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16 women elected on general seats

Islamabad

Our Staff Reporter

Islamabad - The nation has elected 16 women representatives out of 463 candidates who entered the political ring for 324 national and provincial general seats.

According to The Researchers, 150 women filed nomination papers at national level from 111 constituencies of which 60 were on party tickets. At provincial levels 313 women filed nomination papers from 213 constituencies of which 115 were party ticket holders.

The Researchers (TR) under its initiatives - Pakistan Governance Forum (PGF) and Women & Politics in Asia Forum (WPAF) - undertook observation of Election 2013 with a gender lens. This was in pursuance of organisation's 10 years effort to observe and document women role in electoral and political processes since 2002. Aazar Ayaz, executive director, informed that a complete report focusing women performance in pre-poll, poll day and post poll phases will be launched as soon as ECP completes election result and government formation is completed.

In the 2008, 16 women joined National Assembly and 10 at respective provincial assemblies on general seats. For 2013 elections, up till now, 6 (3 each from PML-N & PPP) women have made it to National Assembly and 10 to the four provincial assemblies i.e. 8 in Punjab, 1 each in Sindh & Balochistan whereas no women could win a general seat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Six female winners of 2008 National Assembly could find their way back for 2013, along with 4 from provincial assemblies. Interestingly 2 women each from Punjab (Sumera Malik and Ghulam Bibi Bharwana) and Sindh (Dr Azra Afzal Peechu & Dr Fahmida Mirza) have made a hat trick of winning their seats in National Assembly since 2002. Whereas, 2 women of 2008 Punjab Assembly (Nazia Raheel and Naghma Mushtaq) have been re-elected.

The National Assembly winners' detail and comparison with 2008 is as follows:

Among the winners Sumaira Malik of NA-69 Khushab I, winning by a margin of 38,253, has bagged highest number of votes 118,108 with estimated voter turnout of 61.72 per cent in her constituency. The lowest win has come on 83,916 votes by Faryal Talpur of NA-207 Larkana IV who won by a margin of 63,438 in a constituency where voter turnout was 54.24 per cent.

The lowest winning margin is of 18,152 votes for Ghulam Bibi Bharwana from NA-88 Jhang-Cum-Chiniot where the voter turnout was 64.54 per cent, which is highest among the six women winning constituencies.

Among the winners of provincial assemblies, Saniya of PS-109 Karachi XXI, won by a margin of 44,054 votes besides bagging highest number of votes 53,926 cast with estimated voter turnout of 49.17 per cent for her constituency. Rahat Jamali of PB-26 Jaffarbad II secured 12,521 votes, which is lowest number of vote taken among the winners. She won by a margin of 5,758 in a constituency where voter turnout is informed to be 40.25 per cent.

Whereas, the lowest winning margin is 1,859 votes of Rashida Yakoob from PP-78 Jhang II; where the voter turnout has been 51.93 per cent.

Analysing the results of 2013 women contested constituencies one factor has clearly emerged that in Punjab voters cast their ballot for the party rather than the candidates as all the women candidates who

have switched their parties were able to bag more votes than before or converted previous losses to wins this time.

Ayaz appreciated ECP's efforts to collect and disseminate gender disaggregated data, which has happened for the first time in Pakistan. "This is a good omen to document women role and will bring institutional focus to women issues in electoral processes. This will also provide space for advocacy with political parties to further mainstream women in political processes leading to their equitable share within political parties and institutional democracy'.

He informed that 2013 elections have been phenomenal for women from the perspective of number of candidates and voters by way of their political experience as large number of first timers women were given opportunity to contest under PTI and other parties.