

# Gender Differences: Understanding Perceptions

## Executive Summary National Baseline Study



April 2012

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The study was carried out by Applied Economic Research Centre (AERC) and AASA Consulting.

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**April 30th 2012**







# Preface

The Gender Equity Program (GEP) is happy to present Pakistan's premier representative primary data study which benchmarks existing knowledge, attitudes and practices about women's rights, their empowerment and gender based violence in the country.

A program of Aurat Foundation implemented in collaboration with The Asia Foundation and supported by USAID, GEP has been at the forefront of mainstreaming research in gender interventions in Pakistan during the last two years.

This baseline is the first nationally and provincially representative study that captures insights into the situation of women's rights in Pakistan by juxtaposing responses from men and women. This allows the study to examine gender differentials in knowledge and attitudes while examining a wide range of critical issues for women's development such as; women's right to inheritance, women's mobility, their right to political participation, economic empowerment, domestic violence and other customary forms of gender based violence.

It is our belief that this research, while playing a significant role in GEP, will benefit the Government of Pakistan, civil society and the development sector at large by providing analytical primary research.

We would like to thank the Applied Economic Research Center (AERC) and AASA Consulting for their dedication and spirit in undertaking this exercise. We would especially like to thank Dr. Nuzhat Ahmad, Mr. Zohair Ashir, Mr. Riaz Husain, Mr. Haroon Jamal, Ms. Meher Marker Noshervani and Ms. Birjis Jaleel for their strategic inputs and hard work. Their willingness to interact closely with GEP team and take on board our many suggestions in this colossal exercise is deeply appreciated.

Simi Kamal  
Chief of Party  
Gender Equity Program

# Acknowledgment

This baseline study is a key milestone in understanding the challenges and issues related to gender gap in Pakistan. It is a first study of this magnitude and scope focusing on gender development. This study would not have been possible without the support and cooperation of many.

Thanks are due to USAID, Aurat Foundation, The Asia Foundation (TAF) and the Gender Equity Program team. In particular we will like to acknowledge the contribution of Ms. Simi Kamal, Chief of Party, Mr. Hasan Akbar, Ms. Muneezeh Saeed Khan, Ms. Jodah Bokhari and the other members of the GEP team. We also want to extend our thanks to Ms. Bushra Jaffar Malik, Mr. Babar Aziz, Ms. Amena Raja, Mr. Kamran Yousaf, and other members of the TAF team for their support and assistance.

Special thanks to our project partner AASA Consulting led by Mr. Zohair Ashir and supported by Ms. Birjis Jaleel, Ms. Meher Marker Noshwirani, Mr. Danish Rashdi and Ms. Sana Zaffar Khan and other members of his team who worked closely with us in ensuring that the project is brought to a successful completion and within the project timeframe.

I also want to extend my appreciation to the AERC team for their contributions particularly Mr. Riaz Hussain, Mr. Haroon Jamal, Mr. Minhajuddin Siddiqui without whose tireless efforts this task would not have been completed.

But most of all we want to show our appreciation extended to the many thousands of respondents who gave their valuable time and freely shared their views on a critical issue of national significance.

Prof. Dr. Nuzhat Ahmad  
Director, AERC



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# Acronyms

AERC	<i>Applied Economics Research Centre</i>
CEDAW	<i>Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women</i>
CNIC	<i>Computerized National Identity Card</i>
CSO's	<i>Civil Society Organization's</i>
FBS	<i>Federal Bureau of Statistics</i>
FIR	<i>First Information Report</i>
GBV	<i>Gender Based Violence</i>
GDI	<i>Gender-related development index</i>
GEP	<i>Gender Equity Program</i>
GRAP	<i>Gender Reform Action Plan</i>
KAP	<i>Knowledge, Attitude and Practices</i>
KPK	<i>Khyber Pakhtunkhaw</i>
MDG's	<i>Millennium Development Goals</i>
MoWD	<i>Ministry of Women's Development</i>
NADRA	<i>National Database and Registration Authority</i>
NCSW	<i>National Commission on the Status of Women</i>
NGO's	<i>Non Government Organization's</i>
NPA	<i>National Plan of Action</i>
PSUs	<i>Primary Sampling Units</i>
TORs	<i>Terms of Reference</i>
UN	<i>United Nations</i>
UNDP	<i>United Nations Development Programme</i>
VAW	<i>Violence Against Women</i>
KAP	<i>Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice,</i>
WDDs	<i>Women Development Departments,</i>
PTCL	<i>Pakistan Telecommunication Limited</i>
PIA	<i>Pakistan International Airlines</i>



# Executive Summary

## *Study Framework*

The Constitution of Pakistan says all citizens are equal and there should be no discrimination on the basis of sex. Hence women are guaranteed fundamental rights, and considered equal citizens in all respects. Yet, in 2010, more than 8000 cases of violence against women were recorded, according to an Aurat Foundation report on Violence against Women in Pakistan. Among these 486 cases of domestic violence, 557 cases of honor killings, 928 cases of rape and gang rape, and 74 of sexual violence were reported.

Between 2010 and 2012, six progressive legislation supporting women's empowerment were made. These included the Anti Sexual Harassment Act, National Commission on Status of Women Act, and the Domestic Violence Bill. And during the same time, the law on Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace was implemented which brought around 2000 Government and private organizations to comply with the law, according to a National Commission on the Status of Women Report (2010 –2012).

Despite all, the gap between theory and practice continues to widen – between legislation and implementation, urban and rural disparity, and the reality of the average woman is in stark contrast to the progress being made in the political process, in laws passed, and at policy level. The reasons underlying the gap are a lack of awareness of fundamental rights, limited access to justice, illiteracy, poverty, prevailing patriarchal attitudes, archaic traditions and customs, and little knowledge of women's rights among the general population. It is in this context that the Gender Equity Program (GEP) is being implemented.

## *The National Baseline Study on Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices*

One of GEP's initiatives is this national baseline study, conducted for two major reasons: first, to provide a basis for program impact evaluation in the future; and second, to identify existing on-ground realities with respect to GEP objectives.

The objectives of the national baseline study are:  
a) to benchmark existing knowledge, attitudes

and practices (KAP) with respect to women's rights, women's access to justice and institutions;

- b) women's empowerment;
- c) all forms of gender based violence.

Each of the above objectives consists of a set of indicators which have been measured and analyzed in the study.

### Scope of the Study

The study adopted a holistic research methodology incorporating quantitative and qualitative research tools, and using scientific random sampling. The study was conducted nationwide, covering 11200 adult males and females in the quantitative survey; and 43 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), 53 Key Opinion Makers (KOM) Interviews and 15 Case Studies, in the qualitative survey in Punjab, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Gilgit-Baltistan.

### Major Findings of the Study

The findings of the study are based on the quantitative survey and qualitative discussions. The findings are conveniently divided into the main objectives of the GEP.

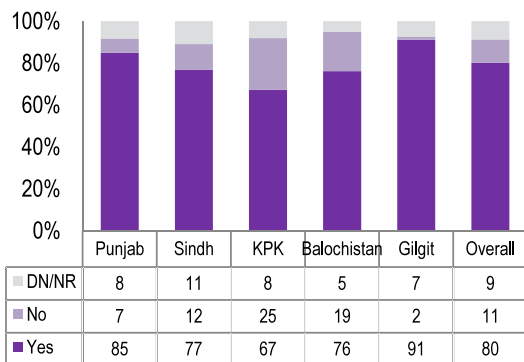
### Objective 1: Human Rights and Justice

Various aspects of human rights and justice are explored in the study including equal rights for men and women, rights relating to marriage and divorce, inheritance, political participation, and access to institutions of justice. Results in the report are presented with three different angles, namely knowledge, perceptions and actual practices prevalent in the household. The results indicate that majority respondents believe that women should have equal rights as men. Most men and women are found to be knowledgeable about these rights.

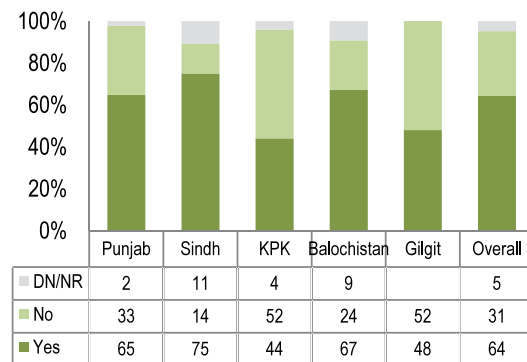
#### Equal Rights and Opportunities

[Q: In your opinion should women be given equal rights/opportunities as men in every field of life?]

Female Respondents



Male Respondents



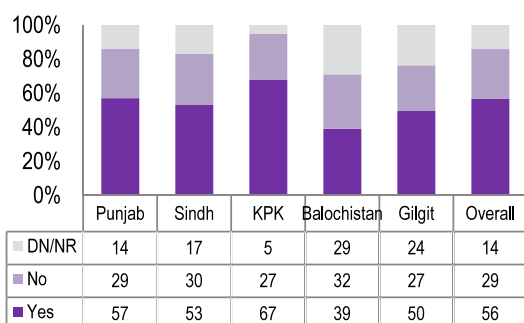
Respondents say that women should have the right to marry of their own choice, right to demand divorce, right to decide *Haq-e-Meher* and *Khula* and the right to inheritance based on Shariah. However comparatively fewer respondents were of the opinion that women should have the right to demand divorce and *Haq-e-Meher*. They also seem

to be less supportive for women's participation in sporting events. Participation in political activities has a lot of support especially to exercise the right to vote but in actual practice few women cast their votes according to their own choice and the decisions are often influenced by their husbands and other members of the family.

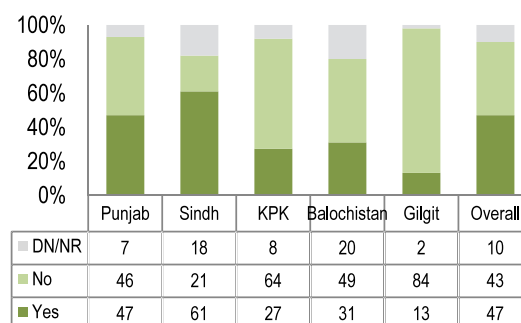
### Women's right to demand divorce

[Q: Should women demand the right to divorce in their marriage certificates "Nikahnama"??]

Female Respondents



Male Respondents

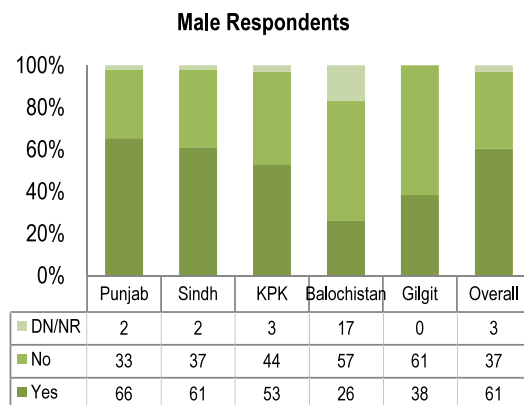
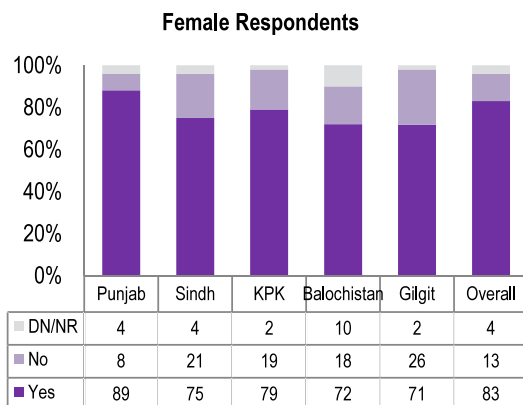


One major conclusion regarding human rights is that in almost all cases female respondents are more in favour of these rights than male respondents. When perceptions and rights are compared to the actual practices prevalent in the households regarding

these rights large differences are observed between female and male respondents. For instance more men than women say that women have a share in inheritance in their household, the right to divorce, marriages of their choice and right to *Khula* etc.

## Seeking justice from institutions outside the home

[Q: Should women go outside the home to seek justice?]

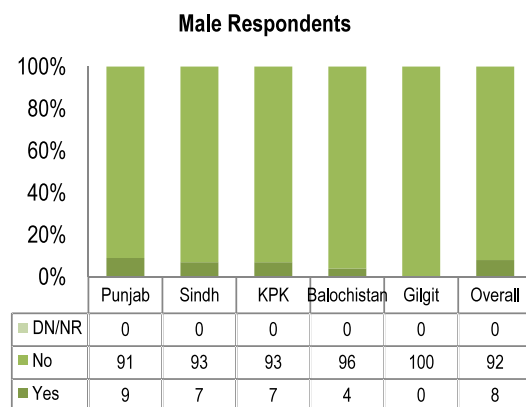
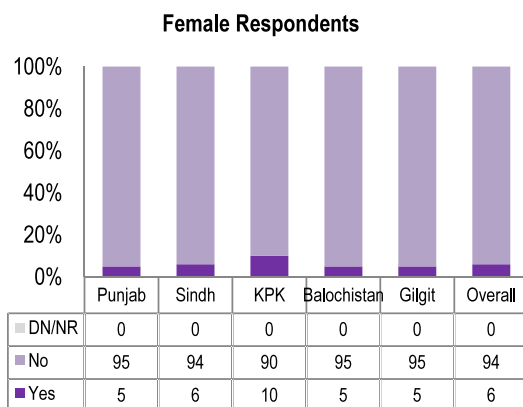


Similarly, most of the women feel that if they want justice, it is necessary to even go out of the home for seeking it. Seeking justice outside of home mostly comprises of going to the police station or

to the court. Yet, women also feel that such step is necessary when disputes and issues are not settled within the family or if the situation becomes such that going outside the home becomes necessary.

## Practice: Seeking justice from institutions outside the home

[Q: Has any woman in your household ever gone out of the home to seek justice?]





It can be concluded that women lack knowledge and awareness of the social justice system. Women perceive the legal system as negative and find their access to it restrictive, due to the behavior and attitude of the police and the complicated and often unending process involved in settling issues in courts. The feudal system continues to control the political process in most parts of the country. In most cases, women vote under the male influence.

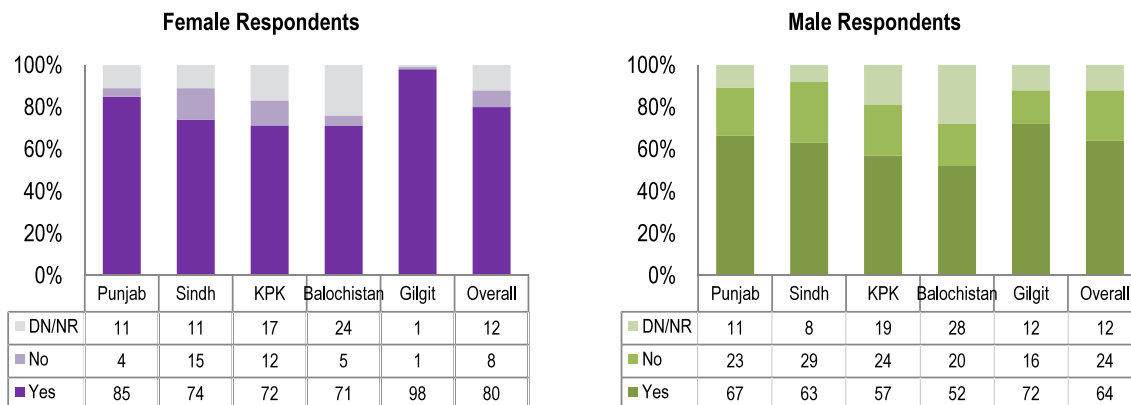
## Objective 2: Women's Empowerment

Women's empowerment is a key factor in the well-being of women and their households.

However, the measurement and quantification of empowerment is quite difficult. It can be only approximated by using proxies and indicators as it is a dynamic process that cannot be observed directly. The results of the study show that most women (80 percent) believe they should work to earn a living, most men felt that it was not their role to do so. What is encouraging is that at least 93 percent of working women say that they can spend their income as and how they want. And around half of the total women interviewed enjoy permission to work.

**Chart – 5.1.1**  
**Perceptions: Women's work for livelihood**

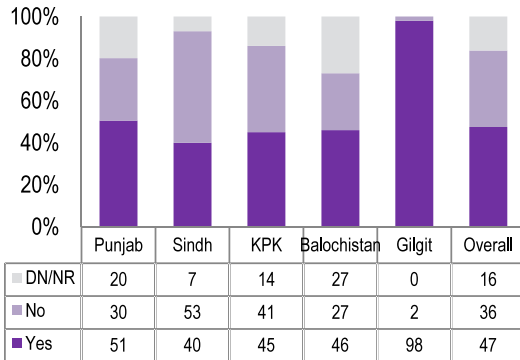
[Q: In your opinion should women work to earn money for a livelihood?]



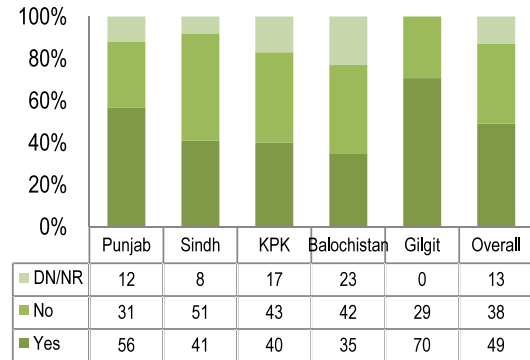
## Women Allowed to work for a livelihood

[Q: Do women in your household have permission to work?]

### Female Respondents



### Male Respondents



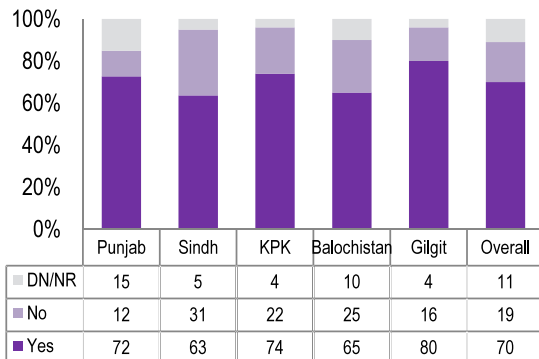
It is also observed through qualitative findings, that for women who prefer to and could work, there are not equal opportunities especially in areas which traditionally are dominated by men; and therefore the options for women are limited to the stereotyped gender roles as care-givers, teachers, nurses, etc. Barriers to women's participation have been defined as restrictions

from the family, male insecurity in terms of losing control over women, and gaining economic independence. The religious sections of the society view women as having separate roles from men, which is why they maintain that women cannot be given all the opportunities and roles that men can enjoy.

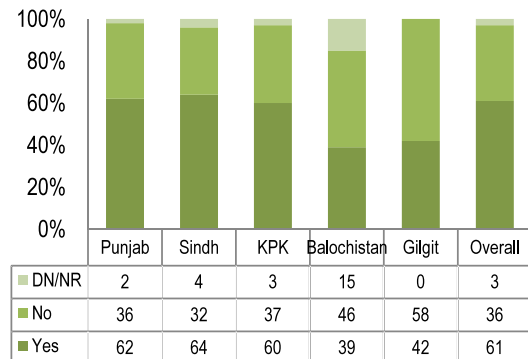
## Financial Decisions Making

[Q: In your opinion should women participate in financial decisions in their family?]

### Female Respondents



### Male Respondents



Most women (70 percent) also feel they should be part of the financial decisions pertaining to their households. Men however have a different view to this. For them, making household financial decisions is not a woman's forte and that they don't even have the knowledge to do so, and women cannot make appropriate decisions.

Women's empowerment has been based on the

number of decisions a woman could take pertaining to household matters. The decisions include those on education, health, marriage, home chores, employment, family planning, and daily ration. Not many women have bank accounts, and even fewer have taken personal loans. But in most cases, the loans have been taken on husband's instructions, and not necessarily of their own choice.

### Women's Mobility

[Q: For what purpose are you/allowed to leave the house?]

[Female Respondents]

	Cannot Go	Can Go	Can Go alone	Can Go with child	Can Go with adult women	Can Go with adult men	Need Permission to go to visit
To meet neighbors	4.5	95.5	80.1	6.5	5.9	3.0	66.2
For Sale and purchase of items	13.8	86.2	50.6	13.1	14.3	8.2	68.2
For visiting a hospital/doctor	6.1	93.9	45.8	15.8	19.5	12.8	77.7
For attending wedding ceremony	7.7	92.3	43.0	13.6	21.3	14.4	78.0
To visit a bank	73.3	26.7	10.1	3.8	6.8	6.0	24.0
To attend a meeting conducted by NGO	85.1	14.9	6.5	1.8	3.5	3.1	13.1
For job	84.1	15.9	6.8	1.8	3.8	3.5	14.5
For Education	81.4	18.6	8.4	2.2	4.2	3.8	17.1
To visit other village/city for any work	44.7	55.3	18.2	6.8	13.7	16.6	48.0

Women's mobility has also been seen as part of women's empowerment, and the extent of women's mobility has been gauged through answers to the question "For what purpose are women allowed to leave the house?". Majority of women say they can easily step out of the house to meet neighbors, and many also do so for sale and purchase of items, visit to the hospital, or to attend weddings. Mobility of women however is limited in case of education, job and visits to bank. Mobility is further restricted by the fact that women need

permission from family members to go out and usually have to be accompanied by someone. Interestingly men think women have more freedom of mobility contrary to what females' responses indicate.

The concept of empowerment appears to be narrow; most women define environment in terms of their basic needs. Women are not able to move about freely and even those who do must inform their families first. Implementation of existing laws

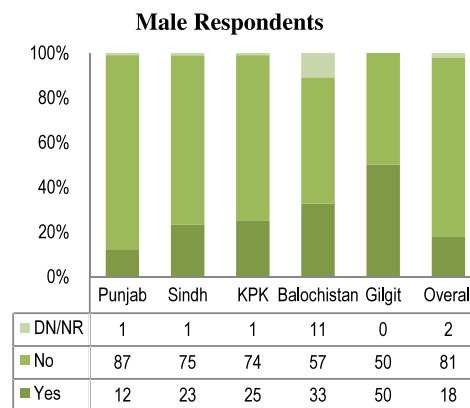
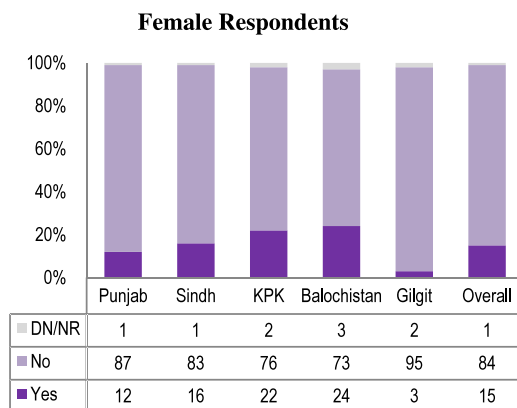
is seen as a main priority in empowering women, followed by education, family support, freedom to work, power to make their own decisions, economic independence and political empowerment. For women who work, there appears to be a complete lack of awareness of any labor laws, or legislation which protects women against sexual harassment at workplace.

### Objective 3: Gender Based Violence

A recent study on Gender-Based violence<sup>1</sup> in Pakistan concluded that “Gender-based violence is

a living reality in present day Pakistan. Though these crimes are prevalent around the world, in Pakistan they are uniquely legitimized in the name of culture, tradition, religion, and morality”. A module of domestic and gender-based violence was introduced in the quantitative survey to obtain perception as well as incidence of domestic and gender-based violence. The worst gender based violence takes the form of honor killing, acid throwing, physically and sexually abusing women and sexual harassment.

**Chart - 6.1.1**  
**Perceptions about Domestic Violence**  
 [Q: In your opinion do men have the right to hit women?]



A small percentage of the women feel that men have the right to hit women, and strangely enough, at least 9 percent women find honor killing justified, while an even lesser percentage agrees

with the concept of *wanni/swara*. These are women who feel that under certain circumstances a man had the religious right to hit a woman after he has failed to verbally settle the dispute; because

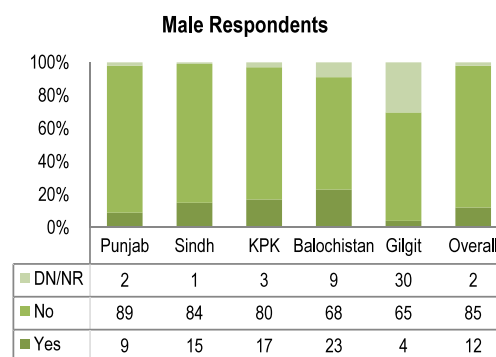
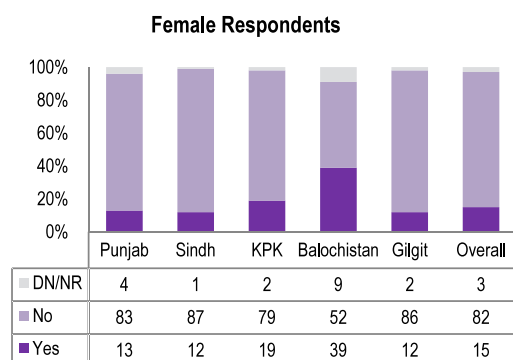
<sup>1</sup> “Gender-Based Violence in Pakistan–A Scoping Study” by Gender Equity Program of Aurat Foundation (January 2011).

the “honor” of the family rests on her behavior. What is apparent is that the onus is on the woman, to be faithful, “proper” and obedient, and it is her responsibility to avoid domestic violence. A majority of women however believed that men do not have a right to hit woman, and even according to Islam, no such right has been given.

Majority of respondents however strongly oppose men hitting women. But the study shows that 15

percent of women have been hit by their husbands in the past and 1.5 percent also disclose that they have been sexually abused. In the qualitative research it is highlighted that mental abuse is an aspect of violence which is not easy to identify, since it is not physically visible. The women who identified with it instantly were those in the shelter homes, who had been through mental violence.

### Prevalent Domestic Violence [Q: Do men in your household hit women?]



As mental abuse has no physical manifestation, it was described as mental stress. However, the women feel that extreme cases of violence should be reported to the police, NGOs, or the media.

It is generally admitted that GBV begins at home, and from the very beginning inequalities start to become visible between male and female siblings. GBV has been defined as prostitution, physical beating of women by men, and women forcibly

confined at home and not allowed to step out of the house. In Balochistan women are said to be forced into frequent pregnancies – seen as a form of sexual violence – due to the husband's wish to have more male offspring.

The study has identified reasons for mental and physical violence along with types of mental and physical violence being committed against women, which are displayed below:

## Types of Domestic Violence

### Mental Abuse

- Taunting remarks (education, behavior, women family members)
- Denied employment,
- Fear of *karokari*,
- Suspicion - constant lack of trust, suspicion or “*shak*”
- Husband “ignoring” his wife,
- Forcing females to abort a pregnancy,
- Refusing to give her money for household expenses,
- Using abusive language, “*galigaloch*” in front of her family and children,
- Deliberate restriction of mobility and communication,
- Enforced isolation of woman from society,
- Threat of divorce, taking away children and second marriage
- “Rape” within the confines of a marriage (forcing marital rights)
- Husband not showing up
- Husband leaving house for weeks

### Physical Abuse

- Slapping,
- Kicking,
- Punching,
- Pulling of the hair,
- Pushing a woman into a wall
- Burning parts of the body with cigarettes,
- Denying access to medicines,
- Forced labour .
- Forced marriages, marriages to the Quran,
- Child trafficking,
- Rape (gang rape),
- Murder,
- Forced prostitution,
- Kidnapping and extortion

### Reasons for Mental and Physical Violence

- Male dominated society (show their strength)
- Men consider women as their property, “*aurat paun ki jooti hai*”
- Men are habitual of abusing women
- Drug addicts - use of drugs increase the frequency of violence
- Marriage is a “certificate” to physical and mental torture
- Domestic disputes over financial issues

- Frustration due to stress
- Unemployment
- Conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law
- Women not dressed according to their requirement such as not covering the head with a *dupatta*
- Women are considered weak “*aurat ko muthi mein rakho.*”
- Women tolerate the abuse for their children’s sake

Reporting of gender based crimes is very low because when a woman complains, she is blamed, and the judicial system is not such that it becomes easy for her to seek justice. In the event a case is reported, the woman's family becomes an outcast, and society does not support a rape victim, and she is blamed for the incident. Police are not trusted; in fact they are feared, and demand witnesses, so women do not want to pursue the case.

It is clear that there is awareness of GBV amongst the masses, and masses do recognize the types of

violence being perpetrated against women. What is unfortunate is that violence against women starts at home. Some women think that hitting another woman is justified. Within the family unit, women themselves perpetuate gender discrimination and violence. Harassment against women has increased across the board as in markets and bazaars, public transport and public places. There are perhaps many more instances of GBV than are being reported – majority of the cases are simply not reported as the system of justice and reporting are manipulated in such a way that it brings only further hardship for women.

#### Perpetrators in case of Physical Violence

	Female Respondents	Male Respondents	Overall
Husband	87.1	85.1	86.4
Father/ Brother	9.5	16.7	12.2
Father in law	9.7	10.7	10.1
Mother/ Sister	7.8	2.9	6.0
Mother in law/ sister in law	7.2	7.2	7.2
Daughter in law	0.3	1.3	0.7
Son in law	0.0	0.5	0.2
Others	2.0	2.0	2.0
Did not respond	2.1	0.6	1.5

Finally, it is apparent that a huge gap continues to exist between legislation and implementation and while the Constitution of Pakistan allows a number of rights to both men and women, it does not ensure that the implementation of such rights is enforced.

Very few women are aware of the recent laws which have been passed in parliament for violence against women, but they think that since the legal system is corrupt, and the men have economic

power, the law would not be enforced.

This study has raised various issues that women face in the Pakistani society. While there is general awareness of gender-based issues being faced by women, no concrete steps are being taken to ensure that the root causes of such issues are addressed, and that implementation of penalties and rights is enforced to ensure protection to women.



# Conclusions

Based on the findings of the report, the major conclusions are summarized here and linked to GEP's three program objectives.

## Objective One: Enhancing gender equity by expanding women's access to justice and women's human rights.

- Generally, women's knowledge and awareness of the social justice system is very low.
- Very few women visit police stations or courts to seek justice.
- According to women, the image of the legal system is negative and also access to the legal system is restrictive because women do not feel comfortable going to court /police station where the environment is not conducive.
- Women who access the social justice system are perceived as bringing disrespect to family.
- Irrespective of gender, even the educated urban men and women do not understand the concept of rights. Even men do not know their rights.
- A high proportion of women vote but in most cases women vote under male influence.
- With a few exceptions the feudal system still controls the political process in the majority of the country.
- Many women believe that they do not have equal rights/opportunities to men and they have to claim their rights, by convincing their family and society.
- Women are denied their inheritance rights because women are perceived as being dependent on men.
- Only half of the respondents are in favour of giving women the right to demand divorce.
- The right to divorce exists legally, but is rarely given and exercised by women.
- Women should not ask for the right to determine their *Haq-e-Meher* as "only family members make correct decisions for them".
- The justification for the right to *Khula* is that women should compromise and reconcile rather than breakup marital life.
- Dowry is given to women to protect and empower them.
- Not many women seek their right to

inheritance and give it up for men; women who ask for their inheritance are seen as “mean and selfish women”.

- There is significant disparity between urban and rural areas in terms of both awareness about women's rights and access to justice. There is greater awareness and access in urban areas than rural.
- Media has played a positive role in spreading awareness of women's rights by highlighting key issues affecting women.

### Objective 2: Increasing women's empowerment by expanding knowledge of their rights and opportunities to exercise their rights in the workplace, community, and home.

- The vision of empowerment is very narrow, most women define environment in terms of their basic needs. For example, even if she is working she is not automatically empowered.
- Women are not able to move about freely and even those who do must inform their families first.
- A woman's mobility is further restricted by time, distance and area.
- Implementation of existing laws is seen as a main priority in empowering women, followed by education, family support, freedom to work, power to make their own decisions, economic independence and political empowerment.
- While there is a general support for women participation in the political process leading to greater empowerment, however, there is strong resistance from the religious and tribal

groups, who thought that Islam does not allow women to participate in the political process.

- Right to inheritance for women is provided under the law but due to unawareness, social, and cultural norms, women do not get their fair share of inheritance, they hesitate to claim their right, the male members of the family have control over women's inheritance.
- Police is viewed as corrupt and organized persecutors of innocent people who approach them for help. Police appears to be a tool in the hands of the powerful and the influential who command it to their whims and requirements.
- There is a complete lack of awareness and no knowledge of any labor laws, or legislation which protect women against sexual harassment at workplace.

### Objective 3: Combating gender-based violence.

- There is awareness of gender based violence (GBV) amongst the masses. The most common form of violence is in prostitution, physical beatings, mental trauma, physical confinement at home and domestic violence.
- A large number of women think that a man has the right to hit a woman and that it is justified.
- The family unit is the seed and source of domestic violence and gender discrimination.
- Within the family unit, women themselves perpetuate gender discrimination and violence.
- In a large number of cases of gender based

violence the offenders are husband or other male members of the family, very few cases of any form of violence are reported.

- Women generally do not seek justice for violence and crimes committed against them.
- Harassment against women has increased across the board from markets and bazaars, to public transport and public places.
- There are perhaps more instances of GBV as most cases are not generally reported.
- A woman is considered inferior and weak while promoting gender based violence.

- A huge gap exists between legislation and implementation and while the Constitution of Pakistan allows a number of rights to both men and women, it does not ensure that the implementation of such rights is enforced.
- Very few women are aware of the recent laws which have been passed by the parliament for violence against women, but they thought that since the legal system is corrupt, and the men enjoy economic power, the law will not be enforced.



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