

Training of Women Councilors in Pakistan: A Review

February 2005

By

Rukhshanda Naz

A. Background

Local Government (LG) elections were held in Pakistan during 2000-2001, under the “Devolution of Power Plan.” This plan targets transfer of power to people at the grassroots level. The plan envisaged a landmark 33 percent reservation of seats for women at all tiers of the local government. As a result of the first round of elections held on the basis of adult franchise at the union council level held in 2001, over 36,000 women entered the realm of local government leadership (see Table 1).

This was a historic occasion. For the first time in the history of Pakistan, women started emerging in a new leadership role and aimed to create their own political constituencies and contribute to the process of decision-making and development at the local level. However, there were instances where women were made to boycott the LG elections and in this, local representatives of all major political parties played a part.

In the second round of elections to fill the vacant seats, by-elections were held in March, 2004. Once again the government was unable to get positive results on some women seats. There were several reasons for the 4,869 women reserved seats that were uncontested in different parts of the country during the 2000-2001 elections. Two constituencies where women participation was almost non-existent were Kohistan and Battagram in NWFP. These are still problematic areas. Due to election rules not being implemented, the forces against women political participation have gained more strength and continue to stop women from participating in the political process (see Tables 2 – a, b, c, d and e). Keeping in mind the various problems that are faced in the election of women councilors and the obstacles that they face once they are elected, a number of government organizations and NGOs initiated a series of training sessions to help women councilors in their work.

The present paper, which is part of a project called “Training of Women Councilors”, helps assess the situation of women councilors in the country in the light of these issues and problems. The paper attempts to highlight institutional as well as attitudinal problems faced by the women councilors with particular reference to the laws and rules which govern their functioning in the local councils according to the Local Government Ordinance (LGO) 2001.

In its conclusion, the paper also provides a set of recommendations in key areas which determine the level of participation and performance of women councilors. The issues identified and the recommendations made in the paper are based on research and information gathered through persistent interaction, numerous meetings and direct interviews with councilors. It also takes input from questionnaires filled by the councilors, ideas and discussions highlighted in workshops, the study of training manuals of different organizations, discussions with the trainers as well as consultations and seminars with women councilors, maintained and held during the last four years.

Table 1: Women in Local Government: A Province-wise Comparison

Provinces	Women's Seats	Women Elected	Seats Vacant	% Coverage
Union Councils				
Punjab	20718	20007	711	96.6 %
Sindh	6498	5878	620	90.5 %
NWFP	5742	3963	1779	69.0 %
Balochistan	3108	2374	734	76.4 %
Total (1)	36066	32222	3844	89.3%
Tehsil Councils				
Punjab	1093	1074	19	98.3 %
Sindh	304	297	07	97.7%
NWFP	201	175	26	87.1%
Balochistan	151	129	22	85.4%
Total (2)	1749	1675	74	95.8%
Town Council				
Lahore	50	50	00	100%
Karachi	59	59	00	100%
Peshawar	30	30	00	100%
Quetta	22	22	00	100%
Total (3)	161	161	00	100%
District Councils				
Punjab	1139	1115	24	97.9%
Sindh	361	360	01	99.7%
NWFP	315	278	37	88.3%
Balochistan	173	152	21	87.9%
Total (4)	1998	1905	83	95.8%
Grand Total	39964	35963	4001	90.0%

Source: <http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.php?id=34130>

Table 2: Local Bodies By-Elections 2004

Total vacant seats (reserved for women)	4869
Total elected	2866
Seats that remain vacant	2003
Women elected as UC Nazim	1 from Sindh
Women elected on seats reserved for minorities	44
Total women elected in by-elections	2911

Table 2a: LG Elections in NWFP

	Vacant seats	Nominations	Un-opposed	Elected after contest	Total	Minority seats
Total	1953	999	623	65	688	Nil
Muslim Women	1188	576	371	42	413	
Worker peasant women	765	423	252	23	275	

Table 2b: LG Election in Punjab

	Vacant seats	Nominations	Un-opposed	Elected after contest	Total	Minority seats
Total	1365	1708	710	233	943	14
Muslim Women	730	1013	373	148	521	
Worker peasant women	635	695	337	85	422	

Table 2c: LG Elections in Balochistan

	Vacant seats	Nominations	Un-opposed	Elected after contest	Total	Minority seats
Total	794	909	507	146	653	5
Muslim Women	525	582	336	95	340	
Worker peasant women	269	327	171	51	165	

Table 2d: LG Elections in Sindh

	Vacant seats	Nominations	Un-opposed	Elected after contest	Total	Minority seats
Total	757	1250	390	192	582	25
Muslim Women	319	524	169	67	236	
Worker peasant women	438	726	221	125	346	

Table 2e: Districts where no Elections were Held on Women Seats:

NWFP	Kohistan, Lower Dir, <i>(In Battagram only 1 woman was elected against 120 vacant seats)</i>
Balochistan	Dera Bugti

Table 2f: Seats for Women in LG Election

Total no. of union councils	Total no. of seats reserved for women	Women council elected during 2000-2001 elections	Women elected during 2004 bye-elections	Total women in union councils
6022	36066	32222	2866	35088

Table 2g: Total No. of Women Councilors in LG Elections

Councils	Total women seats (reserved)	Elected women
Total no. of UCs (6022)	36066	35088
Tehsil Councils (305)	1834	1761
Town Councils (30)	161	161
District Councils	1988	1905
Total	40049	38915 (97.16%)

B. Development of the LG System: An Overview

i- Pre-Independence Era

The local self-governance system in the Indo-Pak subcontinent has evolved over a long period of time which stretches from 1688 to 1935. A separate tier to administer the civic functions of a community on “local self-government” basis was first created by the British colonial administration in Bengal and Madras, followed by Bombay (now Mumbai) and Punjab and other provinces of India.

Initially the system was run through nominated representatives and later through the elected Municipal and District Boards in urban and rural areas, respectively. Separate laws were enacted in each province for large cities, municipal towns and rural areas. The first formal measure of municipal organization was taken by the colonial rulers in the shape of the Conservancy Act which led to the formation of Sanitary Committees in 1842. The Act was first introduced in the Bengal presidency. The Board of Conservancy was established in Karachi in 1846, while in Lahore and Rawalpindi the Municipal Act was passed in 1867.

However, a more structured and clearer concept of local government emerged during the reign of Viceroy Lord Rippon in 1882, when municipal committees were formed through elections and the establishment of rural local governments was proposed. This paved the way for the approval of the Punjab Municipal Act, 1884.

The LG system underwent further transformation in 1912, when the ‘Panchayat’ Act was enforced. The Lahore Municipal Corporation (LMC), established in 1941, is the oldest municipality in what is now Pakistan. The 1907 Decentralization Commission recommended the appointment of non-official chairmen of municipal committees, a recommendation which was endorsed and extended further by the 1925 Simon Commission. Finally, the Government of India Act 1935, allowed limited provincial autonomy and permitted provinces to frame legislation on local government.

ii- Post-Independence Era

In 1947, after the independence of Pakistan, very few areas that constituted Pakistan developed systems of local government and these were mainly confined to Punjab. Wherever the LG system existed, they were not constituted on the basis of adult franchise and remained under firm bureaucratic control. The deputy commissioners of the area, who represented the bureaucracy, played a crucial role in policy formulation and financial matters of LG bodies.

Ayub Khan’s Period (1958-1969): During the period of the first military government in Pakistan under General Ayub Khan, Pakistan saw the development of a comprehensive system of local government with the presidential system replacing the parliamentary form of government.

Since provincial and national governments had been disbanded, the military regime of General Ayub Khan realized the need for some sort of people’s involvement in the affairs of the state. This resulted in the birth of the system of Basic Democracies, under which a new system of local government was introduced across the country, including the North West Frontier Province (NWFP).

In the first instance, LG institutions in rural areas were set up under the Basic Democracies Order (BDO) 1959, creating union and district councils in rural areas. A year later, the Municipal Administration Ordinance (MAO) 1960, was promulgated creating municipal corporations,

municipal committees and town committees in urban areas. There was minimal reservation of seats for women in this system.

Forty thousand directly elected “Basic Democrats” (councilors) from East and West Pakistan each comprised this system. These councilors also formed the Electoral College for the elections of the higher tiers of governance, i.e. the Provincial Assemblies (PAs) and the National Assembly (NA) as well as the office of the President. However, the system went into disfavor and was disbanded after the collapse of President Ayub’s government in 1969. Many of its structures and features were retained in one form or another in the succeeding years.

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto’s Period (1971-1977): After the break up of Pakistan in 1971, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was elected to power. The parliamentary form of democracy was restored following general elections and the system of basic democracies was done away with.

In 1973, the country had its constitution unanimously approved by the national legislature. The constitution made local government a provincial subject and, subsequently, the provincial government introduced their respective local government laws.

These were the;

1. Punjab Local Government Act, 1975
2. Balochistan Local Government Act, 1975
3. NWFP Local Government Ordinance, 1972
4. Sindh People’s Local Government Ordinance, 1972

However, during this period, which stretched over six years, none of the provinces conducted LG elections, and in 1977 the elected government of Mr. Bhutto was toppled by a military junta.

Zia-ul-Haq’s Period (1977-1988): The military government of General Zia-ul-Haq introduced a set of almost identical LG laws for the four provinces.

These were the;

1. NWFP Local Government Ordinance, 1979
2. Sindh Local Government Ordinance, 1979
3. Punjab Local Government Ordinance, 1979
4. Balochistan Local Government Ordinance, 1980.

The first significant measure to ensure women’s representation in the local governments came in 1979, when the provincial governments were directed to reserve seats for women, minorities and peasants in local councils. The proportion was to be determined separately by each province.

All the provinces, with the exception of NWFP, broadly made similar provisions. Two seats at the union council level and 10 percent seats (or a minimum of two seats) in District Councils, Town Committees, Municipal Committees, Municipal Corporations and Metropolitan Corporations were reserved for women. However, in NWFP, no reservation was made for women at the union council/town committee level.

Under these laws, three successive LG elections were conducted in all four provinces in 1979, 1983 and 1987, respectively. The elections on reserved seats for women were held indirectly (by already elected, mostly male members of the councils)

Benazir Bhutto’s Two Terms (1988-1990 and 1993-1996): No LG elections were held during the first tenure of Benazir Bhutto, who was elected as Pakistan’s first woman Prime Minister (PM) in 1988. During her second tenure as PM, the Punjab ordinance on local

government included a provision for 33 percent reservation of seats for women at all levels in Local Bodies (LBs). However, the ordinance lapsed without any elections being held under it and legislation to incorporate this provision was never enacted.

In 1996, the Punjab government introduced the system of LBs based on Panchayats (village committees) in villages and Ward/Mohalla committees in cities/towns. But, no elections took place either in Punjab or in the rest of the country.

Nawaz Sharif's Two Terms (1990-1993 and 1997-1999): LB elections were held only in Punjab (1991) and Balochistan (1992) during the first tenure of PM Nawaz Sharif, with the proportion of women's representation staying the same as was determined by the 1979 ordinances.

The LBs were dissolved in 1993 in Punjab and in 1996 in Balochistan. According to official statistics, before the dissolution there were 8,295 women members (10.4 percent) out of the total membership of 79,155 nationally. The province-wise ratio was 11 percent in Punjab, 12 percent in Sindh, 1.32 percent in NWFP and 16 percent in Balochistan. In 1997, the Punjab LGO 1996, was replaced with the 1979 Ordinance and through an amendment the system of non-elected Panchayats was introduced, which was eventually declared illegal by the Lahore High Court (LHC).

In 1998, the federal government declared a 100 percent increase (or doubling of women's reserved seats) in the LG set up. However, the number of reserved seats for women in the urban and district councils, to which elections were held in Punjab, went up from the earlier 905 to 1,368, an increase of just 463 (3.7 percent) seats. This was nowhere close to the declared 100 percent increase or doubling of seats.

Meanwhile, elections to Union Councils (UCs) in Punjab, in which nearly 5,000 seats (12.5 percent) were reserved for women out of a total number of 40,000, never took place. In Balochistan on the other hand, the provincial government raised the number of reserved seats for women from 16.4 percent to 25.8 percent (1,873 out of 7,246). This was a major stride forward in a province where it had been difficult to even formally have candidates for the lesser number.

In NWFP, where there had been 68 reserved seats for women out of a total of 5,603 (1.2 percent), the number was raised to 184 out of a total of 6,256 (2.9 percent). In Sindh, where there were 1,733 reserved seats for women out of a total of 13,853 (12.7 percent), the number was raised to 3,546 out of a total of 15,417 (23 percent). However, elections were not held in NWFP and Sindh.

iii- LBs Elections 2000-2001

The elections were held under the supervision of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC). These were held in five phases from December 2000 to August 2001, for the UCs on the basis of adult franchise, separate electorates and non-party candidature.

The elections for Tehsil/town and district councils were held in two phases during August-September 2001, through an indirect election modality. The elections were held under separate provincial ordinances promulgated for the purpose. These were;

1. The Punjab Local Government Ordinance, 2001
2. The Sindh Local Government Ordinance, 2001
3. The NWFP Local Government Ordinance, 2001
4. The Balochistan Local Government Ordinance, 2001

As a result of their interest and the support extended to them by CSOs, 36,105 women councilors were elected in the first round of LG elections of the prevailing LG system in Pakistan. The 36,105 women councilors include 126 women elected on seats reserved for minorities and 16 women elected as Nazims, Naib Nazims in different councils.

C. Constraints to Effective Political Participation

The role of women as public representatives is not new to Pakistani society, but there are some pockets of resistance in every district. Due to cultural constraints and the emergence of fundamentalist groups and lobbies, the participation of women either as political leaders or in some instances even as voters is being questioned in some quarters.

The constraints may be divided into two parts. One is pre-election and second is post-election. In the LG elections of 2000-2001, most of the political parties for the first time realized the importance of women members in their ranks. Although the LG elections were held on a non-party basis, it is a fact that a majority of the Nazims and male councilors had political affiliations. At the same time, the majority of women councilors came from the social sector but there were some who came with party support.

The local leaders of five major political parties played a negative role during the nomination process when they signed agreements against women candidates not allowing women to contest in the elections. In some conservative areas, the right wing and progressive political parties joined hands for keeping women away from the democratic process, despite differences on political issues.

The post-elections period came with new challenges for women councilors all over the country. In the first two quarters, civil society, particularly women organizations, were celebrating the high percentage of women who had been elected as public representatives. The women councilors were feted at different social and political events. For these women councilors, however, the real and practical life began with a lot of challenges. They themselves took time to adjust to the new set-up because their respective council members were unable to give space to them.

This situation created a lot of problems for them at all levels. The lack of knowledge of laws and the system, the lack of administrative support, cultural barriers and patriarchal values hindered their work as public representatives.

Issues relating to lack of effective participation by women councilors may be understood by dividing them into different categories:

i- Issues Relating to Lack of Knowledge about Laws and Systems

- The LG system was new. In many instances the women councilors have still not fully understood the way this system works. Experiences have shown that the men councilors and even Nazims took a long time to understand the present LG system.
- In the LG elections, more than 36,000 women joined the arena of local government politics. Many of them came in the field for the first time without having any information on the system or any idea of their roles and responsibilities.
- There is widespread difficulty in interpreting the Local Government Ordinance, since most of the councilors, both men and women are either not educated or have Urdu as the medium of instruction. In contrast, the Ordinance is in English and the language used in the wording of the Ordinance is complicated and technical.
- Most of the women councilors complained that they do not have copies of the Ordinance and its by-laws.
- Most women councilors also do not have copies of the LGO and Rules of Business document. Those who did have it have not bothered to read or have not tried to understand it.

- Women councilors are not focusing on women's problems. Although they have equal status in the ordinance like men councilors, but peoples' expectations from the women councilors are to concentrate on women-related schemes only.
- The gap is widening in understanding the roles of Nazims and councilors due to lack of knowledge of the system. A Union Nazim in Kohat in NWFP admitted that most of the councilors do not understand the English language.
- The large numbers of women councilors were not given enough training/orientation to understand the system. The reason for this is that most organizations tasked with training women councilors preferred to consult the educated women councilors with the result that in most sessions the same group of women repeatedly got trained.

ii- Issues Relating to Lacunas of Laws and Rules

- The law does not make it mandatory to include women in the committees formed by the district governments.
- There are no women's rights committees at the 'Zila' level to monitor women's work and deal with their problems.
- Schedules which define departments and offices do not have a gender mainstreaming approach. Only Health and Mother Care Departments are treated as women welfare areas. There is no concept of a development approach with a women's perspective in other sectors.
- The issue of 'honorarium' or TA/DA for councilors has been left at the discretion of District Councils. As a result, this has not been resolved in a majority of places. Women who do not have enough resources of their own are not willing to come and attend council meetings.
- All power and authority is concentrated in or practically assumed by Nazims only. The role of Naib Nazims is seen as a mere formality.
- The role of women councilors, minority councilors, peasant and workers who are members of the District and Tehsil Councils on reserved seats is not clear. Although they have the same membership status like Union Nazims in District Councils and Naib Nazim in Tehsil Councils, their position is weak as compared to Union Nazim and Naib Nazims, since they were elected indirectly. They do not have any constituency. This creates a problem for them in terms of selecting areas for development schemes.
- The text of the law is completely silent over ensuring women participation. Nephews, husbands, brothers and fathers represent some women councilors in council meetings and conveners of council meetings encourage these practices.
- There is no women's representation in the budgetary committees. The administration or the male colleagues usually provide the copies of the budget just before the announcement of the session.
- There is no provision in the law about the equal distribution of funds for male and female councilors.
- There are no clear details about the rights and responsibilities of women councilors in the Local Government Ordinances.
- There is a long procedure and process for the approval of proposals, which has further created frustration for women councilors.

iii- Issues Relating to Lack of Application of Laws and Rules

- Though Public Safety Commissions have been set up in a majority of the districts, women have been ignored from both the women's councilors pool and from amongst the citizens in several commissions. In culturally conservative districts and even in provincial capitals, women are not actively involved in any decision-making process.
- Committees are not functional and most of these are either without women or have women named on them as a formality.
- The law allows by-election on the vacant seats within a timeframe of one year after the elections. However, the Election Commission announced the date for the by-elections after a two and half year delay. The previous bad experiences of women councilors also discouraged aspiring new candidates.

iv- Issues Relating to Lack of Cooperation by Men Colleagues

- In many instances, women councilors are not invited or even informed about the meetings held at different levels. Even if they are invited, they are not provided with any program or agenda.
- In one instance, a district Nazim clearly asked women councilors to remain silent during the council sessions. The district Nazim in Dir segregated the male and female councilors by putting a curtain in the assembly hall. The same Nazim stopped women from attending capacity building training sessions.
- In many instances, it is seen that the Nazims and men councilors consciously ignore women because they do not want women to be involved in the decision-making process.
- A group of men councilors in Malakand, NWFP, registered a complaint against one of the women councilors for actively participating in a council session.
- Women are teased with irrelevant questions and remarks during the sessions, such as issues of 'Purdah' (veil) and wearing make-up.
- Men councilors try to make fun of women councilors when they raise demand for TA/DA, funds and transport facility. They also ridicule them for their lack of knowledge about the Assembly decorum.
- Some Nazims and other male colleagues treat women sympathetically, but not as their equal counterparts.
- It is observed that when Nazims and male colleagues need support from women councilors and their input is required, they then treat them altogether differently and offer due respect and cooperation.
- Women councilors are not involved in committee work, except for health and education committees.
- Women councilors are not asked to prepare their schemes and if they do, the schemes prepared by them are not accepted.

v- Issues Relating to Social, Cultural and Gender Biases

- Women are unable to get due respect from the community as local leaders. Due to strong patriarchal system of our society, some people are not ready to accept women as leaders. Even community women consider Nazims to be the only problem solvers of the LG set up. In addition, there are a number of sexual harassment /torture cases reported in the media i.e. women councilors from Sialkot, Sargodah, Nowshera and Talagang were publicly disgraced. Women councilors were murdered in Abbottabad, Kohat and Peshawar.
- Women councilors are not only handicapped by family and social problems, but they are also incapacitated by their own lack of basic education.

- Husbands of women councilors sometimes do not allow them to attend council sessions and they cannot go out of their homes.
- Women councilors are no exception to domestic violence. Three women councilors were even murdered in Kohat, Dargai and Abottabad in NWFP.
- A majority of women councilors have little awareness on socio-political issues.
- Women have high expectations from elected women councilors but they have little to offer to their constituents.
- Security and mobility are two major traditional areas of concern for women councilors. Their mobility is also restricted for two reasons - economic conditions and security.

vi- Issues Relating to Lack of Administrative Support

- The continuous resistance and hurdles created by the bureaucracy seem to be a major impediment to the success of the system.
- Lack of coordination has caused a waste of resources. This has resulted in further hampering of the training process. For instance, the District Council of Peshawar allocated Rs1.2 million for women councilors to undertake development schemes in their areas. However, only three women councilors were able to get funds, though an amount of Rs500,000 was fixed for each councilor. Thus the funds lapsed as the government departments were not satisfied with the schemes put forward by women councilors. Women councilors, on the other hand complained that they were not provided with any guidelines for the preparation of the schemes.
- Women councilors have to wait for hours outside offices of government officials or Nazims if they want to meet them whereas male councilors meet them without any prior appointment. Moreover, there is no proper place for women to sit outside the offices.
- Women councilors have no separate offices. Even in big cities, women avoid visiting their respective councils as they have no privacy there.
- Women councilors in Swabi were asked to monitor activities of the 40 Women Welfare Centers established in the Tehsil. However, no conveyance facility was provided for the purpose. This made it difficult for them to do their monitoring work.
- Women councilors are provided with very limited opportunities to speak during the council sessions or meetings and in other programs.
- Being councilors, they have to make a number of telephone calls for addressing problems and issues. However, they have no access to official phones or free telephone facility at home. This is an added financial burden on the women councilors.

vii- Issues Relating to Financial Discrimination in Allocation of Funds and Implementation of Schemes

- The women councilors in UCs who are directly elected and have a constituency to cater to are deprived of adequate funds with which to do development work in their areas. In case of their failure to do such work there is a risk that they would lose support in the constituency.
- In some areas, women are getting an honorarium, a travel allowance and daily allowances but in most of the areas of all provinces they are not getting anything.
- The councilors have to cover large areas in the development schemes while the budget they are getting is insufficient.
- Women representatives are either ignored or given low priority in many instances. In Southern districts of NWFP, some Nazims have even spent development funds allocated for women councilors without consulting them first.

- Problems related to communication, logistics and work related allowances, along with attitude problems of men are some of the major handicaps that affect physical participation of women members in local government affairs.
- There are then problems that affect councilors generally. For example, there is a huge imbalance between development and non-development expenditures. The non-development expenditures eat up the largest chunk of the budget of districts and a highly insufficient amount is left for development activities.
- To add to this is the problem that in some areas, Nazims do not allocate any funds for women councilors, and if they make demands, the Nazim questions their intentions and says that women councilors should not work on streets and roads.
- Even up till now, no separate funds for women councilors have been given or allocated in several districts.
- In many instances, Nazims make verbal commitments to their women councilors but actually do nothing for the allocation of funds and instead use such funds in other works.
- Women councilors are generally not asked to participate in budget making and they are not members of the budget committees.
- Women councilors are not asked to prepare development schemes. If they are asked to prepare their own schemes according to the requirement of their areas, these schemes are usually not approved.
- Women councilors do not have information about the problems, resources and funds in their respective districts.
- Women are not even consulted or involved in planning of women development schemes.
- Nazims and male councilors are in some instances misusing their powers regarding development funds. There are no checks and balances or monitoring of councilors.

D. Training Programs for Women Councilors

The concept of training makes possible capacity building in any field. For example, government departments have some basic training modules but NGOs and professional training platforms gave new trends to the Capacity Building Program. The capacity building training provides space to NGOs for propagating their own agendas. Advocacy-based NGOs fully utilize this opportunity. A substantial number of NGOs started training at provincial and districts level and engaged in material development i.e. LGO, rules of business in the form of booklets, posters and manuals.

i- An Overview of Training of Women Councilors in Pakistan

Several structured training courses and educational programs have resulted in greater participation of women councilors not only in training but also in activism with NGOs and other civil society groups. Training sessions, seminars, media dialogues and public meetings have created space for issues and problems of women councilors and hence they are able to negotiate their demands more effectively.

In most districts, Tehsils and Union Councils (UCs), women councilors have initiated debates on women issues. In 15 districts of NWFP, women councilors passed a resolution against the Hudood Ordinance, bride price, honor killings, Swara (exchange of women to settle disputes) and lack of education facilities.

The women councilors also raised awareness on issues that relate to health, women in prisons and the working of crisis centers. More or less, the same level of interest and activism was found among women councilors all over the country. The interaction between government institutions and NGOs for training and information gathering also increased the knowledge of councilors about the working and procedures of the LG system and its line departments.

At present, more than fifty institutions from non-government, government and grassroots organizations are involved in training of women councilors and other local government officials. Women councilor training initiatives may be divided in four categories: Government, International Organization, NGOs and Rural Support Programs (RSPs).

ii- Initiatives taken by the Government in Selected Areas

There are a number of Capacity Building programs, which have been initiated by government institutions to support the devolution process in the country. In these training programs, most of the participants were male members from the District administration and male Nazims.

Decentralization Support Program: The Decentralization Support Program (DSP) is a joint venture of the GoP and the ADB. The executing agency for the DSP is the Ministry of Finance (MoF). Implementation involves four federal agencies {National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB), Controller General of Accounts (CGA), Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) and Ministry of Women Development} and the provincial and local governments. The DSP has offices at the provincial level with support from the MoF and provincial finance departments.

The DSP objectives are to strengthen the LG system in Pakistan through capacity building. In terms of capacity building training, they have comprehensive training manuals, handouts and training schedules on the district level budget. Through an organized training process, they fill the gap in existing groups of resource persons on budget and finance related trainings. Although, the

participants are mostly government employees and the district administration, in some areas their staff is involved with other capacity building organizations also.

Social Welfare Department Punjab: The Social Welfare Department of Punjab also felt the need to train women councilors so that they could perform their duties with greater efficiency. In this context, the Social Welfare office trained 17,000 women councilors in 34 districts of Punjab. The duration of the training was of 3 days and the programme ran for one and a half years. The Ministry of Women Development provided the funding for this training.

Finance Department (Secretariat): The Finance department arranged orientation workshops for District Council Officers (DCOs), District Nazims, Naib Nazims involved with finance and planning projects and Executive District Officers (EDOs). The purpose of the workshop was to provide these officials with information on budget making. They also invited participants from all districts of Balochistan to the three workshops.

Pakistan Academy for Rural Development: The Pakistan Academy for Rural Development (PARD), Peshawar is the oldest national in-service institution in Pakistan. The purpose of the academy is to conduct research and provide advanced training in rural development administration. This training is for the administrative and supervisory personnel of the village administration and for other nation building departments as well as for civil servants.

PARD offers a wide range of courses. These include Development Economics, Development Planning, Rural Development, Agricultural Education and Training, Public Administration and Management, Rural Sociology, Education and Communication, Social Survey Research, Statistics and Evaluation, Women Development, Local Institutions and Government, Pakistan Studies and Islamiat.

PARD has not only commenced training programs for Nazims, councilors and District Administration officials but has also given support to different government and non-governmental institutions. The five-day capacity building training course for women councilors covered the Devolution Plan, effective leadership, situational analysis and ideal district development, role and responsibilities of monitoring committees, Citizen Community Boards (CCBs), planning process at district level, community development equity & equality, budget preparation for district government, structural, administrative and financial issues in devolution, empowerment of women for bringing social development, police order, communication and team building and problem solving techniques.

National Reconstruction Bureau: The task of the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) is to reform the existing institutions of the state so that they can help in governing the nation in a visibly more just and efficient manner than before. This operational function defines the role of the Federal Government and the provincial governments.

With better governance through reforms or restructuring of the existing institutions of the state, the federal and provincial governments pave the way for the reconstruction of state institutions by the NRB and the establishment of genuine democracy and transfer of power to the people.

The NRB offers a set of five training manuals covering training methodology, handout and information material for facilitators. This basic manual is based on six days of activities. The training manual for councilors, which comprises handouts, is based on 14 sessions which include devolution of power, 2000 basic principles and people empowerment. There is also a manual for feedback and training assessment which relates to the quality of content of the workshop, number of participants and their feedback. The fourth manual works on understanding of group characteristics and workshop continuity for master trainers/trainers. This manual is based on ten-day training programs and four additional training sessions where trainers will attend 14-day training sessions for councilor training. The fifth training manual is a training guide which uses

participatory methodology for master trainers and trainers. It also covers training tools and administration.

iii- Training of Women Councilors by International Organizations

International organizations also started training programs for women councilors together with government organizations and NGOs. These were:

Women Political Participation Program: The Ministry of Women's Development and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) launched a training program for capacity building of women councilors as a part of the Women's Political Participation Project (W3P). Spanning over two years, W3P project not only covered the LG system knowledge but also initiated the task of adult literacy program for illiterate women councilors.

W3P introduced a new concept of training through involvement of female District Councilors (DCs) as Lead Mentors (LMs). A group of LMs was selected from the existing network of female DCs through the social welfare department.

The number of women councilors to be trained under the project was about 36,000. The wide network of women LMs resulted in training of over 18,608 newly-elected women councilors at the district, Tehsil and UC levels in all the four provinces of Pakistan (See Table 3).

Table 3: Progress Made So Far

No.	Province	Total Seats for Women Councilors	Elected Women Councilors	Total Councilors Trained
1	Punjab	23,000	20,718	11,383
2	Sindh	7,222	6,498	3,541
3	Balochistan	3,539	3,108	1,558
4	NWFP	6,288	5,742	2,126
Total		40,049	36,066	18,608

Source: <http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.php?id=34130>

An evaluation was conducted in May 2004 on the request of the UNDP. It evaluated the training of LMs and research analysts, training of women councilors, gender sensitive training of male councilors and district line agencies, production and dissemination of material, a media strategy plan and community servicing. The report also gave some recommendations to improve the process. A few findings of the evaluation are as under:

Training of Women Councilors: The total number of women councilors to be trained was about 36,000, however, according to the evaluation report on W3P submitted by Mr. Atif Humayun Khan and Ms. Shahla Zia to UNDP in May 2004, the actual number of women trained was about 27,000 (page 16, last paragraph). The process of inviting women councilors to training sessions was very problematic due to the absence of an accurate list of women councilors and their addresses. The strategy of the project was based on a mentoring and nurturing experience with women learning from other women. However, even in the first phase of the training only a few women were able to effectively train others.

Training of LMs and Research Analysis: There were 64 female LMs. However, most of the Tehsil and UCs did not have the capacity to adequately conduct the training. By the end of the project, more LMs and Potential Lead Mentors (PLMs) were identified and trained. Thus, the resource pool of LMs and PLMs trained by the project was much larger than originally planned.

The analysis of the selection, training and evaluation process of the LMs is as follows:

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The final evaluation form was too general to do a real assessment. It was based on international project management reports.
- The other monitoring and evaluation forms and activities were restricted to just training sessions and performance of LMs, not to the project as a whole.
- Mid term women councilor's evaluation was meant to be participatory but it did not take place.

Documentation and Analysis

- The reports cited only the achievements of planned activities. They were neither analytical nor were there any details of report activities that had been dropped or delayed.
- The project did not manage to achieve a substantial proportion of what it set out to do, in terms of its main objectives of providing training to women councilors all over Pakistan.

Project Implementation Structure and Identified Issues

- The local government departments at the provincial level and at the district government level were not actively involved during the project implementation.
- Ownership of the project was not acknowledged at any level of government. The provincial ministers felt that they played a nominal role only.

Communication for Effective Social Services Delivery: Communication for Effective Social Services Delivery (CESSD) is a Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funded project to improve the mechanisms for effective service delivery at the district level in NWFP. The CESSD works with local partners and councilors in districts, Tehsils and UCs. It views gender equality as integral to effective social service delivery.

Consequently gender principles and practices are incorporated in all of its planning and development activities and in all of its project work. This means that care is taken to ensure that voices of both men and women are heard and taken into account in all project documentation and dissemination. It also means that women participation in social service operation, planning and decision-making is advocated at all levels.

The CESSD helped the CCBs process in NWFP and initiated women CCBs in Swat, which encouraged women in other parts of the province. A set of three booklets on the formation and working of CCBs, their constitution and registration have been prepared. These booklets also discuss financial matters, record keeping, project monitoring and contracts. A media campaign has also been designed as part of an effective communication strategy. In this, TV will be used for wider distribution of information including success-stories about communities and local government.

The United Nations International Children's Education Fund: The United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) works closely with the provincial government in the areas such as child and women health, nutrition, primary education, water and environmental sanitation as well as advocacy and communication.

To give more information to councilors on the basic principles of the Devolution Plan and to share experiences at the UC level, UNICEF, Balochistan started capacity building workshops. A Training of Trainers session was held before the round of capacity building workshops for officials of local government, selected members of NGOs, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and other representatives. Capacity building workshops were held in districts of Kalat and Kechh. In the workshop, the methodology adopted was based on lectures, group work, group discussion and exposure visits. The duration of these workshops was for four days. Topics covered included issues of development in Pakistan, participatory assessment and analysis, information analysis, priority setting and annual planning for the UC.

South Asia Partnership-Pakistan: South Asia Partnership-Pakistan, (SAP-PK) established as an NGO in 1987, is part of a network of six participatory development-support organizations operating under the same name for the same purposes in Canada as well as in some South Asian countries. The SAP-PK provides training to marginalized groups and CBOs in communication, finance, management and political education.

The SAP-PK with its partner organizations has been working in different parts of the country to enhance women's political participation for the last many years. To respond to the training need of a large number of women councilors, SAP-PK designed the Supporting the Democratic Process for Women (SDPW) Program. The objectives of the program are to involve women in different tiers of the LG system and enhance women participation in the decision-making process. It aims at creating a favorable atmosphere for marginalized groups in general and women in particular to perform their role as agents of social change. It hopes to bring about this through dialogue among elected councilors, voters and community activists which will help further strengthen democratic traditions in the country.

In the pilot phase, there were four rural communities. Two were from Punjab and one each from NWFP and Sindh. Focal groups comprising 20 people were formed to achieve the program's objectives. Seven women councilors were given representation along with community activists, four CBO members and coordinators. The capacity-building workshops covered roles and responsibilities of councilors, the issue of state, law and politics, gender and politics, religion and politics and the skills of advocacy, mobilization and networking.

On the completion of the pilot phase, 80 councilors and activists were trained to organize local dialogues, arrange public forums and hold interactive debates for advocacy on their demands at the councils at three tiers. Focal groups were also involved with public representatives for pushing the community development agenda with the policy and decision making bodies.

Essential Institutional Reforms Operationalization Program: The emergence of the new LG system brought new challenges for elected representatives as well as the administration. There was a need for capacity building at all levels, but no one alone had the ability and skills to respond to the demand.

This situation encouraged capacity building through consortiums. The Essential Institutional Reforms Operationalization Program (EIROP) is a joint venture of the NWFP government, the UNDP and the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC), for capacity building of stakeholders in concerned areas and need-based training for public representatives as well as state functionaries.

The project was launched in March 2001 for a period of 36 months ending February 2004. The project was subsequently extended up to November 2004. The numbers of direct beneficiaries of the project are 33,000 people.

The project's clientele include state functionaries (from provincial to UC secretaries), public representatives (from MPA's to UC members) and CSOs (corporate sector to CCB's).

It aimed to support the NWFP government in establishing effective, efficient and responsive LG systems. It supported capacity building of LG institutions in NWFP and enabled the provincial government to improve the quality and transparency of decision-making processes.

With heavy support from donors and the provincial government, the EIROP planned comprehensive and need-based training on five broad themes. These themes were LGO 2001, Local Councils Protocol, Leadership/Management skills, Human Rights and Local Government and Gender Perspective and Local Government.

The training of a target group was further divided in two groups. First were representatives/functionaries from Districts/Tehsils and second were groups from UCs. As many as 24 districts and 475 union level workshops, with 30 to 35 participants each, were designed to enhance capacity of public representatives and institutions.

The training methodology was based on a participatory approach that included brainstorming, plenary discussions, group work and presentations in knowledge-relating sessions. All training material was prepared in Urdu. There was great emphasis on local language as a medium of instruction and on women councilor participation.

iv- Training of Women Councilors by NGOs

Women councilor representation in local government is the result of a strong movement from various quarters with NGOs as one of the forces behind this movement. Promoting women as effective leaders in their community was a challenge that human rights organizations and women NGOs took up and advocated at various levels. Some of these organizations also followed their initial work with training of women councilors.

Aurat Publication & Information Foundation: The Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation or the Aurat Foundation (AF), established in 1986, is an NGO working for women's empowerment in the society. The AF's goals are to enable women acquire greater control over knowledge, resources and institutions. It wants to facilitate greater women and people participation in governance as well as influence social attitudes and behavior so that it is more sensitive to women's concerns. The AF wants to contribute towards creating an enabling environment for women by strengthening support structures. The AF is a national NGO with offices in the federal and provincial capitals.

When the present government accepted the demand for 33 percent reservation for women through direct elections at the UC level, it was a challenge for the women of Pakistan, particularly for women's rights organizations and activists, who had been struggling for this reservation since long. The Citizens' Campaign for Women's Representation (CCWR) in local government, therefore, was the response of CSOs to this challenge.

The main objectives of the campaign were to mobilize women candidates in 6,022 UCs 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 and to provide an orientation to women candidates about the LG system and the electoral process.

The bringing of women on reserved seats was a response to the stance taken by conservative forces or people not sure about women representation. Studying the situation as it emerged, the AF was quick to predict and respond to the needs of women councilors with financial support from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). A group of programme officers developed a manual for capacity building of women councilors and planned workshops in selected districts of all four provinces.

A project was conceptualised to strengthen the capacity of newly-elected women councilors in NWFP. A training programme was formulated with 62 master trainers from 24 districts. The first round of training from 22 districts of NWFP covered 594 women councilors. In the second round of training, 564 women councilors were trained.

District level consultation was arranged to discuss women councillor issues. 920 Nazims and men councilors participated. Provincial conferences were held first in Islamabad and then in Peshawar. The last activity of the project was a national workshop to share and consolidate for wider dissemination the experiences of women councilors from previous workshops. It also provided an opportunity to local representatives, particularly women councilors from all over the province to know each other and allow an increased interaction of local representatives among themselves as well as with community activists, NGOs, government and the donor agencies.

A set of seven booklets relating to the rules of business of district, Tehsil and UC were published. Other publications were on the LGO as well as handouts and 2 posters for networking and responsibility of women councilors. During the training workshops it was realized that repackaging of material might not be helpful for illiterate councilors. A radio drama was recorded and broadcast through Pakistan Radio for them. Also, audio cassettes were prepared for a wider dissemination.

The Effective Representation of Women Councilors Project (ERWCP) of the AF has taken a major step towards empowerment of women councilors with the financial assistance of CIDA. The Foundation has created support structures for women councilors by setting up five provincial and 70 district resource centers under a three-year program called "Effective Representation by Women Councilors". The Ministry of Women's Development also plans to set up resource centers for women councilors to support them in their new role of leadership.

Shirkat Gah: Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Center, established in 1975, works toward women's empowerment, promoting gender equality and women and law. Shirkat Gah has offices in Lahore, Karachi, and Peshawar. Their activities are documentation, research, networking, advocacy against discriminatory laws and an outreach program for paralegal training at the community-level. Shirkat Gah has a wide range of publications, manuals and information material on laws including discriminatory laws and customary laws.

As an organization working for the well being of women, Shirkat Gah is involved with women councilors in various training sessions relating to women issues. It also arranged a national consultation in May 2002 in Lahore on this issue. Among the participants, 26 women were from Punjab while 61 women were from other parts of the country. The objective of the consultation was identification of their problems, training needs assessment, an analysis of the expectations of their constituents and strategies for overcoming any obstacles.

Strengthening Participatory Organization: In 1987, collaboration between the GoP and CIDA resulted in the formation of a Pak-Canada Small Projects Office. In 1994, the Small Projects Office was transformed into a Pakistani organization called the Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO). Through its capacity building program, project support and the special initiative program, the SPO covered 54 districts of rural and urban communities in Pakistan. The SPO has trained organizations from almost every district of Pakistan.

The SPO provides equal training opportunities to CBOs and to women organizations on development planning and management as well development concepts. The purpose of the training is to initiate a process of socio-political and political and economic development in their communities.

The SPO also started training of local body institutions in year 2003 and arranged training for women councilors. The project was initiated with support from the Gender Equality Project (GEP) of the British Council. It was a pilot project. The objective of the training was to define and identify

possible resources in districts. The training was initiated on resource mobilization because soon after oath taking, women councilors faced the problem of lack of funds. The SPO felt that the women councilors should also be trained in resource mobilization.

The training covered issues of resource mobilization, gender and development, LG structure as well as the social, political and economic rights of women. The duration of the training was three days and it was conducted in 16 districts of Pakistan.

Sarsabz Foundation: The Sarsabz Foundation (SF) was established in 1992. Its focus is the weaker sections of the society, especially women in the community. Empowerment, equality of opportunity, promotion of transparency and participatory decision-making are core values and principals of the SF. It has four major areas of work i.e. research, development, capacity building, advocacy and networking.

Between March and May 2001, SF started a massive campaign for mobilization of women in LB elections at the district level. Orientation of 100 local NGOs and capacity building of 430 women candidate resulted in the election of 223 women councilors in all three tiers of the local government. SF prepared a number of informative publications and two training manuals.

SF built the knowledge capacity of women councilors through a 2-day training session in the second phase of the program. The capacity of councilors was built in the areas of role and responsibilities of councilors, budget making, development, planning, role of monitoring committees, leadership role, and communication and gender issues. The program continued for two and a half years with the CIDA funding. This training was conducted in Faisalabad.

A network of women councilors at district level was set up in September 2002. The objectives of the network were advocacy and sensitization of government authorities, acceptance of women councilors as public representatives, effective role of councilors in the decision-making process and the need to strengthen the voice of women against injustice and inequality. SF is responsible for technical and financial assistance through training workshops and it also offers in-house training services for elected councilors/union secretaries and CBOs.

Pattan: Pattan which means “ferry crossing” is an NGO established by a group of volunteers involved in relief activities against the floods that afflicted the country during 1992. With support from an international donor agency OXFAM, volunteers started work from flood-affected areas of Sargodha, Multan and Muzaffargarh districts in Punjab. In 1993, Pattan was registered under the Societies Act. Pattan works for improving governance and local democratic norms in community level institutions. It involves fostering better links and cooperation between communities and line departments as well as the district administration. In the area of flood management, Pattan pursues the idea of shared responsibility between the community and the government.

All of Pattan's programs focus on identifying and strengthening people's capacities rather than just addressing their vulnerabilities. A high degree of community participation assures accountability of Pattan staff to the communities in which they work.

Pattan conducted a program in 10 districts of Punjab in collaboration with the Embassy of Finland. The objective of the training was to build the capacity of councilors to act as effective representatives of the people. The duration of the course was 12 days while the program went on for three years. The contents of the course were the LG system, role and responsibilities of women councilors, budget making and the role of monitoring committees.

A study on training needs assessment of women councilors was conducted in 13 districts all over the country. The Ministry of Women's Development and the GoP supported this initiative. They also conducted 40 Focus Group discussions with women councilors and local communities. The lack of authority given to women councilors, the lack of funds for their development work and the gap of information, knowledge, experience and skills are the major findings of the survey.

Taraqee Trust: Taraqee Trust was established in 1994 by a group of development workers, intellectuals and activists. It is based in Quetta, Balochistan. The main objectives of the Trust include the improvement in economic conditions of poor communities, especially women, by creation of income generation opportunities and provision of financial services. In addition, the Trust works towards the improvement in living conditions of marginalized communities through provision of Community Physical Infrastructure (CPI) and basic health education services.

After the LG elections, the Taraqee Trust carried out two types of activities: Training as well as exposure visits. Four training sessions for union Nazims were arranged to orient them with the LGO so that they could play their role effectively. These training sessions were conducted in Pishin, Sibi, Naseerabad and Kila Saifullah with the financial assistance of an international NGO, Action Aid. The duration of the training was one day. Two training sessions were held in August 2002 and two other sessions were conducted in September 2002.

An exposure visit was arranged for women and men councilors and Nazims of various UCs to Bhag in Azad Jammu and Kashmir to share information on their respective areas. The councilors discussed issues like problems they faced and how they could run their councils effectively. The exposure visit, arranged in February 2003, was funded by the SPO and was for eight days.

Institute for Development Studies and Practices: Institute for Development Studies and Practices (IDSP) was initiated in 1996. IDSP's idea has been to develop a cadre of effective development thinkers, planners and practitioners at the grassroots level. The Asia Foundation provided the initial funding for testing the concept. The first phase of implementation was piloted in Quetta and Lahore. These efforts were assessed and evaluated by a third party who strongly recommended that the course adopted in Quetta should go ahead.

The institute was registered with the Social Welfare department, Government of Balochistan as a National Human Resource Development Institute in December 1998. The feasibility defined five clear areas of programmatic thrusts for the IDSP. These include certificate and diploma courses in Community Development, Synthesizing and Applying Research, Initiating Process Projects, Initiating Public Debate and Dialogue and Providing Advisory Services.

Under its Awareness Raising Program (ARP), the IDSP designed a set of activities to create awareness on the new political system in Pakistan and to collect information on good governance in collaboration with the Asia Foundation and the UNDP. The IDSP does not address any local government issue directly but in cooperation with Pattan and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), it works on this issue.

IDSP arranged mobilization workshops for CBOs, for male councilors and for Nazims and Naib Nazims at districts, Tehsil and UC level in districts of Punjgoor, Turbat, Gwadar, Bela Khuzdar, Awaran, Kalat and Chagai in Balochistan. In these workshops, almost 22,368 people participated.

As part of the training, dialogue was initiated to create awareness on political issues and contribution of general masses. This discussion took place amongst representatives of media, political parties, women organizations and government officials. As many as 50 dialogue meetings were arranged and each meeting had 50- 100 participants.

For increased community interaction with councilors and the media in Makran, Kalat and Zhob areas in Balochistan, a theatre was arranged with the objective of creating awareness in the marginalized groups of their participation in decision-making. The IDSP launched its theatre program in three phases from 1999-2002. The IDSP also conducted research to collect information on good governance.

The Society for Community Support for Primary Education in Balochistan: It is working towards raising the level of primary education in the province in collaboration with the UNICEF.

The Society realized that councilors could play an effective role in enhancing enrollment and in monitoring primary school functioning. They formed committees in Kalat, Khuzdar and Pishin districts to develop the link between local government and the education department. Each committee comprised 7 members. The activity was carried out in 2001.

The Pakistan Institute of Labor Education and Research: The Pakistan Institute of Labor Education and Research (PILER) was formed in 1982 to create awareness among laborers about their rights, to build capacity and form an organization that would conduct research and identify problems in this area. It consisted of activists of trade unions and was supported by writers, experts, and intellectuals. PILER believes that rights of laborers can be achieved through their representation on every level of democratic institutions

When in 2000, the Pakistan government introduced the LG system, women, peasants and minorities were given representation on various levels of local government. Along with other organizations, PILER started working on the Democratic Rights and People Education Program (DRCEP) to raise awareness among a large number of people and convince them of contesting elections against reserved seats.

As a result of this exercise, about 40,000 women and men were elected on peasant/workers seats. After these remarkable results, PILER devised a plan for "Promoting Economic and Social Rights through Labor in Local Government" for these elected representatives so that they could fight for the rights of the people.

The program was started in 27 districts of the country. In Sindh, the districts covered were Hyderabad, Karachi, Mirpur Khas, Tharparker, Sukkur, Khairpur, Shikarpur and Larkana. In Punjab, Lahore, Gujrawala, Faisalabad, Multan, Toba Tek Singh, Khanewal, Muzaffargarh and Rawalpindi were included. In NWFP, the districts were Abbotabad, Haripur, Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda, Nowshera and Swat. Whereas in Balochistan, Kach, Gwadar, Lasbela and Quetta were selected for the project.

In the first phase, different types of workshops were conducted. In the one-day introductory workshops, 41 venues were selected in 27 districts. In these workshops, almost 3,690 men and women participated. In the one-day initial workshops, strategy and objectives were identified and 25 participants were selected for intensive workshops. On the whole, 2,000 members participated in these workshops. In the two day intensive workshops, 1,000 men and women participated.

The LG elections were held on a non-party basis but soon after the polls, a few political parties considered the system a threat to their politics. To defuse the situation, PILER conducted a number of countrywide seminars in which 3,000 people participated.

As part of these activities, labor councilor conferences were held in four provinces to motivate peasant/worker councilors in raising their voice for labor-related issues. In the conferences, representatives from trade unions, journalists, teachers, lawyers, men, women councilors, MPAs and MNAs participated. PILER also conducted workshops on the Police Order and Public Safety Commission, CCBs, CCBs, a Citizen Councilors Conference and two-day evaluation seminars.

Rural Support Program: Rural Support Program (RSP) includes capacity building for LG institutions and public representatives. They also focus on women councilors in training and developmental activities. Developmental projects give opportunities of learning and confidence building between women councilors and their constituencies.

Sarhad Rural Support Program: The Sarhad Rural Support Program (SRSP) was launched in November 1989 with the objective of alleviating rural poverty through forming and strengthening broad-based village level development organizations.

The SRSP is a private, non-government and non-profit organization. It is the first rural support NGO with a primary focus on NWFP. It started work on public sector NWFP projects like the Barani Area Development Project and the Mansehra Village Support Project.

The purpose of setting up an NGO for institutional development at the grassroots was for development at that level. However, it was seen differently when the SRSP transferred its approach from a Women in Development focus to a Gender and Development focus.

The SRSP was a partner in two consortiums for women councilor training in NWFP. The first was with Rural Support Program Network (RSPN) and AF, which was part of a project called "Advocacy and Networking for Women Councilors." This project planned to assess the situation of women councilors in NWFP in light of their issues and problems. It was an attempt to highlight institutional as well as attitudinal problems faced by women councilors with particular reference to laws and rules, which govern their functioning in the local councils, especially the NWFP LGO 2001.

Two districts - Abbottabad and Haripur, were selected for women councilor training. District and provincial level workshops were held for experience sharing and advocacy with the Local Government department. A document: "A Gender Review of the Legal Framework for Local Government in NWFP" was prepared for advocacy purposes at both provincial and federal levels. A manual on Local Government and Human Rights was prepared by SRSP. AF material on local government was also shared with the participants.

The second consortium in which the SRSP participated was between Associates in Development (AID) Peshawar, Human Resource Management & Development Center (HRMDC), Peshawar and the SRSP, with support of EIROP, NWFP chapter.

A manual titled "Three-day training workshop at district level" was prepared for local administration, human rights and gender balance. The focus of the project was development of the LG institutions. The province is divided into 957 union councils, 61 Tehsil/TCs and 24 District Councils. A composite training program was introduced for bringing about a knowledge and behavioral change in the working of these units.

This three-day training program was divided at two levels, i.e. district and union. The five agenda points were the same for both the groups. The training sessions were prepared according to the participant's background and the need for the best results. Training material from the NRB, W3P, AF, EIROP-NWFP and the CIP was used as a guideline.

The theme of the training manuals was district administration, district council's rule of business, the importance of effective leadership and administrative skills in local government, best case studies in local government, gender balance and E-Government with human rights as the cross cutting theme in the entire manual.

Rural Support Program Network: The Rural Support Program Network (RSPN) has been set up by the RSP of Pakistan. The ten RSPs of Pakistan have membership, and representation on board the RSPN. The goal of the network is to facilitate the RSPs in their objectives of improving sustainable livelihoods of the poor in Pakistan. The network is, therefore, a capacity building organization.

RSPN is not directly involved with women councilors but through networking partners facilitates different initiatives i.e. the NRSP's Institute for Rural Management (IRM) has also held training courses for women councilors as well as Nazims.

The RSPN sponsored an 18 month-long project of the ADB in Abbottabad and Haripur districts in NWFP. This was called "RETA 6008-Gender and Governance Issues in Local Government,

Pakistan.” In the project, the capacity building component was delivered by the SRSP while the AF was responsible for the advocacy component of the project.

As many as 424 elected women councilors and 200 Nazims and Naib Nazims have been trained under the project. Six women councilor forums have been formed in districts. As an advocacy component, the AF has organized two district workshops and one provincial workshop. Apart from training, the women councilors and Nazims visited Bangladesh on a study tour and to Jhelum district in Punjab on exposure visits.

Support to Development Reforms Balochistan: This project aims at institutionalizing decentralized governance on a pilot basis in two districts of Balochistan. The project objectives include provincial policy reforms, institutional capacity building for participatory development and community participation in planning, implementing and monitoring of local development initiatives.

A two-day capacity building workshop for women councilors was designed for effective participation in the LG system. The manual covers an overview of the district government, monitoring mechanism under LGO 2001 and effective communication for women councilors besides placing the women agenda in the country’s Annual Development Plans (Budget rules). It also has some information on dealing with conflicts.

Support to Devolution Reforms developed by District Management Information Centers at Jhal Magsi, Bolan, Loralai and Barkhan districts of Balochistan. These centers were set up from June 2002 to 2004.

In the centers, information regarding basic facilities e.g. schools, water supply, health and demographic information of the area is available. The objective of the establishment of such centers was to provide the district government with planning, monitoring and implementation data. Financial assistance was provided by the UNDP for this project.

E. A Critical Review of Training Conducted By NGOs and Government Institutions

A number of NGOs and Government institutions arranged training for women councilors, but there seems to be a general consensus that this training did not create the desired response and awareness required of them. A number of reasons have been identified and these are:

- Most of the training programs were designed for women while the NRB and a few other organizations had their programs designed for men with their prime focus on Nazims. They were not able to properly highlight gender issues. Neither did they emphasize on the importance of the role of women councilors. Although the initiation of training programs for women was a huge step, it didn't have the necessary orientation on gender and therefore, is not giving full benefit. The same is the case with the district administration. Because of the lack of knowledge of gender issues on their part, the district administration continues to ridicule the women councilors saying they have come into a male dominated institution. Thus, even here the training for women councilors was of no use.
- A review of the training programs for women councilors reveals that these training programs did not give particular attention to the issue of "Resource Mobilization". Even though resource mobilization is the practice of utilizing the local resources to identify and solve local problems, unfortunately not many organizations paid any attention to it.
- Another important point that came out of this review was that almost all the organizations except W3P targeted Tehsil and district councilors because they were easily accessible and they paid no attention to the UC, which forms the basic and fundamental building block of the local government. As a result, a small group of women councilors may have benefited from these training programs but it did not yield fruitful results for the majority.
- None of the training programs addressed the "Rules of Business" that outline how to function in the council and how to go through with resolutions. This discrepancy was found in all the programs as it deprived the councilors of the knowledge that they could practically implement in the councils.
- These training programs emphasized the duties of women councilors, but it never taught them how to make and maintain links with the district offices and the use of optimum methodology to go about their work.
- The training talked of monitoring committees only as a side topic although they form the main constituent of this system and it would have been appropriate to hold full workshops on the committees to completely highlight their character and charter.
- Similarly, the Public Safety Commission (PSC) that can play a prominent role on the Tehsil and District level for women remained a side topic. This is the institution that can address the needs of the marginalized group to some extent but no particular attention was given to it and sessions were instead focused on the duties of councilors.
- Most of the sessions lacked the necessary knowledge of how to deal with voters and the methodology to address their needs. They did not talk about the responsibilities

of the councilors in this new system and the things they were allowed and prohibited to do with the new system in place.

- It was felt that the duration of the workshop was too short to encompass such a wide field and that too for the first time.
- The training was held for the first time and the level of education of most of the participants was very low. In fact most of the female councilors were illiterate and the training designed for them was not always tailored according to their needs and levels of understanding.
- Training programs were conducted at different levels by different resource persons from government organizations and NGOs. The W3P selected a few District councilors as LMs and they were given assignments to train more women councilors at Zila, Tehsil and Union levels. The LMs related their own experiences and problems with the training. The selection of a few councilors as LMs also created an atmosphere of resentment as those selected received financial incentives. As a result, training in such an environment did not bear any fruitful result, because many of the other councilors were not prepared to give due recognition to the selected LMs. Although participation of women in these workshops was high, but there is the possibility that the women participants attended just to get the traveling allowance.
- In the LG elections, several NGOs worked to motivate and mobilize women to participate as representatives. A number of religious parties and local religious leaders tried to stop these women from becoming voters and representatives. In many districts of NWFP such as Swabi and Mardan, written agreements were signed between political parties to disenfranchise women. The local religious leaders tried to mislead the people by telling them that these NGOs were carrying out a Western agenda. They continuously issued false statements against the NGOs, saying that these organizations are getting huge funds from the West in the name of training. In such a hostile environment, the reluctance by women from participation in the training program was natural.

F. Impact of Civil Society and Intervention of Government Institutions

Although people at large and women councilors in particular complain about the prevailing local government system, yet during interaction with these women councilors, a number of case studies came out that showed their role as challenging the power structures, initiating development projects and accepting their role as public leaders. Some of the case studies are discussed here to assess the role of civil society and other institutions in the local government.

Ms. Azra in Balochistan: Ms. Azra is a union councilor from Saeed Abad, UC 14, Quetta Balochistan. In discussions, she said that whenever she took up issues of her area in her council session, she was always discouraged by the Union Nazim. Ms. Azra said that she felt the Nazim was a gender biased person. Once when she was highlighting the issue in the council, she was interrupted by the Nazim by saying that she is not supposed to talk about such issues and only the men councilors of the area would talk about these. Ms. Azra thinks that the Nazim might have been pressurized by the notables of the area because they did not allow their women to participate in the election. Therefore, she went to the Nazim's house along with another woman councilor, where initially the Nazim was not willing to talk to her but after a while he did. She once again took up the issues that had previously been touched upon but the Nazim got annoyed, behaved rudely and ordered her to leave. When she resisted, he treated her impolitely and physically pushed her due to which she fell in the street. She felt embarrassed because people were all around her. She talked about this with other councilors and the next day they went to Aurat Foundation Resource Center (a center established to help women councilors). There they chalked out the strategy against the Nazim's behavior and decided to hold a press conference against him. When the Nazim got to know about this course of action, he came to her house with Mr. Rahim Kakar, District Nazim Quetta City to apologize and promised not to behave discourteously again.

Ms. Robina in Sindh: Ms. Robina is an educated union councilor who belongs to District Larkana, Sindh. She has been struggling to solve the social and development problems of her area, even long before she became a councilor. During the past four years she has succeeded in resolving different problems such as road construction and establishing schools. Ms. Robina said that she is successful because other councilors are very cooperative. She further added that she has tried her level best to resolve the problems in the same manner as men councilors do. In one case, she went to the police station to recover a boy who was not guilty but was arrested by the police. She pursued the case and took it to the PSC (a District authority that can question a police officer) and ultimately got the case reopened. The boy was innocent so he was set free. Similarly a woman came to her and asked for help as her house had collapsed. Ms. Robina sought assistance from the District Nazim and after investigating the case, the District Nazim rebuilt the home.

Ms. Nasim Bibi in NWFP: She belongs to right wing Upper Dir area in NWFP, which is one of the most conservative areas of the country and where very few women were able to contest the LG election due to opposition from the right wing groups. Ms. Nasim was among those few courageous women who contested the election. All members of her family and the people of her area were against this decision but nevertheless she won. Her aim had been to help others. She faced many problems in the council because she was the only woman and the men councilors did not want her in council meetings. But her commitment forced them to accept her and they gave her space. Afterwards she started development work for people and got funds for these. She completed water supply schemes in three areas, built roads and completed a "Janaza Gah" (a place for funeral prayers). Now she is trying to establish a vocational institute.

Ms. Akhter Iqbal in NWFP: Ms. Iqbal is a social worker and was elected as a union councilor from UC 88 Peshawar. Later she was also elected from the Tehsil Council (TC). She contested for both seats as an independent contestant and was successful. Ms. Iqbal said that she is very committed to work for the betterment of the area and for this purpose she has started an education campaign in her constituency. Prior to the LG election, Ms. Iqbal was a renowned social worker and also worked as a General Secretary of the Zakat Committee for four years. In 2002, on the wishes of the people of Islampura, Ms. Iqbal took part in the LG election. She won the seat of UC and within a month she contested the election of TC. Even after winning the election she was in regular contact with the people of her constituency and discussed their problems regularly. This helped her a lot in her working in the council. In the present LG system, it is encouraging to see women like Ms. Iqbal who work effectively on social issues and education.

Ms. Iqbal said that being a town councilor, she has moved resolutions regarding her own area and other UCs. She has succeeded in solving some major problems of her area. Through her discretionary fund, she has done development work in her UC 88 by constructing four roads in addition to one road and one street in UC 99. There was a park in the area which was occupied illegally but was regained with the help of the residents of the area. Besides, maintenance work has been done; water and sanitation projects have also been approved and due to her efforts TC has approved the construction of a footpath from secretariat to Nasir-ud-din Link Road. Similarly, due to her persistence street lights have also been installed in her area.

Ms. Iqbal admits that due to better coordination with the Town Nazim, the Naib Nazim and Town members, all her tasks are accomplished successfully. She said that in the LG system, coordination is very important. Women councilors face a lot of problems due to lack of knowledge about laws. She appreciated the setting up of resource centers for women councilors by the AF and hoped that such initiatives by CSOs would prove to be very helpful for strengthening women representation.

G. Recommendations

1. Training sessions should be planned according to the needs of the councilors, keeping in view the different priority issues in every province. The timings for training and venues are also important factors for generating interest of the participants.
2. Donors should make and implement such strategies under which the programs they fund do not overlap but build on each other. Donors should also ensure that if they are funding an organization on a particular issue, they should not fund others for the same program in the same area because a number of organizations train women councilors on the same topic in different ways. This creates a lot of confusion.
3. Training should be conducted with a pictorial session and material should target illiterate and less educated women councilors as well so that they can get maximum advantage out of it. The audio and video sessions can be very helpful. The training handouts should also be in either pictorial or audio form.
4. As the understanding level of the women councilors of the local government system is not very high, therefore, important topics should be presented through the role play methodology as this will be more helpful.
5. A training unit of resource persons from different organizations should be formed so that orientation can be done in a more effective manner. This would create a good reputation for the councilors as well.
6. Training should be done at the level of clusters of different union councils so that women councilors at a lower level can benefit from these.
7. The timings of the training sessions should be such that they do not disturb the household activities of women councilors and the duration of the sessions should be short to maintain their interest.
8. A database of women councilors of DC, TC and UC should be compiled and kept with the Ministry of Women Development to maintain the record of each and every woman that undergoes training. This would help more women to benefit from the training and will also end the monopoly of a few women councilors who repeatedly get training. Through this method, those uninitiated councilors can be invited who have not yet attended any training session.
9. A training institute or section in some existing institute should be set up for local government issues with a complete curriculum and with study material.

Bibliography

The author has consulted the following as reference material during the preparation of this paper.

1. A Hand Book/Manual for Women Councilors on their Role, Responsibilities & Working as Elected Representatives – Sarhad Rural Support Program
2. Trainer's Manual: Training in Local Government Budget Rules 2003 – Decentralization Support Program, Asian Development Bank
3. Advance Capacity Building Manual for the Training of Female Councilors Towards Improved PSDM: Support to Development Reforms in Balochistan
4. Tarkib Karoon ka Manual: Introductory and Training Program of Local Government Plan – 2002 for elected councilors, NRB March 2001 – Rural Development Academy Balochistan, Quetta
5. Manual of instructions for the Guidance of District Returning Officers, Returning Officers, Presiding Officers, Assistant Presiding Officers and Polling Officers – Election Commission of Pakistan
6. Khawateen Councilors ki Kadam ba Kadam Rahnumai aur Tarbiyat – Women's Political Participation Project (W3P) Update August 14, 2002
7. A Manual for the Training of Women Councilors, Handouts – Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation, September 2002
8. A Manual for the Training of Women Councilors, Handouts – Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation, April 2002
9. Terbiyati Hidayatnama, NRB March 2001 – Rural Development Academy Balochistan, Quetta
10. Saholatkar kay laye Guide, NRB March 2001 – Rural Development Academy Balochistan, Quetta.
11. Kitabcha baraye Terbiyati Jaiza, NRB March 2001 – Rural Development Academy Balochistan, Quetta.
12. Councilor kay laye Terbiyati Kitabcha, NRB March 2001 – Rural Development Academy Balochistan, Quetta.
13. Annual Review 1995 – Sarhad Rural Support Corporation
14. Policies and Procedures Manual, Women and Children Development Program, February 2000 – Khwendo Kor
15. DSP Quarterly, By the ADTA team of Decentralization Support Program (DSP), Volume 1, Double Issue Part 1: September 200.
16. Annual Review 2002 – South Asia Partnership Pakistan

17. The RSPN of Pakistan, "Exploring Options For Working with Local Government" (Proceedings of a Conference of Nov 2001 & Update till June 2002), Islamabad, Pakistan June 2002.
18. Leadership Development for Effective Women Councilors - Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation, 2003
19. Legal Literacy in Pakistan, October 2000, Shahla Zia, Shahnaz Ahmed, Naeem Mirza - Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation
20. An Introduction – Pakistan Academy For Rural Development Peshawar 1997
21. A Gender Review of The Legal Framework for Local Government in NWFP, January 2004, Rukhshanda Naz, Aurat Foundation.
22. Women's Participation in Local Government Election 2000-2001, Naeem Mirza, Aurat Foundation.
23. Advanced Capacity Building Manual for the Training of Female Councilors, Towards Improved PSDM, Support to Development Reforms Balochistan.
24. Roshan Pakistan NWFP (Issues Nov-Dec 2004), Balochistan (Issues Nov-Dec 2003), Punjab (Issues Nov-Dec 2002), Sindh (Issues Jan-Feb 2004)
25. National Reconstruction Bureau set of five manuals "Local Government 2000", March 2001, Rural Development Academy Balochistan, Quetta.
26. Promoting economic and social rights through labor in Local Government. Performance Report, April 2002-May 2004.
27. CESSD Communication Strategy (briefing note).
28. Women Naib Nazims/ Councilors, Rukhshana Ahmad Ali, Nuzhat Iftikhar, Shamim Akter Nagi, Balochistan.
29. Women Councilors, Bushmila Irum, Ruzeena Hasneen, Tasaddeq Begum, Akhteri Begum, Zaib Bibi, Haseena Bibi, Mrs. Alia Riaz, Rana Mubarak Khatoon, Shugufta Parveen from Punjab.
30. Shakeela Khan, Rais Jhan, Bulqes, Bas Bibi, Faiza Hameed from NWFP.