

Challenges and Opportunities for the Inclusion of Women in Politics in Pakistan

A Case Study of Women and Men Career Politicians in the Pakistan Tehreek
Insaf Political Party (PTI)

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Madiha Hussain

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Zusammensetzung der Prüfungskommission:

PD Dr. Eva Youkhana
(Vorsitzender)

Professor Dr. Jörg Blasius
(Betreuer und Gutachter)

Professor Dr. Peter Rieker
(Gutachterin)

Professor Dr. Christoph Antweiler
(weiteres prüfungsberechtigtes Mitglied)

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Abstract

The present study inquired into the challenges and opportunities pertaining to women's political participation beyond elections in Pakistan. The main objective of the current research was to explore how women who pursue political careers as members of the Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) political party navigate the political sphere beyond elections. It also focused on how women career politicians circumvented the structural and institutional challenges of political participation, further exploring the opportunities available to women in the politics of Pakistan. In view of the research objectives underpinning the study, the Milbrath Hierarchical Model was adopted to serve as a baseline for categorizing political respondents according to their level of political engagement.

The study also made use of the Supply and Demand Model of Candidate Selection, which focuses on the selection and recruitment of women aspirants in the political sphere. The model helped to determine the different candidacy stages and to identify structural and institutional challenges in relation to women's political participation, particularly in view of gender-based inequalities. In the present research, a qualitative research design was deployed as it enabled the exploration of the issues from the perspectives of the participants rather than solely from the vantage point of external explanations. Such an exploratory design was also helpful as it explicated the underlying apparatuses and instruments of challenges vis-à-vis women's political participation in Pakistan. To explore the sensitive topic of political participation, individual in-depth interviews were conducted to preempt interviewee reservations about sharing their candid opinions in a group environment.

The current research was guided by the Feminist Standpoint perspective which argues that feminist social sciences should be practised from the perspective of women to access feminist ways of thinking. The Feminist Standpoint approach helped to explore the challenges and opportunities related to women's political participation from the position of marginalized women career politicians. Moreover, male career politicians were also included in the current research based on the understanding that they were gendered beings. Also, the contrasting gender perspectives would help to determine the role of gender in exploring the phenomenon of challenges of women's political participation in Pakistan. The fieldwork for the current research was conducted between 20 July 2018 to 30 Aug 2019 in the Punjab province of

Pakistan. During the fieldwork, 26 semi-structured interviews were conducted with women and men career politicians from the PTI party. The respondents were identified through the snowball sampling technique. The data analysis was done in three phases, spanning data reduction, display and interpretation with the help of the qualitative analysis software Atlas.ti. The present research reflected on multiple aspects of challenges related to women's political participation beyond elections in Pakistan. Based on insights from the participants, it identified pathways to circumvent such challenges. The study found that the motivation gaps can be covered through influential political leaders, either female or male. Apart from being motivated by influential leaders, women can be mobilized to join politics via student unions, labour force participation, involvement in social work or NGOs and through political kinship ties.

Moreover, the study highlighted the financial constraints faced by political aspirants. It was found that women career politicians manage their finances in politics with the help of family members, mainly husbands or parents. They also take advantage of the reserved seat system to overcome their financial challenges. The study also identified that the challenges of the dual burden of juggling childcare and professional careers for women career politicians can be addressed with the help of extended families and domestic helpers. The study showed that female career politicians tackled harassment by relying upon political positions or political kinship ties. The power and authority of woman career politicians safeguards them from harassment in the political party at the very least. Moreover, the findings of the current study revealed that the entry of women aspirants in the political arena is much easier if they have strong political connections. The study found that women career politicians can also ensure their inclusion in decision-making by taking advantage of the leverage of their social class background or political positions.

Moreover, the present research also found that the reserved seat system comprised both a challenge as well an opportunity for women aspirants. It is a promising opportunity for women from marginalized backgrounds to make it into politics. At the same time, it is a challenge because the ambiguous criteria for reserved seats casts into doubt women's candidacy, creating the impression that it is their political connections or affluent backgrounds rather than their abilities which have led to their candidature. Overall, this study serves to bridge the gap between existing knowledge and theoretical findings related to women's political participation, especially in the context of a developing country.

Kurzfassung

Die vorliegende Studie untersuchte die Herausforderungen und Möglichkeiten, die sich aus der politischen Beteiligung von Frauen nach den Wahlen in Pakistan ergeben. Das Hauptziel der aktuellen Untersuchung bestand darin, zu erforschen, wie Frauen, die als Mitglieder der politischen Partei Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) eine politische Karriere verfolgen, sich in der politischen Sphäre nach den Wahlen verhalten. Außerdem wurde untersucht, wie Berufspolitikerinnen die strukturellen und institutionellen Herausforderungen der politischen Partizipation umgehen und welche Möglichkeiten Frauen in der pakistanischen Politik zur Verfügung stehen. In Anbetracht der Forschungsziele, die der Studie zugrunde liegen, wurde das hierarchische Modell von Milbrath als Grundlage für die Kategorisierung der politischen Befragten nach dem Grad ihres politischen Engagements verwendet. In der Studie wurde auch das Angebots- und Nachfragemodell der Kandidatenauswahl verwendet, das sich auf die Auswahl und Rekrutierung von weiblichen Bewerbern im politischen Bereich konzentriert. Das Modell half dabei, die verschiedenen Phasen der Kandidatur zu bestimmen und strukturelle und institutionelle Herausforderungen in Bezug auf die politische Beteiligung von Frauen zu ermitteln, insbesondere im Hinblick auf geschlechtsspezifische Ungleichheiten.

In der vorliegenden Untersuchung wurde ein qualitatives Forschungsdesign angewandt, da es die Erforschung der Themen aus der Perspektive der Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmer und nicht nur aus dem Blickwinkel externer Erklärungen ermöglichte. Ein solches exploratives Design war auch deshalb hilfreich, weil es die zugrundeliegenden Mechanismen und Instrumente der Herausforderungen im Hinblick auf die politische Partizipation von Frauen in Pakistan aufzeigte. Um das heikle Thema der politischen Partizipation zu erforschen, wurden Einzelinterviews geführt, um Vorbehalte der Befragten gegenüber einer offenen Meinungsäußerung in einer Gruppenumgebung zu vermeiden. Die aktuelle Untersuchung wurde vom feministischen Standpunkt aus geleitet, der besagt, dass feministische Sozialwissenschaften aus der Perspektive von Frauen ausgeübt werden sollten, um Zugang zu feministischen Denkweisen zu erhalten. Dies trug dazu bei, die Herausforderungen und Möglichkeiten im Zusammenhang mit der politischen Beteiligung von Frauen aus der Sicht von marginalisierten Berufspolitikerinnen zu untersuchen. Darüber hinaus wurden auch männliche Berufspolitiker in die aktuelle Untersuchung einbezogen, da man davon ausging, dass sie geschlechtsspezifische Wesen sind und dass die unterschiedlichen

Geschlechterperspektiven dazu beitragen würden, die Rolle des Geschlechts bei der politischen Beteiligung von Frauen zu bestimmen.

Die Feldarbeit für die aktuelle Untersuchung wurde zwischen dem 20. Juli 2018 und dem 30. August 2019 in der pakistanischen Provinz Punjab durchgeführt. Während der Feldforschung wurden 27 halbstrukturierte Interviews mit weiblichen und männlichen Berufspolitikern der PTI-Partei geführt. Die Befragten wurden durch die Technik des Schneeballverfahrens ermittelt. Die Datenanalyse erfolgte in drei Phasen, die die Datenreduktion, Darstellung und Interpretation mit Hilfe der qualitativen Analysesoftware Atlas.ti umfassten.

Die vorliegende Untersuchung befasste sich mit verschiedenen Aspekten der Herausforderungen im Zusammenhang mit der politischen Beteiligung von Frauen nach den Wahlen in Pakistan. Basierend auf den Erkenntnissen der Teilnehmerinnen wurden Wege aufgezeigt, wie diese Herausforderungen umgangen werden können. Die Studie ergab, dass die Motivationslücken durch einflussreiche politische Führer, ob weiblich oder männlich, geschlossen werden können. Abgesehen von der Motivation durch einflussreiche Führungspersönlichkeiten können Frauen auch über Studentenvereinigungen, die Beteiligung am Arbeitsmarkt, die Mitwirkung in der Sozialarbeit oder in Nichtregierungsorganisationen sowie durch politische Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen zur Teilnahme an der Politik mobilisiert werden. Darüber hinaus wurden in der Studie die finanziellen Beschränkungen hervorgehoben, mit denen politische Bewerberinnen konfrontiert sind. Es wurde festgestellt, dass Berufspolitiker ihre Finanzen in der Politik mit Hilfe von Familienmitgliedern, hauptsächlich Ehemännern oder Eltern, verwalten. Sie nutzen auch das System der *reserved seats*, um ihre finanziellen Probleme zu überwinden. Die Studie ergab auch, dass die Doppelbelastung durch die Kinderbetreuung und die berufliche Laufbahn mit Hilfe von Großfamilien und Haushaltshilfen bewältigt werden kann. Im traditionellen Familiensystem Pakistans erhalten Berufspolitikerinnen auch Unterstützung von ihren Großfamilien, um ihre politische Laufbahn zu verfolgen.

Die Studie zeigte, dass Berufspolitikerinnen Belästigungen dadurch begegneten, dass sie sich auf politische Positionen oder politische Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen stützten. Die Macht und Autorität von Berufspolitikerinnen schützt sie zumindest vor Belästigungen in der politischen Partei. Darüber hinaus zeigten die Ergebnisse der aktuellen Studie, dass der Eintritt von Frauen in die politische Arena viel einfacher ist, wenn sie über starke politische Verbindungen

verfügen. Die Studie ergab, dass Berufspolitikerinnen ihre Einbeziehung in die Entscheidungsfindung auch dadurch sicherstellen können, dass sie die Vorteile ihres sozialen Hintergrunds oder ihrer politischen Position nutzen. Darüber hinaus ergab die Untersuchung, dass das System der *reserved seats* sowohl eine Herausforderung als auch eine Chance für weibliche Kandidaten darstellt. Es ist eine vielversprechende Möglichkeit für Frauen aus marginalisierten Schichten in die Politik zu gelangen. Gleichzeitig stellt es eine Herausforderung dar, da die unklaren Kriterien für *reserved seats* die Kandidatur von Frauen in Frage stellen und den Eindruck erwecken, dass ihre politischen Verbindungen oder ihr wohlhabender Hintergrund und nicht ihre Fähigkeiten für ihre Kandidatur ausschlaggebend waren. Insgesamt dient diese Studie dazu, die Lücke zwischen dem vorhandenen Wissen und den theoretischen Erkenntnissen über die politische Beteiligung von Frauen zu schließen, insbesondere im Kontext eines Entwicklungslandes.

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List of Abbreviations

UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UN	United Nations
PTI	Pakistan Tehreek Insaf
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICPD	International Conference on Population Development
PAT	Pakistan Awami Tehreek
SFCG	Search for Common Ground Pakistan
PTA	Pakistan telecommunication Authority
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
EIU	The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy index
NDI	National Democratic Institute
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League- Nawaz Group
ECP	Election Commission of Pakistan
WEF	World Economic Forum
CEDAW	Convention on the elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
NADRA	National Data Base and Registration Authority Official
PTI	Pakistan Tehreek Insaf
PMLN	Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz Group
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
NA	National Assembly
MPA	Member of Provincial Assembly
MNA	Member of National Assembly
IRI	International Republican Institute
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
WEF	World Economic Forum

Chapter 1 Introduction

The recent Global Gender Gap Report reveals that if the current trajectory is maintained, it will take another 54.4 years for Western Europe and 71.5 years for South Asian countries to close the gender gap (The World Economic Forum, 2020). At a global level, women's leadership, as well as participation in the political arena are circumscribed, and women tend to be under-represented as candidates and leaders. Irrespective of their demonstrated ability as leaders and their right to equal participation in democratic governance, women do not experience equal representation in the political sphere (UN Women, 2020). A multitude of challenges hinders women's political empowerment as well as the pursuit of their political careers. The challenges of women's political participation range from structural or institutional challenges to cultural practices that limit political opportunities for women. As noted in the UN General Assembly resolution on women's political participation in 2011:

Women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women.

The imperative for gender-balanced representation is essential as women account for almost half of the world's population. Gender balance in politics is key to building and sustaining democracies. Moreover, it ensures the presence of women in parliament which brings about greater responsiveness to citizens' demands. Across the globe, the engagement of women in politics has become a priority for humanitarian and women's groups in recent years. This connects with calls for women to ascend to decision-making positions and have equitable representation.

Statistics for 2020 show that women occupy 25% of positions in all national parliaments, representing an increase of 0.6 points from the figures for 2019 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2020). Of the 193 countries, 22 countries have women as heads of state or government and 14 countries have at least 50% women participating in the national cabinet. While 66 countries have had at least one woman as head of state or government, 127 countries have never had a female head of state or government (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). In 2020, only four

countries (Rwanda, Cuba, Bolivia, and United Arab Emirates) had 50% or more women in the national legislature.

South Asia is home to 860 million women, three-fourths of whom live in India. In terms of political participation, women occupy an average of 7% of ministerial positions and 15% of the seats in the national legislatures throughout the region's nine countries. In Pakistan's neighbouring country India, women have a 10% share in cabinet roles and 11% of the seats in the national parliament. Nonetheless, South Asia's gender divide is the second greatest among the world's eight regions, trailing behind that of only the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) area wherein only 61% of the gender divide has been bridged. South Asia has made the most considerable improvement since 2006, gaining six percentage points.

However, if the rate of development over the last 15 years continues, it will take 71.5 years to close the region's gender divide (World Economic Forum, 2020). South Asia's record in terms of female participation in parliament and governments is broadly consistent with that of other rising areas. For instance, women members make up less than 20% of the parliament in six of the seven nations surveyed, with Sri Lanka being the sole exception at 33%. Having closed just 37% of the gender gap, South Asia is the only region that ranks higher on the Political and Empowerment subindex than it does on the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex (World Economic Forum, 2020). Overall, in South Asia, only 7% of women are political party members (World Development Report, 2011).

In the Global Gender Report of 2020, among 153 countries, Pakistan is ranked at 151st, with Bangladesh coming in at 50th, Nepal 101st, Sri Lanka 102nd, India 112th, Maldives 123rd, and Bhutan at 131st. In 2020, South Asia has closed 66.1% of its gender gap. Whereas In 2018, the Inter-Parliamentary Unit ranked Pakistan on 111th position and categorized it as a 'Hybrid Regime' among 167 democratic countries. This represents an improvement in its 2007 position as an 'Authoritative Regime'. In terms of its Hybrid Regime status, Pakistan may be defined as a state with partial democracy, whereby although elections do take place, the citizens are not involved in the decision-making processes due to a lack of civil liberties (Adeney, 2015).

Moreover, in the Women's Power Index, Pakistan scored 16 in the political parity score as a female political leader was voted in as the head of the state twice since the country's inception in 1946. Moreover, women's representation in the cabinet is marked at 11% and in the national

legislature at 20%; in the local legislature female representation is calculated at 17%, while 28% of the ministries are held by women (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). The annual findings of the Human Rights Watch for 2018, 2019, and 2020 have led to broadly similar conclusions in demonstrating a gender divide that is ingrained in Pakistani culture. The country was ranked at 113 out of 129 countries on the Sustainable Development Goals Gender Index, owing to a lower literacy rate among women in comparison with men. These figures paint a dismal picture of Pakistan's gender equality and women's position. However, 20.6% of the women hold seats in national parliaments in Pakistan (Statista, 2019).

The higher number of women in parliament is attributable to the reserved seat system. In contrast, in the context of the Global Gender Gap Report, Pakistan has been unable to secure a good rating. Pakistan was rated 151 out of 153 nations in the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Index Report 2020, barely surpassing Iraq and Yemen. A comparison of past rankings reveals that Pakistan's overall rating plummeted from 112 in 2006 to 151 in 2020. Similarly, the country experienced a downward spiral in ranking from 112 to 150 in economic involvement and opportunity, 110 to 143 in educational attainment, 112 to 149 in health and survival, and 37 to 93 in political empowerment at the same time.

Pakistan's democratic history has been tumultuous and largely characterized by military coups and the imposition of martial law. The 2013 general election marked the country's second power transition and the first in its history from one freely elected government to another since 1947. In Pakistan, politics is mainly conducted by political parties which leads democracies to be more reactive. As per the Election Commission of Pakistan, 130 political parties sought to register with the Election Commission, but only 116 were qualified to contest in the general election of 2018. Currently, there is no women-only political party working in Pakistan. Of the 116 eligible political parties, some have established separate political wing for women. It has been found that the women's wings in Pakistan are unstructured, disorganized, and susceptible to internal clashes, and women members are less likely to participate in the policymaking process (National Democratic Institute, 2011).

1.1 Important landmarks for the political inclusion of women

Despite multiple obstacles, Pakistani women continue to make history in the political sphere. Women leaders like Fatima Jinnah, Nusrat Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, and Kulsoom Nawaz are

considered influential women leaders in Pakistan's political history. Pakistan has witnessed a positive trend in terms of women's political inclusion with a female Prime Minister (Benazir Bhutto) being elected for two terms (1998–90 & 1993–96). In 2008, Fahmida Mirza appointed as the First Women Speaker in the Pakistan National Assembly and the Muslim world (Latif, et al., 2015).

Moreover, Pakistan became a signatory of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and participated in the Beijing Conference in 1996 during the time of Benazir Bhutto. CEDAW Article 7 focuses on women's rights in public life, emphasizing political participation and sufficient representation in political life. It also focuses on gender equality in terms of voting and equal participation at all levels of public and political life. Pakistan also became a signatory of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 2008 which focused on ensuring free and fair elections under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

At the national level, the Ministry of Women Development, Pakistan, adopted two key policies including The National Policy for Women's Empowerment (NPWE) in 1998 and the National Plan of Action (2002) as a follow up to the Beijing Convention, with a particular focus on women's legislative rights and on the analysis of problems faced by female elected representatives in the local government. According to the 2017 census of Pakistan, women constitute 48.76% of the population. To ensure gender-balanced political participation, General Pervez Musharraf, the 10th President of Pakistan, allocated 60 seats for women at the National Assembly among its 342 members prior to the 2002 general election. According to this amendment, for a set number of general seats (3.5), a political party receives one reserved seat for a woman. Currently, the reserved seat quota is short of the 30% female representation in all public and elected bodies mandated by the United Nations (UN). Still, it comprises significant progress within the patriarchal structure of Pakistan.

General Pervez Musharraf also passed the Women's Protection Bill and approved a 10% quota for women in the Central Superior Services and a 5% quota across the board in all government departments. The female quota was increased to 33% at all three levels of local councils. Moreover, the Freedom of Media Ordinance was another milestone achievement by the Musharraf government which led to a boom in Pakistani media. Following this, greater political awareness was created among people as this ordinance broke the state's political monopoly and

hence control on electronic media (Hussain et al., 2018). Having succeeded the Musharraf government, the government of Asif Ali Zardari (2008–2013) also made significant contributions to policies for empowering women as recommended by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. During the tenure of the Zardari government, Fehmida Zia was appointed as the first female Speaker in South Asia and Hina Rabbani Khar as the first female Foreign Minister, Nargis Sethi as first female Foreign Secretary of Defence, and Shery Rehman as female Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States (US) in addition to the inclusion of more women in the politics of Pakistan.

From 2013 to 2018, the Pakistan Muslim League regime could not implement any significant measures for women's empowerment during its tenure (2015–2018) as cited (Khan & Naqvi, 2020). The 2018 general election was notable as for the first time the Election Act of 2017 made it necessary for political parties to provide 5% of their tickets to female candidates. While the vast majority of political parties endorsed this, non-compliant parties were sent 'show cause' notifications by the Election Commission of Pakistan. Similarly, it mandated that if fewer than 10% of the total votes were cast by women voters in any constituency, the election result in those constituencies would be deemed null and void.

As a result, for the first time in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, by-elections in a Provincial Assembly constituency were called when the female vote count was found to be below 10%. In terms of women's political empowerment, these initiatives represented substantial acts in the political history of Pakistan. Moreover, the Senate elections in March 2018 proved to be similarly notable, leading as it did to the selection of the country's first female opposition leader in Senator Sherry Rehman for a brief period. She is currently the party's parliamentary leader. Similarly, Krishna Kohli, a woman from a minority group, was selected for a women's seat, while another woman, Engineer Rukhsana Zubairi, was selected for a technocrat seat.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union estimates that the global parliamentary population is 46,083, and women make up only 11,037, or 24%, of this number. In Pakistan, 60 allocated seats are reserved for women, but there are currently 69 women who are members of the National Assembly. Eight are directly elected, while one woman has been selected on religious minorities-reserved seats. The percentage of women in the 342-member house has increased to 20.17%. Similarly, in the Senate of Pakistan, out of 104 members, 17 seats were allocated for

women, with 20 (19.23%) women participating in the chamber. These numbers are notable and continue to show improvement.

1.2 Do women represent women?

Research indicates that women politicians have more liberal and progressive views than male legislators (Manon & Réjean, 2000; Pippa & Lovenduski, 1989). Overall, women have expressed support for affirmative action in policies, equal opportunities, and gender equality (Campbell et al., 2010; Ross, 2002; Lovenduski & Norris, 2003; Swers, 2016; Pippa & Lovenduski, 1989; Wängnerud, 2002) and prioritized women's issues such as healthcare (Devlin & Elgie, 2008; Manon, 1998). Indeed, women in parliament highlight issues traditionally associated with females more often in parliament. Such issues may be linked with policy reforms in areas of health, education, children, reproductive rights, and welfare. Moreover, they tend to traverse political boundaries to find common ground (Catalano, 2009; Celis, 2008; Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008).

Women senators serve more effectively than their male colleagues and tend to introduce more women-oriented legislations. Women lawmakers are more likely to work and implement laws that support gender equality, including laws on domestic violence, rape, and sexual harassment. This is borne out by numerous instances. For instance, in Russia, women lawmakers crossed party lines to implement laws for preventing domestic violence against women. In India, women-led rural councils were highly supportive of reforms in providing clean drinking water (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004). A study conducted with Swedish municipal councillors found that women tended to be more concerned about climate change and protecting the environment (Sundström & McCright, 2014).

In comparison with male party counterparts, women have been found to be highly liberal in their opinions toward welfare policy, tending to favour programmes such as shelters for at-risk or homeless families (Poggione, 2004). In Norway, a direct relation was identified between the women members in municipal councils and childcare coverage (Bratton & Ray, 2002). When women are represented strongly in legislatures (approximately 20 to 30%), they are more likely to question existing policy agendas and work towards change that is more visible in legislation (Hömann, 2020). Women's political representation leads to a more stable society as women

parliamentarians seek bipartisanship with women members in the opposition to bring about progressive legislative changes (Hofmeister et al., 2015).

Women in politics are more supportive of the policies related to health and education (Volden et al., 2016). Moreover, women leaders are more likely to promote gender-sensitive laws (Ohemeng et al., 2019). Furthermore, a study showed that when women's parliamentary representation rises by 5%, the country is almost five times less likely to respond with violence to an international crisis. Women's parliamentary representation is also associated with a reduced risk of war and of human rights violations at governmental levels (Melander, 2005).

1.2.1 Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC)

In Pakistan, women parliamentarians were disconnected from each other and unable to share their inter-and intra-party experiences. In 2008, despite political party affiliation, they started working together and raised their voices collectively on women's issues. The Women's Parliamentary Caucus, a cross-party forum established in 2008 to ensure women's participation in all parliamentary affairs in Pakistan. The forum was established by a resolution of the National Assembly in 2008 (Women's Parliamentary Caucus, 2020). Following the establishment of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus Forum, all the women parliamentarians worked collectively for the common goal of women empowerment from one platform. With the help of the cross-party forum, women parliamentarians can build a network to make a lobby to ensure gender equality indicators for government compliance (Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, 2021). Observing the effectiveness of the women's parliamentary caucus, all four provinces of Pakistan have established a parliamentary caucus for women at provincial levels in addition to the Federal WPC.

In Pakistan, women parliamentarian achieved landmark legislation on women's rights related to their protection and empowerment. They raised several issues relating to women on the floors of the House. These included some prominent legislative reforms such as the Benazir Income Support programme (financial assistance to poor women), the Domestic Violence Protection Act, the Act for Acid crimes, the Preventions of Anti-Women Practices and the Criminal Law Amendment Act (UN Women Asia and the Pacific, 2012). It is the first initiative of its kind in South Asia (Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, 2018). Currently, more than 85 women parliamentarians and around 130 female members from more than 20 political parties are

working collectively for gender equality and the implementation of policies to improve the lives of women in Pakistan (UNDP, 2020). The WPC has also collaborated with the National Commission on the status of women to establish secure spaces to oppose discriminatory practices against women and push the government for legal reforms.

The women's parliamentary caucus is also working to create a conducive environment for women within political parties. It also aims to end male domination in the political institution, which hinders women's political participation. Currently, the WPC has the aim of capacity building of women parliamentarians through training and workshops. The cross-party parliamentary platform for women (WPC) has created a strong advocacy group to highlight women's issues and effectively mainstream public policy. However, electing women alone cannot ensure positive change as holding office is just an initial step in the political process. Still, women in leadership positions can be a challenge to male-dominated systems. The increase in the number of female political leaders can inspire more women to join politics (Vogelstein & Bro, 2020). Although there is a trend towards increased political participation by women in Pakistan, political institutions and democratic structures restrict women's entry. Further, women are not a homogenous entity, and there is no guarantee that they all stand for gender equality.

1.3 Setting the scene

The essential prerequisite of democracy is electoral efficacy, namely free and fair elections in tandem with competing political parties. Although women comprise almost half of the world population, the participation of women in politics is usually negligible, particularly in developing countries. In the analysis of the voting behaviour of men and women in the global perspective, Inglehart and Norris (2003) attributed the rise of women to leadership positions and roles in industrial and post-industrial societies to the level of modernization (unlike the case of their peers in developing countries) and to sustain engagement in national politics.

Women are more marginalized in South Asian countries, including India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. That is why they are ranked between 68 and 141 out of 142 countries in the Global Gender Gap (World Economic Forum, 2018). Now meaningful policymaking for the inclusion of women in politics is highly essential in developing Asian countries to raise the level of female political participation. Women's political participation is based on gender

equality which is considered a vital prerequisite for the sustainable development of any democratic country, as stated in the principles of democracy drawn for the Universal Declaration on Democracy:

The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarity, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences (Inter-Parliamentary Council, September 1997).

After 2000, many political parties in Pakistan restructured their wings for women due to the significant number of quota seats available in National and Provincial Assemblies. Increased political participation by women was witnessed in the 2008, 2013, and 2018 general elections of Pakistan which showed that the role of political parties could not be ignored (Hussain et al., 2018). In the modern era, political parties have adopted gender-orientated strategies to select prospective workers and leaders (Sacchet, 2005).

The adoption of these strategies is mainly aimed at increasing participation by women. To take advantage of reserved quota seats for women, even the conservative Awami National Party and Jamiat Ulema Islam-F party in Pakistan sought to establish their women's wings in 2004 (Dutoya, 2013). The reserved quota is one of the main reasons that the 2002 Pakistani parliament showed the most representation of women in politics (Latif et al., 2015). The establishment of women's wings among parties demonstrates that political parties in Pakistan are now creating spaces for women's participation.

In Pakistan, the general elections are held every five years. An increased number of women voters in Pakistan shows a positive trend, an essential prerequisite for a democratic state. The elections of 2008, 2013, and 2018 were significant in shaping women's voting behaviour, with the turnout for the year being the highest since the elections of 1970 and 1977. The phenomenon could be attributed to the lowering of the minimum voting age to 18 years together with the number of registered women voters almost doubling between 2008 to 2012 from 50% to 86% (Rehman & Naqvi, 2013).

Additionally, the higher turnout of women voters in the general elections of 2013 and 2018 heralded a new era of active political participation by women. Beyond elections, they have participated in the form of formal enrolment in a party, participation in political movements, rallies, and representation in local councils over the past years. In 2014, an event in the Pakistani context proved pivotal to the political mobilization of women, namely the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protest (Freedom March) at D-Chowk Islamabad. In the PTI's Freedom March, the party members and followers protested for almost 4 months in 2014 on Constitution Avenue at D-Chowk, also known as Democracy Chowk. The D-Chowk is an important public square located in Islamabad that connects Jinnah Avenue and Constitution Avenue. It is in the government district, which is close to the offices of the Presidency, the Prime Minister, the parliament, and the Supreme Court. The massive political march with a vast number of women participants proved to be a litmus test for women's political participation. It also provided the impetus for the current research.

Likewise, the PTI party organized the protest to demand the resignation of the leader of the incumbent political party, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz Group (PML-N), due to allegations of corruption against them. A larger number of women participated in the protest which transformed local perspectives about how women's political participation should be taken forward in Pakistan. The phenomenon of political participation by women was observed to be more striking for a notable reason. For the first time in Pakistani history, women's activism, hitherto the domain of either the political elite or the grassroots workers, seemed to transcend all political, social, and cultural barriers and to demonstrate the engagement of a broad swath of Pakistani women. Eager to mirror the success of the PTI party in this regard, other political parties strove to take different strategic steps to mobilize women participants in their parties too. (Wu & Ali, 2020).

1.4 Objectives and research question

In view of the preceding discussion, the political inclusion of women in PTI was a phenomenon that needed to be explored in greater depth. This was particularly important for gauging the true potential of such mobilization and its ramifications for the democratic processes in the country, in addition to understanding the challenges impacting women's political participation.

The main research question of the present study was formulated to understand the challenges confronting women wishing to participate in politics in Pakistan and strategies used by women career politicians to bypass those challenges beyond elections in Pakistan. Current research addresses the patterns of political participation by women in Pakistan while being affiliated with PTI political party. It is indisputable that women face challenges in active participation within politics beyond having cast their votes in the elections (Briggs, 2014; Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019).

The present study operationalizes the political participation of women beyond elections. It was felt that the challenges of women's political participation could be understood better in the context of their affiliation with political parties which are considered to be the 'gate keepers'. To this end, the present study selected PTI as a case study. The PTI party or Movement for Justice is a political party formed in 1996 by Imran Khan, Pakistan's current Prime Minister. The PTI party did not win a single seat in the 1997 general election. However, it was able to strengthen its position in the following election as the third political force or alternative to Pakistan's two major political parties, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

Imran Khan was elected to parliament in the 2002 general election with a single seat. In 2008, the PTI boycotted the general election to protest the rigging of elections. Based on its slogans 'Call for Change', the PTI party won 7.5 million votes in the 2013 general election, the second most significant number of votes. It formed a government in one of Pakistan's four provinces, thus establishing itself as the country's second most popular and most prominent political party second only to the PML-N.

In 2018, the PTI party garnered 16.9 million votes, the highest number of votes earned by any political party in Pakistan's history. The party nominated Imran Khan, PTI chairman, for the position of Pakistan's Prime Minister. Currently, the PTI party is in power at the national level in Pakistan, and it also governs two provinces, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Additionally, it has a coalition government in the Baluchistan province, and it is the Sindh province's second-largest opposition party. The following section presents the organization of this dissertation by outlining how each chapter relates to current research.

1.5 Thesis structure

Chapter 2 discusses the historical background of women's political participation in Pakistan. It emphasizes the socio-political history of women's engagement in Pakistani politics and its evolution since 1947. Moreover, it provides insights into the system of government and different tiers of political institutions in Pakistan. Against the backdrop of elected governments and existing political parties, chapter 2 provides a historical overview of women's political engagement in Pakistan since the country's inception. It maps the historical and contemporary contributions of women to political progress. Women's roles are explored in terms of their status as voters, members of parliament as well as party members in the political system of Pakistan. The chapter sheds light on the critical historical events that have shaped women's participation in the political sphere.

It also presents an overview of women's political engagement and discusses significant reforms that have exercised detrimental influence on women's political participation in Pakistan. The discussion of social-cultural contexts within the chapter enables the reader to comprehend the position of women in Pakistan, thus serving as the contextual backdrop for the current research. Moreover, it discusses the emergence of PTI on the political landscape of Pakistan and highlights the strategies adopted by PTI to include women in the party. It also presents an overview of the PTI party manifesto and the by-laws of the women's wing and analyses the influential strategies used by PTI and party leaders to mobilize women in Pakistan beyond the elections.

Chapter 3 begins by discussing the conceptualization of political participation. It provides a historical overview of women's political participation from the global level to the national level. It also explains the modes of political participation and describes these as requisites for democracy. Moreover, chapter 3 elaborates on the Milbrath Hierarchical Model (1969) which is known as a pyramid of political engagement to categorize respondents according to their political activities. The model provides a framework to classify career politicians at multiple levels in accordance with their participation in the political sphere.

Further, it discusses the theoretical model for the present research premised on the theoretical insights of the model of Supply and Demand of Candidate Selection developed by Joni Lovenduski and Pippa Norris in 1993. The chapter discusses their scholarly contributions by

explaining political participation by women in terms of their inclusion in political parties. It focuses on the multiple aspects of candidate selection in which both selectors and aspirants affect results across several sets of institutions in a democratic state. Furthermore, chapter 3 gives insights into the structural and institutional challenges of women's political participation which are shaped by cultural imperatives within a democratic state.

Chapter 4 examines the methods and techniques employed in the present study and is divided into three sections. The first section covers the study's research questions and objectives and provides an overview of the epistemological framework used in the present study. Furthermore, it explains how the framework supports the qualitative research design and in-depth interviews as a methodology in the context of the present research. Section 2 discusses the strategies and techniques utilized for collecting data. It also explicates the research methodology, data collection tools, sampling technique, the nature of respondents and gives an overview of the whole data collection process in the field.

Section 3 describes the data analytical methodologies used to analyse the data. It also elaborates on data organization, the translation, and transcription of recorded interviews, the anonymization of data, and the analytical tools used to analyse the data. The last part describes the process of data coding using the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti. The coding section provides details of the reduction, display, and interpretation of the dataset. It also discusses the ethical issues addressed during the current research.

Chapter 5 is the first empirical chapter of the present study and provides insights into the structural challenges pertaining to women's political participation. It presents the narratives of female and male career politicians with regards to challenges encompassing lack of motivation, lack of finances, dual burden, and harassment in politics. It also expands upon the different themes and sub-themes emerging from the coding process. It discusses the perspectives of career politicians, from women's and men's viewpoints, on the structural barriers confronting women's political involvement in Pakistan. Based on an analysis of in-depth interviews, the chapter looks at the success stories of female career politicians in circumventing the institutional barriers to women's political engagement in Pakistan beyond elections. Additionally, it sheds light on the male career politicians' perspective on some critical elements of female political engagement.

Chapter 6 presents the empirical analysis including the views of the study respondents about institutional challenges to women's political involvement beyond elections in Pakistan. These obstacles may be connected to their involvement in decision-making processes or their reliance on gender quotas. It analyses the experiences of Pakistani women career politicians who have successfully overcome institutional barriers to political engagement. Additionally, the chapter investigates the opinions of male professional politicians on critical issues of women's political participation in decision-making and the implementation of gender quotas in Pakistan.

Chapter 7 provides the conclusion to the thesis. It explains the significant findings of the present study in connection with the research questions. It also compares the results of the current research with existing literature. The chapter presents some recommendations derived from the insights provided by the participants to bridge the gender gap in the politics of Pakistan. It also highlights the limitations of the current study and presents some directions for future studies.

Chapter 2 Political History of Pakistan

2.1 Introduction

Pakistan gained independence on 14 August 1947 in the wake of the momentum created by the Pakistan Movement. The movement eventually led to the partition of India into two states, namely the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of India. Located in South Asia, Pakistan is the fifth most populous country globally, with a population of 212.7 million. It ranks as the 33rd largest country in the comity of states (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Sharing its borders with China, India, Iran, and Afghanistan, Pakistan has a semi-industrialized economy along with an agricultural sector and a growing service sector.

At the time of its independence in 1947, Pakistan consisted of two wings, namely West Pakistan (contemporary Pakistan) and East Pakistan (modern-day Bangladesh). The two wings remained part of the same state till the Bangladesh Liberation war in 1971. The war resulted in the secession of East Pakistan as the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Pakistan is an Islamic democratic country, as proclaimed by the 1956 Constitution of Pakistan.

2.2 Constitution of Pakistan and women's political rights

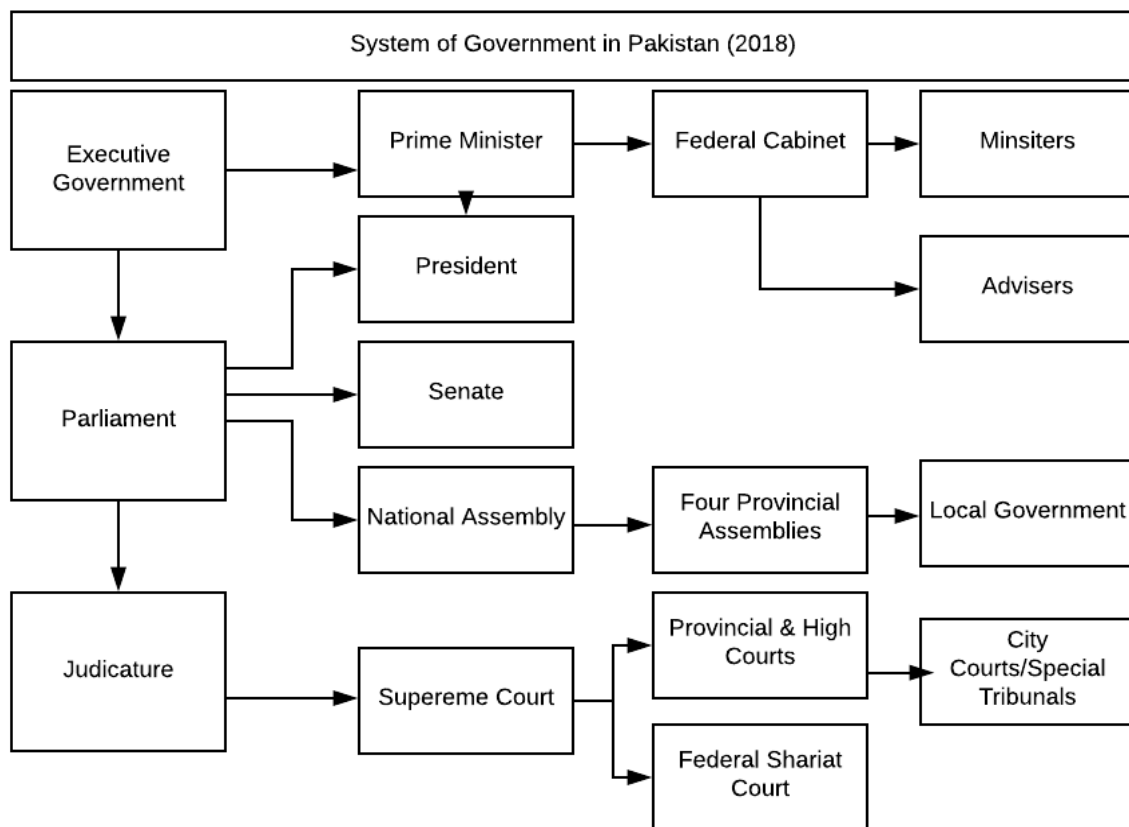
The current political structure of Pakistan has materialized within the framework established by the Constitution of Pakistan, which was passed by the National Assembly in 1973. The Constitution of Pakistan (1973) proclaims it an ideological state, where Islam ensures the equality of all its citizens regardless of faith, ethnicity, or gender. In terms of political rights, the Constitution of Pakistan provides every citizen with the right to establish or join a political party (Article 17.2).

While Article 25 of the Constitution focuses on the principle of women's equality by stating that there is no discrimination based on sex before the law, Sections 32 and 34 ensure the full participation of women in all spheres of public life, and Sections 51 and 59 ensure equal participation for women and non-Muslim members in the parliament. Under Article 51, seats for a total of 60 women are reserved in the National Assembly, whereas under Article 59, 17 seats are set aside for women in the Senate of Pakistan.

2.3 System of government in Pakistan

The system of government in Pakistan has been established by the Constitution of Pakistan as a federal parliamentary system of government. It consists of the executive government (President and Prime Minister), the parliament (Senate, National and Provincial Assemblies, local government), and the judicature (Supreme Court, High Court, District, and Special Courts).

Figure 1 System of Government in Pakistan



Researcher's sketch

Source: Democratic Foundation of Pakistan (2021)

2.3.1 Executive Government

2.3.1.1 President

As per the Constitution of Pakistan, the head of the state is the President, who also serves as Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Armed forces. The President is elected for a term of five

years by an electoral college consisting of members of the Senate, National, and Provincial Assemblies. While the Constitution prohibits the President from running the government whose role is vouchsafed to the Prime Minister, it gives him the power to dissolve the National Assembly if governance cannot be carried out as per the Constitution's provisions and an appeal to the electorate is necessary.

2.3.1.2 Prime Minister

Designated as the Chief Executive of the Republic, the Prime Minister is the head of the government and leads the National Assembly. The members of the National Assembly elect the Prime Minister, who is usually the leader of the majority party in the parliament. He performs as the leader of the nation and controls all internal and foreign policy matters. It is essential to mention that the position of Prime Minister was vague in Pakistan during the periods of 1960–73; 1977–85; 1999–2002, due to the imposition of martial law. In the above-mentioned martial law periods, the military head led by the President enjoyed the powers of the Prime Minister.

2.3.1.3 Parliament

The parliament of Pakistan is the federal and supreme legislative body of Pakistan and divided into the Senate (Upper House) and National Assembly (Lower House) and then into Provincial Assemblies and local bodies as discussed in the following sections.

2.3.1.4 Senate

The Senate, which is the Upper House of the parliament of Pakistan, was summoned in 1973 under Article 59 of the Constitution of Pakistan. It gives equal representation to all the federating units and thus ensures national harmony. It has the power of passing parliamentary bills for law enforcement. It eliminates the smaller provinces' fears of exploitation since membership of the National Assembly is based on the population of each province. It has 104 members in total. Each Provincial Assembly equally elects 23 members from among these 104 members. The Federally Administrated Areas (FATA) elect eight members, and the National Assembly elects four members through a single transferable vote system. Its members are elected for a term of six years; however, one-half of its members retire after every three years. As per the Constitution, of the 104 Senators, at least 17 should be women. A total of four women

senators are elected in each of the four provinces, and one seat is reserved for a woman elected from the federal capital of Islamabad.

2.3.1.5 National Assembly

The National Assembly, the Lower House of the parliament of Pakistan, is elected for five years through adult franchise and based on one-person-one-vote in the general election of Pakistan. The Parliament House building is situated in the federal capital Islamabad. The National Assembly has a total of 342 seats, of which 272 are filled by direct elections, whereas 60 seats are reserved for women to be filled by proportional representation among parties with more than 5% of the votes. Moreover, ten seats are reserved for non-Muslims. The provinces and the federal capital Islamabad are allocated seats based on their population as per the preceding officially published census.

2.3.1.6 Provincial Assemblies

The four provinces of Pakistan enjoy considerable autonomy. The Provincial Assembly in Pakistan is subdivided into four provinces (Punjab, Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh) and two territories (Azad Jammu Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan). Each province has a Governor, a Council of Ministers, a Chief Minister appointed by the Governor, and a Provincial Assembly. The Provincial Assembly members known as MPAs are elected for a five-year term.

MPAs are elected through adult franchise and based on one-person-one-vote in general elections of Pakistan. While each Assembly has a different number of members, Article 106 of the Constitution of Pakistan states that each Provincial Assembly shall consist of reserved seats for women and non-Muslims, apart from general seats based on the number of the respective province's population. Punjab Provincial Assembly has 371 seats, of which 66 are reserved for women, whereas eight are reserved for non-Muslims. Sindh Provincial Assembly has 168 seats, of which 29 are reserved for women, whereas nine are set aside for non-Muslims.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Provincial Assembly has 124 seats, of which 22 are reserved for women, whereas three are reserved for non-Muslims. In the Baluchistan Provincial Assembly, of the 65 seats in total, 11 are reserved for women, whereas three are reserved for non-Muslims. Each Provincial Assembly elects its Chief Minister, who later selects the Cabinet

Ministers. There are 728 seats for all four Provincial Assemblies, of which 128 are seats set aside for women, whereas 23 are reserved seats for non-Muslims.

2.3.2 Local government setup

The local government set up in Pakistan is the third tier of government and operates through local councils existing in each province to ensure effective delivery of public services with the support of the local authorities. These councils serve to undertake the public administration of towns, cities, counties, and districts. Each province has its own Local Government Ministries which implement local legislation. The objective of this system is to make local government more accountable to their residents regarding their decisions. Another objective is to include the local proactive segments of society in developmental/community work-related activities (Anjum, 2001).

2.3.3 The jurisdiction

The judiciary of Pakistan comprises the Supreme Court, the Federal Sharia Court, and the five Provincial High Courts. Other courts include Session Courts, Magistrate Courts, and Special Tribunals such as the Banking Court, the Services Tribunals, and Income Tax Courts. The Supreme Court is the highest appellate court and the court of last resort. Furthermore, there is a High Court in each of the four provinces and one for the capital of Islamabad.

The jurisdiction system of Pakistan has always served as a key player in shaping the country's politics by giving rulings against government functionaries on different occasions. The judges of the Supreme Court of Pakistan disqualified Yousaf Raza Gillani in 2008 and Nawaz Sharif in 2017 from the prime ministerial office based on corruption charges brought against them. Moreover, several members of the National Assembly were disqualified on several occasions for holding fake degrees and dual nationalities and for failing to disclose financial assets in their nomination papers (Asad, 2020).

Later in 2018, Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif was disqualified as a member of parliament on the charges of non-disclosure of his employment details abroad. In 2019, a three-member bench of the Special Court of Pakistan issued the death sentence for Pervaiz Musharraf, who was former military ruler during 2000–2008. He faced the death sentence on account of allegations

that he had imposed emergency rule to extend his tenure as a President of Pakistan in 2007. However, till July 2021, Pervaiz Musharraf is under medical treatment in the UAE. It is unlikely that the sentence can be imposed as there is no formal extradition treaty between Pakistan and UAE to return him to Pakistan.

2.4 Political history of Pakistan

In the first 23 years of independence, no general elections were conducted in Pakistan at the national level. The first general election of Pakistan was held in 1970. During 1970–2019, Pakistan saw four consecutive regimes of dictatorship. Up till 2020, only two governments in 2008–2013 and 2013–2018 managed to complete their five-year terms fully. The political instability in Pakistan was due to specific socio-economic circumstances and several disruptions due to the imposition of martial law that damaged the nation's democratic systems. Moreover, electoral rigging significantly hindered democratic development and further gave rise to political instability in Pakistan (Anten et al., 2012). A total of 11 general elections have been held in Pakistan since its inception, a relatively low figure when compared with its neighbour to the east, India, which has held 17 elections since achieving independence in 1947 at the same time.

2.4.1 First Constituent Assembly (1947)

The first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan came into existence in 1947 under the Government of India Act 1935 as the draft of the Constitution of Pakistan was consolidated later in 1956. Jogendra Nath Mandal was elected as chairman, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah was elected as President of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, whereas Liaquat Ali Khan became the first Prime Minister. The mode of election was based on separate electorates. There were 79 members in the Constituent Assembly, with a majority of 60 members belonging to the PML and the second-highest belonging to the Pakistan National Congress. The third was the Azad group with three members only. The Constituent Assembly had two women members, namely Begum Shaista Ikram Ullah and Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz.

After the death of Quaid-e-Azam in 1948, Khawaja Nazim Uddin held the position of Governor-General. However, later in 1951, when the first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, was assassinated in a political procession, Khawaja Nazim Uddin took control of the

government as Prime Minister of Pakistan and appointed Malik Ghulam to the post of Governor-General. Unable to run the affairs of the state, Khawaja Nazim Uddin was forced to leave his position in favour of the diplomat, Muhammad Ali Bogra, by Governor-General Malik Ghulam, who dissolved the first Constituent Assembly in 1954.

2.4.2 Second Constituent Assembly (1954)

The second Constituent Assembly in 1954 was elected indirectly through Provincial Assemblies. The first direct election was held in March 1951 for the Provincial Assembly of Punjab with 197 seats. A voter turnout of 30% against the one million listed voters was recorded. Voting for the Provincial Assembly was conducted based on the adult suffrage franchise (Rizvi & Gilani, 2013). In December 1951, an election was held for northwest Frontier Provinces and then in May 1953 for Sindh Province Provincial Assembly. Finally, in April 1954, an election was held in the East Pakistan Legislative Assembly.

In 1956, the first-ever Constitution of Pakistan was framed. In the Constitution of 1956, ‘the principle of female suffrage and women’s reserved seats’ was included, which provided dual voting rights to women. With the help of this provision, women could vote not only for a general seat but also for the women’s exclusively reserved seats. Moreover, the office of the Governor-General was replaced with the office of President in the Constitution of 1956, and Major General Iskandar Mirza became the first elected President of Pakistan. A total of 300 members were elected for the National Assembly, with a 50–50 representation for East and West Pakistan. In 1956, within the Constitution of Pakistan, five seats were reserved for women in East and West Pakistan in the unicameral parliament.

The first general election was scheduled for 1959, but President Iskander Mirza abrogated the Constitution of Pakistan and imposed martial law in 1958. All powers were handed over to General Ayub Khan as Chief Martial Law Administrator. General Ayub Khan introduced the electoral system called ‘Basic Democracies’. In this system, people directly voted for 80,000 basic democrats who were not affiliated with any political party. The first basic democrats’ election was held in East and West Pakistan in 1959 with the members serving as an electoral college to elect the members of National and Provincial Assemblies. In 1962, the National Assembly elected and started its first session, and Ayub Khan became the President.

In 1962, Ayub Khan lifted the ban on political parties and passed a new constitution in 1962. He brought a presidential system of government in place of the previous parliamentary system and justified his presidential position by drafting the new 1962 Constitution of Pakistan. During the government of General Ayub Khan, Begum Shaista Ikramullah and Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz were the first two ladies to represent women's rights in the Legislative Assembly of Pakistan. Begum Mahmooda Salim Khan was the first woman to become a Minister and Member of the Cabinet in his government. One of the significant contributions in this era was the Family Ordinance aimed at empowering the women of Pakistan significantly by guaranteeing marital rights and abolishing unmitigated polygamy. Ayub Khan handed over his power to Commander-in-chief of the Pakistan army, Yahya Khan, in 1969. Yahya Khan imposed martial law and abrogated the Constitution of 1962.

2.5 History of general elections in Pakistan (1970-2018)

2.5.1 First general election (1970)

After the imposition of martial law in 1969, General Yahya Khan announced the first general election to be held in Pakistan on 17 December 1970. It was the only election held in Pakistan (East and West Pakistan) before the independence of Bangladesh and new electoral rolls were consolidated based on the census of 1961. In the 1970 general election, of the 300 National Assembly seats, 162 seats were allocated to East Pakistan and 138 to West Pakistan. Elected members later voted for the selection of 13 women members for the reserved quota, comprising seven from East Pakistan and six from West Pakistan. One woman member, Najma Andrews, was elected on a minorities seat, and Jehanzeb Ali was elected on a general seat. Moreover, Ashraf Abbasi became the first female Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly in 1972.

The Awami League and PPP emerged as two major political parties in the Pakistani political landscape. The Awami League secured a strong position by winning 160 seats in the National Assembly and 288 out of 300 seats in the Provincial Assembly of East Pakistan. The PPP won 81 seats in the National Assembly and established itself as the winning party in the Sindh and Punjab provinces of West Pakistan. President Yahya Khan did not want the government of Pakistan to be formed by a political party representing East Pakistan. He used delaying tactics to hold up the formation of the Assembly, which caused unrest in East Pakistan that erupted into a civil war later. The civil war eventually led to the breaking away of East Pakistan from

West Pakistan and its establishment as the separate state of Bangladesh. After the secession of Bangladesh, President Yahya Khan resigned, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became the President of Pakistan from 1971 to 1973. He was the founder of the PPP and served as its chairman until his execution in 1979.

This era of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was significant as it was a period of liberty for women in Pakistan. For the first time, all government service jobs were open to women. Moreover, 10% of the seats in the National Assembly and 5% of the seats in the Provincial Assemblies were reserved for women. In 1973, gender equality was granted in the Constitution of Pakistan, focusing on the full participation of women in all spheres of national life (Weiss, 2012). The constitution draft committee had three women members, namely Jennifer Qazi, Nasim Jahan, and Begum Ashraf Abbasi. An official delegation from Pakistan became part of the First World Conference of Women in Mexico in 1975, which led to the Constitution of the first Pakistan Women's Rights Committee in Pakistan.

2.5.2 Second general election (1977)

In 1977, a general election was again held for the 266 seats of the National Assembly, and once again the PPP won the election. Ten women were elected to reserved seats, and one woman, Naseem Khan, was elected on a general seat, later serving as Parliamentary Secretary in the National Assembly during 1972–1977. Samia Usman became the first women Senator in 1974, and in the same year, Begum Rana Liaquat Ali was appointed as Governor of the Sindh province.

Later, the PPP was accused of rigging the election by the opposition parties, which later led to massive riots across the country. This violent situation led to the imposition of the third period of martial law in the country under the Chief of Army Staff, Zia-ul-Haq. General Zia-ul-Haq overthrew the PPP government and launched a court trial against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto over allegations of the assassination of a political rival. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was issued a death sentence in 1979 by the Supreme Court of Pakistan based on these allegations. Zia-ul-Haq ruled over Pakistan for almost eight years through martial law. He passed laws such as the incarceration of rape victims under Hudd punishments and rules regarding women's testimony and blood money compensation. These laws restricted the entry of women into the world outside

the home. He suspended all fundamental rights given to women in the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan, including the right to be free of discrimination based on sex.

2.5.3 Third general election (1985)

Zia-ul Haq announced the third non-party-based general election of Pakistan to be held in February 1985. The election of 1985 was different from earlier elections as they were held on a non-party basis. Zia-ul-Haq legalized the electoral system by amending the 1973 Constitution and secured his position as the President of Pakistan. In the 1985 general election, 21 seats were reserved for women. Begum Abida Hussain was the first woman elected from a general constituency and served in 1985–1988 as a Member of the National Assembly. As per the requirements to contest an election, every candidate had to be supported by 50 people. These amendments affected all political parties, and some political parties boycotted the election as they wanted a party-based election. There was a massive response from the voters, totalling almost 52%. Later, Muhammad Khan Junejo was elected as the Prime Minister and formed the government in 1985–1988. He was the first Prime Minister of Pakistan who had women ministers in his Cabinet. Begum Afsar and Begum Kulsoom Saifullah served as full Ministers, while Begum Rehana Aleem Mashhadi and Dr. Noor Jehan served as Ministers of State.

2.5.4 Fourth general election (1988)

In 1988, General Zia-ul-Haq died in a plane crash, and the ‘Zia era’ ended. The fourth general election was held in 1988 with a voter turnout of 43.5%. The PPP won, and Benazir Bhutto became the Prime Minister of Pakistan. It was the era of the first female Prime Minister of Pakistan, making history and paving the way for other women to join the politics of Pakistan. Benazir Bhutto was the daughter of the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan in the 70s. She was the first woman in the history of Pakistan to serve as Prime Minister of Pakistan for two non-consecutive terms in 1988–90 and then in 1993–96. During her first term in 1988, 20 women were elected on reserved seats, and four were elected on general seats. She had the first Cabinet with the highest number of five women Ministers out of 45 Ministers.

2.5.5 Fifth general election (1990)

Following the general election of 1988, Benazir Bhutto became the Prime Minister of Pakistan

but was dismissed by Ghulam Ishaq Khan, the President of Pakistan, based on the charges of corruption and misuse of power and authority. As a result, the Assembly was dissolved, and the fifth general election was scheduled in 1990. In 1990, the fifth general election was held, and 217 members were elected to the National Assembly. The overall voter turnout was 45.5%. Only two women were elected on general seats, one was Mohterma Benazir Bhutto, the ex-Prime Minister, and the other was her mother, Nusrat Bhutto who sat in the opposition party. No women were elected on the reserved seat as the sunset clause in the Constitution had expired after three electoral cycles. In 1990, the PML-N won the maximum number of seats and formed the government. Nawaz Sharif was elected as Prime Minister of Pakistan, but his government failed to complete its five-year term. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was compelled to resign because of the pressure of the President and Army Chief of Pakistan.

2.5.6 Sixth general election (1993)

In the year 1993, the sixth general election was scheduled after the forced dismissal of the previous government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, formed in 1990. In the 1993 general election of Pakistan, there were no reserved seats for women who could only contest on general seats. Only four women were elected on general seats, and once again, Benazir Bhutto became the President of Pakistan. She established a woman's support group with the name of the Council of Women World leaders in 1996 and appointed many women judges; she also worked to establish special women banks and women police stations to meet their special needs. Still, she failed to abolish the restrictions on women's rights imposed during the tenure of the Zia government in 1977.

As far as international agreements are concerned during the Benazir Bhutto government, Pakistan became a signatory of CEDAW in 1996 and participated in the Beijing Conference. The articles of CEDAW focus on women's rights, and Article 7 protects women's rights in public life, emphasising political participation and sufficient representation in politics. It also focuses on gender equality in terms of voting and equal participation at all levels of public and political life. Moreover, the first Muslim Women Parliamentarians' Conference was held in Pakistan in 1995. It encouraged women's political participation in the Muslim world and emphasised on gender equality in all spheres of life. In 1996, again, the government of Benazir Bhutto was dismissed without completing its five-year term, with its dismissal based on charges

of corruption and misuse of power charges levelled by the President of Pakistan, Farooq Leghari.

2.5.7 Seventh general election (1997)

The general election of 1997 can be called critical because it completely changed the political paradigm in Pakistan. The year 1970 can be marked as the birth year of Bhuttoism, and the year 1997 was the end of 'Bhuttoism' (fan following of the Bhutto family in politics) in Pakistan. The voter turnout for the PPP dropped from 38% to 22%. Until 1997, the political tussle was between two political parties, the PPP, and the PML-N. However, after 1997, the PPP lost its position of eminence and fell far behind the PML-N as a popular political party. In the general election of 1997, the PML-N formed the government in Pakistan, and Nawaz Sharif became the Prime Minister for the second time. During the seventh general election, there were no reserved seats for women, and only five women were elected on general seats. In 1999, General Pervez Musharraf launched the military coup and overthrew the government of Nawaz Sharif.

2.5.8 Eighth general election (2002)

In 1999, the country was once again under martial law imposed by General Pervez Musharraf, who became the tenth President of Pakistan in 1999. He amended the Constitution in 2002 within the Legal Framework Order to grant him a five-year term limit and conduct a general election. The 2002 general election was held under the government of General Pervez Musharraf. The general election of 2002 was vital as it brought to an end the two-party system between the PPP and the PML-N. Another faction of the PML, the Quaid-e-Azam group, became the mainstream political party of Pakistan due to the support of President Musharraf. The PML (Quaid-e-Azam group) won the election with a voter turnout of 41.5%, and Pir Zafar Ullah Jamali became the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

The military was active in supporting the PML (Quaid-e-Azam group) during the election period who in return extended its support to General Pervez Musharraf (Kronstadt, 2008). During the tenure of the Musharraf government, the parliament of Pakistan parliament passed the Women's Protection Bill, along with an approved reservation of a 10% quota for women in the Central Superior Services and a 5% quota across the board in all government departments. The women's quota was increased to 30% in local governments. Musharraf's government

increased the number of seats for women in the National Assembly from 20 to 60 and increased the seats reserved for non-Muslims to ten. After implementing the reserved seat quota, a political party could get one reserved seat for a woman for every 3.5 general seats.

Although this did not meet the UN-mandated target of 30% representation for women, it was still a significant ratio. In the Musharraf era, the first Upper House was established in Pakistan, which had female members as well on reserved seats. The allocation of reserved seats was based on the priority lists in proportion to the number of seats won by a political party in the general election. The priority list had to be provided by the political parties to the Election Commission of Pakistan before the commencement of a general election. In 2002, the Freedom of Media Ordinance was issued, representing another milestone of Pervaiz Musharraf's government that promoted rapid growth in the Pakistani media. Following this, political awareness began to be created among people as this ordinance broke the state's political monopoly on electronic media and proved pivotal in establishing free media (Hussain et al., 2018).

2.5.9 Ninth general election (2008)

In 2007, General Pervaiz Musharraf was re-elected for a second five-year term through the electoral college. However, he resigned in November 2007 after facing much pressure from political parties due to unnecessary delays in parliamentary elections and the implementation of emergency rule to justify his position. The year 2007 witnessed a severe political crisis in the form of the assassination of the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto. She was killed in a bomb attack while addressing a political rally. After her assassination, her husband, Asif Zardari, and son, Bilawal Bhutto, took charge of the PPP.

In the general election of 2008, the voter turnout was only 44.3%. The PPP won the election and emerged again as the single largest party, using the assassination of Benazir Bhutto to win the election by securing sympathy votes (Birsal, 2008). The widower husband of Benazir Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari, was not eligible to become Prime Minister because he had not been elected in parliament and instead Yousaf Raza Gillani was nominated to become Prime Minister. Later, Asif Ali Zardari won the presidential election in September 2008. In 2012, the Supreme Court of Pakistan charged Yousaf Raza Gillani with corruption and disqualified him from serving as Prime Minister. Raja Pervaiz Ashraf was nominated as a replacement candidate and Pakistan's new Prime Minister in 2012.

The PPP government in 2008 undertook landmark policymaking to empower women, as commended by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. During this government, Fehmida Zia was the first woman to be appointed as Speaker in South Asia, and Hina Rabbani Khar became the first female Foreign Minister, whereas Nargis Sethi was appointed as the first female Foreign Secretary of Defence and Shery Rehman as Ambassador of Pakistan to the US. The constitutional rule is to conduct an election in the country at an interval of five years or whenever the President dissolves the parliament. After the dissolution of the National Assembly, a general election needs to be held under the supervision of a caretaker setup. The PPP was the first government in the history of Pakistan to complete its five-year term in 2008.

2.5.10 Tenth General Election (2013)

The general election in Pakistan was held on 11 May 2013, with the government of Pakistan being formed by the PML-N and Nawaz Sharif ascending to the office of Prime Minister for the third time. It was the second government in the history of Pakistan that had completed its five-year term as a democratically elected government. In this election, 60 seats for women and ten for non-Muslims were reserved in the National Assembly, whereas in Provincial Assemblies there were 128 seats for women, and 23 seats reserved for non-Muslims (National Democratic Institute, 2013).

In the 2013 general election, the voter turnout was 52%, which was the highest on record since the elections of 1970 and 1977 in Pakistan. After the general election was held in 1988, the voters had only two options: the PPP and the PML-N. No other party was able to form the government despite winning a few seats in the Assembly. However, a third option emerged for voters in the 2013 general election in the PTI political. The PML-N won 126 general seats, the PPP won 32, while the PTI party won 28 general seats. The percentage of PTI party votes was 17.8, more than the votes secured by PPP (Birsal, 2008). Moreover, in KPK province, the PTI party emerged as the single largest party with 39 general seats, finally forming the provincial government in KPK.

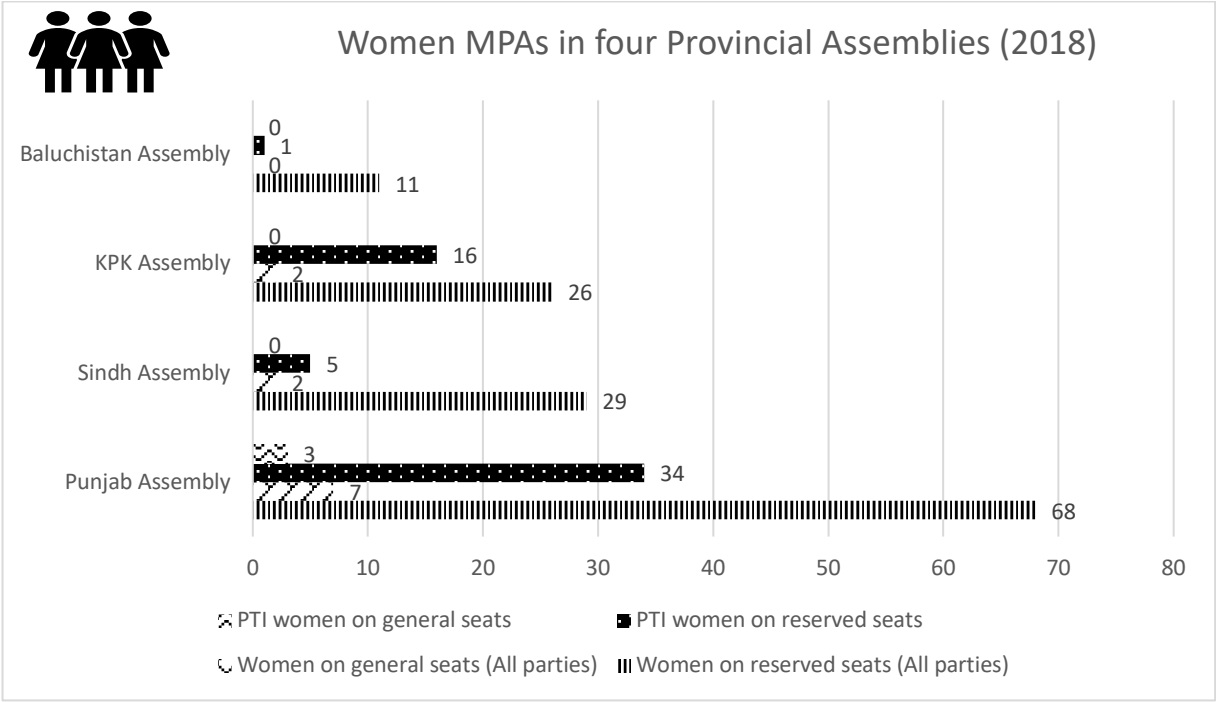
2.5.11 Eleventh General Election (2018)

In 2018, the eleventh general election was held with a remarkable completion of the third consecutive transfer of power from one civilian government to another in the 71 years of the

country’s political history. The PTI party became the single largest party at the national level in terms of seats and popular votes, the PML-N secured second place, while the PPP was the third-largest party in the 2018 general election. Apart from reserved seats, only eight women won National Assembly general seats from among the 171 women contestants. One woman won on the non-Muslim seat. Moreover, of the 35 parliamentary secretaries in the National Assembly, 14 are women, and a woman member presides over one of the 33 committees of the National Assembly.

In the four Provincial Assemblies, only seven general seats out of 386 were won by female candidates: five in Punjab and two in Sindh. Although 79 women in the KPK province and 42 women candidates in Baluchistan contested for Provincial Assembly general seats but they did not win a single seat. A total of 464 women contested for both National and Provincial Assemblies. Whereas 289 women were affiliated with some political party, 175 contested the election independently. The PPP allotted 41 tickets to women contestants, the PTI 39 tickets, and PML-N allotted 36. The 2018 general election proved remarkable as a record number of women contested for general seats. The main reason being that the Election Act 2017 made it compulsory for political parties contesting the election to field women candidates on 5% of general seats.

Figure 2: Women in four Provincial Assemblies



Researcher’s chart

Source: Official website of Government of Pakistan (2021)

In the General Election of 2018, in addition to a greater number of women contesting in the election, there was an increased turnout of women voters. Three critical amendments in the Election Act comprised key reasons for this turn of events. Firstly, if women voters proved to be less than 10% of the total registered women voters, then the result of that constituency was open to nullification. Secondly, another amendment in the Election Act criminalized the act of preventing women from voting in or contesting the elections. Third, it was made mandatory for all political parties to nominate at least 5% of women as candidates (Mahmood, 2018). Moreover, the Election Commission of Pakistan established women-only polling stations in the conservative parts of Pakistan to encourage women voters to cast their votes.

2.6 Local government elections

The aim of establishing local governance is to build stronger communities at the local level. In this system, the central government confers some power to local authorities to solve the local community's problems with local resources (Waseem, 2016). For good governance, financial independence is assured to local governments to enable efficient delivery of goods and services to people at the grassroots level. The election for local government institutions is held every four years on a non-party basis under the current local government system in Pakistan.

Each province in Pakistan has its local government set up to implement the law and provide goods and services to the local community. In the local government setup, District Councils and Metropolitan Corporations are the highest tiers and Union Councils are the lowest tiers. Currently, there are 129 District Councils in four provinces, 13 Municipal Corporations, 96 Municipal committees, 148 Town Councils, 360 Urban Union Committees, and 1,925 Rural Councils. In the KPK province, councils are not identified as rural and urban; therefore, the province has 2,229 Tehsil Councils. The first local government election was held in 1959, and the second one was held in 1979, followed by a third in 2001 and a fourth in 2013 in Pakistan. A brief history is presented in the following sections.

2.6.1 First local government election (1959)

General Ayub Khan initiated the first local government structure during the martial law period of 1958 and introduced it as the only representative of the government and abolished all higher

tiers of elected governments. The aim was to control the centre through pro-military leadership at the local level (Malik & Rana, 2019). In 1959, Ayub Khan issued an ordinance named 'Basic Democracy' to conduct non-party-based local government elections, but the local government system was abolished after the imposition of martial law in 1969.

2.6.2 Second local government election (1979)

For almost a decade the local body system remained dormant until the next period of martial law imposed by General Zia in 1979. He revived the system in 1979 under the Provincial Local Government Ordinance. Under this system, the municipal government was divided into four levels of urban areas comprising Town Committees, Municipal Committees, Municipal Corporations, and Metropolitan Corporations. In 1983, a local bodies election was held to establish local governance under this system. In 1988–1999, four democratically elected governments successively led the country, but none focused on the local government setup, rather, they relied upon provincial elites using their local backup system to retain them in power (Ali, 2018).

2.6.3 Third local government election (2001)

Later in 2000, during the martial law period of General Pervaiz Musharraf, the Ordinance of Local Government (Devolution of Power) was passed. The Devolution of Power plan focused to train councillors, especially women councillors, to participate in different civil society organizations. The campaign was called the Citizen Campaign for Women Representation in Local Government. It was the first time in the political history of Pakistan that grassroots-level NGOs took the initiative for women's representation in politics. Different NGOs initiated a campaign and covered approximately 7,000 Union Councils.

Moreover, this ordinance was ambitious as it allocated a 33% quota for women in local councils, and 17% of the seats were reserved for them in the legislative Assemblies. The third local government election was held in Pakistan from December 2000 to June 2001, focusing on devolving power, which led to the election of 36,105 women councillors in the local government system. A total of 36,006 seats were reserved for women in 6,022 Union Councils, of which 32,222 were filled through direct election, while the rest (3,898) were allocated at the Tehsil and District level through the indirect mode of election. The third local government

election was held across the level of the District Council (the highest tier) to the Union Council (lowest tier).

In the local government election, 33% of the seats were reserved for women at all tiers of local governance. These seats had to be filled through a direct election at the Union Council level and through indirect election at the higher levels. These reserved seats for women were divided proportionately among towns and Tehsils. The Chief Election Commissioner was responsible for conducting the election. Before 2000, the percentage of reserved seats at the local level was minimal. In the era of General Ayub, there were no reserved seats, while in the era of Zia-ul-Haq, only 2% of the seats were reserved for women councillors and 10% for district councils. The Local Government Ordinance promulgated by Pervaiz Musharraf increased reserved seat for women by 33% and allowed them to contest the election directly. On these reserved seats, women councillors were either nominated by elected representatives of the respective Union Councils or were able to contest elections on general seats directly.

2.6.4 Fourth local government election (2013)

After the 2008 general election, the Local Government Ordinance expired and provided an open space for provinces to choose a different local government structure in 2009. The local government election that was scheduled for 2009 was postponed until the new Local Government Plan was formulated. The 18th Amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan in 2010, which the National Assembly passed, stated that all the four provinces of Pakistan are required to establish a system of local government and devolve political, financial, and administrative responsibilities.

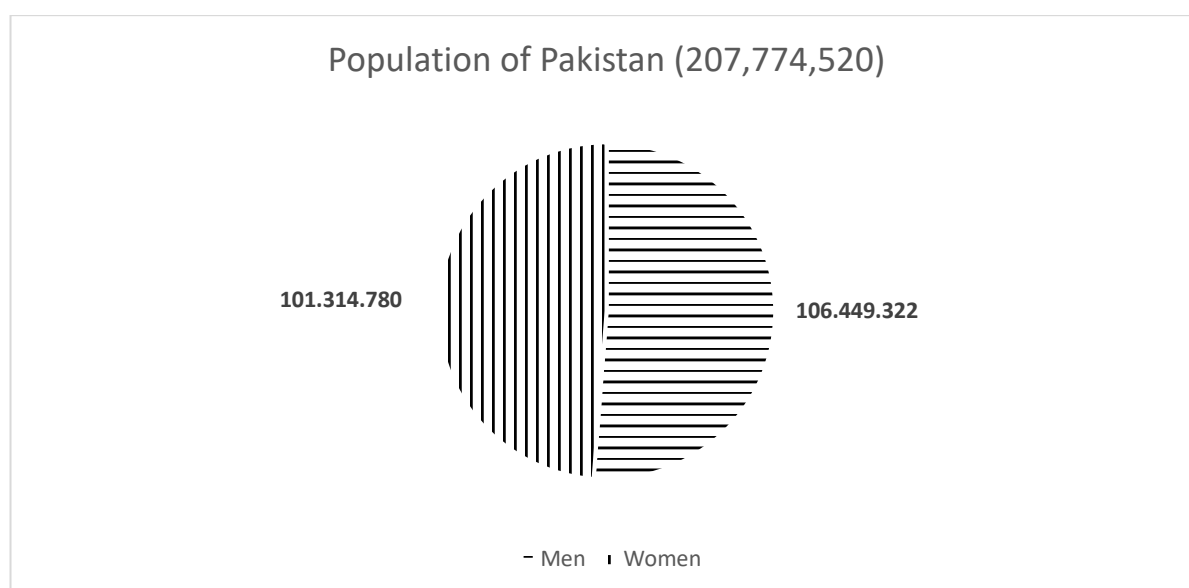
Later, the Provincial Assembly of Baluchistan passed the Local Government Act in 2010 and conducted the local government election in 2013. The Provincial Assemblies of Punjab, Sindh, and KPK passed their Local Government Acts in 2010 but conducted their elections in 2015 (UNDP, 2016). The lack of political will evidenced by the elected government caused the elections to be delayed and finally conducted through the Supreme Court's intervention. The local government election conducted in 2013–2015, elected approximately 19.6% of women across the four provinces of Pakistan. In this newly adopted Local Government Act of 2010, women seats were reduced from 33% to 22% in KPK, 15% in Punjab but remained 33% in Sindh and Baluchistan provinces.

In 2018, after the formulation of the new government by PTI, Prime Minister Imran Khan dismantled the previous local government set up and announced a local government election in 2020 under the new system. However, at the time of writing, the deadline has still not been announced. It is essential to mention that the current government, established by the PTI party, has already missed the constitutional deadline to hold the local government election within 120 days after the expiry of the new term as the past local government completed its term in August 2019.

2.7 Voting behaviour

In almost all democratic societies, voting is considered an essential tool for its members to become proactive rather than passive subjects. Pakistan’s last general election was held in July 2020, whereas a second democratic government in the country has succeeded in completing its five-year term. The last census in Pakistan conducted under the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics was held in 2017, conducted 19 years after the census of 1998. The 2017 census estimated the Pakistan population as 207,774,520 with the number of men standing at 106,449,322 (51%) and women at 101,314,780 (48.76%). The gender ratio stands at 105.7 (Statistics Bureau of Pakistan, 2017).

Figure 3: Population of Pakistan (2017)



Author’s Chart

Source: Pakistan Population Census (2017)

According to the Election Commission of Pakistan's roll of 2018, the total registered voters for the 2018 General Election were 105.96 million. Of these registered voters, 59.22% were males, and 46.73% were females. There was a gender gap between the male and female voters, approximating to almost 12.5m. Currently, 64% of the population in Pakistan is younger than 30 years, and 29% of the population is aged between 15 to 29 years (an age group which is defined as the youth). With these percentages mentioned above, Pakistan is currently experiencing a youth bulge. At this point in time, Pakistan has more young people than it has ever had, and this is forecasted to continue to increase until at least 2050.

2.7.1 Voter registration

In Pakistan, all citizens older than the age of 18 years can register as a voter if they are not declared of unsound mind by a competent court of law and are deemed to be the residents of an electoral area. Only the registered citizens on the electoral roll can cast their votes in Pakistan (Gallup Pakistan, 2012). The Election Commission of Pakistan is responsible for conducting the general elections for the National Assembly, four Provincial Assemblies, and local governments. Pakistan's electoral system largely follows the Westminster first-past-the-post system, meaning that the candidate with the plurality of votes is the winner. The losing candidate wins no representation at all.

2.7.2 Voting behaviour in past general elections

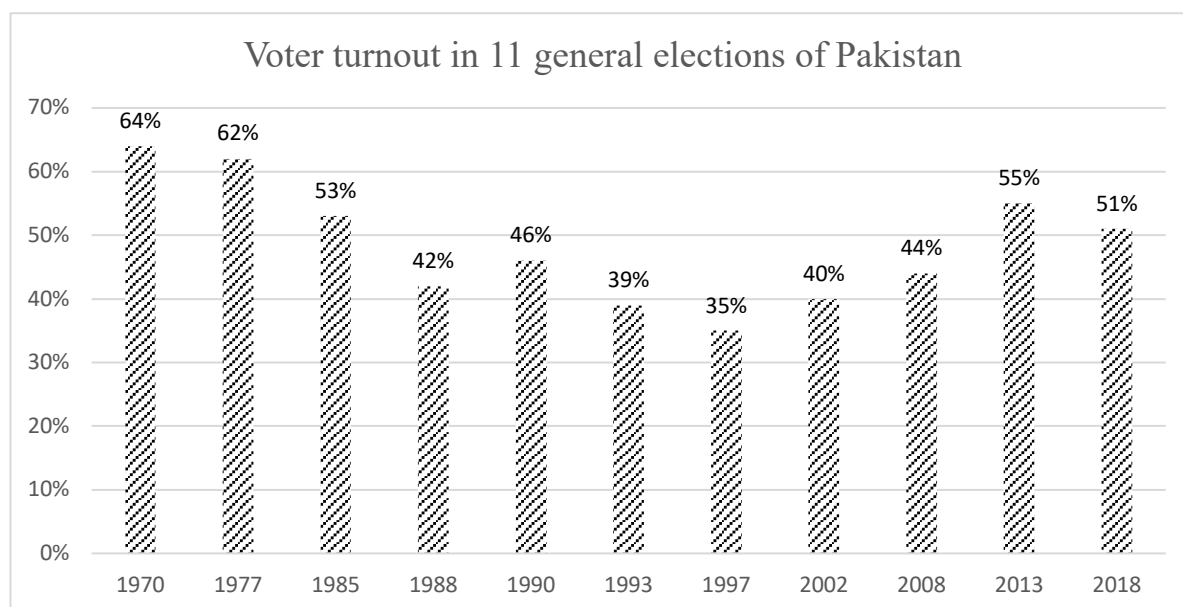
A general election in Pakistan is held at an interval of five years and seeks seats in the lower chamber of the National Assembly and the four Provincial Assemblies (Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). One of the essential indicators in analysing the trends of voting behaviour is the percentage of people casting their votes. The voter turnout data across 11 general elections of Pakistan is summarized in Figure 3 below.

2.7.3 Analysis of voting behaviour

The average voter turnout in the 11 general elections of Pakistan is approximately 51%. Whereas Pakistan experienced high voter turnout in the general elections of 1970, 1977, and 2013. The 2018 general election had a lower voter turnout than the general election of 2013 at

around 5%. Following the 2017 census, approximately 19.7 million young voters were added to the voter list for the 2019 general election, but still, voter turnout has remained slightly low.

Figure 4: Voter turnout (1970-2018)



Author's chart

Source of data: (Gallup, 2019).

One of the reasons for the high voter turnout in the 1970 general election could be the alliance of East and West Pakistan, while the election of 1977 had huge allegations of rigging followed by a military coup (Rizvi & Gilani, 2013). From the voting data available for the past elections, the highest voter turnout was in 2013 (around 55%) after the 1970 and 1977 general elections, slightly decreasing in 2018 (around 51%). In comparison, the number of registered voters increased around 15–20% in 2018 as compared to the 2013 general election (Shah & Sareen, 2018). The last general election was held in July 2018 to fill the 272 seats of the National Assembly and the seats of the respective Provincial Assembly. Two votes were cast per citizen, one for the National Assembly and the other for the Provincial Assembly.

In recent elections, promoting women's empowerment through their active participation in the election has become a top priority for the Election Commission of Pakistan. Before the 2018 general election, the Election Commission of Pakistan implemented reforms to ensure the active political participation of women across Pakistan. It imposed a rule that if in every constituency, the share of women voters in the final count fell below 10%, then the result of the poll would

be declared void. This law was passed to increase the numbers of women voting and to ensure their participation in the polls.

In the 2018 general election, two polls were declared void based on low female voter turnout, with these two constituencies being Shangla (NA-10) and North Waziristan (NA-48). The Election Commission of Pakistan ordered re-election in these two constituencies. It is essential to mention that both these constituencies are tribal areas of the KPK province, wherein influential tribes prevent women from voting. This is against their cultural tradition of female segregation that disallows women from casting their vote in a male-operated polling station (Dastageer et al., 2018). However, this was not the case across Pakistan. In the 2018 general election, 56% of men and 47% of women cast their votes against the total registered voters. Only the KPK province had the highest gender gap of 19% in terms of voting, while the other three provinces had a gender gap of about 8% of total registered voters.

Moreover, a comparison of female voter turnout in the last three elections shows that overall it has been relatively steady, ranging from 46.64% in 2018 and 48.79% in 2013 to 37.05% in 2008 (Dastageer et al., 2018). Although there is almost the same ratio of men and women in the population, there is a massive gap in male and female voter registration. In 2017, the Election Commission of Pakistan attempted to bridge this gap by launching a voter registration campaign across 70 plus districts wherein the numbers of women registering to vote was relatively low. Although this helped to register 4,307,533 women voters, the number of registered women voters in the 2018 general election still fell short by 12.5 million compared to male voters.

Overall, the efforts of the Election Commission of Pakistan helped to significantly increase female voter turnout in the general election of 2018. For instance, while in the 2012 general election, female voter turnout was less than 10% across 17 constituencies, in 2018, this was found to be the case only in two constituencies. The law of the nullification of polls (if female voter turnout were less than 10%) forced political parties to deliberately make efforts to facilitate women to cast their votes to avoid the voiding of election results.

2.8 Prominent political parties in Pakistan

The political parties in Pakistan have begun to focus on gender-orientated strategies to select their prospective workers to sustain the gender balance in their parties. The deployment of such

strategies aims to increase women's participation in politics (Sacchet, 2005). In this regard, political parties are embracing multiple strategies to include women in their parties. These strategies contain women empowerment packages that support Pakistani women in multiple economic and social ways (Masood et al., 2018). Possibly, one of the key motives behind this momentum towards women's inclusion is that the participation of women in rallies and elections, their role in political campaigns, and their high energy show help to facilitate other women in politics and likewise the increased popularity and approval of the respective party.

In Pakistan, after 2000, when a substantial number of seats in National and Provincial Assemblies were reserved for women on a quota basis, many political parties restructured their women's wings (Hussain et al., 2018). Even the conservative political parties like the Awami National Party and Jamiat Ulema Islam-F party ventured to establish their women's wings in 2004 to take advantage of the 33% reserved quota seats for women (Dutoya, 2013).

The reserved quota is one of the main reasons that in 2002, the Pakistani parliament showed the highest representation of women, rising from 1.4% in 1997–1999 to 20% in 2002 (Latif et al., 2015) and increasing to 33% in parliament in 2019 (Election Commission of Pakistan, 2019). This trend indicates that political parties in Pakistan are now deliberately creating spaces for women to join politics. By 2021, 130 political parties registered themselves with the Election Commission of Pakistan. Following the independence of Pakistan, the political landscape in the country was largely dominated by the PPP and PML-N. This situation changed when in 2013, PTI entered the Pakistani political arena to become the third strongest political party in Pakistan (Rehman, 2015). The details of the three major political parties in Pakistan are discussed in the following sections.

2.8.1 Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)

The PML-N is a centre-right conservative party in Pakistan established in 1985. Under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, it formed the government in Pakistan for three terms (1990, 1997, and 2013). Nawaz Sharif is the longest-serving Prime Minister who served for almost nine years across his terms as premier. However, in 2018, Nawaz Sharif was disqualified from holding public office for life and sentenced to ten years of prison based on charges of mass corruption and financial misappropriation. In the current government, the PML-N is the main opposition party in parliament and is currently led by Shahbaz Sharif (brother of Nawaz Sharif), whereas

Nawaz Sharif's daughter, Maryam Nawaz, is currently advancing her father's political agenda in Pakistan.

2.8.2 Pakistan People's Party (PPP)

The PPP is a centre-left, social-democratic party founded in 1967 by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. To date, the party leadership has been dominated by the members of the Bhutto family. Since its formation, the PPP has ascended to power on five separate occasions (1970, 1977, 1988, 1993, and 2008). In 1970 and 1977, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the party chairman and became the Prime Minister. In 1988 and 1993, his daughter, Benazir Bhutto, was the party chairperson and became the Prime Minister of Pakistan. After her assassination in 2008, her husband, Asif Ali Zardari Bhutto, became the party chairperson and the President of Pakistan in 2008. In the current government of 2018, the son of Benazir Bhutto, Bilawal Bhutto, is the party chairperson, and the PPP is the governing party in the Sindh province of Pakistan.

2.8.3 Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI party)

Recently, a new era of active political participation by young women has been observed in the form of increased formal enrolment in political parties, participation in political movements/rallies, and representation in local councils (Rehman & Naqvi, 2013). Currently, almost more than 100 political parties are thriving in Pakistan. The PTI party has gained prominence because of its policies regarding women and appeal to the electorate across the country (Hussain et al., 2018). In the recent past, the PTI party protest at D-Chowk Islamabad in 2014 proved pivotal for mobilizing women politically and proved to be a litmus test for the future of women's political participation. Many women participated in this protest which in turn transformed local perspectives about how women's political participation should be taken forward in Pakistan.

2.9 Background of the protest of Pakistan Tehreek Insaf in 2014

In the 2013 general election, PML-N won, and Nawaz Sharif became the Prime Minister. Even before the official announcement of the election result by the Election Commission of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif declared himself the Prime Minister, which created an impression across the

country that he had rigged the election in his favour. In response to these allegations against Nawaz Sharif, the chairman of the Tehreek Insaf political party, Imran Khan, led a campaign against Nawaz Sharif and his government in 2014.

Imran Khan made six demands to Nawaz Sharif to clear himself from the allegations of rigging the election results. These demands included a vote recount in four constituencies of the National Assembly, establishment of an independent commission to analyse the complete election results held in May 2013, lawful action against the returning officers found involved in the rigging of votes, fresh parliamentary polls if rigging were proved, reconstitution of the Election Commission and massive electoral reforms. In August 2014, Imran Khan announced the Freedom March. Later, the demand for the resignation of Nawaz Sharif as a Prime Minister was also added to the PTI's Freedom March 2014 Agenda. However, after these attempts failed, PTI was forced to announce its anti-corruption movement. Imran Khan stated that he tried for 14 months to get the government to address the rigging allegations through legal means but didn't get any response from the government.

In March 2014, he announced his plan to march from the provincial capital of province Punjab, Lahore city, with millions of his party followers towards the federal capital Islamabad. During this sit-in or 'Freedom March', the PTI party protested for almost four and a half months at Constitution Avenue, D-Chowk, within a few miles of President House, the Supreme Court of Pakistan, and the Prime Minister Secretariat. During the protest there were several violent clashes between the protesters and the police, resulting in injuries to several people. The Freedom March by the political party PTI gained fame because of the unprecedented media coverage. Hundreds of media persons were waiting every day to broadcast Imran Khan's address to protesters.

At last, on 16 December 2014, the protest was halted as a terrorist group attacked the Army Public School in Peshawar and massacred more than 140 people, including 132 children, which gave rise to national mourning and security fears countrywide. Although the Freedom March was unable to achieve its stated demands and Nawaz Sharif remained in power while completing his five-year term of government, the protest catapulted the PTI party into the public eye across the country. In a poll steered by International Republican Institute in 2010, the PTI party was ranked as the most popular party in Pakistan and Imran Khan as the most favourably viewed political leader. Again in 2019, the International Republican Poll (IRI) released figures

showing that the PTI party government enjoyed active support from the masses with a rating of 57% for Imran Khan as elected Prime Minister (International Republican Institute, 2019).

2.10 Background history of PTI party

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI party) or Movement for Justice is a political party founded in 1996 by former national cricket captain and the current Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan. Having gained fame as a national hero for captaining the 1992 cricket world cup-winning team, Imran Khan quit his cricket career, choosing to involve himself in social work. He built the first-ever cancer hospital in Lahore, which was named after his late mother as the Shaukat Khanum Cancer Hospital in 1994.

Imran Khan joined politics in 1996, he became a vocal critic of the corruption and decay in the political system in Pakistan and decided to challenge the status quo by entering politics. In the 1997 general election, the PTI party failed to win even a single seat, but managed to strengthen its position in the following election as the third political force or choice between the two major political parties of Pakistan, the PPP and PML-N. In the 2002 general election, Imran Khan managed to enter parliament by winning only one seat.

The PTI party boycotted the general election in 2008 in protest over the fraudulent election. In the 2013 general election, the PTI party received 7.5 million votes with its slogan of ‘Call for change’ and ‘New Pakistan’. The PTI party secured the second-highest votes and formed a government in one out of the four provinces of Pakistan, emerging as the second most popular and largest political party of Pakistan after the PML-N. In 2018, the PTI party received 16.9 million votes which is the most significant number of votes secured by any political party in the history of Pakistan. The party nominated Imran Khan (chairman of the party) as Prime Minister of Pakistan. The PTI party is in government at the national level and governs two provinces, i.e., Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

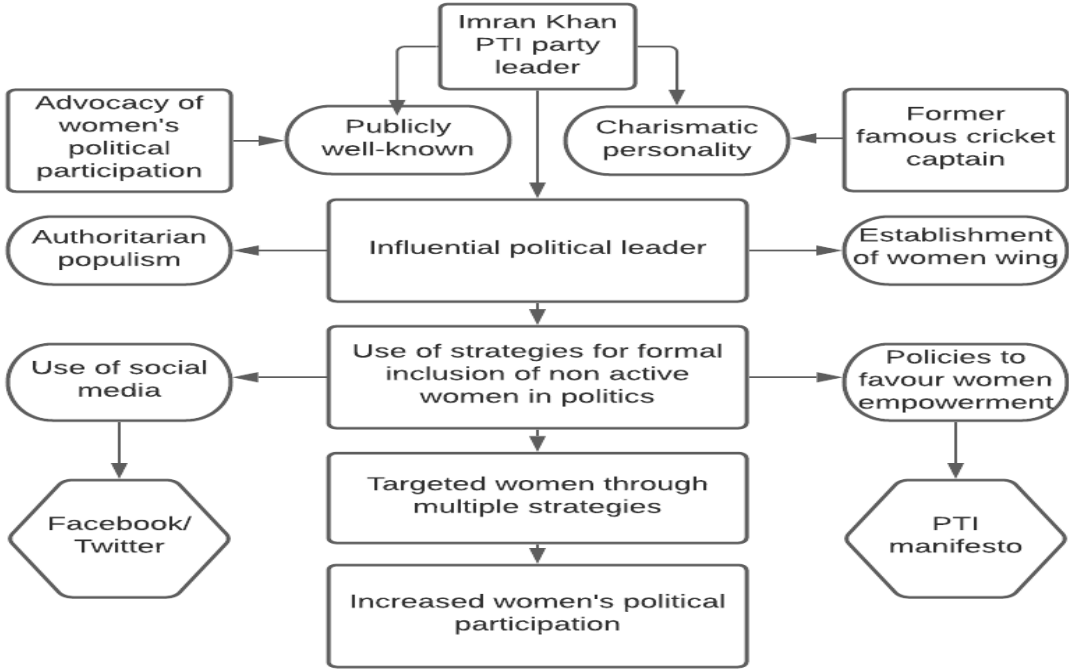
Moreover, it is a member of the coalition government in the province of Baluchistan and the second-largest opposition party in the Sindh province. However, after winning the general election of 2018, the PTI party dissolved all its organizations, structures, wings, and sub-organizations to align them with the recently approved PTI party’s constitution. An official party notification was released on 2 June 2019. Presently, the PTI party contends on its website

that it is the largest political party with over 10 million members in Pakistan and abroad based on its vast membership. Nevertheless, the PTI party is still a long way from achieving the ideal inclusion of women members in the National and Provincial Assemblies. In the current elected government of the PTI party, only three PTI women members were elected in the Punjab Assembly, while 34 PTI women members were elected on reserved seats and one woman on a minority seat. However, no PTI women members were elected in the Provincial Assemblies of Sindh, KPK, and Baluchistan on general seats.

2.11 Political strategies of PTI party to include non-active women in politics

Currently, the PTI party has the largest number of women parliamentarians in the National and Provincial Assemblies of Pakistan. PTI party has played a historically influential role for the effective inclusion of women in politics to attain its current position. Below mentioned model represents the PTI strategies for the inclusion of women in the PTI party.

Figure 5: Conceptual model to understand PTI strategies for political inclusion of women in party



Author's chart.

Based on researcher's perception

2.11.1 Imran Khan: an influential political leader

Since the beginning of his career, Imran Khan has been a well-known personality. First, he achieved fame as a cricketer who won the 1992 world cup for the first time in the cricket history of Pakistan. Later, he retired from cricket in 1992 and focused entirely on building the first-ever cancer hospital in Lahore in memory of his late mother. After Lahore, he built a second cancer hospital in Peshawar and founded the Namal college in Minawali city in 2008. He also served as the Chancellor of the University of Bradford in 2005–2014. He became of interest in the international media, as well, due to his marriage with Jemima Smith in 1995. Jemima Goldsmith is a British TV/film producer and daughter of a luxury hotel tycoon, Major Frank Goldsmith, who was also once a member of parliament in the United Kingdom (UK). In 2004, the couple eventually divorced. Even before joining politics in 1996, Imran Khan was famous in Pakistan with a huge fan following.

2.11.2 Charismatic personality

Imran Khan has a charismatic personality and has been recognized at many international forums. He emerged in the political arena of Pakistan with flying colours (Sigdel, 2018). Enjoying success across the country, Imran Khan is indeed a charismatic leader of the PTI party (Mehdi, 2018). His charisma has helped him to build a successful political career (Yilmaz & Shakil, 2021). Imran Khan's compelling personality along with his excellent organizational skills has enabled him to advance the PTI party as a dominant ruling political party (Hamdani, 2014). His cricket career made him a legend as he won the first world cup for Pakistan in 1992. In addition to his educational background from Oxford University, which polished his personality and his trailblazing cricket career, Imran Khan's devotion to welfare which led him to establish the first-ever cancer hospital in Pakistan by the name of Shaukat Khanum Memorial, has endowed him with a charismatic halo (Hamdani, 2014).

2.11.3 Populist leader

Since the beginning of his political career, Imran Khan initiated a battle against corruption in Pakistan and his passion for developing a new Pakistan has inspired the people. He is one of the most popular political leaders in the politics of Pakistan and a publicly well-known figure worldwide who has also been listed in *Time* magazines as one of the most influential people of

2019. His populism has posed a challenge to the elite and corrupt political leaders and presented the idea of a ‘Naya (new) Pakistan’ free from corruption and the old status quo. Imran Khan portrays himself as a classic populist, the only alternative to the corrupt elite ruling class and political leaders (Waraich, 2018).

Under his populist leadership, the PTI party has cleaved its way between the two main political dynasties that have ruled the country for decades between periods of military rule. He struggled hard against corruption and successfully petitioned the Supreme Court to disqualify Nawaz Sharif. Imran Khan has declared his intention to carry on with his war against the corrupt elite and pursue his struggle to build a Naya [new] Pakistan.

However, his populist leadership has drawn much criticism from denigrators who have called him a leader with a lust for power and a lack of attitude for governance. He has also been critiqued for making many populists promises of building a new Pakistan, which critics categorize as unreal and unrealistic (Hassan, 2020). He was also criticized for paralysing the federal capital of Pakistan in 2014 for almost four months to prove his claims of a rigged 2014 election. Imran Khan has been heavily criticized for using foul language against his opponents, an act considered unworthy of his polished Oxford education.

2.11.4 Women’s wing of PTI party

The women’s wing of the PTI party was established in April 1996 with a motto of representing women at all decision-making levels. Since its formation, the PTI party focused explicitly on women’s rights and delineated these in their party manifesto. The following are some of the key points of the manifesto related to women’s participation in different spheres of life.

- Provision of health services to women in Pakistan (family planning, pregnancy management).
- Establishment of women police stations across Pakistan.
- Review of existing law mechanism to identify gaps and undertake reform to empower women.
- Establishment of a separate prison for women.
- Provision of economic, educational, and legal resources for women.
- Provision of women quotas in government and different public bodies.

- Voter registration drive for women to register them to increase their political participation.
- Creation of job openings for women across Pakistan.

The PTI party manifesto focuses on providing all facilities to women in Pakistan without discrimination in terms of economic status or age. The PTI party designed its manifesto based on the system introduced by the Prophet Muhammad, a society that is based on the rule of law and economic justice. The manifesto aims to establish a welfare state build on the foundations of the Islamic rule of law. It also claims transparency for all its citizens without any discrimination of age, gender, origin, ethnicity, or religion. It stands against acts of terrorism in Pakistan and is also committed to climate change by the party planting a billion trees across Pakistan. Introducing an effective local government system is another vital commitment in the PTI party's manifesto. Overall, it presents an ideal picture of a welfare state.

Moreover, any female citizen aged 18 and above who fully subscribes to the constitution, objectives of the party and by-laws of the woman's wing can join the party with a payable monthly membership fee, as described by the Central Working Committee of PTI. However, as the PTI dissolved all its organizations and wings in 2018, including the women's wing, its official website only states the by-laws for the reconstruction of the women's wing and provides a notification of the nomination of members for the regional working committee for the Insaaf Women's Wing on 11 Aug 2020, after the restructuring of its women wing.

2.11.5 Use of social media

In the past few decades, different political parties have begun to target people through social media as the use of the internet is increasing day by day in Pakistan. Recently, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) released facts and figures showing that internet users in Pakistan had crossed the 50 million subscriber milestone by November 2019. The number of Pakistani social media accounts exceeded 44 million in 2016–2017 as reported by PTA in 2018. In developing countries, including Pakistan, the numbers of mobile phone users, along with social media users, are rapidly growing (*Daily Dawn*, 2018). In Pakistan, Facebook has the highest percentage of subscribers of 92.67%, and Twitter has a percentage of 3.9%. Given this, the PTI party is continuously running its official pages on social media apps. Almost all the parliamentarians of the PTI party maintain and update their official pages and accounts to connect with the masses on Facebook and Twitter. The PTI party has had a social media team

on board since 1996 and now has a team of 150+ volunteers from all over the world to update its social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) round the clock.

In March 2018, the PTI party organized a Social Media Summit about raising awareness through social media in four major cities (Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Peshawar). It was chaired by the party leader, Imran Khan, and attended by PTI party social media activists from all over Pakistan who presented renowned digital and social media strategies to create political awareness. PTI has been using social media to activate politically non-active segments of society, especially women. Different pages of PTI party members on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter support the above statement. There are separate women wings of the PTI party for every province, and every provincial women wing ran its social media accounts to encourage women to participate in politics.

The PTI party focuses on social media campaigns to create awareness about early participation in politics among women. Social media has the potential to promote engagement, opportunities, and communication with the masses, which may result in positive political development (Ram & Suzanne, 2017). The PTI is always ahead in building the brand image of its party through social media. As of 2021, the PTI party has more than 5.3 million followers on Twitter, while PTI party chairman Imran Khan has 13.7 million. The motto of the PTI party social media team is to make the party message viral worldwide and inspire every Pakistani to be a part of the PTI party political movement for 'Naya (new) Pakistan'. The PTI party was the first political party to develop its own website and launched the first official party Twitter and Facebook pages. Moreover, it is the first political party to launch a mobile app for its members.

The PTI party has a well-established media team to run its different social media accounts as social media is the most crucial weapon in the PTI party's arsenal. It has been derided by other political parties for its social media savviness, who mock it by calling it the social media party. The PTI party has long-term plans to use social media to create political awareness among the masses, including the launch of Insaf TV channel in 2013, representing the brainchild of the PTI social media team. The PTI web-based television station, Insaf TV, broadcasts videos and speeches of Imran Khan as well as of the second-tier leaders of PTI. Its content is mostly based on speeches and meetings that PTI leaders have given or rallies and films they have produced for the party's campaign. Moreover, the PTI party has launched a phone app to reach people in rural areas, which helps to overcome the lack of digital reach in such areas. The phone app

assisted its supporters to locate polling place locations in the general election of 2018. The PTI party has also launched instant opinion polls to reach its 3.5 million members instantly via SMS.

Chapter 3 Concepts and Analytical Framework

3.1 Challenges confronting women in politics in Pakistan

Intending to theorize the pathways to bypass the challenges causing the under-representation of women in the politics of Pakistan, the current research targets the women and men who have careers as politicians in Pakistan. Moreover, it also focuses on explaining the role of the PTI political party (current ruling party) as a supporting actor to advance the role of women in politics within the social-cultural context of Pakistan. Although women's political participation may extend beyond political parties and take the form of joining women's networks, trade unions, or NGOs, the crucial role of political parties cannot be ignored (UN Women, 2015).

In the current research, the Milbrath Hierarchical Model, a pyramid of political participation, is used to categorize respondents based on their political activities. The theoretical underpinning for the current research is based on the Supply and Demand Model of Candidate Selection that affects women's inclusion in politics (Matland & Studlar, 1996; Norris & Lovenduski, 1993; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003). Therefore, supply and demand factors have been examined in a typology under two themes: namely structural and institutional under the cultural composition of Pakistan. In contrast, challenges are conceptualised in current research as defined in Cambridge Dictionary (2020) "the situation of being faced with something that needs great mental or physical effort to be done successfully and therefore tests a person's ability".

However, the Demand and Supply model alone cannot explain woman's under-representation until and unless theories of gender and feminism are drawn upon to amplify understanding of the phenomenon (Krook, 2009). The current conceptual framework combined an array of different theories and feminist approaches to get insight into the challenges and opportunities for women in the politics of Pakistan. Most of the studies related to women's political participation, democracy, and gender are omnipresent concepts. The definition of democracy can only be refined by reviewing it from a gender perspective (Tickner, 2005). Hence, the objective of providing more opportunities for women in politics can only be achieved through more in-depth insight into the challenges and prospects for women's political participation in Pakistan through the gender lens.

3.2 Political participation beyond voting

Globally, the concept of political participation embraces different activities through which citizens articulate their views on how they want to be governed and involved in the decision-making process. While some citizens confine political participation to the act of voting, others engaged in active participation by demonstrating allegiance and membership of political parties. Later, some of them move to a more advanced level and occupy a position in the political party, though only a few of them were able to hold public office. The current research revolves around the ‘active forms of political participation’, including formal enrolment in a political party, canvassing, working in campaigns or competing for public and party office. It highlights the challenges of those women who make their way in politics beyond elections through their active political participation either as a political worker or politician (career politicians) while being affiliated with a political party. Consequently, it is encouraging to investigate the challenges of political participation and explore how the women career politicians bypass them successfully in the politics of Pakistan.

Career politicians are defined as those people whose primary preoccupation is politics as indicated by their active membership of political parties or holding of political positions (such as a member of a municipal council, legislative assembly or parliament, mayor, minister along with the ordinary members of political parties or party workers (Yogesh & Latika, 1993, p.1).

3.3 Political participation: meaning and explanation

Political participation is an activity that shapes, affects, or enables engagement with political spheres. It is a mechanism for the public to express their opinions and exert influence on the state and non-state institutions (Becker & Aimé, 2008). Hence, political participation can be broadly defined as citizens’ activities directed to influence political decisions (Van Deth, 2001). Moreover, the phenomenon of political participation can be explained in terms of the citizen’s deep-seated values and the extent to which these values serve societal welfare. In sum, the main aim of political participation is to help citizens to verbalize their opinions in a democratic governments’ decision-making process. Political participation encompasses all the activities through which citizens aspire to influence the government and its policies (Milbrath & Goel, 1978). It includes all the activities carried out by the citizen of the state to choose public office

holders and to monitor their decisions (Kaase & Marsh, 1979). Activities related to political participation are typically intended to affect or alter systematic patterns of social behaviour (Norris, 2001).

Contingent upon the type of political system within a country and its historical background, the political participation indicators may vary and shape people's perception of political participation accordingly. While it may customarily take the shape of constitutional rights, political participation is typically a voluntary exercise of such rights by the citizens of the state. Over the past few years, the rapid expansion of political activities has made it difficult to enumerate every political activity or achieve a monolithic definition. The concept of political participation combines several activities through which the citizens advance and articulate their views regarding how they want to be governed and engage in the decision-making process.

3.4 Political participation, expanding as a democratic essential

Political participation and democracy go hand in hand as “the notion of political participation are at the core of the concept of a democratic state” (Kaase & Marsh, 1979, p.28). A democratic state demands the active political participation of all individuals, including men and women (Becker & Aime, 2008). Given that “democracy is a form of governance which comes from the people and is exercised by the people and for the purpose of the people's own interest” (Becker & Aimé, 2008, p.4), as democracy has the edge over other political systems as it strongly advocates the participation and liberty of all individuals on an equal basis. The idea of a matured democracy has its roots in gender equality in terms of political power and the gender-balanced participation of men and women in a democratic framework (Bettio, 2015). The balanced contribution of both genders substantiates the reliability and effectiveness of democracy.

Intermittently, citizens of democratic states interact with the political institutions, target public policy, or are associated with a selection of public officials. The smooth running of any democratic institution is deeply contingent upon the active political participation of individuals (Division for the Advancement of Women, 2005). Political participation in terms of democracy “refers to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of the rulers and, directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy” (McClosky, 1968, p.252). Hence, political participation is vital in the sense that it regulates the representativeness of

people and the legitimacy of policies and procedures of the government. People living in a democratic state shape the political itinerary directly or through an elected representative.

They also manifest their will in the overall decision-making process, thereby contributing to policy formation (Carter & Stokes, 2002). In a democracy, political participation ensures the effectiveness and accountability of the rulers towards the ruled and is integrated into the state's political system as a mechanism of response or demand (Milbrath & Goel, 1978). Moreover, it has also been argued that if decision-makers realized that ordinary citizens could demonstrate active political engagement, then they are likely to perform their duties more vigilantly (Almond & Verba, 1989). If the citizens of a democratic state are not politically active, in that case, the state may not get the feedback of the masses on a systematic level and eventually loses authority and legitimacy (Dalton, 2006).

3.5 The exigency of gender-balanced political participation

Since the 1960s, political participation in democratic states has been a central theme in research, especially in liberal democracies (Almond & Verba, 1989; Moyser, Parry & Day, 1992). A democratic state can be prosperous by catering to citizens' needs while ensuring gender-balanced political participation and such an approach is more likely to lead to significant development in all social institutions (Uhlener, 2015). Moreover, the right to engage in political participation further promotes democratic governance and contributes to advancing all other human rights. The right to participate in politics directly or indirectly helps to empower marginalized individuals and groups (Bachelet, 2020).

Political participation and democracy are inseparable, as “any book about political participation is also a book about democracy” (Moyser et al., 1992, p.3). Democracy without gender-balanced participation may be considered a vacant democracy. Globally, many countries are still far away from such ideal inclusion, particularly South Asian countries, where governance is under the strong influence of patriarchal values (UN Women, 2014). Normative theories of democracy also argue that as women are equal citizens, they should be provided with opportunities to participate on par with men in political decision-making (Manon, 1998). Gender-balanced participation is a crucial feature of all democratic societies that cater to the specific needs and requirements of both men and women while recognizing their particular experiences (UNDP, 2019).

The current era of modernization gives rise to democracy, providing more political spaces for women to experience a transformation of traditional gender roles relative to non-democratic ones (Norris, 1997). Hence, it is evident that gender-balanced political participation builds a sustainable society and ensures the legitimacy of political processes by making them more reactive to the entire community's concerns and perspectives (Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019). Moreover, gender-balanced participation serves not only to promote human rights but also catalyse growth and sustainable development (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018).

3.6 Political participation: historical overview

The most common activity related to political participation is voting (Levin, 2012). With the advent of democratic states during the 1940s and 1950s, the emphasis was only on casting a vote or electoral participation by citizens. Political participation has experienced considerable expansion over the past 50 years, with the primary focus accorded to citizens' participation in democratic decisions. Furthermore, the concept of political participation has expanded beyond the mere casting of votes. By the early 1960s, in addition to voting, multiple political activities began to be included in the context of statutory political institutions (Campbell et al., 1960).

The direct interface between citizens and politicians led to the generation of numerous communal activities beyond election-related activities. These activities include the freedom to register as a candidate, launch a campaign, be elected, and hold public office (Verba et al., 1971). These activities were classified as conventional or institutionalized modes of participation. Later in the early 1970s, such institutionalized activities were profoundly influenced by social and political movements, especially women's economic and political empowerment. The second wave of feminism during the 1970s altered the conventional role of women and gave rise to a significant number of women as heads of state. The era of 1970 is described as a 'pivot of change' by many historians because of the socially progressive values spread in the Western world, such as political consciousness and the economic freedom of women (Lorenzini et al., 2016).

In America, the era of the 1970s is known as 'identity politics', where native Americans, including marginalized groups of women, gays, and lesbians, mobilized to reform discriminatory law and stood for government support for their interests. The activities of the

National Women's Political Caucus in the US were influential during this time to enhance the role of women in political parties and elect them in public offices (National Women's Political Caucus, 2020). Moreover, many women leaders globally rose to positions of power. For example, Isabel Martinez de Perón became the first woman President of Argentina in 1974–76. El Isabel Domitian was the first woman to serve as Prime Minister of the Central African Republic in 1975–76. Indira Gandhi was elected as Prime Minister of India for two terms, 1966–77 and 1980–84. Golda Meir was elected as the fourth Prime Minister of Israel in 1969–74 and Lidia Geiler Tejada as the interim President of Bolivia in 1979–1980. Maria de Lourdes was elected as the Prime Minister of Portugal in 1979–1980, and Margaret Thatcher became the Prime Minister of the UK in 1979–90.

Subsequently, the concept of political participation experienced a shift from regulated activities which involved citizens' diverse expressions and opinions in society (Barnes & Kaase, 1979). During the 1970s, these social movements were spearheaded by different pacifist and women's organizations that had defied the existing societal standards. Thus, such activities began to be labelled as unconventional modes of participation which rejected elite modes of participation and challenged the social-political arrangements of that time (Inglehart, 1990).

In the 1980s, the concept of communitarian approaches gained momentum with the civic engagement of citizens being embraced as a substitute for state intervention to reduce the outlays of government. Hence, new approaches to volunteerism, civic engagements, and social activities began to be recognized as part of political participation (Verba et al., 1971). The concept of political participation further expanded with the evidence of internet-based technologies in the early 1990s that also expedited modes of expression by ensuring political accessibility with minimal cost (Bennett & Segerberg, 2014).

Moving forward, in the current era of the 21st century, the notions of political participation entail a relatively large number of activities. At present, the concept of political participation has evolved to assay citizens' active involvement in democratic processes. The proliferation of social media has given rise to innovative, digitally mediated politics. Thus, such digital politics have enabled almost every citizen of a democratic state to be politically active at any time with the aid of information technology (Bennett, 2012). Moreover, digital technologies strengthen the transparency and legislative powers of government by contributing to unparalleled access to and exchange of information among its citizens. While the concentration of power and

resources have been raised, there are pressing concerns about privacy, data ownership and targeted exploitation. Now, governments are expected to amend laws and have oversight to meet the evolving challenges of the modern digital economy (Streel & Ledger, 2021).

3.7 Political participation and the role of political parties

International political standards call for gender-balanced participation vis-à-vis the full participation of men and women in all features of the political processes as described in the fifth Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations. However, it is difficult for women to be active in politics. Therefore, special assistance is required to protect their political rights in general. In this regard, the political parties' role is crucial as they hold the remit to nominate candidates for election.

Women's role in political parties can help advance their prospects in politics, at least at the national level. These political parties are the key actors for promoting women in politics as they recruit and select political candidates, thus serve as a bridge between voters and elected officials. Political parties usually function in a democratic government in three ways. First, the voter's choice is enhanced by ongoing competitiveness between parties with clear policy directions, otherwise, the voters will face unfamiliar options every time. Second, competition between the parties encourages the focus of the election on topics of interest to most voters. Third, without political parties, the democratic process favours dominant classes (Kantor & Peterson, 1977).

Moreover, in line with the governmental and international organizations' objectives that seek to advance women's participation in all political spheres, these political parties are also influential in shaping women's political prospects. A balanced democratic government can be established through a political culture in which citizens are active and critical towards the government. The best way to develop such a political culture is through the snowball effect generated with the support of political parties.

The affirmative action of one citizen can motivate others to contribute to civic participation. Through the platform of political parties, citizens can choose their representatives and ensure that elected officers implement and adhere to voters' preferences in parliament. In democratic countries, political parties effectively seek to include women in politics within the context of a systematic structure. They can nominate candidates in national and local elections and even

endorse them during election campaigns (Ballington et al., 2005). The political parties or party supporters can often finance the election campaigns and enable male and female candidates to contest for election, even if they do not have the financial resources to run for office (Iwanaga, 2010).

3.8 Political parties: a gateway for entry into politics

In a democratic state, political parties can serve as a gateway for women to enter political spheres. The left-wing parties worldwide have been more inclined towards women candidates, possibly due to their commitments to agritourism and concerns for under-represented groups (Norris & Lovenduski, 1993). Since the 1950s, the left-wing parties in Europe had been more open to the inclusion of women than mainstream parties (Carter, 1956). Left-wing parties have supported many women's movements linked with abortion, education, and the welfare rights of women on account of their liberal stance on women's issues (Gelb, 1989).

On the contrary, conservative parties were considered less open to women because of their ideological beliefs in traditional gender roles (Eagly et al., 2019), which held the role of women was limited to the household. Likewise, in the German Empire, the woman's traditional role was described under the so-called 'four Ks' in the German language representing the, Kirche (church), Küche (kitchen), and Kinder (children), associating the primary duties of women limited to the home. Whereas in America, it was phrased as 'barefoot and pregnant', defining a woman's role as restricted to the house and to bear children only (Arthur, 1970).

However, these roles significantly changed during the mid-20th century, particularly in terms of women's political rights. German women got the right to vote in 1919, whereas, in Switzerland, it was given in 1971. A significant development that had a substantial impact on women's political participation in Germany was the establishment of the Greens Party in the 1980s. Many feminists became part of the party leadership and highlighted multiple women's issues by the mid-90s. Since 2005, Germany has been headed by Angela Merkel from Christian Democratic Union party and marked as one of the most influential leaders in the world. Moreover, in Germany, the leader of the centre-left Social Democrats is also chaired by a woman named Andrea Nahles (DW, 2018). The Greens and the Left party demand that 50% of all the candidates and ministers' positions represent women. Currently, 58% of the Greens and 54% of the left German parliamentarians are women (Bundestag, 2020).

The political participation of women is often channelled through the women's wings of political parties. It always gets advocacy from several international organizations such as the United Nations, National Democratic Institute, and Development Bank (Meyers, 2017). The establishment of the first woman's branch was undertaken by the Social Democratic Workers Party, Norway, in 1912. The women's branch of the Social Democratic Party of Sweden made a strong impact by opening more than 300 local clubs throughout the country to create awareness among women through debates and seminars. They also provided training for women on organizational and political questions (Korpi et al., 2004). The main aim in establishing women's wings among political parties was to create a space for identifying legislative issues related to women and, later, to include their voices in party politics (Poggione & Reenock, 2009).

Political parties may take various measures to encourage women to become engaged in politics. These interventions may range from operational, training, or strategic levels. Operational steps facilitate the development of a women's wing within a political party. Women's wings are globally prevalent in three out of four countries and half of the political parties surveyed in 110 countries (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1997). It is also expected at the European level (except Denmark) to have parties with an established women's wing. For example, in Germany the Social Democrat party of Germany (SPD) establish one within the party named 'The Working Group of Social Democratic Women' (ASF).

Moreover, in Germany, the Alliance 90/The Greens are actively conducting workshops to encourage women to join politics. The political parties' logistic initiatives include childcare facilities and the alignment of family commitments with political meeting hours. Whereas few political parties focus on training courses that explicitly train women to be candidates or MPs. Parties that have taken such steps include the Austrian People's Party ÖVP (The Inter-Parliamentary Council, 1997).

The implementation of incentives and punitive actions to enable political parties to include women has become the preferred tactic of democratic governments worldwide. In 2019, the Chief Minister, Jam Kamal of Pakistan's Provincial Assembly of Baluchistan, for the first time at the provincial level, approved the construction of a day-care centre. Meanwhile, there is one daycare centre at Parliament House in Islamabad, Pakistan, built in 2017 for women

parliamentarians (Jamal, 2019). Some of these advantages are included in the National Constitution, while the electoral laws and party's objectives impose others.

The motive behind establishing a woman's wing is usually to represent the party as an equal opportunity provider for all or to encourage women to join the party as a formal member. A separate wing allows women to work in a conducive environment without men (National Democratic Institute, 2002). Such political parties serve as a platform for women to participate in politics as a most common route to public office (UN Women, 2015). Several political parties in Pakistan have also established separate women's wings within their parties to promote women or pose as an advocate of women's inclusion in political life. Almost all the major political parties in Pakistan have separate women's wings (Awan, 2016).

Nevertheless, instead of contributing to the party's policy and decision-making process, these women members merely provide canvas support for their male colleagues in Pakistan (Khan & Naqvi, 2020). Even having an autonomous space, these women members are marginalized, and their leadership is not recognized as the power within their parties (Dutoya, 2013). These women members often fulfil the representative functions compared to the executive ones (Awan, 2016), with almost no say in the mainstream party's policy or operational issues (Nizamani, 2016). Instead, these women members are considered second- and even third-rate citizens among the political parties in Pakistan (Sahi, 2015). The first women-only party was established in Pakistan in 2013 under the name of 'Pakistan Woman Muslim League', but till 2020, the party fails to get any prominent position in the political landscape of Pakistan.

The inclusion of women in politics tends to depend on multiple factors, including political structure, a translucent electoral system, spaces for women in the political system, and gender-balanced participation in the public and the private spheres (Office for Democratic Institutions & Human Rights, 2014). While dealing with a complex set of factors, political parties are considered as 'gatekeepers of democracy' and women's political participation in particular (Office for the Democratic Institution and Human Rights, 2014). Political parties in a democratic country express their reviews and highlight the citizens' concerns and later articulate them at public policy council meetings and deliberations. They also provide a legitimate entry point whereby men and women could get elected as representatives or decision-makers.

3.9 Approaches towards political participation

The approach to fair political participation is based on two key arguments that justify the inclusion of women in politics. The first is the ‘difference argument’ which implies that in contrast to their male peers, the woman can bring multiple perspectives and experiences to the table, improving the overall policy and political debates. After employing gender-balanced representation, all kinds of gender disparities can be considered while structuring public policy. While the second approach, ‘pragmatic arguments’ is based on the benefits that a party can attain by including women, which may include greater electability and the unique skills or expertise of women. By including women, political parties can improve their public image, enhance their policy agendas, and fortify their electoral strategies (Lovenduski, 2002).

It is essential to mention that not all political parties can be persuaded to support women’s political participation based on human rights or the principle of justice. In such cases, an incentive-based approach may be used to convince political leaders and political parties to create space for participation by women. For instance, in Canada, the government launched financial incentives for political parties in 2017 to nominate women candidates in provisional elections. The report was presented in 2019 with the title ‘Elect her: a road map for improving the representation of women in Canadian politics’. The committee emphasized the role of political parties and stressed nominating more women as candidates to obtain equality in a typically male-oriented field. Moreover, the committee recommended cash incentives in the form of subsidies to encourage political parties to increase the nomination of women candidates. As a result, a record number of female parliamentarians were witnessed in the 2019 Canadian elections, whereas 98 women were elected out of the 338 members (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2019).

Ultimately the political parties can make a difference by affecting the level of democratic functioning within a country by encouraging and including marginalized groups in active politics (Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008). The democratic political system of any government revolves around the interplay of actors, institutions, and structures, whereby they all function reciprocally. Thereby, socio-cultural structures have the power to limit the activities of the political actors. It has been argued that although such structures can determine political actors, they still have the wherewithal to redefine structures (Rothstein, 2007). Political parties are categorized as ‘crucial actors’, which may help to explain the variation in the representation of

women (Rothstein, 1998). In addition to nominating the candidates' authorization, political parties also decide the candidates' gender quota (Bayer & Leslie, 2009).

By adopting effective strategies and policymaking, these political parties can play an influential role in the inclusion of women in politics. However, despite specific arrangements by democratic governments and political parties, a woman has a lower ratio of participation in politics (National Democratic Institute, 2002). As for women candidates, the chances of being elected may be affected by the voters' choice associated with a particular political party. If a woman contests from a party that is not a popular choice of the voters, she may have a lower chance of being elected (Prasad, 2004).

3.10 Political participation: classification and modes

In democratic states, modes of political participation can comprise a wide range of activities, for instance, voting, protesting, financial contributions, becoming a member of a party, or participating in political discussions. During the 1950s, the right to vote was the central focus and later expanded to conventional and unconventional participation (Almond & Verba, 1989; Axford et al., 1997). Out of these activities, traditional strategies include voting, running for office, and financial contributions. Among others, voting is labelled as the least intense activity, which makes limited demands on the individual and represents a common and widely accepted way to interact with the government (Verba, 2000).

The convention activities are approved in line with the democratic principles of the state. Convention participation refers to those activities that are "accepted as appropriate by the dominant political culture" (Conway, 2000, p.3). In comparison, marching, boycotting, refusing to obey the laws, and protesting are unconventional strategies. However, citizens' participation occasionally bursts beyond the bounds of conventional politics to include demonstrations, protests, and other forms of unconventional political actions. However, unconventional participation is often controversial as it is less accepted. Nevertheless, from the historical point of view, different nations and individuals used both forms of participation (Logan, 2017).

Strategies of unconventional political participation can be helpful because they can be used as a positive instrument to check on the policymakers and make them accountable to the public (Kaim, 2021). A similar series of unconventional strategies were adopted by the PTI political

party in 2014 against the massive allegations of rigging in the 2013 general election of Pakistan. The PTI party organized several gatherings in different cities of Pakistan. However, the protest was called off after 126 days by the party chairman, Imran Khan, in the view of solidarity with the Peshawar school massacre, where almost 132 children were killed in the terrorist attack in the Peshawar city of Pakistan.

The Imran Khan political protest in 2014 was also criticized as a mass civil disobedience movement that resulted in economic losses for the country in terms of closure of offices, businesses, schools, colleges, and universities in the vicinity. However, at times, unconventional political strategies are considered more effective because they may bring rapid changes or produce an immediate effect on public policy as they can also exert direct and consequential pressure in the form of agitation and protest. In contrast, conventional modes of political participation are usually considered unproductive in bringing rapid changes (Logan, 2017). Accordingly, the study of political participation moved towards a wide range of factors and dynamics (Van Deth, 2001).

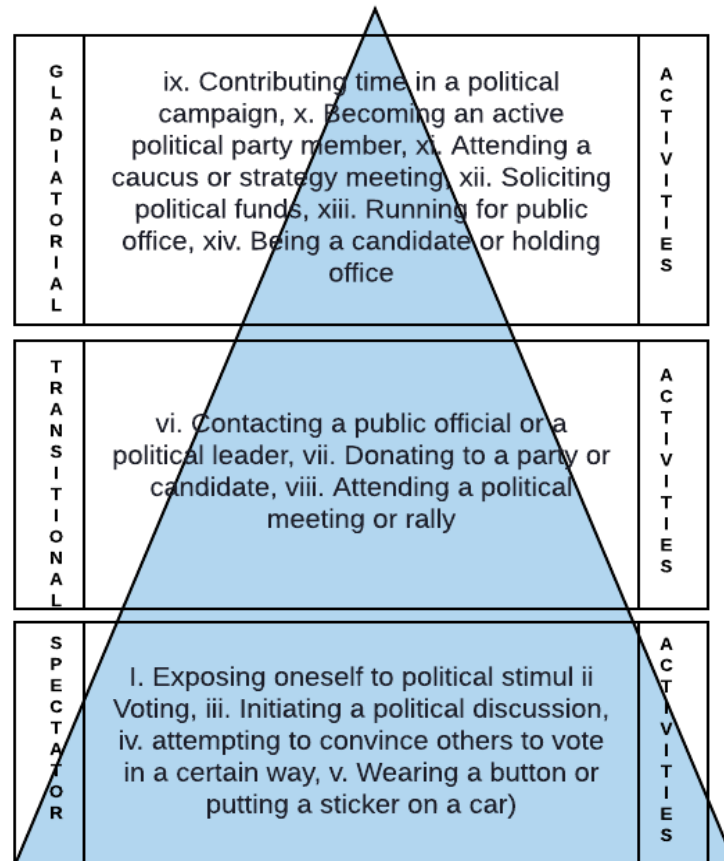
3.11 Milbrath's hierarchical framework

With the modernization of democracies, the different modes of participation are the focus of this research, ranging from conventional to unconventional involvement (Verba et al., 1971). In 1965, Lester Milbrath presented a political participation model to discuss how individuals participate in politics. According to him, any political activity intended to affect the government's decision-making can be stigmatized as political participation. However, such activities are distinguishable from daily life activities as time, energy, and resources are required for these to be carried out. Every rational man evaluates the cost of participating in politics, even it just entails voting, and if the cost offsets the returns, he is likely to avoid it (Downs, 1957).

The Milbrath model provides a guideline to fix the actual position of individuals in politics based on their level of engagement in politics by designating them as passives (who do not participate) or spectators (with minimal participation) or gladiators (high level of participation). The levels are cumulative and take the shape of a pyramid, where citizens involved in a higher level of political activities are viewed as more central to the social structure. For this reason, Milbrath's work was labelled as a 'theory of centrality' (Milbrath & Goel, 1978).

Figure 6: Milbrath Pyramid of political participation

Hierarchy of political participation from Milbrath



Author's chart

Source of data: Hierarchy of political participation by Milbrath (1965)

In this pyramid-shaped model, Milbrath experiences the entire political journey from engaging oneself in initial political activities to eventually holding public office. The significant difference between these activities is the increase of commitments from the lower level towards the upper level. In comparison, the number of participants may decrease while moving from the lower level to higher-level political activities. The model is quite useful in categorizing people depending upon their level of engagement in politics. However, the panorama for politics is considerably more advanced due to technology meditation in every field of life, including politics (Amarasuriya et al., 2009). Still, Milbrath's Model provides a generalized framework for labelling the political actors at different levels, based on their engagement in political activities.

Extensively used in earlier studies, Milbrath's Hierarchical Model provides a useful guide for gauging the level of participation by people involved in different political activities (Axford, 2002; Fowler, 2006; Plutzer, 2002; Zevin, 1999). Milbrath has hierarchically presented multiple political activities, and each level of the model represents a different level of active political engagement being described as intense or plausible. It provides support for categorizing the level of involvement in politics that leads to a further generalization of the political participants. Moreover, it represents the traditional and cardinal activities in the form of a pyramid that simultaneously depicts both the differences and similarities.

Milbrath viewed the individual as a unit of analysis, comprehensively linking the political activities with increasing levels of struggle and engagement. He assigned 13 political activities to three tiers, reflecting the increasing level of participation and the decreasing number of participants. Milbrath termed the lowest participation in the pyramid as Spectator activities, entailing minimal effort and a more significant number of participants, succeeded by Transitional activities with mid-level political participation and relatively fewer participants. On top of the pyramid, Gladiator activities are placed, involving a considerable amount of effort and even fewer participants. It provides a baseline for dividing active political respondents into three categories, discussed in the following sections.

3.11.1 Spectator activities

Positioned on the lowest tier, the individuals with Spectator activities engage in i) exposure to political stimuli, ii) voting, iii) initiating a political discussion, iv) attempting to convince others to vote in a certain way, v) wearing a button or putting a sticker on a car. The lower level activities comprise Spectator activities that include small and straightforward efforts, like wearing a party badge or holding or placing a party flag on display.

3.11.2 Transitional activities

On the second tier, individuals with Transitional activities are likely to engage in vi) contacting a public official or a political leader, vii) donating to a party or candidate and, viii) attending a political meeting or rally. Transitional activities require a bit more effort but not much time, possibly some financial spending or a little contribution to decision-making. However, they are

a liability for the participants. People are somehow involved physically, financially as well as intellectually at the Transitional level.

3.11.3 Gladiator activities

At the top tier, individuals with Gladiator activities engage in ix) contributing time in a political campaign, x) becoming an active political party member, xi) attending a caucus or strategy meeting, xii) soliciting political funds, xiii) running for public office or xiv) serving as a candidate or holding office. The last category is the Gladiator level, including the more substantial commitments such as time or financial, and are physical contributions or even involve holding public office.

The Milbrath Model of political participation can be critiqued since it cannot be applied to all states of affairs and at all times. For instance, those engaged in the Spectator level may also be carrying out other activities related to Transitional or Gladiator levels. Moreover, voters can also be office bearers or support a political party by donating money. The individuals placed on Transitional or Gladiator activities are generally involved in the voting activity, but the model is entirely valid and fits in the description of political participation (Ruedin, 2007). The Supply and Demand Model offers a more comprehensive overview of the phenomenon of political participation and the factors involved in the whole political process.

3.12 Supply and Demand Model of Candidate Selection

Women are globally underrepresented in political office, corporate boards and leadership positions (World Bank, 2011), and assigned less influential cabinets positions than their male counterparts (Krook & O'Brien, 2010). The idea of political participation is central to the democratic system (Norris & Lovenduski, 1993), whereas the dynamics of candidate selection are at the heart of political participation (Krook, 2009). The Supply and Demand Model focuses on women's cases from the perspective of the demand and supply of women aspirants.

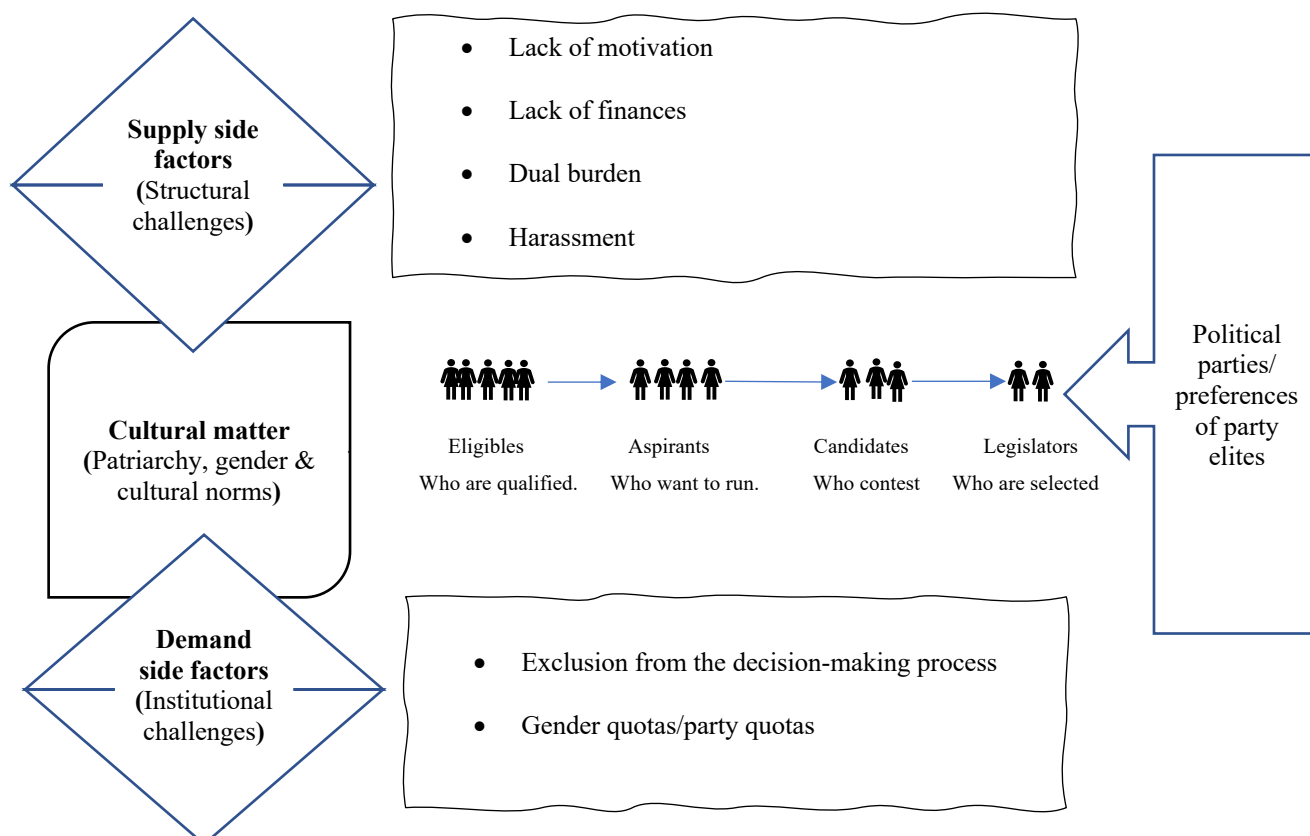
The model discusses the various candidacy stages and highlights challenges to women's political participation while developing insights into socio-cultural and gender-based inequalities in the political arena. The model was initially used to explore the causes of women's under-representation (Hill, 1981) and later refined thoroughly (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995).

The phrase ‘Supply and Demand’ is not related to the economic law of supply and demand but is used as a metaphor to understand the recruitment process in politics. Supply-side factors affect those who come forward as a potential candidate, whereas demand-side factors determine which of these candidates are considered desirable by political elites.

Following the model, women in politics pass through three different stages to become legislators. These are divided into three typologies:

- i) The eligibility to become part of the pool from which politicians are drawn, based on the qualification and motivation of women candidates (supply-side factors).
- ii) The selection as a political candidate, based on the willingness of political elites to select those women aspirants (demand-side factors).
- iii) Eventually, selection to the public office, affected by the culture that drives the mechanism of supply and demand factors (cultural matters).

Figure 7: Conceptual model of factors shaping women’s access to public office



Author’s sketch, inspired by Supply and Demand model of candidate selection by Lovenduski & Norris (1995).

The potential challenges are discussed in the model as supply- or demand-side challenges and can exist in any of the stages mentioned above (Prasad, 2004). There are many explanations for under-representation in politics, but the model focuses on demand-/supply-side factors along with cultural elements based on women's descriptive representation (Krook, 2009; Norris & Lovenduski, 1993; Venn, 2008). It focuses on the aspects of candidate selection as an interactive process in which both selectors and aspirants affect results, managed in several sets of institutions in a democratic state (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995).

Democratic governance is often built on the ideas of a balanced representation of marginalized groups. The concept of political participation is always debated within the context of including both genders and providing them with adequate spaces for political involvement. Hence, the active participation of all citizens of a democratic state across all levels is an essential constituent of human rights. Gender balance in political participation is always a primary objective of any democratic state as women in politics positively impact policy implications (Dodson, 2006; Reingold & Swers, 2011). Indeed, it has been observed that “tackling governance, leadership and political participation from a gender transforming perspective involves considering women as responsible individuals, capable of taking decisions and indispensable for their society’ democratisation processes” (Labani et al., 2009, p.6).

Women are under-represented in all political processes because of their lack of access to resources and face numerous challenges that may differ across countries but tend to be primarily socio-economic and ideological (Delys, 2014). The challenges faced by women wishing to participate are likely to vary, concerning the level of socio-economic development, culture, geography, and type of political system prevalent in countries where these women reside (Alzuabi, 2016; Shvedova, 2005). While globally, the number of women in parliament has improved, gender gaps in politics continue to exist in many countries, particularly in developing ones (Milazzo & Goldstein, 2019). For instance, the nature of these challenges is delineated as:

Women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low level of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women (UN Women Thematic Brief, 2011, p.1).

3.13 Supply-side factors or structural challenges

Structural challenges are the tactical obstacles related to technology, costs, and demand that restrict entry into the market (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2002). However, structural challenges to women's political participation are usually related to socio-economic development in a country (Delys, 2014). The Supply and Demand Model of candidate selection highlighted the structural challenges to women's political participation as discussed in the following sections.

3.13.1 Motivation

First, supply-side factors that shape the supply of women aspirants are based on motivational factors (such as drive, ambition or interest) about being politically active and running for office. The recruitment process pivots on the candidate's social background that determines the resources required to become elected representatives and eventually affects their motivation to participate. The motivation of a female candidate helps to nominate her to the pool of eligible applicants, although women are less willing to participate in politics than their male counterparts, which is the main reason for their under-representation in politics (Lawless & Fox, 2010). The official report of the Standing Committee on the status of women in Canada reported that women tend to have lower levels of interest in politics compared to men (Wilms, 2019).

There are two kinds of justification for the above connotation. First, women are doubtful about their capabilities, even when they have high qualifications as good as those of men (Fox & Lawless, 2011). The second possibility is that women may feel reluctant to contest elections. It is either their lack of confidence or gender-based discrimination that may hamper them. Moreover, the gendered stereotyped electoral process makes them feel less confident or less politically motivated than men (Wilms, 2019). The lack of confidence in the electoral system compels women to refrain from contesting in the election because they fear that they will not get enough support from the masses (Kanthak & Woon, 2014).

3.13.2 Lack of resources

Secondly, apart from motivation, women need several other resources such as time, money, or experience to join politics (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). Such socio-economic challenges

mainly include a lack of financial resources. Female global development practitioners have observed that economic freedom leads toward empowerment and agency at the household or community level and even beyond (Lu, 2019). Moreover, there is a direct link between the socio-economic status of women and their participation in elected bodies and political institutions (Kassa, 2015). Social structures can negatively or positively affect education or employment opportunities and furnish women's human and financial capital to run for public office.

Further, at the global level, in comparison with male peers, women have limited access to education, contacts, and resources, which restricts them from becoming influential leaders (UN Women, 2020). Nevertheless, strong economic positions generally lead to political careers (Delys, 2014) and women's economic empowerment leads towards the means of political participation (Lu, 2019). Lack of financial means and less control over resources are vital factors that exclude women from the political sphere (International Alert Org, 2012) and limit their political participation due to election costs (Kayuni & Chikadza, 2016).

Moreover, limited economic resources are also linked with limited access to information resources and political networks, which may contribute negatively to negate attempts to join public office at national and local levels. Further, the lack of political knowledge and information available to women keep them ignorant about the role of MPs and counsellors and available opportunities (Ballington et al., 2005). However, independent funding and putting financial limits on political campaigns can support the inclusion of women in politics (Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019).

3.13.3 Dual burden

The structural challenges related to work-life balance and sexism can lead to the absence of women in political life (Foos & Gilardi, 2019). In almost every human society, power relations and structures are directed by the gender-power order, as social benefits and social burdens are allocated based on the gender of the individual (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). The leading cause of the low representation of women in politics is the sex role assigned to women, namely that their role is in the home area and that political/public life is the domain of men. This division restricts women to the home and hinders their participation in public or political life (Clark & Cosgrove, 1991). Women take on a disproportionate share of household chores and have less time to opt

for politics as a full-time career. In this regard, a woman has to pay the ‘motherhood penalty’ across fields (Correll et al., 2007; Hill, 1981; Hochschild, 1989).

Women politicians tend to experience a late entry into politics, have a limited number of children, and strive to arrange shorter commutes to work and run for office only with supportive families. In contrast, male peers are likely to compete for office even when there is a lack of family encouragement. Such taxing commitment towards political career discourages many women from opting for politics as a career even before “testing the water” (Teele et al., 2018, p.11). Even being involved in Transitional or Gladiator activities, women feel less available than their male colleagues, especially during their reproductive years (Teele et al., 2018).

Moreover, because of their dual burden, which is not recognized as actual work, women can barely work full time and earn less. The long and irregular working hours, the absence of employee rights for MPs and local councillors (e.g., maternity leave and flexible working hours), the need to be in media highlights, and the strict parliamentary calendars, comprise significant challenges for women in politics. Eventually, these factors negatively affect women’s political career choices because of the disruption of work-life balance (Ballington et al., 2005). In the current era, a new kind of labour politics has emerged to address such issues, focusing on restructuring labour laws in political institutions (Galvin, 2019).

3.13.4 Harassment

Another critical challenge is harassment which has been highlighted immensely in the last ten to 15 years, globally, with a particular focus on violence and harassment against women in politics. Although men and women alike have fallen prey to it, in particular, it is more challenging for women to participate in politics (Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019). In this regard, harassment takes the form of behaviour that specifically targets women to leave politics by pressuring them to step down as candidates or resign from a particular public office (Krook & Sanín, 2016). Though the above definition has considered only politicians, it can also be expanded to women involved in any political activity, whether electoral.

The acts of aggression, coercion and violence directed at women voters, party members and women activists are all aimed at restricting women’s political participation. It is primarily a case of gender-based discrimination to deny their competence in the political arena (Krook & Sanín,

2016). Harassment against women parliamentarians has short- and long-term consequences, limiting their access to leadership positions and preventing their full contribution to political processes (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2018). Moreover, women involved in Transitional, and Gladiator political activities may face sexist language in public offices, biased media coverage, and physical assault. These acts of harassment and violence fortify traditional gender roles and encourage male-dominated decision-making spaces that restrict the entry of women in political sphere (Elliott, 2015).

In the current digitalised age, people involved in politics rely on social media platforms to communicate their political activities to the public and express their views. Harassment has now spread to different online media platforms in the form of bashing, trolling, and negative comments to female politicians and activist speeches and tweets. In 2017, 4,000 women in eight high-income countries faced some form of abuse on social media platforms. However, women in leadership roles are more victims of it (Lehr, 2018). Such online bashing not only damages women personally and professionally but also violate their right to freedom of speech and inhibits them from seeking public office.

3.14 Demand-side factors (institutional challenges)

The demand-side factors explain the role of gatekeepers (political parties or political elites) that define how and to what extent women can be included in politics based on their preferences and opinions. As political elites' choices and beliefs powerfully shaped these evaluations institutional challenges that hinder women's political participation pertain to the electoral system (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). Moreover, it explains the electoral system or political parties' contribution that draws willing women candidates into politics. Generally, in a democratic country, women have more chances to participate in politics. Every political party in a democratic state usually supports the inclusion of women in their parties. Nevertheless, this ratio is also significantly affected by the gender structure of the society where electorates are generally reluctant to vote for women candidates and express a preference for men over women (Philpot & Walton, 2007).

An individual wishing to run for a political office needs to be selected and supported by a political party in many cases. Thus, it is essential to meet the demands of the political parties' gatekeepers who choose their candidate and evaluate them based on their qualifications,

capability, and experience. Although political elites claim that the selection criteria are based on merit, limitations still exist as it is impossible to know every candidate personally. Thus, candidates are usually evaluated on ‘background characteristics’ as a proxy measure of abilities and character and may lead to direct discrimination based on sex, race, or physical disability. Such ‘information shortcuts’ cause the aspirants to be judged positively or negatively based on the affiliated group rather than individual characteristics being considered. Women who have young families may have little available time for party work and not being considered by party elites. Moreover, electors preferred those candidates who can bring a significant vote bank for the party. Consequently, female candidates are usually not a popular choice for political parties (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995).

Such appraisals can also be guided by the descriptive characteristics of elites (Niven, 1998) and such biases may result in the over recruitment of men in political spheres (Murray, 2014). Party selectors work as gatekeepers and decide who will be selected for the positions of political office. As long as men control the party leadership, it is likely to be difficult to significantly increase the number of women in political offices (Kenny, 2013; Lovenduski, 2002). If the party’s culture is oriented towards masculinity, then selection criteria for traditional candidates will keep on being used to select candidates for the political positions.

The type of ideal candidate revolves around white, professional, and non-disabled men, and the list tends to focus on sex, race, occupation, and residency (Kenny & Verge, 2016; Lovenduski, 2002). When party elites favour a specific category of candidates it is called indirect discrimination (Norris & Lovenduski, 1993). Such institutional challenges usually revolve around a political system that operates within a rigid schedule and stringent out-of-date policies and procedures. They prevent the inclusion of women in politics and are considered as the most crucial factor to perpetuate systematic differences in women’s representation across similar societies (Delys, 2014). Moreover, women have less confidence in occupying public office than their equally situated male colleagues, based on the strong perception of a biased electoral environment, which comprises a robust institutional challenge (Samore et al., 2018).

However, if somehow, women are successful in securing party support, in that case, they may experience bargaining over the political polls in favour of other party candidates as they are not a popular choice for voters in many cases (Black & Erickson, 2003; Franceschet, 2005). From nomination till selection, the party president support is a must-have for all aspirants, which is

why the legitimate power lies with the political elites and not with the female candidates. A centralized organization is more open towards women members, but if the party has ties with organizations outside the party, the chances of extra access points for women may increase (Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008).

Proportional representation can address the system as it is less competitive to elect more women than men (Krook, 2009). In the proportional representation system, where parties get seats in proportion to the number of votes cast for them, a woman can be at a low position on the party list but still have chances of being selected (Norris, 1997). Nevertheless, the proportional representation system supports multi-political parties, which give favours to large parties by giving them an ‘unfair seat bonus’. It makes it less convenient for new parties to enter the parliament, and most of them remain under-represented (Fleschenberg & Bari, 2015).

3.14.1 Engagement in political decision-making

Achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment is key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2019). Men and women have the same fundamental right to participate in political decision-making and hold positions of authority. Conventions, protocols, and international accords help promote gender equality worldwide. They have seen advancements in encouraging women to join politics, but they have not had the same success when it comes to attaining gender parity at the highest levels of government (Morobane, 2014). Men account for 50% of the global population, while women currently control only 23% of parliamentary and senate seats globally (Chalaby, 2017; Radu, 2013).

Institutional challenges include the political system that operates through rigid schedules, ignoring women’s dual responsibilities, thus undermining their ability to hold decision-making positions (Kangas & Rostgaard, 2007). The adoption of gender-sensitive electoral or party reforms can promote women’s entry into politics. However, political parties are reluctant to include women and oppose such reforms as they assume that they would lose support and consequently political power. The main reason for political parties opposing the inclusion of women can be attributed to patriarchal influences and practices of dirty politics (Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019). The challenges of excluding women from decision-making are grounded in a system of patriarchy, where authority is mostly allocated to the men in society.

Traditional gender roles limit women's entry to more public roles outside the home (Kangas & Rostgaard, 2007). Moreover, women's socio-economic position plays a significant role in boosting their engagement and presence, particularly when it comes to political decision-making (Kassa, 2015). Women's participation in political decision-making has been regulated by gender norms that prevent women from participating in decisions at par with men (Tagoe & Abakah, 2015). Women who enter male-dominated spaces, such as politics, have to face disapproval from their male colleagues and are thus exposed to a myriad of cultural upheavals (Munemo, 2017). Women are restricted by cultural norms that govern their behaviour and limit them to participate in socio-political spheres in a certain way.

Political domains are historically associated with men and are considered an explicitly masculine activity, making it more challenging for women to participate in political decision-making (Judith, 1999). However, the inclusion of women in the decision-making process can allow a feminine perspective on concerns and issues in policymaking, realizing women's different needs and demands (UN Women, 2021). Attitudes towards women are primarily marked by deeply rooted prejudices and stereotypes, and political opponents often use them to challenge women's capabilities (Masad, 2020).

Moreover, the process of women's political recruitment is moulded by male masculinist standards embedded in formal and informal political party regulations (Kenny, 2013). Political parties utilized women only for administrative or representative tasks, making them a less popular choice for voters (Krook, 2009). In politics, parliaments, and public life, women continue to be under-represented. The average female constituency in the Arab area is less than 23% while the men represent more than 77%, leaving a gender disparity of almost 50%.

3.14.2 Gender quotas

The implementation of gender quotas can significantly impact the inclusion of many women in politics (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005; Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008). A woman who is once elected to the party leadership or even inducted to a mid-level position can draw more women candidates (Montoya, 2007). In the recent decade, gender quotas have been adopted in more than 100 countries to include women in politics (Hughes et al., 2015). Gender quotas have contributed significantly to reduce the gender gap worldwide (Beaman et al., 2009). Usually,

these quotas have been introduced in the form of reserve seats which men are not eligible to contest.

Alternatively, party quotas require the political parties to nominate a certain percentage of women as candidates among all the candidates, or legislative quota, which requires all parties to nominate a certain percentage of female candidates during elections. Multiple factors like the mobilization of women's groups, the party elite's calculations, and the pressure from international actors and national NGOs affect the overall institutional structure (Krook, 2009; Wängnerud, 2002). With such policy reforms, women's participation and their number in the parliament has increased over time in parliaments from 11.7% women in 2010 to 25% women in 2020 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2020). With their descriptive representation in political institutions, the under-represented groups can be provided with an opportunity to participate (Alexander, 2012). The descriptive representation of women eventually constructs different spill overs. As such, women are equal citizens, which contour their political attitudes and behaviours, making them more comfortable participating in politics as compelling political parties to recruit more female candidates (Gilardi, 2015).

Apart from gender quotas, political parties may provide incentives to add more women candidates to their party lists as they find that women are also competitive once they have been included. Further, over time, parties may feel compelled to confirm this expectation (Matland & Studlar, 1996). In South Asia, some conservative political parties follow political agendas directed by or justified in religious language. While these agendas may differ, they have a uniformity of negative views regarding women's political participation (Shaheed et al., 1998). Such conservative religious parties are prominent in many Muslim countries that hold negatives view on the inclusion of women in politics (Ayata, 1996).

Although such conservative parties also have woman members, the empowerment is restricted to individual levels. Their involvement in the general political processes may help shift such parties' positions to more open agendas. However, in many Muslim majority countries, Islamic movements and political parties do not encourage the inclusion of women in leadership positions. It is through the deliberate efforts of the policymakers and pressure from international actors in the form of gender quotas and reserve seats that such parties have been compelled to politically mobilize women to bring the party in power (Tajali, 2015). By 2019, the 29 countries that had achieved the target of 30% women in parliament, were found to be using a quota

system. In South Asia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan have used a constitutional quota system in their national parliament to ensure the inclusion of women in politics (Majumdar, 2012). The institutions of a state impart the “rules of the game” with crucial implications for citizens’ behaviour (Norris, 2002, pp.25–26).

The challenges of women’s political participation were somewhat addressed through reserve seats that appeared as early as the 1930s and hence are localized geographically in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East (Krook & O’Brien, 2010). These reforms raise the mechanism of election to mandate a minimum number of women representatives. Pakistan and India have a significant comparison in this aspect. Both countries share a colonial history which included the British initiative of reserve seats for women in politics in the 1930s. However, after independence in 1947, the two countries followed opposing strategies. Reserve seats for women were introduced in Pakistan in the early 1950s. Comparatively, similar approaches were renounced in India until the late 1980s. Today both countries have a one-third quota for women in the local government, but only Pakistan has reserve seats for women in the national parliament. As a result, women hold 21% of parliament seats in Pakistan but just 8% of those in India (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2009).

The low representation of women in politics needs a general framework that advanced the political community of women to highlight their interests and issues. The percentage of women elected in political offices is dependent on how systematic, practical, and normative institutions combined in ways to facilitate or hamper the selection of women candidates (Krook, 2010). However, gender quota can be classified as a critical mechanism to bridge the gender gap in politics. Women may have attained top footholds in many Asian countries, but it does not mean that they are unimpeded. Women are exceptionally represented by gender quotas in several Asian countries. The political and post-conflict changes in the area provide many countries with the chance to put gender quotas into practice (True et al., 2012).

China and Taiwan introduced a reserved seat system, whereas South Korea inducted candidate quotas and Southeast Asian countries including Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines have political party quotas. Countries that implement them perform better in representing women than those that do not, like Japan, providing a fair representation to women in decision-making positions (Shan, 2021). In countries with a proportional representation system, political parties nominate women at a higher percentage than in those with a single member district plurality

system, such as the first-past-the-post system employed in the UK (European Parliament, 1997).

3.15 Culture-side factors

A possible explanation of women's under-representation in politics can be related to the culture that drives the mechanism of supply and demand factors of female aspirants (Paxton & Kunovich, 2003). It focuses on the structural and institutional challenges faced by women during the political recruitment process, triggered by the social-cultural structure of the country. Moreover, it explains the factors that influence women's induction in political office and creates a gender gap in politics (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Norms and gender culture may lower the supply and demand of women aspirants (Krook, 2009). Gender culture can be defined as societal ideals, meanings, and values with gender connotations (Effinger, 1998).

A fundamental condition is that without cultural change, an institutional mechanism set up to achieve gender equality cannot be equally effective (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). In a Demand and Supply mechanism, the idea is that 'culture matters' generate beliefs regarding gender roles in the political arena, which, in return, profoundly affect women's political recruitment processes. The model lays stress on developing a gender-balanced culture where women have more chances of upward mobility. If only a few women are elected, this might enforce the idea that politics is a man's game.

The Supply and Demand Model differentiates between women and men in terms of their level of confidence, appetite for success, and tendency to self-promotion. The model indicates that the number of women officeholders are unlikely to increase without significant shifts in cultural beliefs to pursue successful political campaigns. Moreover, the gender gap is the product of long-standing trends of mainstream socialization that equate men with the public and women with the private. This division expresses itself in at least three ways as summaries below:

- (1) Gender-specific responsibilities related to tasks such as housework or childcare.
- (2) Conceptions of masculinity that permeate current political institutions.
- (3) A 'gendered mindset', a profound imprint that propels men into politics but negates women to the civic arena (Fox & Lawless, 2005).

Supply and demand aspects are highly characterized by cultural ideologies that may hinder women's political participation. It is a well-defined historical belief that women cannot participate in politics, and this well-established cultural ideology affects women's inclusion in politics (Krook et al., 2009). Although many women have political skills, and political parties are motivated to include them, they tend to be still under-represented in politics. Many political parties show firm commitments to include women in their party, but culture and traditional gender beliefs decrease the supply and demand for women candidates. In such a situation of supply and demand, cultural matters and gender bias led women to have less time and money and lower their motivation and ambition (Norris & Lovenduski, 1993). Regardless of the skills of women candidates and demand by the political parties, gender bias disrupts the equilibrium of supply and demand. Overall, the mechanism of the political market disrupts and excludes women despite their capabilities.

Hence, culture defines gender roles in society and influences the overall political structure. The gender roles are more defined in traditional society as compared to modern ones. In traditional societies, men are supposed to take control of the political system. That is why the political parties prefer male candidates over female candidates as a popular choice among voters because of predefined gender roles. More and more women are turning to politics but still face the challenge of overcoming established belief that politics is a man's domain (Chafetz & Dworkin, 1987). Men usually dominate the political pitch due to global patriarchy and controlling authority outside the family (Innocent et al., 2014).

Feminist theorists argue women have fewer advantages in society than their male counterparts. Discrimination (rather than being natural and biological) is more social and can be called off. The feminist political theory's primary focus is on identifying the facts that give more power and privilege to men than to women and how to eliminate this discrimination (Bryson, 1992). However, male conspiracy theory based on feminist ideology argues that at some level, men discriminate against women to occupy the power prestige and hold political office.

Along with institutional constraints, these push women away from enjoying similar prestige (Bryson, 1992). In traditional societies, culture has purportedly been a prominent obstacle to women's political participation. Later, with the emergence of egalitarian societies, the support for women to take the helm as women political leaders has increased (Carroll, 1994; Rinehart, 1984). The first wave of feminism in the 1950s demanded women have the right to vote and

participate in the public domain. In contrast, the second wave of feminism in the 1960s/70s sought to restructure women's citizenship by defining the private sphere. The radical feminists of the second wave highlighted that identification of men's power itself as a political act, and the slogan "the personal is political" became popular at that time (Rogan & Budgeon, 2018).

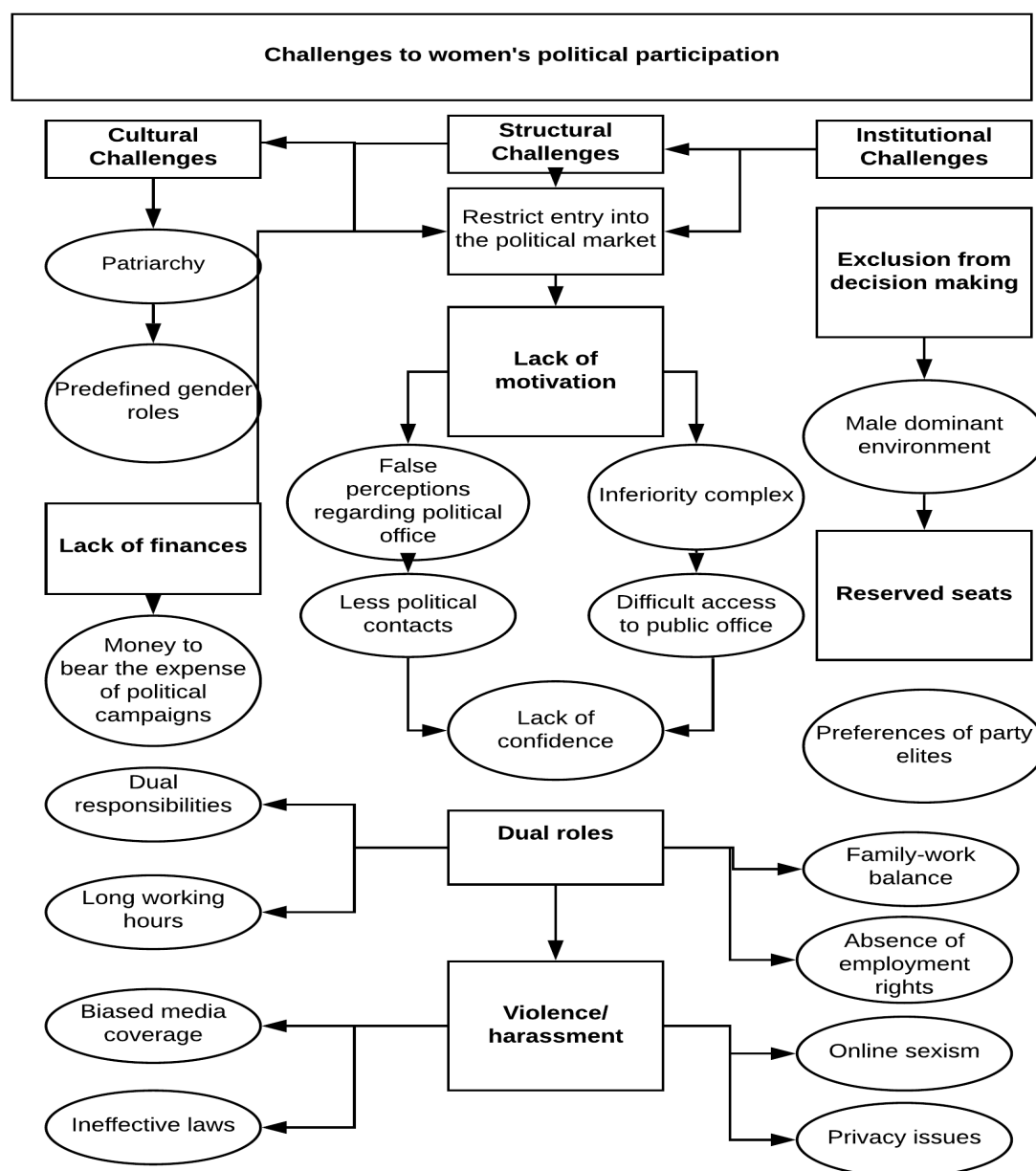
In the past, the private problems of women were considered personal and were re-conceptualized as political issues, whose peripheralization was seen as a trampling of political rights designed to silence women. The argument behind the slogan was that these personal or private problems of women were deeply influenced by social factors such as law, childcare allocation, and division of labour in households and workplaces. Accordingly, the issues were political and needed to be eliminated by political means (McMurtry, 1984). It was argued that public and private domains should be connected as the subordination of women and men's domination originated in patriarchy in society. The dominance of males and the establishment of a genuinely patriarchal society was considered a cultural trait and the most fundamental power structure.

Moreover, patriarchy mainly affected the socialization process by obstructing individuals from realizing their human potential (Millett, 1995). However, radical feminists identified patriarchy as playing a central role in disadvantaging women in society. In contrast, contemporary liberal feminists focused on legal and political reforms to give equal access to opportunities for men and women alike, focusing on maintaining equilibrium in the political system for both genders. In 2020, the UN surveyed 75 nations or about 80% of the world's population and reported that approximately 90% of men and women hold some bias against females that hinders gender equality in areas like politics, employment, and education, with no country recognized as completely gender-equal (United Nations Development Programme, 2020).

Moreover, the survey revealed almost half of the world's men and women believe that men are making stronger political leaders. Pakistan ranked in the top three countries, where 99.81% of the population hold a sexist bias against women. In Pakistan, 62% of the population believed that men make better political leaders (PEW Research Center, 2012). However, in Western societies, this cultural belief is fading rapidly compared to societies in underdeveloped countries (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). In advanced industrial countries, there is a sizeable generational difference due to which older citizens believe that men can be better political leaders than women. However, in general, the younger generation has rejected this idea, and this belief is

rapidly fading as the younger generation replaces the older one (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). Patriarchal structures shape societies in a way that not only brings about a reduction of resources (time or money) but also a loss of political ambition and confidence by women candidates (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). Gender bias in society excludes women from the market systematically by creating labels that mark them as the less competent or less popular choice for voters. Under the strong ideologies of gender, women aspirants' actual desires and potential qualifications fail to qualify them as eligible political candidates (Krook, 2009).

Figure 8 Conceptual model of challenges of women's political participation



Author's sketch Inspired by Supply and Demand model of Candidate Selection by Norris & Lovenduski (1995)

3.16 Conclusion

The essential advantage of using the Supply and Demand Model especially concerning women in politics is twofold. First, it formulates a theory on the structural and institutional challenges that women face in politics and determines the cultural factors that operate such challenges. Secondly, it allows for an exploration of how women have approached politics by overcoming these challenges. It not only focuses on socio-political challenges but extends its scope to structural and institutional ones as well. In short, it combines the socio-cultural elements with the political spheres, which have been previously excluded from the discussion, especially in the context of developing countries.

The Supply and Demand Model can also help to understand the political recruitment of people at the local level. However, overall, it cannot adequately explain how women's political representation differs across countries (Krook, 2010). The candidate selection process relies on a number of factors such as the legal system, electorate process, legislative turnover and the political culture (Norris & Lovenduski, 1993). In contemplation on whether to apply the model in a particular county (Pakistan), for the current research, it is, however, essential to become deeply familiar with the socio-political context (see chapter 2). The current study aims to understand the under-representation of women through the lens of 'the politics of presence', which emphasize that only women politicians can serve other women's interests (Lovenduski & Norris, 2003). The daily experience of men and women differ in terms of education, occupation, and sexual harassment. In the current research, the experiences of women career politicians are in focus, who, if not entirely, but at least to some extent, shared other women's experiences and made it essential to dig deep down into their political experiences.

The limited presence of women in politics leads to the perception that women are not suitable for political roles. Through sharing women's political experiences, it is expected to modify views regarding the role of women in politics in Pakistan and further boost their political participation (Mansbridge, 1999). In the long run, a more significant number of women in politics can negate the perception that the political arena is unsuitable for women and persuade them to cast aside self-doubt in their abilities by participating actively in the electoral system and seeking political careers (Fox & Lawless, 2011). With success stories of women career politicians as role models, other women may experience greater motivation to run for office (Fox & Lawless, 2011). As a case in point, we may take the example of India, where a woman

is more likely to be elected in the constituencies with seats reserved for women in earlier elections as compared to the constituencies that have always been open to candidates for both genders (Beaman et al., 2009; Bhavnani, 2009).

Another example is Sweden, wherein the 2014 feminist foreign policy is an inspiration for other democratic countries. The policy is based on the three Rs framework, namely rights, representation, and resources. Rights represent equal legal and human rights for everyone. Representation is related to the involvement of women in decision-making and political representation in legislative bodies. Resources are related to developmental services for women and focus beyond financial-centric initiatives such as gender budgeting. Sweden is the first country to introduce a feminist foreign policy and attract other democratic countries to adopt women-oriented policies. However, it is essential to analyse the outcomes and results of all kinds of policy reforms as providing room for improvement. Otherwise, it has been estimated that it will take 135.6 years to close the gender gap in only Western Europe (World Economic Forum, 2021).

Chapter 4 Research Design

4.1 Introduction

The current chapter provides an overview of the research design adopted in the current research and is divided into three sections. Section 1 discusses the theoretical foundations of the methodology deployed in the current research. It also presents the research questions, objectives and methods of data collection used in the present study. Section 2 focuses on the research approach and methodology used in the data collection process. Section 3 provides details of the data analysis techniques applied to the data and delineates the ethical considerations addressed in the research as well as its limitations.

The study's main objective was to explore the success stories of women who follow careers in politics and bypass the challenges of political participation as mentioned in the model of Supply and Demand. Moreover, it aims to identify the opportunities available for women in the politics of Pakistan. Focusing on women's political participation, this research took the case of the PTI political party as an entry point for exploring this phenomenon. The Feminist Standpoint theory approach was used to operationalize the data collected within the case study of the PTI party. The research design of the current study differed from existing studies related to women's political participation. That is to say that instead of rationalizing the relationship of women's political participation with traditional trajectories, it focused on creating a space for women's voices and experiences to enable other prospective delegates to consider the option of joining politics in Pakistan.

Section 1

4.2 Research question

What are the challenges and opportunities faced by women who follow political careers as members of the PTI political party in Pakistan?

4.3 Research objectives

1. To explore the historical background of women's political participation in Pakistan.
2. To examine the emergence of PTI and its policies regarding the inclusion of women in politics.
3. To investigate the challenges faced by women in the political arena in Pakistan.
4. To identify the routes adopted by women career politicians to bypass the challenges of political participation.
5. To explore future opportunities for women in the politics of Pakistan.

4.4 Epistemological framework

The current study is based on the Feminist Standpoint theoretical perspective, which emphasizes that feminist social sciences should be practised from the perspective of women or groups of women to access feminist ways of thinking (Collins, 2009). This has been highlighted as among the most prominent and deliberated theories emerging from the second wave of feminism. Many feminist scholars such as Dorothy Smith, Nancy Hartsock, Hilary Rose, Sandra Harding, Patricia Hill Collins, Alison Jaggar and Donna Haraway have supported the acquisition of women's experiences as the beginning of feminist scientific research (Bowell, 2011). The basic concept of the Standpoint theory reflects that the perspectives of individuals are shaped by their social and political experiences. Moreover, it denies the normative association of women with future or potential political subjectivity. The perspective conceives women as already resisting the conditions of their political marginalization. It goes against the discursive system of power to prioritize the voices and knowledge of marginalized women. It lays emphasis on the idea that "social and political disadvantage can be turned into an epistemological, scientific and political advantage" (Harding, 2004, p.7).

Furthermore, the Feminist Standpoint perspective helps to explore the world through the viewpoint of marginalized women while considering them as knowledgeable, focusing mainly on power relations that rely on cultural values and later assign gender roles (Pandey, 2016). It also provides a theoretical baseline to the current study for mainstreaming women's knowledge, expertise, and skills to facilitate entry into politics rather than focusing on the inside and experiences of dominant groups in politics. It helps to support the current scientific inquiry into women's political participation in Pakistan by taking into account their lived experiences in

politics, as women's issues can be explored by understanding their social context and relevant biases and prejudices.

From the vantage of the Standpoint theory, world feminist movements believe that women's participation in the decision-making process is essential so that the world can be seen from a gender-balanced point of view (Butler & Scott, 1992). Therefore, it is vital to probe the socio-cultural norms embedded in patriarchal practices. Using the lens of the Standpoint perspective in the current study, a better insight was viewed as being achievable in this study for exploring the hierarchies of domination and subordination in political spheres within Pakistan. Moreover, it helped to analyse the structural invisibilities giving rise to issues of power and inequality faced by women in the politics of Pakistan.

From a Standpoint perspective, marginalized groups are not considered innocent nor unmarked by power. Instead, it is argued that there is a need to focus on the historical processes, which through the medium of discourse "position subjects and produce their experiences" (Butler & Scott, 1992, p.25). According to this perspective, it is not "individuals who have experiences" but rather "subjects who are constituted through experiences" (Butler & Scott, 1992, p.25). In this context, the Standpoint theory helps to explore the knowledge of under-represented women in politics against the backdrop of geopolitical and socio-cultural differences (Bent, 2019). Moreover, it provides a rational epistemological basis for investigating the voices and perspectives of women in politics while further attending to the structural parameters of their political participation.

Thus, Feminist Standpoint perspective helps to explore the institutional boundaries and cultural limitations in Pakistan influencing women's rights with regard to political participation and reconnoitre how these women devised strategies to overcome these constraints. In the current research, the Standpoint perspective provided significant support for positioning women as political actors in possession of valuable experiences on their political journeys. It supported the naturalistic approach to data collection, such as in-depth interviews and other secondary data sources. It helped to generate in-depth, rich data as participants disclosed their early political life, their entry into politics, family support, and multiple political experiences in detail. Whereas, most of the theories related to women are developed by men and serve men's interests (Walby, 2001). To understand the challenges and experiences of women in politics, these need to be accessible from the standpoint of women, which would be otherwise invisible.

Section 2

4.5 Data collection process

In the current research, the Milbrath Hierarchal Model was deployed to categorize female respondents in the middle (Transitional) or top level (Gladiator) of political participation based on their political activities, whereas the Supply and Demand Model of candidate selection identifies the widely occurring social and economic challenges concerning the cultural system and institutional norms. Moreover, it identifies the selection of women candidates as an introductory process between the political parties because it provided access to aspects of women's political participation, which might not be thoroughly explored in the context of developing countries.

In the current study, the case of Pakistan was selected as political parties in Pakistan are focusing extensively on gender-oriented strategies for selecting prospective women career politicians to sustain the gender balance in their parties. As discussed in chapter 3, political parties serve as an entry point for participation in politics by establishing a connecting bridge between citizens and the state. Thus, to understand women's political participation, it makes sense to choose a political party as a case study because they serve as a platform for women to participate in politics and secure election to the office (UN Women, 2015). The objective behind adopting such an approach is mainly to augment women's participation in politics (Sachet, 2011). Recently, political parties in Pakistan have embraced multiple strategies to attract women by announcing different empowerment packages which support Pakistani women socio-economically. These include employment and educational opportunities as well as agendas to prioritize women's rights in all spheres (The Express Tribune, 2018).

4.6 Selection of case study

In the current study, the PTI political party was selected as a case study. In the 2013 general election in Pakistan, it received 7.5 million votes with its slogan of 'Call for change' and 'Naya (new) Pakistan'. The party secured the second-highest number of votes and formed a government in one of the four provinces of Pakistan. The PTI party was considered one of the most popular and most prominent political parties in Pakistan (Sethi & Khan, 2013). In the 2018 election it received 16.9 million votes, and this is the most significant number of votes secured

by any political party in the history of Pakistan. The party nominated Imran Khan as Prime Minister of Pakistan, who is also the chairman of the party. PTI is currently the incumbent government at the national level and governs two key provinces, namely Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). It is also a member of the coalition government in the province of Baluchistan. Moreover, it maintains its position as the second-largest opposition party in Sindh province after the governing PPP party.

After winning the elections of 2018, the PTI party took power with the most significant number of women parliamentarians in the National and Provincial Assemblies of Pakistan, as discussed earlier (see chapter 2). PTI claims on its official website (Insaf. pk) that it is the largest political party of Pakistan with over 10 million members worldwide. The PTI party has a women's wing established in 1996 within the party to promote participation by women. According to the party manifesto, PTI accords strong recognition of women's rights and shows commitment to fostering and adopting policies for ensuring the political participation of women without any discrimination. Moreover, in its manifesto, PTI emphasizes the representation of women at all decision-making levels. Given the above, female, and male career politicians from the PTI party were selected for participation in the current study.

4.7 Background of the current research

The research interest for the current topic arose during the PTI political party protest in 2014, whereby the PTI party protested for almost four and a half months at Constitution Avenue D-Chowk. The protest site was surrounded by important governmental institutions like the President House, the Supreme Court of Pakistan, and the Prime Minister Secretariat within a 5 km area. The main objective of the protest was to demand the resignation of the ruling political party of 2014, PML-N, due to allegations of mass corruption against them. A large number of women in the protest transformed local perspectives about how women's political participation should be taken forward in Pakistan (*Daily Tribune*, 2014). The phenomenon of women's political participation in PTI's party political protest was observed to be more striking because, for the first time in Pakistani history, women activism, hitherto the domain of either the political elites or the grassroots workers, seemed to transcend all political, social, and cultural barriers. Later, while attending this protest, motivation was aroused to explore the phenomenon of women's political participation in Pakistan in depth.

4.8 Location of the fieldwork

After selecting the case study, the next step was data collection, gathering and measuring information on variables of interest in a systematic way to address the research questions. (Creswell, 2012). The fieldwork for the current research was conducted in the Punjab province of Pakistan between 20 July 2018 to 30 Aug 2019. Sufficient primary and secondary data were gathered from political actors during that period to operationalize the findings within the context of the recent study.

4.9 Research methodology

The current study aimed to explore the political context within which women struggle to advance their political careers in Pakistan. Additionally, it sought to understand the role of political parties concerning women's inclusion in politics. A qualitative research methodology was adopted to examine the phenomenon of women's political participation in Pakistan. It was focused on women's experiences in politics to generate understandings of the concept of their political participation within the socio-cultural context of a developing country. Moreover, a qualitative approach facilitated the gaining of an in-depth view of the subjective experiences of men and women in politics. The qualitative research method was appropriate as it allowed the accessing of insiders' views of their gender-related experiences in the political arena. Thus, qualitative methodology helped to explore the underlying apparatus and instruments of women's political participation in Pakistan.

4.10 Tools for data collection

The current research adopted an inductive approach with the help of deploying a semi-structured interview guide. Instead of a spontaneous exchange of views with the respondents, semi-structured interviews allow for an in-depth examination of many topics during the interview (Adams, 2010). In-depth interviews were considered suitable for conducting current qualitative research as they helped to explore the perceptions of the participants regarding the phenomenon of political participation in specific contexts (Miller & Glassner, 2016). Due to the male-dominated political structure of Pakistan (Tarar & Pulla, 2014), individual in-depth interviews were conducted to explore the sensitive topic of politics, wherein participants may find it difficult to talk about such issues in a group environment (Brayda & Boyce, 2014). In-depth

interviews were conducted with the help of a semi-structured interview guide designed to explore the views, experiences, beliefs, and motivations of individuals on the issue of the political participation of women in Pakistan (Creswell, 2012).

Two different semi-structured interview guides were developed for female and male respondents. Major themes for in-depth interviews were extracted from the Supply and Demand Model pertaining to structural and institutional challenges of political participation. Interviews were carried out in the national Urdu language as emotions and perceptions are best captured in one's mother tongue (Zhang & Guttormsen, 2016). Interviews lasted from 45 minutes to 60 minutes, and these were digitally recorded, and the data were subsequently transcribed. The process of transcribing digitally recorded Urdu language interviews into English transcripts did not affect the essential points, as whenever there was ambiguity, more questions were added to clarify the viewpoint of the respondents. The guide did not follow any strict pattern and was considerably flexible, with probing questions being added if further clarifications were required (Given, 2008; Ryan et al., 2002). The interview transcripts comprised the primary data for subsequent analysis.

The women respondents were asked to share their success stories on making their way in politics. The discussion helped to identify the different factors that played an active role in the domain of participation. The interviews with female party members focused on approaching the PTI party and how the party supported them. During interviews, questions related to the PTI party's vision and its role regarding the promotion of women in politics was also discussed. As respondents were at Transitional and Gladiator levels of political participation, a difference in opinions and political activities was observed.

The political experiences of women career politicians allowed an exploration of the challenges and the possible ways to tackle them successfully in politics. These positions were then triangulated with the data from interviews with men who were members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs). During the interviews, their opinions regarding the inclusion of women in the party and politics were solicited. This data triangulation helped to bring together multiple sources of data and also from distinct sources (Mason, 2002; Mays & Pope, 2000). Moreover, they were questioned about how women could be more effectively included in politics and what possible challenges confronted women in the politics of Pakistan.

4.11 Target population and sampling techniques

The target population in the current study comprised women and men who were PTI party members. According to some researchers, it is important to research men and women simultaneously, acknowledging that men are gendered beings and that contrast is needed to ascertain whether or not gender plays a part (Scott & Joshua, 2010). The present research was focused on the political participation of women, and political respondents were awarded centrality. All the respondents were either political workers or members of parliament categorized as career politicians and therefore ideally suited to explain challenges related to women's political participation in Pakistan.

The process of data collection was highly dependent on flexibility and adaptability in its approach as political members are hard to identify and include in a study without any reference. The total number of respondents to be interviewed was not pre-determined and based on the response saturation. The sampling technique implemented in the current research comprised the snowball sampling technique for both female and male respondents. The snowball technique allowed the soliciting of participants who could identify more respondents fulfilling the selection criteria for inclusion in the study. It is one of the recommended techniques for a small and dispersed population (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) and is suitable for participants who are difficult to access, such as politicians (Audemard, 2020).

4.12 Primary data collection: interviews

Almost 42 visits were paid to the research sites, including the Provincial Assembly Punjab province, offices of the MPAs and head office of the PTI party in Islamabad, Pakistan. The primary aim was to investigate and explore the political experiences of women who work and interact within the context of their socio-political environment, as politics is considered a no-go area for women in most developing countries (Povey, 2012). The initial research process of data collection commenced with a visit to the PTI party office in the nearby constituency in the Rawalpindi city of Punjab province. It helped to gain insights into the ongoing 2018 general election campaign and made interaction possible with many women political workers. During general election of 2018, they were engaged in different election-related activities, and all workers were busy in the election campaign. However, their contact details were taken, and a mutually convenient time was agreed to carry out interviews with them after the elections.

4.13 Interviewees

A total of 18 women who were PTI members were interviewed, of whom seven were PTI workers (Transitional level), and 11 were MPAs (Gladiator level) from the Punjab Assembly, Pakistan. In addition, eight male MPAs from the Punjab Assembly were interviewed to get the men's perspective on the phenomenon of the challenges of women's political participation in Pakistan. The triangulation of three broader groups helped not only in the verification of data but also in understanding the true nature of facts and events free of the personal biases of the respondents. Initial rapport building was done with the respondents by paying them frequent visits (Biber & Leavy, 2006). Rapport was developed while having tea or snacks with them and sharing personal and professional bios that made the research sample comfortable during the interviews. In addition, the aim of the research and their role in the research was explained comprehensively to participants.

4.14 Biographical data of the participants

The present section offers an overview of the socio-economic and political backgrounds of the 18 women and eight men who had political careers in the PTI political party. They were interviewed, and characteristics were noted regarding their age, education, marital status, experience in the PTI party and political kinship ties. Seven women career politicians were party workers at the Transitional level, performing basic political activities or as a maximum holding a position at the PTI party. At the same time, 11 women participants were MPAs at Gladiator level, maintaining MPA position at the Provincial Assembly of Punjab, Pakistan. In comparison, eight male PTI members from the Gladiator level have also been included in the current research to obtain men's perspectives on the phenomenon of women's political participation in Pakistan. All male respondents were MPAs at the Provincial Assembly of Punjab, Pakistan. Besides their MPA position, four of them were holding different ministries in the Punjab province of Pakistan.

4.14.1 Age of the participants

Age is one of the main contributing factors to political participation (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 2005). Hereafter, in the current research, a sample of career politicians was drawn from different age groups, ranging from 18 to 50 years. In Pakistan, political aspirants can join politics at a

comparatively young age as party workers, where political careers usually start from the Transitional level by establishing political connections and working up from the bottom. The PTI party offers its membership to political aspirants above 18 years of age. In the present research, most women career politicians at the Transitional level were under 30, precisely three women were in their 20s, and four were in their 30s.

The life-cycle interpretation of political participation argues that mature people are more interested in their communities through long-term residency, parenthood and numerous life experiences that engage them more in community and national interest and later, such broader interests lead to higher levels of political participation. In the current study, the majority of the participants were in their 40s as a higher degree of political participation was augmented with age (Desposato & Norrander, 2009). Four women MPAs were in their 30s, six were in their 40s, and one was in her 50s. In the case of Pakistan, the age of marriage is 20 and the median age at first birth is approx. 21.6 years. Women in their 30s and 40s are relatively free from childcare responsibilities and can conveniently focus on their political careers. In comparison, out of eight male MPAs, two were in their 30s, and six were in their 40s. All of them were MPAs, having years of experience in politics and as the women MPAs, the majority of the male MPAs were also in their 40s.

4.14.2 Experience in Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) political party

All the chosen participants had a minimum of two years of membership with the PTI political party. The minimum limit was set to explore their political insights and experiences in the PTI party. Comparing experiences, three women were at the Transitional level and had up to five years of political experience, and four had political experience of 5–10 years. In comparison, four women MPAs had 5–10 years of experience, and five had 10–15 years of political experience. Only one woman MPA had more than 15 years of experience, while one had less than five years of political experience, while three male MPAs had 5–10 years of political experience, and five male MPAs had more than ten years of experience. Comparing experiences, participants at the Transitional level had a lower level of expertise than the Gladiator level. It takes years of experience to ascend the ladder of political participation in Pakistan.

4.14.3 Political kinship ties

In Pakistan, the political background provides support for men and women to establish their careers in politics more conveniently and, in some cases, directly from the Gladiator level of political participation. Considering the influence of political kinship ties, participants were questioned about their family kinship ties, either political or non-political. Political families usually inspire more women in their families to join politics (Wasby, 1966). Accordingly, biographical data from participants were obtained, considering the essential factor of family kinship ties. At the Transitional level, only one woman had political kinship ties, while six other women had no political kinship ties. Women with strong kinship political ties usually start their careers from established platforms and bypass the ladder of political participation by directly landing at the Gladiator level.

The case of Benazir Bhutto, the ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan, can be taken as an illustration of hereditary politics. She began her political career directly at the Gladiator level after her father's assassination. In 2020, after her assassination, her daughter, Asifa Bhutto, also joined politics from the Gladiator level. In comparison, seven women MPAs had no political kinship ties, while four women MPAs had political kinship ties. In the context of Pakistan, and particularly women, their careers are primarily influenced by their family background, which seems to influence and control their ambitions and career far more than those of men (Sarwar & Imran, 2019).

All the men were MPAs and while six had no political kinship ties, two had such ties. In the men's case, the political kinship background helps them establish themselves in politics more conveniently. At the minimum, they get the advantage of the Mere-Exposure effect, where the electorate prefers someone on the ballot whose name is more familiar to them. In the case of Pakistan, heredity politics has an influence in the case of male career politicians as well. The example of the PPP can be cited here, where the party leadership shifted among three generations. Initially, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto founded the party in 1967 and after his assassination in 1982, his daughter, Benazir Bhutto, took over the party. After Benazir Bhutto's assassination, her son Bilawal Bhutto became the party chairperson in 2007 at 19 years of age. The political kinship ties and the family name 'Bhutto' aided Bilawal Bhutto to politically establish himself directly at the Gladiator level of political participation. Throughout his political career, he used the maternal surname 'Bhutto' to establish himself in politics.

4.14.4 Marital status and childcare responsibilities

Patterns of political participation are highly influenced by marriage, spanning household responsibilities, childcare, and unequal distribution of roles, especially in the case of women (Campbell et al. 1960). In the traditional family structure, women remain separated from politics in one way or another. Women lack access to resources such as time, money, political connections, and the expertise needed for effective participation, mainly because household responsibilities restrict women's entry into political spheres. However, family structures vary across cultures and societies (Desposato & Norrander, 2009). Hence enquiries were made to both women and men who pursued careers as politicians about the challenges of dual burdens.

In Pakistan's case, the traditional family system is dominantly based on asymmetrical relations (Saher et al., 2013). In contrast, there is no concept of living with a partner or having children without being married in Pakistan due to religious norms. However, being married helps aspirants to become established in politics with an image of respect and dignity, consequently, married politicians are more acceptable than unmarried ones, especially women. With this in view, participants were asked about their marital status and childcare responsibilities to explore family-work balance challenges.

Five out of the seven women at the Transitional level were married, and all had children, while two were unmarried and had no childcare responsibilities. In the case of women at Gladiator level, ten were married, and one was a widow, and all had children. Overall, 16 women participants had children to look after. It is noted that a significant portion of the sample of the women were married and managing their political careers with family and childcare responsibilities. In the case of Pakistan, a woman's career does not delay marriage and childbirth decisions. In contrast, out of the eight male MPAs, seven were married and had children, one MPA was unmarried and had no children. However, none of the men mentioned the dual burden as a challenge in their political careers.

4.14.5 Level of education of the respondents

Education improves the skills required to be a career politician, such as communication skills, which are valuable for public debates and being involved in political institutions confidently while being knowledgeable. Education helps people to stay updated regarding the policies and

procedures of the political institutions. Moreover, well-educated people can contribute to effective policy and engaging in early apprenticeship for politics at the college level in student unions or through sports clubs helps to develop leadership skills.

In the current research, four women at the Transitional level and three at the Gladiator level had a bachelor's degree, although, no educational criteria have been set by the PTI party to join at the Transitional level. In comparison, at the Gladiator level, three women career politicians had a bachelor's degree, and eight had a master's degree. In the case of the male MPAs, two of them had a PhD degree, four had a master's degree, and two had a bachelor's degree. The education profile of the female and male career politicians indicates that all the participants are well-educated. However, there is no minimum qualification criteria set for an MPA. In 2002, General Pervez Musharraf's military government had adopted the requirement of graduation or equivalent qualification for a contesting candidate before the general elections of 2002. The said law was in effect during the general elections of 2002 and 2008. Later in 2008, Pakistan's Supreme Court ruled the law null and void. Currently, there is no minimum educational qualification requirement to join a political office in Pakistan.

However, in the PTI party's case, among the participants, the educational profile of the men was more advanced than that of the women, reflecting the different academic status between men and women in Pakistan. As per the Economic Survey of Pakistan, Pakistan's overall literacy rate is 60% in 2018–19, with 71% of men and 40% of women, whereas in the Punjab province, it is 64% with 73% of men and 57% of women. The traditional attitudes in Pakistan prioritize men's education over women's, and male child preference is visible, particularly in lower- and middle-class families.

4.14.6 Type of political positions occupied by the participants

Out of seven women career politicians at the Transitional level, two held different positions in the party. At the same time, five were engaged at the PTI office located in their constituency. In comparison, all women MPA participants were elected on reserved seats. In the Punjab Assembly, out of 37 PTI women MPAs, 34 were elected on reserved seats, and 11 were interviewed for the current research. While seven male MPAs were elected on the general seats, and one was elected on the minority seat. Pakistan's political system offers a reserved seat quota for women in Provincial and National Assemblies. Women career politicians can choose to

contest against general seats or seek office via reserved seats through their respective political parties. However, it is the party leadership that nominates women candidates on reserved seats against the proportional representation system. According to the total number of acquired general seats in the National Assembly, each political party gets a reserved seat quota. Notably, there is no reserved seat quota for male career politicians.

4.15 First Phase: interviews with women party workers

Based on the political activities they performed, the women who were PTI party workers were placed on the Transitional level in accordance with Milbrath's Hierarchical Model. All of them were non-paid volunteer workers but were officially registered members of the party and had access to the party office to perform different tasks as directed by the party leadership. Their activities include door-to-door canvassing during election days, arranging political rallies, giving administrative support to party officials, placing party banners at different locations, attending party rallies, collecting, and distributing donations and carrying out welfare work on behalf of the party in addition to other tasks directed. Almost every constituency had a local MPA party office with a team of support workers.

Moreover, for current research several PTI party rallies were also attended as part of election campaigns. The women party workers were busy in these campaigns, raising slogans and supporting the rallies of their leaders. After the election campaign, two women who were party workers agreed to give interviews and later referred to seven other women members and shared their contact details. Of these seven women, two women refused to give an interview even after being told that the research was for academic purposes only. Later, they agreed to talk on the phone but refused to meet in person. The other five women workers gave interviews in person, and none had any objections to the recording of their interviews.

It is essential to note here that three interviewees firmly insisted on keeping their information anonymized, while the remaining two had no such objections. Interviews were conducted in person and at a place suggested by the respondents. At the end of the interviews, all the respondents were willing to be contacted again for further clarification. After the interviews had been carried out with seven women workers from the PTI, data saturation transpired. The next level of interviews was commenced with women MPAs at the Gladiator level of political participation.

4.16 Second Phase: interviews with women MPAs

The next phase of data collection involved interviewing PTI women politicians serving as a Member of the Provincial Assembly of Punjab (MPAs). Initially, they were contacted through contact numbers/email addresses available on the internet. But even after writing several emails and calling on their telephone numbers, the lack of response caused considerable stress. Later, the office of the women's wing was located, and a decision was made to contact women politicians from PTI through this office. However, it was worrying to know that the women's wing was inaccessible as it was dissolved right after the election. There was one central PTI office in Islamabad, which was visited, but it was the main office, and women politicians from PTI did not visit it regularly. Politicians usually portray an image of democratic accessibility, but, in reality, they are hard to reach (Marland & Esselment, 2018). It became evident from the literature that arranging interviews with people in positions of authority is challenging and must be mediated by the gatekeeper (Marland & Esselment, 2018).

Hence, one of the elected MPAs from the local constituency in Rawalpindi was contacted, who served as a gatekeeper to access further MPA respondents. The elected MPA was a family connection, whom the researcher had extended support to during the elections of 2013 by volunteering as presiding officer on the day of the elections. The focus of the research was conveyed to him, along with mandatory requirements for the selection of respondents with a surety that the confidentiality of respondent data would be a high priority. He provided some numbers of women MPAs who were his colleagues and could be contacted with his reference. By accessing women MPAs through his connection, three interviews with women MPAs were conducted initially. Those women respondents were from different cities of Punjab and held reserved party seats in the Provincial Assembly of Punjab.

Later, these women MPAs referred to a few more women MPAs, and in this way, subsequent interviews were arranged. Up till Jan 2019, interviews with eleven women MPAs had been carried out. At this point, there was saturation in the data. The specific experiences of female respondents contributed to their perceptions regarding challenges facing women in their political participation in Pakistan and views on measures needed for increasing women's participation. Moreover, it is essential to mention that the Punjab Assembly has the highest PTI women MPAs, totalling 37 women representatives. Of this number, 34 women were elected on reserved seats and while three women were elected on a general seat in the elections of 2018.

Moreover, three interviews were conducted at the home of the women MPAs. In contrast, seven interviews were conducted at the Punjab Assembly guest house where women MPAs were staying to attend the session of parliament. One interview was conducted during the visit of the woman MPA to her constituency, which lent insights into how MPAs usually respond and solve the problems of the people in their local constituency. In total, 11 in-depth interviews with women MPAs were conducted. When there was saturation in data, the data collection process was stopped, with the intended purpose having been achieved by and large. All the women MPAs overall were friendly and co-operated fully during the interviews. With the special pass issued on behalf of a male gatekeeper MPA, not only was an entry to the parliament made possible, but there was a chance to attend an ongoing live session from the balcony of parliament, which was a remarkable experience. It is worth mentioning that an ordinary citizen cannot cross the main gate of parliament until a special guest pass is issued on the recommendation of an MPA and the visitor is also cleared by security.

4.17 Third phase: interviews with the male MPAs

The study of women's perspectives is incomplete without considering the views of men and vice versa (Brandes, 2008). In this regard, male MPAs from the PTI party were also included in the present study. As on some issues which female respondents highlighted, it was vital to get men's opinions to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Their viewpoint was also crucial as feminist issues are deeply rooted in structures and powers and can only be investigated thoroughly if views of a diverse population are included (Gutmann, 1997). Once again, a male MPA from the local constituency played a pivotal role in helping to contact and arrange seven more interviews with male MPAs. All of them were members of the Punjab Provincial Assembly, and five of them held different ministries in the Punjab province.

The in-depth interviews with the male office bearers helped explore the government's system, the way the politicians work, and their role in the PTI political party. All the interviews were conducted in their offices in the Punjab Parliament and lasted for 45–60 minutes each. All the men interviewed mentioned multiple times that their identities must not be revealed, and the requested anonymity was strictly enforced. However, none of them objected to the recording of their interviews. Some of the interviews took four to five hours as the respondents had to leave in between for their political commitments. With the special guest pass, entry to the Punjab Assembly was possible thrice to complete these interviews.

4.18 Secondary data collection

Even though the challenges of women's political participation are the central focus of the current research, and the interviews were the best source for that, an extensive document review was also carried out. These have been triangulated with the interviews when the need arose to understand the mechanism of the political system in Pakistan. The secondary data used for current research was mainly used to corroborate what the respondents claimed or to get insights into the background history of Pakistan's political institutions and the PTI party. The document review revolved around the analysis of a wide range of documents such as written material from the party, official government publications, and reports (Patton, 2002). The information was available across multiple documents. First of all, documents were obtained from the PTI party website, which helped to understand the mechanism, mission and vision of the PTI party regarding the inclusion of women in the party. PTI party social media accounts were also viewed, and later a detailed background on the PTI party was included in the current thesis (see chapter 2). The following official PTI documents were reviewed.

- PTI manifesto (The road to new Pakistan).
- Official documents of the PTI party, available on their website (Insaf. pk).
- By-laws of PTI women's wing.

The secondary data about the background of politics in Pakistan was also compiled, and documents related to political institutions were gathered. Most of the secondary data and official statistics were taken from the Election Commission of Pakistan, which is an official body of Pakistan and handles all types of elections and related party data in Pakistan and is therefore considered a reliable source. In addition, to understand the mechanism of the general elections in Pakistan, the official website of the Election Commission of Pakistan was consulted. It provided all kinds of statistics for the 11 general elections and four local government elections, conducted in the history of Pakistan. It also gave essential details related to the quota system for women in politics.

Moreover, an integral component of the current research was the data collected from the different polls conducted by US Aid, Gallup Pakistan, the International Republican Institute (IRI), the World Economic Forum, and other credible newspapers like *Dawn*, *The News*, and *Herald Pakistan*. Additionally, various reports by the United Nations were also reviewed and

included. Initially, the literature review, which was conducted beforehand, included a wide range of international studies to gather a comprehensive understanding of women's political participation patterns worldwide. This empirical exercise contributed to determining the scope of the current research (Fouche & Vos, 2002). It also helped to extract a broad range of themes that are closely linked with the research focus. Later, these themes helped develop the semi-structured interview guide and supported the formulation of codes to analyse the in-depth interviews.

Section 3

4.19 Limitations of data collection in the present study

Researching the current ruling political party in Pakistan was quite challenging. Even though being in my own home country, it was not easy to access members of parliament without reference, although women political workers were easier to access. However, the respondents who were interviewed through gatekeepers were more forthcoming and welcoming. The reason could be the gatekeeper, who himself was an MPA introduced me to the other politicians as his close relative. The reference of the gatekeeper, a family connection, helped to build rapport with the political respondents. Without the gatekeeper, it would have been impossible to meet MPAs and access the Punjab Assembly in Pakistan. Politicians have often avoided academic discussion on a specific topic based on time constraints or skepticisms (Hunt et al., 1964). An issue linked to the reliability of data used in the current study was that women included in the study belonged to a specific political party presently in power, and their views may have reflected vested interests.

4.20 Techniques of data analysis

The data analysis was done in three phases, namely data reduction, data display, and data interpretation (O'Dwyer, 2004). For data analysis, interviews were translated from Urdu to the English language and transcribed from recorded MP3 files to typed MS Word files while ensuring that participants could not be identified from the text. All the other textual information and memos were added to the transcriptions. Later, qualitative data software Atlas.ti was used for data analysis that allowed managing, coding, and displaying data in a comprehensive way. All audio, visual, and written files were uploaded to the software. It is considered an essential

tool to arrange and manage data systematically and efficiently (Lewis, 2004; Lu & Shulman, 2008; Rambaree & Faxelid, 2013). This helped organize data and undertake literature reviews, sort relevant data/quotations, and create links between the data with the help of a variety of Atlas.ti user-friendly functions.

4.20.1 First phase: data reduction

The first step in data analysis was reducing data (Miles & Huberman, 1984; O'Dwyer, 2004). The process involved a detailed overview of the interview in the form of transcripts or the recordings along with the related memos and notes which were taken during and after the interviews. This process helped to reduce the collected data into 'relevant data'. For the current research, deductive coding was used, in which a codebook is used to guide the researcher through the coding process. The codebook was developed before the start of data collection, extracted from the Supply and Demand Model of Candidate Selection. However, during the data analysis, the codebook evolved, and certain sub-codes were added. The identification of codes was based on underlying issues, similarities and differences discussed in the data, which were revealed through the participants' answers and interpreted by the researcher. Significant sections of texts were highlighted using Atlas.ti. Later, these different segments in texts were assigned codes based on the aspects of interest to the research. Initially, 245 loose codes were assigned to the broader categories based on the meaning contained in the paragraphs of texts (O'Dwyer, 2004). Atlas.ti made it much easier to navigate the different codes to change, edit, or rename them.

4.20.2 Second phase: data display

In the second phase, all the transcripts came under specified codes, and Atlas.ti helped arrange similar codes grouped in related categories under family codes (themes). It referred to the combination of two or more codes in a coherent and meaningful way. Codes that were similar or related were merged and irrelevant ones were eliminated. Frequently, repetitive themes were highlighted, which indicated their importance in the data. Atlas.ti systematically structured the codes and made it easier to display quotations per code along with the distribution of codes per interview script. With the help of Atlas.ti, multiples codes were chained together, and linking of quotations was done to create networks. These networks highlighted the co-occurring principles, which made it easier to recognize repetitive codes.

4.20.3 Third phase: data interpretation

At the third and final stage, data interpretation was carried out (O'Dwyer, 2004), in which the process of selective coding was done by revisiting the codes and searching for themes, concepts, and relationships among them (Silver & Lewins, 2014). When linkages and patterns were created, lines of arguments with a practical explanation of the responses were implemented with the support of relevant literature. This final stage of analysis of data helped to make sense of the data and to understand the whole meaning of the collected data (Morse & Field, 1995); this process is referred to as the operationalization of the analysis process. The final stage involved the selection and interpretation of relevant quotations, searching for alternative explanations, contextualizing the elaborated discussion, and finally synthesizing the write-up. The analysis of interviews, review of literature, historical background of politics in Pakistan, and of the PTI party (chapter 2) and the theoretical framework (chapter 3) were kept in view throughout the research process, which helped to relate the findings with previous literature and theory and to remain vigilant to any negations within the gathered data.

Moreover, research cannot be carried out without taking into account ethical considerations such as informed consent and protection of participant anonymity (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The ethical issues were always kept under consideration in the current research as it dealt with the sensitive issue of politics, and many officials from the current political government were a part of it. The purpose and objectives of the study were conveyed to the participants, and their consent was secured through consent forms. Interviews were recorded only with the consent of the respondents. In cases wherein the respondents were not willing to be recorded, their wishes were complied with, and no recordings were made.

The privacy of the respondent was maintained by replacing their names with pseudonyms and aliases to ensure absolute anonymity. Data were highly secured and always stored under two-factor security authentication. Moreover, to ensure that the study's design complied with all ethical considerations, the study design was approved by members of ZEF (Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung; Centre for Development Research), University of Bonn, before the researcher started the fieldwork.

Chapter 5 Supply-side Factors or Structural Challenges

5.1 Introduction

The current chapter presents the views of the women and men who follow political careers, with a focus on the topic of structural challenges to women's political participation in Pakistan. By probing via interviews, it navigates the success stories of women career politicians who bypass the structural challenges related to women's political participation beyond elections in Pakistan. Moreover, it reveals the perspectives of male career politicians on some of the vital aspects of women's political participation.

The debate over gender-balanced representation is part of a global new wave of feminism and calls for a real-time understanding of women's political challenges. Women seeking to participate in politics find that the cultural and political environment is often unfriendly or hostile. Based on the theoretical model of Supply and Demand of Candidate Selection, the initial challenges concerning women's political participation are related to structural challenges. Such challenges serve as inequalities ingrained in the social structure and restrict the entry of women aspirants into the political realm. A significant part of the interview guide focused on the initial structural challenges regarding women's political participation through the back-and-forth interaction of data. Such challenges confront a woman aspirant who may have less political ambition, fewer financial resources, dual responsibilities, and who faces harassment in the political sphere (see figure 7, chapter 3). Keeping in view the above-mentioned structural challenges, categories and sub-categories are identified, and the following sections demonstrate the perspectives of the participants on each of these categories in detail.

5.2 Lack of motivation in politics

Women are less likely than men to run for political campaigns or be recruited for public office. Furthermore, they are more likely to consider themselves less competent and perceive the political environment as unfair. In developing countries, women's political participation is expected to be significantly challenged. However, with Pakistan being a developing country characterized by a growing economy, women have been struggling actively to engage in politics to build a women-oriented civil society. Nevertheless, women's representation is still low in

Pakistan. The first structural challenge pertaining to women's lower political participation is connected to a lack of motivation as indicated in the Supply and Demand Model of Candidate Selection. In the current research, participants were initially asked to share their motivation to join the PTI party, whereby multiple motivations were revealed. In the present study, out of the sample of career politicians (18 women and eight men), 13 women and four men nominated Imran Khan as their motivation to join the PTI party. In contrast, three women career politicians were motivated by their political kinship ties, while offers of clientelism inspired two. In contrast, four male MPAs mentioned the PTI women's wing and four nominated Imran Khan as a motivation for women aspirants to join the PTI party. A brief overview of the significant motivations revealed by career politicians is presented below.

5.2.1 Motivation through effective leadership

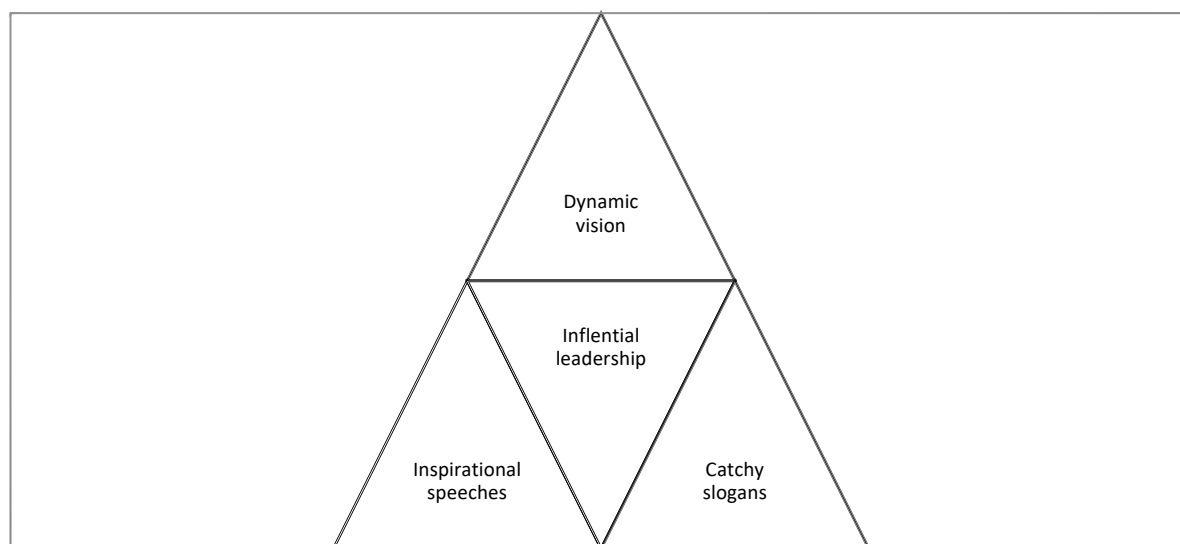
In the present study, five of the 18 women career politicians cited the encouragement given by the PTI party leader, Imran Khan, as their sole motivation to join the PTI party. Two of the women participants were involved in social work, four in other professions, and two engaged in student politics before joining the PTI party. However, all of them joined the PTI party after being motivated by the party leader, Imran Khan. In contrast, four of the male career politicians also observed that Imran Khan was a key motivational factor for women to join the PTI party. Overall, of the 26 participants, 17 nominated Imran Khan as a significant motivational factor for women to join the PTI party.

Women leaders are usually nominated as role models that affect women's motivation to join the political sphere. Before Imran Khan, Benazir Bhutto, who became the Prime Minister of Pakistan for two terms (1988–1990 & 1993–1996), can be classified as one of the influential woman leaders in the history of Pakistan. During her premiership, she launched various reforms to empower women, including adopting the International Convention on the Elimination of All Kinds of Discrimination Against Women in 1996. In addition, she was the founding member of the Council of Women World Leaders in 1996. She launched the "First Women Bank", aimed to cater the special needs of poor, widow and orphan women in Pakistan, which expanded into a countrywide network.

However, despite her reforms to improve conditions for women, she did not inspire women in Pakistan to join politics. Although Benazir Bhutto is recognized as an influential woman leader,

her regime did not catalyse a shift in women’s political participation. One possible explanation would be that she belonged to a well-established political family (Bhutto family) and already had a powerful family legacy to advance her political career instead of mobilizing women as supporters.

Figure 9 Motivational triangle by PTI party leader, Imran Khan to include women in politics



Researcher’s sketch

Based on reseracher’s perception

The 2013 general election in Pakistan was dynamic as the country’s politics witnessed a shift in political culture. This shift marked a move away from a two-party system (PML-N and PPP) to a three-party system with the advent of the PTI party. The most evident achievement of the PTI party was to mobilize women to participate in politics. However, Pakistan’s political history is dominated by the participation of women politicians belonging to influential political backgrounds, suggesting less than active participation by women from the mainstream. In the analysis below, Imran Khan’s motivational strategies are illustrated with the help of success stories of women career politicians from the PTI party.

5.2.2 Motivation by PTI party’s vision

Since the formation of PTI, Imran Khan has focused on the ‘Movement for Justice’ and proposed the vision of ‘Change’ and ‘Remaking Pakistan’. His vision of ‘Change’ is focused on reforming the old corrupt system of Pakistan and building a self-reliant modern Islamic ‘Naya (new) Pakistan’. The idea of ‘Naya Pakistan’ is centred on freedom from political,

economic, and mental slavery. In addition, it focuses on speedy justice for people, poverty reduction, the provision of two million jobs, houses for low-income families, educational facilities, freedom of expression, and equal rights for minorities (for details see chapter 2, section 2.11.4).

Rabia, a woman career politician at the Transitional level of political participation, stated that she was highly inspired by Imran Khan's vision and his appeal to people to work for Naya (new) Pakistan. Upon being inspired by Imran Khan's vision, Rabia, with a social work background, contacted the PTI's local constituency office. She had voluntarily run Imran Khan's political campaign in 2018. She was assigned to conduct door-to-door canvassing for the PTI party in Rawalpindi city. She revealed that although she did not know the local candidate, she canvassed for the candidate only because of the PTI party leader, Imran Khan. It was enough for her that candidate belonged to the PTI party. As in the Pakistani context, party affiliation is very significant, and the supporting political party can determine the electoral strength of a political candidate. Rabia spent her own money during the PTI election campaign, which gave her satisfaction that she had played her part in building a 'Naya (new) Pakistan'. Rabia nominated Imran Khan as her motivation to join politics and stated:

I worked for PTI's vision. I worked in PTI to build the 'Naya (new) Pakistan'. I am happy that I played my part in Pakistan. PTI is the party that can bring change to the country. In our area, people blindly supported the PTI candidate just because of Imran Khan. I worked in all areas of my constituency, and that's how I came to know about people's mentality that they voted just for Imran Khan's name. So even I joined politics just for Imran Khan (Rabia, personal interview, September 2018).

There are multiple influential aspects of Imran Khan's personality that appeal to his followers. Another woman MPA, Samina, also named Imran Khan as a source of her motivation to join politics. She stated that he has built a robust public image under his corruption-free history and is known as 'Mr. Clean'. Furthermore, she stated that Imran Khan is committed to implementing multiple reforms for women's empowerment in a context wherein women's rights are routinely infringed. He has vowed to end discriminatory laws against women in a setting dominated by a conventional 'Jirga system' and characterized by a miscarriage of justice in the name of customs and traditions. Even Pakistani courts sometimes fail to provide justice for fear of reprisals if their decisions contravene traditional Jirga laws. Such a situation is particularly acute for tribal

areas, which tend to be exempted from the state's writ due to their special status as agreed upon since independence. Upon being inspired by the vision of Imran Khan, Samina nominated him as her motivation to join politics and declared:

I joined politics mainly because of Imran Khan. I always liked Imran Khan when he was a cricketer, and even when he became a politician. He promised to give due rights to women and justice to them. He has a very charismatic personality and owns a corruption-free background. He was elegant and clean, always spoke the truth, has a promising vision for women, and is not scared of anyone to empower Pakistan's women. I followed him because he stood against the traditional Jirga system (Samina, personal interview, November 2018).

Imran Khan's vision of 'remaking Pakistan' represents the idea of a 'Utopian Pakistan', where everything is going to be perfect. Moreover, his vision is highly dedicated to ensuring women's participation and empowerment. With such a promising picture of participation in the remaking of new Pakistan, Imran Khan has inspired many women to join the PTI party during his election campaign in the general elections of 2013 and 2018.

5.2.3 Motivation by speeches

Political speeches can build a strong connection between the leader and the masses. Following this strategy, Imran Khan integrates a motivational script in his speeches and tweets. During the general elections of 2013 and 2018, he launched a series of social media campaigns to contact, mobilize and engage the masses, especially women. He activates women through his motivational speeches, tweets, and statements. Imran Khan talked publicly about women's rights and motivated them towards participation in politics. Bano, one of the women career politicians from the Transitional level, revealed that she was motivated by Imran Khan's speeches to enter politics during her university days.

Joining the PTI youth wing (Insaf Student Federation) at university, Bano worked hard as a youth wing member, ultimately earning a position in the mainstream PTI party. Bano felt that Imran Khan had a vision for the young people who had previously been ignored by other political parties. Initially, she was not interested in politics, but Imran Khan's motivational oratory drew her towards politics. Bano commented:

I was never interested in politics and joined ISF [Insaf Student Federation] with my friends as time pass. But soon after joining ISF, I started listening and understanding Imran Khan's vision. In most of his speeches, he called 'meray nojawanion' [My young peers], which motivated and energized me to work for the party with more dedication. Later, from the youth wing, I moved to the mainstream PTI party (Bano, personal interview, September 2018).

Saliha, a woman MPA, was also inspired by Imran Khan and regularly participated in PTI rallies and protests. She was highly inspired by Imran Khan's speeches. She noted that initially, she decided to attend the PTI Freedom March in 2014 after observing multiple security arrangements for women. However, she continued to participate in all other PTI protests with her family. She felt that PTI protests were secure enough for women to join in due to appropriate security arrangements.

Women rarely attend political gatherings in Pakistan, as such rallies are not considered safe for women. During the late 1990s and early 2000s, women attended political rallies only on television. Even today, instances of sexual and physical harassment are common at public gatherings in Pakistan. Public meetings can be a heaven for eve-teasers and hell for women who find themselves at risk of being mugged or groped. Although other parties also have women's wings and women participate in their rallies, political participation by women of the kind observed in PTI is unparalleled. Saliha marked the PTI protests safe for participating women and recalled:

If you listen to him [Imran Khan] live, that is a different experience. From day one, my whole family participated in the PTI protest in 2014. We stayed there in the rain and faced everything. Imran Khan appreciated it a lot. After 2014, I never looked back and participated in every PTI protest as Imran Khan always ensured that these protests should be secure for women participants. I listened to every speech by him live in front of me, which inspired me (Saliha, personal interview, December 2018).

Another woman MPA, Aliya, was also inspired to join the PTI party due to the motivational speeches of Imran Khan. He often uses a natural communication style, and his speeches turn into a dialogue between him and his audience. As noted by Aliya, he often uses metaphors

like ‘Medina’ to reference the idealized welfare state established by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) 1,400 years ago, which people find very relatable. Sometimes he refers to his mother, who died of cancer. His death motivated him to build a free cancer hospital in Pakistan. Using this inspirational story from his own life, he can gain the sympathy and support of his supporters, especially women. Aliya admitted to being motivated by Imran Khan and stated:

I have Pakistan everywhere in my heart, and no doubt Khan provoked these feelings. Through his speeches, he provoked feelings in me to participate in politics. Now I feel that men and women in our society are ready to bring change in Pakistan. Imran Khan’s mother gave him a mission, and we are with him to accomplish it. He has a pain in his heart for the welfare of people as he experienced the tragic death of his mother (Aliya, personal interview, January 2019).

The visibility of women in PTI’s political gatherings is much higher than the other political parties in Pakistan. The reason could be that PTI always has excellent visibility in mass media, thus projecting a strong image of its political campaigns compared to those led by other parties. In its Freedom March in 2014, PTI helped to transform the country’s political culture through active support of women’s participation. The massive involvement of women in politics has been discernible in Imran Khan’s era.

5.2.4 Motivation by catchy slogans

Slogans are an inextricable part of the political campaigning process across the world. A woman MPA, Meena, commented that she joined politics on Imran Khan’s motivation. She talked about the PTI slogans that made her morale high. Imran Khan motivated women to enter politics by deploying catchy slogans during their political gatherings and media campaigns. Although he started his career as a sportsman, his welfare work contributed a lot to transform his image from a celebrity to a politician. Considering his charismatic personality, Meena noted that people felt positively charged whenever he raised political slogans. She noted PTI’s slogans as catchy for its followers and stated:

During PTI’s political gatherings, when he [Imran Khan] raises his slogans, I feel energetic to work for ‘Naya Pakistan’ [New Pakistan]. I am positive that I can do something with Imran Khan to build it. Indeed, these slogans worked for me to put

all my efforts into the PTI party. But, let me tell you, it's not me, you will hear PTI slogans everywhere (Meena, personal Interview, November 2018).

Sheena, another woman career politician, joined the PTI party after being inspired by Imran Khan's leadership skills. She started her political journey in the PTI party at the Transitional level as a volunteer. She recalled that before being attracted by Imran Khan's message, she was not interested in politics. Sheena gave credit to Imran Khan for furnishing her with political awareness, also mentioning a few other women who were homemakers as joining politics due to Imran Khan's motivation. Sheena narrated:

He was very much interested in bringing forward the women's lot who have no political background. He was a cricketer turned politician. Among us, he introduced the concept that politics is for everyone. So, I witnessed that women became highly passionate with my own eyes when he raised his voice for slogans. I saw even those women in the PTI party who are housewives and have never been a part of politics. PTI changed the political culture in Pakistan, and I am a witness to this political journey (Sheena, personal interview, January 2019).

Slogans in political campaigns are not a novel phenomenon and have been used in different countries by different political leaders. For instance, Donald Trump's campaign slogan 'Make America Great Again' or 'MAGA' in his victorious 2016 presidential campaign in American politics proved to be a great rallying cry for his followers. Even though almost the same slogan, 'Let's Make America Great Again', had been used by Ronald Reagan in 1980. PTI slogans such as 'Tabdeeli a rahi hai' (change is coming) and 'Naya Pakistan' (remaking Pakistan) proved very popular among PTI followers, motivating the people, particularly women, to join the PTI party and its rallies. The women's power show was notably the case in PTI's Azadi March (Freedom March) in 2014, as discussed earlier (see chapter 2, section 2.9). Imran Khan has constantly iterated that he wants women to be politically active, and he has managed to catalyse his aim quite successfully. Several months after the PTI Freedom March in 2014 the event remained in the spotlight due to the massive presence of women.

5.2.5 Imran Khan's motivation for professional women

In the current research, four of the women participants had experience in different professions

prior to entry into politics and nominated Imran Khan as a motivation to join the PTI party. Nayla, a woman entrepreneur, joined the PTI party in 2007 and gave up her hefty monthly business income for the sake of politics. She was inspired by the vision of Imran Khan and joined PTI as a volunteer and set aside her business. She worked day and night for the PTI party and expressed the following views:

I just saw that we need to make a Pakistan, and Imran Khan has a vision. For his vision, I gave everything. I was such a big entrepreneurial woman that I used to earn 2, 3 lac a month, but I put it on the stake. So, money's not a problem for me. I fought a lot for the Imran Khan's mission. I arranged rallies, political meetings and activated women in my area. So, this was my passion for joining the PTI party (Nayla, personal interview, December 2018).

One of the women MPAs, Sobia, who had professional work experience of more than 20 years in the PTI party, shared her story of joining PTI. She stated that after the formation of the party in 1996, she decided to join PTI in 1998, gaining insights into Imran Khan's vision very closely. She recalled that initially, people made fun of her because she prioritized joining PTI over other political parties. People mocked her decision as Imran Khan had no political background or political experience, enjoying fame as a cricketer rather than a politician. Despite this, Sobia decided to join the PTI party because she was inspired by Imran Khan's vision. She had been working alongside Imran Khan since 1998 and observing his personality and mindset closely. Sobia became convinced that Imran Khan's focus was on the welfare of the people. Given this, she never regretted her decision to join the PTI party and noted:

My profession revolves around the judiciary, and I got offers from many political parties to join. But I joined Imran Khan in 1998, and throughout I've been with him. We have seen ups and downs in the PTI party together. People used to make fun of me about what insane party have you joined; you should have some sense. But I never left and fully participated as a PTI member and did everything for Imran Khan. I realized that this person had a vision of people's welfare. There was a time when we only had 3–4 women sitting and talking to Imran Khan and all that. He has sympathy for people. He doesn't want people to suffer, so I chose PTI in 1998. Till today, I've become more convinced that I did the right thing. I have never

regretted not for one second because I got a chance to know him [Imran Khan] closely, and I know his vision (Sobia, personal interview, January 2019).

5.2.6 Imran Khan's motivation for social workers

Imran Khan established his credibility via social work before joining politics. He participated actively in social work and community development work before launching his political career in 1991. In addition to establishing the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Trust and building a cancer hospital offering free treatment to poor patients, Imran Khan and his charitable organization have been contributing to cancer research. The premature death of his mother due to cancer inspired him to set up the Cancer Trust hospital.

In the current research, two women career politicians joined politics conveniently as they were already involved in community work. One of the women MPs, Sheena, was involved in social work at her village and was motivated to join the PTI party when encouraged by her community. Before coming to politics, she was already contributing her time and money towards her community. Sheena was motivated by Imran Khan's vision and joined the PTI party to kick start her political career. Sheena stated:

I used to go to the village for social work, met people, went to their gatherings, shared their sadness and problems, help them financially, and participated in their events. That was my nature. So, I think God gave me the capability to serve people. One day village people came in the form of delegation and asked me to contest elections. They requested me to represent them from the PTI platform. I also believed this could be done at its best in the PTI party with Imran Khan's vision as he himself is involved in people's welfare (Sheena, personal interview, January 2019).

Another woman who followed a career in politics, Rabia, from the Transitional level, was also involved in social work before joining the PTI party. She had established a small network of friends to carry out social work activities. However, the thought of entering politics never occurred to her. She always felt that there would be no space for her in politics as she belonged to a middle-class family. However, once during her social work in a government hospital, she found herself unable to get a patient admitted. Realizing that this could have been done quickly

on a politician's recommendation, she developed the desire to be affiliated with a political party to gain such influence. With the emergence of PTI, Rabia felt that joining the PTI party would help to further her social work and serve her community more effectively. Rabia noted:

I used to do social work. I wanted to join politics but feel hesitant because of my social status. So, I worked in PTI as a party worker voluntarily in 2018. When the PTI party won in 2018, I stopped participating because of my other commitments and resumed my social work activities. But I strongly felt that my strong connection with the party could help in my social work, like in the case of the burnt patient I mentioned before (Rabia, personal interview, September 2018).

5.2.7 Imran Khan's motivation for youth

Student politics is essential for the social training of the students and for preparing future leaders. In Pakistan, many politicians have emerged from the ranks of the student union organizations and continue to play an integral role in the leading political parties. For instance, Shehla Raza, a woman career politician, started her political career in 1986 by joining the PSF (People's Student Federation) of the PPP. She was then elected as an MPA in Sindh Assembly for two consecutive terms (2008 and 2013). Raheela Tiwana from PPP also started her political career in the People's Student Federation and was elected Deputy Speaker of the Sindh Assembly in 2002.

In the current study, two of the women who were motivated by the leadership of Imran Khan revealed their political background as students. Bano, at the Transitional level, initially joined student politics (ISF) upon the encouragement of her fellow students. The student wing of PTI is known as 'Insaf Student Federation' (ISF). After her progress in the Insaf Student Federation as a student politician, Bano joined the PTI mainstream party full time and elaborated:

When joining the Insaf Student Federation, I was only 17 years old, and my time at university was just started. I randomly obtained ISF female chapter membership on the motivation of a young girl who came into my class on behalf of ISF. She was a huge fan of Imran Khan, and she forced all girls of my class to join ISF (PTI Youth Wing). So, I joined PTI, and the journey goes on. Now I have got a senior position

in PTI, and I gave the credit to Imran Khan as I thought to join politics on his motivation (Bano, personal interview, September 2018).

5.2.8 Motivation by political kinship ties

In comparison, three of the women in politics, Samina, Meena and Nida, mentioned their political family backgrounds. They nominated their political kinship ties as reasons for joining the PTI party. The cases of Samina, Meena and Nida, also reflect on the dominance of patriarchal culture in Pakistan wherein women are directed or influenced by the male heads of the family. Three of the women in the study joined politics upon the recommendation of the male head of the family.

Of these three women, Samina stated that she had joined PTI because the party's vision inspired her husband. Although Samina had been interested in politics since her college days, she entered formal politics on her husband's recommendations, who himself was a politician. Her husband had joined PTI first, later advising Samina to join PTI as he saw potential in the PTI party for women entering as career politician. Samina was motivated to join the PTI party on her husband's recommendation and elaborated:

When I was a student at my university, I was interested in politics. When I entered practical life after marriage, I practically started my political career on my husband's advice and joined the PTI party. After that, I started working with PTI concretely with my husband, climbed the stairs, and now I'm a Member of the Provincial Assembly (Samina, personal interview, November 2018).

Another woman career politician, Meena, also joined PTI due to her politician husband. Her husband lost his seat in the general election of 2018, but the PTI party offered a reserved seat to Meena. She held a bachelor's degree with less than five years of political experience but was nominated on a reserved seat by the PTI party. While the third woman, Nida from the Transitional level, joined the PTI party as her politician father advised her to start her political career with the PTI party. She was inspired by her father's political career, and her father's advice prompted her decision to join the PTI party. Nida commented:

Politics is in our family; my father was a politician, and one of my uncles is a minister, so I didn't face any issues to join the party. I even saw all these politicians sitting in our drawing-room, discussing politics with my father. So, politics is in my blood, and my father advised me to join the PTI party to start my political career (Nida, personal interview, September 2018).

5.2.9 A motivational bubble: a story of clientelism in the PTI party

In the current study, two women career politicians, Maryam, and Yasmeen, revealed clientelism in the PTI party during their telephonic interview. Their motivation for joining PTI was different from that of other women participants. They joined the PTI party in 2018 and in the same year, ran an election campaign of a PTI candidate. In return, the political candidate promised that they would be given a job in the public sector. Yasmeen, one of the women, stated that she joined PTI because the respective party member had pledged a job to her son, whereas in the case of the other woman, Maryam, the job was promised to her. Working at the Transitional level, these two women spent money on travelling, attending rallies, and undertaking door-to-door canvassing to endorse the local PTI candidate in the constituency.

Later, both observed that the PTI candidate in question is now avoiding their calls and not even repaying their bills after winning the election. Of 18 women career politicians, only these two women from the Transitional level identified clientelism in the PTI party. Both women had many concerns that their identities would be exposed to the party leaders who may harm them by exercising their political power. Hence, even after the assurance of privacy, they refused to answer further questions. They only answered a few questions on the phone and refused to meet with the researcher in person.

Maryam and Yasmeen, who were mobilized in the PTI party by the deal of clientelism, were initially well-motivated. They participated actively in party activities. But when they realized that they had been exploited, they were disheartened and refused to participate in the PTI party any further. They had no other motivation to enter politics except to benefit from clientelism. They were not ready to disclose their identities or name. They felt powerless in front of the party leaders and feared that party elites could harm them in one way or another. Moreover, they could not prove anything since there was no formal agreement to verify the clientelist deal.

In such a case, a political leader can easily deny any verbal commitments. Maryam and Yasmeen were disheartened by their exploitation and noted:

We were promised to be given jobs, but now he [respective MPA] is not attending our calls. Let alone a job; he is not even paying our bills. This is so unfair to us. We had spent our money on his [respective MPA] political campaign. We worked day and night for him and spent our hard-earned money (Maryam & Yasmeen, personal interview, October 2018).

5.2.10 Male career politician's views on lack of motivation for women in politics

In the current research, four male MPA nominated Imran Khan as a motivational factor for women to join the PTI party. A male MPA, Naveed, perceived that the motivational tactics of the PTI party compelled women to join politics. He mentioned that the 2013 general election witnessed the surprising rise of PTI, which can be attributed to Imran Khan's charismatic leadership. He stated that the PTI party gained traction and popularity across Pakistan because many women joined the party as supporters, workers, and political candidates. For Imran Khan, the foremost consideration was to harness women's energies politically as they comprised half of the country's population. Naveed commented:

PTI stands out among other political parties and protests that you will probably not see the same number of women elsewhere and the same in general elections as well. PTI did it with songs and slogans that have never happened in other parties. So, women joined in large numbers and showed interest in politics. This had happened for the first time in Pakistan's history (Naveed, personal Interview, April 2019).

Mohit, a male MPA from the PTI party, perceived that Imran Khan motivated many women to join politics. He stated that the PTI party initially inspired local women of diverse ages and social backgrounds to engage in political rallies. Thus, PTI transformed the Pakistani political culture, which had once been circumscribed by the participation of women belonging predominantly to political families.

Imran Khan realized the importance of women's political participation beyond elections as their population ratio had been maintained at approximately 48% since 2013. In the general election

campaign of 2013, PTI emphasized women's political inclusion based on its understanding of their support as a game-changer. Mohit nominated Imran Khan's leadership as the motivational factor for increased political participation by women in the PTI party and stated:

Prime Minister Imran Khan started his politics 23 years ago. He always has strong views about women's participation in politics and all spheres of life. Women had a very active role in politics, but gradually it was decreased. I think he is the one who for the very first time in the last 4–5 decades, brought women back in politics and they were women from diverse backgrounds (Mohit, personal interview, March 2019).

In comparison, four male MPAs at the Gladiator level noted the PTI party women's wing as a motivation, citing it as an opportunity for women aspirants to advance their political careers. Adnan, a male MPA who was also holding a ministry in the Punjab government, remarked increasing numbers of women are joining the PTI party because of emerging opportunities in its women's wing. He elaborated that the PTI party's leadership is making strenuous efforts to create spaces for women career politicians and reforming the women's wing is a significant step. Adnan referred to the manifesto of PTI, in which the PTI party articulated a vision for women's empowerment as discussed earlier (see chapter 2, section 5.6). Moreover, he explained that creating distinct political spaces for women would encourage more women to join politics, as Pakistan is a traditionally conservative society. Therefore, by establishing a women's wing, Adnan believed that it might be easier for women in Pakistan to enter politics and expressed the following views:

We [PTI] are providing a lot of opportunities for women. We have separate wings for women in different cities, creating more opportunities for them [women]. As a result, many women joined the PTI party, and the process is going on. Imran Khan has a vision for women, which has inspired them [women] to join PTI and work for Naya [new] Pakistan (Adnan, personal interview, April 2019).

5.3 Lack of finances in politics

The other important factor that affects the supply of women aspirants to join politics is the lack of financial resources. Finances are central to engaging in politics, particularly in running for

political office. The cost of canvassing and arranging rallies as well as political meetings is a financial outlay. In the current study, of the 18 female career politicians, four from the Transitional level and seven from the Gladiator level utilized their husbands' money to advance their political careers. In current research, one unmarried woman was funded by her parents, while four women MPAs financed themselves.

In addition, two women at the Transitional level were paid by a political candidate to run his political campaign. In comparison, all eight male career politicians financed themselves in the political arena. They had some donors who provided partial funding for their political campaigns. However, most of the men in politics used their own money. The following sections present the pathways adopted by the PTI party's career politicians to bypass the challenges of lack of finance in politics.

5.3.1 Husband's financing in politics

In the Pakistani context, internal party funding is often not available for individual political aspirants, whereby they have to bear their political expenses. However, the majority of women who pursued careers in politics revealed that they avoid the financial challenges, relying on their partners or parents to advance their political careers as they lack personal incomes. In Pakistan, as per the Global Gender Index report of 2020, only 25% of women are involved in the workforce compared to 85% of men, making it unsurprising if women career politicians depend on their husbands' or parental income to advance their careers in politics. In comparison, only four out of 18 women in the sample group acknowledge they finance their political careers by themselves, reflecting on the low participation of women in the labour market of Pakistan.

Considering the lack of finances as a structural challenge for women's political participation, a middle-aged MPA, Meena, managed her political career with the financial support of her husband. She was a housewife without any personal source of income. Her husband was a politician who had participated actively in the party since the start of his career and gave generous donations to the PTI party's fund. In the general election of 2018, he lost the seat, but the PTI party nominated his wife, Meena, on a reserved seat. After being elected, Meena refused to take the assigned MPA's salary or perks. Instead, she set them towards the PTI party's fund upon her husband's advice. She has no personal source of income and relies on her husband's finances. Since the start of her political career, her husband has supported her financially.

Due to Meena's husband strong financial position, she has chosen to forgo her salary and did not take any economic benefits from the government. Instead, she has redirected her salary to the PTI party fund for serving the community. In the case of Meena, all finance-related decisions are taken by her husband. Although she was elected as an MPA, she mutually decided with her husband to allocate her salary to the PTI party fund. Meena's case reflects the accepted patterns of labour division in Pakistan, which eventually make the husband financially responsible for his wife. Meena willingly directed her salary to the PTI party fund and stated:

Look, I've renounced my salary and given it to the donation fund. So, I haven't taken a salary. But the reason is only that I, I don't need a salary as such. My husband earns quite well, and we decided to give it to the party's fund to serve the people who need it. So, we have enough for ourselves (Meena, personal Interview, November 2018).

Another woman with a career in politics, Sarah, also revealed that she utilized her husband's money for her political career. Like the case of Meena discussed above, Sarah also used the word 'our money' for her husband's income. It reflects the patterns of division of labour in Pakistan whereby the husband has the responsibility to earn, and his salary is shared with his wife. Moreover, Sarah observed that money is essential as the PTI party has no mechanism to support the political candidates. Even women who hold a post in the women's wing get no salary from the PTI party. Instead, they get only a title, for instance, President or Vice President. Sarah confirmed that she did not draw any salary from the PTI party and observed:

My husband financed me from day one. But if you have no money, then how can you participate in politics? I never expect anything from the party. Rather we [husband and the participant] spent on the party from our own pockets. I held a position twice at the party but only got paid once I became an MPA (Sarah, personal interview, November 2018).

Sobia, a woman MPA, also financed her political campaign through her husband. She stated that a career politician gets no salary from the party at the Transitional level and primarily works voluntarily. She noted that if a woman aspirant decides to run for public office, she must use her finances run the political campaign. At times, the party's volunteer network does help the political candidates to arrange party meetings or organize rallies. Sometimes supporters make a

monetary contribution, but the career politicians themselves have to bear the main campaigning expenses. Sobia noted:

Right now, I am getting the salary as an MPA. Slowly it [financial issues] will all be fixed for everyone in politics. Wherever rallies took place, I used to bring money from my husband. I had so much passion, and I worked a lot for PTI, and my husband supported me. I even arranged political rallies and meetings for PTI, where some other volunteers and supports helped me. Some supporters distributed edibles, some distributed party badges, but major spending was managed by us [Sobia and her husband] (Sobia, personal interview, January 2018).

Another woman MPA, Fatima, highlighted that a political aspirant needs to focus on financial planning before joining politics because money is required in politics one day or another. Such financial support mainly comes from the family circle, which includes immediate family members such as husband or parents. Fatima was also financially supported by her husband in politics and revealed:

When you enter politics, you have to come with planning for the future. If you have money, you can manage, or support from family, then you keep on moving forward. In my case, I have my husband's support. My husband financed my political career. Otherwise, it would be difficult for me to advance my political career (Fatima, personal interview, November 2018).

5.3.2 Financial support from parents

Politics in Pakistan traditionally is not considered a suitable profession for women, as reflected in the case of Bano. She was a young woman career politician at the Transitional level and initially faced some reluctance from her family when they learnt about her plans to join the PTI party. Initially, when Bano joined the party, her activities were not intense and were limited to her city. She took finances from her family to advance her political career. Later, she was assigned a vital party position and made progress in the party. As she advanced in her political participation and gained renown, the level of support offered by Bano's family also increased. Bano has drawn more family support as she climbed the ladder of political participation and noted:

My family supported me financially. Initially, my family was a bit reluctant about joining PTI, but later, when I start getting fame, they become happy and supported me even more. My parents are now very much satisfied with my progress in the PTI party and encouraged me (Bano, personal interview, September 2018).

Women in Pakistan have the lowest share of labour income which constitutes 18% to 25%, positioning Pakistan at the ranking of 148 out of 153 countries as cited by the World Bank Report of 2019. The main reason for women's low labour force participation can be attributed to conventional gender roles. Pakistan's popular culture builds on traditional and religious norms, assigning public spheres to men and domestic spheres to women. In Pakistan, lower- and middle-class families plan and save money for sons' careers and daughters' marriages. Following cultural norms, before the wedding, the daughter is the parents' financial responsibility, whereas afterwards, she is her husband's responsibility. Such an economic division of labour is also strongly backed up by the Islamic perspective.

5.3.3 Financing by a political candidate

In the current research, almost all the participants confirmed that the PTI party pays nothing to its members even if they hold a party position. Although some career politicians at the Transitional level participate in PTI political activities voluntarily, some take money for campaign activities, and others charge hourly or work on daily wages. The PTI party has a network of volunteers who may assist political candidates in carrying out their political campaigns. However, in some cases, political candidates hire people to run their political campaigns. A woman career politician at the Transitional level, Yasmeen carried out political canvassing for a PTI party member in the 2018 general election against payment. Belonging to a very low-income family, she could not afford any expenses related to politics. She shared her experience of running someone's political campaign and stated:

I have spent my own hard-earned money on his campaign. If you talk about the transport, I spent 10 k on that, and the rest is a part. He promised us that he would reimburse expenses at the end of the campaign. I am from a middle-class family and charge as per my services. Political candidates usually hire me as per their requirements (Yasmeen, personal interview, October 2018).

5.3.4 Self-financing in politics

The direct costs of running an election campaign include overseeing the election office and its day-to-day operations, arranging corner meetings and rallies. In Pakistan, only 25% of women worked, compared to 85% of men; running a political campaign is a challenge for women, unlike men, who hold most of the share in the labour market of Pakistan.

A woman MPA, Nayla, managed her political expenses through her business. She confirmed that a career politician draws zero salaries at the Transitional level. She stated that one must plan finances before joining politics. As candidates are only paid once, they are elected to parliament and then draw a fixed monthly salary and other perks from the government. Since the beginning, Nayla relied on her business to finance herself in politics and stated:

I used to run a business, and I left it. Instead, I spent my hard-earned money on Imran Khan's vision. I never thought about why I'm spending my money because I have a passion for politics. But I can advise others to plan it. Initially, I received nothing out of politics, but now I have a fixed salary and other perks (Nayla, personal interview, December 2018).

Although it is not easy to manage dual careers, a woman MPA, Sheena, has managed her social work, job, and political career side by side. She brought up her three children with the help of nannies. In Sheena's case, she juggled the triple burden of two careers and childcare. During the initial days of her career, her husband never supported her financially. She used her own money till the time she was elected as an MPA. After getting elected, she started to receive a fixed monthly salary and perks from the government.

While stating her initial days in politics, Sheena became upset, recalling the lack of support extended to her by her husband, among others. She struggled independently, managing her dual careers and family responsibilities side by side. Later, when she was elected as an MPA, her family gathered around her to enjoy the perks and privileges extended to her. Her husband, who had not supported her earlier, now shares freely in the perks of her job. In the early days of her political career, Sheena was never supported financially or emotionally by her family and narrated:

I always used my own money, and no one was there to spend money on me. I managed everything on my own. No one from my in-laws encouraged or helped me. I managed home, kids, finances, everything and no one was there for me. But remember, when things are ready, the fruit is there and ripe; everybody is ready to eat (Sheena, personal interview, January 2019).

As a researcher, when I met Sheena for the interview at her home, she was getting ready to fly from Islamabad to Karachi for a one-week conference. Her sons were grown up and settled in different cities, thus setting her free from childcare responsibilities. As her husband was old and had retired from his job, Sheena was taking him along with her to Karachi as no one was at home to take care of her ageing husband. Thus, the husband who had never supported her during her early career was now benefitting from her privileges.

However, women with political kinship ties are different as they have family support from the onset of their careers. The case of Maryam Nawaz, daughter of Nawaz Sharif (thrice elected Prime Minister of Pakistan), can be taken as an example. Her privileged family background smooths the path of her political struggle, and her political career has commenced directly at the Gladiator level. She is currently advancing her father's political agenda in Pakistan after his exile to the UK in 2019 on corruption charges. Although she has two brothers, she has taken her father's place in the PML-N party with her family's emotional and financial support.

5.3.5 Male career politicians' views on lack of finances in politics

In the current study, all eight men with political careers revealed that they had borne their political expenses independently. In contrast, not a single man mentioned that he had used financial support from a circle of family members or friends to advance his career. Out of the participants, Umair, a male MPA, had contested in the 2018 general election and won a Punjab Assembly seat. He pointed out that he had invested a lot of money, time, and efforts in politics, where there is no such privilege as a reserved seat for a man in politics. He noted that men have to contest the election and compete with several candidates to win an election. Umair supported his political career with self-financing.

Before entering politics, Umair used earnings from his business to fund his political expenses. However, once he was elected as an MPA, he started receiving a salary for his political office

and handed over his business to his brother. Umair also mentioned that the most typical conflicts of interest appear to emerge when a man enters a political situation while looking for means of earning. Then the common good is ignored to gain material profit, or friendships begin to influence the decision-making process. There are no specific laws to criminalize such practices, mainly in the public sector. However, such practices can lead to prosecution in certain circumstances for career politicians. Situations that emerge from a conflict of interest can lead to either legal or unlawful actions, and these situations usually fall within grey areas. As reflected from the narratives of Umair, women are less likely to face such a situation as they can rely on their husband's finances or take advantage of the reserved seat quota. Umair confirmed that running a political campaign requires a lot of effort, hard work, and money for male aspirants in comparison to women and noted:

I have contributed a lot of time, money, and energy in politics. I had a huge struggle in politics. I spent years serving people in my constituency. These women are lucky that they have reserved seats. Although I lost the election of 2013, I didn't give up and am now elected on a general seat. If you ask me how much I spent in politics? It's huge. I have my own business, but after being elected, I handed it over to my brother to avoid a conflict of interest. Women do not face such challenges. They are privileged as compared to us (Umair, personal interview, March 2019).

In the Punjab Provincial Assembly, 297 seats are directly elected by the people (whether women or men) in a first-past-the-post system. To contest one general seat, a candidate must submit nomination papers to the Election Commission of Pakistan. The candidate can be independent or affiliated with a political party and must mention the desired constituency in the process of nomination. After approval from the Election Commission of Pakistan, a candidate can contest an election in his chosen constituency.

The primary political areas wherein election candidates contest elections are called constituencies. In a particular constituency, elections for one general seat are contested, and these constituencies are demarcated based on census data by the Election Commission of Pakistan. In 2018, the average population per constituency was calculated to be 779,886 based on the 2017 census data of Pakistan. Through the Election Act 2017, the Election Commission of Pakistan capped spending on political campaigns at Rs 2 million in the 2018 general election to lower the financial burden on career politicians.

Another male MPA, Adnan, talked about the financial limit set by the Election Commission of Pakistan to run a political campaign. Adnan noted that the monetary limit on political campaigns is perceived to offer a financial challenge for lower- and middle-class career politicians, who must maintain their budget at 2 million. However, if appropriately implemented, the Act can reduce the financial burden on political candidates and provide equal opportunity to all. Adnan mentioned that he had spent a lot of money on his election campaign as his constituency covered a big area. However, Adnan managed his political finances conveniently as he belonged to a landlord family and expressed the following views:

Let me tell you that contesting an election is very hard, mainly due to expenses. However, the Election Commission put a bar at 2 million, which is again difficult to manage for some people. But in the current election, no one followed it as it can help to maintain your budget. It is very tough to run an election campaign as you have to spend a lot of money. My constituency was quite big, and so my budget was high too. I managed it because I belong to a landlord family. Otherwise, it's not easy at all. Putting a financial limit can help us but if it implements strictly (Adnan, personal interview, April 2019).

Pakistan's political history had many cases of high budget election campaigns. The main expenses related to election campaigns include managing the election office and its everyday expenses. Such costs include printing posters and pamphlets, renting vehicles for rallies and organizing corner meetings with a stage, mic, and loudspeakers. Additionally, food and tea must be provided for the participants. The cost of an election varies from one campaign to the next and from one constituency to the next. It is primarily determined by the candidate, the size and geography of a particular constituency, and the level of competition for a specific seat. In many cases, candidates hire people daily to support them in the tasks mentioned above or hire trained polling day agents for the election day. Whereas women in politics elected on reserved seats do not have to struggle to fund such expenses.

5.4 Challenges of dual burden in politics

Globally women are under-represented in politics due to domestic and childcare responsibilities. In the patriarchal culture of Pakistan, women are supposed to be caretakers at home. They are primarily responsible for household chores. They manage families, prepare

meals, and oversee bearing and rearing children. Within the rather patriarchal culture still operating in Pakistan, domestic chores and childcare are strictly considered the woman's responsibility. Many career women depend on nannies, and others seek help from the children's grandmothers with childcare to pursue their careers. As these alternatives may not be available to everyone, most women have no choice but to abandon a well-established career after marriage.

Women in Pakistan hardly ever delay marriage or childbirth due to career goals as defined by cultural norms. They try to manage their careers, sometimes with support from their own families and sometimes from their in-law's family. Still, women with young children find it challenging to pursue their careers without an effective child support mechanism. In the present study, 17 of the women interviewed were managing their political careers with dual responsibilities. Except for the one single woman participant, the others acknowledged that their family obligations remained a challenge to their participation in politics. Comparatively, all the male career politicians admitted that they were free from such household responsibilities. Four women at the Transitional level and five women at the Gladiator level managed their political careers with familial support. Simultaneously, three women at the Transitional level and six women at the Gladiator level handled a dual burden with the help of family and domestic workers. In comparison, while the seven men with political careers were married but none of them took on household or childcare responsibilities.

Unfortunately, Pakistan's political system does not have a robust support system for women in politics. Consequently, a female career politician needs to balance her family and work-life on her own. A typical problem faced by women is choosing between their homes and their professions because the two tend to be incompatible. In the current study, all the women career politicians with young children were asked how they managed their dual burden. The dual burden is one of the most challenging obstacles for women engaged in professional careers. The following sections explore the pathways adopted by career politicians to bypass the challenges of the dual burden in politics.

5.4.1 Family support system

The women career politicians who are elected on reserved seats are not attached to a particular constituency. Instead, they can work in any consistency in the whole province, which makes

their political engagement and schedules more challenging. However, most women in politics preferred to work in their city, which allowed them to stay close to their homes and to build rapport with the people of their local constituency for the next election. In the Pakistani political system, they must attend the Punjab Assembly sessions for 100 days without fixed working hours.

Their primary duty is related to legislation, and attending sessions is more of an obligation. If they do not meet this requirement, they may be issued a show cause notice on low parliamentary attendance. Women MPAs often need to stay outside the home to attend the Punjab Assembly sessions, which can sometimes span many days. Most of the interviews for the current research with career politicians were conducted during their stay at the Punjab Assembly guest house. The MPAs were staying there to attend the session of Punjab Assembly session. Some women MPAs were staying with their children and some with their husbands at the Assembly's guesthouse.

Maliha, a woman MPA, had two children who were enrolled in school in her residential city as she could not take them to Lahore city to attend the Punjab Assembly sessions. She confided that she had set up her support mechanism consisting of domestic help and her mother-in-law. As her children were a little older, she also stayed connected with them over the telephone. She viewed the extended family system as being beneficial for women with professional careers. Maliha managed her political career with the support of her joint family system and stated:

I have two kids at school-going age, and I can't take them out of the city for my political commitments. I am elected on MPA and work in the whole Punjab. Luckily, I live in a joint family system, and I hired a maid and driver. The benefit of living in a joint family system is that my mother-in-law keeps an eye on the maid and the driver. We [Maliha and children] stay on the phone almost the whole day (Maliha, personal interview, January 2019).

Another woman MPA, Sheena, had advanced her career from Transitional level to Gladiator level with the help of family support. After being elected as an MPA, she had permanently shifted one of her older women relatives to her home as her children's caretaker. She noted that being an elected MPA is a more demanding job wherein a permanent support system is required to look after the children. Sheena noted:

When it was time for the oath-taking ceremony, and I had to stay in Lahore for days. I called a person my family knew for years, a very close relative, Daji [older sister]. She's not that old, but her kids are older now. So, now she's taking care of my kids, and stays at my home, and blended well with my kids. So, I am not in tension because sometimes I must stay here [Lahore]. Sometimes for a month or 16 days, 15 days. So, she's the one who is taking care of them [children], and the dad is there, so now it's a bit easy for me (Sheena, personal interview, January 2019).

Another woman career politician at the Transitional level, Rabia, was involved in social work in her circle. However, she started her political journey after getting inspired by Imran Khan. Her husband and her three sons supported her greatly, as Imran Khan's vision also inspired them. She mentioned that her husband was very interested in politics and always encouraged her. However, her husband could not take care of the children when she would go out for her political commitments. Her mother, who lived near her home, would come in to look after her children.

Rabia was progressing well at the Transitional level and was willing to advance her political career. But at a point in time, she started to feel reluctant to advance further because of family commitments. Working and interacting with women at the Gladiator level, she realized that such positions demanded more time to attend party meetings and involved extensive travelling and night stays outside her city. Such demanding working commitments obstructed her from extending her political career. Rabia realized the existence of dual burden in politics and stated:

My husband always supports me. But he cannot help me with household chores or childcare responsibilities because of his full-time professional commitments. My mother lives near my house, so she came to manage my home stuff, but moving further in politics is impossible for me with young kids. So, I cannot manage my political career with my small kids. So, after the election of 2018, I almost quit politics (Rabia, personal interview, September 2018).

In Pakistan, Transitional level political activities can be carried out with flexibility. However, holding a public office at the Gladiator level requires more time and commitment. Given the patriarchal culture in Pakistan, patterns of labour division at the household level operate at the traditional level. Without extra support, a young mother may find it difficult or even impossible

to fulfil her political obligations. At the same time, Pakistan's political spheres do not offer a support system to balance family-work life. There are no special arrangements by the government for working mothers in the politics of Pakistan. None of the women politicians had admitted their children to a government daycare centre in the current study. Instead, they mentioned the support of family.

Upon enquiry, Aliya, a woman MPA, showed her discomfort with the undefining working hours in politics without a childcare mechanism. She noted the Punjab Assembly sessions that sometimes continue for more than two weeks in Lahore city, as the primary job of an MPA is related to legislation. She stated that attending the Assembly sessions is one of the most critical tasks for MPAs. She commented that MPAs can issue a ruling during these sessions, call for public discussions, seek answers from the bureaucracy and government ministers, or propose new policies as bills in parliament. Aliya, being an MPA, had a strict schedule, but she managed it with the support of her family and stated:

I try to stay at home mostly, but I don't get successful at it. I have a lot of work, and in many events, people call me a chief guest because I am a good speaker. I do poetry and write columns too. For the past 4–5 months, I couldn't write columns due to this busy routine. Sometimes I am at Lahore sessions when I come here to my hometown, and I have many meetings here and there. Sessions are random. We have to complete 100 days, sometimes these sessions continue for 20 days a month. Sometimes, it finishes early, but sometimes it's like a burden, like this time it was of 25 days. So being an MPA, you don't have any fixed schedule as anything can come up at any time. So much work, you know, but I manage it with the support of my family as my children are small and school going. Otherwise, our system doesn't relieve us (Aliya, personal interview, January 2019).

The childcare support mechanism is not well established for women parliamentarians. In 2019, a member of the Assembly of Baluchistan, Mahjabeen Shereen, was reportedly ordered to leave the Assembly as she had brought in her daughter. She had brought her ailing child to a session, thinking that it would be the same as women lawmakers from other countries bringing in their children to parliamentary sessions. Later, the MPA vowed to campaign for a change to laws banning women lawmakers from bringing their children to sessions.

Keeping in view the expensive private childcare mechanism in Pakistan, Sara, a woman MPA, managed her political career with the support of her joint family system. She stated that she opted for domestic help with family supervision as daycare centres are expensive. Therefore, she managed her dual burden mainly with the support of the joint family system. She considered the family support system a more reliable and less costly option and stated:

No, no, I don't leave my children in any daycare. They are expensive. My kids stay with servants at home. I live in a joint family system, and family members are there with servants to look after my children. When I joined politics, I don't have kids, and I am working now in politics with kids and managing it with my in-laws and domestic worker's help (Sara, personal interview, November 2018).

In Pakistan, the childcare system for early age children is not supported by the government of Pakistan, whereas private daycare centres are unaffordable, or are not considered secure or reliable. Some institutions provide their employees with daycare facilities inside their premises, but such institutions are hard to find. In 2018, the Department of Women's Development Punjab claimed to have set up 75 daycare centres throughout the Punjab province. However, other provinces have yet to benefit from such a facility. Likewise, many developed countries, such as Germany, have enshrined it as a legal right for all children aged 12 months to access partial state-subsidized childcare. However, such a childcare mechanism is not available in Pakistan and puts all the burden on the parents, especially on mothers as defined by culture.

5.4.2 Support from domestic workers

The current study highlights that while many women career politicians rely on domestic workers for help with childcare, they make sure that family members supervise these workers. All the women with careers in politics have developed their mechanism of support to manage their dual burden. These mechanisms primarily consist of family members and domestic servants. Notably, while all the women interviewed talked about hiring domestic workers and relying on their supervision by family members, it has been noted that not a single interviewee mentioned their male spouses as the primary support option.

In Pakistan, the domestic workers were estimated to number around 8.5 million, including women and girls, as per the International Labour Organization report in 2015. Domestic work

is the easiest and the most widely available job for anyone without training, skills, or education. Domestic workers fall outside the scope of labour laws of Pakistan and are hence vulnerable to low wages. For the protection of domestic workers rights, the Regional Domestic Workers Act came into force in 2019. However, its implementation remains poor in Pakistan. Such discrepancies not only lead to the exploitation of the workers but also lead employers to be at risk due to security concerns. Moreover, due to the lack of an effective mechanism to regularize these domestic workers, cases were reported wherein domestic workers have robbed their employers or even abused the children in their care (Danish, 2019).

While working in politics, Kiran, a woman MPA, managed her political career with the support of domestic workers. When she joined politics, she did not have children. However, later, she had to manage politics along with her pregnancies. Although she hired domestic workers, she always left her children under family members' supervision. Kiran's example also shows that women in Pakistan do not delay their childbirth due to career goals. Instead, they try to manage it with family/domestic workers supports or to sacrifice their careers, as discussed in the case of Rabia, who quit her political career due to childcare responsibilities (section 5.4.1). Aliya shared her experience of managing her political career and noted:

No, no, I don't leave my children in any daycare. They are expensive. My kids stay with servants at home. I live in a joint family system and confirm family members are there with servants to look after my children. When I joined politics, I didn't have kids, and I worked in politics with kids and everything. I have managed it with the help of my family and maid (Kiran, personal interview, January 2019).

Another woman MPA, Samina, shared that she managed her career and childcare responsibilities with her mother-in-law and a domestic worker. She had a very tough routine being an MPA. During her interview, Samina, like other women career politicians, did not mention her spouse sharing childcare with her, which shows the typical division of labour among married couples in Pakistan. Instead, she made use of a domestic servant and took help from her mother-in-law to manage childcare. Moreover, she developed her residence city as her shadow constituency. She did not own one particular constituency because of her reserved seat status. Consequently, Samina managed her political career with childcare responsibilities and commented:

My little kid stays with me, and I hired a maid who stays with me. For the rest, my two kids stay with their grandmother. I have a strict routine. I am a Member of the Provincial Assembly on a reserved seat, which covers all of Punjab. When I am in my city, it's the same activities, doing people's work, especially for women. Then PTI's govt is bringing forth a lot of projects for women empowerment. So, I have a lot of responsibilities in my area in this regard. Moreover, women who are elected on a reserved seat don't have one particular constituency. Instead, they can work in the whole Punjab, making it more challenging to cover the entire province. However, most women career politicians preferred to work in their hometown constituency. I did the same so that I can stay near my home (Samina, personal interview, November 2018).

In the conflict between work and family life, the use of family support or domestic workers provides a relatively cheaper solution for women in politics. Domestic workers' salaries can be adjusted between Rs 8,000 to Rs 10,000 (approximately 40-50 \$) per month as per skills and working hours. Moreover, most domestic workers are women and take care of the children and help with household chores, making them a better choice than daycare centres for women career politicians. Moreover, hiring domestic help is relatively cheaper as labour laws are hardly applied in Pakistan.

5.4.3 Male career politicians' views on the dual burden in politics

In Pakistan, men are not expected to engage in domestic work or childcare as such activities and duties are the domain of women. Instead, men are expected to support their families financially. In the current research, no male career politicians mentioned any challenges related to household or childcare responsibilities. In cases wherein they had children, childcare was provided by the mother or, in many cases, by the joint family system.

Zain, a male MPA, had worked in PTI for the last 15 years, commencing his career at the Transitional level and progressing to the Gladiator level as a twice-elected MPA on a general seat. Additionally, Zain headed a ministry; he did not have to juggle between work and family life as his wife took on the family and childcare responsibilities. Thus, he was able to advance his career easily. However, he felt that he fulfilled his family's financial needs, which was his primary responsibility and openly admitted that he could not manage domestic responsibilities

and his professional career. However, within the dominant patriarchal structure in Pakistan, women do not have such liberties. Zain shared his routine in politics and noted:

I manage my political career and my job with the help of my wife. She managed home and children everything. I hired her as a servant, and she [wife] is the one who looks after her at home, but financial responsibility is mine. I spent day and nights out of home and hence can't manage home affairs (Zain, personal interview, May 2019).

The division of labour in Pakistan is relatively straightforward. Men are responsible for work outside the home and jobs, whereas women are accountable for household and childcare responsibilities. Even if the woman is involved in a professional career and has a partner, she will also take care of the household chores and childcare. In Pakistan, the outside world is mainly associated with the male family members, as reflected in the insights shared by MPA Mohit:

I don't have much household responsibility as I have a full-time career. Usually, I visit home over the weekend if I come to attend Punjab Assembly sessions in Lahore. Over the weekend, I manage all the pending work, like paying bills or sometimes getting groceries that my wife can't do being a housewife (Mohit, personal interview, March 2019).

Another male MPA, Adnan, argued that since most women MPAs in Punjab Assembly are elected on reserved seats, compared to male MPAs elected on general seats, their challenges are already fewer than men. He held the perception that since women on reserved seats do not own any constituency they are only engaged with legislation. Although he noted that all male MPAs are aware of the dual responsibilities of women MPAs and endeavour to relieve them by sharing their burden at the workplace, wherever possible. Adnan noted:

Women career politicians are elected on reserved seats, and their duties are not as challenging as those of men. First, their main work is with legislation, while we have to work in our constituencies. Secondly, we [male MPAs] always try to facilitate our women members, realizing their dual responsibilities. If they face any conflict, we are always ready to share their responsibilities. But attending an

Assembly session is an obligation for everyone, and we can't do anything (Adnan, personal interview, April 2019).

5.5 Harassment in politics

Across the world, women face harassment, and the political sphere is no exception, with this being particularly true of conflict-affected or politically unstable states or regions. Similarly, one of the foremost challenges for the Pakistani government is restoring political stability and providing safe spaces for women's political participation. Gender-based harassment and violence are fundamental challenges to women's political participation. Although digital media enables women career politicians to stay connected with the public conveniently, it also led to an upsurge in online harassment towards them.

In the current study, two of the seven women with careers in politics at the Transitional level admitted that they had faced harassment outside the PTI party. However, none of them admitted to facing harassment in the PTI party. Simultaneously, 11 women at the Gladiator level reported that they had never faced harassment in the PTI party. Furthermore, only two male MPAs confirmed that harassment existed in PTI, while the other male participants denied that this phenomenon existed in their party.

5.5.1 No harassment in PTI party: a truth or a myth?

In the present research, no female career politicians admitted to facing harassment in the PTI party. These insights were interesting, especially as Pakistan is globally ranked by Thomas Reuters Foundation as sixth amongst the most dangerous countries for women in sexual crimes and violence against women. Overall, in Pakistani society, harassment against women is rife, ranging from visual and verbal to physical harassment. Political spheres being a part of the same macrocosm are no exception. The most common harassment is based on sexual orientation, whereby men harass women by passing sexist remarks, staring at their bodies, or trying to touch them in public. Such harassment occurs everywhere, from the political arena, the streets, to the public.

There were a few cases reported earlier in the media by a few women politicians against their male colleagues. For instance, in 2016, Pakistani Defense Minister, Khawaja Asif, caused outrage when he called PTI woman career politician, Shireen Mazari, a ‘tractor trolley’ in the National Assembly session, evoking strong criticism on social media. Later, Khawaja Asif was compelled to issue a letter of apology. Another case was reported in January 2017, when Nusrat Sehar Abbasi, a member of the PML-F, was found to be furious at the constant jeering and bullying by the ruling male legislator, Imdad Pitafi, from the PPP. Nusrat Sehar Abbasi was attending a session during her second term in the Sindh Assembly when she was targeted by Imdad Pitafi, who passed derogatory remarks.

Later, upon being pressed by the PPP leadership, Pitafi apologized to Nusrat Sehar Abbasi on the floor of the House. During data analysis, it was found that all the career politicians denied any incidence of harassment in the PTI party. However, later, while responding to some other questions, a few narrated an incident that may be linked to harassment. It was found that career politicians tended to view harassment as being related to intense physical or sexual abuse only, apart from one or two of the women interviewed.

In the current study, a case of bullying was narrated by a woman career politician, Kiran, against male MPAs, but from other political parties. She revealed that bullying women MPAs had been common in the Punjab Assembly sessions. Later, she mobilized all other women MPAs to support one another while delivering speeches. She encouraged women MPAs to listen to women members speaking in the Assembly and facilitating them by offering applause. Initially, male MPAs had been prone to passing derogatory remarks, but Kiran asked them forthrightly to stop. She clarified that opposition party members made such comments and that PTI members being more educated, tended to respect their female peers in the Assembly. However, despite pointing out this incident, Kiran did not view it as harassment. In fact, she commented that she had never faced harassment in politics and remarked:

Our women fellows were often mocked or bullied during the parliament session. So, I suggested to all other women MPAs that if one woman among us is delivering a speech in Assembly, we must listen to her and support her with clapping. In the beginning, one or two male MPAs even commented that women have a habit of talking. I heard it and ignored it twice, but when I heard it thrice, I said to them that

please don't do this. You are an MPA, and so we are. Right? After that, they [male MPAs] shut their mouths, otherwise before they used to mock women. Although our [PTI party] members are a bit educated and respect us a lot. I have never faced any harassment from any of my male colleague from the PTI party (Kiran, personal interview, January 2019).

5.5.2 Case of harassment against Imran Khan

Given the harassment against women in politics, it is essential to discuss the case of Ayesha Gulalai. In 2017, Ayesha Gulalai, a PTI woman career politician, made allegations of harassment against Imran Khan. Interestingly, no such claims of harassment had been levelled at Imran Khan, also known as 'Mr. Clean', due to his corruption-free reputation. Ayesha Gulalai alleged that PTI party leader Imran Khan had sent her inappropriate text messages in 2013. Although she accused him of sending her 'dirty' text messages, she later failed to show those messages publicly or to any agency.

Consequently, in 2017, Imran Khan announced the filing of a defamation case against her. Gulalai's case remained in the limelight for several months. Imran Khan's supporters unleashed a social media campaign against Gulalai and her family. She was accused of having a political agenda for defaming the party leader, and the photographs of her sister playing squash in short clothes were made viral on social media. Finally, Imran Khan spoke up and told his followers to stop attacking her family. Hitherto, the case of Ayesha Gulalai remains undecided. According to the last few reports published at the beginning of 2021, the PTI party claimed that it had sent a legal notice to Ayesha Gulalai for her allegations against Imran Khan. In the legal notice, PTI demanded Ayesha Gulalai's apology for the false allegations against Imran Khan as she had failed to provide evidence to show that she had been harassed.

Irrespective of the outcome of the Gulalai case in the future, what this event shows is that any victim who dares to make public her experience of harassment is likely to face a backlash. Such a situation may range from accusing the victim, dragging her family into the fracas, or stigmatizing her for speaking up. Simultaneously, the accused should not be sentenced without a fair trial. When the allegations were made by Gulalai, even PTI women career politicians reacted negatively towards Ayesha Gulalai and did not sympathize with her.

PTI's Federal Minister for Human Rights since 2018, Sheerin Mazari, called Ayesha Gulalai an 'opportunist' in a press conference in 2017. She said that Ayesha did it because the PTI party refused her a ticket. Later, PTI attempted to compel Ayesha to resign her seat, which she declined. The PTI party then petitioned the Election Commission of Pakistan to have her removed, but the petition was rejected. However, whatever may be the case's outcome, such an abusive attitude towards the Ayesha Gulalai case creates a cultural climate for women whereby they are inclined to remain silent when sexual harassment is alleged to transpire.

In the present study, Sobia, a woman MPA belonging to a non-elite background, shared her views on the Ayesha Gulalai case, denying harassment in the PTI party. She had joined the PTI as her first political party five years ago and reported that she never faced any harassment in the party. She argued that harassment was more like a tactic used by certain women (referring to the Ayesha Gulalai case) to get political favours. She explained that women who complained about harassment in politics first attracted male politicians by using shortcuts and later complained about harassment. She labelled such women as 'party parachuters' who used shortcuts in politics to get political favours. Discussing her own experience, Sobia shared that her strong attitude had allowed her to navigate the political spheres without becoming a victim of harassment. She emphasized that women in politics had to be strong. She had to ensure appropriate body language and behaviour with male colleagues as these counted a lot in Pakistani culture wherein women are judged by their appearance.

Many women in politics in Pakistan who would not otherwise cover their heads choose to do so after joining politics. For instance, the twice-elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto, started covering her head right after entering politics. The same can be replicated in the case of Sobia, who felt that it is the woman's responsibility to combat harassment by her appearance or body language. Moreover, she emphasized that no severe case of harassment had been reported in PTI during her tenure. She categorically denied the allegations of Ayesha Gulalai against Imran Khan, terming it as a cheap stunt. While referring to Ayesha Gulalai case, Sobia explained:

Never, it's just a dialogue, or it's just a cheap stunt in politics. These [women] are parachuters – our party's parachuters, who use such shortcuts. We were not occupied with such tactics and took the long route. Such women are attracted by high positions, OK? And in reality, they attempt more on men, and men attempt less on

them. That's my experience and what I have seen. There was never a single case of terrible sexual harassment at our party. Your behaviour, your body language, a lot of your things matter. I never faced harassment, and all people respect me because I know where my thin line is, where I need to stop, how to behave, and how not to behave (Sobia, personal interview, January 2019).

In Pakistan, a woman's moral character is judged by her appearance. A woman will be respected more if wearing an eastern dress that fully covers her body. Comparatively, if her dress is Western or short, she will be more vulnerable to harassment. In the popular culture of Pakistan, sexual harassment is justified against women who do not cover their bodies; thus, it created a society hostile to women's rights and safety.

5.5.3 Powerful positions combat harassment

After the women denied harassment in the PTI party, they were asked in general about the pathways to combat harassment. A female career politician, Bano, from the Transitional level shared her experience outside the PTI party and denied harassment existed inside the party. Bano has held a significant position in the PTI party. She viewed harassment as transpiring outside the PTI party and being sexual in nature. Comparing her experience of different work domains, Bano observed that while she did not face physical harassment, she experienced verbal or facial gestures approximating to harassment.

Bano noted that she had met more harassment than other female peers due to her light complexion, which is coveted in Pakistan and invites male attention. She felt that harassment involving facial and verbal gestures was evident in all segments of Pakistani society and not just in politics. For her, harassment was the biggest challenge to work in all fields. She perceived that such harassment is faced by almost every woman who steps outside her home. As a member of PTI, Bano feels safe due to her powerful position, which keeps her male colleagues vigilant about their behaviour and safeguards her from harassment.

Female career politicians at the Gladiator level have power that saves them from sexually oriented harassment in the political sphere. Bano holds a powerful position in the party which placed her on par with her male colleagues, thus protecting her from verbal or physical harassment. However, as an ordinary woman rather than a famous politician, she has faced

harassment in everyday life. A key reason for harassment against women may be that men take advantage of the victim's vulnerability as women in Pakistan are socialized to be subordinate to men. Women in Pakistan are socialized to keep quiet over such incidents because it can harm their reputations. Women feel hesitant in reporting harassment as they are afraid that they will be blamed for the incident, or their mobility may be restricted by their families. Bano marked herself safe in PTI party and explained:

To be honest, harassment is not limited to politics only. I faced harassment everywhere outside the home. It was mostly verbal comments or unwelcoming gestures from males working around me. I am fair in colour; that's why I faced this [harassment] a lot. This harassment makes me upset and is the biggest challenge for me to work outside. Although at my party, it's very less and my team members respect me because of my position (Bano, personal interview, September 2018).

In Pakistan, harassment against women is also linked with the victim's age, saving older women from harassment. As a young woman, Bano is more vulnerable to lewd gestures or verbal harassment. In comparison, older women are respected more in and outside the homes. In the current study, Fatima, a middle-aged woman in her late 40s, was elected as an MPA on a reserved seat in 2018.

However, as far as harassment is concerned, she has never been a victim of harassment in the PTI party. Instead, she has received much respect from her young male party members. While describing the level of respect she has received, she noted that senior male members always greet her by placing their hand on her head, which is considered a way to greet someone with respect in Pakistani society. Compared to Bano, Fatima is older. Thus, she has never faced harassment but instead received much respect. Fatima stated:

No, no. No harassment in the PTI party. I can only talk about me, believe me, in my city, all of my fellows MPAs, all workers and everyone who works around me are mostly young boys. So many young boys and some seniors as well; they all respect me and place their hand on my head while talking to me (Fatima, personal interview, November 2018).

5.5.4 Influential kinship ties combat harassment

The data collected from women in politics revealed that belonging to an influential political background safeguarded female politicians from harassment, as was also identifiable in the case of Nida. She had almost the same experience in the PTI party due to her strong political family background. Although she was a career politician at the Transitional level without holding any party position, Nida was not treated as an ordinary woman in politics on account of her influential political background. Despite regular interactions with her male colleagues, she never faced harassment of any kind in the PTI party. Instead, she always felt respected as a member of the party. However, Nida felt that Pakistani women did tend to experience harassment in politics if they were not well-connected and highlighted:

I never faced harassment, nothing at all. Everyone respects me so much, even sitting next to me. I don't know why, maybe because of my family. Maybe if I am a woman with an ordinary background, they would have such thoughts against me. Now they think something of me, as my father's uncle is in the Ministry of Law. So, no harassment for me in politics (Nida, personal interview, September 2018).

It is evident that belonging to an influential family helps to protect women politicians from harassment. Even though Nida was young and desirably fair-complexioned like Bano, she was safeguarded due to her family connections. The interview with Nida was conducted in her luxurious office, which also affirmed her privileged background. Her privileged political background protected her from verbal or physical harassment in the PTI party. However, the experiences of Nida are comparable with that of Bano, whose youth and beauty did not attract undue attention or predatory behaviour from male colleagues since she enjoyed a powerful position in the party.

It is notable that as Nida did not have a prior professional experience like Bano, she could not compare harassment in politics with similar behaviour in any other field. Moreover, belonging to a privileged background, Nida did not use public transport, which is considered a hub of harassment in Pakistan (Asian Development Bank, 2014), and thus remained safe from street harassment, unlike Bano, who used public transport for commuting.

5.5.5 Self-defense against harassment in politics

A woman MPA, Maliha, shared her experience of harassment in politics. She has been struggling in the political sphere for more than ten years. In 2018, she was elected as an MPA on a reserved seat of the PTI party. She is a middle-aged woman who started her political career at a young age. She observes that in politics, a woman needs to be strong on her own. She believes that combating harassment is her fight and can only be managed by herself. She feels that relying on NGOs or expecting someone else to speak or take a stand on one's behalf is useless, thus reflecting her lack of confidence in law enforcement agencies to protect women in Pakistan. She noted:

You have to be very strong. If you are in a practical field, especially in Pakistan's politics, you need to be strong by yourself. You need to do it yourself, and if you use someone else as a crutch or expect that someone will speak on your behalf, then it won't work, and you will stay a victim of harassment throughout your life. So, it's on your own, that's what I believe that if you are harassed, you should stand against it and give it a shut-up call and then it will end only, otherwise if you rely on NGOs or colleagues then it will not end for life (Maliha, personal interview, January 2019).

In Pakistan, concepts of gender discrimination and women's modesty are considerably different from those in the Western world, mainly due to the high impact of the patriarchal culture and religious norms. The current harassment laws in Pakistan only cover sex-related offences. For instance, one piece of existing harassment legislation has limited scope since it covers harassment that occurs precisely at the workplace. A harassment law under Pakistan Penal Code section 509 states that any act of sexual harassment, wherever it may appear, is a criminal offence. As compared to workplace harassment law, section 509 covers different types of misconduct under sexual harassment.

Although the two laws discussed above cover acts of harassment, under the 2010 Act, appeals can be launched before the Ombudsperson, while section 509 proceedings can be conducted only in the lower courts of law. Therefore, the procedure of filing a complaint with section 509 is very complicated, whereas the complainant needs to fulfil the multiple requirements of courts. Such a situation is even more challenging for a woman to report any event of harassment, considering the patriarchal structure of Pakistani society.

Moreover, some laws in Pakistan protect women from harassment, but social media platforms are somewhat vulnerable. The harassing and bullying of women career politicians on social media platforms are observable on their social media accounts. There are no effective ‘rules of engagement’ about social media. In 2018, a report by Digital Rights Foundation analysed the social media activity of 43 women from seven political parties and three male politician leaders belonging to mainstream political parties in Pakistan, namely PTI, PPP and PML-N. It was found that female career politicians were much more likely to receive intimate, objectifying, and sexist comments. Many women in politics run their campaigns online and manage their social media platforms to keep in touch with their political supporters in the era of digitalization. Twitter and Facebook are two widely used platforms in Pakistan that provide more opportunities for career politicians to stay in touch with the public conveniently.

Aliya, a woman MPA, shared her story of online harassment. Notably she also did not categorize it as harassment during her interview. However, while describing the incident, Aliya noted that she took part in a morning TV show and criticized Aafia Siddique. As a background, Aafia Siddique is a Pakistani woman currently under the custody of America on allegations of terrorism. During the TV show, Aliya shared her opinion about Aafia Siddique’s custody in the USA. In return, the viewers abused and bullied her in the live comments, which made her upset as she could not do anything. She explained that she faced more harassment from the people outside rather than from her colleagues within PTI. She felt that harassment from ordinary people is much higher than from her party members. Consequently, Aliya became a victim of harassment more outside of the PTI party and stated:

Yesterday, there was a morning show. I criticized Aafia Siddiqui, and a person commented on me as a blasphemous woman. Who is Aafia? A saint? Someone who is not agreeing with you and start pointing fingers at you? We should respect the difference of opinions. Everyone has their viewpoints. Let’s be friendly. There was a morning show, and they showed the comments live at the bottom of the show. Another man commented that she is a whore; she is a cursed woman and blasphemous as she humiliates Aafia Siddiqui. I don’t have any problems with my colleagues but from society (Aliya, personal interview, January 2019).

In 2016, The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) was passed by Pakistan’s parliament to combat online harassment. It comprises a package of laws aimed at limiting online terrorist

content, punishing hate speech, and reducing online abuse of women with the support of the Cyber Crime Wing. The punishments under this law can range from three to seven years of imprisonment or a one million to 50 million fine. Furthermore, the legislation mandates the Cyber Crime Wing to send biannual reports to parliament, but this has been only done once in the last four years. The statistics provided by the organization are dismal and reflect poorly on its implementation.

In 2018 and 2019, Cyber Crime Wing received 8,500 complaints from women who had been subjected to online abuse. Only 19.5% of the complaints were investigated, mainly due to a lack of resources as reported by the Human Rights Watch Report in 2018. Officials from the agency informed a parliamentary committee that the most prevalent complaints were extortion and abuse on social media. Online bashing, trolling, and cyberbullying are currently very common on social media platforms in Pakistan, predominantly targeting women's accounts (Gossman, 2020).

However, technological advancements have made it possible for women in Pakistan, at least in the urban middle class, to use social media to make their voices heard. For instance, in Pakistan, the #MeToo hashtag and feminism on social media have gained prominence. Many women are stepping forward to share events of abuse and publicly shaming men for mistreatment of women members, although patriarchy is firmly ingrained in Pakistan's cultural, religious, and political fabric, creating an impenetrable backdrop for the #MeToo movement. However, it provides a ray of optimism that the campaign for women's equal rights may gain traction even in nations where the political elites and prevailing culture are primarily opposed to reform.

5.5.6 Male career politicians' views on harassment in politics

The concept of harassment was varyingly understood by career politicians who participated in the current research. Harassment appeared to be too categorical as a concept among the people of Pakistan, as evident in the observations of Naveed, a male MPA. While acknowledging that harassment exists in politics, Naveed, who held a vital ministry in the Punjab government, interpreted it as the 'exploitation' of female career politicians in exchange for money or political positions.

Similarly, to women in politics, Naveed perceived the word harassment as too intense and closely associated with sexual abuse. He admitted that harassment existed in politics and in the PTI party too. However, he felt that harassment in the PTI party is not intense as female and male MPAs tended to share the same power and authority. Consequently, ill-intentioned male politicians felt apprehensive about harassing their female colleagues directly, instead, choosing to exploit them through indirect offers of money or political positions for face-saving. Naveed acknowledged the existence of harassment in the PTI party against women and explained:

For me, harassment is a strong word. But yes, it exists in politics where many male party members try to exploit their female colleagues in exchange for money or position. But there is not any serious case in PTI because the other party [women career politicians] is also powerful, but I assure you that this is very much less in PTI as compared to any other political party (Naveed, personal interview, April 2019).

Globally, harassment is considered one of the biggest challenges to women's political participation, which needs to be addressed urgently. Faisal, a male MPA, noted that the problem is with the mindset of the Pakistani patriarchal society that makes it hard for men to accept women who step outside their homes. He mentioned that harassment against women was quite common in politics and included men looking at women's bodies lasciviously.

According to Faisal, such harassment is difficult to report, and it can make a woman extremely uncomfortable by interfering with her ability to be comfortable with her gender. He categorized it as obstructing women's ability to participate in politics. He argued that men needed to learn to respect women in the same way as they respected women in their homes to combat it. He stated that giving due respect to women could change the world as it would provide safe spaces for women to participate freely in politics. Faisal perceived harassment as the most challenging factor for women in politics and stated:

We are hypocrites. We portrayed ourselves as the most religious or liberal lot. We talk about women's political participation, but once she comes in front of us, we greet her and then look down at her body. It's our gaze that makes her scared to

participate. So, you have to understand that any woman who talks to you is someone else, daughter, sister or mother. So, the respect you give some women in your family, you should immediately start giving the same respect to that woman, and you will see the world going to change. Now, it's the biggest structural problem for women in our country (Faisal, personal interview, May 2019).

In 2020, while addressing the National Assembly, Shireen Mazari, Human Rights Minister, also exhorted Pakistani men to change their mindset towards women. While supporting 'Equal rights of Women in Pakistan', she stressed that there was a need to acknowledge women as equal citizens and give them due respect regardless of their status. Furthermore, she emphasized that men needed to learn to lower their gaze rather than teach women what not to wear or where not to go, as fundamental freedom was a constitutional right for every woman.

Chapter 6 Institutional Challenges or Demand-side Factors

6.1 Introduction

The empirical analysis of the current chapter presents a discussion with the research respondents, which was centred on the verdict regarding institutional challenges to women's political participation beyond elections in Pakistan. Viewed through the lens of the theoretical model of Supply and Demand, the challenges faced by women in political participation are primarily institutional in nature. For instance, these challenges may be related to their inclusion in the decision-making process or their dependence on gender quotas.

The following sections present an analysis of the experiences of Pakistani female career politicians participating in this study who have proven successful in surmounting the institutional challenges related to their political participation. Moreover, the chapter also provides insights into the male career politicians' perspectives on key aspects of women's political participation in the decision-making process and the effectiveness of gender quotas. Keeping in view the above-mentioned institutional challenges, categories are identified, and the following sections explain the views of the respondents on each of these categories in detail.

6.2 Participation of women career politicians in decision-making

Gender-balanced political participation is essential for strengthening democracy. Globally, women are struggling to gain traction in political spheres. Although they occupy vital positions, the participation of women in the decision-making process remains sluggish. Given the discernible lag in women's participation in decision-making in political parties, this study sought to inquire into the experiences and perspectives of research participants. In the present study, participation in decision-making is conceptualized as either inclusion in the decision-making process or the freedom to object to the results. Moreover, the views of the women career politicians were sought in connection with the level (Transitional or Gladiator) they occupied within the political party. Whereas the women at the Transitional level were queried about party level decision-making, the Gladiator level participants were asked about participation in the political office. In comparison, the male career politicians were asked about the inclusion of PTI female career politicians at both levels.

6.3 Inclusion of women from the Transitional level in the decision-making process

Five of the seven women at the Transitional level revealed that they were not involved in the decision-making process of the PTI party. It may be noted that none of them held a position in the party. In contrast, one participant with a political position in PTI and another with political kinship ties acknowledged that they had participated in the party's decision-making process. Thus, it can be concluded that the participation of women in decision-making transpires if they hold a political position or have political kinship ties.

6.3.1 Involvement in decision-making with political kinship ties

The current section describes the inclusion of the Transitional level women career politician in the decision-making process of the PTI party. Women respondents highlighted that they were excluded from the decision-making process, mainly due to a perceived lack of experience in the political sphere. They instead played a less influential role in decision-making, performing representative roles rather than executive ones. However, the lack of experience is not likely to hinder those career politicians who have political kinship ties. In such instances, inexperienced career politicians may directly ascend to a party position by capitalizing on the political leverage of kinship with prior political presence and experience.

In exemplifying the above, Nida, a Transitional level career politician, highlighted the influence of political kinship in the political sphere. Nida mentioned her kinship ties several times during the interview. Acknowledging her active role in the PTI party's decision-making process, she attributed her strong standing in the PTI party to her political kinship ties. Despite her lack of a party position and less than five years of political experience, Nida revealed that she expected to be appointed to a party position. Later in August 2019, it was announced on PTI official website that Nida was elected as President of one of PTI's wing.

When asked about other routes into politics, Nida commented that the political journey for ordinary women was filled with hardships and hard work. She added that a woman in politics needed to start her career from scratch and exert much effort towards advancing it. According to Nida education or any other skill can aid in the career advancement of a woman aspirant without the leverage of kinship ties. Her own sudden jump to a high party position within one year was indicative of the advantage of her kinship ties to a political family, a plausible

conclusion given that she held only a bachelor's degree with less than five years of political experience. As the extract below shows, Nida felt that the route to politics was challenging for ordinary women while referring to herself as outside of the circle of common women based on her political kinship ties and expressed the following views:

My case is different. After meeting with you, I have an appointment with (X) minister to discuss the roadmap for youth employment. But if you talk about a common woman, who wants to join politics, I think she will have to struggle a lot. She will have to start from a beginner level, and then she will have to make a lot of efforts. She must do a lot of hard work. If her education is a lot or some other extraordinary skills, she may have an easy entry point in politics or decision-making. Otherwise, she will have to start as a worker with usual party work and other administrative stuff (Nida, personal interview, September 2018).

In the politics of Pakistan, many women aspirants with political kinship ties can have the opportunity to kickstart their career directly from the Gladiator level. In Pakistan's history, most of the women who have served in legislative bodies belong to elite political families (for instance Benazir Bhutto, Syeda Abida Hussain, Fahmida Mirza, Hina Rabbani Khar, Maryam Nawaz, Fahmida Mirza). Although political kinship ties do not always guarantee a party position, the family members of career politicians may enjoy many privileges.

The impact of kinship ties in politics was also experienced during the field research for the present study. For the field research, a part of the data was collected from the local constituency of Rawalpindi/Islamabad, wherein a male PTI political candidate was contesting the election. He had an office where he used to conduct his meetings with supporters and party workers. His office lacked a systematic record of enrolled PTI members, and he had unofficially allocated the women's section to his sister.

Although his sister did not officially hold a position in the PTI party, she was still appointed as the unnominated head of the women's section in that constituency. It was observed that she had complete authority over the female workers on behalf of her brother. Such arrangements indicate that PTI women career politicians' networks tend to be weak and lack any formal hierarchal mechanism, particularly at the Transitional level.

6.3.2 Involvement in decision-making with a party position

During field research in Pakistan in 2018, it was found that women at the Transitional level in the PTI tended to be engaged in administrative activities for the 2018 general election. Their duties were primarily limited to organizing women voters during elections, serving as polling agents at women's polling booths, carrying out door-to-door canvassing, or participating in demonstrations on behalf of the PTI party. The Transitional-level female participants also confirmed that their participation in the PTI party was restricted to basic administrative activities. However, they lacked any say in the decision-making process of the PTI party until they held a position in the party, a situation that reflects on the de-facto lack of women's empowerment in the PTI party.

In exemplifying the above, Bano, a woman career politician, held a senior position in PTI, and shared her experience of being involved in the PTI decision-making process. She was working at the Transitional level but possessed extensive political experience. She recalled that she was not involved in the party decision-making process when she did not have a party position. Instead, her duties were limited to administrative tasks, whereby decisions were conveyed to her without her input being solicited. However, after a few years, Bano was significantly involved in decision-making when she was assigned a party position although these decisions were only related to her department. As the extract below shows, Bano felt satisfied with her inclusion in the PTI decision-making process and commented:

While working in the PTI at the start of my career, I was limited to the administrative activities, where decisions were conveyed to me. But yes, now my opinion has weightage. Imran Khan always welcomes women in his party and listens to their concerns as well. Whenever there is a need for any decision on an issue, women are equally involved. But yes, it depends on which level one is working. I am involved in the decisions, which are related to my department only. My suggestions are always heard and welcomed in my department (Bano, personal interview, September 2018).

Bano was satisfied in terms of the level of her involvement in the PTI's decision-making process. She acknowledged that now she was noticed and conferred with recognition by the party leadership. However, the narratives of Bano confirmed that the Transitional level

women's participation in the PTI party was restricted to basic administrative activities only.

6.3.3 Involvement in decision-making with elite social backgrounds

Fieldwork exploring the exclusion of Transitional-level women from the PTI party's decision-making process, identified class-based discrimination. One woman, Nayla, highlighted that in PTI's women's wing, members congregated according to their social class. As a Transitional-level party member of the PTI party, Nayla was responsible for carrying out the day-to-day administrative activities assigned to her. However, she had never been a part of the PTI party's decision-making process, which tended to be dominated by the elite women members. She complained about being alienated by elite women PTI members who never solicited her input in the party's decision-making process.

Social class-based discrimination formulated a glass ceiling in the PTI party wherein women from elite backgrounds excluded middle-class women even during routine discussions. Nayla revealed that the upper-class women members disliked sitting or communicating with the middle-class members. The class differences among the women were indicated mainly by how they dressed, with the class difference being more pronounced in the urban areas (e.g., Rawalpindi or Islamabad cities).

Experiencing the social class divisions in the PTI party, Nayla argued that class-conscious members would better restrict themselves to tea parties with their class peers rather than engage in politics. As the extract below shows, Nayla felt strongly that such class-based behaviour was incompatible with true political leadership and gave rise to communication gaps in the PTI party. She noted:

In the Rawalpindi and Islamabad cities, women in politics are from well-off families and do not mix up with the lower-class women members. Rich ladies used to wear designer clothes and carry expensive accessories. This class difference also generates the communication gap. But in my opinion, a leader is a person who does not settle for such things. If you want to be in your class, then why do you come to politics? Go and sit with the women of your class, have tea parties with them (Nayla, personal interview, December 2018).

Another Transitional-level woman career politician, Saira, also noted the discriminatory practices in the PTI party. She commented that class-based social lobbying in the PTI party excluded middle-class women from the decision-making process even though PTI party leadership has given them a chance. Such class-based discriminatory practices led to a contact divide and lack of exchange of ideas, giving rise to segregation among women members in the PTI party. While sharing her experiences, Saira recalled that she had tended to visit the PTI party office in casual attire early on.

However, at a point in time, Saira had felt sidelined since she did not wear costly clothes. She felt out of place amongst elite PTI women members. Saira revealed that political positions and decision-making among women in the PTI party tended to preserve women's political elites who obstructed the rise of middle-class women. She felt that such an atmosphere was not conducive for women belonging to the middle class as it restricted them from being politically active in the PTI party. While sharing her experience of being isolated in PTI, Saira noted:

Some women in politics are different, very, very different from me. I do not want to label anyone. I just moved out with them in the clothes I was wearing at home with a summer chapel [slippers]. But the women holding the party office and making decisions are from a different category and do not bother us. These women used to do makeup for half an hour. I am not judging, but I just want to tell you that they are different people, and that is why I always find myself a misfit among them (Saira, personal interview, October 2018).

In 2020, the PTI party established the 'Women's Empowerment Committee' to address the regulatory and institutional issues for ensuring women's empowerment. The committee chairperson is a female Member of the National Assembly (MNA), Zille Huma, and the committee comprises women members. The committee has met once in July 2020 to assign responsibilities to the members and decide roadmaps for eliminating discriminatory laws against women in Pakistan. However, up till May 2021, the Women Empowerment Committee had not progressed further in its agenda and did not produce any policy reform related to women's empowerment.

6.4 Views of women and men on the exclusion of Transitional-level women in the decision-making process

In the current research, male MPAs were questioned regarding the exclusion of Transitional-level women career politicians from PTI's decision-making process. The majority of the men tried to counter the perceptions of such exclusion, primarily by dismissing Transitional-level women members as 'unexperienced'. A male MPA, Umair, explained that women at the Transitional level in politics cannot be included in the decision-making process due to their lack of political knowledge. He argued that they lacked the political expertise for participating in the decision-making process. He considered women at the Transitional level less experienced, thereby justifying their exclusion from the decision-making process. Umair suggested that if he were to ask the researcher about an atom bomb formula, the resulting solutions would be disastrous. Extending this metaphor, he justified excluding women career politicians at the Transitional level from the decision-making process by terming them as ignorant, untrained, or less experienced. Umair defended his stance on the exclusion of women career politicians from decision-making in the following way:

We included only the ones who have an understating and come with a solution. Ordinary female workers cannot be included because they do not know what is being discussed. So how can you include them? If I ask you about making an atom bomb formula and you come with yes, yes, and then you end up with an atom bomb that blast on ourselves...[Laugh] (Umair, personal interview, March 2019).

It is evident from the data collected from male MPAs that they were not enthusiastic about including women in the decision-making process, especially women from the Transitional level. When Mohit, a male MPA, was questioned about the reason for the exclusion of female PTI members from the decision-making process, he caustically replied that "they make a lot of noises, sometimes they do not know what their role is". While another male MPA, Faisal, stated that women members from the Transitional level could not be included in decision-making due to their limited background in politics.

According to Faisal, the role of the women is to provide administrative support to the party leadership as required. He stated that the PTI mechanism is not developed enough to accommodate all women career politicians or assign a position within the PTI party. However,

he acknowledged that women did play a prominent role in the PTI party. Faisal mentioned two prerequisites for inclusion in decision-making. These included years of experience in politics and a position in the party. Faisal defended the women's exclusion from the decision-making process in the following way:

We cannot involve women party workers in decision-making. They are inexperienced. When we need them, we call them. I have a proper office, and when I need to visit an area, I usually call the women workers from that area. These women give us a lot of background knowledge of that area, but they cannot make decisions. If there is a meeting where their presence is required, the call for a meeting is circulated among them. But at the moment, we cannot give a party position to all these women or include them in meetings (Faisal, personal interview, May 2019).

While delving into women's participation in decision-making, a male MPA, Atif, suggested that I should stay at home and fill in the questionnaire by myself. He asserted that it was not appropriate for a woman to come to Assembly. This statement by a male MPA is indicative of his mindset towards the participation of a woman in politics. One possible explanation can be that the conventional gender roles in Pakistan have remained unchanged over time. Many people also consider the 'chaar diwari' (four walls) as a fitting space for a woman as it is the only place where she can be secure. In Pakistan, the trend of educating women is on the rise, but this trend appears to parallel an entrenched awareness of women's permanent positions as caregivers at home.

In comparison, Sheena, a female MPA, provided an explanation for the routine exclusion of women from the decision-making process. She noted that such an exclusion was attributable to the patriarchal culture rather than the structure of the PTI party. She observed that patriarchy was dominant in the PTI party, wherein men tended to make all the decisions. Under the influence of patriarchal culture, men found themselves unable to endorse women's empowerment. Using herself as an example, Sheena noted that her assertiveness in meetings resulted from her strong political kinship ties. She recalled how men had tried to suppress other women career politicians by labelling them as too vocal. Sheena felt that women were free to express their opinions if they adhered to patriarchal practices. While sharing her experiences in the male-dominant culture in politics, Sheena commented:

In the PTI party, it is true that men are dominant, but the reason is not the PTI party or its policies. The reason is our culture and, overall, a dominating male society. Even today, men do not accept the empowered role of a woman. I am strong and confident, but the reason is my strong political kinship ties. When a woman performs, men's ego hurts, and they will start taunting like, 'being a woman, how can you talk like this?' Or 'you are a woman, and you are talking loud?' I also experienced this many times while participating in TV talk shows. Well, if he can be loud, then why cannot a woman? (Sheena, personal interview, January 2019).

Saira, another Transitional-level woman career politician, denied that women at the Transitional level are inexperienced and agreed that the current PTI party system favours men. She stated that men dominated the party and especially the decision-making process. She noted that gender discrimination was rife in the PTI party, whereby the roles of men proved to be more dominant than those of women. She commented that women members often came up with more practical recommendations as they belonged to local areas and were familiar with the grassroots problems, but their opinions were mostly disregarded. Although many of the women in the party were more competent than their male colleagues, the PTI structure was such that men dominated decision-making. Saira expressed her view on the male domination in the party in the extract below:

No, in decision-making, men's role is more prominent. The right thing should be quoted. Men are little above the woman in PTI, and it is blatant gender discrimination. Many of the men in the party do not know the grassroots level problems related to women. There are so many competent women in the party but are ignored while taking decisions (Saira, personal interview, October 2018).

In comparison, Umair, a male MPA, tried to defend the current exclusion of Transitional-level women from the PTI party's decision-making process. He expressed his optimism about the newly established women's wing of the PTI party to create more decision-making positions for women. He referred to the restructuring of the PTI women's wing, where more women from the Transitional level will be considered for holding party positions. He highlighted that PTI's new structure would create many opportunities for women in politics belonging to the Transitional level. However, he clarified that apart from the willingness and personal abilities, PTI party women members are expected to make a lot of effort in their careers.

According to Umair, political positions in the PTI party were conferred according to specific criteria. He argued that serving in the capacity of a party worker was not enough. Merit-based selection for party positions focused on specific prerequisites, for instance, merit, competence, skills, and hard work. Although Umair did not elaborate on the exact selection criteria, he pointed out that it was tough to get a political position in the PTI party. His views corresponded with Nida's (section 6.3.1 discussed above), who also observed that the route of politics for ordinary women was challenging and required hard work. While discussing the opportunities for women aspirants in the PTI party, Umair noted:

Apart from aiming to be included in machinery and personal capabilities, you need to do hard work. You are standing in the queue. It is a competition. It is not like if you did a door-to-door campaign, you would get a position. There is a policy for assigning a position in the government machinery. If you fulfil that policy, fall on merit, are competent, have skills, and be ready to do hard work, you have a chance. The women's wing is going to provide lots of opportunities for women members in the future (Umair, personal interview, March 2019).

Meena, a woman MPA, also confirmed the upcoming opportunities in the PTI party with its revised women's wing structure. She shared that the by-laws of the women's wing had been revised. Meena was also optimistic that women at the Transitional level in politics and previous women who were election ticket holders could efficiently run their political campaigns while holding a position in the PTI party. While lauding the structure of the new PTI women's wing, Meena highlighted that PTI is the only party in Pakistan that has implemented such reforms to encourage active female participation at all levels, as her extract below shows:

Although after elections, the women's wing structure is here again with improved structure, in many districts, we had the issue that some women's wing presidents and General Secretaries became MPAs. We want women ticket holders who could not win in general elections; they should contact the organization. The PTI organization positions should be filled with those ticket holders and workers. Women MPAs, who are in the Assembly, now have a lot of other commitments. How will they give time to the skeleton of the party and move organization building? Now, they are not eligible for holding a position in the party. The rest of the women members can have an opportunity, which is a big deal for women. So,

this is in process. It will allow the ticket holders to work in their district not lose next time [elections]. Name a party where something like this has happened? (Meena, personal interview, November 2018).

Meena believed that women career politicians could improve their chances of winning in subsequent elections with structured party support. Since the parliament members were not eligible to hold positions in the PTI women's wing, this would provide more opportunities for Transitional-level women career politicians to move forward.

6.5 Inclusion of Gladiator-level women career politicians in decision-making

In comparison to Transitional-level politicians, nine of the 11 women MPAs confirmed that they had been consulted and involved in the decision-making process. In comparison, two women MPAs shared that they had not been included in making decisions. Five of the eight male MPAs confirmed that women were involved in decision-making, while the other three did not agree with this assertion. The following sections elaborate on the inclusion of Gladiator-level women MPAs in the decision-making process.

6.5.1 Women MPAs inclusion in decision-making backed by law in parliament

Currently, the influential role of women in the decision-making process is enabled through a reserved seat system. Within the Provincial Assembly, in addition to a two-thirds majority, the consent of women MPAs is mandatory for the approval of proposed bills or legislation. Maliha, a women MPA, agreed that women career politicians (especially at the Transitional level) tended to be excluded from the decision-making process in the PTI party. However, she acknowledged that women MPAs were more active in the sessions of parliaments as bills could not be passed without their consent. As a caveat, she noted that obtaining two-thirds of a majority was primarily a ceremonial obligation as men dominated decision-making in the PTI party otherwise.

Maliha emphasized the need to include women members in the party's decision-making process by establishing an effective mechanism. She suggested that, at the very least, each PTI committee needed to include one woman member. She also suggested that each advisory committee of PTI needed to board at least one women representative of the women's wing. She

believed that mandating the inclusion of women in PTI committees would increase women's participation in the decision-making process, especially at the Transitional level. As the extract below shows, Maliha believed that a proactive mechanism would increase women's inclusion in the decision-making process and argued:

The men's role is more prominent in the party. I suggest, in PTI, women should be a part of all committees. Also, in every advisory committee of PTI, there should be one representative from the woman's wing. They should ask for women's opinions too, which is currently not followed. But in the Assembly, there are 33% women members. Our votes have importance, as law-making cannot be taken without our consent. They cannot do anything as if we quit or extend our hands; it cannot be a law. This proves our importance (Maliha, personal interview, January 2019).

In the 2018 general election, PTI emerged as the single largest party in the centre and formed the government in two provinces: Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, PTI did not assign higher decision-making positions (ministries) to women MPAs. In 2018, the PTI government assigned two ministries to women in the Punjab province, whereas the other 34 ministries were assigned to men. One MPA, Ashifa Riaz, was appointed as Minister for Women Development and another woman MPA, Yasmin Rashid was appointed as Minister for Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education.

Whereas in case of federal ministries, three ministries out of 28 were assigned to women MNAs including Dr. Shireen Marzari as Federal Minister for Human Rights, Ms. Zubida Jalal as Minister for Defence Production and Dr. Fahmida Mirza as Inter-Provincial Coordination. None of the women MPAs in the Punjab province was appointed as advisor to the Chief Minister or parliamentary secretary. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, women MPAs did not receive any ministerial portfolios. However, responding to a massive critique, PTI nominated two women parliamentary secretaries (Aisha Naeem in Administration and Ayesha Bano as Higher Education) against 27 male ministers and parliamentary secretaries in the KPK province. In the Baluchistan province, no woman MPA was included in the Cabinet. In contrast, in the Sindh Assembly, two PPP women ministers (Azra Fazal Pechuho and Shehla Raza) were appointed by the Sindh government formed by the PPP.

6.5.2 Role-playing approach to involvement in the decision-making process

Turning now on the role of women MPAs in the Provincial Assembly, it was noted that they were eager and motivated to serve as compared with women career politicians at the Transitional level. Samina, a woman MPA, clarified women in politics need to assert their identities through active decision-making as Pakistan society is male dominated. She observed that active participation might take the form of raising concerns in meetings and getting them implemented. Citing her example, Samina recalled that she used to express her views during meetings and tried to ensure follow-up. She altered her behaviour in discussions by endorsing her role as an MPA. In comparison, Transitional-level women politicians lack such power and authority and may not feel confident about conveying their opinions during meetings. In the extract below, Samina noted that:

When decision-making regarding some issue is ongoing, a woman needs to make her presence known during decision-making as men are dominant in our society. You need to make yourself acknowledged during the process of decision-making. If I go, sit quietly, attend, and come back without any active participation, then I think that I am not doing justice to my seat. We, women, need to make ourselves get acknowledged during the process of decision-making. During the decision-making process at the party, yes, I give my input, and I also try to get it implemented. My party asks for it, and I give my decision too, and if it is correct, then it is accepted by the party (Samina, personal interview, November 2018).

In the current research, a woman MPA, Aliya, believed that female MPAs held equivalent power to male MPAs and needed to participate in the decision-making process with self-confidence. She clarified that the PTI party leader, Imran Khan, gives equal weight to the opinions of female and male career politicians. She commented that since Pakistan is a highly patriarchal society, most male members hold patriarchal values. Pakistan has a power structure in which men hold the most authority, and women are treated as subordinates. Patriarchy has significant ramifications for the lives of both women and men, and the political sphere is no exception. In the extract below, Aliya shared that she was very much heard in the PTI party:

I am the member of a committee, which Mr. Khan himself had established. So, Sir Khan does listen. My point of view has the same importance as others. If I point out something correctly, Sir Khan appreciates it, but our party's people are still part of this society, right, so they behave as people in our society do: not to give space to women like everywhere. The same is often replicated in our party too. But I make sure that I effectively convey my opinion in meetings (Aliya, personal interview, January 2019).

After 2002, the representation of women in legislative bodies has shown positive trends. The 2002 implementation of women's reserved seats has promoted the participation of women in politics. Over the last three legislative years (2018–20), women legislators have been more involved than men in making contributions to the parliamentary business, as explored in a report by Rasheed (2020).

Saliha, a woman MPA, showed her positivity in being affiliated with PTI and its political structure. She noted that PTI included a vast majority of women, especially in Standing Committees. She noted the reserved seat system as an opportunity for women in politics that took their presence to 33% in parliament. She observed that the PTI party was trying hard to ensure the fair representation of women and men within the party as women accounted for approximately half of the total population of Pakistan. Saliha noted that the percentage of women members was 33% of the total Assembly membership, which boosted women's voices and enhanced their confidence to participate in the Assembly session. In the extract below, she observed:

PTI gave much freedom to women. We are in the majority, and whenever committees are established, women are employed in them. Now it is like 30–70 or 33–70, but we are trying to enhance it; we want to bring it to 50–50. As you know, in Pakistan, women are not the majority in Assemblies. The reserved seat system brings women into Assemblies, so we can talk freely, give resolutions, and ask questions. I am hopeful that next time in the government the number of women will increase (Saliha, personal interview, December 2018).

6.6 Views of men for the inclusion of Gladiator level women in the decision-making

The majority of the female MPAs believed they were not treated equally in the decision-making process by their male counterparts. They complained that reserved seats were taken for granted by male MPAs, whereas maintaining their integrity as women remains a challenge in the parliament. In the present research, the narratives of male MPAs also indicate that female MPAs selected on gender quotas are not treated equally in Punjab Assembly's decision-making. In exemplification of the above, the narratives of Babar, a male MPA, demonstrates that members elected on general and reserved seats are not treated equally. He stated that treating elected and reserved seat members differently was not tantamount to discrimination. He noted that the members who worked in a constituency acquired more knowledge regarding the problems of a constituency.

According to Babar, ministerial portfolios were awarded based on their practical work experience in constituencies and could not be termed discrimination. Babar viewed women MPAs as less credible because they entered parliament on reserved seats and did not own a constituency. Babar strongly felt that elected members had gained more experience, and hence they were more eligible to get ministries or to participate in decision making. In the extract below, Babar commented:

The first thing is that it is not discrimination. Secondly, the elected candidate had votes from the constituency. So, elected ones have that edge over the reserved seat members, and that is why they get ministries easily and more included in decision making. In politics, people who fought for election in their district had the votes of people, they know the problems in their constituency better, and they will be the ones to solve people's problems of that consistency. So, this is not discrimination (Babar, personal interview, April 2019).

In Pakistan, many liberals embrace gender equality as long as it transpires outside their homes. Although PTI is a centrist party and supports the inclusion of women in all spheres of life, many of its male party members hold fast to an opposite belief. Despite taking an oath to follow the manifesto of the PTI party, which supports women's empowerment, they do not appear to support the cause. A male MPA, Zain, labelled most of the men in politics as hypocrites. Zain observed that male party elites realized or acknowledged the importance of the inclusion of

women in the decision-making process but did not practise it in practical terms. As the extract below shows, Zain felt that women did not get the respect they deserved in politics and commented:

Unfortunately, women are not included in decision-making. We are a bunch of hypocrites. Look, when a man gets married to a woman, it is not a man's world, and he cannot decide everything. It is teamwork. So, without proper teamwork, the House cannot run. That is how you can expect a country to run without getting proper input from your females. Are we doing that? No. Are we giving any respect to any woman coming and sitting in front of us? No, we look at them as an object. We do not look at them as human beings. Until and unless we do not do that, we will never respect them (Zain, personal interview, May 2019).

Zain noted that just as consultation between a husband and wife was necessary to run a house, the same holds true when running the country. He acknowledged that women continued to be marginalized in politics even though men paid lip service to the idea of women's inclusion. In reality, women members remain excluded as men do not give them the due rights of participation. He stated that women members are taken as objects rather than human beings.

6.7 Reserved seat system

The present research has provided a deeper insight into the women's reserved seat system in the Provincial Assembly of Punjab. Pakistan's political liberalization is being undertaken by the artificial mechanism of a reserved seat system to increase women's political participation. Under this system, party leaders have full liberty to submit the women candidates' priority list. The reserved seat system is intended to engender more profound reform by demonstrating that women can hold leadership roles, encourage more women to enter politics and alter male politicians' and the general public's views about women's political participation.

The reserved seat is a mechanism for policymakers to increase women's participation in government structures wherein women currently have scarce representation. In Pakistan, it was implemented to encourage women's representation in legislative bodies. Since the 1946 general election in Pakistan, a specific quota of seats in parliament has been reserved for women.

Reserved seat quota for women was maintained in the 1956, 1962 and 1973 Constitutions but limited to 5–10% of the total number of members in Assemblies only. Later, in 1973, as the amendment was set to expire, the Constitution of 1973 extended the provision for reserved seats for women for two additional general elections or ten years, whichever occurred first. The rule of the reserved seat quota became inoperative after the 1990 elections.

Moreover, in the 1997 general election, wherein no quota was reserved for women, only two women managed to be elected on general seats out of 460 seats. Later in 2002, General Pervez Musharraf's government increased the number of reserved seats for women to 60 in the National Assembly, setting aside 17 seats in the Senate, 128 in the Provincial Assemblies (Punjab, 66; Baluchistan, 11; KPK, 22 and Sindh, 29) under Articles 51, 59 and 106 of the Constitution respectively. In the present research, since all women MPAs were elected on a reserved seat, the following section analyses the inclusion of women MPAs in the PTI and Punjab Assembly decision-making process, considering their nominations on reserved seats.

In the present study, all 11 female MPAs were elected on reserved seats compared to the eight male MPAs elected on general seats. Following the Constitution, women and men have the same power and authority as MPAs in the Punjab Provincial Assembly, regardless of their nomination to reserved seats or election on the general contested seat. In the current study, women career politicians at the Gladiator level were asked about their challenges while being elected on a reserved seat. The male MPAs were also asked about the role of women MPAs nominated on reserved seats in the Punjab Provincial Assembly.

6.7.1 Reserved seat system: an opportunity

The Election Commission of Pakistan implemented multiple reforms that provided women aspirants with a convenient way to enter parliament. The Election Act (section 206) of 2017 required political parties to allocate 5% of general seat tickets to women, which compelled the political parties to award more party tickets to women aspirants and increase the number of women contesting for general seats. Before the 2018 general election, relatively fewer women ran for general seats since they were seldom awarded party tickets. In the general election of 2018, 5,768 ticket holders from nearly 94 political parties (among the 11,885 independent candidates) contested in the National and Provincial Assemblies. There were only 305 female candidates representing less than 5.2% of all ticket holders from political parties, which shows

that most political parties continue to see the obligatory 5% quota for women on general seats as a formality.

In the 2018 general election, 175 women ran as independent candidates, while 289 women ran on party tickets for different parties. The most tickets (41) for women were granted by the PPP parliamentarians, followed by PTI (39) and PML (36). As a result, the 2018 general election witnessed a record number of women (464) run for general seats in the National and Provincial Assemblies. It was a relatively higher number than noted in the 2013 general election, which featured 228 women contestants. According to the Election Commission of Pakistan's records, only eight women parliamentarians won seats in the National Assembly through direct elections in 2018, while only seven won seats in the four Provincial Assemblies out of 464 women constants.

In Pakistan, a political aspirant can contest an election independently without being affiliated with a political party. However, a party affiliation tends to be crucial due to the strong connection between voters and political parties in Pakistan. In most cases, an independent candidate reduces the market value as a popular choice for the voters. After the 2018 general election, the Punjab Assembly had only four independent MPA members amongst 368 members belonging to six parties. Amongst the four, there was only one woman MPA, Syeda Maimanat Mohsin, from Okara city. Such a situation compels a woman aspirant to look for a political party's membership to advance their careers.

6.7.2 Reserved seat system; a challenge

In the current research, the reserved seat system was explored as an opportunity for women aspirants to make their entry into parliaments via a comparatively easy route. Career politicians generally seek political party affiliations to get a party ticket as an independent candidate has a low chance of winning. While addressing the challenges of political participation, a woman MPA, Aliya, highlighted the unfair allocation of PTI party tickets. She observed that she was willing to contest the election on a general seat in 2018 and was interviewed with a panel of PTI leaders. During the interview, she was advised by the interviewing panel to withdraw her nomination for a party ticket. Instead, she offered to be considered for a reserved seat. She was informed that she would not be a popular choice for voters in that area as a woman candidate. Aliya shared her struggle to get a party ticket in the extract below:

Currently, I am on a reserved seat, but I applied for the party ticket from a (z) area. A panel of PTI leaders interviewed me for selection. During the interview, the panel suggested that I may not contest the election because female candidates are not popular in rural areas. I tried hard to get the party ticket as I do not want to be on a reserved seat. I was told that maybe next time I may get a ticket (Aliya, personal interview, January 2019).

In the political history of Pakistan, most elected women parliamentarians have belonged to influential political families and have been elected to parliament on the strength of their family name. In the election of 2018, three women, namely Saleem Bibi of PP-96 Chiniot, Ashifa Riaz of PP-122 Toba Tek Singh, Zahra Batool of PP-272 from PTI party successfully contested general seats in the Punjab Assembly. All three women belong to prominent political families. Saleem Bibi is a member of the 'Bharwana' clan and the mother of Ghulam Bibi, from Jhang city. In contrast, Ashifa Riaz's husband, Riaz Fatyana, is a former Member of the National Assembly (MNA) and a three-time Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA). Ashifa Riaz also previously served as an MPA from 2002 to 2007. Zahra Batool also came from a political family with male family members engaged in politics.

Sara, a woman MPA, expressed her reservations on the allocation of general seat tickets by the PTI party. She noted that the PTI party ticket list for general election contestants finished at number five for women, whereas the lack of resources for women aspirants for contesting the election was one of the main reasons. She noted the high costs involved in running the whole election campaign which may include establishing an office and supporters. Women career politicians find it difficult to raise funds for their campaigns due to a lack of financial resources. Recalling her own experience, Sara noted that she did not have enough resources to contest the general elections and was not awarded a party ticket. In the extract below, Sara shared her experience of not getting a party ticket:

If you see the list after the fifth candidate, the number ends for general election capacity for women in our party. You need a very strong background, and you need many funds to contest the election. You need an office, supporters or honestly speaking, a whole system to run for elections. Our election process is so complex that an ordinary person cannot think of participation. I was not given a party ticket just because I do not have such vast resources. Although I want to run for a general

seat, but PTI party refused to give me a ticket. Instead, they gave ticket to a male party member (Sara, personal interview, November 2018).

Although the PTI manifesto claims to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, a mismatch is evident between the manifesto claims and the number of general tickets awarded to women career politicians in the 2018 election. The PTI party distributed 769 party tickets. Forty-two of these were given to women against the minimum number of 38 (5% women) mandated by the Election Commission of Pakistan. Later, PTI faced heavy criticism for not ensuring greater empowerment of women by awarding general seat tickets more proportionately. In June 2018, approximately one and half months before the general election of 2018, some of the women career politicians from the PTI party voiced protests over the distribution of party tickets. The protest was held in Peshawar and chaired by former MPA Zareen Zia. She alleged that the PTI party had awarded tickets without merit, thus ignoring genuine party workers.

6.7.3 Allocation of reserved seats with strong political connections

The process of filling reserved seats for women in Pakistan appears flawed and subject to ongoing criticism. It is essential to understand the mechanism of reserved seats to explore the level of involvement of women MPAs in the decision-making process. Reserved seats are filled up based on proportional representation of the seats acquired by a political party in the National Assembly or Provincial Assemblies. In proportion to the number of general seats a party win in the general election, it submits a priority list to the Election Commission of Pakistan. Under this system, female career politicians rely on political parties and seek the approval of party elites to be included as candidates on the list submitted to the Election Commission.

The current mechanism for the distribution of reserved seats seems to serve the interest of party elites whereby no criteria (e.g., qualification, expertise, or any other competencies) exists for the distribution of reserved seats. The legislation empowers political party officials to fill up these positions with any nominee they wish to present as a candidate, thus creating an impression that the nomination procedure is not merit-based. In the current reserved seat mechanism, women aspirants are left dependent on political party leadership. A women MPA, Aliya, elected on a reserved seat, showed her dissatisfaction with the nomination criteria. She stated that although she had worked for years with the PTI party, her name was included at the

bottom of the PTI priority list for reserved seats. She complained that another woman (Y) was placed above her name in the list, even though (Y) had fewer years of experience. She speculated that the position of (Y) was due to her visibility on social media platforms.

Aliya stated that she did much work but never posted details on her social media accounts. She said that being posted on social media was in vogue, but this did not mean that candidate performance should be evaluated based on her social media visibility. According to Aliya, candidates needed to be assessed on their working experience rather than social media visibility to allocate reserved seats. Aliya was highly disappointed by the PTI reserved seat nomination list and noted:

I am not satisfied with the distribution of reserved seats. Even my number was last on the list. In the recent interview you have done with Ms 'Y', she joined Dharna (Protest) of PTI in 2014. I was President at that time, and I used to manage everything. She asked me to keep her in the security team. I adjusted her in security by giving her a stick and made her stand. She never had any party designation ever, but she was active in social media by posting different activities. I know that social media is viral these days, but it is not proper to consider such things in politics. Even her number was above me on the list. I joined in 2005, and she joined in 2014. So, you can imagine how reserved seats are allocated. This is very disappointing for me. You tell me, where I can go and make a complain about it? (Aliya, personal interview, January 2019).

Conveying her dissatisfaction with the PTI reserved seat nominees, Aliya observed that genuine employees in the reserved seat list were either neglected or assigned a place on the list unlikely to progress them to parliament. She stated that she had tried to discuss the merit for the nomination of women career politicians on reserved seats. However, she had faced the displeasure of Imran Khan. Aliya stated that she did not mind the reaction as she respected her leader. However, she was determined to keep mentioning the flawed reserved seat system in the PTI party. Aliya stressed:

I am not satisfied with the nominations for reserved seats, and I will keep on mentioning it. Once I tried to talk to Imran Khan about the women members nomination on reserved seats, and he became outraged. I always said and scolded

as well, but it is OK, and I do not mind. He is my leader and my senior, but still, I keep on saying (Aliya, personal interview, January 2019).

Another woman MPA, Meena, was also nominated for a reserved seat, while her husband was a PTI ticket holder for another constituency. Her husband had lost his seat in the general election of 2018. However, later in April 2021, he was assigned the position of Special Assistant to the Prime Minister by the PTI party. This system of favouring family members of PTI politicians calls into question the distribution criteria of political titles/tickets in the party. In the past, most political parties in Pakistan have faced criticism for the nomination of certain women career politicians on reserved seats.

On 23 June 2018, PTI women members also protested in front of the Imran Khan secretariat at Lahore over the unfair allotment of reserved seats. Later, these women members protested in front of Imran Khan's residence at Bani Gala Islamabad, but they did not get any response from the PTI party. Later, on the official website of PTI, a message from PTI chairperson Imran Khan was uploaded, conveying that the nomination of women on reserved seats was purely merit-based. However, the message did not convey any other details on the nomination criteria of reserved seats.

In the past, reserved seats had been misused to distribute to kith and kin, whereas the PTI list was also highlighted in 2018. For instance, in the PTI party in 2018, the PTI leadership had nominated two women members, Nafisa Khattak and Sajida Zulfiqar, relatives of the former Chief Minister of the KPK province Pervaiz Khattak. Another woman, Noreen Ibrahim, daughter-in-law of former Azad Jammu Kashmir President Sardar Ibrahim Khan, had also secured a place on the PTI's party list. The contrasting narratives of women career politicians and dissatisfaction among them on the distribution of reserved seats can be attributed to the absence of merit, where party leaders can nominate anyone for a reserved seat. Moreover, the hidden criteria followed by the PTI party cast doubt on the nomination of those who possess political connections or privileged backgrounds, notwithstanding their talents.

6.8 Views of women and men in politics on reserved seats

In the 2018 general election, women ran for general seats in more significant numbers, owing to a revised electoral law by the Election Commission of Pakistan, compelling political parties

to allocate 5% of tickets to women. Despite this, only 15 women out of 464 female contestants successfully won the election (Naeem, 2018). In 1999, without affirmative action policies in place, almost six women won seats in the election. Considering the low participation of women in the politics of Pakistan, the reserved seat mechanism was viewed as an essential measure to maintain gender-balance participation in parliament.

Despite constitutional guarantees, the inclusion of women in politics remains widely debated in Pakistan. When women in Pakistan enter the political arena as candidates, they risk their integrity due to male dominance in the public sphere. In this regard, female MPAs complained that their male colleagues had negative perceptions of them since they had been elected on reserved seats. While discussing her experience, a woman MPA Sobia, stated that male MPAs are not ready to share their power, particularly with women on reserved seats. They want to be dominant in the decision-making bodies.

Sobia noted that when male career politicians observe women MPAs giving their input, they reject their opinions because they have been elected on reserved seats. Sobia appeared to be disheartened by the attitude of male career politicians towards women nominated on reserved seats. She stated that sometimes it felt as if women in politics were beggars or that a reserved seat was a stigmatizing label. Sobia recalled being overlooked by male colleagues during meetings, in addition to the motions proposed by women MPAs being ignored because of their reserved seat status. In the extract below, Sobia shared how the ‘reserved seat’ label was used by men to stigmatize women MPAs and to ignore their input:

Men feel they have all the authority, just because they have been elected on general seats and that decision-making should be in their hands. I saw many times when a woman MPA tried to give her input in a meeting, then male MPAs said, ‘she is on a reserved seat’. Being on reserved seat feels like a shame to me, or I sometimes feel that we are beggars (Sobia, personal interview, January 2019).

Another woman MPA, Nayla, also highlighted the limited internal support accorded to reserved seat women members by their male colleagues. She noted that women’s MPA selection on the reserved seat was perceived as a shortcut and considered less valuable than elected positions won by men. The male politicians’ negative perceptions of women’s reserved seats devalue women’s work in parliament. Nayla commented that it was a collective issue of all women

MPAs that they were not appreciated due to serving on reserved seats. As a reserved seat MPA, Nayla revealed her negative experiences in the parliament in the extract below:

The biggest issue is that we, women MPAs, are often told that you are not an elective member, you were nominated, or you are on a reserved seat. So, get your work done through the elected member. It means we are not being heard, mainly because we are on a reserved seat. We are not treated equally in parliament even after being elected. I do not know why it matters so much that you are elected on a general seat or a reserved seat? You [man] are an MPA, and I am as well (Nayla, personal interview, December 2018).

In comparison, male MPAs were questioned about the selection of women on reserved seats. Many of them expressed reservations about the selection criteria for reserved seats. They revealed divergent opinions on the role and importance of women in the legislature while pointing out the difference between women MPAs selected to reserved seats vis-à-vis those elected on general seats. Sharing their views on the reserved seat system, two of the male MPAs objected to the nomination criteria for reserved seats.

In exemplifying the above, Mohit, a male MPA, mentioned that the system of nomination for women had some flaws. However, he encountered the issue of unfair selection, highlighted by a woman MPA, Aliya, (see section 6.7.3 above), by referring to it as the party's decision. He added that as there were more candidates than reserved seats this left unsuccessful applicants feeling disappointed resentful. He stated that the number of women candidates was twice the number of the reserved seats available. He argued that women who did not get a seat might be feeling resentful and prone to complaining about the unfair distribution of the seats.

Mohit felt that while a more transparent merit system might address unfair distribution, women needed to think about contesting general seats in the elections. According to Mohit, coming to Assembly after contesting the election would boost their confidence because they had been voted in by the electorate. He felt that women who won general seats had much more authority and confidence than women elected on reserved seats. Mohit noted:

The party decided the list for reserved seats. But the issue is all women want to be nominated on a reserved seat, especially when there are no set criteria. We have 35

reserved seats, and 70 plus applied for a reserved seat. Now, as after 33 or 35 are being elected, now the rest are in for a disappointment. Naturally, they are complaining. Imagine that if your name was not on the list, you might also complain about the unfair distribution. Open merit may work for them, but I advise women that they should think of contesting elections. If they do this stuff, then you will see, their confidence will rise so much. If you fight the election, your confidence would be something else, Right, or not? You would walk differently in here [Assembly] (Mohit, personal interview, March 2019).

Another male MPA, Babar, shared similar views about reserved seats with Mohit. Babar felt that only MPAs who had fought on a general seat by spending money and exerting efforts to win votes had absolute authority in the Assembly. He believed that MPAs elected on general and reserved seats could not be on par. Babar suggested that some constituencies could be fixed for women candidates only or some provision made whereby only female candidates would compete. He perceived that political empowerment was associated with those candidates who fight an election by utilizing their financial and other resources. Babar strongly felt that the inclusion of women in legislative bodies could be meaningful only if they entered political office by contesting the elections. Babar expressed as:

Women members complain that they are omitted but let me tell you that authority only comes to you after fighting the election. You do not get authority like an elected one. Look, if you are giving them 33% of the seats, the one who came by fighting the election has some other sort of authority. Moreover, as they do not come by competing, you cannot create equality between an elected and a reserved seat member. See, one came by fighting an election, made an effort, spent money, and did everything. So that is why at the end of the day, there is a difference between them. That is why I say the women that come by fighting [have authority]. You can nominate a women competitor against a woman or fix some constituency for women only (Babar, personal interview, April 2019).

While showing awareness of the need for women's reserved seats and the parity of their role in legislation irrespective of selection or election, Naveed, a male MPA, explained the apparent 'discrimination' against elected women MPAs on reserved seats. He expressed the view that MPAs who were elected on general seats could do more as they were affiliated with a particular

constituency. He stated that MPAs elected on general seats had a long history of fieldwork in one constituency and knew the constituents' problems better. Thus, they could solve their problems more effectively. Hence, according to his perspective, the greater value accorded to elected MPAs was not discriminatory. Naveed stated:

I know that reserved seat women also represent other women, and their role in legislation is the same. Still, in politics, people who fought an election in their district had the votes of people. They know the problems in their constituency better. They will be the ones to solve the people's problems of that constituency. So, this is not discrimination as such, but everyone has their own field (Naveed, personal interview, April 2019).

The women in Pakistan already lag in being assigned to political decision-making positions. The platform established through reserved seats for women aspirants encourages women from marginalized backgrounds to enter politics. The largely negative attitude of male career politicians towards reserved seats shows that they do not view selection (as opposed to election) as conferring adequate authority on female MPAs. Therefore, they insist on maintaining the mechanism of direct election for women to validate their authority.

In comparison, four male MPAs defended the system of reserved seats for women. A male MPA, Atif, categorized the discrimination towards a reserved seat female MPAs as a reflection of the male-dominated political structure. Atif felt that the real reason for the male MPAs animus towards the reserved seat system for women was that most of them were unable to engage in debate with intellectually more vigorous women peers. He believed that if male MPAs were secure about their own abilities, then the issues of selected or elected women MPAs would not be a problem for them at all.

Another male MPA, Adnan, favoured the reserved seat system and revealed that women nominees were not considered on par with elected members, although, he added, both elected and selected members had equal authority according to the law. Adnan felt that the prevalent misogyny in the political institutions led women to be treated unequally. He believed that if women on reserved seats were nominated based on some qualifications and expertise, this would contribute to their political empowerment. He believed that the qualifications and

expertise of woman MPAs would allow them to contribute meaningfully to their roles. In the extract below, Atif noted:

In our system, women nominees are not considered equal to the elected people. So that is a hindrance, I believe. But the hindrance is not legal but more in terms of the people's perception, sitting in the parties, sitting in the decision-making places in the hierarchy of government. They do not give equal weight, equal roles to those women, and if you try to give, they should have a background in law, medicine, or other fields to contribute. So, I believe this system should be revisited, reconsidered (Adnan, personal interview, April 2019).

Defending women members against the misperception that they were not interested in contesting elections, Atif revealed that in 2018, several women had shown their interest in getting party tickets as confirmed by two women MPAs earlier (see section 6.7.2 above). Atif explained that the party was not interested in offering them tickets for the general seats. He believed that the party preferred to pay lip service to the Election Commission requirement to offer 5% of the general seat tickets to the women candidates by offering them backwater constituencies with little prospect of success. Atif noted:

The thing is that sometimes males have insecurities towards intellectual females. They cannot answer, are unable to communicate, and cannot express their point of view, but if you are stable yourself, you should have no issue with females, either elected or on a reserved seat. They are quite a few females here, who applied for the tickets, but the party will not give them the tickets to contest. It is not their fault to be elected on reserved seats. Parties gave general tickets to women just to fulfil the requirements imposed by the Election Commission of Pakistan, which is not ethical. We are intellectually dishonest to ourselves (Atif, personal interview, May 2019).

With the current political system in Pakistan, the Election Commission bound political parties to issue 5% of party tickets to women members. The Election Commission registered 386 female candidates for the four Provincial Assemblies' elections. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan, while 79 and 42 women candidates ran for Provincial Assembly general seats, respectively, not a single female candidate won the direct election. However, in Punjab, eight women candidates were elected to a total of 297 general seats. It seems evident that women

were awarded tickets with those constituencies, where they had fewer chances of winning to fulfil the 5% requirement imposed by the Election Commission. Considering the low participation of women in the politics of Pakistan, the reserved seat mechanism seems an essential measure to maintain gender-balanced participation in parliament.

Another male MPA, Naveed, emphasized the need to allocate funds to women MPAs on reserved seats to include them in the political sphere effectively. He suggested that women MPAs should get funds, if not equal to their male colleagues, then at least 50%. He believed that if women MPAs are allocated development funds, they can be trained to carry out projects for the future. Naveed clarified that as of now, the women in politics lacked training for capacity building. He believed that women members are being used to secure votes only and, in return, got a few reserved seats. Naveed noted:

Our females should get funds, if not equal to an elected MPA, then at least half of the funds of an elected MPA. They can only be trained this way to identify a project, analyse its feasibility. We have to build their capacity. As of now, I do not see any strategy for the capacity building of women. There are so many other issues, and we take our women MPAs as a helping hand, which only guaranteed you votes in every election. But for how long do you keep them satisfied this way? (Naveed, personal interview, April 2019).

In March 2019, PTI announced development funds for MNAs and MPAs. However, these funds were not available to women on reserved seats. Most women elected to parliament since 2002 have been selected on reserved seats, and therefore they have not had any kind of constituency. PTI justified their decision that since these MPAs and MNAs were not chosen by constituents, the funds would not be used for a particular constituency. PTI released development funds and announced grant of Rs 500 million for each elected MPA and MNA (Raza, 2021). However, many women MPAs included in current research considered their place of residence as their constituency and sought to develop their reputation in their perceived constituency to contest the next general elections. But the PTI party's decision to allocate funds to elected members only further marginalized women who held reserved seats as MPAs.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The present research was intended to study the challenges and opportunities relating to women's political participation in Pakistan beyond elections. The current chapter summarizes the key findings identified by analysing data collected from women and men with political careers in the Pakistan Tehreek Insaf political party (PTI). It also offers recommendations to address the challenges to women's political participation. In addition, it delineates the limitations of the study and research trajectories for future researchers interested in expanding on the topic.

The present study employed a qualitative research design aimed to explore the women's experiences in participating in Pakistani politics across selection or election to political office or working as a party member. Following the Milbrath Hierarchical Model, the participants were categorized at the Transitional level (party workers) or Gladiator level (members of the Provincial Assembly), a classification based on their level of political engagement. In line with this model, it was theorized that the challenges facing women in politics varied according to their degree of involvement at the Transitional and the Gladiator levels. The present study was underpinned by the theoretical model of Supply and Demand Model of Candidate Selection. The model was initially presented in 1995 by Norris & Lovenduski and identified the various gender effects of candidate selection in British parliament pertaining to racial and class differences reinforced by British political parties' procedures and cultures. The same model was adopted in the current research, whereby female and male career politicians in Pakistan were viewed as 'selected' and the PTI political party was taken as the 'selector'.

In contrast to the Supply and Demand Model of Candidate Selection, which focused on the multiple political parties in the British parliament, the present study focused on the case of one political party (PTI). Moreover, the current research was grounded in the Feminist Standpoint theoretical perspective, which stresses the importance of practising the social sciences from the perspective of women or communities to gain access to feminist modes of thought. However, male career politicians were also included as participants in recognition that they are gendered beings, and the contrast in perspectives is necessary for determining whether gender plays a role. The fieldwork of the present research consisted of semi-structured interviews carried out with female and male career politicians from the Punjab province of Pakistan from August 2018

to August 2019. Due to the difficulty of accessing career politicians, the participants were selected using the snowball sampling technique. The interviews with participants emphasized different impediments to women's political engagement, narrowly classified as structural and institutional challenges and operated under the impetus of culture. By analysing the data based on the deductive codes extracted from the Supply and Demand Model of Candidate Selection, the present research furnishes significant insights about the research questions.

Although the PTI women career politicians made use of multiple routes to undertake political participation, these women at all levels have had to contend with traditional expectations of women's roles. Their challenges were broadly similar and tended to arise from patriarchal traditions and systems, although none of the participants mentioned religion as a hindrance. PTI's position as a centrist political party may provide one of the reasons for religion not being considered a challenge by the women participants. Its ideology is based on a middle-class movement against elite politicians rather than aligned to a sectarian or ethnic agenda. Although the PTI party manifesto is built on the vision of an Islamic welfare state, it follows a centrist philosophy, and its members primarily share the same perspective as suggested in an earlier study (Gerber et al., 2011). In addition to the obstacles identified in the Supply and Demand Model, the present study sheds light on other vital aspects of the challenges faced by women who are PTI members in the politics of Pakistan.

7.2 An insight into the socio-economic and political backgrounds of the respondents

With reference to demographic data, the backgrounds of the women and men in politics have some similarities. For instance, most of the career politicians participating in this study tended to be middle-aged, married, have children, and educated up to tertiary level. The majority of them had progressed from the Transitional level to the Gladiator level in the PTI party, subsequent to accumulating more than five years of experience in the political sphere. The career politicians' age distribution indicated that the majority of the MPAs were in their 40s. However, some of the women career politicians at the Transitional level were in their 20s, possessed lower qualifications and fewer years of experience than the women at the Gladiator level. In contrast, women at the Gladiator level had less education and more kinship ties than the men at the Gladiator level of political participation. All the women at the Gladiator level had been selected on reserved rather than general seats. In comparison, seven of the male career politicians had been elected on general seats, and only one had been elected on a reserved seat

for minorities. None of the women MPAs held any ministry portfolio, while four of the male MPAs headed ministries in the Punjab province.

7.3 Challenges and opportunities for the political participation of women

7.3.1 A summary of key findings

The present study elaborates on the influential role of PTI's party leader, Imran Khan, and his position as a role model for women participants. He has employed multiple strategies to motivate Pakistani women to engage in constructive citizenship beyond elections. The findings of the present study align with earlier studies which suggest that the challenge of lack of interest in politics among women can be overcome through influential leaders, as women are less likely to be involved in politics or to run for political office (Fox & Lawless, 2011; Shames, 2017; Khan & Naqvi, 2020).

Most studies have confirmed that influential women leaders in politics are likely to draw future female aspirants to politics as supported by Alexander & Jalalzai (2016), Bauer & Okpotor (2013) and Dassonneville & McAllister (2018). However, the current study's results are different as rather than a female leader encouraging women to participate in politics, as earlier studies confirm, it is a male leader, Imran Khan, who inspires women to participate in politics.

The present study's findings highlight the motivational strategies employed by Imran Khan to inspire women in politics beyond elections. His motivational triangle is built on a dynamic vision, catchy slogans, and inspirational speeches to promote women's participation in politics. These results are supported by the study of Sanbonmatsu et al., (2009), who have argued that women need the motivation to participate in politics and to combat any attempt to stop them from participating.

The current study explores how Imran Khan has implemented this motivational triangle through his public gatherings and mass media to ensure women's participation beyond elections. This motivational triangle enabled women aspirants to join politics and overcome their lack of motivation to engage in politics. In recent times, women's political participation in PTI gatherings has served as evidence of the massive engagement of women in the political arena, once limited to women belonging to political families or with political backgrounds. PTI

political rallies have drawn local women from diverse social backgrounds and ages to join in at the gatherings. The success of PTI can be attributed to massive support by women in Pakistan garnered by the party leader, Imran Khan, through the deployment of the motivational triangle. In the study, most participants mentioned ‘Imran Khan’ as their sole motivation for joining the PTI party (see section 5.2.1 of chapter 5).

The present study observed that the participation of women in the labour force improves their chances to become effectively involved in the political sphere, following the earlier research by Iversen & Rosenbluth (2008). Togeby (1994) revealed that professional careers unlocked political entry pathways for women and equipped them with the experience and financial resources to participate effectively in politics. In contrast, the current study investigated whether woman with professional careers found political participation easier as they had already established themselves in the labour market and possessed extensive networks. They had the finances to advance their political career and were adequately empowered to enter politics, as discussed in the case of Nayla (see section 5.2.5 of chapter 5).

In the present study, the influence of political kinship ties in Pakistani politics was also found to be strong, revealing that career politicians with political kinship ties were more likely to be granted party positions or nominations for reserved seats in parliament. Political kinship ties included family members who were serving or had previously served in influential political roles. At the very least, political kinship ties facilitated political aspirants with a well-established political trajectory to kickstart their political careers, as discussed in the case of Nida (see section 5.2.6 of chapter 5). In the current study, some participants ascended to the Gladiator level promptly based on their political kinship ties despite having fewer years of political experience and qualifications. Such appointments infringed the criteria highlighted by a PTI party member as non-negotiable prerequisites for holding party positions as mentioned by Umair (see section 6.4 of chapter 6).

The present study also reflects on the effective integration of social workers in politics. In the present study, few women participants were involved in social work activities before they entered politics. The current research findings aligned with earlier research that reported social workers could effectively undertake active forms of political participation as they contributed their time, money, and efforts towards society (Lane, 2011). The present study also found that people engaged in social work tend to be articulate and experienced in public speaking. Their

efforts towards community welfare are primarily voluntary, thus enabling them to integrate effectively into politics. They were also knowledgeable about their community's issues and were accepted by the local community despite the cultural constraints pertaining to their gender and societal expectations, as discussed in the case of Sheena (see section 5.2.7 of chapter 5)

The present study also reflects on motivation gaps among women aspirants that can be effectively covered via their experience in student unions during college and university. The student unions are framed on the structure of parliament whereby students are democratically elected to debate and represent students' concerns to prepare influential leaders. Currently, a ban on student unions in Pakistan has also contributed to a gap in political training among women aspirants. For almost 35 years student unions have been effectively banned in Pakistan. The ban is enforced in most universities of Pakistan. The ban can be traced back to Zia-ul-Haq's dictatorship, which banned unions across the country on 9 February 1984. Fearful of the increasing student resistance, Zia's regime imposed a ban on violent activities among student groups in college and universities, alleging that they were out to destroy the educational system. However, some students joined student unions without notifying their educational institutions and maintained their political activities off-campus, as discussed in the case of Bano (see section 5.2.8 of chapter 5).

The analysis of data obtained from women career politicians showed some evidence of clientelist and patronage deals in the PTI party. The political domain in Pakistan is influenced by political opportunism and patronage deals (Afzal, 2014; Javid, 2019). The story of clientelism and patronage in Pakistan is easily detectable in landlords' politics in the Punjab province or the robust network associated with the political parties in Karachi city (Akhtar, 2009; Javid, 2019; Martin, 2016). The current study highlighted that although such clientelist arrangements are considered unethical they can cover motivation gaps among women in politics. The concept of clientelism revolves around the unequal voluntary relationship between supporters and electoral candidates in which less powerful members (supporters) are exploited, as Stokes (2011) explored.

The current research revealed that clientelist deals also exist in the PTI party and motivated women aspirants to enter politics despite the challenges of political participation. In alignment with findings of Stokes (2011), the present research revealed instances in which a PTI party member had used clientelist arrangements to advance his political careers by exploiting two

women PTI party workers. It elaborates how a male PTI ticket holder in the 2018 general election reneged on promises of employment with two PTI party women members in exchange for running his political campaign. The women career politicians were motivated to participate in the PTI party with a government job offer (see section 5.2.9 of chapter 5). These findings are in line with the observations made by Rousseau (2002), who highlighted that an influential leader's efforts to motivate individuals towards political participation alone might not be successful as individuals tend to be drawn and motivated by gains.

In clientelist arrangements, the elites of the party deal with the state's citizens in exchange for goods and services. Making a clientelist deal is unethical and can be catastrophic. Indeed, the capitalist class in Pakistan has traditionally retained its power through clientelist and patronage arrangements. It has provided the political elites with a way to move forward in politics by strengthening the clientelist system. The present study uncovers that clientelist arrangements do not take legal tender, which is why the respective party leaders cannot be held accountable if accusations are levelled at them. Unless they are shortchanged by the political elites, the political supporters rarely expose such clientelist deals as it also poses questions on their moral standings. In the current study, the two women revealed the clientelist deal only when they were refused benefits by the respective party leader.

Opportunist and clientelist deals can motivate women aspirants to join politics, but the impact is not likely to be lasting. Instead, it may serve as a temporary motivational bubble and expires with the stop of gains for political aspirants. The current study also sheds light on another aspect of patronage and clientelism whereby women aspirants entered politics with an eye to the privilege entailed by the political office, as discussed in the case of Rabia (see section 5.2.7 of chapter 5). Politicians are considered powerful actors in Pakistan, and government institutions are under the influence of politicians, especially those in power through the elected office. Their supporters can circumvent the bureaucratic formalities on the recommendation or reference of an elected politician and motivate them to support the influential political parties.

The current study's findings also highlight some of the essential aspects of financial challenges faced by women and men in politics. Financial planning is mandatory for career politicians in a scenario as political parties in Pakistan do not support political candidates in their political campaigns. The current study reflects that politics in Pakistan is heavily driven by financial capital and political networks. Women usually have fewer opportunities to join a solid political

network and have less access to economic wealth unless they come from a politically engaged background.

However, in most cases, the women are more advantaged as they are funded by their husbands, as Pakistani culture assigns responsibility for financial matters to the husbands. Patriarchy has been ingrained in Pakistani culture since the dawn of time. It is a set of social ties built on a material foundation that nominate a man to financially support his wife or a father/brother to his daughter/sister. Such a social stratification based on traditional sex/gender roles gives males material and non-material advantages while imposing severe restrictions on female roles and activities. A less supporting spouse can lower the chances for a woman aspirant to be politically active in such a case. Moreover, the women career politicians can conveniently budget for such expenses through their nomination for reserved seats. In comparison, the study found that financial planning is more crucial for men in politics in view of the dearth of reserved seats, financial responsibilities for the family and conflict of interest issues, as discussed in the case of Umair (see section 5.3.5 of chapter 5).

The study also found that a higher level of political participation was linked to a higher level of family support, as highlighted in an earlier study (Alesina & Giuliano, 2011). Women career politicians (whether married or unmarried) experience an increase in financial and emotional familial support when they acquire a certain level of fame, money, or power. Upward mobility in politics also increases family support extended to women career politicians, as discussed in the case of Bano and Sheena (see section 5.3.2 of chapter 5). With fewer gains, the Transitional-level path is often daunting for women career politicians in Pakistan. However, when the advantages and yields increase upon reaching the Gladiator level, the family support and acceptance for women also increases. These findings are significant because they provide new insights into how the acceptance of women's political role in Pakistan's patriarchal structure is linked to their advancement in politics.

The current study has identified the importance of family support for women career politicians in Pakistan who are confronted with the dual burden of work and home. The public childcare support system is not well-established in Pakistan, whereas private childcare is expensive. Through the Factories Act 1934 (now Act 2018), organizations across Pakistan must establish daycare arrangements to allow working mothers and even fathers to resume work after parental leave. However, there are only a few organizations that follow the said law. There are only a

few private daycares in the metropolitan cities of Pakistan, and these facilities charge as much as 15–18 thousand PKR (approximately 100 \$) per month for eight-hour shift, five days a week. Such expensive daycares are often unaffordable for lower-income or lower-middle-income parents. The estimated cut off for lower-class families is Rs 4,000 to Rs 20,000 (20 to 100 \$ approximately), whereas the middle-class estimated cut off is Rs 50,000 to Rs 100,000 (estimated between 350 to 650 \$). In such a situation, family support or domestic help is a relatively cheaper solution adopted by the majority of women in politics. The domestic workers' salaries can be adjusted between Rs 8,000 to Rs 10,000 (approximately 40\$ to 50 \$) per month as per skills and working hours. Most domestic workers are women and take care of the children and help with household chores, thus making them a better choice than daycare centres for women career politicians.

The current study highlights that women career politicians mostly bypass the challenge of the dual burden with the help of their extended families and domestic help. Pakistan has a strong tradition of a joint family system, with the tendency towards nuclear families being more pronounced in urban areas than in rural areas. The women career politicians seemed to manage their careers and family life well, but they owned to struggling with multiple roles. Gender roles are changing quite slowly in Pakistan. It is a sociological transition period for women, where women are aware of their rights, but society is slow to change. The current study highlights the struggle of women career politicians to circumvent the challenges of political participation, but a lack of adequate child support mechanism undermines their capabilities.

Moreover, the narratives of women career politicians reflected on the trends of dual-earner families in Pakistan. In Pakistan, dual-earner families are increasing but create more challenges for women who have to struggle between occupational and family obligations. Women with political careers were managing their dual burden independently, while the men of the house remain free of household responsibilities. Such circumstances reported by women in politics show that the traditional culture is still entrenched. Women with professional careers share domestic duties with other family members rather than with their male spouses. Moreover, the joint family system serves as a support system for women career politicians along with domestic workers.

The present study's findings indicated that women at the Transitional level carried out political activities with flexibility, since at this level participation was primarily voluntary and unpaid.

However, holding a public office at the Gladiator level requires more time and commitment. The lack of a child support mechanism in Pakistan meant that some of the women participants had to sacrifice their careers, as discussed in the case of Rabia (see section 5.4.1 of chapter 5). A recent study conducted by Zahidi (2019) highlighted similar results. She revealed that a lack of childcare support mechanisms in Pakistan could be nominated as one of several factors leading to a significant gap in the gender parity scale of the country.

In comparison, the current study finds that male career politicians were privileged because they could participate in politics without the dual burden of home affairs or childcare responsibilities. Such a division of labour is backed up by the patriarchal structure in which societal context it is considered 'unmanly' for a husband to cook food, clean the house, or look after the children. Unlike financial planning, wherein men are relatively more burdened (see section 5.3.5 of chapter 5), male career politicians are moderately free of household and childcare responsibilities due to the patriarchal setup. Hence, they are better placed to manage their professional careers more efficiently and without restrictions, as reflected from the narratives of the men during interviews (see section 5.4.3 of chapter 5).

Concerning harassment in politics, the study highlights some interesting findings. The majority of the women participants believed that harassment existed in politics; none of them shared her experience of harassment in the PTI party. It can be concluded that women career politicians found it incredibly difficult to talk about facing harassment as they lived in a country without adequate safeguards against such harassment. Women in Pakistan often prefer to remain quiet and bear the harassment they experience outside their homes. The possible explanation could be their fears of not being trusted or being blamed and slandered for the harassment they face. Significantly, only a single male MPA acknowledged that harassment existed in the PTI party. However, he showed a preference for softening the term by calling it exploitation (see section 5.5.6 of chapter 5).

It is also possible that female and male career politicians did not admit to the existence of harassment in the PTI party as they wanted to protect the reputation of their party's name or feared retaliation by the party if they revealed anything negative. The narratives of career politicians regarding harassment are in line with the previous research by Johnson et al. (2016), which found that people refrained from reporting harassment directed at them or others out of fear of reprisal by the harasser or the organization. (see section 5.5.6 of chapter 5).

Pakistan is a highly patriarchal society wherein women are considered the ‘Izzat’ (honour) of their men, by their brothers, fathers, or husbands. Any assault on a woman’s integrity can also hit hard on her family. In the traditional culture of Pakistan, a woman is the symbol of her family’s dignity and undoubtedly hesitant to report any incident of harassment. Although a few cases of harassment faced by women professionals have been publicized in Pakistan, the media has dragged their families into the fray and made revelations about their personal life. Unsurprisingly, sexual harassment has been the least reported crime in the Punjab province, as per a report published by the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women in 2018.

In many cases, women career politicians face censure linked with religious oppression and the patriarchal mindset in Pakistan. Social narratives in Pakistani culture portray a flawed image of women in politics, as discussed in the Gulalai case (see section 5.5.2 of chapter). In fact, women often attempt to maintain gender roles in public or remain silent to demonstrate that they are not a threat to men. By doing this, they assume that they will avoid sexual harassment.

The present study identified new dimensions of harassment in the politics of Pakistan. The current study’s findings highlighted that women career politicians could be relatively protected from harassment in their political parties. This is especially the case if they have strong political kinship ties, as discussed in the case of Nida (see section 5.5.5 of chapter 5), or if they hold a position in the party as discussed in the case of Bano (see section 5.5.3 of chapter 5). Moreover, comparison of the case of Bano (a young woman) with Fatima (a middle-aged woman) highlighted that the harassment was linked to age, whereby young women were more vulnerable. The findings align with those of a research, which found that young women in Pakistan face sexual harassment outside their homes and is an incontrovertible part of their lives (Ahmad et al., 2020).

Notably, none of the women interviewed mentioned any law or structural measures to rectify the issue of harassment, which demonstrates the lack of trust of women career politicians in the governmental agencies. The lack of an effective control mechanism compels women career politicians to either avoid harassment or fight independently. The findings are in line with another study by Jatoi (2018), which highlighted that the law system in Pakistan is expensive and overloaded. Jatoi added that female complainants face a profoundly patriarchal and discriminatory process, with little or no real due process. Women politicians are often victims of harassment, especially online harassment. Still, they tend to ignore it as there is no effective

mechanism in Pakistan to protect them, as reflected in case Aliya (see section 5.5.5 of chapter 5). In the patriarchal culture of Pakistan, the narratives of women career politicians show that ignorance or silence in the political world is recognized as an inevitable part of public life for many women or, in other words, ‘the cost of doing politics’ as explored by Krook (2019).

The present study’s findings also provide some interesting insights into the involvement of women career politicians in the decision-making process. The exclusion of women from the PTI party decision-making process was also prominent in the current study’s findings. The PTI party is reputed to be the champion of including and involving women in politics. The media frequently reflects on how Khan’s party’s political rallies have higher female participation than other political parties. However, women’s political engagement is crucial as witnessing women participate in politics sends out a message to other women and the culture of what is natural and achievable. However, mere presence does not always imply that women are represented. In the present study, most women career politicians, especially at the Transitional level, perceived themselves to be excluded from the PTI party decision-making process (see section 6.3.2 of chapter 6).

The results indicate some interesting facts regarding the inclusion of women members in the PTI party’s decision-making process. It was revealed that the PTI party primarily deploys the Transitional-level women in administrative roles at public gatherings, meetings, and election campaigns. The majority of them remain excluded from the decision-making process unless they hold a party position, have political kinship ties or belong to a privileged background, as discussed in the case of Nida (see section 6.3.2 of chapter 6). PTI’s male-dominated leadership excludes the women career politicians at the Transitional level from the decision-making process, ignoring their capacity to contribute to the decisions and failing to develop a strong relationship with them. Due to the lack of opportunity to voice their concerns, the women find themselves limited to administrative tasks. The PTI mechanism lacks the participative management mechanism in which individuals with unequal hierarchies are involved in the power-sharing arrangement at the workplace.

The present study highlights social class domination in the PTI party, thus obstructing the participation of career politicians from middle-class families in the party’s decision-making process. At the Transitional level, women members who belong to the elite social class or have political connections are more prominent in the PTI party’s decision-making process. While the

PTI manifesto does not support Pakistan's flawed status quo, social class disparities continue to exist in the PTI women's wing. The women at the Transitional level in politics expressed concerns about class-based social discrimination hindering their involvement in the decision-making process. The women career politicians from the middle class perceive themselves to be dominated by the women from the upper class. The middle-class women members are thus alienated from the party's decision-making process. They reported feeling marginalized or even excluded within the prevailing structure of the PTI women's wing. In many cases, such discriminatory practices demoralize women career politicians who seek to advance their political careers and make them feel sidelined within their party.

Women in Pakistan's political parties are usually denied decision-making positions and frequently end up not being nominated as candidates during elections on the pretext that they lack political skills. A sense of restlessness and discontentment was identifiable in the views shared by the women participants engaged in the party at the Transitional level as they were sidelined from the decision-making process on the pretext that they were 'inexperienced'. After accumulating years of experience and acquiring a party position, women in politics can expect to be included in the decision-making process. Otherwise, they are categorized as 'inexperienced' and 'learners' and are kept out of the decision-making process. In comparison, the present study highlights that Gladiator-level women MPAs were fully committed and motivated towards performing their parliamentary duties. However, the cultural composition of Pakistani society impedes their performance and growth. The women MPAs endorsed their role and noted that they participated in decision-making with power and confidence. The authority of Gladiator-level women in politics contrasted with the experience of women at the Transitional level who do not have such power and authority.

Compared to the Transitional level, the women at Gladiator level were more involved in parliament's decision-making. Women MPAs were more involved as obtaining two-thirds of a majority, including the consent of women members is primarily a ceremonial obligation for passing a bill. The PTI has not appointed any women MPA as an advisor to the Chief Minister or as parliamentary secretary in the current government setup. Even in the Punjab province, the PTI government assigned ministries to only two women, whereas the other ministries were assigned to men. In the current PTI government formed in 2018, women members were overlooked entirely in assigning the 37 positions of parliamentary secretaries. Afterwards, facing heavy criticism in 2019, PTI appointed six women MPAs as chairpersons of 11 Standing

Committees in the Punjab province. Moreover, the PTI party nominated several women MPA members in different Standing Committees of the Punjab government. The 21 Standing Committees in Punjab have the authority to review the performance and policies of the relevant department independently, and PTI women MPAs are a part of them.

However, women MPAs continue to lag behind male MPAs and are disadvantaged as they have fewer positions as ministers or parliamentary secretaries. The PTI party attracted a significant number of women during its election campaigns of 2013 and 2018 and remained in the limelight. However, the PTI party is not wholly representative as it excludes a swath of members who do not hold political office or belong to ordinary backgrounds from its decision-making process. In sum, it assigns women very few decision-making positions. Currently, the proportion of women in decision-making positions within the PTI party to male peers is less promising, with men occupying most positions of authority and decision-making. Hence, gender disparity is frequently observed in the PTI party.

The present study also found that reserved seats were accorded a lower status in the PTI party. Male politicians were reported to openly mock and criticize women MPAs elected to reserved seats as also confirmed by a woman career politician, Aliya, (see section 6.7.2 of chapter 6), although the women MPAs played an influential role in legislation and served as a bridge between constituencies and administration. Despite their dual burden, women MPAs attended the Assembly sessions for weeks in Lahore city, as witnessed during the fieldwork for the current research. During these sessions, they issued a ruling, called for public discussions, sought answers from the bureaucracy and government ministers and proposed new policies as bills in parliament. Still, women MPAs on reserved seats are expected to be indebted to the party elites who have nominated them. Further, doubts as to their capacities and potential to perform their jobs are frequently voiced.

The data analysis of the current study showed that the present system of reserved seats allowed party leaders to nominate any female member for these seats. Consequently, a woman elected on a reserved seat was felt to be more accountable to the party than to the voters. Being selected rather than elected was also viewed as being negative because it cast doubt on the ability of the women career politicians to run a political campaign. Further, being subject to the approval of party elites made them more vulnerable to harassment or exploitation, as explained by a male MPA, Naveed, (see section 5.5.6 of chapter 5). The PTI

party has never been obliged to share the selection criteria for any candidate nor develop merit for reserved seat nomination, consequently, creating doubts among the party members about whether the nomination was merit-based. The PTI party has faced criticism from time to time on different talk shows and social media platforms over the unfair allocation of reserved seats in the general elections of 2013 and 2018.

In general, the study found that the PTI party is dominated by men who consider very few women for decision-making positions and underestimate their abilities. The PTI party prefers to award general seat tickets to men and considers women only for the reserved seats, as reflected in the case of Sobia (see section 6.8 of chapter 6). The political parties in Pakistan assume that providing a party ticket to women politicians is a waste of resources due to their perceived inability to run political campaigns successfully. The political parties have been called out for arbitrarily distributing party tickets amongst political aspirants, and the PTI party is no exception. In terms of women's electoral representation, political parties tend to be happy in viewing them as an electorate. However, they are less keen to support their candidature until compelled to do so by law.

Female aspirants in the PTI party are only welcomed as volunteer party workers and considered for reserved seats, irrespective of the fact that reserved seats are a temporary measure and that women deserve fair representation on general seats. Pakistani women's plight is often associated with religious injustice, but the truth is much more complex and nuanced. In predominantly patriarchal societies like Pakistan, a certain mindset is deeply entrenched that supports male domination and authority. Nonetheless, there was a strong perception that women in politics can represent the interests of women collectively. To this end, they are perceived to be accountable to their political parties in the same way as an MPA is to his or her constituency, making their nominations more questionable.

Moreover, the power dynamic is extreme for women elected to reserved seats as the party elites distribute these seats among female aspirants. As a result, women are often accused of being party leaders' puppets. As they cannot rely on the popular vote, they are repeatedly questioned by elected members. Notably, in this study, four of the eight male MPAs held different ministries. However, not a single woman out of the 11 women MPAs elected on the reserved seats held any ministerial portfolio due to their reserved seat status.

In the present study, reserved seats proved to be a challenge, yet, at the same time, an opportunity for women career politicians. In the absence of set criteria, the question of merit hangs like a shadow over selection for a reserved seat. The PTI party's underlying criteria put doubt on the candidacy of people with political connections or affluent backgrounds, regardless of their abilities. It is evident that Pakistan's reserved seat system has significantly increased the number of women in parliament. However, these women career politicians continue to be oppressed within their party and parliament.

It is discernible that women are marginalized in politics – not because of their lack of political knowledge or expertise – but due to a misogynist mentality or male-dominant political structures. Women in Pakistan already lag in a higher political decision-making position. The current research highlighted that the platform established through reserved seats for women aspirants encouraged women from marginalized backgrounds to make it into politics, while male career politicians' views showed the electability of women through reserved seats is questionable to them. Despite being cognizant of the challenges of women's political participation in Pakistan, they were keen on maintaining the direct election mechanism.

Currently, the only institutional opportunity provided to women is via a reserved seat system. However, a defined set of criteria may guarantee the quality of women career politicians elected on reserved seats. Moreover, the merit-based selection process for reserved seats would successfully attract women to advocate for gender representation in law and public policy. Although reserved seat quotas have increased the women's odds of getting elected, few women enter the upper echelons of parliamentary hierarchies until selected to a seat. The reserved seat quota allows women career politicians to engage in the decision-making process via MPA positions. Women MPAs elected through direct elections currently represent less than 2% of the strength of the Provincial Assembly of Punjab. Women in politics need to be trained to contest the election and maintain their position in the decision-making process as the reserved seat quota is likely to be withdrawn soon.

In view of the transient existence of the reserved seat quota and the struggle of women for political empowerment, the PTI party leadership is striving to implement effective measures to integrate women into mainstream politics. The women's wing of the PTI was dissolved right after the 2018 general election as per the notification issued by the party's central media department. In mid-2020, after almost one and a half years, the by-laws of the women's wing

were consolidated and published on the PTI website. The new by-laws aim to include all female members in the party's decision-making process by stating that office bearers in the PTI women's wing cannot develop constituencies and run for elections during their tenure or in the elections immediately following their tenure. Moreover, due to their workload and travelling requirements, the members of parliament and the Senate are not eligible to hold the position of either President or General Secretary in the PTI women's wing. The clause mentioned above would ensure the participation of all women members, especially women career politicians, at the Transitional level. It would also provide an opportunity for women members who were ticket holders in the previous election who have unsuccessfully contested the 2018 general elections.

Although the overall performance of PTI in terms of woman's policymaking does not signal the beginning of a new Pakistan as promised, a silver lining is still visible. The PTI party has provided an opportunity for many women to enter the National Assembly for the first time, and quite a few have joined the Federal Cabinet. The PTI party offers an opportunity to women to participate in politics as political parties are recognized as the gatekeepers of women's political participation. Imran Khan and his team seem to be supporting women's political participation. In recent years, establishing the new party by-laws and restructuring PTI women's wings across Pakistan have provided new avenues for women's political participation.

It is undeniable that PTI has ushered in a new dawn for greater political participation by women in many ways. However, as the analysis in this study showed, the institutional and structural inequities and challenges which women members of the party continue to face are rife and deeply embedded. They indicate that PTI needs to move beyond mere lip service to female political participation or surface reforms to party mechanisms to leverage the true potential of its women members and politicians. Within the party, honest introspection and dialogue between the party leadership and female and male members and a commitment to genuine reforms are central to defining an actionable roadmap for women's political participation that demonstrates fidelity to PTI's progressive agenda. By extension, it may be expected that the reforms undertaken by PTI will have a trickle-down effect in the broader context of the Pakistani political arena, with such transformation opening avenues for women's participation in political leadership.

7.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the current study, it is found out that the majority of the challenges are rooted in socio-political structures of society at large. It is, therefore, recommended that those challenges should be seen in their broader context. Based on the findings, this study recommends that those challenges may be addressed in some of the following ways at the party level:

- Initiation of dialogue between PTI leadership and women and men members to examine obstacles to women's participation in the party.
- Develop peer mentoring programmes to transition the Transitional-level women into political office and engage them in political decision-making.
- Awareness-raising trainings to i) sensitize male politicians about the negative impact of their disrespectful attitudes towards women elected on reserved seats and ii) the need for affirmative action via reserved seats to bridge the gaps in women's progress caused by decades of institutionalized and cultural marginalization.
- Delineation of clear and transparent criteria for selecting women politicians to party positions to preempt the exploitation of kinship ties.
- Addressing the class-based self-segregation of women career politicians and party workers in party events and meetings.

7.5 Limitations of the study and future research directions

The present study was intended to explore the challenges of women's political participation in Pakistan beyond elections while being affiliated with a political party. Several valuable insights into the challenges of women's political participation in Pakistan and the success pathways taken to overcome such challenges emerged from the current study. However, the study was limited due to its scope and time constraints. The present research employed snowball sampling due to the sensitive nature of this study. It was difficult to access the career politicians from the

current ruling party in Pakistan unless recommended by someone known to the potential participant. Consequently, this limited the representativeness of the sample to a considerable extent. Future studies may apply a sampling strategy to ensure a more representative sample and hence more generalizable findings. The present study targets a specific sub-group from a particular political party and excluded other prominent political parties. In future, interested researchers may wish to carry out a comparative study, enrolling participants from a spectrum of left-wing or right-wing parties to learn more about the nature of the challenges faced by women career politicians affiliated with different parties.

The primary method of data collection was qualitative interviewing. While being useful for generating in-depth responses from the participants in this study, the method would have been more effective if triangulated with other methods. Hence, future studies may wish to use other methods, such as observations or focus group discussion among female and male participants, to triangulate the data and develop a more nuanced picture of the phenomenon under study. In terms of the themes of certain inequities reported by women participants in the challenges they faced due to the party mechanisms and their backgrounds, future research also warrants a more critical approach, rather than pragmatic and utilitarian as was the case in the present research theoretical lens to analyse the data.

Furthermore, in future research, the other political parties of Pakistan can be further studied to better understand and compare political parties with right-wing or left-wing ideologies. Moreover, further analysis can be done on diverse institutional or structural challenges other than stated in the current research. The initial insights of this research can serve as a trajectory for investigating the various other aspects of career politicians' lives. The study can also be replicated with a comparative study of women career politicians with rural-urban divide to analyse the level of political empowerment.

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