

## January 2018

### *NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 29TH TO FEBRUARY 4TH 2017*

#### ***THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL RAPED AND KILLED IN QUETTA***

Dawn, 29 January 2018

In the aftermath of eight-year-old Zainab's brutal rape and murder in Kasur, another case of a similar nature has surfaced in the country after an initial medical examination report confirmed on Sunday that a 13-year-old girl was raped before being strangled to death in Quetta.

The grade-6 student, T\* was found unconscious in Killi Ismail area of the Balochistan capital earlier today. Rescue teams rushed to the site and shifted the body to Civil Hospital Quetta, where she was pronounced dead on arrival.

Victim's brother Kamran said that he had left home for 30 minutes and found his sister unconscious when he returned.

"Indications of early report suggests that the girl [age 12 or 13] was raped before being strangled," police surgeon Dr Noor Baloch told reporters.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1620546/1-thirteen-year-old-girl-raped-killed-quetta/>

#### **LAW BEING DRAFTED TO ENSURE WOMEN'S RIGHT OF OWNERSHIP**

Dawn, January 30th, 2018

PESHAWAR: Provincial Commission on the Status of Women held a consultation here on Monday for formulating a comprehensive law to ensure the right of ownership of women in the province.

The participants of the consultative meeting, mostly having legal and academic background, however, pointed out that there were many laws that could help in ensuring every man and woman's right to ownership.

They stressed the need for simplifying procedure and implementation of laws at grassroots level.

The copy of the draft that sought changes to preamble and sections 1,2,3,4,5 of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Enforcement of Women Ownership Rights Act, 2012 was circulated among the participants. It says that Islamic Sharia provides equal guarantee for the protection of the property of men and women.

"The Constitution of Pakistan and Section 3 of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sharia Act 2003 enjoin upon the government to legislate with the respect to the protection of the said right," adds the draft law.

The draft also talks about stopping a person from violating right of the ownership or possession of a woman. The draft law proposes that this violation should be made punishable with imprisonment of either a term not exceeding five years and fine not exceeding Rs50,000.

The proposed law also says that whenever a person is convicted of an offense under the law, the court shall hand over possession of the property, on account of which the person has been convicted, to the rightful owner.

During their critique, one of the panelists, former head of Judicial Academy Khwaja Wajihuddin called the preamble "a bit self-defeating". He stressed the need for proper definitions.

Fasihuddin, a police officer, said that he himself witnessed the long and complicated process and delays that deprived people of right of ownership in their life time.

Mohammad Nadeem, a legal expert, also shared his views on the occasion.

Neelam Turo, chairperson PCSW, said that the consultative process would continue to come up with a comprehensive draft law that could help women to get their right of ownership.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1386174>

#### MANSEHRA TEENAGE GIRL ACCUSES 'KIDNAPPER' OF ASSAULT

Dawn January 31, 2018

MANSEHRA/HARIPUR: A teenage girl here on Tuesday alleged that she was kidnapped from Khushala Dogha in Oghi tehsil some three months ago and assaulted during the captivity.

"I was kidnapped and taken to Rawalpindi where the kidnapper raped me when I refused to marry him," she told a local court.

Recording her statement under Section 164 of Pakistan Penal Code, the girl said that the suspect along with his father and two accomplices kidnapped her from her village and forced her to marry him but she refused which infuriated him and he sexually assaulted her.

The victim family presented her before the court of Senior Civil Judge Zahid Hussain Shah for recording her statement as she managed to come back home.

She said that she told the suspect that she could not marry her as she was already married. "He sexually assaulted me and threatened to kill me if I put up resistance," she alleged.

Oghi police that had already lodged an FIR against the suspects and his accomplices following kidnapping of the girl three months ago, started raids for the arrest of suspects in case.

In Haripur, the court of judicial magistrate granted to police two-day physical remand of five alleged rapists and blackmailers of a schoolboy. The suspects included a policeman and two sons of a councillor.

A resident of Khalabat Township lodged a criminal case against a constable of Elite Force and his two accomplices for molesting his eighth grader nephew.

The suspects, according to FIR, took the student to a rented room on Dhenda Road where they molested him one after the other and also captured the offense on mobile phone camera. They intimidated the victim to keep mum otherwise they would upload the video clips on the social media.

The victim, according to police, concealed the ordeal out of fear.

However, sons of a local councillor also started blackmailing the victim when the three alleged rapists shared the same video with them.

However, the victim informed his family. Police on Saturday night registered criminal case against the three alleged rapists and two blackmailers.

Police arrested all the five suspects on Monday and produced them before the court of Judicial Magistrate Aftab Khan, who handed them over to investigation staff on two-day physical remand.

According to Haripur DPO Syed Khalid Hamdani, the constable of Elite Force, presently posted in Peshawar, has been suspended. He said that the suspect would be terminated if court convicted him.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1386393>

#### GIRL KIDNAPPED IN HARIPUR

Dawn, January 31st, 2018

HARIPUR: A teenage girl was kidnapped at gunpoint from a CNG station on GT Road here on Tuesday afternoon.

Police quoted a girl from Kehal, Abbottabad, as saying that she and her sister (19) were in a car that stopped for refuelling at the CNG station near Mohallah Tainki, Haripur, when all of a sudden about eight persons, including two women armed with weapons, came and forcibly kidnapped her sister.

The complainant reported to the police that the accused included Ruqayya Bibi, Gudo Bibi, Qaisar Khan, Shazi Khan, Shahbaz Basharat, Muzamil Shah and Husnain Shah.

The police registered a criminal case against the accused person under Section 365-B/34 of the PPC and have started raids for their arrest.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1386395/girl-kidnapped-in-haripur>

#### MAN THROWS ACID ON WIFE, DAUGHTER IN MALAKAND

Business Recorder, 1 February 2018

PESHAWAR: A man in Malakand on Wednesday threw acid on his second wife and his daughter when a heated family dispute took a turn for the worse.

The culprit fled the scene leaving the two women severely burnt. People of the area rushed both women to the Civil Hospital Thana for immediate medical assistance.

The two women were later shifted to Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar after primary care was provided to them.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/02/01/3-page/697273-news.html>

#### ALARMING SITUATION: OVER 40,000 DIE OF BREAST CANCER EVERY YEAR IN PAKISTAN

The Express Tribune, February 2nd, 2018

No longer dependent on family history, breast cancer is fast emerging as a fatal disease among women, claiming as many as 40,000 lives every year in the country.

This was stated by Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Health Services Director General Dr Ayub Roze during a breast cancer awareness symposium organised by the Khyber Medical University (KMU) in Peshawar on Thursday. The symposium had been organized in collaboration with the Shifa International Hospital (SIH) in Islamabad, the Public Health Association of K-P and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) and the Khyber Girls Medical College (KGMC) in Hayatabad.

During the symposium, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was also signed between KMU, Shifa International Hospital and the K-PHS to organise mammography tests at SIH at subsidised rates for people of K-P.

Dr Roze, Dr Shabina Raza, K-P Public Health Association President Dr Saima Abid, and SIH's Dr Arif Malik vowed to work together for setting up a cancer registry and population-based breast screening and control system in K-P.

Addressing the symposium at the KGMC Auditorium, Dr Roze said that breast cancer is a menace which the female population was confronting at a large scale across the country.

He sounded the alarm over the spread of breast cancer in the country, adding that every year more than 40,000 women die from this disease.

He hoped that the agreement will help lower the ratio of breast cancer in K-P.

Cancer experts said that every female is basically at risk of breast cancer if she is obese, has a family history, or is over 50-years-of-age and leads a sedentary lifestyle. Moreover, a diet which contains a high amount of fat can increase the risk of cancer since fat triggers estrogen which fuels tumour growth.

According to recent estimates, experts said that 97 per cent of breast cancer cases occur where there is no family history.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1624290/5-alarming-situation-40000-die-breast-cancer-every-year-pakistan/>

#### LAWS PROTECTING WOMEN RIGHTS NEED IMPLEMENTATION: DURRANI

The Express Tribune, February 3rd, 2018.

Many laws have been enacted in the country to safeguard the rights of women, but the authorities have failed to implement these with full force.

“There is lack of implementation of laws protecting women rights in the society,” Balochistan Assembly Speaker Rahila Durani said at a conference held at International Islamic University (IIU).

Among many issues women face, one was child marriage, Durrani said. “A bill is being presented in the assembly to prevent pre-mature marriages,” she told the moot organised by the Iqbal Research Institute (IRI) of IIUI. The conference was organised to evaluate the role of women in countering the ideologies of terrorism and extremism with the help of Paigham-e-Pakistan narrative.

The anti-terrorism and anti-extremism narrative had been presented by IIUI with the signature of hundreds of religious scholars last month.

Speakers at the national seminar resolved that a peaceful dialogue in the light of Islamic education was mandatory for the elimination of terrorism, extremism from the society and women could play a vital role in this regard.

The women speakers including parliamentarians and representatives of Wafaq-ul-Madaris (federation of religious seminaries) also resolved that women could play an important role in building of a society, a press release Friday said.

Council of Islamic Ideology Chairman Dr Qibla Ayaz presented the recommendations at the seminar titled ‘Role of Dukhtaran e Pakistan in Reconciliation and Peace Building in Continuation with Paigham-e-Pakistan’ held at Faisal Masjid Campus.

Participants maintained that the recommendation points would be sent to lawmakers.

In the four panel discussion sessions, speakers said role of media was important for highlighting the issues of women and children and special programmes should be organised in this regard. The resolutions also said national educational curriculum should be prepared according to the modern needs.

IIUI Rector Dr Masoom Yasinzai stressed the need for imparting modern education based on critical thinking and characterization integrated with the blend of Islamic character.

He said there was no place for terrorism in Islam and added that IIUI took the responsibility to provide a narrative to the nation to remain clear about Islam, its teachings and dissemination of message of peace.

He urged for the promotion of the attitude of peaceful co-existence.

IIUI President Dr Yousif al Draiveesh said Islam was the only religion which gives complete rights to women. He called upon the Muslim societies to practice and provide the rights to women guaranteed by Islam.

University was keen for women empowerment and as 14,000 women were getting quality education.

He said the number of female students was more than male students at the university.

Seminar was also joined by Khalid Iqbal Jhagra, IIUI women campus Director Dr Farkhanda Zia, Wifaqul Madaris representatives Asma Baig, Naber Andleeb, Razia Madni, Tayyeba Khanum, Durdana Sidiqui and MNAs Farhana Qamar, Shazia Sobia, Romeena Alam and Huma Chughtai.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1625239/1-laws-protecting-women-rights-need-implementation-durrani/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 22ND TO JANUARY 28TH 2018 CELEBRATING WOMEN  
ACADEMICS

Dawn, January 22nd, 2018

Akbar Zaidi

BARRING a few notable exceptions, recent scholarship by academics on Pakistan in the social sciences and books by scholars of Pakistani origin writing not necessarily on Pakistan are almost all by women. Most of these women are Pakistani, but some are of other nationalities. Not all — in fact, just a handful — write about women's issues and on feminism. Most write on issues which are not defined or constrained by the authors' gender. This implies that most women academics are not writing simply as 'women academics' on women's issues, but as competent and able scholars, where gender does not define or restrict their work.

In order to gauge the scale and nature of what Pakistani women academics have been writing, a short list is essential.

Probably the most celebrated academic of Pakistani origin, one who has ironically not written on Pakistan, is Saba Mahmood, an anthropologist at the University of California, Berkeley. Saba Mahmood's highly controversial work on women and Islam has made her a global star, much reviled and much celebrated by academics working on Islam, as well as those working on women and gender. She is the first Pakistani scholar to acquire global fame, as well as notoriety, after sociologist/anthropologist Hamza Alavi, albeit with very different ideological and theoretical perspectives.

Pakistan's most well-known and prolific historian Ayesha Jalal has written 11 books on numerous themes related to South Asian and Pakistani history, while Masooda Bano, at Oxford University has a number of books looking at madressahs, and at women and development using Islamic frameworks.

Earlier work by defence analyst Ayesha Siddiqa on the Pakistani military's business interests has already become a classic, while historian Farzana Shaikh has written two books — one a classic on the history of South Asian Muslims, and another well-received one on Pakistan's political history.

Other, more recent, scholarship, comes from the likes of Sadaf Ahmad on al-Huda, Sadia Saeed on the politics of de-secularisation in Pakistan, Saadia Toor who offers a radical perspective on Pakistan's political history, and Saima Zaidi who has without doubt edited the most valuable and comprehensive, unparalleled book on a cultural understanding of Pakistan.

One must, of course, mention Vazira Zamindar's exceptional book on Partition, and Sana Haroon's examination of clerics in the Frontier.

Humeira Iqtidar, a political scientist, has edited a number of books, with her own tract, the highly controversial work on the Jaamatud Dawa, in which she argues how Islamist political praxis in Pakistan actually 'secularises' Pakistan, a thesis which has been highly contested and rubbished by numerous scholars, including many mentioned here.

Mariam Mufti, another political scientist, has a new book on political parties in Pakistan out soon, while Ammara Maqsood, has had a recent book published on Pakistan's new middle class. Non-Pakistani women scholars would include Christine Fair, Naveeda Khan, Anita Weiss and Sarah Ansari, who have written books on Pakistan — on the military, Muslim identity, women and Sindh respectively.

Probably the most anticipated of all is the recently published book Faith and Feminism in Pakistan by radical feminist scholar Afiya S. Zia, which is already being heralded as 'indispensable' to our understanding of faith and feminism and secular alternatives in Pakistan. This book, in fundamental ways, critiques much of the scholarship which frames Pakistan, especially by those women scholars who reduce all social processes simply to an Islamic paradigm.

There are numerous other women scholars writing on Pakistan as well, and this list is just a powerful indication of the breadth, scope and depth of the scholarship of Pakistani women academics, although, as one expects, the quality varies.

There are two aspects which are striking about this collection of writers. The first is that most of these women academics live and work in the West, and their intellectual worldview is much determined by their location in Western academia. Many academics based in Pakistan have emphasised that location is critical to one's perspective and understanding of Pakistan, and one can see the difference in the scholarship of those Pakistani academics, both men and women, who live and suffer in Pakistan, unlike the diaspora which has acquired numerous privileges on account of its location.

The second striking fact is that most of these women academics have been writing on some aspect of Islam, a revisionist Islam, an Islam only imagined from the West rather than from Pakistan. This, again a locational paradigm, affects their work accordingly.

One celebrates all academic scholarship in a country where the social sciences were once considered to be 'dismal', but especially the academic and scholarly work of women writing on Pakistan. There are numerous reasons why there is a revival in the social sciences in Pakistan, related mainly to the social and structural transformation in the economy and society. Women may perhaps be one of the main beneficiaries of such developments.

Given the very large number of Pakistani men and women undertaking graduate work in the social sciences at universities in Pakistan and abroad, one expects an even greater field of scholarly research and output. In 2018, one expects a rich feast of some new scholarship by both men and women academics in the social sciences whose books are about to be released.

This trend would seem to be an oddity, for some Pakistani journalists have framed their arguments and concern about women in the more mundane manner of looking at women's social position in Pakistan. Some have told us that there is a 'gap' between women in Pakistan and those in almost all other countries with regard to social and gendered indicators. Other journalists lament the 'failure of women'. No one, man or woman, would deny that these facts exist and need to be urgently redressed. Yet despite numerous constraints and severe discrimination, the success of these women is worth much celebration, where women academics have put their male colleagues to shame. More power to them.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1384408>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 15TH TO JANUARY 21ST 2018

TORCHED WOMAN LEFT TO DIE IN LOCKED UP ROOM RESCUED

Dawn, January 18th, 2018

MIRPURKHAS: A mother of three children, who was allegedly torched by her husband and his relatives two weeks ago in Walkart Town and then left to die in a locked up room, was rescued by her sisters and shifted to hospital on Wednesday.

Neighbours said that Mehnaz Baloch, 23, suffered serious burns after her husband Allah Bux Baloch doused her in kerosene oil and set her on fire with the help of family members on Jan 3.

On Wednesday morning, the victim's sisters came to visit her from Tando Allahyar and found her locked up. They broke open the door and shifted their sister to Civil Hospital where doctors said the victim had suffered 80 per cent burns.

During the treatment, a brother-in-law of the victim attacked her and her sisters in the hospital but police saved them. The victim was later shifted to Liaquat University Hospital Hyderabad because of her precarious condition. The victim's sisters told media persons that they felt insecure and demanded Mirpurkhas SSP should provide them safety and justice.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1383549/torched-woman-left-to-die-in-locked-up-room-rescued>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 8TH TO JANUARY 14TH 2018

FEMALE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: MIRPUR HANDS CANTEEN REINS TO WOMEN

The Express Tribune, January 8th, 2018.

MIRPUR: In a boost for women entrepreneurs in Mirpur, the local administration has ruled that contracts to run canteens at girl's educational institutions in the area will only be provided to women.

Mirpur division Commissioner Chaudhry Muhammad Tayyab has said that only women will be granted contracts for operating canteens at government girl's schools and colleges in all three districts of Mirpur division.

Talking to APP here on Sunday, he said that the step had been taken under a plan to empower local women by ensuring their participation in self-employment opportunities apart from ending the direct access of men to canteens in such educational institutions.

"It would be, indeed, the first pilot project in Azad Jammu and Kashmir which aims to encourage and boost the confidence of women who aspire to work independently and provide for their families," said Tayyab.

The Divisional Commissioner said that new contracts would be granted through an open auction and due advertisements will be issued to invite interest from women.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1603282/1-female-education-institutions-mirpur-hands-canteen-reins-women>

## WOMAN ALLEGEDLY KILLED BY HUSBAND, IN-LAWS

Dawn, January 12, 2018

ISLAMABAD: A woman was allegedly killed by her husband and in-laws in the capital, police said on Thursday.

The victim was allegedly doused in kerosene and set on fire by her husband and his family at a house in Ghorī Town, they said.

The deceased, identified as Ambreen, was her husband's second wife, and had married him some six months ago.

Her mother approached the Kural police and alleged that her son-in-law and his family were behind the victim's death.

She said the couple had fallen in love and gotten married in a court.

She told the police that her daughter had been beaten by her husband, police said, and that her daughter's in-laws has claimed she died from burns she received due to a gas cylinder explosion.

The police said Kural police have taken the body of the deceased into custody following the complaint lodged by the victim's mother, and the body has been shifted to a hospital for an autopsy.

The police have also picked up the victim's husband for further investigations, and examined the house, where they found suspicious circumstances, including kerosene.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1382390>

## CANADA SCHOOLGIRL ATTACKED OVER HIJAB

Dawn, January 13, 2018

An 11-year-old girl was assaulted in Toronto on Friday by a man who twice tried to cut off her hijab with scissors and then fled, police said.

Khawlah Noman told reporters that she was walking to school with her younger brother when the man came at her with scissors.

"He tried cutting (off) my hijab two times," she said.

"I felt really scared and confused. I didn't feel comfortable that people are doing this."

Police described the assailant as an Asian male wearing a black hoodie and glasses. He was said to be about 20, nearly six feet tall and with a medium build.

Authorities are investigating the incident, which occurred at about 9am (1400 GMT) near the Pauline Johnson school in Toronto's east side, police spokeswoman Katrina Arrogante told AFP.

Constable Jenifferjit Sidhu told a press conference that Noman had turned and confronted her assailant, making loud noises to scare him off and then she ran away with her little brother in tow.

Afterward, according to Sidhu, the girl noticed a 12-inch cut from the bottom up on the back of her hijab.



She and her brother joined a group of other students also walking to school, for safety, but the siblings became separated from the group and from each other at an intersection crossing.

At that moment, less than 10 minutes after the first assault, the same man suddenly returned and allegedly tried again to cut off her hijab, before fleeing.

“This is a cowardly act of hatred. It does not represent who we are (as Canadians),” Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne said in a Twitter message.

“We must stand firm in our support of this young girl who was assaulted simply for wearing a hijab,” she said. The school serves nearly 300, kindergarten to grade six, students “of diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds,” according to the local school board.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1382687>

#### NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1ST TO JANUARY 7TH 2018

#### 41 WOMEN KILLED FOR ‘HONOUR’ IN GUJRAT IN 2017

Waseem Ashraf Butt

Dawn, January 01, 2018

GUJRAT: As many as 41 women were murdered on the pretext of ‘preserving honour’ and over domestic disputes in Gujrat during 2017.

The number has increased from the previous year’s 35. In 2013, around 51 women were murdered followed by 36 in 2014.

According to data collected from the district police office, most of the women had been slain by their kin and the complainants in these cases were also family members. However, there was no conviction in these cases as the complainants would reconcile with the suspects.

Most of these murders occurred in rural areas in the jurisdictions of Jalalpur Jattan Saddar, Kunjah, Daulat Nagar and Dinga police stations. The police stations in recently urbanised areas located in the outskirts of the city also reported an alarming number of cases of violence against women. Three women of a family were killed for ‘honour’ in the Civil Lines police precincts besides a few others over the year.

There were 38 cases of women’s murders reported to various police stations in 2017 as compared to 34 in 2016. Some unidentified bodies were also recovered during the last year who did not belong to Gujrat district, including the recently solved blind murder of a woman who belonged to Rawalpindi.

Women were also killed over marriage disputes, domestic issues and various other reasons. A senior police investigation officer told Dawn that he believed culture and traditions were the main reason behind violence against women. He stressed effective legislation and awareness campaigns to contain such violence.

He added that out of the 38 registered cases, suspects nominated in 36 had been arrested and sent behind bars, but such suspects would often be released on technical grounds mainly due to pardoning by and reconciliation with complainants, who were mostly the victim’s relatives.

Prof Dr Muhammad Nizamuddin, chairman of the Punjab Higher Education Commission, says Pakistan had high prevalence of violence against women owing to various factors such as a patriarchal society where gender inequality

at various levels was accepted as a norm. Men had assumed higher status in society irrespective of caste, creed, finance and education, he stressed.

“Pakistani society is complex with various ethnic groups, but when it comes to gender inequality almost all groups, classes and sects seem to follow this rule — although intensity varies. Men are taught that they are superior, and the structure of society has been evolved and developed to give men more power. This unequal power lies at the root of violence against women,” he explained.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1380063>

## SHE BROKE JAPAN’S SILENCE ON RAPE

Motoko Rich

International New York Times, 2 January 2018

TOKYO — It was a spring Friday night when one of Japan’s best-known television journalists invited Shiori Ito out for a drink. Her internship at a news service in Tokyo was ending, and she had inquired about another internship with his network.

They met at a bar in central Tokyo for grilled chicken and beer, then went to dinner. The last thing she remembers, she later told the police, was feeling dizzy and excusing herself to go to the restroom, where she passed out.

By the end of the night, she alleged, he had taken her back to his hotel room and raped her while she was unconscious.

The journalist, Noriyuki Yamaguchi, the Washington bureau chief of the Tokyo Broadcasting System at the time and a biographer of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, denied the charge and, after a two-month investigation, prosecutors dropped the case.

Then Ms. Ito decided to do something women in Japan almost never do: She spoke out.

In a news conference in May and a book published in October, she said the police had obtained hotel security camera footage that appeared to show Mr. Yamaguchi propping her up, unconscious, as they walked through the hotel lobby. The police also located and interviewed their taxi driver, who confirmed that she had passed out. Investigators told her they were going to arrest Mr. Yamaguchi, she said — but then suddenly backed off.

As the United States reckons with an outpouring of sexual misconduct cases that have shaken Capitol Hill, Hollywood, Silicon Valley and the news media, Ms. Ito’s story is a stark example of how sexual assault remains a subject to be avoided in Japan, where few women report rape to the police and when they do, their complaints rarely result in arrests or prosecution.

On paper, Japan boasts relatively low rates of sexual assault. In a survey conducted by the Cabinet Office of the central government in 2014, one in 15 women reported experiencing rape at some time in their lives, compared with one in five women who report having been raped in the United States.

But scholars say Japanese women are far less likely to describe nonconsensual sex as rape than women in the West. Japan’s rape laws make no mention of consent, date rape is essentially a foreign concept and education about sexual violence is minimal.

Instead, rape is often depicted in manga comics and pornography as an extension of sexual gratification, in a culture in which such material is often an important channel of sex education.

The police and courts tend to define rape narrowly, generally pursuing cases only when there are signs of both physical force and self-defense and discouraging complaints when either the assailant or victim has been drinking.

Last month, prosecutors in Yokohama dropped a case against six university students accused of sexually assaulting another student after forcing her to drink alcohol.

And even when rapists are prosecuted and convicted in Japan, they sometimes serve no prison time; about one in 10 receive only suspended sentences, according to Justice Ministry statistics.

This year, for example, two students at Chiba University near Tokyo convicted in the gang rape of an intoxicated woman were released with suspended sentences, though other defendants were sentenced to prison. Last fall, a Tokyo University student convicted in another group sexual assault was also given a suspended sentence.

“It’s quite recent that activists started to raise the ‘No Means No’ campaign,” said Mari Miura, a professor of political science at Sophia University in Tokyo. “So I think Japanese men get the benefit from this lack of consciousness about the meaning of consent.”

Of the women who reported experiencing rape in the Cabinet Office survey, more than two-thirds said they had never told anyone, not even a friend or family member. And barely 4 percent said they had gone to the police. By contrast, in the United States, about a third of rapes are reported to the police, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

“Prejudice against women is deep-rooted and severe, and people don’t consider the damage from sexual crimes seriously at all,” said Tomoe Yatagawa, a lecturer in gender law at Waseda University.

Ms. Ito, 28, who has filed a civil suit against Mr. Yamaguchi, agreed to discuss her case in detail to highlight the challenges faced by women who suffer sexual violence in Japan.

“I know if I didn’t talk about it, this horrible climate of sexual assault will never change,” she said.

Mr. Yamaguchi, 51, also agreed to speak for this article. He denied committing rape. “There was no sexual assault,” he said. “There was no criminal activity that night.”

Ms. Ito had met Mr. Yamaguchi twice while studying journalism in New York before their encounter on April 3, 2015.

When she contacted him again in Tokyo, he suggested that he might be able to help her find a job in his bureau, she said. He invited her for drinks and then dinner at Kiichi, a sushi restaurant in the trendy Ebisu neighborhood.

To her surprise, they dined alone, following beer with sake. At some point, she felt dizzy, went to the bathroom, laid her head on the toilet tank and blacked out, she said.

When she woke, Ms. Ito said, she was underneath Mr. Yamaguchi in his hotel bed, naked and in pain.

Japanese law describes the crime of “quasi-rape” as sexual intercourse with a woman by “taking advantage of loss of consciousness or inability to resist.” In the United States, the law varies from state to state, with some defining the same crime as second-degree rape or sexual assault.

The police later located a taxi driver who recalled picking up Ms. Ito and Mr. Yamaguchi and taking them to the nearby Sheraton Miyako Hotel, where Mr. Yamaguchi was staying.

The driver said Ms. Ito was conscious at first and asked to be taken to a subway station, according to a transcript of an interview with the driver. Mr. Yamaguchi, however, instructed him to take them to his hotel.

The driver recalled Mr. Yamaguchi saying that they had more work to discuss. He also said Mr. Yamaguchi might have said something like, "I won't do anything."

When they pulled up to the hotel, the driver said, Ms. Ito had "gone silent" for about five minutes and he discovered that she had vomited in the back seat.

"The man tried to move her over toward the door, but she did not move," the driver said, according to the transcript. "So he got off first and put his bags on the ground, and he slid his shoulder under her arm and tried to pull her out of the car. It looked to me like she was unable to walk on her own."

Ms. Ito also appears incapacitated in hotel security camera footage obtained by the police. In pictures from the footage seen by The New York Times, Mr. Yamaguchi is propping her up as they move through the lobby around 11:20 p.m.

Ms. Ito said it was about 5 a.m. when she woke up. She said she wriggled out from under Mr. Yamaguchi and ran to the bathroom. When she came out, she said, "he tried to push me down to the bed and he's a man and he was quite strong and he pushed me down and I yelled at him."

She said she demanded to know what had happened and whether he had used a condom. He told her to calm down, she said, and offered to buy her a morning-after pill.

Instead, she got dressed and fled the hotel.

Ms. Ito believes she was drugged, she said, but there is no evidence to support her suspicion.

Mr. Yamaguchi said she had simply drunk too much. "At the restaurant, she drank so quickly, and in fact I asked her, 'Are you all right?'" he said. "But she said, 'I'm quite strong and I'm thirsty.'"

He said: "She's not a child. If she could have controlled herself, then nothing would have happened."

Mr. Yamaguchi said he had brought her to his hotel because he was worried that she would not make it home. He had to rush back to his room, he said, to meet a deadline in Washington.

Mr. Yamaguchi acknowledged that "it was inappropriate" to take Ms. Ito to his room but said, "It would have been inappropriate to leave her at the station or in the hotel lobby."

He declined to describe what happened next, citing the advice of his lawyers. But in court documents filed in response to Ms. Ito's civil suit, he said he undressed her to clean her up and laid her on one of the beds in his room. Later, he added, she woke and knelt by his bed to apologize.

Mr. Yamaguchi said in the documents that he urged her to return to bed, then sat on her bed and initiated sex. He said she was conscious and did not protest or resist.

But in emails that he exchanged with Ms. Ito after that night, he presented a slightly different account, writing that she had climbed into his bed.

"So it's not the truth at all that I had sex with you while you were unconscious," he said in a message on April 18, 2015. "I was quite drunk and an attractive woman like you came into my bed half naked, and we ended up like that. I think we both should examine ourselves."

In another email, Mr. Yamaguchi denied Ms. Ito's allegation of rape and suggested that they consult lawyers. "Even if you insist it was quasi-rape, there is not a chance that you can win," he wrote.

When asked about the emails, Mr. Yamaguchi said a full record of his conversations and correspondence with Ms. Ito would demonstrate that he had "had no intention" of using his position to seduce her.

"I am the one who was caused trouble by her," he added.

Ms. Ito said she rushed home to wash after leaving the hotel. She now regards that as a mistake. "I should have just gone to the police," she said.

Her hesitation is typical. Many Japanese women who have been assaulted "blame themselves, saying, 'Oh, it's probably my fault,'" said Tamie Kaino, a professor emeritus of gender studies at Ochanomizu University.

Hisako Tanabe, a rape counselor at the Sexual Assault Relief Center in Tokyo, said that even women who call their hotline and are advised to go to the police often refuse, because they do not expect the police to believe them.

"They think they will be told they did something wrong," she said.

Ms. Ito said she felt ashamed and considered keeping quiet too, wondering if tolerating such treatment was necessary to succeed in Japan's male-dominated media industry. But she decided to go to the police five days after the encounter.

"If I don't face the truth," she recalled thinking, "I think I won't be able to work as a journalist."

The police officers she spoke to initially discouraged her from filing a complaint and expressed doubt about her story because she was not crying as she told it, she said. Some added that Mr. Yamaguchi's status would make it difficult for her to pursue the case, she said.

But Ms. Ito said the police eventually took her seriously after she urged them to view the hotel security footage.

A two-month investigation followed, after which the lead detective called her in Berlin, where she was working on a freelance project, she said. He told her they were preparing to arrest Mr. Yamaguchi on the strength of the taxi driver's testimony, the hotel security video and tests that found his DNA on one of her bras.

The detective said Mr. Yamaguchi would be apprehended at the airport on June 8, 2015, after arriving in Tokyo on a flight from Washington, and he asked her to return to Japan to help with questioning, Ms. Ito said.

When that day came, though, the investigator called again. He told her that he was inside the airport but that a superior had just called him and ordered him not to make the arrest, Ms. Ito said.

"I asked him, 'How is that possible?'" she said. "But he couldn't answer my question."

Ms. Ito declined to identify the investigator, saying she wanted to protect him. The Tokyo Metropolitan Police would not comment on whether plans to arrest Mr. Yamaguchi were scuttled. "We have conducted a necessary investigation in light of all laws and sent all documents and evidence to the Tokyo Prosecutors' office," a spokesman said.

In 2016, the most recent year for which government statistics are available, the police confirmed 989 cases of rape in Japan, or about 1.5 cases for every 100,000 women. By comparison, there were 114,730 cases of rape in the United States, according to F.B.I. statistics, or about 41 cases per 100,000 residents, both male and female.

Scholars say the disparity is less about actual crime rates than a reflection of underreporting by victims and the attitudes of the police and prosecutors in Japan.

Over the summer, Parliament passed the first changes to Japan's sex crime laws in 110 years, expanding the definition of rape to include oral and anal sex and including men as potential victims. Lawmakers also lengthened minimum sentences. But the law still does not mention consent, and judges can still suspend sentences.

And despite the recent cases, there is still little education about sexual violence at universities. At Chiba, a course for new students refers to the recent gang rape as an "unfortunate case" and only vaguely urges students not to commit crimes.

In Ms. Ito's case, there is also a question of whether Mr. Yamaguchi received favorable treatment because of his connection to the prime minister.

Not long after Ms. Ito went public with her allegations, a Japanese journalist, Atsushi Tanaka, confronted a top Tokyo police official about the case.

The official, Itaru Nakamura, a former aide to Mr. Abe's chief cabinet secretary, confirmed that investigators were prepared to arrest Mr. Yamaguchi — and that he had stopped them, Mr. Tanaka reported in *Shukan Shincho*, a weekly newsmagazine.

The allegations did not affect Mr. Yamaguchi's position at the Tokyo Broadcasting System, but he resigned last year under pressure from the network after publishing an article that was seen as contentious. He continues to work as a freelance journalist in Japan.

Ms. Ito published a book about her experience in October. It has received only modest attention in Japan's mainstream news media.

Isoko Mochizuki, one of the few journalists to investigate Ms. Ito's allegations, said she faced resistance from male colleagues in her newsroom, some of whom dismissed the story because Ms. Ito had not gone to the hospital immediately.

"The press never covers sexual assault very much," she said.

Ms. Ito said that was precisely why she wanted to speak out.

"I still feel like I have to be strong," she said, "and just keep talking about why this is not O.K."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/29/world/asia/japan-rape.html>

#### MALALA TOPS LIST OF MOST SEARCHED PAKISTANIS ON WIKIPEDIA

Dawn, January 02, 2018

KARACHI: Malala Yousufzai, the activist for girls' education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate, has topped the list of most searched Pakistanis on Wikipedia during 2017 — second year in a row.

According to a report by the Pakistan affiliate of The Wikimedia Foundation, Ms Yousufzai's Wikipedia page had over 2.5 million views the previous year.

The list, which tabulates Wikipedia searches of Pakistani personalities, is based on searches carried out from Jan 1 to Dec 20, 2017.

Other personalities who were among 25 most searched Pakistanis on Wikipedia in 2017 included politicians, social workers and people from the entertainment industry. Among the most searched are also those who are no more in this world.

Mahira Khan, the actress who has been adding one accolade after the other to her name over the past few years, was the second most searched Pakistani on Wikipedia with over 2m views.

The page of the father of the nation, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, came on third position with over 1.3m views.

On fourth position came the page of Saba Qamar, an actress, with 910,102 views.

Pakistan Tehree-i-Insaf chairman Imran Khan's page with fifth position attracted 884,206 views and ousted prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz president Nawaz Sharif's followed it on sixth position with 867,548 views.

Actor Fawad Khan came on seventh position with 860,213 page views.

On eighth position, the page of legendary Pakistani musician and singer late Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan attracted 838,527 people.

Former prime minister and assassinated chairperson of the Pakistan Peoples Party Benazir Bhutto's page was viewed by 794,442 times.

The page of iconic social worker late Abdul Sattar Edhi had 664,107 views.

In descending order, following are the other most search Pakistanis on Wikipedia: actress Sajal Ali (643,528 page views), actress Mawra Hocane (601,239), actor Imran Abbas (380,358), actress Sanam Saeed (251,679), actress Veena Malik (242,998), actress Mehwish Hayat (238,832), actor Humayun Saeed (229,505), actor Adnan Siddiqui (227,398), musician and singer Atif Aslam (608,525), actor and singer Ali Zafar (363,534), singer-turned-evangelist late Junaid Jamshed (299,878), legendary singer and actress late Noor Jehan (277,287), singer late Nazia Hassan (264,801), legendary singer late Mehdi Hasan (203,460), and slain social media celebrity Qandeel Baloch (455,651).

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1380232>

## YOUNG WOMAN MARRIED OFF TO 50-YEAR-OLD MAN ON JIRGA'S ORDER HANDED OVER TO HER PARENTS

Dawn, January 6th, 2018

SUKKUR: A 16-year-old woman, Farhana Rajib, was handed to her parents on Friday on an order of the first additional judge (Hudood) of Sukkur after personnel of the Bagarji police and local women police produced her in the court to record her statement.

She informed court that she had been married off to a 50-year-old man, Rajib, about a year ago on a ruling given by a jirga in lieu of Rs1 million imposed as fine on her father, Lakhmir Shaikh.

She stated that her husband had routinely been torturing her on suspicion of her character.

She prayed to court to help get her divorce from him.

Giving details of the jirga ruling, the women, a resident of the Bagarji area, said the community elders forming the jirga had taken up the issue of her uncle's freewill marriage and declared it Karo-kari [an extramarital affair].

She said her uncle, Qadir Bux Shaikh, was ordered to pay a fine of Rs4 million and her father, Lakhmir Shaikh, Rs1 million to the aggrieved side.

She said her father defaulted on the fine money as her family was poor.

She said that her father had to hand over her to a man belonging to the aggrieved family in lieu of the fine money as per the jirga ruling.

Farhana told the court that she had been subjected to torture on different pretexts ever since the forcible marriage as her husband feared her inclination to some other person. She said she could no more bear the torture.

Therefore, she added, she approached the women police station to seek court's help in getting divorce from her husband and protection for her family from the community elders' possible wrath.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1381041/young-woman-married-off-to-50-year-old-man-on-jirgas-order-handed-over-to-her-parents>

## February 2018

**NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 26TH TO MARCH 4TH 2018**

### ***MAN KILLS WIFE, SISTER IN SUSPECTED HONOUR KILLING***

The Express Tribune, 27 February 2018

In yet another grisly incident bearing the hallmarks of an honour killing, a man allegedly killed his wife and sister in a village in Sanghar district on Monday. According to Tando Adam taluka DSP Muhammad Ayub Brohi, two young women were allegedly shot dead in Mir Muhammad Khyber village by the suspect, Abdul Rehman Khyber, who escaped after the incident.

The bodies of the slain women were shifted to the Shahdadpur Institute of Medical Sciences Hospital for postmortem formalities. The DSP said that the incident took place in the limits of the taluka police station and the FIR has not been lodged so far.

In another taluka of Sanghar district, the body of 25-year-old Khadim Hussain Sanjrani was found lying in an agricultural field in Khairo Khan Sanjrani village. The police said that Sanjrani's throat was slit with a sharp object.

Mubarak Ali Sanjrani, the victim's brother, informed the police that Khadim left home on Sunday night around 8pm but did not return. He claimed that neither their family nor his slain brother have any known enemies. "We own only two acres of land which we cultivate for a living," he said. The family also held a protest along with the body, demanding the killer's arrest. The murder FIR could not be lodged due to a delay in the postmortem.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1645563/1-man-kills-wife-sister-suspected-honour-killing/>

### **WOMEN ARE FREE, AND ARMED, IN KURDISH-CONTROLLED NORTHERN SYRIA**

International New York Times, 28 February 2018



MANBIJ, Syria — Radwan, a 30-year-old Arab man, came with four male witnesses and a grievance with an ex-wife to a place called the Women's House here in Manbij, in northern Syria.

He had recently divorced his second wife, Amira, 17, and he wanted back the gold he had given her as a bride price, some three or four ounces at most — worth more than few goats but less than a car.

The five men sat down with Amira and her mother, Isra, in a circle of plastic chairs around a stove to discuss the matter, with the mediation of several officials from the Women's House.

The conversation grew heated as Amira and her mother, who asked that the families' last names be withheld to avoid a tribal backlash against them, refused to return the gold. When the Women's House officials said that not only was Amira right to keep it, but that she was also entitled to a houseful of furniture in compensation for the divorce, Radwan began shouting.

Chairs were knocked over and voices raised, but the women officials escorted the men out of the building politely but firmly, warning that the police would be summoned if they didn't go quietly.

Shilan Shermooz, the administrator of the Women's House, said the matter was not yet over. Once Radwan made the reparations, she said, they would send his case to court and see him prosecuted for beating and abusing Amira for the two weeks they were married. Radwan was also guilty of fraud, she said, because Amira agreed to the wedding not knowing he already had a wife and children.

"The patriarchy really is over," Ms. Shermooz said, sharing a laugh with two colleagues.

In the Kurdish-controlled areas of northern Syria, a push for gender equality has given women like Ms. Shermooz significant power to enforce women's rights. The authority wielded by women here — in the police, the courts and the militias — is patterned on the gender egalitarian philosophy of the Kurds' ideological leader, Abdullah Ocalan.

The founder of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or P.K.K., Mr. Ocalan is serving a life sentence in Turkey on terrorism charges, and his organization is a designated terrorist organization according to the United States and the European Union. But his philosophy is widely popular among Kurds, particularly in northern Syria and eastern Turkey.

Six years of control of most of northern Syria have given the Kurds a chance to put into practice their gender reforms to an unprecedented degree, unhampered by interference from the Turkish government, which has cracked down on many of the women's institutions in Kurdish-majority areas of Turkey.

By law, every government institution in Kurdish-controlled Syria has a co-president or co-chairman of each sex, and most government boards and committees have to be equally mixed by gender as well — except for women's institutions, which are led by only women.

The Kurdish militias have separate Women's Protection Units, or Y.P.J., which have been important partners with men's units on the battlefield. When the Syrian Democratic Forces, an American-backed coalition, captured Raqqa from the Islamic State in October, the overall commander was a Y.P.J. woman, Rojda Felat.

"There are always men thinking that women are slaves, but when women are an armed force, men are scared of them," said Arzu Demir, the Turkish author of a book on the Y.P.J. militias.

The Kurdish effort to enact gender equality has really been put to the test in places like Manbij, which is overwhelmingly Arab, and also conservative and tribal. The Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces took control here about 18 months ago, in a campaign supported by American Special Operations forces and air power.

While the Manbij Military Council, which is now in charge, is a majority Arab force, the new government is organized on Mr. Ocalan's revolutionary principles.

Women were immediately given the right to divorce, previously a right reserved to men; to inherit property on an equal basis with men; and to keep their children and their homes in a marital breakup. Gone were long-observed Shariah law provisions that gave a woman's testimony in court

only half the weight of a man's.

Those changes were not without pushback. The Kurdish majority area of Kobani in Syria, for instance, outlawed the practice of men taking more than one wife. But when officials tried to apply that restriction to Manbij, anger from tribal leaders led to the granting of an exception here.

Still, the Women's House in Manbij right away began aggressively counseling wives whose husbands married a second time that they could divorce, and walk away with the children, the house and half of any property. The result has been some 200 divorces in the past year, mostly in cases of polygamy and underage marriage, said Widat Hayat an Arab woman and a sociologist who heads the research department at the Women's House. It is an unprecedented number.

Many local men have found it difficult to reconcile the prosperity and stability the new government has brought with their own traditions.

Abdul Aziz al-Hassin, 45, an Arab shopkeeper who has 14 children, agrees that "a woman has the same rights as a man, she's not a slave or a servant." But he still intends to take a second wife, he said, because his current one, also 45, can no longer bear children. How will she react to that? "I won't tell her," he said. "It's none of her business."

Attitudes like that die hard.

"When we opened the Women's House, even we didn't believe this was going to work here," said Jihan Mustafa, one of the counselors who coach women on their rights, and help them through divorce, spousal abuse prosecutions and legal actions to force their husbands to better provide for their children. "Now as you see, it is always busy here."

At the Women's House in Manbij, halls, waiting rooms and consultation rooms were crowded with men and women — with many of the men visibly angry.

Ms. Mustafa is a Kurd, as were the first women's activists here, but now other members of the Women's House are Arabs, and most of their clients are as well. Manbij is heavily Arab, with minorities of Kurds and others. "There is real acceptance for it, just 18 months after the liberation of Manbij," she said.

Acceptance is hardly universal, however, and many of those who are critical are also afraid to speak out publicly.

"To understand the current situation, think of ISIS, but at the other end of the spectrum," said Abdul, 37, a teacher who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of repercussions from Kurdish officials. "They never stop trying to impose codes and teachings that contradict our cultural norms and conservative views," he said. "And they insist on having a female presence in everything, which has made them hire unqualified females in posts they don't know how to handle."

Kurdish leaders are aware of the discontent, but say the changes they are bringing are long overdue and are gaining acceptance, especially among younger Arab women.

“Most men don’t accept it, but we speak to women and try to make society understand why it is not good, for instance, to have more than one wife,” said Isam Abdul Qader, an Arab member of the Manbij Women’s Council, another organization that advocates women’s equality. It also sends teams of women door to door in neighborhoods and villages, where they ask to come in and explain to the women their new rights.

“Many men don’t let us in at first,” said Hana Sharif, a Kurdish council member. “We just go back two or three times. Little by little, it is working.”

Maja al-Ali, 25, is an Arab woman member of the council who said the new local government has changed her life. “Before I just stayed in the house and I couldn’t even wake up in the morning,” she said. “Now I have character and a role in society. Now I get up in the morning, I have meetings and do things, and I love life now.”

At the request of local women, the council has started a driving school for them. Recently, some women in Manbij have asked the women’s council to set up firearms courses to teach civilian women how to defend themselves.

“It is about time,” Ms. Sharif said, “that we have all of our rights

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/24/world/middleeast/syria-kurds-womens-rights-gender-equality.html>

## MARCH OF WOMEN

Dawn, March 2nd, 2018

Zubeida Mustafa

AS the forces of feminism grow in strength, it is heartening to see women mobilising themselves and rising to fight their own battles. It is clear that the seeds of awareness that were sown in the 1980s are now bearing fruit.

We see many young faces taking up the cudgels. They are the generation which reacted to the oppression of their mothers in Zia’s Pakistan and the heightened misogyny of the post-9/11 years.

Next Thursday is International Women’s Day, and a number of these activists have organised the Aurat March as a show of female strength. They hope to mobilise women in large numbers to resist the forces of patriarchy.

If education reinforces patriarchy, no change can be expected.

The flyer distributed by Hum Auratein (We Women) — no organisation is mentioned — invites women of all socioeconomic classes and ethnic backgrounds to join the march (from Frere Hall, Karachi). The demands identified are: 1) an end to violence; 2) workers’ rights; 3) reproductive rights; and 4) environmental justice and access to clean water, clean air and enjoyment of public lands.

Men are also welcome if each of them is accompanied by two women. But it must be recognised that by itself the Aurat March will not accomplish much if it is not followed by some tangible action. The march can at best mobilise women and create the passion to forge ahead. But then must come action to create the conditions and facilities that are needed to empower women.

The ultimate aim should be to enable women to win autonomy in decision-making in all walks of life. Regrettably, we seem to be stuck at the awareness-raising stage. A basic issue which should have been addressed from the start has seemingly been pushed into the background. That is the education of women.

This is the sector in which the government has let women down badly. Of the 23 million children out of school in Pakistan, 65 per cent are girls, That also explains why the women of Pakistan are so downtrodden. Besides, the quality

of education is so poor that it doesn't empower most educated women either. As a result, their visibility in public spaces is minimal and gender equality is still a pipe dream.

The fact is that the key to political empowerment, income generation, development, employment, good health and self-reliance is education. When I speak of education I do not just mean imparting literacy and numeracy skills but also what the curricula teach. If education reinforces patriarchy and the conventional belief in the secondary status of women, no change can be expected.

It cannot be denied that the neglect of education is the underlying cause of Pakistan's social and economic underdevelopment. This also accounts for the backwardness of women. But what shocks me is the failure of people generally — even activists and feminists — to recognise the role of education in the uplift and emancipation of women.

At the Karachi Literature Festival in February in the session on #MeToo: Gender Issues Today none of the panellists, one of them a foreigner, expanded on the missing factor — female education and literacy — that is the scourge of our society and at the root of women's backwardness.

The #MeToo session at KLF was followed by a conversation with Kesho Scott, an African American feminist-activist, academic and author of *The Habit of Surviving: Black Women's Strategies For Life*. Kesho's message was profound and poignant, based as it was on her own experience. Paraphrased, it read, 'Set your sights on education which alone promises economic independence and without which women can never hope to win their rights'.

This was the black woman's strategy for survival in an America at a time when the biggest achievement she could honestly lay claim to was, 'I survived'. It was a country where a black child of 13 was not allowed to swim with white girls in the swimming pool and had her head pushed into the toilet as a punishment. That was Kesho Scott who learnt from her mother the habit of surviving. In such a society, it would not have been easy to fight for social justice.

Yet Kesho did and can now proudly write, "Eventually I became a well-educated professional woman." Education has helped her. More than that, it has enabled her to carry on her community work.

African American women have come a long way in their struggle for civil rights and women's empowerment. Education became a key element in this struggle. More importantly, those who succeeded didn't abandon their less fortunate sisters.

And yet education is not high on the Pakistani woman's agenda. I hope Hum Auratein will pledge to educate every illiterate woman living on Pakistani soil — there are about 50m of them who need to learn the three Rs. Education is also important for equity without which all women cannot be empowered.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1392628/march-of-women>

#### ONE OUT OF FIVE WOMEN IN PAKISTAN IS PART OF LABOUR FORCE: UN REPORT

Dawn, March 3rd, 2018

Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: Stating that societal barriers remain to women's representation and advancement in the civil service, a new study released by the United Nations on Friday asked the government to develop evidence-based programming to address barriers to gender equality in public administration.

The Pakistan case study on 'Gender Equality in Public Administration' jointly released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of

Women (UN Women) found that women in Pakistan face entrenched societal attitudes and suggested that a multi-faceted approach that accounts for socio-economic realities must be devised to increase women's access to decision-making positions in public administration.

A second key finding of the study says that designing and implementing policies for increasing women's access to decision-making positions in the Pakistan public administration require a multi-faceted approach looking at the socioeconomic realities of women's lives.

The case study, carried out under UNDP's global Gender Equality in Public Administration (GEPA) initiative, recommended that engagement with parliament was required for meaningful dialogue on the translation of the benefits of increased induction into the civil services to society at large, and even before that, to the so-called ex-cadre recruitment.

With the dissolution of the women development ministry, there was no longer a standing committee on women development of parliament, alternatives and means of reengagement, therefore, have to be explored, the study recommends.

According to the study, the role of women in decision making in public administration can benefit women, at large, when there is a well-defined 'Gender Equality Agenda' articulated and committed to by the government. This provides these women an opportunity to expand their influence to empower women in Pakistan in a more direct manner.

Pakistan needs to translate the change in office space into change in the larger public space, with more women in the street. There is a need for continued engagement at the societal level to change attitudes, specifically those of men, the study emphasises.

Within the civil services, there can be an effort to introduce women's networks within public service to promote mentoring opportunities for young women and sharing of experiences. Pakistan is uniquely poised to share its experience of an increased critical mass necessary to form the base on which to structure equal participation of women in decision making in public administration. These experiences can very well be shared beyond Pakistan as part of South-South cooperation.

The study notes that the baseline for gender equality in the labour force leaves significant room for improvement. While women's labour force participation in Pakistan has increased by more than 50 per cent over the past 15 years, only one out of every five women participates in the labour force.

However, one interesting development is that Pakistan has reached parity between women and men at the tertiary education level which is very relevant to this study given admission to the civil service requires a bachelor's degree.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1392924/one-out-of-five-women-is-part-of-labour-force-report>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 19TH TO FEBRUARY 25TH 2018

EVENT FOR GASIFIERS DISTRIBUTION AMONG RURAL WOMEN HELD

Business Recorder, 21 February 2018

LAHORE: World Wide Funds for Nature-Pakistan (WWF-P) and SNGPL, as part of the AWARE project, organized an event for gasifiers distribution among rural women of Matta village in district Kasur.

The project titled "agro-waste community enterprise for provision of alternate energy for households and small-businesses (AWARE)" provides clean burning cooking stoves fuelled by agro-waste as an alternate means of energy to rural communities, said a WWF-P spokesperson, here on Tuesday.

The project aims to promote eco-friendly, alternate energy sources among rural households and small businesses through training, awareness and dissemination of 525 gasifiers units using agro-waste as fuel – a low-cost, simple, user-friendly yet clean source of energy for cooking with great potential for wider dissemination among rural communities where different agro-wastes are available in abundance.

The project is being carried out through multiple field activities in central Punjab, South Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through capacity-building workshops, on-site demonstration of agro-waste gasifiers and distribution of gasifier units among rural families and small businesses.

Through this project, 525 rural and farming families, small culinary businesses and 20 local vendors/technicians are being facilitated. More than 44 fabricators/local technicians have been trained on gasifier fabrication procedure and its technical specification.

WWF-P Director General Hammad Naqi Khan said that with this partnership they have an opportunity to promote renewable energy technologies, particularly harnessing the true potential of agro-waste, in order to ensure that the rural and less privileged areas of the country keep pace with the growing energy demands in a sustainable manner.

“This project will not only improve rural livelihoods by ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and clean energy but will also help in promoting environmental stewardship and encourage climate change mitigation,” he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Farrukh Majeed, General Manager at Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) SNGPL, said, “We, as an organisation, are committed to conserving and protecting the environment. To achieve this purpose, we have worked with WWF-P in the past and will continue to work with the organization in future.”

“Recognizing the measures being taken by WWF-P in tackling the catastrophic impacts of climate change, we will promote activities to protect and preserve the environment. Conservation is at the heart of SNGPL’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy.”

The project team also visited the tree plantation site. The provision of agro-waste gasifiers to communities was directly linked with tree plantation to foster environmental stewardship among rural communities.

Therefore, more than 1,680 trees have been planted by the communities where the gasifiers were distributed. The project team has also launched awareness campaign among rural school girls of the project area educating them about alternative energy solutions. More than 600 students received training and participated in the plantation activity.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/02/21/12-page/701072-news.html>

## WOMEN VOTERS IN DIR

Dawn, February 22nd, 2018

AT last, it seems the wheels of change are turning in some of the most regressive parts of this country, though not without some firm prodding from the Election Commission of Pakistan. On Tuesday, over 1,000 women in Lower Dir exercised their right to vote, a sign that their disenfranchisement in the area may be coming to a long overdue end. The women cast their votes in a by-election to select candidates for 21 seats of local government councils; the earlier election had been cancelled by the ECP because no women had turned up to vote on that occasion. This time around, a substantial percentage of registered women voters exercised their right of franchise, even though the numbers varied widely from one polling station to another. Nevertheless, it is a beginning and that in itself is something to welcome.

Lower Dir is among those areas where the pretext of tradition has repeatedly, and disingenuously, been used to disenfranchise women. Earlier, local chapters of political parties would openly strike agreements to disallow women from choosing their representatives — anathema to those who consider the public space, and the decisions made in it, as belonging to men alone. When rights activists and the ECP began to take notice, the agreements became more tacit, and were enforced subtly through social pressure.

The recently enacted Elections Act, 2017 has given more teeth to the legal provisions against women's disenfranchisement, and the recent by-poll proves that if there is sufficient political will, regressive traditions can be whittled away. Credit goes to the ECP — and the lawmakers that have strengthened its hand — for taking steps to signal to political parties that business as usual will no longer be tolerated.

To further cement the participation of women in the electoral process, the 12pc gender disparity among male and female voters countrywide must be urgently addressed. It would also be a productive exercise to make gender-disaggregation of votes a regular practice so as to help discern voting patterns among women.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1390853>

COURAGE, THY NAME IS WOMAN  
Business Recorder, 22 February 2018

Shabir Ahmed

Where do Pakistani women get it from? It defies theory. Speaking generally, ours is a tradition-bound society where it is drilled into the girl-child's mind to mind the hearth and home and little else. Some would even argue they are brought up on a diet of submissiveness. How, then, do our women vastly outnumber men in the pantheon of courage?

Ayub's opponents couldn't find a man to run against him. They turned to Fatima Jinnah, and what a stroke of genius that turned out to be. The frail lady, used to living in the shadow of her brother, turned out to be more than a match for the self-proclaimed Field Marshal. She didn't have the Deputy Commissioners to corral the 'basic democrats' but she had more than what they had: courage of her convictions. To speak her mind, to expose seven years of 'development' as a sham, and tell all how that caricature of democracy (basic democracy) was designed to perpetuate the dictator.

People loved the sight of her standing on one foot to take off her sandal and brandish it at the mercenaries of law. They followed her and cheered her and made sure in defeat was victory.

She didn't win but Ayub lost.

Another dictator and another courageous lady: Nusrat Bhutto, disheveled in many a picture, and in at least one bleeding, taking on the General. When the jiyalas were scurrying for cover she stood tall against the might of the state. Neither threats nor jail could diminish her anger, or her fight. She was of course fighting for her husband but showed others the virtue of courage.

She didn't win but Zia lost face.

It was left to Nusrat's daughter — not her sons — to carry the baton to the finish line. If John Kennedy was around to write another edition of Profiles in Courage Benazir would figure prominently.

She might have lacked political savviness in those early years, and had her faults, but if there was one attribute that defined her it was sheer courage. She put to shame the party's men when she was the first to jump over the barbed fence laid to restrain her movements; or how she smuggled herself out to a political gathering locked up in the boot of a car.

Twice kicked out of Prime Minister House she kept fighting long after the pundits had penned her political obituary. The triumphant return home was bloodied by the attack on the cavalcade but that did not deter her. She defied the 'advice' of the dictator to return home again. Liaquat Bagh sealed the testimonial to her fearless courage.

She lost her life but Pakistan won. Democracy, with all its shortcomings, returned.

But these were the political ladies, and politics is the school of the best and the worst, teaching mostly compromises and betrayals but, occasionally, fighting for the just cause too. What about women outside the political arena?

How do we rate Mukhtaran Mai, who had the courage to go public much before me too hashtag became a wave? She shattered the stigma of rape. Government bribed her, intimidated her, put her on ECL. Many of us, to our abiding shame, looked the other way, and to his utter shame one suggested rapes in Pakistan were contrived to get a passage to Canada.

The original silence breaker, she responded to violence and gender apartheid with insistence on justice and education.

What about Malala Yusufzai? Shot for going to school, she turned an ordeal into an inspiration. She could have easily opted out, living the life of an average school girl in the UK, and perhaps continue writing her diaries of despair under the pseudonym Gul Makai.

Instead, she stood up to be counted, refusing to be deterred by threats and taking in her stride all those indecorous comments about her becoming a tool in the hands of the West. It must have required a special kind of courage to make that transformation from the conservative Swat girl to making girls' education the mission of her life.

How many of her male contemporaries could measure up to the guts and raw courage of Asma Jahangir? When tribute after tribute started pouring in (inevitably, there were some 'good riddance' comments as well) we put it to friends "OK, we know what she fought against, but what did she fight for?" Most could not distinguish between the two and couldn't get beyond personifying her as an anti-power machine.

Yes, she was overawed neither by the power of the military nor the reach of the mullah; and pricked our conscience by describing them the way we wanted to but did not have the courage to. She defiantly fought the State, to expose its ugly side. She fought against myopic policies that put the country's future at risk. She fought against the removal of a Chief Justice and then fought against the same Chief Justice once he got restored.

But what did she fight for?

Asma fought for voice. She stood for giving people, especially the weak and the vulnerable, voice. To be able to speak for or against issues that matter to them. By becoming the symbol of resistance against all forms of injustice and discrimination she showed us the way: to speak up for a cause, and keep speaking up until heard.

Good Leaders, to paraphrase MacArthur, never die; they simply fade away. But Nations that allow their message to fade away die. The real celebration is not in writing tributes but in emulating what they stood for. Let courage become a national trait.

For starters, let us have the courage to put women issues top of the national agenda. And what could be a greater tribute to our heroines than committing ourselves to education for girls – not education in its utilitarian sense of gainful employment, but to be better equipped to banish bigotry and narrow-mindedness and bring up more courageous sons and daughters.



Our messengers of hope have been women; women who for all their frailty and faults gave 'leading from the front' a new meaning. The followers will be amiss if they don't carry the message forward: To speak up and be heard.

On a personal note, thank you dear departed mother Hamida for raising a son who can't right the wrongs but can tell right from wrong.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/02/22/20-page/701338-news.html>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 12TH TO FEBRUARY 18TH 2018

VALIANT RIGHTS FIGHTER ASMA PASSES AWAY

Dawn, February 12th, 2018

LAHORE: Asma Jahangir, an iconic lawyer, activist and champion of human rights, passed away here at the age of 66 on Sunday.

A constant traveller, she returned to the city she had given so much to and accepted a lot from to bid a final farewell to a world she always strived to make a better place for the coming generations. Her departure was marked by a suddenness that had become her characteristic through her time as a fierce campaigner for people's rights.

She collapsed while on a telephone call, discussing a meeting with a lawyer, was rushed to a private hospital but could not survive. A doctor concerned at Hameed Latif Hospital told Dawn that she died of brain haemorrhage. She has left behind her husband, two daughters and a son.

According to family sources, Ms Jahangir's funeral will be held on Feb 13 (Tuesday) at Gaddafi Stadium at 2pm as her daughter and brother are scheduled to arrive in Pakistan from abroad. As the news of her death spread across the country and beyond, her friends and colleagues among the lawyers' community, intellectuals, politicians, civil society members and her well-wishers rushed to her Hali Road residence in a state of shock and disbelief. Condolences and tributes poured in through messages and posts on social networking sites, including Twitter.

Among others, Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar as well as other Supreme Court judges and senior lawyers reached Ms Jahangir's residence and extended their heartfelt condolences and sympathies to her family. The mourners were all praise for her being the leading torch-bearer of human rights, minority rights, who put up huge resistance against intolerance and retrogressive elements of all kinds. Brave and outspoken, she rose to prominence by sheer dint of hard work, diligence and commitment to the ideals of rule of law, said her colleagues in the legal fraternity and the area of human rights.

Senior lawyer Azam Nazir Tarar told media persons that he was on the phone with Ms Jahangir, when she collapsed. "After that I screamed and kept repeating her name but the call eventually dropped," he said.

Often addressed as the voice of the voiceless, Ms Jahangir had an illustrious decades-old career in the pursuit of human rights and stood undaunted in the face of extreme pressure, and even shrugged off life threats with her customary nonchalance. She co-founded the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in 1987 and before that, in the early 1980s, the Women's Action Forum.

She was widely known for playing a prominent role in the lawyers' movement. Also in the same decade she set up the famous legal firm AGHS along with lawyers Shehla Zia, Gulrukh and Hina Jilani, her sister in comrade in all causes.

Born in 1952 and raised in Lahore, Ms Jahangir studied at the Convent of Jesus and Mary before receiving her Bachelors' degree from Kinnaird College and doing LLB from the Punjab University in 1978. Ms Jahangir was called to the Lahore High Court in 1980 and to the Supreme Court in 1982. In the 1980s, she became a pro-democracy activist and was imprisoned in 1983 for participating in the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy against the

military regime of Ziaul Haq. In 1986, she moved to Geneva and became the vice-chair of the Defence for Children International and returned to Pakistan in 1988.

She was also put under house arrest in November 2007 after the imposition of emergency.

After serving as one of the leaders of the lawyers' movement, she was the first woman to serve as the president of the Supreme Court Bar Association. For some time, she co-chaired the South Asia Forum for Human Rights and was the vice-president of the International Federation for Human Rights.

Ms Jahangir was the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion from August 2004 to July 2010, besides serving on the UN panel for inquiry into Sri Lankan human rights violations and on a fact-finding mission on Israeli settlements.

She received several awards, including the 2014 Right Livelihood Award (along with Edward Snowden), 2010 Freedom Award, Hilal-i-Imtiaz in 2010, Sitara-i-Imtiaz, Ramon Magsaysay Award, 1995 Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders and the Unesco/Bilbao Prize for the Promotion of a Culture of Human Rights. She was awarded an Officier de la Légion d'honneur by France.

Condolences and tributes poured in from across the country and abroad, recalling the great services Asma Jahangir had rendered to her country and its people, especially those at the wrong end of authority and frequent persecution run by agents of bigotry. Especially recalled were her courageous defence of clients no other lawyer would be ready to represent: from Salamat Masih in 1993 to those fighting for their rights in Okara and Gilgit-Baltistan. Her trailblazing work in the area of women's rights was also highlighted, with friends and admirers quickly pointing out that this was just one part in the grand and most impressive mosaic left behind by Ms Jahangir's long uncompromising journey.

The National Assembly speaker and deputy speaker, the Chief Justice of Pakistan, the PPP chairman and co-chairman, the Supreme Court Bar Association and the Pakistan Bar Council condoled the death of Asma Jahangir. Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif also condoled her death.

Senate Chairman Mian Raza Rabbani in his message expressed his deep grief and termed Ms Jahangir's death a national loss. He said she always fought for the rule of law, upholding of the Constitution and protection of democratic institutions, besides waging struggle for the voiceless.

NA Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Deputy Speaker Murtaza Javed Abbasi expressed deep grief over the sad demise of Asma Jahangir. They lauded her immense contributions towards upholding the rule of law, democracy and safeguarding human rights. They also praised her services rendered for the cause of independence of the judiciary, rule of law and supremacy of the Constitution in the country.

Chief Justice Saqib Nisar in his message extended heartfelt condolences and sincere sympathies to members of the bereaved family of the departed soul. Praising her services rendered for the cause of independence of the judiciary, rule of law and supremacy of the Constitution, he said Ms Jahangir's services would always be remembered in good words in the judicial history of Pakistan.

PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari expressed their profound grief and sorrow over the sudden death of Asma Jahangir.

Bilawal Bhutto said Ms Jahangir was highly pro-democracy dedicated fighter and lived a life of rights defender. "Her death is an irreparable and colossal loss for the entire nation, which will miss her for her dashing role she always played in the courtrooms, on rights platforms and for her particular contribution towards creating awareness among the masses about their rights," he said.

Asif Zardari said Ms Jahangir was a brave woman, who showed resistance to dictatorships and struggled for restoration of democracy and the Constitution. He said she never compromised when it came to the principles of democracy and the Constitution. He said the eminent lawyer defied those who tried to sabotage human rights, adding that her death was a shock to the people of Pakistan in particular and democrats all over the world in general. “The Bhutto family along with the Pakistan Peoples Party stands in solidarity with the bereaved family,” he said.

Supreme Court Bar Association president Kalim Ahmed Khursheed Syed said the association was in a state of shock and distress on the sudden sad demise of its former president. Terming her death a big loss, he said she always stood up for maintaining the high standards of democracy and the supremacy of law in Pakistan.

While the SCBA is mourning its former president’s death, its president called upon the legal fraternity across the country to not appear in courts on Monday (today).

Similarly, the Pakistan Bar Council expressed grief over the death of Ms Jahangir and announced observing mourning for three days from Monday to Wednesday (Feb 12 to 14). It said the lawyers would also not appear in courts on Monday for attending her funeral and holding condolence meetings in their respective bar associations all over the country.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1388897>

#### WOMEN’S POLITICAL INCLUSION CAN HELP PROTECT THEIR RIGHTS

The Express Tribune, February 13th, 2018.

Through greater participation in mainstream politics, women can influence legislation being passed by the house to devise laws which help protect their rights.

This was stated by speakers at a seminar held with respect to National Women’s Day in Peshawar on Monday. The seminar had been organised by the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Blue Veins with assistance from the Australian government and Trócaire to highlight the role of women and factors contributing to great inequalities for women including gender-based violence (GBV), restricted mobility, lack of education, little awareness of rights, lack of access to and ownership of resources and assets, and limited access to social services.

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Commission on Status of Women (K-PCSW) Chairperson Neelam Toru said that they had been working to strengthen the status of women in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) by working towards pro-women laws.

“Change is incremental, and while there is a lot to be done when it comes to safeguarding the rights and lives of women, considerable progress has been made in passing pro-women legislation,” Toru said.

“The increased participation of women in politics and public life will pave the way for more solid legislations which protect women’s rights in the province completely,” she concluded.

However, activists suggested that they need to do more in terms of help GBV survivors overcome problems

“The civil society has a responsibility to ensure the safety, wellbeing and rights of those at risk of GBV; regardless of whether high numbers of data exists or not,” said activist and lawyer Rakhshanda Naz. “Many GBV cases are often overlooked and not reported which is a huge setback which is why any available data on GBV, including reports from police, legal, health, or other sources is helpful and can help civil society in identifying the gaps and finding better solutions,” she said.

Women Parliamentary Caucus Vice Chairperson Amna Sardar , urged people to keep an open mind towards women legislators.

“While reserved seats have increased the presence of women in assemblies in Pakistan, women elected to these seats often serve as proxies for family members and are not allowed to play their role as public representatives, this trend should end now because the prominence of women in the parliament simply cannot be ignored anymore,” Sardar implored.

District Councilor Rabia Basri said that while the establishment of local governments had provided a platform for citizens to be involved in the planning, execution and monitoring of public service delivery programmes, more needed to be done to end the inherent discrimination against women.

“In our everyday lives, we come across women who face discrimination on a daily basis by their counterparts at work or even in other walks of life. But now, these women have proper representation, and we make sure their problems are addressed and are solved by any means possible,” Basri said.

Blue Veins programme coordinator Qamar Naseem said that women are a crucial part of our society who have been constantly overlooked and treated unfairly.

“There are various factors of violence against women and girls such as traditional gender roles, patriarchy, and attitudes which force women to be placed in difficult positions, women can play a positive role in the economic and social growth of the country if all the obstacles in their way can be addressed and eradicated,” he said.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1633261/1-womens-political-inclusion-can-help-protect-rights/>

#### MAN THROWS ACID ON FOUR SISTERS

Dawn, February 14th, 2018

SIALKOT: A man allegedly threw acid on a girl and her three sisters here on Tuesday over rejection of his marriage proposal in Bonkan-Pakka Ghara locality of the city.

Police said suspect Qasim, stated to be a quack, had his clinic in the area. His wife had died about six months ago and he wanted to marry a girl of the area. The girl rejected the proposal which infuriated Qasim.

On Tuesday, he visited the house of Afshan (20) and threw acid on her and her three siblings Amina, (8), Jannat, (6), and Ayesha, (7). Neighbours gathered there when the girls raised a hue and cry.

Later, Rescue 1122 shifted the injured to Government Allama Iqbal Memorial Teaching Hospital in a critical condition.

The doctors said Afshan suffered 40 per cent acid burns to her head, 20pc to face, hands and arms. They said Jannat sustained 20pc burns to her arms. Ayesha and Amina suffered minor burns as acid fell on their clothes.

Muradpur police have arrested suspect Qasim and registered a case against him. Police said he confessed to throwing acid on the girls for rejecting his marriage proposal.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1389324/man-throws-acid-on-four-sisters>

#### 48 PC PAKISTANI WOMEN HAVE NO SAY IN HEALTH MATTERS: UN

Dawn, February 15th, 2018

Faiza Ilyas

KARACHI: A United Nations report released on Wednesday presents a very bleak picture of Pakistan that is yet to make a serious start for women's development, the majority of whom are deprived of education and basic healthcare.

The report finds that 98.8 per cent of women from the poorest rural households are education poor (defined as having only completed six or less years of education), with the rural Pashtun women not only being the most deprived in education but also have the least say in decisions regarding their own health care.

Released two years after world leaders had adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the report — Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda — examines all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and shows their impact on the lives of women and girls. It highlights how the different dimensions of well-being and deprivation are deeply intertwined and suggests measures to tackle existing structural inequalities and turn promises into action.

The most deprived population in education comprises rural Pashtun women, report indicates

Pakistan is one of the four countries highlighted in the report where 4.9 million women aged between 18 and 49 years are simultaneously deprived in four SDG-related dimensions.

Across nine out of 10 dimensions, women and girls from the poorest 20 per cent of households in rural areas fare worse than women and girls from the richest 20 per cent of households in urban areas.

Disaggregation by ethnicity revealed further differences. In the case of malnutrition (proxied by a low Body Mass Index), Sindhi women and girls from the poorest rural households fare far worse than any other group across all wealth quintiles and locations. "However, the most disadvantaged ethnic group often varies across indicators, oscillating between the Sindhi, Saraiki and Pashtun.

"A closer look at those most likely to be disadvantaged — that is, women in the poorest rural households — suggests that in six of the 10 dimensions studied, Sindhi and Saraiki women and girls fare the worst while Pashtun and Punjabi women tend to fare better.

"Exceptions can be observed in some areas, such as access to clean cooking fuel, where rural poorest were equally deprived irrespective of ethnicity," the report says.

Deprivation in access to employment, according to the report, is unique: the richest are much more likely to lack employment as compared to the poorest, 86.8 and 53.3 per cent, respectively.

On average, 48.1 per cent of women and girls aged between 15 and 49 years in Pakistan have no say in decisions regarding their own health care, but rates vary significantly by location, wealth and ethnicity. For instance, women and girls in rural areas are 1.3 times as likely to report having no say in decisions regarding their own health care as those in urban areas: 52.5pc compared to 39.3pc, respectively.

The differences by ethnicity, however, reveal the largest inequalities, with Pashtun and Sindhi women and girls most likely to report having no say (65.2pc and 62.5pc, respectively) and Saraiki, Punjabi and Urdu least likely (44.0, 40.4 and 31.9pc, respectively).

"The furthest behind are women and girls facing the compounded effect of intersecting forms of discrimination (ethnicity, wealth and location). Ethnicity in some cases exceeds wealth and location as a predicting factor for having no say in own health-care decisions. For example, rates of 'no say' among Pashtun women and girls are higher than the national average, irrespective of wealth and location," the report says.

The report recommends investment in accessible, affordable and quality early childhood education and care as an important strategy that could help contribute to the achievement of gender-and child-related targets of the 2030 Agenda by reducing the time women spent on unpaid care enabling them to increase their access to employment, improving children's health and nutritional outcomes.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1389532/48pc-pakistani-women-have-no-say-in-health-matters-un>

## UN WOMEN REPORT SHOWS WORRYING DEGREE OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN PAKISTAN

The Express Tribune, February 14, 2018

Niha Dagia / Zoha Ismail

KARACHI: The United Nations released on Wednesday a report on gender equality for its Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 with Pakistan being one of the main four countries in focus. The report identifies inequality among women and girls and paints a sorry picture for the country.

Using data from a UN Demographic and Health Surveys 2012-2013 report which takes into account variables such as wealth, location and ethnicity, the report reveals that 12 per cent of women in Pakistan (4.9 million) aged 18-49 are simultaneously deprived in four Sustainable Development Goals-related dimensions: 1. Child marriages, 2. Education, 3. Healthcare, and 4. Employment.

“These women were not only married before the age of 18 and education-poor, they also reported no agency in health-care decisions and said they were not working at the time of the survey,” the report adds.

79.8 per cent of the women in this cluster live in rural areas and households concentrated in the bottom 40 per cent of the wealth distribution.

The data highlights that women from marginalised ethnic groups living in poor rural households fare worse across a variety of well-being and empowerment. The most disadvantaged ethnic group oscillates between Sindhi, Saraiki and Pashtun. “Sindhi women and girls from the poorest rural households fare far worse than any other group across all wealth quintiles and locations,” the report notes.

The report found that around 79.8 per cent of the women lack access to clean cooking fuel while a quarter is deprived of sanitation services with seven per cent living more than 30 minutes from the closest water source.

A unique disparity was found in employment with the richest more likely to lack employment as compared to the poorest – at 86.8 per cent and 53.3 per cent respectively. While poverty pushed the poorest women into precarious, often informal and unpaid work, the rich face significant barriers including biased gender norms, discrimination in wages and limited job options.

Child marriage, widespread across all socioeconomic groups, encompasses 12 per cent of all women aged 18–49 (or 4.9 million). Almost 24 per cent of women belonging to the richest households and a staggering 63 per cent from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are married before age 18.

While inequality is observed across all indicators, the largest disparity is seen in regards to education. Where 98.8 per cent of the women belonging to rural background and 29.3 per cent belonging to the richest urban dwellers lack access to education. In total 74 per cent of have an average of less than 6 years of education. The data reveals that poor, rural Pashtun women are the most disadvantaged in literacy.

Looking at healthcare, women and girls from rural areas with high concentrations of poverty have less access to medical services. The difference between the most advantaged and most disadvantaged groups is significantly large (13.4 and 70.2 per cent, respectively).

The report stated, on average, 48.1 per cent of women and girls aged 15 have no say in decisions relating to their own health care, however, percentages vary significantly by location, wealth and ethnicity.

Food insecurity among women was a staggering 11 per cent higher than among men.

Only 32 per cent of rural households have access to safely managed drinking water compared to the 41 per cent of urban households. The large differences also exist across income and ethnic groups.

When safe water is not available, women and girls from 80 per cent of households are responsible for water collection, especially in rural areas.

Almost 70 per cent of the female urban population in Pakistan lives in slums where they lack at least one of the following: access to clean water, improved sanitation facilities, durable housing or sufficient living area.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1634815/1-un-women-report-shows-worrying-degree-gender-inequality-pakistan/>

## WOMEN WITHOUT AGENCY

Dawn, February 16th, 2018

YET again, the low status of women in this country stands exposed in all its ugliness. A United Nations report released on Wednesday examines the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their impact on the lives of women and girls. According to the findings, 4.9 million women between the ages of 19 and 49 years in Pakistan are simultaneously deprived in four SDG-related dimensions, with health being one of them.

The disaggregated results are an indictment of not only cultural mindsets that keep women in subjugation but also of governmental apathy. On average, 48.1pc of women and girls between 15 and 49 years of age have no say in decisions about their own health. Those in rural areas are 1.3 times more likely to experience such lack of agency than their counterparts in urban locations.

Sindhi and Pakhtun women and girls are the most disadvantaged in this category with between 62pc and 65pc reporting no say in health matters. Notably however, Pakhtun women and girls, regardless of income level or location, are the most suppressed on this score with higher than the national average unable to participate in decisions about their health.

Pakistan's deeply entrenched patriarchy relegates women to the bottom of the pile in an already inequitable system. They are expected to defer to men in decisions that can affect the rest of their lives; where health is concerned, these could include questions about how many children to bear, when to seek medical attention for themselves and their children, and so on.

Consider the skewed gender ratio in Pakistan — 105 men for every 100 women in a world where the longer life expectancy of women means they outnumber men in most countries. But what else can be the outcome given the traditional preference for males in our culture? Girls get the shorter end of the stick from infancy onwards, leading to higher levels of malnourishment and anaemia among women, increased risk of death in childbirth and chronic health conditions.

However, cultural patterns are not immutable. As successful polio-vaccination campaigns have demonstrated, community-based interventions are the most effective in changing attitudes subtly and non-threateningly.

Lady Health Workers, using the same approach, have also made considerable strides in spreading public awareness about other health-related issues, especially pertaining to pregnancy and childbirth; their numbers can be further enhanced to reach more women.

But decisions about one's health are no different from decisions about other aspects of one's life. For women to acquire that level of autonomy requires whittling away at age-old notions.

An enlightened education curriculum, more schools and colleges, increased employment opportunities for women, and implementation of pro-women laws all have a role to play. It is to our detriment as a nation that half our population does not have the tools or the agency to lead a more fulfilling existence.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1389631/women-without-agency>

#### TWO KILLED FOR 'HONOUR'

Dawn, February 17th, 2018

Ali Jan Mangi

DERA MURAD JAMALI: A man killed his wife and her friend in the name of honour in Goth Abdul Aziz of Nasirabad district on Friday.

Police said that the suspect identified as Faiq Ali opened fire on his wife Zahra and Muhammad Sadiq. The two received multiple bullet wounds and died on the spot.

The suspect fled after committing the crime. The police termed it an incident of "honour killing" and said efforts were under way to arrest the suspect. The bodies were shifted to the district hospital and later handed over the victims' relatives.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1389966/two-killed-for-honour>

#### CHITRAL WOMEN TO GET SHARE IN FOREST ROYALTY

Dawn, February 17th, 2018

Zahiruddin

CHITRAL: For the first time, women will get forest royalty in villages flanking the forests in southern Chitral, which has been seen as a major step to strengthen them financially and elevate their status in the society.

In the areas of Arandu, Sheshi Koh, Damil, Arsoon and Kalash valleys of Bumburate, Birir and Rumbur, the government pays 60 per cent of the income generated from the sale of forest timber to the local residents when the forest is harvested on commercial scale, which normally happens after every five years.

PTI MPA from Chitral, Bibi Fozia, told this correspondent that it was a revolutionary step taken by the incumbent government and now the forest royalty would go directly into the pockets of women besides the existing royalty holders.

She said that the disbursement of forest royalty through the joint forest management committees (JFMCs) was not legal as per rules given in the Forest Act as major chunk of the amount would go to a few influential people while women were ignored.



Appreciating the bold step taken by Chitral deputy commissioner Irshad Sodhar, she said that the step reflected the vision of PTI chief Imran Khan who stood for justice, equality and transparency.

DC says share of women royalty holders to be fixed as per Shariah

“The women will now be no more dependent on the male members of their families for money to fulfil their needs,” she said. The MPA said that in the areas near forests the sources of income for women were limited while poverty was rampant as there was no land available for agriculture which further minimised economic activity for womenfolk. She said that with money in hand the local women could also start small businesses as well.

When contacted, the deputy commissioner said that as per practice in vogue for the disbursement of forest royalty, the amount was placed at the disposal of JFMC office-bearers where the funds were often misappropriated.

He said that as per rules given in the law governing the management of forests in the province the royalty amount was to be disbursed equally among the residents of the areas having landed property there.

“As directed by the chief secretary, I decided to make direct payment of the royalty money to the royalty holders. I also decided to include the women of the area for the first time in the list of recipients and fix share for them as per Islamic Shariah,” he said.

In a household in Arandu, a man has seven daughters but no son and the decision of inclusion of women will benefit him, while in the old system he would have only one share for himself, the DC added while explaining how the step would benefit the women in forest areas.

Mr Sodhar said that a special survey was in progress in the forest areas by the district administration to compile the list of royalty holders, including women, and the disbursement of Rs149 million would be started shortly.

Awami National Party’s provincial joint secretary Khadija Sardar said that the step would bring about a tangible change in the lives of women in the border areas. She said that under Shariah a well-defined share was fixed for women in the family property.

Social welfare officer Nusrat Jabeen welcomed the bold decision of the district administration and said that making women the shareholders of forest royalty was in accord with the objectives of the district committee on the status of women.

Former MNA Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali also appreciated the decision, but stressed transparency in disbursement of the funds by making direct payment to the women royalty holders through female staff.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1389955/chitral-women-to-get-share-in-forest-royalty>

## POLICE OFFICIAL HELD ON RAPE CHARGE

Dawn, February 17th, 2018

HARIPUR: A sub-inspector of the police was arrested and booked for allegedly raping a woman here on Friday.

The Sera-i-Saleh police registered a criminal case against their sub-inspector, Aqeebat Shah, under section 376 of the PPC, on the complaint of the woman, a resident of Wah cantonment.

She insisted that she was stopped by the SI on the Donali bridge on Feb 14 night when she was traveling to Wah cantonment area from Abbottabad in her vehicle along with daughter and driver.

The woman added that the SI first kept them there for two hours, smashed the car's number plate, snatched her mobile and took the car to an unidentified place, where she was sexually assaulted.

She said she later reported the assault to the Serae Saleh police, who registered a criminal case against the SI and arrested him.

The police later carried out the woman's medical examination.

When contacted, Serae Saleh police station SHO Siddique Shah confirmed the arrest and booking of the SI and said the suspect would be produced in the court of judicial magistrate on Saturday (today) for physical remand.

He said though the Forensic Science Laboratory's report was awaited, the woman's initial examination showed 'no evidence of rape during the last five days'.

The SHO said a committee had also been formed to submit a report on the matter to the DPO in the next five days.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1389953/police-official-held-on-rape-charge>

#### FEMALE DOCTOR COMPLAINS OF HARASSMENT

Business Recorder, The Express Tribune, 18 February 2018

LAHORE: A female doctor on Friday has approached Punjab Service Tribunal seeking contempt proceedings against Secretary Health Punjab for transferring and posting her at three different places within three months.

Dr. Momina Samina Asaf, serving with Qila Gujjar Singh's police line hospital as consultant Gynecologist said Punjab Service Tribunal last year on November 15 had maintained status quo on transfer order from Government Hospital but the orders has been ignored. The appellant said that she was treated discriminately and in a prejudicial manner she was transferred time and again at different places with sole intension to harassed and black-mail her.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/02/17/5-page/700323-news.html>

#### NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 5TH TO FEBRUARY 11TH 2018

##### KHYBER-PAKHTUNKHWA — A VIOLENT PLACE FOR WOMEN

The Express Tribune, February 5th, 2018.

The murder of actor and singer Sumbul Khan in Mardan was just one of the 19 major acts of violence against women across Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa so far this year, suggested data collected by a local non-governmental organization (NGO).

The first violent incident of the year took place when a woman, identified as Salma, committed suicide by setting herself on fire inside the Kotwali police station in Peshawar on January 2. Her extreme act was motivated by a protest against the release of a house owner she had had a dispute with.

Taken aback by the suddenness of the move, police officers took a while to respond as the woman suffered severe burn injuries. With the absence of any burns facilities in Peshawar, the woman had to be rushed to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences in Islamabad for treatment where she succumbed to her injuries.

A few days later, a woman was gunned down by her family in Mansehra who had eloped and married a man she loved around 15 years ago.

On January 8, a boy killed his stepmother in the Saddar area of Mardan. A day later, a couple was killed in Maidan area of Dir, apparently in the name of “honour”.

The same day, a man killed his own wife in the Doranpur area of Mardan.

Well-known stage actor Brekhna was killed along with her father by her suitor in the Kakshal area of the city. The man later committed suicide when he was chased by angry locals.

On January 18, brothers strangled their sister to death in Dera Ismail Khan in another case of “honour killing”.

On January 28, a newlywed bride was killed in Kohat.

The following day, two brothers killed a doctor-to-be Asma Rani in Kohat for turning down a marriage proposal.

On the penultimate day of the month, a man threw acid on his wife and stepdaughter in the Betkhela area of Malakand.

Despite the fact that the province’s top court is hearing a case on a similar incident which took place in DI Khan in October 2017, another girl was filmed naked by two boys in Parang area of Charsadda.

Before the month ended, there was time for a boy to kill his stepmother and then dumped her body in a deserted area falling within the remits of the Mathra police station in Peshawar.

It was followed by the alleged “honour” killing of two sisters in Pishtakhara area on the outskirts of Peshawar. The assailant was angry that they used to dance for a living.

Talking to The Express Tribune, rights activist Taimur Kamal said that they had collected the data and cases from incidents reported in newspapers. He, however, conceded that this data was not comprehensive since not every case of violence against women is reported in the media, while some cases are not even reported to the police.

“It is unfortunate that most of the rape and molestation cases are not reported to the police or let’s say the police does not register the first information reports (FIRs) in each rape and violence case,” he explained, adding that in Punjab, the media was far more vigilant and that the government also takes action once a case is reported in the media. This, he observed, was not always the case in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

“A woman committed suicide inside the station house officer’s office to register her protest against the release of a suspect whom she had accused of usurping her money and other belongings, but nothing really happened to that SHO,” he lamented.

Women rights activist Ruskhshanda Naz, who went to court along with the mother of a teenaged girl who had been paraded naked in a DI Khan village last year, told The Express Tribune that social media had proved to be a blessing since it was highlighting issues which were not ordinarily highlighted by the media.

“Social media is highlighting negative things as well, but it is good that due to social media pressure the government is taking action in cases of violence against children and women,” she added.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1626510/1-khyber-pakhtunkhwa-violent-place-women/>

WOMAN FOUND DEAD TWO MONTHS AFTER FREE-WILL MARRIAGE

Dawn, February 7th, 2018

BADIN: An 18-year-old woman, who had contracted a free-will marriage about two months back, was found dead with her throat slit in her room in the thatched house of her family in Khair Mohammad Panhwar village near Nindo Shahar town on Tuesday.

Nindo Shahar SHO Ghulam Mustafa Bhatti said that when police reached the house, the room was locked from inside and they had to break open the door.

The woman, Shabana Panhwar, was found dead in a pool of blood, he said, adding that her throat was slit and it was presumed that she had committed suicide.

However, her husband, Ali Hasan Panhwar, and other family members chose not to share a motive behind her suicide with police or local reporters.

They also did not comment on a question about possibility of it being a murder.

A post-mortem examination of the body was performed at the local rural health centre before the body was handed over to the heirs.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1387750/woman-found-dead-two-months-after-free-will-marriage>

## WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS' PROBLEMS DISCUSSED

Dawn, February 8th, 2018

RAWALPINDI: A coffee morning was arranged by Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) for women entrepreneurs to discuss the issues and hurdles to economic empowerment of women.

Australian High Commissioner Margaret Adamson was the chief guest on the occasion. The function was largely attended by the businesswomen from the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad and the Potohar region.

The basic aim of the function was to create awareness among the women about the opportunities available in the business sector besides providing them opportunity to present their problems.

Speaking on the occasion, Australian High Commissioner Margaret Adamson said that the Australian government supported Pakistan's efforts to increase regional trade and investment.

"The lives of Pakistani women are changing rapidly. It will be vital for a prosperous Pakistan to facilitate an environment which provides enough economic opportunities to engage women," she said.

She said the Australian government was actively exploring avenues for increased skills development and opportunities for women's entrepreneurship in Pakistan.

She lauded RCCI for establishing Women Business Incubation Center (WBIC) to help women entrepreneurs to establish and run their own businesses.

She assured her full support and cooperation in this regard.

RCCI president Zahid Latif Khan in his address said that creating opportunities and empowering women in entrepreneurship had always been Chamber's priority.

"The main purpose of this initiative is to provide women a platform to excel in the field of entrepreneurship," he said.

While highlighting key activities of RCCI, Zahid Latif said recently they organised All Pakistan Women Presidents Chamber Summit to highlight various issues particularly being confronted by the businesswomen including the importance of unity and cooperation between the women chambers for nation building.

He said RCCI being a proactive business facilitation entity, believed in identifying and functionalising such forums for women entrepreneurs to get into the mainstream of the economy.

President thanked the participants of coffee morning and said that an active participation of women entrepreneurs is required to make such sessions a successful event.

Addressing participants, Chairperson Women Committee of RCCI Ms Sadia Zia said that the Rawalpindi chamber always supported women and had provided a platform to come forward and play their leading role.

She urged participants to increase the level of interaction and bring more awareness among women and enrolled them under RCCI platform.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1388071/women-entrepreneurs-problems-discussed>

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT LAWS IN PAKISTAN

The Express Tribune, February 8th, 2018.

In January of this year, a professor at Karachi University, who is also a well-known Urdu linguist, Sahar Ansari, was found by the university inquiry committee to have sexually harassed a female university professor. The committee's decision is that university administration should bar Ansari from teaching and he should not be allowed to participate in any other university-related activities. The female assistant professor lodged her complaint of sexual harassment against Ansari in 2016.

When these allegations were first made, the university's initial three-member committee was not persuaded that the allegations of sexual harassment had been sufficiently proved. The complaint was taken to the provincial ombudsperson for the Protection of Women against Harassment at the Workplace. The ombudsperson then directed the university to reinvestigate the matter.

This well-known incident has brought into focus Pakistan's sexual harassment laws and their effectiveness. There are two legal provisions that govern sexual harassment throughout Pakistan: section 509 of the Pakistan Criminal Penal Code and the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act of 2010. Both laws apply to the entire country and are in line with Pakistan's constitutional provisions and international commitments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and ILO conventions under the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences.

Under the criminal provision, sexual harassment against women in public spaces is now a criminal offence. The law can attract a maximum penalty of three years' imprisonment and/or a fine of up to Rs500,000. Making sexual harassment a criminal offence is a welcome development. Unfortunately, the title of the section is problematic and shows that lawmakers have not fully understood underlying issues around harassment and why it occurs. Section 509 is titled 'Insulting modesty and causing sexual harassment'. The word modesty is subjective and open for interpretation at the discretion of the presiding judge. This is problematic and its interpretation is open to abuse.

The criminal law aspect of sexual harassment suffers from the same institutional challenges faced by the wider criminal justice system. The system is costly, overburdened and female complainants encounter a deeply patriarchal and discriminatory system, and there is little or no meaningful due process.

Women are already reluctant to come forward with allegations of sexual harassment in a country where many still blame the woman themselves for such wrongs. In fact, with the other pro-women criminal laws put into place over the last decade, the primary issue has been the implementation of these provisions. There is no active case management by judges, particularly in the lower courts. Therefore, cases and trials take far too long.

There is also no state-funded free and independent legal advice nor representation. The police are not well-versed in pro-women laws nor are they properly trained on how to deal with women survivors of violence. Similarly, lawyers are not trained to a high enough criterion on professional and ethical standards. It is perhaps for these reasons that a prosecution has never been brought in the Pakistani courts under the sexual harassment provision and it has failed to act as a deterrent.

The civil law Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act provides a detailed system of how workplace harassment is to be reported and dealt with. The act requires organisations — include all places of work — must clearly display a code of conduct in a prominent place in a language(s) that all members of staff understand. The code, which is set out in full within the act, provides the minimum standards on how employees, management and owners of organisations are required to behave in a work environment and includes a definition as to what constitutes sexual harassment.

The act requires that organisations set up a three-member inquiry committee, of which one has to be a woman, to deal with cases of harassment. The names of the committee members must be prominently displayed within the organisation. The code includes various provisions, such as abuse of authority, hostile work environment and retaliation. The code further provides how an informal and formal complainant is dealt with. Ombudsperson offices have been established under this Act and institutional set ups such as these are welcome developments.

A strict time frame of 30 days is provided within which the committee must deal with a formal complaint. The organisation then has seven days to ensure the implementation of the committee's findings. Alternatively, a complainant may directly approach the provincial ombudsperson with the complaint. An appeal's procedure is also provided.

The Act is clearly laid out and is less daunting for complainants than the criminal provision. It is probably for this reason that many sexual harassment complaints have been either dealt with by organisational inquiry committees or provincial and federal ombudspersons. However, a flaw of the act is that it fails to properly address the issue of colleagues protecting male perpetrators during any investigation. This is particularly problematic when those that are in positions of power take it upon themselves to protect their male co-workers from the allegations.

The ombudsperson plays an important role in combating sexual harassment. Under the Act, the federal and provincial governments must ensure that ombudspersons are appointed and that they are working in an effective and transparent manner. In Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, even after consistent civil society pressure, it took the government over five years to appoint an ombudsperson. In the case of sexual harassment allegations against Ansari, it took Karachi University two years and interference from the provincial ombudsperson before the appropriate decision was made.

The law on sexual harassment has the potential to be a catalyst for positive change in our attitudes towards women in the workplace, and the act and the establishment of the ombudsperson's office are a good starting points. However, for law to be a realistic deterrent and to reshape social attitudes towards sexual harassment, effective implementation and consistent oversight is essential.

In Pakistan, cultural norms around what is expected of women, unequal power relationships at the workplace and a lack of an enabling environment are some of the reasons sexual harassment is rampant. Ansari's incident is a milestone towards tackling harassment in the workplace. Yet this is an example of one woman speaking up, with many still unwilling or unable to do so. For meaningful progress to be made we will have to look beyond just law making to allow for effective widespread state-led and civil society-led campaigning around the issue.

An example is the online international campaign #metooPhd, a hashtag created to allow university employees and students to come forward with their experiences of sexual harassment. To rid workplaces of unwelcomed and inappropriate behaviour by male colleagues it is important that the system works in a timely and efficient manner, and a supportive environment is provided to those that speak up.

Beyond just keeping in line with everyone's fundamental rights, progressive and robust organisations must surely recognise the importance of a harassment-free environment as both a more productive win and an economically savvy choice.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1628822/6-sexual-harassment-laws-pakistan/>

## March 2018

### *NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 26TH TO MARCH 31ST 2018*

#### **MISSING WOMEN VOTERS**

Dawn, March 26th, 2018

THERE is rising recognition that democracies are incomplete without women's voices in the electorate.

Where women have a right to vote and stand for office, there have been profound effects on political change in those countries. One of Pakistan's serious democratic deficits is that even though women constitute half the country's population of 200m citizens — as the 2017 census indicates — out of 97m registered voters, only 42m are women while about 55m are potential male voters. Disappointingly, this indicates an increase to 12m in the gender electoral gap from 10.97m in 2013.

Some evidence of this was discussed in a report published in this newspaper on Friday on the predicament of women voters in Mianwali, Punjab. Hindered in their attempt to make it to the electoral rolls, most women, including a grandmother from Kalabagh district, did not possess CNICs that serve as voting passports in this country.

Bridging the electoral gender gap will be no small feat for the ECP when many women from KP and Punjab lack CNICs which are essential for voter enrolment.

Time is of the essence — an April deadline is looming for prepared electoral rolls. Ongoing emergency registration campaigns in 79 districts countrywide are a well-intentioned effort, though with massive illiteracy and low levels of voter sensitisation only fast-track door-to-door registration can work.

Meanwhile, the reason for missing women voters is also reflective of the ineptitude and lack of foresight of the political parties.

The exercise to encourage women to register with Nadra and then enlist themselves as voters should have started after the last election. To gauge the electoral gender gap, an ECP-led survey in Gujrat, for example, found that 35,000 women voters over 18 do not have CNICs. Surveys in KP and Fata would find a similar situation. Without the support of political parties, barriers to women's enfranchisement will remain.

This year's polls must not be a rerun of 2013 when many women were barred from voting because of the collusion of local elders, political parties and non-state actors. It is because political parties have failed to mobilise the female vote bank that many women have had little interaction with or even scarce interest in what politicians offer. Party leaderships should be aware of the value of women voters and tailor campaigns for their participation.

As yet, there appears to be no realisation that women could be potent swing voters if drawn to a particular issue-based political campaign promising to better their lives.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1397604>

## WOMEN VOTERS' RATIO IMPROVES, ALBEIT SLIGHTLY Dawn, March 30th, 2018

Iftikhar A. Khan

ISLAMABAD: The ratio of women voters has improved for the first time in the country's recent history, though in terms of numbers the gap between male and female voters has widened to 12.65 million.

As the number of voters crosses the 100m mark to reach 104.26m, the percentage of male and female voters stands at 56.07 per cent and 43.92pc, respectively. The number of male and female voters, according to the latest figures, comes to 58.46m and 45.80m, respectively.

According to the electoral rolls of September 2017, of the 97.02m citizens registered as voters, 54.60m were men (56.27pc) and 42.42m were women (43.73pc). That means the percentage of male voters has dropped from 56.27pc to 56.07pc and that of female voters has increased from 43.73pc to 43.92pc.

In terms of number, the gap between male and female voters, which now stands at 12.65m, was 12.17m in September last year and 10.97m in March 2013.

There were 86.25m registered voters in the 2013 general elections — 56.4pc men and 43.6pc women.

According to voter registration data released by the ECP in September 2015, ahead of local government polls, there were 93.07m voters in the electoral rolls — 52.36m men and 40.7m women — a difference of 11.65m.

In 2002, the voters' ratio was 86 women per 100 men. In 2008, the ratio decreased to 79 women per 100 men. In 2013, it further decreased to 77 women per 100 men.

According to the statistics of preliminary electoral rolls 2018, the total number of voters in Punjab stands at 59.74m — 33.29m male and 26.44m female voters.

In Sindh, the number of voters is 22.06m, including 12.27m male and 9.79m female voters.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the number of voters is 15.23m — 8.69m male and 6.54m women voters. Balochistan has a total of 4.19m voters out of which 2.42m are male and 1.76 female voters. The number of voters in Fata is 2.29m, including 1.38m male and 0.910m female voters.

In federal capital, the total number of voters is 0.730m, including 0.389m male and 0.341m female voters.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1398428>

## MISSING VARSITY GIRL FOUND STRANGLED AFTER ASSAULT Dawn, March 30th, 2018

Saleem Mubarak

FAISALABAD: The body of a girl who had gone missing earlier this week was found in a canal on Wednesday.



According to a doctor at the hospital where autopsy was conducted, she was subjected to rape and violence before being strangled to death. The victim was a student of English literature at the Government College University, Faisalabad.

Ali, the girl's father, told the media on Thursday that his daughter had left the university after attending her classes, but did not return home.

"I and my relatives got worried and launched a search for her, but to no avail. I then approached Gulberg police for registration of a case, but the SHO not only refused to entertain my application but also used objectionable language.

"I then sought assistance from City Police Officer Athar Ismail. But the CPO neither bothered to take action against the SHO nor ensured registration of a case," Ali said, overcome with emotion while recalling his helplessness.

The girl's father quoted eyewitnesses as saying they had seen some people bundling her into a car near the university.

Ali said he suspected some university students' involvement in the crime.

Her class fellows remembered her as an intelligent, simple and reserved person. They said police could have saved the victim by tracing her mobile phone location and call data, besides using footage of the CCTV camera installed on roads leading to the university.

A senior police officer said on Thursday a murder case had been initially registered against unidentified persons by police on the complaint of a police volunteer. Claiming that the culprits would be "nabbed soon", he said police would investigate why the case was not registered by Gulberg police when the father approached them.

The CPO has suspended the Gulberg SHO over the delay in registration of the case. A departmental probe into the incident has also been initiated against him.

Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif has sought a report on the matter.

The CPO has formed two teams to trace and arrest the culprits.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1398448>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 19TH TO MARCH 25TH 2018

SPECIAL REPORT | SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PAKISTAN: MISOGYNY IN THE WORKPLACE: HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

Dawn, March 20th, 2018

Razeshta Sethna | Tooba Masood | Ramsha Jahangir

SEXUAL harassment, abuse and discrimination in Pakistan's workplaces, including universities, are pervasive, mostly unreported and ignored by senior managers, a Dawn survey of 300 women found. In response to being asked whether women were made to stay silent about workplace harassment, 61 per cent said their employers did not coerce them to keep quiet, but a significant 35pc were told to remain silent by their colleagues and bosses.

The survey conducted through online questionnaires and interviews in Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar and Quetta collated responses from women in the workforce, across professions and industries, to gauge experiences of sexual harassment and whether workplaces have anti-sexual harassment policies in place.

Nonetheless, when it comes to formal reporting mechanisms, testimonies from women suggest most lack faith in the process — only 17pc of those who experienced harassment approached their organisation's internal inquiry committees. Despite 59pc reporting that their managements do take harassment seriously, most women expressed worry that managers wouldn't sanction harassers and their work situations would not improve. Most women felt they would not be believed during investigations or when perpetrators had support in high places.

### Why women are dissuaded from reporting workplace harassment

Women in medicine shared stories of a toxic culture of misogyny. Some as students endured catcalling, comments about their body size ("they would rate us on a scale of one to ten," said one) and gossip about their reputation. Some doctors said promotions were denied on the pretext that they were 'less experienced', not 'as committed' as male colleagues or because they didn't succumb to sexual demands. Those who call out workplace misconduct are routinely portrayed as hysterical and malicious liars or whiners.

One former medical student of a university hospital said her professor, a well-known orthopaedic surgeon, often paid her unwanted attention. Once, he propositioned her while she was operating on a patient under his supervision. "He stood so close to me, shoulder-to-shoulder in the operating room. He told me I'd have to come back to him if I cut my finger while operating. No one knows when you wear [surgical] masks what a doctor is whispering to you," she said.

"Female students would invariably get higher marks than male students. He had power over students he favoured. We knew his behaviour was problematic, so did our seniors, but by complaining we'd be jeopardising our careers. We were given warnings about some professors and male students we should steer clear of. It was a very uncomfortable environment. I hated it."

Bad behaviour doesn't have to be sexual to constitute harassment. In fact, everyday aggressions by male bosses often create humiliating work conditions for female subordinates.

Women in technology speak of how managers denigrate their worth and work; improper touching and comments, bullying; and bosses taking credit for their achievements. Schoolteachers talk of promotions promised in return for sexual favours. One said she was publicly mocked for using the bathroom 'too often'.

Politicians said they are routinely criticised for their appearance — they must not look too feminine since that's not associated with leadership, nor too masculine since that's not their lot. Being perceived as usurping power in a man's world makes them fair game, they said. Even legislative assemblies in which pro-women laws are sanctified are not safe from everyday sexism.

In January 2017, PML-F's Nusrat Sehar Abbasi was well into her second tenure in the Sindh assembly and accustomed to the frequent jeering and heckling by certain male legislators from the ruling party. Nonetheless, she decided enough was enough when PPP's Imdad Pitafi invited her to come to his chamber for a 'satisfactory response' to a question she had asked, which prompted laughter from other members of the ruling party. She even threatened to immolate herself if he did not resign.

"I didn't get what he said at first because of the poor acoustics, not until other women told me. I wasn't given the chance to respond because PPP's deputy speaker Shehla Raza switched off my mike; she didn't stand in my defence. I was fed up with the constant whistling and bad language used by male legislators," Abbasi tells Dawn. "They believe women on reserved seats [are not elected] on our own merit. They don't realise we do most of the work and pass the most bills, while they heckle us." Pitafi eventually apologised on the floor of the house, after Bilawal and Aseefa Bhutto-Zardari urged him to do so.

This was not an isolated incident. Many women lawmakers suffer inappropriate banter intended to publicly demean them. In June 2016, then defence minister Khawaja Asif called PTI's Shireen Mazari a 'tractor trolley'; in April 2017,

PPP's Khurshid Shah remarked that women would 'fall ill' if prevented from 'chattering'; in Nov 2014, JUI-F's Fazlur Rehman claimed PTI's female supporters were of 'bad character'. Failing to condemn this behaviour, women lawmakers mostly support their parties for fear of censure by male leaders.

When women protect harassers they are actually 'enabling' these men and their misconduct, explains Nighat Dad of the Digital Rights Foundation. "Society is wired in such ways because of the stakes involved; even if you might know of their behaviour you will stay silent. Networks empower people and people don't want to lose their communities. Often harassers are weaker but enablers allow them to become strong so they stay within communities and are not isolated. You won't see these powerful enablers around complainants often so they become weak and isolated."

Silence and secrecy enforce perpetrators. If a woman cannot be completely silenced, they make sure she is disbelieved or shamed, say lawyers dealing with harassment cases. The more powerful the perpetrator, the more he is able to discredit the victim through his network of supporters.

Senior police officer Maria Taimur admits women in the force won't talk about harassment as much as they should. "At a higher level we don't face intimidation as much, but lower entry-level constables and ASIs do. Women in the force can go to their DPOs or CPOs to complain, and have learnt to give men shut up calls. But often the matter is also hushed up. We have anti-harassment drives in most districts, we try to change mind-sets, but it's a slow process," she said. Taimur raised another issue: "You can't spot a harasser because often their demeanour is so respectful in public. This makes it easier for them to cover their tracks."

Having worked with male colleagues for over 12 years, Uzma, an ASI at Lahore's Lower Mall police station is well versed in their psyche. "Tharak jhaartay hain aadat se majboor," — they flirt out of habit — she said. Although women in the force can hold their own, she admits certain men try to cast them as being of ill repute. "What rubbish. Women work because they need to."

Still, women facing harassment are often caught between two bad choices.

Of the women surveyed, more than half said they would leave their jobs if harassed. For 12pc, reactions of workplaces and families would determine whether they stayed. But many recognise that ignoring harassment or leaving the workplace altogether will only exacerbate the problem. "If it's not one woman, then it's another, which is why predators need to be held accountable," said one interviewee.

One of the Punjab ombudsperson's first cases was a complaint from a junior clerk in the agriculture department in 2014, recollected Bushra Khaliq of Women in Struggle for Empowerment. The only woman in her office, for six months, her colleagues maligned her reputation, told dirty jokes in her presence and blew cigarette smoke in her face. "When the department failed to take her seriously, her family went to the police. Eleven people were nominated in the complaint, and each was given different levels of punishment."

But such an outcome is still an anomaly. In interviews, women explained how disciplinary action against harassers is virtually non-existent in a society where powerful men are immune from censure: "They usually get a slap on the wrist at most."

One lawyer talked of misbehaviour in her profession: "My [former] boss, an influential lawyer-politician, made unwanted sexual advances, told me that at the civil courts women lawyers are sold for Rs500, and that he had slept with many 'pretty women parliamentarians'. Once he tried to hug me, and when I told him specifically that this was not okay, he said his last employee was a tomboy and never hesitated to hug him. I left that law chamber."

Recalling her early days, another lawyer wrote of a senior colleague, a son of a high court judge, who would send her dozens of inappropriate, late-night text messages. "I never replied and would greet him the next day at work, pretending they had never happened. ... The firm had no anti-harassment policy or procedure ... I was made to

believe that this was a rite of passage and that the messages would stop. ... After I quit, I received another text from him calling me a slut.”

“Sexual harassment is a question of power and authority over women. The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act is aimed essentially at behaviour correction, it doesn’t involve courts or the police directly,” states Khaliq. With its enactment and the amendment to Pakistan Penal Code Section 509, both in 2010, the real challenge is implementation.

Legal experts argue that though sexual harassment in public spaces is now punishable with imprisonment and/or a fine, it has not served its purpose given the criminal justice system’s shortfalls. Meanwhile, although the civil law requires organisations to adopt a code of conduct and constitute internal inquiry committees, organisations often fail to implement it. “They don’t say they won’t comply, but some public organisations don’t. It was a nightmare to get PTV to nominate a committee. Banks, on the other hand, are more compliant because it is part of the State Bank’s audit,” explains Maliha Hassain of Mehergah.

Under this law, if a complainant is not satisfied with the internal committee, they can approach their respective ombudsperson for cases of workplace harassment. But, eight years on, the only provincial ombudsperson’s post that is presently filled is Sindh’s — Punjab has had no ombudsperson since April 2017. And while compliance with rulings is almost universal according to former federal ombudsperson for harassment, retired justice Yasmin Abbasey, she admits that the high courts have sometimes issued stay orders to stop proceedings despite lacking the jurisdiction to do so.

“Granted, it is risky for women to talk because of lack of supportive mechanisms. But they are more aware and understand they don’t need to tolerate this. The #MeToo conversations are trickling down to the grass roots,” Khaliq says. And what of the effects of these conversations? Of her own profession, Abbasi believes that speaking up will help to ensure that “the path for younger women to enter politics is not as difficult”.

Uzma Al-Karim, former special adviser to the Sindh ombudsperson, believes only a mind-set change will make workplaces safer for women. But, until then, “We have to enforce the law so that there is zero tolerance for all forms of harassment in a work environment.”

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1396333>

## MEN AND WOMEN ENJOY EQUAL RIGHTS, SAYS SAUDI CROWN PRINCE

Dawn, March 20th, 2018

WASHINGTON: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who arrives in Washington on Tuesday on his first official visit, has acknowledged that men and women are equal rejecting the perception in the West that Islam wants to keep women under wraps. “Absolutely, we are all human beings and there is no difference,” he said in reply to a question during his first interview to a US news channel — CBS 60 Minutes.

Asked if there was any truth in the perception that the kind of Islam practised in Saudi Arabia was “harsh, strict and intolerant,” the prince acknowledged that it was and blamed the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran for forcing Saudi rulers to introduce such practices. “After 1979, that’s true. We were victims, especially my generation that suffered from this a great deal,” he said.

Prince Mohammed said that since assuming the office of the crown prince, he had introduced massive reforms, emancipating women, introducing music and cinema and cracking down on corruption. The prince said there were extremists in the kingdom who were unwilling to accept “a man and a woman alone together and their being together in a workplace” but he was trying to modernise his country. He acknowledged that the Saudi-led war in Yemen had

caused a humanitarian catastrophe, but blamed Yemeni rebels for “using the humanitarian situation to their advantage in order to draw sympathy from the international community”.

Reminded that while he had launched a major anti-corruption campaign, he recently purchased a yacht for a half-billion dollars, the prince said: “My personal life is something I’d like to keep to myself ... I’m a rich person and not a poor person. I’m not Gandhi or Mandela.”

Insists his personal life is something he’d like to keep to himself — ‘I’m a rich person and not a poor person. I’m not Gandhi or Mandela’

The prince said that Saudi Arabia would acquire a nuclear bomb “as soon as possible,” if Iran developed one.

He said that Osama bin Laden partly achieved his objective of creating hatred between the West and the Muslim world.

“Saudi Arabia does not want to acquire any nuclear bomb, but without a doubt, if Iran developed a nuclear bomb, we will follow suit as soon as possible,” said Prince Mohammed when asked if Saudi Arabia needs nuclear weapons to counter Iran.

“In order to create an environment conducive to recruitment and spreading his radical message that the west is plotting to destroy you.”

Indeed, he succeeded in creating this schism in the west,” said the Saudi royal while describing why Bin Laden unleashed his hate campaign.

Prince Mohammed will meet US President Donald Trump at the White House on Tuesday for talks that will also focus on the growing tension between the Arab kingdom and Iran, the US media reported on Monday.

But a brief White House statement only said that “the president looks forward to discussing ways to strengthen ties between the United States and Saudi Arabia and to advance our common security and economic priorities”.

The prince met President Trump in March 2017 as well when he visited the White House as a deputy crown prince before replacing the former crown prince, his cousin, Prince Muhammad bin Nayef. The 32-year-old royal is the kingdom’s youngest crown prince ever.

Prince Mohammed, who is also the defence minister, launched a massive campaign to arm his country with sophisticated weapons. Last week, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute identified Saudi Arabia as the world’s second largest arms importer.

In 2013-17, the kingdom increased its arms imports by 225 per cent compared with 2008–12. The report showed that 61 per cent of Saudi Arabia’s arms import came from the US and 23 per cent from the UK.

The US media reported that the first leg of Prince Mohammed’s trip, in Washington, will focus on defence ties while in New York, he will hold meetings with potential investors.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1396320>

DOWRY: A UNIQUE FORM OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The Express Tribune, March 20th, 2018.

Dowry is an “amount of property brought by a bride to her husband on their marriage”. On the contrary, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the term ‘gender-based violence’ (GBV) is used to distinguish violence that targets individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender from other forms of violence. Gender-based violence takes many different forms and there may be distinctive patterns or manifestations of gender violence associated with particular cultures or regions. Virtually every culture in the world contains forms of violence against women that are nearly invisible because they are seen as “normal” or “customary”. In my opinion, dowry is one form of normative GBV that is practised in South Asian countries.

No matter how much our societies have seemingly evolved, dowry or jahez is still practised in most geographical areas of Pakistan and surprisingly enough at all levels of social hierarchy. Historians trace back the tradition of dowry to the kanyadana concept along with the moral basis of stridhana in Hindu religion. The kanyadana concept entails that giving gifts is one of the ways to achieve higher spiritual and cultural recognition.

Moreover, it is a way to compensate the bride in order to omit her from inheriting land or property from the family.

In a sharp contrast to this practice, Islam only has the concept of mehrin which the groom presents a gift to the bride. A short incident from the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) suggests that when Hazrat Ali came to visit him to express his wish to marry Hazrat Fatima, the Prophet (PBUH) asked if he possessed anything to offer as mehr. He replied that he had a horse and a saddle to which the Prophet (PBUH) advised him to keep the horse and to sell the saddle.

Jahez cannot be traced back to any religious custom in Islam, yet it is widely practised in Pakistan from the poor households to the elitist urban families. Not only is the practice forbidden in Islam, it is banned legally too in some parts of Pakistan. The law titled, ‘the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Dowry, Bridal Gift and Marriage Functions Restriction Act of 2017,’ states that the total expenditures on marriages, including on baarats or valimas, shall not exceed Rs75,000. The law also restricts the maximum value of gifts given to the bride by her parents, family members or any other person to Rs10,000. Further, making it illegal for anyone from the groom’s family to ask or force the bride’s family for dowry. If they still do, they shall be liable to a two-month prison term and a fine of Rs300,000 or both.

Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan are still behind in enacting a powerful law such as that of K-P. Even though the law in Punjab states that the expenditures on marriage should not exceed a ‘reasonable amount’, it does not clearly define dowry as a malpractice. A more desperate state could be found from the fact that the Sindh Assembly actually opposed the draft bill presented for banning dowry. Obviously, a great amount of criticism can be made on the implementation of the law.

Dowry is a cult, a malpractice that has been followed by generations of our society after importing it from another religion and culture. It is a form of violence, which is being inflicted on women, and is used as a medium to reinstate the patriarchal structures embedded in our society.

My question then is, when a practice is prohibited in our religion, partially or fully banned by our legal system, an import from another culture or tradition — then why are there almost 2,000 cases reported about dowry deaths per year? Why does Pakistan still have the highest rate of dowry death at 2.45 per 100,000 women?

Lastly, what are we going to do to stop this malpractice today to save our daughters from this unique and most ‘normal’ form of gender-based violence!

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1664246/6-dowry-unique-form-gender-based-violence/>

PESHAWAR: A nongovernmental organisation's report on the PTI government's reforms and challenges in the education sector during five years has painted a bleak picture of the girls' learning in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"Girls are at a greater disadvantage with almost half of them (51 per cent) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa not attending the schools," revealed the report quoting the Pakistan Education Statistics, 2015-16, data.

The report titled "Five years of Education reforms: KP wins, losses and challenges for the future 2018-23," was launched by the Alif Ailaan here on Tuesday.

The ceremony was attended by elementary and secondary education minister Mohammad Atif Khan and lawmakers from across the country.

Alif Ailaan praises PTI govt for spending Rs30bn on educational infrastructure

The report appreciated the provincial government for spending around Rs30 billion on the infrastructure development including construction of classrooms, boundary walls, electrification, drinking water, and washrooms.

According to it, KP is leading in terms of infrastructure development.

As the challenge of providing access to all children of primary school going age is yet to be resolve, the most significant test of the government's resolve is to provide access to children between the ages of 10 and 16 years to middle, high and higher secondary schools.

The report has drawn the government's attention towards a massive imbalance between the provision of primary and post primary schools across the province.

The report said currently, 9.76 per cent and 8.13 per cent of all schools are middle and high schools respectively.

"The gap is enormous considering that the right to education under Article 25A of the constitution gives the right to education for all children from five to sixteen years of education."

It says the primary schools outnumber cumulative middle and high schools by a ratio of 4:1. This disparity in numbers means that students are forced to travel further from homes to access schooling beyond the primary level causing low retention rate as well as the persisting gender gap at the middle and high school level.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has seen slight progress in enrolment numbers at the primary level and a significant improvement at the high school level. The enrolment rate has increased by 4.54pc at primary level, 2.3pc at middle level and 26.96pc at high level.

The report also drew the government's attention towards low quality of education.

"The challenge of improving learning outcomes of students enrolled in schools across KP needs emergent attention," it said.

It said the data on educational achievement was not as highly developed in KP as in Sindh or Punjab, although that was due to change from 2018 with the introduction of assessment at the fifth and eighth grade level.

The report said the scores achieved by children of KP in the tests conducted by National Education Assessment System are disappointingly low, indicating the distance that had yet to be covered in way of ensuring quality education and learning.

According to it, other positive initiative taken by the KP education department include establishment of areas for play in schools and sports tournaments, technology and science initiative in schools, students assessment at primary and middle level, independent monitoring unit and school quality management initiative.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1396610>

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Dawn, March 21st, 2018

IN Pakistan, not only do women suffer the toxic culture of workplace misogyny, they also fear that breaking their silence on sexism and physical violations will have serious consequences. This is because sexual harassment happens where there is a power differential, where men in authority wield control over women's careers and reputation. In a report published on Tuesday in this newspaper, women from many professions — law, medicine, education, etc — spoke of their experience.

They reported unwanted contact, catcalling, gender-related comments, groping, unwelcome promise of rewards for sexual favours and persistent propositioning. Based on interviews and the findings of a countrywide poll on sexual harassment, the report suggests the true scale of the problem is far greater than what is generally believed. Of the 300 respondents surveyed, for instance, 83pc believe men will get away with inappropriate behaviour.

Women everywhere in the workforce suffer economically, socially and professionally for challenging abusers. Interviewees sharing their harrowing experiences confirmed this: a medical student didn't complain when propositioned in the operating theatre; a teacher suffered relentless intimidation and physical abuse to keep her job; students spoke of sexual favours exchanged for grades. Despite a 2010 law to protect against workplace harassment, many women are dissuaded from making official complaints — only 17pc had approached an internal inquiry committee, according to the Dawn poll.

Although organisations and universities are legally obligated to institute inquiry committees mandated to rule impartially on harassment cases, most fail to follow through. Improving law and policy is critical, especially as conversations are being triggered about women's rights to workplace respect and safety. These conversations must include the precarious workplace conditions endured by vulnerable women, including factory workers and contract employees.

Provincial women's commissions could also act as watchdogs by checking on inquiry processes at workplaces. Also, the 2010 law should be amended to allow provincial ombudspersons to take suo motu notice of harassment cases. As always, the Achilles heel lies in executing legal requisites — since April 2017, Punjab has had no ombudsperson, while this slot has not been filled in KP and Balochistan for the past eight years. To end, breaking the silence on harassment will break the hold of power and patriarchy and pave the way for lasting change. Writer, Maya Angelou's advice is gold for Pakistani women: "There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside of you."

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1396577>

## TECHNOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT: 'WHEN WOMEN WORK, ECONOMIES WIN'

The Express Tribune, March 21st, 2018.

Along with economic benefits, the technology and internet boom has empowered women by facilitating remote jobs and increasing overall female employment, experts said on Tuesday.



“Internet is more accommodating for women who cannot go to workplaces due to different restrictions,” Professor Shahida Wizarat, Head of Economics Department at the Institute of Business Management (IoBM), said while speaking at a women empowerment event titled ‘Gender and Trade Conference: Closing the Gender Gap – A Tool for Economic and Trade Development in Pakistan’.

The two-day event was arranged by the Pakistan Women Entrepreneurs Network for Trade (Pakistan WE-NET) and the World Bank Group.

“Female labour force participation in Pakistan is 11% in urban areas and 33% in rural areas,” World Bank Group Senior Economist Yoon Cho stated during her presentation.

“Moreover, 17% males and 60% females in rural areas are employed without pay while the figures in urban areas are 7% males and 14% females.”

Despite progress in female education, large variations remain across the provinces which hinder female participation in the economy, she added.

Cho said 40.2% of unmarried women and 27.73% of married women in the prime age bracket of 25 to 34 years were part of the workforce.

Transport, household responsibilities and childcare are major bottlenecks in developing countries which hinder female participation in the workforce.

“Women are an important source of human capital and should receive skills training, counseling and mentoring for easing their entry into modern industries,” Cho said, adding access to finance, professional networks and knowledge-sharing also needed to be increased.

“Economic policies, including trade policies, are powerful instruments for translating gender equality aspirations into reality,” World Bank Group Finance and Competitiveness Director Zoubaida Allaoua stated.

Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Margaret Adamson said gender equality was essential for successful economic and social development globally.

Dorothy Tembo, Deputy Executive Director of Geneva-based International Trade Centre, elaborated on the joint mandate devised by the World Trade Organization and the United Nations to strengthen and improve the performance of trade and investment support institutions for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Dr Gulden Turkman, founding chair of W20 and member of WBG Gender Advisory Council, while stressing the importance of women for long-term sustainability and development of a country’s economy, said “when women work, economies win.”

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1665224/2-technological-empowerment-women-work-economies-win/>

## WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN LIVESTOCK PROJECT

Dawn, March 23rd, 2018

SIALKOT: USAID launched its ‘Women Investment in Network of Dairy Investment’ (WINDS) project on Thursday.

The launching ceremony was held at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry where US Consul General Elizabeth Kennedy Trudeau was the chief guest.

The counsel general said that WINDS is the first, five-year long initiative by the USAID under its Punjab Enabling Environment Project (PEEP) in Sialkot to provide opportunities of investment to rural women in dairy development sector. Under PEEP, USAID will give funds worth Rs3 million to 30 selected local women.

Under WINDS project, the USAID experts will provide training to women in dairy development, milk testing and milk preservation.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1396994/women-entrepreneurs-in-livestock-project>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 12TH TO MARCH 18TH 2018

WAF HIGHLIGHTS PLIGHT OF HOME-BASED WORKERS

Dawn, March 12th, 2018

Xari Jalil

LAHORE: Women's Action Forum (WAF), a collective of several women's rights based organisations, held an event on Sunday to commemorate International Women's Day at Hamdard Hall on Lytton Road.

This year, WAF along with several other organisations, pay a special tribute to Pakistan's women workers, including the millions of women working in factories, in brick kilns and agro-businesses as bonded labourers, those who work at home as piece rate workers, and in other people's homes as domestic help, in fisheries and as peasants and those who contribute their labour as unpaid family helpers.

Well-known speakers in activist circles included Nighat Saeed Khan, Robina Saigol, Khawar Mumtaz, Samina Rehman and Samiya Mumtaz, but domestic labourers and home-based workers along with other women workers also spoke of their plight and grievances.

Speakers said they stood in complete solidarity with the women in their demands for recognition, minimum and equal wages, to be counted as workers, to be given maternity and health benefits, have access to schools for their children, be released from bondage, and a life free of harassment and violence at home and work.

They said it was commendable how these workers had successfully struggled in Sindh and Punjab to make the government adopt home-based workers policies. They had also successfully mobilised and organised other women workers and especially applauded those women who had the courage to raise their voices and break barriers to claim their space.

The forum marked the loss of many of their key members.

"Today we celebrate and remember key WAF members we lost this year," said Khawar Mumtaz. "We salute Asma Jahangir, a fellow traveller, a champion of women's and human rights, forever ready to stand up for persecuted and oppressed women. Her sudden departure from this world is a loss we all deeply feel."

She also mentioned Lala Rukh, a staunch and principled member of WAF, who captured so much of activism with her camera, and Nigar Ahmed who dedicated her life to promoting women's rights. WAF paid tribute to all of them as torchbearers of the cause. "Their spirit lives on; the torch they helped to light is alive in us. We rejoice in knowing this torch is being carried forward by younger feminists, activists and women workers here and everywhere."

Home-based workers complained that they did not receive full payment for their exhausting work.

“We have the most back-breaking work, even within the confines of our home,” said one worker. “We are expected to produce even more than the capacity of what a human can produce, yet when it comes to being paid, the middle men especially delay our payments, give us less than what our minimum wages are decided, and often do not even pay us overtime.”

Another worker said they ended up getting health issues by sitting in one position all the time for the whole day. She said they had to more than often include other people in the household, including children, to help them make the products, but the others would not be paid for the work.

Umme Laila Azhar, executive director of Home Net Pakistan, said the home-based workers were not even included in the formal sector, and remaining in the informal sector did not add their hard work to Pakistan’s GDP. Neither did they receive any social security or access to benefits that a worker usually did.

“The home-based women workers must be included in the mainstream movement of working women’s rights,” she said.

“They are denied their basic rights. Even the home-based workers’ policy is toothless and the government is being inefficient and lazy in implementing it fully.”

She said the civil society had stood by the bill when it was drafted but when it was passed it had been watered down by the law department.

Later, WAF released an official statement saying that they pledged support to the uncounted millions of home-based workers and demanded they be acknowledged in national databases. They also demanded the elimination of the wage gap, ensuring minimum wages for all, appointment letters for factory workers, declaring farm and fisheries sector workers as “labourers” as in Sindh.

Apart from WAF, activists from All Pakistan Trade Union Federation (APTUF), Awami Workers’ Party (AWP), Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BLLF), Homenet Pakistan, Labour Education Foundation (LEF), Tameer-e-Nau, Feminist Collective Lahore and Women In Struggle for Empowerment (WISE) were also present.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1394695/waf-highlights- plight-of-home-based-workers>

## 10 PERSONS ARRESTED IN DERA VANI CASE

Dawn, March 12th, 2018

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Ten persons were arrested and a case was registered against 22 others for being involved in a vani case in Katch area of Dera Ismail Khan on Sunday.

The police swung into action after the vani case was reported on media. According to police, a case was registered against 22 people, including members of a punchayat (jirga), the person who solemnised the nikah and the bridegroom.

The incident took place in Katch area when Mohammad Abid and a girl in his neighbourhood fled and tied knot against the wish of the girl’s family. Soon after the incident, family of the girl called a punchayat to decide the case. The head of four-member jirga Haji Abdul Ghaffar ordered Abid’s family to give 14-year-old Muqadas, the sister of Abid, to aggrieved party in vani.

According to an official at Bandkori police station, soon after the reports about the incident the police contacted the affected family of the girl but they refused to register any report.

However, on local residents' insistence, the police registered case under section 310 against 22 accused persons, including the jirga head, bridegroom Saifur Rehman, his father Abdur Rehman, and Abdul Sattar, who solemnised the nikah.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1394727>

## A WOMAN OF SUBSTANCE

Dawn, March 12th, 2018

WHEN women believe in themselves — even while fighting the odds stacked against them — it's true to say the rest does follow. This month, 39-year-old Krishna Kumari Kohli, a former child bride from a low-caste Hindu community in Sindh's Tharparkar district, won a seat in Pakistan's Senate. This is a historic achievement, to say the least, given Ms Kohli has suffered discrimination and poverty and spent two years as a child with her family shackled to a life of hard labour on fields owned by feudal landlords. In her words, she could never have envisaged a seat in the upper echelons of political power, especially when around only one in five women hold parliamentary seats in male-dominated assemblies.

As the first Dalit female member of the Senate, Ms Kohli, who ran on a PPP ticket, had perhaps underestimated her abilities. Over years she has shown indefatigable determination to bring about change through her grass-roots activism focusing on education and ending child marriages and bonded labour.

Having married at 15, though fortunate enough to attend university, she knows of the travails of young mothers. So how she uses her new position for bringing development to districts with some of the country's worst socioeconomic indicators will be her test. Preventing child marriage, ending malnutrition, and decreasing maternal and child mortality rates are not easy challenges when corruption is rife and resources poorly allocated. Tackling such entrenched injustices requires perseverance.

Further, while the PPP must be commended for supporting women in politics regardless of religion, caste or gender, it would do well to take note of the shambolic healthcare and education facilities under its governance. For improvement in the country's abysmal human development indicators, all political parties should work on encouraging gender inclusivity in politics. Party manifestos should outline measures for including more women in decision-making and as nominees for the general seats. It would be wise of politicians to note that women leaders deliver on promises, so supporting them will improve human rights, education, justice and economic development.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1394763>

## SPEAKERS SEE NO PROGRESS IN THAR WITHOUT WOMEN'S PROSPERITY

Business Recorder, 12 March 2018

HYDERABAD: A prosperous Tharparkar cannot be envisioned without progress of women of the district, according to the speakers who expressed their views at a Women's Day event.

Thar Foundation organised the event at village Gorrano to celebrate the Thari women's contribution in the socioeconomic betterment of the region.

The speakers stressed on the need that fruits of development brought about by Thar Coal projects should also benefit women of the area. They said development without active and equal participation of women would not last.

They said by driving trucks at Block II OF the coal project, Thari women have proved to the world they are capable to stand by men in any field.

The women speakers urged that other companies willing to begin operations on Thar Coalfield should give employment to women and adopt the model introduced by Sindh Engro Coal-Mining Company (SECMC) for empowerment women.

Many stalls were also set up where cultural handicrafts were on display as people from nearby village thronged the venue and purchased the items. Children performed tableau and sang folk songs.

Madam Mumtaz, an educationist from Thar, spoke as president of the event. She lamented the fact that many women were not yet free to work alongside men in most of the fields.

“Even today, girls are married before reaching adulthood and work in the fields without much recognition,” she said, adding that these are not babies who are malnourished but the mothers who have not much to eat, let alone eating healthy, nutritious food. She said it high time we must pay attention to this pitiful state of women in Tharparkar.

Lata, one of the dumping truck driving trainees, urged Thari girls to get education, first and foremost, to pave the way for playing greater role in their later days of life. She said education placed women in better positions to avail opportunities and to contribute more.

Manager of the Foundation’s education wing Sabeen Shah said women have different roles: she is a mother, a daughter, a sister, a friend, and a wife. “In all the roles she plays, woman does her best,” she said.

Thar Foundation’s Fayyaz Soomro said with the change in time, social conditions have also changed and “now women have started gaining more participation in different walks of life, hence the progress of our society is inevitable.”

Dr Ashok Bakhtani, Fareeda Akbar, Shahnaz Pinjaro, Rukhsana Kunbhar, Mohini Kumari also spoke.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/03/12/17-page/704489-news.html>

## GOVERNOR EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER LOW RATIO OF WORKING WOMEN

The Express Tribune, 12 March 2018

It is an alarming situation that only 20% of women work after getting a professional degree.

This was stated on Sunday by Governor Mohammad Zubair while speaking at an award distribution ceremony organised by Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI), Karachi at Governor House.

Zubair was of the view that those Pakistani women who were working, were extremely talented. Women have proven their worth in the fields of medicine, administrative services, accountancy, banking, business, entrepreneurship, social work and politics by working with devotion and dedication, the governor said, adding that the nation was thankful to its women for their contributions, which helped Pakistan move forward.

However, he expressed concern over the fact that a large percentage of women with professional degrees did not choose to work after their graduation. Citing a study, Zubair said only 20% of women work after getting a professional degree. According to him, it was a matter of grave concern and there was a need to create awareness regarding it.

We must encourage and motivate women to contribute towards national progress by working in their chosen field, Zubair said. He added that it was essential for the progress and prosperity of the country that every professional worked irrespective of their gender.

The governor also named many Pakistani women who played a prominent role in their fields, including Madar-i-Millat Fatima Jinnah, Benazir Bhutto, Bilquis Edhi, Asma Jahangir and Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan.

According to him, it was very encouraging that a large number of women were setting up their own businesses and working as entrepreneurs. He also praised the WCCI for organising an award distribution ceremony for women.

Later, the governor distributed awards among successful women in various fields. The women who received awards included Florence Villers, Saadia Naveed, Tasneem Ahmer Abbas, Munavar Shakir, Momina Duraid, Sophia Saifi, Dr Iffat Yazdani, and Akram Khatoon who was given a lifetime achievement award.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1657272/1-governor-expresses-concern-low-ratio-working-women/>

## WOMEN URGED TO RAISE VOICE AGAINST HARASSMENT

Dawn, March 15th, 2018

KARACHI: Despite being routinely harassed at public places, especially while travelling on public transport, a majority of women do not lodge a formal report against harassment either out of fear of retaliation as they have little confidence in the recourse system or due to the social stigma attached to it.

To break this silence, society needed to support and strengthen its women so that they could raise their voice without any hesitation against this offensive male behaviour.

These points were raised at a seminar held at Ziauddin University on Wednesday.

Titled 'Protection against harassment of women at workplace', the interactive event aimed at creating awareness in society about the kinds of harassment women face and how this problem could be addressed.

"Every woman has a story behind her. Some have the courage to tell it to the world while others lack the confidence to share it even with their family," Prof Khalida Ghaus, the managing director at Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC), said, adding that though a law on harassment existed, most women didn't report the offence, considering it a taboo subject.

Dr Ghaus emphasised the need for equipping women with relevant knowledge and information about what harassment actual meant and how they could get legal recourse.

"We need to raise the level of self-belief, optimism and confidence in women to help them communicate with men pragmatically and boldly," she noted.

Collectively, she pointed out, the society needed to work on this problem by breaking stereotypes and strengthening women.

Actress and model Sarwat Gilani urged women 'to speak louder'. "Nobody is going to speak for us except ourselves. We should stop the harasser and learn to say no. We have this law for the last eight years but unfortunately many of us don't know about it. We should create public awareness on this law as much as we can."

Advocate Zia Ahmed Awan spoke about the deeply rooted gender discrimination in society and said that a girl child had to face discrimination even before the child was born.

"I receive a large number of harassment cases, mostly from housemaids. I want to tell the audience here that you are not a good person if you are not helping others. Let's work together, let's think about voiceless people."

Psychologist Dr Atia Naqvi urged women to face life's challenges with courage and resilience. "Hold your head high; you have to make yourself strong. Trust your judgment. Don't hide your feelings if you are not comfortable with anyone. Learn to treat yourself with respect otherwise it would be difficult for you to survive in this society."

Prof Sirajuddaula Syed, a senior pathologist and vice chancellor of Ziauddin University Prof Dr Pirzada Qasim Raza Siddiqui also spoke.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1395272/women-urged-to-raise-voice-against-harassment>

#### MAN, TWO MARRIED WOMEN KILLED IN NAME OF 'HONOUR'

Dawn, March 15th, 2018

BADIN: A man and two married women were killed in the name of 'honour' in Badin and Shikarpur districts on Wednesday.

In Badin, one Sharif Gambheer, 50, axed his wife, a mother of nine children, to death in Malook Shah locality Ward No. 7 early on Wednesday morning.

The suspect surrendered along with the axe to police at City police station and confessed to the murder. "I don't have any regrets over murdering her because I suspected she did not maintain good character," he said before police.

Eyewitnesses said the victim Ghullan, 38, was seen running out of her house and her husband was coming after her with the axe in hand. Before someone could rush to her rescue, the suspect attacked her and axed her to death.

The victim had seven daughters, three of them with special needs, and two sons. The elder son Rasheed who was married just 10 days ago, told journalists that his mother was a respectable woman who worked as charwoman at neighbours' houses to earn bread and butter for her children.

The victim's children, relatives as well as neighbours rejected the husband's charge that she had 'objectionable' character.

They said the husband was levelling baseless allegations on his deceased wife to try to portray his crime as honour killing.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1395257/man-two-married-women-killed-in-name-of-honour>

#### WOMEN URGED TO RAISE VOICE AGAINST HARASSMENT

Business Recorder, 15 March 2018

KARACHI: Speakers at an interactive seminar on the topic “The protections against harassment of women at workplace”, organized by Ziauddin University on Wednesday, believed that confidence is the only weapon to eliminate women harassment in the society.

The objective of the seminar was to create an in-depth awareness in the society regarding harassment faced by the females in our society and making all effective measures to nip this evil of harassment in the bud from all the facades of our society.

Addressing the seminar, Prof Dr Khalida Ghaus Managing Director Social Policy and Develop Centre (SPDC) said that every woman has a story behind her, some have courage to tell it to the world, and some are not confident enough to share with their family even. Some 85 percent female witnesses harassment of different kind on routine basis at various public places throughout the city, most importantly during travelling via public transport, she added.

“It is known to all that we have full-fledge procedure of law with a view to file complain against cases pertaining to harassment but women usually feel frightened to report cases of such nature which certainly becomes a taboo in our society”, she said.

Dr Ghaus further said that there is need to provide knowledge related to the actual mean of harassment.

“We need to exaggerate the level of self-belief, optimism and confidence in woman to communicate with men pragmatically and boldly”, she added.

“The burden of self-esteem, respect and dignity that a woman is carrying on her shoulder is the main reason that she fails to confess how she is being exploited. Collectively we need to work on this we should break stereotypes; we should give them strength to raise their voices,” she said.

Famous model and actress Sarwat Gillani provoked women to speak louder. She said nobody is going to speak for us it’s our responsibility to speak for ourselves.

Social activists Advocate Zia Ahmed Awan said that in our society discrimination starts even before the child is born. Large number of cases for harassment that I have received is mostly of maids, he mentioned.

While addressing to the audience he said, “You are not a good person if you are not helping others. Let’s work together, let’s think about voiceless people.”

Psychologist Dr Atia Naqvi motivated women by saying that “You (women) have to hold your heads high, you have to make yourself strong, trust your judgment don’t hide your feelings if you are not comfortable with anyone say it louder, learn to treat yourself with respect, otherwise it would be difficult for you survive in this society”.

Prof Dr Sirajuddaula Syed, Senior Pathologist, addressing the seminar said that we are living in a society where females are handicapped and can’t speak for their rights. We as a society should teach them about their basic rights.

Earlier, Vice Chancellor Ziauddin University, Prof Dr Pirzada Qasim Raza Siddiqui in his welcome address said that we have male dominating society and we need to understand and ensure maximum protection to women. It is surely believed that confidence is the only weapon to eliminate harassment.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/03/15/12-page/705022-news.html>

MAN KILLS BROTHER, AUNT FOR ‘HONOUR’

Dawn, March 14th, 2018



MANSEHRA: The bodies of a man and a woman were found from a forest in Thathi area here on Tuesday.

“We have found the bodies of a man and his aunt, who had fled their houses some two weeks ago in Swabi,” Ayaz Khan, DSP (central), told reporters.

The bodies of the man, 30, and the woman, 40, were found in the mountains in the limits of Khaki police station, and police shifted them to King Abdullah Teaching Hospital for autopsy.

DSP Khan said preliminary investigation revealed that the man had illicit relations with his widowed aunt, stated to be mother of five, and fled with her.

He said the elder brother of the deceased was following them since they fled the homes, and shot them dead when he spotted the two, and dumped their bodies at a deserted place.

The DSP said mother-in-law of the deceased woman had lodged FIR with Kalu Khan police station in Swabi after she eloped with the man some two weeks ago.

He said bodies were handed over to the families after completing medico legal formalities.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1395120/man-kills-brother-aunt-for-honour>

#### TEENAGE BOY HELD FOR ASSAULTING DEAF GIRL

Dawn, March 14th, 2018

MARDAN: Police claimed on Tuesday to have arrested a teenage boy for assaulting an eight-year-old deaf girl in Jungara Bashkhaly locality here.

Chooria police station officials said they had arrested the 14-year-old accused, the victim's neighbour, soon after the girl's father registered FIR against him on Monday.

The officials quoted the girl's mother as telling them that her daughter complained on March 6 through gestures that she felt pain and was bleeding. After two to three days, the mother said she took her to a doctor when she again complained about pain, and the doctor said the girl had been raped.

Meanwhile, the girl's father accused police of using delay tactics in registering FIR. He said the police registered FIR of the case on Monday when some mediapersons approached him.

The police said they had obtained two-day physical remand of the accused from the judicial magistrate. Also on Tuesday, the post-mortem report of seven-year-old boy released by Mardan Medical Complex Hospital confirmed the victim was raped before being murdered.

The boy was missing from home, and his father had registered a complaint with Sheikh Maltoon police on Saturday. But the next day, his body was found wrapped in a plastic bag near his house which sparked protests.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1395119/teenage-boy-held-for-assaulting-deaf-girl>

#### PROTEST AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

Dawn, March 17th, 2018

NAWABSHAH: Members of the minority Kolhi community held a demonstration outside Nawabshah Press Club on Friday in protest against sexual assault on a just-married teenage girl and the perpetrator's threats to the victim's family to withdraw the case.

The protesters led by the victim's father told journalists that his 18-year-old recently married daughter was going to farmland in a village near Sakrand town four days ago when the male suspect subjected her to sexual assault.

He said that they lodged an FIR against the suspect who was arrested by police but since his detention his family was pressurising them and also using their influence to bungle the medical report in order to save the suspect.

The victim told journalists that she got married on March 6 and had been in trauma since the criminal had destroyed her life.

The protesters demanded Pakistan Peoples Party co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and MNA Faryal Talpur provide them justice.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1395747/protest-against-sexual-assault>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 4TH TO MARCH 11TH 2018

GENDER INEQUALITY

Dawn, March 5th, 2018

BY not maintaining gender equality and failing to incorporate the opinions and experiences of half the population, we are losing out on opportunities to improve health and economic growth.

The many reasons, both institutional and behavioural, for this kind of gender imbalance are highlighted in a joint UNDP and UN Women report that explores women's representation and access to decision-making roles in Pakistan's civil service.

Gender Equality in Public Administration looks at women's perception of barriers and opportunities to identify discrepancies between official policies and their implementation with regard to inducting women in the civil service.

In the last 15 years, women's labour force participation has increased by more than 50pc as documented — however, this still translates to employment for only one out of five women, according to the report.

Clearly, access to education remains an unrelenting obstacle to women's empowerment.

Moreover, nothing will give without reforming policies to boost women's economic rights.

Consider these figures: from 2013-14, the federal government (all grades 1-22) inducted 444,521 persons in the civil service; only 20,428 were women.

Because traditionally defined roles compartmentalise women professionals, federal departments recruit more women as teachers and medical staff.

Besides most women are admitted into the civil service at entry levels; fewer receive promotions; and almost all face discrimination when it comes to selection and remuneration.

Realistically, it will take generations to remove entrenched gender stereotypes and misogynistic social norms, virtually enslaving girls for life and denying women agency.

Yet the only way to bridge the gender imbalance is through quality education — especially significant when higher education is a prerequisite to increasing women's representation in the civil service.

Meanwhile, women's political representation matters because countries with a larger number of women as ministers or in parliament witness lower levels of inequality, more confidence in government and higher health spending.

With few women in the provincial and federal legislatures in this country, political parties must support increasing female participation in government knowing it will contribute to improved trust in public institutions and favour more informed and inclusive policymaking.

When women have a voice in shaping public policy, it also maximises their economic potential which is critical to achieving national growth.

Despite girls outperforming boys at schools and even with more visible changes in the boardroom as women step into leadership roles, many are still denied their full potential.

Even men in power would concede this is socially unfair and economically flawed.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1393265>

#### AURAT MARCH TO BE HELD ON MARCH 8

Dawn, March 6th, 2018

Shazia Hasan

**KARACHI:** A collective of women from diverse affiliations, backgrounds and professions referring to themselves as 'Hum Aurtein' gathered at the Karachi Press Club on Monday to introduce and brief the media about the upcoming Aurat March to commemorate International Women's Day.

It was said that Aurat March is unique because it is a collective effort not led by a single group or organisation. "As a result the march has been organised by 'Hum Aurtein' made up of women belonging to diverse classes, ethnicities and sections of society that not only comprises those planning the event but also includes participants," said classical dancer and peace activist Sheema Kermani.

"We will gather at Frere Hall at 4pm on March 8. Besides marching to bring attention to the issues faced by women in our country there would also be skits, talks and other activities," she said.

There were some 15 women seated next to Ms Kermani at the press conference. Moniza, another peace activist, said that the march has been inspired and fuelled by the momentum of women movements and struggles worldwide. "We also wish to highlight through this march a diverse range of issues to express our solidarity with all women here and in other countries about the connected nature of our struggles that we get to see through the #MeToo hashtag on social media and their responses," she said.

"There is sexual harassment, child abuse, unequal pay scales, so many injustices that women are facing everywhere," she added.

Another activist, Bushra Arain, said that they see political platforms everywhere but have now found Hum Aurtein, which is not a political platform. "Aurat March is not funded by political parties, NGOs or groups. It is a citizen-led effort being funded with small contributions from individuals. It is all being done on voluntary basis," she pointed out.

Pastor Ghazala Shafiq said that she was there representing the minority Christian group. “Women are marginalised anyway and life for a non-Muslim girl can be even worse. There are forced conversions for some while others are made sex workers,” she shared.

“Our Constitution is confused. All citizens are equal according to it but are they really?” said Sabiha Javed, representing another minority women’s organisation.

Saira Feroze from Home-Based Women Workers Federation said that home-based women workers work as hard as any other worker but are not given any facilities that a factory worker may get.

Abida Ali of Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research pointed out that the platform may not be political but their demands are very much political.

Soha Tanvir Khan from the Aurat March organising committee also said that the time had come to collectively recognise each other’s problems and then collectively stand up for justice.

Esther Jane, who is a visually impaired teacher, said that when women have a disability their challenges multiply. “We can’t even go out of the house due to insecurity,” she said.

Finally, the women outlined a four-point manifesto regarding their key areas of concern about which they wanted to raise their voice at the Aurat March.

They said they wanted to see an end to violence against women carried out and promoted by patriarchal forces as well as state-backed violence targeting activists and communities.

They wanted an economy that is equitable and transparent where all workers have access to a living wage, affordable healthcare for themselves and their families, and workplaces free from harassment and discrimination.

Another demand was to see all women have the right to make informed decisions about pregnancy and childbirth and access to quality and affordable reproductive health services.

Every person and community should have the right to clean water, clean air, access to and enjoyment of public lands. Our climate and natural resources must be protected for ourselves and the future generations.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1393445>

#### WOMEN CONTRIBUTED 36PC OF PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS, REPORT SAYS

Dawn, March 8th, 2018

ISLAMABAD: Although women constitute 20pc of parliament – with 19 seats in the Senate and 70 in the National Assembly, women parliamentarians contributed 36pc of the business transacted by both houses in their respective parliamentary years, a report released on Wednesday said.

The report, released by the Free and Fair Election Network (Fafen), said that women also supported their male colleagues in sponsoring a 3pc additional agenda.

Women legislators attended 67pc of National Assembly sittings and 64pc of Senate sittings. PML-N MNA Kiran Haider was the most regular lawmaker, attending 100pc of National Assembly sittings, while Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party Senator Gul Bushra attended 92 out of 100 Senate sittings.

Senators Sehar Kamran, Sherry Rehman and Rubina Khalid sponsored the highest number of resolutions in the Senate.

Women parliamentarians on average sponsored 23 agenda items individually, while men sponsored 10

MNAs Aisha Syed and Shireen Mazari sponsored eight and seven resolutions in the National Assembly, respectively.

The reporting period for the National Assembly was May 2017 to February 2018, and the Senate reporting period was from March 2017 to March 2018.

According to a statement issued by Fafen, parliamentary orders of the day included a total of 5,654 agenda items issued during the reporting period.

The percentage of contributions women made to parliamentary business in the National Assembly was equivalent to that of men: 49pc.

In Senate, women sponsored 15pc of parliamentary business individually and 3pc jointly.

Women MNAs initiated 31 out of 98 bills (32pc) on their own and 22 (22pc) in collaboration with men. Women exclusively sponsored 36 out of 72 (50pc) resolutions in the National Assembly, and collaborated with men in moving an additional 16 (22pc) resolutions.

Women senators sponsored 13 out of 145 bills (9pc) on their own and five alongside men, and moved 15 out of 99 resolutions (15pc).

Women parliamentarians also kept a close vigil on the government by asked questions and raising calling attention notices. In the National Assembly, women raised 50pc of the questions (1,595) and moved 86pc of the calling attention notices (64).

In Senate, women raised 16pc (241) of the questions and moved 26 (25pc) of the calling attention notices.

On average, a woman sponsored 23 agenda items individually in both houses, while a man sponsored 10. In the National Assembly, women MNAs introduced on average 25 agenda items in comparison to six by men, and women senators sponsored on average 17 agenda items compared to 21 sponsored by men.

Women in the National Assembly attended on average 50 sittings (67pc), while men attended 42 (56pc). Women in Senate attended on average 64 (64pc) of sittings, while men attended 59 (59pc).

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1393884>

## CELEBRATING WOMEN

Dawn, March 8th, 2018

FOR the first time in two decades, International Women's Day will be celebrated in Pakistan with a statistical clarity: 101,314,780. That is the female population of the country according to the provisional results of the census conducted last March-May. More than 100m female Pakistanis, a population larger than most countries in the world, who have different lives, face different risks and have different opportunities. With the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women set to open next week in New York, the UN has called for International Women's Day to draw special attention this year to the rights and activism of rural women. For Pakistan, that theme has special resonance. While sections of the urban female population have made undeniable progress towards gender empowerment and equality, the situation in rural Pakistan is almost certainly grim. Indeed, the absence of systematic documentation of

women's contributions to the rural economy, both outside and inside the home, and the prevalence of regressive social codes often means that threats and opportunities for Pakistan's rural women can only be broadly estimated.

The recent election of a Thari Hindu woman, Krishna Kumari, to the Senate has briefly shone a national spotlight on the courageous activism of rural women, but it is clear that much work remains to be done. In terms of greater political inclusion for all women, there is an early opportunity to test the commitment of political parties: the upcoming general election. Certainly, the three major political parties in the country each have a reason to boost women's participation in the electoral process both as candidates and voters.

The memory of PPP's iconic woman leader, Benazir Bhutto, still greatly influences the party. In the PML-N, a front-line political role for Maryam Nawaz can pave the way for greater female participation in a party that historically has been male dominated. The PTI's vibrant and inclusive political rallies are now so well established that the party can force positive change across the political spectrum if it gives women a greater role in party decision-making. Perhaps today, on International Women's Day, political parties will announce new measures to promote women's rights and participation in the political process.

Clearly, International Women's Day is not just for some women and some causes — it is a day to celebrate all women and press for progress in all women's causes. Over the last year, the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements have shone a much-needed spotlight on the discrimination, degradation and violence that women all over the world, even powerful ones in advanced economies, routinely contend with. Last month, Pakistan lost its iconic rights activist, Asma Jahangir. The lesson to be learned from her activism is that all wrongs, big and small, against women emancipated and less free, must always be fought with vigour and resoluteness. May more Pakistani women carry Asma Jahangir's immense legacy forward.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1393787>

## INEQUALITIES MAR WOMEN'S ACCESS TO LABOUR MARKET

Dawn, March 8th, 2018

Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: On the eve of International Women's Day, a study released by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) speaks of persistent inequalities between women and men on access to the labour market, unemployment and conditions at work.

“Women are less likely to participate in the labour market than men and are more likely to be unemployed in most parts of the world, according to new study ‘World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2018’ released on Wednesday.

The headline finding, however, is that, on average around the world, women remain much less likely to participate in the labour market than men. At 48.5 per cent in 2018, women's global labour force participation rate is 26.5 percentage points below that of men.

Since 1990, this gap has narrowed by 2 percentage points, with the bulk of the reduction occurring in the years up to 2009. The rate of improvement, which has been slowing since 2009, is expected to grind to a halt during 2018-21, and possibly even reverse, potentially negating the relatively minor improvements in gender equality in access to the labour market achieved over the past decade.

Globally, the labour force participation rate for men and women aged 15 and over continues its long term decline; it stands at 61.8pc in 2018, down by 1.4 percentage points over the past decade. The decline in women's participation rate has been slower than that of men, resulting in a slight narrowing of the gender gap.

Developing countries show the highest ratio of female-to-male unemployment rates across income groups, at 1.3 in 2018. This largely reflects the fact that unemployment rates among men in these countries are low by international standards, while the rates among women are only slightly above the global average.

Conversely, in regions such as the Arab States and Northern Africa, female unemployment rates are still twice as large as men's, with prevailing social norms continuing to obstruct women's participation in paid employment.

The study says the gap in employment participation rates between men and women is narrowing in developing and developed countries while it continues to widen in emerging countries. However, this may be a reflection of the fact that a growing number of young women in these countries have joined formal education, which delays their entry to the labour market.

Looking at women running businesses, authors of the study note that globally four times as many men are working as employers than women in 2018. Such gender gaps are also reflected in management positions, where women continue to face labour market barriers when it comes to accessing management positions.

Globally, over 42pc of workers are either own-account or contributing family workers. This translates into over 1.4 billion workers who are more likely than those in other categories of employment to be in informal employment and living in poverty, and to have limited or no access to social protection systems.

In developing and emerging countries, progress in reducing vulnerable employment is stalling, as the number of own-account and contributing family workers has been rising in line with the increasing labour force. As a result, the share of workers in these categories of employment in developing and emerging countries is particularly high, reaching 76.4pc of total employment in developing countries and 46.2pc in emerging countries in 2018.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1393843>

#### LEGISLATIONS PROVE NO BARRIER: OVER 55 WOMEN KILLED VIOLENTLY IN K-P

The Express Tribune, March 8th, 2018.

It was ominous when on just the second day of the year a woman walked into a police station and set herself on fire. Officers took their time in responding to the searing sight as the woman suffered which were ultimately fatal burns.

Since that incident two months ago, which took place in the provincial capital, more than 54 cases of violence against women have been perpetrated in the province, including some which have drawn the attention of the top court. Justice in most of those cases, however, remains elusive.

A database of incidents of violence against women collected by a local non-governmental organization (NGO) using newspaper reports as the basis for their data recorded, at least 18 major incidents of violence against women, including honour killings, across the province were committed in January. This doubled to 37 in February.

The data, though, only shows a partial picture since a number of cases are never reported in the media, while a fraction is not even reported to police.

The first incident of violence in 2018 occurred when a woman, identified as Salma, walked into the Kotwali police station in Peshawar and set herself on fire. She was apparently protesting against the release of a house owner she had a dispute with. The woman suffered extensive burns and succumbed to her injuries in Islamabad days later.

This incident was followed by the brutal murder of a couple in Toru Mayar area of Mardan. The two had eloped and had allegedly been killed in the name of honour.

Another woman was gunned down by family members in Mansehra who had contracted love marriage 15 years ago.

On January 8, a boy killed his stepmother in the Saddar area of Mardan. A day later, another couple was killed in Dir, apparently in the name of honour.

The same day, a man killed his wife in the Doranpur area of Mardan.

Days later, well-known stage actor Brekhna was killed along with her father by her suitor in the Kakshal area of the city. The man later committed suicide.

On January 18, brothers strangled their sister in DI Khan in another honour killing case.

On January 28, a newlywed bride was killed in Kohat.

A day later, a medical student Asma Rani was killed in Kohat by two brothers after she rebuffed advances. The case drew the attention of the apex court. Recently her family's request to move the case from Kohat to Peshawar was also granted.

The next day a man threw acid on his wife and stepdaughter in Batkhela area of Malakand.

In Parang, Charsadda, a girl was filmed naked by two boys.

A boy killed his stepmother and then dumped her body in a deserted area within the remits of Mathra police station.

It was followed by the killing of two sisters in the Pishtakhara area on the outskirts of Peshawar. These two were also apparently killed in the name of honour since they were seen as making a living by dancing, something which was unacceptable to their brothers.

On February 2, a local singer Sumbal was gunned down allegedly by Jehangir Khan – the same man who had previously killed Ghazala Javed in Peshawar.

On February 7, a married woman committed suicide in the Budhani area of Peshawar due to unknown reasons. The same day, an 18-year-old girl committed suicide in Mardan.

Separately on the same day, Momina was apparently killed for honour by her in-laws after she was allegedly spotted with her lover in Nisata, Charsadda.

On February 9, a man killed his sister-in-law in Kolai area of Kohistan when he spotted her with a man. When his mother tried to save the woman, she was also killed. The accused lover was also killed.

On February 11, in Topi area of Swabi, a man allegedly killed his wife, cut up the body into pieces and then buried them inside his house. The next day in Bannu, a man killed his wife in Kachi Camp.

On February 13, another woman was killed by her husband in Bannu due to unidentified reasons.

Though there was a ban on celebrating Valentine's Day publicly, there was no ban on violence against women on the day after a man killed his wife, a mother of three, in Akora Khattak area of Nowshera. He then left the body in the house and fled with his three children.



On February 15, a woman committed suicide after a verbal dispute with her husband in Urmar Payan area on the outskirts of Peshawar. A woman also committed suicide in Jehangirabad area of Peshawar the same day.

On February 16 a man and his sister-in-law were killed by unidentified assailants in Bannu.

On February 17, a woman was allegedly raped inside her vehicle by a policeman in Haripur.

The next day, a teenaged girl who was assisting her elder sister during the polio vaccination campaign was abducted by unidentified people in Sheikhan. She was found unconscious from a nearby graveyard a few hours later with officials claiming that she was not raped.

On February 20, another local singer, dancer and actor Noor Sher was killed by her husband Malik Sheraz in Abbottabad. They had divorced just five days after their marriage.

The same day, a man and his father attacked his wife in Chamkani area of Peshawar because the woman had filed for divorce. She, however, survived with injuries.

On February 22, a man killed his daughter in Ogai area of Torghar along with her suitor Muhammad Saeed, ostensibly for honour.

Similarly, a girl was slaughtered by her brother and cousin in Abbottabad inside their residence when she was found to be pregnant on February 24.

On February 26, a young girl was killed by a man and his father when the family refused to accept their marriage proposal in the Pishtakhara area of Peshawar.

On February 27, a girl was killed by her brother in the Katlang area of Mardan after she refused to make tea for him.

Rights activist Tamure Kamal told The Express Tribune said that it was unfortunate that violence against women continues unabated despite the fact that there is proper legislation in this regard.

Another rights activist, Imran Takkar said that the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa police, like those in the rest of the country, are not gender sensitive. Moreover, continued violence against women only shows that government policies have failed.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1654020/1-legislations-prove-no-barrier-55-women-killed-violently-k-p/>

## PROGRESS FOR WOMEN IS PROGRESS FOR ALL

The Express Tribune, March 8, 2018.

We are at a pivotal moment for women's rights. The historical and structural inequalities that have allowed oppression and discrimination to flourish are being exposed like never before. From Latin America to Europe to Asia, on social media, on film sets, on the factory floor and in the streets, women are calling for lasting change and zero tolerance for sexual assault, harassment, and discrimination of all kinds.

Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is the unfinished business of our time, and the greatest human rights challenge in our world.

The activism and advocacy of generations of women has borne fruit. There are more girls in school than ever before; more women are doing paid work and in senior roles in the private sector, academia, politics and in international

organisations, including the United Nations. Gender equality is enshrined in countless laws, and harmful practices have been outlawed in many countries.

But serious obstacles remain if we are to address the historic power imbalances that underpin discrimination and exploitation.

More than a billion women around the world lack legal protection against domestic sexual violence. The global gender pay gap is 23 per cent, rising to 40 per cent in rural areas, and the unpaid work done by many women goes unrecognised. Women's representation in national parliaments stands, on average, at less than one quarter, and in boardrooms it is even lower. Without concerted action, millions more girls will be subjected to genital mutilation over the next decade.

Where laws exist, they are often ignored, and women who pursue legal redress are doubted, denigrated and dismissed. We now know that sexual harassment and abuse have been thriving in workplaces, public spaces and private homes, in countries that pride themselves on their record of gender equality.

The United Nations should set an example to the world. I recognise that this has not always been the case. Since the start of my tenure last year, I have set change in motion at the UN headquarters, in our peacekeeping missions and in all our offices worldwide.

We have now reached gender parity for the first time in my senior management team, and I am determined to achieve this throughout the organisation. I am totally committed to zero tolerance of sexual harassment and have set out plans to improve reporting and accountability. We are working closely with countries around the world to prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse by staff in peacekeeping missions.

We at the United Nations stand with women around the world as they fight to overcome the injustices they face.

Women's empowerment is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals means progress for all women, everywhere. The spotlight initiative launched jointly with the European Union will focus resources on eliminating violence against women and girls, a prerequisite for equality and empowerment.

Let me be clear: this is not a favour to women. Gender equality is a human rights issue, but it is also in all our interests: men and boys, women and girls. Gender inequality and discrimination against women harms us all.

There is ample evidence that investing in women is the most effective way to lift communities, companies, and even countries. Women's participation makes peace agreements stronger, societies more resilient and economies more vigorous. Where women face discrimination, we often find practices and beliefs that are detrimental to all. Paternity leave, laws against domestic violence and equal pay legislation benefit everyone.

At this crucial moment for women's rights, it is time for men to stand with women, listen to them and learn from them. Transparency and accountability are essential if women are to reach their full potential and lift all of us, in our communities, societies and economies.

I am proud to be part of this movement, and I hope it continues to resonate within the United Nations and around the world.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1654230/6-progress-women-progress/>

‘WOMEN HAVE BEEN AT FOREFRONT OF DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE’

Dawn, March 9th, 2018

ISLAMABAD: Various seminars and conferences were held across the twin cities in order to mark International Women's Day, which is observed on March 8 each year.

Women have been at the forefront of the democratic struggle in Pakistan's political history, said PPP Senator Sherry Rehman at an event hosted by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute.

"We have seen the struggle of Fatima Jinnah, Benazir Bhutto and Asma Jehangir, who were icons of resistance and peace and were champions of democracy," she said.

"We are proud of the trajectory of the first Hindu-Dalit girl, Krishna Kumari, from bonded labour to being a senator," she added.

Renowned poet Kishwar Naheed said women are now more aware of their rights and stressed on the need for educating men on women's role in society.

A march was held outside the National Press Club, the participants of which demanded basic rights for women. The march was hosted by a coalition of civil society organisations under the banner of Ending Violence against Women and Girls.

One of the participants, Haseeb Khawaja said 12 million Pakistani women do not have identity cards due to which they cannot cast votes.

Women daily wage workers were also sitting outside the press club, demanding the regularisation of their services and MNA Asad Umar came there to express solidarity with them.

A teacher, Rabia Waheed said she and the other teachers have been protesting for 68 days but their services have not been regularised.

The Women's Democratic Front held a march from the press club to Nazimud Din Road. The organisation's president, Ismat Shahjahan said the Constitution calls for gender equality while the policies and laws in the country are based on gender inequality, discrimination and violence.

During another event, National Commission on Human Rights Chairman retired Justice Ali Nawaz Chohan said: "Women are our inspiration, strength and character".

He said the role of women in third world countries and Pakistan is evolving and that they are breaking away from patriarchal practices.

Serena Hotel hosted an outdoor breakfast for all women associated with Serena- as employees and well wishers- in which members of the diplomatic corps and officials of the foreign affairs ministry also took part.

Australian High Commissioner Margaret Adamson said International Women's Day is an important opportunity to recommit to a fair go, a level playing field so everyone has equal opportunities to fulfil their expectations and potentials.

Dutch Ambassador Ardi Stoios-Braken said the struggle for equal rights for women is not over in the West as well and that the Dutch foreign affairs ministry has formulated a special policy for posting women on top positions.

The capital police also held an event to observe women's day at the Police Lines Headquarters. Speaking on the occasion, Islamabad Inspector General of Police Dr Sultan Azam Temuri said there are 289 women police officers in the force, which makes for just 2.5 pc and that there are just 0.89pc women in the country's police force.

He said more women will be brought into the force during the next recruitment. He said women will be given training, will be assigned important field positions, will be provided a conducive environment, anti-harassment committees will be formed in the force, women's toilets and day care centres will be established in stations. Women police officers were awarded shields for good performance and for their contributions to the force.

The Women Research and Resource Centre at the Fatima Jinnah Women University hosted a seminar on Violence against Women and Girls and Access to Justice during which speakers urged women to speak up for their rights.

Benazir Jatoi from the Aurat Foundation talked about how to tackle violence against women and the laws and regulations in this regard.

"There are proven solutions for supporting and empowering survivors to stop recurrence of violence. Laws and policies are powerful tools to punish perpetrators and provide justice," she said.

A volley ball match a tug-of-war was held in the Government Postgraduate College for Women on 6th Road as well.

The college's team won the volley ball tournament from Government College for Women Murree Road's team and the Punjab College for Girls Satellite Town beat the host college in the tug-of-war.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1394048>

#### FLOUR MILLERS ASSOCIATION ISSUED SHOW-CAUSE NOTICE

Dawn, March 9th, 2018

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has issued a show-cause notice to the Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA) for prima facie indulging in anti-competitive practices such as price fixing and sharing commercially sensitive information.

The commission took notice of the news reports that PFMA and its member undertakings had increased the prices of various categories of wheat/flour and its by-products in 2015 and 2016. The Commission also conducted an inspection of the premises of PMFA and impounded relevant documents and material.

The CCP noted that the PFMA executive committee was regularly meeting, exchanging commercially sensitive information and strategic data on flour prices and allocation of quantities between 2012 and 2014 and was also facilitating the coordination among its members, thus potentially affecting, preventing, restricting and reducing free competition in the relevant market.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1394094/flour-millers-association-issued-show-cause-notice>

#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY OBSERVED IN SEVERAL SINDH TOWNS

Dawn, March 9th, 2018

HYDERABAD: Civil society and non-governmental organisations, political parties, academic institutions and government departments organised various programmes to mark the International Women's Day in several Sindh towns on Thursday.

A group of civil society organisations held a colourful programme at Sindh Museum in Hyderabad where women and girls presented tableaux, traditional songs and speeches to highlight services of women in society.

Speakers at the programme, including Qaumi Awami Tehreek president Ayaz Latif Palijo, educationist Parveen Munshi, civil society activist Zahid Thebo and others, stressed the need for ensuring women's rights.

A large number of farmers and fishermen under the banner of Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) took out a rally to mark the day. The participants demanded climate finance and gender-responsive climate change policy in Sindh.

"I want to salute fishing men and women and farmers. Gender-specific impact of climate change should be researched and government needs to formulate a gender-responsive climate change policy," said PFF chairperson Mohammad Ali Shah.

Young folk singer Khushboo Leghari and Soho Leghari sang traditional songs and presented dance to pay tribute to rural women who fed the world but faced food security issues.

Social activist Zulfiqar Halepoto, educationist Ismail Kumbhar and civil society activist Punhal Sario also took part in the rally.

Students of Institute of Gender Studies, University of Sindh, staged a walk for women's rights, which was led by SU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Fateh Mohammad Burfat.

Dr Burfat said that true liberation of women could come from their socio-economic and gender emancipation initiatives. Only an annual celebration was not enough to ensure women's importance in society, he said.

Women Action Forum activist Dr Arfana Mallah highlighted reasons behind society's failure to empower women, who constituted 49 per cent of total population.

**NAWABSHAH:** The Nawabshah women development department organised a seminar on the day to create awareness among women about their rights.

The speakers at the moot said that it was the need of the hour that women were made aware of their rights so that they could face the world.

They said that women were still facing injustice in society. They must be given equal share in jobs and political parties, they said.

**DADU:** Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf leader Liaquat Ali Jatoi has said that women's role has always remained important and positive in the development of society.

He was speaking at a gathering of the party's women activists on the occasion of Women's Day. PTI had always raised issues of women and stood for their rights, he said.

**UMERKOT:** The first women police station was inaugurated here on Thursday to coincide with Woman's Day.

Mirpurkhas DIG Mazhar Nawaz Sheikh and human rights activist Iqbal Detho said at the inauguration ceremony that women police were in a better position to help victims of early marriages, honour killings and domestic violence.

They said that women police station was a gift for women of the district. Women police officials could prove to be a strong voice for victimised women, they said.

SHO Khush Bakht who took charge of the police station vowed to put in her best efforts to help all vulnerable sections of society.

MIRPURKHAS: Speakers at a seminar at DIG police complex held to mark the International Women's Day called for protection of rights of women and children.

DIG Mazhar Nawaz Shaikh had organised the event in collaboration with a number of NGOs.

The DIG said that 1108 help-line had been set up in Mirpurkhas to provide succour to women and children in distress.

SSP Mohammad Usman Bajwa said that those who subjected helpless women to torture should be awarded exemplary punishment.

Law expert Iqbal Detho said that medical officer was bound to provide first aid to a patient and then he should himself contact police for letter.

Mirpurkhas Commissioner Shafique Ahmed Mahesar said that committees had been formed to check national identity cards of bride and groom if their age was found to be less than 18 years and stop such marriages.

SANGHAR: Speakers at a programme organised by Awami Workers Party to mark Women's Day said that women were the worst victims of 'hegemonic' capitalist system.

The party activists said that no relief could come to any segment of society under the prevalent capitalist system. They would continue their struggle for the rights of working class, including women, they said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1394008>

#### TEENAGE GIRL LEFT FOR DEAD FOR RESISTING GANG RAPE IN NAWABSHAH

Dawn, March 11th, 2018

NAWABSHAH: Three men subjected a teenage girl of the minority Bagri community to criminal assault in Qazi Ahmed town on Saturday and left her for dead when she offered resistance.

The girl's parents who brought their traumatised daughter to Peoples University Medical Hospital told journalists that the three suspects kidnapped their 14-year-old daughter and when she resisted their attempt to rape her they tortured her so severely that it fractured her backbone.

They said that police had first refused to register the case and lodged it only after the news was flashed in electronic media. Police had not yet arrested the main suspect while influential people of the area were pressurising them to accept compensation money and withdraw the case, they said.

They demanded Chief Justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar to take suo motu notice of the case, serve them justice and order the government to provide adequate treatment to their daughter.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Peoples Party MNA Faryal Talpur directed SSP and deputy commissioner of Shaheed Benazirabad to arrest all the suspects involved in the heinous crime and provide justice to the poor girl. She also called for provision of best healthcare facilities to the victim.

Nawabshah municipal committee chairman Azeem Mughal visited the victim at PMU hospital on the directives of MNA Talpur and enquired after her health.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1394508>

**April 2018**

**NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 23 RD TO APRIL 29TH 2018**

**IRAN POLICE'S ASSAULT ON WOMAN OVER HEADSCARF STIRS DEBATE**

Dawn, April 24th, 2018

TEHRAN: A grainy video of female officers from Iran's morality police assaulting a young woman whose headscarf only loosely covered her hair has sparked a new public debate on the decades-long requirement for women in the Islamic Republic.

While officials of all ranks up to President Hassan Rouhani have weighed in on the incident, it has seen women in Iran not only question the rule that they must wear the hijab in the street but also their faith in the theocratic nation.

Even before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the long, flowing chadors and hijabs, were both a political and religious symbol in Iran.

"I used to be a person who would always say her prayers and deeply believed in God," said Afrouz, 28. "I would always say grace before having a meal. Right now, I believe in none of those things."

The video appeared online last week, with activists suggesting it was taken in Tehran, though nothing in it offers hints at its location. It shows a young woman with a long red scarf loosely covering her head, her hair clearly showing, being surrounded by three morality policewomen wearing chadors, who grab her. One grabs her by the throat. She screams, they pick her up off her feet. She then ends up on the ground, weeping as another woman comforts her before the officers grab her again.

"Why are you hitting me? You have been destroying us for 30 years," she is heard shouting at one point.

The video went viral on social media and drew an immediate reaction from officials. Iran's interior minister, Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, ordered authorities on Thursday to investigate the incident soon after Masoumeh Ebtekar, a female vice president for women's affairs, condemned the police's "violent" approach to the situation.

Reformist lawmaker Tayebeh Siavoshi said on Saturday that the policewoman seen in the video grabbing the young woman's throat has been suspended pending the investigation. None of the women in the video have been identified.

"Imposing [force on women] will lead nowhere," she said.

President Rouhani, a cleric who is considered a moderate within Iran's political system, also criticised the morality police in a speech on Saturday. The police force's stated mandate is "promoting virtue and preventing vice." "Grabbing people's collars to promote virtue will not work," Rouhani warned. "You cannot do it by being aggressive."

Hard-liners, however, have dismissed the video as a foreign plot. The hard-line Kayhan daily on Sunday described the video as "strange and suspicious," noting foreign activists have promoted it. Previously, hard-liners pointed to a campaign challenging the hijab launched by a journalist at the Persian service of the Voice of America, which is funded by the US government.

But on the streets of Tehran, women are openly discussing the video and their own encounters with morality police.

"I think that it was very unnecessary the way that the police, or the morality police, handled the situation," said Hamraz, 27, an Austrian national born to Iranian parents who is on vacation in Tehran. "It was very unfortunate that it

was caught on camera, but in a way it was good that everyone got to see how people are being treated: very unjust and very unfair.”

Sahar, a 25-year-old university student, agreed. “I think everyone must be free to choose what they believe in and we can deal with each other more peacefully instead of trying to induce people to do what you think is right,” she said. “This method surely will not work.”

The hijab and chador have long been parts of Persian culture. They became political symbols in 1936, when Iran’s pro-Western ruler Reza Shah Pahlavi banned the garments amid his efforts to rapidly modernise Iran. The ban became a source of humiliation for some pious Muslim women in the country.

As the 1979 Islamic Revolution took hold, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini ordered female civil servants to wear the chador. At first, thousands of women protested the decision in Tehran and Khomeini later said officials should not insult women who chose not to wear it though he also called the chador “the flag of the revolution”. The hijab and loose-fitting clothing later became mandatory for all women in Iran. And though some freedoms for women were curtailed in the years that followed, Iranian women were still allowed to drive, unlike in Saudi Arabia, and hold public office.

Women arrested for showing their hair in public in Iran can receive jail terms of two months or less and face fines equivalent to \$25.

In December, Tehran’s police said they would no longer arrest women for not observing the Islamic dress code as video clips of women choosing not to wear hijabs and walking the streets with their heads uncovered spread across social media.

One image of a young woman, head uncovered and waving her hijab like a flag in Tehran’s Enghelab Street became famous during economic protests that swept Iran later that month. Tehran’s prosecutor, Abbas Jafari Dolatabadi, said in March that the woman had been sentenced to 24 months in prison.

The telecommunication junction box she stood on in the photograph has since been re-welded to stop women from standing on it, though protests continue.—AP

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1403574>

#### MAN KILLS YOUNG DAUGHTER, HER FRIEND ‘FOR HONOUR’ NEAR JACOBABAD

Dawn, April 24th, 2018

SUKKUR: A man allegedly shot and wounded his young daughter and then killed her with repeated blows of a hatchet before killing her acquaintance in the same manner in Eidan Leerwani village near Jacobabad on Monday.

Officials at the Miranpur Buriro police station said that Shabbir Leerwani used his pistol and hatchets in carrying out the double murder apparently under the custom of Karo-kari (a family member liable to be killed by another member for maintaining an extramarital affair).

They said Gal Naz died on the spot and Nazeer Ahmed Leerwani, 24, succumbed to his serious injuries while being rushed to a hospital. Shabbir fled the village after committing the crime, they added.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1403477/man-kills-young-daughter-her-friend-for-honour-near-jacobabad>

#### BODY OF WOMAN KILLED FOR ‘HONOUR’ EXHUMED

Waseem Ashraf Butt



Dawn, April 26, 2018

**GUJRAT:** Police on Wednesday exhumed the body of Sana Cheema, a 26-year-old Italian woman of Pakistani origin, who is feared to have been killed in the name of so-called honour in her native area of Mungowal in Gujrat district.

Dr Komal Ishaq of the Aziz Bhatti Shaheed Teaching Hospital conducted an autopsy on the body, which was exhumed in the presence of area magistrate Lubna Sagheer. Strict security measures were taken in and around the graveyard with a contingent of the Gujrat police deployed at the site.

Dr Ishaq collected samples from the stomach and other tissues to be sent for testing to the Punjab Forensic Science Agency (PFSA) in Lahore to help the police investigators ascertain the cause of death.

DSP Saddar Irfanul Haq Sulehria told Dawn that they would try to get the test results at the earliest because of the sensitive nature of the case. He added that the outcome of the investigation depended on the forensic report, which usually took several weeks to compile because of the large number of cases the PFSA had to deal with.

The initial investigation had raised doubts over the version provided by the victim's family, which had claimed that she had died of natural causes, the DSP said, adding that a case had been registered against her father, brother and a paternal uncle under Sections 302 (premeditated murder) and 201 (causing disappearance of evidence of offence, or giving false information to screen offender) of the Pakistan Penal Code, on a report filed by the Kunjah police SHO.

According to sources, the police have already taken the suspects into custody, but their arrests have not been confirmed as they are currently being interrogated.

Relatives of the deceased woman said her family had been settled in Italy for nearly 17 years, and she lived in Brescia city where she worked as a translator at a driving school.

She had arrived in Pakistan in January and, since, had been living with her parents at her native village where she died or was killed on April 18. She was buried the same night.

Her death had sparked outrage among various circles in Brescia, as the Italian media reported that Ms Cheema had wanted to marry an Italian man. A group of Pakistani immigrants in Brescia had also held a protest against the news report, demanding that the newspaper bring forward the man she was alleged to have been romantically involved with. Her family had apparently handed over to the police a medical prescription from a doctor in Mungowal, claiming that she had been ill.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1403976/body-of-woman-killed-for-honour-exhumed>

## GOVT CONSIDERING INCREASING MATERNITY LEAVE TO SIX MONTHS: MINISTER

Dawn, April 25th, 2018

**ISLAMABAD:** The government is considering increasing the maternity leave up to six months, in line with international practices, in order to encourage exclusive breastfeeding.

State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said though exclusive breastfeeding is strongly recommended, the maternity leave in Pakistan is just three months.

“I suggest Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) should assist the government in legislation for increasing maternity leave. How can a woman ensure exclusive breastfeeding if she only gets three months' leave,” she said at a mass awareness campaign titled Umeed Sey Agey at the Ministry of Planning on Tuesday.

She said it is unfortunate that there is no trend for day-care centres in offices in Pakistan.

“On the other hand, women in rural areas have six to eight children. They prefer giving the best part of their food to their children and so they do not get proper nutrition. Currently, 44pc of children under five in the country are stunted,” she said.

Ms Aurangzeb said parliament is the largest social mobiliser and that NGOs should seek parliament’s help in addressing such issues.

“In some areas of PTI legislator Shehryar Afridi’s constituency, NA-14, Kohat, there were 89pc refusals during polio campaigns. We then decided to get the help of Mr Afridi and these refusals dropped to 38pc,” she said.

SUN Coordinator Dr Irshad Danish told Dawn six month maternity leaves are given in developed countries in order to ensure exclusive breastfeeding.

“Nurses corners are established in offices and even in departmental stores so that babies are not given even a single drop of water the first six months. However, Pakistani law is silent about these issues,” he said.

Dr Danish said his organisation will assist the government in drafting a bill in which it will be suggested that nurses’ corners be established in offices where three or more women are employed so babies are not deprived of their rights.

Member Planning Commission Dr M. Azeem Khan said: “This campaign is aimed at averting morbidities and mortalities in newborns due to preventable causes.”

He said the government is fully cognizant of the fact that appropriate nutrition and care helps children get the best start to life and the opportunity to reach their full potential and save thousands of mothers’ and children’s lives.

Chairman of the board of directors of the Human Development Foundation Dr Khalid Riaz said this campaign calls for urgent action at individual and collective levels in order to raise mass awareness about the alarming implications of malnutrition and focusing on promoting the right nutrition during the first 1,000 days for both the mother and the baby.

SUN focal person Aslam Shaheen said this effort will go a long way in overcoming malnutrition in Pakistan and saving huge losses to the economy due to malnutrition.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1403653>

## PPP REFUSES TO TAKE UP BILL ON HINDU WIDOWS’ REMARRIAGE

The joint opposition once again protested on Tuesday inside the Sindh Assembly when the government opposed taking up an amendment to the Hindu Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2018, seeking to allow Hindu widows to remarry of their own will.

The private bill on the agenda was moved by Pakistan Muslim League – Functional (PML-F) Parliamentary Leader Nand Kumar. It was a private members day where all MPAs could present their bills and resolutions. However, almost all scheduled items on the agenda for the day were set aside as the government decided to pass an out-of-turn resolution that demanded reduction in the fee for national identity cards.

As the proceedings started with speaker Agha Siraj Durrani in chair, the question answer session began where hardly three to four questions were answered.

“The Hindu Marriage Bill is on the agenda. The government claims to be a champion for the rights of minorities. This is an important bill. Please first take it up rather than bringing out-of-turn items in the House,” Kumar said.

Opposition members belonging to the Muttahida Qaumi Movement – Pakistan, Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) joined the PML-F for taking up the Hindu Marriage Bill and finishing the agenda first.

Addressing the protesting opposition MPAs, the speaker said he himself favoured taking up the Hindu Marriage Bill first. However, he added that he would go with the wishes of the majority of the House.

Defending the government, Parliamentary Minister Nisar Ahmed Khuhro said there were some flaws in the bill, due to which it should not be taken up. Law Minister Ziaul Hasan Lanjar maintained that the assembly had already passed the law, however, Kumar wanted to make an amendment to it in haste, which was not possible.

Defending his proposed amendment, Kumar said there had been a custom in the Hindu community, according to which widows or divorced women were not allowed to remarry. “If a teenage girl becomes widow, she has to spend her life alone. This is a curse. We have to get rid of this custom through this bill,” he said.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1694383/1-ppp-refuses-take-bill-hindu-widows-remarriage/>

#### WOMAN CRITICAL AFTER BEING SET ABLAZE ‘BY IN-LAWS’

Dawn, April 26th, 2018

LAHORE: A young married woman suffered critical burns when she was allegedly set on fire by her in-laws over a domestic issue in Shahdara on Wednesday.

In her statement to the media and the police at the hospital, 24-year-old Fauzia alleged that her in-laws set her ablaze after dousing her in petrol.

She said her husband worked abroad while she lived with her in-laws in Majeed Park.

Fauzia said she left her in-laws’ house over some domestic issue some time back and started living with her parents. On Wednesday, she said, her husband called her from abroad, asking her to go back to his parents and apologise to them for her mistake.

Following her husband’s direction, Fauzia said she returned to her in-laws house where her brothers-in-law Ikram and Javed and their sister Sehar and mother overpowered her and set her on fire after throwing petrol on her body.

According to the doctors involved in her treatment at a local hospital, Fauzia had suffered nearly 90 per cent burns and her condition was critical.

City Division SP (Operations) Ali Raza said apparently Fauzia tried to commit suicide following a row with her in-laws over some family issues. However, he said, the police lodged a case against the suspects on the victim’s complaint.

The woman’s in-laws had disappeared from their house shortly after the incident, he added.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1403899>

IT has been widely documented that women in this country are targets of acid crimes for rejecting marriage proposals, for arousing jealousy among relatives, or, in some way or the other, for having provoked patriarchy. In essence, such heinous attacks are largely based on the notion of male ownership of women's bodies and of control over their actions in conservative communities. The reality that this unforgivable crime is more often than not perpetrated by male relatives is underscored by Thursday's shocking acid attack on three students from the University of Gujrat.

The three students, who included two sisters, suffered severe burns when they were attacked by three men at a bus stop — one of the alleged perpetrators was the sisters' maternal uncle, an Islamabad police official; the other two worked for a government development authority.

This and other instances of acid crimes show that destroying a woman's face and body for perceived misdemeanours is intended as revenge and punishment, and intentionally targets the identity and individuality of victims. This is all the more reason why Punjab's chief minister must immediately ensure that severe punishment under the law is awarded to those guilty of such brazen attacks, most of which are concentrated in the province.

Moreover, the government should heed growing calls to regulate acid sales. In the long term, however, curtailing acid crimes requires removing entrenched misogynistic attitudes that deprive women even of their right to life. One way is to disseminate information through sustained campaigning on gender equality.

Used as an inexpensive weapon of choice, acid causes severe physical disfigurement leading to extreme psychological and physical trauma. The shocking nature of this crime alone demands the strictest punishment so that emboldened regressive elements do not act with impunity.

However, statistics provide evidence to the contrary. With at least 400 annual acid attacks reported by rights organisations, and 80pc of them targeting women, the country's anti-acid crime legislation has failed as a deterrent in the seven years since it was enacted.

This is a damning reflection of the state's apathy when it comes to the implementation of a watertight law that stipulates that acid crime is non-compoundable with imprisonment ranging from 14 years to life and a minimum fine of Rs1m as punishment. Notwithstanding philanthropic rehabilitation initiatives, the state itself has no official projects to financially compensate and rehabilitate burn victims. Public-private initiatives are direly needed to change societal norms that permit men and boys to believe this crime is acceptable behaviour.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1402938>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 9TH TO APRIL 15TH 2018

#### WOMEN AS CYBERCRIME VICTIMS

The Express Tribune, April 10th, 2018

Cybercrime is a relatively modern phenomenon in Pakistan and can take many forms, from pornography involving children to fraud and impersonation. It is diverse and ever evolving. The Federal Investigation Agency has now released a performance report for the first quarter of 2018 and it makes for revealing reading. Women make up a staggering 90 per cent of the cases reported to the Cybercrime circle in Lahore, and of that number 90 per cent of cases had their origins in Facebook.

This highlights once again the vulnerability of women in Pakistan no matter where they go, what they do, how they dress and speak — and cyberspace is no less a place for them to be abused than anywhere else. According to Nighat

Dad, a prominent activist for digital rights, most of the complaints arise from the non-consensual use of images to shame and blacken the character of women as well as blackmail and harass them.

This is a complex area both for the law and civil society. The law rarely keeps pace with evolving social behaviours, and the existing law is flawed. The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act lacks the defined set of rules that would enhance its efficacy and there is anyway a shortage of staff to cope with the volume of cases being referred — a number that can only increase over time. With 1,200 cases reported every month, each of which may take months to resolve through a lengthy process it is obvious that there is a mismatch between crime and its resolution one way or the other. The justice system is no better equipped to cope with the volume either.

Despite all the deficits in the system and the legislation there is no doubt that women are today and in the future going to be the principal victims of cybercrime in Pakistan. This is both threat and opportunity for legislators and those working to protect women in physical as well as cyberspace. It is not beyond the capacity of either to work together for the betterment of half the population, a goal well worth striving towards..

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1681454/6-women-cybercrime-victims/>

#### SUSPECTED RAPIST OF FIVE MINOR GIRLS HELD

Dawn, April 11th, 2018

KARACHI: The city police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested a suspect allegedly involved in rape of five minor girls mainly in East district of the city.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) East Zone Zulfiqar Ali Larik at a press conference said that the arrest was made after investigators found similarities in some six incidents that led to the formation of a special team, which finally nabbed the suspect.

“During the probe, the team discovered that in five such cases the DNA results pointed to the same perpetrator,” he said. The suspect’s DNA test confirmed his involvement in the five cases, the police added.

“In 2015 a case was registered by the Quaidabad police for the rape of an eight-year-old girl and more such cases were reported in 2016, 2017 and in February 2018. The DNA samplings confirmed the identity of a suspect in five cases, which triggered his search and finally led to his arrest.”

The crime pattern, he said, set the course of the probe for the investigators as all five cases were reported on Fridays. The arrested suspect was an employee of an industrial unit and targeted minor girls in the poor residential neighbourhoods close to industrial areas in Landhi and Korangi.

“The suspect has been involved in such crimes for the past four to seven years, with girls of seven to nine years of age.”

The police also believed that the suspect could be involved in street crimes.

During the probe a few facts emerged which strengthened the doubt about his involvement in street crimes as the police had also recovered five mobile phones and 10 SIMs from his possession,” said the DIG East.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1400813>

#### GIRL BURNT TO DEATH IN VILLAGE FIRE

Dawn, April 12th, 2018

DERA MURAD JAMALI: A five-year-old girl was burnt to death on Wednesday when three houses in Nabi Khan Khosa village caught fire, apparently because of a short-circuit. According to police, the fire started in a house and soon engulfed two adjacent houses.

“Zubairan Bibi, 5, was trapped in one house and died of burns,” a senior police officer told Dawn, adding that area people tried to rescue the girl but failed.

Police officials said all three houses were gutted in the fire which was brought under control after four hours.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1401110>

#### BLACK CUSTOM OF KARO-KARI NOT BASED ON RELIGION: IGP

Dawn, April 14th, 2018

SUKKUR: Sindh’s Inspector General of Police (IGP) A.D. Khowaja has said the black custom of karo-kari is neither based on religion nor culture.

Mr Khowaja said at an inauguration ceremony of regional women protection cell late on Thursday evening that police were making renewed efforts for the recovery of Fazila Sarki.

He said that cases of assault on girls had shot up in southern Sindh. Parents should teach their children about how to handle harassment, he said.

“Being Muslim it is our responsibility to protect rights and honour of women but it is sad to see that women are being killed over flimsy pretexts and allegations of karo-kari even in this age and the victims are buried without proper funeral rites,” he said.

He said that police department faced challenges in Shikarpur, Kandhkot and Ghotki districts because of overlapping boundaries on the river and it was causing difficulties in action against criminals. The department had written to the government to construct Ghotki-Kandhkot bridge to help police catch criminals, he said.

The IGP said that 15 to 20 per cent police personnel were engaged in security duties instead of operational work.

Unnecessary security duties would be withdrawn soon, he said.

Sukkur DIG Khadim Rind said that women were harassed routinely in schools, colleges and workplaces but most females did not share their ordeal with family members.

He asked parents to keep an eye on mobile phone sets of their daughters to save them from bad people because nowadays, most girls were being blackmailed through cyber crime.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1401427/black-custom-of-karo-kari-not-based-on-religion-igp>

## May 2018

*NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 21st TO MAY 27TH 2018*

*Only Rs250m allocated for women development in ADP*

By Mudaser Kazi

Published: May 24, 2018

**KARACHI:** Most of the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations are interlinked with women development such as ‘no poverty’, ‘good health and well-being’, ‘quality education’, ‘gender equality’, ‘decent work and economic growth’, ‘reduced inequalities’ and ‘peace, justice and strong institutions’.

However, the provincial government, which claims to be a champion of women empowerment, has allocated a paltry Rs250 million for women development in the Annual Development Programme (ADP) for the 2018-19 fiscal year.

The total budget for development schemes relating to women development has been divided into 10 ongoing schemes. Like other sectors, no new scheme was introduced for women development in the budget. The outgoing government deemed it appropriate not to announce new schemes so that the new government could announce them based on its manifesto.

An amount of Rs35 million has been allocated in the budget from the thrown forward amount of Rs461 million for the implementation of a gender reforms action plan in Shikarpur, Sukkur, Nawabshah, Larkana, Mirpurkhas, Jacobabad, Hyderabad and Karachi.

**Environment sector handed third straight budget cut**

The total estimated cost of the scheme was Rs544.77 million and it was approved in December, 2011. An amount of Rs10 million was added to the scheme’s budget when it was revised for the outgoing fiscal year. According to the budget estimates, only 22% funds for the scheme will be utilised by June 2019, six-and-a-half years since its initiation.

Of the Rs250 million for women development in the ADP, a major chunk of Rs107 million has been allocated for the establishment of the Women Development Complex in Karachi. The project was approved in January 2018 at an estimated cost of Rs244.27 million. The government expects that 49% funds for the project will be utilised in the coming fiscal year.

Amounts of Rs3 million and Rs15 million have been allocated for a working women’s hostel and Women Development Complex in Nawabshah respectively.

**Development schemes: ‘Sindh’s pace of work quicker than last year’**

The hostel was initially approved in 2011 but only 4% of its funds have been utilised it so far. The complex was approved in 2009 and if the complete funds allocated for it in the current fiscal year were utilised, its financial progress would have been 54%. The estimated costs of the hostel and complex in Nawabshah when the schemes were approved stood at Rs13.76 million and Rs44.76 million respectively.

The provincial government has earmarked Rs12 million in the coming fiscal year’s budget for advocacy of women empowerment in Sindh. The scheme was approved in 2011 at an estimated cost of Rs49.38 million.

**Sindh’s transport projects are on the road to nowhere**

The establishment of three daycare centres in Karachi and one in each divisional headquarters in Sindh is another scheme that has been languishing since 2011 when it was estimated at Rs95.57 million. The total amount allocated for the scheme in the new budget is Rs20 million.

The scheme for the repair and maintenance of the Women Training Institute in Nawabshah was approved in 2017 at an estimated cost of Rs36.55 million. As of now, no money has been spent on the project. However, a sum of Rs20.82 million has been allocated for the scheme in the new budget.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1717536/1-rs250m-allocated-women-development-adp/>

## NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 14TH TO MAY 20TH 2018

Teenage girl shot dead for 'honour'

A Correspondent May 17, 2018

NAWABSHAH: A teenage girl was gunned down by her uncle and his son in the name of honour in Hussain Bux Khoso village near here on Wednesday.

According to villagers, Sikandar Khoso and his son Ali Asghar Khoso killed Ms Amul, 14, and managed to escape.

ASP Ali Raza Leghari said the weapon used in the crime had been found and police were making efforts to arrest the killers.

Published in Dawn, May 17th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1408070/teenage-girl-shot-dead-for-honour>

Separate women caucus in Senate proposed

Shazia Hasan May 18, 2018

KARACHI: "Up until now there is just one women caucus looking at the National Assembly and the Senate, but for the first time now we have proposed the setting up of separate women caucus in the Senate to take [up] the women empowerment agenda at every legislative forum," said Senator Sassui Palijo.

She was speaking at a programme organised by the Strengthening Participatory Organisation (SPO) on Wednesday, where the speakers shared some key findings of policy advocacy and research on strengthening pro-women legislation for improved gender-based violence response services in Sindh under an initiative funded by Trocaire and the Australian government.

"After the 18th Amendment, women development is one of the primary subjects of discussion in the provincial assemblies regarding issues in implementation," she added.

Nuzhat Shirin, chairperson, Sindh Commission on the Status of Women, said that they were currently reviewing three pro-women laws in Sindh and trying to ensure that in future laws were not passed without diligent scrutiny and review. "We have selected specific districts of Sindh to significantly reduce gender-based violence incidents and if [the scheme proves] successful, we will replicate the strategy in other districts," she said.

Dr Ayub Shaikh, member, Provincial Steering Forum, Sindh, said that to start a 'rebellion' against the system and norms of society there was a need for special planning. "The system has been ruined because everyone here has been more focused on their own benefits and then they say that things are like this because of lack of education. But centuries ago when there were no schools, colleges and universities in Sindh the situation was far more peaceful," he pointed out. "It is because before calling yourself human you need to be humane. That's how you build a balanced society, through humane humans," he added.

Uzma Noorani, director of Panah Shelter, said, "We cannot expect true women empowerment, until women at the grass-roots level are aware of the pro-women legislations and rights guaranteed to them in these laws.



“The Dowry Act and the Acid Crime Control Bill have been reviewed and we are working on establishing more shelter homes and safe houses for women while they await court orders on cases of gender-based violence and such crimes. Safe houses are to be run under the supervision of deputy commissioners and security there has to be provided by police,” she said.

Talking about the status of darulamans for gender-based violence response service, Aliya Shahid, secretary, social welfare department, said that there were only five darulamans in Sindh.

“But we need more along with a management committee to monitor their performance,” she said.

Earlier, ShaziaShaheen, SPO’s head of programme, said that lobbying and advocacy to strengthen implementation of pro-women legislation and gender-based violence response services in Sindh helped establish the Domestic Violence Commission under Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Rules 2016, Provincial and District Monitoring Committees under Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Rules 2016 and Sindh Commission on the Status of Women under Sindh Commission on the Status of Women Act 2015.

“Women development officers have been assigned the charge of protection officers across Sindh in October last year and summary of Non-Development Expenditures [SNEs] of 29 protection officers for the monetary year of 2018-19 has also been submitted by the women development department, government of Sindh,” she said.

RaheemaPanhwar, SPO’s regional coordinator, said that bringing together opposition and treasury benches for strengthening pro-women structures, lack of adequate human, physical and financial resources in women development and social welfare departments had been a major challenge for legislatures, and civil society for policy advocacy and effective implementation of pro-women laws in Sindh.

Mahnaz Rahman, resident director, Aurat Foundation, Haroon Ahmed Khan, secretary of women development department also spoke on the occasion.

Published in Dawn, May 18th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1408362>

Minor girl found tortured, chained at home in Lahore

The Newspaper’s Staff Reporter Updated May 20, 2018

LAHORE: Police recovered a minor girl from her house who was chained and allegedly tortured by her stepmother in Baghbanpura here on Saturday.

Identified as Sehrish, 12, the girl had torture marks on various parts of her body, particularly the face and arms.

Take a look: Footprints: A poor man’s daughter

Some neighbours claimed to have heard cries of the girl from her house near Mahmood Booti, Bund Road and alerted police on emergency 15. Police raided the house and rescued the girl whom they found chained. She told police she had been chained by her stepmother Najma and maternal uncle Shahbaz.

Sehrish further told police her stepmother would torture her over petty issues and upon resistance chained and locked her in a room.

Her neighbours, who accompanied police during the raid, filmed the statement of the girl.

Police arrested both Najma and Shahbaz on the statement of the girl, and sent the girl to a local hospital for a medical examination.

A case will be lodged against them on the basis of the medical report which was awaited.

Published in Dawn, May 20th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1408852>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 7TH TO MAY 13TH 2018

NO LET-UP IN 'HONOUR' CRIME

Dawn, May 9th, 2018

Rafia Zakaria

IT may be hot — swelteringly and terrifyingly hot — in most of the country, but the brisk business of killing women (and some men) in the name of honour continues apace. Some weeks ago, an angry man, mad at his sisters over some domestic dispute, began beating them with a stick. When his 100-year-old grandmother tried to intervene, he began to beat her too. Age is not a factor when it comes to male privilege; when he was done, the century-old grandmother as well as one of his sisters was dead. The other sister lay in critical condition in the hospital.

Take this month. On the very first day of May, a man shot his sister and her alleged paramour to death in Charsadda. In another incident, a young couple in Karachi set out to have dinner with the wife's family. The two had married of their own will almost two years ago and her family had been upset about the relationship. When the two were returning from the dinner, unknown assailants stopped the rickshaw they were in (the husband was a rickshaw driver) and pumped their bodies with bullets. Both of them died.

In news reports, the police were waiting to contact someone in the husband's family for filing the FIR because the wife's family was believed to have been involved in the killing.

These are just the latest stories in Pakistan's ongoing saga of women and some men being killed in the name of honour. Over the 70-something years for which Pakistan has existed, the country has been busy murdering its own, mostly women and some men, for the 'crime' of refusing marriage, imagined relationships in which accusations serve as an excuse for male rage, made-up relationships that assist in covering up crimes to get inheritances or do away with inconvenient neighbours.

Just about every conflict lends itself to an honour killing, a cover via which the whole neighbourhood and society claps for the killer and looks the other way as investigations languish and justice is shelved.

All this was supposed to have changed, at least a little bit, when parliament passed an anti-honour killing law in 2016. By subjecting those who perpetrate 'honour' crimes to at least mandatory life sentences and not permitting the crime to be 'forgiven' by the family, it was believed that honour crimes would decrease or even end. The mechanism of collusion, in which family members commit such crimes and then are summarily 'forgiven' by other family members, would be done away with.

One hoped that a blow had also been dealt to the idea that a death can be permissible or 'honourable'. Murder is always murder, and mandatory punishments were a way of underscoring this fact that seemed to be contested in Pakistan.

This hopeful experiment has failed. According to statistics maintained by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 1,280 people have been murdered in honour crimes since the enactment of the law. Of these, for more than half no FIRs had been registered or there was no information. Obviously, cases in which no FIR is registered do not result in criminal prosecutions. In addition, according to the experts, these numbers, which are based on estimates from the news media and similar sources, are likely underreported. If the actually reported number of 'honour' killings is continuing at a furious rate, then the real number may have increased even more.

These cases do not even come within the purview of the new legislation, the purpose of which was to impose mandatory sentences in instances of 'honour' crimes. For this to happen, the case has to be classified as an 'honour' crime when it is being filed. If it is not classified as such, how can the sentence be applicable? The easy way out, then, is to simply insist that there was some other motivation for the crime.

The result is before us; 'honour' crimes (even those actually being classified as such) are continuing to take place. They are, in fact, likely increasing even if many FIRs make no mention of 'honour' as a motivation for the crime.

If the fight against honour crimes is real, and Pakistanis have not become so callous as to be completely immune to these reports — to the electrocuting of teenage couples, to the bullet-riddled bodies of dinner guests coming home, to the burned and charred and strangled bodies of women — then a demand must be made for a special investigation unit that looks into the motivations of these killings.

The onus of ensuring that honour killings are actually classified as such and do not evade the mandatory punishment must be on law enforcement. If this is deemed unfeasible for reasons of cost, the time may have come when 'forgiveness' for murders is finally done away with. This would mean that all murders would be subject to mandatory sentences, a fact that would reduce not only 'honour' crimes but also the overall murder rate in the country as a whole.

Statutory legal systems such as the one in operation in Pakistan do not function well when there is a hodgepodge of rationales, the possibility of punishments that do not involve imprisonment, such as the payment of money or forgiveness, that render the current system handicapped. The only way to end this kind of crime, which kills scores in brutal ways within the country and allots Pakistan a reputation for misogyny and barbarity the world over, is to make sure that these steps are carried out, that laws that do not work are replaced with ones that do.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1406546>

#### **SPEAKER STRESSES NEED FOR NATIONAL REGISTER FOR CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN**

All political parties should be compelled to include a human rights chapter in their election manifestoes.

This was stated by former Senator Farhatullah Babar at the inaugural session of a two-day National Conference, 'Human Rights and Labour Rights: Towards an Enabling Environment for Compliance', organised by the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (Piler) in collaboration with the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) and Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC) on Tuesday.

Human rights and labour rights activists, politicians, trade union leaders, representatives of employers and civil society activists attended the conference from across the country.

Freedom of expression is the most important fundamental right, which is facing a challenge in Pakistan, he said, adding that the invisible actors are the main threat to the freedom of expression, which has paralysed the democratic and governance system.

This threat should be faced with unity of the progressive forces, he added.

Civil society calls for amending labour laws to comply with ILO conventions

He said the state is not persuading cases regarding crimes against women. There should be a national register for crimes against women and a special public prosecutor be appointed to take responsibility for ensuring provision of women's rights, he added.

Babar said due to lack of accountability, implementation of the laws is difficult to achieve.

Pope urges end to violence against women

IA Rahman from the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan said labourer's right to fair trial, right to equal protection and equality are mentioned in the Constitution, but there are discrepancies in the laws.

In the existing laws, fair trial is impossible, he added.

Interment centres have been established under the Action in Aid of Civil Power Regulations, but there is no information about these centres working across the country.

Rahman said human rights must be honoured in Pakistan, for which he underlined the need for national unity.

Piler Executive Director Karamat Ali said labour rights have declined over the period. Our labour has fewer rights than the rights available at the time of independence, he said.

He said workers had representation under the India Act before independence, but today there is no representation of workers in Parliament.

About 85% of the members in Parliament were landlords before the partition and the same percentage can be seen in today's Parliament, he said, adding that it was not a true representative body of the workers.

Dr Saba Gul Khattak from Open Society Foundation said fundamental freedoms are compromised in Pakistan. Now, the youth are demanding their constitutional rights with the help of social media, she said

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1705521/1-speaker-stresses-need-national-register-crimes-women/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 30TH TO MAY 6TH 2018

INCREASED MATERNITY LEAVE

Dawn, April 30th, 2018

WOMEN'S empowerment is a concept with many moving parts. Adequate maternity leave is one of those elements, and it has received scant attention by policymakers in Pakistan. Women should not be 'handicapped' in the workplace by the traditional expectations of them as children's primary caregivers; being a mother and a working woman are not mutually exclusive.

There seems to be some recognition that our laws need to be more in sync with international practices, even if it is largely in the context of infant health. Last week, the information minister, Marriyum Aurangzeb, at an event to promote a mass awareness campaign about infant morbidity and mortality from preventable causes, referenced the obvious correlation between exclusive breast-feeding and an increase in paid maternity leave.

The number of working women in Pakistan today is far higher than it was in 1958, which is the year to which the currently operative law on maternity leave and benefits dates. That legislation stipulates only 12 weeks of paid maternity leave, including six weeks prior to and six weeks after delivery. Moreover, even this is not implemented properly, and penalties for violations are absurdly low. The absence of an institutionalised culture of maternity benefits enables companies to do as they please.

Many establishments do not even have a policy for maternity leave; sometimes, especially in the informal sector, they simply terminate the services of the women concerned. Thus, for working women, delivering a baby can often have serious financial consequences. Moreover, the lack of adequate, paid maternity leave means that women in the formal, especially the corporate, sector are confronted with the prospect of being sidelined for promotion if they choose to spend more time bonding with their babies.

Each of these scenarios take away from women's right to a level playing field in the public sphere. Not only must paid maternity leave be increased to six months, but every company should provide a crèche on its premises. A guilt-free mother is a more productive employee.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1404776>

#### HARROWING INCIDENT: POLICE ARREST FOUR MEN FOR ALLEGED GANG RAPE

The Express Tribune, April 30th, 2018.

GUJRANWALA: Police arrested four men for raping a second-year student in Sohdra on Sunday.

Police identified the four men as Tahir, the girl's neighbour, and Kashif, Tayyab and Jaffar, his companions.

The girl's parents went to the Sohdra police station 10 days ago, pleading officials to take action. Police then raided several areas and apprehended the four men. After conducting a medical examination of the victim, police have registered the case, while also recording the young girl's statement.

Details show that Tahir lured the young girl to a campsite nearby, where he raped her, while his companion, Kashif, Jaffar and Tayyab, proceeded to document the incident by taking pictures.

The accused then used these images to blackmail the girl, calling her to several locations, where she was then raped multiple times.

After news of the incident and the images began to circulate among village residents, the men abducted the girl from her home and forced her to marry a man named Nazaqat, who was a servant working at the campsite owned by a retired policeman, Haji Mehmood. However, police have not yet managed to apprehend him.

The accused's family maintains that the young girl left her home and ran away with Nazaqat out of her own free will. Police have taken our children into custody because they were Nazaqat's friends and confidantes, they said. They maintain that their children are innocent.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1698602/1-harrowing-incident-police-arrest-four-men-alleged-gang-rape/>

#### GB COUPLE WITH MINOR GIRL SHOT DEAD IN MANSEHRA

Dawn, May 1st, 2018

GILGIT: A couple with their two-year-old daughter, residents of Diamer district of Gilgit-Baltistan, was shot dead for honour in Mansehra district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa allegedly by their relatives on the night between Friday and Saturday.

According to police, a woman aged 30 from Thore valley of Diamer had married with a man, 35, also a resident of the valley, on her own free will.

Earlier, they said the woman had married a person in her locality, but she had allegedly eloped with her love three years ago.

The couple had married in court, fled from their home town and started living in Alaiy village of Ughi, where they had a baby girl born to them.

Police said on the night of April 28, some unknown persons attacked the house of the couple and killed them along with their minor daughter and then fled the scene.

After postmortem, the bodies were shifted to Diamer where they were laid to rest in their native graveyard on Sunday.

Police suspected that the couple was killed by the former in-laws of the woman.

Talking to Dawn, SP Diamer Mohammad Ajmal said the FIR of the incident had been registered with Battagram police station. He said GB police were in contact with their counterparts in KP regarding the case.

Mr Ajmal said some alleged murderers had been identified, however, they were yet to be arrested.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1404983>

#### SHC TAKES SUO MOTU NOTICE OF NINE-YEAR-OLD'S RAPE, MURDER IN LARKANA

Dawn, May 3rd, 2018

LARKANA: Sindh High Court Chief Justice Ahmed Ali Shaikh has taken suo motu notice of rape and murder of a nine-year-old girl whose body was found floating in a pond near a hotel in the city on April 25.

SHC registrar Ghulam Rasool Samoon sent a letter to the district and sessions judge of Larkana on Wednesday and sought report on the case. The SHC directed DIG of Larkana, SSP and investigation officer of the case to appear in person in the court on May 7 and submit a report on the case.

Larkana police had rounded up 27 suspects and DIG Abdullah Shaikh had formed an 11-member committee headed by SSP to investigate the case whose FIR was registered with Haideri police station under Sections 302-364-337A(I)-337F(I) PPC.

Sources said that during interrogation two of the suspects had confessed to have kidnapped the victim with the intention of sexual assault but police had not yet confirmed it nor divulged names of the suspects.

However, the two kept changing their statements and blaming each other that the victim suffocated to death when one of them was trying to rape her, said the sources.

Police surgeon Dr Saleem Shaikh had said that according to preliminary findings the victim had died due to asphyxia as signs of struggle were present on her face, arms and other body parts.

He said that most probably hands were used to block her breathing from nose and mouth as blood stains around both parts were present and attempt was made to rape her.

KHAIRPUR: A large number of students of Mehran University of Engineering and Technology Z.A. Bhutto campus took out a rally from central library of the campus and marched up to zero point on Wednesday, demanding arrest of the rapist and killers of the minor girl.

The student leaders Shafqat Bhayo, Noman Soomro and others said that it was distressing to see that the rapists and killers of the innocent girl had not been arrested even after seven days since the incident.

They demanded the killers be arrested and hanged in public without further delay and said that Sindh police had completely failed in the case as they could not even find out who the culprits were.

They said that the innocent girl had gone through the same agony and faced the same agony as Kasur's innocent girl Zainab, hence response to it should be of equal proportions.

They appealed to prime minister, Chief Justice of Pakistan, IGP Sindh and chief minister to provide justice to the victim's family by arresting and awarding exemplary punishment to the culprits.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1405267>

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT: PAKISTAN'S TIPPING POINT?

Dawn, EOS, May 6th, 2018

She went public about being sexually harassed, he categorically denied it; other women spoke up and said they had similar experiences. She complained to the management and disclosed it on Twitter; he sent her a defamation notice. People took sides. Commentators said she did this for fame and personal gain, that all women in the industry are cheap and easy, doubted her version, commented on her clothing and behaviour at private gatherings, and asked why she continued to stay in a toxic environment.

The woman referred to here is television journalist Tanzeela Mazhar, who was joined by journalist and anchor Yashfeen Jamal in pursuing a case of sexual harassment against PTV's then director of current affairs, Agha Masood Shorish. These women braved professional losses and social censure, courageously went through the formal complaints process, and won. In November last year, Shorish was fired on charges of sexual harassment.

While most women do not report sexual harassment, for ones that do, the immediate response and aftermath follow a predictable template, as evident in the recent Meesha Shafi-Ali Zafar standoff. However, as awareness in the wake of recent laws and platforms for interactions increase, there are slow but evident changes in social reactions.

Going by social media, it seems there is an explosion of sexual harassment cases, of women finding the strength to break the silence. A wider lens, though, would show that social media has been slow to catch on. Women have been fighting both inner demons and external opponents to speak out for over a decade now.

Hockey player Syeda Sadia Nawazish was expelled from the national team after she filed sexual harassment charges against head coach Saeed Khan. Earlier this year, she approached the Lahore High Court to demand that a woman be appointed to the Punjab government's apex body dealing with sexual harassment. She asserts that the provincial ombudsperson's office did not conduct a formal inquiry and pressurised her to withdraw her case. She is not just fighting her case itself but fighting to make the formal system more responsive to women.

Rewind to eight years ago. On March 9, 2010, over a hundred professional women working in the police, in airlines, private corporations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), doctors, health workers, bankers, teachers, all cheered from the upper galleries of the National Assembly as President Asif Zardari signed into effect the law on Sexual Harassment at the Workplace. The law was steered through a 10-year gestation by Fouzia Saeed, the first woman to publicly complain and contest a case of sexual harassment in Pakistan. One of the first women to file a formal complaint under the law was PIA pilot Captain Rifat Haye.

Rewind another eight years from then. It was in 1998, when I wrote (from what I know) the first report on sexual harassment at work in Pakistan for the legal aid organisation Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid (LHRLA). I spent half the interview time explaining to women what the concept meant.

In an earlier incarnation of the law, the policy had to be called the ‘Code of Conduct for Gender Justice.’ The law itself, insisted the then-PML-Q government, could be ‘Law against Gender Aggravation’, because the phrase ‘sexual harassment’ could not be used. Now, as per the law, guidelines against sexual harassment have to be prominently displayed in public spaces in government offices.

As an illustration, look at the office of the Sindh Ombudsperson on Sexual Harassment at the Workplace. It was instituted in 2012 and only one case was registered that year. The next year, the number rose to 25, to 38 new cases the year after that and in 2016, there were 134 cases filed. In six years, that’s an increase of a whopping 197 percent. The most number of complaints were filed in Hyderabad, followed by Karachi, Khairpur and Naushehro Feroze.

The rise in the number of cases being brought on the public radar was made possible by the 2010 law. But it is no coincidence that women have started speaking out on abusive work environments at the same time that they have started claiming their right to public space, whether it is riding bikes or sitting at dhabas, and the same time that ‘khaana khud garam karlo’ [heat up your own food, the playful protest sign which drew the ire of some men] becomes an issue. It’s the economics.

More women are now working outside the house than ever before, and with the preconditions for women’s work increasingly in place, the number is set to continually rise. See the data pointing to seismic socioeconomic changes:

The mean age of marriage for women has risen from 16 years in 1961 to 22.8 in 2007. Since 1988, fertility has almost halved and teen fertility decreased from 20 percent to eight percent. Later marriage and fewer children are the prerequisite to women joining the workforce.

As poverty has declined in Pakistan — by 25 percentage points between 2002 and 2014 according to the World Bank — women are less occupied with dealing with household survival needs such as collecting water, subsistence farming or domestic chores.

Pakistan’s female literacy has also seen a slow rise, reaching 49 percent in 2015, but is considerably higher for women in the 15-25 age bracket, at 66 percent. Between 2004 and 2014, according to economist S. Akbar Zaidi, there has been a 432 percent increase in girls’ enrolment at universities. Mobility has also increased — women who can visit markets alone rose by 12 percent in the past five years — now at 37 percent.

All these statistics are reflected in the changes in the labour force profile. Female labour force participation increased from 16 percent in 2001 to 24 percent in 2012, rising eight percent in a decade, as female unemployment went down from 16.5 percent to nine percent. While women being a quarter of the workforce is still substantially below regional averages, the rate at which it is changing is significant, as is the fact that the increase is not only in agricultural work — the traditional mainstay of women — but also in the formal economy and in the services industries.

If almost a quarter of the workforce — one in every four employees — is now women, it would mean that working women are no longer an aberration. The earlier reflex reaction at sexual harassment was questioning why women were working outside the home at all, or telling women to quit their jobs and sit at home. That is no longer viable.

The primary reason why women did not openly complain about harassment was that they wanted to or needed to continue working. Women’s presence at the workplace is now generally not challenged, even if their roles, responsibilities and authority continue to be.



There is also strength in numbers and women are not as isolated as they previously were. The dynamics between being the only woman in a workplace and being one out of many is significantly different. Additionally, economic independence and the ability to contribute towards household expenses significantly changes women's position inside domestic power hierarchies, which in turn impacts the kind of familial support networks available to contest harassment.

It also means employers will have to deal with women differently now. While lobbying for the 2010 law to be passed, the Alliance Against Sexual Harassment (AASHA) made a voluntary code of conduct on sexual harassment for organisations to adopt. Interestingly, the private sector came on board before even women's rights NGOs did, with over a thousand companies adopting and instituting it before the law was even passed.

In the statement of reasons in amending the law on sexual harassment in public places, the note by then Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani states: "This amendment will not only make the public and work environment safer for women but ... more and more women will get the courage to enter the job market." As women's employment becomes economically desirable and the preconditions are in place, women will increasingly influence the terms of engagement as these sexual harassment cases show.

But women aren't cresting any waves yet.

Five years ago, a young woman committed suicide because her accusation of sexual harassment was not taken seriously. Haleema Rafique, a cricketer who played with the Multan Cricket Club — along with three other players — accused the chairman of the club of sexual harassment. He filed a suit of 20 million rupees against the girls after the Pakistan Cricket Board inquiry committee did not find evidence to support the accusation. Her family says she could not cope with the social censure and with her trauma being rubbished by the authorities.

Even today, it is still difficult for women to report cases because of the power hierarchies involved. Rarely are there instances of junior staffers sexually harassing line managers or senior executives. By going public, women risk taunts, jeers, workplace ostracism, penalties and professional losses, social censure and family opprobrium. All this in addition to the emotional toll such acts take on women. The usual pattern in discrediting women's testimonies is character assassination, of focusing on past behaviour, dress, relationships and so on.

Norm setting is a universal function of the privileged and establishing what is acceptable is a function of power. By allowing women to define what is normal and acceptable and what is not, laws on sexual harassment subvert gendered power relations and hence trigger severe public reaction.

The possibility that an accusation could be fabricated prompts a unique panic. In Pakistan's context, where fake assault, theft, kidnapping and even murder cases are filed by the dozens everyday (the institutionalised practice of 'intiqami karwai' or acts of vengeance), the possibility of the misuse of no other law leads to calls against the law itself.

Despite symbolic power, the laws have constrained outreach. The sexual harassment at workplace law only extends to formal workplaces and does not cover the informal economy where the bulk of women still work, such as in the agriculture sector. The law regarding harassment at public places, which is not well known by women or well understood even by the police, is tougher to prosecute, and does not have many prominent success stories yet.

Sexual harassment is notoriously hard to prove. It can easily degenerate into 'he said/she said' statements when accusations are flung around and it is one person's word against another. But there are ways around it.

With workplace harassment, the law itself is expansive enough to allow a broad-range interpretation, and includes verbal harassment, and no material evidence is necessary to lodge a complaint.

Women have found innovative ways of providing proof even years after the incident — such as by writing down details when such an act occurs, dating it and sending it to one's self through courier or registered mail and leaving it sealed till they decide to formally complain. The authorities concerned can then open the sealed, courier-dated document to ensure the evidence was not fabricated overnight.

There have been many sexual harassment complaints in which there is no proof or circumstantial evidence, but trained investigators have been able to hold harassers guilty by establishing patterns. Despite harassers bringing in people to vouch for their character, investigators speak to others associated with either the victim or harasser one-on-one in confidentiality without involving police or the courts and unearth corroborating factors.

“In 90 percent of cases, harassers target more than one person and it's not a stand-alone act. We know how to get to that,” says Maliha Sayed, executive director of Mehrgarh, an institution specialising in this and which has dealt with almost 4,000 cases of sexual harassment.

But to know these mechanisms, women experiencing harassment have to reach out to others, to look up the law and to go through the systems that have been put in place.

It is here that things become touchy.

This issue exploded in India last year. A senior law student crowdsourced and published a list of over 60 renowned Indian male academics who, she said, were sexual harassers based on what others had told her privately.

Some seasoned Indian feminists, who have been political vanguards and fought for women's rights over decades, wrote a cautionary letter about unsubstantiated, anonymous accusations and underlined the need for due process so as not to delegitimise the struggle against sexual harassment. It divided the women's movement into what some referred to as a 'feminist civil war.'

Older feminists were accused by young feminists of protecting male academics belonging to their own class, of being upper-caste apologists, of upholding a system that had failed women. Younger feminists promoted unconventional and radical methods of naming and shaming sexual predators because, they argued, that the due process didn't work for them. In the generational divide, the older feminists were dismayed that all their work and struggles were summarily dismissed and that the principle of fairness was being overridden.

The same dynamic also played out in Canada where committed feminists such as writer Margaret Atwood expressed concerns over the #MeToo movement and the eclipsing of due process in a case of a Canadian academic. She faced the same anger and rejection and was dismissed as redundant by younger women. Atwood mused over the choices in an opinion piece in *The Globe and Mail*: “Fix the system, bypass it, or burn it down?” she asks.

The same dilemma has emerged in Pakistan.

Those who have been part of the women's movement for decades and have fought to institutionalise women's rights emphasise the need to engage with the system, however flawed it may be, and work to fix it and not bypass it. For instance, they insist women facing sexual harassment at work must report it formally and follow up with case investigation and not accuse someone on social media and stop there.

Fouzia Saeed was the driving force behind the sexual harassment law and set up AASHA. Anis Haroon was the chair of the National Commission on Status of Women when the law was passed and currently is on the National Commission for Human Rights and Women's Action Forum (WAF). Uzma Noorani is with the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and runs Panah, a shelter for women and is part of Sindh's provincial Sexual Harassment Implementation Watch Committee. All three believe the existing law and its mechanisms must be used and just

accusing someone without formally complaining trivialises the process. Pointing to the success stories where women managed to get justice, they iterate the need for due process.

“Breaking the silence is critical when there are no systems in place. But now we have legal protocols, and they get undermined with media trials,” says Fouzia Saeed, referring to the accusations MPA Ayesha Gulalai made against Imran Khan.

Anis Haroon illustrates with the recent case from the University of Karachi, where the victim did not have screenshots or other forms of proof but a pattern of behaviour was established and the offending professor was prohibited from entering the university ever again. In National College of Arts (NCA), Rawalpindi, female faculty members fought a case against the director of the campus and, in accordance with the recommendation of the inquiry committee on sexual harassment, NCA announced that he had been “compulsorily retired.”

“Speaking out is important but you should follow through,” suggests Sayed. “Women have to decide what their goal is. There are now forums for resolving things. If those are not used, then it’s just accusations, statements and controversy. The process should not be unjust to anybody. At least try using the mechanisms first.”

All women’s rights activists at the same time point to the need of believing the victim.

“It’s a rubbish argument that women make such claims for publicity,” says Haroon. “Here, it only offers notoriety, abuse and wrecked nerves. No woman will make such claims lightly. We believe them. If they approach us, we always help them.”

Those who professionally investigate sexual harassment cases say it is unhelpful to look at allegations as true or false. Since an allegation is a statement of belief that some wrong has occurred, they suggest the assessment should judge whether the charge is substantiated or not, and not be framed as whether it is true or not.

In most cases, globally and not just in Pakistan, women generally file complaints after some time has passed after the incident and they can gather the courage, secure themselves in a support network or are no longer in a position subservient to the abuser.

“Only those in a position of privilege will ask questions such as why didn’t she report it when it happened,” argues Noorani. “[Those who cast aspersions] have not experienced the pervading confusion, vulnerability and insecurity when such acts happen. The law has no statute of limitations. Women can report no matter how much time has lapsed.”

One significant influence on public disclosure is if women realise what is happening to them is a pattern; that they are not alone in experiencing this. It could be the knowledge that the abuser is a serial harasser. Or it could be impersonal — the understanding that what they are going through is a phenomenon across society or even across countries and cultures. Having instant access to such information and to connect with others has become pivotal.

Accessible media has been a game changer for women. The instantaneous mass outreach of social media enables trends to become global, such as #MeToo and #TimesUp. Activists had earlier tried to catalyse such moments around rights-based movements — for instance, the World Social Forums in the early 2000s — but without social media platforms, they were unsustainable. The Aurat March is another example of the cascade effect, as women’s marches were held across the United States for the past two years.

Social media platforms have created and democratised space for women.

Often women experiencing sexual harassment experience anger, confusion and self-doubt. The act of speaking out breaks through the isolation women experience and as others share their experiences, it allows patterns to emerge through a cascade effect.

While condemnation of women who speak out is routine, social media has created channels for people to express solidarity. In the recent cases where women have accused men on Twitter, many women have expressed support and admiration and said the simple words that women often do not get to hear: "I believe you." Many women on social media were unflinching in their support for victims and pointed out the hypocrisy and misogyny of gender and cultural hierarchies. In a departure from the norm, many men have also expressed support to women who speak out, have condemned harassers and challenged other men who defend them.

In one case, it had an instant effect. Patari stated that its CEO accused of harassment would be stepping down, expressed complete support for victims of harassment and announced a detailed investigation, and through a statement by investors, iterated its commitment to positive and progressive workplace values. It was a best-case scenario. Conversely, the organisation The Digital Factory (TDF) in a statement denied all charges against its chief — also accused of harassment and lewd behaviour — and said that the accusations are based on personal grudges to defame the organisation.

There has simultaneously been an outpouring of scorn and outright abuse against Shafi. When known activist and social analyst Marvi Sirmed observed that the broadcast media persons condemning Shafi were also known for harassment, she also faced a barrage of abuse, much of it also amounting to sexual harassment. Social media provides the anonymity and amplification that allows for diatribes and taunts against the victims. The Federal Investigation Agency and private organisations such as Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) and Bolo Bhi are working to address online harassment as a phenomenon. DRF has set up a cyber harassment helpline, through which 1,500 cases were registered in a single year.

"Nothing works," fretted a senior activist friend. "We thought better laws would fix things, then we thought increased education would, then that women becoming financially independent would, then women in leadership positions would."

She goes quiet for a moment.

"I understand structures and patriarchy and all that, but so much could be eased if these boys just had better manners."

The strength of the workplace law is that it has an inbuilt implementation system. It mandates all organisations to have inquiry committees to deal with complaints and provincial and a federal ombudsperson's office that can either be approached directly by women, or be used to challenge decisions of the committees. The ombudsperson's decision can be appealed before the governor, whose decision will be final. The courts are not involved. No material evidence is required to approach the ombudsperson and verbal testimonies are given weightage.

If organisations have not made standing inquiry committees, that complaint can be taken to the ombudsperson's office too. Women who are not employees but have been harassed in a work-related environment, for instance freelancers, can directly appeal to the ombudsperson's office.

The other law is that which addresses sexual harassment in public places and covers all spaces outside the workplace, including private gatherings. This is the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) 509. In addition to physical sexual advances, it includes words, sounds, gestures and exhibiting of objects of sexual nature that women find offensive. It is punishable by three years in prison or fines or both. These cases, heard before first class magistrates, involve the courts, are bailable and require warrants for arrest.

All provinces are meant to have sexual harassment implementation watch committees. Though Balochistan and Khyber Pukhtunkhwa have not instituted these as yet, the ones in Sindh and Punjab are in place and have dealt with numerous cases already. The committees comprise bureaucrats but also rights activists and civil society members. While the appointment of Krishna Kumari as a senator was celebrated by many for the election of a Hindu Dalit from Tharparkar, many people may not know of her expertise on sexual harassment code compliance and that she ran Sindh's provincial centre of Alliance Against Sexual Harassment (AASHA) for years. Many other women politicians have also been active in anti-harassment efforts including Shahnaz Wazir Ali, Sherry Rehman, Shazia Marri and Attiya Inayatullah.

There are many organisations that assist women attempting to deal with sexual harassment. These include Mehrgarh, Interactive Resource Center (IRC), Women in Struggle for Empowerment (Wise), Tehrik-i-Niswan and Women's Action Forum (WAF), among others.— N.B.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1405703>

## June 2018

*NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUN 18th TO JUN 24th 2018*

### *Rape survivor commits suicide in Multan*

By Our Correspondent

Published: June 19, 2018

MULTAN: A rape survivor in Layyah committed suicide on Sunday after police refused to register an FIR. Reportedly, the 29-year-old, a resident of Chak No 126 Chobara, was kidnapped and raped by three influential men in the area.

When she attempted to register an FIR against the men, the Chobara police station SHO refused to do so.

After being turned away by the SHO, the victim went to the Layyah DPO who ordered the Chobara DSP to further investigate the matter and register an FIR.

Professor among six held for 'rape, blackmailing' of student in Multan

However, even after the directives issued by the Layyah DPO, the SHO did not register an FIR. Disheartened by the lack of justice, the rape victim committed suicide by consuming para-phenylenediamine (hair dye).

She was rushed to Nishtar Hospital where she breathed her last.

When contacted the Chobara police station SHO showed that an FIR had been registered on June 14, the date when the DPO ordered an investigation.

However, no action has been taken against the rapists and they still remain at large.

Published in The Express Tribune, June 19th, 2018.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1737004/1-rape-survivor-commits-suicide-multan/>

Five charity workers gang-raped in India

Reuters Updated June 23, 2018

CHENNAI: Five Indian anti-trafficking campaigners were gang-raped at gunpoint during an awareness programme they were organising in a village, police said on Friday.

Unidentified men picked up nine activists during a street play performance in Kochang village in Jharkhand state and drove them into a dense forest, where the men were beaten up and the women raped, police officer Ashwini Kumar Sinha said.

“It is a very rare case, where people working on anti-trafficking have been targeted,” Sinha told this news agency in a phone interview from Khunti district of Jharkhand.

“We are not ruling out the possibility of the involvement of trafficking gangs and are investigating all aspects.” The street play had been organised by charity Asha Kiran, which runs a shelter home for the rehabilitation of rescued girls in Khunti district of Jharkhand, which has been identified as a trafficking hotspot.

There are around 200 rescued girls in Asha Kiran’s shelter. Most of were trafficked into domestic servitude to cities where a growing middle class is looking for cheap live-in labour.

Jharkhand is among the top five states in India that reports increasing cases of human trafficking, with traffickers targetting poor villages, convincing vulnerable families to send their daughters away for employment, campaigners said.

Indian activists fighting to curb the trafficking of women and children condemned the shocking attack on “frontline workers”.

“We are still processing what has happened,” said Rajiv Ranjan Sinha of the Jharkhand Anti-Trafficking Network — a coalition of 14 grassroots organisations working in the central Indian state.

“This is the first time field workers have been targetted and it is both surprising and shocking. It is now going to become more difficult to work on this issue.” India has seen an increase in reports of human trafficking in recent years. Almost 20,000 women and children were victims of trafficking in 2016, a rise of 25 per cent from the previous year, according to government data.

Activists say the figures are under-reported, especially due to a lack of awareness in rural areas, emphasising the importance of programmes run by various charities to combat trafficking.

“The incident underlines the dangers on the ground and the fact that human trafficking is an organised and ruthless crime,” said Rishi Kant of Shakti Vahini, an anti-trafficking charity that also works in Jharkhand.

“Every day young girls are being rescued from domestic servitude in Indian cities. Many of them are from remote villages, which is why these awareness programmes are so important and the incident is shocking.”

Published in Dawn, June 23rd, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1415570/five-charity-workers-gang-raped-in-india>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUN 11th TO JUN 17th 2018

Rape survivor commits suicide in Multan

Published: June 19, 2018

MULTAN: A rape survivor in Layyah committed suicide on Sunday after police refused to register an FIR.

Reportedly, the 29-year-old, a resident of Chak No 126 Chobara, was kidnapped and raped by three influential men in the area.

When she attempted to register an FIR against the men, the Chobara police station SHO refused to do so.

After being turned away by the SHO, the victim went to the Layyah DPO who ordered the Chobara DSP to further investigate the matter and register an FIR.

Professor among six held for 'rape, blackmailing' of student in Multan

However, even after the directives issued by the Layyah DPO, the SHO did not register an FIR. Disheartened by the lack of justice, the rape victim committed suicide by consuming para-phenylenediamine (hair dye).

She was rushed to Nishtar Hospital where she breathed her last.

When contacted the Chobara police station SHO showed that an FIR had been registered on June 14, the date when the DPO ordered an investigation.

However, no action has been taken against the rapists and they still remain at large.

Published in The Express Tribune, June 19th, 2018.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1737004/1-rape-survivor-commits-suicide-multan/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUN 4th TO JUN 10th 2018

LHC acquits man convicted of stabbing young college student 23 times in Lahore  
By News Desk

Published: June 4, 2018

The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday acquitted the main accused in the Khadija stabbing case, a year after a judicial magistrate had sentenced him to seven years in prison.

The accused, Shah Hussain, who is the son of lawyer Tanvir Hashmi, was arrested and shifted to jail last year for allegedly stabbing 24-year-old Khadija Siddiqui a year earlier.

Khadija, a law student and class fellow of the accused who miraculously survived the attack, petitioned the court that Shah had stabbed her 23 times.

Convict Shah Hussain, son of Advocate Tanvir Hashmi, had moved an appeal in LHC where Justice Sardar Ahmad Naeem allowed the appeal.

A judicial magistrate on July 29, 2017, had sentenced Hussain to seven-year imprisonment under section 324 (attempted murder) of Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), two-year under section 337A(i) (causing injuries), five-year under section 337A(ii), one-year under section 337F(i), three-year under section 337F(ii) and five-year under section 337F(iv) and all punishments were to run concurrently, making the total punishment for seven years imprisonment.

However, an appellate court in March this year had lessened the jail term from seven years to five years.

Advocate Hassan Rizvi, the counsel for Khadija Siddiqui, said that they would challenge the decision of the high court before the Supreme Court.

On May 3, 2016, she went to Davis Road to pick up her sister from a school. When the two were about to get into the car, the convict attacked her. The victim said her younger sister was also injured. As the attacker tried to flee, she grabbed him and his helmet fell off after which she recognised him.

She said the accused also used to harass her before the incident took place. Khadija's sister also recorded her statement and recognised Shah Hussain as the assailant in the courtroom.

Stabbed 23 times, survivor to sit in same exam as her attacker

In its decision, the trial court had held that the convict had stabbed the victim mercilessly as severe injuries on her vital body parts clearly proved that the convict stabbed her without any limit to commit her to death. Nothing was in favor of the convict after cross-examination of eye-witnesses, the ruling said.

“The prosecution has established the case without any shadow of even a minor doubt,” the judge had observed.

Khadija Siddiqui and Shah Hussain both were class fellows at a local law college.

Expressing annoyance over the verdict, Khadija's lawyer Hassan Niazi said his hope had been shattered with the shocking verdict.

He said the short order had left him shell-shocked. “Today's verdict of the Lahore High Court has proved that only high and mighty shall win [in Pakistan],” he added.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1727596/1-lhc-overtums-jail-sentence-acquits-main-accused-khadija-stabbing-case/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 28th TO JUN 3rd 2018

MoU signed to work on harassment against women

A Reporter June 02, 2018

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Research and Security Studies and the Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection against Harassment have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to work on harassment against women.

Under the agreement, both the organisations will seek collaboration to promote a mechanism for the enforcement of the Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010 and carry out independent research, awareness campaigns and development in the country.

According to a statement, CRSS is committed to the cause of independent research and nonpartisan analysis in Pakistan and the establishment of the ombudsman secretariat is to investigate, inquire, recommend and implement on matters relating to sexual harassment, hostile work environment and gender-based discrimination at workplaces under the Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010.



Published in Dawn, June 2nd, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1411411/mou-signed-to-work-on-harassment-against-women>

Peshawar: Teenage girl 'stripped naked' in crowded street

Our Correspondent June 3, 2018

PESHAWAR: A teenage girl was allegedly stripped naked in a crowded street in the urban Kachi Mohalla locality to punish her family for filing a complaint against the accused at the local police station.

One Shakila, 50, told the police that one Zafar clashed with her nephew Waseem on Friday after which she and her family members lodged a complaint at the Gulfat Hussain Shaheed Police Station.

She added that while on way back home she took her 15-year old daughter, (I), from the house of her brother.

“Mazhar, brother of Zafar, intercepted us on the way. He tore off the clothes of my daughter in public. When people around us rushed to help us, the accused escaped. One of my relatives, Tanvir covered my daughter with a chaddar,” Shakila complained in the first information report lodged with the Gulfat Hussain Shaheed Police Station. The complainant said there were a number of people in the street who were witnesses to what had happened to her daughter.

The police lodged the case under Sections 354 A of the Pakistan Penal Code.

“I want strict punishment for all those who were involved in this act so that nobody could dare do such a thing,” the victim told reporters.

She said that she was going home along with her mother from her uncle's house when the accused attacked her. She alleged that the accused removed her shawl and tore off her clothes. “The locals rushed to cover me with their chaddars,” she added.

Station House Officer Wajid Shah told reporters that the two parties were relatives and had clashed. He said both the groups had approached the police.

“We lodged their complaints and sent the victims to hospital. In the meanwhile when the girl was going home from her uncle's house, Mazhar stopped her and tore off her clothes. The victim later approached the police and we lodged the FIR,” Wajid Shah said.

He added that two members of the accused party had been arrested and raids were being conducted to apprehend Mazhar.

District Nazim Muhammad Asim Khan visited the victim family late Friday and directed the police to arrest the accused at the earliest. The incident is first of its kind in Peshawar in recent years.

A similar incident was reported in Dera Ismail Khan a few months back.

Meanwhile, Capital City Police Officer Qazi Jamilur Rahman has taken note of the incident and constituted a team headed by Superintendent of Police City to arrest the accused.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/324871-teenage-girl-stripped-naked-in-crowded-street>

**July 2018**

**NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUNE 25TH TO JULY 1ST 2018**

***India most dangerous country for women with sexual violence rife: poll***

By Reuters

Published: June 26, 2018

LONDON: India is the world's most dangerous country for women due to the high risk of sexual violence and being forced into slave labour, according to a poll of global experts released on Tuesday.

War-torn Afghanistan and Syria ranked second and third in the Thomson Reuters Foundation survey of about 550 experts on women's issues, followed by Somalia and Saudi Arabia. The only Western nation in the top 10 was the United States, which ranked joint third when respondents were asked where women were most at risk of sexual violence, harassment and being coerced into sex.

Woman travels to India seeking treatment for depression, left drugged, raped and beheaded

The poll was a repeat of a survey in 2011 that found experts saw Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, India, and Somalia as the most dangerous countries for women. Experts said India moving to the top of poll showed not enough was being done to tackle the danger women faced, more than five years after the rape and murder of a student on a bus in Delhi made violence against women a national priority.

"India has shown utter disregard and disrespect for women...rape, marital rapes, sexual assault and harassment, female infanticide has gone unabated," said Manjunath Gangadhara, an official at the Karnataka state government. "The [world's] fastest growing economy and leader in space and technology is shamed for violence committed against women."

Government data shows reported cases of crime against women rose by 83 per cent between 2007 and 2016, when there were four cases of rape reported every hour. The survey asked respondents which five of the 193 United Nations member states they thought were most dangerous for women and which country was worst in terms of healthcare, economic resources, cultural or traditional practices, sexual violence and harassment, non-sexual violence and human trafficking.

Respondents also ranked India the most dangerous country for women in terms of human trafficking, including sex slavery and domestic servitude, and for customary practices such as forced marriage, stoning and female infanticide. India's Ministry of Women and Child Development declined to comment on the survey results.

Trapped by war

Afghanistan fared worst in four of the seven questions, with concerns over healthcare and conflict-related violence. Kimberly Otis, director of advancement at Women for Afghan Women, said women and girls faced severe gender-based violence, abuse, illiteracy, poverty, and other human rights offences.

"The ongoing war and conflict are getting worse in Afghanistan, which puts the lives of women and girls at increasing risk," said US-based Otis, a survey participant.

Afghanistan's Public Health Minister Ferozuddin Feroz said the deteriorating security situation was making life difficult for women, with large parts of the country still in the control of Taliban fighters after nearly 17 years of war.

“Nowadays, suicide bombings and armed conflict is the third [highest] cause of deaths and disability in Afghanistan,” he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview in London. “Instead of focusing [spending] on maternal health, on nutritional status, we spend it on trauma.”

The impact of a seven-year war drove Syria into third place in the survey, amid concerns over access to healthcare and both sexual and non-sexual violence. “There are so many dangers for girls and women,” said Maria Al Abdeh, executive director of Women Now For Development, which supports women’s centres in Syria.

Indian woman ‘lets’ boyfriend rape 13-year-old niece

“There is sexual violence by government forces. Domestic violence and child marriage are increasing and more women are dying in childbirth. The tragedy is nowhere near an end.”

Somalia, where more than two decades of war has fuelled a culture of violence and weakened institutions meant to uphold the law, was again named as one of the five most dangerous countries for women. Saudi Arabia ranked fifth, with women’s rights experts saying there had been some progress in recent years, but the recent arrests of female activists ahead of the lifting of a ban on women driving showed much more needed to be done.

“One of the worst laws that prevent women from having equal opportunities is guardianship – because every woman is subjected to a male guardian. She cannot get a passport, cannot travel, sometimes she cannot work,” said Ahlam Akram, founder of BASIRA (British Arabs Supporting Universal Women’s Rights) in the UK.

“We need to completely obliterate this system. I think change is coming, but it takes time.”

#MeToo puts US on list

Experts said the surprise addition of the United States in the top 10 most dangerous countries for women came down to the #MeToo and Time’s Up campaigns against sexual harassment and violence that have dominated headlines for months.

“People want to think income means you’re protected from misogyny, and sadly that’s not the case,” said Cindy Southworth, executive vice president of the Washington-based National Network to End Domestic Violence. “We are going to look back and see this as a very powerful tipping point...we’re blowing the lid off and saying ‘#Metoo and Time’s Up’.”

Rounding out the top 10 most dangerous countries for women were Pakistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen and Nigeria. India, Libya and Myanmar were considered the world’s most dangerous nations for women exploited by human traffickers in a global crime worth an estimated \$150 billion a year.

“In many countries the simple fact of being female creates a heightened risk of becoming a victim of slavery,” said Nick Grono, chief executive of the Freedom Fund, the first private donor fund dedicated to ending slavery. The poll of 548 people was conducted online, by phone and in person between March 26 and May 4 with an even spread across Europe, Africa, the Americas, South East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific.

Respondents included aid professionals, academics, healthcare staff, non-government organisation workers, policy-makers, development specialists and social commentators.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1742747/3-india-dangerous-country-women-sexual-violence-rife-global-poll/>

**August 2018**

**NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 20TH TO AUGUST 26TH 2018**

**TWO WOMEN SUBJECTED TO SEXUAL ASSAULT**

By Noor Soomro

Published: August 20, 2018

**RAHIM YAR KHAN:** Two women were sexually assaulted in separate incidents in Rahim Yar Khan on Sunday, Express News reported.

In the first incident that occurred in Dari Azeem Khan area, police said that Z\* was allegedly abducted by accused Abdul Khaliq and his accomplices from her home while she was alone. The suspects took the victim to an undisclosed location where the accused sexually assaulted her. The victim was shifted to a hospital for a medical examination. Police have registered a case and have started investigations.

Sexual assault case: Police fail to catch suspects

Meanwhile, another woman was raped in Rahim Yar Khan's Moza Jauharwala area. A police official said that S\* was alone in her house when accused Muhammad Hanif and his friend barged into her house and allegedly raped her.

He added that when the victim raised a hue and cry, the culprits fled the scene. The woman was shifted to a hospital for medical examination. A case has been registered against the accused.

Earlier on August 16, a woman was raped in the city's Tiranda Muhammad Panah area. A police official said that the accused Sajid Ali barged into the house of S\*, a resident of Chak No 142-NP, and allegedly raped her when she was alone.

After committing the offence, the accused left the victim in a semi-naked state and fled the scene.

In recent months, cases of sexual abuse have been on the rise across Punjab. Most cases have been reported from Faisalabad, Rahim Yar Khan, Gujranwala and other parts of the province. The victims include women and minor girls or boys.

Teen girl who was gang-raped for two days dies in Rawalpindi

A report issued by NGO Sahil revealed that the highest incidents of sexual abuse involving children were recorded in Punjab. Earlier, Sahil executive director Manizeh Bano said the sexual exploitation of women and children across Punjab had been reported over many years.

She added hundreds of rape cases have been identified, but only a few victims have come forward to seek justice.

\* Names withheld to protect identity

Published in The Express Tribune, August 20th, 2018.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1784895/1-two-women-subjected-sexual-assault/>

**September 2018**

**NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 24TH TO SEPTEMBER 30TH 2018**

**COUPLE KILLED OVER 'HONOUR'**

The Newspaper's Correspondent September 25, 2018

TAXILA: A newlywed couple were killed allegedly over honour in Golra village in the limits of Attock Saddar police station in the early hours of Monday.

Quoting the suspects, police said the deceased woman had contracted marriage against the will of her parents after eloping with a man, who was a resident of Chotta Lahore, Swabi, a few weeks ago. After marrying, the couple started living in a small village.

The woman's father traced the couple and along with his brother entered their house where they tied the victims' hands and slit their throats.

On getting information, the police shifted the bodies to DHQ Hospital. Police have arrested both suspects and recovered the knife used in the murder.

Published in Dawn, September 25th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1434877/couple-killed-over-honour>

**NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 10TH TO SEPTEMBER 16TH 2018**

**TWO THARI WOMEN COMMIT SUICIDE**

A Correspondent Updated September 11, 2018

MITHI: Two women committed suicide in separate incidents in Tharparkar district on Monday.

Reshma Kolhi, 22, took the extreme action in her house located in Sabosan village near Nagarparkar town by strangulating herself with a rope. She could not buy essentially needed footwear due to abject poverty, her husband, Wagho Kolhi, said.

In Napelo village, near Dahil town, a 27-year-old woman, Samina Rahimoon, committed suicide by using the same method.

Her relatives said she gave in to starvation as the family had nothing to eat for several days.

Published in Dawn, September 11th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1432105/two-thari-women-commit-suicide>

**WOMEN'S VOTE**

Editorial September 12, 2018

ONCE again, PTI's Shaukat Ali Yousafzai defeated PML-N's Rashad Khan in the Shangla-I by-election that took place on Sept 10. This time, however, Mr Yousafzai secured 41,960 votes against Mr Khan's 22,113 votes — a large margin compared to his narrow win in the general elections on July 25, when the former obtained just 17,300 votes against the latter's 15,600 votes. So what made the difference? The increased participation of women — primarily. For the first time, the ECP had declared results from the general election null and void due to the low turnout of female voters. To encourage women to take part in the democratic process, the Election Act makes it mandatory to

have at least 10pc of total votes in each constituency cast by women. This new provision was introduced thanks to the efforts of women lawmakers. Encouragingly, only three constituencies had a female voter turnout of less than 10pc, compared to 17 constituencies in 2013. Twenty-two constituencies had a higher turnout of women than men. And in the tribal regions, there was a 36pc increase in women voters — the highest in the country.

In Shangla, only 5.9pc women showed up to cast their votes on July 25. In the repolling, that figure increased to 13.7pc. Patriarchal traditions limit women's mobility and bar their political participation. Keeping in mind the traditions and realities of the land, tents were provided for purdah-observing women, transport was provided by political parties to and from the polling stations, and female staff and police were deployed inside polling booths, this time around. While much remains to be done by the political parties to adhere to election rules and nominate at least 5pc women candidates to the general seats, the ECP must be lauded for its efforts to bring ordinary women into the political fold. But it should also be noted that these numbers are still relatively low. Women are 'half the sky' — not 10pc. The state must take the first steps. Society will follow.

Published in Dawn, September 12th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1432418/womens-vote>

#### SRI LANKA WOMEN SELLING KIDNEYS TO REPAY LOANS: UN EXPERT RECORDER REPORT SEP 12TH, 2018 COLOMBO

Sri Lankan war widows and women in former conflict zones are being forced to sell their kidneys to pay loan sharks, a UN expert said Tuesday, urging government intervention. Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, the UN's independent expert on effects of debt on human rights, said that debt collectors were also demanding sexual favours.

“Women are at times exposed to psychological and physical violence by these collectors ...,” he said in a statement after a visit to the island nation. “I have also learned of cases of borrowers who have tried to sell their kidneys for money to repay loans,” he said without elaborating.

Sri Lanka is home to tens of thousands of war widows nine years after the 37-year civil conflict ended, many of them forced to use small “microfinance” loans to survive

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/09/20180912406613/>

#### WOMAN DIES, THREE INJURED IN ACID ATTACK IN TOBA TEK SINGH By Kashif Farid

Published: September 15, 2018

FAISALABAD: A woman has died while three others suffered burns after being attacked with acid in Toba tek Singh's Gojra area, Express News reported. The husband of the deceased and her two children were injured in the attack in Saddar 92-JB.

Toba Tek Singh DPO Zulfiqar Ahmed said that Muhammad Anwar, his wife Sakina Bibi and their two sons Hassan and Adil were fast asleep in their house when accused Safdar barged in and threw acid on the family.

As a result, all the victims suffered severe burns and were shifted to Tehsil Headquarter Hospital Gojra, the DPO added. Later, the victims were referred to Allied Hospital Faisalabad.

He maintained, “Sakina Bibi succumbed to her injuries as most of her body was badly burnt while her husband and children were being provided treatment at the hospital.”

The doctors at the facility said the condition of the children was critical. They said the attack had left the husband's eyes severely affected.

Meanwhile, the police claimed to have arrested the suspect and registered an FIR No 401/18 against him under sections 302,324, 336-B and 34.

Zulfiqar Ahmed revealed that Muhammad Anwar and his family would stop the accused from visiting their house. "This enraged the suspect and he took the extreme step," he pointed out.

Earlier on September 13, a man threw acid on his wife, mother-in-law and four other persons.

Police said accused Shafqat was married to Nimra Shahzadi and the couple developed some differences and the woman left her husband and started staying at her parents' house. The accused had approached his in-laws for reconciliation but failed.

On the day of the incident, the victim was travelling with her mother Rani Bibi in a Qingqi rickshaw when the suspect spotted them in Manawan. He was riding a motorcycle and he threw acid on them. Resultantly, six persons were affected. The woman and her mother suffered serious burns and were rushed to a nearby hospital.

The injured were identified as Rani Bibi, Nimra Shahzadi, Afshan Attique, Shehar Bano Ghulam Murtaza, and Aiza. An FIR was registered against the accused on the complaint of Rani Bibi.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 15th, 2018

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1803617/1-woman-dies-three-injured-acid-attack-toba-tek-singh/>

#### NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 3TH TO SEPTEMBER 9TH 2018 ENGRO ENERGY, UN TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THAR RECORDER REPORT

HYDERABAD: In a bid to advance women's empowerment activities and initiatives in Thar, Engro Energy Limited (EEL) along with its subsidiaries Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC); Engro Powergen Thar (Pvt) Limited (EPTL) and Thar Foundation (TF) – the CSR wing of the Companies – signed the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), with support of UN Women.

Speaking on the occasion, Shamsuddin Ahmad Shaikh, Engro Energy, said, "We have a strong commitment towards gender balancing initiatives with a specific focus on affirmative action which enhances women's empowerment. As part of our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)s, our CSR-wing, the Thar Foundation, has already instituted various programs aimed at women's empowerment and their financial inclusion financial inclusion of females."

Country Representative of UN Women Pakistan, Jamshed M. Kazi, said: "Managing diversity can be a strong indicator of future performance and I am delighted to know that Engro Energy Limited is already working hard to ensure women enter the workforce and are exposed to equal opportunities and rights."

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2018/09/07/5-page/737520-news.html>

**October 2018**

**NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 15TH TO OCTOBER 21TH 2018**

**CIVIL SECRETARIAT GUARD DENIES WOMAN ENTRY WITHOUT DUPATTA**

Xari Jalil | Imran Gabol Updated October 20, 2018

LAHORE: The government representatives on Friday took the flak after a guard at the Minister's Block of the Punjab Civil Secretariat stopped a woman from entering the premises without a dupatta on her head.

The issue surfaced when a woman uploaded a video on social media showing that a guard had prevented her from entering without a dupatta. It shows the guard telling the visitor that the orders had been orally given by Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid and Chaudhry Zaheeruddin from the Public Prosecution Department.

Both of them vehemently denied issuing any such order and the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, through its official account, also condemned the allegation.

Dr Yasmin Rashid tweeted: "This is quite absurd indeed! Neither has such an instruction been given nor is it possible to discriminate against anyone on this pretext. Have taken notice of this. The guard has been investigated and a show cause notice is being issued to him."

Her party page also supported her tweet: "The Minister @Dr\_YasminRashid has not issued any discriminatory orders like this. One should not hurl any blame/allegation without concrete evidence. You may report the incident to concerned authorities."

Speaking to Dawn, Personal Secretary to Chaudhry Zaheeruddin denied the involvement of the minister, and said whoever had done this was involved in character assassination.

"Thousands of people including women of all ages and attire enter inside everyday, and no one is told this," he said. "Someone is playing a prank of some kind for tarnishing our image," he said, adding "there are no such rules and no such orders."

Social media user Sidra Butt posted a video saying she had gone to the Minister's Block to find out veracity of an earlier claim she had heard about not being allowed inside without a dupatta and she found it to be true.

"Went to the Minister's Block, Civil Secretariat lhr today coz I heard of this issue that you can't enter without a dupatta. They refused me too. I asked for written orders and there were none. They used your name ma'am @Dr\_YasminRashid . You can see. @PTIOfficial #NayaPakistan".

She said she also asked politely for the written orders but was told that the orders had been orally communicated.

The guard in the video says the orders were given by the health minister after a woman came earlier, 'inappropriately dressed'. He said that after that incident Dr Rashid had told the guards not to allow entry to any woman who had not covered her head. Punjab Commission for the Status of Women chairperson Fauzia Viqar said, "instead of controlling how men should behave, women are controlled as always. Society needs to train its men if gender violence and discrimination is to end."

PU NOTICE:

In a somewhat similar case, the Punjab University administration on Friday directed the Institute of Biochemistry and Biotechnology (IBB) admin officer to remove the notice directing the girl students to wear dupatta on the premises of the institute.



A notice was signed by IBB Administrator Muhammad Rafiq in which the dress code for both boys and girls was defined and adherence was asked for.

The notice prohibited the boys from wearing shorts or 'casual clothes' and instead allowed pants and shirt or shalwar kameez only and girls were restrained from wearing shirts short of knee-length, and nothing other than a shalwar or trouser was allowed.

PU Registrar Dr Khalid Khan told Dawn that they had removed the notice and would take disciplinary action against the administrator who posted it. Quoting the administrator, he said the notice was posted on the direction of the head of the department, Dr Saima Sadaf.

Published in Dawn, October 20th, 2018

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1440074/civil-secretariat-guard-denies-woman-entry-without-dupatta>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 8TH TO OCTOBER 14TH 2018

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT LIKELY TO BOOST GDP BY AT LEAST 10%

By Bilal Hussain

Published: October 14, 2018

KARACHI: Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Vice President Saeeda Bano has stated that if women receive as many opportunities as the country's male population, the gross domestic product (GDP) will rise by at least 10%.

The FPCCI, spearheaded by Bano, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Jinnah University for Women (JUW) in a bid to establish industry-academia linkages for the advancement of academic research to promote industrial development in the country with focus on empowering women.

"The purpose of this initiative is to conduct joint research using equipment and facilities of one another to develop a better understanding and subsequently evaluate as well as create opportunities," Bano told The Express Tribune. The FPCCI will offer JUW students internships and assist them in industry-based research projects including startups.

She added that the chamber would continue to ink such MoUs with other universities like Karachi University, Dow University, Greenwich University and others to provide ample opportunities for fresh graduates to explore ideas, startups and look at the larger picture of the economy.

Bano stressed that Pakistan was in dire need of empowering women as it would help the flagging economy recover and eventually flourish.

Bano, a businesswoman herself, added that Pakistani women had no direct role in exports. Even Bangladesh has better female representation in exports than in Pakistan at around 5-10%. According to McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) research, \$28 trillion or 26% could be added to the annual global GDP in 2025 if women play a role in labour markets identical to that of men's.

"The long-term objective of this MoU is to empower women entrepreneurs and nurture female leaders," she said. "This can be achieved by increasing the number of girl students interested in technology, innovation, digitalisation, entrepreneurship and leadership."

“We will hopefully be doing as much as we can for the cause, but the government should also come forward and do some concrete work in this regard,” she added.

Bano argued that women should be trained properly for an extended period for participation in the economy. “A few days of workshops won’t help much.”

She added that she didn’t think men had been behind women’s plight in the country’s economy, but it had been women themselves.

“What I have seen is that women don’t support other women who climb the success ladder,” she lamented. “They criticise when they must have been supporting the women walking up the path of success.”

Published in The Express Tribune, October 14th, 2018.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1825267/2-women-empowerment-likely-boost-gdp-least-10/>

## **November 2018**

***NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 29TH TO NOVEMBER 4TH 2018***

### ***WOMEN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN COLD STORAGE***

By APP

Published: October 31, 2018

ISLAMABAD .: Several projects meant for facilitating women in Balochistan – including setting up of a women enclave, hostels for working women and special cells for them in jails – have yet to see the light of the day despite their approval by competent authorities two years back.

Separate cells for female inmates at different jails in Quetta, Mach, Dera Murad Jamali, Khuzdar and Gadani have not yet been set up, sources told APP on Tuesday.

There has been no progress either on the establishment of centres for women in Quetta and three new Special Beginning Birth and Women’s Centers (SBBWC) in Makran, Naseerabad and Zhob under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) at a cost of Rs120 Million, according to the sources.

Similarly, divisional women centres in Quetta, Sibi and Khuzdar, women enclave in Quetta and working women hostels were in the cold storage too, said the sources.

The women belonging to the provincial capital were still waiting for the promised pink bus service and no funds were earmarked for the project in the current fiscal year, they added.

According to Aisha Nasrin, a working woman, females in the conservative Balochistan province are even deprived of basic civic needs.

She laments that no seats are reserved for women in public buses due to which they have to face severe problems while travelling. She calls upon the government to establish baby care centres in Quetta and other cities of the province.

Women Development Secretary Sadiq Mandokhail told APP that her department was trying to get land in Quetta for the various women-related projects. He said that priority was to provide safe working environment for women.

Sidra Khan, a student, says that women are facing severe accommodation problems due to lack of government-run hostels and high rents of private accommodation despite being sub-standard. She urges government to find a proper solution to the accommodation problem.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1837632/1-women-development-projects-cold-storage/>