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### Socio-Economic Determinants of Perception Regarding Women's Political Rights: A Provincial Analysis

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#### Abstract

This study examines the determinants of women's political rights and, their essential role in promoting gender equity in Pakistan. The data is taken from world value survey (WVS) wave 7. The study is based on two theories that explain the determinants of women's political rights in Pakistan; life cycle theory and, modernization theory. The Logit models is used for spanning both long-term and, short-term data, regional and, urban-rural analyses, and, gender-wise comparisons. It unveils the complex dynamics influencing these perceptions. The findings emphasize the importance of high income, political engagement, and, opposition to military rule in shaping support for women's political rights. Regional disparities within Pakistan highlight the need for tailored policy approaches.

**Keywords:** Women, Political Rights, Gender Equity, Logit.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Political Economy underscores the intricate relationship between gender equity in political rights and, its profound impact on gender parity within the economic domain. It posits that when women are afforded equal political rights, they are better situated to advocate for and, implement policies that foster gender equity in economic spheres (Htun & Weldon, 2010; Jalalzai, 2004). This, in turn, contributes to the development of more inclusive and, prosperous societies. In the specific context of Pakistan, a nation where women represent a substantial 48.52% of the population (World Bank, 2019) and, actively participate in various facets of society, gender disparities continue to persist within the political sphere. Despite the Constitution of Pakistan guaranteeing fundamental rights to women, including political rights, there remains a stark underrepresentation of women in political decision-making roles. Globally, women's representation in political arenas stand at merely 15%, highlighting the widespread challenges women face in their pursuit of political empowerment (UNDP, 2005). The challenge of women's political participation and, the protection of their rights persists in many developing countries, including Pakistan.

Despite being a developing nation with a growing economy, Pakistani women have actively sought involvement in government and, the development of female-oriented civil society. The Constitution of Pakistan enshrines the protection of women's rights under national legislation. Article 25 guarantees equity before the law and, equal protection (Arstein-Kerslake & Flynn, 2016), explicitly stating that there should be no discrimination based on sex. Additionally, Articles 32 and, 34 in the Principles of Policy chapter ensure women's full participation in all spheres of national life (Syed et al., 2009). However, in reality, women continue to face political marginalization and, gender-based discrimination. Pakistan has witnessed significant political violence against women, with tragic cases such as the assassination of former Prime Minister

Benazir Bhutto in 2007 and, women's rights activist Zille Huma Usman in the same year (Rodgers, 2008). The attack on Malala Yousafzai, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, in 2012 further underscores the challenges women face in advocating for their rights. Pakistan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1996, with the condition that no policy or law conflicting with Islamic principles would be drafted (Blanchfield, 2011; Chresna, 2013; Weiss, 2003). Despite the passage of years, CEDAW implementation remains inadequate, with issues persisting in women's participation as voters and, candidates. The establishment of women's wings within political parties, such as Pakistan Tehreek Insaf Women's Wing, has elicited mixed opinions, with some viewing it as isolating and, others as a strategy to promote women's political access (Jamal, 2013; Patchamuthu et al., 2018; Waseem, 2022). Regardless, women's participation in government remains limited, primarily due to conservative interpretations of the country's laws.

To understand, this complex issue better, it is crucial to delve into the societal norms and, perceptions that shape the dynamics of political empowerment in Pakistan. Norms in a society may play a pivotal role in influencing not only the allocation of political rights but also their effective exercise (Jayachandran, 2021; Platteau, 2015). The belief that "Men make better political leaders than women do" is a perfect example/case of how these perceptions/norms/prejudices persist. Considering that, such notions, can/may hinder women's political activities. This can further limit their opportunities such as to engage meaningfully in the political spheres. This lack of women representation in political sphere, as mentioned before, can, in turn, hinder the formulation of important policies that may promote gender equity in economic spheres (Baniamin & Jamil, 2022). However, let's say that it is very essential to transform the potential of political strength in shaping these norms and, cultures.

We may predict that when women have equal political rights and, representation, they can also challenge and, may also change the existing gender scenarios (Bradshaw et al., 2019; Cockcroft et al., 2009; Kittilson, 2006; Macchiavello et al., 2020; Njagi & Onyango, 2019). Moreover, we say that as these kinds of policies are implemented, they may significantly contribute in reducing gender-based economic inequalities. Furthermore, fostering more inclusive economic growth. Moving ahead, the significant research problem that we found is that women, often, being underrepresented in Pakistan's parliament, which extends beyond politics, carry a significant social and, economic consequence. The limited/prohibited (culturally) involvement of women in shaping policies will hamper the course of development of gender-inclusive economic policies.

We thus say that despite Pakistan's constitution advocating for gender equity, the enduring challenge of women's under-representation in the parliament persists and, may lead to severe consequences. For example, with only twenty-one percent of parliamentarians being only female (Rubab et al., 2020). Now, this issue becomes even more pronounced and, severe in the National Assembly (NA). NA comprises of 342 members. Out of that, female representation are mere 3 percent (when excluding reserved seats).

In this study, we dig into the socio-economic factors shaping how people view women's political rights in Pakistan. By exploring these views, we aim to uncover the barriers that keep women from participating in and, being represented in politics. This insight will help us create effective strategies to boost gender equity in Pakistan's political scene. We start by reviewing existing research on gender and, political rights, focusing on Pakistan's case. The paper is organized as follows: after this introduction,

we will review the literature on gender and, political rights. Then, we will analyze Pakistan's socio-economic land, scape, highlighting provincial differences. We will present our analysis of public perceptions and, discuss the implications for policy and, future research. This research aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 (Gender Equity) and, SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). It aims to break down barriers to women's political participation and, foster a more equitable society. The next section will review the literature, identify research gaps, and, outline our study's contributions. Following that, we will present the conceptual framework, results, and, conclusions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Women's political rights have been a long debate and, research worldwide. Political participation are crucial for gender equity and, women's empowerment. This literature review explores the status of women's political rights, while, carefully examining variations across focus on Pakistan. A major leap in studies, forward came with the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 (Blanchfield, 2011; Chresna, 2013; Weiss, 2003). This treaty, has been crucial in advancing gender equity or you can say women's political rights. Literature shows that signatory nations have been encouraged to enact legal and, policy reforms to enhance women's political participation. Also, many countries have introduced gender quotas and, affirmative action measures to counteract the under-representation of women in politics. These strategies, however, including reserved seats or cand, idate quotas, have succeeded in boosting women's political involvement.

A study predicts that the situation in Muslim-majority countries varies widely. In Bangladesh and, Indonesia, for instance, female heads of state have marked progress in political empowerment. Yet, the impact of Islamic law on women's political participation is a complex issue and, needs to be explored deeper (Koburtay et al., 2023). Cultural and, societal factors, along with different interpretations of religious texts and, understand, ings, significantly affect women's political roles. Even where women hold leadership positions, substantial gender inequalities persist in other areas and, needs to be explored deeper. Challenges such as gender-based discrimination, limited educational opportunities for women, and, traditional roles remain prevalent and, requires further research (Anker et al., 2003; Kadam, 2004).

Another study shows that\ nations without religious-based legal systems or where robust civil societies and, progressive policies exist; they often see higher levels of women's political participation (Chaney & Sahoo, 2020; Cockcroft et al., 2009; Mukhlis & Mustofa, 2022). These countries exemplify gender-inclusive policies, and, women in good political positions. Developed nations, such as those in the West, show relatively established women's political rights (Cuzick et al., 2008; Fauzi et al., 2020; Jayachran, 2021; Njagi & Onyango, 2019; Smith, 2002). They implement various policies, like gender quotas, anti-discrimination laws, and, supportive childcare systems, to promote gender balance in politics.

Pakistan's political scenarios has seen notable changes regarding women's political rights and movements since last years. The 2017 Elections Act mandated reserved seats for women in the parliament (Muhammad, Rahim, et al., 2019; Qureshi & Ahmad, 2022). Studies have further shown varying poverty rates based on different definitions; calorie intake; 21%, basic needs; 29%, income poverty; 30%, the Poverty of Opportunity Index; 44%, and, the Human Poverty Index; 47%, (Hossain, 2014; Kabeer,

2003; Lan et al., 2022; Malhotra et al., 2002; Njagi & Onyango, 2019). Challenges like violence against women in politics are significant, with female politicians often targeted and needs to be explored deeper (Ali & Khan, 2007; Krook, 2017; Montoya & Roland, sen Agustín, 2013). Barriers to women's education and, employment also limit their political engagement (Iversen et al., 2010; Jalalzai, 2004; Jevons, 1879). Resistance to women in leadership roles further complicates the situation and needs to be explored deeper. Efforts to combat these issues include legal reforms and, awareness campaigns against political violence. Nevertheless, Pakistan still has a long way to go to achieve gender equity and, full political rights for women, which is highly being mentioned in researches too.

Globally, women's political rights have evolved considerably, influenced by various factors (Htun & Weldon, 2010). While some countries, such as developed ones, have made significant progress, others face unique cultural, and, socioeconomic challenges. International agreements, gender quotas, and, affirmative action have been crucial in advancing women's political rights (Bari, 2005). Pakistan's experience highlights both progress and, ongoing obstacles in enhancing women's political rights, which is highly being mentioned in researches too. Despite regional variations, the global (UNOM WHO, UNICEF, UN Women) push for gender equity and, women's empowerment continues to drive these changes (Fulcher et al., 2023; Muhammad, Bhatti, et al., 2019).

Moreover, in the case of Pakistan, poverty is experienced differently across class, gender, region, and, urban-rural divides. Rural areas such as those in baluschistan especially, suffer higher poverty rates than urban ones, whether measured by income poverty or broader indicators (Chaudhry & Rahman, 2009; Khan et al., 2021; Mahmud et al., 2012). About three-quarters of the country's poor live in rural areas, and, rural poverty is increasing even as urban poverty declines. Gender and, poverty are significantly globally linked, with 70% of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty being women (Marcoux, 1998). This "feminization of poverty" shows that women are disproportionately affected by poverty and, are among the most vulnerable. Gender dynamics heavily influence how women experience poverty, including disparities in food distribution and, resource allocation within households. Female children in poorer households often face higher rates of chronic malnutrition (Kabeer, 2003; Lan et al., 2022; Malhotra et al., 2002; Njagi & Onyango, 2019).

We see that Pakistan ranks low on gender development indices, with a Gender-related Development Index rank of 120 out of 146 countries and, a Gender Empowerment Measurement rank of 92 out of 94 countries, which is very worrisome (Tabassum et al., 2010). Gender disparities in crucial social sectors are increasing. Macroeconomic policies such as stabilization, liberalization, and, structural adjustments have disproportionately affected women and requires further innovations. Though macro-level data on structural adjustment programs (SAP) is scarce (Elson, 1995; Peabody, 1996), micro-level studies show negative effects like increased unemployment, inflation, declining real wages, and, reduced caloric intake for the poor, including many women (Cheston & Kuhn, 2002; Mujahid, 2014; Shohel et al., 2023).

Economic crises and, structural adjustments have hurt women's roles as producers, household managers, and, mothers. The situation worsened with inflation (reaching to double digits now) from reduced food subsidies, impacting women's roles in managing households, especially concerning very basic or essentials like wheat and, oil (Bano, 2009). Reductions in public social sector spending added to women's

burdens, increasing their responsibilities for their children's futures. Female-headed households surged but suffered badly, but often these households were among the poorest, as women typically earned less (Chant, 2004; Fuwa, 2000; Horrell & Krishnan, 2007). The Pakistan 2010 Program, outlining around 16 national development goals, aims to enhance women's status. However, the gap between policy intentions and, actual implementation remains a significant hurdle since always. Discriminatory laws, such as the Hudood Ordinance and, laws of evidence ( have always been in critics), contradict the constitutional guarantee of equal rights (Lau, 2007; Saeed, 2004). Although there is recognition of gender issues in policies and, development plans, the gap between intent and, implementation hinders progress. Institutional support, policy contradictions, and, resource constraints have impeded effective gender equity measures and require further deliberations.

Addressing these challenges and, strengthening civil society's role is crucial for advancing gender equity in Pakistan is a big challenge (Kittilson, 2006; Njagi & Onyango, 2019). While many studies focus on contemporary factors, few explore historical comparisons over the past decade, missing insights into evolving societal norms and, perceptions shaping women's political rights (Diekman & Schneider, 2010; Iversen et al., 2010; Jalalzai, 2004; Jevons, 1879; Loring, 2018). This study carefully aim to bridge this prevalent research gap by deeply examining the determinants of women's political rights and. Moreover, their role in promoting gender equity in Pakistan needs to be celebrated.

## THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In the context of women, achieving equal political rights to men, the Political Economy Theory makes an important base for this study. This theory highlights the link between political rights and, economic conditions, showing that how this relationship, in particular, can greatly impact women's empowerment and, their role in politics (Jevons, 1879). When women have political rights equal to men, it means they can influence economic policies and, decisions. This gender equity can further lead to more inclusive and, a more gender- sensitive economic policies/approach. An example being that policies should address the gender wage gap, support women entrepreneurs, and, ensure fair access to economic opportunities are more likely to be implemented when women are politically active and, influential.

Moreover, with equal bases of political rights, women can surely advocate for economic policies that meet their specific needs, such as affordable childcare (day care facilities for those who work), maternity leave, and, protection from work-place harassment and even discrimination. The Political Economy Theory highlights, how gender equity in political rights, directly (indirectly as well) impacts gender equity in economic outcomes (Peterson, 2006). It shows that, when women have equal political rights, they are better performers. They are more able to push for and, implement policies that promote gender equity in the economy.

The Figure 1 shows a visual representation of the intricate relationships between key concepts related to women's political rights, economic conditions, and, their impact on policies and, well-being.

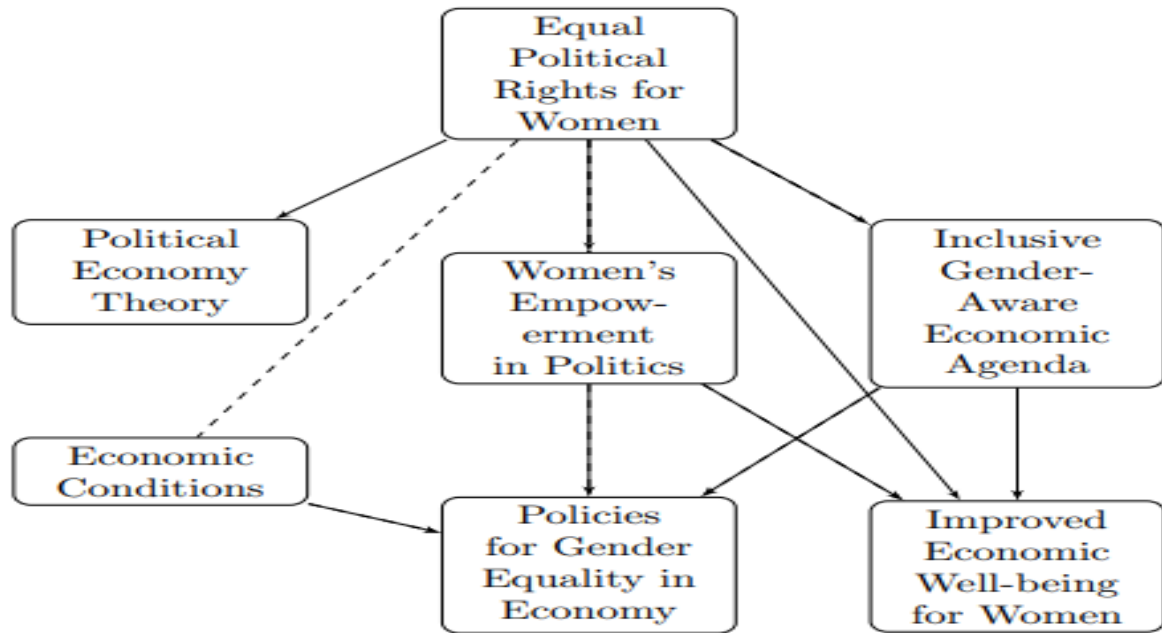


Figure 1. Concept Map and, Linkages in the Context of Women's Political Rights

### DATA AND, METHODOLOGY

The study examines the factors influencing women's political rights in Pakistan, using data from the World Value Survey (WVS) wave 7. It employs two key theoretical frameworks: life cycle theory and, modernization theory. These frameworks help analyze urban-rural disparities, gender-specific influences, and, both short-term and, long-term data through Logit models. High income, political engagement, and, opposition to military rule significantly impact support for women's political rights. These findings are vital for shaping policies and, interventions aimed at enhancing gender equity in Pakistan. Regional differences highlight the need for targeted approaches to advance women's political empowerment.

#### Model Specification

$$\text{Logit } (P (\text{Political rights})) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ Gender} + e \dots (1)$$

Equation 1 assesses the effect of gender on the likelihood of supporting political rights. Note that, in this equation, gender measures whether being male or female influences these perceptions.

$$\text{Logit } (P (\text{Political rights})) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ Gender} + \beta_2 \text{ Age} + e \dots (2)$$

This model 2, particularly examines how age affects the likelihood of supporting political rights, comparing perceptions of older and, young.

$$\text{Logit } (P (\text{Political rights})) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ Gender} + \beta_2 \text{ Age} + \beta_3 \text{ Marital Status} + e \dots (3)$$

See equation (3), we investigate how marital status influences support for political rights, considering differences between married and, unmarried individuals.

$$\text{Logit } (P(\text{Political Rights})) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ Gender} + \beta_2 \text{ Age} + \beta_3 \text{ Marital Status} + \beta_4 \text{ Educational Status} + \beta_5 \text{ Income} + \beta_6 \text{ Priorities} + \beta_7 \text{ Political Satisfaction} + \beta_8 \text{ Military Rule} + \beta_9 \text{ Political Violence} \dots (5)$$

Equation (5) presents the final equation, which is estimated in next section.

**Table 1.**  
**Measurement Details for Final Model**

Variables	Reference From WVS	Question number	Reference Question Statement from WVS
<b>Dependent Variable:</b> Political Rights	E233		Democracy: Women have the same rights as men - on a 1 (Not essential) to 10 (essential) scale, if answer is greater than 4, it is coded as 1 showing an essential characteristic of democracy, otherwise=0
<b>Independent Variables</b>			
Gender/Sex: Male	X001		Sex of respondent =1 if Sex=male
Age	X003R		Respondent's Age recoded (3 intervals: 15-29, 30-49 and, 50 or more)
Marital Status	X007		Marital Status (1=yes, 0=otherwise)
Educational Status	X025R		Educational level   respondent: recoded ( <i>Upper Education, Middle Education, Lower Education</i> )
Income	X047R_WV		Subjective income level (recoded in 3 groups: <i>high income, medium income, low income</i> )
Priorities	A004		Important in life: Politics (Scale 1 to 10)
Political Satisfaction	E111_01		Satisfaction with the political system (Scale 1 to 10)
Military Rule	E116		Political system: Having the army rule (Scale 1 to 10)
Political Violence	E290		Justifiable: Political violence (Scale 1 to 10)

## RESULTS AND, DISCUSSION

The reliability of the logistic regression model hinges on meeting specific assumptions. To ensure robustness, we conducted several diagnostic tests. Link tests confirmed that the chosen link function was appropriate for our model. We also assessed the impact of individual data points using leverage statistics, identifying observations that could disproportionately affect the model's results. We addressed multicollinearity issues, which occur when predictors are highly correlated. Lastly, we examined residual plots to detect any potential non-linear relationships or patterns that might indicate model misspecification.

### Determinants of Women's political Rights

Note that in Baluchistan, perceptions of women's political rights are notably shaped by gender. Being female strongly correlates with viewing women's political rights as vital for gender equity. Economic factors, such as low income, don't significantly influence this perception in the province. Thus, gender appears to be the primary factor driving views on political rights, while economic status seems less impactful. Middle-level education positively affects this perception, indicating that education plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes towards gender equity. Age and, marital status do not notably affect perceptions in Baluchistan, suggesting they aren't key drivers here. Political priorities show variable significance, but high political satisfaction is positively linked to perceptions of women's rights, stressing the importance of being content with the political system. Opposition to military rule doesn't have a significant effect, whereas exposure to political violence has a negative impact, underscoring the need for peace and, security to advance gender equity.

Determinants of Women's political Rights: A provincial analysis

VARIABLES	(1) Baluchistan Logit	(2) KP Logit	(3) Punjab Logit	(4) Sindh Logit	(5) Pakistan Logit
female	<b>1 668***</b> (0 582)	<b>1 464***</b> (0 545)	<b>0 440***</b> (0 166)	0 142 (0 261)	<b>0 487***</b> (0 126)
low_income	-0 203 (0 451)	0 682 (0 697)	-0 199 (0 173)	<b>1 005***</b> (0 344)	0 0130 (0 136)
middle_education	<b>0 889**</b> (0 450)	<b>1 015**</b> (0 491)	0 0881 (0 164)	0 159 (0 256)	<b>0 249**</b> (0 124)
age_3intervals	0 410 (0 466)	-0 264 (0 402)	-0 0641 (0 132)	0 111 (0 200)	-0 0197 (0 102)
married	-0 498 (0 713)	<b>1 138**</b> (0 546)	0 0658 (0 215)	-0 427 (0 339)	-0 0174 (0 161)
Priorities	0 242 (0 219)	-0 124 (0 186)	<b>0 120*</b> (0 0732)	0 00834 (0 106)	0 0786 (0 0530)
political_satisfaction	<b>0 507**</b> (0 249)	-0 0710 (0 0571)	<b>0 0812***</b> (0 0282)	0 0711 (0 0440)	<b>0 0801***</b> (0 0205)
Military_rule	-0 120 (0 229)	-0 0794 (0 174)	<b>-0 258***</b> (0 0759)	-0 175 (0 107)	<b>-0 232***</b> (0 0537)
Political_Violence	-0 687 (0 498)	<b>-0 326***</b> (0 0899)	-0 0811 (0 0523)	-0 0596 (0 0688)	<b>-0 101***</b> (0 0355)
Constant	-1 010 (1 716)	<b>1 883**</b> (0 946)	<b>1 908***</b> (0 402)	<b>1 945***</b> (0 585)	<b>1 817***</b> (0 287)
Observations	220	342	1,538	630	2,730

Stand,ard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0 01, \*\* p<0 05, \* p<0 1

Note that in KP, gender again plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of women's political rights, with being female positively influencing these views. Low income is also positively associated with this perception, highlighting the significant role of economic factors in supporting gender equity. Middle-level education contributes positively to this perception, reinforcing the importance of education. Age does not significantly affect perceptions in KP, suggesting uniformity across age groups regarding women's political rights. Conversely, being married positively influences this perception, indicating marital status as a significant factor in KP. Political priorities and, high political satisfaction do not significantly impact perceptions here. Opposition to military rule has no significant effect, while exposure to political violence negatively influences perceptions.

Note that in Punjab, being female significantly relates to viewing women's political rights as crucial for gender equity, similar to other provinces. Economic factors, such as low income, do not notably impact this perception in Punjab. Middle-level education positively affects the perception, underscoring the role of education. Age does not significantly influence perceptions in Punjab, indicating a general consensus across age groups. Marital status also does not significantly affect perceptions, suggesting that being married may not be a key driver. Prioritizing politics positively influences perceptions, emphasizing political engagement's role. High political satisfaction is positively associated with this perception, reflecting the importance of contentment with the political system. Opposition to military rule is negatively associated with the perception, pointing to the importance of democratic governance. Exposure to political violence also negatively affects perceptions. Note that in Sindh, gender plays a major role, with being female positively associated with viewing women's political rights as essential for gender equity. Interestingly, low income is positively linked to this perception in Sindh, indicating that economic



empowerment strongly influences gender equity support here. However, middle-level education does not significantly affect this perception, suggesting that economic factors may be more critical than education. The 15-29 age group is positively associated with the perception, indicating that younger people in Sindh tend to have more progressive views. Marital status, political priorities, and, political satisfaction do not significantly impact this perception. Opposition to military rule and, exposure to political violence also lack significant effects in Sindh.

At the national level, being female remains a strong and, significant factor in shaping perceptions of women's political rights as crucial for gender equity. Both low income and, middle-level education are positively linked to this perception, reflecting the complex interplay of economic and, educational factors nationwide. The impact of age varies, with the 15-29 age group positively associated with this perception, suggesting younger individuals in Pakistan are more progressive in their views. Marital status, political priorities, and, political satisfaction do not significantly affect this perception at the national level. Opposition to military rule is not a significant factor, but exposure to political violence has a negative effect, highlighting the importance of peace and, security in promoting gender equity. Despite progress in women's political participation, significant barriers remain. Quotas ensure some representation, yet women hold only about 20% of parliamentary seats (UN Women Pakistan, 2023). Deep-seated patriarchal norms and, limited resources often hinder women's effective campaigning, particularly in rural areas (Bari, 2020; Sadiq, 2022). Additionally, the gender gap in labor force participation is substantial, around 86% (World Bank, 2024)

## CONCLUSION & POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In examining the factors influencing women's political rights in Pakistan, we used four different models. Each model provided a unique view of how these factors interact with gender, regional differences, and, urban-rural divides in Pakistan. The results predicted that high income, political satisfaction, and, opposition to military rule, are indeed the key factors in shaping how people see women's political rights. High income and, political engagement were found important, in case of Pakistan, but opposition to military rule was especially notable, reflecting a strong push for democracy. To promote women's political rights in Pakistan, policy makers need to design policies which carefully this address, while keeping in mind the complexity of the issue. Moreover, policymakers should aim to boost political engagement and, satisfaction of all citizens (not along women). They should also consider regional and, urban-rural differences in designing policies. Special efforts to further improve gender equity in politics must account for economic status, education, and, age, especially among women.

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**Consent to Participate:** Yes

**Consent for publication and Ethical approval:** Because this study does not include human or animal data, ethical approval is not required for publication. All authors have given their consent.

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