

1. IMPROVING GENDER EQUALITY IN PAKISTAN

Small Steps to Date, Large Strides Ahead

To have an adequate appreciation of the far-reaching effects of disparities between women and men, we have to recognize the basic fact that gender inequality is not one affliction, but many, with varying reach on the lives of women and men, and of girls and boys.

—Amartya Sen²

1.1. South Asia stands out among all the regions of the world as a region with a high degree of gender inequality—in opportunities, resources, and rewards enjoyed by men and women. Within South Asia, gender disparities in Pakistan are also pronounced: they cut across all classes, sectors, and regions of the country. Although the issues of gender inequality in Pakistan are well documented, less is known about what drives these gender differences and what policy levers are at hand to effect change. This Gender Assessment describes the multiple dimensions of tackling these gender inequalities and identifies implementable policies that will most effectively alleviate gender gaps. Achieving this objective requires in-depth understanding of both economic and non-economic issues. Because existing data provide only a partial grasp of factors driving gender inequalities, the Gender Assessment has combined data analysis with information on legal, political, and socio-cultural environments. It is vital to include the influence of socio-cultural norms on families' reactions to policies and programs, or we risk creating initiatives that are unsuccessful, even if they provide all the right economic incentives.

1.2. The recent Policy Research Report on Gender (2001)³ extensively analyzed gender issues across the developing world and provided evidence of the types of reforms and policies that can promote gender equality. It also stressed that one-size-fits-all policies for promoting gender equality will not work. This Country Gender Assessment (CGA) examines what policies would succeed or fail in the Pakistani context. The CGA builds on Pakistan's Poverty Assessment (2002), which showed that steady economic growth throughout the 1980s and 1990s was not accompanied by commensurate social improvements. With a gross national income (GNI) per capita of \$470 (2003) and 32.6 percent of the national population below the poverty line, Pakistan remains classified as a low-income economy.⁴ At the end of the 1990s, its social indicators were below those of other developing countries with similar per capita incomes, and they improved more slowly than those of countries with similar growth rates.⁵ Levels of illiteracy are among the highest in the region, while school enrollment rates are the lowest. Figure 1.1 reveals large gender gaps in literacy and enrollment relative to the rest of South Asia and to lower-income countries in general.

² Based on the text of an inauguration lecture for the new Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University on April 24, 2001. A shortened version of this paper was published in *The New Republic* on September 17, 2001.

³ World Bank (2001).

⁴ World Bank (2004c).

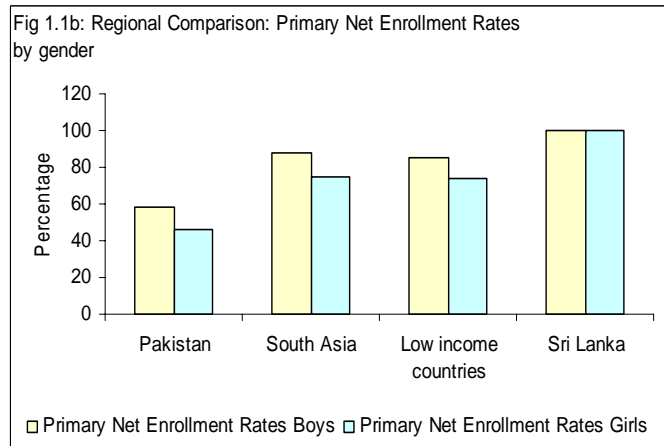
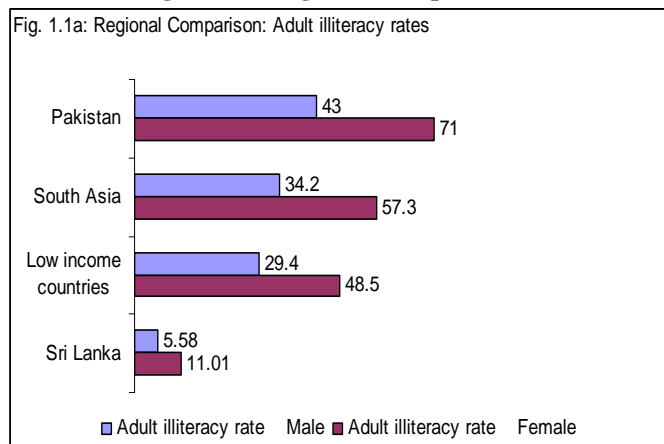
⁵ World Bank (2002).

1.3. The economic revival program introduced at the end of the 1990s is beginning to reverse the deteriorating macro situation of a few years ago. Many financial and legislative decision-making responsibilities have been decentralized to provincial and lower-level local governments, with the goal of improving accountability and service delivery. The budget deficit has fallen, inflation has remained below five percent, the current account deficit in the balance of payments has turned into a surplus, and exports have begun to grow again after years of stagnation.

1.4. All of these developments help create an environment conducive to reducing gender disparities, and policymakers have committed themselves to a number of gender specific goals in recent years. Pakistan has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Specific policies to promote gender equity have been articulated in the National Plan for Development and Empowerment of Women (2002), National Plan of Action (1998) and the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).⁶ The PRSP is aligned with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and identifies gender equality as an explicit goal (see Box 1.1).

1.5. While only one MDG explicitly cites the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, gender issues are germane to achieving all eight MDGs. Various dimensions of the gender gap each have their own effect on the development trajectory, and their effects are also interactive. A primary indicator for eradicating gender disparities is *equality in educational opportunity*, as measured by school enrollments. A one-percent rise in female school enrollments boosts average GDP levels by 0.37 percent, whereas a one-percent increase in male education has no significant effect; conversely, gender disparity itself significantly lowers levels of per capita income.⁷ A cross-country study on the impact of missing the MDG target on gender equality estimates that countries such as Pakistan, which have not achieved the targeted equity in education by 2005, risk losing an average of 0.4 percentage points in annual economic growth between 2005 and 2015 if they remain off track.⁸ Potential negative social effects of failing to achieve universal education include between 0.1 and 0.6 more births per woman, 2.4 percentage points greater incidence of underweight children under age five, and up to 32 per 1,000 higher child mortality by 2015.

Figure 1.1: Regional Comparisons



Note: Illiteracy rates pertain to those 15 and older.
 Source: Figures for Pakistan calculated using PIHS 2001. Figures for low-income countries, South Asia, and Sri Lanka are taken from Genderstats World Bank (2004).

⁶ Government of Pakistan (2003).
⁷ Klasen (1999) ; Knowles et al., (2002).
⁸ Abu-Ghaida and Klasen (2004).

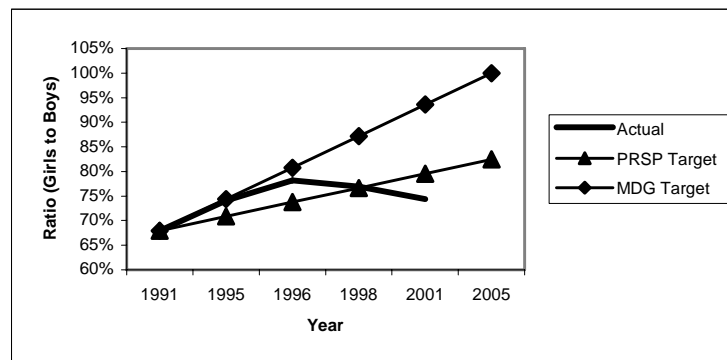
Box 1.1: Attaining the Millennium Development Goals in Pakistan: What Are the Gender Issues?

The government's pledge to achieve the MDGs by 2015 means it is prepared to assume responsibility for ameliorating gender disparities in social, economic, and political spheres. While only one of the eight MDGs promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women, gender issues are germane to achieving all eight MDGs. Gender gaps in a country's political, social, cultural, and economic dimensions are intertwined with the country's overall development trajectory. Especially important is the achievement of universal education; because increases in educational attainment are transmitted to subsequent generations, reductions in the gender gap for education are self-perpetuating. Female education also advances other development goals: women are more productive both inside and outside the household; and evidence overwhelmingly shows a mother's education to have a beneficial impact on family size, the well-being of her children, and her use of community services.⁹ Outside the home, women's education raises productivity in both wage employment and agriculture,¹⁰ and enables women to meaningfully participate in the political process.

A primary indicator for eradicating gender disparities is *equality in educational opportunity*, as measured by school enrollments. In Pakistan, allocations for basic education have increased, yet public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP has remained low, comprising about 1.8 percent in 1998.¹¹ How has public expenditure affected gender gaps in schooling? Analysis of public spending¹² suggests a significant gender gap among the lower-income quintiles, where girls receive much less in government resources per capita than do boys at both the primary and secondary school levels. Extending this analysis to understand how girls' enrollment will respond to an *increase* in public education expenditure also reveals a gender gap among the lower-income quintiles—*the marginal impact of an increase in total spending is higher on boys' enrollment than on girls'*—indicating that boys tend to benefit more than girls from public expenditure on education at both the primary and secondary levels.¹³

If this pattern of public expenditures does not improve, Pakistan will be hard-pressed to attain its goal of gender equality in education by the year 2015 (Figure 1.2).¹⁴ Even though the ratio of the number of girls enrolled in primary school (regardless of age), relative to the number of boys enrolled, showed improvements in the first half of the 1990s, it has since taken a downward turn. In 2001, the ratio was 74 percent. Pakistan's PRSP aims to reach a ratio of 82 percent in primary enrollment by 2005, much lower than the MDG target of 100 percent. If the 1990's pattern of public expenditures on education persists, achieving any significant improvement in girls' enrollments seems unlikely in the short-term, or by the MDG target date of 2015.

Figure 1.2: Gender Ratio in Enrollments and MDG Target



Source: Ratio of primary Gross Enrollments Rates for 1991, 1995, and 1998 taken from Pakistan Poverty Assessment (2002). Ratio for 2001 based on World Bank staff calculations using PIHS 2001. PRSP target taken from Government of Pakistan (2003).

⁹ Strauss and Thomas (1995).

¹⁰ Behrman and Deolalikar (1988) Quisumbing (1996).

¹¹ World Bank (2002). For comparison, note that in Sri Lanka education spending was 5.3 percent of the GDP.

¹² Benefit incidence analysis of the impact of public expenditure on education on school enrollments of girls and boys taken from note prepared for World Bank (2004d). The expenditures are for 2000-01, while data on school enrollments of girls and boys are from the 1998-99 Pakistan Integrated Household Survey.

¹³ Under the assumption that public expenditures are proportional to public school enrollments, this exercise of estimating marginal benefit incidence is an approximation of the actual dynamic impact of change in education expenditure on outcomes,

1.6. The social justice inherent in promoting gender equality makes its achievement an important aspect of human welfare, intrinsically worth pursuing. As an outcome of gender inequalities, gender inequities refer to differences not only in men’s and women’s opportunities, but also in what Amartya Sen refers to as their capabilities and freedoms (or power). Inequalities in freedoms reflect the fundamental differences between men and women in their ability to achieve their capabilities, “... the range of things that a person could do and be in her life.”¹⁵ The pursuit of gender equality promotes the fair distribution of capabilities and freedoms, as well as offer potential economic benefits.

1.7. To reduce gender gaps and reverse long-standing trends in gender inequality will require interventions that promote women’s voice and create an environment that fosters women’s greater involvement in the public sphere. There have been a number of efforts in Pakistan to address gender inequality on the legal and political fronts. The reservation of seats for women in local government and provincial and national assemblies has brought about an unprecedented increase in women’s political participation, creating space for women’s voice. Government and civil society alike have led efforts to mitigate violence against women and other violations of the law. In 2004, Parliament passed a bill against honor killings. Discriminatory laws—prominent among them the Hudood Ordinances—have become the subject of increasing debate in recent years. The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), charged with the mandate of reviewing existing laws suggesting reforms, has recommended that the Hudood Ordinances be repealed. The government currently is reviewing NCSW’s recommendation on the Hudood Ordinances.

1.8. What is to be done in the meantime, as institutional reforms and economic growth slowly work to reduce gender inequities? Active policy measures to promote gender equality in the present are crucial. In particular, near-term approaches must work around existing constraints on women and girls, augmenting their access to basic services, paid work, and opportunities for decision-making in the public sphere. Key to this CGA is the finding that in each of the dimensions analyzed in this study, the persistence of gender gaps stems from both culturally-based and economic constraints. Restriction of women’s mobility—which varies by region in Pakistan, and in the most conservative form results in female seclusion—is a particularly formidable obstacle to closing gender gaps. Policies that can work around such cultural constraints will both increase service delivery to females and encourage long-term cultural shifts that will reduce these constraints.

1.9. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to the following: (1) an overview of gender gaps in Pakistan; (2) a discussion of the methodology and data used in the CGA; and, (3) a description of the report structure. The overview examines the patterns and trends in indicators that reflect gender disparities arising from the economic and non-economic roles of men and women, during the decade of the 1990s (up to the year 2001). Data sources used include the 1998 Census and the 2001-02 round of the Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (PIHS).

I. GENDER INEQUALITY IN PAKISTAN: AN OVERVIEW

1.10. With an area of 803,940 square kilometers, Pakistan borders India (in the east and southeast), Iran in the southwest, Afghanistan (in the north and northwest), and the Arabian Sea to the south. The country is made up of two territories (Islamabad Capital Territory and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas)

since it measures the impact of aggregate changes (e.g., change in total enrollment) on different groups (see Lanjouw and Ravallion 1999 for methodological details) using cross-sectional data at a certain time.

¹⁴ Actual gross enrollments are obtained from various rounds of the Pakistan Integrated Household Survey. The PRSP target is that indicated in Government of Pakistan (2003) .

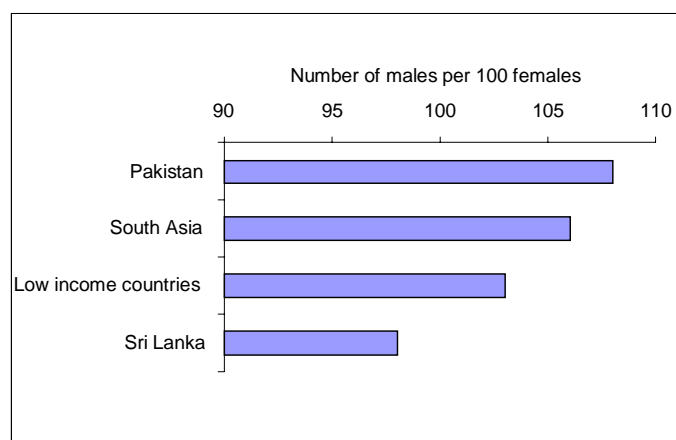
¹⁵ Sen (1989).

and four provinces (Balochistan, North West Frontier Province, Punjab, and Sindh). The most populous of these provinces is Punjab, which is home to roughly one-half the country's total population of 148.4 million (2003).¹⁶ Although Pakistan's official language is Urdu, a host of other languages—including Baluchi, English, Pashto, Punjabi, Saraiki and Sindhi—reflect the ethnic diversity of the population. The largest of these groups is Punjabi; Pashto, Sindhi, and Saraiki each account for between 10-15 percent of the population; and Urdu, Baluchis, and Afghans make up less than 10 percent each. Because the population is predominantly rural (about 68 percent), nearly one-half the labor force is involved in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting.

Health

1.11. According to the 1998 Population Census, the sex ratio (the ratio of men to women in the population) is 108 males per 100 females.¹⁷ The sex ratio frequently is used as an indicator of gender inequality in a society because it reflects gender differentials in mortality.¹⁸ A high sex ratio indicates premature death of females, the source of which could include poor female access to health inputs or social factors resulting in sheer neglect. Pakistan's sex ratio of 108 males per 100 females indicates excessive female mortality and surpasses even South Asia's already high ratio of 106 (Figure 1.3). Even compared to other low-income countries, Pakistan's sex ratio is high.

Figure 1.3: Sex Ratio Imbalance in Pakistan: Too Few Girls



Source: Sex ratio for Pakistan based on 1998 Census. Sex ratio for South Asia, low-income countries and Sri Lanka taken from Gender Stats (World Bank) for the year 2000.

1.12. Amartya Sen brought attention to this simple but powerful sex ratio statistic to calculate the phenomenon he called “missing women.”¹⁹ In a world with no excessive female mortality the sex ratio would be 95 to 98 males per 100 females.²⁰ The difference between this benchmark and the actual ratio translates to the number of missing women—that is, women who could have lived but did not because of premature death. Taking 95 as the benchmark, Pakistan's sex ratio of 108 implies almost 8 million missing women. Sen calculated that more than 100 million women were missing due to the surfeit of female mortality in parts of the developing world, most notably South Asia, China, West Africa and parts of North Africa. Other social scientists have more conservatively estimated the range of missing women to be between 60 and 90 million.²¹ All of these estimates confirm the enormous toll that excess female mortality is exacting on women in these regions of the world.

¹⁶ World Bank (2004c).

¹⁷ The *sex ratio* is defined as the ratio of the number of males to females in the population, and it is calculated as the number of males per 100 females (a ratio of 95 is considered normal) from census data. Census data is the most appropriate data source to use for calculating the sex ratio, as the Census is designed to produce a count of the entire population of the country. However, sex ratio in the population also is frequently estimated using household survey data, which can be problematic because the selection of households in the survey can affect the sex ratio estimated. See Deaton (1998) for a discussion.

¹⁸ The sex ratio also can be influenced by sex ratio at birth, migration, and under-enumeration of females.

¹⁹ Sen (1990).

²⁰ Sen (1990), Coale (1991), Klasen and Wink (2002). Biologically, women tend to have lower death rates than men, so female death rates ideally should be lower than male death rates.

²¹ Sen (1989), Sen (1990), Coale (1991), Klasen (1994)

1.13. Because there is little evidence of prenatal sex selection in Pakistan, the prevailing sex ratio reflects relatively poor treatment of girls after birth, rather than female infanticide. This phenomenon has been called “extended infanticide,” where girls have an elevated mortality rate in childhood because they may be denied inputs like food, nutrition, and health care.²²

1.14. Indeed, female child mortality exceeds male child mortality in Pakistan. Most recent estimates of childhood mortality show the female rate between ages 1 and 4 to be 24 per 1,000 births, while the male rate in this age group is only 15 per 1,000 births (Table 1.1). Among infants, male mortality rates exceed those for females, a pattern consistent with biologically expected sex-based differences in mortality rates. In Pakistan, mortality rates other than those for very young ages are largely unknown. Life expectancy at birth was about 59 years for both men and women in 1990 and rose to 63 years by the late 1990s. Prior to the 1980s, male life expectancy exceeded female life expectancy at birth.

	<i>Infant Mortality</i>		<i>Child Mortality</i>		<i>Under 5 Mortality</i>	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
1980 – 1990/91	102	86	22	37	122	119
1997-2000	99	71	15	24	112	93

Note: Rates per 1,000 live births.
Source: Pakistan DHS 1990-91; Pakistan Reproductive Health and Family Planning Survey, 2000-01.

1.15. Women in Pakistan begin bearing children at a young age. Births also tend to be spaced close together: about one out of three births occur less than two years apart. Until the beginning of the 1990s, the average total fertility rate (TFR) in Pakistan exceeded five births per woman.²³ The fertility rate has gradually declined since the early 1990s, and at the end of the decade it was just under five births per woman.²⁴ This high fertility—along with low age at first birth and closely-spaced births—worsens women’s health and intensifies gender differences in health status. While data on maternal mortality are not directly available, approximately one woman in 31 dies due to pregnancy-related outcomes.²⁵ Because most deliveries are not carried out by trained birth attendants or doctors, complications arising during delivery can lead to disabilities, an outcome that has not received adequate attention in research.²⁶

1.16. Studies from Pakistan consistently show a high incidence of malnutrition among children from birth to age 5.²⁷ A recent estimate of rural malnutrition rates (Table 1.2a) shows 65 percent of rural girls to be chronically malnourished (low height for age). A similar number of boys also are malnourished. Estimates of malnutrition rates through the 1990s display no evidence of gender gaps.²⁸ Anemia is more

²² Miller (1981).

²³ During the 1990s, Pakistan’s fertility rate began to decline. The total fertility rate (TFR) appears to have declined to about 4.46 by the late 1990s (1998-99 PIHS). This decline has been accompanied by an increase in contraceptive prevalence rates. According to the 1998-99 PIHS, the contraceptive prevalence rate was 17 percent, which, though higher than in previous years, is one of the lowest in the region.

²⁴ NIPS (2001).

²⁵ WHO, UNFPA, and UNICEF estimate (2004).

²⁶ Ashford (2002).

²⁷ Qureshi, Nazli, and Sumro (2001) provide an overview of results from different surveys over time. Among children aged 0-5 years, the incidence of stunting—which reflects chronic or long-term malnutrition—shows an increasing trend, from almost 43 percent in 1977 (Micro-nutrient Survey) to 50 percent in 1990 (Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey) and 60 percent in 1998-99 (Pakistan Socio-Economic Survey).

²⁸ The Pakistan Socio-Economic Survey (SES) for 1998-99 shows a higher incidence of malnutrition among boys than among girls (Qureshi, Nazli and Sumro, 2001). Most research on gender disparities in nutritional status based on anthropometric measures tends not to find any statistically significant gender differences. For example, preliminary results from the PRHS (2001) on the incidence of malnutrition do not show any differences by gender (World Bank 2002). Haddad (1999) outlines three possible reasons for the failure to observe gender differences. First, excessive female child mortality causes the most malnourished girls to drop out of the sample. Second, anthropometric standards are age sensitive, and a high incidence of age

prevalent among females than males in each age category (Table 1.2b). Particularly in the 15-24 and 25-44 age groups, there is a clear pattern of anemia among women. This high prevalence in childbearing ages is of particular concern, since anemia is one cause of low-birth-weight babies.

1.17. In summary, health indicators reveal a range of female disadvantage. When the various indicators are pieced together to explain the existence of excess female mortality in Pakistan, it appears that gender differences in access to preventive and curative medical care could be responsible for the pattern of gender gaps in health outcomes observed. Further data analysis is presented in Chapter 4.

Education

1.18. The female literacy rate is very low in Pakistan, since less than one-third (29 percent) of adult women (aged 15 and older) are literate.²⁹ The male literacy rate is higher at 57 percent. Adult women's low literacy levels primarily reflect extremely low attainments in female schooling among the country's older generations. While both male and female literacy rates increased throughout the 1990s, the gender gap in literacy rates did not diminish.

1.19. Mirroring the literacy gap are gender gaps in school enrollments among children of school age: girls' enrollment rates are lower than boys' enrollment rates. The primary Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) for girls is 61 percent. If this rate is adjusted for whether enrollment is age appropriate, then only about 46 percent of primary school-aged girls are enrolled in primary school. Called the Net Enrollment Rate (NER), this rate is 46 percent for girls and is lower than the GER, suggesting delayed school entry and grade repetition among girls. These patterns are common among boys as well, for whom the GER is 82 percent and, adjusting for age, the NER is 58 percent. The enrollment in grades higher than primary are low for both boys and girls; however, here too there is a gender gap: the net enrollment rate in post-primary grades (grade 6 and beyond) is only 27 percent for girls and about 38 percent for boys.³⁰

Table 1.2: Malnutrition and Anemia

a. Malnutrition Among Children Under 5 (percent)				
		1990-94	1998-99	2001-02
		<i>Rural and Urban</i>	<i>Rural and Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>
Underweight	Male	39.8	44.3	48
	Female	40.5	32	48
Stunted	Male	36	64.9	64
	Female	36.6	53.9	65
Wasted	Male	13.9	10.6	11
	Female	13.7	8.1	12

b. Prevalence of Anemia (percent)			
		<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>
5-14	Male	32.5	41.5
	Female	40	42.7
15 – 24	Male	15.3	24.6
	Female	33.1	37.5
25-44	Male	8.7	19.5
	Female	37.1	37.3

Note: Malnutrition
Underweight: Low weight for age (2 standard deviations below median weight for age of reference population)
Stunted: Low height for age (2 standard deviations below median height for age of reference population)
Wasted: Low weight for height (2 standard deviations below median weight for height of reference population)
Anemia: low hemoglobin content
Source: 1990-94: National Health Survey of Pakistan (1996), reported in Compendium of Gender Statistics Pakistan Socio-Economic Survey (1998-99). Malnutrition figures for 1998-99 from Pakistan Socio-Economic Survey. Malnutrition figures for 2001 from Pakistan Rural Household Survey, 2001.

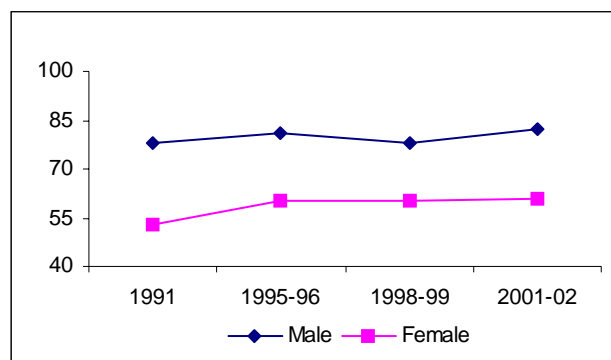
misreporting for females could result in a large proportion of females appearing to be less malnourished than they really are. Third, the anthropometric standards are not gender neutral, since standards differ for females and males.

²⁹ Literacy refers to the capability to read and write.

³⁰ Net enrollment rates calculated for children aged 11-16 comes from World Bank (2003).

1.20. The gender gap in primary school enrollments did not narrow appreciably during the 1990s (Figure 1.4). For most of the decade, the primary GER for girls remained approximately 20 percentage points below that for boys, except during the start of the 1990s, when the gender gap was slightly higher at 25 percentage points. A noteworthy and worrying trend is that in periods when the gender gap has narrowed, the decrease has been due to a decline in male enrollment rather than a rise in female enrollment. A similar trend is also observed if NERs are compared over time.³¹

Figure 1.4: Primary School Gross Enrollment Rate, 1991–2001



Source: PIHS rounds for various years reported in Poverty Assessment, 2002.

1.21. These trends in *average* net enrollments rates mask the *marginal* growth in enrollments during the 1990s. A growth incidence analysis of enrollments between 1991 and 2001 suggests that changes in primary NER over the last decade were concentrated among the richer groups, who already had high enrollment rates in 1991 (see Chapter 3). There also were interesting variations by gender and region. In urban areas, both boys and girls belonging to higher income groups registered growth in enrollments, but rural areas saw a distinct difference between enrollment growth for boys and girls. While only rural boys belonging to higher income groups registered growth in enrollments, rural girls belonging to both lower- and upper-income groups registered growth.

1.22. The trends and patterns in primary schooling throughout the decade and into 2001-02 suggest that much work is needed to meet the gender equity goals set in the PRSP—namely to reduce the gender gap in primary school enrollment by 2005 (see Figure 1.2 in Box 1.1). A detailed analysis of constraints to girls’ schooling is presented in Chapter 3.

Participation in the Labor Force

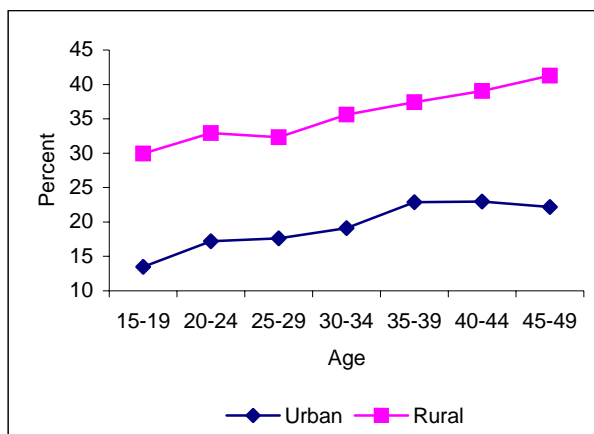
1.23. As in most developing countries, measuring the extent of female labor force participation is sensitive to the definition of work used and the duration (a week, month, or year) considered. Measurement of male participation in the labor force tends to be less affected by these issues. According to the Pakistan Integrated Household Survey, which measures work participation over a reference period that is longer than that used by the Labor Force Survey, 67 percent of males and 25 percent of females were participating in the labor force in 2001-02.³² This definition of labor force participation includes both paid and unpaid (family labor) work. Women who participate are much more likely to do so in unpaid work, while men are more likely to participate in paid work. Almost 60 percent of women involved in the labor force are unpaid workers. This is a very high rate compared to that of men; among those who participate in the labor force, only 19 percent of men are unpaid family workers.

³¹ World Bank (2002).

³² Labor force participation is measured for those aged 10 or older. In contrast, most other countries in South Asia calculate labor force participation rates for individuals 15 and older.

1.24. The aggregate participation rate of 25 percent for females conceals substantial variation by age and across regions. Figure 1.5 depicts age-specific participation rates for females aged 15-49. The age-specific participation rates also vary between rural and urban areas, for rural women participate more heavily in the labor force than do urban women. Older women participate more in the labor force than younger women. Because the average age at marriage is about 22 for females, the age pattern of participation suggests that most women in the labor force are married. This trend is not surprising, given that in Pakistan marriage is nearly universal for both men and women over the age of 20. In addition, married women are expected to contribute to their husbands' households, which potentially could explain why participation rates rise with age.

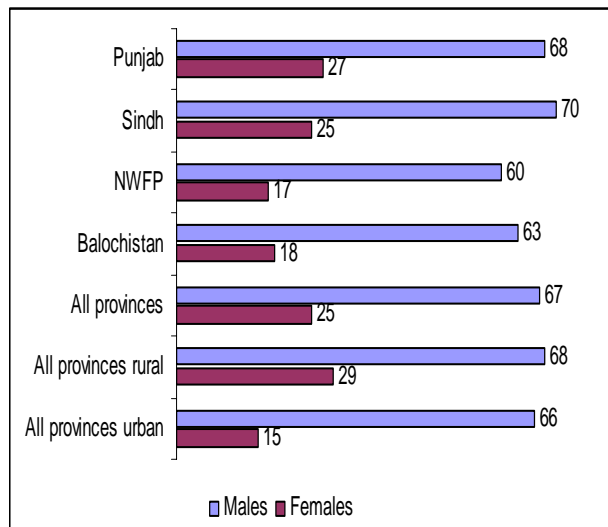
Figure 1.5: Female Labor Force Participation Rates by Age and Region



Source: World Bank staff calculations using data from the PIHS 2001-02.

1.25. Female labor participation rates also exhibit considerable variation across provinces (Figure 1.6). Women in rural Punjab have the highest participation rates, while women in Balochistan have some of the lowest participation rates in both rural and urban areas.

Figure 1.6: Labor Force Participation Rates by Province



Source: World Bank staff calculations using PIHS 2001-02 data for individuals aged 10 and older.

1.26. In addition to participating in work activities, whether paid or unpaid, it is important to look at female ownership of productive assets to better understand women's economic roles. Female ownership of an important rural asset, land, appears to be limited in Pakistan. Data on ownership of assets such as land or access to credit by gender are not readily available from existing data sources. The Pakistan Rural Household Survey (PRHS) in 2001 has found that women owned only 2.8 percent of plots, despite the fact that 67 percent of villages surveyed reported that women maintained the right to inherit land. A 1994 survey in rural Punjab found that of the 1,000 households surveyed, only 36 women owned land in their own names.³³

Political Participation

1.27. Recent legislation mandating reservation of seats for women in local governments, as well as in provincial and national assemblies, has substantially increased women's political representation. As a result of adopting the 33-percent quota mandated by the Local Government Ordinance (2001), women competed not only for the reserved and open seats on the union, subdistrict (tehsil) and district councils, but also for the posts of Nazims and Naib Nazims. Out of a total of 40,009 seats reserved for women,

³³ Kazi (1999).

36,187 women were elected to various government bodies during the local elections of 2001 (Islam 2002). A similar reservation/quota system for women's representation exists in the Senate and in the national and provincial assemblies; about 17 percent of seats in the national assembly are reserved for women, and 18 percent of seats are reserved for women in provincial assemblies distributed across the four provinces

1.28. The unprecedented number of women elected to these government bodies following the quota adoption has opened up not only an enormous political space, but also a strategic opportunity for women to set and implement local government agendas. Despite seat reservation, however, political participation problems remain, as several factors continue to constrain women's effective involvement in politics at the local, provincial, and national levels. One such constraint is related to information: women are significantly less informed than men about political matters, likely because of their relatively low access to political information. As discussed in Chapter 5, women's political knowledge and involvement also may be inhibited by restricted mobility.

1.29. Although the first tenure of local government has been characterized by lack of proper resource allocation to local councils, which has impeded local governments' effectiveness, Pakistan can expect to see strong results from carving out a political space for women in the coming years. Studies from other countries such as India have shown that, over time, communities benefit significantly when women participate in local government.³⁴

II. GENDER ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

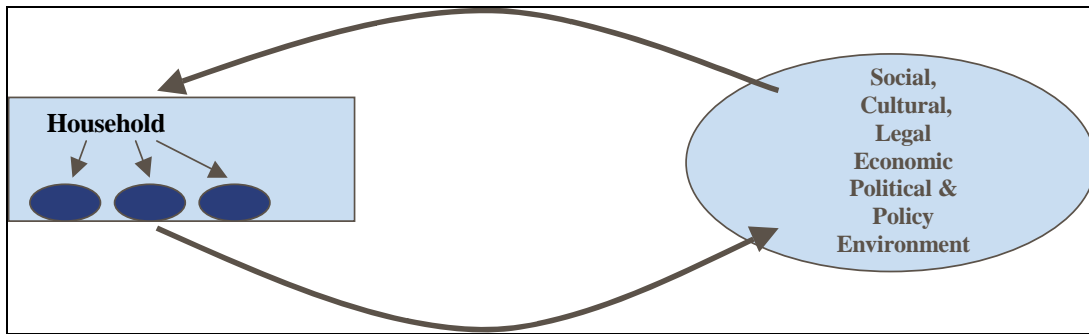
1.30. The Gender Assessment has two basic objectives. *First*, it draws attention to the emerging gender issues in Pakistan. There already exists a large body of work on Pakistan that seeks to comprehend the underpinnings of gender inequality. The Gender Assessment synthesizes this work and extends it further with a view to filling knowledge gaps and recommend suitable policy options. The analytical work reported here involved consultation with relevant government institutions and research on a number of important issues—most notably those relating to customary practices and legal matters—by Pakistani experts. This process has yielded a set of policy recommendations that enable Pakistan to move closer to its stated policy objectives on gender. *Second*, the Gender Assessment aims to expand the Bank's understanding of gender gaps in Pakistan and to provide a framework for enhancing the effectiveness of the Bank's efforts to encourage gender mainstreaming in the country.

The Analytical Framework

1.31. The Gender Assessment framework centers on the family and the economic, social, cultural, legal and political constraints that families face. This multi-layered structure is critical to how factors both within and outside the family's control influence gender inequalities (Figure 1.7). Many of life's most basic decisions are made within the household: families reinforce gender roles, transmit gender norms from one generation to the next, and determine the opportunities available to family members based on their gender. These decisions can magnify or reduce gender gaps.

³⁴ Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2001).

Figure 1.7: Framework of Analysis



1.32. The conceptual framework recognizes the importance of factors both inside and outside the family in determining how gender disparities in outcomes arise and are perpetuated. While household socioeconomic status affects gender disparities, gender gaps in outcomes are muted somewhat in higher income households but they persist even in wealthier parts of Pakistan and in wealthier households. This is because gender disparities are intimately related to and driven by customs, social norms, and formal structures such as laws and regulations. The gender structures embedded in social and legal institutions affect gender relations and gender outcomes, and thus the scope for policy and action. For example, practices such as *purdah* (see Box 1.2 for details) or customs that limit female mobility have an impact on women’s access to schools, medical advice and even income-earning opportunities. Male household members, on the other hand, face fewer restrictions on their movement outside the household. These cultural institutions thus establish the incentives, opportunities, and constraints that determine peoples’ choices and actions, and they shape power relations within the family and society.

1.33. There are great benefits to using such a framework. By placing the household—and specifically decision-making within the family—at the heart of the framework, the Gender Assessment can “unpack” the process of household decision-making for the policymaker. This enables policymakers to select programs and program designs available from national and international experience that are most appropriate for Pakistan, given its current conditions and circumstances, as well as its goals for the future. This framework allows the policymaker to better contemplate and address the following issues:

- *Appropriate policy/program design:* Economic incentives alone, such as stipends for girls’ education, are not likely to reduce gender gaps. What are the important non-economic factors that program design must incorporate?
- *Appropriate targeting of recipients:* Policy will need to specifically target girls and women to directly reduce gender inequities in access to resources and opportunities. Given that prevailing non-economic conditions can make such targeted policy intervention ineffective, how can policy ensure that the targeted delivery of resources translates into equitable access to resources?
- *Appropriate policies to “level the playing field”:* Policies such as quotas or reservations may not be the best means of reducing gender gaps. Here, lessons are forthcoming from the experience of the 33-percent reservation of seats for women in local government. Even with the introduction of such legislation, seats went vacant in communities where women’s mobility and public presence were most restricted. Should the reservation policy be applied in labor force participation to draw women into formal labor markets? The analysis and discussion in subsequent chapters will address such questions and offer recommendations for related policy measures.

Box 1.2: Customs that Influence Women’s Freedom of Movement Outside the Household

Norms restricting women’s mobility are closely linked to issues of *purdah* and *izzat* (honor). As reviewed in Mumtaz and Salway (2005), the ideal form of restricted mobility is seclusion of women inside the household. While this is an extreme practice, a more common form is requiring women to seek permission to leave the household and to be accompanied, preferably by a male household member, or at minimum a group of other women or children. Typically understood to be an Islamic injunction, mobility restrictions are observed in many regions and religions, as documented by Mandelbaum (1986) and Jejeebhoy and Sathar (2001). The practice is inextricably linked to issues of honor in the society and communities observing it. “Protecting” a woman in this way safeguards her honor and, more importantly, preserves the honor of her family and community.

The relationship between the practice of *purdah* and mobility is a highly complex. *Purdah* requires women to thoroughly cover themselves with clothing, although the strictness of practice fluctuates widely throughout Pakistan and across South Asia. The most austere form uses the *burqa*, a black dress combined with a headcover, which completely veils the face and body. A less strict version of the dress code requires a scarf to cover the head in public. In addition to defining customs of dress, *purdah* has the potential to constrain women’s mobility, such as in rural areas, where it can interfere with a woman’s ability to perform manual labor. In some cases, however, *purdah* can even enhance female mobility. According to one woman, age 45, in northern Punjab:

I had no mobility problems with purdah. ... It ensures respect. If a woman with purdah goes out, she will be respected. If a school girl has to go alone and she is wearing a burqa, she will be respected more.

Survey data from rural areas of Punjab and Sindh, gathered in the recent round of Pakistan Rural Household Survey (2004), show large variation in the observance of *purdah* across districts (Table 1.3). The sharpest differences are between northern Punjab, and southern Punjab and Sindh. While overall observance is higher in Sindh and southern Punjab, the severity of *purdah* conditional on observance is greater in northern Punjab; i.e., the proportion of observers with full body/face covering is substantially higher. This is no longer true, however, when we consider observance of *purdah* while outside the settlement in which the woman resides. Overall, nearly one-half of women observing *purdah* will not leave their settlement unless completely covered.

Table 1.3: Practice of Purdah Among Rural Women: Percent Practicing

	No	Yes
N. Punjab (total)	48.9	51.1
S. Punjab (total)	18.5	81.5
Sindh (total)	16.7	83.3
TOTAL	24.3	75.7

Source: Cross-tabulations from Pakistan Rural Household Survey (2004).

Sources of Data and Information

1.34. Existing survey data has provided much information about gender gaps in outcomes, but more information is necessary to unpack the underlying factors that inhibit efforts to reduce these gaps. Because so many factors originate from socio-cultural contexts, understanding them requires more nuanced and detailed data sources than pre-existing data can accommodate, which has required additional qualitative and quantitative data acquisition and analysis. The analysis also has benefited substantially from insights in papers by Pakistani specialists on topics ranging from gender issues in the water sector to gender issues in political participation, family law, and access to justice.

1.35. The method of combining qualitative and quantitative information to learn more about potential implementable policy design was applied in the areas of education and health. Development studies are increasingly adopting this “qual-quant” approach as an analytical tool.³⁵ The qual-quant approach is

³⁵ This approach has been adopted in research on poverty where qualitative participatory poverty analysis is combined with data from household surveys. See proceedings from a workshop on qualitative and quantitative poverty appraisal, (Cornell University 2001) and Kanbur’s discussion therein.

particularly useful in gender analysis because data on social and cultural characteristics—for instance, those reflected in marriage customs—are difficult to measure from quantitative household surveys and to some degree are region specific. Qualitative data on marriage practices have helped improve our understanding of them, including details on how property rights are ascribed and enforced under different region-based norms.

1.36. *Primary household survey data.* The Gender Assessment combines several rounds of the Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (PIHS) and the Pakistan Rural Household Survey (2001) or PRHS-I with the second round of Pakistan Rural Household Survey (2004) (PRHS –II). PRHS-II is a panel data set that follows about 2,000 households from PRHS-I. This second round expanded the community, facility, and household questionnaire to capture, in greater detail, constraints on women’s access to schooling, health facilities, credit, markets, institutions, and ownership patterns regarding land and other assets. The PRHS-II also provides quantitative data on female mobility and gendered patterns of inheritance, customary practices related to women, and the incidence of domestic violence. The second round of the PRHS has provided a rich information base for analysis, and for identifying the critical constraints that impede progress in the outcomes summarized in previous sections.

1.37. *Qualitative study on gender.* The analysis in the Gender Assessment integrates quantitative information obtained from PIHS and PRHS with qualitative insights from a study carried out in five rural sites in Sindh and Punjab (see Box 1.3 for a description of the data). The qualitative research also has enabled the assessment of how women can be effectively integrated into development initiatives that emphasize community involvement and participation—in a context where there are likely to be numerous constraints on female mobility and decision making.

1.38. To offset the shortcomings of qualitative studies based on a set of case studies on specific villages or communities, which weakens the credibility and general applicability of inferences drawn from them, the qualitative study selected sites from a sampling frame for a representative rural household survey (see Box 1.3). In so doing, the qualitative study insights based on a few households in a community can be combined with quantitative data on all the households in that community. The qualitative study also brought to light questions that could be included in the quantitative household surveys seeking to analyze gender dimensions. The qualitative study was intended to shed light on key gender issues that are difficult to tease out of quantitative data such as women’s participation in community mobilization activities, the interaction of social and customary practices as reflected in notions of female honor, restricted mobility, the practice of purdah, public and private violence against women, inheritance and marriage practices. The study also sought to understand constraints on girls’ schooling and women’s participation in political decision-making. Policymakers need such insights to understand how programs can be better designed and how women can be better engaged in community decision-making since the devolution reforms and increased political representation of women in local government.

1.39. *Papers from Pakistani experts.* In a series of background papers, Pakistani experts have facilitated understanding of gender inequality with regards to customary practices and legal issues, access to water, and capacity-building of women representatives. The Gender Assessment derives important lessons from these papers, including the positive and negative effects of customary practices and formal laws on women. Women in Pakistan are vulnerable, since avenues for obtaining justice are very limited. In many areas, including family law, women have limited legal protection. Even where laws exist, women’s access to the legal system is severely limited by cultural norms that prohibit women’s access to public spaces and a general ignorance of rights and procedures in the justice system. The legal system is not supportive of females seeking redress for violations of their rights. High costs and delays in obtaining justice further discourage women from trying to avail themselves of legal means to protect their rights. For victims of violence or those fleeing honor killing (the practice of killing a female family member perceived to have tarnished the family’s honor), few legal remedies are available. There also is a lack of

safe houses for these women and reliable mediation mechanisms. A number of civil society organizations as well as the government have taken steps to alleviate women's unequal access to justice. Given the magnitude of the problem, it is important to find ways to provide legal aid to women.

Box 1.3: Qualitative Study on Gender

The qualitative survey on gender was undertaken in five rural sites in the provinces of Punjab and Sindh. These sites covered five districts, with one site in each of the following districts: Lodhran (southern Punjab), Faisalabad (central Punjab), Chakwal (northern Punjab), Badin (Sindh) and Mirpur Khas (Sindh). Interviews were conducted in the main village and in one settlement close to the village at each site.

The study selected sites where both a Rural Support Program (RSP) and a nongovernmental organization (NGO) engaged in community mobilization of men and women were active. RSPs invest in the social mobilization of women and men and have formed women's organizations across 80 districts in Pakistan. The site selection enabled the study to assess constraints and benefits associated with women's membership in community organizations set up by the RSPs.

Methodology

The interview team selected three types of female respondents for the study: married women, Union Councilors representing the Union Council to which the selected site belonged, and the Social Organizer responsible for the RSP's community organization at the site (an employee of the RSP). In all, 60 women from households, 5 female councilors, and 5 female Social Organizers (SO) were interviewed between May and August 2004.

A village-level census already had been conducted in the five sites as part of a larger quantitative survey of rural households in Sindh and Punjab, enabling the qualitative study to randomly select 12 married women between the ages of 20 and 45 in each site (6 women were members of community organizations and 6 were not members). The selection process also ensured that at each site, equal numbers of women were selected from the main (or central) village and the settlement. Following the site selection, the team identified and contacted a female councilor representing the Union Council for that site, as well as the female Social Organizer responsible for that site's community organization, interviewing one of each per site.

Almost all interviews were taped unless respondents were uncomfortable with taping. Interviewers ensured that respondents interviewed separately and that the interview was conducted in the local language. Interview transcripts subsequently were translated into Urdu and English, and then coded with the qualitative data analysis software, NU*DIST, for further analysis. The interviews combined a semi-structured format with open-ended questions, allowing respondents to discuss their views related to the interview topics

Variation across sites

The presence of the RSP— that offers men and women the opportunity to mobilize into community organizations— was common to all sites. The five sites also cover a range of regional differences that allow the study to compare and contrast findings from each site. The sites represent a range of agro-climates that affect livelihoods, particularly the nature of women's participation in work activities. For instance, Chakwal in northern Punjab is part of the rainfed (barani) areas where the population relies mainly on rainwater for cultivation, causing agricultural output to vary considerably throughout the year. As a result, men in Chakwal tend to seek employment outside the farm sector, while women have taken over the management of the family farm. In contrast to Chakwal are Lodhran and the Sindh sites that are part of the canal-irrigated areas. Lodhran belongs to the heart of the cotton-growing belt, where agriculture is more market-oriented and cotton-picking offers paid work opportunities for women. In the Sindh sites of Badin and Mirpur Khas wheat is the major crop followed by cotton. The Punjab sites (main village and settlement) are larger (in terms of number of households) than the Sindh sites. Land ownership rates are low, but range from a high of 52 percent of households in Chakwal to only 15 percent of households in Mirpur Khas.

1.40. The background papers also address the role of capacity-building for women leaders as the country prepares for the next round of local government elections (slated for 2005). The Local Government Ordinance 2001, which provided for 33-percent reservation of seats for women in all local councils, has created an unprecedented opportunity for women to participate in the country's political process. In the first round of elections, some 36,187 women were elected to these seats. Most of the women elected in the 2000-01 elections were new to governmental decision-making and therefore had little knowledge of their rights, roles, and responsibilities as councilors. Increasing the presence of women in the political arena was a necessary first step toward political empowerment, but it is equally important to make women aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding the local government system if they are to make a difference in governmental decision-making. Several government agencies and non-governmental organizations have taken action to build the skills and capacities of elected councilors. Examples include the Women's Political Participation Project (W3P) of the Ministry of Women's Development, Social Welfare and Special Education, and the Citizens' Campaign for Women's Representation in Local Government convened by the Aurat Foundation. These efforts to train women councilors becomes increasingly necessary as the country moves toward the second round of local government elections. It is also important to assess these training programs and to distinguish aspects of training that are working from those that are not.

III. ADDRESSING KEY GENDER GAPS

1.41. The following chapters offer in-depth findings on gender gaps in the areas of education, health, and in income-earning activities. Chapter 2 contextualizes the analysis of constraints faced by women and girls with a discussion of women's legal entitlements in family law (inheritance, marriage, and divorce). The chapter examines legal entitlements in relation to customary practices revealed by quantitative data in the PRHS-II. This is a useful starting point for the CGA, since gender disparities are shaped by customs, social norms and laws and regulations. This chapter sheds light on the many ways legal and customary institutions impinge upon women's status in the household and in society. It also examines the complex role of customary practices in the lives of Pakistani women. While many such practices clearly violate legal provisions and are detrimental to women's welfare, on occasion they compensate for the lacunae in laws or their unenforceability and in so doing provide protection to women. Explaining these legal lacunae and related customary practices provides a foundation for understanding constraints on women's access to opportunities in schooling, health care, labor force participation, and involvement in the public sphere discussed in subsequent chapters. The chapter also discusses policy recommendations made by Pakistani experts on gender issues in areas such as legal provisions, access to justice, and political participation.

1.42. Chapter 3 investigates the gender gap in school enrollment, and identifies constraints that impede both school attendance for girls and female teacher availability. The chapter argues for complementary strategies that can augment ongoing interventions and programs, and address both supply and demand issues. The supply-side strategy emphasizes school proximity and ways to augment the availability of female teachers. The demand-side strategy considers initiatives to improve girls' ability to access schools through non-financial incentives along the lines of programs currently being implemented in Punjab and Sindh.

1.43. Chapter 4 explores ways to enhance the impact of policies and programs for improving women's and girls' health. The chapter investigates the determinants of female health, including the proximity to facilities, outreach programs such as the Lady Health Worker program, and access to health-related information. The effect of recent policies and programs are examined in depth and further

recommendations are made that will likely reduce impediments to women and girls' access to health services.

1.44. Chapter 5 discusses constraints to women's participation in activities in the public sphere. The chapter focuses on factors that shape women's participation in income-earning activities. An understanding of these factors then frames the discussion of how women's participation in community life can be enhanced. This chapter also analyzes the links between women's participation in income-earning activities, their autonomy, and their visibility in the public sphere that enhances their voice in the community and in political decisionmaking.

1.45. Each of the chapters highlights policy recommendations that can be implemented in the near term, with the objective of effectively narrowing gender gaps. The report stresses the importance of learning from existing interventions through rigorous evaluations before scaling up the intervention or introducing new ones. Evaluations can provide information to policymakers to judge which projects should be expanded and guide the scaling-up process. Evaluations also inform policymakers about which aspects of program design are effective, and which are superfluous. Indeed, each of the policy recommendations in the areas of education and health suggest small-scale pilot trials to assess the impact of the interventions. This experience will help assess the applicability of the recommendations on a larger scale.