



Women Legislators Assert Lawmaking, Oversight Roles

A FAFEN report on the performance of female parliamentarians during the fourth parliamentary year of the 13th National Assembly

As the National Assembly completes its fourth parliamentary year, women legislators continued to perform impressively, asserting themselves in their lawmaking and oversight roles, according to a Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) report on the eve of the International Women's Day.

Women constitute less than one-quarter (23%) of the National Assembly's current 334 members - 60 elected on reserved seats and 17 through popular vote. However, they were more active and effective voices of constituents

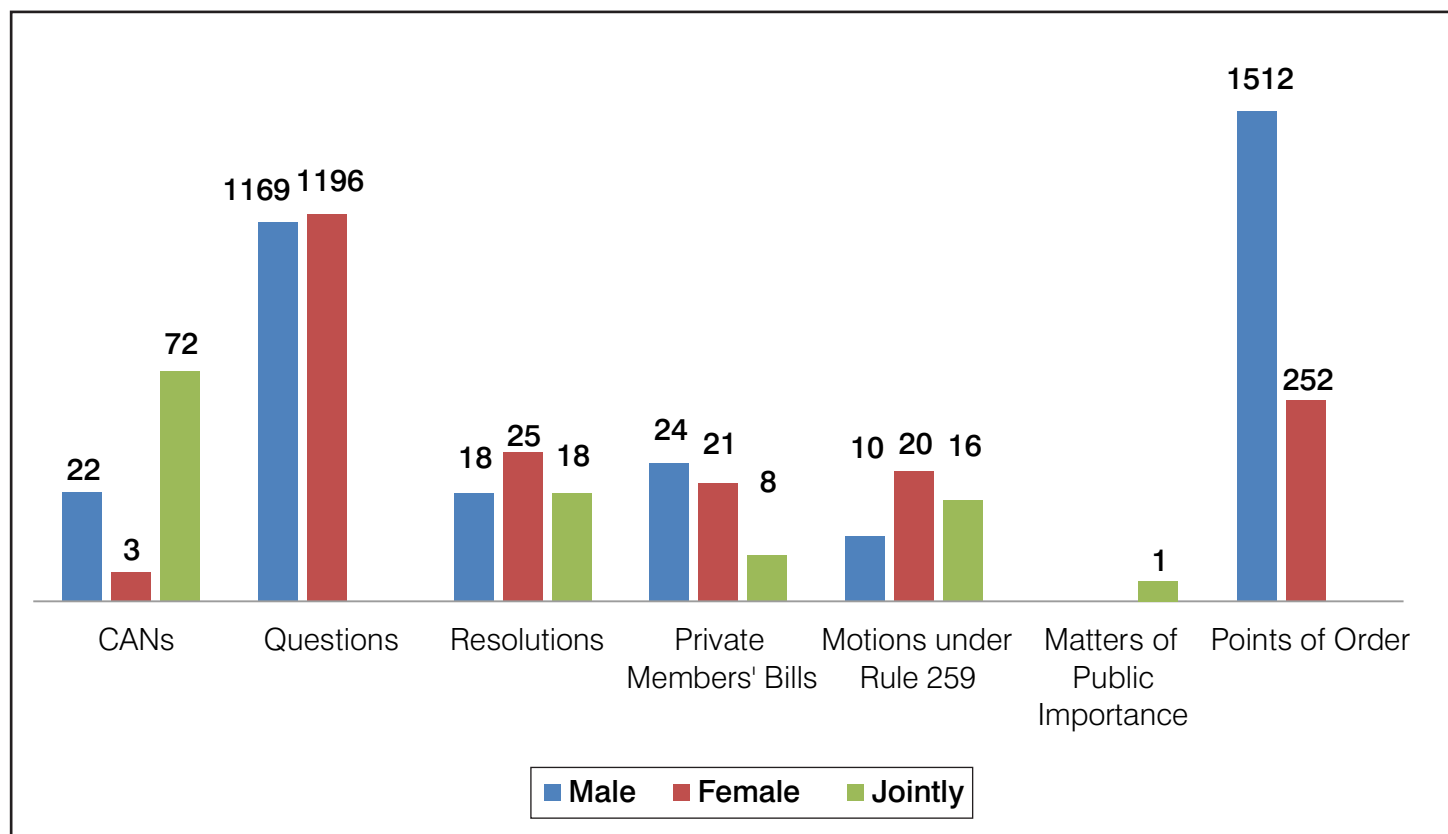
than their male counterparts in the Lower House, which is headed by the country's first woman speaker.

The Performance Analysis of Women Parliamentarians is done by FAFEN's Parliament Watch Project (PWP), which aims to collect and publish information on the performance of Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) and Members of the Provincial Assemblies (MPAs) by directly observing the actions of the elected representatives in the legislatures. The unique aspect of FAFEN's Parliament Watch methodology is direct observation of parliamentary proceedings. FAFEN deploys trained observers to the National Assembly in order to monitor the institution's performance using a detailed, standardized checklist and reporting forms covering all types of parliamentary business. The information gathered is measured against the neutral and objective framework of the normal rules of parliamentary procedure.

This FAFEN report (April 11, 2011 to February 14, 2012) analyses participation of women in various types of parliamentary business admissible under the Lower House's Rules of Business. The participation is assessed on the basis of directly observable interventions in the House. There may be more submissions that female Members have submitted to the National Assembly Secretariat, but were not presented in the House.

Legislation

In legislation, which is a core function of a legislator, female parliamentarians were quite active in bringing up Private Members' Bills. The fourth parliamentary year was marked by passage of four pro-women bills.

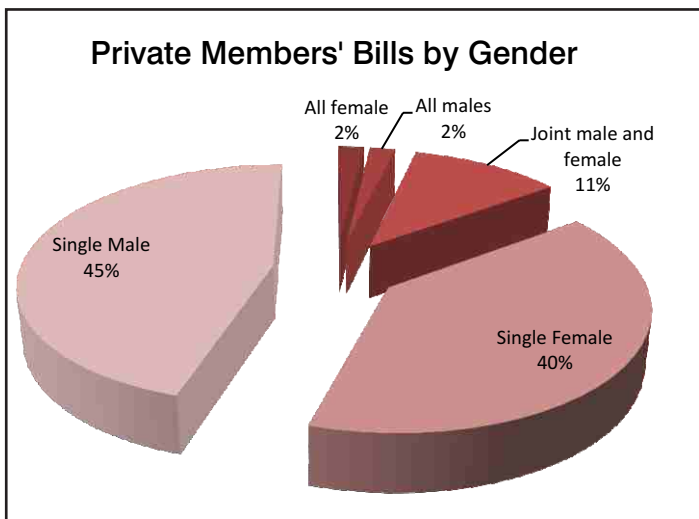


Moved by a PML Member in 2008, the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Act 2011, passed in November last year, prohibits anti-women practices like giving a female forcefully in marriage or otherwise in Badal-e-Sulh, Wanni or Swara; depriving a woman from inheriting property; forced marriages; and marriage with the Holy Quran. The violators could face imprisonment of three to ten years or fine of Rs500,000 for each crime.

Earlier on May 10 last year, the National Assembly passed the Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Bill 2010, recommending a jail term of 14 years and a minimum fine of Rs1 million for those committing this crime. The bill was moved by two PML Members and one representing PMLN.

The Lower House also passed the National Commission on the Status of Women Bill 2012 for promoting social, economic, political and legal rights of women – moved by the adviser to the Prime Minister on Human Rights. The fourth bill passed was the Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Bill 2010.

Overall, women parliamentarians have been active in introducing legislation - single female Members authoring 20 out of the 53 Private Members' bills that appeared on the Orders of the Day in the fourth parliamentary year. Similarly, during the third parliamentary year, 17 out of 34 were authored by single female Members.



Of the Private Members' Bills moved by women parliamentarians, 14 were introduced in the House, five not taken up while two were passed. Women legislators also collaborated with their male and female colleagues to author six bills that appeared on the Orders of the Day. Of these five were introduced in the House and one not taken up.

Apart from the three bills on women rights, a look at the areas in which female parliamentarians introduced legislation in the fourth parliamentary year shows their legislative interests encompass a variety of important national issues.

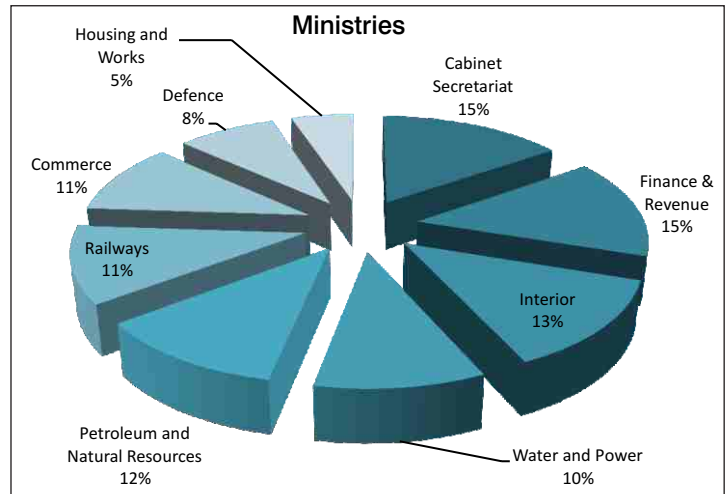
They moved two bills each on criminal law, employment,

elections and NADRA and one each on the Capital Development Authority (CDA, banking, child rights, food security, foreign affairs, health, housing and works, citizenship, and right to information.

Out of the 24 Private Members' Bills moved by male parliamentarians in the fourth parliamentary year, 19 were introduced in the House, five not taken up, and none was passed.

Questions

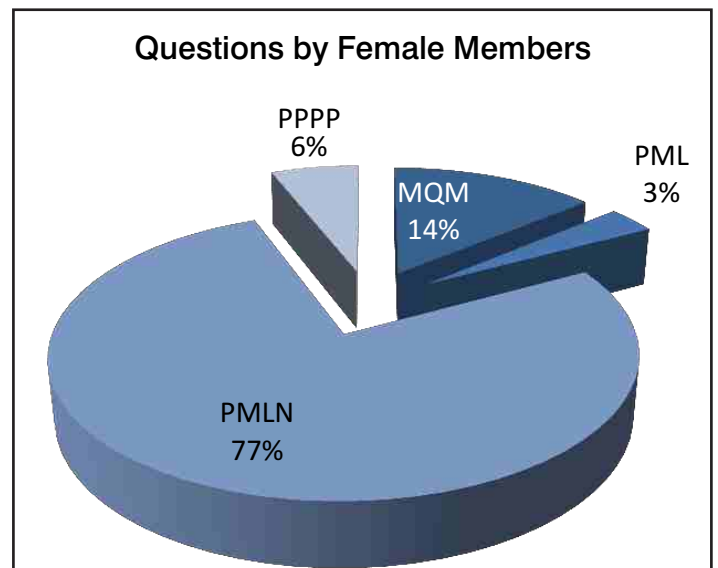
Question Hour allows the legislature to hold the executive answerable to the public and make the Members of the Parliament aware of the activities of the ministries and



divisions. Legislators can seek any information on matters of national significance and also draw the government's attention to public grievances to have them addressed.

The female parliamentarians contributed exceptionally to oversight of executive by putting up questions. Out of 2,365 questions raised during the fourth parliamentary year, more than half (1,196 or 51%) were put forward by female Members. On average, 16 questions were submitted by each female MNA, almost four times more than their male counterparts who raised 1,169 questions.

The women Members asked 635 Starred questions (requiring oral answers) and 561 Unstarred questions

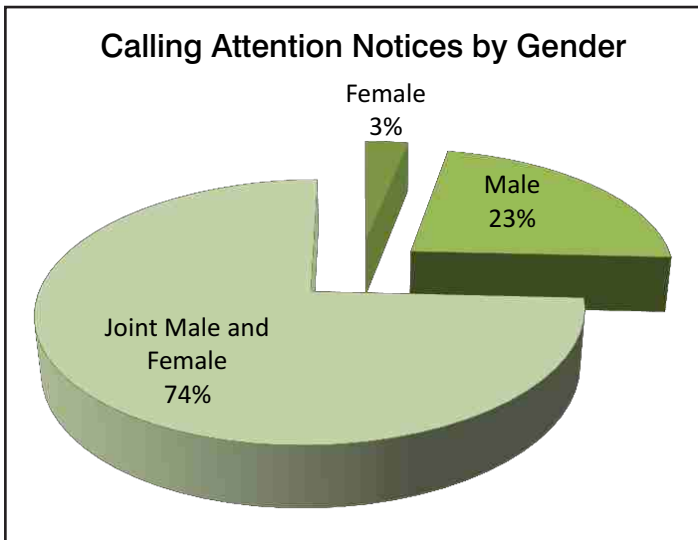


(requiring written answers). Their questions were directed to 43 ministries. The pie-chart below shows the top 10 ministries:

A total of 1,196 questions were asked by 28 female parliamentarians –PMLN (16), MQM (5), PML (4) and PPPP (3). The women parliamentarians representing PMLN outperformed their colleagues by asking 920 questions, followed by MQM (166), PPPP (71) and PML (39). None of the women parliamentarians from ANP, MMAP and PMLF asked any Question on the floor of the House.

Calling Attention Notices

Calling Attention Notices (CANs) are a method of drawing the attention of a Minister towards a matter of urgent public importance. Through this notice, a Member can request a Minister to pay attention to a particular matter and take necessary steps to address it.

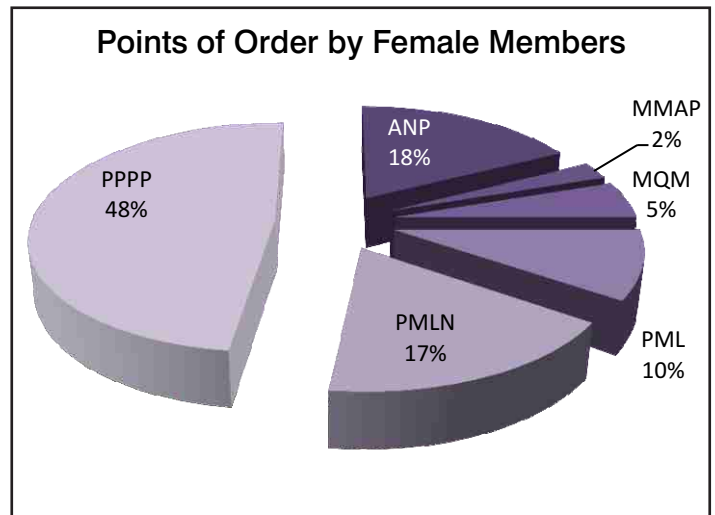


In the fourth parliamentary year, the women legislators were part of 75 of the total 97 Calling Attention Notices either individually or jointly with their male and female colleagues. A closer look at the Calling Attention Notices shows that women parliamentarians are bringing to the floor of the House issues directly affecting the lives of the people. They raised such critical issues like the energy crisis, increase in power tariff, dilapidated condition of national highways, violence against women, draft electoral list, disaster management, and increase in prices of petroleum products

Points of Order

A Point of Order is raised to address an apparent breach in the rules of parliamentary procedure while an Assembly's business is underway, and usually requests the Chair's ruling on the issue. Points of Order must never be concerned with non-procedural issues. This section looks at the Points of Order raised during the fourth parliamentary year and the decisions taken to resolve them.

Out of 1764 Points of Order raised in the House, the women parliamentarians' share was 252 or 14 percent.



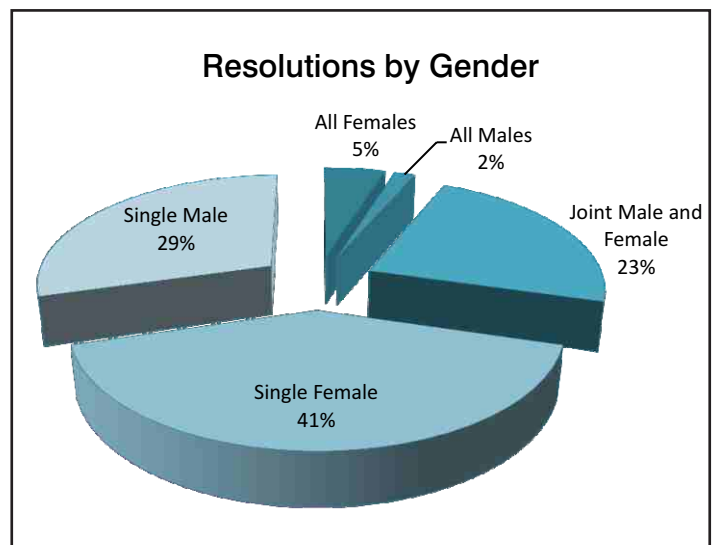
The female legislators representing PPPP raised almost half –(121) - Points of Orders, followed by PMLN and ANP (44 each), PML (24), MQM (13) and MMAP(6).

However, only 16 Points of Order raised by female legislators about the business of the House with the rest relating to issues including women rights, media, health, Balochistan, power outages, and employment.

Resolutions

Through Resolutions, a legislator expresses an opinion, makes recommendations, or conveys a message on a specific and important issue, commending, condemning, urging or requesting an action by the government. Resolutions can be moved by Ministers or by Private Members.

The female representatives moved 42 Resolutions, either independently or jointly with other female or male



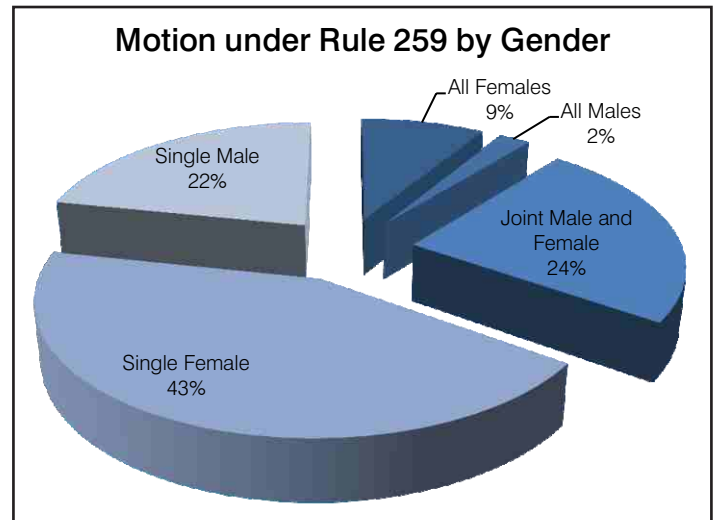
members, while their male counterparts sponsored 19. Twenty-five of the Resolutions were moved by single female Members, three were sponsored by multiple female Members and 14 jointly sponsored by male and female Members. Eighteen Resolutions were raised by single male Members while one was sponsored by more than one male Member.

Motion under Rule 259

Any Minister or a Member can give notice of a Motion that any policy, situation, statement or any other matter may be taken into consideration. No question shall be put at the conclusion of the debate unless a Minister or a Member, with the consent of the Speaker, moves a substantive motion immediately afterwards in appropriate terms in which case, a question shall be put.

Of 46 Motions under Rule 259 appearing on the Orders of the Day, 20 were sponsored individually by female parliamentarians and 15 were sponsored in collaboration with their other male and female colleagues. Ten Motions were moved by single male Members, while one was jointly moved by more than one male Member.

In the 13th National Assembly the women Members have presented themselves as effective legislators, using all options available in the Lower House for raising the voices



of the citizens, especially women. Their efforts not only highlight their vital role as legislators but also the central position a legislature enjoys in a democracy.

About FAFEN

Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN), established in 2006, is a coalition of 42 leading civil society organizations, working to strengthen all forms of democratic accountabilities in Pakistan. Governed by Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability (TDEA), FAFEN's key achievements are:

- Observed the public display of Pakistan's draft electoral rolls and conducted the country's first statistically-valid voters' list audit in 2007
- Deployed more than 18,829 trained, neutral Election Day observers nationwide to watch the February 18, 2008 polls and 264 long-term observers to monitor the pre-election process
- Fielded long-term observers nationwide and published 19 pre-election reports
- For the February 18, 2008, General Elections, FAFEN conducted 260 simultaneous Parallel Vote Tabulations (PVTs)- the largest effort in the world
- Conducted its first survey, Constituents Aspirations Survey, in December 2008 with a sample size of 3,124 respondents to get the description of the state of public opinion and also to get a deeper understanding of the values, attitudes and beliefs of people living in the constituencies
- Conducted mapping of organizations working for human rights within Pakistan
- Observed general elections at Gilgit-Baltistan in 2009 and by-elections in various constituencies of the Punjab, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2010
- Implemented a unique methodology to observe parliamentary proceedings under its Parliamentary Watch Project
- Monitors public institutions across Pakistan and issues monthly reports on the state and performance of educational, health and other local level institutions. In addition, monthly reports on prices, crimes, incidence of disease, caseload in lower courts and political and electoral violence are issued

FAFEN continues to implement robust programs in-between elections related to monitoring parliamentary affairs, connecting constituents to their elected representatives, monitoring the performance of public and elected institutions and advocating electoral and democratic reforms. FAFEN is also monitoring political and electoral violence, peace activities and promoting active citizenry through ongoing civic education activities across the country. FAFEN is currently implementing Supporting Transparency, Accountability and Electoral Processes in Pakistan in 200 National Assembly constituencies in 119 districts across Pakistan.

FAFEN Secretariat

224-Margalla Road, F-10/3, Islamabad

(P) 051-22 11 026

(F) 051-22 11 047

(E) secretariat@fafen.org



www.fafen.org