



Political Participation
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A Research Study by



Awaz e Niswan

Acknowledgements

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Acronyms

AAN	Awaz e Niswan
AF	Aurat Foundation
IDI	In-depth Interviews
CNIC	Computerized National Identity Card
CSOs	Community Service Organizations
ECP	Election Commission of Pakistan
JAZBA	Jamhooriat aur Ba-Ikhtiar Aurat
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
MNA	Member National Assembly
MPA	Member Provincial Assembly
NA	National Assembly
PA	Provincial Assembly
SAP-PK	South Asia Partnership Pakistan
UC	Union Council
WLG	Women in Local Government
WVN	Women Voter Network

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Executive Summary

Political participation, especially voting, is the fundamental right of every citizen and the foundation of any democratic system. The political participation of all segments of society is essential for democratic processes to be inclusive, especially given Pakistan's cultural and socioeconomic diversity. However, women and members of other socially excluded groups are often unable to participate for social and institutional reasons, including barriers to computerized national identity card (CNIC) registration and the lack of awareness and voter education. There is a gender gap of around 11.8 million in Pakistan's electoral rolls, leaving a significant percentage of Pakistani women without CNICs. According to the "Global Gender Gap Report 2021" published by the World Economic Forum (WEF), Pakistan ranked 153rd out of 156 countries on the gender parity index. Pakistan is 98th in political empowerment indices. The country ranked 7th among eight countries in South Asia, only better than Afghanistan.

Awaz e Niswan conducted a research study on Women's Political Participation with support from JAZBA (Jamhooriyat aur Ba-ikhtiar Aurat). The study aimed to explore the challenges and opportunities experienced by young women (18-32 years of age) in Pakistan regarding their political participation and aspirations as voters, constituents, and potential candidates.

In addition to a desk review, primary data was collected through twenty in-depth interviews and an online survey form completed by 122 participants. The respondents were women from the Jazba programme regions.

Key Findings

1. ***Women are unaware of their right or of laws that support their rights*** Women voters in Pakistan are less informed about electoral processes. The majority were unable to name a few rights guaranteed by the constitution and unaware of their legal entitlements.
Conclusion Absence of politically aware and informed women's constituency lead to gender gaps in voting and political engagement.
2. ***More women are voting than before*** Sixty-four percent of the young respondents had ever voted, while twenty-six percent had never cast a vote.
Conclusion Increase in numbers of female voters and voting patterns, based on a mix of party affiliation, candidate profile, and family voting patterns, is influenced by awareness raising efforts by CSOs.

3. ***Women's votes are family and context specific*** Women are expected to conform to the wishes of their fathers and brothers and cannot exercise autonomy in vote. Women voted according to the family's party affiliation; 27 percent of the respondents didn't give any prior thought and cast vote considering it a mere duty.
Conclusion Women's votes are influenced by a range of factors, including familial as well as external factors.
4. ***Gender norms and power dynamics hinder women's participation*** While discussing the social barriers which could constrain young women, forty percent of the respondents noted a lack of family support, restricted mobility, family responsibilities, and cultural and religious norms and practices and exclusion from family decision-making.
Conclusion Gendered division of public and private spheres and unequal power relations influence women's political participation.
5. ***Women call for enabling conditions to become politically engaged*** It is not only the family but also local notables who discourage women's participation. Fifty-four percent of the respondents cited distant polling stations as one of the major reasons behind low voter turnout on Election Day followed by lack of transport and absence of female staff at the polling stations. A dearth of washrooms, potable water, and ceiling fans, and lack of access for persons with disabilities were also cited.
Conclusion Enabling conditions are a prerequisite for political engagement. Enabling conditions are a prerequisite for political engagement and reducing gender gap in Voter turnout.
6. ***Women are reluctant to contest elections or take up active roles within a political party*** Politics is perceived as a male domain and women feel they do not have the political skills required.
Conclusion Recognition of women's role in politics to represent women distinct interests is not complemented with enthusiasm to contest elections.
7. ***Women are unable to navigate the hurdles to contesting elections*** Respondents shared that attaining nomination and a party ticket are difficult for women aspiring to contest elections. Lack of financial resources, social defamation, harassment, and possible loss of family and community support are additional barriers for women who want to enter politics. Election campaigning often turns into smear campaigns and personal vilification which further discourages women to run for elected positions.
Conclusion Gender biased political culture thwarts women's political ambition, representation and influence.

Recommendations

The recommendations cover the social and political factors that impede women's participation in politics, especially young women. Some of these recommendations have been noted in other studies, by Awaz e Niswan as well as other organizations. Yet they bear repeating as the issues remain to be addressed with the seriousness which they deserve.

Federal and provincial governments

- Ensure civic education in the curriculum, including on basic constitutional rights and obligations.
- Empower Local Government and ensure local government elections are held regularly.

Election Commission of Pakistan

- Collaborate with civil society organisations and the local government bodies for collecting data of unregistered women, persons with disabilities and transgender population in their respective jurisdictions/constituencies.
- Run voter education campaign prior to the election focusing on women, trans people, pwds and minorities to facilitate casting of vote by these groups.
- Ensure separate entrances for men and women at combined polling stations, besides establishing women-only polling stations, with female polling staff and women police, in known culturally sensitive areas.
- Implement minimum of 10% women votes to accept results of a constituency. These should be specified as 10% for each polling station.
- Advocate for and enforce campaign finance laws so that costs are not a barrier for a woman candidates.

Political parties

- Political parties to outline a party policy on women's inclusion and set targets for women's membership and representation within the party structures at national, provincial and sub-national level. Party leadership to ensure women's representation in core decision making forums as members.
- Political parties to ensure compliance with 5% mandatory nomination of women candidates with attention to representation from marginalised population. They should take affirmative actions to: build capacities, fully or partially finance the election campaign, protect against threats/acts of election violence and have code of conduct on sexual harassment.

- Political mentoring of women by experienced party members/leaders to promote advancement of women's political career.
- Canvass and engage with women voters to reduce women's invisibility, political disconnect and gender gap in voters' turnout.

Civil Society and Funding Agencies

- Mobilize young women at the grassroots in communities and educational institutions for inclusive, active and sustained political and civic engagement.
- Facilitate interactions between women voters and elected representatives to increase visibility of women voters concerns.
- Develop and disseminate knowledge products on political, social, legal and economic rights and reforms to enable voice and action on protection of rights of women and marginalised groups.
- Voter education campaigns should specifically focus on disadvantaged sections of society including rural women, transgender persons, minorities, PWDs and illiterate persons.
- Build political participation and leadership capacities of young women from diverse background as young community leaders.
- Enhance opportunities and spaces for women leaders to participate in decision making forums and process.
- Build synergies with CSOs working on political empowerment for advocacy and engagement with duty bearers and influencers to amplify collective voice and action on women's political interests.
- Promote women's political role and interests as voters, constituents, candidates and elected representative through engagement and investment in media communications for behavior change within media and beyond.
- Identify key actors for engagement and develop context specific approach and interventions to change discriminatory beliefs related to women's voting.
- Mobilize and invest in capacity building of young men as allies to enable change in gender norms and beliefs at individual, family and community level.
- Invest in generating data and research evidence for advocacy with policy makers, election commission and political parties on women's electoral participation and representation.

Introduction

The context and trajectory of political participation and representation worldwide draw attention to social and gender inequalities and exclusion of citizens from the democratic and decision-making processes. Inclusive and equal participation of all citizens without any discrimination are central to the functioning of sustainable democracy based on the notion of people's power and representation of their interests. International and national gender equality commitments including women's political empowerment have not yet been fully translated into tangible actions, strategies and outcomes across nations. Significant gaps exist in the exercise of democratic and constitutional rights, leaving many women and girls and other marginalized groups behind and excluded from meaningful engagement in politics as electorates and public representatives.

Women's participation in politics does not reflect their numerical strength as a proportion of the population (approximately half or slightly more in most countries globally). Despite the relative progress and diminishing of society's rigid stance and attitude, women in the legislature and at other levels of political engagements are still facing various challenges and problems. Political participation has various dimensions, such as exercising the right to vote, propagation of political ideology, right to local government politics and contesting elections. It is an irony that in the developing countries, a large number of the females have considerably contributed to freedom struggles and in the creation of several national political organizations, alliances or parties, but they have always been underrepresented in the decision-making.¹ Women face innumerable challenges navigating and influencing the social norms and the political climate of society. Gender equality remains a distant goal, despite being one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by all member states of the United Nations.

Pakistan is a country with a youthful demographic profile. The total population of Pakistan is 208 million of which 49% are women (Census, 2017). Women's political participation and representation is one of the key indicators of women's empowerment and gender equality. The progress on women's political participation in Pakistan has been inconsistent due to weak political and democratic processes,

¹Valadez, J. (2018). *Deliberative Democracy, Political Legitimacy, and Self-determination in Multi-cultural Societies*. Routledge.

governance issues, lack of accountability on women's rights and patriarchal societal norms.

To ensure the participation of women as voters, a significant effort was made during the elections in 2018 to ensure women cast their votes, by facilitating access to CNIC and automatic voter registration on issuance of the CNIC. Election Commission of Pakistan data shows the total registered voters till May 2022 as just over 124 million, 55% of which are male voters and 45% are female voters; the gender gap is estimated to be 11.8 million. These female registered voters comprise 85 percent of total women ages 18 years and above. While the percentage of registered female voters has increased, as have the votes polled by them, only 21.6 million (47%) voted for the National Assembly elections, comprising approximately 40% of the total (female and male) votes polled.

This change in political participation can be attributed to a number of factors, such as Pakistan's legal commitments to the international community which include: the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). These commitments have impacted Pakistan following the 4th World Conference on Women in 1995. In addition to this, the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan also played a vital role in the political development of women. Furthermore, the Election Commission (EC) Order of 2002, the Political Parties Order of 2002, the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies Allocation of Reserved Seats for Women and Non-Muslims Rules of 2002. Moreover, amendments in the Election Act 2017 required all parties to give at least five per cent of their tickets to women.

The progress made to-date by Pakistani women to claim and occupy political space has given them an opportunity to raise their concerns and voice, and has provided them a channel through which the elected government as well as political parties can integrate women's representation into existing political structures and their decision-making processes. That said, the progress is not universal across the country. In each province, the level of women's political participation is determined by the region-specific socio-cultural barriers to women's advancement and also by the historical specificity of political movements in their geographical area.²

² Shirkatgah, 2009. Women in politics: participation and representation in Pakistan.

Historical Perspective

Pakistan's first constituent assembly (1947-1954), had only two women among a total of 79 members. The indirect elections of 1956 returned no women, while six were indirectly elected in 1962. From 1977 onwards, the number of women candidates contesting and winning National Assembly elections increased gradually and reached a peak in 2008. Fifteen women contested in 'party-less elections' in 1985 but only one secured victory. In the year 1997, only six women were able to secure seats. After introducing 17 percent reserved seats for women in both national and provincial legislatures in 2002, the number increased to 69 women in a total of 342 members of the National Assembly in. More encouragingly, seventy-five women contested the 2002 elections and 13 were elected. The trend continued till 2008, with 16 out of 64 women candidates winning seats in general elections that year. The 2017 amendments to the Election Act required all parties to nominate at least five percent women; however, the record of 16 elected women in 2008 remains intact.

Table 1: Number of Women parliamentarians in National assembly

Election	Number of Women in parliament
First Constituent Assembly 1947-1954	2
Direct elections of 1956	Nil
1962 and 1965 Assembly	8
1965-1969	6
1985	1
1990	2
1993	4
1997	6
2002	69 (including reserved seats)
2008	76
2013	70
2018	69

Source: Data gathered from various websites

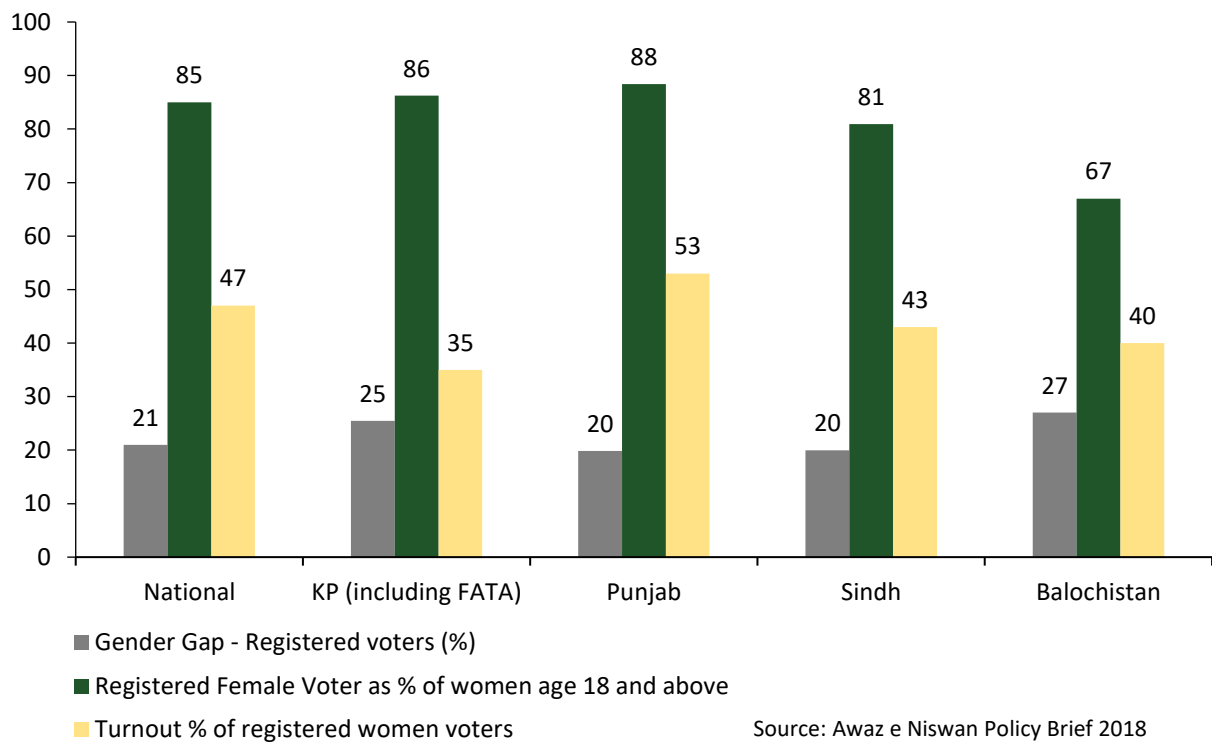
Study Rationale and Objectives

Pakistan adopted universal adult suffrage in 1956, granting all women and men aged 18 and above the de jure right to vote. To ensure the participation of women as voters,

a significant effort was made during the elections in 2018 to ensure women cast their votes, by facilitating access to CNIC and including automatic registration as voters on the issuance of the CNIC.

The detailed picture of status of women in general election 2018 as voter is provided in the Figure 1, where participation of women in electoral process assessed as their share in total registered votes and turnout as percentage of women age 18 years and above.³

Figure 1: Status of Female in General Election 2018



Only half or less of the eligible, registered women voted in the 2018 election. This, despite the increase in registered female voters, and the provisions of the Election Commission reforms that i) mandated 5% women's nominations by each political party ii) declaring results void if votes cast by women are less than 10% of the total votes cast.

Factors contributing to a low female voter turnout have been noted as lack of privacy at overcrowded polling stations, presence of male presiding officers, shortage of female polling staff and inadequate arrangements for separate polling stations for

³ Awaz e Niswan Policy Brief 2018. Political Participation of Women in Pakistan
<https://aan.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Women-and-Political-Participation-policy-brief.pdf>

women. Lacking transport and resources women are dependent on male family members to apply for and receive a National Identity Card (NIC), a prerequisite to voting. Women are disenfranchised by their families, tribes, and local and spiritual leaders, and can face social sanctions for casting votes, as well as threats of physical violence.⁴

Moreover, if we talk about women representation in legislature then the influence of gender and social norms on the electoral politics and processes in Pakistan is quite visible. Patriarchal notions about the role of women, their mobility and participation in public spheres limits and at times actively discourage women from participating in politics. At the same time policies that directly or indirectly promote gender inclusion do bear results. For example, in the general elections of 2013, only 245 of the 7000 candidates were women. The number of candidates rose to 464 in elections 2018 (176 for the National Assembly and 288 for the provincial assemblies)⁵, possibly because the 2017 Election Reform Act made it mandatory that at least 5% of the total candidates fielded by each political party were women (Table 2).⁶ Several political parties did not meet this requirement and the ECP is considering legal action. Women are also nominated for constituencies where the political party is unlikely to secure a win, reinforcing popular myths that they do not fare well at the polls.⁷

Table 2: Women Candidates on General Seats in General Elections 2013 & 2018

Legislature	Party Ticket		Independent		Total	
	2013	2018	2013	2018	2013	2018
National	61	112	74	64	135	176
Provincial	99	158	185	101	284	259
Total	160	270	259	165	419	535

Source: Awaz e Niswan Policy Brief 2018

Electoral rolls released by Election Commission of Pakistan shows that the total registered voters till November 2021 were just over 124 million (male 55% and female 45%).⁸

⁴ Awaz e Niswan, 2018. Political Participation of Women In Pakistan

⁵ Election Commission of Pakistan Website List of Contesting Candidates (Women)

⁶ Awaz e Niswan, 2018. Political Participation Of Women in Pakistan

⁷ Awaz e Niswan Policy Brief 2018. <https://aan.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Women-and-Political-Participation-policy-brief.pdf>

⁸ <https://ecp.gov.pk/frmGenericPage.aspx?PageID=3267>

Table 3: Province Wise Voter Statistics

	Male		Female		Total
Federal Capital	495,901	53%	442,381	47%	938,282
Balochistan	2,937,404	57%	2,231,489	43%	5,168,893
KPK	11,763,284	55%	9,552,987	45%	21,316,271
Punjab	38,485,077	54%	32,617,645	46%	71,102,722
Sindh	14,348,200	55%	11,878,977	45%	26,227,177
Grand Total	68,029,866	55%	56,723,479	45%	124,753,345

Source: ECP (As of 17th May 2022)

Moreover, age wise voter statistics released by ECP indicates largest gap between male and female in the age group of 18 to 25.

Table 4: Age Wise Voter statistics:

Age	Male	Female
18 to 25 years	63%	37%
26 to 35 years	54%	46%
36 to 45 years	52%	48%
46 to 55 years	53%	47%
56 to 65 years	54%	46%
Above 65 years	51%	49%

Study Objectives

The study aims to explore the challenges and opportunities experienced by women in Pakistan regarding their political participation and aspirations as voters, constituents and potential candidates. The purpose of the current study is to:

- Help understand the underlying reasons and causes, which prevent young women from political participation and their lack of interest in the process.
- Explore the challenges and opportunities experienced by young women in Pakistan regarding their political participation and aspirations as voters, constituents and potential candidates.
- Furthermore, the study will probe the role of formal and informal institutions, facilitating and constraining factors regarding political participation of young women.

Moreover, the study would help JAZBA in designing and executing interventions that further support engagement of young women in electoral processes as voters and potential candidates

Methodology

A brief description of research methods, geographic and demographic profile of participants.

Research Methods

Primary data for the study was conducted through in-depth interviews and an online survey. In-depth interviews were taken from 10 districts of JAZBA programme across Pakistan, however, a survey form was filled out by women from 23 districts.

Twenty in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted virtually with young women in each of the 10 districts, identified by the SAPPK and AF from their field Local Resource Persons and coordinators. The semi-structured interview guide covered all important aspects related to the political participation of women in Pakistan, enabling the interviewer to probe and generate responses. The IDIs were supplemented with a short web-based survey form with closed-ended questions, disseminated on various social media platforms, resulting in 122 responses.

Geographic Profile

The study covered four provinces (Sindh, Baluchistan, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Gilgit Baltistan. Telephonic interviews were taken from 10 districts while the survey form was filled by respondents from 23 districts.

Table 3: Geographical profile of Participants (IDIs and Survey)

Baluchistan	Turbat, Gwadar, Quetta
KPK	Bannu, Peshawar, Nowshera, Charsadda,
GB	Hunza, Gilgit, Ghazar
Punjab	Rawalpindi, Lahore, Jhang, Okara, Attock, Faisalabad, Okara, Layyah
Sindh	Hyderabad, Thatta, Karachi, Sakkar, Ghotki

Demographic Profile of respondents

For this study young women are defined as being in the age group 18-32 years. Table 4 shows that the majority of women who participated in the online survey were in the age group 18-32 years, and were single and unemployed and majority had college and above education.

Table 4: Demographic Profile of Survey Participants (Women n=122)

Age		Education		Marital Status	
Age in years	%		%		%
18-32	81	Below Matric	1	Single	69
33 and above	19	Matric	5	Married	31
		FA	14	Employment	
		BA	16		%
		MA /BS	46	Employed	42
		MPHIL/ Other	18	Unemployed	58

Similarly, Table 5 shows that the majority of IDI participant were in the age group 23-32 years (75%), and were single and employed with majority having fourteen years of education.

Table 5: Demographic Profile of IDI Participants (Women n=20)

Age		Education		Marital Status		Employment	
Age (In years)	%		%		%		%
18-32	75	Matric	15	Married	35	Employed	75
33 and above	25	FA	25	Single	65	Unemployed	25
		BA	40				
		MA/BS/LLB	15				
		MPHIL	5				

Findings

Women's participation in politics helps advance gender equality. Due to inadequate voter education and a lack of information on electoral processes, voters in Pakistan are less informed. The prevalence of supply and demand-side constraints and barriers, significantly affecting women, PWDs, and other vulnerable segments, have constrained these eligible voters' understanding and knowledge of the overall voting concepts, processes, participation in political activities, and interaction with political representatives. The gender gap in political and electoral processes exists despite efforts to narrow it. Following are the findings from IDIs and survey on women voting behaviors, hurdles and constraints they faced, facilitating factors, and political aspirations.

1. Women are unaware of their right or laws that support their rights

Understanding of constitutional rights is the foremost important step while advocating for women political rights. Pakistan's Constitution of 1973 provides basic fundamental rights to all its citizens including freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom of information, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly. Political rights include the right to participation in civil society and politics, such as freedom of association, the right to assemble and the right to vote. In Pakistan, women don't have access to political rights and have no prior knowledge of the power vested in them by the constitution. Besides, women's knowledge and access to rights in Pakistan have been suppressed by prevailing patriarchal and cultural norms. An overwhelming majority of the women interviewed could not name even a few rights entrusted to them by Pakistan's constitution. The standard response to this question was 'rights have been given; many rights are given' followed by complete silence. Only a few women who have been an active part of grassroots politics and were able to name some. Young respondents requested to be given more information and awareness material on the rights and pro women acts and laws. Respondents reiterated that rights exist only on paper and never benefitted ordinary women, nor did women try to understand their rights.

Similarly, 56% of young respondents were unaware of the pro women laws have been enacted in Pakistan over the last two decades, several.

Only 25% of the young women between age group of 18-32 years were aware of the existing pro- women acts and laws. The lack of information dissemination of these laws

is one reason cited by the respondents due to which majority of women are unaware of their existence.

Women's political participation is a fundamental prerequisite for gender equality and genuine democracy. It is understood that without a CNIC women are not able to cast their vote. During the survey, respondents were inquired whether they have ever cast their votes. Sixty eight percent of the young women had had

During the IDIs, the respondent mentioned a woman whose CNIC was made at the age of 46 last year with the help of Women Voter Networks (WVNs) running under JAZBA. She had never cast her vote and is looking forward to the next general election to exercise her right.

ever voted, while 32 percent of them have never cast their votes. Whereas, ninety six percent of the women above 33 years had ever voted (Table 6).

Table 6: Ever Voted in Elections (% Distribution)

Ever voted in Elections (%)		
Age in Years	Yes	No
18 – 32	68	32
33 and above	96	4

Earlier, women were told to stay away from political affairs and were not encouraged to go out on Election Day either. If there were 15 house members, the men would go out to vote while women would remain inside performing daily house chores. When asked about their disinterest, they will express disappointment with the candidate or blame the economy

IDI respondent (Charsadda district)

However, it appears that there is a shift and more women are now voting. Change is being reported, positively shaping women's attitudes and perceptions and giving them the right direction. Now, young women are not only interested in casting votes, but they also encourage elderly females to accompany them to the polling stations. This appears to be a result of awareness raising by local CSOs and others. A couple of older participants shared that they are engaging women and youth on their own. They are giving them the awareness of political participation. These women emphasized that CSOs should go to remote areas and conduct awareness sessions for young women, so they can also come forward and voice their rights.

I have realized that young women in my area have started taking interest in politics. They make their own decisions while voting and are not being influenced by the opinion of others

IDI respondent (Hyderabad)

Participants with experiences in grass root level politics agreed with the fact that casting a vote is important to be able to raise voice against prevailing issues and demand rights. As voters, women can hold elected representatives accountable to them. Previously, women were left out of the local decision-making and not able to prioritize their issues, they would easily get into other's commands and would vote for those uneducated masses who were being supported by their families for generations. Over time, women are more aware of their problems and can distinguish between the right and wrong choices when it comes to electing a suitable candidate.

Women attributed this change to efforts made by the local civil society organizations working in their areas. While speaking on the effectiveness of JAZBA program in inculcating political awareness, one of the participants from Hyderabad said, "*Under JAZBA, we are given awareness sessions and material to learn about political participation. They trained us on which issues we should talk about with our councilors, chairperson, and other elected representatives. We did not have the right to information earlier, but now we are aware of it. I believe that we can actively participate well in the next general elections as we are fully prepared to face the issue*".

In a welcome development, women have started coming out to cast votes and are taking a keen interest in contestant profiles and party manifestos. Earlier, women thought politics to be men's domain and considered vote a mere piece of paper but now a majority of women have realized the importance that it holds for them and their

future is shaped by this power vested in them. An IDI respondent from KP who contested recently held local elections informed that ‘Due to recent political developments, women had lost hope in the electoral process and did not want to cast votes in recently held Local Government elections. I made them realize that their future might improve if they choose their leader wisely and whole-heartedly’.

The family also influences women to vote for the one they want and not to whom the woman want to vote.

IDI respondent (Ghizar)

Another woman from Nowshera shared that she had only cast her vote twice as she lives in a male-dominated society. There were instances when her husband would snatch away her CNIC and cast a vote on her behalf. However, due to JAZBA and other CSOs working in her area, she has understood the importance of voting and has become more conscious of her problems. She hoped to cast her vote in the future without any pressure from the family. One of the participants from Ghizar informed ‘A political candidate called me to ask for the vote. I told him on his face that I will cast a vote as per my choice and will not be a part of his campaign’. She further added ‘I was educated, so I spoke. However, uneducated women will not speak about it and do as instructed’. Further, participants also spoke on the importance of engaging men in women-centered programs and sessions. A respondent from Gilgit shared that *‘under the JAZBA program, I worked with men for women’s issues at the UC level. I motivated men through awareness sessions and went into 15 villages in my UC. I told my community men that the problems you are talking about could not be resolved unless you empower your women. As a result of my efforts, I see 100% attendance of the women in various awareness sessions’*.

However, it was found during the IDIs that some women have a negative perception of the political system of the country and do not foresee any change in the upcoming days and consider voting as a waste of their time and resources. To them, participation in the electoral process or the vote doesn’t hold any influence to bring about change in their lives and country. There were still a few instances where women's main criteria for voting was party affiliation, family ties, family pressure instead of party manifesto and candidate's qualification, experience and plans.

As per the survey, young women women's criteria for casting vote in the general election of 2018 was reported to be the party affiliation, pressure from the community and family, candidates reputation and party manifesto. Thirty one percent of the respondents between 18-32 years of age considered party affiliation a major reason for casting votes, whereas, 27 percent didn’t give any prior thought and voted while

considering it just a duty towards their nation which shows their disinterest in the political system. (Table 7).

Table 7: Reasons of Voting in Last Election (in % Distribution)

Reasons	Age in Years	
	18 - 32	33 and above
Party Affiliation	31%	25%
Party manifesto	14%	25%
Candidate's reputation/ message	16%	10%
Family/community pressure	11%	10%
Never given it a thought	27%	30%

4. Gender norms and power dynamics hinder women's participation

Despite initiatives taken by the government and civil society in recent times, women's participation in the electoral process remains inadequate. Participation is understood as merely an event, not a dynamic process. Certain barriers still hinder women's voter turnout and political participation. The most obvious ones discussed during the IDIs were socio cultural norms because of which women face hardship in their active participation.

In some districts of KP and Sindh, which still have tribal and rural imprints, women were deprived of their vote by men, with agreement among the competing political parties. Furthermore, women were prohibited from articulating their views and making choices during elections. They conform to the wishes of their fathers and brothers and cannot cast a vote for the candidate of their own choice. The patriarchal system has been found to have firm roots in the country's electoral processes and general politics. One of the respondents from Charsadda informed that 'our men would take our women's CNICs and cast a vote on their behalf to elect the candidate of their choice.'

Similarly, a young IDI respondent from Gilgit believed that 'if we talk about Gilgit Baltistan then the cultural norms surely affect the voting process. Moreover, there is no proper check and balance in the remote areas. The men of the families would take away the CNICs of their women and stamp the vote themselves in polling stations'.

Some respondents talked about different ways their families tried influencing their vote. One of the young respondents from Peshawar said '*the vehicle which dropped*

me at the polling station was of the party which my family was supporting. The family asked them to make sure I vote in front of them. Upon reaching, they approached me and asked me who I would vote for-- I smiled and said, whoever it would be my choice and went behind the booth”.

Some of the other factors affecting women’s right to vote are the long distances to reach the polling stations, the hectic process of obtaining a Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC), and the non-availability of women presiding and returning officers at the polling stations. During the IDIs, most women cited the distance of polling stations from home as one of the significant reasons behind women's reluctance to poll vote. Transport is not readily available while polling stations are far from their homes.

In one of the women polling station of my area, polling started around 3pm. I tried solving the matter with presiding officer but nothing helped. Polling started only after high rank government official came to visit the polling station.

IDI respondent, Charsadda

They fear that their whole day will be wasted due to far-off polling stations, and they will be unable to fulfill household responsibilities. An IDI respondent from Charsadda who is actively engaged in local politics shared that ‘the number of polling stations for women in my area were less, there were long queues outside, and women were pushing each other to get in line. In this chaos, many votes were wasted, and many women returned without casting a vote”.

Moreover, women also faces difficulty stamping the ballot paper. An IDI respondent from Nowshera shared a recent incident from the Local Government election KP where 467 votes were wasted in a women's polling station. They had stamped the ballot twice and did not fold it properly.

Women's polling stations had lacked the necessary facilities and have a dearth of washrooms, potable water, and ceiling fans. Besides all this, polling stations lack good

My father ordered us to vote for candidate of his choice and upon our refusal, took away CNICs of female members in retaliation.

IDI respondent, Quetta.

access points for persons with disabilities. There were hardly any ramps for women bound to wheelchairs. While speaking on the issue, respondent from Peshawar shared ‘The polling stations are faraway and women are unable to travel that far. Secondly, women face issues in locating their polling stations’. Participants shared that after

reaching the location they were informed about the change of polling station, they emphasized on initiating a system which enables a person to cast vote in any constituency. Some emphasized that provision of security in polling stations is important. The presiding officers sometimes bar voters from casting voting especially when voters are not supporting the party of their liking. KP respondents noted that there should be no presiding officers near the polling booth to influence the voters.

During the survey, while discussing the social barriers which could constrain young women voter turnout, forty percent of the respondents reported lack of family support, twenty five percent blamed local notables followed by cultural and religious restrictions and disinterest in the politics. Moreover, 54 percent of the respondents cited distant polling stations as one of the major reasons behind low voter turnout followed by lack of transport and absence of female staff at the polling stations. (Table 9) In order to overcome these challenges, IDI respondents suggested that the number of polling stations for women voters should be increased with adequate facilities and waiting areas, polling staff should be given adequate training before Election Day and gender segregated polling booths should be setup for women and these initiatives should be well advertised by ECP before the elections so men cannot cite these issues as an excuse for stopping women from their voting rights.

Table 8: Barriers to women voter turnout (% multiple options)

Barriers to Women Voter Turnout (% Multiple Options)		
	Age in Years	
	18 – 32 (%)	33 and above (%)
Social Barriers		
Underage at the time of registration drive	22	19
Family does not allow	40	43
Local notables	25	19
Cultural and religious restrictions	24	38
Sickness/out of city	6	24
Not interested to vote anyone	23	38
Institutional Barriers		
Lack of female staff at polling station	28	14
Lack of security	31	24
Lack of transport	34	48
Distance to polling station	54	33
Lack of gender-segregated polling booth	27	62

As per the IDI respondents, a well-coordinated networking and interaction between constituents and the political leadership, elected representatives and government duty bearers may help in addressing public issues and improve public confidence in political leadership. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, there is limited interaction (or access) between the public and their local government representatives as well as with the elected political representatives i.e., MNA/MPA; the same is the case with duty bearers.

The majority of young respondents had scant or no knowledge regarding the responsibilities of local government politicians, duty bearers and elected representatives for provincial and national legislative assemblies (Table 9,10). Those who had some knowledge correctly reported provision of infrastructure and services and resolving local disputes for local government representatives; and representing their constituents and oversight of government operations for provincial and national elected representatives.

Table 9: Knowledge about responsibilities of Local Government Representatives

Duties of Councilor (% distribution)		
Age in Years	Yes	No
18 – 32	42	58
33 – 42	70	22

Table 10: Responsibilities of Elected Representatives

	Age in Years	
	18 - 32	33 and above
Responsibilities of (Mayor/Nazim/Chairman (% in multiple option)		
Provision of infrastructure & services	37	50
District/Tehsil budgeting	30	40
Resolving local disputes	68	45
Responsibilities of MNAs and MPAs (% in multiple option)		
Legislation in assembly	47	36
Provide oversight on government operations	32	55
Represent citizen interests in the government	54	50

5. Women call for enabling conditions to become politically engaged

The majority of the young respondents expressed willingness to become more politically aware and engaged citizens.

Table 11: Aspiration to become politically engaged citizens (% Distribution)

Aspiration to become politically engaged citizens		
Age in Years	Yes	No
18 – 32	80	20
33 and above	74	22

The majority of young women demanded to include political and civic education in high schools and colleges, followed by family support in this journey of becoming aware and knowing about rights. Ensuring security also emerged as one of the major components. Participants also requested for Information sessions organized by the ECP, local NGOs and political parties in educational institutions and community spaces.

Table 12: Provisions required to become engaged citizen (% in multiple options)

	Age in Years	
	18 - 32	33 -42
What will motivate you to become an engaged citizen (%)		
Include political / civic education in high school and college	69	87
Easily accessible, user-friendly information about how to become engaged	21	52
Information sessions organized by Election Commission of Pakistan with local NGOs and political parties in educational institutions and in community spaces (for female community members)	19	30
Permission from family members	32	65
Secure environment in public spaces	11	0
Quota for young women in political parties at community and district level	5	0

6. Women are reluctant to contest elections or take up active roles within a political party

Young women recognized the need and value of women's role in politics as elected representative across all tiers of democratic governance.

Participants agreed with the fact that women have an important role to play in politics at all three levels. They urged for the need for more women parliamentarians in the assemblies while they emphasized the fact that women should be encouraged to contest general elections rather than being selected on the reserved seats. However, they agreed that a significant improvement has been witnessed in recent times.

Women from diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds are actively participating in the realm of politics and trying their luck in attaining a party ticket. While discussing the importance of a politically aware woman and her participation in political activities, the majority of the young women agreed with the fact that women must get involved in politics as only a woman can understand the nature of women's problems and will be a more dedicated and effective advocate for addressing them. IDI respondents believed that it is incredible to see a woman from their community representing them on a national or provincial level and highlighting their problems there.

Respondents further believed that women are comfortable around other women, and will share more with another woman than with her husband or other male relatives. Women should participate in politics so they can meet with community women and discuss their issues. One of the respondents said *“no community woman would take her problem to the elected male representative. She would contact a female to solve her issues and problems, we believe that a woman can understand another woman better.”* Respondents agreed that in the past few years women have developed more interest in politics in recent years. They perceived a gradual move from being nominated on reserved seats to being elected on general seats which is a positive change. The respondents were happy that women are being represented on different public forums, and their confidence has increased after watching other women running their election campaigns.

As per the survey, majority of the respondents did not show interest in contesting elections (table 13). Only twenty eight percent of the young women were willing to contest election in future.

Table 13: Willingness to contest elections

Willingness to contest Elections (in % Distribution)		
Age in Years	Yes	No
18 – 32	28	72
33 and above	48	52

8. Women are unable to navigate the hurdles to contesting elections

Politics is considered a man's domain. In Pakistan, women are explicitly and implicitly discouraged from participating as it is thought to be a 'dirty business'. During the IDIs, participants discussed the issues they faced while contesting elections or fear to face in the future. Respondents shared that attaining nomination and a party ticket is

difficult for women, especially when she belongs to a ‘not so influential class and family’. Participants shared that they were promised party tickets numerous times, but those were distributed among the family members at the time of elections.

One of the young women from Gilgit shared that ‘I was an active member of the local political party, remained involved in mobilizing people and disseminating party manifesto. At the time of election, the party ticket was allotted to the wife of the key

I contested a previous election on a general seat where I was the only female candidate. I was offered money to withdraw my nomination. After several unsuccessful attempts, other candidates started a well-organized smear campaign against me. They started pointing fingers on my character, they threatened me with kidnapping and murder attempts. My secretary was given death threats due to which he left. Locals were asked not to cast vote for a woman. My eighteen female members and I were not allowed cast vote on the Election Day, along with many of my female supporters.

IDI respondent, Charsadda

position holder of the party, who used to live in Islamabad. In protest, I resigned from the party and stood as an independent candidate but lost.’

Receiving party support is not the only barrier faced by female candidates. Monetary costs involved when filing nomination papers and running an effective campaign hinder women from participating successfully. The mandatory 5% female candidate clause does not specify that the party should extend financial support to the candidate. Aspiring candidates donate large sums to the party to secure a nomination. The women’s wing in the political party has thus far not been successful in influencing party structure and systems to ensure an equal playing field for women. Neither can they ensure decision-making positions within the party hierarchy for themselves.

Further, they agreed with the fact that social defamation, harassment, possible loss of family and community support are an additional barrier for women who want to enter politics. Election campaigning is often turned into smear campaigns and personal vilification. In the context of prevailing social norms and codes of family honor, such negative campaigns against a female candidate can lead to immense social pressure and strain family relations.

I faced a lot of backlash from the family and they threatened to cutoff ties with me’

IDI respondent, Ghizar

Respondents mentioned that successful female candidates who are able to cross all these hurdles and challenges and enter the legislative assemblies or local government are marginalized as they are not provided equal opportunities or resources like their male counterparts. Women legislators are less likely to be involved in key decision-making roles in parliament, discouraged from active participation in proceedings (especially in LG Councils) and subjected to sexist comments and harassment by male colleagues. Women councilors serves as a role model for the women in the community and also provide platform to the women to interact and convey their problems and grievances to the authorities. Their role for the women’s problem solving and continuous engagement with the community women to facilitate them earns them huge respect from the community. However, women Councilors in particular are deprived of resources, whether it be development funds, participation in meetings, office space, and travel allowances. Considered intruders in a male dominated space, these women councilors have nevertheless developed networks and individual strategies to meet some expectations of their female constituency. Many have emerged from the process more determined to engage in the political process and to learn the ropes so that they can understand how to make best use of this opportunity.⁹

In the survey, around 61 percent of the respondents considered acquiring party ticket as one of the hurdles in contesting elections. Thirty four percent cited lack of family support, followed by security threats and inability to hold political rallies/election campaigns/ holding corner meetings

Table 14: Hurdles in contesting elections (% in multiple option)

Hurdles in Contesting Elections (%)	Age in Years	
	18 - 32	33 and above
Conducting Political rallies/election campaigns/ corner meetings	29	22
Security threats	34	52
Lack of Family Support	36	65
Acquiring Party Ticket for election	61	87
Finance	38	78

⁹ Zaidi Y., Farooq S. et al. 2018. Rural Women in Pakistan: Status Report 2018. UN Women Pakistan.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from this study show that there is a gap waiting to be filled in as far young women's political participation is concerned. Lack of age appropriate civic and political education in educational institutions, non-formal education and in media creates a vacuum. The environment in which civic engagement and familiarity with political processes can take root is missing girls and young women. Social norms further disadvantage and discourage women from participating. It appears that political parties are also not as invested in encouraging such participation beyond the elections. The findings presented at length in the previous section suggest a set of key conclusions on which the recommendations are based.

1. Absence of politically aware and informed women's constituency lead to gender gaps in voting and political engagement
2. Increase in numbers of female voters and voting patterns, based on a mix of party affiliation, candidate profile, and family voting patterns, is influenced by awareness raising efforts by CSOs.
3. Women's votes are influenced by a range of factors, including familial as well as external factors
4. Gendered division of public and private spheres and unequal power relations influence women's political participation
5. Enabling conditions are a prerequisite for political engagement and reducing gender gap in Voter turnout.
6. Recognition of women's role in politics to represent women distinct interests is not complemented with enthusiasm to contest elections
7. Gender biased political culture thwarts women's political ambition, representation and influence.

Recommendations

Barriers	Recommendations for Key Actors	Considerations for JAZBA
Absence of politically aware and informed women constituency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mobilize young women at the grassroots in communities and educational institutions for inclusive, active and sustained political and civic engagement. -Build political participation and leadership capacities of young women from diverse background as young community leaders. -Enhance opportunities and spaces for women leaders to participate in decision making forums and process. -Facilitate interactions between women voters and elected representatives to increase visibility of women voters concerns. -Develop and disseminate knowledge products on political, social, legal and economic rights and reforms to enable voice and action on protection of rights of women and marginalised groups. -Federal and provincial governments should ensure civic education in the curriculum, including on basic constitutional rights and obligations. -Voter education campaigns should specifically focus on disadvantaged sections of society including rural women, transgender persons, minorities, PWDs and illiterate persons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strengthen mobilization and action-oriented capacity of existing women voters' chapter/network by focusing on political education and engagement. -Partner with educational institutions for mobilization and awareness of women students and teachers. -Focus on developing a cadre of young women leaders and create spaces for their engagement with and participation in decision making forums. -Enhance inclusion of women from across social sections and other vulnerable groups in program interventions and develop relevant and empowering voter education and behaviour change campaigns.

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Influence of familial and external factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify key actors for engagement and develop context specific approach and interventions to change discriminatory beliefs related to women’s voting. -Mobilise and invest in capacity building of young men as allies to enable change in gender norms and beliefs at individual, family and community level. -Election candidates to focus on women voters’ issues in public, door to door and digital campaigns and make special efforts to canvass women voters at the local level. -Political parties need to layout plan to canvass and engage with women voters to reduce women’s invisibility, political disconnect and gender gap in voters’ turnout. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Plan behaviour change campaigns focusing on multiple factors and actors to shift attitudes towards women’s voting and public role. -Community meetings to focus on sensitizing individual members, decision makers in the families, community influencers and young men to support women’s right to vote. -Capitalize on community youth and build young men’s alliance to engage with peers and male family elders to change attitudes toward women’s role in public and politics.
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Gendered spaces and unequal power relations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSOs should work on addressing structural causes of social exclusion of women, persons with disabilities, minorities and trans people to break the repetitive cycles of dependency. -Build synergies with CSOs working on political empowerment for advocacy and engagement with duty bearers and influencers to amplify collective voice and action on women’s political interests. -Promote women’s political role and interests as voters, constituents, candidates and elected representative through engagement and investment in media communications for behaviour change within media and beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Priorities advocacy and policy initiatives for enhancing women’s electoral and political participation to influence change at local, provincial and national level through networking. -Organize dialogues with different stakeholders on prioritized themes to break institutional barriers to women’s political participation. -Continue to engage with journalists for gender sensitive reporting to positively influence public image and behaviour

		regarding women's role in public and politics.
Lack of enabling conditions for women voters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NADRA should take steps to eliminate the gender gap in CNIC and voter registration through extensive outreach campaigns, especially in educational institutions (public and private). - ECP and local administrations to adopt and enforce administrative measures to ensure physical accessibility of PWDs to educational institutions, public buildings and modes of transport. -Ensure separate entrances for men and women at Combined Polling Stations, besides establishing women-only Polling Stations, with female polling staff and women police, in known culturally sensitive areas. -ECP should collaborate with civil society organisations and the local government bodies for collecting data of unregistered women, persons with disabilities and transgender population in their respective jurisdictions/constituencies. -ECP to implement minimum of 10% women votes to accept results of a constituency. These should be specified as 10% for each polling station - ECP to run voter education campaign prior to the election focusing on women, trans people, PWDs and minorities to facilitate casting of vote by these groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Organise multi-level consultations with representatives of ECP and local administration to discuss women's voting challenges and way forward on short and long term reform measures -Facilitate regular interaction of women voters' network with duty bearers on voting concerns of all women. Project to take up the district level concerns and demands for actions with decision makers at the provincial and national level.

<p>Lack of interest to contest elections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple institutions to act on systematic and consistent political sensitization and mobilization of women through political skill development, education and political exposure, confidence building, community engagement, networking within and outside with elected representatives, buy-in from family decision makers and positioning within political parties to generate interest and safe spaces for political participation. -Political mentoring of women by experienced party members/leaders to promote advancement of women’s political career. - Support women’s leadership in politics as role models for political inspiration of younger generation. -Create space for political awareness and networking between political leaders and community women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strengthen Women Leadership Groups (WLG) to enhance women’s role in local governance. - Highlight women and other marginalised groups’ concerns related to contesting elections at different forums with key stakeholders to change gender biased political behaviour and practice. -Enhance opportunities and spaces for mentoring, exposure, skill building and networking to develop self-confidence, competence and political ambition.
<p>Gender biased political culture for women representation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Invest in generating data and research evidence for advocacy with policy makers, election commission and political parties on women’s electoral participation and representation. - Engage in joint advocacy and lobbying with formal institutions through working with existing alliance or develop a coalition for promoting political empowerment of women and marginalised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Contribute to evidence generation for advocacy with government, political parties, parliamentarians, and Election Commission. -Focus on alliance building and steer formation of a coalition of change for consultation, policy influence and follow up. -Engage in dialogue with parliamentarians and political party leadership on increased women’s representation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parties to implement 5% mandatory party nominations for women candidates. -Political parties to outline a party policy on women’s inclusion and set targets for women’s membership and representation within the party structures at national, provincial and sib-national level. Party leadership to ensure women’s representation in core decision making forums as members. -ECP to enforce campaign finance laws so that costs are not a barrier for a woman candidates. - Political parties to ensure compliance with 5% mandatory nomination of women candidates with attention to representation from marginalised population. They should take affirmative actions to: build capacities, fully or partially finance the election campaign, protect against threats/acts of election violence and have code of conduct on sexual harassment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Arrange interactions of community women with elected representatives and political party senior officials.
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ANNEXURES

Annexure I: IDI Guide

Perspectives about young women engagement in political processes

Section I Perspectives on Women Voters

1. In Pakistan's constitution, different duties and rights of citizens have been clearly stipulated. Being a Pakistani citizen, are you aware of your rights and duties. If yes, can you name a few?
2. What do you understand by the term "politics"? (is it being an elected repr? Is it being a member of a political party? Is it the process of negotiation with others to achieve desired results?)
3. What is the current role of women in Pakistani politics? And in your opinion what is or should be the ideal role of women in Pakistani politics?
4. What could facilitate women's involvement in politics?
5. In your opinion what are the benefits for promoting meaningful political participation of women in the country?
6. Why is young women's participation as a voter important?
7. What are the major challenges faced by women which effect women's and participation both as voter? (Cultural, religious norms and stereotypes/ Women's perception of the lack of safety for women in the political sphere/ Absence of gender equality policies/ Lack of financial resources and skills among women/ Lack of education and literacy among women)
8. In your opinion, how can these challenges be overcome?
9. Did you face any barriers in exercising your choice and your vote? If yes then, how did you overcome them? From whom you faced these barriers and restrictions? How did you overcome them?
10. In your opinion which strategies should the government and local councils can effectively promote meaningful political participation of women (as a voter)
11. In your opinion which strategies should civil society adopt to effectively promote meaningful political participation of women and increase representation in your country? (Both as a voter and candidate)

Section II Perspectives about women candidates

1. In your opinion how should the government and local councils can effectively promote meaningful and increased political representation of women?
2. Can you provide examples of different strategies or initiatives you know of that key actors have taken that have positively impacted on promoting women's representation and meaningful participation?
3. What are the major challenges faced by women which effect women's and participation as a candidate? (Cultural, religious norms and stereotypes/
Women's perception of the lack of safety for women in the political sphere/
Absence of gender equality policies/ Lack of financial resources and skills among women/
Lack of education and literacy among women)

Annexure II: Survey Questionnaire

Questionnaire- Women's Political Participation

Awaz e Niswan Under the project JAZBA is conducting research on Women's Political Participation. The proposed study would help understand the underlying reasons and causes, which prevent young women from political participation and their lack of interest in the process. Furthermore, the study will probe the role of formal and informal institutions, facilitating and constraining factors regarding political participation of young women. The study would help JAZBA in designing and executing interventions that further support engagement of young women in electoral processes. The study will also provide direction to the engagement with young women by the Awaz e Niswan network.

Respondent Details: Name: Age: District: Province
Education:

Have you ever voted in an Election?

1. Yes
2. No

Did you, or any female member of your family vote in the last general Election of 2018?

1. Yes I voted
2. No I did not vote
3. Yes, female members of my family voted
4. No female member of my family voted

What was the criteria for voting in General elections 2018?

1. Party Affiliation
2. Party manifesto
3. Family/community pressure
4. Candidate's reputation/ message
5. Never given it a thought

Reasons for not voting in last election? (Social Barriers) (Please tick all that apply)

- A. Polling station was far from home
- B. Underage at the time of registration drive
- C. Family does not allow

- D. Local notables
- E. Cultural and religious restrictions
- F. Sickness/out of city
- G. Not interested to vote anyone

Reasons for not voting in last election? (Institutional Barriers) (Please tick all that apply)

- A. Lack of gender segregated polling booth
- B. Lack of female staff at polling station
- C. Lack of security
- D. Lack of transport
- E. Distance to polling station
- F. Other

Mark those responsibilities of elected local representatives (Mayor/Nizam/Chairman) of which you are aware of?

- A. Provision of infrastructure & services
- B. District/Tehsil budgeting
- C. Resolving local disputes
- D. Others

Are you aware of the duties of elected representatives?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Mark those responsibilities of MNAs and MPAs of which you are aware of? (Please tick all that apply)

- A. Legislation in assembly
- B. Provide oversight on government operations and works
- C. Represent citizen interests in the government
- D. Others

Have you ever planned to contest election?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

If yes, barriers faced (Please tick all that apply)

- A. Conducting Political rallies/election campaigns/ holding corner meetings
- B. Acquiring Party Ticket for election
- C. Security threats
- D. Lack of family support
- E. Finance

Did you ever receive threats for participating in the political process?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

If yes, what was the nature of threats? (Please tick all that apply)

- A. Character assassination
- B. Cyber bullying
- C. Abduction
- D. Rape
- E. Sexual Assault
- F. Mob violence
- G. Death threats
- H. Other, please specify: _____

In your opinion what are the benefits for promoting meaningful political participation of women in Pakistan? (Please tick all that apply)

- A. Increases public trust in the political system
- B. Impacts the policy agenda
- C. Expands the pool of women willing to run for office
- D. Contributes to socio-economic development
- E. Promotes better understanding of gender equality issues in society
- F. Improves the image and credibility of institutions (governments, political parties, parliaments)
- G. Other (please specify):

In your opinion which strategies should the government use to effectively promote meaningful political participation of women and increase representation in Pakistan? (Please tick all that apply)

- A. Raise the percentage of women voters who must cast their votes in any constituency from 10% to 33%

- B. Ensure political and civic education classes in all high schools, secondary and degree education institutions.
- C. Increase reserved seats for women at all tiers to 33% of the total members.
- D. Provide a quota for female and male youth seats, with “youth” defined as 18-29 years of age.
- E. Enforce campaign finance laws so that costs are not a barrier for a woman candidates.
- F. Ensure security of women candidates.
- G. Government should improve the quality of data on girls and young women with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds in accessing the political and civic spheres.
- H. Federal and Provincial governments should establish quotas for women in all government bodies and committees at all tiers (federal, provincial, district and in Parliament)
- I. Laws mandating elections within political parties at stipulated intervals (e.g. every 3 years or 4 years) with a minimum percentage set for women in party positions

Do you aspire to become an active, politically engaged citizen of Pakistan?

- Yes
- No

What will motivate you to become an active engaged citizen?

(Tick all that apply)

- A. Include political / civic education in high school and college
- B. Easily accessible, user-friendly information about how to become engaged
- C. Information sessions organised by Election Commission of Pakistan with local NGOs and political parties in educational institutions and in community spaces (for female community members)
- D. Permission from family members
- E. Secure environment in public spaces
- F. Quota for young women in political parties at community and district level



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