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**Essay (Final Session):
“Background, Assessment and Analysis
of the Gender Issues in Pakistan”**

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BACKGROUND, ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS OF THE GENDER ISSUES IN PAKISTAN*

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the assessment of the gender issue in Pakistan, review and analysis of the major sector depicting gender inequalities. Before continuing to the detailed analysis of the gender issues in Pakistan, it gives a bird's eye-view of the socio-economic, political and cultural background of Pakistan. The paper explains the areas of critical gender inequalities in Pakistan and reviews the various gender indicators in Pakistan. It also discusses the current policies and the programs addressing the gender issues in Pakistan and the suggests some policy recommendations to improve the women's status in Pakistan.

KEY WORDS

Pakistan and Gender Issues, Assessment of gender issues in Pakistan, Gender Indicators

I – INTRODUCTION

Differences in opportunities and access to the resources between men and women exist all over the world, but they are most common in poor developing nations. These differences develop at very early stages, for example, boys usually receive a larger share of education and health spending than girls. Girls, in many developing countries, are allowed less education by their families than boys, and this might be shown by the lower female primary school enrollment and lower literacy rates in females. Consequently, women have less employment opportunities, especially in the formal sectors. Women

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who do work outside the home often also bear the burden of the responsibility for household-tasks and child-nurturing. The lower spending on girls' health results in higher mortality rates and lower life expectancy rates in girls than boys. However, the life expectancy has increased for both men and women in all regions, but female morbidity and mortality rates sometimes exceed male rates, particularly during early childhood and the reproductive years.

The causes of gender inequality, linked to the households decisions that are particularly complex. Regardless of how such decisions are made, they obviously are influenced by the traditions, customs, institutional and cultural norms (World Bank, 2002a)¹. These norms and values do not capture the full benefits to society of investing in women. Limited education and training, poor health and nutrition, and denied access to resources don't only depress the women's quality of life but also cause to hinder the economic efficiency and growth. This is alarming because women are agents of change, shaping the welfare of future generations.

In Pakistan, as a developing nation, the situation is more or less similar as described in the earlier paragraphs of this paper. The main objectives of this paper are; the assessment of the gender issue in Pakistan, review and analysis of the major sector depicting gender inequalities. Before continuing to the detailed analysis of the gender issues in Pakistan, it will be useful (in understanding the causes of gender inequalities) to have a bird's eye-view of the socio-economic, political and cultural background of Pakistan. So, the essay is organized as follows. In the next Section – II a brief background of Pakistan is presented. Section - III explains the areas of critical gender inequalities in Pakistan. Section – IV reviews the various gender indicators in Pakistan. Section – V discusses the current policies and the programs addressing the gender issues in Pakistan. Section – VI presents the summary of analysis and the policy recommendations to improve the women's status in Pakistan. And the last section (VII) concludes the essay.

II – A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF PAKISTAN

Pakistan is a federation of four provinces (Punjab, Sindh, NWFP and Balochistan) conjoined with the federal capital area, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), the Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA), and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

¹ World Bank (2002a). "Summary of Gender Profile: Technical Notes". *GenderStats: Database for Gender Statistics*. The World Bank. Retrieved on 27/11/2005 from <http://devdata.worldbank.org/genderstats/techCountry.htm>

Figure 1: Flag and Map of Pakistan



Source: CIA (2005). World Fact Book: Pakistan²

Official name of Pakistan is 'Islamic Republic of Pakistan'. General Pervez Musharrf is the present Head of the state (President) and the Mr. Shukat Aziz is the present Head of the government (Prime Minister). Islamabad is the federal capital of Pakistan. In this section, the historical, demographic & geographic and socio-economic & political background of Pakistan will be discussed. First of all, we'll look at the brief historical background of Pakistan.

Historical Background

Pakistan got independence (from British rule) after the separation of British India (in 1947) into the Muslim state Pakistan (with two sections West Pakistan and the East

² CIA (2005). "The World Fact Book – Pakistan." *Central Investigation Agency (CIA)*, the Government of USA. Retrieved on 27/11/2005 from <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/pk.html>

Pakistan) and the large Hindu state India. During the separation of British India the issue of disputed *Kashmir* territory remained unresolved. This dispute over the *Kashmir's* territory resulted in many wars between Pakistan and India. Pakistan and India fought first war over Kashmir in 1948 (soon after their independence), in which Pakistan captured some part of the Kashmir (*Azad Kashmir*) while the large area of Kashmir is still held by India. The both countries also fought a second war in 1965. A third war between these countries was fought in 1971 (in which India got the advantage of political dispute between West Pakistan and East Pakistan) resulted in East Pakistan becoming the separate nation of Bangladesh. In response of the Indian nuclear tests, Pakistan conducted its own Nuclear Tests in 1998. The Dispute over Kashmir is still going on, but the start of the discussion and other confidence building measure, in recent past and especially after the severe earthquake of October 8th 2005, is helping to reduce the tension.

Geographic and Demographic Background

Pakistan is situated in South Asia bordering Arabian Sea on South, India on East, Iran and Afghanistan on West and China on the on North. Total (land) area of Pakistan is 796,096 square KMs (Population Census Organization (PCO), 2005a)³. The Geographic Coordinates are 30 00N, 70 00E (CIA, 2005). Pakistan has largest land boundary with Afghanistan (2430 KMs), 2912 KMs Boundary with India, 909 KMs boundary with Iran and shares 523 KMs long border with China. Pakistan has a coastline of 1046 KMs long (CIA, 2005).

According to the 1998 census (carried out by Population Census Organization) the total population of Pakistan is 132,352 thousands (68874 thousands Male and 63478 thousands female) and Average annual growth rate 2.69%. But the current total population of Pakistan is 155648500 (PCO, 2005b)⁴. Average household size is 6.8, according to Pakistan Demographic Survey 2003 (PDS-2003)⁵. Crude Birth Rate is 26.5 per 1000 persons and general Fertility Rate is 114.5 per 1000 women (97.9 per 1000 in urban areas and 124.5 in rural areas). The Fertility Rtes is about 21% higher in rural areas

³ PCO (2005a). "Pakistan at Glance – Census 1998". Population Census Organization, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan. Retrieved on 28/11/2005 from <http://statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/index.html>

⁴ PCO (2005b). "Population Clock: Estimated Population of Pakistan" Population Census Organization, Statistics Division – Government of Pakistan. Retrieved on 28/11/2005 from <http://statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/index.html>

⁵ PCO (2005c). "Pakistan Demographic Survey 2003" Population Census Organization, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan. Retrieved on 28/11/2005 from <http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/fbs/statistics/pds2003/pdswriteup.pdf>

as compared to the urban areas (PCO, 2005c). Crude Death Rate is 7.0 per 1000 person; 7.3 for males and 6.6 for females (PCO, 2005c). Infant Mortality Rate is 76.2 per 1000 live births according to PDS-2003. Thus the Natural Growth Rate of population is calculated in PDS-2003 as 1.95 % per annum. According to the PDS-2003 the Life Expectancy at Birth is 64 years for Males and 66 Years for females. Islam is the largest religion as the 97% of population are Muslim, while Christians, Hindus and Others constitute the 3% of total population (CIA, 2005). Urdu is National language, English is used as official language in offices and ministries. Other regional languages include Punjabi 48%, Sindhi 12%, Siraiiki (a Punjabi variant) 10%, Pashtu 8%, Balochi 3%, Hindko 2%, Brahui 1% (CIA, 2005).

Table 1: Pakistan at Glance
Pakistan at Glance (Census – 1998)

Area (Sq. Kms.)	796,096
Population (000)	132,352
Male	68,874
Female	63,478
Sex Ratio	108.5
(Males per 100 Females)	
Population Density	166.3
(Persons per Sq. Km)	
Urban Proportion	32.5
Average Annual Growth Rate	2.69
(1981-1998)	
Literacy Ratio (10+)	43.92
Male	54.81
Female	32.02
Labor Force	31.98
Participation Rate (10+)	
Average Household Size	6.8

Source: Population Census Organization (PCO, 2005a)

Socio-Economic and Political Background

Pakistan, an impoverished and underdeveloped country, has suffered from decades of internal political disputes, low levels of foreign investment, and a costly, ongoing confrontation with neighboring India. But now Pakistan has raised development spending from about 2% of GDP in the 1990s to 4% in 2003, a necessary step towards reversing the broad underdevelopment of its social sector. GDP growth, spurred by double-digit gains in industrial production over the past year, has become less dependent on

agriculture. Foreign exchange reserves continued to reach new levels in 2004, supported by robust export growth and steady worker remittances (CIA, 2005).

National currency of Pakistan is Rupee. Share of agriculture in GDP is 22.6%, while share of industry and Services sectors are 24.1% and 53.3% respectively (2004 est.). Total labor force is 43 million, out of which 42% employed in agriculture 38% in services and 20% in industry. And Unemployment rate is 8.3% plus substantial underemployment (2004 est.). Population below poverty line is 32% (FY 2000-01). Household income or consumption by percentage share: lowest 10%: 4.1%, highest 10%: 27.6% (FY 1996-97) while the Distribution of family income – Gini index is 41 (FY1998-99) [CIA, 2005].

Some important recent economic indicators of Pakistan are shown in the Table 2.

Table 2: Recent Economic Indicators of Pakistan

Recent Economic Indicators:						
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004*	2005**
GDP (US\$bn)	73	71	72	82	95	104
GDP per capita (US\$)	520	490	480	550	620	670
Real GDP growth (% change YOY)	4.3	2.6	2.8	5.8	6.3	8.4
Current account balance (US\$m)	-85	1,878	3,854	3,573	-1,541	-2,874
Current account balance (% GDP)	-0.1	2.6	5.4	4.3	-1.6	-2.8
Goods & services exports (% GDP)	13.6	14.8	15.4	16.9	16	16.6
Inflation (% change YOY):	4.4	3.1	3.3	2.9	7.4	7.7
Unemployment rate (%)	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.6	7	6.6

Source: Australian Department of Foreign affairs and Trade (DFAT), 2005

* Data subject to revision

** Forecasted data

Social conditions in Pakistan are poor; most of the population is deprived of better health facilities, sanitation and clean drinking water facilities. Literacy rate is 43.92%, for males 54.81% and for females 32.02% (Census 1998) i.e. the status of women's education is lower as compared to males. The value of Human Development Index (HDI) is 0.527 and HDI rank of Pakistan (among 177 countries) is 135, while the value of Human Poverty Index (HPI-1) is 37.1% and the HPI-1 rank of Pakistan (among 103 countries) is 68 (UNDP, 2005)⁶.

Political system in Pakistan is bicameral Parliament (or Majlis-e-Shoora) consists of the Senate (100 seats; members indirectly elected by provincial assemblies to serve four-year terms) and the National Assembly (342 seats; 60 seats represent women; 10 seats represent minorities; members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms). Military

⁶ UNDP (2005). "HDR 2005- Country Fact Sheet: Pakistan" United Nation Development Program (UNDP). Retrieved on 28/11/2005 from http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_PAK.html

remains most important political force, while *Ulema* (clergy), landowners, industrialists, and small merchants also have some influential role in politics (CIA, 2005)

Military had intervened directly three times, firstly in 1958 (General Ayoub), secondly in 1971 (General Yahya) and both forced Martial Law in country. And lastly, following a military takeover on 12 October 1999, Chief of Army Staff and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Pervez Musharraf, suspended Pakistan's constitution and assumed the additional title of Chief Executive; on 12 May 2000, Pakistan's Supreme Court unanimously validated the October 1999 coup and granted MUSHARRAF executive and legislative authority for three years from the coup date; on 20 June 2001, Musharraf named himself as president and was sworn in, replacing Mohammad Rafiq Tarar; in a referendum held on 30 April 2002, Musharraf's presidency was extended by five more years; on 1 January 2004, Musharraf won a vote of confidence in the Senate, National Assembly, and four provincial assemblies (CIA, 2005).

III – CRITICAL GENDER ISSUES IN PAKISTAN

The distressed world in which we live is characterized by extremely unequal sharing of the burden of adversities between women and men. Gender inequality doesn't only exist in the developing world but it exists in most parts of the world, from Japan to Morocco, from Uzbekistan to the United States of America (USA). The most developed countries like USA and Japan are also entrapped with the gender inequality and violence against women. For example, In the USA, 700,000 women are raped or sexually assaulted each year, with 14.8 percent of women reporting having been raped before the age of 17 (UNIFEM, 2005)⁷.

Inequality between women and men can take very many different forms. Definitely, gender inequality is not a homogeneous phenomenon, but it is a collection of unrelated and interlinked problems. Let us analyze different areas depicting gender inequality in Pakistan.

Women and Poverty

Though the Pakistan showed a relatively consistent growth performance for the last 50 but this growth failed to reduce the absolute poverty in country. The absolute number of

⁷ UNIFEM (2005). "Not a Minute More: Facts and Figures on Violence against Women". *United Nations Development Fund for Women* (UNIFEM). Retrieved on 28/11/2005 from <http://www.unifem.org/campaigns/november25/FactsFigures.pdf>

poor has increased from 19 million in 1960 to 42 million in 1995 (UNDP, 1999)⁸. A systematic gender analysis of poverty remains vague in Pakistan due to the absence of gender-disaggregated, poverty-related data. The incidence of poverty in rural areas is higher than in urban areas according to both income poverty and broader measures, while the three quarters of Pakistan's poor live in rural areas.

The link between gender and poverty is evident all over the world. Out of 1.3 billion people living in poverty, 70 percent are women (ADB, 2000)⁹. Feminization of poverty is a global phenomenon. Women are the poorest among the poor and the most vulnerable among communities. Poverty in Pakistan has a "woman's face." There are considerable intra-household disparities in food distribution and investment of resources between male and female members. Among poorer households, incidence of chronic malnutrition is higher among female children.⁶ Women's access and control over productive resources are extremely limited. In addition to suffering from the same deprivations as men, women face the additional suffering of unequal opportunities to education, health, and other social services due to patriarchal control over their sexuality and cultural restrictions over their mobility (ADB, 2000). The value of the Gender-related Development Index (GDI¹⁰) is 0.508 and GDI rank (among 104 countries) is 104 (UNDP, 2005).

Social Status of Women

The social and cultural context of Pakistani society is predominantly patriarchal. Men and women are conceptually divided into two separate worlds. Home is defined as a woman's legitimate ideological and physical space, while a man dominates the world outside the home. In the given social context, Pakistani women lack social value and status because of negation of their roles as producers and providers in all social roles. The preference for sons due to their productive role dictates the allocation of household resources in their favor. Male members of the family are given better education and are equipped with

⁸ UNDP (1999). *A Profile of Poverty in Pakistan*, United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) Islamabad, p.1.

⁹ ADB (2000). "Women in Pakistan." *A County Briefing Paper*. Programs Department (West) and Office of Environment and Social Development, Asian Development Bank (ADB). Retrieved on 27/11/2005 from http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Country_Briefing_Papers/Women_in_Pakistan/women_pakistan.pdf

¹⁰ GDI measures achievements in the same dimensions using the same indicators as the HDI but captures inequalities in achievement between women and men. It is simply the HDI adjusted downward for gender inequality (UNDP, 2005)

skills to compete for resources in the public arena, while female members are imparted domestic skills to be good mothers and wives (ADB, 2000).

Education and Health for Women

Women's lower social, economic, and cultural standing results in the low health and educational status of women. Social and familial control over women's sexuality, their economic dependence on men, and restrictions on their mobility determine differential access of males and females to health services. Intra-household bias in food distribution leads to nutritional deficiencies among female children. Early marriages of girls, excessive childbearing, lack of control over their own bodies, and a high level of illiteracy adversely affect women's health. Institutionalized gender bias within the health service delivery system in terms of lack of female service providers, and neglect of women's basic and reproductive health needs, intensify women's disadvantaged health status (ADB, 2000).

Strong gender disparities exist in educational attainment between rural and urban areas and among the provinces. In 1996–1997 the literacy rate in urban areas was 58.3 percent while in rural areas it was 28.3 percent, and only 12 percent among rural women. There are also considerable inequalities in literacy rates among the four provinces, especially disparities between men and women (ADB, 2000).

Political participation of Women

Although women do not have a role in the formulation of macroeconomic and social policies, they have borne the brunt of such policies. Women's exclusion from decision-making bodies at the local, provincial, and national levels does not provide them any opportunity to voice their concerns or promote their perspective on governance. The male-dominated governance structure has been creating and recreating gender inequalities (ADB, 2000). The number of women in parliament remained lower in Pakistan, but the present government raised the women representation in national and provincial assemblies and local governments. On the basis of the Gender empowerment Measure (GEM¹¹) the rank of Pakistan is 71st (UNDP, 2005).

¹¹ GEM reveals whether women take an active part in economic and political life. It focuses on gender inequality in key areas of economic and political participation and decision-making. It tracks the share of seats in parliament held by women; of female legislators, senior officials and managers; and of female professional and technical workers- and the gender disparity in earned income, reflecting economic independence. Differing from the GDI, the GEM exposes inequality in opportunities in elected areas (UNDP, 2005).

Violence against Women

Violence against women is the most powerful mechanism used by family, society, and state to silence voices of resistance to the existing gender-related social order. It is a fundamental violation of the human right to life, physical safety, self-respect, and dignity. It is the manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women. The social construction of gender establishes male authority and power over women, and provides the basis for gender-based violence in the society.

The different forms of the violence against women in Pakistan include physical and mental torture, murder and honor-killing, sexual harassment and rape, Kidnapping and women trafficking, and forced prostitution. It is difficult to assess the extent of violence against women due to lack of data. Also, the incidences of violence are grossly underreported.

Employment and Opportunities for Women

Women lack ownership of productive resources. Despite women's legal rights to own and inherit property from their families, there are very few women who have access and control over these resources. A micro-level survey of 1,000 rural households conducted in 1995 in Punjab found that only 36 women owned land in their own name, while only 9 of them had control over it (MWD, 1995)¹². Similarly, formal financial institutions do not cater to women's credit needs due to the underlying assumption of women's role in the reproductive sphere. The Agriculture Development Bank of Pakistan (Now known as Zarai Taraqiyati Bank Ltd), Khushhali Bank and First Women's Bank Limited are the only banks that have small-scale credit programs that cater to women. Other sources of credit to women include informal sources such as non-government organizations, friends, relatives, and moneylenders.

In the cultural context of Pakistan, women's wage work is considered a threat to the male ego and identity and women's engagement in multiple home-based economic activities leads to under-remuneration for their work. Pakistani girls and women spend long hours fetching water, doing laundry, preparing food, and carrying out agricultural duties. Not only are these tasks physically hard and demanding, they also rob girls of the opportunity to study (ADB, 2000).

¹² MWD (1995), "Pakistan National Report," submitted to the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing. Ministry of Women's Development, Government of Pakistan.

IV – REVIEW OF GENDER INDICATORS IN PAKISTAN

Gender and World Development Indicators

The gender-related world development indicators are presented in the Table. 3 as following:

Table 3: Women in Development (Pakistan)

Female Population (% of Total)	life expectancy at birth		Pregnant Women Receiving Prenatal Care	Women in Non Agricultural sector (% of total)	Women in Agricultural Sector (% of Total)	Unpaid Family Worker 2000-2003		Women in Parliament	
	Male 2003	Female 2003				1995-2003	2000-2003	2000-2003	Male (% of male employment)	Female (% of female employment)	1990	2004
48.3	63	65	43	8.2	21.1	16.7	50.1	10	22

Source: World Bank (2005). World Development Indicators 2005

The data (in Table. 3) shows that women constitute 48.3% of total population in Pakistan. Nearly 57% of pregnant women deprived of the prenatal care. Share of women in the non-agricultural sector is only 8.2%, while in agricultural sector this share is 21.1% (relatively larger than non-agri sector). Large proportion of total employed female workers is unpaid as the 50.1% (of total employed) are the unpaid female family workers. And only 22 women are in the parliament till 2004. A detailed table of gender Indicators is given in Appendix (at the end of this paper)¹³.

Gender Inequality in Education

The inequality in Literacy Rates has already been discussed in the earlier section. Some other indicators of gender inequality in education could be found in Table No 4. Which shows some extant of gender inequality in numbers, enrollment, teaching staff and student-teacher ratios.

Table. No. 4: Data Sheet Showing Number, Enrolment Teaching Staff and Student Teachers Ratio (Student per Teacher)

Type	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Number of Primary Schools (Thousand)				
Total	162.5	147.7 R	149.1	150.8
Female	58.7	42.9	43.5	43.9
Enrolment in Primary Schools (Thousand)				
Total	19148	17135 R	17529	18220
Female	7044	6893	7167	7519
Teachers in Primary Schools (Thousand)				
Total	366.4	408.9 R	413.9	433.5
Female	127.2	183.6	183.5	191.7

¹³ See Appendix: Pakistan's Gender Profile, page 18

Student Teacher Ratio (Student per Teacher)	52.3	41.9	42.4	42
Teachers per School (Total)	2.3	2.8	2.8	2.8
Teachers per School (Female)	2.2	4.3	4.2	4.4
Student per School	117.8	116	117.6	120.8
Percentage of Female Teachers	34.7	44.9	44.3	44.2
Number of Middle Schools (Thousand)				
Total	18.4	25.5 R	26.8	28
Female	8.1	5.9	6.3	6.5
Enrolment in Middle Schools (Thousand)				
Total	4112	3759 R	3821	3918
Female	1615	1705	1506	1551
Teachers in Middle Schools (Thousand)				
Total	91.5	209.6 R	230.1	238.3
Female	44.3	127.8	139.3	145.8
Student Teacher Ratio (Student per Teacher)	44.9	17.9	16.6	16.6
Teachers per School (Total)	5	8.2	8.6	8.4
Teachers per School (Female)	5.5	21.7	22.1	22.4
Student per School	223.5	147.4	142.6	139.9
Percentage of Female Teachers	48.4	61	60.5	61.7
Number of High Schools (Thousand)				
Total	12.6	14.8 R	15.1	15.6
Female	4.6	2.8	2.8	2.8
Enrolment in High Schools (Thousand)				
Total	1726	1565 R	1574	1589
Female	653	676	644	658
Teachers in High Schools (Thousand)				
Total	155.7	260.2 R	270.2	278
Female	52.2	125.3	126.1	132
Student Teacher Ratio (Student per Teacher)	11.1	6	5.8	5.7
Teachers per School (Total)	12.4	17.6	17.9	17.8
Teachers per School (Female)	11.3	44.8	45	47.1
Student per School	137	105.7	104.2	101.9
Percentage of Female Teachers	33.5	48.2	46.7	47.5

Source: FBS (2005), Pakistan Demographic Survey 2003

Gender Inequality in Health

The gender disaggregated data on health is not available in Pakistan. Some indicators of gender inequality in health could be found in following Table 14:

Table 5: Health Nutrition and Violence

	Pakistan				South Asia		Low income	
	1980	1990	1995	2000	1980	2000	1980	2000
Life expectancy at birth (years)								
Male	55	58	60	62	54	62	52	58
Female	56	60	62	64	53	63	53	60
Child malnutrition-weight for age (% of children under 5)	..	40	38	..	71	48	..	42
Child immunization rate (% of children under 12 months)								
Immunized against DPT	2	54	58	61	6	65	8	62
Immunized against	1	50	47	56	..	58	..	60

measles								
Child mortality rate (per 1,000)								
Male	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Female	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	..	..	..	500	..	566	..	657
Maternal Health								
Birth attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	..	<i>19</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>20</i>	..	<i>38</i>	..	..
Maternal leave benefits								
Number of weeks	..	<i>12</i>	..	..	..	..	..	..
Compensation	..	<i>100</i>	..	..	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of anemia (% of pregnant women)	..	..	..	<i>37</i>	..	..	..	..
Prevalence of HIV (% of people aged 15-24)								
Male	..	..	..	<i>0.1</i>	..	<i>0.3</i>	..	<i>1.2</i>
Female	..	..	..	<i>0</i>	..	<i>0.5</i>	..	<i>2.2</i>
Prevalence of physical violence against women by an intimate partner	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Note: Data in italics refer to the most recent data available within the two years of the year indicated								
Source: World Bank (2002b) ¹⁴								

Gender Inequality in Opportunity

The gender disaggregated data on Opportunities is not available in Pakistan. Some indicators of gender inequality in opportunities could be found in following Table:

Table. 6: Opportunities for Women in Pakistan

	Pakistan				South Asia		Low income	
	1980	1990	1995	2000	1980	2000	1980	2000
LABOR FORCE								
Females (% of total labor force)	23	24	26	29	34	33	37	38
EMPLOYMENT								
Distribution of labor force by employment status								
Wage and Salaried								
Male (% of males employed)	..	34	35	36	..	..	..	..
Female (% of females employed)	..	23	25	33	..	..	..	..
Self-employed								
Male (% of males employed)	..	46	47	47	..	..	..	..
Female (% of females employed)	..	13	14	17	..	..	..	..
Contributing Family Workers								
Male (% of males employed)	..	..	17.2	16.7	..	..	..	..
Female (% of females employed)	..	..	61.7	50.1	..	..	..	..

¹⁴ World Bank (2002b). "Health, Nutrition and Violence." *GenderStats: Database on Gender Statistics*. The World Bank. Retrieved on 30/11/02005 from <http://devdata.worldbank.org/genderstats/genderRpt.asp?rpt=health&cty=PAK,Pakistan&hm=home2>

Women in administrative & managerial positions (% of total workers in this occupational group)	..	..	4	..	..	..	..	..
Female wages (% of male wages)								
Agriculture	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Non-agriculture	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Manufacturing	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Unemployment rates								
Male (% of male labor force)	3	3.4	4.1	6.1	..	..	..	..
Female (% of female labor force)	7.5	0.9	13.7	17.3	..	..	..	..
Note: Data in italics refer to the most recent data available within the two years of the year indicated								

Source: World Bank (2002c)¹⁵

V – ADDRESSING GENDER ISSUES IN PAKISTAN: POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Government of Pakistan makes amendments in the Constitution and promulgation of Local Government Ordinance, 2001; at least 33 percent of seats in each tier of local government are women. In the National Assembly, more than 60 seats are held by women out of 332 seats while over 128 seats are held by women out of 728 seats in the provincial assemblies. Similarly, there are 17 women in the Senate out of 100 members. While most of these women have been elected on reserved seats, some have won on general seats. Women participation in politics as voters, candidates and political activists is increasing. Representation by women is better than in most countries of the world, including the largest democracies of the world. This provides a good opportunity to address the gender gap in the social, economic and health sectors.

Now there is a growing realization at the policy making level of the government that gender disparities and inequalities cannot be accepted and government has initiated a number of programs/projects and taken practical steps to reduce gender inequalities. Some of the major initiatives include:

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

Though the interim PRSP (IPRSP) of Pakistan didn't address the issues of gender but the full PRSP includes this issue. One of the noteworthy additions to the Poverty Reduction Strategy in the full PRSP is the focus on some economy-wide issues like gender

¹⁵ World Bank (2002c). "Opportunities" *GenderStats: Database on Gender Statistics*. The World Bank. Retrieved on 31/01/2005 from <http://devdata.worldbank.org/genderstats/genderRpt.asp?rpt=opportunity&cty=PAK,Pakistan&hm=home2>

mainstreaming, employment and environment. These issues cut across many sectors and policy regimes and have been addressed above at those levels. This section highlights those aspects of the new issues which have not been dealt with earlier while avoiding repetition of policies and measures described earlier. Different measures for the gender equality and women empowerment were suggested in the Draft PRSP (Government of Pakistan, 2003)¹⁶.

“The Government of Pakistan firmly believes that any poverty reduction effort must address the gender dimension in order to address poverty meaningfully. Gender is a cross cutting theme therefore it is integrated in all sectors, interventions and policies. Gender mainstreaming is a policy of the Government, committed to the Beijing Platform for Action. Mainstreaming gender issues into policies, development plans and programs is the key strategy to promote gender equality in Pakistan. In the longer term, the government will support the use of gender sensitive budgeting (GSB) in analyzing the federal and provincial government budgets to determine the extent to which resources are allocated to address gender inequality. This will not only improve women’s status but will also contribute to national, social and economic development of the country.”

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is a policy document that entails a comprehensive strategy to reduce poverty through:

- High and broad-based economic growth focusing particularly on the rural economy, while maintaining macroeconomic stability;
- Improving governance and consolidation of devolution;
- Investing in human capital with a renewed emphasis on effective delivery of basic social services; and
- Bringing the poor and vulnerable and backward regions into the mainstream of development, reducing existing inequalities.

¹⁶ Government of Pakistan (2003). “Draft PRSP (Summarized Version) for discussion only”. PRSP Secretariat, Islamabad: Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan. Available at <http://www.finance.gov.pk/>

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Pakistan signed CEDAW in 1995 and ratified on March 11, 1996 (Shaheed and Zaidi)¹⁷. Pakistan submitted its first implementation report in 1998. CEDAW has 16 articles and two general recommendations which cover all aspects of life, such as education, employment, and equal access to health care. The two recommendations deal with violence against women.

The National Plan of Action (NPA) for Women

Pakistan made commitment at the UN's Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing, Pakistan prepared the National Plan of Action for Women (NPA) with a 15 years perspective and launched in August 1998 covering the following 12 critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing process:

1. Women and Poverty;
2. Education and Training of Women;
3. Women and Health;
4. Violence against Women;
5. Women and Armed Conflict;
6. Women and the Economy;
7. Women in Power and Decision-Making;
8. Institutional Mechanism for the Advancement of Women;
9. Human Rights of Women;
10. Women and the Media;
11. Women and the Environment;
12. Girl Child Rights.

National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women

The National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women was approved on 6th March 2002 by the Cabinet and announced by the President of Pakistan at the

¹⁷ Shaheed, Farida and Yasmin Zaidi (). "Pakistan Ten Years into the Beijing Platform for Action: A Civil Society Perspective on Some Critical Areas of Concern" Prepared for the *NGO Organizing Committee*

National Convention for Women held on 7th March 2002. The policy suggests a number of different activities in three intervention areas:

- *Social* empowerment of women (education, health, law and access to justice, violence against women, women in the family and community, and the girl child)
- *Economic* empowerment of women (poverty, access to credit, remunerated work, women in the rural economy and informal sector, and sustainable development)
- *Political* empowerment of women (power and decision making)

The Gender Reform Actions Plans

The federal and all provincial governments have approved Gender Reform Action Plans (GRAPs) during 2004-05 that suggests the following intervention areas:

- Women's employment in the public sector
- Policies and fiscal reforms
- Capacity development interventions
- Women's political participation
- Institutional restructuring for more effective gender mainstreaming
- Support actions to create an enabling environment

VI– SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In Pakistan, planned development has failed to address gender inequalities due to the gap between policy intent and implementation. Lack of political will, weak and corrupt governance structures, limited technical and intellectual capacity of the institutions, and resource constraints have been the main impediments in policy implementation.

Gender inequalities the development remains unbalanced and full potential of the development can not be realized. The situation is same in Pakistan. The gender indicators shows that there persists gross gender inequalities in the filed of education, heath, social status, economic empowerment along with social injustices. But now there is a growing realization at the policy making level of the government that gender disparities and inequalities cannot be accepted. So, the government of Pakistan has taken a number of practical steps to reduce gender inequalities.

Policy Recommendations

The main problem in Pakistan, like many other developing nations, is the proper implementation and enforcement of these measures suggested in the gender policies of the Pakistan. As for as the policies are concerned, it is very good on papers, but the actual problem is the execution and implementation of these policies. Some Policy Recommendations for improving women status in the society are given as:

- Government & civil society should work together on long-term basis to draw strategies for NPA implementation.
- The civil society organizations must be provided monetary information assistance from the available funds.
- Men should be sensitized to encourage women to take active part in economics.
- Expand outreach of financial institutions for women.
- Empower institution to empower women.
- Uniform wage structure (for male and female) in the private and informal sector.
- Women (single, divorced, widows) skills programs.
- Tax and utility bills rebate for small-scale women entrepreneurs.
- Provision of marketing facilities such as exhibitions and outlets, and linkages for women cottage industries.
- Establishment of export trade houses and display centers for women managed enterprises.
- Skill training courses, technologies by Polytechnic Institutes for women.
- Joint project for promoting women entrepreneurs to participate in mainstream commerce.
- Poverty reduction program link with provision of micro credit for women.

VII – CONCLUDING REMARKS

I would like to conclude the whole debate on ‘Gender Issues in Pakistan’ in the words of Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen¹⁸:

“The need of the hour is to define, interpret and apply Gender in a purely Pakistani context. Only then we would be able to reduce the disparities and losses in vital areas of national development named as education, economy and health. Converting the gaps into gains in such areas would take us as a nation on the path to development. That development would not be reflected in the stock exchange only but in a society marked by gender harmony, sensitivity and human dignity.”

¹⁸ Perveen, Rakhshinda (2005). “Gender in Pakistan.” A SACHET Publication. Society for Advancement of Community, Health, Education, and Training (SACHET). Retrieved on 27/11/2005 from http://sachet.org.pk/home/gender/gender_in_pakistan.asp

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APPENDIX: PAKISTAN'S GENDER PROFILE

Gender Indicator	2000	2001	2002
Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women age 15-19)	64	..	62
Adult illiteracy rate, female (% of males aged 15+)	72	71	70
Adult illiteracy rate, male (% of males aged 15+)	43	42	41
Age dependency ratio (dependents to working-age population)	1	1	1
Birth rate, crude (per 1,000 people)	34	..	33
Child immunization rate, against DPT (% of children under 12 months)	61	63	63
Child immunization rate, against measles (% of children under 12 months)	56	57	57
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women aged 15-49)	28	..	..
Contributing Family Workers, female (% of females employed)	50	..	..
Contributing Family Workers, male (% of males employed)	17	..	..
Death rate, crude (per 1,000 people)	8	..	8
Employees, agriculture, female (% of economically active population)	73	..	..
Employees, agriculture, male (% of economically active population)	44	..	..
Employees, industry, female (% of economically active population)	9	..	..
Employees, industry, male (% of economically active population)	20	..	..
Employees, services, female (% of economically active population)	18	..	..
Employees, services, male (% of economically active population)	36	..	..
GNI per capita (US\$)	450	420	420
Health expenditure, public (% of GDP)	1	1	..
HIV prevalence rate, female (% of males aged 15-24)	..	0	..
HIV prevalence rate, male (% of males aged 15-24)	..	0	..
Labor force activity rate (% female)	37	38	39
Labor force activity rate (% male)	87	86	86
Labor force, female	14,793,280	15,536,590	16,307,630
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	29	29	30
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	64	..	65
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	62	..	63
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	63	..	64
Male unemployment, (% of male labor force)	..	..	..
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	500	..	..
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	81	..	76
Net primary school enrollment rate, female	57	..	..
Net primary school enrollment rate, male	76	..	..
Population aged 0, female	2,080,000	2,149,000	2,170,000
Population aged 0, male	2,148,000	2,243,000	2,265,000
Population aged 0-14 (% of total population)	42	41	41
Population aged 1, female	2,045,000	2,027,000	2,091,000
Population aged 1, male	2,118,000	2,085,000	2,175,000
Population aged 15-64	..	..	..
Population aged 15-64, female	36,030,000	37,300,000	38,615,000
Population aged 15-64, male	39,957,000	41,244,000	42,572,000
Population aged 15-64, total (% of total population)	..	..	..
Population aged 2, female	2,012,000	2,030,000	2,013,000
Population aged 2, male	2,089,000	2,102,000	2,070,000
Population aged 3, female	1,983,000	1,998,000	2,016,000
Population aged 3, male	2,061,000	2,073,000	2,087,000
Population aged 4, female	1,955,000	1,968,000	1,984,000
Population aged 4, male	2,034,000	2,045,000	2,058,000
Population aged 5, female	1,930,000	1,947,000	1,960,000

Population aged 5, male	2,007,000	2,025,000	2,037,000
Population aged 65+, (% of total)	3	3	3
Population aged 65+, woman	2,237,000	2,319,000	2,403,000
Population ages 0-14, female	..	..	..
Population, female	66,578,000	68,248,810	69,961,550
Population, female (% of total)	48	48	48
Population, total (millions)	138,080,000	141,450,000	144,902,000
Safe water (% of population with access)	90	..	..
Sanitation (% of population with access)	62	..	..
School enrollment, primary, female (% gross)	62	..	..
School enrollment, primary, male (% gross)	84	..	..
Self-employed, female (% of females employed)	17	..	..
Self-employed, male (% of males employed)	47	..	..
Total fertility rate (births per woman)	5	..	5
Total labor force (millions)	51,724,770	53,482,240	55,280,110
Under 5 mortality rate	108	..	101
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force)	17	..	..
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force)	6	..	..
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force)	8	..	..
Unwanted fertility rate (births per 1,000 women age 15-49)	..	..	..
Wage and Salaried, female (% of females employed)	33	..	..
Wage and Salaried, male (% of males employed)	36	..	..
Youth illiteracy rate, female (% of males aged 15-24)	58	57	56
Youth illiteracy rate, male (% of males aged 15-24)	29	28	28
Source: World Bank. <i>WDI Online Database (Data Query)</i> . http://devdata.worldbank.org/genderstats/query/default.htm			