

Socio-Cultural Constraints to Women's Political Empowerment in Southern Punjab: Evidence from Multan District

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ABSTRACT

Politics is considered to be a dirty game for women not only in Pakistan but also in the globe; if they want to enter in politics, they have to face unfriendly political, public, cultural and social environment. Patriarchal society is the main hindrance that disillusions women's empowerment. The main aim of the research work is to identify different socio-cultural, economic, religious and political factors and constraints which deprive women from participation in the political activities. The study has been conducted in three tehsils i.e. Multan Sadar, Shujabad and Jalalpur Pirwala. The data has been collected from (N=1000 respondents) from structural political local bodies of Multan district categorized in the following manners: Nazim/Naib Nazim, male/female general councillors and male/female voters through semi-structural questionnaire by convenient random sampling method, and data has been analyzed through SPSS in the simple form of frequency and percentage and hypothesis has been checked by chi-square

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test technique and processed in the form of tables. The empirical results indicate that there exist different socio-cultural constraints including patriarchy, traditional feudalist society and misinterpretation of religion, veil (Purdah), stereotype image of women, illiteracy, and ignorance about their socio-political rights etc. that decreases their political empowerment. It has been further suggested that women should be given equal chances in politics and in the decision-making process. The situation can be improved by making socio-cultural norms conducive to women's political empowerment and encouraging role of electronic media can improve their political empowerment in Multan district.

Introduction

Men and women possess different psychological, social, cultural characteristics; hence their role in society is determined accordingly. For centuries, women have been relegated to a secondary status in the family and the society.¹ In the primitive societies, men used to go for hunting i.e. outdoor activity, while women stayed at home and looked after the children and family. As civilization advanced women have started performing multiple role of working outside the home but they are still not completely equal. There is no country that could have attained gender equality or does not have a gender gap; hence, nowhere women are in a stronger position to play an effective and decided role in shaping the economic, social and political dimensions of a society.²

The concept of women empowerment can trace its origin quite a few centuries back at least to the 17th century with the legal meanings "to authorize or to enable or permit" both of these usages survive today but have been overwhelmed by the word's use in politics. However, its modern use originated in

¹Rajib Lochan Panigrahy, *Women Empowerment* (New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 2006), 24.

²Preet Rustagi, "Identifying Gender Backward Districts Using Selected Indicators," *Economic and Political Weekly* 35, no. 48 (2000): 4276-4286; Taga, Abdul Aziz Taga, "Gender Gap in Pakistan: A Sociological Analysis," *Academic Research International* 2, no. 3 (2012): 629.

the civil-rights movement's pursuit of political empowerment for its followers. It emerged during the U.S civil rights movement in the 1960s but in its modern context the concept has been increasingly discussed and formulated by the third world feminists since the late 1980s.³ Women empowerment, particularly in the domain of politics, means to empower women by increasing their political participation and political consciousness. As compared to women in developing countries, the women of the developed countries are in much better economic and social position. It goes without saying that women can become an agent of change only through their substantial participation i.e. they must have right to vote at their own choice/free will, launch election campaign and contest elections because it will ensure that their rights are duly protected. They need to be empowered to minimize their dependency, exploitation, discriminating attitudes and biased laws.⁴ Though women represent more than half of the world population however nevertheless, they may be subjected to men made laws and suffer from discrimination in various spheres of life,⁵ which indicates that women constitute the more vulnerable segment of the society.⁶ According to a report of the United Nation of Development Programme 2005, women do 2/3of the jobs but still receive 1/10 of the global's income and very own less than one percent of its property, and out of 13.7 million poor in the world 3/4 are women and out of 872 million illiterate in the world 2/3 are women beside, the number continues to increase every day. And their

³Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo, *Women, Education and Empowerment: Pathways towards Autonomy* (Hamburg: UIE Studies, 1995), 5.

⁴Arab Naz and Waqar Ahmad, "Socio-cultural Impediments to Women Political Empowerment in Pakhtun Society," *Academic Research International* 3, no. 1 (2012): 163.

⁵U Daraz, "Pakhtun Social Structure and its Impacts on Women Education," (Islamabad: MS Thesis, Department of Sociology, International Islamic University Islamabad, 2012); Kour, Tajinder, "Women Empowerment: Yet A Distant Dream," (New Delhi: S. B Nangia and APH Publishing Corporation, 2016), 4435-7.

⁶Georgina Waylen, "Gender, Feminism and the State: An Overview," in *Gender, Politics and the State*, ed., Vicky Randall and Georgina Waylen (London: Routledge, 2012), 11-27.

participation in politics is only 15 percent and most effective only 12 countries of the world have 33 percent seats for women in parliament.⁷ In many societies, political activities are still part of public life, separated from domestic life which women are generally confined. Because political activities are regarded purely as male's domain, in tune with the culture and traditions of the society. Currently, the sociologists and political scientists use women's political status as an indicator to gauge the women's abilities and capabilities which may minimize their total dependency on their male family members.⁸

The Problem Stated

Like many countries of the world, Pakistan has also been facing challenges regarding the issues of women political empowerment. Pakistan has an elected and representative government nevertheless it lacks in political development as compared to the developed countries of the world. Because here is a common opinion that institutional imbalance in the body politics of Pakistan has provoked the trends of an authoritarian/executive political culture which hindered the growth of democratic attitude and also affect the enhancement of women's political empowerment.⁹ Moreover, the issue of women political empowerment has been considered as disturbing or problematic because the same is believed to precarious balance between societal and state structures. In Zaidi's view, Pakistan being a post-colonial society has in and out a tribalistic and feudalistic structure; the dominance and empowerment of these structures in all

⁷United Nations Development Program, "Human Development Report," *New York*: (2005). [Online]. Available: <http://www.hdr.undp.org>

⁸Naima Tabassum, Tabassum Afzal, and Huma Tabassum, "Shifting Trends of Women's Participation in Local Government in Pakistan: A study With Special Focus on Sindh Province," *Mystic Thoughts-Research Journal of Sufism and Peace* 1, no. 1 (2015): 15.

⁹Muhammad Javaid Akhter, "Dilemma of Political Culture: Case Study of Pakistan (1988-1997) (Multan: PhD diss., Bahauddin Zakariya University, 2010), 11.

sphere of life weakens the position of women in society.¹⁰ Critelli has similar views about women's status in Pakistan. She believes that in rural as well as tribal systems of society the patriarchal customs create male domination over women's destiny to the extent that they can be bought and sold like commodities.¹¹ In Pakistan, women make almost 52 percent of the total population but their role in shaping the political system is insignificant which is due to clash between the cultural and political values combined with misinterpretation of religion by the clergy class.¹² Through their self-satisfactory interpretation of Quranic verses and Hadith, they deny equal status to women as postulated by Islam. According to their interpretation women must be confined in their homes, because public life and mixed culture are prohibited for them.¹³ Moreover, Pakistan in general and southern Punjab and Multan district in particular, represent traditionally patriarchal society. It divides the population into masculine and feminine groups as well as separates the role of men and women into productive and reproductive domains which jeopardizes as women's liberty and progress.¹⁴ The stronghold of patriarchy, centuries of deep-rooted traditions provide a fewer chance to women and they face many constraints and challenges in their empowerment ranging from small to large. Shaheed.et.al has the similar views that

¹⁰Najia Asrar Zaidi, "From Victim to Survivor: A Critical Study of Qaisra Shahraz's The Holy Woman," *Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies: Alam-e-Niswan* 19, no. 2 (2012): 213.

¹¹Filomena M. Critelli, "Between Law and Custom: Women, Family Law and Marriage in Pakistan," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 43, no. 5 (2012): 673-693.

¹²Rashid Menhas et al. "Cultural Barriers of Female Empowerment," *Afro Asian Journal of Anthropology and Social Policy* 4, no. 1 (2013): 2.

¹³Santi Rozario, "The New Burqa in Bangladesh: Empowerment or Violation of Women's Rights?" *Women's Studies International Forum* 29, no. 4 (2006): 368-380.

¹⁴Arab Naz and Hafeez-ur-Rehamn Chaudhry, "Gender and Development: Socio-Cultural, Economic, Religious and Political Impediments in Women's Empowerment and Gender Development: A Case Study of Malakand Division KPK Pakistan," *Bio Info Sociology* (2011): 45. Available online at: <http://www.bioinfo.in/contents.php?id=189>

for their political empowerment, the Pakistani women are facing three distinct but interconnected categories of constraints i.e. socio-economic, societal structure and religious argumentation¹⁵ which invariably prevent them from developing political awareness and experiences. Besides that, there are some physical constraints like the heavy burden of childbearing hampers their participation in politics. Owing to their poor access in respect of financial resources, their decision making power at family and community level is badly affected.¹⁶ Farooq also stated that leaving alone the fact that women are not encouraged to participating in politics, they are also denied to have their personal identities.¹⁷ In such societies, domestic affairs are the legitimate concern whereas men deal with the world outside. This unjustified maintenance of the public/private and indoor/outdoor life is based on honor (*izzat*) and veil (*Purdah*).¹⁸ The notion of an honor (*izzat*) is linked with women's sexual behavior; their sexuality is considered a potential threat to the honor of the family. Besides the traditional values i.e. the ideology of the veil (*Purdah*), socio-cultural practices, and the concept of honor is linked with women's sexuality.¹⁹ Similarly, the gender discrimination and inequality in life participation in the sphere of politics are based on women's restrictions on social mobility, feudalism, strict customs and traditions, misinterpretation of religious values and prevalence of patriarchic values.²⁰

¹⁵Farida Shaheed, Asma Zia, and Sohail Warraich, *Women in Politics: Participation and Representation in Pakistan with update 1993-1997* (Lahore: Shirkat Gah, 1998): 26

¹⁶Ayodele Aderinwale, ed., "Empowering Women for the 21st Century: The Challenges of Politics, Business, Development and Leadership," *Africa Leadership Forum*, (1997): 316-330

¹⁷A. Farooq, "Waseela-e-Taleem: A Revolutionary Step," *Dawn*, December 14, 2003.

¹⁸Naz and Chaudhry, "Gender and Development,"": 45-46

¹⁹H. Qureshi and F.A. Raarieya, eds., *Gender and Education in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press. 2007).

²⁰Farzana Bari and Mariam S. Pal, "Country Briefing Paper: Women in Pakistan," Asian Development Bank Programs Department and Office of Environment

Women political empowerment is also very much closely linked to their economic participation and independence. The low representation and participation of women in government affairs are caused by financial dependency, poverty, salary discrimination, unemployment, and lack of economic support for electoral campaigns. Their daily over occupied schedule hardly spares any time to take part in political activities. Even if they are somehow elected they are given fewer opportunities for training and development whereas their access to funds for development projects is misused²¹ Because politics is increasingly becoming commercialized needing more financial resources to participate, whereas women lack access to and ownership of productive resources, hence have a limited scope to play a political role; therefore as compared to women having better economic status and participation, economically dependent women are always more oppressed.²² According to Global Gender Gap Report 2014, Pakistan is to be found at 141 positions amongst 142 countries regarding general sexual orientation fairness file; while it is on the same position as for as the matter related to the economic participation and opportunity. In case of women's political empowerment, Pakistan occupies 85th position among 142th countries.²³ Since the decision-making power is the sole property of men hence it is very difficult for women to take up and execute gender sensitive approaches moreover they are not provided sufficient funds for the

and Social Development (2000). [Accessed 10th September 2012].

Available at:

http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Country_Briefing_Papers/Women_in_Pakistan/default.asp#contents

²¹Mariam Sohail, "Women Empowerment and Economic Development -An Exploratory Study in Pakistan," *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (2014): 210.

²²Bari and Pal, "Country Briefing Paper: Women in Pakistan,": 5.

²³World Economic Forum, "The Global Gender Gap Report," (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2014). (The Global Gender Gap Index was first introduced by the world economic Fourm in 2006 as a frame work for capturing the magnitude of gender based and tracking their progress. The index benchmarks national gender gap on economic, political education and health criteria.

same.²⁴ Women get less paid jobs as compared to those jobs which are assigned to men nevertheless they are well qualified for some jobs.²⁵ Pakistan is amongst the countries that have the lowest level of participation rate of women in the labor force; in contrast with men participation rate is 70.1 percent and women have 19.1 percent, this huge gap indicates that Pakistan is a society wherein restrictions are imposed on women's paid job.²⁶ According to a report of the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap 2013, Pakistan ranked 134th out of the 135th countries amongst the worst places for women in the world but as a better state than the neighbouring countries like India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka regarding women situation, same as in 2013, for the political empowerment of women, Pakistan ranked 64th position out of 136th countries in the world.²⁷ Literacy rate is an indicator of the treatment meted out to the women. Among South Asian countries Pakistan has the lower literacy rate i.e. 49.9 per cent only. In Pakistan literacy rate among women is 35.2 per cent in big towns while it come down to 25 per cent in villages. When measured in the rural areas enrollments in girl's school is dropped from 55 per cent to 25 per cent. The reasonable level of women's socio-economic and political empowerment in Pakistan is still awaited.²⁸

The present study helps to investigate the problem that various socio-cultural constraints resisting women for getting political empowerment and also evaluates the role of

²⁴Augusto Lopez-Claros and Saadia Zahidi, "Women's Empowerment: Measuring the Global Gender Gap," *Geneva Switzerland World Economic Forum* (2005): 5.

²⁵M. Lakshmi Narasaiah, *Women and Microcredit* (New Delhi: Sonali Publications, 2004), 50-75.

²⁶Ricardo Hausmann, Laura D'Andrea Tyson and Saadia Zahidi, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2012* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2012), 4.

²⁷Neha Ansari, "Global Gender Gap Report 2013: Pakistan Second Worst in Gender Equality," *The Express Tribune*, October 26, 2013. Available online at: <tribune.com.pk/story/622688/~1oba1--2013-pakistan-second-worst-in-gender-equality/ (last accessed: 3.1.20 14).

²⁸Amna Latif. "A Critical Analysis of School Enrollment and Literacy Rates of Girls and Women in Pakistan," *Educational Studies* 45, no. 5 (2009): 424-439.

empowered women (their meaningful and appropriate representation at local bodies) in the context of change take place in Pakistan in general and of the southern Punjab and Multan district in particular.

Objectives of the Study

The study has explicit objectives and specific time period from 1999 to 2009. The central objective of this investigation is

- To identify various socio-cultural (social structure) factors that keep women suppressed and restricted for getting political empowerment.
- To explore the influence of religious factors resisting women's political empowerment.
- To investigate the influence of patriarchy and economic factors as constraint in a way of women's political empowerment.
- To determine political factors that influence women's political empowerment
- To suggest policy recommendations as to how women's socio-cultural constraints can be minimized.

This study does not claim to be the final verdict rather it is just an attempt to contribute somewhat an original analysis in its merit to the issues of women's political empowerment which may provide ground to the further researchers in this field.

Hypothesis of the Study

The following assumptions have been made as hypothesis to prove whether those can be accepted or not from the results:

- Whether or not socio-cultural constraints have close association with women's political empowerment?
- Whether or not religious factors resisting women's political empowerment?
- Whether or not patriarchy, economic dependency and feudalism as constraint factor prevent women's access to political institutions and political empowerment?
- Whether or not political factors influence women's political empowerment?

Universe of the Study

The present research was conducted within the area marked as four tehsils of the Multan district i.e. Multan Sadar, Shujabad and Jalalpur Pirwala and Multan Cantonment, hence the Multan district can be termed as our research universe. (It is pertinent to mention here that in Cantonment board no local bodies' elections were held from 1999-2009. The competent authority, Government of Pakistan (Ministry of Defense) is competent to nominate the members of the board keeping in view the population ratio. As per Cantonment act 1924, the Station Commander of the Cantonment area was to be president of the board by Ex-Offico, whereas one vice president was to be elected from the elected body. In Cantonment Board Multan, elections were held after the gap of 17 years and Mr. Humayun Kabir was elected as vice chairman on 02 Oct, 2015).

Sampling Size

The selection of a research sample has important consequences for the validity of research findings (Vaus, 2001). A small set of cases or units a researcher selects from a large pool and generalizes to the population (Neuman, 1997:240). As far as the data related to the local bodies during 2001-05 and 2005-09, we have selected (N=1000 respondents) from structural political local bodies of Multan district form N1=100 Nazim/Naib Nazim, N2=150 male general councilors, N3=150 lady councilors, N4=300 male voters and N5=300 female voters respectively have been selected from the list of elected from urban rural union councils of three tehsils (Shujabad, Jalalpur Pirwala and Multan Sadar) of Multan district during 2001-05 and 2005-09 local bodies elections, whereas the total number of Nazim/Naib Nazim, male and female general councilors was 132, 864, and 406 respectively, whereas total numbers of registered voters was 21,13,892, which could be further classified as 11,34,593 and 979, 299 male and female registered voters respectively.

Data Collection Method

This study is basically the combination of both qualitative (in form of description) and quantitative (in form of tables, frequencies and percentages) approaches of social science, because these approaches not only facilitate the researcher for developing better vision of the phenomena but also provides ground for comparing finding obtained (Nachias & Nachias, 1992:15-17). For the collection of primary data, survey has been used as the major tool of research; hence information was gathered through a five likert-type 1. Strongly Agree, 2. Agree, 3. Disagree, 4. Strongly Disagree. 5. Undecided, A semi-structural questionnaire (open ended) was developed on the basis of daily life of personal experience knowledge about how women have to face different socio-cultural constraints for getting political empowerment. Some information regarding women's political empowerment and respondents were taken from office of concerned union councils, DCO offices (district coordinating offices). During conducting survey local leadership and some educated people helped the researcher to a great extent. The gathered information was examined through applying SPSS version-21 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) with the application of Chi-square test for validity of hypothesis.

Findings and Data Analysis

Results analysis of the study has been prepared under different heading which is suitable according to the objective of research topic.

Socio-Cultural Constraints to Women's Political Empowerment:

The purpose of the present study was to find out how socio-cultural factors become constraints to women's political empowerment generally in southern Punjab and particularly in the Multan district. In addition it is highlighted that socio-cultural structure of Multan district is extremely male dominated that plays a major role of constraints in women's

political empowerment and discriminates between the both sexes in many aspects of life.

Table. 1: FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS TO WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

Socio-Cultural Constraints	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	Undecided	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Gender biased Social Structure	156	536	206	102	0	69.2	69.2	89.2
Family oppose the women to participate in socio-cultural activities	231	563	137	69	0	79.4	79.4	93.1
Stereo type image of women	320	463	119	70	0	78.3	78.3	81.1
Woman's multiple liabilities	270	500	169	41	21	77.2	77.2	79.1
Social taboos, superstitions, unhealthy traditions and customs	334	462	156	48	0	79.6	79.6	95.2
Religious Misinterpretation of women (by the clergy in Muslim society)	334	434	150	38	44	76.8	76.8	96.2
Strick Purdah system (veil)	242	425	245	32	56	66.7	66.7	72.3
Patriarchal system	206	371	260	157	6	55.7	55.7	84.3
Illiteracy and ignorance about women's rights and duties in the context of politics	383	452	75	31	59	83.5	83.5	89.4
Religion (Islam) adversely effected women's socio-political mobility	536	96	245	123	0	63.2	63.2	87.7

Source: Field Data

The following table 1 shows that in gender biased social structure of Multan district out of 1000 (100 percent) respondents 536 (53.6 percent), 156 (15.6 percent), 206 (20.6 percent) and 102 (10.2 percent) were agreed and strongly agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively which indicates that the respondents who agreed and strongly agreed believed that the women did not enjoy equal status

with men in real life because social structure strongly discourages women's political empowerment; while those who disagreed and strongly disagreed believed that men were, by nature, made superior to women, who were not only physically stronger and earned better living than women but also had a great sense of power to deal with the public and private matters. Whereas 563 (56.3 percent), 231 (23.1 percent), 137 (13.7) and 69 (6.9 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively which indicates that most of the family members unanimously opposed the women participation in socio-cultural activities and believed that they did not enjoy equal status with men in real life. In addition to this, 463 (46.3 percent) 320 (32.0 percent), 119 (11.9 percent), 70 (7.0 percent) and 28 (2.8 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed and remained undecided respectively which indicates that women did not enjoy equal status with men in real life and social structure strongly discourages women's political empowerment. In this context 500 (50.0 percent), 270 (27.0 percent), 168 (16.8 percent), 41 (4.1 percent) and 21 (2.1 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed and undecided respectively which indicates that in the opinion of 77 percent respondents, woman's multiple liabilities undermine her political role, while rest of them disagreed, strongly disagreed or remained undecided. As the data reveals that 462 (46.2 percent), 334 (33.4 percent), 260 (26.0 percent), 157 (15.7 percent) and 6 (.6 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed and undecided respectively which indicates that social taboos, superstitions, unhealthy traditions and customs do obstructs women's political empowerment. Simultaneously 434 (43.4 percent), 334 (33.4 percent), 150 (15.0 percent), 38 (3.8 percent) and 44 (4.4 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed and undecided respectively which indicates that the majority of respondents believe that the customary laws based on religious interpretations also restrict women's political empowerment. Furthermore data shows that 425 (42.5 percent), 242 (24.2 percent), 245 (24.5 percent), 32 (.3.2 percent) and 56 (.5.6 percent) agreed, strongly agreed,

disagreed, strongly disagreed and remained undecided respectively which indicates that majority of respondents endorsed that strict purdah system (veil) does have negative impacts on women political participation and empowerment. It is obvious from the collected data that in traditional patriarchal 371 (37.1 percent), 206 (20.6 percent), 260 (26.0 percent), 157 (15.7 percent) and 6 (.6 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed and remained undecided respectively which indicates that 576 respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the contents of the question. In such a run 452 (45.2 percent), 383 (38.3 percent), 75 (7.5 percent), 59 (5.9 percent) and 31 (3.1 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed and remained undecided respectively which indicates that 835 respondents agreed or strongly agreed. The data shows that out of 1000 (100 percent) respondents, 536 (53.6 percent), 96 (9.6 percent), 245 (24.5 percent) and 123 (12.3 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively which indicates that 632 respondents believed that religion (Islam) has adversely effected women's socio-political mobility. To find out the significant association between the above mentioned variables chi-square test was adopted.

Pearson Chi-Square	1650.328 ^a
Degree of Freedom	12
P-value	.000***

Resultantly, the socio-cultural constraints to women's political empowerment in the proposed hypothesis i.e. various socio-cultural constrains have close association with women's empowerment which has been judged by chi-square and the results show that there is a significant relationship among the variables; hence the null hypothesis is adopted for these variables. $P=.000^{**}<.05$, which shows that the result of the given variables is highly significant and the association between various socio-cultural constrains and decision making, social mobility and control over resources to women's political empowerment is coherent.

Economic Constraints to women's Political Empowerment:

Economic possession is considered as one of embellishing privileges in social life, personality development of the individual and emancipation of social status. The present study indicates some economic constraints regarding women's political empowerment in the Multan district. There exist a clear disparity between man and woman at the economic level where women are restricted to take part in empowerment and development. In this session of analysis a set of questions were put to the respondents to test how extent do economic dependency factors influence women's political empowerment.

Table. 2: FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS TO WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

Economic Constraints	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	Undecided	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Economic dependency of women	207	388	245	160	0	59.5	59.5	84.0
Ownership of family income	251	427	275	47	0	67.8	67.8	95.3
Spend their income independently	279	462	123	136	0	74.1	74.1	86.4
Economic resources essential for political Participation or contest the election	150	625	133	92	0	77.5	77.5	90.8
Male control over decision-making process in domestic and political spheres	209	387	214	185	5	59.6	59.6	81.5

Source: Field Data

The above table 2 explicitly explain that out of 1000 (100 percent) respondents 388 (38.8 percent), 207 (20.7 percent), 245 (24.5 percent) and 160 (16.0 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively which indicates that the feedback related to 595 respondents was affirmative. The table elucidate 427 (42.7 percent), 251 (25.1 percent), 275 (27.5 percent) and 47 (4.7 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed

respectively which indicates that 678 respondents confirmed that ownership of family income and finance are generally in male hands. In addition to this respondents, 462 (46.2 percent) 279 (27.9 percent), 123 (12.3 percent) and 136 (13.6 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively which indicates that 741 respondents endorsed that earning women are not free to spend their personal income on their own. About 625 (62.5 percent), 150 (15.0 percent), 133 (13.3 percent) and 92 (9.2 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively which indicates that the answer from 775 respondents was positive. While on the other hand 387 (38.7 percent), 209 (20.9 percent), 214 (21.4 percent), 185 (18.5 percent) and 5 (.5 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed and undecided respectively. 596 respondents agreed or strongly agreed which indicates that handsome majority of the respondents endorsed the proposition. To find out the significant association between the above mentioned variables chi-square test was adopted

Pearson Chi-Square	2653.416 ^a
Degree of Freedom	16
P-value	.000***

Resultantly, the economic constraints to women's political empowerment in the proposed hypothesis i.e. patriarchy and economic constraints have close association with women's political empowerment which has been judged by chi-square and the results show that there is a significant relationship among the variables; hence the null hypothesis is adopted for these variables. $P=.000^{**}<.05$, which shows that the result of the given variables is highly significant and the association between economic and decision making, social mobility and control over resources to women's political empowerment is coherent.

Political Constraints to women's Political Empowerment

According to the report of United Nation Development Program all over the globe, employment and political activities are referred to sex and gender where men are responsible

and are assigned the superior position and while women are not supposed to have same. Women, therefore, are not ready to take part in country's politics. The political structure of is mainly headed by patriarchal and male dominated at local, regional and national level in the area under discussion and women are comparatively speaking quite invisible on the political scene. This means the number of women who hold important elective and administrative positions is extremely low. In this context table 3 provide us to make some useful comments on this question.

Table. 3: FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS TO WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

Political Constraints	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	Undecided	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Women are empowered to initiate political activities	179	341	280	188	12	52.0	52.0	81.2
Politics is regarded as men's concern	267	519	173	0	32	79.5	79.5	82.7
Women should strive for some political career	231	399	259	111	0	63.0	63.0	88.9
Easy access to the membership of any political party	129	306	476	93	5	44.0	44.0	90.7
Political process at union council level is conducive for the process of women's political empowerment	436	334	168	41	21	79.61	79.1	95.9
Political process at the Union Council being a primary unit had an impact on politics at the national	406	312	164	118	0	71.8	71.8	88.2
1/3 representation of women at local government is sufficient for enhancement of their political empowerment	272	129	367	232	0	40.1	40.1	76.8

women when assigned some political tasks can perform better than men	185	280	386	149	0	46.5	46.5	85.1
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Source: Field Data

On observing the above table 3 we came to know that out of 1000 (100 percent) respondents, 341 (34.1 percent), 179 (17.9 percent), 280 (28.0 percent), 188 (18.8 percent) and 12 (1.2 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed strongly disagreed and remained undecided respectively which indicates that more than 50 percent i.e. 520 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. While explaining the presence of gender discrimination in politics the data shows that out of 1000 (100 percent) respondents 519 (51.9 percent), 276 (27.6 percent), 173 (17.3 percent) and 32 (3.2 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed and undecided respectively. 795 respondents confirmed the hypothesis.

Furthermore, out of 1000 (100 percent) respondents, 399 (39.9 percent), 231 (23.1 percent), 259 (25.9 percent) and 111 (11.1 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively; hence 630 respondents agreed or strongly agreed. It was founded in the study that out of 1000 (100 percent) respondents 467 (46.7 percent), 93 (9.3 percent), 306 (30.6 percent) , 129 (12.9 percent) and 5 (.5 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed and remained undecided respectively which indicates that 560 of them agreed or strongly agreed. It was explored in the study that out of 1000 (100 percent) respondents, 436 (43.6 percent), 334 (33.4 percent), 188 (18.8 percent), 41 (4.1 percent) and 21 (2.1 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed and remained undecided respectively which indicates that union council level proved to be the first step for the political awareness of women in the opinion of 770 respondents. This study also revealed that out of 1000 (100 percent) respondents, 406 (40.6 percent), 312 (31.2 percent), 164 (16.4 percent) and 118 (11.8 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed and remained undecided respectively

which indicates that more than 70 percent i.e. 718 either agreed or strongly agreed with the contention. It was explored in the present study that out of 1000 (100 percent) respondents, 367 (36.7 percent), 232 (23.2 percent), 272 (27.2 percent) and 129 (12.9 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively; which indicates that 599 respondents answered in affirmative. It was also founded out that 386 (38.6 percent), 149 (14.9 percent), 280 (28.0 percent) and 185 (18.5 percent) agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Some 535 respondents endorsed the contention. To find out the significant association between the above mentioned variables chi-square test was adopted

Pearson Chi-Square	1441.738 ^a
Degree of Freedom	12
P-value	.000***

Resultantly, the political constraints to women's political empowerment in the proposed hypothesis i.e. political factors have close association with women's political empowerment which has been judged by chi-square and the results show that there is a significant relationship among the variables; hence the null hypothesis is adopted for these variables. $P=.000^{**}<.05$, which shows that the result of the given variables is highly significant and the association between political constraints and decision making, social mobility and control over resources to women's political empowerment is coherent

Conclusion

In light of the objective of the study following conclusion can be drawn on the basis of empirical analysis. The present study investigated that women's political empowerment is tight with complex and intertwined factors. The socio-cultural factors have a straight and direct influence on women's outdoor mobility, decision-making (in both domestic and political affairs), and control over resources and women were not allowed to step-out of their houses without taking permission of their male family member

whether they might be father, brother, husband, father-in-law or son, as it was thought against the women honour. Women's participation in practical politics are considering as a conflicting concept which possesses limitations on women's effective participation and empowerment. The study concluded that Multan district is a land of traditions, where socio-cultural norms have a strong control over the lives of individuals, women constitute the most important but neglected section of the society. The fixed and rigid set of traditional norms and values are generally associated with the male-dominated society which does not allow men to treat women as an equal human being. The data also showed that political consciousness among women as an important component of achieving their rights and duties. The study revealed that economic factors play a very important role in women's participation in politics because women have to face serious challenges of financial resources such as money and vehicles, without these resources women cannot launch or sustain election campaign. Furthermore, from a political point of view, it was also concluded that women have to face gender biased political system where the male has all the authorities regarding decision-making and have control over all resources. Even the women have been allowed to work yet the equal to man but women were not permitted to take decisions themselves and were highly dependent on their male partners and colleagues. Although women have also been making full participation to socio-economic and political fields at home, local, provincial and national levels and are now more mobilized than before, as a matter of fact, their real and significant political participation is still missing. So it is a need to empower them at an institutional and individual level. It is also concluded that women cannot get equal opportunities in politics and could not become more empowered until and unless socio-cultural values are not changed.

1.10. Suggestions and Recommendations:

For resolution of the problem following suggestions and recommendations were observed to minimize socio-cultural constraints to women's political empowerment and enable them to participate completely in the mainstream of society; firstly to empower women in every fields of life with special emphasis on politics. They need to acquire an equal right to education because of the fact it's a basic human right of every individual, and an educated woman is much more likely to aware about her rights and to take correct decisions and certainly, this awareness leads her closer to political empowerment. Secondly, political education has to be made an obligatory part of a syllabus even at the primary level and people need to take it as their obligation to get involved in political affairs of the state. All discriminatory laws, traditions and cultural practices that create disturbance into women's political empowerment need to be abolished by using the appropriate authorities. Thirdly, religion misinterpretation in term of women's political empowerment which increases gender gap and also provides maximum hold to male over socio-economic and political resources, by involving religious scholars through religious speeches, lectures and seminars; awareness regarding women political empowerment shall be propagated in a way change the mental horizon of the male. Fourthly, Women ought to attain economic independence so that they can enhance their socio-cultural and economic status as an active being because economic empowerment will cause to their political empowerment. To change men's negative attitude towards women, where their contribution in different sectors like health, education, politics, economic, and religious ought to be appreciated. Whereas the number and representation of women must be increased in all decision-making bodies of federal, provincial and local levels and to curtail all the obstruction in women's access to power. For the political betterment of women it is likewise very essential for women politician as they've got the responsibility to work as trustees of the

rights of those whom they may be representing. In this regard, the role of female councilors is extremely crucial, who're working at the local level and more close to the people. Female voters should vote for those who are in favors of their empowerment. The government should be provided constitutional guarantees for the protection of women at all level of governance.