
Gendered Analysis of Across Parties Electoral Manifestos in Pakistan

Nayab Javed

Ra'ana Malik

Electoral manifestos play a central role in determining parties' priorities for national development and ensuring fundamental rights of people. Moreover, Political parties have taken concrete steps towards women's inclusion in the national development in Pakistan since 2000 because empowerment of women is directly linked to their greater economic role. In this regard, the aim of present study is to analyze the differences in key working areas for women empowerment in parties' manifestos. The population consisted on 38 eligible political parties for election registered with Election Commission of Pakistan. But as a sample, the study revolves around three main political parties' manifestos, all Sectors and Time frame (three election tenures). Three main parties included (Pakistan Muslim League-N, Pakistan People's Party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf) 2013 and 2018. The study is based upon secondary sources of data. Findings showed that three main parties' have given the attention to bring women in the mainstream of national development through women empowerment. Comparative analysis revealed that PTI acknowledges more women integration in economic growth of country by providing them free education up to matric, housing and child care assistance. Moreover, PTI gives special attention to "women support cells" in each police station at tehsil level. While PML-N committed to political participation of women at all levels, protection of rural women and land rights and special commitment for women protection centers. However, PPP also pledge to women empowerment with special focus to increase additional 10 percent quota for women in political parties, increase job quota to 20 percent and quota for women judges is integral to the judicial process at all levels. In addition the analysis revealed that besides the commitments in manifestos, parties are unable to fulfill that or even some areas are in manifestos still unaddressed yet. The Election Commission of Pakistan should develop follow up mechanism for commitments made in manifestos. This study has recommendations for political parties to work on the gender sensitive agenda including men, women and third gender as well.

Key Words: Economic development, political participation, women empowerment, social inclusion, Electoral Manifestoes

Introduction

Electoral manifestos play a key role in bestowing the vision of party democracy. Party democracy emphasizes on party policies, party campaigns, choice of voters and government policy (Eder, Jenny & Müller, 2017). Parties work on three major characteristics through their manifestos including party positions, campaigns and attracting voters. Potential voters are capable to judge parties through their policy documents; they highlight the party performances and judge whether promises have been kept or not (Dalton, Farrell & McAllister, 2011). The major purpose of constituting manifestos is to have direct and indirect effects on candidates (Budge, 1987), as Laver and Garry (2000) describe that manifestos are planned manuscripts written by a senior party leadership with smart objectives and future plans. However, party ideology is another feature that can be seen through the party manifesto. Every party differs in its ideology from others. As parties has been broadly divided into two major categories; parties of the right and parties of the left. The ideological positioning of right wing parties is traditional; they are less pragmatic and not well integrated gender in their manifestos. On the other hand the left parties are more pragmatic, leader oriented and able to address the gender sensitive issues through their policies (Epstein, 1967 & Eder, Jenny & Müller, 2017).

In addition, there is defined role of different political parties to promote women political participation that has been acknowledged around the globe to increase the role of women in legislative process. Woman quotas had been introduced in the result of that provision. However, with the quota system women are not getting political empowerment due to many factors. One of the most important factors is the lack of acceptance of women participation at party level. Political parties don't take women in politics as their right. Due to this, political parties fail to incorporate the women issues, concerns and solutions in electoral manifestos. The ideology of parties towards women political representation and participation can trace back to their electoral manifestos and follow up mechanism for agenda that have been already written in electoral manifestos. Moreover, another aspect involves that how the political parties promote women access to legislative assemblies (Lovenduski, 2010 & Caul, 1999).

Hence, the role of political parties has strong position to promote women in formal politics through their electoral manifestos, inclusion in intra party decisions and positions. Roles and duties should be assigned to women legislators on equal basis to men at intra party level. Need to draw attention to the issues by political parties so that the further actions can be taken place (Krook & Childs, 2010).

Furthermore, Fleschenberg and Hadi (2017) conducted a study on gender specific review of election manifestos of Pakistan's political parties 2008 revealed that many parties hold with women-specific agenda in their manifestos, many commitments have been made in post elections. Moreover, the women specific agenda has been divided into three main categories pro women legislation and

policy-making in the different areas, women political empowerment and decision-making in the bureaucracy, judiciary, and law enforcement.

Goetz and Hassim (2003) highlighted the key factors for increasing the women's political effectiveness including implementation and accountability to any manifesto regarding gender action. So there is not merely an inclusion of issues in party manifestos during electoral campaigns just to show off. They should focus on the implementation and achievement of the set goals in manifestos. So, under the above approach electoral rules and practices have made the political culture of political parties. These rules create a neutral environment for women politicians too. The recently election commission of Pakistan has passed, the electoral reforms bill 2017 that introduces many changes with reference to women's political participation as candidates. It recognizes that voters are very important and acknowledges that every party should give five percent tickets to women candidates. It is the clause of continuous resistance by the public and male politicians that leads to changes in Pakistan political patriarchy and party politics. The recently passed Electoral Reform Bill 2017 introduces a number of changes in regard to women's political participation as voters and candidates, pinpointing to an uneven level playing (Fleschenberg & Hadi, 2017). This study mainly identifies a broad pattern of change in the political parties' gender discourse and it concerned itself with the variation displayed by ideologically distinct political parties.

Methodology

The present study intends to analyze manifestos of three main political parties: Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N), Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) within the time frame of 2013 & 2018. The purpose of selecting these three political parties was their representation in the National Assembly. In addition, the representation of women legislators in National and Provincial Assemblies from three main three parties is higher than other parties. Another strong reason behind it that these parties have women wings working for women development countrywide.

In order, to view the gender discourse, they have mentioned women empowerment aspect in their manifestos. Hence, desk reviews used as research technique to analytically review the documents. That identified the gap regarding women empowerment agenda across the party.

The documents are accessed through the official websites of the parties. After getting access to the women empowerment section of documents, have read and allotted initial codes to develop major themes. In addition, thematic content analysis followed by certain criteria. That was set on the indicators of women empowerment and principles given by The United Nations. Moreover, manifestoes content analysis is drawn according to the indicators of women empowerment and principles based on two tenures across the parties.

Findings

The manifesto analysis followed by these major themes economic empowerment, social empowerment, political empowerment and Gender based violence. Generally it is noted, that despite variations in few areas of gender discourse, all major political parties emphasized the need to empower women. Some other important issues remained completely neglected. In particular, desperate need to address youth, rural and minority women concerns.

Table 1: *Gender related Commitments in Manifestoes across parties (2018)*

Women Empowerment	PPP	PML-N	PTI
Gender Responsive Democracy	Silent	Silent	Silent
Economic Empowerment	“Equal Fair Pay and Fair Job Policy for women. Job quota 20%. Credit for women entrepreneurs and rural women”.	Silent	“To protect women’s in heritage rights to land and property” p.23 “Establishing residential and caretaking facilities for working women in Urban setting” p.23
Social Empowerment	“Legislation to secure women’s rights. Social protection to single and widows. Maternal Healthcare”.	“Enactment of the protection against harassment of Women in Workplace Act”.	“Stipends will provide to secondary school girls”p.45 Large scale national maternal health programme” p.23 “Will increase the capacity of Dar-ul-aman”p.23 “Will increase the numbers of Lady Health Workers”p.43

			“Will increase women quota in local government and bodies of public boards”p.23
Political Empowerment	“10% quota for women on general seats proposes for political parties”.	Silent	“Will launch women voters drive across Pakistan to ensure the opportunity for women to exercise their right to vote”p.23
Gender Based Violence	“Law against acid crimes,home-based women workers and domestic violence”.	Silent	“Will establish Women Support Cells in each police station to support and processCriminal cases”p.13. “Special Courts of Gender Based Violence Cases”p.23

Source: PPP, PML-N & PTI Official Electoral Manifestos (2018)

Table 2: Gender related Commitments in Manifestoes across parties (2013)

Women Empowerment	PPP	PML-N	PTI
Gender Responsive Democracy	“Inclusion of women will be at all levels of governments, judiciary and criminal justice system”P.28	“Inclusion of women in all Judiciary levels. Gender sensitization added in legal education system & judicial Academies. Establish Women Commission to ensure women participation at all levels” p.24.	Silent

Economic Empowerment	<p>“Will expand Women entrepreneurship and rural women farmers” (p, 28) “Home based women workers, Fair pay and fair job policy for women” (p, 28) “Increase women participation in workplace” (P, 24) “Increase the job quota for women up to 20%” (p, 28)</p>	Silent	<p>“Vocational and skill-based training for income generation”</p>
Social Empowerment	<p>“Cut maternal and infant mortality rates by 60% “(p, 15& 18) “Promote family planning services” (p,20)</p>	<p>“Land Rights Technical & Vocational Education for women (P, 14). Maternal & Child Healthcare (P, 15) Speedy Justice Action Plan in property and family disputes (P, 14). Women Protection Centers” (P, 15).</p>	<p>“Free education & Scholarships; Child care assistance to working women” (P, 17) “Social awareness against un-Islamic customs”(P, 17)</p>
Political Empowerment	<p>“Increase 10 % quota for women on general seats” (p,28)</p>	<p>“Inclusion of women in influencing political party policies and process” (P, 14).</p>	Silent
Gender Based Violence	<p>“Immediate implementation of pro-women laws related to honor killing, gang rape, acid burn victim, inheritance, dowry, child maintenance,</p>	<p>“Un-Islamic Customary practices(Karo-Kari, Wani, Sawara) against women criminalized through Law</p>	<p>“Enforce laws for in-camera trial of rape cases”(P,18) “Women Support Cells in each police station to support and process</p>

sexual harassment and early marriage” (p, 28).	Prevent and Marriage”(P, 14).	Forced Child cases”(P,18)	criminal cases”(P,18) “Special law on violence against women” (P, 18)
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Source: PPP, PML-N & PTI Official Electoral Manifestos (2013)

Table 3: Overall Gender related Commitments across parties

	PPP	PML-N	PTI
Commitment for Ending Violence against Women (EVAW)	“Committed to legislation on the prevention of acid crimes to safeguard women and the rights of home-based women workers, apart from extending legislation against domestic violence across Pakistan”.	“To protect their inheritance rights and improve pro-women legislation, devise new antidiscrimination and EVAW laws along with proposing the formation of sexual harassment committees at the workplace	“Eliminating all discriminatory laws and provisions in the Constitution in order to ensure women’s equal status. Restoring Ministries of Women Development at the national and provincial levels. Promising to set up One Step Women’s Centres at the union council level called Insafigah
Commitment for Health	“To introduce a special programme which provides safe maternityrelated medical support to provide protection, nutrition, and vaccination to every child	to implement skill training and healthcare programmes to bridge existing gender gaps to launch population welfare programmes”	To achieve all health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) onmaternal and neonatal health,and infant and child mortality To initiate a mother and child healthcareprogramme and to introduce 24/7 motherchild healthcare services in at least half of the

Commitment or Education	<p>until the age of five years to take measures to decrease the rapid population growth to 1.6 percent”</p> <p>“To task the National Commission on Human Development with the target of one million women for literacy and education programmes”</p>	<p>“To preferentially appoint women teachers at primary school level to pay special attention to professional and higher education of women to devise programmes to increase women’s literacy rate”</p>	<p>country’s basic health units</p> <p>To begin reproductive health programmes such as birth spacing and to ensure women’s right to reproductive health decisions</p> <p>To double the number of girls’ high schools within five years</p> <p>To provide incentives for girls’ education by providing uniforms, textbooks, meals, scholarships, transportation, and sibling daycare</p> <p>To revise and improve textbooks and curricula in order to remove gender-based stereotypes”</p>
Commitment for Economic Empowerment	<p>“To increase job quota for women to 20 percent to ensure their Economic empowerment</p> <p>To further strengthen the Benazir Income Support Programme”</p>	<p>“To design microcredit programmes for women’s empowerment</p> <p>To provide house building loans for widows</p> <p>To introduce daycare facilities for working women</p> <p>To initiate a Women Entrepreneurship Financing Scheme to promote women’s business activities”.</p>	Silent
Commitment for Women Labour Rights	Silent	Silent	To draft a national policy for women homebased workers

		<p>to address their demands sothat HBWs and other unregistered women workers are brought under the labour policy, to exercise their rights equivalent to men employed in the formal economic sectors To show zero tolerance against bondedlabour and to bring culprits to justice.</p>
<p>Commitment for Minorities & Disables Women’s Political Participation and Empowerment</p>	<p>“Commits to an additional 10 percent quota for general seats, in addition to the 33 percent representation for women”</p>	<p>“Stresses a 20 percent quota for female staff in government offices”</p>

Source: PPP, PML-N & PTI Official Electoral Manifestos (2013 & 2018)

Women’s Social Empowerment

Pakistan is a signatory of many international commitments on women rights. Sustainable development goals are signed (agenda 2030) in 2016. In order to achievethese goals, particularly goal 5 with its measuring targets and indicators need to work on some primary areas. So, health and education are the basic working areas as fundamental human rights to improve women lives in general. The inter party content analysis of electoral manifestos showed that there is still a long way to achieve the goals discussed in SDGs.

The parties have focused about the maternal health, childcare services, reducing the population growth but there is still needs to incorporate the provisions about reducing child mortality rate, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, develop women technical skills and combat with women related diseases, to focus on the women senior citizens health. PML-N has thrown the plan Minister's National health Programme for the deprived people (pmhealthprogram.gov.pk, 2017) but no special policy was designed in order to fulfill the commitments has been written in electoral manifesto. So, special attention should be given on accomplishing the women health and education related services that had been promised in electoral manifestos.

Women's Economic Empowerment

Investing on women potential is way to achieving the economic growth and social outcomes. Party manifestos have not listed out the practical commitments to overcome the lack of women participation in labor force. The agriculture sector is backbone of Pakistan's economy with the highest employment and employment and absorption rate (Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2015-16). According to PCSW report, 2017 report "the female labor force participation rate is highest (28.8%) in the rural agriculture sector, but is still lower than that of males (69%)". So, the parties focus should be on the women are working in rural agriculture. That area needs to be focused in party manifestos. Another important area, which needs serious attention, the policy oriented approach for women working in informal sector (Home based Workers, HBW's).

According to the Labor force survey, 2014-15 in Pakistan, "women's participation in labour markets of rural areas is higher (28.8%) as compared to their participation in urban areas (10%). So, the parties fail to justify their commitments in lawmaking and policy reforms. PML-N passed only one law on labour rights in 2015 but that was not directly linked to women labor rights (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2015). According to SDG 5 (Target 5A) "Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws. In order to achieve the target 5A electoral parties in Pakistan need to make gender aware policies in economic sector. Moreover under the vision 2025, the government has also committed to increase the female labor force participation rate to 45%.

Women's Political Participation Empowerment

Inclusive governance always gives attention on equal representation and participation of both men and women in process of decision making (Claros & Zahidi, 2005). Pakistan has committed to strengthening women full participation in power structures under Article 7 (CEDAW), National plan of Action, 1998 and National policy for Development and Empowerment of Women, 2002 along with these Pakistan has also constitutional provisions in particularly Article 34 (NCSW,

2010). Despite all the commitments have been made by the government of Pakistan still women political participation could not pay back in the country's legislative process. According to the study conducted "many reasons are impeding women substantive representation in patriarchal political culture: financial dependence on male counterparts, restricted mobility, weak decision making power, family barriers and cultural norms and practices" (Bari, 2005).

So, keeping in view reasons mentioned above; parties should focus on women substantive representation and participation at grassroots levels. This section reviews political parties' commitments on quota allocations for women: as PPP's manifesto committed that "Inclusion of women in all standing committees (2013) and 5% quota for women on general seats (2018)". In addition PML-N manifesto committed that "Inclusion of Women in influencing political party policies and process (2013); in 2018 PML-N did not commit any provision regarding women role in legislative process. On the other hand PTI manifesto did not commit any single provision regarding women inclusion in legislative structure and process. PTI both manifestos 2013 and 2018 are silent regarding role of women in power structures. Without the women inclusion in governance process; it is not possible to understand half of the population's problems.

In addition, women quotas in the bureaucracy have not been discussed in the manifestos under review. In 2018, as per the direction of ECP, all the major parties allocated the 5% seats for the women legislators so that they can contest on general seats on equal basis to men. But the manifestos remain silent in order to develop the accountability mechanisms for the allocations of women tickets. Moreover, the follow-up mechanism should be followed for the nominations of women on quota seats. Parties should pay serious attention while making decisions for reserve seats nominations on intra party level as democracies based on the equal rights of people.

Conclusion

The under review political parties only committed in documents for all pro women provisions. Only few issues addressed practically rest of all are ignored yet in implementation. For example "the elimination of different forms and aspects of violence against women" these commitments were not practically addressed during 2013-18 legislative process, policymaking as well as implementation by the side of ruling party as well as opposition parties. During 2008, the main issue is that most of bills were tabled as private member bills instead of at party levels. In addition, pro women bills were tabled by the women legislators as private member bills. However, a positive change can be seen in 2013 in that women supportive laws moved from the party level. Another, practice can be observed that 'women concerns' should be addressed by only women legislators; it should not be confined to females, but the male legislators should also be sensitized too.

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