

# REPORT ON THE STATE OF WOMEN IN URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAKISTAN

## I. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY

### 1.1 Socio Economic Profile

#### Brief Contextual Description of the country

Pakistan consists of four provinces, the federal capital area and the federally administered tribal areas (FATA). The total population of the country, according to the provincial results of the 1998 Population Census, is 130.6 million, of which 55.6 percent is in the Punjab, 23 percent in Sindh, 13.4 percent in North Western Frontier Province (NWFP), 5 percent in Balochistan, 2.4 percent in FATA and 0.6 percent in Islamabad. About 67.5 percent of Pakistan's population is rural and 32.5 percent urban. Its human development index (HDI), indicating the proportion of people affected by three key deprivations, is 46 percent, ranking it at 63 out of a list of 77 developing countries. Nearly two-thirds of its adult population cannot read or write, and nearly half the population does not have access to basic social services like primary health care and safe drinking water.

Pakistani society is characterized by tremendous linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity. There are also considerable economic disparities between different sections of society, as well as divisions of caste, tribe, clan and class. It is dominated by a feudal and tribal value system, with strong patriarchal trends which permeate attitudes and behavior even where the actual social structure has changed. The overwhelming majority in Pakistan is Muslim, but while Islam and related State policies have affected social patterns to some extent, Pakistani society is so entrenched in culture, that customary and traditional laws and practices usually override both statutory and Islamic laws, which are only used selectively or adapted in accordance with cultural traditions.

Pakistan's political history includes several constitutional crises, frequent periods of political turmoil, economic instability, martial laws, wars and internal strife on sectarian, ethnic, language and provincial autonomy issues. This has affected the evolution of a political culture, the development of democratic norms, and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

All these social, cultural, economic and historical factors have directly and indirectly affected the status and rights of women at every level and in all sectors, and have negatively impacted on their integration in development or their real participation in the processes of decision-making.

**Table 1: Basic data on Pakistan**

Population		Level of Urbanization (As percent of total population)	GNP per capita US \$
Female	Male		
48.0	52.0	32.5	500

Source:

1. Population Growth and its implications, National Institute of Population studies, Islamabad.

2. Provisional results of fifth population and housing census, Statistic Division, Govt of Pakistan 1998.
3. Human Development Report 1999 - The Crisis of Governance

**Table 2: Female-Male Literacy figures**

	Literacy Rates of Total Population		Levels of Education Enrolment Levels									
	Female	Male	Non-Formal Education		Primary		Lower Secondary		Upper Secondary		Tertiary	
	47.1											
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Urban	52.2	74.3			79	99	40	55	24	35	38	62
Rural	19.1	48.6			(U/R)	(U/R)	(U/R)	(U/R)	(U/R)	(U/R)	(U/R)	(U/R)

Source: Economic Survey 1999-2000, Govt of Pakistan, Economic Adviser's Wing, Finance Division, Islamabad.

Compendium on Gender Statistics Pakistan, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Division - December 1998.

**Table 3: Female-Male Mortality Figures**

Infant Mortality		Under 5 Mortality	Maternal Mortality	Number of Children per Woman (Total Fertility Rate)
Urban	83	30.8	350	8
Rural	112	(U/R)	(U/R)	(U/R)

Source: Population Growth and its implications - National Institute of Population Studies, Islamabad July 2000.

**Table 4: Participation of Women in the Labour Force**

Labour Force		Percentage of Women in Labour Force	Share of Income of Women
Urban	12.5 million	8.4	26 percent (U/R)
Rural	26.9	16.3	

Source: 1. Economic Survey 1900-2000

2. Human Development Report 1999 - The Crisis of Governance

## 1.2. Politics and Governance

### Brief Description of the Political and Government Structure of Country

Pakistan is a federation of four federating units [the provinces of Punjab, Sindh, the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Balochistan], and includes the Islamabad Capital Area and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The Constitution provides a power-sharing formula between the

federation and the provinces. It contains a Federal Legislative List (comprising the subjects which only the federal government can legislate on), as well as a Concurrent Legislative List (comprising the subjects which both the federal and provincial governments can legislate on). In case of any conflict, the federal law prevails. Whatever remains is the domain of the provincial governments.

Pakistan has a parliamentary system of government. The federal legislature comprises the National Assembly and Senate, referred to as the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament (Majlis-e-Shoora) respectively. Federal legislation can be initiated in either House of Parliament and has to be approved by both Houses, except for finance bills which only require approval of the National Assembly. The **National Assembly** has representation on a population-basis through direct elections, and consist of 217 seats. Of these, 207 are Muslim seats filled through constituency-bases election, while 10 seats are reserved for specified minorities and filled in through direct voting by the respective minorities on the basis of separate electorates. General Elections to the National Assembly are held every five years, unless it is dissolved earlier. The **Senate** has representation on a basis of provincial parity, and comprises 87 seats. Of these, 14 members are elected by members of each Provincial Assembly, 8 elected by members of FATA in the National Assembly, 3 elected from the Federal Capital and 5 by members of each Provincial assembly to represent *Ulema*, technocrats or other professions. The term of Senate members is for six years, elections being held every three years for about half the seats. The **Provincial Assemblies** comprise 248 seats in the Punjab (240 Muslim, 8 minority), 109 in Sindh (100 Muslim, 9 minority), 83 in NWFP (80 Muslim, 3 minority) and 43 in Balochistan (40 Muslim, 3 minority). Elections are held in the same manner as those to the National Assembly.

The **President** is the head of State, and is voted in by members of the Senate, National and Provincial Assemblies. With a few exceptions, the President is bound to act on the advice of the Prime Minister. The **Prime Minister** is the executive head of the federal government, while **Chief Ministers** head their respective provincial governments. They must be members of the National and Provincial Assemblies respectively. The **Governors** of the provinces are appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister.

The **Passage of legislation** at both the national and provincial level requires a simple majority of members present and voting, provided there is a quorum of one-fourth of the members of the respective body. At the federal level, there is also a provision for a joint sitting of both Houses if a bill passed by one House is not passed by the other House within 90 days, or rejected, or passed with amendment. Federal laws require the assent of the President, while provincial laws require the assent of the concerned Governor. The President also has the power to promulgate **Ordinances** effective for a four-month period, with the same force and effect as laws, if the National Assembly is not in session. Governors have similar powers at the provincial level, but the life of provincial ordinances is only three months. **Constitutional amendments** can only be made by Parliament and require the approval of two-thirds majority of the total membership of each House. There is no provision for a joint sitting in the case of a constitutional amendment.

All citizens of Pakistan have the **right to vote** for members of the National and Provincial Assemblies, provided that they are 21 years of age, (now 18 years suggested by the new government), registered on the electoral roll and not legally declared to be of unsound mind. However, since the introduction of separate electorates in 1985, only Muslim voters can vote for candidates to the Muslim seats in the assemblies, while non-Muslims can only vote for their respective candidates on the minority seats. All citizens also have the **right to contest election** to the Senate, National and Provincial Assemblies, subject to certain qualifications. Apart from the requirements of being enrolled as voters and provisions relating to character, candidates must be at least 30 years of age to contest elections to the Senate, and 25 years of age for the National and Provincial Assemblies. Any member of the National Assembly is **eligible to be the Prime Minister**, provided that she/he commands the confidence of the majority in the National Assembly. Any person can be elected **as the President**, provided that she/he is a Muslim, at least 45 years of age and qualified to be elected as a member of the National Assembly.

Both women and men have **equality of political rights** under the Constitution in terms of voting and contesting all elective offices. The Fundamental Rights in the Constitution guarantee the equality of all

citizens before the law and forbids discrimination on the basis of sex alone, but provides space for **affirmative action** by the State in the context of women. The Principles of Policy further state that steps will be taken to ensure the full participation of women in all spheres of national life. Since Pakistan's creation, there used to be some provision for **reserved seats for women** in the legislatures in addition to their rights to contest general election, but this provision expired after the 1988 election and has not been renewed since. The most recent provision was for 20 seats in the National Assembly (about 10 percent) and 5 percent reservation in the Provincial Assemblies, filled indirectly through the vote of already-elected members of these bodies. There were no reserved seats for women in the Senate.

**Local Government** is a provincial subject. Thus, separate laws relating to local councils exist in the provinces. Within these, there are several types of councils for urban and rural areas. Until recently, elections to local councils had only been held in Punjab (partial) and Balochistan, after a long period where local bodies stood dissolved. There was provision for **reserved seats** for women in local bodies, as well as for workers and religious minorities, filled through indirect election by members already elected. There were about 12.7 percent seats reserved for women in the Punjab local councils (excluding union councils for which elections had not been held), while Balochistan had reserved 25.8 percent seats for women in local councils overall. In the other two provinces, 2.9 percent seats overall had been reserved for women in NWFP and 23 percent in Sindh.

However a new system of local government was introduced in 2000 and elections have since been held. This system is based on the Devolution of Power Plan which has provision for a 33 percent reservation of seats for women and a 20 percent reservation for workers/peasants on all local councils. These reserved seats are directly elected at village level for union councils and indirectly elected at district and sub-district levels for Zila and Tehsil councils. (See report on the first elections held under this new system: *Local Government Elections. December 2000 – (Phase 1)* by Farzana Bari, 2001)

The Constitution ensures citizens the **fundamental right to form associations, unions and political parties**, subject to certain conditions, and there are a number of related laws. With respect to non-profit associations, there is the Societies Registration Act 1860, the Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies Act 1961, provisions for non-profit companies in the Companies Ordinance 1984, as well as provisions relating to public trusts. The Industrial Relations Ordinance 1969 relates to the establishment of trade unions. And the Political Parties Act 1962 and the Representation of Public Representatives Act 1976 lay down the rules relating to political parties.

## Overview of the Situation of Women in Pakistan

There is considerable disparity between the status of men and women in Pakistan. While some indicators relating to women's status have improved marginally in recent years, several have remained static, and there has been further deterioration in other areas. The reasons for disparities in almost all areas are diverse. They include negative social bases and cultural practices, discriminatory legislation, and inadequate policies, plans and programs, including budget allocations. The lack of political will and the absence of meaningful or effective affirmative action ensure that the disparities continue without any significant change.

In 1995, the Pakistan National Report for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing noted that Pakistani women continued to suffer in the face of oppressive patriarchal structures, rigid orthodox norms, and stifling socio-cultural customs and traditions. In 1997, the Report of the Commission of Inquiry for Women observed that socio-economic indicators pointed to discriminatory laws and practices widening the gap between men and women in almost all key sectors. The Report also noted that certain forms of violence against women had increased and that handicaps faced by women in the matter of their legal status had obviously increased in certain areas. A report on the State of Human Rights in 1998 noted that the goal of equality between the sexes and elimination of discrimination against women, instead of advancing, received a setback during the year.

According to the 1998 Human Development Reports, Pakistan ranks 138 on a list of 174 developing countries on the Human Development Index (HDI); 131 on a list of 163 countries on the gender

development index (GDI); and 100 on a list of 102 countries on the gender empowerment measure (GEM).

There are still far fewer women in the country compared to men. The latest provisional census figures of 1998 show that of a total population of 130.6 million 48 percent are women and 52 percent men, a **sex ratio** of 92.5 women for every 100 men in the country. This indicates just a slight improvement over the census figures of 1981 according to which women comprised 47.5 percent of the population. A 1998 report of the Federal Bureau of Statistics suggests that this marginal increase of 5 percent in the figures could be due to a decline in the level of mortality and improvement in data collection, while the continuing disparity is mainly because of the excess mortality of young girls and women in child-bearing age. Recent statistics also indicate that **life expectancy** today is higher among females (64.6) than men (63.9)

There is still considerable disparity between the health status of males and females in several areas. The **infant mortality rate** for girls between the ages of 1-4 years is 66 percent higher than for boys, suggesting significantly less favourable treatment of girls. Mortality continues to be higher among females till the age of 40. Moderate levels of **anaemia** are considerably higher among females than males in almost all age groups after the age of 1, and severe levels are also generally higher, particularly in the 15-44 age group. Among poorer households, **chronic malnutrition** is more prevalent among girls than boys. The **maternal mortality rate** mostly reported as 340 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births, is alarmingly high, and even this is considered an under-estimation by many. It is estimated that one woman in every 38 dies from pregnancy-related causes. When calculated for married women, the **fertility rate** on an average is 8 live births throughout the marital reproductive span, and 5.2 live births when fertility is measured for all women of reproductive age. This is the highest in the 9 selected Muslim and other neighbouring countries including India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia and Iran. The contraceptive prevalence rate was estimated at 24 percent in 1996-97, compared to 41 percent in India, 49 percent in Bangladesh and 66 percent in Sri Lanka.

The **literacy rate** for females is generally stated to be 24 percent as compared to 49 percent for males, though one report estimates it at about 27 percent during 1997-8. Of the 60 percent illiterate population, more than 60 percent are women. The **primary school enrollment rate** for girls during 1996-7 was estimated at about 66 percent of total female population compared to 90 percent for males. Moreover, dropout rates are much higher among girls. Of those without **basic education opportunities**, about 70 percent are girls. Pakistan is at the bottom of the list of the 9 selected countries in terms of girls' literacy rates of 24 percent compared, for example, with 78 percent in Indonesia and Malaysia, 72.5 percent in Turkey, 66 percent in Iran, 78 percent in Sri Lanka, 68 percent in Egypt, 64 percent in Iran and 38 percent in India.

The **crude activity rate** according to the 1996-7 labor force survey was 9 percent for females and 47 percent for males, while the **refined activity rate** was 13.6 percent and 70 percent respectively. Most official data sources are, however, generally known to greatly underestimate female work participation. Largely due to inappropriate definitions, data gathering methods and cultural inhibitions on the part of both enumerators and respondents. A 1995 report, referring to relatively more reliable sources of information, stated that **female labour force participation rates** in the rural areas ranged between 57-43 percent while the participation rate for urban women in 1991 was estimated at 17 percent. The large majority of **rural women** work in agriculture as unpaid family helpers, amongst the poorest paid group in the rural sector.

The share of urban women in professional and related jobs was stated to be about 20 percent in 1992, largely in the traditional teaching and medical professions. They constituted 9.4 percent of production workers, only one-sixth of whom were paid employees, while most were relegated to temporary, casual or contract work outside the regular workforce. It was estimated that 77 percent of the economically active women in urban areas in 1991-2 were employed in the informal sector, four fifths of whom were home-based workers with average monthly earning of less than one-third of the factory workers, themselves the lowest level employees in the formal sector. 1993 figures, which are not likely to differ

significantly from the current statistics, indicate that only 5.4 percent of federal government employees are women, mostly in social sectors, and their share at higher levels of employment is negligible.

There is no detailed or reliable data available about women's **ownership of land or property**. However, a 1995 survey of 1,000 households in rural areas of the Punjab showed that only 36 women owned land in their own names, only 9 had the power to sell or trade without permission from their male relatives, and that in nearly two-third of the households, daughters did not inherit land.

In 1996-7, there were reported to be about 8 percent **female-headed households**, but the actual number is likely to be higher. Socio-cultural values, gender biases on the part of both enumerators and respondents and the commonly understood definition of headship of a family belonging to a male member, are some of the reasons suggested for the under-reporting. This is borne out by an intensive study conducted in Karachi in 1987, which indicated that 10 percent of the households were headed by women. Women and girls in poor households bear a disproportionately high share of the **burden of poverty** due to their lower status, evidenced by lower endowment of land and productive assets, discrimination in the labour market, and more limited access to economic options and social services. While there has been some overall decrease in poverty, a report on human development in South Asia states that female poverty decreased at a much slower pace than male poverty during the 1970-95 period. Women also carry a **double burden of work**, performing both productive activities and domestic household responsibilities. This is particularly true for poor women in rural households who have far fewer basic services and facilities available to them.

Women's legal status is totally unequal to that of men. While the **Constitution** guarantees equality under the law, equal protection of the law and non-discrimination on the basis of sex alone, other provisions create space for issues of women's rights to be constantly re-opened. Socio-cultural norms and religious interpretations are frequently used as the basis for challenging and re-deciding women's rights issues, creating insecurity for women and uncertainty about their rights. Thus, there are several issues relating to women's **fundamental rights** of choice, security of person, dignity, liberty, freedom of movement etc. on which there are conflicting decisions, and which still need to be finally resolved by the superior judiciary. There are also several **discriminatory laws** in existence, as well as laws which have a **disparate impact** on women. And in actual practice, several of the laws with relatively positive provisions, are ignored or not implemented. Some examples are briefly provided.

In the matter of **family law** there is no uniformity of rights, each religious community being governed by their personal or customary law, and discriminatory provisions exist in all of them. Under the Muslim family laws, men and women have unequal rights relating to inheritance, termination of marriage, minimum age of marriage and natural guardianship of children. Polygamy has not been banned or even sufficiently restricted by law; and there are grossly inadequate provisions for women's financial security after termination of marriage.

Women have unequal rights under the **citizenship laws**, in which citizenship through descent is guaranteed only through a father. These laws give a foreign wife of a Pakistani man the right to acquire citizenship, with no corresponding right for the foreign husband of Pakistani woman. The **law of evidence** limits women's legal capacity by reducing the value of their attestation of evidence to half that of and unacceptable without that of a man, in matter of written financial transactions. The **Qisas and Diyat Act** allows for compromise and compensation in matters of bodily harm and murder, which in view of the prevalent socio-cultural biases against women, has a particularly negative impact in cases where the victims are women. The **Hudood Ordinances**, the most damaging of the laws in the context of women, contain provisions which totally oust women's testimony for the imposition of the *had* or maximum penalty; and since adulthood has been redefined differently for males and females for the purposes of the ordinances, they make young girls liable to harsher adult penalties at a younger age than boys for offences relating to rape, adultery and extra-marital sex. The vast majority of women in prisons today, including several minor girls, have been charged under this law. The law is often used for false and malicious prosecution of women to curtail their freedom of movement, freedom of choice in marriage, and as revenge or reprisal for their attempt to exercise their legal rights.

While women have equal **political rights** as men under the Constitution, their **political participation** at the formal levels is still totally inadequate, and their **political representation** is negligible. During the last election held in 1997, fewer women than men were **registered as voters** (55.6 percent men and 44.4 percent women), and a smaller percentage actually voted. Women face several hurdles in the exercise of their right of franchise in terms of identification requirements, socio-cultural norms discouraging their participation, agreements by candidates and parties in several areas that women would not vote, and the lack of action by official agencies against offenders of legal provisions in this respect. **Political parties**, by and large, tend to view women as a passive vote bank, following the dictates of men within their families or clans. Even within their own parties, they treat them largely as followers to be strategically used for election canvassing and public campaigns. Thus, most parties do not even have lists of female members. Women's representation on decision-making bodies within parties is mostly quite inadequate, and the number of tickets given to women for general elections is negligible. This lack of interest or active discouragement of women's political participation is reflected in their **representation in the federal and provincial legislatures**. There were currently only about 3 percent women in the National Assembly (7 out of 217) and about 2.3 percent in the Senate (2 out of 87), making their overall parliamentary representation 2.9 percent (9 out of 304); and they are just .4 percent overall in the four provincial assemblies (2 out of 483). At the **ministerial level**, there is currently no woman with the status of a federal minister and only one with the status of a minister of state (1 out of a total of 21). There was no woman minister at the provincial level. In local bodies prior to the Devolution of Power Plan implemented in 2000, about 12.7 percent seats had been reserved for women in the Punjab, which fell far short of the 33 percent demanded and 20 percent claimed by government, while Balochistan had taken the major initiative of reserving 25.8 percent seats for women. Local body elections in the other provinces had not been held. In the past, the reports on women's participation in local bodies have not been particularly encouraging because of their own inexperience, the modality of bringing them in the future as a result of the relatively recent efforts and initiatives of women's NGOs and women in political parties. Women's participation in **trade unions** is still minimal, but there are several active **women's groups** and a number of **advocacy organizations** working on women's rights issues. However, in view of recent concerted governmental attempts to curtail their political role, their future effectiveness and role is yet uncertain.

**Violence against women**, in several forms and at different levels, is another area of serious concern. Rooted in the patriarchal feudal and tribal value systems, many of its forms are so firmly entrenched in our culture that they are ignored, condoned or not even recognized as violence by the larger sections of society. **Domestic violence** is fairly widespread and takes forms of physical, mental and emotional abuse. Wife abuse is rarely considered a crime socially unless it takes an extreme form, an attitude reflected in the behaviour both of law-enforcement agencies and the judiciary. Of the 1,000 women involved in a relatively recent survey in the Punjab, 35 percent admitted to being beaten by their husbands. Domestic violence sometimes takes extreme forms of **murder or attempted murder**, a commonly used method being that of stove burning. During 1998, 282 burn cases of women were reported in the Punjab alone, of whom 65 percent died of their injuries. The official figures given for murder of women during 1998 were 1, 974 overall, of which 1, 183 were in the Punjab. Of the 885 reported cases in the Punjab, more than 67 percent were victims of their own relatives – husbands, brothers, fathers and in-laws. Rape remains the commonest form of violence against women, though only a fraction get reported or prosecuted because of the shame attached to the victim. 706 cases in the Punjab were reported in the press during 1998 alone, of which 55 percent of the victims were minors and more than half of total cases were of gang-rape. **Custodial violence** is known to be widespread but, for obvious reasons, rarely reported or pursued. Only 41 cases were reported in the Punjab during 1998, reports registered in just 6, and only 1 person held. The official figures for kidnapped women during 1998 were a total of 4, 529 country-wide. Of Lahore cases, more than half the victims were minors. **Sexual harassment** of women in the public or the workplace is a common phenomenon, and while frequently reported in the media, is rarely reported to the police or taken notice of. An increasing form of violence, used to settle a score, is that of **public humiliation** of women by stripping them naked in public. Several inhuman **customary practices**, including bartering girls to settle disputes, marriage to the Quran and murder of women in the name of honour, continue unabated,

sanctified by those who commit the crimes as cultural traditions, and condoned both by the law-enforcement agencies and the courts.

As is apparent from the above, women continue to face the grave biases, discriminatory practices and forms of violence prevalent in highly patriarchal society at several levels. From birth, socio-cultural norms prescribe a different set of roles, responsibilities and behaviour patterns for women, denying them equal access to several facilities and opportunities at par with men and maintaining their subservience and subordination. This further affects their own self-confidence, limits their access to information and skills, and reinforces in them the social perception of having a lower social status than men. Combined with their unequal economic situation, the discriminatory or gender-insensitive laws and policies, and lack of sufficient political will to seriously address the root causes of the problem, the task of extricating themselves from this situation becomes monumental.

### 1.3 Participation in representation of women in politics

#### Women's Share as registered voters

Since the introduction of the separate electorate system in 1985, there have been separate electoral rolls maintained for Muslims and non-Muslims in Pakistan. According to the 1997 General Elections Report, the total number of registered voters was 56, 615, 667, of which 55, 068, 024 (97.27 percent) were Muslims and 1,547, 643 (2.73 percent) were non-Muslims. With several additions, deletions and amendments made over the years, there is some doubt about the absolute accuracy of the electoral rolls. According to one study, they still contain the names of those who have died, left the country or moved out of the constituency. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is aware of these problems, and is currently in the process of vetting and updating the electoral rolls. This is important, particularly with regard to women, since several instances of malpractice or denial of the right of franchise can be attributed to errors on the electoral rolls.

Almost half the eligible voters in the country are women. However, there is a significant disparity between the number of women and men registered as voters on the electoral rolls. Of the total number of registered voters for the 1997 Elections, both Muslims and non-Muslims, about 55.4 percent (31, 382, 633) were men and almost 44.6 percent (25, 233, 034) women. There were, thus, more than six million fewer women than men registered as voters, or a difference of about 11 percent. The same proportions were reflected among the total number of registered Muslim voters (55, 068, 024), of whom 30, 533, 349 were male and 24, 534, 675 female. However, the share of women was marginally higher among the total number of non-Muslim voters registered (1, 547, 643), of whom 849, 284 (54.9 percent) were male and 698, 359 (45.1 percent) female. The highest proportion of women were registered in the Punjab 46.2 percent), followed by Islamabad (45.4 percent) and Balochistan (45.2 percent), while the lowest proportion were registered in FATA (25.2 percent).

**Table 5: Registered Voters by Sex and Province, Pakistan, 1997**

Country/Province	Registered Voters (Figures in millions)			Percentage to total voters	
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
Pakistan	25.10	31.52	56.62	44.4	55.6
Punjab	14.80	17.20	32.00	46.2	53.8
Sindh	5.70	7.63	13.00	44.0	56.0
NWFP	2.70	4.00	6.70	40.3	59.7
Balochistan	1.40	1.70	3.10	45.2	54.7
FATA	0.40	1.20	1.60	25.2	74.8

Islamabad	0.10	0.12	0.22	45.4	54.6
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Source: Election Commission of Pakistan, Islamabad, Federal Bureau of Statistics

In some areas, the disparities are even more marked. In 1994, one study pointed out that the number of women registered in the Peshawar (NWFP) constituency was less than half the number of males registered, while only two constituencies (in Sindh) had more women than men registered as voters. In 1997, the gender difference in three FATA constituencies was above 90 percent. A 1999 NWFP study presents some other interesting findings. While pointing out that the widest gap between registered male and female voters out of the provinces (excluding FATA) was in NWFP (about 180-19 percent), it also notes that the province has the maximum and minimum gender differences with respect to registered voters. In Abbottabad, Karak, Haripur and even Chitral there is a minimum difference (5-6 percent), while the maximum (38.6 percent) is in the Peshawar rural district. It suggests the possibility, without making any finding, that this may be due to the fact that the Hindko-speaking, non-tribal population of the province is less conservative than the Pushto-speaking Pathan tribes. The study also observes, with reference to registration for provincial assemblies in the whole country, that every Muslim constituency has a lower registration of women than men, excluding two constituencies (one each in Punjab and Balochistan) where more women than men are registered; that there are 11 non-Muslim constituencies with gender equity in registration; and 17 non-Muslim constituencies with marginally higher female registration. Even in FATA, where the male-female ratio for the Muslim community was 75:25, the ratio for the non-Muslim community was 55:45. Whether this has been due to a growing political consciousness since the imposition of separate electorates, or because the non-Muslim community has relatively fewer gender biases, is yet to be ascertained.

While the barriers to women's registration have been discussed in greater detail in a later section, there are several instances both of indifference as well as active resistance to women's enrolment by male family members and local influentials, sometimes resulting in total prohibition. This obviously excludes a significant proportion of eligible women from their right to be registered as voters. While this restriction may be more common or intense in some areas, examples of it exist across all provinces, as referred to in different reports.

### Box 1: Barriers to Women Voter Registration

<p>In 1996, the Assistant Commissioner of Thatta (Sindh) was reported in the Dawn newspaper as stating that as many as 50,000 women in Thatta could lose their right to vote because of the opposition of their male family members to entering their names on the voters' list.</p>	<p>In the tribal area of FATA, where the right of universal adult franchise was granted for the first time in 1997, several groups, including religious leaders, opposed the registration of Women. Announcements were made at some mosques in Khyber Agency that registering them under their own names as a great evil. A tribal jirga (Council) issued an edict threatening that houses from which women were registered would be burnt down and they would have to pay a fine of Rs. 10,000. The registration which did take place was largely due to the efforts of two advocacy NGOs, supported by local groups.</p>
<p><i>Women in Politics: Shirkat Gah, 1998</i></p>	<p><i>Aurat Foundation's Election Reports/Newsletter 1997</i></p>

In Ghungh village (Punjab near Lahore), during a bye-election held in 1990, there was not a single woman registered as a voter as against 700 registered male voters, because of a directive given by the 'spiritual mentor' of the village debarring them from registering. The males claimed that no regime could force them to register their women, and that they would beat their women with shoes if they insisted on their right to vote.

*Moving Towards Change: Dr. Inayatullah*

The proportion of registered female voters has increased overall since the first general elections held on the basis of universal adult franchise in 1970, but showed a decline in the 1990s. For the 1970 elections, women comprised 43.7 percent of the voters' list, the percentage going up to 46.3 percent by the 1988 elections. But the percentage decreased marginally to 46.1 percent for the 1990 elections, to 45.5 percent for the 1993 elections and even lower to 44.5 percent for the 1997 elections. This decline appears to be due to the fact that fewer women than men have been registered as new voters in recent years. Between 1993-1997, there was a 7 percent increase in the list for new male voters, only 3 percent for new female voters. If this pattern continues, the difference between registered male and female voters will become even more marked.

### **Women's Share in Voting Population:**

There has been a general downward trend in the overall voter turnout in Pakistan. In 1977, the reported turnout of voters was 61.9 percent, declining to 43.07 percent in 1988. In 1990, the national voting average went up slightly to 45.46 percent, then declined again to 40.28 percent in 1993 and further to 35.42 percent in 1997. Similar trends are repeated in provincial voting patterns for the Provincial Assemblies elections, except for Sindh where the turnout was higher in 1997. The voter turnout during the 1990s (38.5 percent) ranked Pakistan as 146<sup>th</sup> in the global listing of 163 countries. The declining trend in the turnout of voters appears to indicate people's loss of confidence in the political system due to the growing corruption and criminalization of politics in Pakistan, disillusionment among the general public because of the inability of the political parties to deliver; and a lack of faith in the electoral process itself.

**Table 6: Voter Turnout**

Province	1988	1990	1993	1997
Punjab	46.49	49.61	47.07	39.81
Sindh	42.38	43.28	28.23	31.31
NWFP	33.92	35.74	34.59	27.75
Balochistan	25.69	29.18	24.95	23.17

It is commonly believed that a far smaller proportion of voters from upper/middle class backgrounds actually vote as compared to those from lower income backgrounds. This perception finds reflection in the fact that political parties and candidates generally tend to ignore upper/middle class neighborhoods in campaigning during elections. Voter turnout figures from Lahore (Punjab) during the 1993 elections ran counter to this generalization, showing a similar turnout from wards categorized in the concerned study as upper, middle and industrial (43.8, 44.8, and 42.9). However, the sample is too small to reach any definite conclusions and other factors could also have contributed to this.

It is difficult to accurately assess the turnout of female voters in elections, since the Election Commission does not maintain gender-desegregated data in this respect. Nor is there any national-level study on the subject. However, female voter turnout is generally thought to be lower than that of male voters, a fact borne out by the few smaller studies and data-collection exercises. A study based

on 25 percent of the total polling stations in the 1990 elections, revealed that 48 percent of men and 30 percent of women cast their votes, a difference of 18 percent. One, based on male and female voter turnout data collected from constituencies in Lahore (Punjab) during the 1993 elections indicated a 46.9 percent turnout of male voters, and a 40.4 percent turnout of females, a difference of almost 7 percent. Yet another, based on data collected from 3 villages of Hafizabad (Punjab) during the same election showed a male turnout of 56 percent against a female turnout of 48 percent, a difference of 8 percent; while data collected from 10 women's urban polling stations in Rawalpindi (Punjab) indicated a 43.86 percent voter turnout against an overall turnout of 46.2 percent. While these are not conclusive studies, it is fairly apparent that a smaller proportion of registered women compared to men turn out to vote. Keeping in mind that there are 6 million less women registered to start with, the disparity between voting men and women becomes even greater because of women's lower turnout.

While the proportion of female voter turnout may have consistently been less than that of men, the Election Authority maintains that the ratio of women's votes' cast has grown in each election after 1988. Interventions made by NGOs in recent years may have also had some effect in particular areas.

### **Exercise of the Right to Vote**

There are several reasons for a lower turnout of female voters in elections. But is apparent that they are often prevented from exercising their right to vote by their families, tribes, clans, and local and spiritual leaders. In some constituencies, particularly in Balochistan and NWFP, rival candidates and political parties have also had mutual agreements to restrain women from casting their votes. According to various reports:

- ◆ In some areas in Bajau, Mohmand, Khyber, Orakzai and North Waziristan Agencies of FATA, not a single female vote was cast in the 1997 elections. In Jamrud, only 37 out of 6,600 registered women voted. This was largely because of resistance by male family members, announcements by mosques declaring their voting as un-Islamic, and threats by tribal councils.
- ◆ In one village of Punjab, women were granted the right to vote for the first time in 1998, almost 30 years after the introduction of universal adult franchise in the country.
- ◆ A SAARC observer team in the 1997 election noted that women were physically stopped from voting in Balochistan.
- ◆ In 1993, in a settled district of NWFP, candidates from PPP and ANP, as well as an independent candidate, signed an agreement with each other and village elders to disallow women from voting. Similar instances have been reported from Karachi (Sindh) and Sheikhpura (Punjab)

Penalties do exist in laws, both the Pakistan Penal Code and the Representation of People Act, for those who threaten or prevent voters from exercising their electoral rights. The Code of Conduct for General Elections, 1997, further forbids political parties, contesting candidates and their workers to propagate against women's participation. However, no action in this respect has been taken by the concerned authorities even when it has been brought to their attention by women's advocacy groups. In 1993, WAF reported the agreement between candidates in NWFP to the Chief Election Commissioner and demanded action against them, but nothing was done. In 1997, despite wide coverage by the media and reports by advocacy organizations, no attempt was made to charge those making violent threats against women in FATA.

There are also reports that women are made or persuaded to vote in situations where the context between political parties or candidates is close. In the 1988 elections, where provincial elections were held after national elections, it was reported that PML supporters sent out their female family members in much larger numbers when they realized that the PPP had again a slight edge over them in provincial elections. In FATA, during the 1997 elections, a candidate who vociferously opposed women's registration and voting in one area where he had less support ensured that women voted in another area favourable to him. Reports from Balochistan for this study also indicate that in constituencies where political parties or candidates feel strong, there is a limited registration of women or they are not allowed to cast their vote. But where the opponent is considered strong, they actively

register their women voters and send them to vote. Whatever the motives behind making women vote, the practice results in breaking the taboos which exist in several areas against their voting and makes women familiar with the electoral process, a first step towards a more genuine exercise of their rights.

**Table 7: Women Representatives at Different Levels**

Year	National Parliament				State/Provincial Parliaments				Urban Local Government Councils	
	Upper House Representatives		Lower House Representatives		Upper House Representatives		Lower House Representatives		Representatives	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
1960										
1970			6	227			11	?		
1980	01	86	47	427			50	?		
1990	04	261	12	651			06	?		
2000										

Source: Preliminary Base Line Report on Women Participation in Political and Public life in Pakistan - October 1999.

Compendium of Gender Statistics Pakistan - 1998

**Table 8: Number of Women in Ministerial Positions**

Year	Number and percentage of Women in Federal Cabinet/Executive Branch		Number and percentage of Women in State/Provincial Cabinet/Executive Branch		Number and percentage of Women Mayors	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1960						
1970						
1980						
1990	3	0.48	1	0.26	2	0.76
2000						

Source:

1. Preliminary Base Line Report on Women Participation in Political and Public life in Pakistan October 1999

## 2. Federal Government Civil Servants Census Report, Management Services Division.

**Table 9: Women in Decision Making Positions in the Civil Service**

Title of post (top four [4] levels)	No. and percent of Women Appointed to Decision – Making Level Position of the Civil Service (Federal)		No. and percent of Women Appointed to Decision - Making Level Position of the Civil Service (State / Provincial)		No. and percent of Women Appointed to Decision - Making Level Position of the Civil Service (Local)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<b>Grade 22</b>	00	00	00	00		
<b>Grade 21</b>	02	0.9	00	00		
<b>Grade 20</b>	23	2.5	00	00		
<b>Grade 19</b>	111	5.8	7	3.09		

Source:

1. Preliminary Base Line Report on Women Participation in Political and Public life in Pakistan -October 1999
2. Compendium on Gender Statistics Pakistan, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Division - December - 1998

## 2. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN URBAN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

### 2.1 Women's Participation in local government

As stated earlier, women have equal rights to participation in local government elections. However, the same factors listed above contribute to their lower levels of participation than men. As local government elections have been held infrequently in the last two decades, statistics on women's participation do not exist. NGOs and advocacy groups have been encouraging women to participate in elections at all level, including the local level. There are no government programmes to encourage women to participate in local government elections.

## 3. WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### 3.1 Legal and Political Initiatives

On 14 August 2000 the Military Government announced plans for conducting local government elections under revised rules and regulations aimed at giving more power to local governments. In the rural areas there are three types of local governments: the Union Councils (village level) and the Tehsil Councils (sub-district level) and Zila (district) Councils. **Union Councils** have 21 members, out of which there are 12 General seats (8 men and 4 women); 6 seats for workers/peasants (4 men and 2 women) and one seat for minorities. The Union Nazim (President/Administrator) and Naib Union Nazim (Vice President/Deputy Administrator) are both ex-officio members of the Council. Thus of a total of eighteen directly elected seats, six are reserved for women. As in the initial version of plan announced by the Chief Executive on August 14, 2000, in the final plan total number of seats of **Tehsil Council** is not given. It depends on the strength of union councils in each tehsil. Naib Nazim of the union council will

be member of Tehsil Council. Thirty three percent of the general seats are reserved for women while twenty percent each is allocated for peasant workers and minorities. Similarly the total number of seats of District Council is not given. It will depend upon the strength of Union Councils in each district. Union Council Nazim will be a member of District Council. More details are provided at the website of the government of Pakistan <http://www.nrb.gov.pk/archieve/document-0003-01.html>

**Table 10: Number of Seats in Local Councils (tentative) in the last local government elections in Sindh**

Types and number of Units	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Workers	Peasants	Women	Total
Metropolitan Corporation (1)	90	19	4	Nil	7	120
Municipal Corporation (9)	330	41	27	Nil	34	432
Municipal Committees (28)	624	33	58	Nil	63	778
Town Committees (117)	1367	100	240		222	1,929
District Council (17)	831	55	2	34	89	1,011
Union Councils (675)	7,042	1,160	Nil	2,025	1,350	11,577
Total (847)	10,284	1,408	331	2,059	1,765	15,847

Source: 1. Provincial Election Authority  
2. Census Bulletin 1998

**Table 11: Number of Seats in Local Councils in Balochistan as of 1 October 1999**

Types and number of Units	Muslim	Non-Muslims	Workers	Peasants	Women	Total
Municipal Corporation (1)	58	5	3	Nil	6	72
Municipal Committees (15)	293	15	32	Nil	60	400
Town Committees (30)	233	19	38	Nil	120	410
District Council (26)	396	18	52	52	104	622
Union Councils (379)	3,365	Nil	Nil	790	1,583	5,738
Total (451)	4,345	57	125	842	1,873	7,242

Source: 1. Provincial Election Authority  
2. Census Bulletin 1998

**Table 12: Number of Seats in Local Councils in Punjab as of 1 October 1999**

Types and number of Units	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Workers	Peasants	Women	Total
Metropolitan Corporation (1)	250	11	14	Nil	26	301
Municipal Corporation (7)	613	19	48	Nil	86	766
Municipal Committees 79	2,407	87	176	Nil	392	3,062
Town Committees (140)	2,161	141	280	Nil	560	3,142
Zila Council (34)	287	63	68	150	304	3,455
Union Councils (3,043)	26,000	-	Nil	9,129	12,172	48,301

Total (3,304)	31,718	321	586	9,279	13,540	59,027
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Source: 1. Provincial Election Authority  
2. Census Bulletin 1998

**Table 13: Number of Seats in Local Councils (tentative) in the last local government elections in NWFP**

Types and number of Units	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Workers	Peasants	Women	Total
Metropolitan Corporation (1)	84	2	Nil	Nil	4	90
Municipal Corporation (30)	800	4	Nil	Nil	60	864
Town Committees (12)	168	-	Nil	Nil	24	192
District Council (24)	759	-	48	96	96	999
Union Councils (759)	9,523	2	759	1,518	Nil	11,802
Total (826)	4,334	8	807	1,614	184	13,947

Source: 1. Provincial Election Authority  
2. Census Bulletin 1998

**Table 14: Number of Seats in Local Councils in Northern Areas as of November 1999**

Types and number of Units	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Women	Total
Zila Councils (5)	47	-	10	57
Municipal Committees (5)	61	-		61
Union Councils (103)	719	-	-	719
Northern Area Council (1)	24	-	-	24
Total (113)	827	-	10	837

Source: 1. Provincial Election Authority  
2. Census Bulletin 1998

**Table 15: Total Membership in Local Councils in Pakistan as of 1 October 1999**

Province	Total Councils	Total Councilors	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Workers	Peasants	Women
Punjab	3,204	59,027	31,718	321	586	92,79	13,540
Balochistan	451	7,242	4,345	57	125	842	1,873
NWFP	826	13,947	11,334	8	807	1,614	184
Sindh	847	15,847	10,284	1,408	331	2,059	1,765
Northern Areas	113	837	-	-	-	-	10
FATA	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Islamabad	18	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Total	5,459	69,900	57,681	1,794	1,849	13,794	17,372

Source: 1. Provincial Election Authority  
2. Census Bulletin 1998

### 3.2 Training and support mechanism for women in local government.

There is no proper setup of training among government institutions nor in political parties. Recently Jamat-I-Islami (religious political party) started a training program for their women. At the NGO level and civil society organizations, several NGOs have worked out different strategies to increase women's participation in politics, but the number of NGOs directly working on the issue on a sustained basis is very limited. To increase the level of women's participation and make it effective in local elections Aurat Foundation with collaboration with several other organizations and member of program networks run a campaign involving several public meetings, preparation and distribution of materials and intensive advocacy and lobbying. It resulted in Punjab increasing women representation to 12.7 percent and 25.8 percent in Balochistan. For the first time in Pakistan's history people and NGOs were involved in Local Government Plan 2000 (devolution of power). Even grass-root level organizations took a leading role for women representation and again Aurat Foundation planned a huge campaign with civil society groups at the national level and tried to cover 7,000 union councils. In addition to the Aurat Foundation there are five or six other organizations working on training and political education like Pattan in Multan, Sungi in Hazara division and SAP-PK in some part of NWFP and Punjab and Sindh. Under the Local Government Plan 2000, the Government plans to initiate training of councillors, including women councillors. They plan to involve civil society organizations that specialize in providing training.

#### Non Governmental/Civil Society Organizations Initiatives

For the first time in Pakistan civil society organizations have initiated a collective campaign for women representation and training in local government. The initiative was started by the Aurat Foundation and later joined by Muthida Labor Federation, SAP-PK, SAVERA, PILER, Sungi Development Foundation, Khwendo Kor, HRMDC, SBRC, Pakistan NGO Federation along with four provincial coalitions and lot of other organizations. The campaign is called the **Citizens Campaign for Women's Representation in Local Government**. This campaign has great potential to improve the representation of women in local government. Because of its importance the details mapped out for the campaign are provided below:

**Background:** The Government of Pakistan will hold Local Government elections from December 2000 to June 2001 for devolution of power. Under this plan elections will be held for local government from the level of the Union Council – the lowest tier of Local Government – to the district level. The Plan includes a radical component of reserving 33 percent seats for women at all tiers of local governance, which will be filled through direct election by the entire electorate at the level of the Union Council and by indirect elections at the higher levels. This is the first time that both the percentage and the direct elections for women have included at any level of governance. This achievement has been the direct result of lobbying and advocacy by civil society organizations for a number of years.

It is expected that as a result of this, at least 20,000-25,000 women will be elected as local councillors at the lowest tier of the Union Council alone, which will be a milestone in Pakistan's political development as for the first time such a high number of directly elected women will be participating in local governance.

These women will require support at various stages of the political process, starting from their mobilization as candidates, support in the electoral process, capacity building for effective participation and representation and developing their political strength in the post election scenario as a powerful pressure group that impacts at the grassroots level.

The first stage will be to mobilize women to stand as candidates for the reserved seats at the union Council level and ensure that there is local support for them. At the same time there will be a need to build an environment in the constituency, which is not hostile but actually supportive for women to play their role as candidates and representatives of the people. This will need to be combined with some political orientation for the candidates for them to participate in the electoral process with some knowledge.

In collaboration with all its networks and with all the major civil society networks, Aurat Foundation (AF) will coordinate a citizen's campaign to ensure that women stand for elections in all the Union Council elections to be held from December 2000 to June 2001. Elections to the higher tiers, which will be held from July to August 2001, will be the second phase of this Project, for which a project proposal will be presented later.

The general objectives will be to:

- Mobilize women candidates in 7,000 Union Councils across the country.
- Create public acceptability about the role of women as public representatives.
- Create an enabling environment at the local level for prospective candidates.
- Undertake orientation for women candidates about Local Government and the electoral process.

The short-term objectives will be to:

- Set up the institutional framework to undertake the Campaign at the national, provincial and district levels.
- Conduct one national and four provincial level orientation meetings for representatives of activist organizations.
- Conduct 106 orientation meetings for members of the District Coordination Committees that will coordinate the Campaign in all the districts.
- Conduct meetings at the divisional level for selected DCC members who will undertake the political orientation of the women candidates.
- Hold meetings at the Union Council level to promote acceptability of women as public representatives.
- Identify women candidates in every Union Council and link them with their local support.
- Provide orientation to about 70,000 women candidates on Local Government and electoral processes.
- Prepare inputs for the electronic media through major current affairs programs, talk projecting the importance of women's representation and participation in Local Government elections as candidates and as voters.
- Project the same objectives through the print media in every major daily and the popular magazines right down to the district editions.
- Prepare and disseminate posters, leaflets, pamphlets, stickers and cassettes of songs for voters and candidate education.

**The Provincial Steering Committees (PSCs):** The Provincial Steering Committees (PSCs) will be formed on the same pattern, involving the major provincial or regional support organizations. They will also form the sub-committees for their functioning. They will set up the following committees:

- Campaign Management Committee, headed by the Provincial Coordinators.
- Finance Management Committee

- Political Orientation Committee
- Monitoring Committee
- Media Committee

The PSCs will also hold planning and review meetings each electoral phase. The PSCs will play a more active role in the orientation of candidates, in field monitoring and promotion through the media because they will be closer to the electoral process.

The National Steering Committee and the PSCs will be provided a secretariat, which will be set up at the regional offices of the Aurat Foundation. The secretariat will be run by the National and Provincial Coordinators of the Campaign, who will be appointed by the NSC and will act as the secretaries of the respective Steering Committees.

**National Steering Committee:** The National Steering Committee (NSC) will be formed with representative of three to four major national support organizations and representatives of labor federation and the media. The NSC will be responsible for managing the Campaign and disbursing the funds. The NSC will elect an organization from among them to receive the funds for the Campaign from the funding agencies.

The NSC will appoint the Provincial Steering Committees (PSCs) and, with their consultation, the District Coordination Committees. The NSC will function through the formation of the following sub-committees:

- Campaign Management Committee, headed by the Coordinator of the Campaign
- Finance Management Committee, headed by a Finance Manager
- Formation of DCCs Committee
- Media Committee

The NSC will manage the Campaign with the assistance of the PSCs, through setting up the District Coordination Committee (DCCs), assigning them responsibilities and monitoring the Campaign through setting up Control Rooms to map out the mobilization of candidates and the building up a supportive environment through some field visits. They will also stay closely in touch with the Election Commission, the Ministries of Women's Development and Local Government, to keep watch and report on attempts to hamper and harass the candidates and voters. They will provide support and intervene where problems arise within the DCCs or at the Union Council level.

The NSC will hold a meeting to appoint the National and Provincial Coordinators and the organization through which the funds will be channelled. The sub-committees will also be appointed. There will later be a planning meeting before each phase and a review meeting after each electoral stage.

**District Coordinating Committees:** Representatives of major support organizations, NGO networks and labor federations in the NSC, in consultation with the PSCs, will form the DCCs, comprising of activists of local level organizations and media professionals. Responsibilities will be taken by the major networks of Aurat Foundation, like the Network of Citizens Action Committees for Women's Rights in 50 districts and the Network of the Political Education Program in 54 districts, (with some overlap), the member organizations of the provincial NGO coalitions like the Sindh NGO Federation, the Balochistan NGO Federation, the Sarhad NGO Ittehad, the Punjab NGO Coordination Committee, (many of which are also in the AF networks) and the labor federations and some other professionals organizations, etc., to be part of the DCCS.

The responsibilities of the DCCs will be to:

- Coordinate the Campaign at the district level.
- Share and assign responsibilities to all possible support structures to cover as many of the Union Councils in the district as possible.

- Organize support-building meetings in the Union Councils.
- Identify women willing to stand for elections in all the Union Councils.
- Set up a Control Room at the DCC headquarters to map the Union Councils and identify local support and resistance in each Union Council.
- Involve the local media in the Campaign.
- Facilitate provision of ID cards and voter registration especially to female candidates .
- Report to the Provincial and National Steering Committees on a regular basis.

**Orientation of activists and women candidates:** As soon as the Steering Committees are formed and the secretariats are set up, a two day orientation will be held at the national and provincial levels for activists from the key national and provincial origination. Orientation for DCC activists about the Campaign will be held at the district level. There will be another orientation at the divisional level for selected members of the DCCs and especially women activists for conducting the orientation for the candidates.

As the women candidates announce their intention to stand and a minimum sufficient number is identified, the DCCs will undertake a simple orientation program for them. The program will be done phase-wise to synchronize with the election phases. For this the support organizations will do workshops of the DCC members who will be involved in the orientation program. The total number of women exposed to this program will depend on the funding available. Specially designed programs for the electronic media and video copies will also be prepared for use.

The one-day orientation will include the following:

- Key issues of concern for women
- How women can make a difference as public representatives.
- Why women should exercise their vote in Local Government elections.
- The basics of the Local Government structures in which they are to play a role
- The basics of campaigning and the electoral process.
- How to vote.

**Material for candidates and voter education:** Material will be developed for the three key sets of activities for the campaign, that is:

- Motivating the women to come forward as candidates
- Orientation of the women candidates for the electoral process.
- Educating the voters on key issues for women and the electoral process.

The first set will include fliers, leaflets and pamphlets on:

- Why it is important for women to play a role in politics
- Why women must come forward as public representatives
- How women have made a difference when they have.

The second set will include simple pamphlets on:

- Key issues of concern for women
- The basics of the Local Government structures in which they are to play a role
- The basics of campaigning and the electoral process.

The third set will include posters, leaflets and fliers on:

The importance of Local Government for ordinary citizens.

Why women should exercise their right to vote

How they should register as voters

How to get their ID cards

What are the key collective demands to make from all the candidates

How to vote.

#### **4. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Before we examine the experience of women in urban local government in Pakistan there is a need to examine the history of Local Government in Pakistan. Local Government in Pakistan exists under the supervision of the various provincial governments, who merely delegate some of their functions and responsibilities to local governments by the promulgation of ordinances. The local government ordinance of 1979, with its amendments is in operation in the Punjab, Sindh, and the NWFP, while in Balochistan local government are under the 1980 ordinance. These ordinances specify functions of local governments.

In 1947 the areas that constituted Pakistan had few developed systems of local government and these were confined mainly to the Punjab. Wherever local government existed, it was not based on adult franchise, and the agenda and budget were under severe bureaucratic control with the Deputy Commissioner playing a critical role in determining policy.

The period 1958 to 1969, which saw Pakistan's first martial law and military government, also witnessed the development of extensive elected systems of local government. After disbanding the provincial and national governments, the military government realized that there was a need for at least a semblance of involvement of the people in their own affairs. This gave rise to the Basic Democracies system, which set up a new system of local government across the country through which members were elected.

The Basic Democracies system was seen as a substitute for universal suffrage and it served as an electoral college to elect the President and the assemblies. However, with the fall of the Ayub Khan regime with which it was closely associated, Basic Democracies fell into disfavour. Besides, the first general elections of 1970 and the separation of East Pakistan from Pakistan resulted in the formation of a new system of government in the country. Ironically though, the proposed elections to be held under the People's Local Government Ordinance of 1975, promulgated by Pakistan's first democratically elected government, to elect town and municipal committees (as well as councils in the rural area) were never held.

If the first martial law government was the pioneer in devising an extensive system of local governments, it was the second martial law regime of General Zia that implemented the principle of elected local governments, which were revived in 1979 under the provincial local government ordinances, which, with amendments, are still in operation in Pakistan. Elections for local councillors have been held on a non-party basis in 1979, 1983, 1987, and 1991. Now third martial law government has introduced a new set-up for local government.

The period since 1985 has seen four general elections in Pakistan where the people were asked to choose members of the provincial and national assemblies. In the absence of elected assemblies local governments were the only popularly elected bodies and thus played important political and developmental role.

In our society the common behaviour of people and government towards local government institutions has always been rather casual. The constitution of Pakistan does not recognize local government as the third tier of government. Without constitutional protection most of the time they perform their duties as non-elected institutions. Second problem in local government institutions is inadequate representation of marginalized sections of society i.e. women, labour, farmers and religious minorities. Although again the current martial law government announced reservation in plan 2000.

#### **4.1 Women in Local Government**

The total number of seats reserved for women in all local governments (the districts, town, Tehsil and Union Councils) is approximately 46,620. These figures are collected in light of the existing no of Union Councils, which might be enhanced during delimitation process in accordance with the Census figures of 1998. According to a rough estimate after the delimitation process across the country the number of reserved seats for women might increase to 70,000 keeping in view the increase in the number of Union Councils.

The situation of women in Local Government institutions is always worst in Pakistan. In every election, even when they are selected as a councillor, women representative depend on people from influential and majority groups. If they want to contest general election on general seats they have to contest as independent candidates because most political parties and other set ups discourage them and try to exclude them from the whole process. Majority groups wish to have only females elected who do not become a problem for them and can be easily used for their vote bank. Consequently appropriate and active females have to make a deal with majority group in election to become a candidate. After becoming a councillor they have to please the chairperson and other elected male councillors, otherwise they do not get development projects. Because most women councillors do not have their own funds and are reliant on their male colleagues, they cannot pressurize them or even oppose the projects of male councillors. This severely restricts their ability to undertake projects or meet the needs of their constituencies.

Although Balochistan is a backward province, during the last local government's elections women's representation was fairly reasonable. The number of female councillors was about 17 percent. Keeping in view the backwardness of the area, its conservative social set up and restrictions on the mobility of females, this ratio of female representation was quite satisfactory. The comparison between local bodies elections of 1991 and 1999 in Balochistan revealed that the female participation had increased during the last elections. In 1991 elections, 847 seats were reserved for women, out of which 87 remained vacant. However, in 1999 elections the situation was a bit different. 1,871 seats were reserved for women. 1,530 seats were filled in the first stage of polls. During bye elections all the remaining seats were filled. It was encouraging that in some of the general seats females contested polls against male candidates. Their contesting election on general seats was a positive sign. For the first time in the history of the country such a large number of women were elected on reserved seats in Balochistan.

In Punjab the situation was different. Elections of Union Councils, one of the important components of local bodies, could not be conducted despite the fact that the Punjab Government gave undertaking before the Lahore High Court for early holding of the said polls. If these elections were held in the 3,043 union councils across the province, it would have resulted in election of at least 10,000 women. In elections of remaining local bodies 1,348 women got elected on reserved seats. The ratio of females was less compared to Balochistan.

Apart from reserved seats, eight lady councillors were elected through direct elections on general seats. Four of these were elected as councilors of municipal committee or corporations, two from sub urban town councils and two from rural councils. Two of the females, elected on reserved seats also became office-bearers of rural local councils. They were elected chairperson of District Council Sargodha and District Council Rahim Yar Khan respectively. Chairperson of District Council Jhang was Sughra Imam, who was elected through direct elections. All the three females belong to traditional

political families, whose backgrounds are feudal. The remaining females were from middle class families, which could not be considered traditional political families.

Compared to Balochistan, the North West Frontier Province is a bit less backward. However, it is still considered backward keeping in view its political and social indicators. Although, the provincial government announced 100 percent increase in reserved seats for females, this figure was still not in proportion to the overall female population in the province. There is a single municipal corporation, 30 municipal committees and 12 town committees, making the total number of these councils 43. If elections were conducted the number of women elected on reserved seats in Peshawar would have been 4, whereas its population was 2,038,629 out of which 971,232 were women. Similarly, the population of Haripur District was 681,469 whereas only two seats were reserved for women in Municipal Committee Haripur.

Despite such disproportionate the reserved seats for women in 43 urban councils were 172, whereas the population of females in these urban areas was 1,400,458 according to the National Census of 1998.

## **4.2 Problems faced by lady councillors after their election:**

As majority of the lady councillors got elected on reserved seats through indirect elections therefore they had inferior status compared to their male counterparts who were elected through direct polls. Although, there was no legal difference between the councillors elected on reserved seats and those elected on general seats, social attitudes, prevailing political scenario etc. made the councillors elected on reserved seats including women and minorities, inferior in status. One such attitude was experienced in a meeting of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation, when a female councillor was subjected to heckling by a male councillor during her speech. Other female councillors protested against that attitude and according to news reports, they even tried to give him a thrashing. This attitude is not only confined to local councils. Such incidents also happen in other tiers of elected bodies including the parliament and provincial assemblies. In the suspended National Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition was a female. The stories and rumours spread regarding her personal and marital life were also a portrayal of this traditional mentality. In the presence of such attitudes, social values and dogmas, the philosophy of "reserved seats" often turns into a misnomer and such seats appear to lack any utility. The women elected on these seats have to face the hostile attitude of their male counterparts, resulting in the shattering of their confidence.

The second major problem faced by them, which was also due to social factors, is that as the women councillors lack any constituency from where they are elected therefore they have to make more efforts for establishing their credibility for which they need resources, time as well as support of people. For making all these efforts they have to overcome their domestic responsibilities and also to generate monetary resources for meeting the expenses. Most women councillors find this very difficult to do. Like National and Provincial Assemblies, where special allowance are given to the members, special allowances should be fixed for councillors. Such allowances should be on basis of mobility of each councillor.

The third major problem faced by women councillors concerns their responsibilities in the council. Because women councillors are indirectly elected on reserved seats by directly elected councillors each woman councillor has to support the politics of the group that elected her. Normally, they have been included in committees related to women's issues and have not been made members of committees meant for development work. Thus, even outside their residences they have been assigned responsibilities related to domestic tasks like looking after vocational centres, etc.

## 5.A NOTED LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

### 5.1 Annotated list of organizations

#### List of NGOs working for Women Political Participation in training and awareness sector

##### Aurat Foundation

Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation (APISF) established in 1986, is a civil society organization committed to women's empowerment in the society. The Foundation sees this empowerment in the context of women's participation in governance at all levels, which seeks to increase their knowledge, share in resources and role in management of institutions. The women's effective role in governance is linked to political and social framework that facilitates a more active role for citizens in the affairs of the country. The Foundation also works with civil society organizations to undertake advocacy and action on areas of concern to women and for creating a suitable environment for citizens' participation in governance. Established in Pakistan in February 1986, AF is registered with the government under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, as non-profit society. With headquarters in Lahore, and five regional offices in the federal and the provincial capitals, the organization has an outreach extending to 97 to Pakistan's 121 districts. It has over 120 employees, with 65 professionals and an annual budget of over Rs. 2.75 million. The Foundation has recognition nationally and internationally as a major institution for women's development in the country. Over the last 14 years, the Foundation has emerged as a major support organization for civil society organizations working for bringing about social change at the community level. The Foundation has set up a network of information focal points for community level women in over 1000 rural and urban communities across Pakistan. It has developed and is strengthening its network of civil society organizations in 50 districts for citizens' participation in good governance; and it is catalyzing critical groups in society to influence policy, legislation and programs for women's greater economic and political power in society.

##### Addresses:

Contact Person Lahore: Ms. Nigar Ahmed  
 Aurat Foundation Lahore  
 8-B, LDA Garden View Apartments, Lawrence Road  
 Lahore, Pakistan.  
 Phone: (042) 6306534. 6314382  
 Fax: (042) 6278817

Contact Person Islamabad: Ms. Shehnaz Ahmed  
 Aurat Foundation, Islamabad  
 H. No. 16, Street No. 67, G –6/4 Islamabad, Pakistan.  
 Phone: (051) 277512. 277547  
 Fax: (051) 822060

Contact Person Karachi: Ms. Nasreen Zehra  
 Aurat Foundation, Karachi  
 5/B, Block, 2, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor PECHS Karachi Pakistan.  
 Phone: (021) 4555857.  
 Fax: (021) 4536762.

Contact Person Quetta: Mr. Younas Khalid  
 Aurat Foundation Quetta  
 3- Kasi Street, New Al-Gilani Road, Quetta Pakistan.  
 Phone: (081) 836342.  
 Fax: (081) 836406

Contact Person Peshawar: Ms. Rukhshanda Naz  
 Aurat Foundation, Peshawar.  
 T/255, Khyber Colony No.2, University Road  
 Tehkal Payan, Peshawar.  
 Phone: (091) 843642. 40786  
 Fax: (091) 43619.

### **Human Rights Centre of Pakistan**

HRCP pursues its objectives through efforts to spread awareness and to educate inform and mobilize public opinion. It registers and investigates incidents of wrongs and elicits legal or administrative relief or redress for individual or group grievances. And it elicits specific projects to develop data or build effort and capacity.

Towards these ends, the organizations runs a complaints cell, works and information network made up of a string of correspondents, scans the daily press. It issues publications of various categories, organizes seminars, consultations and workshops and when necessary holds public demonstration. It carries out fact-finding, makes court interventions and lobbies. It trains activities and maintains an exchange relationship with international human rights groups.

Much of its activity in 1998, as often in the recent past, had to be concentrated on women, children and minority rights, democratic development, religious and other kinds of intolerance and the freedom of the press, and with pearl reform, police excesses and the problem of the bonded labor. They are also part of umbrella network for WIP supported by UNDP.

Contact Person: Mr. I.A. Rehman or Ms Asma Jehangir  
 HRCP, Lahore  
 Awan-I-Jamhoor 107, Tippu Block, New Guarden Town, Lahore  
 Phone: (042) 5838341. 5864994  
 Fax: (042) 5883582.

### **PATTAN Development Organization**

The worst floods in two decades ravaged much of Pakistan in September 1992. "Pattan" (which means ferry closing), arose from the efforts of a group of volunteers working in the aftermath of these floods. With the backing of international donor agency, OXFAM, the volunteers delivered tents, food and seeds to flood a affected areas of Punjab's Sargodia, Multan and Muzaffargarh districts. It was soon clear that the riverine areas were home to some of Pakistan's most marganalized people and that relief alone would not address their vulnerability.

Therefore, Pattan was registered under the Societies Act, in 1993, to continue the successful partnership between the flood volunteers and the reverine communities.

Since the establishment, Pattan has worked intensively with riverine communities along the banks of the Chinab, Sutlag and Jehlum, in Central and Southern Punjab. Pattan work is based upon a process of social organization, in which Pattan works which riverine communities to develop effective community level institutions that represent all social groups and channel their efforts in to development work Pattan work which over one hundred community, organizations in its mitigation and development. Pattan works for improvement local governance, which starts with transparency and democratic norms in community level institutions, and also involve fostering. Better links and cooperation between communities and line departments and district administration. They also involve in advocacy for promotion of policy change and institutional reforms. They did two main research studies on Women in Local Government and Women in Parliament along with Aurat Foundation.

Contact Person: Ms. Farzana Bari or Mr. Sarwar Bari  
 PATTAN, Islamabad  
 H # 125, C, St. 19

F. 11/2, Islamabad  
Phone: 2299494.

### **Savera**

Savera, a non profit, non governmental organization committed to development activities in Pakistan, was launched by a group of highly concerned and motivated professionals and academics representing a wide range of multidisciplinary expertise in various social sciences in 1989. The title Savera itself symbolizes an awakening and enlightenment. The UNDP in 1997 engaged Savera in the context of enhancing female participation in the political process at all level in the country. Savera is the coordinating partner with three other NGOs and election commission of Pakistan. Savera beside performing the main task of liaison agency, has also assumed the responsibility of collecting, collating, documenting and disseminating information on trends and determinants in decision making among women from all over Pakistan, providing the institutional frame work for project monitoring and research.

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SAVERA  
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### **South Asia Partnership Pakistan (SAP-PAK.)**

South Asia Partnership (SAP) is a network of participatory development-support organizations operating under the same name and for the same purposes. Canada and five South Asian countries, namely Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Whereas SAP-Canada is a consortium of 26 Canadian voluntary organizations, the South Asian components are indigenous NGOs that work for the uplift of the socio-economically marginalized populations in the region. Through an International Council, the six national organizations work together in the context of a common charter.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has been a significant participant in the SAP system since its establishment. However, with the coming into existence of SAP-International (SAP-1) as a legal body, efforts are being made to bring other like-minded support agencies into the SAP system.

South Asia Partnership-Pakistan (SAP-PK) is a non-sectarian, non denominational, non-profit NGO that was founded by a group of leading Pakistani development and social activists in 1987. The organizations proper functioning started after the establishment of the secretariat two years later. SAP-PK holds the mandate to facilitate CBOs in embarking upon the path of self-reliant, sustainable and participatory development.

SAP-PK embarked on a five-year programme in 1996 to bring about a positive social change with the following basic objectives:

- To strengthen the capacities of CBOs/NGOs to be catalysts and facilitators of sustainable democratic community development and to contribute to policy dialogue at local, provincial and national levels; and
- To increase Canadian and international NGOs involvement in Pakistan and to increase awareness of the country's development issues.

SAP-PK comprises a General Body, National Council and a Secretariat managed by professional staff. It has translated the objectives and goals into the following four broad areas of action:

1. Provide program support to Pakistani CBOs, NGOs and other civil society organizations working for sustainable participatory development;
2. Extend capacity building support to Pakistani CBOs, NGOs to help them grow into viable and sustainable organizations;

3. Promote Canadian and other international NGO partnership with Pakistani grassroots NGOs; and
4. Promote foreign NGOs and people's understanding of the participatory micro development processes unfolding in Pakistan.

Contact Person: Mr. Mohammad Tahseen  
SAP-Pk  
Hassen Memorial Trust Nasirabad  
2-Km Raiwind Road, Thekar Niaz Baig  
63 Lahore.  
Phone: 542 6470-74.

### **Sungi Development Foundation**

Sungi was formed in 1989 upon the initiative of a group of socially active individuals from the Hazara division of the North West Frontier Province. It has main offices in Abbottbad, Haripur, Islamabad and field offices in Circle Bakote, Battagram and Balakot. Sungi's target groups are farmers, people in forestry, users of small forests, labour (factory and fields), rural Women and people of middle class from rural and urban areas.

Sungi's strategy focuses on cluster making, group formation and advocacy to enable local people to access to resources, protect their basic human rights, preserve their environment, and ensure equal distribution of natural resources. Its programmes include social mobilization, civic rights programme, health and sanitation programme, sustainable live hoods, small rural enterprise development programme, natural resources management, craft programme (jisti), advocacy support unit and participatory research, monitoring and evaluation.

Human resource development

Contact Person: Mr. Mushtaq Gadhi  
Sungi Development Foundation  
Street No. 67, G -6/4 Islamabad, Pakistan.  
Phone: (051) 2237272  
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### **PILER**

PILER was established in 1982 as a Civil Society Organization. The people who contributed for the establishment of the organization include trade unionists, educationists, economist, doctors, engineers, journalists and intellectuals. The thought was to consider the problems of the labour class and to induce social awareness among them.

PILER's objectives are:

- Institute mandate was that it will work for betterment of labor class.
- Institute will establish an organized research wing to produce a data bank for Pakistan and other developing countries.
- Institute will publish pamphlets, booklets, newsletters etc. on labor class.
- Institute will also play positive role in culture and art.

It was also decided that institute being not biased to any of the ideology it will work for the betterment of work class to achieve the objectives a goals.

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Pakistan Institute for Labour Education and Research  
141-D,Block 2  
P-E-C-H-S  
P-O-BOX 8032, Karachi.

## **All Muslim Women Parliamentarians**

In 1993, during the second term of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, the Government of Pakistan organized an international conference for women parliamentarians in Islamabad. At the end of the conference Pakistan took the responsibility of establishing a secretariat for coordination and training for women parliamentarians. The All Muslim Women Parliamentarians conducted trainings on negotiating skills and some training for women that were elected during 1998 and 1999 Local Bodies Election.

Secretariat for Muslim Women Parliamentarian  
H. No. 27, G-25, F 8/2, Islamabad.  
Phone: 261712. Fax: 851510.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE ACTIONS.**

### **6.1 Reforming urban local government**

The Local Government Plan 2000 covers laws and regulations that promote women's participation and representation in local government, including the 33 percent quota. Hopefully after the completion of the 2001 elections there would be a number of able and independent women in local councils.

### **6.2 Recommendations for the future**

Now that women will receive 33 percent quota in local government, they need to ensure that their gains are not lost. To do this they need to join civil society organizations and pressure the government to make the quotas for local government permanent and to initiate quota systems in provincial and national assembly.

Considerable organizational work needs to be undertaken to raise the awareness of women in the community on how to use the local government as an institution to further their interest. For this they need to be made more aware of how to identify the issues of common concerns and to collectively put pressure on the local bodies to address these issues. They must also learn how to make the local government more responsive and accountable to them. This requires them to understand the functioning of the local Government and how to generate the pressure on them to respond positively.

As stated earlier a huge number of women will become councillors for the first time. To ensure their effectiveness it is important that programmes be initiated to train them in their duties. Similarly gender awareness training is also needed for their male counterparts and staff of local councils.