Theory of Modernization and Political Emancipation of Women in Pakistan: 
An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

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The theory of modernization by Inglehart describes that economic development is directly proportional to cultural modernization which affects women's participation in politics. The main focus of this article is to evaluate the relevance of modernization to explain the global differences that exist in women's political participation and, on this basis; to evaluate the situation in Pakistan regarding the political participation of women. Modernization, through changing values in society, has a very positive impact and it brings gender equality to politics. The modernization theory of Inglehart throws light that modernization in society carries positive changes and it also changes the lives of the citizens which is ultimately reflected through gender equality in politics. But along with modernization, certain other issues undermine women's participation in politics and these issues still exist in developing countries like Pakistan.

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1. Introduction

This article elucidates the basic concepts that deal with the role of women in politics by explaining the theoretical understanding of modernization and the political participation of women. Iglehart’s (2003) theory of modernization debates the gender disparity which is decreased in affluent industrialized states than in the developing countries. Economic prosperity and political progress are related and in developed industrialized states women are more financially independent and sex roles are transforming to adopt new attitudes in the society (Bull & Boas, 2012). Pakistan lags in gender parity in the political arena of the globe. Many factors are there which are linked with the political emancipation of women along with the effect of
modernization that is affecting female participation in politics. This article further explores the
gender disparity in Pakistani politics and examines the hurdles that are acting as a stumbling
block to women's political emancipation. Modernization refers to a process that leads to
industrialization in society. It enhances practical education in society. Fritzsche & Vogler (2020)
explained the shortcomings of the theory by critically evaluating it thus exposing the
impediments that may hinder the way of giving benefits to the society. There is always a shift
from the current status to an upper level with the advancement of modernization. It is taken as a
positive aspect that improves the status of people by industrialization.

Yi (2007) has explained the five phases of economic activities leading to the modernization of
society. It ranges from a traditional society to a highly modern society of more consumption.
Drews (2013) points out that modernization does not only consist of economic dynamics but also
deals with the norms and values along with related institutions. Kasych & Vochozka (2019)
explained the evolutionary aspects of modernization and pointed out the systemic process
through which society changed its trends toward different aspects of modernization. Przeworski
& Limongi (1997) points out the fact that modernization enhances political participation. It was
argued that economic development results in the nourishment of democracies. As societies need
to deal with the complexities of labor and employees as a result of industrial growth and
technological advancement requires the loosening of the autocratic control of the system (Nhema
& Zinyama, 2016). Many factions of the society appear such as the bourgeoisie that affect the
decision making process through their input and thus modernization helps the people to grow
their intellect as well (Wanderley & Barros, 2020). So, democracy enhances with the process of
industrialization and modernization.

2. Literature Review

Paxton & Hughes (2020) criticizes the logic that modernization gives liberty to women. Paxton
explains that in Africa women's role is limited to agricultural activities and modern technology
has limited the role of women in the fields. But this criticism can be countered by the notion that
modernization has opened new vistas in the industrial sphere and hence allocated more roles in
the professional job market for women.

Gilman (2018) explained the importance of modernization in society and elucidated the
relevance of the concept throughout the history of human development. Giddens (1991) pointed
out that with the evolution of modern society the traditional factors of the society that influences
the social set up e.g., religion and family have faded as a result of the new social structure as the
result of industrialization. These new factors revolutionize the prevailing ideas of societies to
deal with the new challenges. Giddens further argues that new concepts of gender parity arena an
ingredient of the whole new setup of a modernized democratic society. If old traditions e.g.,
gender parity prevails along with the effort of modernization of the society, the system will fall.
To become a successful modern society, all the aspects of the modern societal setup must prevail
including gender party and women's emancipation.

Syed & Tabassum (2015) explains that in the post-independence period, women's participation in
politics through representation at various level i.e., local, provincial and national level indicates
their minimal representation at all forums. The recent progress in the enhanced quota for women
in political parties is a beam of hope for a better future. The history of Pakistan can be divided
into two broader eras of women's role in politics.
3. Research Methodology

This article is based on qualitative research and secondary data that explains the impact of modernization on Pakistani women. Data is gathered through books, articles and various research journals.

3.1. Modernization and Transition of Society

Norris (2009) points out about the impact of industrialization those results in the transition of the traditional society to one having rational views on secular lines. According to Inglehart (2005), the post-industrial stage of modernization refers to more autonomous individuals and the eradication of the dictatorial states. Inglehart also explains that socio-cultural transformation is relative in any society as a result of modernization. No doubt, economic development alters individual views about society but religion and history also pave the way for societal dynamics. It is important to point out that modernization does not ensure democracy. There are examples where modernization is deeply rooted but dictatorial regimes are existing in states e.g., China. Inglehart elaborates that modernization leads to a more cognizant society. Once the process of modernization starts; it penetrates every aspect of life resulting in the likely increased political participation of people. The fundamental tenant of the modernization theory is based on the fact that socio-economic development leads to an anticipated change in the cultural and political vistas of the society (Huntington, 1973).

Socio-economic development leads to the inclusion of more labor that is related to an increase in specialized work and education which enhance human interaction and pave way for cultural change such as gender roles and increase political participation. But it is the flexibility in the society that determines the impact of modernization as different societies exhibit different tendencies towards the same level of the stimulus of modernization. It is the cultural and historical legacies that are imbibed into the fabric of society to hinder any transformation (Inglehart, 2005).

3.2. Women Representation with the Rise of Modernization

Verba & Nie (1978) points out that there should be an increase in women's representation with the rise of modernization in the state. According to these scholars, material wealth and educational emancipation of the society help in the promotion of democracy which ultimately increases women's political participation and representation. Gender inequality is prevalent in traditional society while in modern societies women are given equal opportunities to perform their roles in various avenues of life. Western industrialized societies are the icon of modernized societies having the torch bearer of women's egalitarianism. The right to vote, and having property and political representation are the fundamentals of western modernized societies. Modernization is co-related to the changing women's status in society. The women became more independent and less subservient as compared to their male counterparts. Modernization is gender neutral and hence supportive to women. Industrialization has decreased the biological irregularities of male and female counterparts and females were considered to have more status than only giving birth to children thus increasing women's rights and sphere of activities (Jaquette, 1982).

3.3. Gender Equality and Role of Modernization

Inglehart and Wlzel (2005) elucidate the co-relation of modernization and economic prosperity with the participation of women in politics. Although modernization is an important factor in
explaining women's participation in politics yet culture is considered a fundamental aspect to analyze the women's role as leaders in a fragile political setup and economy. In the post-industrial society, there emerged a more rational attitude towards women's role in politics. Thus the prosperity in the economic sphere is linked with change in culture and ultimately gender disparity decreases. Inglehart and Norris (2003) utilized the United Nations Gender Development Index in their study. Irrespective of political participation in voting, females' participation is considerably low. Male domination is evident in the political sphere of society. They are of the view that the change of the society from the agricultural phase to an industry dependent and further to the post-industrial phase has changed the values within the society and hence paved the way to eliminate gender disparity. The gender gap gradually decreased in the upcoming generations of post-industrial states. Inglehart and Norris are of the view that economic prosperity promotes women's diversified role in society rather than constraining them to the traditional role of child upbringing.

There is a positive impact of the cultural change in the societies and they become receptive to altering the strategic traditional mindset thus allowing women to have more share in political offices and supportive of policies like gender quotas. It is the egalitarian attitude of the new generation in post-industrial societies.

It is the outcome of economic progress that gender disparity is decreasing and cultural values are transforming toward a more egalitarian attitude. Industrialization ensures women get better wages and ultimately it has an impact to decrease the fertility rate. Economic independence leads to the higher educational training of women and gradually women's participation in politics increases. The transformation of the society leads women to take part in management and professional bodies and they are sharing power positions in the political offices. Although it is in a negligible state, the prosperous industrial societies are moving on the right track. It reflects the transformation toward a secular and rational society apart from the old fundamental society. It also represents a change from survival to individualism.

By using the gender equality scale, Inglehart and Norris (2003) evaluate attitudinal support for gender equality. This scale includes five elements originating from EVS (European values survey) and WVS (western values survey). Men as political leaders can perform well than women. Men have more right to the job when jobs are rare. Higher education is more important for the boy as compared to a girl what the level of social acceptance is if a woman wants to become a single parent. Women need children to fulfill their wishes or there are some other reasons.

Inglehart judged gender equality based on jobs, leadership, education and control over one own body. He argues that poor countries have different priorities than rich countries. They have to fulfill their necessities first and due to the strict patriarchal system, women are not allowed to go against their family values. An independent woman is mostly viewed negatively by society as going against societal norms. The legal setup of the societies also hinders women's emancipation by restricting their rights toward property and marriage rights. Societies that are not developed lay more constraints on women and put more emphasis on the role of birth giving as a primary part of women's role and her satisfaction is confined to the only goal of motherhood.

The situation is the opposite in industrial societies where individuals are given equal opportunities to play their roles in society irrespective of their gender. The political life and the
individual life of women have been transformed by the adaption of new cultural values. More opportunities are given to female counterparts to play their role in public and private life. As a result, women are demanding more legal and political rights and a cultural transformation has shifted the gender roles to a new horizon. (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). They are of the view that post-colonial states did not develop the altered mindset toward women's emancipation in the same way as it was seen in post-industrial states. It might be one important factor that the traditional attitude towards women throughout the globe is the major hurdle to promoting women in the parliaments. Culture is one of the important aspects that influence modernization and change in attitudes or values in society. Using data from IPU, Inglehart thinks that irrespective of the cultural background and setting, the women's ratio in the parliaments is increasing gradually. Modernization and industrialization have ultimately changed the traditional mindset of the global village. Inglehart has studied the attitudes of people toward women's participation in political affairs by asking about the degree of agreement and disagreement with to statement that ‘men are better leaders than women in the political arena’. Economic prosperity is assessed by per capita GDP in different states. The result was astonishing as women in poor and rich stated unanimously rejected the notion of male superiority in politics. Moreover, men in affluent societies oppose the statement in larger numbers than men in poor states. So, it is evident that gender parity and women's role is nothing to do with self-interest and individual gains. Although, society is transforming the deeply rooted cultural traditions are having an important factor in dealing with the issue. There are three kinds of obstacles to hinder women to play their role in political offices as studied by Inglehart (2003). Structural hindrances, cultural orientations and institutional impediments are the stumbling blocks in the way of women's efficient role in politics. Socio-economic prosperity is supportive for women to gain better education and professional training. But it does not ensure the enhanced place of women in the Electoral College. Various factors such as family history, networking and support from peers are important to enhance the role of women in political life. The trends in the political parties and level of political awareness and quota system further impact women's share in political offices. The trends of democracy in political parties and the increase in opportunities for women candidates may alter the women's positions in the political sphere.

Cultural barriers may hinder the position of women to take part in political work as the traditional role may suppress the desire of women to work in the political arena. Traditional societies also hinder women to alter their working roles in society. It is also pertinent that GDP is not important to explain the women's role in politics as seen in most of the Middle Eastern states. States having more Christian religions among people have more women in public offices as compared to states having Islam, Hindu, or Buddhist as dominant religions. So, culture plays a predominant role in explaining and transforming the attitude of society regarding women's role in politics.

3.4. Political Participation of Women in Pakistan
Women voting in elections and their membership in the political parties are extremely important matters to understand. The status of females is improving in Pakistan’s politics as a gender quota has been applied that ensures minimum political participation of women. Women’s representation at the local level and in the province must be analyzed thoroughly to understand the issues and prospects of women’s participation in the political system of Pakistan. Participation at the national level is extremely important to ensure gender parity in Pakistan. If one analyses the annals of history, it becomes evident that women are not included in politics in
Pakistan in most of the assemblies since inception at equal levels to the male members of the assemblies. The introduction of the gender quota has improved the situation in the political offices of Pakistan. The political participation of women from the local to the provincial and national level is an important yardstick that can measure the gender parity in the political setup of Pakistan.

3.5. Political Manipulation of Women in Pakistani Society
As concerned with Pakistan politics, is ruled by a small cluster of leaders and their relatives. Politics is merely a game of elites in Pakistan. Political powers transferred from generation to generation over the last decades. Pakistan society with pluralistic nature has comprised of various regional and ethnic groups and divisions. These ethnic divisions have a variety of elite regional groups along with national level elite groups. These groups compete with one another in the political arena to gain state power. Women are badly ignored in this whole competition.

Three distinct categories can be drawn to understand the types of elites in Pakistan. The civilian and military groups are important while the religious cadre is also significant to influence politics in Pakistan. Civilian cadre can be divided into many groups i.e., landlord, tribal, feudal, businessman, industrialist and ethnic leaders. In the patriarchal system of Pakistan, women are excluded from the position of tribal leaders or landlords. They are not allowed to join the military, not considered religious leaders, or not given importance even on the professional ground in most of the families in Pakistan. In all major sections of Pakistan society including the political arena, women are ignored and it is tough for them to have easy access to prove themselves. The only way for women to enter in politics of Pakistan is to have a relationship with these political families or who have already the part of this elite stratum. Consequently, a very small number of women have the opportunity to have political representation at the national level.

3.6. Gender Inequality
Gender inequality has proven to be a dominant aspect of the Pakistani system. In the image of mother and wife, the image of the woman is private rather than public. These positions socially subscribed hinder empowerment for women. It has been thought that only external forces can motivate them, but this is not the case because empowerment is not an asset that can be given to women (Seierstad, & Healy, 2012). Society is not explored based on human potential but the basis of gender. In this sense, women are in the oppressed category where such an unfair distinction occurs. Men are on the point of exercising power i.e., while women are on the point of gaining power. In this situation, authority does not seem to be impartial, but sexuality matters are fundamental to the entire work of power in contemporary culture (Sapiro, 1986)

Different professions are connected with one class or another in human cultures. The more inactive jobs are connected with women, the more effective or strong the jobs are connected to men. Politics is also one of the realms of the concept of power. It is no denying that women are viewed by numerous thinkers including Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Rousseau as having secondary rights to men for their social position. They used separate reasons to argue that politics is fundamentally a male prerogative, but women are not suitable for political representation on equal rights as men possess (Nelson & Caudhuri, 1994). The way towards empowerment is imperfect if women are not empowered politically and engaged fairly in attempts to govern the country. Of Pakistan's 50 percent female population, only 5 to 10 percent took part in politics and the top political positions are uncommon for them if the
percentage remained lower. Political empowerment, indeed, is the process of involvement in decision-making at different levels of politics (Lohmann, 2001).

Women's challenges can be resolved only when the delegates are integral members of state, national and international decision-making bodies. Looking at in Indian state, women in India had a political history of firstly becoming puppets in male hands because the men of Panchyat were not acknowledged equal; none even remotely expected the degree of devotion exhibited by the women who took part in politics as a result of 33% panchayat and town reservations. The appearance of these women rejects the conviction that women are not politically available. Therefore, women in politics are not on the high ranking of governance, so in this way, there are very few women heads in the state and gender based criteria are active in the election, selection, and preservation of woman leaders.

3.7. Women in the Pakistani Political System

Pakistani women were given voting rights in 1947 under the Pakistan Ordinance after the partition. And in the provisional constitution of 1956, their right to vote has been reaffirmed by national elections (Shami, 2009). The right to vote, though, is another matter, because this democratic right is a separate activity. The difference between theory and reality in Pakistan is very broad. In Pakistan, indeed, it is difficult to enforce such constitutional requirements as Pakistan is a patriarchal party while the constitution of Pakistan ensures that women are empowered within society (Weiss, 2012). So, the turnout for female voting is still very limited in Pakistan. Looking at advanced countries in history, usually, women's voting is great, but women are not permitted to vote in separate constituencies in developing countries such as Pakistan. Pakistan has only 32.2 million eligible female voters who are facing severe obstacles when casting their ballots and getting to the highest reaches of the power corridor as opposed to the 38.8 million enrolled male voters. The causes for this decline in voting are part of the tradition. The National Commission's inquiry stated that thousands of women in over 13 of 56 Swabian Union Councils were prohibited from casting ballots in March 2001 during the provincial government polls (Bano, 2009).

The 1st period witnessed the minimal participation of women at all levels i.e., local, national and provincial levels. It started in 1947 from the independence and lasted till the end of the 20th century. The 2nd period was recognized for the better involvement of women in all three domains as the female quota system was introduced. It started from the commencement of the 21st century.

In the background of Pakistan's constitutional history from 1956 to 1973, the allocation of seats to women in the parliament can be witnessed throughout Pakistan's constitutional record. An effort to locate the history of Pakistani women's political involvement reveals that in 1956, 3% of the women's seats in both national as well as provincial assemblies were reserved, and were raised to 5% in 1973. The turnout was doubled by 10% in 1984 but only 20 women were to be indirectly elected to the National Assembly. Twenty-two women took part in the National Assembly in 1985, while 4 women were competitive in 1988-1990 for general seats in addition to their 20 retained seats. During the same era, Benazir Bhutto, the 1st Muslim female Prime Minister, was appointed. In 1988 the preserved women's seats declined, which means that the National Assembly only consisted of two women and three women for provincial assemblies. There was one more minority seat reserved too. In 1995, the National and Provincial Assemblies had four women each (Syed & Afzal, 2013). Women in politics now have 21% of the National
Assembly seats and 18% of the Senate seats. One woman, Benazir Bhutto, became Prime Minister of Pakistan while others find their place in different high ranked positions in central as well as provincial governments of Pakistan (Derichs & Thompson, 2013).

Politics is a controlled domain, and it is governed by men strongly in Pakistan. World Bank population indicators 2011 suggested that women represent 49 percent of Pakistan's population because of their low qualifications, less schooling and less empowerment in the political sphere, so, they were unappreciated in national growth (Ali & Akhtar, 2012). Patriarchal arrangements and social stereotypes reject their capacities and generate prolonged barriers to empowerment. Pakistan's political domain is traditionally often seen as masculine while politicians as males and occupy key political roles, while women are relegated to soft portraits, which essentially impede Pakistan's empowerment stage.

Customary legislation plays a critical role in the problem of dominance. Pakistan's Constitution acknowledges the concept of justice between all people and the right to equal protection of the legislation (Weiss, 2012). It makes violence against women, in particular, which is unlawful on the grounds of gender and calls for effective State intervention. One example of how legislation works to ensure women's full and equitable participation in decision making is the efforts to expand the role of women through legislative initiatives such as gender quotas, which are being enforced at an impressive pace worldwide. The Quota system was adopted to remove the isolation of women in the political system (Ali & Akhtar, 2012). Some other types of things have been observed which are working side by side and customary law is one of them which plays its crucial role in the absence of any written or constituted law. The customary rule is commonly stated as the practice or usually traditional rule that has become an integral part of anticipated or acknowledged conduct in the community while on the other hand, the oxford dictionary explains it as the law based on or founded by custom but not associated with the common rule. If anyone is finding that how traditions, as well as customs, help women in different fields of life, then one can see that several practices are common which are damaging to the wellbeing of women according to the state as well as Islamic law. Some cultural practices are very helpful to women when there are no legal protections available or unenforceable conditions absent. This is well known in many aspects where traditional institutions are put off unoccupied due to the inattentive legal protections through stepping into the breach. Such kinds of practices can be seen in rural Pakistan. It has not been proposed that such practices give maximum benefits to women but if there are absentees of legal protections in written laws or implementation then it has been observed that some customary practices do well for the welfare of the women (Rasul, 2014).

3.8. Political Participation of Women in Pakistan before the 21st Century

From 1947 to 2000, female political participation in politics of Pakistan was at its lowest ebb. The first national assembly of Pakistan witnessed only one member of the parliament. The constitutions of Pakistan till 1973 demarcated a very less number of seats for female representation. Only ten seats were reserved for females in the first constitution of Pakistan i.e., 1956. It was just 3.2% of the total strength of the parliament. The provincial level political offices were no exception in that regard with only 3% females in assemblies. The next constitution was also in a similar pattern with having 6 female members in the assembly at the national level. In the general election of 1970, 13 females got an opportunity to serve at the national level on reserved seats. There were ten seats for women in the national assembly as determined by the 1973 constitution. The percentage was increased from 3.8 to 4.7%. The upper
house i.e., the senate had no women at all and there was no allocated seat for females. When Gen Zia took over the charge and abrogated the constitution of 1973, he increased the number of women in Majlis e Shura and included twenty women with minimal powers. After Zia’s death, the 1973’s constitution was restored. The women's quota was increased in parliament up to 8.4% in the national assembly. The elections from 1990 to 1997 were conducted without any allocated seats for females in the parliament. The representation of women in the parliament of Pakistan was not given attention in this period. No attention was being paid to the revival of the women's quota in the national assembly at that time. In the 1997 elections, there was only three percent elected women and only one woman in provincial assembly out of all provincial assemblies. There was no representation of women in the senate in this era. This era started with 1.2% representation to 8.4% from 1985-to 1990 and then 3% women representation in the 1997 elections.

![Graph showing women representation in Pakistan](source)

Source: Adopted from FAFEN (2013)

**Figure 1: Women in the National Assembly and Senate of Pakistan**

4. **Conclusion**

The theory of modernization explains the process of economic development and links it with political emancipation in the female strata of society. Pakistani society is a developing one and industrialization has affected the process of female political awareness but the patriarchal traditions are still prevalent in the roots of the majority of the population which is a stumbling block in enhancing females in the political hierarchy of the society. Education and development pave the way toward a more egalitarian society that empowers women in every walk of life including politics. Pakistan is a case that represents struggling features in the way of female political empowerment at an equal level as compared to men. Continuous efforts toward women's political empowerment will yield results that ensure the equality of women in the political arena of Pakistan.

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