

Role of Women Parliamentary Caucus in Promoting Political Participation of Women in Pakistan

M.Phil. Thesis



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“Thesis submitted to the National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, for the partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Pakistan Studies”

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**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PAKISTAN STUDIES
QUAID-I-AZAM UNIVERSITY
ISLAMABAD**

CERTIFICATE

This dissertation submitted by **MS. SHABANA BIBI** entitled:

**“ROLE OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS IN
PROMOTING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN
PAKISTAN”**


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Dedicated
To
My Beloved Parents,
&
My Late Grandfather Muhammad Rafiq
With Love and Gratitude

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research thesis with title “**Role of Women Parliamentary Caucus in Promoting Political Participation of Women in Pakistan**” is my own work neither as a whole or any part of there has been copied from any source. Furthermore, it is declared that I have written the data entirely on the basis of my personal efforts, made under the sincere guidance of my supervisor. No portion of this work presented in this report has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or institution of learning. If any part of this work is proved to be copied or found to be a report of some other, I will stand by the consequences.

Shabana Bibi

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shabana Bibi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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All praises be to Allah Almighty, the most kind and sympathetic, who blessed me to complete this work within specified time. I would also like to offer humble words of respect to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) the most perfect and model among all the creatures born on the surface of earth who spread knowledge for the whole humanity.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANP:	Awami National Party
AF:	Aurat Foundation
APPGs:	All-Party Parliamentary Groups
CANs:	Calling Attention Notices
CSOs:	Civil Society Organizations
CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CML:	Convention Muslim League
CNIC:	Computerized National Identity Card
COP:	Combined Opposition Parties
CoR:	Council of Representatives
CrPC:	Criminal Procedure Code
ECP:	Election Commission of Pakistan
FAFEN:	Free and Fair Elections Network
FATA:	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FES:	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)
FFRP:	Forum des Femmes Rwandaises Parlementaires
GFPIs:	Gender-Focused Parliamentary Organizations
ICAN:	International Civil Society Action Network
ICCPR:	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IKP:	I Know Politics
IPU:	Inter Parliamentary Union
KP:	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

LAJA:	Legal Aid and Justice Authority
LFO:	Legal Framework Order
MFLO:	Muslim Family Law Ordinance
MMA:	Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal
MNA:	Member of National Assembly
MPs:	Member Parliamentarians
MQM:	Muttahida Qaumi Movement
N.A:	National Assembly
NPA:	National Plan of Action
NADRA:	National Database and Registration Authority
NCSW:	National Commission on the Status of Women
NCHR:	National Commission Human Rights
NDI:	National Democratic Institute
PILDAT:	Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency
PIPS:	Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services
PML-N:	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)
PPC:	Pakistan Penal Code
PPP:	Pakistan People's Party
PTI:	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf
SAARC:	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SCOs:	Civil Society Organizations
UAF:	Urgent Action Fund
UDHR:	Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UK:	United Kingdom
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
US:	United States
UWOPA:	Uganda Women's Parliamentary Association
VAWG:	Violence Against Women and Girls
WFD:	Westminster Foundation for Democracy
WLCs:	Women Legislative Caucuses
WPC:	Women Parliamentary Caucus

GLOSSARY

Badl e Sulha:	Mutually agreed compensation.
Dar al-Aman:	Women shelter homes.
Hudood:	It is often used to refer to the Islamic laws that state the limits ordained by Allah and include the deterrent punishments for serious crimes
Karokari :	It refers to honour killings in Sindh
Qatl-i-amd:	Intentional murder
Qazf:	A religiously defined equal and same punishment for causing the hurt (e.g. an eye for an eye).
Quran:	The holy book Muslims believe on.
Zina:	The wilful sexual intercourse between man and woman without being validly married to each other.

Abstract

This research aims to describe the role of Women Parliamentary Caucus in promoting political participation of women in the Parliament of Pakistan. It further focuses on the different achievements of WPC regarding promoting women's role in Pakistan's Parliament, that how different actions of WPC promoted the role of women in the parliament of Pakistan. The available literature mainly concentrated on the overall representation and women's role in Pakistan's Parliament, the role of WPC has not been properly focused, and has rarely been the center of scholarly explorations. The role of WPC has been assessed through qualitative method. Qualitative design allowed for the exploration of the outlook and meaning from the perspective of women legislators. For this specific study, both primary and secondary sources were explored. The Feminism theory is applied to the work because my work is basically on empowerment of women in political process, i.e. increasing their representation in the parliament, then the raise of gender sensitive issues and work on legislations that protects women rights. Women Parliamentary Caucus was formed to bring women parliamentarians from across party lines to discuss issues concerning women. Women members of the Parliament actively supported each other in the Parliament. The caucus held several round table discussions on key policies & legislation. Many bills concerning women's rights were tabled & got support from women across party lines.

Key words: Women Parliamentarians, Women empowerment, Gender sensitive legislations, Feminism

Introduction

As a noun caucus refers to a “closed meeting of a group of people”. Caucus can be a verb means “to meet” (McKenna, 2008, p.65). The origin of the term caucus is unknown. Some claim it derives from caulkers, who assisted in shipbuilding; others claim it is the Latin word caucus, which is derived from the Greek kaukos, means a “drinking vessel”. However, some claim that it originates from the Algonkian Indian term caucausu, meaning of which is advisor or counselor (McKenna, 2008, p.65).

A caucus is defined in the dictionary as a gathering of a legislative body, for the purpose of choosing applicants for a specific post (American heritage dictionary, 1970). A caucus, sometimes known as a legislative party, generally seeks to bring people together to find consensus on particular issues. Caucus is a vital component of the party's overall strategy, from federal government to local level. Political party leaders organize their participants into groups, although single party members can similarly form groups on their own, usually called caucus (Napier & Labuschagne, 2017, p.208).

A caucus is just a group of parliamentarians who share a common interest in a certain issue, such as population growth or gender equality (Palmeiri, 2016). It is distinguished by a legislative committee for its procedures, authorities, and duties. Women’s caucus generally consists of only female MPs. Men and women could both participate in the parliamentary caucus on gender equality, but the main goal would be to advance gender equality (Palmeiri, 2016).

Parliamentary women caucuses organized lawmakers devoted to advance rights of women and gender equality in order to manage their struggles and speed up improvement. For these groups no predetermined structure was set. Relatively, it would be created to achieve the particular objectives of the candidates for the caucus while taking into account the countrywide political and social environment (Parl Americas, 2016). Caucuses concept in parliaments is not known in Pakistan however, very popular worldwide. Gender equality is a global issue today worldwide (WPC, 2008)

Globally, women face many hurdles to their political participation. Despite, the reality that women make up half of the world's population, still their participation

in law making forums has been always low (Bano, 2009). According to inter-parliamentary Union (2021), globally women hold only 25.5% of Parliamentary seats. The situation is same in both developed underdeveloped countries. Women's participation in political decision-making is only 1/5th (Khattak and Hussain, 2016).

In spite of constituting a large number of the population, women still remain unheard and unseen, and their due rights had been ignored after independence of Pakistan. In 2021, Global Gender Report, Pakistan ranks 153rd place out of 156 nations for gender parity in political empowerment. As of 2021, only 5.3% Pakistan's Senate seats are held by women (IPU, 2020). Gradually there had been occurred an improved awareness regarding women's role in law making institutions. This change in political participation of women occurred due to many reasons such as legal commitment of Pakistan to international communities which include: CEDAW, ICCPR, and UDHR. The Constitution of 1973 is also vital aspect in political development women (Awan, 2018).

In Pakistan a bicameral parliament exists. National Assembly (N.A), which is lower house of the parliament, is made up of 342 members. Of these, 282 are elected generally for five years, and the remaining 60 seats, which are reserved for women, be given to various political parties in proportion to the number of general seats that they possess. There are 104 members of the Senate, which is the upper house of the Parliament. For a period of six years, members of provincial assemblies choose senators in an indirect election process, with 17% of the Senate's seats designated for women. Every three years, half of them retire (Ahmad, 2017).

There are two broad periods of women's political participation in Pakistan's Parliament, earlier and afterward the year 2002. This era division is founded on the basis of number of women existing in proper political and lawmaking houses of Parliament in Pakistan. The first phase began in 1947 when the nation gained its independence, and continued up to year 2002. Throughout this era women representation in political institutions was low, which didn't show any improvement till the elections of 1997. During the second era which started in the year 2002, and has continued up to date, a high quota allotment was introduced for women at all political levels in the country (Syed e al, 2013). General Pervez Musharraf introduced

17% quota reservation for women in Pakistan's two houses of the legislature (LFO, 2002).

The February 18, 2008, elections will always be considered as a crucial changing point in Pakistani history. Over 22% of women were elected to general and reserved seats in the parliament provided yet one more chance for women legislators to take part in the making of gender concerning legislation and increasing its impact and engagement with other organizations for promoting rights of women and empowerment on a national and worldwide level (WPC, 2008). The first Muslim female Speaker of NA (Fehmida Mirza) recognized the importance when she elected to the position of Speaker and started conversations with female lawmakers from all parliamentary parties about this subject. The Speaker arranged the first gathering of women Parliamentarians on October 20, 2008. . 58 female MNAs attended the meeting, and supported the Speaker's proposal, through a unanimous vote to create WPC (WPC, 2008). WPC was formed as a broad attempt to advance women's role in the parliament. Women politicians can connect, campaign, and contest for compliance with government regulations, via the caucus on a national, cross-party platform (commonwealth Library, 2016)

The present work focuses on the role of WPC in promoting political participation of women in parliament of Pakistan. It will focus on the different achievements of WPC regarding promoting women's role in the parliament of Pakistan, that how different actions of WPC promoted the role of women in the parliament of Pakistan, bring consensus among women parliamentarians across the party lines and facilitated them to discuss gender sensitive issues in the Parliament of Pakistan. . Further, the attention of scholar will be on the outcomes of women's representation in the legislature when it comes to enacting legislation and developing policies that advance the interests of women.

Statement of the Problem

The problem I want to explore in this research is the role of Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) in promoting political participation of women in Pakistan. WPC was formed in 2008 under leadership of Fehmida Mirza with the aim to promote role of women parliamentarians in Pakistan's Parliament. Historically women representation and participation in the parliament of Pakistani had remained low; women had always

been marginally represented in the Parliament of Pakistan. Through this study the researcher examined the performance and achievements of WPC in promoting participation of women parliamentarians in the parliament of Pakistan, encouraging and facilitating them to participate in parliamentary proceedings, and raise gender sensitive issues in parliament. Further the effectiveness of WPC in addressing gender sensitive legislations will also be the concern of researcher.

Objectives of the Study

- To describe role of Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) in promoting political participation of women in Pakistan.
- To describe performance of women Parliamentarians in the parliament of Pakistan
- To understand role of Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) in gender sensitive legislations in Pakistan.

Literature Review

Literature relevant to this research is wider thus need some classifications; therefore, it has been divided into five categories. It includes Literature on Global Perspective of Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), Literature on representation of women in Parliament of Pakistan, Literature on Problems to women political participation in Pakistan, Literature on Women in decision makings in Pakistan, and Literature on the formation of WPC in Pakistan.

Literature on Global Perspective of WPC

Napier and Labuschagne (2017) the origins of the historical evolution of caucuses may be found in American political history. In the middle of the 18th century, a gathering of political club or party leaders in Boston was referred to as a "caucus" in order to organise elections. (Duverger's, 1972) Caucuses receive a lot of attention in the book *Political parties: Their Organisation and Activity in the Modern State*. Political party caucuses, also discussed as legislative parties in the UK and other nations that adhere to the Westminster political system, to which mostly people is not familiar with and are not extensively studied or documented in scholarly works, much like many other facets of democracy and the institutional structures that support it. Political party caucuses and related undertakings are typically more transparent and

varied in the US, largely due to their significant influence in presidential candidate nominating processes and their involvement in a number of legislative bodies.

Parl Americas (2016) the legislative or societal needs that have been recognized will determine the objectives of the caucus. Developing and amending laws from a gender perspective, advocating for representation of women in politics and the mainstreaming of gender issues in parliamentary processes and institutions, fostering discourse and raising understanding of gender issues in communities and political parties, and/or offering assistance, knowledge, or other types of support to members of are a few examples of these (WPC, 2008).

The idea of parliamentary caucuses is relatively new and unheard of in Pakistan, however very popular worldwide. The two Houses of Congress have been cultivating the tradition of caucus for almost 300 years; with more than 150 caucuses in US legislatures. The "Iowa Caucus" or the "Taxes Caucus" are important factors in the selection of presidential candidates in the American political system. The "Black Caucus," "Hispanic Caucus," or "Women Caucus" inside Congress have also had a significant impact on changing US policy by submitting "en-block" modifications to already available legislation or cooperatively initiating new legislations . Women MPs have recently taken a lead role in establishing large-scale groupings and Caucuses in the majority of Latin American and African nations in order to address critical gender-related issues in their respective nations. Women's political representation and participation is currently being addressed through "broad-based" Regional Caucuses formed by women MPs in respective parliaments in many countries. Conversely, in countries such as Brazil, it has been common for all female lawmakers, irrespective of their political inclinations, to abstain from voting on bills that impact women.

Agora (2015) women's caucuses are established to increase influence of women on political decisions, it is generally accepted that forming cross-party caucuses can help in providing the peer support required to advance a legislative and policy agenda for gender equality. While the number of parliaments with a women's caucus is rapidly increasing, some researchers and politicians question whether women's caucuses have any real impact on how politics are decided. Although almost every participant had some reservations, the overall response to this question seems to be largely positive. There are some success stories about the practical effects of a women's caucus on

legislation (Rwanda being the main one), but in the majority of situations (Indonesia, the US, Nepal, Ghana, and so forth), the tangible advantages associated with having a women's caucus remain fairly confined.

IPU (2020) globally, the percentage of female serving in parliaments has significantly improved during the past 25 years. In 1995 only 11.3% of the seats in the parliament that year were held by women. This percentage nearly doubled to 22.1% by 2015. Except Europe nine countries worldwide retain lower or unicameral legislatures with less than five percent female representation. There were 52 of these chambers overall in 1995, across all areas. Throughout a twenty year period, Rwanda, the United Arab Emirates, Andorra, and Bolivia have made the most advancement in women's representation. Europe is no longer setting the standard for women's parliamentary representation. However, The Nordic area is the sole sub region that has surpassed the 40% mark.

NDI (2016) various caucuses not only support the collaboration of female lawmakers in the development of policy. To help female lawmakers become better legislators, they have programs, launches, and workshops available. For example, the Ugandan Women's Caucus offers courses for female delegates on speech making, coalition building, constituency building, parliamentary procedures and other related subjects. The Network of Women Deputies of the Finish Parliament hosts educational luncheons in Finland to stimulate parliamentary discussion of significant current issues. Women state ministers are frequently invited to these functions. The Women's Parliamentary Network organized a negotiation and dispute resolution workshop in Morocco, where the female participants received training. Women's caucuses are organized in different methods that are best suited to the local political structure and models the country had adopted.

Johnson and Josefsson (2016) In order to build consensus among women parliamentarians, on matters pertaining to Women's rights and gender parity , UWOPA established by females Parliamentarians in the Fifth Parliament (1989–1994). Today, Currently, UWOPA is parliamentary caucus that is formally registered, all female members of parliament are automatically members of UWOPA, and male members may join as associate members.

Literature on Representation of women in Parliament of Pakistan

(Tabassum et al., 2015, jabeen 2021, Habib & Rind 2020). Women actively participated in the freedom struggle of Pakistan, but after independence they were not given proper share in the Parliament of Pakistan, their representation in Pakistan's NA remained low in history. Women have been marginally represented in the house till 2002. (Jabeen 2021) Women were only given three percent of seats in the NA of Pakistan under the constitutions of 1956 and 1962; however, ten seats were set aside for them in the 1973 constitution. General Zia ul Haq doubled the reserved seats for women in 1985. In 1988 when the quota expired women were completely from the Assemblies. In 2002, General Pervez Musharraf introduced 17% quota reservation for women in NA and Senate of Pakistan.

Awan (2018) shed light on democratic governments in Pakistan from 1988 to 2018. During this time two major political parties of Pakistan (PPP) both came to power three times. Benazir Bhutto was elected two times as Prime Minister.

Zaka (2012) Women made up only 2.3% of Parliament till modifications to the election laws in 2002, and Pakistan was rated 105th globally for women representation. An increase in the number of reserved seats and the 2008 elections brought about significant change. With 22.5 percent women MPs, Pakistan moved up to position 46 globally in the IPU table of women representation. By comparing with its neighboring countries Sri Lanka, only 5.8%, and 10.7% in India were women, ranked 122nd and 100th respectively, were women.

Literature on Problems to women political participation in Pakistan

According to NCSW report of 2010, In Pakistan's the traditional patriarchal nature of society prevents them to take active in ordinary politics. In order to end the current gender inequity, social and cultural structures must be transformed. While the paper claims that gender stereotyping is the primary cause of women's underrepresentation in politics, this is however not the only factor responsible for the deficiency. This inadequacy is also caused by women who are seated in political institutions but are not participating actively.

(Bano 2009, Ali & Akhtar 2012) Women despite comprising up half of the global population, they have never held a significant amount of representation in institutions

that make decisions. There are different obstacles to women participation. Similarly in the context of Pakistan, Chaudhry addresses patriarchy at the level of politics. The reserved seat quota system was designed to help women get more involved in policymaking so they could successfully run for general seats without the need of affirmative action. . The results of the 2018 general election, however show declining pattern among women for general seats. Even reserved seats are filled based on a priority list provided to the Election Commission by parties led by men, in proportion to their success with the general seats.

Awan, M. A. (2018) summarizes an important study on women's political participation in Pakistan. The study assesses women's historical representation in politics, both as voters and as representatives. It describes existing patterns and social constraints that affect the women's involvement in politics. Pakistani women are not as powerful as statistics and trends currently show, Socio-cultural tendencies, financial dependence, and fewer women being nominated by political parties are a few of the reasons why women are not politically empowered. The study recommends enhancing women's empowerment on the social and economic fronts to secure their significant influence in the political structure. To achieve the genuine meaning of empowerment, normative practices in social institutions must be transformed.

Literature on Women in decision makings in Pakistan

Bari (2015) to address the gender imbalance in politics gender quotas is a key tactic. Many women Politicians have evolved into female role models. Increasing the numerical strength of women in the parliament, and their physical visibility within the governmental structures had inspired more women to enter to politics. Khan and Naqvi (2018) Women in parliament have proven to engage in activity and dedicated members in the legislative process. But without the backing from the senior members of the party, they are unable to advance a legislative agenda. They are limited as cross-party negotiators inside their caucuses if they lack a voice in their respective parties and sufficient democratic clout to offer them. Khan & Naqvi (2020) The indirect method of election for women both facilitates and undercuts the potential of women to become politicians provided by the restoration and expansion of reserved seats for them in legislative bodies. (Aurat Foundation 2012) the indirect method of elections keeps women from having constituencies and keeps them from connecting

with voters; instead, women are forced to stay dependent on their political counterparts, who are primarily men.

(Serken and Zia 2015, Quraishi and Ahmad 2022, Jabeen and Muhammad 2021, Noreen 2014) examined the evolution of interests of women legislation approved in the course of the two decades, focuses on the 13th 14th and 15th NA of Pakistan and how women Parliamentarians participated. The reinstatement and expansion of reserved seating benefited women According to them here is positive relation association between a rise in the proportion of female lawmakers and legislation addressing gender inequality and women's empowerment. However, it is argued that the quota has evolved as a tool b which political parties denied general seats to women that could be won and by giving them a reserved seat. Butt and Shahid (2012) noted that a number of laws, including the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 2004, the Protection of Women Bill of 2006, the Criminal Acid Act, the Status of Women Bill, the Honour Killing Law, and the Sexual Harassment Law, have been created to end prejudice against women.

Literature on Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) in Pakistan

(WPC, 2008) The elections that were held on February 18, 2008, will always be regarded as a crucial turning point in Pakistani history. With a two-thirds majority, Three times elected from a rural general constituency in the isolated Badin region of Sindh, Fehmida Mirza made history as the first female speaker of the house in Pakistan. Additionally 15 women came on the General seats. The election of more than 22% women to general and reserved seats in the parliament provided yet additional brilliant chance for women legislators to take part in the making of legislations that is gender sensitive and increasing its effect and contact with outside organizations working both domestically and globally to advance women's rights and empowerment. Shortly after being elected to the prestigious position, Fehmida Mirza, realized the importance of the occasion and started a series of conversations with female lawmakers from all parliamentary parties. The Speaker called the first gathering of female lawmakers on October 20, 2008. 58 female MNAs attended the meeting, and there was a unanimous vote in favor of the Speaker's scheme to establish WPC.

Khan and Naqvi (2020) the women's caucuses are the only effective cross-party forum in the national and provincial assemblies. These caucuses collaborate with male legislators and activists from civil society's women's movement to pass laws that make honour killings, child marriage, rape, and sexual assault illegal. To bring attention to the opinions of women that are ignored, and who were elected on reserved seats but lacked the confidence to assert their rights, the KP provincial caucus was established.

Research Questions

The main question of my research is to study what role Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) has played in promoting political participation of women in the parliament of Pakistan.

Supplementary Questions

1. How women representation and participation in Pakistan's Parliament evolved over history?
2. How WPC facilitated women parliamentarians to discuss gender related issues in parliament?
3. How far WPC succeeded in passing gender sensitive legislations in Pakistan?

Research Methodology

The role of WPC has been assessed through qualitative method. In addition to being useful in the creation of theories and the analysis of non-numerical data, qualitative design allowed for the exploration of the outlook and meaning from the perspective of women legislators. For this specific study, both primary and secondary sources were explored. Nonetheless, primary sources received special attention, and secondary sources were examined in light of primary source. Secondary quantitative data was used, for example, It deal with numerical data and statistical analysis of Women's involvement in parliamentary proceedings: how many times they spoke on the assembly floor, how many bills, resolutions, and motions were moved, how many parliamentary questions were asked, how many call-to-attention notices were issued, what kinds of issues were raised, how many private member bills were moved, and how much legislation was drafted. In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted from political actors, Civil Society members and representatives from the WPC through purposive sampling. Published material particularly reports of FAFEN,

PILDAT, AF were also assessed through their official websites. Additional secondary data that can be found in publications such as books, articles, journals, newspaper and data that is shared by ECP was also analyzed to fulfill the objectives of the research.

Theoretical Framework

The Feminism theory relates to my work because my work is basically on women's empowerment in political process, i.e. increasing their representation in the parliament, then the raise of gender sensitive issues and work on legislations that protects women rights. Women had always been under-represented in the political system of Pakistan. Historically in the legislative assemblies of Pakistan, women representation was marginal. However in the last two decades, there occurred improved awareness regarding women presence in the legislative houses. Gender quota was introduced in the parliament. General Pervez Musharraf introduced 17% quota reservation for women in both the houses of the Parliament of Pakistan. WPC was also established in 2008 with the aim to promote political participation of women in Pakistan. So the study under focus will focus on the role of WPC in promoting political participation of women in Pakistan. In order to highlight the issue of women's underrepresentation in politics, I shall apply fundamental feminist theory in this thesis.

Feminist theory holds that our society's current power relations are established and shaped by the gender-power hierarchy. This theoretical paradigm is based on the core ideas of feminist philosophy (Blomgren, 2010). Women's movements have always placed a high premium on women's political participation (FES, 2018). According to feminist theory, patriarchy is a system of gender inequality caused by men's subjugation of women. It provides the framework for women to be subservient to men. One could classify any society under male rule as patriarchal. Feminist theory states that, the gender-power hierarchy moulds structures of our society. Political participation of women has long been a top priority on the agenda of Women's movements (FES, 2018).

The main question at hand is how women's social situation is affected by the male domination of formal politics. Bryjak and Soroka contend that the absence of women in important decision-making roles raises the possibility that their interests and viewpoints won't be taken into consideration when social and political policies

are developed and put into action. For their own reasons, men have traditionally dominated and hence controlled the majority of legislative, judicial, and political positions. Men have also historically dominated the legal profession (Bryjak and Soroka 1997). A group is more likely to dominate a social institution if its members make up the majority of the institution's membership.

Socialist feminists therefore contend that men use the legal system as a means of gaining power in order to advance their own agendas. To retain their favored position in the economic hierarchy, they have invented, interpreted, applied, and enforced the law. In this view, formal political posts and the legislation, if held largely by one gender group, namely men, operate as instrument to uphold the general male dominance in patriarchy (Bryjak and Soroka 1997)

The current trends of women's participation in official political forums and their views being taken into consideration when laws are being made show improvements. The liberal feminist movement has created a global trend of quotas for women in political forums in an attempt to swiftly address this issue on a global scale. A growing number of women are standing for political office nowadays, from national legislatures to local councils, across the board.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter one will focus on Global Perspective of WPC. Definitions, Brief Historical Background, Objectives, structures, and effectiveness of WPC in different countries will be undertaken. Chapter two is the Historical Review of women's political and Legislative Participation in Pakistan from 1947 to 2008. It will deal with representation of women in the parliament of Pakistan historically in different Constituent Assemblies, laws affecting status of women, role of women in legislations.

Chapter three will highlight the Formation of WPC and achievements of WPC in promoting political participation of women in the parliament of Pakistan. It will deal with the performance of WPC in promoting representation and their programs to facilitate women in raising gender sensitive issues in the parliament of Pakistan. Chapter four will focus on Legislative outputs of WPC in gender sensitive matters.

Chapter 1

Global Perspective of Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC)

Introduction

The basic aim of the chapter is to focus on meaning and understanding of the word caucus, parliamentary caucus and women parliamentary caucus. A brief historical overview of the caucus will also be undertaken. The chapter will further focus on the global perspective of women parliamentary caucus, its formation, organization and effectiveness in different countries. Examples of women parliamentary caucus has been given from different countries of the world. The chapter is divided into six main sections like: What is Caucus? Where does the word come from?, Historical Background of Caucus, Women Parliamentary caucus, objectives of Women Parliamentary Caucus, Structure of WPC, Effectiveness of Women parliamentary Caucus.

1.1. What is a Caucus? Where does that word come from?

As a noun caucus refers to a “closed meeting of a group of people”. Caucus can be a verb means “to meet” (McKenna, 2008, p.65). The origin of the term caucus is unknown. Some claim it derives from caulkers, who assisted in shipbuilding; others claim it is the Latin word caucus, which is derived from the Greek kaukos, means a “drinking vessel”. However, some claim that it originates from the Algonkian Indian term caucausu, meaning of which is advisor or counselor (McKenna, 2008, p.65).

Similar definitions of a party caucus can be found in brief dictionaries, which generally say that a caucus is a gathering of legislators with the express purpose of choosing candidates for a given position or policy (American Heritage Dictionary, 1970). Caucuses are defined as gathering of a political party, or a faction thereof, for the aim of selecting candidates for office, choosing party leaders, and/or developing policy (Kotzé & Van Wyk, 1988:81). According to the definitions above that caucuses normally take place in secret, they decide strategies and create policies.

Little was found when basic information about political party caucuses was searched online. Political figures had also not written much about it in their writings

(Napier & Labuschagne, 2017). The majority of references refer to the American practice, the caucus system, and the Democratic and Republican Parties' practice of this system to appoint people for political position. or to further certain causes. The literature about caucuses in the Westminster system of government is often low, and most of it is illegible (Napier & Labuschagne, 2017)

A caucus is just a group of parliamentarians who share a common interest in a certain issue, such as population growth or gender equality (Palmeiri, 2016). It is distinguished from a legislative committee by its procedures, authorities, and duties. Women's caucus generally consists of only female MPs (member parliamentarians). Men and women could both participate in the parliamentary caucus on gender equality, but the main goal would be to advance gender equality (Palmeiri, 2016).

A caucus, sometimes known as a legislative party, generally seeks to bring people together to find consensus on particular issues. In parliamentary politics, a caucus is essential to a political party's operation within a legislature and throughout all tiers of government (Napier & Labuschagne, 2017). It is a vital component of the party's overall strategy. There are several issues raised by the secretive way a party caucus conducts its business in a supposedly open democracy (Napier & Labuschagne, 2017)

Political party caucuses, also mentioned as parliamentary parties in the UK and other nations that adhere to the Westminster political system, are not widely popular in the public and are not extensively studied or documented in scholarly works, much like many other facets of democracy and the institutional structures that support it. Political party caucuses and related activities are typically more transparent and varied in the US, largely because of their significant influence in presidential candidate nominating processes and their involvement in a number of legislative bodies (Napier & Labuschagne, 2017). The purpose of caucuses is to bring together lawmakers from different political parties. These organizations provide bridge between representatives of various interests and promote intellectual exchange. Caucuses aid the legislative branch in bridging socioeconomic gaps and limiting presidential power in post-conflict states (Gomez & Koppell, n.d).

1.2. Historical Background of Caucus

The term "caucus" has a long history in both academic fields of political science and history as well as in everyday politics (Napier & Labuschagne, 2017). The city of Boston was where the term "caucus" was originally used in the middle of the 18th century to refer to a gathering of the leaders of a political club or party, called to plan elections. These origins may be found deep within the political history of America (Napier & Labuschagne, 2017). Caucuses were first held in the US in the 1830s, has also been identified as one of the institutions used to nominate candidates for public office (Ibele 1971:299). To choose delegates to each party's national convention, the caucus is still used in some states in addition to a direct primary election procedure during a presidential election year. The party convention has mostly taken the role of the idea in more recent US politics (The free dictionary).

The term "conferences" or "forums" is used in American legislatures to refer to the gathering of party members for local, state, and federal caucuses. Members of bigger caucuses or parts of legislatures, such as the "Black Caucus," participate in these caucuses, which are called for specific or constrained reasons (Napier & Labuschagne, 2017). The purpose of many extra caucuses in the US Congress (United States House of Representatives) is to advance factional or sectional interests. A recent example is the emergence of a special caucus or group known as the "Freedom Caucus" in the US Congress, which consists of around 40 Republican members out of a total of 247 members and is intended to advance a party agenda. In the French political system the term "groups" refers to legislative caucuses (Napier & Labuschagne, 2017)

The awareness of functioning through caucuses in parliaments is very popular and widely accepted elsewhere in world (WPC, 2008). The two Houses of Congress have supported the tradition of caucus for more than three hundred years, with more than 150 caucuses in US legislatures. The Iowa Caucus, often known as the Taxes Caucus, has a significant role in selecting presidential candidates in the American political system. The "Women Caucus," "Hispanic Caucus," and "Black Caucus" in Congress all had a major impact on the evolution of US policy by initiating new laws or offering "en-block" modifications to current legislation. In order to address key gender-related issues in their individual countries, women MPs have recently taken

the initiative in organizing large-scale groups and Caucuses in the majority of countries of Latin American and African (Napier & Labuschagne, 2017)

1.3. Women Parliamentary Caucus

A caucus is just a group of parliamentarians, who share a common interest in a certain issue, such as population growth or gender equality, distinguished from a parliamentary committee by its procedures, authorities, and duties. Female caucus usually made up exclusively of female MPs (Palmieri, 2016). Parliamentary caucus for promoting gender parity could include both men and women, but its main goal should be to advance gender equality (Palmieri, 2016)

In many cases, women entry to legislative bodies doesn't result positively. There occurred no change in male-dominated practices despite an increase in female members of parliament (MPs). Party and legislative quotas are examples of new institutions that are present in already available formal and informal organizations that have undermined gender equality. Women in the legislature do not ensure that the goals and procedures of parliament, which are institutions created and maintained by men, will change (Gonzalez and Sample (2010, 15). To overcome the obstacles they face, female MPs and their allies have created a number of GFPIs. One kind of GFPI is a parliamentary committee or commission with a gender equity mandate (Adams, Scherpereel & Wylie, 2019). These organizations, like the committees for gender equality and equal opportunity, receive funding and employees from the legislature and have a formal involvement in creating and/or revising laws. A second type of GFPI is women's committees or caucuses within parties. Intra-party organizations work to reshape party agendas and provide policy deliberations a gendered perspective. A third kind of GFPI is cross-party organizations that have been formally registered and deal with issues of gender equality. These APPGs, which are present in the UK and other countries, address a variety of gender equality concerns. Sexual Violence, Sex Equality, and Women, Peace and Security are just a few of the numerous APPGs in the UK (Adams, Scherpereel & Wylie, 2019).

While these three institutions have been used in a variety of settings, our attention is on a different category of GFPI called WLCs (IPU, 2013, p. 10) WLC is a procedure that have been established in the legislatures of many nations to improve collaboration amongst female politicians. IPU guidelines list a number of factors,

including fostering cross-party support, defending on legislative priorities of women, bringing a gender viewpoint to policy talks, enhancing the abilities of female lawmakers, and advancing gender mainstreaming, as reasons why actors in various contexts have created WLCs (Adams, Scherpereel & Wylie, 2019). In order to achieve this, WLCs are legislative groups that prioritize women and/or gender issues in their membership and/or goals. They are accessible to members of various political parties and are listed as members of a membership list. WLCs are voluntary organizations that, unlike parliamentary committees, often play no official part in the legislative process. Members of all legislative parties are welcome to participate in WLCs, unlike single-party women's caucuses. In addition, unlike APPGs, WLCs concentrate on both the professional growth of MPs and politically significant issues (Adams, Scherpereel & Wylie, 2019).

In order to address issues of gender equality and support the political solidarity of women, parliaments use different strategies. Some parliaments opted for a parliamentary committee on women's or gender equality concerns. Compared to caucuses, committees are more strictly governed by parliamentary rules but also have more legislative authority. The formal bodies of the legislature known as committees' draught and evaluate legislation, hold hearings, and carry out other prescribed legislative duties (IPU, 2013). Caucuses are less formal organizations that advocate for legislation, carry out outreach initiatives, raise awareness of women's issues, and achieve other predetermined objectives. These groups, unlike committees, typically do not have any legislative obligations, but they are nonetheless capable of being more persuasive, particularly through advocacy, which is generally prioritized among their unofficial activities (IPU, 2013).

Even in cases when parliaments "opted" to create a committee to address gender issues, caucuses can be constituted. The two are not mutually exclusive. In order to have a bigger impact on the legislative process in parliament, certain WPCs have also formed partnerships with parliamentary committees and further bodies in charge of gender problems and gender equality. Women lawmakers in Ecuador have chosen to form a caucus in order to mainstream gender and women's concerns into the work of all committees as opposed to keeping them within a single specialized committee (IPU, 2013).

In Argentina, the Women's Caucus has grown into an official organization with the same powers and policies as any other. A women's caucus and a gender issues committee in Timor-Leste work together to raise awareness of domestic violence through competitions with prizes for children, women and educators (IPU, 2013).

In several nations' parliaments, women's caucuses or parliamentary groupings have been established as tools to promote cooperation among politically active women. Such caucuses can effectively unite female lawmakers from different parties in alliances around shared objectives. Cross-party cooperation is established through women's caucuses. They enable female lawmakers from various political parties overcome intra-party conflicts to advocate for women's rights or work together on other policy matters by bringing them together around issues that they can all support (IPU, 2013)

1.4. Main objectives of Women Parliamentary Caucus

- To encourage women unity in general and among female lawmakers in particular.
- To use a gender viewpoint to influence laws and policies.
- To bring gender equality concerns to the attention of lawmakers.
- To increase the ability of female lawmakers to serve as capable representatives and lawmakers.
- To guarantee the proper implementation of laws and policies pertaining to gender equality.
- To pursue support from intergovernmental and non-governmental groups. (Palmieri, 2016).

1.5. Structure of Women parliamentary caucus

Women frequently organize themselves in parliamentary committees or caucuses in parliaments, congresses, and legislative assemblies, according to IPU, an international organization of parliaments. These organizations keep an eye on how gender mainstreaming is being applied to all aspects of the nation's legislative process. Men are permitted to participate as honorary members in several nations' female parliamentary bodies. Even in a divisive political environment, strategic collaboration between women's CSOs, parliamentary bodies, political party wings, and—can

achieve greater success in advancing women's political representation and leadership than either of them alone.

Various caucuses not only support the collaboration of female lawmakers in the development of policy. To help female lawmakers become better legislators, they have programs, launches, and workshops available. For example, the Ugandan Women's Caucus offers courses for female delegates on speech making, coalition building, constituency building, parliamentary procedures and other related subjects. The Network of Women Deputies of the Finnish Parliament hosts educational luncheons in Finland to stimulate parliamentary discussion of significant current issues. Women state ministers are frequently invited to these functions. The Women's Parliamentary Network arranged a negotiation and dispute resolution workshop in Morocco, where the female participants received training. Women's caucuses are organized in a different ways that are best suited to the local political structure and models the country had adopted (NDI, 2016)

The IPU has made attempts to assist women's caucuses around the world in their activities. It established and keeps up a database that compiles information on the existence and features of women's caucuses all over the world. Additionally, the 2013 "Guidelines for Women's Caucuses" from the IPU offer useful resources for female legislators who seek to start a caucus or improve an existing one. It highlights several strategies for the effectiveness of women's caucuses, including being clear about goals and objectives, reaching out to allies both inside and outside of parliament, making sure it has enough money and administering it properly, and improving lines of communication with other parliamentarians, the public, and civil society (IPU, 2013)

1.5.1. Different structures

Women's caucuses can be organized using a variety of ideas and structures, depending on what works best in the local political environment. Below are some of the highlights.

There are five governing structures for the Rwandan Women Parliamentary Forum. All forum members are represented in the General Assembly, which is the highest body. Nine people make up the Executive Committee, who runs the forum.

The Standing Committees are the third type of governmental body. The five committees are: Research, documentation, and ICT; Collaboration and advocacy; Law and gender; Budgets, gender strategy, policy monitoring and Women's capacity-building and empowerment. The Audit Committee, the fourth structure, is made up of three member's leads forum's finances, ensuring that the General Assembly's resolutions are carried out, and resolving any disputes that may develop there. The Executive Secretary, who oversees the day-to-day operations of the forum, is the final governing body.

The Network of Women Deputies of the Finland Parliament was founded by female lawmakers in 1991, despite the absence of an official women's caucus in the Finnish parliament. In Finland, cooperation among female lawmakers has always existed, and this network gave it greater structure. The network coordinates collaboration with representatives from various nations and arranges seminars and gatherings. An executive committee that is chosen annually by the general assembly is in charge of the network's operational aspects. There is a current member and a new member of the network for each of the parliamentarian caucuses. The network's president and vice president are selected for a year and alternately selected from all of the various caucuses.

On the first Wednesday of every session, the caucus gathers in Malawi at least once. The caucus chair may schedule additional meetings. The Chair may arrange a meeting outside of regular business hours after consulting with the other members. In order to finalize its structure, the caucus surveyed its members to determine prospective areas of priority. Priority areas as a result were citizenship, marriage, divorce, widowhood and inheritance, and custody and maintenance of children. The Women's Caucus chairwomen in Nepal are chosen for a one-year term in order to increase the opportunity for women to hold leadership roles. In addition, if one party holds the caucus chair position, the opposing party holds the vice chair position. A secretary, a treasurer, and a public relations officer are further elected officials. The Nepali caucus has decided to concentrate their efforts on drafting legislation; hence they do not have a legislative or meeting schedule. With the help of this caucus, NDI has provided seminars, programmes for members to strengthen their abilities, and other support systems (NDI, 2016)

1.6. Effectiveness of Women parliamentary Caucus

The main topic is whether and how a parliament's legislative output is impacted by the presence of women's caucuses. Do caucuses put issues onto the legislative agenda that might not have otherwise made it there? Is there visible difference in the laws created in terms of gender sensitivity, and what impact does this have on national development strategies? Shortly, are women's caucuses effective? Although almost every participant expressed some doubts, the overall reaction to this question seemed to be mainly positive (Agora, 2015).

Some success stories exist about the practical effects of a women's caucus on legislation (Rwanda being the prominent example), but in the majority of situations (Indonesia, the US, Nepal, Ghana, and so forth), the tangible advantages associated with having a women's caucus remain rather restricted (Agora, 2015). This does not imply that the women's caucuses in these nations are ineffective or have not in any way influenced the development of more gender-sensitive laws. Experience suggests that women's caucuses primarily function behind the scenes and not in the spotlight; they assist in the flow of legislation but are not yet able to influence the legislative agenda (Agora, 2015)

Women's caucuses have been established to increase women's influence on political decisions, it is generally accepted that forming cross-party caucuses can help in providing the peer support required to advance a legislative and policy agenda for gender equality. While the number of parliaments with a women's caucus is rapidly increasing, some researchers and politicians question whether women's caucuses have any real impact on how politics are decided (Agora, 2015). Although almost every participant had some reservations, the overall response to this question seems to be largely positive. There are some success stories about the practical effects of a women's caucus on legislation (Rwanda being the main one), but in the majority of situations (Indonesia, the US, Nepal, Ghana, and so forth), the tangible advantages associated with having a women's caucus remain fairly confined (Agora, 2015).

Women's caucuses support legislatures and democratic processes more broadly. The Rwandan women's caucus has significantly enhanced the legislature's performance. All female members of parliament, irrespective of their political party or ethnicity, are members of the Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians, also

known as the FFRP. In 1996, while the administration in transition, it was established. The FFRP is strong because there are a lot of women in the legislature. Since 2003, Rwanda has consistently ranked top for the proportion of women in parliaments. Currently, almost 56% of the elected members of the lower house of parliament are women. Using its significant presence in Rwanda, the FFRP supports the country's legislative system.

Participants in a 2011 Joint AGORA and iKNOW Politics Virtual Discussion analyzing the challenges that would prevent women's caucuses from supporting legislation on gender equality identified three distinct problems:

- 1) The caucus is a small entity that lacks the required weight to advance legal reform because there aren't more women in many legislatures.
- 2) The establishment of women's caucuses needs significant organizational, leadership, and workload initiatives.
- 3) Finding consensus and working together is challenging due to the fact that women's caucuses are cross-party affairs. Parliamentarians view that caucuses help in cross-party drafting of legislation across the party due to their perceived weakness and soft positioning, but occasionally this softness prevents them from advancing gender-sensitive agendas in the legislative process (Agora, 2015).

The IPU has made attempts to assist the caucuses of women everywhere in the world in their activities. It established and keeps up a list that compiles information on the presence and features of women's caucuses all over the world. Additionally, the IPU offers useful means for female legislators who aim to form a caucus or enhance an already available one. It identifies a number of tactics for boosting the efficiency of the women's caucuses, including putting a clear attention on aims and objectives, reaching out to allies both inside and outside of parliament, guaranteeing sufficient finance and dealing with it sensibly, and enhancing communication networks in the caucus and with other lawmakers, CSOs, and the common people (IPU, 2013)

Examples:

Women in Iraq's CoR, the only chamber of parliament, first assembled in 2005 to investigate the creation of a women's caucus. After this, the multi-party caucus has discussed issues affecting women, planned legislative initiatives, and get training in cooperation, dispute resolution, campaigning, leadership, and team-building with the help of NDI. Additionally, NDI has given them technical support for drafting legislation on topics including gender-based violence and discriminatory labor and retirement practices. On the floor of the parliament, the caucus asked in 2010 that there be more women in the upcoming Iraqi cabinet. Despite the fact that their pleas went unanswered, newly elected female MPs have sworn to keep advocating for more women in positions of leadership.

Women's caucus delegates from Somalia, Kenya, South Sudan, and Uganda attended several workshops organized by NDI in 2015 where they addressed policy goals, difficulties, and challenges in their respective legislatures. Participants in this campaign established the Women's Parliamentary Association, a regional alliance of women's caucuses throughout the IGAD region (ace, n.d)

Africa

During the Fifth Parliament (1989–1994), female MPs founded the cross-party UWOPA to foster agreement among female lawmakers on matters pertaining to gender equality and women's rights. All female members of parliament are automatically members of UWOPA, while male members may join as associate members. UWOPA is currently a legally recognized parliamentary caucus (NDI, 2016).

The Uganda Women Parliamentarians Association, which was established in the 1990s, played an important part in supporting gender equality provisions in Ugandan Constitution, such as those relating to equality of opportunity for women, nondiscrimination based on gender, and a quota of 33% for female seats in local government, and the creation of an Equal Chances Commission. The women's caucus in South Africa has collaborated to improve both the experience of female MPs and policies that are gender sensitive. The caucus also campaigned to enact legislation to

lower the amount of arms in a society and to hold males legally accountable for providing financial assistance to their children (Johnson and Josefsson 2016)

Asia

Through an intense lobbying campaign, the Network of Women Parliamentarians and Civil Society in Afghanistan stopped the Ministry of Women's Affairs from being abolished. Working with women's NGOs, the Indonesian Women's Political Caucus (KPPI) was able to pass a quota into the election law beginning with the 2004 legislative elections. The Indonesian Women's Parliamentary Caucus collaborates with this caucus, which is a multi-party organisation made up of female politicians, community leaders, and labour unions, to increase women's effective participation in politics.

Europe

To ensure that at least every third spot on the candidates' election lists is assigned to the less represented gender, the Women's Parliamentary Club Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia has assisted in getting revisions to the Election Code. This has assisted in electing 37 women to the House of Representatives in 2006. Additionally, they assisted in securing amendment to the Republic of Macedonia's 2008 Budget that increased financing for facilities that offer shelter to the homeless and those who have experienced domestic violence (NDI, 2016).

Latin America & the Caribbean

The women's caucus in Brazil vote as a bloc. This has made it possible for them to pass laws regarding quotas and violence against women. This caucus organizes to ensure that the Brazilian budget contains funds for social programmes and gender equality initiatives in addition to supporting laws that are significant to the caucus. Due to the caucus' tireless efforts, the 1988 Brazilian constitution now includes a provision known as the "lipstick clause" that guarantees women's rights. The women's caucus in Uruguay worked to get laws against domestic abuse and allowing all women to take time off for gynecological exams every year passed in 2003. Middle East & North Africa, The Women's MP Forum in Morocco was successful in getting the electoral threshold increased for female candidates from 3% to 5% (NDI, 2016).

Conclusion

In this chapter a global understanding of WPC has been developed. Globally, women face many hurdles to their political participation. Even though half of the world's population is female, still their participation in law making forums has been always low. Among other responsibilities in the political process, women frequently face barriers that keep them from fully engaging in the process. According to inter-parliamentary Union (2021), globally women hold only 25.5% of Parliamentary seats. At the start of the new millennium, there was a significant change in the global trends for representation of women in the important decision-making bodies. In the developing nations of Africa and Asia, the changing patterns have been especially positive. South Asia, where at the end of 2016, the proportion of women represented, was at an all-time low the previous century. By organizing pressure groups, alliances, and caucuses, women lawmakers have succeeded in making an impression and promoting a national agenda centered on gender at the many levels. Globally, women's percentage serving in parliaments has significantly increased during the past 25 years. In 1995 only 11.3% of the seats in the parliament that year were held by women. This percentage nearly doubled to 22.1% by 2015.

Chapter 2

Historical Overview of women's Political and Legislative Participation in Pakistan (1947-2008)

Introduction

In this chapter I traced the historical background of women's role in the Parliament of Pakistan. The evolution of women's representation in the parliament of Pakistan from independence of Pakistan till the establishment of women Parliamentary Caucus shall be focused. Further the chapter shall help to analyze presence of women in different constituent Assemblies of Pakistan historically, and what was different laws and legislations passed during this period that affected status of women in Pakistan. The chapter is divided into three major sections: Representation of women in parliament of Pakistan (1947-2008), Laws effecting women's status in Pakistan and effect of women political participation on the laws to effect women.

2.1. Representation of women in parliament of Pakistan (1947-2008)

In the independence movement, Muslim women played a significant part but after the independence of Pakistan they were not given a proper share in the law making forums of newly born country (Syed et al, 2015), Historically, women participation in National Assemblies and shares of seats remained different under various political systems (Awan, 2018). The Country's first Constituent Assembly comprised of those members, who were elected in 1946 general elections. For the first time, its meeting held on August 10, 1947 (Nawaz, 2016). Primarily the total membership of the Assembly was 69, but later on it rose to 79 after some princely states joined Pakistan. Begum Jahan Ara Shahnawaz and Begum Shaista Ikram Ullah, were the worth mentioning, and the only two women members of the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan (Shami, 2009). The first Constituent Assembly however, was not long lasting, and in October 1954, Governor General Ghulam Muhammad dissolved it (Ahmad, 2017). Pakistan's second On May 28, 1955, the Constituent Assembly was established. which consisted of 80 members (40 members from East Pakistan and 40 from West Pakistan). The second constituent Assembly did not have a single woman member (Tabassum, 2016)

After nine years of independence, finally the first Constitution was proclaimed on March 23, 1956. Unicameral legislature was introduced, Parliament to be composed of only one house known as National Assembly of Pakistan comprising of 310 members. It provided 10 reserved seats for women under Article 44(2) (1) in the NA (5 from East Pakistan and 5 from West Pakistan) (PILDAT, 2004). The Assembly's total strength was 310 members, in which 3% was approved for women. Under this Constitution However, the Constitution was revoked, no elections were held, and Martial Law was enforced in the country on October 8, 1958.

The military government of General Muhammad Ayub Khan, framed a new Constitution in the country in the year 1962. Unlike the 1956 Constitution, this Constitution provided Presidential form of Government in the Country. It also provided a federal state, and a unicameral legislature was introduced (Ahmad, 2017).

Six seats were reserved for women under the new Constitution, out of the total 156 strengths, which make women's share in the house only 3.8%. Resultantly, in 1962 elections, only 6 women came to the NA on reserved seats, in which three belong to East Pakistan and three to West Pakistan. But these female members of the National Assembly had never been given any Ministerial positions, nor were these members appointed as Parliamentary Secretaries. The country's First Presidential elections were held on January 2, 1965. These Elections were very important as a woman (Miss Fatima Jinnah) was running in the elections opposite to Ayub Khan. The Convention Muslim League (CML) and the Combined Opposition Parties (COP) were the two main political parties in the elections. Ayub Khan contested election from the platform of CML, while Miss Fatima Jinnah contested from the platform of COP. However, after the independence of Pakistan she did not take any part in political activity. Miss Fatima Jinnah was the strong supporter of democracy, and she expressed her sympathy with the opposition parties. Four candidates were contesting the 1965 Presidential elections, which were: Ayub Khan, Miss Fatima Jinnah, and two more persons, who are unaffiliated with any political party. Miss Fatima Jinnah had a plus point as compared to other candidates as she was the sister of Pakistan's founder. However, in the result, Miss Fatima Jinnah was defeated and Ayub Khan became the elected President of Pakistan, by securing 64% of votes in his favor. The CML won the majority, by securing 120 seats, while only 15 seats were secured by opposition. COP gained only 10 seats. The new Electoral College voted again on March 21, 1965

to elect 156 members of the National Assembly, 24 and once again 6 members were elected to NA on reserved seats, 3 each from East Pakistan and West Pakistan. However, not a single woman was elected on general seat (Tabassum, 2016)

The 1962 Constitution was abrogated by General Yahya Khan, and Martial law was imposed throughout the country in 1969. He announced general elections to be held in the country under his (LFO) based on the principle of "One Man One Vote". He reserved 13 seats (6 from West Pakistan and 7 from East Pakistan) for women in the Lower House, which has 313 total members, he gave 13 reserved seats for women) (Hashmi, 2014). Women representation in the House was increased to 4.1%. Elections were held in the Country, but Assembly could not convene its session due to East Pakistan crisis, which led to the formation of Bangladesh, and dismemberment of Pakistan. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gained majority in West Pakistan and formed government. The 144 members, who were elected from West Pakistan made the constituent Assembly of Pakistan. The Assembly convened on 14th April 1972 for the first time. The Six women were entered to the NA on reserved seats, but no one was elected on general seats (Tabassum, 2016). After 1970 elections, the civil government came to rule in December 1971. The new government adopted an interim Constitution in 1972. Nasim Jahan, Begum Ashraf Abbasi, and Mrs Jannifer Qazi were the members of Constitution committee in 1972. The Assembly of 1970 was historic in the parliamentary history of Pakistan, because it elected a woman, Begum Dr. Ashraf Abbasi to the office of Deputy Speaker for the first time. During this period however, Mrs. Nargis Naem was also selected as the Women Parliamentary Secretary for the first time (Hashmi, 2014)

The Constitution of 1973 provided 5% quota seats. In the Lower House, 10 seats out of 210 were reserved for women. (Tabassum et al, 2015). It also specified that this quota reservation will be valid for the following ten years or for two further general elections, whichever it occurs later. This quota reservation was however, expired in 1990 and was not revived during the consecutive governments of PML-N and PPP (Bano, 2009). The first Senate was set up with the total strength of 45 members. There was no defined quota reservation for women. Resultantly, Mrs. Samia Usman was voted as first woman Senator in Pakistan from 1973 to 1975. She was the first woman from (PPP) elected as senator of Pakistan. After that the second woman Senator Miss Asifa Farooqi served from 1975 to 1977, she also belonged to

PPP. The total number of the Senate members was increased to 63 from previously 45 members (Tabassum et al, 2014).

In 1977 elections, 10 women members were elected on reserved seats. Beside these 10 women, one woman was able to enter the National Assembly on general seat. Begum Naseem Wali Khan was the first Pakistani woman, who was given a ticket from a political party in general elections. But she was never able to take the office because of the opposition reject against Bhutto for rigging in 1977 elections. Therefore, from March 1977 to July 1977 only 10 members were sitting on reserved seats. Meanwhile, the elections results were not accepted by opposition, therefore oath was not taken. This caused a political chaos in the Country. On 5th July 1977, another Martial Law was enforced in Pakistan by the then Army Chief, General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, and continued till the year 1985. The Constitution of 1973 was suspended during this time.

On 2nd March 1985, the Constitution was revitalized under the restoration of Constitution Order (P.O.14 of 1985). The reserved seats for women were raised to 20 from previous 10; it means the seats were doubled in numbers. Women were given 20 seats out of 237 total strength of National Assembly, which increased their proportion to 8.4% of the total strength. In 1985 political activities were resumed (Aurat Foundation, 2012). In 1985 under the revived Constitution of 1973, elections held in the country, on non-party basis. In addition to 20 seats, which were reserved for women, another woman, Syeda Abida Hussain, was elected from Jhang on general seats. She belonged to a very politically powerful and landlord family. Later on in the by-election of 1985 another woman Nasim A Majid was elected on General seat in National Assembly from Bahawalnagar. Later Begum Nasim Majid also became Parliamentary Secretary for housing and working, and Mrs. Leela Wanti managed the reserved seat for minorities. After the revival of 1973 Constitution elections held both in National Assembly and Senate of Pakistan, and membership of the Senate was increased from 63 to 87 (Tabassum, 2016).

During the period from 1988 to 1999, the alternative democratically elected governments of Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto, no step was taken to increase quota reservation for women in NA of Pakistan. In November 1988, the eighth NA election was held (Tabassum 2016). In the year 1988 a historic change occurred in the

political system of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto was elected as Pakistan's first female prime minister. This brought a revolution in women role in parliament. Dr. Ashraf Abbasi was once again elected to the office of Deputy Speaker in the National Assembly (Hashmi, 2014). In the year 1988, elections for the Senate (Upper House) held, and out of total 87 members only one woman elected as Senator, which made female representation in the Senate 1.1%. In this election Dr. Noor Jahan Panazai from Baluchistan was elected as member of the Senate. The then President, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, by exercising the power Article 58(2) (b) dismissed the National Assembly on August 6th 1990 (Tabassum et al, 2015).

After 1988 elections, the Constitutional quota of reserved seats for women ceased. As a result, following three consecutive elections of 1990, 1993, and 1997, held without any specified quota defined for women (Aurat Foundation, 2012). Benazir Bhutto served two times as Prime Minister, and two times as the Leader of Opposition in Parliament, but could not take any concrete measures to enhance quota reservation for women in the Parliament of Pakistan. During the period from 1994 to 2000, the proportion of women representation in the Upper House (Senate) was 2.29%, with the total strength of 87 members in the house. Two women from Karachi, in the year 1994, Mrs. Nasreen Jaleel belonged to (MQM), and Ms, Fiza Junejo, who belonged to PML-J, were elected as Senate members, and remained in the house till the year 2000 (for six years). Beside these two women members, a woman Begum Nadira Khan Khakwani entered the Upper House Senate.

The Senate (Upper House) elections held on 14th March 1991, and as a result of this election only one woman was elected as Senator out of 87 total strengths. Panazai was the first women in Pakistan who served as the Chairperson of the Senate from 1991 to 1993 (Tabassum, 2016).

The democratic system came to an end on October 12, 1999, when the government of Mian Nawaz Sharif was overthrown by a fourth military coup. Only in 2002, after significant 1973 Constitutional revisions in the form of an LFO 2002, was Parliament once again constituted.

On August 24, 2002, General Pervez Musharraf, the Chief Executive of Pakistan, released his LFO, announcing that October 2002 will see general elections for both the National and Provincial Assemblies of Pakistan. He also revised the

Constitutional. The NA seats were increased from 217 to 342 members. For the first time in Pakistani history, sixty seats for women were reserved in the Lower House of NA. The provinces were allotted seats in the NA based on population proportions. The constituency seats were used to fill through the system of direct elections from single-member constituencies. Reserved seats were allocated to each political party based on the proportion of general Seats secured by them in the elections (Muhammad & Abbas, 2019). General Pervez Musharraf announced 17 % reserved seats for women in both the houses of the Parliament i.e. NA and Senate (Dutoya, 2013). The longstanding public demand for women reserved seats was acknowledged under LFO. The demand of women was 33% representation in the Parliament. However, The LFO agreed to give 17% seats. In the National Assembly 60 seats were reserved for women in total 342-Members and in the Senate 17 seats were reserved for women in 100- Member Senate (Sterken & Zia, 2015). Pakistan reached to 31st position in the IPU rating in 2002 after President General Pervez Musharraf expanded the reserved seats under the LFO (Jabeen, 2021).

In 2002 elections a total 74 women elected, both on reserved seats and general seats for the 12th National Assembly of Pakistan. Out of these, 60 came on reserved seats, twelve elected on general seats, and additionally one woman on the seats reserved for minority (Mirza & Wagha, 2019). This was the highest percentage of women ever represented in Pakistani Parliament. Accordingly, a lot of women were given place in the Federal Cabinet. Some were appointed as Parliamentary Secretaries, while others were appointed as Chairpersons of many Standing Committees. Since then women have shown some remarkable achievements in the Parliamentary functioning. The first elections of Senate under the Quota reserved seats for women held in 2003. As a result, there were 18% women in the Senate. Seventeen women elected on reserved seats, and addition to this one woman was elected on general seat. This increased women's representation in the Senate to 18% (18 seats out of total 100 seats) in the Senate (Tabassum, 2016).

In Pakistan's history, the elections that were held on February 18, 2008, will always be regarded as a crucial turning point. The subsequent events also turned out to be historical; however they were overshadowed by Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's martyrdom. Dr. Fehmida Mirza, a third-time candidate from the distant Badin district of Sindh's rural general seat, was chosen with a resounding two-thirds majority to

become the first female speaker of the house. She was one of up to 15 women who were voted to the General seats. In March 2009, there were Senate elections. With its new makeup, 17 female senators were elected (WPC, 2008)

2.2. Laws effecting women's status in Pakistan

The nature of laws established and their impact on women's socio-legal protection in the nation may also be researched and analyzed for the two periods. It is said that due to marginal representation of women in Assemblies addition to women's limited participation in parliament and assemblies, the first phase was marked by discriminatory laws that institutionalized and legitimized the discrimination of women. Conversely, the second era was thought to be advantageous for the creation of numerous laws protecting women from assault due to its high degree Considering women's quota reservations and the high proportion of female legislators (syed et al, 2013).

Between 1947 and 2000, the first phase of women's marginal representation, there were many laws that victimized and discriminated against women. Women's organizations at the time saw the introduction of the MFLO in 1961 as the only accomplishment. It requires divorce and marriage registration. It also included divorce and dissolution of marriage proceedings. Subsequently, women's organizations criticized Muslim Family Law Ordinance (MFLO) for being Islamic. Aside from this, the era saw the introduction of numerous discriminatory Hudood legislation during General Zia's alleged "Islamization" period (Syed et al, 2013).

2.2.1. Hudood Ordinance

General Zia-ul Haq put the Hudood Ordinances into effect. An Islamic system was introduced in the country. Hudood Ordinances were issued on 10th of February, 1979. The Hudood Ordinances addressed: rape, abduction, fornication, adultery, making a false accusation of a crime, the use of drugs and Alcohol, as well as theft and robbery, and many other penalties outlined in the Hudood Ordinances. Hudood Ordinances remained points of concern of concern for women during this period. For the establishment of a criminal legal system in the Country these ordinances were enacted, which should be on the basis of Islamic criminal laws. According to Hudood Ordinances, when an adult married Muslim who committed Zina, would face penalty 17 of being stoned to death, and punishment for adult single Muslim and adult non-

Muslim would be 100 lashes, according to *Al Quran* (Dawn May 7, 2011). *Zina* and *Qazf* Ordinances, which were dealing with Sexual crimes were the most controversial. Under the *Hudood* laws six different categories of sexual crimes Punishment for each was set (Dawn May 7, 2011).

Women's issues began to surface in political forums more often during the second phase, which saw an increase in women's presence in legislative and political forums following the year 2000 (Mirza and Wagah 2009)

- The criminal law amendment Act 2004 to curb Honour Killing.
- The Protection of Women Act 2006 to amend the Hudood Ordinances.

2.2.2. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2004

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2004 was passed after the killings of many women and girls. It was also known as Honour killing Act, and was passed after many years of demands and struggle from the society. Its purpose was to protect its citizens, particularly women and girls, and to declare all murders committed in the pretext of honor illegal, and to give punishment to the culprits, and promoters of such crimes. The Act amended (PPC), and (CrPC) to make crimes committed in the name of honour killing as murder punishable by law. Honour killing is also known as Karokari. This was for the purpose to remove honor killing and violence against the women (Lari, 2011, p.17). The Government eventually passed the law, after years of struggle from Civil Societies, and make honor crimes, and Karokari illegal. Under The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2004, also known as Honour Killings Law, many of changes were made in (PPC) 1860, and 1898 (CrPC). It mostly added the existing rules to make qatl-i-amd (intentional murder) under the pretext of honour (Lari, 2011, p.17)

2.2.3. The Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill, 2006

The official bill 'The Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill, 2006,' has moved by the government on August 21, 2006. The bill was enacted by the National Assembly in its fourth year. The bill was supported by PPPP, MQM and ANP. MMA (coalition of 6 religious parties) opposed it, and PML-N refrained to vote (Mirza, 2011, p.13). The National Assembly passed the Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006 on November 15, 2006, and it became

enacted on December 1, 2006. After getting President General Pervez Musharraf's approval, the bill was promulgated. It was specified in its preamble, that it is essential that a relief and defense should be provided to women against misuse, and to protect them from exploitation. Sections 365B, 367A, 371A, 371 B were added in PPC (Act XLV of 1860). This deals with Abducting or compelling women for marriage without her consent, as well as Abducting for unusual desire, selling or buying the people for prostitution, all will be penalized with death or severe Jail, which could be extended to 25 years, and also shall be responsible to fine (Noreen 2013, p.125). This Act affected the *Hudood Ordinances* particularly in cases sexual crimes of rape. Under the Act various parts of the *Hudood Ordinances* were amended. It added and removed some sections, and moves some crimes to PPC. For example, under the Act crime of rape was removed from the *Hudood Ordinances* and instead added into the PPC. Earlier, under the *Hudood Ordinances*, when a woman who blamed men for the crime of rape needed testimony from four men for assurance, and if they didn't, they faced the risk of being penalized for having sex without marriage. Rape was declared as a crime according to the Act, and sentences would be based on evidence. The Act also prevented women from being charged with fornication crimes if they claimed they were raped, but could not prove their "absence of consent". Outside of marriage, heterosexual intercourse is still illegal, but the Act stipulated that such allegations will be examined by a court before when formal charges are filed. Furthermore, under the act, capital penalty and physical punishment, such as flogging for consensual extramarital sex was eliminated; nonetheless, this offence is still considered to be punishable by sentences of five years in jail or fine (Noreen 2013, p.125).

2.2.3. Effect of women's political participation on the laws to effect women

Laws are drafted by legislative bodies on behalf of the people they represent. Any group that is underrepresented in the institutions that make laws may be more negatively impacted since they are not heard when laws are being made. Women's voices, concerns, and issues may not make it to the floor of decision-making forums where they may be included and changed to better serve their interests in state policies and legislation if they continue to be underrepresented in parliaments. Globally, the proportion of women in parliaments is lower than that of men (Syed et al, 2013). For the quality of women's representation and accomplishments to continue to grow, there must first be a greater number of women in parliaments (Syed et al, 2013).

Conclusion

The chapter focused on Women's representation in the parliament of Pakistan from independence till the formation of WPC in 2008. Historically women representation in the Parliament of Pakistan has remained low. There are two broad periods of women's political participation in Pakistan. During the first period, which started with the independence of the country and continued till 2000, women have been marginally represented in the all Political forums of Pakistan. However, during the second period, which started in 2001 and still continues, shows remarkable contribution of women in the Parliament of Pakistan. In Pakistan, there is always indirect system for the election of women occupying reserved seats. Only the first Constitution of Pakistan, which was promulgated in 1956, provided the system of direct elections on the seats reserved for women, however the Constitution was abrogated without any elections held. After that, all the Constitutions provided indirect systems of elections. The situation remained same under the military governments. women legislative participation is linked to reserved seats as well as several other issues, including the involvement of political parties, laws promoting equal representation, policies favorable to women, and the election system. General Pervez Musharraf introduced 17% quota reservation for women in both the houses of the Parliament, resultantly in 2002 election; a significant number of women were able come to the Parliament. During the period 2002-2007 women members took active part in legislations. They participated in different Parliamentary procedures such as: Debates, 66 Questions Hours, Resolutions, Points of orders, Private Member Bills, Calling Attentions Notices etc. During the period of 2002-2007 38 laws were made in the Parliament in which two important laws related to women.

Chapter 3

The Formation and Achievements of Women Parliamentary caucus (WPC)

Introduction

The chapter will focus on the formation of WPC in Pakistan, its primary functions, objectives and organization. The chapter will further focus on specific achievements of WPC regarding role of women in the parliament of Pakistan, that how different actions of WPC promoted women's role in the parliament of Pakistan, build consensus among women parliamentarians across the party lines and facilitated them to discuss gender sensitive issues in the Parliament of Pakistan.

This chapter is divided into different sections and themes on the formation and achievements of WPC like: functions of WPC, organization of WPC, WPC build consensus among women parliamentarians across party lines, Capacity Building of women Parliamentarians, Bring consensus with male parliamentarians, Worked for increased representation of Women in the electoral process, voiced for Violence against Women and Girls and police reforms, Build linkages with experts and organizations outside Parliament, Worked on Gender Budgeting, Knowledge exchange among women parliamentarians across countries, Emphasis of Women Parliamentarians increased, National and regional engagement with peacekeeping, Women's access to resources and opportunities, Women participation in parliamentary Business increased, Resolutions, and some other achievements.

3.1. Formations of women parliamentary caucus

After terrible assassination of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto continues it was a need for nationwide political reconciliation and integration, which Ms. Bhutto promoted during her period and is now basically seen as her final political legacy (WPC, 2008). Shaheed Mohtarma In addition to putting out the idea for the first time of creating such a Caucus, Benazir Bhutto suggested a multifaceted strategy to increase the representation of women in parliament.

- to address issues of gender through the institutional framework of the legislature, ensuring that national laws encouraging rights of women reflect these standards;
- To collaborate with important women's organizations outside of Parliament in the public and commercial sectors, and to supervise and support the implementation of gender-sensitive policies and programs.
- to establish and strengthen relationships with non-Muslim nations independently and collectively, as well as with Muslim women parliamentarians, in order to interact with women lawmakers around the world. However, after her assassination, the move could not hold grounds. (WPC, 2008)

A gender disparity in women's political engagement has decreased significantly over the past ten years as a consequence of deliberate initiatives (Commonwealth Library, 2016). For the first time in Pakistan's independent history, both general and reserved seats in parliament had more than 22% women. The election of a woman as Speaker of the NA on February 18, 2008, the first time a woman had ever been elected to that position in Pakistan's democratic history, and the election of over 22% of women to general and reserved seats in the parliament provided yet another excellent opportunity for female lawmakers to help the legislature become more gender-sensitive and increase its influence and collaboration with outside groups promoting women's rights and empowerment (WPC, 2008)

Shortly after being elected to the coveted position, Dr. Fehmida Mirza—the first Muslim woman Speaker in the history of the Muslim world—acknowledged its significance and started a series of conversations with female parliamentarians from all parliamentary parties on the topic. She was able to win their trust with her neutral attitude, and on October 20, 2008, the Speaker called the first gathering of female parliamentarians. 58 female MNAs attended the meeting, which endorsed the Speaker's idea to create WPC and authorised her to implement this instruction by a unanimous vote (WPC, 2008).

As a result, the Speaker established a Steering Committee to design the proposed Caucus' bylaws. On November 21, 2008, the Speaker called the formal gathering of the Women Members of the National Assembly after the Rules had undergone a

comprehensive review by distinguished legal experts. WPC was officially established through a resolution during this conference (WPC, 2008).

WPC is open to all female lawmakers serving in the National Assembly and Senate. Members discuss both individual and group challenges affecting local women. WPC serves as a kind of oversight body in parliament, ensuring adherence to institutional measures for women's inclusion by regularly exchanging expertise with international organizations and keeping an eye on how well inclusive policies are being implemented (Legislative Watch, 2009). WPC has rapidly expanded to become an essential forum for female lawmakers to work together to make parliament more gender-sensitive and to strengthen its influence and engagement with national and international organizations that support the institutionalization of a shared agenda for women's empowerment (Legislative Watch, 2009).

In addition to a federal WPC, Pakistan currently has four provincial ones, making it the first project of its sort in South Asia (UNDP 2014). The support for women's rights has gradually moved from the Centre to the provinces. Provincial caucuses should make it simpler and more effective to identify and address context-specific gender concerns. (Common wealth Library,2016)

3.2. Functions of Women Parliamentary Caucus

- To create a non-partisan forum for all female lawmakers in Pakistan's parliament from all political parties to speak with one voice on legislation pertaining to women, girls, and gender equality.
- To collaborate with male champions in order to forge consensus on certain gender issues that have an impact on people's lives and violate constitutionally guaranteed rights. WPC is well-positioned to sway legislation that addresses gender equality.
- The Caucus has given female lawmakers a platform where they may advocate for the advancement, emancipation, and empowerment of women independent of party politics. WPC connects with female lawmakers all over the world by establishing and fostering alliances. WPC collaborates regularly with networks and international organizations to progress women's rights and promote greater empowerment via the sharing of ideas and best practices. In order to monitor and provide support for the implementation of gender-sensitive

policies and activities, WPC regularly coordinates and communicates with a wide range of reputable organizations outside the Parliament. The WPC in the Pakistani Parliament has already made links with the female lawmakers in the area. WPC is now helping to organize provincial caucuses in Pakistan.

3.3. Organization of Women parliamentary caucus

WPC has been successful in bringing together female lawmakers from all political parties and enhancing their combined influence and authority. Despite being an unofficial organization, WPC has expanded quickly and eventually acquired a formal structure, which includes a General Body and Working Council. The Working Council has ten members, including two secretaries and treasurers, one representative from each of the seven major political parties, and one independent. The former, larger forum has 93 members, including 76 female senators and members of the National Assembly. In order to advocate for legislative changes, confront discriminatory practices in the distribution of development funds, and have a voice in political parties, WPC has worked with other organizations such as the National Commission on the Status of Women (Commonwealth Library, 2016). The defined rules state that the Caucus is run by three primary bodies that make decisions.

1. **The patron:** The patron of the Caucus is the female lawmaker holding the highest parliamentary position (either Speaker, Senate Chairperson, Deputy Speaker, or Deputy Chairperson). She can call meetings of the General Assembly and Working Council as needed and serves as their chair. Additionally, she has the authority to make any decisions that must be approved by the General Assembly in order for the Caucus to function. In agreement with the General Assembly, She is also allowed to select the WPC's Secretary and Treasurer from the Caucus members.
2. **The General Assembly:** It consists of each and every Caucus member. The Membership of the Caucus is limited to female legislators. The General Assembly, which must convene at least once during each Parliamentary session, makes all of the decisions.
3. **The Working Council:** The Working Council is made up of representatives from every parliamentary faction in the legislature to represent women. In discussion with the General Assembly, the Patron elects its members for a one-year term. It has the authority to make decisions and strategies for the Caucus.

4. **The Secretariat of WPC:** Under the direction of the Secretary WPC, the Caucus Secretariat runs all of the offices. The Secretary oversees the day-to-day operations of the WPC and is chosen from among the Members of the Caucus by the Patron in collaboration with the General Assembly for a one-year term. Along with formulating their individual agendas and ensuring that their decisions are carried out through the Secretariat, she is also in charge of maintaining the records of the General Assembly and Working Council sessions.
5. **The Office of the WPC Secretariat:** The Women's Parliamentary Caucus has a fully operational office at Parliament House, which was opened on July 6, 2009 by the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani.

3.4. Achievements of Women Parliamentary caucus

3.4.1. Build consensus among women parliamentarians across party lines

The Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) united female lawmakers from all political parties on a same platform, articulating the aspirations and dreams of Pakistani women in a unified voice (WPC, 2008). It gives female lawmakers a special chance to successfully carry out their three legislative responsibilities of monitoring, representation, and legislation. Peer learning, deliberations, and candid conversations about current events and gender issues in the Caucus facilitate consensus-building and improve agenda prioritization (WPC, 2008)

Women lawmakers identified the need for a cross-party, nonpartisan forum for women's problems and took the initiative to form the WPC. Sometimes the challenge comes when discussing the issue in Caucus which is against the party interest of women, because Women mostly enter to the parliament of Pakistan on reserved seats and not on general seats. These women don't have their direct constituency, and come on party representation, so they have to represent the party interest in every case. But WPC helped in bringing consensus among women parliamentarians (WPC, 2008). WPC gave female lawmakers a special chance to successfully carry out their three parliamentary responsibilities: oversight, representation, and legislation. Peer learning, deliberations, and candid conversations about contemporary and gender issues facilitate the formation of consensus and improve the prioritisation of the agenda in the Caucus (WPC, 2008).

Ahmad Bilal, President of PILDAT explained

“WPC helps in making consensus not only among women parliamentarians, but also among political parties, because these women from different parties try to convince their party leadership that we should have to support in these pro women legislations. Which helped in law making, otherwise couldn't be possible. These across parties meeting of WPC and setting of women parliamentarians develop inter-party understandings” (Bilal, Ahmad, Personal Interview, November 18, 2023)

Similarly Shahida Rahmani, current Secretary of WPC

“Women Parliamentary caucus worked to bring consensus among women parliamentarians of different political parties. For example “when Khwaja Asif was a Minister and Sherri Mazari in the opposition at that and he used bad words for her, all women parliamentarians walked out for three days until he apologizes. Similarly in 2010-11, Chaudhry Nisar Saab was not ready to give funds for women parliamentarians and caucus raised voice” (Rahmani, Shahida, Personal Interview, 16/11/2023)

3.4.2. Capacity Building of women Parliamentarians

Quotas systems have been considered as one of the most operative action for promoting women's political participation. No doubt, the Quota seats enhanced the number of women in the Parliament, but it was not a permanent solution for achieving gender equality. The government of General Pervez Musharraf got the credit for increasing the number of reserved seats for women to sixty. The increase number of women in the Assemblies couldn't detach them from the norms of society. Women members were not equally granted in the Assembly and their opinions were not taken seriously. Women did not actively participate in political activities and not have a real understanding of the political procedures; therefore they always look to their male colleagues and political masters for guidance (Bano, 2009). Political representation of women is not only about to increase their numbers in the House, but also about their value and impacts in legislations. Women members of the Parliament should have to participate openly, clearly in decision makings. Deprived of the conducive environment to be politically energetic and knowledgeable, these women have lack of knowledge and experience to take part in political process and policy making

(PILDAT 2004) WPC had played vital part in the capacity building of women Parliamentarians.

WPC arrange different sessions, workshops, seminars and meetings, in which women parliamentarians get training and were taught about how to review, assess and make laws, and then they actively participate in different parliamentary proceedings like: questions attention session, calling attention notices, private member bills etc (Rahmani, Shahida, Personal Interview, 16/11/2023). Significant learning opportunities are also provided to the female parliamentarians through a variety of mechanisms organized by the Caucus in collaboration with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), relevant specialists, and academia. These mechanisms include seminars, conferences, and study circles on important themes. As a result, they have made progress towards fulfilling their significant functions as legislators, representatives, and overseers. Women MPs represent a variety of regions and bring a range of issues from those areas to the legislature through call attention notices, point of orders, and other means. The WPC working council convened weekly meetings, presented various topics, and attempted to draft legislation related to such matters. In their capacity as overseers, female lawmakers have taken on a more proactive role. This role was played both in the business of the House as well as beyond (Imran, Ali. Personal Interview, 18/11/2023).

At the May 2010 convention, the Caucus, which was made up of six working groups, made the recommendation that women legislators should be given more responsibility for promoting peace and taking the initiative to resolve conflicts. The Caucus committed to tackling the core causes of insecurity and instability, which were determined to be poverty and illiteracy. The participants suggested that laws protecting women's rights be passed, that partnerships be formed to maintain national harmony, that quotas of 10% be applied to women in the police, security services, and judiciary, and that the government give priority to housing for vulnerable women. Establishment of 10% quotas for women in the court, security services, and police, and those authorities should give housing supply top priority in order to protect vulnerable women (Rashid & Zaka, 2012)

3.4.3. Worked for increased representation of Women in the electoral process

In many parts of Pakistan, women are prohibited from participating in the voting process and casting ballots. WPC has led campaigns whereby severely poor and marginalized women have contested elections and won. In a struggle to encourage and protect women's voting rights, WPC made important recommendations to ECP during the election process. Resultantly, the female legislators in the Caucus were successful in passing two noteworthy amendments that resulted in two noteworthy changes. The 2017 Election Reforms Bill: (i) guaranteeing the involvement of female voters in elections and stating that every constituency needs at least 10% of female voters to hold an election; (ii) each political party will allot 5% of its tickets to female political leaders seeking general seats in elections (Imran, Ali. Personal Interview, 18/11/2023).

The 2017 election reforms were the result of the concerted advocacy of women. These changes provide that if less than 10% of voters in a constituency are female, the election will be declared invalid. In 2017, women also campaigned for the affirmative action of allocating 15% of party tickets for general seats to women; nevertheless, they were only able to get a 5% provision. The majority of research participants for this paper concurred that political parties would not field female politicians for general seats unless they were related to male politicians, or required by law (Chaudhry, 2023).

WPC with its collaborators realized that a large number of women were excluded from politics because they lacked a CNIC or were not registered to vote. In response to WPC-led lobbying initiatives, the NADRA and ECP established registration camps prior to the 2013 general elections. In addition to providing identities, the camps helped create ration cards and other forms of identification. NADRA also started computerizing electoral rolls and census data after realizing there were gaps in the electorate's accurate representation. Women were frequently prevented from voting at the local level due to cultural barriers (conservative views towards women participating in political decision-making). There have been deliberate efforts to combat these biases in the last two general elections. The Chief Justice of the Peshawar High Court issued an order to ECP during the 2013 general elections in Peshawar to overturn the results of two constituencies in which women were denied the right to vote. ECP then arranged for re-election in these areas. A bill

pertaining to civil and criminal penalties for citing disenfranchisement is presently being drafted by the NCSW. The penalties might include prosecution or the suspension of political candidates. After it is framed, WPC will introduce the bill (common Wealth Library, 2016).

3.4.4. Bring consensus with male parliamentarians

Pakistan's Parliament comprises of male champions from all parliamentary parties who have not only stood up always on women raised-issues but they have steered the initiative be it a bill or advocacy with government to improve a policy or undertake better implementation. The bills and acts pertaining to women and child protection are the greatest achievement and Pakistani male population is it any side of the political-orientation or voters and members from any parliamentary party have stood with WPC initiatives on all imperative bills (Zaka, Muhammad Rashid Mafzool, Personal Interview 17/12/2023)

As Ali Imran, previous head of Westminster Foundation for Democracy, explained

In parliamentary setups the concept of caucuses is a decade older concept came from western democracies, especially from US. Usually these are not formal bodies, but it's a kind of group of people having the same ideologies, visions and same views on political issues. The political system of Pakistan is highly influenced by UK model, but the concept of Caucus came to us from US model. We cannot say that WPC in Pakistan is a very formal body, because It's not under the rules and regulations of the parliament, but in a way we can say a semi-formal body as it has its own rules and regulations and speaker endorsed and adopted those rules and regulations (Imran, Ali. Personal Interview, 18/11/2023)

According to him

“In Pakistan women are 20% in the parliament and to pass a bill, simple majority is required. So the important work of WPC is that it built consensus with male members of the parliament to support them in pro women legislation. Some private members bills were moved by individual women member and resulted in the passing of those bills. Similarly WPC also played role regarding parliamentary Committees, member of WPC are present in the meetings of parliamentary committees, somehow when a law made it effects both man and women, both in a positive or negative way. In this

regard WPC played important role in raising women concerns in parliamentary committees, and in the houses” (Imran, Ali. Personal Interview, 18/11/2023).

Examining proposed legislation, the parliamentary committees collaborate with the parliamentary caucus to advance progressive legislation. They now have a rare chance to improve parliamentary operations and make valuable contributions to the legislature. It also helps them develop personally and strengthens their abilities as capable lawmakers. They contend that attitudes towards women in politics may change if there were more women in leadership and decision-making positions inside political parties, assemblies, and the political system (Chaudhry, 2023).

In some cases they however don't get support from male counterparts, when women raise issues they get opposition from them. According to Shahida Rahmani when PPP took initiative on early child marriage, there was the government of PTI and the members of PTI and PML-N doesn't support due to which legislations couldn't held (Rahmani, Shahida, Personal Interview, 16/11/2023).

3.4.5. Violence against Women and Girls and police reforms

Concurrently, WPC has collaborated with Islamabad's female police stations to strengthen the process of requesting legal aid. A 2008 report published by WPC outlined the problems and worries that prevented police stations from being secure for all women. It also called attention to the predicament of women's police stations, which are manned exclusively by female police officers. WPC members have actively lobbied for an increased role and support for women police officers in light of the following outcomes: increased salaries, a guarantee of officer safety when travelling in conflict areas, and an encouragement for officers to be proactive in providing legal aid to women and chi (common Wealth Library, 2016).

3.4.6. Build linkages with experts and organizations outside Parliament

For the WPC, it has proven to be an effective strategy since it has helped to garner support for their projects and bring in experience. Organizations like UNDP, *WFD*, PIPS and FES had a very important role in strengthening the caucus; UNDP helped bringing the initial concepts of caucus. Similarly *FES* had also worked with WPC on Gender Responsive Budgeting. PIPS supported women parliamentarians in research, provide research assistance to women parliamentarians, helps in drafting of legislations (Imran, Ali. Personal Interview, 18/11/2023).

WPC is an asset of the National Parliament and a role model to be emulated by provincial legislatures and other developing countries. In my capacity as the founder Member and Research and Analysis Team Lead since 2009-20 of the PIPS, the globally recognized top ranked parliamentary research institution, we have always provided invaluable research support to WPC and women MPs in addition to holding numerous national and international conferences on women participation, representation and empowerment in close collaboration of the WPC to sensitize stakeholders with regards to women's central role to have a resilient, progressive and egalitarian society, as imagined by Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, in every facet be it peace-time, a conflict situation or a flood hazard (Zaka, Muhammad Rashid Mafzool, Personal Interview 17/12/2023).

Legislators who share similar views can convene in a caucus, or cross-party parliamentary group, which provides a forum for them to interact with representatives of academia, civil society, and the private sector. Together, these groups can highlight issues of public interest, including domestic abuse, women's rights, women and gender equality, and healthcare. A caucus gives a comparatively smaller group of MPs a way to further their policy objectives and identify studies that is grounded in evidence to bolster their efforts. It is interesting to note that female MPs are actively promoting cross-party discussion on social issues through all-party parliamentary organizations like the Parliamentarians Human Rights Forum and the Young Parliamentarians Forum, which bring together male and female MPs (Rashid & Zaka, 2012)

Increased CSOs involvement in women's parliamentary caucuses at the provincial and national levels to encourage agreement, planning, and a unified front among all female lawmakers against misogynistic statements, harassment, and other issues that affect women in politics. It is important to assist and encourage these caucuses in creating internal support networks to bolster the confidence, expertise, and knowledge of female lawmakers (Chaudhry, 2023).

3.4.7. Worked on Gender Budgeting

WPC worked with FES on Gender responsive budgeting. They arranged different workshops, so that women members of the parliament understand budgeting from gender lens.

According to Sidra Saeed, Program Advisor at FES

WPC approached us to work with them on gender budgeting, and to train women members to understand Gender Budgeting. It's a very great achievement of WPC to talk on Gender Budgeting in a third world country. FES invited trainers from Austria and Germany to give them training, and they worked on Gender Responsive Budgeting. For example if the government fix budget on transport, it considered women in that or not? If budget on education or health, as there are special provisions for females etc.? Similarly mostly women came to parliament on reserved seats, but it doesn't mean not give them budget to build their constituency, so it's also part of gender responsive budgeting. When the next budget was issued, the taxation on women hygiene items which was previously 16% decreased to 7% and it was due to intervention of WPC. In budget cycle, WPC raised questions on women education. They approached all committees, and asked whether they put gender sensitivity in budget proposal before sending it to Finance Minister, if they say no, then WPC gives an option to put gender sensitivity in the proposal. Different Ministries involves in it like Human Rights Ministry. WPC also raised question to give budget for building of quota basis constituency, then they were granted budget (Saeed, Sidra. Interviewed on 28/11/2023).

3.4.8. Knowledge exchange among women parliamentarians across countries

Through the organization of conferences, seminars, study tours involving many countries, and the hosting of foreign female parliamentarians, WPC has promoted the sharing of expertise among parliamentarians from other nations. Additionally, WPC has started a number of regional projects and solidarity actions within the SAARC. For example, in 2014, the WPC organized meeting held in Nepal, which brought together delegates from South Asia. Similar to this, in June 2011 an Afghan women's parliamentary team travelled to Pakistan, and in 2012 the WPC delegation from Pakistan paid a follow-up visit to Kabul (Commonwealth Library, 2016).

3.4.9. Emphasis of Women Parliamentarians increased

Historically women representation in Pakistani Parliament had remained low. After the independence of the country there have been various modifications in women's representation in Parliament. There are two broad eras of political Participation of

women in the politics of Pakistan. During the first period, which started in the year 1947 after the independence of the country and continued till 2000, women had been marginally represented in the Parliament of Pakistan. During the second period which started in 2001 and continues till date, women representation in the Parliament has increased significantly. This change occurred when in the year 2002, General Pervez Musharraf introduced 17 percent legislative quota for women in the Parliament for the first time in Pakistani history. As a result, sixty seats in NA (lower house) were reserved for women out of total 342 seats. 17 seats were reserved for women in the Senate (upper house).

According to Nafisa Shah, Former Secretary of WPC

“Political representation of women is not only about to increase their numbers in the House, it’s also important to have a meaningful role and a consciousness. With the formation of WPC a consciousness and emphasis increased that at least women from all political parties set together, and can talk about women issues. It increased solidarity among women Parliamentarians, and they raise voices for each other against male derogatory remarks” (Shah, Nafisa, Personal Interview, 14/12/2023).

Women cast their first ballots in numerous FATA during the general elections of 2008 and 2013. This pattern has kept getting stronger. There is currently discussion on penalizing people who use non-formal means (such loud speaker announcements or threats) to prevent women from voting (NCSW 2012a). Though much work remains, the existence of a vibrant women's network in parliament is indicative of a shift in the larger political climate. Syed Shamoona, the secretary of the WPC, stated, "The caucus is a watershed." In Pakistan's political history, this is the only system of its sort that has allowed women to participate both quantitatively and qualitatively in House proceedings (Commonwealth Library, 2016)

3.4.10. National and regional engagement with peacekeeping

The WPC also has started a conversation on how gender affects conflict and violence that is authorized by the state. For instance, women lawmakers from federal and provincial assemblies participated at the inaugural Women Parliamentarians Convention, which focused on "The Role of Women Parliamentarians in Peace, Security & Reconciliation", which was organized by WPC in 2010. Another example

is that the WPC met twice in 2011–12 with Afghani female parliamentarians to talk about the women's role in security and peace, liberal laws for women, areas where more cooperation is needed to help women lawmakers. (ICAN 2014)

3.4.11. Women's access to resources and opportunities

Besides facing difficulties in getting funding for political campaigns, women are granted fewer political seats than men. There is male dominance over opportunities and resources inside parties. Through networking, information sharing, capacity building, and mentoring, WPC has given women lawmakers access to resources and opportunities. With conferences, research trips, and training programmes, the capacities of female lawmakers have been enhanced. In addition, WPC has advocated for more female representation on special committees that oversee electoral reform, peace and security, and constitutional modifications. These committees include places in the peace jirga and other national institutions (ICAN 2014).

3.4.12. Women participation in parliamentary Business increased.

It has been founded out that WPC has gradually enhanced the role of women MPs in the NA of Pakistan in day to day parliamentary business appreciably, be it introducing important private members bills, debating on national issues and participating in parliamentary accountability tools such as the Questions, CANS and Adjournment Motions. This has markedly enhanced women's recognition amongst the best and most accomplished MPs with regards to professional fulfillment of their key functions of representation, legislation and oversight of the executive. Unlike pre 2008 era where there were primarily fewer and only exceptional cases of vibrant women MPs making their presence felt by their parliamentary contributions since 1947 due to being in lesser numbers, however, women input is considered today an essential part of most important national debates, be it foreign policy, education or climate change, which is a great leap forward (FAFEN, 2011).

- **Performance of women in second Parliamentary year of the 13th National Assembly of Pakistan**

In comparison to their male colleagues in the NA, women MPs have been more engaged, outspoken, and powerful advocates for residents throughout the second parliamentary year. In spite of the fact that the proportion of female lawmakers is only

22% of the total. In addition to having a female Speaker, the NA has 76 female members—16 of whom are elected to general seats and the remaining 60 to reserved seats. Although there are differences in the activities among the 76 female members of Parliament, 50 of them (66 percent) have contributed nearly half of the Lower House's formal interventions. For example, calling attention notices, private member's bills, resolutions, motions for adjournment, points of order, and issues of public concern (FAFEEN, 2010).

In the NA's second parliamentary year, female MPs have demonstrated greater engagement, outspokenness and strength as forceful representatives for the people when compared to their male counterparts. Despite the fact that there are only 22% of female lawmakers overall. The NA comprises 76 female members in addition to a female Speaker; 16 are elected to general seats and the remaining 60 to reserved seats. While the participation of female lawmakers has not been evenly distributed, fifty of them (66 percent of the seventy-six female members) have contributed almost half of the formal interventions for example questions, private members bills, calling attention notices, resolutions, adjournment motions, points of order, and matters of public importance (FAFEEN, 2010).

Together, by submitting Resolutions, Private Member's Bills, Calling Attention Notices, and other parliamentary actions, these parliamentarians have demonstrated their ability to work successfully with both male party members and those from other parties (FAFEEN, 2010).

Out of the 3,314 questions asked, 1,826 were by female members. while male members submitted 1,488 questions. For every sitting day of the year, 67 Private Member's Bills were on the Orders of the Day. 49 of these were presented to the House. Out of all the bills introduced, just six private member's bills were introduced by male representatives, compared to 43 bills introduced by female representatives, either alone or in cooperation with other female or male members. Women members sponsored 23 of the 49 resolutions on diverse causes, while male members sponsored 13. Compared to 12 motions filed by male members under Rule 259, 22 motions were filed by female members. However, the House only received 16 resolutions, eight of which were not on the Orders of the Day. A total of 124 MNAs—38 of whom were female members—moved 147 Calling Attention Notices (CANs), as per the Order of

the Day. Compared to women elected to general seats, reserved seat members seem to be more active. (FAFEEN, 2010).

- **Performance of women in Third Parliamentary Year of the 13th National Assembly of Pakistan**

In the 2010 legislative session, out of 34 measures, 17 of them were written by individual female members of parliament. Fourteen of the twenty-one Private Members' proposals that female lawmakers submitted were heard in the House; two were passed and five were not. The leadership of Dr. Fehmida Mirza as Speaker of the Pakistani National Assembly gave female lawmakers a fantastic opportunity to work on laws that prioritize the rights and empowerment of women. In order to guarantee that gender concerns are appropriately translated into laws, programs, and policies, women in the parliament established the WPC, bringing women together across party lines and fostering consensus on matters affecting women (Rashid & Zaka, 2012).

During the third parliamentary year of the thirteenth National Assembly, women made up about half of the members' agenda. Of the 340 members of the National Assembly currently in office, women make up fewer than one-quarter (23%) – there are 77 female parliamentarians, 60 elected on reserved seats, and 17 elected by popular ballot. In the National Assembly, which is led by the nation's first female Speaker, women members actively engaged in parliamentary activity despite their notable underrepresentation. They also continued to be more forceful and successful than many of their male counterparts.

Over the course of the third legislative year, 2,458 parliamentary interventions were made by female lawmakers. A parliamentary intervention is defined by FAFEN as any of the following: when an MNA requests attention to an issue during a House floor debate through Points of Order, Supplementary Questions, Debate on Adjournment Motions, etc. or places an agenda item on the Orders of the Day, Private Members' Bills, Calling Attention Notices, etc (FAFEEN, 2011).

Shireen Arshad Khan (176) with 176 interventions, Ms. Marvi Memon (171), Ms. Nuzhat Sadiq (164), Ms. Tahira Aurangzeb (161), Ms. Qudsia Arshad (155), Ms. Nisar Tanveer (154), Ms. Khalida Mansoor (131), Ms. Tasneem Siddiqui (130), Ms.

Nighat Parveen Mir (120), and Ms. Shaheen Ashfaq (114) are among the female lawmakers who have made more than 100 interventions. All of these lawmakers are members of the PMLN, with the exception of Ms. Marvi Memon from the PML. Each of these ten lawmakers asked 112 questions on average. These lawmakers submitted more than one-third (34%) of all the questions that were tabled on the House floor. Just 8% of the interventions to the total participation recorded by all female lawmakers were made by the women elected by popular vote. Twenty-two percent of the female legislative members of the National Assembly are women who were elected by popular vote. Five female lawmakers who were elected by popular vote did not participate at all throughout the course of the year, while six more lawmakers made less than ten interventions. During the third parliamentary year in the National Assembly, five female parliamentarians—four from the PPPP and one from the PMLN—elected by popular vote each made more than twenty parliamentary interventions (FAFEEN, 2011).

Just 8% of the interventions to the total participation recorded by all female lawmakers were made by the women elected on general seas. Twenty-two percent of the female legislative members of the National Assembly are women who were elected by general vote. Five female lawmakers who were elected by popular vote did not participate at all throughout the course of the year, while six more lawmakers made less than ten interventions. During the third parliamentary year in the NA, five female parliamentarians—four from the PPPP and one from the PMLN—elected by popular vote each made more than twenty parliamentary interventions. Female members, Dr. Azra Afzal Pacheho (PPPP), Ms. Saira Afzal Tarar (PMLN), and Mrs. Shamshad Sattar Bachani (PPPP) have made 54, 34, and 30 parliamentary interventions, respectively. Thirty-seven (29%) of the 136 MNAs who moved 130 CANs during the third parliamentary year were female. Together with their male counterparts, female MNAs submitted 108 CANs in total (82%) (FAFEEN, 2011). CAN is a significant piece of parliamentary procedure that allows members to draw a ministry's attention to an urgent problem. The way that female lawmakers contributed to the Assembly's monitoring of the executive branch by asking questions was remarkable; of the 3,339 inquiries that were brought up in the third parliamentary year, 1,685 (or 51%) were sponsored by female lawmakers. Each female MNA

submitted 22 queries on average, nearly four times as many as their male counterparts (FAFEEN, 2011)

- **Performance of women in Fourth Parliamentary Year of the 13th National Assembly of Pakistan**

According to the research, four bills promoting women were passed in 2011, the fourth year of the female legislators' tenure. The NCSW approved Bill 2012, The Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Bill, the Prevention of Anti-women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Act, and the Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Bill. It was thought that this "exemplified the active role that female parliamentarians play in bringing up Private Members' Bills." (Rashid & Zaka, 2012)

As the NA wraps up its fourth parliamentary term, female lawmakers have demonstrated remarkable performance, stepping forward to take on leadership and legislating responsibilities. Less than one-quarter (23%) of the 334 members of the National Assembly currently in office are women; 60 were elected on reserved seats, and the remaining 17 were elected through popular vote. But they were more engaged and powerful voices of the people. By raising issues, the female legislators made a significant contribution to the monitoring of the executive (FAFEEN, 2012). During the fourth legislative year, 2,365 questions were presented, of which 1,196 (or 51%) were submitted by female Members. During the fourth legislative session, female lawmakers participated in 75 out of the 97 CANs, either on their own or in tandem with their male and female counterparts. A closer examination of the CANs reveals that female lawmakers are bringing matters that have a direct impact on people's lives to the House floor. The proportion of female lawmakers among all Points of Order raised in the House was 252 (14%). While their male colleagues sponsored 19 Resolutions, the female delegates moved 42, either on their own or in tandem with other female or male members. Of the motions under Rule 259 that were presented on the Orders of the Day, fifteen were sponsored jointly by female and male lawmakers, and twenty were sponsored solely by female lawmakers. Ten of the motions were made by lone male members, and one was made jointly by many male members. Using every means at their disposal in the Lower House to elevate the voices of citizens, particularly women, the female members of the 13th National Assembly have demonstrated their effectiveness as legislators using all options available in the

Lower House for raising the voices of the citizens, especially women. Their efforts serve as a reminder of the crucial role legislators' play in a democracy as well as the importance of the legislature itself (FAFEEN, 2012)

3.4.13. Resolutions

The WPC has passed the following resolutions and actively supported gender-sensitive debate in the Parliament:

On July 17, 2016 The House passed a resolution denouncing the vicious and cruel attacks on women and girls in Karachi, Abbottabad, Multan, Faisalabad, Jhelum, and Peshawar, after being prompted by the WPC. The House reaffirmed that it will not tolerate any kind of violence against women in our nation and demanded immediate action to stop these crimes from being committed. The House additionally declared that anyone found guilty under the law should receive exemplary punishment and asked that all feasible steps be taken to guarantee the efficient execution of current legislation protecting women (WPC, 2008). In honour of International Women's Day on March 8, 2014, a resolution was voted on March 7, 2014, indicating the Pakistani Parliament's assurance to the advancement of women's empowerment (WPC, 2008).

On June 14, 2014, when a resolution on the subject of "Increasing Intolerance, Rampant Paganism, and Violence against Women in Pakistan" was enacted, the commitment has been reaffirmed on International Women's Day every year (WPC, 2008).

3.4.14. Other Achievements

Other key achievements according to Syed Shamoan Hashmi included:

“The appointment of first-ever woman Member of the Planning Commission of Pakistan when Dr. Saba Gul Khattak was nominated as Member Social Sector on the apex body in 2009, Establishment of provincial caucuses after the joint Communiqué of the 16th Speakers' Conference, held in Lahore, March 3, 2010, The restructuring of the NCSW, enabling it to be a financially and administratively independent organization after the landmark legislation for the same. In 2010, as the Parliament sat to amend the Constitution of the country, purging it of all the infringements, two key recommendations of the Caucus were also accepted. The Clause 2 of Article 25 was

amended to delete the word “alone. A new Article 25 A was added, making it mandatory on the State in accordance with any legal requirements; give all children between the ages of five and sixteen free and compulsory education. In May 2010, the Caucus created yet another history when it gathered all women legislators from the federal, provincial and legislative assemblies of all units of the Federation to a “National Convention of Women Parliamentarians”. The event attracted women parliamentarian’s delegations from all SAARC countries as well and the idea of Caucus moved to the provincial assemblies as well. In addition, Bangladesh and Nepal followed suit and formed similar forums in their respective Parliaments as well. The landmark Declaration of the Convention became an international document to be referred and followed by many similar regional and international initiatives later.

Similarly the caucus

- Examined the problems and weaknesses in the implementation of legislation that support women and suggesting changes to remove the obstacles. To create legislation against honour killing and rape, significant changes were made to the Evidence Act's pertinent provisions, the PPC, and the Cr.P.C. in August 2016 (WPC, 2008).
- 1. Demonstrated a particular interest in improving and changing Pakistan's situation for female police officers. Consequently, there is a rise in the quantity of women working in law enforcement, together with the introduction of specialized training programs and their growing allocation of significant tasks; (WPC, 2008).
- 2. Examined and resolved the issues and concerns raised by people with disabilities; leading the inaugural regional conference on the contribution of disabled women to long-term national development; proposing a complete bill based on the rights of people with disabilities; creating and presenting the Khadija-tul-Kubra awards for women with disabilities were (WPC, 2008).

Conclusion

WPC helped in the capacity building of women, organized different seminars, workshops, programs to train women members of the parliament. WPC has gradually enhanced the role of women MPs the NA of Pakistan in day to day parliamentary business appreciably, be it introducing important private members bills, debating on

national issues and participating in parliamentary accountability tools such as the Questions, Calling Attention Notices and Adjournment Motions. This has markedly enhanced women's recognition amongst the best and most accomplished MPs with regards to professional fulfillment of their key functions of representation, legislation and oversight of the executive. Unlike pre 2008 era where there were primarily fewer and only exceptional cases of vibrant women MPs making their presence felt by their parliamentary contributions since 1947 due to being in lesser numbers, however, women input is considered today an essential part of most important national debates, be it foreign policy, education or climate change, which is a great leap forward. WPC has come a long way!

Chapter 4

Legislative Outputs of Women parliamentary caucus

Introduction

The chapter describes legislative outputs of women Parliamentary Caucus. It will focus on different legislation passed with the formation of Women Parliamentary Caucus. WPC lobbying activities have had a major influence on public policy by making "the woman question" essential. The chapter is divided into different sections on legislations like: The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010, The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2010 (On Sexual Harassment), Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Bill 2011, Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act, 2012, The Prevention of and Women Practices Bill 2011, The Women in Distress and Detention Fund 2011, The universal and free education law in Nov 2012, The National Commission on the Status of Women Act, 2012, The National Commission for Human Rights Act, 2012, The Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Act 2020, The Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2020 and The Legal Aid and Justice Authority Act, 2020

4.1. The Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010

Workplace harassment is a major barrier that keeps women in Pakistan from entering the job. Legal protection is provided under the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act of 2010 for women against workplace harassment and alters already available laws dealing to Pakistani women's freedom to work. In light of these data findings, the Pakistani government enacted the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010 with the intention of protecting women from harassment at work (Khan and Ahmed, 2016).

The first person to bring up this matter in the Assembly was Ms. Khalida Mansoor, who accused men of intimidating women and girls at work and requesting sexual favors verbally and in writing. As a result, a number of male lawmakers attacked Ms. Khalida Mansoor's position, sparking a flurry of accusations and discussions inside the Assembly. As Ms. Khalida Mansoor pretended to be a male member of the assembly, she harshly criticised some of the male members for

harassing women in the legislature. She also related the story of a male MPA from Sindh Assembly whose suspension resulted from a complaint that he had harassed a female member by recording notes (NA Deb, 5 June 2008, p.16). Numerous female lawmakers have expressed that harassment of women in the workplace is becoming a daily occurrence and that we need to take significant action to prevent it.

Protection against workplace harassment of women is one of Pakistan's most notable laws enacted in support of women. Because there are more and more working women in the nation, this law's inaugural provisions are extensive. Protecting working women is essential, and it's also a step towards enforcing gender equality. This bill pertains to women's rights to status in the current society. Above all, women's advocates and civil society applauded this bill and the work of female lawmakers in this area (Noreen & Musarrat, 2013). At the national level, this measure was ignored despite being the first in Pakistani history to establish safeguarding of women from sexual harassment. Women have a fundamental right to enjoy security in both the both the public and private domains. Thus, this bill confirms a significant advancement for the protection of Pakistani women in general (Noreen & Musarrat, 2013).

The bill was approved on January of 2010. To create a code of conduct that would authorize the creation of anti-sexual policies; all registered organizations and businesses, whether they are private or multinational, must adhere to this. The law provides a thorough explanation of the reasoning behind this action to lessen harassment in all of its manifestations. Legal requirements mandate that all organizations form committees with three members, one of whom must be a woman. However, this committee will take strong measures against the offenders in response to the accusations from female employees (Mushtaq, 2019)

4.2. The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2010 (On Sexual Harassment)

This act is a significant advancement as it protects women's rights in Pakistan. The majority of people in our social structure believe that women should live in or remain at home. Because of this, women who aspire to achieve in life must deal with oppression in all spheres of society. The main proponent of this Amendment was Sherry Rehman. For the first time in Pakistani history, sexual harassment was declared a serious offence under this law. This law must be followed in the convict's

punishment. Without a doubt, this is a noteworthy and amazing law that aims to protect women in Pakistan. This law affirms that anyone who wishes to disparage a woman in any context or by making any gestures that suggest a harassment inclination shall be held accountable. It also describes people who ask women for sexual favors, particularly from those who are their employees and work beneath them. A person found guilty of these acts shall face harsh punishment from the court or pay fee in retaliation (Mushtaq, 2019).

4.3. Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Bill 2011

Due to WPC's close attention to the condition of acid burns victims, police processes have been reformed and governmental efforts to prosecute offenders have been stepped up. The intentional use of a corrosive material or fluid to cause harm is known as "acid violence." Most victims of acid assault are women and children, and assailants frequently aim for the head and face to cause blindness, disfigurement, and other injuries. Although it happen anywhere, acid attacks are more common in South Asia. According to reports, Pakistan is seeing an increase in acid assaults. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan discovered that, in 2014 alone, 232 women in Pakistan were burned or subjected to acid attacks. The formation of burn units in each district hospital is the goal of the development money allotted to the eight female legislators (common Wealth Library, 2016)

In Pakistani society, repugnant and heinous acts known as "acid throwing" frequently ignore the rights of women. This is the lowest possible way for women to be humiliated in any society, developed or not. This delinquency occurred in households and in public areas, which is very serious. Acid throwing misbehavior is typically committed by ex-husbands of wives, but it can also be committed by males whose proposals are turned down by the families of the girls (Naheed, 2008). They respond by committing this crime in order to exact revenge. These fears led to frequent and harsh criticism of the government by female members of Parliament. As a result, the Pakistani government passed the Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act, a significant and tangible step in combating this crime. However, this legislation promoted a maximum one million rupee fine along with a fourteen-year jail sentence (Gazette of Pakistan, 2011).

4.4. The Prevention of and Women Practices Bill 2011

Dr. Doniya Aziz of the assembly supported this bill. Amazingly, this bill rendered three acts illegitimate: (1) denying a woman the opportunity to inherit via dishonesty; (2) using the girls as bargaining to settle clashes as a "badl e sulha"; and (3) compelling women to marry Quranic men in accordance with conventions. It is forbidden to knowingly deny any woman her property rights. This carries a severe penalty of one lac rupees in fines and a maximum sentence of seven years in jail. Similarly, this edict also made it clear that marriage and the Holy Quran were forbidden. It stipulates that anyone found guilty of forcing a woman into marriage with a Quranic partner faces a minimum sentence of three years in prison and 50 lac rupees fine (Gazette of Pakistan, 2011). Unfortunately, there are a lot of ingrained traditional values in Pakistan that run counter to the highly esteemed status of human rights, particularly with regard to women's dignity. Additionally, several rituals also transgress the belief in rights of human. This bill also described marriage according to the Quran as an oath a woman takes promising not to marry for the remainder of her life and not to claim her fair portion of property. This bill's justification was to end all derogatory acts directed at women that are still common in our culture (Mushtaq, 2019)

4.5. The Women in Distress and Detention Fund 2011

The bill that is supported aims to safeguard and advance women's rights. On the other side, this bill will provide financial and legal support to women who are deteriorating and in misery within the nation's jails. This law was essentially a redraft of the 1996 Women in Distress and Detention Fund Act (Gazette of Pakistan, 2012). However, this measure was previously distributed by an ordinance on April 18, 2010. The intention was to support the Ministry of Human Rights in obtaining financial and legal resources to compensate women who are imprisoned and abandoned. A new statute was established under the ministry in order to operationalize the money for women's facilitation. The bill put out two goals to support female inmates who are either in Dar al-Aman or on probation. This measure aims to provide distressed mothers and their children with books, jobs, and medical support. Women lawmakers continued to support female hostages in this fashion, demonstrating the importance of continuing this trend of women's emancipation and reclamation (Mushtaq, 2019).

4.6. Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act, 2012

The Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act of 2012 were approved on February 20. This law is thought to be a step towards enhancing Pakistani women's economic and social empowerment. This statute also acknowledged that the act in question, which is linked to violence, confined within a home and treated as private property, is unquestionably radical and revolutionary. Notably, prior to the passage of this statute, domestic abuse was not considered to be violence at all (Gazette of Pakistan, 2012). For a very long time, domestic violence persisted as a cause for concern. The Domestic Violence Prevention Act fabricated the idea that violence within the *char diwari* (the four walls of the house) would be considered a misdemeanor, punishable by jail time and severe penalties. This bill was later filed in the Senate by Senator Nilofar Bakhtiar. Moreover, this law is a well-written measure that shows a serious and intentional effort to stop or lessen domestic violence against women in Pakistan. The Act's primary feature is the recognition of domestic abuse as a crime or infraction. In addition, this Act stipulated that it would no longer be disregarded or continues to exist covertly (Gazette of Pakistan, 2012).

4.7. The universal and free education law in Nov 2012

NA passed the universal and free education law in Nov., 2012; The private members bill for free education in ICT to children aged 5-16 years was introduced by women MNA Ms Yasmeen Rehman, which was supported by women MPs from MQM, JUI F and PML N and a consensus law was approved by the Parliament. The law penalized anyone guilty of child labor with fine of Rs 50,000 and imprisonment for six months in jail in addition to creation of 10% quota in private schools for free compulsory education to the poor and needy. The law was later followed by all provincial legislatures and literacy rate in Pakistan enhanced from 45% to more than 60% in a decade or so.

4.8. The National Commission on the Status of Women Act, 2012

The NCSW Act, 2012 created the NCSW, a statutory entity with financial and administrative autonomy, and it came into being by presidential edict. It is the outcome of the local and international responsibilities of the Pakistani government. such as the NPA for Women, 1998, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995. The primary responsibilities of NCSW include reviewing and analysing laws, policies, and programmes, keeping an eye on the application of laws pertaining

to women's empowerment and protection, and assisting the government in carrying out its commitments and obligations under international agreements (NCSW).

The fundamental goals of NCSW are essential to the Constitution's tenets of woman empowerment and equality. In addition to granting women equality, it gives states the authority to enact laws that positively discriminate against girls and women. Therefore, the NCSW Act of 2012 grants the Commission the authority to request and obtain data from any authorized source. It also grants a civil court the authority to compel the production of documents and the attendance of any individual.

The Pakistani government has promised to uphold women's rights in a number of national and international fora. As the leading body for women worldwide, it frequently represents Pakistan at CSW meetings, conferences, and committee hearings under CEDAW, as needed by the government. The NCSW serves as a custodian for the rights of women and among its duties are monitoring the implementation of laws protecting and empowering women, examining and reviewing laws, policies, and programmes related to these rights, assisting the government in carrying out its obligations under international agreements, collaborating with legislators, provincial governments, and experts, and upholding its role as an institution that responds to victims of violence. As a key component of its work, NCSW also conducts research and promotes data collection as proof for policies, actions, and monitoring. It displays a range of variables, including women's decision-making authority in the houses, financial freedom, freedom of movement, political engagement, acceptance of gender roles that are not equal, and media exposure, educational opportunities, and experiences of domestic abuse, among others, based on data from multiple sources (NCSW).

4.9. The National Commission for Human Rights Act, 2012

As stipulated in Pakistan's Constitution and international treaties, the NCHR Act, 2012, lays forth a wide-ranging command for the promotion, defense, and realisation of human rights. The NCHR is an unbiased state organization that reports directly to the Pakistani Parliament and operates independently of the Government. Every year, the Parliament is immediately presented with the NCHR's financial and performance reports for approval (NCHR). The National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) has several primary functions and powers, such as investigating allegations of human

rights abuses through suo-moto action or petitions filed by individuals or institutions; reviewing proposed legislation pertaining rights of human, supporting national campaigns to increase awareness of human rights issues and advocating for them (NCHR).

Some Recent success stories of Women Parliamentary Caucus

The Women Property Rights Act 2020, The Zainab Alert Act 2020 and Legal Aid and Justice Act 2020 are some of the most recent success stories where WPC must be lauded as they go well beyond protection of essential women rights as promised by the Constitution of Pakistan, but genuinely target the core issue of women empowerment as we have seen people violating women's inheritance rights in most supposedly settled and educated elites in the country. The ICT Rights of People with Disabilities is also a great initiative for improving the day to day lives of so many Pakistanis.

4.10. The Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Act 2020

On March 19, 2020, the President gave his consent to the Act. A law to establish protocols for child abduction and missing persons' alertness, response, and retrieval. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan acknowledges that a person's life, liberty, and dignity are inviolable fundamental rights. Measures to safeguard children who have gone missing or been abducted under the age of eighteen must be made in light of these rights, including the raising of awareness, the responding to, and the recovery of missing and abducted children. The Pakistani government must take action to ensure that children under the age of eighteen are protected against abuse, exploitation, abduction, and assault, as well as their right to life.

This is a national security risk because children who are taken before the age of eighteen are highly vulnerable to violence, exploitation, abuse, trafficking, rape, or even death. The implementation of systems pertaining to missing alerts, response, and recovery of abducted and missing children is imperative. This is necessary to prevent future incidents like the abduction, rape, and the seven-year-old Zainab's murder, a resident of Kasur district, which occurred in January 2018. The ZARRA created by this Act will supplement and support the duties of child welfare and protection organizations, as well as federal and local law enforcement organizations. It will also

supervise and direct the work of all departments, agencies, and authorities of the government concerning incidents of kidnapping and missing children

The measure was first introduced in June of last year by Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari in response to several reports of horrifying crimes against children, mostly from Kasur. It is named after nine-year-old Zainab Ansari, who was murdered in Kasur in 2018 after being raped. Outrage around the nation was generated by the tragedy, which also made people wonder about children's safety and the authorities' obligations to stop child abuse cases from rising in Pakistan.

The bill was first enacted by the NA in January 2020, and after some modifications, the Upper House accepted it. One of the changes was to broaden the bill's scope, which was previously restricted to Islamabad. Mazari introduced the altered bill in the Lower House, where it was overwhelmingly approved by voice vote (*Dawn*, January 12, 2020).

4.11. The Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2020

An Act that safeguards and preserves women's property ownership rights since it is necessary to safeguard rights of women to ownership of their properties and to ensure that these rights are not infringed upon by pressure, fraud, harassment, or force. The legislation as named as The Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2020. If a woman is taken from her property in any way and there are no ongoing legal processes concerning it, and if there are no existing legal actions involving that property, she can file a complaint with the Ombudsman.

The Legal Aid and Justice Authority Act, 2020

The Legal Aid and Justice Authority Act 2020 recognized the Legal Aid and Justice Authority to help the underprivileged and vulnerable members of society obtain justice in criminal situations by offering them financial, legal, and other support (The gazette of Pakistan, 2020)

A Act aims to improve and reform legal aid services and access to justice for those in need of legal assistance. The LAJA, which is tasked with managing, administering, and supervising legal aid services, is established by the act as an independent statutory organization. With a wider goal to enhance the judicial system,

the Legal Aid and judicial Authority takes the role of the current legal aid programme. The Legal Aid and Justice Authority Act of 2020 guarantees access to assistance for people who cannot afford legal representation, they need by introducing standardized and simplified eligibility requirements for persons seeking legal aid. It places a focus on the development and enhancement of legal aid services in a range of legal fields, such as family, criminal, civil, and immigration law. (The gazette of Pakistan, 2020)

Conclusion

The caucus has taken the lead in talks in favor of legislation and has been crucial in gaining both civic and political support. The biggest contribution is the role of women in introducing public-interest bills and legislations such as universal education law (2013), improvement in implementation of women inheritance laws, amending juvenile justice system and enhancement of job quotas for women in public departments. WPC also led to initiatives such as separate women police stations and employment of police-women in the police department. WPC has above all highlighted issues faced by victims of extremist domestic violence and women harassment, people with disabilities, transgender and to sensitize the fellow MPs, government machinery and all stakeholders have led to a progressive thinking serving wellbeing all citizens. When it comes to the introduction of new laws intended to stop VAWG, the previous ten years have been the most progressive. In order to make them more comprehensive, a number of earlier legislations have also been modified.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Pakistan has vowed to actively address the gender gap in politics in the new era and has acknowledged the past women's marginalization from political processes. In addition to pledging to boost women's political involvement, it has embraced worldwide initiatives aimed at empowering women and promoting gender equality. It has also challenged sociocultural barriers that limit women to the home and encouraged them to contest for office and hold elected office. In compliance with global agreements, the Ministry of Women Development's National Plan of Action for Women (1998) and National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women (2002) have propelled the economic, social, and political integration of women and minorities onto the country's development. In July 2000, an ordinance was passed that formed the NCSW as a legislative entity with the goal of addressing discrimination against women. The commission was strengthened by the NSCW Bill 2012, which replaced the NCSW Ordinance of 2000 and gave it independent financial and administrative autonomy through an independent secretariat was unanimously adopted by the Pakistan Senate in 2012.

WPC founded in 2008, is a broad effort to advance women's participation in parliament. In addition to networking, advocating, and lobbying for governmental conformity with international gender equality indicators, the caucus provides a nationwide cross-party forum for Women politicians to address contextual barriers to equality. Women parliamentarians from different political parties have come together, which has also increased their combined influence and authority. Despite being an unofficial organization, WPC has expanded quickly and eventually acquired a formal structure, which includes a General Body and Working council. The Working Council has ten members, including two secretaries and treasurers, one representative from each of the seven major political parties, and one independent. The former, larger forum has 93 members, including 76 female senators and MNAs. WPC has worked with other groups, such as the NCSW, to establish safe spaces where women may advocate for legislative changes, confront discriminatory practices in development funding allocation that are both active and passive, and have a voice in political parties.

The WPC is open to all female lawmakers serving in the Senate and National Assembly. Four members address the problems that local women confront on an individual and a group level. As a sort of "watchdog" in the legislature, WPC makes sure the institutional measures for women through successful implementation of inclusive laws and regular knowledge exchange with international groups. WPC, which aims to institutionalize a consensus agenda for women's empowerment, has quickly grown to be an essential forum for female lawmakers to work together to make parliament more gender-sensitive and to enhance its influence and engagement with both domestic and foreign organizations. More than 20 political parties, 85 female parliamentarians, and about 130 female provincial assembly members were collaborating to create new legislation and encourage the efficient application of existing laws and policies in order to promote gender equality and women's rights, when it comes to promoting and lobbying for women's rights, the provinces have gradually shifted away from the Centre. Identification and resolution of gender-specific context-specific issues ought to be simpler and more effective with provincial caucuses

WPC lobbying activities have had a major influence on public policy by making "the woman question" essential. The caucus has taken the lead in talks in favor of legislation and has been crucial in gaining both civic and political support. The frameworks and laws that fully address VAWG are as follows. The following laws have been passed: NCSW of 2012; the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Act of 2011; the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2011 (which addresses the prevention of acid crime incidents); the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act of 2010; and the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act of 2012.

To give like-minded Caucus members a framework to interact with academia, private sector partners, and civil society organizations that collectively emphasize the need for legislation on public interest issues like women and gender equality cross-party parliamentary groups are formed. A caucus gives a comparatively smaller group of MPs a way to further their policy objectives and locate evidence-based research that supports their work. It is interesting that through all-party parliamentary groupings like the Young Parliamentarians Forum and the Parliamentarians Human Rights Forum, which unite male and female MPs, women MPs are becoming active

facilitators for cross-party discourse on social problems. In the nation's parliamentary history, these cross-party parliamentary groups are relatively new phenomena that are opening up new avenues for peace building, conflict resolution, and legislation in the public interest.

Women Members of Parliament face discrimination & misogyny in the Parliament. Pakistani politics is patriarchal & traditional patronage based that provides very limited space for women politicians within the political parties and the Parliament. Decisions are controlled by male leaders. Women members have however stood together & questioned male members who have made sexist comments on the floor of the house. They have lobbied effectively within their political parties for bills regarding anti women practices, domestic violence, sexual harassment, increased women participation in politics. WPC organized several round table discussions on women's voting & political participation. Meetings were held with Party leaders to convince them on agreeing to a minimum percentage for women voters & award of party tickets for general seats.

WPC has provided an effective platform to women parliamentarians to discuss policies & legislation. It has had its share of challenges over the years but it has provided a workable model for other Parliaments to adopt. Women in Provincial Assemblies have also formed caucuses. Donors' role in the Provincial Assembly Women Caucus needs to be analyzed. In my opinion a Parliamentary Caucus must maintain its independence in setting.

Recommendations

WPC further needs to

1. Advocate for the incorporation of gender-sensitive policies in all aspects of legislation.
2. Collaborate with other parliamentary committees to ensure the integration of gender perspectives in policymaking.
3. Implement ongoing training programs for women parliamentarians, focusing on leadership, public speaking, and policy analysis.
4. Establish mentorship programs to support the professional development of emerging women leaders.
5. Enhance communication strategies, including social media and community engagement, to increase public awareness about the Women Parliamentary Caucus.
6. Develop campaigns to promote positive narratives about women in politics, countering stereotypes and biases.
7. Adopt an intersectional approach in policies and programs, addressing the diverse needs of women from different regions, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
8. Ensure inclusivity by focusing on marginalized groups, such as women with disabilities or from minority communities.
9. Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact of Caucus initiatives on women's political participation.
10. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of implemented policies and programs to inform future improvements.
11. Foster collaborations with international organizations and parliamentary caucuses to share best practices and strategies.
12. Seek support for capacity-building initiatives and exchange programs to enhance the skills of women parliamentarians.
13. Develop a media strategy to proactively shape the narrative around women in politics and counter negative stereotypes.
14. Encourage active engagement with the media to amplify the voices and perspectives of women parliamentarians.

15. Advocate for increased institutional support for women parliamentarians, including access to resources, training opportunities, and mentorship programs.
16. Work towards creating a supportive environment within the parliamentary institution that encourages women's active participation.
17. Develop programs to engage and empower young women interested in politics, encouraging them to pursue careers in public service.
18. Establish mentorship programs connecting experienced women parliamentarians with aspiring young leaders.
19. Conduct regular consultations with women parliamentarians to gather feedback on challenges they face.
20. Ensure that Caucus initiatives align with the current needs of its members by maintaining open channels of communication.

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