



Women in Leadership Positions: A Comparative Study of PM Benazir Bhutto and CM Maryam Nawaz

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ABSTRACT

Women comprise 49.6% of the world population. In Pakistan, women comprise 49.33% of the population. Becoming almost half of the population, women's role in the administration, economics, and politics is meager. In the political history of Pakistan, it has had only one female prime minister throughout its independence. In 77 years of Pakistan, for the first time in 2024 female chief minister of Punjab secured a seat. This paper explains the women's leadership in Pakistan. A comparative study of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and current serving chief minister Maryam Nawaz. The paper examines the hardships they both face, their leadership style, and their policies. The studies also analyze the similarities and differences of support systems behind each leader. The study reveals that both women as leaders perform very well. Maryam Nawaz is currently serving and her policies and initiatives toward development are very reliable. Both women's styles are democratic, inclusive, and more responsible. The governance of Maryam Nawaz is more active in her province because of social media advancement as compared to Benazir Bhutto's time. Both paved the path for women in all sectors of government and as Benazir is a landmark personality Maryam Nawaz also will be the most reliable women leader of Pakistan.

Keywords: Women Leadership, Benazir Bhutto, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan Politics, Social Media.

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Introduction

Nowadays, gender equality is increasingly endorsed as a basic human right. Women's role in leadership has accumulated substantial scrutiny in the world. By surmounting traditional barriers, women are making progress in areas, where men were dominated, which results in unique results in politics, shaping organizations, administration, business, science, and other fields. Women's leadership revolutionized institutions and redefined traditional norms and is driving inclusive initiatives that contribute to improving the economy and society. Women held positions of leadership since ancient civilizations. Notable women are Cleopatra of Egypt, Queen Hatshepsut, Empress Wu Zetian of China, and Razia Sultan of Delhi Sultanate. They show a good understanding and far-sightedness in decision-making and strategic thinking abilities in leadership, diplomacy, administration, and wars. Their achievement not only questioned stereotypes but also paved the path for other women to participate in politics and administration work. But women face a vast cultural strain even to access education, the right to vote, and other jobs. The period of the suffrage movement played a vital role in introducing women to the democratic system in a new government system in decision making. The major key figures are Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and the third most influential personality is Sojourner Truth. In addition to women in politics, countless women have participated in business, health, education, and support(Klenke, 2004). Women's contributions remained overlooked in history. Women belong to different countries and cultures but in leadership, they all face the same problems because of the prevailing myth that women are weak and cannot make strong decisions like wars and other hard decisions. The environment is not always conducive for women, but women have to create their paths. Women leaders like, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Indira Gandhi, Golda Meir, Margaret Thatcher, and Benazir Bhutto play a major role and their policies are more inclusive and have a positive impact on the future potential of women in political leadership(Adler, 1996). Women in Pakistan comprise more than half the population but the ratio of female labor force participation is lowest among the other countries

and it is not a safe state for women as declared by the United Nations report. Females are capable of working and participating in the economy but are not allowed to because of social culture and norms. Pakistan sustains a patriarchal culture, which encourages men to control women by imposing power on them. Women are forced to follow the strict culture of society which is also man-made(Phillips, 2003). The trends in the East are changing now, feminist waves are developing in different countries. The narrative of parents to teach female and their participation in every field of life is now highly encouraged in Pakistan(Ali & Rasheed, 2021). In Pakistan from 1947 women's participation remains very low in politics. No doubt women have also played a major role in the formation of Pakistan but they remain marginalized because of societal culture and norms. In the first constituent assembly of Pakistan, there were only two women: Shaista Ikram Ullah and Jahanara Shah Nawaz. In the second constituent assembly, there were no women. In Ayoub Khan's 1962 constitution women were elected indirectly but the number of women represented was only 6 seats(Mirza, 1969). The presidential elections of 1964 were of major importance in the women's role in Pakistan's political leadership. In this election, Fatima Jinnah the sister of Muhammad Jinnah contested for the presidency against the powerful military journal Ayoub Khan(Ali, 1975). In the 1970s general election of Pakistan, a total of 107 women took part but only 24 women succeeded in general seats. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto plays a major role in women's empowerment, especially for the poor women of Punjab and Sindh. In the electoral history of Pakistan, the majority of women participated and cast votes for the candidates. These elections give a blow to women's empowerment (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987). From 1988 to 1999 women's roles were important and had great importance in history as the first female prime minister was elected i.e. Benazir Bhutto. She is the first female prime minister of all Muslim countries. She faces many challenges before and after the prime minister ship. But she made a path for women that they are capable and the country can trust them and can be selected again(Gul & Farooq, 2020). Now in 2024, for the first time in the history of Pakistan, a female

candidate i.e. Maryam Nawaz Sharif daughter of the former prime minister took oath for chief minister of Punjab by taking 220 votes. She was the first woman after Benazir Bhutto's assassination who got a top minister position (Wikipedia, 2024). Maryam Nawaz and Benazir Bhutto are both influential figures in Pakistan and are key personalities in the political landscape. Both ladies have strong political backgrounds as both fathers served as Pakistan's prime minister. As women, they became a sign of resilience in a male-dominated society. Benazir Bhutto focuses on social work and women's empowerment and Maryam Nawaz is now changing society by using technology to empower women. They reflect contrasting policies but have a great role in Pakistan's political sphere.

Literature Review

Leadership encompasses the ability to influence people to reach common objectives. Effective leadership involves different attributes i.e. vision, decisive decision, and dedication. Successful leaders prioritize ethical transparency, credibility, and courage to question societal norms and make tough calls when required(Silva, 2016). A gender-based stereotype exists that women's leadership style is different from men's. It is perceived based on a myth that a woman's style of leadership is based on an interpersonal-oriented style and the opposite of her men's leadership style is a task-oriented style. Studies reveal that women adopted a more inclusive more adaptive and more democratic style as compared to men(Eagly & Johnson, 1990). According to the 2023 ranking of Forbes in the list of most powerful and influential females in the world, Ursula von der Leyen is in the top one and she belongs to Germany and plays her role in politics and policy, Christine Lagarde, Kamala Harris, Georgia Meloni, Taylor Swift, Mary Barra and Sarah London and others are present total one hundred in numbers. These women are considered the most powerful and influential women in the world, playing their role in politics, policy, entertainment, finance, business, technology, media, and philanthropy (Forbes, 2024). In 2024, the women of Pakistan are also included on the list of influential women. Gender equality is common all over the world, even if it prevails in most developed societies of the world. But Pakistan is the worst country in the case of the gender gap index. According to the

2024 gender gap index report out of 146 countries of the world, the ranking of Pakistan is 145 and the index is 0.5 (Paradigm Shift, 2024) In such a male-dominated society still, women are working in Pakistan and making history, in politics Fatima Jinnah, begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan, Benazir Bhutto, Maryam Nawaz, Dr. Fahmida Mirza and Ghazala Gola and Suriya Bibi are notable figure. Dr Ruth Pouf and Arfa Karim also play a key role in health and sciences. Other influential women of Pakistan are Sharmeen Obaid and in sports Nida Dar and many more examples are present. The women stand still against the culture of society and make history (Anmol, 2024). In Forbes, the 2024 report of the most influential one hundred women, 2 Pakistani businesswomen are also included i.e. Shazia Syed and Shaista Asif. This shows that women of Pakistan are working and competing in the world (Dawn, 2024). Pakistani women also make history as Benazir Bhutto was the first prime minister of the Muslim world and now the current serving chief minister of Punjab the most populated province of Pakistan is under the leadership of Maryam Nawaz, she made history by becoming the first female chief minister of Punjab. Benazir Bhutto as a woman knows much better about the social and cultural barriers that hold women to grow and participate in the country's economy and development. As a prime minister she also faces multiple issues but to empower women she contributed much more in her tenure. For the very first time, she established a women's development bank for easy loans for women. She introduced the first female pilot to Pakistan for the very first time. She also makes pathways for the women of Pakistan to participate in politics. Maryam Nawaz the current serving chief minister of Punjab, is the first woman to serve the seat of chief minister secure the seat. She is working on several issues that women face. She is supporting the young girls and the women of old age. Her policies are different from Benazir's. There is not much work on her leadership style. The article will contribute to the literature about her leadership style and policies and how they are different and similar to former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Research Questions

1. What difficulties do both women i.e. Benazir Bhutto and Maryam Nawaz face to become women leaders of Pakistan?

2. How leadership styles and policymaking of both Benazir Bhutto and Maryam Nawaz are different?

Research Objectives

- To critically analyze the Struggle of women in politics in Pakistan.
- To analyze the policies of both Benazir Bhutto and Maryam Nawaz.
- To understand that either women to women leadership is different or not.

Research Methodology

Qualitative research methodology is used in this paper. Secondary data is used, comprising scholarly, academic articles from Google Scholar, JSTOR, Taylor Francis, and Wiley Library were examined. International reports, governmental official websites, speeches in jalsa, and interviews of both ladies from TV channels and YouTube were examined. Gender studies theories were examined and applied to their work. Reputed newspapers, Dawn, the Economist, the News, and Jang newspaper articles were also examined.

Benazir Bhutto

Benazir Bhutto was the first female leader to serve two times as a prime minister of Pakistan and in all Muslim countries, she was the first female prime minister and executive head of the state (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023)

Early Life

Benazir Bhutto was born on 21 June 1953 and she was assassinated on 27 December 2007. She was the eldest daughter of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto former prime minister of Pakistan. She was born in Karachi in a wealthy and political family. She studied in top universities of the world i.e. in Oxford University and Harvard University. She was active from a young age, before Prime Minister ship she was president of the Oxford Union (Wikipedia, 2023).

Beginning of Political Journey

Benazir Bhutto led the country from 1988 to 1990 and then from 1993 to 1996. Her father Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was elected prime minister of Pakistan when she was studying abroad. She returned to Pakistan in year 1977 when Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's government was coup d'état. She and her mother Nusrat Bhutto control the party i.e. Pakistan

People's Party (PPP). She led the movement of the democratic restoration movement in the country. The people of Pakistan support her and welcome her warmly. She also faced personal exile and was imprisoned by dictator Zia ul Haq. From 1979 to 1984 she was confined to her residence under arrest (Jagran Josh, 2024).

Challenges of Benazir Bhutto from 1988 to 1990

Benazir Bhutto in 1988 in November became prime minister of Pakistan. She made a coalition government with MQM and the coalition lasted for 20 months. Her government was dismissed by the president of Pakistan Ghulam Ishaq. She faced many challenges in her tenure. The most important are the ethnic issues of Pakistan, internal instability of the country, Russia Afghanistan issue, poverty, and economic challenges. Despite all of these changes, she faces challenges about her personality and being a woman. People accused her that she is autocratic in her decisions. Her sister in law ones stated that "you can never speak when she is in the room. There is never a dialogue" (Facts and Details, 2024). Tim Rutton stated that her leadership style is democratic but she belongs to an autocratic family and controls a large area of Sindh. An aspect of her personality is autocratic and her political party i.e. Pakistan People's Party is a democratic party in words only because it looked like a monarchial party after Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto her daughter was leader and after her assassination her son Bilawal Bhutto was appointed as chairman. But she was dismissed from Prime Minister Seat, accused of corruption and her husband was a name of Mr. ten percent. All these behaviors and attitudes are not democratic (Rutten, 2008). She was educated at Harvard and Oxford but she was not experienced in running a country. In her interview, she said 'I ran the government to the best of my honest ability. And I did for nothing but acknowledgment and love'. In 1989 she also faced a vote of no confidence movement (Facts and Details, 2024). Benazir Bhutto's government was also criticized on an international level. The international amnesty forum criticizes her government because of death squads, abduction, and terrible torture under police custody. Her brother was also shot dead during a police blockade. Benazir was considered an autocrat as she declared herself party leader for

her whole life, according to international forms it was said that she did little for human rights and never worked to remove the restriction on women that Zia ul Haq imposed (Dalrymple, 2008). As a woman, she also faces character assassination issues. She was too young in a country which is going through a democratic weak party and internal conflicts also through neighboring country wars.

Challenges of Benazir Bhutto from 1993 to 1996

In October 1993 Benazir Bhutto became prime minister of Pakistan again and her second tenure started which lasted for almost 3 years. In her second term, she was well experienced as compared to her first tenure. She legislates for women to protect rape victims, add a ten percent quota for women in government jobs, and also tries to make a separate police force for women. She also works for girl's education. Benazir Bhutto faced family challenges in her second tenure as her younger brother Murtaza Bhutto contested against her. The press was busy making headlines about his family at the time. Benazir Bhutto also decided to support the Taliban, as she knows how the Taliban treated women. Women have no freedom even to visit outside the house alone. It was clearly stated in international media that during her tenure Pakistan was installing thousands of madrasa students in Afghanistan as a Taliban (Dalrymple, 2008). In her second term, she was also accused of corruption and was overthrown. She was assassinated in a gathering was shot in the head and died in hospital. As a woman she faces religious, cultural, family, and life threats and intimidation, and the media portrays only her personality and many other challenges. The opposition party made her weak by attacking her character calling her Peeli Taxi as the wrong woman and leaking her private pictures. As a prime minister, she also faces these vulnerable and inhuman issues. Pml supporters chant the slogan that Coca-Cola Pepsi, Benazir Taxi. Sheikh Rasheed called her Peeli taxi, and the term Peeli taxi was used for prostitution (The Friday Times, 2022). The most heart-wrenching act was when pictures of Benazir and Nusrat Bhutto were air-dropped in Punjab. This inhuman act was acted by the opposition during the election campaign of 1988 and Nawaz Sharif's party was blamed for this act (Sheikh, 2023). So we can

understand how as a strong-positioning woman character assassination was done and she was continuously blackmailed by people of that time.

Benazir Bhutto faces religious opposition also as once in 1989 on 27th September a religious ulema of 500 in numbers gathered and argued that a woman cannot lead a nation because of her gender. Only man could become a leader of a nation. They urge the public to reject Bhutto's leadership because of her gender. They claimed that Benazir Bhutto misinterpreted the citations of the Quran and Hadees just to justify her leadership. The United Ulema Convention issued a fatwa against her rule and declared that no woman can lead a nation (Rahi, 2020).

Social media play a significant role during her tenure. The basic source of information for people at the time was newspapers and television. In 2007 she used media for her campaigns as she used Facebook to deliver her messages to the young generation. YouTube was also very effective for her to deliver her messages, and policies and her interviews were posted but still, media and technology were not as modern as it is in the period of Maryam Nawaz now.

Maryam Nawaz

Maryam Nawaz was born on 28th October 1973 in Lahore. She is the daughter of the former prime minister of Pakistan Mr. Nawaz Sharif. She received her early education from the Convent of Jesus and then went to Beacon Home School (Indian Express, 2024). In 2017 she was also selected as one of the BBC 100 women. She is the first female chief minister of Pakistan's province i.e. Punjab.

Beginning of Political Career

Maryam Nawaz joined the Pakistan Muslim League (N) her father's political party to assist him in the year 2011. She played a major role in the 2008 election campaigns of her father which helped her to build her political profile. She also got a membership of a party in 2011. In 2013 when Nawaz Sharif took the oath of prime minister at that time Maryam Nawaz was appointed as chairperson of the prime minister youth program. On 3 January 2023, she was appointed as senior vice president of the party and in 2024 she is now the chief minister of Punjab (Stars Unfolded, 2024).

Maryam Nawaz's Leadership

Maryam Nawaz took oath as the first female chief minister of Punjab. During her address at the assembly with a photograph of her later mother kalsoom Nawaz with her, she said,

“Today this victory is not just mine. It is the victory of every woman, every mother and I hope am not the last. This victory of women should continue even after me”. Her first speech shows her inclusive, democratic, and women empowerment behavior. She dedicated her victory to every woman of every age of society to defeat a male-centric society. She declared in her first speech that she is not only the chief minister of the person who cast a vote for her, but she is the chief minister of every person who didn’t cast a vote for her. Her behavior in the first address shows that her a democratic politician of good mind to serve the people (Indian Express,2024)

She also said that “the door of my chamber and heart remain open for the opposition as far my party members”. She also added that the phase of victimization she suffered it’s the natural hatred generated in the human heart but she has no intention of taking any revenge from anyone(Dawn,2024). Her behavior from the first day of her oath-taking is highly democratic and her policies are more productive for females as she takes several initiatives to empower women as compared to Benazir Bhutto.

Maryam Nawaz's Policies for Women's Empowerment

In her current serving tenure, she makes and implements some policies for women's empowerment. The chief minister started forming a women's protection force and women protection centers in districts of Punjab. These forces protect women against gender discrimination and domestic violence and also provide shelter to distressed women (Punjab Government,2024) She increases the job quota for women in Punjab Public Service Commission from 10% to 15%. She stated that 1 billion rupees will be allocated to daycare centers at workplaces, hostels for working women will also be established, and paid internships will also be started for women. She promised to make a law for three days leave for women, i.e., maternity leave. Serrate place and

timing will be fixed for the women for gymnasium purposes and in a stadium. She also stated that separate prating rooms will be established for women in government institutions. She also stated that women's percentage for abroad scholarships would be appreciated more. Pink bikes would be given to women. She also stated that the young girls would not be encouraged as domestic workers. Parents would be kept in trust by the government and women would be empowered (Business Recorder,2024). She also introduced a helpline to report harassment and get help from forces(Dawn,2024).¹ She also makes a meeting with the chief executive of Huawei Company to make Punjab a digital hub. She also plans to develop smart cities in Punjab through the use of technology (Director General Public Relations, Government of Punjab,2024).

Maryam Nawaz also launched free Wi-Fi in the cities of Punjab and free online libraries which are accessible to all citizens. She also introduced the first air ambulance and free medicine for people and she visited the homes of people and investigated the progress of workers and officers. Maryam Nawaz also introduced a special package for transgender so that they can be introduced into society and appear in the mainstream (Dawn,2024).

The role of social media is highly appreciated in the current tenure of Maryam Nawaz as she is making different online services to help out people. We just make a call to take assistance. Many initiatives she started for the people of Punjab like loans for homes and loans for women, so people can easily apply online without visiting offices and waiting in long queues. Her presence on social media apps is very active and her response to people's complaints is very responsive.

Comparative Analysis of Both Leaders

Both female leaders face social, cultural, and religious problems because Ullema declared that a woman cannot lead a nation or cannot become a leader. But in Islam, we have a number of examples of women who were businesswomen, administrators, and warriors. Both ladies have strong support of family background and party back. Both face jail in cases of corruption. Both

women fought with strength. But the difference is present. Benazir was a prime minister and had more pressure of responsibilities as compared to the chief minister. So that's difficult for her to cover all areas of Pakistan as a single lady. Maryam Nawaz is a chief minister and the political situation of the country is not as was during the tenure of Benazir. i.e. dictatorship. The technology and dependencies of people on social media are more now as compared to Benazir's time. So social media is playing a key role in her administration. But the governance of Maryam Nawaz is more effective than Benazir. Maryam Nawaz's initiatives are more productive her style is more democratic than Benazir's.

Conclusion

In the history of Pakistan for a woman to lead a

country looks difficult. Benazir and Maryam Nawaz are the first women leaders to lead a nation. Both face inter and intra-political issues. The leadership style of Maryam Nawaz is more effective and responsible than Benazir Bhutto. Benazir Bhutto was autocratic in her style while Maryam Nawaz is more democratic. Some other women like Hina Rabbani Khar is also good examples as she is the first female foreign minister of Pakistan and at her first tenure, she was the youngest foreign minister. In a male-dominated society, both females face challenges but both perform well. Maryam Nawaz is currently serving chief minister her policies are more advanced and she is more active than Benazir. And we can hope after completing her 5 years Punjab's position will be different and more developed and progressive than before.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

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