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WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract:

Women play an active role in the guidance and consultation in politics and leadership. A number of examples are on the record of our history where women have been rulers or assisted the rulers in their affairs or have exhibited tremendous intellectual efforts for the reform and betterment of the society. These ladies bore enthusiasm for social uplift and high qualities of leadership, sincerity, intellect, courage and command. With their male colleagues, they stood hand in hand, to offer strong resistance against the British. Ms. Fatima Jinnah known as Madar-e-Millat (Mother of the Nation) who was the first lady to have inspired and organized the Muslim women for the struggle of freedom. At that stage, ladies of the elite, in particular, gave a solid helping hand to the men, in their social and political efforts. After independence in 1947, these women formed bodies and organizations to establish platform where they could exhibit their leadership qualities and opinion and where they could initiate work towards achievement of their objectives. Therefore, in this Paper I want to analyse that Pakistan was the only one country where women's played an important role in political participation and the largest percentage of women to take part in the parliament of Pakistan.

KEYWORDS-

Women's, Politics, Political Participation, Leadership, Parliament.

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is a strange new country where women have a complete right to participate in politics and other issues related to the country. In this respect we may observe that women played vital role in politics of Pakistan. As we remember that Begum Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz and Begum Shaista Akramullah were the first ladies to represent in the first legislative assembly of Pakistan. They managed inclusion of rights for women, in the constitution of the country, and played active role in information of laws that would promote women's rights and participation in national affairs.

The Muslim Personal Law of 1948, demand for Special Seats for Women in 1956, the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance 1961 and passing of Muslim Personal Law under Constitution of 1962 all owe to persistent struggle of these ladies. The most significant moment in the political history, that assigns prominence to the political character of women, was the decision of She's was the one to raise her voice against a dictator. Had the elections been fair, Ms. Jinnah must have won. Although Ayub Khan managed his victory in the elections, but the brave woman had cracked the foundations of dictatorship that finally constrained him give up and abandon power. Contest in the presidential elections by Ms. Fatima Jinnah was a step to initiate democracy in the country. Fatima Jinnah to contest the presidential elections.

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Fatima Jinnah was the youngest sister of Ali Mohd Jinnah. She became political during president campaign against Ayub Khan. She was a social activist in many forms. To suffer of flood in East Pakistan and West Pakistan, resettlement of refugees health issues and T.B patients was her priority. As a presidential candidate failure she put the blame on pressure of major political parties and her desire to do something for Pakistan. No doubt she was a great women promoted the cause of the Muslim League helped Jinnah to achieve his mission. It is said that there is a women behind every man and Fatima was the women behind Jinnah's success story as a companion and a positive influence in all walks of his life.

Then came the Bhutto era and at that time women, in the light of the theory of economic rights, continued their struggle for their status and reservations in the society. Toward this end, women from the urban areas did a commendable job in forwarding their demands and mobilizing movements for the women, by way of forming a number of women organizations. General elections and formation of Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) during Gen. Ziaul Haque's period helped women move ahead in the political arena. Later, some of the women became important political figures in the country. Now using political tone, they demanded their rights with more time, the women outside assemblies condemned dictatorship of Gen. Zia and supported the movement against martial law. Later, a young, intellectual and dynamic young woman Benazir Bhutto (also known as Daughter of Democracy) was trained by her father and the then Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to be perseverant toward the cause of democracy in the country.

A new and pleasant era of democracy commenced when Benazir Bhutto became world's first and the youngest Prime Minister. After forty years of independence, a woman had the honour to lead the country. Even during Nawaz Sharifs government, important offices like those of the opposition leader in the National Assembly, ambassadors and ministers were held by women. Besides, those women are also mentioned who have promoted the cause of development, progress and solidarity of the country and worked for the uplift of women's status and role in the society. Therefore these courageous women have not only created awareness among the women about their strength and importance, but also have indicated the platform where their demands could meet success.

Since the creation of Pakistan in 1947 Pakistan inherited the menace of poverty. The burden of this poverty was put heavily on the female population which is 50% of the total population of Pakistan. ON the top of it, women were neglected and under-nourished. All the governments had tried in one form or the other to develop the women but could not make a very happy progress because of various reasons. After some time, the government of Pakistan has introduced a special hardcore poverty alleviation programme focusing on the very poor families through the women of the family. Our commitment is reflected in the newly created " Benazir Income Support Programme" through which cash assistance of Rs.1000/ per month is provided to poor households with an allocation of Rs 34 billion for 2008-09. This is the direct disbursement of assistance to the poor women at her door step. It will certainly enhance her nutrient intake putting her in a better position to take part in the development of the country. In Pakistan, we have taken deliberate and conscious steps for the promotion and protection of women's rights and their advancement.

On the political front we have thirty three percent reserved seats for women in all local bodies (more than 36000 women councilors). At the national level seventeen percent seats have been reserved for women in the constituent assembly. Today the present government is committed and believes in creating, an enabling environment for people in general to enjoy long, healthy and creative life and for women in particular.

At lost, in this paper not only men's role in the political movements and social welfare, but it also introduces those courageous ladies who, in their individual or organizational capacity, are or have been instrumental in the struggle aimed at bringing changes in the country.

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CONCLUSION:

In Pakistan there is a democratic government like India. Where those countries there is democratic government there is equal opportunities are given to all the individuals of the country. Before independence there shall be discrimination between women and men but at the passage of time reserved seats were given to women's all over the country. In recent times their shall be no discrimination between men and women. All are given equal powers to take part in every governmental functions or parliaments in each and every country.

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