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Women's Empowerment in Pakistan

A Scoping Study

Gender Equity Program صنفی مساوات پروگرام

January 2011

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The study was carried out by Ms. Rubina Saigol

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Preface

The Gender Equity Program (GEP) forms a substantive part of Aurat Foundation's long-term commitment and action to serving the cause of women's empowerment and advancement in Pakistan. GEP is a five-year USAID-supported grant-making program which aims to close the gender gap in Pakistan by facilitating behavioral change, enabling women to access information, resources and institutions, acquire control over their lives and improve societal attitudes towards women and their issues. It is being implemented with the collaboration of Asia Foundation.

The objectives of GEP are:

- *Enhancing gender equity by expanding women's access to justice and women's human rights*
- *Increasing women's empowerment by expanding knowledge of their rights and opportunities to exercise their rights in the workplace, community, and home*
- *Combating gender-based violence*
- *Strengthening the capacity of Pakistani organizations that advocate for gender equity, women's empowerment and the elimination of gender-based violence*

GEP's program matrix puts together the aims, requirements, activities and actions of each of the four objectives into a systematic grid that lists all the required outputs, the interventions for each output and the program targets for each intervention. The grants are designed to meet these agreed and approved interventions and outputs.

In the first year GEP's research initiatives include initial scoping desk studies to identify current status of knowledge and actions under each objective area and post-floods scenario, plus gaps that need to be addressed. These are:

1. Effects of the 2010 Floods on Women in Pakistan
2. Gender Based Violence in Pakistan
3. Women's Empowerment in Pakistan
4. Capacity of Pakistani Organizations to Carry Out Gender Equity Initiatives
5. Gender Equity - Justice and Governance in Pakistan

Other studies in the first year of GEP include a comprehensive primary data baseline representative nationally and for each province, and several primary data based GBV studies covering sensitive areas, are underway. In-depth studies covering key government institutions to derive both policy and practical guidelines for further work under GEP are also being carried out.

This scoping study on Women's Empowerment in Pakistan has formed the first step in helping GEP understand and define women's economic and social empowerment in Pakistan and the issues that it entails, fine tune it's designed inputs for the first three grant cycles in the first year of GEP and better design the proposed outputs, interventions and program targets for the subsequent years of GEP.

It identifies current initiatives by local and international NGOs with respect to women's empowerment, along with the Government machinery salient for issues such as women's health, education, labor and employment. It also identifies the key gaps in research and interventions and finally it presents a way forward, presenting conclusions and recommendations at the policy and response levels.

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Chief of Party
Gender Equity Program (GEP)

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments ii
Table of Contents iii
Acronyms and Abbreviations iv
Executive Summary v

1. Defining Empowerment 01
1.1 The Marxist versus Poststructuralist Concept of Power 01
1.2 Multi-dimensional Concepts of Power 02
1.3 The Contextual Nature of Power 04
1.4 Self-Empowerment versus External Sources of Power 04
1.5 Instrumental View of Women's Empowerment 05
1.6 Measuring Empowerment 05
1.7 Economic and Social Empowerment 06

2. Economic Empowerment 07
2.1 Women's Land Rights, Food Security and Livelihoods 07
2.2 Women and Employment in the Formal and Informal Sectors 12

3. Social Empowerment 21
3.1 Women and Education 21
3.2 Women and Health 25

4. Current Initiatives 29
4.1 General Initiatives 29
4.2 Land Rights, Agriculture and Livelihoods Initiatives 30
4.3 Employment and Economic Empowerment Initiatives 32
4.4 Education Initiatives 34
4.5 Health Initiatives 36

5. Recommendations 39
5.1 General Recommendations 39
5.2 Land Rights, Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Recommendations 40
5.3 Recommendations regarding Formal and Informal Employment 43
5.4 Education Recommendations 46
5.5 Health Recommendations 47

6. Government Machinery for Women's Empowerment 49

7. Civil Society Organizations and Women's Empowerment 54
7.1 Federal Area 54
7.2 Punjab 55
7.3 Sindh 60
7.4 Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa 62
7.5 Balochistan 63

8. Donors and International NGOs 67

Bibliography 75

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABES	Adult Basic Education Society
AHAN	Adolescent Health Awareness Network
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
EOPI	Employees Old Age Benefits Institution
ERRA	Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GGI	Gender Gap Index
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GRAP	Gender Reform Action Plan
HDI	Human Development Index
ILO	International Labor Organization
ITA	Idara-e-Taleem-o-Agahi
LHV	Lady Health Visitors
LHW	Lady Health Workers
LRSDA	Lower Sindh Rural Development Association
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoWD	Ministry of Women Development
NAVTEC	National Vocational and Technical Education Commission
NCSW	National Commission on the Status of Women
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	National Plan of Action
PILER	Pakistan Institute of Labor Education and Research
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSDP	Public Sector Development Program
PVDP	Participatory Village Development Program
SAHE	Society for the Advancement of Education
SAWM	South Asia Women in the Media
SCSPEB	Society for the Community Support for Primary Education, Balochistan
SAHE	Society for the Advancement of Education
SAWM	South Asia Women in the Media
SCSPEB	Society for the Community Support for Primary Education, Balochistan
SDPI	Sustainable Development Policy Institute
SPO	Strengthening Participatory Organizations
TRIP	Trade-Related Intellectual Property agreement
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEMC	Women's Empowerment in Muslim Contexts
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWHL	Women Workers' Helpline
WWO	Working Women's Organization

Executives Summary

Women's empowerment is a complex, multi-dimensional, fluid and emerging concept within feminism and development literature. It has economic, political, social, cultural, religious, personal, psychological and emotional elements. Empowerment appears to be context-specific and has multiple determinants. Women are capable of empowering themselves while external actors and agencies can create supportive environments.

Women's empowerment is defined in a wide variety of ways some of which include access to material resources such as land, money, credit and income, availability of decent employment opportunities that involve good working conditions, access to power through representation in political and decision-making bodies, the freedom to make choices in life, enjoyment of basic rights granted in the constitution and international agreements, equal access to quality education and health facilities, mobility to be able to access various facilities, and control over one's body, sexuality and reproductive choices. Empowerment is believed to be the road to women's own equality, rights and fulfillment, while the instrumental view regards women's empowerment as the means to a better family, economy, society and nation.

Empowerment is not unidirectional and can also be diminished with a change in contextual variables. It has to be continually reiterated and established to prevent reversal. Empowerment is not easily amenable to measurement and existing measures are inadequate. A multivariate analysis is required that encompasses a multiplicity of variables and measures empowerment in ways unique to the situation.

The ownership of land is believed to be one of the foremost conditions of women's empowerment. Women do not generally own land and when they do they seldom exercise effective control over it in terms of decision-making. Socio-cultural, traditional, emotional and legal constraints prevent them from demanding land rights. Male relatives usually control women's land or strike a bargain to protect and provide for them in return for relinquishing their rights to land. Women seldom receive property rights granted to them by law and religious sanction. They have little access to legal redress in case of being forced to give up their land and often tend to fear social censure and ostracism for demanding land rights. They are also liable to be subjected to physical, emotional and psychological violence when they demand land rights. Even where male relatives recognize women's right to land, they do not take measures to ensure this right for them. Women are more likely to receive land where it has less economic value than in regions where land is a highly valued and commercial commodity.

Land rights are also deeply linked with food security but women often do not have access to credit or extension services as agricultural policies are dominated by a patriarchal bias. Women, therefore, find it hard to access agricultural inputs such as seed and fertilizer and irrigation water to enable them to cultivate their own land. They are not represented on water boards and irrigation bodies.

Women's contribution in the fields of fisheries and forestry have not been given due recognition by the government. Rural women are dependent upon forests for firewood and fuel but their views do not enter the national and global discussions on forest management and preservation. The introduction of commercial fishing and the permission to large companies to use trawlers for fishing have impoverished the fishing communities with women's roles becoming diminished. With fishing having become a major industry, women's roles in net weaving and earning a livelihood have become redundant. Women wash and clean shrimps in conditions which cause serious health damage as they are not supplied with proper clothing or environment to do the work in safety.

With regard to paid employment women suffer in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. There are very few women in the formal sector where conditions of work are marginally better. However, even in this sector, workers, both men and women, seldom enjoy the benefits of minimum wage, medical facilities, accident insurance, old age benefits, limitation of working hours and transport. The great majority of workers, especially women, are not registered with institutions such as the Employees Old Age Benefits Institution so that even workers in the formal sector are denied the rights granted to them. Although Pakistan has signed ILO Convention 100 regarding equal pay for equal work, in practice employers find all kinds of ways to circumvent laws. Women seldom join trade unions which are heavily male-dominated. Families, employers and socio-cultural constraints discourage them from engaging in union activities.

There is a preponderance of women in the informal sector of work where they constitute a majority. This is the sector in which women are most vulnerable and highly exploited. This sector involves part-time, temporary, casual and contractual work where there is no minimum wage, security of employment, health benefits or any of the facilities that are normally associated with work in the formal sector. A large number of women are home-based workers who have no access to the market and depend upon the middleman to market their products. They have no knowledge of the market and end up selling their work cheaply. Women normally work very long hours in conditions that lead to health issues. Such workers are often invisible and their work is not recognized in official statistics. Since many of them work from home, it is difficult to organize into collectives or unions to demand their rights.

With regard to the social sectors such as education and health women suffer on account of their lower position in the social hierarchy. Education suffers from a chronic lack of funding being generally around 2 per cent of the GDP. The meager amounts are consumed by buildings, salaries and running expenses with no money left for educational development. Pakistan is way below the MDG for education and the allocation is far less than the Education Policy promise of 7 per cent of the GDP. As a result, government schools are in a dilapidated condition and the state of teaching is abysmal.

There is increasing privatization of education in spite of the inclusion of education among fundamental rights. Poor parents still prefer to send their sons to school as they are perceived as future breadwinners. Even though girls perform well at the primary levels, as they reach puberty they are removed from schools due to early marriage, fear of security, lack of transport and mobility, and socio-cultural and traditional beliefs. At the higher levels of education women perform better than men but higher levels are usually available only in urban areas and rural women are at a greater disadvantage as compared to their urban sisters. The curriculum and textbooks are full of bias and not conducive to women's empowerment as they tend to reproduce the patriarchal gender division of labor and roles.

Health has received less than 1 per cent of the GDP and is a heavily donor-dependent area. Women, as end users of health facilities suffer due to lack of access to good health facilities. Rural health facilities such as Basic Health Units and Rural Health Centres can often be inaccessible for women lack mobility. Lady Health Workers are unable to reach women in remote areas due to the absence of transport and safety. Women suffer due to health problems on account of lack of reproductive choices in terms of the number and spacing of children. Families enforce such decisions upon them, and frequent pregnancies occur in the effort to produce male offspring. Women suffer violence at the hands of family members which sometimes mutilates them seriously and occasionally even leads to death. The constant fear of violence, tension, depression and worry leads to a plethora of emotional and psychological problems for which women in rural areas are taken to *pirs* for supernatural cures.

Women's lack of power within families and the denial of their right to make choices results in a number of health problems. Women are often malnourished as they have lesser access to food resources than their male kin. Additionally, extremism, militancy and displacement exacerbate women's emotional, psychological and physical health. Private health services are too expensive for them and the state pays virtually no attention to women's health as they are considered subordinate, less important and dispensable.

A number of initiatives have been taken by the government, donors and non-governmental organizations to increase women's empowerment and ensure their legal, economic and political equality. However, since the problems are complex, multi-dimensional and overwhelming it will take a long time for women to achieve empowerment and equality. Recommendations to address the issues have been provided in terms of recognizing and ensuring women's land rights, their access to extension services, transport, mobility and social services. It is suggested that all workers should be registered to end informalization so that they can gain access to labor rights. All discriminatory laws should be amended and women's equality as enshrined in the constitution should be ensured. The Home-based workers policy should be adopted by the government and the ILO Convention 177 on HBWs should be signed. Allocations for education and health should be enhanced with a special emphasis on women's education and health. As agriculture, labour, health and education are all now provincial issues with the passage of the 18th amendment, it needs to be ensured that fundamental rights of women are not violated as the provinces devise policies and strategies for these areas.

1. Defining Empowerment

Women's empowerment is a complex and evolving concept that is constantly being defined, re-defined, elaborated, sharpened and clarified. It is deeply inter-linked with gender equality and equity which appear to be the ultimate goals of women's empowerment. It has been associated with the structural transformation of society through land and labor reforms, educational opportunities, access to resources, autonomy, the right to decision-making, control over fertility and women's own control over their bodies, sexuality, and reproduction. Empowerment is context-dependent: and one vague and abstract notion of empowerment cannot be imposed on all contexts across space and time. It is a malleable concept which can signify different things in varying and multiple contexts: thus it eludes a clear and concise definition. Empowerment must also be conceptualized through women's own perspectives and lives, and not as the imposition of an urban middle-class notion of rural women occupying a culturally different space.

1.1 The Marxist versus Poststructuralist Concept of Power

The notion of power has undergone radical transformations over time. The Marxist conception of power resides in the idea that the dominant social classes in society exercise power over the subordinate and oppressed classes until they are overthrown through social conflict, and new hegemonic classes emerge. The traditional concept of power, as exercised by someone above over those below, was seriously challenged by the poststructuralist movement in the 1980s when the French historian, Michel Foucault, introduced the idea of power as diffuse and dispersed across social spaces, and produced at several sites rather than existing in a singular vertical dimension (Foucault, 1972, 1980). Foucault suggested that power is exercised at many points through the application of expert knowledge derived through the social, medical and political disciplines (1979, 1988). In this discourse power is not an object that can be possessed by an individual or class, but a process that can occur in any situation; for example, the therapy situation where the expert produces power over the patient. The ultimate objective of the diffuse power is to create docile and disciplined bodies, whose conformity to established social norms and conventions can be ensured through clinical and disciplinary interventions rather than direct force.

The debate between the Marxists and poststructuralists, as well as postmodernists, rages on. Marxists assert that certain classes exercise power through the state in order to further their own interests of capital accumulation. They cite the domination of global corporations in the current version of capitalism as evidence that power resides with those who own and control the knowledge-making industry, such as the corporate media and publishing houses who produce educational curricula. The power to produce new discourses, therefore, still resides with those with the means and methods to produce, package, distribute, and circulate knowledge.

Poststructuralist feminists, however, seized upon the Foucauldian re-definition of power to contest the idea that power can only be exercised over someone. The idea that power can be a positive quality, which can be produced by anyone, resonates with the notion that one can have power with rather than over another. This concept provides women with an entry point into the discourses of power. It opens up power, and makes it potentially available to women. In other words, empowerment becomes a possibility.

1.2 Multi-Dimensional Concepts of Power

CARE, the international non-governmental organization (NGO) provides a definition of empowerment that encompasses three dimensions: individuals, structures and relationships. According to CARE:

Individuals must gain power to change and effect change; structures that dictate social, economic and political power-holding must be altered; and human relationships must be created or modified to support change (CARE, "Women's Empowerment").

Elaborating upon this three-dimensional model of power and transformation, CARE asserts that excluding the lives of poor women on the basis of caste, race or other markers of social differentiation is disempowering, and a change in all three spheres (individual, structures and relationships) is a necessary pre-requisite for women's empowerment.

Another holistic definition of women's empowerment is provided by the World Economic Forum, which includes the idea of fundamental human rights in its formulation of women's empowerment:

The past three decades have witnessed a steadily increasing awareness of the need to empower women through measures to increase social, economic and political equity, and broader access to fundamental human rights, improvement in nutrition, basic health and education (Lopez-Claros and Zahidi 2005).

This definition incorporates social empowerment through access to health, education and nutrition, but combines the access-based argument with human rights and an increase in social, economic and political equity.

A major access-based definition of women's empowerment appears in Pakistan's Medium Term Development Framework 2005–2010, which states:

Empowerment encompasses access to options, information, education and resources; decision-making power and authority; and control over one's life. (Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan 2005).

Naila Kabeer elaborates upon the multi-dimensional nature of empowerment, and its manifold manifestations, in her analysis of the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG) related to gender equality (Kabeer 2005). She envisages women's empowerment as encompassing greater access to knowledge, social and economic resources, coupled with greater autonomy in economic and political decision-making. Kabeer thus adds autonomy and decision-making power to the idea of access to economic, political and social resources, including food, health care, education, credit, employment, ownership of assets, and access to media. Going further, Kabeer also seeks alteration in the sexual division of labor, a key area of feminist discourse.

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) drew upon a comprehensive framework of women's empowerment to develop principles which include the following: high-level leadership for gender equality; respect and support for human rights and nondiscrimination; ensuring health, safety and well-being of all workers; promoting education, training and professional development for women; implementing enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women; and promoting equality through community initiatives and advocacy (UNIFEM 2010).

It is apparent that the concept of women's empowerment is broadening and expanding and, in the process, encompassing ever increasing areas

of women's equality at the legal, political, economic and social levels. However, this process of broadening and deepening may also contribute to its vagueness, as it comes to mean different things to different people.

Any policy intervention, therefore, cannot be a fragmented one. Unless interventions are holistically planned, empowerment may not occur in all areas of women's lives. Women's empowerment in one sphere does not necessarily lead to empowerment in others. In Pakistan's context, specifically, there is a yawning gap between constitutional aspirations and ground realities, particularly in rural areas where conservative communities exercise enormous control over women's choices. A systematic transformation is required, not just in individual institutions, but specifically those that support patriarchal structures and systems. This means that broad policy interventions are required at the household level if empowerment is to be achieved (Chaudhary and Nosheen 2009).

Here it is important to insert a caveat. Some of the assumptions of feminists and development practitioners alike have not been borne out by experience and study. Although it is useful to plan, design and implement interventions, empowerment may not occur or take shape as envisaged. The process is affected by so many factors and beset by chance events, such sudden changes in political alignments, that a straightforward relation between policy interventions and outcomes cannot be guaranteed. Here it is pertinent to refer to Bushra Zulfiqar's incisive analysis which acknowledges that empowerment is a complex process and deeply embedded in social and cultural constructs which define its scope and limitations (2010). Women's empowerment is often equated with the capacity to make choices in life, and it is assumed that economically independent women are capable of making choices for themselves. In reality, Zulfiqar argues, the exercise of choice is limited by many factors, in particular the gendered perceptions of masculine and feminine:

My key argument is that economic participation alone does not lead to women's empowerment. Access to labor market does not improve the status of women within the household hierarchy and does not influence the power relations in their favor (Zulfiqar 2010).

This argument is echoed in Manisha Desai's critique of the concept of empowerment and the urban, elite and formal labor bias of the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Gender Empowerment Measure (2010).[1] Desai argues that a decrease in the measured gender gap does not translate into gender equality. She points out that positive trends in gender empowerment are often accompanied by unintended negative consequences of development. This has been demonstrated in Pakistan, where sometimes violence is unleashed upon women who try to empower themselves legally or economically, for example, when they demand their share in property, or try to contract a marriage of choice.

An understanding of the complex, malleable, contradictory and multi-dimensional nature of empowerment is necessary before planning interventions. It must also be remembered that empowerment is not a fixed point at which a woman may one day arrive. It is an ongoing process which lasts an entire lifetime. Nor is it necessarily a forward moving process: empowerment may be reversed if the social, economic and political milieu, such as might occur with the entry of a new, conservative government. This was demonstrated in December 2010, when in Pakistan the Federal Shariat Court declared certain sections of the Women's Protection Act 2006 contrary to the Shariah and the Constitution, and restored the overriding power of the Hudood Ordinances (including the highly discriminatory Zina Ordinance), thereby reversing the few protections gained by women after decades of struggle. In sum, women's empowerment is a fluid process that is not unidirectional. It cannot be taken for granted, and has to be strived for continuously over the entire lifespan.

[1]The Gender Empowerment Measure of inequality in political and economic participation/ decision-making and in power of resources is further discussed in Section 1.6.

1.3 The Contextual Nature of Power

It has been widely acknowledged that the concept of women's empowerment is complex and open to multiple interpretations depending upon the context. For example, Mason and Smith in a study of five Asian countries found that gender relations are heavily influenced by community norms and values (2003). They found that community in the five countries studied was a far better predictor of women's empowerment than individual traits. It was found that empowerment is inherently multi-dimensional and complex as women may be simultaneously empowered in some spheres and not in others (Mason and Smith 2003, also Kishore and Gupta 2004). Mason and Smith concluded that community norms and values are serious determinants of women's empowerment in given contexts, and must be altered if meaningful change is envisioned.

Another study that contextualized the notion of women's empowerment was conducted by the Women's Empowerment in Muslim Contexts (WEMC) project, in which the Pakistani NGO Shirkat Gah was a partner. This project examined the context-specific ways in which women take initiatives to empower themselves by overcoming economic, legal and political obstacles, including challenging the use of culture and religion to legitimize oppressive practices.[2] In this project, power is considered the driving force that excludes and marginalizes individuals and groups. Borrowing from the Foucauldian notion of power as dispersed and diffuse, it is seen as permeating individuals, groups and societies, instead of emanating from a fixed point (Hébert 2010).

In her study of gender, religion and the pursuit of justice, Farida Shaheed suggests that in Pakistan, Islam has changed from a purely religious identity to a system that dictates all aspects of life (2009). Shaheed asserts that the real force that disempowers women in the name of culture, religion and tradition is the fusing of politics and religion with the objective of capturing state power and exerting political influence. This argument is supported by Nathalène Reynolds who argues that issues "specific to the Pakistani context, in which governments during brief democratic interludes have struggled to keep the social structure intact" must be examined in order to understand the issues of gender equality in the country (Reynolds n.d.).

1.4 Self-Empowerment versus External Sources of Power

The idea that women take initiatives to empower themselves instead of relying solely on external forces is upheld by Bushra Zulfiqar who argues that empowerment is a highly relative and complex concept with different articulations for different individuals (2010). Zulfiqar believes it is not possible to address the issue of empowerment at an individual level, and that empowerment is a state of mind which has to come from within and cannot be granted by any outside actor. External actors like the government, civil society and donors can help create an enabling environment for women to exercise choices in life. Their role can be to provide women with a social space that is free of violence, fear and discrimination. Women's capacity to exercise choices is constrained by gendered conceptions of masculinity and femininity in given contexts and, as Zulfiqar argues, women's empowerment can ultimately challenge and alter patriarchal beliefs and institutions that perpetuate such stereotypes and thereby reinforce inequality.

In her analysis of the politics of empowerment, Bushra Zulfiqar points out an important area that has been rendered invisible because of the prejudices and silence surrounding the issue. This is the all-important sphere of reproductive choices, which are often controlled by families, with women having little say over their own bodies and sexuality. Women in specific contexts are not allowed to control contraceptive usage, fertility and childbirth. Herein resides one of the biggest sources of disempowerment. This argument is supported by Lori Adelman who asserts that at the heart of equality and empowerment lie a person's fundamental right

[2]Information about the project, its aims and theoretical framework is available at the project website, www.wemc.com.hk.

and ability to control her own body, including her sexuality (2010). Adelman argues that without this right, women risk being unable to fo to schools because of being forced into an early marriage or sexually harassed, raped or expelled on the basis of being pregnant. On account of religious beliefs and cultural prejudices women's sexual and reproductive rights are often shrouded in silence.

1.5 Instrumental View of Women's Empowerment

In addition to arguments based on access, equality and rights, the literature on women's empowerment also reveals instrumental arguments based on the logic that women's empowerment is not an end in itself, but the means to achieving other ends. For example, the international organization, CARE, seeks to empower women as agents of change. It is argued that once women are supported and empowered, the whole society benefits. The World Bank takes a similar view in its assertion that empowerment has long been legitimized in development discourse, not just for the well-being of women, but also for its positive impact upon families (Mason and King 2001). This view is akin to the argument often advanced for women's education: if a woman is educated, the whole family and society reap the benefits. This tendency to view women's empowerment as the means to some external goal is discernible in the argument that women's empowerment leads to economic growth (Jahangir 2008). The propensity to regard women's rights as an instrument of achieving other objectives is also perceptible in the perspective of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) that "women's empowerment is vital to sustainable development and the realization of human rights for all" (UNFPA n.d.). Instrumental reasoning for women's empowerment thus includes, but is not limited to, ideas based on societal benefit, positive impact upon families, economic growth and sustainable development.

Instrumental arguments diverge from those based on rights and equality, which emphasize empowerment as the basis of women's equality and their enjoyment of fundamental rights. An instrumental rationale for any right may be ease access to such rights in contexts where resistance is observed. Nonetheless, such arguments become self-defeating for they perpetuate the idea that empowerment is not vital for women's own sakes, but because it serves some purpose that is wider and external to their interests.

1.6 Measuring Empowerment

A problematic aspect of women's empowerment is the question of how to effort to measure and quantify this abstract and intangible concept. Measurement indices, while usefully providing a quick picture of a phenomenon, tend to be limited for they reduce vast and complex data to a few measurable variables. They tend to leave out the telling details, subjective experiences and ontological issues that enrich the total picture. Nevertheless, measuring empowerment is helpful for policymakers to enable them to tailor interventions based on the broad picture that emerges.

The Gender Gap Index (GGI) is used to measure the extent of inequality between men and women by measuring the gender gaps in particular contexts. The four aspects of this index include economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political empowerment, and health and survival. In 1995, the UNDP introduced two measures of human development to highlight the status of women. The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) measured the same variables as the Human Development Index (HDI) but underscored the inequality in achievement between men and women in the three areas of life expectancy, education, and estimated earned income. The second, the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), was a measure of women's participation in the economic and political life of the country, and measured inequality in the three areas of political participation and decision-making, economic participation and decision-making, and power over economic resources. In 2010, these were superseded by the Gender Inequality Index (GII), "a composite measure reflecting inequality in achievements between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment

and the labor market," which was intended to capture the disadvantages faced by women and girls in these three central spheres of existence, and thus "better expose differences in the distribution of achievements between women and men" (UNDP 2010). Nevertheless, while such indices may be useful for technocratic interventions, they fail to reveal the invisible and hidden dimensions of empowerment and women's daily lived experience.

In an attempt to measure women's empowerment as a variable in international development, Malhotra, Schuler and Boender (2003) proposed six dimensions of empowerment: economic, socio-cultural, familial-interpersonal, legal, political and psychological. These measurement dimensions suggest the complexity of the concept of empowerment, and the difficulty in capturing its essence in varying and multiple contexts. Each dimension is so deeply inter-linked with all others that even identifying relationships between them is a herculean task. The difficulties of measuring such a malleable, fluid, and fragmented, concept were noted in a study of the determinants of empowerment in Southern Punjab (Chaudhary and Nosheen 2009). The study's authors argued that questions of how empowerment is to be measured remain unanswered, and no rigorous method has been devised. They pointed out that there is a proliferation of outcomes, but no clear form of measurement, and it is difficult to specify exactly what the determinants of empowerment are in a given context. In Pakistan, for example, they pointed out that women's empowerment has regional and religious attributes which interact with patriarchal traditions of women's subordination, which in turn lead to malnutrition and shortfalls in women's education.

Chaudhary and Nosheen concluded that since the notion of empowerment varies from region to region and culture to culture, its determinants and measuring methods must also vary. Further complexities arise from the fact that while household and family relations disempower women, they do not disempower other groups. These authors suggest that a multivariate analysis is required, since their results showed a great number of factors had a statistically significant relationship on the level of empowerment. In the context of their study, factors included the joint family system, women doing paid work, women having a bank account, women's access to the media, their participation in excursion activities, women's age, marital status, caste, religion, and whether or not they subscribed to an Islamic viewpoint. The large number of determinants of empowerment in varying contexts is daunting. Therefore, any measure is necessarily limited and cannot capture the full extent of women's empowerment at all levels and in every social, cultural, economic and political context.

1.7 Economic and Social Empowerment

While it is difficult to derive a singular overarching meaning of empowerment from the vast literature on the subject, the following elements of women's empowerment may be derived from the existing literature:

- Economic empowerment, which includes women's land rights, livelihoods and labor in the formal and informal sectors;
- Social empowerment, which includes equal access to education and health care for women; and,
- Political empowerment, which includes women's representation on elected bodies.

This report is focused on economic and social empowerment, and deals with each component separately. Political empowerment is covered by another study in this series. In the concluding sections of this scoping study, key current initiatives have been identified to provide an overview of the field, recommendations compiled from various sources have been consolidated, and detailed lists of organizations, donors and government agencies working on women's empowerment have been identified.

2. Economic Empowerment

2.1 Women's Land Rights, Food Security and Livelihoods

2.1.1 Women and Land Rights

In recent years, there has been a growing understanding of the intersection between women's land rights, food security, and livelihoods. Where once this issue was widely neglected in Pakistan, and did not feature in the land reforms of 1959, 1972 and 1977, it has lately spawned several studies on women and land rights. A landmark study on women and land rights conducted by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) was premised on the assumption that if women were to obtain their share of land rights, it would not only provide an impetus to their own economic empowerment, it would collectively empower both men and women (Khattak, Brohi and Anwar 2010). It was assumed that land as an economic resource and a source of power and status would contribute significantly to women's empowerment if distributed by the state in an equitable manner. The SDPI study found that land is viewed differently across geographical regions and in diverse social contexts. Men view it as a source of status and power, and as the basis on which they could gain access to credit and other facilities, and for commercial transactions.

Khattak et al found that over 89 percent of men surveyed across field sites supported women's Shariah-based right to land. Some believed that women's ownership of land was a fundamental right. On the other hand, 20 percent argued that women should not own or control land due to customs, traditions, and a perceived lack of competency to manage land. The majority, however, believed that women could own as well as manage land, either alone or with male help. Khattak et al argue that this acknowledgement of women's right to land has not been translated into practical action, and women's share in family inheritance has not been ensured. Men in areas where land is highly productive do not support women's right to own land, while in areas where it is not a premium commodity, they are supportive. Even men who support women's right to land in principle usually do not intend to give their female relatives their share of property, as in their view it would alter social relations where men are providers and women dependants.

All the women in the SDPI study expressed their desire to own land because of the respect, honor, status, and economic power its possession confers upon the owner. However, they were concerned that this might not actually happen because of the patriarchal bargain wherein men are perceived as protectors and providers in return for women relinquishing their ownership rights. The absence of social protection systems leave women dependent upon their male kin and local, customary, and personalized systems of protection, arbitration, and dispute settlement. Women place family interest before personal interest, and tend to see themselves as an integral part of the family, not as separate legal entities. Frequently, they willingly cede land and its control to their husbands, brothers, and sons; however, indirect forms of violence are also used to force

them to relinquish their rights to male relatives. Women were found to be generally unaware of the laws and constitutional provisions that protect their rights. They tend to view the state as a distant and abstract entity that had not penetrated their lives. Therefore most women turn to personalized local systems to protect their interests.

In a study of women's access and right to land conducted by Shirkat Gah, it was found that women's land rights were inextricably linked to access and control over assets (Mumtaz and Noshirwani 2007). It was found that the perception of women's low status and subordinate position in society prevents them from gaining their rights. Customary practices, buttressed by social structures, restrict women's mobility, making active control over resources difficult. Even when the owners of land, women lack control owing to lack of autonomy and dependence upon male kin. This study also revealed a widespread lack of knowledge and information of women's land rights and absence of social legitimacy for the exercise of such rights. Corruption and the long, complicated process of accessing and ensuring the implementation of law further complicate the picture. Additionally, discriminatory laws against women reinforce the notion of their secondary and subordinate status in society. Mumtaz and Noshirwani found that when women make a claim to rights, inadequate support structures and mechanisms lead to threats of violence. They pointed out the indifference of legislators, policymakers and politicians towards the issue of land rights for women, and the severe dearth of data for advocacy.

According to the SDPI Country Gender Profile, female ownership of land is extremely limited, and data on ownership of land or access to credit is not available (2008). In 2001, the Pakistan Rural Household Survey found that women owned only 2.8 percent of the plots, even though 67 percent of the villages surveyed asserted that women maintained the right to inherit land (cited in World Bank 2005). The SDPI Country Gender Profile reported that barriers to women's ownership of land include family pressure, fear of social boycott; dependence upon male relatives to deal with the outside world, legal complexities, fear of violence, customary tribal laws, and discriminatory parallel judicial systems such as the jirga and panchayat, which are now labeled Alternate Dispute Resolution Systems.

Although the Constitution affirms gender equality in Article 25, and the country's legal system upholds inheritance rights for women, lack of political will and discriminatory cultural practices deprive women of land. In areas where the custom of bride price prevails, women themselves are seen as property and commercial commodities. Furthermore, illegal property grabbing by in-laws upon the death of the husband prevents women from receiving their share. Most formal courts take a very long time to settle inheritance cases, a further discouraging factor for women. Women's land rights are closely linked to their social, economic and political status in society.

The finding that women fail to make claims for their land rights for fear of social censure, and that they see themselves as integral parts of the family instead of as independent and separate legal entities, was borne out in a study of struggle of tenant farmers for land in ten districts of the Punjab (Saigol 2010b). This study of the Anjuman-e-Mazareen movement focused on the role of women leaders, and found that even when women are in the forefront of the struggle for land rights and take an active part in fighting the might of a militarized state, they fight for the protection of their sons', husbands', fathers', brothers', and other male relatives' property. Indeed, it had not even occurred to the strident women leaders of the movement that they should fight for joint ownership of the land once the state agreed to grant land to the tenant farmers. Upon being asked about registering the land in their own names or joint ownership, they appeared to like the idea and expressed enthusiasm, but simultaneously disclosed that they could not see themselves as separate from the family and community. The male tenant farmers interviewed also supported the idea, but did not do anything practical to ensure their womenfolk had this right. It appears that the militant resistance offered to military and state might by these women was an extension of the protective

mother role women are conditioned to play in society (Saigol 2010b).

2.1.2 The Right to Food

As noted earlier, there is an interrelationship between women's land rights and the right to food. According to the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on the right to food, globally women cultivate 50 percent of all food grown (UN Human Rights Council 2010). Yet, women constitute 70 percent of the world's hungry, and are disproportionally affected by malnutrition, poverty and food insecurity. The Human Rights Council observes that "women's access to control and ownership of land or property are crucial for the purpose of strengthening their security and livelihood. It is important to understand the multiple factors – law, inheritance, marital status and agrarian reform policies – that impede women's equal access to land and the way these affect women by virtue of their gender at the level of individual, community and nation" (ibid.) In spite of constituting the majority of the agricultural workforce and production, it is estimated that women have access to or control over only 5 percent of the land globally.

In Pakistan, the percentage of female-headed households is regionally among the highest, at an estimated 25 percent of total rural households (Food and Agriculture Organization 1995). A study on female-headed households and urban poverty in Pakistan found that 31 percent of the respondents were the only breadwinners in their families, and 8 percent of the households had only female earners while 14 percent had females as the major earners (Mohiuddin 1989). These women range from single parents, widows and wives of migrant workers, to women migrant workers.

Rural households continue to acquire lands through inheritance practices based on customary systems that reaffirm women's unequal access and control over land. Since land acquisition is mediated through male kin, women's land rights are negotiate within a framework of unequal relations of gender, and female entitlement is not a recognized social value. Cultural and social norms ensure that household distribution of resources is uneven in rural areas. The Food and Agriculture Organization warns that in developing countries "twice as many women suffer from malnutrition as men, and girls are twice as likely to die from malnutrition as boys" (Food and Agriculture Organization n.d.).

The UN Human Rights Council asserts that women improve the food security of their households through their access to income-generation activities and ensuring food availability. The right to control, access and manage land is tied to a woman's right to exercise financial independence, earn a livelihood and subsequently provide livelihood for herself and her household. Gender-blind agrarian reform policies continue to exclude women from entitlement to land. Women, who are responsible for the procurement and preparation of food, are most directly affected by food shortages in a country where agriculture is the backbone of the economy and women are integrally linked to it. One revealing incident highlighting the central role of women in providing food security occurred in Karachi in 2009, when around 15 women and girls were killed trying to grab a single bag of wheat flour which was being distributed free. This tragic incident brought to light the desperation of the poor, especially women, for one of the most basic rights – the right to life.

2.1.3 Women and Agriculture

Women form a significant part of the agricultural workforce. According to SDPI's Country Gender Profile (2008), women in rural areas engage in agricultural activity as unpaid family helpers, and are not registered as workers. Women receive hardly any technical knowhow to enable them to increase their income generation capacities. While 38.4 percent of men in the labor force are engaged in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, the figure is 69.9 percent for women.

Several reforms are oriented towards distributing 10–20 acres of land to women to grow food, which is too large a holding for women to cultivate themselves (Sadeque and Hisham 2009).

Even with family labor, women can, at best, manage between two and four acres of land. If larger holdings are distributed without proper storage facilities and mechanisms of institutional support, such as microfinance, women are not able to cultivate the land. Most agricultural extension services and programs are oriented only towards men.

Extension service departments are not aware of the specific needs of women and base their recommendations on commercial and large-scale industrial farming. Gender specific agricultural tasks, such as seed preparation, receive little support from extension workers. Similarly, raising and tending livestock also falls primarily to women who have no extension support and cannot market their products due to diminished access to markets. Even in cases where posts for female extension workers have been created, they are lying vacant on the pretext that there is a dearth of qualified female staff, though it has been pointed out to authorities that this might be due to the lack of lodging, security and transport (Sadeque and Hisham 2009).

Several contradictions beset agricultural policies and practices. Even though agricultural policies pay lip service to the inclusion of women, they promote cash crops for export, and fail to focus on anyone who holds less than five acres of land – women invariably fall in this category. With this emphasis on large landholdings, many women cannot be recognized or registered as farmers. Women are involved in cash crop farming only as pickers, not as growers. They are therefore not recognized as farmers, but as rural women working on agricultural land. As Sadeque and Hisham point out, even the agricultural census does not consider women full-time agricultural workers as they also work at home (2009).

Women's participation in paid agricultural work is limited. A significant portion of agricultural tasks, such as weeding, watering, harvesting, threshing, are mostly carried out by women; but as customs and traditions favor men's access to markets, women's contributions remain unrecognized, uncounted, and underestimated, even as their workloads are tripled. Women associated with agriculture have low wages, long working hours, lack of basic property rights as individuals, lack of access to and management of land and resources; lack of agriculture extension training, and lack of credit (SDPI 2008).

In the irrigation sector, women have no say in decision-making, no clear-cut rights as water users, and no representation in irrigation-related agencies. When women are engaged in farming they spend less of their earnings and invest more on improving land and natural resources than men. The Provincial Irrigation Drainage Authorities and Area Water Boards have no representation of women because land ownership is the criterion for such representation, and women generally do not own land.

Apart from the policies of the national government that are biased towards big landlords, international agreements dictated by powerful countries also impact upon agriculture in developing countries. The Trade-Related Intellectual Property (TRIPs) agreement is particularly pernicious, for it allows the patenting of seeds by powerful multinational companies such as Monsanto. With the introduction of self-destructing seeds, the control farmers exercised for centuries is set to be lost. The control over the world food chain through the Agreement on Agriculture pursued by rich countries under the World Trade Organization (WTO) regime threatens to create severe food insecurity in poor countries, and women would be the worst affected.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 25 million agricultural workers suffer from pesticide poisoning, and women comprise a significant portion of this figure. Women's agricultural work creates medical complications which are seldom addressed because of their lower status in rural homes and lack of attention to their health and nutritional needs.

2.1.4 Women and Forestry and Fisheries

Women also play a role in forestry and gathering fuel for cooking. They are responsible for fencing, procuring food for family, fodder for livestock and

raw materials to produce medicines which fetch extra income for the family. Here, as in other areas, they are not recognized as full workers.

In the past, women were equally involved in fisheries, but with the mechanization and commercialization of the fishing industry, they were slowly pushed out. According to Najma Sadeque, who studied the loss of women's livelihoods in fishing communities, the introduction of nylon nets resulted in loss of income for women (Sarwar n.d.). The Deep Sea Fishing Policy, which allows foreign trawlers to catch fish through satellite tracking, has directly affected the sustenance of fisherfolk (ibid.).[3] To date, not a single policy framework or administrative action, with regard to the socio-economic uplift of fisherwomen, has been taken by the government to ensure sustainability or the livelihoods of fisherwomen.

Tayyaba Ahmed, who has studied women in fisheries, reports that with the change in fishing practices, from the family to industrial fishing, the role of women in family fishing has almost come to an end in Pakistan (2004). When fisherwomen more or less retired from active fishing and focused more on the home, they lost a steady income. Since the late 1960s, the use of nylon fishing nets put an end to women's traditional livelihoods earned through the weaving of cotton nets, which had once been their main source of a small, stable income.

When the fisheries were "professionalized," only men were recognized as involved in the fishing industry, and women were restricted from their traditional livelihoods. In areas where export agents took over the catches, women workers lost access to fish for sale and were turned into low paid wage laborers. A day's work, of peeling 12–14 kilograms of prawns, fetches a mere Rs 40–60, helping to make poverty endemic amongst these communities.

About 10,000 women workers are associated with the fisheries industry and are employed in 30 Registered Processing Plants or warrahs where the conditions for workers are appalling (Ahmed 2004). Women peel and clean ice-covered shrimps, fish and crabs with their bare hands. They are involved in grading, sorting and packing, drying and cleaning fish, and work in fish meal plants. A sizeable number of women workers are involved in weaving nets, making fish baskets and so on as wage laborers. Despite the difficult and hazardous nature of this work, women have few protections for their health and safety: even rubber boots and gloves are unheard of in the warrah. Nor are proper working tools available.

There in no protection from the summer heat even as women work with ice-covered shrimps, leaving them susceptible to disease. There are no proper hand-washing facilities available, nor is First Aid or a dispensary available. In some warrahs only one toilet is provided per 100 women workers, and the condition is deplorable. As a result, women are prone to diseases due to lack of hygiene and poor work conditions, including malaria, gastrointestinal ailments, tuberculosis, skin diseases, Hepatitis B, and continuous backaches. Women workers are called in whenever a catch arrives, even if it is in the middle of the night, and during the high season, women may work for 14–15 hours at a stretch. Girls as young as 15 years of age are employed in warrahs (Ahmed 2004).

Despite these appalling conditions, women's role in the fisheries industry is not recognized in government policy documents, laws and rules. The Handbook of Fisheries Statistics of Pakistan, an annual publication of the Marine Fisheries Department, has no mention of women, even though it carries a full chapter on the fishermen population. Government policies and documents on fisheries do not make any mention of women (SDPI 2008). The first ever convention of fisherwomen was organized by the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum in 2005, where it was recognized that women participate equally in going into waters, catching fish, weaving nets, preparing boats, drying fish and selling catch in the market.

[3]Deneb Sumbul has made a documentary film on the issues of fisherwomen and the impact of the sale of Diamond Bar Islands on the coastal areas and fisherfolk livelihoods. See also "Fisherwomen seek their rights,", in The Nation, 2008.

Recognizing that women had been marginalized by commercialization, attendees at the convention stressed the need for special training and alternative employment opportunities.

2.1.5 Summary

Women generally do not own land, and when they do, they do not exercise effective control over it. There are customary and traditional constraints on their ownership which are further exacerbated by dependence upon male relatives. Women themselves are reluctant to demand their inheritance for fear of violence and social censure. The state and its laws are perceived as abstract and distant entities, not easily accessible to women. As a result they rely on local traditional systems which are often biased against women. There is no institutional and legal framework for agriculture, fishery or forestry in the country and gender discrimination is rampant. Women do not have access to extension services. The majority of women work in villages due to mobility concerns and this diminishes their income chances. When women's work is used for household consumption and not sold in the market it becomes devalued as it is accorded no monetary value. The work done in the field is seen as an extension of household duties and therefore not counted in data collection. Women in the fisheries industry similarly go unrecognized and underpaid, despite working in terrible conditions.

2.2 Women and Employment in the Formal and Informal Sectors

2.2.1 National and International Commitments to Women's Economic Empowerment

Economic security is an integral part of women's empowerment for without an adequate source of livelihood people cannot gain access to primary needs such as food, shelter and clothing. Economic policies and priorities of the state determine how wealth is generated, circulated and distributed among the population. Article 13 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) requires that there be no discrimination against women with regard to economic and social rights. State policies are required to be just and equitable with regard to gender so that national income is not distributed in a skewed way, and to ensure that those who produce the country's wealth receive an equitable share of the fruits.

The Constitution of 1973, in its Principles of Policy section, declares that "steps shall be taken to ensure full participation of women in all spheres of national life" (Article 34). There is recognition in the fundamental law of the land that women's participation in all national spheres is vital for the country's prosperity. Article 37(e) of the Constitution reads: "The State shall make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work, ensuring that children and women are not employed in vocations unsuited to their age or sex, and for maternity benefits for women in employment." Article 38 of the Constitution specifically refers to economic well-being:

The State shall (a) secure the well-being of the people, irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race, by raising their standard of living, by preventing the concentration of wealth and means of production and distribution in the hands of a few to the detriment of general interest and by ensuring equitable adjustment of rights between employers and employees, and landlords and tenants; (b) provide for all citizens, within the available resources of the country, facilities for work and adequate livelihood with reasonable rest and leisure; (c) provide for all persons employed in the service of Pakistan or otherwise, social security by compulsory social insurance or other means; (d) provide basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing. housing, education and medical relief, for all such citizens, irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race, as are permanently or temporarily unable to earn their livelihood on account of infirmity, sickness or unemployment; (e) reduce disparity in the income and earnings of individuals, including persons in the various classes of the service of Pakistan.

In spite of the clear commitments at the international and national levels, Pakistan's employment picture for women, in both the formal and informal sectors, remains bleak. A

number of rights and entitlements granted in the Constitution, laws and labor policies, do not translate into practical reality even in the formal sector of employment. On the other hand the informal, unorganized sector, which is expanding considerably with the economic downturn in recent years, is devoid of the labor rights and securities to which workers are entitled in the formal sector.

2.2.2 Relationship between Paid Work and the Empowerment of Women

The assumption that paid work outside the home leads to women's empowerment and economic independence has yielded mixed results at best. Studies reveal that there is no straightforward relation, and other factors, such as traditional family mores or social class, play a role in the extent to which women are empowered by paid employment outside the home. It was generally assumed that woman's income increases autonomy, and that education and participation in work are important elements of women's agency. In some studies, autonomy and empowerment are equated (Jeejeebhoy 2000 cited in Khan 2007); however other studies show that the concept of empowerment is different from autonomy. Aspects of women's autonomy include mobility, access to resources, their inclusion in decision-making inside the home and in the public sphere, and economic autonomy; freedom from domestic violence, as well as the freedom of interpersonal communication (Sathar and Kazi 2000).

The participation of women in the labor force has not necessarily led to greater happiness for women. Domestic power is dependent upon the social context, and the double burden ensures that economic contribution does not translate into greater autonomy, independence or sense of well-being (ibid.). Nevertheless, the most important impact of paid work on women is the rise in self-esteem and self-confidence and a sense of increased economic security and independence which enables them to meet their family's needs (Shaheed and Mumtaz 1981; Khan 2007). In rural households, however, education and/ or unpaid work on the household farm are not associated with an increase in autonomy.

Jeejeebhoy and Sathar have shown that region more than religion plays an important role in determining the degree to which women can exercise autonomy (2001, p. 708). Sathar and Kazi found that paid work outside the home has a chance of increasing women's autonomy (2000). Mobility and decision-making opportunities for women are generally low, and gender systems in specific situations are important for understanding women's autonomy. Khattak found that women in the urban manufacturing sectors also faced the double burden of paid and household work, but a sizeable number (over half in pharmaceuticals and food processing) reported that household chores are not their primary responsibility (2001, p. 76–77). This, however, did not mean that their work was automatically assumed by men; rather it was usually delegated to other women in the household so that there was very little change in women's traditional roles in the home.

Nonetheless, the freedom of movement granted by participation in the labor force has effects on participation in other forms of public life. Adolescent girls in rural areas are increasingly engaged in paid work, not only for the income, but for the relative freedom that it affords. Around 80 percent of women say that they would do paid work if opportunities were available, and mobility concerns could be overridden. A study of urban women in the manufacturing sector found that despite their limited control over their own earnings, working women exercised greater authority in household decision-making than those who had no source of income (Khattak 2001).

Sathar and Kazi suggest that employment per se does not improve women's status or lessen their reproductive duties; however, formal employment that carries respect and status, and is socially valued, has an impact on mobility and fertility, and engenders a sense of self-worth (1990). Therefore formal sector employment is more conducive for improving women's status, respect and mobility, because socially valued work is considered important.

In the urban manufacturing sector women's decisions are more valued now that they are working (Khattak 2001). Some women said that they could purchase whatever they wished, and were now consulted on marriages, purchases and proposals. Khattak concludes that women in paid work acquire self-confidence and assertiveness in household decision-making; however there is no shift in gender ideology among either men and women. Most women reported that they would like to stop working once the family's financial situation improves. Khattak found that paid work is simultaneously empowering and disempowering. Women's ability to save more money becomes empowering, but the savings are spent on transport and utilities rather than on luxury items. Poverty drives women into the workforce rather than autonomous desire or independent decision-making. Thus the positive outcomes of paid work are limited. If more work in the formal sector, and poverty had not exerted such a powerful influence, the impact would be greater; as it is, paid work has not challenged gender ideology roles (Khan 2007).

The results of studies on whether or not labor force participation and entry into paid work enhances empowerment are inconclusive. There is no straightforward relationship between the workforce participation of women and economic or social empowerment. The diverse and contradictory results may be a function of the varying contexts of women's work and activities, their double burdens and low status in society and within families. Even when women earn an income, their household chores and childcare functions are not shared by men, although other women may take over the work. This means that the underlying patriarchal division of labor, and gender role identities, are not transformed merely through entry into the labor force. However, social class and the nature of the paid employment may also be determinants of whether or not paid work enhances women's empowerment.

2.2.3 Determinants of Women's Entry into the Workforce

Studies have attempted to analyze why women enter the workforce. Shaheed and Mumtaz showed that younger women mostly work to amass dowry (1981). Other reasons include keeping girls busy at home after puberty, negative attitudes to girls' education, and the compulsions of female-headed households to earn for their families. Younger women from poor families enter the workforce upon the insistence of families and not out of choice. Older, better-educated heads of households make such decisions on their own (Naqvi and Shahnaz 2002, p. 15). However, among the upper-middle classes and elite groups, young women are increasingly entering the workforce, especially in urban areas and big cities, and are visible in banks, the media (both print and electronic), the legal profession, the fashion industry, performing arts, visual and filmmaking arts, development, research, and university level teaching. Most of these young women seem to be self-motivated and vying for personal independence.

On the other hand, there are many who belong to the well-to-do classes and obtain an education without ever entering any profession. Factors contributing to this include marriage, especially where the husband and in-laws frown upon women's paid work, and the family does not need the woman's income. There are some who enter a profession but leave after the birth of a child, since childcare is still perceived mainly as women's work. Furthermore, some areas of work are considered inappropriate for women by conservative sections of the middle classes who perceive medicine and teaching as respectable, but the media, banks, corporations and the arts as unacceptable for women (Saigol 2010a).

Both age and purdah (veiling) appear to be related to the choice to enter the workforce. Veiling and seclusion are believed to be more important for younger women of marriageable age. Purdah is the main mechanism used by conservative societies to control women's mobility and fertility (Khan 2007). Historically, Muslim reformers have allowed women's education only on the condition that purdah is observed (Khan 1999, p. 38–39). In Pakistan, purdah differs by class and region. In urban areas, and among the elite and well-to-do classes, traditional purdah has been shunned,

although modesty is still upheld as a positive value. In rural areas, however, there are rules and regulations regarding women's spaces which tend to be strictly segregated from those of men. In this matter, however, the dimension of class crisscrosses with region and religion: as rural folk move higher up the social ladder, purdah becomes a status symbol that signifies that the men of the family are capable of secluding their women from other men and do not need them to work outside the household. Empirical evidence from Muslim contexts shows a positive correlation between wealth acquisition and purdah (Khan 2007, Sultana et al. 2009). The very poor laboring classes in both rural and urban areas in Pakistan are unable to impose strict purdah and seclusion as women are required to work in the fields in rural areas, and in the informal sectors in the urban areas for additional family income.

Strict purdah and segregation are more pronounced in Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa, which is more conservative and religious than Sindh or the Punjab. However, this is not a hard and fast rule: purdah is also strictly observed in interior Sindh, which is mostly rural, but has a sizeable non-Muslim population. Purdah and forms of veiling also vary according to religion: Christians in urban areas of the Punjab and Sindh are less likely to observe strict veiling than Muslims, while Hindu women in interior Sindh often follow a strict form of veiling. The complexity of class, caste, religion and region affecting how veiling and seclusion function in society must be taken into account while planning development interventions. At the same time, however, transforming the local contexts, and what may be defined as "culture," must remain the core value of social development.

2.2.4 Invisibility of Women's Work in Official Data

One of the major issues of women's work and economic contribution is that their work remains invisible and uncounted (Khan 2007). The Labor Force Survey has redefined agriculture to reflect women's contributions more accurately, but reproductive and household labor are still not included (Mahbub-ul-Haq Development Center 2000, p53). The Labor Force Survey 2003–2004 shows that there has been increased women's employment in "skilled agriculture and fishery," a category in which growth from 48.4 percent in 2001 to 52.8 percent in 2003–2004 was led exclusively by women (Mumtaz 2005, p. 36).

Women have argued that in the Pakistan Integrated Housing Survey, time use should be included so that women's work and activities can be reflected more accurately (Khan 2007). This would help to provide a truer picture of women's participation in the urban informal sector where women do much manufacturing and domestic work (Shaheed and Mumtaz 1981, Kazi 1999, p. 385, 390–392). In 1997, the Report of the Commission of Inquiry for Women recommended that agricultural and domestic workers be used in the definition of workers and brought under the purview of all laws applicable to them. This would enable the inclusion of women in the workforce and help present a more accurate picture.

2.2.5 Women's Participation in the Labor Force

Khan reports that a rise in labor force participation coincides with a higher female unemployment rate compared with men (2007). This gender imbalance is even more severe in urban areas. Women's labor force participation in rural areas has increased because of the out-migration of males and the growth of cotton production (Kazi 1999). About 67.3 percent of women who constitute the agricultural labor force entered paid work due to the out-migration of men (Khan 2007). Outside of agriculture, most women in rural areas, about 73 percent, are employed in the informal sector. Their earnings come from livestock production, on-farm labor, brick kiln work, and domestic services.

Khan reports that most women in the urban areas work in the informal sector, including manufacturing, community, social and personal services, as well as crafts and trade-related work (2007). A growing number of urban middle class women are getting an education and going into various professions (Kazi 1999, p. 409). However, even in urban areas, women constitute a very small proportion of the formal sector, as most are

home-based workers; the most poverty-stricken, under-enumerated and invisible of workers. At the top end are women in medicine and teaching, while many are entering the burgeoning private education sector. There are more women teachers in schools than in universities and colleges, showing a bias at the higher levels. The health sector tends to employ women at the lower rungs of the ladder and in lower status occupations, such as Lady Health Visitors, midwives and nurses.

The proportion of women in non-traditional white collar jobs, such as engineering, corporate banking, and the armed services, has not increased significantly in the past decade (Khan 2007). Women constitute about 0.1 percent of the 1.1 percent employed in finance, insurance and real estate services. Women in manufacturing comprise 2.5 percent, and in community, social and personal services they constitute 2.7 percent of the workforce compared to 10 percent of their male counterparts (Statistics Division 2004, p.132). The First Women Bank Limited, created to increase women's participation in these sectors, has not been able to develop women's entrepreneurship to the extent envisaged. The government has not fulfilled its quotas for hiring women in public sector jobs and there is no broad policy to create equal opportunity for women (Khan 2007).

Pakistani women's participation in the formal labor force is still among the lowest in the world. Around 35 percent of urban working women are professionals, technicians and associate professionals. In the informal sector they perform home-based and low-paying piece-rate work including crafts like sewing, crochet and embroidery. Between those at the upper end and lowest end, women are marginally represented. About 1.2 percent of urban working women are engaged in clerical work (Mirza 1999). Since the 1990s, women have been entering the workforce as receptionists, secretaries, telephone operators, draftswomen, designers and computer operators. Medicine and teaching still predominate but now law, marketing, banking, media, NGOs and human resource management are also considered viable careers. Women also work in beauty salons and call offices. Many families find it no longer possible to maintain a living standard without women's work (Khan 2007).

According to the National Commission on the Status of Women (1997) a much larger percentage of men than women are engaged in white collar jobs, i.e. clerical, sales, professional work. Only 18 percent of women compared to 33 percent of men are in clerical jobs. Despite quotas, women's work tends to be concentrated in the education and health sectors (National Commission on the Status of Women 2003), which are considered socially acceptable jobs. Decisions about getting a job are often made by other family members and not by women themselves. This is true especially for young girls who have relatively less autonomy and decision-making power. Families may also enforce prevention from work outside the home.

While women's labor force participation has improved over time, there has been a sharp increase in unemployment from 1 to 10 percent, accompanied by a 40 percent decline in self-employment (Asian Development Bank 2000). Women's unemployment rate has increased at a higher rate than for men. Women are much more disadvantaged in work than men, and enter employment where they are vulnerable and there is absence of decent work (Ministry of Labor and Manpower 2009). They are employed mainly in the informal sectors of the economy and constituted 71.7 percent of the workforce in 2008 (ibid.). According to official data, more than three-fourths of the employees' monthly income is under Rs 1,500, and over a quarter of men and two-thirds of women have a monthly income of less than Rs 2,500 (Haque 2007). Regional analysis shows that a higher proportion of women than men earn less than the minimum wage in urban and rural areas. Nor has the rise in female labor force participation resulted in higher employment opportunities, and there is a need for government expenditure on the social sector in order to create more job opportunities.

It seems that paid employment is rare in rural areas, while in urban areas, women work longer hours and receive less pay than men. Women are the majority among the poor and face the added burdens of carrying water and fuel in the rural

areas. Additionally, both rural and urban women perform the reproductive duties of unpaid domestic chores and childcare. Despite women working in paid labor outside the home, men do not participate in housework or childcare. Many men even refuse to recognize the economic value of women's work. A majority of women, 73 percent, themselves believe that men have more right to work than women, and 65 percent of men feel it would be a problem if the woman's income was greater than their own (Khan 2007).

2.2.6 Working Conditions in the Labor Market

Working conditions, even in the formal sector, are far from desirable as reported by the Pakistan Institute of Labor Education and Research (PILER 2007).[4] Labor rights and entitlements are being dismantled even within the formal sector as the state recedes from its welfare functions. The compulsory weekly holiday was abolished through amendments in the Shops and Establishment Ordinance 1969. This superseded earlier provisions under the Factory Act that women will not work before sunrise or after sunset. The introduction of late evening shifts and longer workdays through the Finance Act 2006, which increased working hours from eight to 12, also discourages women from entering work in the formal sector. Women's work days and hours are longer than those of men, and because most women are not permanent workers, they are not entitled to benefits (Siddiqui et al 2006a). Women are also subject to harassment in the workplace: although the passage of the Sexual Harassment Bill in 2010 was a step in the right direction, a great deal is required for the proper implementation of this law.

2.2.7 Women in the Informal Sector

In the past three decades, the greatest growth of work for women has been in the informal, unorganized sector, as home-based workers. Women are migrating to cities from rural areas and entering the informal economy. The Women Workers Helpline estimates that out of 20 million workers in the informal economy, around 12 million are women (Women Workers Help Line 2009). Many are domestic servants, with no legal protection. Around 200,000 trafficked Bangladeshi women and Afghan refugee women work as domestic servants and as part of the informal economy. The global economy, cultural norms, family restrictions, and lack of mobility all discourage women's entry into formal labor. Rapid urbanization has spurred the growth of the informal sector which now accounts for about four-fifths of all workers and produces a meager income compared to the formal sector (Breman 2009).

Women also find it more difficult to enter the formal sector due to lesser education, fewer marketable skills, and social taboos. Keeping women out of the regular workforce, and thereby avoiding restrictions on wages and working conditions, as well as taxes, is a strategy to lower production costs and maintain flexibility (Khan 2007, Breman 2009). The informal sector has become central to poor women's survival as they work out of necessity, with few skills and little payment to supplement diminished family incomes due to the economic slowdown since 2008.

The increase in the informal sector is associated with poverty: 60 percent of such workers live below the poverty line. The Pakistan Participatory Poverty Assessment found that women's informal work was one of the most commonly used risk-mitigating strategies of poor households. According to a draft report of the National Commission on the Status of Women, only 7 percent of women reported that their work was the main source of family income (quoted in SDPI 2008, p. 86). Neo-liberal globalization has also enhanced the rate of informalization and, as Sayeed and Khattak warned (2001), privatization and downsizing have further detrimental effects on women's work as informal labor does not benefit from the laws and regulations covering formal labor.

Two types of informal systems have been identified by Blunch, Canagarajah and Raju (2001):

[4] Also see SDPI 2008, p.79.

wage and non-wage employment. Non-wage employment refers to people who are self-employed or employed in a small family enterprise and includes, for example, vendors, roadside barbers or milk sellers. Waged employment is characterized by regular work, casual workers on sub-contract and home-based workers. While these distinctions are not hard and fast, there is variation in the kinds of employment arrangements across time and geography.

In 2007, a 20 percent growth was recorded in Pakistan's large informal sector (Haque 2007). According to conservative estimates, out of the country's $160 billion economy in 2007, over $32 billion is in the informal sector. An approximate assessment shows that 32 percent of the informal workforce is in the wholesale and retail business, 21 percent in the manufacturing sector, 17.5 percent in the community, social and personnel sector, 13.8 percent in construction, and 11.1 percent in the transport sector. This estimate included both in urban and rural areas (ibid.).

Women are represented in the informal sector in manufacturing, trade and services. In nearly all categories, women earn less than men, leading to the intensified feminization of poverty. Globally, out of 1.3 billion people living in poverty, 70 percent are women (Asian Development Bank 2000). Women comprise the poorest of the poor, and are the most vulnerable section of society. The social relations of gender mediate the manner in which women experience poverty. This phenomenon has given rise to new debates on poverty reduction and social protection, along with calls to formalize the informal sector and bring it within the ambit of the legal protection framework.

Informal activities have often been characterized by low levels of capital, skills and diminished access to organized markets and technologies, low and unstable incomes, and poor, unpredictable and hazardous working conditions (Khan, Khattak and Kazmi 2005). Activities in this sector are often outside the scope of official statistical enumeration and government regulations and elude the formal system of social protection. The units operating in the informal sector are highly labor-intensive but employment is mostly casual and based on kinship or personal relations rather than contractual arrangements which would ensure protection for the workers. The informal sector activities depend, to a large extent, on local and regional demand. The informal sector in Pakistan, as elsewhere, is characterized by insecure employment, low earning and low productivity, all of which contribute to poverty; by some estimates, 75 percent of the poor are clustered around the poverty line (PRSP). There is enormous gender discrepancy in wages in the informal sector where women generally earn one-third less than their male counterparts. This wage gap has widened even in waged and salaried employment.

Women outside the agricultural sector find low-skilled, low-paying work that is typically done from home. Their wages are lower than men and seldom increase over time and they are also often less educated. Kazi and Raza argue that the underestimation of female employment is greater for those working from home, who either do not admit that they work for remuneration, or are omitted in surveys of census by male enumerators (1989).

According to the Ministry of Labor and Manpower (2009), six out of 10 women are engaged in casual or piece-rate work (56.8 percent in 2008). In 2008, 35.4 percent of women and 17.5 percent of men with paid jobs outside the agricultural sector were so-called "home workers," a status associated with low pay. The proportion of women home-based workers in industries increased from 74 percent in 2000 to 77.4 percent in 2008. Women also run a higher risk of being unemployed, with women's unemployment rate at 8.7 percent compared to 4 percent for men in 2008 (ibid.).

2.2.8 Women's Participation in Labor Unions

Conditions in the formal sector are only slightly better. Pakistan's working hours are much longer than those provided for by conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO). Pakistani employers can compel workers to work until 10

pm at night. This discriminates against women in a society where they are threatened with rape, abduction and abuse. Labor laws are applied inconsistently, and women often do not join labor unions to enhance their bargaining power (Sadeque and Hisham 2009).

Labor unions are largely dominated by men, and pay scant attention to women's concerns. Reasons for women's low participation in unions were gauged by talking to women factory workers in Karachi as a part of a workshop organized by PILER in 1993. Firstly, families in a segregated society frown upon the free mixing of men and women in unions and regard women's participation in sit-ins and public demonstrations as inappropriate. Secondly, unions often hold their meetings after work hours when women have to rush home to complete household chores. Thirdly, the managements of factories and business enterprises tend to discourage women from unionization by declaring it an "unfeminine" activity which requires close interaction with unrelated men. Unions often have men from various ethnic, sectarian and religious backgrounds, and mixing with men from other communities is looked down upon by families and neighborhoods. Finally, women are often the first to be laid off when managements retaliate against union activity. Job insecurity, coupled with threats of violence, serves to make women more docile and subservient compared to their male counterparts.

The idea of women's cooperatives has not taken root and women are discouraged by their families to engage in collective activity. Although Pakistan has ratified ILO Convention 100 on equal pay for equal value of work, corresponding legislation has not been passed. However, the state is committed to reduce income disparities between individuals under Article 38(e) of the Constitution.
Owing to a lack of organized cooperatives and unions, women's voices are often excluded from finance and development policies and forums. They have lesser access to resources which results in inequalities. Gender gaps are perpetuated down the generations as women have less experience in the workforce, less income, less leisure, less education, and less health and time for rest.

2.2.9 Women and Poverty Reduction

There is a strong correlation between employment generation and poverty reduction, and thus to fulfilling Pakistan's commitments under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the current economic crisis, however, it is likely that the labor market will remain weak in output, and the shift to informal sector jobs is likely be long lasting. This adds pressure on those in vulnerable employment, as it keeps the level of working poverty high, especially in rural areas where job creation and availability is low. Social protection is also limited, so working poverty levels are likely to increase. This is likely be difficult to reverse, as has been observed in previous crises (Ministry of Finance 2010).

2.2.10 Summary

Studies on workforce participation and empowerment are inconclusive. It seems that paid work by itself is an insufficient condition for women's empowerment. Contextual factors play a part in determining the level of women's empowerment even if paid work is taken as a constant.

The major barriers to female participation rate include gender inequality and the perception of women as low-status dependents. This ideology is reinforced by customary practices and the laws of the land. The issue of purdah is complicated because of the inter-sectionality of class, caste, region and religion, and its constraints or facilitation of women's work varies across geographies and markers of social differentiation.

Women tend to get menial and low-paid jobs even though they may be more time and energy-consuming. Most women are uninformed about opportunities, assets and services and have neither ownership nor control over resources. Women's mobility is restricted, their skills are not always marketable, and their voices are not heard. These factors contribute to women's diminished opportunities economically empower themselves. There is a preponderance of women in the informal sector, which is characterized by part-

time, temporary, insecure, and contractual work. Women's economic empowerment is inhibited due to lack of attention in policymaking and the meager resources granted (SDPI 2008). While women are increasing in the labor force, especially in the informal sector, their voices remain unheard within national and global debates on poverty and labor.

The unemployment rate is higher for women of all age groups than for men. They continue to be the first ones to lose their jobs in an economic downturn and are often given the least priority in hiring. There are no laws that specifically pertain to equal compensation for equal value of work, or for protection of labor rights for domestic and home-based workers. Major reasons for the low rate of women's participation in the formal sectors include the lack of recognition of their contribution, mobility constraints, inadequate knowledge about opportunities, and the cultural view of women as low-status dependants. Furthermore, working conditions even in the formal sectors of employment are discouraging for women.

The lack of gender disaggregated data makes it harder to get a picture of women's economic empowerment, as women's work is invisible and their contribution to the Gross Domestic Product remains uncalculated (Planning Commission 2005). Data collected by the Federal Bureau of Statistics on women's employment through labor force surveys fail to adequately capture their contribution to agriculture or participation in the informal sectors of the economy (ibid.). There is a lack of recognition of the relation between macro-economic policies and women's empowerment.

The lack of unionization by women and the absence of women's cooperatives, means that their voices remain unheard. Women lack the means to collectively bargain for their rights in the labor market and are hampered by social and cultural considerations, insecurity, fear of job loss, and social censure.

3. Social Empowerment

3.1 Women and Education

3.1.1 National and International Commitments

In the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, the right to education was declared a fundamental right for all citizens. Article 34 refers to women's full participation in all spheres of national life, and Article 37(a) reads: "The State shall promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of backward classes or areas." Similarly, Article 37(b) refers to the provision of free and compulsory secondary education within the minimum possible period. Education is again referred to in Article 38(d), which asserts that the state shall provide basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, housing, education and medical relief, for all such citizens, irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race, as are permanently or temporarily unable to earn their livelihood on account of infirmity, sickness or unemployment.

Despite a number of global and national aspirations and initiatives on education including CEDAW Article 10; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 26; the Education for All declaration led by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); commitments under the MDGs; the National Plan of Action (NPA) launched in 1998; and the Educational Sector Reforms, the situation of education in Pakistan remains abysmal. The emphasis has been overwhelmingly on access and quantity (i.e. increasing enrolment and dropout) with little focus on the quality and type of education provided by the public sector. The malaise in public sector education is so deep that increasing numbers of children, even from relatively poor families, are entering private schools, which now account for 60 percent of primary schooling in the Punjab.

In its Education Sector Reforms, the Government of Pakistan promised to maximize equal opportunities and reduce the gender gap at all levels of education (Ministry of Education 2002). The NPA envisioned the provision of primary and non-formal education of girls of all ages in 1998 (Ministry of Women Development 1998), and an increase in girls' enrolment at the middle level by 2000. The NPA also suggested introducing legislation on the enforcement of Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2001 and, where infrastructure was available, it recommended its introduction by 2003. The NPA also contained recommendations on adult literacy and training for women, particularly in disadvantaged areas. Many of the recommendations were tied in with the Social Action Programs I and II.

3.1.2 Expenditure on Education

Education, along with skills training, forms the backbone of development, creating skilled human power and thereby raising productivity, employment, and wages. It is the single most important contributor to poverty alleviation, because it represents investment in human capital and productivity. Pakistan has historically spent a miniscule sum, around 2.1 percent of Gross

Domestic Product (GDP), on education. The MDG aspiration is for developing countries to spend at least 4 percent of GDP on education, while Pakistan's National Education Policy, 2009, promises to increase expenditure on education to 7 percent of GDP by 2015 (Ministry of Education 2009). However, despite these aspirations and goals, actual expenditure on education is dismally low, and the meager funds get utilized in infrastructure, current expenditure, and salaries, rather than on educational development. According to SDPI's Country Gender Profile, education suffers from low levels of public spending, poverty, cultural constraints, acute regional and gender inequalities, and ideological biases and stereotypes (2008).

Constitutionally, education is a provincial subject. However, the Federal Ministry of Education has traditionally set policy guidelines, while the provincial governments have been responsible for implementation. While federal allocations for social sector development and social protection have remained stagnant or even decreased, the provinces have raised spending on development, especially education. This is in line with the concept of devolution as envisaged in the 18th Amendment to the Constitution and the National Finance Commission Award. Even though provincial shares have increased in the Federal Divisible Pool, however, funds available for development are dwarfed by expenditure on debt-servicing and defense. Given this, it remains to be seen how the promise to increase allocations to education to 7 percent of GDP will be achieved. Indeed, the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) is routinely cut to accommodate ever-increasing defense and debt-servicing expenditure.

As the government recedes from its welfare functions and pushes education increasingly into the private sector, women will be at a further disadvantage. When families can afford to educate only one or two children, they invariably choose male children who are seen as future breadwinners. Despite girls' enrolment initiatives by the government, a 2009 study by the Lahore School of Economics estimated the gender gap at the primary school level to be 11.3 percent, and the majority of parents still place boys' education above girls' education (HRCP 2009).

The HRCP Annual Report 2009 contends that government allocations for the year 2009–2010 were too low to meet the sector's considerable needs, despite 2010 being declared Year of Literacy by the Prime Minister. The budgetary allocation of 3 percent of GDP for 2009–2010 was less than the minimum of 4 percent recommended by UNESCO. The excessively low investment in public education over decades has led to the failure to achieve many of the goals set globally for girls' education. According to UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report 2009, Pakistan is one of the very few countries which failed to achieve even a single Education for All goal. In 2009, Pakistan was ranked 141st out of 182 countries in UNDP's Human Development Index 2009. In the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index released in September 2009, Pakistan ranked 117th out of 134 countries in terms of quality of primary education. According to the HRCP Annual Report 2009, the quality of life in Pakistan, including education, has deteriorated since 2005.

3.1.3 Literacy and Enrolment Rates

Pakistan has a literacy rate of 57 percent, well below neighboring countries like Sri Lanka and India (Ministry of Finance 2010, pp. 145–147). This remains considerably short of the 88 percent Pakistan has committed to achieve by 2015, as its MDG target (Planning Commission 2010). The gender gap is also telling, with literacy at 69 percent for men and 45 percent for women. There is also an urban-rural divide: in urban areas the literacy rate is 74 percent, compared to 48 percent. There are similar inequalities between provinces, with literacy in the Punjab and Sindh at 59 percent; but only 50 percent in Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa and 45 percent in Balochistan (Ministry of Finance 2010). In Sindh and Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa the literacy rate has improved greatly, but all provinces have demonstrated some increases from previous years.

The gross enrolment rate[5] is 91 percent, which means that 9 percent of children are out of school (ibid.) The net enrolment at the primary level remained below 60 percent until 2008–2009, in spite of a marginal improvement over time (Planning Commission 2010). If Pakistan were to achieve its target of 100 percent net enrolment by 2015, it would require an increase of 43 percentage points. This is an unrealistic goal, given that Pakistan achieved an increase of only 16 percentage points in the past ten years (ibid.). SDPI's Country Gender Profile 2008 holds the lack of coordination between donors and Government of Pakistan to account in the failure to reduce literacy rates. There are too many overlapping and multiple programs with little inter-donor or government-donor coordination to reduce duplication.

3.1.4 Gender and Education

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) for Pakistan as a whole is 0.65. In the provinces it is 0.72 in the Punjab, 0.63 in Sindh, 0.45 in Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa and 0.37 in Balochistan (Ministry of Finance 2010).[6] A large number of girls drop out of school at puberty due to social and cultural constraints, mobility, distance of schools from home, security, and the lack of facilities such as latrines, clean drinking water, electricity and buildings. This is particularly true of rural areas and, to a lesser extent, also true of urban areas.

In spite of the plethora of global and national initiatives, and the pouring of donor funding into education, very little seems to have been achieved on the ground. Statistics show that while urban women have made gains, girls and women in rural areas are at a systematic disadvantage. Even girls who complete primary education do not necessarily progress to middle or secondary school. The GPI for primary education in 2005–2006 was 0.82 for both the gross and the net enrolment rates, while at the secondary level it was only 0.77. Thus, as girls reach adulthood, they appear to be at a disadvantage compared to boys. The situation improves significantly for higher education where, in some subjects, the index actually favors women. Girls also have marginally better rates of reaching Grade 5: the GPI for this indicator is 1.02. Girls also do better in transition rates from primary to secondary, where the GPI is 1.07.

These figures confirm that while girls do well at the primary level, they face disadvantages as they grow older, and drop out due to conservative social values, security and transport concerns, and to help with domestic work. They also show that in higher education, women tend to perform better in some subjects, and their enrolment is also high. It is at the middle levels, when girls approach the traditional marriageable age, that there are social pressures to withdraw from education. However, rural women are at a consistent disadvantage compared to urban women when it comes to higher education, as the latter benefit from the existence of nearby colleges and better transport facilities, as well as higher family incomes. According to SDPI's Country Gender Profile, gender gaps in urban education are almost nonexistent, but in rural areas, where gender bias is extreme, they are severe.

As regards vocational education, the proportion of women is 38 percent, with the rural-urban divide once more apparent. In rural areas, women's representation in vocational education is 36 percent, compared to 43 percent in urban areas. A similar pattern is repeated in secondary education, where the representation of rural women is 35 percent and that of urban women is 38 percent. The rural-urban divide is also a class divide which shows systematic discrimination against poor women. Women generally, and rural women in particular, are under-represented in both the private and public sectors, revealing a gender as well as a class bias.

[5]The gross enrolment rate is the proportion of children, regardless of age, enrolled at a specific level of education, expressed as a percentage of the total number of children of the appropriate age for that level of education. The net enrolment rate is the proportion of children of appropriate age for a level of education enrolled at that level of education.
[6]The Gender Parity Index is the number of females enrolled divided by the number of males.

HRCP (2009) reports that Pakistan has one of the highest gender disparities in education figures in the world. The 2009 Nizam-e-Adl agreement between the government and extremists in Malakand division of Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa led to Pakistani Taliban banning girls' education in the area, and some 4,000 schools, with over 40,000 girls on their rolls, were shut down. About ten schools in Malakand tried to open after the deadline imposed by the Taliban, and were blown up. In recent years, the Taliban have burned or bombed over 200 girls' schools in Swat and Malakand. Religious conflict and violence have thus had a direct impact upon the education of girls, especially in Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa province and the adjoining Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

The new education policy of 2009 strongly emphasized religious content in the curriculum, and declared Islamic education the duty of society and the state (Ministry of Education 2009). The teaching of religion as a state policy has led to devastating consequences for women, minorities and democracy in the past (Saigol 1995, 1996, 2002 and 2003) The madrassa curriculum goes further in terms of its emphasis on women's subordinate roles in the family (Farooq 2006, Saigol 2010a). Some of the textbooks used in girls' madrassas exhort them to be obedient wives and regard women's acceptance of subordinate status as a gateway to heaven. Women's housework and childcare responsibilities are defined as equivalent to jihad or holy war: in other words, sacrificing their own needs to those of the husband bestows the status of martyrdom on women (Saigol 2010a). This "education" for women is disempowering, and negates the very purpose of education, which is economic and social empowerment.

While donor and NGO initiatives in public-private partnerships have focused on increasing women's access to various levels of education, there has been much less concern with the kind and quality of education that girls receive. The assumption that education is always and necessarily empowering for women is not borne out when one considers the curriculum and textbooks. Textbooks are steeped in patriarchal ideology depicting women and girls in predefined gender roles, and offering few choices in terms of a career and aspirations (Saigol 1997). While denying women education is a violation of their human rights and economic and social security, subjecting them to a patriarchal educational agenda that limits the opportunities they can imagine and reinforces traditional stereotypes cannot be empowering. Women not only need access to education at all levels, they have the right to an education that can ensure their human security by bolstering their capabilities, self-respect, and human dignity.

3.1.5 Conditions of Public Schools

Dismal conditions in public sector schools are another reason for low enrolment and high drop out rates, especially for girls. In the public sector up to the elementary level, 37.7 percent of schools lack boundary walls, 33.9 percent have no drinking water facilities, 60 percent lack electricity, and 37 percent have no latrines; this is especially common in rural areas with poor infrastructure (Ministry of Finance 2010). The absence of latrines and sanitary facilities, along with security concerns and the attitude of teachers have been cited as the most common reasons for girls dropping out of school. The current Pakistan Peoples Party government has made a commitment to establish infrastructure by 2012.

3.1.6 Summary

To summarize, poverty, low public spending, low returns from education, violence against women, lack of transport and security, poor conditions in state schools, differences in government and private education, gender discrimination, class discrimination, conservative and traditional attitudes, non-availability of educational facilities with a growing population, absence of curriculum reforms, and poor indigenous research on educational issues, constitute the main issues besetting education of children, especially girls, in Pakistan.

3.2 Women and Health

A developing country needs not only an educated and trained workforce to raise productivity and incomes it also needs a healthy one. Pakistan is beset with a host of problems that contribute to bad health – these include lack of clean drinking water, absence of adequate health services, a polluted environment, malnutrition, congestion in overcrowded cities, and the absence of a proper waste disposal system. As a result, Pakistanis are susceptible to various illnesses and communicable diseases.

Health has not been a priority area for the rich, who mostly make the country's laws and policies, and can afford expensive quality health services in the private sector. As a result, expenditure on health is minimal and public sector health facilities have deteriorated. This directly affects the poor, but the most affected are women who tend to be the more frequent end-users of public health services because of reproductive and sexual health issues.

3.2.1 National and International Commitments

In the Constitution of Pakistan, Articles 38(a), 38(d) and 25(1) refer to women's health and freedom from sex-based discrimination. Pakistan is also a signatory to a number of international commitments to ensure public health, and has announced national aspirations to improve the health of the poor and women. These include the Universal Declarations of Human Rights (Article 25), CEDAW (Article, 12), MDG (goals, 4, 5, and 6), the NPA, etc. Health is viewed as an integral part of poverty alleviation by the government and social development practitioners. Good health is correlated with higher productivity, a better quality of life and economic development.

3.2.2 Expenditure on Health

Despite an almost three-fold increase in public expenditure on health since 2001, spending remains abysmally low (Ministry of Finance 2010). In absolute terms, the allocation in the budget for health increased from Rs 60 billion in 2007–2008 to Rs 74 billion in 2008–2009. Nonetheless it declined as a percentage of GDP during this time (HRCP 2009, p. 254). The total public sector expenditure on health, when both federal and provincial allocations are combined, comes to 0.54 percent of GDP, the lowest among countries at the same income level. According to the HRCP Annual Report 2009, Pakistan spends $15 per capita on the health sector whereas the average for South Asia is $26 (ibid. p. 253). This falls far short of the $34 recommended by the World Health Organization in order to ensure essential health services to the population (ibid. p.254).

In 2009–2010, the government allocated Rs 6 billion to improve the health status of children and their mothers, including attempts to increase the cadre of Lady Health Visitors (LHVs) who provide family planning services. However, in the PSDP for 2010–2011, the allocation for health declined by Rs 6 billion compared to its allocation in the 2009–2010 PSDP (Iqbal 2010).

3.2.3 Gender and Health

Life expectancy for women remains poor in Pakistan and compares poorly with the region as a whole. The National Health Policy 2009 aims to improve the situation in an attempt to meet Pakistan's MDGs for health by establishing training centers for nurses, reducing the maternal mortality ratio to 140, and ensuring that 90 percent of births are attended by skilled health professionals by 2015.

There is widespread and chronic malnutrition among women and young children, especially girl children, against whom there is cultural and social discrimination in the distribution of household resources. Women lack the power within their families to decide on the number of children they will bear, and men refuse to take responsibility for contraception even where they accept that a limited family size is preferable. Patriarchal value systems and gender biases affect women's choices and health and, consequently, their work, economic productivity and sense of well-being.

Pakistan's health issues have remained consistent since the NPA's endorsement by the government

in 1998 (Saeed et al 2009). Most health issues relate to reproductive health care, lack of potable water supply, and inadequate health services (including family planning). Today the country has 100,000 Lady Health Workers (LHWs) and the government plans to increase this number to at least 200,000 in the near future. Fully trained midwives have been introduced for better maternal health care. New basic health units and rural health centers have been established, and the health infrastructure is constantly updated to meet the growing requirements of the population (ibid.). Nevertheless, owing to a surge in population, improvement has been limited.

Issues that remain unresolved have to do with women's subordinate status within families. They have no control over their fertility and the pressure to reproduce continually in the hope of male offspring has deleterious effects on their health. The scarcity of safe water, coupled with poverty, has a direct impact on women's health for they are subject to frequent health threats and cannot afford expensive health services at private clinics. They have to perforce rely on government services which are located at distances and are of poor quality. Lack of mobility due to the absence of safe transport makes it difficult for women to access health centers particularly in rural areas. The privatization of health services means that the state is withdrawing from its obligation to ensure health for its citizenry, leaving the poor population at the mercy of a highly inefficient system.

Sexual and reproductive health has received little attention, largely due to the stigma attached to sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV and AIDS. Rape, incest, sexual abuse and harassment continue to affect women's psychological, emotional and physical health. The rate of abortion remains high (190,000 per year) as women have no control over their reproductive capacities and men fail to take responsibility for contraception. One study found that that 41.9 percent of highly empowered women felt that the birth of a male child did not provide security, but there was a strong positive association between contraceptive use and level of empowerment and vice versa (Badar 2007). The authors concluded that there is a strong inverse relationship between women's empowerment and fertility, while a positive relation exists between empowerment and contraceptive use.

The Pakistan Medical Society has described anemia, pregnancy risks, menopausal disturbances and heart disease as major causes of morbidity and mortality among Pakistani women. A 2009 survey showed that more than 50 percent of women suffered from iron deficiency, while cardiovascular disease was the leading killer among women. Women with diabetes are two or three times more likely to have heart attacks than men. High blood pressure is also common among women who use oral contraceptives. The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists says that about 30,000 women die during pregnancy and more than 400,000 suffer from pregnancy-related complications every year, and remarked that improved basic health care structures in slums and rural areas was essential if women's health is to be improved (HRCP 2009, p. 263).

Violence has increased manifold due to war, conflict, and militancy. This affects women's health in a number of ways, including depression and sorrow due to the loss of close relatives. Violence and conflict, which has exacerbated since 2007, has led to increase in maternal morbidity and high rates of abortion and miscarriages (Saeed et al 2009). Mental and psychological health is particularly deteriorating as a result of war, conflict and displacement. Additionally, religious extremists forbade the use of polio vaccination in areas of FATA, Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa and Balochistan, where religious edicts were issued declaring immunization a diabolical plan to render tribal men infertile. This has led to an increase in polio cases in recent years. Underage marriages are another common source of mental and physical problems among women.

Out of the already low allocation for health, the funding for women's health is even lower, as there is an increasing tendency to privatize health care. This means that families that cannot afford health care for all their children will inevitably prefer to spend more on the health of a male child. The lack of transport facilities further complicates the issue

of women's access to health services. Absence of clear legislation on women's health and the inadequate health care infrastructure forces women to seek the help of poorly trained paramedics or informal systems that can endanger their lives. The lack of serious government commitment is a serious concern for human development practitioners because of the relationship of health with all other areas, including economic productivity and the enjoyment of a fulfilling life.

The World Health Organization estimates that 25 million agricultural workers suffer from pesticide poisoning, including a significant number of women. Cotton cultivation is a major reason: women become exposed to pesticides while working in cotton fields, even while pregnant or breast feeding. Women and children's health is also affected by water polluted with pesticides, which also enter the food chain through crops and livestock exposed to polluted water and soil, and cotton seeds which are processed to produce edible oil.

There is an urban bias in national health policies, as well as inadequate financial allocations and emphasis on tertiary medical facilities with little attention to primary health, ineffective monitoring and lack of regulatory control of the private health sector (HRCP 2009). The government has not kept up with the increasing number of patients, and the dismal state of affairs at public hospitals – which are often the only available option for rural women – continues.

3.2.4 Summary

Health issues cannot be looked at in isolation but need to be understood within a broader and holistic perspective (SDPI 2008). Health facilities for the masses are overburdened, and quality suffers. Public health loses out because doctors prefer to treat affluent clients privately. Low expenditure by the state and low priority to health means that there is increasing reliance on private services which are often unaffordable. The Ministry of Health depends upon donors to implement programs and policies due to a severe shortage of funds. This injects uncertainties into the system, making programs hard to design because of constantly shifting donor priorities. The high costs of health, combined with women's lack of mobility, restricted decision making power in the family and limited information are some of the key barriers to effective health care. Moreover, in conservative areas, male doctors are not allowed to examine women and there is an acute shortage of female doctors who find it difficult to work in remote areas due to housing shortage and absence of transport facilities.

4. Current Initiatives

4.1 General Initiatives

In the past fifteen years, the Government of Pakistan, as well as donors and civil society organizations, have taken a number of initiatives for women's empowerment and gender equality. It is not possible to enumerate all the measures here; however, a brief overview of some of the significant ones is presented below.

In 1998, the Government of Pakistan endorsed the National Plan of Action based on the twelve issues raised at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995. The government planned to focus on education, health, economic empowerment, rights of the girl child as well as other issues that emerged from Beijing.

In 2000, the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) was established through an ordinance. The NCSW is conceived as a watchdog on women's status and rights, and reports on discrimination against them. Over the past decade the NCSW has released several useful reports on discriminatory laws, violence against women, and other policies. It interacts regularly with women's rights groups to fulfill the agenda of women's emancipation and equal opportunities. It is an important part of the government machinery for women's empowerment.

In 2002, a National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women approved. It included social, economic and political empowerment of women along with recognition of women's economic contribution, both in the formal and informal economy. It also focused on the provision of easy access to microcredit, improved earning by better access to livelihoods, particularly agriculture and livestock production, and fulfilling the quota of 5 percent women in government services.

In the second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP-II), the government declares its aim of recruiting women to high positions in various services. Women's share in the foreign service, especially in ambassadorial positions, is growing consistently. The last governor of State Bank of Pakistan, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, was a woman. Progressively larger numbers of women are entering the legal profession, and the higher judiciary is increasingly inducting women. With government encouragement, women are now joining the armed forces, air force and other new fields (PRSP-II).

In 2009, four key legislative moves on women's rights were made. The Domestic Violence Bill was passed by the National Assembly, but failed to pass the Senate. The Criminal Law Amendment Bill was successfully moved, amending the Pakistan Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code to define sexual harassment more adequately to punish offenders. This was signed into law in 2010. The Nizam-e-Adl Regulation was signed in April 2009 to implement Qazi Courts system in the Malakand Division. This did not take into consideration the rights and freedoms of women at risk at the hands of obscurantist mullahs and anti-women forces (HRCP 2009).

The Punjab government's five billion rupee Sasti Roti ("cheap bread") scheme, meant to make food cheaper for the common man, was only partially successful, and later met with a number of issues in implementation and corruption. However, at a time when wheat flour was exorbitantly expensive and difficult for the poor to afford, the scheme provided flour at subsidized rates to the poor.

The Benazir Income Support Program was a federal government scheme for which Rs 70 billion were allocated in 2009 and Rs 50 billion in 2010. This scheme provides income support to women of households that fall below the poverty line. A sum of Rs 1,000 per month is given to women as supplementary income. This is distributed through legislators so that they could can the scheme in their constituencies. Although this scheme helped in the empowerment of women, because they had to get registered and receive national identity cards, thereby getting citizenship identity, nonetheless the scheme simply offers a safety net, without the employment creation which can lift people out of poverty. Though there were irregularities observed in this scheme, on the whole it has been successful.

A Gender Responsive Budgeting Initiative in 2005 studied how the state spends its money at the federal and Punjab levels, and is now strengthening monitoring and implementation of poverty reduction programs. Nevertheless, national and provincial budgets remain largely indifferent to the issues of women (Saigol, 2010c).

Current ongoing welfare initiatives include the Pakistan Bait-ul-Maal, which disburses funds to the destitute, needy, widows, orphans, invalids, and infirm, irrespective of gender, caste, creed or race. It has a food support program, individual financial assistance, and offers institutional rehabilitation through its civil society wing, the National Center for Rehabilitation of Child Labor, vocational training institutes and Dastkari Schools. Secondly, zakat (religious tax upon certain Muslim sects) provides funds for Guzara (subsistence) allowance, educational stipends, health care, social welfare and rehabilitation, Eid grants and marriage assistance.

A significant non-government initiative is the formation of South Asia Women in the Media (SAWM) which is taking up issues of religious fundamentalism, human security and the portrayal of women in the media. This is a useful platform from which organizations can raise issues of concern to women in the burgeoning private electronic media.

Some of the initiatives for poverty alleviation focused on women have shown improvement; however, welfare and cash payments tend to have limited impact as they fail to address the strategic interests of women which would alter their subordinate status in society. The total number of female beneficiaries under the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, Khushali Bank and Zarai Taraqqiati Bank Limited, increased from 174,000 in 2005–2006 to 318,000 in 2006–2007.

4.2 Land Rights, Agriculture and Livelihoods Initiatives

4.2.1 Government Initiatives

A 2009 study of the Sindh government's 2008 land distribution program considered the distribution of land among landless women. Though the project was successful over all, in three of the 17 districts male beneficiaries of the scheme outnumbered female beneficiaries. Overall figures show that women have received 70.6 percent of the land, while men received 29.4 percent. By the time of the study about 41,517 acres of the 85,199 available in this phase of distribution had been was distributed among 2,845 women and 1,184 men recipients. This is a laudable initiative that can be replicated in other provinces.

The federal government has launched a five marla (approximately 125 square meters) scheme for homeless citizens in rural areas. Land titles will be given to a female rural member of the house to boost her confidence and financial independence. This, again, is a laudable scheme to empower rural landless women.

Lady Livestock Workers are being trained to disseminate knowledge about better management of livestock to other women. Around 3,500

women will be trained with the support of the University of Veterinary and Animal Science. This will help ensure sustainable growth and alleviate poverty in rural areas where 60–70 percent of the population resides (PRSP-II, 2010).

The government has initiated several projects to help women through extension services such as the Crop Maximization Project, Integration of Agriculture, Research and Extension Activities, Introduction of Herbs as Crops, etc. The National Fund for the Advancement of Rural Women was launched in 2005 by the Ministry of Women Development with Khushhali Bank, First Women Bank Limited and the Agha Khan Rural Support Program. It envisaged empowering 23,000 women covering 74,000 households. This is slowly being implemented, and is reaching the women who are the poorest of poor (SDPI 2008).

In January 2011, the provincial assembly of Sindh amended the Sindh Fisheries Ordinance 1980 and abolished the lease system for fishing in the public waters (Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum 2011). The amended law will protect the economic rights of 0.5 million fisherfolk who were exploited by influential persons under the old contract system. This appears to be a positive initiative to protect vulnerable fishing communities against exploitation, but specific measures are required to empower fisherwomen whose issues have not been recognized or addressed by the government.

4.2.2 Initiatives by Non-Government Actors

Women's land rights have received little attention in the past. In recent years, however, studies on women and land rights have been conducted by at least two organizations: SDPI (Khattak, Brohi and Anwar 2010) and Shirkat Gah (Mumtaz and Noshirwani 2007). Both studies point out the reasons why women are denied land rights, including cultural, customary, traditional and legal dynamics that work to deny women land rights. They point out women's subordinate status in society, inability to manage land, lack of access to credit and facilities, and fear of violence and social censure among women which deters them from seeking their rights to land and demanding their inheritance. The study by SDPI was funded by ActionAid Pakistan, which is beginning to look at land rights as a major issue that straddles food security and women's rights, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

Shirkat Gah's Green Economics and Globalization program looks at issues of women and agriculture and the manner in which land sold to multinational companies affects the lives of local people. Shirkat Gah has conducted studies on sustainable agricultural practices and organic farming with a focus on women. Its Karachi office has also worked on fisherwomen's issues and has documented them in film. Roots for Equity, another Karachi-based organization working in interior Sindh, has experimented with women's collective farming in interior Sindh. Roots also works on issues of globalization and, in particular, on the manner in which the WTO Agreement on Agriculture impacts livelihoods of farmers, particularly women, in developing countries. Roots for Equity has created a farmers' association that holds an annual convention to discuss the issues of the farming community and chalk out strategies to prevail upon the government to protect farmers' rights when entering international agreements. Roots works on food security and food sovereignty and has conducted research on the impact of pesticides on women peasant labor in Sindh.

The Netherlands-based donor agencies ICCO and Kerk in Actie have supported the Lower Sindh Rural Development Association in Mirpurkhas, Sindh, and the Participatory Village Development Program working in Tharparkar, on issues of livelihood, food and water security, health and education with a focus on women. In the north several organizations, including ActionAid Pakistan, Oxfam, Islamic Relief and Christian Relief Services, have worked on women's livelihood issues, especially following the 2005 earthquake. ActionAid's Emergency and Reconstruction Program paid a great deal of attention to women in reconstruction efforts and brought together women through community centers to enable to rehabilitate themselves through collective decision-making. These innovative experiments were carried out in Mansehra, Battagram,

Muzaffarabad and Bagh.

4.3 Employment and Economic Empowerment Initiatives

4.3.1 Government Initiatives

Pakistan's fifth and sixth five-year plans were the point at which economic importance of women began to be recognized (Khan, 2007). The First Women Bank was established in 1989 as a development bank for women. The National Plan of Action and the National Fund for the Advancement of Rural Women were devised for women's empowerment. It was recognized that expanding government employment opportunities for women was imperative as women only make up 5.4 percent of public service employees. Village-Based Family Planning Workers' Scheme, LHWs, the 1997 Commission for Inquiry on Women, NCSW, and the National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women 2002 were all steps towards the women's empowerment and ultimately gender equality.

The National Fund for the Advancement of Rural Women (Jafakash Women) is facilitating economic empowerment. The Ministry of Women Development (MoWD) has initiated three pilot projects aimed at diversifying women's skills and making them more competitive in the economic market.

MoWD has taken many measures to enhance women's empowerment. These include the National Fund for the Advancement of Women; Patti Development Project; Skill and Microenterprise Development amongst Gwadar Women, in collaboration with Khushhali Bank; Economic Empowerment of Rural Women through First Women Bank; and Economic Empowerment of Women in Tharparkar District in collaboration with Thardeep Rural Development Program. However, the MoWD has few resources, and is not a highly valued ministry. Indeed, the current government has failed to appoint a minister, more than two years after coming to power. Since the work of this ministry is cross-cutting and depends upon several other sectoral ministries such as education, health or agriculture, its work is often impeded by red tape and bottlenecks.

The Pakistan Decent Work Country Program, a joint initiative of the Government of Pakistan and International Labor Organization aims to provide opportunities for men and women to get decent and productive work with security and human dignity. It has four objectives: labor law reform; employment generation through human resource development; skill training expansion and social protection including in the informal economy.

In 2009–2010 social security and welfare expenditure recorded an impressive increase of 56.6 percent over the previous year. While expenditure on safety nets has fallen, that on social security and welfare has increased. Social security is being replaced by direct and targeted assistance such as the Benazir Income Support Program (PRSP-II).

The Labor Policy of 2002 for the first time recognized home-based workers and extended welfare coverage to them. However, implementation was weak, and the promises never materialized. The Labor Policy 2009 contains new labor regulations and a clear commitment to bring all workers into the formal stream. A social protection bill for bangle workers in Sindh was signed recently. There are several NGOs working on the issues of home-based workers, including HomeNet, Sungi and others across Pakistan.

The government's Waseela-e-Haq program aims to provide the poor with an opportunity for self-employment. A cash award of Rs 300,000 is given as a one-time loan for income generation schemes and small enterprises. This program can potentially be targeted toward women.

In 2010, the Harassment of Women at the Workplace law was passed. While its implementation will require a great deal of work, its passage is a positive measure that may potentially bring a modicum of security to women at their places of work.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy aims to create Special Economic Zones to promote women's employment. However, the experience of other

countries with such zones shows that they deny all the basic rights, protections and entitlements to which those in the formal labor sector are entitled. Labor in such zones is heavily exploited, as there is total absence of any social protection or fundamental labor rights. These zones seem more to encourage informalization than discourage it.

Employees Old Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) provides monetary benefits to older workers and includes pensions, invalidity pension, survivors' pensions, and old-age grants. This institution was involved in corruption and misappropriation scandals in the early part of the decade, but it can be a potential source of income for older women workers as they are formalized and register with this institution.

There are over seven thousand registered trade unions in Pakistan. In 2002, their male membership was 245,400, compared to only 2,134 for women. This reflected a three-fold decline since 1998 due to the ineffectiveness of unions to address women's issues and the social stigma attached to women's participation alongside men in union activities. As a result, women do not have significant membership in major unions or decision-making power; trade unions, in particular, need to induct more women office bearers.

In July 2006, the government announced the 12-hour work day. Women workers stayed in industries until ten at night and worked in two shifts, against both ILO conventions and the laws of the land. They also lost legal compensation for extra work. About 52 million workers were affected by this but the trade union movement was too weak to respond effectively.

There is a need for home-based workers' unions or cooperatives so that women can increase their bargaining power in such situations. In early 2005, HomeNet South Asia was launched to start the process for home-based workers (Khan 2007). Strengthened trade unions and workers' cooperatives is a major gap that needs to be filled as workers have little recourse to collective bargaining in the era of informalization.

The Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP) proposed a coherent gender reform agenda to align policies, structures, policies, programs, and projects on gender equality. GRAP is based on the idea of political, administrative, public sector employment, policy, and fiscal reforms, and has led to the achievement of a number of major gender equality goals. These include the establishment of a Provincial Gender Mainstreaming Committee in the Punjab, amendments in the rules of business for women's development departments, the restructuring of women development's departments is on the cards, career development centers in universities have been established, and gender mainstreaming has been established in eight government departments of the Punjab. Electronic and print media campaigns have been launched to create awareness.

However, GRAP has yet to be successful, and has been heavily critiqued by donors and NGOs. Some donors have shown complete disillusionment with its implementation, and it has been alleged that political will among politicians and the bureaucracy only exists because of international pressure.

PRSP -II claims that its predecessor, PRSP-I, shows that microcredit increases incomes for poor households; however it has not led to women's empowerment. If women entrepreneurs receive skill development training and access to markets, then they would graduate from income-generation activities and microentrepreneurship to big business. Credit schemes are designed for women to work in groups and this, it is claimed, results in enhanced self-confidence and decision-making skills. However, several studies done in India and Pakistan contradict the claim that microcredit is empowering for women. The Indian study found that microcredit can have inadvertent detrimental effects, especially in a highly male-dominated environment and industry, and such strategies need to be thought out more clearly before being applied (Leach and Sitaram 2002).

4.3.2 Initiatives by Non-Government Actors

The paradigm of microcredit and loans is related to women's economic empowerment. While many believe women to be less creative entrepreneurs than men, and less reliable when repaying loans, in reality the situation is the opposite. Many independent evaluations have found women to be much more reliable clients than men; they are better investors with quicker and higher rates of repayment.

Goetz and Gupta in their analysis of Grameen Bank and three other credit institutions in Bangladesh noted that only 37 percent of female borrowers retained control over loans within the household (1996). Thus in 63 percent of households where women had taken loans in their own names, men used part or all of the money for their own needs. Women remained responsible for repayment, even when their husbands used the loan without generating any return. Ultimately, therefore, some women are worse off with a loan than without it. In an evaluation of the literacy and microcredit program conducted by a Lahore-based NGO, Bunyad, it was found that microcredit followed the "government dole" model and saw women as recipients of welfare – a demeaning, rather than empowering position (Afridi 2009). In another study in Pakistan, it was found that microcredit has limited potential for the empowerment of urban women (Asim 2008). Thus, microcredit schemes often have limited value for empowerment and are sometimes actually disempowering; aside from men taking loans in women's names, microcredit can reinforce purdah and perpetuate inequalities and existing social stratification (Khan, 2007).

Since the verdict on microcredit is mixed, such schemes have to be used with a great deal of caution and careful planning. Women's economic empowerment requires long-term, strategic interventions rather than short-term, piecemeal initiatives. Even in the literature on women's economic empowerment, there is little if no recognition of the non-economic gender-based roles, responsibilities and subjectivities having a direct bearing on economic empowerment. This suggests that empowerment has to be understood holistically and relatively, i.e. in relation to men, in relation to different women's groups, and at different levels.

There have been campaigns by labor rights organizations, like PILER, advocating for better working conditions in the formal sector and registration of workers in the informal economy. PILER recently also released an assessment of the new Labor Policy of 2009.

To protect home-based workers, there is a need to advocate for the government to sign ILO Convention 177 on home-based workers. SUNGI has led the move towards developing a Home-Based Workers' Policy, for which advocacy with the government has begun through the National Commission on the Status of Women. HomeNet Pakistan, Aurat Foundation, Women Workers' Helpline and other organizations are also involved in this effort. Such initiatives are supported by ILO, ActionAid and other organizations. In 2006, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) supported a major initiative for Home-Based Women Workers and their rights through ActionAid Pakistan.

4.4 Education Initiatives

4.4.1 Government Initiatives

The 18th Amendment to the Constitution finally declared education fundamental right in 2010, fulfilling a long-standing demand of civil society organizations. This step will help advocacy groups in raising the question of education and in demanding more allocations for this sector.
In the past, initiatives such as the Nai Roshni schools and the Prime Minister's Literacy Commission have not borne much fruit. The excessive privatization of education and its non-formalization have led to state abdication of this duty and lower quality of public education. In the Punjab up to 60 percent of children are now in private education, largely thanks to the dismal quality of formal education. There is an urgent need now to end the present system, whereby several educational systems run in parallel (private, public, etc), and to create a single stream

that can match internationally recognized standards. In spite of the government's Education Sector Reforms, which emphasize women's education, little has been achieved in the rural areas where most poor women reside.

The Education Policy 2009 promised increased allocations in the coming years; however, they have not yet materialized, as the current federal budget (2010–2011) once again allocated a meager sum for education. This may, in part, be due to the provincial autonomy which was the overriding principle of the 18th Amendment, and the National Finance Commission Award which gives the provinces a greater share thanks to the devolution of many subjects from the centre to the provinces.

With control over an enhanced share in national resources, all the provinces have set aside funds for social protection and pro-poor subsidies, in addition to health and education. The Parha Likha Punjab scheme developed by the previous provincial government was abandoned. Instead, there has been discussion of a program of Danish Schools, which were to provide free educational facilities to children of families registered under the food support program. The Punjab government released about Rs 700 million to provide quality education in rural areas at par with that available in urban areas. However, the system could not be launched properly until the end of 2009.

The education budget for the Punjab increased from Rs 21.503 billion in 2009–2010 to Rs 28.885 billion in 2010–2011. The government made a separate allocation of Rs 3 billion for the Danish schools in its Annual Development Plan, and Rs 2 billion rupees for the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority. The provincial government also allocated Rs 1.96 billion for information technology. It announced that the number of seats in engineering colleges would be increased by 300 from the following fiscal year, and to 1,200 in the next four years. Similarly, 452 new seats would be added to existing medical colleges from September 2010, and four new medical colleges would be established, adding another 550 seats. The inclusion of women in these initiatives will be important.

Approximately four million children between four and 15 years of age were found to be out of school, and most of them were rural girls. Around 4.3 million children were in the public school system. The Sindh government acknowledged that the issue of quality education needed to be addressed on urgent basis ("Outlay Rs 422 bn…" 2010). The provincial government in Sindh increased the education development budget from Rs 5.9 billion rupees to Rs 7 billion, and allocated an additional Rs 6 billion for boarding schools and comprehensive schools. The efforts of the Sindh government to educate girls are laudable and can be replicated in other provinces.

The Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa budget announced an allocation of Rs 9.4 billion for health and education combined (Daudzai 2010). A sum of Rs 33.1 billion was set aside to build 27,419 new schools and while Rs 2.9 billion was to be spent on 147 colleges and libraries. Language laboratories and a scholarship for Ph.D. students were also to be established. In Balochistan, it was announced that the PSDP would receive Rs 22.026 billion ("Record Rs 152 bn Balochistan budget" 2010). The major portion of current revenue expenditures would go to the general public service (Rs 18.565 billion) and education affairs and services (17.328 billion) (ibid.). In the Balochistan budget, a record rise of Rs 8 billion is envisaged in the coming year (ibid.). It is important that the initiatives planned by the provincial governments be made gender-sensitive and extended to women.

In recent years, the Department for International Development (DFID) provided support for the Gender Education Policy Support Project run by the Government of Pakistan with technical support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). This project aims to achieve gender parity, equality and equity at all levels of education. At the higher levels of education, women have an advantage, as more women go into higher education and achieve better results. This, however, is true of the middle classes. For the urban lower and middle classes, there is a dire need for vocational and technical training, as well as general education.

In spite of the large number of initiatives in the education sector, particularly by donors working through NGOs or the government, the literacy rate remains low, particularly in rural areas where women are at a disadvantage. There is little inter-donor coordination or government-NGO coordination. As a result, efforts are dispersed, overlapping and, in the end, fruitless. There is a need to pool resources and devise a comprehensive program that covers the three main elements of education: curriculum (what is taught), pedagogy (how it is taught), and evaluation (how one measures what is taught). Finally, education is equated with schooling instead of being conceptualized broadly as a life-long process in which learning occurs in many settings.

4.4.2 Initiatives by Non-Government Actors

Education has received a great deal of funding support from all the major donors including DFID, Oxfam, ActionAid, CIDA, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UNICEF, UNESCO, and others. As a result, organizations like Society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE) and Idara-e-Taleem-o-Agahi (ITA) in the Punjab; Khwedo Kor in Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa; Baanh, Beli, Sindh Education Foundation and Teachers Resource Center in Sindh, and the Society for the Community Support for Primary Education, Balochistan (SCSPEB) in Balochistan have set up a large number of community-based and non-formal girls' primary schools.

However, since the preferred certification by parents and communities is the government primary certificate, the children have been subjected to the curriculum and textbooks created by the Federal Education Ministry. The mainstream curriculum is far from empowering for women, as it perpetuates traditional bias and gender insensitivity. There have been a number of efforts to reform the curricula and textbooks which have met with resistance from the conservative and religious lobbies for being seen as promoting secular knowledge.

Curriculum reform efforts have been made by the Sindh Education Foundation, SDPI and Simorgh, but the government has not been inclined to implement changes. However, supplementary educational materials developed by Simorgh have been very well-received in private schools. The Kaleidoscope series created by Simorgh has won approbation from a number of educators. Similarly, the attempt at creating an alternative "history from below" project undertaken by ActionAid Pakistan in an attempt to depict peoples' history has received plaudits from the private sector and civil society organizations, but the government has been reluctant to adopt a new view of history that does not privilege religious nationalism.

SAHE has conducted teacher training workshops and produced materials on gender and human rights education funded by CIDA. While the teachers showed willingness and even excitement about using the new materials and ideas, the education bureaucracy and senior management discourages any practices that do not lead to examination results. Therefore, even good curricula and materials and effective pedagogy fails due to the centralized examination system that imposes only a certain text and rote methodology upon students and teachers alike. ITA is also producing materials and carrying out workshops and training in citizenship education to inform students, including girls, of their basic rights. Once again, the government has not been sympathetic to alternative materials not produced under its own specific direction.

4.5 Health Initiatives

4.5.1 Government Initiatives

Health has traditionally received a miniscule amount of allocation in the national budget, usually less than 1 percent of GDP. In the 2010–2011 budget, allocations for family planning, primary health care and the expanded program on immunization were slashed. One reason for the dramatic cuts at the federal level (the health was reduced by 27 percent) may be that health is now a provincial subject following the 18th Amendment (Iqbal 2010), and the provinces have received increased allocations for their own development programs. The assumption underlying this move is that health can better be

served locally instead of being managed from the centre. However, women find it hard to reach even district level health services due to lack of mobility; once local government systems have been established, it is expected that governance and service delivery will become easier. A new pilot program has been announced by the federal government, the Waseela-e-Sehat scheme, which provides health insurance to the poorest of the poor.

In the 2009–2010 national budget, over 50 percent of health allocations were for two programs on family planning and immunization. Immunization presents its own problems: Taliban in Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa and FATA have often prevented immunization in their areas of control. In conflict-affected areas, therefore, issues of women's health are even more challenging; some conservative groups do not allow women to be examined by male doctors, despite the acute shortage of women doctors.

The Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa budget announced an allocation of Rs 9.4 billion for health and education combined (Daudzai 2010). Of this, Rs 5.9 billion would be spent on health. A total of 250 trainee medical officers would be employed and the first batch of 50 women doctors from the Girls' Medical College would be given the opportunity of house jobs.

The Balochistan government allocated 7.443 billion rupees for health affairs and services. Rs 1.13 million rupees were allocated to providing medicines to hospitals and Rs 1 billion to the purchase of new medical equipment. The government has proposed a new 100 bed hospital, and the renovation of the 547 basic health units operational in the province ("Balochistan budget for 2010-11 announced" 2010).

The Punjab government allocated Rs 14.5 billion for the health sector in the provincial budget for the year 2010–2011 as against Rs 12.025 billion in 2009–2010. In addition, Rs 1.5 billion was allocated for the establishment of three new medical colleges (Saleem 2010). Medical allowances of 25 percent per month for Grades 1–15 and 15 percent for Grade 16 and above were also proposed.

The Sindh government raised its budgetary allocation for health to Rs 16.9 billion for the fiscal 2010– 2011 against Rs 5.7 billion the previous year. Rs 6.3 billion are dedicated to development, and Rs 10.6 billion to recurrent expenses ("Outlay Rs 422 bn…" 2010).

The Ministry of Women's Development established 24 Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Centers for women's centers throughout the country to provide relief and support to rehabilitate survivors of violence and women in distress. These are in line with CEDAW, National Plan of Action and the Beijing Platform for Action. The objective is to protect women against all types of violence and eliminate discrimination. The centers provide temporary shelters to victims of violence in emergencies, medical and first aid, and arrange free legal assistance to victims. They also investigate cases of violence or prejudice and liaise with agencies to protect women individually and collectively. Nine centers will be established in the earthquake affected areas in Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir in collaboration with the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA).

The MoWD also launched a campaign against violence against women, which will create awareness through the print and electronic media to enable women to understand and exercise their rights economically, politically and legally. It will also inform rural women about protection and legal services available against violence and brutality (PRSP-II 2010).

The vision here is to integrate preventive and primary health care at the basic health unit level, and strengthen secondary and tertiary health care facilities. Recent government initiatives to post women health workers only to districts where their parents or husbands reside is a positive step, as it can facilitate women's entry in the health profession in a context where male-dominated societal values reign supreme. However, the effect of this measure may also be negative, as it would reduce opportunities for women except in areas where their family members reside. Additionally, it could reinforce patriarchal values and male-

dominated attitudes. However, until such attitudes change considerably, the only way some women can access health facilities is through measures such as this.

4.5.2 Initiatives by Non-Government Actors

Health is heavily dependent on donors, particularly the World Health Organization. Other major donors include CARE International, which strives to improve health knowledge and health services through women's access to life saving education and care, including birth spacing, HIV prevention and maternal care. Health insurance covering the entire family is a major component of the program, and will cover full hospitalization, day care, pregnancy, diagnostic tests, and accident compensation for earning members of the family.

CARE's initiatives can be replicated by other international NGOs, many of whom, like ActionAid International and Oxfam, have a large presence in Pakistan and already work on health and education issues. These NGOs work in disaster and conflict-hit areas and their efforts can be coordinated with those of the government and other donors.

ActionAid Pakistan has set up health clinics in all of its development areas as a part of an integrated health program. Special attention is paid to women's health issues such as reproductive health. ActionAid also focuses on HIV and AIDS, with emphasis on the manner in which women may be infected through heterosexual contact and male responsibility for contraception.

While many women's and human rights organizations work on reproductive and maternal health, few pay special attention to the health of young women and unmarried women. As a result, there is silence on the issue of sexually transmitted diseases and the sexual rights and health of unmarried girls and women. An exception is the Adolescent Health Awareness Network (AHAN) which works on sexual and reproductive health rights, and is supported by the World Population Foundation. Such initiatives can be replicated, as there is little awareness in Pakistan about alternative sexualities including homosexuality, transsexual issues and gay, lesbian and bisexual choices and issues.

5. Recommendations

5.1 General Recommendations

There is a need for capacity-building of governments as well as civil society organizations in order to ensure gender equality. The capacity of gender equality advocacy groups must be enhanced to enable them to voice women's priorities in public decision-making, as well as the capacity of public institutions to respond adequately to women's needs. The Ministries of Finance and Planning need to strengthen the capacity of technical staff to carry out gender-responsive budgeting and planning, and the capacity of gender focal points in sector ministries should be developed so they can coordinate gender responsive budgeting effectively.

The national institutions and systems designed for women's empowerment, such as the Ministry of Women's Development and the National Commission on the Status of Women, should enhance their skills to participate effectively in national planning processes, monitor implementation and promote accountability mechanisms for gender equality. Women's organizations and gender equality advocates need to enhance their understanding of the national planning and budgeting processes so that they may have effective input into policy-making. The sustainability of new capacities needs to be safeguarded through broad-based partnerships and stakeholder forums to determine policy priorities, implementation strategies and accountability mechanisms (SDPI 2008). These demands constitute the core of governance for gender equality. Even when capacities are developed, governance structures should ensure that mechanisms of implementation translate into demonstrable performance.

It is imperative to have sex disaggregated data on all social and economic sectors based on differences in social, economic, and political status, in order to base policies, programs and strategies upon reliable information. For this, comprehensive research and surveys, both qualitative and quantitative, would need to be done on a country-wide basis. A project database of all programs, policies and plans for gender equality by governments, NGOs, and international NGOs is needed as a repository of knowledge and for checking and replication of efforts. The reports and policy papers produced should be translated into national and regional languages for wider dissemination across the country.

In order to achieve the MDGs and other development goals, it is vital that aid is used effectively and responsibly to achieve gender equality. Various donors perceive and give importance to the gender equality component differently in various aid programs. There needs to be coordination between different donors in terms of how they conceive gender equality and women's empowerment. Similarly, the synergies between the Government of Pakistan, provincial governments, donors, civil society and activist groups are important so that the efforts of each may be further fortified and duplication avoided.

According to the UNIFEM Report 2006, to support gender equality, the aid architecture

needs be based on the following premises:

- Adequate financing for programs that respond to women's needs;
- Accountability systems for governments and donors to track and enhance their contributions for gender equality;
- Gender sensitive progress assessments and performance monitoring; and,
- Indicators for aid effectiveness.

Women's political empowerment through an increase of seats in legislative assemblies and in the government can, in turn, have a positive impact upon economic empowerment. In this area women in Pakistan have done better than many South Asian counterparts with 17.5 percent representation in the national and provincial legislatures. Women had 33 percent representation in the recently abolished local government system. The provincial governments should devise new local government systems which are effective for service delivery especially with regard to women. Furthermore, the direct election of women through tickets allotted to them by political parties should be encouraged so that their voice in the assemblies can be more effective. Women who enter the assemblies on reserved seats are beholden to their parties, and find it difficult to deviate from party positions on women's issues.

5.2 Land Rights, Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Recommendations

The Human Rights Council recommends that "states undergoing agrarian reform or land redistribution schemes must uphold the equal right to land for women, regardless of marital status. Women usually do not have their names on land-use certificates (whether jointly with their husbands or individually), which decreases their ability to apply for mortgage or credit" (UN Human Rights Council Advisory Committee 2010). They are only allowed to work on the land. This discrimination in land ownership must be eliminated based on CEDAW principles. To achieve this, changes in institutions and laws are required. However, cultural practices perpetuate discrimination based on customary and traditional mores. Governments that have good laws must also show the will to enforce them and bridge the gap between legal and theoretical equality through affirmative action and strict enforcement of women's legal, economic and political rights.

A study on poverty and land reforms suggests that in terms of ownership of land by gender stark inequities are apparent (Leghari and Mahesar n.d). The authors of the study recommend that redistributive laws and policies target the poor population and are gender-sensitive. Women must be recognized as constituting a separate group and accorded rights as such. Once pro-poor and gender-balanced policies are in place there is a need for effective follow-up and monitoring to ensure that loopholes are not exploited to keep the less privileged deprived of the possible advantages. A joint ownership system should be used to give land to landless women to enhance their status and position in their families and society, and would be a significant step towards acceding land rights to women. Joint ownership of land in the government's transfer schemes and land reforms would be achieved through half-titles for women (Mumtaz and Noshirwani 2007). Though small in number, women do hold titles to the land but generally do not exercise control over it. The government should provide training and awareness opportunities and infrastructure support to facilitate women so that they can control and manage the land on their own (Leghari and Mahesar n.d).

Most of the recommendations on women's land rights by Consult for Women and Land Rights, India, are equally applicable to the case of Pakistan (CWLR 2006). The pivotal demand is to increase rural women's ownership of land, resources and productive assets through radical agrarian reforms. There should be a gender-just redistribution of land along with a transformation in anti-women laws, policies and unequal social and economic relations. Land, along with forest and water, are major sources of livelihood for the rural poor, and women represent the majority of the rural poor. Land transferred from government is one source, while other sources include land bought from market and received through family inheritance. Women's legal ownership of land and

resources should be encouraged through individual titles in the name of women alone for farms, garden plots or housing/ homestead land for subsistence needs. Joint ownership with men for income generation and management of land and resources can also provide women with a modicum of security. Group rights for women under the control of women's groups on private agricultural land, common property resources, surplus ceiling land, forest and water resources is another viable option.

It is imperative to institute legal reform by amending existing laws to include the definition of resource rights for women, and apply gender equity in inheritance rights. In the case of Pakistan, the Muslim inheritance law is complex and manifests itself differently in different situations. The half share of land and property prescribed under Muslim law is not a ceiling, but a least recommended share. This can be legally increased to equal share through the process of learned opinion. However, even a share equal to half that of the brothers is usually not given to women due to cultural and customary beliefs, and women are, instead, compensated with dowry. This practice needs to be eliminated in favor of the legal and, preferably, equal share in inheritance. The enforcement of law based on equality would be vital as families often find loopholes to scuttle the legal process or simply use threats, violence and fear of social censure to impose their will.

Although Shariah laws grant inheritance rights to women equal to half the share of the brother, it is still superior to customary and cultural practices that do not give any share at all. Shariah can therefore be used to legitimize women's inheritance rights, but ultimately the aim must be equality of inheritance based on CEDAW as well as the equality enshrined in Pakistan's Constitution. Inheritance and family laws can be brought under a secular civil code in order to enact gender-neutral laws (Khattak, Brohi and Anwar 2010). Khattak, Brohi and Anwar also suggest that local government systems should be instituted immediately to resolve disputes and ensure women's land rights and effective control. The state should aim to strengthen social protection and social service systems. The absence of state services makes women more dependent upon family and kinship and informal systems. Better access to systems and services of the state for security and protection, as well as formal justice systems should be ensured and, in the event of divorce, there should be five years maintenance and equal division of the property acquired during marriage (Khattak, Brohi and Anwar 2010).

There needs to be widespread dissemination of knowledge of women's legal inheritance rights and rights to land. One of the several reasons for the denial of women's rights to land and property is the lack of knowledge and access to legal systems as well as lack of resources to fight legal cases. The media, both print and electronic, as well as women's organizations can be involved in the dissemination of information, as well as assistance in acquiring legal aid in the absence of personal resources.

There is a severe dearth of data and baseline information which impedes effective advocacy for women's land and inheritance rights. Proper documentation of women's agricultural tasks and time-use studies are needed since many of their activities are labeled extensions of household duties. A debate with policymakers, lawmakers, civil society organizations needs to be initiated and the vibrant private media used to highlight this hitherto ignored issue. The debates should be used to disseminate information as well as create legitimacy for women's ownership and control over land and resources and inheritance rights. They can also raise awareness of women's rights over their assets and how to exercise effective control and management. The organizations currently working on land rights need to be strengthened, and a network should be established to create synergies and avoid overlaps and duplication. The network should work to mobilize the public on the issue and enhance organizational capacity by providing relevant and timely information.

Women's participation in paid agricultural work is limited. A significant portion of agricultural tasks, such as weeding, watering, harvesting, threshing, are carried out mostly by women; however as customs and traditions favor men's access to

market, women's economic contribution to agriculture remains unrecognized, uncounted and underestimated even though their workloads are tripled (SDPI 2008). There is a need to get women's economic contributions counted in official statistics and enumerations. The assistance of women's organizations can be enlisted to carry out the work of documentation, as well as train personnel in the statistics and finance divisions regarding the compiling of data on women. Such data should inform important national documents such as the economic review, five-year plans and the annual budget.

Women need to be given a voice in decision-making in the irrigation sector. At present they have no clearly specified rights as water-users, and no representation on irrigation-related agencies. Since land ownership is the criterion for such representation, and women do not own land, they remain voiceless in such bodies (ibid.). A country-wide campaign for women's land rights can be accompanied by demands for their representation on area water boards.

Agricultural policies should be based on sound knowledge of gender relations and collective management. Research and analysis of the situation needs to be done and gender analysis should be incorporated in planning, monitoring and evaluation. Reforms are needed in the legal system to ensure land and water rights and for women's membership in farmer's organizations. This membership is based on land ownership which must be legally ensured so that women can be represented on farmers' bodies.

In order to address women's issues in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, it is important to comprehend the underlying cultural practices which are either reinforced or ignored by the formal legal systems. Agricultural policies need to be revised in order to take into account women's issues and to make them gender-sensitive. Small-scale land distribution to women for subsistence farming can be encouraged and supported. Organic farming for women is another option to meet needs at the family and community levels. Appropriate food storage systems are required so that women can preserve and store food for lean times.

There needs to be recognition of the informal and semi-formal sector workers in the case of rural women. Sustainable agricultural production techniques can ensure food security and food rights for women. Farm employment should be promoted for it leads to asset creation (Sadeque and Hisham 2009). Women's capacity for economic autonomy can be enhanced through capacity-building, skill development and microfinance rather than microcredit (Mumtaz and Noshirwani 2007). Women need to be given management and marketing training to be able to manage and sell their produce. This can done through women's organizations working on agricultural and land rights issues.

Harmful and deleterious agricultural practices that affect women's health need to be curtailed. There is a need to implement the Agriculture Pesticide Rules 1973; the Food and Agriculture Organization's international code of conduct on the distribution and use of pesticides, and the 2005 National Environmental Policy which promotes and integrates pest management and discourages the use of agrochemicals (ibid.). Such laws and policies should be published in the vernacular languages and used to train rural women and concerned government officials.

It is important to ensure women have access to credit and agricultural information. Gender-specific agricultural tasks, such as seed preparation, threshing and fertilizing, receive little support from agricultural extension workers. The information provided on radio and television is addressed only to men on the assumption that only men are agricultural workers. Women should be provided extension services such as loans, credit, fertilizers and seeds. This can be done through public-private partnerships in setting up extension services organizations. The mechanization of agriculture had made women redundant as the requirement of manual labor was diminished. There is a need to equip women and train them in latest technologies to bring them up to date. This can be done with the help of women's organizations (Khattak, Brohi & Anwar, 2010), who can also help establish small seed banks and microfinance banks.

As a result of the commercialization of fishing, women's roles have been marginalized. Fisherwomen need alternative employment opportunities and compensation. They also need training to make a claim for their share in the fisheries sector. Health services need to be provided to fisherwomen for the various diseases that result from their work. Small, specialized health units can be set up for them and easy accessibility should be ensured. Technical knowhow should be provided to women to increase their income-generation capacities. Until now, not a single policy or administrative action to uplift the socioeconomic status of fisherwomen has been taken by the government.

The rates of engagement in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries labor force are 38.4 percent for men and 69.9 percent for women (SDPI 2008). Nonetheless, this sector has been singularly ignored in most official policies. Women need to be imparted training and skills in livestock, dairy farming and fish pond cultivation, and fruits and vegetable preservation and packing to enable them to become self-employed. Women's access to extension services is vital for their economic empowerment.

There should be gender-responsive forestry policies and programs for sustainable forestry. The needs and interests of both men and women should be taken into account and gender issues must be incorporated into sustainable forestry management. As the UN Human Rights Council states:

Technologies designed to meet women's needs have proven particularly useful in increasing productivity and shortening physically demanding labor to relieve women of their heavy burdens. Alternative sources of cooking fuels have proven to shorten preparation and storage of foods and decrease the need for daily firewood collection. Equitable rights to land for women in both developed and developing countries point to the success of rural (and urban) small businesses run by women (compared to their male counterparts) so much so that banks and service industries actively support women's entrepreneurial initiatives (UN Human Rights Council Advisory Committee 2010).

It is not adequate to promote only equal access of women to land ownership. Other resources necessary for socioeconomic participation include capital, technical assistance, tools, equipment, markets, and time. Women need training in methods to increase productivity through new forestry technologies, including nursery techniques, site selection, species selection, land preparation, planting, weeding and maintenance. There is an urgent need to train female forestry extension agents and increase awareness about women's specific use of forest resources. Women's particular needs and constraints must be kept in mind during any intervention in forestry and agriculture. It is important to increase awareness among men and women about the value of forests and sustainable management of forests (Martin 2004). Women's craft and home-based forest industries can be promoted through credit utilization, business management and marketing. Finally, it is imperative to enhance women's participation and cooperation in community groups and/ or forest resource management committees created for project management (SDPI 2008). Women's organizations involved in agriculture and sustainable environmental issues can be enlisted for this purpose.

Women's traditional knowledge should be preserved and transferred down the generations and to others. This requires research and publication in the vernacular languages. Agricultural labor can be brought within the formal economy so that women's work would be recognized and valued and their issues addressed more easily. To achieve this, large-scale campaigning and advocacy is needed with both the provincial and federal governments.

According to the UN Human Rights Council, Committee on the Right to Food, women are most affected by food insecurity therefore a rights-based approach is required by donors, governments and civil society organizations. Women's health needs are strongly affected by food insecurity as they are malnourished and underweight. They also face vulnerability to HIV and AIDS due to poverty and lack of control over

their own bodies. Women's right to food and health are basic for themselves and their families hence barriers to proper health care must be removed. Sanitation should be ensured along with potable water. For this purpose, the organizations concerned with women's health, as well as the provincial health departments can be enlisted. The income earned and managed by women is positively correlated to economic and nutritional well-being for the entire household (Quisumbing et al 1995, p. 9). Women are more likely to spend their income on food and children's needs and research shows that a child's chances of survival increase by 20 percent when the mother controls the household budget (Walsh 1998). Men, in particular, need to be sensitized to the health needs of the family through training, workshops and campaigns.

In order to institute meaningful reforms in the area of land rights, agriculture, fisheries and forestry, an umbrella platform or alliance of organizations working on these issues should be formed. The organizations that can be involved in the formation of this alliance should include, but not be limited to, SDPI, Roots for Equity, the Lower Sindh Rural Development Association (LRSDA), Participatory Village Development Program (PVDP), Shirkat Gah, South Asia Partnership, Sungi and HRCP. This platform can be the basis of advocacy, research, training and dissemination of knowledge of the issues involved. Country-wide consultations with all stakeholders can be held by this platform on the issues raised in this section. The platform can also liaise with the NCSW, MoWD and other concerned ministries such as the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, as well as provincial women's departments and departments of agriculture, to propose changes in law and formulate strategies for implementation. Lobbying with parliamentarians, especially women parliamentarians would be necessary to bring about changes in inheritance and land-related laws. The creation of links with agricultural universities, such as the premier institution in Faisalabad, would help with research on the issues. The proposed platform may also act as a watchdog to ensure implementation. The media can be used to publicize the issues more urgently.

5.3 Recommendations regarding Formal and Informal Employment

In order to ensure women's economic empowerment, the creation of a legal environment which encourages women's participation in the labor force, especially in the formal sector, is necessary. Development policies should be gender-sensitized to promote investment in female human capital. Employment in civil services and public sector entities should be strictly on merit and not on quota basis to enable women to compete openly for jobs. A reservation of 10 percent seats discourages women from openly competing on merit in which they have an advantage, as they do better at the higher education levels. Wage and remuneration disparity is also a discouraging factor for women and is in part a function of their lesser education or training for the job. However, gender-based wage discrimination also occurs where women are equally qualified. As a signatory to ILO Convention 100 on equal pay for equal value of work, Pakistan must outlaw gender-based wage differentials.

Social security and benefits should be ensured for women working in all sectors (formal and informal, rural and non-rural). The organizational and collective bargaining capacity of women should be enhanced through the endorsement of trade unions and cooperatives, facilitating women workers' associations that need to be acknowledged as collective bargaining representatives. There should be policies focused on understanding and mitigating the effect of industrial pollution on women. The minimum wage promised by the Labor Policy 2009 should be strictly implemented.

There is a need to understand why policies and programs fail to deliver. Systematic data or understanding of this issue is highly limited. Studies on increasing the numbers of young women in services are important. Young people have hopes and aspirations but not enough opportunities are created for them. Future strategies should focus on research and analysis in this area. These can be conducted by women's

organizations engaged with labor issues. Access to the credit market and occupational and industrial choices is essential if women are to attain their rightful place in the economic and political fields. Violence against women increased during the 1990s and is linked to increased economic hardships along with domestic and community pressures. Legislative support and access to job opportunities is urgently needed to ameliorate the lot of women and reach the goal of gender equality (Siddiqui et al 2006a). This can be done by engaging women legislators both at the federal and provincial levels. The Domestic Violence Bill needs to be passed urgently, as a part of such violence comes from economic hardship, especially when women venture out of the house to work and become targets of harassment and suspicion by family relatives.

The Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP) had the following four major objectives:

- To seek transformation of the provincial government into an organization that actively practices and promotes gender equality;
- To ensure that all public sector operations in the province promote gender equity and reduce gender inequality;
- To make possible adequate representation of women as decision-makers in the provincial governments, both in the political and executive domain; and,
- To ensure that all provincial civil servants have an understanding of gender issues and are able to contribute positively towards the goal of gender mainstreaming.

One of its major goals was to enhance public sector employment of women. However, GRAP has so far failed to meet some of its objectives as implementation by the federal and provincial governments is weak. Nevertheless, its goals are laudable and need to be reiterated and upheld, and supported by country-wide campaigning by women, labor and human rights organizations.

There is a need to recognize unpaid work in all the sectors, formal and informal, as well as work done in the form of household services and childcare. Home production activities are done mainly by women, therefore the omission of unpaid work from national statistics leads to the undercounting of women's work. This needs to be corrected urgently to enable the full recognition of women's productive and reproductive work. Women, labor and human rights organizations can conduct time-use studies to quantify women's household labor, as well as labor performed as unpaid helpers, so that it can be counted and recognized.

There is a deep connection between labor and children's schooling. Mothers working in the formal sector are more likely to send children to school than those in the informal sector. Child welfare is affected negatively when women are in informal work (Khan, 2007). All the rights and entitlements of workers in the formal sector should be extended to all workers; this will help to end discrimination, as there is an overwhelming majority of women in the informal sector. The Ministry of Labor and Manpower, along with organizations working on women, labor and human rights can help document the extent and spread of the informal sector so that a mass registration drive can be carried out.

According to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper-II, women's empowerment is more than simply increasing income. It requires transformation in their status in power relations and going beyond income-generation and provision of low-paid part-time work which often reinforces existing inequalities. Both macro- and micro- level issues to be addressed to help them realize their full potential. Advocacy campaigns at the national level can be combined with local initiatives to enable women to become a part of the formal workforce.

Women's labor force participation rates in the formal sector will not rise significantly unless mobility issues are addressed. Socio-cultural norms against women going out of the house need to be tackled through media and awareness programs. Safe transport organized for women to reach offices and schools can go a long way toward resolving issues of employment and livelihood as well as education. Safe and secure public buses for women, or other forms of public transport, can solve a major problem that bedevils women's efforts to gain employment and

education. Employers can be encouraged to hire women from the local community so that distance, and therefore mobility, does not remain too much of a problem. Many women work from home due to mobility and security concerns as well as conservative social values. There can be training, credit schemes and market support and access to new technology for women who cannot venture out.

It is recommended that an alliance of organizations concerned with labor issues raised here should be formed for nationwide consultations. This platform should include PILER, the Working Women's Organization (WWO), Women Workers' Helpline (WWHL), HomeNet Pakistan, Aurat Foundation, Shirkat Gah, SDPI, Strengthening Participatory Organizations (SPO), Roots for Equity, Sungi and HRCP to suggest laws and formulate alternative policies to ensure labor rights. This alliance can work together to ensure that Pakistan ratifies ILO Convention 177 on home-based workers and adopts and implements proposed policies devised by Sungi and others. Pressure can be applied on the government as well as the private sector to ensure minimum wage, social security protection, and equal pay for equal work as per ILO Convention 100, already ratified by Pakistan. The alliance can also help conduct research and recommend policy options by working with the NCSW, MoWD, Ministry of Labor and Manpower, Ministry of Finance and provincial labor departments. Lobbying with parliamentarians would be required to change discriminatory laws that affect women in general and labor in particular. The media can be used for greater awareness of the issues such as the long working hours.

5.4 Education Recommendations

The government should stick to the budgetary allocations promised in the Education Policy 2009. There should be a detailed plan as to how this allocation will be spent, for there has been a tendency in the past to spend a great deal on infrastructure and administrative needs with little left to improve quality and access. It is better to improve and correct present structures than start a plethora of new initiatives which will take time to build and launch (HRCP 2009). The proper utilization of funds is as big an issue as the lack of funds. For the proper use of educational funds, NGOs working in the education sector, along with the Ministry of Education and provincial education departments, can be brought together for consultation and recommendations.

The depoliticization of the education process in terms of selection and training of teachers and their qualifications and examinations must be done immediately. Political appointments and admissions play havoc with the system and deny education to the deserving. Campaigns should be launched against political interference in educational institutions, and education NGOs can highlight specific cases which can be referred to courts. Legislation banning corporal punishment in schools must be enacted, as these punishment discourage enrolment and increase the drop out rate. The judiciary can be used to ensure implementation of this proposal.

One of the biggest reasons for school drop out is the lack of institutions where the next stage of education can be pursued. This can be remedied both by establishing new institutions and by upgrading existing state schools, especially for girls. There is a particular need to establish secondary schools in rural and peri-urban areas to facilitate children who cannot afford private education. The Ministry of Education should provide the funding, while education sector NGOs can be involved in technical input and curriculum and pedagogical issues.

The tripartite system of public, private and NGO schooling should be ended, and a uniform system introduced to equalize opportunity. The quality could be improved by incentives to teachers, particularly primary level teachers, who are very low-paid women. Safe and secure public transport for teachers will also encourage more young and energetic girls to enter professional education as teachers and students.

be created including, but not limited to, SAHE, ITA, Sindh Education Foundation, Society in Balochistan, Khwendo Kor, Baanh Beli, the Adult

Basic Education Society (ABES), SDPI, and Simorgh to carry out research, advocacy, and training in educational methods and pedagogy. The curriculum should be decentralized to the provincial levels but conform to the fundamental rights granted in the constitution. These organizations can work with the Ministry of Education, MoWD and the Human Rights Ministry to ensure the implementation of Education for All and the MDGs. The focus should be on all levels of education from primary to higher education. The proposed platform should devise new curricula based on the ideas of civic rights, equality and democracy for various levels of education and formulate effective ways of communicating these ideas to teachers and students. The new curriculum can be incorporated into social studies but should also be integrated into other disciplines.

The proposed platform can work with the National Vocational and Technical Education Commission (NAVTEC) in order to ensure that women receive training in computers and other marketable skills to better their knowledge and economic status. A program should be devised to work with the women's studies centers and departments in public universities, as well as with social science departments, to conduct policy-oriented research on women's issues for advocacy purposes. The platform needs to work with teachers, students and school administrators at all levels to instill the values of gender equality and equity in education. For this purpose, seminars and conferences should be organized in schools, colleges and universities instead of being held in hotels.

5.5 Health Recommendations

The UN Human Rights Council's resolutions consider health a human rights issue. In Pakistan, it suffers from many problems that the government and its many partners should tackle. Increased public investment in the health sector is needed to remove gender inequality. Public spending on health – particularly on maternal, newborn and child health – must be both increased and improved. The government should promulgate a law to regulate the functioning of private sector health care centers across the country (HRCP 2009). National policies should focus more on maternal morbidity and mortality, bringing attention to unsafe abortions and issues of women's access. The population and health departments should be merged so that women's reproductive and sexual rights issues can be addressed holistically. At present, two parallel streams of service providers replicate the same work without any significant change in outcomes.

There is a need to focus on public health and providing people with potable water, sanitation, and a clean environment. Improving sanitation and clean water supply are essential to prevent most waterborne diseases. The government should launch a massive primary health education program for boys and girls in rural areas and city slums on an emergency basis; activate basic health units, rural health centers; and taluka/ tehsil level hospitals. It should also train more paramedics and trained birth attendants. Basic health units and rural health centers should be constructed in places that are accessible to women in areas of low mobility. There is a need for laws requiring affianced couples to prove that they are not afflicted with thalassemia, a common recessive condition. The care of mothers and children should be accorded high priority in new malaria prevention programs.

Violence against women is a major cause of women's health problems including depression and physical and emotional injury. Women are maimed, mutilated, injured, tortured, burned and abused by close relatives in the family, most often by close male kin. The Domestic Violence bill, which was passed by the National Assembly but lapsed in the Senate, should be enacted as soon as possible. Measures are needed to publicize the law against sexual harassment at the workplace so that all women, especially those in rural areas, become aware of their rights. However, laws alone do not end violence. An effective mechanism should be devised to ensure compliance and effectiveness to attain these rights. All provincial governments should provide biannual reports to the provincial legislatures regarding violence against women and actions taken. Women's allegations of abuse by law enforcing authorities

should be seriously investigated and perpetrators brought to justice. The provincial chief ministers and inspectors general of police should be held responsible for ensuring that women are not detained in order to produce a male suspect or absconder. Police are in urgent need of training on women's issues. Police officers violating the law should be thoroughly investigated and punished, apart from necessary administrative actions (HRCP 2009).

Steps should be taken to improve the quality and access of primary health services, especially in rural areas. Where such facilities are present they are undermined by staff absence and lack of equipment. It is important to consider women's health roles beyond their stereotyped position as mothers and caregivers. Attention should be paid to mental health issues and appropriate awareness campaigns should be launched. There is an urgent need to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates which are the highest in the region. Due to gender-based constraints on women's access to health services, including restricted mobility and proscriptions on interaction with men, essential maternal and child health services rely heavily on female medical staff who are in limited supply. Female staff shortages must be immediately addressed, especially in remote and underdeveloped areas.

Reproductive health issues exist in a socio-cultural milieu of conservative patriarchal values and lack of choice. The Population Council reports that a majority of men oppose contraception but agree to abortion (cited in Ilyas 2007). Male members of households need to be sensitized to women's productive and reproductive rights, and made aware of the economic and social benefits of contraception and family planning. NGOs concerned with health as well as the provincial health departments should work in partnership to organize workshops and run campaigns to convince men. Local level health professionals can assist with this task, and women's NGOs can be engaged to help with dissemination and training.

There are currently no female service providers at the ministry or health department levels. There should be attractive stipend/incentive schemes to encourage girls from under-developed areas to complete secondary school and acquire the qualifications needed for induction into nursing, LHV and midwifery training. Attention needs to be paid to the salary scales of Lady Health Visitors and midwives, as at present they are too low to incentivize families to bear the social costs attached with a working daughter. Small loan schemes can be devised for newly-qualified workers to set up private health centers. Existing vacancies at medical health centers also need to be filled, and women incentivized to work there through maternity benefits, child care facilities, and the implementation of the law against sexual harassment law in the workplace.

It is recommended that organizations and donors working on health should form a platform for advocacy. These organizations can work with the provincial health departments and seek greater allocations for health, especially sexual and reproductive health rights. For this purpose these organizations can work along with the Family Planning Association of Pakistan and women's organizations such as Shirkat Gah and Simorgh. A selected number of hospitals and clinics in all the provinces which specifically address women's health needs can be selected to carry out research on the needs of women and suggest laws and policies required. Special attention needs to be paid to women's psychological, mental and emotional health at all ages as currently the focus is overwhelmingly on women of child-bearing age. This alliance can work with the NCSW to have health declared a fundamental right. Lobbying with parliamentarians will be required to achieve this constitutional amendment.

6. Government Machinery for Women's Empowerment

The government ministries and commissions included here are salient for women's empowerment and pertinent for the issues included in this scoping study, namely labor and employment, food security, land and agriculture, health, and education. These are the key ministries/commissions concerned with the issues addressed in this study. However, several other ministries are also relevant for women's issues at both the federal and provincial levels. These can be accessed through the Government of Pakistan web portal (pakistan.gov.pk).

Ministry of Commerce[7]

The Ministry of Commerce is concerned with contributing to the national economy through trade liberalization and facilitation, improving export competiveness and reducing cost of doing business. Aim to achieve higher market access for Pakistani products in existing markets as well as new markets with ultimate aim of improving quality of life of the people of Pakistan. The Commerce Ministry is concerned with export policies which have an impact on labor and employment as well as on the economy in general. Export promotion policies particularly affect the informal sector of the economy in which there is a preponderance of women.

Ministry of Education[8]

The Federal Ministry of Education formulates educational policies and sets the curriculum guidelines to be followed. Education is a provincial subject after the passage of the 18th amendment and the provincial education departments are responsible for implementation of national policies and curriculum.

Ministry of Environment[9]

The Ministry of Environment is responsible for National Policy, plans and programs regarding environmental planning, pollution and ecology, including physical planning and human settlements, urban water supply sewerage and drainage. As women in rural areas are heavily dependent upon the environment for water and fuels, environmental degradation often affects them economically and directly. This ministry is crucial for addressing women's concerns related to the ecological systems.

Ministry of Finance[10]

The Finance Division deals with the subjects pertaining to finance of the Federal Government and financial matters affecting the country as a whole, preparation of annual budget statements and supplementary/excess budget statements for

[7] www.commerce.gov.pk
[8] www.moe.gov.pk
[9] www.moenv.gov.pk
[10] www.finance.gov.pk

the consideration of the parliament accounts and audits of the Federal Government Organization etc. as assigned under the Rules of Business, 1973. The Finance Ministry carries out Economic Reviews in order to assess the country's situation regarding labor, employment, education, health and food requirements. This ministry is crucial for its central role in national allocations.

Ministry of Food Agriculture and Livestock (MINFAL)[11]

The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock is mainly responsible for policy formulation, economic coordination and planning in respect of food grain, agricultural and livestock. It also includes procurement of food grains, fertilizer, import price stabilization of agriculture produce, international liaison, economic studies for framing agricultural policies, fishing and fisheries beyond territorial waters, and animal quarantine. The provincial agricultural departments are responsible for policy implementation.

Ministry of Health[12]

Federal Ministry of Health formulates national policies on health and provides guidelines to the provincial health departments. The Ministry addresses issues such as reproductive health, Lady Health Workers and maternal and child health as well as all other health issues affecting the population. The provincial health departments are responsible for implementation.

Ministry of Human Rights[13]

The Ministry of Human Rights is mandated to review of human rights situation in the country including implementation of laws, policies and measures. The Ministry states that the present millennium has been turned as The Millennium of Human Rights. The Ministry of Human Rights has to safeguard and protect the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the articles 8-28, Principles of Policy's article 29-E, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights without any distinction of creed, race or religion. The Ministry is central to women's rights as it is responsible for ensuring that women's human rights granted in the Constitution of Pakistan as well as in international covenants and agreements signed by Pakistan are implemented.

Ministry of Industries and Production[14]

The Ministry focuses on not just industry, but more broadly on social and economic systems as a whole. Since this ministry is concerned with industry and production it is pertinent for labor and employment issues. Women's right to employment can be ensured by working with this ministry so that women do not face discrimination in labor practices and labor laws are implemented strictly.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting[15]

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is vital for women's rights as the media falls under it. Media messages through news, information, videos, talk shows, drama serials and films have a massive impact upon women in terms of how they are portrayed or silenced or made invisible. This ministry can be persuaded to address women's concerns regarding the negative depiction of women or lack of positive portrayal.

Ministry of Interior[16]

The main objective of the Interior Ministry is to make Islamic Republic of Pakistan a country where rule of law reigns supreme; where every Pakistani feels secure to lead a life in conformity with his religious beliefs, culture, heritage and customs; where a Pakistani from any group, sect or province respects the culture, tradition and

[11] www.minfal.gov.pk
[12] www.health.gov.pk
[13] www.mohr.gov.pk
[14] www.moip.gov.pk
[15] www.infopak.gov.pk
[16] www.interior.gov.pk

faith of the other. Since the Ministry of Interior is integrally connected with the penal system and oversees and directs the functions of the police force, this ministry is central in addressing women's security concerns both in terms of the protection of their rights as citizens and their physical security, as well as with regard to women accused of crimes and lying in jails.

Ministry of Labor and Manpower[17]

Ministry of Labor and Manpower is mandated to perform the functions broadly related to policy formulation regarding labor administration manpower planning and employment promotion. As the subject of labor and employment under the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973 is on the concurrent legislative list (abolished under 18th amendment), the Ministry functions in close coordination with the Provincial Governments in these fields. The implementation of labor policies takes place at the provincial and local levels.

Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs[18]

The Law and Justice Ministry tenders advice to all the Federal Government organs on legal and constitutional questions as well as the provincial Governments on legal and legislative matters. It also deals with drafting, scrutiny and examination of bills, all legal instruments, international agreements, adoption of existing laws to bring them in conformity with the Constitution, legal proceedings and litigation through Pakistan concerning the federal government and other several subjects. This ministry is crucial for women's empowerment as it deals with issues of law and justice. Since women are subject to the misuse and abuse of law and are often denied justice, this ministry must be involved in ensuring justice for women and in repealing discriminatory laws against them.

Ministry of Minorities[19]

The Ministry is mandated to protect the rights of minorities as envisaged under the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973 and is working for the betterment and uplift of various religious minorities in Pakistan. This ministry is important as it addresses the issues of non-Muslim Pakistanis and women belonging to minority religious groups are often doubly or triply discriminated against. They are disadvantaged on the basis of their gender, religion and often also class as a large number of members of minority groups are also poor. Hindu Hari women in interior Sindh and Christians in the Punjab have been particular victims of harassment and discrimination. It is important to work with this ministry to address the specific concerns of women belonging to diverse religious communities.

Ministry of Population Welfare[20]

The Population Welfare Program aims to bring about the country's social and economic development through rational choices about Family size and reproductive behavior. The focus of the Program is to consistently improve and enrich the lives of individuals, families and communities in accordance with the Reproductive Health program. This ministry is crucial with regard to women's health and reproductive issues because of the lack of reproductive rights and absence of women's voice in determining family size. This ministry can be persuaded to stress male contraception and women's say in family planning.

Ministry of Religious Affairs[21]

This ministry is important to work with as women's rights and status are often interpreted by governments based on the ministry's

[17] www.molm.gov.pk
[18] www.molaw.gov.pk
[19] www.minorities.gov.pk
[20] www.mopw.gov.pk
[21] www.mora.gov.pk

recommendations. The Ministry works in close liaison with the Council for Islamic Ideology (CII), an institution which determines whether or not laws conform to Islam. Since women are often discriminated against on the basis of narrow, literalist and harsh interpretations of religion, it is vital to ensure that this ministry, along with the CII works within a liberal and tolerant framework of interpretation especially with regard to women's equality and discrimination against them.

Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education Division[22]

The Ministry aims to provide, an enabling environment and tangible opportunities, through policies, programs and projects that would contribute in poverty alleviation and promotion of social progress and social justice in the country through addressing the needs of downtrodden, marginalized and vulnerable segments of the society. Social welfare is on the concurrent list of subjects. It is concerned with the well being and uplift of the community at large and vulnerable groups in particular. Focus of the programs is on the neglected, disadvantaged, underprivileged and exploited children, women, youth, aged, disabled, indigents, destitute, beggars, prisoners and ex-convicts etc. Special Education: In order to spearhead pioneering work in the challenging area of Special Education and rehabilitation of disabled persons, it was considered necessary to create a new organization to take up this task. Accordingly, the Directorate General of Special Education was created under the then Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education.

Ministry of Women Development (MoWD)[23]

The Ministry of Women Development is a National focal Ministry for the advancement of women. It plays the role of advocate, planner and coordinator of women. It is responsible for formulation of policies and laws to meet the special needs of women ensuring that women interests and needs are adequately represented in public policy formulation by various organizations and agencies of government, promotion and undertaking of projects for development of women, matters relating to equality of opportunity in education, training, employment and facilities in health care and community development. The Ministry of Women Development coordinates with Women Development Departments at the provincial levels.

National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW)[24]

The National Commission on the Status of Women is mandated to examine the policy, programs and other measures taken by the Government for women development and gender equality to assess implementation and make suitable recommendations to the concerned authorities where necessary for effective impact. The NCSW's objective is to review all laws, rules and regulations affecting the status and rights of women and suggest repeal, amend or introduce new legislation essential to eliminate discrimination, safeguard and promote the interests of women and achieve gender equality in accordance with the Constitution and obligations under international covenants and commitments.

Planning Commission[25]

The main functions of the Planning Commission are to formulate a National Plan and review and evaluate its implementation; formulate annual plan and ADP; monitor and evaluate implementation of major development projects and programs; stimulate preparation of sound projects in regions and sectors lacking adequate portfolio; continuously evaluate the economic situation and coordinate economic policies, and organize

[22] www.moswse.gov.pk
[23] www.mowd.gov.pk
[24] www.ncsw.gov.pk
[25] www.planningcommission.gov.pk

research and analytical studies for economic decision making. The Planning Commission is the main planning body of the country for all economic and social plans over periods of five years.

Women's Studies Centers

Women's Studies Centers at the Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, Punjab University, Lahore, Jamshoro University, Allama Iqbal Open University, Fatima Jinnah Women's University, Peshawar University and University of Balochistan conduct short academic and training courses on feminist theory, practice and women's development issues. They carry out research, publication and hold seminars on the issues of women's empowerment and gender equality. Established in 1989 by the Women's Division (later Ministry of Women Development), these Centers were mandated to introduce the discipline of Women's Studies in Pakistan with a specific focus on the issues relevant for South Asia and Pakistan.

7. Civil Society Organizations and Women's Empowerment

A large number of national, regional and local organizations work on the issues of gender equality and women's empowerment across Pakistan. There are NGOs and community based organizations (CBOs) that work specifically on women's issues and connect these with other areas such as the environment, economy, education or health. On the other hand, nearly every organization has a strong gender component because gender is perceived as a cross-cutting issue. There is an increasing tendency to build women's issues into every project as an integral part of the project cycle. Several organizations working on minority issues, the environment, labor, child rights, or governance, build a gender perspective into their approach. It is, therefore, not possible to list every single organization contributing to women's empowerment here, as the number is enormous, and most can be found in the Pakistan NGO Resource Directory.

A few key organizations have been selected and described here, based on their extensive work on women's empowerment. They have been divided regionally into those operating in the Federal Area, Islamabad, followed by the Punjab, Sindh, Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa and Balochistan. It is important to remember that several of these organizations work across the length and breadth of Pakistan even though their main offices may be located in Karachi, Lahore or Islamabad. There are others that are limited to a particular region such as Sindh or Balochistan. These organizations have been selected keeping in view the issues addressed in this study, namely economic empowerment, land rights, livelihoods, labor, education, and health. Most of the organizations working on women are listed in the NGO Directory for further reference.

7.1 Federal Area

Bedari[26]

Based in Islamabad, Bedari works for the protection and promotion of women's and girls' human rights. Bedari addresses issues of violence against women through lobbying with legislators and policymakers for bringing about women-friendly laws and policies. Bedari is engaged in creating and institutionalizing support structures for women victims of violence. Bedari has provided training to lawyers, policemen and local government officials on violence against women. Bedari has run campaigns to raise awareness on the issues of women's rights and sexual harassment through seminars, radio shows and poster campaigns. Direct support to women victims of violence has also been provided. The

[26] www.bedariforevaw.org.pk

Online Resource Center run by Bedari enables women to reach government agencies, NGOs and local officials responsible for dealing with violence.

Rozan[27]

Based in Islamabad, Rozan works on emotional health, gender and violence against women, children and youth. The program "Aangan" focuses on the emotional health of children in general, and on the issue of child sexual abuse in particular. "Zeest" is focused on the emotional and mental health of women as well as on violence against women. "Rabta" is Rozan's Police Training Program and focuses on attitudinal change and police-community collaboration by addressing issues of self-growth, gender, and violence against women and children. The Youth Help Line provides postal and telephonic counseling and referral services to adolescents on emotional problems and reproductive health. Pehchaan is Rozan's Gender Resource Centre which stresses on gender sensitization, awareness and training at the national level. Rozan has also conducted research programs on understanding masculinities and the emergence of newer, violent masculinities in Pakistan steeped in religion. Rozan has conducted trainings in all the four provinces of the country.

Strengthening Participatory Organizations (SPO)[28]

Based in Islamabad, SPO functions in all the four provinces of the country, covering 54 districts. SPO works for a democratic, tolerant and socially just society that is based on participatory principles. It focuses on sustainable and self-reliant development. The main emphasis is on strengthening and supporting community organizations and public interest institutions of Pakistan for the poor and disadvantaged sections of society for sustainable and participatory development. Its three main areas of focus are: democratic governance, social justice and peace and harmony. SPO also works in areas hit by emergencies and on building capacities. The organization works with Internally Displaced Persons, earthquake reconstruction, and access to services and protection. Gender is a cross-cutting issue built into all the programs run by SPO.

Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)[29]

A development and policy research institute based in Islamabad, SDPI aims to "catalyze the transition towards sustainable development, defined as the enhancement of peace, social justice and well-being within and across generations." The institute serves as a source of information, expertise and advice to the government, NGO and private sectors. It helps support Pakistan's environment and development agenda. SDPI conducts policy-oriented research on sustainable development using a multi-disciplinary approach. It provides the social and physical infrastructure for research in Pakistan and establishes collaborative advocacy means along with like-minded organizations. SDPI promotes the implementation of policies, programs, laws and regulations based on sustainable development. It strengthens civil society and facilities its interaction with government through collaboration and activist networks. SDPI disseminates its research findings through public education seminars, media, conferences, lectures, publications and curricula development. Gender is built into its research, activist and advocacy-related activities.

7.2 Punjab

Adult Basic Education Society (ABES)[30]

Based in Gujranwala, ABES also works in Rawalpindi, Sargodha and Faisalabad. ABES is focused on education and women's empowerment and gender issues also form one of

[27] www.rozan.org
[28] www.spopk.org
[29] www.sdpi.org
[30] www.abes.cjb.net

its core areas of work. Additionally, ABES works on poverty alleviation, education, health, microcredit systems and children. ABES uses advocacy, research and training as the tools to advance its agenda and strategies. ABES has focused on the non-formal education of girls in its areas of operation.

Applied Socio-Economic Research/ Institute of Women's Studies, Lahore (ASR/ IWSL)[31]

Based in Lahore, ASR has done extensive work on all aspects of women's empowerment and gender equality. ASR has conducted research on women and labor in various industries across Punjab. ASR has addressed a wide range of women's issues ranging from violence against women, peace and conflict and minority rights to issues of women and labor, women and media, discriminatory laws and women's rights. The Institute of Women's Studies, Lahore (IWSL) established by ASR is the first institute of its kind in South Asia. The Institute has run three-month diploma courses with international faculty and students. These courses included topics on women's history, patriarchy, fundamentalism, militarism, nationalism, media, education, political economy, the state and literature and the visual and performing arts. The IWSL reflected a holistic and multi-disciplinary approach towards the systematic teaching of feminism in South Asia. The IWSL has produced research and publications on religion, nationalism, gender, patriarchy, education, media and the state.

AURAT Publication and Information Service[32]

Based originally in Lahore, AURAT Foundation has extended its reach to all of Pakistan's districts. It is committed to women's empowerment and citizen participation in governance and believes in the creation of a just, democratic and humane society. It seeks to raise women's economic and political status in society. It works in collaboration with other civil society organizations using advocacy, activism, research, training, publication and seminars/conferences to disseminate its perspectives on women's empowerment. AURAT Foundation was extensively involved in the training of women councilors in the local government system in order to build their capacity to accomplish their goals. The organization has published a great deal of material on women legislators as a part of its Legislative Watch Program which is also used to educate women parliamentarians on national issues. AURAT Foundation has published books, pamphlets, newsletters and research papers on various constitutional and political issues.

Bunyad Foundation[33]

Bunyad envisions a literate, just, tolerant and enlightened society through building the capacities of rural families and communities to enable them to create a better future. Its mission is the empowerment of underprivileged and marginalized groups, particularly rural women and children through literacy, education, gender justice and employability. It aims at the economic empowerment of women by strengthening the social development process in communities by means of a multi-sectoral program. Some of the programs specifically targeting women's empowerment include, Gender Justice through Musalihat Anjuman, Women's Empowerment and Development Project, Adult Literacy, Non-formal education for girls and work in the disaster-hit areas.

HomeNet Pakistan[34]

HomeNet Pakistan is a network of organizations working for the recognition and labor rights of home-based workers. HomeNet carries out research and advocacy on Home-based workers in Pakistan. HomeNet lobbies with the

[31] asr@brain.net.pk
[32] www.af.org.pk
[33] www.bunyad.org.pk
[34] www.homenetpakistan.org

government for the adoption of the National Policy on Home-based Workers and recognize their rights and entitlements. Based in Lahore, HomeNet works throughout Pakistan and conducted studies on a Baseline Survey on the Bangle Industry, and a study of the national budget, 2010-11 with regard to gender-responsive budgeting focused on labor, education, health and the informal sector.

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)[35]

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) is the leading human rights organization in Pakistan. It has evolved as a highly informed and independent body on the struggle for human rights and democratic governance. HRCP works to ensure that the state complies with the international declarations, conventions, agreements and protocols that it has signed and applies pressure to sign others. As a watchdog, HRCP keeps an eye on human rights in the country and reports annually on the state of human rights in Pakistan. The organization conducts research, inquiries and publishes regularly on issues of human rights, women's rights, child rights, labor rights, rights to education and health, democratic governance, accountability, transparency and other issues that pertain to the rights of citizens and groups. HRCP guides and informs the government on policy and lawmaking and constitutional issues. It informs and guides the public on these issues through seminars, meetings, conferences and other modes of communication while networking with a number of other organizations. HRCP was central in getting so-called "honor killing" declared murder, and has taken a serious and consistent stand against all discriminatory laws against women, minorities, bonded labor and the downtrodden groups in society. HRCP is based in Lahore but works across the entire country.

Idara-e-Taleem-o-Agahi (ITA)[36]

The ITA or Centre for Education and Consciousness works on the paradigm that educational is a fundamental human entitlement and that every person has the right to learning, knowledge and citizenship skills. Based in Lahore the ITA believes in achieving these objectives through active partnerships with the public sector and affordable quality schools throughout Pakistan. The organization works on both formal and non-formal education in the country, education in emergencies, health and environment, school enrichment programs, citizenship education, democracy, human rights and governance, teacher education and capacity-building for educational leaders and managers. Gender issues are built into all programs as cross-cutting issues.

Kashf Foundation[37]

Inspired by the Grameen Bank model in Bangladesh, Kashf Foundation has been engaged in providing microfinance and financial services to poor women in order to empower them and ensure their inclusion in the economy and to enable them to develop microenterprise. Kashf seeks to alleviate poverty by empowering poor women and enabling them to become economically self-reliant. The organization believes that access to financial services is a basic right of every individual and has developed various financial products that suit a variety of clients. Kashf provides guidance and training to women to enable them to use the loans prudently and be able to pay back with ease. Based in Lahore, Kashf has widened its operations to other parts of the country.

Organization for Participatory Development (OPD)[38]

Based in Gujranwala in the Punjab, OPD's area of operation includes two more districts, that is,

[35] www.hrcp-web.org
[36] www.itacec.org
[37] www.kashf.org
[38] www.opdpak.org

Shaikhupura and Khushab. OPD aims to change the status quo in society and thereby develop a more cohesive and well-governed society. The purpose of the organization is to raise the quality of life of the underprivileged strata of society. The organization is focused on the issues of health, education and microfinance through research, networking, training and creating linkages. The non-formal area of girls' education has been one of its areas of work and gender issues cut across OPD's work on all the areas in which it works.

Society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE)[39]

The Society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE) runs Community-Based Schools for girls. SAHE conducts research and advocacy on all educational issues, especially for ensuring that education is implemented as a fundamental right, especially for girls. Based in Lahore, SAHE works with a vast network of organizations concerned with education, women's rights, human rights and democracy across the country. SAHE has conducted workshops and training on the methods of integrating human rights and gender issues in teaching and the curricula across the country. SAHE has developed manuals and training materials for teachers in order to improve the quality of schooling and brought out a number of publications on girls' schooling and education in terms of access, quality, constraints and the ways to overcome the bias against girls' education. SAHE is involved in Teacher Education and Education for Citizenship in order to inculcate social and tolerant values in society.

Shirkat Gah – Women's Resource Center (SG)[40]

Shirkat Gah is a leading women's rights organization in Pakistan. Based in Lahore and Karachi, its operations extend to all parts of the country. SG has engaged in advocacy for women's rights and empowerment along with a network of organizations concerned with women's rights, human rights, democracy and justice. The organization has brought out a number of important publications on women's rights, legal issues, violence against women, women's citizenship, the state and women, the environment, militarization, globalization and customary and cultural practices that have an impact upon women. As a part of the Women Living Under Muslim Laws network, SG has conducted research on how religious laws and cultural practices and local traditions affect women. The organization has also conducted studies on the relationship between the environment and women as well as a study on women and land rights. SG has studied women's empowerment in Muslim contexts across varying regions in Pakistan and has attempted to contextualize the issue of empowerment as well as show how women themselves define or understand empowerment. SG has also conducted serious studies on the political use of religion and its specific effects on women. The organization conducts training, offers legal services, brings out publications and engages in advocacy.

Simorgh Women's Resource and Publication Center[41]

Based in Lahore, Simorgh is a leading women's organization that has worked on the issues of violence against women, the media and women and gender and judiciary. Simorgh has worked on a broad spectrum of women's issues including education, citizenship and the state. Simorgh has brought out a number of publications on women and literature, women and religious fundamentalism, women and the state, and children's alternative textbooks to provoke critical thinking and to promote a tolerant view of the world. Simorgh works with other organizations and networks in its advocacy, training, research and publication work. The organization brings out

[39] www.sahe.org.pk
[40] www.shirkatgah.org
[41] www.simo-rghpk.org

a bi-annual socio-legal journal that views legal issues from a social perspective. Simorgh has conducted training on women's rights with the police and judiciary in order to sensitize the penal system on women's rights. Trainings have also been conducted with school teachers in order to introduce innovative ways of familiarizing children with alternative and tolerant ways of thinking. Simorgh has also worked on folktales and the manner in which folk stories can be used to create a more humane and just society.

South Asia Partnership – Pakistan (SAP-Pk)[42]

SAP-Pk focuses on empowering the marginalized sections of society, and works to influence policy in favor of the people. The vision is to create an engendered, critical society in South Asia based on the universal principles of human dignity, justice, democracy, and peaceful coexistence. The mission is to create an enabling environment for participatory governance and sustainable collective action for peace, human security, and regional cooperation at the regional level, by organizing marginalized sections of society and developing their capacities. Based in Lahore, SAP-Pk works across the length of Pakistan on issues of democracy and governance, disaster and emergencies, the right to sustainable livelihoods, the right to life and security, the right to identity and equal participation, peace, and the right to have fair and free elections. The organization has a strong women's empowerment agenda, which is an integral part of all its programs. SAP-Pk is particularly involved in women in agriculture and their rights and issues. Working in alliance with other civil society organizations SAP-Pk engages in training, research, advocacy, and brings out publications on human rights and other issues. SAP-Pk has conducted workshops on women's rights and patriarchy, women and media, and violence against women, and works closely with organizations involved with women's rights, human rights, and sustainable development.

Women Workers' Helpline (WWHL)[43]

Based in Lahore, the vision of WWHL is to create a socially just, economically equitable, politically aware and gender-sensitive society. The mission is to create awareness among women, enabling them to play their effective role in the political, economic, and social arenas and strengthen a democratic and gender-sensitized culture in Pakistan. Its objectives are to struggle for women's equal representation in political decision-making, organize women workers to formulate and strengthen trade unions, struggle for new legislation for informal and home-based workers, ensure the implementation of labor and social security laws, struggle for the elimination of discriminatory laws against women, provide legal help to victims of violence and sexual harassment, and network with like-minded civil society organizations.

Working Women's Organization, Lahore (WWO)[44]

Based in Lahore, WWO creates awareness of political rights among working women and motivates them to struggle for the protection of their human rights, women's rights and labor rights. WWO uses workshops and training sessions to make working women aware of their fundamental rights granted in the constitution and laws of the land. It carries out critiques of the labor policies and programs with regard to working women. The organization also engages in campaigns and political mobilization for specific causes of working women to ensure their rights, as well as win the rights granted in international human rights and ILO conventions. WWO works with organized labor in the formal sectors as well as home-based workers and domestic workers.

[42] www.sappk.org
[43] www.wwhl.org.pk
[44] www.sedc.org.pk/portal/directories/org.php?orgid=493

7.3 Sindh

Baanh Beli[45]

The chief area of operation of Baanh Beli is Sindh (Mirpurkhas and Karachi). A major project undertaken is the Village Community Development Project in Nagarparkar, which focused on savings and credit, female education and female health care. In central Tharparkar, the Village Community Development project had female education as a thematic area. In northern Tharparkar, the Village Community Development Project was undertaken which focused on female education, and the rural Karachi Ujagar Project focused on developing primary schools for girls and female health care.

Behbud Association[46]

The Behbud Association aims to support and strengthen women and focuses on community development. It works to alleviate poverty, illiteracy and poor health conditions and economic deprivation. Behbud seeks to empower women by providing health, education, income-generation and vocational training, regardless of color, cast or creed. The association's aims and objectives are to advise and assist unemployed women and men in securing gainful employment and provide loans at nominal interest to the most deserving. It has embarked upon major projects benefiting women on education, skill training, distress and rehabilitation, health, and reproductive health. All these projects were carried out in Karachi. Behbud Association has also been engaged in disaster relief operations.

Health and Nutrition Development Society (HANDS)[47]

Based in Karachi, HANDS aims to improve primary and secondary health facilities, quality education and alleviate poverty. HANDS has intervened in public and private sectors benefiting more than 2 million people in 5,000 villages in Hyderabad, Sanghar, Badin, Thatta, and Bin Qasim Town. HANDS regional offices in these districts are not only resource centers for non-profit and private organizations, they are also facilitators for different departments of the district government. HANDS undertakes health advocacy and networking programs through training, leadership development and community empowerment to bring about meaningful change. Women's health issues are built into the program.

Indus Resource Center (IRC)[48]

The Indus Resource Center works on integrated social and economic development in Pakistan. IRC's work is directed toward the seven Millennium Development Goals, however the eradication of hunger and poverty, universal primary education and gender equality are the major areas of focus. IRC concentrates on the following issues: education and literacy with focus on education primarily for girls, but increasingly now on boys, adult literacy and provision of a learning environment; participatory governance, which stresses civil society mobilization and local institutions, human rights and strengthening of democratic processes; and sustainable livelihoods, which promotes simple home-grown technologies for sustainable use of natural resources and provides microcredit for poor entrepreneurs. IRC also works with local artisans especially women to improve their skills and provide access to marketing handicrafts and local products; Disaster risk management builds the capacity of local communities for disaster preparedness and risk mitigation. IRC is based in Karachi but works in interior Sindh, in particular in Dadu and Khairpur.

Lower Sindh Rural Development Association (LRSDA)[49]

Located in Mirpurkhas (Sindh) LRSDA promotes literacy, basic health standards, and seeks to

[45] www.ilmkidunya.com/.../educational_ngos_pakistan_baanh_beli.aspx
[46] www.behbud.org
[47] www.hands.org.pk
[48] www.irc-pakistan.com
[49] www.net-ngo.org/detailpage.cfm?ngoid=58

improve socio-economic conditions and the environment. Some of its thematic areas include women, emergency relief, rural development, agriculture, education, health, poverty alleviation, food security and water security. Its methods include training, research and advocacy. It works in lower Sindh and on issues of irrigation and agriculture related to the lower reaches of the Indus River.

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF)[50]

PFF works on the issues of just and sustainable livelihoods. Its areas of operation include Karachi, Thatta, Badin, Jamshoro, Sanghar, Kashmore, Qambar, and Shahdadkot in Sindh, and Gwadar in Balochistan. Rehabilitation of flood and cyclone hit disaster areas. The organization seeks socio-economic and political justice for fisherfolk through advocacy. Its projects include good governance and dealing with water crisis in the Indus Delta, just and sustainable livelihoods, rehabilitation of flood and cyclone affected communities, sustainable livelihoods in disaster-prone areas, community-based disaster risk management and livelihoods, community empowerment and conservation of biodiversity. PFF has developed a gender policy so that gender issues are integrated into all its projects as well as within the organizational culture.

Pakistan Institute of Labor Education and Research (PILER)[51]

PILER promotes labor rights, democracy, human rights, social justice and peace. The organization is engaged in research, training and advocacy in the areas of labor rights and labor legislation, social justice, human development and regional solidarity and peace. PILER aims to promote and democratic and effective labor movement enabling people to exercise their fundamental rights at work and in communities. PILER seeks to push the market, society and state towards economic justice for realizing secure and prosperous livelihoods. PILER engages in research, education, training, advocacy, networking with civil society organizations and the government. Based in Karachi, PILER has conducted programs for the education of women labor in industries across the country. It has sought to mobilize women workers through cooperatives to enhance their bargaining power. PILER has worked in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. Women's labor and employment issues are built into all of PILER's programs and projects.

Participatory Village Development Program (PVDP)[52]

Located in Hyderabad, PVDP works in the Thar region of Sindh. The vision is to create a healthy, literate, civic and socio-economically self reliant community. The organization was formed with a mission to support the poor and disadvantaged communities in improving the quality of their lives, through encouraging people to organize and mobilize themselves for social change. PVDP was formed with a clear aim to tackle the causes of poverty and deprivation and bring about a long-term difference to the lives of the most disadvantaged people of Tharparkar district of Sindh Province in Pakistan. To achieve this aim PVDP and the community embarked upon the challenging task of improving the natural resources upon which 90 percent of the poor and disadvantaged depend. The organization believes in participatory approaches in all its work, and opposes discrimination of all kinds. One of the major issues that PVDP addresses is gender inequality and poverty. It addresses the unequal access of women to livestock, land, health and education. Another major issue is food security with a special emphasis on the role of women in food production and provision and their marginalization in terms of access. The organization engages in capacity-building, forming alliances and networking as well as training and

[50] www.pff.org.pk
[51] www.piler.org.pk
[52] www.fiohnetwork.org/fiohnet/pvdpnet.htm

publications.

Roots for Equity[53]

Based in Karachi, Roots for Equity works in interior Sindh and disaster-hit loc women's land rights, agriculture, livelihoods, globalization and conflict and militarization. Roots conducted research on women peasants across the country in order to form broader alliances for food security, food sovereignty and women's rights to land. Roots also worked with women in Tando Allah Yar on sustainable agriculture. The organization has done extensive research on the impact of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture and its impact upon small farmers, particularly women. Roots also analyzed the impact of the WTO TRIPs agreement on seeds for farmers. Roots conducted a study of the effects of pesticides on women cotton-pickers and peasants in the province of Sindh. The organization conducted a study of the impact of the 2005 earthquake on women with regard to their livelihood losses and the effects on their health and sense of well-being. Roots for Equity works through alliances, training, mobilization, seminars, and publications.

Thardeep Rural Development Program (TRDP)[54]

TRDP works in rural areas of Tharparkar, Umerkot, Dadu, Jamshoro and Khairpur districts of Sindh. The program facilitates the rural communities in a way that they can be empowered to secure their rights with command over resources and capabilities to manage the process of sustainable development. For the purpose, Thardeep organizes the local communities and develops their managerial and technical capacity. It also facilitates them in the process of income generation through provision of credit. Thardeep also extends services in the areas of primary health care, education and water. The working strategy of organization is based on the continuous process of research on social issues relevant with and related to community development. TRDP also works on disaster-related issues such as the 2010 floods. TRDP's programs include microenterprise and income-generation, health, education, emergency response and rehabilitation, child rights through social mobilization and training and publications. Gender issues are built into all programs and projects of TRDP.

7.4 Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa

Association for the Creation of Employment (ACE)[55]

Based in Peshawar the mission of the association is to build the capacities of communities and entrepreneurs to enable them to be more productive and increase their income-generation potentials. ACE works with the most disadvantaged groups in society, to benefit the poorest segments of society. The Association's areas of operation are Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat and Bannu in Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa. Major projects undertaken with regard to women include training and employment of women. The thematic area for this project was business and microcredit and it was carried out in Hazara.

De Laas Gul Welfare Program[56]

The objectives of De Laas Gul Welfare Program are to implement a cohesive program of human resource development with a focus on education, skill training and awareness-raising about health issues; and to raise awareness about rights among marginalized communities through advocacy. De Laas Gul Welfare Program aims to implement a comprehensive program of evaluation policies to assist public sector institutions to respond to the needs of the marginalized people. The main themes of the organization include women's empowerment, education, skill training, health,

[53] roots@super.net.pk; azra.sayeed@gmail.com
[54] www.thardeep.org
[55] ace_enterprise@psh.infolink.net.pk
[56] www.dlg.org.pk

community mobilization, and relief and rehabilitation. The provincial office of De Laas Gul is in Peshawar and regional offices are located in Swabi and Mansehra. The area of operation is Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa (Malakand, Hazara, Mardan, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Dir, Buner, Nowshera, Dera Ismail Khan) and FATA (Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber). Major projects undertaken for women include training of rural Women in tailoring. It is being carried out in villages of Peshawar, District Swabi and Bannu.

Khwendo Kor Women and Child Development Program (KK)[57]

Khwendo Kor upholds the following values as its main pillars: rights for all; empowered communities, especially women and children; a just and equitable society. The vision is to sustain and strengthen Khwendo Kor to empower vulnerable communities, especially women and children, to effectively demand their rights and contribute to a just and equitable society. KK works on community-led services, sustainable livelihoods, institutional development, good governance and relief and rehabilitation. The current projects of KK focus on gender-based violence, the Open Minds Project for War and Peace Reporting, an Inter-News Project involving women, the Awaz-e-Haq project on civic and human rights to sensitize government officials regarding the rights of the vulnerable groups in society, and focusing on registration of women voters, democratic governance, child protection centres, and reconstruction of schools and basic health units.

Sungi Development Foundation[58]

Sungi's vision is peaceful and prosperous society based on social justice, equity and equality. The Mission is to bring about policy and institutional changes by mobilizing communities to transform their lives through equitable and sustainable use of resources without any discrimination against social origin, sex, race, caste and religion. Sungi works with and through community-based organizations on issues of livelihoods, food security and income-generation, health and education, community infrastructure, and disaster risk reduction. The core programs include disaster management, good governance and democratization, human and democratic rights, sustainable livelihoods, social sector development, human and institutional development, and a democratic governance project. Sungi works in Abbotabad, Battagram, Haripur and Mansehra. Major projects undertaken for women include credit systems for poverty alleviation. Sungi also works on advocacy for home based workers, and has taken a leading role towards developing a national policy for women workers in the informal economy.

7.5 Balochistan

Balochistan Rural Support Program (BRSP)[59]

BRSP aims to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of the rural poor by harnessing the potential of people to manage their own development, through their own institutions. Its objectives are to improve the quality of life of disadvantaged rural populations through social mobilization and grassroots institutional development; to nurture and foster human resources at community level and enable them to plan, implement and manage development initiatives for sustainable development; to organize and improve services in health, education, rural enterprise, physical infrastructure, agriculture, livestock, water and sanitation, and women's empowerment in rural areas. The thematic areas are: pro-poor sustainable development, water supply and sanitation services, education, natural resource management, enterprise development for improved livelihoods, employment opportunities for men and women, development

[57] www.khwendokor.org.pk
[58] www.sungi.org
[59] www.brsp.org.pk

of rural infrastructure, promotion of health services with an emphasis on reproductive health, gender mainstreaming, promotion of rights-based interventions, child protection and empowerment of adolescents, promotion of peace and inter-faith harmony, and youth development and empowerment. Current projects include livestock management, disaster mitigation, water, hygiene, flood emergency response, crop maximization, addressing acute malnutrition, emergency health response in flood-affected areas, family advancement for life and health, community policing, productivity enhancement, asset creation for the poorest women, improved sexual and reproductive health, monitoring and supervision of community schools, drinking water and irrigation, and a dairy development project. The head office is located in Quetta, with regional offices in Jafferabad, Jhal Magsi, Kalat, Kharan, Khuzdar, Killa Saifullah, Loralai, Mastung, Pishin and Zhob.

Development Association of Youth (DAY)

The thematic areas of DAY include health, education, environment, poverty alleviation, rural development, drug addiction and a focus on youth. DAY works in both rural and urban areas of Balochistan. The operational areas are Quetta, Loralai, Zhob, and Sibi. The methods used are advocacy, training and publications. Gender issues cut across the work of DAY. A major project on women was the female reproductive health project.

Institute of Development Studies and Practice (IDSP)

Based in Quetta, Balochistan, the Institute for Development Studies and Practices (IDSP) is a national institution with open learning spaces. Its mission is "To nurture and develop individuals and communities that will change the power structures by demystifying processes of education and development and generate value based partnerships and practices at all levels". The purpose of IDSP's interventions is to reduce and eventually end the exclusion of majority of young people from mainstream education and livelihood opportunities in the country. IDSP opens learning spaces for the young to empower them for generating and regenerating responses to the existing challenges of education, learning, livelihood, peace and pluralism. The Learning Spaces provided by IDSP are used for conducting theory and practice based courses on the themes of community development, mainstreaming gender and development and courses on development studies. IDSP programs include mainstreaming gender and development in Balochistan, academic learning, learners and community partnership, child protection centers, learning and livelihood and disaster relief. Gender issues run across all programs and projects of IDSP.

Society for the Community Support for Primary Education, Balochistan (SCSPEB)

The Society for Community Support for Primary Education in Balochistan (SCSPEB) seeks to promote human development by utilizing community mobilization strategies to establish government-community partnerships. SCSPEB realizes that promoting education as a whole, especially for girls, requires support from all stakeholders: parents, community, schools, education department and local government. It is only through the active interest and sense of shared responsibility of such stakeholders that access to and quality of education can be ensured. SCSPEB is well known for its Home School Project for girls' education in Quetta. Its main programs include Balochistan Primary Education Program, Primary Education Quality Improvement Project, Home Schools, Village Development through Social Sector Services, Primary Environmental Care at Girls' Primary Schools,

[60] www.net-ngo.org/detailpage.cfm?ngoid=31
[61] www.idsp.org.pk
[62] www.scspeb.org

Increasing Primary School Participation for Girls, Afghan Refugees Education Project, Mastung Education for All pilot project, Community Girls Middle School Project, Capacity-building of Teachers, Skill Development and Literacy Project and Rehabilitation of Refugee-affected Hosting Areas. SCSPEB works with the government, civil society organizations and community-based organizations to achieve the objective of education, especially for girls.

8. Donors and International NGOs

Although a large number of donors and funding agencies support women's empowerment projects, a few donors and INGOs have been selected here for their visible presence on Pakistan's development landscape as well as their relevance for the issues addressed in this scoping study. Further information on donor agencies may be found at www.ngorc.org.pk.

ActionAid Pakistan (AAPk)[63]

ActionAid Pakistan includes women's rights among its main themes. AAPk believes that the denial of fundamental rights arises from the inherently patriarchal nature of society entrenched in cultural values, social norms, and political, legal and religious institutions. Work on women's rights involves promoting women's rights to self-determination and creating opportunities for their social, economic, political and legal participation. The aim is change the existing unequal gender relations by removing ideological and institutional barriers to women's empowerment. AAPk also works on education, food rights, emergencies and health in all the four provinces of Pakistan and mainly in the rural areas.-

Asian Development Bank (ADB)[64]

ADB is committed to promoting women's economic and social empowerment in the Asia-Pacific region. The bank focuses on poverty reduction and addresses issues of health, education, transport, economic opportunities in all the provinces of Pakistan and rehabilitation of disaster-hit areas.

Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)[65]

AusAid Pakistan focuses on the issues of health, basic education, human capital, rural development, governance, internally displaced people and reconstruction of earthquake affected areas. Gender issues are built into the programs on health, education and rural development.

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)[66]

CIDA's Program for the Advancement of Gender Equality (PAGE), which concluded in March 2010, recognized that women bear the burden of poverty disproportionately. Gender inequality is rooted in social, cultural and religious practices and discriminatory laws. CIDA has consistently supported gender equality, women's empowerment and women's human rights through education and infrastructural and programmatic support to leading women's organizations and those with a strong focus on gender.

[63] www.actionaid.org/pakistan
[64] www.adb.org
[65] www.ausaid.gov.au
[66] www.acdi-cida.gc.ca

Catholic Relief Services (CRS)[67]

CRS is focused on agriculture, education, emergency response, food security, health and microfinance. In Pakistan CRS has focused a great deal on disaster areas affected by the 2005 earthquake and 2010 floods. CRS aims to promote human development by responding to major emergencies, fighting disease and poverty, and nurturing peaceful and just societies.

Church World Service – Pakistan/ Afghanistan (CWS – P/A)[68]

CWS-P/A, as an ecumenical organization, struggles for a society based on social justice, regardless of class, religion, gender and culture, by assisting marginalized communities in an accountable manner to achieve economic prosperity and improve human and social capital through participatory endeavor, which liberates people and enhances their capacities to take control over their lives. The vision is based on communities that are interdependent, equal, peaceful, rational, just and fair. The basic work areas include disaster management, education, livelihoods, health, peace and governance, water and sanitation.

Department for International Development (DFID)[69]

In Pakistan DFID has supported a number of programs related to women, health, education and poverty. Some of these include the Gender Justice and Protection Project, Gender in Education Policy, Support Program, support to national health programs, poverty reduction budget support, earthquake reconstruction and rehabilitation program, Punjab School Education Program, maternal and newborn health, Pakistan financial inclusion program, humanitarian assistance to those affected by floods and conflict, Punjab Devolved Social Services Program, Punjab Economic Opportunities Program, Support to the Medium Term Development Framework, education in Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa, support to rural support program, support to Kashf Foundation, Strengthening Education in Pakistan, and internal displacement. Gender issues are built into all of DFID's programs and projects.

European Union – Delegation of the European Commission in Pakistan (EC)[70]

The European Union has provided development and humanitarian aid to Pakistan especially for IDPs and earthquake affected-areas. Due to conflict and the security situation the EC's involvement has remained on the low side. Gender issues are built into EC's policies and programs. The EC focuses on the promotion of democracy and violence against women and human rights.

Food & Agricultural Organization (FAO)[71]

A UN Agency, FAO is concerned with agriculture, fisheries and livestock. It looks into issues of food security with which women are integrally connected. Women in Pakistan, as in other Asian countries, are heavily engaged in agricultural work, livestock management and fisheries. FAO distributes free seeds to vulnerable farmers to mitigate the effects of food insecurity.

Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (FES)[72]

A German agency, FES is mainly concerned with promoting democracy and human rights. In Pakistan, a major initiative was on labor relations and the trade unions movement. FES has set a unique example of development-oriented and democratic cooperation between workers and employers by facilitating the establishment of the Workers Employers Bilateral Council of Pakistan, a body which has been recognized by the government as a competent consultant in labor policy issues.

[67] crs.org
[68] www.cwspa.org
[69] www.dfid.gov.uk
[70] www.delpak.ec.europa.eu
[71] www.fao.org
[72] www.fespk.org

German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)[73]

The priority areas in Pakistan for GTZ are basic education, basic health, family planning and HIV/AIDS, good governance, democracy and civil society. The themes include good governance, rural development, sustainable infrastructure, security and reconstruction, social development, environment and climate change, economic development and employment, and cross-sectoral themes including gender, youth, poverty, food, nutrition, security and ecological standards.

Heinrich Boll Foundation (HBF)[74]

The main tenets of HBF are ecology and sustainability, democracy and human rights, self-determination and justice. The role of the foreign offices is to engage in political dialogues and observations, offer regional expertise, and implement and coordinate projects in the field of ecology and energy, democratization, and peace and security. HBF is supporting and strengthening participation, pluralism and the rule of law in the region. With regard to women's empowerment and gender issues, HBF made a video to celebrate the ten years of Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, a conference on women, religion and politics in Pakistan, a study on gender, religion and the quest for justice in Pakistan, and a gender perspective on Talibanization.

ICCO & KerkinActie[75]

ICCO envisages a world without poverty and injustice. Based on this vision, ICCO supports projects that contribute to one of three main programs. The policy emphasis may differ from country to country, depending on local political and economic conditions. The program on basic social services aims toward access to decent education, health care, water and food for all. The program on fair and sustainable economic development works at improving the income of small-scale entrepreneurs and their families in developing countries. Working on democracy and peace, ICCO supports initiatives that further a stable political situation and the emancipation of underprivileged groups.

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)[76]

IFAD's strategy in Pakistan has the aim of combating rural poverty through an emphasis on rural development. The strategy focuses on alleviating poverty in vulnerable and remote areas, achieving community participation, identifying opportunities for innovation structuring institutional arrangements that capitalize on partnerships between public and private sectors. enhance the access of poor rural women and men to productive assets, skills, services and improved technologies, with particular emphasis on enhancing productivity – through pilot schemes for land distribution, new microfinance products and market access initiatives, strengthen the capacity of poor rural people to engage in and benefit from local development processes – supporting government line agencies to improve the participatory approach, working with potential partners and promoting institutional innovation at the grass-roots level. Key parts of the strategy include vocational training, skill-enhancement and access to financial services and markets. IFAD-funded programs and projects work to improve livelihoods and productivity of poor rural people. IFAD operations reach the most disadvantaged communities in remote and marginalized areas across the country. IFAD works with the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund to implement microfinance projects and support communities affected by the 2005 earthquake. IFAD works with small farmers with limited land and livestock, landless farmers, including small-scale livestock herders, fishers who depend on a combination of on-farm and off-farm wage employment, and households headed by women who have little

[73] www.gtz.de
[74] www.boell-pakistan.org
[75] www.icco.nl
[76] www.ifad.org/english/operations/pi/pak/index.htm

access to resources, services and assets of their own.

International Development Research Center (IDRC)[78]

IDRC has supported Pakistani researchers' efforts to improve health care, education, and farming practices, and find lasting solutions to economic and environmental problems. Research has focused on peace-building and women's experience of discrimination and violence. IDRC has facilitated efforts to reduce poverty, such as the development of a community-based monitoring system that can track the impact of government efforts to reduce poverty.

International Labour Organization (ILO)[78]

A specialized agency of the UN, the ILO in Pakistan addresses the continued discrimination suffered by women in the world of work. Along with CIDA, ILO launched a project to promote Gender Equality for Decent Employment to reduce gender inequality and to promote employment opportunities for women in Pakistan. In 2010, ILO held a photography competition on Gender Equality for Decent Employment to engage individuals and professional organizations aimed at inspiring people to think about women, men, girls and boys in the world of work, and capturing both the challenges they face and achievements they have made. The ILO Pakistan office aims to ensure that Pakistan implements the ILO Conventions signed such as Convention 100 and that it signs other ones related to women such as Convention 177 concerned with home-based workers.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)[79]

The three priority areas include ensuring human security and human development; development of sound market economy and the achievement of balanced regional socioeconomic development. JICA is actively implementing various sector specific programs agreed upon by both, Governments of Japan and Pakistan. The sectors which Government of Japan has focused on are health and sanitation, education, irrigation and water resource development, agriculture, industrial development, governance, and environment. Gender issues are built into JICA's programs and projects.

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)[80]

The thematic areas of NORAD include the environment, health and AIDS, energy, education and research. NORAD has supported women's organizations with regard to research and publications. Women's empowerment and gender equality issues are built into NORAD's programs and projects.

OXFAM Great Britain (OGB)[81]

In Pakistan, Oxfam's focus is on education, health, tackling violence against women, and emergency relief. Oxfam supports girls' right to education, gender equality, and conflict and natural disasters. Other development work by Oxfam includes lobbying for better health care, focusing on rural land rights and economic opportunities and increasing resilience to disasters and climate change.

Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF)[82]

The objectives of PPAF are to empower the poor and increase their incomes, especially women; to provide credit to partner organizations and assist them expand their poverty targeted microcredit

[77] www.idrc.ca
[78] www.ilo.org/islamabad
[79] www.jica.go.jp/pakistan
[80] www.norad.no
[81] www.oxfam.org.uk
[82] www.ppaf.org.pk

programs; to provide grants and loans on a cost-sharing basis for development of small scale community infrastructure; to enable accessibility of disadvantaged communities to infrastructure, health and education; to strengthen the institutional capacity of partner organizations and support them in their capacity building efforts with communities. The target population for PPAF projects constitutes poor rural and urban communities, with specific emphasis being placed on gender and empowerment of women. Benefits accrue directly to the vulnerable through income generation, improved physical and social infrastructure, and training and skill development support.

Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE)[83]

The Netherlands focuses its development cooperation in three sectors: education, environment/ water management, and good governance/ human rights. The education program aims to contribute to the MDGs and the `Education for All` goal in Pakistan. At the same time it aims to reduce the breeding ground for radicalization by supporting access, equity, quality and relevance in education, both at the policy and system level, through focused interventions addressing the needs of Pakistan's youth, in particular girls and women. The objective of the environment/ water management program is to promote sustainable development in Pakistan and achieve poverty reduction. The goal of the democratization, governance, human rights (including women's rights) program is to contribute to the development of a sustainable democracy, where all (state and non-state) institutions are able and capable of playing their (constitutional) roles, human rights are respected and all citizens can participate in the political process, thereby reducing the risk of further (political) instability in Pakistan and the region.

Save the Children (UK)[84]

Save the Children works on the issues of health, education, rural development, economic relief and livelihood support, and provision of emergency relief. The organization is also concerned with child labor, child rights and child protection. The geographical areas of work are Punjab, Sindh, Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa and FATA. Save the Children also has a focus on the girl child in all its work.

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)[85]

SDC's aim is to alleviate poverty by helping people in partner countries to help themselves. Development activities focus on promoting economic and governmental autonomy, improving production conditions, helping to solve environmental problems, and providing better access to education and basic health care for the most disadvantaged groups in society. SDC focuses on the Millennium Development Goals and the Poverty Reduction Strategy which provide the overall reference framework for SDC's cooperation program in Pakistan. The overall goal of the cooperation program is to reduce poverty by promoting people-driven, equitable and ecologically sound development. The program is structured around three broad domains: improving governance, increasing income, and reconstruction and rehabilitation, underlined by a human rights based approach. Gender and HIV and AIDS are mainstreamed throughout the program. Major components of SDC's program are concentrated in Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa. All official development cooperation activities aim to improve living conditions for the world's most disadvantaged people. The SDC focuses primarily on conflict transformation, social development, good governance, promoting economic structures and safeguarding natural resources.

Trust for Voluntary Organizations (TVO)[86]

TVO, a non-political, autonomous body has a mandate to provide support to NGOs in Pakistan.

[83] www.netherlandsembassy.org.pk
[84] www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/pakistan.htm
[85] www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/Pakistan
[86] www.tvo.org.pk

It serves as a catalyst for indigenous NGOs engaged in participatory development-oriented programs. TVO advocates development with equal opportunities for all segments of the society. The purpose was to improve the quality of life of the neglected segments of Pakistani population. To improve the social status of the rural population of Pakistan through funding of participatory community development projects in five major social sectors: poverty alleviation, primary education, primary health care, safe drinking water supply and rehabilitation of the disabled. Gender is a cross-cutting issue in TVO's work.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP)[87]

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is an important partner of the Government of Pakistan for achieving national development goals and international commitments including the Millennium Development Goals. UNDP's works with the government, civil society and development partners in four broad programmatic areas; poverty reduction and gender, democratic governance, environment and climate change and crisis prevention and recovery. UNDP promotes the MDGs in Pakistan and works on poverty reduction, environment and democratic governance. UNDP runs a Gender Justice Protection Project and supports the Campaign to End Violence Against Women.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)[88]

UNESCO has a comprehensive education program in Pakistan which focuses on the education of girls in particular in an effort to meet the MDG targets for Pakistan. The Education for All initiative also emphasizes the education of girl children and women. UNESCO stresses gender equality and women empowerment and believes that global prosperity and peace will only be achieved once the entire world's people are empowered to order their own lives and provide for themselves and their families. UNESCO works on the assumption that societies where women are more equal stand a much greater chance of achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and that every single MDG relates directly to women's rights. UNESCO believes that societies where women are not afforded equal rights as men can never achieve development in a sustainable manner.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)[89]

UNFPA promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programs to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect. The three core areas of UNFPA's work – reproductive health, gender equality, and population and development strategies – are inextricably related. Population dynamics, including growth rates, age structure, fertility and mortality, migration and more, influence every aspect of human, social and economic development. Reproductive health and women's empowerment powerfully affect, and are affected by, population trends. The importance of gender equality and women's empowerment to development progress is underscored by the fact that this was selected as one of the eight Millennium Development Goals. Beyond being a goal in itself, gender equality is also a driver for all the MDGs, and is intimately linked and specifically connected to goals to improve maternal and newborn health and reduce the spread of HIV. UNFPA's gender framework incorporates four strategic linkages that address critical factors underlying inequalities and rights violations: girls' education, women's economic empowerment,

[87] www.undp.org.pk
[88] www.unesco.org.pk
[89] www.unfpa.org

women's political participation and the balancing of reproductive and productive roles. A strong emphasis on the human rights, including reproductive rights, of individual women and men underpins all of UNFPA's work and its way of working. Promoting and protecting these rights requires considerable cultural fluency because UNFPA works in some of the most sensitive and intimate spheres of human existence, including sexuality, gender relations and population issues.

United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)[90]

Children in Pakistan face a variety of serious challenges ranging from malnutrition and poor access to education and health facilities to exploitation in the form of child labor. Their low status in society can leave them victim to daily violence at home and in school as well as to organized trafficking and sexual exploitation. Girls are specially affected as conservative attitudes may impede them attending or finishing school. UNICEF works with children, including and especially girl children, on issues of education, disasters and emergencies. UNICEF has worked in disaster-affected areas of Pakistan on the rehabilitation of children's lives, education and safety.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)[91]

USAID has launched the Gender Equity Program in partnership with Aurat Foundation. The program is a strategic approach to women's empowerment aims to provide grants to civil society actors working on gender equity and human rights. The program has four major objectives: enhancing gender equity by expanding women's access to justice and women's human rights; increasing women's empowerment by expanding knowledge of their rights and opportunities to exercise their rights in the workplace, communities, and home; combating gender-based violence and strengthening the capacity of Pakistani organizations that advocate for gender equity, women's empowerment, and the elimination of gender-based violence.

World Food Program (WFP)[92]

In response to the complex food security challenges in Pakistan, WFP assistance encompasses emergency, recovery and development, and focuses on the most vulnerable. Emergency food assistance is provided to communities affected by conflict and displacement, as well as those still suffering amid the impact of sustained high food prices. Protracted relief and recovery support aims to address food insecurity in the most underdeveloped regions by supporting education and health care systems, and using food-for-work and food-for-training to facilitate livelihood and asset rehabilitation. WFP emphasizes an amelioration of gender disparities and improved access to education, health care and livelihoods among the poorest residents of marginalized and remote areas. WFP aims to improve access to food in ways that enable women and girls to take advantage of developmental opportunities. By providing monthly take-home rations of oil, the Country Program seeks to increase enrolment and retention of girls in primary-schools. Similarly, oil incentives are provided to pregnant and nursing mothers in exchange for availing of health care services; while the supply of food stamps to participants in asset-creation activities intends to enhance the income-generating capacity of rural women, and positively impact upon their social status.

The World Bank (WB)[93]

The World Bank does not work alone, but in cooperation with various groups including, communities, civil society organizations,

[90] www.unicef.org/pakistan
[91] www.usaid.gov/pk
[92] www.wfp.org/countries/Pakistan -
[93] www.worldbank.org.pk

government, and donor agencies. The joint effort of these groups is required to significantly reduce poverty. The World Bank provides technical expertise and funding in areas such as health, education, public administration, environmental protection, agriculture, and basic infrastructure. WB supports the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy and focuses on three key areas: strengthening economic stability and government effectiveness; strengthening the investment climate; supporting pro-poor and pro-gender equity policies. World Bank funded projects are carried out in all the provinces and areas of Pakistan and gender issues cut across its work.

World Health Organization (WHO)[94]

Apart from its work on all kinds of health problems, WHO lays stress on maternal and reproductive health and maternal and child mortality. WHO also works on issues of malnutrition of women and girl children. WHO has worked in disaster-affected areas and emergencies to ensure the health of affected women and children as well as on immunization and preventive health care. Some of the projects in Pakistan include the Women's Health Project, Reproductive Health Project, Child Health Program and National Nutrition Project. These programs were designed to reduce premature deaths among women and children. WHO seeks to help Pakistan meet its MDG targets through development and the reduction of poverty in the country. WHO believes that poverty is an important health determinant. WHO seeks to enable Pakistan to achieve MDG targets by 2015 by reducing poverty, combating diseases and ensuring improved and equitable availability of services. The Medium Term Development Framework 2005–2010 was aligned towards the goal of achieving the MDG targets.

World Population Foundation (WPF)[95]

WPF has supported government as well as civil society organizations in designing and managing Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and provided technical assistance and training for effective program implementation. WPF, along with AHAN conducted an assessment study on knowledge, attitudes and practice of reproductive health indicators. The study revealed the alarming state of unsafe sexual practices, sexual exploitation, early marriages, unsafe abortions, and maternal deaths among Pakistani youth. Based on this study WPF focused on enhancing attitudes, skills and behavior of Pakistani adolescents. WPF's major focus has been on adolescent sexual and reproductive rights, especially among school-going youth.

[94] http://www.who.int/countries/pak/en
[95] www.wpfpak.org/html/organisation.html

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