



Some findings from the 1st and 2nd phases of a three-year research study on Women's Involvement in Myanmar Politics

September 17, 2020

Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF) has been conducting a three-year research project regarding women's involvement in Myanmar politics. This research, conducted from 2018 to 2021, funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), involved three phases: intra-party politics and women's participation in political parties; the community survey about voter bias; and the regional competitive study to explore the status of women's political representation in Malaysia and Indonesia.

At the "Election and Participation" Webinar held on September 1, Daw Aye Lei Tun, the Senior Program Manager (Gender and Livelihood) of Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF), who leads the research, shared key research findings from the first phase of the research found in the report published in April, along with the preliminary findings of the second phase of the research which will be released in October. Here are some excerpts.

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Engendering Political Recruitment and Participation at the Party, Local and National Level in Myanmar

Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF)



Aye Lei Tun

Political party findings

When we study the first stage of political parties, we asked how elected representatives in the parties are elected; we also asked about candidates' political background, experiences, and enthusiasm. First, when asked about candidates' political backgrounds, the main finding was that their family also had a political tradition; we see that people with such political generation have more space and chances. In particular, when we asked the central executive committee (CEC), we met two women. The rest were men. About 60 percent of male respondents and those two female respondents have political background. For those candidates who did not come from a family with a political background, findings indicated that they were individuals with the following characteristics: influential power in the community,

a high level of education, a good image within the community, or actively involved in community affairs. Second, in terms of educational background, the rate of men and women who completed a bachelor degree was not very different. However, when compared with the rate of completion status of postgraduate degree, women outnumbered men. This means that women were elected as candidates based on their education. The more educated they were, the more likely they were to be elected. Third, when it comes to motivation, they responded they intended to work for the community's affairs, to amend the constitution, and to build peace. Fourth, regarding the question about their role models, most of the male and female respondents chose male role models. Last, when looking at the selection process of the party gatekeeper, we found that very few

women were elected to the party's central executive committee (CEC). A few parties have more than 20 percent of women in their CEC members; most of the parties have less than 20 percent.

According to most of the parties, we noticed that they did not have a specific policy and strategy for promotion of women's political participation. No matter whether it is male or female, only qualified people can join their parties. They said that all are given equal opportunities; no special measure to promote women. The parties supposed that this was the way they were open to everyone for equal participation.

Further, when we asked about the experiences of both the CEC and MPs during the campaign period, we

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found that women experienced more challenges. This is due to the fact that women have to balance family responsibilities and their responsibilities as MPs. Especially during the campaign period, women were at more risk to travel to some areas which were insecure. When women had to lead the election campaign in some remote areas where no security was granted, and in some areas which lacked sanitation facilities (such as toilets and water), they experienced more challenges. Another factor is about financial issues; women faced more constraints. The research team also found that both men and women were discriminated against based upon their level of education or harassed based on race and religion. However, sexual harassment was the most common for women during the campaign period, that was occurred on the social media.

Community Survey Findings

The survey findings are still being analyzed, and so let me summarize

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some points. In the community meetings, it is true that women had to attend more community meetings because men are going to the fields for work. But we cannot say that women were involved in the community meetings at this point, because the voices of women were heard in the meetings. But if women were given some tasks to do by the leader in the meeting, they just followed. We also have some women's group within the community; but these groups are not related to political activism, rather they are just based on religion and social affairs, or maternal and child care.

The report summarizing the key findings of the first phase of the project on women's political participation was published at the end of April, and distributed to 94 parties. Eight recommendations were provided to promote women's involvement in politics. Details can be downloaded on the EMReF website www.emref.org. The findings of the second phase of the project will be released in October.

A Gender lens was not used as a key factor in the Peace making process of Political Parties

August 19, 2020

The report on “The Preliminary Review Paper on Security Sector Discussion” which analyzed the status of women, peace and security, and gender equality argued that political parties did not view gender equality as an important issue in the peace making process.

The above remark was made in the chapter about “political parties” under the analysis of “The Preliminary Review Paper on Security Sector Discussion”, from the perspective of Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Gender Equality. In that chapter about “political parties”, the paper suggested that political parties are acting like a key bridge in the security dialogue. Thus, the perspectives and attitudes of political parties towards women, peace, and security are crucial to take into account. The paper pointed out lack of analysis regarding the level of awareness and understanding of political parties about the importance of women, peace, and security sector in the peace building process.

The paper suggested that three indicators need to be analyzed to determine the extent to which political parties understand women, peace, and security as well as to find out their attitudes towards gender issues. They are: 1) the percentage of women’s participation from the political

party group in the security sector; 2) the attitude of political parties towards gender equality could be explored by examining the presence or absence of gender policy and practices which promote gender equality in the party; 3) the documents submitted by political parties should be analyzed from a women, peace, and security perspective, whether they contain women’s participation, prevention of all kinds of violence against women, provision of necessary services to survivors of violence; and whether rehabilitation and resettlement has been considered from women’s perspectives.

In addition to the chapter about political parties, from the women, peace, and security (WPS) perspective and gender equality perspective, the paper examined the role of relevant organizations; the engagement and coordination among stakeholders; sensitive issues and current security issues in the security dialogue; a comparative analysis of security sector proposals in the federal division of power; the role of research organizations and think-tanks; and the points in Appendix chapter- A (37 discussion points from 72 conference papers) in each relevant chapter. The report was published by MIPS on August 14.

Source: <https://mips-mm.org/>

Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security Perspectives: An analysis of “The Preliminary Review Paper on Security Sector Discussions”





Photo: The Shan Magazine

“It comes to women to participate in the election despite their legs being broken and having carried the children on their back”

September 14, 2020

The Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD), a major party in Shan State, will compete in the election with the involvement of 37 percent of women candidates. Nang Mya Oo, Chairman of the SNLD party in Taunggyi Township, who will run in the 2020 election from Kayah State as an ethnic representative of SNLD, raised her voice in the SHAN Magazine, particularly about the challenges of female candidates.

“We have many challenges. We need to pay 300,000 kyats to Union Election Commission (UEC) as a registration fee. Some women could not pay that amount 300,000 kyats. Another thing is that security issue is challenging us. At the time when we are going for election campaign, it is very difficult for a woman to go alone in some areas. Then we need someone to accompany with us. So, some expenses would be added for the companions who go with me. Further, if we are following this way, we are not as easy as men did to get out of the family responsibilities, child care, and burden of household tasks. Previously, a secretary from our party talked about the equal rights of ethnic people. It is said that it is not fair to run away, after breaking the legs of ethnic people. But in hindsight, there are situations where we, women have competed in the election for equal rights; not only have their legs been broken, but also they are carrying the children on their backs.”

Source: The Shan Magazine

Only Six women Candidates will Compete in Nay Pyi Taw

August 19, 2020

Only six women candidates from the Nay Pyi Taw Council constituency have submitted nominations to the sub-commission, said U Moe Zaw, a member from this sub-commission.

“This year, the number of female candidates has increased more than that of the 2015 general election”, said U Moe Zaw.

In Nay Pyi Taw Council area, 76 applications for Amyotha and Pyithu Hluttaw seats were scrutinized. As the number of women was higher than last year’s general election, their potential to win is good, said U Thant Zin Tun, a current Pyithu Hluttaw MP from Dakhina Thiri Township.

“We want to see strong and smart people getting involved”, said U Thant Zin Tun.

Six percent women of total candidates from Nay Pyi Taw Council Constituency came from five parties. Daw Thet Thet Hlaing and Daw Mya Myo Thu Zar Win from the National Unity Democratic Party (NUD), Daw Su Yee Phyo Aung from the National Democratic Force Party (NDF), Daw Naw Mya Thae Pwint from the Union Solidarity Party (USP), Daw Su Myat Sandar from the Yeomanry Development Party (YDP), and Daw Hla Hla Yee @ Daw Cho Cho from the National Unity Party (NUP) have applied.

In the 2015 general election, Daw Khin Myo Thwin of the NLD party from Zeyar Thiri Township, Daw Win Win Thi of the USDP party from Pinyinana, and Daw Suu Yi Phyo Aung of the NDF party from Lewe Township competed. Only three women candidates from Nay Pyi Taw competed in the 2015 election. All three of the women candidates who competed in the 2015 election were defeated.

Credit: 7Day News



Photo: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serena_Williams

World Famous Quotes

“Every woman’s success should be an inspiration to another. We’re strongest when we cheer each other on.”

..... Serena Williams (American Professional tennis player)

Action Plan for the Prevention and Response of Sexual violence in Conflict will soon be Approved

September 10, 2020

A draft action plan on the prevention and response of sexual violence in conflict will be approved soon to implement, as it was signed by the Joint Communique on the prevention and response of sexual violence.

U Soe Aung, Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement Ministry, and Vice-Chairmen of Myanmar National Committee on Women, stated at the virtual meeting of Myanmar National Committee on Women (2/2020) held in Nay Pyi Taw on September 7. The National Working Committee on the prevention and response of sexual violence in conflict has been set up; then a working plan has been drafted, and it will be approved soon. The Prevention of



Photo: Myanmar National Committee on Women Facebook

Violence Against Women law has been drafted to provide effective legal action to prevent violence against women, and negotiations are underway

with the Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/MyanmarNationalCommitteeOnWomen/posts/773946420070633>