reserved seats for women in the NA for a period of 10 years or till the second general election whichever was later. Ten women on reserved seats and one on a general seat took their place in the sixth national assembly.

In the seventh national assembly (1985-88), Article 51(4) of the 1973 Constitution was amended and the quota provision of 10 reserved seats for women was increased to 20 and extended to the third general election or for 10 years whichever was later. Twenty women were elected on reserved seats and two on general seats. This status quo of reserved seats for women was maintained in the eighth NA (1988-90). Three women were elected on general seats.

In the ninth NA (1990-1993) there were only two women representatives who won elections on reserved seats. The provision of reserved seats lapsed in 1990.

In the tenth (1993-96) and eleventh (1997) NA, no reservation was made for women. Four and six women were elected after winning elections on general seats respectively.

The low political representation in the national legislature is a disconnect between women's increasing interest and participation in politics and their representation. Women have been increasingly participating in politics as voters, as members and workers of political parties and as candidates and elected representatives, however, this rise in their active interest in politics has not led to a higher level of their representation in the formal structures of the country.

The military regime of Parvez Musharraf, who took over from the

civilian government of Nawaz Shareef in October 1999, took a landmark decision not only to reserve seats for women in political structures at the national, provincial and local level, it radically increased the size of the reservation. Thirty three percent seats were reserved for women in all three tiers (union council, tehsil and district) of Local Government and 17% women in the national, provincial assemblies and in the senate. This resulted into 60 women in the twelfth NA who were elected on reserved seats and twelve women were elected on general seats.

The elections of the thirteenth NA kept the provision of 17% reserved seats for women in the national and provincial assemblies. Currently there are 60 women who have been elected on reserved seats and 15 on general seats.

The following table shows the numerical strength of women in the 12 National Assemblies of Pakistan.

Table 10: Women Representation in National Assemblies 1955-2007.

Year (Tenure of Assembly)	Number of Women Legislation		
	Reserved Seats	General Seats	Total
1955-58	0	0	0
1956	♣		
1962-1965	6 + 2*	0*	8
1965-1969	6	0	6
1972	6	0	6
March 1977-July 1977	10	01	11
1985-1988	20	2	22
1988 – 90	20	4	24
1990 – 93	0	2	2
1993 – 96	0	4	4
1997 – 99	0	6	6
2002-2007	60	14	74
2007- to date	60	15	75

Source: Mumtaz, K (2005), “Women’s Representation, Effectiveness and Leadership in South Asia” conference paper.

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♣ Article 22 (2) (1) of the 1956 constitution provided 10 reserved seats for women members for a period of 10 years. 5 from East Pakistan, 5 from West Pakistan. Women's territorial constituencies were delimited for this, giving a double vote to women in these constituencies-one for a general seat candidate and one for the women's seat. However, no elections were held under this Constitution.

In the absence of a gender quota as shown in the table above, women were not able to enter the parliament despite their active presence and participation in political parties.

### **Gender Quotas in Pakistan**

As mentioned earlier, the gender quota is not new in the political history of Pakistan, in fact, it is a continuation of the colonial tradition. The British government set out quotas for women as well as different minorities in the Government of India Act, 1935. The tradition of quotas for women in politics was continued in post-colonial Pakistan by the civil and military regimes. The Constitution of Pakistan 1956, 1962 and 1973 reserved seats for women, 3%, 2.75%, and 5% respectively in the national and provincial assemblies. In 1985 the number of reserved seats for women in the national assembly was raised to 20 (10%) for a period of 10 years or three general elections whichever came earlier. In 2002, through the Legal Framework Order, sixty seats were reserved for women in a house of 342 members (17%) of the National Assembly. Multiple socio-cultural, economic and political factors hampered women's full integration in public life. Therefore, the state took this affirmative action of reserved seats to bring women into the national and provincial legislatures. However, the total number of seats reserved for women in the national legislatures remained insignificant until 2002 when 17 percent seats were reserved for women. These were additional seats to be filled through the proportional representation system whereby the share of women's reserved seats for each party was determined on the basis of general seats won. Each party submitted a closed list of its women candidates on the reserved seats. No criteria was specified for the selection of women candidates

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on these reserved seats. As a result, the leadership of the political parties nominated those women at the top of the closed list, who were either their relatives or belonged to elite political families. This led to a capture by the elite of the women's reserved seats in the legislature. The majority of these women came from traditional political families with feudal backgrounds. Some of them were kith and kin of the leaders of various political parties. The majority of them entered politics for the first time and had limited experience of political work or working for women's rights issues. Only a few women MPs had linkages with the women's rights movement prior to entering in the national legislature.

Moreover, candidates for the seats of the National and Provincial Assemblies were required to be graduates. This also worked against many female party workers who belonged to the poor or lower middle classes. Thousands of female party workers who had been working tirelessly for their parties for years and years could not qualify to be nominated on the reserved seats due to this condition. Thus women from the elite classes with the collusion of the male leaders of their political parties actually captured the space that had been created for women's representation through the reservation of seats in the parliament.

The reservation of gender quotas in formal political institutions was riddled with an essentialist assumption that women were a universal and undifferentiated category rather than one divided by class, ethnicity, region and the rural/urban divide. The treatment of women as a homogeneous group negated the diversity in their social status. Thus, the adequate representation on the reserved seats, of the different interests of women belonging to different social groups was ignored. This essentialist approach to gender quotas gave a free hand to political leaders to nominate women of their own choice, from their families and from the elite classes, to the reserved seats for women.

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Another specific issue with the gender political quota in Pakistan is the way government chose to institute the quota provision through an indirect mode of election for the reserved seats. The indirect modality of the elections keeps women away from mainstream political processes and does not provide them opportunities to develop their political skills. Nor does it allow women to develop their own direct constituency. As they were expected to be selected or nominated by the leadership of their political party which consists of men from the elite, this reinforced the already dependent status of women in political parties and their reliance on the political leadership.

The gender quota in Pakistan has always been instituted through an indirect mode of election which negates the very spirit of this affirmative measure. The need for affirmative action arises in societies where social, economic and political processes marginalize certain sections of society and they are excluded from mainstream processes and structures. Such affirmative measures are taken to bring them into the mainstream. However, it is important that these affirmative measures be instituted in a manner that removes structural barriers to women's political participation so that the need for the quota provision is eliminated. The gender quota is to be considered a temporary measure which should be able to create an enabling environment in which this quota provision is gradually withdrawn and women are able to compete with men in the political arena without any special measures favoring them.

# 5

## Role and Performance of Women Parliamentarians

Parliaments as representative bodies of people, have three key functions i.e. law making, representation of people's interests and the oversight of government functioning. In this study the performance of women parliamentarians is assessed with reference to these three main functions of the parliament. Before I deliberate on the performance of women parliamentarians, it is important to assess the overall working of the parliament and the level of descriptive and substantive participation of both its male and female members.

Pakistan has a political history of parliamentary disruptions by military rulers. The parliament that was restored after the general election in October 2002 had a difficult start due to the controversy it inherited around the Legal Framework Order (LFO) 2002. Although elections were held under the LFO, there were sticky points in the LFO such as the combining of the post of Army Chief with that of Head of the State, the role of the National Security Council and the raising of the retirement age of Supreme Court Judges. The government and opposition locked their horns on the issue of the LFO and the parliament was unable to function smoothly. Due to these reasons the overall performance of the parliament from 2002 to 2007 was quite poor.

Out of a total of 608 working days, the national assembly worked only for 385 days (SDPD, 2008). Despite many efforts, we were

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unable to obtain information on the attendance of the members of the national Parliaments as representative bodies of people, have three key functions i.e. law making, representation of people's interests and the oversight of government functioning. In this study the performance of women parliamentarians is assessed with reference to these three main functions of the parliament. Before I deliberate on the performance of women parliamentarians, it is important to assess the overall working of the parliament and the level of descriptive and substantive participation of both its male and female members.

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Out of a total of 608 working days, the national assembly worked only for 385 days (SDPD, 2008). Despite many efforts, we were unable to obtain information on the attendance of the members of the national assembly. However, it was commonly observed that MNAs had not been attending parliament sessions on a regular basis. Lack of quorum remained a permanent problem faced by the Musharraf government in running its parliamentary business effectively and efficiently. Again it is a common observation that the attendance of women parliamentarians in parliamentary sessions was better than that of male MNAs. Eighty percent female

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parliamentarians from our sample reported that they had been participating in parliamentary sessions on a regular basis. Also a large number of female respondents perceived their own level of participation in the parliament as “excellent” (42.5%) and 45% rated it as “good”. Only ten percent women parliamentarians felt that their participation in parliamentary sessions was just an average. The performance of the parliament in terms of law making was also fairly poor. Out of 222 bills/Ordinances introduced in the parliament during its 44th sessions from 2002-2007, only 50 bills/Ordinances were passed over a period of five years (SDPD, 2008).

Women’s legislative performance has to be assessed against the backdrop of the overall functioning of the parliament itself. A review of parliamentary proceedings shows that women’s interventions in parliamentary sessions and debates were less in the first and second years of the parliament and after that they started participating more actively in parliamentary discussions and debates. Since the parliamentary authorities do not maintain gender disaggregated records, the level of women’s participation on the parliamentary floor was assessed through a detailed analysis of parliamentary proceedings. The review does not compare the level of participation and performance of female MPs with male MPs. Women’s performance is assessed on the level of their own participation and contribution in 34 sessions of the parliament in terms of moving bills, motions, resolutions, parliamentary questions, points of order and call attention notices moved by them.

As mentioned earlier women MPs viewed their own participation in the parliament as better than that of male colleagues in terms of their regularity in attending parliamentary sessions. Women MPs have been actively participating in the working of the parliament. They have been raising points of order and making comments and observations on parliamentary debates. The following table shows the number of private members bills, Call Attention Notices

(CANs), privilege motions, parliamentary questions, point of order and comments made by women MPs during the 34 sessions of the parliament.

Table 11: Nature of Women MPs Interventions.

S.No	Nature of intervention	Total
1	Private Members Bills	11
2	Resolutions	11
3	Privilege Motions	34
4	Points of order	94
5	Parliamentary Questions	920
6	Calling Attention Notices	97
7	Comments / Interventions/ Debates	834

Source: Compiled from parliamentary proceedings of 34 sessions.

The political party affiliation of those who moved parliamentary questions, points of order and privilege motions are given in appendix 8.4., 8.5 and 8.6).

## Women Parliamentarians and Legislation

The continuing gender gap in national legislative bodies around the world shows that the commitment made in the fourth United Nations World Conference held in Beijing in 1995 by 189 countries to achieve gender equality in politics is still a distant dream. Nevertheless, the number of women in the world parliaments is increasing slowly. It has moved up from 1 percent in 1960 to 17.7% in 2006 (IPU, 2007). With an increase in the number of women in world parliaments, questions are being asked about the performance of women parliamentarians. Some women lobbyists had used essentialist arguments in order to promote their presence in politics. Their assertion was that women are caring and nurturing by nature. They have a distinct perspective, therefore, their inclusion will make a substantive difference to the nature of politics. Now the question being raised is what impact have women parliamentarians had on the political realm? What difference have women parliamentarians made to the nature and style of politics? And to what extent have

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women parliamentarians promoted women's agenda and interests in legislation and public policy?

Some research studies conducted in the developed and developing countries to explore the question of whether women have different legislative priorities to men, suggest that women law makers are more likely to push legislation on family related issues such as domestic violence, reproductive rights, children and the social sector than men (Thomas, 1994; Phillips, 1995).

The present study makes an attempt to assess women's concerns and priorities and their legislative behavior through reviewing parliamentary proceedings from a gender perspective and interviewing women parliamentarians. Women MPs interventions are divided into six categories i.e. women specific, social sector/ public interest, political and constitutional, economic, governance and miscellaneous. However, these categories are not mutually exclusive and at time were overlapping

The gender review of the proceeding of the Pakistan parliament (2002-2007) shows that in line with the findings of some of the earlier studies conducted in both developed and developing countries, the majority of interventions by women parliamentarians (40%) on the parliamentary floor related to social sector and public interest issues. Women parliamentarians showed high level of concerns on the state of social sector in general and education sector in particular. They had been frequently raising public interest issues such as the issue of inflation, unemployment, rising prices of utilities, drug addiction, financial support to poor from bait-ul-mal, financial support to poor suffering from various illnesses, rehabilitation of baggers, electrification, freedom of press and media, irregularities of government contractors, rehabilitation of earth quack affectees etc.

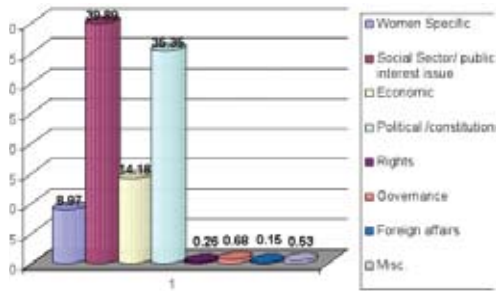
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Interestingly, at variance with the common perception that women parliamentarians are less interested in hard core constitutional and political issues, the findings of this study show that after the social sector and public interest issues, political and constitutional issues was the second area in which women MNAs were most interested and in which they participated during parliamentary debates. Apart from making general statements in defense of government policies by those who belonged to the ruling party and general criticism of government policies by those women parliamentarians who belonged to opposition, there were several political and constitutional issues of national importance on which women parliamentarians expressed their views. Women parliamentarians were quite vocal in criticizing the political role of the army and the defense budget. Some women members belonging to the PPP and the PML (N) demanded a reduction in the defense budget and a reallocation of money saved from defense to be spent on education and health. Women MNAs also gave their views on constitutional matters. They frequently commented both for and against the LFO and 58-2 (b) depending on their political party affiliations. They expressed their views on issues relating to the National Finance Commission, provincial autonomy, independence of the judiciary, the nuclear and Kashmir policies, Kargil and terrorism. Women parliamentarians raised issues of corruption, the law and order situation, and the transparency and fairness of elections and referenda. Their contribution in parliamentary discussions and debates shows that women parliamentarians were alive to political and constitutional issues as much as they were to social sector and women-specific issues.

The common perception is that women represent women's interest. However, the data of the study shows that women's specific issues raised by women MPs came third on the list of various categories of issues women MPs raised during the NA sessions. Women MPs were more active in raising issues which concerns the general public

and not exclusively the women. Women’s specific issues raised by women MPs ranged from violence against women, honor killing reproductive health, trafficking of women, sexual harassment at work place, protection and support to burn victims and survivor of vilonce, women’s adequate representation in government bodies and discriminatory attitudes of the speaker and male MPs.

Figure 21: Nature of Issues Raised by Women MPs.



The findings of the study confirm the conclusion of earlier studies that women parliamentarians do have distinctive legislative behavior. They take keen interest in pushing pro-women legislation related to family and social sector matters. This trend is clearly reflected from the number and content of private members bills introduced by women parliamentarians belonging to various political parties which is unprecedented in the parliamentary history of Pakistan. Twelve MNAs out of the 40 who were interviewed for this study, reported that they had submitted Private Member Bills (PMBs) related to women’s issues. Out of 69 private members bills that were pending before the national assembly at the time of its dissolution, 31 private members bill were submitted by women parliamentarians. Only one Bill on Women’s Protection was passed out of 50 bills that were passed by the parliament. The content of the private members bills show that the majority of PMBs wanted new laws to provide protection to women against domestic violence, honor killing, and traditional practices that are inimical to them. Again it was women parliamentarians, Sherry Rehman from the PPP who

submitted The Hudood Laws (Repeal) Bill, 2006 and Kashmala Tariq from the PML (Q) who submitted the Offence of Zina (Enforcement of Hudood) (Amendment) Bill, 2006. There was only one bill on the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) 2006 that was submitted by a male MP Ch. Shujat Hussain. The content of PMBs given in the table below clearly shows that women parliamentarian's legislative priorities were substantively different from their male colleagues. Even those women parliamentarians who belonged to religious parties submitted PMBs that demanded uplift and welfare of women.

### Private Members Bills of Women Parliamentarians Pending before the National Assembly on 15.11.2007 (at time of dissolution)

Table 12: Various Bills Moved by Women MPs.

S. No.	Short title of the bill	Introduced by	Date
1	The Protection and Empowerment of Women Bill 2004	Ms. Sherry Rehman	14.09.04
2	The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2004	Ms. Sherry Rehman	14.09.05
3	The Equality of Opportunity for Women in Employment Bill 2006	Ms. Sherry Rehman & 12 other MNAs	07.02.06
4	The Hudood laws (Repeal) bill 2006	Ms. Sherry Rehman & 11 other MNAs	07.02.06
5	The Prevention of Domestic Violence Bill 2006	Ms. Sherry Rehman	08.07.06
6	The Control of Thalassamemia bill 2004	Ms Gule Farkhanda & 8 others	13.09.05
7	The Services Tribunals (Amendment) Bill 2006	Ms. Samina Khalid Ghurki	06.12.05
8	The Pakistan Postal Service Management (Amendment) Bill 2006	Ms. Samina Khalid Ghurki	12.09.06
9	The Agricultural Pesticides (Amendment) Bill 2007	Ms. Samina Khalid Ghurki	08.05.07
10	The Protection of Serving Women Bill 2006	Ms. Samia Raheel Qazi & 16 other MNAs	07.02.06
11	The Uplift and Welfare of Women Bill 2006	Ms. Samia Raheel Qazi & 16 other MNAs	14.02.06
12	The Offence of Zina (Enforcement of Hudood) (Amendment) Bill 2005	Dr. Farida Ahmad Siddique & 15 other MNAs	07.02.06

13	The Dowry and Bridal Gifts (Restriction) Bill 2006	Dr. Farida Ahmad Siddique & 14 other MNAs	07.02.06
14	The Pakistan Environment Protection (Amendment) Bill 2006	Ms. Fauzia Wahab & 21 other MNAs	07.02.06
15	The Pakistan Citizens (Amendment) Bill 2006	Ms. Mehnaz Rafi	07.02.06
16	The Pakistan penal Code (Amendment) Bill 2006	Ms. Mehnaz Rafi	14.02.06
17	The Pakistan penal Code (Amendment) Bill 2006 (366-C)	Ms. Mehnaz Rafi	02.05.06
18	The Domestic Violence Against Women (Prevention and Protection) Bill 2006	Ms. Mehnaz Rafi and Mr. Riaz Fatyana	08.08.06
19	The Special Citizens Bill 2007	Ms. Mehnaz Rafi	08.05.07
20	The Criminal Law (Amendment ) Bill 2006	Ms. Rubina Saadad Qaim Khani & 5 other MNAs	14.02.06
21	The Pakistan Baitul (Amendment) Bill 2006	Ms. Rubina Shaheen Watto	12.09.06
22	The Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Bill 2006	Ms. Rubina Shaheen Watto	12.09.06
23	The Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) 2006	Ch. Shujaat Hussain MNA	13.02.07
24	The Pakistan Pharmacy Bill 2007	Syeda Farhana Khalid Banoori & 19 other MNAs	08.05.07
25	The Allopathic System (Prevention of Misuse) (Amendment) Bill 2007	Syeda Farhana Khalid Banoori & 18 other MNAs	08.05.07
26	The Pakistan Penal Code (Amendment) Bill 2007	Ms. Yasmeen Rehman & 3 other MNAs	08.05.07
27	The Control of Viral Diseases Transmitted via Blood Products Bill 2007	Ms. Yasmeen Rehman & 11 other MNAs	08.05.07
28	The Pakistan Environment Protection (Amendment) Bill 2007	Ms. Yasmeen Rehman & 7 other MNAs	08.05.07
29	The Drugs (Second Amendment) Bill 2007	Ms. Yasmeen Rehman & 4 other MNAs	08.05.07
30	The Family Stability & Protection Bill 2007	Ms. Aisha Munawar & 11 other MNAs	08.05.07
31	The Injured Persons (Medical Aid) (Amendment) Bill 2007	Ms. Mehreen Raja and 40 other MNAs	09.10.07
32	The Offence of Zina (Enforcement of Hudood) (Amendment) Bill 2006	Ms. Kashmala Tariq	08.08.06

Source: SDPD (2008), "Five Years Performance of the National Assembly of Pakistan"

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It was noted that the content of some of the PMBs was exactly the same, such as the bill on Domestic Violence against Women (Prevention and Protection) bill, 2006 submitted by Mahnaz Rafi and Mr. Riaz Fatyana and the Prevention of Domestic Violence Bill, 2006 submitted by Sherry Rehman and other MNAs from PPP. However, women MPs did not make any effort to discuss it or club it together or develop a strategy to push together for its passage.

There is contradictory evidence that women parliamentarians had shown occasionally solidarity and support across party lines on legislation relates to women's specific issues, while they had also opposed women-specific legislation because of their party politics. For example the amendment to the honor killing legislation is a case of women solidarity. The amendment was moved by the ruling party but was supported by women parliamentarians from the PPP too. However, when Sherry Rehman from PPPP moved a motion reference "The Introduction of Bill to Provide for Elimination of Gender Discrimination", the bill was opposed by Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar, the adviser women affairs. The content of the bill was fairly non-controversial. It was seeking universal education for women and free primary education to every child. The bill proposed that one third women must be recruited in the Federal Public Service Commission and equal pay for equal work for women in line with ILO convention 100. However this bill was opposed by the woman legislator of the ruling party who claimed that their government was liberal and champion of women equality. Since the ruling party did not want that the bill moved by opposition should be passed as it would yield some political benefit to the PPPP, the ruling party opposed it. Women parliamentarians in this case preferred to toe the party line instead of securing women's interests through the passage of the bill.

Nevertheless, when women MPs were asked the question whether they felt solidarity with other women parliamentarians because of

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their gender , the majority of them (77.5%) responded positively. However, there were very few occasions on which women parliamentarians exhibited gender solidarity on issues of common concern.

Also it was noted that women parliamentarians did not make enough effort to effectively lobby prior to moving their Private Members Bills in the parliament. At times they did not discuss matters even with the leadership of their own party. Lack of preparation and effective lobbying prior to the submission of the bills indicates that some of these MNAs were more interested in scoring political points and in gaining political legitimacy through moving these items of draft legislation than in getting them through the parliament. This non-serious attitude of women MPs is also reflected in the fact that some of PMBs submitted by female MNAs of different political parties were similar in nature and content, yet they were not submitted as joint bills. However these were clubbed together by the legislative committee later.

The fact of the matter is that despite introducing a fairly large number of bills, women MNAs were not very effective in getting their bills through. This failure can be explained by a number of factors. One of the obvious reasons is an overall inefficient functioning of the parliament itself. Parliament has been extremely slow in passing laws. There were a total of 222 bills/ordinances introduced in the last parliament and only 50 bills/ordinances were passed. The performance of parliament from November 15, 2002 till November 15th, 2006 in conducting its business, indicates an extreme level of inefficiency. For example out of a total of 5038 resolutions presented during the period from 2002-2006, only 52 (1%) were passed. Out of 40091 questions, 8816 (22%) were answered. Out of 2820 calling attention notices, statements were made on 283 (10%). A total of 2410 adjournment motions were moved while only 399 (16.5%) were brought before the house

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while a bare 100 were discussed. Out of 621 questions of privilege, 208 (33%) were brought before the house and 10 were resolved in the Speaker's Chamber. Similarly, of motions moved under Rule 69 and Motions under Rule 241 only 12.6% and 1.3% respectively were discussed in the house. Given this background of the overall inefficient functioning of the parliament, the low performance of women parliamentarians in terms of getting pro-women legislation through cannot be attributed to lack of capacity and capability of women parliamentarians alone. Systemic and political issues that impact on the functioning of parliament in general should also be taken into account in understanding the poor performance of women parliamentarians in conducting legislative business.

Additionally it is also a fact that women MNAs did not have the technical know-how to draft their bills properly. Most of the PMBs were badly drafted. Sixty eight percent women parliamentarians reported that they did not receive any technical support or advice from parliamentary staff in drafting their bills. There was no mechanism in place within the political parties to help their parliamentarians to draft their bills. It was only women members of the MMA who reported that their parties had provided them a secretariat with the services of a professional lawyer who was hired to support them, in addition to the advice of senior party members who helped them to draft their bills.

Our questionnaire had a section on Training Needs Assessment (TNA) of women parliamentarians. The analysis of the information gathered on training needs shows that drafting of legislation was mentioned as the top training need priority by 57.5% women parliamentarians, followed by advocacy and networking skills.

The study provides sufficient evidence to show that women parliamentarians have distinctive legislative priorities to those of men. They feel more strongly about women, family and

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social welfare issues than male parliamentarians. However, as Ann Phillips (1991) asserts, women's different legislative priorities should not be explained through essentialism. It is women's social position and their specific roles in society that determine their experiences, concerns and priorities as different to men's.

### **Women Parliamentarians and Representation**

One of the roles of the parliament is to represent the interests of various sections of the society. In a parliamentary democracy, it is assumed that the gender or group identity of the representative is irrelevant in protecting and promoting the politics of interest. However, this assumption is questioned by those who believe that group interests can only be represented by those who belong to the same interest group. Women have long been assumed as a universal category with distinct interests. This notion of universal women was challenged by the relativism of post-structuralist and post-modernist scholarship. The differences amongst women along the lines of class, ethnicity, race, caste, sexual orientation and other social divisions challenges the universalism of woman as a category of analysis. If women are divided, then the question arises, do women have interests shared across the borders of class, ethnicity, religion, rural/urban background that needs to be represented in legislative bodies? Many feminists argue that recognition of differences among women does not mean that women have no interests in common that can be the basis for them to collectively engage in politics (Hill and Chappell, 2006). The politics of difference and identity should not be allowed to destabilize feminist politics. Many feminists argue that women have both interests in common and in conflict (Vickers 2002a; Sivak 1995, Jhappan, 1996). Therefore, women can form 'strategic essentialism' a term coined by Gaytree Spivak which means "formulation of a temporary consensus about women's interests". This does not mean that women have all interests in common. However, women can formulate minimum common interests in a specific situation and articulate them in politics.

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Women's interests are generally ignored by the male centered politics in Pakistan. The inclusion of women in formal political arenas is considered imperative in order to represent women's interests. It is argued that women's presence in politics is not only important for symbolic reasons but also to bring about a substantive difference to politics.

Women are expected to aggregate and articulate women's interests in legislation and public policy. Ninety percent women parliamentarians interviewed for this study believed that women had special interests. Seventy percent of female MNAs believed that only women parliamentarians could represent the interests of women.

The review of parliamentary proceedings informed us that women parliamentarians, in their individual capacity, did raise many women's specific issues on the parliamentary floor related to laws, violence against women, protection and empowerment of women. However, women parliamentarians could not manage to act collectively on behalf of women voters in the parliament. One of the reasons for this failure was that women parliamentarians belong to various political parties whose ideological position on women's issues varied significantly from each other. Women parliamentarians were unable to develop a consensus on a minimum agenda on which everyone could agree and work together.

Some women parliamentarians from PPPP took an initiative to form a cross party women parliamentarians caucus. This effort failed due to differences which emerged among women parliamentarians soon after the establishment of the caucus. Female MNAs could not agree on a common issue that needed to be prioritized and pushed together in the parliament.

The majority of women parliamentarians strongly believe that formation of cross party caucuses is the most effective strategy

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to push women's agenda and protect women's interest in the parliament. In response to a question whether a women's caucus could help women parliamentarians to project women's issues more effectively, the majority of them (67.5%) responded positively. In focus group discussion, some women parliamentarians said their own political leadership was the main hurdle in cross-party networking. They said that in a political culture of floor crossing, their political leadership was highly insecure about the loyalty of their MNAs. If someone nurtured a good relationship with MNAs belonging to other parties, they were viewed with a lot of suspicion by their political leaders. So the political leadership discourage their MPs to work closely with MPs of other political parties.

Another reason for women parliamentarians' failure to develop a consensus on a common issue was a lack of organized women interest groups in our society. The women's movement with its narrow popular base, mainly in urban centers, fails to touch the lives of poor women belonging to the most marginalized sections of society. In the absence of organized interest groups, it is easier for political parties and for women parliamentarians to ignore women's concerns .They feel no pressure that they are answerable and accountable to women in whose name they enter the national structures of formal politics. Although women MPs did take up some issues that were popular among women's groups and in the women's rights movement, they did not work systematically around women's interests. They did so more to legitimize their own political existence as they entered politics on the reserved seats than out of a genuine concern for women.

It was also noted that women elected on this quota were more eager than women elected on general seats to represent women's interest. This seems to illustrate that women parliamentarians who are elected on reserved seats seem to have a need for legitimacy and a constituency base.

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Internationally, the experience of working to promote women's interests, shows that these interests are best articulated in parliaments if these are aggregated and organized at the societal and political party level. The culture of political parties in Pakistan is not only male dominated physically, its political priorities are also not gender responsive. Lack of inner-party democracy in political parties creates a sense of insecurity amongst party workers. Instead of taking a stand on issues within their parties, party workers work more at appeasing the party leadership. Authoritarianism within political parties weakens networking and lobbying on women's interest issues within political parties as well. Sometimes women parliamentarians lack support from their own party members and MNAs on women's issues.

As women parliamentarians who enter the parliament on reserved seats for women do not have a direct constituency, they face tremendous problems in developing a direct constituency base whose interests they should be representing in the parliament. Some of them started working with NGOs and women's rights groups. In the absence of a direct constituency they were asked by their party leadership to surrender their development grants in favor of party colleagues who had direct constituencies. Therefore, it is important that women parliamentarians connect themselves with various organized women's interests/interest groups in order to effectively represent their interests in the legislature and in public policy.

Women parliamentarians were quite active in moving call attention notices (CANs) on issues of public concern. The review of 34 assembly sessions revealed that 97 CANs were moved by women parliamentarians. The party affiliation of these women parliamentarians is shown in the table below. Women belonging to the ruling party (PML-Q) were the most active in calling for the attention of the parliament towards public interest issues, followed by women parliamentarians belonging to the Pakistan People's Party.

Table 13: Party-Wise Call Attention Notices Moved by Women MPs

S. No.	Names of Female MPs	Name of Political Parties	Number of Interventions
1	Ms. Begum Ishrat Ashraf	PML (N)	1
2	Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho	PPPP	2
3	Dr. Fareeda Ahmed	MMA	2
4	Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan	PMLQ	4
5	Ms. Afsar Begum	MQM	1
6	Ms. Aasyia Azeem	PMLQ	1
7	Ms. Asia Nasir	MMA	1
8	Ms. Bilqees Saif	MMA	2
9	Ms. Bushra Anwar Sipra	PMLQ	1
10	Ms. Bushra Rehman	PMLQ	10
11	Ms. Farzeen Ahmed Sarfaraz	PMLQ	2
12	Ms. Fauzia Habib	PPPP	10
13	Ms. Gul –e- Farkhanda	PMLQ	4
14	Ms. Jameela Ahmed	ANP	1
15	Ms. Kashmala Tariq	PMLQ	4
16	Ms. Mehnaz Rafi	PMLQ	9
17	Ms. Mehreen Anwer Raja	PPPP	1
18	Ms. Naheed Khan	PPPP	3
19	Ms. Nelofar Bakhtiar	PMLQ	1
20	Dr. Rozina Tufail	PMLQ	2
21	Ms. Saima Akhtar Bharwana		1
22	Ms. Samia Raheel Qazi	MMA	2
23	Ms. Shagufta Jumani	PPPP	1
24	Ms. Shakila Khanum Rashid	PPPP	1
25	Ms. Shamim Akhtar	MQM	3
26	Ms. Shahida Akhtar Ali		2
27	Ms. Sherry Rehman	PPPP	6
28	Ms. Tehmina Daultana	PMLN	2
29	Ms. Yasmeen Rehman	PPPP	1
30	Ms. Zubaida Jalal	PMLQ	2
31	Ms. Zeb Gohar Ayub	PMLQ	2
32	Sayyeda Farhana Khalid Banoori	MMA	11
<b>Total</b>			<b>97</b>

Source: Compiled from parliamentary proceedings of 34 sessions.

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A wide range of issues were raised through these Calling Attention Notices by women parliamentarians. Of all the CANs raised by women parliamentarians only 4 were women specific. These four raised the issues of women- trafficking, violence against women, protection to survivors of violence and ban on women casting their vote in NWFP. The other CANs raised a host of issues, ranging from as the price hike, increase in utility bills, increase in PIA fares, plight of PTCL workers and the Margalla tower residents (who lost their flats during the earthquake), defective Haj arrangements, undeclared load shedding, bird flu, dengue and congo fever in Karachi, Shell selling leaded petrol as unleaded, misconduct of nazims etc. Most of the Calling Attention Notices represented the interests of a wider community rather than only women.

### **Women Parliamentarians and Oversight Role**

Another important role of the parliament is to oversight or oversee the governance and functioning of the government through its parliamentary committees. The Parliament had 43 standing committees which are departmental. Functional committees deal with subjects that cross departmental boundaries and select committees are set up on an adhoc basis on various issues. The main role of committees is to scrutinize government policies and actions and to amend legislation. The Committees are empowered to go into all matters of the Ministries. They have the power to invite or summon before them any person they deem appropriate. The committees are supposed to work on a non-political basis.

All women MPs who were interviewed for the study were, without any exception, members of one or more parliamentary committees. The analysis of the gender composition of parliamentary committees reveals that women are included as members in all parliamentary committees, however, their number remained insignificant. There were only two parliamentary committee in which women's membership exceeded 33%. One was the Standing Committee

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on Culture, Sports, Youth Affairs and Tourism (46%) and the other was the Standing Committee on Women's Development (61%). The representation of women MPs in the remaining parliamentary committees varied between 7 to 24 percent. The details of the gender ratio in parliamentary committees is given in appendix 8.7.

Women parliamentarians were working as chairpersons on nine parliamentary committees that included women and development, health, education, environment, social welfare and special education, tourism, population welfare, defense production and petroleum and natural Gas. With the exception of parliamentary committees on Defense Production and Petroleum and Natural Resource and Narcotic control, other committees which were headed by women parliamentarians were dealing with 'soft sectors'. This is in line with the stereotypical understanding of women politicians' abilities to work more effectively with social sector issues. There is nothing wrong for appointing women on parliamentary committees that deal with social sector as women have genuine interests in these issues. However, the issue of concern is that women are often not appointed to committees that deal with sectors that are traditionally associated with men.

The Parliamentary committee system is the backbone of mature parliamentary systems. Parliamentary committees ensure transparency and good governance in government policies and functioning. The parliamentary committee system has not made its mark in the parliamentary history of the country due to a number of political reasons.

The findings of FGDs with male and female parliamentarians shows that the parliamentary committee system in their view was not functioning very effectively in Pakistan. These committees did not meet regularly. However, when compared the number of times parliamentary committees met, with the exception of the

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Defense Production committee, all committees headed by female Parliamentarians held more meetings as compared to parliamentary committees headed by male parliamentarians.

One of the reasons for the inefficiency of parliamentary committees was related to the nature of the composition of parliamentary committees. The appointment of parliamentarians as chairpersons or as members was based on political reasons rather than on consideration of the knowledge and skills of parliamentarians to serve on a particular committee. Most of the time members of parliamentary committees were not at all well versed in the subject they were meant to be dealing with. They were given the appointments to please political parties as members of committees are entitled to additional allowances and perks. The majority of the members working for various parliamentary committees hardly had any competence to offer to the committee's work.

Moreover, the parliamentary systems were not functional. Committees were not properly staffed and had no ability to hold the government accountable. The Research wing of the parliament hardly provided any background information to members of the PCs. Therefore, some of the difficulties faced by members of these parliamentary committees in working effectively were due to lack of their knowledge, information and experience. In addition they hardly received any information or research support from parliamentary authorities that could help them in their committee work.

Another issue mentioned by participants of the FGDs was that the parliamentary committees had no political clout. Although in theory the Chairperson of the parliamentary committee has the power to invite the minister to the committee session, in practice, they were unable to exercise this power due to the non-cooperative attitude of ministers. It was a common complaint by both male and female members of parliamentary committees that ministers were

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not available to attend meetings. Rather some chairpersons of parliamentary committees said that they had to work under their ministers. The situation becomes even worse when the chairperson belongs to the party in the opposition.

Moreover, it was also observed that there was a complete disconnect between parliamentary committees and civil society organizations. There is no bar on the involvement of concerned citizens and civil society groups in parliamentary work. However, in most committees, civil society organizations or activists are not invited to attend meetings or give their views on any subject. There is no mechanism in place where members of committees could hear public voices and could integrate a civil society perspective in their committee work.

Women chairpersons of the parliamentary committees particularly mentioned that there was a lack of financial resources available to them to perform their job effectively. They said they were unable to travel to collect evidence if needed or hold meetings to investigate matters before the committee. In the absence of financial support to the parliamentary committees, it is unrealistic to expect parliamentary committees to function effectively and efficiently.

Similarly, there was hardly any tradition of organizing public hearings on issues of public concern. Parliamentary Committees are not properly staffed and have no ability to hold the government accountable. In a vibrant parliamentary democracy it is important to hold public hearings on issues of public concern. One of the reasons mentioned by most of the respondents was a lack of funds available to travel and to organize such meetings.

Women parliamentarians were fairly vigilant about the performance of the government. They had been raising the issue of governance and holding the concerned ministries accountable by asking them

questions and demanding information. The number of questions women parliamentarians raised during 34 sessions of the national assembly is shown in the table below:

Table I4: Participation of Female MPs in the Parliamentary Debate Through Question Hour 2002-2007.

S.No.	Names of Female MPs	Names of Political Parties	Number of Interventions
1	Ms. Begum Ishrat Ashraf	PML (N)	13
2	Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho	PPPP	22
3	Dr. Fahmida Mirza	PPPP	2
4	Dr. Fareeda Ahmed	MMA	31
5	Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan	PMLQ	12
6	Ms. Afsar Begum	MQM	2
7	Ms. Aliya Malik	PLMQ	14
8	Ms. Ambreen Naeem	MMA	19
9	Ms. Aasyia Azeem	PMLQ	1
10	Ms. Asia Nasir	MMA	4
11	Ms. Belum Husnain	PPPP	67
12	Ms. Bilqees Saif	MMA	7
13	Ms. Bushra Anwar Sipra	PMLQ	1
14	Ms. Bushra Rehman	PMLQ	10
15	Ms. Farzeen Ahmed Sarfaraz	PMLQ	1
16	Ms. Fauzia Habib	PPPP	3
17	Ms. Gul -e- Farkhanda	PMLQ	17
18	Ms. Inayat Begum	MMA	65
19	Ms. Jameela Ahmed	ANP	42
20	Ms. Kaniz Aisha Munawar	MMA	17
21	Ms. Kashmala Tariq	PMLQ	36
22	Ms. Khalida Mohsin Qureshi	PPPP	12
23	Ms. Mehnaz Rafi	PMLQ	39
24	Ms. Mehreen Anwer Raja	PPPP	9
25	Ms. Memona Hashmi	PMLN	6
26	Ms. Nafisa Munawar Raja	PPPP	1
27	Ms. Naheed Khan	PPPP	9
28	Ms. Onaza Ehsan	PMLQ	1
29	Ms. Rahila Yahya Munawar	PMLQ	2
30	Ms. Razia Aziz	MMA	2

31	Ms. Rehana Aleem Mashhadi	PMLJ	1
33	Ms. Riffat Javaid Kahlon	PMLQ	3
34	Dr. Rozina Tufail	PMLQ	1
35	Ms. Rubina Saadat Qaimkhani	PPPP	30
36	Ms. Rukhsana Bangish	PPPP	6
37	Ms. Rukia Khanam Soomro	PPPP	9
38	Ms. Shabina Talat	MQM	5
39	Ms. Samia Raheel Qazi	MMA	50
40	Ms. Samina Khalid Ghurki	PPPP	64
41	Ms. Shagufta Jumani	PPPP	8
42	Ms. Shahzadi Umerzadi Tiwana	PMLQ	4
43	Ms. Shakila Khanum Rashid	PPPP	36
44	Ms. Shamim Akhtar	MQM	4
45	Ms. Shamshad Sattar Bachani	PPPP	2
46	Ms. Shahnaz Sheikh	PPP-Patriot	2
47	Ms. Sherry Rehman	PPPP	28
48	Ms. Rubina Saadat Qaimkhani	PPPP	2
49	Ms. Yasmeen Rehman	PPPP	99
50	Ms. Zeb Gohar Ayub	PMLQ	10
51	Sayyeda Farhana Khalid Banoori	MMA	17
<b>Total</b>			<b>920</b>

Source: Compiled from parliamentary proceedings of 34 sessions.

The above table shows that women parliamentarians from the PPPP were the most active in questions hour. Out of 920 parliamentary questions asked by women parliamentarians in 34 sessions of the assembly, 470 were asked by women parliamentarians from the PPPP. This was followed by women MPs of the MMA. They asked 209 questions. Women parliamentarians from the PML (Q) asked 152 questions. Women from the MQM, the ANP and the PML (N) asked the least questions, 11, 42 and 6 respectively. Since the number of women MPs of various political parties was not the same, therefore, their participation in terms of parliamentary questions should be assessed in relation to the level of their presence in the parliament. Also we cannot conclude that women parliamentarians of the PPPP and the MMA were more active in their oversight role than women belonging to the ruling party of PML (Q), since it is understandable

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that women MPs from the ruling party have less to criticize in the performance of their own government. .

It is interesting to note that with the exception of women parliamentarians belonging to the MMA, all those who were most active in raising questions (except for Yasmeen Rehman) had a high level of public exposure either at the political party or civil society level prior to their entry in the parliament. Ms. Yasmeen Rehman from the PPPP was the only exception, she was the most active member, asked 99 parliamentary questions, who was not active either in politics or in the women's movement prior to entering the parliament. It can be inferred that women who have a higher public exposure and experience previously play their political roles more effectively.

### **Impact of Women Presence in Legislative Bodies**

The impact of women's presence in legislative bodies depends on the level of their legislative performance which is in turn dependent on many structural and functional factors. The wider discursive and institutional contexts of citizenship, democracy, social movements, the state of democratization in the society and in the governance structures, the election system, institutional rules and procedures, provision of affirmative action measures, the modality of elections on reserved seats, and the capacity of women parliamentarians etc. all determine the performance of women in the legislature .

The findings of the study show that for the descriptive representation of women to translate itself into substantive representation depends on the ways and means through which they are brought to legislative bodies. Women's inclusion in legislative bodies through a gender quota can be extremely effective if quota modalities are direct, empowering and create space for women politicians to develop their own constituency and power base.

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One of the conclusions of the study is that although the presence of women in the parliament may not have resulted in tangible outcomes in terms of passing laws and making policies that protect women's interests, it hugely impacts on bringing a focus on women's issues. This can be seen from the interventions of women parliamentarians in parliamentary proceedings. The number of times gender issues were raised in the parliament (2002-2007) through private members bill, through calling attention notices, parliamentary questions, privilege motions and resolutions is unprecedented in the parliamentary history of Pakistan.

Another important area where women's presence in politics has impacted positively is at the cultural front. The high visibility of women in the parliament due to their sheer numerical strength (205) made an enormous impact on cultural perceptions of women's roles in politics. Previously the number of seats reserved for women in various parliaments was not very significant. A seventeen percent electoral quota for women brought a significant number of women into the political arena. This created a dent in the gender role ideology that assumed politics as a male prerogative. The gender quota created legitimacy for women's role in the public arena. Although women were not granted the 33% quota at the national level which they were given at the local government level, yet the number even at the national level was substantial enough not to be ignored. Women parliamentarians became highly visible in the print and the electronic media. They were frequently invited to participate in political discussions in the print and electronic media and in public forums. They began to be included in most of the panels of politicians, simply for the reasons of adding "color" to the discussion programs, even other than more substantive reasons. The later observation is based on the grounds that two categories of women parliamentarians were often invited by television channels. The first category was those women who represented a "modern image" of Pakistani women. These were English speaking, articulate

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and so-called “westernized” women. The second category of women were those who wore hijab and represented the extreme “religious right” image of a woman. The electronic and print media often ignored those who represented the image of the average Pakistani woman in the parliament.

Women’s entry through the gender quota in politics not only created a genuine interest in politics among women parliamentarians, their presence in the political realm served as a role model in society. This impact was obvious from the number of women candidates (180) who contested elections on general seats in the general election of 2007. This is a clear indication that the political aspirations of women are changing fast. However, only 38 of these women succeeded in being given party tickets. All the remaining women candidates then contested the elections as independent candidates and all of them except one lost. It appears that without party support, it is difficult for independent women candidates to win general seats, especially when the election process is increasingly becoming more and more commercialized and criminalized. It is becoming more and more difficult for women to compete with male candidates in general elections. Fifteen women candidates have been elected to general seats in the national assembly (2007). All of them have won on party tickets. This shows a continuing gap between women’s political aspirations and the willingness of political parties, who can act as gate keepers, to provide equal opportunities to women to participate and represent them in politics.

Women parliamentarians also showed a high level of oppositional gender consciousness. They entered the legislative assemblies through a gender quota that has been filled through an indirect mode of election, which did not give them any opportunity to develop their own constituency. They were often taunted by their male colleagues that they were not ‘real’ politicians as they had no

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constituency and their position was dependent on the favor of the political leadership. This created a need and desire among women parliamentarians who were elected on reserved seats, to develop their own power base. Many women parliamentarians who had no history of working with women's rights groups or civil society organizations, now actively reached out to women's rights groups and organizations and tried to champion the cause of women's rights, in order to build themselves a constituency and legitimize themselves by championing political causes.

Women parliamentarians also felt the pressure from women's rights groups and NGOs who pushed women parliamentarians to raise issues of concern to women. They were reminded by women rights activists that they had come on reserved seats for women, therefore, their whole rationale for their presence in the legislatures was that they had the responsibility of taking up women's issues. Particularly issues such as the repeal of discriminatory legislation against women, such as the Hudood Ordinance, the Law of Evidence, and Qisas and Diyat<sup>2</sup> against which the women's movement has been lobbying for decades. Women parliamentarians were compelled to respond positively to some of these pressures for the sake of their own legitimacy, and to create their own constituency.

Women's presence in the legislatures also brought some positive changes in the political parties as well. The leadership of political parties began to recognize women's potential. Their attitude towards those female members who served on reserved seats and played an active role has changed to some extent. Many women MPs who were interviewed said that their party leadership now takes them more seriously. The review of political party manifestoes shows that gender equality and women's empowerment is included in all party

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2. The Hudood Ordinance was promulgated in 1979 by Zia-ul-Haq regime. It equates rape with adultery. Four Muslim male pious witnesses are required to give maximum punishment in the case of adultery and also in the case of rape. The practical implication of this law is that a married woman can be charged for adultery if she reports rape, but cannot prove it.

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manifestoes including those of religious parties. Women are seen now as a constituency by the political leadership, whose interests when reflected in party manifestos, will fetch political support.

Lastly, the gender quota provided women an opportunity to take up the role of public representatives. They learnt political skills, enhanced their own political capabilities and capacities and built up their confidence to become representatives. Nineteen women who served in 12th national assembly have been returned on reserved seats in the 13th parliament. These women parliamentarians are well versed in parliamentary business and rules now. They will be able to play a more effective role than they played in the previous parliament. Therefore, it is expected that the performance of those women MPs who are returned to the parliament for the second time will be improved greatly.

It is interesting to note that the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) a coalition of NGOs under its Parliament Watch Project (PWP) monitors the performance of the parliament. In the first "Parliament Performance Update-1" that monitored eight sessions of the parliament from November, 10-21, 2008, onwards, it concluded that women parliamentarians are performing better than male MPs. The report gives a gender breakdown of various parliamentary activities. It shows that out of 42 CANs, 15 were moved by women MPs. Similarly out of a total of 654 questions put in the assembly, 395 were asked by males and 258 were asked by female members. The report calculates that female MPs put forward an average of 3.4 questions as compared to 1.5 average of male members. Similarly seven women MPs have moved PMBs. The number of PMBs is exactly the same as moved by male members (who are much more numerous). Women MPs moved 2 resolutions as compared to 3 moved by male members. The impact of the gender quota on capacity development is already visible from the performance of women parliamentarians in the first eighth (what

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is first eighth? Do you mean the first eight?) session of the 13th parliament of the country. It is expected that due to the knowledge, experience and know-how that these women gained because of the gender quota, they will be able to play their role more effectively in the present parliament.



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## Issues and Challenges Faced by Women Parliamentarians

The analysis of research data gathered for the current study, indicates that most of the issues and challenges women face in entering politics are at the discursive, institutional and personal levels. Azza Karam (1998) rightly says that these difficulties do not disappear when women take up responsibilities as members of parliament. The following section analyzes the responses of women MPs in terms of the difficulties they faced in working effectively through parliamentary structures.

### **Discursive Barriers**

The discursive dichotomy of the public-private in political discourse defines politics in the public sphere and as a male prerogative. Women have to struggle through these patriarchal discursive spaces to negotiate and claim politics as a legitimate realm for themselves. Feminists challenge the traditional notion of politics that defines it as an activity, a conscious, deliberate participation in the process by which resources are allocated among citizens. This conception of politics restricts political activity only to the public arena and the private sphere of family life is rendered as apolitical. Vicky Randall defines politics as an “articulation, or working out of relationships within an already given power structure”, which is in contrast with the traditional view of politics. This means that boundaries of politics

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between public and private spheres are fluid and politics takes place in both spheres.

The discursive divide of public/private plays a determining role in shaping societal attitudes and institutional structures that limits women's opportunities to enter into formal politics. Within this patriarchal discursive context of politics, when women enter into politics as private citizens, they are unable to play a transformative role to change the nature of politics and gender relations. Rather they are forced to play their political role on terms determined by male society.

The majority of respondents mentioned the patriarchal mind set that they encountered in society, in political parties and in the parliament as the key challenge in performing their role as public representatives, effectively. They said that they were not treated equally by male parliamentarians and were not taken seriously by parliamentary authorities. Women parliamentarians complained that men brought their patriarchal attitudes from home to the parliament. Male domination in the parliament and in its functioning makes it a patriarchal site where women have to continue to fight their way by resisting public patriarchy on a daily basis.

### **Cultural Barriers**

The discursive dichotomy of the public-private that defines men's roles in the public sphere and women's roles in the private sphere of home, shapes the cultural barriers that women face in entering politics. The gender role discourse does not only create a duality of femininity and masculinity, it also places them in a hierarchal fashion in which the female sex is generally valued less than the male sex because of their socially ascribed roles in the reproductive sphere. This gender status quo then is maintained through low resource allocation to women's human development by the state, the society and the family. This can be seen in the social indicators which

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reflect varying degrees of gender disparities in education, health, employment, ownership of productive resources and politics. The subordinate socio-cultural status of women, and simultaneously, male privilege, is maintained through restricting women's mobility through the institutions of segregation and purdah in Pakistan.

The cultural barriers shaped by patriarchal political discourse become vital structural factors in determining the level of women's participation in politics. Women have to negotiate their entry into and claim public space according to the discursive, cultural and material opportunities available to them in a given cultural and societal context. Although gender role ideology is not static, rather it is in flux due to its constant intersection with ever changing economic, social and political systems, women continue to be defined as private beings in dominant cultural discourses which results in creating structural barriers to women's entry into politics.

Nearly all married women parliamentarians mentioned that they were fully supported by their families in entering parliamentary politics, however, almost all the respondents mentioned the continued pressure they had to face to shoulder their domestic responsibilities in the same way as before. They said they had competing demands on their time due to their dual responsibilities of care, work and political work. They were left with little time to participate in politics. Many reported that they suffer from extreme stress in managing these dual roles as there is no support available from their families, political parties, parliament or the state. Women parliamentarians belonging to religious parties were more vocal in expressing their discontent caused by the conflict in their domestic and parliamentary responsibilities. Some women parliamentarians of the MMA made contradictory statements on their political role. On the one hand, some of them ideologically believed that politics was a male domain and women should be primarily responsible for domestic roles. They said they had to enter politics because

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of reserved seats as the political leadership of their parties was not willing to forego the women's reserved seats due to political reasons. They saw their presence in politics as a temporary phenomenon and believed that women should focus on looking after their families. They said politics should be left to men. Some of them proposed that there should be a separate parliament for women. Despite this, it was observed that some MNAs belonging to the MMA clearly enjoyed their role as parliamentarians. They told me very proudly that they were very effective in raising issues of public concern in the parliament. However, they appeared to be confused in taking a clear position on the role of women in politics. Ideologically they believe politics is a male arena, but practically their experience in politics has been positive and they felt women should have some role in politics. However, they were reluctant to take a clear position on the issue of women's representation in political bodies due to the party line.

Another cultural barrier to women's entry into politics is due to restrictions on their mobility. The concept of purdah and segregation does not allow women to freely interact with the general public. Politics requires frequent interaction with constituents. Some of the respondents mention this as one of the hurdles. They said it is also a common public perception that women politicians will not be able to help in thana kacheri, (police/court) therefore, the public do not think that women representatives will be as effective in addressing the issues of the constituency as male representatives will be.

### **Institutional Barriers**

One of the main hindrances to women's entry into politics is the male dominated, masculine agenda that political parties have. Hierarchical gender relations are often reproduced within political parties. Female party members are treated as less important and are not assigned decision-making positions within their own parties.

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The situation becomes worse due to lack of democracy within the party, which is a common feature of all mainstream political parties in the country. Instead of holding regular party elections, the leadership of the political party nominate handpicked party members to decision making positions. Consequently, women political workers are not assigned party positions due to the male bias of party leadership.

A baseline study conducted by Bari and Zia (1999) on “Women’s Participation in Politics and Public Life in Pakistan” revealed that the most political parties do not maintain a membership record. So it was difficult to know the number of women who had joined various political parties. However, all political parties, with the exception of Awami National Party (ANP), have a women’s wing. The status of women’s wings is marginal to the mainstream party structures. The women’s wing of many parties such as Sindhiani Tehreek (the women’s wing of the Awami Tehreek), the PPP and the PML (N) played an extremely active and significant political role in the movement for democracy and especially when their party leadership was in trouble. However there is clearly a mismatch between the political participation of women and their representation within the parties and the parliaments.

All parties have a wide gender gap in their decision-making structures such as their Central and District committees. In the absence of a democratic culture within political parties, leaders of the parties appoint men at important party positions. If they appoint women then their preference is for those who are not independent minded and are willing to toe the party line rather than pursue women’s interests. Women in political parties often felt compelled to adjust to party structures for their own survival.

Political parties are institutionalized sites of patriarchal power in the political arena. Women’s subordinate status in the private

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sphere of the home is reproduced in the political parties. Women are not treated equally. They are discriminated against at the time of elections in terms of awarding party tickets as they are not perceived to be winnable candidates. They are also intimidated by the patronizing attitudes of men in political parties and at times sexually harassed by them. During the research some women politicians confided that they had faced pressure to give sexual favors to those in positions of power in the party in order to move upwards in the party and in national politics. Some of them complained bitterly that merit did not prevail in their parties. Those women who were willing to give sexual favors to party bosses were the ones who got the most opportunities.

All female MPs with the exception of those belonging to the MMA reported a lack of support and facilitation from their own political parties in their legislative roles. Political parties have no institutional mechanisms to provide support to parliamentarians in general and women in particular. Jamat-e-Islami is the only political party that facilitated its female parliamentarians by providing them office space and technical assistance. One of the women parliamentarians from Jamat-e-Islami voluntarily offered her parliamentary lodge to be used as a party office. The Jamat provided all office equipment (computer, telephone, and fax) and hired a trained lawyer to provide support in legislative work to its female parliamentarians. This office was frequently used by women parliamentarians belonging to other constituent parties of the MMA as well. We were told that the party leadership frequently visited their office, delivered lectures and guided them in their legislative work.

The working conditions in the parliament determine the quality of legislative and other functions of the parliament. The majority of female MPs reported that the working culture of the parliament was disabling for them. Historically, the parliament has not developed itself to function in the most effective and efficient ways because of

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interrupted democratic processes in the country. There is a lack of technical support available to all members. Lack of staff and research resources and lack of physical infrastructure, especially space, is generally true for everyone. Obviously women's capacity to work effectively depends on the overall environment and working of the parliament itself.

All respondents had a shared experience of lack of support and non-responsiveness of male dominant parliamentary authorities and structures as well. The most common complaint echoed by women parliamentarians, including those belonging to the ruling party, was in relation to the attitude of the speaker. They felt that he never gave them either the floor or enough time to raise issues. They did not have a chance to contribute in parliamentary debates as much as they wished. In the FGDs, all women parliamentarians agreed that women used to come far more prepared on issues than the male MNAs of their parties; however, they got far less of a chance and opportunity to express their views in the parliamentary sessions due to the male bias of the speaker.

The performance of women's parliamentarians also suffered due to lack of secretarial, research or other support related to their legislative work from the library or research staff of the parliament. In particular, they mentioned that the lack of gender expertise in the research staff and the lack of availability of gender disaggregated data posed difficulties to them in raising gender related issues in the parliament.

Also women parliamentarians felt that their presence in parliament was not accepted by male parliamentarians as giving them the right to participate in politics. They faced patriarchal resistance from male colleagues in accepting them as public representatives on an equal footing. Their male colleagues made sexist jokes and statements which were normally removed from parliamentary proceedings. Women MPs said that they were constantly reminded

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by male parliamentarians that they were not equal to them as they had been elected on reserved seats and had no geographical constituency of their own. There was clearly a spillover of male biases and private attitudes of male parliamentarians into the public arena of the parliament.

The Election Commission is another institution that is critically important in creating an enabling environment for women in politics. The Election Commission did not act on complaints submitted by various NGOs with evidence that women were not allowed to caste their votes in certain areas during the elections of 2001. No action was taken by the Election Commission. Women MPs were of the view that an independent and efficient election commission that ensures the implementation of election rules can curtail the use of money and of violence, and that would help them greatly in participating in elections.

The election system seems to be impacting on women's political representation quite significantly. The proportional systems of representation (PR) appear to be more favorable to women's political participation and representation than simple majority election systems. According to a UNIFEM study (2007/08), out of 176 countries for which data was available in 2007, the global average of women's representation in the PR system was significantly higher (20.7%) than in the non-PR system (13.3%). Women candidates find it hard to compete in the first-past-the post system with male candidates, due to large constituencies and lack of social and financial resources.

### **Personal Barriers**

Discursive and institutional structures determine women's capacities and capabilities at the individual level. Some of the capacity issues of women parliamentarians relate to the overall level of development, the state of democracy and democratization in the society, in political parties, and the history and environment of the parliament itself.

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There are other factors such as women's social and political position in society that also impact on women's limited capacity to work in the political arena.

As the findings of the study reveal, the majority of female members of parliament had been elected for the first-time. They lacked confidence, relevant parliamentary experience, and basic knowledge and skill in legislative work. Similarly, they lacked sufficient gender understanding on how to represent women's interests. They lacked advocacy skills to promote women specific issues. As a result of all this, they were not able to make effective alliances, networks and linkages within and outside parliament with stakeholders.

Interestingly, when they were asked the question whether they thought they were fully equipped to perform their roles effectively, 82.5% responded positively, only 17.5% percent did not consider themselves as equipped to perform their roles effectively. This self-perception may be due to the experience they acquired over the last five years. Since the majority of them were highly educated, some of them came from a professional background, so they were fast learners.

The key finding of the study is that the level of confidence and capacity building needs of women parliamentarians vary according to their political background and their exposure to the public and to political life. The needs of women who came through contesting direct elections were different from those who came on reserved seats. Similarly those who worked as the chairpersons of parliamentary committees or as state/cabinet ministers had specific training needs.

As mentioned earlier, all the respondents said that they entered the legislature with the consent of their families. However, they felt constrained due to competing demands

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from their families and their parliamentary responsibilities. Issues of mobility, lack of independent sources of income and lack of social capital as women, limit the scope of their political work.

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## Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concludes that the performance of female MPs can not be assessed in isolation as their ability to perform effectively as public representatives is connected with wider structural and systemic issues. The level of society's social and economic development, the state of democracy and democratization, the status of women in the society, the nature and culture of political parties and the parliament and the presence and strength of women's movement are some of the factors that also impact on political performance of women parliamentarians. It became evident from the findings of the study that when women who are socially considered as private citizen enter in the public domain of politics through an affirmative action measures, they continue to face all those challenges and constraints that had been militating against them to enter in the formal arena of politics. Therefore, to expect from women parliamentarians whose majority entered in parliamentary politics for the first time, who had limited or no prior political experience of working as public representatives, who lacked social capital in terms of their own constituency, who had weak or no linkages with women's movement and who did not have even a basic know-how about the functioning of parliament, should perform and represent women's interest effectively as soon as they enter the parliament, is not very realistic.

It is important to remember that the need for the provision of

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gender quota arises in a society where women are unable to compete with male politicians to enter in politics due to number of functional and structural constraints posed by the wider social, cultural, political and economic structures of the society. Gender quota is a response to this continuing gender gap in politics. The reservation of seats for women in the parliament is a recognition that women can not participate and represent in parliament on an equal footing with men due to the patriarchal nature of the social, economic and political structures of the society. Therefore, they are pushed in parliament through gender quota. Thus it should not be expected that the numerical presence of women in the parliament will automatically result into their effective representation. The substantive performance of women parliamentarians demands the complementary political and electoral reforms that are critically important to create a supportive and an enabling environment for them. The findings of the study show that the government, the political parties and the civil society in Pakistan did not provide adequate support to women parliamentarians in the areas of capacity building, the networking and the information sharing.

The majority of women parliamentarians mentioned the patriarchal challenges and resistance that they had to face at the inter-personal, the family, the society, the political parties and the parliament level. They said that they had to deal with the pressures coming from the public and private patriarchy on their own as there was no forum or a platform where they could have voiced these issues as collective concerns.

It became clear from the research findings that in the absence of strong organized women's movements that articulate women's interest outside the parliament, it becomes difficult for women parliamentarians to advocate women's interests effectively within the parliament and in their own political parties. As women parliamentarians came on gender quota, they did not have direct

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constituency of their own. The indirect modality of election on gender quota seats provided them with no opportunity to develop their own constituency base. In the absence of any power base in the shape of constituency or women's movement, women parliamentarians were easily ignored by the political leadership of their parties.

The study provides evidence that patriarchal resistance and challenges that women parliamentarians continue to face after entering in the parliament triggered an oppositional gender consciousness in them. Despite their elite class background, when they were neglected and ignored by their male colleagues and the parliamentary authorities, they became far more aware of their gender identity. They showed resentment to the male domination and masculine culture of the parliament that viewed them as proxy and discriminated against them. Women parliamentarians across parties expressed their resentment to misogynist parliamentary culture and all of them with the exception of those belonging to religious parties showed their resolve to claim politics as their legitimate space and right.

The main conclusion of the study is that despite the daunting challenges women parliamentarians continue to face and the political inexperience of the majority of them who entered the parliament for the first time on gender quota, they brought a greater attention to women's issues during the 12th national assembly from 2002-2007 than ever before.

The study empirically verifies the assertion that women politicians represent women's interests better than male politicians. The data of the study shows that most of the parliamentary interventions by female parliamentarians related to the social sector, public interests and women specific issues. Interestingly, the findings of the study refute the assertion, often made in political science literature that women are not interested in hard core constitutional and political

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issues. The findings of the study show that there were significant numbers of women parliamentarians who took keen interest and showed commitment in raising issues in these areas too.

The study reveals that the tangible outcome of women's representation in terms of introducing women specific laws, shifting the policy focus towards women, making private issues of women into public concerns or improving the gender responsiveness of governance, are not significant. However, it asserts that the presence of women MPs in large numbers in the parliament impacted enormously on a social, political and cultural level in terms of changing people's perception regarding women's roles in politics. The high visibility of women parliamentarians in public forums, in the electronic media and in political life had a huge symbolic value. Their presence created a higher level of social acceptability of women's roles in politics. This is evident from the substantive increase (180) in numbers of women who contested on general seats in the general election, 2008. Women's presence in the legislature of 2002-2007 served as a role model for others. The presence and visibility of women in politics led many to aspire to enter into politics as well.

In the light of the multilayered analysis of women's performance in the legislative assembly of 2002-2007, the following recommendations are proposed. These recommendations are multi-faceted and will contribute in changing and transforming the structures that create the conditions of women's exclusion and marginalization in politics:

- The gender quota is the most effective fast track strategy to bridge the gender gap in political representation. In order to liberate women from their dependency on political leaders for their nomination and to provide them opportunities to develop their own political skills and constituency base, it is proposed that the modality of elections on gender quotas in the parliament

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must be changed from indirect to direct form of election. As it is difficult to work out a viable direct modality of election on 17% seats reserved for women, it is recommended that civil society should be mobilized to demand an increase in the gender quota in the national and provincial assemblies and in the senate from 17% to 33%. The gender quota in politics must be substantive, no less than 33%, which is the critical number recommended by CEDAW.

Also an intersectional approach to the gender quotas is recommended as women are not a homogeneous group. They are divided along the lines of class, ethnicity, religion, and rural/urban background. Therefore, to ensure that women belonging to different social group have adequate representation in the parliament, there should be well defined criteria for candidates for the political quota system. We need to move away from an essentialist approach towards women as a universal category. Gender quota must be instituted within the framework of difference and diversity.

- Human capacities and capabilities are the result of availability and access to resources such as education, health, employment, awareness and opportunities. In a backdrop of the limited capabilities of women parliamentarians, development of a corresponding support systems and training programs for women politicians on reserved seats are critically important. Thus capacity support is identified as one of the most strategic areas of intervention to empower women politicians and representatives. However, the capacity building support should move beyond imparting technical know-how on the functioning of the parliament. The training approach should be holistic and should also focus on the social and political learning needs of women parliamentarians. Moreover, training should not be perceived as an activity but rather than as an on-going process which should have regular follow-ups and impact assessments.

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- It is difficult for women representatives to impact on politics without having any power base. Therefore, building coalitions, forming caucuses and networks with women's movements, civil society organizations inside and outside parliament is a critically important strategy that should be supported by government, civil society and donor agencies. This will enable women parliamentarians to carve a space in politics for aggregating and representing women's interests effectively.
  - To remove institutional barriers to women's political participation and representation, political and electoral reforms are needed. The most urgent political reform area is the change in the Political Party Act. It should be made mandatory for political parties to keep membership records, to hold regular party elections, to reserve 33% seats for women in party positions and to give 33% party tickets to women candidates.

Elections in Pakistan keep on bringing back the same rural and urban elite in the power structures of governance. It is high time for democrats to think which electoral system can guarantee multi-class representation in national and provincial assemblies in the political scenario of Pakistan. We need to open this question for public discussion and to evolve a consensus on moving away from the First-Past-the-Post system of elections, to some form of Proportional Representation electoral system.

- It is important to understand that women's exclusion in politics is not a biological phenomenon that can be addressed by merely bringing more women into politics. It is a result of a broader socio-cultural, economic and political structure. Women's political participation and representation cannot be achieved in isolation. It is intrinsically linked with socio-economic redistributive justice which can be achieved through mobilizing people, and building strong women's and civil society movements. These are important areas that need support and further strengthening.

# 8

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## 9

## Appendixes

## Appendix i: Political Status of Women Globally

	Women in National Parliaments (% seats in lower or single house)		Women in Ministerial Positions (%)	Existence of quotas for women's political representation/			
	2008a/	1997a/	2008d/	Type 1 f/	Type 2 h/	Type 3 i/	Type 4 i/
Afghanistan	27.7	-	3.7	●	●g/		
Albania	7.1	-	6.7		●g/		
Algeria	7.7	3.2	10.8				●
Andorra	25.0	7.1	37.5				
Angola	15.0	9.5	6.3				●
Antigua and Barbuda	10.5	5.3	9.1				
Argentina	40.0	27.6	23.1	●	●g/	●	●
Armenia	9.2	6.3	5.9		●g/		●
Australia	26.7	15.5	24.1				●
Austria	32.8	26.2	38.5				●
Azerbaijan	11.4	12.0	6.7				
Bahamas	12.2	15.0	8.3				
Bahrain	2.5	-	4.3				
Bangladesh	-	9.1	8.3	●		●	
Barbados	10.0	10.7	27.8				
Belarus	29.1	-	6.5				
Belgium	35.3	12.7	23.1		●g/		●
Belize	0.0	3.4	18.2				

Benin	108	7.2	22.2				
Bhutan	8.5	2.0	0.0				
Bolivia	16.9	-	23.5		●g/	●	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	11.9	-	0.0		●	●	●
Botswana	11.1	8.5	27.8				●
Brazil	9.0	6.6	11.4		●g/	●	●
Brunei Darussalam	-	-	7.1				
Bulgaria	21.7	10.8	23.5				
Burkina Faso	15.3	9.0	14.3				●
Burundi	30.5	-	29.6	●	●		
Cambodia	19.5	5.8	6.9				
Cameroon	13.9	5.6	11.6				●
Canada	21.3	20.6	16.0				●
Cape Verde	18.1	11.1	35.7				
Central African Republic	10.5	3.5	12.5				
Chad	5.2	2.4	17.2				
Chile	15.0	7.5	40.9				●
China	21.3	-	8.6		●		
Colombia	8.4	11.7	23.1				
Comoros	3.0	0.0	-				
Congo	7.3	-	13.2				
Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	8.4	-	12.1				
Costa Rica	36.8	15.8	29.4		●g/	●	●
Croatia	20.9	7.9	23.5				●
Cuba	43.2	22.8	18.8				
Cyprus	14.3	5.4	18.2				●
Czech Republic	15.5	15.0	12.5				●
Côte d'Ivoire	8.9	8.0	12.5				●
Denmark	38.0	33.0	36.8				
Djibouti	13.8	-	9.1		●		
Dominica	16.1	9.4	21.4				
Dominican Republic	19.7	11.7	14.5		●g/	●	●
Ecuador	25.0	3.7	35.3		●g/	●	●
Egypt	1.8	2.0	6.5				

El Salvador	16.7	155	38.9				●
Equatorial Guinea	-	8.8	14.0				●
Eritrea	22.0	21.0	17.6		●		
Estonia	20.8	10.9	23.1				
Ethiopia	21.9	2.0	9.5				●
Fiji	-	4.3	8.3				
Finland	41.5	33.5	57.9				
France	18.2	10.9	46.7	●	●g/	●	●
Gabon	16.7	8.3	16.7				
Gambia	9.4	2.0	27.8				
Georgia	6.0	6.9	17.6				
Germany	31.6	26.2	33.3				●
Ghana	10.9	9.0	15.9				
Greece	14.7	6.3	11.8			●	●
Grenada	26.7	20.0	50.0				
Guatemala	12.0	12.5	6.7				
Guinea	19.3	7.0	15.8				
Guinea-Bissau	14.0	10.0	25.0				
Guyana	29.0	-	26.3	●			
Haiti	4.1	3.6	11.1				
Honduras	23.4	-	-		●	●	
Hong Kong, China (SAR)	-	-	-				
Hungary	11.1	11.4	21.4				●
Iceland	33.3	25.4	36.4				●
India	9.1	7.2	10.3			●	●
Indonesia	11.6	11.4	10.8		●		
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	2.8	4.9	3.2				
Iraq	25.5	6.4	10.3	●	●		
Ireland	13.3	12.0	21.4				●
Israel	14.2	7.5	12.0				●
Italy	21.1	11.1	24.0				●
Jamaica	13.3	11.7	11.1				
Japan	9.4	4.6	11.8				
Jordan	6.4	0.0	14.8		●		

	Women in National Parliaments (% seats in lower or single house)		Women in Ministerial Positions (%)	Existence of quotas for women's political representation/			
	2008a/	1997a/	2008d/	Type 1 f/	Type 2 h/	Type 3 i/	Type 4 i/
Kazakhstan	15.9	13.4	5.6				
Kenya	9.4	3.0	-	●			●
Kiribati	4.3	0.0	7.7				
Korea (Democratic People's Rep. of)	20.1	20.	1 0.0		●		
Korea (Republic of)	13.7	3.0	5.0		●	●	●
Kuwait	3.1	0.0b/	6.7				
Kyrgyzstan	25.6	1.4	18.8				●
Lao People's Democratic Republic	25.2	-	11.1				
Latvia	20.0	9.0	22.2				
Lebanon	4.7	2.3	4.5				
Lesotho	25.0	4.6	31.6			●	
Liberia	12.5	-	20.0		●		
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	7.7	-	0.0				
Liechtenstein	24.0	4.0	20.0				
Lithuania	22.7	17.5	23.1				●
Luxembourg	23.3	20.0	14.3				●
Macedonia (TFYR)	29.2	3.3	13.6		●g/	●	●
Madagascar	7.9	3.7	12.5				
Malawi	13.0	5.6	23.8				●
Malaysia	10.8	7.8	9.4				
Maldives	12.0	6.3	14.3				
Mali	10.2	12.2	23.1				●
Malta	8.7	5.8	15.4				●
Marshall Islands	3.0	-	10.0				
Mauritania	22.1	1.3	12.0		●g/	●	
Mauritius	17.1	7.6	10.0				
Mexico	23.2	14.2	15.8		●g/		●

Micronesia (Federated States of)	0.0	0.0	14.3				
Moldova	21.8	4.8	10.5				●
Monaco	25.0	5.6	0.0				
Mongolia	6.6	7.9	20.0				
Montenegro	11.1	-	6.3				
Morocco	10.5	0.6	19.2				●
Mozambique	34.8	25.2	25.9				●
Myanmar	-	-	0.0				
Namibia	26.9	22.2	25.0			●	●
Nauru	0.0	-	0.0				
Nepal	33.6	3.4	20.0	●	● <i>g/</i>	●	
Netherlands	39.3	31.3	33.3				●
New Zealand	33.1	29.2	32.1				
Nicaragua	18.5	10.8	33.3				●
Niger	12.4	1.2	25.8		●		●
Nigeria	7.0	-	22.7				
Norway	36.1	36.4	55.6				●
Occupied							
Palestinian Territories	-	-	-		●	●	
Oman	0.0	-	9.1				
Pakistan	22.5	2.3	3.6		●	●	
Palau	0.0	0.0	0.0				
Panama	16.7	9.7	23.1		●		
Papua New Guinea	0.9	1.8	3.6				
Paraguay	12.5	2.5	18.9		● <i>g/</i>	●	●
Peru	29.2	10.8	29.4		● <i>g/</i>	●	
Philippines	20.5	11.1	9.1		●	●	●
Poland	20.2	13.0	26.3				●
Portugal	28.3	13.0	12.5		● <i>g/</i>	●	●
Qatar	0.0	-	7.7				
Romania	9.4	7.3	0.0				●
Russian Federation	14.0	10.2	9.5				
Rwanda	48.8	17.1	16.7	●	● <i>g/</i>	●	

Samoa	8.2	4.1	23.1				
San Marino	11.7	11.7	20.0				
Sao Tome and Principe	1.8	7.3	25.0				
Saudi Arabia	0.0	-	0.0				
Senegal	22.0	11.7	17.9				●
Serbia	21.6	-	16.7	●	●	●	●
Seychelles	23.5	27.3	20.0				
Sierra Leone	13.2	-	14.3				
Singapore	24.5	4.8	0.0				
Slovakia	19.3	14.7	13.3				●
Slovenia	12.2	7.8	17.6		●g/	●	●
Solomon Islands	0.0	-	0.0				
Somalia	8.2	-	-		●		
South Africa	33.0	25.0c/	44.8			●	●
Spain	36.3	24.7	43.8		●g/	●	●
Sri Lanka	5.8	5.3	5.7				
Sudan	18.1	5.3	6.3		●		
Suriname	25.5	15.7	16.7				
Swaziland	10.8	3.1	18.8				
Sweden	47.0	40.4	47.6				●
Switzerland	28.5	21.0	42.8				●
Syrian Arab Republic	12.4	9.6	6.3				
Tajikistan	17.5	2.8	5.9				
Tanzania (United Republic of)	30.4	17.5	20.7	●	●	●	
Thailand	11.7	5.6	10.0				●
Timor-Leste	29.2	-	25.0				
Togo	11.1	1.2	9.5				
Tonga	-	0.0	-				
Trinidad and Tobago	26.8	11.1	36.4				
Tunisia	22.8	6.7	7.1				●
Turkey	9.1	2.4	4.2				
Turkmenistan	16.0	18.0	7.1				
Tuvalu	0.0	8.3	0.0				
Uganda	30.7	18.1	28.0	●	●	●	

Ukraine	8.2	3.8	4.3				
United Arab Emirates	22.5	0.0	8.0				
United Kingdom	19.5	18.2	22.7				●
United States	16.8	11.7	23.8				
Uruguay	12.1	7.1	28.6				●
Uzbekistan	17.5	6.0	5.3		●		
Vanuatu	3.8	-	7.7				
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	18.6	5.9	21.4				
Viet Nam	25.8	26.2	4.2				
Yemen	0.3	-	5.7				
Zambia	15.2	9.7	16.7				
Zimbabwe	13.5	14.7	16.3				●

Sources:

Columns 1-2: IPU database.

Column 3: IPU poster, based on information obtained from Governments, Permanent Missions to the United Nations, or publicly available information.

Columns 4-7: IDEA Global Database for Quotas for Women.

- a/ Information corresponds to 31 May 2008 and 25 December 1997.
- b/ Kuwait: No woman candidate was elected in the 2008 elections. Two women were appointed to the 16-member cabinet sworn in June 2008. As cabinet ministers also sit in parliament, there are two women out of a total of 65 members.
- c/ South Africa: The figures on the distribution of seats do not include the 36 special rotating delegates appointed on an ad hoc basis, and all percentages given are therefore calculated on the basis of the 54 permanent seats.
- d/ Reflecting appointments up to January 2008. The total includes Deputy Prime Ministers and Ministers. Prime Ministers were also included when they held ministerial portfolios. Vice-Presidents and heads of governmental or public agencies have not been included.
- f/ Constitutional Quota for National Parliaments.
- g/ Sanctions (enforceable measures) are legally mandated and applied when mandated quotas in national parliaments are not met; applicable only to Quota Type 2.
- h/ Election Law Quota Regulation for National Parliaments.
- i/ Constitutional or Legislative Quota at Sub-National Level.
- j/ Political Party Quota for Electoral Candidates.

## Appendix ii: National Assembly and Provincial Assembly – Number of Seats

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - NUMBER OF SEATS				
Province Area	General Seats	Seats Reserved for		Total
		Non-Muslims	Women	
Federal Capital	2	10		2
Punjab	148		35	183
Sindh	61		14	75
NWFP	35		8	43
FATAs	12		--	12
Balochistan	14		3	17
<b>Total:</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>332+10=342</b>

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES - NUMBER OF SEATS				
Province Area	General Seats	Seats Reserved for		Total
		Non-Muslims	Women	
Punjab	297	8	66	371
Sindh	130	9	29	168
NWFP	99	3	22	124
Balochistan	51	3	11	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>728</b>

Source: Election Commission of Pakistan

## Appendix iii: List of Women MPs on Reserved Seats

Sr No	Name	Party	Sr No	Name	Party
1.	Ms. Mehnaz Raffi	PML(Q)	31.	Begum Ishrat Ashraf	PML(N)
2.	Dr. Hajra Tariq Aziz,	PML(Q)	32.	Ms. Tehmina Daultana	PML(N)
3.	Ms. Tanzeela Aamir Cheema	PML(Q)	33.	Begum Rehana Aleem Mashhadi,	PML(J)
4.	Dr. Donya Aziz	PML(Q)	34.	Ms. Meena Ehsan Laghari	NA
5.	Ms. Kashmala Tariq	PML(Q)	35.	Ms. Ayla Malik	NA
6.	Dr. Saira Tariq	PML(Q)	36.	Ms. Fiza Junejo	PML(Q)
7.	Ms. Riffat Amjad	PML(Q)	37.	Ms. Sherry Rehman	PPPP
8.	Dr. Attiya Inayatullah	PML(Q)	38.	Ms. Ruqia Khanum Soomro	PPPP
9.	Ms. Bushra Rahman	PML(Q)	39.	Ms. Fauzia Wahab	PPPP
10.	Ms. Farzeen Ahmed Sarfaraz	PML(Q)	40.	Ms. Rubina Saddat Qaimkhan	PPPP
11.	Ms. Shahzadi Umerzadi Tiwana	PML(Q)	41.	Ms. Nafisa Munawar Raja	PPPP
12.	Ms. Rahila Yahya Munawar	PML(Q)	42.	Ms. Shagufta Jumani	PPPP
13.	Prof. Aasiya Azeem	PML(Q)	43.	Dr. Farida Ahmed	MMAP
14.	Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan	PML(Q)	44.	Ms. Kaniz Aisha Munawar	MMAP
15.	Begum Tehmina Dasti	PML(Q)	45.	Ms. Shamim Akhtar	MQM
16.	Ms. Onaza Ehsan	PML(Q)	46.	Ms. Afsar Begum	MQM
17.	Ms. Bushra Anwar Sipra	PML(Q)	47.	Ms. Shabina Talat	MQM
18.	Dr. Rozina Tufail	PML(Q)	48.	Ms. Gul-e-Farkhanda	N A
19.	Ms. Tahira Asif	PML(Q)	49.	Ms. Khurshid Afghan	PML(F)
20.	Ms. Naheed Khan	PPPP	50.	Begum Zeb Gohar Ayub	PML(Q)
21.	Ms. Belum Hasnain	PPPP	51.	Sayyeda Farhana Khalid Banoori	MMAP
22.	Ms. Shakeela Khanam Rashid	PPPP	52.	Ms. Razia Aziz	MMAP
23.	Ms. Fauzia Habib	PPPP	53.	Ms. Nayyer Sultana	MMAP
24.	Ms. Mehreen Anwar Raja	PPPP	54.	Ms. Jamila Ahmed	MMAP
25.	Ms. Yasmeen Rehman	PPPP	55.	Ms. Ambareen Naeem	MMAP
26.	Begum Shahnaz Sheikh	PML(Q)	56.	Ms. Inayat Begum	MMAP

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27.	Ms. Rukhsana Bangash	PPPP	57.	Ms. Shahida Akhtar Ali	MMAP
28.	Ms. Nasim Akhtar Chaudhry	PPPP	58.	Dr. Noor Jahan Panezai,	PML(Q)
29.	Ms. Samia Raheel Qazi	MMAP	59.	Ms. Imrana Khawar	MMAP
30.	Ms. Maimona Hashmi	PML(N)	60.	Ms. Bilqees Saif	MMAP

Source: Compiled from National Assembly Publication 2002-07

## Appendix iv: Points of Orders Raised by Female MPs (2002-2007)

Sr No	Names of Female MPs	Name of Political Parties	Number of Interventions
1	Ms. Begum Ishrat Ashraf	PML (N)	2
2	Dr. Fahmida Mirza	PPPP	1
3	Ms. Bilqees Saif	MMA	3
4	Ms. Bushra Anwar Sipra	PMLQ	1
5	Ms. Bushra Rehman	PMLQ	4
5	Ms. Fauzia Habib	PPPP	1
6	Ms. Fauzia Wahab	PPPP	2
7	Ms. Gul -e- Farkhanda	PMLQ	3
8	Ms. Kashmala Tariq	PMLQ	4
9	Ms. Mehnaz Rafi	PMLQ	10
10	Ms. Mehreen Anwer Raja	PPPP	2
11	Ms. Memona Hashmi	PMLN	2
12	Ms. Nafisa Munawar Raja	PPPP	1
13	Ms. Naheed Khan	PPPP	15
14	Ms. Rehana Aleem Mashhadi	PMLJ	5
15	Dr. Rozina Tufail	PMLQ	1
16	Ms. Rubina Saadat Qaimkhani	PPPP	1
17	Ms. Shabina Talat	MQM	1
18	Ms. Samia Raheel Qazi	MMA	3
19	Ms. Saima Akhtar Bharwana	PMLQ	1
20	Ms. Samina Khalid Ghurki	PPPP	2
21	Ms. Shamim Akhtar	MQM	1
22	Ms. Shamshad Sattar Bachani	PPPP	2
23	Ms. Shahnaz Sheikh	PPP-Patriot	3
24	Ms. Sherry Rehman	PPPP	5
25	Ms. Rubina Saadat Qaimkhani	PPPP	2
26	Ms. Yasmeen Rehman	PPPP	1
27	Ms. Zeb Gohar Ayub	PMLQ	2
28	Dr. Fareeda Ahmed	MMA	1
29	Dr. Noor Jehan Panizai	PMLQ	1
30	Tehmina Daultana	PLMN	11
<b>Total</b>			<b>94</b>

Source: Compiled from National Assembly Publication 2002-07

## Appendix v: Participation of Female MPs Through Motions in the Parliament 2002-07

Sr No	Names of Female MPs	Name of Political Parties	Number of Interventions
1	Ms. Begum Ishrat Ashraf	PML (N)	2
2	Ms. Afsar Begum	MQM	1
3	Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho	PPPP	1
4	Ms. Belum Husnain	PPPP	1
5	Ms. Bushra Anwar Sipra	PMLQ	1
6	Ms. Fauzia Habib	PPPP	1
7	Ms. Fauzia Wahab	PPPP	3
8	Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan	PLMQ	1
9	Ms. Ayesha Munawar	MMA	2
10	Dr. Fareeda Ahmed	MMA	1
11	Ms. Inayat Begum	MMA	1
12	Ms. Gul –e- Farkhanda	PMLQ	1
13	Ms. Kashmala Tariq	PMLQ	3
14	Ms. Mehnaz Rafi	PMLQ	3
15	Ms. Memona Hashmi	PMLN	2
16	Ms. Naheed Khan	PPPP	4
17	Dr. Rozina Tufail	PMLQ	2
18	Ms. Samina Khalid Ghurki	PPPP	1
19	Ms. Samia Raheel Qazi	MMA	1
20	Ms. Sherry Rehman	PPPP	2
21	Ms. Tehmina Daultana	PMLN	2
<b>Total</b>			<b>34</b>

Source: Compiled from National Assembly Publication 2002-07

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## Appendix vi: Bills and Amendments in the Bills Presented by Female MPs (2002-2007)

Sr. #	Raised by	Political Party
1	Dr. Hajra Tariq Aziz	PMLQ
2	Ms. Mehnaz Rafi	PMLQ
3	Ms. Nafisa Munawar Raja	PPPP
4	Ms. Sherry Rehman	PPPP
5	Ms. Fouzia Habib	PPPP
6	Ms. Fouzia Habib	PPPP
7	Ms. Mehreen Anwer Raja	PPPP
8	Ms. Naseem Akhtar	PPPP
9	Ms. Sherry Rehman	PPPP
10	Sayyeda Farhana Khalid Banoori	MMA
11	Ms. Mehreen Anwer Raja	PPPP

Source: Compiled from National Assembly Publication 2002-07

## Appendix vii: Percentage of Committee Members

Percentage of Committee Members								
S. No	Committee	Chairman / Chair Person	Secretary	Total No of Members	Male		Female	
					No	%	No	%
1	Standing Committee on Cabinet Secretariat and Special Initiatives	Male	Male	13	11	84.62	2	15.38
2	Standing Committee on Defence and Defence Production	Male	Male	13	12	92.31	1	7.69
3	Standing Committee on Commerce	Male	Male	13	13	100.00	0	0.00
4	Standing Committee on Industries and Production	Female	Male	14	12	85.71	2	14.29
5	Standing Committee on Communications and Railways	Male	Male	13	13	100.00	0	0.00
6	Standing Committee on Water and Power	Male	Male	13	11	84.62	2	15.38
7	Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Resources	Male	Male	13	13	100.00	0	0.00
8	Standing Committee on Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs and Statistics	Male	Male	13	13	100.00	0	0.00
9	Standing Committee on Planning and Development and Population Welfare	Male	Male	13	10	76.92	3	23.08

10	Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas	Male	Male	13	12	92.31	1	7.69
11	Standing Committee on Interior	Male	Male	12	10	83.33	2	16.67
12	Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting	Male	Male	13	11	84.62	2	15.38
13	Standing Committee on Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs and Tourism	Male	Male	13	7	53.85	6	46.15
14	Standing Committee on Education and Science and Technology	Female	Male	13	10	76.92	3	23.08
15	Standing Committee on Law, Justice and Human Rights and Parliamentary Affairs	Male	Male	13	11	84.62	2	15.38
16	Standing Committee on Religious Affairs and Zakat and Ushr and Minorities Affairs	Male	Male	13	11	84.62	2	15.38
17	Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis	Male	Male	13	10	76.92	3	23.08
18	Standing Committee on Food, Agriculture and Livestock	Male	Male	13	10	76.92	3	23.08
19	Standing Committee on Local Government and Rural Development	Male	Male	13	12	92.31	1	7.69
20	Standing Committee on Health	Male	Male	13	10	76.92	3	23.08
21	Standing Committee on Housing and Works and Environment	Male	Male	13	12	92.31	1	7.69
22	Functional Committee on Government Assurances	Male	Male	13	13	100.00	0	0.00
23	Functional Committee on Human Rights	Male	Male	14	14	100.00	0	0.00
24	Finance Committee	Male	Male	15	13	86.67	2	13.33
25	Standing Committee on Women Development	Female	Male	13	5	38.46	8	61.54
26	Standing Committee on Information Technology	Male	Male	13	12	92.31	1	7.69
27	Standing Committee on Textile Industry	Female	Male	13	12	92.31	1	7.69
28	Functional Committee on Problems of Less Developed Areas	Male	Male	13	13	100.00	0	0.00

29	Standing Committee on Ports and Shipping	Male	Male	13	12	92.31	1	7.69
30	Standing Committee on States and Frontier Regions	Male	Male	13	12	92.31	1	7.69
31	Standing Committee on Narcotics Control	Female	Male	13	11	84.62	2	15.38
32	Standing Committee on Social Welfare and Special Education	Male	Male	13	10	76.92	3	23.08
33	Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges	Male	Male	9	8	88.89	1	11.11
34	Council of the Chairmen	Male	Male					
35	Social Welfare and Special Education	Female	Male					
36	SAFRON	Male						
37	Population Welfare	Female						
38	Petroleum and National Resources	Female						
39	Defence Production	Female						
40	Environment	Female						
41	Privatization and Investment	Male						
42	Minorities	Male						

Source: Compiled from National Assembly Publication 2002-07

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## Appendix viii: Questionnaire

### Questionnaire For the Semi-Structured Interview to Assess the Role and Contribution of Women Parliamentarians

#### Demographic Information

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

1	21-31	
2	32-42	
3	43-53	
4	54-64	
5	65-above	

3. Place of Birth:

1	Urban		Name of the City
2	Semi Urban		
3	Rural		

4. Place Of Residence:

1	Urban		Name of the City
2	Semi Urban		
3	Rural		

5. Educational Status:

1	Graduate	
2	Master	
3	Master / M.Phil	
4	Ph.D	

6. Marital Status:

1	Single	
2	Married	
3	Divorced	
4	Widow	
5	Separated	

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**7. Number of Children:**

1	1 – 3	
2	3 – 5	
3	5 – 7	
4	7 – above	

**8. Age of Children:**

1	1– 5	
2	6- 10	
3	11 – 15	
4	16 and above	

**9. Nature of Family:**

- Nuclear       Extended

**10. Occupational Status:**

- Working       Non-working

**11. Occupational Status of Husband/Father:**

1	Business	
2	Govt.Servant in BPS 17 and Above	
3	Govt. Servant in BPS 16 and Low	
4	Landlord	
5	Farmer	
6	Professional *	
8	Property Dealer	
9	Labor	
10	Army officer	
11	Any other	

**Specify if any other:** \_\_\_\_\_

\* Doctor , Engineer, lawyer

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12. Monthly expenditure of the Household:

1	Less than 20,000	
2	20,000 – 40,000	
3	40,000 – 80,000	
4	80,000 – 100,000	
5	100,000 – 200,000	
6	200,000 – above	

**Political Background**

13. Did You got elected on

Reserved Seat       Direct Seat

14. Are you member of any political party?

Yes       No

If yes which party?

1	PML (Q)	
2	PPP	
3	PML (N)	
4	Jamat-e- Islami	
5	JUI	
6	MQM	
7	PPP (Shairpao)	
8	ANP	
9	Other	

Specify if any other: \_\_\_\_\_

15. How long have you been a member of the party?

1	Less than 1 year	
2	2 – 5 years	
3	6 – 10 year	
4	11 year and more	

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16. Do you hold now or in the past any party office?

Yes

No

If yes give details?

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17. Have you ever worked with any women's right group/organization or the NGO dealing with issues of development?

Yes

No

If yes, name of the group?

18. Were you politically active in raising women's issue before entering in the parliament?

Yes

No

If yes give details?

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19. Is any member of your family has contested election?

Yes

No

If yes who?

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for which seat?

MNA

MPA

District Nazim

20. Is any member of your family has won election?

Yes

No

If yes at which seat

District Council

Tehsil Council

Union Council

National Assembly

Provincial Assembly

Local Government

Senate

Did you win the election?

Yes

No

22. How many times did you become the member of Parliament/  
Senate?

	Number of Time Elected	
1	One Time	
2	Two Time	
3	Three Time	
4	Four Time and more	

### **Political Experience and Needs for Capacity Building**

23. Do you think you are fully equipped to perform your role effectively as a parliamentarian?

Yes

No

Somewhat

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24. Did you receive any training after becoming a member of parliament?

Yes       No

If yes describe the nature and duration of the training?

	Nature of Training	Duration	Who Imparted	Outcome Of training?	Comments
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

25. Were you satisfied with the quality of training?

Yes       No       Somewhat

26. What are the areas in which you lack skills?

1	Advocacy	
2	Networking	
3	Drafting Legislation	
4	Moving Bill	
5	Another	

Specify if any other:

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27. How do you rate the political skills of women Parliamentarians?

1. Excellent      2. Good      3. Average      4. Poor

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28. Please identify areas in which women parliamentarians need capacity building support?

1	Advocacy	
2	Networking	
3	Drafting Legislation	
4.	Moving Bill	
5	Preparing Questions	
6	Any other	

29. What could be the best strategies/ways to deliver training or improve the capacity of the parliamentarians in future?

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**Feminist Consciousness**

30. Do you think women have special interest to be represented?

- Yes       No       Do't Know

31. Do you think women can represent women's interest better than men?

- Yes       No

32. Did you have any networking with Women's Rights Groups/ NGOs outside the parliament?

- Yes       No

If yes give details:

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33. Have you developed any cross party linkages with female and male?

Yes       No

34. Is there any solidarity among women Parliamentarians on women's issues?

Yes       No

If not please explain the reasons?

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35. What strategies do you propose to promote women's solidarity across party on women's issues?

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### **Impact of Gender Quota**

36. Do you support gender quota system in politics?

Yes       No

37. In your view how gender quota has impacted on politics/society

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**Women Caucus**

38. Was there any attempt to establish women’s caucus in the parliament?

- Yes                       No

39. What were the main reasons for the failure of women parliamentarians to develop a women caucus?

40. Do you think women caucus could help women parliamentarians to project women’s issues more effectively?

- Yes                       No                       Not Sure

41. What needs to be done to mobilize female parliamentarians to establish women caucuses.

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**Barrier/Constraints Faced by Women Parliamentarians**

42. What difficulties do you face to work as a member of parliament at

Personal Level

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Family Level

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Parliament Level

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Constituency Level

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**Parliament Performance**

43. How would you rate your level of attendance of parliamentary sessions ?

- Regular       Irregular

44. How would you rate your participation in parliamentary debates?

- Excellent       Good  
 Average       Below Average

46. Are you member of any parliamentary Committee?

- Yes       No

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If yes, which committee and what was your experience of it?

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45. Did you raise any women any of the following?

			Explain
1	Private Member Bill		
2	Resolution		
3	Call Attention		
4	Questions		
5	Adjournment Motion		
6	Question of Privilege		
7	Women's Issues		
8	Any other		

46. Did you receive any support from the parliamentary staff?

- Yes       No       Not Sure

If yes what kind of support did you get?

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47. What are the areas in which parliamentary staff lack skills?

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48. What sort of political activities you do outside the parliament?

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**Role as Minister**

49. Were you consulted on the portfolio you are given?

Yes       No

50. Do you have adequate power to work effectively as a minister?

Yes       No       Somewhat adequate

51. Have you done any thing special as minister for women of the country?

Yes       No

If yes please explain

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52. What difficulties did you face as a woman minister?

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53. What sort of changes you brought to your ministry to work more effectively?



## **About Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung**

### **Promoting Democracy, Peace and Social Justice**

#### **Origin, Values and Aims**

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization committed to the principles and values of social democracy and the labor movement. The FES was founded in 1925 as a political legacy of Friedrich Ebert who was the first democratically elected president of Germany. Inspired by Ebert's ideals of shaping politics in the spirit of freedom, solidarity and social justice, the Foundation has continued to incorporate such ethos in its programs for political education, international cooperation as well as scholarship programs and research.

#### **The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Pakistan**

The FES established its office in Islamabad in 1990. However, cooperation between Pakistani organisations and the FES had already commenced during the middle of the 1980s. The FES established partnerships with institutions from diverse backgrounds and carried out projects aimed at promoting the dialogue between state institutions, political parties, civil society actors and the general public. The FES has joined hands with legislatures, national and local government institutions, public administration, trade unions, research institutes and social activists to achieve desired aims in partnership and mutual trust.