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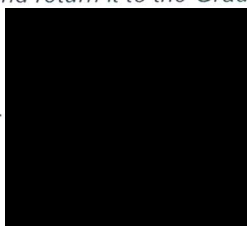
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# **Women's Contested Politics of Presence**

**Learning from the Experiences of Pakistani Women Parliamentarians**

By

**Shaheen Ashraf Shah**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Women and Gender Studies

Centre for the Study of Women and Gender, Department of Sociology  
University of Warwick

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*Dedication*

This thesis is dedicated to my Husband

Ashraf Ali Shah,

and my Daughters

Aleena and Nain Sukh

With all my love and gratitude

## *Declaration*

I confirm that this thesis is my own work, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Warwick UK. It has not been submitted at any other university.

While doing this research project, the following articles have been published in Pakistan's leading newspaper the Daily Dawn:

1. 'Women's Role in Legislation' *Dawn* 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2011

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/09/18/womens-role-in-legislation.html>

2. 'Student's Voice; The Wild Goose Chase' *Dawn* 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2011

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/07/31/students-voice-the-wild-goose-chase.html>

## *Abstract*

This study provides a case study of women's political representation in the National Parliament of Pakistan, where a particular form of the quota approach has been adapted in a highly gendered political context. By examining the experiences of Pakistani women parliamentarians, this thesis contributes to key academic literature on gender quotas and political representation that has received a considerable attention from feminist scholars. The aim of this thesis is to explore the extent to which women's formal representation is translated into substantive change for women.

This is an empirical case study, primarily based on qualitative analyses of face-to-face in-depth semi-structured interviews of 20 women parliamentarians (out of 76) and proceedings of the parliament of the last three years (2008-11). By adapting Anne Phillips's (1995) *The Politics of Presence* in entirely new and novel way, one of the major contributions this study claims to make to the theoretical literature is to analytically examine the effects of quotas from various aspects of political representation: *descriptive*, *substantive* and *symbolic* representation and from a broader perspectives than has hitherto been seen. It also addresses a major gap in the literature on the reasons why some quota women act more often than others in legislatures, and what factors contribute to the silence and suppression of Pakistani women leaders.

It is argued that women's presence in the political spheres is important, but that it is vital to take the particular context into account when judging whether women can and do act for women. This thesis shows that representation depends on various factors which can positively or negatively contribute towards substantive change. It also demonstrates that quotas may challenge existing gender dynamics and have various effects on women's representation within and outside parliament. However, some gender and human rights issues may be difficult to tackle, especially those challenging the powerful feudal and tribal political elite (mainly men).

## **Introduction**

Gender quotas are now adapted in more than one hundred countries with the aim of increasing women's political representation in legislatures. In terms of the theoretical argument for women's political representation, Phillips (1995) highlights that there is no argument from a justice perspective that defends the under-representation of women in politics. However quotas are not simply linked to increasing women's presence in legislatures. Quotas, or the presence of certain numbers of women leading to a critical mass in legislatures, are also linked to change in policy outcomes, political processes and legislatures with them becoming more gender and women friendly (Dahlerup, 1988) . However, scholars now draw attention to various factors that may affect change. As Tremblay (2006: 506) highlights:

‘it is now generally accepted that a critical mass of women in politics does not necessarily translate into substantive representation of women, since this latter depends on many factors, such as gender identity, party affiliation, and the legislative roles of women’.

Quotas have now become so popular and controversial (Dahlerup, 2012: vii) that the comparative literature has expanded to provide a picture of the complex nature of the relationship between women's presence and representation in various contexts (Chaney et al., 2007; Franceschet et al., 2012; Childs, 2004). As part of this debate, scholars have argued that:

‘it is more useful, when conceptualising the relationship between women's presence and women making a difference, to think of different kinds of

women acting in different gendered environments and to explore whether particular political contexts are ‘safe’ for women to act like (and for) women’ (Childs 2004a: 14).

International research has already indicated the complexities involved in the political processes of representation. It is argued that women operate under highly gendered political contexts and their potential ability to effect change may be affected due to several factors related to gendered political institutions, including: parliament and political parties (Lovenduski, 2005; Jones et al. 2009), electoral methods that reinforce the politics of patronage (Goetz 2003; Sater, 2012), distinct priorities of women legislators as all women do not seek to represent women (Childs 2004), feminized style of politics that is little valued (Childs 2004a), male dominated culture of legislatures that influence on minority group (women) (Franceschet, 2010), formal and informal rules, procedures and norms that have gendered consequences (Rai, 2010), labelling and stigmatization of quota women (Childs and Krook, 2012) as well as the volatile political situation as noted in the case of Afghanistan (Larson, 2012). There has been considerable debate on women’s political representation and in particular quota adaption, implementation and effectiveness, as well as on the relationship between women’s numerical (descriptive) and substantive representation, which I intend to explore in the context of Pakistan.

Below I discuss my personal interests and motivation for doing this project and then go on to explain the scope of this study by situating Pakistani women MNAs in the global debate around quotas and representation and to describe the focus of research. This introductory chapter concludes by describing the structure of the thesis.



### ***Rationale and Aims of the Thesis***

In 2000, the military-led Pakistani government made a commitment to increase women's political representation by introducing gender quotas in the form of reserve seats at all levels of the political system. Finally, these 'women reserve seats' were increased threefold to 18% of the total available in the Senate, 17.5 % of the seats in the National and Provincial Assemblies and 33% of those in local government institutions.

My interest in quotas and political representation as particular areas of research developed when in July 2008 three teenage girls and two older women were killed in an honour crime committed by men from the Umrani tribe in Baluchistan Province of Pakistan. The media reported that the women were first shot, and then while injured were thrown into a pit and buried alive, with their bodies later being found half-eaten by animals. According to media reports, the two elder women were their mothers or other relatives, possibly killed because they were sympathetic to the girls' wishes. The girls' crime was to choose the men they would get married to. It also came to the surface that 'Baluchistan government vehicles were used to abduct the girls, and [that] the killing was overseen by a tribal chief who is the brother of a provincial minister from the existing ruling Pakistan People's Party', the PPP (The Telegraph, September 1<sup>st</sup> 2008; see also Dawn 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2008; Yasin, 2008; Siddiqa, 2008).

One may argue that honour killing is not new to Pakistani society, so this case is not surprising. It actually came as shock and stunned everyone when a woman senator, Ms. Yasmeen Shah, while condemning the incident by raising the issue in Pakistan's Upper House/Senate was confronted by a male Senator Mr. Israrullah Zehri from the province where this unfortunate incidence took place, stood up on the floor of House and said, 'these are centuries-old traditions, and I will continue to defend them. Only those who

indulge in immoral acts should be afraid'. This was met with an almost total silence in the House, with only three senators supporting Ms. Yasmeen Shah and the rest keeping quiet (Hassan, 2008). Later, Ms. Yasmeen claimed in the media that male Senator Mr. Zehri had threatened to have her assassinated for raising this issue in parliament (Jang, 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2008).

Human and women rights and feminists groups also strongly protested against Senator's Zehri's statement (Dawn, 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2008, Bari and Bari, 2008, Siddiq, 2008), and a serious debate evolved throughout Pakistan. Following these events, and despite strong outrage by many actors, including the media, human rights and women's groups against Senator Zehri, he was promoted by the state government and appointed to a cabinet position.

I was thus troubled by the existence of legislatures dominated by feudal<sup>1</sup> / tribal elite, who proudly defend events which amount to crimes against humanity and women. I questioned what expectations we should have of women representatives, who are made subordinate to male political leaders and are expected to bring change for other women. Powerful feudal-tribal-political elites, who are mainly men, possess immense power and are inclined to control women's lives (Bari and Bari, 2008).

The case of Pakistani women parliamentarians represents a much more complicated terrain when I consider the context under which quotas have emerged, which includes

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<sup>1</sup>For the purpose of this thesis, the term 'feudal' is used to refer to the attitudes and characteristics of those families/individuals having been in politics for several years, who also dominate local and/or constituency level politics. Some of them are part of the landowning class, but they can also be tribe/clan leaders with many spiritual followers, and with great influence in their rural and tribal settings. In all cases, this is not a social scientific or historical use of the term, but a colloquial use of it.

the threatening and violent political environment due to growing Talibanization<sup>2</sup>, the war on terror and religious fundamentalism (Shah, 2002; Rashid, 2008), the semi-feudal, tribal and patriarchal nature of the parliamentary democracy (Goodson, 2008; Lieven, 2011), the frequent military takeover of the parliaments and women's lower status in society (Mumtaz 1998, Shaheed 2009), as well as the lack of political experience of women parliamentarians (Bari, 2009). It is also important to consider the dual role played by the state government (Khan, 2004) on the one hand introduces quotas, and on the other hand supports those who defend and perpetuate violence against women. As some argue:

‘Gender quotas are a good idea in principle. However, when considering the adoption of gender quotas in a country, state, or municipality, the context of women's representation and the details of the quota legislation to be adopted (including how it interacts with the existing electoral rules) are of paramount importance’. (Jones, 2005: 652).

While considering the extent of challenges to women leaders, I place Pakistani women MNAs in the context of global gender politics and the debate that continues around the effectiveness of quotas in terms of representation. By doing this project, I have not only tried to develop an understanding of the relationship between the presence of women parliamentarians and the representation of women's interests under the shadow of existing feudal, tribal and/or military elite democracies, but also to empirically verify theoretical claims made by western feminist scholars and widely applied in developed democracies, in the context of complex democracy like Pakistan to ‘show how the

---

<sup>2</sup> Rise of Taliban movement in Pakistan, especially in bordering areas of Afghanistan

constraints of real political situations affect the capacities of actually existing women politicians and vice versa' (Lovenduski, 2005: 9).

### ***Scope and Focus of the Study***

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the extent to which women's formal representation is translated into substantive change, in what ways quotas have affected women's numerical, substantive and symbolic representation, and to establish the major factors affecting change for women's representation in Pakistan. This thesis not only focuses on what women MNAs have achieved and represented in the substantive sense within and outside parliament, but also considers the views of women MNAs on issues they have not been able to represent, and importantly, the reasons for this. As some scholars highlight, we should also consider in our analyses that why women legislators fail (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008). By examining the effects of quota from various aspects of representation, I argue that evaluating representation requires going beyond numbers/critical mass by considering the wider effects of quotas in a particular context (Franceschet et al. 2012).

In essence, this thesis builds on the concept of 'The Politics of Presence' developed and extended by Anne Phillips (1995; 1998) analyzing the effects of gender quotas in relation to three facets of representation: *descriptive*, *substantive* and *symbolic representation* (Franceschet et al. 2012).

- Under *descriptive representation* I have focused on the routes women have taken to parliament and women's perspectives on political recruitment processes and about themselves as politicians.

- *Substantive representation* is evaluated and divided into two parts - *substantive representation within parliament* which deals with the engendering of the legislative interventions within the House, and *substantive presentation outside parliament*, which explores women MNAs' contribution to bringing about change to the lives of other women. However, substantive representation within parliament is further analytically examined from two different aspects: firstly, *substantive representation as process* focusing on women's contribution towards most of the legislative business of the parliament such as questions, resolutions, motions and bills. Secondly, *substantive representation as outcome* relates to the examination of bills passed by the House with a special focus on women-specific legislation or policy outcomes (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008).
- *Symbolic representation* relates to changes in public perceptions of women in politics and the engagement of women constituents in political processes.

The thesis is based on in-depth semi-structured interviews of 20 women parliamentarians and gendered analyses of the proceedings of the National parliament (2008-11). It focuses on women Members of the National Assembly (MNAs), not because other legislative and political institutions in Pakistan are unimportant but because the National Assembly has the highest number of women parliamentarians, that is 76 out of the House of 342 which particularly includes both quota and non quota women MNAs. Of these 76 women parliamentarians, 60 are quota/reserve seat MNAs, while 16 women were directly elected to general seats during the election of 2008, raising women's overall representation from 17.5% to 22% in the House. As per the electoral rules, reserve seats are given to parties in proportion to the number of general

seats won by them in elections. For example, any political party that wins four or five directly-elected general seats are additionally awarded one women reserve seat. This means that parties winning a greater number of general seats be allocated more women reserve seats in the parliament. Political parties submit a closed list of women candidates and therefore play an important role of gate-keeper for reserve seats; it is written in law that political parties nominate women candidates. Women cannot nominate themselves directly to reserve seats.

Constitutionally speaking, there is no difference between members directly elected to general seats and those nominated for reserve seats. Nevertheless, these electoral rules and procedures mean that in practice some differences exist between these two groups (quota and non quota) of members of the House. So the National Assembly permits a comparison between quota and non-quota/directly elected women parliamentarians in order to evaluate in what ways two different electoral rules and procedures adapted for quota and non-quota women parliamentarians have influenced women's representation.

Besides this, the National Assembly of Pakistan also enjoys the widest geographical coverage in terms of representatives from all four provinces, who also represent all of the major political parties active in the country's coalition politics/government, that help in collecting a wide range of data from a diverse group of women members. I think that any study examining gender and political aspects particularly at the national level in Pakistan must consider that although Pakistan is predominantly a Muslim state, it is still highly multi-ethnic, multi-racial and multi-lingual, meaning that there are divergences among the people of the country (Ali and Rehman, 2001: 2).

### ***Structure of the Thesis***

In the next chapter I provide a review of literature on quotas, critical mass and other key concepts of women's political representation. Firstly, I briefly explain quotas and the idea of critical mass, which has remained dominant in analyses of the differences that women legislators have made. Here, I show that feminists for some time have contended with the concept of critical mass, which assumes that change will automatically occur as the number of women in the legislature increases. I then review a range of literature which challenges the critical mass concept on various grounds, demonstrating the argument made by various scholars who highlight that presence is important, but that bringing change may be affected by several other factors.

I then go on to discuss the three concepts of political representation - *descriptive*, *substantive* and *symbolic* - and how these have been used by scholars in relation to the effects of quotas. I review the literature showing the mixed effects of quotas on women's political representation. In order to explore the field further, I also review the literature on Pakistani women parliamentarians. Throughout this review, I engage with the literature in order to assess its significance for my project, highlighting relevant theory as well as the gaps in knowledge which this thesis intends to address. At the end of literature review I introduce my conceptual framework, which is based on Anne Phillips' text *The Politics of Presence* (1995). The final part of the chapter introduces the research questions.

Chapter three outlines in detail the research methodology adapted to achieve the aims and objectives of this study. I first introduce the mixed methods approach adapted for this study, discussing the relevance of in-depth interviews, proceedings of the

parliament, secondary data, observations, and meetings with civil society organization including feminist organizations. I also provide detailed discussion of the difficulties related to accessing elite women, secondary data, interviewing places and doing field work in high security zones.

I explain how my personal contacts and networking with influential people working in important positions in the media and civil society organizations as well as the civil bureaucracy were crucial in order to access political women as well as (parliamentary) data. I give a full account of my experiences of the process of doing this elite and gender study by closely analyzing the relationship between researcher and researched and considering the implications of ethical issues, asking questions, qualitative analyses and the interview place and time. At the end of this chapter, while describing sampling based on a non probability stratified random sample, I provide basic collective socio-political information regarding the women parliamentarians interviewed for this study.

The fourth chapter sets the context for the study by offering information on gender and politics in Pakistan. This chapter has two main parts; in the first part the socio-cultural context in relation to women's status in Pakistan is discussed. Here, it is highlighted that women in Pakistan are not a homogeneous group, there are marked differences in their status. Here I also discuss how political power and violence against women, especially honour crimes, are interlinked with each other. The second part provides information regarding the political context, with reference to the frequent military actions which have affected democratic processes and institutions. I then discuss the political structures of governance and political parties which are currently present in the parliament. I argue that the National Parliament of Pakistan is dominated by feudal and



tribal elites. I then explain that women in political parties and legislatures are marginalized, and I argue that women reserve seats have been introduced without much change in the socio-political context.

Chapter five provides a full account related to women's descriptive representation. I first examine the routes women have taken to parliament, while exploring women's experiences of going through the recruitment processes within political parties. Second, I examine women's perspective on the electoral rules and processes that have been adapted to bring women into politics and parliament. Third, I examine how quota and directly elected women MNAs perceive themselves as politicians. Interestingly, I find marked differences in the perceptions of directly elected and quota women about themselves as politicians. The quota women are stigmatized and see themselves as second class politicians, whereas directly elected women are more confident and claim to receive greater respect within and outside parliament.

Chapter six responds to the central research question which relates to the substantive and symbolic representation of women within and outside parliament. This chapter is divided into two parts. In first part, I discuss women's substantive representation within parliament, based on an empirical verification of National Assembly proceedings data from the last three years (2008-11). Here, I show that women MNAs are very active members of the parliament and their participation is much higher than male parliamentarians. However, the role played by women champions seems crucial in increasing women's input into the legislative business of the parliament. The examination of substantive representation as outcome shows limited gains, as most of the efforts taken by women MNAs in engendering legislative agendas are ultimately

ineffective – as demonstrated by the fact that the National Assembly passed very few women-specific bills throughout these years.

In the second part of this chapter six, I document and analyze women's experiences of practicing representation outside parliament. I highlight the effects of quotas on women's substantive and symbolic representation at constituency, community and personal level. I seek to establish whether women politicians seek to act for women and develop any relationship with women constituents outside parliament. The insights provided by women confirm that the overwhelming majority of women strongly support the notion of representation as process, which depends on the continuous relationship between the *representative* and *represented*.

Chapter seven presents information regarding the ways in which women perceive representation, as well as the factors affecting change. In this chapter I first analyze the conception held by of women MNAs concerning representation, especially focusing on who they perceive themselves as representatives in parliament. Results reveal that quota women see themselves a more accountable to parties and men in their parties, while directly elected MNA speak of having a greater responsibility towards women constituents. However, in practice, when I examined data on the proceedings of the parliament, I found quota women to be more involved in raising women's related agendas in parliament as compared to directly elected women. I obtained similar findings in the case of the cross-party women caucus initiative. In interviews women provided somewhat negative comments, widely criticizing the official women's parliamentary caucus, but in practice women MNAs of different political parties make collective efforts to propose and support women's issues in parliament.

In this chapter I also present a case study related to the silence among women politicians on the appointment of two male politicians (including Senator Zehri as mentioned above) as cabinet members, who have defended honour crime against women. I unpack the truths behind their silence, showing the anger, helplessness and the difficulties they experience in addressing issues which challenge the powerful feudal and tribal political elite of Pakistan.

At the end of this chapter, I provide a full account of the constraints and obstacles to women's political representation in Pakistan, which are important to analyze in order to understand the factors that affect the bringing of change for women. I provide an analysis on the basis of several examples, stories, and narratives of women related to their descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation.

Chapter eight, the final concluding chapter, draws together the findings of the research. For descriptive representation, the quota played an important role in increasing women's presence. However, the electoral rules and recruitment processes adapted for women reserve seats, as analyzed in chapter five lead to negative labelling and the subordinated status of female politicians, which is particularly the case for quota women. By examining substantive representation from different angles, more nuanced claims are advanced. The determinants of substantive change strongly suggest that the presence of women is necessary and has brought increased attention within parliament towards women's issues, but that this has not been sufficient to achieve substantive outcome. There are several other extremely crucial factors which affect women's ability to bring about change. Nevertheless, when analyzing women's representation it is necessary to take the context in which the representation is occurring into account.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Introduction***

This chapter provides a review of the literature around quotas, critical mass, factors affecting substantive change for women, concepts related to women's political representation and conceptual framework adapted for this study. I first briefly explain quotas and their forms. I then go on to discuss critical mass and factors affecting change. I review the literature highlighting that scholars have been analyzing the quotas and their effects through the idea of critical mass which originates from Kanter's (1977) work, which assumes change will occur as the number of supporters of a cause increases. Currently, however, the critical mass theory is challenged on many grounds, as scholars draw attention to several factors which affect change positively and negatively.

Empirical studies show that it is not only weight through numbers that counts, but several other factors are also important, that may affect change such as parliament, political parties, masculine culture, norms, ritual, formal and informal rules, equality champions, labels and mandates, deteriorating security conditions and others. After that I review the literature that analyzes the effects of quotas in relation to women's descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation. The review suggests that quotas contend with theoretical problems when it comes to questions of women's diversity, different identities, unified interests and the relationship between representative and represented.

I then go on to review the literature on Pakistani women legislators, highlighting gaps and certain issues of relevance to my study, considering how my research will take these forward. To this end, I explain my conceptual framework for this study by adapting Anne Phillips's (1995) '*The Politics of Presence*' which theorizes women's presence as important, but warns that gender parity cannot bring with it a certificate the women's interests will be addressed.

In my conceptual framework, I expand the ideas presented by Phillips (1995) in *the Politics of Presence*, and adapt the arguments extended by several other scholars who claim that evaluating representation requires going beyond numbers/critical mass and examining the wider effects of quotas in any particular context (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008; Franceschet et al., 2012; Childs 2004). I examine the effects of quotas on women's descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation from different aspects and integrate broader perspectives, while keeping the Pakistani political context central to my framework. Finally, I present the research questions which have guided me throughout my analysis.

### ***Quotas, Critical Mass and Factors Affecting Change***

It is argued that 'significant representation by gender cannot be achieved in any existing polity without some form of quota' (Mansbridge, 2005: 622). Therefore, in order to increase women's presence in legislative and political institutions, in the past 15 years more than 100 democracies around the world have established quotas (Krook, 2009: 5). These gender quotas are used as a fast-track strategy, different from incremental track modeling that suggests that gender equality will come in due time as a country develops (Dahlerup, 2012). Quotas in politics involve establishing a percentage or number - for

instance 20, 30 or 40 percent - for the representation of any previously excluded group/s such as women, minority and others. As Dahlerup (2006: 19) explains: 'quotas are used as a measure to increase the representation of historically excluded or under represented groups'.

Most scholars recognize three basic forms of quota: reserved seats, party quotas and legislative quotas. Reverse seats are mainly adapted by countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The party quotas have been introduced in Western Europe, whereas many developing and post-conflict countries of Africa, the Middle East and South Eastern Europe have legislative quotas (Krook, 2009 see also Norris, 2004; Franceschet et al., 2012). In terms of which form is more effective in increasing women's numbers in political institutions it has been noted that

'reserve seats produce 6.4 percent and 48.8 percent of women in the parliament, party quotas between 4.1 percent and 47.3 percent, and legislative quotas between 9 percent to 40 percent' (Inter Parliamentary Union 2008, cited in Krook, 2009: 40).

Scholars argue that 'some countries have witnessed dramatic gains following quota adoption, while others have seen modest changes or even setbacks in the numbers of women elected' (Franceschet et al. 2012: 6). The literature review suggests that several actors play an important role in the successful adaptation of quotas in various countries, for instance women and women's movements, actors in political parties, women parliamentarians, countries' constitutions, non-feminist allies, as well as those who

enforce international norms. (see Mazur, 2011; Jones, 2005; Krook, 2009; Franceschet et al., 2012).

The expectation that the presence of a certain number of women in legislatures mean that women can make a difference was promoted by those who advocated the notion of critical mass, introduced into political debates in 1988 by Drude Dahlerup. The idea of critical mass was advocated widely in order to achieve women's enhanced representation, particularly in legislative bodies. The assumption was that once women reach certain numbers or a percentage of the total number of those present in the legislature, change will occur automatically.

Gender and politics scholars developed the idea of critical mass, which first originated in Kanter's (1977) work on bureaucratic organisations. Kanter identifies four different types of groups, as follows: *uniform groups* have only one kind of person dominating others and have a ratio of 100:0 percentage ratio. *Skewed groups* are constituted of a maximum of 15 percent, but this is still seen as token representation, where its members are controlled by dominant groups. *Tilted groups* occupy 15-40 percent under which minority members potentially become able to affect change, and finally, ratio of about 60:40 down to 50:50, the group becomes *balanced group*, and the culture and interaction reflect the balanced nature of the group (Childs 2004a).

Dahlerup's (1988: 283-84) research on Nordic women legislators highlights that when women reached a critical mass, the changes were found in the political discourses, social climate of political life, power and performance of women and policy. The argument was made that:

‘a qualitative shift will take place when women exceed a proportion of about 30% in an organization. In this way, the move from a small to a large minority is significant’ (Dahlerup, 2006a : 512).

Women politicians themselves have been arguing that ‘women MPs seek both to articulate women’s issues in Parliament and conduct politics in a new and feminised way’ (Childs, 2000 : 70, see also Darhour and Krit, 2012). The presence of women in politics in certain numbers bringing change remains a major focus of enquiry, and feminists have contended for some time with the idea of critical mass as relevant for women’s political representation (Childs, 2004). As Dahlerup (2006a: 512) highlights

‘a story of the theory of a critical mass has played an important role for women politicians themselves, as well as for those advocating increased representation for women in politics, most recently for the many who advocate introducing electoral gender quotas’

However, the idea of critical mass has been criticized and contested in the scholarly literature, because getting more women elected may be necessary, but certainly not a sufficient condition (Phillips 1995). As Childs (2004: 196) asserts, women being able to make a difference simply through determining the number of women present is an inadequate notion. Childs and Krook (2008: 734) inform us that

‘scholars ought to adopt a more guarded approach: rather than simply assuming that women will form alliances with other women as their numbers increase,



they must investigate multiple possibilities in the relationship between women's descriptive and substantive representation'.

Dahlerup (2006a: 520) herself argues that:

'number and percentages are of only minor importance for the policy outcome. Even a few women in politics, under the right circumstances, can make a big difference, while a large minority of women parliamentarians may not wish or be able to change the political agenda in a certain political system at a certain time. At any rate, numbers interrelate with other factors, and consequently, isolating the effect of sheer numbers is almost impossible'.

Some even write that the notion of critical mass fails to build on Kanter's original insights that highlight the crucial role played by critical actors apart from the women present in an institution (Chaney et al., 2007: 12). Meanwhile, others argue that 'scholars applying Kanter's work to both the behaviour and success of female state legislators are putting cart before the horse' (Bratton 2005: 98). Several other grounds were also made to challenge the concept of critical mass; such as those who argue that it hides more than it reveals, it tells us nothing about gender identity or that gender identity may vary amongst women, there is no agreement about what constitutes critical mass, and that it simply counts the numbers of biological females and males present, as well as failing to acknowledge the importance of party differences (Childs 2004, see also Grey, 2002; Lovenduski, 2005; Tremblay, 2006; Childs and Krook 2006 and 2008).

Importantly, the critical mass theory places undue responsibility on the shoulders of female legislators (Trimble 2006: 127).

Despite apparent patterns of changes in politics, it is now increasingly being argued that:

‘how effective are gender quotas in practice depends on several factors, including the likelihood of women achieving appropriate representation by other means and the institutional plausibility of achieving a satisfactory quota system in a given country in a given historical moment’ (Mansbridge, 2005:622).

Recent scholarship in the field of feminist and gender research captures well and informs us about several positive factors that have emerged through empirical enquiry, as well as those negatively impacting upon women politicians’ potential ability to bring change. For instance, a great deal of the literature talks about women’s active role in legislatures, however, some draw attention towards the crucial role played by a few active women legislators. Scholars inform us that these ‘equality champions’ with feminist convictions and skills put significant efforts into gender mainstreaming political agendas, substantially contributing to women’s share of legislative business (Cheney, 2007: 117-32). Others also indicate that ‘women politicians have more readily acted as and for women when they have a team (of sufficient size), whose members have feminist leanings, and when they find themselves in a general environment supportive of feminist ideas’ (Grey, 2006: 501). Therefore it is not just the number of women that counts, but the presence of women with feminist consciousness, skills and

awareness are also important. Such findings draw attention to the fact that it is not only numbers/critical mass that is important, but ‘who these women are’.

The potential of women leaders is likely to be greatly affected by institutional considerations, culture and structures. Lovenduski (2005: 11), in her work on feminizing politics, informs us that ‘to understand the feminization of politics, it is necessary to understand the institutions in which the processes are taking place’. At the same time, many women politicians consider that parliaments are not conducive to women acting in a feminized way (Childs, 2004 and 2004a), because legislatures are still masculine in nature and have the tendency to resist change. Some authors indicate that parliaments with less gendered practices can facilitate positive change for women. As in case of the Welsh parliament, authors find that:

‘a new institution, unlike an established one, does not have the weight of tradition and established gendered practices to contend with and is able to institutionalise differently gendered practices which facilitate women’s representation, both descriptive and substantive, and create a more feminised and woman-friendly political organization’ (Jones, et, al. 2009: 9-10).

Some scholars draw attention to male dominated cultures that influence women to behave more like the dominant (male) group. It has been argued that the male-dominated culture of a political institution only ‘institutionalizes the norms of the men who founded it and for so many years inhabited it as a wholly male institution’

(Lovenduski, 2002: 208). Such dominance in practice influences women to behave more like the men they seek to replace. As Puwar (2004: 75) highlights,

‘if women want to be accepted in a world that adheres to strict gender fictions, they have to display the acceptable face of femininity. Otherwise they could alienate their colleagues and be ostracized from the very community they want to have an impact on’.

Puwar while defining women and black and Asian MPs in Westminster as ‘space invaders’ still argues that ‘the expectation that their mere presence will be enough to transform political styles is unrealistic’ (ibid, 2004: 77).

In most recent research on ceremonies and rituals in parliament scholars draw attention to formal and informal rules, procedures, norms and ritual that affect women by undermining their ability to promote issues that are presumed to be conflictual. Presenting the case of the Chilean Parliament, Susan Franceschet demonstrates that:

‘[The] formal and informal rules that shape the daily rituals in Chile’s congress, have profoundly gendered consequences, influencing not only the arenas in which men and women are more likely to participate (parliamentary committees, and leadership positions, for instance), but also the actions legislators take on behalf of women as constituents’ (2010: 405).

Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler (2005) in their research on the representation of women in 31 democracies, confirm the interconnections between the several dimensions of

representation, and also highlight that ‘the structure of electoral systems exerts powerful influence on both women’s descriptive representation and symbolic representation. [...] the effects of substantive representation however, are much less than theory anticipate’ (2005:407).

The difficulties related to political parties and party identity are far more complex issues than any other factors affecting women’s ability to make a difference. It has been shown that political parties are gendered political institutions (Rai, forthcoming), in which women are marginalized and have very little influence on decision-making. As Goetz (2003: 136) highlights, in Uganda: women’s status in politics is compromised that their effectiveness in promoting gender equity agendas is low and women are unable to challenge party system.

Childs (2004) researches the experiences, attitudes and styles of new Labour women MPs in the UK and recognizes that the relationship between women’s descriptive and substantive representation is complicated and that party and gender identities are crucial. She argues that the relationship between women’s descriptive and substantive representation ‘is most considered and contested’ (Childs 2004: 17). She further notes that ‘any comprehensive account of the relationship between women’s presence and the substantive representation of women in Westminster must also recognize that women MPs are party representatives’ (ibid, 2004: 197). Phillips also writes that women are party candidates, who are said to represent that party’s policies and programmes. Therefore, ‘in what sense can we say that the women elected through this process carry an additional responsibility to represent women?’ (1995: 71).

Some scholars find that quotas create mandates, as well as labels for women politicians (Childs and Krook, 2012; Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008). The mandate effect is seen when female legislators perceive an obligation to act on behalf of women. However, labels act to reinforce negative stereotypes about women's capabilities, which may not be necessarily true, but do have some effect on quota women and require further research. As some assert:

‘[These] negative stereotypes about “quota women” reduce women’s ability to build solidarities and to accumulate power and influence (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008: 421).

However, Childs and Krook (2012: 101) conclude that the stigma connected to quota may erode and the power of labels appeared to diminish over time.

Apart from parliaments, parties, informal norms and labels, several scholars talk about the electoral method which too has a substantive impact on women's ability to bring change. Different countries have adapted different forms of quotas, including legislative, reserve seats and party quotas which are structured around elections in numerous ways. A more adverse impact was particularly observed where quotas are adapted with a top-down approach (Krook, 2009).

Problems were also found for women politicians when they lacked their own power base or particular constituency to represent. For instance in case of South Africa Goetz (2003a : 62) informs that ‘all of women’s gains in politics were hostage to the good will of the president’. As Meena (2004:8, cited in Bauer, 2011) asks in the case of Tanzania;

‘when women and gender related issues are in conflict with party interests, what position will these women [in reserve seats] take?’ All these scholars draw attention to the fact that how women become representatives is important.

Many scholars see a strong women’s movement, women politicians’ links with such movements, women’s policy agencies and women groups as highly effective in pushing political parties and states for substantive change. As Weldon highlights:

*‘Thus, strong, autonomous women’s movements and effective women’s policy agencies reinforce one another in improving women’s representation. This effect is interactive: Each factor magnifies the effect of the other. (2002: 1162).*

Amy Mazur also (2011: 1) writes that:

‘the most important factors in determining feminist policy success ... may be strategic partnership between women’s policy agencies, women’s movement actors in political parties, and women in political offices, the presence of a constitutional, culture, and non feminist allies’.

Bauer (2011: 361-2) stresses that:

‘whether women are elected on party lists or in reserved seats, strong autonomous women’s movements and traditions of political advocacy and

mobilization are necessary to influence political parties and national agendas’.

Evaluation of the case of women’s political representation in conflict and war zone countries such as Afghanistan is also relevant to Pakistan when they inform us that the deteriorating security environments bear greatly on politicians. As noted in the case of Afghanistan, ‘parliamentarians were concerned about speaking their minds in parliament because of the potential repercussions that might affect their personal safety and that of their families’ (Larson, 2012: 147). In such democracies, women’s interests are also often aligned with Western agendas (Larson, 2009, cited in Larson 2012: 148; see also Bari 2009).

These are just some of the factors that affect change, although there might be several others at play. As quotas are adapted in different contexts, so the nature and impact of various factors and actor are also different. Taking these arguments further that the presence of women is important, but there are several other factors which can positively and negatively contribute towards the effects of women’s political representation. Therefore it is important to be sensitive about masculine political institutions, gendered contexts and complicated processes. As has been aptly summarized elsewhere:

‘it becomes clear that – based on current theories and evidence – quotas may have positive, mixed and sometimes even perverse effects on women’s political representation’ (Franceschet et al. 2012: 13).



### ***Quotas and Theories of Political Representation***

The question of the effects of women's presence is at the core of research on gender and politics. The effects of quotas have also been analyzed in relation to three facets of political representation: descriptive, substantive and symbolic.

Phillips (1995: 62-63) summarizes four basic arguments for raising the proportion of women. *Firstly*, concerning the symbolic role model of successful women, Phillips considers the symbolic argument to be the least interesting, but asserts that positive role models are certainly beneficial. *Secondly*, the principle of justice between sexes is considered to be perhaps the most powerful argument. She emphasizes that the argument for justice alone is enough for parity between women and men. It is also argued that women's absence undermines the legitimacy of political institutions, meaning that women should be descriptively represented. *Thirdly*, Phillips provides an argument that women's interests are discounted in the absence of women's representation; *fourthly*, women's different relationship to politics in which women will introduce a different set of values and concerns is emphasized.

Some strongly argue that 'more typically, substantive, not descriptive, representation is the reason scholars and activists concern themselves with numbers of women in legislatures' (Meyers and Langbein, 2009: 491). Most of the literature concerned with substantive representation is based on Henna Pitkin's (1967) well established work '*The Concept of Representation*'. Pitkin argues that 'representation here means acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them' (1967: 209). Feminist theorists have also argued that women are not just standing for women, but also acting for women (Phillips, 1995; Lovenduski, 1997). Mansbridge (2005: 622) writes that

‘descriptive representation by gender improves substantive outcomes for women in every polity for which we have a measure’. Scholars now highlight that

‘the presence of women in parliament is not simply about justice, symbolism or a feminised style of politics, it is about acting for women (although it is about all of these too)’ (Childs 2004: 196).

Below, I discuss all three forms of representation descriptive, substantive and symbolic, and some of the controversies surrounding quotas in relation to the concept of representation.

### **Descriptive Representation**

With the concept of *descriptive representation*, representing means being typical of the larger group of people, but not acting for the group (Pitkin 1967: 89). Mansbridge (1999: 629) argues, ‘characteristics such as colour of skin or gender, but also shared experiences are important, so that a representative with a background in farming is to that degree a descriptive representative of his or her farmer constituents’.

Childs (2004) and Mansbridge (1999) offer a more sophisticated understanding of descriptive representation, where shared experiences have greater impact than visible characteristics. Nonetheless, descriptive representation is seen as extremely justifiable especially to increase the representation of deprived or excluded groups such as women. It is argued that the mere presence of women in the legislature may still affect the legislative processes:

‘Even when the descriptive legislator is silent, his or her mere physical presence reminds the other legislators of the perspectives and interests of the group of which he or she is a descriptive member. Descriptive representatives have, moreover, several advantages in communicating with other legislators’ (Mansbridge, 2005: 626).

Feminists have reclaimed women’s descriptive representation, arguing for it as a straightforward matter of justice; as Phillips (1995: 63-5) highlight, there is no argument from a justice perspective that can defend the exclusion of women in political spheres.

Empirical studies exploring descriptive representation have analyzed the impact of three categories: *institutional*, concerning electoral rules and candidate recruitment; *structural*, related to women’s education achievements; and *cultural*, such as beliefs about equality or women’s suitability for leadership role (Franceschet et al., 2012: 7). The literature around descriptive representation helps us to understand how many women are elected, why so few women elected, what kinds of women are elected, the route women take to parliament, barriers and complexities of electoral processes, party recruitment system, resources and motivations women bring to politics (Lovenduski and Norris, 2003).

The call for women’s descriptive representation proposes that women should represent women in proportion to their presence in the population (Phillips, 1995). ‘This first conjures up the mirror concept: A legislative assembly is said to be representative if its composition reflects the whole (that is, the population)’ (Tremblay, 2006: 502). But empirical evidence suggest that quotas primarily benefit women of a particular class,

especially those with strong ties with male party leaders, ultimately showing elite women's capture of political spaces and also greatly ignoring the diversity and differences among women (Franceschet, et al., 2012). Cases such as Argentina (Piscopo, 2006; Waylen, 2000), South Africa (Vincent, 2004), Pakistan (Bari, 2009) and Uganda (Tripp, 2006; Goetz, 2003) are some of the countries where elite women have benefited most from the gender quota. In addition, resistance was also observed in the Indian parliament during a debate about quotas, as many feared that only women from elite political families would get chance to be members of the parliament (Rai, 2000; Nanivadekar, 2006).

A number of scholars have already challenged the issue of differences among women, and these differences are now being widely acknowledged. As Hoskyns and Rai (1998: 346) argue, 'this selective inclusion of women in the political process is important, but inadequate in challenging the established hierarchies of power relations'. Fraser (1995) emphasizes that we must recognize differences. Childs (2004) argues that women's differences must be acknowledged and Rai (2000) also gives emphasis to the recognition of differences among women and groups of women. Rainbow Murray (2010: 94) rightly pointed out that

'even if one accepts that legislatures should have a gender balance more in proportion to the general population (a concept which is in itself contested), quotas may still be challenged as an imperfect solution to gender inequalities in politics'.

While exploring the descriptive characteristics of female parliamentarians, some scholars conclude that women MPs are less like women voters in terms of their social characteristics (Mecedes Mateo- Diaz, 2002 cited in Lovenduski, 2005:174), their agendas do not embody the priorities of women constituents (Lawless and Fox, 2011), they are from better off classes (Bilal, 2004), and similar ones to male parliamentarians (Mumtaz 1998). Thus, the descriptive characteristics of women politicians mean they confront an impossible double bind, as they are expected to be more representative of women in public and also to meet established selection criteria set by male politicians (Franceschet et al., 2012). Nevertheless, scholars do highlight that descriptive characteristics of women leaders may affect even substantive change. Empirical evidence shows that:

‘if quotas bring in female parliamentarians who, aside from their sex remain descriptively similar to male parliamentarians in terms of socio economic and professional status, they may be less likely to represent the concerns of ordinary women substantively. If elected women are more similar to women in society than to their male colleagues, they may lack political capital necessary to act effectively’ (ibid, 2012: 240)

The quota further contends with theoretical problems when attached to the idea of critical mass that women acting in political fora should make a difference as their number increases. However, under descriptive representation, representatives are not expected to make a difference; as Pitkin’s criticism of descriptive representation suggests, ‘a man can only be held accountable what he has done’ and ‘not for what he

is' (Pitkin 1967: 90), indicating that representatives cannot be held accountable under descriptive representation (Childs, 2004).

Accordingly, descriptive representation is now being argued as being the basis of 'shared experiences' rather than only visible characteristics (Mansbridge, 1999). Despite shared experiences and all women standing for other women, women leaders can still show 'complex, overlapping, a sometimes contradictory and often internally contested mixture of identities, needs, strategies and goals' (Trimble, 2006: 126-7). Because 'women are never simply women; 'real' women's identities are multiple, differentiated in terms of class, ethnicity and sexuality' (Childs 2004: 17). Empirical studies show that women are instead divided across ethnic, class, linguistic, political and regional lines (Larson, 2012)

### **Substantive Representation**

*Substantive representation* stresses the importance of what an 'elected individual thinks and does, rather than emphasizing who the person is' (Tremblay, 2006: 502). Under substantive representation 'a group is most simply described as the representation of one's interests may be more important, than the representation of one's kind' (Lovenduski, 2005: 18). This approach seeks to ascertain whether 'if elected, women will "make a difference" in legislative life and political leadership, or they will offer 'substantive' representation to women' (Lovenduski and Norris, 2003: 86). The fundamental assumption is that women in politics prioritize issues and policies differently from men and have the potential to make a difference in politics, including by representing women interests.

Scholars connect women's presence with substantive representation in many ways, although demonstrating these effects is not straight forward (Franceschet et al. 2012: 8). Some scholars argue that women's entry into politics may not bring immediate radical changes, but women still show commitment to women on many fronts. Women legislators often take a pro-women line and women are primarily represented by women in legislature (Lovenduski and Norris, 2003; Childs 2000; Grey, 2006; Bari 2009, 2010).

Other scholars, through the verification of the legislative record of assemblies, show differences among men and women legislators' priorities and that women legislators had a greater propensity than their male colleagues to both engage in and initiate political debate on women's issues in order to further the substantive representation of women. As Chaney et al. (2007: 125) highlight, 'there is a significant difference between the sexes with female AMs being almost twice likely to advance feminist and pro equality interventions when compared to male colleagues'. That females act more on legislation that deals with women's rights and social issues has also been found by several others (Schwindt-Bayer 2006; Swers 2005; Jones 1997).

Apart from women legislators taking a pro-women line, more often initiating women's issues in legislatures and prioritising issues differently than men, some studies illustrate that the majority of women politicians feel that they do behave in a different manner from their male counterparts and have different style of politics. They are not as combative and aggressive, are willing to cooperate and create consensus, offer different language and are more polite (Bochel and Briggs, 2000; Childs, 2004, 2004a). Indeed, male and female Assembly members themselves see a difference to the usual

masculinist political culture and style, with to certain extent a more feminised, more consensual and less aggressive and macho way of doing politics emerging (Jones et al., 2009). Important in this regard is also Childs's (2004, 2004a) exploration of the feminized style of politics, where she informs us that women parliamentarians think that their different style of politics is because of gender and not sex, which concerns the way in which masculine and feminine gender roles are ascribed to males and females. However, it is argued that women's feminized style is less legitimate than men's (Childs, 2004a).

Other scenarios are also possible, including the viewpoint that women's presence alone does not necessarily lead to improved policy outcomes (Walsh, 2012; Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008). As some highlight, changes may be constrained due to the inexperience of women legislators (Lovenduski 1997), their lack of social capital (Goetz 2003) and the labelling or stigma attached to quota women (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008). At the same time, scholars also inform us that not all women legislators seek to act for women or in a feminized manner (Childs 2004) and that women show greater loyalty to parties (Tripp, 2006). In fact, women candidates appear to be the products of more rigid and patriarchal gender and political socialization patterns than citizen respondents (Lawless and Fox, 2011).

The concept of critical mass also carries an assumption of women's presence and the representation of their interests (Tinker, 2004, cited in Larson, 2012: 142). Wangnerud (2000) reveals that in the Swedish parliament women's interests are primarily represented by female politicians; she asserts that 'when women take over seats from



men, it should mean that we gain a greater number of politicians who prioritize issues such as gender equality and social welfare' (ibid, 2000: 85).

However, defining women's interests in politics seems quite complicated due to the 'difference among women' argument. Many scholars have already raised concerns and complexities in taking women as homogenous group who have unified interests. Smooth (2011), while taking the difference argument, highlights that women in societies are positioned through different and complex identities like race, region, class and sex, and therefore such a framing of unified interests also obscures how issues affect group/s representation differently. Indeed women parliamentarians within parliament represent different constituencies, ethnic and racial groups which can be extremely complex, as Larson (2012: 143) highlights in case of Afghanistan that 'women [MPs] are motivated to enter politics to represent specific groups' interests, not just gender interests'.

'Many feminists explicitly recognize women's heterogeneity as a group, observing that there is "no empirical nor theoretical plausibility" to the idea that women share *all* or even *particular* experiences' (Celis et al. 2008a: 102). Trimble (2006: 131) also asserts that 'there is no single will, or set of interests, of the category "woman" that can be intelligibly represented'.

I agree with Molyneux when she writes: 'while it is true that at a certain level of abstraction women can be said to have some interests in common, there is no consensus over what these are or how they are to be formulated' (1984: 61). For instance, Smooth (2011) highlights that she found it difficult to differentiate women's interests while

interviewing African-American legislators. She explains that women legislators gave greater importance to presenting women's issues, but when legislators began to speak about women's issues they were often coded as children's issues, or at times as race issues (ibid, 2011: 436). This also suggests that women have diversified interests many of which are not commonly considered to be 'women's issues' but which in reality are raised and represented by women legislators. Such differences also direct our attention towards 'how some issues/interests come to be associated with women while others do not; how some are associated with some women and others with other women' (Reingold and Swers 2011: 434).

Moreover, in terms of women having unified interests, in presence theory Phillips (1995: 67) clarifies that 'for the idea that women have at least some interests distinct from and even in conflict with men's is, I think, relatively straight forward'. Phillips also suggests that the notion of distinct 'women's interests' dissolves upon closer attention. However, I again find Molyneux useful when she highlights 'gender interests' rather than 'women's interests'; she noted that

'this is not to deny that women generally have certain interests in common, these cases be called "gender interests" to differentiate them from the false homogeneity imposed by the notion of women's interests' (1984: 62).

Thus, the issue of women representing women's interests seems highly complex, without considering the critical question: 'which women's interests?' Therefore, conceptualizing women's interests in a way that enables us to think about differences

among women, as well as distinct gender interests, is highly important (Smooth, 2011: 483).

### **Symbolic Representation**

*Symbolic representation* relates to role model effects, with Phillips (1995) arguing that role models are certainly beneficial. Symbolic representation does not require women to make a difference as such, but argues that women's presence may create change as women politicians might act as role models for many other women (Childs, 2004). Some argue that symbolic representation is open to manipulation by representatives (Celis et al., 2008a), but it also tends to involve images that are largely arbitrary and thus have little or no real meaning (Pitkin, 1967). The literature around symbolic representation 'consider how women's presence affects constituents perception and opinions' (Franceschet et al., 2012: 13) as well as patterns of women constituents' engagement in political processes (Childs, 2004).

The effects of quotas on symbolic representation are highly important when assessing their broader impact on public attitude and women's political empowerment (Franceschet et al., 2012). Whereas, numbers of scholars conclude that 'quotas have little or no effect on women's political activities' (Zetterberg, 2009, cited in Franceschet et al., 2012: 12; see also Lawless, 2004). In contrast, many scholars point out that the greater visibility of women in public spheres has certainly affected public perceptions of these normally male dominated political spheres (Bari, 2009; Childs 2004). Scholars also highlight the gains for women in terms of increased respect from family and community members, enhanced capacity to speak and be heard in public forums, greater autonomy in decision making in the family and increased access to education (Burnet,

2011). Others claim that women representatives are more frequently accessed by women constituents. Childs (2004: 120-121) shows that in Britain ‘their [women’s] presence engendered greater access between themselves and their women constituents, not limited to white women only, they are also contacted by Asian women’. The empirical evidence available on women’s symbolic representation at the local level in India suggests that women’s symbolic representation is closely linked with substantive representation. This is because ‘individuals change their attitudes about the effectiveness of female leaders when they are exposed to female leaders who deliver public goods’ (Beamon et al., 2012: 222). Some even go on to say that quotas deepen the democratic foundation of the state (Meier, 2012).

Such findings suggest an increasingly strong relationship between representative and represented - indeed in theoretical terms there is a great emphasis on the relationship between these two categories. Several writers, starting with Henna Pitkin (1967), leading to Mansbridge (2003) and including Phillips (1995), conceptualize representation while keeping in view the continuous relationship between ‘representative’ and ‘represented’. Phillips (1995: 82) writes that representation is a process that depends on continuing relationship between representative and represented. Trimble (2006: 131) also says that ‘articulation of social perspectives requires collective processes, meaningful deliberation and fully developed relationship between legislators and between representatives and constituents’.

Scholars also find interaction and the relationship between representative and represented highly useful in terms of promoting gender concerns. As Mansbridge writes:

‘In listening, they can respond flexibly, drawing not just from what they have heard from their constituents, but also from what they know from their own lives. In speaking, they can call up anecdotes from personal experience to describe how a piece of legislation may affect their group. They can speak vividly with facts and emotion drawn from their experience. They can speak with authenticity and be believed’ (2005: 624).

Thus, in terms of symbolic representation, quotas may generate short, medium and long terms effects (Franceschet et al., 2012).

Given the mixed results, it is likely that women’s representation will produce varied results according to the different contexts and environment to which they are adapted. Therefore, ‘to understand what happens when the numbers of women rises, it is necessary to understand under what condition changes can be expected to occur and how institutional effects will distort and delay the processes’ (Lovenduski and Norris, 2003: 85). Accordingly, examining whether women act for other women is not only interesting but also central to this thesis in the context where Pakistani quota women enter parliament indirectly. They are neither voted in by women constituents, nor do the women they represent (constituents) have any role in selecting their representative (women politicians). Women reserve seats are awarded to parties in proportion to the general seats won by them in elections. If this is the case then in what way we can expect quota women to represent women constituents or develop any relationship with other women? What representation means in the absence of such a crucial link between *represented* and *representative* remains a major concern for this thesis. Before going to

examine these claims below I provide a literature review around Pakistani women legislators' substantive role.

### ***Women Representation in Pakistan's National Parliament***

I discuss fully the history of women reserve seats in the national parliament of Pakistan, Pakistan's political system and parties in the next chapter – 3. Here I have concentrate more on the literature produced on women legislators in National Parliament corresponding women's descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation as well as major obstacles, in order to identify gaps and how my research will contribute to these gaps.

In summary, since independence in 1947, women's representation in Pakistan's parliament has remained low. For almost eleven years there was no legislature at all and for another fourteen years the political process functioned under the shadow of military rule (Mumtaz, 1998). Between 1955 and 1999, in eleven constituent Assemblies, women's share in parliamentary politics never increased more than nine percent. In 2000 General Musharaf took the most important decision in Pakistan's history, in terms of women's political representation in legislatures, by reserving 17.5% of seats through the women's quota at provincial and national and 33% at local level.

Currently women constitute 22% (76 out of 342 seats) of the National Assembly. Of the 76 seats occupied by women, 60 of these women are indirectly elected on women reserve seats and 16 came through direct elections to general seats. Legislators holding general seats are elected on a 'first past the post' basis by a single member constituency. However, for reserve seats there are no direct elections. Women reserve seats are given

to parties in proportion to the number of general seats won by them at election, and parties submit a closed list of women candidates.

There is very little literature focusing on women's descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation at the national level (especially during the times of low representation) until 1999, with literature only occasionally mentioning women legislators' substantive role in the House. The only exception available is Khawer Mumtaz's (1998) work. She evaluates 40 years of legislative records and proceedings (1947-1988) of Pakistan's National Assembly to shed some light on women's role in national legislature. Throughout the period of Mumtaz's analysis, women's representation in National Assembly remained varied, starting at zero, and then being identified at 3%, 5% and later 9%. It is revealed that very few women were directly elected, and others were on reserve seats.

However, more scholarly analysis became available later on the role of women parliamentarians in legislature and substantive change, particularly after the year 2000 when women's representation increased to 21% in legislatures. The 12<sup>th</sup> National Assembly (2002-07) has remained a major focus of enquiry for researchers in Pakistan. Some studies have been conducted to examine the performance of the women that constituted 21% of the parliament (60 on reserve seats and 14 directly elected out of 342 seats) (see UNDP, 2005; Bari, 2009, 2010; Bilal, 2004; and Mirza and Wagha, 2009).

In terms of women's descriptive representation relating to women leaders' political recruitment and social characteristics, scholars highlight that the process of women's

recruitment on reserve seats especially within parties remained exclusively within the domain of party hierarchy. The gender perspective and track record of nominees were not the determining factors and selection process was marred with irregularities and nepotism (UNDP, 2005; see also Bari, 2010). The indirect method of women's election also leads to the politics of patronage, and the majority of women nominated on reserve seats are family relatives of prominent male politicians with elite, feudal and political backgrounds. It must be said, though, that women party workers were also nominated on reserve seats and subsequently entered the parliament. However, women party workers raised serious concerns over the process for women's indirect election, which is completely different from mainstream political system, and requires representatives to be elected by constituents (Bari, 2009). Party workers were of the view that women on reserve seats are rarely selected on merit (UNDP, 2005: 37) and they may be bypassed in nominations (PILDAT, 2004).

The findings of previous work also suggest that women who reached parliament are educated, since having a bachelor degree was set as a pre-condition for parliamentary candidature especially in 2002. They are often from urban areas, in many cases have no or little personal political experience (Bari, 2009; Mumtaz, 1998) and are financially comfortable - while some are more comfortable than others, no one is financially destitute (Bilal, 2004). In contrast, the majority of women in Pakistan are illiterate, and live in rural areas in chronic poverty (WB, 2005). The women of rural areas simply lack representation within parliament (Bari 2009), which strongly indicates that women leaders are not sufficiently representative of women in Pakistan (Bilal, 2004).



The effects of quotas on substantive representation has remained a major focus, under which scholars have been exploring women's contribution within parliament in terms of parliamentary interventions (resolutions, questions, motions and bills). Below, I first discuss the literature around substantive representation produced at the time when women's representation in the National Assembly was not more than 9%. I then provide discussion on literature which emerged later, after women's representation increased to 17%.

As discussed above, at the time when women's representation was low - between 3- 9 percent - Mumtaz (1998) conducted analyses over 40 years (1947-88) of the legislative record of the National Assembly. In her research, she highlights that despite being low in numbers and working in unstable and uncertain political conditions, women parliamentarians overwhelmingly participated in legislative business, concluding: Indeed the quality of women's interventions has been higher than male legislators (ibid, 1998: 350).

During these years (1947-88) women politicians raised several issues related to women, ranging from female employment to sports participation, and from family laws to women's political representation in the parliament. Women parliamentarians continuously made efforts to increase women reserve seats, including instigating a change in the process for women's indirect elections. Krook (2009: 66) while writing on women reserve seats in Pakistan, informs us that in 1966 lady parliamentarian - Begum Dolly proposed an increase in the number of women reserve seats. Begum Nasim Jehan, a female legislator, also introduced an amendment to replace indirect elections by male legislators with direct elections by female voters as a means of

fostering accountability between elected and ordinary women (ibid, 2009: 67). However, women's demands never go through parliament, and women do not always find the House supportive to them and their proposals (Mumtaz, 1998).

Mumtaz (1998) found that women parliamentarians have not always conformed to the party position, especially in regards to women's issues, showing great consensus among women from different parties. For instance the debate on Muslim Family Law Ordinance (MFLO, 1961) reveals strong consensus among women parliamentarians, and some, despite their ruling position strongly supported the law (ibid, 1998: 328-339). The Muslim Family Law Ordinance (MFLO, 1961) presented some very important pro-women provisions that aimed to restrict polygamy, in that a husband desiring a subsequent marriage had to seek permission of his current wife. If a husband decided on a second marriage then he would be liable to make a payment on the dowry of the existing wife. The Ordinance also addressed the custody and security of children as well as share in inheritance (Ali, 2000a). At the same time, Mumtaz (1998) found that women were divided and brought varying perspectives mainly on the issues of separate universities for women, women reserve seats and women's participation in sports.

Mumtaz (1998) states that women parliamentarians have demonstrated their capacity to participate ably and fully in the Assemblies. She also notes that quota women expressed greater concern than directly elected women regarding issues directly relevant to women (ibid: 350-1). However, her research does not explore why quota women were found to be more active than directly elected women. She highlights that 'male legislators' negative attitude, sheer tolerance and biased view of women continues to hound women's rights protagonists' (ibid: 339).

In 2002, women's representation increased to 21% in 12<sup>th</sup> National Assembly. A comprehensive study based on records of 5 years (2002-07) of the proceedings of the National Assembly by Mirza and Wagha (2009) reveals that in 43 sessions of the House during five years (covering the period from 16<sup>th</sup> November 2002 to 15<sup>th</sup> November 2007). Women MNAs participated to a varying degree in the proceedings of the parliament and their share in some of the proceedings of the parliament compared to male parliamentarians during 5 years remained as follows: 27% of the total questions, 30% of the total calling attention notices, 42% of the private member bills, 24% of the total resolutions and 8% of the total adjournment and privilege motion (ibid, 2009: 90). The same report concludes that this is an impressive showing, given the limited political and parliamentary experience women possessed, in addition to the overall tense climate<sup>3</sup> that prevailed during the time of the 12<sup>th</sup> National Assembly.

Almost similar are the findings of another study conducted by Farzana Bari (2009) on the 12<sup>th</sup> National Assembly. However, she only includes the proceedings of 30 sessions in her analyses as compared to the complete analysis of 43 sessions of the National Assembly as analyzed by Mirza and Wagha in the study mentioned above. However, she does bring some qualitative aspects to her study by interviewing 40 female MNAs (out of 74).

In terms of legislative interventions, Bari confirms that women drew greater attention to women's issues during the 12<sup>th</sup> National assembly, and that most of the interventions

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<sup>3</sup> The National Assembly barely met the constitutional requirement of 130 days per year, the president failed to address the parliament at the beginning of every year, the Speaker of the NA faced no confidence twice and lack of attendance and quorum has also been a persistent issue (Mirza and Wagha 2009:88).

made by women were related to social sector, political and constitutional change, public interests and women specific issues. Findings from the previous term suggest that women have also raised issues mainly known as men's interests, such as finance, export and import, industries, earthquakes, military operations and the environment (Mirza and Wagha, 2009: 83-5; Bari 2009)

Despite women's active role and the proposing of legislation related to women, in five years (2002-7) out of 38 laws passed by the House only two were directly relevant to women's concerns. One amends two of Hudood<sup>4</sup> Laws and another was passed with the aim of eliminating honour killings (Mirza and Wagha, 2009: 90). Bari (2010: 376) also raises concerns that the tangible outcome of women's representation 'in terms of passing laws and making policies that protect women's interests' is not significant.

Findings from the last term (2002-07) also suggest that quota women are more active than directly elected women in terms of initiating legislative intervention. Results suggest that male parliamentarians and directly elected women show the least interest in raising issues of direct concerns to women (Bari, 2009; Mirza and Wagha 2009).

The last term's (2002-07) proceedings records also reveal that women themselves have resisted substantive change for women - for example the Women's Protection Bill (2006) that amended Pakistan's controversial Hudood Laws and greatly affected

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<sup>4</sup> An Ordinance to bring in conformity with the injunctions of Islam, the law relating to the Offence of Zina (extra/pre marital sex) imposed by Gen Ziaulhaq in 1977 that have far reaching consequences for women. According to its clause 4, 'A man and a woman are said to commit *Zina*', if they wilfully have sexual intercourse without being married to each other. However Zina is liable to Hadd (restriction). It specifies the Islamic punishment that whosoever commit this would be punished stoned to death at a public place or with whipping numbering of one hundred stripes. The ordinance is most criticized for making it exceptionally difficult and dangerous to prove an allegation of rape. A woman alleging rape is required to provide four adult male witnesses of good standing of "the act of penetration". In practice this is virtually impossible as no man of good standing would stand there and watch the violent act.

women was strongly rejected by women from religious parties (Mirza and Wagha, 2009; Bari, 2010). It has been asserted that women parliamentarians always follow party lines (Bari, 2010).

A lack of experience and confidence (Bilal, 2004), lack of support and resistance within parliament (Bari 2009) as well as lower status within society are a few of the issues raised by scholars concerning women parliamentarians. At the same time scholars acknowledge that:

‘to expect women legislators to perform and represent women’s interests effectively as soon as they enter the parliament is not realistic, given that (a) the majority entered parliamentary politics for the first time; (b) had limited or no prior political experience of working as public representatives; (c) lacked social capital in terms of their own constituency; (d) had weak or no linkages with women’s movements; and finally, (e) did not have even basic know-how about the functioning of the parliament’ (Bari, 2010: 381)

I was unable to find any systematic analyses or literature on the effects of Pakistani women legislators’ symbolic and substantive representation outside parliament. However, Bari (2009) mentioned that women parliamentarians think that their presence in the legislature has affected people’s perception of the political field as a male domain and has also strengthened links between women legislators and the women’s movement.

There are several gaps in existing knowledge on Pakistani women legislators which this thesis intends to address. While building on the work done by Mumtaz (1998) and Bari

(2009 and 2010), primarily based on the gendered analyses of parliamentary proceedings and women MNAs' interviews, which suggest that Pakistani women MNAs are very active members of the parliament; I go further, to find out reasons why women are active members of the parliament; an important aspect on which most Pakistani scholars are silent.

Scholars thus urge quota women to come through direct elections, but little is learned about what women parliamentarians who are the beneficiaries of reserve seats think about the process, how women politicians get involved in parliamentary politics and how they perceive themselves as politicians, elements which are investigated in this thesis. The Pakistan context provides an opportunity to compare quota and non quota women legislators, to assess the importance of the processes by which women reach parliament and become representatives for bringing change.

In the existing literature, there is also insufficient explanation as to who it is that these quota women represent - whether it is women, the provinces, constituents, parties or party leaders. Quota women politicians have no constituency, and are not elected by women, so it is pertinent to ask whether they still consider themselves as representing women. However, in the academic literature, most scholars have argued that representation is a process which depends upon continuous relations between the represented and representative (Phillips, 1995; Pitkin, 1967). Such claims are yet to be considered in the context of Pakistan.

Importantly, many Pakistani scholars including Bari and Mumtaz only focus on what women politicians have achieved in terms of legislation in the parliament. Much ignored

are the issues women have not been able to address, and the reasons for this; some argue that examining why female legislators experience success as well as defeat is important (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008).

Moreover, the important role played by women politicians outside parliament is rarely touched upon or systematically investigated by scholars. The kind of substantive and symbolic representation achieved outside parliament in terms of bringing change into the lives of other women is also the focus of this thesis.

### ***Conceptual Framework***

I believe that any empirical research exploring relationships between descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation should consider that the context in which acts of representation occur is of crucial importance. Since Pakistan demonstrates overwhelming complexities related to context – such as gendered power relations, un-democratic processes, a semi-feudal and tribal society, a volatile political situation and threatening environment (discussed more fully in the next chapter on contextual analysis) - the challenges to women parliamentarians seeking to bring change may be enormous. Several other factors may also play a crucial role in determining women's effectiveness in ensuring change, of which a few might be universal and many embedded in the particular social and institutional context in Pakistan.

Therefore, in order to develop an understanding of women's descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation in Pakistan, I take the '*politics of presence*' concept, developed by Anne Phillips (1995), and develop it in a new and novel way by incorporating various arguments extended by other scholars into a framework for the

application and analyses of my data. I leave the notion of ‘women representing women’ open for exploration. By analyzing various roles (within and outside parliament) played by women MNAs, as well as considering the insights, contexts and processes in which women are practicing representation, I open up new ways of evaluating women’s political representation.

I primarily adapt Phillips perspective that theorizes presence as important, but equally warns that gender parity cannot bring with it a certificate that interests will be addressed, saying:

‘Changing the gender composition of elected assemblies is a major, and necessary, challenge [.....]. But changing the gender composition cannot guarantee that women’s needs or interests will then be addressed.[....] Gender parity operates in a framework of probabilities rather than certainties’ (1995: 82).

In this study, I evaluate the extent to which quotas have influenced women’s descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation (Franceschet et al., 2012) .

*Descriptive representation* explores the routes women have taken to parliament, as well as looking at their perspectives on political recruitment and about themselves as politicians. Here, my purpose is to develop an understanding of whether the way in which women become representatives makes a difference to them.



*Substantive representation* is divided into two parts: firstly, substantive representation within parliament which deals with the engendering of the legislative interventions within the House, and secondly, substantive presentation outside parliament, which considers women MNAs' contribution to bringing change in the lives of other women, as well as patterns of women constituents' engagement in political processes.

I find it useful to approach substantive representation in parliament from two different aspects. The first of these is *substantive representation as process*, under which women MNAs are seen contributing in everyday legislative business of the parliament by introducing all types of bills, resolution, motions, etc. Further to this, by *substantive representation as outcome* I refer to women specific legislation introduced by parliamentarians (especially by women) and are subsequently passed by the Assembly. In using this approach I verify empirically to what extent women's concerns are integrated and achieved in the legislative business of the parliament. Evaluating women's substantive representation from different aspects I follow the argument extended by Franceschet and Piscopo that proposes:

‘these two aspects [*process* and *outcome*] of substantive representation do not always occur together. The distinction also allows researcher to determine more precisely the factors that shape both aspects of substantive representation’ (2008: 421).

Here, by the term ‘women related legislation’, I mean the bills which directly address women's concerns, where policy consequences, in this case bills passed by the assembly are likely to have a more immediate and direct impact on a significantly larger number

of women than on men (Trimble and Arscott, 2003: 185). I believe that all policy outcomes have gender aspects and may affect women and men in many ways. Therefore, my analysis includes the bills made by women politicians to promote women's interests across the full range of policy issues (Chaney et al., 2007:118).

The review of empirical research also suggests that substantive representation is mainly evaluated in terms of voting for bills, speaking for women and introducing women's issues in parliamentary debates. In practice, however, women are substantively represented through a variety of representative acts involving varied levels of expertise and resource mobilisation (Celis et al., 2008a; Celis, 2008b).

In regard to my conceptual framework, I acknowledge that it is important to ascertain whether women have a voice in the national legislature and whether women parliamentarians play any role in bringing women's issues to the parliamentary agenda, acting as and for women. However, only concentrating on parliamentary business is not sufficient, because legislative outcomes do not reveal much about the substantive representation that takes place outside parliament. Moreover, examining the legislative business of the parliament also says nothing about women's issues, and who women MNAs have not been able to represent and why. Therefore, along with legislative interventions, I was equally interested in exploring women MNAs' perspectives on substantive gains outside parliament as well as issues they couldn't represent in the parliament.

In my conceptual framework, I view the impact of women's presence outside parliament as highly crucial. I think that looking into women's contributions outside parliament is

an under-investigated and poorly understood area of research into gender and politics in Pakistan. As a consequence, the specific contribution made by women outside parliament is severely underemphasised. Such concerns are raised with women MNAs in interviews, revealing women's substantive and symbolic representation outside parliament.

While interviewing women, I observed that discussion of women's substantive representation often slipped into one on symbolic representation. Even though there sometimes seemed to be little distance between the two, I find it useful to make some distinction between the two terms. By *substantive representation outside parliament* I mean the contributions women MNAs are making to the lives of other women, while *symbolic representation* refers to changes in public perceptions and attitudes of women in politics, and the engagement of women constituents in political processes (Franceschet et al., 2012: 13). I examine the ways that women perceive the substantive representation that takes place outside the parliament at constituency and/or community level, for other women and even for women MNAs themselves due to their increased presence in politics.

In summary, the conceptual framework I have adapted allows me to evaluate the effects of various aspects concerning quotas on women's descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation allowing me to make more nuanced and precise claims about women's political representation.

## ***Research Questions***

This thesis responds to the following three questions:

1. What is the relationship between women's descriptive and substantive representation in the National Assembly in Pakistan?
2. How has the introduction of quotas affected women's descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation?
3. What factors affect the extent to which women's formal representation results in their substantive representation?

The next chapter sets out and explains the methodology adopted to address the above research questions and to achieve the aims and objectives of the study.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### ***Introduction***

The main purpose of this thesis is to analyze the extent to which women's formal representation turned into substantive change. In doing so, the study explores the relationship between women's descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation. By focusing on the experiences and perspectives of Pakistani women parliamentarians, this study tries to respond following research questions: What is the relationship between women's descriptive and substantive representation in the context of the National Assembly in Pakistan? What are the effects of quotas on women's descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation? Finally, what are the factors affecting women's political and substantive change in Pakistan?

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodology adopted, as well as various issues that have arisen during research processes. The chapter discusses the use of a mixed method approach to analyze the various data sources. I carried out in-depth interviews with women MNAs, and examined parliamentary proceedings and used secondary sources (reports of NGOs) as major sources of data for analysis. However, personal observation and meetings with and visits to women and civil society organizations also significantly contribute towards my research.

During the research process, I discovered that in accessing elite political women, the parliament, parliamentary data as well as other information and places where elites work and live is highly challenging in Pakistan. During the time of my study access became

even more challenging due to the volatile and threatening political situation, under which political elites themselves became threatened. Because of growing suicide attacks on politicians, meeting with any ‘stranger’ for interview was no longer a usual activity for many politicians. However, the most important avenue remained our (my husband and myself) personal social contacts and networking with people working in influential sectors (bureaucracy, media and development) to access parliamentary data and women MNAs. I highlight that it is near impossible for a person without a web of social networks with influential people to access elites and their lives.

Within this chapter I also discuss in detail the difficulties in gaining access, ethical issues, building rapport, asking questions, research setting, fieldwork difficulties and the qualitative analyses I conducted using Nvivo software. I shall also discuss my experiences of accessing and visiting locations where elites are found (parliament, parliamentarians’ lodges and the party Secretariat). I show how as a ‘female researcher’ I experienced parliament as gendered place which provides limited space and inclusion, particularly to women visitors/observers. However, I strongly feel that these sites have the potential to reveal relevant information about the political lives of Pakistan’s elite.

### ***Selecting Research Methods***

I adapted an approach of triangulation or multiple methods, while keeping in view the research questions and focused on the conceptual framework that required assessing women’s representation from broader aspects. For this study, I have used various methods, as follows: (1) in-depth interviews; (2) analysis of reports of parliamentary proceedings and other secondary data sources; (3) personal observation; and (4) meetings and visits to relevant organisations working on parliamentary democracy in

Pakistan. By combining different methods, I have tried to respond to each of the research questions. For instance women's substantive representation within parliament is analyzed through using secondary sources and parliamentary proceedings. While examining legislative interventions made by male and female legislators, I verify to what extent women are involved in the legislative business of the parliament in general and raising women's concerns in particular. However, examining women's descriptive and substantive and symbolic representation outside parliament from women's perspectives was not possible through the proceedings data. Therefore, representation outside parliament is analyzed through in-depth interviews of women MNAs. However, I cannot ignore the significance of personal observations for this research, which helped me to uncover various facets of the current condition of parliamentary democracy in Pakistan. Meetings with feminists and professionals working in women's and other organizations were also beneficial in terms of shaping my own research.

Using various methods for data collection also helps to avoid the problem posed by the self-reported claims of women politicians that require independent verification and validity through other measures (Lovenduski and Norris, 2003). Scholars have emphasized that the interview method should therefore be used 'as a complement to the published material as one tries to build up as accurate and objective picture as possible' (Arthur 1987 cited in McEvoy, 2006: 189). Thus, in order to ensure validity, I combine interviews with parliamentary proceedings as well as secondary sources obtained through various organizations. As some have previously highlighted, triangulation helps the process of cross-checking information and findings derived from various sources (Deacon et, al., 1998).

Below, I provide a more detailed explanation of each method and how each method contributes towards this study.

### **In-Depth Interviewing**

Despite the difficulties involved in accessing and interviewing elite political figures, which I will discuss later in this chapter, interviews are still seen as a crucial methodological tool for assessing the views of women politicians (McEvoy, 2006). As there is growing number of women in politics, women politicians are now viewed as legitimate foci for analysis (Ross, 2000). Semi-structured interviews have become an extremely prominent method for gathering data on elite political women in feminist research (Puwar 1997; Ross 2001; Childs 2004, 2004a; Bilal, 2004; Bari, 2010; Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008; Childs and Krook 2012; Franceschet et al. 2012).

This study specifically focuses on the experiences, perspectives and opinions of women politicians, and is concerned with various aspects of representation (descriptive, symbolic and substantive). Some argue that

‘Interviewing is often important if one needs to know what a set of people think, or how they interpret an event or series of events, or what they have done or are planning to do’ (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002: 673).

Examining how women conceive and practice representation in the real world of politics by talking to them can provide fresh insights into the theoretical literature on women’s political representation (Childs 2004; Chaney, et al. 2007). Moreover, the use of in-depth interviews, in turn, provides maximum opportunity to women MNAs to



reflect on their ways of practicing representation. Women have the chance to share their lived experiences of practicing representation in a highly threatening environment, and consider how this influences their capacity to pursue change for women.

Women's in-depth interviews are used to respond to all of the research questions, as women provide information regarding the effects of quotas on their descriptive and symbolic as well as substantive representation. The information provided helps me to draw conclusions based on the specific experiences of Pakistani politicians in relation to the current theoretical debate being played out in a global context on women's political representation. Importantly, several of the other issues and enquiries that I raise which are relevant to my research questions, such as representing women's interests, factors contributing to MNAs' silence, subordination and suppression, resistance within and outside parliament and whether women accept any responsibility to represent women in the parliament can better be responded to by women MNAs. As Johnson (2001: 104) argues,

‘In-depth interviewing commonly seeks “deep” information and knowledge - usually deeper information and knowledge than is sought in surveys, informal interviewing, or focus groups’.

Not only this, but the conceptual framework adapted for this study that focuses both on the successes as well as defeats of women MNAs in terms of substantive representation is also conducive to in-depth qualitative interviews. For example, only women can explain why they have failed to act for women when there are great expectations from them. In addition to providing information on the immediate successes and failures

encountered, these women provide richly detailed answers to open-ended questions, which help to uncover the recruitment processes they have experienced, the gendered environment in which they work and their impact on women's substantive representation, which enables me to respond to most of the research questions.

### **Parliamentary Proceedings and Secondary Sources**

In order to reply to my first research question concerning women's substantive role and contribution in the National Assembly, I conduct a gendered analysis of parliamentary proceedings over three years (2008-11). The parliamentary proceedings are analyzed from two different aspects, namely *representation as process* and *outcome*, as envisaged in my conceptual framework, with the findings being fully presented in chapter six.

Parliamentary proceedings provide rich information regarding the working of the parliament in general and substantive representation of women in particular (Bari 2009). For instance, by examining a range of legislative interventions (questions, motions, resolutions and bills) I produce gender disaggregated data, and show that women are very active members of the parliament. For this research, it was also essential to establish whether the parliamentarians (men and women) show any distinctive interests; whether they engender legislative agendas; how much they contribute towards legislation as prime responsibility of parliamentarians; whether quota women act more often than non-quota legislators; and the efficacy of the contribution of parliamentarians in terms of the passing of their bills by the House. All of these are major concerns of this thesis, and the responses can be found by analyzing the proceedings of the Assembly.

By carrying out in-depth analyses of Private Members Bills, I establish that woman's concerns and issues are primarily represented by women legislators. I also identify difficulties in the categorization of feminine and masculine fields of interests, as women take up significant issues in the parliament which are often considered to be the male domain (finance, governance, the war on terror and defence/military). Interestingly, a few men also show interest in raising women's issues. These are important additional findings that this thesis produces on the basis of parliamentary proceedings data, at the same time as fulfilling the main purpose of this study. Importantly, parliamentary proceedings greatly help in verifying claims women make in interviews related to women-specific legislation they have advocated, as well as the factors affecting women's potential ability to bring change, such as delays, time spent pending or the lapsing of bills.

Some of the proceedings data were published by the National Assembly Secretariat in a format entitled 'National Assembly Debates', which I obtained in paper form. These documents fully detail session proceedings and give information about the Questions, Motions, Debates, Resolutions and all other legislative business that took place. The bills presented and passed by the House were downloaded from the National Assembly website. Gender disaggregated data is neither maintained nor even made available by National Assembly. Therefore, in addition to National Assembly Debates I also use organizations' (PILDAT and FAFEN's) annual reports and other secondary sources to produce several tables showing women's contribution in terms of substantive representation within parliament (see chapter six).

### **Personal Observation**

Personal observation remained highly crucial throughout my fieldwork and contributed towards my analysis in many ways. For example, personal observation during interviews with women MNAs and taking note of their smiles, anger, and changing voice tone helped me in describing interviews and assessing the importance women give to any particular subject of enquiry (Childs 2004). The observations made during field work of various elite locations such as parliament lodges, buildings, halls or the party Secretariat and while attending sessions or waiting for interviews with women MNAs allowed me to gather information about elites' lives for use in my analyses. Throughout this process, I wrote down brief and quick notes as soon as possible after experiencing, seeing or hearing something important and interesting, which were later developed into full field notes.

### **Meetings and Visits to Organizations**

As there was so little official information available from the National Assembly on parliamentary proceedings, I was very reliant on the information provided by the civil society organisations, and this is why I visited and approached various organizations (PIDAT, FAFEN, Aurat Foundation, SDPI and Shirkat Gah) to find out what work they had done and what data they had gathered.

Ross (2001: 155) highlights the fact that sometimes unexpected twists and turns in research process are usually valuable, if sometimes apparently time wasting, although meetings and interviews other than with parliamentarians were not part of my initial research methodology. Thus, the importance of those visits, meetings, informal talks and discussions with Pakistani feminists, human rights activists and professionals

associated with such organizations was solely to find out what information existed on parliamentary proceedings in light of the lack of official data.

It is important to mention here that informal interaction with people working in civil society organizations is not used in qualitative analyses of my data. Such informal meetings, rather, contribute towards preliminary part of my research design particularly in obtaining data, understanding the current research projects are being undertaken by NGOs/scholars and aspects of women's representation not examined yet such as substantive representation outside parliament, women MNAs' perspectives in selection methods and their silence on some important women's issues in the House.

By adapting various methods including in-depth interviews, analysis of reports of parliamentary proceedings, observation and visits and meetings with organizations I made all possible efforts to examine women's political representation in Pakistan from different angles. Below, I discuss in detail the difficulties I experienced in accessing elite women and data, revealing important information about democracy in Pakistan.

### ***Gaining Access***

During the first year of my PhD at the University of Warwick, I underwent specific training in order to improve my research skills, for instance focusing on methods to gain valid and reliable data, conducting interviews, and using software for data management and analyses. Unfortunately, none of these skills can be put into practice if one finds it extremely difficult to access the target respondents or required data. The difficulties are

further multiplied if a young researcher approaches elite women with little established academic or research credentials (Puwar, 1997), as also in my case.

Soon after starting my research, I realized the importance of my social capital and contacts with high profile people in various fields, not only in accessing elite women which I discuss below, but also in obtaining proceedings data from organizations including the National Assembly. Parliamentary proceedings data is supposed to be made available for public or research purposes. However, this is unfortunately not systematically happening in Pakistani democracy at the moment, and even independent civil society organizations find it difficult to access parliament's legislative record, as explained below.

### **Accessing Secondary Sources and Parliamentary Proceedings**

It is unfortunate that the National Assembly (NA) website does not provide full information regarding the proceedings of the parliament. At the end of 2008 when I started work on this thesis only very limited and basic information was available online on the NA website. However by 2011 it had improved, providing some information regarding the bills introduced and passed by the Assembly which are very much part of this thesis. However, complete information on the work of the parliament, including session data, is still no available on the website.

Due to the lack of required official data by the National Assembly of last three years (2008-11) for this thesis, I started a search for information on parliament proceedings from other sources. I first contacted one of my scholar friends (Mr. Wasim Wagha),

who has published work as a consultant for an organization (the Aurat Foundation) on the role and performance of women parliamentarians during previous tenure (2002-07), which was also based on parliamentary proceedings. He informed me that the NA Proceedings are published in the form of booklets/reports entitled 'National Assembly Debates', and which can be purchased from the National Bookshop in Islamabad and may also be available at some other bookstores in major cities. I visited most of the bookshops he mentioned in major cities, but very few of them had available the books I needed. I then visited the official government publisher to get copies of information about all of the sessions that had taken place over the three years under study, but my search for these copies was fruitless as they too had limited copies.

Given the situation, I entered into contact with various organizations, including Shirkat Gah, Aurat Foundation, the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and PILDAT, through visits, emails and phone calls. These organisations have previously published reports based on parliamentary proceedings and legislation, but none of them had required gender disaggregated data of NA interventions over the last three years (2008-11). However through these organizations I learned that the organization FAFEN was likely to have the required data available, which turned out to be correct.

FAFEN is a network of civil society organizations, which as part of one of its projects is currently observing parliamentary proceedings. Their observations of the National Assembly proceedings are recorded on a standardized form, based on objective rules of parliamentary procedures. I had no personal contact in FAFEN, so I decided to send them an email to ask if they could share their reports/data on the National Assembly with me. Unfortunately, the initial response was not very encouraging, as FAFEN

refused to share their work with me, saying that the reports were still in the process of compilation and could not be shared with the public before official publication.

Later, through one of my colleagues whose organization is part of FAFEN's network, I managed to establish contact with somebody within the organisation. This person put me in contact with a project manager working at FAFEN, requesting him to extend support to my project. I assured him that the data would only be used for PhD research purposes, and not for any other publication, until such times as FAFEN made their report public.

It may be noted that the person who introduced me to FAFEN serves in a very important position (Chief Executive) at one of the leading Non Governmental Organizations in Pakistan. Eventually the FAFEN team shared with me its two reports on the performance of the NA based on parliamentary proceedings, which also include gender disaggregated information regarding each intervention made by male and female MNAs. However, I was informed by FAFEN that it only had data from the second and third years of the parliamentary term available, meaning that the data from the first parliamentary year (2008-09) was still missing. Therefore, it became crucial for me to get the first parliamentary year's data as well, and I was left with no option but to contact the NA Secretariat. I personally visited the Secretariat and met with the staff concerned, but I was refused access to the record without any satisfactory reason given.

I then used my husband's personal contacts in the federal bureaucracy, including Commissioner Rawalpindi, who contacted high-profile NA staff and assigned his personal staff to collect information on all proceedings that took place during the first



parliamentary year (2008-09) from the NA secretariat. It took two months to get the full one year proceedings record, as the NA Secretariat does not manage or keep this record in a rigorous way, and so many of the sessions debates were missing, making it took longer to obtain all of the relevant information. The assigned persons spent a considerable amount of time in obtaining the copies; however, I contributed financially to the costs for getting documents and for shipment and delivery.

While going through this process, I realized that there were two important limitations to researching people in elite positions. The first concerned the reluctance of the data gatekeeper (the NA Secretariat), who control access to documentary evidence that can give varied information about representatives, and who may want to protect representatives or its own organization (the NA) from any criticism that may emerge through my research. Second, my experiences also show how difficult it might be to study elites' lives for those with limited resources, and no web of social networks with other powerful actors/sectors of the society.

It may be noted that I was not asking the NA for personal information on any individual member of the House; I was looking for something (proceedings data) that is supposed to be made available for public. This clearly demonstrates how powerful institutions (in this case the National Assembly and civil bureaucracy) work in Pakistan, which are certainly far beyond the reach of ordinary people living without significant contacts who have power in society and institutions.

While doing this research, I also learnt that gaining access to some other important data is highly challenging, such as getting individual MNA's attendance and gender

disaggregated voting record. The voting data in gender disaggregated form is not at all maintained by NA. Whereas not making MNAs' attendance record public means constituents can never learn how much time a particular MNA/representative has spent on legislation during National Assembly proceedings. It is important to mention here that even independent watchdog civil society organizations with significant resources such as FAFEN find it difficult to gain access to such data. FAFEN (2010: 4) highlight that:

‘FAFEN has so far been unable to secure formal authorization from the relevant authorities to observe the parliamentary proceedings and its observers have been denied official accreditation [...] The National Assembly Secretariat has yet to demonstrate that it ascribes importance to independent observation and appraisal of parliamentary proceedings. FAFEN observers were instead forced to seek ad hoc accreditation’.

These observations by FAFEN are relevant in relation to my own experiences and difficulties in gaining access to similar data. It provides evidence of the nature of Pakistan's democracy and the way it works. Importantly, it is not only session data that is difficult to obtain; indeed as a member of the public one cannot enter into the parliament or observe sessions without first obtaining a reference from a Member of the National Assembly, which I discuss later in this chapter.

I finally received the second and third years' parliamentary data from FAFEN in the gender disaggregated form that I required. However, in order to generate gender disaggregated data for the first parliamentary year, I had to analyze copies of eleven

sessions of the NA obtained in paper record form. These eleven sessions were held during the first parliamentary year (March 2008 to March 2009), in which the NA met for a total of ninety-seven days. The counting and compiling of data from just this one parliamentary year took me three months – a highly time consuming process. This would have been easier if the NA had made available the data in electronic format. The lack of availability of proceedings data in electronic format hugely increases the cost and resources (energy and time) required for researching the work of the Pakistani parliament.

My literature review has suggested that scholars have processed parliamentary proceedings data available in electronic format with research software, in order to produce analytical reports and other results (Chaney, et al. 2007; Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008). However this may not be possible in the case of Pakistan, due to the non-availability of data in such a format. Experience of previously published research work on Pakistani parliament (Mirza and Wagha, 2009; Bari 2010, 2011; PILDAT 2010, 2011; FAFEN 2010, 2011) also suggests that these studies were conducted under the auspicious of huge organizations, fully financed by national and international donors as well as fully equipped in terms of being able to hire staff to carry out the research. However, in comparison to this my resources were very limited in terms of money and time.

### **The Herculean Task of Accessing Elite Women in Pakistan**

Accessing women who are part of the political elite was one of the toughest tasks I experienced during this research project. However, the current highly threatening and volatile situation in Pakistan means that politicians receive fairly frequent life threats, as a result of which, political elites spent a lot of time in high security zones which made my access extremely difficult. For instance, many of them asked me to meet them for

interviews at the Assembly building, parliament lodges, the party Secretariat and residences; all of these places were equipped with high security, check points, and barriers and I was asked to park my vehicle far away from the buildings, take long walks to enter, go through strict security checks and have permission and an entry pass.

Apart from this, due to their fear of violence politicians generally avoid public interviews or making any statement on conflicting issues. Any statement given by politicians regarding widely debated Pakistani laws such as the blasphemy law<sup>5</sup> can mean they are declared 'fit to be killed'. For instance recently the Governor of Punjab Salman Taseer, was assassinated by his own guard while openly/publicly supporting changes in the blasphemy law. His assassin admitted in the court that 'he had killed Punjab Governor Salman Taseer in Islamabad for his blasphemous statement' (Yasin, 2011). One of my interviewees also informed me that she received death threats when a statement she made to the media was repeatedly shown on TV channels accompanied by claims that she has committed blasphemy (I fully discuss this in chapter seven).

Most of the literature aimed to prepare researchers for interviewing elites is based on developed industrial democracies (Rivera, et al., 2002). It is often suggested that initial contact is made through writing a letter to request an interview, followed by sending

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<sup>5</sup> In 1986 the Pakistan Penal Code was amended by Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1986, which added **the Blasphemy Law** under section 295-C to the Pakistan Penal Code. It provided the death penalty or life imprisonment for the criminal offence of defiling the Quran and name of the Prophet Mohammad including other religious prophets. Section 295-B made defiling the Quran a criminal offence. It reads: "Whoever wilfully defiles, damages or desecrates a copy of the Holy Quran or of an extract there from or uses it in any derogatory manner or for any unlawful purpose shall be punishable with imprisonment for life." And the section 295-C deals with the use of derogatory remarks, etc. in respect of the Holy Prophet: Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations, or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine." (Amnesty International, 2004)

emails and/or further letters, emails and phone calls to set a date and time for the interview. By employing different approaches or even changing the content in the second demand for an interview, researchers often receive a better response. Puwar (1997) conducting research in the UK explains that in the second call she pointed out it was staff research, not only a PhD study, which gave her ‘competitive advantage’ and resulted in a few more MPs agreeing for interviews. Some also argue that writing letters to politicians was of limited use, and that they can be better approached by phone (White et al., 1996). Others highlight that ‘even the most charming political scientist may find it difficult to pick up the phone and call the offices of powerful and busy government officials or lobbyists and navigate through busy receptionists and wary schedulers’ (Goldstein, 2002: 669).

Many of the tools and techniques mentioned above, which are often used by researchers in developed, countries seem less effective in Pakistan. In Pakistan few politicians, especially women, use emails to communicate with the public, and they do not like to share their personal contact numbers. For instance the list of MNAs available on the NA website does not include women MNAs’ contact numbers, although it does mention full details of male MNAs such as their name, party, constituency, address, phone and picture. The lack of such crucial information about women has serious implications not only for researchers like me, but also for the constituents/women they represent who may like to contact them and are not able to find their phone numbers. Interestingly Pakistani women MNAs not sharing contact details or phone numbers applied to all women parliamentarians, irrespective of their party identity. Despite women being in ‘public’ spaces, they are often still hesitant to share their ‘private’ phone numbers, which restricts one of the cheapest means of public access to representatives.

I also made efforts to get potential participants' personal mobile numbers through my personal contacts, in particular journalists. Despite these efforts I only managed to obtain the contact numbers of eight women MNA. I made several attempts at calling women MNAs, followed by mobile SMS messages briefly detailing the interview request and research background including details of the person that provided me with their contact numbers. However, they neither answered my phone calls nor replied to any of the SMSs. According to a research report on Pakistani women politicians, women parliamentarians are not confident - even over the phone - talking to a stranger (Bilal, 2004). It should be noted that this was the case even when research interviews were conducted by telephone under the direction of an independent well-reputed organization, and letters to all women MNAs had been sent out three weeks before the phone interview detailing all related information (Bilal, 2004). I was seeking in-depth face to face interviews requiring more time of elite women, who may have had their own priorities.

Contacting women by telephone proved to be disappointing, so I tried another approach: writing letters by post and sending emails. Not all women MNAs use emails, but there were a few very active women politicians who had an email address so I contacted these by email. Although I was aware that it may not have a positive result, I sent letters providing full information regarding the research, and me as a researcher, including details of my supervisor, to 30 women MNAs (out of 76) requesting an interview. In both cases, where I approached potential participants through postal letters and emails, the response was the same - disappointing. I received absolutely no responses. My

impression before entering into the field that the targeted elite group may not entertain any request for an interview from a stranger/unknown person was fully endorsed.

Given this situation, I tried to access women MNAs in other ways. My experience of this project suggests that powerful elites can effectively be accessed through other powerful sectors/actors of the society. For this thesis, I conducted 20 interviews with MNAs. All 20 interviewees were actually contacted through my husband and my own personal contacts and friends working as journalists, bureaucrats, civil society professionals and human rights activists, including one male MNA who I met when attending a UN University course in Jordan, and who I met coincidentally in the parliament during fieldwork. My husband and I have developed this social capital over several years. For instance, I personally possess more than 10 years working experience in the development sector. My husband also enjoys strong linkages with the bureaucracy including federal government, as he heads one of the elite social and sports clubs in Hyderabad city. Therefore, it can be said that our contacts not only belong to better off families, but also occupy influential positions of power (Chief Executives, Commissioners and Directors), in powerful sectors (civil bureaucracy, development and media), which made it possible for me to access political elite. Such a finding simply highlights the importance of social capital in terms of class and the benefits of holding positions of power in important sectors.

In some cases our personal and professional contacts contacted women MNAs directly wherever possible, and in turn, put me in contact with them. In other cases, they contacted senior party male leaders to ask them to request women in their party to take part in interviews. Media professionals were also instrumental while negotiating access

to women MNAs. In some cases, my request for an interview was immediately accepted, when participants were approached through senior journalists. This greatly reflects the positive view of the Pakistani political elite towards media representatives. No doubt the Pakistani media has now become a very powerful and influential pressure group, while setting agendas in Pakistani politics. Of course, women politicians are well aware of the growing influence of the media in Pakistan. In any case, the powerful elite prefer to have a strong relationship with media, especially as they possess immense potential to make them more visible to the public.

In this process, what surprised me the most was that the approach of snowball sampling (by which I mean requesting women MNAs who came in contact with me through various contacts, including influential ones, to put me in touch with their other female colleagues) was also ineffective in the field. Goldstein encourages the snowball sampling approach, and writes that

‘if you have established a good rapport with a particular respondent, do not be shy about enlisting their help in getting in the door with others on your sample list’ (2002: 671).

However, when I tried this technique, most of the women MNAs unexpectedly refused to put me in contact with other women colleagues. However, in response, they simply advised me to contact other MNAs directly. Some of them were even reluctant to share the contact numbers of other MNAs. Only one MNA helped me to access three other MNAs of her party.



Due to the immense difficulties I experienced in accessing elite women, I was compelled to reduce my intended number of interviews from 25 to 20. Despite several efforts, I did not manage to access any of the three women MNAs from Baluchistan Province. None of my personal contacts had any relationship with them, which clearly shows the effects of my social capital and contacts on my sample.

To sum up, the fieldwork experience suggests that accessing elites (in this case, women in the National Assembly) may be difficult without powerful references. Indeed the references that were most successful were those in high profile and influential positions in different organizations. It would be far less likely for a person without such a web of social networks to enter into elites' lives and be able to conduct research on their work.

### ***Ethical Issues***

During the field work, due care was taken regarding a number of ethical issues. For instance confidentiality was confirmed to all respondents from the outset, while introducing the research topic, purpose, objective and scope. The technique of explaining and confirming confidentiality to participants in the beginning, especially in this kind of project, was very useful (Leech, 2002).

I think confidentiality is highly important under the circumstances in which Pakistani women are more exposed to unsafe elements of society. Any responses given by women might potentially be politically problematic for them, because their responses touch other influential people's and parties' ways of doing politics (Rivera, et al., 2002). It was confirmed to all participants that the information they provided would not be shared with anyone else, and used only for research purpose. I clarified to them that the

quotations would not be identifiable, and care would be taken when citing material in the thesis.

I used an MP3 tape recorder for interviews with respondents' prior permission, and no one objected to being taped. Once the interviews started I found respondents less conscious about being recorded, they were reasonably vocal on most of the issues. Women were forthcoming, even when talking about issues such as party males' resistance, rape cases and constituents' problems.

### ***Building Rapport and Relationships***

Several factors played a part in developing rapport and relationships with interviewees such as gender, ethnicity, caste, region/province and language. The fact that I am female played important role in our closeness, and I found women MNAs to be very comfortable and vocal, especially when talking about sensitive issues such as rape, domestic violence, dislike of men and parliamentary culture. Some of the MNAs shared a similar background with me in aspects such as ethnicity, caste and region, which were also important in building a relationship. There were no linguistic or cultural barriers between the respondents and me, and speaking to them in Urdu (the national language of Pakistan) combined with my familiarity with other local languages (Sindh and Punjabi) was also useful. I easily built up a rapport with them, which helped in gaining their confidence and created a sense of closeness and affinity.

Some of my interviewees were very eager to meet me, and when I arrived at their lodges/residences, they warmly welcomed me and said that they were waiting for me. This was particularly the case with those women who have appeared less in media

interviews and other forums, and I got the impression that for them it was pleasant to be interviewed for research purposes. It seems not necessarily to be the case that all elite people have the experience of being interviewed or familiarity with interview processes. There is also a possibility that some may have never been a subject of academic study before as a few MNAs confirmed, and as also found by Ross (2000; 2001).

For some of the interviews, it was extremely important to build rapport and a relationship with women parliamentarians, especially in cases when women initially were not inclined to give interviews, and I was literally imposed on them by influential references. In such cases, I made a deliberate effort to present my profile as attractive to them and highlight the relevance of my research to them to develop their interest in my interview. I always started interviews by introducing myself and the research. It seemed to me that my brief introduction (mentioning my higher education, working with United Nations, World Bank and Asian Development Bank, international exposure) worked very well while balancing some power in favor of me.

My status as ‘doctoral researcher’ studying in ‘foreign university’ and my ‘international exposure’ through being trained in various universities worked in different ways with women, especially when building rapport and relationship. Some of them showed great interest comparing my educational achievements with their own As one said:

‘I am really impressed, you are highly educated ... different from us ... we [MNAs] are just bachelor degree holders’ (Quota MNA, 7).

In another interview at MNA's residence, she enquired about scholarships and opportunities for advanced learning abroad, and requested that I guide her daughter in higher studies in gender. Another senior MNA immediately became much more open and warm when she learned that the University of Warwick is located in Coventry. She told me that she has many Pakistani friends and relatives living in Coventry, whom she had often visited. Kindness was shown to me by these women, especially those whom I approached through my relatives, particularly those working in bureaucracy and who enjoy a better working relationship with women MNAs.

There was another interesting event that I encountered during the interviews, when women MNAs from the Punjab Province developed an interest in the cultural Sindhi dress I was wearing at the time of interview. I responded immediately, and told them that when I next visited, I would bring the same dress for them. I realized that this particular cultural gift, though not very expensive, may still be valuable to elite women from other provinces and useful in developing intimacy between a researcher and respondent. Nevertheless the importance of where and what I have studied, the organizations I have worked for, my relationship with referees and the cultural dress code all helped.

### *Asking Questions*

It was clear from the outset that in order to gain full insights substantial preparation and know-how is required in order to ascertain the respondents' background, party interests, region-specific problems and specific issues related to the context under inquiry. I put significant effort into establishing in-depth knowledge about the personal background and party identity of women MNAs, as well as contextual information related to the

research questions. Before conducting the interviews, I also thoroughly examined the debate and proceedings of the parliament and reports on the performance of women parliamentarians, which helped me to ask relevant questions.

Based on an extensive review of the existing literature, I prepared a detailed list of open-ended questions to use as an interview guide (see Appendix I), designed to obtain a wide array of information about the personal background, experiences, perceptions and understanding of women parliamentarians on several subjects. As Berry (2002: 679) states, ‘open ended questioning – the riskiest but potentially most valuable type of elite interviewing – requires interviewer to know when to probe and how to formulate follow up questions on the fly. It’s high wire act’.

The open-ended approach was particularly helpful for the kind of in-depth work I am engaged with. As some argue ‘to get at the contextual nuances of responses and to probe beneath the surface of a response to the reasoning and premises that underlie it’ (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002: 674). This succinctly highlights why the open-ended question approach is useful.

Throughout the interview process, I followed my own line of enquiry but more often the interview takes the form of a talk or conversation. Leech (2002: 666) advises researchers to, ‘Approach interview subjects with positive attitude. Act as though it is natural that people would *want* to talk to you. Appear friendly and curious’. I kept the whole process of interviewing flexible by giving full freedom to the interviewee to reply. I occasionally redirected them if the discussion went too far off topic. During

interviews, I was continuously writing notes to make sure I didn't miss any pertinent data volunteered (Berry, 2002).

While asking some of the questions, I observed change in the voice tone and expressions of MNAs, especially when talking about threats. One MNA explained how she was threatened when the media collected and disseminated fatwas (testimonies) from religious scholars, which declared her fit to be killed. My personal observation helped me in such cases to prepare transcripts. However, I took special care by asking potentially difficult questions at the end, particularly when related to their male party colleagues' involvement in honour crimes or threats to women parliamentarians, asking the most simple and direct questions in the beginning. As Leech (2002), Rivera, et al., (2002) and McEvoy (2006) emphasize, it is a good idea to ask less difficult questions at the beginning of the interview in an effort to establish trust in order to pose more threatening questions later. I found such a technique practically useful.

### *Qualitative Analysis*

Once an interview was completed, I immediately transferred it to the computer. I tried to transcribe interviews as soon as I finished, mostly on the same day. Sometimes, this was difficult, especially when I felt exhausted after chasing women MNAs, going through the interview process and travelling.

Interviews were conducted in local language/s (Urdu and Sindhi), although during interviews respondents continuously used English language words. However, verbatim transcripts of the interviews were prepared in English language as I translated and transcribed. I still captured all words said on the recording but edited out some sounds

(eh, err, ahs etc). Even then, I needed considerably more time than I had previously anticipated. Efforts were made to make the translation as accurate as possible, without losing the essence of the original meaning of the message. Being a local and familiar with social and cultural contexts, it was easy for me to capture the meaning of women MNAs' statements, opinion and concepts. However, in some cases, it was challenging for me to retain the meaning and maintain the structure of the sentence in English language. Equally challenging was to get the conceptual equivalence of some terms/concepts used by participants during interviews which are not equivalent in different cultures like 'feudal lord' and 'jirga'. In such a situations, I sought the informal support of trained and experienced friends, occasionally guiding me. Consultations with other experienced friends during the translation process proved to be highly beneficial in achieving conceptual equivalence and retaining meaning (Birbili, 2000).

It usually took me between four and six hours to transcribe a single interview, and each interview was transcribed as separate document resulting in a total of about 400 double-space pages of interview transcripts. I translated all interviews, because at this stage, I was not sure which quote/ part of the interview I would be using in my analysis. Later during data analysis process, I found it more comfortable to refer to transcripts than audio recordings of interviews each time.

The transcripts were then analyzed and coded by using Nvivo-7 software, which is usually used for qualitative studies in order to manage and store large amounts of qualitative data. I used both electronic and manual approaches for coding and generating preliminary analysis, which involved categorization of all of the responses given in each

interview. Nvivo also helped in conducting in-depth analysis resulting in the identification of key themes about the women's experiences, which were related to their descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation. I identified key phrases which emerged, based on various interview statements such as representation as process, labelling, contested politics, conflicting interests and feudalistic parliament. The process of analyzing transcripts, referring back to them and re-analyzing continued throughout the writing-up processes.

### ***Choice of Research Setting; Interview Place and Time***

Most of the interviews were conducted during the period of National Assembly sessions held in the capital city of Islamabad, with some taking place in Karachi. Doing interviews in between Assembly sessions seem to be the most effective way to approach such a geographically dispersed group of women respondents while they were in one place, especially when my personal financial resources were limited.

Of the twenty, eight interviews were conducted on the premises of the NA (cafeteria, lobby, the common room of female MNAs), four in parliamentarians' lodges (located near NA, given to MNAs, some using them as offices other as personal residences with others living there with their families), five in offices outside NA, 1 at party secretariat, one at the residence of the MNA, and one interview took place in a car, while the participant was travelling to attend a media interview.

The interview length ranged from forty minutes to two and a half hours. Throughout I was unable to follow any strict schedule or time frame for interviews. In particular the interviews I conducted during the NA sessions took place without any prescribed time



schedule given by MNAs. Often, even after getting an interview confirmation and meeting MNAs at the agreed time, I was asked by participants to reschedule the meeting and in a couple of situations they even then later refused to be interviewed. That was very frustrating, and also affected my scheduled appointments with other MNAs.

All of the interviews were conducted in private. The interviews on the premises of the NA were particularly challenging, especially when my mobile phones stopped working once I entered the Assembly Hall, as due to security reasons mobile phones are usually jammed. Therefore, several times, despite arriving at Assembly Hall and sitting in the Visitors' Gallery, I was unable to send even an SMS message informing MNAs that I was inside NA Hall waiting to see them. For some of the initial interviews I waited for hours in the Visitors' Gallery for participants, which also provided an opportunity to attend parliament's sessions but took up considerable time. Given that situation, I always made the effort to arrive at the NA much earlier than the session starting time (usually 3pm) in order to catch women either at the NA main entrance or outside the Assembly Hall. Since mobile phones do not work within the Assembly Hall it became extremely important for me to inform respondents in advance about my presence before the start of the Assembly session. I always called and/or left a mobile message on the telephones of respondents before heading to interview them.

Often, the interview environment was not ideal, especially for the interviews conducted in offices and residences/lodges which were more often interrupted by family members, children, office staff, phone calls and local people waiting to see the MNAs. Such situations made me more conscious about time and anxious to finish the interview as soon as possible and I quickly prioritized my questions and asked the most relevant and

important questions early, also doing this in cases when I was given limited time for the interview.

In some cases, it took me longer to finish interviews, as during interviews women were doing other things simultaneously. I was left drinking tea or waiting in their offices, while my respondents went off to do something more important to them. In one interview, when I reached the participant's parliament lodge, she greeted me and placed me in a room while asking me to give her time to finish watching the interview of a senior party fellow on TV. She said, 'he is speaking on something really important for me to know about party's stance on a particular issue' (Quota MNA, 8). I realized that conducting interviews in unfamiliar locations has a significant impact on the power dynamics operating within the interview process. Entering these environments in which I had no control placed me within a powerless position, although at times came as an opportunity to observe elites' ways of lives, see them meeting their constituents and to obtain their views.

### ***I/Feminist/Researcher/Woman accessing and researching Elites' Places and Lives***

From the beginning of this chapter, I have explained the problems I faced in accessing parliamentary proceedings data as well as women MNAs for interviews. However throughout this process I never realized that even after gaining access to and securing an interview with women MNAs, I would still be facing problems in accessing the locations where interviews were conducted, such as the National Assembly, parliament lodges and party Secretariats.

## **National Assembly**

To enter into parliament, one requires the reference of any MNA and NA staff, who provide the visitor's name and national ID card number to the concerned department so they can issue a day pass. The visitor can collect their pass from outside parliament building, and it usually allows entry for one day into the parliament. This means that only those with a reference or contact with MNAs and National Assembly staff can get access to the parliament. It might be more difficult for the general public to secure access in order to observe parliamentary proceedings.

The first time a MNA asked me to meet her at the NA for an interview, I arrived outside the NA building but guards refused to let me enter the parliament, asking me to fetch a pass from a nearby office outside the parliament. I went to this office, informing them about my appointment with particular MNA. They said that she had not given them my name as visitor, and that she needed to inform them first so that they can issue me with an entry pass. I called her but she did not answer, but after half an hour she called me back and talked to the staff concerned on my mobile, after which I finally was allowed entry.

This reminds me again of the importance of social networks and the capital required for even entering into parliament. I was fortunate to meet with MNA Mr. Shakir Bashir incidentally during my first visit to the parliament, when I attended a UN university course in Jordan. He introduced me to his cousin who worked at the NA Secretariat and instructed him to help me. Therefore, every time I needed access, I called his cousin to get an entrance card, which would have otherwise been extremely difficult. This shows that the ordinary person, even a researcher, cannot enter into parliament without any

reference, so informal networks are essential. Here, I would also like to share something more about the parliament as a gendered place, and how I experienced this as a female researcher as well as an outsider. However, little is written about parliaments as gendered spaces from the perspectives of the outsiders or female researcher.

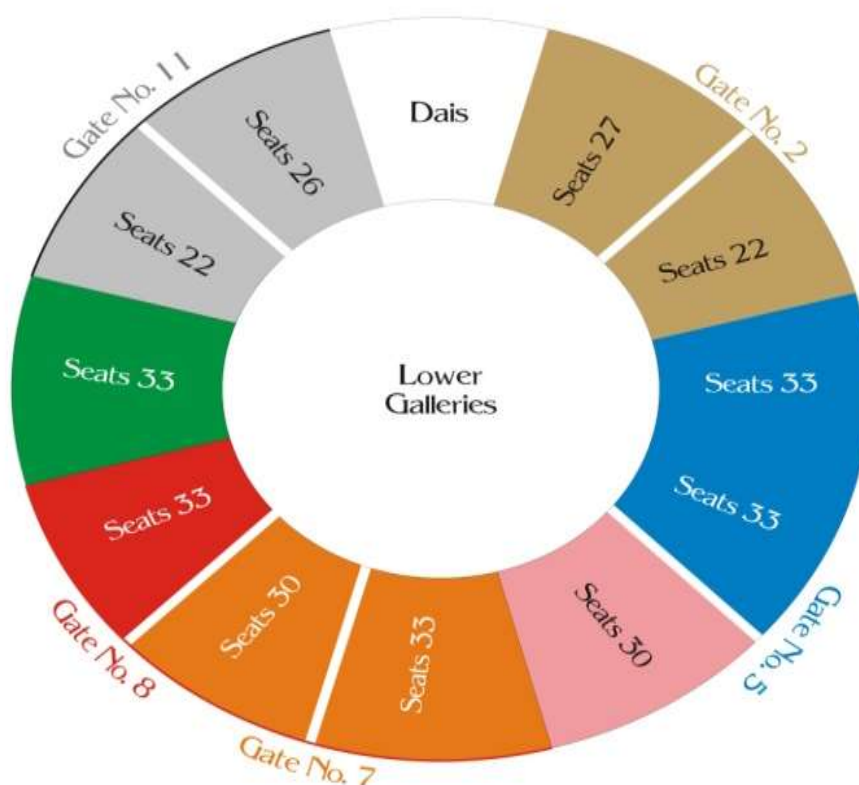
Puwar's (2010: 298) discussion identifies ways to analyze the 'archi-texture of the parliamentary spaces' from different aspects, which also struck me during the fieldwork. While trying to locate women MNAs, I observed that the parliament building contains several different spaces such as the Assembly Hall, chambers, offices, corridors, a lounge for women MNAs, a cafeteria, a mosque, and toilets. Throughout the journey I spent several hours in the lavish and huge Assembly Hall, whose furniture, layout and decoration reveals much about the amount of public expenditure given to elites' comfort and lives (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: National Assembly Hall (Courtesy of NA Secretariat Staff)**

As can be seen in Figure 1, Staff Parliamentarians sit in the middle, and there are galleries for visitors at the end of the Hall. As soon as visitors enter the Hall, they are firmly asked to sit in the gallery. No visitor is allowed to walk into the centre area where parliamentarians sit. However, one can also see a gallery on the first floor, which is mostly reserved for media representatives and some special guests as approved by Secretariat staff.

For me as a ‘female researcher’, access was highly constrained. I learned that in the Assembly Hall, out of eleven visitors’ galleries on the ground floor, only one gallery with 30 seats (refer to the pink section in Figure 2) is reserved for women visitors, which means women experience differentiated and limited inclusion (Puwar 2010).



**Figure 2: Visitors' Galleries in National Assembly Hall (Courtesy of NA Secretariat Staff)**

As mentioned earlier, I spent several hours in the Assembly Hall waiting to interview MNAs. Every time, I was compelled to enter from gate five, near the female gallery and sit in the same gallery, which was problematic as it increased the distance between me and the target respondent, who was usually sitting in a different row in another gallery.

The other element I noticed about the gendered parliamentary space came to the surface during my fieldwork, when I was unable to find a place reserved for women visitors to perform namaz (prayer). The National Assembly has a mosque where only men (MNAs, assembly staff and visitors) can perform their religious duties. When I asked the Assembly staff if there was any place where I as a female could pray the answer was negative. One stranger, perhaps from the Assembly Secretariat staff, told me to go to the lounge/common room reserved for women MNAs. I immediately rushed to the common room, but was denied access through the corridor leading to the room, with a security guard telling me the room was only for women MNAs. Such discrimination against women in the facilities offered in public spaces is actually part of wider societal structure, where women's needs are rarely taken into account (Ali, S. 2007a). Nevertheless, rethinking the experiences of parliaments from a women's perspective and ensuring proper spaces to women may be ways to address injustice and make women's human rights a reality. This is important because parliamentary space is not just for politicians, but a place of interaction between, politicians, media, researcher and the public (Puwar, 2010).

### **Parliamentarians' Lodges**

I conducted some of the interviews in parliamentarians' lodges, which are located near the National Assembly and allotted to MNAs by the government. MNAs use these

lodges as a residence and offices, and I found some also live in them with their families. Certain aspects of the interior of parliamentarians' lodges such as the setting of rooms, the furniture and decoration demonstrate visible class differences among women MNAs. I observed that the lodges/residences of directly elected women and some of the women on reserve seats who are from political and feudal families were fully furnished with expensive items. I also found servants in their lodges, who served expensive food and drinks during the interviews. Women MNAs informed me that these lodges are also used as offices from which they deal with constituents' problems in cooperation with other departments located in the federal capital.

The women party workers' lodges were rather simple, and I only noticed basic furniture such as a bed and sofa in their lodges. The women party worker interviewees informed me that they use these apartments only while they are attending sessions of the NA in Islamabad. Otherwise, they spent most of their time in the areas where they live, which is why their parliament lodges were less maintained. What I find more interesting was the look of the lodges of woman MNA who had a background in the corporate sector, which gave the impression of the offices of any professional, with computers, books, desk and sometimes even an office assistant who managed the MNA's personal website, bills submitted to the Assembly, and travel diary.

### **Party Secretariat**

I faced unusual security arrangements at the party Secretariat premises I visited to interview a MNA. In this particular case, I contacted one of our family friends affiliated with a similar party to ask them to accompany me to the building. This was the only interview in which I was concerned that my own ethnic identity (Sindhi) would affect

my access to an official party site, as a result of long-term ethnic tension between the Sindhi and Urdu communities in the Sindh Province of Pakistan. Some researchers demonstrate that in ethnic and divided societies, researcher's identity may have bearing upon data, 'as interviewee may make assumption about the researcher's identity and tailor responses accordingly' (McEvoy, 2006: 184).

Therefore, I requested that our friend take me to the party Secretariat. He is a local resident of Karachi who is much more familiar with the area and party. He told me that four blocks around the HQ building are sealed off by security barriers. While arriving at the party Secretariat, I informed security personnel about the purpose of my visit, which was to interview a woman MNA. They immediately asked me which TV station or newspaper I was working for. It was important to assure them that I was not a media representative, but a student researcher, for which I used my university student ID card. Getting into the party Secretariat required security guards (standing far away from the building) first to make a telephone call and talk to the person (the woman MNA) who invited me. Then, when the woman MNA confirmed my interview with her, the security guard took us to the correct place in order to meet with the MNA.

My web of social networks also worked very well in helping me to access elites' places as well. However, these places show deep divisions of class, race, gender, (dis)ability and sexuality (Rai, 2010) and made me aware of the need to examine their architecture and spaces (Puwar, 2010).



### *Sampling*

There are 342 seats in the National Assembly, of which 76 are occupied by women, with 60 of these on women reserve seats and 16 being directly elected. The 60 reserve seats for women are divided first among provinces and then between the parties as per their share of the vote in the general election. Table 1 below shows the parties and provinces' positions in the NA and how the sixty reserve seats for women are divided between them in the current 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly. It also shows the distribution of the 16 women (directly elected) between the various parties.

**Table 1: Total number of women in the National Parliament (2008) - both reserve seats and directly elected - according to province and party \***

S#	Political Party	Province				Total Seats
		KPK	Punjab	Sindh	Baluchistan	
1	Pakistan Peoples' Party Parliamentarians – PPPP	3	12 (4)	7 (4)	1	23 (8)
2	Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz – PMLN	1	16 (3)	0	0	17 (3)
3	Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam – PMLQ	1	7(3)	1	1	10 (3)
4	Mutahida Quomee Movement – MQM	0	0	5 (1)	0	5 (1)
5	Awami National Party- ANP	3	0	0	0	3
6	Mutahida Majlis-e Amal – MMA	0	0	0	1	1
7	Pakistan Muslim League Functional – PMLF	0	0	1	0	1
8	Independent		(1)			(1)
<b>Total</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>35 (11)</b>	<b>14 (5)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>60 (16)</b>
<p><i>Source; Election Commission Pakistan</i> * The number of directly elected women is in parentheses.</p>						

What is shown in the above table is that women MNAs belong to different provinces and parties, and some of them are directly elected (16) while others are indirectly elected on reserve seats (60). This is because all provinces are allocated a different number of

reserve seats in proportion to their share of the population. Therefore, the Baluchistan province being the smallest in terms of population has less women reserve seats and the Punjab province has highest women reserve allocation as the most populous province. However, one can observe that some parties have just one reserve seat, and others have more. This difference is because of their share of general seats. Parties such as the PPPP, which won more direct/general seats of the parliament, also enjoy the biggest share of women reserve seats. This suggests that women in smaller parties will be completely sidelined if their parties lose their share of general seats.

The selection of an appropriate sample design is a key decision that affects the type of conclusions one can draw later during data analysis (Goldstein, 2002). While drawing on various possible ways to develop a sample of elite Pakistani women politicians for this study, I realized that probability sampling may not be effective. There also remains the possibility of one party or province's viewpoint dominating, if the sample includes and concentrates on any single party or province while excluding others. My own preoccupation of not being able to access and interview the MNAs I selected for the sample also contributed to my decision not to use a probability sampling method.

I am aware that the non-probability sampling technique relies more heavily on personal contacts. By using a stratified random sample design in which the strata were defined by province, party and electoral process I designed my sample. In doing so, I ensured representation of women politicians from most of the provinces and major political parties occupying 90% seats of the parliament, as well as directly elected MNAs and those nominated against reserve seats.

I do not claim full diversity in my sample on several other factors such as age, marital status, political experience, or the family background of women MNAs. That said, I made deliberate efforts to include in my sample women MNAs who are directly elected and selected on reserve seats, and women from different provinces and parties.

In the context of Pakistani politics, this national level study on women MNAs, I believe that the party, province and electoral process are some of major important aspects for considering any sample of women MNAs. If we observe closely, we learn that the Pakistani parliament itself is representative in nature: for instance, each province has allocated number of seats in the NA, including women reserve seats which are also divided among provinces. Moreover, each province of Pakistan has its own distinct language, culture and history. Therefore, women parliamentarians representing different provinces in the parliament belong to diverse cultures, norms and identities (Ali and Rehman, 2001). Not only this, but in some cases women representatives encounter region specific women's issues - for instance in the KPK province, due to strong hold of the Taliban, women have been facing greater resistance to girls' education and women's right to cast their vote during elections. Women in the southern parts of the Sindh and Punjab provinces are more subject to honour crimes. Therefore, while acknowledging differences among women and the ethnic diversity among provinces, I approached women MNAs who represent most of the provinces of Pakistan to participate in this study.

Pakistan has a multi-party coalition government and the parliamentary political system functions through regular competition between political parties (already discussed in chapter three). The political parties are also concentrated in various geographical

constituencies, representing distinct and in some cases conflicting interests of the provinces, parties and constituents. However, parties continue to serve as allies to each other under the multi-party coalition government. Party alliances provide both strength and a great challenge for representatives in general and women representatives in particular, especially when gender and parties' interests contradict (fully explored in chapter seven). As women in the parliament represent various political parties with different ideologies, interests and political motives, in order to explore how women's interests are compromised in the face of other more important party and province issues, it seemed to me to be more useful to talk with women from different political parties.

Women MNAs also enter into parliament through two different electoral processes: some of them are directly elected, while others are nominated on reserve seats. As this study is greatly concerned with the influence of the electoral process on substantive representation, an examination of the experiences of women MNAs with these two different types of electoral processes for accessing parliamentary politics is extremely crucial.

Most importantly, the conceptual framework and the approach I have followed for this study strongly acknowledge differences among women which are complicated in the context of Pakistan, as well as valuing gender, party identity and political contexts. Ensuring diversity among women at least on the basis of province, party and electoral method in the sample, allows us to evaluate different women's experiences of representing and resisting conflicting interests under various contexts and identities.

### *The Women I Interviewed*

For this study, I interviewed twenty women MNAs, that is, 26% of the total women (76) in the parliament, of which five are directly elected women MNAs and fifteen on reserve seats, representing three provinces (Sindh, Punjab and KPK) and five major political parties (PPPP, PML-N, PML-Q, MQM and ANP), as shown in table below. These parties were selected because they occupied 90% of women reserve seats and are part of both the Treasury and opposition.

**Table 2: Number of women MNAs interviewed for this study - in reserve seats and directly elected - according to province and party \***

Political Parties	Province				Total interviews (directly elected)
	KPK	Punjab	Sindh	Baluchistan	
Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians – PPPP	1	3 (1)	2 (1)	0	6 (2)
Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz – PMLN	0	4 (1)	0	0	4 (1)
Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam – PMLQ	0	2 (1)	0	0	2 (1)
Mutahida Quomee Movement – MQM	0	0	2 (1)	0	2 (1)
Awami National Party- ANP	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9 (3)</b>	<b>4 (2)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15 (5)</b>

\*Number of women directly elected in parentheses.

Of the twenty women I interviewed, nine belonged to the feudal, influential political families, with no or limited personal political background or experience, of which three were directly elected and six nominated on reserve seats.

Two of the women respondents came from upper class urban areas, and also had no personal political background. One is directly elected and one nominated on a reserve seat.

Moreover, nine interviewees defined themselves as party workers with a strong history of party activism (ranging from ten to twenty two years), and were from upper middle class families and all nominated on reserve seats. The women party workers are comparatively less privileged than directly elected women in terms of family political background, land ownership, having spiritual local followers, and their influence on local area politics.

The interviewed women were aged from 35 to 60 years old. Data shows that few young women enter into politics and the majority of those who do are married. All of the women in this study possess an education to the level of bachelor degree and above, as graduation had been made a precondition for candidates in the general election of 2002 and 2008.

Examination of the professional background of fifteen MNAs in reserve seats suggests that these women possess experiences in different fields; one is a doctor, three have a background in teaching, one comes from the banking sector, three of them run their own businesses such as boutiques and selling furniture, and two of them are practising

lawyers. Five reserve seat MNAs said they had not been in any professional career, in fact housewives mainly belonging to feudal political families.

Of the five directly elected women respondents, three were housewives not involved in any profession and came from established political and feudal families. One possesses significant experience of electronic media and the other one is a doctor by profession.

All twenty respondents are associated with political parties, since reserve seats are filled through political parties on the basis of parties' standing to win general/direct seats. 60% (12) of respondents claimed that they had been associated with political parties for more than six years, while the remaining 40% (8) have been members of political parties for less than six years.

Thirteen (65%) of MNAs belonged to families that had contested an election before, a significant number, and seven (45%) said no one from their family had ever contested election. In most cases, they had joined particular political parties due to long familial affiliation, rather than any personal ideological preferences. The majority of women belonging to political families were not personally active in party politics; however their families provided them with frequent opportunities to interact and develop contact with party leadership during various times, which I will move on to discuss in the next chapter.

The majority of these MNAs were supported and encouraged by male members of their families, in particular fathers and husbands, to enter parliamentary politics. Almost 33 % (7) of the husbands and fathers of women MNAs were working as government



officials in high positions, 25% (5) of the husbands and fathers of MNAs belonged to the business class, and 25% (5) of the respondents reported that their husbands and/or fathers were landlords. Only 17% (3) said that their husbands or fathers were engaged in mid-level career jobs in government or the private sector. The occupational background of the husbands and fathers of women respondents suggest that the majority of them have come from elite backgrounds, greatly reflecting the reality of the parliament as dominated by financial elites (Bari, 2010).

I did not find any studies that provided such detailed information as the above of existing women MNAs I did not interview, but even then, there is some diversity within my sample of women respondents. In a nutshell, I interviewed women coming from five major political parties and three provinces. Out of twenty respondents, five were directly elected, fifteen were selected on reserve seats, twelve belonged to the ruling parties with eight in opposition parties, nine identify themselves as party workers, twelve are from feudal, political and/or urban elite families, as well as some having professional backgrounds in several fields as shown above. Further details of participants are provided in Appendix II.

### ***Other Field Work Difficulties***

I completed my field work in ten months, travelling seven times to Islamabad and five times to Karachi and interviewing twenty women MNAs. Apart from those already discussed, the other major limitations I faced during field work which were beyond my control concerned the volatile political situation in Pakistan and the 2010 and the 2011 floods, which increased the difficulties and delays in accessing women MNAs. Under

these circumstances MNAs were spending more time in their constituencies and less in Islamabad.

The extensive travelling, unpredictable and volatile political situation, unplanned party meetings and tasks of interviewees, extensive coordination and preparation made the field work very difficult. It is clear that interviews with elites should not be underestimated as researching this group is an exhausting process for the interviewer.

### ***Final Thoughts***

In this chapter, I have highlighted my experiences of feminist and elite research processes in Pakistani contexts that are rather mixed. As Puwar (1997: 13) also puts it, ‘it certainly was not always a cosy, friendly exchange of information’. Sometimes more friendly, sympathetic, and sisterly and other times rude, hostile and rushed.

My experience suggests that it is highly unlikely for a person without a web of influential social networks and contacts to access women politicians, including those based at the National Assembly. To a large extent, elite women can be effectively accessed by those in positions of power in various other influential sectors of Pakistani society. I did have the advantage of my own and my husband’s social contacts that we have developed over many years of work. Even then, in many instances I find it difficult to access parliamentary data, MNAs and the locations where elites carry out their work.

In this chapter I have tried to highlight how my position as PhD student, researcher, young woman, unknown/stranger to participants and having gained my qualifications abroad has had an impact on every aspect of this research, from gaining access to

developing rapport. In addition, I was not always placed in the ideal environment for interviews.

Findings also highlight that most of the techniques and tools (such as writing letters, emails and phone) to secure interviews used by researchers in developed democracies did not work in my case. It is important to train researchers by offering techniques which may be useful in doing elite research projects in difficult and transitional democracies. It is also important to bear in mind the volatile political situation, security threats and natural disasters such as floods in Pakistan, which can also affect field work. So there is a strong need to openly discuss the research and fieldwork processes one encounters in different contexts, including high security zones, while researching elite groups within the population whose lives are at times under threat.

Despite the difficulties in accessing parliamentary proceedings and interview participants, both are a crucial methodological tool for obtaining important information and the views of political elite women, as other techniques may not allow the researcher to uncover the rich information required for research of this kind (McEvoy, 2006). However I strongly feel that personal observations also revealed much about the architecture, interiors and design of parliamentary sites in terms of analyzing elites' lives.

The next chapter specifically sets and explains particular context by analyzing the socio, cultural and political situation in Pakistan, in which women MNAs are practicing representations.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Contextual Analysis**

#### ***Introduction***

As a result of the attacks that took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, and the ensuing war on terror and in neighbouring Afghanistan, Pakistan suddenly became key partner to the United States of America (US). Internationally, the image of Pakistan as a fundamentalist country in general and with its women as veiled, submissive and oppressed in particular emerged (Critelli, 2010: 236). Prior to the US war on terror, Pakistan was already experiencing critical times due to the increased Talibanization of the country and a military takeover by General Pervaiz Musharaf (Rashid, 2008).

In October 1999, Musharaf threw out the democratically elected government of Mr. Nawaz Sharif and later in 2001 joined the US led anti-terrorist coalition to wage war against Afghanistan. While supporting the US, Musharaf also initiated a major crackdown against militant groups within Pakistan. Musharaf, while taking over power, assured Pakistanis that he would soon restore democracy. Finally, in 2000-2 the military government through various reforms arranged elections and also brought a significant number of women to the legislature by restoring and increasing gender quotas at various levels; national, provincial and local.

This chapter sets the context for this study by offering information on gendered political environments in Pakistan. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the semi-feudal, tribal, undemocratic and fundamentalist nature of Pakistani democracy which is embedded within its historical, social and political context. This chapter has two major

parts: the first part explains the socio-cultural context and the second part provides details regarding the political context.

I first discuss the socio-cultural context, with reference to women's status in Pakistan. Here I show that like anywhere else, women in Pakistan are not a homogenous group, there are marked differences in their status. Women with greater access to resources, and who come from the richer classes enjoy greater economic, social and political power as compared to those coming from poorer families with limited access to social and economic opportunities.

Despite significant diversity among women, by and large, women from poor rural families are highly marginalized and greatly affected by the semi-feudal and tribal nature of the society. Here, I discuss in detail the customary practices of honour crime, Jirga, rape and violence against women to demonstrate that women's fellow politicians are powerful men, who defend honour crimes, and are further supported by the state government which too is ruled through family dynasties and similar elite groups. In the context of this thesis, it is important to understand how in practice crimes against women and political power are interlinked, which creates a complicated situation for women politicians in order to bring change.

In the second part I first provide an overview of the historical political context with reference to the frequent military coups that have taken place. Understanding the military's crucial role in Pakistan's politics is highly important, as the military has ruled the country for more time than civilian governments. Here, I make three important points: firstly, that frequent and deliberate military intervention has weakened the

democratic political process; secondly, that the military have imposed discriminatory laws which especially affect women; and thirdly that the military has patronised militant and religious groups for their own purposes, which have remained highly resistant to women's emancipation. In doing so, I show that the military's actions have not only affected democratic institutions and processes, but also have had serious consequences for women's advancement in the country.

Next, I will briefly explain the key structures of Pakistan's political governance, I then discuss the existing political system and the nature of the political parties present in the national parliament, as well as the position of women in political parties and legislatures, including women reserve seats. I highlight that political parties and parliament are actually dominated by feudal and tribal men and run through family dynasties. Women in political parties are marginalized and have a very weak status in terms of party hierarchy. I argue that women's greater representation in legislatures emerged without much change in the socio-political context for women. Therefore, the relationship between women's descriptive and substantive representation must also be viewed in the context of these wider power structures and changes.

It is important to mention here that this chapter is based on a wide range of sources including scholarly literature and country assessment reports of international organizations such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. Occasionally I refer to media reports and newspaper articles, especially when reporting cases related to violence and honour crimes against women that have occurred in the recent past. Unfortunately, there is not much literature in scholarly form which gives in-depth information about the extent of violence against

women, especially in rural and tribal areas (Khan, S., 2006: 1). Much of the literature talks about the codification of religious text in Islam, the application of discriminatory rules and laws and the implications of those laws to women (Patel, 2010; Mumtaz and Shaheed, 1987; Jahangir and Jilani, 1990; Ali, 2007). Most of the information regarding honour crime cases is based on media reports, newspaper articles or human rights groups' reports, which is why I am constrained to rely on such material. I also express concern that there is no mechanism in place to verify the claims of the media, and almost no further information to follow up on publicised cases of women who are victims of violence.

### ***Socio - Cultural Context***

Pakistan (meaning 'land of the pure') is the state created in 1947 as a Muslim majority country in South Asia in response to the freedom movement from the British colonial power. The founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah was known for his highly secular ideas. He was vocal and supportive of women's greater empowerment, stating that:

'No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you; we are victims of evil customs. It is a crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of the houses as prisoners. There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live' (quoted in Mumtaz and Shaheed, 1987: 183).

Pakistan is a country of 180.71 million inhabitants, of which 97 percent are Muslims and 3 percent minorities including Christians, Hindus and other religions (Pakistan

Economic Survey 2011-12). Pakistan is the federation of four provinces (Sindh, Punjab, Baluchistan and Khabar Pakhtoon Kha – KPK), Federally Administered Tribal Areas – FATA, and the Federal Capital. Pakistan has great diversity in terms of provincial and linguistic differences. Each province has a distinct language (Sindhi, Punjabi, Balochi, Pushto, Urdu and others), culture, history, norms and identities. Some scholars highlight that:

‘One cannot overlook the fact that in Pakistan one is confronted with peculiar situation where every region (or province as it is called) is comprised of people who are ethnically and linguistically different to the people in the next province’ (Ali and Rehman, 2001: 3).

Importantly, provinces have different and specific challenges to take into account: for instance, the insurgency in Baluchistan and the war on terror which particularly affects the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the Khabar Pakhtoon Kha province. In some cases, provinces have conflicting interests; as two major agricultural provinces Sindh and Punjab are usually found in conflict over the distribution of canal water for agriculture. In addition, within provinces controversies among ethnic minorities are serious. Some highlight that ‘there are grave dangers of secular separatist movement in the provinces of Baluchistan and Sindh that could divide nation’ (Rashid, A., 2008: XL).

The review of literature on Pakistani women suggests that:



‘No single image or description of the “typical” Pakistani woman suffices [...] as the status of women in Pakistan is not homogenous, because of the intersection of gender with other forms of exclusion in the society’ (Critelli, 2010: 238-9).

The marked differences between men and women in Pakistani society are evident in the high sex ratio of 108 males per 100 females (Bari, 2000). However, ground breaking work that has been undertaken on Pakistani women’s lives’ also shows diversity and inequalities among women (Ahmed, S., 2010). Literature also suggests that these differences are mainly because of women’s geographical location, but also class that greatly affects their status (Ihsan and Zaidi, 2006: 201). It is apparent that women from middle and upper class families with greater access to health, educational, professional opportunities and resources live a very different life to those without access to such resources. An Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2002: 1) report informs us that ‘one third of the population can be classified as poor in 1999, and somewhat more in rural areas’.

Hence, 68% of the population lives in rural areas and face unequal socio-economic development resulting large gender disparities across all social sectors of development (Gazdar, 2005). For instance, despite differences in literacy ratios of men (69%) and women (45%), statistics reveal that the school enrolment of boys and girls has risen in Pakistan in recent decades (P-MDG, 2010). However, the rural-urban divide and marked differences within the provinces are prevalent. In urban areas, 64.6% of females are enrolled at primary and 50 % at secondary level, although in rural areas, only 39.3% and as low as 17.3% of girls are enrolled in primary and secondary schools respectively.

In fact only 10% of rural women receive primary education in the Baluchistan province of Pakistan (Rai et al., 2007: 08).

Recent statistics also reveal that the economy has been under considerable pressure as overall inflation rose, public debt increased, poverty grew deeper, food insecurity grew and the unemployment rate increased (P-MDG 2010; Pakistan Economic Survey 2011-12). The poverty and the pressure of work especially on women from poor families contribute to poor health and malnutrition among women and girls. The use of reproductive health services is still low, and maternal mortality ratios remain high (WB, 2005: i). Contraceptive Prevalence Rate has decreased from 30 percent to 27 percent in 2011 (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2011-12) 'In rural areas, literacy did not increase women's perceptions of having reached a 'sufficient' number of living children, although the opposite was true for urban areas' (Zaki and Johnson, 1993: 445).

In terms of women's economic participation, on the one hand, poverty forces women to work harder to earn and protect their families from starvation (Bari, 2000), but on the other hand, illiteracy, social and cultural norms all play a part in restricting women's greater involvement in productive economic roles. The social perceptions of women as wives and mothers have a greater bearing in terms of their productive economic activity. 'The patriarchal ideology is that men lead economically productive lives, ... while women focus on reproductive activity caring for their children and homes' (Weiss 2010: 14). The decision to enter into employment is not something women make independently (Shahid, 2010). Nevertheless, women's slow and gradual journey to economic empowerment is also on its way.

According to the labor force survey (2005-6), female participation rates have risen from 27.5% in 2005-06 to 31% in 2004-05. However if we closely observe trends of women's engagement in economic activity, we find that women work in a much narrower set of occupations. In rural areas, the active female labor force is mainly involved in agriculture, and in urban areas, women work in the informal service sector in roles such as domestic workers. Women's employment at senior level in federal, provincial and local government bureaucracies is low, for instance women make up only 5% of the workforce of federal bureaucracies (Rai et al. 2007: 37).

It is important to remember that rural women in Pakistan are also not homogeneous groups, there are provincial and regional differences among women and as well as caste, class and religion. For instance rural women from poorer landless families that also include Hindus, Christians and Muslims mainly work as *Haris* (sharecroppers) and are highly vulnerable (Chaudhry, 2010). Despite rural women's active role in agriculture, which is the backbone of agrarian Pakistani society, some argue that 'women's right to work, own property as well as the right to inheritance are violated on a large scale primarily due to certain social and customary practices' (Ihsan and Zaidi, 2006: 204).

These social and customary practices include girls being exchanged and married at an early age, preferably with cousins in order to keep property within families. Other cultural practices of dowry, endogamy and bride price (bride families receiving money from the groom in exchange for the bride) impinge upon women's rights. As such no celebrations are made after the birth of a girl child, the general trend of son preference is likely to remain strong in Pakistan (Ali S. M., 1989). Often male children are known as *waris* (one who inherits property/belongings) and a baby girl is seen as a burden or

liability, and the one who has to marry into another family (Ali, S. 2000a). 'Traditionally, and more culturally women are regarded as the bearer of the family honour and are always expected to be decorous and moderate' (Rehman, 1987: 248).

It is a fact that Pakistan is a country where feudalism still exists, which means a few thousand feudal families control rural Pakistan (Goodson, 2008: 10). However the power of the feudal family is due 'not to the extent of their personal landholdings but to the fact that they are chiefs of large tribes; and the importance of leadership roles in kinship groups' (Lieven, 2011: 17). Patterns of land ownership are now changing, as Punjab and KPK provinces do not have major landowners. However, the Sindh Province is still dominated by few landlord families who control thousands of acres of agricultural land (Gazdar, 2005). In reality, rural and tribal life in Pakistan is controlled by feudal groups and tribal chiefs, where people rely heavily on the patronage of a kinship group. These kinship groups are mainly based on caste and tribe. These kinship groups are crucial in terms of acquiring political power, and the vote bank in Pakistan is still confined to kinship groups.

However, the tribal and semi feudal nature of the society seems highly complex and challenging for women's empowerment that still uphold violence against women in the name of honour. Women are also killed in the name of honour on a mere suspicion relating to their character by their own fathers, brothers, and relatives (Shah, N., 1998). The existence of honour crimes is one of the few major human and women rights issues that occur almost in all four provinces of Pakistan, although occurring especially in rural and tribal areas. The custom of honour crime is now used to justify murders that are committed to settle personal revelries or disputes, or sometimes to kill men or women

who marry or seek a divorce without the consent of the family (Warraich, 2005; Patel, 2010; Shah, N., 1998).

However in rural and tribal settings of Pakistan, customary practices like jirgas (tribal assemblies) are increasingly used to resolve communities' differences and disputes related to several issues, including but not limited to water distribution, land, marriages, and even theft. Jirgas are justified on the basis of providing speedy justice to the people (Lieven, 2011). Jirgas' history goes back to the colonial period (Baxi, et al., 2006), when British colonial powers endorsed patriarchal tribal values in the Panel Code of 1860 and judicial interpretation of these provisions until their repeal in 1990 (Warraich, 2005: 78-9), under which state authorized local *sardars* (tribal heads) to exercise magisterial powers by holding courts and make judgments (Shah, 1998). In practice women/girls do not participate in jirgas, but are used as commodities; women are given away as compensation to victims' families.

However, jirgas, violence against women (honour crime) and political power are very much linked with each other in the rural and tribal setting. There is significant evidence available to show that in practice, powerful political people and state institutions (like police and administration) play direct and indirect roles in such crimes against women in different ways. In her analysis, Ms. Nafisa Shah, who is also a Member National Assembly (MNA) in a women reserve seat and belongs to a district of Khairpur where honour crimes rate is high, argues that:

‘...in practice *Faislo* [Jirga] is also used by political party representatives to reinforce their social hold over the constituents. This is a dangerous trend

since the communities can also manipulate the *faislo*, making their votes for the *sardars* [head of one or more tribe] conditional to a settlement of their choosing' (1998: 249).

She further provides this classic example showing why political tribal and feudal leaders own Jirgas. She informs us that:

'In one incident in the 1997 elections, a Junejo [tribe/sub tribe] woman was married into another tribe. The Junejos approached the incumbent party insisting that he have the woman returned to them. When the person contesting the election refused, fearing that the woman may be killed as was increasingly happening in the region, the entire tribe boycotted the elections, costing the politician many votes' (Shah, 1998: 249).

Her analyses reveal that the same powerful political people hold Jirgas, punish men and women, use government machinery (police) to enforce their decision on poor rural people, get hold of rural life, contest election and gain political power.

The Human Right Commission of Pakistan's yearly reports are full of instances of honour crime, reporting grave violations of women and human rights (see also Amnesty International, 2002). Such cases also include the Mukhtaran Mai rape case, which received considerable international media attention. Mai was gang raped in June 2002, in front of her village after the decision of the Jirga (court/assembly of village elders) of very powerful Mastoi clan men for the alleged wrongdoing of her 12 year old brother (HRCP, 2002: 243). Holding Jirgas and giving away girls and women to settle

community disputes are banned by the state law in some provinces but still continue throughout Pakistan (Azhar, 2012; Shah N., 1998). Jirgas and honour crimes are owned by powerful people in society, as Baxi, et al. (2006:1241) also argue:

‘In India and Pakistan ethnographic studies suggest that caste *panchayats* (village council), *jirgas* (tribal council), police officers, lawyers, prosecutors and even trial judges uphold localised notions of sovereignty often in contravention of constitutional law or even of the rule of law’.

It is true that the plural legal system of Pakistan is highly complex and challenging, as ‘laws derived from religious texts operate alongside constitutional provisions, secular civil and criminal law, customary practices and more recently international human rights laws operating along with the ordinary courts’ (Ali 2007: 403). ‘Some of these systems are exclusively applicable to the tribal areas whereas others are applicable throughout the country’ (Ali and Arif, 1998: 32). ‘Customary laws differ considerably among the different regions and ethnicities of Pakistan’ (Lieven 2011: 91), and by and large, perpetrators often find an escape from punishment (Azhar, 2012).

However, during the recent past something different is happening in Pakistan which has never happened before - while conducting illegal Jirgas some political powerful feudal and tribal men have been challenged by the court, including the highly publicized case of a male parliamentarian from Sindh Province. The member of National Assembly Mir Hazar Khan Bijarni, held a Jirga in his constituency to settle a community dispute and give away five minor girls (aged 3-11) to compensate victims. The Supreme Court of Pakistan took immediate action on media reports, issuing an order for the arrest of all

those involved in that Jirga, including Mr. Bijarani (Kamran, M. 2007). Later Bijarani appeared in the Court, and his case is still under review.

Even more complicated in this situation is the role played by the state government. Although state government upholds certain international agreements, they still support powerful tribal and feudal men who support crimes against women and see nothing wrong in it. For instance the MNA Mr. Bijarani mentioned above was appointed as a cabinet member and given the education portfolio during the current term. Another case includes that of Senator Zehri (also discussed in chapter one), who on the floor of the House said that ‘he will continue defending honour crime’, and has also been rewarded by the government and appointed as a cabinet member. Suraya Makhdoom (2009) writes that in the Sindh cabinet, there are at least three MNAs appointed as ministers who have been involved in organizing Jirgas against women.

The reason for discussing fully here issues such as rape, jirgas and violence against women by the powerful political elite is that I return to a consideration of these issues in interviews with women MNAs. I investigate how women politicians have raised such critical issues, as well as the difficulties they experience in challenging fellow tribal and feudal elites in the parliament.

Despite numerous challenges, Pakistan has initiated many policies to address inequalities. For example, Pakistan has ratified several UN women’s and human rights treaties, a permanent National Commission on the status of Women (NCSW) was established in 2000, employment and political quotas in government and legislative institutions have been introduced, the Ministry of Women’s Development introduced a



National Policy for the Development and Empowerment of Women (2002), and the National Plan of Action and Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP) were also formulated. The cross-party women's caucus has also been formed in 2008, and is functional at national level, comprising women parliamentarians from all major political parties.

To sum up, it is apparent that two different aspects of gender growth and inequalities exist simultaneously. By and large, women with access to resources live differently than those living under the shadow of poverty, rural, feudal and tribal settings. These various layers of Pakistani society greatly affect women's status within society. It also suggests highly complex and challenging contexts for women politicians in order to bring about change for other women. However, women politicians are themselves marginalized in political spheres, as discussed below.

### ***Political Contexts***

In this section I describe the political context in Pakistan. I first provide discussion related to the historical role of the military in creating adverse and complicated conditions within the country for democracy in general and women's advancement in particular. In the political context of Pakistan, it is highly important to understand the critical role of the military that has led Pakistan for more time than democratically elected governments.

I then briefly explain political and legislative structures of governance, before I go on to discuss political parties and quotas for women. I go on to explain political parties and their position in the national parliament, including women in parties. Here I show that the parliament is ruled and run by political family dynasties, who also dominate the

political parties, and that women's status in all parties is weak in terms of party hierarchies. At the end I discuss women in legislatures and the history of women reserve seats. In doing so, we begin to understand the gendered linkages between different layers of Pakistani politics which run through powerful feudal and tribal family political dynasties. This further helps to conceptualize women politicians' role in terms of the substantive representation of other women.

### **The Armed Democracy and Implications for the War on Terror**

The state's most powerful institution - the military - has frequently intervened in the democratic political processes and has ruled Pakistan for most of its history, also weakening the political institutions (Shaheed, 2009: 13). For instance, in its 65 years of existence, Pakistan has been governed more by military dictators than by elected governments, with a high number of military president generals. Assemblies were repeatedly dissolved by military general in the years 1954, 1955, 1969, 1977, 1988, 1990, 1993, 1996 and 1999, affecting the democratic process (Critelli, 2010; Mumtaz, 1998). The military generals cum presidents Ayub Khan (1958-69), Yahya Khan (1969-71), Ziaulhaq (1977-88), and Pervaiz Musharaf (1999-2007) tried to redefine democracy and claimed that the army were building democracy instead of bypassing it (Haqqani 2006: 114). Scholars inform us that 'the military general distorted democratic processes, sidelined political parties and strengthened itself as the state's the most powerful institution' (Shah A., 2002: 68). They also suspended human rights and operated military courts (Shaheed, 2009: 14)

The Pakistani army's long involvement in politics must also be seen in the broader context of their attempts to gain a hold over economic resources. The army enjoys

enormous financial leverage (Goodson, 2008) and differences are visible between army and civilian government-owned resources. As Lieven (2011: 161-2) writes '[army] headquarters gleam with marble and polished wood ..., while government ministers work in decaying office blocks with peeling walls and broken stairs'. Some of the Pakistani authors find 'the army to be extremely manipulative ... that the military deliberately acquired its multiple roles and weakened the state and its political system for its own interests' (Siddiq, 2007: 65). As Shah (2002: 69) also highlights, the 'military has gradually taken over most of the institutions in the name of fighting corruption and promoting accountability'.

The military-led governments not only intervened in democratic political processes, but in the name of the Islamization of the state instituted some of the laws such as the Hudood Ordinances to name just one set of those laws greatly affecting women and minorities. The Hudood Ordinances were promulgated in 1979 by Gen Ziaulhaq under his military dictatorship in order to bring the law into conformity with Islam. The implications and consequences of the Hudood laws for women have been analysed by the scholars (Patel, 2010; Mumtaz and Shaheed, 1987; Jahangir and Jilani, 1990; Ali, S. 2007). The statistics related to the Hudood laws reveals a substantial increase in women in jail, who were subjected to charges of adultery under such laws; 'in 1982 there were only 70 women convicts in the whole Pakistan, the figure rose to 7000 in 2002-3' (Ali, 2007: 382).

Religion has always remained dominant in the political processes even after General Ziaulhaq was killed in 1988; however, it is a fact that no subsequent civilian government has dared to repeal these laws. During the previous government tenure (2002-07),

through the Women's Protection Bill (2006) the Hudood laws were amended but not fully repealed. The religious groups' and parties' support for the Hudood Laws was loud and visible in parliament, and religious parties' legislators strongly protested even amendments in the Hudood laws (Mirza and Wagha, 2009).

The state government, and particularly the military, has supported various Islamist, militants, Taliban, insurgents and religious groups during various times, which has created an increasingly difficult and complicated situation in the country. There is evidence that the Pakistani regime from 1971 onwards have patronized and then later discarded these groups when no longer needed. In 1970-71, the Pakistani state exploited right-wing Islamic militants, to terrorize, torture and murder Bengali intellectuals, politicians, and other supporters of the Bangladesh movement (Cohen 2003: 15).

Later, military dictators worked with Islamist groups and parties during the Afghan war (1979-88), and continue to work with them in the struggle over Kashmir (Haqqani, 2006). Some also point out that:

‘throughout the 1990s, the *madrassahs* (religious schools) run by General Ziaulhaq's favoured fundamentalist parties continued to supply the cannon fodder for the “holy war” that the Pakistani army sponsors in Kashmir, India's northernmost and only Muslim-majority state’ (Shah A, 2002: 69; see also Rashid A., 2008).

More recently, General Musharaf forged closer links with the US and other Western forces after 9/11, and served as a major ally in the ‘war on terror’ in neighbouring

Afghanistan. Apparently, Musharaf followed a different approach than previous military generals by taking action *against* religious and militant groups, rather than *patronizing* them. Some argue that Musharaf's support to US after 9/11 was rather a 'short term tactical move to appease the US, but not the army's long standing support to Islamic extremists' (Rashid, A., 2008: 219) as I mentioned above that historically Pakistani forces have been patronizing militant groups.

However, Musharaf's government's actions against religious groups to appease the West saw increased Talibanization, and proved to be a great security threat to the country (Schaffer, 2002-3; Shah, 2002; Haqqani, 2006). Indeed religious parties and groups which have never succeeded in gaining ground in general elections secured several seats in the National Assembly and the Provincial Assemblies of KPK and Baluchistan during the elections of 2002 (Goodson, 2008).

The war on terror has also worsened the economic, social, security and human rights situation in the country. According to various estimates due to growing number of drone attacks by US within Pakistan and Pakistan military's own actions in tribal region have greatly fuelled anti-government and American sentiments in the country, as well as growing numbers of suicide attacks and displaced population in the country are observed. According to Human Rights Commissions of Pakistan Report (2011:50) there were 74 drone strikes in the country in 2011. As many as 517 people were killed in these attacks. More drones were reported in 2010, when 134 strikes claimed the lives of 957 people. Alone in Khabar Pakhtoon Kha Province at the end of 2011, there were 470,000 persons displaced down from around 1.1 million people in the previous year as war in tribal region still continues. It is argued that 'Even recently, Pakistan's security

is at high risk due to the terrorist acts in Karachi and other major cities including federally administered tribal areas (FATA) adjacent to the Afghan borders' (Michael, 2007:45). Pakistan has already lost over 36,000 innocent men, women and children in various attacks in cities, mosques, shrines, schools and others, including 3,500 security personal. Some even report greater economic losses, 'in fact, Pakistan has not only lost precious lives and infrastructure; according to official estimates, it has also suffered a loss of around \$ 35-40 billion since 2001-2002' (Ali, A. 2010:1).

There has been a fall and rise in the partnership between military and religious groups and parties, which has serious consequences for women's advancement throughout the country. It may be useful to explain that Mohtarama Fatima Jinnah, a sister of Muhammad Ali Jinnah (the Founder of Pakistan) contested the presidential election in 1965. In response to her candidature, the General Ayub Khan worked with the support of religious clerks to release a *fatwa* (testimony) against the appointment or election of a female as Head of State (Ali, 2000). Later, General Ziaulhaq, who brought contradictory laws such as Hudood, also set up a self-appointed *Majli-e-Shoora* (Council of Advisors) with an objective to close doors to women becoming head of the state while targeting Ms. Benazir Bhutto (Krook, 2009: 67).

In addition to this, the known liberal General Musharaf - who introduced enhanced gender quotas - recently struck a deal with religious groups and parties, while assuring the House that the Hudood laws and other Islamic provisions in the constitutions would not be scrapped. It is following this that under his rule, in 2006, the Hudood laws were amended, but not repealed. Khan (2004: 98) points out that 'women and religious

minorities and their rights could and had been bartered! [...] a deal between the military and the Mullahs [religious leaders], and between them the United States’.

More recently, after 9/11 and the war on terror with growing Talibanization and extremism in society, extreme violence was also committed against women politicians. The late Ms. Huma Usman - the Minister for Social Welfare - was killed by a man, who in his statement said that he killed her because she was dressed inappropriately and that women should not be involved in politics (Ishtiaq, A. 2007). Ms. Bakhtiar, the then Tourism Minister resigned in 2007, after hard-line Islamic clerics accused her of hugging her male coach after a charity parachute jump in France. Her photos appeared on social media websites, which resulted in an outcry against her. The pressure from religious groups was so intense that she resigned and failed to win the support of her cabinet colleagues (Ishtiaq, A. 2007a). In December 2007, Ms. Bhutto was also assassinated in terrorist attacks. Ms. Shery Rehman was threatened for raising concerns over blasphemy law of Pakistan inside and outside parliament. It is argued that women are continue to lose the larger struggle for equal rights in the face of an increasingly conservative and anti-women agendas of religio-political forces in Pakistan (Zia, 2009).

The above discussion suggests that the military have remained crucial in deteriorating democratic political processes. Moreover, military and state governments have collaborated with various religious and militant groups for their own gains. These religious groups have now become a great threat to the country and for to women’s emancipation. The discriminatory laws imposed by military governments are now guarded by religious parties and groups, who now occupy and dominate mainstream social, political and cultural spaces in Pakistan. As Shaheed (2009) states that

‘Importantly, this political patronage [military and state] transformed the social standing of the average mullah [religious leader]; from being dependent on social charity and occasional government honoraria whose company was suffered rather than welcomed, many were suddenly far better resourced and linked to circles of influence’ (2009:14).



### Political Structures of Governance

In terms of political and legislative structures, Pakistan has four tiers of governance. First, the *Upper House (Senate)* is an indirectly elected house of 100 members, in which each province has equal representation within a total of 22 seats (14 general seats, 4 for technocrats and 4 for women). In addition, 4 seats are reserved for members from the Federal Capital and 8 from FATA, which also includes one seat reserved for women. In total out of a total of 100 Senate seats, 17 are reserved for women, as shown in the table below.

**Table 3: Composition of the Senate/Upper House**

Province/Area	General Seats	Reserve Seats		Total
		Women	Technocrats	
Federal Capital	2	1	1	4
Punjab Province	14	4	4	22
Sindh Province	14	4	4	22
KPK Province	14	4	4	22
Baluchistan Province	14	4	4	22
FATA	8			8
Total	66	17	17	100
Source: The Election Commission of Pakistan, <a href="http://www.ecp.gov.pk">www.ecp.gov.pk</a>				

Second, there is a lower house which is known as the *National Assembly*, and which comprises 342 members, with representation from all four provinces proportional to their population, including 60 reserve seats for women and 10 for minorities. As the distribution of seats is based on the population of the province Punjab has more seats than other provinces, being Pakistan’s largest province in terms of population. The 272 general seats of the National Assembly are filled through direct elections from single member constituencies, except reserve seats for women (60) and religious minorities (10), which are given to parties in proportion to general seats won by them in election.

**Table 4: Composition of the National Assembly/Lower House**

Province/Area	General Seats	Reserve Seats		Total
		Women	Non- Muslims	
Federal Capital	2		10	2
Punjab	148	35		183
Sindh	61	14		75
KPK	35	8		43
Baluchistan	14	3		17
FATA	12			12
Total	272	60	10	342 (332+10 minority seats)
Source: The Election Commission of Pakistan, <a href="http://www.ecp.gov.pk">www.ecp.gov.pk</a>				

All four provinces have directly elected *Provincial Assemblies* as a third tier of governance, which vary in size. In Provincial Assemblies, women also enjoy 17% representation.

**Table 5: Composition of the Provincial Assembly**

Province	General Seats	Women	Minorities	Total
Punjab	297	66	8	371
Sindh	130	29	9	168
KPK	99	22	3	124
Baluchistan	51	11	3	65
Total	577	128	23	728
Source: The Election Commission of Pakistan, <a href="http://www.ecp.gov.pk">www.ecp.gov.pk</a>				

Finally, there exists a devolved *local government system*, which is in some provinces is currently undergoing reforms which are being carried out by the government. Below, I discuss the National Assembly in more detail, the institution which this thesis is investigating.

### **Political Parties and Family Dynasty in the Current 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly**

The election of 2008 was relatively free and fair, and was followed by a peaceful transition from the Musharaf's military-led regime to a democratically elected government (Goodson, 2008). There are several political parties registered with the Election Commission of Pakistan who do not enjoy representation in the parliament. For example, in 2008 before the elections to decide the current 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, 148 political parties registered with the Election Commission of Pakistan, 43 parties

contested election and 10 are now present in the national parliament, as shown in the table below:

**Table 6: The Position of Political Parties in the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Seats in NA</b>
1. Pakistan People’s Party Parliamentarians – PPPP	126
2. Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz – PMLN	91
3. Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam – PMLQ	53
4. Mutahida Qaumi Movement – MQM	25
5. Awami National Party- ANP	13
6. Mutahida Majlis-e Amal – MMA	7
7. Pakistan Muslim League Functional – PMLF	5
8. Baluchistan National Party Awami – BNPA	1
9. Pakistan People Party – Sherpao PPS	1
10. National Peoples Party – NPP	1
11. Independent	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>340*</b>
<i>*One seat election postponed one withdraw</i>	
<b>Source: Election Commission of Pakistan 2008, available online at:</b> <a href="http://ecp.gov.pk/Misc/ReportGeneralElection2008Vol-II.pdf">http://ecp.gov.pk/Misc/ReportGeneralElection2008Vol-II.pdf</a> <b>accessed on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2009</b>	

Despite having distinctive ideologies, party manifestoes, priorities and agendas (PILDAT, 2002), the majority of the political parties mentioned in above table - such as Pakistan Peoples’ Party Parliamentarians – PPPP, Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz –

PMLN, Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam – PMLQ, Mutahida Qaumi Movement – MQM, Awami National Party- ANP, who hold more than 90% seats in the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly (NA) - are mainly known as moderate and secular parties, especially in terms of arguing for greater women’s engagement in public affairs in their party manifestoes and election campaigns (PILDAT, 2002; Cohen, 2003).

However, Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) is an alliance of distinct Islamist parties<sup>6</sup>, and relies on another approach to developing policy for women: ‘Its argument is to enforce the proper order in the private sphere such that it no longer pushes women onto city streets and unfriendly workplaces’ (Zakaria R., 2012: 7). Regarding religious parties, the feminists in Pakistan highlight that

‘politico-religious groups are entities that define their political and societal agendas in religious terminology. Their main aim is not to make people good Muslims but to gain political power’ (Shaheed 2009: 10)

Some small parties from different parts of Pakistan, such as the Pakistan Muslim League Functional (PMLF), won five seats. The Baluchistan National Party Awami -BNPA, a nationalist party concentrated in Baluchistan Province, also won a single seat. The PPPS and NPP also won one seat each from the Punjab and Sindh Provinces respectively (see Table 6)

The gate keeper role of political parties is extremely crucial when they are making government cabinets and alliances, offering women reserve seats, mobilizing the public

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<sup>6</sup> Jamiat-e-Ulema Pakistan (JUP), Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam (JUI), Jamat-e-Islami (JI), Tahrir- e-Jaferia Pakistan (TJP), and Jamiat Ahle Hadith (JAH).

and taking important policy decisions in the country. Although political parties are located and concentrated in different geographical constituencies with complicated and distinct interests of the constituents, they serve as coalition partners in federal and provincial government.

The parliamentary system of Pakistan is party based and it is currently dominated by multi-party coalition government. For instance, soon after the election of 2008, two major parties such as the PPPP and the PMLN, who won the largest share of seats in the NA initially collaborated to establish a government, but did not succeed in sustaining their partnership. Currently, the country is led by a PPPP-led coalition government, joined by other parties such as the PMLQ, MQM, ANP and PMLF. However, the PMLN and religious parties such as MMA remain in opposition, although the MMA spent some time in the PPPP coalition as a partner before leaving the partnership.

The national Political Parties Order 2002, which was followed by the guidelines ‘Rules and Code of Conduct of Political Parties’ attempted to enforce greater transparency and accountability within parties. Unfortunately, there is no systematic or separate documentation and/or analyses on political parties which could tell us how transparent these parties are in their internal affairs, as obtaining such information is extremely difficult. The limited available literature does mention that:

‘the political parties, by and large, do not adhere to democratic norms in internal processes. Majority policy decisions are taken in a non-transparent manner, mostly on an ad hoc basis. The systems of monitoring and

accountability do not exist and institution building is a lowest priority'

(UNDP, 2005: 16, see also Rai *et al.*, 2007 and Bari, 2010).

The historical political involvement of the military has also led to the gradual decline and marginalization of political parties. Political leaders, frustrated about continuous takeovers of the political system, have been resorted to joining hands with generals (Haqqani, 2006). A great deal of horse-trading – the buying and selling of the support of legislators in Pakistani politics - is now commonplace. Parliamentarians often change their parties and loyalties to partner with powerful dictators, who further reward them by offering ministries and important government positions (Mumtaz, 1998; Goodson, 2008; Haqqani, 2006).

It is also very clear that all of the political parties in Pakistan are dominated by men. Only male leaders and their families lead parties, except the PPPP, although that too is now headed by the son and widower of Ms. Bhutto after her assassination in December 2007. Family dynasty is the norm and politics take place in the form of family business or enterprise. For instance during the current political setup, Qaim Ali Shah is the Chief Minister of the Sindh Province, while her daughter Nafisa Shah is an MNA in women reserve seat. Yousuf Raza Gilani who served as Speaker National Assembly and Prime Minister of Pakistan has two sons who are members of Assemblies. Also, Chaudhry Pervaiz Ellahi is an MNA who was also recently appointed as Deputy Prime Minister by the current government, while his son is the member of a Provincial Assembly. Almost ten family members of Zulfiqar Magsi, the Governor of Baluchistan, are serving in the National Assembly, the Senate and the Baluchistan and Sindh Assemblies.

Nor are the religious parties behind in this race. Molana Fazlul Rehman, a head of a religious party, who also served as Leader of the Opposition during the previous term (2002-07), has a brother and sister-in-law who were also MNAs, while another member of a religious party, Kazi Hussain Ahmed was senator at the same time that his daughter served as a MNA.

This list is very long - I have named here only a few examples, but there are several other political families for whom politics serve as family enterprise (Pakistan Think Tank, 08 March 2012). However, there are also parties such as the MQM in parliament, which are dominated by an ethnic minority – the *Mohajirs* – who migrated from India during the partition of India and Pakistan (1947) and who have numerous upper and middle class cadres as members of National and Provincial Assemblies. By and large Scholars agree that:

‘with few exceptions, all the political parties are in fact extensions of powerful families with hereditary leaderships. Their politics mainly revolve around managing and strengthening family interests. Elections are all about gaining control of state patronage. Clan, tribe, caste and *biradari* [Tribe] play a major role in the perpetuation of dynastic politics’ (Hussain, Z. 2012).

The influential and powerful politicians who acquire political power through their ability to contest elections and win parliamentary seats usually use influence and patronage to boost their own prestige within communities. The dominant political families thus have strong roots not only in parliament, but also in other areas of the government, military, civil services, business and other major fields, which also means



that 'quite wide sections of society have the ability to exploit and even distribute patronage to some extent' (Lieven, 2011: 213).

### **Women's Movement in Pakistan**

Pakistani women's political activism goes back to the struggle for the Pakistan independence movement. The women's movement emerged during the era of Pakistan's freedom movement, when women were more concerned about the survival of state and played major role for the independence (Weiss, 1999). Scholars state that 'women had not made reserved seats a central issue before independence and, indeed, had initially believed that the state had more pressing priorities than enhancing women's legal status'. (Afzal 1999; cited in Krook 2009:60).

Unfortunately after independence, women who were very active in the freedom movement remained confined to women's wings of the parties, strengthening and contributing to the wider political agendas of their respective parties, but the majority returned to their homes after independence. Their identity was submerged in the larger interests of the state. Mumtaz and Shaheed (1987, cited in Bari 2009:39) 'referred to this phenomenon as generic to many other countries, where women were called upon to play a political role side by side with men at times of crises, war or the nationalist struggle but they were pushed back to their "legitimate arena" of the home as soon as the crises was over'.

The women's movement in Pakistan never confined itself to women's issues only. It struggles for the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy, peace, environment movements, trade unions by forming NGOs and played key roles in media.

Nevertheless, discriminatory laws remained as big challenge for women's movement throughout Pakistan's history that also served as major cause of bringing together large number of Pakistani women around women's movement especially during 1970s similar to the second wave of the feminist movement in other parts of the world (Khan 2004, Ali, 2000).

There remain organized debates, discussions, and demonstrations by women and human rights' groups against discriminatory laws like Hudood Laws, Qanoon-e- Shahadat and Qisas and Diyat Ordinances. In the 11 years of General Zia-ul-Haq's government (1977-88) several women and human rights groups emerged and feminist movement in Pakistan have drawn on a wide range of strategies to repeal the discriminatory laws imposed by the state. Some of them used the Islamic framework, and other adapted secularist and human rights convention as frame of reference that created awareness and greater attention to women' issues (Ali 2000; Shaheed and Warraich 1998). The use of secularist and Islamic arguments for women's rights also brought division and differences regarding a conceptual framework for a women's movement in Pakistan. As Ali (2000:57) point outs that 'the perception that being secular means denial of religion appears to be the understanding of most women in Pakistan, and very few are willing to take up a secularist stand on women's issues'.

It is interesting to note that women's groups and organizations faced resistance from both the states and hard line religious groups and fundamentalists. Even women's basic rights to work, to drive and to vote, which had always been assured by constitution, began to be challenged in different fora (Zia, 1998). A feminist activist Nighat Saeed Khan shows how she and her 'Institute of Women's Studies Lahore' labeled as anti-

state, anti-government, anti-Islam and of leading women astray, of immorality, debauchery and of being pro Hindu and pro Jewish along with several other women's organizations. She notes that '[government] intelligence agencies continued to harass women's groups and NGOs, and Islamic fundamentalists and militant organizations continued to threaten and intimidate these groups' (Khan 2004:87). Threats to women's organization still exist, and indeed, have increased during recent years in the country. The State of Human Rights Report (2010:75) in Pakistan also claims that 'working in the field of human rights continued to be a dangerous proposition in Pakistan [.....] Those working for rights of religious minorities or women were at greater risk than other Human Rights Defenders (HRDs). The government did not attach adequate importance to the need to recognize, and prevent the great personal risks that HRDs faced because of their work against abuse and violation of rights'.

Women's movement in Pakistan succeeded in many ways, but none of which can be claimed as a result of its sole contribution. It played major role in raising awareness of women's concerns and issues at different levels, protesting against and modifying discriminatory laws during various times, making efforts in adapting women focused international and national conventions and policies including affirmative actions and setting up women's development institutions and national machineries.

The literature review also suggests that the most marginalized rural women in Pakistan are not well connected with the women's movement. As Shaheen Sardar (2000:57) comments, in Pakistan 'the women's movement also failed to forge strong links or sufficiently involve women and women's organizations from the rural areas and the lower income brackets'. The image projected of the movement by vested interests of a

militant, un-islamic, westernized impede the kind of outreach necessary (Zia, 1998). Moreover, when in 2002, reserved seats increased in parliament, the urban women benefitted the most. Bari (2009) states that the parliament is now dominated by urban women, never joined parliament through participating in women's movement. However, some argue that it is unfortunate if women's movement has begun to be defined only by a few urban based women centred groups (Khan, 2004). Moreover, despite greater resistance, the women's movement in Pakistan could not succeed to repeal discriminatory laws and maintain public pressure. To sum up, 'the reality is that there exists in Pakistan today, a consciousness regarding women's issues and [women's movement] a definite pressure group representing women's concerns' (Ali, 2000:61).

### **Women in Political Parties**

Political parties in Pakistan are gendered in terms of membership and leadership hierarchies, being largely male dominated. In almost all parties limited representation of women in core committees is evident (Bari, 2009, 2010, Zaidi and Zia, forthcoming). Women in parties are highly marginalized, but here I do not refer to powerful women politicians such as the late Ms. Bhutto, who enjoyed her father's legacy and successfully contested elections and returned to the parliament four times. Instead, I am rather referring to members of party's women's wings which are comprised only of female members. Women in parties are either prominent party activists who have inherited political power, ordinary women party workers or women relatives of male members of the parties (UNDP, 2005: 17-18).

The majority of parties have a history of having women wings. The women's wings play an important role in mobilising women and constituents, especially during the time

of elections, campaigns and voters' registration (Ali S. W., 2009: 88, Ali S., 2000). However, in reality women politicians in women's wings feel marginalized and ghettoised (Zaidi and Zia, forthcoming). Women's wings as such play no role in parties' decision making, and widely remain ineffective in their ability to change the political culture of parties such as the dominant masculine norms and the values and attitudes held towards women. The women's wings greatly lack any support in terms of resources, authority, ability to make independent decisions, capacity to govern their functioning, even lacking mandates for gender mainstreaming of the political parties (UNDP, 2005).

Moreover, women's wings have their own hierarchy; office bearers include the president, vice president, treasurer and a few more posts, who are nominated by party leadership, with no elections held. Previous studies on women's wings found that 'there was little or no "effectiveness" found in the way women's wings have been functioning in order to identify potential women representatives or to expand the role of women in politics' (Zaidi and Zia, forthcoming). Some even note the declining interests of women members of women wings as they argue that 'women cadre[s] in political parties, which could not make it to the assemblies, have lost interest and their wings are in disarray' (UNDP, 2005: 26).

### **Women in the National Legislature**

Since independence, there has been wide gap in women's political representation in legislatures (Bari, 2009). A review of the available literature suggests that women either entered into legislatures through contesting elections on general seats or on women reserve seats. Nevertheless, somehow Pakistan has maintained minimum quotas for

women in legislature (Refer, Table 7 below). Some argue that in the 1950s, Pakistan was the first country to introduce quota regulation in the form of reserve seats (Ayaz and Fleschenberg, 2009: 205). Others point out that quotas already existed from the colonial era,

‘they were first introduced in 1935, when the country was part of India and ruled by the British Empire, through the Government of India Act, which enfranchised women and allocated seats for them in the Council of State and the Federal Assembly’ (Krook M., 2009: 60).

All of the women who have contested elections have come from well-known feudal and elite political families, and many of whom inherited political interests from their families. To a large extent, socio-cultural and economic barriers obstruct women’s entry into public offices. Middle class women have also found some space in legislatures through reserve seats, but reserve seats never always continued (Mumtaz, K., 1998).

**Table 7: Women Representation in the National Assembly 1955-2011**

S No.	Year	Reserve Seat	General Seats	Total (%)
1	1955-58	0	0	0
2	1956	*		
3	1962-1965	6 + 2**	0**	6 (3.8%)
4	1965-69	6	0	6 (3.8%)
5	1972	6	0	6 (4.2%)
6	March - July 1977	10	01****	10 (4.6%)
7	1985-88	20	2	22 (8.9%)
8	1988-90	20	4	24 (10.1%)
9	1990-93	0	2	2 (0.9%)
10	1993-96	0	4	4 (1.8%)
11	1997 – 99	0	6	6 (2.3%)
12	2002 – 07	60	14	74 (21%)
13	2008- to date	60	16	76 (22%)

*\*Article 44(2) (i) of 1956 constitution provided 10 reserved seats for women members for the period of 10 years. 5 from East Pakistan [now known as Bangladesh], 5 from West Pakistan. Women's territorial constituencies were delimited for this, giving a double vote to women in these constituencies - one for a general seat candidate and one for the women's seats. However, no elections were held under this Constitution.*

*\* \*8 women sat in the assembly; one expired and was replaced by another in East Pakistan.*

*\*\*\* the first woman elected to a general seat didn't enter National Assembly because her party boycotted the assembly following the elections*

Source: Mumtaz K (2005) and Krook, (2009)

As shown in the table above, there were no women in the National Assembly during 1955-56. The constitution of 1956 provided ten reserve seats for women who were elected by female voters on the basis of territorial constituencies for a period of ten years. In this way women got a double right to vote: for the general seats and the seats reserved for women. However, in reality no elections held under this constitution.

The 1962 constitution reduced the number of women's seats to 6. Later, the 1973 constitution provided 10 reserve seats for women for the period of ten years, although at this time one woman was directly elected in 1977. Some argue that:

‘...the Constitution of 1973, represented a significant advance in the recognition of women's rights in Pakistan. Distinct from earlier constitutions, it made women and men equal before the law and outlawed any discrimination on the basis of sex’. (Krook, 2009: 68).

The constitution of 1973 was amended during 1985-88 and women seats were increased from 10 to 20 and extended for next ten years by General Ziaulhaq, while some women were also directly elected. This provision lapsed in 1990, and a dramatic drop in the number of women elected was observed. There that no reservation was made for women reserve seats until 1999. Therefore, only 2 women were directly elected to legislatures in 1990-93, 4 in 1993-96 and 6 in 1997-99 (Bari, 2009).

Finally after twelve years, in 2000 reforms took place which resulted in a greater number of women in the parliament. General Musharaf took the landmark decision of restoring and increasing the number of women reserve seats. The number of women



reserve seats, which never increased more than 9% of national parliamentary, reached up to 17% of the total seats in national and provincial legislatures. In 2000, through the Legal Framework Ordinance (LFO), 17% seats were reserved for women in National and Provincial Assemblies as well as 33% for local government institutions - almost three times higher than the previous reservation.

Later when reserve seats increased under reforms in 2000 under the rule of General Musharaf, the indirect method of election was adapted for women reserve seats at national and provincial level. In reality, women reserved seats were added to existing general seats. Reserve seats are filled through proportional representation, whereby the share of women reserve seats for each party is determined on the basis of the number of general seats won by parties.

The demand for enhanced representation of women in all legislative institutions has been continually made by civil society forums and women themselves over many years. Several other actors and factors contributed to campaigns for women's representation in pieces of legislation such as the constitution of Pakistan that provides provision for affirmative action and in international declarations that the country has signed up to. The national and international community and originations present particularly after the increased problems of Talibanization in certain regions, women's organizations, women legislators and the women's movement have all remained involved in various ways and made advances on women's enhanced share in politics (Mumtaz, 1998; Bari, 2009; Krook 2009).

The above facts also suggest that the increased numbers of seats that were reserved for women in parliament only emerged during military rule. For instance in 1954, 1956, 1962, 1967, 1970 and 1973 women reserve seats remained between only 3 to 4% of the total available. General Ziaulhaq, who also imposed Hudood laws, doubled this portion to 9% in 1984. Musharaf even increased women seats to 17% of the total available in 2000. Moreover, political parties have never been sympathetic to women's political representation in the parliament (Bari, 2009). One may question the reasons for which gender quotas became a priority for the military led government. Krook (2009: 17) points out that,

‘for nondemocratic regimes ... reserved seats provided a convenient and easy solution for demonstrating their will to include many different groups, thus in their eyes legitimizing their rule’ (see also Rai *et al.*, 2007; Khan, N., 2004).

Thus, it cannot be ignored that gender quotas in Pakistan are also a result of international pressure which has forced military governments to do something that is at odds with many other things that they do. On the one hand, the military have imposed martial laws, which have hindered the democratic process, and have patronized militant groups and the Taliban who have remained highly resistant to women's emancipation. They have also introduced liberal policies such as quotas. So, women are brought into the parliament, without there being much change in the deep-rooted feudal, tribal and unjust nature of the parliamentary democracy. As noted by Night Said Khan:

‘women in the lower, and poor class are, however, still fighting for their right, the Hudood Ordinance still exists ... honour killing continues, forced

marriages are the norm, very few women get even the inheritance determined in the Quran, the educational system, the laws, religion and fundamentalism imposed on women are interpreted by whomever she “belongs” to; and she is the victim of all forms of violence from within the home to that meted out by the state. Where is the resistance? A strong autonomous, cross-class, women’s movement is badly needed in Pakistan’ (Khan, 2004: 98).

### ***Final thoughts***

In this chapter I have attempted to present an overview of the complex historical, social and political context in which women parliamentarians operate in Pakistan. The chapter indicates that women’s backgrounds in Pakistan are diverse, and their status in society greatly depends upon the social, economic and cultural conditions in which they live. Women from better off families who have greater access to resources have assumed greater control of their lives, while women living in poorer conditions who generally have limited or no power and resources live a different life. Society itself is hugely diverse, inequality and stark differences exist among people of different provinces and urban and rural areas.

The evidence suggests that there is considerable imbalance of power, especially in rural areas. Here, powerful political men hold great influence over village life, protect those who commit honour crimes, hold Jirgas to punish poor people, use political power to get hold of constituents and also defend crimes and harmful practices against women. The reality is that the patriarchal and semi-feudal political elite operate through a system of patronage where violence against women is a daily occurrence.

The political context is highly complex and the most powerful institution – the military - has destabilized the democratic processes by frequently throwing out the democratically elected government, Islamizing the state, imposing discriminatory laws, demoralizing political parties, and also importantly by patronizing religious groups and political parties for its own political interests. The military have introduced liberal policies such as quotas in order to justify their rule, but much of the socio-political context remains unchanged for women.

The political parties do not adhere to democratic norms. In Pakistan, all political parties and parliament are ruled through family dynasties by powerful military, industrialists, feudal and tribal elite. Relevant for this research, is that women are still highly marginalized within political parties. Thus, the majority of women who are brought into the parliament through reserve seats have to face a highly challenging as well as threatening political environment.

In this context, it is worthwhile examining the extent to which women's formal representation is turned into substantive representation of women, a notion which this research addresses. The following analytical chapters provide analysis of the data collected as a result of using the various methods. The next chapter discusses the recruitment processes of women politicians in Pakistan by various parties, and the implications and challenges of these processes from the perspectives of women politicians.

## Chapter Five

### Women's Political Recruitment

#### *Introduction*

In the previous chapters, I presented an introduction, contextual analysis and a literature review along with my conceptual framework and the methodology chosen for this study. This is the first analytical chapter, based on the interview data of 20 women MNAs, of which 5 are directly elected and 15 are indirectly elected on women reserve seats. This chapter responds to my second research question which also examines the effects of quotas on women's descriptive representation.

This chapter has three major objectives:

First, I analyze what routes women have taken to reach the parliament. This is done by exploring women's experiences of going through political recruitment processes within parties. In doing so, I analyze the determining factors in their selection to reserve seats. I find that women take three major routes to parliament 1; family and kinship support, 2; long term party affiliation, and 3; personal relationships with party leaders. Here I also show that in many cases, women reserve seats provide an opportunity for political parties' leaders to accommodate certain feudal and political families in parliamentary politics. Although gender quotas greatly benefit women from the upper and urban class as well as feudal and political families, upper middle class women party workers also succeeded in entering into parliament. In the case of directly elected women MNAs, the condition of having a graduate degree pushed political families to allow family women

to get a hold on party seats, especially when male members of families showed less interest in politics or couldn't meet the graduate degree condition.

Second, I explore perspectives of women MNAs on the electoral rules and processes adapted for women reserve seats. It is highly imperative for this study to analyze how women MNAs, who are beneficiaries of women reserve seats, think about the way gender quotas are implemented in Pakistan in order to understand the consequences of indirect election to women's political and substantive representation. Women MNAs show serious concern over indirect entry of women into parliament, a system that makes them subordinate to party men.

Third, I investigate and compare how quota and non quota women MNAs perceive themselves as politicians. Interestingly, I find marked differences in the perceptions of directly elected and quota women about themselves as politicians; the quota women are stigmatized and see themselves as second class politicians, whereas directly elected women have more confidence and claim greater respect within and outside parliament. The quota generates labels and also reinforces negative stereotypes about women's capacities as politicians, as has also been found elsewhere (see Childs and Krook 2012, Franceschet and Piscopo 2008).

Instead of highlighting the responses of quota and directly elected women MNAs separately in this chapter, the analysis is based on all interviews combined, creating findings related to a particular topic. However, throughout my analysis, I clearly highlight and distinguish between the perspectives of women MNAs in reserve seats,

who are indirectly elected by parties, and women MNAs who are directly elected through mainstream political processes of election in the same way as male politicians.

In order to explore women MNAs' experiences of entering into parliament, in this chapter I first briefly explain the representation of women in parliament and the electoral process adapted to implement gender quotas, as well as the positions of power (Federal Minister, State Minister, Advisors and Parliamentary Secretaries) women MNAs currently occupy. I then examine, in detail, how women have accessed parliamentary politics and the determining factors in their selection. Next the processes of recruitment within parties as experienced by women and their perception on the selection method are considered. Finally, I collect their views on how these women see themselves as politicians.

### ***Women's Representation in National Assembly***

As already explained in chapter three, the National Assembly (NA) has a total of 342 members, of which 272 (80%) are general seats, 60 (17%) are seats reserved for women and 10 are (3%) reserve seats for non-Muslims/minorities. The seats in the National Assembly are divided among the Provinces (Sindh, Punjab, Baluchistan and KPK), the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the Federal Capital, on the basis of population.

The general election to establish the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, which is the focus of this research, was held on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2008. During the 2008 election, women parliamentarians entered through two different routes; direct elections and women reserve seats. At present, there are 76 (22%) women MNAs in the parliament, 60 in

women reserve seats and 16 directly elected to general seats from various provinces (for further details refer Table 1 in chapter Methodology). Members holding general seats are directly elected on a 'first past the post' basis by a single member constituency.

However, there were no direct elections for women and non-Muslim reserve seats. These seats are directly given to the parties in proportion to the total general seats they win. It is important to reiterate once again that women in reserve seats have no geographical constituency as such, are not directly elected by voters and do not represent any specific electorate, unlike directly elected members who are elected by constituents.

The basic eligibility criteria that apply to both directly and indirectly elected MNAs state that in order to become MNA s/he should be citizen of Pakistan, not less than 25 years of age, must be enrolled as a voter in the electoral list, fulfil the qualities provided in Article 62 and 63 (see Appendix III) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and must have bachelor degree. The last condition of graduation is controversial, and was first introduced by the General Musharaf, a former president of Pakistan prior to the election of 2002. Five petitions were also submitted against the condition and heard by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, but the Court upheld the graduation condition (Mirza and Wagha 2009:2). However, in 2008, the condition of graduation was removed by the 13<sup>th</sup>, and current National Assembly.

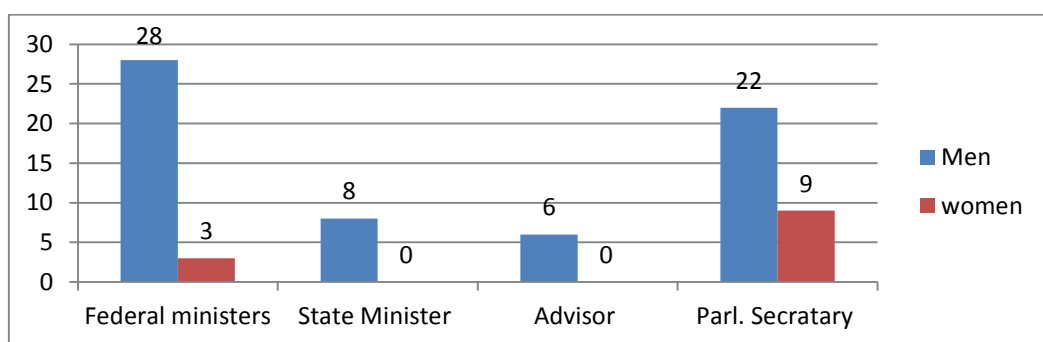
### ***Positions of Power***

In terms of important positions of power held by women parliamentarians this last election was significant; Ms. Fehmida Mirza (directly elected MNA) of the ruling party



(Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians-PPPP) was elected for the first time in Pakistan's history as the first woman Speaker of the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, also enjoying the status of the first Woman Speaker of the Muslim World. As far as other positions of power are concerned, as shown in the figure below, so far only three women have been made federal ministers. However, none has been assigned the role of State Minister or Advisor, and 9 women politicians serve as parliamentary secretaries, indicating the presence of gendered patterns in women's share in federal government.

**Figure 3: Positions of Power occupied by Parliamentarians**



*Source: National Assembly [www.na.gov.pk](http://www.na.gov.pk) accessed on July 2011*

### ***Politics of Accessing Parliamentary politics***

From the interviews I conducted, I found that there were three successful routes into parliament resulting from: 1) the support of family and kinship networks which have strong ties with party leadership, 2) membership in and long-term association with political parties and 3) a personal relationship with party leaders (head of the party, or party members having a close relationship with the party head or his/her family). Below I discuss in detail all three routes women have taken to parliament.

## **Family Support and Kinship Networks**

I spoke with some of the women holding reserve seats, who mainly belong to upper class feudal and political families, and who entered into parliament on the basis of the strong links of their family men with political party leaders. These women informed me that although their family male members had previously contested elections and had been associated with political parties for a long time, they themselves had previously had no role in politics in a personal capacity, and had been pushed by their male family members and parties to join parliamentary politics. As one said:

‘In a personal capacity, I had no role in politics. The party chairperson Ms. Bhutto pulled me in this field. I used to meet her during party meetings at my home. From ten years, my husband is associated with this party, he has also been member Central Executive Committee [the CEC] of the party. I and late Ms Bhutto were very close to each other, we had many informal talks. Indeed, I never thought that she will nominate me as reserve seat candidate. Actually my husband was not given a winnable general seat ticket by the party; therefore, I was nominated for women reserve seat with certain entry into the parliament. Otherwise I run my own business of designing furniture’ (Quota MNA, 3).

Another MNA from a political family reported:

‘we have a very strong constituency, always contested by my father-in-law or husband. Unfortunately, during the previous election of 2002, my husband was defeated by 50 votes. So in the election of 2008, [the] party

provided general seat ticket to another candidate. However, party head ensured my husband that our family will be adjusted in some other ways, as he [the party head] wanted to see our family in the National Assembly. Although, we never demanded any women reserved seat. Later, [the] party head asked my husband for submitting my papers for women reserve seat, I as a housewife personally never think of politics' (Quota MNA, 4).

Another MNA also mentions having no personal political background, but having strong relationship with the party head:

'I joined politics accidentally; I even have never participated in college politics. My father is affiliated with the party since long ago as an activist; he has been contesting local government elections. But due to the graduation condition, my father was unable to join national parliamentary politics. He asked the party head for my nomination to a reserve seat. The seat was actually given to us due to my fathers' better relationship and friendship with the Head of the party (Quota MNA, 6).

The above comments reveal that many of the interviewed women selected for reserve seats were not political women who can be said to have been engaged in politics or political parties for several years; as one mentioned, prior to entering politics she was a housewife and another reported that she was running her own business. They were nominated because of their family male members' association with parties or party leaders. Women from political families, as in the above cases, were pushed by party leaders to apply for women reserve seats, which came as an opportunity for political

parties' leaders to accommodate women mainly from upper-class political families, especially when parties couldn't offer winnable general seats to male members. This shows the importance of family dynasties in engendering politics of Pakistan. It also raises important questions around who exactly these women represent in the parliament – the men in their feudal-tribal families, political parties and/or women while being nominated on women reserve seats? I come to this question while providing analysis of interviews of women MNAs in chapter 7, where I explore who women politicians see themselves representing in parliament.

Apart from reserve seat nominees, I also interviewed five directly elected women who were largely from well off sections of society, which is reflective of the prohibitive cost of elections that enables only those who have the financial resources to enter the parliament through elections. The majority of them reported that they too were given party tickets for direct election seats because of male members of their families, who have been contesting particular family constituency for many years. Directly elected women MNAs informed me that the graduation condition affected the candidature of their male family members, as these males failed to meet the eligibility condition of educational qualification (Bachelor degree). One directly elected MNA said:

‘my father, who also served as president of Pakistan couldn't contest the election for not having graduation degree, first he asked my brother who showed least interests in politics, later, my father provided my name for the party ticket to contest election from our family constituency. We have been winning this seat for several years’ (Directly elected MNA, 13).

It may also be noted that directly elected women took advantage of the opportunity of contesting elections, when either there was not any other suitable and preferred male member available, and/or, when brothers/sons/uncles did not show an interest in politics similar was also found by Bari (2009 and 2010) in previous tenure (2002-07) of the assembly. So the family women were the only reliable option left for political families in order to gain political power and keep it concentrated within their family. Important to note is that, as reported by women MNAs, in such cases parties were only minimally interested in the gender of their party candidate the contesting election on a party ticket from any particular constituency. This is because the party ticket was given on the basis of families' potential to win the seat in a particular constituency, rather than gender of the candidate.

Nevertheless, the eligibility condition that members should have bachelor degree, played in dual ways for women's representation in the National Assembly. On the one hand, the senior male politicians who did not hold bachelor degrees brought women from their family to contest direct general seats in parliament. On the other hand, the graduation requirement made it difficult for thousands of party workers to meet the criteria to be selected for women reserve seats, as women party workers were unlikely to have been to university/college (Bari, 2009).

### **Long Term Party Affiliation**

Another successful route the long-term party association, mainly taken by upper middle-class women party workers who have been associated with parties for more than ten years is through playing a very active role in party-led movements and activities. When asked why they were selected for women reserve seats, some party worker MNAs

reported that long-term party association and making sacrifices for political parties played an important role in their selection. As one said:

‘I have been associated with the party for more than 20 years. For the party I was put into jail and many times beaten by police and military forces in party demonstrations’ (Quota MNA, 19).

Others spoke of party loyalty, working for the party and having a higher education background as determining factors in their selection. As one explains:

‘I remained very active in politics throughout my student life. Later, I joined this party perhaps now my 25<sup>th</sup> year of association with this party. After joining the party, in 1993 I established 200 local units at grass root (union council) level for the party, while mobilizing local people for membership in and support for the party. I was offered a bribe during a previous tenure in the NA by the then President Musharaf. Many of the MNAs changed their parties and loyalties, but I cannot even think of it. I believe such things really play a part’ (Quota MNA, 5).

Another MNA said:

‘I am working for my party since my childhood - almost 30 years. I have been active in organizing for the party at the local level in my area. I am not only party worker, but a highly educated woman, a doctor by profession’ (Quota MNA, 2).

Interestingly, some other women MNAs I interviewed likewise reported that having an active role within parliament, for example by introducing legislation during a previous term, played a crucial part in their re-selection during the current term. One informed me that:

‘I was already looking at the human rights cell of the party, I was the first ever woman heading any cell of the party. I succeeded on many fronts, I worked very hard promoting the human rights portfolio of the party. We had developed a network for information on human rights. For that, I came into contact with several national and international human rights organizations, mobilized people, and my performance in previous tenure also remained high, as I introduced several bills, motions and resolutions during previous term. All these were the basis of my selection’ (Quota MNA, 1).

Two more also reported the same pattern:

‘I made the highest number of bills during my previous term (2002-7), greatly strengthening party performance within parliament’ (Quota MNA, 3).

‘I performed very active role during my previous tenure in Provincial Assembly’ (Quota MNA, 2).

The women party worker MNAs also seem to be well connected with party leadership, and enjoy direct and better relationships with them. As one said:

‘for every given task to me by party head, I call or email her almost every day, providing updated progress on each issue and given tasks’ (Quota MNA, 2).

### **Personal Relationship with Party Leadership**

Other than women MNAs who entered the parliament through family connections and long term party affiliation; I also interviewed two women MNAs who reported that their personal relationship with party heads and strong professional background in media and banking played an important role in their selection. However, they too belonged to the upper-class urban elite of Pakistan and highlighted the importance of the personal relationship/contacts with party heads/leaders. One was nominated to a reserve seat, while the other contested and won a direct election seat. It may be important to mention here that she is the only directly elected MNA, out of the five in my sample, who stated that the costs related to her election were borne by the party making it possible for her come through direct elections.

These two MNAs seemed very confident in their selection, and argued that they have great potential to offer to political parties and the parliament. As one MNA, who has significantly contributed to legislative business in parliament (as examined in the next chapter), said:



‘I have not worked within the party, but I have far more experience than those women sitting in the party. I ran my own company at the age of 27, as Chief Executive Officer. I have achieved excellence in my field of banking. I am not a mid-career professional in any bank. Other women may have made it on the basis of their family relationship with the party leadership; but I am a successful corporate person who the party needed’ (Quota MNA, 7).

The directly elected MNA, who was also nominated for reserve seat with several years experience in electronic media, argues that:

‘No doubt party provided me an opportunity to be in politics; nevertheless, I personally have brought my own fame, name and working experience of several years in media to the party’ (directly elected MNA, 14).

Both of them reported that they were offered parliamentary seats directly by party heads, who were aware of the women’s strong professional background in media and banking.

In summary, the above discussions suggest that women entered into parliament through three different routes: family networks, party affiliation and personal relationships with party leaders.

For directly elected women, family political background, potential to contest election and graduation condition further contributed to favourable conditions. Only in one case

did a woman suggest that her strong professional background in media was also important. But all of the directly elected women report a strong relationship with the party leadership, whether of their own or with their family. So with one exception, all of them are actually an extension of powerful political families, who are already dominant in Pakistani politics.

In the case of reserve seats, some of the women respondents belonged to the similar feudal and political families like the majority of directly elected women MNAs, and they too were nominated on reserve seats because of male family members who themselves could not get party tickets for winnable seats of the parliament. Therefore, political families still succeeded in capturing political power through women reserve seats.

Party workers also entered parliament on reserve seats. They identify well established contacts with top party leadership, long term party activism, showing loyalty and support for parties in difficult times, and a strong educational and professional background as important factors in their selection. However, some of the quota women do believe that their performance in previous Assembly tenure was considered by party leaders when nominating them for reserve seats.

What clearly emerges from these interviews is that women party workers have achieved these parliamentary political positions after several years of struggle in the field of politics. This is different to women MNAs, who often do not think of joining political parties, and who directly enter parliament on the basis of family or personal relationships with the party leadership.

### ***Processes of Women's Recruitment***

In practice, before election, the Secretary of the Election Commission of Pakistan issues an order that the political parties may file their lists of nominated candidates in order of priority for the seats reserved for Women and non-Muslims in the National Assembly of Pakistan. Generally, parties nominate a higher number of women candidates than they anticipate will become MNAs after the election. For instance, in the election of 2002, there were 279 women candidates nominated by different parties against a total of 60 reserve seats in the House (UNDP, 2005:35).

In this process, as I mentioned earlier, two factors can affect women's candidature: the party's position in the general election results, and the women candidate's position in the party list. The women at top of the party list have greater chance of entering into parliament than those nominees at the end of the list. Moreover, according to the Political Parties Provision to Rule 4 (4) of the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies, concerning the Allocation of Reserved Seats for Women and Non-Muslims (Procedure) Rules 2002, the list submitted by a Political Party shall not be subject to change or alteration either in the order of priority or through addition or subtraction of new names after expiry of the date of submission of nomination papers. The election commission of Pakistan has no procedure or mechanism to monitor how parties select or nominate women candidates for reserve seats. It all depends on the party, which can nominate anyone who meet the basic eligibility criteria of becoming a MNA.

When I asked quota women MNAs, the processes of their successful recruitment within parties on reserve seats, the majority of women MNAs informed me that a long time

before the elections, they themselves and/or their family male members were asked by top party leadership (mainly) men to submit/write a simple application to the party head, stating their personal background, eligibility for parliamentary seat, interests in party and politics, services for party, along with some other basic documents such as; passport photo and application fees. A woman party worker said that:

‘Ms. Bhutto [head of the party] directly asked me to submit an application against reserve seat’ (Quota MNA, 1).

However, a MNA from a political family reported that:

‘[the] party head asked my father to submit papers for women reserve seats’ (Quota MNA, 6).

These comments show that women in direct contact with party leadership were themselves asked to submit an application, while those nominated on the basis of having male family members who were in a party or who had a relationship with leaders were mainly approached through these family members.

A very interesting finding emerged when I asked women MNAs about the initial expenses borne by them in recruitment. The women respondents explained that other than the election commission fee set by the government, women nominees also paid a non-refundable application fee to their political party, ranging from PKR 25,000-35,000<sup>7</sup> for a women reserve seat, with a much higher fee of PKR 100,000-200,000<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> USD 294-411, (USD 1 = PKR 85)

<sup>8</sup> USD 1176 – 2352, (USD 1 = PKR 85)

reported by directly elected women on a party ticket for a general seat. This shows that due to an absence of any government mechanism or law to monitor women's recruitment within parties, these political parties are able to sell or charge women candidates applying for direct and reserve seats.

What was more surprising, when two women MNAs from one of the largest parties informed me that after elections, when their parliamentary seat was confirmed, they were asked by the party for further deposits of around PKR 100,000. However, it is unclear why only two, not all women MNAs were requested to make further deposits; while explaining the whole process a participant explained that:

‘I send an application mentioning my personal and educational background including the services and work I have done for the party. I paid PKR 30,000 with the application and later, when I was elected as MNA, I was asked by party to deposit RS 100,000. As I was among one of the top five women in the party list of women reserve seat, so my selection was obvious. I also paid the election commission fee PKR 4000’ (Quota MNA, 1).

The above statement is highly important as it clearly demonstrates the deeply corrupt and discriminatory practices of the political parties in the name of offering reserve seats to women. It may also be noted that only two women respondents share the information that they were asked for more money. However, it cannot be said with certainty that other respondents have not paid money to the party after being elected as MNA. There is a possibility that other women MNAs avoided sharing such information in interviews. Nevertheless, this highlights the need for a monitoring mechanism that will help to

make women's recruitment within parties transparent. In contrast, women from two other political parties informed me that their party did not charge any application fee, and that they only paid the election commission fees.

None of the women respondents who paid various fees mentioned having any financial constraints; only one middle class party worker, a MNA I interviewed, said that paying fees was difficult for her, saying:

‘I had no money to pay the application fees - my brother himself submitted my application and also paid my fees’ (Quota MNA, 2).

Regarding my query whether the women were interviewed or not at the time of joining the party, I received mixed responses. Some women - especially first time nominees as parliamentary candidates - said that they were interviewed by a committee comprising of four or five members, including the party head and senior members of the party who were mainly men.

Women from two of the political parties also informed me that during the process of recruitment to reserve seats, the top leadership of their party was out of the country. Thus, the party head convened a local committee comprising of senior party leaders in order to compile the initial list of nominated candidates for provincial and national assemblies. Later, some of the women nominated for reserve seats were asked by committees to appear at an interview. As one said:

‘I was informed by party that party head wanted to meet me as my name was finalized for reserve seat. For me, it was the first time to meet with party leaders, they knew my father well and I was nominated because of my father. In the interview, there were four or five senior members of the party’ (Quota MNA, 17).

Those who appeared in interviews mentioned that the interviews were rather informal, not lasting more than 15-20 minutes, and involved a talk with the party leadership/interview committee, who claimed that candidates were already chosen by party heads. There is significant evidence available which reveals that the final selection of women to reserve seats was made only by the top leadership. In most cases, women in quota positions were actually asked by party heads to submit nomination papers. As MNAs explain:

‘The party head decides in terms of who should be included in the final list. I was nominated by General Pervaiz Musharaf [Leader of the party- PMLQ] himself’ (Quota MNA, 7).

Another MNA also confirms that:

‘The interview was simply a formality, because candidates were not short-listed on the basis of papers submitted or interviews conducted. By and large, candidates were already chosen by parties, who were *asked* to apply for reserve seats. Some of them were invited for interview, but not all candidates’ (Quota MNA, 18).

It appears from the interviews that the women who were known to the party leadership mainly because of family party affiliation or long term party work were not asked for interviews. One directly elected MNA confirmed this:

‘There was no interview, because my father is very well known to the party leadership’ (Directly elected MNA, 11).

Women party workers also said that there had been no interviews. According to them, party leadership was well aware of the work, they have been doing for parties for years. In the words of a party worker and MNA:

‘There was no interview, party leaders have known me as a party worker for several years’ (Quota MNA, 5).

Out of five directly elected women I interviewed, three similarly confirmed that they were not interviewed by parties; as one said:

‘As such I never attended any interview for getting a party seat for direct elections. The ticket from our constituency is always given to my father, who couldn’t contest in elections this time. My father provided my name to the party and the leadership didn’t raise any objections. The party knew the vote bank in our constituency was attached to our family, whoever, contest election from our family will get votes and win. ... I only met once with the



party head, before getting a ticket in one of the party's programs, where my father introduced me to the party head' (Directly elected MNA, 13).

This means there was no proper selection process adapted by parties for women's recruitment. The privileged women in terms of personal and informal contacts with party leadership were not even requested to appear in interviews. However, despite being known to the leadership and selected for parliamentary politics women often have to pay in some other ways. Two directly elected women MNAs from two parties informed me that they travelled to Dubai and London for a meeting with party heads in order to get ticket for direct seats, which would have had a financial implication, as one explains:

'I went to Dubai to meet a party head to get a seat, although I was also interviewed by her during our meeting in London' (Directly elected MNA, 12).

Another said:

'I travelled to the party's London Secretariat for a meeting with party leaders. Although, there was not any interview for getting a party ticket, I just met him informally, showing my interest in his party before being offered a seat. Later, during the time of the election of 2008, I was offered a seat by the party' (Directly elected MNA, 14).

The upper class feudal and political families provided a strong basis for women MNAs to develop links with and become known to the party leadership during various times. The notion that their *family is part of the political dynasty* was also an important element in helping women build their personal political background, who otherwise were not particularly politically active in parties. However, this situation may affect those who do not enjoy a political family background. As one quota MNA from a feudal and political family with no personal political background herself told me:

‘Ms. Bhutto was fully aware of my family and its strong political background. She used to visit our villages often, where I got a chance to meet her several times. As such, I didn’t feel any difficulty in selection process, my family possesses political background, and has a long history of struggle in elections and voting. We are also well connected with local people’ (Quota MNA, 4).

I found only one party in which women candidates on reserve seats were nominated by the party’s local units, rather than top party leadership. This is the urban based party dominated by the Urdu speaking ethnic community - the *Mohajirs* – who mainly migrated from India in 1947 at the time of the creation of Pakistan. Interestingly, the party has also dedicated one women reserve seat to the widows of party workers killed in service and those who have sacrificed their lives during various difficult times for the party. Women MNAs from this party informed me that:

‘Our party is different from other parties, nothing goes without consultations at local level. We have a strong organizational setup, under

which party's local units propose parliamentary candidates. ... In one city alone, there are 281 units of the party, each unit nominates 20-30 people to the Sector, mainly lower and middle class party workers. Sometimes the list also includes non-party workers, who share party's ideology and are sincere with the party's cause. The Party Sector further scrutinizes and shares the final list with the *Rabta* (coordination) committee. The Rabta committee comprises of top decision makers of the party, they further decide about the list. ... [The] sector finalized the list of at least 26 women candidates on reserve seats, out of which only five reached the National Assembly' (Quota MNA, 9).

What was surprising was when a woman with a quota seat from the same party reported that she was not aware of her nomination for a reserve seat by the local unit. This occurred because the party asked units directly to nominate women candidates, rather than requesting candidates directly to apply for women reserve seats. Her comments also highlighted local level patriarchal patronage, meaning that women party workers cannot nominate themselves for reserve seats; this takes place under the tight control of the local party units and committees, with decisions then approved by top leadership. However regarding this particular party a UNDP Report (2005: 21-22) clearly highlights that,

'women are not involved in any decision-making process. The women's wing functions under tight control of the "coordination committee". Party directives dictate the norms of functioning and prior approvals are required

for women party activists as well as women legislators who wish to attend any public event or speak on any important issue’.

From these lengthy discussions with women parliamentarians on recruitment processes, it is apparent that in Pakistan, the selection processes for women reserve seats remained non-transparent, deeply corrupt, arbitrary, without any set criteria and highly confined to the male-dominated top leadership of political parties, corresponding with the findings of studies examining the previous term (2002-07) when women first entered into the parliament (see Bari 2010 and 2011, UNDP 2005). Moreover, the recruitment processes of directly elected women MNAs reveal that the gender of the representative does not matter for parties, if the candidate or the candidate’s family possess strong potential to contest and win a particular constituency. This is particularly the case when the local vote bank is more confined to that political family rather than the political party.

### ***Perception on the Selection Method***

I now focus attention on the way in which women perceive the process of their indirect entry into parliament, and examine whether these women support the existing method of selection. When asked to reflect upon selection processes the majority of women parliamentarians - including those belonging to upper class influential political families, who have benefited the most from the opportunity offered to them by the current system - confirmed that the selection process is not merit based.

Others highlight that the process favours elitist section, especially for those well connected with political elite of country and discriminates against the poor. As one said:

‘I would have never been in the parliament, if not known by general Musharaf himself’ (Quota MNA, 7).

Another said that:

‘Several times I got an opportunity to meet with Ms. Bhutto, because my husband works for her party, so that she selected me for reserve seat. Otherwise, how many women have had an opportunity to access political parties’ elite of this country to get themselves nominated for women reserve seats’ (Quota MNA, 3).

Although, women party workers agree that due to reserve seats a greater number of women workers are today in the parliament, some women activists still feel that in keeping with tickets for general seats, large numbers of reserve seats are given to women from upper class and political families. One MNA said:

‘Parties have nominated urban *mams*/madams, who rarely have any experience of political fields. I know many of the MNAs, who were running beauty parlours, fashion boutiques and furniture businesses who are now political women. As a party worker this makes me feel uncomfortable, because we have been struggling in political field for the last several years. Many women MNAs enter into parliament just by offering a cup of tea, dinner and gifts or just because they are daughters, mothers, sisters or relatives of male politicians’ (Quota MNA, 5).

Nevertheless, some party workers experienced their indirect selection for reserve seats as deeply undermining of their view of themselves as competent candidates for direct elections. They pointed out that despite significant political experience, rather than getting direct election seats, parties nominate them against women reserve seats which they believe frees political parties to provide a party ticket for direct elections to potential women candidates. In her words:

‘During the last tenure (2002-7) I served as Member Sindh Provincial Assembly, and I am associated with the party since my childhood as a party worker which leadership is fully aware of. This time in the election of 2008, I wanted to come through direct elections and I applied for general seat ticket. I was called for an interview that was taken by Ms. Bhutto herself along with some other party members. During interview Ms. Bhutto asked from other members regarding my performance in Provincial Assembly the one member said, “She is good party worker, there are no complaints against her, she performed outstandingly in provincial assembly.” ... Even then, I was denied a direct seat. Finally, I was made candidate for a women reserve seat, though I have the potential to come through direct election. Moreover, my male fellow parliamentarian, who got the general seat I applied for was fairly angry at me, saying how I dare to apply for a general seat he has been contesting and winning since long ago’ (Quota MNA, 2).

The above comments show parties’ preference for male candidates, by offering them the party tickets for direct seats. This differs from my previous observation, regarding

directly elected women MNAs from influential political families, who experienced no reluctance of parties in offering them direct seats, and were not even interviewed by party leaders, due to the strong financial and political position of their families. This reveals that for women party workers, despite in some cases having several years' political experience, getting a party ticket for a direct seat is extremely difficult - especially for a winnable seat.

Most of them reported that the indirect selection system increases their dependency on and subordination to parties and party leaders. Women are beholden to male party leaders and fear being sidelined at any point. Women's suppression and subordination to party male leaders certainly have serious implications, especially when considering the issue of substantive change for women. One MNA said:

'No matter how much you work throughout, they [party leaders] can drop you out at any time without any satisfactory reason' (Quota MNA, 19).

Another reported that:

'It denies independent women the opportunity to contest women reserve seats directly, as seats are given to the parties. Only political parties dominated by men, control women's entry, exit and re-entry through women reserve seats' (Quota MNA, 20).

Two of the party worker MNAs, who were also nominated as MNAs by the same party in previous term (2002-07) argued that the process of recruitment can easily be

manipulated through internal party politics and by male members close to party leadership. She reported that:

‘For three years, I was highly marginalized within the party. There was one group who quickly came closer to the selectors, so I was simply side-lined. Due to personal jealousy, they were saying to party leaders that I will betray the party, when I learned that my name was omitted from the list of women reserve seats. At the last moment, in the general body meeting, when the party head asked about the performance of women MNAs in previous term, many members gave my name. In this way, finally, I was included in the list’ (Quota MNA, 1).

Her comments once again highlight that the performance within parliament does matter at least for some MNAs, and perhaps mostly for those with a weak relationship with party heads. By playing an active role within parliament, women can still show their potential to contribute to parliamentary business in order to secure party and leaders’ patronage. As some quota MNAs, who also served in previous tenure (2002-07) reported, their performance in previous term also played a part in their re-selection during the current term (Quota MNAs 1, 2 and 10). This is something highly significant, and I will be exploring its effects in my next data chapter based on parliamentary proceedings.

On the other hand, women from upper class political families with little or no experience of politics share a different story, revealing that despite the less active role played by them in the parliament, they still seem confident about their reselection, mainly because



of their families' ties and connections with party leadership. As one MNA from political family stated:

'I didn't feel any difficulty in getting a women reserve seat, not even interviewed. Because it was my family that was honoured by the party' (quota MNA, 4).

In her interview, quota MNA 4 accepted that she has not performed well within parliament, having never participated in debates due to a lack of communication skills, but when asked if she still feels she will be nominated for women reserve seats in the next election she said:

'I am hopeful, I will get seat in next election as well, the head of the party has been very kind to us' (Quota MNA, 4).

This suggests that powerful male members manipulate political processes to bring in women from their family who can better serve their political interests. So the women MNAs, who don't perform well in terms of legislative business of the parliament, still seem hopeful of re-entering the parliament. They know that real power resides somewhere else, perhaps outside the parliament and instead in the hands of patriarchal political party leaders.

During some of the interviews I discovered a kind of guilt among those quota women, who entered parliament on the basis of family connections with leadership, as they

admitted that women workers have more right to be nominated for women reserve seats.

She reported that:

‘I personally feel that a higher number of women party workers must be nominated to reserve seats. They personally have been contributing significantly to parties, they also possess several years of political experience. Many of them have given their whole lives to parties. They do have moral justification to enjoy the privileges of political fields through women reserve seats’ (Quota MNA, 6).

Women MNAs also pointed out that the existing reserve seats method supports only large parties, saying that:

‘This kind of women’s entry supports women from large parties, which have greater potential to win general elections, and discriminates women from small parties. Small parties with 2-3 general seats in the House don’t get any women reserve seats’ (Quota MNA, 9).

Her comment is very much reflective of the composition of the parliament, where parties holding only one or two general seats have no women representative.

Interestingly, directly elected women raised serious concerns over indirect entry of quota women. One of them said:

‘Indirect entry of quota women creates stereotypes about them, that they are less competent and patronized by male party leaders’ (Directly elected MNA, 13).

‘The kind of feeling ‘quota woman’ gives you, shakes your confidence’ (Directly elected MNA, 15).

‘It creates a problem of men ‘elected’ and women ‘selected’, where the elected member is given more importance than the selected one’ (Directly elected MNA, 12).

While the views held by elected women about quota women - such as them being less competent and less experienced - are not necessarily accurate, such stereotypes do nonetheless affect quota women (see, Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008; Childs and Krook, 2012).

In addition, directly elected MNAs also argue that quota women are subjected to increased levels of backlash and character assassination. She said:

‘If you come through direct election, nobody would do a character assassination. Don’t you remember how Kashmala Tariq [quota MNA] was treated by Dr. Firdous [directly elected MNA] in TV talk show. She called quota women almost prostitutes, who she thinks have achieved parliamentary seats while sleeping with male politicians. This would have never happened if quota women had also come through direct elections.

Quota women may not have reached the parliament through any illegal means, but they are treated very poorly even by fellow directly elected women' (Directly elected MNA, 13).

By and large, both directly elected and quota women define the indirect method adapted for reserve seats as without merit, based on party and male leaders' patronage, and as putting women in a dependent and subordinate position to party leadership, where they experience manipulation, nepotism and discrimination. However, I have identified huge differences in the way quota and directly elected women see themselves as politicians, due to the different kind of electoral method that brings them to parliament, as discussed next.

### ***How women perceive themselves as politicians***

In the case of Pakistani women MNAs, I find marked differences in the opinions of directly elected and quota MNAs, with women in reserve seats finding themselves to be second class politicians, and directly elected women claiming greater status, respect and value within and outside parliament. For instance, women on reserve seats reported that:

'Inside and outside parliament quota women are not considered seriously, just dummies sitting in the parliament dictated by and dedicated to party men' (Quota MNA, 8).

Quota women argue that quotas generate labels for women, with them being seen as drawing room women, incapable politicians, urban *yes boss madams* and someone who is easily influenced and less respected, which greatly reduces women's power in terms

of their ability and confidence as competent politicians. Respondents cautioned that this method has serious implications for women's credibility as competent politicians. As one explained:

‘People think that on reserve seats, parties pick and choose those women favourite to party leaders rather than women of credentials, performance, background, role in civil society and others’ (Quota MNA, 9).

Some quota women also argued that the parties and elected members, including directly elected women, make them feel that women reserved seats are given to the parties as something *additional* and not needed, and so the women in these posts do not enjoy an equal status. As one MNA who was nominated to a reserve seat in a previous tenure 2002-07, and who later, in the election of 2008, contested election for a direct seat said that no constituency make a difference to quota women:

‘While going through the experiences of a first term on reserve seat, I was so upset by the behaviour of all – male politicians, media, public and government. Women on reserve seats are always less valued and less respected. Every time, whenever I tried to talk or participate, I was reminded that I am a quota woman, I have no constituency, so I better keep my mouth shut’ (Directly elected MNA, 12).

One more observed that,

‘even in party meetings, if there are no seats left and you arrive late, no man offers his seat to quota women. But in case if any directly elected woman needs seat, men always obliged to spare their chairs’ (Quota MNA, 2).

Significant numbers of women on reserve seats reported that government institutions do not cooperate with them much and ignore quota women. As she informs that:

‘I made several calls to the irrigation and drainage department during recent floods, but they never turned up’ (Quota MNA, 2).

Another quota MNA also said that:

‘I continuously made efforts to push absentee primary teachers in our rural areas to regularly attend the school and also made written complaints against those absentee teachers, but the education department rarely took notice of my complaints’ (Quota MNA, 6).

However, directly elected women sense a different attitude of people and government institutions towards them. One MNA explained that:

‘When I go and visit various offices for some work, I find huge difference in the behaviour of people, especially when I tell them that I am the *elected* members of the House from constituency. ... I am given more respect in a sense, they make my matters important and give greater attention to solving the problems of my constituents. ... Even the public see you differently. I

have been listening to people saying that I am not a quota woman, but an *elected* Member of the Assembly’ (Directly elected MNA, 12).

Another MNA made the following comment claiming better status within parliament:

‘In parliament my status is different to women on reserve seats. I am the only woman who sits in the four front seats of the parliament; front seats are occupied either by the prime minister, ministers or parliamentary leaders. I am the only elected woman from Pakistan’s largest city. ... I have great importance in the parliament’ (Directly elected MNA, 14).

Surprisingly, one more elected MNA said that:

‘Our importance even in diplomatic spheres is also high, as diplomats preferred inviting only elected parliamentarians in their programs’ (Directly elected MNA, 15).

On the basis of women’s own negative perceptions of themselves as second-class politicians, when I asked MNAs about the efforts they are taking to make recruitment of women reserve seats more transparent, accountable and direct, the majority of responses were negative. They seemed insecure and unconfident about gaining support from the parties in order to strengthen recruitment within parties. As they said:

‘Ideally quota women should also come through direct elections, but that seems impossible, men would never compromise at the expense of their

own in order to accommodate women. In the case that they make nomination for women reserve seats transparent, then, party men would certainly be losing their control on women by making them independent' (Quota MNA, 9).

Another said:

'This might be highly challenging for women demanding parties for direct election, they may look at us in a sceptical way. [Whether] anyone agrees or not we [quota women] are the beneficiaries of male members decisions' (Quota MNA, 19).

Above comments show that women find themselves in a very weak position to challenge or change existing methods of women's selection. They are stigmatized and totally dependent on male members' patronage. One of the respondents said that:

'I think this may not be the right time - women MNAs still need some time to strengthen their own position within parliament as well as in parties. Women lack support of the parties and we obviously cannot work in vacuum' (Quota MNA, 7).

These comments indicate women's lack of influence within parties, and evidence suggests that the majority of parties are dominated by men with little representation of women, even in core committees. When I asked women MNAs, why it is important for them to be elected through popular vote by public, women reveal that:



‘In democratic process, your strength is with people’ (Quota MNA, 5).

‘It builds your own confidence and satisfaction’ (Quota MNA, 20).

‘No one questions your political credibility at least’ (Quota MNA, 12).

One also highlighted that:

‘In politics having your own power base is important and that can only be achieved by going through democratic processes and developing strong relationships with people. Once you develop relationships with the public and win people’s trust, they feel you are their true representative’ (Directly elected MNA, 11).

Nevertheless, it seems strengthened as argued by some that how women achieve parliamentary political power or how party leaders nominate them shapes perception about their capabilities. ‘In all cases, the nomination practices can create the demeaning notion that “quota women” are unnecessarily privileged, less capable, and blindly loyal to male party bosses’ (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008: 403; see also Childs and Krook, 2012).

### *Final Thoughts*

This chapter has explored what routes women have taken to the parliament, what factors contributed in their selection, the processes of recruitment within parties, and how women perceive the indirect entry of quota women and see themselves as politicians.

Results show that women have taken three successful routes to the parliament; family support and kinship networks, long terms party affiliation and personal relationship with party leadership. Arguably the most privileged women MNAs in terms of family political background, party connections, social networks, better relationship with party leadership, high professional background etc, manage to get a seat in the parliament.

Women party workers are largely supported due to their loyalty and commitment to the party, their long term affiliation with and support for parties in difficult times, and their legislative performance during previous terms. Some of the quota women do mention of gaining weight via performance within parliament, as one of the determining factors in their selection.

It appears from the interviews that women party workers enter parliament after several years of struggle in parties and politics, while women from feudal and political families are favoured, despite personally being less active in the party and politics. However, no one can be nominated for a reserve seat without benefiting from close relationships, patronage and favouritism of the male party leadership.

In the case of directly elected women, the need for a family member to take a party position under the circumstances where male family members were unable to contest

an election or not interested in politics, greatly benefit women in joining parliamentary politics. Except for a few, the majority of women MNAs are actually an extension of family dynasties already dominant in Pakistani politics.

The recruitment processes for reserve seats, particularly within parties, are not just patronized, dominated by men, manipulated, non transparent and without merit, but are also deeply corrupt and discriminatory, raising the need for proper monitoring of the parties by the Election Commission of Pakistan. The privileged women candidates in terms of personal and informal contacts with party leadership were selected without going through any standard process, in many cases even not being interviewed for parliamentary seats. Women also reported that they are dependent on male politicians, as well as reporting not finding much support within parties to enable them to make strong demands for direct elections and promoting transparency of women's recruitment to reserve seats.

It was very clear from the interviews that the quota generates labels and stigmatizes women politicians, who are not taken seriously within and outside parliament, as reported by most of the quota women. The process clearly reinforces negative stereotypes about women's legitimacy as competent politicians.

Pakistan sets a very distinct example of political representation, where members of the electorate such as women/constituents have no role in choosing their representative (Quota MNAs), and the representatives are not accountable in any way to the people they represent. Under such conditions, should we still expect that quota women represent women in parliament? We can also ask in what way we should develop links

between women's descriptive and substantive representation. More importantly, in the case of directly elected MNAs, should we expect that they will act more often on behalf of women than quota MNAs, as they are elected by both men and women unlike women MNAs on reserve seats?

In order to consider the responses to these questions, in the next chapter, I explore the relationship between women's descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation within and outside the parliament, using NA proceedings data as well as data collected during interviews with 20 women MNAs.

## Chapter Six

### Linking Descriptive to Substantive and Symbolic Representation

#### *Introduction*

In the previous chapter, I showed that a majority of quota women MNAs, those who entered parliament through indirect processes, see themselves as second class politicians. I also demonstrated that directly elected women feel more confident, as they enter through mainstream political processes, just like male MNAs. Within this chapter, I focus on how these women MNAs practise representation within and outside parliament, in order to understand the relationship between women's formal and substantive representation. This chapter responds to my first research question, which concerns the relationship between women's descriptive and substantive representation in the National Assembly in Pakistan, as well as my second research question that examines the effects of quotas on women's symbolic and substantive representation.

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, I analyse the work that women representatives carry out within parliament, such as legislative interventions. In the second part, I present the work they do outside parliament in their constituencies, particularly in changing the lives of other women.

The analyses of women's substantive representation within parliament is based on the parliamentary proceedings data of the last three years (2008-11), offering a detailed and critical engagement of women parliamentarians in various legislative affairs. In doing so, I find out to what extent women's formal representation is turned into substantial policy and legislative outcome, especially by putting women's issues onto the

legislative agendas. As the National Assembly will complete its current term in 2013, up to now, there has been only three years' complete data available. The remaining sessions' data had not yet been compiled at the time the research was being conducted.

The analyses are based on the parliamentary proceedings' data and secondary sources obtained from the National Assembly Secretariat and its website, as well as organizations such as FAFEN (Free and Fair Election Network) and PILDAT (Pakistan Institute of Development and Transparency) in the form of annual reports published on the performance of the parliament. I thus evaluate the proceedings from two different aspects as reflected in my conceptual framework. As a reminder, *substantive representation as process* relates to whatever women have introduced in the form of legislative interventions (bills, questions, resolutions, motion and etc), and *substantive representation as outcome* refers to what has actually been achieved in terms of legislative outcome, such as bills/legislation passed by the Assembly which mainly address women's concerns (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008).

In first part of this chapter, I examine the total numbers of interventions (Calling Attention Notices, Resolutions, Question, Private Members' Bills and others) put forward by male and female MNAs in the last three years (2008-11). By doing so, I argue that in terms of parliamentary interventions, women MNAs are comparatively more active members of the parliament than male politicians. Moreover, women's contribution in most of the legislative business is also higher than their proportional representation (22%) in the House. For instance, women who only constitute 22% of parliament all together move 70% of Private Members' Bills.

After that, I focus on the policy interests of parliamentarians to examine whether male and female MNAs show any distinctive priorities with a special focus on legislation related to women in the parliament. I conduct in-depth analyses of 115 Private Members' Bills (PMBs) moved by male and female parliamentarians during the last three years. In this case, results show that by and large women take more interest and show commitment in introducing women's related legislation: women contribute 70% of the bills, of which 44% are directly relevant to women and social issues.

However, it cannot be over simplified that women are only interested in social or women's issues, as they have introduced legislation in policy domains usually considered as men's interests for instance the constitution, business, finance and governance. I also show that a few quota women champions act more often than others, substantially increasing women's contributions to legislation. Analyses of the PMBs reveal that overall, male politicians show least interest in legislation, as they only move 30% of the bills. Results also demonstrate that very few men award priority to women's related legislation; women's issues are primarily represented by women MNAs.

Finally, I look at *substantive representation as outcome*, to understand how descriptive and substantive representation connects in practice. Sixty one bills passed by assembly during the first three parliamentary years (2008-11) are evaluated in order to establish how many of them are relevant to women. The final results reveal, only 3 out of a total 61 of the bills passed by NA in the last three years are of direct relevance to women. By providing further details about each of the three women-related pieces of legislation, I show that the bills addressing women and gender inequalities in private domain may be vetoed by male parliamentarians.

At the end of the first part of this chapter, which analyzes substantive representation as process and outcome, I shed some light on one of the crucial concerns of this thesis, which is why some quota women are very active in parliament despite knowing that most of the legislative interventions made by them do not go through the parliament.

The second part of this chapter is based on the interview data of twenty women, including both quota and directly elected MNAs, in order to develop an understanding of the effects of women's presence in politics on their symbolic and substantive representation, mainly outside parliament. In this part, I particularly examine women's views on the impact of their presence on the public in general and on women constituents in particular. I seek to find out what substantive change women politicians are making to the lives of other women as role models, and their means of engagement with women constituents, especially under the circumstances where quota women MNAs are not directly elected by women constituents.

### ***Women's Contribution in Parliamentary Business***

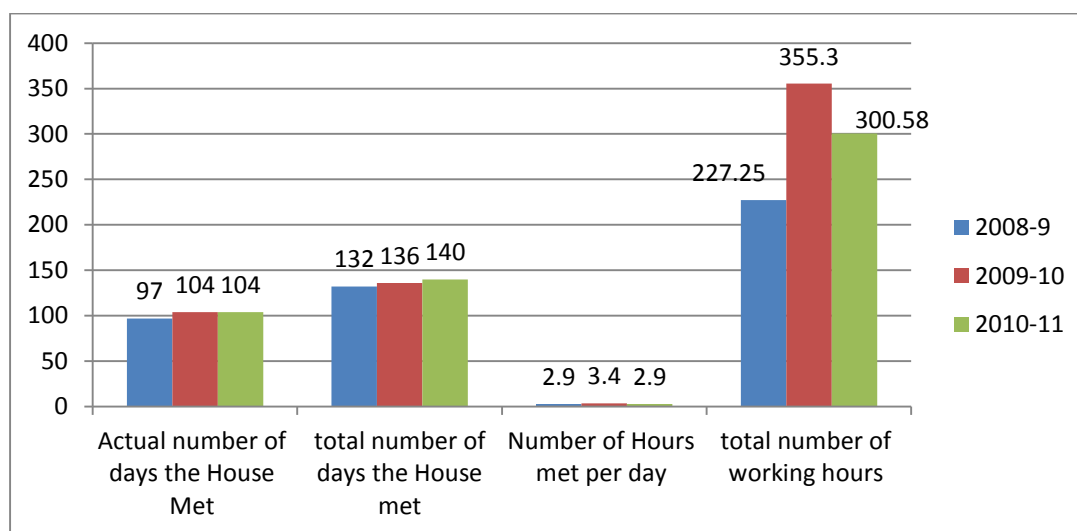
Before I examine different aspects of women's substantive representation, I provide brief details of the overall working days and the hours that the parliament met. Parliamentarians' performance cannot be analyzed without considering how frequently parliament meets.

According to the article 54(2) of the Constitution of Pakistan, the House has to meet for no less than 130 days, and there must be at least three sessions in a year. During the last three years (March 2008 to March 2011), the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly (NA) met for 132



days in the first year, 136 days in the second year and 134 days in the third parliamentary year<sup>9</sup>, thus fulfilling the constitutional obligation to meet for a minimum of 130 days in a year. However, the actual number of working days the NA met during the last three years total 97, 104 and 104 respectively. In terms of working hours, the NA devoted 277 hours and 15 minutes in the first year, 355 hours and 20 Seconds in the second year and 300 hours and 35 minutes in the third year, showing a 28% increase in the second year and a 15% decrease in the third year.

**Figure 4: Working Day and Hours of the 13<sup>th</sup> NA (2008-2011)**



Source: (PILDAT, 2011)

Overall the second year of 13<sup>th</sup> NA shows an increase in time spent: the actual number of days increased from 97 to 104, the total number of days the house met from 132 to 136, the number of hours the house met per day from 2.9 to 3.4 and the total number of working days from 277.75 to 355.33, as compared to the first year. Meanwhile, the third year witnessed a decrease in the number of hours met per day and total working

<sup>9</sup> This does not include any day on which there is a joint session and any period, not exceeding two days, in which the national Assembly is adjourned

hours, a slight increase in the total number of days the house met and no change in the actual number of days the house met.

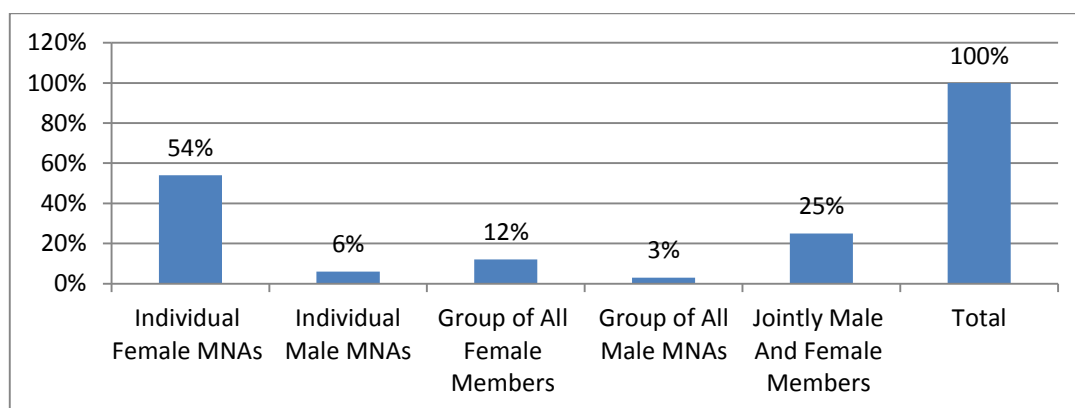
The parliament runs its business according to a code called 'Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business' that does not only facilitate the legislation - the prime responsibility of the parliament - but also sets appropriate means for parliamentarians to intervene and speak on the issue of public concern (Mirza and Wagha, 2009). The Constitution of Pakistan, and the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business are two basic documents given to all MNAs as soon as they take an Oath. As a public representative, the Rules of Business equip the MNA with a variety of tools such as raising or introducing Calling Attention Notices (CANs), Questions, Private Members' Bills (PMBs), resolutions, Point of Order (POs), motions, as well as participating in debates, in order to address the concerns of the people and hold the Executive (Prime Minister) accountable (Khan, O. 2008: 8). Many of these tools are routinely used as day to day activities by MNAs, greatly revealing the behaviour, performance and efforts made by the legislators to run the parliamentary affairs.

Here, I provide a gender review of the proceedings of the parliament of the last three years (2008-11), while exploring women members' participation in and contributions to legislative business within parliament. The purpose is to quantify women's overall contribution under each category, consistent with my conceptual understanding of 'substantive representation as process', where parliamentarians contribute to political and legislative processes. Below, I provide details of the interventions made under each category, while briefly describing the nature of the activity or intervention.

## Resolutions

Resolutions are a crucial part of the parliamentary agenda, under Rule 157 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of the National Assembly. Through resolutions, the House expresses its opinion on various issues. As shown in the following figure, the resolution is moved individually by a male or female MNA, jointly in a group of just men or women or a mix including both male and female MNAs.

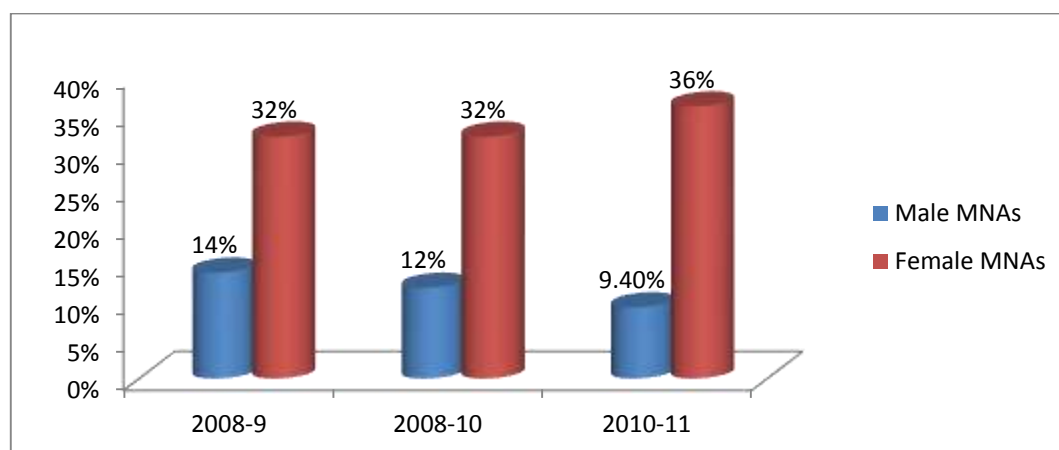
**Figure 5: Resolutions moved by Gender (2008-11)**



Sources; NA Official Debates, FAFEN 2010:75-6, 2011:67

Overall, in the last three years (2008-11), women MNAs were involved in sponsoring more than 91% (166) of resolutions, of which 54% (99) individually, 12% (22) jointly with other women MNAs and 25% (45) in mixed groups of male and female members, which were moved as shown in the figure above. One can also observe marked differences in the patterns of resolutions, especially those moved individually by male and female members. Women individually moved 54% (99) resolutions, as compared to 6% (11) by male MNAs in three years.

**Figure 6: Percentage of MNAs putting forward Resolutions by Gender (2008-11)**



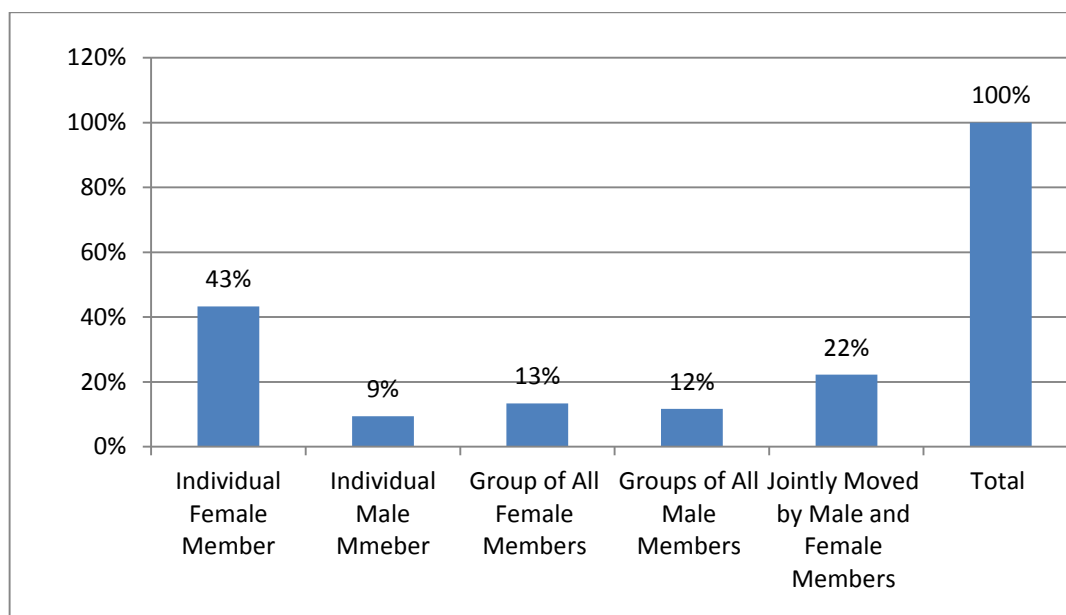
Sources; NA Official Debates, FAFEN 2010:75-6, 2011:66

Data also reveal that each year, of the total male members (265), on average only 14% (37) in the first, 12% (32) in the second and 9% (23) in the third year, participated through resolutions, while each year there was a declining interest of male members in putting resolutions (refer Figure 6). Comparatively, women members' participation through resolutions has increased; from 32% (24) in the first and second years to 36 % (27) of the total female MNAs (76), who submitted resolutions during the last three years.

### **Motion under Rule 259**

Under Rule 259, any Minister or a Member may give notice of a motion, as part of which any policy, situation, statement or any other matter may be taken into consideration. Similar to resolutions, motions are also moved individually or in a group of male/female members.

**Figure 7: Motions under Rule 256 moved by Gender (2008-11)**



Sources NA Official Debates, FAFEN 2010:96, 2011:35-36

In total, during the last three years women MNAs, individually and jointly with other women, sponsored 56% (102) of motions under Rule 259, of which 43% (78) individually and 13% (24) with other women. However, male members initiated 21% (38) of motions; 9% (17) individually and 13% (21) with other male members. It is also very clear that higher numbers of resolutions are put forward by women individually - at 43% (78) this number is much higher than the 9% (17) by male members.

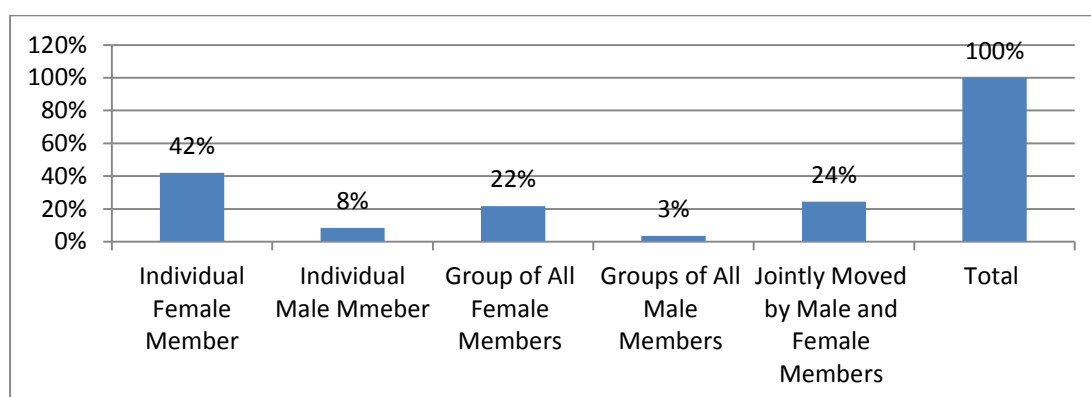
### **Private Members Bills (PMBs)**

As per Rule 118, a member may move/introduce a Bill after giving ten days written notice of his/her intention to do so. Overall, the data show a declining interest of members in submitting Private Members' Bills, from 79 in the second year to 32 in the third parliamentary year. One of the possible explanations of more bills being put forward during the second parliamentary year (2009-10) relates to the overall working

of the parliament that shows an increase in the total number of hours the House met and the working hours of the parliament in the second year (refer Figure 4, above in this chapter.) But, despite this, the decline in PMBs in the third year is significant.

The similar decline in PMBs was also observed in previous terms, and some of the Pakistani scholars put this phenomenon down to the non-seriousness of the parliament, and a tendency to waste considerable efforts made by the parliamentarians on preparing and introducing bills, as well as lack of will of the House to pursue them, and as a result large numbers of bills lapse, are rejected or disallowed (Mirza and Wagha, 2009, Bari, 2009; 2010). How many PMBs were actually passed by the current Assembly will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

**Figure 8: Private Members Bills moved by Gender (2008-11)**



Sources; NA Official Debates, FAFEN 2010:57-63, 2011:61-62

In terms of how many bills were introduced by parliamentarians during the last three years, the results show that women, individually and jointly with other female MNAs, submitted almost 64% (of which 42% individually and 22% with other women) bills as compared to 11% (of which 8% individually and 3% in sponsorship with other men) initiated by male MNAs. Women's contributions increase if we also consider bills

submitted by women in partnership with other male MNAs from 64% (91) to 88% (126) overall. The greatest difference can be observed in respect of individually introduced bills, where women put forward 42% (60) as compared to 8% (12) of bills initiated by male MNAs individually. This shows that very few male members table PMBs individually, whereas a significant numbers of bills are put forward by women MNAs individually.

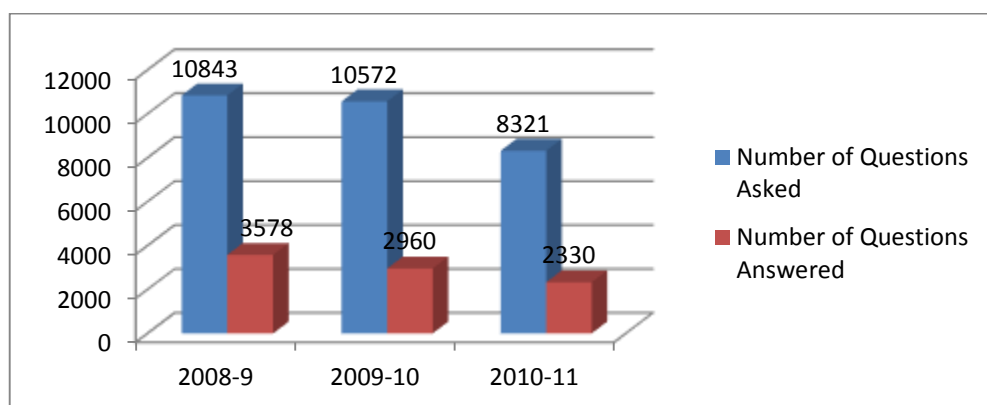
But what is important to remember is that drafting any piece of legislation such as Private Members' Bills is a highly technical as well as futile exercise, especially under circumstances when there is limited technical support available for parliamentarians doing this particular task (Mirza and Wagha 2009; Bari, 2009; 2010). Despite these difficulties, women who are still new to parliament show a significant interest in submitting bills, while male politicians are less concerned about legislation, as shown above. This simply raises a question of why women are so active in parliament. Why are males on the whole not worried about their performance within the parliament? Does this also mean that men, who enter parliament through direct elections on the basis of their potential to contest elections and win the popular vote, are well aware of the fact that they will be re-elected in next term irrespective of their performance in terms of legislative work they have done in the parliament? These are some of the major concerns that this thesis raises, and tries to shed light on this at the end of the first part of this chapter.

### **Questions Asked**

Rules 69 to 86 deal with the asking of questions by members and the furnishing of replies to those questions by the Cabinet. Question hour is meant to make the government answerable to the public and make the latter aware of the activities of the

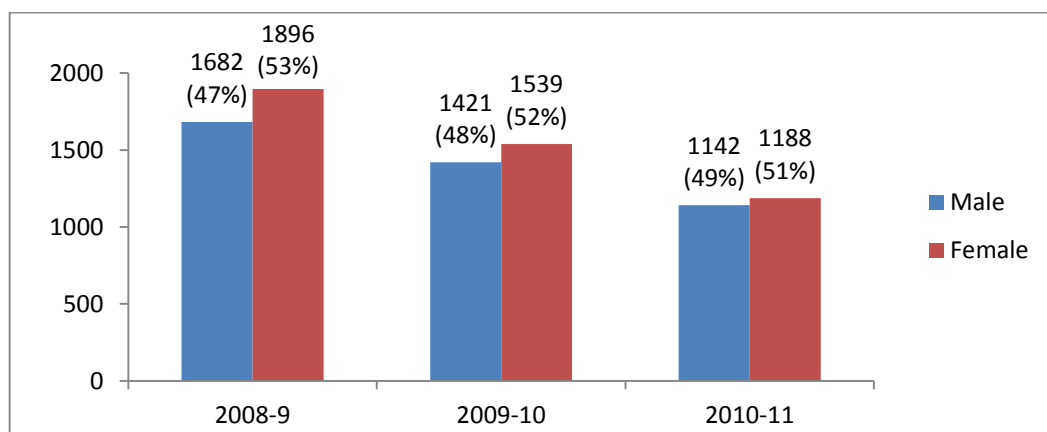
Ministries and Divisions. Overall, 10843 questions in first year, 10572 in the second year and 8321 in third year were asked, of which only 3036 (28%) in first year, 3488 (33%) in second year and 2329 (28%) in third year questions were answered. It means each year almost 70% questions went unanswered by concerned ministries/government departments. One can see the declining interest of parliamentarians each year in putting questions forward, as shown in figure below. PILDAT (2011: 11) highlights that ‘this is an area of serious concern as lack of an effective system of accepting questions and their disposal through an efficient timeline of receiving answers from concerned departments is resulting declining interest in members’.

**Figure 9: Number of Questions Asked and Answered**



Source: PILDAT (Nov 2011: 12)

**Figure 10: Percentage Share of Questions Answered by Gender (2008-11)**

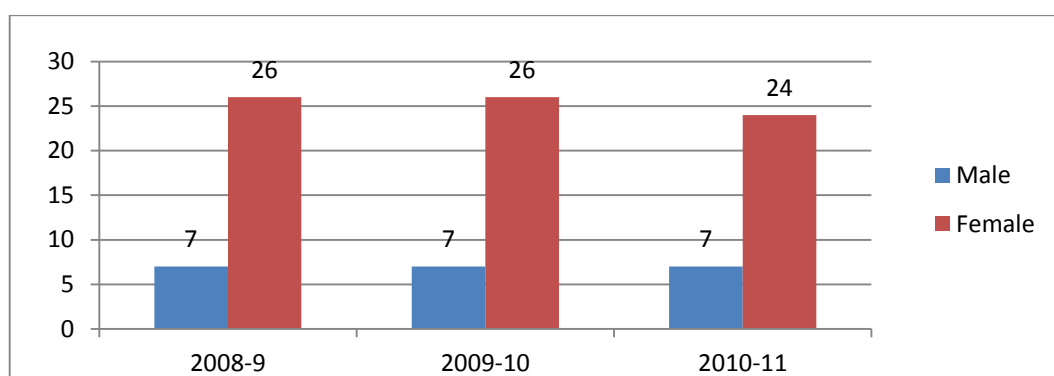


Source; NA Official Debates 2008-9, FAFEN 2010:46-7, 2011:46



While looking at data related to questions which were answered particularly during the last three years, it appears that each year women have been contributing more than 50% of the questions.

**Figure 11: Average Number of Questioned Asked by each Member by Gender (2008-11)**



*Source; NA Official Debates 2008-9, FAFEN 2010:46-7, 2011:46*

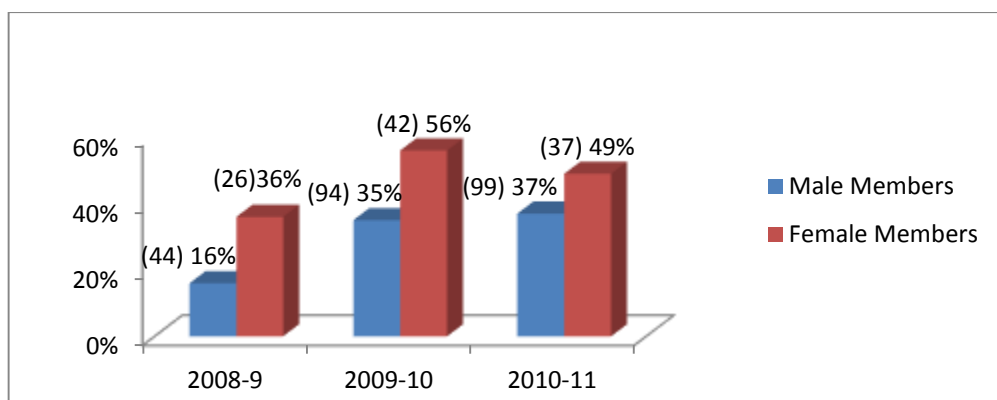
On average, each year the 76 women members put forward almost four times as many questions as their male counterparts, who occupy 265 (78%) seats in the parliament. Every year each woman member asked between 24 and 26 questions, while male members put forward on average 7 questions, thus showing women's greater contribution in response to their underrepresentation within the parliament.

### **Calling Attention Notices - CANs**

Rule 88 of the conduct of the business of the parliament contains provision for a Calling Attention Notice to draw the attention of a particular Minister or Ministry towards any matter of urgent public importance. During the last three parliamentary years

respectively, 94, 120 and 130 CANs were brought to the attention of Ministries. Data reveal that CANs are either moved individually or jointly by a group of only males or females, or a mixed gender group.

**Figure 12: Percent of Members who participated through CANs (2008-11)**



*Source; NA Official Debates 2008-9, FAFEN 2010:37, 2011:54*

In examining data related to CANs, it was found that during the last three years, more women MNAs' than male MNAs participated in CANs, in proportion to their representation in the parliament. For instance, of a total 76 women legislators, every year 26 (36%), 42 (56%) and 37 (49%) women actively participated in the assembly proceedings through the CANs. Meanwhile, out of a total of 265 male MNAs, 44 (16%) during the first year, 94 (35%) in the second year and 99 (37%) in the third year participated in CANs (FAFEN 2010:37, 2011:54, 2012).

One of the PILDAT's Reports (2010: 20) on the performance of the 13<sup>th</sup> NA highlights that during the second parliamentary year 2009-10, the maximum numbers of Calling Attention Notices were submitted by women. The report named three women MNAs, each of whom individually submitted 60 CANs in a year, the highest among all members.

### *Participation in other matters*

FAFEN's second year report (2010: 101) on parliamentary proceeding reveals that among the 24 members who took part in the debates on 'Matters of Public Importance' which were taken up by the House, 13 (54%) were women and 11 (46%) were male Members.

In summary, the overall women's rate of contribution is higher than that of their male colleagues in most legislative areas. Women have been actively participating in the legislative business of parliament - a fact that allows us to reject other views regarding Pakistani women MNAs, which claim that quotas produce second rate women politicians. Empirical evidence suggests that they are performing far more than those male politicians possessing several years' political experience, in terms of legislative business of the parliament, as shown in the table below.

**Table 8: Legislative Activities by Gender (2008-11)**

Activity	Legislative Activity - 2008-11		
	Resolutions	Motions under Rule 259	PMBs
Individual Female Member	99	78	60
Individual Male Member	11	17	12
Group of All Female Members	22	24	31
Group of All Male Members	6	21	5
Jointly moved by Male And Female Members	45	40	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>143</b>

Sources; NA Official Debates, FAFEN, 2010 and 2011

Returning to the issue of what makes women participate in various activities in the parliament, as we learned in the previous chapter on women's recruitment, performing in the parliament is important, if not for all then for at least for some of the women MNAs to secure re-selection in next term. This means that not all, but at least a few

women must be more active than others. Therefore, it might be worthwhile exploring whether all women are active in the legislative business of the parliament or just a few, who act more often than others.

Below, I provide an in-depth analysis of 115 Private Members' Bills moved by men and women MNAs in order to explore two important aspects of substantive representation. Firstly, I examine policy interests and the major focus of parliamentarians; whether they show any commitment to raising women's issues that mainly affect women and secondly, I look at whether all women are active in the parliament or if just a few women are highly active.

### ***Engendering Legislative Agenda***

As we learned from the above analysis, women parliamentarians have raised their concerns within parliament by asking Questions, introducing Calling Attention Notices, Motions, Resolutions, and Private Members Bills etc. However, the importance of Private Members' Bills moved by MNAs is extremely high in the context of Pakistan. This is because ordinary Pakistanis' lives are affected by the legislation adapted by the House. The legislation comes either in the form of a Government Bill/Ordinance or a Private Members' Bill. When the piece of legislation or bill is introduced by a Minister it is called a Government Bill, or if it is moved by a MNA or a group of MNAs, it is called a Private Members' Bill.

According to the process of law-making in Pakistan, a bill can be presented by member/s of the House in either the National Assembly (Lower House) or the Senate (Upper House) and, after being passed by a simple majority, shall be transmitted to the

other house. When the bill is passed by both houses, it is then presented to the President for assent. If the bill is not passed by either any of the Houses or fails to receive the President's assent and is then sent back to the parliament for amendments, it will be considered in the joint sitting of both Houses of the parliament. If the bill is passed in joint sitting it will again be presented to the President for his/her assent. In this instance, the bill will become an act of parliament, and the President does not have powers to withhold assent. The bill when passed through all these processes of legislation successfully becomes law and has greater potential to affect society and to regulate the conduct of individual/s, businesses, and others.

Below, I provide an in-depth analysis of the contents of 115 Private Member Bills downloaded from the National Assembly website, submitted by both men and women parliamentarians in the last three years (2008-11), to explore the link between women's descriptive and substantive representation. I especially focus on PMBs to know who acts for women within parliament by introducing women's related legislation with greater capacity to make a substantive difference for other women. Here, women specific legislation means bills particularly addressing women's concerns/issues in all policy areas (Chaney et al., 2007: 118). By thoroughly examining Private Member Bills, I particularly build on the existing literature to test theoretical arguments that women are not just 'standing as' women but also 'acting for' women as a group (Phillips, 1995; Lovenduski, 1997).

It is important to clarify here that my purpose is not to see whether a bill gets passed by Assembly or not, that I will do later, but, here my motive is to know about the interests of parliamentarians in various legislative and policy agendas. I do not include

Government Bills introduced during the last three years by the Minister/s of the government in my analyses, because government bills talk more about the government's intention to introduce any particular legislation rather than the interests of particular male or female legislators. I do consider government bills and PMBs that were successfully passed by the House in the next section, when it comes to the question of analyzing *substantive representation as outcome*, in which I explore all bills passed by assembly to see how many of them are relevant to women.

Before I test such theoretical claims, it is necessary to clarify how these bills are analyzed. In examining the bills, I broadly categorize patterns of 115 PMBs that firmly fall within the following six areas:

1. *Constitutional/legal* that include bills addressing criminal law amendments, constitutional amendments, Pakistan panel code, criminal law procedures and others.
2. *Business/commerce/finance* deals with bills related to banking laws, fiscal responsibility, imports and exports, telecommunications, oil and gas, industry etc.
3. *Governance* includes bills regarding employment act, civil servants, political parties act, National Assembly secretariat affairs, securities and law and order.
4. *Social* category deals with health, housing, family matters, child labour, education, disabled and religious affairs.
5. *Women specific* includes bills like acid throwing on women, rape, marriage within the Quran, sexual harassment, prevention of anti women practices,

family property inheritance, social protection for home based workers and reproductive health rights including amendment acts directly relevant to women.

6. *Other related matters* bills regard foreign affairs, environment, military and defence, refugees issues and others.

In some of the cases, it was difficult to categorise bills when they fell between two categories. For instance, the Prison Amendments Act 2010 highlights that many women who are arrested for some offenses or are convicted, keep their children with them in jail. Thus, the bill moved by woman MNAs makes the government responsible for providing boarding houses for children connected with women jailed throughout Pakistan, with some other provisions as well. Another such bill is the Rehabilitation Authority for Victims of Violence and Abuse Act, 2010. This bill particularly seeks to establish an Authority for rehabilitation of victims, and applies to both women and child victims of violence and abuse of any kind. In such cases, I have preferred to include these bills under the *women specific* category.

However, PMBs purely addressing children-related issues like the Child Marriage Restraints Act 1929, which seeks to bring attention to and remove the common practice of child marriages in Pakistan, and the bill called the Charter of Child Rights Act 2009, which advocates the promotion of an enabling environment free of violence, abuse and exploitation of children, were both moved by women MNAs, and are included in the *social* category.

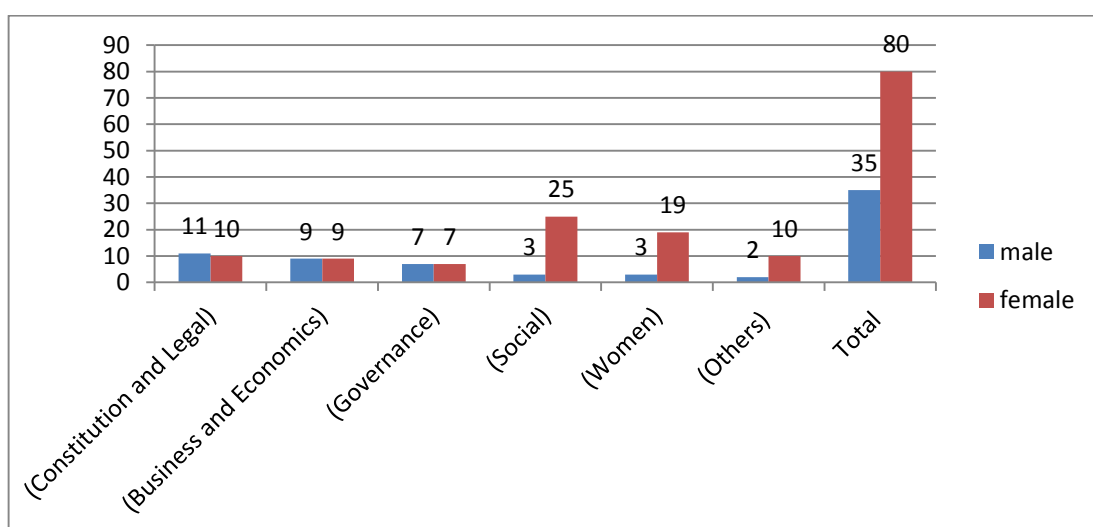
The other important aspect I would like to highlight here is that PMBs are introduced by individual MNAs or by a group of MNAs. However, in practice, the first signatory

of the bill is considered a prime mover of the bill, while playing an important role in contextualizing and initiating the bill. Therefore, to gain a clearer understanding, I have only considered the first signatory of bills, either male or female MNAs as prime movers of the bill, in order to create gender disaggregated analyses as below.

### Analysis of Private Members' Bills - PMBs

The results show that out of 115, 80 (70%) PMBs were moved by 26 women parliamentarians, as compared to 35 (30%) bills moved by 15 male MNAs, as shown in the figure below. This shows that a significantly higher proportion of bills are moved by women, even much higher than the 42% of PMBs introduced by women during the entire five year period (2002-07) of the last assembly (Mirza and Wagha, 2009:71).

**Figure 13: Number of PMBs moved by MNAs under each category by Gender (2008-11)**



Bills in certain categories such as constitutional/legal, business and governance are presented by men and women MNAs at the same rate. Both male and female MNAs



introduced an almost similar number of bills 11-10, 9-9 and 7-7 respectively, as shown above related to constitutional, business and governance policy areas.

However, the greatest difference can be found in respect of social and women related legislation. Out of 28 total bills in *social* and 22 in *women* related categories, women MNAs contributed 25 and 19 of bills in each category respectively. This suggests that female legislators are more likely to put social and women's issues on the legislative agenda rather than male MNAs, and women show similar levels of interest to male politicians in putting forward issues other than social and women specific legislation. That females act more on legislation that deals with women's rights and social issues was also found to be the case by several others (Carroll 2001; Schwindt-Bayer, 2006; Swers, 2005; Jones 1997).

#### ***Details of the bills moved by women MNAs directly relevant to women***

Some of the important bills directly relevant to women moved by women MNAs include:

- The Offence of Qazf Act (2008) providing support to the women who are subjected to rape or similar offences and suffer great hardship in getting their cases registered against the alleged offenders.
- The Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (2008) that makes provisions to protect women and children from violence, be it physical or psychological due to its debilitating impact on the victims of such violence.
- The Prevention of Harassment in the Workplace Act (2008) aims to provide a secure working environment to men and women workers.

- The Acid Control and Crime Prevention Act (2010) seeks to amend various acts and codes to provide better protection against acid crimes which are more common against women, as well as rehabilitation of, and compensation for, victims of acid crimes.
- The Reproductive Health Care and Rights (2010) bill seeks to promote the reproductive health rights of men and women by giving equal rights and access to information, services and provisions.
- The Factories Amendment Act (2009) seeks to provide provision to make working hours more flexible for adult female factory workers, since women have to look after their domestic affairs, along with their professional responsibilities.
- The Women's Honour Act (2009) emphasizes a promotion of social awareness to control all kinds of violence upon women in which the trends of cooperation, sympathy, sincerity and loyalty shall be promoted amongst women and men instead of seeing them as competing forces.
- The Prevention and Control of the Trafficking of Women (2010) bill seeks to address the issue of women's trafficking.

***Details of bills moved by women MNAs in other categories***

It cannot be said that that women are not interested in areas of more interest to men such as constitutional/ legal amendments, finances and governance. Evidence suggests that although women are more interested than men in social and women's issues, they have submitted an almost equal number of bills as men in categories traditionally known as men's domains. Some of those bills include:

- The Fiscal Responsibility and Debt Limitation Act, (2005) makes government responsible for taking the public representatives of the people into confidence before incurring further debts/grants that will eventually be paid back by the citizens.
- The Pakistan Penal Code Amendment Act (2008) deals with a law which provides considerable punishment to those who dispose of hazardous waste in a way that ignores the guidelines laid out by the government.
- The Commission of Inquiry Amendment Act (2009) proposes greater public access to the reports produced by government's constituted commissions.
- Two other bills also include amending the National Database and Registration Ordinance 2000 in order to facilitate people to obtain citizenship documents.

Women MNAs also show interest in policy issues related to language, minorities, environment and refugees, not touched by men at all, as included in the category 'others'. Some of bills related to these issues include:

- The Constitutional Amendments in Article 251, which emphasizes the teaching of Arabic and Persian at school level.
- The Constitution Amendment (article 51-59) Act (2008) to amend the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan by asking to allocate seats for non-Muslims in the Upper House/Senate as well as an increase in non-Muslims seats in the National Assembly.
- The Foreigner Amendment Act (2010), to cover the gaps in the prevailing Foreigners Act, 1946, with an aim to ensure better protection of foreigners in general, and refugees in particular.

Other bills moved by women MNAs also include Fiscal Responsibility and Debt Limitation Amendment Act (2008), The Pakistan Citizenship Act (2010), the Senior Citizen Act (2009), The Medical devices Act (2008), the Medical and Dental Council Act (2009) and others. These display women's interests in fields found more generally in the literature as part of the male domain.

### *Details of Bills moved by Male MNAs*

The data show that male politicians introduced a much lower number of PMBs as when compared to women legislators. Indeed, men showed less interest in women's and social issues. Male members' priorities are mainly related to legal, constitutional as well as business and commerce areas. Male members have moved bills such as the following:

- The De-weaponization of Pakistan Act (2011) that seeks to provide measures for the creation of a weapon-free Pakistan, for the restoration of peace.
- The Constitution Amendment Act (2009) that talks about the process for appointment of judges of the Supreme Court of Pakistan as well as in the High Courts. Male politicians have also proposed amending articles 11, 73-80, 177 of the constitution, and others have put various amendment bills forward.
- Two bills named National Database and Registration (2010) and (2012), and a further one to amend the National Database and Registration Authority Ordinance, 2000. All of these deal with issues related to Computerized National Identity Cards.
- Fiscal Responsibility and Debt Limitation Amendment Bill (2008) that seeks to increase the government limit for debt incurring from 3% to 4% of GDP.

Some other bills moved by male MNAs include the Competition Amendment Act (2009), which seeks to ensure that severe penalties are imposed on the Companies found to be in violation of orders of the Competition Commission of Pakistan. The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority Amendment Act (2009) makes the authority safeguarded against interference from the Federal Government. The Foreign Security Agency Act (2010) suggests a law to regulate and keep an eye on private security agencies belonging to different countries operating in Pakistan.

#### ***Male MNAs introducing women-specific legislation***

Results show that male parliamentarians moved only three bills directly addressing women's concerns; two bills by Mr. Riaz Fatyana, presented during the first parliamentary year, the Working Women (Protection of Rights) Act from (2008) and the In-House Working Women Protection Act, also (2008). Both of these bills relate to a safeguarding of the rights of working women, and to providing them with certain facilities or rewards.

One more women-specific bill was moved by male MNA Ch Pervaiz Ellahi - The Prevention of Anti-Woman Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Act (2008), which seeks to prohibit certain practices (depriving women from inheriting property, forced marriages, marriage with Quran etc.) leading to exploitation and discrimination against women.

The above findings that women taking interest in masculine domains and males introducing bills in feminine areas of interests (although very limited) suggest that these

categorisations are problematic. Men can also develop interests in women issues, and women can introduce policies in areas known as masculine interests, but, the idea that women are able to represent women's interests more than men seems stronger (Phillips 1995; Childs 2004).

Overall very few men award priority to women's concerns. The finding concerning the lack of male parliamentarians' interest in raising women's issues is consistent with previous terms' reports and studies which show that the performance of Pakistani male parliamentarians remained extremely low in terms of initiating women specific legislation in the Parliament. In fact during the last term (2002-07) of NA, in five years only 17 (6.3%) out of total 269 male members of the National Assembly stood in support of their women colleagues or individually initiated issues of women's rights (Mirza and Wagha, 2009: 86 see also Bari 2010).

### ***Champion Women***

As observed in the section above, out of 115 PMBs, 70% (80) of the bills are moved by women MNAs, while only 30% (35) are credited to male MNAs. The majority of bills women have introduced are relevant to social and women's issues. Women all together introduced 19 bills directly relevant to women, as compared to only 3 bills by male MNAs (Figure 13).

The analyses of Private Members' Bills also reveal some other important facts about 'champion women' such as that key individuals make a disproportionately high level of interventions. The data shows that amongst all MNAs, the maximum numbers of bills - 15 - were submitted by Ms. Y.R followed by Ms. F and Ms. D.A, who moved 9 and 7

bills respectively, showing high levels of participation by few women parliamentarians. These three women MNAs altogether made up 39 percent (31) of the total bills, with 80 moved by women parliamentarians. This shows a key role played by these individual women, who introduce legislation more frequently than most of the other women MNAs.

Interestingly, of 19 bills of direct concern to women introduced by women MNAs, more than half of the bills 11 (58%) were moved by these three individual women, showing greater commitment to raising women's issues. These bills related to women's issues include; domestic violence, home-based women workers, sexual abuse, reproductive health care and women-trafficking. Chaney et al. (2007: 121) highlight the importance of 'individuals with greater awareness, skills and feminist conviction in pursuing gender equality' in legislatures. So Phillips' (1995:168) observation that 'only some of whom [female politicians] will feel themselves charged with responsibility for speaking for women as a whole' seems strengthened in this case.

Taken together, these data reveal marked patterns of polarization with regard to gender. This shows that *inter gender polarization* means, when compared to male MNAs, a higher proportion of female MNAs are likely to initiate legislation, and that *intra gender polarization* stems from the fact that a limited number of women put forward a disproportionately high number of PMBs as examined here (Chaney et al. 2007: 123).

However, in this case, it is important to remember that all of these three active women are 'quota MNAs' and so not directly elected. This finding supports my previous observation that for some of the quota women, it is important to participate in the

parliament. As they point out in my interviews, their active role in the previous term played a part in their re-selection, which is especially the case for Ms. YR who introduced the highest numbers of bills and who talked about her performance in the previous tenure.

Evidence from various sources suggests that a quota MNA, who made the highest number of interventions in all areas of legislation during last term (2002-7), with an individual total of 322 interventions (Mirza and Wagha 2009: 76), is neither a very high-profile public figure nor someone who demonstrates a high level of experience linked to civil society (Bari 2010). Further investigation reveals she was dragged into politics by her party leader/head of the party, as a result of her husband's long-term party affiliation. As she informed me in her interview, her husband couldn't get a winnable general seat, so she was nominated to a reserve seat by the party leader.

On the one hand, it suggests that there is no reason to assume that women MNAs who enter parliament on women reserve seats, on the basis of male family members' relationship with top party leadership, and with little or no political experience and linkage with NGOs, will not perform to promote women specific legislative agenda. Thus, the number of women in legislatures is important, but *who they are* is also of paramount importance (Chaney et al., 2007). On the other hand, this also shows that participating in parliament is one of the ways quota MNAs can show their strength and capabilities to political party leaders in order to re-secure parliamentary seats.

The analysis of the PMBs presented above only ensures that women do bring women related legislative agendas into the parliament. However, do women's input and efforts



to contribute towards women's related legislation have any substantial outcome? Is women's input turned into output in terms of change in policy? The answer is generally no. This is because the majority of PMBs do not actually succeed in getting through the House. By and large, efforts made by women seem ineffective in changing policy outcome, when especially I look at the bills passed by NA in the last three years following my conceptual and analytical framework evaluating *substantive representation as outcome* in the following section.

### ***Substantive Representation as Outcome***

The *women's substantive representation as outcome* as envisaged in my conceptual framework means 'bills introduced by parliamentarians especially women and passed by the House, with special focus on women specific legislation is sought here'. Below, I provide in-depth analysis of 61 bills which successfully went through the National Assembly in first three parliamentary years (2008-11) that include both Private Member Bills and Government Bills to know how many of them are of direct relevance to women. In doing so, I assess to what extent women's formal representation is really turned into substantive change in policy and whether efforts made by women MNAs have any substantial impact in terms of substantive outcome for other women. As I elaborated in the above section, in Pakistan the legislative success of PMBs or Government Bills is greatly dependent upon first successfully passing from both house National Assembly, and Senate and secondly being signed by the President.

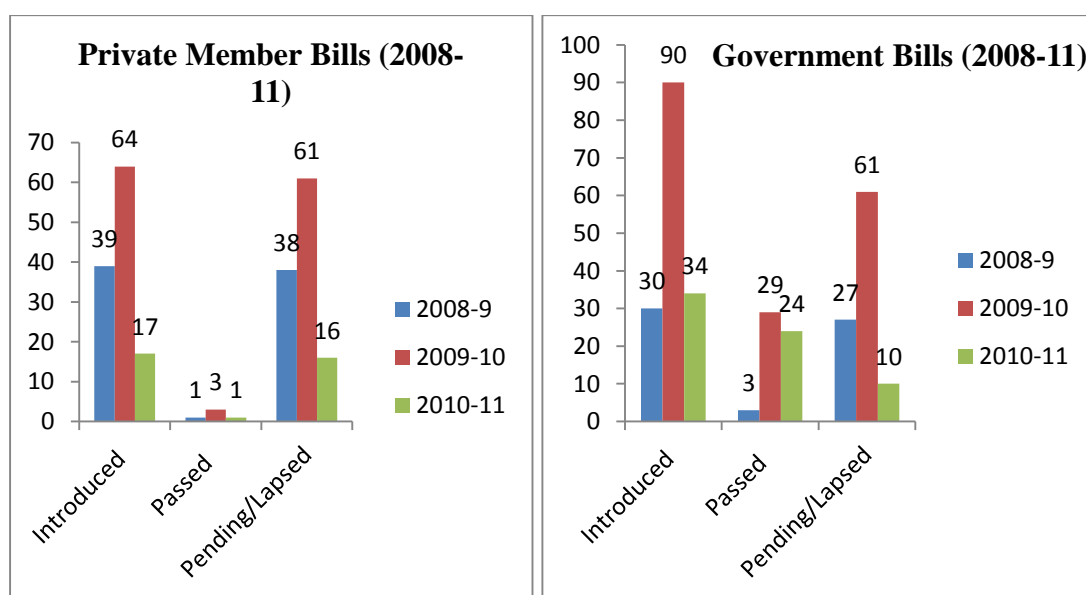
In this section, I do not emphasize the gender of the mover of the bill, as I did when analyzing PMBs moved by MNAs in the previous section. This is because, the large number of bills that went through the parliament were actually government bills

presented by the minister in charge. Either male or female MNAs, as sitting ministers of any particular ministry, can present government bills. However, 90% (28) of federal ministers are male MNAs (refer Figure 3 in previous chapter), and with such a small number of women federal ministers (3, or 10%), any attempt at a sophisticated level of comparative analysis is problematic.

### Analyses of the Bills Passed by the House (2008-11)

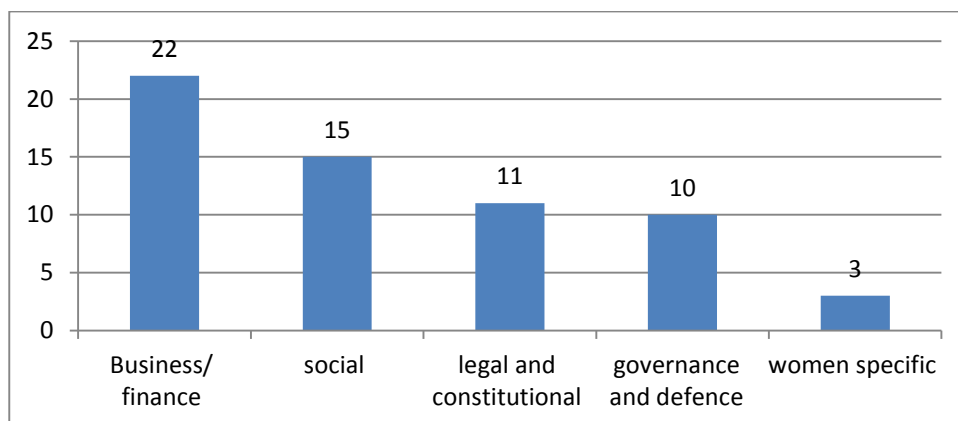
The last three years' (2008-11) performance of the parliament shows that out of a total 274 bills (154 Government Bills and 120 PMBs) introduced, the House only passed 61 bills, of which 5 (8%) were PMBs and the remaining 56 (92%) were government bills. This suggests that a large proportion (96%) of Private Members and (64%) of Government Bills either lapsed or are still pending as shown in figures below.

**Figure14: Private Member Bills and Government Bills (2008-11)**



Source: PILDAT 2010, National Assembly Secretariat,

**Figure 15: Number of Bills passed by NA under each category (2008-11)**



However, in depth analysis of all 61 bills (5 PMBs and 56 government bills) passed by the House reveals that a significant number 22 (36%) of bills passed were mainly concerned with business/financial matters, 15 (25%) bills related to social issues like health, education, housing and others, 11 (18%) bills were legal/constitutional/amendment in nature, and 10 (16%) related to governance including defence (refer Figure 15). Only 3 bills out of 61 (5%) addressed women's concerns/issues: The Domestic Violence Bill (prevention and protection) (2009) moved by the female MNA Ms. Y R as a PMB, and two Government Bills, Protection against Harassment of Women in Workplace Act (2010), and The Criminal Law Amendment Act (2009), moved by the government Minister in charge. Below, I provide further details regarding three bills relating to women's concerns, to show what eventually happens to these bills, which further provides insight into the context within which women MNAs work.

### ***Details of Women Specific Bills passed by the House (2008-11)***

#### ***Private Member Bill passed by the House (The Domestic Violence Bill –DVB 'Prevention and Protection' 2009)***

The Domestic Violence Bill (2009) is the only Private Member's Bill passed by the House in three years, and was introduced individually by the most active woman parliamentarian, Ms. Y.R in the 2008-9 parliamentary year. The author of the bill states that

‘through this Bill, domestic violence is brought into the public domain and responds to the National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women of adopting zero tolerance for violence against women and introducing positive legislation on domestic violence’ (DBV-2009).

The DVB-2009 makes several provisions for protection of women and children subjected to domestic violence. The bill suggests that,

‘A person who is guilty of violation of protection order ... shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to two years but shall not be less than one year and also be liable to ‘fine which may not be less than two hundred thousand rupees. The court shall order that the amount of the fine shall be given to the aggrieved person’ (DVB 2009).

This bill was passed unanimously by the NA on 4th August 2009. Despite being passed by the NA, the bill was rejected in the senate (Upper House) due to changes in the

legislative processes after the 18<sup>th</sup> constitutional Amendment, under which several of the Ministries are now devolved to provinces (Mirza, 2011). Finally, after two years of long wait the bill was recently presented again in the joint session of the Senate and the National Assembly.

Ms. Fouzia Saeed, who is not a MNA but a member of the National Commission on the Status of Women - NCSW and the chairperson of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Watch Committee, explained how the bill was dealt in the joint session in an article in the *Express Tribune* (April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012). She writes:

‘Today I walked out of the parliament with a feeling of humiliation. The strong sense that many simply played politics with women’s pain made me feel nauseated’.

She noted that during the joint session, the bill was resisted by male members, and even some male senators jokingly said ‘now we can’t even slap our wives anymore! What kind of system do you want?’, while others said that bill must be deferred. Finally, the bill was deferred, as one male MNA declared that people have issues and therefore, a few more days are needed (Saeed, F. 2012).

The above observations are highly important in revealing several aspects about a parliamentary culture and male MNAs’ attitudes towards women’s issues. The Domestic Violence Bill (2009) is the only Private Members’ Bill passed by the House in the last three years which is relevant to women’s issues, but which couldn’t successfully go through the Upper House. One may therefore understand why several

of the bills submitted by women MNAs, which address important issues like The Acid Control and Crime Prevention Act, The Child Marriages Restraint Act 2009, Social Protection for Home based Workers Amendment Act 2010, Criminal Law Amendment Act 2009 and others couldn't be passed by the NA. The bill can only be passed when accepted by a two-thirds majority of both houses, highlighting the crucial importance of male members who are in majority.

While the majority of male MNAs who are in positions of power seem less interested in legislation which penalizes those who perpetuate violence against women especially in the private domain as one male MNA said 'we even cannot slap our wives anymore!' It suggests that the bills which challenge the private domain of powerful male politicians and the ways in which they exercise power in their personal lives are usually vetoed. This relates very much to what I discuss in the context chapter, where I show that significant evidence is available showing a link between honour crimes/Jirgas and politics being played out by influential feudal and tribal political men, who also dominate parliament. It would challenge such powerful men if some of these women and human rights were respected. However the following two government bills deal with harassment in public domain but still succeeded in being passed.

*Government Bills passed by the National Assembly (Criminal Law Amendment Act - 2009 and Protection against Harassment at the Workplace - 2009)*

The two important government bills relating to harassment at the work place were passed by both houses. One is the Criminal Law Amendment Act (2009), which made an amendment to Section, 509 Pakistan Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure

1898, by making public and work environment safer for women by opening up the path for more women to pursue livelihood with dignity. The bill claims to reduce poverty, as more and more women are encouraged to enter the job market. The Act penalizes the offense of sexual harassment by imposing 3 years imprisonment or a fine of up to Rs 500,000, or both.

Another more comprehensive government bill, The Protection against Harassment at the Workplace Act (2010), was passed by NA on 22 Jan 2010, while addressing in detail the process of holding enquiries into harassment cases including major and minor penalties. The bill also requires all public and private organizations to adopt an internal code of conduct and a complaints/appeal mechanism, aimed at establishing a safe working environment free of intimidation and abuse for all working women. Both of these bills relating to harassment in the workplace are government bills moved by the Ministers in charge. These bills have now become law after the approval of the Senate and the assent of the President of Pakistan on 9th March 2010.

The above findings suggest that fewer bills directly relevant to women are passed by the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly. Indeed, of 3 pieces of women-specific legislation mentioned above, only two were approved by the Senate, and one (Domestic Violence Bill- 2009) is still stalled and waiting to be passed by the Upper House (Senate). This shows that on average the NA passed one bill related to women each year in the last three years. Most of the efforts made by women in moving PMBs, of which many of them were directly relevant to women (refer Figure 13), seem ineffective, because only one private members bill addressing women's concerns was passed by the NA.

Regarding the failure of significant amount of bills in Pakistan Parliament, scholars inform us that:

‘the process of law making was seriously flawed, there was a visible lack of sufficient time for debate in the House. The tendency to bulldoze legislation persisted and most legislation was undertaken in a hasty manner’ (Mirza and Wagha, 2009: 88).

Some describe various other factors, such as inefficient functioning of the parliament, lack of technical support to MNAs in preparing appropriate drafts of bills, lack of capacity and political will to pursue bill resulting large number of bill rejections (see Bari 2010; PIDAT, 2010 and 2011; FAFEN 2010 and 2011).

Overall the experiences of this term’s data support the general observation by Phillips (2005: 82-3) that ‘changing the gender composition of elected assemblies is largely an enabling condition ... but cannot present itself a guarantee’. The presence of more Pakistani women in politics certainly brought greater attention to women’s issues in ‘feminization of political agendas’ (where women’s concerns and perspectives are articulated), but has limited impact when it comes to the ‘feminization of the legislation (where output has been transformed)’ (Childs, 2006: 157).

At the end of first part of this chapter, which evaluates women’s *substantive representation as process and outcome* based on NA proceedings, there are some indications of the forms of substantive representation occurring as process under which women are substantially contributing to the legislative business of the parliament.



Moreover, evidence suggests that although some men also raise women's concerns, women's issues are primarily represented by women. Women also show interest in domains traditionally known as masculine such as finance, governance and constitutional amendments.

Moreover, the substantive representation as outcome that deals with policy outcomes and/or bills passed by the NA with special focus on women's related legislation show little progress. It means that most of the efforts made by women have limited impact. It was also learned from above analyses that not all but only a few women (mainly quota MNAs) are more active than other women politicians.

Why are women making all these legislative interventions, especially PMBs, when getting bills passed by the NA is so ineffective? Women's active participation in parliament creates an incentive, by raising women's profiles, which also benefits political parties by increasing the parties' share in legislation. The parties may also need potential politicians who can perform legislative action on their behalf. Male politicians who are greater in numbers show the least interest in the legislation. Women MNAs are often dependent on male political leaders, as women lack their own power base/constituency, and have to perform such futile legislative work to show political parties' leaders that they are potential political women and have much more to offer parties.

Such observations are reinforced when looking at the legislative performance of directly elected women MNAs in the next chapter, who also seem less active than quota women like male politicians. This suggests that directly elected MNAs including both men and

women, whose legislative interventions are far below those of quota women, are well aware of the fact that the real power resides outside parliament with constituents as well as in their ability to contest and win elections. Therefore, to re-enter the parliament, legislation is not as important for directly elected MNAs as for quota women. I am not arguing that for all quota women it is important to act within parliament, as not all of them are active in parliament, but for some of them with weak contacts, it becomes important to gain weight via performance. The context of women's parliamentary work in Pakistan is highly complicated, where party men control women's entry as well as women's agendas.

Next, I shift my focus to women's symbolic and substantive representation outside the parliament. The discussion is based on interviews of women MNAs to find out to what extent women MNAs feel their presence has contributed towards symbolic and substantive representation of women outside the parliament at various levels such as constituency, community and personal.

### ***Substantive Representation outside the Parliament***

Anne Phillips (1995: 82) in *The Politics of Presence* clarifies that 'I am very much at one point with her [Hanna Pitkin] in seeing representation as a process [... which] depends on the continuing relationship between represented and representative'. The Pakistani quota women's representation complicates what is being argued in theory, in terms of relationship between the representative and the represented. This is because in practice, in Pakistan, represented (women/voters/constituents) neither elect representatives (quota women) nor have any role in the process of women representatives' selection. So, can we still claim any responsibility of quota women to

represent women, who are in-directly elected by party leaders as parliamentary candidates?

With this in mind, it was particularly important in the case of Pakistani quota women MNAs to examine the nature of their relationship with represented/women constituents outside parliament. Whether quota women still seek to establish any contact or relationship with women, when they already know that constituents/women will have nothing to do with their re-election in the next term is a question explored in this section. This is the same for women constituents, especially amongst poor rural women, despite knowing that quota women are not their *elected* representatives and different from them in terms of class and the urban/rural divide. That they still seek to contact women MNAs is also part of the discussion. However, experiences of directly elected MNAs are also important to understand how the gender of the representative impacts on processes of representation like elections and campaigns.

In doing so, I specifically explore the link between women's descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation. Many times I observed that discussions in interviews around symbolic representation slipped into discussions about substantive representation, as here both deal with the effects of their presence in politics to those outside parliament. Even then, I was able to distinguish between these two facets of representation. Here *symbolic representation*, 'theorized as public attitudes towards women in politics and trends in political engagement of female constituents' (Franceschet, et al., 2012: 13) and *substantive representation outside parliament* deal with women MNAs' work for female constituents in order to improve their lives. In doing so, this section provides

initial evidence of the extent to which the effects of substantive change are observed by women MNAs outside parliament.

This section is based on interview data of 15 quota and 5 directly elected MNAs respondents. I do not describe quota and directly elected women MNAs responses separately, the analyses of all interviews rather create findings related to particular topics across all of the interviews. However, their responses are clearly marked as being from quota or non quota respondents.

### **Importance of Acting outside Parliament**

During discussions, women MNAs strongly highlighted the importance of working outside the parliament. Many women MNAs argue that representation is not just raising people's concerns within the parliament, much of the work needs to be done outside the parliament. They also argue that people who come to visit MNAs rarely talk about parliamentarians' activities within parliament. They seem more worried about their livelihood and everyday issues like jobs, drainage, access to safe drinking water and several other day to day problems requiring immediate attention. In the words of a quota woman MNA:

‘Sometimes, when I meet people, I expect they will talk about my recent move in the parliament or about very important national issues. But they always want me to listen and solve their problems immediately, like getting jobs, transfer and posting and fund raising for their organizations and helping them in many ways’ (Quota MNA, 20).

Another said that:

‘Representation is all about relationships that you cannot develop while sitting in the parliament, but with greater interaction with people and those working for any similar cause’ (Quota MNA, 8).

### **Impact of Gender on Elections, Campaigns and Women Constituents**

Directly elected women talked a lot about the impact of their gender on elections and on constituents, and the importance of being a ‘woman representative’ for other women. When asked how the sex of the representative has impacted on the constituency as they are directly elected by people unlike quota women, one directly elected MNA said:

‘A large number of women voted for me and that had never happened before in our constituency. I consciously concentrated on women voters during my election campaign. I also arranged special pick-up and drop-off facilities for women on election day, so that all women could cast their votes, as well as separate sitting arrangements for women during our public gatherings. This resulted in greater mobilization of women in the political processes (Quota MNA, 11).

One of the ways in which directly elected women explained how the sex of the representative impacts on other women was that women representatives attracted a greater number of women constituents. She said:

‘This is our family constituency, previously my father used to contest this seat, but this time I became MNA. I observed that when my father was MNA, mostly male constituents were more active in discussing their problems. We were also receiving women at our home, bringing different types of issues for my father. But they never talked to him directly and we were the bridge between women voters and my father as their representative. Now more women visit us, in many cases even their families send them to contact me’ (Directly elected MNA, 15).

Like directly elected MNAs, who claim that their gender had given local women an advantage to interact with their political representatives, several of the reserve seat MNAs reported the same that women in their areas had never met with male politicians. However, quota women MNAs are frequently contacted by other women. A quota MNA informed me that:

‘A woman cannot as easily and freely discuss and interact with a male representative as with a woman politician’ (Quota MNA, 1).

Women pointed out that that in some cases if the representative is male, it makes women’s access to them difficult. One explained:

‘More women than men contact me to resolve their local problems, who otherwise cannot be comfortable with male parliamentarians. Many times, to get their problems solved, women travelled with me in order to visit

various offices. That is impossible for women if the representative is male (Directly elected MNA, 14).

Women also argue that it not only that women voters have found contact difficult with male politicians, but, sometimes male politicians themselves prefer male members of families to contact them. She explains:

‘I was contacted by a widow, whose son was arrested by police. The widow said that she contacted male representatives; but they always asked her send any male member of family to deal with an issue. Male politicians did not realize that she is a widow, and that the only male in her family is her only son, who is now in jail’ (Quota MNA, 7).

The above comments reveal how representation is practiced in everyday life and how the gender of representatives may affect the involvement of men and women in politics differently.

### **Women, Violence and Women Parliamentarians**

One of the most important aspects of women’s representation as MNAs highlight is the growing interaction between *women victims of violence* particularly raped or sexually harassed women and women MNAs. Women leaders shared examples of giving support, personally visiting and providing moral and psychological support to rape victims and women subjected to violence in their areas.

One MNA said that:

‘A rural woman was gang raped by six men due to a community conflict over land in my area. I immediately shared her case with the party chairperson and she advised me to support her. I went to meet the victim and her family, assured them full support in raising this issue in the parliament. I went far more than just offering words, while arranging legal support and personally monitoring the whole situation, so that her medical reports may not be manipulated or changed in any way by continuously being in contact with her and her doctors, and the police officers concerned’ (Quota MNA, 2).

Another MNA talked about a woman victim of an acid attack. As we observed in the previous chapter, the bill relating to acid attack is still waiting to be passed the assembly. She reported:

‘It was shocking when I learned about a girl victim of an acid attack in my area by a man who wanted to marry her. Upon her refusal to marry him, man threw acid in her face. As a result, her face was completely damaged and disfigured. ... I knew that the girl victim belonged to a very poor family unable to bear her health expenses. I then talked to Chief Minister of the Punjab Province, who confirmed full expenses would be paid by the government related to her health care and further support for face surgery’ (Quota MNA, 5).



One of the MNAs does report that political women's involvement in violence cases greatly affect women victims, in the sense of encouraging affected women to register and pursue their cases of victimization, who usually find themselves completely helpless after the incidents. She highlights the plight of women victims in this way:

‘The majority of rape and violence victims are poor women, they neither have sufficient support or resources to pursue their cases in courts, nor even find encouragement from family or the community. Institutions also discriminate against them, raped women who go to register reports are re-raped at police stations, officers misbehave with them, do not register their complains, sometime due to involvement of local influential people as well. All this greatly contributes to their vulnerability, that's why many such cases go un-reported. Not only this, if the accused is powerful, he may try to manipulate first the investigation, and the medical and other reports including any important evidence by offering bribes to police and other departments, as usually happened in such cases. It becomes challenging for women MNAs not only to raise such issues in the parliament, but also to ensure women victims receive full support. So when investigation institutions like the police and health departments see the involvement of high level women politicians' in such cases, they take victims more seriously and find it difficult to change investigation reports' (Quota MNA, 10)

Women MNAs also reported that in some cases supporting women victims means putting their own lives in danger. A quota MNA shares the following:

‘Our areas have remained for a long time under the influence and rule of the Taliban or conservative religious political parties, who have played havoc with women’s lives. Once, in a college, students arranged a farewell party at the end of their term. Some of the religious parties’ men forcefully entered into the college and abused students and also threatened girls for arranging and attending mixed parties in the college. They also threatened the college administration if they registered any complaint to the police against them. Many of the young girls were scared of even going back to college. I visited the college, met administration representatives and students, especially girls, and ensured our party’s support in taking the issue to the police and the district administration. It was difficult to challenge those culprits, who don’t find it difficult to even kill anyone’ (Quota MNA, 8).

Another MNA presents an interesting view that political women are tackling women’s violence issues in a different way than male politicians, putting in much more effort behind the scene also found elsewhere (Childs 2004). She said:

‘Earlier, male politicians were conducting a different kind of politics, when reading any issue of violence against women in newspaper, they used to give statements. But I never do it. Until and unless I research a particular issue and visit myself the incident site, I never feel satisfied’.

She continued to say:

‘I remember some poor women in a rural village of Sindh Province, severely beaten by the police, even some of the women’s clothes were torn off. Later, the footage was aired by several media/channels. I personally visited the village and talked to women and men, raised the issue within parliament, with the Prime Minister and the President. I also filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking justice for poor people’ (Quota MNA, 7).

Women MNAs also argue that their close interaction and greater access to women victims of different kinds of violence have made them even more able, aware and confident about those critical problems women face, which also helps MNAs in raising such issues in the parliament. In a way, they were arguing that female constituents create mandates for women legislators to be substantive representatives (Childs and Krook, 2012; Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008).

One MNA states that:

‘women’s contact with us [women MNAs], make our input in parliament more dynamic, as most of the legislative initiatives taken by women relate to women’s everyday life experiences of violence, prejudice and discrimination they face’ (Quota MNA, 1).

Another MNA noted that women led to greater attention being placed on women’s issues which previously went ignored and untouched, such as acid throwing on women,

domestic violence, sexual harassment at workplaces and others, as more women are victims of such violence. She said:

‘If you want to know the legitimacy of gender perspectives within parliament, I suggest, please look at the issues never brought in the parliament before women’s inclusion that will show you the difference we have made. But it is so unfortunate the legislation we have been introducing related to women is still pending and most of it has lapsed. Very few legislative initiatives go through the parliament’ (Quota MNA, 07).

However, the proceedings data, as shown in first part of this chapter, also supports the above comments given by women MNAs that female legislators are more active in putting women’s issues on the legislative agenda than their male counterparts. But quota women are also stigmatized as second class politicians as found in the previous chapter on women’s recruitment. These complications certainly raise a need for quotas to overcome the issue of ‘quota women being labelled as second rate politicians’ (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008; Childs and Krook, 2012; Murray, 2012).

### **Women Focused Development Initiatives and Priorities**

Women seem particularly involved in promoting and focusing on women development projects. As one quota MNA explained:

‘I belonged to far flung rural area, deprived most of the basic amenities. As such there are very limited opportunities available for women, even after graduation women do not find jobs. Their talent goes wasted, young women

hardly find any further opportunities for enhancing their skills. After realizing this, I have established a Skills Development Centre for women through funds provided to me in sponsorship with the Social Welfare Department' (Quota MNA, 5).

Another quota MNA said that:

'My village is located upstream of the Indus river, where the flow of water is very high. Whenever, there is much water in river, we literally flood and become cut off from the world ... .. I not only made efforts to construct a bridge connecting our village to the rest of the villages, but also worked for the improvement of drainage in the area and the strengthening of the river's banks' (Quota MNA, 9).

The elected MNA reported:

'In my constituency my focus is more on education, particularly girls' education. I am making efforts to provide all modern facilities to schools such as computer labs, books ... I am also closely working with national and international nongovernmental organizations, interested in investing in girls education' (Directly elected MNA, 13).

The above comments clearly highlight the extent to which women MNAs are involved in substantive representation outside parliament to improve the lives of other women. It

may be noticed that it is not only directly elected women working for women constituents, in fact, quota women are equally involved in such work.

### **Role Model Effects**

Some of them also reported women's positive role model effects, especially in their communities; one of the quota respondents said:

‘In my area, women have never attended any political/public gatherings arranged by political parties. It happened for the first time when I called for a public gathering in such a far flung conservative rural area, indeed, for me it was very difficult to address such a large number of people first time. What I found, in the first meeting was that there were very few women present from our families. Later, in second gathering, I found many women were sitting in a hall and waiting to hear me. It was a big shift in our communities allowing women to occupy male spaces’ (Quota MNA, 6).

When I asked her how this shift was achieved, she said that:

‘It happened because people saw the conservative families like us - who never usually permitted their daughters to go out - had now actually allowed women to be in politics. Seeing us, several families allowed their women to be in our political party and go to public gatherings and a lot of families permitted their girls and women to enter workplaces after my involvement in politics. They saw me as an example’ (Quota MNA, 6).

A directly elected MNA also similarly argued that the gender of representatives has a greater impact on the increase in rural women's access to education, who otherwise are marginalized in many ways. She said:

‘As you know political and feudal families like us in rural areas enjoy greater influence on rural life and communities. When communities observe that women of such families like us can allow their daughters to be involved in politics, why shouldn't they also encourage their women to get education and jobs. Therefore, I now find more mobilization of women in my community, especially in getting education’ (Directly elected MNA, 13)

Another directly elected MNA talked about encouraging women in public institutions, highlighting an important form of substantive representation:

‘In my district female officers (doctors and teachers) were denied work, due to high security threats and lawlessness in most of the districts. Parents had reservations about sending their daughters to work and getting education. Also it was rare for government institutions to have female staff. I made special efforts involving government to provide security to women professionals in offices, so that women could attend their jobs and also convince their parents to allow them to work. In many cases, I personally argued with girls' parents that being a woman, if I can work as politician, why couldn't their daughters work in hospitals? I also convinced male professionals that if they can elect a lady as their representative in the

parliament, why can't men work with women professionals in offices' (Directly elected MNA, 15).

### **Involvement at Personal and Community Level**

A significant number of women MNAs reported their personal involvement in the very personal and individual matters of women, in some cases, even patronizing other women who approached them every day. This shows the significance of patronage among women and the evidence suggests that women MNAs have been aiding other women in many ways. As one said:

'I personally do a lot of counselling to women within our community. I was approached by a young lady doctor, who had passed her commission exam and got a job. But her brother, who is also our party worker, was not allowing her to do a job; normally women don't work in their community. I talked to her brother and convinced him to let her work. Local people have now recognized my own position in the political arena and take me and my advice seriously' (Directly elected MNA, 11).

One more MNA also reported the following:

'A woman came to me with her electricity bill of RS 25000, I never met her before. She said she had no money to pay the bill. In fact, I too had no money to give her. I then used my contacts and make a call to a friend working in the local office of the electricity department. The department



gave her relief for half of the money and the remaining money she paid in instalments’.

She further added:

‘Ideally she would have been accommodated by the concerned departments, but unfortunately that never happens. Even for a small issue people knock your door, they believe being a powerful politician we can do everything!’ (Quota MNA, 17).

Meanwhile, many of the quota women and elected MNAs reported developing personal relationships and friendships with people, particularly women. She said:

‘I often meet women, who regularly approach me, I also attend their personal ceremonies, mourning ceremonies, create opportunities and many more’ (Quota MNA, 5).

Another stated that:

‘poor women usually come to see me to arrange dowries for their daughters’ weddings, I make great efforts to help most of them who seek my support, sometimes personally, otherwise, asking friends and contacts for their support’ (Quota MNA, 4).

A directly elected MNA said that:

‘I am very active in community work, I know most of the people in my constituency, indeed, and am familiar with their names’ (Directly elected MNA, 13).

There might be several factors that push women MNAs to patronizing women constituents, but interpreting above comments, especially those by elected women, it is not difficult to see that developing personal relationships constitutes a form of patronage that will certainly ensure future votes for them, their families and their parties. Nevertheless, such moves or efforts by quotas women reveal a different story; despite knowing that such efforts may not have an effect on their re-selection, they still act.

### **Growing Access by Women Groups/ NGOs**

‘Contact with women’s organizations is an important dimension of substantive representation and signals that parliamentarians recognize women as a social category’ (Chaney, et al. 2007: 12). Other than increased contact with women victims of violence, one MNA argues that women’s presence in parliament has increased feminist groups and NGOs’ involvement in promoting women-related legislation in parliament via women legislators. She says:

‘I am approached by several NGOs interested in assisting women MNAs in representing women related legislation in the parliament, especially those promoting women’s rights in Pakistan’ (Quota MNA, 5).

Another said:

‘I have been working with NGOs on the drafts of several bills moved in the parliament for making legislation more positive to women’ (Quota MNA, 3).

Such claims made by women were also observed in NGO reports, which clearly highlight that they have been working with several women MNAs in order to promote women-specific legislation in the parliament (Legislative Watch, 2011). Thus, women MNAs’ presence in the legislature seems highly important for women’s organizations, particularly those engaged in promoting legislation beneficial to women, as women’s concerns are mainly represented by women MNAs in the parliament.

### **Change in Public Perception**

Some women MNAs believe that women’s presence in the public domain has an important symbolic aspect, especially by creating a change in public perception regarding the public/political field, where previously they only used to see men. One MNA seems very clear on the impact that the women politicians’ increased appearance in the media had on the public. She stated that:

‘You find a frequent appearance of women politicians in the media, TV talk shows, newspapers and in public places. Women talk on several important national issues, they offer expert opinions and represent government, while being in important positions. This sends important signals to women as well as men, when they see that several women are involved in politics to such an extent’ (Quota MNA, 20).

### **Strengthening Party Position**

Quota women especially highlighted that they substantially contribute towards the strengthening of their parties' positions in their areas and supporting party workers. As a reserve seat MNA informed me:

'I live in a rural area, and in my constituency my party male candidates have always been defeated by other parties' candidates in both provincial and national assemblies' elections. As such I am not elected by the people of this area. Even then, I am working hard in this constituency, doing a lot of development work related to roads, schools, hospitals etc. Now people have recognized my efforts and demanding from my party that I should be given direct seat to contest elections' (Quota MNA, 5).

A similar response was given by another MNA:

'The funds allocated to me are invested in areas, where the party has a greater numbers of voters. I am also supporting women workers, who play an important role in mobilizing and collecting people during campaigns and elections by paying for transportation and other costs related to the arrangement of party gatherings' (Quota MNA, 1).

The above comments that they are working for parties are unsurprising, but demand by people to ask the parties providing women party tickets to contest elections seems a welcome move.

### **Gains at Personal Level**

Some of the respondents also reported a positive impact on their personal lives, raising their personal status in families and communities. MNAs observed that their families, in-laws, husbands, friends and relatives had begun to recognize their potential, and they have find more respect in their social circles. As one explained:

‘I am valued and given greater importance in all ceremonies and family gatherings. People wait for me in programs and they don’t perform any community functions, until I arrive’ (Directly elected MNA, 13).

Another reported:

‘My in-laws have never been approving of me. For several years, we had no contact with each other, because we married on our own, against my husband’s family’s will. But, when they learned I have become MNA, many of them now approach me with their personal problems’ (Quota MNA, 9).

Political representation has not only impacted on women MNAs’ personal status, but also their political skills. One of the respondents said that an increased participation of women in politics has helped women politicians to sharpen their skills in public speaking:

‘I was surprised, after making my first speech in a public gathering that I could do it ... I still can’t believe that I did it’ (Directly elected MNA, 13).

Opposition women MNAs seem rather more active, even participating in mass public protests. She explains that:

‘I remained involved in the campaign of young doctors and the agriculture department workers who were asking the government to regularize their jobs. I have personally learned a lot from this campaigning’ (Quota MNA, 5).

### ***Final Thoughts***

The first part of this chapter initially analyzes *substantive representation as process*. It is asserted that where women MNAs are seen actively contributing to the overall legislative business of the parliament as revealed in first three parliamentary years (2008-11), women significantly contributed most of the legislative interventions of the parliament (Resolutions, PMBs, POs, Questions and Motions.) Women's overall input is much higher than male members' input.

Evidence from in-depth analyses of the Private Members' Bills (PMBs) also indicates that women more often than male politicians put social and women's related issues on legislative agendas. However, women also introduce an almost similar number of bills as male MNAs related to areas of interests known as men's domains, such as finance/business, governance and legal. This highlights the importance of women's interests in areas other than social and women's issues. At the same time, we witnessed the fact that some male MNAs have also introduced very few bills addressing women's concerns.

Significant evidence found that not all women MNAs are active, but a few quota women act more often than other. Those champion women performing within parliament cannot be seen simply as those individuals with greater awareness, skills and feminist conviction in pursuing gender equality' (Chaney, et al. 2007). There are several things happening in Pakistani politics, one of which is women's desire to be re-selected in the next term, a situation which pushes some women MNAs to perform more often than others.

The results are disappointing when I analyze *substantive representation as outcome*, which looks at women specific legislation passed by the House. Progress made by the NA is extremely low. Strikingly, 96% PMBs lapsed or are pending. Of those, 80% were moved by women MNAs, including many of the important bills related to women's issues. In the three years, just two government bills of direct concern to women were successfully pushed through both Houses and received the assent of the president.

It seems problematic that women MNAs, who have been introducing pro-women agendas, are made to be dependent on male party elites for their re-selection, while male political elites seem less supportive of women's related legislation. This is observed in the case of the Domestic Violence Bill (2009), which also addresses the issue of violence against women in particularly in the private domain. This Bill, moved by woman MNA, cannot be passed due to strong resistance by male politicians, who still uphold violence against women. Thus, bills challenging the powerful political elite (mainly men) and tackling gender based inequalities in private domain are thrown out by male leaders.

However, gains within parliament in terms of women specific legislation are much lower than gains women MNAs claim outside of parliament in terms of symbolic and substantive representation. Examples of the latter include growing access by women constituents and women victims of violence, participation of women constituents in the political processes, the role model effect, changes in community and public perceptions, as well as an increase in personal status and skills.

There was strong support for the claim of a link between descriptive and substantive representation when MNAs talked about the support they have been extending towards women victims of violence, including rape, a majority of whom were poor rural women. Many women MNAs contended that women were making contact with them in greater numbers, and their experiences of introducing women related legislation in the parliament is also affected due to their close interaction with women victims of violence and others, as one said explained:

‘I live in an area where large numbers of women are factory workers, who have been complaining about long and late hours working in factories. Realizing their problems, I introduced legislation called the Factories Amendment Act 2009, providing relief to women factory workers in terms of working hours’ (Quota MNA, 5).

Another said that:



‘I introduced the Acid Crime Control Prevention Act 2009, while personally observing and meeting with women and child victims of such violence, as there is no law in this country dealing with such a crime’ (Quota MNA, 7).

However, neither of these above mentioned bills introduced by women MNAs has been passed by the parliament.

Support for the claims that representation depends on a continuous relationship was forthcoming, insofar as women parliamentarians personally make efforts to respond to women’s issues and problems. Women MNAs’ testimonies that they even remember constituents names, participate in their community programs and conduct personal visits indicate their growing relationship with constituents. Women MNAs also claim that their presence has made a difference outside parliament for them and other women as well. Women MNAs share various women focused development initiatives making a difference to the lives of other women. Discussions on substantive representation outside parliament also reveal that because of gender quotas, women MNAs have reaped several personal benefits including greater respect amongst the family and the community, enhanced skills in public speaking, as well as increased autonomy and mobilization.

In summary, based on the evidence above, it is apparent that quotas have great impact in terms of *substantive representation as a process within parliament*, which I have conceptualized as women’s contribution towards legislation and engendering of the legislative agendas, as well as in terms of *substantive and symbolic representation outside parliament*, which means change in public perception of women in politics and impact on women constituents. However, little supporting evidence is found when it

comes to *substantive representation as outcome*, especially in terms of policy change/  
women specific legislation.

The next chapter provides details regarding the silencing and suppression of women  
parliamentarians, as well as the constraints they face to practicing representation.

## Chapter Seven

### Constraints to Practicing Representation

#### *Introduction*

In the previous chapter, I examined the effects of women's presence within and outside parliament. By analyzing proceedings data I showed that despite women's active role and contribution in raising women's concerns, very few women-related legislative initiatives achieved a positive outcome. I also documented gains in terms of women's symbolic and substantive representation outside parliament, based on women's experiences.

In this chapter, I first provide discussion on who exactly it is that women politicians especially quota women represent and feel accountable to. As we know already, quota women are not directly elected by constituents/women, so in what way should we expect these women to represent other women? In order to compare the differences in views, I raised similar enquiries with directly elected women MNAs. Interestingly, a number of opposing findings emerged from the analyses of two data sets - the proceedings of the parliament and interviews with women MNAs. For instance, the directly elected MNAs, who claim to feel a greater responsibility to represent women in interviews, in practice, are less involved in legislation as shown in proceedings' data. However quota women, who perceive themselves as more accountable to parties and party men, put a greater numbers of bills in general and women-specific bills in particular on the legislative agenda. Very similar findings emerged when I talked to women MNAs regarding the cross-party women caucus. Interestingly, women MNAs who have introduced cross-party legislation with the support of women MNAs from

different parties seem less supportive to the women's cross-party coalition caucus initiative. This is discussed in further detail in this chapter.

I then focus on a case study exploring the factors contributing to women's silence and subordination in response to male senator Mr. Zehri and MNA Mr. Bijarani's appointments as cabinet members. Senator Zehri is someone who on the floor of the House defended the cultural practices of honour-killing of women in Baluchistan Province, whose statement was widely condemned by women and human rights organizations. MNA- Mr. Bijarani conducted *Jirga* (Tribal Assembly) in his rural constituency and ordered a village family to give away their five minor girls (aged three to six years) as compensation to victims' families for resolving the conflict. Despite outrage, both of these notables were appointed as cabinet members during the current term. However, women MNAs within the parliament showed little resistance against their appointments as cabinet members, showing rather *contested* politics of presence. Women unpack truths behind their silence, showing anger as well as the helplessness and difficulties they experience in addressing issues which challenge the powerful political elite of Pakistan. This certainly throws light on the constraints and contexts within which women political representatives operate.

After this, by analyzing women's experiences, views and opinions, this chapter will provide insight into the kinds of resistance and difficulties women face within and outside parliament when practicing representation, in particular the substantive representation of women.

### ***Who Women Politicians Claim to Represent***

It remains a puzzle in Pakistani politics who it is that quota women represent, as they are not elected: is it their parties, women's organizations, constituents, their families, or someone else? In practice, the directly elected MNAs (both male and female) do represent a constituency in the parliament, and are directly elected by constituents. On the other hand, women MNAs on reserve seats are indirectly elected by parties which are dominated by men, and voters have no role in their selection. Therefore, in what way we should expect that women MNAs will take on the additional burden of representing women or find themselves accountable to women as well? As Phillips argues 'in the absence of mechanisms to establish accountability, the equation of more women with more adequate representation of women's interests look suspiciously undemocratic' (1995: 71).

Although data from proceedings show that women MNAs more frequently put women's issues on legislative agendas, the data also tell us that some 'quota women' intervene more often than others among them. Therefore, I believed that it may be useful to consider who these quota and elected women perceive they are representing in the parliament. Do they accept any responsibility for representing women in parliament, thereby establishing a link between descriptive and substantive representation? Most importantly, who do they see themselves as accountable to? Do directly elected and quota women share different perceptions? Below I provide the responses to these issues of quota women MNAs, followed by those of directly elected MNAs.

It is important to explain that by asking who they represent, I do not refer to representation linked to the political party that women MNAs belonged to or represent

in the parliament. As we know that all MNAs both men and women represent a party and are equally representative of their parties, regardless of whether they are directly elected or selected for a reserve seat. However, these issues are explored in the context where the electoral method does not make quota women accountable to women/constituents, but where parties and party men control quota women's entry into the parliament. So in such cases, do they still feel themselves accountable to women, or as Childs (2004:82) questions: '[do] they perceive representing women a responsibility (positive) or obligation (negative)'?

I asked women MNAs, while being in a women reserve seat but who are still nominated by parties, who they think they represent in the parliament. The initial conception of women's representation, as perceived by quota women, reveals great loyalty and accountability to the party. Ten out of fifteen quota women respondents reported that they represent the party, two quota MNAs consider themselves the representative of constituency (both men and women) - despite the fact they don't represent any constituency - and only 3 MNAs said that as reserve seat nominee, they consider themselves as a representative of the party as well as women.

A higher number of quota women said they represent and are accountable to parties. As one reported:

'I don't think that every MNA works on raising women's issues, and neither do I. If I am elected in reserve seat, it never means it's my responsibility to represent women. I am only accountable to my party. My performance relates to the party. I work very hard for the specific tasks the party gives to

me. For instance, right now I have a portfolio of information and communication, so I feel myself responsible for tackling information related issues rather than women issues' (Quota MNA, 1).

When asked what representing the party means to MNAs, they told me that the loyalty and feeling of belonging to a party means that they want to promote their party's agenda and support their party's standpoint rather than going against it, regardless of the fact that this might not be in the interest of women.

Three of the quota women MNAs admitted their lack of interest in women's issues. They seem instead to concentrate more on the fields they possess greater experience and interest in. They stated that:

'I have not concentrated on women's issues very much. I have a business and corporate background; banking, foreign policy, environment are my major interests' (Quota MNA, 7).

'I am more interested in taking up issues related to the war on terror, the restoration of judiciary and constitutional amendments. I don't want to touch all women's issues, as I don't have time. I am very much specific in terms of my goals' (Quota MNA, 8).

The above comments highlight that not all women MNAs are interested in women's issues, showing divergent interests among women. However, the issues they highlight above such as the war on terror and restoration of judiciary are generally not seen as

women's issues. Smooth (2011) highlights that she finds it difficult to differentiate women's interests while interviewing US women legislators. As she notes, when legislators began to speak about women's issues, which were often coded as children's issues or at times, as race issues.

Two of them also informed me that they had lost interest in taking legislative initiatives on women's issues within parliament when they learned that women's issues are considered soft, less important and are raised for publicity purposes. They also reported that taking soft issues de-legitimize them as politicians, whenever they tried to raise women's issues rather labelled as 'feminists'. She said:

'Now I am very conscious, I don't want to be labelled as feminist - as people perceive them as westernized women, promoting western agendas always talking on women's issues. Others think these women have nothing else to do, and only talk on less important issues. I am sorry to say this, but the majority of men in parliament don't consider women's issues as important' (Quota MNA, 5).

Their comments show uncomfortable feelings attached to being labelled as 'feminist', as well as the criticism that quota women face for raising women's issues, which greatly discourages them from representing women's concerns. There is no doubt about how hard it might be for women to raise issues such as rape, violence or harassment, especially when one considers the involvement of influential and powerful political men, whose patronage women require, especially in circumstances when women's own position within parties is very weak and political men enjoy power over them.



Interestingly, two of the women reported that they represent both men and women constituents, although they are not directly elected. Such a statement actually came from the quota women whose male family members have been contesting elections from their constituency for many years and who still maintain close contact with voters. They said:

‘I represent constituents [men and women]. I am frequently contacted by them and try to resolve their issues as often as I can’ (Quota MNA, 4).

‘I take the responsibility of representing constituents first’ (Quota MNA, 6).

Only three of the quota women I interviewed accepted responsibility for representing women, saying that:

‘As I am in a women reserve seat, I feel greatly responsible for representing women. Whenever there is any bill or legislation in favour of women, I always support it’ (Quota MNA, 10).

There are women respondents who argue that they represent both women and their party, and their apparent desire to represent women derives from their collective struggle for women’s rights. As one confirmed:

‘I think I represent the party as well as women. Being a part of the feminist movement, I feel myself greatly responsible for women’s issues’ (Quota MNA, 17).

Regarding the responses of directly elected MNAs, interestingly, all of the five directly elected women MNAs I interviewed said that they feel a huge responsibility to represent women. In the words of one directly elected MNA:

‘Women’s issues are the responsibility of all parliamentarians, but I feel myself more responsible to women than women MNAs on reserve seats, because women have voted for me and I am accountable to them’ (Directly elected MNA, 12).

A similar view was expressed by another directly elected MNA:

‘As a woman and an elected representative I feel a great responsibility towards women voters as well as male voters’ (Directly elected MNA, 13).

But what are more interesting are the statements of some respondents, such as the directly elected women who in interviews claimed greater responsibility to other women because as they said, ‘women have voted for them’. In practice, they remained far behind quota women in terms of initiating legislation in general and women’s related legislation in particular within parliament, which is evident in data from both terms of the NA. For example, in the previous term (2002-7), among the list of 25 (out of 74) of the most active women parliamentarians of 12<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, only two women legislators were directly elected on general seats (Mirza and Wagha 2009: 92).

More recently, A Free and Fair Election Network while evaluating data of current (13<sup>th</sup>) National Assembly, indicate that elected women on general seats only contributed 8% of the interventions made by all female parliamentarians between March 2010 and March 2011 (Legislative Watch, 2011a) . Indeed, when I thoroughly examined 115 private members bills (PMBs) introduced by women, as explained in previous chapter, it became clear that among 26 women who have moved 70% of the Private Members Bills, only two are directly elected women.

However, one may argue that there are a lower number of them - only 16 of directly elected MNAs as compare to 60 quota women in the parliament - so their rate of contribution must be lower than quota MNAs. Even then, where 40% (24 out of 60) of quota MNAs appear to be more active, only 13% (2 out of 16) of the directly elected MNAs played a part in advancing 115 private members bills during the last three years (see chapter six).

It may not be difficult to answer why a sizeable number of especially quota women mostly see themselves more loyal to their party despite being selected on women reserve seats. Party loyalty is supreme among women MNAs not just because of ideology, but perhaps because being elected indirectly allows parties' control over women reserve seats by making women subordinate to party/party men, rather than more accountable to the represented. As one MNA explains:

‘We are here because of the parties. I may not have been in the nominees, if party head had not put me at the top of the women reserve seats list’  
(Quota MNA, 1).

Their comments show the significance of the party, as well as male politicians' patronage for women. How women are made subordinate to party men can better be understood from the discussion on processes of recruitment in parties, and women's perceptions of these processes, where some of the quota women - and especially those who do not enjoy political family background - find themselves vulnerable (see chapter five). Others also reported that performance in parliament played a key role in their re-selection, keeping them active as a means to show their potential to parties. Discussions held on recruitment also suggest that there were no set criteria for selection; nepotism and favouritism were high where privileged women in terms of male party leaders' patronage became priorities for selection. In addition, corrupt practices such as the buying and selling of women reserve seats were also reported by MNAs.

All these make women politicians very weak, and show the need for a high level of loyalty to parties in the case that they want to be in political parties and parliament. For directly elected women, especially those contesting elections from family constituencies where men have previously been present, it makes no difference if they fail to participate in legislative business of the parliament. They are directly elected by people, and parties give them tickets for direct election on the basis of their potential to contest and win elections, not on the basis of how much they have performed within parliament.

Below I examine women's responses regarding the women's caucus formed in 2008, which includes women MNAs from different parties, showing that women politicians

seem less supportive to the idea of a cross-party coalition among women, as they seem highly divided by party lines.

### ***Women United***

The NA official proceedings reports reveal numerous examples of women's cross-party joint legislative initiatives and support for bills presented by members of other parties. Some of the bills were jointly introduced by women MNAs from different parties during previous and current terms. Researchers have claimed that the

‘Formation of cross party caucus on women's issues is one of the most successful strategies that has worked in many world parliaments to push women's agendas in legislation and public policy’ (Bari 2010: 26).

However, in interviews women provide less favourable comments, widely criticizing the women's caucus formed in 2008 as a result of the efforts made by the Speaker of the NA, Fehmida Mirza, that involves all 76 women MNAs as well as 17 female senators from the Upper House/Senate. The first and one of the major objectives of the caucus states that the women's caucus will work

‘to attain a broad-based consensus among all women members of the Parliament on an agreed agenda for women development, empowerment and emancipation, enabling them to *work beyond and above party lines* [emphasis added] for the uplift of the women of Pakistan’ (WPC, 2009)

Reflecting upon the cross party coalition and women caucus experiences, participants that were actually involved describe an enormous feeling of despair. According to them, the forum has not delivered much in terms of pushing women-related legislative agendas. Several of them reported that they had stopped attending caucus's meetings; a MNA stated:

'I never go to caucus meetings, it's all drama of Ms. Speaker of the NA. Caucus, for what? You are in government, you don't need to sit and recommend that it should be done. You are in parliament and you need to forcibly implement all women-related agendas' (Quota MNA, 2).

According to another respondent, the caucus expects something that may be difficult to achieve, such as cross-party support among women. She said:

'The women parliamentarians' caucus doesn't do anything ... it is the forum where women get together and curb government and others. Now, I don't attend its meetings. Actually the forum expects something impractical, we obviously cannot go out of the party lines' (Quota MNA, 6).

These comments clearly highlight the fact that women are divided by parties and going beyond party lines seems highly challenging.

During interviews many of the participants, on the one hand, showed that women have been working collectively behind the scenes and, on the other hand, illustrated acute

tension between party loyalty and supporting women's issues in the parliament. One MNA recalls an event and provides this interesting example:

‘Women MNAs of religious parties asked us [women MNAs of liberal parties] to raise domestic violence issue in the parliament. And when we took a stand, women from religious parties obviously failed to say even a single word in the support of the bill amendment, because male members of religious parties took very strong stand against the initiative within the parliament’ (Quota MNA 10).

The above example suggests that even though women are working across party lines behind the scenes, they cannot go along with women's issues in case men from their party decide to oppose them, as also found elsewhere (see Childs, 2004). The loyalty to their party is always important, and sometimes this means going against one's own beliefs and defending the party's beliefs, values and approaches. A directly elected woman said that:

‘Many times I find party obedience difficult, but even then I make myself prepared to defend party's stand, especially when in public. I also make speeches and defend the arguments in favour of my party within parliament. I take it as part of doing politics in Pakistan’ (Directly elected MNA 13).

Talking about caucus, one of the MNA puts it more simply, arguing that:

‘We really don’t need the women’s caucus especially when parties agree to support women’s led initiatives. We need to understand that parties decide at their own level, where the women members’ role is minimal’ (Quota MNA, 5).

In her comments she clearly identifies women’s marginalized role within parties and their limited influence on decision making. As some Pakistani scholars suggests,

‘most parties do not have regular elections and leaders usually nominate members to party positions. .... nor is much known about the role and status of the few women in the central executive committees of the party’ (Zaidi and Zia, Forthcoming: 8).

However, I was keen to ask women MNAs if they could share any example of going against a party decision, while supporting women’s issues in the parliament. Only one quota MNA shared the following:

‘My female colleague MNA from another party [a religious party] asked me to support her bill related to women’s issues. She handed over to me the copy of the bill. I read her bill and didn’t find anything contradictory or objectionable. When her bill was presented, I supported her bill without informing party leadership and asking their consent. Later, I learned many of my party colleagues complained against me to the party chairperson’ (Quota MNA, 3).



Regarding the caucus, one MNA appeared to be rather angry and seemed more satisfied while working independently outside the caucus, reporting that:

‘I don’t attend caucus meetings, as I don’t have time. I am doing more work for women outside. I told caucus members that we are legislators and our prime work is to do legislation, if 50 women bring 50 pieces of legislation in a parliament that is chaired by a woman speaker, we can bring great change’ (Quota MNA, 7).

When asked if the caucus has endured in any way, only one MNA said that ‘within the forum women feel united, good and talk of women’s issues’ (Quota MNA, 8). Another said that:

‘The main work of the caucus is skills development; we are receiving several lectures on different topics’ (Directly elected MNA, 13).

Nevertheless, no one would like to talk over and above their party lines. One MNA felt strongly about this, saying that:

‘At the end of the day we don’t stand united. I desire at least for common women’s issues and we should stand above the party line’ (Quota MNA, 17).

More problematic was to observe silence among women on some of the most important issues within parliament to occur during current term. I thought it might be interesting

to explore women MNA's silence on some of those important issues which highly contributed to perception that women MNAs have failed to support other women.

Women MNAs' silence brought extensive criticism especially when male Senator Mr. Zehri and MNA Mr. Bijarani were appointed as cabinet members. Below I provide this case study exploring factors behind women's silence on some of those gender and human rights issues, which directly challenge powerful-tribal-feudal male elite of the parliament.

### ***Showing Contested Politics***

In 2010, the government appointed two male politicians, Senator Mr. Zehri and MNA Mr. Bijarani, as Cabinet members. Mr. Zehri the renowned politician who made a statement on the floor of the House while defending the burying alive of five women in Baluchistan Province in the name of Bloch tribal culture and family honour (also discussed chapter one and three). The incident, in which five women including three teenage girls were brutally shot and buried alive, and media reports suggest some of them were still alive at the time of burying. They were killed, as three of the young women wanted to marry men of their own choice and two other women were perhaps their mothers, who lost their lives while trying to save the girls.

The killing of women was widely highlighted by local and national media and condemned by women rights groups and organizations. Apart from the media, the issue of burying alive of five women was also raised by the female senator Ms. Yasmeen Shah in the Upper House/Senate. Her move of taking up this issue in the Senate was not appreciated by some male senators. Even Mr. Jamali went on to say to Ms. Shah: 'go to

our society and see for yourself what the situation is like there, and then come back to raise such questions in the house'. Another male Senator, Mr. Zehri, also made statement that 'these are centuries-old traditions, and I will continue to defend them, only those who indulge in immoral acts should be afraid' (Dawn, 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2008; The Telegraph, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008; Yasin, 2008; Bari and Bari, 2008; Siddiqa, 2008). It may also be noted that Yasmeen Shah, the woman Senator who raised the issue, belongs to a different party (PMLQ) who are in opposition, while these two male notables are from the ruling party (PPPP).

According to Ms. Yasmeen Shah:

'Alleged that the government was not taking action against the culprits because of the involvement, as she said, of a PPPP [ruling party] provincial minister in the incident. She demanded of the government to take strict action against the tribal elders involved in what she termed as a serious crime against humanity' (Aziz, K. 2008).

Later, as Ms. Yasmeen Shah claimed:

'In the Senate Committee on Human Rights that her fellow Senator Mir Israrullah Zehri had warned her that a death squad comprising 12 tribesmen had been dispatched to assassinate her for raising the issue of burial of five women in Baluchistan' (Jang, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2008).

The second incident concerned when another MNA Bijarani, who was also appointed as Cabinet Member by the State Government, held Jirga in his constituency and passed a judgement giving five poor village girls (aged three to six years old) for marriage to a family to compensate for a murder in Jacobabad District. In August 2007, the conduct of this Jirga was reported by the newspapers and the Supreme Court of Pakistan took immediate action against MNA Mr. Bijarani and ordered for the arrest of all those conducted Jirga including PPP MNA Mr. Bijarani (Kamran, M. 2007). Many were arrested and later, and Mr. Bijarani also appeared in court with his case still under review.

Despite significant outrage around the statement made by male Senator Zehri and Mr. Bijarani, the government promoted and appointed both of them as cabinet members, offering the portfolio of Post Office Services and Education. Their appointments as cabinet members were also condemned by human and women rights groups in Pakistan, and The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan showed serious concern over the incident and following statements made by male senators. A joint statement was also issued by feminist groups and organizations such as the Joint Action Committee (JAC), Women Action Forum (WAF), Insani Haqooq Ittehad (IHI) and Violence Against Women Watch Group. These and other women's rights groups demanded disqualification of Senator Zehri. As the media reported:

‘Criticising the appointment of Senator Israrullah Zehri and Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani as federal ministers, the WAF said it was shocked, horrified and outraged at the appointment of Senator Mir Israrullah Zehri as federal minister’ (Yasin, 2008; see also Bari and Bari, 2008).

However, the House witnessed silence among women on their appointments, greatly contributing to the perception that women fail to represent women. On women's silence and the lack of resistance by women on their appointments, a prominent Pakistani writer Cowasjee, A. in his article in daily Dawn, wrote:

‘Now, how do the women [parliamentarians] who sit in the cabinet with these two men, Zehri and Bijarani, react? They are silent. How can they bring themselves, in all good conscience, to even sit in the same room as these men’ (Cowasjee, 2008).

I now move on to analyse the statements made by women MNAs on their silence in House. Here, I show that some of the women's and human rights issues which challenge feudal and powerful class of society are difficult to achieve even for political women, especially when state government itself plays a complicated role to protect and promote those who defend crime against women. As Aisha Siddiqa, an independent strategic and political Pakistani analyst, highlights in her article in *Dawn*.

‘The underlying sentiment is similar ... gender rights or human rights are not possible because [they] challenge the power of those at the top who will then choose to treat issues of rights as cursory and one to be ignored and brushed aside as minor problems, even non-existent matters. ... Burying men or women alive or killing them for honour is not about religion or tribal morality, but, about the ability of some individuals to exercise naked power’ (Siddiqa A. 2008).

When I asked women MNAs about Mr. Zehri's statement that 'burying alive is cultural practice' and his continued defence of such practices, their responses reveal some interesting points of view. The majority of women MNAs were critical and rather angry about the statement made by a male senator Zehri; as one MNA from an opposition party said:

'He is a mad and sick feudal lord, he said burying women alive, is a part of our culture. The culture of his tribal area is not the culture of the whole of Pakistan. I strongly oppose these tribal practices against women' (Quota MNA, 5).

An MNA from the same ruling party as Mr. Zehri explains how she reacted:

'In the parliament he [Mr. Zehri] came to see me for some work and I didn't talk to him. I was literally burning about his statement. So I behaved very rudely to him, and didn't talk to him much. Later, I saw he met two of our colleagues and left. They all met him very nicely. I went to my colleagues, who greeted him and said you are shameless people, meeting with such a person who supports murdering women' (Quota MNA, 1).

Almost all of the women MNAs were worried about Mr. Zehri's attitude. However, regarding the silence in the House on their appointments as cabinet members, woman MNA from opposition party reported that:

‘Although we are a coalition government partner, we raised the issue of his appointment with the ruling party. The ruling party said Senator Zehri is a very good person, we don’t want to lose him. So it was to no avail’ (Quota MNA, 8)

Another MNA said:

‘I personally talked to my party colleagues regarding his appointment. As I am very junior in my party, therefore, I am expected to consult with seniors. My senior colleagues said we really don’t need to talk about these issues with ruling party. Then, I told my seniors to at least bring this issue to the notice of our party leadership and ask them what we think about his appointment’ (Quota MNA, 6).

One more MNA also repeated a similar sentiment:

‘When I raised a similar issue in the National Assembly, I was told by many including our party men to avoid raising such issues. Because those who support honour crime [such as Mr. Zehri] enjoy great hold and influence within party, so the other members avoid supporting women in raising such issues’ (Directly elected MNA, 13).

The directly elected MNAs from the ruling party also found these appointments difficult, as one explained:

‘Their appointment as cabinet members is purely a party’s decision. It’s a coalition government; we are to take all people along with us. We obviously cannot fight with party on these issues, after all we are party representatives they are our colleagues’ (Directly elected MNA, 11).

The above statements reveal that women reacted and protested behind the scenes. But, when asked, despite anger and reaction behind the scenes, why they did not raise the issue of male members’ appointments as cabinet members within parliament; women MNAs provide following comments, which show their powerlessness and lack of party support for gender issues. One said:

‘He shouldn’t be cabinet member, but unfortunately we [women MNAs] cannot do much about it. We are helpless to raise these issues with parties. Parties have already made alliances, so they cannot go against each other. These feudal minded parliamentarians have full support of the parties and their leadership. Women MNAs know that these male feudal lords will get back into the Assembly and be re-elected in the next elections. Parties and government will again embrace them. We [Quota women] are obviously not sure about our own political future, relying on the party and party leaders, women are at male leaders’ mercy, and we can be left out if we challenge male status quo’ (Quota MNA, 19).

The above comments are important, as they show that raising certain issues is problematic for MNAs. Women MNAs have very little influence over parties’ decisions, with the directly elected MNAs also avoiding taking on such issues. It is



important to understand that challenging colleagues from one's own party or MNAs from other coalition parties may not be very easy for women. Under the coalition, in which parties heavily rely on each other's support, shows little support to women. So, women MNAs have to not only protect their own parties' interests, but also take care of coalition parties and their members, while greatly compromising on women's interests and often on what they themselves believe in.

The parties secure their own governments, interests and status within parliament by endorsing male politicians who enjoy greater potential of winning elections, especially those from constituencies where the vote bank is more confined to political families or individuals rather than parties. I have explained elsewhere as well that parties rely on feudal lords such as Zehri and Bijarani, who have their own tribal/feudal constituencies. As one MNA rightly pointed out:

‘These constituencies are their states, where even government teachers and police officers cannot stay in post without their consent’. (Quota MNA, 20)

A highly active quota MNA from the opposition also criticized government for not protecting women, saying:

‘I was very vocal on the Baluchistan killings of women. I still feel this government just pays lip service to women, because it's a feudal government. We will not be successful in getting rid of these influential ministers. We have lot of ministers who have violated human and women's

rights. The problem is the lack of sensitivity of the government towards women's issues' (Quota MNA, 7).

Some also thought it was difficult to take up women's issues when a party is in government. As one MNA from the ruling party living in an area where honour killings often occur explained:

'When our party was in opposition, I used to raise many women's issues including several rape cases. Honestly speaking, now it is difficult to take up women's issues while being in government. My present status does not allow me to talk on women's issues, which defame our own party government' (Quota MNA, 2).

The above example also reveals that women issues are buried when parties make alliances and form a coalition government, or prioritise other important agendas. None of the women from the opposition, ruling, or coalition government are able to act in the interests of women when the government and political party leadership themselves work against women's interests. The politics of patronage within parties is also important, as it renders it difficult for women to take any stand against the male elites within parties.

Below I explain some of the other barriers shared by women MNAs to women's political participation in general and substantive representation in particular.

### ***Feudal and Masculinist Parliament***

One of the major factors concerning the resistance of substantive change for women that emerged from the interview data concerns the feudal and elitist nature of the parliament and political parties. As a large number of women politicians have highlighted, the current parliament is not just dominated by men, but the *privileged men* of particular feudal, industrial, religious and elite class of society, ‘for whom it is difficult to accept women in leadership roles’ (Quota MNA, 6). As one stated: ‘they are always more comfortable in brotherly, fatherly and elderly roles to women’ (Directly elected MNA, 13).

Many MNAs mentioned that it is a particular mindset of male politicians, whereby they only accept women as subordinates, while relating this to privileged male politicians’ ways of living in rural settings. One MNA summarised this by saying:

‘They only see women as farmers, bonded labourers, workers, carers ... fully controlled by men, but women are not seen as competent politicians’ (Directly elected MNA, 14).

A woman party worker claimed that:

‘They [male politicians] don’t feel comfortable seeing ‘women party workers’ in the positions of power, they only accept women of their own class, from families like Ms. Bhutto’s, in the parliament’ (Quota MNA, 4).

Another middle class party worker presented the view that since decades ago, women are present within political parties only to provide support services for the election of the male candidates, but not as rulers. She stated:

‘they only want women to vote for them and we as party workers are just for collecting large number of women for their public meetings’ (Quota MNA, 15).

Women repeatedly complained that male parliamentarians see themselves as superior, and this supremacy comes from their elitist background, political experience and greater potential to invest in parliamentary politics than women. Women MNAs confirmed the existence of masculine norms which suggest that the ideal politician is a male, dominant, directly elected, confident, powerful, public speaker, arrogant, from the upper class and, importantly, someone who can invest money in parliamentary politics. Women lack most of these characteristics. Therefore, as one said:

‘When women first joined parliament, male members kept asking, “what efforts have women made to reach in the parliament? How much money have women spent to be a MNA?” Male members always used to say, you [quota women] were sitting at home and brought here without any effort, so you have no place in parliament’ (Quota MNA, 3).

The view that women do not possess any political experience, so do not deserve parliamentary politics, was further echoed by the majority of quota women MNAs who talked about how male politicians reacted when all MNAs, including women, were offered development funds by the government:

‘Male members have been questioning why women are given funds, when they don’t have any constituency’ (Quota MNA, 5).

Some women in reserve seats also reported that they were later approached and persuaded by male politicians to use development funds in their constituencies. A directly elected MNA told a rather different story regarding development funds. She shows how quota MNAs are stigmatized, stating in her interview:

‘Development funds given to the quota women are just being wasted. The quota women to appease party leaders invest funds in the projects in male leaders’ constituencies rather than in projects for women. Indeed many of them haven’t been able to submit projects in time, so quota women’s funds elapse’ (Directly elected MNA, 12)

Women define one of the reasons for male resistance within parliament as the growing insecurity among male politicians, due to the active role played by women in parliamentary business, which negates male MNAs’ claims that women lack political skills and experience. One MNA in particular mentioned this, saying:

‘Women MNAs’ attendance and participation is much higher than male parliamentarians, and that makes them uncomfortable. We [women MNAs] have proved them wrong when they say that we are incapable of doing politics’ (Quota MNA, 16).

The analyses of parliament proceedings in the previous chapter also suggest that women are very active members and their contribution is higher than their fellow male politicians, but still ineffective in the sense of substantive representation as outcome.

Some of the respondents claimed that male members resisted because women parliamentarians are now often raising a large number of sensitive, human and women rights issues such as honour crime, rape, jirgas and the blasphemy law that previously went largely ignored by male dominated assemblies. As one MNA said:

‘This is the parliament largely dominated by rural – tribal elites, who support burying women alive in the name of culture. Now they fear that such norms and practices will be strongly challenged in the parliament’  
(Directly elected MNA, 13).

She makes the above comments in the context of the honour killing of five women in the Baluchistan Province, the incident discussed previously. Her claim that such sensitive issues are now being raised in the parliament seems strong, as it appears from the analyses of PMBs in previous chapter that women MNAs have submitted bills addressing domestic violence, acid crimes against women and workplace harassment. So even though women do not publicly contest the appointment of certain men, they are still acting in other ways to encourage change.

Women also spoke of their learning ways to deal with men’s resistance within parliament. One MNA recalls how women MNAs managed resistance from male parliamentarians of religious parties at the time of the introduction of a new bill - The

Prevention of Harassment at the Workplace Act 2010. The bill sought to create a safe working environment for women, free of harassment, abuse and intimidation, with a view towards the fulfilment of their rights to work with dignity. The directly elected MNA said that:

‘During the debate on the bill, the male members, particularly from religious parties, argued that this kind of law can be misused by women against any man. They also said that ... Islam does not allow such provisions’ (Directly elected MNA, 13).

Soon, women realised that the male MNAs from religious parties use religion against women. The women who possess a strong background in religious education came forward, while defending the bill. One of these women explained to me that:

‘I possess a very strong religious education and also have been researching Quranic verses. Taking advantage of this, during debate on the bill, I used several Quranic verses in favour of it. We [women] very strongly argued with religious parties. Now, whenever Mullahs (religious leaders) speak in the parliament against women by using Quran and religion, all other women MNAs come to me to answer Mullahs in their own terms, means, defending women rights through Quranic verses’ (Directly elected MNA, 13).

The use of the Quranic verses in support of women’s human rights is very old in the history of women’s activism in Pakistan. Such a strategy was widely used by women

and human rights activists and promoters during various times (Shaheed and Warraich, 1998, Ali S, 2000).

Some women MNAs also shared the view that the attitude of the parliament towards women was changing. During one interview, an MNA said that:

‘The first tenure [2002-07] was very tough, we were not even allowed to talk. Throughout first tenure we fought to be heard in the parliament, this tenure was comparatively better’ (Quota MNA, 3).

Women parliamentarians also contended that male parliamentarians’ support for any of the initiatives taken by women is extremely crucial, especially at the time when bills are passed, as a majority of two-thirds is required to get a bill passed, and women constitute only 22% of the parliament. Therefore, even women acting together cannot make change happen without male MNAs’ support. As one MNA said:

‘We actually initiate, work in background, complete the task, and present legislation related to women in the parliament, but none of our bills can ever be passed without male members’ support’ (Quota MNA, 3).

Women agree that many of the issues related to women were solved because of male support. They feel more confident when their initiatives/legislative proposals are supported by party leadership, and when male parliamentarians also support women.



### *Women's Lower Status*

Most women think that women's lower status and the large gender disparity in society greatly contribute to the widely held perception that women are not suitable or competent for political or public office. Interestingly, this was not just reported by women on reserve seats; directly elected women from influential political families talked in a similar manner. However it is important to remember that these are the women who have broken through the proverbial barriers.

One directly elected MNA noted that:

‘Initially we encountered a huge doubt from all quarters including from my family [an Uncle] asking how woman can contest election. There was no concept or trend of women contesting election in our area. Local people were also worried and asked my father [a former MNA] “how can a lady be a part of the election ... how she will manage constituents’ problems?” It was very difficult for us to convince local people’ (Directly elected MNA, 11).

Directly elected women MNAs pointed out that voters believe that male politicians can better help them in dealing with certain issues than women politicians, in particular, settling community conflicts, police and court matters. As one MNA articulated:

‘The public, vote for powerful people and political families especially those having some influence over bureaucracy, government and police administration. For constituents, especially in rural setting, where

community conflict over land, water distribution and power relation are immense, it does matter who is going to help them when communities are in conflict and sometime even put into jails. People think we [women] obviously cannot leave our houses at night, to go with them to police stations (Directly elected MNA, 13).

I also asked directly elected respondents how, in practice, they manage constituents' problems. Indeed all of the directly elected MNAs reported that they have fully functional offices in their constituencies, managed by their family male members, who support them in solving constituents' problems. As one puts it:

‘Mostly in my absence, when I visit Islamabad for attending an Assembly session, my husband and sons spend significant time with constituents’ (Directly elected MNA, 11).

Interestingly similar were the comments made by some quota women, who as such have no constituency but are frequently contacted by local people. One of them said ‘my son put significant time to respond to constituents in my absence’ (Quota MNA, 1). Another reported, ‘indeed my brother manages my local office full time’ (Quota MNA, 4).

This reflects the fact that gender stereotyping exists to a certain degree in society with a division of labour between men and women where politics is still men's business, preventing women being part of the political playing field without the support of male family members. As Bari identifies, the public require frequent interaction with politicians, but segregation does not allow women to freely interact with the general

public (2009: 78). This also applies to women constituents, as observed in the previous chapter, where women constituents are not able to go and see male representatives. However, women MNAs contended that they are accessed by male constituents and frequently interact with them.

Two of the quota MNAs believe that in Pakistan the politics is seen and practised more violently and that is difficult for women to perform in such a manner. In the words of one of them:

‘Parties and political men show their power and strength through staging deadly demonstrations, blocking roads, chanting slogans, party workers forcefully shutting down markets and shops during party strikes - which in many cases result in the killings of innocent people and destruction of the peace. All of these acts seem very difficult for women’ (Quota MNA, 5).

### ***Lack of Resources***

Many of the women MNAs I spoke to regarding the resources necessary for pursuing a parliamentary career in Pakistan spoke about the lack of resources as major constraint for women’s overall political participation, including resources related to means of finance, time, political experience, and social networks.

However, lack of income and financial resources are typically problematic for women party workers, who despite their experience of grassroots political mobilization and interest in being directly elected are unable to stand for general elections. This is because the financial resources required in elections cannot be considered modest in

Pakistan. Therefore, the majority of quota women informed me during the interviews that they cannot contest election, as one explained:

‘It is not possible for me to go for direct elections, my financial resources are limited. For elections, you need at least Rs 40-80 million that I don’t have’ (Quota MNA, 1).

It suggests that without quotas it may be difficult to bring a large number of women in the parliament, while taking into account the fact that significant resources are required to come through direct elections.

The lack of financial resources required for direct elections is not merely a problem for middle class party workers. Most of the directly elected women reported that their candidature was supported by their families, otherwise coming through direct elections would have been difficult for them. Only one directly elected MNA said that she did not pay for her election campaign. All expenses were borne by the political party. But when I asked how the party generates resources, she further clarified that:

‘Our party receives financial support from well off individuals, who share the party’s vision and provide voluntary funds for the party’s activities. Such funds are used in election campaigns and running party’s affairs. In our party, none of the MNA pays for election campaigns. Everything is done by the party’ (Directly elected MNA, 14).

Her comments prove that if parties provide resources, women can still stand for direct election, but the above case is the only example in Pakistan of a party bearing all election-related expenses. Some of the respondents seem hopeful for their participation in direct elections and argue that:

‘Women could still compete in elections, if the Election Commission of Pakistan strengthened and ensured implementation of the rules’ (Quota MNA, 19).

Another MNA puts it more clearly, stating that:

‘Everyone knows that parliamentary candidates spend an excessive amount of money on elections, far more than limit prescribed in rules [PKR 50,000], there has hardly been disqualification of candidates on this basis by Election Commission’ (Quota MNA, 6).

Almost all women in the interviews demanded an independent and strong election commission that would ensure compliance of election rules also found by Bari (2009).

Women MNAs show great concerns over the non-compliance of rules by the ECP.

According to one woman MNA:

‘When important rules like the limit to spend on elections are ignored, this brings serious complications and threats to the democratic system, and what we are experiencing now reflects this difficult reality. When politicians spend a significant amount of money in elections, after joining the

parliament, they try to regain such money through illegal means. They make use of their political power in order to accumulate wealth. And this cycle continues, increasing corruption and malpractices' (Quota MNA, 20).

Above, she makes two different points: politicians ignore limits on election expenditures, and they use their political power to recover money they spent on elections. Her claims seem strong as according to the declaration of assets by MNAs of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, the average values of assets of a Member of the National Assembly was just below RS 27 million in 2002-03 which has increased to almost RS 81 million in 2008-09. This is a threefold increase in the assets declared by members of the National Assembly belonging to the 12<sup>th</sup> NA (2002-07) and the 13<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan from 2002-3 to 2008-09 (PILDAT, 2010a). Although many think that this value is grossly under-reported, even this value is far above the average means. So this seems to provide evidence that political power is used to make money.

Women MNAs also reported a lack of political skills in terms of campaigning for elections, drafting bills, communication skills, and facing mass gatherings of voters, which resulted in a lack of confidence in them. A number of MNAs also mentioned that they had lack of confidence initially in believing that they can serve as parliamentarians. However, because of the influence and encouragement of people around them and the experienced they gained, they now feel more confident, as discussed more fully in previous chapter in the section on gains at the personal level.

Time was also among the most important factors impacting on women being engaged in several activities. The majority of them reported the immense pressure of dedicating significant time to party meetings and other activities. Indeed directly elected women said they find it difficult to manage Assembly, party and constituency activities. Directly elected women reported a heavy workload which included frequent travelling between the capital city, Islamabad, and their constituency. As one said:

‘Sometimes I feel exhausted, moving between Islamabad and home, when I reach home, I find many constituents waiting and looking for me to deal with their issues. The family, friends and relatives always complaining that I don’t give them time. Honestly speaking, I hardly even find any time for myself’ (Directly elected MNA, 12).

Women widely complained against parties’ unfriendly family environment, mentioning delays and late meetings, with unplanned tasks and activities given to women and the non-serious attitude of male parliamentarians:

‘It is mandatory for all MNAs of our party to attend the party secretariat at least twice a week to meet constituents and manage office tasks, and two days are to be spent in the constituency office as well. There is no guarantee that after going home you will not receive any call, task, or assignment from the party ... all of these things make life terrible. See, next week, the party has arranged a grand show in a rural district, Bhit shah, far from here [place, where MNA lives]. After attending office I have to leave for Bhit shah. I go

two days before the event to make sure all goes well' (Directly elected MNA, 14).

One young woman parliamentarian with young children finds it difficult to manage both family and public life. She informed me that initially her participation in politics was resisted by her mother due to the demanding nature of political career:

'My mother was angry with me and my father's decision of joining parliament. She was arguing that my kids are too young and that they will be ignored, if I spend more time outside in politics' (Quota MNA, 6).

She also shared an immense feeling of guilt that she was neglecting the needs of her children saying:

'I will never forgive myself, for ignoring the kids – especially when my kids need me and don't find me around' (Quota MNA, 6).

In her view, her greater political empowerment does not lend itself to positive outcomes, precisely because the core issue of the dual burden of women's lives is not addressed.

Many respondents reported that due to lack of time and social constraints, they find it difficult to develop social networking and have frequent contact with male politicians. Women give great weight to social networks, especially with those male party leaders that may be helpful in securing parliamentary seat. As one explains:



‘I think social networking is extremely important for a political career especially with those who have greater influence within parties. But I hardly find time to do anything else other than what I am doing now. Part of the problem is, I cannot go out for dinners, evening parties, neither I am so pretty, nor fashionable, as such have no relationship or time to meet with other colleagues’ (Quota MNA, 2).

Networking is also a problem in terms of gender, and it is often impossible for women to engage male politicians in such informal ways. However, I found women in obvious tension. As one said:

‘If we don’t go to attend party meetings, we would be considered ‘less committed to the party cause’, and if we frequently keep going out, it may affect our personal lives’ (Quota MNA, 17).

### ***Fear of Violence***

During discussions, when I asked women MNAs about the issues they have not yet been able to raise in the parliament so far, and the reasons for this, the majority of them reported the fear of different forms of violence which constrains them in taking up certain issues, particularly those related to human and women rights. The deteriorating security environment in the country greatly contributes to the risk faced by politicians at the personal and political level, as also observed in the case of Afghanistan (see Larson, 2012).

During discussions, three of my respondents reported that they wanted to present a bill amending Pakistan's blasphemy law, but declaring such interests continued to be dangerous. They do not want to put their own and their families' lives at risk by raising issues which are more prone to inciting violence. As one said:

'I think the blasphemy law of Pakistan really needs to be changed, it is being misused by several for victimizing innocent people. But I alone cannot take this issue at this moment, it might be extremely dangerous' (Quota MNA, 8).

Another said:

'Even simply talking on an issue like the blasphemy law can take your life. It is not just facing resistance within parliament, there might be greater risk waiting for you outside the parliament' (Quota MNA, 5).

One MNA shared her story about how she was threatened when it was remarked that she had committed blasphemy. She discussed this and recalled a situation she had recently experienced prior to our interview, saying:

'I participated in a TV talk show, where there were two other guests along with me and the host of the program. We were discussing the immunity given to President Zardari by the Constitution of Pakistan in relation to his Swiss bank account cases against him. I made an argument that under Article 248 of the constitution of Pakistan, the President enjoys immunity

therefore cases against him cannot be opened. I further said that every time a president is asked to appear in the court, he cannot function or run the affairs of the state. The guest responded and said that if Caliph Hazrat Umer Farooq can be called by and appeared in court, why can President Zardari not be? I simply and politely responded that in Hazrat Umer's period there was no constitution, though now we have a constitution that provides presidential immunity.

As it was a live program, after few minutes of my statement the host of the program started receiving several emails stating that I had uttered blasphemies against Hazrat Umer. This was seconded by a journalist sitting beside me during the show. The issue was really exaggerated. Anyway, I finished the show and went back home and slept. Soon after, I received calls from my neighbours, saying please put on the TV and see what's being aired. The TV channel were repeatedly showing my statement and calling many Mullahs [religious leaders] to get their fatwas [testimonies] on my statement. In few hours they almost declared me a prostitute and a woman eligible to kill. And that continued for weeks'.

She further added:

'No human right organization came forward. I then received a series of phone calls saying that they will kill me ... you have committed blasphemy and two persons also went to court against me. They even didn't forgive my

relatives. My relatives were receiving mobile messages saying that I'll be killed, ... [that] I am prostitute' (Quota MNA, 1).

When I enquired about how she dealt with the situation, the participant said that she was continuously under pressure, until she offered her apology and an explanation in the media that she had never said such things or she never meant it. She then took a very low profile, moving away from media interviews, public activities, and meetings with people. Her case clearly show that how media can affect politicians including women.

Two other women MNAs show serious concern over growing violence in the country, also as a major threat to women's substantive change in Pakistan. A reserve seat MNA said the following:

'When I continuously protested in the National Assembly against the blowing up of a girls' schools in Sawat Valley by Talibans and urged the Government to take action, I started receiving messages on my mobile, saying that I'll face the consequences if continue raising this issue. I finally end up feeling frustration and despair' (Quota MNA, 4).

The directly elected women, who were mostly from a rural, feudal and political family background, shared the following while explaining that women from elite families are also not free from threats and how violence is used against women politicians:

'Because of the high security threat, during my election campaign I avoided the inclusion of my photograph in any posters or publicity material. I did

not arrange a big public gathering, and instead went for a door to door campaign, while mobilizing people in my area. Extremists and militants in our areas destroyed all the posters containing women politicians' photos' (Directly elected MNA, 11).

Another MNA belonging to the urban elite reported similar events:

'... the very next day after my photo appeared in papers with details saying that I was one of the contestants from very posh area of Pakistan's largest city which is known for its ethnic violence, a delegation from the business community came to meet and insisted that I avoid the direct elections, as they were concerned about growing security threats to politicians. But I was determined to come through direct elections, so I didn't listen to anything they said' (Directly elected MNA, 14).

One MNA from the KPK province, who thinks how global context that the drone attacks by US in tribal areas of Pakistan have greatly fuelled anti-government and American sentiments in the country increasing violence, said:

'Being a part of this government that is backing the US war on terror I feel highly threatened. As a human rights defender and political activist, previously I used to visit mosques and even prostitutes' homes and their areas, and I never ever felt threatened before. But now, I am scared due to increasing threats to politicians' (Quota MNA, 10).

Discussions with women also suggest that their confidence in the State's ability to provide justice and hold criminals accountable continued to diminish and that they found themselves to be more vulnerable. Women mentioned several incidences in their areas showing extreme actions by ordinary Pakistanis, depicted high levels of violence in society, and highlighted the State's poor role in protecting its own people. As one said:

‘A mob in my district savagely beat two teenage brothers until they died and then hung their dead bodies from a nearby pole. The whole incident was seen by police officers, no one saved the boys, indeed some police officers participated in violence ... so you see how vulnerable we all are’ (Directly elected MNA, 12).

All participants reported that they feared violence against them. Although women agreed that male politicians face similar risks and threats to their lives, they felt that women are more vulnerable, as women politicians are comparatively weak and poor in terms of resources so they can hardly afford personal security arrangements. This was repeatedly mentioned by middle class quota women MNAs:

‘Personal security guards might be very expensive to afford’ (Quota MNA, 8).

Some also reported that the security provided by the government is inadequate and unreliable. As one recalls:

‘Don’t you remember what happened to Governor Salman Taseer, who was killed by his own security guard provided by the government for raising the blasphemy law issue in public?’ (Quota MNA, 2).

Some women from the opposition also complained that the government itself was involved in various acts of violating their privacy. She said:

‘I complained to the Speaker’s office about the tapping of my phone by government agencies, but to no avail’ (Quota MNA, 19).

### ***Final Thoughts***

This chapter has focused on the constraints and difficulties limiting women’s political and substantive representation within and outside parliament, highlighting the difficult, threatening and highly complex contexts in which women operate. I also discussed some important issues related to quota women MNAs in the context of Pakistan, considering whether they accept any responsibility to represent women, especially when they are not elected by women as well as highlighting the experiences of cross-party coalition.

Although quota women lack any constituency or powerbase and as such show no accountability to women or constituents, they still actively contribute to raising and addressing women’s concerns and issues within parliament (see chapter six). Nevertheless, quota women’s initial conception of political representation reveals greater loyalty and commitment to parties. The hierarchical, masculine and feudal nature of the political parties and parliament, as well as the electoral processes for

reserve seats, make women politicians show great loyalty and patronage to parties. Women's loyalty to parties can be socially and politically rewarding in terms of achieving the patronage of male party leaders.

The findings related to women parliamentarians' caucus confirms that women MNAs have worked together and collectively on parliamentary agendas behind the scenes. They accept that the caucus has contributed towards an improvement of their political skills, by providing various trainings. But they seem less supportive of the women's caucus when it comes to the idea of cross-party coalition, resulting in an enormous feeling of despair among women, often as a result of difficulties in going against party lines. So party identity is crucial for women MNAs, and challenging parties, even for women's issues, seems difficult.

I also discussed in detail the case of women's silence in the House on the appointment of Mr. Zehri and Mr. Bijarani as Cabinet members, highlighting factors significantly contributing to women's suppression and subordination. I have argued that although not all, some women's and human rights are difficult to obtain, especially those challenging the powerful feudal male elite of the Pakistani parliament. Political men possess much more power in parties, parliament and society than women, as shown here and in previous chapters. Moreover, powerful feudal and tribal politicians enjoy the full support of their political parties' leaders and the state. Women felt demoralized by the fact that government itself own powerful people, who directly or indirectly defend crimes against women. A complicated situation presents itself, whereby women need men's support to get their bills passed and find it difficult to go against their parties and political men and to take up important issues which may challenge the male elite.



Women's experiences also suggest that parties and the coalition government can be both a support for substantive change, and a threat. They can be a support when women jointly take initiatives related to women's legislation and gain the support of members from other coalition parties. The threat occurs when they find it difficult to raise women's issues, particularly challenging the influential feudal hold on the parties, as women greatly lose support from their own parties and coalition parties when raising these issues.

Towards the end of this chapter, I highlight the major constraints shared by women MNAs in interviews, which ranged from the feudalistic nature of the parliament to women's lower status and their lack of resources as well as their fear of violence. All of these significantly contribute to women's subordination and suppression of their actions, which includes their capacity for resistance, while also blocking the women's way to political participation and substantive change. Furthermore, women argue that parliament is not only dominated by men but 'privileged men' of elite background, making political field and substantive change more challenging for women.

Respondents' experiences specifically highlight how a lack of resources can prevent women from seeking political and public office. Nevertheless, the growing fear of violence among women MNAs and failure of the state to provide security to women and human rights promoters are serious concerns raised by women MNAs.

This chapter strongly highlights the importance of the context affecting substantive change. Several examples shared by women MNAs highlight the complicated nature of

the relationship between women's descriptive and substantive representation, which is greatly dependent upon several factors. On the one hand, quotas generate mandates for women (see chapter six), while on the other hand they make them subordinate to those – often political men - who seem less supportive of women's mandates. In order to secure a mandate women require the support of male and other party members; however, parties make alliances as a result of which women's interests are lost in the wider political interests of feudal/tribal/political men.

Having now reached the end of the analytical part of the thesis, the next chapter moves on to provide conclusions based on the findings of this research study.

## Chapter Eight

### Conclusions - Towards a Contested Politics of Presence

This thesis has explored Pakistani women parliamentarians' experiences of practising representation in order to find out the extent to which women's formal representation is translated into substantive change. By analyzing the effects of quotas in relation to women's descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation, this study highlights the fact that it is absolutely crucial to take context into account when considering whether women can act for women. Several factors affecting women's representation have been observed in this case study, including the activity of women legislators, how women leaders are selected and enter into parliamentary politics, the strong hold of semi-feudal and tribal elites over political processes and institutions, the weak and un-democratic political system, women's subordinated status and indebtedness to their parties, party men and families, various external pressures that exist and the volatile political situation.

I have adapted Anne Phillips's *Politics of Presence* and also considered arguments extended recently by scholars on quotas and representation which claim that representation depends on various factors that facilitate or/and obstruct women's representation (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008; Lovenduski, 2005; Childs, 2004, 2004a). Therefore, evaluating representation requires going beyond numbers and the concept of critical mass, and instead examining the wider effects of quotas in any particular context (Franceschet et al., 2012). Following these arguments, this thesis has dealt with the following research questions: (1) Is there any relationship between women's descriptive and substantive representation in the National Assembly in

Pakistan? (2) What are the effects of quotas on women's descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation? (3) What factors affect substantive change for women?

The major contribution this thesis claims to make is the innovative approach taken in analyzing women's political representation from different aspects. This not only reveals the substantive change women have achieved within parliament in terms of engendering policy processes and outcome, but also looks at the changes outside parliament that women leaders think they are making in the lives of other women. I have also explored the changing public perceptions of women in politics, and the engagement of women constituents in political processes from women leaders' perspectives. At the same time, I have not only concentrated on what women leaders have achieved so far, but also on what women think they have not been able to achieve, and the reasons for this. By combining parliamentary proceedings and in-depth interviews, I not only create knowledge and provide an analysis of individual women MNAs' experiences, but also of the wider impact of quotas. In doing so, I make nuanced claims about the effects of quotas in relation to women's descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation.

The effects of quotas on women's descriptive representation are explored in chapter five, through a consideration of how women enter into parliament, what routes they have taken to do so and how they perceive themselves as politicians. In doing this, on the one hand I have revealed that women's political recruitment processes are often non-transparent, highly male dominant and based on corruption, nepotism and favouritism. On the other hand, I show that quota women view themselves as second class politicians, whereas in contrast, directly elected women claim to have confidence and status within and outside parliament. These differences in the perceptions held by quota

and directly elected women are mainly because of the different electoral process they have taken to parliamentary politics. Quota women are labelled, stigmatized and considered to be less respected, as also noted by Childs and Krook (2012) and Franceschet and Piscopo (2008). In particular, I have argued that descriptive representation is important, but the way in which women become representatives makes a difference to how effective they can be.

The effects of quotas with regard to women's substantive and symbolic representation and a discussion of the some factors affecting change are presented in chapter 6 in two parts: *substantive change within parliament* and *outside parliament*.

Women's substantive representation within parliament is evaluated as *process*, whereby women parliamentarians are seen contributing to various legislative interventions of the parliament; and also as *outcome*, dealing with the engendering of legislation as well as policy outcome. The findings reveal that women legislators are highly active members of the parliament, with their contribution to most legislative interventions (Question, Calling Attention Notices, Bills, Resolution and others) being much higher than that of their male fellows. Women legislators prioritise social and women's issues more often than their male colleagues, and women's concerns are primarily raised by women politicians.

Despite women's active role, the gains in terms of concrete policy outcomes such as legislation related to women's issues remained extremely low in the last three years (2008-11). This suggests that women's efforts remained highly ineffective, as a large number of the bills introduced by women legislators did not go through parliament. This

also means that substantive representation has only occurred with regard to *processes*, as substantial activity on behalf of women leaders within parliament is demonstrated, but not as policy *outcome*. As shown, of the 61 bills passed by the House, only 3 (5%) of these are directly relevant to women's issues. Of the three, indeed, one bill was initially rejected by the Senate and only two bills successfully went through both houses (the Senate and the National Assembly).

Consequently, in chapter six, I established that some quota women MNAs are more active than others, and that they contribute substantially to women's share in legislation. It also appears from the data that for some of the women interviewed, it is important to act in parliament to secure re-selection, by showing their legislative capabilities and potential to party leaders. However, the reasons why some women put more women's related issues on political agendas than others are still unclear.

The effects of quotas reveal that women make increased gains in their political life outside parliament in terms of symbolic and substantive representation. Women acknowledge that they are accessed more frequently by women constituents, as well as noting a change in the public perception of them as well as the role model effect. The most important impact of the increased number of women in politics was observed in terms of greater interaction between female victims of violence, abuse and rape and women legislators. In such cases, the gender of the representative clearly does matter. Women MNAs argue that women victims of violence feel less comfortable approaching a male representative, with whom sharing experiences of rape and violence may be difficult for women constituents. Substantive representation in terms of bringing change in the lives of other women was also forthcoming, as seen by the elaboration of women-

focused development projects and various other initiatives taken by women MNAs as well as extended personal support to women constituents.

The research question relating to the factors affecting change is specifically dealt with in chapter seven. In addition, this chapter also responds to some of the gaps identified in the literature review on Pakistani women legislators related to who these quota women perceive themselves as representing in the parliament. It also examines the issues that the women have not successfully been able to raise so far and the reasons for this.

However, some gender and human rights issues may be highly problematic to tackle, especially those which challenge the interests of powerful male party elites. It is also shown that women operate in highly a gendered political context, which is dominated by powerful feudal and tribal elites (mainly men), who also dominate political parties. The powerful male elite have their own interests in defending crimes committed against women as shown in chapter three. Thus, women's representation in a parliament such as Pakistan's which is dominated by feudal and tribal powerful elites may not be as strong as in a parliament which has adapted more democratic norms and processes. Apart from this, women also spoke about several other issues, including resistance within parliament, their fear of violence, their lower status in society, the violent nature of Pakistan's politics and the lack of resources which affects substantive change for women.

Below, I provide a summary of the findings which respond to the three research questions mentioned in chapter two (literature review), which are also answered in turn

and in detail in chapters five, six and seven. I first summarize the effect of quotas with regard to descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation. I then highlight that some gender and human rights are difficult to achieve, especially those challenging the powerful feudal and tribal elite. After this, I draw attention to various factors which positively and negatively affect change. Before moving on to consider avenues for future research, I discuss the theoretical and analytical contribution in detail that this study has made.

### ***The Effects of Descriptive Representation***

Gender quotas no doubt increase the proportion of women's representation in the parliament, as seen by the number of women present. Results revealed that women have succeeded in making use of three available routes to parliament: the support of family and kinship networks, membership in and long term association with political parties and finally through personal relationships with party leaders. Although family and kinship networks continue to play an important role, women think several other factors like family political background, party connections, social networks, relationships with party leadership, professional background, and crucially, performance in the House also remained important determining factors in their selection.

All of the five major political parties which the women under study belong to have adapted their own ways of recruiting women to reserve seats. Results reveal that the process of recruitment within parties proved to be highly male dominated, non-transparent, ad-hoc and a result of the system of patrons, as well as being also based on nepotism, favouritism and corrupt practices.



It was observed that all women in reserve seats were chosen by the party leadership, which is dominated by a few top party leaders who are mainly men. In some parties women party workers were not even able to nominate themselves as a parliamentary candidate. This indicated a strong need for a mechanism for monitoring political parties by the government to make recruitment to reserve seats as transparent as possible.

Results also reveal that by and large, political space created for women is taken up by women from financial elites, urban areas, the educated class and entrenched political families. Rural, poor, uneducated women are still kept out of the corridors of power, although differences among women in Pakistani society are immense (as discussed in chapter three). However, my findings provide empirical evidence that although women leaders do not mirror their female constituents in terms of social characteristics, they still show commitment to act for other women (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2012).

The findings suggest that women reserve seats came as an opportunity for parties, and were also used by party leaders to accommodate some influential political families in the parliament. Reserve seats were offered as substitute to general seats when parties could not manage to provide general seat tickets to male members of political families, so the women of those families were instead offered reserve seats to enable a family member to play a part in politics. Offering reserve seats to women from entrenched political families is simply an extension of family dynasty politics that have dominated Pakistani politics for a long time, as shown in chapter three.

In the case of directly elected women, the condition imposed that candidates must be university graduates played an important role in increasing their numbers in parliament.

Many senior male politicians were not able to enter into political competition, due to this degree condition. Therefore, their family women were brought forward to get hold of party seats, especially when there was no other suitable male member available in the family, or other male family members showed no interest in politics. In such cases, women were selected as a second choice, but were still seen as a reliable option for political families to keep political power concentrated within families. In 2008 the current (13<sup>th</sup>) National Assembly removed the condition of having a graduate degree. The next election, due in 2013, will further reveal the impact of such measures on women's entry into parliament through direct election.

The indirect entry of quota women to reserve seats generates negative labels that shake women's confidence in themselves as legitimate politicians. It also adds to women's lower status and makes them subordinate to party leadership. The labelling and stigmatization of quota women is more common than for directly elected women, and quota women are treated like second class politicians. In contrast, directly elected political women seem more confident and claim greater respect within and outside parliament. This has led to division among quota and non quota women and highlights the importance of how women are selected or entered into parliament, showing that it does make a difference and may affect women politicians.

Despite these status differences among quota and non quota women MNAs, the majority of them do not support the indirect entry of women into politics, but they also seem less prepared for direct elections, mainly due to financial resource constraints. The much less powerful and less respected women may find it difficult to promote gender and human rights and challenge established hierarchies, as real power mainly resides in the

hands of patriarchal, feudal and tribal men. Descriptive representation is achieved rapidly, without much change in existing gender and power structure.

### ***The Effects of Substantive Representation within Parliament***

As my findings in chapter six illustrate, *substantive representation as process* occurs more frequently in the carrying out of the legislative business of the parliament. In this area of political work, women are found to be actively involved in introducing various legislative interventions such as Resolutions, Motions, Private Members Bills, Questions and others.

Available parliamentary proceedings data (2008-11) suggest that women MNAs contribute more significantly and more frequently to legislative interventions than male MNAs. For example, women all together instigated 70% of the PMBs, 50% of the parliamentary questions, 91% of the resolutions, 56% of the motions proposed, as well as showing greater participation in debates during last three years. The rate of women's legislative contribution is also much higher than that of male politicians. Indeed, if we closely observe legislative input by gender, we find that comparatively, women MNAs are more engaged in taking legislative initiatives at the individual level than male MNAs. For instance in three years (2008-11) 60 PMBs were put forward by women MNAs individually, whereas male members only introduced 12 bills. A similar observation was made for other interventions such as resolution calling, attention notices and others.

The above findings allow us to reject other assertions regarding Pakistani women politicians as novices, and that their inexperience means that may not be able perform

well in the parliament. As argued by Franceschet (et al., 2012:14) ‘these findings support the need for quotas to overcome barriers to women’s access, at the same time they negate charges that quotas produce second-rate parliamentarians’ However, it cannot be said with certainty whether women’s active role in the parliament will also mitigate the negative labels or stigmatization surrounding quota women.

The most important gains in terms of substantive representation were observed in the in-depth analyses of 115 PMBs. The Private Members’ Bills presented clearly demonstrate the distinct legislative priorities of male and female legislators. Women MNAs more often prioritize social and women’s issues, and draw the attention of the parliament more often to women’s concerns.

During three parliamentary years (2008-11), women altogether proposed 19 legislative pieces directly relevant to women’s issues, as compared to 3 bills introduced by male MNAs addressing women’s concerns. Interesting in this regard was to observe that an almost equal contribution is made by male and female MNAs in other policy areas which are mainly known as male domains such as finance, governance, legislative and constitutional issues. Indeed, some policy areas such as minority population issues, environment, language and refugees taken up by women MNAs were never touched on by male politicians.

The above findings highlight that women’s interests vary, as many of the issues raised by women actually linked with other groups interests such as minorities, children and refugees which were equally important to women as well. Nevertheless, the theoretical argument that male-dominated Assemblies will not adequately represent women, and

so the presence of women will affect political agendas, alter priorities and processes seems strengthened in this case. Equally important is Phillips's (1995) assertion that a few will feel more responsible than others to represent women. The findings also inform us that some women contribute disproportionately more than other women MNAs, which is especially the case with quota women who are more often stigmatized.

The analysis relating to *substantive representation as outcome* as related to women-related legislation passed by the Assembly suggests only very limited gains. Almost 78% of the bills proposed were either rejected, lapsed or were left pending, and so did not make it through the parliament. This can be seen as showing the poor performance of the parliament, which also has an effect on women's substantive representation; women's performance cannot be seen in isolation.

Of the 274 bills introduced by parliamentarians, the House only passed 61 bills, of which only 3 (5%) were directly relevant to women's issues. Two of these were introduced by the minister in charge of the related portfolio and one PMB was proposed by a female MNA. Evidence also suggests that despite being passed by the NA, of the three women-related pieces of legislation, one PMB got stuck in the Upper House / Senate due to male members' resistance and is still pending. As I mentioned earlier, the substantive success of legislation/bills in Pakistan depends on successfully being passed through both Houses (National Assembly and Senate), as well as receiving the President's assent. Overall, the findings indicate that the efforts made by women MNAs in introducing 70% of the PMBs, of which many (42%) were relevant to women and social issues, seem ineffective in achieving a substantive outcome.

Despite such a poor response of parliament to their efforts in terms of outcomes, quota women in particular still seem more active in proposing legislative intervention than directly elected members of the parliament. The responses given by some of the quota women particularly highlight that their performance within parliament does impact on their reselection. So it becomes necessary for *some* quota women to act within parliament more often than others to show their potential as competent politicians in order to re-secure entry into the parliament.

What is important to note is that performing well in the parliament is not necessary for all women MNAs, including quota women. Many less active women MNAs who perform poorly in the parliament told me in interviews that they were still hopeful of re-securing parliamentary seats in the next election. Their confidence stemmed from the fact that they enjoy better connections with and support of male party leaders, who ultimately control and decide *which women* should be in the parliament on reserve seats, while providing patronage to the women of their choice. The quota women are controlled by powerful party men, who can reward or punish women MNAs, and they also control women's entry into parliament.

In the light of the above facts, we can say that quotas have certainly affected women's *substantive representation as process*, under which women are seen to be very active, while engendering the legislative agendas. Women have not only contributed more than male MNAs, but also it is clear that women's concerns are primarily presented by women MNAs in the parliament. However, quotas have little effect on substantive representation as outcome; the parliament has not responded positively to many of the bills including women-related legislation submitted by MNAs. It suggests that the

relationship between women's descriptive and substantive representation in the Pakistan Parliament is complex, as it depends on many factors such as the overall working of the parliament, the support of the party and its male members for women-led agendas, the role played by women champions, and parliamentarians' motivation and interest to take lead on the women's issues.

### ***The Effects of Substantive Change outside Parliament***

The National Assembly should not be regarded as the only place where women take action. Many of the direct effects of the work of women in position as a result of quotas, in terms of substantive and symbolic representation, may also exist outside parliament. Women MNAs also place great emphasis on the need to perform outside parliament for women/constituents, as discussed in chapter six.

Support for the theoretical claims of the effects of women as role models was forthcoming in this case, as several women MNAs reported that many other women see them as a good example, and that their presence in politics impacts on other women in many positive ways. The directly elected and quota women, particularly those from feudal and tribal families, report a strong impact of their participation on their communities. Communities feel motivated, while allowing their women, who usually observe greater purdah (seclusion) in rural settings, to seek educational and professional opportunities by following the example set by women from well-known feudal and political families. This is partly due to the strong hold and influence of these feudal and political families on rural life.

The most significant gains in terms of substantive representation outside parliament are achieved in the form of the support extended by women MNAs to women victims of violence. Women MNAs claim that the interaction between women victims of violence and their local political representative encourages women sufferers to take up their issues on the one hand. On the other hand, this helps women MNAs who use their personal experiences of interacting with women victims to make legislation more women friendly and responsive, as well as encouraging them to raise such women's issues within parliament. Women also claim to advocate for violence against women issues in a different manner to male politicians. One female MNA said that in cases of violence against women, previously male politicians had just given statements to newspapers, while she visits sites herself, meets victims, mobilizes resources for victims' support and raises related issues in different forums. Although Phillips (1995: 63) considers symbolic representation to be the least interesting form of representation, my findings suggest that symbolic representation in term of women leaders' engagement with women constituents may also influence women's substantive representation within and outside parliament. This is because women leaders bring those issues in the parliament as a result of their interaction with women constituents, and this also leads them to design projects and initiate policies directly affecting women's lives.

Some also pointed that they especially targeted women constituents and motivated them to participate in political processes, women who have been ignored by male representatives for long. Women politicians highlight that the gender of the representative does have an impact, as more women are now accessing them and participating in political processes as well as in their public gatherings. Others highlight



a change in public perceptions regarding the political sphere as more women are now found in politics which also normalizes women's presence in male domains (Lovenduski, 2005). Significant numbers of respondents highlight gains at personal, community and constituency levels which included greater respect, status, communication and political skills.

In turning to substantive representation outside parliament in terms of the efforts made by women leaders to change the lives of other women, it was observed that women initiate women-focused development projects which directly affecting women constituents, such as skills development centres for rural women, water, drainage, sanitation and girls' education projects. These women leaders also provide patronage to female constituents at a personal level.

All of these examples suggest that women politicians also play an important role outside parliament. They are engaged in various activities which influence the symbolic and substantive representation of women. Quota women are equally active in their role outside parliament as directly elected women, but such positive effects are less often produced.

### ***Representing Interests and Challenging the Powerful***

Also of concern are the issues and interests that women have failed to represent and the reasons for this. An example of this failure can be seen with the honour killing of women in Baluchistan Province and women MNAs' subsequent silence on the appointment of male politicians (Zehri and Bijarani) as cabinet members - a case study that I explored in detail in chapter seven. Women show their anger on male members' appointment as

cabinet members, as well as helplessness in raising such issues in the parliament. Women MNAs responses specifically address two important issues. The first relates to women's subordinated status within parties and parliament, partly arising from the indirect method of election that makes them dependent to party men. The second relates to parties' and state governments' support for male politicians who defend honour crime against women.

However, this complicated situation needs to be understood in the broader political context. As explained in chapter three, Pakistani politics is dominated by a coalition government, in which parties rely on each others' support. Women have to be conscious of raising issues which may harm their coalition partners (i.e. members of other political parties). Women informed me that under the coalition government, parties cannot act against each other or risk isolating themselves from influential male party members just to advocate for women's issues. Most tribal/feudal party men are seen as a great strength for parties, due to their potential for winning general elections. Therefore, many parties rely on these powerful men who also enjoy great hold, respect and influence within parties. The women are not only defending their own parties' interests, but also protecting coalition parties' members.

Therefore, women feel hesitant in taking the lead on gender and human rights issues which challenge powerful party men, as challenging them benefits neither women MNAs nor their parties. As a result of raising or resisting such issues, women MNAs may be punished or denied re-entry into parliament, which is especially the case for quota women who rely heavily on the patronage of male leadership. Parties may also not want to risk losing the support of their coalition partners in order to maintain the

security of their own place in the government. Thus, women's interests, especially those challenging powerful feudal and tribal elites, are ignored and submerged in the wider interests of political parties and male leaders. Therefore, such interests are also ignored by the majority of women MNAs, who themselves cannot succeed without the support of their male counterparts. However, it cannot be ignored that women politicians have a stake in preserving the existing norms and practices in order to survive in a semi-feudal and tribal parliament such as Pakistan's. The other important fact is that it is only women leaders which tend to take the lead on women's issues. However, the effectiveness of women's action is mainly dependant on male members' and parties' support.

Thus, the issue of the representation of interests cannot be considered as a straightforward matter of presence. The fear of brutal violence, the lack of state government and political party support for women and the effects of the control of feudal powerful elite over political processes significantly hinder the achievement of positive representation of certain groups' interests in the parliament.

Results also reveal that not all women are interested in putting women's issues on parliamentary agendas, for several reasons, including the lack of interest in women's issues, not wanting to be labelled as feminist or someone working on western agendas or less important issues, the lack of support by male colleagues and most importantly, because of their greater loyalty to parties and party men than women constituents. A sizeable number of quota women in particular consider themselves more loyal and accountable to their parties than any other stakeholder; party loyalty is more prevalent

among quota women MNAs, as the electoral system entails political parties' control over women reserve seats.

The importance of recognizing the effects of the party, party identity, coalition government, a weak democratic system and the subordinated status of women is supported empirically here, as well as showing that the relationship between women's descriptive and substantive representation is complicated and contingent (Chaney et al. 2007: 13).

### ***Factors Affecting Change for Women in the Pakistani Context***

Results show that various factors may affect change directly and indirectly. Taken together, these factors suggest that women's presence is necessary, but much more important is to consider the conditions arising from threatening environments, including the conflicting and unsafe situations in which women politicians operate where they can experience fear and subordination and their ability to act for women may be seriously hampered.

One of the most important determining factors that positively contributed towards women's substantive representation as process in the parliament stems from the actions taken by some women champions, particularly quota women. Evidence suggests that not all act, with a few acting significantly more often than others. This highlights the importance of not just the number of women present in the parliament, but who these women are as well as what these women do, as some make a disproportionately higher number of legislative interventions.

Evidence from Pakistan also suggests that these active women MNAs are neither well connected with independent women's movement, nor have been personally active in politics over a long time. In fact the MNA who introduced the highest number of PMBs was offered a women reserve seat because of her husband who was affiliated with the party but could not himself win general elections. She was therefore motivated by the party leadership to join parliamentary politics, as she informed me in an interview. It should also be remembered that some quota women MNAs accepted that their performance within parliament does matter in securing reselection for a parliamentary seat. Parties also need women to be active because the legislative input made by women ultimately strengthens the party position and contributions to the parliament, especially when male MNAs show comparatively less interest in legislation. It also highlights the importance of the methods by which women MNAs are selected and demonstrates that several factors affect their political career.

The feudalistic and masculine nature of the parliament and political parties maintains the harsh treatment experienced by women MNAs. Women rightly pointed out that political institutions are not just dominated by men, but that these men are privileged and of a particular class, who feel more comfortable seeing women as carers, mothers, sisters or bonded labourers, and not as potential political leaders. Women MNAs complained the treatment they received and resistance they faced from male members of the parliament. Women also claimed that male members are afraid of women's active role, and also that the efforts made by them to bring important issues such as honour crime, rape and Jirgas which directly challenge powerful feudal men in parliament make male members feel uncomfortable. Women also informed me of the gradually changing attitude of the parliament and acknowledged male members as potential actors for

promoting women's issues. As one said, none of women's related bills can be passed by the House, if women do not manage to gain male members' votes.

It can be said that male members can be both a great support as well as a resistant force to substantive change for women. However more important is the support of the party, which can also impact on the decision taken by male members to either accept or reject any women's-related change. More complicated is that parties are influenced by, dominated by and reliant on religious, feudal and tribal chiefs, many of whom perpetuate and defend violence against women in the name of honour (see chapter three). So the bills which particularly address violence in the private domain are simply vetoed as observed in the case of the Domestic Violence Bill 2009, which when presented by female MNA a religious party male leader said, 'now we can't even slap our wives any more! What kind of system do you want?' (Saeed, 2012).

At the same time, results highlight the importance of women's collective action, strategies and ways of coping with resistance within parliament, for example women reported collaborative work by women MNAs to defend women's human rights. Women MNAs by using a Islamic/Quranic framework that support women's rights, responded to the resistance of religious parties' male leaders, who were deliberately using religion to undermine women's human rights. However women leaders demonstrated significant despair regarding the cross-party women's caucus initiative, seeming disappointed by the minimal role of women's caucus and explaining that going beyond party lines is challenging. Some of them did feel, though, that the caucus has been helpful in enhancing political skills by providing some professional training.

A lack of resources in terms of skills, time and social capital and contacts affects political women in many ways. Almost all of the women politicians reported being overburdened, and in addition directly elected women reported more frequently feeling the pressure of managing constituents, parliament and family duties. Women claim that despite a change in their personal status after acquiring political power, the basic problem of the dual role traditionally performed by women especially in domestic spheres is not altered. However the role played by women leaders' male relatives in terms of managing constituency work is also highly important, especially in a segregated society like Pakistan. Segregation greatly affects women politicians, as holding a role in public office requires frequent interaction (Bari, 2009). Under such circumstances, family male members' support to a great extent helps women leaders in performing their representative role for constituents.

Growing extremism, brutal violence and lack of tolerance prevalent in Pakistani society are some of the most important factors affecting women's desire to push for women's and human rights issues in the parliament. The extreme acts of violence perpetuated against politicians, including the women and public, make them conscious of raising issues which may subject them to more violence, for example the controversial blasphemy law. It is important to mention women's lack of confidence in the government's ability to protect its own people, including women. Women also lack resources, so they are often unable to hire personal security or guards, and they show a lack of faith in the public security provided by the government. There was strong concern among women that raising women's or minority issues within and outside parliament may increase violence against them. Many of the women MNAs reported that they want to work on Pakistan's blasphemy law, but raising this issue can mean

inviting death. Such findings suggest that before making a clear link between descriptive and substantive representation it is important to consider whether the political context is really *safe* for women to act for other women (Childs, 2004a).

### ***Analytical and Methodological Contributions and Considerations***

This thesis makes several contributions. In particular, it makes an empirical contribution to various research fields connected with global quota debate, the politics of presence and women's substantive representation in Pakistan. This thesis applies the conception of representation, developed and extended by western feminist scholars in a less democratic and highly threatening political context to verify claims of a link between women's descriptive and substantive representation that had intuitive appeal. The analyses of women leaders acting and representing in real situations would provide more theoretically informed empirical research.

This thesis started from the premise that that representation occurs in many forms, so it is important to evaluate women's input from different aspects while keeping in view the prevailing political context. This leads the thesis to take novel approach in examining change and the effects of quotas from different aspects of women's representation (descriptive, substantive and symbolic), not only concentrating on what has been achieved in substantive sense, but also on what women think they have not been able to achieve and why. Not only are the successes of quota women important, but highlighting their failures is equally relevant to identify ways to overcome the barriers to substantive change for women and quota effectiveness. In doing so, this thesis makes a contribution to both empirical and theoretical knowledge, furthering understanding



around the analysis and measurement of the effects of gender quotas on various facets of representation.

Importantly, this thesis analytically separates substantive representation into *process* and *outcome*. This emphasizes the need to include in our conceptualization both women's contribution in the everyday legislative business of the parliament, as well as the outcomes achieved in the form of women specific legislation or policy. As shown in this thesis for instance, if I only concentrate on concrete policy outcomes I will see that they are very few and then conclude that substantive representation has no avail in Pakistani parliament. However, by doing this, I would miss the important contribution women leaders are making in terms of engendering the legislative business of the parliament. It is crucial to highlight women's active role in terms of introducing legislative agendas (including women-specific initiatives), which they do far more often than male parliamentarians. The findings of this research highlight the fact that despite women's active role in advancing gender issues, the parliament has approved few policy outcomes relevant to women. As a result of these findings, it is argued that both women's substantive representation *as process* and *as outcome* deserve to be considered in order to make specific claims (Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008; Childs 2006).

By focusing on the effects of quotas outside parliament, this thesis shows that representation occurs in many forms, and that quotas may not only challenge existing gender dynamics within parliament, but also outside parliament. It was particularly important to establish in the case of Pakistan whether women's presence is making a contribution towards change for other women/constituents. Given that quota women are not elected by women/constituents, they are less empowered and more stigmatized.

Such a conceptualization allows us to embark on a detailed exploration of the effects of quotas in broader socio-political contexts.

In terms of methodological consideration, scholars argued that the way in which representation is conceptualized affects the research methods and indicators (Franceschet et al., 2012: 233). Evidence from my fieldwork suggests that many of the techniques (such as writing letters for interview, sending emails and/or making phone calls and snowball sampling) useful in developed democracies seemed to be of little use in Pakistan due to social norms and security concerns.

With regard to proceedings data, I found that the principle institution (National Assembly) was also reluctant to provide access to the proceedings data that is supposed to be made fully available to the public. Even independent watchdog civil society organizations find it difficult to access or monitor parliamentary and legislative activity of the House. Some important information such as gender disaggregated voting figures or the attendance record of individual MNAs was also unavailable. This means that constituents can never learn how much time their representatives have spent on legislation and which types of legislation/policies they voted for. Such findings tell us about the kind of democracy that exists in Pakistan and how powerful institutes actually work in practice.

My findings also provide insights into how I, as an outsider and female researcher, experienced parliament as an institution that offers selective and limited inclusion to women visitors/researchers. From the sitting arrangement, to offering a place for prayer to women visitors, the parliament building seems a place constructed for men and

privileged women MNAs, which ignores ordinary women's needs. I also concluded that parliament houses, galleries, room position, offices, walls, and attached lodges can also be sights of analyses, telling us much about elites' lives (Puwar, 2011).

All of the evidence mentioned above indicates that representative political institutions in Pakistan in reality are undemocratic, non-transparent and highly difficult to access, being almost out of the reach of ordinary Pakistanis. I personally would have never been able to undertake this research project without personal influential contacts who occupy important positions in government, civil society organizations, media and politics. This clearly shows that Pakistani political elites can be only accessed through other influential actors and sectors of society.

### ***Filling Gaps, Limitations and Future Research***

This study provides a comprehensive picture of the effects of quotas on descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation in the Pakistani context. To some extent this thesis fills gaps in knowledge, as discussed in chapter two. This thesis has corroborated the findings of other researchers who have found that quota women are more active than directly elected legislators, but little was learned about the reasons why some quota women act more often than others. This study has identified that performance within parliament matters for some of the quota women in order to re-secure parliamentary seat. Therefore, it becomes important for them to show their potential and capabilities to the parties and the male leadership. However, it is still unclear why some women choose to take a strong pro-women line or why they also introduce significant numbers of bills related to women issues. It is clear that future research may be able to look into this more deeply.

Evidence from this study also highlights that indirect entry of women into political spheres creates negative labels and leads to quota women's status of second class politicians, although analyses of proceedings data reveal that quota women are very active, somewhat negating the charges that quotas provide second rate politicians. However this raises the need to explore how the quota system can be further adapted to mitigate the effects of negative labelling on women representatives.

The overwhelming majority of women defined representation as 'the relationship between representative and represented', which became more nuanced when women's activity outside the parliament was explained in chapter six. As findings suggest that several of the women interviewed are making efforts in order to establish relationships with local people/women/constituents in many ways.

This study has limitations too, especially claims made by women MNAs related to substantive and symbolic representation outside parliament. Women enter political life during wider societal changes, so we cannot be sure that particular change shared by women is solely resulted due to their presence in politics. This is only one step in direction of documenting effects of quotas, there is a need for further studies. Future scholars may focus on a different aspect and examine change from the perspectives of the represented, instead of the representative.

Future research may also assess the impact of more recent changes in policy on women's political representation, such as the removal of the graduate degree condition for parliamentary candidates. It has been observed that during the last two elections

(which took place in 2002 and 2008) women from feudal and political families were given chances to represent the constituency, which significantly increased the number of elected women in the parliament. The next election is expected to be held in 2013, and is likely to reveal more about the impact of policy change on women's representation.

## *Appendix I: Questionnaire Guide*

### **Descriptive Representation**

- Selection processes, resources and criteria
- Influencing factors in selection
- Difficulties in recruitment
- Politics of patronage
- Routes taken to parliament
- Bypass of women party workers in nominations
- Selection process impact on long term political career goals
- Reflections on selection methods and themselves as politician
- Difference between women elected and selected
- Make any difference, if men elected and women selected by men?
- Support and reasons for direct election
- Any efforts to come through direct election
- Women's underrepresentation
- Reasons for parliamentary politics
- Why so few women elected?
- Effects of quotas on women's descriptive representation

### **Women acting for women (Substantive and Symbolic Representation)**

- Representing women in parliament and politics
- Acting for women in parliament
- Contribution towards women's representation
- Response of parliament towards women's issues
- Acceptance of representing women's interest
- Who women represent in parliament?
- Acting for women outside parliament
- Access to and by women
- Ways of building relationship with women
- Linkages with civil society organizations
- Nature of interaction with civil society forums
- Acting as role model for others
- Reaction of men in constituency towards woman representative

### **Party and party Identity**

- Reasons for joining party
- Contradiction in party and gender identity
- Conflicting interests of women and party
- Cross party coalition
- Interaction and alliances with women parliamentarians from other parties
- Autonomy in making decisions
- Women's position within party
- Impact of party identity on representing women

### **Silence, Resistance and Threats**

- Nature and kinds of resistance within and outside parliament

- Consequences of challenging power/gender hierarchies
- Fears associated with women parliamentarians
- Factors/reasons for silencing of women
- Why women fail to resist appointment of Zehri and Bijarani
- What contributes in suppression and subordination of women MNAs
- Military/establishment interventions
- Strategies to cope/handle resistance
- Barriers to political career

**Future politics**

- Achievements and contributions
- Ambitious/continue political career
- Alternates career paths for women politicians

*Appendix II : Background information of Women MNAs interviewed*

Name	Directly elected/Quota MNA	Education	Age	Province	Political Party	professional background	Years of Political party affiliation	Family contested election previously? Yes/No	Years of Parliamentary political experience
MNA	Quota	MA	47	Sindh	PPPP	Teaching	15	No	6 +
MNA	Quota	MBBS	37	Sindh	PPPP	Medical/Doctor	13	No	6 +
MNA	Quota	BA	45	Punjab	PPPP	Personal business	5	YES	6 +
MNA	Quota	BA	43	Punjab	PPPP	House wife	2	Yes	3
MNA	Quota	MA	55	Punjab	PMLN	Teaching	25	No	6 +
MNA	Quota	MA	39	Punjab	PMLN	Housewife	4	Yes	3
MNA	Quota	BA	37	Punjab	PMLQ	Banking	3	Yes	3
MNA	Quota	MA	47	KPK	ANP	Teaching	16	No	3
MNA	Quota	BA	50	Sindh	MQM	Personal business	17	No	3
MNA	Quota	MA	48	Punjab	PMLQ	Personal business	13	Yes	6 +
MNA	Quota	BA	39	Punjab	PMLN	House wife	7	Yes	6 +
MNA	Quota	BA	40	Punjab	PMLN	House wife	9	Yes	3 +
MNA	Quota	LLB	58	Sindh	MQM	Lawyer	7	Yes	3
MNA	Quota	LLB	36	Punjab	PPPP	Lawyer	15	Yes	6 +
MNA	Quota	BA	44	KPK	PPPP	Housewife	8	Yes	3
MNA	Directly elected	BA	45	Punjab	PPPP	Housewife	2	Yes	3
MNA	Directly elected	MBBS	44	Sindh	PPPP	Medical/Doctor	7	No	6 +
MNA	Directly elected	BA	42	Punjab	PLMN	Housewife	3	Yes	3
MNA	Directly elected	MA	45	Sindh	MQM	Media	3	No	3
MNA	Directly elected	MA	44	Punjab	PMLQ	House wife	4	Yes	6 +



*Appendix III : Article 62 and 63 of the Constitution of the Pakistan*

**[62. Qualifications for membership of Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament):**

- (1) A person shall not be qualified to be elected or chosen as a member of Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) unless-
  - (a) he is a citizen of Pakistan;
  - (b) he is, in the case of the National Assembly, not less than twenty -five years of age and is enrolled as a voter in any electoral roll in-
    - (i) any part of Pakistan, for election to a general seat or a seat reserved for non-Muslims; and
    - (ii) any area in a Province from which she seeks membership for election to a seat reserved for women.
  - (c) he is, in the case of Senate, not less than thirty years of age and is enrolled as a voter in any area in a Province or, as the case may be, the Federal Capital or the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, from where he seeks membership;
  - (d) he is of good character and is not commonly known as one who violates Islamic Injunctions;
  - (e) he has adequate knowledge of Islamic teachings and practices obligatory duties prescribed by Islam as well as abstains from major sins ;
  - (f) he is sagacious, righteous and non-profligate, honest and ameen, there being no declaration to the contrary by a court of law;
  - (g) he has not, after the establishment of Pakistan, worked against the integrity of the country or opposed the ideology of Pakistan.
- (2) The disqualifications specified in paragraphs (d) and (e) shall not apply to a person who is a non-Muslim, but such a person shall have good moral reputation.]

**[63. Disqualifications for membership of Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament):**

- (1) A person shall be disqualified from being elected or chosen as, and from being, a member of the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament), if:-
  - (a) he is of unsound mind and has been so declared by a competent court;  
or
  - (b) he is an undischarged insolvent; or
  - (c) he ceases to be a citizen of Pakistan, or acquires the citizenship of a foreign State; or
  - (d) he holds an office of profit in the service of Pakistan other than an office declared by law not to disqualify its holder; or
  - (e) he is in the service of any statutory body or any body which is owned or controlled by the Government or in which the Government has a controlling share or interest; or

- (f) being a citizen of Pakistan by virtue of section 14B of the Pakistan Citizenship Act, 1951 (II of 1951), he is for the time being disqualified under any law in force in Azad Jammu and Kashmir from being elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Azad Jammu and Kashmir; or
- (g) he has been convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction for propagating any opinion, or acting in any manner, prejudicial to the ideology of Pakistan, or the sovereignty, integrity or security of Pakistan, or morality, or the maintenance of public order, or the integrity or independence of the judiciary of Pakistan, or which defames or brings into ridicule the judiciary or the Armed Forces of Pakistan, unless a period of five years has elapsed since his release; or
- (h) he has been, on conviction for any offence involving moral turpitude, sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years, unless a period of five years has elapsed since his release; or
- (i) he has been dismissed from the service of Pakistan or service of a corporation or office set up or, controlled, by the Federal Government, Provincial Government or a Local Government on the grounds of misconduct, unless a period of five years has elapsed since his dismissal; or
- (j) he has been removed or compulsorily retired from the service of Pakistan or service of a corporation or office set up or controlled by the Federal Government, Provincial Government or a Local Government on the ground of misconduct, unless a period of three years has elapsed since his removal or compulsory retirement; or
- (k) he has been in the service of Pakistan or of any statutory body or any body which is owned or controlled by the Government or in which the Government has a controlling share or interest, unless a period of two years has elapsed since he ceased to be in such service; or
- (l) he, whether by himself or by any person or body of persons in trust for him or for his benefit or on his account or as a member of a Hindu undivided family, has any share or interest in a contract, not being a contract between a cooperative society and Government, for the supply of goods to, or for the execution of any contract or for the performance of any service undertaken by, Government:

**Provided** that the disqualification under this paragraph shall not apply to a person-

- (i) where the share or interest in the contract devolves on him by inheritance or succession or as a legatee, executor or administrator, until the expiration of six months after it has so devolved on him;
- (ii) where the contract has been entered into by or on behalf of a public company as defined in the Companies Ordinance, 1984 (XLVII of 1984), of which he is a share-holder but is not a director holding an office of profit under the company; or
- (iii) where he is a member of a Hindu undivided family and the contract has been entered into by any other member of that family in the course

of carrying on a separate business in which he has no share or interest;  
or

Explanation.- In this Article "goods" does not include agricultural produce or commodity grown or produced by him or such goods as he is, under any directive of Government or any law for the time being in force, under a duty or obligation to supply.

- (m) he holds any office of profit in the service of Pakistan other than the following offices, namely :-
- (i) an office which is not whole time office remunerated either by salary or by fee;
  - (ii) the office of Lumbardar, whether called by this or any other title;
  - (iii) the Qaumi Razakars;
  - (iv) any office the holder whereof, by virtue of such office, is liable to be called up for military training or military service under any law providing for the constitution or raising of a Force; or
- (n) he has obtained a loan for an amount of two million rupees or more, from any bank, financial institution, cooperative society or cooperative body in his own name or in the name of his spouse or any of his dependents, which remains unpaid for more than one year from the due date, or has got such loan written off; or
- (o) he or his spouse or any of his dependents has defaulted in payment of government dues and utility expenses, including telephone, electricity, gas and water charges in excess of ten thousand rupees, for over six months, at the time of filing his nomination papers; or
- (p) he is for the time being disqualified from being elected or chosen as a member of the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) or of a Provincial Assembly under any law for the time being in force.  
For the purposes of this paragraph "law" shall not include an Ordinance promulgated under Article 89 or Article 128.

(2) If any question arises whether a member of Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) has become disqualified from being a member, the Speaker or, as the case may be, the Chairman shall, unless he decides that no such question has arisen, refer the question to the Election Commission within thirty days and should he fail to do so within the aforesaid period it shall be deemed to have been referred to the Election Commission.

(3) The Election Commission shall decide the question within ninety days from its receipt or deemed to have been received and if it is of the opinion that the member has become disqualified, he shall cease to be a member and his seat shall become vacant.]

**[63A. Disqualification on grounds of defection, etc.**

- (1) If a member of a Parliamentary Party composed of a single political party in a House-

- (a) resigns from membership of his political party or joins another Parliamentary Party; or
- (b) votes or abstains from voting in the House contrary to any direction issued by the Parliamentary Party to which he belongs, in relations to-
  - (i) election of the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister; or
  - (ii) a vote of confidence or a vote of no-confidence; or
  - (iii) a Money Bill or a Constitution (Amendment) Bill;

he may be declared in writing by the Party Head to have defected from the political party, and the Head of the Parliamentary Party may forward a copy of the declaration to the Presiding Officer, and shall similarly forward a copy thereof to the member concerned:

**Provided** that before making the declaration, the Party Head shall provide such member with an opportunity to show cause as to why such declaration may not be made against him.

"Party Head" means any person, by whatever name called, declared as such by the Party.

- (2) A member of a House shall be deemed to be a member of a Parliamentary Party if he having been elected as a candidate or nominee of a political party which constitutes the Parliamentary Party in the House or, having been elected otherwise than as a candidate or nominee of a political party, has become a member of such Parliamentary Party after such election by means of a declaration in writing.
- (3) Upon receipt of the declaration under clause (1), the Presiding Officer of the House shall within two days refer the declaration to the Chief Election Commissioner who shall lay the declaration before the Election Commission for its decision thereon confirming the declaration or otherwise within thirty days of its receipt by the Chief Election Commissioner.
- (4) Where the Election Commission confirms the declaration, the member referred to in clause (1) shall cease to be a member of the House and his seat shall become vacant.
- (5) Any party aggrieved by the decision of the Election Commission may within thirty days, prefer an appeal to the Supreme Court which shall decide the matter within ninety days from the date of the filing of the appeal.
- (6) Nothing contained in this Article shall apply to the Chairman or Speaker of a House.
- (7) For the purpose of this Article -

- (a) "House" means the National Assembly or the Senate in relation to the Federation and a Provincial Assembly in relation to the Province, as the case may be.
  - (b) "Presiding Officer" means the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Chairman of the Senate or the Speaker of the Provincial Assembly, as the case may be.
- (8) Article 63A substituted as aforesaid shall come into effect from the next general elections to be held after the commencement of the Constitution (Eighteenth Amendment) Act, 2010:  
**Provided** that till Article 63A substituted as aforesaid comes into effect the provisions of existing Article 63A shall remain operative.]

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