



EMBASSY OF PAKISTAN
BANGKOK

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No. ESCAP / Coresp. / 08

May 05, 2009

Subject: Questionnaire to Governments on Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000).

Dear Mr. Srinivas,

Please refer to letter No. SDD/GEES/B+15 dated 30th December 2009 of the Executive Secretary on the subject.

2. Enclosed please find a copy of the response from the Government of Pakistan to the 'Questionnaire on implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of Twenty Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)'.

(Ahmed Amjad Ali)
Charge d' Affaires (a. i.)

Mr. Srinivas Tata
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United Nations Economic and Social
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Bangkok.

for,
Social Development Division,
Gender & Development
Section.

Spec



No 3(1) UN-CW/09

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS & STATISTICS
(ECONOMIC AFFAIRS DIVISION)

From Section Officer
Tele: 051-9201706
Fax :92-51-9210734

Islamabad the April 11, 2009

Subject:- Questionnaire to Governments on Implementation the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the Twenty Third Special Session of the General Assembly(2000)

Dear Sir,

Please refer to Embassy of Pakistan, Bangkok's letter No. ESCAP/Cooresp/2007 dated January 12, 2009 on the above subject.

2. Enclosed please find a copy of the response to the Questionnaire on implementation the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of Twenty Third Special Session of the General Assembly(2000) received from Ministry of Women Development, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad for your information and further necessary action.

Regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Tassaduq Hussain Jadoon)

old papers pls 9/15/14
AA
to ESCAP

Mr. Ameer Khurram Rathore,
Counsellor/ Deputy Chief of Mission,
Embassy of Pakistan,
Bangkok, Thailand.

QUESTIONNAIRE TO GOVERNMENTS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION (1995) AND THE OUTCOME OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2000)

PART-I MAJOR OVERALL ACHIEVEMENTS AND OBSTACLES

ACHIEVEMENTS

Government of Pakistan is fully sensitive to safeguard women's rights and has taken significant steps for social, political, economic and legal empowerment of Pakistani women. The Government is making efforts to fulfill its international and national commitments to protect the women's rights. These include Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; National Plan of Action for Women; National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women; Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.

As a follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995 and to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of Pakistan launched a National Plan of Action (NPA) for Women in August 1998. It is a guideline document, which outlines strategic objectives/ actions for social, economic, political and legal empowerment of Pakistani women. The NPA emphasizes that women's empowerment may be achieved through recognition of women's human rights, their right to political participation and in decision-making at all levels.

Implementation of Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is one of Pakistan's key international commitments relating to women. In this regard the Project 'CEDAW Follow-up and Implementation' has been launched to undertake follow-up and implementation of CEDAW. Ministry of Women Development is the designated national focal machinery for reporting on its implementation. Pakistan's combined, initial, second and third periodic report was examined by the UN CEDAW Committee of Experts in its 783rd and 784th meeting (38th session) held in New York during 14th May- 1st June, 2007 through an interactive dialogue with the Pakistan delegation.

The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2004; Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Ordinance, 2006; and Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006 are major achievements for protection of women's rights and elimination of

violence against women. Two Bills titled "Protection against Harassment at Workplace Bill, 2009" and "Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2009" are being introduced in the National Assembly. A Gender Crime Centre has been established in the Ministry of Interior to provide protection to the victims of violence. This Centre collects and maintains data on crime situation across the country including gender-based violence.

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals are incorporated in Medium Term Development Framework (MTDF). Major focus of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper-II (PRSP-II) is also on the MDGs. Progress, though not sufficient, has been made in achieving targets under MDGs.

Women have been given increased role in every sphere of life. Now they are working in every field including Police, Army, Air Force, Health, Education, Business and as Ministers at Federal and Provincial Cabinets, elected representatives in the Parliament and even as Speaker of the National Assembly. The presence of more than 28000 women in Local Government institutions and 232 women members in Senate, National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies are playing a vibrant role in the legislative business. NGOs and Civil Society Organizations are also playing active role for the cause of women. Senate and National Assembly Standing Committees on Women Development are active to bring a positive change in the lives of women.

Women Parliamentarians Caucus has been constituted to liaise and build working relationship with key state and civil society institutions and organizations in order to contribute towards national and international efforts for promotion of women's empowerment, rights and gender equality.

Government is committed to improve access as well as quality of education for boys and girls. The literacy and enrolment rate of girl students have been increased. The Government has undertaken a number of reforms to widen access to education and enhance its quality. The Government has embarked upon comprehensive health sector reforms. The health policy of Pakistan (2001) provides an overall national vision for health sector development based on the "Health for All" approach which emphasizes accessibility, affordability and acceptability of health services by the general population. Among ten areas of reforms it aims at promoting greater gender equity, bringing basic nutrition gaps in the target population (mothers and infants) and creating mass awareness in public health matters.

OBSTACLES

The obstacles/ challenges in twelve critical areas of the National Plan of Action are as under:-

1. **Women and poverty:-** The feudal agrarian structure of society and economy, the disparities in the ownership of land, the capital-intensive process of industrialization, lack of opportunities in access to resources for women are the major factors contributing to wide spread poverty.
2. **Education and training of women:-** Poverty, parents' negative attitude towards female education, burden of household work for the girl child, lack of adequate facilities in the schools, difficult access to school, shortage of female teachers, high drop out rate for girls after 5th class especially in rural and remote areas are the major factors affecting female education.
3. **Women and health:-** (i) High maternal mortality rate, infant mortality rate. (ii) Lack of trained birth attendants. (iii) Marriages at younger age and shortage of health facilities especially of MCH Centers. (iv) Poverty, low literacy rate, lack of awareness regarding reproductive health treatment and facilities. (v) Cultural barriers.
4. **Violence against Women:-** (i) Harmful traditions and customary practices, (ii) Low literacy level specially among women, (iii) limited role in decision making and economic deprivation, (iv) lack of awareness regarding their rights.
5. **Women and armed conflict:-** (i) Deep-rooted tribal and feudal patriarchal customs and practices, economic problems, illiteracy, (ii) Lack of political and economic stability due to prolonged stay of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and disturbance in Tribal areas.
6. **Women and the economy:-** (i) Socio-cultural values and practices restrict female specially in rural areas, access to education, training, mobility, limited child care facilities, transport and hostel facilities, lack of micro finance and credit facilities for women.
7. **Women in power and decision making:-** (i) Low level of literacy. (ii) Low labour force participation rate. (iii) Disproportionate share of the

responsibility for the family and home, conservative attitudes towards female participation and male dominance.

8. **Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women:-** (i) Lack of financial and human resources in the government and civil society organizations. (ii) Strengthening of Ministry of Women Development.
9. **Human rights of women:-** Traditional values and customary practices which still exist in many parts of the country.
10. **Women and the media:-** (i) Stereotype attitude towards women's participation in all communication system. (ii) Lack of code of ethics or policies regarding the depiction of women. (iii) Lack of women in policy making and decision making.
11. **Women and the environment:-** (i) Lack of women's involvement in natural resource management. (ii) Denial of land ownership rights to women. (iii) Low participation in decision making. (iv) Delay in implementing policies and insufficient financial and human resources to support the implementation.
12. **The girl child:-** (i) Discrepancy in the various regulations regarding female adulthood. (ii) Birth registration and record keeping. (iii) Son preference. (iv) Lack of education, health, adequate nutrition and recreational facilities. (v) Sexual abuse and economic exploitation.

PART-II MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

POLICIES

i) NATIONAL POLICY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN 2002.

The Ministry of Women Development formulated a National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women on 7th March, 2002 through a consultative process. The Policy is a statement of intent of the Government to elaborate the following key policy directions for social, economic, political and legal empowerment of women:-

- (1) Ensuring that government agencies adopt a gender sensitive approach to development in preparing need based, participatory and implementable programmes and projects. Gender sensitization to be institutionalized and integrated into all sectors of development and will include the private sector as well;
- (2) Developing multi-sectoral and inter - disciplinary approaches for women's development with horizontal and vertical linkages at every level;
- (3) Mainstreaming gender issues through integration into all sectors of national development; and
- (4) Eliminating all negative social practices;

Women's empowerment is a cross cutting agenda and gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of the entire government machinery. Keeping this in view, efforts have been made to incorporate women's concerns and issues in the education policy, employment policy, labour policy, health policy, national youth policy, child welfare and protection policy and trade policy etc.

ii) MEDIUM TERM DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (2005-10)

The MTDF synchronizes development plans, especially with reference to women's empowerment and gender equality, with national as well as international commitments notably the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Millennium Development Goals and the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Fulfillment of these commitments is one of the top priorities of the government. The MTDF translates these commitments into concrete and tangible development efforts with benchmarks and financial outlays during 2005-10.

iii) POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PAPER (PRSP)

The Government of Pakistan firmly believes that any poverty reduction effort must address the gender dimension in order to address poverty meaningfully. Mainstreaming gender issues into policies, development plans and programs is the key strategy to promote gender equality in Pakistan. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) launched by the Government is a policy document that entails a comprehensive strategy to reduce poverty through:

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

The PRSP-II is built around the lessons learnt from the PRSP-I and based on capitalizing the gains of globalization while minimizing its negative spillover. The PRSP-II strategy paper is under finalization in consultation with all the stakeholders.

(iv) VISION 2030

The vision for advancement of women and gender equality entails equality of opportunity for all citizens – both women and men. For both of them it also necessitates freedom – freedom from hunger, poverty, illiteracy, ill-health, strife and lawlessness, religious and ethnic intolerance, patriarchy, feudalism, tribalism, racism, militarism, class and linguistic boundaries, urban-rural imbalances, deprivation and marginalization of the vulnerable.

According to Pakistan's vision, 2030, Pakistan is a country where women enjoy equal rights, equal respect, equal decision-making authority, equal mobility, equal protection, equal access to law and justice, equal under the law, equal in economic empowerment opportunities, and equal in society – in status, worth and value.

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

(i) WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION (W3P) PROJECT

Women's Political Participation Project (WPPP) was one of the initiative of the Ministry of Women Development to achieve the said strategic objective. In continuation of its efforts, Ministry conceived a project titled; "Women Political School Project". Women's Political Participation Project (WPPP) which ran from February 2002 to March 2004 with a total funding of US\$ 3.00 million was a pioneering effort to develop the capacity of over 36,000 newly-elected women councillors at the district, Tehsil and union council levels. Its main purpose was to impart needs-based training to the women councillors, so as to maximise the impact of their presence by enhancing their participation in the formulation, advocacy and implementation of a gender-sensitive economic strategy. WPPP was successful in training about 27,000 (75%) of the women councillors during the project period. The project was recognised by UNDP as one of the best practices from fifty-nine (59) case studies submitted by 22 country offices from all over the world.

(ii) WOMEN POLITICAL SCHOOL

To build upon the gains of the first phase, and address the gaps identified, a three year follow-up project envisioned as a Women's Political School with a funding of US\$ 4.57 million was initiated during December, 2004. Under this project the capacity of women councilors has been built and they are now serving their constituents more efficiently by participating in decision making processes. Their efficiency is now reflected in terms of increased attendance, more active participation in deliberations, influencing policies and budgets, accessing funds and getting schemes approved. Overall in its project life, the WPS project trained 23,148 Women Councillors enabling them to advocate for the rights of their constituency.

(iii) **SHAHEED BENAZIR BHUTTO CENTRES FOR WOMEN (SBBCW)**

Violence against women, due to gender discrimination, is a sensitive and complex issue, a formidable challenge from the perspective of Rights and Responsibilities and a matter of serious concern as it undermines women's dignity and self-esteem, deprives them of their full participation in decision making and development process.

Pakistan, fully sensitive to the issue, is engaged in taking bold steps to address the abuse, in all its forms and manifestations. As an advocate, lobbyist and catalyst for the causes of women, the Ministry of Women Development has taken various serious steps to sensitize all segments of society.

One of the major activities of MoWD is setting up of 'Women Centres', throughout the country. These centres provide relief/support on emergent basis and rehabilitation services to the survivors of violence and women in distress. These Centres are playing an important and effective role in addressing the problems and grievances of women and thus contributing towards their social and economic empowerment. This support facility is also in line with our national and international commitments.

MoWD has so far established (25) Women Centre at Islamabad, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Vehari, Schiwal, Mianwali, Sialkot, Faisalabad, Bahawalpur, Multan, Meerwala, Khushab, D.G. Khan, Karachi, Nawabshah, Hyderabad, Jacobabad, Peshawar, Kohat, Abbottabad, Swat (Mingora), Quetta, Sibi, Khuzdar and Mirpur (AJK). 23 Centres are already operational while remaining two (02) will start functioning shortly.

The Centres are striving:-

- (i) To protect Women against all forms of violence;
- (ii) To eliminate all forms of discrimination against women;
- (iii) To provide temporary shelter to victims of violence (in emergencies);
- (iv) To provide free medical/first aid;
- (v) To provide/arrange free legal assistant/aid;
- (vi) To investigate cases of violence/prejudice; and
- (vii) To liaison with all local agencies to address grievance of women at individual and collective levels.

Following services are provided at all Women Centres:

- Temporary shelter

- Free legal aid
- Free medical aid.
- Social counseling
- Psychological counseling
- Telephone Helpline
- Micro credit (At Sahiwal & Vehari Centre only)

The Centre provides services according to the requirement and circumstances of the victim which cover a broad spectrum, ranging from sexual assault to homelessness. Up to Dec 2008, about 12,000 cases have been registered in these 23 Centres.

Thirty (30) new Women Centres will be established by next year after approval by CDWP/Planning & Development Division.

Ministry of Women Development, Earthquake Reconstruction & Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) and Governments of NWFP and AJK will establish 09 (nine) Women Development Centres in earthquake affected areas of NWFP and AJK. Buildings for these Centres will be constructed by ERRA and after furnishing, these would be handed over to MoWD, for putting into operation.

(iv) **JAFAKASH AURAT: ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN**

A number of initiatives have been taken by the Ministry of Women Development, for economic empowerment of women through micro-finance, MoWD launched projects, in collaboration with the renowned entities to cater for such activities. Following four (04) pilot projects have been launched, in the far flung/remote areas of NWFP, Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan, as the Government intends economic empowerment of women by eliminating extreme poverty: -

- a. Jafakash Aurat: Patti Development Project, Chitral. (AKRSP) Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
- b. Jafakash Aurat: Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Gujranwala & Sheikhpura Districts. (FWBL) The First Women Bank Limited.
- c. Jafakash Aurat: Supporting Skills and Micro Enterprise Development amongst Gwadar Women, Balochistan. (Khushhali Bank)
- d. Jafakash Aurat: Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Tharparkar (Sindh)

Jafakash Aurat: Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Tharparkar (Sindh).

The project was approved by the DDWP on 15th December, 2006 at a cost of Rs. 35 million, in collaboration with Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP), targeting Sindhi Rural women's traditional crafts, and shall link these to local, national and international markets. The break up of project cost is as under: -

Contribution of Ministry of Women Development	Rs. 8.750 million
Contribution of Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP)	<u>Rs. 26.250 million</u>
Total	Rs. 35.000 million

Physical Indicators.

- Total number of beneficiaries 8000
- Total number of indirect beneficiaries 16000
- Range of Micro-credits Rs.5000/- to 100000/-
- Project period 36 months
- Date of Completion 30-06-2009

(v) IT TRAINING FOR THE ELECTED LADY REPRESENTATIVES: OBJECTIVES, HISTORY & ACHIEVEMENTS

Introduction

The Project aiming at providing training / familiarizing Women Councilors in the field of IT was launched in June 2003. The total cost of the Project was 15.410 million (4.92 million for Pilot Phase & 10.49 million for Final Phase). In July 2007, the project's life was extended with an enhanced original cost of Rs. 15.524 million. The focus of the training is imparting of basic skills and computer literacy to enable the women Councilors to use computer with ease for gathering information through Internet and to develop networking among Councilors by using e-mail.

(b) Achievements

- **Physical Target:** Training of 3100 Elected Lady Councilors, all over Pakistan.
- **Achievements:** Training of 3084 Women has been completed.

Details

Year	Achievement
2004-05	1000
2005-06	1037
2006-07	955
2007-08	92
Total	3084

On successful completion of the project for provision of IT training for female councilors from June 2003 to June 2008, Ministry of Women Development submitted another proposal to continue its efforts to provide basic IT training to female councilors. The project titled "IT Training for Elected Lady Representatives" has been approved by the CDWP on 10th Oct, 2008 at a total cost of Rs. 97.288 million.

(vi) **"COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN INCLUDING MEDIA" WITH A TOTAL COST OF 38.00 MILLION.**

Project titled, "Community Campaign to Prevent violence Against Women Including Media" was approved by DDWP with at a cost of Rs. 38.00 million for a period of 24 months(2005-07) which was later extended to 30.06.2008. Project has been completed on 30th June, 2008, its achievements are as under: -

1. Nation wide awareness campaigns on press/ Electronic Media on women related issues
2. Quarterly Newsletters of the Ministry
3. Printing & Distribution of Posters on women rights
4. Printing & distribution of brochures, flyers & leaflets
5. Election Campaign to motivate women for casting their vote.
6. Theme Song for MoWD (khuch Sapnay Hain)
7. Walk on violence against women day
8. Designing of ads in the newspapers on National Days

Proposal for second phase of the project is likely to be approved by the competent forum.

(vii) **DISTRICT RESOURCE CENTRE FOR WOMEN.**

30 District Resource Centres have been established for Women in the premises of District Councils or close to District Councils. Services/ facilities offered through DRC:

- (i) Provision of conference room, office support, washrooms, computers, fax machine for assistance to nearly 10% of women councilors in different tiers of the local government system for effective participation in the decision making;

- (ii) Provision of linkages with all capacity building programs initiated by GoP, civil society and donor organizations by themselves or in collaboration with each other.

(viii) **GENDER BASED GOVERNANCE SYSTEM (GBG)**

Planning and Development Division, Government of Pakistan and UNDP, Pakistan has jointly initiated Gender Based Governance System (GBG) Project with an expected grant of \$ 10 million for a period of five years (2008-12). GBG provides a comprehensive capacity building support to the bureaucracy and the political leadership at all tiers of governance in gender sensitive manner. GBG project would institutionalize the process of empowering local representatives, particularly women to raise their issues and concerns in policies agendas.

(ix) **NATIONAL GENDER REFORM ACTION PLAN (GRAP)**

National Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP) was developed during 2004-05. The scope of National GRAP is to mainstream gender at all levels of governance structure. Key reform areas are: i) Institutional Restructuring. ii) Policies and Fiscal Reforms. iii) Women Employment in Public Sector. iv) Women's Political Participation.

GRAP envisages building partnerships and forging linkages with various Public sector Ministries/Divisions and District Governments to realize its goal of Gender Mainstreaming at all tiers of governance structure. The implementing partners of GRAP are: Ministry of Women Development; Ministry of Finance; Planning and Development Division; Establishment Division; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting; Ministry of Law & Justice; Ministry of Labour, Manpower & Overseas Pakistanis; National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW); Ministry of Education; Ministry of Social Welfare & Special Education; Federal Bureau of Statistics; Women Development & Social Welfare Department, Government of AJK; Provincial Governments and District Governments.

Gender Development Sections has been established in six strategic Ministries which includes:- Ministry of Finance, Planning & Development Div, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Est. Div, Ministry of Law & Justice, Ministry of Labour and Manpower. Focal persons have been also appointed in these Ministries to mainstream gender into the policies, plans, programmes of the concerned Ministries/ Divisions. Under this project, a 10 % quota for women has been reserved in federal government.

This special measure has been taken to increase women's presence at decision making level in the public sector from existing low level to a reasonable level.

(x) **GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING (GRB)**

In recent years, Government of Pakistan has adopted a multi pronged approach with a paradigm shift to engender its budgetary and planning process. Gender Responsive Budgeting Initiative (GRBI), and Gender Mainstreaming Project are the integral parts of this approach.

The Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan with technical and financial support of United Nation Development Program (UNDP) and its cost sharing namely, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Royal Norwegian Embassy, launched a pilot project 'Gender Responsive Budgeting Initiative (2005-2007)' (GRBI). The Gender Responsive Budgeting is intrinsically linked with any comprehensive Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) Monitoring Project, therefore; on completion of GRBI, the project has merged into Strengthening PRS Monitoring Project with effect from January, 2008. The work under the GRBI is being successfully carried out under the Strengthening PRS Monitoring Project and will be expanded in terms of scope and locations.

(xi) **BENAZIR INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

Benazir Income Support Programme has been launched to support the marginalized families. Under this programme a stipend of Rs. 1000 is being given to the poor women every month. A sum of Rs. 34 billion has been allocated for this programme. Initially 3.5 Million families will get benefit by the end of March and in the later phases, 7 Million more families will be-benefiting from the programme.

(xii) **ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN.**

National Commission on the status of Women is a statutory body established in 2000. The goal of the commission is the emancipation and elimination of all sorts of discrimination against women. Main functions of the Commission include: examination of the policy, programmes and other measures taken by the government for women's development and review of all policies, laws, rules and regulations affecting the status and rights of women and gender equality in accordance with the Constitution of Pakistan.

3. LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

Significant measures taken by the Government for legal empowerment of women are as under:-

- THE CRIMINAL LAW (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2004.

“The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2004” made changes in the existing criminal law to deal effectively with offenders of honour killing.

- CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE, 2006.

The President of Pakistan promulgated an Ordinance on 8th July, 2006 amending section 497 of CRPC to grant of bail to women in jails on charges other than terrorism and murder. A large number of female prisoners have been released from different prisons of Pakistan under this new law.

- THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN (CRIMINAL LAWS AMENDMENT) ACT, 2006

Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006 has been enacted on 1st December 2006 to provide relief and protection to women against misuse and abuse of law and to prevent their exploitation. The object of this is to bring the laws relating to Zina and Qazf, in particular, in conformity with the stated objectives of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Constitutional mandate and in particular to provide relief and protection to women against misuse and abuse of law. This Act is providing 30 important amendments in the existing ‘Offence of Zina and Qazf (Enforcement of Hadd Ordinance 1979)’, the ‘Pakistan Penal Code (Act XLV of 1860)’, the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 (Act V of 1898)’, and the ‘Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act 1939’.

- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST (PREVENTION AND PROTECTION) BILL, 2009.

There is a need to provide legal mechanism for protection of victims of domestic violence inline with the provisions of the Constitution. The draft Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2009 is being finalized.

- HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE.

Following Bills are being introduced in the Parliament shortly:-

- i) The Protection against Harassment at the Workplace Bill, 2009.
- ii) Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2009.

The draft Bills comprehensively address the issue of sexual harassment of women at workplace in the public and private sectors. These legislations would serve as deterrent to the issue of harassment at workplace.

4. ISSUES, OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES

- The feudal agrarian structure of society and economy, the disparities in the ownership of land, the capital-intensive process of industrialization are the major factors contributing to widespread poverty. However, lack of opportunity for women is due to a many social and economic factors.
- The enrolment of girls is still low and the drop out rate is high. Even though compulsory primary education has been made a policy, its enforcement has not been very effective due to lack of facilities. The high population growth rate has compounded the problems to cope with meeting of existing demands.
- The performance of the Health sector requires improvement in meeting the increasing demand of population living in both urban & rural areas. Despite an increase of health infrastructure such as hospitals, dispensaries, Mother and Child Health (MCH) Centres, Basic Health Units (BHUs) and Rural Health Centres (RHCs) and professionals (Medics & Para-medics), these are still inadequate to provide health coverage to maximum number of people in Pakistan. Women & girls suffer more because of these inadequacies.
- The situation in less developed areas of Pakistan is aggravated by very deep-rooted tribal and feudal, patriarchal customs and practices, grave economic problems, which needs a sustained effort for minimizing the negative impact on families, especially women and children. The high population growth rate, illiteracy, lack of employment opportunities, high cost of living and the alienation of the youth, encourage crimes in society.
- Socio-cultural values and practices related to the economic role of women still deny them equal status with men. Women are not seen largely as the bread earners for families or even for themselves. Traditional values still hold women primarily responsible for home management and care.
- Education and training remain the most important factors in determining the employment status of women. Low literacy rate of females and lack of opportunities for higher education limit their full participation in the economy.

- Lack of secure mobility, childcare facilities, and outstation residential facilities discourage women from undertaking more demanding jobs and employment. Recruitment bans in the public sector have negatively affected the employment of women within the public sector, especially in the health and education sectors.
- The major obstacle that women face in participating in decision making and other forms of power is low levels of literacy, low economic participation rates, disproportionate share of the responsibility for the family which keeps them bound indoors, and conservative attitude towards female participation and a culture of male dominance and corruption that keeps them away from politics.
- The main obstacle in achieving gender equality in all spheres is that men are the key decision-makers regarding natural resource management in Pakistan. The ownership rights on land are generally held by male members of the family, and even where women own the resource legally, the decision-making regarding the resource is taken by the men.

LESSONS LEARNED

Women and Poverty

There is need for close co-ordination of the MoWD with policy-making machinery of the Government, donor agencies, NGOs and RSPs, and private organizations. Unless the gender issues are effectively incorporated into planning and policy documents, it is unlikely to produce the desired outcomes for women. The formulation of the Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP) is a significant strategic step towards this end.

Education and Training of Women

There is a need for developing a special curriculum for girls and boys in rural areas. This could focus on skills required for agriculture, forestry, etc. Although there is already some education of this sort being administered in the rural areas, it does not match the real requirements at the village level. Besides the boys, there is a need for offering such education to girls as well, as women in the rural areas are actively involved in farming activities.

Women and Health

There is need for greater Public-Private Partnership to address health needs to achieve a comprehensive health plan for women. Greater collaboration of the MoH with the MoPW and MoWD in particular and with other line Ministries/ Departments would further facilitate comprehensive planning in health sector.

Violence against Women

It is also important to consider the repeal of discriminatory laws and legislation to counter various forms of violence against women. Strict penalties should be imposed on commercial sales and trafficking of women and girls and considered a criminal offence.

Women and Armed Conflict

The Government's policy to strictly monitor and control militant groups who pursue and spread political, religious and sectarian conflict and ban fund raising activities by these groups locally, as well as ensure that no foreign funding is directed to these groups for their activities need to be pursued at all level.

NGOs and civil society organizations can design special programmes for the refugee women and female-headed refugee households and provide full safety and protection to women refugees while resident in Pakistan, and ensure that they are given proper refugee status and furnished with appropriate documentation, etc.

Women and the Economy

There is need to institutionalize the provision of credit to women at a much larger scale and study its impact on women.

Women in Power and Decision Making

Encourage women's participation in the political, administrative and judicial institutions of the country through a policy of positive discrimination in favour of women and establish government-non-governmental Task Forces at the provincial levels.

Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

Capacity of national machineries need to be enhanced to undertake the voluminous work of gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women. This can only be achieved through strengthening and revitalization of the MoWD.

Human Rights of Women

Promote an effective partnership with the GO and NGOs to help in raising awareness about gender issues and ensuring that the basic human rights of women are respected. Increase women's access to legal aid and assistance as well as legal redress in cases where their basic rights have been infringed and ensure the implementation of the national Plan of Action.

Women and the Media

Women need to be actively involved and consulted in the designing, formulation, implementation and gender impact evaluation of all policies related to new changes and developments in media and other forms of communication which will enable them to influence and positively impact their lives and contribution to society and the world at large.

Women and the Environment

Improve women's access, decision-making and participation in the use, management and development of water resources through a focused approach that recognizes women's-needs as legitimate and just. Mainstream gender perspectives to ensure that the interests and needs of women as well as those of men are systematically pursued in the development of all national/ regional policies and programmes. Gender issues need not to be confined to a sector called "women's development" or addressed through isolated or marginal programmes.

The Girl Child

To increase Government programmes for awareness raising and support of the girl child and continue to focus the effort of development projects on the girl child until the gender gap between boys and girls is eliminated. Undertake a strong programme for the protection of the girl child from sexual and economic abuse by enacting requisite legislation and ensuring the enforcement of the legislation.

PART-III INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ministry of Women Development (MoWD) is the national focal machinery for empowerment of women at the federal level. It is committed to protect and promote the rights of women. The thrust on women's development and empowerment has been unprecedented during the last seven years. Significant steps and measures were taken for women's legal, political, economic and social empowerment.

One of the major steps was the creation of a full-flagged Ministry of Women Development at the federal level on 2nd September, 2004 by its separation from the erstwhile Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education. The aim was to ensure the formulation of a need based coherent gender agenda to promote gender equality. The mandate and role of this Ministry is of a lobbyist, catalyst, promoter, and coordinator of gender agenda in Pakistan.

The main function of the Ministry according to its Rules of Business is to focus on formulation of public policy and laws to meet the special needs of women, assistance to women's organizations, projects for women, research on conditions and problems of women, matters relating to equality of opportunity in education and employment.

Government formulated a National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women 2002 through a consultative process. Women's development and empowerment is a cross cutting agenda and thus, it is the responsibility of the entire government machinery. Ministry of Women Development is playing the role of an advocate, lobbyist and catalyst for the cause of women. Under the Cabinet decision focal persons have been appointed in most of the Ministries/ Divisions to liaise and coordinate with the Ministry of Women Development in implementation of their policies/ programmes.

Government established National Commission on the Status of Women in 2000 which is a statutory body. The goal of the commission is the emancipation and elimination of all sorts of discrimination against women. Main functions of the Commission include: examination of the policy, programmes and other measures taken by the government for women's development and review of all policies, laws, rules and regulations affecting the status and rights of women and gender equality in accordance with the Constitution of Pakistan.

The existence of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women at the provincial level is vital as implementation of all development programmes and projects in Pakistan is undertaken primarily at the provincial level. Women Development Departments are exist at provincial level for streamlining all activities related to women's development in the province and to coordinate with all line departments and organizations concerning women development.

Historically, the government has maintained a supportive policy framework in which NGOs are working for betterment of people including women. The Government has its grants-in aid programme for promotion, revitalization and improvement of NGOs, which encourage the formation and registration of new NGOs. The government has been providing financial and technical assistance to NGOs on a continuous basis for their developmental activities. Under the Devolution Plan more and more CBOs are being created to undertake community welfare programmes in rural areas.

NGO sector today remains a promising sector for development and social service delivery to disadvantaged population in difficult areas. The National Council of Social Welfare (NCSW), which is an apex organization in Pakistan for promoting social welfare programmes through NGOs. It provides financial and technical assistance to registered NGOs for executing welfare programmes.

The institutional infrastructure for gender in Pakistan consists of government institutions, donor programmes and projects, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The government provides the overall policy framework for women's empowerment. However, traditional and social norms hold key position in Pakistan in prescribing women's domain of participation.

The donors are assisting the government with the formulation and implementation of a broad reform agenda, which is expected to have a key role in transforming the status of women in Pakistan. NGOs have played their role as an important alternative institutional mechanism for development. Thus the institutional infrastructure for programming for women is diverse and dynamic and has the potential for growth.

The major obstacles in Pakistan with reference to institutional mechanisms are the lack of financial and human resources in the government and civil society organizations dealing with gender equality. The institutional structures that exist in Pakistan to deal with the advancement of women are marginalized within the existing institutional framework and do not have the necessary say in changing policy. The MoWD which is a

national machinery need to be further strengthened and re-vitalized to work effectively for advancement of women at both national and international levels.

The Government has launched the National Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP) in 2005 to align policies, structures, processes, programs and projects for enabling the government to implement its national and international commitments on gender equality. Gender Development Sections has been established in six strategic Ministries which includes:- Ministry of Finance, Planning & Development Div, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Est. Div, Ministry of Law & Justice, Ministry of Labour and Manpower. Focal persons have been also appointed in these Ministries to mainstream gender into the policies, plans, programmes of the concerned Ministries/ Divisions.

The Ministry of Women Development (MoWD), with technical assistance from the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), has initiated a Capacity Building – MoWD Project. Launched in July, 2005, the four years long project aims to support the Ministry of Women Development and the Provincial Women Development Directorates (MDD) in mainstreaming the gender approach into policies, plans, projects and programs of the Government of Pakistan in the priority areas of the National Plan of Action (NPA) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP) at different levels, favoring women empowerment. This effort has been undertaken in line with the core policy and mandate of the Government of Pakistan for Gender Mainstreaming.

Major challenges and constraints for women in different social sectors in Pakistan are as under:-

- **Women and Poverty**

The major factors contributing to wide spread poverty are the feudal agrarian structure of society and economy, the disparities of ownership of land, the capital-intensive process of industrialization, increasing oil prices.

- **Women and Education**

Some of the major factors affecting the low rate of women education are poverty, low parent motivation, illiteracy and conservatism of the parents, long distant schools and inadequacy of the teaching facilities and technical aid, high work load for the girl child at home, less opportunities of employment and the most important is the priority for education of the boy child.

- **Women and Health**

The performance of the Health sector in Pakistan needs to meet the increasing demand of the population living both in rural and urban areas. Women and girls suffer more because of these inadequacies.

- **Women and Violence**

Pakistan is no exception in gender based violence. It takes many forms from physical abuse to sexual, psychological, emotional, verbal and economic abuses which limit women's decision-making power and freedom. Traditional or customary practices are core obstacles that need to be overcome through revision and amendment of laws and policies or even through new laws/ acts etc.

- **Women and Economy**

Socio-cultural values and practices related to the economic role of women still tend to deny them equal status with men. Other factors are lack of secure mobility, child care facilities and out station residence, poverty, illiteracy, poor health standards, employment in low paid jobs, lack of skill training and other economic facilities such as access to credit and market etc, and conservative family and societal environment.

ACTIONS

Government of Pakistan firmly believes that any poverty reduction effort must address the gender dimension in order to address poverty meaning fully. Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP-II) prepared by the Government entails comprehensive strategy to reduce poverty. The government has also been able to allocate the resources to bridge the existing gender gaps in capabilities, opportunities and decision making through Gender Responsive Budgeting Initiative project.

Goal 3 (Gender Equality) of the Millennium Development Goals is not only a goal in its own but an essential ingredient for achieving all other MDGs. The United Nations Millennium Development Goals are incorporated in the country's planning and resource allocation processes across all the countries. In Pakistan these have been incorporated in Medium Term Development Framework (MTDF) and major focus of the Poverty Reduction Paper-II (PRSP-II) is also on the MDGs: As a matter of fact even in the PRSP-I major focus had been on poverty reduction, education, health and water and sanitation, which are the core elements of MDGs. Progress has been made by taking into consideration MDG 2015 targets.

The Government has launched the National Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP), spread over two phases. The first phase of the project has been completed and the government (Ministry of Women Development) is in the process to start second phase of the project to achieve its remaining aims and objectives.

Government is committed to improve access as well as quality of education for boys and girls. Under a Letter of Understanding signed on 7th march 2007, Ministry of Education, in collaboration with UNICEF and DFID Islamabad, has also initiated a 4 year duration "Gender in Education Policy Support Project" (GEPSP) having two major components of Knowledge Promotion and Capacity Building to remove gender disparities and improving gender equality in education. Under this project, apart from a large number of allied activities, two national level and four provincial level consultative meetings for knowledge building/ sharing and capacity building have been organized.

Moreover, the Curriculum Wing has ensured the elimination of stereotypes in gender roles in the recently revised curricular (2006). However, elimination of such stereotypes in the textbooks will also be ensured in 2009, during development of textbooks under revised curricula.

The Government has embarked upon comprehensive health sector reforms. The health policy of Pakistan (2001) provides an overall national vision for health sector development based on the "Health for All" approach which emphasizes accessibility, affordability and acceptability of health services by the gender population. Among ten areas of reforms it aims at promoting greater gender equity, bridging basic nutrition gaps in the target population (mothers and infants) and creating mass awareness in public health matters. Government is also going to announce new health policy which would address the gender gap in the health sector.

Violence against Women although a global phenomenon, has received committed attention of the government. Government has created Gender Crime Centre in the Ministry of Interior to address all sorts of crimes against women on regular basis. These centers will be established at the provincial and district level and gender responsive centers would be set up at police stations for proper handling of women cases. Government is committed to establish Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Centers for Women in each district of the country to provide immediate relief to the victims of violence. To facilitate access of women to legal system, the government plans to create an Ombudsman for women that would not only deal with cases of crime but also look into hurdles women face in their access to justice.

The discriminatory laws against women are reviewed to address the issue of violence against women. The Protection against Harassment at Workplace Bill, 2009 and Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2009 are being introduced in National Assembly. A Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2009 is being finalized to provide legal mechanism for protection of victims of domestic violence. Legislation on ownership of property and assets by women is being formulated.

The government is taking initiatives to improve the opportunities for women to increase their presence in decision making level in the federal government from existing low level to a reasonable level. For this purpose a 10% quota has been reserved for women in federal government. Measures are also being taken to address the problems of working women at their workplace which includes: establishment of working women hostels; provision of transport facility to female employees; establishment of day care centers etc.