Femininity and Women Political Participation in Pakistan

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Abstract

Gender gaps in political participation are quite persistent and significant in both developed and under developing countries. However, femininity and political participation has very much less researched area. This study explains how are the dominant, hegemonic discourses of gender producing subordinate, submissive feminine identities that adhere to the masculine political connotations and result in the low political participation in Pakistan. Social constructionist understanding of gender is the underlying theoretical foundation of this article. This research engages qualitative research methodology and method includes in-depth interviews with 20 women selected purposefully, participant and non participant observation and various informal discussions with women informants. It can be concluded that domesticity ideology, gendered division of labor, traditional gender roles, strict division of private and public sphere, adherence to essentialist and biological determinism, hegemonic political structure and the emphasized femininity are characteristics of feminine identity in the Pakistan. This feminine identity is undermining women capabilities, creating social barrier and leaving meager spaces in the masculine political structure of Pakistan and hence, lowering the level of political participation.

Introduction

Gender gaps in political participation were found to be quite persistent and notable in the western, industrialized and democratic countries (e.g. Bennett & Bennett, 1992; Parry *et al.*, 1992; Scholzman *et al.*, 1995; Burns *et al.*, 1997; Verba *et al.*, 1997; Scholzman *et al.*, 1999; Norris, 2002; Burns, 2007; Gallego, 2007; Paxton *et al.*, 2007; Dalton, 2008) and a research area since 1950s. Conventionally feminine characteristics like submissiveness, dependence, passivity and reproduction are considered incoherent with political activities and left women out of political context and make women politically incongruous (Jackman, 1994; Sigal, 1996; Hollows, 2000; Cole & Sabik, 2010). However, feminist understanding of feminine identity and political participation in classical patriarchal/ developing society like Pakistan calls for the inquiry.

Women remained politically very visible during Pakistan movement and participated actively in subsequent political and constitutional processes. Ms. Fatima Jinnah, Begum Shaista Ikramullah, Begum Ra'ana Liaqat Ali, Begum Shah Nawaz, Lady Abdullah Haroon, Lady Hafeezullah, Begum Hafeezudin, are the few to name. In the current politics Benazir Bhutto (late), Fehmida Mirza, Sherry Rehman, Hina Rabbani Kher, Marvi Memon, Maryam Nawaz and many more hold the important portfolios in different governments. Pakistan also holds distinct position in the other Muslim countries and became trendsetter when Benazir Bhutto was elected as the first prime minister and Dr. Fehmida Mirza as the first speaker of the national assembly (Repila, 2013). Similarly, Samina Khalid Ghurki was appointed as minister for social welfare and special education, Sherry Rehman as minister for information and broadcasting, Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan as health minister, Hina Rabbani khar as minister for foreign affairs, Anusha Rehman khan, leads ministry of information and technology and Saira Afzal Tarar is a state minister for national health

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services (Saeed, 2008; Ali, 2015). However, most of them belong to politically influential families with a very strong support of their men who are already in politics. It is important to point out that in some cases the male members were unable to manage the qualifications imposed by the election commission so they brought forward the female members as substitute/ replacement candidates, just to continue the political legacy of that family/ party in that constituency/ area. Majority of them are considered 'elites' and believed to be the extension of male political discourse. Quota/ reserved seats paved way of entering into politics for selected women however their presence in the politics posed serious question of representation of majority of the women of Pakistan and the very effectiveness of quota system itself (True *et. al.*, 2014).

Patriarchal structure of the Political parties still does not consider women appropriate for politics (Yusuf, 2013). Political parties used women representation for public gatherings, political meetings and during political campaigns however, they consider them idle vote bank (Zakar, 2005). Women wings of the political parties serve this purpose of representative function (Bano, 2009). This trend of political parties point out the important fact that they are not active/ serious in addressing women issues (Yusuf, 2013).

Methodology

Nature of this study calls for the in-depth analysis of the experiences of women rather than mere numeric narration. Similarly, intention was to provide a holistic view of social phenomena (Hatch, 2002; Marshal & Rossman, 2006), focus on participants' perspectives, their meanings and their subjective views (Hatch, 2002) and framing of human behavior and belief within a social-political/historical context or through a cultural lens (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Thus, in-depth and rich data remains the focus of this study rather using broader research methods associated with positivist approach offering less in–depth information (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Padgett, 1998).

The methods included in depth interviews with 20 women selected purposefully, participant and non participant observation and various informal discussions with women informants. The interviews were unstructured allowing flexibility, flow of information, and liberty of conversation. The interview was followed by the informal discussion with women provided them more space on reflecting and contextualizing their experiences in conversation way. The interviews were conducted in Punjabi language. All the women were very conversant with this language. The information was then translated into English and transcribed.

Age of the women participated in the study ranged from 24 – 56 years. All of the respondents were married and had at least one child. At the time of the interview 18 women were living in joint family while 2 were living in a nuclear family arrangement. All of the respondents were home makers and were not engaged in any formal income generating activity. All of the respondents were living in their own owned house. All of the respondents were married into their own caste group. All of them belonged to lower and middle class with income ranged Rs. 15000-25000 per month. The 5 respondents were educated up to primary level, 3 were matriculate while 12 were illiterate. All of the respondents were quite familiar with vote casting process and had casted their votes in the last election and two of the respondents had town committee members on women seats. All of the respondents knew the local politicians.

Analysis and Discussion

This section interprets women voters' views and tries to highlight their position in the masculine political structure. Analysis of women voters' views also put forth interesting facts i.e.,

some of the women are facilitating the male hegemony by narrating that women are less skillful, incompetent and made for domesticity. These women advocate the gender division as rational, logical, natural and destined by the will of God. Appreciation of power relations make women subordination grave on the one hand while strengthening dominant discourses and power groups (male) on the other. This article focuses on the ways feminine identity is constructed and fixed as natural and unchallenged. The forth coming discussion presents the themes derived from the in-depth interviews of women voters.

Gendered Division of Labor

Women were asked regarding the ideal gendered roles performed by both men and women in Pakistani society i.e., women ideally suitable for private and men best suited for public. The responses expressed by the respondents were predominantly nested in biological deterministic explanation of gender roles.

Most of the respondents strongly believed in biological determinism. They were convinced that women are made to do household chores and men to do hard jobs in public domain. The biological differences between men and women guide their actions in the social world. One of respondents expressed that,

> *"The biologically week nature of a woman is logically suitable for household chores and homely activities. She can best do the small activities of cooking, cleaning, nurturing children and taking care of husband. She is unable to go outside and do the hard work. She is not made for manly activities. She cannot be a man".*

Similar views were shared by another respondent. She argued that:

> *"We are not physically strong and enduring. We are week and innocent. We are not like men. They know how to deal with difficult things. We are best for home and home related chores. This is what we can do and made for. Home and woman are synonymous, inseparable".*

These responses vividly show the biological differences between men and women as the basis of women subordination (de Beauvoir, 1972). Women themselves believe that they are week and made for home and homely activities. They consider male biology ideal for hard jobs in the public domain (Geddes and Thompson, 1890). It can be asserted that women in the study locale strongly believe in the domestic ideology thesis and traditional gender roles as natural.

An old woman shared her views as,

> *"Nature (God) has created women from the rib- a tender, week and flexible bone. Women are physically week creation. Their bodies are not capable of doing hard jobs. They are created keeping in view the home and related activities".*

Another respondent shared that:

> *"Men are the reflection of God on the earth. God has made them superior and powerful and women are inferior and week. Women are less intelligent and emotional. How can women be equal to men? It is obvious disobedience to God's will to replace the both with one another".*

The above quote gives warning to feminists that the struggle for gender equality is an open challenge to God's will and design.

The afore mentioned stance was reinforced by another respondent. She argued,

> **"***God has planned things very wisely. God knows who can perform what. He has designated women with the motherly qualities, attributes and men the fatherly (earning) one. Women should remain in home and men to go outside and earn the money for her and the family. Both women and men should abide by the laws made by God".*

Essentialist understanding of gender encoded in the biological differences legitimized the hegemonic masculinity and subordinate femininity as divine plan and natural. Gendered division of labor based on the biological differences between women and men is believed divine and natural. Thus, rationalizing the separation of women and men's spheres into the private/ inferior for women and public/ superior for men (Chodorow, 1978).

Defining on good women an old woman asserted that,

> *"Good woman get out of her home only twice in her life: once when she is getting married and going to her husband's home; and when she dies and her dead body is taken to a graveyard, rest of her life she is destined to be at home doing domestic chores. Women out side home are looked down upon and taken as immoral".*

The above discourse locates a good woman as the one who stay at home and do not go out. The discourse declares going out as immoral and threat to family honor and respect.

Another woman supported the same narrative as,

> *"Women are carriers of family name, honor and prestige. Going outside the home can risk them. It is better to die than to spoil the honor and family name. True (masculine) men make their women stay at home (doing domestic chores)".*

Women are believed to be the custodian of moral standards and carriers of family name, honor and reputation. Women's moral evaluation depends how passionately they are adhering the cultural standards in the public and private domains (Chodorow, 1995). Thus, moral order of the society facilitates the sex based division of labor. These explanations very clearly embody the women's perception of gendered division of labor and its justification from cultural, religious and moral perspectives.

All of the women interviewed were very strong advocate of biological determinism. They support the essentialist understanding of gender division of labor and the public and private division of the social world. Women believed non conformity to the societal standards is a threat to their femininity and gender division of labor. They also considered it deviation if men are not performing their role accordingly.

One of the respondents very firmly asserted that,

> *"Men should not stay at home like women. They should move like free birds. They should only be in home to take rest, have food and back to work again".*

The response was reinforced by another respondent. She asserted,

> *"Men taking interest in domestic chores are not true (masculine) men. How a man can be like a woman (role performance)? This is shameful for a woman if her husband does her work. She is incompetent (does not know her role) and bring curse for her and her husband. How can she manage her identity as a woman (ironic)"?*

Women responses have very lucidly demonstrate the domestic ideology and performance of traditional gender roles. Willful observance of sex based division of labor indicates the women position with respect to men in the society. Women are naturally happy in performance of traditional gender roles but also safeguard gender power relations by creating justification for men to domesticate them shows the reproductive power (Millet, 1971).

Description of responses summarizes and justifies the home and homely chores and activities as women's domain while public domain as the men prerogative. It points out the power of culturally designed discourses of gender in Pakistani society which sets the rules for both women and men. Feminist post structuralist stance demonstrates the power of male who are getting the benefits from the gender/power discourses prevalent in Pakistani society. Women were complying with the designed stances of femininity, subordination and traditional gender roles and also protecting

masculine ethos. This obedience yields social acceptability, security and adjustment in the masculine political structure of Pakistani society.

Feminine Identity

Women were asked the question: what characteristics constituting their identity in Pakistani society? How do they see themselves and other women in their social world? The responses overwhelmingly depicted the classical patriarchal construction of feminine identity mix of behavioral traits, physical features and emotional expressions, and above all, the submissiveness to their men. A middle aged woman responded that,

> *"Woman means "something covered not open". Woman should be soft spoken, mild and caring. They should be disciplined and docile. They should be the source of peace and tranquility for family".*

Similar explanation was given by another respondent. She argued,

> *"Women are the future mothers. They should be trained enough to take care of their families and children. They should exhibit behavior that is joyful for family. They should be welcoming and ready to take any assignment pertaining to family and husband".*

Another respondent held the belief that,

> *"Women can make the home hell or paradise with her behavior. If she is caring and efficient in her skills, submissive and has full control over her tongue the home becomes paradise. Women who argue all the time are the cause of discomfort and source of hell in home".*

Responses emphasized private nature of feminine characteristics of women. Domesticity as women identity appears to be the prominent feature of femininity in Pakistani society. Another interesting narration of women as "something" personifies the objectification of women identity and shows the ultimate subordination to existing discourses of gender in Pakistani society. Physical features of the women have different meanings for different respondents. Some of them were of the views that women should have beautiful features and attractive physique. Nonetheless, many respondents did not consider the beautiful features important. A young woman described that,

> *"Women are synonymous to beauty and attraction. Women should look like women so to attract their husbands. Physical beauty can make marital relation more enduring. Women feel good and confident if they have attractive and charming physique".*

Similar views were expressed by another respondent,

> *"Beauty is a blessing of God. Woman should be beautiful to a considerable extent otherwise marital relationships can be at risk. Men feel good and their conduct with wives is good if they are beautiful".*

Another description of beauty says,

> *"Beauty of a woman is not the physical features and attractiveness. It is her conduct, behavior, treatment with husband and interaction with in-laws. If she is cordial to everyone in the family and reciprocates effectively she is really a beautiful one. Mere physical beauty is of no use".*

The discourses of beautiful women express many aspects and characteristics. Thus physical marks of beauty are equated with good behavior with family members. The beauty is interpreted within the context of marriage and family and smooth relationships. Beauty is traded with respectability and adjustment within the family (Renzetti and Curren, 1992).

Feminine identity is very loudly associated and characterized with emotional expressions. These emotional expressions are again privately owned and demonstrated within family. Another respondent emphasized that,

> *"Women should be loving, caring and considerate. This is the prerequisite to smoothly run the home. She should be soft spoken and should keep her voice low. Women should possess ultimate forbearance. They should show the tolerance to a great extent".*

Similar views were shared by other respondent. She asserted that,

> *"Women should be very tolerant and forgiving. I believe these characteristics of women help them to go a long way. These virtues are very vital to save her and her family life".*

Emotional expressions in private sphere (home) are considered very important for the smooth functioning of family affairs. Women's emotional expressions i.e. tolerance, forbearance, forgiveness, are the emotions that symbolizes the submissiveness and subordination. These emotional expressions are used against the women in case of disagreement within family or in the cases of violence against women. Emotional expressions can be used to conceal the incidence or its gravity.

I see the responses unidirectional i.e. women domesticity, conformity of traditional gender roles and resultantly the subordination. Their behaviors, physical features and emotional expressions are gendered and revolve around the family. The constituted feminine identity becomes the subordinate femininity and complies with the hegemonic designs of the masculine political structure of Pakistan. Thus, results in the low political participation of women. The crux of the discussion here is that women should confine themselves to home and family life. They are not encouraged to be politically active and participate in the public domain, especially politics.

Political Sphere and Leadership

Women voters' percentage has increased significantly during the last national elections held in 2013. However women political participation is a complex phenomenon with different levels and types.

It was asked how they see the politics and do they think women should go for politics and can be political leaders. Women were very skeptical regarding politics. They thought of politics as dirty game, false promises, maneuvering, deception, interest groups, fights, violence and power play for power elites. Their responses are presented in the following section.

One of the respondents argued,

> *"Politics is basically lying all the time to all the people. Politics is not for common and innocent people. Politics is for wicked and clever people. Only corrupt can go longer in politics. Politics is not for the common people. They should focus on their family and home".*

Politics was further explained by other respondent as,

> *"Looters can become good politicians. Politics is all about looting the poor and becoming rich. Only rich people having illegal money can be in politics. Politics is only for rich and wealthy people. Poor hardly manage the daily affairs. Their ultimate desire is to run their homes efficiently. They hardly make their both ends meet".*

One of the respondents opined as,

> *"Politics is all about wealth and power. Land lords and wealthy people are suitable for politics. Cunning, shrewd, clever and talkative people are good in politics".*

Women portrayal of politics depicts their expression and views. This very simply states the perception of the common people in Pakistan. Negative image of politics and politicians shows the lack of trust, corrupt political culture and less political socialization of the women. They were

deliberately kept away from the political activities and political processes and resultantly developed the epithetic feeling for masculine political discourse in Pakistan (see also Rapoport, 1991; Verba *et al.*, 1997; Lovenduski, 2005; Burns, 2007).

While answering to the question should women go for politics, respondents in a larger majority took the stance that only way to take part in politics is to cast a vote beyond this politics is only for men. Casting a vote is not an independent decision or matter of choice for women. Mostly male head of the family dictates whom to cast a vote. A respondent gave detail as:

> *"Politics is male prerogative. Women have nothing to do with politics. During the elections, we are asked to cast votes for a specific candidate. We go and cast our votes for that candidate. I think it is sufficient for women as for as the politics is concerned".*

Views shared by other respondent regarding this were,

> *"I wonder how some women manage to go to political campaigns? They do not have respect for themselves and their family. How male of their families are tolerating this? I cannot even think of this. I am unable to go to polling station to cast a vote alone".*

A respondent shared her experiences,

> *"Some women came to my home convincing me to vote for some candidate. It seemed very awkward for women to beg for votes. They were chatterboxes. I did not like them at all. Women should go to cast vote to the maximum".*

It is evident from the above responses that middle class women do not like to participate in political activities like convincing, persuading and political campaigning. They see women in political campaigns as awkward and chatterbox. Nevertheless, they were willing to cast votes mostly under the influence of male members of their family. Politics is considered as men's domain. All the political activities are men designed and men centered leaving less space for women to come and operate especially during the elections. If some of the women are engaged for some activities they are only working for their own candidate(s) and they, in most of the cases, are men. Thus, women feel out of the context to be the part of the political activities except casting of vote (Smith, 1990a). When asked, can women become political leaders? Respondents out-rightly rejected the notion of political leadership by women. Moral justifications, religious interpretations, feminine identity, gendered division of labor and lack of skills were presented to justify that women may not become political leader (s). They argued that,

> *"Women have to compromise many things while living and working in male dominated field. Men are surrounding them all the time. They have to go everywhere even at odd timings. This is not morally good things for a woman".*

Another argument appeared,

> *"If women are the political leaders and running the systems (political system), then who will take care of home and children. This will ruin everything- the politics and family".*

Popular explanation stated:

> *"God has made women for home and domestic activities. They should not go beyond the limits. Even Islam does not allow women to be the political leaders".*

Patriarchy combines morality, religion and cultural interpretations to justify its existence and perpetuation. Women under the strong hold of patriarchy are tailoring the justification for their own subjugation and supremacy of men. The patriarchal interpretations become reality and ultimate truth and the women have to go with this reality/truth (Smith, 1990a). They are even unable to think of behaving otherwise. It can be argued that women have been subjected to false consciousness and thus contribute to their own subordination.

Talking about the capacities and capabilities of women as political leader, respondents were very confident that women cannot become good leaders. Women lack individual resources like education, time, money and other necessary skills to become a political leader. They stated that;

"Women cannot become political leaders because they do not have enough qualifications. They are not brave, bold and courageous. Women are unable to take good decision".

Another respondent, pointing out women' incapacity of becoming leader, asserted that,

"Women do not have education, money, time and skills to become political leader. How women can run a country when some of them are unable to run a home properly (laugh)".

In almost similar tone, another respondent argued,

"Political leaders have to be clever, opportunists and very wise. They have to be bold and quick in making decisions. Women are basically innocent and kind hearted. They cannot make bold and quick decisions".

Still another narration,

"Women are naturally less wise and poor in financial matters. How they will make budget of a country. Women are unable to make/ maintain good relations with other male leaders".

The above responses declare women as naturally incapable of becoming political leaders (Coffe & Dilli, 2015). These responses labeled women as intellectually inferior to men. The essentialist belief can be seen as powerful discourses that perpetuate women subordination in society.

Personal incompetence goes further:

"Political leaders have to keep many secrets and women are very talkative and do not have control over their tongues. They are unable to keep secrets and important information for longer time".

Inability of women to become political leader has roots in the strong belief in the women week biology (Geddes & Thompson, 1890) and idealized masculine traits popular in politics. Standardized masculine political leader's traits are male designed and propagated. These are set yardsticks to measure the women's capacities and capabilities in politics.

Threats to Femininity

Respondents were asked the question how political participation was threatening to their feminine identity. Respondents were firm believers of the fact that political engagements to a larger extent shall imprints negative consequences to their identity as women. Their deliberations were uncovering many interesting gender layers in the socio cultural contexts of Pakistani Society. One of the respondents asserted,

"Women in politics no longer remain women; they turned to male by the time. In politics they have to do all dirty things that men do. They have to loose sharam -o- haya (honor). sharam –o- haya (honor) is the only identity of a woman. How can they call themselves women without this (questions in eyes)?

Another description,

"All the time they are among men. They travel with men, talk with men, share opinion with them and take advices. They cross their limits and forget the natural (moral) divide between women and men".

The responses revealed that in politics women have to work in co environment. Another respondent reported,

"Women, engaged in politics, have to ignore their families. I wonder how they manage to leave their kids, husband and families behind. How they justify that they are good women? Women beyond their familial roles are not women at all".

The above quote put the care of family (husband, children etc.) as the main moral responsibility of women.

Another respondent expressed her point of view with very harsh language. She argued that;

> "Women in politics are bad and immoral. They are bitches and prostitutes, exposing their bodies to everyone and devoid of respect and honor".

Gendered socialization inculcates gender norms of domesticity, gender roles and gender division of labor. Strict public/ private division of gender endorses and strengthens the masculine construction of realities (Millet, 1971). Women complying with the normative stances of Pakistani masculine society are loudly vowing the gender norms. They believe that entering into political sphere shall kick them out of normative structure of the society and they have to lose their place/space as women (Skeggs, 2002).

A powerful discourse appears,

> "I strongly believe that the deterioration in society is the result of role reversal. Women are trying to become men and men are doing the women role. Women are challenging the nature (God). Consequently, God is punishing all of us".

Women involvement in politics is considered as a deviation from the God's design which, as opined by the respondents, causes miseries for the humanity.

Religious interpretations are always referred to justify the socially contributed realities. Power discourses seek strong support from these interpretations to maintain dominance. Traditional social organization provides fertile ground to yield the entrenched dominance. Women believe that going away/against the power discourses would be havoc and cause disobedience to God which in turn results in punishment.

Challenges to Masculinity

It was also attempted to know how the respondents see the political participation of women? As their understanding of politics and their attitude to words politics challenge men and their masculinity. Respondents shared their views endorsing the hegemonic masculine practices in Pakistani society. However, some of the respondents see the potential challenges to masculinity of men.

Respondents say,

> "Men can share their power with other men in some situations/ cases but it is difficult for them to share it with women in all instances. Men are crook. They win their trust and use women for their own agenda (poor women)".

It is pertinent to mentioned here that power here is used in its classical meanings.

Another respondent expressed her opinion as,

> "Power remains with men only. They very bluntly take decisions. They do not even bother to ask them. It is logical that men should take charge, they are good at this. Women talk unnecessary. They cannot reach a consensus".

Another female respondent, in almost similar fashion argued;

> "Women are wasting their time in politics. They are disrespecting their families as well as themselves. No one is listing them. None is caring about. They (men) are making fun of them".

The above quote revealed that women involvement in politics brings them disrespect. Women involvement in politics is just wastage of time and they get nothing out of it.

Another respondent declaring women as innocent and men as cunning asserted that,

> "Men take advantage of women's innocence. They put them forward to win the sympathies of voters. Women are puppets true beneficiaries are men".

Men enjoy the power being the power players in the public sphere. They have established the hegemonic masculinity norms in politics and women's informed submission to these norms show the success (Connell, 2006). It can be argued that although women submit to the masculine norms in politics but they seem aware of the fact that men are the beneficiaries and using women as and when desired. This informed submission has the chances of bringing forth change.

A respondent claimed that,

> *"Men feel threatened from women in politics. It is very difficult for men to obey women in politics. Men hardly listen to/ tolerate women in home how they can bear them in politics".*

Another respondent told that,

> *"I still remember when a woman managed to win seat against a male. It seemed very unusual and awkward to listen that a woman is now the member of national assembly. It was very insulting, in fact, that a woman defeated a clergy man".*

These responses pointed out a fact that change in power structure is not accepted and tolerated by the powerful (males). The power structure resists/ reacts in different ways. The perpetuated subordination pronounces the change "*unusual*", "*awkward*" and even "*insulting*".

Conclusion

It can be concluded that women under the strong hold of the patriarchal connotations woven into the socio cultural fabric of the Pakistani society think them unsuitable and out of the context as for as the political realm is concerned. Gender as a socially constructed binary (Butler, 1990) places "women" and "men" into distinct social categories. This discursive construction assumes that certain bodies, behaviors, personality traits and desires are contrastingly different for both. The whole panorama of gender differences is translated through symbolic meanings and becomes basis of social practice in society. The socially constructed qualities of "maleness" and "femaleness" not only represent gender identities but also "a collective iteration in the form of culture, social structure and social organization" (Schippers, 2007). Masculinity and femininity becomes cultural standard of conduct at all levels from the self to collective. These standards are taken for granted and unchallenging and hence, make gender differences institutionalized (Lorber, 2000; Martin, 2004). The dominant socially designed attributes a woman should possess in Pakistani society are childbearing and rearing, love and care for parents/husband, home making, submissiveness, passivity and dependence. The home/ private sphere become ideal, normative space for women to operate. And men are characterized with decision making, production, independence, assertiveness, violence and wider interaction. The men are associated with public and public sphere. These feminine/masculine ideals are the basis of social practice and social relations in society. These are internalized, taken for granted and imbedded into culture, social structure and social organization of Pakistani society. Thus, it is argued that Politics becomes the public concern and male prerogative ignoring women, considering women out of concern and preventing their participation (Philips, 1998; Arneil, 1999; Rai, 2003; Holmes, 2003; Bari, 2010).

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