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## Women Empowerment in Local Self Government in Tehsil Miranshah North Waziristan Tribal District: Problem and Prospects

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### Abstract

*The study is mainly focused on the women's empowerment in local self-government in Tehsil Miranshah, North Waziristan Tribal District. A multi-disciplinary approach is applied in this study. The study shed light on the brief evolution of local government system and its features in former Federally Administered Tribal Areas; and the scholar has also tried to mention the ratio of women's representation and participation in decision making process at local government institutions levels. The Scholar has also conceptualized the concept of women empowerment in Tehsil Miranshah with the support of Governance theory, various theories of Gender studies. In addition, it is discussed within the framework of Feminist School of thought. The data collected during survey shows that the social and cultural values of the locality in north Waziristan is the main hindrances to women in order to participate in the local government institution.*

**Keywords:** Women Empowerment, Political Participation, Impediments, North Waziristan, Patriarchy, Pakhtunwali.

### Introduction

Modern participatory democracy and good governance are closely related to each other. Participatory of neglected sector like women, minority, transgender and youth in different spheres of society in order to promote accountability, transparency, effectiveness, efficiency and strategic vision based on equity and rule of law. Women political participation in politics and local self-government is key pillar and attributes of participatory democracy and good governance. The issue is that good governance is not possible without women active political participation in politics. Therefore, it is argued that local-self-government and women political participation is also important aspects of this research study. In Pakistan generally and tribal areas in particularly Women political participation in politically administratively and financially has not gained too much attention in all sphere of politics. (Khan, 2010).

However, under 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment of 1973 Constitution, Fata has been merged with Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Women empowerment in newly created tribal district through their due share in local self-government so there is dire need to make them a part of main stream country politics. The Study on Women's Political Empowerment in Local Self-government in Fata: A case study of North Waziristan Tribal District Challenges and Prospects is important for several reasons firstly;

Pakistan is male dominated society where women historically been deprived from political participation. These restrictions show that tribal community is conservative social norms has created barriers for women seeking to engage in Social life. Secondly, the study has rationale based because North Waziristan district is a region that has experienced much political and social upheaval in last few years, including military operations against militancy and also the influxes of the IDPs these incidents created new challenges for the women political participation in the region. Thirdly considering women political participation in tribal society provides insight to the factor that hinders women political participation. In the context of Pakistan tribal norms values and customs play important role in decision making. Here the story of women right is not the only subject under men suppression but all the important matters are controlled by tribal customaries.

Ex- Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) has important geo strategic position in South Asia during the period of Cold War and Post September 11, 2001 in pre- Independence period it was a buffer zone between Great Britain and Russia. In 1901 Britain introduced FCR Law (Frontier Crime Regulations 1901) for its administrative and political purpose, so in order to control the local people Britain appointed their officials. (Wazir, 2007).

Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto the former Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party in 1974 takes initiative to merge Fata with North West Frontier Province N.W.F.P. So for this Purpose a commission was formed under the chairmanship of Nasir Ullah Babar to Chalk out plan for this purpose. Consequently, the military takeover in July 1977 postponed the plan; it was the first development plan formulated for the people of Fata later in 1996 due to Adult Franchise system for the first time right to vote for the people of Fata was granted (Jafferlot, 2006).

#### **Research Problem:**

Women political empowerment is crucial issue for any state or society. Women political participation in local self-government is need of the day in modern democratic system. Women role can't be ignored therefore this thesis is aim to assess and analyze the role of women political empowerment in local self-government will be taken into consideration along with prospects and challenges in North Waziristan tribal district. Moreover, the socio-cultural values of Pashtun code of conduct known as *Pakhtunwali* hinder political empowerment of women at grass root level in North Waziristan tribal district. Similarly, patriarchal society, cultural norms, tradition and societal values are all responsible for women's lack of political participation in local self-government in North Waziristan. Therefore, this thesis will also recommend various suggestions and policy options to enhanced women political participation in local self-government.

#### **Research Objectives:**

1. This Study is to know about the desire of the local people of North Waziristan tribal district about local self-government.
2. This Study aims to know the views of the local people about the women political participation in decision making process at grass root level
3. This study aims to contribute to policy making on local self-government in newly tribal districts with main focus on North Waziristan tribal district.

**Significance of The Study**

The study on women's political empowerment in local self-government in North Waziristan district holds significant academic, institutional and wider implications. Academically, the nature of women political empowerment will enable the scholar develop their knowledge regarding gender dynamics in politics, moreover feminist theories will helpful in in-depth understanding of socio-cultural nature of the study and intersectional analysis. Institutionally, this study provides valuable understandings for policy makers in order to make efforts for the promotion of gender equality in political spheres and participation. This study will help in understanding the importance of women political participation at grass root organizational level. Moreover, this study is useful in the sense that it will try to explore the local government that bring progress and prosperity in modern time. Being periphery and far flung area, FATA has great potential for modern democracy but unfortunately there is no major work done on it. The different themes of the study like participatory democracy, political participation of women will help us to understand FATA and its people voice in depth and clarity. This research work will have covered the history of political life in FATA. To make a more in-depth understanding the social structure will also be study. However, the prime focus will be on women political participation in local self-government in North Waziristan district.

**Literature Review:**

Shad and Ahmad (2018) in their work discussed the political, and administrative history of Federally administered tribal areas as an example of effective government, they cited the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR), 1901. They spoke about how extremism and terrorism had altered the lives of people there as well. The National Action Plan (NAP) and the FATA Reforms Package from December 2014 were cited as examples. In an effort to bring these underdeveloped regions up to speed economically and politically, the central government formed the FATA Reforms Committee in November 2015. The FCR, which had been in effect for a century, was repealed and replaced by the FATA Interim Governance Regulation as part of the Thirty-first Constitutional Amendment Act of 2018. One of the suggestions was to create a system of local self-government. However, the topic of interest is not addressed in this book.

Tabassum (2016) has briefly explored the role of women in local government. Until the local bodies elections in 2005, She lauded the varying Pakistani regimes for devolving political, administrative, and financial authority to popularly elected regional and municipal governments. On the other hand, democratic leaders have always fought against organizations with broad support from the public because they saw them as a danger to their control over local affairs. She also praised the 2001 Local Government Ordinance for its provision of quotas guaranteeing women at least a share in office., however, she did not emphasize women's empowerment in FATA's previous local governments

Wazir and Khan (2014) provide a comprehensive analysis of the legal framework in FATA, focusing on the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) of 1901, the Constitutions of Pakistan, and the various regulations introduced by the government at various points in time before and after independence. They complained that the FCR modifications didn't do much to improve the quality of people's political, social, or economic lives where they were implemented. They also emphasized the exceptional powers of the Political Agent (a high-ranking government official).

The inconsistencies and outright contradictions in the FCR with other parts of the Constitution of Pakistan, in their views, severely limit the ability of the country's courts and legislature to help the tribal regions' native population. The landmark event in FATA's political and legal history was the introduction of adult franchise and the staging of general election to the National Assembly of Pakistan in 1997. Furthermore, local people in FATA might be given more agency via the establishment of local self-government organizations in accordance with Article 140 of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan. As much as its members were chosen and nominated by the Political Agents rather than elected by the general population, the Agency Councils were unable to play a substantial role in the development of these tribal communities.

According to Rai (2011) one measure of a developed democracy is the percentage of eligible voters who actually cast ballots. Gender discrimination may be eliminated by changes in the law and institutional practices if women have a voice in politics and administration. The Indian Constitution from 1952 addresses the promotion of and preservation of economic, social, and political justice as well as equality of opportunity and standing. In contrast, there has been little progress made towards addressing the issue of women's underrepresentation in national and state legislatures and political parties. Some of the most prominent barriers to women's political engagement in India include the political party structure, the patriarchal societal structure, and discrimination in seat allocation.

Jamal (2016) has written on the many obstacles women in Pakistan's tribal regions face while trying to get an education. To back up his claims, he cited works from both domestic and international authors. He further claims that Pashtun women are not treated as equals in society. Misunderstandings of religious teachings on the subject of women's education have also been a barrier to the development of the field in indigenous communities.

. Khan (2012) has shown out why Ex tribal areas, or FATA, have been less developed than they might be, and. She also thought about how international terrorism has slowed the country's progress economically and socially. However, the indifferent policies of the succeeding governments, the cold war, and the unique geographical position also added fuel to the fire. She spoke out against two prevalent matrimonial socio-cultural values in the tribal areas, **Swara** (a custom to give killer's hand to the heir of the killed to settle blood feud) and **Vulvar** (Ser paisay means 'bride money or head money'), calling them "humiliating and unacceptable," and "against the spirit of Islam." As a result, she is effectively subservient to her master (husband). These factors also worked against the goal of fostering a warm and loving marriage for the couple. Many women in tribal communities in FATA have died because of the Tor or black societal norms.

Kumar & Shetty (2020) studied women participation in Indian local elections. So inquiry in Indian local election shows that women participation in Municipal government is just 20% which is far less than men. Moreover, the authors linked this low ratio of women participation in local election with societal norms and tradition which discourage women from participating in government activities. However, authors also emphasis on educational facilities to females so that the gap of low level of women involvement in local election will be filled. Authors also discuss that that the low female representation in election or any regional and political campaign is the major issue which needs to be address.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In North Waziristan, women face discrimination and they are limited to their house hold activities in the male dominated society. As a result of this gender in equality women are consider inferior to men. So the most appropriate theory for this study is **Liberal Feminism Theory**. Liberal Feminism also known as “egalitarian or mainstream feminism”. It focuses that all human beings should be treated equally and no one should be deprived from equal opportunity on ground of gender (Mill 1869). They mainly focus on the women’s representation in public spheres on equality basis so as to enable them to participate in the decision making process. However, they see women as under- represented in the governmental and international institutions. Women do not enjoy a high managerial status in such institutions but a relegated position like clerk or supporting staff. They intend to identify the obstacles in the way of emancipation of women so as to address them and to provide opportunity to interested women to take part in political and public affairs. Basically this theory urged for gender equality individual rights and legal reforms. From the perspective of North Waziristan Society there is dire need to examine root cause of various of gender disparities across various domains including political participation.

This research also contributes to the development of a new theoretical framework known as the "**In-built Socio-Political Resistance Theory.**" This theory examines many political, bureaucratic, social, cultural, and religious issues that hinder the progress of women's empowerment. It is possible to enhance the political system **khan and Ul Haq (2022)**. Nevertheless, it is important to have genuine and dedicated political leadership in order to implement changes that are beneficial to the public, develop policies that prioritize the well-being of their constituents, and their power as a firm responsibility entrusted to them by the people, while being accountable to the popular will. The presence of bureaucratic involvement hinders the development of local government institutions in Fata, as well as the promotion of women's empowerment in all its forms. Political and institutional reasons provide significant obstacles to the empowerment of women at the grassroots level within local self-government organizations. The absence of a strong commitment from national political leaders to provide women an autonomous political standing has also impeded their empowerment. Moreover, the lack of interest shown by the national political leadership towards promoting local self-government is a significant hindrance to the empowerment of women at the grassroots level.

### **Hypothesis**

The socio-cultural values encompassed in Pakhtunwali (Pashtun Code of Conduct) hinder the political empowerment of women at the grass-roots levels in Tehsil Miranshah of the newly merged North Waziristan Tribal district.

### **Research Methodology**

Methodology used for this research study is both qualitative and quantitative or mixed method.. The literature review shows that the area of the selected study is innovative to be explored. There is some secondary data with respect to women empowerment in the former FATA and also political-cum-administrative aspects of governance in FATA. The scholar, therefore, will rely on the secondary data (books and research articles of various journals) for historical background of the study. However, the scholar relied on primary data in the shape of questionnaire – composed of both closed-ended and open-ended questions – and interview schedule – composed of both

closed-ended and open-ended questions – to justify the hypothesis. The sampling for this study was purposive-stratified. The scholar will collect primary data from government officials in Deputy Commissioner Office, officials in education and local government departments, and District Election Commission office. The scholar will also collect this data from the general local public through the above research data-collection tools according to their education level. The secondary data was analyzed through Content Analysis. The primary data was analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

### **Findings**

The thorough critical study of the various points of view of various respondents shows the local population including both educated and uneducated have no experience of local government system and unfamiliar with importance of local bodies. They did not get any training in local bodies. With respect to women's participation in local bodies, majority of the respondents particularly the elders of locality were unwilling to allow them.

### **Recommendations**

The interviews from people from different walks of life regarding social, economic, administrative and political empowerment are integrated as follow.

#### **Social Empowerment**

Tribal society is mostly patriarchal in nature where male member of the family is dominant. Females are not empowered to make their own decision about their matrimonial choices, education, job or any decision which can change their life. Family institution is dependent on both male and female members but in FATA, male is having an authority in decision making for the family. Government can play its role for social empowerment of women in FATA taking the following steps.

The basic reforms should be introduced in the existing Local Government Act of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In this connection, the following structural and functional changes need to be introduced.

#### **Political-cum-Social Empowerment**

The following reforms need to be introduced.

##### **1. Establishment of Separate Union Councils**

Separate Female Union Councils (FUCs) need to be established. All seats should be general. The Method of election, terms and conditions should be like those of Union Councils in other parts of the province as given in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government (Amendment) Act, 2019.

It is also needed to mention that under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government (Amendment) Act, (KP LGA) 2019, 3624 Village Councils and 559 Neighbourhood Councils have been provided. Under the KP LGA, 2019 the number of VC and NC in Agency Districts.

Such FUC should consist of five women union councilors contrary to current composition of VC/NC that is seven included three general seats, one woman, one youth, one peasant and one minority. The women representation should be omitted from the current VC/NC.

So far as powers and functions of the FUC are concerned, all the powers should be excluded from it and it should be given the following powers and functions. It should be socially empowered especially in health and education sectors. The following functions pertaining to health need to be assigned to FUC. It should have the power:

- a. To propose reforms at the grass roots level;
- b. To coordinate with the Primary or Basic Health Units (BHU) located in the concerned FUC;
- c. To evaluate the performance and conditions of those BHU in terms of staff availability, medicines, laboratory equipment, and infrastructure;
- d. To introduce reforms with respect to Mother-Child Health Care; and
- e. To coordinate with Tehsil, District and Provincial Health Administration.

In addition, in education sector FUC should be empowered:

- a. To coordinate with the girl's primary schools (GPS) to revisit existing education policy and to propose reforms to Tehsil, District and Provincial Education Administration;
- b. To monitor the conditions of GPS and to monitor their infrastructure facilities;
- c. To modernize these schools with modern information technology; and
- d. To provide solar system facility for uninterrupted supply of electricity to students.

Besides these the following steps are required. As earlier stated that the former tribal areas are closed society and very difficult to open for change especially in case of female freedom to go out of home for political participation. Keeping in view the norms and culture of the society, females can socially be empowered by forming village based community organizations. The community headed by the head of the organization shall be responsible for gathering of the females of the said village. This will provide a platform to the females to openly discuss their matters and find a way forward to resolves such issues pertaining to females' hindrances in the process of social empowerment. Tribal females should be encouraged and motivated to become part of the village based organization. They must be imparted Islamic and modern education to establish a sound family system acceptable to their socio-cultural environment. Separate Women University should be founded in each tribal district including Miranshah. Government should provide scholarships to females for their education

### **Economic Empowerment**

FUC should be financially empowered. Economic empowerment is closely connected with socio-political empowerment. In Pakhtoon society generally and tribal pakhtoon society particularly, women are hardly allowed to go out of homes and to earn bread and butter for themselves or to involve in any kind of business activities. In such circumstances, alternate means of business opportunities can be provided. In this regard, the following recommendations are made.

- Livestock and dairy industry at domestic level needs to encourages and promoted. The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa needs to allocate budget for this purpose. The concerned provincial ministry and local government institutions should be involved in promotion of this industry.
- Indoor boutiques should be encouraged and promoted. The concerned ministry with the collaboration of district and tehsil administration, indoor boutiques should be established because the local women of tribal areas are skillful in making local traditional dresses.
- Handcraft industry must also be promoted to exploit the skill of the local female in tribal areas.

- The government needs to establish female vocational training centers which shall provide free basic training to women for acquiring different skills such as embroidery, handicrafts, rearing of cattle, poultry making, and setting up of poultry farm.
- Government must provide interest free loans for new entrepreneurs.

### **Administrative of Women Empowerment**

It is worth to mention that women neither in the national nor in the local political process were allowed to take part. Still it will take time to bring change in the mindset of the local tribal areas towards political and administrative empowerment.

- Change in attitude of bureaucracy is also need of the hour. Bureaucracy since colonial era was the master of the rank and file. It should be made public servant in real sense. Its main objective should be to deliver services to common man of the tribal areas who suffered since colonial period.
- Female civil servants need to be deputed in the newly merged tribal districts so as to have maximum interaction with the females of the tribal areas.

In addition to all the aforementioned suggestions, the following suggestions should also be kept under consideration.

- Female seats should be allocated for FATA at provincial assembly.
- In tehsil head quarter there no any single female worker. Government should need to announce special vacancy for them.
- Government should need to increase quota for the female of FATA
- After Merger Government must ensure all departments in newly merge districts and give opportunity to females
- Government must announce scholarships for female of Ex FATA to complete their higher studies
- It is needed that government must have announced Internship program for female to aware female about Government jobs.

### **Conclusion**

The Thorough analysis of the selected issue shows that socio-cultural norms are the major impediment in the way of implementation of the local government system in FATA generally and in tehsil Miranshah particularly. The study also shows that both educated and uneducated class of tribal society are unfamiliar with the significance of local government system. So in such circumstances it will be hard nut to change the socio-cultural values of tribal people.

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