

Gender Studies

Gender and Governance

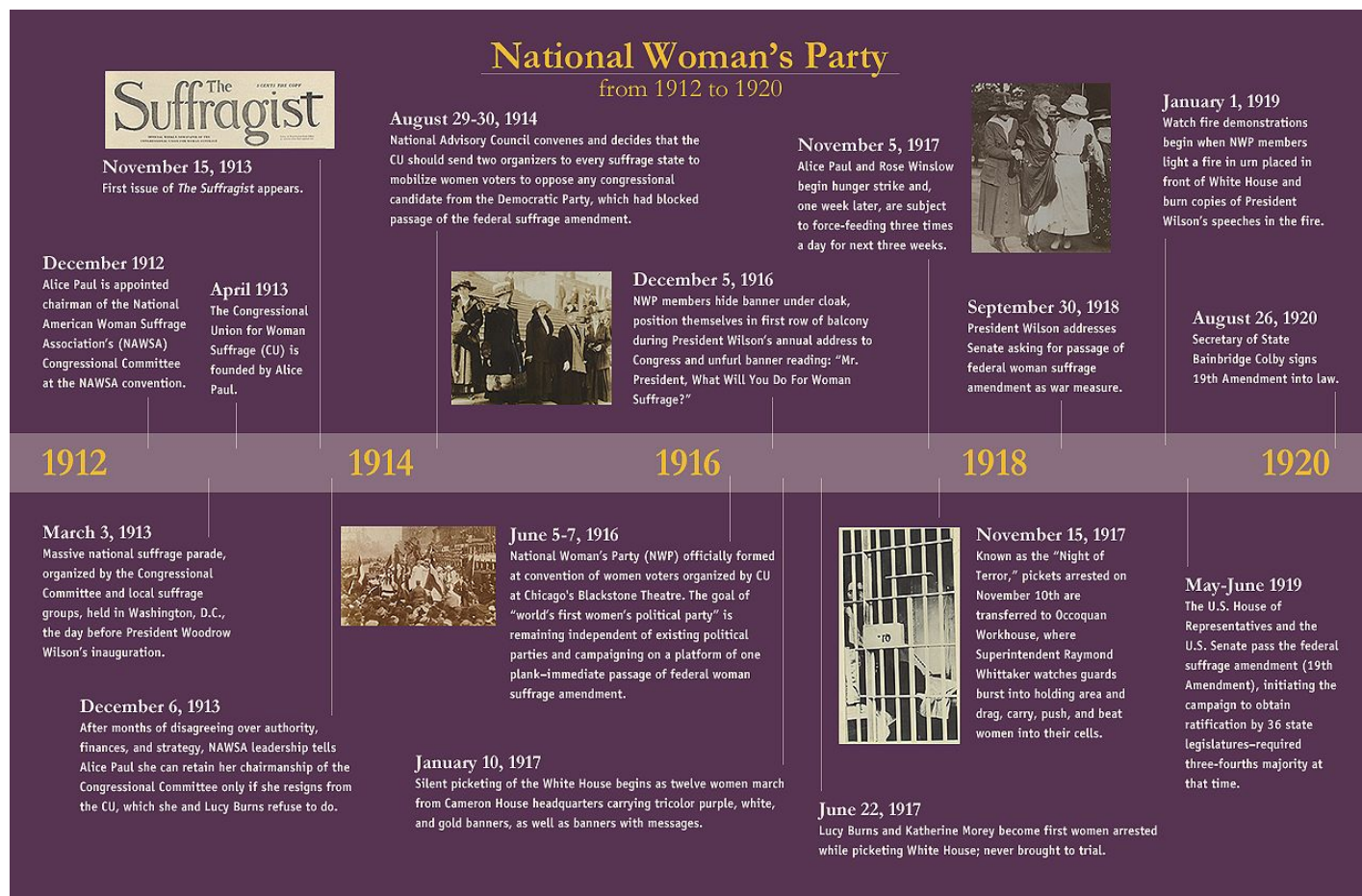
1. Defining Governance

- a. The word “governance” came from the Latin verb “*gubernare*,” or more originally from the Greek word “*kubernaein*,” which means “to steer.”
Basing on its etymology, governance refers to the manner of steering or governing, or of directing and controlling, a group of people or a state.
- b. Governance is essentially related to politics, in that politics is often defined as the art of governance. Nevertheless, they are distinct from each other in the sense that politics is broader than governance. Governance is commonly defined as the *exercise of power or authority by political leaders for the well-being of their country’s citizens or subjects*.
- c. Good governance is understood through its eight indicators or characteristics:
 - i. Participatory: Participation means active involvement of all affected and interested parties in the decision-making process.;
 - ii. Rule of Law: Rule of law demands that the people and the civil society render habitual obedience to the law. It also demands that the government acts within the limits of the powers and functions prescribed by the law. ;
 - iii. Effective and Efficient: Effectiveness (meeting the needs) and efficiency (proper utilization of resources) must necessarily go together to ensure the best possible results for the community.;
 - iv. Transparent; In legal terms, it means that information on matters of public concern are made available to the citizens or those who will be directly affected
 - v. Responsive; Responsiveness means that institutions and processes serve all stakeholders in a timely and appropriate manner.

- vi. **Equitable and Inclusive;**Equity and inclusiveness means that all the members of the society, especially the most vulnerable ones or the grassroots level, must be taken into consideration in policy-making. Everyone has a stake in the society and no one should feel alienated from it.
- vii. **Consensus Oriented;** Governance is consensus oriented when decisions are made after taking into consideration the different viewpoints of the actors of the society.
- viii. **Accountability;**Accountability means answerability or responsibility for one's action

2. Suffragist Movement

See previous notes



Women Gain Votes (Some Even Matter)

Kuwait's Parliament granted full voting rights to women last week, a surprising reversal: two weeks earlier, a similar measure was defeated. Women's suffrage has been entwined with other struggles. Canadian women won the right to vote

in 1917 — except for native Americans. They (and native men) were denied the vote until 1960. Likewise, Australia gave most women the vote in 1902, but its aboriginal population had to wait six more decades.

New Zealand led the way with universal suffrage in 1893. Here is a timeline showing when some countries — from democracies to dictatorships — granted women the vote, and some others that have yet to do so. *BILL MARSH*



3. Gender Issues in Women as Voters

**GENERAL ELECTIONS - 2013
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TURNOUT**

PROVINCE / AREA	TOTAL NUMBER OF SEATS	RESULT DECLARED	REGISTERED MALE VOTERS	REGISTERED FEMALE VOTERS	TOTAL REGISTERED VOTERS	TOTAL VOTES POLLED	TURNOUT OF TOTAL VOTES POLLED
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	35	35	7,008,536	5,257,626	12,266,162	5,476,001	44.64%
FATAs	12	9	1,142,237	596,079	1,738,316	508,013	29.22%
Federal Capital	2	2	337,909	288,060	625,969	389,976	62.29%
Punjab	148	147	27,697,779	21,561,563	49,259,342	28,760,265	58.38%
Sindh	61	57	10,490,636	8,472,741	18,963,377	9,782,599	51.58%
Balochistan	14	13	1,915,388	1,421,274	3,336,662	1,300,628	38.97%
TOTAL:	272	263	48,592,485	37,597,343	86,189,828	46,217,482	53.62%

- Mostly women vote by the choice of the male relatives, they are expected to follow the opinion of their male relatives when it comes to their right to decide about their vote
- Lack of access of polling stations and lack of transportation poses a challenge to women's participation in electoral processes
- Politics is considered men's job, women are expected to fulfill their household gender roles.
- Women's participation as voter or active political campaigner is considered un-islamic in different spheres of District Mardan and Swabi

- e. Lack of National Identity Card restricts women from taking part in political processes.
- f. Women are not on part of the voters list.
- g. Security issues hamper females from voting
- h. Untrained polling staff and a lack of professionalism
- i. Horse Trading
- j. Disabled and elderly are not entertained
- k. Women's restricted mobility and limited access to information poses a great challenge to women's political participation.
- l. The environment of political parties and male domination within in the political parties is a huge challenge for women's participation in the political processes.
- m. More women leadership will increase women's participation and engagement in the political processes.
- n. If women are engaged and opportunities are created for women, more women will take part in the electoral and political processes

4. Gender Issues in Women as Candidates

- a. Women are not given due credit in the form of nominations from the respective political parties. While a total of 3.5% of women candidates was nominated by the political parties, 96.5% of the candidates were men.
- b. The low level of representation of women in the election indicates low confidence on the part of political parties towards them, which contrasts starkly with the level of political activism seen among women.
- c. Women have been considered as a passive vote bank, and political parties tend to use them mostly for representative functions at public gatherings, meetings, and campaigns.
- d. There is a tokenism in including women's wings and women workers, but no real and actual changes have been made to state that political parties actively support women. Women do not hold senior positions in the parties, are not always members in key committees, including decision making committees. All political parties are primarily male dominated and there is a hesitation and reluctance to offer positions and space to women

- e. Structural discrimination in party organizations has influenced women's representation when it comes to the contestation of elections
- f. The environment of political parties and male domination within in the political parties is a huge challenge for women's participation in the political processes. More women leadership will increase women's participation and engagement in the political processes
- g. It is considered inappropriate for women to take part in the public political campaigns.
- h. Women don't have access to the political activities and leaders of their communities.
- i. Women's participation as voter or active political campaigner is considered un-islamic.
- j. There is a capacity gap. Many women are at a loose end without the capacity and without requisite training from their political parties or through the Government. As a result, they remain silent and non-participatory. It is necessary for political parties to firstly set a standard and criteria for women whom they nominate on reserved seats and secondly to provide them adequate training and support for their work as legislators.
- k. Dynastic politics.
- l. Financial constraints as women are not funded.
- m. Political victimisation of women is rampant.
- n. Religious issues question the leadership capabilities of females.

5. Gender Issues in Women as Representatives

- a. They are not respected.
- b. Sexual Harassment
- c. Character assassination
- d. Not respected as they have reserved seats

- e. In many cases, their funds are taken away from them and used by other party members, leaving them unable to work in their districts or on issues they wish to focus on.
- f. without a sizable majority in the legislative bodies, they are bound to constantly negotiate with their male colleagues and senior party members for their support. It is akin to campaigning, when these women have to go 'door to door' to ask for support.

6. Impact of Political Quota in Pakistan

Women's reserved seats remain a critical element in improving women's political participation. With approximately half of the world's population and approximately half of Pakistan's population, consisting of women, it is essential to have women's presence and voices in the assemblies through their chosen representatives. There is no denying the fact that democratic political systems have always been patriarchal and have excluded women's presence and participation. This has been reflective of society's own biases against women participating in public and political life. The 17% quota for women currently in place in the Senate, National and Provincial Assemblies in Pakistan has nevertheless had positive results with women continuing to create spaces for themselves with actively participating in legislative functions despite all obstacles. It is important to keep this momentum going and further support and confidence to be placed in women to allow them to transcend into general politics.

This issue has been time and again picked up at international level with specific clauses in the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action amongst others.

The main objective of reserved seats for women in Pakistan is to correct the historical imbalance in a democratic political system. The core idea is to put in place temporary special measures mandating the recruitment and inclusion of a minimum number of women in legislative assemblies to ensure women's representation and the raising of women's voices and issues in the assemblies. It is envisaged that reserved seats for

women will pave the way for women to enter into direct politics with the support and trust of the electorate. Women's reserved seats have been a priority objective and demand of the women's movement in Pakistan.

Demand from 33% from 17% reserved seats

Currently, 17% seats in the Senate, National and Provincial Assembly have been reserved for women on the basis of proportional representation. The original and continued demand of the women's movement is 33% reserved seats for women in all legislative assemblies: Senate, National Assembly, Provincial Assembly and local government. This would allow women to have a viable majority in legislative bodies to have a positive and actual impact in bringing and passing laws and overall gender mainstreaming. A decreased percentage results in women remaining in minority and not being able to support each other in a voting bloc and would therefore require support from male colleagues - support which is difficult to get and not forthcoming for women's right issues.

It is extremely unfortunate to see that the reserved seats for women in local governments have been lessened in all provinces. The previous national law on local governments made an allocation of 33% women in local government. This proved to be successful with the large amounts of women participation and successful performances. It is difficult to comprehend why each province has since then reduced the reserved seats for women.

Analysis of women in legislative bodies in 2013 election:

While the number of women in the legislative bodies in 2002 and 2008 remained steady, there has in fact been a decrease of women's representation in 2013 by 6 women. This means that instead of a hoped for increase of women successfully winning elections on general seats, their chances have in fact reduced.

It becomes clear that the need for reserved seats is as important as ever. In terms of our social environment, Pakistan has gone backwards instead of forward. There has been more hostility towards women; there is an onslaught of extremism as a whole. This makes society more dangerous for women, with women more vulnerable as

politicians when they go for campaigning and their work; as public figures, in the general mounting discrimination against them and increasing violence - to which women are more prone to. The decrease of women in the legislative assemblies, the reduction of women's reserved seats in local government and the decrease of women in senior positions such as ministers, speaker, advisors and cabinet members in the federal and provincial governments are all symptoms and evidences of the backward movement of Pakistani society in the context of gender equality and reforms. With this environment, reserved seats for women are extremely important and must be increased!