

Received : 15 June 2024, Accepted: 29 August 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47059/rr.vx9i2.196>

SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS ON WOMEN'S TURNOUT IN NA-22 OF DISTRICT MARDAN IN THE GENERAL ELECTIONS 2018

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Abstract

This study explores the socio-cultural impacts that influenced women's turnout in NA-22 of District Mardan during the 2018 General Election. Even though vote is the legal rights of women, but social norms, family influence, religious, and political consciousness all had a big impact on women turnout in elections. This study also examines the obstacles and difficulties women encounter, such as polling station accessibility, societal perceptions of female voting, and the influence of local political culture on women's political participation. There have been advancements and difficulties in guaranteeing equal voting rights for women in District Mardan. In the rural areas of Pakistan, women's voting behavior is still influenced by family dynamics, ingrained gender norms, and limited access to political education, even despite constitutional guarantees for female participation. But still, socio-cultural norms like limiting women's freedom of movement, male-dominated culture, male decision-making authority, and traditional religious interpretations make it difficult for women to participate in electoral politics in NA-22 of Mardan.

Women find it challenging to participate in elections, to cast their vote due to socio-cultural norms such as restrictions on their freedom of movement, traditional norms and values and religious interpretations. This study illustrates the extent of these challenges as well as the gradual but steady progress made toward women's political empowerment. It is crucial to understand Mardan's socio-cultural context, it is needed to overcome all those challenges which affected women turnout in

elections and to enhance women turnout in elections. This study will analyze socio-cultural factors affecting women's voting turnout in NA-22 of District Mardan in the context of the 2018 General Elections. The concept of women's electoral participation was investigated and evaluated using a range of closed-ended questions. Further investigations have primarily concentrated on several factors that will clearly demonstrate the gender gap in women's turnout of NA-22 in District Mardan concerning the 2018 General Elections. Frequencies and percentages have been calculated for each question. Every one of these questions has been further examined using a variety of independent variables, including age, education, urban/rural, marital status, and occupation.

Keywords: Factors, Socio-Cultural, Turnout, affects, District Mardan, General Elections

Introduction

Due to socio-cultural norms and values, women's turnout is extremely low globally. Given that women make up the same population as men but participate at a lower rate than men, these kinds of barriers have a negative impact on electoral politics and the democratic process. One major socio-cultural factor affecting women's voting participation in NA-22 of District Mardan is the patriarchal family structure, where male family members typically hold significant decision-making power. In these kinds of households, voting is usually decided by male family heads, and women's participation is either prohibited or discouraged. Women were prohibited from voting at polling stations by most social norms and traditional values.

Socio-cultural factors have a big impact on women's voting turnout in NA-22 of District Mardan. The area is dominated by patriarchal ideals and traditional gender norms that frequently restrict women's ability to engage in public and political life, including voting rights. Women's political involvement is viewed as secondary in many households, where they are expected to prioritize household duties. Their reliance on male family members for financial support has further limited their participation in political processes. Furthermore, women's awareness of political rights and the significance of voting is hampered by limited educational opportunities.

This type of violation is more common in the rural parts of Mardan, where traditional tribal customs have a significant influence. Even if a woman is legally allowed to vote, these circumstances have discouraged her from exercising that right or even forbid her from the turnout in elections.

Women's involvement in electoral politics has historically been low because of these socio-cultural factors such as Pashtun traditions, family dynamics, religious interpretations, and other factors have had a significant impact on the voting behavior of women in rural areas of KP and District Mardan. The 2018 General Election were seen as a turning point for women's participation because of reforms, but many women are still disenfranchised due to traditional beliefs. The District of Mardan is steeped in Pashtun tribal customs and conservative cultural norms.

These norms define social roles, particularly for women, who are often perceived as limited to domestic responsibilities, thereby limiting their freedom of movement and access to public life. These cultural traditions have a big influence on women's political participation, as the 2018 General Elections showed. Despite Pakistan's constitutional framework guaranteeing equal rights for women, the intersection of gender, politics, and tradition norms continues to influence women's voting behavior in rural areas. In addition, there are educational obstacles, gender norms, familial and societal pressures, and the underrepresentation of women in political leadership roles. Additionally, the obstacle in their way and the relative inaccessibility of polling stations in rural areas make it difficult for many women to actively participate in elections and to use their right to vote.

Literature Review

The literature has been reviewed to highlight all those socio-cultural norms and traditions which affected women political involvement in the electoral politics. These include articles, research papers, library books and MPhil PhD published and unpublished thesis.

To be strengthened and represented in parliament, women must participate in electoral politics. In this sense, education is essential for empowering all the people without discrimination of male and

female and raising awareness of their rights, obligations, and social standing. (Ahmad and Bilal, 2018).

According to the literature, patriarchal systems and conservative attitudes toward women restrict women's autonomy, social participation, and right to vote in many regions of Pakistan, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, where Mardan is situated. This has a negative impact on women's political engagement. Due to socio-economic factors that impede their political participation, women face obstacles and challenges in terms of turnout and participation in electoral politics globally. The worldwide representation of women in the 2008 General Election was 17.7%. The fact that women are underrepresented in politics and have very less opportunity to cast their votes and participate in electoral politics (Bano, 2009).

In electoral politics, women's representation and participation are notably low. Their participation in politics is very limited because they are socially and economically inferior. Globally, women are incredibly under-represented in electoral politics. Although women's representation and participation in politics are guaranteed by the constitution of Pakistan, they continue to encounter structural and cultural obstacles, but still, there needs to be some improvement to increase women's participation in politics (Bari, 2005).

In electoral politics, women's representation and participation are notably low. They participate in politics to a limited extent and are socially and economically inferior. Globally, women are incredibly underrepresented in electoral politics. Although women's electoral participation in politics is guaranteed by the Pakistani constitution, they continue to encounter structural and cultural obstacles (Bari, 2005).

To increase women's political participation and representation in all decision-making bodies, including parliamentary body budgets, manifest committees, and central and provincial executive committees, the Act of 2017 was put into effect. In addition to providing training, support, and funding for female candidates to get ready for elections, the commission has recommended more efficient voter education for women (NCSW, 2005).

It has called on the ECP to prepare strengthened voter education information and facilitation plans, take corrective action for a foolproof result transmission system, and increase women's electoral participation (Imran, 2018).

The conservative atmosphere of Pashtun, women usually give more weight to the opinions of male family members when casting their ballots. However, most of women do not understand the importance of voting. Furthermore, religious interpretations in rural areas often reinforce patriarchal views. The community's general perception of female voting participation as socially unacceptable is shaped by this cultural influence outside of the family. (Noreen and Irfan,2018)

In rural areas women frequently experience obstacles that keep them from exercising their right to vote. In addition, family obligations and constraints make it difficult for them to vote in elections. In Pakistan, particularly in regions like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, family influence plays a significant role in determining women's political participation. Women are expected to follow the decisions made by their male family members, and political decision-making is often perceived as a male domain. (Khan ,2017).

In KP, women are subject to more strict cultural norms and frequently have their political decisions influenced by male family members or local tribal elders. Their election turnout is hampered by social norms and values. Cultural and religious conventions have a big impact on their turnout. The political participation is often perceived as a male privilege or obligation in male-dominated households. Despite an increase in the number of women in the district of Mardan, they are still not in the positions in electoral politics as they require (Anwar, 2019).

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been working to increase the number of women who cast ballots. However, research on these programs' effectiveness in places like Mardan is still ongoing. Strong cultural and social resistance is a common occurrence for campaigns aimed at raising political consciousness among rural women (Gul, 2019).

Research Method

The research method is based on both primary and secondary sources, such as books, articles, MPhil, PhD thesis, magazines, newspapers, journals, and the internet.

Universe of the Study

The scope of the study is the women of NA-22 in District Mardan in the General Election 2018. The sampling frame is the quantitative approach of female registered voters in NA-22 of District Mardan. The total number of female registered voters was 161820 in the 2018 General Elections.

Population of the Study

The population for this study is delimited to the females of NA-22 of District Mardan in the General Election 2018. The total population of female of District Mardan according to 2017 census was 1172215 and registered voters of female in NA-22 in the General Election 2018 was 161820. The chosen population has contributed valuable information regarding different factors that affect the turnout of women. The study population of this research is women from Village Council Gujjar Garhi Rural (1), and Neighborhood Council Pat Baba (1) in NA-22 of District Mardan in the General Election 2018.

Identification of Variables

Dependent Variables: Women turnout in the General Election 2018 in NA-22 of District Mardan.

Independent Variables: Socio-cultural variables.

Sampling Size

Sample size is chosen by applying Taro Yamane's Formula. The sample size is 400 respondents. Convenience methods and non-probability sampling have been used for data collection. The numbers of women registered vote were 161820 in the General Election 2018 in NA-22 of District Mardan. The number of registered participants is taken and applied on the Taro Yamane formula.

Were,

“n” shows the sampling size

“N” shows the total population

“e” shows the margin error

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$
$$n = 161820 / 1 + 161820(0.05)^2$$
$$n = 161820 / 161821 (0.0025)$$
$$n = 161820$$
$$n = 399.99$$
$$n = 400$$

According to the Yamane formula, the sample size is 400. The 400 copies of questionnaires have been distributed in the union councils for data collection

Socio-Cultural Factors and Women Turnout

Socio-cultural factors have a big impact on women's voting turnout in NA-22 of District Mardan. The area is dominated by patriarchal ideals and traditional gender norms that frequently restrict women's ability to engage in public life, including voting rights. Women's political involvement is viewed as secondary in many households, where they are expected to prioritize household duties. Furthermore, women's awareness of political rights and the significance of voting is hampered by limited educational opportunities. The socio-cultural factors that impact women's voting turnout in NA-22 of District Mardan are complex and profoundly embedded in the socio-cultural environment of the area. One important factor is the strong patriarchal system, which frequently requires male family members to make decisions, including political ones. Because their male relatives frequently make voting decisions for them, women may not have the independence to use their political right, especially in rural areas. These socio-cultural elements work together to produce major obstacles that affect women's electoral participation in NA-22 District Mardan and they did not cast vote frequently.

Socio-cultural Factors and its Impact on Women Turnout

Table 1. Responses about the socio-cultural variable of the total respondents (n=400)

Questions	Age wise%	Education wise %	U/C wise %	Marital status wise %	Occupation Wise%	Total %
Are cultural values an impediment in the way of women's electoral participation?	41.2%	44.2%	41.2%	43.5%	50%	39.5%
Is male dominance the barrier in the way of women's electoral participation?	54.9%	52.7%	64.8%	62.5%	53.8%	48.3%
Do religious factors prohibit women from casting votes?	26.2%	30.3%	23.6%	29.9%	50%	23.5%
Do Pashtunwali a barrier in the way of women's electoral participation?	52.9%	50.7%	55.8%	53.8%	50%	39.3%
Do family restrictions prohibit women to cast vote in elections?	50%	49.8%	62.3%	64.7%	60%	43.5%
Do family responsibilities prohibit women to cast vote in elections?	46.1%	33.8%	49.2%	38%	43.5%	31.8%
Do security threats impede women from casting vote casting votes in elections?	62.7%	57.8%	56.3%	61.1%	63.6%	55.5%

Does the lack of education affect women’s turnout?	71.6%	61.2%	77.4%	77.7%	100%	59.8%
Do traditional values of the society discourage women from turning out in elections?	72.5%	73.4%	72.4%	64.7%	88.3%	62.3%
Do social norms prohibit women from casting vote in elections?	35.3%	20.6%	23.6%	22.8%	29.9%	17.5%

1. Cultural Values are an Impediment in the Way of Women's Electoral Participation

Cultural values have a bad impact on women’s turnout in elections. This is due to societal expectations and norms that place women in traditional roles, limiting their autonomy and participation in public activities like voting. Cultural values are as a barrier that effected women turnout in elections, this varies depending on occupation and marital status, with working women and married women most likely to feel restricted by traditional expectations. This means that societal expectations and cultural values around District Mardan discourage and even restrict their involvement in the electoral process

In the above table the question about cultural value is an impediment on the way of women turnout were asked from the respondents “Are cultural values an impediment in the way of women electoral participation?” The data provided contains responses to various questions on the barriers women face when participating in elections, with breakdowns based on factors like age, education, urban/rural status, marital status, and based on occupation.

Explanation with respect to Age: Regarding age, 41.2% of the older respondents say that their political participation has been constrained by cultural norms.

Explanation with respect to Education: During surveyed in the education category, approximately 44.2% concur that cultural norms are barrier to women's voting rights and keep them far away from participation in elections.

Explanation with respect to Urban/Rural: According to urban/rural, approximately 41.2% of female respondents believe that cultural norms have influenced women's political participation in both urban and rural areas. This indicates that cultural values are perceived as a barrier in their voting rights.

Explanation with respect to Marital Status: Approximately 43.5% of married women said that cultural values represent a slightly greater barrier. They concurred that societal cultural norms hindered their ability to vote. Married women also concurred that their participation in public activities, such as voting, is restricted by their household and family obligations.

Explanation with respect to Occupation: Cultural values are seen as a bigger obstacle as accepted by 50% of working women. This probably illustrates the tension between the increasing public involvement of women in the workforce and traditional gender norms. Because of societal expectations about their roles in the home or community, women who work may experience more social pressure in all walks of life, including the political sphere.

2. Male dominance is a barrier in the way of women's electoral participation

In the Pashtun society male dominancy is the barrier that prohibit women from electoral participation. Most of the respondents agree that due to male dominance they are suffering from turnout, reflecting the entrenched gender inequality in many societies like the NA-22 of District Mardan, especially in urban areas and among married women. In this regard a question was asked “Is male dominance a barrier in the way of women's electoral participation?” Most of the respondents believe that male dominance is a significant barrier to women's electoral participation. This highlights the persistent influence of patriarchal structures that often control and limit

women's role in politics, particularly in regions with entrenched gender roles. The above question was further analysis based on age, education, urban/rural, marital status, and occupation based.

Explanation with respect to Age: Male dominance is cited as a barrier by older respondents (54.9%) in relation to age. More patriarchal control has been experienced by older generations, which has shaped their understanding of its continued impact on women's voting behavior.

Explanation with respect to Education: About 52.7% of women with less education believe that male dominance is a barrier. Less exposure to feminist thoughts or gender equality movements, noticing that patriarchal conventions are the cause of the deprivation of women's political rights.

Explanation with respect to Urban/Rural: Urban women (64.8%) are more likely to believe that male dominance prevents them from participating in politics than rural women. That means that while urban environments have offered more freedom than in rural areas, they have also shown more overt manifestations of male dominance, for example, in public spaces, political institutions, and workplaces.

Explanation with respect to Marital Status: Married women (62.5%) are more likely to view about male dominance as a barrier, which explains the findings. Male decision-makers have discouraged or limited women's election participation, which has reflected by traditional gender norms in families.

Explanation with respect to Occupation: About 53.8% of women respondents agreed that male dominance is the obstacle that preventing women from exercising their right to vote in elections. Besides, every aspect of their lives, including their ability to vote in elections, is being negatively impacted by the male household's restrictions.

3. Religious Factors Prohibit Women from Casting Votes

The question was asked about religious factors from the respondents “Do religious factors prohibit women from casting votes?” Religious factors are more pronounced for older, married, and rural women, suggesting that more traditional or conservative areas are likely to impose these barriers on women. This suggests that religion factor has a big impact in some areas, it is not universally

perceived as a major obstacle to electoral participation. However, for certain groups, religious interpretations or practices have restricted women's rights, including their right to vote. The above-mentioned question was further analysis based on age, education, urban/rural, marital status, and occupation.

Explanation with respect to Age: Regarding the age group, 26.2% of older female respondents agreed that religious factors pose a greater challenge. Religious factors restrict women's participation in social and political activities.

Explanation with respect to Education: In terms of education overall, 30.3% of female respondents agree that they do not vote because of their religious beliefs. Religious factors restrict their electoral participation.

Explanation with respect to Urban/Rural: An explanation regarding urban/rural areas is that 23.6% of women on union councils in both urban and rural areas believe that religious factors are a minor obstacle. In contrast to more traditional rural areas, this implies that urban areas might have easier access to a wider variety of religious interpretations, which are less restrictive.

Explanation with respect to Marital Status: Married women are more likely to perceive religious factors as a barrier to voting in elections, possibly because of the strong influence of religious norms within family structures was 29.9%.

Explanation with respect to Occupation: Regarding occupation, the explanation is that 50% of working women believe that religion is a bigger obstacle. Because of certain religious communities, women are frequently expected to put their families and household duties first, which have reduced their visibility and participation in public life, including voting.

4. Pashtunwali is a Barrier in the Way of Women's Electoral Participation

Pashtunwali is more pronounced for older, married, and rural women, suggesting that more traditional or conservative areas are likely to impose these barriers on women. In this regard the question was asked "Do Pashtunwali a barrier in the way of women's electoral participation?"

most of women believed that Pashtunwali (a code of conduct in Pashtun culture) is a barrier to women's electoral participation. This is significant in regions where Pashtun culture is prevalent, as the cultural codes have restricted women's public roles, including voting rights.

Explanation with respect to Age: The female respondents of 52.9% view about Pashtunwali is a barrier, which reflects the older generations greater adherence to Pashtunwali traditions and values, which have limited women's political participation.

Explanation with respect to Education: People with lower levels of education (50.7%) are more likely to view Pashtunwali as a barrier, because of their limited exposure to progressive concepts that question social norms of Pashtunwali prevent women from voting.

Explanation with respect to Marital Status: Pashtunwali generally upholds patriarchal control over women turnout in Pashtun societies like the areas of District Mardan, particularly in the private realm of (53.8%) married women have been affected by these norms.

Explanation with respect to Urban/Rural: Pashtunwali is perceived as a barrier by approximately 55.8% of women in both urban and rural union councils, which makes sense given that rural communities are more likely to uphold traditional cultural norms like voting and their political participation.

Explanation with respect to Occupation: Regarding occupation women surveyed, 39.3% agreed that Pashtunwali is a major barrier preventing them from participating in elections. Their ability to vote has a negative impact on this factor.

5. Family Restrictions Prohibit Women from Casting Votes in Elections

Family restrictions are seen as a major barrier, particularly for married and working women, with rural women experiencing more significant limitations due to traditional family roles. A question in this regard about family restriction was asked "Do family restrictions prohibit women from casting votes in elections?" Many women answered in favor of this question and believe that

family restrictions prevent women from voting. This reflects the strong influence of familial roles in many societies, where women have discouraged or even prevented from voting due to domestic responsibilities or family expectations. This question was further analysis based on age, education, rural/urban, marital status, and occupation.

Explanation with respect to Age: According to age-wise analysis, 50% of older respondents were more likely to view family restrictions as a barrier. This shows that older women are still expected to fulfill traditional expectations related to family and political duties during the election process.

Explanation with respect to Education: The women respondents of about 49.8% in the literate category acknowledge that the primary obstacle to their political participation in elections is the burden and limitations placed on their families. Their social and political rights in society have always been discouraged by family restrictions.

Explanation with respect to Urban/Rural: Both in urban/rural areas, 62.3% of women believes that family restrictions are a bigger obstacle, which reflects the greater influence of family control in these environments, where traditional family restrictions have prevented them from participating in electoral politics.

Explanation with respect to Marital Status: Married women of 64.7% more likely to view family constraints as a barrier. This implies that married women are more likely to be constrained by the priorities or decisions of their families, which has deterred and prevented them from participating in the political process.

Explanation with respect to Occupation: About sixty percent of working women said that family obligations prevent them from voting in elections. Family responsibilities have still restricted their time and freedom to vote, even though they are independent in their careers.

6. Family Responsibilities Prohibit Women from Casting Votes in Elections

Family responsibilities are a moderate barrier, particularly for older and rural women, as well as for those with less education. However, it's not the most dominant factor. The of female respondents believe that family responsibilities prevent them from voting. This is a significant but not overwhelming percentage, indicating that while family duties do present a challenge for some women, but it is not the most dominant barrier for the majority but less females in favor of this barrier.

Explanation with respect to Age: Approximately, 46.1% of older women respondents (such as those with more established families or traditional roles) believed that women's voting rights are restricted by family obligations. This implies that older generations are more burdened by family expectations, which prevents them from voting in elections.

Explanation with respect to Education: People who have less education, (33.8%) are more likely to view that family obligations are a hindrance in their turnout in elections. This is because traditional roles are more ingrained, and social mobility is restricted from political rights such as voting.

Explanation with respect to Urban/Rural: Family responsibilities are cited as a barrier more frequently in rural areas (49.2%) than in urban areas. Women find it more difficult to participate in elections in rural areas due to more rigid family and societal expectations.

Explanation with respect to Marital Status: According to the explanation regarding marital status Married women (38%) are more likely to view family obligations as a deterrent to voting, this is probably a result of married women having to handle more household responsibilities, which limits their capacity to engage in public life and politics.

Explanation with respect to Occupation: the occupation respondents of 43.5 percent of working women cited family obligations as a barrier, which has reflected the difficulties in juggling work, family obligations, and voting.

7. Security Threats Impede Women from Casting Votes in Elections

The question about security threats was asked from the respondents in urban and rural areas “Do security threats impede women from casting votes in elections?” the females respondents believed that security threats are a significant barrier to women’s participation in elections. These are a significant concern for all groups, with particularly high concern among working women, married women, and older individuals, highlighting the safety risks that women face in conflict-prone or unstable regions. This highlights the concern over the safety of women, especially in conflict-prone or unstable regions, affecting their willingness or ability to vote. The question was analyzed based on age, education, urban/rural, marital status, and occupation.

Explanation with respect to Age: Older adults (62.7%) are particularly concerned about security threats because they are more vulnerable to violence and conflict as they get older. A sizable percentage of literate female respondents are agreed that security risks affect their ability to cast a ballot.

Explanation with respect to Education: Those with lower levels of education (roughly 57.8%) are more likely to believe that security is a barrier, possibly because of residing in areas with more political unrest. They feel uncomfortable casting ballots in elections.

Explanation with respect to Urban/Rural: More people in rural areas (56.3%) perceive that security threats are a barrier than in urban areas. Security threats are a problem in urban areas due to a higher likelihood of politically motivated violence and civil unrest. They acknowledged that security risks affected their political participation in elections.

Explanation with respect to Marital Status: Providing an explanation in relation to marital status, married people (61.1%) are also very concerned about security risks. They are more cautious about going out in uncertain and dangerous situations because they feel a stronger sense of an insecure situation. Therefore, they feel hesitation to cast their vote in elections.

Explanation with respect to Occupation: Approximately 63.6% of working women stated that security threats are a greater obstacle, which has restricted them from voting rights. because they

are facing more public exposure, making them more vulnerable to threats. It's affected their participation in elections.

8. The lack of Education Affects Women's Turnout

In every aspect of life, education plays a vital role and creates awareness amongst women. To know about the role of education responses to the query "Does the lack of education affect women's turnout?" were gathered in NA-22 of District Mardan, people were asked to learn about the gender gaps that impact on women's voting participation. Women of NA-22 feels that lack of education is a hurdle to women's electoral participation. This shows a strong consensus that education plays a crucial role in motivating women to vote and understand the importance of civic engagement. Lack of education is a major barrier, especially in rural and married populations, showing that education plays a crucial role in encouraging women's electoral participation. This question was examined considering several factors, including age, education, urban/rural, marital status, and occupation based.

Explanation with respect to Age: Among the respondents of different age group, older women (71.6%) are more likely to believe that literacy is a barrier that have kept them from voting. Elder generations said that the lack of formal education, their right to vote is suffering

Explanation with respect to Education: Due to literacy, those with less education are more likely to believe that their lack of education prevents them from voting. About 61.2% underscores the significance of education in raising political consciousness.

Explanation with respect to Urban/ Rural: Rural respondents (77.4%) are more likely to view that lack of education is a major obstacle in their turnout, due to their limited access to educational resources and lower literacy rates, their electoral participation is suffering.

Explanation with respect to Marital Status: According to 77.7% of women respondents, a major obstacle to voting in elections is a lack of education, which limits the opportunities for political participation for less educated women.

Explanation with respect to Occupation: In the occupation category, all working women (100%) stated that their inability to obtain illiteracy prevents them from exercising their right to vote. This implies that people who work are more conscious of the link between political engagement and education, and they concur that women with less education are less like to cast ballots.

9. Traditional Values of the Society Discourage Women from Turning out in Elections

The answer to the question is that the traditional values of the society have discouraged women from turning out in elections. As this question was asked from female respondents, "Do traditional values of the society discourage women from turning out in elections?" Data were gathered to learn more about the gender gap in women's turnout. People were asked to find out how in NA-22 of District Mardan residents felt about women's voting rights. Most of the respondents believe that traditional societal values have discouraged women from voting, pointing to deep-rooted social norms that have place limitations on women's public participation. Traditional values are seen as a discouraging factor, especially for working women, highlighting the tension between traditional gender roles and women's political participation. The abovementioned question was examined based on several factors, including age, education, urban/rural, marital status, and occupation.

Explanation with respect to Age: Older people (72.5%) are more likely to believe that traditional values prevent them from voting in elections, indicating that they are more restricted by gender social values and norms.

Explanation with respect to Education: The explanation in terms of education is that 73.4% of women who are less literate believe that the traditional values deter them from voting and pose a significant barrier to their voting ability. They are more common in communities with lower levels of educational attainment because of these values they have fewer opportunities to vote.

Explanation with respect to Urban/Rural: The results indicate that the traditional values have a similar effect in both urban and rural areas, with no discernible difference between urban (72.4%) and rural (72.5%) areas. These conventional values, however, are more ingrained in rural areas.

Explanation with respect to Marital Status: Married people (64.7%) see those traditional values as a problem, but they are less likely than other groups to see them as a barrier. This illustrates how societal expectations place additional strain on married women and in their turnout.

Explanation with respect to Occupation: According to 88.3% of working women in the occupation group, traditional values deter them from voting. This has mirrored the tension that exists between women's public roles (such as employment) and the conventional social norms that restrict their ability to participate in public and political life.

10. Social Norms Prohibit Women from Casting Votes in Elections

To comprehend the idea that improved women's turnout in elections requires a strong political background. Thus, it is imperative to emphasize the significance of voting rights. In this case, the responses to the query were gathered. People were asked to find out the answer to the question "Do social norms prohibit women from casting votes in elections?" in NA-22 of District Mardan residents felt about women's turnout. In this a very less respondents agreed with the statement that social norms are a barrier to women's electoral participation, suggesting that while social norms have influential, they are not seen as the primary obstacle when compared to other factors like security, family responsibilities, or education. Social norms are still a barrier, social norms are perceived as less restrictive compared to other factors like family responsibilities and security threats. This question was examined considering several factors, including age, education and urban/rural status, marital status, and occupation-based status.

Explanation with respect to Age: According to age-wise analysis, older people's support for social norms (35.3%) prevents them from voting. This indicates that older generations adhere more strictly to traditional gender roles.

Explanation with respect to Education: The lower percentage in less-educated groups (20.6%) suggests that social norms are more embedded in less-educated communities and are not as much of a perceived barrier for those with lower education levels.

Explanation with respect to Urban/Rural: Social norms are cited by 23.6% of women in rural areas as a barrier that keeps them from participating in the electoral process. Furthermore, traditional values are more strongly held in rural communities, where social norms are more ingrained between the voting rights of female.

Explanation with respect to Marital Status: Approximately 22.8% of married people believe that social norms are a slight barrier, which has been reflected in family influence and behavior regarding their turnout in elections and involvement in civic responsibilities.

Explanation with respect to Occupation: Overall, 29.9% of working women agreed that social norms prevent them from exercising their right to vote. This illustrates the conflict between women's entry into public settings (such as workplaces and elections) and conventional expectations for their conduct.

Conclusion

In a democratic society every man and woman have the equal fundamental right to participate in electoral politics. However, there are numerous obstacles, including socio-cultural barriers, which are the primary barriers preventing women from participating in electoral politics in Pakistan, particularly in NA-22 of District Mardan (KP). Women's participation in electoral politics is extremely low because of these norms and values. Campaigns to raise awareness, gender-sensitive laws, and safeguards for women's safety and freedom of movement during elections are all necessary to increase female participation in the democratic process. In conclusion, socio-cultural barriers significantly limit women's ability to fully participate in the electoral process in NA-22 District Mardan.

Deeply ingrained cultural traditions and male-dominated household dynamics continue to discourage and restrict female voters, despite the progress made by the government and non-

governmental organizations. The government, civil society organizations, and political parties must work together to boost female voter turnout. To address these cultural peculiarities, this study highlights the importance of electoral policies, particularly in conservative and rural areas. Priority must also be given to education, empowerment initiatives, and secure voting locations to shatter the cultural taboos surrounding female political participation.

The study's findings demonstrate that socio-cultural elements in NA-22 District Mardan during the General Elections 2018 present major obstacles to women's complete participation in the political process. Even though women can now vote due to advocacy and legislative changes, social and traditional norms, as well as deeply held cultural beliefs, often discourage and forbid women from exercising their right to vote. If policymakers want to boost female voter turnout, they must engage with local communities and address these issues through gender-sensitive campaigning, focused outreach initiatives, and accessible, safe voting options. Increased social awareness and cultural change are necessary to dismantle long-standing barriers and advance a more inclusive democratic process for all citizens without discrimination of male and female.

The complex and interrelated socio-cultural factors that limit women's ability to vote in NA-22 District Mardan are numerous factors, such as patriarchal family structures, religious beliefs, economic constraints, political illiteracy, security threats, traditional values, social norms, a lack of education, and a lack of accessible infrastructure, contributed to the low female turnout in the 2018 General Election. Despite the advancements made by the government and non-governmental organizations, deeply ingrained cultural norms continue to pose significant challenges. Addressing these socio-cultural barriers and raising female voter turnout in NA-22 Mardan required to focus interventions that prioritize political awareness, education, and community involvement. Furthermore, steps must be taken to ensure that rural women have both financial and physical access to the electoral process. In NA-22 of District Mardan (KP) elections in the future won't be more inclusive and representative unless these efforts are made together.

In conclusion, the data highlights that societal norms, family dynamics, and patriarchal systems are the key challenges limiting women's electoral participation, with these barriers being more pronounced in rural areas, among married women, and in traditional settings.

The above-mentioned figures here show the percentage of respondents who believe that various factors prevent women from casting votes and affect their participation in elections. Each factor is analyzed across demographic categories (age, education, urban/rural, marital status, occupation) and the total percentage. There are reflects different perceived barriers to women's electoral participation across various demographic categories (age, education, urban/rural, marital status, occupation). These barriers have an impacts women's participation in elections is influenced by multiple complex factors cultural values, male dominance, and family restrictions are perceived as major barriers to women's electoral participation, with male dominance and family restrictions being particularly pronounced in rural areas and among married women. Pashtunwali is identified as a specific cultural barrier, especially in rural areas where traditional practices are rigid. Religious factors are not seen as a major barrier across most groups, though a notable 50% of those in occupations believe that religious factors prevent them from voting rights. The occupation category stands out as an area where working individuals perceive greater cultural, family, and religious barriers compared to other groups. including family obligations, security concerns, educational attainment, traditional values, and social norms. The data suggests that security threats, lack of education, and traditional values are among the most significant barriers to women's electoral participation. It theses barriers remove from the NA-22 of District Mardan the voting ratio will be increase in the future elections.

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