

Abstract

Local government can be defined as "a significant institution that manages public affairs within a small locality (town, city, village). After 18th constitutional amendment in Pakistan, the subject of local government was transferred to provinces and the second tier of government (provincial govt) had to delegate its powers to the elected local representatives, which forced the provincial government to delegate political, administrative, and financial authority to the local elected representatives in Pakistan. Article 140-A of Pakistan constitution lays down that "Each province shall, by law, establish a local government system and devolve political, administrative and financial responsibility and authority to the elected representatives of the local governments." Under the shadow of 18th amendment, the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Acts (LGA) of 2013 and 2019 were promulgated by the incumbent provincial governments. The main objectives of this research are; (a) role of women in local government systems in KPK and Punjab, (b) Socio-cultural, political, legal, security and administrative challenges that hampers women active participation in KPK and Punjab local governments, (c) extent of political, administrative and financial devolution under PLGA and KPLGA 2013 and 2019 in KPK and Punjab, and (d) Challenges to KPK and Punjab local governments. This study is qualitative in nature and the researcher employed analytical and descriptive methods to go deep into the study. The data of this research work is mainly based upon primary sources (especially interviews); and secondary sources. The researcher presents fresh insight into the issue and take into account the narrative of the population through purposive sampling, and by conducting semi- structured interview of the respondents. Once interviews are transcribed, each interview is read by the researchers twice. After studying all the interviews, common themes are identified means thematic analysis took place. The study concludes that both KPK and Punjab local governments have strengths and weaknesses. Women in Punjab local governments enjoy more freedom of participation than KPK due to less socio-cultural restrictions. But in both provinces, women face same political, administrative and budgetary issues. The KPK local govt is politically, administratively, and financially more autonomous and stable than that of Punjab local govt. Comparatively, KPK local govt is more successful than that of Punjab due to its functional nature and conducting of regular elections.