

Political Reforms and Women Political Participation in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Abstract

Women's political participation strengthens their political as well as over-all empowerment. The discourse of women's political participation is a matter of concern in the academic circles across the world. This study focuses on the effect of political reforms on women's political participation in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. Furthermore, this study focuses on the effect of political reforms on women's public and civic engagements which further contribute to their political participation. To unearth the mentioned effect, this study uses positivist research paradigm which guides quantitative methods and procedures. A sample of 400 hundred respondents was selected through random sampling technique and data was collected through structured questionnaire. Data for the study is collected from two tehsils of Swabi and Mardan. Liberal feminist theory is used as theoretical framework in this study to examine the question of the effect of political reforms on women's political participation. Independent sample t-test was employed to analyze the effect of political reforms on women's political participation. The study finds positive effects of the political reforms on women, like awareness about these reforms and civic engagements. The study recommends that women political participation could be enhanced by improving their level of education.

Keywords: Political Activists, Political Awareness, Political Reforms, Election Reforms

1. Introduction

The debate of women politics and their political participation is a global trend these days. The Southeast Asian region has also been through the same discussion for the last two decades and Pakistan is no exception in this regard (Jalalzai & Krook, 2010). Women politics has been a matter of concern since the independence of Pakistan. Efforts have been made by the government in different periods to ensure women political empowerment (Jafar, 2005). In Pakistan, various reforms have been brought by the government in respect of women empowerment. These reforms are "giving 17% reserve seats to women in the parliament", "allotment of 33% quota in the local government at KP", "law against the harassment cases of women", and "ban on the *Swara* of women". All the mentioned reforms are implemented by the government of Pakistan in various times for ensuring women empowerment (Naazer, Mahmood, & Ashfaq, 2017; Bari, 2005). This study intends to see the impact of these reforms on the real empowerment of women, especially on their political participation. One of the

serious issues which still exists is to assess the impact of the governmental laws on the women's real empowerment, especially on their political participation.

Many studies have discussed and debated the issue of political changes and women empowerment. However, the quantification of the real effect of the political reforms on women political participation in Pakistan is a need of the day (Bacchi, 1999). Therefore, this study is an attempt to examine these effects. The discussion on women political participation in this paper is divided into two categories, namely political participation, and public engagement. Women political participation is further determined by "women participation in party gatherings", "their involvement in election's campaign", women participation in public protests", women role in arranging corner meetings", and "women are free in corner meetings or not". The second category i.e., women public engagements are comprised of "women resolve neighbourhood issues", "their involvement in resolving street problems", "women contribution in resolving family disputes", "women help with the abused women", and "their help with the women in the courts". The study examined the effect of the political reforms on the mentioned categories of women political empowerment.

2. Literature Review

One of the fundamental Sociological features of society reveals that society does not remain static in any condition. Across the globe, societies move with a different rate of growth gradually (Hensline, 2012). Similarly, change in one part of the society affects the entire system of society internally and sometimes affect other societies externally as well (John & Erna, 2010). All formal and informal institutions (i.e., family, education, politics, economics, and religion) of the society have key role in societal development. Nevertheless, political institution has paramount role in the growth of the society because this institution makes policies for the development of society (Perry & Perry, 2015). According to March & Olsen (1996), "politics is a machine that determines (who gets what, when, and how), power fuels the machine and through this power, the ability of politics is to control the society." Political changes affect the rest of the societal systems because politics as an institution controls the whole society. Women (being half of the world population) play a paramount role in different walks of social life across the globe. However, their political participation is more significant because of the importance of politics in the societal structure (Shaheen, Maqsood, Arif & Bushra, 2012). The changes in political atmosphere of a society affects the entire system, thus, the dilemma of women participation in politics exists not only in Pakistan but throughout the world (Badshah, Rehman, & Muhammad, 2018).

Globally, political reforms (particularly in respect of women) are common practice to give empowerment to the women (Geisler, 2000). Throughout the women movements, their political participation is taken very seriously (Tinker, 2004). Different governments have focused women's formal representation in international politics throughout the history. Political reforms have a visible impact on women political empowerment/participation across the borders. In 1893, women got the right to vote in New Zealand for the first time. In 1907, the women entered the parliament for the first time in Finland. In 1946, women representation in the Soviet Union's government reached to 10% of the national legislature. Similarly, in 1967, the women achieved 30% part in the German Democratic Republic. In 2013 in Germany, Angela Merkel as women also remained the head of the government (Alison, 2004). Women formal political representation in 2008 reached to 50% of the parliament in Rwanda (Paxton, Hughes, & Painter, 2010). Women have strength in the European parliament although their

socio-economic features are different than men (Beauvallet & Michon, 2008). Women strength in the parliament roused to 20.3% at the end of 2012 as it was recorded 19.5% in the preceding year i.e., 2011. Norris (2006) found the effect of constituent changes on women representation and revealed that women parliamentarians have serious political commitment in different countries i.e., Norway, Sweden, and Denmark etc. In Sweden's parliament, half of the strength is included of women. Political reforms along with various socio-cultural, ideological, and political factors have an impact on women political involvement all over the world (Tabassum, Afzal, & Tabassum, 2015).

Regionally, the continent of Asia is found very dynamic in respect of women political participation and even in their political leaderships since last two decades (Ali & Akhtar, 2012). In the 1980s, Turkish women found an opportunity as political actors, and they had a sound political contribution as one of the women held the office of the Prime Minister from 1993 to 1995 (Keskin-Kozat, 1997). Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's political reforms brought women of Turkey to this position as he was a great believer of: "If a society does not wage a common struggle to attain a common goal with its women and men, scientifically there is no way for it to get civilized or develop" (Ibid). In India, the eighty-fourth constitutional amendment was made to reserve one-third seats for women in the legislative bodies as well as in the states to empower women in the political arena of the country (Raman, 2002). The Indian women are taking keen interest in the politics as on national level they are fully involved in the legislative issues of the country (Rahman, 2002). Additionally, the report demonstrates that women in India have a role in the activities of local Panchayat. Bangladesh in the region is also experiencing substantial progress in women politics as in 2013 Haseena Wajid remained head of the government. Kenya is additionally confronting a political shift which may result in shaping the way of organizations and general administration. Kenya is going through an institutional transitional procedure related to women political issues. It implies that women empowerment is needed in Kenya. South Korea is also good in women political participation as Geun-Hye has been the head of the government. Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan also remained as Prime Minister for two terms (Keskin-Kozat, 1997).

Pakistan like other nations in the region is also experiencing political reforms in respect of women empowerment since the preceding two decades. Most importantly, the era from 1998-2008 has been recognized as paramount in promoting the agenda of women empowerment and emancipation (Zia, 2009). The political atmosphere of Pakistan has been changed significantly by the reforms introduced by General Pervaiz Musharraf since 2002. With the political reforms, women representation in Pakistan's politics is visible. In General Musharraf's regime, women were given 17% quota in National Assembly, Senate and in four provincial Assemblies through LFO 2002. Moreover, 33% seats were also allocated to women by the government in the local government system of Pakistan. The parliaments of 2002 and 2008 have revealed the maximum strength of the women members (Bari, 2005). The women have been taking part in the national and the provincial legislatures and have also occupied key public offices in national and provincial governments.

2.1. History of Women Political Participation in Pre-Partition Era (1918-1947)

Women political involvement in Pakistan is not a current political business; however, women were also present in the political struggle for independence of Pakistan and actively took part in the Pakistan movement (Rahman, 2002). A great historical significance of Pakistan Movement about women participation cannot be ignored by the nation as for the first time

Muslim women took part in such a movement. It has recognised women role in the creation of Pakistan. The Khilafat movement of the 1920s was the first precedent of women presence in the political arena. A women political figure Bi Amman (mother of Muhammad Ali Johar and Maulana Shaukat Ali) opposed British imperialism by motivating the women of India (Ibid). Women came out with Bi Amman from various parts of India, and they struggled to have their own identity while opposing British rule in the sub-continent. When Maulana Shaukat Ali and Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi were locked off in the jail; Bi Amman raised the voice against British cruelties. Another figure among women members of Pakistan movement was Fatima Jinnah, sister of the founding father, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. She was the first lady who formulated women perspective for the creation of Pakistan.

The founding father of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah also observed the increasing number of women in the congress (Ibid). He recognized the presence of Muslim women and their participation in Muslim League. In 1937 at Lucknow, Quaid-e-Azam called for the establishment of women wing in the Muslim League. Moreover, women like Fatima Sughra, Mahmuda Razzaq, Shaukat Ara, Kulsoom Rehman and Tazeen Faridi have also remained active in Pakistan movement. All these women have contributed one way or the other during the process of independence from British rule. Ms. Tazeen Faridi remained one of the political figures during the independence movement. She was an early member of All Pakistan Women Association [APWA] (Dawn, 2011). An interesting situation was faced by the British government when Mahmuda Razaq was imprisoned by the British government. When she has started the campaign in the jail for independence of Pakistan, soon the administration of jail discovered that enthusiasm among girls and women for the independence is increasing because of arresting women.

2.2. Women Political Involvement in Post-Partition Era

Women in Pakistan have also remained active in post-independence era. Begum Jahan Ara Shah and Begum Shaista Ikramullah have served as first women members in the Legislative Assembly of Pakistan. They have contributed to real spirit for the promotion of women in the country's politics on the national level. They struggled to put the demands of women rights on the agenda of the constituent assembly (WMC Pakistan, 2015). Another moment came into the front of the public when the mother of the nation, Fatima Jinnah, decided to contest presidential elections against General Ayub Khan. It was a bold decision of the mother of the nation because the political atmosphere of the country was not favourable for women (Ibid). Although, General Ayub Khan won the presidential elections, the contest of elections by Fatima Jinnah had let an impact over the rest of women political activists at that time. It has made a history of the women in the politics of Pakistan. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah coined the seed of women politics as he took his sister everywhere in the protests, public speeches, etc. He was a great advocate of women emancipation. He said, "No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you." Mr. Jinnah had set the trend, and his successors followed him. Liaquat Ali Khan, being first Prime Minister of Pakistan had kept his wife Rana Liaquat Ali Khan side by side in every political activity.

These women became a symbol of courage for all the women of the time to be active participants in any political activity in the country. Women wings were set up by the political parties in Pakistan during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's regime (i.e., 1970-77). Women got economic independence and played a paramount role in the labour force. Women came close to Benazir Bhutto and joined her to release the country from dictatorship. Women in Pakistan not only

take part in legislation, but they have also been holding different key positions in governments. The late Benazir Bhutto has served as prime minister of Pakistan for two terms i.e., in 1988 and later in 1993. She came into politics and started the struggle for the provision of social security to Pakistani women. She started her political journey with taking the token in her hands for the protection of women rights (Ali & Akhtar, 2012; Rehman, Khan, & Khan, 2017). After all these political changes and women political participation, women in Pakistan still need to reach to the required position in the political arena of the country. Since the independence, women role in decision-making institutions in Pakistan are still nominal although women form half of the country's population (Bano, 2009).

2.3. The 21st Century Reforms in Pakistan for Women Empowerment

The history of women in Pakistan has not been an invisible political business. The practical engagements of women have been recorded in the political struggle for the independence movement against the British and even after the creation of the independent state of Pakistan. Nevertheless, the political reforms of 21st century are very prominent for women empowerment including their political participation.

2.3.1. Allocation of 17% Reserve Seats to Women in the Parliament

During General Musharraf's regime, women quota in the parliament was reserved through Legal Framework Order-2002 (LFO), and 17% seats were allocated to women in both the chambers (i.e., National Assembly and Senate) of Pakistan's parliament and in four provincial assemblies also (LFO, 2002). Prior to Musharraf's regime, no reserve seat was allocated to women in the parliament during the general elections of 1988, 1990, 1993 and 1997 (Aurat Foundation, 2012).

2.3.2. 33% Reserve Seats for Women in Local Government

In order to empower the women politically, General Musharraf's regime had allocated 33% reserved seats for women in the local government system for elections in all the provinces under the legal framework order of 2002 (Soomro, 2016). Before General Musharraf's regime, the seats were not reserved for women in the local governments in any of the provinces. It enhanced the political participation of women in politics thus helped in overcoming the governance gaps.

2.3.3. Law against the Harassment of Women

The harassment of women especially at workplace is a major issue in the country. Therefore, another reform with the title of Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010 was passed by the government of Pakistan in January 2010 to protect and empower the women in harassment cases (Khan & Ahmad, 2016). This reform was made by the government with the spirit to give social protection against any kind of mistreatment to women for their exposure to the public sphere where they can develop a versatile agency by going through multiple experiences in the job market across the country.

2.3.4. Ban on the *Swara* of Women

After the regime of General Musharraf (which had been significant about political reforms for

the women), the PPP coalition government of 2008 extended the process of the women empowerment and reforms. It made another political reform for women protection. In December 2011, a legislation was passed by the government with the title “anti-women practices bill” in which *Swara* of women was banned (Khan, 2011). According to Capt. Revert “*Swara* means a women rider, but in traditional terminology, it refers to a girl given over to the aggrieved family as compensation for blood.”

3. Research Methodology

The study examines the effect of political reforms on women political participation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. This study is conducted in two districts, i.e., district Swabi and Mardan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The research is conducted under a positivist paradigm which guides quantitative method. After completing such prerequisites, the researchers collected data from 400 women political activists by using an interview schedule. The interview schedule is comprised of two sections. Section first includes questions about respondent’s knowledge about political reforms. Section two is composed of questions about women political participation. The collected data is passed on through a quantitative data analysis protocol. Using SPSS, the descriptive statistics is applied for univariate analysis and bivariate analysis which are done through independent sampling t-test of inferential statistics. Content analysis technique is used for further analysis of the data. Various categories are made under relevant contents and are analysed in line with key insights from liberal feminism. Collectively, the similar and different responses are discussed and critically analysed in the next section of the article. The key findings are concluded in the last section.

4. Analysis and Discussion

The data has been analysed in line with two different quantitative analysis techniques i.e., descriptive, and inferential statistics. It is analysed for socio-demographic variables, knowledge of the respondents about political reforms and women political participation through descriptive statistics. Afterwards, the effect of the knowledge of the respondents about political changes on women political empowerment has been computed through inferential statistics technique. We have applied Independent Sample t-test of the inferential statistics for the analysis of the bivariate variables.

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

The table-1 shows the social features of the respondents. The respondents are selected from two tehsils namely tehsil Mardan and tehsil Swabi in district Mardan and District Swabi, respectively. From both tehsils a sample size of 400 women political activists is selected in which 52.7% respondents are from tehsil Mardan and the remaining 47.3% have been chosen from tehsil Swabi. The table likewise shows age of the women political activists in which 52.5% of the respondents belong to age cluster 26-35 years, 22.7% of them belong to age group 16-25 years, 19.7% belong to age cluster 36-45 years, while the remaining 5.0% portion of respondents belong to 46 years of age or above 46 years. Minimum age of the respondent’s i.e., women political activists is 16 years, and maximum age is 70 years. Data in the table concludes that dominant part of the respondents is from age cluster 26-35.

The table also shows that married respondents are 64%, single are 34%, and the remaining 2.0% respondents are widowed. The table further clarifies that 57% respondents have a nuclear

family structure, 41% have a joint family structure, and the remaining 2.0% have an extended family structure. Thus, the information shows that larger part of the respondents is 57% women who have nuclear family structure. Table moreover demonstrates the literacy level of women political activists in the finished years of education which demonstrates that 37% respondents have Bachelor qualification, 19% have Matriculation qualification, 19% have Intermediate, and 19% respondents have Master and above levels of education, while just 6.0% of the respondents are ignorant. The information concludes that a dominant part of the respondents are the 37% women who have finished their bachelor (See Table-1).

1. Respondent's Division by Place, Age, Marital Status, Structure of Family, and Education (N=400)

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Statement	Frequency	Percent
Respondent's Residence (Tehsil)			Respondent's Family Structure		
Mardan	211	52.7	Nuclear Family	229	57
Swabi	189	47.3	Joint Family	163	41
			Extended Family	8	2
Age of the Respondents (Years)			Respondent's Education (School Years)		
16-25	91	22.7	Illiterate	23	6
26-35	210	52.5	Matric	75	19
36-45	79	19.7	Intermediate	76	19
46-55	15	3.7	Bachelor	147	37
Above 55	5	1.3	Master and above	79	19
Respondent's Marital Status					
Single	136	34			
Married	256	64			
Divorced/Widowed	8	2			

The table-2 shows the information of the respondents about political changes which have been made in different periods by various governments. The table shows that 75.3% respondents have the learning about political change i.e., "an extension in women quota in the parliament" whereas the 24.8% of them have no idea about the said political change. The information in the table concludes that majority of the respondents is 75.3% women who have the learning about the previously mentioned change. About the statement i.e., "17% seats for women through election in the parliament" data shows that 71.3% women political activists have an awareness about the said new reform whereas 28.8% had no idea about it. The information shows that major part of the respondents is 71.3% women political activists who have knowledge about the previously mentioned reform.

2. Respondent's Division by their Awareness about Political Changes (N=400)

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Statement	Frequency	Percent
An Extension in Women Quota in the Parliament			Law against the Harassment Cases of Women		
Yes	301	75.3	Yes	321	80.3
No	99	24.8	No	79	19.8
17% Seats for Women through Election in Parliament			Ban on the Swara of Women		
Yes	285	71.3	Yes	359	89.8
No	115	28.8	No	41	10.3
33% Quota for Women in the Local Government of KP					
Yes	285	71.3			
No	115	28.8			

The information in the table-2 further shows that 71.3% women political activists have an awareness about the statement i.e., "33% quota for women in the local government of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa," whereas 28.8% have no idea regarding the said political change. The information concludes that dominant part of women political activists is 71.3% who have an idea about the mentioned statement. The table information shows that 80.3% women political activists have awareness about the reform i.e., "law against the harassment cases of women" whereas 19.8% respondents have no idea about the said reform. So, the data shows that greater part of women political activists is 80.3% who have an idea about the said reform. Data in the table exhibits about the statement i.e., "ban on the *Swara* of women" which shows that 89.8% women political activists have knowledge about the previously mentioned political change, while 10.3% of the respondents have no clue about this political reform. The information concludes the dominant part of women political activists being 89.8% women, who have an awareness about the abovementioned reform (see Table-2).

The table-3 gives the view of the respondents about the announcement i.e., "women go to party gatherings" which demonstrates that 67.8% individuals affirm the statement, 18% of the respondents strongly affirm, 6.5% are not sure about the announcement, 5.3% negate it, and 2.5% of the respondents strongly negate statement. The information shows that greater part being 67.8% of women political activists who are agree upon the statement that women go to party gathering. The information in the table likewise displays that the 62% women political activists are agree to the statement i.e., "women participate in the protests", 17.3% reply is don't know, 11.3% of the respondents strongly affirm it, 7.5% negate it, and just 2.0% of the respondents strongly disagree this statement. The information therefore shows the greater part of the respondents being 62% who accept the statement that women take part in the public protests. The information in the table further uncovers that 54.3% of the respondents accept the statement that "women are free in casting a vote", 29.8% of the respondents strongly accept it, 13.3% are uncertain, 2.0% of the respondents negate it, and the last 0.8% of the respondents strongly negate the statement. Thus, this information obviously declares that the dominant part of respondents is 54.3% who accept that women are free in casting a vote.

3. Respondent's Opinions about Impact of Political Changes on the Political Participation of Women

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Statement	Frequency	Percent
Women go to Party Gatherings			Women take part in Election Campaign		
Strongly Agree	72	18	Strongly Agree	103	25.8
Agree	271	67.8	Agree	196	49
Uncertain	26	6.5	Uncertain	75	18.8
Disagree	21	5.3	Disagree	22	5.5
Strongly Disagree	10	2.5	Strongly Disagree	4	1
Women Participate in the Public Protests			Women Arrange Corner Gatherings		
Strongly Agree	45	11.3	Strongly Agree	86	21.5
Agree	248	62	Agree	217	54.3
Uncertain	69	17.3	Uncertain	60	16.5
Disagree	30	7.5	Disagree	6	7.5
Strongly Disagree	8	2	Strongly Disagree	1	0.3
Women are Free in Casting Vote					
Strongly Disagree	119	29.8			
Agree	217	54.3			
Uncertain	53	13.3			
Disagree	8	2			
Strongly Disagree	3	0.8			

The table-3 also additionally displays the view of the respondents about the statement i.e., "women are involved in the election movement" in which 49% women political activists accept

this statement, 25.8% strongly accept, 18.8% are uncertain, 5.5% negate this statement, and last 1.0% of the respondents strongly negate it. The table thus concludes the larger part of the respondents being 49% who affirm that women take part in the election movement. About another statement i.e., "women arrange corner gatherings," the information in the table exhibits that 54.3% women political activists affirm this statement, 21.5% of the respondents affirm it, 16.5% stay undecided, 7.5% negate it, and last 0.3% of the respondents strongly oppose this statement. This discourse proves that the dominant part of the respondents is 54.3%, who affirm the statement about corner gatherings (see Table-3).

The table-4 shows that 60% women political activists affirm that “women resolve neighbourhood problems,” 19.3% strongly affirm it, 17.3% of the respondents are not aware about the statement, 3.3% negate it, and just 0.3% of the respondents strongly negate this statement. This information shows that the dominant part is 60% of the respondents who accept that women resolve neighbourhood issues. The table likewise shows that 44.5% of the respondents accept that “women contribute in resolving other family's disputes,” 14.8% of the respondents strongly accept this statement, 33% of the respondents stay undecided, 9.8% negate it, and the last 1.0% of the respondents strongly negate the statement. The information clearly proves larger part of the respondents being 44.5% who believe that “women give contribution in resolving other family's disputes.”

The information in the table demonstrates that 31.5% of the respondents stay undecided about the statement that “women help individuals in courts,” 27.8% affirm this statement, 23% negate it, 15.3% of the respondents strongly accept, and 2.5% of the respondents strongly negate the statement. The information concludes that dominant part of the respondents is 31.5% who stay undecided about the statement. The table likewise shows that 57.5% of the respondents affirm that “women resolve street problems”, 17.5% stay uncertain about this statement, 14.8% strongly affirm the statement, 8.0% negate it, and last 2.0% of the respondents strongly negate the statement. Information in the table shows the larger part of the respondents being 57.5% who accept that women resolve street problems.

4. Respondent’s Opinions about Impact of Political Changes on the Public Engagements of Women

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Statement	Frequency	Percent
Women Resolve Neighbourhood Issues			Women Resolve the Street Problems		
Strongly Agree	77	19.3	Strongly Agree	59	14.8
Agree	240	60	Agree	230	57.5
Uncertain	69	17.3	Uncertain	71	17.8
Disagree	13	3.3	Disagree	32	8
Strongly Disagree	1	0.3	Strongly Disagree	8	2
Women Contribute in Resolving other Families’ Disputes			Women Help the Abused Women		
Strongly Agree	59	14.8	Strongly Agree	63	15.8
Agree	178	44.5	Agree	212	53
Uncertain	120	30	Uncertain	80	20
Disagree	39	9.8	Disagree	41	10.3
Strongly Disagree	4	1	Strongly Disagree	4	1
Women help Individuals in Courts					
Strongly Disagree	61	15.3			
Agree	111	27.8			
Uncertain	126	31.5			
Disagree	92	23			
Strongly Disagree	10	2.5			

Information in the table-4 also exhibits that 53% women political activists affirm the statement that “women help the abused women,” 20% stay undecided about this statement and 15.8% women political activists strongly negate the statement, 10.3% negate it, and the last 1.0% of the respondents strongly opposed the statement. The information concludes that dominant part of women political activists is 53% women, who accept that the women extent their help to the abused women (see Table-4).

4.2. Inferential Statistics

The analysis of inferential statistic in table-5 shows the comparison of women political empowerment with the various interpreters of knowledge about political changes in the country. There is statistically a mean difference between the women political empowerment based on their awareness about the 17% women reserved seats in the parliament of Pakistan. Similarly, statistically a mean difference is seen between the political empowerment of women political activists based on their awareness about the 33% women quota in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly. Likewise, statistically a significant mean difference is recorded between the women political empowerment based on the women awareness about the reform i.e., “the law against the harassment cases of women.” However, the difference of the mean between the women political empowerment based on “ban on the *Swara* of women” is statistically not significant.

5. Independent Sample T-test Statistics between Knowledge about Political Changes and Women Political Empowerment

Knowledge about Political Changes	Mean	St. Dev	Confidence Interval
17% Women Reserve Seats in the Parliament			
Yes	9.12	2.438	
No	7.97	2.271	
t-value	0.435 ^{***}		-1.652–0.647
33% Quota for Women in Local Government at K			
Yes	8.69	2.650	
No	8.15	2.310	
t-value	0.401 [*]		-1.052 – 0.027
Law against the Harassment Cases of Women			
Yes	9.10	2.585	
No	8.11	2.274	
t-value	0.130 ^{***}		-1.573 - 0.418
Ban on the <i>Swara</i> of Women			
Yes	8.88	2.274	
No	8.24	2.258	
t-value	-1.64 ^{ns}		-1.407 – 0.125

Note: (ns) mean not significant

P<0.001^{***}

P<0.01^{**}

P<0.05^{*}

5. Findings of the Study

The key findings of the study are discussed in detail separately under different title heads and its summary along with suggestions is concluded in a separate portion at the end.

5.1. Awareness of Women Political Activists about Political Reforms

The analysis of the awareness among women political activists about political reforms reveal that major part of women political activists is aware of the different political changes brought in the study area. Mostly the women political activists are aware of the increase of women seats in the parliament. They have the knowledge about the 33% quota for women in the provincial government of KP. The respondents are also aware of the law against harassment cases of women and about the ban on *swara* also.

5.2. Political Reforms and Women Political Participation/Empowerment

The perception of women political activists about the impact of political reforms on women political participation is optimistic. Women have been taking part in the political parties' meetings. They are taking part in public protests. Women take part in the election campaign are holding the corner meetings. Women are free up to some extent to cast votes in the general and local government elections.

5.3. Political Changes and Women Civic Engagements

The study about the effect of political changes on the women civic engagements reveal that women take part in the civic activities of the community. They are busy in resolving the neighbourhood social issues. Women are also involved in resolving the street problems. Thus such activities are contributing to political change regarding women empowerment.

5.4. Women's Knowledge about Political Reforms

While finding the T-test, the statistic between knowledge about political reforms and women political empowerment uncovers that there are significant mean differences being recorded about women political empowerment based on their knowledge about 17% female participation in the parliament. Women with the knowledge about the said reform are more empowered politically as compared to those women who have less knowledge about the previously mentioned reform. Finding of the t-test also reveals significant mean differences between two groups of women political activists about their empowerment based on the knowledge about the law against harassment cases of women. Women with knowledge about the said reform are more empowered as compared to those who have less knowledge.

6. Conclusion

This study examines the effect of political reforms on women political participation and empowerment in the province of KP. It is a province in which traditional socio-economic, cultural, and patriarchal structures do not give space to women for their empowerment (Ullah, 2018). Findings of the study suggest that women political activists have the awareness about the political reforms (provision of 17% quota to women in the parliament, 33% women quota in the local governments, the law against female harassment cases, and ban on *Swara*) introduced by the government of Pakistan in 2002. The study concludes that women political participation in the target area is affected by these reforms as women are present in political party's meetings, they are involved in public protests, they are running the election campaign, and are also holding corner meetings.

The study also suggests that the effect of political changes is visible on women civic engagements as they are busy in resolving the neighbourhood issues and they are also involved in resolving the street problems at local community level. The study finds significant mean differences between the two groups of the respondents about their political empowerment based on the knowledge about various political reforms. Women with knowledge about political changes are more active in political participation as compared to those who have no or less knowledge about the various political changes introduced in province of KP and at the national level in Pakistan.

Suggesting workable solutions to the policy makers, the government needs to focus on female education in all respects. It would create awareness among the women population of the society. The educated women can know about their political rights, and they can understand political dynamics of the society. Women political representation (both, elected and through quota) in local, provincial, and national governments should also be increased. Their current quota in the parliament (i.e., 17%) and in local governments (33%) is not enough because they constitute half of the country's population. Moreover, the study shows that separate wings of women should be established in the political parties to encourage and ensure the women political contribution in the country.

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