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Title: Women's Representation in Local Democracy: Formal and Informal Institutions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Abstract

Pakistan's democracy is still rather new. In 2000, General Pervez Musharraf introduced the Local Government Ordinance 2000, which allocated gender quotas of 33% for women in the local government. In 2011, under the 18th amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan, provincial governments are empowered to introduce local government reforms independently and according to provincial needs and contexts. As a result, the provincial assembly of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) passed its own Local Government Act 2013 on October 31 2013. Local elections were subsequently held in May-June 2015. Many women are now participating in local government as councilors. At the same time, KP's Pashtun society follows a set of informal institutions called *Pakhtunwali* that may affect women councilors' participation in local democratic processes.

The aim of the study is to assess women councilors' participation (political and civic) in local democracy in Pakistan's KP province. This study test hypotheses about the interaction between formal and informal institutions in connection with women's participation. Furthermore, the variables of political parties, civil society, and the media are also hypothesized to test their effects on women councilors' political and civic participation.

A case study approach is utilized. The main research methods are qualitative individual in-depth interviews, observation, and content analysis. A total of 53 individual interviews, 60 minutes per session (a total of one session per participant) are conducted with women councilors from nine local councils, civil society activists, and journalists and academics (as experts). Two newspapers are selected to collect news items from to do content analysis.