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KP elects none, though 16 women become lawmakers

ISLAMABAD: In May 11 polls, six women have succeeded to make it through to the National Assembly and 10 to the four provincial assemblies, i.e., eight in Punjab, one each in Sindh and Balochistan, whereas no woman could win a general seat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

A total of 150 women had filed nomination papers at national level 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.

Six female winners of 2008 could find their way back for 2013 in NA, along with 4 for provincial assemblies. Interestingly, 2 women each from Punjab and Sindh have made a hat trick of winning their seats in National Assembly since 2002. While, 2 women of 2008 Punjab Assembly have been re-elected. In 2008, 16 women joined National Assembly and 10 at respective provincial assemblies on general seats.

Among the winners Ms Sumaira Malik of NA-69 Khushab, winning by a margin of 38,253, has bagged highest number of votes 118,108 with estimated voter turnout of 61.72 percent in her constituency.

The lowest winning has come on 83,916 votes

by Ms Faryal Talpur of NA-207 Larkana, who won by a margin of 63,438 in a constituency where voter turnout was 54.24 percent. The lowest winning margin is of 18,152 votes for Ghulam Bibi Bharwana from NA- 88 Jhang and Chinniot where the voter turnout was 64.54 percent, which is highest among the six women winning constituencies.

Among the winners of provincial assemblies Ms Saniya of PS-109 Karachi, won by a margin of 44,054 votes besides bagging highest number of votes 53,926 casted with estimated voter turnout of 49.17 percent for her constituency.

Ms Rahat Jamali of PB-26 Jaffarbad secured 12,521 votes, which is lowest number of votes taken among the winners. She won by a margin of 5,758 in a constituency where voter turnout is informed to be 40.25 percent. While, the lowest winning margin is 1,859 votes of Ms Rashida Yakoob from PP-78 Jhang, where the voter turnout has been 51.93 percent.

In 2002 and 2008 elections, many came from politically elite backgrounds, and could benefit power and privilege but largely due to education as eligibility criteria. Removal of this criterion was seen to be damper for women being awarded party ticket and its first victim, among other reasons, was Ms Hina Rabbani Khar who

had been contesting on her father's seat.

Women in KP were threatened both as candidate and voters limiting their active political lives. Political parties in KP once again joined hands to bar women from voting.

While in Balochistan, overall security threats hampered the whole process. However, there is still a long way to go, but if these elections are any indicator then the women have put down a marker unlike any.

The Pakistan Governance Forum and Women and Politics in Asia Forum undertook observation of election 2013 with a gender lens. This was in pursuance of organisations' ten years effort to observe and document women role in electoral and political processes since 2002.

Aazar Ayaz informed that a complete report focusing women performance in pre poll, poll day and post poll phases will be launched as soon as the ECP completes election results and government formation is completed.

Aazar Ayaz appreciated the ECP 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. —ONLINE