

Representation Of The Feminist Perspectives In Pakistan's Political Science Academia

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Abstract

The feminist perspectives entered the field of Political Science/ International Relations during 1980s as part of the larger critical turn in Social Sciences. Marginalization of women's role and voices in mainstream academic discourse of war and peace remained a key concern of the Political Science/IR feminist perspectives. The current study uses insights from Sandra Harding's stand point theory to explore how the feminist perspectives are represented in Political Science/International Relations academia of Pakistan. This paper undertakes a systematic review of leading (HEC recognized) journals of IR and Political Science in Pakistan, to examine if and how the feminist perspectives is represented in Pakistani International Relations discourse. Since local academic discourses are underrepresented in largely Euro centric discipline of Political Science/IR , this study will contribute towards better understanding of representation on a key critical academic perspective (Feminism) in Political Science/IR. The results of study show that feminist perspectives are marginalized in local academia in terms of representation. Serious efforts are required to promote academic research and development in this field with the support of Government, academic institutions and researchers.

Keywords: Feminist Perspective, Marginalization, Academia.

تلخیص

تحریک نسواں کا عنصر سیاسیات اور بین الاقوامی تعلقات عامہ میں ۱۹۸۰ کے عشرے میں نظر آیا جب سماجی و معاشرتی علوم میں تنقیدات کی سطح پر بڑی تبدیلیاں منظر عام پر آئیں۔ سیاسیات اور بین الاقوامی تعلقات عامہ کے علم و ادب و تحقیق میں جنگ و امن کے حوالے سے خواتین کے نکتہ نگاہ کو اہمیت نہ ملنا لمحہ فکریہ رہا ہے۔ زیر بحث مقالے میں پاکستان کے تعلیمی میدانوں میں بین الاقوامی تعلقات عامہ کے شعبہ میں خواتین کے کردار اور ان کے نقطہ نگاہ کو Sandra Harding کے نظریے Stand Point Theory کی روشنی میں جانچا گیا ہے۔ اس مقالے میں (ایچ ای سی) کے منظور شدہ علمی و تحقیقی رسالوں میں چھپنے والے مضامین و تحقیقی مقالوں کا منظم طریقے سے جائزہ لیا گیا ہے تاکہ شعبہ سیاسیات اور بین الاقوامی تعلقات عامہ کے مضامین کے دائرہ کار میں ہونے والی تحقیقات میں خواتین کے کردار اور ان کے نقطہ نگاہ کو سمجھا جاسکے۔ پاکستان میں تعلیمی میدان میں مقامی سطح پر سیاسیات اور بین الاقوامی

تعلقاتِ عامکے شعبے میں یورپی لٹریچر کی بھرمار ہے۔ زیر بحث مقالہ میں ان شعبوں میں خواتین کے ظہور پذیر کردار اور اس کے بارے میں موجود عمومی سوچ کا جائزہ بھی لیا گیا ہے۔ ان تمام تحقیقات اور جائزے کے بعد زیر بحث مقالہ میں نتیجہ اخذ کیا گیا ہے کہ شعبہ ہائے سیاسیات اور بین الاقوامی تعلقات عامہ میں پاکستان کے تعلیمی میدانوں میں خواتین کے نکتہ نگاہ اور کردار کو وہ بنیادی اہمیت نہیں مل پائی جس کی وہ حقدار ہیں۔ تحریک نسواں سیاسیات اور بین الاقوامی تعلقات عامہ کا ایسا بنیادی جزو ہے جسے تحقیقات و مطالعہ اور تعلیمی میدان میں زیادہ اجاگر کرنے کے لئے محققین، حکومت اور تعلیمی اداروں کو فوری اقدامات کرنے کی ضرورت ہے۔

کلیدی الفاظ: نسائی نقطہ نظر، پس ماندگی، شعبہ ہائے تعلیم

Introduction

The concept of feminism has attracted the attention of scholars worldwide in the last decade and scholarly research has been produced in this field of study. After having attained such attention, the concept is still misunderstood in several parts of the world. First of all it is important to understand this concept thoroughly which is defined as “*The promotion of the equality of both gender male and female and their equal rights in society where they live, and the apprehensions in the course of theory and action, not on the basis of sexual or biological orientations and roles but their individual participation and assistance on the basis of equality in society*” (Allan 1993).

The last century saw the rise of women activism, particularly during last few decades, and the dramatic changes were observed in attitudes regarding sexuality in all regions of the world. Laws and policies like violence against women, family law, the criminalization of homosexuality, and maternity and parental leave have not only taken place but Improvements have also been seen. (Htun, 2013)

Feminism movements began late in 19th century and three waves have been observed till now. First-wave feminism was concerned with upper class and middle class which was mostly women of white color. These women were suffering due to social and political inequality. The Second-wave of feminism made efforts to speak against cultural and social inequalities. The third-wave of feminism consisted of revolutionary movement regarding dominant impact of women in politics (Priya, 2017).

In the male dominated societies, the general perception for women can be termed as the “the other” which may be termed as a creature not as socially valuable or useful. They are subject to marginalization and discrimination. In the twentieth century women were discriminated most of the times. The male domination existing in the society was challenged by feminism in order to abolish gender based discrimination against women (Gilarek, 2012).

The element of women empowerment is a very sensitive element of Feminism. Women empowerment situation has been very poor as always for last several decades. Women are mostly underrepresented in the top institutions of society, be it in government, private sector organizations or academia (Beard, 2017). History lessons regarding theories of development and perspectives relevant to feminism allow social activists to understand the importance of massive role of gender which influence all aspects of society and life (Drolet, 2010).

The movement regarding feminism has strived to reduce marginalization of women in all fields of society and also in academia. The picture in the west is much more improved now but in the eastern countries especially Pakistan, things have not improved yet. In existing societal circumstances in Pakistan women status in culture and economy has been marginalized and they have been discriminated in all the fields. This status is shaped by society and cultural law prescribed by the old subcontinent Hindu traditions, Islamic social norms along with the lack of policy for improvements (Punjab Gender Parity Report 2016, 2016). Keeping in view the above discussion and ever-growing importance of feminist scholarship invites us to look at the implications of this theory in perspective of our country Pakistan.

So, this study examines the representation of feminist perspectives in local Political Science/IR academia in the context of Sandra Harding's Stand point theory and will provide in depth analysis of current situation regarding awareness, knowledge and research in Political Science and International Relations academia in Pakistan. This study will also highlight the research work that has been done in this field. Thus we will be able to have an overall view of where we stand in terms of knowledge, research and contribution in the field of feminism in academic research perspective.

Our research theme "the representation of Feminist perspectives in IR/Political Science Academia" is considered to be marginalized in Pakistan academia as are women in our society. This subject has been given absolute importance in west and much research has been done in academia in this regard. But in Pakistan, this subject has massive research potential at local level academia. There is an immense need for highlighting the women participation in all walks of life including academia especially in terms of feminist perspectives at local level in Pakistan to grow along with rapid progress in this field. So our study will fill this gap/need and will make a useful contribution in Political Science/IR scholarship. This study will explore the perspectives of feminism in local Political Science and IR academia through the representation regarding this discourse.

Review of Literature

A hundred years ago, women's peace movements came into existence to ensure that WW1 (World War 1) was "the war to end all wars". Although that movement couldn't

get much fame and appreciation but it was majorly responsible for shaping of the League of Nations and the United Nations. There is a strong relation between women's peace activism and feminist activism today. Feminism built a long tradition and inheritance till the end of WW1 (True, 2017).

Feminism has emerged in West as a thought. The existence of women has been seen through the glass of male ideology in history of humanity and that has resulted in females being termed second to men. The feminist thought emerged through the fight for the right of women and for seeking justice for women. There are two major perspectives in feminist ideology i) intellectual commitment ii) political movement. These two are the main causes for obtaining justice for women. As described by D Madsen, "feminism deals with women and their status in society and asks questions about oppression, consciousness and gender". D Madson explains regarding apprehensions in terms of theory of feminism which are i) exclusive experiences faced by women throughout history ii) idea of female consciousness of females iii) meaning of gender that restrict and limit iv) reason to liberate women from these oppressions"(Madsen, 2000). The concept of feminism and its related political ideology is based upon sensitive areas of human rights, culture, family, race, reproduction, class, work, science, the body, disability, globalization, and sexuality. The concept of Feminism grows over time with us throughout our lives and is shaped up dealing with various matters in the society. (Wimmer, 2011).

The Feminist Scholarship around the World

Feminist scholarship is defined by its values and process like field of community psychology. In females movement (liberal, feminism, and womanish radical, socialist), feminist scholars reinterpreted classic concepts in philosophy of science to create feminist epistemologies and methodologies like in the political ideologies of the 1970's. Feminist terms like feminist standpoint theory, empiricism, and postmodernism, recognize women's lived experiences as legitimate sources of knowledge. Feminist methodologies somehow find ways to capture women's voices that are consistent with the feminist ideals (Coyner, 1988).

The research regarding feminism is complex, difficult and it explains regarding policy and values which cover methodological and conceptual grounds of communication research and theory. It was described by Salwen and Stacks in the first chapter of their book ("Integrating Theory and Research: Starting with Questions") that the challenge for communication scholars has two sides. First is to re-enter research questions and methodologies into the process of studying communications, meaning re-starting from the basic question of "how social investigation should be approached" (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2006, p.11) in communication so the gaps in knowledge deriving from gender imbalances may be

redressed. For the achievement of this very purpose, our ways of enquiring and knowing the knowledge should be re-examined and revisited (Coyner, 1988).

So as feminism theory and discourse is written, understood, researched, or published, the main obstacle is faced of getting it published in main stream Journals and books. The members of editorial boards and faculties of scholarly publications are not sensitive about their presence. (Spender, *Feminist Theorists*, 1983) explained, “while both sexes may have been making theories for as far back as we can trace, only one sex is seen as the theorists, one sex has its theories accepted as legitimate, only one sex owns the realm of theory”. This concept hardly changed even ten years later. (Lana F. Rakow, 2004). The researchers think of feminism concept in communication in the year 1970. At that time only little information regarding this concept was available to guide feminism research. The concepts related to Women were there for decades but were destroyed, distorted and silenced (Coyner, 1988).

If we look at feminist research of last half century, we will understand that minorities of male and females have been “othered” or oppressed in research. Feminist research and theories have helped developing the idea of carefulness in future feminism research by raising feminist voices. (Rakow, 1986). The aim of these scholars’ contributing to this field of research is production of knowledge and searching for remedies to problems related to women. The main purpose of feminist scholars is to assist the society regardless to gender, race, national origin, ethnicity etc. (Collins, 2004). Also explains the same in beginning stages of the development (Coyner, 1988).

Asian countries, in general, have long histories and their male-dominated cultures have had influence on all aspects of Asian life. As correctly pointed out by (Janice Peterson, 2001). The study of Political Science/IR has been more concerned with history of America and Europe as Asia has not been much relevant in this regard. But the situation has changed as Asian countries are now emerging powers and attracting attention of the world (S. Anandhi, 2008). The rise of IR has also increased interest in this field of study in Asia itself and developing strong base and creating knowledge every day. The Asian scholars are in ever increasing number in this field making Political Science/IR more widened and international discipline.

Feminist Theory in Political Science Academia

In 1980’s feminism entered in the field of Political Science/IR and it is exploded in 1990’s. In the political science, core issues of the feminist scholarship were addressed. Like the scholars discussing a generalized view on sexuality and gender, which helped to explain militarism or war like for instance (Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, 2014), representation discussed by (Mansbridge, 1999), elections and political parties discussed by (Gidengil, 2008), the support regarding free trade agreements discussed by (Gidengil, 2008); development of democracy discussed by (Pamela Paxton, 2007).

Feminists extended the theory of political science by proving how gender impact politics which can be viewed conventionally or by expanding the boundaries of gender studies. This undermines the tradition of dealing feminism as a unique field under political science. It also has impact regarding understanding of power which is central theme of this discipline.

It is understood that political science and feminist scholarship are mutually beneficial and enriching to each other. Participation of feminist regarding enhancing the understanding of power has been crucial, while political scientists can support understanding that how informal or formal institutions come together with movements in society to fight the dominance of males or gender inequality which are main concepts of women studies. The research on Feminism is mainly conducted by women but the main journals in this discipline and related institutions do not have majority of women (Weldon, 2017).

The political and Gender scholars mention that basis of continuing and solid male domination in the fields of political science, academy and politics are complex. Dominance can't be challenged by simply increasing number of women in a public office (Cowell-Meyers, 2007). The Social criteria or determinants may be different in terms of the gender roles and the meanings assigned to them. Such stage in the development of feminism was called "adding women." The priority was given to include women as gender and objects of analysis as a variable concept (Gasztold, 2017).

Therefore, the term "personal is political" is important for many gender scholars and the academic researchers have been attached to their political commitment. The efforts or research in the field of feminism are very important which helped women academic scholars to organize inside this discipline in year 1960.

The traditional theories of political science oppress the importance of women and the role of gender as a category in social and political life. The main goal of feminism is considered be as raising awareness and thereby to universalize this approach in both theory and in practice (Hartsock, 1996). The Supporters of the feminist perspectives have understood that the gender aspect is very important to the study of certain determinants and political processes and of security issues in the whole globe of feminism. Gender creates and impacts the individual as a person but also all of society. Feminist theory also analyze various security phenomena, terrorism including armed conflict and other actions related to political violence and that's because it focuses on research at the individual level, for both men and women.

The feminist perspectives in Political Science/IR scholarship is a heated debate as discussed here in detail. The feminist perspectives have changed the face of Political

Science/IR studies and has massively contributed to this field of study around the world and in Asia. It has highlighted the marginalization/missing feminist perspectives which have been discussed in this literature review through Origin of feminism movement, feminist perspectives in Political Science/IR discipline, waves & variants, main issues/questions. The feminist perspective is emergent in Political Science academia here in Pakistan as well as in Asia. The feminist perspectives and its key concerns have contributed much in bringing about a social change. Therefore this study will also be a useful contribution in highlighting feminist perspectives in Political Science/IR academia as well as in IR theory.

Research Question

How is the feminist perspectives represented in Pakistan's Political Science/IR academia? In this question, "Representation" means how much work has been done on feminist/gender issues in local academia. So, we will explore the representation of feminist perspectives by analyzing five HEC recognized x,y-category journals of political science and IR. All online available volumes of these journals will be explored. This question will help find out how much local research on the topic has been conducted in past and how much support and space given to the feminism related studies.

Theoretical Framework

This research is based on Feminism standpoint theory by Sandra Harding which has been employed to explore the representation of the feminist perspectives in Pakistan Political Science/IR academia. Standpoint theory is considered to be a feminist theoretical approach which claims that marginalized women and suppressed thinking ways of feminism has been ignored by research and theory.

The main concept of feminism standpoint theory is elaboration of two main concerns;

1. To identify the cultural values and power dynamics (which stand for subordination of women)
2. To bring into light, the knowledge cultivated by activities which are typically assigned to the women (Wood, 2012)

The discrimination against women as compared to men seriously impact the creation of knowledge and it is a theme analyzed by feminist scholars, which were inspired by Marxist theory. The source of learning and knowledge level can be assessed by a person's social position in societies grouped by gender, class or race. (Borland). The Local and international Research apparently has marginalized/ignored feminist way of thinking. Unfortunately in Pakistan, knowledge is very much affected by this gender discrimination.

It emerges that Political Science/IR academia is also one of those fields which are heavily affected by this marginalization. To get an insight into this issue of marginalization/missed voices of women in local Political Science/IR academia, we have to observe representation of feminist perspectives in respective field. It will be found after having a look at them that to which extent it is marginalized in local academia? Representation will be analyzed by looking into the research done on feminist perspective/gender issues in local/Pakistani Political Science/IR academia. For this purpose, all the available online issues of five X, Y-category HEC recognized IR/Political Science journals would be checked. It will find out that how much discourse has been carried out in this field and to what extent the articles relating to feminist perspective have been published. The publication in these high-profile local journals will give us an idea that how much representation has been given to feminist perspective related research. The representation of these ignored voices will be analyzed here at local level (Pakistan) through the lens of Feminist standpoint theory.

Methodology

In this study, we have used qualitative research method. This method was developed in the social sciences for enabling the researchers to study cultural and social phenomena, observe thoughts, behaviors, feelings, and the belief of the mass society. This will be an exploratory and descriptive research.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Since the qualitative data has been attributed to the fact that it is usually recorded in the form of words; descriptions, opinions and feelings rather than numbers. In the qualitative research data analysis probably carries apprehensions than any other part of the research process.

Summative Content Analysis

In our research question we have articles of women/gender issues as initial codes by which we extract our required data. So, summative content analysis technique is the most suitable data analysis technique for this research study.

Five HEC recognized(X-Y, category) Political Science/IR journals will be explored to observe representation of feminist perspective in Political Science/IR academia of Pakistan. Online available issues/volumes of these five journals will be scrutinized in detail and articles related to feminist/gender issues will be selected and separated. The library research method has been used for data collection. The analytical and descriptive analysis will be completed using descriptive statistics.

Names of the five HEC recognized X-Y, category Political Science/IR Academic Journals are as follows:

- a) IPRI.
- b) Journal of Political Studies.
- c) Margalla Papers.
- d) NDU Journal.
- e) Pakistan Horizon.

Cumulative Detailed Statistics Regarding Political Science/IR Journals

The following tables present the statistical data regarding HEC online journals publications;

Table: 1
Detailed statistics regarding political science/IR journals

Name of Journal	Online available Volumes	Total No of Volumes/ Issues	Total No of Articles in All Volumes
Pakistan Horizon Journal	1948-2013	240	1419
IPRI	2002-2019	35	202
Journal of Political Studies	2000-2018	30	330
NDU Journal	2008-2018	10	74
Margalla Papers	2007-2017	14	112

The total number of articles in all five HEC recognized online available Journals including all the volumes issued has been tabulated year wise. The percentage of articles published regarding Feminist perspectives will also be determined under statistical and descriptive analysis. The journal wise feminist perspectives related publications and the overall feminist related publications will also be analyzed and will be added to this descriptive analysis. The statistical data and percentages will then be presented through descriptive analysis in form of bar graphs and pie charts. I have gone through all online available volumes of these journals and show my data through tables and graphs. Finally on the basis of feminism related articles/publications in each Journal, 21,44 articles have been seen from all online available volumes of these five X,Y-category journals. The percentage representation of these journals on the topic concerned has been observed. Lastly, a detailed overall tabular, graphical presentation has been made to show a collective percentage of representation of feminist perspective in Pakistan Political Science/IR academia through all these journals.

(Note): The list comprises of major Pakistani HEC recognized (x, y category) journals in the fields of Political Science/IR.

Table: 1
Detailed statistics regarding political science/IR journals

Name of Journal	Online available Volumes	Total No of Volumes/ Issues	Total No of Articles in All Volumes	Feminism Concerned Articles in All Volumes	Percentage of Feminism Articles in Each Volume
Pakistan Horizon Journal	1948-2013	240	1419	12	0.85%
IPRI	2002-2019	35	202	0	0 %
Journal of Political Studies	2000-2018	30	330	10	3.03%
NDU Journal	2008-2018	10	74	2	2.70%
Margalla Papers	2007-2017	14	112	1	0.89%

Table: 2
Cumulative detailed statistics regarding political science/IR journals

Total No of Volumes Issued by all Five X-Category Journals	Total No of Articles in All Volumes of All Journals	Feminism Concerned Articles in All Volumes of All Journals	Overall Percentage of Feminism Articles in all Journals
329	2144	25	1.16%

If we look at the data in table 1 and 2; there are 21, 44 articles in 329 online available issues of all five journals. In all these 21, 44 articles there are only 25 articles which are about feminist perspectives/feminist issues. The percentage of feminist articles is only **1.16%** of all 21, 44 articles.

So, we have been able to answer our main research question that “How Feminist Perspective is represented in Pakistan Political Science/IR academia”?

The reply is very clear represented through data tables that Feminist perspective’s representation has been very poor in Pakistan Political Science/IR academia.

Graphical Representation of Journals Data

A graphical account of all the journals is elaborated below:

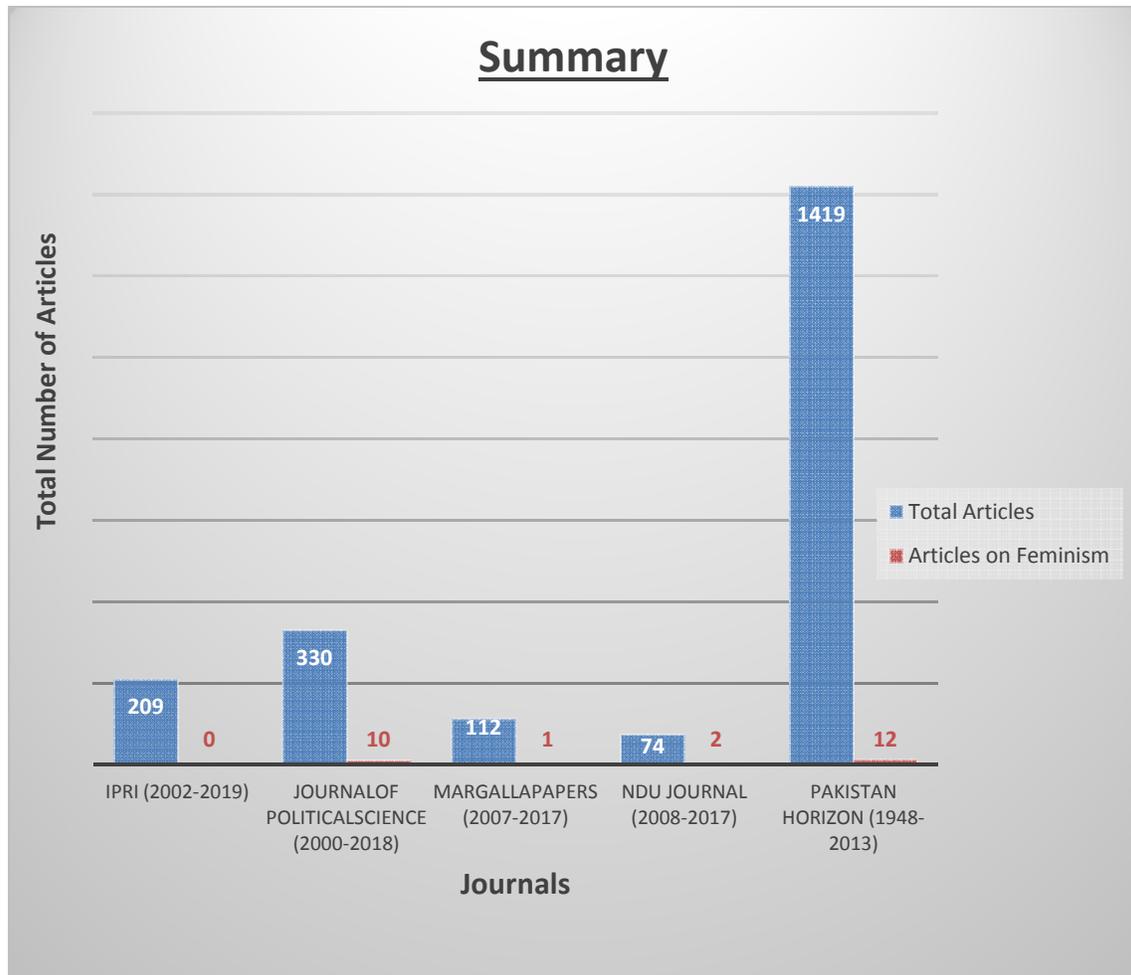


Figure 1 : Total number of articles published in all journals

The bar graph shows the total publications per journal and also bifurcate the number of publications regarding feminism. The blue bars shows the total publications of each of the five journals and the orange bars show the publications regarding feminism. From this graphical representation we can clearly determine that articles/publications regarding feminism are very few in number. The highest publications are from the Journal of

“Pakistan Horizon” which is only 12 out of 1419. The other four Journals also have very few articles published regarding feminism. This shows that a lot of effort is still required to publish and highlight/promote research in this area.

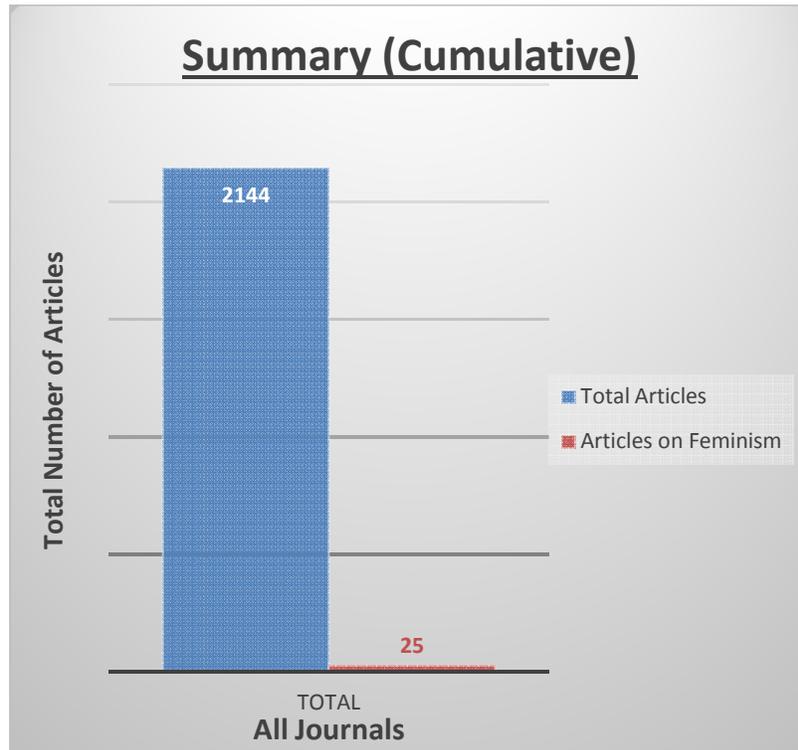


Figure 2 : Cumulative Summary

The figure2 represents the cumulative data regarding journals publications. The totals of published articles are 2144 which are represented by blue bar. The orange bar represents the articles published regarding feminism which are only 25 which clearly depicts that the ratio of feminism related publications is very low. This outcome supports the basis of our research ideology that feminism is the field of research that is underrepresented even in terms of research publications or academics in Pakistan.

Important Contents of Feminist Concerned Articles

Although the research work/ publications regarding feminism in Political Science/IR academia has been in a very low percentage, yet it has touched some important/sensitive areas as follows;

1. Participation of women in Economic Development:
2. Role of Women in promoting counter terrorism/radicalism/War Culture:
3. Women empowerment through Political Presence & Media.

4. International Law & Human Rights Declaration:
5. Role of feminist scholars in highlighting Gender based violence:
6. Challenging Conceptual shortcomings of literature regarding women status:
7. Women Role in the United Nations and Global Platforms.

Analysis & Conclusions

This research study is about the topic of feminist representation in Political Science/IR academia in Pakistan which has been analyzed through the lens of Sandra Harding's standpoint theory. Several important findings regarding representation of feminist perspectives have been discovered which have been elaborated below;

1. Very less representation, almost negligible (1.16%), mostly mainstream issues are discussed.
2. This study concludes that Online available publications of IPRI has the least percentage of representation i.e 0%, while NDU online issues has 3.03% of representation of feminist perspective which is highest in all five journals online publications. By this one can imagine the minimum representation of feminist perspectives in local Political Science/IR academia.
3. Women role in economy, politics and in UN are mostly discussed. Other important issues are neglected.
4. Most of the articles are related to empowerment of women through political/parliament participation.

The findings and conclusion of a piece of research summarizes the whole topic and gives us a brief but comprehensive picture of the study. We have been able to extract some useful findings and draw lessons which will be a valuable addition to body of knowledge.

Future Recommendations

Keeping in view the above-mentioned findings and observations of our research study; there are a few recommendations that are given hereunder;

1. The Feminist perspectives requires to be discussed in the academic/research journals much more as this field of study as this topic has not been given required attention at local level in Pakistan. This education should start from the grass root level.
2. Women Issues should be discussed not only in the lens of feminist theory but also other relevant theories so that the marginalization and other concerns would be more understood. It will also challenge the existing theories and will provide basis for developing new normative standards. This segment of study/literature in academics will bring revolutionary changes in gender and politics scholarship.

3. The local and international scholars need to continue to theorize the nature of and relationship between these unique dimensions of feminist theory.
4. It must also be analyzed through research studies that how women in Pakistan can contribute more to agriculture and industry of modern times and contribute towards economic growth of country.
5. Domestic inequalities and violence have to be highlighted more in feminist discourse in Pakistan as these have been a great cause of concern since Pakistan came in to being in 1947. The point of view of domestic women must be highlighted by publishing the local women's thoughts as they are the true knower of the situation instead of western literature about our country.
6. The bills/resolutions/acts passed by Government or legislative assembly regarding women rights in Pakistan should be discussed in research journals articles in order to determine whether these laws truly protect women.
7. These women should be united, make a platform write and publish more in local media without looking at western scholars and their ideas. That's how the core issues will be properly understood and highlighted regarding local women. They are the best knower's in the situation.
8. The newspapers must as a part of their policy publish research regarding feminism and must allocate space in every issue for this topic. Similarly newspapers, electronic media and social media should support feminist activist and research produced by them.
9. Our society is a heterogeneous mix of people and has complex structure. The people in our society as a whole have responsibility towards feminist perspective and its outcomes. It's our duty being a part of society to support the weak, have nots and the true knower's. This will not only give voice to the weak but support to segments of society who have not been given their due importance.

At the end I would like to repeat that, this field of study has massive potential for future research and there are countless aspects that still require the attention of the researches. The future research can be conducted on more robust analyses of structural change and feminist perspectives if we integrate accounts of local regimes, institutions, and other structural dimensions of gender and politics. Further, the issues such as women identity, self-understanding, education, women and local politics, women in academia, local women and international issues are the topics that also require researchers' attention at local level in future.

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