

Gender Composition of Representatives from Winning Ethnic Parties in All Three Parliaments

Women have participated in every political movement in Myanmar, yet women are underrepresented in policy-making positions. In 2015 General Elections of Myanmar, 18 out of 53 competing ethnic parties won. A total of 140 candidates from ethnic parties were elected to all parliaments and only 14 were female. The article provides gender composition of the 18 winning ethnic parties and aims to promote women participation in Myanmar political atmosphere.

The data used in this brief article was obtained from Union Election Commission and Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation transcribed into excel format in English for the purpose of analysis. In this article, an ethnic party is defined as a political party in which the majority of its leadership and membership identify themselves as belonging to an ethnic group.

Chart 1: Winning Ethnic Parties with No Female Candidates in 2015 General Elections

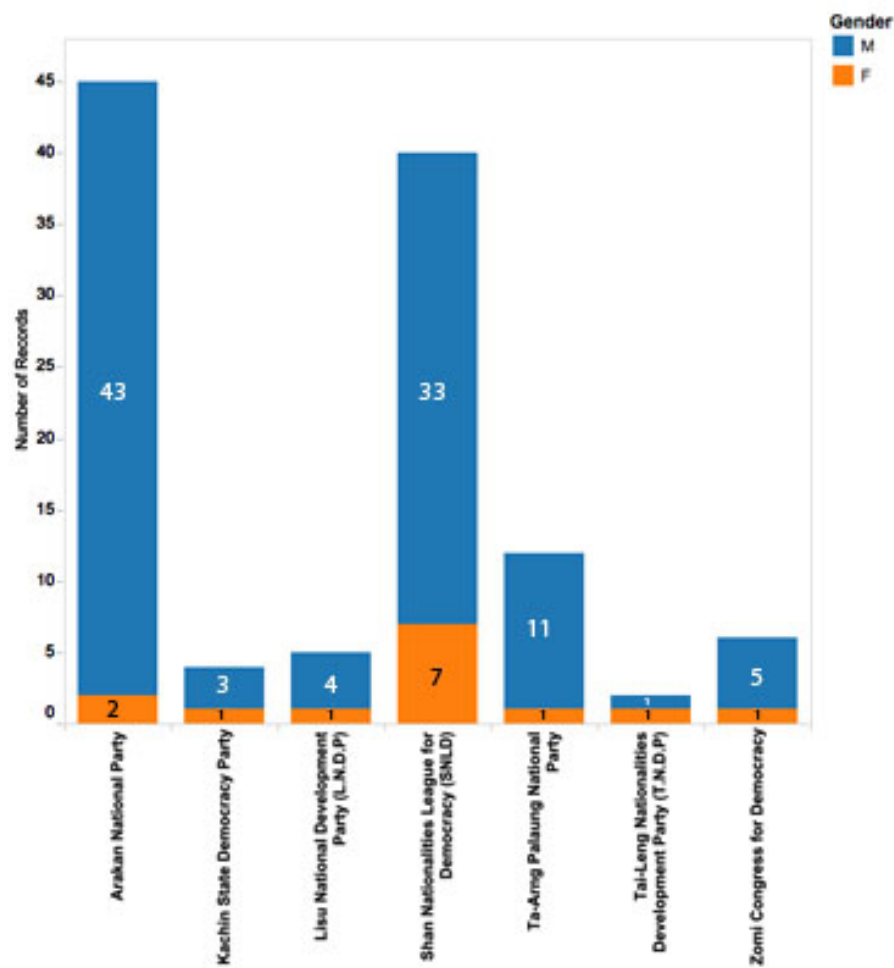
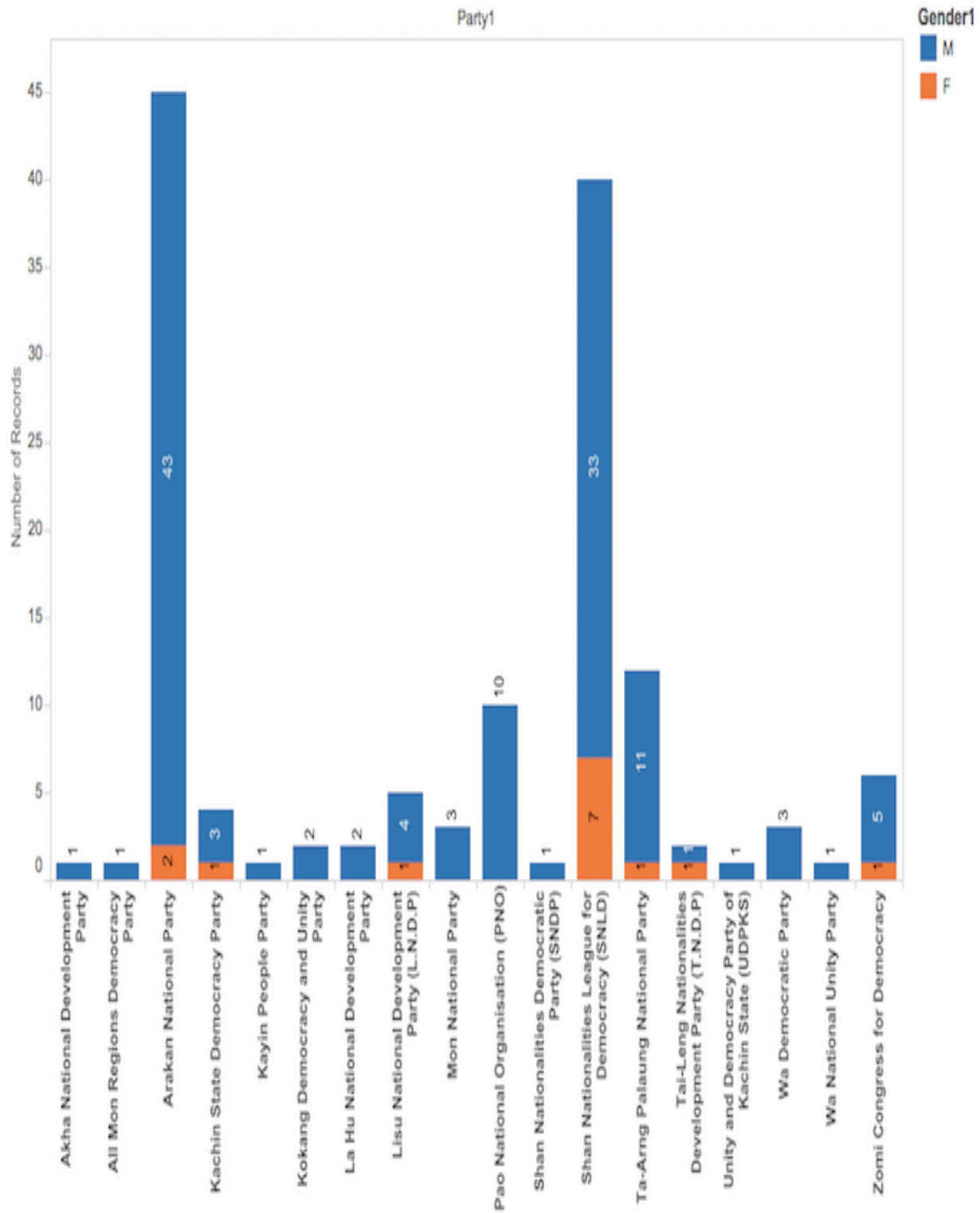


Chart 2: Gender Composition of Candidates from 18 Winning Ethnic Parties in 2015 General Elections



Out of 14 female parliamentarians, 7 were from Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD), making SNLD an ethnic party with the highest female participation. Arakan National Party, despite winning 45 seats in total, had only 2 female candidates. Kachin State Democracy Party, Lisu National Development Party (L.N.D.P), Ta-Arng Palaung National Party, Tai-Leng Nationalities Development Party (T.N.D.P) and Zomi Congress for Democracy had one female MP each.

On the other hand, the other 11 ethnic parties did not have any female candidate elected. They are:

1. Akha National Development Party
2. All Mon Regions Democracy Party
3. Kayin People Party
4. Kokang Democracy and Unity Party
5. La Hu National Development Party
6. Mon National Party
7. Pao National Organisation (PNO)
8. Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP)
9. Unity and Democracy Party of Kachin State (UDPKS)
10. Wa Democratic Party
11. Wa National Unity Party

Despite women participation in political movement, the above numbers indicate that the Myanmar is still far from attaining gender parity. Political parties play a crucial key in determining the number of women elected because they are responsible for recruiting members and selecting candidates. In addition, parties determine who will reach positions of power. Thus political parties should recruit female members not only for increasing the parties' size but also promote them to decision-making positions.

Reference

The 2015 General Elections Results, Union Election Commission