



The "Women's Composition" of the NA updated with two-thirds

The three out of 14 women MPs represented in the newly-elected National Assembly (NA) are lawyers, three women MPs are professionals in the field of education, two are representing the field of culture, two come from the business sector, two are journalists, one woman has specialized in diplomacy and Eastern Studies, and one is mathematician-programmer. In reality, not one but three women are mathematicians; two of them later were appointed as school principals and the third woman became head of a political party.

By the way, among women participating at the elections education practitioners constituted 33%, temporarily unemployed women were 15% and state officials constituted 11%. Journalists, lawyers, cultural activists having nominated their candidacies at the elections constituted 2% each.

Women candidates were provided with 5% broadcasts on public TV



OSCE/ODIHR EOM media monitoring found that H1 devoted 4 per cent of its election related news programs to female candidates and party representatives, and public radio 5 per cent. This is disproportionately low, given that around 21 per cent of all registered candidates were female, and given Armenia's stated target of 30 per cent women in the legislature.

Unreal candidates



11 out of 139 candidates nominated in the majoritarian electoral system were women (approximately 8%), two of whom were elected to the NA. It is true that the number of women elected through the majoritarian electoral system is twice more than during the previous elections, but 32 constituencies out of 41 did not have women candidates (78%). Moreover, three women among those nominated through the majoritarian electoral system did not declare costs of their election campaigns, and as OSCE / ODIHR observers note, this fact questions the verity of their candidacies.

Woman & politics

Margarita Hakobyan - "Gender Equality Starts at the National Assembly"



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Special issue 2012



Only 1 in 10 MPs is a Woman in the Armenia's Parliament, and only 1 in 5 MPs is a woman around the world. The lowest representation of women in the Parliament is in Arabic countries (14.9%) and countries of the Pacific (12.7%). Women's representation in the Armenia's NA constitutes 107%.

"The Next Elections Start Right After the Previous One Ends ..."

Although this unwritten rule does not work very well in our context, it is high time now, after analyzing the election results, to get the answer to the 'why didn't the 20 percent quota defined in the Electoral Code work?' question. Around 23% of women on average were included in the electoral lists of political parties and the public reserved the right to expect that due to the quota the women's representation in the NA would be at least doubled. The time has come for experts to express their professional opinion from whom the answer to this question is expected. Certain reasons, indeed, were apparent to the public even with a naked eye. The main reason perhaps is the long list of waiving of mandates right after the elections.

According to data of the Central Electoral Committee, there were 26 women in the overall 102 candidates who had applied for waiving their mandates: 14 women from the list of the Republican Party and 10 women from the list of the 'Prosperous Armenia' Party gave their seats away to men. The waiving of mandates was viewed negatively by the OSCE / ODIHR observation mission. As European experts observed "The high number elected candidates who withdrew raises concern about the degree of respect for voters' choice".

"The gender quota was neutralized as a result of movements and waiving of mandates due to inter-party considerations: these movements and waiving of mandates

remained in many cases unclear for the public", claimed the local experts in their turn who were representatives of the Armenian Association of Women with University Education (AAWUE) and the "Caucasus" Research and Analytical Center. These institutions conducted research on women's political participation with the support of OSCE Yerevan Office and Oxfam Armenia.

During an interview with us they mentioned two more reasons impeding the efficiency of quota.

First, very few women are included in the first five and even ten places of the list, which correspond to the minimum threshold. To note, that is a considerable regress compared to the elections

2007 when women's representation in the first five places of the lists was four times more, and twice more – in the first ten places. Alongside with this, both during the previous and 2012 elections political parties having included maximum number of women in the places reaching the threshold did not get elected into the NA.

Second, in order to comply with the law, political parties included such women in their electoral lists who were not yet ready to work at the NA. Thus, they waived their mandates for others to take them up. Such candidates are labeled as 'unreal candidates'.

According to expert assessment the waiving of mandates could be prevented if the recommendation made by women's organizations was included in the Electoral Code. The recommendation referred to maintaining the quota in case of mandate withdrawal, specifically "the woman waiving her mandate should be replaced by the next woman included in the political party's electoral list".

All debates evolving around elections prove today that in the

Electoral Code it is necessary to fix such a mechanism which will prevent the political parties from breaking the gender quota and will not allow men to take seats which are under gender quota.

According to recommendation already made, the problem is possible to settle through defining either one of the two provisions in the Electoral Code. They are either "the woman waiving her mandate should be replaced by the next woman included in the political party's electoral list", or "women should constitute a certain percentage not in the electoral lists, but among those who received mandates". This percentage should correspond to the indicator defined in the RoA Strategy on Gender Policy (2011 – 2015) which reads: "Undertake special measures to ensure 30% of women's representation in the decision-making levels of legislative and executive bodies of the country" ...

Hence, at least in terms of jointly supporting and implementing these recommendations, we may say that the next elections have started both for women's organizations and political parties...

Appeal to the political parties

The "Caucasus" Research and Analytical Center and the Civil Society Partnership Network (CSPN) which unites 30 NGOs partnering with Oxfam Armenia, organized an e-petition prior to the elections and sent an appeal to the political parties trying to prevent women included in the electoral lists from waiving their mandates. In particular, the appeal reads:

"...Taking into account the undesirable practice of a number of female politicians during previous elections, when they waived their mandates giving different excuses, we are appealing to women includ-

ed in the 2012 proportional representation lists:

Honorable female politicians do not give up your mandates as voters have faith in you, by voting in your favor.

We appeal to party leaders and all members:

In order to fulfill the requirement of the law be guided by the principle of justice in gender equality, thus allowing the next woman on the electoral list to replace the woman who has waived her mandate.

It is also unacceptable for the public when the waiving of mandates is due to party persuasion or request. For this reason we are

appealing to the leadership of the parties:

Do not suggest to women included in the party's pre-electoral lists that they give up their mandates, because the public wants to see the politicians they actually voted for in the NA."

Right before and after the elections social advertisements with the same content were prepared and broadcast by radio and TV.

Expert's Opinion

Why do Women Avoid Political Campaigns?



"The main obstacle which prevents women from engaging into political campaigns is the existence of some criminality in politics, although the list of obstacles is not limited by that one only", - this was the viewpoint expressed by experts of the "Caucasus" Research and Analytical Center during the debate entitled "Women's participation at the NA 2012 elections" initiated by Oxfam Armenia.

"The Armenian society lacks women's consolidation"

Lilit Zakaryan, gender expert, while assessing how successful the cooperation between women's organizations and women candidates are, emphasizes the absence of due mechanisms.

- Some of the women candidates remembered about women's organizations only after elections finished and expressed their dissatisfaction that women's organizations did not support them in their political campaigns. I think this problem has two sides, as well as we do not have mechanisms to provide such support. There may be individual cases of success or failure, however mechanisms through

"More delicate campaigning technologies can lead to bigger results ..."

As Hovhannes Hovhannisyian observed, women's organizations often start frontal attack without considering the fact that they deal with stereotypes. We consider women to be more at home and the kitchen. This is the traditionally shaped stereotype and when someone adheres to certain stereotype and sees that it is being broken from outside, he/she starts protecting it.

- So, when one speaks of equality between men and women, as an expert, I have the knowledge to object saying that we need to be led by harmony and not equality in this issue. That is to say, the issue should be solved through men and women accomplishing, not replacing each other.

As Hovhannes Hovhannisyian, head of the "Caucasus" Center, Chairman of the Commission of Civil Society Affairs of RoA Public Council presented, the research of this topic has a specific history for the Center. The Center conducted a sociological survey on the gender aspects of public and political participation in 2010 which revealed several issues impeding women's political participation.

As Hovhannisyian says, the same question arises now while conducting the research on women's political participation within Oxfam Armenia's initiative. This time the 14 impeding factors were put on the agenda of debate for the focus groups by proposing to rate them by 1- 10 grading scale.

As a result, 5 factors scored the highest as the most impeding ones three of which relate to the imperfect electoral processes, specifically to widespread electoral bribes, toughness and aggression of political campaigns, including the usage of intolerable threatening mechanisms and the existence of criminality in the political campaign. The other two factors impeding

women's participation are women's load with household and family chores and their limited financial opportunities.

It is noteworthy that the factor related to household and family chores was ranked first according to opinions of men: women rated it much lower. Hovhannisyian mentioned that nevertheless both men and women are of the same opinion when rating the negative influence of the existing criminality in the political campaign.

The factors in the second group (having scored 5-6 on average) refer to the lack of democracy inside political parties, on the one hand, and the supremacy of male stereotypes in public life, on the other.

And finally, the third group includes factors which impede women's political participation, but are not critical (score of 4-5). Among these are the lack of women's political experience and insufficient knowledge on electoral technologies, as well as the weak support provided by media and women's organizations.

"One should either refrain from defining a quota, or fully maintain it"

As Hovhannisyian mentioned, there are certain legal obstacles in this regard because of which few women are represented in political structures.

- I am fundamentally against the idea of quota. It is certainly preferable to create an environment where each person will express himself/herself in line with his/her capabilities. However the current situation urges to define a gender quota as a temporary measure. Yes, 20% quota was defined to increase women's representation in the NA but there are no sub-legislative acts ensuring its implementation. We particularly refer to rotation, when a woman having waived her mandate is replaced by the next woman in the list. These recommendations were also made by the Public Council Committees on civil society affairs, demography and gender equality, which unfortunately were not considered. And, as during previous elections, 26 women waived their mandates due to different reasons. I think that we should accomplish what we started: either refrain from defining a quota, or ensure the full operation of legislative mechanisms.

Fact

Women in Political Parties and NGOs

There are more NGOs in Armenia (around 3700), than political parties. Despite this 5.2% of Armenia's citizens are involved in NGOs and 10.7% in political parties.

At the same time, NGOs are more feminized than the political parties. Men employed in junior positions of NGOs constitute 30.3%, women are twice more. Men in the management of NGOs are 75%, women constitute only 25%. The percentage of men in political parties is 53.4%; women constitute 46.6%. Men constitute 90.1% and women 9% in the lower and middle circles of organization, whereas in top management of the organization the percentage of women does not even reach 1%. According to Hovhannes Hovhannisyian, this speaks of the lack of internal democracy in political parties and absence of mechanisms for women's promotion.

Assessment

What Was the Gender Focus in Electoral Programmes of Political Parties?

We asked this question to Lilit Zakaryan, gender expert who monitored the issue during all NA sessions and can compare the current programmes with the ones presented by parties during the 2007 elections.

- Research of electoral programmes of around ten political parties participating at the 2007 elections conducted by AAUWE revealed that the highlighted women's issues are limited to provisions on family and motherhood. The same conclusion was made after reviewing electoral programmes of 2012. Only the "United Armenians" political party included a provision in its programme which read: "Increasing women's role in state, public and political institutions and their comprehensive involvement in most important processes".

To be fair, it should be noted that in their electoral programmes certain political parties touched upon protection of women's rights, the need for improvement of household and work conditions but most political parties lack a profound understanding of gender equality issues.

In this meaning the electoral programme of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) Dashnaktsutyun for 2007 has an advantageous difference. It has a separate section on equality of men and women which includes information on the importance and need for achieving equal opportunities and equal rights for men and women and legislative guarantees for eliminating discrimination. I think a significant influence on this approach was made by "Socialist International", which



unfortunately was not evident in their NA fraction.

- Isn't it worth appraisal that political parties are concerned with issues of motherhood?

- It is indeed very good that political parties think that a woman, as a mother, should be protected. But I want to ask a question now - is the woman as a citizen, specialist or as a professional protected? Shouldn't we help women to combine family and career? Why does our country for instance lack programmes which can support new mothers to get quickly re-trained and get back to their professional career? Why isn't there a baby room in our NA for women MPs who have newborn children? We can ask "why" questions endlessly. And the list of these 'whys' makes us think that gender equality issues are not seriously treated in our society; if more toughly phrased, they are just imitated.

And this is why gendered approaches are not seen in the electoral programmes of political parties.

- It seemed that the Government has an understanding of these issues. It adopted the RoA Concept on Gender Policy and later approved the related strategic plan ...

- Certainly, there were significant changes in the Government's gender policies within recent years. However, there were simultaneous amendments in the Electoral Code, and the minimal 20% quota was fixed instead of the 30% quota indicated by the Government. While compiling the proportional electoral lists complaints are raised that the gender quota is an artificial measure ... Even the political parties with 40-50 percent of women members declare that the processes should not be accelerated artificially as still there is a lack of well-trained women for political campaigns.

Vote For Change

**Margarita Hakobyan -
"Gender Equality Starts at the National Assembly"**

Gender equality starts with women's representation in the NA. This is where all laws on women's equality are drafted. And if women's rights are violated there, then it is useless to speak of other institutions, mentions Margarita Hakobyan, Country Director of Oxfam Armenia when summarizing and presenting the joint initiatives of Oxfam Armenia, CSPN and "Caucasus" Research and Analytical Center aiming to enhance women's participation at the recent NA elections.

Discussions around the topic of women's political participation are not new or surprising for Oxfam which has been present in Armenia for 18 years. Within the framework of its livelihoods, healthcare and other programmes Oxfam pays particular attention to the implementation of women's right to equal participation. Maintaining commitment to its main mission Oxfam continues to design and imple-

ment its programmes in a way that women play greater role in taking decisions that affect their lives.

As Margarita Hakobyan mentions "women are in the heart of Oxfam"; gender equality is a core component of Oxfam programmes. It is integrated into all programme priorities relating to social, economic and civic rights.

"Oxfam has always closely followed

local elections since we always attached great importance to participatory democracy in the context of the country development. This time we considered women's more active participation at the NA elections as imperative of time", notes M. Hakobyan also highlighting that the same goal was pursued by CSPN in its activities which unites around 30 organizations that are also Oxfam partners.

Besides, Oxfam Armenia in partnership with "Caucasus" Center undertook the research on "Women's voice and participation at the 2012 NA elections". Its final results and expert recommendations will soon be presented to the public.

My vote is power

CSPN member NGOs organized noteworthy activities in the pre-election period. Lilit Chitchyan, CSPN Coordinator presented the scope of activities.

"We conducted an interesting training campaign in the regions of Shirak, Vayots Dzor and Syunik within the "Vote for Change" project. Our partners conducted awareness workshops for community population on the most important provisions of the Electoral Code, organized meetings with the MP candidates and presented them with pledges containing priorities and recommendations of Oxfam's livelihoods and healthcare programmes", said Lilit Chitchyan. She also mentioned that CSPN will consistently monitor that



the recommendations of pledges will be put on the NA agenda.

"We will monitor the raising and implementation of those recommendations from the very first NA session", she added.

The "my vote is power" flash mob was another CSPN initiative which Oxfam Armenia held in partnership with the Armenian Young Women's Association. "The flash mob participants were young women and girls who walked along the street and informed the passers-by that each person has the right to vote. They demonstrated to the public and every person's vote is power and the voice is valued".

CSPN in partnership with the 'Caucasus' Research and Analytical Center and "Pro Media Gender" NGO organized an e-petition and placed an appeal in their websites to all political parties calling for maintaining women of their electoral lists at the NA", Chitchyan mentioned.

Change Starts with You

**Larisa Alaverdyan -
"I am not the type of person who gets offended; I am the continuously working type"**



"I consider integrity and commitment to people's interests as the most important features of a politician. Neither knowledge, nor capabilities ... The latter can be achieved if one wishes and if one steps into politics with honest aims. That is why, in my opinion, a deal started with doubtful methods can never lead to positive effects, no matter how much pragmatism is stressed as part of politics", says Larisa Alaverdyan, former MP, member of "Heritage" fraction, the first Human Rights Defender of RoA, whose absence in the new NA convocations treated with regret by the society.

Alaverdyan reacts half seriously to this observation: "with my example I proved that MPs do not stay forever". At present she heads the newly established department of human rights protection at the Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University, as well as continues her work at the "Fight against Violations of Law" NGO.

As we already know after the elections Larisa Alaverdyan took a decision to leave the "Heritage" Party.

"I expressed my general disagreement to the principles based on which the electoral list was compiled ... I said I would stay with the team until the elections end and later would take my decision based on the law", she mentions and reminds that the 41st place in the list was initially a message to the public revealing her principal position.

In particular, she did not conceal that she did not agree to the alliance of "Heritage" and "Free democrats" since she thinks the alliance will not bring success to the "Heritage" Party. She was unfortunately right. She is of the same opinion today too. She thinks that the "Heritage" Party has to continue its mission of standing for the interests of people and needs to fulfill its promises. All the rest, she thinks,

are just technologies which she did not perceive from the very beginning.

Maybe, from the "Heritage" Party point of view, everything was organized in a literate way, but I did not understand the entire process. I just would like to request members of political parties to think not for today but for a 5 year perspective before undertaking anything", L. Alaverdyan mentioned.

When we asked whether Ms. Alaverdyan did not get offended for not being represented in the 5th convocation of the NA alongside with other active "Heritage" MPs, she replied: "I am not the type of person who gets offended; I am the continuously working type".

While reflecting on women's political participation Alaverdyan noted that only active mass entering of women into politics can bring about changes there.

- Women should not wait for the country to undergo change and for equal conditions to be there so that they exercise active political participation. The country will face changes just by women entering into politics ..., she says confidently and mentions that the Armenian society has such a potential hidden in women that we haven't attained yet.

**Lilit Galstyan -
"A civilized woman is unable to play by the rules of the current political game"**

"Unfortunately, Armenia is significantly far from demonstrating the model of a democratic country. Frankly speaking, under these conditions, it is a fantasy to speak about sound and transparent mechanisms of women going into the NA, campaigns and inter-party democracy", said Lilit Galstyan, ARF Dashnaktsutyun member, ex MP.

- It is true that the political parties ensured women's representation in every sixth place of the list, but it is not a secret at all how the lists of the political parties in Armenia were compiled ... If the parties had internal democracy, it would not be possible that the

party at a certain point would easily reject a certain woman whom it included in its list. A normal, civilized woman with democratic principles is unable to play by the rules of the current political game ...

When asked whether the above-mentioned refers to her political party, Galstyan insisted that there is an internal democracy in ARF and women constitute a significant number in the party lists (32% - ed.). At the same time she cannot positively rate that for the first time in its history Dashnaktsutyun Party entered the NA without any women MPs. "But we have, what we have ...", she concluded.



The Voice of the Many

"If quotas were a step forward, then waiving of mandates was two steps backwards"...

- Quotas have an artificial nature; they should be replenished with clear mechanisms so that political parties involve and remove women not for the sake of avoiding criticism but truly train women professionals giving them the chance to express themselves. One should not be afraid of working with women ...

- In my opinion, if gender quotas were a step forward in terms of ensuring a gender balance, then waiving of mandates was two steps backwards. It depends on the mentality of the woman politician and the reason she appeared on the electoral list. If the reason is merely maintaining the quota then her role is leaving the list. If she really deserved being on the list then I think she should not waive her mandate and will be able to use it in a dignified way ...

- It is unacceptable that head of political parties use the practice of taking prior applications on waiving from not only women, but men so that if successful, they can move other forward in the list and provide them with mandates ...

- Voters elect candidates included in the first places of lists, however later the ones in the last places take the mandate. It is forbidden to mangle the list ...

- Sometimes there are situations when you cannot blame a person for waiving the mandate; he/she may experience health-related problems - this is a different case. But mandatory waiving of mandates is unacceptable ... then why that person was initially included in the list.

- Local criminal persons, existence of large financial flows, application of different unlawful methods - these are the rules of the game dictated by men. Even such rhetoric questions as "what kind of debate can we have with women?" once again shows that they deem a woman's participation formal.

- The number of women in the new convocation of NA is high thus one can assume that there is a certain progress in this area which is not sufficient yet. In order to increase women's representation in the NA it is necessary to implement different projects by encouraging their role and participation, as well as bringing examples of positive experience which can promote women's political participation.

Source: "Women voice and participation at the 2012 NA elections" research

Observes

... A review should be undertaken of the effectiveness of the candidate nomination quota as a temporary special measure for achieving de facto equality with regard to women's right and opportunity to stand as candidates.

... Political parties should be encouraged to have a gender policy and to publicly provide gender-disaggregated information on their members. Consideration could be given to political parties being required to have a proportion of women on their senior decision-making bodies and to having more transparent and democratic methods for candidate selection.

Source: OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report

New faces of the Parliament

Why do women take mandates? The parliamentarians responded to the inquiry of WomenNet.am and the entire interview may be found at <http://WomenNet.am>

Arpine Hovhannisyan - "My Word of a Professional"...



The newly elected parliamentarian Arpine Hovhannisyan from RPA faction is a Candidate of Juridical Sciences and lectures at the Department of Civil Law of Yerevan State University. In line with her university education, she worked at the Ministry of Justice, later at the Administration of RA President, and lastly as an Advisor to RA National Assembly Speaker.

- I am against revolutionary developments in life in general, and I am prone to evolution path. During my entire life I made achievements step by step, and the idea of doing more and more appeared gradually. My entry to politics was a result of the same normal and natural development. I would like to express my word of a professional in the politics and serve Armenia and its nation by the knowledge I gained

and still to be gained. I approach all matters with a great enthusiasm, even if a minor problem I try to resolve it as my highest priority.

Regarding expression of discrimination towards women I would classify it two ways: an external discrimination and an internal self-boundary by women themselves.

When the woman doesn't visualize her role in the social activities and doesn't seek for her career development the phenomenon leads to external discrimination - "a glass ceiling" as per gender terminology. This or that way all women collide with discrimination, but I believe each should overcome internal complexes and only after that it would be possible to overcome the external impediments...

Lyudmila Sargsyan - "I Wish Politics Could be More morale"

"I came to politics because I wanted it to look humane and be morale. I wish all of us live in a country, where the Constitution is a commandment for all and which laws could defend the person. I wish the citizens are demanding and consistent in their pretentions. I wish them understand that people have a greater power than the coming and going governments", - this is how the Member of "Armenian National Congress" faction and chairperson of Social Democrat Hunchakian Party (SDHP) Lyudmila Sargsyan determines her mission in politics.

- To be involved in politics one doesn't need motivation. The person is either reflective or not, is either concerned or not. I have never been aside of politics and all occurring in the country has always been bothered me. Consequently, these worries made us determine our path - position ourselves either as regular citizens, observers or citizens willing to have an opportunity to impact the processes and take part in the country reformation. Our actions are directed to our children and for the future generation, but meantime if we fail in something or are

frigid towards the reality, it means we perform indifference towards our country, nation and own children.

Although the gaming rules are set by men and sometimes it is a bit hard for women to play by these rules, yet some women move straight forward and achieve much when they try to "get out of their kitchens."

As per my estimates, out of 131 MPs only five women including myself are trying to influence the political process. The others still need to decide should they position themselves as "British Queen" or not..."



Standpoint

"We Wear Hejabe from Inside..."



Nvard Manasyan perhaps was amongst those unique candidates that would not avoid pronouncing the term "feminism" and considered herself as the ideology promoter. It may sound surprising, but many women involved in the protection of women's rights are afraid to be qualified as feminists...

During the parliamentary elections Nvard Manasyan was involved in the proportional lists of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Faction. She has been seriously engaged in the gender inequality since long. As a lecturer of the Chair of Education Management at Yerevan State Linguistic University she considers gender knowledge as crucial for those professionals who will take over the management of the sector in the future.

- You know, I prefer to wear hejabe rather than acknowledge that we wear an invisible hejabe from inside. Perhaps, wearing a hejabe would make me understand my inequity and would thrust me for emending the situation. It seems I am free if I wear high-low dresses or go out during evening hours. In fact I am not: even in the most peaceful places my freedom instantly gets enchained. After marriage, the husband and his mother can manage the woman's life, limit her visits to parents house, decide whether should be employed or not, should she carry a baby,

decide the sex of the child, and draw ways for child upbringing.

Our constitution stipulates equity but I doubt women mastered its significance. Bring me the best laws in the world but I will remain the same slave. We need to interpose this as an agenda in the education system. The teachers who inspire no confidence among girls should understand that they discourage the future woman, restrict her freedom and even impact on choice of the profession. When the school girls are told that they are not able for certain things, at the age of 25 they in fact get convinced about their incapability. Media-politics curtails the woman's role since the woman has to always be half-naked, young and beautiful. As a matter of fact, women likewise men get age.

Discrimination towards woman is a universal phenomenon; it starts from nascence and stipulates women constantly affirm themselves. In the Armenian reality it is a widespread opinion that politics and public life is not for a woman. Such perceptions often "penetrate" into the political parties as well. It is very hard to preserve individuality and be granted with equal conditions. The idea of having a female president, prime-minister and equal representation at the parliament is too far and hazily outlined for us. Therefore, the gender quota stipulation for the electoral lists is the result of these barriers.

NGO tribune

"There is no place for intellectual woman in the current electoral system"

- I was really upset that the most active women parliamentarians Anahit Bakhshyan and Larisa Alaverdyan from "Heritage" party



as well Lilit Galstyan from "Dashnaktsutyun" did not end up in the parliament fifth convocation. There was no logic in including their name in the proportional lists under "non-passing" numbers. These ladies have always stood for public interest, their voice was heard and they upraised problems that required an immediate resolution.

- The first idea that comes to mind is perhaps their active performance, independence and perseverance was a challenge due to which their male colleagues were put in disadvantaged situation. In any case, it has been an evident thrust for the society.

When analyzing the results of majoritarian election during which women were "defeated" by men it becomes apparent that we are down to a level where the most substantial components are money and the brusque powers. In this aspect elections demonstrate the moral and intellectual indicator of our public and it becomes evident that there is no place for intellectual woman in the current electoral system.

Karine Danielyan,
"Association for Sustainable Human Development" President

"Economy is the fundament for everything"



- It is difficult to talk about excessive ideas such as democracy, it is even tougher to stipulate others apply it in the

course of social-economic serious problems, when women do not have even a minor success in economic sphere, and public doesn't feel this gap. Women's active participation in the economic development may boost their political participation as well.

Quota is a stipulating mechanism and it is not a secret that Armenians are creative enough to sidestep these mechanisms. Although the law requires women candidates in the proportional lists, yet due to certain circumstances women do not end up being at the parliament, which again happened for the last convocation. Perhaps we need to reformulate the quota mechanism: women representation in the parliament instead of their involvement in the proportional lists.:

Lilit Asatryan,
"Armenian Young Women's Association" President

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50 per cent of public doesn't participate in the decision making and dialogues, 50% are poor and politically barren. They were told to stay in the kitchen, die in the bedroom since there is no life for them after 40 years old. Why do we get surprised when we hear the name of our nation amongst the poorest ones? Women may add wealth, social justice and variety, since the point of view from one corner only can't be unbiased.