



## Free and Fair Election Network

# Preliminary Report on Third Parliamentary Year of the 13th National Assembly

### Women MPs Source Half of National Assembly Business

- Female Members Excel in All Forms of Parliamentary Interventions
- Reserved Seat Members More Active than Directly Elected MNAs
- 18 Female Members Register Zero Participation
- Shireen Arshad Khan, Marvi Memon and Nuzhat Sadiq Among Ten Most Active Members
- Nine of 10 Most Active Female MPs belong to PMLN

ISLAMABAD, March 16, 2011: Women Members accounted for almost half of the parliamentary agenda conducted during the third parliamentary year of the thirteenth National Assembly, according to parliamentary records and FAFEN's direct observation of proceedings between March 11, 2010 and March 4, 2011.

Women constitute less than one-quarter (23%) of the National Assembly's current 340 members - 77 female parliamentarians, 60 elected on reserved seats and 17 elected through popular vote. Despite their significant underrepresentation, women Members actively participated in the parliamentary business and remained more assertive and effective as compared to many of their male counterparts in the National Assembly that is headed by the country's first woman Speaker.

The women parliamentarians put up 2,458 parliamentary interventions during the entire third parliamentary year. FAFEN defines a parliamentary intervention as each of the instances when a Member of the National Assembly either submits an agenda item on the Orders of the Day (Calling Attention Notices, Questions, Private Members' Bills, etc.) or raises his/her concerns during a debate on the floor of the House (Points of Order, Supplementary Questions, Debate on Adjournment Motions, etc.).

Despite the fact that 18 women parliamentarians failed to participate in any form of parliamentary business during the entire year and 43 women parliamentarians came up with less than 10 parliamentary interventions, the remaining 34 female parliamentarians contributed almost half of the parliamentary business conducted during the year.

There were 10 female parliamentarians, who contributed more than 100 interventions each during the year. These 10 active parliamentarians can be credited for 60% of the participation registered by all female parliamentarians. In other words, these 10 women Members accounted for around one-quarter of the parliamentary activity in the lower



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house of the parliament during the year. All the women parliamentarians conducting more than 100 parliamentary interventions have been elected on reserved seats and with the exception of one Member of PML, all belong to PMLN.

Female parliamentarians with more than 100 interventions include Ms. Shireen Arshad Khan with 176 interventions, Ms. Marvi Memon (171), Ms. Nuzhat Sadiq (164), Ms. Tahira Aurangzeb (161), Ms. Qudsia Arshad (155), Ms. Nisar Tanveer (154), Ms. Khalida Mansoor (131), Ms. Tasneem Siddiqui (130), Ms. Nighat Parveen Mir (120) and Ms. Shaheen Ashfaq (114). With the exception of Ms. Marvi Memon from the PML, all of these parliamentarians are affiliated with the PMLN. On average, each of these 10 parliamentarians put up 112 questions. More than one third of the total questions (34%), which were tabled on the floor of the House were put up by these parliamentarians.

The women parliamentarians elected through popular vote contributed to only 8% of the interventions to the participation registered by all female parliamentarians. The popularly elected women make 22% of the parliamentary strength of female Members in the National Assembly. There were five popularly elected women parliamentarians who did not register any participation during the entire year, while another six parliamentarians made less than 10 interventions. There were five female parliamentarians -- four from PPPP and one PMLN -- elected through popular vote, who made more than 20 parliamentary interventions each during the third parliamentary year in the National Assembly. Among popularly elected women Members Dr. Azra Afzal Pacheho (PPPP), Ms. Saira Afzal Tarar (PMLN) and Mrs. Shamshad Sattar Bachani (PPPP) put up 54, 34, and 30 parliamentary interventions, respectively.

Agenda-wise, during the third parliamentary year, 136 Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) moved 130 Calling Attention Notices (CANs), of which 37 (29%) were women Members. In total, female MNAs collaborated with their male colleagues in submitting 108 CANs (82%). CAN is an important parliamentary business through which Members call attention of some ministry to an issue of urgent nature.

Female parliamentarians' contribution to oversight of executive through putting questions was exemplary, as out of 3,339 questions raised in the Assembly during the third parliamentary year, more than half (1,685 or 51%) were put forward by female Members. On average, 22 questions were submitted by each female MNA, almost four times more questions than their male counterparts.

In legislation, which is a core business of the National Assembly, female parliamentarians were quite active in bringing up Private Members' Bills. Out of 34 Private Members' Bills on the Orders of the Day, half (17, or 50%) were submitted by single female Members, including the only Private Members' Bill passed by the Assembly during the third parliamentary year. More than one-fourth (28.9%) of the



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Members who took part in debate about the budget proposals were women, with a total of 33 female parliamentarians (44% of all female MNAs) taking an active role.

Women Members also sponsored 75 Resolutions (94.9% of Resolutions put forward) either independently or jointly with male or female Members, and more than half of all Resolutions (46, or 58%) were put forth by individual female Members. Resolutions are a crucial part of the parliamentary agenda, through which the House expresses its opinion on some issue.

Female MNAs also took part in other agenda items including Motions Under Rule 259 and discussion on Matters of Public Importance. Women MNAs were active in the submission of 55 (80.9%) Motions Under Rule 259, including 12 Motions (18%) jointly sponsored by male and female Members, eight Motions (12%) tabled by groups of female Members, and 35 (51%) Motions put forth by individual female Members.

Fourteen Matters of Public Importance were brought forth by 22 Members of the National Assembly, including 10 male Members (4% of 263 male Members) and 12 female Members (16% of 77 female Members). As many as 41 female Members (53.2% of all women MNAs) from six parliamentary parties participated in raising Points of Order during the third parliamentary year.

Women Members raised a total of 199 Points of Order during the year, including 23 POs related to non-inclusion of their submitted agenda items on Orders of the Day or seeking permission to take part in discussions on agenda items submitted by other Members.

A total of 41 female Members (53% of all women MNAs) from six parliamentary parties participated in raising Points of Order. All six female parliamentarians affiliated with the MQM participated in raising Points of Order during the reporting period. Fifteen female Members (47% out of 32) of the PPP put forth their concerns through Points of Order, followed by ten PMLN female Members (50% out of 20), seven PML female Members (54% out of 13), two ANP female Members (67% out of three), and one Independent female Member.

**About FAFEN:** FAFEN is a network of 35 civil society organizations working to foster democratic accountabilities in Pakistan. It is governed by Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability. For more information please visit [www.fafen.org](http://www.fafen.org).