

Role of Women of Sindh in Politics of Pakistan (1947 -1988) An Analysis

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Abstract:

In Pakistani society, even in the world it is generally considered that the politics is the prerogative of man. Despite of this thinking women in whole world have proved themselves in the political arena of the world. They have also been proved great leaders of the world through their efforts and their political vision. Margrate Thatcher, Hillary Clinton, Aung San Suu Kyi, Indra Ghandi Khilda Zia, Sheikh Hassina Wajid, Miss Fatima Jinnah, Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto are the exemplary politicians and leaders of the world. Women of Sindh also played central role in the politics of Pakistan before and after its independence. Though the society of subcontinent was not supportive to women. even they were not allowed to get education but there were a few of women who were aware of their political rights, due to the efforts of these women political leaders, the women from Sindh not only participated in the Pakistan movement but they launched the movements against British and played leading role for independence. After independence the women of Sindh continued their political carrier, they always remained on the front line whenever the politics of Pakistan faced the challenges by military rulers from Ayub Khan to Pervez Musharraf. The Social Status of women has remained deprived since the making of Pakistan. Sindh is a southern province of Pakistan and is greatly affected due to the policies of government in different periods, which also affected the lives of women of Sindh. In Pakistan generally and in Sindh particularly there is patriarchal and male dominated society, which deprived women from their legitimate rights. But the women of Sindh continued their role in the politics of Pakistan. This paper will focus on the role of women of Sindh in Pakistan's politics.

Key words: Politics, Pakistan, Sindh, Status of Women, Society, Political Role, Muslims women, lead, parliament, democracy, Martial law

Introduction:

The Status of Women generally in whole world is highly victimized of different social controls. Pakistan is a part of this world where all these social controls are adopted to suppress the status of women in different aspects of life, weather it is social, economic, or political. Many writers, intellectual's economists are of opinion that Pakistani Society is uniformly and unquestionably

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patriarchal society in which women is treated as the property of men to whom they are related. (Sarfranz,1985& Alvi 1991). Sindh as a part of Pakistan is also experiencing from same pattern and situation. The society of Sindh is rooted in patriarchy and feudal set up, and it is so strong in rural areas of the province, which imposes its norms on women to keep them in subordinate position. Despite of having such unsupportive society, women have continued to play their role in every field. This research focuses on the political role of women and particularly the role of women of Sindh.

Role of Sindh in Freedom Movement:

There were numerous factors behind the creation of Pakistan. Muslims often claim that Pakistan came into being not only because of the Muslims in India were intensively conscious of their national and cultural identity, but also the Hindu community in India was intolerant and exclusive (Sayeed, 1996). But this research has proved that the British policy of divide and rule was an actual factor behind the creation of Pakistan.

Sindh had never accepted subjugation of British, and always played substantial role for the independence. Jihad movement was supported by Sindh, another example was the khilafat movement and Hijrat movement Sindh played central role in all these movements. Though there was no any contribution of khilafat movement in the making of Pakistan, but it left significant effects on the Muslims of India, and the Muslims of India had taken part in any movement for the first time which was against the British, and they learnt various tactics and techniques through the Khilafat movement , that, how to organize a movement, these all things helped the Muslims in the struggle of Pakistan. The separation of Sindh from Bombay presidency was considered the first stone to the separate State for Muslims of British India. There is a series of activities behind this achievement. A two day conference was organized with the theme of Sindh Azad Conference on 15-16 April 1932 in Hyderabad. Before this a movement was launched for the separation of Sindh by the people of Sindh and the All-India Muslim League passed a resolution for separate province in 1925, and finally Sindh was separated from Bombay presidency under the Indian act of 1935 on 1st April 1936.

Role of Women of Sindh in Freedom Movement:

The Muslim women of Sindh played very momentous role in the struggle of Pakistan, The Muslim women from Sindh like women from other parts of India, they encouraged and motivated their male members of family like husbands, brothers and sons to take part in the movement of independence.

In fact, without contribution of women in Pakistan movement, it would be impossible for Muslims of India to get independence from British emperor. as Quaid – e- Azam said: No nation can make any progress without the cooperation of its women. If Muslim women support their man as they did in the days of the prophet of Islam, we should soon realize our goal, no nation is capable of remaining a strong nation, unless and until its men and women struggle together for the achievement of its goal. (Saiyad, 1999).

In 1938 a session was organized by All India Muslim League at Patna in this session a Women Muslim League Committee was formed. Begum Nusrat Abdullah Haroon from Sindh became the member of All India Muslim League. Begum Nusrat Abdullah Haroon was nominated the president of All India Women Muslim League from Sindh in 1943, she visited all parts of the country to aware the women from various parts of country and organized women to take part in the movement of Pakistan. She had a social club in Delhi with the name of Nusrat club, it was popularly for the social activities, but lady Haroon dedicated it for political activities of Muslim women. She was used to address the Muslim women and motivated them for the movement of Pakistan in the club. Later Nusrat club became popular center of political activities of Muslim women. Sindh Provincial Muslim Women Committee was formed in 1946, Lady Abdullah Haroon, Lady Hidayatullah, and Lady Khairunnisa Shaban were selected as members of committee, these ladies started to travel all parts of Sindh to unify women for movement of Pakistan and also travelled to Quetta from Hyderabad to motivate the women from Baluchistan for Pakistan movement. Though the families of these women were very strict to observe purdha, so they were used to address the people in burqa.

Another exemplary character from Sindh was Begum Sughra Hidayatullah ,she belonging to district Shikarpure and had open her eye in a feudal family of Durani of Ghari Yaseen the family was very strict to observe purdah, generally she is known Lady Glulam Hussain Hidayattullah ,Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah was her husband and was one famous politician from Sindh and contributed a lot in Pakistan movement, lady Sughra helped her husband Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayattullah in every walk of political activities. Lady Hidayattullah was a great name of Sindh she played prominent role in Muslim League Women Wing Sindh. As a president of Sindh Women's Muslim League, she travelled all parts of Sindh and picked out the women from their homes and asked them to join Muslim League.

Begum Tahira Ejaz Hussain Aagha is also a discourse able name of Sindh women Muslim League. She was famous for her services as an organizing secretary in most processions and conferences. She was used to excite the women of Sindh with this saying. "The hand that can walk the

cradle can rule the nation.” (Laiq,2000) She always stressed women that, they should actively contribute in the movement of Pakistan.

Begum Tahira Eijaz had written a book of 44 pages, it was published in 1946 with the title of “*Assan Jo Pakistan*”.(Ibid) In the elections of 1946 two women were succeeded from Sindh Mrs. G Alana on seat of Muslim League and other was Miss Jethi Bai Tulsidas Sipahemlani on the seat of congress, She was belonged to Hyderabad Sindh, she served as deputy speaker of Sindh Legislative Assembly twice, after the elections of 1937 from 1-06-1939 to 24-02 1945 and later from 14-03-1946 to 05-11-1946.(www.pas.govt.pk). The most significant figure of Pakistan movement was Miss Fatima Jinnah, the younger sister of Quaid-e-Azam, Miss Fatima Jinnah played an important role of a link between the Muslim women of subcontinent and Quaid-e- Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in All India Muslim League There are some instrumental figures of Pakistan movement apart from these women of Sindh, Like Fakhurunissa Wali Muhammad Afandi, Begum Mehrunnissa and Fatima Shaikh of Sindh. She made Hyderabad the center of political activities in Sindh. (www.Awamipolitics.com) Begum Aziz Rasool, Begum Abdul Aziz, Begum G Alana (she also contested elections of 1946) Begum Wajid Ali Ansari Begum Muhammad Ishaque, Begum Makhdoom Muhammad Umar and Begum Ghulam Rasool Bhurgri played instrumental role in Pakistan movement.

Role of Women after Independence:1947-1988

Pakistan was formed on 14 August 1947 under Indian Independence Act in the result of partition of British India. Muslim women now they were the independent citizens of Pakistan, they kept continue their political activities after the independence also. They worked continuously for the rights of women and development of country in the parliament and out of parliament.

Role of Women in Parliament:

After independence Begum Shah Nawaz and Shaista Ikramullah were the representatives of women in first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan made in 1947. By untiring endeavors of these ladies, “The Muslim Personnel Law of Shariah was passed in 1948”. (www.pas.govt.pk.) The law guaranteed equal status and equal opportunities to all citizens female and male. But the constitution was not implemented, and it was abrogated on 7 October 1958.

In 1971, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto became the first elected prime minister of Pakistan, and he took the matter of the making of constitution of Pakistan on priority basis, in this connection a constitution

committee was designed and, in this committee, the two women namely Begum Ashraf Abbasi from Sindh and Begum Naseem Jehan were appointed as member of committee.

Both women played significant role to frame the constitution of 1973. Begum Ashraf Abbasi played vibrant role particularly regarding the women's rights because of her untiring efforts and logical reasoning the 1973 constitution declared equal opportunities to all citizens male and female and instructing that there would be no discrimination on the basis of race, religion, caste and sex for appointment in the services of Pakistan.

Article 27. (1) No citizen otherwise qualified for appointment in the service of Pakistan shall be discriminated against in respect of any such appointment on the ground only of race, religion, caste, sex, residence or place of birth. (CIRP, 2018). In the result of this law women have been entered in the superior services of country. Begum Ashraf Abbasi was elected as Deputy Speaker of National Assembly twice, in 1973- 77 and in 1988 during the first tenure of Benazir Bhutto's government. She became the first woman deputy speaker of the National Assembly in 1973 and held the position till 1977 and again from 1988 to 1990. (Kalhoro, 2014) During Bhutto period women from Sindh played significant role in parliament. Begum Zakiya Brohi from Hyderabad, Miss Firdous Junejo from Badin, Taj Bibi Baloch from Karachi, Begum Basheer Naaro of Sukkur, Begum Shamim N.D Khan these women leaders were elected as Members of Sindh Assembly (MPA's) in 1972 and 1977. These women leaders not only played a significant role for the women's right, but they also raised their voice for the rights of peasants and labors on the floor of Sindh Assembly.

In 1977 General Zia-ul Haq imposed the Martial law by taking over the government of an elected Prime Minister Z.A Bhutto and he sent Bhutto ladies to jail and later he created a very cruel environment to compel them to adopt exile. In such condition most of women politician in Pakistan generally and in Sindh particularly deprived due to the crucial rule of General Zia on one hand and his dictatorial laws on other hand. This acutely affected the legal status of women. In the result of General Zia's policies that the most of women organization were arose in the country particularly in Sindh. Restorations of Democracy (MRD) formed on 6 February 1981 (khan,2001). MRD completed its organization process and announced to launch Civil Disobedient Movement from 14 August 1983. In the result MRD the elections of 1985 were held and four women, Salma Ahmed, Qamarunisa Qamar, Begum Rashida Pasha Khuhro and Afroz Nazeer Ahmed were elected as Member National Assembly on reserved seats for women from Sindh. Begum Gulzar Unar from Khairpur Mir's, Begum Noureen Akhtaree Islamuddin from Sukkur, Amina Ashraf from Karachi, Mrs. Maqbool Balouch from

Shikarpur and Mrs. Parveen Atta Maree from Tando Aadam were elected on reserved seats of women in Sindh Assembly. They played role for the rights of women and for the restoration of democracy on the floor of assembly.

General Zia was died on 17th August 1988 in Air crash near Bahawalpur (khan, 2001) Senate Chairman Ghulam Ishaq Khan became president of Pakistan. He announced that general elections would be held within three months, as per promised general elections were held on 16th November 1988 (Ibid). Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won the elections and emerged as a majority party in the National Assembly, by winning the 93 seats out of 205 (Ibid). Benazir was invited to form the government. The fundamentalist religious persons and some factor of establishment opposed it. Despite of huge opposition circumstances favored to Benazir Bhutto, and she took oath as a Prime Minister of Pakistan on 2nd December 1988. She was first women of Muslim world who was elected as Prime Minister. During her tenure she tried to establish the democratic system, and, in this connection, she formed coalitions with other parties. She tried to revert the 8th amendment. She continued the struggle for democracy throughout her life.

Finally, she sacrificed her life on 27th December 2007 during the rule of another General the Pervaiz Musharraf. Nusrat Bhutto was elected five times, Member National Assembly (M.N.A) in 1977, 1988, 1990, 1993 and 1996. She also served as senior Minister of country in 1988 when Benazir her daughter was the Prime Minister of Pakistan, her role in Assembly remained commendable.

Role of Women out of Parliament:

Women of Pakistan generally and women of Sindh particularly played leading role against military rulers. When first Martial law was imposed in Pakistan by Ayub Khan in 1958 with the help of Iskandar Mirza. At that time a Sindh born lady Miss Fatima Jinnah opposed the military ruler and contested the presidential election against Ayub Khan. In the dictatorial rule of Yahya Khan another leader from Sindh raised the voice against one unit, auction of lands and publishing of voter list in Sindhi. She was Akhtar Baloch In 1977 3rd Martial law was imposed in country by General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq. The Bhutto ladies Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto led the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) When the Movement for the Restorations of Democracy (MRD) formed on 6 February 1981 and the leadership of this movement announced to launch Civil Disobedient Movement from 14 August 1983. The movement spread all over the country, thousands of the people participated in procession protest and rallies. In Sindh the movement turned into violence.

Demonstrators attacked government properties particularly on Police stations, Railway stations, post offices, Banks and other government properties, they also attacked on jails and railway lines and canals were also breached. The province had become a battlefield. (Shaikh,2000). The military used iron hands to crush the movement. The Sindh governor admitted that in the opening three weeks of the struggle, about two thousand people had been arrested,189 killed and126 injured. (Talbot,2005). Law enforcing agencies openly used Lathi charge, Tear gas and in some places in the opened fire. “In September at KN Shah (Khair pure Nathan Shah, the city of district Dadu Sindh province) army fired on protestors at least 7 were killed and more than twenty were injured. (Javed ,1991) and another incident on National High way near Sakrand, the army opened the fires and at least 17 were killed and more than sixty were injured (Laique ,2002) . Even military janta used jets and bombardment on Lakhat and Sekhat the villages of Sindh province (Chandio ,2009).

Though on those days Benazir was in jail but she was trying to keep in touch with party leaders and workers with the help of a few sympathetic officers and led the movement. Not only Bhutto ladies but other women of Sindh belonging to PPP Begum Shamim N.D Khan, Dr Ashraf Abbasi ,Raheela Tiwana, Nuzhat Pathan ,Rukiya Soomro, Fatima Soomro ,Noorjehan Soomro and Rashida Panhwar, the women leaders of Awami Tehreek and, Sindhyani Tehreek, like Zarina Balouch,Akhtar Balouch, Mariyam Palijo, Fatima Palijo, Shahnaz Rahoo Sahabzadi Dahir and Zahida Sheikh, the Women leaders of Democratic Students Federation(DSF) Hameeda Ghangro, Afshan Saboohi and Nazneen and women of People’s Students Federation (PSF) Rahilla Tiwana ,Mudasar Sehar and of other democratic parties not only performed their role in MRD but these women Leaders organized their respective political parties they led the processions in the harsh regimes of Martial law, they also faced the Lathi charge and tear gas of police and armed forces during MRD movement.

After the arrest of Bhutto there was ban on political activities, thus the workers of PPP continued their activities under the leadership of Begum Bhutto in the meetings which were used to held in the name of Quran Khawani and also with other nominal titles of meetings, but the actual reason was the political movement for restoration of democracy. In those days on 16th December 1977 Begum Bhutto wanted to launch a programme so she gave the instructions to the party workers, they should be gathered in the Gaddafi Stadium to watch the cricket match and Begum Bhutto with her daughter Benazir Bhutto also went to see the cricket match in the stadium.

As both the women leaders entered in stadium, the people who were already planned to be gathered there, they started to raise the slogans of “Jeay Bhutto, Bhutto Ko Riha Karo and Nusrat

Bhutto Zinda abad” The police said Begum Bhutto to leave the stadium she said I have purchased the ticket to see the match and I did not say the people to raise the slogan. (Dur-e-Sameen 1996). The workers of PPP entered in the ground and police attacked on them with batons, Begum Bhutto was also severely injured with two to four batons, but she kept her senses under her control and she raised a slogan with full strength that, Zalmon Jawab do Khoon Ka hisab do. When civil disobedient movement was launched by MRD, the number of women offered arrest and 27 women of Sindhyani Tehreek offered arrest, and they went to jail. Two women who have a great recognition of a political and social activists like Rahilla Tiwana of PSF and Akhtar Balouch of Awami Tehreek, even they faced the torture cells during the dictatorial rule of General Zia and General Muhammad Yahya Khan respectively. (Pathan,2014).

After the imposition of Martial law in 1977 Zia promulgated the Shariat Bill ‘Hudood Ordinance’ of 1979. The women of Sindh protested against Zia’s Hudood Ordinance. A committee was formed. This consisted of Anjuman Jamohoriyat Pasand Khawateen of communist party, Women Action Forum and Sindhyani Tehreek. Akhtar Balouch was leader of that Tehreek. They launched a Tehreek started from Karachi city “. Akhtar Baloch, Anees Haroon Afshan Saboohi, Nasreen Azhar the daughter of Suleman Shaikh late Yasmeen and Nusrat Leghari the wife of Nazeer Leghari editor of Jang. These women played important role against Zia’s Hudood Ordinance. They organized seminars and press conferences in the leadership of Akhtar Baloch against said movement.”(Palijo, A, 2014)

Conclusion:

This research has proved that the women of Sindh have remained deprived from their legitimate rights since the genesis of Pakistan. During research period the women of Sindh had played role in politics of country. Though the number of women political workers was limited even than they played vital role in the parliament and out of parliament for the rights of women, for restoration and strengthening of democracy. Women political workers led the processions and rallies against the military rulers. They organized women wings of political parties and also led the political parties.

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