

FEMALE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: PAKISTANI PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Female political participation among muslims is not something new. It always remained indirect and revolved around family. The participation is expected to increase in future but mainly indirectly.

INTRODUCTION

Politics has been traditionally thought to be the male domain among muslims of the subcontinent [1]. The women who ventured to take part were never taken seriously and their role was considered unnecessary, secondly, anomalous [2] superfluous [3] taken [4] or at the most supplementary to the family interests as an appendage [5]. Such an understanding of the women's role seems correct when politics is viewed as only the formal state institutions and participation of actors in them. In this sense the women's role has quite appropriately been termed as male-equivalent [6], marginal [7] and male Chauvinistic courtesy [8]. As the definition of politics is little broadened to include all those activities that supplement the struggle of nation as a whole for sovereignty, self determination, democracy, economic self-sufficiency, social welfare etc; irrespective of sex, then the picture painted regarding female participation shows a different scene because the author uses the concepts of public and political interchangeably believing that "personal is political".

It is the difference of the context that defines the nature of an activity to be termed as political or apolitical [9]. If the Green World Movement in the West [10] could be termed as a political one, an indirect mode of participation, then why can't Women Action Forum or APWA be considered as political ones in Pakistan. This paper treats all those movements as political movements that directly or indirectly affect women status, their participation in public life and or are directed towards strengthening or weakening female subordination/male domination. And in the context of subcontinent, movements