GENDER ACTION MANIFESTO

Andrea Fleschenberg
Rabeea Hadi

Policy Paper
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MANIFESTO

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Gender Action Manifesto
Publication Series “Strategising Women’s Political Representation in Pakistan”, 2017

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Foreword

Gender equality in political participation and representation is the cornerstone of modern democratic governance. Ideally, both men and women should have equal rights and opportunities to participate fully in all aspects and at all levels of political processes under international standards. The importance of women’s equal participation in politics, especially in decision-making positions, is not simply about equal numbers; it is about creating an environment that values women’s perspectives and interests, recognises women as change-makers and enables differences to improve democratic governance.

In practice, it is often more challenging for women to access and exercise their rights and get political representation. This is especially true in a society like Pakistan where democracy has not remained stable. A sustainable and strong democracy plays a vital role in ensuring women’s political empowerment by changing the political culture within the political parties, state bureaucracy, and society. On the political landscape in Pakistan amidst democratic and dictatorial regimes, we can see that political patriarchy has dominated the surface with little space and level playing field for women for the last 70 years. There are multiple challenges in regards to political empowerment of women. Although the picture is not hopeless and we can see increased participation and representation of women after the introduction of the quota system in Pakistani politics, especially over the last 15 years, there is still a long way to go to remove the political patriarchy deep-rooted in our political structure, social and cultural fabric. Continuation of democratic governance will certainly ensure maximising the space for women in the political arena.

If the next general elections take place as scheduled in 2018, this will mark the second consecutive transition of democratic terms in Pakistan. With election fever around, this is an ideal time for the civil society, women’s rights activists, and female politicians to seek more commitments and resolve from political parties in their respective manifestos. Heinrich Böll Stiftung Pakistan is publishing this “Gender Action Manifesto” to actively support the recognition of gender aspects in political parties’ manifestos by providing a framework for argumentation and action.

The “Gender Action Manifesto”, co-authored by Andrea Fleschenberg and Rabeea Hadi, has been prepared based on debates, discussions, and recommendations made during five consultative workshops conducted in Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, and Quetta from April to May 2017. Around 200 representatives from political parties, both ruling and opposition, in the respective provinces as well as civil society activists, gender experts, representatives of National and Provincial Commissions on the Status of Women, and academicians from across Pakistan were involved. They all provided their policy-level input and recommendations.

The “Gender Action Manifesto” comprises two parts. The first one reviews the manifests of the years 2008 to 2013 of all major political parties including Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal (JUI-F), Pakistan Muslim League-Functional (PML-F), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Awami National Party (ANP) and Qaumi Watan Party (QWP). Rabeea Hadi identifies gaps in gender-specific commitments and subsequent actions in regard to legislation in political parties’ manifestos. She specifically highlights the areas of ending violence against women, women’s health and education, economic empowerment and labour rights as well as minorities and disabled persons. She also reviews the thematic areas of quota provisions, capacity building of party workers, political parties’ structures and representation of women in decision-making positions of bureaucracy, judiciary, and law enforcement.

The second part of the manifesto, authored by Andrea Fleschenberg, discusses in detail the policy-level framework through putting spotlights on Access: agenda-setting for women’s political participation and empowerment; Presence: agenda-setting for women-specific legislation and policy-making; and Influence: agenda-setting for women in decision-making in bureaucracy, judiciary, and law enforcement.

Heinrich Böll Stiftung Pakistan would like to thank both authors for their extraordinary commitment to drafting this publication, as well as other stakeholders all over Pakistan who actively participated by sharing their expertise and experiences. We hope that the “Gender Action Manifesto” will not only provide the political leadership, experts and practitioners a deeper understanding of policy-level issues pertaining to women and gender, but also help political parties at the federal and provincial levels to formulate their policies and laws through a gender lens. Finally, we hope that female and male politicians will actively utilise the “Gender Action Manifesto” in their practical work and that it contributes to an increased representation of women’s interest in Pakistani politics.

September 2017

Kapil Dev
Programme Coordinator
Heinrich Böll Stiftung
Introductory Remarks

by Andrea Fleschenberg

The past 15 years of quota-induced increase in female representation and participation in Pakistani politics still have not substantially addressed the disconnect between women’s increased presence in legislative bodies and their second-class citizenship status, i.e. gender-based cross-sectoral discrimination and deprivation. This is visible in an overall categorisation as low human development, in particular in gender-specific disaggregation and comparison. It leads some to put a question mark on women’s empowerment through gender quotas.
Action Research and Gender Action Manifesto Rationale - Focus on Women’s Political Effectiveness

Guiding our quest into reviewing gender quota experiences and the subsequent need for a gender action manifesto for the 2018 elections, we applied the concept of women’s political effectiveness of Goetz and Hassim (2003). This is “understood as the ability to use ‘voice’ to raise issues of concern to women in politics, to use electoral leverage to press demands on decision-makers, to trigger better responsiveness from the public sector to their needs, and to enforce constitutional commitments to women’s equal rights.” This ‘voice-to-representation-to-accountability’ relationship is not linear; it is “a matter of (...) mobilising women around issues of concern to them, advancing those issues through the political process, and implementing solutions to women’s problems through legal and administrative system”. (Ibid.)

This happens:

- across different spheres, namely the political system, the state apparatus and civil society
- at horizontal and vertical levels of politics, via elections, institutional supervision as well as state-citizen interactions
- through three types of public engagement, namely access (consultation and dialogue), presence (representation) and influence (accountability and enforceability).

In this regard, we highlighted in our preceding action research on the review of gender quota experiences (see Bari 2015, Fleschenberg and Bari 2015, Fleschenberg 2016, Fleschenberg et al. 2016) that gender quota parliamentarians are under constant scrutiny and pressure of justification by various sections of the society. This may be by (proclaimed feminist or not) women activists accusing them of capitulating to the patriarchal state and male-dominated political parties when not representing women and their issues to the level and extent expected. It could also be by conservative, predominantly male veto actors at societal and political levels. An example of this are male parliamentarians who challenge the very notion of positive discrimination. They resent women’s public participation and quota in parliament for enjoying a similar political status, and perks and privileges despite being subjected to the same extent of electoral competition, such as having to build constituencies or to ensure a similarly high number of votes cast to qualify for a parliamentary mandate. It could be the general perception in media and the public scrutinising, and more often than not, harshly judging them for not being ‘true’ representatives of the people or the female populace for that matter. This scrutiny is further exacerbated given their asymmetric socioeconomic background, higher levels of dependency and weaker support systems. Such judgements might include labels like (i) elite women belonging to influential political families, (ii) proxies and tokens for male power brokers and thus serving specific vested interests in addition to (iii) not being ‘proper’, ‘decent’ (read: socio-culturally ‘authentic’) women who comply with dominant (patriarchal) gender roles prescriptions, values and subsequent behaviours in public.

After the publication of our studies, a number of consultations in Pakistan and Europe with women parliamentarians, activists, and other political stakeholders took place over the past two years - a starting point in a longer series of critical engagement. In the 2016 and 2017 workshops, we followed an interactive approach, bringing together women politicians, academicians and activists from across Pakistan and from different levels and arenas.

In the first phase in 2016, discussions focussed on women’s substantive political representation. Concerns of intra-party reforms, capacity building, and electoral reform issues were discussed as well as macro level lack of coordination and gender accountability concerns. This generated a series of recommendations in working groups.

The findings were published as Unseating Political Patriarchy - A Toolkit for Debate and Action, along with addressing some blind spots and knowledge gaps identified. In the Toolkit, we revisited different gender quota modalities and lessons learned from research on gender quota experiences worldwide. Assessments of experiences and challenges of women parliamentarians on gender quota seats in Pakistan and their subsequent recommendations were shared.

Experiences highlighted engage with a
conservative social order while facing structural barriers. These include lack of social capital, independent resources in the context of high levels of political corruption and/or commercialisation, along with a prevailing gender-specific voters’ bias linked with the reluctance of political parties to award general seats’ election tickets to women. Gender quota parliamentarians also outlined that they have to engage with an insecure political setting (e.g. Talibanisation, youth radicalisation), more prevalent in some parts of the country than in others, and more for certain political parties’ members than others. They are critical of high levels of diverse political contestations and political competition which can add to generally geared disempowering institutional settings. Women parliamentarians more than often feel like having to work against all odds in a larger setting of dysfunctional governance structures and increased expectations of parliamentarians as problem-solvers. The result is a high level of demands, expectations, workload and women’s double burden when engaging with constituency work.

Experiences narrated also point towards a different scale of men’s autonomy and capacity to negotiate and navigate within the given political environment. This is due to predominantly androcentric (read: male-oriented) political support systems and access to resources, cultural norms for agency and mobility, along with gender-specific requirements of protection in volatile environments. Women parliamentarians and women’s activists criticise pervasive male-dominated institutional cultures linked to a lack of support and responsiveness from the government, technical staff in parliament, and the ministerial bureaucracy in addition to a perceived lack of political clout to enforce the commitment of stakeholders and authorities.

However, two contradictory trends emerged. On the one hand, there is an increased acceptability and visibility of women politicians, while on the other there is increased pressure from extremist and misogynist counter movements and veto actors/spoilers. This makes the role of political parties even more crucial when it comes to unseating political patriarchy and to ensure women’s political effectiveness.

The study again found a number of concerns within a wider contradictory trend. This featured an increased recognition amongst parties’ leadership of women’s political capacities and competencies. It also featured a mismatch between women’s political aspirations and parties’ responses, reflected in a predominance of androcentric patrimonial politics and in response to a growing number of independent women candidates as well as gender becoming a bargaining chip if political expediency demands.

In addition, we identified food for thought and further action to increase women’s political effectiveness in order to generate more debate at a larger level ahead of the 2018 elections. Also provided was a brief overview of further reading resources/policy reports. A series of issues were raised that need to be revisited by different stakeholders, including, among others:

- (intra-party reforms, changes in political culture and potential electoral reforms
- coalition and alliance-building to address accountability concerns across various levels and policy-making arenas
- capacity building for women’s successful political mainstreaming and a review of the role certain (inter-) national actors play
- questions of political communication and education among legislators, political workers/activists as well as the general public
- resources and support required for success in electoral and parliamentary politics

In the second phase during 2017, the Toolkit was presented at five national consultation workshops in Quetta, Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Peshawar to women politicians and activists from different backgrounds. Also shared were the findings from a desktop study on a gender-specific review of election manifestos of Pakistan’s political parties (2008-2013). This desktop review scrutinised political parties’ manifestos for the 2008 and 2013 elections on women-specific agenda setting, commitments made and post-election (in-) actions in regard to:

- legislation and policy-making in the areas of (i) violence against women, (ii) health, (iii) education, (iv) economic empowerment and labour rights, as well as (v) minorities and disabled
- political empowerment via (i) quota provisions, (ii) capacity building of political party workers, (iii) political culture and structures in political parties and assemblies, as well as (iv) impact of women’s substantive political representation
- decision-making in the bureaucracy, judiciary, and law enforcement
This served as a baseline for discussing and strategising on necessary components of Gender Action Manifesto 2018 Elections on the above-mentioned issues at hand, moving beyond a particular focus on gender quotas and women’s substantive political representation. In each workshop, at least three specific gender actions were drafted in detail in interactive working groups. These outlined arenas/fields of intervention, objectives, approaches, and stakeholders as well as spoilers/veto actors to be considered for any kind of respective strategy. The findings of both desktop review and the national consultation process are presented in this policy paper, along with addressing some additional issues debated, blind spots identified to facilitate further debate and action ahead of the 2018 general elections.

Key Concerns for the Gender Action Manifesto - No Shortcuts to Power

Goetz and Hassim (2003) distinguish between three key arenas for increasing women’s political effectiveness, which are interlinked. Any kind of genuine implementation of and accountability to any gender action manifesto, therefore, needs to consider engaging with and strategising beyond the mere inclusion of issues into party manifestos during electoral campaigns or targeting one arena and its stakeholders alone. The arena of political competition focuses first on politics as an intervening factor between voice and accountability, meaning between raising demands and achieving subsequent commitments for implementation and sanctions for non-compliance. It includes various state and non-state actors involved in the political competition, formally or informally, with different (vested) interests and agendas, resources and support systems. How political competition is organised can lead to specific dynamics for women’s exclusion or marginalisation in legislation and policy-making. The key factors are electoral rules and practises, the organisational setup and prevailing political culture of political parties and legislative assemblies and their modus operandi. These create a particular kind of environment women politicians and activists have to manoeuvre in. Some more recent examples regarding Pakistan evolve around (i) the Electoral Reform Bill 2017, (ii) the decisions surrounding the constituency PK 95 and a vote ban on women, (iii) male politicians’ behaviour towards female peers in assemblies such as in the case of PTI MNA Shireen Mazari or PTI MNA Ayesha Gulalai.

The 2017 amendments to the Representation of People Act (1976), tabled as one of two private member bills by PPPP Senator Sherry Rehman, is considered a pro-women legislation to ensure non-discriminatory participation in electoral politics when codifying:

- the disqualification of candidates who themselves or their supporters stop women from casting votes
- a requirement for the Election Commission to collect gender-disaggregated data at the polling station and constituency-level for comprehensive gender-sensitive electoral monitoring (and thus sanctioning of violations) (The Express Tribune, 21.05.2017, p. 3)

The recently passed Electoral Reform Bill 2017 introduces a number of changes in regard to women’s political participation as voters and candidates, pinpointing to an uneven level playing field as well as continued resistance by large segments of the public to any changes in the given setup of Pakistan’s political patriarchy:

- five percent of party tickets should be allowed to female candidates
- nullification of election results at the level of polling stations and/or constituency if women voters cast less than 10 percent of the overall turnout
- initiatives of the Election Commission of Pakistan to ensure female voter registration if it is 10 percent less than men’s (The News, 27.08.2017)

This is the backdrop of not only the experiences gathered in the 2013 elections where “…despite measures taken by the government and awareness created by civil society ahead of polls for women to exercise their franchise, the turnout is always low. (…) Over 95 percent of registered women voters in at least 17 National Assembly constituencies, according to the ECP, did not cast their votes”, which women’s activists argue is due to the political patriarchal setup allowing for a collusion among different local leaders to enforce a vote ban against women, the lack of access of women to state institutions and political parties/leaders as well as existing electoral rules and practises such as campaign spending, political recruitment practises or lack of gender-segregated polling stations and female polling staff (The News, 27.08.2017; see also Bari 2015).
An important case is of the by-elections in the constituency PK 95 in Lower Dir II over an alleged vote ban on women. It was subsequently challenged by a group of women’s activists with the Election Commission of Pakistan (which declared the result null and void), in the Peshawar High Court (which annulled the ECP’s decision) and subsequently the Supreme Court of Pakistan (which upheld the ECP’s position, ultimately). It was considered “a landmark case for Pakistani women’s rights activists” such as Asma Jehangir, Rakshanda Naz, Tahira Abdullah and Bushra Gohar as well as NCSW Chairperson Khawar Mumtaz, given women’s political participation and thus universal franchise being at stake (Dawn 17.03.2016, p. 19; Dawn 10.05.2016, p. 1).

However, political analysts remain critical of the extent of the reforms introduced and the commitment to follow it through, as outlined by Secretary-General of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, I.A. Rehman. He argues that “both women and non-Muslims are dissatisfied with the method of filling the seats reserved for them” and that “lawmakers are afraid of taking radical steps needed to empower citizens” and thus democratise elections, so far “skewed in favour of the elite” (The News, 27.08.2017).

In the case of Shireen Mazari, her determination to seek an official apology and ultimately sanctioning of the derogatory language used by Defence Minister Khawaja Asif (not a first time offender) under the existing law against sexual harassment at the workplace, i.e. the National Assembly remained ultimately unsuccessful, despite the extensive public debate created.

Another public controversy emerged surrounding PTI MNA Ayesha Gulalai. She raised allegations of improper conduct against PTI chairman Imran Khan. In response, she faced a smear campaign over her motives and behaviour not only from certain PTI members/leaders but also from her own community and its (male-exclusive) leaders in FATA. This was indicative of certain misogynist features of political culture in assemblies and political parties as well as segments of the wider political public.

Second, the state arena focusses on how state institutions influence the effectiveness and impact of voice through a legal framework of rights, resources available, participatory opportunities in policy debates and the wider institutional framework. Considering the state as the general regulator and thus important for Gender Action Manifesto’s ultimate outcome and impact, it brings into play the bureaucracy, judiciary, and law enforcement, dealing with the implementation and compliance of legislation and policies made (or the lack thereof). “Gender-blind and gender-biased disciplinary and reporting systems within the public administration are the greatest culprits for the many exclusions, humiliations and poor quality services endured by women”, argue Goetz and Hassim (2003). Furthermore, decisive is, in particular, the state’s “autonomy from the interests of dominant and conservative social groups, indeed, autonomy from patriarchal interests” (Goetz and Hassim 2003).

Key factors of a state’s responsiveness to gender action manifestos are: (i) its institutional setup as well as level of administrative and political decentralisation, in addition to (ii) its capacity to translate such women-specific commitments into governance performance indicators, changed laws, procedures and budget allocations and behaviour of state representatives towards relevant citizens during the implementation process.

A case in point is the Council of Islamic Ideology. In our action research series, it is often identified as stakeholder-cum-spoiler for its decision-making regarding women’s issues and, in particular, its response to recent legislative initiatives on Women’s Protection Bills at the provincial and national levels. Recent decisions by the Council of Islamic Ideology have created public controversies over its role and continued influence in public policy and law-making such as its proposed Women’s Protection Bill to allow for “light beatings” of wives by their spouses along with prohibiting co-education beyond primary school level or addressing reproductive health issues as well as violence against women (Dawn, 01.06.2016, p. 8; The Express Tribune, 26.05.2016, p. 3). Another case in point is the Council’s response to the landmark Punjab Women’s Protection Bill which it “rebuke[d] of not being Shariah-compliant” and equating its intent with Westoxification and a potential breakup of families (The Express Tribune, 17.06.2016, p. 7; Dawn, 25.03.2016, p. 2; Dawn, 23.06.2016, p. 2).

In response, Punjab’s Provincial Commission on the Status of Women, among others, condemned the CII’s version of a Women’s Protection Bill as “unconstitutional, illegal and in complete violation of fundamental human rights” (Dawn 31.05.2016, p. 2). Similarly, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan equally condemned the CII’s recommendations, which it deemed “ridiculous”, and not required (as already settled by criminal
Another case in point is the recent critique of religious parties such as the JI or the JUI-F opposing a bill against forced conversions of the Hindu girls passed in the Sindh Provincial Assembly and the Senate, even calling for a dissolution of the Sindh Provincial Assembly in late 2016 over allegations that “the law is part of a conspiracy to make Pakistan a liberal and secular country”, violating its Constitution as well as religious teachings (Dawn, 30.11.2016, p. 17; Dawn, 25.12.2016, p. 9; The Express Tribune, 26.11.2016, p. 9).

Third, the civil society arena is considered by Goetz and Hassim (2003) as a key proving ground to establish legitimacy for women-specific commitments and to build a constituency for their implementation and sanctions in case of non-compliance. Civil society is often understood as playing a crucial role as a watchdog for the arenas of political competition and the state. Civil society does not only include non-governmental organisations, but also community-based organisations, other kinds of non-state associations and networks, and media and non-state actors from various backgrounds. More often, this paves the way for civil society as an arena of polarisation and contestation. The key factors are, among others, (i) the level of social conservatism, (ii) existing sociopolitical cleavages and the degree of (violent) conflict(s), apart from (iii) the nature of women’s associations, their number, sociopolitical leverage (read: influence/impact), capacity for unity and alliance-building with others on women-specific commitments and political agenda-setting (See Bari 2015 and Fleschenberg/Bari 2015 for details).

The Secretary-General of the Pakistan’s Human Rights Commission, I. A. Rehman, highlighted in a critical intervention titled The roots of misogyny a joint failure of the state, segments of society at large as well as parts of the civil society to undo the seeds of misogyny implanted into the country decades ago, its powerful legacies and current dynamics.

“Obviously, a section of society, including women, has been influenced by the orthodoxy’s opposition to women’s rights to the extent of justifying violence against all those who rebel against unjust constraints. (...) The real issue is the fact that it has not been possible to make women-friendly laws, nor to fully implement such laws, because of the orthodoxy’s opposition. (...) That women’s rights will forever remain subject to the veto of those who abuse religion for political purposes is a preposition the people of Pakistan cannot afford to accept. (...) Also, the rise in woman-bashing in Pakistan since the Zia period, to a greater extent than in any other Muslim country, is a question the ulema must ponder over. The reality is that the combination of patriarchal constraints, feudal emphasis on male supremacy and misogyny has left Pakistani women with little space to even breathe” (Dawn, 16.06.2016, p. 8).

In an opinion piece titled Electoral Patriarchy, Umair Javed draws from inside Lahore when, discussing social conservatism and gendered sociopolitical cleavages, he stresses that:

“(...) The absence of women in urban politics, therefore, has a lot to do with the absence of women in spaces where political entrepreneurs emerge. The two main sites of public interaction in urban Pakistan are the marketplace and the mosque. Both of these are almost exclusively male-dominated spaces” (Dawn, 30.01.2017, p. 8).

In light of the above, a series of concerns and issues were raised in the national consultation process with women politicians and civil society activists that need to be revisited by different stakeholders and in different arenas. These are explained in detail throughout this policy paper and after the following gender-specific review of 2008 and 2013 political parties’ manifestos.
Gender-Specific Review of Election Manifestos of Pakistan’s Political Parties (2008-2013)

by Rabeea Hadi

Democracies are expected to base their governance on representation from across their population, considering not only the majority but also the concerns of marginalised groups and minorities. According to a World Bank Report (2015), the percentage of women as of 2015 was 48.6, which fairly makes about half the country’s population. Though Pakistan’s Constitution guarantees dignity, freedom, and equality to all citizens, women have remained marginalised, among others, in political participation, evidenced by their low percentage in holding public offices and still lower turnout in casting votes in elections.

During the legislative period of 2008-2013, the PPPP government assigned women key parliamentary positions. Fahmida Mirza was elected as the first speaker of the National Assembly, and Hina Rabbani Khar appointed the first woman foreign minister. Women in parliamentary assemblies were active in enacting major pro-women legislation such as bills against domestic violence, trafficking of women and women’s reproductive rights (Gender Concern International, 2013).

According to a comparative analysis of the 2008 elections, Aurat Foundation (2008) reviewed women’s substantive political representation in assemblies as being consistent with the previous elections in 2003, given their substantial representation on reserved seats. The elections in 2013 saw a considerable increase in the number of women candidates on general and reserved seats compared to 2008. A detailed overview of women’s representation after the 2008 and 2013 elections is presented in the following charts. (Aurat Foundation 2008, 2013):
2008 ELECTION

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

- Women elected on reserved seats
- Women elected on general seats
- Women elected on reserved seats for minorities
- Men elected on general/minorities seats

Total Male MPAs

SENATE

- Women elected on reserved seats
- Total Male Representation

PUNJAB ASSEMBLY

- Women elected on reserved seats
- Women elected on general seats
- Women elected on reserved seats for minorities
- Total Male MPAs

Total 371

BALOCHISTAN ASSEMBLY

- Women elected on reserved seats
- Women elected on general seats
- Total Male MPAs

Total 65

SINDH ASSEMBLY

- Women elected on reserved seats
- Women elected on general seats
- Total Male MPAs

Total 168

KP ASSEMBLY

- Women elected on reserved seats
- Total Male MPAs

Total 124
2013 ELECTION

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

- Women elected on reserved seats: 60
- Women elected on general seats: 272
- Total Male MPAs: 342

SENATE

- Women elected on reserved seats: 17
- Total Male Representation: 83

PUNJAB ASSEMBLY

- Women elected on reserved seats: 66
- Total Male MPAs: 371

BALOCHISTAN ASSEMBLY

- Women elected on reserved seats: 11
- Total Male MPAs: 65

SINDH ASSEMBLY

- Women elected on reserved seats: 29
- Total Male MPAs: 168

KP ASSEMBLY

- Women elected on reserved seats: 22
- Total Male MPAs: 124
The charts reflect an increase in women’s participation in politics in terms of being present and having access and voice. However, in-depth research is needed to determine the factors behind this increase (Aurat Foundation, 2013) as well as its impact and implications on women’s citizenship status and livelihoods, still marked by deprivation, discrimination, and exclusion. Considering that, the number of women elected on general and minority seats in both the elections remains critically low. Another important element is the still lower percentage of women on reserved seats. Currently, there is a 17 percent reserved seats quota for women in the national and provincial assemblies. While this continues to create space for women in legislation and policy-making, statistics above draw attention towards political parties’ commitments and seriousness about gender-sensitivity in their manifestos and decision-making.

Having said that, the most significant step taken by the PPP-led National Assembly (2008-2013) was the formation of the Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) through which women from all political parties formed a cross-party alliance to pursue a pro-women agenda and work together on women’s issues. Subsequently, this led to women’s issues and concerns being raised on the assembly floor and important pro-women laws enacted.

Women’s issues should not only be taken up by women parliamentarians. They should also be addressed in political parties’ manifestos during election campaigns as well as in their respective post-election parliamentary agenda-setting and gender actions. Women are constituents of political parties. They contribute as party workers at the grassroots level as candidates, voters, and legislators. Thus, women are a constituency that political parties should address and be held accountable for in terms of political representation.

In the following sections and ahead of the 2018 national elections, a gender-specific review of political parties’ manifestos is provided, assessing parties’ commitments and positions on national development, policy-making in different areas for the citizens, including marginalised groups and minorities. The gender lens is used to scrutinise commitments presented in 2008 and 2013 by major national and provincial political parties represented in the assemblies - PPPP, PML-N, PML-F, PML-Q, PTI, MQM, ANP, QWP, JI and JUI in regard to:

- Women’s Political Participation and Empowerment
- Women’s Inclusion in Decision-Making in Bureaucracy, Judiciary, and Law Enforcement

Within these, we investigate important thematic areas addressing women’s issues and concerns and how gender-sensitive political parties are in terms of providing opportunities, support, inclusion, empowerment, protection, and services.

Given the review of party manifestos below, one can argue that as a general trend, gender concerns/women’s issues have been presented in separate sections instead of following a more appropriate cross-cutting approach of including gender as an important category for legislation and policy-making in each and every area highlighted in political parties’ manifestos such as trade, employment, education, health, agriculture, judiciary. While concerns related to women are raised and the provision of facilities is mentioned, political parties’ manifestos lack concrete measures, implementation, and monitoring mechanisms to address the existing gap between commitments made and subsequent gender actions taken after the elections.
Spotlight 1: Women-Specific Legislation and Policy-Making

Political parties must provide a clear agenda on concerns related to citizens’ rights which are addressed at the macro level through policies and legislations and at the micro level through practical implementation of commitments made in party manifestos. As it is understood, legislative work is based on a political party’s commitments - not only to represent its stance to address the issues and concerns of the people but also towards capacity building of its representatives so that they are able to raise those issues at decision-making platforms. The manifestos under analysis are generally devoid of mechanisms for the capacity enhancement of party representatives on legislative work. They do not mention parliamentary procedures and legislative processes and how the party envisions strengthening them.

Another important aspect to consider is the mechanism of networking required between party representatives in order to raise issues and concerns of women with a collective voice. These concerns do not pertain to a particular party but are a reflection of Pakistani women as a whole and therefore need to be strongly voiced. Provincial coordination and networking steps are not envisioned by the political parties. Only the Women Parliamentary Caucus of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has taken an initiative for capacity building of newcomers in politics with the support of UNDP, British Council and Westminster Foundation. It has also undertaken study circles and exchange tours nationally and internationally. A National Parliamentary Caucus formed under the PPPP regime is being mentioned as an achievement in the party’s manifesto. However, its long-term operation, coordination, and strengthening mechanisms are not considered.

In light of the above-mentioned challenges or shortcomings of party manifestos, this section aims to highlight the commitments made by political parties to women with respect to lawmaking and policy formulation in major thematic areas of ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG), health and education, women’s economic empowerment, labour rights as well as rights of minorities and disabled persons. As a first step, commitments of major political parties, represented in the provincial and national assemblies are reviewed. This is followed by an assessment of subsequent actions (or lack thereof) during previous legislative periods in regard to key legislative issues under scrutiny.

Legislation on Ending Violence against Women (EVAW)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM)</th>
<th>The party’s manifesto was one of the most progressive from a gender rights perspective, both in 2008 and 2013, committing to a repeal of anti-women practises. Key areas highlighted are:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>− Effective legislation and implementation of strict sanctions for socio-political harassment, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, discouragement of female education or women’s full participation in society as equal citizens.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Domestic violence, child abuse, rape in vengeance, forcing rival’s womenfolk to march naked on streets, honour killings, child marriages, marriages to the Holy Quran, acid crimes, bonded labour and child labour.</td>
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<tr>
<td>− A massive public awareness-raising campaign to educate citizens about their fundamental rights and means to address violations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Establishment of state-run women shelter homes to provide them protection and security, especially to couples marrying of their own will, particularly in certain rural areas.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Amendments to the Domestic Violence Bill.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Pakistan People’s Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) | The PPPP also committed to legislation on the prevention of acid crimes to safeguard women and the rights of home-based women workers, apart from extending legislation against domestic violence across Pakistan. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Manifesto Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N)</strong></td>
<td>The PML-N’s stance on women’s issues was more of a general nature. It missed out on linking women with key structural areas and social sectors relevant to women’s livelihoods and citizenship status (see Aurat Foundation 2008 for details). In 2013, the party’s take on women’s rights was to ensure respect and protection as given by Islam, pledging to protect their inheritance rights and improve pro-women legislation, devise new anti-discrimination and EVAW laws along with proposing the formation of sexual harassment committees at the workplace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)** | The PTI’s gender policies outlined in its manifesto presented substantial provisions for women:  
- Eliminating all discriminatory laws and provisions in the Constitution in order to ensure women’s equal status.  
- Restoring Ministries of Women Development at the national and provincial levels.  
- Promising to set up One Step Women’s Centres at the union council level called Insafgah. |
| **Awami National Party (ANP)** | The 2008 manifesto of the ANP included strong progressive statements with respect to women’s rights and women’s political participation. But it lacked detailed gender-sensitive action plans in a number of sectors of critical importance to women (Aurat Foundation, 2008). In 2013, the party’s pro-women commitments were long and comprehensive with the following aspects:  
- Ensuring the repeal of all discriminatory laws and policies infringing women’s equal rights and their participation in public decision-making.  
- Promulgating a pending legislation on domestic violence as well as trafficking of women.  
- Taking concrete steps to combat gender-based violence (GBV). |
| **Pakistan Muslim League - Quaid (PML-Q)** | The PML-Q also aimed to formulate women-friendly policies related to women in conflict, women-headed households, in addition to rural women and their land rights. The manifesto also included commitments to:  
- Remove discriminatory laws and customary practices.  
- Criminalise karo kari, vani, and swara (missing in its 2008 manifesto).  
- Implement pro-women legislation as well as legislation on ending violence against women.  
- Execute treaties to control child trafficking.  
- Establish Women Protection Centres for impoverished, old and displaced women. |
| **Pakistan Muslim League – Functional (PML-F)** | The PML-F manifesto 2013 focused on women in a separate section as well as employing gender as a crosscutting category in the entire document, pledging to:  
- Review all the laws with a focus on international obligations of Pakistan.  
- Condemn gender-based violence and discrimination.  
- Enact and strengthen laws on domestic violence, honour killings, giving away of women and girls as compensation to resolve disputes and abolish traditional illegal and unjust dispute resolution entities (jirgas, panchayats).  
- Seek to increase the age of marriage to 18 for both boys and girls. |
| **Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F)** | The JUI-F manifesto stated the intention to ensure women are treated the same as men and promised to ensure inheritance and ownership rights of women as provided by Islamic Shari’a. In addition, it intended to discourage non-Islamic social customs like big dowries, negligence towards widow’s marriage, marriage with Quran, vani, exchange marriages, karo kari and so-called honour killings. Through education and effective communication, the party aimed to discourage the practise of triple talaq and to curb crimes against women through social and legal means. |
| **Qoumi Wattan Party (QWP)** | The QWP also committed to taking effective measures to address gender-based violence and to ensure that laws are amended to conform to international standards on women’s rights. |
In conclusion, the above-mentioned political parties provided written commitments for the elimination of different forms and aspects of violence against women but these commitments were not substantially reflected during the 2008 and 2013 governments’ legislation and policy-making as well as implementation, be it either by ruling parties or opposition parties. The majority of bills on the issues at hand were tabled as private member bills and not through party platforms.

The following laws were moved by the PPPP government during its 2008-2013 tenure:

- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2010 for harassment (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2010)
- The Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2010)
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2011 for anti-women practises (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2011)
- The Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Act, 2011
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2012 (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2012)

The ANP in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, however, moved an important law on anti-women practises called the Law against Ghag in the provincial assembly in 2012, which aimed to ban forced marriages. Under customary law, a woman’s hand is forcibly demanded without considering her will or her parents’ or wali’s (guardian’s) consent. This was a private member bill moved initially by Provincial Minister for Social Welfare and Women’s Development, Sitara Ayaz, resulting from enormous pressure on the Peshawar High Court where a number of cases were heard (Ashfaq, 2013). During 2008-2013 ANP-led provincial assembly another private member bill was tabled by MPA Noor Sehar - the Domestic Violence Bill. This initially lapsed in the National Assembly despite ANP’s commitment.

Major opposition came not only from the religious parties but also from the PML-N. The same bill is now being brought forward by MNA Amina Sardar (PML-N) during the 2013-2018 legislative term. Both PML-Q and PML-N moved the Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act 2011 on Acid Control and Prevention during this tenure (National Assembly of Pakistan 2011).

Under the ruling PML-N, the following laws were passed (from 2013 onwards) in the National Assembly:

- The Hindu Marriage Act, 2017 (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2017)
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2016 (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2016)
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2015 (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2015)
- The Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Bill, 2014 (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2014)

A change in legislative pattern was observed between 2008 and 2013. As already mentioned, in 2008, the pro-women bills were private member bills primarily tabled by women parliamentarians. Gender was viewed as a ‘women-only’ agenda, kept solely confined to women who sensitively tabled the above-mentioned bills. From 2013 onwards, a shift can be observed in moving women-related laws from the party platform. It should also be noted that despite the commitments, other political parties did not move or table pro-women bills - a clear indication of their lack of seriousness on women issues.
Legislation on Health and Education

Health and education are prime areas of empowerment for women because the majority of staff and beneficiaries are women, for instance, given the number of teachers and lady health workers at the grassroots level.

The only law moved during the 2008-2013 government was a private member bill on education - The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (Constitutional Amendment 25A), 2012 (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2012). This was moved by PPP Senator Yasmeen Rehman and aimed to make primary education free for all (Dawn 13.11.2013). It helped with the enrolment of primary school going children in public schools, supported by the Benazir Income Support Programme’s Waseela-e-Taleem component in 2012 (BISP 2017) thereby, effectively contributing to Pakistan’s Millennium Development Goal of Education for All. The programme was taken over by the 2013-2018 PML-N-led government, but no further legislation and policy developments were made.

The manifestos reviewed show that with respect to health, the parties are concerned about maternal and newborn health and aim to reduce population growth. However, when it comes to policies and efforts, the government (2008-2013) did not do much to address population growth.

The PML-N has launched a national health programme for the underprivileged. It is called the Prime Minister’s National Health Programme - Healthcare for All - a social welfare programme for the poor population (pmhealthprogram.gov.pk, 2017).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Health Commitments</th>
<th>Education Commitments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPPP</td>
<td>- to introduce a special programme which provides safe maternity-related medical support</td>
<td>- to task the National Commission on Human Development with the target of one million women for literacy and education programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- to provide protection, nutrition, and vaccination to every child until the age of five years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- to take measures to decrease the rapid population growth to 1.6 percent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PML-N</td>
<td>- to implement skill training and healthcare programmes to bridge existing gender gaps</td>
<td>- to preferentially appoint women teachers at primary school level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- to launch population welfare programmes</td>
<td>- to pay special attention to professional and higher education of women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTI</td>
<td>- to achieve all health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on maternal and neonatal health, and infant and child mortality</td>
<td>- to devise programmes to increase women’s literacy rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- to initiate a mother and child healthcare programme and to introduce 24/7 mother-child healthcare services in at least half of the country’s basic health units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- to begin reproductive health programmes such as birth spacing and to ensure women’s right to reproductive health decisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANP</td>
<td>- to place a high priority on the health of mothers and children in its National Health Policy</td>
<td>- to double the number of girls’ high schools within five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PML-Q</td>
<td></td>
<td>- to provide incentives for girls’ education by providing uniforms, textbooks, meals, scholarships, transportation, and sibling daycare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- to revise and improve textbooks and curricula in order to remove gender-based stereotypes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- to make merit and need-based scholarships available for public school students, especially for girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- to establish vocational and technical institutes for women in backward districts and tehsils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- to initiate women’s education and literacy projects, particularly in Balochistan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Legislation on Economic Empowerment and Labour Rights

In regard to economic empowerment and labour rights, the party manifestos are not short of commitments and content. But again, the parties did not follow up on their commitments in terms of lawmaking and policy formulations.

The PPP and PML-N-led governments passed no laws with respect to the economic empowerment of women, the allocation of respective women quotas or to design a just labour policy. The only law on labour rights passed by the National Assembly in 2015, was the Minimum Wages for Unskilled Workers Ordinances, 1960 (W.P. Ordinance XX of 1969) (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2015).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Economic Empowerment</th>
<th>Labour Rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MQM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPPP</td>
<td>- to increase job quota for women to 20 percent to ensure their economic empowerment. &lt;br&gt; - to further strengthen the Benazir Income Support Programme.</td>
<td>- to provide via law reserved seats: four for labour representatives in the National Assembly and two in each Provincial Assembly. &lt;br&gt; - to promote the organisations of workers in trade unions, including agricultural workers. &lt;br&gt; - to enact special laws for home-based and domestic workers to establish trade unions. &lt;br&gt; - to provide social security and decent wages and to end the exploitation of workers by middlemen and employers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PML-N</td>
<td>- to design microcredit programmes for women’s empowerment. &lt;br&gt; - to provide house building loans for widows. &lt;br&gt; - to introduce daycare facilities for working women. &lt;br&gt; - to initiate a Women Entrepreneurship Financing Scheme to promote women’s business activities.</td>
<td>- to draft a national policy for women home-based workers to address their demands so that HBWs and other unregistered women workers are brought under the labour policy, to exercise their rights equivalent to men employed in the formal economic sectors. &lt;br&gt; - to show zero tolerance against bonded labour and to bring culprits to justice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTI</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Legislations on minorities and disabled persons

While Pakistan’s population is marked by diversity and heterogeneity in terms of ethnicity, religion, gender orientation, caste, socioeconomic status and culture, religious fundamentalist and right-wing mindsets have considerably shrunk the space for religious minorities to exercise their beliefs and express their views openly. The Blasphemy Law is one case in point. Increased Islamisation has also negatively impacted cultural diversity (Zaheer, n.d.). The parties’ manifestos are found completely silent on issues of transgender and cultural minorities.

Similarly, there is no protection for citizens belonging to other minorities such as transgender who often face violence, exploitation, and deprivation, given Pakistan’s hegemonic heteronormativity approach towards marriage. This makes it impossible to address the rights of LGBTI communities (Daily Times, 2017). Policy-making for persons with disabilities (PWDs) is another gray area which is highly neglected by political parties. The only policy called the National Policy for PWDs was formulated in 2002 (World Bank, 2002) but has not been implemented with no legislation to integrate this group into the labour force.

Being a liberal political party, the PPPP has given categorical assurances on the protection of minorities but has yet to deliver on its pledges since forming the provincial government in Sindh following the 2013 elections. However PPP government in Sindh enacted the Hindu Marriage Bill 2016. While being in power from 2008 to 2013 in the National Assembly, the party’s role in defending its leaders who advocated for the rights of minorities, then Governor of Punjab Salman Taseer and then Federal Minister for Minorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Manifesto Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **ANP** | - to take steps to implement the existing 10 percent quota for women’s employment | ANP also believes that trade unions are critical in protecting labour rights and would, therefore:  
- continue to support trade unions for the protection of rights of workers employed in the informal sector  
- provide meaningful and requisite technical and financial support to improve their participation in all spheres of life. |
| **PML-F** | - | - pledges free and mandatory registration of all labourers (women and men) in informal work settings, especially HBWs and agricultural labourers  
- to ensure prohibitive steps against child labour, forced labour and bonded labour |
| **JUI-F** | - to endorse the right to livelihood in all departments/areas | - |
| **JI** | - to provide working women a peaceful/dignified environment  
- to provide public sector employees four months of maternity leave, full salary and the right to have leave with half salary for the upbringing of the child  
- to provide widows and divorced women special relaxation in age for employment in public and private sectors | - |
| **QWP** | - | - to adhere to international obligations on labour rights  
- to take measures for the wages of workers, work hours, and benefits and also to address the problems of workers/labour unions  
- to condemn all forms of child labour and to take effective steps for its abolishment |
Despite its mantra of peaceful dialogue, the PTI-led provincial government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has not yet taken any legislative measures to ensure the protection of life and property of minorities such as Sikhs, Christians, Kalash, and Ismailis who remain under constant threat from militant forces like the TTP.

Other political parties influential at the national and subnational levels have a checkered track record. These range from the JI as a staunch opponent of repealing the Blasphemy Law, having a history of anti-Ahmadi campaigns and not addressing the protection of minorities as per the Constitution, to the MQM, which in 2013 awarded party tickets to religious minorities (three for the National Assembly, and four for Provincial Assembly candidates on general seats, see: SAP-PK, 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Commitments for minorities</th>
<th>Commitments for disabled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MQM</td>
<td>- to repeal all discriminatory laws against non-Muslims</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- to reject the misuse of religion in perpetuating injustices against any minority and societal group</td>
<td>- The MQM manifesto misses out on the mechanism of integrating PWDs in spheres of life, but commits:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- five percent quota for minorities in federal government</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- four reserved seats in the Senate</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- to add one more seat in Parliament for minorities representing ICT</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- to establish an independent, permanent National Commission for Religious Minorities with tribunal powers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPPP</td>
<td>- to celebrate National Day for Minorities to promote integration, brotherhood, and harmony in order to remove the sense of deprivation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- to take necessary legislative measures in order to ensure there is no forced conversion of religion in the guise of marriage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- to increase minority representation in the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- to introduce a quota for minorities in educational institutions and public sector jobs, including diplomatic missions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- to permit the Christian community to run their own schools and colleges</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- to double earmarked development funds for minorities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- to accelerate the passage of the Hindu Marriage Bill in the National Assembly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- to provide minorities official leave and advance salary to celebrate their religious festivities in whichever province they are</td>
<td>- reserved seats for ‘physically challenged people’ in the National Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PML-N</td>
<td>- to provide minorities official leave and advance salary to celebrate their religious festivities in whichever province they are</td>
<td>- reserved seats for ‘physically challenged people’ in the National Assembly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PTI
- to grant protection and freedom to practise their religion defined under the Constitution
- zero tolerance for any abuse and violence against minorities
- to ensure their representation in state institutions

ANP
- to review and remove discrimination against religious minorities in the Constitution and laws
- to ensure affirmative action to integrate religious minorities as equal citizens

PML-Q
- to take steps against the misuse of Blasphemy Law and punish those who make false accusations

PML-F
- to ensure job quotas for disabled persons, customised working opportunities and special access for their mobility

JUI-F
- to ensure religious freedom of minorities as prescribed in Islam and in the Constitution

QWP
- to encourage education and employment opportunities for youth with disabilities

The electoral system does not specify a particular quota for women belonging to religious minorities, i.e. a gender quota within the quota for this particular social group. Those who are elected on reserved seats for minorities are mostly men, given that political parties hardly ever assign tickets to minorities’ women either on reserved seats for women or for minorities.

Consequently, there is currently not a single woman MPA or MNA from the PPPP with a background of religious minorities, despite the party’s significant Hindu vote bank in Sindh. Exceptions at the level of the National Assembly are the JUIF with MNA Asiya Nasir on a reserved seat for minorities, the PML-N with Romina Khurshid Alam and Phyllis Azeem, and the PML-F with Reena Kumari on reserved seats for women.

At the provincial level, Shunila Ruth of PTI is on a reserved seat for minorities along with the PML-N’s Mary Gill, Shazia Tariq and Joyce Rofin Julius, elected on reserved seats for women in the Punjab Assembly in addition to Anita Irfan as MPA on a reserved seat for minorities in the Balochistan Assembly.

In Sindh and KPK reserved seat provisions for minorities or women do not include a single female representative from these communities.

Overall, the political parties did not take legislative measures to safeguard the rights of minorities and persons with disabilities beyond (i) the PML-N’s fulfilled pledge to enact the Hindu Marriage Act 2017 - a very critical safeguard in the field of personal status law; and (ii) the government’s inclusion of PWDs in the 2017 Census - a potential step to provide data for governmental policies, programmes and to allow for their socioeconomic integration and recognition.
Spotlight 2: Women’s Political Participation and Empowerment

Women’s political representation remains an important area of advocacy and lobbying for civil society women’s and rights-based organisations, like reserved seat provisions are considered as crucial elements for women’s political participation and subsequent empowerment in the light of the country’s predominant political patriarchal setup. For long, one key demand of the women’s movement has been a 33 percent reserved seat provision in all legislative bodies, to contest direct elections in women-only constituencies as well as for political parties to allocate a minimum 10 percent of party tickets to contest the general seats.

This section reviews political parties’ stance on quota allocations for women, respective capacity building measures and potential commitments to gender-sensitive and women-conducive political party structures. As a first step, commitments of major political parties, represented in provincial and national assemblies are reviewed, followed by an assessment of subsequent actions (or lack thereof) during previous legislative periods.

Political parties such as the PML-N, PML-Q, PML-F, JI, and JUI do not mention quota allocation for women in their party manifestos. There is also no mention of quotas or women’s representation in the bureaucracy in the manifestos under review. The major parties like the PPPP, PML-N, and ANP do mention allocating quotas for women in the judiciary, police and law enforcement agencies, but with respect to bureaucratic representation and gender inclusive mechanisms, the manifestos remain quiet.

Upon reviewing the manifestos of the mentioned parties, a common outcome is that no party has any accountability mechanism for its workers on quota seats. The PML-N does not hold its party members explicitly accountable and talks about developing monitoring mechanisms for projects and people outside the party’s domain. The MQM claims to implement e-governance programmes countrywide for improving government’s efficiency, transparency, accountability and competency for existing public sector staff but makes no mention of who is accountable for what. The PTI stresses upon a robust local government system by promising financial and legal backstopping, especially to village councils, but does not address women’s representation and accountability in the system.

**Quota Provisions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Parties</th>
<th>Representation of Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MQM</td>
<td>proposes a gradual increase in women’s representation to 50 percent in all walks of life, particularly in national and provincial assemblies, in government and semi-government offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPPP</td>
<td>commits to an additional 10 percent quota for general seats, in addition to the 33 percent representation for women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTI</td>
<td>stresses a 20 percent quota for female staff in government offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANP</td>
<td>pledges a minimum 33 percent representation of women in political parties, national and provincial assemblies, local government, public services, superior judiciary, public commissions and boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>believes in women to contest direct elections to all elected positions, including on reserved seats/quota, for which it assures developing consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QWP</td>
<td>to allocate a minimum 33 percent quota for women at all levels of responsibility and enable them meaningfully participate in functions of the state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a special quota of seats to be allotted for women of FATA in the National Assembly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Capacity-Building of Party Workers

Generally, for female or male party workers, there is no clear agenda on capacity development mentioned in the manifestos. The PPPP does not have any formal structure for capacity-building of its workers on women development. It initially had a culture of study circles during the time of Benazir Bhutto which no longer exists.

The PTI has dissolved its women wing into regional men’s and women’s groups. The regional group of ICT is chaired by Fauzia Arshad. She has appointed a secretary training who in turn is responsible for capacity building of party workers. There is no funding for capacity building and the regional groups are responsible to generate funds for training. Capacity building training is usually imparted by master trainers of organisations like NDI, as shared by Aruj Shahid, member PTI, Islamabad Chapter.

The ANP does mention its vision to strengthen the relevant ministries and departments for women development in provinces by fulfilling professional, technical and financial requirements. But it does not provide a specific layout of how it intends to do that.

However, the PML-F commits to engage women in the political arena, to provide them with learning and decision-making opportunities for which it suggests establishing women rights awareness programmes in association with civil society organisations.

Political Party Structures and Representation of Women in Decision-Making Positions

A gender-balanced political party structure is also an indication of a party’s sensitivity towards gender and inclusion, reflected in its policies and commitments. In order to understand the gender sensitivity of a political party one has to look at the number of women at the party’s executive levels/bodies as well as among party members, as reviewed in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Parties</th>
<th>Representation of Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PML-N</td>
<td>The current ruling party has 14 main office-bearers with ‘all male’ composition. The district presidents and general secretaries in all provinces are men except for one woman in Punjab (Saira Afzal Tarar from Hafizabad). The central working committee of PML-N, right from the chairman to joint secretary, is exclusively male. However, there are a few women members on the executive committee but the party’s constitution has no allocation of women representation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPPP</td>
<td>The PPPP party leadership comprises five men only, including the chairman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTI</td>
<td>The PTI’s central executive committee is composed of only eight women (out of total 80 members). Another notified committee of the PTI, the Election Analysis Cell comprises 22 members, all being men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANP</td>
<td>Out of 29 members of the central party cabinet, seven are women for the 2014-2018 tenure, constituting 24 percent of women representation at the executive level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QWP</td>
<td>QWP’s mainstream leadership comprises two women and three men, nearly achieving gender parity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JI</td>
<td>The central leadership of JI comprises 12 men</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, executive structures of political parties are highly patriarchal and male-exclusive, except for the ANP, PTI, and QWP-KP. This is also reflected in parties’ manifestos where gender remains a separate section and not a cross-cutting theme.
Spotlight 3: Women in Decision-Making in Bureaucracy, Judiciary, and Law Enforcement

Political parties are expected to take measures for women’s equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making with quota allocations being one potential tool, for example when recruiting women in key decision-making positions in the judiciary, bureaucracy and law enforcement agencies. As a first step, commitments of major political parties, represented in the provincial and national assemblies are reviewed, followed by an assessment of subsequent actions (or lack thereof) during the previous legislative periods.

During the PPPP government (2008-2013), out of 447 serving officers of the Foreign Office, 63 were women (13.2 percent). Among them were 13 heading diplomatic missions, 12 envoys, and four directors. From 2013 onwards, women representation in the police numbers to 6363 (1.6%) of the total 403865 police recruits at SP, ASP and DSP levels and lower ranks. No woman is seen at higher positions in the department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Parties</th>
<th>Representation of Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PML-N</td>
<td>makes a general pledge in increasing women’s participation in financial institutions, higher judiciary, health and educational establishments as well as law enforcement agencies at the executive level. It also commits to ensuring women’s effective representation and enhancing their role in policy and decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPPP</td>
<td>ensures to allocate seats for women judges through parliament to make women an integral part of the judicial process at all levels, however, the manifesto does not speak about the number. The party also ensures representation of women in all private and public sector boards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTI</td>
<td>also speaks about ensuring significant and meaningful participation of women at all levels without providing details or information on implementation mechanisms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANP</td>
<td>stance is to especially encourage the recruitment of women in the judicial system at the level of readers and moharars and stresses upon employing them as judges in the high courts. It also pledges to undertake administrative reforms within civil, judicial and police structures for the effective implementation of existing laws, especially for women rights to inheritance, elimination of customary discriminatory practises of child marriages, swara, ghag, and vani, among others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PML-Q</td>
<td>denies the existence of a parallel judicial system and assures appointing women in the lower judiciary, their recruitment in high courts and the Supreme Court of Pakistan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PML-F</td>
<td>commits to equal female representation in all boards and councils to cater to their unique needs and identifies exceptional corrective and preventative measures to eliminate gender-based violence which includes increasing women courts and women police stations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tentative Conclusions on Findings and Gaps Identified in Gender-Specific Commitments in Political Party Manifestos and Subsequent Actions

A number of outcomes can be derived from the analysis of the 2008-2013 political party manifests and subsequent actions by government and opposition parties present in the national and provincial assemblies.

First, the commitments made are of a general nature rather than outlining concrete commitments and detailed gender actions in the manifestos. This includes lacking implementation mechanisms as the major focus lies in the provision of facilities by political parties rather than on implementation.

Second, manifestos, in general, represent gender in a separate section. For the purpose of genuine gender mainstreaming, it would have been appropriate to integrate gender-specific issues and commitments as a cross-cutting thematic and analytical aspect in all manifesto areas identified.

The manifesto of the PML-F, however, has comparatively well-integrated women’s concerns as crosscutting in the main thematic areas while the PTI has also provided substantial provisions for women in its gender policy. So far only a few political parties share progressive manifestos from a gender-based rights perspective namely, the MQM, ANP, and PPPP.

The ruling PML-N has a generic stance and fails to show a clear gender link with key structural areas and social sectors.

Third, with regard to specific issues often outlined in gender action debates, such as quota provisions, capacity building of female political (party) workers or gender budgeting, the following conclusions can be derived:

Most political parties demand on average a 20 to 50 percent quota for women in all aspects of life, including within the political parties, legislative assemblies, local government, civil service, public commissions, and boards as well as for the higher judiciary, among others. Having said that, however, a number of political parties namely, the PML-N, PML-Q, PML-F, JI, and JUI do not mention any quota allocation for women in their party manifestos. In addition, the manifestos are generally devoid of mechanisms to train and build capacities of women’s political leadership, not only within the political parties. However, this has larger and interlinked ramifications with other arenas. Women need recognised leadership skills and capacity building to break with the prevailing situation where they are denied key positions within the political parties and organisations, legislative assemblies, the bureaucracy, and the judiciary as well as law enforcement.

Furthermore, there is a lack of favourable working environment and infrastructure within the political parties and beyond, such as office structures, operational and technical support for women party workers and parliamentarians provided by the political parties themselves. The manifestos also fall short of discussing how political parties could develop a political nexus within their domain to discuss women-related issues.

Another blindspot or gap within political parties’ manifestos is the issue of gender budgeting. The political parties generally do not have budgetary allocations outlined for women legislators, their constituencies and capacity building or respective legislation and policy-making commitments. In regard to women legislators on reserved seats, the prevailing attitude within the political parties can be described as being a more ‘charitable’ approach. The parties’ manifestos do not make mention of investing party funds for women campaigning on a pro-women manifesto or those elected on a general seat, similar to prevailing laws governing legislative assemblies and budget allocations for legislators. The same is the case for specific policy areas which circumvent the genuine implementation of women-specific legislation and policies given this lack of budget allocation and monitoring-cum-compliance procedures. A case in point of this non-prioritisation and no political will among parties as well as the government and its state apparatus is the lack of budget allocations for the implementation of CEDAW and its 16 articles, ratified decades ago under the government of then Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. The same is true for the National and Provincial Commissions on the Status of Women which continue to strive for the allocation of adequate and independent budgets.
Consequently, one can argue that political parties have not clearly considered the role(s) and significance women play within their organisations. However, women legislators’ parliamentary presence has been impactful in terms of legislations put on assemblies’ agenda, drafted and passed as well as with highlighting women’s issues in parliamentary and public debates. In this regard, the establishment of national and provincial women parliamentary caucuses has been of great importance to carry respective gender action manifestos ahead. Examples are the demand for 10 percent of general constituencies being earmarked for women - a demand raised by the National Assembly’s Women Parliamentary Caucus. It is based on consensus of all women parliamentarians and their lobbying efforts to develop such a consensus within their respective political parties and women’s wings. Another case in point is the action taken by then MPA Bushra Gohar, other women legislators and activists against the ban on women voters in PK 95. In regard to Gohar’s own ANP party, this effort even became part of the ANP’s manifesto, which aims “to prohibit all sorts of deals between local elders and political parties that bar women from exercising their right to vote and contest”.
Spotlights from National Consultation Process

by Andrea Fleschenberg
FOCUS ACCESS: Agenda-Setting for Women’s Political Participation and Empowerment

The concerns and issues presented and discussed can be distinguished into two major spotlights. First, changes were stressed within political parties, assemblies and at the local government level in regard to women’s political participation and empowerment in terms of quota provisions and manifestos. In all national consultation workshops, quota provisions were accepted tools to ensure women’s representation and subsequent empowerment. The participants demanded an increased level of quota provisions in all legislative and political decision-making bodies within the political parties, national and provincial assemblies and their committees as well as government bodies such as the ECP. Some cautioned that the current quota design and the control of reserved seat allocations by a predominantly male body translate into women politicians’ lack of power and authority and dynastic politics instead of women’s political mainstreaming, inclusive and merit-based approaches.

This also includes the demand for electoral reforms to allow for the direct election of reserved seats for women in national and provincial assemblies as well as for a reduction and monitoring of election campaign expenses. The participants also demanded that political party manifestos should be clear and detailed on the role of and commitment to women legislators at the national and provincial levels. Thus, political parties should be bound to strengthen women in politics. In addition, a number of participants pointed towards a different code of conduct/ethics to govern political participation which should be monitored. They mentioned a lack of respect demonstrated in parliamentary proceedings, experiences of discrimination of female legislators as well as cultural barriers to women’s political participation, particularly in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Therefore, for instance, intra-party election processes should be monitored by the ECP, and anti-harassment committees established in political institutions and a mass media awareness campaign on women’s political participation commissioned. Apart from this, independent and strengthened women’s machinery like the National and Provincial Commissions on the Status of Women have a crucial role to play in this regard.

Second, there is a need for capacity-building measures as well as gender-sensitive political education among legislators, grassroots (political party) workers, election staff and the leadership of political parties as well as the public at large. Capacity building is not only needed on key aspects of parliamentary work procedures and the mandate as such but more on gender budgeting, gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive public policy-making. This is linked to gender actions focussed on creating an inclusive political culture at the intra-party and inter-party levels, in all legislative assemblies and within the local government institutions. The participants identified a change in the political culture as a precondition for an increased political empowerment of women and strengthened governance processes and their accountability. Consequently, this would break pervasive feudal-cum-dynastic politics and entrenched political leadership, patriarchal and thus exclusive values and practices.
SPOTLIGHT 1:
Women’s Political Empowerment within Political Parties, Assemblies and Local Government Bodies

Gender Action: Capacity-building and Mentoring at All Levels, Accompanied by Women Manifestos and Implementation Mechanisms

The participants in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Peshawar shared a combined approach to women’s political empowerment through capacity-building and mentoring at all levels. This needs to be accompanied by gender-specific manifestos of political parties and subsequent implementation-cum-accountability mechanisms (for which prior political education among key stakeholders from bottom up is a must). Changes at the policy level or electoral reforms thus also need to be supported by skill development among a variety of actors - female and male members of political parties, assemblies and communities involved in political decision-making processes (or not yet).

This capacity-building and mentoring, some argued, needs to be mirrored in educational curricula and their portrayal of women along with the appointment of focal persons for women and youth who should be actively involved in all measures taken. Ultimately, such measures can only be successful if adequately and consequently monitored. This will ensure not only a change in norms, practises, and discourses but also a public auditing system based on transparency and accountability to commitments made, at the service of strengthened gender-sensitive and inclusive policy-making and implementation in a favourable sociopolitical environment.

ARENAS

- arena of political competition at various levels
- others: education and health

OBJECTIVES

- gender justice and mainstreaming leading to gender-balanced political participation, governance, and environment
- sensitisation on gender and women’s issues in governance processes, platforms and among governance actors
- incorporation of women-specific manifesto principles into political parties’ (post-election) agendas and accountability of commitments made
- reinforcement of local government system
- representation and capacity building of women that ensures their empowerment and addresses the needs of those marginalised (e.g. women with disabilities, transgender community)
- increased level of awareness, inclusive representation, and accountability of political parties
- capacity building of women political workers at the grassroots level
- public auditing system, based on transparency, monitoring and accountability
There are a number of approaches and tools to be used which are interlinked and often complementary, depending on the specific context and arena. These include:

- capacity building and awareness campaigns
- code of ethics to be implemented and monitored by ECP along with sanctions on those using money and coercive methods
- representation of women on executive committees within the assemblies and political parties to ensure allocation of funds, tickets and drafting of support mechanisms
- exchange at all levels of women politicians and subsequent networking, training and mentoring efforts
- political education of party workers at all levels, e.g. in the form of party political schools
- monitoring mechanisms, in particular at the grassroots and provincial levels through respective committees
- grassroots activism
- consultation with government officials, in particular women
- engagement with media and civil society organisations as a pressure and watchdog element
- civic education of the public at large on political processes through curriculum initiatives
- allocation of funds by political parties
- collaboration with international non-governmental organisations, donors, and government experts

For each approach outlined above, a number of stakeholders have to be taken on board and their commitment should be ensured. These include:

- government
- legislators/policy-makers at all tiers
- political parties (including their committees and wings), in particular their senior leadership
- Election Commission of Pakistan
- Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services
- (female) government officials
- (female) political party workers
- civil society organisations, predominantly women’s rights groups, political and human rights activists along with women representatives from minorities, persons with disabilities and the transgender community
- media
- academia
- curriculum development board

To ensure genuine implementation and compliance with the gender action at hand, a number of spoilers and veto actors must be considered and counter-strategies reflected upon to avoid a failure of the gender action. Potential spoilers and veto actors that might challenge, boycott or threaten and even attack such gender actions and their proponents, in particular, beneficiaries of the current status quo are:

- lack of political will by government and bureaucracy
- patriarchal mindsets
- undemocratic measures and absence of a continuous democratic political process
- military establishment
- religious clergy and Council of Islamic Ideology
- the political parties’ leadership
- landlords/feudal
- radicals in all forms, including religious radicals, particularly within the political party structures
- lack of resources and commitment
**SPOTLIGHT 2:**

**Electoral Reforms**

**Gender Action: Direct Elections on Reserved Seats at Provincial and National Levels**

Apart from achieving a gender-balanced and women-conducive political environment, certain changes in the rules of the game are required, key among them direct elections on reserved seats. This is important to ensure that women politicians at all levels are merit-based and do not rely only on quota provisions but achieve genuine political mainstreaming, beyond male-dominated control and lack of grassroots support.

**ARENAS**
- arena of political competition at various levels

**OBJECTIVES**
- ensure that women politicians have their own constituency and ability to run successfully for general seats
- combat favouritism, nepotism, and dynastic politics
- increased mobility and mobilisation of women candidates, voters, and politicians

**APPROACHES**
There are a number of approaches and tools to be used which are interlinked and often complementary, depending on the specific context and arena. These include:
- lobbying with political parties’ leadership, members of national and provincial assemblies as well as the Election Commission of Pakistan
- media campaigns
- recommendations and monitoring by women’s machinery, i.e. the National Commission on the Status of Women along with Provincial Commissions on the Status of Women

**STAKEHOLDERS**
For each approach outlined above, a number of stakeholders have to be taken on board and their commitment should be ensured. These include:
- the senior leadership of political parties
- women political activists, legislators and voters
- members of women’s machinery at the national and provincial levels
- media, in particular, senior analysts and opinion-makers
- Election Commission of Pakistan

**SPOILERS & VETO ACTORS**
To ensure genuine implementation and compliance with the gender action at hand, a number of spoilers and veto actors must be considered and counter-strategies reflected upon to avoid a failure of the gender action. Potential spoilers and veto actors that might challenge, boycott or threaten and even attack such gender actions and their proponents, in particular, beneficiaries of the status quo are:
- conservative segments of society
- parliamentarians at the provincial and national levels
- political parties’ leadership
- lack of resources and commitment
SPOTLIGHT 3: Policy Reforms

Gender Action: Policy Changes and Legislation Needed To Change Political Parties, Management, Policy, and Budgeting Processes towards Women’s Mainstreaming

The participants outlined that policy changes are required at the level of political parties along with key decision-making processes (e.g. budgeting, management) to ensure women’s political mainstreaming and gender-sensitive and women-conducive policy-making.

ARENAS
- arena of political competition at various levels

OBJECTIVES
- genuine/substantive and increased participation of women in politics
- increased understanding of women’s roles and needs for protection when participating in politics
- merit-based selection of community (political) workers
- code of conduct of political parties
- 50 percent quota for women for general seats contested in elections

APPROACHES
There are a number of approaches and tools to be used which are interlinked and often complementary, depending on the specific context and arena. These include:
- policy of women’s economic empowerment and participation as a precondition for their success in politics
- policy of women’s participation at the management levels across sectors as a precondition for their success in politics
- Terms of References/Code of Conduct for participation, policy understandings and awareness, including criteria for candidate selection

STAKEHOLDERS
For each approach outlined above, a number of stakeholders have to be taken on board and their commitment should be ensured. These include:
- women
- political parties
- parliamentarians at the national and provincial levels

SPOILERS & VETO ACTORS
To ensure genuine implementation and compliance with the gender action at hand, a number of spoilers and veto actors must be considered and counter-strategies reflected upon to avoid a failure of the gender action. Potential spoilers and veto actors that might challenge, boycott or threaten and even attack such gender actions and their proponents are:
- male-dominated society, its mindset and subsequent stereotypes towards women
- favouritism in policy implementation and thus privileges and entitlements for few along with marginalisation and/or exclusion of others
FOCUS PRESENCE: Agenda-Setting for Women-Specific Legislation and Policy-Making

The concerns and issues presented and discussed can be distinguished into three major spotlights. First, gender actions needed prior to legislation and policy-making in the area of representation. This includes the nature of quota provisions, training and capacity-building of political workers, candidates, and legislators on a variety of issues. One key objective is to ensure fair and inclusive representation of women from all walks of life in legislation and policy-making processes, not only of those with a background in dynastic politics or those from specific societal elite. For this purpose, the participants of the national consultation process pointed towards the need for transparent public policy-making processes governed by clear ToRs instead of laws being passed without ensuring grassroots-level consultation and respective monitoring and auditing of parliamentary decision-making and its implementation. Related gender actions to ensure inclusive representation as a first step to achieve gender-sensitive legislation and policy-making included, among others:

- continued quota provisions with an intersectional approach that is inclusive of those marginalised such as women from FATA, women with disabilities, women from minority communities and transgender community representatives, among others
- an increase of women in leadership positions in different sections such as the bureaucracy
- women-sensitive organisational rules and procedures in decision-making which establish a conducive environment and infrastructural setup for women’s participation
- merit-based (s)election processes instead of political interference and favouritism binding legislation for political parties to allocate tickets and funds for women, to include them in intra-party decision-making and leadership positions - also, but not only, when formulating party manifestos - as well as to sanction any kind of bans on women’s participation in electoral politics

Second, gender actions on specific legal issues and in specific policy areas, in particular in regard to women’s economic empowerment, education, health, violence against women and access to rights and justice mechanisms were highlighted. Here demands were raised to follow an intersectional approach and to focus particularly on vulnerable and marginalised women - be it due to their age, abilities, ethnic or religious background, family status (read: single, widowed and divorced), geographic location (rural and periphery versus urban), socioeconomic status or gender orientation (read: transgender community). A number of specific policy areas in need of gender-specific legislative actions were identified, for instance, related to:

- women’s economic participation and empowerment - laws for the protection of female agricultural and home-based workers, land rights of women along with gender equality in education and educational curricula
- violence against women and protection of rights - laws on combating human trafficking, violence against women, underage marriages, forced conversions and the protection of women from minorities in personal status laws
- social protection – laws, and policies to provide social protection to transgender community members, to provide government services for internally displaced women and refugees and to include women in disaster-related policy-making processes

Third, gender actions are required to increase the level of gender-sensitivity in legislation and policy-making and to address the pervasive accountability gap in women-specific legislation and policy-making in terms of implementation, its monitoring and sanctioning in case of non-compliance. Here, the objective of an accountability framework across the political, state and civil society arena was highlighted by a number of participants. Gender budgeting and auditing was one key instrument identified apart from other measures already discussed above. The other instruments were policy review committees at the district level plus increased human and financial resources for drafting concrete policy ToRs and follow-up mechanisms to review implementation and avoid vague implementation formulations. For this, the participation of relevant grassroots communities and stakeholders such as women, community/religious leaders as well as media are considered crucial.
Gender Action: Capacity-building and Training on Legislation and Policy-Making along with Adequate Quota Modalities and Practises to Change Modes of Representation

Apart from specific issues and concerns for pro-women policy-making, the participants in Lahore raised the issue that three other aspects have to be considered to ensure gender-sensitive decision-making processes: (i) quota modalities and practises, (ii) capacity-building and training on policy-making, (iii) modes of representation with a focus on mandates, rights, authorities and issues of legislation-making. While at any given legislative period, many parliamentarians receive training on the job, this process can be skewed, lacking commitment and adequate resources and thus hamper women’s political participation and gender-sensitive legislation and policy-making.

**ARENAS**
- arena of political competition
- arena of civil society
- arena of the state
- other: education

**OBJECTIVES**
- fair and inclusive representation
- informed citizens aware of the rights and duties of political processes and gender mainstreaming
- bridging/alliance-building across arenas (civil society, bureaucracy, judiciary) and political innovation

**APPROACHES**
There are a number of approaches and tools to be used which are interlinked and often complementary, depending on the specific context and arena. These include:

- legal initiatives for quota modalities, modes of representation and authorities/mandates/rights
- policy initiatives for training and capacity building as well as authorities/mandates/rights
- advocacy
- training, awareness, and sensitisation
STAKEHOLDERS

For each approach outlined above, a number of stakeholders have to be taken on board and their commitment should be ensured. These include:

− Election Commission of Pakistan
− office-bearers in assemblies (and their standing committees), local government, women’s machinery (National and Provincial Commissions on the Status of Women, National Commission on Human Rights), community development as well as those in academia
− civil society organisations, namely trade unions, the rights-based working on/with youth, minorities, women and LGBTI community
− caucuses in assemblies and local government bodies, namely for women, youth and minorities
− political parties, namely members of election manifesto committees, women’s wings
− media (electronic, print and social)

SPOILERS & VETO ACTORS

To ensure genuine implementation and compliance with the gender action at hand, a number of spoilers and veto actors must be considered and counter-strategies reflected upon to avoid failure of the gender action. Potential spoilers and veto actors that might challenge, boycott, or threaten and even attack such gender actions and their proponents are:

− extremist mindsets and groups (“those with fundamentalist approaches”)
− patriarchal mindset of political parties
− Council of Islamic Ideology
− landlords/feudal
− law enforcement agencies
− certain political party and community leaders
− media anchors
SPOTLIGHT 2:
Key Issues of Required Women-Specific Legislation and Policy-Making

Gender Action: Legislative Initiatives on Women’s Economic Empowerment, Social Protection and Combating Violence Against Women

The participants in Quetta and Karachi outlined three major policy areas to be addressed by concrete legislative gender actions: (i) women’s economic empowerment, (ii) social protection, and (iii) combating violence against women.

Such legislative approaches should also ensure an effective complaints mechanism as well as comprehensive stakeholder involvement ranging from political leadership, law enforcement agencies, and rehabilitation and crisis centres’ staff, among others. The key concerns were not only to achieve the respective targets on the issues at hand such as ending violence against women or empowering women economically through equal job opportunities, women’s expos and other initiatives. But the concerns were also to have comprehensive, non-ambiguous legal definitions and approaches which are also context-tailored with adequate resources and services for implementation. Having said that, ultimately, political parties need to include those issues not only into their party manifestos but have to develop a detailed post-election political agenda and commitment.

ARENAS
- arena of political competition
- arena of state

OBJECTIVES
- political parties include issues at hand into their manifestos, following an approach marked by women’s empowerment and protection on issues, and developing a specific agenda
- decrease in violence against women
- increased access of women to resources, safe facilities, and services
- building mechanisms ensuring the life of respect and dignity
- connect citizens with decision-makers in governance processes
- representation of marginalised group in legislation and policy-making processes on issues at hand
- system accountability and justice
- raise voice and awareness on issues at hand
STAKEHOLDERS
For each approach outlined above, a number of stakeholders have to be taken on board and their commitment should be ensured. These include:
- government
- political parties
- law enforcement agencies
- politicians along with community leaders
- bureaucracy/ministries of respective policy areas addressed
- women parliamentarians at the national and provincial levels
- civil society activists
- media
- academia
- religious leaders
- communities/general public
- Election Commission of Pakistan

APPROACHES
There are a number of approaches and tools to be used which are interlinked and often complementary, depending on the specific context and arena. These include:
- detailed campaign on issues, in particular with political parties and their manifesto-writing
- education in terms of curriculum changes and the inclusion of issues at hand
- reduction of bureaucratic processes
- capacity-building and training at all levels, including in regard to gender-sensitivity, awareness on legislation and policy-making as well as for law enforcement
- comprehensive, context-specific approach and, if needed, revision of definitions of key legal issues and terms addressed such as in the case of ‘violence against women’
- gender-disaggregated data collection to improve legislation and policy-making on issues
- inclusion into political party manifestos
- an intersectional approach to ‘gender’ and ‘women’ in legislation and policy-making

SPOILERS & VETO ACTORS
To ensure genuine implementation and compliance with the gender action, a number of spoilers and veto actors must be considered and counter-strategies reflected upon to avoid failure of the gender action. Potential spoilers and veto actors that might challenge boycott or threaten and even attack such gender actions and their proponents are:
- cultural barriers, i.e. values and beliefs of practitioners opposed to laws and government agendas and services provided
- political leadership
- implementers without proper access to information and with language barriers
- religious leadership
- religious extremists
- community elders
- law enforcement agencies
- (male) family members
- women’s character assassination drives and their lack of political power
Gender Action: Increase in the Degree and Quality of Gender-Sensitive Legislation and Policy-Making and Closure of the Existing Accountability Gap

The participants in Quetta, Islamabad, and Peshawar problematised the poor quality of gender-sensitive legislation and policy-making, further exacerbated by an existing accountability gap, partly due to missing implementation mechanisms and compliance monitoring. This nexus is crucial if quota modalities, capacity building and mentoring along with legal and policy changes - thus women’s political participation - should ultimately bear fruit to change women’s lives and secondary citizenship status. This kind of gender action demands a comprehensive, cross-cutting and multifaceted approach to legislation and policy-making as well as overall transparent and strengthened governance processes.

**ARENAS**
- arena of political competition
- arena of state
- arena of civil society
- other: communities, education

**OBJECTIVES**
- equality in respect, rights, and privileges along with full voice and participation, meaning gender equity in Constitution, laws and their making
- empowering, meritocratic, inclusive and public legislation and policy-making
- effective and inclusive implementation of legislation and policies made for all women across Pakistan
- enhanced access to justice for women, transgender, women with disabilities and from minorities
- end to non-compliance and violations of pro-women laws and policies enacted
- monitoring and accountability mechanisms based on gender-sensitive principles and indicators and effective checks and balances
- gender equality enshrined in political manifestos along with their monitoring and sanctioning of non-compliance by stakeholders and relevant communities

**APPROACHES**
There are a number of approaches and tools to be used which are interlinked and often complementary, depending on the specific context and arena. These include:
- gender budgeting at all levels and for all areas
- strengthening Women Parliamentary Caucuses and women’s machinery and their alliances across assemblies, provinces and policy-making levels, communities and political parties
- legislation to allow for and ensure vibrant civil society organisations as watchdogs
- gender-sensitive education in all institutions and disciplines, community awareness-raising along with capacity building on gender-sensitive decision-making among stakeholders
- merit-based, non-clientelistic legislation and policy-making
- inclusive grassroots decision-making along with sanctions on political parties for non-compliance/discrimination
- enforce gender-sensitive party manifestos and quota provisions
- examine legal frameworks and include all stakeholders, in particular (marginalised) recipients
- code of conduct for media reporting
- linkages with internal legal principles, regimes, and practises
- conducive infrastructure, services and environment for women involved in legislation and policy-making
For each approach outlined above, a number of stakeholders have to be taken on board and their commitment should be ensured. These include:

- watchdog organisations, namely women’s machinery, communities, civil society and media
- judiciary and law enforcement agencies from bottom up
- Ministry of Law and Human Rights, Ministries/Departments of Women’s Development and/or Social Welfare as well as ministries of the respective policy area under scrutiny
- local government bodies and their representatives
- bureaucracy (e.g. political agents, law, and finance departments)
- political parties’ leadership
- religious and community leaders
- Council of Islamic Ideology as a pressure group
- academia involved in action research and in providing monitoring expertise
- educational institutions (e.g. union bureaucracy, teachers’ and students’ unions)

To ensure genuine implementation and compliance with the gender action at hand, a number of spoilers and veto actors must be considered and counter-strategies reflected upon to avoid failure of the gender action. Potential spoilers and veto actors that might challenge, boycott or threaten and even attack such gender actions and their proponents are:

- law enforcement agencies and security forces
- political parties’ leadership as well as legislators in national and provincial assemblies with a particular agenda
- bureaucracy
- parallel, the informal justice system (jirga) - “mother of all spoilers”
- feudal system
- rigid, misogynist mindsets and institutions
- patriarchal cultural setup
- curriculum setup, hate speech and material
- Council of Islamic Ideology and religious parties
- non-state actors (militants/extremist groups)
- powerful vested interest groups of the political right as well as the corporate sector
- media
FOCUS INFLUENCE:
Agenda-Setting for Women in Decision-Making in Bureaucracy, Judiciary, and Law Enforcement

In order to translate voice, access, and presence into influence in the political arena, the influence of women’s decision-making needs to be ensured in the state dimension. This, within the bureaucracy, judiciary, and law enforcement tasked with implementation, monitoring and sanctioning of non-compliance of public policy-making, thus, ultimately, with closing the identified accountability gap.

The concerns and issues presented and discussed centred around an overall increase of women in decision-making bodies and procedures at all levels as well as an increased access to justice mechanisms in case of non-compliance within the political and state arenas. Measures of positive discrimination for the bureaucracy, judiciary, and law enforcement were also preferred and highlighted in all national consultation workshops. These could be in forms of quota provisions, women-specific recruitment drives, specific capacity building, and professional training programmes, strengthened women-specific institutions and conducive, safe working environment of relevant decision-making bodies. It goes without saying that the participants conceptualised such mainstreaming approach to be marked by principles of inclusive representation and intersectional concerns of discrimination, thus providing equal opportunities for women from marginalised backgrounds at the provincial and national levels.

A wide range of tools was pointed out, ranging from anti-harassment committees at the departmental levels, effective gender-disaggregated data collection and analyses, special environment provisions for marginalised/vulnerable groups and media sensitisation campaigns. Conducive environment means women having access to basic facilities and amenities - washrooms to daycare provisions, and security not only at the workplace but also from and to work. This is even more necessary given the prevailing stereotypes against women’s engagement in public affairs and subsequent mobility challenges and insecurities in public spaces. The media - be it electronic, print or social - is considered a crucial stakeholder and watchdog as well as part of the problem given its predominant focus on women as objects rather than on role models and achievements made.
Gender Action: Equal Opportunities and Participation, Access to Decision-Making and Mainstreaming of Women

The participants of all national consultation workshops countrywide stressed upon the need to increase women’s involvement in decision-making processes at all levels, across all sectors and arenas - be it in politics, the bureaucracy, judiciary, law enforcement or in educational institutions. Such an increase in different areas is interlinked when it comes to women’s empowerment and mainstreaming.

Focusing on quotas for the arena of political competition was considered insufficient. In addition, quotas should also be complemented by other tools of positive discrimination such as (i) training, capacity-building along with professional exposure and mentoring, (ii) adequate provision of necessary resources and conducive infrastructure, apart from (iii) gender-disaggregated data collection to allow for monitoring of such processes.

**ARENAS**
- arena of political competition
- arena of state
- arena of civil society

**OBJECTIVES**
- key decision-makers should be women
- women’s issues, involvement, and voice should be mainstreamed to allow for sustainable national development and policy-making
- stereotypical role portrayals of women in all walks of life should be avoided
- equal access to rights and opportunities in recruitment, training, and promotion should be guaranteed through:
  - policy reforms and gender-sensitive policies
  - implementation of existing quota provisions
  - access to justice, health, and educational facilities/services, particularly for marginalised groups
  - providing a conducive judicial environment

**APPROACHES**
There are a number of approaches and tools to be used which are interlinked and often complementary, depending on the specific context and arena. These include:
- training, capacity-building and exposure programmes along with performance-based evaluations and promotions as well as mentoring at all levels
- review of recruitment and service rules, including quota provisions
- recruitment of women in key positions to generate a different environment, also in the bureaucracy
- measures to ensure a conducive and secure workplace, for example, daycare centres at the workplace
- gender budgeting and gender-disaggregated data collection for process monitoring from bottom up
- appropriate budget allocations as well as specific financial benefits to encourage women to seek leadership positions
- positive use of media as a strategy
For each approach outlined above, a number of stakeholders have to be taken on board and their commitment should be ensured. Engaging male stakeholders should be conceptualised as alliance-building. These include:

- government officials at the respective levels along with decision-makers in the ministerial bureaucracy, judiciary and law enforcement along with those from local government bodies
- training institutes/academies
- academia (to ensure expert monitoring)
- legislators at various levels as well as political party leaders and workers
- community members, in particular from marginalised groups (women from ethnic and religious minorities or with disabilities, transgender etc.)
- representatives from women’s machinery such as parliamentary caucuses, commissions on the status of women
- religious leaders
- media

To ensure genuine implementation and compliance with the gender action at hand, a number of spoilers and veto actors must be considered and counter-strategies reflected upon to avoid failure of the gender action. Potential spoilers and veto actors that might challenge, boycott, or threaten and even attack such gender actions and their proponents are:

- a number of stakeholders outlined above may also serve as spoilers such as government officials, bureaucrats, political parties and media persons
- conservative, patriarchal and even misogynist cultural norms and respective societal mindsets and intolerance
- ‘mullahism’ and so-called religious leaders as well as religious political parties with a hegemonic approach
- conservative political parties
- extremist activists and groups
- media and its focus on aggrieved women rather than on women as role models and achievers
Mainstreaming will be difficult to achieve without prior and accompanying gender-sensitive legislation and policy-making as well as implementation monitoring by key stakeholders such as the judiciary, and women’s increased participation in decision-making. Therefore, existing laws need to be reviewed, changed or amended besides new laws being passed and implemented. Access to justice, in particular for marginalised groups, also means access to opportunities and a favourable environment for women’s mainstreaming in decision-making bodies. In addition to access to justice, access to health and education - from the district level to the top - was also a key gender action outlined by the participants.

**ARENAS**
- state apparatus, in particular, judiciary and bureaucracy from bottom up

**OBJECTIVES**
- gender-sensitive policies that produce a women-conducive judicial environment and justice as well as increased and merit-based opportunities for women (beyond the quota provisions)
- implementation of laws along with adequate legal and policy reviews to ensure pro-women legislation and justice
- access to services in health, education, and justice, also for marginalised groups

**APPROACHES**
There are a number of approaches and tools to be used which are interlinked and often complementary, depending on the specific context and arena. These include:
- lobbying with stakeholders
- media-based awareness campaigns
- capacity building, including that of political party workers, media persons, and academia
- increase in quota provisions
- capacity building and training on service rules
- creating awareness, professional grooming and mentoring among women
- gender-specific monitoring from bottom up
To ensure genuine implementation and compliance with the gender action at hand, a number of spoilers and veto actors must be considered and counter-strategies reflected upon to avoid failure of the gender action. Potential spoilers and veto actors that might challenge, boycott, or threaten and even attack such gender actions and their proponents are:

- political parties
- dominance-oriented male members of institutions and communities involved
- women themselves
- religious leaders

For each approach outlined above, a number of stakeholders have to be taken on board and their commitment should be ensured. Engaging male stakeholders should be conceptualised as alliance-building. These include:

- legislators at various levels, political parties and local government representatives
- judiciary
- bar councils
- media
- bureaucracy (e.g. at Ministry of Law, respective Departments of Health and Education)
- civil society
Bibliography


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