

Diary 2003

**WOMEN OF PAKISTAN:
A JOURNEY THROUGH POLITICS**

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I have a dream that with induction of women into local government councils, priorities will be shifted. That seeing things from a different perspective, women will put greater emphasis on human resource development. They will prioritize opening of schools, providing health services and the availability of clean water over other non-development projects. I have a dream that in order to achieve a more equitable and just society, women will start to speak up for themselves-- and for their sisters and daughters-- using the political process as a means of reaching out to others. Those women will attain positions of and authority to educate men on their vision of a just social structure based on equitable distribution of wealth and resources for the betterment of both sexes of the human race.

I have a dream that through the enhanced indirect representation of women in the political arena, direct political participation of women though the general vote will also be enhanced. Those Pakistani women will now start getting ready to uphold their Constitutional right by voting independently of any pressures.

I have a dream that Pakistani men will start to realize that they have as much at stake in promoting the equitable participation of women in all spheres of life and especially in the sphere of politics, if they wish to live in a just and dynamic society where social change is positively directed.

Last, but not the least, I have a dream that the government will start to take seriously the issues of women's rights and empowerment, and make efforts to change age old, negative attitudes towards the status and role of women in society with an honest political will and commitment.

Let us pray that these dreams turn into realities.

Wishing you a Happy New Year,

Tasneem Ahmar
Director



1947ء میں مسلم لیگ خواتین کا ایک جلسہ قائد اعظم کی خدمت میں حصول پاکستان پر مبارکباد پیش کر رہا ہے۔ اس جلوس میں صوبہ دہلی کی بیس ہزار خواتین نے شرکت کی

اخبار خواتین، 31 دسمبر 1966ء

Editorials

Women in Politics

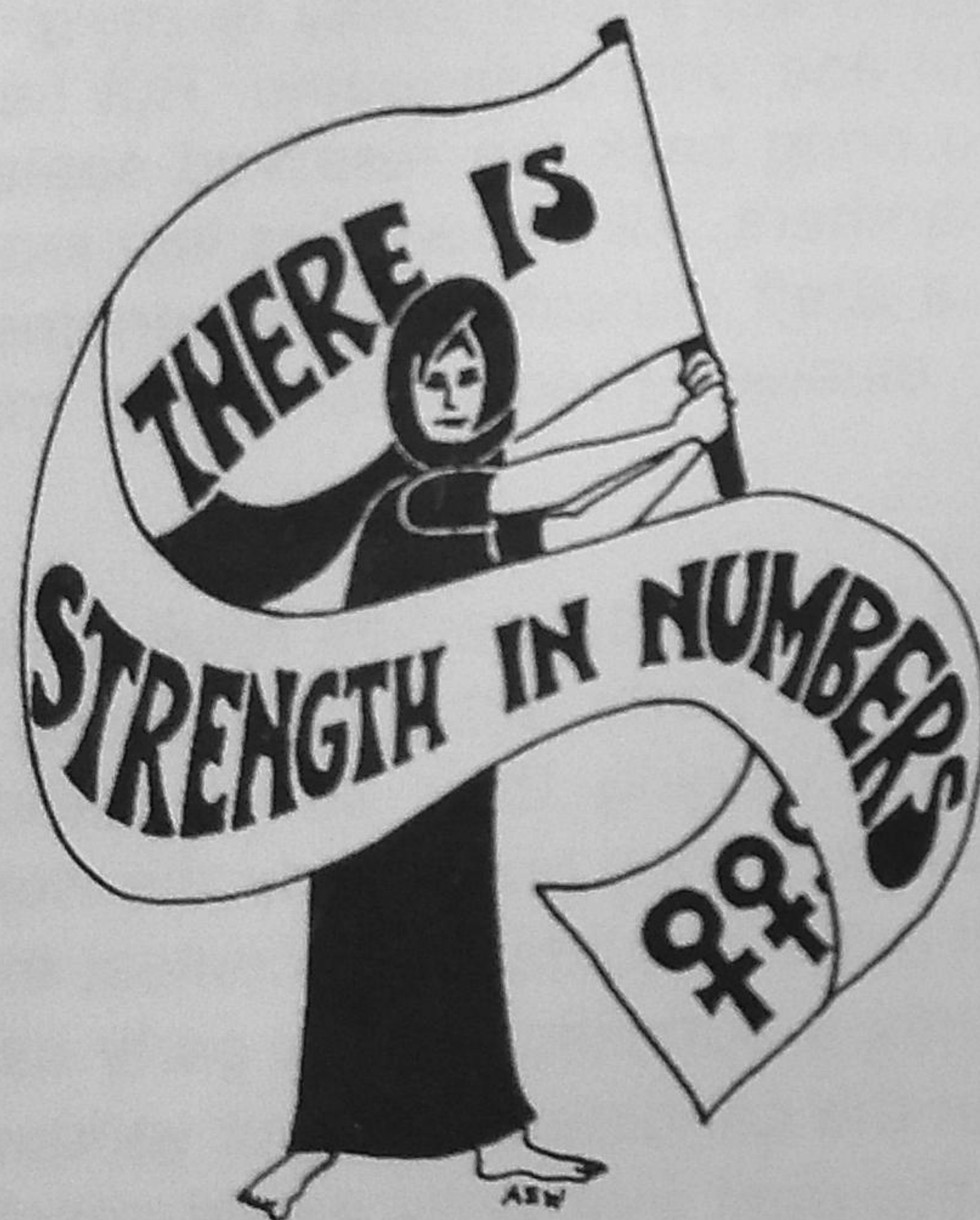
Pakistan National Conference's plea to a disallow from electoral contest the political parties not fielding female candidates for 10 percent of seats is compelling. This is one way of undoing, to some measure, an injustice that has only been perpetuated further rather than being redressed over the time. For some years, women, clearly making up more than half of us, had at least some measure of representation in the legislatures in the form of reserved seats. But ages have passed since those lapsed and our political elite has taken no steps to restore them.

Benazir Bhutto, during her tenure, kept pleading lack of parliamentary support for amending the Constitution to act to this effect. But that was a spurious argument. Had she brought the issue fore to the decisive point, the others would have perforce fallen in for reasons of political expediency. But she didn't. Apparently, she had no heart in the matter. For his part, Nawaz Sharif showed himself up no less apathetic. He used his parliamentary juggernaut in every way to make his own office the most powerful and unchallengeable. But he didn't employ this advantage to bring back the reserved seats for women to the legislative chambers. All through his last tenure, his people kept telling that a draft constitutional amendment was on the anvil. But that elusive enactment never made its public appearance.

In fact, almost all the political parties have their women wings. And they all flex that party arms for building up their public support bases and waging their street politics. But when it comes to the hustings, they push aside the women cadres and select almost all-male candidates to contest the polls. At best, females make only a sprinkling of the party candidates. Just a cursory glance at the candidates' lists of various political parties and groups for the past four polls would conclusively testify to this fact. Given these conditions, the PNC's plea makes all the sense. At least, it holds out the prospect of the beginning of a process to redress a stark injustice to a huge segment of our population.

We indeed would go a step further and suggest that at least one third of the berths in the governments, both at the centre and in the provinces, should also be reserved for women. The fact is that if women's representation in legislatures has been only symbolic, in the governments it has just been in the nature of a token. This is an affront to our women's talents and accomplishments. It's true that due to the prevalent socio-economic hitches, our female population, particularly in the countryside and the lower strata of urbanites, has not come up the way it could have. But it is also a fact that the women in the country have made their mark in every walk of life and are capable of effectively handling various ministerial posts. Indeed, the present administration can set a model for the future governments by inducting at least another female minister in the federal cabinet.

The Frontier Post (Peshawar): February 8, 2000



International Women's
Tribune Centre IWTC)

With Hope in Our Hearts

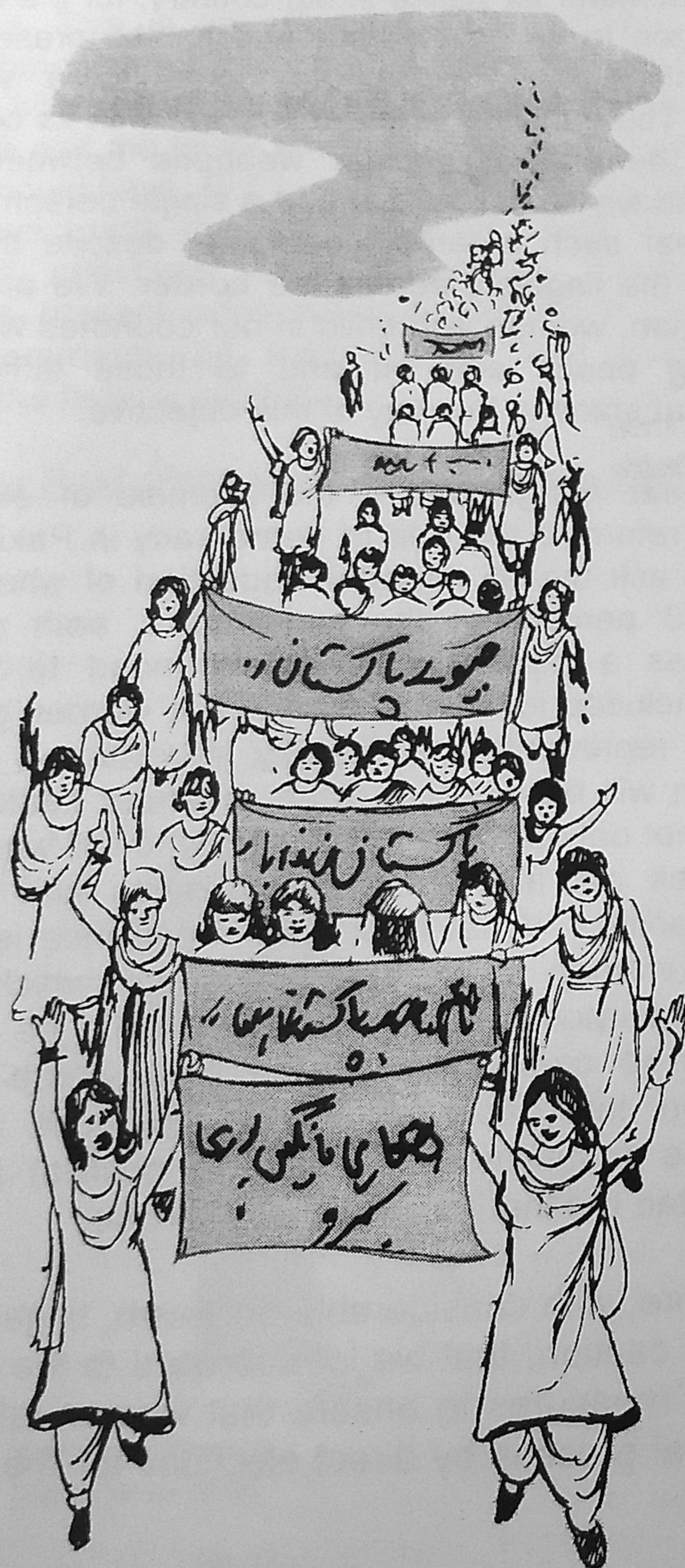
As the new year begins our hearts and minds focus on the over-riding demand for peace in our country, for the war clouds on the horizon to be driven back and for the present tension between India and Pakistan to come to a satisfactory conclusion. There is little as fearful as war with its concomitant threats of the use of nuclear weapons between our two countries and we do not believe that a single person exists who does not fear such a terrible outcome, despite the war like postures of the jingoists across the border. We are confident that every man, woman and child in our countries is praying for an enduring peace and an end to those difficulties and problems that stand in the way of this objective.

The new year brings with it the promise of elections and hopefully a return to the rule of democracy in Pakistan. Which leads us to ask the all important question of whether women will form 33 percent of the legislatures, both national and provincial, as a right which was extended to them in the recently concluded local elections, where women gained nearly 30 percent representation. Equally important is the issue of how women will be elected to the reserved seats, for this will determine not only the kind of women who will want to serve on these bodies but also their effectiveness and the future of women in politics. What is of vital importance is the mode of election of women to the reserved seats, which to have any meaningful purpose, can and should only be one of direct elections. The experience of the past where women were selected on the basis of indirect elections or nomination through the male members of the political parties, amply demonstrated the inefficacy of that exercise.

It is therefore, with considerable optimism, tinged with a certain element of caution, that we look forward to the present regime taking due measures to ensure that women fully participate in the electoral process by direct elections for the reserved seats for women.

With fingers crossed, and hope in our hearts, we wish you all a Happy New Year.

SHE, JANUARY 2002



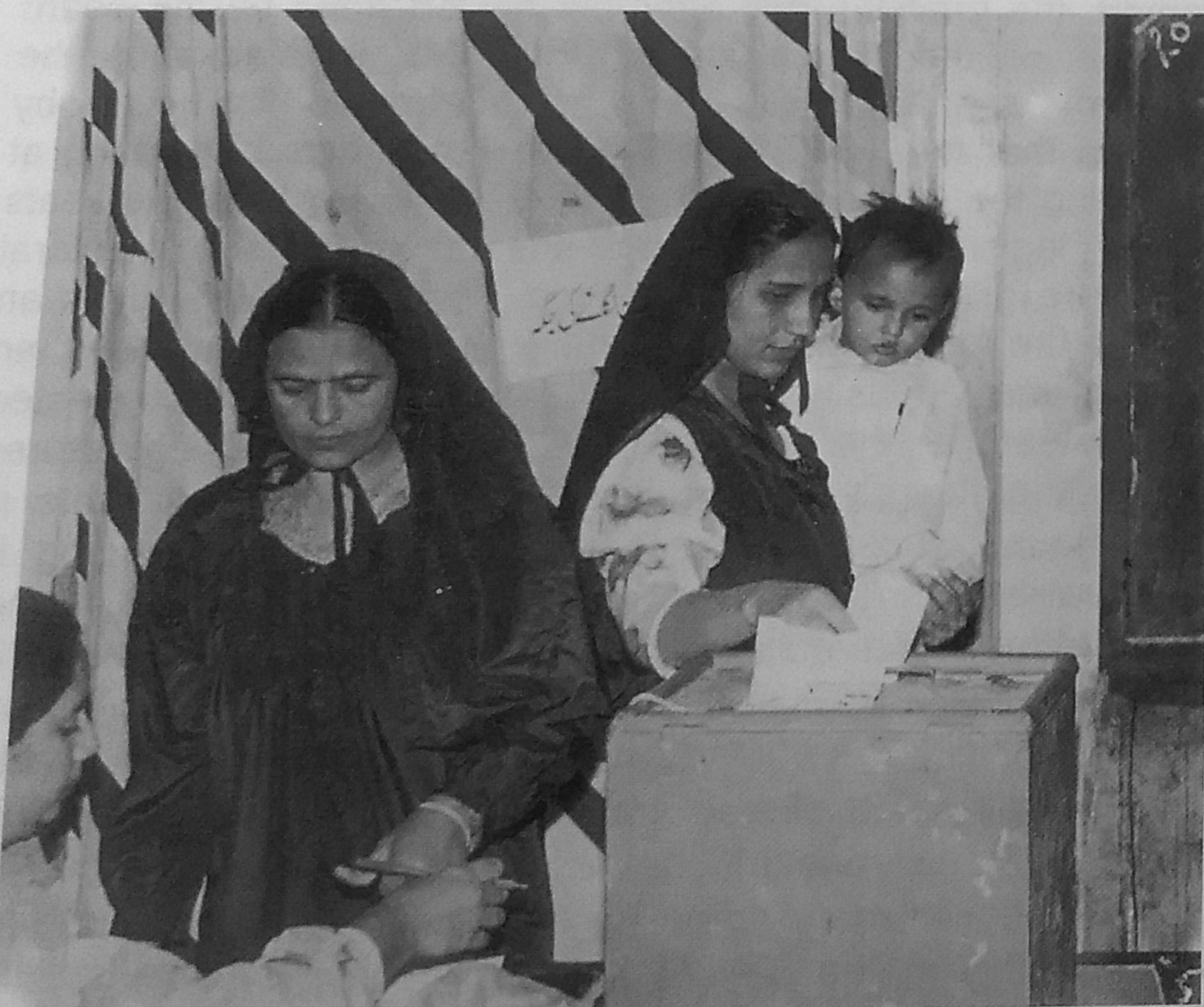
Subha, Shirkat Gah

Restoring Women's Seats

THE PPP filed a bill in the Senate for the restoration of reserved seats for women through a constitutional amendment (17th Amendment) in the legislatures of the country. The text of the Bill is not yet available but if the formula observed during the first ten years (after the enforcement of the '73 Constitution) is followed then according to Article 51(4) 'twenty seats in addition to the number of seats referred in clause (1) shall be reserved for women and allocated to the Provinces in accordance with the Constitution and law.' Under Article 106 (4) five per cent of the number of members of each provincial Assembly would be reserved for women.' Apart from that the PPP Bill may have provided reserved seats for women in the Senate also. The PPP sponsors in the Senate have said that this is their third attempt at securing the reserved seats for women, the previous two attempts having gone by the board because of the Opposition of the PML legislators in the National Assembly. The PML has defended its action by claiming that the PPP's efforts were not directed so much at promoting the cause of women as to artificially boost its seats in the legislatures by taking advantage of the electoral procedure given in the Constitution. That procedure gives an edge to the ruling party by returning more of its nominees than those of the Opposition. The PML at that time had suggested that instead of the members of the respective legislatures constituting the electoral colleges for the women's seats in each House, those seats should be allocated according to votes polled during the general elections by each party. At that time the total votes polled by the PML were more than the PPP, even though the PPP and its allies had more members in each house. The PPP rejected the formula then, calling it extra constitutional. The overall situation is more favourable to the PML now if the constitutional formula is followed, but the PPP can still secure more seats for its women candidates in Sindh and possibly in the Senate if that proposal is accepted. In a countrywide poll, however, the PML would still be the gainer by far. But the point is: would the PML tolerate even that minor gain to the PPP? It can kill the Bill in the Senate where the opposition does not have the two thirds majority to carry it.

On the other hand, if the two sides are sincere in giving this right to women, as it a part of the manifesto of both, a consensus can easily be hammered out by them and a constitutional Amendment to this effect can be made. May we urge the two sides to approach this matter in a non-partisan way and look at it not merely as a women's cause but as a national cause. Women have unjustly been deprived of their right of representation for too long. This wrong should be remedied now.

The Nation (Islamabad): January 4, 1999



Women's Seats Election

The Election Commission has finally notified the election results for 60 National Assembly seats allocated to women. According to the proportional party list system under which these elections were held, the largest party in parliament, PML (QA), obtained 22 seats, the next largest, PPPP 15, MMA 12, PML(N), MQM and NA three each, PML(J) and PML(F) one each. On closer examination, the distribution of seats to each party according to province presents an interesting profile. The bulk of the PML (QA)'s 22 seats come from Punjab (19 in fact), with one each from the other three provinces. The PPPP is confined to Punjab (nine) and Sindh (six). MMA, as was expected, garners the greatest number of women's seats from NWFP (seven), with two each coming from Balochistan and Sindh, and a solitary one from Punjab, PML (N) has been reduced to a Punjab-based party with all its three seats coming from that province. Similarly, the MQM remains confined to its traditional base in Sindh (urban). The National Alliance (NA) shows two seats from Punjab and one from Sindh, the PML (F) one from Sindh, and the PML (J) one from Punjab.

Since the provincial seats have been allocated on the basis of the seats won in the National Assembly by each party or alliance, it seems obvious that the electorate's overall mandate is not just divided, it is divided along provincial lines. Three of the biggest parties, PML (QA), PPPP and PML (N) are 'heavyweights' in Punjab, with only the PPPP of these showing strength in Sindh. The MMA is clearly an alliance of two smaller provinces, NWFP and Balochistan, despite the three seats it has picked up in Punjab (one) and Sindh (two). The greatest setback is clearly the PML (N)'s, buffeted as it was in this election by the split in its ranks and the exile of its leaders, factor that have reduced it to a rump party in parliament confined to Punjab alone. The PPPP escaped the first, but does not seem to have allowed the second factor to set it back too much.

The other phenomenon to be noted in the women's seats elections is that 25 of the 60 are close relatives of the political

in parliament with input from the newly-elected women members, particularly clauses relating to zina that have led to instances of unjust crucifixion of women. Also, women have a heavier cross to bear when people get killed in incidents of conflict and violence, and have a greater vested interest in peace. Indeed, women MNAs may be able to play a crucial role in promoting a more tolerant climate in the country. They are also in closer touch with economic realities, and may be better able to expose the smug jugglery of figures by finance ministers and finance departments, forcing changes in budget priorities in favour of education, health, population control and social welfare.

There are any number of other areas where women legislators may be able to make a significant difference to governance. True, the process of changing entrenched and pervasive patriarchal attitudes will be long and arduous, but at least we now have a sizeable women's caucus in our legislatures. NGOs that have long campaigned for social justice will have a well-marked line of communication with political parties, which can be utilized to promote the struggle against oppressive laws and customs. If parliamentary parties give due deference to the views of their women members and include them in decision-making, and if the women themselves can work across party lines on issues of common interest, we might yet have legislatures more responsive to popular aspirations and thus more democratic.

Dawn (Islamabad): November 2, 2002

Women in the House

The major cause of disenchantment of the voters with the electoral process is that it does not represent them truly because the rich and the powerful can only afford this vocation. People who are only accessible during the election period are normally confined to their Deras oblivious to the impoverished populace and their issues. Due to the same reason, women reserved seats were re-introduced by the military government to empower the fairer sex in the Parliament. However, the electoral reform which was for the good of the women was again hijacked by the political parties when the influential leaders nominated their kith and kin to the 60 seats reserved for women. According to reports Pakistan Muslim League (Q) has awarded women seats to the kith and kin of its leadership out of a total of 22 seats, followed by PPPP handing over four seats and PML (N) and MMA giving away two seats each to leadership's close female relatives.

The women's seats were revived by the military after the quota lapsed in 1993 and was not continued even during the 'democratic' governments of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. It is in line with the successful experience of local bodies elections in which 33 percent of elected councillors were women. These councillors come from the working class and are making useful contribution in highlighting and resolving problems of their gender at the grass root level. However, the same cannot be said about the elected MNAs. Most of these elected members with exception of few like Tehmina Daultana – who has learned the tricks of the trade through active participation – have only one qualification that is they belong to "political correct" families. Legislation being a very complicated procedure needing political awareness, it will be interesting to see how these women find their way through the political maze they are not used to.

More over, it is also to be seen how they acquit themselves in a House which is male dominated – the same males who impose those stringent restrictions against which women have been advocating – and compromising experienced politicians. How

will they be able to serve the objectives of women when they sit under the wings of the very parties which have done nothing in past to address women's grievances. Women empowerment is not all about having fairer sex in the parliament, it is about political awareness in fighting for women rights. How they can possibly struggle for the rights of their deprived sisters when their knowledge about their problems and issues is as meagre as that of the opposite sex.

The News (Islamabad): Nonvembe, 06-2002



Legislative Watch, Issue No.4

یونین کونسلوں میں خواتین کی نمائندگی

پورا ہوگا۔ بلکہ ملک کی نصیب آبادی کے مسائل کو سمجھنے اور انہیں حل کرنے کے امکانات بھی بہتر ہو جائیں گے۔

یونین کونسلوں اور کمیٹیوں میں وہ خواتین نامزد ہو سکتی ہیں جو اپنے علاقے میں سماجی کام کا تجربہ رکھتی ہیں۔

اور اس علاقے کے معاشرتی حالات سے واقف ہوں۔ اس سلسلے میں یہ شرط لگانا بھی مناسب ہوگی کہ خواتین کی کم از کم عمر کم از کم 18 سال ہو اور وہ شادی شدہ ہوں۔

ان ارکان کی ذمہ داریاں کیا ہوں گی میں سمجھتی ہوں کہ اس کی وضاحت کی چند ضرورت نہیں۔ ان کا سب سے بڑا کام ضرورت مند کنبوں کے پاس پہنچ کر ایسے مشورے دینا ہوگا جو انہیں بہتر زندگی گزارنے میں مدد دے سکیں۔ اسی طرح عائلی کونسل میں بھی ان خواتین کی خدمات سے فائدہ اٹھایا جاسکتا ہے

اس سے بڑا فلاحی اور ترقیاتی منصوبہ اور کیا ہو سکتا ہے کہ ہمارے گھر پر سکون رہیں۔ اور یہ منصوبہ عورت کے بھرپور تعاون کے بغیر پایہ تکمیل کو نہیں پہنچ سکتا۔

مشرحین

اخبار خواتین 28 مئی 1986

اوپر میں نے جس مسئلہ کا ذکر کیا ہے اس کے حل کا تمام تر تعلق دفاعی انجمنوں یا ایسی خواتین سے ہے جو رضا کارانہ طور پر سماجی خدمات انجام دیتی ہیں۔ ہمارے ملک کی خواتین میں سماجی کام کرنے والوں کی کمی نہیں اور رضا کارانہ خدمت کا جذبہ روز افزوں بھی ہے۔ لیکن چونکہ اس طرح کوئی بات بھی یقینی نہیں ہوتی اس لئے نتائج کے بارے میں زیادہ پر امید نہیں ہوا جاسکتا۔

بہرے خیال میں بنیادی جمہوری اداروں سے اس سلسلے میں بڑا کام لیا جاسکتا ہے۔ بشرطیکہ ان میں خواتین کو موثر نمائندگی حاصل ہو۔ ہمارے یہاں ان اداروں کے بعض اعلیٰ

مراحل میں تو خواتین کے لئے کچھ نشستیں مخصوص کی گئی ہیں لیکن ان کی سطح پر ایسا کوئی انتظام نہیں اور چونکہ خواتین کے لئے انتخابی

محنت میں پڑنا اتنا آسان نہیں اس لئے وہ بہت کم یونین کونسلوں یا کمیٹیوں میں کوئی نشست حاصل کر پاتی ہیں۔

اگر ہر کونسل یا کمیٹی میں کم از کم دو خواتین کی نامزدگی کا

مسل اپنا پابا جلتے تو میں سمجھتی ہوں کہ اس سے نہ صرف ترقیاتی

دفعہ ای منصوبوں میں عوام کی شرکت کا مقصد بہ طریق احسن

نہیں رہتی آج کی حکومت کل کی اپوزیشن اور آج کی اپوزیشن کل کی حکومت ہے اس لئے حکومت اور اپوزیشن کو کم از کم اس معاملے میں اپنے جماعتی تعصبات اور مفادات سے بالاتر ہو کر ایک دوسرے سے تعاون کرنا چاہیے۔ حکومت ایوان میں یہ بل پیش کرنے سے قبل ہی اپوزیشن سے با مقصد رابطہ کر کے تعاون کی درخواست کرے اگر پیپلز پارٹی کی قیادت احتساب کو بہانہ بنا کر عدم تعاون کا فیصلہ کرتی ہے تو وہ خود کو عوام کے سامنے ایکسپوز کرے گی تاہم حکومت بھی سنجیدگی اور اخلاص کے ساتھ خواتین کو منتخب اداروں میں نمائندگی دینے کے لئے بل پیش کرے اس کا مقصد محض اور محض آبادی کے ایک حصہ کو سینٹ کے خلاف اکسانا اور اپوزیشن سے متنفر کرنا ہونا چاہیے۔ قومی اسمبلی اور سینٹ نمائندگی رکھنے والی جماعتوں اور ان کے ارکان کو اس معاملے میں محض حکومت کی مخالفت کی وجہ سے عدم تعاون نہیں کرنا چاہیے اور پارٹی ڈسپلن یا مفادات سے زیادہ عام آبادی کے نصف حصے کے مفاد کو ترجیح دینی چاہیے۔ اس ضمن میں اصل ذمہ داری بہر حال حکومت پر عائد ہوتی ہے جسے بل پیش کرنے سے پہلے یا بعد اپوزیشن کا تعاون حاصل کرنا چاہئے بجا کہ حکومت کو قومی اسمبلی میں دو تہائی اکثریت حاصل ہے اور وہ عام قوانین اور آئینی ترمیم بھی آسانی سے منظور کرا لیتی ہے لیکن سینٹ میں اسے اپوزیشن سے تعلق رکھنے والے ارکان کے ووٹوں کی ضرورت پڑتی ہے اس لئے ہر مرتبہ سینٹ میں دو تہائی اکثریت نہ ہونے کی وجہ سے نا کامی کا منہ دیکھنے کے بجائے بہتر یہی ہے کہ حکومت اپوزیشن سے تعلقات کار بہتر بنائے اور پارلیمانی اداروں میں جمہوری اصولوں اور روایات کے مطابق اپوزیشن سے تعاون اور فائیت کے جذبے سے معاملات طے کرنے کی حکمت عملی وضع کرے۔ حکومت اور اپوزیشن جمہوری نظام کی گاڑی کے دو پہیے ہیں جو ایک دوسرے کے ساتھ ہی چل سکتے ہیں۔ ماضی میں سیاسی اختلافات کی وجہ سے دشمنی کی حد تک چلے جانے کے جس کلچر نے جنم لیا اس نے جمہوری نظام اور اداروں کو نقصان پہنچایا۔ اب یہ روش برقرار نہیں رہنی چاہئے کراچی کے مسئلہ پر حکومت اور پارلیمانی اپوزیشن میں مفادیت اور تعاون کی راہ کھل سکتی تھی مگر یہ موقع ضائع کر دیا گیا اب خواتین کی نشستوں کی بحالی کے مسئلہ پر فریقین ایک دوسرے سے تعاون کر کے تعلقات کار کا آغاز کر

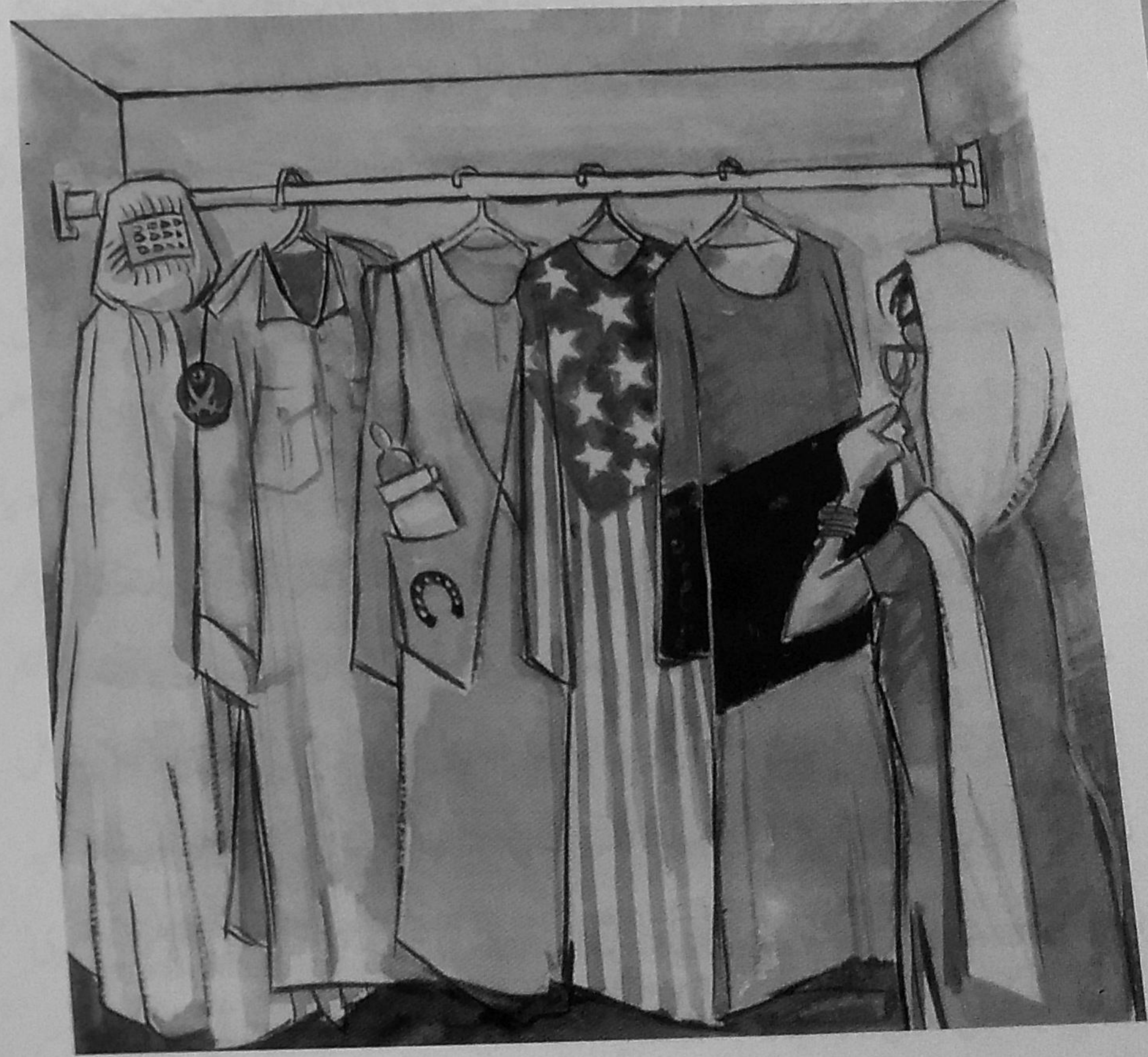
سکتے ہیں کیونکہ مسلم لیگ اور پیپلز پارٹی کے علاوہ اپوزیشن کی گئی دوسری جماعتوں نے خواتین کو برابر کے حقوق دینے اور فلاح و بہبود کا وعدہ کر رکھا ہے لہذا کسی تاخیر کے بغیر اس مسئلہ پر مذاکرات کا آغاز ہونا چاہیے اور اتفاق رائے سے بل منظور ہونا چاہیے۔ اگر آئین میں ترمیمیں اور چودھویں ترمیم اتفاق رائے سے منظور ہو سکتی ہیں تو سولہویں ترمیم کیوں نہیں؟ کسی بھی جماعت یا رکن اسمبلی و سینٹ کو یہ تاثر نہیں دینا چاہئے کہ وہ ملک کی نصف آبادی کو منتخب اداروں میں موثر نمائندگی دینے کے خلاف ہے اور خواتین کے حقوق سے بے توجہی برتی جا رہی ہے۔ آئینی ترمیم کے ذریعے منتخب اداروں میں خواتین نشستوں کے تعین کے علاوہ اس امر کا اہتمام بھی قانونی طور پر ہونا چاہیے کہ ہر سیاسی جماعت عام انتخابات کے موقع پر ٹکٹوں کی تقسیم میں خواتین کو ان کی آبادی کے تناسب سے اکاموڈیٹ کرے تاکہ وہ براہ راست انتخابی عمل کے ذریعے منتخب اداروں تک پہنچ سکیں اور آہستہ آہستہ انہیں مخصوص نشستوں کی احتیاج نہ رہے امید کرنی چاہیے کہ حکومت اب اس کام میں مزید تاخیر نہیں کرے گی۔

نوائے وقت 27 دسمبر 1998ء

صرف اسی صورت قومی اسمبلی میں ان کا جواز بھی برقرار رہے گا اور ان کی افادیت بھی ثابت ہوگی۔

پاکستان 2 نومبر 2002ء

....Just a thought



خواتین کی مخصوص نشستیں بحال کرنے کا فیصلہ

ایک اخباری اطلاع کے مطابق قومی اور صوبائی اسمبلیوں میں خواتین کی نمائندگی کو یقینی بنانے کے لئے مخصوص نشستیں بحال کی جا رہی ہیں اس سلسلے میں آئینی ترمیمی بل قومی اسمبلی کے رواں سیشن میں متعارف کرایا جائے گا۔ حکومت نے اس آئینی ترمیمی بل کو قومی اسمبلی اور سینٹ سے دو تہائی اکثریت کے ساتھ منظور کرانے کے لئے حکمت عملی وضع کر لی ہے۔ خواتین ہماری آبادی کا نصف حصہ ہیں اور قومی اداروں میں ان کی نمائندگی نہ ہونا سخت زیادتی ہے کیونکہ خواتین کی مشکلات اور مسائل کے ازالے کے لئے ان کی اپنی نمائندہ خواتین ہی کوئی موثر کردار ادا کر سکتی ہیں چونکہ ہمارا انتخابی نظام ابھی اس قدر ناقص اور خواتین کی بڑی تعداد اتنی ناخواندہ و پسماندہ ہے کہ براہ رست انتخابات میں حصہ لے کر منتخب اداروں تک پہنچنا مشکل ہے سیاسی جماعتوں نے بھی ابھی تک خواتین کو ان کی عددی قوت کے مطابق اہمیت نہیں دی اور عام انتخابات میں انہیں اپنی آبادی کے تناسب سے ٹکٹ جاری کرنے کی روایت قائم نہیں ہوئی اسی بنا پر خواتین کے لئے قومی اور صوبائی اسمبلیوں میں نشستیں مخصوص کرنے کی ضرورت محسوس کی جاتی ہے۔ جب سے مخصوص نشستیں ختم ہوئی ہیں نواز شریف اور بے نظیر بھٹو کو اقتدار کی دو دو باریاں مل چکی ہیں مگر خواتین نشستیں بحال نہیں ہو سکیں حالانکہ ایک خاتون کے دور اقتدار میں ہر کسی کو یہ توقع تھی کہ وہ اپنی صنف کی زیادہ سے زیادہ نمائندگی کا اہتمام ضرور کریں گی۔

اگرچہ موجودہ حکومت نے بھی خواتین کی نشستیں بحال کرنے کے لئے اس وقت سوچا ہے جب سینٹ میں اس کی دو تہائی اکثریت باقی نہیں رہی اور اپوزیشن کے ساتھ اس کے تعلقات بگاڑ کی آخری حدوں کو چھو رہے ہیں اس کے باوجود غنیمت ہے کہ اسے یہ خیال آیا ہے سینٹ میں اکثریت نہ ہونے کے باوجود خواتین کی نمائندگی کے بل کی اپوزیشن بالخصوص پیپلز پارٹی کو حمایت کرنی چاہیے یہ درست ہے کہ قومی اور صوبائی اسمبلیوں میں مسلم لیگ کی اکثریت کی وجہ سے اس بار حکمران جماعت کو فائدہ ہوگا لیکن جمہوری نظام میں کوئی شخصیت یا جماعت بھی ہمیشہ برسر اقتدار

الیکشن کمیشن نے خواتین کی مخصوص نشستوں پر امیدواروں کی حتمی لسٹ جاری کر دی ہے خواتین کی مخصوص نشستوں پر سیاسی پارٹیوں کی جنرل سیٹوں پر حاصل کی جانے والی نشستوں کے تناسب سے خواتین کا چناؤ کیا گیا الیکشن کمیشن سے جاری اعلامیہ کے مطابق سب سے زیادہ نشستیں مسلم لیگ ق کی 22 خواتین کامیاب ہوئیں۔ دوسرے نمبر پر پاکستان پیپلز پارٹی پارلیمنٹین 15 اور متحدہ مجلس عمل 12 نشستیں حاصل کرنے میں کامیاب رہیں۔ مسلم لیگ "ن" صرف 3 نشستیں حاصل کر سکی۔ نیشنل لائنس کی 3 خواتین مخصوص نشستوں پر کامیاب ہوئی ہیں جبکہ ایم کیو ایم کی 3 خواتین جیتی ہیں۔ مسلم لیگ فنکشنل کی واحد خاتون کو قومی اسمبلی کا ممبر بنایا گیا ہے۔ پنجاب سے مسلم لیگ ق کی 19 خواتین کامیاب قرار دی گئیں جب کہ پیپلز پارٹی پارلیمنٹین کی 9 خواتین کامیاب ہوئیں اور متحدہ مجلس عمل کی واحد خاتون کامیاب ہوئی ہے۔ مسلم لیگ ن کی 3 جب کہ مسلم لیگ ج کی ایک اور نیشنل لائنس کی 2 خواتین جیتی ہیں۔ سندھ سے مسلم لیگ (ق) کی ایک خاتون اور ایم ایم اے پی کی 7 خواتین کو کامیاب قرار دیا گیا ہے۔ بلوچستان سے مسلم لیگ (ق) کی کامیاب خواتین میں مہناز رفیع ڈاکٹر ہاجرہ طارق عزیز تنزیلہ عامر چیمہ ڈاکٹر دونیا عزیز کشمالا طارق ڈاکٹر ساہرہ طارق رفعت امجد عطیہ عنایت اللہ بشری رحمن وزین احمد شہزادی عمر زیدی ٹوانہ راحیلہ یحییٰ عائشہ عظیم ڈاکٹر فردوس عاشق بیگم تہینہ دستی عنزہ احسان بشری نذیر عظیم زینا طفیل مسز طاہرہ آصف۔ مسز کے فضا جونجو۔ مسز زیب گوہر ایوب اور زبیدہ جلال شامل ہیں۔ پیپلز پارٹی پارلیمنٹین کی جیتنے والی خواتین میں ناہید خان، مسز بیگم حسنین مسز شکیلہ خانم رشید فوزیہ حبیب مہرین انور راجہ، مسز یاشمین رحمان بیگم شہناز شیخ، رخسانہ بنگلش مسز نسیم اختر چودھری، شہر بانو شیریں رحمان مسز رقیہ خانم، مسز فوزیہ وہاب، روبینہ سعادت قائم خانی، نفیسہ منور راجہ، مسز شگفتہ، متحدہ مجلس عمل کی طرف سے نامزد خواتین میں صائمہ راحیل قاضی، ڈاکٹر فریدہ احمد کنیر عائشہ سیدہ فرحانہ خالدہ رحیمہ عزیز نیر سلطانہ جمیلہ احمد انمبرین عنایت بیگم شاہدہ بیگم عمرانہ خاؤز اور

بلقیس سیف، پاکستان مسلم لیگ (ن) کی خواتین میں میمونہ ہاشمی، بیگم عشرت اشرف، تہینہ دولتانہ مسلم لیگ (ج) کی واحد جیتنے والی خاتون کا نام، بیگم ریحانہ علیم ہے۔ نیشنل لائنس کی جیتنے والی خواتین میں سمیرا ملک، عائکہ ملک گل فرخندہ جبکہ ایم کیو ایم کی جیتنے والی خواتین میں شمیم اختر، ریحانہ نسرین، شاہینہ طلعت مسلم فنکشنل کی واحد خاتون خورشید افغان جیتنے میں کامیاب ہوئیں۔ الیکشن کمیشن کی جانب سے خواتین کے لئے مخصوص قومی اسمبلی میں ساٹھ نشستوں پر تین بڑے سیاسی خاندانوں کی خواتین پہلی بار قومی اسمبلی کی رکن منتخب ہوئی ہیں۔ جن میں مخدوم جاوید ہاشمی کی صاحبزادی میمونہ ہاشمی، قاضی حسین احمد کی صاحبزادی سمعیہ راحیل قاضی اور سابق صدر جنرل ایوب خاب مرحوم کی بہبود سابق وزیر خارجہ و سپیکر قومی اسمبلی گوہر ایوب خان کی اہلیہ زیب گوہر ایوب شامل ہیں۔ قومی اسمبلی میں خواتین کے لئے مخصوص نشستوں پر بلوچستان سے پاکستان مسلم لیگ قائد اعظم کو ایک نشست ملی ہے جس پر سابق وفاقی وزیر زبیدہ جلال کو کامیاب قرار دیا گیا ہے چونکہ وہ عمومی نشست پر بھی کامیاب ہو چکی ہیں اس لئے ان کی جگہ مسلم لیگ کی ترجیحی فہرست میں دوسرے نمبر پر موجود نور جہاں پانیزئی ان کی جگہ قومی اسمبلی لیگ ق کی ترجیحی فہرست میں دوسرے نمبر پر موجود نور جہاں پانیزئی ان کی جگہ قومی اسمبلی کی رکن منتخب ہوں۔ نور جہاں پانیزئی سابق دور حکومت میں سینٹ میں ڈپٹی چیئر پرسن رہ چکی ہیں۔ قومی اسمبلی میں اس وقت کل 72 خواتین بیٹھیں گی۔ یہ اپنی نوعیت کا پہلا تجربہ ہے کہ تاریخ میں پہلی بار ایوان زیریں میں خواتین کی بھرپور نمائندگی ہے۔ پاکستان اگرچہ تیسری دنیا کا ایک پسماندہ ملک ہے مگر اس کو یہ اعزاز بھی حاصل رہا کہ یہاں پر ایک خاتون دوبارہ وزیر اعظم منتخب ہوئی۔ مگر اس کے وجود ترقی یافتہ ممالک، تیسری دنیا کے ممالک پر دباؤ ڈالتے رہتے ہیں کہ وہ حصہ میں خواتین کو بھرپور نمائندگی دیں۔ کہا گیا کہ ایسا مغرب کے دباؤ کی وجہ سے کیا گیا ہے۔ بہر حال خواتین کو اسلامی معاشرے میں جو عزت و مرتبہ عطا کیا گیا کسی اور معاشرے جیسے اس کی نظیر نہیں مل سکتی۔ اب جب کہ خواتین قومی اسمبلی میں بھاری تعداد میں جلوہ افروز ہو چکی ہیں تو انہیں ملک میں خواتین کی حالت بہتر بنانے اور ان کی فلاح و بہبود کیلئے خاطر خواہ اقدامات کرنے ہوں گے

5

Sunday

JANUARY

Notes

The Political Enigma

Feminization of power must be about something other than electing more women to public office. We not only need to inquire whether a candidate is a woman, but also if she is pro-women. If all we care about is electing women, be it anyone, then we may end up with a few more women in office who would be going about their usual business as before, which does nothing for the majority of women in our country.

(Excerpts) Farhat Naz Rahman: Women's Own March 1998,

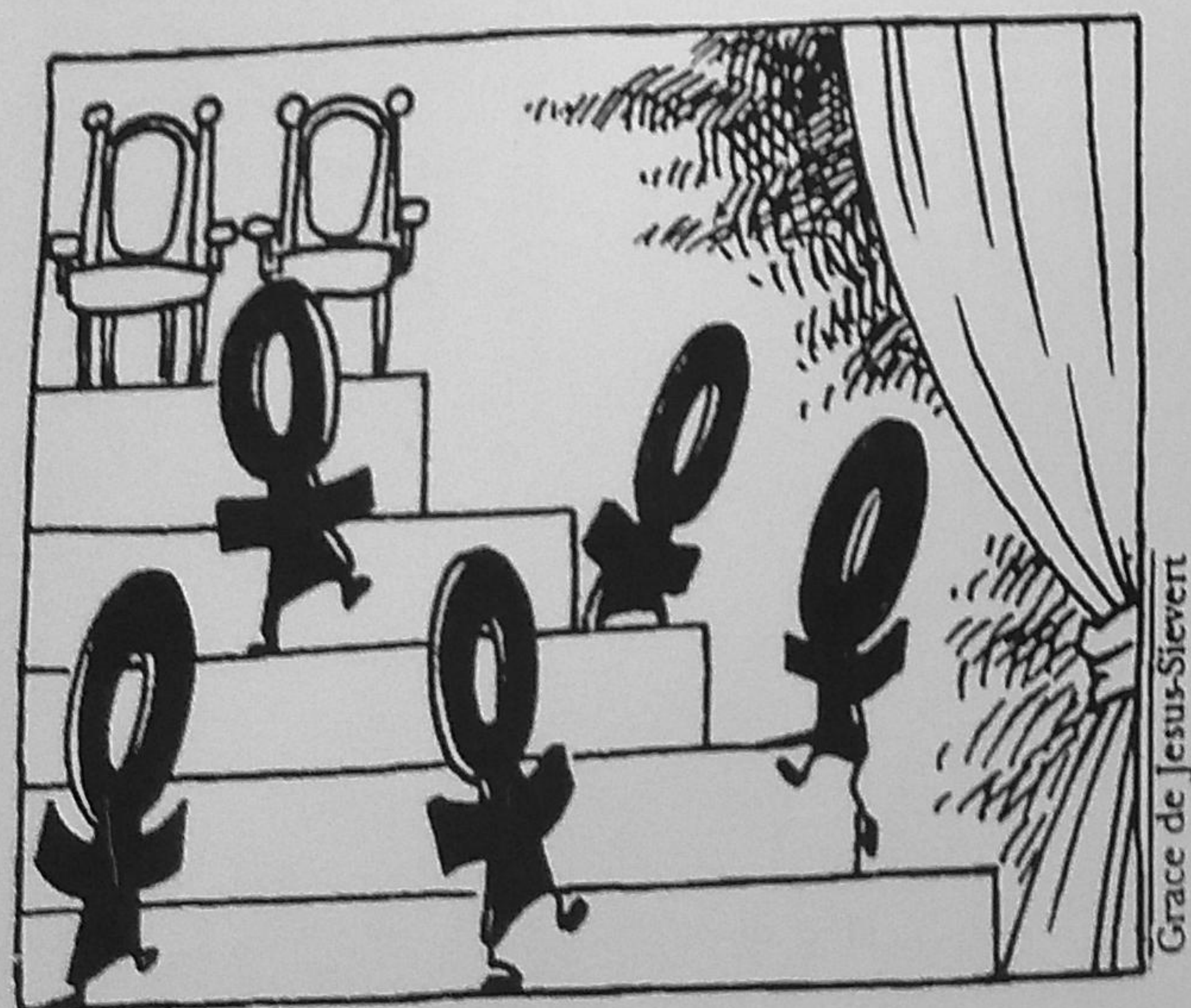
Politics Necessary but Largely Distasteful

Looking back on her many decades of political activism, Zari Sarfaraz believes that

Fifty years ago, women were more active and were in prominent roles, now they have become mere show pieces, in keeping with the desires of the male members of political parties. Today, women in parties are appointed from on top, you might see them in political public gatherings, but they have no experience in the field. I always say that first you must do social work, understand people's problems, and then come into politics. You have to be outside with the public, so people have solidarity with you. Ghaffar Khan also did social work and then came in politics. Those who are appointed from the top have no ideology.

(Excerpts) Farida Shaheed:

IMAGINED CITIZENSHIP: WOMEN, STATE & POLITICS IN PAKISTAN (Shirkat Gah, Lahore, 2002)



Women in Action, ISIS International, 1/94

League will have an easy walk-over in Frontier

Begum Shah Nawaz confident of victory in referendum

Begum Shah Nawaz, MLA, who accompanied by Begum Fatimah and Begum Salma Tasadduq Hussain toured the NWFP, on her return to Lahore on Thursday evening, said that the Muslim League would have an easy walk-over in the coming referendum.

Begum Shah Nawaz and the other women leaders from the Punjab toured the districts of Peshawar, Bannu and Kohat. They were the first Indian women to cross into the Tribal territory and to address meetings.

Giving impressions of her tour, Begum Shah Nawaz said: "Everywhere we went, we saw scenes of enthusiasm and rejoicing at the coming into being of the greatest Muslim State into the world. The Pathans are proud to be the citizens of Pakistan and they assured us that they were prepared to sacrifice their all for the cause of Islam and the Muslim nation."

LEAGUE WILL SWEEP THE POLLS

Expressing her confidence that the Muslim League would sweep the polls in the Frontier Province, Begum Shah Nawaz said: "A new spirit seems to have electrified the atmosphere in the Frontier in favour of the Muslim League. The last bastion of the Khan brothers. Utmanzai, their home-village, fell to the Muslim League Mujahids when we held meetings there and exposed the policy of the Khan Brothers, who had always stood in the way of the emancipation of the Muslim nation."

MESSAGE TO QUAID-E-AZAM

Replying on behalf of the Afridis of Darra, Nawab Malik Samad Khan assured Begum Shah Nawaz of their wholehearted support to the Muslim League. The Nawab added: "Please convey this message on our behalf to Quaid-e-Azam, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, that we the Afridi tribesmen wholeheartedly support the idea of an independent Pakistan, and that

heartedly support the idea of an independent Pakistan, and that he has our full support in every way. The services of our soldiers and the armament factories in our area are at his disposal and we are ready to shed the last drop of our blood at his call for the Muslim nation and Pakistan."

In the end Begum Sahiba appealed to the Pathans to rally round the Muslim League flag and thus defeat the machinations of the Khan Brothers who wanted to keep the Frontier Province under Hindu raj.

The Pakistan Times (Lahore): 4 July, 1947

Voting: Influence vs. Pressure

In the discussions, women expressed greater concern about the pressure brought to bear upon the electorate by the local power structure than that exerted by family men. This was variously expressed as 'we vote to stay on the right side of those who are powerful and influential', 'if the local chaudhry suspects we won't vote for him, he starts threatening us', 'the poor vote according to the wishes of the member [of the local council]'. In one group, women said 'The wadera also pressurizes us. We were compelled to cast votes in favour of a candidate we did not like.' The reality is mixed however and in the same group women also said: 'to participate in politics is our duty and we cast our vote in good faith. We taken the decision [on how to vote] by ourselves when we cast the votes.' The perception of pressures exerted by those at the top of the local power structure is shared by men who commented that they vote out of fear, since the politicians can active their thugs 'who take away our animals'.

(Excerpts) Farida Shaheed:

IMAGINED CITIZENSHIP: WOMEN, STATE & POLITICS IN PAKISTAN *(Shirkat Gah, Lahore, 2002)*

مجھے اس سزا پر فخر ہے

—: نزہت ماجد ملک :

ایک مرتبہ لیڈی اردن ہائی سکول کی تمام ہندو طالبات ایک جلوس کی صورت میں پنڈت نرو سے ملنے گئیں۔ اس سکول میں کل 9 مسلمان لڑکیاں پڑھتی تھیں۔ جن میں ایک میں تھی۔ ہم نے سوچا کہ اگر ہندو لڑکیاں اپنے لیڈر سے ملنے گئی ہیں تو ہمیں قائد اعظم سے ملنا چاہیے۔ چنانچہ ہم بھی جلوس کی صورت میں قائد اعظم کے گھر روانہ ہو گئیں۔ قائد اعظم تو گھر پر نہ مل سکے۔ لیکن محترمہ فاطمہ جناح نے ہمیں خوش آمدید کہا اور خاصی دیر بڑی نصیحت آمیز گفتگو کی۔ جب ہم سکول واپس پہنچیں اور پرنسپل کو اس حقیقت کا علم ہوا کہ ہم قائد اعظم سے ملنے گئی تھیں تو وہ بہت برہم ہوئیں۔ اور ان طالبات کی سربراہ لڑکیاں کے لئے یہ سزا تجویز کی گئی کہ وہ ایک ہفتہ تک دفتر میں کونے کی طرف منہ کر کے کھڑی رہیں۔

ان طالبات کو اپنی اس سزا پر کوئی شرمندگی نہیں ہوئی۔ اور وہ اب بھی اس پر فخر کرتی ہیں کہ انہیں یہ سزا محض اس لئے دی گئی کہ وہ اپنے قائد سے ملنے گئی تھیں۔ سزا پاسنے والی لڑکیوں میں ایک میں بھی ہوں۔

Muslims will resist encroachment of their rights

"There is an erroneous notion that Muslims of the Punjab are satisfied with the national division of the Province. This is due to the fact that the Muslims as a nation are peace-loving and believe in the innate justice of their cause and the honesty of the Boundary Commission," said Begum Salma Tasadduq Hussain, MLA, member of the Punjab League Organising Committee, in a statement in Lahore on Tuesday.

She added: "Attempts are being made in certain quarters to confuse the issue. The matter before the Boundary Commission is quite simple and plain. It is to decide that all contiguous areas which are predominantly inhabited by non-Muslims should be included in Hindustan. The principle so far followed all over the world is the issue basis of population and not the basis of income tax and property. The claim of property as advanced by the Sikhs can be tenable only under the circumstances when the property is owned by the State but now that when the Punjab is partitioned and the final boundaries are to be fixed, the property owned by the individual would continue to be in his possession as before. So the basis of property in any way does not affect the finalising of the boundary lines."

"It is high time," she says "that it should be made known to all that the Muslims claim the area in which they are in majority and which area is contiguous to the districts already allotted to them on account of their being Muslim districts. The Muslim opinion is solidly behind the legitimate claim and shall not rest unless their demand is fully satisfied and in case any other consideration as for example, the appeasement of a particular sub-community. Induce the British Government to deprive Muslims of their rights, they shall resist this encroachment on their rights with all legitimate and constitutional methods and needs be, they shall lay down their lives for their cause rather than submit to the slavery of the minority community of the area in question."

Muslims did not claim anything, which was not theirs by right. "I would not in any way seek to influence the issue which is sub-judice but the census figures of 1941 clearly show that there are vast tracts in Eastern Punjab which are predominantly Muslim and are contiguous to the 17 districts allotted to us.

There is no question of any dispute regarding these areas for they must form the part of Pakistan which has been formed on the principle that Hindus and Muslims are two different nations and neither of the two nations wants to be under the other.

(Excerpts) Begum Salma Tasadduq Hussain: The Pakistan Times (Lahore): 16 July, 1947

Voting Rights of Women

Begum Shamsunnahar Mahmud joined the suffrage movement in 1935. She went to Calcutta to give testimony in favour of voting rights of women in 1936.

At the local level elections such as those of Union Parishads, women were not allowed to vote till 1950. The Union Board as an autonomous body was formed in 1885. The members were however nominated, not elected. In 1950, when the secret ballot system was introduced, women also got the voting power.

(Excerpts) Narigrantha Prabartana: Diary 1993-94 Feminist Bookstore, Dhaka

Baluchi Women

Sir,- I am most grateful to you and your readers for their sympathetic interest in the condition of the Baluchi women of the Dera Ghazi Khan Tribal Area disclosed in my letter published in your esteemed paper of June 5. Your readers have addressed various enquiries to me and as the answers to their queries are of general interest, I request you to publish them.

Broadly speaking, their queries can be classed under three main heads:

- (a) How is it possible for a Government to award decrees for the sale and purchase of human beings?
- (b) Why has there been no effective agitation against such decrees?
- (c) Would not interference with local customs cause unrest among the Baluchi tribes?

The question at (a)) could best be answered by Government. I can only say that decrees for the sale and purchase of Baluchi women and awarded under section 8 and 9 of the Frontier Crimes Regulation. Section 9 thereof:

"A decree passed.... Shall not give effect to any finding ... which, in the opinion of the Deputy Commissioner, is contrary to good conscience or public policy..."

How the political courts reconcile the purchase and sale (and auction) of human beings with "good conscience" is beyond my understanding. We should be grateful if the political courts could prove from records that the intention of the farmers of the F.C.R. was to use its provisions for the sale and purchase of women as being done at present. I am sure they cannot.

The reasons for (b) are many. Baluchi women are most backward and are practically hundred percent illiterate. They cannot form association effectively to raise their voice. Then our men folk are the real culprits in these heinous crimes and

our Tumandars receive a share of the sale proceeds. They, therefore, stifle our voice even if we try to protest. We are cut off from the rest of the world; no leader or public man has ever cared to visit our area; and whenever we approach the authorities for redress, they put us off by saying that we should go to Tumandars. It is like the complainant going to the accused for justice.

The apprehension expressed at (c) has always been a convenient excuse for denying us justice. It comes out of an unwilling mind. The British did away with the evil practice of "Satti" prevalent among Rajputs – tribes more virulent than Baluches – without fear of consequences. Ours is the similar case and the Pakistan Government should be bold enough to face any artificial agitation that may be engineered in favour of these evil customs which, we hold, cannot be enforced under the F.C.R. it will make this letter a bit lengthy if I quoted particular instances in which certain customs have of late been abandoned by the political courts and yet there has been no unrest worth the name. Suppose for the sake of argument, interference with evil customs causes ill – will, then should not our Government be brave enough to face it?

You will be surprised to know that until very recently the political courts had no consolidated record of various customs. They awarded decrees on hearsay. They have tried to collect these customs and whatever customs they have codified, they would not make public for fear of contradiction or exposure. This "customs book" does not contain a word of sympathy or cheer for the Baluchi women.

Is there any Mufakkir, Mutafakkir, Hajazi or Niazi who would care to espouse our cause?

Yours etc,
Ayesha Begum Buzdar
Dera Ghazi Khan

The Pakistan Times (Lahore): 17 July, 1948

Powerful Pakistan is Best Memorial to Quaid-I-Azam

Begum Raana Liaquat Ali's address to Lahore Women

"A powerful, prosperous and progressive Pakistan will be the best memorial of our reverence and regard to the architect of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, and we can best fulfill his mission by completing the work which he had started - bequeathing to the posterity an invincible State of Pakistan," observed Begum Liaquat Ali Khan addressing a big meeting of the Lahore Muslim women, on Sunday, in the Habibia Hall, Islamia College, Lahore.

Begum Liaquat Ali exhorted the women to inculcate the sterling qualities of unity, faith and discipline, as preached and practiced by our departed leader and said: "We need inspiration from these principles at this critical juncture desperately."

Recounting the glorious part played by the women in the struggle for the achievement of Pakistan, she very much regretted the complacency of the women at the present moment and asked them to redouble their efforts in every sphere of life and take prominent part in all the activities of the country. "To elevate our culture, to make the country progressive and lastly to educate the masses, are the duties which we will have to shoulder in the wake of freedom, as our work has now started," she emphasised.

She urged them not to establish organisations parallel to the Muslim League, but to make supreme efforts to make the parent body strong, as the organisation had fought for our goal of Pakistan. She asked the women to enlist themselves as 'Qaumi Razakars' and join the Muslim Women's National Guard in large numbers.

Concluding, Begum Liaquat Ali appealed to them to collect and prepare warm clothes for the Mujahids of Kashmir in view of the approach of the winter. "We should not relax for a moment

but should give them legitimate succour so that they can carry on their struggle," she said.

Begum Shah Nawaz, MLA, and Begum Salma Tassadduque Hussain MLA, who also addressed the gathering, appealed to the women to take greater part in the defence of the country by learning ARP and First Aid.

Begum Tassadduque asked them to be ready to lay down their lives even at the behest of Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan who could inspire confidence, determination and faith after the passing of the Quaid-e-Azam.

Miss K. B. Ferozuddin, Deputy Directress of Education, West Punjab, asked the women to face the difficulties with courage and work for the uplift of the masses.

Begum Fatimah, a social worker of Lahore and Begum A.G. Khan also spoke.

The Pakistan Times (Lahore): 28 Sep, 1948

Unequal Partners

The political clout of the Pakistani women in 1993 can be gauged from the fact that only eight women have been awarded party tickets to contest the October elections from general seats; and the provision for reserved seats that gave them some added representation no longer holds.

(Excerpts) Mariana Babar: Newslite, September 1993

1
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Notes



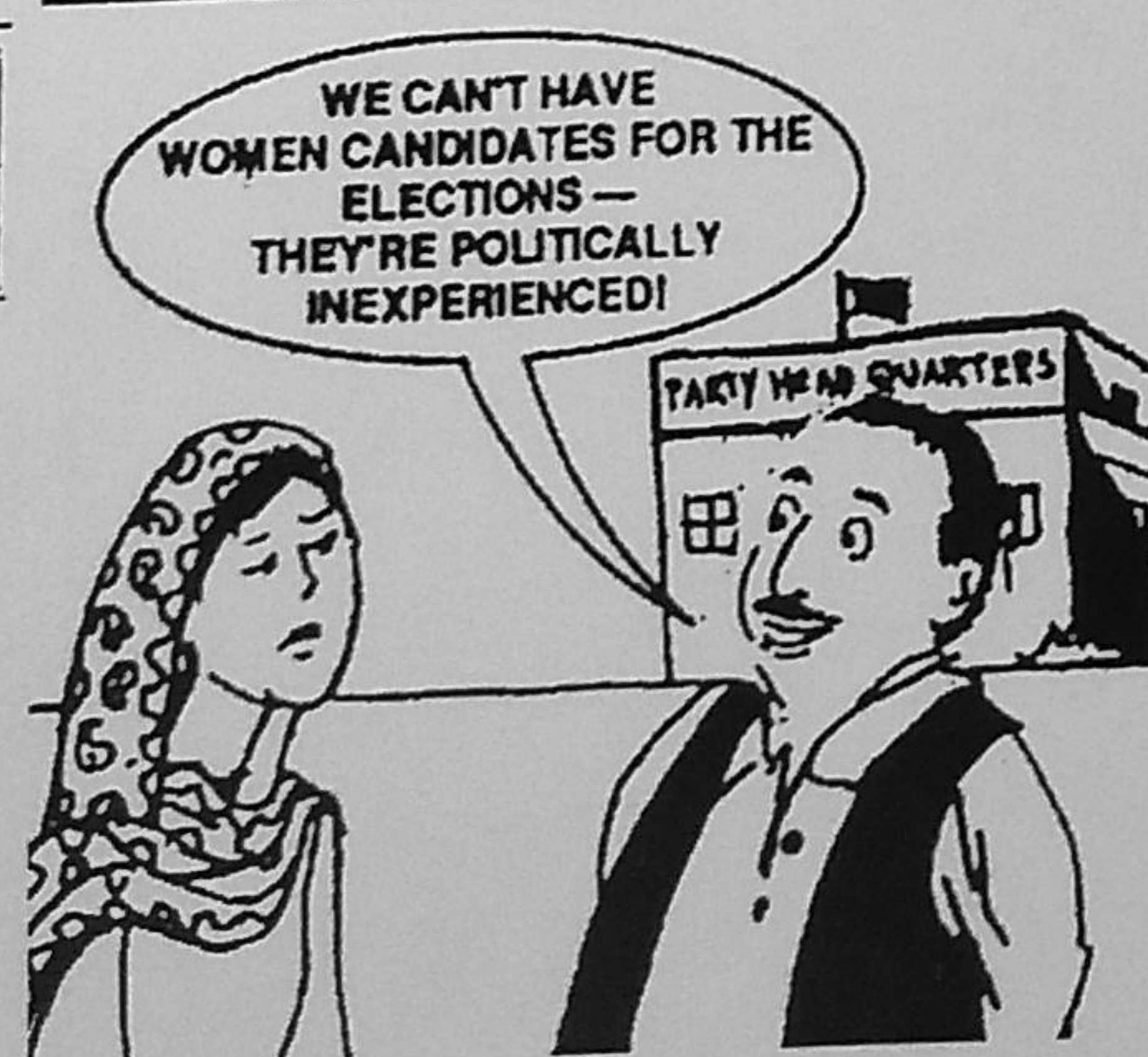
Suffrage And Social Work

The organizing of women's associations also helped enormously to impart to women a civic consciousness, not only to release their forces, but also to direct them into social channels. Some of these have already been mentioned in the chapter on education. But as all combine both social and educational reform, and are moreover inevitably interlinked with the effort to gain the power of suffrage, they cannot be separated in a short review. Women naturally first pooled their efforts locally. Permanent local bodies carried out regular programmes of educational and social reform. The most important of these were the *Indian Women's Association* of Madras, the *Nari Siksha Samiti* of Calcutta, the *Stree Bharata Mandai* of Calcutta and North India, the *Seva Sadam* of Bombay, the *Saroj Nalini Central Association* of Bengal, and the *Mahila Vidyalaya*. They all established sub-committees to take charge of different lines of work. For instance, Rama Swami Mudaliar had already suggested in 1888 that women should be put in sole charge of female committees to advise on education. The associations bent their efforts to that end with the result that at present they are definitely in a position to influence the curricula of schools. Bombay, for instance, owing to their efforts, adopted a new curriculum in 1931.

The leaders of these women's organizations soon realized the desirability of wider concerted action, and called into being, first Provincial or State, and later All-India conferences. The late Begum of Bhopal organized the first All-India Mohammedan Women's Conference in 1914. Then the women of all creeds and castes joined together in the National Council of Women in India, and the All-India Women's Conference. In 1926 Women's Conferences on Educational Reform were held all over India, in places as widely separated as Madras, Calcutta, Poona, Bombay, Karachi, Delhi, Dacca, Hyderabad (Sindh), Lahore, Allahabad, Cawnpore, and aroused such interest and enthusiasm that the following year saw the first All-India Women's Conference on Educational Reform at Poona. These Conferences demanded the establishment throughout India of suitable curricula for girls' education, the abolition of child-



THREE MONTHS LATER ...



marriage and purdah, women's right to inheritance, and civic rights. What enthusiasm and determination these conferences aroused is seen from the fact that many resolutions aimed at the abolition of even the most deeply rooted customs were carried unanimously. The Mohammedan Women's Conference took the lead in condemning polygamy, and every mother present signed a pledge not to give her daughter in plural marriage. In the All-India Women's Conference a resolution was unanimously carried in favour of keeping intact the Sardar Act (demanding uncompromisingly that any marriage with a girl under 14 should be *ipso facto* illegal), and the formation of Vigilance Committees was planned to prevent and bring to light any breaches of the law against child-marriage.

(Excerpts) S. DAS: PURDAH: THE STATUS OF INDIAN WOMEN (Ess Publication New Delhi, 1979)

A Woman of Substance

30 years later, I was standing before Begum Akhtar Jahan Khan, a legend who had lived a full life as a freedom fighter and a selfless social worker.

I could not imagine this was this same woman who was elected to the East Pakistan Assembly twice: once in 1962 and again in 1965 and who used to enliven the proceedings of the legislature speaking the chaste Bangla language. She is the recipient of many awards including Pakistan Movement Gold Medal, Tamgha-I-Quaid-I-Azam, Coronation Medal from Queen Elizabeth II, Crescent of Pakistan Award and Hazrat Khatijat-ul-kubra Award from Pakistan Federation of Business and Professional Women's club.

Though she is in her early eighties today, she still has the vigour and zeal of a teenager.

(Excerpts) Yasmin Mustafa: The Review, Dawn, February 28 - March 6, 2002

Women of No Substance

Judging by the number of pages allocated to women's issues (five of a total 62) in its manifesto, the PPP seems extremely concerned about women. The document contains a detailed section titled Women's Rights and Development Agenda 1997-2002, with 11 important – sounding subtitles, including, tantalising ones such as 'Violence', 'Water', 'Contribution from the Government of Pakistan to the Organisation of Women Parliamentarians from Muslim Countries' and 'Integration'.

In marked contrast to this wordy commitment, the PML (N) allocates a skimpy half-page to "women's uplift", claiming that increasing female literacy and [women's] economic potential is of utmost importance to our social development. The Pakistan Muslim League has a comprehensive plan for bringing about the social, political and economic participation of women."

In the PTI manifesto, women's issues are neatly tucked away under a chapter on social reforms.

Strongly advocating the "uplift" of women's status and counting their involvement in the decision making process as a critical factor, the PTI claims it is "committed to bring women into the mainstream of socio-economic progress by upholding and protecting rights of women as equal citizens."

On laws which discriminate against women, the PPP takes a decisive line, supporting the "repealing /amending [of] blatantly discriminatory and derogatory laws, e.g. the Hudood Ordinances, the Citizenship Act." The PTI too believes in "abolishing all laws that discriminate against women," while the PML (N) maintains a discreet silence.

What the PML (N) does mention, however - in a section dealing more generally with political reform - is that women should be given due representation on the principle of proportionate representation. On this topic, the PPP is once again more loquacious. Its manifesto contains a detailed description of women's political rights, repeatedly guaranteeing

equal political participation to women. It promises, among other things, to restore reserved seats for women in both the national and provincial assemblies, as well as the Senate and the local bodies. The PTI also takes a strong line on the issue, claiming it will bring about the full participation of women in mainstream politics by "amending the Political Parties Act (1962) to ensure that "all parties have a significant female representation on all committees" and "amending electoral rules to ensure that only political parties which allocate a minimum of 10 per cent general seat tickets to women candidates are allowed to participation in the elections."

Apart from the standard rhetoric, all three parties have also attempted to address important international women's issues. On ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the PTI is openly in favour of the idea while the PML (N) and PPP make no mention of it in their manifestos.

(Excerpts) Tasneem Ahmar: The Herald Election Special. February 1997.



Candidates vow to safeguard women's rights

Candidates for the two constituencies of the Federal Capital have vowed to safeguard the rights of women if they are voted.

Almost six candidates from NA-48 and NA-49 pledged to formulate women-friendly legislation, encourage their participation in every sphere and added that strict measures would be taken against the perpetrators of violence against women.

They were speaking at a seminar on "Face to Face Dialogue with Election Candidates on Women Rights", here Thursday organised by Aurat Foundation at a local hotel.

Syed Zafar Ali Shah, PML (N) candidate from NA-48, was of the view that Islam clearly defined the rights of women.

He vowed to incorporate these tenets if his party is elected to power.

Col. (Retd) Sanaullah of Pakistan Awami Tehrik was of the view that his party was mainly focussing on this sensitive issue, which has been left untouched by every government in the past.

He stressed the need to educate women adding that without education women would be held hostage by our male-dominating society, which regards them merely as machine for childbearing.

He promised to redress all the grievances of the women and added that literacy rate for women would be uplifted if his party was mandated by public for running state affairs.

Rab Nawaz Chaudhry, Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf candidate from NA-49, underscored the need for full participation of women in the coming elections. He called upon the female audience of the seminar to vote for change, which, according to him, was only possible through his party.

Regretting over the exploitation of the women in the hands of male, he pledged to make all out efforts to address their problems, if given the chances.

Mian Aslam, MMA candidate from NA-48, dispelled all such impressions that they would follow Taliban-style system of governance if voted to power.

He said that his alliance would make sure that women enjoy all the rights granted to them by Islam.

He said that the impression of forced burqa-wearing has been wrongly circulated in order to distance people from religious parties.

The Nation (Islamabad): September 27, 2002

Four basic facts emerge from the experience of these years:

- that women's representation in local bodies' institutions was minimal (ranging from 5 to 12 %), except for Balochistan, where it shot up to 25.8% in the 1999 elections;
- that the situation vis-à-vis women's representation differed from province to province and from urban to rural councils;
- that the elections on women's seats had always been indirect, whether these were for the national and provincial legislatures or for local bodies; and
- that no women's seats were ever reserved in the Senate (the upper house of the Parliament).

(Excerpts) Naeem Mirza: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 2000-2001, (Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation, Islamabad)

Women contesting political office

Counter-intuitively, women have had more success in the national assembly (NA) than in the provincial assemblies (PA). As in practically all matters, provincial differences are evident. All women returned on general seats to the NA belong to Sindh and Punjab. At the provincial level, 5 women have won seats in the various Punjab assemblies since 1985. In Sindh only one woman won a general seat during this period, in NWFP a single woman has repeatedly won a provincial seat. No woman has ever successfully competed for a general seat in Balochistan, though two women contested general seats for the first time ever in 1993.

Non-Muslim women have fared a little better within the framework of reserved seats for minorities. In the 1988 Punjab Assembly elections, 5 women contested along with 79 men (1:15), winning 2 of the five reserved seats. Since then they have consistently managed to win one or two of these seats. In Sindh 5 women contested the 2 Christian minority seats in 1988, competing with men in a 1:5 ratio, one won. For other minority seats and in subsequent elections, while women have stood they have not managed to win. No reserved seats were provided for women within the minority seats.

One of the issues – apart from women being seen generally as weaker candidates than men – is of finances. Parties often seem to give tickets to self-financing candidates, or, and indeed preferably, those who can contribute to the general party kitty in addition to funding their own campaign. Women politicians or otherwise – rarely the kind of independent financial resources this would require. Suggesting that parties support to women candidates is seen as anathema to party practices. The need to be self-financing is a deterrent not only to all women but also for middle class men. (In the latter context, the MQM may be seen as a significant exception but that is because in an arena of ethically charged politics it was party affiliation rather than individual electoral expenditure that secured victory.)

Before the new devolution plan, following a federal directive in 1979, all provinces reserved seats for women, minorities and peasants. Elections were held under these provisions in 1979, 1983, 1987 and 1992. Excepting NWFP, all provinces made broadly similar provisions. Two seats at the union council level and 10% or a minimum of 2 seats were allocated to women in District Councils, Town Committees, Municipal Committees and Corporations, and Metropolitan corporations. In NWFP, no seats were reserved for women at the Union Council level, vastly reducing the number of women councilors in the province.

The modality replicated that for the assemblies: councilors elected by universal franchise formed the Electoral College for all reserved seats. Before local bodies were dissolved in 1993, women accounted for 10.4% of the total number of councilors. Province wise, women made up 11% in Punjab, 12% in Sindh, 1.32% in NWFP, 16% in Balochistan, 0.58% in the Northern Areas and 7.8% in Islamabad Capital Territory. After local bodies were dissolved in 1993, elections were only held in Balochistan and, partially, in Punjab.

The proportion of women contesting general seats for the local bodies has been even lower than for the assemblies. In 1998, 73 women contested in Punjab and two won. Pointing to the lack of political commitment, the 1998 amendments claiming to double women's reserved seats in Punjab actually only provided an increase of 3.7% (from the previous 9%). In Balochistan, where women's reserved seats were substantially increased to 26%, for the first time, two women contested the general seats of the Quetta Municipal Corporation.

(Excerpts) Farida Shaheed:

IMAGINED CITIZENSHIP: WOMEN, STATE & POLITICS IN

PAKISTAN (Shirkat Gah, Lahore, 2002)

Empowerment: A Multi-Factored Process

And, while few women would disagree with Nasim Wali Khan when she advocates the need to increase women's decision-making powers within the family as a pre-condition to women's empowerment and participation as well as decision-making in other fields, this cannot be accomplished by mere wishful thinking. To bring about change in the home requires altering structures and systems and, as numerous women pointed out, amending the laws to remove biases and discrimination against women.

(Excerpts) Farida Shaheed:
IMAGINED CITIZENSHIP: WOMEN, STATE & POLITICS IN
PAKISTAN (Shirkat Gah, Lahore, 2002)

Women in Local Govt: Emerging Realities

The most outstanding aspect of these elections is the mainstreaming of women within the political system. The majority of women who got elected at the union council level actually contested elections from their respective constituencies through full-fledged engagement in the electoral process. Unfortunately, the much-criticized previous system of indirect elections to women's seats was retained for tehsil and district council elections, thereby, depriving women of the opportunity to gain electoral experience at these levels. Elections on the reserved seats for women, either at the national or the local level, had never before been direct and constituency-based in Pakistan. That is why the indirect system of elections has so far failed to achieved a major objective of affirmative action measures which is to strengthen women within the mainstream political system.

**(Excerpts) Naeem Mirza: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 2000-2001, (Aurat
Publication and Information Service Foundation, Islamabad)**

Politically aware women must for nation - building

Speakers at a seminar on "Role of Women in Politics" held that social, political economic empowerment of women was necessary for nation building as they make half of the country population.

The seminar was arranged by Strengthening Participatory Organisation (SPO) at district auditorium here on Saturday. Dr Muhammad Tufail Khan, member SPO Board of Directors, presided over the function whereas Naimatullah, Bannu city Nazim was chief guest on the occasion.

Other participants included Arshad Haroon Regional Director SPO, Ejaz Qasim Programme Manager, Prof. Shah Behram, district councillor Naheed Bukhari, tehsil councillor Begum Shamshad Gandapur.

Ejaz Qasim, Programme Manager of SPO, DI Khan, informed on the occasion that SPO had successfully completed its "Supporting Democratic Electoral Processes in Pakistan" (SDEPP) project in 75 union councils of four southern districts of NWFP including DI Khan, Lakki Marwat, Bannu and Karak with the collaboration of UNDP.

"The aim of SDEPP project was to create awareness among the people regarding political education and ensure their involvement in electoral process", he said.

The women were given more importance in the project as majority of the women of these areas were deprived of their political rights, as they were not allowed to poll their votes in election.

He said that during the project maximum information and political knowledge was provided to the people and practical demonstration was also given to them on how they could cast their vote in polling process.

Arshad Haroon, Regional Director, said that participation of people in SDEPP project and specially womenfolk was encouraging and it was hoped that voter turn out would improve in the October general elections.

Other speakers also appreciated the efforts of SPO in providing political education to the common people and appealed to other civil societies to run such community-based political projects in these politically backward areas so that people could play effective role in political process of the country.

The News (Rawalpindi / Islamabad): October 6, 2002

Seminar on Women's vote

One-day seminar on 'importance of women vote' was organised here at Ghazikhanay village by the Citizen Action Committee (CAC) Buner, which was largely attended by locals.

Nazim Union Council Gadezai, Juma Gul, was chief guest on the occasion while Saeedur Rehman advocate, Hakim Zada, Abbas advocate and Ghani AR Abid addressed the participants.

The speakers highlighted importance of women's right to vote in the process of electing public representatives. They exhorted the participants to come forward and ensure women's participation in the elections.

The speakers said that no nation round the globe could survive without equal participation of the fair sex in national affairs.

The News (Rawalpindi / Islamabad): October 6, 2002

Women councillors complain of discrimination

Women councillors lashed out at their male counterparts, Nazimeen and Naib Nazmeen for their non-cooperative attitude.

The women councillors, belonging to various union, Tehsil, and district councils of Rawalpindi were speaking at a roundtable conference on "Voices of women councillors", organized by Pattan Development organization in collaboration with the Embassy of Finland at a local hotel on Monday.

The conference was organized to review the performance of the women councillors after completion of the first year of installation of local governments in the country.

Ms Kaija Illendar, the charge' affaires at the Embassy of Finland, was the chief guest on the occasion.

The women councillors said they were not consulted, while setting an agenda for council sessions. Moreover, the sessions of the councils are not held regularly, they said. They said as almost all the members of the councils belonged to various political parties so most of the precious time was wasted in useless political discussions.

The councillors criticized the negative role of the male councillors who, they said, did not encourage them to present their views in the house. "Our suggestions are not taken up seriously during the session", One of the councillors said. She said male councillors treated them as "special persons".

The women councillors said they were never consulted while preparing development schemes in their areas and no development funds had been allocated for them. They also criticized the officials of various government departments who, according to them, also did not cooperate with them.

(Excerpts) M. Amir Wasim & Sher Baz Khan: Dawn
(Islamabad) August 6, 2002

A troubled home front

Zahida Paryo, a general councillor of union council three, Dadu, fell prey to her husband, Abdul Jabar's, wrath after being elected councillor. The mother of seven children and in her early thirties, she complains that her husband, a hotel waiter, helped her during her elections to union council, but after that she says that he has turned against her. "I stood first by securing the highest number of votes and people honoured me a lot" she said. "He could not digest that. Although he wanted to see me win the election, he started leveling charges against me when I went to a council session or any office. He forbade me from dressing up and also ordered me not step out of the house. Should I go in rags? Would he be happy then," she protested.

The matter was initially confined to the family, but came into the limelight when Zahida's children staged a protest demonstration before Dadu press club, demanding their mother return home again. By that time, according to the children, their estranged mother had gone to her sister's home in Bhan Syed Abad, a town thirty kilometers south of Dadu. As Eid approached, Zahida's children felt more embarrassed and staged another protest in Bhan Syed Abad town, where their mother was living with her sister. The children carried Quran on their heads, staged a sit-in and demanded their mother to return home to celebrate Eid with them. Zahida conceded to their demand and promised to come home on the condition that her husband not be there, as she feared he would beat her. That is exactly what happened and she was forced to leave her home, and children, again.

Meanwhile, Jabbar went to the press club Dadu twice and told reporters that there was no dispute between the couple and that instead, "the enemies of our family are creating troubles for us." Zahida Paryo has finally filed a suit in the family court of Sehwan for separation.

Manzoor Solangi: The Review, Dawn, February 7- 13, 2002

Women's Development

Women constitute about 48% of the population of Pakistan, but on a gender basis their development status offers a dismal state of affairs. Minimal employment opportunities, discrimination, maltreatment, domestic abuse, torture, rape and "honour killings" are the familiar stories of women in Pakistan. Despite the fact that economic and social development goals cannot be achieved without participation of almost half the population of Pakistan, the political will needed for affirmative action in the area of women's development has been lacking. Largely due to the advocacy and lobbying efforts of the women's groups, the political parties have also raised their level of interest in the development and progress of women in the society. The stance of each political party on the issue of Women's Development is given hereunder

WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT	
Party	Proposed Programme
ANP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guarantee of equal rights for women in social, political and economic spheres ▪ Abolition of all discriminatory laws against women
MMA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grant of rights to women in accordance with Quran and Sunnah ▪ To enable women to play a positive role in society
MQM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To abolish all such laws that cause injustice and harassment to the female population ▪ To provide more opportunities to women to join teaching profession ▪ Training schools for female nurses, midwives and lady health visitors ▪ Population Welfare Centres to have 75% female staff ▪ Education, health and social welfare departments to place no restriction on

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ appointment of female officers / officials ▪ Campaign to spread awareness against gender discrimination ▪ Women to be given appropriate and effective representation in every walk of life including elected bodies
NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equal rights for women in all spheres of life ▪ Reservation of 25% quota for women in all public / private sector jobs including their preference in educational sector ▪ Protection against all kinds of harassment
PML (N)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To ensure respect, dignity, and protection to women as granted by Islam ▪ To promote participation of women in national development and their social, political, and economic empowerment ▪ Preference to women teachers in primary education ▪ Relaxation of age limit for mothers and widows for employment ▪ Promotion of female education and health care programs ▪ Widows with minor children who have no source of income to be provided stipends until a child reaches the age of 18 ▪ Protection of employment quota for women ▪ Effective representation of women in all key policy / decision making bodies ▪ Special legislation on violence against women and child abuse ▪ Review of law relating to sexual harassment ▪ First Women's Bank to retain its women focus

PML (QA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encouragement of women to take part in elections ▪ Major focus on education for women ▪ Importing in the existing infrastructure for women and girls ▪ Involvement of women in agriculture projects ▪ Protection for women industrial workers under the labour laws ▪ Promotion of cooperation for women ▪ Pseal legislation to combat all forms of violance against women ▪ Review of discriminatory laws aginst women ▪ Strengthening of laws of inheritnce for women ▪ Ownership of government or state land allotments to be in the neme of husband and wife
PPP (P)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Measures to give a larger role to women in various spheres of life
PTI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Free education to girls from poor households up to matric including scholarship for graduates ▪ Reservation of 33 per cent seats for women in all elected bodies ▪ Creation of social awareness against brutal and un-Islamic customs and practices ▪ Legislation to ensure equal workplace opportunities to curb domestic violence against women and enactment of sexual harasssment code ▪ Provision of housing assistance to working women ▪ To encourage active involvement of women in the management of community based rural development

	<p>initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specific micro-credit schemes for women ▪ Skill-based training for income generation and specific functional literacy programmes for women ▪ To legislate and enforce laws regarding in camera trial of molestation and rape cases ▪ To establish separate "women support cells" in each police station at tehsil level
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"A Comparative Study of Election 2002 Manifestos of Major Political Parties".

PILDAT (Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development And Transparency) 2002.

قومی اسمبلی میں خواتین کی نشستوں میں اضافہ کیا تو قعات پوری ہوئیں؟

افسوسناک بات یہ ہے کہ مختلف سیاسی جماعتیں انتخابات کے وقت عورتوں سے خوب کام لیتی ہیں۔ انہیں یہ بھی معلوم ہوتا ہے کہ عورتوں کے ووٹوں کے بغیر ہم اسمبلی تک نہیں پہنچ سکتے لیکن جب ٹکٹ دینے کا وقت آتا ہے تو یہ سیاسی جماعتیں عورتوں کو نظر انداز کر دیتی ہیں اور اپنی فعال اور محنتی ورکرز کو بھی پارٹی ٹکٹ نہیں دیتیں، اور اس کے مقابلے میں ایک عام مرد کارکن کو ترجیح دی جاتی ہے۔ حقیقت یہ ہے کہ خواتین کی مخصوص نشستوں سے زیادہ فائدہ نہیں پہنچ سکتا۔ سیاسی جماعتوں کو چاہئے کہ وہ عورتوں کو آگے لائیں اور انہیں زیادہ تعداد میں جنرل سیٹوں پر انتخابات میں شمولیت کا موقع دیں تاکہ ان میں مقابلہ کر کے آگے آنے کا شعور پیدا ہو۔ خواتین کے انتخابات کے طریقہ میں بھی تبدیلی کرنے کی ضرورت ہے۔ جب مرد حضرات خواتین کو منتخب کرتے ہیں تو یہ عورتیں، ان ممبران کی پابند ہوتی ہیں۔ انہیں اپنے مخصوص حلقوں میں خواتین کے ووٹوں کے ذریعہ ہی منتخب ہو کر آگے آنا چاہیے۔ اب یہ سیاسی پارٹیوں کی ذمہ داری ہے کہ وہ باشعور سلجھی ہوئی "خواتین"، کو اسمبلیوں میں لائیں۔

نوائے وقت 9 فروری 2002ء

خواتین منتخب کونسلروں کے نام

میرے ہاتھ میں خالی پیالہ دے کے

وہ سب کہتے ہیں

مانگ لو جو بھی چاہو

روٹی، بوٹی

عزت، منصب

حاکمیت کے شاہی نوالے

باغ کی جانب کھلنے والے در، دروازے

میں نے خود بھی سوچ رکھا تھا

میں تو اب خوابوں سے باہر

اپنے دیس کی ہر بیٹی کو

عزت اور طہور کی دہلیز کو

روشن کرنے والی شمع بنا کے

خوش ٹھہروں گی

میں تو اپنے بیٹوں کو

تعویذ انا یوں گھول پلاؤں گی

کہ کوئی حکومت، ملکوں ملکوں

قرضہ مانگنے جانہ پائے

جائے تو پھر دعائے پائے۔

میرے ہاتھ میں حاکمیت کا خالی پیالہ دے کے

وہ سب ہنستے ہیں اور کہتے ہیں

کس نے کہا تھا، حرف گزیدہ اس بستی میں تم بھی آؤ

یہاں تو کہنے اور کرنے میں فرق کی ناؤ یونہی چلے گی

یونہی رہے گا وقت کا صحرا

گیان کی منزل کب آئے گی

کب دانش سے خالی پیالہ بھر جائے گا

کب پنجرے سے نکلی عورت

اڑنا سیکھ کے تمہیں کہے گی

میرے تمہارے بیچ جو دوری

صدیوں سے قائم تھی

میں نے اس دوری کی ڈور کو کاٹا

میں نے بارش اور زمانے کے سارے موسم

پہن لیے ہیں

وقت گزاری کے آنگن سے اب تو نکلو

آؤ بگڑے کام سنوارو

آؤ میرا ساتھ نبھاؤ

دھوپ بہت اجلی ہے

اور اب تو میرے نام کی تختی گلی گلی ہے۔

سوختہ سامانی دل

کشورناہید

CHRONOLOGY

Year Event

1876

- A book, Chashmah-e-Khird, is published in which two educated Muslim women of then ruling families of Bhopal, Shahjahan Begum and Nawab Jaffri Begum of Shamsabad are appreciated for successfully managing affairs of their respective States.

1889

- Ten Muslim women political activists of British Punjab attend fourth session of Indian National Congress.
- Shahjahan Begum, ruler of Bhopal, writes a book, Tehzib-e-Niswan (The Refinement of Women) regarding women's rights.

1892

- Female franchise is not mentioned in Councils Act of 1892.

1904

- Thoughts and views of Muslim women are spoken aloud in public for the first time when a Parsi woman reads out a paper written by Chand Begum, a Muslim woman from Madras, at Mohammedan Education Conference in Bombay.

1905

- Many women participate in popular movement against partition of Bengal.

1905-8

- First involvement of women in mass politics is during the Swadeshi Movement (campaign for use of only those goods that are made in India).

1908

- Women from different communities form Maliha Parshad (Ladies Congress).
- Anjuman-e-Khawateen-e-Islam is founded at Lahore by Begum Sir Mian Mohammed.

1909

- There is no mention of female franchise in the Council Act of 1909.

1910

- Bharat Stri Mahamandal (All India Women's Association) is formed.

1913

- First Muslim woman actively involved in nationalist movement is Abadi Begum (mother of Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, popularly known as Bi Amman). She makes her first public appearance at meeting of Anjuman-e-Khuddam-e-Kaaba.
- Khanpur Mosque incident is landmark in history of Muslim women's emergence on national political scene.

1914

- All India Muslim Ladies Conference is founded by Begum of Bhopal.

1915

- The first All-India Muslim Ladies Conference is held.

1917

- Bi Amma breaks old traditions where women could not address public gatherings, and addresses annual meeting of All-India Muslim League in place of her son (Muhammad Ali) arrested by British.
- Indian Women's Association is formed.
- Question of women's suffrage is raised for the first time from platform of Indian Women's Association, demanding enfranchisement for Indian women.

1919

- Government of India Bill is enacted, it excludes women from voting, but allows Provincial Assemblies to drop exclusion clauses if they so wish.
- Khilafat Movement is first to mobilize women on a political platform. Muslim women are supported by Christian and Hindu women, most prominent being Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu, Sarala Devi and Basanti Devi, who participate in Khilafat movement alongside Bi Amma, Begum Mohammed Ali, Begum Hasrat Mohani and other Muslim women.

1920

- Non-Cooperation Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi begins to generate following among men and leads to increased political participation of women.

1921

- Women attain the right to vote in Madras Province.

1923

- Women attain right to vote in Bombay Province and the United Provinces.

1927

- Simon Commission is set up to examine working of Montagu-Chelmsford-Reforms Commission, recommending an increase in existing ratio of male-female voters.
- All India Women's Conference is founded.

1929

- Women attain right to vote in Bengal Province.
- A boycott of Simon Commission is organized, demanding universal suffrage for both men and women.

1930

- Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz from Lahore and Mrs. Subbarayan from Madras represent Indian women at First Round Table Conference at London. A memorandum demanding equal rights for all people, regardless of religion, caste, creed or sex, is submitted to the Conference.

1931

- Many nationalist feminists in general and from Congress in particular reject all suggestions for reservation of seats for women during Civil Disobedience Movement.
- All India Women's Conference and All Asian Women's Conference are held at Lahore and reiterate demand that women should be adequately represented in central and provincial legislatures, districts and municipal local bodies.
- A representative gathering of Indian Women at Bombay are drafted a memorandum on status of Indian women is proposed new constitution of India.
- All India Women's Conference (AIWC), Women Indian Association (WIA) and National Council of Women in India (NCWI) are sent the demand for securing the presence of women on Legislative and Administration Institutions.
- Lothian Committee is appointed for criteria of property, education, wifehood and literacy to expand the number of woman in electorate.

1932

- Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz, Mrs. Subbarayan and Sarojini Naidu are invited to discuss reservation of seats for women at second session of Round Table Conference.
- Report of Indian Franchise Committee is published.

1933

- Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz is invited to a meeting of League of Nations (USA).

1935

- Government of India Act, for the first time, enfranchises 6.6 million women and allocates 9 out of 250 seats for women in Federal Assembly and 6 out of 150 seats in Council of State, as reserved seats.

1936

- All India Women's Conference agitates for franchise and representation of women in local bodies.

1937

- Muslim women start playing an active role in community politics. Prominent among these are Mrs. Hamid Ali and Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz who work together for cause of Muslim women.
- Shaista Ikramullah, Gauhar Iqbal and Fatima Jaffar play an important role in awareness raising of general public and women in particular, by contributing thought-provoking articles and features in newspapers and women's magazines.
- Elections are held under the Government of India Act 1935 and 56 women are entered Legislatures.

1938

- All India Women's Sub Committee is established at twenty-sixth session of Muslim League at Patna.

1940

- First Feminist Political Group, Muslim League (Women's Group) is formed.
- Burqa clad (veiled) women take to streets protesting against arrest of Muslim leaders and ban on Khaksar movement. Press criticises this as 'fall of all women'.
- Supporting Khaksar movement, women march along with men. After police arrest men, women are asked to return to their homes but they refuse. As a result, for the first time, women are arrested in a political movement.

1941

- Muslim Girl Students Federation is launched by Lady Abdul Qadir, Shaista Ikramullah, Fatima Begum and Miss. M. Qureshi.
- Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz is nominated member of National Defence Council.

1942

- Quaid-e-Azam takes personal interest in Women's Wing of Muslim League. He addresses huge rallies of women supporters and not only publicly acknowledges the role and support of women, but also their low social status. As a result, a committee is formed within Muslim League Central Committee, aiming to work for social and cultural uplift of women.

1943

- Five thousand women attend annual meeting of Muslim League.
- Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz is elected to Punjab Assembly and remains Parliamentary Secretary until 1948.

1945

- Lady Nusrat Haroon, President of all-India Muslim League leads a delegation of Muslim Women workers to Frontier Province to mobilise Pushtoon women for active participation in independence movement.

1946

- Salma Tassadduq Hussain and Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz contest elections and win seats to Punjab Legislative Assembly.
- Shaista Ikramullah and Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz are elected to Central Constituent Assembly
- Thirteen-year old girl student Fatima Sughra hoists Muslim League flag on top of Civil Secretariat Lahore after pulling down Union Jack during a public demonstration.
- Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz hoists a green flag made out of her own dupatta on top of jail building in Lahore.

1947

- Police baton charges and uses tear gas to disperse a demonstration of Muslim women protesting against arrest of Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz.
- Sixteen Muslim women are arrested at public demonstration at Lahore.
- In Peshawar, Pushtoon women march unveiled in public for first time, as part of civil disobedience movement. Women form a "War Council", with an underground radio station, called Pakistan Broadcasting Station, which operates without being traced until Independence on 14th August.
- 14th August: Pakistan is created. Despite strict restriction on women's mobility and gender segregation among Muslim, a significant number of women participated in the struggle of Pakistan.
- Women become the main targets during the fierce communal riots during partition. The abduction of ten thousand women during migration in Punjab became the most distressing issue.
- Mai Bakhtawar of Sind Hari Committee, a peasant movement, is killed in police firing.
- After Independence, Pakistan adopts (with some changes) Government of India Act 1935, containing provision of reserved seats for women.
- Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz and Shaista Ikramullah become members of first Constituent Assembly of 69 members.

1948

- Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan launches Women's Voluntary Service.
- Democratic Women's Association is formed, with a political agenda.

1951

- Khadija Begum G. A. Khan and Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz are elected members of Legislative Assembly of Punjab.

1952

- Jahan Ara Shahnawaz, first woman member of former All India Muslim League, becomes first Asian woman to preside over a session of parliament.

1953

- Naseem Akbar is acquitted in Rawalpindi Conspiracy case.

1954

- A Charter of Rights for Women is presented before Constituent Assembly, calling for reservation of ten per cent seats for women in all legislative assemblies, equal status and equal opportunities for women, equal wages for equal work, and protection of women's rights in Muslim Personal Laws. Constituent Assembly unanimously adopts this charter, but demand for ten per cent reserved seats to just three per cent.

1955

- There is no woman member in second Constitutional Assembly.
- Female political workers form United Front for Women's Rights.

1956

- 1956 Constitution provides for 10 reserved seats (3%) for women in National Assembly. It also provides for 10 reserved seats in each Provincial Assembly. However, no elections are held under the 1956 Constitution.
- Women are given right to 'double' vote – one for general seats and one for women's seats.

1958

- Gen. Ayub Khan assumes power and introduces a multi-layered 'democracy'.

1959

- First local bodies elections are held during military regime of Gen. Ayub Khan without any representation of women.

1960

- Elections for Basic Democracy Units are held, eighty thousand members are elected by adult franchise including few women whose exact number is not available.

1962

- Constitution provides for 6 reserved seats for women in National Assembly out of 156, later increased to 218 (3.2% reduced to 2.7%); and 5 seats in each Provincial Assembly out of 155 (3.2%).
- Right of double voting is taken away from women under 1962 Constitution.
- Mujeeb-un-Nisa Ikram, Shams-un-Nahar Mehmood, Khadija G. A. Khan, Ruqeeya Anwar, Siraj-un-Nisa Choudhry and Zari Sarfaraz become members of first National Assembly.

1963

- Zahida Khaliquzzaman is appointed first woman Cabinet Minister.
- The Provincial Assembly of West Pakistan passes a resolution recommending the repeal of Family Law Ordinance, which is defeated in the National Assembly after a 20-hour debate.

1964

- Combined Opposition Parties (COP) nominate Fatima Jinnah, popularly known as "Mader-e-Millat" (Mother of the Nation), as presidential candidate for elections to be held in January 1965. Nine-point programme of COP includes restoration of direct elections, adult franchise and democratisation of 1962 Constitution.

1965

- A number of State-backed maulvis issue a fatwa religious proclaiming women's contesting elections as 'un-Islamic'.
- Despite this fatwa, Fatima Jinnah contests presidential elections.
- As results of presidential elections are announced, Fatima Jinnah loses, obtaining 28,345 votes against Gen. Ayub's 49,647.

- Six women are elected on reserved seats to second National Assembly, comprising 148 members.
- Five women are elected to each Provincial Assembly.

1969

- In Rawalpindi, on 6th January, female students of schools and colleges, wearing black headscarves, demonstrate demanding release of political detainees including Z. A. Bhutto.
- Women from all walks of life participate in anti-Ayub agitation.
- Nusrat Bhutto leads PPP women's rally in Rawalpindi against Government of Gen. Ayub Khan.
- Women take out processions all over the country in favour of DAC (Democratic Action Committee) to struggle for democracy and immediate withdrawal of state of emergency.

1970

- First-ever General Election on basis of direct adult franchise held for 313 National Assembly seats.
- Active participation of women is witnessed in electoral process.
- PPP manifesto makes special appeal to women and promises to give them equal rights. Nasim Jehan, a founder member of PPP, mobilizes women for participation in electioneering.
- Nine women contest elections to National Assembly as independent candidates, none of them wins.
- Not a single political party gives tickets to its women members, though National Awami Party (Bhashani group) selected a woman, Kaneez Fatima, a trade unionist, as a candidate, but withdraws from election because of flood in East Pakistan.

1971

- Government announced a list of 88 MNAs elected of defunct Awami League including 6 women members who continue to retain their seats in National Assembly.

1972

- On 14th April, first session of National Assembly elected in 1970 is convened.
- Six women, Nasim Jehan, Nargis Nasim Sindhu, Shireen Wahab, Zahida Sultana, Dr. Ashraf Abbasi and Jennifer Jehan Zaib Qazi Musa are members on reserved seats of third National Assembly.
- Three women are included in Constitution Committee of National Assembly.
- For the first time in Parliamentary history of Pakistan, a woman, Dr. Ashraf Abbasi, is elected deputy speaker of National Assembly.
- All Government Services are made accessible to women through Administrative Reforms of 1972.
- Universal Franchise and equal voting rights for women and men are introduced.

1973

- Constitution (1973) is passed, with milestone Article 25, which is commonly referred to as the equality clause in the Constitution. Some important points are, (1) All citizens are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of law. (2) There shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone. (3) Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the protection of women and children. Other important gender-relevant Articles include 27, 32, 34, 35, 228.
- Constitution provides 10 reserved seats for women in National Assembly (almost 5%), and 5% in each Provincial Assembly for 10 years or two general elections, whichever is later. No seats are reserved for women in Senate.
- Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan is appointed Governor of Sindh, first woman governor in Pakistan.

1974

- Women's Front Students of University of Punjab form. Its slogan is "women and politics are one".

1975

- On 8th of March International Women's Day is celebrated in Pakistan for the first time.
- A rally for women's rights is baton-charged by police in Lahore.
- A rally of Women's Front is baton-charged in Rawalpindi.
- Nine women are arrested for conducting union activities in a factory in Lahore.
- Nusrat Bhutto leads Pakistan delegation to the first World Conference on Women in Mexico. Pakistan endorsed Mexico Declaration.

1976

- Women's Rights Committee is formed under Yahya Bakhtiar. It approves formation of a Women's Division in federal Government.

1977

- Only one political party, National Awami Party, gives a woman, Nasim Wali Khan, tickets to contest National Assembly elections from two constituencies. She wins from both on General Seats.
- For the first time, Nasim Wali Khan (NAP) is elected on general seat for National Assembly. She contested from two constituencies in NWFP and won from both. However, she never took oath, since her party boycotted the assemblies. Dr. Ashraf Abbasi (PPP) is elected on General seat for Sindh Assembly.
- Nusrat Bhutto, Kulsoom Saifullah, Bilquees Begum, Bilquees Habibullah, Dilshad Begum, Nafisa Khalid, Nargis Naseem, Seema Usman Fateh, Nasim Sultana and Mubarak Begum are elected on reserved seats for National Assembly.
- General Zia-ul-Haq stages a coup d'etat and Martial Law is imposed, Nizam-e-Mustafa and so called "Islamization" process begins.

1979

- Federal Women's Division is established, as national machinery for advancement of women, as a follow up to 1975 Mexico conference, and in preparation for 1980 Copenhagen conference on women.
- Local Bodies Elections are held during military rule of Gen. Zia-ul-Haq. Provincial Governments reserve two seats for women at union council level and 10% (or a minimum of two seats) seats in all other councils, with exception of NWFP, with no reservation for women at Union Council and Town Committee level.
- Hudood Ordinance is promulgated and a system of "Islamic" punishments is introduced.

1980

- Second World Conference on Women is held in Copenhagen.

1981

- Women's Action Forum is formed in Karachi, with subsequent chapters in Lahore and Islamabad.

1982

- Following a rigid policy of pre-censorship on print and electronic media, political activists and feminists take up a new channel to voice their opinions: street theatre. Among first productions is Aurat, written by Safdar Hashmi, directed by Ali Ahmad, produced by Sheema Kermani, with Sameena Pirzada in lead role. Other similar groups follow.

1983

- Pakistan Commission on the Status of Women is established, chaired by Zari Sarfaraz.
- Local Government Elections are held for second time during Gen. Zia-ul-Haq's military rule, and women get some representation in Local Government Institutions. These seats are filled through direct elections.
- Ansari Commission report recommends Islamic provisions be incorporated into 1973 Constitution, proposing that women should not hold high government positions, such as president or prime minister. In addition, women contesting elections must be above 50 years of age and must have prior written permission from their husbands.

1984

- 12th February is commemorated as first anniversary of brutal state repression against peaceful, unarmed women-designated as "Pakistani Women's Day and commemorated each successive year.

1985

- On 25th February, Majlis-e-Shoora (non-elected National Assembly) elections are held.
- On 23rd March, first session of newly elected Parliament is held.

- Number of reserved seats for women in Majlis-e-Shoora (non-elected National Assembly) is raised to 20 (almost 10%) and period of reservation extended another 10 years or three general elections whichever is earlier.
- 15 women contest National Assembly elections on general seat, of whom only one, Syeda Abida Hussain is successful. Nasim Akhtar wins a general seat later in bye-elections.
- 25 women contested for Provincial Assemblies. Only 2 women, Syeda Sajida Nayyer Abadi and Farhat Khawaja Rafiq are elected to Punjab Assembly.
- 23 women are elected to National Assembly of 237 members (9.7%).
- There is no woman nominated to Senate of 87 members.
- Laila Wati is elected on a non-Muslim seat.
- 60 women contest elections for 20 reserved seats in National Assembly. Shabzadi Mehmooda Begum, Apa Nisar Fatima-tuz-Zohra, Afsar Raza Qizilbash, Sarwari Saddique, Sitwat Sher Ali Khan Pataudi, Ishrat Ashraf, Rehana Aleem Mashadi, Khurshid Begum, Dr. Attiya Inyatullah, Dure Shahwar, Rafia Tariq, Furrukh Mukhtar, Salma Ahmad Qamar-un-Nisa, Kalsoom Saifullah, Bilquees Begum and Bilquees Shahzada are all nominated on reserved seats for 5th National Assembly.
- 65 women contest elections for 23 reserved seats for Provincial Assemblies.
- Report of Pakistan Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by Zari Sarfaraz is presented, but not released to the public.
- Pakistan attends Third International Conference on Women at Nairobi and endorsed the Conference document, "Forward-Looking Strategies the Advancement of Women".
- On 30th December, Martial Law ends and amended Constitution is revived after nearly nine years.

1986

- Benazir Bhutto returns to Pakistan after self-imposed exile in Europe. In addition to male support, women also support her, hoping for positive changes on women's issues.

1986-87

- Draft 9th Constitutional Amendment (Shariah Bill) is tabled in Parliament by Qazi Abdul Latif and Maulana Sami-ul-Haq. It is strongly condemned by the women's movement, which launches a vigorous campaign against it, including a 1000-women strong demonstration in Islamabad by WAF, defying bans on freedom of assembly and speech during Zia-ul-Haq's Martial Law era.

1987

- Local Government elections are held under Mohammed Khan Junejo's premiership with proportion of women's representation remaining the same as in 1979 and 1983 local bodies elections.

1988

- National Assembly is dissolved by Gen. Zia-ul-Haq and PM Junejo dismissed.
- On 17th August Gen. Zia-ul-Haq is killed in an air crash.
- National Assembly polls on party basis are held after 11 years resulting in hung parliament as no party wins a clear majority.
- 24 women are elected to National Assembly of 237 members (10.1%) 4 on general and 20 on reserved seats including Benazir Bhutto, Nusrat Bhutto, Dr. Ashraf Abbasi and Syeda Abida Hussain.
- 33 women contest elections to 20 reserved National Assembly seats. Rehana Sarwar, Sarwari Siddique, Nadira Khan Khakwani, Amina Piracha, Razia Sultana, Rehana Aleem Mashadi, Shahnaz Begum, Abida Malik, Aamira Ehsan, Dr. Attiya Inyatullah, Shahnaz Wazir Ali, Nasreen Rao Rasheed, Shameem N. D. Khan, Mehmooda Shah, Zareen Majeed, Ruqqayya Khanum Soomro, Amina Bibi, Samina Razaq, Kulsoom Saifullah and Meher-un-Nisa are indirectly elected on reserved seats to National Assembly.
- 21 women contest Provincial Assemblies election.
- Nasim Wali Khan and Fauzia Behram are elected members to NWFP and Punjab Assembly respectively.
- 60 women contest elections to 23 reserved seats in four Provincial Assemblies.
- Dr. Noorjahan Panzai becomes first woman who is elected to Senate.
- Dr. Ashraf Abbasi is elected Deputy Speaker of National Assembly.
- Constitutional provision for reserved seats for women is in force for 1988 elections, but expires thereafter, and is not renewed by Benazir Bhutto (both terms), Nawaz Sharif (both terms) or anyone else until general elections are held in 2002 under Gen. Pervez Musharraf's Martial Law.
- On 1st Dec, Benazir Bhutto is nominated Prime Minister.
- On 2nd Dec, Benazir Bhutto becomes first Muslim woman Prime Minister.
- Four women ministers are appointed at Federal level.

1989

- PPP Government moves a bill for extension of existing provision of reserved seats and tries to secure consensus, but Government's move is dismissed.
- Women's Division is upgraded to Ministry of Women's Development.
- Benazir Bhutto publishes and disseminates 1985 report of Commission on the Status of Women.

1990

- Benazir Bhutto's government is dismissed by President Ghulam Ishaque Khan after only 20 months in office.
- WAF and women's organisations setup advocacy campaign with political parties for inclusion of women's issue in election manifestos.

- On 24th October, 7th General Election for National Assembly is held.
- 13 women contest National Assembly Elections. Only Benazir Bhutto and Nusrat Bhutto are elected on general seats in National Assembly (0.95%).
- 22 women contest on general seats in Provincial Assemblies election. Fauzia Behram (Punjab) Nasim Wali Khan (NWFP) are elected.
- On 23rd November. First session of National Assembly is held.
- One woman Dr. Noorjahan Panazai is in the senate (1.1%).

1990-93

- IJI Government of Nawaz Sharif makes no effort regarding restoration of women's reserved seats in National and Provincial Assemblies.

1991

- Local Bodies elections are held in Punjab. Women's representation is 11%, and modality of elections for filling women's seats is indirect.

1992

- Local Bodies elections are held in Balochistan, NWFP and Sindh. Women's representation is 16% in Balochistan, 1.32% in NWFP and 12% in Sindh.

1993

- On 18th April, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan dismisses Nawaz Sharif Government and his cabinet.
- Local bodies in Punjab are dissolved soon after P.M. Nawaz Sharif's Government is dismissed, but Balochistan Local Bodies continue to function until 1996. National average of women's representation in local bodies is 10.4%.
- Women's rights organisations restart advocacy campaigns during general elections to bring women's issues into political parties manifestos. These include demand for 33% reservation of seats for women in all legislative bodies.
- General Elections for National Assembly are held. No party wins a simple majority.
- 16 women contest on general seats for National Assembly. Only four are elected: Benazir Bhutto, Nusrat Bhutto, Tehmina Daultana and Shahnaz Javed (1.8%).
- 25 women contest for Provincial Assemblies. 3 of them, Nasim Wali Khan (NWFP) Musarrat Sultana (Punjab) and Feroza Begum (Sindh) are elected.
- On 14th October, first session of National Assembly is held.
- On 19th October Benazir Bhutto becomes Prime Minister of Pakistan for the second time.
- PPP Government prepares another bill for restoration of reserved seats for women on return to power in 1993. This bill calls for 9 reserved seats in Senate for the first time, in addition to National Assembly seats.

- One woman Dr. Noor Jahan Panezai is in senate (1.1%).

1994

- Fiza Junejo and Nasreen Jalil are selected member of Senate for a six year term.
- Bill for reserved seats for women is presented in National Assembly, but is defeated, and Bhutto government makes no further moves to achieve consensus, despite sustained campaign by women's organizations.
- A National Commission on Status of Women is established, headed by a Supreme Court judge and included political representatives and experts.

1995

- Pakistan attends Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing and presents Pakistan National Report, prepared in collaboration with NGOs. Pakistan endorses conference documents, platform for Action and Beijing Declaration.
- Women's advocacy organisations arrange round table discussions with representatives of PPP, PML-N, ANP and other political parties on issues of women's reserved seats.

1996

- Benazir Bhutto's government signs and ratifies CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, but with strong reservations, making a mockery of ratification.
- There is no progress on issue of restoration of reserved seats for women during PPP government.
- On 5th December, Benazir Bhutto's Government is again dismissed by President Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari.
- On 12th December, President announced adult franchise for FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas).

1997

- Report of Inquiry Commission on Women of Pakistan – with a number of excellent recommendations – is presented to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, on the occasion of Pakistan's Golden Jubilee, co-authored by Shahla Zia and Asma Jahangir, Commission headed by Supreme Court Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid recommends 33% reservation for women's seats in all elective bodies.
- Women's rights organisations again step up campaign during General Election to demand for 33% reservation of seats for women and other measures.
- On 3rd February, General Elections for National and Provincials Assemblies are held.
- 34 women contest general elections for National Assembly, and 6 are elected: Benazir Bhutto, Nusrat Bhutto, Syeda Abida Hussain, Majeeda Wyne, Tehmina Daultana and Dr. Fehmida Mirza, (3.2%). One more woman Khurshid Mehmood is elected in bye-election.

- Two women are in Senate (2.3%).

- 22 women contest for Provincial Assemblies. Only one Nasim Wali Khan is elected to NWFP Assembly.
- On 15th February, first session of National Assembly is held.

1998

- Controversial Fifteenth Amendment Bill is railroaded through National Assembly where PM Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League has an absolute majority, to replace existing legal system with "Islamic Shari'ah". It is not presented in Senate, thus cannot be enacted, due, inter alia, to sustained protest and opposition by human rights and women's movement.
- PM Nawaz Sharif announces in his Independence Day speech to nation, launching of National Plan of Action (NPA) in follow-up to FWCW, Beijing. There is no subsequent action on actual implementation.
- A countrywide signature campaign is undertaken by women's organisations to secure support for principle of reservation of seats in legislatures.
- Women from several political parties join in solidarity with women's rights groups in their advocacy efforts relating to reserved seats.
- Women's reserved seats in partial local bodies elections are raised from 9% to 12.7% in Punjab, 16.4% to 25.8% in Balochistan, 12.7% to 23% in Sindh and 2% to 2.9% in NWFP.
- Local Bodies Elections are partially held, as only Balochistan could complete them, Sindh and NWFP did not hold them at all, and Punjab only held elections for urban local councils by indirect elections. In the Local Bodies elections, the proportion of women's representation in Punjab is 12.7% and 25.8% in Balochistan.

1998-99

- All provincial assemblies pass unanimous resolutions urging Federal Government to restore and enhance women's reserved seats in all legislative bodies, and incorporate reserved seats in Senate. No action, no response from federal Government.

1999

- PPP and PML-N support enhancement of women's representation to 20%. TI, PTI, Millat Party and PPP-SB officially endorse demand for 33% reservation.
- In January 1999, PPP introduces a Bill in Senate, proposing 9 reserved seats for women in Senate, 40 in National Assembly (double the previous number) and 20 each in Provincial Assemblies (four times the previous number). Bill is referred to a Standing Committee, until without progress PML-N Government is dismissed by General. Pervez Musharraf in October 1999.
- On October 12, Pakistan is once again put under a military regime, Parliament is suspended and Constitution held in abeyance, National Security Council is formed and there is one woman in National

Security Council, two women are inducted in Federal Cabinet, one in Punjab, two in Sindh, one in NWFP and one in Balochistan.

2000

- Government of Pakistan submits the first of the required annual reports on progress achieved in implementation of CEDAW to the UN-two years late.
- Pakistan National Commission on Status of Women is established.
- On 14th August, military government announces Devolution of Power Plan (Local Government Plan 2000), increasing women's reserved seats to almost 33% at union council, tehsil and district levels. It also introduces in union councils, the modality of direct elections by a joint electorate of women and men.
- Led by Aurat Foundation, a coalition of civil society organisations undertakes a countrywide campaign to mobilize and maximise the participation of women voters and candidates in political and electoral process in local bodies.
- 36,105 women are elected members of local government Institutions, over 32,222 women come through constituency-based direct elections at union council level; 3,741 women are at higher tiers of Local Government. 16 women are elected on General seats as Nazims and Naib Nazims at different levels: two elected District Nazims, one Naib Nazim Tehsil, twelve Nazims Union Council and one Naib Nazim Union Council.
- 126 women have elected on seats reserved for minorities.
- Only 10% of women's seats remain vacant, mostly in NWFP and Balochistan, where women are prevented both from contesting and voting.

2001

- Majority of women at National Consultation organised by Ministry of Women's Development endorse reservation of 33% seats in all legislative bodies, but Gen. Pervez Musharraf promulgates restoration of only 17% seats in National and Provincial Assemblies.

2002

- On 21st August President Gen. Musharraf promulgates Constitutional amendments called LFO (Legal framework Order-2002).
- 11th General Elections are held on 10th October and candidates minimum qualification is raised to graduation and minimum voter's age is reduced from 21 to 18 years.
- From the previous 10% reserved seats for women in the National Assembly are increased to 17% (60 seats). Reserved seats for women in the provincial assemblies are: 66 out of 371 in Punjab, 29 out of 168 in Sindh, 22 out of 124 in NWFP, 11 out of 65 in Balochistan. There is no reserved seat for women from FATA in NA.
- There are 17 reserved seats for women in Senate out of 100 seats. 4 seats each for Punjab, Sindh, NWFP and Balochistan, one for Islamabad, and none for women from FATA in Senate.

- There are 33,175,571 registered women voters out of 71,200,234 total voters for 11th General Election (46.6%).
- 55 women contest elections on general seats for National Assembly, 33 from Punjab, 18 from Sindh, 3 from NWFP and one from Balochistan.
- 12 women are elected on general seats and 60 are nominated for National Assembly by political parties securing minimum 5% of votes polled.
- In many constituencies, for the first time a woman is elected on general seat. These include: Zubaida Jalal from Turbat in Balochistan, Hina Rabbani Khar and Khalida Mohsin Ali Qureshi from Muzaffargarh, Gulam Bibi Bharwana and Saima Akhtar Bharwana from Jhang, Sumera Malik from Khusab, Iman Waseem from Attock, Rubina Shaheen Wattoo from Okara, Samina Khalid Ghurki from Lahore. Dr. Fahmida Riaz from Badin, Shamshad Sattar Bachani from Hyderabad and Dr. Azra Fazal from Nawabshah.
- For the first time, many women also get elected on general seats for provincial assemblies: Five to Punjab, Three to Sindh, one to NWFP and one to Balochistan Assembly. These include: Sughra Imam from Jhang, Asifa Riaz Fatiana from Toba Tek Sing, Dr. Nadia Aziz from Sargodha and Rehana Jamil (Punjab Assembly), Ghazala Habib from Manshera (NWFP Assembly) and Nasreen Rehman from Loralai (Balochistan Assembly), Sasoi Palejo from Thatta, Marvi Mazhar from Dadu (Sindh Assembly).
- Twice-elected Prime Minister and Chairperson of Pakistan Peoples Party Benazir Bhutto cannot take part in the elections for being convicted in a NAB case.
- Syeda Sughra Imam has been elected to the Punjab Assembly, but her mother, seasoned parliamentarian Syeda Abida Hussain, and her father, Syed Fakhar Imam lose the elections.
- Political parties award most of reserved women's seats to the kith and kin of leadership. Twenty-five close relatives including sisters, wives, daughters, daughters-in-law, nieces of senior politicians and various party leaders have been nominated to the National Assembly on 60 reserved seats.
- Women MNAs demand 30% seats in Cabinet.
- Rahila Tiwana, a former PPP activist and presently with National Alliance, takes oath as Deputy Speaker of Sindh Assembly. She becomes the second woman to be elected Sindh's Deputy Speaker, first being Jethi Bai Tulsi who was elected deputy speaker for Sindh Assembly in 1939.

Calendar 2004

JANUARY

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