

GENDER IN PAKISTANI POLITICS: THE UNSEEN POWER OF CULTURE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Dr. Dilawar Khan¹, Dr. Hassan Shah², Dr. Muhammad Bilal^{*3}

¹Associate Professor, Department of Pakistan Studies, Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar

²Assistant Professor and HOD Deptt of Political Science, University of Buner

³Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan

¹dilawar1983@gmail.com, ²hassan_shah@ubuner.edu.pk, ³bilal@awkum.edu.pk

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Corresponding Author: *

Dr. Muhammad Bilal

Abstract

Understanding the role of gender in politics remains a theoretical debate and policy concern. This article explores how gender construction influences women's political participation in Pakistan. This study particularly highlights how culture, social structure, and social status intersect with women's political participation. Feminist political perspective guides the methodological application of this study. Data for this study come from women and men political activists through interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). Qualitative thematic analysis method helped in the analysis of data. Findings of the study revealed that women's political participation is influenced by cultural norms, expectations and women's domestic roles. Similarly, the role of women's social status in relation to patriarchy is found affecting women's political participation. In order to improve women's political participation, the study suggests gender socialization on equality basis.

INTRODUCTION

The role of gender in Pakistani politics cannot be denied because men often dominate the country politics. Men's dominant role in the public and political sphere of the country has significantly influenced women's political experiences, including their political participation. The dominant status of men in the public is an evidence of gender construction in which social structure and culture has an important role. This type of gender socialization in a discriminatory way shaped and reshaped women's political experiences (Bilal & Ahmad, 2012). Although, the constitution of Pakistan guarantees equal political rights for all citizens across the genders but the actual situation is dismaying for women's political rights. Traditional social structures, culture, and societal norms are the main reasons behind this situation (Khan, Ahmad & Shahid, 2024). Despite

the legal and constitutional safeguards to women, the prevalence of gender inequality has been remained an academic concern in Pakistani politics (Zia, 2009).

Since the last two decades women's political participation has been appeared in different shapes. The implementation of gender quotas in legislative assemblies, the rise of women-led civil society organizations, and the increasing role of digital media have provided new platforms for political engagement and awareness. Notable advancements include legislative reforms such as the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act (2010) and the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act in various provinces. These developments reflect both the state's recognition of gender disparities and the growing societal demand for inclusive governance. However, the translation of

these opportunities into sustained gender equity remains a significant challenge due to entrenched patriarchal attitudes and resistance from conservative segments of society. This study explores the multifaceted challenges and emerging opportunities in Pakistan's gender politics, aiming to provide a comprehensive analysis that can inform policy reforms and strengthen democratic practices (Jafar, 2005).

History of Gender in Pakistani Politics

The history of gender in Pakistani politics can be traced back to the country's inception in 1947. From the beginning, women played an active role in the independence movement, with figures like Fatima Jinnah emerging as national leaders. However, post-independence politics soon reverted to male-dominated leadership, with women often relegated to symbolic roles. Despite constitutional provisions for equality, gendered barriers persisted in legal, political, and cultural domains. The 1956 Constitution recognized women's right to vote and run for office, laying the groundwork for formal political participation (Weiss, 1998).

During the 1970s, gender politics in Pakistan gained momentum under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who introduced several progressive policies. Women's participation increased in the workforce and education sectors, and the First Women's Conference was held in 1975, aligning with the UN Decade for Women. However, this progress faced a major setback during General Zia-ul-Haq's military regime (1977-1988), when Islamization policies led to discriminatory laws such as the Hudood Ordinances, which curtailed women's legal rights and reinforced patriarchal control over their mobility and autonomy. The post-Zia era saw a resurgence of women's activism. The formation of organizations like the Women's Action Forum (WAF) in the 1980s marked a turning point in gender advocacy. WAF protested against repressive laws and advocated for equal rights in public and private spheres. This period also witnessed the rise of Benazir Bhutto, the first woman Prime Minister of a Muslim-majority country, symbolizing a breakthrough for women's political leadership (Jalal, 1991 & Shaheed, 2009).

In the 2000s, under General Pervez Musharraf's regime, a significant shift occurred with the

introduction of gender quotas. The Local Government Ordinance 2001 reserved 33% of seats for women at the grassroots level, which led to the political empowerment of thousands of women. This reform allowed women from marginalized communities to participate in decision-making at local levels, challenging patriarchal control over political spaces. However, this empowerment was often limited by cultural constraints and lack of support mechanisms. Despite incremental progress, gender politics in Pakistan remains shaped by a complex interplay of religion, tradition, and politics. While legal reforms and advocacy have opened new avenues, systemic resistance to women's empowerment still persists. The historical trajectory reflects a pattern of progress and regression, where gains are often undermined by political instability and conservative backlash. Understanding this evolution is crucial to formulating inclusive policies that ensure long-term gender equity in political participation (Bari, 2010 & Khan, 2016).

Theoretical Underpinnings of the Study

The analysis of this study is grounded in feminist political perspective and intersectional feminism. From feminist political perspective, we have borrowed the work of Kantola and Lombardo for analysis. Kantola and Lombardo's (2017) concept of women and political analysis is used to analyze how women's social position influence their political participation. In women and political analysis concept, they have argued that women and men are represented in political institution based on their socioeconomic status (Kantola & Lombardo, 2017). As a part of larger theoretical perspective i.e. gender and political analysis, the concept of women and political analysis has strengthened our argument on how socioeconomic inequalities produces gender construction in a discriminatory way that shape and reshape women's political participation in the context of Pakistan. We have also used intersectional feminism as a theoretical lens to build the argument on how different sociocultural and economic factors intersect women's political participation in Pakistan. Kimberly Crenshaw's concepts of structural and political intersectionality are borrowed for analysis to explore how social and political structures in Pakistan are discriminatory in terms of women's political

experiences. Crenshaws' concepts of structural and political intersectionality argues that different factors, such as social, economic, religious, and culture has marginalized women's status in the political sphere (Charusheela, 2013).

Methodology

Ontologically speaking women's political experiences are positioned as socially, culturally, and historically constructed realities. Epistemologically, we approach the reality of women's politics through feminist political perspective. These theoretical foundations (constructionism and feminist political theory) guided us to conduct this study qualitatively under flexible qualitative research design to explore the real essence of how gender plays a significant role in Pakistani politics. Using interview guide, we asked 22 participants (11 women & 11 men) through in-depth interviews about how social structure, culture, and social position have influenced their political participation. Seven focus group discussions (FGDs) were also part of the data collection process. Purposive sampling method helped us in the collection of data while selecting women and men political activists. The collected data were transcribed into meaningful text and then studied it time and again to get familiarity with the data. We then coded the data with the help of clubbing similar responses. Coding of the data led us to the creation of themes in line with the empirical review. All these steps of data analysis were completed using Clark and Braun's (2017) method of thematic analysis. After completing these methodological processes, we came up with the following analysis.

Data Analysis

Culture, Gender, and Politics in Pakistan

The analysis in this article revealed that the role of culture in gender socialization is indispensable. Patriarchy defines rigid gender roles in Pakistani context where women are placed in an inferior position that influence women's presence on the public and political sphere, including their political participation. Gender training in primary socialization takes place in a discriminatory way where family expectations places men in a dominant position. This type of discriminatory socialization discourages women's political participation and political leadership. These deeply rooted social norms

often go unchallenged, as they are passed down generationally and internalized by both men and women, making it difficult to initiate structural change (Ali, 2013; Bilal, Ahmad & Zaid, 2017).

The institution of family also plays a central role in shaping gender dynamics. In many Pakistani households, women are expected to prioritize family responsibilities over personal development or professional ambitions. Daughters are often denied the same investment in education and career-building as sons, with parents fearing that educating girls might result in defiance or societal backlash. The cultural emphasis on a girl's "honor" and the associated burden of family reputation limits her independence. Even educated women face familial pressure to conform to traditional roles, as their aspirations may be seen as conflicting with marital and domestic obligations. These familial pressures create psychological and practical barriers to gender equality (Critelli, 2010).

The analysis in this study further indicated that gender inequality is due to women's limited access to education and professional opportunities. In rural and tribal areas, many girls are not enrolled in school due to cultural taboos, security issues, or household responsibilities. In some cases, even when schools are available, parents choose not to send their daughters due to fears of reputational damage or inappropriate interactions with boys. As a result, the female literacy rate in Pakistan remains alarmingly low compared to males. This educational gap directly impacts women's ability to participate in the labor market, engage in politics, or challenge discriminatory systems. Education is a vital tool for empowerment, and its denial to women maintains the cycle of gender-based subjugation (Aslam, 2009).

The portrayal of women in media and cultural narratives continues to reinforce harmful stereotypes. Pakistani television dramas, movies, and advertisements often depict women as passive, emotional, and dependent on male figures. Rarely are women shown in positions of leadership, power, or intellectual competence. These media representations not only reflect but also shape societal perceptions, legitimizing traditional gender roles and discouraging progressive change. Men are frequently glorified as breadwinners and protectors, while women are shown as homemakers and caretakers. Such portrayals hinder

efforts to promote gender equality by normalizing patriarchal behavior and marginalizing alternative gender identities (Khan & Rehman, 2020).

Finally, the fear of social stigma acts as an invisible barrier that prevents women from challenging discriminatory practices. Women, who seek careers, speak publicly, or resist traditional roles, are often labeled as immoral, rebellious, or un-Islamic. The societal tendency to scrutinize women's behavior under the lens of honor and shame discourages them from stepping into public roles or reporting abuses. This social policing is enforced by both men and women and creates a hostile environment for female empowerment. Without societal support and the dismantling of harmful stereotypes, legal reforms alone are insufficient to achieve true gender equality in Pakistan (Syed, 2008).

Structural and Institutional Challenges

Pakistan's legal framework, though embedded with constitutional guarantees for gender equality, suffers from inconsistencies, loopholes, and weak implementation mechanisms. Article 25 of the Constitution of Pakistan guarantees equality before the law and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, while Article 34 calls for full participation of women in all spheres of national life. Despite these provisions, numerous discriminatory laws, outdated legal interpretations, and parallel justice systems—such as Jirgas and Panchayats—undermine these constitutional rights. These informal institutions often issue verdicts that violate women's basic human rights, such as forced marriages and honor killings, reflecting the state's failure to enforce constitutional supremacy over tribal customs (Shirkat Gah, 2010). Another major challenge lies in the ambiguity and conflict between civil, religious, and customary laws. The coexistence of these overlapping legal frameworks creates a fragmented legal environment where women often fall victim to subjective interpretations of Sharia or local traditions. For example, while the Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act of 2006 aimed to rectify injustices under the Hudood Ordinances, its impact has been limited due to societal resistance and judicial reluctance to fully adopt the new legal standards. Furthermore, many judges and lawyers are inadequately trained in gender-sensitive jurisprudence, leading to biased decisions

that do not protect women's rights adequately (Zia, 2009).

The judicial system also poses structural and procedural challenges for women seeking justice. Courts are often male-dominated and physically inaccessible for rural and low-income women. Victims of gender-based violence frequently face humiliation, character assassination, and even threats during legal proceedings. Moreover, delays in court cases and the lack of legal aid discourage women from pursuing justice. Although women protection laws like the 2016 Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act have been introduced, implementation remains weak due to institutional apathy, lack of awareness, and political will (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

Law enforcement agencies are another critical barrier to gender equality in Pakistan. Police officers, often lacking gender sensitivity training, tend to trivialize domestic violence, sexual assault, and harassment complaints. Victims are either discouraged from registering FIRs (First Information Reports) or are subjected to inappropriate questioning and harassment themselves. In many cases, police side with the perpetrators, especially in patriarchal rural settings, further dissuading women from reporting crimes. The lack of female police officers exacerbates the situation, as many women are uncomfortable or unwilling to speak to male officers about personal or traumatic incidents (HRCP, 2021).

The role of legislative bodies in addressing gender inequality has been inconsistent and often reactive. While some landmark laws such as the Anti-Harassment at Workplace Act (2010) and the Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act (2011) have been passed under pressure from civil society, many other important reforms remain pending due to political instability and conservative opposition. Women's representation in legislative assemblies—though improved by reserved seats—often lacks meaningful participation due to patriarchal party structures that marginalize their voices in decision-making processes. Thus, gender-focused legislation often lacks the necessary follow-through and enforcement (Bari, 2010).

Institutional mechanisms such as the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) and provincial women's development departments are tasked with promoting gender equality, yet they suffer

from limited resources, bureaucratic inefficiency, and a lack of autonomy. These institutions are often underfunded and sidelined in policy development processes. While they have produced important research and policy recommendations, their influence on actual legislation and implementation remains minimal. Without political commitment and institutional strengthening, these bodies remain symbolic rather than transformative in ensuring gender justice (UN Women, 2022).

The failure to integrate gender-sensitive training into the broader governance and legal education systems has a long-term negative impact. Law schools, police academies, and judicial training institutions seldom offer comprehensive modules on women's rights and gender justice. This results in generations of legal practitioners, lawmakers, and public officials who are ill-equipped to address gender-based discrimination and violence. Institutional change requires systemic efforts to include gender as a central component of legal education, public service training, and policy-making—an area where Pakistan still lags significantly (Jafar, 2005).

The Intersection of Gender and Politics in Pakistan

Intersectional analysis is best in addressing gender and women in politics, especially when analyzing the multidimensional nature of oppression faced by women in Pakistan. Intersectionality emphasizes that individuals' experiences of discrimination are not shaped by a single factor, but by the interconnections of multiple social identities, such as gender, class, ethnicity, and religion. For women in Pakistan, gender oppression intersects with other forms of marginalization, such as ethnic or religious minority status, socioeconomic background, and geographic location. This framework provides a more nuanced understanding of how various layers of social inequality exacerbate women's political exclusion and vulnerability. As a result, intersectionality offers a critical lens for analyzing women's political participation in Pakistan, which is often obscured by monolithic representations of women's struggles (Crenshaw, 1989).

In Pakistan, women from marginalized ethnic groups, such as the Baloch, Pashtun, and Mohajir communities, face compounded challenges in the political sphere. Their experiences of oppression are

not only gendered but also ethnic and regional. For instance, Baloch women in particular have been historically excluded from political spaces, both within their communities and the broader national political structure. The traditional tribal structures in Balochistan often limit women's access to education, healthcare, and political participation, while the state's neglect of the region's political issues further marginalizes them. This ethnic and regional marginalization intersects with the gendered discrimination women face, making their political empowerment an even more complex issue. As a result, ethnic minority women in Pakistan remain invisible in national discussions about gender equality and political representation (Shaheed, 2011).

Economic disparities also intersect with gender politics in Pakistan, where class-based oppression exacerbates gender inequalities. Women from lower-income families, especially rural women, are often deprived of education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. This socio-economic deprivation restricts their ability to participate in the political process, either as voters or candidates. The financial constraints faced by women in lower socio-economic brackets are compounded by the patriarchal norms that limit their mobility and access to political spaces. In rural areas, where traditional gender roles are most rigid, women's participation in politics is often constrained to local governance structures, which are dominated by male-dominated political families and tribal leaders. The intersection of class and gender, therefore, further entrenches women's political disempowerment (Bari, 2010).

The intersectionality of religion and gender also plays a crucial role in shaping the political lives of Pakistani women, especially for those who belong to religious minorities. Muslim women, particularly in conservative communities, face systemic barriers in participating in politics due to entrenched religious and cultural norms. However, women from religious minorities, such as Hindus and Christians, experience even greater levels of exclusion. They are doubly marginalized—once due to their gender and once due to their minority religious status. Their representation in political spaces is minimal, and their concerns often go unheard in mainstream political dialogues. This intersectionality of religion and gender adds another layer of complexity to the gendered political

landscape in Pakistan. Minority women are frequently subjected to societal discrimination and violence, further limiting their political agency (Zaman, 2014). Political participation in Pakistan is also heavily influenced by the urban-rural divide, which intersects with gender. Urban women, especially those from middle or upper-class backgrounds, have better access to education, employment, and political networks. They are more likely to hold leadership positions in political parties or civil society organizations and participate in public protests and policy advocacy. Conversely, rural women, who constitute the majority of the female population, face substantial barriers to political engagement. The socio-cultural norms in rural areas often confine women to traditional roles, while the lack of infrastructure and resources, such as roads and communication networks, further isolates them from political developments. Thus, rural-urban disparities intersect with gendered barriers, creating a dual system of political exclusion for women (Jalal, 1991).

Furthermore, the intersectionality of education and gender in Pakistan shapes women's ability to participate in politics. Educated women in urban centers tend to be more politically active, with many holding influential positions in the public and private sectors. However, for rural and less-educated women, political participation is often out of reach. The lack of access to quality education, combined with the high rates of illiteracy among rural women, means that their political engagement is minimal. This intersectionality of education and gender exacerbates the socio-political isolation of women in rural areas. In many cases, education is seen as unnecessary for women, especially in rural regions, where traditional gender roles are more entrenched. Consequently, the intersectionality of education and gender must be addressed to increase women's political representation (Khan, 2016).

The role of media in shaping perceptions of women in politics also reflects the intersectional nature of gender politics in Pakistan. Women politicians, particularly those who belong to marginalized communities, are often portrayed in ways that perpetuate stereotypes of submissiveness, emotionality, and ineffectiveness. The media plays a crucial role in either reinforcing or challenging these stereotypes. For instance, when women from minority

groups or rural areas attempt to engage in politics, they are often depicted as "outsiders" or "unqualified." This not only limits their visibility but also perpetuates the narrative that certain women, due to their class, ethnicity, or religion, are not suited for political leadership. The media, therefore, has an important role to play in reshaping public perceptions of gender politics and creating a more inclusive political environment for all women (Khan & Naqvi, 2020).

Finally, understanding the intersectionality of gender politics in Pakistan is essential for designing inclusive policies that can address the varied and complex challenges women face. Intersectionality provides a framework for understanding the multiple layers of discrimination that women experience and how these layers intersect to shape their experiences in the political domain. Policy reforms must consider these intersecting factors, such as ethnic background, class, education, and religious identity, in order to create a more inclusive political system. Addressing the unique barriers faced by women from different socio-economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds will allow for more comprehensive and effective gender equality policies. Only by recognizing the intersections of various forms of oppression can Pakistan hope to create an equitable political space for all women (Crenshaw, 1989).

Women's Political Participation in Pakistan

Political participation in Pakistan have evolved over time, but challenges remain deeply embedded in societal, legal, and institutional frameworks. The political system, despite being a democratic republic, continues to face gender-based discrimination that significantly limits women's active involvement in governance. Women's participation, both as voters and candidates, is guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan. Article 17 provides every citizen, regardless of gender, the right to form associations and participate in political activities, yet this formal equality does not always translate into practical political empowerment. The gender gap in political participation persists, influenced by a mix of socio-cultural barriers, political party dynamics, and institutional constraints that prevent women from fully realizing their political rights (Bari, 2010)

In Pakistan, reserved seats for women in both the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies have been a significant step toward enhancing women's political representation. These seats, introduced by the 18th Amendment in 2010, allocate a fixed percentage of parliamentary seats to women, which initially increased their numerical presence in political structures. However, this provision has not resulted in real political empowerment for women. Women on reserved seats are often nominated due to political loyalty rather than merit, and their political actions are heavily influenced by male party leaders. This limits their ability to make independent decisions or raise issues that affect women's rights. As a result, the political participation of women remains largely symbolic rather than substantive.

A major barrier to the full political participation of women is the pervasive influence of patriarchal norms and societal attitudes that view politics as a male-dominated sphere. Pakistani women who engage in politics often face intense criticism, harassment, and even threats. These societal constraints, compounded by the media's portrayal of women politicians, often as "puppets" or "supporters" of male leaders, diminish their credibility and public appeal. Women candidates who seek office outside the reserved seats often face an uphill battle, dealing with issues like gender-based violence, intimidation, and lack of financial resources. In a deeply patriarchal society, women are frequently discouraged from participating in public decision-making, further perpetuating gender inequality (Khan & Naqvi, 2020).

Despite the legal provisions that provide women with the right to vote and contest elections, political parties often marginalize them in terms of active participation. In Pakistan, women's involvement in political parties remains limited, with few holding positions of influence. Most political parties prefer to maintain traditional male leadership, and party structures often fail to nurture female candidates, limiting their ability to progress to more influential roles. Political parties, which have historically been patriarchal, tend to field male candidates in general elections, further reducing the chances for women to contest general seats. This creates a disconnect between women's political rights and their political visibility in the electoral process (UN Women, 2022).

At the grassroots level, the political participation of women is equally hindered by limited opportunities for engagement. Local government reforms in Pakistan, which introduced a quota system for women in local councils, initially opened doors for women's involvement in politics. However, the implementation of these reforms has been inconsistent. In many cases, local women representatives are either marginalized by male family members who hold decision-making power or subjected to coercion by male leaders within their constituencies. Moreover, the lack of adequate training and financial support for women in local governments hinders their capacity to effectively contribute to governance and development (Cheema et al., 2006).

The role of the media in shaping political discourse is crucial in either empowering or undermining women's participation. In Pakistan, women politicians are often portrayed in a sensationalized manner that focuses more on their personal lives and appearances than their policies or achievements. The media frequently reinforces traditional gender stereotypes, undermining the credibility and seriousness of female political figures. While some women have managed to break through these stereotypes—such as Benazir Bhutto, the former Prime Minister—most women in politics face the challenge of being overshadowed by patriarchal portrayals in the media, which trivializes their efforts and contributions (Khan & Naqvi, 2020).

Legislative measures to promote women's participation in politics have been largely ineffective without broader institutional support. Though Pakistan's Election Commission has taken steps to encourage female participation, such as introducing electoral quotas, these measures have not been rigorously enforced. The implementation of gender-sensitive policies and strategies within political parties remains a challenge. The lack of gender-conscious policy training for party leadership and members is a significant factor in the continued underrepresentation of women in political offices. Furthermore, the absence of mechanisms for female candidates to access financial and political resources prevents them from competing effectively against their male counterparts (Aurat Foundation, 2018).

The future of women's political participation and representation in Pakistan requires comprehensive reform, not only within legal frameworks but also in political party structures and societal attitudes. There needs to be an emphasis on electoral reforms that ensure meaningful participation rather than token representation. Capacity-building programs for women in politics, better access to resources, and the creation of a supportive political environment can help women break through the glass ceiling. Additionally, fostering a culture of political awareness and gender equality from a young age would enable future generations of women to pursue leadership roles, ultimately leading to a more inclusive and democratic political system in Pakistan (UNDP, 2019).

Recent Developments and Opportunities

Recent developments in global digital transformation have revolutionized how businesses operate and engage with consumers. With the widespread adoption of AI, blockchain, and cloud computing, companies are not only enhancing productivity but also reducing operational costs. This shift towards digitalization presents vast opportunities for startups and small businesses to access global markets with minimal investment. Governments around the world are launching digital economy policies to support innovation, boost entrepreneurship, and enhance public service delivery. Remote work has become normalized, creating cross-border employment prospects. Furthermore, digital payments and fintech services are increasing financial inclusion, especially in developing countries. The challenge lies in ensuring cybersecurity and data privacy, which have become critical concerns. Yet, those who adapt swiftly to these changes are reaping immense rewards. Tech hubs are emerging in regions previously considered peripheral. This wave of transformation signals a new era of global economic restructuring (World Bank 2023).

The renewable energy sector has witnessed remarkable growth in recent years, offering both environmental benefits and economic opportunities. Technological innovations in solar, wind, and hydroelectric energy have made clean energy more affordable and accessible than ever before. Many countries are setting ambitious targets to transition to carbon-neutral

economies, prompting investments in green technologies and sustainable infrastructure. This shift creates new jobs in research, engineering, and construction while reducing dependency on fossil fuels. Moreover, green financing models and international climate funds are encouraging private sector participation. Renewable energy not only addresses climate change but also offers energy security and rural electrification. Developing nations, particularly in Africa and South Asia, are utilizing solar power to bridge energy gaps. Government incentives and public-private partnerships are key enablers of this transition. The renewable revolution opens a promising frontier for sustainable development (International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), (2023).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are at the forefront of recent technological advancements, offering transformative potential across multiple sectors. From predictive analytics in healthcare to intelligent automation in manufacturing, AI is streamlining operations and enhancing decision-making. Companies are leveraging AI to improve customer service through chatbots and personalization algorithms. In agriculture, AI-driven drones and sensors are helping farmers monitor crop health and optimize yields. However, AI adoption raises concerns about job displacement, ethical data use, and algorithmic bias. Policymakers and educators must prepare the workforce with digital literacy and reskilling programs. The opportunity lies in harnessing AI to complement human capabilities rather than replace them. As research continues, AI's potential to solve complex global problems becomes increasingly evident. Countries investing in AI infrastructure and education will likely lead the next wave of economic growth (McKinsey & Company. (2023).

In the field of education, recent developments in online learning and Ed Tech platforms have opened up unprecedented opportunities for learners worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital classrooms, video conferencing tools, and e-learning software, breaking geographical and financial barriers to education. Platforms like Coursera, edX, and Khan Academy are democratizing access to high-quality courses from top universities. Moreover, adaptive learning technologies personalize

the educational experience, catering to individual learning styles and paces. These tools are especially beneficial in underserved regions where quality teachers are scarce. However, the digital divide remains a significant challenge, particularly in rural and low-income areas. Governments and NGOs are working to provide devices and internet access to bridge this gap. The future of education is hybrid, flexible, and tech-driven, creating opportunities for lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2022).

Global healthcare systems are undergoing significant transformation with the integration of digital health technologies. Telemedicine, wearable devices, and electronic health records have improved patient access, diagnosis accuracy, and treatment outcomes. The pandemic underscored the value of virtual care, prompting governments and insurers to support its expansion. AI is now aiding in drug discovery and predictive diagnostics, while big data analytics help track disease patterns and manage public health crises. These developments offer new business opportunities for health-tech startups and mobile health solutions. However, concerns around data privacy, regulatory frameworks, and equitable access remain prevalent. Addressing these challenges can help ensure inclusive health innovation. The future holds promise for personalized medicine, genomic research, and AI-powered diagnostics. Healthcare is shifting from reactive to preventive, promising better quality of life globally (World Health Organization, 2023).

Recent economic shifts have brought both challenges and opportunities for global trade and investment. The post-pandemic recovery, coupled with geopolitical tensions, is prompting countries to reconsider supply chain dependencies and explore regional trade blocs. There is a growing emphasis on economic resilience, with nations investing in local industries and digital infrastructure. The rise of e-commerce and digital trade platforms enables small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to reach international markets more easily. Trade agreements are being renegotiated to reflect modern priorities such as data governance and environmental standards. These developments create opportunities for innovation in logistics, fintech, and cross-border payment systems. Businesses that embrace transparency, sustainability, and agility are thriving in this new landscape. Investment in human capital and

technology will determine competitive advantage in the evolving trade ecosystem (World Trade Organization, 2023).

Environmental awareness and sustainability have become central themes in global policy and corporate strategy. From the Paris Agreement to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), recent years have witnessed a surge in eco-conscious initiatives. Corporations are increasingly integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) metrics into their operations to attract investment and meet consumer expectations. Sustainable agriculture, circular economies, and green buildings are becoming more mainstream. Youth-led climate movements are pressuring policymakers for stricter environmental regulations. These trends create opportunities for innovation in clean tech, sustainable packaging, and carbon capture solutions. Financial institutions are directing capital toward sustainable ventures through green bonds and impact investing. Environmental sustainability is no longer an optional initiative but a competitive necessity. Collaboration between governments, businesses, and civil society is key to meeting global climate goals (United Nations, 2023). Urban development is undergoing rapid transformation through smart city initiatives aimed at improving infrastructure, public services, and quality of life. Smart cities leverage Internet of Things (IoT), AI, and data analytics to manage traffic, waste, water, and energy systems efficiently. Cities like Singapore, Dubai, and Barcelona are leading the way, offering replicable models for others. These developments create opportunities for real estate, construction, and tech startups focused on urban innovation. Citizen engagement through mobile apps and participatory platforms is enhancing democratic governance. However, ensuring equitable access and preventing digital exclusion are ongoing challenges. As populations urbanize, smart development becomes crucial for sustainability and resilience. Investment in public transport, green spaces, and affordable housing is also critical. The smart city movement represents a new vision for inclusive, tech-enabled urban living (OECD, 2023).

Technologies are reshaping the global financial landscape, providing inclusive, accessible, and efficient alternatives to traditional banking systems. Innovations such as mobile banking, crypto currency,

robot-advisors, and peer-to-peer lending are expanding financial services to the unbanked and under banked populations. Countries in Africa and Asia are pioneering mobile money platforms that empower rural populations. Blockchain technology is enhancing transparency and reducing fraud in financial transactions. Meanwhile, regulatory sandboxes are being introduced to test and guide new financial models. This fosters innovation while managing risks associated with digital finance. Fin Tech offers a unique opportunity for economic empowerment, especially for youth and small enterprises. However, cyber security, digital literacy, and consumer protection remain key policy areas. The future of finance lies in agility, trust, and inclusiveness (International Monetary Fund, 2023).

The field of agriculture is witnessing a technological renaissance with the advent of smart farming techniques and precision agriculture. Drones, satellite imaging, and AI-driven soil sensors are helping farmers optimize irrigation, pest control, and fertilizer usage. These tools improve yields, reduce environmental impact, and minimize resource wastage. Vertical farming and hydroponics are emerging as viable solutions for urban food production. Governments and aggrotech companies are working together to digitize agricultural value chains. This not only boosts productivity but also connects farmers directly with markets, improving income. Challenges such as land fragmentation, climate change, and lack of digital infrastructure still persist. However, targeted investment and training can empower rural communities. Agriculture is transforming from a subsistence activity to a data-driven, tech-enabled industry (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2023).

Conclusion

The analysis presented in this article conclude that Gender has a significant role in Pakistani politics which has influenced women's political participation. This study found that gender socialization in Pakistani context takes place in a discriminatory way that affect women's politics and their leadership role. As discussed above culture has a significant role I shaping and reshaping women's political experiences. For instance, patriarchal culture has kept women in a subordinated position in the family and public sphere

that influence women's political participation. Similarly, social structure and institutional frameworks do not give due role to women in politics. For example, the constitution of Pakistan has given equal political rights to women in politics but the actual position is dismaying. Women in Pakistan remain unable to openly contest elections and occupy their due positions in the parliamentary politics. Women in party politics are also lagging behind because men have dominated party politics. This study further highlighted the role of social position in gender and women's politics. As men in the society occupy sound social status it positions women in a humble position that hinders women's politics. Due to men's strong position in the family and public, women remain unable to independently participate and play their due role in the party and parliamentary politics. The study recommends equal gender socialization from private to the public life where the role of family, peers, formal schooling and media remains undeniable. This would improve women's confidence on the public and political spheres ultimately resulting in upgrading women's political participation.

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