

**Role of Women in the Political Development of  
Balochistan: A Case study of Women  
Parliamentarians in Balochistan Assembly: 2002-2018**



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***Session 2020-2024***

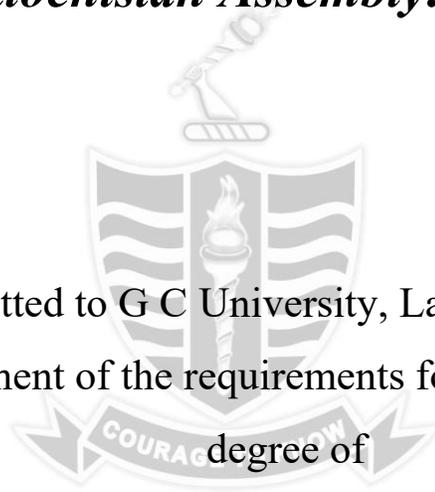
***Department of Political Science***

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***Role of Women in the Political Development of  
Balochistan: A Case Study of Women Parliamentarians  
in Balochistan Assembly: 2002-2018***

Submitted to G C University, Lahore in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the award of  
degree of



**BS  
In  
Political Science  
By  
JAHAN ZAIB**

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***Session 2020-2024***

## RESEARCH COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

It is certified that **Mr. Jahan Zaib and Mr. Najeeb Ullah** of BS in Political Science have completed the research report entitled “*Role of women in the political development of Balochistan: a case study of women parliamentarians in Balochistan Assembly: 2002-2018*”.

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## DECLARATION

We, the students of **BS** in the subject of **Political Science, Session 2020-2024**, hereby declare that the matter printed in the thesis titled “*Role of women in the political development of Balochistan: a case study of women parliamentarians in Balochistan Assembly: 2002-2018*” is our own work and has not been printed, published and submitted as research work, thesis or publication in any University, Research Institution etc., in Pakistan or abroad.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Deponents

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# DEDICATION

*DEDICATE THE FRUIT OF THIS HUMBLE EFFORT*

*TO*

*We dedicate this thesis to the courageous women parliamentarians of Balochistan who have broken barriers and paved the way for gender equality. Their resilience, bravery, and unwavering commitment to public service continue to inspire future generations, empowering women to step into leadership and shape a more just and inclusive society.*

*Jahan Zaib*

*Najeeb Ullah*

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In the end, our parents are the one who deserve full credit of our efforts.

**Jahan Zaib**  
**Najeeb Ullah**

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## **Abstract**

This study examines the challenges faced by women parliamentarians in Balochistan from 2002 to 2018. Women, despite constituting nearly half of Pakistan's population, remain underrepresented in politics. Cultural and societal norms in Balochistan, a patriarchal society, create significant barriers for women in leadership. The research, based on interviews with female political figures, identifies major challenges including deeply ingrained patriarchal attitudes, limited educational opportunities, and a lack of institutional support. Female politicians often face security concerns, skepticism from male colleagues, and cultural opposition to their participation in public life. Education is repeatedly highlighted as a crucial tool for empowerment, with interviewees emphasizing its importance for both political awareness and economic independence. Furthermore, economic empowerment through initiatives like microfinance is seen as key to enhancing women's roles in society. The need for mentorship and support networks is also identified as vital to fostering female political leadership. The conclusion highlights the persistent obstacles, such as media stereotyping and inadequate policy implementation, that continue to impede women's political empowerment in the province. Recommendations include investing in education, promoting gender-sensitive media representation, and increasing women's seats in political bodies to foster a more inclusive and equitable political landscape in Balochistan.

**Key Words:** Parliamentarians, Patriarchal Society, Education, Empowerment, Political Leadership

## 1.1 Introduction

Political development is guaranteed in inclusiveness, which include women empowerment in the politics which leads to the overall political development. Such as, enhancing democracy, fair representation, policy impact, transformative leadership, and community development. This research analysis the evolution of the women's role in political development in Baluchistan. In the historical context, women role in politics have gone through different phases which started from roman times to the 21st century. Still there are limitation in geographical context. According to the report release by world economic forum in 2023 Pakistan is ranked on 142 out of 146 which is embarrassing. Baluchistan, which territorially, the largest province of Pakistan ranked the least in the gender equality among provinces of Pakistan. the political development specifically with regards to women participation is a mere dream. From 2002 to 2018, there comes many women parliamentarians who have played distinguished role in political empowerment of the women but failed to make it compatible with other sister provinces. Women role in political participation is tied with many challenges which ultimately impacting the overall political development of Baluchistan. This piece of research will enable the reader with challenges women is facing. such as socio-political factors in Balochistan. It will further the reader with role of women parliamentarian in promoting the women in political development of Balochistan. Indeed, women inclusiveness is the need of the hour to ensure political development of Balochistan.it will lead to qualitative leadership, standardized policy making, equal access to decision making process, and more importantly it will encourage the women participation in mainstream politics. Different parliamentarian has come from different parties but their weightage remain hostage. There is a special quota system for the women in parliament but due to the undemocratic selection process fair representation becomes royal dream. Moreover, this research will also highlight the different remedies to enhance the political participation for women in the politics, specially through true parliamentarian spirit.

## **1.2 Framework of the Research**

This research paper is divided into five chapters.

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the study, introducing the main themes and scope to the reader. It covers several key elements including the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, research objectives, research questions, and the methodology used for the research. Additionally, it outlines the structure of the chapters that follow, offering a roadmap for the rest of the study.

### **Chapter Two: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**

The literature review aims to explore the perspectives of various scholars, writers, and political scientists on the subject of women's parliamentarians in Balochistan, Pakistan. This chapter presents a synthesis of these different viewpoints, examining how various challenges to women's parliamentarian have been discussed and analyzed in academic and political literature. It provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the issues surrounding women's political participation in the province.

### **Chapter Three: Role of Women Parliamentarians in the Process of Political Development in Balochistan**

This chapter explores the significant role of women parliamentarians in Balochistan's political development from 2002 to 2018. It highlights their key contributions to promoting gender equality through legislative reforms, such as the Domestic Violence Act and child marriage restraint laws. Additionally, the chapter emphasizes their efforts in improving education, healthcare, and fostering women's political participation at the grassroots level.

### **Chapter Four: Challenges to Women's Political Empowerment in Baluchistan**

In this chapter, interviews with the former female members of the Baluchistan Assembly are presented. These interviews explore the experiences, obstacles, and challenges women in Balochistan face in the realm of politics. The chapter provides first-hand insights into the personal and professional hurdles these women encounter as they strive to participate in and influence political decision-making processes.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusion**

The final chapter summarizes the key findings of the study. It recaps the barriers to women's empowerment identified throughout the research, and highlights the underlying causes of these challenges. The conclusion also outlines potential solutions and recommendations for enhancing women's political participation and empowerment in Baluchistan, providing a way forward for future initiatives aimed at gender equality in politics.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem:**

Despite the significance of women's political representation, the status of women parliamentarians in Balochistan remains concerning. They face various challenges that hinder their effective participation and empowerment in the political sphere. Key obstacles include: Limited access to education and political training, poor health and wellbeing, entrenched patriarchal structures and gender biases and Inadequate access to political participation. Studies have shown that even when women parliamentarians have access to these essential factors, they still encounter challenges in exercising their full potential. According to the United Nations, certain indicators are crucial for empowering women parliamentarians, including:

- Freedom to make decisions and participate in policymaking
- Equal access to resources and opportunities
- Autonomy to control their political careers and public lives

This research aims to investigate the specific challenges and obstacles faced by women parliamentarians in Balochistan, using these indicators as a framework to explore and address the barriers to their effective political participation and empowerment which leads to the political development in Baluchistan.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

1. To identify and analyze the socio-political factors that facilitated the entry of women into parliament in Balochistan during the period of 2002-2018.
2. To investigate the challenges and obstacles faced by women parliamentarians in Balochistan, including gender biases, patriarchal structures, and limited access to resources and political support.

3. To assess the impact of women parliamentarians on representing the interests of marginalized communities, including ethnic and religious minorities,
4. To explore and recommend strategies for enhancing the effective participation and representation of women parliamentarians in Balochistan, including measures to address gender biases, increase political support, and improve access to resources and opportunities.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- I. What motivated them to enter politics, especially in a province with deeply rooted traditional and cultural values?
- II. What were the main challenges and difficulties faced by women parliamentarians in Balochistan?
- III. How have they contributed to advancing women's rights and gender equality during your time in office?
- IV. What was needed to increase women's political participation in Baluchistan and ensure their voices are heard in key decision-making processes?

### **1.6 Significance of the Research**

This research on the "Role of Women Parliamentarians in Balochistan from 2002-2018" is really important because it helps us understand how women are represented and empowered in a society like Balochistan, where men usually hold most of the power. By studying the challenges faced by women parliamentarians, we can come up with strategies to address gender biases and promote equality. It also shows us how women parliamentarians influence policy decisions and laws, especially when it comes to issues that affect women. This research can provide recommendations to help women participate and be represented more effectively in politics, which can lead to political reforms and initiatives for gender equality. It's especially significant because it fills a research gap in understanding women's political participation in Baluchistan, a region that hasn't received much attention in research. By empowering women parliamentarians and potential female leaders, this study aims to create a more inclusive and fair political landscape, and inspire

efforts to promote gender equality, political empowerment, and social justice in Balochistan and similar places.

### **1.7 Research Methodology**

In this research paper, both primary and secondary approaches were applied. Through primary and secondary method, research has been analyzed. Researchers conducted the interviews of various women member in Balochistan Assembly. The Secondary sources are focused on journals, books, newspapers and articles. The findings were triangulated to increase validity and provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of women parliamentarians in Balochistan. Throughout the research process, ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured.

### **1.8 Research Limitations**

One of the significant challenges faced by the researcher during the data collection process was the disconnect between the theoretical framework and the realities on the ground. While existing theories on political development provided valuable insights into women's participation and empowerment, they often failed to accurately reflect the complexities and nuances of women's lived experiences in specific socio-political contexts. This disparity was particularly evident in regions like Balochistan, where deeply rooted cultural norms, socio-economic factors, and historical dynamics shaped women's roles in politics in ways that existing theories did not fully encompass. As a result, the researcher encountered difficulties in aligning theoretical constructs with empirical observations, necessitating a critical re-evaluation of the frameworks used to analyze women's political participation and highlighting the need for more context-sensitive approaches in future studies. Similarly, the researchers encountered several other limitations during the interviews with various women parliamentarians. One significant challenge was security issues, as many interviewees were concerned about their safety while engaging in public discussions. This apprehension sometimes led to delays or cancellations of scheduled interviews. Additionally, logistical difficulties arose in coordinating meeting times and locations, particularly in a region where travel can be unpredictable. These factors may have limited the diversity of perspectives captured in the study, as some women may have been unable or unwilling to participate due to these constraints. Overall, these challenges highlight the complex environment in which women in politics operate, impacting both their engagement and the research process.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

### **Literature Review**

Literature review plays very significant role in any research. It provide the reasonable grounds to make the research valid. It highlights the thoughts of distinguished scholars in that particular area of research. These scholars use the primary and secondary resources to finalize their view on that particular area. Literature review further enlarge the researcher to obtain the purpose of research. Many scholars have come to produce their literature while using different sources on the political development. There are different books, reports, articles, and documentaries on the political development with regards to women participation, in and outside the parliamentary setup.

First report by Hakim and Azra report, under the title of “Socio cultural, religious, and political aspects of the status of women in Pakistan”. The status of women varies from society to society. There are different forces which discourage the womanhood in societies. This report also highlights the dominant factor playing its role in discouraging the women to play its part in political development, in Baluchistan. according to this report women political participation in Baluchistan is uncountable. The representation of women in mainstream politics is comparatively embarrassing with respect to the total population. The 47.1% of the total population is represented by 3% representation. The voting turns out is again very low in the province. Many few women have casted their vote in 2013. This trend shows how women have been marginalized. Similarly, the given representation also plays its minimum role to uplift the women participation which is half of total strength of the population. According to the report, women in Baluchistan is completely marginalized by the patriarchal nature of the society. Women in the province are illiterate, having low accessibility to healthcare facility, remain completely dependent on the men. Male chauvinism is widely acceptable as normal in the province. One who made up to the mainstream politics also suffer through many challenges. Misinterpreted Religion have been used as tool to discriminate the women from politics. This again became a great challenge for the women parliamentarian to uplift the marginalized status of the women in the society.<sup>1</sup>

Second report by Ruth Peterson, under the title of “Women Environment in Challenging Environment Case Study of Baluchistan”. This report mainly emphasis on the mobility of women

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<sup>1</sup> Hakim and Azra, “Socio Cultural, Religious, and Political Aspects of the Status of Women in Pakistan”, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad, Vol. 37, No.4, pp. 727-746.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41261079>

in the societal structure of Baluchistan. The deeply entrenched nature of male chauvinism, according to this report, created an atmosphere of fear for women to mobilize. Women are not allowed to go outside home. There is complete code of conduct which is wholly against the fundamental rights of women. Whosoever challenges this code of conduct or establish the private rules that particular women have to face several challenges. The male in that particular area consider this as honor issue. Similarly, the whole societies are structured on the tribalism. The complete decision-making process is under control of head of the family. The head of the family decides the future of that particular tribe. Ruth Peterson compares this set up with early nature of the romans time where the father or the brother in the family steer the affairs of the family. The women were not given the access or equal rights to derive their own destiny. Same like situation can also be witnessed in Baluchistan. Peterson also says that the fast-evolving phase of women rights is still negligible in Baluchistan. Peterson furthered his research that free mobility of women will encourage the scoring of women in the national and provincial politics. This will come with deconstruction of conventional nature of the society, mainly through education.<sup>2</sup>

Sakhi Mandal report tells the other side of the story. This report is specifically focusing on the Indian societies but generally, he says such tendencies exist everywhere in the illiterate and backward nature of societies. This report emphasis the untold stories of women related issues. Women in backward societies. Women, in such, societies are paying the huge cost for their unmade issues. They face multifarious violence i.e. honor killing, harassment, treated like a slave, domestic violence, rape, and poverty. This situation left out the unimaginable and traumatized feeling on the women. They consider this trend as normal and usual. Sakhi Mandal also highlighted that such notions ultimately discourage the overall political development. This will lead to the complete marginalization of women from politics. The feeling of womanhood remains is mere dream in such kind of societies. Extending the thoughts to the Baluchistan seems the report is written on Baluchistan women. The extension of violence in Baluchistan is very conscious and evident. Many parliamentarians have come in the parliament but the existence of male domination in policy making process unable the women to shape the policy or regulation based on women centric.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ruth Paterson, "Women's Empowerment in Challenging Environments: A Case Study from Balochistan", *Development in Practice*, published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd, Vol. 18, No. 3, Jun., 2008, pp 333-334.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/i27751923>

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Hamilton Mahida, "The Sakhi Mandal: A new way of women empowerment", *Wutan Huatan Jisuan Jishu*, Volume XVI, Issue XI, November/2020,

<http://mahilaarts.org/NAAC%20REPORTS/Research%20Innovations%20and%20Extension/3.3.2/2019-20.pdf>

According to another report authored by Dr Makhi Kakar, who is the Doctor in sociology department of Baluchistan university. He wrote the article under the title of Baluchistan women in politics an examination of political participation and its effect on women empowerment in Baluchistan. He highlighted the roles of women parliamentarian from different political forces in Pakistan. This report tells that the gender disparities are very much common in Pakistan, specifically in Baluchistan. This disparity can be easily evident from the inclusion of women in the mainstream politics. This report also highlights the antidotes for improving the political development in the context of women political participation. The voting turns out in electoral process is very low for women in the province. Despite, having 50% of the total population. There different undemocratic barriers involved in reflecting the demise picture of low political participation. The women representation contained many loopholes like favoritism, nepotism and dynastic politics. The party tickets are not divided on the basis of meritocracy rather than on favoritism. The quota system furthered the undemocratic selection of women. Similarly, the women parliamentarian after coming to parliament hardly play its fair role in making the policy oriental to women in the province. Balochistan already having low share in the decision-making process making women more vulnerable. According to this report woman from the marginalized societies should be given free and fair weightage in the decision-making process. The political forces on the national level should encourage the women participation in mainstream politics. Similarly, government should also play its role in making the society free and open for women participation.

Dr Kakar report also throw some light on the role of different non-governmental organization in the province. The Aurath foundation is dominant which is essential plate form for the registration of women quarries in the province. Thousands of cases are being registered against the honor killing in the province. Most of the cases are reported from the remote areas which shows the extent of less political participation leads to less protection in the province. He furthers equated the situation with true form of democracy cannot be ensured with marginalized status of women.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Makki Kakar, Muhammad Rahim, and Shokat Ali, "Balochistan Women in Politics: An Examination of Political Participation and its Effects on Women Empowerment in Balochistan, Pakistan", *Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 11(2), May 2023  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371111675\\_Balochistan\\_Women\\_in\\_Politics\\_An\\_Examination\\_of\\_Political\\_Participation\\_and\\_its\\_Effects\\_on\\_Women\\_Empowerment\\_in\\_Balochistan\\_Pakistan](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371111675_Balochistan_Women_in_Politics_An_Examination_of_Political_Participation_and_its_Effects_on_Women_Empowerment_in_Balochistan_Pakistan)

Moreover, John Esposito write the article on “Islamic vision on the women rights”. He strengthened his point of view with fulfilling the women rights ultimately leads to the political development. The modern concept of human rights specifically women rights are intentionally misinterpreted with Islamic version of human rights. Mr. John, in his article, found the reasonable supported in the universal declaration of human rights in the last sermon of the holy prophet peace be upon him. He says that the modern version of human rights is very much resemble with Islamic rights. The Islam also discourages the gender biasedness’ in political system. Gender biasedness demoralize the overall political development of the system. The political system must be very much inclusive to provide the space to the marginalized communities. Islam gave equal chances to both men and women. This articles also analyses the era before the advent of the Islam. Before Islam women position was deeply entrenched in numerous crisis. The women were treated like subjects. The master to slave relation was deeply affecting the early societies. It was the Islam which promoted the position of women in the societies under the shadowy principles of Islam. Islam integrated the women in politics, economy, and society as whole. It gave the equal rights to both genders irrespective of cast, color, and religion.<sup>5</sup>

According to another report published by Aurat foundation, non-governmental organization, voting turn out in largest province of Baluchistan is bleak. There are very few women who could made in to parliamentarian politics in between 2002 to 2008. This particular era was very much furnishing and supportive for women. The increment of the number of seats for women in parliament didn’t brought and millstone development for women in the provinces. Afterwards national and regional parties also have never focused on integrating half of the population in politics. Very few projects and programs were introduced in era of 2008 to 2013. Pakistan people’s party which is very much renown in promoting feminist-based manifesto but they have failed to channelized the women from Baluchistan in national and provincial politics. This discouraging process is furthering the hostage of women in societies.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> John L. ESPOSITO, WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN ISLAM, Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Vol. 14, No. 2 (SUMMER 1975), pp. 99-114.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20846947>

<sup>6</sup> Women and Elections 2008, “Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation”, Neswletter, Issue No.23, January-March 2008.  
<https://www.af.org.pk/Newsletters/Newsletter%2023.pdf>

Dr Rubina Batool, she is lecturer in gender and development, in the department of Baluchistan university. She wrote an article on women political empowerment in Baluchistan. A focus on political literacy among policy makers. She highlighted the major structural loopholes in the policy making due to political illiteracy. The policy makers are weather illiterate or feel lazy in prioritizing the women development in Baluchistan. She also highlighted the core issue. Such as, the political leadership in the politics are the byproduct of the same society in Baluchistan. The sense of male domination is furthered in the policy making. The sense of sisterhood in the women strata of the society is very weak. There is no any particular done by these politicians to uplift the women status in the politics. The decreasing trend of the voting turn out is demolishing the sense of democracy on the province. Moreover, there are few women registered with NADRA.<sup>7</sup>

## **Theoretical Framework**

This research takes inspiration from theories of political and democratic development and applies them specifically to the role of women parliamentarians in Balochistan. It recognizes the significance of free and fair elections and political participation in fostering democratic growth in the region. By exploring the experiences and contributions of women parliamentarians, this research expands our understanding of how their involvement can shape and strengthen democratic processes. It highlights the importance of inclusivity and equal representation in promoting a vibrant and robust democracy. Through this lens, the study provides valuable insights into the unique challenges and opportunities faced by women in the political arena, offering recommendations to further enhance their participation and influence. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader discourse on political and democratic development while emphasizing the crucial role of women in shaping the future of Baluchistan's democracy.

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<sup>7</sup> Dr. Rubeena Batool, Mr. Shah Khalid Baloch and Ms. Nasreen Samar, "Women's Political Empowerment in Balochistan: A Focus on Political Literacy Among Policymakers", VOL. 3 NO. 2 (2023): JOURNAL OF QURANIC AND SOCIAL STUDIES  
<https://jqss.org/index.php/JQSS/article/view/100>

## 2.1 Max Weber Theory of Political Development

Max Weber's arguments emphasize the central role of political parties in the development of modern mass democracy. According to Weber, the expansion of the right to vote and the rise of mass democracy necessitated a higher degree of rationalization in electoral campaign techniques. Modern political parties are, as Weber puts it, "the children of democracy, mass suffrage, and the development of extreme unity and rigorous discipline." These parties evolved alongside the structuring of political life, particularly in urban settings, such as with the German Social Democrats, and the growing importance of political programs. Weber highlights that mass parties are a key example of the bureaucratization of all forms of organization. One of the defining features of these modern parties is their freedom of recruitment, which allows them to avoid becoming overly patrimonial, where a few prominent figures dominate the direction of the party. Instead, this open recruitment fosters a more democratic structure within the party, allowing it to adapt and thrive within the context of mass democracy.<sup>8</sup>

Max Weber's theories provide a nuanced framework for analyzing women's participation in political development, particularly through his concepts of authority and bureaucracy. Weber's identification of three types of authority—traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal—helps illuminate the barriers and opportunities women face in political contexts. Traditional authority often perpetuates patriarchal norms that confine women to domestic roles, limiting their participation in public life. In contrast, rational-legal authority, which is based on established laws and procedures, can empower women by creating formal mechanisms for inclusion and representation in governance. By advocating for legal reforms and policies that promote gender equality, women can leverage rational-legal frameworks to challenge traditional norms and enhance their political influence.

Additionally, Weber's emphasis on bureaucracy sheds light on the structural dynamics within political institutions that affect women's participation. Bureaucratic systems, characterized by hierarchical structures and formal rules, can serve as both obstacles and enablers for women

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<sup>8</sup> Duran Patrice, "Max Weber and the Making of Politicians: A Sociology of Political Responsibility", *Max Weber Studies* Volume 10.1 – January 2010, accessed from Researchgate. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273545927\\_Max\\_Weber\\_and\\_the\\_Making\\_of\\_Politicians\\_A\\_Sociology\\_of\\_Political\\_Responsibility](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273545927_Max_Weber_and_the_Making_of_Politicians_A_Sociology_of_Political_Responsibility)

seeking to engage in politics. While these systems may offer pathways for women to enter civil service roles and influence decision-making, rigid hierarchies can also reinforce gender inequalities, making it difficult for women to ascend to leadership positions. Furthermore, Weber's focus on social action highlights the importance of understanding the motivations behind individual and collective actions in the pursuit of political goals. Women's movements and grassroots activism can challenge existing power structures, mobilizing support for gender equality and fostering an environment where women's voices are increasingly recognized and valued in political development.

## 2.2 Gabriel Almond's Theory of Political Development

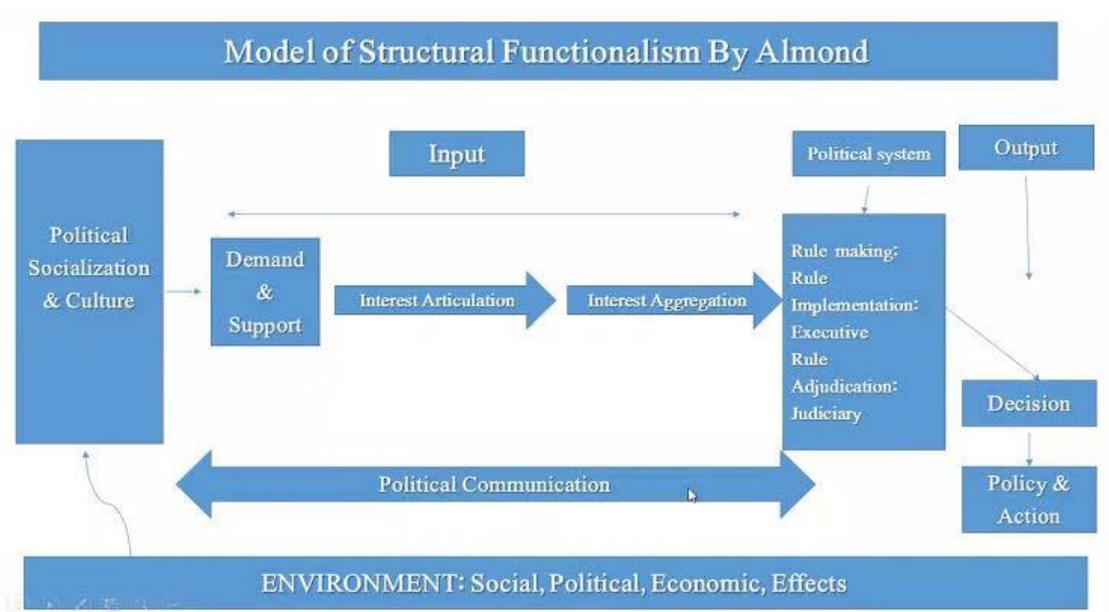


Fig 2.5.1: Model of Structural Functionalism by Almond

Source: Accessed from the google.

Gabriel Almond's concept of the political system focuses on how different structures within a society work together to maintain order, resolve conflicts, and manage the distribution of resources and power. Almond identified four key functions of a political system: political socialization, recruitment, interest articulation, and interest aggregation. Political socialization transmits political culture and values to new generations, while recruitment selects individuals for

political roles. Interest articulation allows individuals or groups to express their needs and demands, and interest aggregation combines these into policies or actions. Almond also introduced the concepts of input, conversion, and output in the political system. Inputs, such as demands and supports, are processed through political institutions (conversion), which then produce outputs in the form of laws, decisions, and policies. This framework emphasizes how political systems transform societal demands into concrete outcomes, ensuring both responsiveness and stability.<sup>9</sup>

Gabriel Almond's theory of political development emphasizes the significance of political culture and socialization in shaping political behavior, including the participation of women in politics. Almond categorized political culture into three types: parochial, subject, and participant. In societies characterized by parochial political culture, individuals are primarily engaged in local matters and often lack awareness or interest in broader political issues, which can marginalize women by reinforcing traditional gender roles that confine them to domestic spheres. To enhance women's political participation, it is crucial to shift towards a participant political culture that recognizes women as active agents in governance. This shift involves fostering attitudes that encourage engagement in political processes and dismantling cultural barriers that inhibit women's involvement.

Moreover, Almond's emphasis on political socialization highlights how various agents—such as family, education, and media—shape individuals' political attitudes and behaviors, including those of women. In many contexts, socialization processes can reinforce gender stereotypes that limit women's political aspirations and participation. Therefore, targeted efforts in education and awareness campaigns are essential to empower women, challenge existing norms, and encourage their active participation in political life. By creating an environment that promotes inclusive political socialization, women can be motivated to engage in political activities, thus contributing to political development and fostering a more equitable and representative political landscape.

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<sup>9</sup> Syba Gen, "Political System Almond's Model: Structural Functionalism", accessed from SCRIBD. <https://www.scribd.com/document/641917843/political-system-Gabrial-almond>

## **2.3 Role of Women in the Political Development Processes**

Empowering women is crucial for economic and social progress. China and Bangladesh are great examples of how empowering women has contributed to the development of their societies. In China, Chairman Mao Zedong's reforms in the 1950s, such as banning the binding of women's feet and providing universal primary education and healthcare, played a significant role in empowering women. When Deng Xiaoping took over in 1976, he opened China to the world, leading to rapid economic growth. The country's workforce, which had a higher proportion of women, played a crucial role in driving this progress. Similarly, Bangladesh gained independence in 1971 and inherited a significant quota under the Multi-Fiber Agreement. Foreign investment, particularly from East Asian countries, flowed in, and the garment industry became a major sector. Women, who were recognized as skilled workers in garment production, seized the opportunities, with over 80% of the workforce being women.<sup>10</sup>

These examples highlight how empowering women through education, healthcare, and economic opportunities can lead to significant social and economic development. It's inspiring to see the positive impact that women's empowerment can have on a country's progress.

## **2.4 Role of Women in legislative Representation**

According to report on “Performance of Women Legislators” published by Free and Fair Election Network highlights that women in Balochistan are underrepresented in the Provincial Assembly. Even though they make up 46% of the population, their presence in the Assembly is only 20%, and they have no representation in the Cabinet. The Constitution of Pakistan actually emphasizes the importance of women's participation in all areas of national life. To address this issue, the Constitution reserves 17% of seats in the legislatures for women. Political parties then nominate women candidates for these seats based on the proportion of general seats in the legislature. It's crucial that efforts continue to be made to ensure equal representation and opportunities for women in politics.

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<sup>10</sup> Shahid Javed Burki, “Role of Women in Pakistan’s Development”, Tribune: The Express, March 14, 2022 <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2347800/role-of-women-in-pakistans-development>

## Increasing Women's Representation in Government

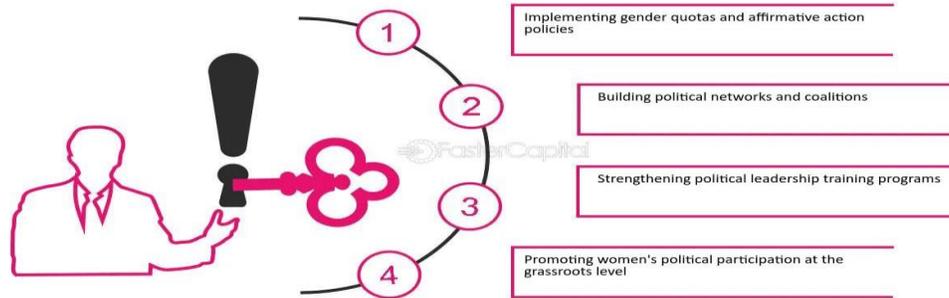


Fig: 2.1 Increasing Women Representation in Government

Source: Accessed from the fastercapital website

Moreover, the role of women in legislative representation in Balochistan is vital for promoting gender equality, empowerment, and inclusive decision-making. Despite being underrepresented, holding only 12% of seats in the Balochistan Assembly and barely 5% in local government, women legislators play a crucial role in representing women's voices and concerns, advocating for their rights and interests, and challenging patriarchal norms. They promote gender-sensitive legislation and policies, ensure women's participation in political decision-making, and address gender-based violence and discrimination. By supporting women's economic empowerment and development, women legislators encourage political participation and leadership among women. They build bridges between political parties and factions, fostering a more inclusive and democratic society. To promote gender equality and empower women in Balochistan, increasing women's representation in legislative bodies is essential. By doing so, women can contribute fully to the political process, leading to a more equitable and just society.

## 2.5 Education and Economics: The Bedrock Political Empowerment



Fig: 2.2 Empowering Women through Education and Skill Development

Source: Accessed from the fastercapital website

Education and economics play a crucial role in empowering women politically in Balochistan. Limited access to education is a major barrier that prevents women from participating in politics. The unequal literacy rates between men and women make it difficult for women to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the complexities of political processes. Education is key in empowering women by giving them confidence, critical thinking abilities, and a deeper understanding of political structures, which are all vital for meaningful engagement in politics. Additionally, the lack of economic opportunities restricts women to the domestic sphere, limiting their ability to engage in public activities, including politics. Shah's (2014) research highlights the impact of limited economic mobility on women, as it forces them to rely on men and further hampers their involvement in political activities. When women achieve financial independence, they can engage in political endeavors without depending on male relatives for economic support. This economic autonomy is crucial for empowering women to actively participate in politics and have a voice in decision-making processes.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Tariq Hussain Bugti, "THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN BALOCHISTAN'S POLITICAL PROCESS: BREAKING BARRIERS AND EXPANDING PARTICIPATION", *Pakistan Journal of Social Research*, Vol.5, No.1, March 2023, pp. 670-673. <https://pjsr.com.pk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/74.-Vol.-5-No.-1-March-2023-Bugti-Ali-The-Role-of-Women-in-Balochistans-Political-Process.pdf>

## **Chapter 3: Role of Women Parliamentarians in the Process of Political Development in Balochistan**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The Balochistan Women's Peace Coalition exemplifies the growing activism of women's rights organizations. These groups are actively working to raise awareness about gender equality and are advocating for legislation that removes barriers hindering women's participation in politics.<sup>12</sup> The role of women parliamentarians in the political development of Balochistan from 2002 to 2018 has been pivotal in shaping the province's sociopolitical landscape. This period marked a significant transformation in women's political representation, driven by constitutional reforms and affirmative action policies that reserved seats for women in both provincial and national assemblies. In Balochistan, women are allocated 11 out of 65 seats in the Provincial Assembly, which has allowed female representatives to influence legislative discussions and contribute to policymaking. This inclusion has not only increased the visibility of women in politics but also facilitated the advocacy for issues critical to women and marginalized communities, such as education, health care, and social justice. The presence of women in the political arena has challenged traditional gender roles and norms, gradually reshaping societal perceptions regarding women's capabilities and rights.

The engagement of women parliamentarians has been further bolstered by the efforts of civil society organizations, which have worked tirelessly to promote political awareness and empower women to participate in governance. These organizations have provided training programs and workshops aimed at enhancing the skills of women leaders, focusing on areas such as public speaking, legislative processes, and community mobilization. Through these initiatives, women parliamentarians have gained confidence and developed the capacity to advocate effectively for their constituents. Furthermore, their involvement in legislative committees and public forums has enabled them to voice the concerns of women and children in Balochistan,

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<sup>12</sup> Tariq Hussain and Waqar Ali, "The Role of Women in Balochistan's Political Process: Breaking Barriers and Expanding Participation", *Pakistan Journal of Social Research*, Vol.5, No.1 March 2023. <https://pjsr.com.pk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/74.-Vol.-5-No.-1-March-2023-Bugti-Ali-The-Role-of-Women-in-Balochistans-Political-Process.pdf>

bringing issues like domestic violence, education access, and health disparities to the forefront of political discourse. This advocacy has led to the introduction of various bills and policies aimed at promoting gender equality and addressing the unique challenges faced by women in the province.

Despite significant progress, women parliamentarians in Balochistan have faced numerous challenges that have hindered their effectiveness and influence. Cultural norms and societal resistance often limit their ability to operate freely, particularly in rural areas where traditional views on gender roles remain deeply entrenched. Additionally, issues such as security concerns and limited resources have posed obstacles to their political engagement and outreach efforts. Nevertheless, the resilience of these women in the face of adversity has led to a gradual cultural shift, fostering an environment where more women are beginning to view political participation as a viable path. The impact of women parliamentarians in Balochistan from 2002 to 2018 is a testament to the transformative power of female political leadership in a traditionally conservative society, paving the way for future generations of women to take on active roles in the political arena and drive meaningful change in their communities.

## **3.2 Key Contributions of Women Parliamentarians in Balochistan**

### **3.2.1 Gender Equality and Women Rights Legislations**

All citizens are equal under the law and are entitled to equal legal protection. Article 25 asserts, “No discrimination shall be made solely on the basis of gender.” Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) consistently advocated for women's rightful entitlements and accorded them the utmost respect.<sup>13</sup> Women parliamentarians in Balochistan have played a crucial role in advocating for and establishing legal frameworks aimed at promoting gender equality and protecting women's rights. Their efforts have led to the enactment of significant legislation, including the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, which provides legal recourse for victims of domestic abuse, and the Balochistan Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, designed to

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<sup>13</sup> Sadia Sohail, “Gender Inequality in Balochistan”, Balochsian Voices article, published on January 15, 2019. <https://www.balochistanvoices.com/2019/01/gender-inequality-in-balochistan/>

address and prevent harassment in professional settings. By actively participating in legislative processes, these female leaders have highlighted critical issues affecting women, such as violence, discrimination, and economic empowerment, ensuring that women's voices are heard and represented in the policymaking arena. Their advocacy not only addresses immediate legal protections but also contributes to a broader cultural shift toward recognizing and upholding women's rights in a traditionally patriarchal society, thereby laying the groundwork for future advancements in gender equality within the province.

### **3.2.2 Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act (2014)**

The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, enacted in Balochistan in 2014, represents a significant legislative milestone aimed at addressing and combating domestic violence within the province. This law provides a comprehensive framework for the protection of individuals, particularly women and children, who are victims of domestic abuse. It defines various forms of domestic violence, including physical, emotional, psychological, and economic abuse, and establishes legal measures for prevention, protection, and redress. The Act mandates the establishment of protection committees to assist victims, facilitates access to legal aid, and outlines procedures for the filing of complaints and obtaining protective orders. By criminalizing domestic violence and emphasizing the need for support services, this legislation not only aims to safeguard the rights and dignity of victims but also seeks to raise awareness about the issue, encouraging a societal shift towards rejecting violence against women and fostering a culture of respect and equality.

### **3.2.3 Balochistan Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act (2016)**

The Balochistan Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, passed in 2016, is a landmark piece of legislation aimed at creating a safer and more equitable working environment for women in Balochistan. This law defines harassment in various forms, including physical, verbal, and psychological abuse, and establishes clear procedures for reporting incidents of harassment in workplaces. It mandates the formation of inquiry committees within organizations to investigate complaints and provides a framework for disciplinary actions against perpetrators. By promoting awareness and accountability, the Act not only empowers women to report harassment without fear of retaliation but also encourages employers to implement effective

measures to prevent and address workplace harassment. Ultimately, this legislation is a critical step toward fostering a culture of respect and safety in professional settings, reinforcing women's rights to work free from discrimination and violence.

### **3.2.4 Child Marriage Restraint Act (2018)**

The Child Marriage Restraint Act, enacted in Balochistan in 2018, is a pivotal legal measure aimed at curbing the practice of child marriage in the province, where such marriages have long been prevalent due to cultural and socio-economic factors. This law raises the minimum legal age of marriage to 18 years for both males and females, thereby aligning with national and international standards on children's rights and gender equality. It criminalizes the act of child marriage, imposing penalties on those who facilitate or conduct such marriages, including parents and guardians. The Act also emphasizes the importance of awareness-raising initiatives to educate communities about the detrimental effects of child marriage on health, education, and overall development. By legally protecting the rights of children and promoting their well-being, this legislation seeks to empower young individuals, particularly girls, to pursue their education and achieve their full potential, ultimately contributing to a decline in early marriages and fostering a more equitable society.

## **3.3 Improving Education and Health**

### **3.3.1 Zubaida Jalal Contributions to Education**

Zubaida Jalal worked relentlessly to make Pakistan's education system more inclusive. As Education Minister, she ensured that religious seminaries in Pakistan also offered mainstream modern education. Her efforts to update the curriculum were widely praised, and her advocacy for girls' education is well-known. She introduced the first-ever sector-wide approach to Education Sector Reforms, focusing on everything from Early Childhood Education to knowledge-based Higher Education.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Kamran Khan, "Ms. Zobaida Jalal Khan" article published on balochistanstars, 2020. <https://balochistanstars.com/ms-zobaida-jalal-khan/>

Zubaida Jalal is a prominent female politician and educationist from Balochistan who has made significant contributions to the province's educational development. As one of the most influential women leaders in Balochistan, she has been a vocal advocate for education, particularly for girls and marginalized communities. Her efforts span both her role as a federal minister and as a grassroots activist. Before entering mainstream politics, Zubaida Jalal gained recognition for her work as an educator. In 1982, she established the first-ever girls' school in her hometown of Mand, Balochistan, at a time when there were limited educational opportunities for girls in rural areas. She started this initiative by using a room in her own house, providing education to young girls who would otherwise have had no access to schooling due to cultural constraints and the absence of infrastructure.

During Pervez Musharraf's regime, Zubaida Jalal served as the Federal Minister for Education from 2002 to 2007. In this role, she made several landmark contributions to the education sector, including policies that impacted Balochistan. Jalal spearheaded efforts to reform the national curriculum and education policy, emphasizing the importance of girls' education and the need for inclusive curricula that accommodated regional diversity, including that of Balochistan. As a federal minister, she directed resources and programs to improve Balochistan's educational infrastructure, focusing on establishing new schools, enhancing existing ones, and ensuring better teacher training.

### **3.3.2 Dr Shama Ishaq Contributions to the Health Sector**

Dr. Shama Ishaq is a prominent figure in the health sector of Balochistan, known for her dedication to improving healthcare services in the province. As a medical professional and politician, she has played a significant role in addressing various health issues and implementing policies aimed at enhancing the health infrastructure in Balochistan. Dr. Shama Ishaq has been an outspoken advocate for health reforms in Balochistan. She has emphasized the need for comprehensive health policies that address the unique challenges faced by the province, such as a lack of resources, inadequate healthcare facilities, and high rates of maternal and infant mortality. Recognizing the high rates of maternal and child mortality in Balochistan, Dr. Ishaq has worked on initiatives aimed at improving maternal healthcare services. This includes promoting prenatal and postnatal care, as well as increasing access to skilled birth attendants.

Provincial Assembly Member, Dr. Shama Ishaq Baloch, stated that the current government is dedicated to enhancing health, education, and other social sectors in Balochistan. "While we don't claim to have brought a revolution, this government is sincere and committed to taking concrete measures to improve health and other sectors, in contrast to the previous administration," she said.<sup>15</sup> Dr. Ishaq has advocated for the construction and upgrading of healthcare facilities, particularly in rural and underserved areas of Balochistan. This includes establishing basic health units (BHUs) and expanding district hospitals to ensure that healthcare is accessible to remote populations. As a member of the Balochistan Provincial Assembly, Dr. Shama Ishaq has participated in legislative efforts to allocate more resources to the health sector and to develop laws that support public health initiatives. This includes advocating for policies that ensure equitable access to healthcare services for all citizens, especially marginalized groups.

### **3.4 Initiatives that Increased Women's Political Participation**

Women parliamentarians in Balochistan have made significant strides to enhance women's political participation at the grassroots level, recognizing that greater representation is crucial for addressing the unique challenges faced by women in the province. Their advocacy for the implementation of quotas in local bodies and provincial decision-making positions has been instrumental in ensuring that women have a voice in governance and can influence policies that affect their lives. By pushing for these affirmative action measures, women leaders have worked to dismantle barriers that traditionally limit female participation in politics, encouraging more women to engage in the electoral process and hold positions of power within their communities. This grassroots mobilization has not only fostered a culture of political engagement among women but also contributed to broader societal shifts in perceptions regarding women's roles in leadership, ultimately promoting gender equality within the political landscape of Balochistan.

The election of Raheela Durrani as the first female Speaker of the Balochistan Assembly in 2015 marked a historic milestone for women's leadership in the province, symbolizing the

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<sup>15</sup> Shehzad Baloch, "Balochistan Assembly: Doctors should serve in their hometowns first", Tribune: The Express, published on October 01, 2024.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/689882/balochistan-assembly-doctors-should-serve-in-their-hometowns-first?amp=1>

progress that women parliamentarians have made in breaking through the glass ceiling in a traditionally conservative political environment. As Speaker, Durrani has not only presided over assembly sessions but has also championed the cause of women's rights and empowerment within the legislative framework. Her leadership has paved the way for increased visibility and influence of women in provincial politics, inspiring other women to aspire for leadership roles.

Raheela Durrani continually seeks ways to contribute to society. She was the pioneer in establishing medical and education funds for those in need. She has taken concrete steps to address housing issues for marginalized groups such as working women, female students, the elderly, and orphans. She has also organized and participated in awareness walks, passed resolutions to highlight the challenges faced by the visually impaired, and supported initiatives for the education of special needs children. People from all sectors of society trust her efforts to resolve their concerns.<sup>16</sup> Under her guidance, the assembly has addressed critical issues related to gender equality, health, and education, further emphasizing the importance of women's participation in legislative processes. The elevation of women to such prominent roles serves as a powerful example of the transformative impact of female leadership and reinforces the need for continued efforts to support women's political aspirations in Balochistan.

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<sup>16</sup> Ahmed Jahangeer Khan, "Ms. Raheela Hameed Durrani", published on balochistanstar blog, 2020. <https://balochistanstars.com/ms-raheela-hameed-durrani/>

## **Chapter No.4: Challenges to Women Parliamentarians in Balochistan**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Women make up almost half of Pakistan’s population (49 percent), but they hold very few leadership roles, only about 4.5 percent, which is one of the lowest in the world. Only two out of every ten women in Pakistan are part of the workforce, again one of the lowest rates in the region. Even when it comes to voting, women’s political participation is limited. In the 2018 elections, only 40 percent of the 46 million registered women voted. It’s clear that women in Pakistan are underrepresented in politics, whether as voters, candidates, or members of political parties. To address this, the Pakistani Constitution reserves 17 percent of the seats in the National Assembly and Senate for women. In 2000, General Pervez Musharraf’s military government introduced the “Devolution of Power Plan” to help close this gender gap.

“Although some may disagree, the military government actually encouraged women to get involved in politics,” said Zubaida Jalal, who was the federal minister for education from 2002 to 2007 and later the federal minister for defense production from 2018 to 2022. “The plan gave 33 percent of local government seats to women, which helped women at the community level become part of politics.” Zubaida Jalal is from Mand, a small town in Balochistan near the Iranian border, and is the only woman ever elected from the Makran division. She said she “never planned to enter politics,” but made the decision in 2002 because she wanted to bring reforms to the education system, something she has always been passionate about. Many male politicians also worked with the Musharraf regime, but women tend to face harsher criticism.<sup>17</sup>

From 2008 to 2018, women’s empowerment in Balochistan faced significant challenges due to deeply ingrained cultural norms and patriarchal traditions. Limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, particularly in rural areas, restricted women’s social and political advancement. Political participation was hindered by male-dominated power structures, and even though women held reserved seats in local government, their influence was often minimal. Additionally, security concerns and a lack of institutional support further constrained efforts to improve women’s rights and gender equality during this period.

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<sup>17</sup> Mariyam Suleman, “Where Are the Women in Pakistan’s Politics”, The Diplomat, published on May 25, 2023. <https://thediplomat.com/2023/05/where-are-the-women-in-pakistans-politics/>

## 4.2 Challenges Based on the Findings of the Conducted Interviews of Women Parliamentarians

<b>Political Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Limited Representation</li> <li>2- Lack of Political Will</li> <li>3- Lack of Policy Implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Social and Cultural Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Cultural Barriers</li> <li>2- Lack of Education</li> <li>3- Lack of Advocacy and Awareness</li> <li>4- Absence of Health Facilities</li> <li>5- Lack of Mentorship</li> </ul>
<b>Economic Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Lack of Economic Empowerment</li> <li>2- Relative Underdevelopment</li> <li>3- Absence of Property Rights</li> <li>4- Non-participation in Financial Services</li> </ul>
<b>Security Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Safety and Security Concerns</li> <li>2- Lack of Educational institutes</li> <li>3- Squeezed Public Sphere</li> <li>4- Traditional Constrains</li> </ul>

### 4.2.1 Political Challenges

According to the three respondents, limited representation of women in Balochistan's political landscape poses a significant barrier to achieving gender equality, as the scarcity of female voices in decision-making roles results in critical issues being overlooked. Additionally, there is a lack of political will among male leaders, which often prevents the prioritization of women's rights and initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality. This shortfall is compounded by ineffective

policy implementation, where even well-crafted policies fail to bring about real change due to inadequate resources or commitment. Together, these challenges perpetuate the marginalization of women and hinder meaningful progress in the region.

Furthermore, there is a notable lack of political will among male leaders, which prevents the prioritization of women's rights and initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality. This reluctance often leads to the marginalization of women's concerns in policy discussions and legislative agendas. Compounding these issues is the ineffective implementation of existing policies; even when well-crafted initiatives are proposed, they frequently fail to bring about real change due to insufficient resources, lack of commitment, or bureaucratic obstacles. Together, these challenges create a cycle of exclusion that perpetuates the marginalization of women and stifles meaningful progress in both the political sphere and broader societal context in Balochistan. Addressing these barriers is essential for fostering a more equitable environment where women's contributions and needs are recognized and valued.

#### **4.2.2 Social and Cultural Challenges**

The three respondents emphasized that cultural barriers in Balochistan significantly hinder women's participation in politics and public life. Traditional norms often confine women to domestic roles, leading to societal resistance when they seek to engage in governance or community leadership. This patriarchal mindset perpetuates the belief that women should not have a voice in decision-making, effectively marginalizing their contributions. Coupled with these cultural constraints is the critical issue of lack of education, as many girls are denied access to quality educational opportunities due to economic factors and a prevailing preference for boys' education. This educational disparity limits women's understanding of their rights and diminishes their capacity to participate meaningfully in political processes, perpetuating a cycle of exclusion and disempowerment.

Moreover, the respondents pointed out the lack of advocacy and awareness surrounding women's rights as a significant barrier to empowerment. Many women in Balochistan remain unaware of their legal rights and the resources available to them, which hinders their ability to seek help and engage in governance. The absence of adequate health facilities exacerbates their

vulnerability, as limited access to essential healthcare services affects their overall well-being and ability to participate in public life. Additionally, the lack of mentorship opportunities leaves aspiring female leaders feeling isolated and unsupported, making it difficult for them to navigate the male-dominated political landscape. Addressing these interconnected issues is vital for creating an environment where women can thrive and contribute meaningfully to their communities and governance.

### **4.2.3 Economic Challenges**

The interviews with women politicians from Balochistan highlight the profound impact of economic empowerment on women's political participation. Many respondents emphasized that the lack of economic opportunities significantly hinders women's ability to engage actively in politics. Without financial independence, women often find themselves reliant on male family members, which limits their voices and contributions to governance. Furthermore, relative underdevelopment in the region exacerbates this issue, as women face additional barriers in accessing education and resources necessary for personal and professional growth. This underdevelopment not only affects women's economic status but also perpetuates societal norms that restrict their involvement in public life.

Additionally, the absence of property rights poses a critical challenge for women in Balochistan. Without ownership of land or assets, women struggle to gain the economic security needed to participate fully in political processes. This situation is compounded by their non-participation in financial services, which leaves them without the means to invest in businesses or education. The interviews reveal that addressing these economic barriers is essential for fostering an environment where women can thrive politically. By promoting policies that enhance property rights and financial inclusion, the region can begin to dismantle the obstacles that have long kept women from taking their rightful place in decision-making roles.

### **4.2.4 Security Challenges**

The respondents with women politicians from Balochistan reveal that safety and security concerns are significant barriers to women's political participation. Many interviewees noted that the volatile environment in the region makes it particularly dangerous for women to engage in

public life, limiting their ability to campaign and connect with constituents. This sense of insecurity not only deters women from entering politics but also restricts their freedom to advocate for issues that matter to their communities. Coupled with the lack of educational institutions, which leaves many women without the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate the political landscape, these factors create a challenging environment for aspiring female leaders.

Additionally, the interviews highlight how the squeezed public sphere restricts women's visibility and influence in political discussions. With limited platforms for engagement, women often struggle to assert their voices in decision-making processes. Traditional constraints further exacerbate this issue, as cultural norms dictate that women should remain in domestic roles rather than pursue public leadership. The combination of these challenges underscores the urgent need for reforms that prioritize women's safety, enhance educational opportunities, and create inclusive public spaces where women can participate fully in political discourse. Only through addressing these intertwined issues can meaningful progress be made toward gender equality in Balochistan.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

### **Conclusion**

The journey of women parliamentarians in Balochistan from 2002 to 2018 reflects a complex interplay of progress and persistent challenges. Despite significant advancements in women's representation in the political arena, numerous obstacles continue to impede their full participation and empowerment. The interviews conducted with prominent female leaders revealed a consistent narrative of struggle against deeply entrenched patriarchal norms, socio-cultural resistance, and a lack of resources. These barriers not only limit women's opportunities to engage in politics but also affect their ability to advocate for the rights and needs of the women they represent, perpetuating a cycle of marginalization. One of the most significant challenges identified was the pervasive male chauvinism that dominates the political landscape in Balochistan. This cultural attitude not only undermines women's contributions but also discourages potential female leaders from pursuing political careers. Additionally, the interviews highlighted the critical role of education in enabling women to understand their rights and navigate the political system. However, the high levels of illiteracy among women in the province hinder their ability to participate effectively in political discourse, creating a significant gap in female representation and influence in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the absence of support from families, society, and the media exacerbates the challenges faced by women parliamentarians. Many women reported facing skepticism and opposition from their families, which stifled their ambitions and made it difficult to engage in public life. Societal norms often perpetuate conservative views about gender roles, while the media frequently fails to portray women positively, limiting their visibility and reinforcing stereotypes. For meaningful change to occur, it is essential to cultivate an environment that encourages women's political participation, one that is supported by families, communities, and media narratives that celebrate women's achievements and contributions.

To sum up, the experiences of women parliamentarians in Balochistan from 2002 to 2018 underscore the need for comprehensive strategies to address the multifaceted challenges they face. Empowering women in politics requires not only increasing their representation but also dismantling the barriers that inhibit their participation. This includes fostering educational opportunities, challenging patriarchal norms, and creating supportive networks that enable women to thrive in political roles. By addressing these issues, Balochistan can work towards a more

inclusive political landscape that reflects the voices and needs of all its citizens, ultimately contributing to a more equitable society.

## **Recommendations**

Following are the suggestions for empowering women in politics in Balochistan

1. The government of Balochistan should invest in educational programs that promote female education, especially in rural areas, to ensure that girls have equal opportunities for learning and personal development.
2. Establishing mentorship and support networks for women parliamentarians will help them connect with experienced political leaders, providing guidance and building confidence in their political careers.
3. Media outlets should be engaged to promote positive narratives about women in politics and train journalists on gender-sensitive reporting to enhance the representation of women in the media.
4. Initiatives should be launched to engage men as allies in the fight for gender equality, fostering understanding and support for women in leadership roles through training and awareness campaigns.
5. The government must advocate for policy reforms that protect women's rights, including legislation addressing violence against women, ensuring equal pay, and supporting parental leave to promote gender equality.
6. Strengthening political training programs focused on public speaking, negotiation skills, and political strategy will equip women with essential tools to participate effectively in the political arena.
7. Increasing access to financial resources for women parliamentarians is crucial, providing them with the necessary support to run their campaigns and engage in political activities.
8. The implementation and enforcement of gender quotas within political parties and government bodies will ensure that women are represented at all levels of decision-making, increasing their visibility and influence.
9. The government should implement constitutional reforms to increase the number of women's seats in both the provincial and national assemblies.
10. The government should organize awareness programs and seminars aimed at empowering women at both the district and provincial levels.

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## **Appendix: (Interview Questions)**

QNO:1 What motivated them to enter politics, especially in a province with deeply rooted traditional and cultural values?

QNO:2 What were the main challenges and difficulties faced by women parliamentarians in Balochistan?

QNO:3 How have they contributed to advancing women's rights and gender equality during your time in office?

QNO:4 What was needed to increase women's political participation in Baluchistan and ensure their voices are heard in key decision-making processes?