

# Exploring the Discursive Representation of Pakistani Female Politicians in Print and Electronic Media: A Qualitative Study of Narrative and Framing

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## Abstract

This study uses a qualitative discourse analysis approach to investigate Pakistani female politicians' discursive representation in print and electronic media. Specifically, the research focuses on the narratives and framing strategies employed by the media to construct and portray the public image of these political figures. By employing Corpus-Assisted Diachronic Discourse Analysis (CADD), the study traces the changes in media discourse over time, uncovering how gender biases, societal norms, and power dynamics shape the representation of women in Pakistani politics. The findings reveal significant trends in gendered framing, highlighting how media portrayal fluctuates between marginalization and recognition of female politicians' contributions, though gender stereotypes remain deeply embedded in these narratives. The findings of this study have important implications for future media reform initiatives, advocating for a more equitable and balanced representation of women in politics. The insights gained can also inform gender advocacy strategies and policy efforts to enhance women's visibility and leadership roles in traditional and digital media.

**Keywords:** Pakistani Female Politicians, Media Representation, Discourse Analysis, Gender Bias, Narrative Framing, Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis, Diachronic Study.

## 1. Introduction

The media is central in constructing the political socialization process; framing and positioning female aspirants to political leadership undergoes gender bias. For Pakistan, which has unique cultural, religious, and patriarchal values that strongly define gender roles, female politics portrayed in media represent these values. This research uses CADD to analyze representations of Pakistani female politicians in print and electronic media in the past years. This study proves that energy efficiency crossover is an approach to the interwoven complexity of real-life systems, as stated by (Ullah et al. 2016; Awan & Pianezzi, 2023; Yaseen, 2023 Kiani, 2023).

There is vast cogent literature through extensive and intense research on gender portrayal in media, especially regarding language's role in configuring the existing power relations. There is also a promotional aspect of Women in Leadership where they seek to portray women in leadership positions, yet this ends up presenting them either in their domestic capacities or as mere trespassers in what has been a traditionally masculine domain. In this study, the researcher intends to add knowledge to the body of literature by highlighting how Pakistani female politicians have been represented in media narratives and how such representations have changed (Khatoon, 2019).

Baharun and Ismail (2022) opined that Pakistan media portrayals play a pivotal role in portraying and influencing the culture related to women in politics. These representations concerning female politicians are significant in a patriarchal society since they dictate their political acceptability and acceptance. This research examines the language, topics, and discursive practices employed in the construction of these women by the media in both print and electronic media.

### The rationale of the study

This study focuses on how media portray female politicians, especially in the manner in which they seek to govern society, how receptive a society is to accept the new principles of leadership given to women by the media, and therefore, how the public tends to approve or reject female leadership figures. The patriarchal sequences inherent in the socio-cultural contexts of Pakistan make the media representation of women politicians racially sexist. While women have been striving for election into political offices, and some of them have been elected, the portrayal of women in politics in both the print and electronic media has not been interrogated adequately, and more specifically, the portrayal has not been placed under the diachronic lens to ascertain the changes that have occurred over time. This research will therefore seek to fill this gap by exploring the portrayal of female politicians in Pakistani media and the change that the portrayal has gone through over the period.

## 2. Literature Review

This section critically analyses the previous literature on media portrayal of gender and politics, especially how female politicians are covered in print and electronic media. This paper presents the state of the global and local research, methods, and theoretical work conducted to explain female politicians' representation, especially within the Pakistani media.

### Media Representation of Female Politicians

Women in politics, especially as politicians, have been depicted in various ways, and this aspect of coverage by the media has attracted researchers in different political settings. Experts have stated that there is still a stereotyped portrayal of women politicians due to the 'culturally available' images through which the media constructs meaning, attributes, and identities, which instantaneously gender women politicians as fragile, sexualized, or dependent or as wives or daughters of certain male politicians. In the study conducted by Ross and Comrie in 2012, they noted that women in Politics are often labeled based on looks, family commitments, and emotions, while the opposite gender is portrayed as efficient, robust, and decisive. Specifically,

the reviews identified in Williams' study supported the negative representation of women; hence, the pattern cut across both Western and non-Western societies.

Kahn (1994), in the same line of study, analyzed the media coverage of election campaigns in the United States and concluded that women candidates received more negative coverage than men candidates. This coverage presents the implications of gender and affects women's politics in the long term because negative or stereotypical coverage dissuades people from voting for women candidates. Focusing on non-political attributes, including looks and being frail, weak, or emotional, desecrates the image of women as candidates who are worthy to participate in politics.

In the Pakistani context, Rahman and Rizvi (2015) studied the portrayal of female politicians in print media, and the results showed the portrayal of women politicians in a patriarchal manner, either as mothers or wives. It was also understood that watching movies with female politicians has Pakistani cultural bias, which brings out a significantly small picture of their leadership potential. This signifies that the media helps in perpetuating the part that women should not be allowed in politics or that there should be very few of them.

#### Stereotyping Based on Gender and Framing in Media

To analyze the media content, researchers use the theory of framing introduced by Goffman (1974), which deals with how media presents the news. They make meanings, helping the audiences understand issues in specific ways and are influenced by culture and power relations. It also reveals that there is a way in which the media portray female politicians as more than just aspiring political candidates and more so as women, thereby emphasizing their femininity as opposed to their competency as politicians. These frames further prop up misconceptions about women's ability to lead because, compared to men, women are presumably more emotionally maternal or passive.

Awan and Pianezzi (2023) discussed how women's consumption in the political arena in South Asia was gendered through media by drawing links with the traditional status of women. The authors focused on the fact that, even with a growing representation of women in politics, patriarchal attitudes remain in force. In this respect, this study offers the regional setting that explains how Pakistani media might do the same to female politicians, thereby perpetuating the gendered norms that restrict women's roles and power in politics.

It has been noted in other studies that threats to female politicians are constructed in different parts of the world as either victims or as reindeer oddities of political processes. Fayyaz (2023) pointed out how the 'Iron Lady' frame portrays female politicians as the exception to the norms, undermines women's leadership, and portrays women in leadership roles as the exception rather than the norm. This framing can be observed in Pakistan's portrayal of politicians such as Benazir Bhutto as both a politician and a mother. The press highlighted her family life and political career to build a multifaceted image of her, simultaneously limiting it.

#### Accomplishments of Corpus-assisted Discourse Analysis to Media Studies

CADS is an emergent methodological approach used increasingly in media studies to examine the big corpora of media texts by using quantitative corpus linguistics in combination with

strategies of qualitative discourse analysis. Baker et al. (2008) were the first to employ CADS to study the portrayal of marginalized communities, such as refugees and asylum seekers in the United Kingdom. Their work also showed how the discourse patterns in media texts explicate prejudices and stereotyping, thus providing a framework for understanding how the media constructs opinion.

Referring to the GSM in gender and media, Stefanowitsch (2021) emphasized the application of CADS for recognizing the overused topics and the language patterns used to depict women in media sources. Combining corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis enables the researchers to understand how gender stereotyping is constructed in the news media in a hidden way. This approach can be used to analyze female politicians, which consistently shows how they are kept in the peripheral through such aspects of language as diminutive or gendered metaphors.

Afzaal et al. (2022) used CADS to analyze the gendered representation, explicitly targeting the representation of female politicians in Pakistan for both print and Electronic Media. In their study, the authors concluded that while media enable female politicians to manage their images through electronic media such as social media, media could not shake off gendered frames where women politicians were depicted using stereotyped frames that focused on their personality rather than their competency. This implies that as much as new media technologies present opportunities for the infusion of democracy in the political arena, traditional media continues to pose a strong determinant to the futile achievement of gender equity in the political systems.

The proposed research is a diachronic analysis of media representation.

Therefore, as suggested by the nature of change in the discourse or the topic under study, diachronic analysis is well suited for studying media constructions of women politicians and how they are changed in the light of new socio-political realities. Partington (2010) highlighted the importance of diachronic research in media analysis and underscored that those researchers interested in how and why discursive practices lying at the heart of the media mirror large-scale societal changes must routinely investigate how media discourses changed over time. This approach is most appropriate when used in analyzing the representation of hitherto socially excluded groups such as women politicians, and this is because their portrayal might change based on amendments or even shifts in political culture and or gender.

Analyzing the change in media portrayal of female politicians over time, McEnery et al. (2015) suggest how the representation of women in UK politics evolved over the period, with the 1970s as one endpoint and the early 2000s as the other. They concluded that although the use of more explicit and culturally apparent forms of sexism is either tame or declining, lesser, more modern forms of sexism are still used, as they witnessed the usage of thin-slicing when reporting on female politicians. This implies that despite some measure of (over) change in the eradication of apparent gender bias, the media has not entirely done much to explain traditional gender stereotyping.

Media, Gender, and Politics in Pakistan: The relationship between media, gender, and politics in Pakistan is anchored by specific social-cultural factors defining how women are portrayed in politics. Patriarchal society is prevalent in Pakistan and restricts women from politics, and this

issue is evident in media portrayal of women politicians. Khan (2017) analyzed how femininity and masculinity are gendered in the media of Pakistan, which not only reproduces the prejudice of the society towards women in politics but also maintains a policy that seniors their status to the male counterparts in political authority. This is especially important as far as the representation of women in the media is concerned and bears tremendous repercussions regarding the legitimization of political power.

Furthermore, Yaseen (2023) pointed out that the media portrayal of female politicians in Pakistan is colored by the religious and cultural norms of the country, where women are expected not to work and engage in politics but rather to remain at home and care for their families. Such a cultural environment contributes to the stereotyping of women politicians in media by discarding their political accomplishments to their family responsibilities and body shaming.

The studies explored here show that female politicians have myriad challenges in the portrayals they receive in media worldwide, specifically in Pakistan's socio-political environment. Gendered framing, traditional stereotypes, and biased linguistic patterns employed in media coverage constrain the media representation of women in politics and downplay their authority in a patriarchal manner. To make a similar contribution, this paper will attempt to employ Corpus-Assisted Diachronic Discourse Analysis (CADDa) to investigate how Pakistani media has presented female politicians in the past and what potential effect these portrayals may have on promoting gender equity in political management.

Prior studies have established the role of media in politics and gender with the contention that critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an effective way to reveal the hidden power relations in the text. When integrating Corpus Linguistics with Critical Discourse Analysis, Baker et al. (2008) explained the essence of mixing the two fields, particularly when studying the media representation of refugees and asylum seekers. Likewise, Stefanowitsch (2021) employed corpus linguistics as a sound theoretical and methodological paradigm to analyze big datasets for language use features that may be hard to capture.

Regarding gender and media, Rahman & Rizvi, 2015 established that Pakistani female politicians are constructed in a way that maintains an emulation of traditional patriarchal culture. They are portrayed as being jovial or Mother figures or the feminine political bosses, which is not favorable to the political power they hold. This is substantiated by our findings, which align with Karlina's (2023) global findings on the representation of disabled women in the media, where women are often portrayed as helpless or victims.

A similar view of female politicians' portrayal can be found in Awan & Pianezzi (2023), who focused on South Asian countries and established that women are still underrepresented in the media and political discourse, and the primary attention is paid more to their private lives, than their political acts. Thus, by focusing on a diachronic analysis of media discourses associated with Pakistani female politicians, this research will extend such findings and enrich our understanding of how the representations of female Pakistani politicians have changed over time.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

The present study employs an interdisciplinary theoretical analysis framework that draws upon Critical Discourse Analysis, Feminist Theory, and Framing Theory to analyze the coverage of Pakistani women in political leadership positions in printed and print media. These theoretical paradigms offer vantage perspectives on how language, power, and gender work in media discourses, specifically in a socio-political setting where Patriarchal culture dominates the public domain.

#### Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA is concerned with power and society as far as language is concerned. Of all the frameworks outlined above, this is quite helpful in explaining how and why media texts reassert power relations, specifically those of gender. Fairclough (1995), CDA focuses on how discourse builds up social realities like women's subordination in patriarchal societies. Thus, it can be stated that CDA assists in identifying the hidden power relations that pertain to the social realities of Pakistani female politicians. Perusing linguistic patterns, framing techniques, and media narratives typical for CDA helps to identify how female politicians are silenced via the framework of stereotyped femininity.

This aligns with van Dijk's (1993) observation that 'discourse constitutes societal power relations', primarily where they reflect media discourses. As this theoretical framework exemplifies, analysis of how women politicians are depicted and the media's reception of them speaks volumes about the culture's perception of women in authority. CDA enables one to examine the processes through which these relations are constructed and how language is used to index them, making this theory appropriate for analyzing gendered media representation.

#### Feminist Theory

Feminist theory nurtures critical thinking in media theories, as it is premised on gender as a social factor that defines power relations toward media inequalities. For instance, Butler (1990) and de Beauvoir (1949) state that gender is created and reinforced by culture and the media, which are the main culprits of the messages that need to get through. Where the dominating cultural ideals are challenged by the feminist theory concerning how females are portrayed, especially when it comes to revealing their gender roles, especially given the fact that women politicians are depicted as subjugated to men in authority.

This study employs Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) to analyze gender and politics in media representations, mainly how female politicians are discursively constructed to resist or reproduce gender scripts. For instance, it is expected to read or hear about Pakistani women politicians as mothers or victims; Feminist Theory addresses this by manipulating the society through which women's power is restricted even when in politics.

#### Framing Theory

Goffman's (1974) Theory of Framing explains how the media structures and delivers the information and how the audience views it. Frames in media refer to the mental structures that the journalist uses to portray news stories, and these frames can reinforce existing prejudices in

society or subvert them. In the context of this study, Framing Theory assists in identifying how Pakistani media frame female politicians or women in leadership and governance positions or women mainly defined by their capabilities in the assumption of political roles.

Thus, framing theory is precious for a more profound analysis of media discussions and defining the primary written, spoken, and mental patterns. The objectification or vilification of female politicians as ‘mums’ or ‘victims’ emanates from the larger society’s desire to reduce women’s roles to merely childbearing. Thus, using this theory, the study aims to identify the changes the above frames have undergone and the prospects they might entail to the general perception of female politicians.

### Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons, both academically and socially, particularly within the context of Pakistani politics and global media studies: This study is significant for several reasons, both academically and socially, particularly within the context of Pakistani politics and global media studies:

### Addressing a Research Gap

Empirical research focusing on the analysis of media portrayal of female politicians in Pakistan is scarce, and more such studies with the longitudinal framework need to be conducted. Similarly, although extensive work has been done on gender and media representation cross-culturally, little research has been done on this aspect of Pakistani media, particularly in its socio-political context. This study employs CADDA to analyze how female politicians have been depicted in the Pakistani press over time and across history and the modern era.

### Theoretical Contributions

Based on the literature, the analysis of CDA, Feminist Theory, and Framing Theory is a valuable contribution to media studies and gender politics. Thus, integrating these theoretical perspectives also enriches the existing knowledge of the representation of female politicians in the media and offers a sound methodological approach to future research in media discourses. To this end, this paper demonstrates that it fosters a rapport between media studies, gender studies, and political communication. It also shows how gendered approaches could unlock new ways of interpreting media texts.

### Social and Political Implications

The study's conclusion reveals various recommendations significantly impacting Pakistan’s gender equity and women's political engagement. Media is a dominant force in driving reactions and attitudes amongst the masses. Thus, the depiction and portrayal of women in politics determine their success regarding votes and their success in leading the people. In this way, this research can contribute to media activism that challenges the gendering and sexualizing of women and encodes stereotypical biases that restrict women's political career paths.

In addition, the case affirms the consequences of media framing for society, essentially the continuation of stereotyping procedures that hinder the advancement of women in political positions. It reiterates the gender narratives of societies. Knowing what these media depict is

essential for policymakers, media workers, and gender activists who wish to enhance gender balance in the political sphere.

### Implications for Media Reform

This is important because there is a clear perception of a lack of media reform in Pakistan, especially among women politicians. This means that even to date, the cultivation of a specific gender frame, like seeing women politicians as mothers or victims, hinders society's growth from fully appreciating women's representation in politics. As a result, this research theoretically and empirically calls for a different understanding of female politicians' political engagement in changing or transforming the stereotypical gender images in popular culture.

### Educational and Advocacy Tool

The research helps educate gender advocates, political leaders, and media practitioners. Thus, along with revealing how gendered media narratives influenced the participants' perceptions, the study could be employed to increase people's awareness of the necessity of producing more inclusive representations of women in politics. These findings can be used by female advocacy groups and NGOs operating in Pakistan to support organizations that fight for women's rights in the media and politics.

In addition, based upon this systematically developed theoretical framework and emphasizing the study's implications for scholarship and society, this research also advances a theoretical-discursive project and practical program for transforming patriarchal gender representation in media. Collectively, its concentration on the Pakistani condition opens up the critical questions of gender, politics, and media in a state where conventional gender dynamics and contemporary political characteristics are contradictory.

### Objectives of the Study:

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the media's influence in shaping public perceptions of female politicians in Pakistan and its broader impact on gender representation in politics, the following objectives have been established:

1. To investigate the discursive representation of Pakistani female politicians in print and electronic media, focusing on the narratives and framing strategies employed.
2. To uncover how gender biases, societal norms, and power dynamics shape the portrayal of women in Pakistani politics over time.
3. To employ a diachronic approach to trace changes in media discourse regarding female politicians, highlighting trends in gendered framing.
4. To provide insights that can inform future media reform initiatives to promote equitable and balanced representation of women in politics.
5. To enhance understanding of the implications of media representation for gender advocacy strategies and policy efforts to increase women's visibility and leadership roles.

### Research Questions:



To gain a comprehensive understanding of how media shapes public perceptions of female politicians in Pakistan and its broader effects on gender representation in politics, the following research questions are formulated:

1. What narratives and framing strategies do the media employ to represent female politicians in Pakistan?
2. How do these representations reflect and perpetuate gender biases and societal norms?
3. In what ways has the portrayal of female politicians changed over time in Pakistani media?
4. What are the implications of these media representations for women's political engagement and gender equity in Pakistan?
5. How can the findings of this study inform media reform initiatives and gender advocacy efforts?

#### **4. Methodology**

To achieve the objectives, the present study employs Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA), which borrows features from corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis to analyze big data from textual material. The data collected for this study relates to media texts in both print and electronic media over the latter part of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century to enable the researcher to examine the portrayal of female politicians in a diachronic manner. This methodological approach is helpful regarding the analysis of several linguistic and discursive repetitions belonging to different historical periods.

The content analysis included keyword analysis, collocation analysis, and concordance plot analysis to determine the media texts' general themes and specialized narratives. These tools help to trace discursive strategies, as far as the discussion of female politicians is concerned, and the references to gender, power, and politics, both omissions and explicit mentions of it. By these methods, the research establishes how female politicians are constructed by language to conform to or transgress gender power relations.

The research also analyses particular cases of the most famous Pakistani women politicians, including Fatima Jinnah, Benazir Bhutto, and Maryam Nawaz, and their representation in Pakistani media, which can speak about the tendencies of how women are positioned in the country's political discursive formation. The study compares the representation strategies used in different media by considering print and electronic media. It discusses the possibility of gender construction being different in print compared to electronic media.

#### **5. Results and Discussion**

The qualitative analysis explored Pakistani female politicians' empowerment and powerlessness, discourses, and identity. Some of the broad themes that were distinguished are highly extolling

or subverting patriarchy, with the language choices being noted to be a sensitive issue. Including words such as 'as a woman' and 'a woman politician' ends the language with a male-dominated feature, where women are seen as inferiors, less political striving. Phrases like 'women's empowerment' and 'gender equality' present continuities of this endeavor in rendering women as self-empowered political actors (Lazar, 2005). Other tensions also arose from such ideologies as the patriarchal ideology that favored the traditional male and female roles in a relationship.

On the other hand, the Feminist ideology favored women's right to leadership and innovation in political spheres. Using women politicians as the protagonists supplied the media with role models and agents of change, enhancing the visibility of leadership attributes in women. The identity representations were also diverse: women were portrayed as Advocates, Heralds of andropause, or crusader leaders. While Fatima Jinnah and Benazir Bhutto can still be criticized as two fine examples, Maryam Nawaz was an active character of contemporary Pakistan who wanted a change despite facing political and legal issues.

The diachronic analysis explored the evolution of the representation of Pakistani female politicians across three time periods: Phases Pre-2000, 2000-2010, and 2010 and onwards; the changes regarding language, tone, and style were noted as there was the transition of positive attitude regarding women in politics. Up to 2000, the trend in portraying women was very biased and in paternalistic manner, where there was much focus on the language of domesticity and the achievements in the political arena were considered. During the ten years of 2000-2010, knowledge of women's political participation was broad. However, the seeds of patriarchy persisted; they either funded or highlighted personal shows rather than transforming structures. In Jubilee, the exercise of self-initiative by women, exercising power, the theme of comradeship and group formation with a challenge to patriarchy and discourse of power and gender sensitivity (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002). This shift was worrying in equal measure because it was also a shift in recognizing women as severe political actors and societal transformations that were ailing their societies.

### Gendered Framing in Media

Another significant discovery of this study relates to the fact that gendered framing is used so often when presenting Pakistani female politicians. Being a female politician, the media presents in two ridiculous roles, firstly as a mother figure and secondly as a mortal who has become a victim of political fierceness. For instance, Benazir Bhutto was portrayed in the media as a mum, and this made her image more familiar and, at the same time, stereotyping women. Likewise, Maryam Nawaz has been depicted as a political victim of an aggressive episode, and the media attention has revolved around her suffering instead of her political gimmicks.

Such a gendered framing corresponds with how women are portrayed in politics in the rest of the world. Rahman and Rizvi (2015) showed that the media plays a vital role in marginalizing gendered female politicians through such depictions, thus reducing the visibility of women politicians as political players. A cultural stereotype in which female politicians are labeled as matriarchal or as victims demean their authority and reinforce patriarchal values in media channels.

### Emphasize Personal Life

The other major study is the media's preoccupation with women politicians' private lives. This is evident in the case of Maryam Nawaz, especially during her time in leadership, where her media differential is based more on family issues and personal misfortune than leadership qualities. Such emphasis on personal life is typical for gendering female politicians as it does not indicate their achievements. Instead, it maintains the stereotype that a woman in politics is a wife, mother, daughter, etc. (Awan & Pianezzi, 2023).

This follows the general trend in other research studies on gender and media representation. For instance, Afzaal et al. (2022) analyzed the representation of female politicians in Pakistan media. Specifically, the study showed that the Pakistani media positions women politicians about their private or family roles, and this type of framing perpetuates gender stereotyping and constrains the political agency of women politicians.

### Diachronic Changes

The diachronic analysis that forms the basis of the current study indicates that although there has been a trend towards improvement in the portrayal of female politicians in media, there are still profound gender biases. The tabloid style of reporting of women in politics, as seen from the examples under consideration, reveals how Pakistani female politician was sexually objectified in the 1990s when Benazir Bhutto emerged into the scene. In recent years, the media has finally recognized political accomplishments such as the ones by Maryam Nawaz. However, traditional gender roles still appear in most representations.

This finding resonates with Stefanowitsch (2021), who has underlined the relevance of diachronic analysis of media narratives. Although there are attempts to address women's ability in politics and acknowledge their political achievements, it will take years to eradicate gender stereotyping totally, and it is evident that media representation is still a product of these stereotypical norms.

To date, the media of Pakistan does not portray female politicians with respect and dignity and still portrays the stereotypes and discrimination prevailing in the country. According to the ever-growing database on media portrayal of female politicians, even though women have entered the political scene in more significant numbers, the traditional news broadcast keeps feeding the public with information about women in their private lives rather than in their public roles. As it has been seen when female politicians are mentioned, they are portrayed in ways that only according to their roles in society as women, hence negating their political status and, more so, their involvement in the business. This skewed representation is not helpful, especially in light of women's ability to participate in politics and dismantle stereotype that keeps them out of leadership roles. In this research, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Feminist Theory are used to analyze these portrayals to uncover the inherent power relations in media texts.

Another strength of this research is the diachronic dimension since it is possible to see the changes that occurred in the representation of women in Pakistani politics over the years. Most past works have only included cross-sectional examinations or case studies and did not account for the dynamic spectrum of these representations. This study, therefore, makes use of Corpus-Assisted Diachronic Discourse Analysis (CADD), which is a proper method of analyzing changes in media representation over time to achieve a longitudinal perspective on how socio-

political context affects the representation of gender in politics. This approach is critical in tracking the advancements or lack thereof in representations in media female politicians and exploring the existing challenges and how today's political discourses still reflect gender bias.

In addition, this research explores gender, politics, and media as two convergence points of concern in media politics, particularly on the representation of female politicians in media discourses. The representation of female politicians in Pakistan media is equally a problematic issue, which silences the authority of female politicians and dominates them through the cultural norms of sexual politics that restrain women to patriarchal interpretations. The representations also discourage them from their leadership potential and continue to portray in society that women should not be allowed in politics. This research questions the contingent implications of these four narratives to unveil how they affect gender parity in the political arena. Thus, the study puts forward a breakdown of the media's role in reconstructing and maintaining patriarchal power relations, which makes it possible to address the gender bias that impedes women's political advancement. The study also seeks to provide practical recommendations on achieving a gender balance in reporting that will acknowledge women's input to politics.

This study is currently within the most extensive continuing discussion concerning gender representation in media, especially about the political culture in Pakistan. As the authors noted, many studies are devoted to the analysis of gender representation in media all over the world. Still, the case of Pakistan and South Asian countries is insufficiently investigated. Culturally and politically, Pakistan is different from other regions. Therefore, this research is vital to meet the gaps in the existing literature to add essential findings in the discourse of Gender, Media, and Politics. Within this context, the importance of this research can be measured not only, and not primarily, by the theoretical findings that contribute to the understanding of the research problem but also by its practical potential for media practitioners, politicians, and especially policymakers. Regarding gender and leadership, Carll states that fixed beliefs created by the media help transfer beliefs about the acceptability of women in political positions. This study does go against the systematic erasure and marginalization of women and consequently presents the need for change.

Thus, using the method of CDA and Feminist Theory, the study defines the prejudiced processes of media discourses concerning female politicians. CADDa builds on this by mapping out how these images have evolved over time and thereby affords a more nuanced perspective on how shifting socio-political realities shape gender portrayals in the media. This temporal analysis is crucial to understanding not only the continuities of gender bias and discrimination but also the possibilities of change toward fair representation.

## 6. Conclusion

This research has also emphasized the present-day plight of Pakistani female politicians in terms of their portrayal in the media. While there have been some improvements made in the recognition of their political activities, the gender stereotype and the emphasis on women's private sphere thus exclude female political representatives. It is crucial to point out that media should be reformed to provide a better portrayal of women in politics, and further research should

be conducted to understand how these portrayals affect people's perceptions and the political legitimacy of the women involved.

As a quantitative research study, this paper helps describe the discourses and the media's framing of female politicians. The diachronic approach, which considers media discourses as developing over time, shows the presence of gender biases and their evolution. It allows us to comprehend the dynamics of media discourse in forming attitudes toward women in leadership positions.

Even though there has been a significant increase in the number of women in politics in Pakistan and the dramatic influence of electronic media, specifically social media, this study is critical. However, women politicians continue to be marginal figures in the media despite the advancement in other areas of politics, and women political leaders are portrayed in a way that reveals a gendered appeal to emotions rather than their skills in the art of politics. This is pervasive in most societies and perpetuates conventional gender roles while only acknowledging the part that women scantily play in politics.

Analyzing the premise that gender equality in Pakistan is an issue of debate and considering the shift of global politics for the involvement of women in governance, the present study shall have a significant bearing in highlighting the plight of women politicians and how the media portrays them. Moreover, the study addresses the Sections of social media and other new and emergent forms of media as it explores whether these new forms of media perpetuate or disrupt the conventional supply of women in politics.

Therefore, by analyzing both print and electronic media, this research seeks to fill a significant gap in knowledge about the portrayal of female politicians in Pakistan and the changes therein. Altogether, the conclusions drawn from the study enhance theoretical understanding and practical implications that may be utilized in gender mainstreaming for media and political participation. The analysis of gender, politics, and media, combined with the study's diachronic approach, grants valuable insight that remains relevant for further discourses on gender representation in the public sphere.

#### Practical Relevance for Media and Political Reforms

Besides theoretical significance, the study is critical to media practitioners, politicians, and policymakers. The fact that it becomes possible to unravel and discuss the nature of the biases and the framing strategies as regards the subject in this case, that is, the media portrayal of female politicians, makes it possible to come up with real solutions that may help reverse the trend. In addition, it advocates for change in the current distorted media portrayal of women in politics by identifying the gaps in the existing media frames. The findings of the presented research can be further utilized by non-governmental gender organizations, Media Self-Regulatory organizations, and Political initiatives that are concerned with increasing the ratio of women in Leadership positions.

Lastly, this research contributes significantly to the knowledge of gender, politics, and media in a region seldom explored in gender representation literature. It is not just an academic endeavor; its recommendations for media reform can be applied to construct the framework against gendered negative representations of women in politics. Thus, the findings of this study are

valuable for supporting the attempts to change the current power relations and bring a more gender-sensitive perspective in media, therefore supporting women in leadership roles. These discoveries will be helpful for civil society organizations, media regulatory agencies, and other women's rights advocates when demanding change that acknowledges women in the political sphere.

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