



# **RIGHTS, SHARES, AND CLAIMS: REALISING WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN SOUTH ASIA**

WORKING PAPER: RESOURCE MAPPING FOR  
WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS WORK IN PAKISTAN

2011-12

SOUTH ASIA  
WOMEN'S FUND

**SAWF**

## About South Asia Women's Fund (SAWF):

SAWF is a regional women's Fund, committed to supporting women-led interventions to enhance and strengthen access to women's human rights and countering violations thereof. It has worked closely with partners to support human rights in the context of conflict, identity, socio-economic deprivations and in relation to violence against women. In its present phase, it is committed to supporting the emergence of a regional human rights movement, which would address national and regional concerns. Its work is focused on developing a regional mandate that is informed by national realities, and is responsive to the rights and needs of the individual woman. The organisation, currently works in Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

## Consultant Researchers:

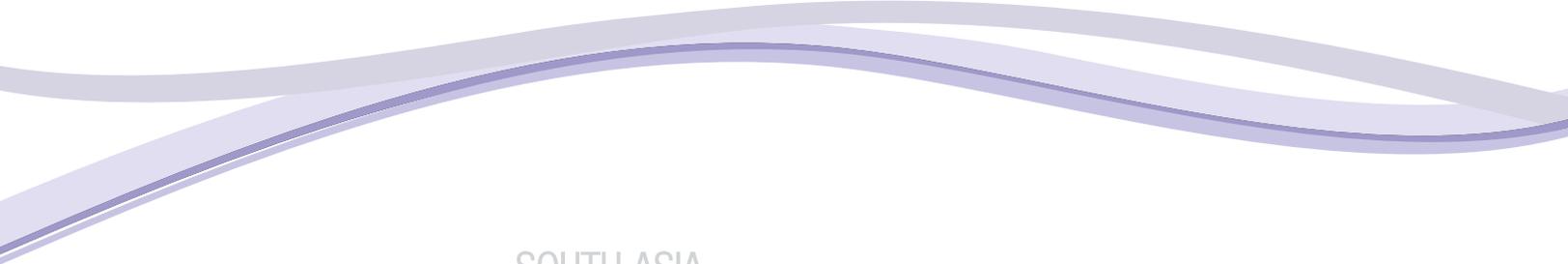
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## Acknowledgements:

This study would not have been possible without the participation of various actors engaged with grant making and grant seeking, namely, donor representatives, heads and staff members of NGOs, CBOs, CSOs and Women's Groups. We are deeply grateful and wish to thank each one of them for contributing to the study.

*Please note that the details of the study's participants are confidential.*



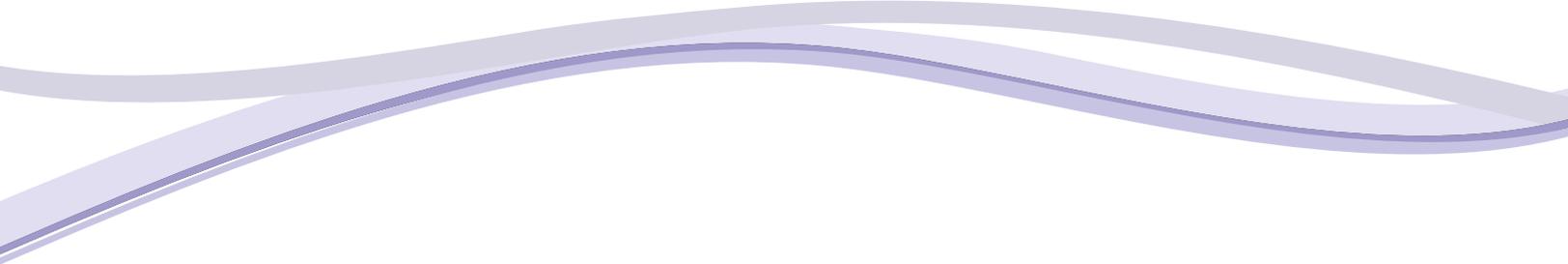
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RIGHTS, SHARES, AND CLAIMS: REALISING  
WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN SOUTH ASIA;  
*Working Paper: Resource Mapping for  
women's human rights work in Pakistan*

*Supported by*  
Ford Foundation





*First published by :*  
South Asia Women's Fund (SAWF)  
16/6A, Mohideen Terrace,  
Ward Place, Colombo-7, Sri Lanka  
in 2013

[www.sawf.info](http://www.sawf.info)

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*Cover Design:*  
Harsha Jagasia, Mumbai

*Printed by :*  
Shivam Arts  
211, 5th Lane, Nishatganj  
Lucknow-226007  
Phone : + 91 522 4104922, + 91 9415061690  
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## ABBREVIATIONS

BPFA	:	Beijing Platform for Action
CBO	:	Community Based Organisation
CEDAW	:	The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIDA	:	Canadian International Development Agency
CRC	:	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	:	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	:	Corporate Social Responsibility
DANIDA	:	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	:	Department for International Development
FATA	:	The Federally Administered Tribal Areas
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
INGO	:	International Non-Governmental Organisation
KPK	:	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
NATO	:	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	:	Non-Governmental Organisation
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programme
UNWOMEN	:	The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	:	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	:	Violence Against Women

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION	5
2.	CHAPTER II - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	9
	Challenges Faced in Undertaking Study	11
3.	CHAPTER III - OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN	13
	Women's Rights Activism: A Brief Look	14
	The State Response	16
4.	CHAPTER IV - CHANGING DONOR TRENDS	19
	Corporate Social Responsibility - New Avenue for Donor Aid	23
5.	CHAPTER V - GROUND REALITIES - KEY FINDINGS FROM THE PRIMARY RESEARCH	24
	Beneficiaries of Funding - Women or Communities?	24
	Budgetary Allocations for Women	25
	Work Approach: Rights Based vs Welfarist	26
	Gaps in Funding and Issues Faced	27
6.	CHAPTER VI - RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	33
7.	BIBLIOGRAPHY AND OTHER READINGS	36
8.	ANNEXURE I	38

## CHAPTER I- INTRODUCTION

With a population of roughly 184.8mn, of which almost half are women,<sup>1</sup> Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world. However, more than 23 percent of the population live in abject poverty, on less than \$1.25 a day.<sup>2</sup> Almost two-thirds of the population live in rural, under-developed areas in the predominantly agrarian economy. Pakistan is ranked 145<sup>th</sup> out of 187 countries on the United Nation's Human Development Index of 201, which means that its development indicators are severely lacking. Large sections of the population lack access to quality services for education, health care, water and sanitation. This too, is reflected in the country's development indicators. The disparity of lives between the rich and the affluent and those below the poverty line who constitute roughly 37% of Pakistan's population is evident from wealth distribution patterns; the poorest twenty per cent of the population survive on roughly 9.3% of the national income while the richest 20% have access to 40.3%.

Pakistan's geo-strategic importance, located as it is at the cusp of Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle East, makes it a key ally for the West and international corporations that are keen to engage with countries like Afghanistan, China and Iran. With a registered growth rate forecast of 3.7% ,<sup>3</sup> Pakistan's floundering economy is heavily reliant on aid that it receives primarily from the US through the Coalition Support Fund.<sup>4</sup> The Coalition Support Fund was constituted to compensate Pakistan for logistical and infrastructural support extended to the NATO during the Global War on Terror Campaign. Reports suggest that over the span of ten years since 2002, Pakistan has received aid to the tune of \$18bn from the US.<sup>5</sup> Apart from its involvement with the NATO in fighting the insurgency in Afghanistan, Pakistan has several inter-connected conflicts raging within its territory that complicate the geo-political scene as well as obfuscates the routes and consumption of money received as aid. Internal conflicts range from an insurgency in Balochistan to Taliban menace in major provinces like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal areas. A porous border with Afghanistan leads to spillage of insurgents from Afghanistan into Pakistan.

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<sup>1</sup> Pakistan Population Census Organization, Housing Listing Data, 2012

<sup>2</sup> "Pakistan - Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)."

<sup>3</sup> APP, "ADB Enhances Pakistans Growth Forecast to 3.7%."

<sup>4</sup> The Coalition Support Fund is the reimbursement offered by the NATO coalition to Pakistan for the 'expenses already incurred and compensation for facilities made available to the coalition forces such as the Shamsi Airfield and the Dalbandin air base'.

<sup>5</sup> James Melik, "US Aid to Pakistan: What Next After Bin Laden."

It is not just geography that makes Pakistan's situation precarious. For a state that began its existence as an Islamist state, Pakistan has been struggling to modernise its outlook -; a prerequisite for maintaining relations as an ally of the liberal capitalist nations of the West. Apart from adapting a liberal Western-influenced lifestyle, Pakistan's economy has largely been dependent on billions of dollars being pumped in, in the form of civilian and military aid. The civil society in Pakistan refers to a rather large and amorphous group of organisations with varying goals and aspirations and includes a range of non-state and non-market citizen organisations and initiatives, networks and alliances, operating in a broad spectrum of social, economic and cultural fields.<sup>6</sup> These include not just NGOs, philanthropies, academia and independent and quasi-independent pressure groups, but also faith-based organisations, seminaries and tribal *jirgas*<sup>7</sup> that give rise to a complicated set of societal pulls and pushes leading to a 'collection of incoherent voices, conflicting world views and opposing interests'<sup>8</sup>.

Since the inception of Pakistan, its economy has been severely reliant on external aid, with estimates suggesting that gross disbursement of overseas development assistance to Pakistan between 1960-2002 was around \$73.1bn, from both bilateral and multilateral donors. However, the ratio of military aid was proportionately higher than the humanitarian aid component. Pakistan's leanings towards the US through the Cold War, by signing several treaties of military cooperation through the 1950s and 1960s led to a spurt of American aid that funded several developmental and infrastructural projects as well as humanitarian activities. By 1964, overall aid and assistance received by Pakistan was pegged at about 5% of its GDP.<sup>9</sup> The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 led to increased US assistance, primarily in military aid as Pakistan became part of the US fighting coalition against the occupation. Large, undisclosed sums of money doled out by the US to Pakistan's military and intelligence establishments created groups of *mujahideen*<sup>10</sup>. Humanitarian aid that reached Pakistan in those times was meant primarily to rehabilitate Afghan refugees and for the development of

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<sup>6</sup> Adnan Sattar Rabia Baig, *Civil Society in Pakistan - A Preliminary Report n the Civicus Index on Civil Society Project in Pakistan*.

<sup>7</sup> A *jirga* is an assembly of tribal elders, usually Pashtuns that decides on contentious issues or issues of interest to the tribe usually by consensus.

<sup>8</sup> Adnan Sattar Rabia Baig, *Civil Society in Pakistan - A Preliminary Report n the Civicus Index on Civil Society Project in Pakistan*, 4.

<sup>9</sup> S. Akbar Zaidi, *Who Benefits from US Aid to Pakistan?*

<sup>10</sup> *Mujahideen* are groups of non-state actors that form fighting militias and follow the belief that they are struggling for the holy cause of their Islamic faith in the 'path of God'. The word is derived from Arabic from the root *jihad* which means struggle.

infrastructure in the country. The nature of aid remained primarily military in nature, leading to the growth of an economy more focussed on developing security and infrastructure than on human development. Even the Global War on Terror, that began in the early years of the twenty first century, allocated international aid to help compensate Pakistan for the deployment of its resources and personnel to the NATO initiative, leaving the humanitarian crisis unfolding underfunded.

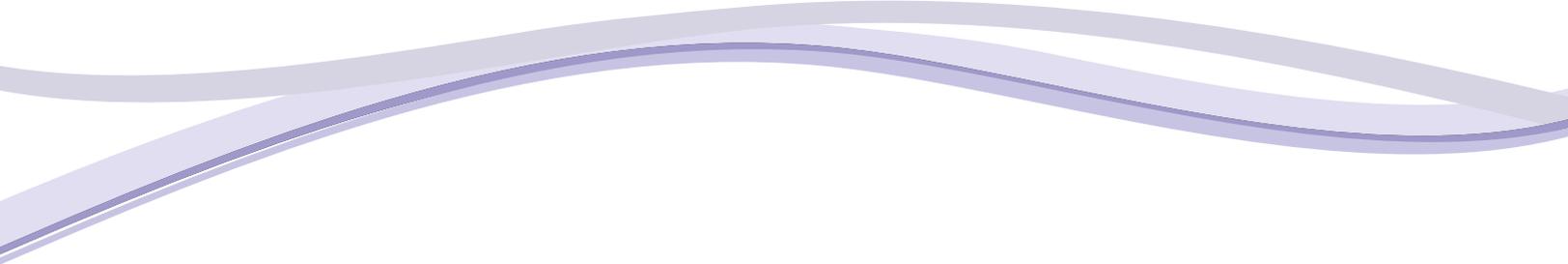
Skewed development indicators also indicate that the odds are stacked against women. Pakistan ranks as one of the worst countries in the world in terms of gender gap according to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2009. According to the Human Development Index, Pakistan ranks 141 internationally, while it is at the bottom rung in the rankings among Asian countries at 132 out of 134 countries. Gender discrimination is widely acknowledged as part of the social fabric, which prevents women and girls from accessing basic services or participating in large numbers in the decision-making and political processes of the country.

The growth of women's rights NGOs in Pakistan can be traced back to the state's attempts during the Zia<sup>11</sup> years to segregate women and push them back into domestic subservience. The struggle for reasserting their identity by women-centric NGOs was massively aided by the international donor community as the timing of these developments in Pakistan coincided with increased importance being given to WID perspective by the international development industry. The role of NGOs became even more prominent in the post-Zia era as rampant corruption and inefficiency of the successive democratic governments combined with the move of the state economy towards neo-liberalism gave NGOs the space to function and flourish as viable alternatives to state interventions. In the era of the subsequent military ruler, Parvez Musharraf, only lip service was paid to fostering organisations that strengthened the movement for women's rights in Pakistan. While several discriminatory Islamic laws were repealed with the revision of the Hudood Ordinance<sup>12</sup> and passing of the Protection of Women

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<sup>11</sup> The decade long tenure of Zia-ul-Haq(1978-1988) was a military dictatorship. Several sources describe Zia as a polarizing figure who spearheaded the strengthening of Pakistan military and preventing Soviet incursions but was widely criticized for weakening democratic institutions and supporting harsher laws that are believed to have led to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism along with fostering militant groups.

<sup>12</sup> The Hudood Ordinance enacted in 1979 was one of the landmark legislations of the Zia era's Islamisation drive that intended to implement Islamic Shari'a by enforcing punishments as prescribed in the Quran and sunnah for 'crimes' like extramarital sex, alcohol consumption etc. The ordinance was criticised for resulting in hundreds of cases where women subjected to rape or even gang rape were accused of *zina* (extramarital relations) and imprisoned. The draconian Hudood Ordinance was revised in 2006 under the Women's Protection Bill.



Bill, there was little opposition offered to the rising demand among influential right-wing religious fundamentalists for the re-introduction of patriarchal state rules as laid down by the Islamic sharia.

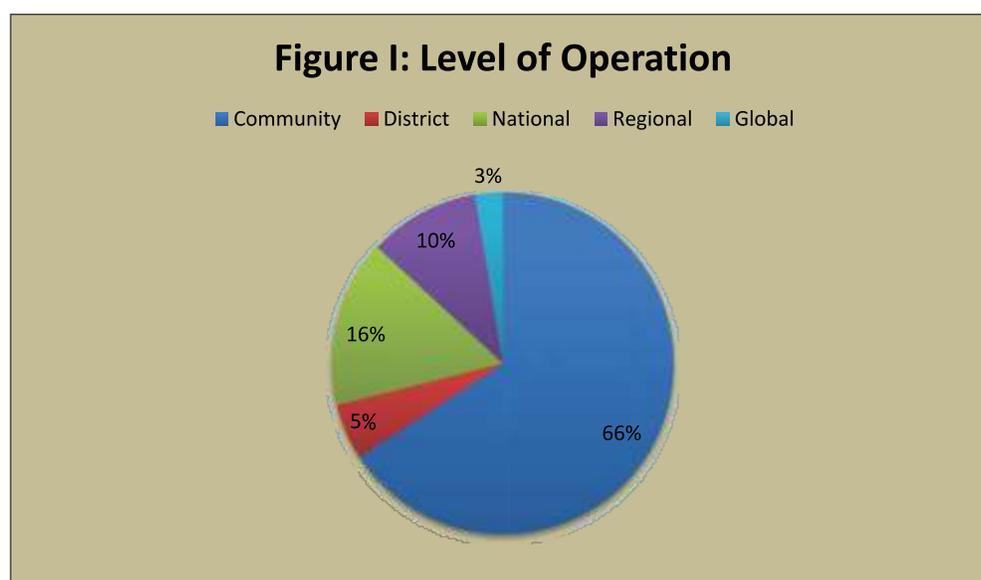
## CHAPTER II - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The task undertaken by SAWF to understand the donor patterns and funds flow for women's rights work in the country combined qualitative and quantitative data gathering. The data gathered was then analysed using secondary data review to establish the context of donor climate in Pakistan and evolve patterns of funding as well as changing donor patterns. The standardised design and framework used across the countries included in the Resource Mapping across South Asia was used to plot the coordinates of the donor map. While the first stage of the study involved contacting respondents via a survey questionnaire, further clarity was brought into the research through in-depth interviews with key informants.

A total of 235 organizations were short listed and contacted over a period of time. Out of these organizations, 72 responded. The crucial factor of regional balance to ensure appropriate representation of issues under various cultural, regional as well as ethnic contexts was kept in mind.

After the completion of the primary phase of data collection, the second phase that involved in-depth interviews focussed on issues of resources and funding in the context of interventions, programmes and projects targeting women. In-depth interviews were held with twenty-five women activists, selected NGOs from amongst the surveyed organizations and selected donor organizations prominent in the social development and gender sectors. The donor interviews were conducted through a structured questionnaire, whereby eight questionnaires were emailed to the selected donor and United Nations agencies. However, a response was received only from three United Nations Organizations. Therefore, other donor related data was extracted through secondary information and other key informants. In all, the second phase of data gathering covered 32 key informants.

It needs to be pointed out that among the surveyed organisations, there was a higher response from organisations working at community or local level as compared to larger national level NGOs. As depicted in the chart below, of the total respondents, 66% were operating at local/community level, 16% worked at the national level and 10% were regional level organisations while 5% of the respondents operated at the district level and 3% were global level organisations. NGOs like Shirkat Gah and Aurat Foundation, which are experienced organizations with main focus on women's issues, have strong linkages at both regional and global level.\*



\*Note: Three organisations gave multiple responses

There are several small and large voluntary organisations and non-governmental groups functioning across the various regions of Pakistan. However, there is a paucity of data that lists the exact number of NGOs functioning in the country. Studies conducted by the Aga Khan Foundation suggest there are no less than around 60,000 operating across the various provinces of Pakistan. Government sources are quoted as saying the bulk of them (over 59%) are based in Punjab, followed by Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

While most International NGOs have significant presence in the country, a majority of the NGOs work at the local district levels on community development issues. There are several others that work at the provincial level and some that implement national level programmes and projects. Due to the lack of penetration of government agencies in several conflict-stricken parts of Pakistan like FATA, KPK and Balochistan, these NGOs form a crucial cog in taking the process of development and humanitarian aid forward. However, the paucity of modern NGOs in provinces like KPK and Balochistan has been attributed to logistical difficulties, widespread illiteracy, limitations on women's mobility and the tribal/feudal system that frowns upon efforts for social change. This is the reason why, studies point that NGOs in Pakistan are predominantly urban and therefore do not reflect an over 65 per cent of the rural population.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Adnan Sattar Rabia Baig, *Civil Society in Pakistan - A Preliminary Report n the Civicus Index on Civil Society Project in Pakistan*.

The Civicus Index on Civil Society published in 2001 also points out that in terms of thematic focus – areas that made up for 56% of the total interventions were in education (basic, primary, adult and informal) while health and women’s development accounted for 39 per cent each. Intermediary NGOs and support organisations also focussed on education (69%) and women’s issues (56%)

Observers familiar with Pakistan’s unique civil-military governance equation say that the influence of civil society on governance and development is still at a nascent stage, in comparison to several other South Asian countries. However, unlike countries like Sri Lanka where an NGO Secretariat has been established to document and monitor the activities of NGOs and the work they undertake, Pakistan-based organisations receive international aid directly through project grants, granting them a higher stake in the developmental process of the country. The Initiative on Indigenous Philanthropy says Pakistanis give billions in cash and kind (like zakat<sup>14</sup>), which usually funds several civil society initiatives locally while the foreign funds flooding Pakistan are used by larger development organisations as well as advocacy groups with a pan-country focus.

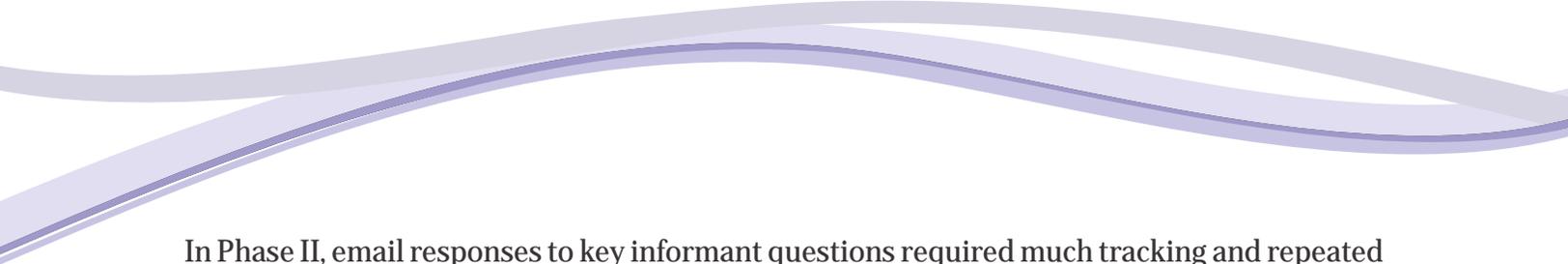
### *Challenges Faced in Undertaking Study*

However, conducting a nationwide study of the magnitude that SAWF envisioned was fraught with challenges. Conducting a survey within the confines of a defined framework proved challenging within the six major regions of the country, where internet connectivity and access of women’s groups working at the ground level to the questionnaire and data gathering techniques used was limited. Follow ups with Key Informants located across the country was a major hurdle as it wasn’t easy to organise them into a focus group or ensure face-to-face information gathering in most cases.

Postal interviews and face-to-face interactions worked best in the case of the Pakistan chapter even though the process was time-consuming and painstakingly slow. There was a problem of interpretation of the questions, despite the translation of the questionnaires into Urdu. The answers to several questions asked revealed a distinct lack of comprehension of the issues being posed, which did affect the quality of data. There were also several cases where issues stated were left incomplete or had significant information missing, especially when questions were posed pertaining to budgetary allocations.

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<sup>14</sup> Zakat, one of the five pillars of Islam, is the giving of alms to the poor, widows and those in debt through circumstances beyond their control. It is paid out by the wealthy or people who have income and assets beyond what is required to provide for one’s immediate family. It is paid once a year, usually during the month of Ramadaan.



In Phase II, email responses to key informant questions required much tracking and repeated follow-ups, necessitating several rounds of one-on-one interviews. However, the biggest challenge was tracking down representatives from the donor community as several were tight-lipped about their work. Despite several ‘ice-breaking’ exchanges of communication, only three respondents shared their insights into the donor communities’ involvement in Pakistan.

As a result, the net tally of the organisations represented in the survey was 72 in Phase I and 32 Key Informants for Phase II.

## CHAPTER III - OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN

The government of Pakistan acknowledges that the country faces the disturbing trend of a skewed sex ratio wherein for every 108 men there are only 100 women.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, female infant mortality and morbidity rates are higher than the mortality and morbidity rates for male children, as is access to education. Female literacy rates across the country are not higher than 38%. This is also reflected in the percentage of school enrolments of women that is only around 51%, while the literacy rate and school enrolment rates among men<sup>16</sup> is around 65% and 60%. The economic activity rate<sup>17</sup> among women in Pakistan is 14% at best.<sup>18</sup> The female unemployment rate was found to be around 8.4% as compared to 4% among men in 2008.<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, the poor in Pakistan are disproportionately rural and female.

Approximately 52% of Pakistani women suffer from poverty of opportunities<sup>20</sup> as compared to 37% of men. Healthcare for women is poor, with around 29% women living in several areas deprived of health care. The maternal mortality rate is high at 276 per 100,000 live births<sup>21</sup> and female life expectancy is less than that of men - 64.5 years compared to 65.3 years for men.<sup>22</sup> Around 50% of the mothers in Pakistan have been found to suffer from anaemia.

Violence against women is widespread in the country, cutting across class, regional and urban-rural divides. Domestic violence, rape and murder of women, supposedly in the name of honour are frequently reported. In regions wracked by conflict and instability, their existential conditions exacerbate their vulnerabilities as witnessed following the 2009 military operation in tribal areas of northern Pakistan and the 2005 earthquake. Women living in conservative societies especially in the rural regions of Pakistan are forced to suffer silently due to the prevalence of traditional practices such as Karo Kari (honour killings), Wani (giving

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<sup>15</sup> Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Census Organization, 1998

<sup>16</sup> Federal Bureau of Statistics, *Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey 2006-07*, Govt. of Pakistan. School enrolment refers to net enrolment rate at primary level (ages 5-9).

<sup>17</sup> 'Economic activity rate' is defined as the percentage of population both employed and unemployed (16 to 65 years), which constitutes the manpower supply

<sup>18</sup> Shirkat Gah, *ICPD + 15 (draft) Report, 2008*

<sup>19</sup> *Pakistan Employment Trends for Women 2009* (Series No. 5), Ministry of Labour and Manpower

<sup>20</sup> "Poverty of opportunities" is unequal distribution of social and economic services and opportunities, whereby particular social segments are deprived

<sup>21</sup> NIPS, *Demographic and Health Survey, 2006-2007*

<sup>22</sup> National Institute of Population Studies Projections for Government of Pakistan, 2005-06

of females in marriage as compensation to resolve disputes), Swara (a similar practice) and Watta Satta (exchange marriages).<sup>23</sup>

A Thomson Reuters Foundation Expert Poll commissioned in June 2011 found Pakistan among the three most dangerous countries for women due to a range of threats to their security- from rape and violence to dismal health care and ‘honour killings’.<sup>24</sup> Those that polled Pakistan abysmally low on the security index for women mentioned cultural intolerance combined with tribal and religious practices as the main causes of concern. Pakistan’s Human Rights Commission says more than a thousand women and girls are victims of honour killings every year, while nearly 90% women were victims of some form of domestic violence.

### *Women’s Rights Activism: A Brief Look*

Pakistani media frequently reports on women who attempt to break the shackles of conservative, right-wing extremist societal norms that result in the subjugation of women and their exploitation along with denial of their human rights. In an interview to the newspaper the Express Tribune, women’s rights activist Fouzia Saeed mentions how threats from conservative elite as well as religious conservatives are a frequent occurrence for activists like her. *“Society’s so-called leaders are always after you. We are called those women who are inspired by the West...an NGOised woman; a westernised woman”*. Fouzia Saeed is part of an increasing breed of women’s rights activists helming organisations trying to work on anti-Talibanisation of the society in areas where they hold sway, in an attempt to help improve the access of women to government schemes and NGO projects on healthcare and education.

Several studies looking at the NGO scene in Pakistan say that their listed set of organisational commitments are rarely met on the ground. Women activists say that the biggest threat to women rights in Pakistan is the inadequate legal back-up and enforcement to ensure upholding of women rights. Despite the existence of organisations like Pakistan Women Lawyers’ Association (PAWLA), Women Action Forum, the Aurat Foundation and Pakistan’s Human Rights Commission, the interpretation of Islamic roles that are regressive and harmful to the rights of women in the modern state are yet to be completely amended.<sup>25</sup> The poor

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<sup>23</sup>Typically in a Watta-Satta arrangement, a brother and sister from one family marry a brother and sister from another. The theory is that each marriage will be a guarantee for the other: if one girl suffers at the hands of her in-laws, their own daughter will suffer reprisals from her in-laws. In practice what often happens is that – rather than preventing maltreatment – *Watta-Satta* means that if one marriage breaks down so does the other.

<sup>24</sup>Reuters, “Pakistan Ranks 3rd on List of Most Dangerous Countries for Women.”

<sup>25</sup> Najma Farman, “THE ROLE OF NGOS IN WOMENS RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN.”

female development indicators evident in Pakistan reflect wider issues facing women in Pakistan; mostly denial of rights and access to justice, limited opportunities for political participation and economic empowerment.

Knowing one's rights and accessing them poses different sets of problems for women in Pakistan. For one, though there are legal provisions safeguarding the fundamental rights of women, the enforcement of the rights is weak and not supported amply by law-enforcing agencies. The weak justice sector prevalent in the country is aggravated by poor capacity to ensure speedy trials, lack of facilities and automation, high pendency rates, lack of legal assistance etc. Lack of education and awareness of the rights engendered by law and cultural barriers set in place by the conservative society are further barriers that stand in the way of women realising their basic rights. Another crucial factor is the significant legislations that outrightly discriminate against women or deny them their rights. One of the most notorious examples is the Offence of Zina (Hudood) Ordinance 1979, which criminalizes adultery and sex outside marriage and has very weak evidential criteria.

On the positive side, legal reforms initiated recently have made some progress in providing citizenship rights to women and protecting them from violence. Criminalisation of honour killings and making laws against rampant abuse of adultery laws has been the result of years of advocacy by women's rights organisations. Another landmark move for women rights activists in the country is the Domestic Violence Bill, presently in the process of debate in the Parliament. But major discriminatory legislations, such as the Hudood Ordinance, remain on the statute books.

Since the turn of the 21st century there has been a notable increase in the participation of women in the political processes, with 33% seats in the local government reserved for women. At the provincial and federal level, 20% of the lawmakers are now women. Lobbying by the civil society and intensive networking led to increased participation of women in the local elections. The advocacy work undertaken by bigger women-centric organisations led to women turning out to vote and even campaign for candidates standing for elections from seats reserved for them.

However, though this shows that activism is currently on the road to redress the criticism of inadequate representation of women at the national political scene; the quality of female lawmakers being elected to represent their communities has also been under the spotlight. There have been questions raised on the quality of female lawmakers not being on par with their male counterparts. Research show that this situation is a result of lack of skills, awareness and capacity to fully participate in the political process, along with cultural barriers fostered by the lack of exposure to development at the national level.

Concerns have also been expressed over how few trade unions involve women workers or work towards addressing their concerns and problems. There are hardly any instances reported where issues pertaining to women workers have been flagged as points of major concern by unions. Similarly, there is widespread opinion that there are fewer women in leadership roles in trade unions due to the tradition of segregation and social restrictions on the mobility of women. Studies point out that the under-representation of women in most associations in the public sphere like trade unions, professional associations, employers' union and student organisation indicates the subjugated status of women within the Pakistani society.<sup>26</sup>

The public sector in Pakistan too is largely male-dominated, with women representing less than 6% of the civil servants.<sup>27</sup> There are few women in the top echelons of the various administrative services. However, there appears to be an increased awareness among the government departments about the need to reduce the gender gap and prevalent gender discrimination.

### *The State Response*

Pakistan endorsed its commitment to the global struggle for gender equality and women's rights when it became a signatory to CEDAW<sup>28</sup> and CRC<sup>29</sup> in 1996. However, their endorsement to the international convention has so far proven to be mere lip-service as these have not yet been promulgated as laws – this means that there are no legal provisions that safeguard the rights of women and the girl child.

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<sup>26</sup> Adnan Sattar Rabia Baig, Civil Society in Pakistan - A Preliminary Report n the Civicus Index on Civil Society Project in Pakistan.

<sup>27</sup> Government of Pakistan, (2003), National Commission on the Status of Women; Inquiry Report on Status of Women Employment in Public Sector Organizations

<sup>28</sup> The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

<sup>29</sup> The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a human rights treaty setting out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. The Convention defines a child as any human being under the age of eighteen, unless under states own domestic legislation majority is attained earlier. <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>

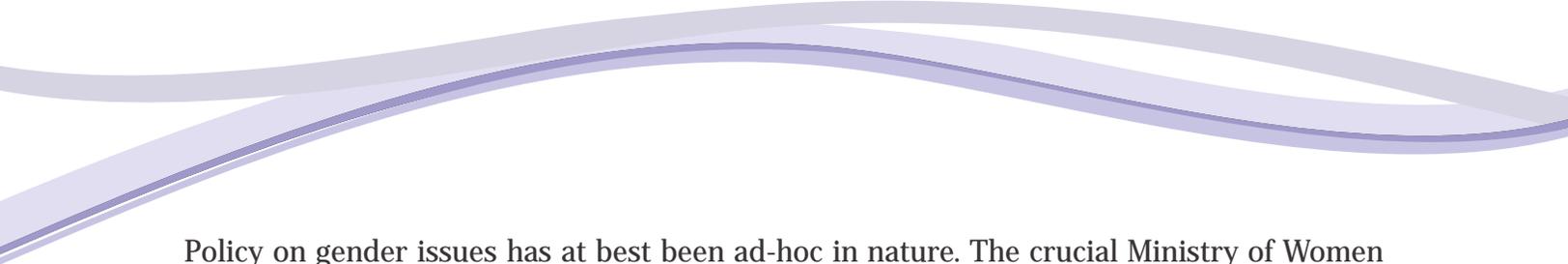
However, it must be put on record that in response to the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA)<sup>30</sup> and CEDAW, there was a sudden spurt in the number of organisations and initiatives spearheaded by the government to attempt to bring about gender equality under the stewardship of the Ministry of Women Development.

- The National Plan of Action for Women charted out over a hundred and eighty interventions in critical areas like Poverty, Education and Training, Health, Violence against Women and later added on disabilities too to an existing list of twelve areas.
- A National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) was set up at the turn of the twenty first century to examine the relevance and efficacy of policies, programmes and measures taken to address the core issues of women's development and gender equality.
- Similarly the Women's Protection Bill was passed by the National Assembly of the country in November 2006 and the Gender Reform Action Plan approved a year earlier was expected to aid gender main streaming in areas like political participation, employment in public sector as well as other capacity building interventions.
- Pakistan also has a National Policy for the Development and Empowerment of Women that was approved by the Pakistan government in March 2002. It was to serve as a guide to both governmental and non-governmental organizations, and the civil society, to contribute to the protection of women rights, promotion of gender-balanced society and encourage the participation of women in the socio-economic development of the country.

However as stated earlier, there is still a dearth of equality of opportunities for women as well as access to resources, opportunities as well as basic services like health and education. Though there are a number of women and organisations at the grassroot level that are also establishing linkages with other organisation working on related areas of interest, their impact is hardly said to be felt or visible at the wider societal level.

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<sup>30</sup>The Beijing Platform for Action is an agenda for women's empowerment that aims at accelerating the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and removing all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>



Policy on gender issues has at best been ad-hoc in nature. The crucial Ministry of Women Development, for instance, has now moved from the federal level of legislation to the provincial level after the passing of the 18th amendment that made women-centric laws uneven and unequal across the various provinces. As more power passes to the provincial government from the federal set up, there are fewer issues where momentum can be built for a national consensus, necessitating smaller, spread over battles for realisation of women's rights across Pakistan. What adds more confusion to the existing chaos is the lack of comprehension on the part of the provincial councils about their role in creating new legislations to protect the interest of women resulting in an unsavoury stalemate that makes it difficult for developmental work to take place.

## CHAPTER IV: CHANGING DONOR TRENDS

Reports show that since the Paris Declaration of 2005<sup>31</sup>, foreign governments involved in bilateral and multilateral development pacts with the Pakistan government and other international donors are redefining their strategies. The focus and stress is now being placed on joint-sector programming, basket funding and extending support across sectors. There is also a palpable shift of funding from NGOs working across sectors to other organisations like businesses, academic institutions and trade unions.<sup>32</sup> Women development in Pakistan has multiple funding sources with the biggest proportion through foreign assistance programs (bilateral donors), followed by Government of Pakistan, Private (foreign) Foundations, and other sources including philanthropists and INGOs. CIDA, World Bank and the UNDP are the chief foreign funders to several large sized NGOs working at the national level as well as medium sized NGOs working up till the community level.

According to a study on aid fragmentation in Pakistan, the area of “Gender and Women Development” received an increasing amount of aid in 2006 and 2007 within the social sectors; approximately US\$15 million in 2006 and US\$27 million in 2007. However, it is difficult to accurately analyse the impact of aid on gender as a whole as there is no account of how the funds were absorbed into social sectors such as education, health, rural development and agricultural sectors where women, like men, were beneficiaries. Each of these sectors has received on an average between US\$250 - 400 million over the last two years. So while fund allocations to projects that specifically cater to women and girls may have increased over 2006/07, what amount of fund allocation goes exclusively to women and girls is not clearly visible in the analysis. This discrepancy has created a major gap in being able to accurately prioritize and allocate funds for gender equality. As a result, gender remains a grey area vis-à-vis overall development priorities and especially within the context of international aid flows.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The Paris Declaration of 2005 aims to strengthen partner countries' national development strategies and associated operational frameworks along with increasing alignment of aid with partner countries' priorities, systems and procedures and helping strengthen their capacities. <http://www.oecd.org/development/aideffectiveness/34428351.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> Development Cooperation Report 2006, OECD Journal on Development, Volume 8

<sup>33</sup> Themrise Khan (2008), Gender Equality and AID Effectiveness in Pakistan, A Mapping and Situation Analysis Study, Commissioned by Interagency Gender and Development Group

The earthquake of October 2005 marked a major point of transition in the international aid scenario in Pakistan. The earthquake was followed by the conflict in Swat as well as in other parts of Khyber Paktunkhwa in 2008-09 and then the massive floods in the consecutive years of 2010 and 2011. The arrival of international NGOs and relief organizations into the country resulted not only in financial assistance but also a newer generation of organizations, where several international groups stayed back starting local operations. This created a parallel group of civil society organizations that had global networks but competed for the same pie of resources with CSOs working only locally. However, it was not a total loss scene for the local CSOs that were taken on board by these newer organisations as their local implementation partners on the field.

**Table 1 : Gender Funding According to Source**

Funding Sources/Funding Agency/Project	Committed (USD)	Disbursed (USD)	Expended (USD)
USA	42,855,347	6,605,559	3,681,566
Canada	34,631,520	16,116,414	819,838
Norway	20,261,675	11,095,838	7,545,648
UK	19,814,067	3,099,549	2,116,595
UN (United Nations)	15,354,817	12,923,465	14,345,124
Switzerland	15,067,481	6,232,268	5,274,326
Pakistan	5,885,722	1,725,947	1,354,566
UN Globally Mobilizes Non-Core Assistance	3,757,072	4,322,775	3,946,947
Italy	2,659,433	1,791,176	1,022,707
Netherlands	2,205,882	1,791,176	1,022,707
National Private Donors	2,056,722		
Spain	1,330,010	1,698,604	1,384,081
Finland	623,623	623,623	23,623
International Private Donors	97,533		

*Source: DAD PAKISTAN {<http://www.dadpak.org/dad/> Accessed on 3rd April 2012}*

According to a donor mapping study undertaken by DFID Pakistan in 2007, multilateral organisations like the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank were the biggest stakeholders in Pakistan's development story. About 25% of the total financial aid was

provided by bilateral donors while the UN agencies contributed to about 2% of the total aid share.<sup>34</sup> Though multilateral donors dominate the donor market, their assistance is in the form of loans and not grants and is largely deployed for large national level infrastructure projects and government programmes that require massive budgetary support. According to the Donors Assistance Database<sup>35</sup>, at present, there are 77 donors in the country including multilaterals, bilaterals, foreign governments, government of Pakistan and private donors. A total of US \$ 29,672,177,244 has been committed for all projects that are active, of which US \$ 17,427,674,227 has already been disbursed. The committed amount ranges from US \$ 20,000 by Singapore government to US \$ 11,455,873,646 by the Asian Development Bank. Amongst these 77 donors, 17 donors, both foreign and National, are funding women and development projects, most of which is being channelled towards the public sector.

Pakistan's development sector funding appears to be closely linked to the existing geopolitical situation. Aid flowing into Pakistan through multilateral and bilateral donors was tied up with Pakistan's cooperation with the NATO's war efforts in Afghanistan. The US had withheld billions of dollars' worth humanitarian aid to Pakistan following the closure of its military aid routes via Pakistan into Afghanistan following a breakdown in US-Pakistan relations. Media reports in July 2012 however confirm that the US has disbursed civilian assistance to Pakistan to the tune of \$2.8 billion, including approximately \$1 billion in emergency humanitarian assistance since 2009.

The global economic recession appears to have gravely impacted Pakistan's aid scenario. Bilateral donors had to redefine their funding strategies to balance their own economic needs. An example is CIDA's Program for Advancement of Gender Equality (PAGE), a five-year programme that funded local NGOs and CBOs working on gender issues, which were wrapped up in December 2010 despite effective results, because of changed funding priorities due to an economic crunch.

In cases where funding is through the private sector, it is either through International NGOs or larger established organizations. For instance, USAID is the largest donor currently to Pakistan with a commitment of US\$ 42,855,347 of which US\$ 13,068,428 was earmarked for Gender Equality Programme (2010-2015). It has contracted it out to a National NGO acting as the GEP Secretariat, rolled out with technical assistance from a local organisation. CIDA-the second largest donor too focuses its funding for gender focussed work on either cross cutting programmes or channels it through the public sector which has limited space for NGOs. Similarly, Norway, which is the third largest country providing financial assistance for gender

<sup>34</sup> Support to the DFID Country Assistance Plan 2008 – 2013, May 2007, DFID Pakistan

<sup>35</sup> Government of Pakistan/UNDP, Donors Assistance Database, 2012

and development incorporates Women Rights and Gender Equality (WRGE) at the centre of all its development cooperation, making it once again a cross cutting sector.

In several cases, International Aid Assistance for Women's Rights is usually incorporated into other heads like human rights, good governance; economic empowerment etc. resulting in the fragmentation of funds spent on each sector *vis-a-vis* gender and development sector initiatives. Denmark's funding agency DANIDA for instance, which according to their web site has committed US\$ 28 million for Pakistan, spends about US \$ 7 million for civil society, good governance, human rights, and gender equality. It has to be kept in mind that every partner country has its own set of national procedures and strategies that advocate and support development priorities. These procedures include benchmarks for achieving priorities. But more importantly, these strategies identify the main priorities that donors then follow as their benchmark for providing financial support. However, not all partner country and donor have been able to align their priorities together. Women's rights are an area in Pakistan, where both stakeholders have yet to clarify concepts and procedures in order to achieve alignment.

Several agencies of the UN like UN Women and UNDP are actively working on women's issues across most regions of Pakistan. However, with the exception of UN Women, gender remains a cross cutting theme across all the programmes though separate budget allocations are mentioned for women development and empowerment related projects. UN Women meanwhile focuses mainly on women at the policy level and gender main streaming in the government departments. It is pertinent to mention here that UN Women also funds NGOs in Pakistan and provides them with institutional development support, understanding the need of the local organizations for this kind of assistance.

Private foreign foundations like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Packard Foundation also support work in selected sectors like reproductive health and capacity building as well as leadership training.

While philanthropy, as mentioned earlier, in the form of religious giving or 'zakat' and other charity is widely acknowledged to be a huge source of aid for development work, there is little official data available to quantify the extent of this funding.

Despite the bleak downturn in global economic fortunes, there has been continuing aid flow for women development and human rights in Pakistan. However, the public sector remains the largest recipient of donor aid with few new donors emerging on the scene. Private sector is slowly emerging among the list of beneficiaries. However, studies show that donors are interested in consolidating their efforts to avoid overlap of funding the same issues under different heads. There are also growing concerns about performance based output and accountability. Women are usually an integral component of all development cooperation and seen as direct and target communities, but many donors do not have budgetary allocations specifically for women issues. In instances where funding assistance is focused on women

centred interventions, it is usually through International NGOs, International Consortiums or established national NGOs, which then transfer funds to local NGOs as implementing partners.

### *Corporate Social Responsibility – New Avenue for Donor Aid*

A study commissioned by SAWF in 2011-12 to understand the impact and extent of Corporate Social Responsibility or CSR initiatives in Women's Rights across the Indian sub-continent (specifically in five countries – Pakistan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh) found that 'the success of CSR in any country is linked to its integration in the global supply chain', i.e. the CSR initiatives within the sectors with international business interests were directly proportional to the business interests the country had internationally.<sup>36</sup> In Nepal and Pakistan, where the private sector was still in a stage of gradual evolution, CSR was found to be much less evolved.

The study shows that it was in the 1990s that CSR became a serious proposition with the commencement of the Sialkot Partnership against child labour that involved private stakeholders and the International Labour Organisation. While there are still no mandates set legally for CSR, trends show that there is a transition likely from arbitrary activities and scattered charity to essential and sustainable business strategies. Children's education and public health are identified as the most preferred areas of intervention as the public spend two per cent and less than one per cent in these sectors respectively.

With the exception of the carpet weaving industry, women do not form a sizeable work force in the export-oriented businesses of Pakistan. There are said to be a few CSR initiatives like the STEP fair trading initiative that provide training for women weavers in villages of rural Punjab in conjunction with the UNDP. The state-owned mega corporation Pakistan State Oil says in its website that it supports Women Empowerment through its CSR initiative supporting Behbud Association, a national NGO that works in reproductive health, community development, education, vocational training and upliftment of the underprivileged sections of society. They also aid the Rashid Memorial Welfare Organisation that carried out education, health and vocational training for women and orphans and work towards poverty alleviation measures. However, the SAWF report concludes that overall, women's rights as a target area of CSR seems fairly absent, with most corporates seeing women as consumers than stakeholders.

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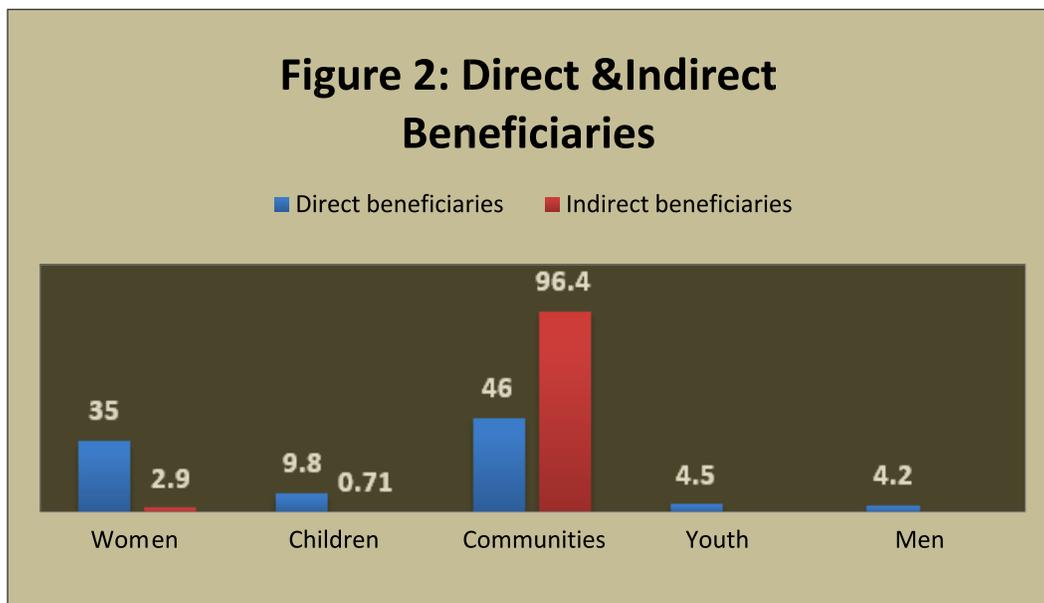
<sup>36</sup> SAWF, *"In the Making - CSR and Women's Rights in South Asia - An Exploratory Review of the CSR Scenario in Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka 2011-12."*

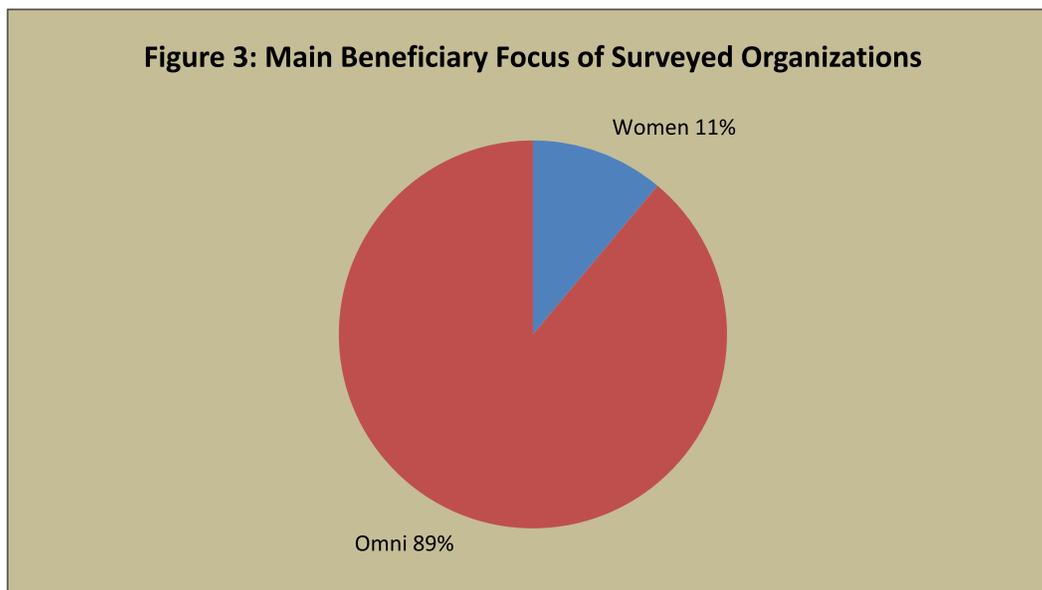
<sup>37</sup> Kunwar Khuldune Shahid, "Corporate Social Responsibility in Pakistan."

## CHAPTER V : GROUND REALITIES – KEY FINDINGS FROM THE PRIMARY RESEARCH

### *Beneficiaries of Funding – Women or Communities?*

The study carried out across provinces in Pakistan took into account the details of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the NGOs (whether men, women, children and /or community). As can be seen in the figure below, most organizations that participated in the study, were working with communities at large as their direct beneficiaries followed by women, children while a small percentage worked with youth and men. While 35% of the organisations said that they worked directly with women; those that polled communities as their target audience were higher at 46.3%. Meanwhile a look at the indirect beneficiaries of the work undertaken showed a rather one-sided trend(96.4%) with communities benefitting as a whole due to the work undertaken.





Of the organisations covered as a part of the study, 88.89% mentioned their focus of operation as omni, *i.e.* working with communities, men and children and youth (including women) as opposed to 11.11% specifying their work to be focussed around women.

#### *Budgetary Allocations for Women*

Around 93% of the organisations that participated in the study stated that the funds at their disposal were used towards issues focussed on women, though there were considerable variations in the proportion of funds utilised. A fairly significant percentage of these organisations - about 38% indicated they had spent more than 75% of their budgetary allocations for 2010-2011 on women focussed projects and activities while about 35% stated their budgetary allocations were to the tune of 50-75% of their total annual budget on women centred projects. However, there were also organizations (7%) that had no budgetary allocation specifically for women with another 6% just spending 10% or less and 13% spending in the bracket of 25 to 50%. However, the most discouraging statistic that emerged during the study was the disappointing figure of 20.19%, which represented the total accumulated overall allocations for women. In fact, 93% of the organisations said that their funds were being used for women focussed issues; however, a closer look at their vision, mission, strategies and interventions revealed a completely different picture.

Table 2: Percentage of Organizations according to Budgetary Allocations for Women\*

No. of samples falling in the ranges	na	nd	=0	>0 <=10	>10 <=25	>25 <=50	>50 <=75	>75 <=99	=100	out of total (ignoring na/nd)	Overall % of Allocation for Women
% of financial allocation in budget for women as direct beneficiaries	1	0	5	4	0	9	25	27	1	71	20.13%
			7%	6%	0%	13%	35%	38%	1%	100%	

\*Note: data from 1 organisation was not considered

### *Work Approach: Rights Based vs Welfarist*

Majority of the surveyed organizations were engaged in community development projects targeting not any particular gender group but the community at large. The data indicates that all the surveyed organizations were working in at least two sectors if not more, mostly in health, education, livelihoods, conflict, governance, disaster management, political participation, gender justice, human rights, natural resource management, water and sanitation and more.

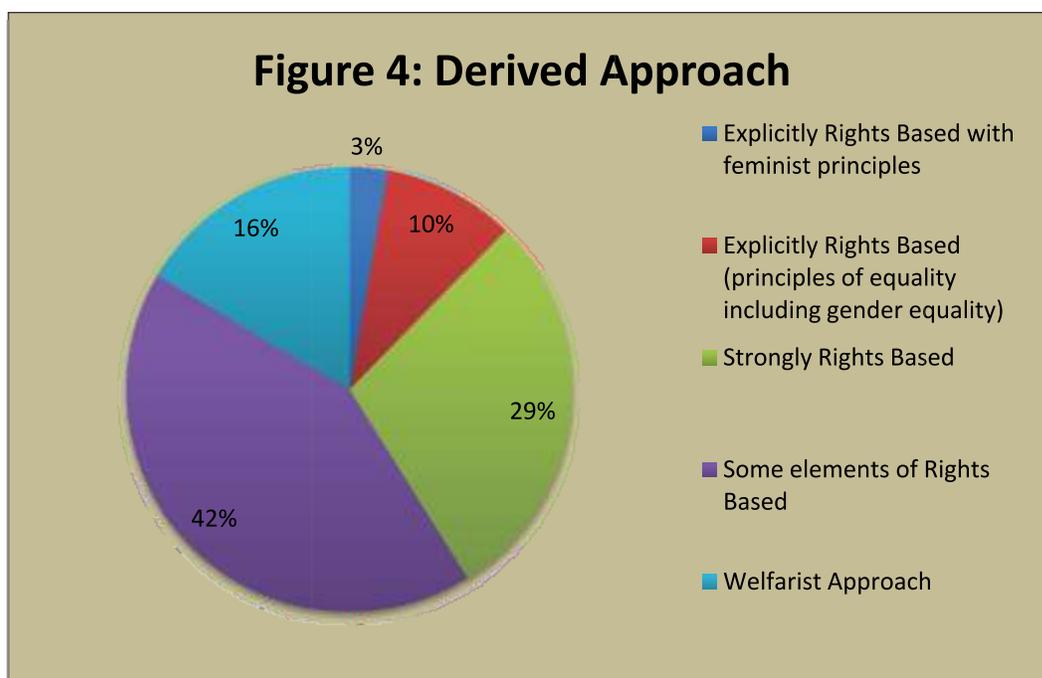
Although in most instances organizations use multiple work approaches and strategies for each project ranging from awareness raising and advocacy, service delivery, and capacity building. However, each NGO has an organizational approach, which is followed and reflected in its vision, mission and way of working.

According to Fig 4, the highest percentage of organizations, 42%, were in the category of 'some elements of rights based', reflecting lack of consistency and clarity in the NGOs' way of working - fluctuating from rights based combined with other work approaches. Most of these organizations in their vision, mission and objectives claimed to be using atleast some elements of rights based.

29% organizations were 'strongly rights based', derived from the understanding that the objectives and activities of these organizations reflected a 'rights based' agenda through advocacy, social mobilization, and service delivery to those communities or marginalized groups who were deprived of basic services thus basic rights.

The next significant approach but with a wide difference in percentage as compared to the other two approaches mentioned above were organizations in the category of 'not clear or welfarists' approach (16%). Such organizations were basically delivering welfare activities without any explicit approach or mission.

The remaining 10% of the organizations were 'explicitly rights based' and 3% 'explicitly rights based with feminist principles'. This was disappointing, however, at the same time it also highlighted the need for both the donors and organisations to un-package and reflect on rights based methodologies and how to incorporate them within an organisation's strategic and programmatic approach. *(Please refer to Annexure 1)*



### *Gaps in Funding and Issues Faced*

The aid scenario in Pakistan requires close scrutiny to understand the gaps in funding. On the face of it, there appears to be no paucity of funds flowing in for human rights works and women-centric activities, however, closer examination reveals that the omni-focus of organisations and the spread of the spectrum of their work means that most NGOs are being sponsored by multiple donors. Key informants say that this has led to the fragmentation of work and the setting in of a piecemeal approach, where funding is available for the completion of certain activities or stages of processes only. Several organisations that participated in the study expressed concern over the lack of funds, especially short term funding for

projects with heightened stress on the end-result. Interviewees revealed a growing distrust within the community for the motives behind aid offered and the dissatisfaction over incomplete results achieved due to insufficient funding over a sustained period of time for completion of activities.

The funding available to organisations that participated in the study varied a lot, ranging from around nearly one crore Pakistani rupees to as much as five lakh Pakistani rupees annually. The range was also reflected in the quality and quantum of work accomplished as several organisations indicated that the funding did not cover overhead costs or administrative costs incurred during the process.

The average working budget of organisations working on women issues was presented to be in the range of Pakistani Rupees thirty to fifty lakhs annually, with the budget strictly streamlined into project specifics without accounting for other incidentals and overheads. An additional issue raised not only by the survey respondents but also the key informants was that organizations seldom received any funding support for institutional development or overhead expenses, which could enable them to grow as an organization. The solution, as seen across South Asia was to create a consortium of organisations – small and large to band together to work towards achieving common goals. For instance, local organisations and community-based groups began to forge partnerships with INGOs or provincial networks to attract specific funding for activities. Oxfam's Violence against Women campaign is a good example of how several smaller organisations of Pakistan working towards prevention of VAW came together at the provincial, district and grass-root level to organise campaigns and events. However, there is also criticism that the severe paring-down of budgets for activity-based funding has resulted in budgets not stretching enough to even meet the requirements of the activity itself.<sup>38</sup>

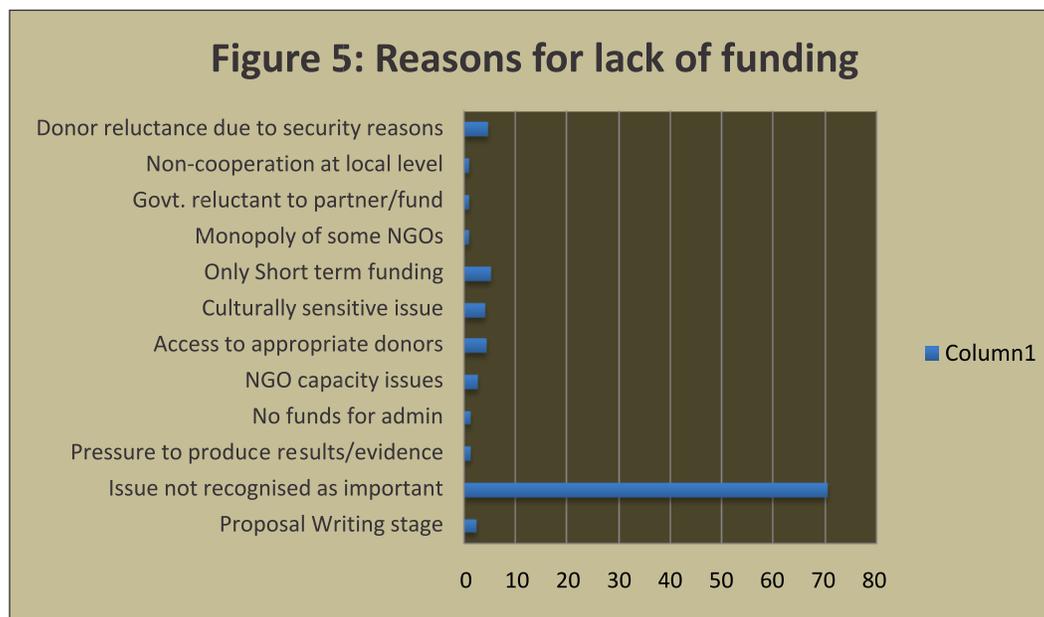
Pakistan-based activists are however, in two minds about the benefits of teaming with international NGOs or creating consortiums with them in the lead. They express worries about international NGOs setting up base in Pakistan, employing local staff picked from national organisations at three times the salary and perks that local organisations can offer, creating a highly competitive environment for recruiting resourceful employees. This leads to a drastic difference in the quality of workforce, often impacting work on the ground.

Internationally funded projects are often short term, small in nature and require implementing partners who are merely 'contracted' to do a pre-defined project with limited ability to influence, contextualise or innovate.

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<sup>38</sup> Key informant (II) in-depth interview with NGO activist for the research

The process of raising funds was mentioned as one of the biggest hurdles faced by women’s organisations. Fig. 5 clearly shows the main reasons listed by organisations for lack of funding.

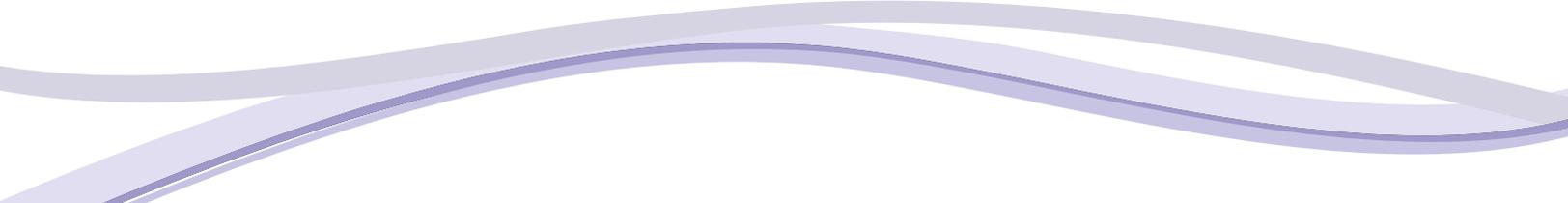


The changing environment and the dilution of aid to cross cutting themes rather than specific sectors was stated as a key reason for difficulties faced in securing aid. Organisations also said there was limited donor engagement with NGOs working on women’s issues at the local level.

Another key issue raised was the lack of access faced by smaller organisations working at the community or grass-roots level to donors with the wherewithal to fund women’s rights work. Though their work in the field was indicative of the areas that were likely to be funded, lack of information and the skills to complete the necessary paperwork as well as proposal requirements of foreign donors was a massive hindrance in securing aid.

A prominent NGO activist from KPK said that though her organisation was committed and honest about their work, funding was hard to come by as they were faced with the dilemma of ‘who to approach for funding as each donor had their own clearly set out areas of priority for funding’. Moreover, bilateral and multilateral donors basically follow a global funding trend strategized according to their country or institutional specific requirements and positioning. However, these are not the only factors that play a role in hampering funds for NGOs and CBOs.

Organisations reveal administrative and organisational inabilities to meet the demands of international donors. Several donors also mentioned the lack of capacity among organisations



to absorb the funding available. They say there were significant capacity issues that had the potential to hamper project performance. This was one of the main reasons why organisations

the issue is the lack of liability on the consultants' part to ensure its implementation efficacy as well. This is like the final nail in the coffin for increased corporatisation of the Rights Sector in the name of 'coherence' and 'accountability', says a noted social activist and researcher.

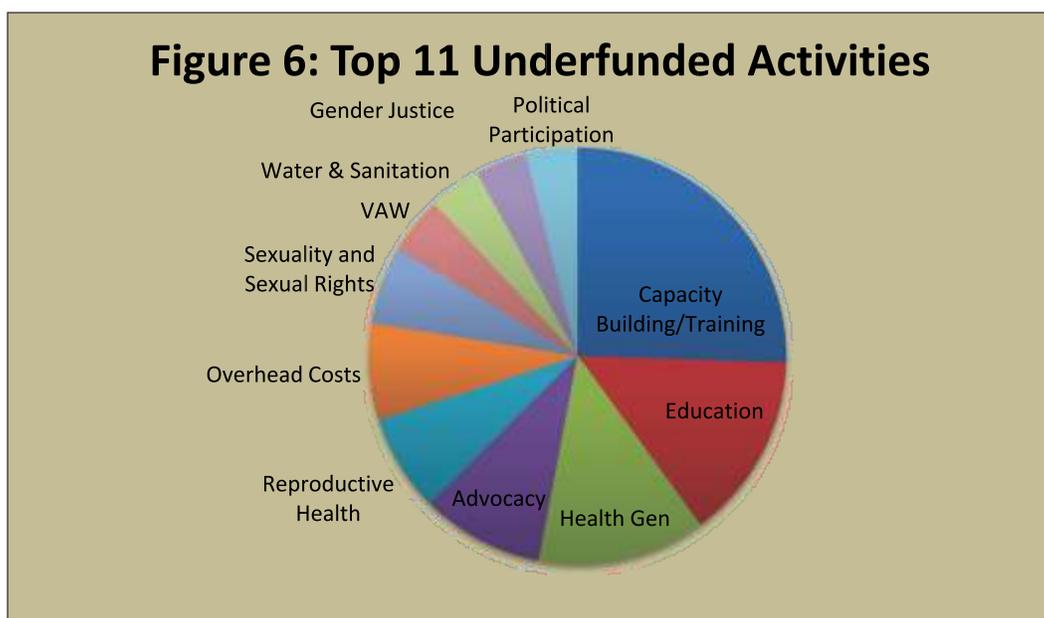
A disturbing trend that was reported during field research was of donor groups leading the agenda setting – from defining objectives to setting the parameters of the output monitoring. Activists say this trend is gaining ground among local NGOs as a method of building 'coherence' with donor agencies. This has led to NGO groups being driven to fragmenting their objectives and increasingly becoming fragmented themselves in their coverage of issues. Prominent NGO activists say that it has resulted in the sapping of the capacity of groups to be responsive to needs on the ground and reacting to learning from the field. Instead, the NGO programming has rapidly altered to be responsive to the funding available. While researchers and observers don't necessarily detect malafide intentions or an inclination to only attract money, this has been mentioned as 'a slow and insidious trend sometimes present in the best of groups.'

The Figure below shows the top 11 areas of interventions mentioned by organisations, during the two phases of data gathering, as those that struggled to secure funding - education, health and capacity building especially of community women groups remain the three most challenging sectors.

Education and health are two major development sectors of Pakistan, which need immense strengthening. Therefore, they are priority areas for the donors as well. However most funding that is received for these two sectors remains concentrated largely to the public sector. From the donor perspective, the magnitude of the issues in both education and health are beyond the capacity of the NGOs because both sectors require large-scale interventions.

Many respondent organisations highlighted difficulty in acquiring funds for capacity building (of organizations as well as that of the community) as the activity was not viewed as priority by many donors. The main reason for this, shared by the donors themselves, was that capacity building and trainings do not yield any substantive outcomes. A few donors like CIDA conducted their own respective trainings for selected partners after assessing their capacities in certain areas. However, it proved to be a cost intensive exercise, which could only be carried out with selected partners; and therefore, has not evolved into a strategy.

In addition to critical thematic areas such as Reproductive Health, Sexuality and Sexual rights, VAW, Gender justice, Water and Sanitation and political participation; organisations also



mentioned difficulties in raising funds for core costs such as honorariums, salaries, rent and equipment.

## CHAPTER VI : RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Working on women's issues in Pakistan is a nuanced tight-rope walk due to societal constraints, geographical complexities and more importantly, religious and cultural predispositions. There is little debate that there is a wide chasm that needs to be bridged in terms of making funding accessible to NGOs and community based organisations that work with women on issues related to them. Accessibility of smaller organisations to sources of funds and their ability to tap into them remain major challenges for the Pakistani society. Funding support from other sources like private foundations and private donors is either for specific sectors or largely unaccounted for in the case of private foundations and philanthropic organisations. The obvious strategy by the foreign assistance programs is to include women and development as a cross cutting theme and mainstream gender into the public sector. Multilateral and bilateral aid agencies are currently in the role of providers of technical assistance to the public sector or working in partnerships or consortiums that leaves limited funding space for smaller NGOs.

There were several salient points that emerged during the study that reflects on the structure and the working atmosphere prevalent in Pakistan, not just for women-centric work but also for development work at large.

- Pakistan's societal realities reflect in the social service and development sector too. Though there are a significant number of NGOs in the country working on women's issues, few are solely women-centric or have women as direct beneficiaries. However, despite their focus of operations being the general community as direct beneficiaries, they list women as the largest category of indirect beneficiaries.
- Most NGOs used a broad 'rights based approach' with activities in diverse community development sectors like education, health, economic empowerment, gender justice, vocational skills trainings etc. with very few NGOs using explicit rights based approaches based on feminist or equality principles.
- Awareness raising and advocacy at community and different administrative tiers were more common activities amongst the NGOs rather than service delivery. Similarly gender justice programs were also more oriented towards awareness raising with very few organizations providing legal aid services. Similarly, there were few voluntary pressure groups working in Pakistan (Women's Action Forum, Pakistan Reproductive Health Network) with majority working on donor funded projects and programmes.
- Difficulties in accessing funds were attributed to the donors' lack of interest in certain sectors rather than assessing organizational capacity to handle certain sectors or scale of work as ascertained by key informants and donors. Similarly though there was a funds crunch mentioned by organizations in undertaking work, the budgetary allocations of organizations involved in the survey showed several organizations with large budgetary allocations as well.
- According to the NGOs, education, health and capacity building were the sectors most commonly neglected by the donors for funding. These sectors were considered to be beyond the scope and capacity of most NGOs in the country keeping in mind the magnitude of the issues specifically in health and education.
- Most aid flow in the country is through multilateral and bilateral donors. There are 17 donors at present who have committed funds for women and development including Government of Pakistan, private foundations and INGOs. A large proportion of foreign assistance is channeled to the public sector with only a small segment of the funds for

NGOs.

- There appears to be a palpable shift in International Aid assistance with donors focusing on joint sector programming in the form of general budget support, sector wide approach, basket funding and joint assistance strategies.
- Women are treated as a cross cutting theme or 'main streamed' by most donors and there are less resources available for women-centered projects and programs. Even if funding is available it is usually through umbrella set-ups like consortiums, networks, INGOs or established National NGOs.

The donor and resource mapping study undertaken across Pakistan underlined the need for sustained engagement with small and medium sized NGOs and community based organisations to carry the work with women and women-centred communities forward. Geopolitical realities and the shift in the global economic climate were bringing about changes in the funding environment that has already begun to adversely affect donor assistance programmes that are increasingly the funding loop. The study shed light on several thousand NGOs and CBOs operational across Pakistan working on women issues that need to be tapped and streamlined by bringing them together through provincial and national level forums. It is recommended that thematic networks be formed to bring together organizations working on similar issues which can also help in capacity enhancement of each organization by learning from the strength of other partners in the collective:

- There is a need to create partnerships with local organizations, which can be done through district or provincial NGO collectives. There are existing women focused networks already functional in Sindh and Punjab provinces which can be consulted for future partnerships.
- Capacity building of NGOs is a crucial area that needs to be focused on. The study findings reveal that this was one of the major areas which the surveyed organizations felt was overlooked by all donors. However, capacity building endeavours need to be very carefully planned, developed and researched. Regional level partnerships or collectives can also be effective through experience sharing and stronger accountability mechanisms. Such partnerships can also open up partners. Capacity building needs to be contextualized and based on expressed needs/requirements and groups should be encouraged and incentivized to set the programme agenda themselves.
- Need was also expressed for focussing on small NGOs and CBOs. Increasing support for

them is the only way forward in countries like Pakistan where development is hampered by multiple complications like conflict and other forms of violence as well as societal pressures.

- The quality of training available across sectors also needs to be improved. While at present, there are a lot of training programmes available, it is largely generic in nature and the quality is often reported to be poor.
- A key recommendation raised by key informants that could hold some merit is exploring possibilities of diverting funding from merely policy level assistance to undertaking work at the grassroots level for bringing in change in the lives of the Pakistani women. This need becomes paramount as the biggest donors to Pakistan – the multilateral and bilateral donors in most instances, do not have a direct relationship with the recipient organizations and funding is indirectly filtered down through consortiums or larger NGOs with no accountability mechanisms or transparency in the process. Donors and organizations need to brainstorm extensively to devise strategies to bridge the existing gaps between the donors and their partner organizations.

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## ANNEXURE I

In order to ensure parity and consistency in analysis of qualitative data, common definitions and sets of parameters were developed – for instance while analysing the approaches being undertaken by the groups, the following definitions were referred to by all the researchers:

*Category 1: Explicitly rights based (with principles of equality including gender equality):* it brings together gender, participation, and empowerment into a coherent framework which is rooted in the norms and principles of international human rights standards and values. Focuses on, (i) Participation – inclusive, people-centred; (ii) Empowerment – leading to social transformation, for the marginalised and oppressed communities; (iii) Accountability: Identification of claim-holders and corresponding duty-holders (state and non-state); (iv)

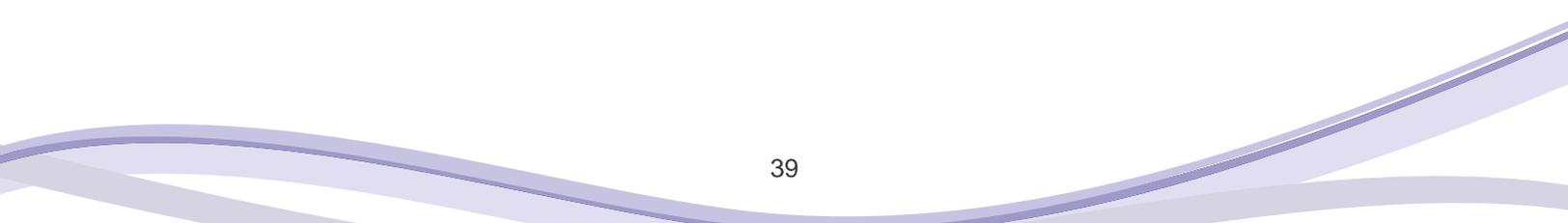
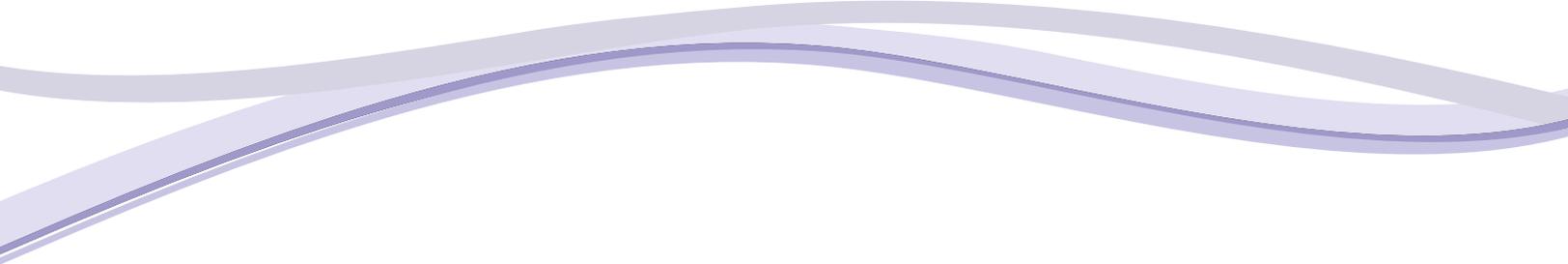
Equality and Non-discrimination-as defined by international human rights law; and (v) Justice - based on universal standards and norms; just distribution of resources and power; ensuring claims of violations.

Category 2: *Explicitly rights based (with feminist principles)*: Along with elements of category 1, clear articulation of feminist principles – critiquing unequal power relations, analysing gender inequality and protecting and promoting women’s rights and issues.

Category 3: *Strongly rights based*: Groups that reflect a rights based approach in their praxis- which means their activities, demonstrate adoption of a rights based approach even while the articulation may be missing (responses on objectives, strategies, activities and changes in women lives include elements of RBA – participation, empowerment etc. but not seen within the framework on quality and non-discrimination. No direct reference to human rights standards, inclusion or social transformation).

Category 4: *Some elements of rights based*: Groups that refer to rights based approach, and there is some level of understanding within the organisations, however, the activities or strategies do not reflect the same.

Category 5: *RBA not clearly articulated/welfarist*: Focusing on the needs and not on rights of the communities; addressing immediate causes of problems. Programmes are entirely around the needs of the community, and there is little or no linkage between one programme line and another, as no attempt has been made to synchronise programme plan or strategic understanding. No reference to elements of RBA.





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