

Chapter 9 | GENDER AND WOMEN DEVELOPMENT

Women constitute about 50 per cent of the country's population and 22.7 per cent of the labour force. Article 25(2) of the Constitutions of Pakistan recognizes equality of citizen without discrimination on the basis of sex. To enable the female actively participate in socio-economic development of the country, their protection, well-being, empowerment and participation is required to encourage them through need base initiatives.

The Vision 2025 and 11th Five Year Plan envisage providing an enabling environment and equal opportunities to women for development of their full potential. This would enable them enjoy the benefits of economic growth, prosperity and social development emerging due to the initiatives taken by the federal, provincial governments and private sector stakeholders. There is a need to draft a standard framework and guidelines for equitable participation of women in socio-economic development across all regions and sectors.

Pakistan is committed to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Goal 5 on "Gender Equality; Ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls" specifically relates to women development & empowerment which is fully aligned with the pillar-I of Vision 2025.

Performance review 2016-17

Pakistan has taken many initiatives for women development and empowerment during 2016-17. Participation of women has been encouraged in decision making bodies. These include providing day care facilities for children of working women at work place, establishment of women crises centres in the capital and across the country, and ensuring ownership of land and assets to women.

The women are being encouraged to participate in electoral process. To ensure women participation in the electoral process, a Gender Cell in Election Commission of Pakistan is already working. Ministry of Commerce in cooperation with US Government has taken initiatives to enhance ability and to provide opportunities for women entrepreneurs. Other important women friendly programmes include; Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), National Rural Support Program (NRSP), Pakistan Bait-ul-mal initiatives, First Women Development Bank, survey conducted by the National Commission on the Status of Women and Prime Minister's Youth Business Loan Scheme (50per cent of loans are earmarked for women).

The women entrepreneurs and start-ups are encouraged to implement innovative ideas for businesses that may lead to resolve social problems faced by women. A Centre for

Social Entrepreneurship at a cost of Rs178.43 million has been established by the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform.

The women with disabilities actively participate in consultation workshops managed by NGOs and public sector organization. It is felt that there is need to initiate welfare schemes for the children of working women with a view to facilitate the working women so that they can effectively contribute in socio economic development of country. Similarly, there is need to develop a mechanism of facilitation for the women victims of human rights violations including rape, denial of ownership of assets and implementation of women quota in jobs. Such an initiative can ensure providing equal opportunities for women.

Outlook 2017-18

The Annual Plan envisages the need for a framework of equitable development of women, gender mainstreaming, through development of gender sensitive need based projects and actions, integration of gender dimensions into all sectors of economy. A women right based approach to develop women's economic, social and development rights, entitlements and sensitization on gender issues is needed. To ensure implementation and review of policies & plans and for guiding gender sensitive policy making, action plans and interventions are to be taken in order to achieve the Vision 2025 objectives. A support mechanism for women survivors of violence and women in distress would be strengthened. The creation of gender based knowledge through research and gender disaggregated data (including data on transgender), day care facilities for infants and children of working women and women friendly workplace would have to be promoted.

Programmes

The federal and provincial governments, civil society and international organizations have envisaged plans for achieving gender equality and women empowerment. For this purpose, funds would be earmarked in the PSDP/ADPs for awareness raising campaigns and women rights. The women departments in provinces envisage initiatives for establishment of working women hostels, daycare centers, women crises centers, grievances addressing system for women, awareness at work place harassment and shelter houses for women. The helpline against Human Rights violations, crises centers in the ICT and Human Rights Directorate established in the provinces would continue to support women in need and distress. The ten percent quota for women employment would be ensured by the concerned establishments. The remarkable programmes are summarized below:

- Continue services under "Establishment of Helpline for Legal Advice"
- Establishment of National Institute of Human Rights at Islamabad
- Implementation on Action Plan on Human Rights in Pakistan
- Construction of working women hostel, G-6/2 and G-7/3, Islamabad
- Institutional strengthening of Ministry of Human Rights to facilitate the human rights victims.