

WOMEN PARTICIPATION UNDER DEVOLUTION OF POWER PLAN 2000: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses women participation in local government established under devolution of power plan (DOPP) 2000 promulgated by a military ruler General Pervez Musharraf. According to this draft women were given 33% representation in local councils but issues and challenges regarding women participation still do exist which are recommended to overhaul after a comprehensive study of previous research works.

Keywords: *Devolution, Government, Local Government, Woman, Participation, Representation, Provinces*

INTRODUCTION

Local government means governance at grass root level whether in the hands of men or women. Pakistan has observed different types of governing systems particularly democratic and military rules but decentralization or local governments have never been encouraged in Pakistan. Ayub was the initiator of local government system who introduced “Basic Democracies System 1959” followed by “Local Government System of 1979” enforced by Zia. Musharaf promulgated “Devolution of Power Plan (DOPP) 2000” and strengthened the system of local governments in terms of representation and development. Currently provinces have different local government systems with different legislations.

Women participation as equal to men has paramount importance for a healthy society and future generations. Short history of local governments in Pakistan discourages women participation. There is nothing found practically about role of women in these systems of local governments. Legislators made nominal efforts to enforce women’s concerns in process

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of decentralization. Despite the fact that state, religion and constitution encourage women participation and empowerment, political authorities remained reluctant to enhance it at grass root level.

Islam (state religion of Pakistan) is complete code of life and addresses the equality of human beings. Allah calls both men and women which means that both are equal in terms of all kinds of rights as mentioned in Surah Al-Ahzab in these words:

“For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women who are patient, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast, for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise - For them all has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward.” (Al-Ahzab 33:35)

Role of women in grass root politics is a globally discussing issue. International human rights and political organizations are waving the flags of women rights in local, national and international politics. Charter of United Nations Organization 1945 declares that all mankind have equal social, economic and political rights in spite of different entities i.e. gender, race, color, religion and region. Under the charter of UNO, there are several commitments, agreements, laws, conferences, plan of actions and conventions protecting women political rights. Vienna Declaration and Program of Action; International Conference on Population and Development; Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; Millennium Development Goals and United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development are working global commitments that are source of security for women political rights (United Nations Human Rights High Commissioner, 2014).

Developing countries focus on encouraging the trend of women participation in matters of governance. Growing political role of women is a significant change of 21st century. According to ranking of 128 states developed by The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 2005 Sweden, Rwanda and Norway increased women political participation to 45.3%, 48.8% and 38.2% in all levels of government. Scandinavian states are observing highest number in terms of women participation followed by American and European countries. Asia and Africa are improving their

system of political participation while Arab and Pacific regions are at lowest ebb in this regard (Jabeen & Iqbal, 2010).

Our society is patriarchal in nature and not ready whole heartedly to get participate the women in political process. More than 50% of country's population is comprised of women but they are deprived of their basic political rights. Article 25(2) of the constitution enforces rights for women equal to men and establishes the parameters of legislation in this regard. Issue of legislation is one of the major concerns in subject problem collided with several other socio-political hurdles.

Pakistan's three constitutions allocated reserve seats for women from 3 to 10%. Article 44(2), of 1956 constitution gave 3% quota for women i.e. 10 seats. Constitution of 1973 also reserved 10 women seats. In 1985 these seats were increased to 20. In 1997-1999, this quota reduced to a lowest level i.e. 3.2% in lower house (National Assembly), 2.4% in upper house (Senate) and 0.4% in Provincial Assemblies. Women were not given representation in Basic Democracy's System of 1959 and nominal number of women seen under Local Government System of 1979 (Tabassum, et al., 2008).

First time in the constitutional history of Pakistan, Devolution of power plan (DOPP) 2000 enacted by Musharraf brought remarkable political representation and development for women under the guidelines of National Reconstruction Bureau, a state think tank for devolution of powers. Government conducted two elections i.e. 2001 and 2005 under this constitutional draft. A remarkable number of women contested these elections and launched inclusive election campaigns throughout the Pakistan. Women were the hot issue discussing in election debates. Women participants succeeded to capture a good number of reserved seats.

Execution of women participation in local governments is a single characteristic regarding women empowerment in mainstream politics but there are several issues that have come into sight after observing DOPP 2000. Though 33% representation in all tiers of district government i.e. union, tehsil and district councils but they felt difficulties in performing their assigned roles owing to male domination, low literacy rate and near to the ground political experience of women. DOPP 2000 was an effort to enable the women to get participate them in political process but their absence in policy-making, financial management and other socio-political matters raised the questions on practice of women participation.

Research Question

To what extent DOPP 2000 fulfilled the women requirements of political participation in local governments and which are the existing issues and challenges?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is descriptive and historical in nature. Qualitative and quantitative approaches with secondary sources of data have been applied to complete this research work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Democratic and military rulers have never prioritized women participation in local governments. Military regimes are known as upholder and initiators of local governments but Ayub and Zia tried their best to keep women out of local government system and legalized only 2% women representation. Begum Nasim Wali Khan as opposition leader in NWFP voiced strongly and publically for women representation in local councils but not materialized. A few women were seen in local councils just because of their strong political background (Khattak, 1996).

There were several hurdles in the way of women participation in local governments but most prominent were religious and tribal. Religious and tribal leadership were against women participation on the grounds of their traditions. DOPP 2000 provided 33% representation to women in all tiers of local government and there is not any religious or tribal impediment in the way of women participation (Tabassum, et al., 2008).

Aurat Foundation publicized through its report entitled as “Citizens campaigns for women participation in local government elections 2001 and 2005” that, Punjab captured top ranking in women participation followed by Sindh. Balochistan and NWFP (KPK) stand at 3rd and 4th positions respectively. Despite of this ranking women participation and seat-winning ratio in all provinces is valuable (Aurat Foundation, 2008).

Women participation was given a reasonable priority in DOPP 2000 but it remained a nightmare in the context of role in policy making / implementation, capacity building, allocation of financial resources and management at district level (Chaudhry, 2009).

Women were not given shares in citizen community board and public safety commissions despite the fact that they were entitled to get representation with the ratio of 33% (Haroon, 2010).

A discussable political participation of marginalized groups particularly women in local government system enhanced the opportunities for them to access state services and serve the state (Hussain, 2012).

Almost all district nazims perceived that DOPP 2000 was initiator of local governments in real sense and implemented the article 32 of the constitution according to its spirit, which states that state government should encourage the system of local government with special participation of women, workers and peasants (Khan & Mirza, 2013).

However, women were given 33% representation in local government bodies but their attendance in sessions of Union, Tehsil and District Councils was next to nothing because women seats were filled just to win the women seats but not to represent them in councils. They were missing represented in practical politics at grass root level and given nothing in management of district governments (Chaudhry, et al., 2014).

History of Women's Participation in Pakistan's Local Government System

History of local government system starts from 1958 and six elections of local bodies have held until now. Only military rulers prioritized the local government system and every ruler tried to keep women out of local government system. Nominal representation has been given to this marginalized group in every regime.

Account of women's role in local government starts with the beginning of local government system. Women were given 2% during Ayub's Basic Democracy's system 1959 and Zia's Local Government System 1979. It was increased to 10% during Nawaz Sharif's first era 1990-93. In the 1998 elections of local governments, women reserved seats were, 25.8% in Balochistan, 12.7% in Punjab, 2.9% in NWFP and 23% in Sindh but elections were held in Balochistan and Punjab only. Military government of Musharaf introduced Devolution of Power Plan in 2000 under which two local body's elections were held in 2000 and 2005. Under this plan, 33% seats reserved for women (Jabeen & Iqbal, 2010).

Analysis of women Participation in Local Government under Devolution of Power Plan 2000

DOPP 2000 gave a good number of women seats in the system of local governments, which is never observed before that. Women representation never crossed double figure. First time in history, women were given 33% representation in all tiers of district government. Women participated in local government elections of 2001 and 2005 under this legal draft and captured most of the seats reserved for them. Punjab is at top position with 97.7% and 99.4% in 2001 and 2005 elections respectively with the ranking sequence of Punjab (1), Sindh (2), Balochistan (3) and NWFP (4).

Punjab

Composition of Punjab during the period of 2001-10 is as follows:

Population	Area	Districts	Tehsils	Union Councils
100 million	205344 km ²	35	118	3445

Punjab is richest in terms of fertile lands, literacy rate, institutions and political awareness. Literacy rate in Punjab is 61% and 52% portion of women population is educated. In large number, women from Punjab participated and succeeded in local government elections held in 2001 and 2005. Seat-winning ratio of women in Punjab was highest among the four provinces.

Punjab									
District	Number of UCs	Women General Seats				Women Labor/Peasants Seats			
		2001		2005		2001		2005	
		Total	Filled	Total	Filled	Total	Filled	Total	Filled
Attock	72	288	281	144	144	144	139	144	142
Bahawalpur	107	428	421	214	212	214	184	214	213
Bahawalnagar	118	472	463	236	236	236	224	236	233
Bhakar	42	168	164	84	81	84	65	84	83
Chakwal	68	272	269	136	133	136	133	136	135
D. G. Khan	59	236	232	118	117	118	106	118	118
Faisalabad	289	1156	1142	578	578	578	572	578	569
Gujrat	117	468	466	234	233	234	224	234	234

Gujranwala	188	752	748	376	376	376	365	376	374
Hafizabad	42	168	167	84	83	84	84	84	82
Jhang	128	512	505	256	254	256	230	256	248
Jehlum	53	212	210	108	107	106	102	108	106
Qasur	113	452	450	226	224	226	216	226	226
Khanewal	100	400	400	200	199	200	196	200	198
Khushab	51	204	200	102	100	102	90	102	101
Laiyah	44	176	172	88	87	88	71	88	88
Lahore	150	600	598	300	299	300	288	300	300
Lodhran	73	292	292	146	145	146	142	146	145
Mianwali	56	224	212	112	110	112	104	112	106
Mandi Bahaudin	65	260	258	130	128	130	130	130	125
Muzafargarh	93	372	350	186	185	186	160	186	185
Multan	126	504	500	258	257	252	248	258	254
Narowal	74	296	295	148	146	148	146	148	148
Nankana Sahb	68			136	126			136	122
Okarra	114	456	446	228	227	228	220	228	228
Pakpatan	63	252	250	126	125	126	126	126	122
Rajanpur	44	176	174	88	86	88	78	88	88
R. Y. Khan	122	488	488	244	243	244	234	244	240
Rawalpindi	170	680	680	350	340	340	330	350	322
Sargodha	161	644	620	322	320	322	315	322	316
Sahiwal	89	356	356	178	176	178	170	178	170
Sialkot	122	488	488	248	248	244	220	248	242
Shekhupura	169	676	670	202	200	338	320	202	198
Toba Tek Singh	82	328	328	164	165	164	156	164	164
Vihari	89	356	355	178	177	178	170	178	174

(Source: Reports of Election Commission of Pakistan, PILDAT and Aurat Foundation)

Women from Punjab showed first-rate commitment to participate in local government elections. In most of the districts, women contested the elections without any fear. Most important thing is that, women from Southern Punjab won the seat at equal ratio with women from Central and Northern Punjab. Filling of peasants and labor seats is in greater ratio than

that of general seats. In one of the elections of 2001 and 2005, 100% general seats were filled in Attock, Sialkot, Khanewal, R. Y. Khan, Rawalpindi and Faisalabad districts while peasant/labor seats in Toba Tek Singh, Rajanpur, Pakpattan, Narowal, Mandi Bahaudin, Lahore, Qasur, Hafizabad, Gujrat and D. G. Khan district touched the same figure.

Sindh

Composition of Sindh during the period of 2001-10 is as follows:

Population	Area	Districts	Tehsils	Union Councils
55.24 million	140914 km ²	23	86	1221

Sindh province has 56% literate population and 47% portion of women population is educated. Sindh is officially divided into rural and urban areas varying men-women literacy rates. Rural women of Sindh is politically less aware whereas and unable to take political decisions. Men due to patriarchal society carry out most of political decisions and political practices.

Sindh									
District	Number of UCs	Women General Seats				Women Labor/Peasants Seats			
		2001		2005		2001		2005	
		Total	Filled	Total	Filled	Total	Filled	Total	Filled
Badin	49	196	190	92	90	98	88	92	91
Dadu	80	320	312	104	104	160	140	104	102
Gkotki	35	140	136	84	82	70	66	84	84
Hyderabad	102	405	405	104	102	204	180	104	103
Jacobabad	78	308	275	80	77	154	95	80	73
Jamshoro	28			56	55			56	55
Karachi	178	712	702	356	355	356	328	356	355
Kashmor	37			74	74			74	74
Khairpur	76	304	290	152	151	152	126	152	150
Larkana	80	320	280	88	86	160	112	88	86
Matyari	19			38	37			38	37
Mirpur Khas	64	222	221	82	80	128	124	82	80

Noshehro Feroz	51	204	204	102	101	102	83	102	102
Nawabshah	51	204	186	102	101	102	55	102	100
Qambar	40			80	80			80	80
Sanghar	59	232	230	110	110	118	112	110	107
Shikarpur	47	188	166	102	101	94	77	102	101
Sakhar	46	184	178	92	92	92	74	92	90
Tando Allah Yar	19			38	37			38	37
Tando Muhammad Khan	16			32	31			32	30
Mithi	44	150	150	88	87	88	87	88	88
Thatha	55	220	209	110	109	110	100	110	106
Umar Kot	27			54	53			54	52

(Source: Reports of Election Commission of Pakistan, PILDAT and Aurat Foundation)

Ratio of winning seats was different but election environment was same for women in rural and urban areas of Sindh. Dadu, Hyderabad and Sanghar districts gave 100% general seats to women whereas in Gkotki and Mithi districts women won 100% peasants/labor seats. Most significant thing was that, women captured more seats in Mithi district (underdeveloped) than Karachi (more developed). Seat capturing ratio in Sindh was not much different from Punjab despite of better literacy rate, infrastructure and political environment of the later.

NWFP (KPK)

Composition of NWFP during the period of 2001-10 is as follows:

Population	Area	Districts	Tehsils	Union Councils
26.2 million	74521 km ²	24	72	954

NWFP is a tribal society and religious elements in socio-political sectors are dominant. Women are given limited opportunities in all sectors due to which women literacy rate is 35% along with overall i.e. 50%. In tribal areas of NWFP, DOPP 2000 faced criticism for women share in local governments. Women also confronted the difficulties in this way but

election results depicted a good picture of women participation in local government elections.

NWFP (KPK)									
District	Number of UCs	Women General Seats				Women Labor/Peasants Seats			
		2001		2005		2001		2005	
		Total	Filled	Total	Filled	Total	Filled	Total	Filled
Abotabad	46	184	182	102	98	92	82	102	98
Banu	40	160	88	98	92	80	42	98	88
Batgram	20	80	4	40	20	40	2	40	20
Buner	27	108	105	54	51	54	50	54	50
Charsada	49	196	192	98	96	98	92	98	96
Chitral	24	96	95	48	2	48	45	48	45
D. I. Khan	46	184	174	94	92	92	72	94	92
Lower Dier	34	136	8	74	25	68	4	74	26
Upper Dier	31	124	28	56	46	62	15	56	45
Hangu	17	68	49	38	34	34	18	38	34
Haripur	44	176	168	90	90	88	74	90	88
Karak	21	84	80	42	40	42	39	42	40
Kohat	27	108	60	64	60	54	16	64	54
Kohistan	36	144	1	76	1	72	1	76	2
Laki Marwat	33	132	100	66	62	66	30	66	62
Malakand	28	112	104	56	1	56	50	56	55
Mansehra	58	232	158	118	110	116	62	118	106
Mardan	73	292	204	150	146	146	56	150	142
Nowshehra	47	188	180	96	94	94	84	96	92
Peshawar	92	368	310	184	180	184	115	184	170
Sawabi	56	224	136	110	104	112	44	110	98
Shangla	24	96	78	56	52	48	36	56	52
Sawat	65	260	205	130	110	130	98	130	110
Tanak	16	64	51	32	30	32	20	32	30

Despite of cultural barriers and criticism from religio-political parties and tribal leaders, women of NWFP participated whole-heartedly in local government elections. Political environment and behaviors were not in women's favor but they showed commitment during election campaigns

and succeeded in capturing more than 90% reserved seats across the province except the districts of Batgram, Lower Dier, Malakand and Kohistan where women representation could not touch the double figure.

Balochistan

Composition of Balochistan during the period of 2001-10 was as follows:

Population	Area	Districts	Tehsils	Union Councils
13.16 million	347190 km ²	27	128	618

Balochistan covers 43% area of Pakistan but its share in population of Pakistan is less than 5%. Literacy rate among women is at lowest ebb i.e. 25%.

Balochistan									
District	Number of UCs	Women General Seats				Women Labor/Peasants Seats			
		2001		2005		2001		2005	
		Total	Filled	Total	Filled	Total	Filled	Total	Filled
Awaran	5	20	19	16	15	10	9	16	15
Barkhan	8			16	15			16	15
Bolan	27			54	54			54	53
Chaghi	19	76	73	20	19	38	37	20	19
Noshki	10			20	19			20	18
Dera Bugti	12	48	5	24	7	24	4	24	4
Gawadar	13	52	34	26	25	26	12	26	26
Jafarabad	46			92	90			92	90
Jhal Magsi	9			25	20			25	21
Kalat	18	72	62	36	36	36	30	36	35
Kech	38	152	90	76	75	76	76	76	75
Kharan	16	64	63	14	12	32	30	14	13
Khuzdar	36	144	90	70	69	72	38	70	68
Kohlu	16	64	54	16	14	32	28	16	15
Lasbela	21	84	80	44	44	42	36	44	44
Loralai	29	116	107	40	38	58	38	40	40
Mastung	13	52	50	26	25	26	24	26	24
Musakhail	10			20	18			20	19

Nasirabad	53	212	158	48	46	106	74	48	46
Panjgor	16	64	54	32	30	32	30	32	30
Pisheen	27	108	98	76	76	54	50	76	75
Kila Abdullah	27	92	75	50	48	46	38	50	48
Kila Saifullah	15	60	52	30	29	30	28	30	28
Quetta	66	264	224	134	128	132	106	134	131
Sibbi	34	136	115	42	40	68	52	42	40
Zhob	24	96	72	56	54	48	43	56	56
Ziarat	10	40	34	20	18	20	19	20	20

(Source: Reports of Election Commission of Pakistan, PILDAT and Aurat Foundation)

Women of Balochistan appear to be poorest in terms of literacy, employment and confidence level but despite of this they contested local government elections in 2001 and 2005. Women participation and representation scenario during these elections was nearly same to other provinces. Women won most of the reserved seats but could capture only four to seven general and peasant seats in district of Dera Bugti.

A Glimpse of Local Government Elections 2001 and 2005

Local Government Election 2001								
Province	Union Councils		Tehsil Councils		District Councils		All Councils	
	Women Elected	Percentage %	Women Elected	Percentage %	Women Elected	Percentage %	Women Elected	Percentage %
Punjab	20008	96.7	1125	98.4	1118	98	22251	97.7
Sindh	5879	89.6	358	98.2	362	99.8	6599	95.8
Balochistan	2375	76.5	155	87.5	155	88	2685	84
NWFP (KPK)	3965	69.1	208	88.8	280	88.4	4453	82.1
Local Government Election 2005								
Province	Union Councils		Tehsil Councils		District Councils		All Councils	
	Women Elected	Percentage %	Women Elected	Percentage %	Women Elected	Percentage %	Women Elected	Percentage %
Punjab	13660	98.6	1152	100	1147	99.6	15959	99.4
Sindh	4395	98.6	358	100	354	99.4	5107	99.3
Balochistan	2195	96.8	192	98.9	191	99.4	2578	98.3
NWFP (KPK)	3330	84.4	308	94.2	305	93.8	3943	90.8

(Calculated from above drawn tables)

Number of elected women in all tiers of local government is highest in Punjab i.e. 97.7% in 2001 and 99.4% in 2005 followed by Sindh i.e. 95.8% and 99.3% respectively. Balochistan stood at third position with 84% in 2001 and 98.3% in 2005. NWFP observed lowest ratio of women participation. Ratio of women representation in tehsil and district councils is higher than that of union councils, which means that women faced problems in direct elections held at union council level.

A report entitled as “Devolution and Human Development in Pakistan” researched by Social Policy and Development Centre gives the details of women participation in all tiers of local government under DOPP 2000. According to report woman participated in local government elections under subject system against historical trends of women participation in local body’s elections (Social Policy and Development Centre, 2006-7).

According to above mentioned report number of women representatives, vacant seats and their percentage in four provinces in different tiers of district government was as given here:

Tiers of District Government	Number of Tiers	Total seats	Women Representation	Percentage of Women seats (%)	Number of Elected women	Vacant Seats
Union Councils	6022	126462	36066	28.5	32222	3844
Tehsil Councils	305	8192	1749	21.3	1675	74
Town Councils	30	773	161	20.8	161	0
District Councils	96	8806	1988	22.6	1905	83
Total		144233	39964	27.6	35963	4001

Ratio of women nazims and councilors across the Pakistan vary but it can be said that women participation for the office of councilor is mentionable but number of women nazims is very low as given below:

Province	Women Representation in the Tier of Union Council				Women Representation in the Tier of Tehsil Council		Women Representation in the Tier of District Council	
	Nazims	Councilors	Total seats	Percentage %	Nazims	Councilors	Nazims	Councilors
Sind	0	4095	22974	17.8	0	306	2	158
Punjab	2	13457	72513	18.6	0	848	0	641
Baluchistan	0	1605	10878	14.8	0	124	0	65
NWFP	0	2807	2097	14	0	66	0	103
Total	2	21964	126462	17.4	0	1344	2	967

Source: (Himayatullah, 2003).

Data extracted from above mentioned report states that women participation (ranging from 14 to 18.6%) in all tiers of district governments vary in all four provinces of Pakistan that is 17% in average. This percentage is highest in all local government systems from the inception of Pakistan.

What was New about Women Participation under DOPP 2000?

1. Women Political Participation at Grass Root Level

First time in the constitutional history of Pakistan women representation increased to 33% in all tiers of district government.

2. Constitutional Provisions

33% representation for women was under constitutional umbrella to protect and legalize the women natural rights.

3. Institutional Mechanism

Women representation under DOPP 2000 was not just in announcements but a institutional mechanism was introduced in which women were given equal representation in all tiers of local government.

4. Elimination of Discrimination

First time after the emergence of Pakistan as independent state steps were taken to eliminate gender discrimination in senate, national, provincial and district assemblies.

5. Socio-political Empowerment

Women started to observe their socio-political status and rights under the promulgation of DOPP 2000.

6. Gateway to Mainstream Politics

Women entered in mainstream politics while using the corridor of local politics. Women from poor and middle class background launched themselves in local politics and opened the avenues of provincial and national politics.

Issues and Challenges

1. Women Participation and Disinformation

DOPP 2000 provided a good chance to women to participate in grass root politics, context local body's elections and involve in managerial matters of local governments but they were unknown or ill-informed about the plan. It was a political dilemma which proved as a stumbling block in the way of women development. Women participation could be fruitful if they were known of the plan.

2. Male dominance in Policy Devising and Implementation

Male remained dominated in working of local councils, policy making and implementation. Women were not given role in policy decisions.

3. Lack of Capacity Building

Women could not indulge themselves in official activities of local councils due to lack of capacity building.

4. Non-provision of Shares in Local Budgets

Local development budgets approved by provincial or district governments were without the shares of women councilors and nazims. They could not satisfy the people of their localities.

5. Council's Headships

Women were given 33% share in district assemblies but seats of nazims of district councils were only for male candidates due to which women could not play effective roles in district governments.

6. Hurdles by Tribal and Religious Leaders

Women faced hurdles to participate in local politics and context election due to objections raised by religious and tribal leaders.

7. Womanless Citizen community Board and Public Safety Commission

Citizen community board and public safety commissions were important public institutions at district level for development programs and resolution of public complaints respectively but women were kept away from these institutions.

8. Indirect Mode of Election for Reserved Seats

Indirect mode of election was introduced for reserved seats of laborer, minorities and women owing to which women could not participate directly in local politics.

CONCLUSION

Local government system is essential for local development and governance but absence of women participation makes it poor and ineffective. Women constitute more than half of the total population of the country and keeping them away from the local politics means absence of half of the population from the political system. Governments have been involved in keeping poor women participation in local governments since the inception of Pakistan as an independent state. First time in the constitutional history of Pakistan Field Martial Ayub Khan promulgated system of basic democracies with 80000 basic electorates but women representation was next to nothing. General Zia introduced Local Government System of 1979 very different from the previous but same, in the context of women representation. After that, different regimes increased women representation from 10 to 18% in local governments.

After assuming the power, General Pervez Musharraf promulgated Devolution of Power Plan 2000 under which women were given remarkable share i.e. 33% in union, tehsil and district councils. It is highest share for women throughout the history of independence but it proved a number game for political parties. Practically women stayed away from the local politics and district management. Women faced many problems during election campaigns, elections, functioning of councils and policy devising and budgetary proceedings. Despite of several positive changes, a

high number of issues and challenges regarding women participation were the part of plan. These issues must be addressed to create the opportunities for women participation in local politics according to the spirit of Objectives Resolution of 1949 and Constitution of 1973.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A national plan of action may be framed to resolve the issues related to women participation.
- Support building stratagem, loans and Scholarships for women should be part of local governments.
- Youth quota ought to be comprised of women also.
- Women must be given share in head seats of union, tehsil and district councils.
- Specific ratio for women heads of union, tehsil and district councils ought to be part of manifestoes of political parties.
- Women may be given share in development budgets of local governments.
- Women role in policy making/implementation and district management is need of the hour.
- Separate complaint cells comprised of women personals may be constituted to resolve women related issues at grass root level.
- Make possible the appointment of gender advisors at grass root level.
- Steps must be taken to abolish discriminatory directives and practices.
- So-called religious, traditional and tribal barriers in the way of women participation at grass root level should be removed constitutionally.
- District police, health, education, water and sanitation must be under local government with equal women representation.
- Women panchayat system should be introduced at local level to settle down women relating disputes.

- Government may form local level institutions to bring knowledge and confidence for women.

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