

WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN MYANMAR'S
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in International Development
Studies

Common Course
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
Chulalongkorn University
Academic Year 2018
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Thu Thu Swe : WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN
MYANMAR'S HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. ADVISOR: Asst. Prof.
Naruemon Thabchumpon

The thesis mainly discusses about main obstacles and challenges for women to participate in political activities in Myanmar including economic factor, social factor, political factor, and the ways how women are empowered to participate in political activities in Myanmar by using both primary and secondary data. The primary concept for this study is based on women empowerment processes which are included four different pathways in which women are changed –material (economy), perceptual (knowledge and skill), cognitive (self-confident and self-esteem) and relational (bargaining power). Moreover, the thesis analyses actor's roles in these four pathways. The thesis found out external factors namely economy, religion, culture and tradition, verbal gender-discrimination and gender-violence as well as lack of gender-concept in policy and political factor are obstacles and challenges for women. On the other hand, internal factors namely education, knowledge and skills and self-confident are not challenges for women to participate in political activities. In order to empower women, there are four main actors in Myanmar: state (Ministry of Social Welfare, Union Election Commission), political parties, CSO/NGO/INGO and media for four pathways. It is observed that for four pathways, state and political parties takes cooperation and leading roles for economic (material pathway), knowledge and skills (cognitive pathway) and self-confident (perceptual pathway) of women empowerment with CSO/NGO/INGO sector. But state cannot do its cooperation and leading role very well like political parties. The thesis found out CSO/NGO/INGO can do a lot for women empowerment. Without support of CSO/NGO/INGO, state and political parties cannot do anything for material, cognitive and perceptual pathways. And for bargaining power (relational pathway), CSO/NGO/INGO does not have power to do. State and Political parties have power but in reality, state and political parties cannot do anything for bargaining power for women. For media sector, the thesis found out it can just support for improving knowledge for women.

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ACRONYM

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
MNCWA	Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
NSPAW	National strategic plan for the advanced of women
NLD	National League for Democracy Party
USDP	Union Solidarity and Development Party
ANP	Arakan National Party
TPN	Ta'aung (Palaung) National Party
UN	United Nations
IPU	Inter-parliamentary Union
MP	Members of parliament
TWG	Technical Working Group
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Newzealand
DFID	Department of International Development in UK
EMRF	Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FSWG	Food Security Working Group
MEDA	Myanmar economic development organization
MSI	Marie Stopes International
MWCDF	Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation
MMCWA	Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association
NAG	Network Activities Group
UMFCCI	Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry

UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WFP	World Food Programme
MPs	Members of parliament
CEC	Chief Executive Committee



CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem of Statement

In 1935, Myanmar stood at the second in ASEAN countries for women have the right to vote in election. Since then, women in Myanmar have had the constitutional rights of equal opportunity with men to participate in politics by giving their votes. Moreover, although women also have equal rights to access education, health care, same salaries and economic opportunities like men according to 2008 constitution, women especially in rural and ethnic areas are rare to participate in decision-making processes of their own family, community, local and national level and in political activities. It is apparent that women do not tend to hold the same positions as men in decision-making processes and political activities. Consequently, women are always left behind in Myanmar society concerning with the participation of political activities and decision-making processes, and women voices are very silent as well.

The possibility for all citizens regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity to participate in the management of public affairs and decision-making processes is the heart of democracy. However, in most of the countries, the political arena and decision-making processes remain largely dominated by men (Ishrat Jahan,2008). In Myanmar politics, parliamentary democracy has been practiced since 2010 while the elections for two national parliaments confirmed democratic government. Although women participation in politics is marginalized before 2010 during military time, in 2010 election, women had opportunity to participate at union and state/ region levels parliaments although politics has traditionally been a male preserve. After finishing 2010 election, the government and political parties empowered women to participate in decision-making processes, therefore, in 2015 election, the ratio of women participation is increased nearly double compared with 2010 election at both national and local levels.

At present, the cabinet of Myanmar at national level has been led by National League for Democracy (NLD) with the leadership of woman, Daw Aung San Su Kyin. And she is the only woman cabinet member. She takes two ministry positions, Ministry of President's Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Except her, there is no

woman in both ministerial and deputy-ministerial positions. In local government, among fourteen chief ministers from State/ Region governments, only two women are appointed as chief ministers in Kayin State and Tanintharyi State governments.

Among 52 million population of Myanmar, 50.7 % are women and 49.3 % are men. Although women population are more than men, the ratio of women participation in politics is very low compared with the ratio of men according to 2015 election result. At the national level parliaments, women participation is 10.3 %, there are 23 women representatives in Amyotha Hluttaw (House of Nationalities) which are elected based on State/ Region out of 224 representatives with the equal number. However, in Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives) which are elected based on townships in the country, women participation ratio is 10.5 %, women representatives are 46 out of 440 members. At the state/ region level parliaments which are elected based on populations in the country, the rate of women participation is 9.7%, 86 women can participate out of 749 representatives (Asia Foundation Report, 2017) in fourteen state / region parliaments of Myanmar.

In ASEAN region, Myanmar is the least country for women participation in politics compared with Thailand (10.6%), Malaysia (17%), the Philippines (27.2%), Lao PDR (25%), Vietnam (25.3%), Singapore (23.9%), Cambodia (20.3%), Bangladesh (20%) and Indonesia (17.1%) concerning with women participation in decision-making processes (Sein, S. S., Latt, 2017). Women participation is 22.9% in national elected bodies at the global average.

Concerning with the level of participation in decision-making processes in Myanmar, the level of women participation in major decision-making processes is also low because women are very rare to get high rank positions in every organization especially in government administration sector. For example - in national parliaments' offices, although there are three Director Generals, there is no woman. In Deputy Director Level, among 11 officers, only three officers are women and for Director and Head of the departments, there are few women as well. Women work according to the orders of highest rank men officers. They do not have the opportunities to participate in decision-making processes of parliament administration sector like men.

In Myanmar, government has assumed that women should be empowered to participate in decision-making processes like men. Therefore, Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs (MNCWA) was established on 7th October 1991 under Ministry of Social, Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. Also Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation (MWAF) was also established in 2003 to empower women in every sector. Since Myanmar signed in CEDAW treaty, Ministry of Social, welfare, Relief and Resettlement has begun the national strategic plan for the advanced of women since 2013 to 2022 in order to empower women and to be gender equality. Although the government is trying for gender equality and women empowerment, women participation in politics is still very low.

People also know that the number of women participation in politics in Myanmar and the level of participation in decision-making processes are very low even though they participate in politics. But we do not know why both the number of women participation and level of participation are very low, what kinds of obstacle and challenge factors that are prevented for women and how women can be empowered in order to increase participation ratio and participatory level in political activities.

Besides in the academic field, gender equality and women empowerment in decision-making processes and political activities are important and essential issues in worldwide. Therefore, the researchers emphasize on these issues and there are also many studies about women participation in the least women participation countries like Georgia, Bangladesh, Kenya etc. In Myanmar, there is only one research published by Asia Foundation concerning with Myanmar women participation in politics, it is mainly focused on women representatives' experiences in their political lives. To my knowledge, the study on why the ratio and level of women participation in political activities are very low and how women are able to empower to participate in political activities of Myanmar has not studied yet.

Therefore, this thesis aims to identify why women's participation is very low especially in the political activities? What are the main obstacles and challenges that women faced for expanding participation? And to what extend can women be empowered to participate in political activities?

1.2 Research Questions

- ❖ Why does women's participation remain low in political activities in Myanmar?
 - What are main obstacles and challenges for women to participate in political activities in Myanmar?
- ❖ To what extent can women be empowered to increasingly participate in political activities in Myanmar?

1.3 Research Objectives

- ❖ To identify the factors contributed to low participation of women in political activities in Myanmar
 - To indicate main obstacles and challenges for women to participate in political activities in Myanmar
- ❖ To explore the ways women can be empowered to increasingly participate in political activities in Myanmar

1.4 Conceptual Framework

The thesis will be mainly focused on the concept of women empowerment processes adopted by Chan, Martha & Simeen (1995). According to this concept, there are four kinds of pathways: material pathway, perceptual pathway, cognitive pathway and relational pathway. These four pathways are supported for economic, social and political factors. In order to participate in political activities in Myanmar, women can face economic, social and political challenges and obstacles; therefore, this concept will be related with my question number one and sub-question. Moreover, in women empowerment processes, actors' role is also important. If family, community, political parties and government cannot support effectively for women, they will not participate in political activities in Myanmar. Therefore, the concept of women empowerment and actor's role is also connected with my research question number two. The detailed conceptual framework of research will be in Chapter II.

1.5 Research Methodology

1.5.1 Research site / location selection

The main area of research is Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives). Pyithu Hluttaw is one of the parliaments in Myanmar namely Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Assembly), Amyotha Hluttaw (House of Nationalities), as well as Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives). Representatives from Pyithu Hluttaw are elected based on township as well as population, or combining with an appropriate township which is contiguous to the newly-formed township if it is more than 330 townships, and 110 representatives who are the Defense Services personnel nominated by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defense Services (2008 constitution, Myanmar). Therefore, there are 440 representatives and among them, 42 representatives are elected women and 4 women from military side.

Pyithu Hluttaw is selected research site because it is very important in term of political activities in Myanmar. The members are elected by direct election from every people within the townships in Myanmar; consequently, women can enter into politics. Also it is the place linked with democracy and women participation in political activities. Therefore, we can see the possibilities that women can be enter in politics. Representatives from Amyotha Hluttaw are elected by States/ Regions; consequently, women are rare to participate in political activities in this parliament. Therefore, the number of women representatives in Pyithu Hluttaw is more than Amyotha Hluttaw. Since it is needed to look at the ground-level situation when data is collected, collecting data from Pyithu Hluttaw will make to get ground-level situation data. Pyithu Hluttaw is selected as my research site because of the above reasons.

1.5.2 Data collection

In this study, qualitative research method will be used in order to know the obstacles and challenges prevented for women, and the ways how women are empowered to increasingly participate in political activities in Myanmar. Data collection will be conducted from documentary research and field research as follows:

1.5.2.1 Documentary Research

Regarding documentary research, the thesis thoroughly examined both published and unpublished documents in relation to women participation in political activities. The research relied on statistic of women participation involved in political activities in Myanmar, lists of women representatives in parliamentary committees, statistic of political parties' women candidates for representatives in respective elections, political parties' policies, as well as government's national strategic plan for the advanced of women since 2013 to 2022. Also, the thesis used international newspapers and local newspapers about women participation in political activities in Myanmar, INGOs' and NGOs' reports and previous researches to get data about women participation in political activities and how women are supporting to participate in political activities in Myanmar.

1.5.2.2 Field Research

Field research was conducted in Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives), Union Election Commission and Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in Nay Pyi Taw, CSOs and media sector in Yangon during April 5, 2018 to 5 May 2018. During this period, the thesis was conducted using qualitative method with qualitative mechanisms. The mechanism of inquiry included in-depth interviews with the sample. The interviews included to the selected interviews from 6 women representatives, 5 from political parties, 4 from Pyithu Hluttaw staff, 4 from Ministry of Social Welfare and Union Election Commission and 5 from CSO and media sector, The objective of conducting in-depth interviews was to access the knowledge and to identify how women faced obstacles and challenges and how women can be empowered to participate in political activities. Selecting women representatives for in-depth interviews, three representatives were chosen from main land constituencies (divisions), three representatives were from ethnic constituencies (states) as well as two representatives from military side. The detailed tentative interviewee's list is as follows:

1.5.2.3 Methodology Matrix and Interview Strategy

Occupations	Number of Interviewees	Note
Women representatives	6	(3) from main land constituencies (3) from ethnic constituencies
Political parties	5	-(2) from National League for Democracy party (NLD) - (1) from Union Solidarity and Development party (USDP) -(1) from Arakan National Party (1) from Taang National Party
Union Election Commission	2	higher level staff in commission (if possible)
Ministry of social welfare, relief and resettlement	2	higher level staff in ministry (if possible)
Women staff from Pyithu Hluttaw	4	Higher level staff in Pyithu Hluttaw (if possible)
Women from CSO and media	5	(2) from CSO, NGO who is working for women affairs (3) from media who is working for women affairs
Total Interviewees	24	

Table (2) Methodology Matrix and Interview Strategy

Research Question	Data Needed	Information Sources & Interviewee/ origin of sources	Tools and Methods of Data Collection
<p>1 Why do women's participation remain low in political activities in Myanmar?</p> <p>- What are main obstacles and challenges for women to participate in political activities of Myanmar?</p>	<p>- the data and factors why women participation is low in political activities</p> <p>- Economic obstacles and challenges for women</p> <p>- Social obstacles and challenges for women</p> <p>- political obstacles and challenges for women</p>	<p>- Interviews with women MPs</p> <p>-Interviews with political parties</p> <p>- Interview with Union Election Commission</p> <p>- Interview with Social Welfare</p> <p>- Interview with staff from Pyithu Hluttaw</p> <p>- Interview with CSO and media</p>	<p>- In-depth interviews with women MPs</p> <p>- In-depth with chairman or deputy-chairman of political parties</p> <p>- In-depth interviews with staff from Union Election Commission</p> <p>- In-depth with Ministry of Social Welfare</p> <p>- In-depth interviews with staff from Pyithu Hluttaw</p>

				- In-depth interview with CSO and media
2. To what extent can women be empowered to increasingly participate in political activities in Myanmar?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What kinds of empowerment activities do women have access in various stakeholders -the ways women can be empowered to participate in political activities in Myanmar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews with women MPs -Interviews with political parties - Interview with Union Election Commission - Interview with Social Welfare - Interview with staff from Pyithu Hluttaw - Interview with CSO and media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -In-depth interviews with women MPs - In-depth with chairman or deputy-chairman of political parties - Focus Group with staff from Union Election Commission - In-depth interviews with Ministry of Social Welfare - In-depth interviews with staff from Pyithu Hluttaw - In-depth interview with CSO and media 	

1.6 Scope of the Research

In this thesis, women representatives in the interview are from Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives). So, it cannot cover all women political participation in Myanmar both in House of Nationalities and State/Region Parliaments. However, this gives privilege to the future researchers who are interested in same topics and would like to discuss and choose case study on Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) and State/

Region parliaments. Moreover, although there are many political activities, the thesis mainly focused on campaigning, candidacy for election, representation for constituency people, oversight and criticism to the government's activities and policies and also participation in decision-making processes of government activities.

1.7 Limitation of the Research

Data collection time was not parliament session time, therefore, women representatives went to their constituencies, and it was very hard to collect the data for researcher especially women MPs from ethnic areas. Thus, the interviews for women MP from ethnic area were conducted by phone. Moreover, selecting sample site for the interview, especially for women MPs from Yangon Region, Rakhine State, Shan State, majority party, opposition party, two ethnic parties, the civil society organizations which focus on gender equality and women empowerment, and media, it was not able to cover all women MPs in House of Representatives and all women political participation in Myanmar. Another limitation was that women members could not give much time for the researcher to do in-depth interviews and to answer all questionnaires because they were very busy with their parliamentary jobs. In order to solve the problem, the researcher went to headquarters of parties and sent request letters to participate in-depth interviews.

1.8 Significance of the research

In Myanmar political situation, although the government cabinet is formed by National League for Democracy which is led by woman leader, Daw Aung San Su Kyi, women participation ratio and women participation level are still low but most of us forget to see some aspect how women are able to empower to participate in political activities in Myanmar. Since this thesis pointed out the issues that women participation ratio and level are low, and it is based on women empowerment processes, this study is able to contribute much of the possibilities for promoting women participation ratio and level in political activities in accordance with Myanmar which is one of the countries signed on Convention on Elimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted by UN. Moreover, in development content, gender equality and women empowerment are key issues. Therefore, UN adopted gender equality and

empowerment for all women and girls in Sustainable Development Goal (5). By doing this thesis, gender equality will improve in political activities in Myanmar. Furthermore, studying about politics in Myanmar is not too much and to study women in politics in Myanmar is not yet studied. Therefore, this might be the first research which looks at women participation in politics of Myanmar.

1.9 Ethnical Issues

Concerning the ethnical issue, this study requires collecting information directly from the field by interviewing women representatives from Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives) , political parties as well as staffs from Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Union Election Commission and Pyithu Hluttaw. Therefore, personal information will be maintained with confidentiality and anonymity. The information collected in any cases or situations is purposefully used only for this research. Priority as respect to the rights of the informants is essential. During the process, all the informants were explained about the objectives of the study and were asked permission for recording in In-depth interviews and focus group discussions will be performed. Moreover, the participants were explained that their name would be kept anonymous to move out their worries concerning with their answers.

CHAPTER II

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS: CONCEPTS AND EMPIRICAL SITUATION

2.1 Women participation in politics

In many decades, women have enjoyed formal equality to participate in politics by giving their votes for their representatives, standing in elections, and competition any offices as same as the men. Later, there has been marked consistency for women to participate in local and national politics although women representation ratio in politics is low (Anne Phillips, 1991).

Anne Phillips, 1991 pointed out that it is needed to consider about irrelevant the composition of our elected representatives because the resulting pattern of the election has been firmly skewed in the direction of white middle-class men and for women, they are only the starkest among a range of excluded groups although liberal democracy makes equations between democracy and representation,. Therefore, campaign for women's right to vote was always linked with a parallel campaign for women's right to be elected as representatives.

Therefore, in the late 1960s, when the women's movement re-emerged, they strongly presumed in favor of direct democracy because of critical repudiation of party politics which always ignore women to participate in politics as representatives. Until now, the feminists oppose liberal that democracy can deliver the goods for women and they also prefer direct forms of participation for women. Anne Phillips 1991 describes two ways which women can participate in politics, mirror representation and group representation as follows:

Mirror representation: many feminists have pointed out the ways for women to participate more in politics: basic justice, solving for sexual segregation. Most of the people assume that women should cook but they cannot be engineers, typists, and directors, moreover, they should be excluded from central activities in the political realm. It is unfair and un-justice for women. Also, for the hundred years ago, access to political power has been an issue; therefore, women organizations have combined for justice case with one point that women would bring to politics with different set of values, and experiences. Concerning with justice, the argument is to eliminate or moderate whatever women face obstacles to participate in politics (Anne Phillips,

1991). The concept of mirror representation is the universal practice of electing representatives according to geographical constituencies. It means the interests of people voting are relatively homogeneous within localities. Whether the representatives are male or female, it is not necessary in mirror representation, but the voters concentrate on rich or poor, areas populated by particular racial or religious groups, the class, and the race or religion of the representatives. For the political parties, they select their candidates who seem consonant with the locality in mirror representation. For example, in Northern Ireland, where religious conflict is happened, the voters elect their representatives by homogeneous class or race (Anne Phillips, 1991). Therefore, women who are popular in the community and consonant with the local people can get the votes and they can participate in politics as representatives.

Group Representation: in order to participate more women in politics, another argument is based on the conflict of the interests between women and men. It is meant that women voters give their votes to women who will represent the interests of women; black people give their votes to black people who will represent black community; working-class people normally gives their votes to the same working class people who will represent their community. Therefore, basically, in national assembly of every democratic country, there should be some farmers, some housewives, and some manual workers (Anne Phillips, 1991). Thus, if women give their votes to women representatives, and women support women representatives, women participation in politics will increase.

Because the researcher reviews about women participation in politics, it is assumed that justice should be for women and it is needed to eliminate the obstacles and challenges prevented for women to participate in politics. Also how the encouragement of women society and the same class and races are important for women to participate in political activities can be learnt as well as the researcher can apply these factors in accordance with Myanmar content in this thesis.

2.2 Women Participation in politics in Myanmar

Myanmar was reformed to a new modern democratic country since 2011 after the country had been governed by military for sixty years. Since then, Myanmar parliaments, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Assembly), Amyotha Hluttaw (House of Nationalities), Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives) and State/ Region parliaments have been established according to 2008 constitution.

According to 2008 constitution, Pyidaung Hluttaw (Union Assembly) is the national level parliament which is combined with Amyotha Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw. Concerning with legislation, article 95 (b) of 2008 constitution, if there is a disagreement between the Pyithu Hluttaw and the Amyotha Hluttaw concerning a Bill, the Bill shall be discussed and resolved in Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. Moreover, concerning with budgeting, tax, and national planning, member of representatives from both houses need to discuss in Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (House of Representatives) Session.

According to article 109 (a) and (b) of 2008 constitution, Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives) is formed with not more than 330 representatives elected on the basis of township as well as population and not more than 110 military representatives who are the Defense Services personnel nominated by the Commander-in-Chief. On the other hand, in accordance with article 141 (a) and (b), Amyotha Hluttaw (House of Nationalities) is formed with 168 representatives elected on the basic of 12 representatives from 14 States and Regions and also 56 representatives who are the Defense Services personnel nominated by the Commander-in-Chief. According to article 161 of 2008 constitution, State/ Region parliaments are formed with two elected representatives from each township in the Regions or States.

In Myanmar politics, there are two parliament terms - the first term which Union Solidarity Development Party (USDP) headed by high ranks from military background took the majority of seats from 2011 to 2015 and the second term which National League for Democracy (NLD) headed by Daw Aung San Su Kyi, daughter of Bogyoke Aung San took the majority of seats from 2016 to 2022.

In Myanmar, 2010 general election represented a historic transition from more than six decades of military rule to civilian government. People can give their votes

for their representatives to new national parliaments called Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Assembly), consisting of Amyotha Hluttaw (House of Nationalities) and Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives). In addition, parliaments were also established for the 14 States and Regions (Sein, S. S., Latt, 2017)

Although the military retained an important measure of control by reserving 25% of all parliamentary seats at both the national and State/ Region levels, the Union Parliament of 2011-2016 surprised observers from local and international community by being much more active than expected (Sein, S. S., Latt., 2017)

However, 2010 election results showed that women representation ratio is very low by winning 28 seats out of 466 elected seats total, therefore, 5 or 6%, of elected national level representatives were women, with 4 seats in the Amyotha Hluttaw and 24 seats in the Pyithu Hluttaw. In the term between 2015 and 2010, there was no women military representative but in January 2014, only two women MPs were appointed to the 166-seats representing the military bloc in both houses at the national level (Sein, S. S., Latt, 2017)

At the State/Region level, among 659 elected seats across 14 state/region level parliaments, women only won 25 seats (3.8%) and also for military side, only a woman representative was appointed in Yangon region parliament in 2014. Among 14 state/region parliaments, in 6 State / Region parliaments Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon States; Sagaing and Tanintharyi Regions, there was no women representatives. Otherwise, Shan State parliament was the highest level of women's representation with eight women representatives, and Yangon Region Parliament was second rank with six women representatives. For State/ Region governments, only four women held ministerial positions (Sein, S. S., Latt, april 2017)

The 2015 general election gave second major opportunity for women to participate in representational governance, and in the 2015 elections, the ratio of women representatives was increased significantly to a total of 151 elected seats across both national and State/ Region levels. The number of female representatives in the National Parliament became more than double increasing from 4.8% to 10.6% of all elected representatives with 23 women representatives in Amyotha Hluttaw and 44 seats in Pyithu Hluttaw. The military appointed only two women MPs to Pyithu Hluttaw (Sein, S. S., Latt, 2017)

At the state/region level, 84 women were elected as representatives; the ratio was increased from 2.9% to 9.7%. From the military side, only two women representatives were appointed in the states and regions (one in Yangon Region and one in Shan State). In state/ region governments, there are also only four women holding ministerial positions in the current government, with two in Yangon Region and two in Ayeyarwady Region (Sein, S. S., Latt, 2017).

Concerning with ministerial positions of national government in Myanmar, between 2010 and 2015 period, women held only two out of the 33 ministerial positions. When Daw Mya Mya Ohn Khin was appointed as Minister of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement in December 2012, she was Myanmar's first female cabinet minister in 60 years (Daw Ba Maung Chain from Karen State in 1953 was the last). The other woman Minister was Daw Khin San Yi, formerly a deputy minister of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, who was appointed as a minister for the Ministry of Education in February 2014 (Sein, S. S., Latt, april 2017)

In 2010-2015 period of national government in Myanmar, concerning with deputy-ministerial positions, six women were appointed to deputy ministerial positions: Daw Le Le Thein (Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development); Daw Sandar Khin (Ministry of Culture); Daw Su Su Hlaing (Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement); Dr. Daw Thet Thet Zin (Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry); and, Daw Win Maw Tun (Ministry of Health) (Sein, S. S., Latt, april 2017)

In 2015-2020 period of national government in Myanmar which National League for Democracy (NLD) headed by woman leader, Daw Aung San Su Kyi, there is one minister, herself. She controlled two ministry positions by herself, Ministry for President's Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Except her; there is no woman in both ministerial and deputy-ministerial positions (Sein, S. S., Latt, april 2017)

For administration sector, among Myanmar's 16,785 ward and village administrators, only 42 are women. For the country's 330 township administrators, there is no woman (Sein, S. S., Latt, april 2017)

For judicial sector, women are also discouraging in senior judiciary positions. None of the seven Supreme Court justices are women; however, there are 17 women

high court judges out of the 52 in the 14 states and region High Courts (Sein, S. S., Latt, 2017)

Sein, S.S, Latt, 2017 pointed out that women in Myanmar cannot participate in decision-making processes because of lack of experience and certain skills, lack of confidence, restrictions on women's travel, social perception which means that politics is very dangerous issue and it is suitable with men, not for women, traditional norms that authority is for men and the discouragement for female leadership. Additionally, Gender Equality Network (2015) survey revealed that the social, cultural and religious are the fundamental challenges for gender equality discourse in Myanmar.

2.3 Representatives in Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives) by State/ Region

In 2010 election although there are 440 members in Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives including military members, just 24 women became women representatives. Although there are 435 members, only 46 women became women representatives by state/ region in 2015 election. In 2010 election, in Chin ethnic area constituency and Irrawaddy, Tanintharyi, Magway Region constituencies, women were not elected as Member of Representatives for Pyithu Hluttaw. In 2015 election, just only Irrawaddy Region constituency, there is no woman representative as follows: See table in Appendix B and C.

2.4 Women Participation in Parliamentary functions in House of Representatives

The main responsibilities of parliament are legislation, representing constituent people as well as oversight to the government's activities. In order to do parliament functions very well, member of representatives need to submitting, discussing and resolving on a Bill, submitting proposals and raising questions which are concerning with the needs of constituency people, discussing and resolving to the government sector, as well as cooperating with both Union level and State/ Region government sector through parliament committee for the prosperity of citizens (2008 constitution).

2.4.1 Submitting proposals for parliamentary debate

Member of Representatives can submit proposals which are related with the prosperity of Myanmar citizens, government organizations, and the issues that are permitted by Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw. There are two kinds of proposals, general proposals and special proposals (eg- when Rakhine State conflict happened in Myanmar, woman member of parliament submitted special proposal strongly against statement of human rights situation in Myanmar on 21 July 2017 which is reported by Ms. Yang Hee Lee, special rapporteur on the situations of human rights in Myanmar from OHCHR in 2017). In the current parliament from February 2016 to January 2018, seventh sessions have already been held and members of representatives submitted 89 proposals. Among 89 proposals, women MPs submitted 28 proposals while men MPs submitted 61 proposals. For special proposals, MPs submitted 6 special proposals, among them; women MPs submitted 2 proposals while men MPs submitted 4 proposals although the number of women MPs in House of Representatives) is only 46 among 440 MPs. Therefore, it is observed women MPs are active and participate more than men in submitting proposals for parliamentary debate. Surprisingly, it is not found women MPs submitted general proposals and special proposals concerning with gender equality, women affairs and women empowerment because they are less pay attention on women affairs though they are women members of parliament. See in Appendix D and E.

2.4.2 Raising questions

One of the parliamentary functions is representing constituency people. With the aim of the function very well, MPs can raise questions concerning with the needs and requirements of constituency people to Union government organizations and they can urge the government to take actions related with these issues. In the current parliament from 2016 to 2018, seventh sessions have already been held and member of representatives asked 917 questions. Among 917 questions, women MPs asked 147 questions while men MPs asked 770 questions. Although the percentage of women MPs is only 46 among 440 MPs, the percentage of women's asking questions is more than men because men MPs could ask 2 questions (770/400) each while women MPs could ask 3 questions each (147/42). Therefore, women MPs are more active and

participate in asking questions than men which is one of the parliamentary functions. See in Appendix F.

2.4.3 Participation in committee functions

Parliamentary committees are organized in both national parliament and state/region parliaments. It is very hard to get enough time to discuss about detailed bills in the parliamentary session hall, therefore, parliamentary committees are organized in order to discuss and assess bills in detailed. Thus, committee functions are also important. At the national level, it is observed that all elected women representatives belonged to at least member of one committee but it is very rare to get leadership positions: chairman and secretary (Asia Foundation, 2015). Though there are 42 women MP, two members got chairman position: Government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee, and Banks and Monetary Affairs Development Committee, but there is no women MP who is secretary of committees.

In the first parliament term of Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives) (2011-2015), although there were twenty-three committees; there were one woman chairman and one woman secretary. In the second parliamentary term (2016-2020), there are two women chairmen and no woman secretary. In (2011 to 2015), although there were 26 women MPs including military women MPs, women got 32 positions including chairman, secretary and members of committees, thus, some women MPs had opportunity to participate in two committees. In contrast, in 2016-2020, though there are 46 women MPs including military women MPs, the research found out 38 women MPs can participate in parliamentary committees. Thus, it is assumed eight women MPs do not have opportunity to participate in parliamentary committees. See in Appendix G and H.

2.5 Women Empowerment

Nowadays, gender equality is one of the distinguishing features in development content, and in the contemporary development discourse, the modalities of gender equality emerged two perspectives; women's development and women's empowerment (Md. Aminur Rahman, 2013). Easter Boserup's (1970) points out that women's role in economic sphere pave way to the rise of women's development

perspective. On the other hand, women empowerment is confusing concept because the root concept 'power' is itself disputed. According to Rawland (1997), there are many forms of power in order to understand the process of empowerment as follows:

- (a) Power over: controlling power,
- (b) Power to : generative or productive power
- (c) Power with : group share power together
- (d) Power from within: self-acceptance and self-respect for equal opportunities of power

Ramwland points out that in "power control" stage, "women empowerment means bringing women who are outside the decision-making process into it and empowerment puts a strong emphasis on participation in political structures, formal decision-making and, in the economic sphere. Women are empowered for the opportunities available to them without constraints. In "power to", "power with" and "power from within" stages, women empowerment is concern with the processes by which women become aware of their own interests and how these interests are related to the interest of others by participating from a position of a greater strength in decision-making and actually by influencing such decisions.

According to Ramwland (1997), women empowerment can be operated within three dimensions:

- (a) Personal: development a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the defects of internalized oppression.
- (b) Rational: developing the ability to negotiate and influence relationship and decisions made within it.
- (c) Collective: it includes involvement in political structures, but might also cover collective action based on co-operation rather than competition.

Friedman (1992) described there are three kinds of women empowerment processes namely social, political and psychological.

- (a) Social empowerment – it consists in processing knowledge, information and skills.
- (b) Political empowerment – it is mechanism that influences policy changes both at the micro and macro level. It's the result of the power of voice and collective action.

(c) Psychological empower – it is expressed as an individual sense of potency demonstrated in self-confidence behavior, self-reliance and increased self-esteem.

Dandikar (1986) described women empowerment as a multifaceted process, which involves four parallel aspects as follows:

- (1) Women access economic/resource base;
- (2) Her public/political arena allowed her to participate in society;
- (3) Her family structure, and the strength and limitations it imposes on her; and
- (4) Psychological / ideological “sense” about women in her society, which in turn shapes her own perception and she allows herself to consider.

Regarding women empowerment, in the study “Targeted Credit Programs and the Empowerment of Women in Rural Bangladesh”, the researcher, Hashemi et al (1993) have identified six general domains in which, traditionally subordination of women is played out and in which empowerment of women is believed to be taking place as follows:

1. Sense of self and vision of a future.
2. Mobility and visibility.
3. Ability to earn a living.
4. Decision-making power within the household.
5. Ability to interact effectively in the public sphere.
6. Participation in non- family groups.

In another study of ‘Rural Credit Programs and Women’s Empowerment in Bangladesh’, the researcher, Syed Hashemi et al (1996) has identified eight empowerment indicators to measure women’s empowerment especially for developing country as follows:

- a. Mobility
- b. Economic security
- c. Ability to make small purchases
- d. Ability to make larger purchases
- e. Involvement in major decisions

- f. Relative freedom from domination by the family
- g. Political and legal awareness
- h. Participation in public protests and political campaigning.

According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), empowerment is “a process through which women and men in disadvantaged positions increase their access to knowledge, resources, and decision-making power, and raise their awareness of participation in their communities, in order to reach a level of control over their own environment”. There are five indicators for women empowerment by UNHCR (2001) as follows:

- (1) **Access** - women has equal access to good and services with men
- (2) **Conscientization** - both women and men have awareness of gender role
- (3) **Mobilization** - women have opportunity to meet with organization and networks to discuss about their problems and needs
- (4) **Control** - balance the power between men and women
- (5) **Gender equality mainstreaming** – in strategies and programs of transforming gender relations, it is needed to consider the interests, needs and resources of women.

There are many definitions and indicators concerning with women empowerment by different academicians. However, women empowerment for political activities is different from others because actor roles and agents for women empowerment are very important in order to participate in political activities. Therefore, the study will mainly focus on the women empowerment process and actor’s roles defined by Chan, Martha & Mahmud, Simeen (1995). According to the concept, there are four different pathways for women empowerment processes as follows:

2.5.1 The material pathway

It describes changes in access to and control over material resources. In this pathway, women have accessed stable income, fulfillment of basic needs, campaigning expenses, earning capacities, no need to do all household activities in order to participate in politics.

2.5.2 The Cognitive pathway

It means changes in levels of knowledge, skills, and awareness of wider environment.

In this pathway, women have accessed education, leadership skill, electoral and campaigning knowledge, political and decision-making knowledge.

2.5.3 The perceptual pathway

It means changes in self-perception on the part of the woman plus changes in the perception of the woman by others. In this pathway, women have self-confidence to participate in decision-making processes and politics, leadership mind and women have changed concept about tradition/culture.

2.5.4 The relational pathway

It means Changes in contractual agreements and bargaining power in various types of relationships. In this stage, women have power to participate in community activities, local / national activities.

These pathways can be experienced not only by the women themselves but by other agents or actors in their lives, as defined below (Chan, Martha & Mahmud, Simeen, 1995)

- Self** - woman in her individual capacity
- Family** - Woman's natal and marital families: both nuclear and extended (bari)
- Community** - community/ society/ village/ township to which a woman belongs either through birth or marriage ties

- Elite** - community/ society/ village/township leaders, religious leaders, political leaders, local politicians in the place where woman lives.
- Government** - government officials, officials of formal institutions, government efforts, government policy and so on.

Regarding with women empowerment, women are needed to empower to improve material resources, knowledge and skills, self-perception, bargaining power in various types of relationships to participate in politics. In Myanmar, by looking at Myanmar political situation during 60 years of military rule, the government did not give permission to citizens to do politics. If both men and women are interested in politics and working for politics, these persons will be send to jail. Because of history of Myanmar Politics, most of the parents, families, and communities do not want their daughters to do politics and it is assumed that politics is not for women, politics is not an easy job and the political situation is not stable, they will be in jail if they enter into politics.

Although Myanmar transformed to democratic country from military government in 2011, Myanmar people have traditional thinking and concept, therefore, actors' roles (family, community, political parties and government are important to support women participation in political activities in Myanmar. Therefore, there are many academic definitions and theories for women empowerment; it is a main priority of the thesis to determine how women can be empowered by actors' roles in political activities in Myanmar.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

External Factor

Internal Factor

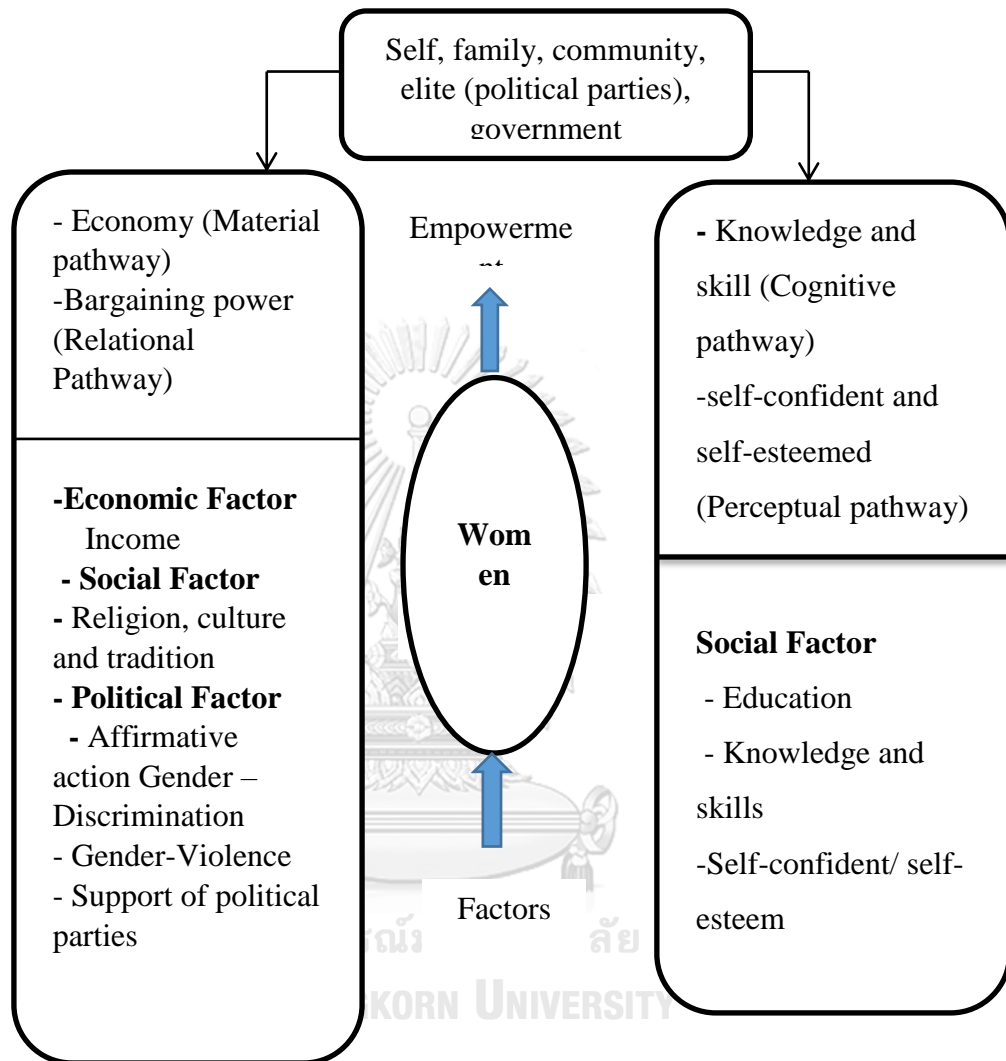


Figure (2.7) Conceptual Framework

It is important to note that women can face external and internal challenges. Economic factor, religion, culture and tradition under social factor, affirmation action, gender-discrimination, gender-violence under political factor are external factors that women can normally face to participate in political activities. Then, women can also face education, knowledge and skills, self-confident and self-esteemed which are internal factors for women prevented to participate in political activities. Therefore, this concept will relate with my research question one and sub research question.

In order to increasingly women participation in politics, external and internal factors women can normally face should be solved and women should be empowered. According to changes of women empowerment concept, material pathway and relational pathway are connected with external factor. On the other hand, cognitive and perceptual pathways are related with internal factor. Empowerment processes are expected to occur through changes in different aspect along these four pathways and also these changes can be thought of as ingredients for empowerment.

For women empowerment in all economic, social and political sectors, the supports of actor's roles: family, community, Elite (political parties), and Government are also important. If the family, community, political party, and government efforts are very strong for women empowerment, women can participate more in political activities while failure lack of family, community, political party support and government efforts lead to decrease women's participation in politics.

CHAPTER III

FACTORS CONTRIBUTED TO LOW PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN MYANMAR

This chapter aims to identify the factors contributed to low participation of women in political activities in Myanmar. The findings in this chapter will be identified based on 24 in-depth interviews with women members of parliament, Chief Executive Officers from NLD, USDP, ANP, TPN parties, parliament staff, and staff from Union Election Commission as well as staff from Ministry of Social Welfare. According to conceptual framework of the thesis, women can face external factor and internal factor to participate in political activities. Therefore, this chapter will examine what kinds of external and internal factor women in Myanmar face to participate in political activities.

3.1 External Factors

3.1.1 Religious, Cultural and Traditional Factor

Myanmar is the Buddhism country; thus, Myanmar people strongly believe in their religion. Religiously and historically, since 13th century, the Buddhist Sangha did dissemination to Buddhism that women are considered spiritually lower than men and also men just can attain Buddha-hood rather than women. In Buddhist language, “Hpone” is the abstract power that all men are believed to possess and take them to the higher spiritual level. For women, some women are considered to possess “Hpone” but it is not the same degree as the men’s possesses and lower than men’s possesses. Therefore, Myanmar Buddhist men are very afraid to lose their “phone”. All Buddhist people believe men can lose their phone when they do some sort of domestic and household jobs such as washing, ironing women and men’s clothes especially trousers and skirts, and also when girl kids pass their fathers (Minoletti, 2014). Thus, these kinds of household jobs are for women and religious belief prescribes women not to participate in decision-making and political activities. The majority Burmese Buddhist society still believes and for ethnic areas in Myanmar, some of the ethnics’ areas such as Shan and Arakan believe women are inferior to

men. In contrast, in some ethnic areas where mainly have Christian and other religion, women have much bigger chance to participate in public sphere and politics comparing with other Buddhist women (Sang Hnin Lian, 2015). Because of Buddhism concept “women are inferior to men”, men are automatically leaders and women are followers. Later, religion belief becomes tradition and culture in Myanmar. According to International Organization Action Aid’s study, it is found in an event or ceremony, women’s roles in Myanmar are typically welcoming guests, decorating and preparing food, and on the other hand, the responsibilities of men are for leadership and management of activities. Concerning with religion, culture and tradition,

One woman MP from National League for Democracy Party said that,

“In Myanmar, women are just preparing food and drink and welcoming guests in every event or ceremony, and then when the discussion time; women are just listening and rare to participate in discussion time because women themselves assume participation in discussion is not concerned with women and just listen men’s saying” because of traditional and cultural concept” (woman MP from National League for Democracy Party).

Male respondent from Equality Myanmar said that

“In Myanmar, men are the influencing and the only one decision-maker in a family because of Myanmar tradition and culture. For women; their responsibilities are doing household activities. It can be seen that there will be one woman who is vanguard for family and nine are men for ten families. Consequently, women are not interested in not only politics but also other things, and they just want to do household chores and taking after children and husbands (male respondent from Equality Myanmar).

Because of Buddhism concept “women are inferior to men”, later, maleness becomes as tradition and culture in Myanmar. Leadership is related with “maleness” in Myanmar context, consequently, majority of Myanmar people assume men can do not only political activities but also in various activities than women. It can be seen favor of male leadership is the strongest barrier for women to participate in political activities in Myanmar.

Concerning with favor of male leadership, interviewee from Yaung Chi Thit which focus on gender equality and women empowerment said that

“Because of Myanmar tradition and culture, Myanmar people normally like male leadership and also they have the concept women should be married and do household jobs, thus, politics is not concerned with women”.(founder of Yaung Chi Thit organization which focus on gender equality and women empowerment).

This thesis has shown that traditional and cultural norms in Myanmar heavily influence the roles that are perceived to be permissible for women to take on and it is found out Myanmar people prefer male leadership. By doing 24 interviews with woman MPs, media sector, civil society sector, and the thesis observes all respondents assume religion, culture and tradition are one of the factors for women to participate in political activities.

3.1.2 Economic Factor

The condition of economy plays a significant role in the participation of women to legislatures in both sustainable and consolidating democracies. There is a link between economic status and women’s participation in politics because they need to use at least campaign expenses. According to UN statistics, women do 67 percent of the world’s work but their earnings are for only 10 percent of the world’s income. In Myanmar context, economic situation of women is related with religion, culture and tradition. Because of religious belief, cultural and religious norm mentioned earlier, the responsibilities of women are household activities: washing, ironing, cooking, and looking after children and husbands inside the house. On the other hand, men are to go outside for income and family’s support. Because men are the main persons to find income for family, ownership of housing, land, properties are with the men’s name although in Myanmar, according to article 378 of 2008 constitution, every people regardless of gender have equal opportunities to occupy housing, land and other prosperities.

Therefore, in Myanmar, generally, women do not have much time to find income because of lot of household jobs and they just spend the money that their husbands give. Nowadays, it can be seen women in Myanmar find money to support family but the unemployment rate of women is more than men, men is 3.9 and female is 4.1 (Gender Dimension,2017). To do political activities, women need to spend at

least campaign expenses. If women do not have their own income, they cannot participate in political activities. Concerning with economic factor,

Woman MP from ethnic party said that

“Normally women in Myanmar do not have their own income; moreover, there is no enough employment for women. Because of heavy loads of household jobs, they do not have much time to find income; consequently, they cannot participate in political activities” (Ethnic woman MP from Ta’aung (Palaung) National Party).

Woman from NGO sector said that

“Economy is one of the challenges for woman not to participate in political activities in Myanmar, majority of women in Myanmar have household bargaining. Therefore, they do not have to find money and also to study political knowledge. In contrast, for men, they can find their own money and they have time to discuss about politics with others in coffee shops” (woman from Irrawaddy media).

One of Members of CEC from National League for Democracy Party (NLD) replied that

“If there is no strong economic background, both men and women cannot do politics. The women especially married women do not find incomes and they just manage and spend money that their husbands pay, thus, women are more difficult to do politics than men because they do not have their own income” (woman MP and one of members of CEC from National League for Democracy Party (NLD)).

The possibility of getting money for campaign expenses for women who are very willingly to participate in politics is from their family. Therefore, according to concept of Chan, Martha & Mahmud, Simeen (1995) about the actor’s role, family is important for women to support money in order to participate in political activities in Myanmar.

Family’s financial and other supports

Family support is one of the possible ways to get campaign expenses for women to participate in political activities. But in Myanmar, because of religion,

culture and tradition, Myanmar people assume politics is not concerned with women, but for men, they can do as they wish. Besides, in a family, if there is son and daughter, parents assume first priority is son, consequently, if men want to do politics, family support money, but, women are very rare to get financial support from their family compared with men. For married women, it is found that their husbands do not want to provide financial support because they are afraid of women cannot give much time for family. Thus, almost every family in Myanmar except political families does not want to encourage their daughters to do political activities and provide financial support. By looking at current women MPs from Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives), most of them are from political family. For example, Aung San Su Kyi, the State Counselor of Myanmar, is descendant from Bogyoke Aung San, the father of Myanmar Independence. And as a result, she has more chance to take part in political affairs due to the fact that she is from political family. In her first political speech in August 1988,

“I could not, as my father’s daughter, remain indifferent to all that was going on. This national crisis could, in fact, be called the second struggle for independence.” (Speech of Daw Aung San Su Kyi, the chairman of NLD Party in August 1988)

When the campaign posters of NLD in 2015 election is looked at, the campaign posters are frequently featured side by side images of father and daughter. It is not surprisingly that most of women MPs are from political families in current parliament term (2016-2022), consequently, they can be women MPs easily with financial and other support from families. By doing 6 in-depth interviews with women MPs, it is observed four of them are from political families though two of them are not. Concerning with family members’ support, One woman MP replied that

“Most of the family does not want to provide not only financial but also other supports for women to do politics because they assume politics is not concerned with women” (woman MP from National League for Democracy Party (NLD)).

Next factor which family does not want to provide financial and other supports for women is related with political fear. Because people assume political job is not a safe and insecure job even though the country transforms to democratic country. Almost every parent, family does not want to provide support for women to do political activities. It is assumed politics is not for women, politics is not an easy job and the political situation is not stable. They will be in jail if they enter into politics. Besides, Myanmar people assume teachers and government staff have been noted as professional and respectful careers for women, so, almost every parent want their daughters to be teachers and government staff instead of doing politics. One respondent said that

“In Myanmar, family does not want to provide not only financial but also other supports to women because they feel afraid of politics. Normally they assume that teachers and government staff are suitable jobs for women but politics is insecure job for them. (ethnic woman MP from Arakan National Party).

In this thesis, two women representatives who are not from political family describe that the disapproval of family created significant tension within their families and they could not emphasize fully on campaigning because of family tension and lack of financial support from family which is also one of the challenges for women during campaign period.

3.1.3 Political Factor

Sixty years of military rule in Myanmar had shown the critical role of its citizen's political participation marginalized. During military times, not only women but also men could not do politics. If they were interested in politics and working for politics, these persons went to jail as political prisoners. Besides, family members and the relatives of politicians are also punished concerning with political issues. Because of military rule, Myanmar people are very afraid of politics and political activities. Also they are inculcated politics is very dangerous for them. Besides, in political history of Myanmar, 1988 democracy movement, 1990 revolution and 2007 Saffron (Shwe War Yaung) revolution, Myanmar citizens, monks, students who were revoluted military government went to prison as political prisoners. Because of bad and terrible

memory of Myanmar politics, almost every Myanmar people assume politics is insecure job for people.

In 2011, Myanmar transforms multi-party democratic system; politicians can have opportunities to participate in Myanmar politics. Otherwise, it is assumed although mental and physical security of politicians is safe than before during military time, there are many restrictions for political rights of people: freedom of expression, assembly until now. Also, political rights of Myanmar people are still being broken according to article 124A (Sedition) of Penal Code, article 66 d of telecommunication law, and peaceful assembly law in Myanmar which has many restrictions for political rights. In current Myanmar politics, the people who criticize government's activities are charged with the above laws, thus, there are political prisoners in Myanmar until now.

One Woman MP from National League for Democracy Party (NLD) replied

“The most important thing in Myanmar for women not to participate in political activities is political fear. Because of political fear, not only women but also men are hard to participate in politics, for women, they are more dangerous than men because of the different physical and mental structure (woman MP from National League for Democracy Party).

Woman from media sector said that

“Historically, politicians went to prisons as political prisoners, besides, the relatives and family members of politicians went to prisons. Because of bad experiences, Myanmar People both men and women are normally not interested to do politics (former editor of Voice Journal and Magazine).

Woman from CSO sector stated that

“Myanmar People both Burmese and ethnic have political fear because of military government, thus, not only women but also men are dare to do politics though Myanmar transforms to democratic country (woman for Women Can Do It organization (WCDI)).

The thesis found out every interviewee described political factor is one of the factors contributed for women's low participation in political activities in Myanmar. They mentioned not only women but also men in Myanmar feel political fear though Myanmar transforms to democratic system, consequently, Myanmar people assume

political activities are insecure. Thus, they do not want to participate in political activities even though they are interested in because of political fear.

3.1.3.1 Legislation for gender equality in Myanmar

In Myanmar, it is observed 2008 constitution cannot guarantee for gender equality. The article 347 and 348 of 2008 constitution, every people have equal rights before the law and prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender and also article 249 and 350 of constitution guarantee that every criticize regardless of gender must have equal rights and equal pay in economic sector. Contrarily to these articles, article 352 is the problem for gender equality because this article specifically identifies “the positions that are suitable for men only”. Besides, constitution does not guarantee equality clause describing special measurement or affirmation actions that can increase women’s participation in political activities in Myanmar which is generally dominated in spite of the constitution gives 25% of the seats of both houses for military channels which women are generally excluded. Concerning with constitution, one ethnic woman described that

“In the constitution, there should be adopted article concerning with women political participation. For example, in constitution, article if the party wants to complete in election, how many percentage of women candidate must be in the party should be adopted” (ethnic woman MP from Ta’aung (Palaung) National Party).

Providing a framework for conducting elections in Myanmar, there are electoral law which is referred in the Constitution and series of other principal laws: Union Election Commission Law, the Political Parties Registration Law, Pyithu Hlutaw Election laws, Amyotha Hluttaw Election Law, State/ Region Election Law and four by-laws. Although these laws guarantee that every people regardless of gender who are qualified with criteria adopted in these laws can be candidates of member of representatives and every people regardless of religion, gender have rights to vote, it is observed there are no special measurement or affirmation actions for increasing women’s participation in political activities in these laws. Concerning with Election Law, woman from CSO sector described that

“In one of the election laws, there should be guidance how much percentage of women candidates should be in every party” (Founder of Yaung Chi Thit which focus on gender equality and women empowerment).

Besides, though in first term of parliament (2011-2015), concerning with women’s affairs, Prevention of Violence against Women could be adopted, in current second parliament term (2016-2020) which is headed by National League for Democracy; the leader is woman, Daw Aung San Su Kyi, there is no legislation concerning with women’s affairs and gender equality in political activities until now.

3.1.3.2 Support of political parties

Political parties are the most important institution for increasingly women MPs because if they select women as candidates for election, women can participate in political activities in Myanmar. Unlike other countries, the Myanmar people give their votes by looking at only party regardless of gender issue. For example, in 2015 election, the leader of NLD gives campaign speech to the public “just look at party, not to look at candidates”. From the Myanmar people’s side, they want to transform democratic system and want to get civilian government, therefore, they just look at party without looking at candidates are women or men and also qualification of candidates. Therefore, political parties are the important and essential channels for women participation in politics, but it is observed that political parties have been slow to respond for enhancing women’s political participation.

In 2015 election, the political parties selected 789 (12%) of women as candidates for MPs while 6074 (88%) of men candidates and after election has finished, 1150 men candidates and 151 women candidates won in election and became MPs in both national and state/region parliaments.

Figure (3.1) women and men candidates in both national and state/region parliaments in 2015 election

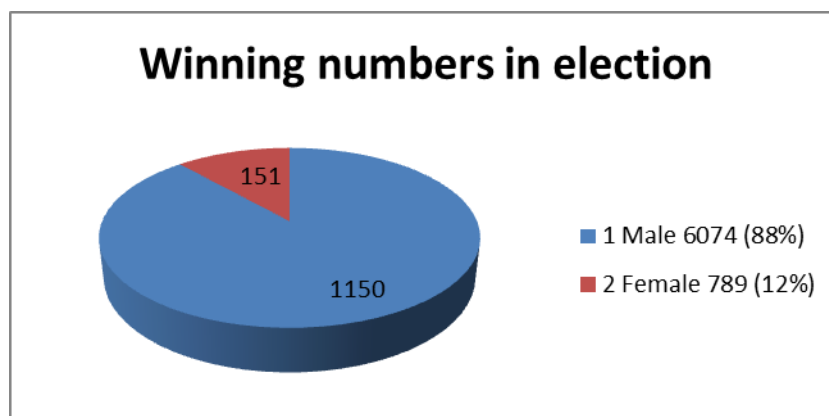


Table (3.1) Women elected women members of parliament in both national and state/ region parliaments by party in 2015 election

Party	Total MPs	Women MPs
Shan Nationalities League for Democracy	42	7
National League for Democracy	887	134
Taang National Party	11	1
Arakan National Party	45	2
Union Solidarity and Development Party	116	3
Pa-O National Organization	10	0
Other Parties	47	4
Independent MPs	5	0

By looking at the above statistic, the political parties select only 12% of women as candidates for both national and state/region parliaments; consequently, the ratio of women participation is low in Myanmar politics. The other potential way to increase women's political participation is gender policy or gender-quota system that stipulates minimum number of women candidates for each political party. Therefore, in most of the Nordic countries which the percentage of women participation in

politics is very high, Scandinavian parties, Swedish Liberal Party, Swedish Communist Party, Norwegian Socialist Left Party, Danish Socialist People's Party adopted gender-quota system in their respective parties. In Myanmar political parties, there is no gender policy and gender-quota system until now although political parties play vital role in increasingly women participation in political activities in Myanmar.

In spite of there is no gender policy for each party, it is investigated that in NLD, there is gender platform in criteria of selecting MP candidate as follows;

- (1) If there are two persons who are equal qualification, the party selects woman as first priority.
- (2) If there are two persons who are equal qualification, the party selects young people as second priority.
- (3) If there are two persons who are equal qualification, the party selects ethnic people as third priority.

It is observed that the other political parties, such as USDP, and SNLD, do not have not only gender policy but also gender platform or guideline like NLD. Moreover, when the 2015 election manifestos of political parties are observed, there is one party that would emphasize on women affairs in its manifesto, NLD. Unsurprisingly, almost every political party would not emphasize on women affairs in their parties' policies and election manifesto except NLD party because the leader of NLD is woman, Daw Aung San Su Kyi, consequently, NLD party is more emphasized on women affairs than other political parties.

In NLD 2015 election manifesto, the party gives commitment to the people to implement thirteen sectors including women affairs. Concerning with increasingly women participation in political activities in Myanmar, NLD party' commitment on increasingly women participation in politics was as follows according to 2015 election manifesto,

- (1) The party would take an action to get gender equality in administrative, economic and social sectors and to implement all laws which are concerned with gender equality very effectively and efficiently.
- (2) The party would take an action to get equal rights for women like men in equal jobs, as well as not to gender-discrimination in promotion of all levels in all sectors.

It is investigated women's political participation is also challenged by the policies and practices of the political parties themselves. In spite of the fact that Myanmar now has more than 90 political parties, there are no concrete policies promoting women's participation or set aside reservations for women candidates. Besides, most of political parties assume gender equality issue is not important in Myanmar like other issues, economic, health, education, peace-building, and etc. Therefore, the parties did not mention about women's affairs in their manifesto and they do not think about gender policy and gender-quota system with the aim of increasingly women participation in politics. Concerning with political parties' support, research has shown there should be gender policy or gender quota in every political party; every interviewee mentioned gender policy is important for women to participate in political activities. Woman from CSO sector stated that

“How women are trying and how women are bright and active, if the political party does not select women as MP candidates, women cannot be MP and participate in political activities, thus, there should be gender policy which adopt minimum percentage of women candidates (Founder of Yaung Chi Thit which focus on gender equality and women empowerment).

Ethnic woman MP replied that

“At present in Myanmar, majority of the women who know Myanmar politics work in CSO, NGOs and INGOs sector and they know about political parties' policies very well. Because there is no gender policy in political parties, the qualified and active women will not be party members and women political participation will be low (ethnic woman MP, one of members of CEC from Ta'aung (Palaung) National Party).

A Man from CSO sector described that

“There should be gender policy in every political party, if there is not, women's political participation will be low in the future” (Man from Equality Myanmar Organization).

It seems pretty clear according to interviewees, lack of gender policy and gender quota system of political parties causes another challenge for women to participate in political activities.

3.1.3.3 Gender-Discrimination and Gender-Violence

In 2010 election, NLD did not compete; therefore, Myanmar people give their votes to USDP party which is from military background and other ethnic parties due to the limited choice of political parties although they want to get civilian government. In 2012 by-election and 2015 election, Myanmar people give their votes to NLD party. Unlike other countries, in Myanmar, people are ravenous civilian government and want to transform to democratic system from military rule, consequently, when they give their votes, they just look at party regardless of ethnicity, religion and gender. Thus, the research found out every women MP describes society and community support them by giving their votes and there is no gender-discrimination in voting.

One Ethnic woman MP replied that

“Ethnic people give their votes to their ethnic representative and party regardless of gender”. Thus, there is no gender-discrimination in voting in 2015 election (ethnic woman MP from Ta’ung (Palaung) National Party).

Respondent from media sector described that

“In current situation of Myanmar, people are rare to look at candidate whether women or not when they give their votes and they just look at party, even though candidate is woman. If she is from their favor party, they give vote for her, thus, there is no gender discrimination in giving votes (respondent, former editor of Voice Journal).

Though there is no gender-discrimination in giving votes, the research found out political society especially opposition parties combat women MP candidates rather than men MP candidates. From doing 6 in-depth interviews with women MP, five women replied they faced challenges of criticism and verbal gender-discrimination from men of opposition parties and within their parties during campaign period.

Woman MP from National League for Democracy Party described that

“The voters just look at party, they do not look at the candidates are men or women when they give their votes but there is gender-discrimination among political society. Men politicians especially politician from opposition party always tell “woman cannot do anything, also young woman cannot do

anything for their constituency people” (Woman MP from National League for Democracy Party).

Ethnic woman MP, one of members of CEC from Ta’aung (Palaung) National Party said that

“People especially in politician criticize woman cannot do anything even although she is very bright and educated. For ethnic voters, they do not look at gender; they look at party when they give their votes” (Woman MP from Ta’aung (Palaung) National Party).

Gender-based violence is another major factor to women’s participation in political activities and other decision making roles. Women leaders in government and business have reported being regularly subjected to intimidation, threats and sexual harassment in the workplace, and some also experienced violence in their homes (Pann Ei Phway Phyu Sin , May 2016). The research found out majority woman MP respondents describe in 2015 election, gender-violence is very rare case for them but one woman MP mentioned she faced gender-violence in 2015 campaign period.

“Because of woman, violence can be happened more than man. Campaign office was been destroyed and volunteers for campaign office were attacked with knife in 2015 election” (Woman MP from National League for Democracy Party).

The research found out face criticism and verbal gender-discrimination of the people especially men from opposition parties and within political parties though there is no gender-discrimination in voting women. Moreover, gender-violence is also one of the factors contributed for women’s low participation in political activities in Myanmar.

3.2 Internal Factor

3.2.1 Educational Factor

In historical period of Myanmar context, men need to find income for family support and the responsibility of women is to do household jobs. Therefore, parents send their sons rather than daughters to the schools and universities. Concerning with

historical period of Myanmar, one woman MP, who is one of members of CEC from National League for Democracy Party replied that

“In historical period of Myanmar, in one family, parents send their sons rather than daughters to school in order to access education, but at present, in Myanmar, basic education is compulsory, thus, women have right to access education like men and the ratio of graduated women is more than men in Myanmar” (woman MP, one of members of CEC from National League for Democracy Party).

At present in Myanmar, article 366 of 2008 constitution guarantee every people may have equal right and opportunity to access education regardless of gender issue. Consequently, women have the right to access education like men. Education makes people be self-esteem, empower individuals (especially women) and enhance political participation (Gender Dimension, 2017). Thus, education is the basic need for women to participate in political activities in Myanmar. According to Gender Dimension, in 2017, the literacy rate of men is 92.6 % while the literacy of women is 86.9% in Myanmar. Although literacy rate of men is higher than women, women are more than men in term of the graduated, postgraduate diploma, master degree and Ph.D degree. See the following table;

Table (3.2), number of women and men attained degrees in Myanmar in 2014 (Gender Dimension, 2017)

Degree	Women	Men
Graduate	1,097,993	763,762
Postgraduate Diploma	29,452	18,718
Master Degree	56,514	20,202
Ph. D	7,241	4,576

When women MP education in Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives) is looked at, the degree obtain of women MPs is higher than men MPs. Besides, there are two MPs who do not have degree. At current situation of Myanmar, it is observed education is not challenge for women to participate in political activities in Myanmar

because the rate of degree attained of women is more than men throughout the country. Concerning with education,

Woman MP from National League for Democracy Party described that

“Although education is the basic need for every people, even there is no higher degree of education for the people who would like to be MPs, they can be MPs. The people who are elected from working class as MP, he or she just needs to represent their working class” (Woman MP from National League for Democracy (NLD) party).

Woman from Government sector described that

“At present in Myanmar situation, though literacy rate of men is higher than women, the graduated rate of women is higher than men; moreover, some research found out educational background of women MPs is higher than men MPs. Thus, in current situation of Myanmar, education is not the problem for women to participate in political activities” (Assistant Director from Union Election Commission).

The research found out in the current Myanmar context, it is observed that women are more educated than men; therefore, education is not challenge for women to participate in political activities in Myanmar.

3.2.2 Leadership skill, electoral and campaigning knowledge, political and decision-making knowledge

To be woman MPs, women should have leadership skill, electoral and campaigning knowledge as well as political and decision-making knowledge before they become MPs. Unsurprisingly, in Myanmar context, in spite of some young woman MPs have knowledge about leadership, electoral, campaigning, political and decision - making knowledge, some women MPs does not have opportunities to study these skills and knowledge and as a result, they do not know about these before they become women MPs. By doing in-depth interviews with six women MPs, it is found that three women MPs have these skills and knowledge before they become MPs, otherwise, three women MPs do not have these skills and knowledge before they become MPs. Concerning with these skills,

Woman MP from National League for Democracy Party described that

“In current Myanmar political context, most of MPs were political prisoners; therefore, they do not have opportunities to attend the trainings in leadership skill, electoral knowledge and etc. Although these skills and knowledge should have, it does not mean these knowledge and skills must have and these are not challenge for not only women but also men to participate in political activities in Myanmar” (Woman MP from National League for Democracy party (NLD)).

One of the interviewees from media sector described that

“At present, there are much training about leadership skill, electoral and campaigning knowledge, political and decision-making knowledge both in mainland and ethnic areas provided by CSO, NGO and INGO sector. In these trainings, it is found women trainees are more than men, thus, women will have these skills and knowledge than men” (one of the interviewees from Eleven journal).

The thesis found out that leadership skill, electoral and campaigning knowledge, political and decision-making knowledge is not challenge for women to participate in political activities in Myanmar although women MPs should have these skills.

3.2.3 Self –Confidence

Leadership is strongly related with stereotypically masculine traits of confidence, autocracy and bravery, contrary to the qualities of empathy, patience and selflessness that women are expected to embody (Pann Ei Phway Phyu Sin, May 2016). Thus, confidence, autocracy and bravery are important factors for increasingly women political participation. Related with the importance of self-confident,

Ethnic woman MP described that

“Confidence is important to participate in political activities. Though a person who has strong educational background, this person may have confident. Bravery and autocracy come from confidence, thus, confidence I can do is the important factor for women who would like to participate in political activities” (Ethnic woman MP from Ta’aung (Palaung) National Party).

According to Asia Foundation Survey, though women MPs are more educated than men, they often feel less confident than male counters in parliamentary functions or public speaking (Sein, S. S., Latt, 2017). This research found out one out of six

women did not have self-confident as we must be women MPs though they have mindset to improve their constituencies in various sectors. Concerning with self-confident

One of woman MP from NLD party replied that

“Self-confidence comes from education and knowledge and skills. If women are more educated and more knowledge and skill, they have self-confident that we can do it like men” (Woman MP from NLD party).

The thesis found out one woman MP who does not have self-confident is not educated woman. Therefore, it is assumed normally women who are educated persons have self-confident. In section 3.2.1, the thesis found out women are educated than men, so, lack of self-confident is not barrier and challenge for women to participate in politics in current Myanmar situation.

3.3 Conclusion

Firstly, based on the findings in this chapter, power relation between men and women in Myanmar is needed to think about. In current situation of Myanmar, men and women find income to provide support for the family and they have separate pocket money. Though they have separate pocket money, the money earned by women used for household chores and the money earned by men used buying materials: houses, motor-bicycles, and sending children to school. Consequently, the ownerships of materials are automatically with the name of men because the money spent for buying materials are from men. Why do not women have equal power like men in economic factor? The research is clearly found out that women need to do household activities and spend money earned by women for household activities because of culture, tradition. Why do these culture and tradition comes from? It is clearly seen because of Buddhist concept and belief. Therefore, the thesis found out economy is related with religion, culture and tradition.

Moreover, based on the findings, four women MPs are from political families. Therefore, their fathers encourage them a lot to do. On the other hand, their mothers do not really like their daughters to do politics, but, they cannot ban their husband's decision, just follow and do not have opportunity to show their desires to their husbands and children. Without having power in their household levels, how can

women get decision-making level at national level and to participate in political activities? Here, why do not women have equal power like men in their household? It is related with religion, culture and tradition the thesis found out. Therefore, the thesis found out economic and power relation is related with religion, culture and tradition.

Next factor is education. Education is internal factor. To access education, economy and political factor is needed. If there is no economy, women cannot access education and if there is no article for equal opportunity accessing education, women cannot access education. Therefore, it is assumed that external and internal factor are interrelated with each other.

Then, the thesis found out all internal factors is related with others. If women have strong education, knowledge and skill, women have self-confident. Moreover, all external factors are also related with each other. If there is action to prevent gender violence, women will not face gender-violence and gender-discrimination in campaign period and these will not be challenges for women to participate in political activities. So, the thesis found out all factors, internal and external factors are interrelated with each other and also all factors under internal and external are also related with each other.

Moreover, the thesis found out that external factors: religion, culture and tradition, education, gender-violence, gender-discrimination and gender policy/gender quota are challenges for women to participate in politics. On the other hand, internal factors: education, knowledge and skill as well as self-confident are not barriers for women to participate in politics.

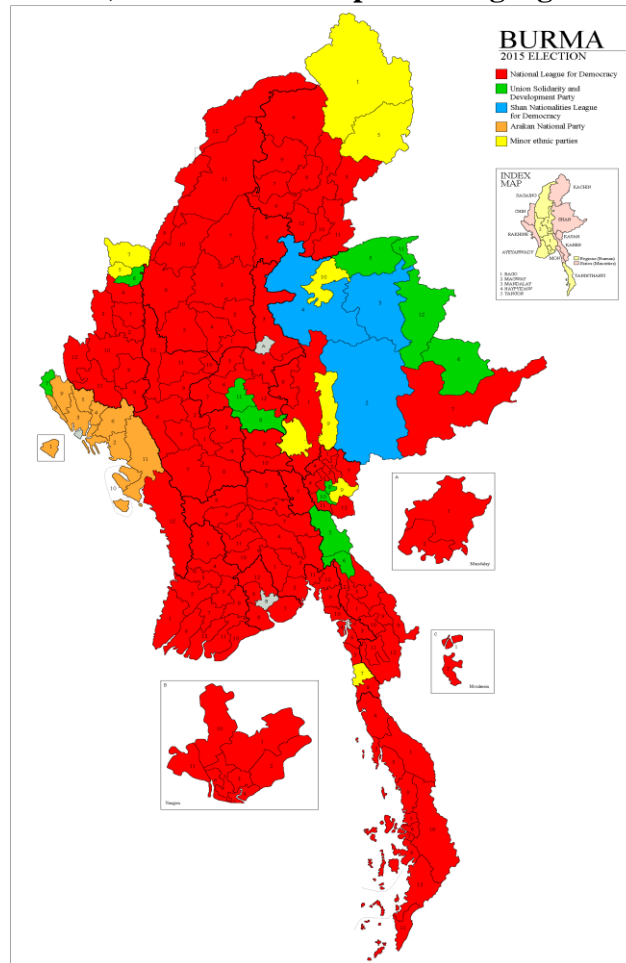
CHAPTER IV
GENDER – INEQUALITY FACTORS: POLITICAL LIFE OF SIX WOMEN
MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT STORIES

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to indicate gender inequality factors that women MPs from Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives) faced in their political life to be women MPs as case study presenting.

In Myanmar, there are 7 States namely Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Rakhine and Shan and 7 Regions namely Yangon, Mandalay, Magway, Sagaing, Bago, Thanintharyi, Ayeyarwaddy. In 2015 election, NLD won 255 seats, USDP won 30 seats, Arakan National Party won 12 seats, Ta’ung (Palang) National Party won 3 seats as well as other political parties won 30 seats in Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives). Among 440 MP, there are 42 women MPs, 7 are from Shan State, 3 are from Kayah, 2 are from Mon, 2 are from Rakhine, one is from Kachin State, one is from Kayin, as well as one is from Chin.

Map (4.1) Map of 2015 election Result in Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives) Source from <https://www.google.com/search?>



The findings illustrated below are based on individual in-depth interviews with four women MPs, namely Daw Sandar, Daw Hla, Daw Mya and Daw Nilar who are from Yangon Division constituencies under National League for Democracy Party (NLD), one ethnic woman MP called Daw Nan from Shan State constituency under Ta'aung Palaung (National) Party (TPN) and one woman MP called Daw Wai from conflict area of Rakhine State constituency under Arakan National Party (ANP).

4.2 Women members of parliament from mainland Myanmar

The four women MPs are selected from constituencies of Yangon Region. The reason for selection four women MPs from Yangon Region is because the number of women MPs from Yangon Division is the most, eight women MPs among 42 women MPs in Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives). Moreover, in Yangon Region, NLD is a majority party and all women MPs are from NLD party. Besides, Yangon is

the former capital of Myanmar and Kawhmu township, constituency of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Su Kyi, and Thongwa township, constituency of former first lady, Daw Su Su Lwin are in Yangon Division. Therefore, four women MPs from constituencies in Yangon Division are selected to explore their main obstacles and challenges and gender inequality they faced in their political life to be women MPs in 2015 election rather than women members of parliament in different divisions.

Daw Mya

Daw Mya (68 years old) is woman member of parliament of Mayangon constituency from NLD party and one of the members of Chief Executive Committee in NLD party. She was elected as woman MP in 1990 election, in 2012 by-election and in 2015 elections.

At current parliament, she is the chairperson in one of the parliamentary committees. Her occupational background is a medical doctor and she is married person, her husband is also a medical doctor and politician like her. She has participated in political activities by involving as member of Insein Doctors' Union since 1888 revolution. Her political life was very hard; she stayed in prisons as political prisoners for eleven years.

“My political life is very hard. From 1997 to 2004, I was arrested and stayed in prison for seven years concerning with Mayangon youth organization. From 2004 to 2008, I was also arrested with article 10 (A), consequently, I stayed in prison for four years”.

She is from political family, her husband involved as member of Aung San Doctors' Union and her father is also politician as financial officer of Mon State NLD Party. Therefore, she did not need to struggle to get permission and understanding of family to do politics like other women MPs. Besides, she is fully provided both financial and other support by her family. Therefore, she became women MPs in both 2012 by-election and in 2015 election from Mayangon constituency.



Photo of Daw Aung San Su Kyi gave speech in her Mayangon NLD Office in 2012 by-election (Photo credited to Mizzima Journal)

She mentioned that apart from her father and husband, her relatives did not want to contact with her because of the political fear.

“My parents and relatives live in Mawlamyine, so, when I visited to my parents and relatives, investigators from military government followed me. Thus, my relatives did not want me to come and visit to them. Moreover, when I was free from prison in 2008, my younger sister who was government staff met with me wearing government staff uniform. Next day after my sister met with me, her senior officer told her if she meets with me again, she will be fired or transfer to another place. So, my relatives do not want to meet me because of fear”.

Besides, people lived around her house were also afraid to contact with her, until 2015, and her neighbors did not want to contact with her. Those who would like to contact with her are trishaw drivers. Therefore, she mentioned that Myanmar people are still influenced political fear until now because of bad political system though Myanmar transformed to democratic system,

Concerning with educational background, though she is a doctor, most of her life passed in prison as political prisoners, thus, she did not have opportunity to attend trainings about leadership, management.

“Though every prisoner has the right to read, they need to wait for one or two month to get one book, therefore, I did not have much knowledge about leadership and management before I become woman MP, and I faced difficulties due to the lack of knowledge about them”

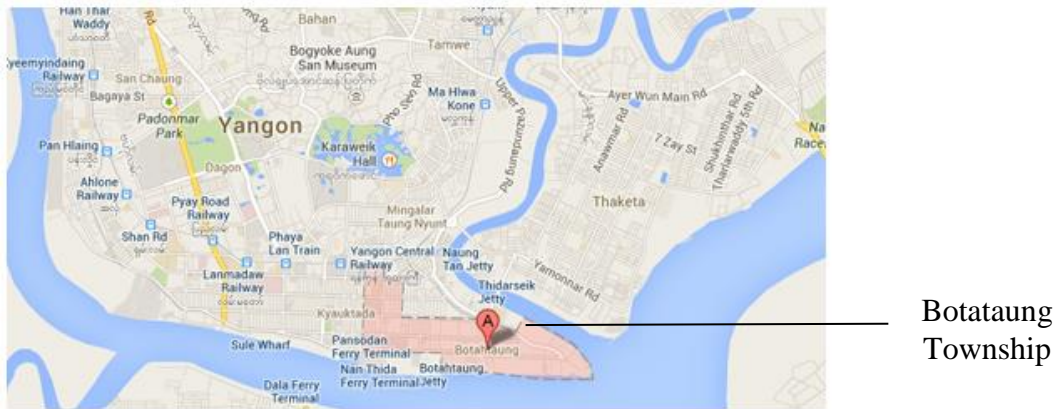
She stated she did not really want to be woman MP in both 2012 by-election and in 2015 election, thus, in her party, she wanted to be selection team for the member of candidates because MP candidate cannot be from selection team according to rule and regulation of NLD party. But, Chief Executive Officers from NLD party want her to be woman candidate. Because of their wishes; she became woman MP in 2012 by-election and 2015 election though she did not have self-confident to be woman MP. In every election, she did not face verbal gender-discrimination within NLD party and opposition party because she has many experiences in politics and she is 65 years old lady though she is woman.

From interviewing with her, it is observed that she faced external factors but he did not face internal factors except lack of knowledge and skills about politics, management and so on. Moreover, it is assumed there is no gender inequality problem that she faced to be woman MPs because she is CEO in NLD party, 88 generation and also political prisoners. Therefore, all politicians within NLD party and other political parties respect her. Therefore, the research found out she did not face any gender inequality to be woman MP.

Daw Hla

Daw Hla (49 years old) is woman member of parliament of Botataung constituency from NLD party. She was born in Mandalay, central part of Myanmar but her family moved to Botataung, Yangon after she had finished her matriculation exam. Therefore, in 2015 election, she competed as woman MP in Botataung constituency.

Map (4.2) location of Botataung Township



Her father was politician from National League for Democracy before 88 Revolution. Her father and other politicians discussed about politics as political talk in her house, thus, the word “democracy” and “military government is needed to change” are so familiar with her. Her father encouraged her to do politics, thus, she has participated in political activities in Myanmar since 1990 election as member of NLD party, and in 2015 election she competed as woman MP candidate from NLD. When she competed in election, her father supported campaign expenses and other necessary things. Therefore, she mentioned she becomes woman MP because of her father and she did not face any economic challenge to be a woman MP. Though her father supported her to do political activities, she mentioned her mother did not want her to do politics because of political fear.

“In 1988 revolution, my father involved as a political activist from NLD party, thus, my family is not peaceful and include in watch lists of military government. For my Mom, she faced bad moment; consequently, she had political fear. Thus, when I started to do politics like my father, my mother did not want me to do politics and did not give permission to do politics. On the other hand, because of my father, a political activist, I become woman MP.

It can be seen that even woman from political family is struggle to get permission from both father and mother to do politics. Though mother of woman MP from Botataung constituency did not want her daughter to do politics, she cannot ban her daughter not to participate in politics and she just follows her husband’s decision. Moreover, it can be observed that women participation in decision-making level in her family.

Daw Hla's educational background is that she has got double masters specialization in History and International Relations. Moreover, she had attended women leadership training which is opened by IRI for two years and a lot of trainings about leadership, management, political science. Therefore, she has fully self-confident to be woman MP. Even though she is educated woman, she faced verbal gender-discrimination among political society that woman cannot do anything in campaign period,

“People lived in Yangon have knowledge about gender-equality, and they just look at party when they give votes, thus, I did not face gender-discrimination in giving votes. However, I faced verbal gender-discrimination among political society in campaign period”.

It can be observed that even though women MPs faced verbal gender-discrimination among political society; voters in Myanmar give their votes, just looking at parties regardless of gender, ethnicity and religion.

To sum up, Daw Hla is from strong political family and her father and relatives are closely worked with leader of NLD party, Daw Aung San Su Kyi. Therefore, she did not face both internal and external challenges for her to be woman MP. Besides, she is not a member of 88 generation and a political prisoner. She just does NLD party's charity jobs and party jobs. Therefore, it is assumed that she faced verbal gender-discrimination among NLD party society and other political parties' society because people from political society assume she does not have experiences to be woman MP since she is not a member of 88 generation and a political prisoner.

Daw Nilar

Daw Nilar (52 years old) is woman member of parliament from Insein constituency of NLD party. She is Christian and Karen ethnic woman. Since 1988 revolution, she has participated in politics by being member of Student Union of Yangon University; consequently, she spent four months hiding in the jungle because of military government. She is a married person with one child.

Her occupational background is director of local NGO, and she has her own business. Thus, it is assumed she is from strong economic background. Therefore, she

mentioned she did not face economic barrier to compete 2015 election and to become woman MP.

“Economic is one of the challenges for women to participate in political activities in Myanmar due to the need of campaign expenses at least. For me, I spent my campaign expense by selling my land in my native town”

She stated her husband give permission to do politics and support her a lot to be a woman MP, thus, she could sell her land and spend for campaign expenses. However, her parents did not want her to do politics because of political fear and cultural and traditional thinking “women should not do politics”.

Besides, she is educated person holding double master, first one is Master of Arts in Zoology and second one is Master of Business Administration. Moreover, she had attended many trainings, conferences, seminars concerning with leadership, management, electoral knowledge, as well as she performed as speaker in panel discussion, and presentation, and she also did as a facilitator and moderator concerning with leadership, management, Myanmar politics, human rights and women’s rights in more than 30 countries all over the world before and after becoming a woman MP. Therefore, she has self-confident to be woman MPs.

She mentioned that she faced verbal gender discrimination especially from men politician of opposition party and also calumny on social media in campaign period. Besides, her campaign office was destroyed by her opposition party and her two campaign volunteers for campaign office were attacked with knife.

“For me, my campaign office was destroyed and volunteers for campaign office were attacked with knife in 2015 election”

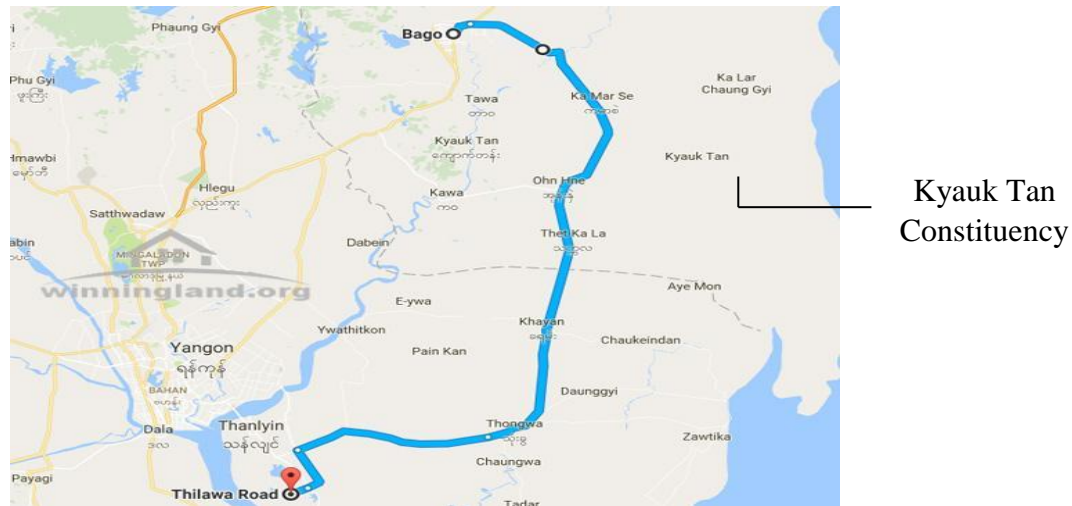
To sum up, she did not face internal and external challenges to be woman MP in 2015 election. But, she faced gender inequality problems namely gender-violence and gender-discrimination challenges a lot in 2015 election though she is 88 generation and she has many experiences in political activities.

Daw Sandar

Daw Sandar, single person (40 years old), is a woman Member of Parliament of Kyauktada constituency from National League for Democracy party in current parliament (2015-2020). Her constituency, Kyauk Tan is located in southern part of

Yangon with a population of over 126,000 has 57 village-tracts with 80 villages (<http://www.elevenmyanmar.com>). The location of Kyauktada is as follows;

Map (4.3) location of Kyauk Tan Township



Her native town is not Kyauk Tan township, Yangon. She is Shan Buddhist ethnic woman from Taungyi Township, Shan State. Even though she is Shan ethnic person, her constituency is in mainland area; therefore, she works for mainland area people's prosperities. Her father is soldier and there are eight siblings in her family, she is the eldest and single woman.

Concerning with her educational background, she got Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics from Taunggyi University. Moreover, she had attended women leadership school which is opened by IRI in Myanmar before she became woman MP. Thus, she mentioned she has leadership skill, electoral and campaigning knowledge, political and decision-making knowledge before she becomes woman MP. Because of her educational background, she stated she has self-confident to do both the responsibilities of woman MP and everything like men.

Though her family wants her to be government staff, she does not want. Later, she moved to Yangon to find jobs when she graduated. When she moved to Yangon, her mother cried because of traditional and cultural thinking that women do not need to do jobs and stay with the family. In 2007, she would like to support Daw Aung San Su Kyi and would like to transform Myanmar to democratic country but she did not

know how to support Daw Aung San Su Kyi and her party. Thus, she went to everywhere Daw Aung San Su Kyi went and support for campaign though she was not a member of NLD party. She mentioned it was very difficult to decide whether she registered as NLD party member or not as politician because of family tension not to do politics. She mentioned family tension is related with not only cultural and traditional factor but also political factor.

“Since 2010 election, the situation of Myanmar is a little bit of peaceful and stable. Though in 2012 by-election, NLD and other ethnic parties participate in political activities in Myanmar smoothly. However, my family still assumes politics is insecure job because of bad political system in military-government. Thus, my family especially my mother was crying when I started to do politics due to the fact that she feels politics is insecure and women should not do politics. Finally, I gave promise to my family if I did not win in 2015 election as woman MP, I will never do politics throughout my life. Because of this promise, I got permission from my family to compete in 2015 election”.

Moreover, she mentioned she faced economic challenge a lot in campaign period.

“When I started to do politics, I could not do my jobs and I did not have my own income. Thus, after I had worked in politics for two years, I started to think not to do political activities anymore due to the fact that I could not stand without my own income and I am not from strong economic background. From my family side, they did not provide any financial support and other support because they did not want me to do politics. When I was elected as MP candidate, she did not have money to spend campaign expense; therefore, I borrowed money from her colleagues to spend campaign expenses.”

Though she faced a lot of economic challenges, in campaign period, she mentioned she fully got votes from constituency people without gender-discrimination. On the other hand, she faced verbal gender-discrimination among political society within her party and from opposition party.

“Though I fully got votes in my constituency people without gender-discrimination, I faced verbal gender-discrimination in political society “women cannot do anything.” Moreover, within NLD party, there are two

groups, one group is political prisoners and another group is not political prisoners though they do politics. For me, I was selected as woman MP candidate in 2015 election though I am not political prisoner, thus, I faced verbal gender-discrimination by other men politician from NLD party that she is not political prisoner and woman cannot do anything. Moreover, in campaign period, I faced verbal gender-discrimination from opposition party”.

Daw Sandar is not from political family, so, she faced external challenges a lot than other women MPs who are from political family but she did not face any internal factors. Moreover, she also faced gender-inequality factor especially verbal gender-discrimination a lot among NLD party and political society like other women MPs who are not political prisoners and 88 generation.

4.3 Women members of parliament from ethnic areas of Myanmar

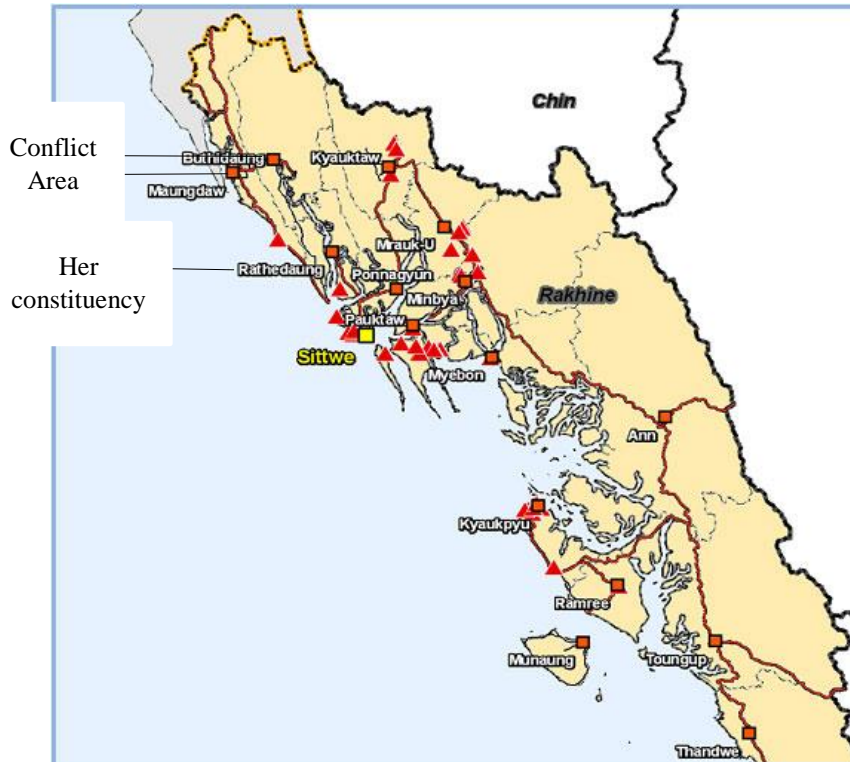
In Myanmar, there are seven ethnic States namely Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Rakhine and Shan. Among 42 women MPs, 7 are from Shan State, 3 are from Kayah, 2 are from Mon, 2 are from Rakhine, 1 is from Kachin State, 1 is from Kayin, and 1 is from Chin. In this section, one woman MP from Shan State is selected to present her political life in 2015 election as case study because in Shan State, the number of women MP is the highest compared with other ethnic areas. Besides, among 7 women MPs from Shan State, woman MP from Man Ton constituency is selected because Man Ton constituency is Palaung Self-administrative area and it is aimed to identify political life for women in self-administrative area to participate in political activities by pointing out experiences of current woman MP in 2015 election. Then, the challenge and obstacles of woman MP from Rakhine State will also present in this section in order to know how women in conflict area faced to participate in political activities.

Daw Phyu

Daw Phyu (59 years old) is woman member of parliament of Yathedaung constituency from Arakan National Party (ANP). In 2011 election, she won and became woman MP. And in 2015 election, she also won and became woman MP as second

time. Her constituency Yathedaung is located in Sittwe district and far from conflict areas in Rakhine State.

Map (4.4) Location of Rathedaung Constituency



She lives in Yangon, not in Rathedaung though she is Rakhine ethnic woman. Before 2010 election, she started to do in charity jobs for prosperity of Rakhine people and state. Besides, in celebration of ceremonies which are concerned with Rakhine ethnic people, she participates as a leader. Therefore, majority of Rakhine people know her very well. In 2010, Myanmar transforms to multi party democratic system. Thus, ethnic people established their own ethnic party and compete in election. Rakhine ethnic people also established Arakan National Party. As soon as ANP was established, the chairman of AND party invites her to be member of ANP as well as elect her to compete in 2010 election and 2015 election as women MP candidates from ANP.



Arakan National Party Office

She is married woman with three children. While she was attending second year majoring in business, she got married. Consequently, she did not have opportunity to finish her study because of household burden and taking care of her husband and children. Besides, she did not have her own income. It can be observed in Myanmar, women do not have much time to study and pay attention in various sectors like men because of lot of household activities. Furthermore, they do not need to go outside to find money, just spend money their husband gives and as a result, they do not have their own income like woman MP from Yathedaung constituency because of traditional and cultural factor mentioned in Chapter III.

Unfortunately, her husband was died and after her husband died, she needed to find money to support her children. Thus, she worked as merchant. She mentioned when she competed in 2010 election, she faced economic challenge to spend campaign expense because she is not from strong economic background and she did not have any financial support for campaign expenses from anyone.

“Economic is one of the challenges for women not to participate in political activities in Myanmar. For me, I was struggled a lot and faced a lot of economic challenge to spend campaign expense because I am not from strong economic background”.

In accordance with ethnic area, majority Rakhine have influenced political fear more than people in mainland areas though they have strong patriotism on their ethnic people. Therefore, voters in Rakhine people give their votes to their Rakhine candidates regardless of gender issue. She mentioned she faced a lot of challenges that

people did not want her to communicate when she went to villages in campaign period.

“My constituency is one of the townships in Rakhine State, the least developed state in Myanmar. Therefore, most of the people are very afraid of politics. In 2010 election, when I went to villages in my constituency for campaign, the villagers did not want me to stay in their houses as guests because of political fear. Therefore, I cried with depression due to the fact that all villagers and people do not want to accept me. On the other hand, my Rakhine ethnic people are ethnic patriotism. So, they give their votes to people who are from Rakhine National Party”.

Besides, she mentioned when she became woman MP, she did not have self-confident and feel worry to attend parliamentary session as follows:

“For me, when I went to attend to first parliament session in first parliamentary term as woman MP, I felt very worry that I can do the functions and responsibilities of woman MP. E.g- the media people always follow to me, I feel very afraid to speak with media people”

It can be observed women who are not educated person, they feel worry whether they can do or not. For woman MP from Yathedaung constituency, she is not educated person, moreover, she did not have knowledge about Myanmar politics, leadership, management, legislation and parliamentary knowledge before she become woman MP, thus, it can be investigated she felt worry when she started to do parliamentary functions and politics.

“I did not have chance to attend leadership and other trainings before I become woman MP because I just had one month to prepare for campaign. But when I became MPs, I have many chances to attend these trainings in country and aboard which NGOs and INGOs are held”

Next, she mentioned another challenge she faced is verbal gender-discrimination “woman cannot do for prosperity of Rakhine people and woman should not participate in politics” especially people from opposition party, then, she faced contempt from people.

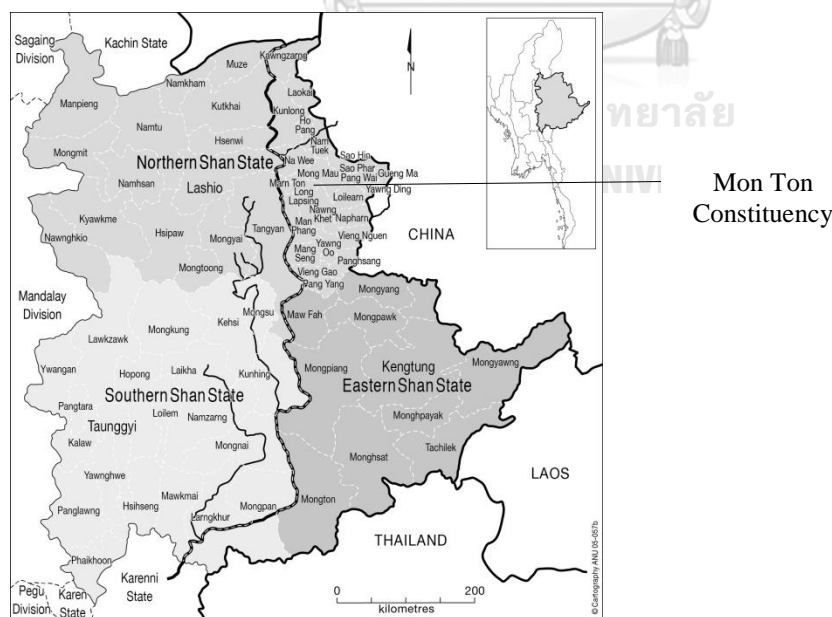
It is assumed Daw Phyu is not from political family. Therefore, she is very hard to struggle to be woman MP. She faced both external and internal factors to be

woman MP than other women MPs from political factor. Moreover, she faced gender inequality especially gender-verbal discrimination a lot among her party ANP and other opposition party “Women cannot do anything if they become women MPs” like other women MPs.

Daw Nan

Daw Nan is member of representative of Man Ton constituency in Palaung Self-administrative area from Ta'aung (Palaung) National Party. She is single and 35 years old. Her father is the leader of ethnic armed group and in 1990; he signed peace agreement with Myanmar government and established political party. At present, her father is Chairman of Ta'aung (Palaung) National Party. Since in 1990 TPN party was established, though she became party member, she did not do political activities. In 2014, she did party jobs as well as in 2015 election, she competed as woman MP candidate. She described she did not face any financial challenge to do political activities due to the fact that she is from political family and her family support her to be woman MP not only campaign expenses but also other necessary supports.

Map (4.5) Location of Man Ton Constituency



In 2015 election, there are two women candidates from TPN party as well as in Chief Executive Committee; there is only woman, herself. She mentioned that in her

ethnic area, majority of women are not interested in politics, and they assume responsibilities of women are doing household activities and looking after their children and husband. Apart from them, everything is not concerned with women because of cultural and traditional factor.

“In my ethnic area, women themselves do not interested in politics, they just want to do household activities and looking after their children and husband”.

She mentioned because her constituency is Self-administrative area, she faced political challenge than other women MPs. In 2015 election, government cuts off phone line for three months in her constituency ethnic area. Thus, she and people from her constituency ethnic area did not get any update information concerning with election. Surprisingly, phone line got back as soon as election is finished.

“In campaign period in 2015 election, Union Election Commission cannot give guideline the way how to give votes: whether they need to tick or stamp until one week before election starts. Therefore, I faced a lot of difficulties in campaigning because I showed two ways how to give votes to constituency people, consequently, people feel so confused because in ethnic area, the rate of illiteracy people is very high. Moreover, in campaigning time, the government cuts off phone line for three months in my constituency ethnic area. Surprisingly, phone line got back as soon as election was finished. Therefore, I faced a lot of difficulties in campaigning time”

She pointed out the weakness of Union Election Commission in 2015 election and because her constituency is in self-administrative area, lack of government support is one of the factors for her in campaign period. Another challenge for her to be woman MP in campaign period is verbal gender-discrimination like other women MPs.

“When I compete in 2015 election, I am 31st year old. Because I am young woman, people especially in politician criticize young woman cannot do anything although I am very bright. For ethnic voters, they do not look at gender; they look at party when they give their votes”.

Besides, she mentioned gender-discrimination in parliament as follows;

“Today is the period that every people talk about gender equality and human rights. So, men also have knowledge about gender equality and human rights.

Generally they accept them but they feel very hard to accept gender equality mortally. Therefore, there is no practice that men want to give women equal opportunities like them. For example, looking at parliamentary committee, there are many women MPs who are very bright and very active in parliamentary functions, they should get at least secretary position in committee but they could not be. We will think why women could not get committee chairman and secretary's positions. For me, it is assumed that this is gender-discrimination and women did not have equal opportunities to participate in attending this meeting for selecting committee's chairman and secretary.

Based on interviewing with Daw Nan, the research found out not only in campaign period but also in parliament, women MPs face gender-discrimination of men MPs that women MPs do not have equal opportunity to attend important meetings in parliament like men MPs.

By interviewing with Daw Nan, she did not face external and internal factors a lot like women MPs who are not from political parties because she is daughter of Chairman of Ta'aung (Palaung) National Party. On the other hand, she faced external factor which is political restrictions more than other women MPs because she is woman MP from self-administrative area and near with border area of China-Myanmar. Besides, she faced gender verbal-discrimination among political society.

4.4 Conclusion

By doing in-depth interviews with 6 women MPs, the research found out 4 women MPs are from strong political family and 2 are not. Women MPs who are not from political family faced external factors a lot more than women from political family. Consequently, when we see women MPs in House of Representatives, it is unsurprisingly found out majority women MPs are from political family. For normal person who are not from political family is rare to be women MPs because of external factors mentioned in Chapter III.

Moreover, the thesis found out that almost every woman MPs both from ethnic area constituencies and mainland area constituencies face gender inequality problems especially gender-verbal discrimination "Women cannot do anything",

“Politics is not concerned with women”, “women should not be vote to be women MP” and so on within their political parties and political society. We can see that there is gender verbal discrimination but also there is discrimination between women themselves because in NLD party, there are two groups: first group is political prisoners and 88 generations and second group is women who can just do parties’ activities and become women MP. Therefore, the thesis found out woman who are one of members of CEC from party, political prisoners did not face gender verbal-discrimination in 2015 election. On the other hand, women MPs face gender verbal discrimination a lot. Therefore, the thesis found out there is discrimination not only within gender but also within women MP candidates themselves. For women MPs from other political parties also face gender verbal-discrimination among political society and within their political parties. Thus, the thesis found out that gender verbal-discrimination is the common problem for all women.

We need to think why does gender verbal-discrimination become common challenge for women MP candidates? It may be related with external factor meaning religious, culture, and tradition factor. All Myanmar people have concept women are inferior to men; consequently, they automatically think women cannot do anything in not only politics but also everything like men. Therefore, gender verbal-discrimination happens for women. Moreover, it also may be political factor. If there is strong action to prevent gender-discrimination, women will not face verbal-gender discrimination a lot like women MPs in current parliament.

The taste of democracy means that women who are from various classes should be participated in political activities and to be women MPs not to be silent women voices in Myanmar. Therefore, the external factors normal women who are not from political parties face should be solved and women should be empowered to participate in politics. Thus, in next chapter, the research will assess how women are empowered to participate in politics by various actors.

CHAPTER V

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN MYANMAR

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to answer research question two, the ways women can be empowered to increasingly participate in political activities in Myanmar. In order to answer research question two, the findings illustrated below are based on experiences and suggestions from in-depth interviews with six women MPs, four members of CEC from political parties, four staff from Union Election Commission and Ministry of Social, Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, four representatives from CSOs and four representatives from media sector. Then, this chapter will describe the actor roles in women empowerment processes to participate in political activities in Myanmar: State (government, Ministry of Social Welfare, Union Election Commission), Political Parties (NLD, USDP, and Ethnic political parties), civil Society as well as media sector by using women empowerment concept : material pathway, cognitive pathway, perceptual pathway and relational pathway.

According to the concept of women empowerment, material pathway is related with income, economy, and financial support which are the external factor. Cognitive pathway is related with improving knowledge and skills which are internal factor. Also perceptual pathway means self-confident which is related with internal factor for women. For relational pathway, it means bargaining power for women to participate in political activities which is related with external factor.

5.2 External Factor

5.2.1 Economic Factor

According to finding of Chapter III, economic factor (material pathway) is one of the challenges for women not to participate in political activities in Myanmar. Basically, every MP needs to pay (500 USD) to Union Election Commission as registration fee and they can spend more than (10000 USD) as campaign expenses. Besides, they need to use other materials such as pamphlets, posters, T-shirts, umbrella and so on in campaign expense. Thus, in order to spend campaign expenses,

women need to assess stable income and need to empower to participate in economic sector for women.

5.2.1.1 Economic Support by the State

In Myanmar, there are two Ministries which focus on gender issue and women empowerment: Ministry of Social Welfare and Union Election Commission. State (Ministry of Social Welfare and Union Election Commission) cannot directly provide support basic needs and campaign expenses to women MP candidates in campaign period but State can provide support to get stable income for women.

Concerning with state's support for material pathway, woman MP from NLD party said that

“State did not support both financial support and other material support for women MPs in 2015 election”. (Woman MP from NLD party).

State can give guideline by adopting laws and policies for women empowerment in economic sector. In order to get equal income and gender-equality in labor market for women, article 249 and 350 of 2008 constitution can guarantee every citizen regardless of gender must have equal rights and equal payment in economic sector. Moreover, to get stable income and gender equality in labor market, employment, credit, resources, assets and economic benefits, the state especially Ministry of Social Welfare adopted “Women and Economy” as one of the parts in the national strategic plan for the advanced of women since 2013 to 2022 (NSPAW). To implement NSPAW effectively, technical Working group on women's participation (TWG participation) was organized to increase women participation in economic, politics and decision-making processes. Technical working group (2018) has been working the following programs and activities together with CSOs /NGOs / INGOs sector as follows in order to get stable income for women.

Table (5.1) programs and activities of Technical Working group on women's participation (TWG participation) under Ministry of Social Welfare for material support

Implementation	Indicator	Target by 2018	Target by 2020	Actors
<p>- Develop workplace policies and guidelines in order to address harmful social norms, business culture and practice, and sexual harassment in the workplace,</p> <p>- include sanctions for sexual harassment and discrimination in employment including on grounds of pregnancy.</p>	-Workplace policies and guidelines	-Numbers of organizations that develop workplace policies and guidelines	-Number of organizations that develop workplace policies and guidelines	State, DANA, ILO, YCT, MCRB
<p>- Increase access of women entrepreneurs, including young women, to finance, credit, markets, skill training, technology and social protection</p>	<p>-Number of women owned business,</p> <p>-Number of registered women owned bank account</p> <p>-Number of loaners for women to do their own business</p>	<p>-Number of women owned business,</p> <p>-Number of registered women owned bank account</p> <p>-Number of loaners for women to do their own business</p>	<p>- Number of women owned business,</p> <p>-Number of registered women owned bank account</p> <p>-Number of loaners for women to do their own business</p>	DANA, ILO, MWEA
<p>DSW's training schools should provide new training programs that avoid traditional gender stereotypes around "women's occupations"</p>	Number of training programs	-Number of training programs	-Number of training programs	DSW, Action Aid

Moreover, the thesis found out Ministry of Social Welfare established two women development centers, four vocational training schools; two women care centers as well as ten schools for cottage industries for women throughout the country. Besides, Ministry of Social Welfare also provides financial and technical support to ten women care centers established by NGO organizations.

Concerning with women centers, deputy director from Ministry of Social Welfare said that

“Ministry of Social Welfare tries to provide stable income for women especially for women in ethnic conflict areas. It established 18 training schools for women. In every school, training to do cottage industries for women is given. In these 18 schools, women not only from ethnic conflict areas: Kachin State, Rakhine State and Shan State but also mainland areas are attending in order to get stable income after they finished their studies and to provide financial support for their families”. (Deputy Director from Ministry of Social Welfare).

Though State (Ministry of Social Welfare) provides women to get stable income and gender-equality in economic sector in accordance with NSPAW. State did not provide any financial and material support for women candidates to be women MPs in election. Otherwise, State (Union Election) tried to prevent vote buying and selling in election among candidates by limiting the amount of campaign expenses.

Concerning with limitation the amount of campaign expenses, ethnic woman MP from Ta’aung (Palaung) National Party said

“Most of Myanmar people think Union Election Commission gives 10000 USD as campaign expenses to MP candidate. Actually, UEC did not provide any financial support to any MP candidate. UEC just give guideline not to spend more than 1000 USD for every MP candidate to prevent vote buying and selling”. (Woman MP from Ta’aung (Palaung) National Party).

Concerning with limitation the amount of campaign expenses, assistant director from Union Election Commission described that

“If there is no limitation for campaign expenses, the rich MP candidates can use a lot as campaign expenses and he/she can buy votes from people. Thus, Union Election Commission limit like that. After the election has finished, every MP

candidate need to show total amount of campaign expenses with detailed budget sheets”(Assistant director from Union Election Commission).

The thesis found out that though the state did not provide both financial and material support to women MP candidates in 2015 election, the state is trying to provide stable income for women by establishing vocation training schools for women. Besides, in order to create employment for women like men as well as gender-equality in labor market, state also has special programs and activities under NSPAW working together with CSO sectors.

5.2.1.2 Economic Support by Political Parties

The role of political parties is also important for economic sector of women MP candidates to be women MPs and participate in political activities in Myanmar. Normally, in Myanmar, the research found out big parties like NLD, USDP have donor organizations and elite families which support big parties and donate financial support to them. Thus, the party can provide not only financial but also material supports to women MP candidates.

Concerning with providing campaign expenses, one of members of CEC from NLD party described that

“Our party, NLD does not provide financial support for Member of Representatives, but we have donors for each MP as campaign expenses. In 1990 election, our party provided financial support to registration fee of candidate to Union Election Commission for three youngest candidates. And in 2015 election, NLD provide little financial support for poor ethnic men and women candidates”. (Woman MP, CEO from NLD party).

One of members of CEC from USDP party explained about providing campaign expenses

“Our party does not provide financial support for MP candidates, but there are donators who support our party to provide financial support for each MP candidate” (one of members of CEC from USDP party).

One of CEC members from Ta’aung Palaung (National) Party said that

“My party provides 2000 USD for one township; there are four MP candidates for both national and state/region in township. USD 2000 is not enough for four

MP candidates. Therefore, though party provides to every MP candidate, every MP candidate needs to spend their own money as campaign expenses in election period”. (Woman MP, one of members of CEC from Ta’aung Palaung (National) Party).

Woman MP from Rakhine National Party explained that

“Rakhine State is least developed state in Myanmar, thus, for our party; there are not many donors to provide financial support. MP candidates need to spend campaign expenses by themselves and our party did not provide any financial support. I spent 8000 USD for campaign expenses in 2015 election”. (Woman MP from Rakhine National Party).

Besides, the thesis found out that there are five groups namely education network, health network, Central supporting Organization, Funding Department as well as Women Committee under NLD party. When NLD organizes current government, the party leader, Daw Aung San Su Kyi instructed to establish women committee which is needed to cooperate with ministries. Therefore, NLD organizes women committee on September 2017. In order to get stable and own income for women as well as financial support for their families, women committee is giving sewing trainings, vocational trainings as well as trainings for cottage industries for women members of NLD party.

Concerning with activities of women affairs, chairman of women affairs committee, one of members of CEC from NLD party described that

“Our women affairs committee provides vocational trainings for stable and own income for members of party. Besides, I am sure increasing women participation in political activities will be one of the important factors that will adopt in the policy because our leader is woman and also women population in Myanmar is over half of the population (Chairman of women committee and one of members of CEC from NLD party).

Concerning with activities of women affairs, one of members of CEC from USDP party described that

“In USDP, there are five hundred and ten thousand party members. Among them, women party members are two hundred thousand. Our party provides

advocacy trainings for women party members to get stable and own income. (one of members of CEC from USDP party).

Except big parties, NLD and USDP, the research found out there is no party which has special plan and activity to access stable and own income for women party members though there are around 90 political parties in Myanmar. Besides, for campaign expenses, almost every women MP spends campaign expenses by their own money although some parties support campaign expenses. For women MP candidates from big party, NLD and USDP get financial support from donors and elite families supported their party, the other small ethnic parties do not have financial donors and elite families provided for financial support to MP candidates. However, some ethnic political parties like Ta'aung Palaung (National) Party provide some money as campaign expenses but their parties' financial support is not enough. Thus, almost every woman MP needs to spend campaign expenses from their own families. Unsurprisingly, political parties do not provide financial support and other support for women more than men MP candidates. It is also investigated that in every political party, there is no special budget for providing campaign expenses, materials for using during campaign period.

5.2.1.3 Economic Support by Civil Society Organizations, NGOs and INGOs

The role of civil societies, NGOs and INGOs is also important for material pathway of women MP candidates to be women MPs and participate in political activities in Myanmar for women. In Myanmar, there are thirty one organizations which focus on women affairs and work partnership with Ministry of Social Welfare namely ASHO, Action Aid Myanmar, Asia Development Bank (ADB), AYOM, DANA Facility, DFAT, DFID, EMRF, FAO, FSWG, GEN (Gender Equality Network), ILO (International Labor Organization), Land Core Group, LWF Myanmar, MEDA, MSI, MWEA, MWAFF, MWCDF, MMCWA, NAG, Oxfam, Pact Myanmar, UMFCCI, UNCDF, UNFPA, UNDP, WFP and Yaung Chi Thit.

It is observed local NGO like Pact Myanmar provides loan to women in order to get stable and own income for them. Besides, some CSOs, NGOs and INGOs provide material support for women MPs during election period.

Concerning with the role of CSOs, NGOs, INGOs' support for material pathway, woman MP from Ta'aung Palaung (National) Party described,

“The role of CSO is important for women to participate in political activities. For me, Women Can Do It (WCDI) local based NGO provides sixty umbrellas and sixty T-Shirts which were pressed “Let's vote women” as well as pamphlets. (Woman MP and one of CEC members from Ta'aung (Palaung) National party).

Woman MP and one of CEC members from NLD party said that

“In 2012 by-election and 2015 election, NGOs and INGOs sector provided material support but also volunteers in election periods. Not only NGOs/ INGOs sector but also CSOs sector like Myanmar Motion Picture Organization, musicians, actors and actresses provide a lot by using artistry for women MP candidates during election period.”

Woman MP from Rakhine National party mentioned that

“For our party, in both 2010 and 2015 election, we did not get any financial and material support from CSOs, NGOs and INGOs sector during election period”. (Woman MP from Rakhine National Party).

It is observed that CSOs, NGOs and INGOs support to get stable and own income for women by using loan system. Moreover, they support materials a lot which can use for campaign especially for big party more than small and ethnic parties. For example, Rakhine State is the least developed country in Myanmar. But woman representatives from Rakhine State interviewed for this thesis did not get any support from CSO/NGO/INGO sector. Therefore, it is assumed CSO/NGO/INGO sector should equally provide support between big parties and ethnic parties.

5.2.2 Summary

In economic sector (material pathway), three main actors are mainly involved for providing women empowerment. However, the research found out 24 interviewees replied that state (Ministry of Social Welfare and Union Election Commission) cannot provide support for women empowerment in economic sector a lot though state tried to empower women in economic sector. The thesis found out material and financial

support mainly come from political parties as well as CSOs, NGOs and INGOs sector for women empowerment to participate in political activities in Myanmar.

5.2.3 Bargaining Power

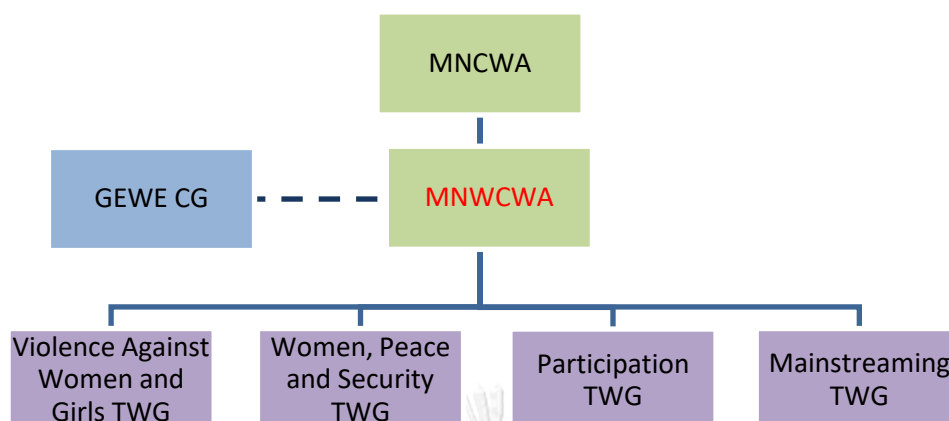
Based on findings of Chapter III, power relation and bargaining power for women are very important to participate in decision-making processes and politics. Therefore, in this section, the research will assess how actors: State (government, Ministry of Social Welfare, and Union Election, Commission), political parties, civil society and media try to get bargaining power for women.

5.2.3.1 Bargaining power for women supported by State

Myanmar has committed to several international conventions and regional agreements including the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which is adopted by United Nations on 22nd July 1997, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. To promote bargaining power for women, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement adopted the national strategic plan for the advanced of women since 2013 to 2022 (NSPAW) as mentioned earlier. In NSPAW, there are four key priority areas including “increasing women’s political participation” under one key priority of “women participation”: violence against women and girl, women, peace and security, women participation and mainstreaming.

Besides, the CEDAW committee recommended the Myanmar government should adopt measures to guarantee and accelerate women’s full and equal participation in all levels including in the parliament, local government, ministerial posts, the judiciary, the Military, diplomatic services as well as in academic field in order to promote bargaining power for women to participate in all areas. Therefore, state established national coordinating mechanism is as follows:

Figure (5.1) national coordination mechanism for NSPAW (Source from Union Election Commission in Myanmar)



Technical Working group on women's participation (TWG participation)

In order to implement NSPAW very effectively, technical working group on women's participation has been established to develop annual action plans, to analyze, to research and to collect the data concerning with women's participation in decision-making processes in Myanmar, to provide support of implementation in states and regions, to monitor, to evaluate, to report to MNCWA as well as to share information with GEWE CG. Besides, TWG need to cooperate with other sector and other three technical working groups. In the technical working group on women's participation: there are 31 representatives from 31 INGOs and NGOs organizations as well as 11 representatives from 11 government organizations as follows:

Table (5.2), List of Government Organizations which are members of Technical working group for women participations

No.	Government Organizations
1.	Department of Commerce
2.	Department of Cooperatives
3.	Ministry of Border Affairs
4.	Department of Forestry
5.	Department of Hotel & Tourism
6.	Department of Labor
7.	Department of Rural Development

8.	General Administrative Department
9.	Ministry of Home Affairs
10.	Union Election Commission
11.	Department of Social Welfare Under Ministry of Social, Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

Table (5.3), List of CSOs, NGOs, INGOs which are members of Technical working group for women participations

Organizations Name				
ASHO	Action Aid Myanmar	AYOMs	DFID	ADB
DFAT	DANA Facility	MRF	EMRF	FAO
FSWG	Land Core Group	ILO	GEN	MSI
MEDA	LWF Myanmar	MWEA	MWAF	MWCDF
MMCWA	NAG	Oxfam	Plan	Pact Myanmar
UMFCCI	UNCDF	UNFPA	UNDP	WFP
Yaung Chi Thit				

The thesis found out that for increasing women participation in political activities, state (Union Election and Ministry of Social Welfare) targets to participate **at least 15 percentages of women in national level of parliaments, and at least 17 percentages of women in State/ Region level of parliaments in 2022.** Concerning with state's efforts in relational pathway, assistant director from Ministry of Social Welfare mentioned that

“With the aim of implementation NSPWA, TWG on women participation will do working programs to get at least 15 percentages of women participation in national level and at least 17 percentages of women participation in state/region level parliaments” (assistant director from Ministry of Social Welfare).

Though state is trying for women to get bargaining power for women, 24 interviewees in this thesis mentioned that state cannot provide support for women to

get bargaining power. Concerning with state's support, one woman MP from ethnic party stated that

“For me, I think state cannot do anything for women to get bargaining power to participate in politics at both national and state/region levels. I heard Ministry of Social Welfare is working for women to get bargaining power in accordance with CEDAW treaty, but for me, state's efforts did not really effective in 2015 election for women” (woman MP from Ta'aung (Palaung) National Party).

The research found out that the state is working to gain bargaining power for women to participate in political activities. But these efforts are not really effectively on women. In order to get bargaining power for women very effectively and efficiently, affirmative actions like gender-policy and gender-quota system. Concerning with affirmative action for bargaining power for women to participate in political activities, one of ethnic woman MP mentioned that

“By looking at parliamentary committee, there are many women MPs who are very bright and very active in parliamentary functions, they should get at least secretary position in committee but they could not be. Thus, I think in Myanmar context, quota system should be applied. (Ethnic women MP from Ta'aung (Palaung) National Party).

Besides, in 2013 in the previous government period, ethnic woman MP, Daw Khin Saw Wai from Rakhine National Party tried to submit proposal whether the government has the plan to apply quota system or not, but, the chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw, U Shwe Mann told to raise questions instead of submitting proposals to her. Thus, she raised question to government sector. At the time, Minister of Presidential Office, U Soe Thien answered the government does not have plan to apply quota system for increasingly women participation in political activities and decision- making processes. At current government, NLD period, the Union Election Commission is trying to adopt quota system in Myanmar.

Concerning with adopting quota system in Myanmar, assistant director from Union Election Commission mentioned that

“Our commission is trying to adopt quota system in Myanmar, but whether quota system is adopted or not depended on parliament”. (Assistant director from Union Election Commission).

Surprisingly, the research found out all women MPs from NLD party led by woman, Daw Aung San Su Kyi do not prefer to apply quota system in Myanmar.

Concerning with applying quota system, one woman MP from NLD mentioned that

“Currently in Myanmar, quota system should not apply because quota is the system which fulfills the target number and percentage. If we apply quota system, women who do have capacity will be participate in political activities and decision-making processes” (woman MP, one of the CEO members of NLD Party).

Another woman MP from NLD Party stated that

“I think qualified women should participate in politics as well as decision-making processes. By applying quota system, women who are not qualified can participate. Thus, I do not encourage applying quota system with the aim of increasingly women participation in political activities and decision-making processes in Myanmar” (Woman MP from National League for Democracy).

The research found out that though state tries to provide support in bargaining power for women in accordance with one of the countries signed in CEDAW and Beijing treaties, the efforts are still weak and do not effective in relational pathway. Moreover, state cannot do any affirmative actions for bargaining power for women to participate in politics.

5.2.3.2 Bargaining power for women supported by political parties

Political party plays vital role in relational pathway for women. If the party does not select women as women MPs, they will not have bargaining power to participate in political activities at both national and State/Region levels. Concerning with the political parties' roles in relational pathway, 24 interviewees stated the most significant source of political parties' support is to select MP candidate and to pay

opportunity to get bargaining power. However, Chapter III of the research, lack of gender policy is one of the main challenges for women to get bargaining power and to participate in political activities in Myanmar. Therefore, CEC members from four political parties who the researcher interviewed mentioned they are trying to adopt gender policy in their parties.

Concerning with adopting gender policy in political parties, one of CEC members from NLD party mentioned that

“In 2018, the women committee has been providing public services and charity jobs for women. In June, 2018, the women committee’ meeting will held and we will adopt policy of women committee in this meeting. I am sure an increase in women participation in political activities will be one of the important factors that will adopt in the policy because our leader is woman and also women population in Myanmar is over half of the population (woman MP, one of CEC members as well as Chairman of women committee in National League for Democracy).

One of CEC members from Ta’aung (Palaung) National Party stated that

“Currently, there is no policy and plan concerning with women’s affairs. But in coming party conference, I will encourage our party members to draw plan or policy concerning with women’s affairs and increasingly women participation in political activities (CEC member from Ta’aung (Palaung) National Party).

The research found out the role of political party plays major role in bargaining power (relational pathway) for women. But political parties cannot do anything for bargaining power of women right now. However, CEC members of political parties have gender concept and emphasize on gender issue women empowerment issue than before. Therefore, they will try to adopt gender-quota system to increase the number of women participations in political activities in future.

5.2.4 Summary

For bargaining power, the thesis found out that the main actors are state (Ministry of Social Welfare and Union Election Commission) and political parties. And, media and CSO/ NGO/ INGO sector cannot provide support directly for women to have bargaining power. To get bargaining power, affirmative action is important.

Although affirmative action is important, both state and political parties cannot provide any affirmative action like gender-policy and gender-quota system. Why do not state and political parties adopt affirmative action? It is because the high rank of officials and heads of government do not have gender concept and they think gender and women empowerment issue is not important like other sectors: economy, health, education and so on. However, the research found out that CEC members from political parties accept that their parties need gender-quota or gender-policy for women. Thus, it is assumed that before 2020 election, they can adopt gender-quota or gender-policy or gender-platform for women to get bargaining power to participate in political activities in 2020 election.

5.3 Internal Factor

5.3.1 Knowledge and Skills

Based on findings of chapter III, the thesis found out knowledge and skills are not challenge for women to participate in political activities in Myanmar. If they did not have these knowledge and skills, they can participate and to be women MPs. But in findings of Chapter IV, the thesis is observed that two women MPs did not have knowledge and skills. Therefore, they are little bit struggle in functioning parliamentary jobs after they have become women MPs. Therefore, in this section, the thesis will assess how actors: state (government, Ministry of Social Welfare, Union Election), political parties, CSOs/NGOs/ INGOs provide support for women empowerment in knowledge and skills.

5.3.1.1 Knowledge, Leadership and Advocacy Trainings by the State

State is one of important actors to change the level of women knowledge about leadership skills, electoral and campaigning knowledge by giving awareness programs to women. It is observed the activities which are needed to implement in the national strategic plan for the advanced of women since 2013 to 2022 (NSPAW) are as follows;

- The government needs to mentor programs for female parliamentarians to improve leadership and decision-making skills.

- The government needs to do activities to increase women's engagement with electoral processes.
- The government needs to do capacity building for future women leaders on leadership and negotiation skills.

In order to do the above functions very effectively and efficiently, Technical working group (2018) has been working the following programs and activities together with CSOs /NGOs / INGOs sector as follows in order to change level of knowledge for women.

Table (5.4) programs and activities of technical Working group on women's participation (TWG participation) under Ministry of Social Welfare for knowledge and advocacy trainings

Implementations	Actions	Number of actions implemented until 2018	Number of actions target at 2022	The Responsible ministry and organizations
Giving awareness programs about oversight to the government's activities, leadership skills, public speaking, planning to women MPs and women MPs candidates	Number of seminars, workshop, conference	N/A	Number () (did not mention the number)	-Participation Technical Working Group (PTWG) - YCT - Akaya
Capacity Building and Technical Assistant Programs for gender equality in decision-making level	Actions and programs for capacity building and technical assistance	N/A	Number () of programs for capacity building and technical assistance did not mention the number)	-DANA -International Labor Organization (ILO) -MWEA

Though the technical working group under Ministry of Social Welfare gives training programs for women to improve their skills, 6 women MPs interviewed for the research described they did not get any training for women MP candidates in both 2010 and 2015 elections.

Concerning with awareness programs supported by state, one woman ethnic woman MP said that

“Government should give trainings to improve capacity building, and improve women’s knowledge and skills. Till 2015 election, we, all of women MP candidates did not attend any training provided by government”. (Woman MP from Ta’aung (Palaung) National Party).

The thesis found out that, the implementation and cooperation between responsible ministries and organizations are weak though government has activities and plans for changing and improving women knowledge to participate in political activities Therefore, women MP did not get any training for improving their knowledge from state’s side.

Concerning with cooperation among government ministries and organization, One respondent said that

“Civil society organizations give awareness trainings to public throughout the country but they do not inform to Union Election Commission, consequently, we, Union Election Commission does not know which organization is giving which training in which State/ Division. Besides, among Ministries, the cooperation is also weak. For example- in 2013, our Commission had drawn our own policy and action plan for increasingly women’s participation in politics; we do not know Ministry of Social Welfare has already drawn their own strategic plan. I mean this is the example of how cooperation is very weak among ministries. I suggest each ministry should share information to other ministries and cooperate with each other very effectively (Assistant Director of Union Election Commission).

Another respondent replied that

“I think cooperation is the responsibility of government. Ministry of Social, Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has already drawn and implemented NSPAW for two years but Ministry of Social Welfare does not have influence

power to other concerned ministries for implementation of NSPAW such as Union Election Commission etc and also it is found that connection and cooperation between Ministry of Social Welfare and concerned ministries is very weak. Thus, although NSPAW is implemented and there is no effectiveness on increasingly women participation in decision-making processes in Myanmar (founder of Yaung Chi Thit).

The thesis found out that government (Ministry of Social Welfare, Union Election Commission) cannot do anything in the ground level. It takes cooperation roles between other ministries and CSO/NGO/INGO sector. Although it takes cooperation and leading role, it does not have influencing power to concerned ministries. Consequently, cooperation and collaboration are still weak between ministries and civil society organizations and between focal and concerned ministries. Thus, it is observed state's efforts are non-binding and has so far had little effect for taking actions though state is one of the important actors for knowledge and skills.

5.3.1.2 Knowledge, Leadership and Advocacy Trainings by Political Parties

The role of political parties is also important for cognitive pathway for women to participate in political activities in Myanmar. Since the role of political parties is important, the research observed political parties take leading and cooperation role in giving awareness trainings for women party members to improve in leadership and electoral knowledge joining with CSOs, NGOs and INGOs sector like government's role.

Concerning with political parties' role in improving knowledge and skills, one respondent mentioned that

“In our party, trainings for capacity building, knowledge about politics, electoral system are giving to women party members joining with CSOs, NGOs and INGOs sector. These trainings are given not only in headquarter in Yangon, but also NLD offices in townships” (woman MP and one of CEC members from NLD party).

Woman MP from Ta'aung (Palaung) National Party said that

“In my party, trainings about human rights, elections, and constitutions are giving to women party members cooperating with CSOs, NGOs and INGOs

sector. Besides, in special days for women like International Women Day, women MPs give training how they do functions in parliament and parliamentary system to women party members. (Woman MP and one of CEC members from Ta'aung Palaung (National) Party).

One respondent from USDP Party stated that

“USDP party is giving trainings for women party members to improve their capacity and knowledge in cooperation with CSO sector”

It is observed political parties cannot do trainings for improving knowledge and skills. It just takes leading and cooperation role like state. Unlike State, political parties can give trainings for improving knowledge and skills for its women party members cooperated with CSO/NGO/INGO sectors very effectively and efficiently.

5.3.1.3 Knowledge, Leadership and Advocacy Trainings by CSO/NGOs/INGOs

In the above section, 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, the research found out both state and political parties take leading and cooperation role for cognitive pathway. In ground level, CSO/NGO/ INGO sector are mainly responsible for giving knowledge, leadership and advocacy trainings for women. Without supporting of CSO/ NGO/ INGO sector, state and political parties may not support for cognitive pathway for women.

Concerning with CSO/NGO/INGO' support for cognitive pathway, in Chapter IV, among six women MPs who did in-depth interview, four women MPs have attended trainings, schools about political, electoral knowledge, two women MPs had opportunities to attend trainings after they become women MPs.

Related with the important role of CSO/NGO/INGO in cognitive pathway, “The role of CSOs is very important in not only Myanmar politics but also global politics. At present in Myanmar, the rate of women who know about politics, leadership, and electoral knowledge is higher than before because of awareness training programs. CSO takes this role, giving awareness programs in Myanmar politics (founder of Yaung Chi Thit, CSO which focus on women affairs and women empowerment). Currently in Myanmar, women's networks like the Women's Organization Network, Gender Equality Network, Women Can Do It, the Women's League of Burma and

the Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process are giving awareness trainings throughout the country with the aim of increasingly women participation in decision-making processes in Myanmar.

Concerning with the changing and raising awareness of leadership skill, electoral, campaign and decision-making knowledge,

One woman MP replied that

“For me, I did not have opportunities to attend the training about these skills before I become MP but I get opportunity to attend workshops, seminars and conferences headed by NGOs and INGOs about electoral and political systems which are used throughout the world after I become MP. These workshops, seminars and conferences make me more knowledgeable and more easily to do my parliamentary functions very well (Women MP from Rakhine National Party).

Another woman MP said that

“I have attended trainings which are organized by various civil society organizations. Especially I attended 2 years training about leadership skill which is organized by IRI and I attended training about decision-making processes which is organized by US Aid. This knowledge is very useful when I become woman MP (Woman MP from National League for Democracy Party).

CSO/NGO/INGO cooperates with government (especially Ministry of Social Welfare, Union Election Commission) and political parties and they give advocacy trainings for women in ground levels throughout the country. But, the research found out CSO/NGO/INGO sector face difficulties and challenges to get permission from township/ district administrators under Ministry of Home Affairs to provide advocacy trainings in townships/districts.

Concerning with challenges and difficulties, Founder of Yaung Chi Thit Organization mentioned that

“Our organization is registered to government sector, thus, if we want to do advocacy trainings in every township/district, we just need to inform to respective government ministry. We do not need to get permission from township/district administrator according to rule and regulation. But in reality,

we need to get permission from administrator. Thus, we face difficulties. For example, when we provided advocacy training for women in Kayah State, we informed to state administrator, but we did not get permission from administrator to do training till one day before the training is held. (Founder of Yaung Chi Thit Organization).

Advocacy Manager from Equality Myanmar described the same situation as well as difficulties like founder of Yaung Chi Thit Organization

“When our organization wants to give advocacy trainings to community or society, we need to get permission from township administrator; we face difficulties not to get permission from administrator till one day before the training is held” (Advocacy Manager from Equality Myanmar).

Therefore, the research found out CSO/NGO/INGO’ role is the most important because it plays and works in ground level advocacy trainings for women. However, there are many limitations from government side for CSO/NGO/INGO sector for women empowerment in knowledge and skills. CSO/NGO/INGO sector face difficulties to get permission from Ministry of Home Affairs to do advocacy trainings in the ground level although they are registered organizations and worked joining with Ministry of Social Welfare and Union Election Commission under NSPAW.

5.3.1.4 Knowledge improving and information support by and of Media

Media does not directly provide cognitive pathway for women empowerment but it provides knowledge improving and information support for women by reading books, and articles about politics, electoral. Therefore, women can get knowledge about politics, electoral, leadership as well as management and improve their knowledge. Consequently, women can participate in political activities.

Concerning with the role of media sector in cognitive pathway, author from Irrawaddy Journal described that

“In Irrawaddy Journal, there is one section for women affairs. In this section, articles about women, peace and security, gender equality, women who participate in politics and electoral knowledge are described. By reading about

these, women will access knowledge and change the levels of their knowledge” (woman author from Irrawaddy Journal).

One woman MP described that

“The role of media is important for improving knowledge for women because media is one of platform for giving information about current politics, update news and information happened not only within country but also from board, by reading articles and using media, women can change their levels of knowledge. (Woman MP, one of CEC members from Ta’ang (Palaung) National Party.

The research found out that the famous journals in Myanmar Irrawaddy Journal, Seven Days, Eleven have special section for women to provide knowledge improvement and information support for women though they cannot provide directly to get leadership skill, management skill. Thus, it is observed media is also one of the things which indirectly support for cognitive pathway of women empowerment.

5.3.1.5 Summary

For improving knowledge and skills, the thesis found out State and political parties take leading and cooperation role in giving advocacy trainings to improve knowledge and skills for women. But in reality, state cannot do its role effectively and efficiently. Therefore, it is assumed state cannot do to improve knowledge and skills for women to participate in politics. On the other hand, political parties can take its leading and cooperation role. And as a result, political parties can give trainings cooperating with CSO/NGO/INGO sector. CSO/ NGO/INGO sectors play the important because state and political parties cannot do anything without CSO/NGO/INGO. Also, the thesis found out media plays indirectly support role for women empowerment in knowledge and skills.

5.3.2 Self-confident and Self-esteemed Factor

Based on findings of Chapter III and IV, It is observed self- confident mainly come from knowledge and skills. Women who do not have knowledge and skills, they do not have self-confident to participate in politics. Concerning with self-confident, a woman MP described:

“My motivation to be a woman MP is self-confident. I believe myself I can go to parliament and I can do parliamentary jobs. To have self-confident, we, our women need to know and have knowledge about speaking skill, and electoral and leadership knowledge”. (Ethnic woman MP from Ta’aung (Palaung) National Party)

Then, self-esteem comes from nationalism and patriotism, hobby and philanthropic mind on their community and society.

Another woman MP said that

“My self-esteem comes from my patriotism on my ethnic people, Rakhine. Rakhine is the least developed State, thus, I have strong emotion that I want my ethnic people to have equal opportunities like other ethnic people in Myanmar and also I want my state to be developed like other states and divisions. However, I did not have self-confident because I am not educated person and do not have much knowledge about politics. (Ethnic woman MP from Rakhine National Party).

Another woman MP said that

“I did human rights and women’s affairs for my community and society people but my efforts are not effective and efficient for them. Therefore, I believe if I become women MP, I can do effective and efficient ways for human rights and women’s affairs of my constituency people” (Woman MP from National League for Democracy Party).

Therefore, in this section, the thesis will assess how actors provide support for improving self-confident and self-esteem for women.

5.3.2.1 Support for self-confident and self-esteem by State, Political Parties, CSO/ NGO/ INGOs and media sectors

In order to have self-confident, women need to have knowledge about leadership, politics, election, campaigning and management. Therefore, the main actors for self-confident must be state, political parties, CSO/NGO/INGO and media sectors since they give advocacy trainings and knowledge improving information for women. Otherwise, self-esteem comes from nationalism and patriotism, hobby and philanthropic mind on their community and society. If so, to have nationalism and

patriotism, hobby and philanthropic mind, women need to practice themselves, to have personal-experiences, and so on. Thus, the research found out various actors does not have projects and activities to provide support from various actors: State, Political Parties, CSO/NGO/INGOs and media sectors.

5.4.2 Summary

To increase self-confident which comes from knowledge skill, various actors can provide advocacy for women empowerment. However, the study found out there are no special project and activities to have nationalism and patriotism, hobby and philanthropic. Women need to practice themselves. The various actors cannot provide any support for perceptual pathway.

5.5 Conclusion

In Myanmar, there are four actors: state (Ministry of Social Welfare, Union Election Commission), political parties, and CSO/NGO/INGO which focus on gender equality and women empowerment as well as solve external factors women faced to participate in politics. For economy which is external factor for women, state especially Ministry of Social Welfare tries to get stable income for women and tries to adopt workplace policies and guidelines prevented for gender-discrimination and gender-violence in economic sector. But in reality, it does not work. For example, in July 2018, there happened sexual violence in CSO sector. Man CEO from one of CSOs abused sexual violence on woman staff under this CSO organization in workplace. Actually, CSO sector gives advocacy trainings and plays major role in development sector of Myanmar. Even woman who work in development field was victim for sexual violence; we can think how much other Myanmar women face gender-violence in workplace? Therefore, the thesis found out state cannot do anything to solve gender-violence and gender-discrimination in workplace although state has functions under NSPAW. Also, state cannot provide material support for women MP candidates in campaign expenses. However, state can establish 18 vocation training schools throughout the country to get stable income for women. But the thesis found out establishing vocational trainings is not enough to solve economic

challenge for women. On the other hand, another actors, political parties and CSO/NGO/ INGO can provide support a lot for economic factor for women.

Next, political factor is external challenge for women to participate in politics. In order to solve political factor, the thesis found out state and political parties play the most important role but they cannot do anything for women. Also to get bargaining power for women to participate in politics, both state and political parties cannot do any action like gender-quota and gender-policy because the heads of the state may think actions for bargaining power is not necessary for current situation in Myanmar. For example, all women MPs assume gender-quota is not necessary thing for current situation in Myanmar the thesis found out.

For internal factors, improving knowledge and skills as well as self-confident and self-esteemed, the thesis found out CSO/NGO/INGO is the most important role for internal factors. Without support of CSO/NGO/INGO, state and political parties cannot do anything for improving knowledge and skills as internal factors. Although CSO/NGO/INGO sector plays the most important roles in internal factors, there are a lot of limitations from government sides to get permission to do advocacy trainings. Actually, state (Ministry of Social Welfare) needs to cooperate with Department of Administration under Ministry of Home Affairs to solve limitations for CSO/NGO/INGO sector. But in reality, state cannot do anything. For media sector, it can indirectly support for increasing knowledge and skill for women but it cannot provide other things for women.

Then, for culture, tradition and religion which are also external factors, the thesis found out actors cannot do anything although culture-tradition and religion is the main root for women not to participate in politics.

CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the thesis will be concluded by answering the two research questions: the reasons why women's participation remains low in political activities in Myanmar and the ways how women are empowered to participate in political activities in Myanmar. All data comes from 24 in-depth interviews in various sectors: women members of representatives, CEC members from four political parties, staff from Ministry of Social Welfare, and staff from Union Election Commission, as well as media sector. Last, analysis and recommendation will be presented in this chapter.

6.2 Summary of Findings

In the thesis, there are external and internal factors for women not to participate in political activities in Myanmar. The thesis found out that external factors, economy, religion, tradition and culture, gender-violence and gender verbal discrimination and political factors especially lack of gender concept in policy and political structure are the challenges for women to participate in politics. External factor namely religion, culture and tradition are related to economy. Because of these religion, culture and tradition, women do not have equal opportunities in economic sector. Based on the findings of Chapter V from in-depth interviews with six women MPs, four women MPs are not poor; consequently, they did not have challenges in economy. But based on the findings of Chapter VI, low income women and normal women have problems and challenges in economy to participate in politics. Therefore, the thesis found out religion, culture and tradition are the main roots for economic factor which is external factor.

Also, the thesis found out that religion, culture and tradition are also main roots for verbal gender discrimination. Because of religion, tradition and culture, people especially people from political background always do verbal gender-discrimination like "Women cannot do anything" a lot on women. Moreover, gender-violence is also related with political factor. If the government has concrete action to prevent gender-discrimination and gender-violence, women cannot face verbal gender discrimination and gender-violence to participate more in politics. Therefore, the

thesis found out that external factors are related with each other and they are main challenges for women to participate in politics.

Also, for internal factor, they are related with each other. If women are educated and have knowledge and skills a lot, they have automatically self-confident. In current situation of Myanmar, women are more educated than men. And also CSO/NGO/INGO sector provides advocacy a lot to improve knowledge and skills a lot for women. Therefore, the thesis found out education, knowledge and skills are not challenges for women. The more educated women have, the more self-confident women become. Therefore, the thesis found out that internal factors are not challenges for women to participate in politics although external factors are challenges for women.

To answer question two, empowerment concept is used in this thesis which are material (economic) pathway, cognitive (knowledge and skill), perceptual (self-confident and self-esteem) and relational (bargaining) power. The thesis found out that these pathways are related with external support, actors' roles. In Myanmar, there are four main actors: State (Ministry of Social Welfare and Union Election Commission), Political Parties, CSO/NGO/INGO and media.

State especially Ministry of Social Welfare signed in CEDAW. Therefore, it can be seen there are many functions to solve all external factors women in Myanmar are faced. But in implementation for all functions, state just takes leading and cooperation role. And state cannot do anything in ground level. For example, for economy sector (material pathway), state can just open vocational trainings for women. Except this function, state cannot provide anything for women. Then, advocacy trainings are important in order to prevent tradition and cultural challenge in economic sector. But in reality, state cannot give any training for communities, just cooperates with CSO/NGO/INGO sector. Also for improving knowledge and skills and to have self-confident, state can just cooperate with CSO/NGO/INGO to give advocacy trainings. Although state takes leading and cooperative role, it cannot solve the limited situations for CSO/NGO/INGO sector to do advocacy trainings in communities. Also, it can be seen that state, leaders of the state forget to emphasize on gender concept in policy and political structure. Moreover, state cannot also do anything to prevent gender-violence and gender-discrimination. Therefore, the thesis

found out state cannot do anything for women empowerment although State ratified in CEDAW.

Moreover, political parties take leading and cooperation role like state for women empowerment processes to participate in politics. Unlike state, political parties can take its leading and cooperation role very well with CSO/NGO/INGO sector to give advocacy trainings to improve knowledge and skill and to prevent culture and tradition. Also it can be seen to cooperate with donor organization to empower women to get stable income and provide to improve women economic situation. On the other hand, political parties cannot do anything to prevent gender-discrimination and leaders of political parties still forget to emphasize on gender concept in policy and political parties' structure for increasingly women participation in politics.

Then, the thesis found out CSO/NGO/INGO role is strengthening in gender issue in Myanmar. Without CSO/NGO/INGO support, government cannot do anything in implementing CEDAW. CSO/NGO/INGO can provide not only stable income for women but also financial and material support for women MP candidates in campaign period. Moreover, they can give advocacy trainings not only for improving knowledge and skill but also to prevent religion, culture, and tradition, gender-discrimination and gender-violence. On the other hand, they do not have power to do bargaining power for women to participate in politics. Also, the thesis found out media can just do knowledge sharing to prevent gender-violence and gender-discrimination but it cannot do anything to empower women to participate in political activities in Myanmar.

According to the findings in Chapter III and IV, external factors for low participation of women in politics, are religion, culture and tradition because they are the main roots for economic sector, and verbal-gender discrimination. But the thesis found out state and political parties forget to prevent religion, tradition, and culture which are the main challenge for women. It is assumed that CSO/NGO/INGO gives advocacy trainings for women and they are talking about this. But these advocacy trainings are not enough and they are not directly effective on women to prevent religion/tradition and culture. Therefore, the thesis found out external support/ actors

should consider how to prevent religion/ tradition and culture prevented for women to participate in political activities in Myanmar.

6.3 Analysis

In the thesis, women empowerment change processes (material, cognitive, perceptual and relational pathway) are used but three pathways; material, cognitive and perceptual pathways are looking for women empowerment in general. This is not effective a lot for women who want to be women MPs and to participate in politics in Myanmar. Just relational pathway (bargaining power) can applied for women empowerment in participation of politics because in Myanmar context, we need to look at the inequality of power in terms of gender. In Myanmar, most of public sphere in all level, family, society, regional and national level are designed for men and women do not have equal power with men in all public sphere. Therefore, power inequality in terms of gender is important for women. Even though women are empowered to improve economy and goes for training to improve their knowledge and skill, self-confident and self-esteemed, these things cannot grantee for women to be women MPs and to participate in politics in Myanmar context. Therefore, in concept of women empowerment change processes, just relational pathway (bargaining power) can apply for women empowerment for participation in politics.

Then, other things we need to look at are political background and political position. In Myanmar context, politics is related with political background and political position. Therefore, for women who elected as women MPs, they are elected not as women; they are elected as daughter of former politicians, niece of former politicians and so on. Also, political position is also important for women to be women MPs and to participate in politics. Because political position can balance power inequality between men and women and can prevent gender inequality. If woman has political power and political position, she has more bargaining power and she has equal power like men.

Moreover, policy and political structure is also important for increasingly women participation in politics. At present, it is found there is no concrete policy and political structure. When we looked at women MPs in parliament, women MPs are more active in parliamentary functions than men MPs. But women MPs did not reach

at decision-making level of parliament. Only one woman MP became chairman of parliamentary committee and there is no woman in secretary position of parliamentary committee and why? It may be because of lack of concrete policy and political structure. Therefore, in current situation in Myanmar, gender activists encourage government and political parties to have concrete policy and political structure in Myanmar. But the thesis surprisingly found out women MPs from NLD party led by woman leader do not prefer to adopt and apply special and concrete policy and political structure. In accordance with Myanmar adopts CEDAW, they are talking about gender platform and gender – policy, in reality, there should be concrete policy and political structure for increasingly women participation in politics and decision-making processes.

6.4 Recommendations

Inequality of power in terms of gender is important for women to be women MPs and to participate in politics. But, at present, state, political parties and CSO/ NGO/ INGO gives advocacy trainings and they are talking about power inequality in terms of gender but most of advocacy trainings are more emphasize on improving knowledge and skills. Also the target groups are for women. In order to balance power between men and women, men are also main persons to give advocacy trainings. Therefore, both women and men should give advocacy trainings. Moreover, state, political parties and CSO/NGO/INGO should do not only advocacy trainings but also campaigns to balance power between men and women in all levels. For media sector, it should try to put articles which give knowledge to balance power equality between men and women. Then, State, Political parties which has power to adopt concrete policy and political structure should do to make sure to adopt them for increasingly women political participation in Myanmar.

According to the time limitation and the time for field research is not parliament session time, the researcher chooses just only one parliament “Pyithu Hluttaw” though in National level, there are two parliaments “Pyithu Hluttaw” and “Amyotha Hluttaw”. Moreover, the thesis applies qualitative method. Therefore, a further study which will apply both qualitative and quantitative method in Amyotha Hluttaw should be done to study situations of all women representatives at national

level. Moreover, the study can do how women in Myanmar are empowered by various actors, state (Ministry of Social Welfare, Union Election Commission), political parties, CSO/NGO/INGO, media sector. Based on findings of the thesis, a further study should be done about the effectiveness of each actor on gender equality and women empowerment in detail. Then, another study can be conducted women participation in politics and decision-making levels in regional level and household level.



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APPENDIX

Appendix A: table for Data of women parliamentarians in 2010-2015 and 2015-2020 (Sein, S. S., Latt, april 2017)

	Elected MPs (Women/Men)		Military- appointed MPs (Women/Men)		Women as % of Elected MPs (Women)		Women as % of All MPs (Women)	
	2010 / 2015	2015 / 2020	2010 / 2015	2015/ 2020	2010/ 2015	2015 / 2020	2010/ 2015	2015/ 2020
National Parliament Total (The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw)	28/ 438	67/ 434	2/ 164	2/ 164	6.0%	13.7 %	4.8%	10.5%
Upper House (The Amyotha Hluttaw)	4/ 155	23/ 145	0/ 56	0/ 56	2.5 %	13.7 %	1.8%	10.3%
Lower House (The Pyithu Hluttaw)	24/ 283	44/ 279	2/ 108	2/ 108	7.8%	13.6 %	6.2 %	10.6%
Stat/Region Parliaments	25/ 634	84/ 575	1/ 221	2/ 219	3.8%	12.7 %	2.9%	9.7%

Appendix B: Table of Women Representatives in House of Representatives by State/ Region in first term 2011-2015

State/ Region		Women Representatives	Men Representatives
Ethnic Areas	Kachin State	1	16
	Kayah State	1	6
	Kayin State	1	6
	Chin State	-	7
	Mon State	3	7
	Rakhine State	1	15
	Shan State	2	47
Mainland Areas	Sagaing Region	2	35
	Irrawaddy Region	-	22
	Tanintharyi Region	-	9
	Bago Region	1	27
	Magway Region	-	23
	Mandalay Region	2	35
	Yangon Region	6	37
Military	Military	2	108

Appendix C: Women Representatives in House of Representatives by State/ Region in second term 2016-2020

State/ Region		Women Representatives	Men Representatives
Ethnic Areas	Kachin State	1	18
	Kayah State	3	4
	Kayin State	1	6
	Chin State	1	8
	Mon State	2	7
	Rakhine State	2	15
	Shan State	7	43

Mainland Areas	Sagaing Region	5	32
	Irrawaddy Region	-	24
	Tanintharyi Region	2	8
	Bago Region	6	22
	Magway Region	2	23
	Mandalay Region	2	34
	Yangon Region	8	36
Military	Military	4	106

Appendix D: Table for submitting general proposals by women and men MPs in current parliament sessions in House of Representatives

Gender	First Session	Second Session	Third Session	Fourth Session	Fifth Session	Sixth Session	Seventh Session	Total
Men	3	18	7	8	17	7	1	61
Women	6	3	3	7	6	3	-	28
Total	9	21	10	15	23	10	1	89

Appendix E: Table for submitting special proposals by women and men MPs in current parliament sessions

Gender	First Session	Second Session	Third Session	Fourth Session	Fifth Session	Sixth Session	Seventh Session	Total
Men	2	-	1	-	1	-	-	4
Women	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
Total	3	-	1	-	2	-	-	6

Appendix F: Table for asking questions by women and men MPs in current parliament sessions.

Gender	First Session	Second Session	Third Session	Fourth Session	Fifth Session	Sixth Session	Seventh Session	Total
Men	64	185	97	76	259	71	18	770
Women	19	33	15	13	50	17	-	147
Total	83	218	112	89	309	88	18	917

Appendix G: Table for women and men chairman, secretary and members of committee in House of Representatives (2011-2015)

Committee	Women Participation			Men Participation		
	Chair	Secretary	Member	Chair	Secretary	Member
Bill Committee	-	-	2	1	1	11
Public Accounts Committee	-	-	2	1	1	11
Hluttaw Rights Committee	-	-	2	1	1	11
Government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee	-	-	2	1	1	11
Fundamental Rights of Citizen, Democracy and Human Rights Committee	-	-	-	1	1	14
National Races Affairs, Rural Development Affairs and Internal Peace Implementation Committee	-	1	1	1	-	12
Banks and Monetary Affairs Development	-	-	1	1	1	12

Committee						
National Planning, Union Budget and Taxation for Scrutiny and Coordination Committee	-	-	2	1	1	9
Peasant, Worker and Youth Affairs Committee	-	-	1	1	1	12
International Relations Committee	-	-	1	1	1	12
Economic and Trade Development Committee	-	-	1	1	1	12
Transportation, Communication and Construction Committee	-	-	-	1	1/1	12
Sports, Culture, and Public Relation Development Committee	-	-	-	1	1	13
Investment and Industrial Development Committee	-	-	1	1	1	12
Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development Committee	-	-	-	1	1	13
Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Committee	-	-	-	1	1	13
Health Development Committee	-	-	1	1	1	12
Judicial and Legal Affairs, Complaints and Appeals Committee	-	-	1	1	1	12
Education Development Committee	-	-	-		1	13
Population and Social Development Committee	-	-	6	1	1	7
Reforms and Evaluation Development and Progress Committee	-	-	1	1	1	12
Rule of Law and Tranquility Committee	1	-	5	-	1	3
Total	1	1	30	21	23	262

Appendix H: Table for lists of women and men chairman, secretary and members of committee in House of Representatives (2016-2020)

Committee	Women Participation			Men Participation		
	Chair	Secretary	Member	Chair	Secretary	Member
Bill Committee	-	-	1	1	1	12
Public Accounts Committee	-	-	2	1	1	11
Hluttaw Rights Committee	-	-	1	1	1	12
Government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee	1	-	4	-	1	9
International Relations Committee	-	-	5	1	1	8
National Races Affairs and Internal Peace Implementation Committee	-	-	1	1	1	12
Fundamental Rights of Citizens Committee	-	-	1	1	1	12
Education Development Committee	-	-	-	1	1	13
Health and Sport Development Committee	-	-	5	1	1	8
Banks and Monetary Affairs Development Committee	1	-	2	-	1	11
Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development Committee	-	-	-	1	1	13
Farmers and Workers Affairs Committee	-	-	1	1	1	12
Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Committee	-	-	3	1	1	10
Economic and Finance Development Committee	-	-	2	1	1	11
Transportation, Communication and Construction Committee	-	-	1	1	1	12
Investment and Industrial Development Committee	-	-	-	1	1	13
Electricity and Energy	-	-	-	1	1	13

Development Committee						
Public Affairs Management Committee	-	-	3	1	1	10
Judicial and Legal Affairs Committee	-	-	4	1	1	11
Total	2	-	36	17	19	213



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