Women Participation under Devolution of Power Plan 2000: Issues and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a discussion about women participation in local governments established under devolution of power plan (DOPP) 2000 promulgated by a military ruler Pervez Musharraf. According to this draft, women were given 33% representation in local councils. The paper presents the existing statistics of women participation in local governments at provincial and districts level in Pakistan for a comparative analysis. The study has found that issues and challenges regarding women participation still do exist which are recommended to overhaul after a comprehensive study of previous research work in this area. Recommendations have been offered for enhancing women’s political participation and resulting women empowerment in Pakistan based on the analysis of data and historical discourse. The study has implications of academic signification for research scholars and practical relevance for policy makers interested in uplifting socio-political status of women in Pakistan.

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1. Introduction

Local government means governance at grass root level whether in the hands of men or women. Pakistan has observed different types of governing systems particularly democratic and military rules but decentralization or local governments have never been encouraged in Pakistan. Ayub was the initiator of local government system who introduced “Basic Democracies System 1959” followed by “Local Government System of 1979” enforced by Zia. Musharraf promulgated “Devolution of Power Plan (DOPP) 2000” and strengthened the system of local governments in terms of representation and development. Currently provinces have different local government systems with different legislations.

Women participation equal to men has paramount importance for a healthy society and future generations. Short history of local governments in Pakistan discourages women participation. There is nothing found practically about role of women in these systems of local governments. Legislators made nominal efforts to enforce women’s concerns in process of decentralization. Despite the fact that state religion and constitution encourage women participation and empowerment, political authorities remained reluctant to enhance it at grass root level.

Keywords

Women Participation, local Government, Women Empowerment, Pakistan

JEL Classification:

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Islam (state religion of Pakistan) is complete code of life and addresses the equality of human beings. Allah calls both men and women which means that both are equal in terms of all kinds of rights as mentioned in Surah Al-Ahzab in these words:

“For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women who are patient, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast, for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise - For them all has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward.” (Al-Ahzab 33:35)

Role of women in grass root politics is a globally discussing issue. International human rights and political organizations are waving the flags of women rights in local, national and international politics. Charter of United Nations Organization 1945 declares that all mankind have equal social, economic and political rights in spite of different entities i.e. gender, race, color, religion and region. Under the charter of UNO, there are several commitments, agreements, laws, conferences, plan of actions and conventions protecting women political rights. Vienna Declaration and Program of Action; International Conference on Population and Development; Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; Millennium Development Goals and United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development are working global commitments that are source of security for women political rights (United Nations Human Rights High Commissioner, 2014).

Developing countries focus on encouraging the trend of women participation in matters of governance. Growing political role of women is significant change of 21st century. According to ranking of 128 states developed by The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 2005 Sweden, Rwanda and Norway increased women political participation to 45.3%, 48.8% and 38.2% in all levels of government. Scandinavian states are observing highest number in terms of women participation followed by American and European countries. Asia and Africa are improving their system of political participation while Arab and Pacific regions are at lowest ebb in this regard (Jabeen & Iqbal, 2010).

Our society is patriarchal in nature and not ready whole heartedly to get participate the women in political process. More than 50% of country’s population is comprised of women but they are deprived of their basic political rights. Article 25(2) of the constitution enforces rights for women equal to men and establishes the parameters of legislation in this regard. Issue of legislation is one of the major concerns in subject problem collided with several other socio-political hurdles.

Pakistan’s three constitutions propagated reserve seats for women from 3 to 10%. Article 44(2), of 1956 constitution gave 3% quota for women i.e. 10 seats. Constitution of 1973 also reserved 10 women seats. In 1985 these seats were increased to 20. In 1997-1999, this quota reduced to a lowest level i.e. 3.2% in lower house (National Assembly), 2.4% in upper house (Senate) and 0.4% in Provincial Assemblies. Women were not given representation in Basic Democracy’s System of 1959 and nominal number of women seen under Local Government System of 1979 (Tabassum, Afzal, & Tabassum, Shifting Trends of Women’s Participation in Local Government in Pakistan: A Study with Special Focus on Sindh Province, 2008).

First time in the constitutional history of Pakistan, Devolution of power plan (DOPP) 2000 enacted by Musharaf brought remarkable political representation and development for women under the guidelines of National Reconstruction Bureau, a state think tank for devolution of powers. Government conducted two elections i.e. 2001 and 2005 under this constitutional draft. A remarkable number of women contested these elections and launched inclusive election campaigns throughout the Pakistan. Women were the hot issue discussing in election debates. Women participants succeeded to capture a good number of reserved seats.

Execution of women participation in local governments is a single characteristic regarding women empowerment in mainstream politics but there are several issues came into sight after observing DOPP 2000. Though 33% representation in all tiers of district government i.e. union, tehsil and district councils but they felt difficulties in performing their assigned roles owing to male domination, low literacy rate and near to the ground political experience of women. DOPP 2000 was an effort to enable the women to get participate them in political process but their absence in policy-making, financial management and other socio-political matters raised the questions on practice of women participation. The present study aims to explore the extent to which DOPP 2000 has fulfilled the requirements of women’ political participation in local governments, and what are the associated issues and challenges in this regard.
2. Research Methodology
This research is descriptive and historical in nature. Qualitative approach with secondary sources of data have been applied to complete this research work.

3. Literature Review
Democratic and military rulers have never prioritized women participation in local governments. Military regimes are known as upholder and initiators of local governments but Ayub and Zia tried their best to keep women out of local government system and legalized only 2% women representation. Begum Nasim Wali Khan as opposition leader in NWFP voiced strongly and publically for women representation in local councils but not materialized. A few women were seen in local councils just because of their strong political background (Khattak, 1996).

There were several hurdles in the way of women participation in local governments but most prominent were religious and tribal. Religious and tribal leadership were against women participation on the grounds of their traditions. DOPP 2000 provided 33% representation to women in all tiers of local government and there is not any religious or tribal impediment in the way of women participation (Tabassum, Afzal, & Tabassum, 2008).

Aurat Foundation publicized through its report entitled as “Citizens campaigns for women participation in local government elections 2001 and 2005” that, Punjab captured top ranking in women participation followed by Sindh. Balochistan and NWF (KPK) stand at 3rd and 4th positions respectively. Despite of this ranking women participation and seat-winning ratio in all provinces is valuable (Aurat Foundation, 2008).

Women participation was given a reasonable priority in DOPP 2000 but it remained a nightmare in the context of role in policy making/implementation, capacity building, allocation of financial resources and management at district level (Chaudhry A. G., 2009).

Women were not given shares in citizen community board and public safety commissions despite the fact that they were entitled to get representation with the ratio of 33% (Haroon, 2010).

A discussable political participation of marginalized groups particularly women in local government system enhanced the opportunities for them to access state services and serve the state (Husain, 2012).

Almost all district nazims believed that DOPP 2000 was initiator of local governments in real sense and implemented the article 32 of the constitution according to its spirit, which states that state government should encourage the system of local government with special participation of women, workers and peasants (Khan & Mirza, 2013).

However, women were given 33% representation in local government bodies but their attendance in sessions of Union, Tehsil and District Councils was next to nothing because women seats were filled just to win the women seats but not to represent them in councils. They were missing represented in practical politics at grass root level and given nothing in management of district governments (Chaudhry, Ahmed, & Farooq, 2014).

3.1 History of Women’s Participation in Pakistan’s Local Government System
History of local government system starts from 1958 and six elections of local bodies have held until now. Only military rulers prioritized the local government system and every ruler tried to keep women out of local government system. Nominal representation has been given to this marginalized group in every regime.

Account of women’s role in local government starts with the beginning of local government system. Women were given 2% during Ayub’s Basic Democracy’s system 1959 and Zia’s Local Government System 1979. It was increased to 10% during Nawaz Sharif’s first era 1990-93. In the 1998 elections of local governments, women reserved seats were, 25.8% in Balochistan, 12.7% in Punjab, 2.9% in NWFP and 23% in Sindh but elections were held in Balochistan and Punjab only. Military government of Musharaf introduced Devolution of Power Plan in 2000 under which two local body’s elections were held in 2000 and 2005. Under this plan, 33% seats reserved for women (Jabeen & Iqbal, 2010).

3.2 Analysis of women Participation in Local Government under Devolution of Power Plan 2000
DOPP 2000 gave a good number of women seats in the system of local governments, which is never observed before that. Women representation never crossed double figure. First time in history, women were given 33% representation in all tiers of district government. Women participated in local government elections of 2001 and 2005 under this legal draft and captured most of the seats reserved for them. Punjab is at top position with 97.7% and 99.4% in 2001 and 2005 elections respectively with the ranking sequence of Punjab (1), Sindh (2), Balochistan (3) and NWFP (4).

3.3 Punjab
Composition of Punjab during the period of 2001-10 is as follows:

Table 1

| Population | Area   | Districts | Tehsils | Union Councils |
|------------|--------|-----------|---------|----------------|
| 100 million| 205344 km² | 35        | 118     | 3445           |

Punjab is richest in terms of fertile lands, literacy rate, institutions and political awareness. Literacy rate in Punjab is 61% and 52% portion of women population is educated. In large number, women from Punjab participated and succeeded in local government elections held in 2001 and 2005. Seat-winning ratio of women in Punjab was highest among the four provinces.

Table 2

| District          | Number of UCs | Women General Seats | Women Labor/Peasants Seats |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
|                   | 2001          | 2005                | 2001                      | 2005                      |
|                   | Total         | Filled              | Total                     | Filled                    | Total                     | Filled                    | Total                     | Filled                    |
| Attock            | 72            | 288                 | 281                       | 144                        | 144                      | 139                       | 144                      | 142                       |
| Bahawalpur        | 107           | 428                 | 421                       | 214                        | 214                      | 184                       | 214                      | 213                       |
| Bahawalnagar      | 118           | 472                 | 463                       | 236                        | 236                      | 224                       | 236                      | 233                       |
| Bhakar            | 42            | 168                 | 164                       | 84                         | 84                       | 65                        | 84                       | 83                        |
| Chakwal           | 68            | 272                 | 269                       | 136                        | 136                      | 133                       | 136                      | 135                       |
| D. G. Khan        | 59            | 236                 | 232                       | 118                        | 118                      | 106                       | 118                      | 118                       |
| Faisalabad        | 289           | 1156                | 1142                      | 578                        | 578                      | 572                       | 578                      | 569                       |
| Gujrat            | 117           | 468                 | 466                       | 234                        | 234                      | 224                       | 234                      | 234                       |
| Gujranwala        | 188           | 752                 | 748                       | 376                        | 376                      | 365                       | 376                      | 374                       |
| Hafizabad         | 42            | 168                 | 167                       | 84                         | 84                       | 84                        | 84                       | 82                        |
| Jhang             | 128           | 512                 | 505                       | 256                        | 256                      | 230                       | 256                      | 248                       |
| Jehlum            | 53            | 212                 | 210                       | 108                        | 108                      | 102                       | 108                      | 106                       |
| Qasur             | 113           | 452                 | 450                       | 226                        | 226                      | 216                       | 226                      | 226                       |
| Khanewal          | 100           | 400                 | 400                       | 200                        | 200                      | 196                       | 200                      | 198                       |
| Khushab           | 51            | 204                 | 200                       | 102                        | 102                      | 90                        | 102                      | 101                       |
| Laiyah            | 44            | 176                 | 172                       | 88                         | 88                       | 71                        | 88                       | 88                        |
| Lahore            | 150           | 600                 | 598                       | 300                        | 300                      | 288                       | 300                      | 300                       |
| Lodhran           | 73            | 292                 | 292                       | 146                        | 146                      | 142                       | 146                      | 145                       |
| Mianwali          | 56            | 224                 | 212                       | 112                        | 112                      | 104                       | 112                      | 106                       |
| Mandi Bahauadin   | 65            | 260                 | 258                       | 130                        | 130                      | 128                       | 130                      | 125                       |
| Muzafargarh       | 93            | 372                 | 350                       | 186                        | 186                      | 160                       | 186                      | 185                       |
| Multan            | 126           | 504                 | 500                       | 258                        | 258                      | 248                       | 258                      | 254                       |
| Narowal           | 74            | 296                 | 295                       | 148                        | 148                      | 146                       | 148                      | 148                       |
| Nankana Sahib     | 68            |                     | 136                       | 126                        | 126                      | 126                       | 126                      | 122                       |
| Okarra            | 114           | 456                 | 446                       | 228                        | 228                      | 220                       | 228                      | 228                       |
| Pakpattan         | 63            | 252                 | 250                       | 126                        | 126                      | 126                       | 126                      | 122                       |
| Rajanpur          | 44            | 176                 | 174                       | 88                         | 88                       | 78                        | 88                       | 88                        |
| R. Y. Khan        | 122           | 488                 | 488                       | 244                        | 244                      | 234                       | 244                      | 240                       |
| Rawalpindi        | 170           | 680                 | 680                       | 350                        | 350                      | 340                       | 350                      | 322                       |
Women from Punjab showed first-rate commitment to participate in local government elections. In most of the districts, women contested the elections without any fear. Most important thing is that, women from Southern Punjab won the seat at equal ratio with women from Central and Northern Punjab. Filling of peasants and labor seats is in greater ratio than that of general seats. In one of the elections of 2001 and 2005, 100% general seats were filled in Attock, Sialkot, Khanewal, R. Y. Khan, Rawalpindi and Faisalabad districts while peasant/labor seats in Toba Tek Singh, Rajanpur, Pakpatan, Narowal, Mandi Bahaudin, Lahore, Qasur, Hafizabad, Gujrat and D. G. Khan district touched the same figure.

3.4 Sindh
Composition of Sindh during the period of 2001-10 is as follows:

Table 3

| Population | Area         | Districts | Tehsils | Union Councils |
|------------|--------------|-----------|---------|----------------|
| 55.24 million | 140914 km²   | 23        | 86      | 1221           |

Sindh province has 56% literate population and 47% portion of women population is educated. Sindh is officially divided into rural and urban areas varying men-women literacy rates. Rural women of Sindh is politically less aware whereas and unable to take political decisions. Men due to patriarchical society carry out most of political decisions and political practices.

Table 4

| District | Number of UCs | Women General Seats | Women Labor/Peasants Seats |
|---------|--------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
|         | 2001         | 2005                | 2001                        | 2005                        |
|         | Total        | Filled              | Total                      | Filled                      | Total                      | Filled                      |
| Badin   | 49           | 196                 | 92                         | 90                          | 98                         | 88                          | 92                         | 91                          |
| Dadu    | 80           | 320                 | 104                        | 104                         | 160                        | 140                        | 104                        | 102                         |
| Ghotki  | 35           | 140                 | 84                         | 82                          | 70                         | 66                         | 84                         | 84                          |
| Haiderabad | 102       | 405                 | 104                        | 102                         | 204                        | 180                        | 104                        | 103                         |
| Jacobabad | 78         | 308                 | 80                         | 77                          | 154                        | 95                         | 80                         | 73                          |
| Jamshoro | 28          | 56                  | 56                         | 55                          | 56                         | 55                         |                            |                             |
| Karachi | 178          | 712                 | 356                        | 355                         | 356                        | 328                        | 356                        | 355                         |
| Kashmir | 37           | 74                  | 74                         | 74                          | 74                         | 74                         |                            |                             |
| Khairpur | 76           | 304                 | 152                        | 151                         | 152                        | 126                        | 152                        | 150                         |
| Larkana | 80           | 320                 | 88                         | 86                          | 160                        | 112                        | 88                         | 86                          |
| Matyari | 19           | 38                  | 38                         | 37                          | 38                         | 37                         |                            |                             |
| Mirpur Khas | 64         | 222                 | 82                         | 80                          | 128                        | 124                        | 82                         | 80                          |
| Noshehro Feroz | 51    | 204                 | 102                        | 101                         | 102                        | 83                         | 102                        | 102                         |
| Nawabshah | 51         | 204                 | 102                        | 101                         | 102                        | 55                         | 102                        | 100                         |
| Qambar | 40           | 80                  | 80                         | 80                          | 80                         | 80                         |                            |                             |
| Sanghar | 59           | 232                 | 110                        | 110                         | 118                        | 112                        | 110                        | 107                         |
| Shikarpur | 47         | 188                 | 102                        | 101                         | 94                         | 77                         | 102                        | 101                         |
| Sakhar | 46           | 184                 | 92                         | 92                          | 92                         | 74                         | 92                         | 90                          |
| Tando Allah Yar | 19 | 38                  | 38                         | 37                          | 38                         | 37                         |                            |                             |
Tando Muhammad Khan 16 32 31 32 30
Mithi 44 150 150 88 87 88 87 88 88
Thatha 55 220 209 110 109 110 100 110 106
Umar Kot 27 54 53 54 52
(Source: Reports of Election Commission of Pakistan, PILDAT and Aurat Foundation)

Ratio of winning seats was different but election environment was same for women in rural and urban areas of Sindh. Dadu, Haiderabad and Sanghar districts gave 100% general seats to women whereas in Ghotki and Mithi districts women won 100% peasants/labor seats. Most significant thing was that, women captured more seats in Mithi district (underdeveloped) than Karachi (more developed). Seat capturing ratio in Sindh was not much different from Punjab despite of better literacy rate, infrastructure and political environment of the later.

3.5 NWFP (KPK)
Composition of NWFP during the period of 2001-10 is as follows:

| Population | Area | Districts | Tehsils | Union Councils |
|------------|------|-----------|---------|----------------|
| 26.2 million | 74521 km2 | 24 | 72 | 954 |

NWFP is a tribal society and religious elements in socio-political sectors are dominant. Women are given limited opportunities in all sectors due to which women literacy rate is 35% along with overall i.e. 50%. In tribal areas of NWFP, DOPP 2000 faced criticism for women share in local governments. Women also confronted the difficulties in this way but election results depicted a good picture of women participation in local government elections.

| District | Number of UCs | Women General Seats | Women Labor/Peasants Seats |
|----------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
|          |               | 2001 Total | 2005 Filled | 2001 Total | 2005 Filled | 2001 Total | 2005 Filled |
|          |               | Total | Filled | Total | Filled | Total | Filled |
| Abotabad | 46 | 184 | 182 | 102 | 98 | 92 | 82 | 102 | 98 |
| Banu | 40 | 160 | 88 | 98 | 92 | 80 | 42 | 98 | 88 |
| Batgram | 20 | 80 | 4 | 40 | 20 | 40 | 2 | 40 | 20 |
| Buner | 27 | 108 | 105 | 54 | 51 | 54 | 50 | 54 | 50 |
| Charsada | 49 | 196 | 192 | 98 | 96 | 98 | 92 | 98 | 96 |
| Chitral | 24 | 96 | 95 | 48 | 2 | 48 | 45 | 48 | 45 |
| D. I. Khan | 46 | 184 | 174 | 94 | 92 | 92 | 72 | 94 | 92 |
| Lower Dier | 34 | 136 | 8 | 74 | 25 | 68 | 4 | 74 | 26 |
| Upper Dier | 31 | 124 | 28 | 56 | 46 | 62 | 15 | 56 | 45 |
| Hangu | 17 | 68 | 49 | 38 | 34 | 34 | 18 | 38 | 34 |
| Haripur | 44 | 176 | 168 | 90 | 90 | 88 | 74 | 90 | 88 |
| Karak | 21 | 84 | 80 | 42 | 40 | 42 | 39 | 42 | 40 |
| Kohat | 27 | 108 | 60 | 64 | 60 | 54 | 16 | 64 | 54 |
| Kohistan | 36 | 144 | 1 | 76 | 1 | 72 | 1 | 76 | 2 |
| Laki Marwat | 33 | 132 | 100 | 66 | 62 | 66 | 30 | 66 | 62 |
| Malakand | 28 | 112 | 104 | 56 | 1 | 56 | 50 | 56 | 55 |
| Manshera | 58 | 232 | 158 | 118 | 110 | 116 | 62 | 118 | 106 |
| Mardan | 73 | 292 | 204 | 150 | 146 | 146 | 56 | 150 | 142 |
| Nowshera | 47 | 188 | 180 | 96 | 94 | 94 | 84 | 96 | 92 |
| Peshawar | 92 | 368 | 310 | 184 | 180 | 184 | 115 | 184 | 170 |
| Sawabi | 56 | 224 | 136 | 110 | 104 | 112 | 44 | 110 | 98 |
| Shangla | 24 | 96 | 78 | 56 | 52 | 48 | 36 | 56 | 52 |
| Sawat | 65 | 260 | 205 | 130 | 110 | 130 | 98 | 130 | 110 |
Despite of cultural barriers and criticism from religio-political parties and tribal leaders, women of NWFP participated whole-heartedly in local government elections. Political environment and behaviors were not in women’s favor but they showed commitment during election campaigns and succeeded in capturing more than 90% reserved seats across the province except the districts of Batgram, Lower Dier, Malakand and Kohistan where women representation could not touch the double figure.

3.6 Balochistan

Composition of Balochistan during the period of 2001-10 was as follows:

Table 7

| Population | Area    | Districts | Tehsils | Union Councils |
|------------|---------|-----------|---------|----------------|
| 13.16 million | 347190 km2 | 27        | 128     | 618            |

Balochistan covers 43% area of Pakistan but its share in population of Pakistan is less than 5%. Literacy rate among women is at lowest ebb i.e. 25%.

Table 8

| District       | Number of UCs | Women General Seats | Women Labor/Peasants Seats |
| ---------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
|                |               | 2001 | 2005 | 2001 | 2005 | 2001 | 2005 |
|                |               | Total | Filled | Total | Filled | Total | Filled | Total | Filled |
| Awaran         | 5             | 20   | 19    | 16   | 15    | 10   | 9     | 16   | 15     |
| Barkhan        | 8             | 16   | 15    | 16   | 15    | 16   | 15    | 16   | 15     |
| Bolan          | 27            | 54   | 54    | 54   | 53    | 54   | 53    | 54   | 53     |
| Chaghi         | 19            | 76   | 73    | 20   | 19    | 38   | 37    | 20   | 19     |
| Noshki         | 10            | 20   | 19    | 20   | 18    | 20   | 18    | 20   | 18     |
| Dera Bugti     | 12            | 48   | 5     | 24   | 7     | 24   | 4     | 24   | 4      |
| Gawadar        | 13            | 52   | 34    | 26   | 25    | 26   | 12    | 26   | 12     |
| Jafariabad     | 46            | 92   | 90    | 92   | 90    | 92   | 90    | 92   | 90     |
| Jhal Magsi     | 9             | 25   | 20    | 25   | 21    | 25   | 21    | 25   | 21     |
| Kalat          | 18            | 72   | 62    | 36   | 36    | 36   | 36    | 36   | 36     |
| Kech           | 38            | 152  | 90    | 76   | 75    | 76   | 75    | 76   | 75     |
| Kharan         | 16            | 64   | 63    | 14   | 12    | 32   | 30    | 14   | 13     |
| Khuzdar        | 36            | 144  | 90    | 70   | 69    | 72   | 38    | 70   | 68     |
| Kohlu          | 16            | 64   | 54    | 16   | 14    | 32   | 28    | 16   | 15     |
| Lasbela        | 21            | 84   | 80    | 44   | 44    | 42   | 36    | 44   | 44     |
| Loralai        | 29            | 116  | 107   | 40   | 38    | 58   | 38    | 40   | 40     |
| Mastung        | 13            | 52   | 50    | 26   | 25    | 26   | 24    | 26   | 24     |
| Musakhail      | 10            | 20   | 18    | 20   | 19    | 20   | 19    | 20   | 19     |
| Nasirabad      | 53            | 212  | 158   | 48   | 46    | 106  | 74    | 48   | 46     |
| Panjgor        | 16            | 64   | 54    | 32   | 30    | 32   | 30    | 32   | 30     |
| Pisheen        | 27            | 108  | 98    | 76   | 76    | 54   | 50    | 76   | 75     |
| Kila Abdullah  | 27            | 92   | 75    | 50   | 48    | 46   | 38    | 50   | 48     |
| Kila Saifullah | 15            | 60   | 52    | 30   | 29    | 30   | 28    | 30   | 28     |
| Quetta         | 66            | 264  | 224   | 134  | 128   | 132  | 106   | 134  | 131    |
| Sibbi          | 34            | 136  | 115   | 42   | 40    | 68   | 52    | 42   | 40     |
| Zhob           | 24            | 96   | 72    | 56   | 54    | 48   | 43    | 56   | 56     |
| Ziarat         | 10            | 40   | 34    | 20   | 18    | 20   | 19    | 20   | 20     |

(Source: Reports of Election Commission of Pakistan, PILDAT and Aurat Foundation)
Women of Balochistan are poorest in terms of literacy, employment and confidence level but despite of this they contested local government elections in 2001 and 2005. Women participation and representation scenario during these elections was nearly same to other provinces. Women won most of the reserved seats but could capture only four to seven general and peasant seats in district of Dera Bugti.

Table 9: A Glimpse of Local Government Elections 2001 and 2005

| Province  | Local Government Election 2001 |          |          |          |          |
|-----------|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|           |                                | Union Councils | Tehsil Councils | District Councils | All Councils |
|           | Women Elected | Percentage | Women Elected | Percentage | Women Elected | Percentage | Women Elected | Percentage |
| Punjab    | 20008            | 96.7      | 1125      | 98.4      | 1118      | 98       | 22251      | 97.7      |
| Sindh     | 5879             | 89.6      | 358       | 98.2      | 362       | 99.8     | 6599       | 95.8      |
| Balochistan | 2375            | 76.5      | 155       | 87.5      | 155       | 88       | 2685       | 84        |
| KPK (NWFP)| 3965             | 69.1      | 208       | 88.8      | 280       | 88.4     | 4453       | 82.1      |

| Province  | Local Government Election 2005 |          |          |          |          |
|-----------|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|           |                                | Union Councils | Tehsil Councils | District Councils | All Councils |
|           | Women Elected | Percentage | Women Elected | Percentage | Women Elected | Percentage | Women Elected | Percentage |
| Punjab    | 13660            | 98.6      | 1152      | 100       | 1147      | 99.6     | 15959      | 99.4      |
| Sindh     | 4395             | 98.6      | 358       | 100       | 354       | 99.4     | 5107       | 99.3      |
| Balochistan | 2195             | 96.8      | 192       | 98.9      | 191       | 99.4     | 2578       | 98.3      |
| KPK (NWFP)| 3330             | 84.4      | 308       | 94.2      | 305       | 93.8     | 3943       | 90.8      |

(Number of elected women in all tiers of local government is highest in Punjab i.e. 97.7% in 2001 and 99.4% in 2005 followed by Sindh i.e. 95.8% and 99.3% respectively. Balochistan stood at third position with 84% in 2001 and 98.3% in 2005. NWFP observed lowest ratio of women participation. Ratio of women representation in tehsil and district councils is higher than that of union councils, which means that women faced problems in direct elections held at union council level.

A report entitled as “Devolution and Human Development in Pakistan” researched by Social Policy and Development Centre gives the details of women participation in all tiers of local government under DOPP 2000. According to report woman participated in local government elections under subject system against historical trends of women participation in local body’s elections (Social Policy and Development Centre, 2006-7).

According to above mentioned report number of women representatives, vacant seats and their percentage in four provinces in different tiers of district government was as given here:

Table 10

| Tiers of District Government | Number of Tiers | Total seats | Women Representation | Percentage of Women seats (%) | Number of Elected women | Vacant Seats |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Union Councils              | 6022            | 126462      | 36066                | 28.5                        | 32222                   | 3844         |
| Tehsil Councils             | 305             | 8192        | 1749                 | 21.3                        | 1675                    | 74           |
| Town Councils               | 30              | 773         | 161                  | 20.8                        | 161                     | 0            |
| District Councils           | 96              | 8806        | 1988                 | 22.6                        | 1905                    | 83           |
| Total                       | 144233          | 39964       | 27.6                 |                            | 35963                   | 4001         |
Ratio of women nazims and councilors across the Pakistan vary but it can be said that women participation for the office of councilor is mentionable but number of women nazims is very low as given below:

Table 11

| Province      | Women Representation in the Tier of Union Council | Women Representation in the Tier of Tehsil Council | Women Representation in the Tier of District Council |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
|               | Nazims | Councilors | Total seats | Percentage | Nazims | Councilors | Nazims | Councilors |
| Sind          | 0      | 4095       | 22974       | 17.8       | 0      | 306        | 2      | 158        |
| Punjab        | 2      | 13457      | 72513       | 18.6       | 0      | 848        | 0      | 641        |
| Baluchistan   | 0      | 1605       | 10878       | 14.8       | 0      | 124        | 0      | 65         |
| KPK(NWFP)     | 0      | 2807       | 2097        | 14         | 0      | 66         | 0      | 103        |
| Total         | 2      | 21964      | 126462      | 17.4       | 0      | 1344       | 2      | 967        |

Source: (Pakistan Devolution A Note In Support of the Development Policy Review May 1, 2002 With July 2002 Update, 2003)

Data extracted from above mentioned report states that women participation (ranging from 14 to 18.6%) in all tiers of district governments vary in all four provinces of Pakistan that is 17% in average. This percentage is highest in all local government systems from the inception of Pakistan.

4. What was New about Women Participation under DOPP 2000?

4.1 Women Political Participation at Grass Root Level
First time in the constitutional history of Pakistan women representation increased to 33% in all tiers of district government.

4.2 Constitutional Provisions
33% representation for women was under constitutional umbrella to protect and legalize the women natural rights.

4.3 Institutional Mechanism
Women representation under DOPP 2000 was not just in announcements but a institutional mechanism was introduced in which women were given equal representation in all tiers of local government.

4.4 Elimination of Discrimination
First time after the emergence of Pakistan as independent state steps were taken to eliminate gender discrimination in senate, national, provincial and district assemblies.

4.5 Socio-political empowerment
Women started to observe their socio-political status and rights under the promulgation of DOPP 2000.

4.6 Gateway to mainstream politics
Women entered in mainstream politics while using the corridor of local politics. Women from poor and middle class background launched themselves in local politics and opened the avenues of provincial and national politics.

5. Issues and Challenges
5.1 Women Participation and Disinformation
DOPP 2000 provided a good chance to women to participate in grass root politics, context local body’s elections and involve in managerial matters of local governments but they were unknown or ill-informed about the plan. It was a political dilemma which proved as a stumbling block in the way of women development. Women participation could be fruitful if they were known of the plan.

5.2 Male domination in policy devising and implementation
Male remained dominated in working of local councils, policy making and implementation. Women were not given role in policy decisions.
5.3 Lack of Capacity Building
Women could not indulge themselves in official activities of local councils due to lack of capacity building.

5.4 Non-provision of Shares in Local Budgets
Local development budgets approved by provincial or district governments were without the shares of women councilors and nazims. They could not satisfy the people of their localities.

5.5 Council’s Headships
Women were given 33% share in district assemblies but seats of nazims of district councils were only for male candidates due to which women could not play effective roles in district governments.

5.6 Hurdles by Tribal and Religious Leaders
Women faced hurdles to participate in local politics and elections due to objections raised by religious and tribal leaders.

5.7 Womanless Citizen community Board and Public Safety Commission
Citizen community board and public safety commissions were important public institutions at district level for development programs and resolution of public complaints respectively but women were kept away from these institutions.

5.8 Indirect Mode of Election for Reserved seats
Indirect mode of election was introduced for reserved seats of laborer, minorities and women owing to which women could not participate directly in local politics.

6. Conclusion
Local government system is essential for local development and governance but absence of women participation makes it poor and ineffective. Women cover more than half of the total population of the country and keeping them away from the local politics means absence of half of the population from the political system. Governments have been involved in keeping poor women participation in local governments since the inception of Pakistan as an independent state. First time in the constitutional history of Pakistan Field Martial Ayub Khan promulgated system of basic democracies with 80000 basic electorates but women representation was next to nothing. General Zia introduced Local Government System of 1979 very different from the previous but same, in the context of women representation. After that, different regimes increased women representation from 10 to 18% in local governments. After assuming the power, General Pervez Musharaf promulgated Devolution of Power Plan 2000 under which women were given remarkable share i.e. 33% in union, tehsil and district councils. It is highest share for women throughout the history of independence but it proved a number game for political parties. Practically women stayed away from the local politics and district management. Women faced many problems during election campaigns, elections, functioning of councils and policy devising and budgetary proceedings. Despite of several positive changes, a high number of issues and challenges regarding women participation were the part of plan. These issues must be addressed to create the opportunities for women participation in local politics according to the spirit of Objectives Resolution of 1949 and Constitution of 1973.

7. Recommendations
- A national plan of action should be framed to resolve the issues related to women participation.
- Support building stratagem, loans and Scholarships for women should be part of local governments.
- Youth quota ought to be comprised of women also.
- Women must be given share in head seats of union, tehsil and district councils.
- Specific ratio for women heads of union, tehsil and district councils ought to be part of manifestoes of political parties.
- Women should be given share in development budgets of local governments.
- Women role in policy making/implementation and district management is need of the hour.
- Separate complaint cells comprised of women personals should be constituted to resolve women related issues at grass root level.
- Make possible the appointment of gender advisors at grass root level.
- Steps must be taken to abolish discriminatory directives and practices.
• So-called religious, traditional and tribal barriers in the way of women participation at grass root level should be removed constitutionally.
• District police, health, education, water and sanitation must be under local government with equal women representation.
• Women panchayat system should be introduced at local level to settle down women relating disputes.
• Government should form local level institutions to bring knowledge and confidence for women.

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