Journal of Mass Communication & Journalism

Research Article **Open Access**

Media Analysis of Women's Participation in Politics

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Abstract

Media and politics go hand in hand as both depend on each other for their respective functioning. With opening up of democratic political space in Pakistan, media got added space and role to push for an increased political participation of non-traditional political segments of society, civil society, academia, women and minorities. Since 2002, women's political participation apparently went up with the increase in number of reserved seats for women in parliament and assemblies and 33% quota in local bodies. Independent electronic media and print media too got opportunities with more space to operate. During last 10 years (2002-2012), expansion in media (outlets and space) in Pakistan with 24/7 coverage pattern created opportunities for many to claim their share of news coverage. Since more women came to politics during this decade, so they were exposed to media space for their respective political activities.This research paper on 'Media Analysis of Women's Participation in Politics' aims to explore changes taking place in media patterns and messages vis-à-vis women in politics and their impact on society covering a decade from 2002 to 2012. The paper finds that coverage of women politicians by media was increased after 2008 when the PPP led democratic government replaced the Musharraf led government. But this increase could hardly influence acceptance of women politicians in society because media largely and generally portrayed women politicians as fashion celebrities or in television debates as non-serious politicians.The paper finds that though media provided expanded space to women politicians, it could not contribute as desired in terms of breaking barriers of gender, class and personal clout. Though some women politicians having clout and from the affluent class did get space in media but generally there have been limited opportunities for women politicians from the lower middle class and with less glamour to get their due share in politics and society projecting through the media.Though the media did give space to women parliamentarians elected on the reserved seats on nominations of their parties, It could not bridge the gap between society and these women parliamentarians as they did not have their constituencies and were not answerable to the masses/society. That is why society and people hardly took them as influential in politics and decision-making and media too gave them coverage for the sake of coverage. The women who were directly elected to the parliament have a different case. So, the study finds that media could have adopted such strategies that would have engaged talented woman politicians in healthy social-building dialogue, which it could not.

Keywords: Media analysis; Politician; Society; Politics

Introduction

Women have had an important role in politics of the country since its formation but media failed to highlight this role in a befitting manner [1]. Aurat Foundation, a leading NGO working for women's rights, believes that society fails to understand the role of women politicians in the country and there is a need to create awareness on more political participation by women in the country as they form almost half of the population. The intensity of suppression of women increased manifold in Zia era and impacts of this era still refuse to die down. There is a debate in society about Zia's agenda and the vision of the founder of the nation, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Both actually contradict each other [2]. Vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah may be taken as a yardstick to measure the role of women in politics and their public perception, be it pre-Partition freedom struggle or post-Partition phase of nation building. Giving his message loud and clear on March 10, 1944, at Aligarh, Quaid said, "No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you". According to Dr. Zafar Ali Raja (1991), the Quaid had a vision for involvement of women in practical life because it ultimately leads to a better society and there is no concept of society if politics is skipped.As if drawing media's attention towards the battle it is supposed to wage against the social clutches that suppress women, the Quaid mentioned in his speech at a Muslim Language meeting at Muslim University, Aligarh:

"Another important thing, which I want to make clear to you is that no nation can made progress in the true sense unless its women participate in the development and construction work along with men. We are habitual of wrong customs and traditions of keeping women confined within the four walls of the house. This is not just cruelty but also a crime against humanity… There is no reason that women should live in the conditions in which they are being kept". The Quaid's emphasis on creating an acceptable space for women in the society was directly linked with media because, "The media not only plays an important role in shaping the values of society but also reflects those values." Electronic media is leaving a greater impact on people's voting behavior in Pakistan than print media but women have a disadvantage since their improper presentation on electronic media is coming in their way of winning over the 'popular vote' through which 'political power emerges' [3].The representation of stereotypical images of women politicians in media such as their status being elected on the reserved seats, their dresses and fashion related personal use items such as handbags, etc and they being from the elite class itself manifests the misrepresentation of woman politicians. The study finds that the way the media represents these woman politicians, in fact, tantamount to sensationalizing and scandalizing them, which violates the media ethics.

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Moreover, misrepresentation in this way also deprives the audience of the real story behind women's struggle for democracy, human rights and their real capabilities and knowledge; and hence mars their right to have an informed choice to take informed decisions. This dangerous trend is contrary to the environment needed for growth of democracy [4]. For political parties and personalities, media is a 'forum' to present their ideologies enabling the masses to hold the corrupt accountable on the basis of the information they are given. Hence, the importance of media in a democratic set-up is increased manifold. Cook [5] went one step further to state that only conveying the messages to the masses is not enough for media channels when it comes to politics but it is also imperative for it to start a healthy debate on different issues related to politics in such a way that all stakeholders (women politicians being a major stakeholder) have an equal opportunity to access the people. Taylor [6] is justified in saying it is the expression of free will of the masses that makes elections an integral part of a democratic system but then how a question of free will can arise when one of the main stockholders–women politicians–are handicapped in the media competition all along. Less and less women are coming up on the parliamentary canvas and media cannot distance itself from this phenomenon saying that it is verdict of the people. Election is not only about putting some politicians in or out but at the same time, it also reflects the state of mind of the masses and social values, the formation of which is a job of media (www.grin.com). Media is selective and shows us a few faces repeatedly influencing 'voting patterns' and resulting in coming to power of these faces again and again [7]. While discussing influence of media in shaping social behavior, researchers now a days take into consideration what Lazarsfeld and his colleagues (1948) found as 'media could influence the masses only at a limited scale'. But this may not be a case in Pakistan at the moment where media has recently been expanded and has acquired a dominant space in society. Further, copious studies found that the effects of media on society are anything but limited [8-10]. Media makes some issues part of its agenda and that agenda subsequently becomes agenda of public discourse which may be against or for a certain issue projected by media but their discourse will revolve around it [11]. This study also explores this very theory in perspective of presentation of women politicians on media and public perception about them. The issues that are projected more on media acquire more space in public discourse, discovered many researches over years, substantiating the validity of agenda setting theory [11-16].

Kahn and Goldenberg [17,18] argue that since the masses look at media for information about political personalities to make up their minds about their future choices, media has the power to tilt their opinion either way–against or for gender biases. But media uses its power to attract the attention of the masses towards 'the looks' and 'domestic lives' of women politicians more than what they have in store for the betterment of society [19]. Scherer conducted a study to explore the influence of media on the masses when they go to polls in 12 European Union states and concluded that different media channels as well as face-to-face communication influence different people. Hendriks, et al. [1] found that in the Netherlands, the more the masses consume media content, the more they become aware of political issues.

In the light of the investigations of Gunther [1], politicians can increase their influence on the masses if they hit the media of choice of their voters. Media puts the feminine attributes over and above political insight and policy-making experience of women, giving their male competitors an edge on them in public discourse [20].

Media doesn't do it for nothing but it has 'power elites' to serve, who want edge out their competitors (including women politicians) to grab power but when media does it, it loses the range of its influence on society [21]. It is not only Pakistan's novice media that is suffering from this credibility deficit because it is not presenting a true picture of facts to society but media of the developed countries is also facing this 'major issue' of 'its declining credibility with a public that increasingly is cynical toward institutions of all kinds and blames the media for many defects…' [22-27].

One of the reasons for the masses to go to media for political information is their taste for the 'stylistic dramatization' that OP-ED pieces satiate [28]. Though all kinds of media are found wanting, TV and newspapers play a prominent role in keeping the masses abreast of politics [29]. Heated political debates in TV talk shows are gaining popularity but OP-ED pieces of newspaper still have an edge on TV. This is where, Ms. Shaheed, a civil society activist based in Lahore, told us in an interview that woman politicians are ignored. "I don't see enough OP-ED pieces on women politicians in print media," she observed. The perception among the masses that politicians are a failure, politics is about corruption and media nurtures cronyism leads the society towards cynicism [30]. The lack of credibility and cynicism serve to weaken the link between media content and political support of masses [28,31]. Taking grasp of political potential of women, Quaid-e-Azam would often say that 'if woman of the house becomes a Muslim League member then everyone in the house including children, old people and youth will become Muslim leaguers'. The Quaid never minced words acknowledging the potential of women unlike today's media that specify domestic roles for women. Ali mentions that speaking to a public gathering on March 10, 1944, Quaid-e-Azam said, "These great assets (of women) should not be wasted." On February 6, 1948, he told Muslim League Women Wing: "You have the key to a big success. And that key is the next generation. Bring up your children in such a way that they become citizens who could be pride for the nation". After formation of Pakistan, he took it upon himself to pay tribute to women politicians: You have given many sacrifices for Pakistan, a country, which the whole world has now accepted as a reality. You will have to go one step forward. That day is not far when nations of the world will praise Pakistan. In his address to the nation on Radio Pakistan on August 21th 1947 days after formation of the new country, the Quaid mentioned women separately with men to advise them to work harder. Speaking at Dawar Park, Dacca, on March 20, 1948, he pressed on women to play their role, being 'backbone of the country'.

In his speech to Muslim Convention in Delhi on April 17, 1946, he said, "It is a good thing that a revolutionary change is taking place in women. This change is of great importance. No nation in the world can make progress unless the women of that nation move along with me. At one occasion, the Quaid encouraged Khurshid Ara Begum, a women politician, saying, "Presently, you have a few women for supporters but, I am sure that you will soon have more. You continue your work. I assure you that women will have to play an important role for the uplift of the nation. The women in the Punjab have done well. I have full faith in the abilities and inspiration of women." Speaking to students of Islamia College for Women (Nawakot) on March 25, 1940, he said apart from pen and sword, women are the 'third power, which is more powerful than both'. Edging women to be active in politics, Begum Gaiti Ara Bashir Ahmed said, "Our loving Quaid-e-Azam ordered us (women) to become soldiers in the freedom struggle. And (we) should devote our whole time for the creation of Pakistan". Addressing a group of girl students, Quaid said, "The task before you is big, and you should not lag behind at this moment of your life. Come and work side by side men. Remain engaged in the freedom struggle along with us

till we are successful… I witnessed the work of women, their problems and the hindrances that come in their work … You young girls are luckier than your mothers because you are going to be liberated".The Quaid has gone an extra mile to set an example for politicians of his country to follow, taking her sister Fatima Jinnah along at almost all important occasions to the chagrin of male participants; hence making Fatima Jinnah a leading icon of the Pakistan Movement.According to Dr. Dushka Syed:

"The constant presence of Fatima Jinnah, the Quaid's sister, was not accidental, but a message by this visionary leader that women should be equal partners in politics and that they should not be confined to the traditional home-bound role of a wife and a mother. It is not surprising then that he was constantly under attack of the orthodox religious parties. Once, so the story goes, he was about to address a mammoth public meeting, and was requested not to have Fatima Jinnah sitting on the dais by his side. He refused" (www.wpcp.org.pk). The confidence that the Quaid gave her sister enabled her to stand against the country's first dictator Ayub Khan and '[H]er appeal went directly to the hearts of the people as she fiercely attacked the man who had suppressed the freedoms of speech and expression' [32]. Mazari's version shows the key role that women politicians play to wrestle people's right to freedom of speech and expression out from dictators. Ayub Khan's spin doctors had not spared a moment to outshine Fatima Jinnah on a controlled press that the country had at that time [33]. Though with the help of excessive use of power, Ayub succeeded in defeating her in 1965 elections but her struggle left the dictator 'weakened'.In addition to Fatima Jinnah, women politicians told us in interviews that Benazir Bhutto is an ideal for them to follow across party lines as she rose to the highest legislative office of the country (the office of the prime minister) twice despite all odds.At the start of her career, the youngest ever prime minister of the country–Benazir Bhutto suffered highly indecent propaganda tactics [34]. The army generals showered leaflets defaming her by projecting her feminine attributes among rural populations across the country and this technique of leaflets, according to Defleur& Larsenis instrumental in creating rumors. Even her pregnancies became a 'topic of intense political discussion from military headquarters to editorial boards'. Nonetheless, she not only won the elections after delivering her first baby, Bilawal, as she named her, but gave birth to another baby while in office. "That is one less glass ceiling for women Prime Minister in the future to have to break," she wrote in her autobiography (1988). Looking at the presentation of women, packed in taboos and stereotypes, on media, Shrinvastam is justified in saying that media is dominated by male characters. This male dominance is leading to male chauvinism in the society pressing on the need for media to become more 'responsible'. Spring said that the media 'missed the point' when it tries to put only a few elected women in the limelight, ignoring the fact that their presence in the parliament is result of a long-fought battle for 'political power on the part of women'. Women politicians not only need voter support but also ample media coverage to dispel the impression that they are non-electable commodity. Media should not divide domestic and international issues into female and male agenda, respectively, restricting the options of women to speak on national security and foreign policy. Often, media gives women negative coverage that belittles them in public perception when it comes to politics [35]. Demographic patterns of developed countries like the US show that women outnumber men a little but the breakdown of their parliamentarians does not reflect these patterns, which is illogical.In the first place, women have a lack of resources to run for elections and then they are subjected to gender stereotypes by media, compounding the complexity of situation [17,18]. Stereotyping and gender biases by

mediamen put women politicians in a different shade than men, which is unfavorable. Larson thinks media is supposed to educate the masses about compatibility of election candidates with the system, regardless of their gender, but it presses the gender attributes in such a manner that women have disadvantage. It is unfair that media praises women on the basis of the dresses they may put on and praises men on the basis of the issues they may raise as part of their political agenda [17,18]. Another dangerous trend that media has adopted is that it has turned women politicians into stuff for style pages instead of the sections dedicated for real politics and policy matters [36]. Sometimes, media puts domestic issues and certain traits like being emotional, weak and noncompetitive on women politicians like a label, creating a 'misleading impression' about them [37]. On the basis of findings of Iyengar and Kinder [16], we are justified in saying that if our media had given women the space they deserve, opinion of the masses would have been primed about women politicians and their performance would have been assessed without prejudices and gender biases.On countless occasions, media persons said that they show the masses what they want to see but this simplistic statement does not hold ground since media present to the masses an interpretation of politics in the form of news stories and opinions that influence public choice of politicians.

Problem statement

Looking at the media content in the expanded media market, one finds that media linked the already existing stereotypical images of women in Pakistani society with the emerging political cadre of women hailing from different political parties representing them as models to be copied by other women in terms of fashion and lifestyle, instead of projecting their talents and political knowledge. The women political cadre started emerging when the Musharraf government introduced the mandatory 33% quota of women in the local governments and increased the reserved seats for women in the Parliament. Similarly, Media landscape was also opened up for private sector to set up electronic television channels in 2002. These television channels due to infancy and teething problems could not rise above certain societal norms (taboos and tradition) and regulatory issues and continued to marginalize women in terms of their portrayal as leaders.During 2002-2007, media and woman politicians got enough space to interface with each other, but hardly there were any political processes where their involvement could be covered as the system was democratic but not parliamentary as all powers rested in the then president. Moreover, women politicians emerged in the local governments have nothing to do with media spacing. So, in a sense media space was not that much opened for woman politicians during this period.But as a result of the February 2008 elections, a democratic government came in the power and elected a political president (Mr Asif Ali Zardari who replaced Musharraf the same year). The new president surrendered all his powers to the democratic government and restored the powers of the parliament. The era beginning from 2008 heralded a new phase of democracy in Pakistan and in recent history for the first time, the democratic government completed its five-year term, judiciary and media emerged as new power players. Media got tremendous independence and new media space was opened up for political debates. Media also realized that since women in general and women in politics need to be given space in a 24/7 media environment as they needed content for 24 hours a day. The study finds that during the five years of democratic regime, media enjoyed freedom and included a select group of woman politicians from different political parties and shades of life such as academia and Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), human right groups in the debates taking place on certain subjects. Since this group was a few select so they did not represent the

whole lot of women parliamentarians. Moreover, media gave space to the select group of woman politicians from various parties but did not portrayed them in real term politicians but shown them as 'women' generally branded with fashion, kitchen talk and glamour. This is actually the interesting point came out of the study and is explained in discussion part of the paper.Studies have proved that electronic media is presenting more women politicians than print media. It is also believed that women politician's presentation is in a more acceptable manner on electronic media than print media. Is, or can, media serve as a bridge to transfer women politicians' elevated status in society so that others take courage from them? It is the question this study attempts answer. This can only be possible by acceptance of women politicians in the society as political leaders and for this acceptance change in public perception is the key that media holds. This study included a lot of suggestions and findings to fix this very problem. Key women politicians in the Province of Punjab, hailing from various political parties, have been interviewed so as to get first hand information of how media covers their stories and gives them space. The study analyses how media sees participation of women in politics in the province.

Justification

The study on media analysis of women's political participation provides a well researched and thought provoking policy position that the frequency of coverage of women politicians increased after 2008 (during the democratic government led by the PPP and the coalition partners) but this increase could not be translated into acceptance of women politicians in society because they are put in a negative light on media. An extensive literature review sets the scene for this analysis and provided strong base for discussions and findings in this study.The scoping study speaks of a wide-ranging perspective on media spaces and women political participation. It is hoped that the investment (human, intellectual and financial) on this scoping study holds a a real value as the study provides a research based assessment of media spaces available and how these spaces are being utilized for highlighting women political participation. The researchers analyzed media coverage, perceptions, threats and opportunities for women political participation. The scoping study is not just a piece of smart research rather a baseline study that sets a new trend in further media research in Pakistan on the subject of media and women in politics. The study entails policy messages in the finding and recommendations chapter, which also speaks of value for money. These message, findings and recommendations may be used for raising voice for women political participation at the higher decision making levels within party and in the government and in opposition. The study provides an opportunity to media professional as well to review their current coverage pattern for women politicians.As required by the objectives of this research, the paper analyses portrayal in the media (all media outlets i.e. newspapers, social media, television, radio etc.) of women active in politics and women's participation in politics over the last decade. It analyses messages (positive, negative, threatening and glamourous) relating to political participation of women making a comparison of media messages towards male vs. female participants in politics. The study further discusses divers of change such as structural, institutional and agent-based factors and analyses as to how media-led messages change environment for women's participation (e.g. pressures on women, formal and informal processes through which women rise in political roles, local area acceptability about women's role).

Hypotheses

The following three hypotheses, set in place, have been tested in

this study in the discussion parts.

1. Media began to give women politicians more space after Musharraf regime (2008).

2. Increase in coverage of women politicians on media has changed public perception about their role in politics in an encouraging manner.

3. When projected in a negative light, women are not taken by society as serious political players.
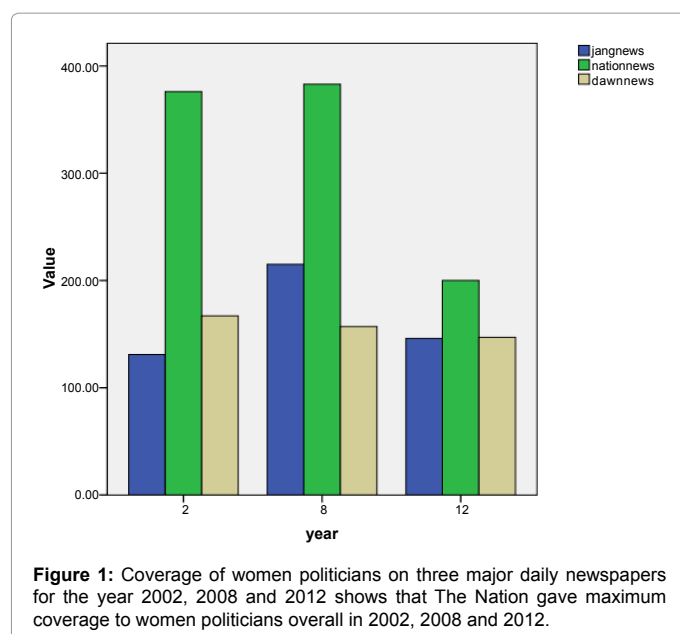
Theoretical framework/theory of change

Like other social science research, media research does have various theories based on which, scoping studies on media spaces and participation of people are conducted. The media researchers at the University of Twente believe that agenda setting in media is the creation of what the public thinks is important. Media having powerful influences and ability tell the people as to which issues are important. Hence, in a way media tends us to consume what media sells us as agenda of the debates relating to everyday life. Here media uses its power and influence to manipulate the agenda setting.Some scholars count agenda setting as an approach falling in the cultivation theory while others are of the view that both are two different theories. However, for this study, we have treated them as two different theories and weighed findings of this study on the scale of agenda setting theory. Walter Lippmann suggested that media creates 'pictures in our heads'. The notion was later developed into a theory. Based on their experiment, McCombs and Shaw [11] declared that there was a strong relationship between the issues raised by media and the issues being discussed in public. "The Agenda Setting Theory" has been selected as the theory of change for this study amid our present day media's growing agenda setting role in public debates on two counts: 1) it is not necessary that media reflects reality; 2) its focus on few selected topic of their choice tends people to believe that only these topics are important while others are not. The Agenda setting theory is one of the most import theories of change while analyzing media content because it exposes media's pervasive role in political communications. If we really understand this theory, we can help influence media's agenda setting processing that may increase women's space in political communication.

Model for Media's agenda setting theory

The above model (Figure 1) is classic example of how we can use the theory of agenda setting to bring about change in political communications in terms of amplifying voices of women active in politics. Media's agenda setting is very much closely linked to public agenda and policy agenda. If we influence the agenda setting of media, we can really influence the public agenda and ultimately influence the policy agenda. This scoping study benefits from this theory of change while suggesting way forward after Media analysis of women's political participation.Phase-I- Media's Agenda Setting vis-à-vis women politicians across four key categories. In the first place, agenda of media vis-à-vis women politicians was measured through analysis of its content spanning the decade starting from 2002 to 2012. The media content related to women politicians was divided in four categories corresponding to the messages and the tone it carries. The four categories are 1) positive, 2) negative and 3) threatening and 4) glamorous [38].

Operationalization of categories

For this study, media content was placed in positive, negative, threatening and glamorous categories on the basis of the message it delivered and the tone in which it is delivered. The scale to measure

Figure 1: Coverage of women politicians on three major daily newspapers for the year 2002, 2008 and 2012 shows that The Nation gave maximum coverage to women politicians overall in 2002, 2008 and 2012.

these categories has been conceptualized in the introduction part in detail. Its operationalized form is mentioned below:

Positive: Women politicians given opportunity to express their view on legislation, human rights, democracy, foreign policy, social and institutional reforms, instilling a sense among the masses that they are serious political stuff.

Negative: Women politicians are engaged in shouts and grunts, accusations and allegations, claims and counter-claims, snubs and sneers, instilling a sense among the masses that they are not serious political stuff.

Threatening: Women politicians are put to harassment (talked down by journalists or other experts); offensive words, tones and gestures; shut up and insulted by male or female participants; trial of personality; probe into domestic life in such a way males are not; discriminations between their and their male colleagues' roles in politics and society, instilling a sense among the masses that they are inferior to their male colleagues.

Glamorous: Women politicians' female traits; dresses; looks; style of moving and talking; and make-up are discussed and sometimes put on the sections reserved for fashion and design, instilling among the masses a sense that they are not political stuff.

Public agenda setting

In the second phase, public agenda on this specific topic of presentation of women on media was measured through the methods of focus group, quick survey and intensive interviews. The respondents, being stakeholders in politics and media, did not only share their perceptions but also their experiences they have had while working in their spheres connecting to media and politics. Majority of the respondents of intensive interviews for this study expressed their concern the way the media sets its agenda and portrays women politicians as a social commodity instead of thoughtful politicians. They were critical of gender insensitive reporting and gender imbalance coverage of media's political space and non provision of a level playing field to all players, especially women politicians. The scholars at the

University of Twente refers the Agenda Setting Theory as 'the creation of what the public thinks is important' and describes it as a powerful influence of media that impresses upon the audience/public as to what issues are important. Water Lippman says media presents the images to the public while setting the agenda. Similarly KcCombs and Shaw gone to a step ahead saying the mass media exerts a significant influence the voters during election campaigns. The research conducted on agenda setting is basically based on two assumption: a) media filters and shapes or construct reality instead of reflecting it in real terms; b) media frames few certain issues and tends public to consume them as burning and important and that it does in a certain time frame. This media concentration is considered as the media is setting the agenda for public discourse.Looking at Pakistan's expanded media space, we every day find that different media groups/outlets set the agenda of public debate differently as per potential and interests. We observe every day that the agenda setting theory tells us which media sets what agenda in political communications segments. Bernard Cohen stated: "The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about."The interviews for this study and the participants of focus group sessions time an again talked about the agenda setting role of media, which they thought was not in real sense portrayal of woman politicians as politicians rather as glamour in politics. They were of the view that media can set its agenda in such a manner that woman politicians are able to win acceptance of their work as politicians, leaders and honourable members of the parliament and society representing almost half the population of the country. If they are projected so, even those who occupy parliamentary seats reserved for women will no longer be considered less important. This agenda needs to be set in the media to ensure participation of women in politics and decision-making process, the majority of the respondents suggested.

Methods

The problem, as defined in Chapter 1, was confronted with the methods of content analysis, quick survey, focus group and intense interview methods to reach a conclusion. Theoretical framework explains as to how these methods go along with the theory. The changes in media and public perception revolve around Musharraf regime, the starting point for an expanded media spectrum. A team of researchers collected secondary data from selected media stories and coverage of television anchored shows, radio and social media products on political issues and analyzed as to how much space media gave to women to highlight their role and participation in politics. The print media was divided in three categories representing 2002, 2008 and 2012 to see how print media has been covering the women's political participation. The data was viewed and analyzed with two angles; one the participation of women as newsmakers or participants in political activities and secondly how they performed while having discussions in the parliament and in media. Similarly, television shows were selected to analyze the women's political participation in media space. Key Informants interviews helped understand pre, during and post 2008 media coverage as a comparative model. This criterion in comparison speaks of how media gave space on issues of women political participation while electronic media was not in private sector and how this spacing was changed once the private television emerged since 2008. A quick survey method and rapid assessment techniques were applied to reach to answers to the research questions. The secondary data on portrayal of women's political participation in media was also used for a coordinated analysis to achieve the objectives of this research. The geographical area for this research is the province of Punjab. As many as six focus group

discussion and 20 Key Informants interviews were conducted in the province.

Media content analysis techniques were done to see the research's results. Social Media experts were also among the key informants who gave vital information on the subject. Due to paucity of time for this scoping study, mostly the qualitative method was used that leads to factual calculations to draw up results to the satisfaction of the research questions.

Sampling

Non-random and purpose sampling was used to find respondents in Islamabad (the federal capital) and Labore, Multan, Sialkot and Faisalabad (Punjab province). As a result, a sample of total 50 respondents was drawn to represent the study population. This sample of respondents with stakes in politics and media–women politicians, social society workers media researchers and journalists–served the purpose of focus group, quick survey and intensive interviews.

Instrument/Questionnaire

A standard questionnaire was used for short survey, focus group discussions and intensive interviews. However, the researchers had the liberty and time to extend the questions in sessions with focus groups and female politicians in case of intensive interviews to get to the bottom of the matter. All the questions were set to test the hypotheses and the title of the research. Moreover, a content analysis was done in terms of measuring media spaces given to woman politicians in selected print and electronic media outlets. The content analysis is presented in the graphs in chapter-III.

Findings and Discussion

An overview of content analysis of three mainstream newspapers– Jang, The Nation and Dawn–before, during and after Musharraf regime (2002-2012) shows that coverage of women shot up immensely during Musharraf era and then came down. Despite this decline, the frequency remained higher than before (Tables 1,2 and Figure 1).Coverage of women politicians on three major daily newspapers for the year 2002, 2008 and 2012 shows that The Nation gave maximum coverage to women politicians overall in 2002, 2008 and 2012.

Electronic media

Before Musharraf, there was only state-owned TV but he allowed private sector to expand electronic media market. We have analyzed the latest content on electronic media to see the frequency and nature of content related to women politicians (Tables 3-5). Figure 2 shows that Express News gave maximum coverage to women politicians, followed by Geo and Aaj News respectively. Figure 3 shows that Express News was gave maximum positive news about women politicians, while Geo gave negative coverage to women politicians the most.

Focus groups and intensive interviews- Key findings

The deception of numbers

Name of Publication	Year 2002	Year 2008	Year 2012	Total number of news items on women politicians
Daily Jang	131	215	146	492
Dawn	167	157	147	471
The Nation	376	383	200	959

Table 1: Number of news items on women politician.

Publications	1-5 inch	6-10 inch	11-15 inch	16-20 inches	< 20 Inches
Dawn	71	114	175	61	50
Jang	107	85	189	182	14
The Nation	245	106	313	207	29

Table 2: Measurement of space given to these news items.

Name Channel	Name of Programme which were analyzed
Geo News	• Aik Din Geo K sath (Sunday) • Geomentary • Geo Ajooba (Sunday) • Hum Sab Umeed Say hai • Hum Awaam • FIR
Express News	• To The Point • Takrar • News 6 PM • News Hour • Reporter Pakistani • Baat Se Baat • Express Fatafat • Shikanja
Aaj News	• Dosti Aisa Nata • Sawal Hai Pakistan Ka • Fear Files

Table 3: TV channels, their programs, timing and duration of analysis.

Name Channel	Coverage of women Politician
Geo News	179
Express News	270
Aaj News	87

Table 4: Frequency of coverage of women politicians shows that out of 4107 item aired on these TVs from Dec 1 to Dec 15, 2012. 536 were related to women politicians, directly or indirectly.

Name of TV Channel	Positive	Negative	Threatening	Glamorous
Geo News	47	60	40	32
Express News	182	43	25	20
Aaj News	43	25	7	12

Table 5: Express News portrays women in positive light the most.

The content analysis has shown a significant increase in presentation of women on electronic media during and after Musharraf regime. The result is strongly endorsed by respondents of focus groups and intensive interviews. The respondents are also stakeholders being politicians, media professionals or researchers, and civil society activists. Their opinion is informed and based on their observation of society and professional experiences. Almost all of them, 70 in number, observed the increase in participation of women politicians on media during and after Musharraf regime but there was a difference between opinions of participants of focus groups and intensive interviews about the second hypothesis that media is changing public perception in such a way that women get courage to take part in politics. A dominant majority of focus group participants, who are local or provincial level actors, take courage from this increase in presentation of women politicians on media. The level of satisfaction with the presentation of women politicians on media can be gauged from the fact that at times, male respondents in Multan and Faisalabad stated that women politicians are given relatively more space on media than their male colleagues. In Lahore and Sialkot, female respondents see that media plays a pro-active role in supporting them in politics and welfare work. One female respondent in Sialkot quoted an incident in which media helped her start a welfare project in the city. A female politician in Lahore said:
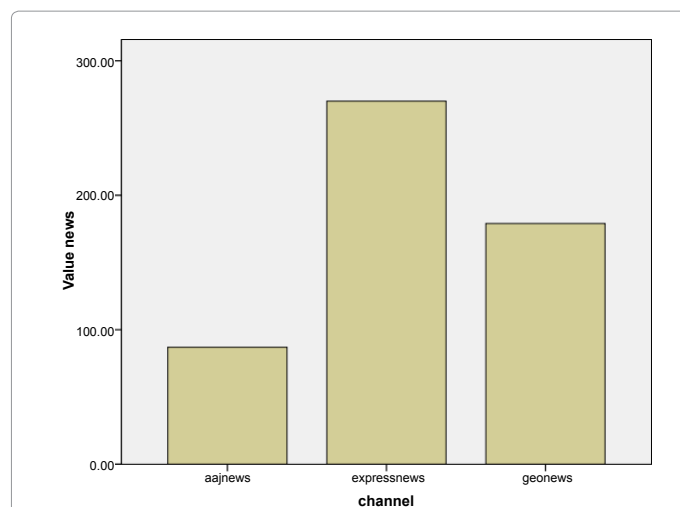
Figure 2: Shows that Express News gave maximum coverage to women politicians, followed by Geo and Aaj News respectively.
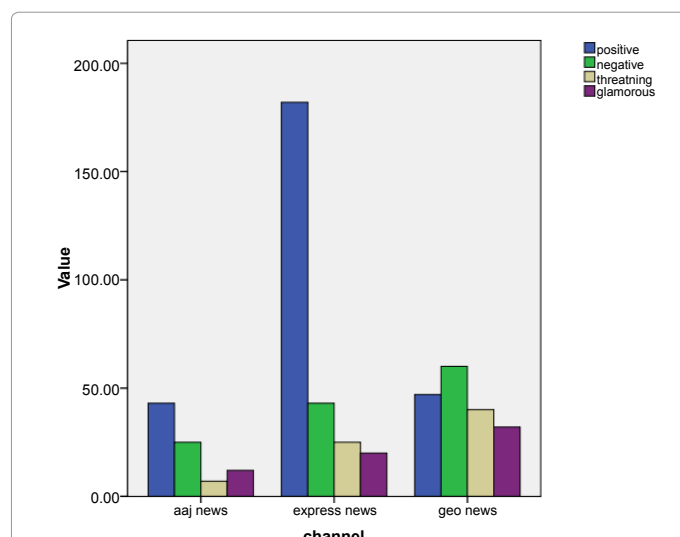

Figure 3: Figure above shows that Express News was gave maximum positive news about women politicians, while Geo gave negative coverage to women politicians the most.

'Yes, media is our voice. It supported us a lot. It has helped spread our good image.'

But this majority is nonetheless disturbed with discrimination between media portrayal of women and men in such a way that the women don't feel encouraged to take part in politics. Similarly, the interviewees, who are provincial and national level stakeholders, see this increase in presentation of women on media as an eyewash and 'ridiculous. When the media spectrum increased manifold after permission of opening private TV channels and radio stations, every segment of society got more coverage, which means the increased coverage is not specific to women politicians. They, rather, got less than their due share on electronic media and still continue to suffer bleak coverage on print media (Tables 2 and 4). In print media, English language newspapers highlight the issues surrounding women politicians but the Urdu language newspapers gave women politicians a cold shoulder, typical of a male chauvinist society. Head of the

state-run radio says, "It is true that influence of Radio has increased over last 10 years … But, once again their (media's) role in women's participation in politics is not up to mark. Then it is also truth that political elite of this country hardly care about Radio." The female politicians prominent on media see its treatment of their colleagues as balanced (50/50 as one of them call it) but their approach is not reflective of that of others.

Focus group discussions were interesting as some of the participants came up with stereotypical images of women prevailing in our society since centuries describing them as the ones who have only one image that depicts them doing the chores. Even media and awareness tools did not help them reconstruct their images that also showed that media in its agenda setting does not care for changing gender insensitive stereotypical images in the minds of certain segments of society who are consumers of media information and construction processes. For example, a male participant in Multan said women are supposed to perform in-house duties and politics is not their piece of cake. Another male participant in Sialkot said media should teach women how to sew and do other domestic chorus and not the politics. Interestingly these mindsets prevail in our society and they are media consumers as well. These examples categorically manifest that media's agenda setting focuses other than accepting women as leaders, politicians and key players in societal matters. Since media in their talk-shows portray woman politicians as someone who straight came from their kitchens, taking them as granted or considering them prone to scandals. These sorts of negative construction of their images by media are well consumed by general audiences who then pass derogatory and gender insensitive remarks about women in politics in the country. Media content managers need to set the agenda of public discourse portraying these women as leaders, nothing less than that.

The second fiddle

The information gathered for this study suggests that in many cases journalists invite women politicians to their programmes/shows when their male guests reportedly refuse to turn up. This is the reality a woman politician has to swallow when she comes on media–she is playing second fiddle to men at the outset. A leading civil society activist believes that increase in coverage of women politicians is linked with the increase in number of women anchors on media. Her observation was fully substantiated by statement of a leading women anchor who said, "I think media has not arranged special programmes for women politicians. I, being female anchor, usually invite women legislators to participate in my talk show in a bid to give equal treatment to women and men politicians." Women politicians have contributed a lot in the law making process but media used them in many cases as a lure to attract more and more audiences instead of being serious stakeholders. Almost all respondents observed that the stage is set for women politicians' portrayal on media in such a way that their shine is pushed under the bushel. Only one journalist, a female one, said that she takes extra care of the fact that in her programmes women are presented equal to men and given the chance to take part in debates on policy matters, international relations, human rights, legislation and social reforms. Others think they have the potential to shed light on these serious issues but it remains untapped.At this point, we can conclude that the increase in presentation of women politicians on media failed to paint their image in such a manner that encourages others to come to politics. It is because public set the agenda of its discussion in accordance with agenda of media that strives to strike a chord with aging social perceptions about women politicians.

The society, corruption and laziness

"I don't blame the media fully. These gender biases are imbedded in our society. But media ought to break these biases instead of thriving on them for the sake of broader viewer- or readership," said a media scholar. Herald (magazine writes that despite increase in coverage of women politicians on media, social perceptions about them is far from encouraging. This admission of lapse on the part of media rejects our second hypothesis. Media mirrors Pakistani society and those who work in the media are very much part and parcel of the society. The corruption in different segments of society reflects in media as well. Media exposes stories of corruption in society and social media exposes corruption stories of Pakistani media elites. Reports suggest politicians pay hefty amounts to select group of media people to get befitting coverage. Media analysts partly blame media owners for this corruption as they either pay low or no salaries to media people/journalists even for their hectic work. Woman politicians hailing from affluent class are also following the suite and pay money and gifts to journalists. These stories are in abundance on the social media. "Connections do matter. Those with 'friends' at right places catch ample opportunity to express themselves to the public through media," a female participant replied in Lahore. Indulging in laziness, they do not only block some important information that they could have got from a women politician belonging to not so big a city, but they also leave a negative impact on public perception of women politicians. Seeing the same faces and listening to similar arguments again and again, media audiences are justified in thinking that the share of women in politics is limited only to this monotony that media shows them. The subtle damage that this approach does is creating a stress among a wide majority of women politicians who feel cast aside and disgruntled. "If I say anything, nobody will listen to it but if ShahzadiUmerTiwana (politician from prominent Tiwana family) says something, every channel will air it," a women politician in Lahore said. Another damage that this approach makes is that society is not aware of the achievements of politicians at grassroots and in ignorance they make up their minds that women politicians have no contributions in development at local level. Women politicians from less prominent background or holders of lower political office feel cheated by this perception of increase in media coverage about women politicians. Their agony is summed up in a statement one of the respondents made: "There is much 'coverage of the coverage of women politicians by media' but in reality they (women politicians) are not there at all." Women politicians are often seen complaining about lack of resources because few parties finance them and their position is secondary when it comes to distribution of wealth within a family in Pakistan's male-dominant society. They would not have faced these constraints in using media in an effective way if the media had been sensitive to them. "Yes, absolutely it happens (class discrimination). I can't offer dinners in five-star hotels for media makers as SaminaKhawar Hayat; that's why she steals the coverage," said a female politician.It is media, which helps, or can help; women get a good office even in their political parties. The women who are given the opportunity to present their views stay in politics for a long time. But the hitch is that the number of such women is very low. "There, sure, are pressure groups in media. They have their own interests and benefits. They have set 30-35 faces which they invite on regular basis in prime time programmes," a woman politician pointed out.

The beauty barrier

After facing the barriers of gender and class, women politicians face another barrier–the beauty barrier we may call it. In only two weeks, Geo TV put women politicians in the category of glitz and glam 32 times, according to our content analysis. There are programmes on media channels that show as to how a slim, smart and young politician walks on the Constitution Avenue, highlighting her dress and glasses etc. It is a source of concern among female politicians, intellectuals and social workers (who we have studied in this project) that older and obese women politicians even don't stand on the edges in media content. "I wonder what makes them ask Marvi Memon such questions as 'have you ever loved somebody?' and Sharmila Faruki 'when will you get married?' questioned a participant of the focus group in Lahore. Not only political parties, but the society at large also takes women as politicians less seriously after their portrayal as 'fashion commodity' and their negative coverage on media. It is because of this hostile perception that less and less people vote for women politicians and dictators like Musharraf had to fix quota for them in the parliament only to later boast of his efforts for 'women empowerment' in his book 'In the Line of Fire'.This quota serves to distance women parliamentarians from the masses as they get seats on the basis of their links, reported Aurat Foundation. But despite this quota, their number could not have been risen to the desirable 33 percent in the parliament. On the basis of this discussion and findings, we can conclude that the study has proved our first and third hypotheses and rejected the second hypothesis. (Briefs of intensive interviews are given in the annexure if readers need their original message).

Limitations

This time-bound research got a very little time to complete this study.If focus groups and intensive interviews had been held after equal intervals, more exact picture of the subject would have resulted. Resources were other obstacles since involving experts in such groups requires more resources. However, media contacts of the researchers made up for this deficiency to a large extent.

Conclusion

The study notes that the frequency of coverage of women politicians has been increased since 2008 but this increase could not be translated into acceptance of women politicians in society because they are put in a negative light on media. The study concludes that instead of breaking the barriers of gender, class and personality, Pakistan's expanded media space ended up consolidating them, diminishing space for women politicians to get their due share in politics and society.The stopgap arrangement of fixing their quota in the parliament served to further increase the gap between women politicians and society, which they don't represent directly. Media could have plugged this gap but did not. Media gave coverage to women in politics but did not project their role they played in parliament and in the provincial assemblies. They played a key role in legislation processes and they took part actively in the parliamentary debates. But their role has hardly been acknowledged in the media. From the media content, apparently it seems that women political participation is seen in media spaces and women leadership from political parties and civil society are invited to contribute to these spaces, be it television, radio or newspapers but there have been no formal studies around that. During these two phases, the findings conclude that media build its agenda in such a manner that women politicians enjoy more acceptances of their work and person in society. So, for a future policy change agenda, one needs to understand that in the context of Pakistani media and politics, it is important that visibility of women in politics be seen as serious stakeholders and leaders from almost half the population and not just as an object given representation for the sake of representation as show piece to establish that women are in political arena in Pakistan. The study notes that when

the media spectrum increased manifold after permission of opening up of private TV channels and radio stations, every segment of society got more coverage, which means the increased coverage is not specific to women politicians only. They, rather, got less than their due share on electronic media and still continue to suffer bleak coverage on print media. Media has not befittingly covered the contribution of women politicians towards the law making process and did not take them as serious stakeholders. A woman journalist said she takes extra care of the fact that in her programmes women are presented equal to men and given the chance to take part in debates on policy matters, international relations, human rights, legislation and social reforms. Others think they have the potential to shed light on these serious issues but it remains untapped.We can conclude that the increase in presentation of women politicians on media failed to paint their image in such a manner that encourages others to come to politics. It is because public set the agenda of its discussion in accordance with agenda of media that strives to strike a chord with aging social perceptions about women politicians.

The study finds that the media messages and talk shows impacted the public in a way that they do acknowledge that women politicians are given an increased space on the media but that spaces hardly talk about their real achievements in the parliament in terms of their effective role in legislative business and debates on issues of national and international concern. Moreover society is not aware of the achievements of politicians at grassroots and in ignorance they make up their minds that women politicians have no contributions in development at local level. Women politicians from less prominent background or holders of lower political office feel cheated by this perception of increase in media coverage about women politicians. Their agony is summed up in a statement one of the respondents made: "There is much 'coverage of the coverage of women politicians by media' but in reality they (women politicians) are not there at all." True Musharraf opened up media and the frequency of coverage of women increased in his regime, but he failed to penetrate in the society to undo the appalling and unreal perceptions about women, not least women politicians, which were created by his predecessor dictator ZiaulHaq. It is for this reason that despite the increase in coverage about women politicians on media, the social perceptions about them is far from encouraging.

Not only political parties, but the society at large also take women as politicians less seriously after their portrayal as 'fashion commodity' and their negative coverage on media, almost all media outlets resort to these stereotypes of women politicians for their so-call 'rating' of viewership. The print media publishes stories if some controversy around women parliamentarians generates inside the parliament or during television talk shows. It is because of this hostile perception that less and less people vote for women politicians and majority of them are on a served seats quota in the parliament.This quota serves to distance women parliamentarians from the masses as they get seats on the basis of their links, reported Aurat Foundation. But despite this quota, their number could not have been risen to the desirable 33 percent in the parliament. On the basis of this discussion and findings, we can conclude that the study has proved our first and third hypotheses and rejected the second hypothesis.

This study provides an eye opener for government, academia, civil society and donor communities in Pakistan so that they can work on increase in women's political participation. There is a need for building media agenda for women political participation in a real sense by influencing media's decision makers. The media coverage of women political participation can be increased through pro-active media work. Based on the findings and recommendation in this study, civil society and academia has to line up media outreach programmes, devise training programme for media persons so that they can report sensibly and keeping in with all sensitivities around issues. The civil society advocacy groups can draw up media plan with a view to increase the media space of women politicians and can impart training to staff of likeminded groups and community groups and also media professionals. The Awaz project partners are well grounds and established civil society and academia groups. They may organize training for journalists on rights based reporting. They can also conduct media interface training of the women politicians and parliamentarians so that they can speak the way media want them to articulate. The Awaz partners can help generate content projecting women parliamentarians positively and build their networking with media groups. The Awaz partners can launch a media campaign for the cycle of the project using results from this study and further follow up discussion with this research team. The partners in collaboration with Journalists for Democracy and Human Rights (JDHR), a reputed media think tank can draw up a media campaign strategy and a strategic plan to influence and leverage media in favour of women in politics. One thing is for sure that in 24/7 media environment, there is a space available for those non-traditional news-makers such as women in politics, minorities and marginalized groups. But this media space is largely consumed by male politicians as they can manure information. To grab more space in media for the women in politics, a well-structured media work is highly recommended as needed by the respondents of this study.

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