

# **Attitudes towards Women's Political Participation**

## **Base Line Survey**

**Aware Girls**

**Feb 2014**

## Preface

Aware Girls with the support of Common Wealth Foundation and Peace Direct started a program to strengthen democracy and improve good governance through political empowerment of young women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. The program was developed after Election Monitoring of General Elections 2013 by Aware Girls, which revealed the challenges to young women's participation in civic, political and electoral processes.

Under the Project Aware Girls conducted a baseline survey to research in depth the attitudes of the community towards women's political participation. The findings of the Survey will be used to improve Civil Society's initiatives for the political empowerment of young women. This Survey was conducted in District Swabi and District Mardan of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province Pakistan. This Survey was conducted by the young women activists trained by Aware Girls for active civic and political participation. 1,503 respondents took part in the Survey, out of whom 874 were females and 629 males.

Aware Girls is thankful to Common Wealth Foundation and Peace Direct for supporting Aware Girls' in achieving its aims of empowering women, strengthening democracy and building peace.

# The Survey

## Methodology:

A questionnaire of 29 Questions was developed by experts on women's political participation issues. Young women activists trained by Aware Girls was briefed on the use of Survey forms. These young women interviewed more than 1500 men and women from the community to find out their attitudes towards women's political participation. The data was tabulated and analyzed by Aware Girls' team and course content for Community meetings was designed according to the Survey Findings.

Six focus group discussions were conducted with men and women in District Mardan and Swabi to brainstorm and discuss the challenges to women's political and civic participation. The findings of the Focus Group discussion were added to the Survey Report.

## Summary of the Findings:

The main challenges identified through the survey were:

1. Mostly women vote by the choice of the male relatives, they are expected to follow the opinion of their male relatives when it comes to their right to decide about their vote
2. Women don't have permission from their families to take part in civic, political and electoral processes
3. The communities are aware of the lower participation of women in the political processes and less opportunities for women's political engagement
4. Women have lesser opportunities of engagement in public political campaigns and democratic processes
5. Lack of access of polling stations and lack of transportation poses a challenge to women's participation in electoral processes

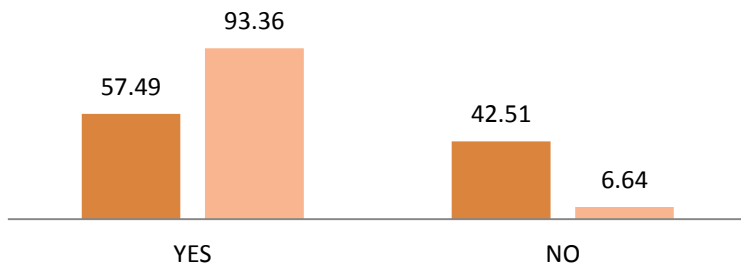
6. Politics is considered men's job, women are expected to fulfill their household gender roles. Leadership is assumed as men's role in the society. However, a large proportion of women is the opinion that politics is the job of both men and women.
7. Women's participation as voter or active political campaigner is considered un-islamic in different spheres of District Mardan and Swabi
8. Both men and women (mostly women) don't have access to the political activities and leaders of their communities.
9. It is considered inappropriate for women to take part in the public political campaigns.
10. Lack of National Identity Card restricts women from taking part in political processes.
11. Women's restricted mobility and limited access to information poses a great challenge to women's political participation.
12. The environment of political parties and male domination within in the political parties is a huge challenge for women's participation in the political processes. More women leadership will increase women's participation and engagement in the political processes.
13. If women are engaged and opportunities are created for women, more women will take part in the electoral and political processes
14. A large percentage of the participants (around 50%) favored Marshal Law (Army Rule) in comparison to democratic governments.
15. Most of the women were of the opinion that they don't have the capacity and skills to mobilize and engage in electoral and political processes.
16. Closing down of the female polling station was considered acceptable, and more than 50% of the people thought they don't need laws to bring the perpetrators to justice.

## The Findings

Q 1	Had you polled votes in the last election?	Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
	Yes	261	57.49	211	93.36	312	74.3	347	86.10
	No	193	42.51	15	6.64	108	25.7	56	13.90

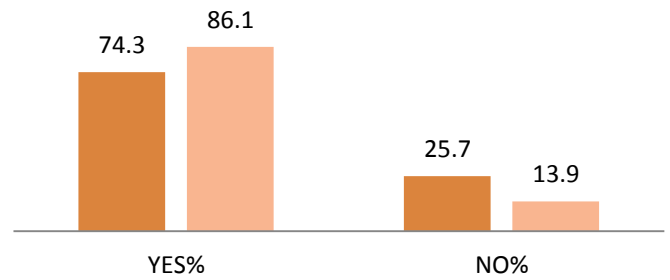
### Mardan

Female Male

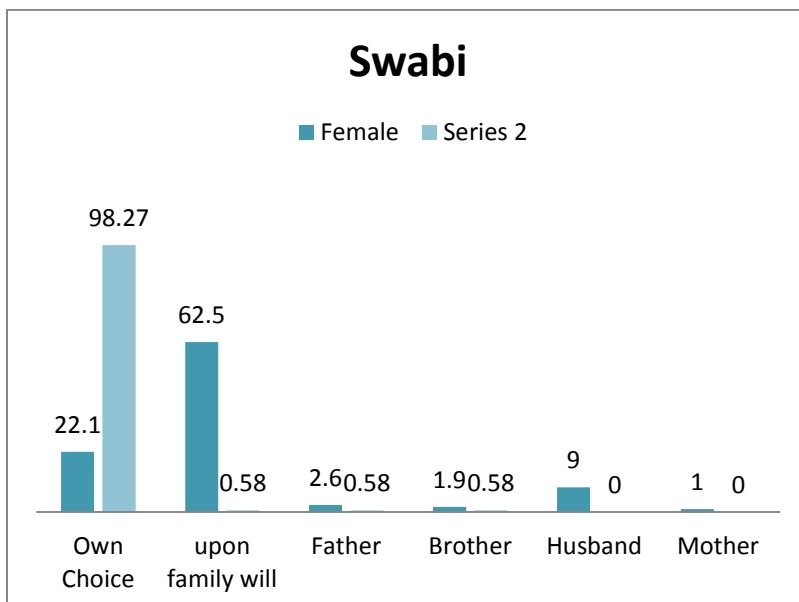
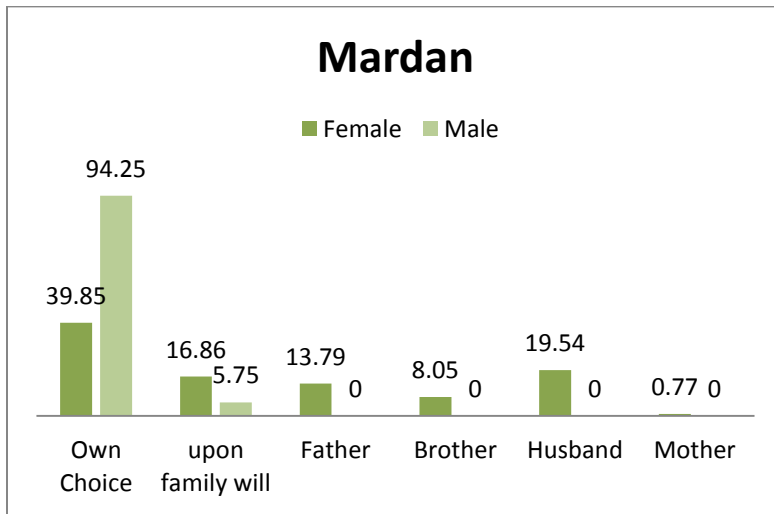


### Swabi

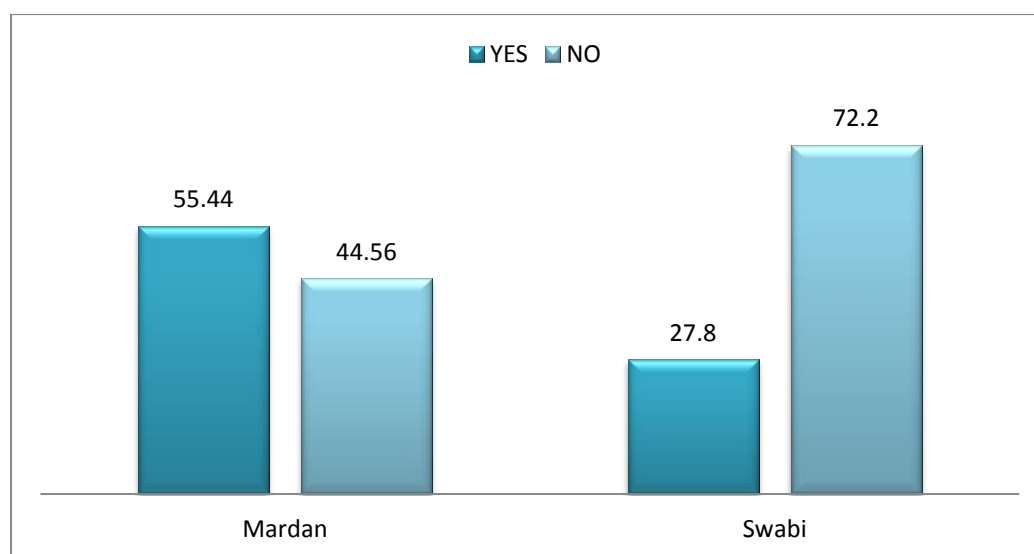
Female Male



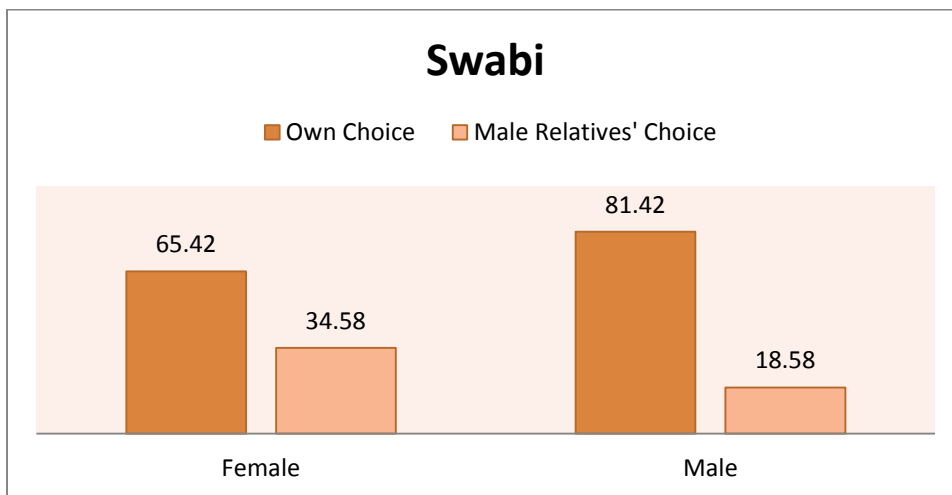
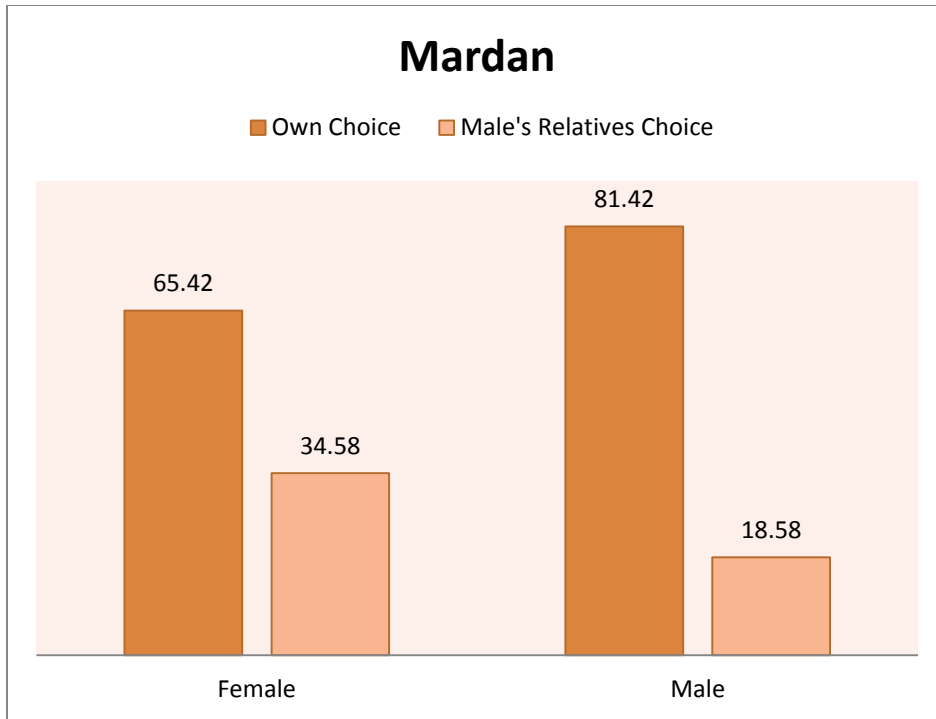
Q-2	Upon whom instructions you polled vote?	Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
	Own Choice	104	39.85	213	94.25	69	22.1	341	98.27
	upon family will	44	16.86	13	5.75	195	62.5	2	0.58
	Father	36	13.79	0	0.00	8	2.6	2	0.58
	Brother	21	8.05	0	0.00	6	1.9	2	0.58
	Husband	51	19.54	0	0.00	28	9.0	0	
	Mother	2	0.77	0	0.00	3	1.0	0	



		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q 3</b>	Was gender your reason for not polling vote? (This question is only for females)								
	Yes	107	55.44	0		30	27.8	0	0.00
	No	86	44.56	0		78	72.2	0	0.00
	If NO then Why?			0					
	No permission from family	18	20.93	0		36	46.2	0	0.00
	I do not like politics	16	18.60	0		17	21.8	0	0.00
	Poling stations was far away	40	46.51	0		14	17.9	0	0.00
	Polling station was closed down	12	13.95	0		11	14.1	0	0.00

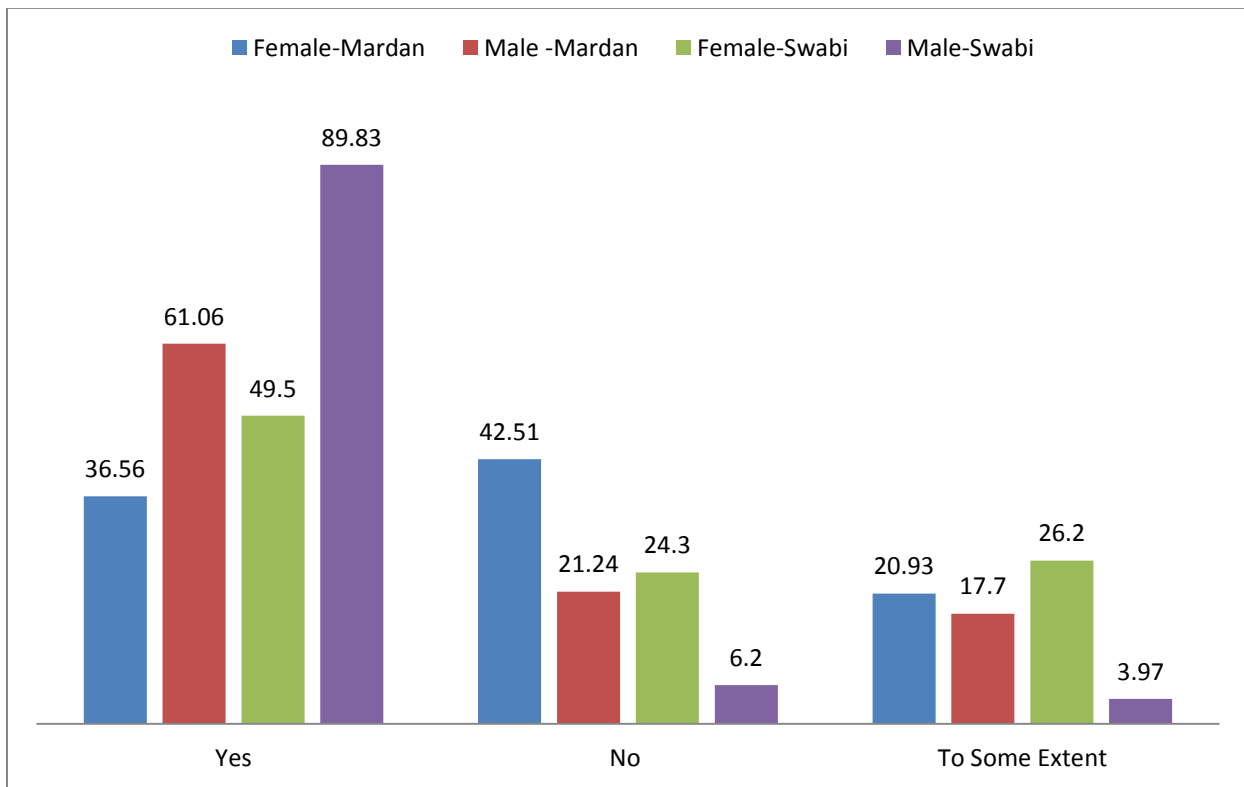


		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q 4</b>	In your opinion whom choice female should poll vote?								
	Own Choice	297	65.42	184	81.42	66	15.7	254	63.03
	Own father, brother ,or husband choice	157	34.58	42	18.58	354	84.3	149	36.97

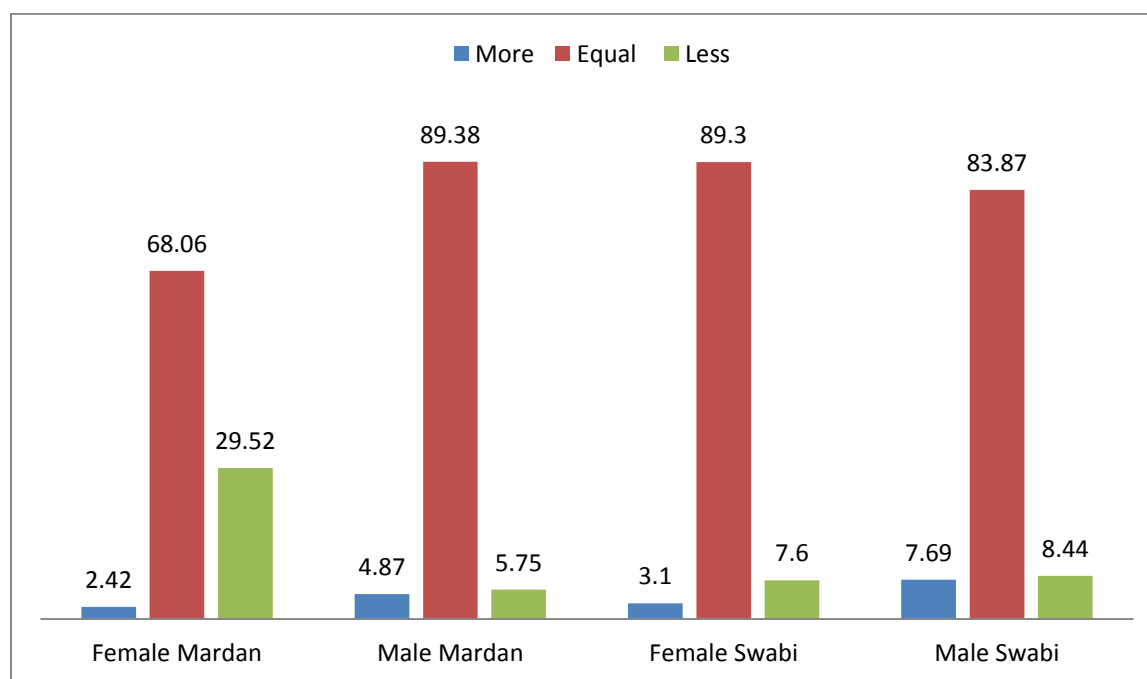




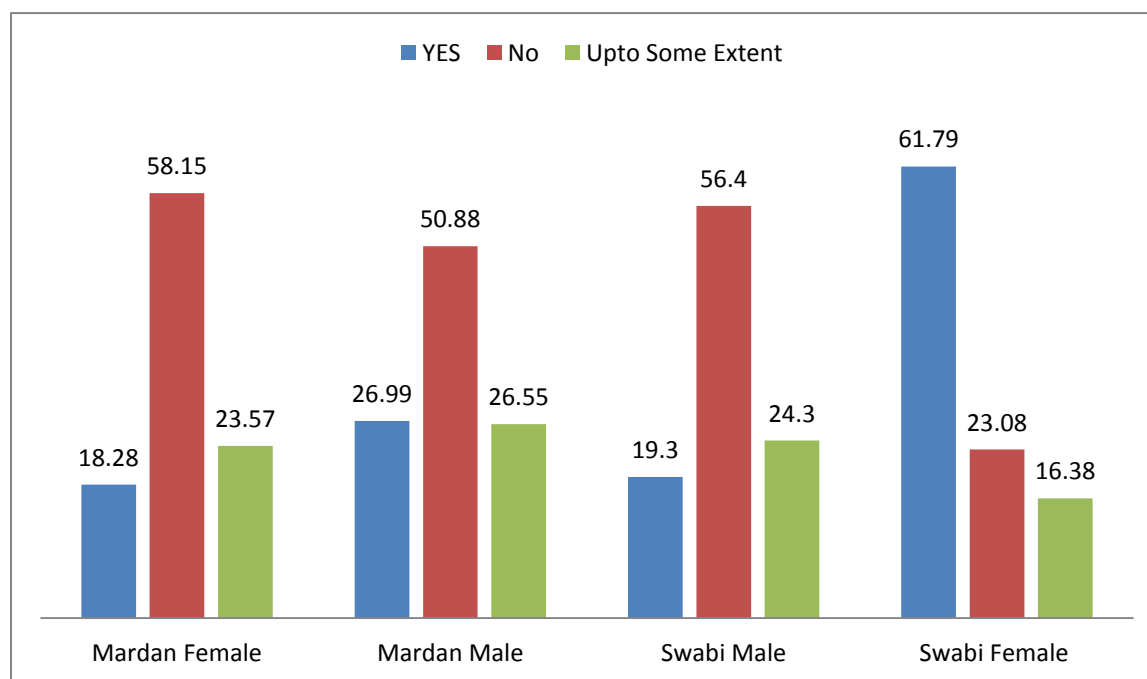
		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q 5</b>	<b>Do you have interest in country politics?</b>								
	Yes	166	36.56	138	61.06	208	49.5	362	89.83
	No	193	42.51	48	21.24	102	24.3	25	6.20
	To some extent	95	20.93	40	17.70	110	26.2	16	3.97



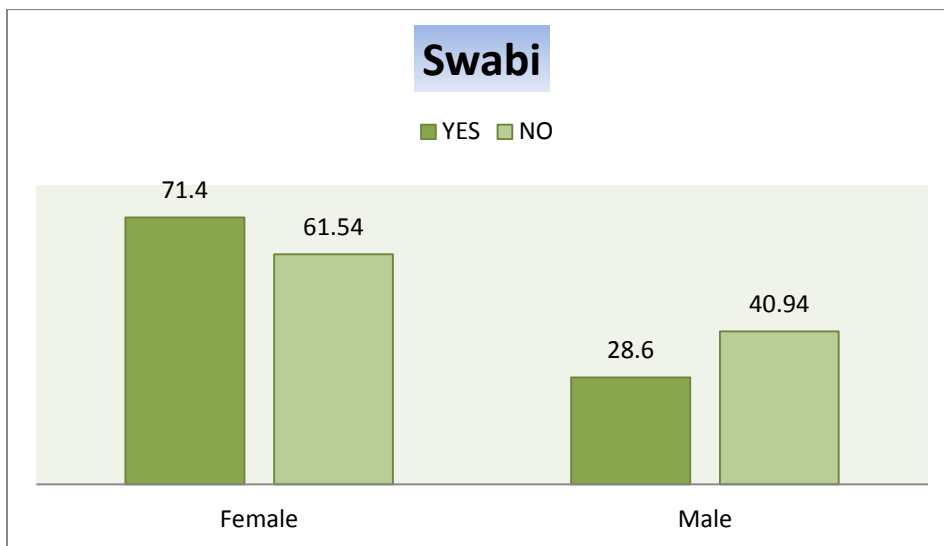
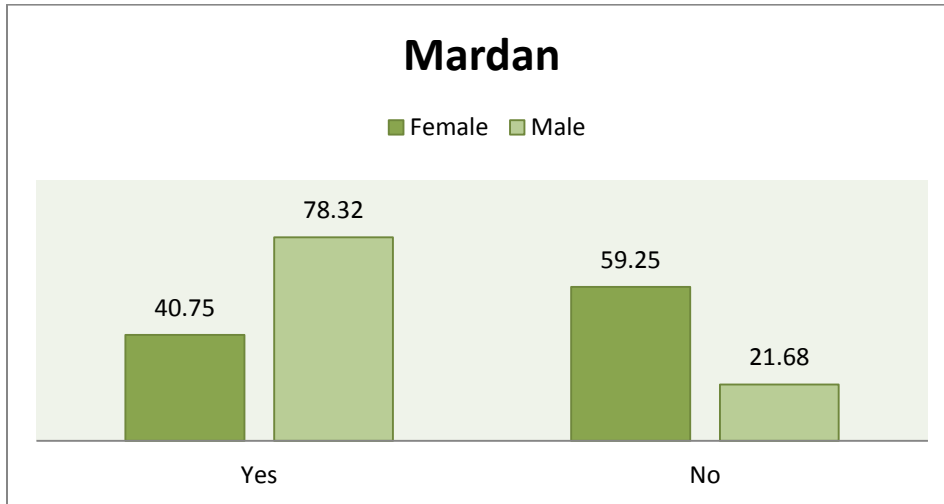
		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q 6</b>	<b>What in your opinion is the current ration of women's political participation compared to men?</b>								
	More than man	11	2.42	11	4.87	13	3.1	31	7.69
	Less	309	68.06	202	89.38	375	89.3	338	83.87
	Equal	134	29.52	13	5.75	32	7.6	34	8.44



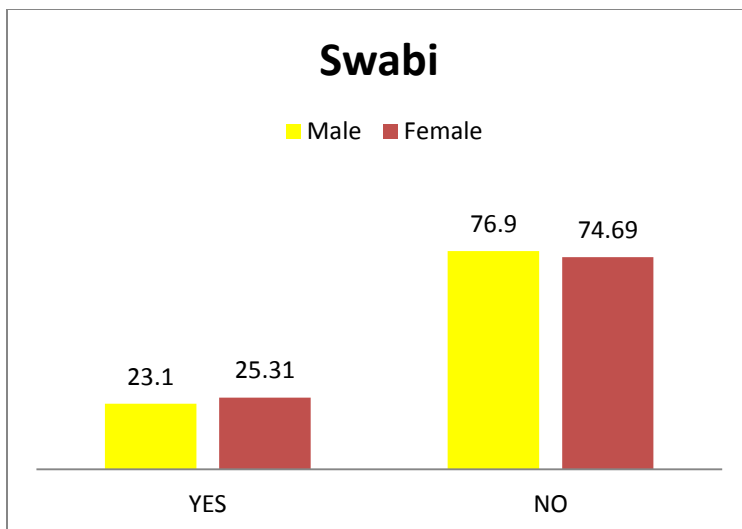
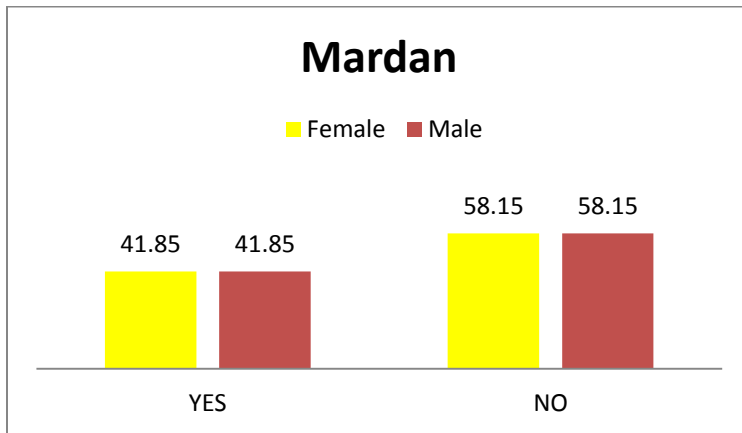
		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q 7</b>	<b>Are you satisfied from the current representation of females in politics?</b>								
	Yes	83	18.28	61	26.99	81	19.3	249	61.79
	No	264	58.15	115	50.88	237	56.4	93	23.08
	To some extent	107	23.57	60	26.55	102	24.3	66	16.38



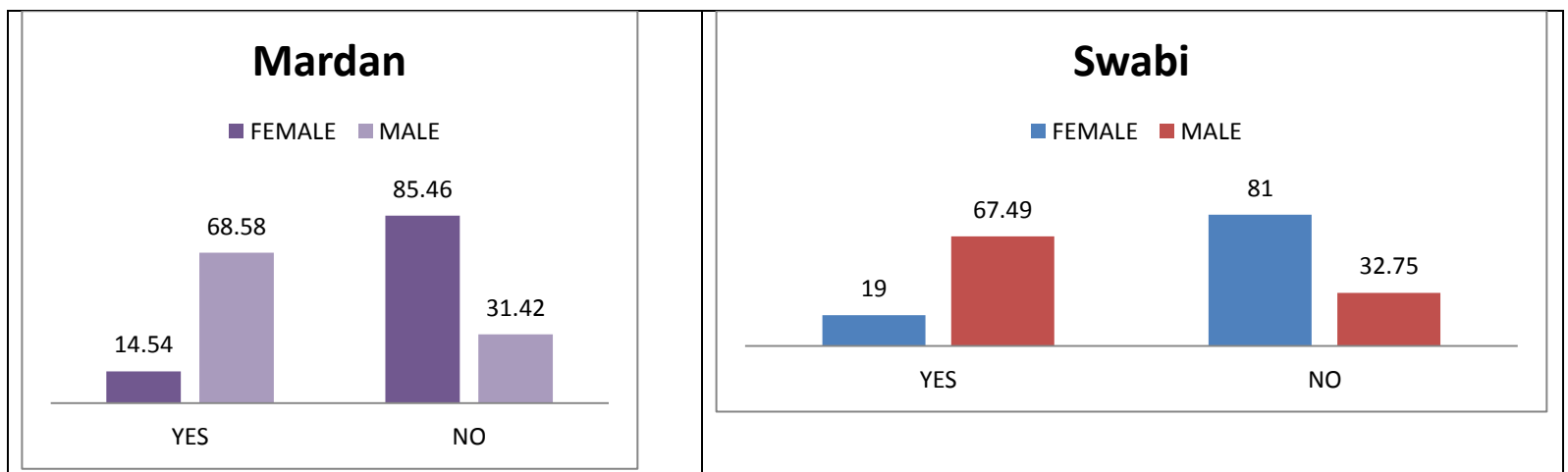
		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q 8</b>	<b>Do you think that election is only Men's job?</b>								
	Yes	185	40.75	177	78.32	300	71.4	248	61.54
	No	269	59.25	49	21.68	120	28.6	165	40.94



		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q9</b>	<b>Had any female participated in the previous government from your community/area?</b>								
	Yes	190	41.85	68	41.85	97	23.1	102	25.31
	No	264	58.15	158	58.15	323	76.9	301	74.69



		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q10</b>	<b>Have you ever participated in the political campaign/Assemblies?</b>								
	Yes	66	14.54	155	68.58	80	19.0	272	67.49
	No	388	85.46	71	31.42	340	81.0	132	32.75

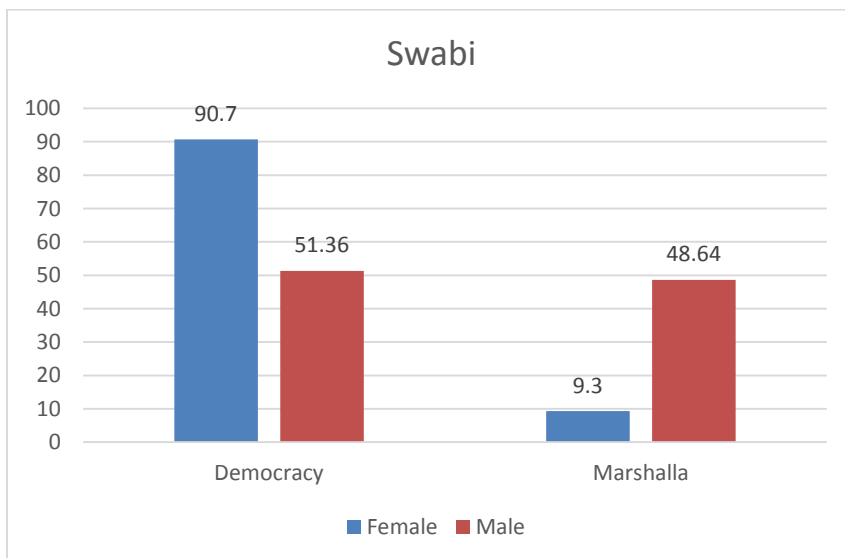
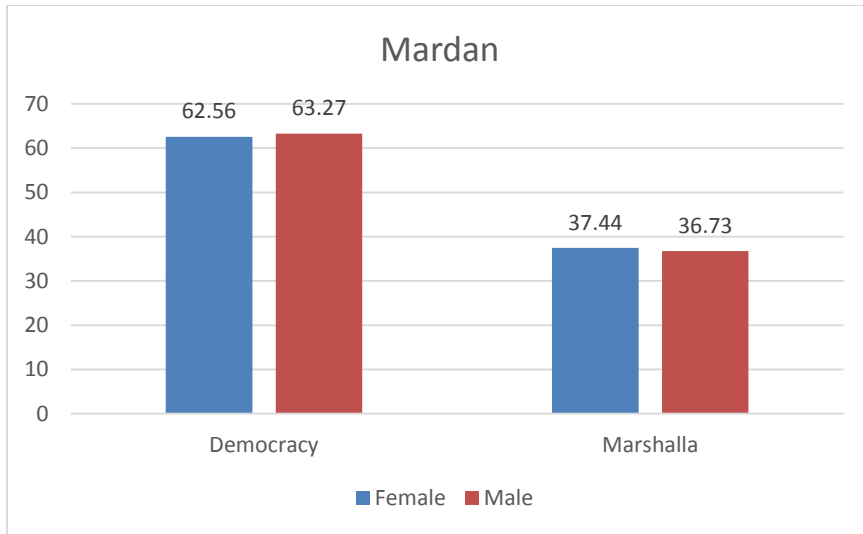


		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q11</b>	<b>If you get any opportunity ,will you participate in the election?</b>								0.00
	Yes	85	18.72	144	63.72	102	24.3	277	68.73
	No	369	81.28	40	17.70	112	26.7	126	31.27

		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
	If ,NO ,then Why								
	No permission from family	338	91.60	6	7.32	49	43.8	75	59.52
	Females participation is considered bad in our society	279	75.61	0	0.00	24	21.4		0.00
	No resources for participation in politics	132	35.77	34	41.46	33	29.5	102	80.95
	Islam does not permit this	37	10.03	0	0.00	67	59.8		0.00
	Other	49	13.28	42	51.22	30	26.8	56	44.44

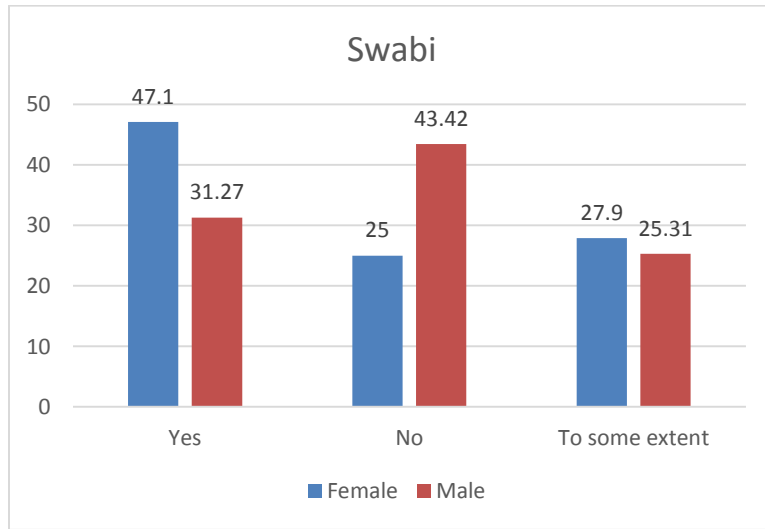
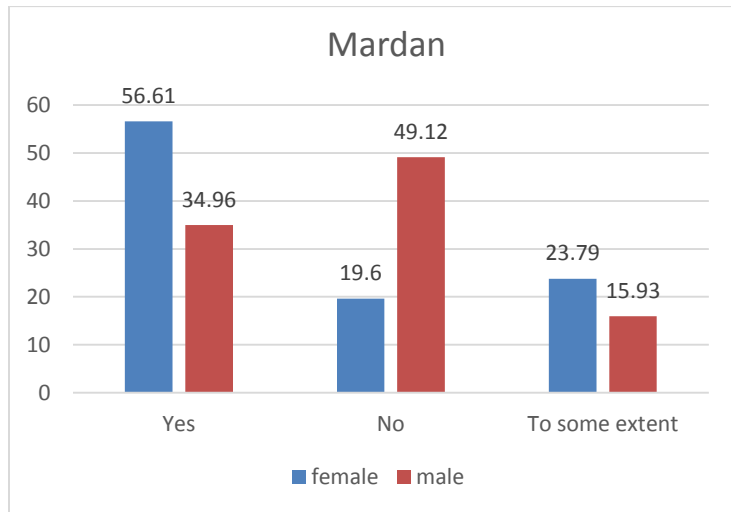
		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q12</b>	<b>If you get the opportunity in politics ,then for whom you will work?</b>								
	For Women	212	46.70	53	23.45	196	46.7	19	4.71
	For Male	16	3.52	40	17.70	15	3.6	76	18.86
	For both	226	49.78	133	58.85	209	49.8	306	75.93

		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q13</b>	<b>Which type of government you are in favour?</b>								
	Democracy	284	62.56	143	63.27	381	90.7	207	51.36
	Marshalla	170	37.44	83	36.73	39	9.3	196	48.64

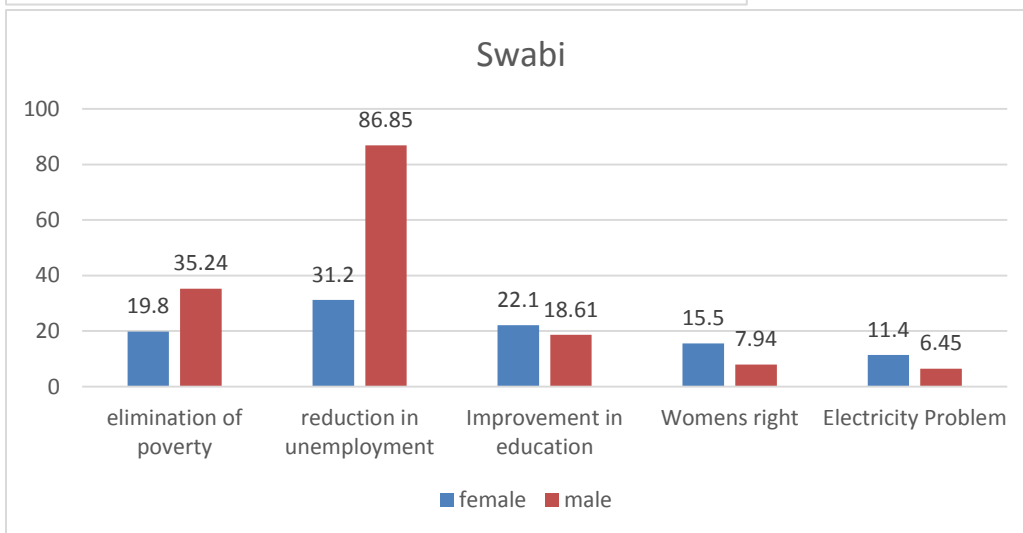
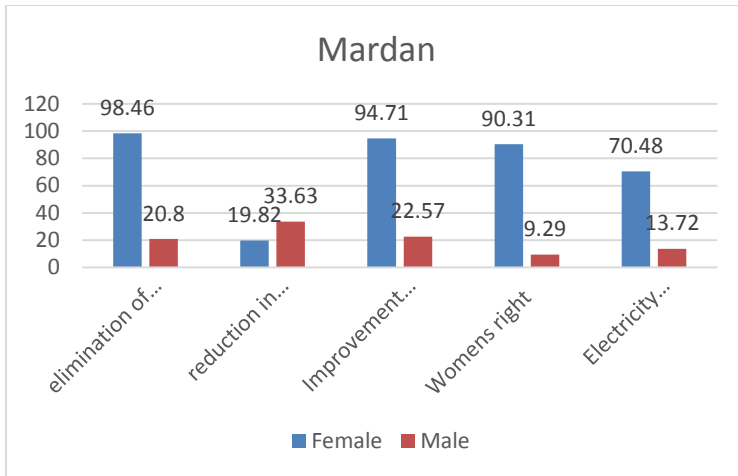




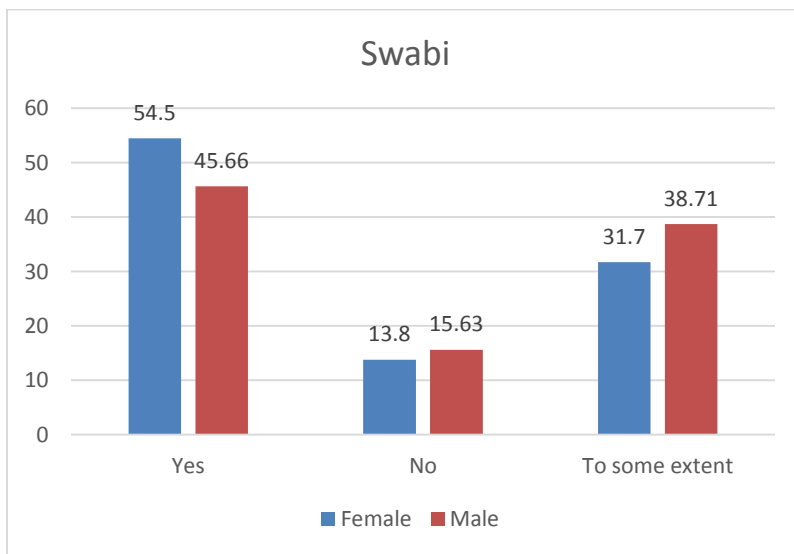
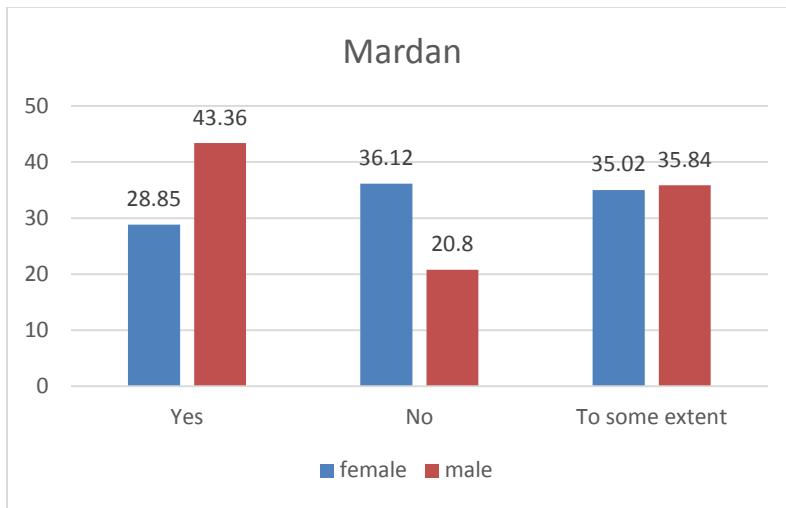
		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q14</b>	<b>If you take part in politics ,will you get the help of male members (for women) or female members (for men)?</b>								
	Yes	257	56.61	79	34.96	198	47.1	126	31.27
	No	89	19.60	111	49.12	105	25.0	175	43.42
	To some extent	108	23.79	36	15.93	117	27.9	102	25.31



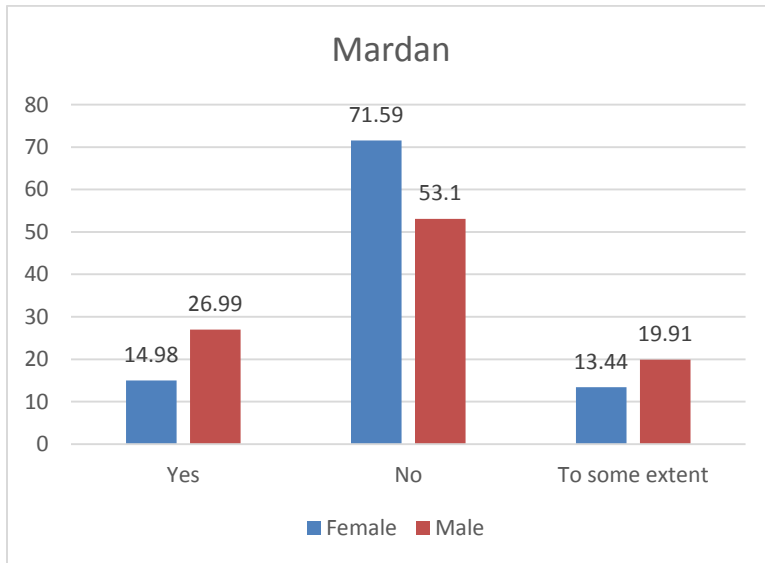
		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q15</b>	<b>After Having position of a politician what kind of change will you bring in country?</b>								
	elimination of poverty	447	98.46	47	20.80	83	19.8	142	35.24
	reduction in unemployment	90	19.82	76	33.63	131	31.2	350	86.85
	Improvement in education	430	94.71	51	22.57	93	22.1	75	18.61
	Womens right	410	90.31	21	9.29	65	15.5	32	7.94
	Electricity Problem	320	70.48	31	13.72	48	11.4	26	6.45



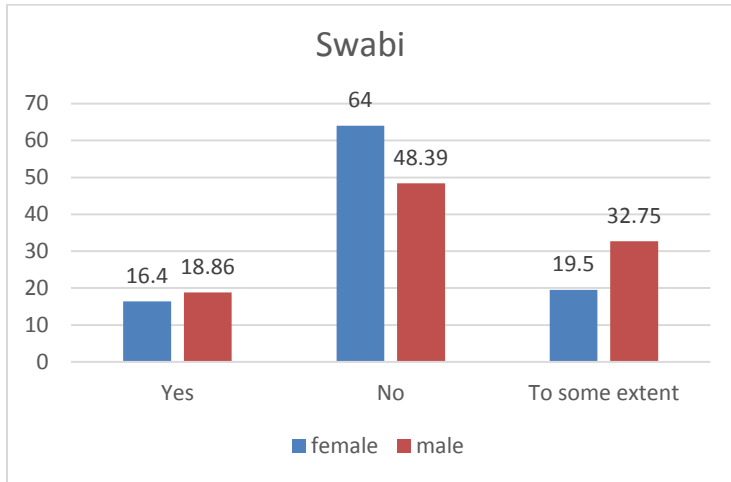
		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q16</b>	<b>Do you the have capacity to convince females for participation in politics?</b>								
	Yes	131	28.85	98	43.36	229	54.5	184	45.66
	No	164	36.12	47	20.80	58	13.8	63	15.63
	To some extent	159	35.02	81	35.84	133	31.7	156	38.71



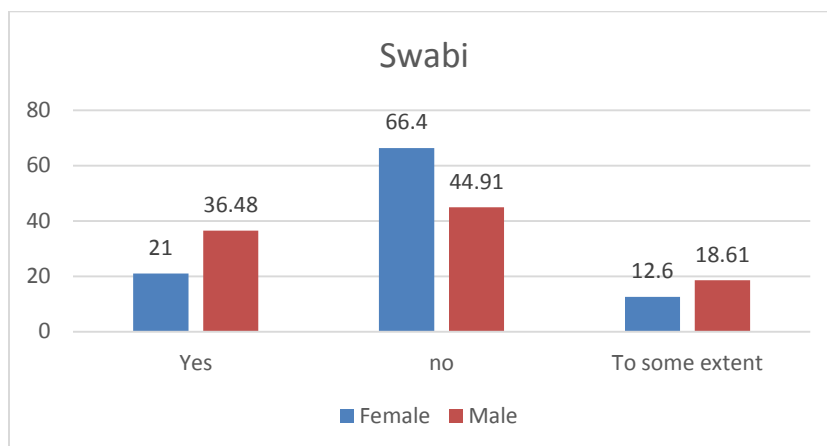
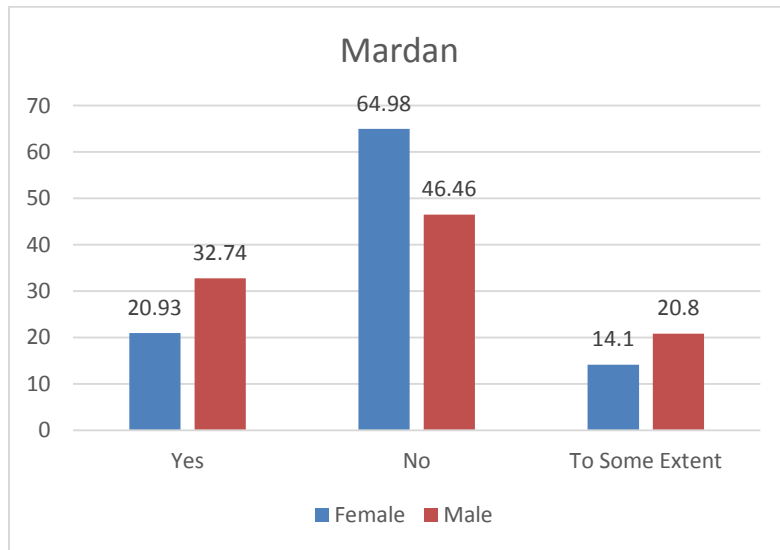
		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q17</b>	<b>Does the political leaders of your community works for the women development and their rights?</b>								
	Yes	68	14.98	61	26.99	69	16.4	76	18.86
	No	325	71.59	120	53.10	269	64.0	195	48.39



	To some extent	61	13.44	45	19.91	82	19.5	132	32.75
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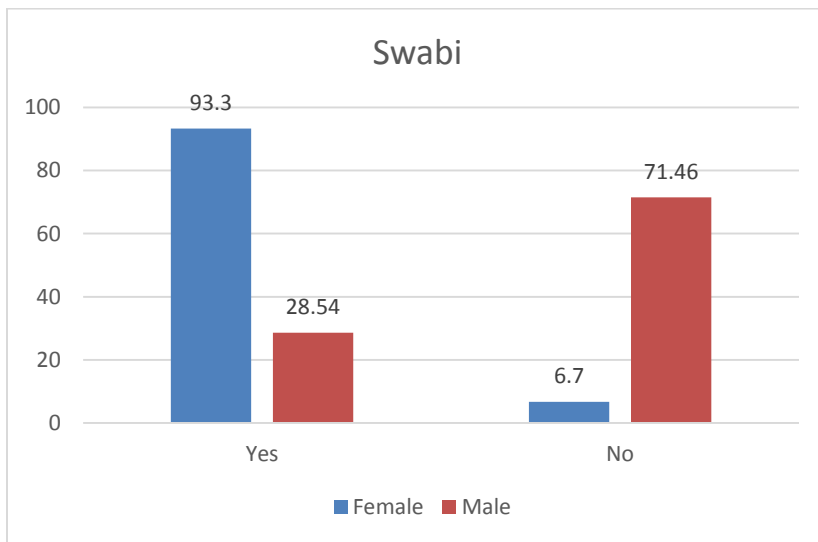
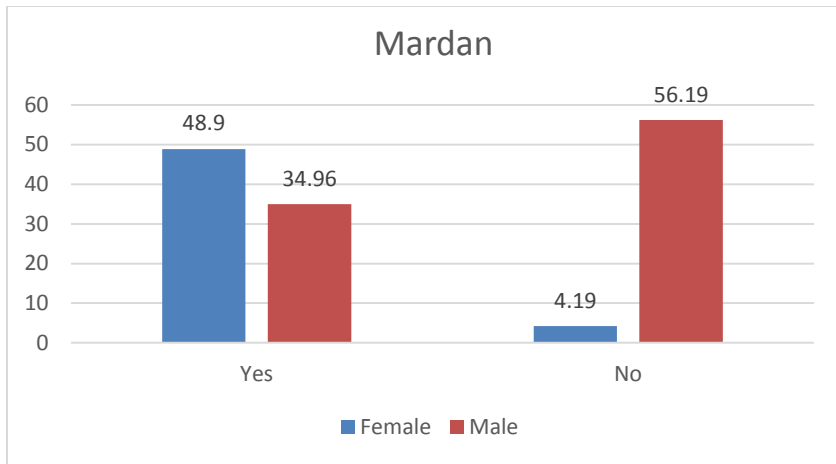
Q18	Do you have access to the political leader of your community for the solutions of your problems?	Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
	Yes	95	20.93	74	32.74	88	21.0	147	36.48
	No	295	64.98	105	46.46	279	66.4	181	44.91
	To some extent	64	14.10	47	20.80	53	12.6	75	18.61





		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q19</b>	<b>If from your community /area a female is nominated for local elections will you vote for her?</b>								
	Yes	222	48.90	79	34.96	392	93.3	115	28.54
	No	19	4.19	127	56.19	28	6.7	288	71.46

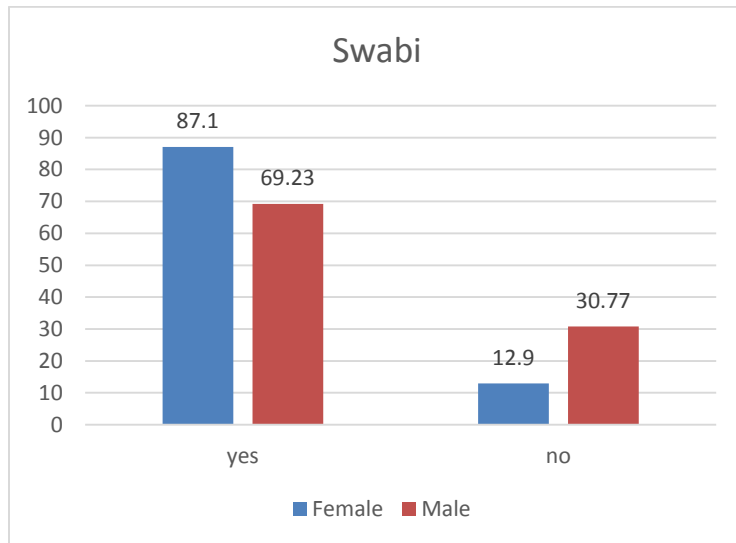
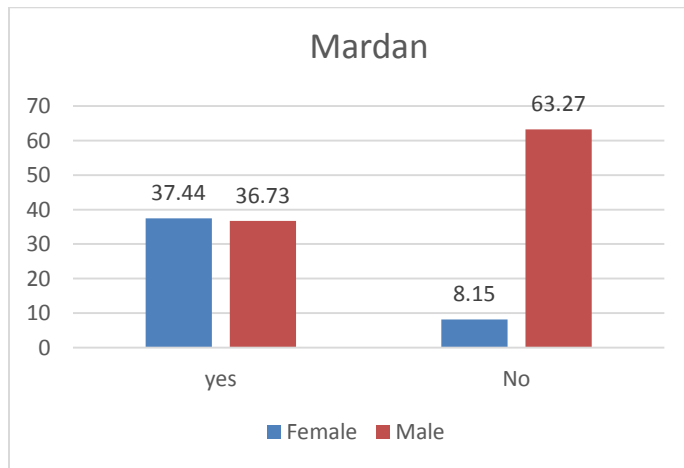
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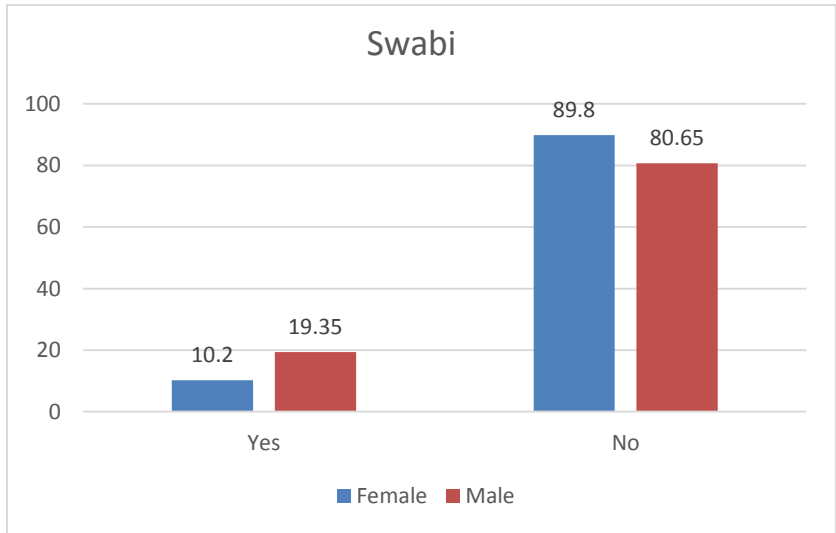
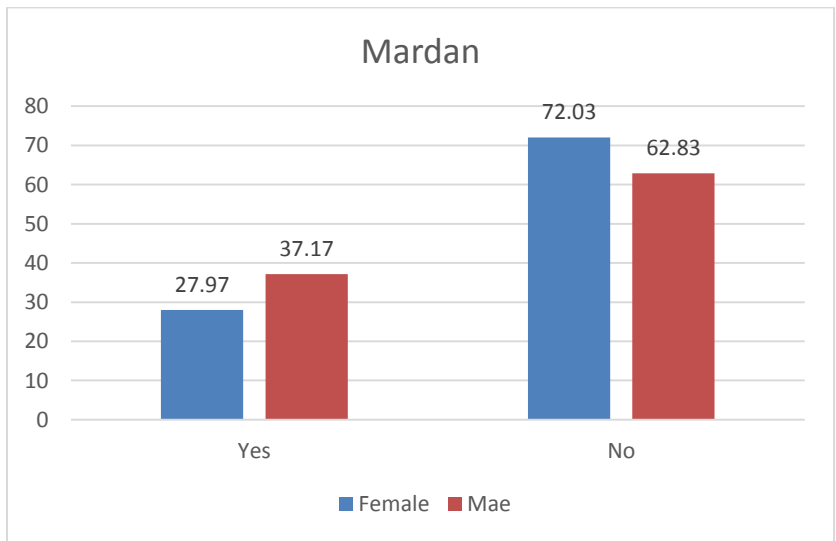
		Mardan		Swabi			
		Female Responses	%	Male Responses	%age	Female Responses	%age

<b>Q20</b>	<b>In your opinion,should a female become president/primeminister of country?</b>		0.00						
	Yes	170	37.44	83	36.73	366	87.1	279	69.23
	No	37	8.15	143	63.27	54	12.9	124	30.77





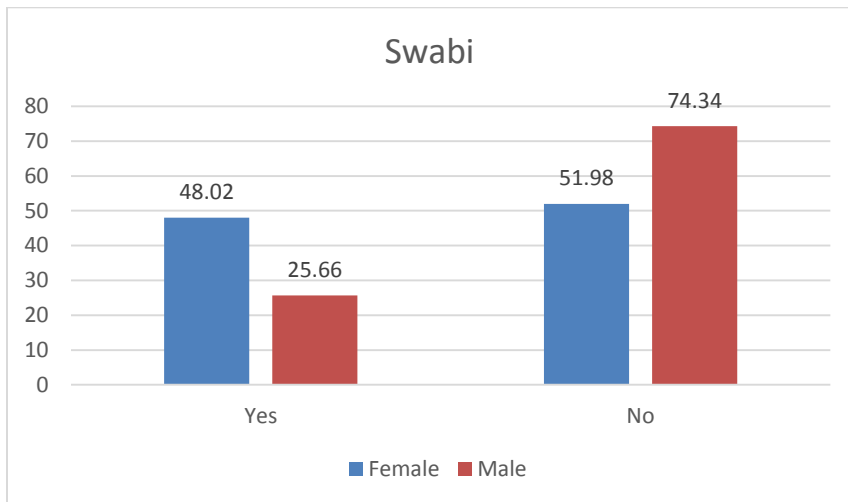
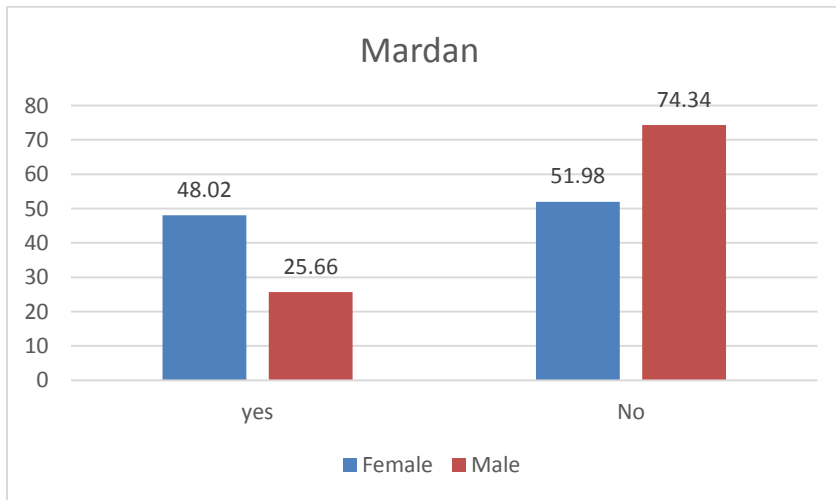
		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q21</b>	<b>In the previous elections, female polling stations were closed down, on the notion that it is against the customs. In your opinion was it legitimate step?</b>								
	Yes	127	27.97	84	37.17	43	10.2	78	19.35
	No	327	72.03	142	62.83	377	89.8	325	80.65



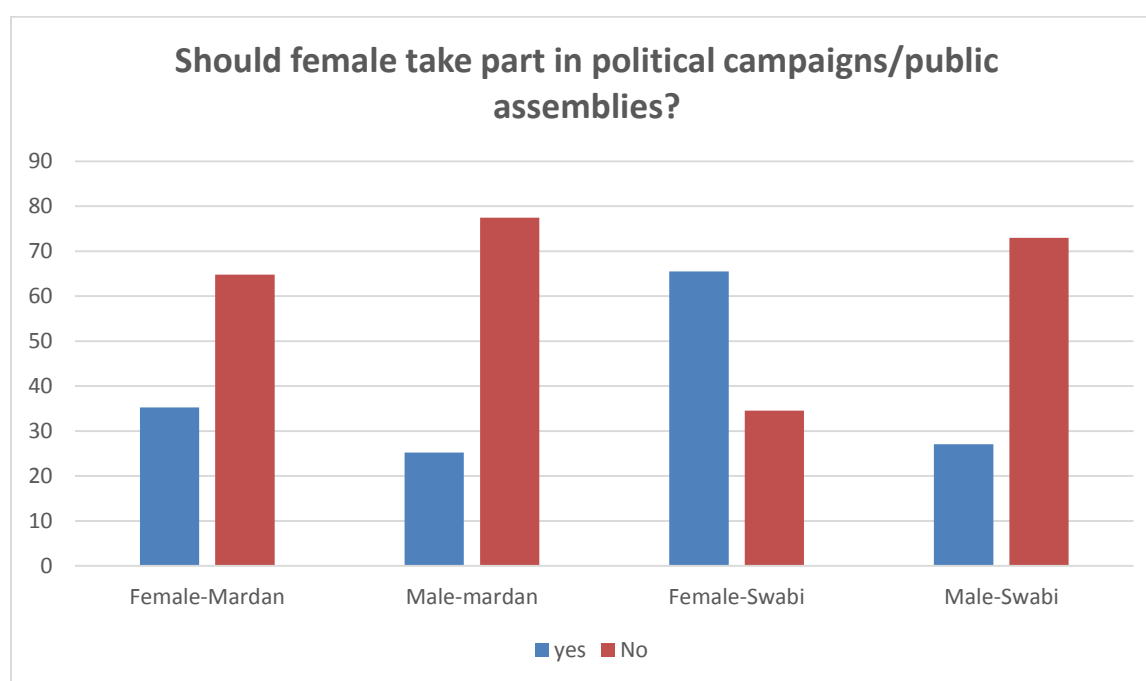
**Mardan**

**Swabi**

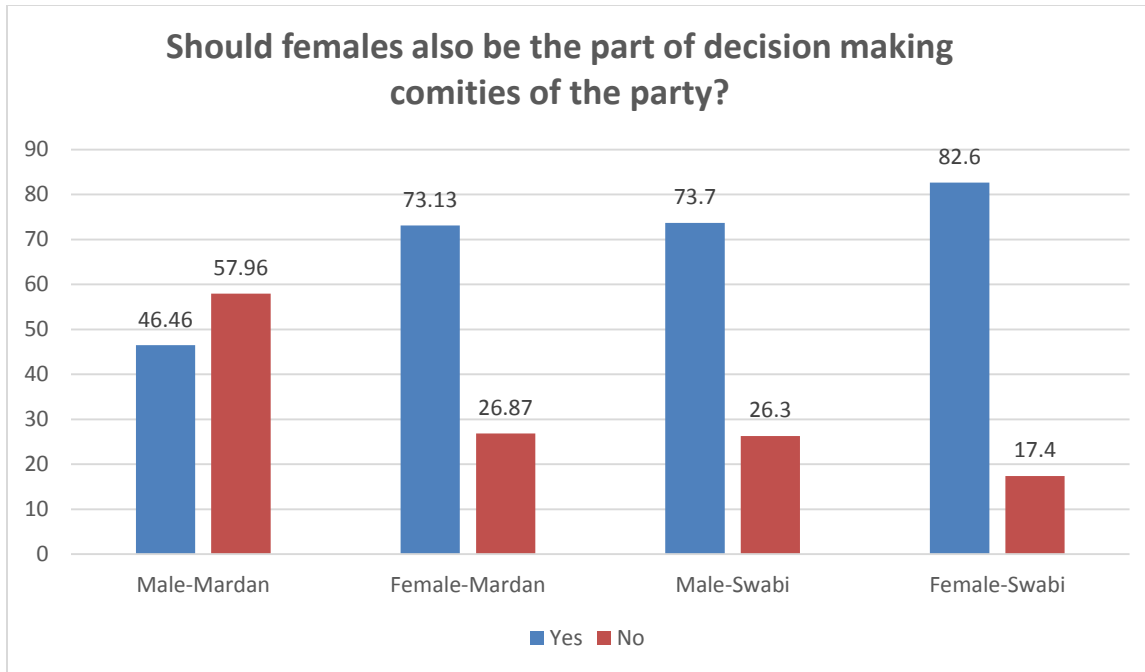
Q22	In your point of view ,should female meet the political leaders or representaters of their communities for solving the community problem?	Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
	Yes	218	48.02	58	25.66	361	86.0	134	33.25
	No	236	51.98	168	74.34	59	14.0	269	66.75



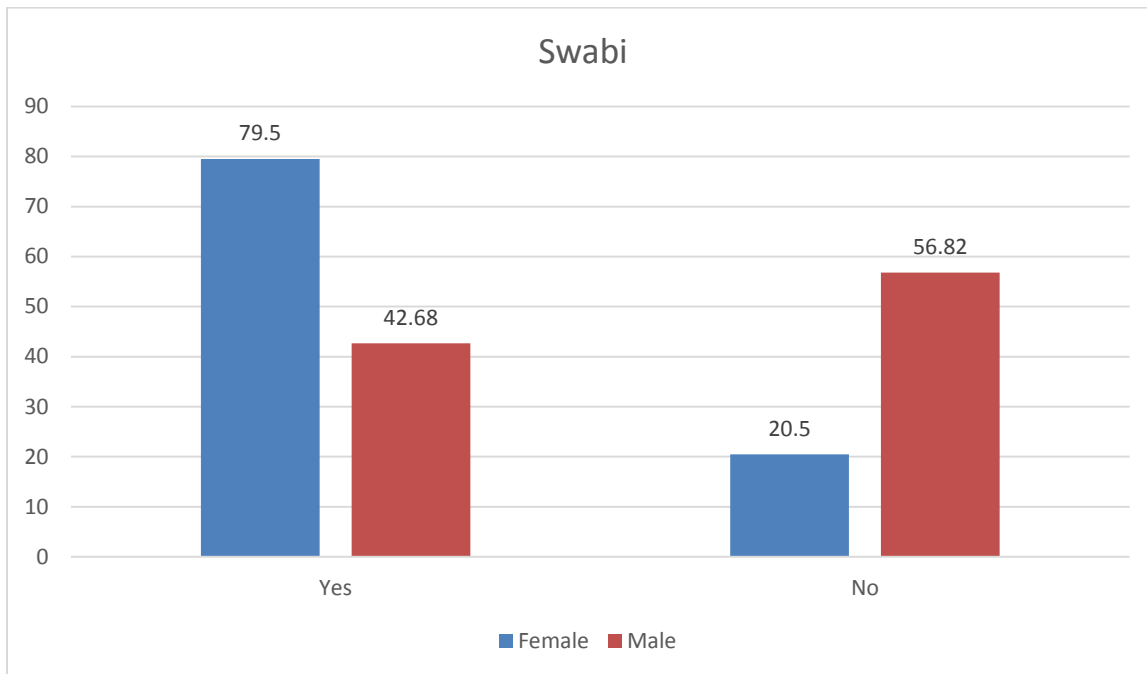
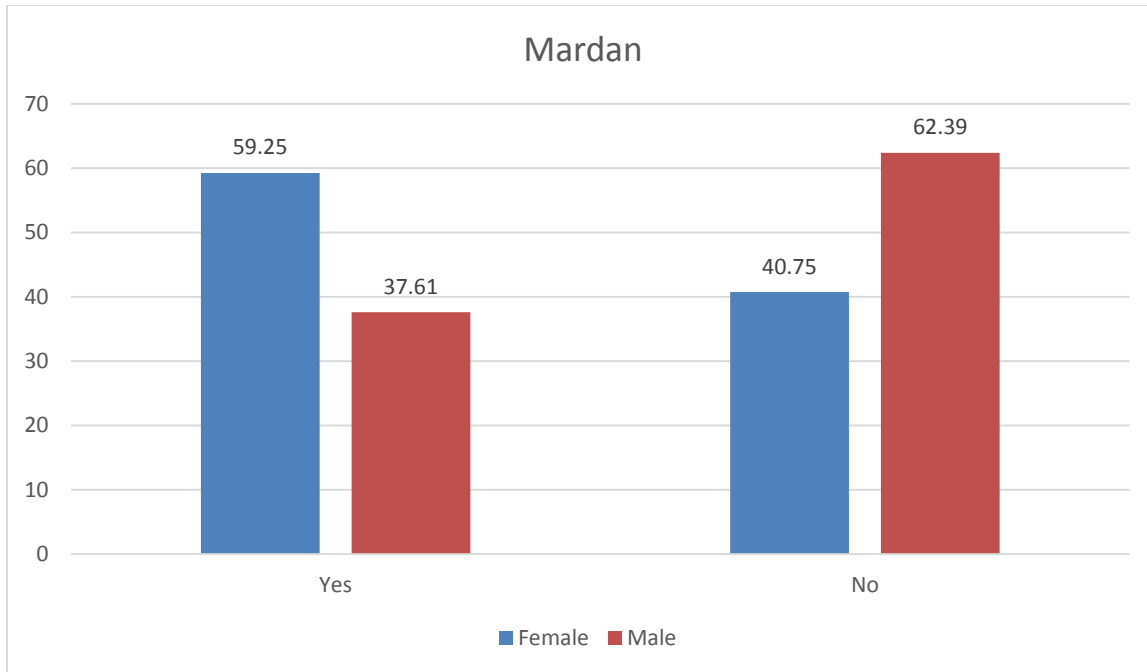
		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q23</b>	<b>Should female take part in political campaigns/public assemblies?</b>								
	Yes	160	35.24	57	25.22	275	65.5	109	27.05
	No	294	64.76	175	77.43	145	34.5	294	72.95



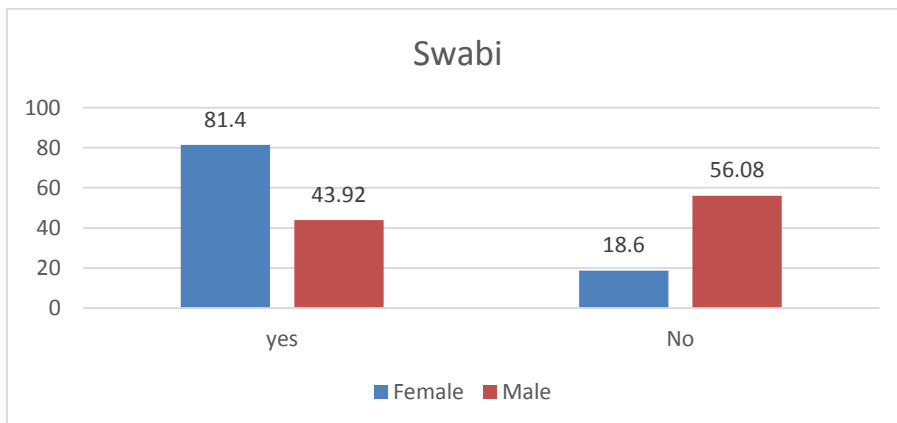
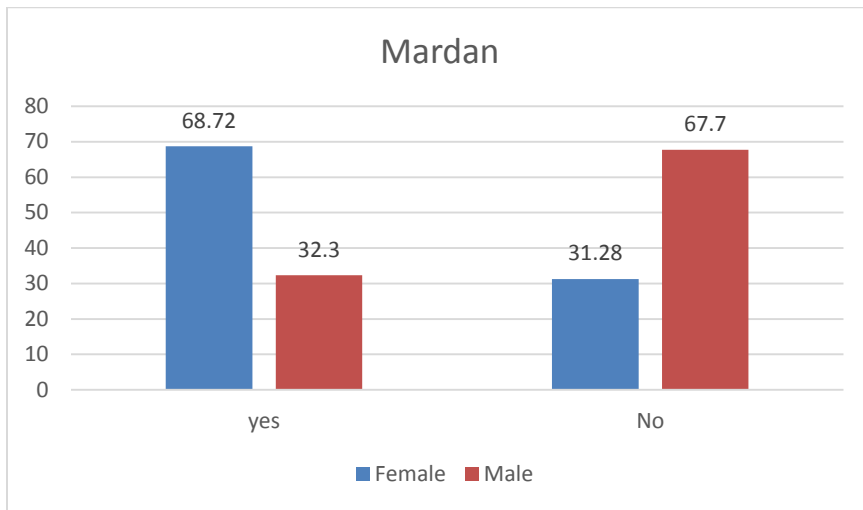
		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q24</b>	<b>Should females also be the part of decision making comities of the party?</b>								
	Yes	332	73.13	105	46.46	347	82.6	297	73.70
	No	122	26.87	131	57.96	73	17.4	106	26.30



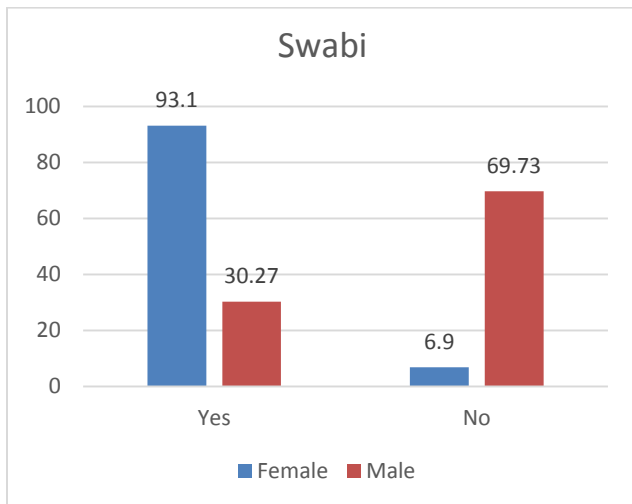
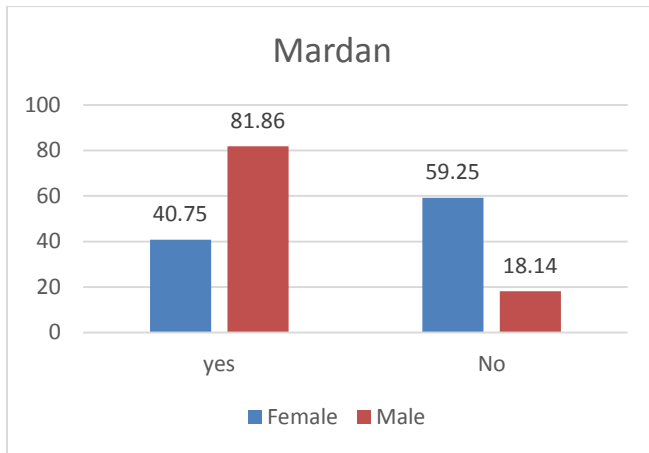
		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q25</b>	<b>Should females work with the political parites as political workers?</b>								
	Yes	269	59.25	85	37.61	334	79.5	172	42.68
	No	185	40.75	141	62.39	86	20.5	229	56.82



		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q26</b>	<b>what do you think that those people should be legally punished who are involved in the agreements of closing down female polling stations?</b>								
	Yes	312	68.72	73	32.30	342	81.4	177	43.92
	No	142	31.28	153	67.70	78	18.6	226	56.08



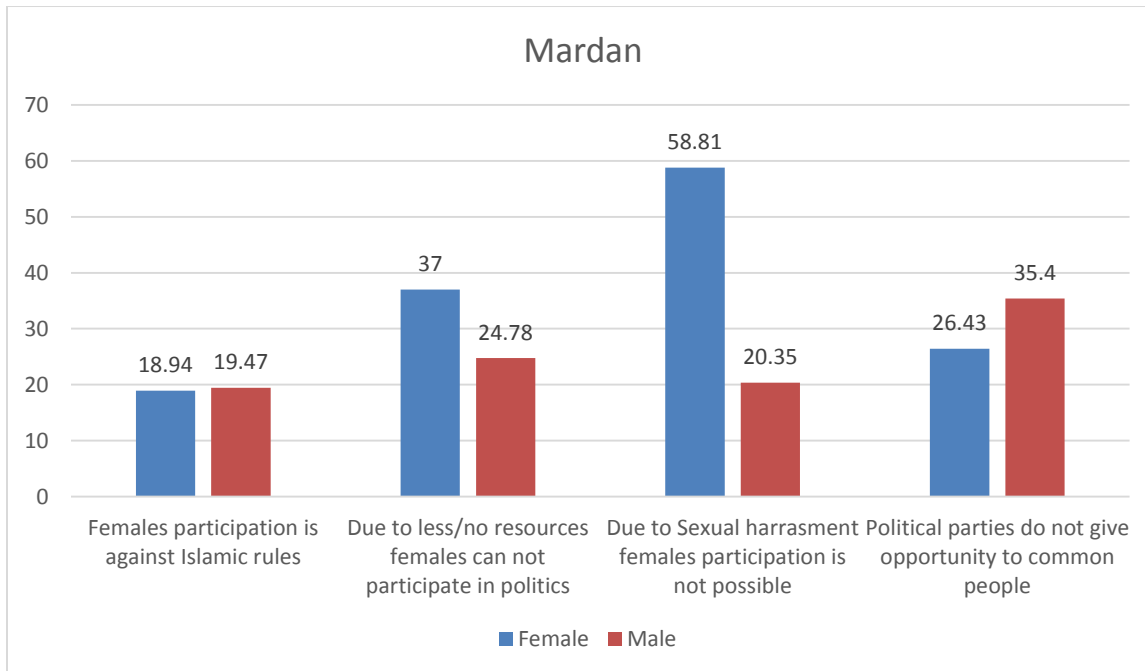
		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q27</b>	<b>Should there be any laws or legislation for increasing the participation of females in cabinet or in political parties?</b>								
	Yes	185	40.75	185	81.86	391	93.1	122	30.27
	No	269	59.25	41	18.14	29	6.9	281	69.73

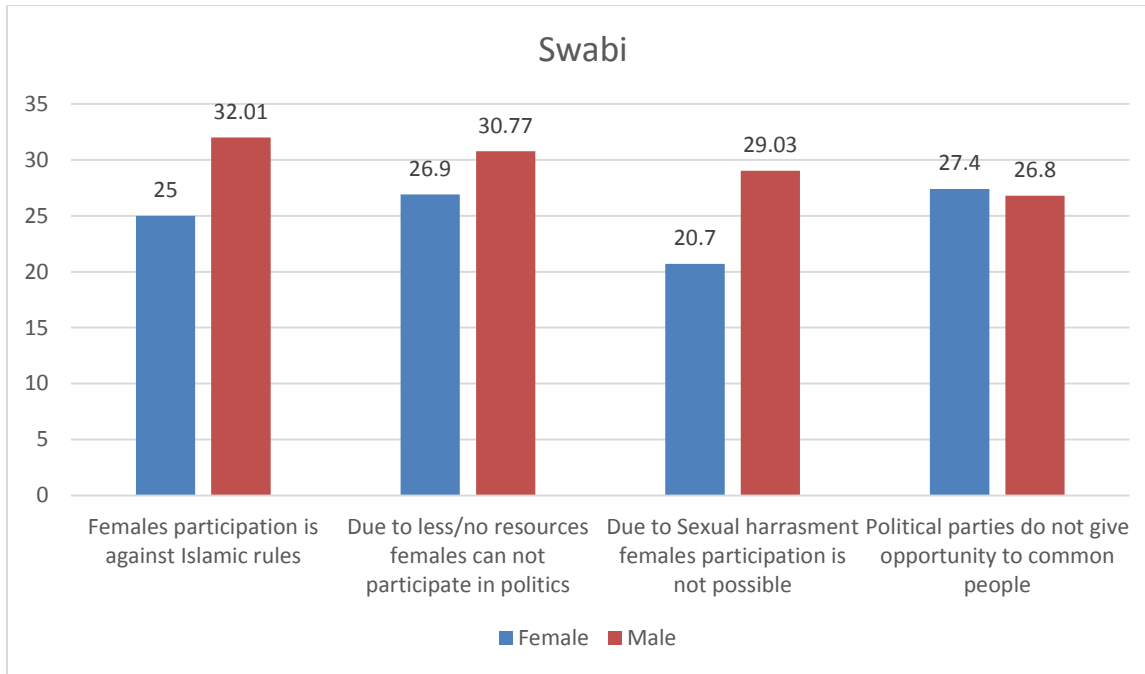


		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	

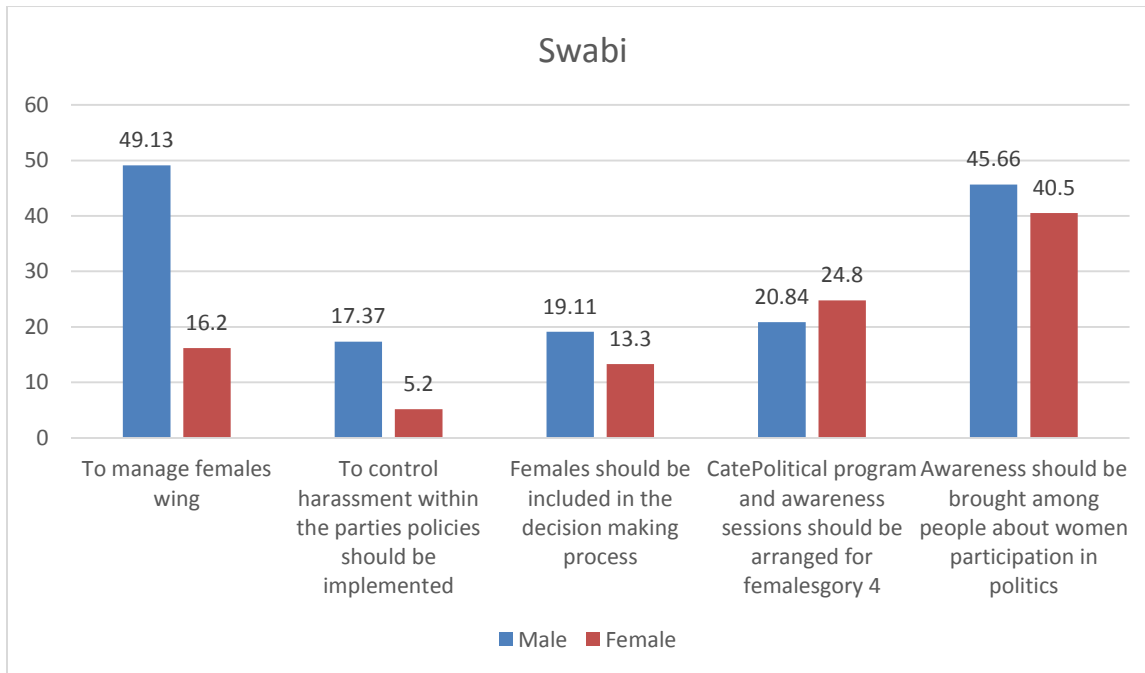
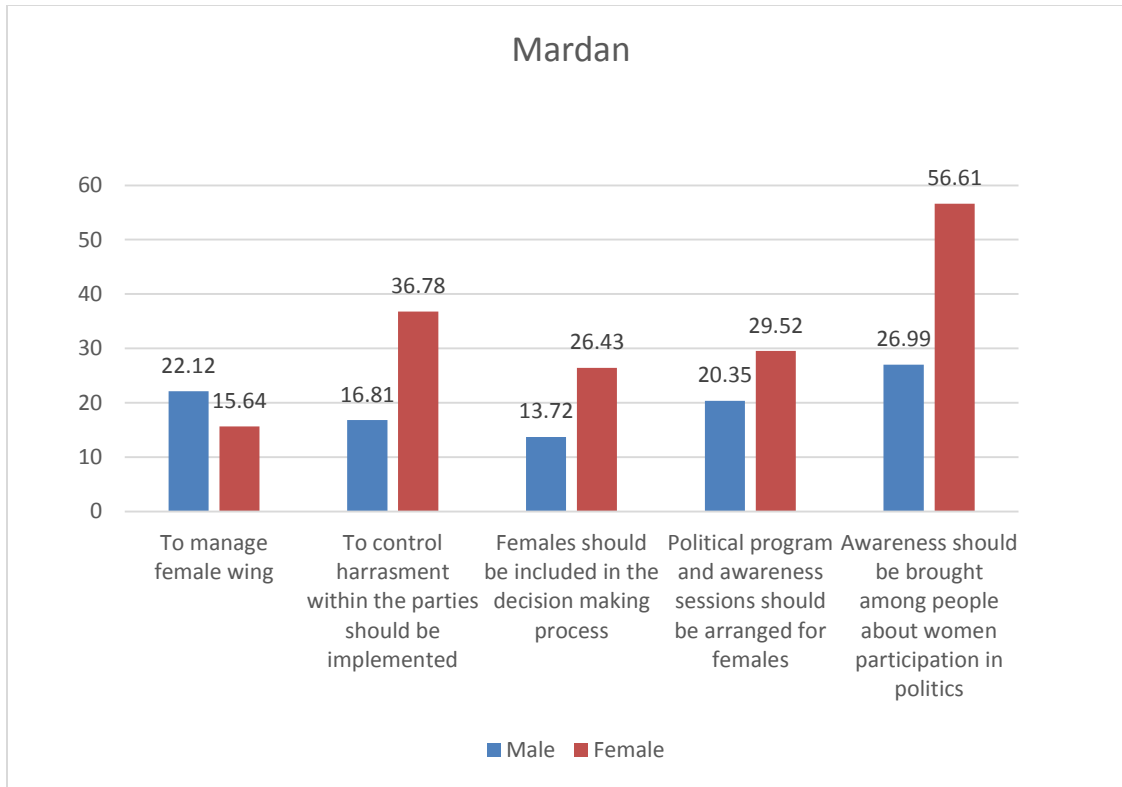


		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q28</b>	<b>What problems are faced to females in getting in to politics?</b>								
	Females participation is against Islamic rules	86	18.94	44	19.47	105	25.0	129	32.01
	Due to less/no resources females can not participate in politics	168	37.00	56	24.78	113	26.9	124	30.77
	Due to Sexual harrasment females participation is not possible	267	58.81	46	20.35	87	20.7	117	29.03
	Political parties do not give opportunity to common people	120	26.43	80	35.40	115	27.4	108	26.80





		Mardan				Swabi			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Responses	%	Responses	%age	Responses	%age	Responses	%age
<b>Q29</b>	<b>In your opinion what decisions/steps should be taken for the females partiapiation in politics?</b>								
	To Manage females wing	71	15.64	50	22.12	68	16.2	198	49.13
	To control harassment within the parties policies should be implemented	167	36.78	38	16.81	22	5.2	70	17.37
	Females should be included in the decision making process	120	26.43	31	13.72	56	13.3	77	19.11
	Political program and awareness sessions should be arranged for females	134	29.52	46	20.35	104	24.8	84	20.84
		257	56.61	61	26.99	170	40.5	184	45.66



## Focus Group Discussions

Six Focus Group Discussions were conducted to discuss in depth the challenges to women's political participation. The challenges identified through the focus group discussions are as follows:

### **1. Politics is Perceived as Men's Job:**

In District Mardan and Swabi, politics is considered as men's role. Politics is considered a dirty fight for money and power in which men are interested. Women's role is more linked to their gender roles within their families. Men were considered best fit for politics as they have unrestricted mobility, have resources, have decision making power and have control over their own lives. While on the other hand, most of the women in these districts don't have control over resources, don't have the decision making power of their own lives, and don't have control on every aspect of their own lives. Women's civic, political, and electoral participation depends on the permission of their male counter parts.

### **2. Lack of Resources:**

Lack of resources such as access to wide pool of volunteers and financial resources was considered a huge challenge for women to take part in active politics such as running for election campaigns, achieving progress within the political parties, and contributing to political parties. Women's lack of access to and lack of control over resources was considered a big challenge.

### **3. Restricted Mobility:**

Because of the Pashtoon culture, women have restricted mobility and they are not allowed culturally to give public appearances to both men and women which poses a huge challenge to women to become active in civic and political life.

### **4. Fulfilling Gender Roles:**

Women are expected to fulfill their gender roles and manage the household, because of the burden of the household responsibilities which they have to perform on daily basis, women find it difficult to spend more time outside their homes. The women who participated in the focus group discussions always had to go to their homes before noon

so that they can cook for their family. If women may not be able to fulfill their household responsibilities because they were engaged in civic and politic activities, they may face domestic abuse.

**5. National Identity Card:**

Some women in these areas still don't have National Identity Cards and their votes aren't yet registered which becomes a barrier in polling vote.

**6. Lack of Access to Polling Stations:**

Some women couldn't participate in the elections because they don't have access to the polling stations either because the polling stations are very far away or because no transportation is available.

**7. Women's Political Participation is Considered Anti-Islamic:**

Some men and women from these communities considered women's participation in politics as un-Islamic. They were of the opinion that leadership of societies is men's job as per their religion, and women have been given the responsibility to stay inside home. They were of the opinion that women's participation in politics and public life will destroy the social fabric.

**8. Sexual Harassment**

In the focus group discussion, the participants mentioned sexual harassment in gender non-segregated environments as a challenge to women's political participation. The participants were of the opinion that lack of mechanisms for protection of women within the political parties is one of the reason for not participating in the political parties.

**9. Lack of Information about Political Process:**

Most of the women do not have information or access to information about the political, civic and electoral processes. They remain unaware of the opportunities for women's political participation and their rights. Lack of awareness about rights and opportunities lead to lower participation of women in the political processes.

**10. Men are the Opinion Makers:**

Most of the men were of the opinion that women should follow the opinion of men in their families regarding their decision of vote. Most of the people were of the opinion

that women don't have knowledge and understanding of politics therefore they should let men decide about their vote.

**11. Lack of Interest in Politics:**

Many women lack interest in politics either because of the gender roles assigned to them, because of little information about the political processes of their communities, or because of the negative propaganda about the politicians and politics.

**12. Political Parties are Not Women Friendly**

The participants were of the opinion that the political parties are not women friendly, don't offer opportunities to women, and often women are left out in the political campaigns. The political parties are dominated by men, the leadership is controlled by men and often men makes the face of the political parties. The political parties also do not talk about women rights and issues of women.

**13. Women are Left Out in the Political Campaigns:**

The participants said though large rallies are organized for men before elections to mobilize and engage them in the electoral processes but when it comes to women only few corner meetings or door to door campaigns are conducted to reach out women. During the political campaigns often the head of the families who are men, are reached out to ask for votes of the whole family, thus women are left with little information about the candidates who are running for elections.

**14. Class Issues and Discriminations:**

The participants said that women from families who have political background may still have some opportunities to get information about the political and civic processes and get engaged in the political processes, but women from families living in poverty aren't welcomed to join the civic and political processes.

## Recommendations:

- i. Government should introduce a system to make the National Identity Cards a compulsion for every woman. Government committees should be formulated at the district and councils levels to ensure that every woman in the community has an Identity Card.
- ii. Governments should make sure that every woman's vote is registered. Election Commission should introduce a system to ensure it.
- iii. The number of polling stations should be increased in the communities in coming elections to make them accessible for women.
- iv. Women Centers should be formed at the community level to discuss their issues in a friendly space.
- v. Women literacy rate should be increased through giving free quality education.
- vi. Training centers at the community level should be established to train women about the skills required to take part in politics and elections and other legal documents required.
- vii. Female politicians should do frequent visits to their communities.
- viii. Women should be engaged while formulating the agenda and manifesto of the party through discussions and organizing frequent meetings.
- ix. Sports facilities should be provided to women for the confidence building.
- x. Quality health centers should be made accessible, affordable and available.
- xi. Women security personnel should be hired and recruited in the female polling stations.
- i. Laws that violate women's rights should be revised regularly.
- ii. Committees for the implementation of the sexual harassment at work place should be proactive and made at the community level.
- iii. Grievance system and mechanism should be made with in the parties and communities to address the issues.
- iv. Women demand the parties to implement the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- v. The number of reserved seats should be increased to 50%.
- vi. The systematic marginalization of women in parties should be discouraged by facilitating women's equal participation in politics.

- vii. The candidates recruitment system within the political parties should be fair and on the basis of merit and not on gender.
- viii. Specific budget should be allocated for development projects for women.
- ix. Gender equality should be institutionalized within the party structures, processes and practices. A gender audit on a yearly basis should be done to do the self assessment.
- x. A gender action plan should be developed to prevent discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex and gender, party codes of conduct should be introduced and informed along with developing strategies for capacity building of women party members.
- xi. Parties should introduce provisions to ensure women representation of women at the decision making levels.
- xii. A mentorship program should be organized by the parties for the capacity building.
- xiii. Gender desegregated data of the party members should be maintained and awareness raising programs in the areas where there is low membership of women should be organized.
- xiv. It is important that the party mechanism and documents are written and implemented in a gender sensitive manner.
- xv. Awareness raising campaigns regarding gender equality should be organized for all party members.
- xvi. Seminars and workshops should be organized for all the party members to understand gender equality and women's rights.
- xvii. Parties in opposition should advocate for introducing gender policies and the parties in the government should facilitate and lead these processes.
- xviii. Women should be members and part of all the committees, task forces and working groups.
- xix. There should be gender mainstreaming of the party code of conducts.
- xx. The existing women wings of the parties should be strengthened.
- xxi. Superficial practices to increase the number of women in parties should be avoided like nominating women candidates in areas where it is difficult for them to win.