

## **Women Welfare in Pakistan: Analysis of MDG 3&5 Through Locally Constructed Indices.**

### *Abstract*

*The threats to instruments and strategies of women empowerment in Pakistan are vivid as far as episodes of the past two decades are concerned. How far these potential threats proved detrimental to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been an un-answered question of the period. The main objective of this study was to evaluate women welfare in terms of Pakistan's achievement in MDG3&5 and also in comparison with its neighboring countries (i.e. India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka). Being a literature-based study multiple sources of secondary data were accessed through their websites. The analysis leads us to the fact that women welfare in Pakistan is residual in nature. To double-check the results of the analysis made through locally constructed indices, the findings were triangulated by the In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) of 30 welfare personnel of the country as well as by the UN indices (GDI and GEM).*

**Key Words:** *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Women Welfare, Residual*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Women's status has been considered as an important measure of their welfare in a community. Regarding enhancement of women's status United Nations has devised various instruments and strategies like the **Commission on the Status of Women**

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#### **Dr. Muhammad Iqbal**

Assistant Professor,  
Department of Social Work, University of Sargodha,  
Sargodha, Pakistan.  
Email: mibasit@yahoo.com

#### **Prof. Dr. Amir Zada Asad**

Professor,  
Department of Social Work, University of Peshawar,  
Peshawar, Pakistan.  
Email: amir\_zada\_asad@yahoo.co.uk

(CSW)<sup>1</sup>, UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)<sup>2</sup>, UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)<sup>3</sup>, UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)<sup>4</sup> and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). And from amongst them, CEDAW is the main UN effort in favor of gender equality in the world<sup>5</sup>. Around the world CEDAW is considered to be the Bible of women rights.

Pakistan is a signatory to CEDAW<sup>6</sup>. Gender related Millennium Development Goals (i.e. MDG 3&5) reflect the focal areas of CEDAW<sup>7</sup>. But it is pity that none of the Pakistani government showed seriousness in proper implementation of this Convention in letter and spirit. Same is the case with gender-related MDGs. A Pakistani woman possesses diversified status across classes, regions and areas<sup>8</sup>. No doubt, she enjoys a better status than most of the women in the Islamic world<sup>9</sup>, but it is yet to be ascertained whether she actually enjoys that or not. In this article not only outcomes of women welfare in Pakistan have been measured but a comparison across-the-border (i.e. with India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka) has also been made.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The word “welfare” is a combination of two words: “well” and “fare”. In this combination *well* means good and *fare* means to set off on the road of life. The term, then, means a “journey or arrival to happiness and prosperity”<sup>10</sup>. Historically, the experts have been attaching the word ‘welfare’ to different other words to give a meaning to the activities concerned with their particular field of practice e.g. The term ‘welfare manager’ came to be used in 1904, ‘welfare policy’ in 1905, ‘welfare work’ in 1916, ‘welfare centers’ in 1917 and ‘women welfare’ in 1928<sup>11</sup>.

It is vivid from the body of existing literature that the word ‘women welfare’ is more relative than absolute. It requires an understanding in terms of its historical and

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<sup>1</sup> [www.uno.org/women\\_watch](http://www.uno.org/women_watch)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> [www.un-instraw.org](http://www.un-instraw.org)

<sup>4</sup> [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)

<sup>5</sup> H. Charlesworth; C. Chinkin C. & S. Wright. (1991). Feminist Approaches to International Law. In *American Journal of International Law*. Vol.85 p. 613–645.

<sup>6</sup> Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD). (2006). *CEDAW Country Ratification Report: A Digest of Case Law on the Human Rights of Women (Asia Pacific)*. (Thailand: APWLD)

<sup>7</sup> [www.weforum.org](http://www.weforum.org)

<sup>8</sup> Aurat Foundation. (2008). *Overview of the Women Protection Act 2006* (Quarterly Issue No: 24). (Islamabad: Aurat Foundation).

<sup>9</sup> ADB (Asian Development Bank). (2000). *Women in Pakistan: Country Briefing Paper*. (Manila: Asian Development Bank).

<sup>10</sup> R. Williams, (1976). *Key Words: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Glasgow: Fontana). p.31

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*.

cultural milieu within which it is used. Although so many experts of the welfare field defined it but the conceptual confusion still prevails among the scholarship. That is why the scholarship, despite the lapse of so many years, fails to have any universally agreed upon definition of the term. Relativity of the term is posing problems for those engaged in cross-national comparisons whereas for cross-national comparisons, one must be absolutely clear about ‘what women welfare is?’ and ‘how it can be measured?’<sup>12</sup>. Although women welfare had been widely misused and considered synonymous to charity for the women<sup>13</sup> yet it is measured quantitatively as human development. US Department of Health, Education and Welfare had already called women welfare a set of activities related to human development<sup>14</sup>. As far as the today’s literature is concerned, the terms such as social well-being, social welfare for the women and human development are often used as equivalent or analogous terms.

Willensky and Labeaux (1918) are of the opinion that social welfare refers to those formally established organizations and socially sponsored institutions, agencies and programs which are aimed at maintaining or improving the economic conditions, health or interpersonal competence of a population partially or totally<sup>15</sup>. After Willensky and Labeaux (1918) a long silence prevailed upon the scholarship when Kendall (1961) broke the inertia by relating social welfare to human resources. He, in very clear words, revealed:

The purpose of social welfare is to strengthen human resources and to maximize human potential for handling successfully the many stresses and strains which seem to characterize this era of rapid political, social, economic and cultural change<sup>16</sup>.

This strong definition of social welfare is self-explanatory. Unlike the previous ones it gives direction to the enhanced human potential toward handling stresses and strains of life. This definition was no doubt a widely accepted one but could not lower down the intellectual heat of the scholars. Seeing that the United Nations had to intervene the situation, The United Nations defined social welfare as: *A wide range of socially sponsored activities and programs directed towards community and individual well-being*<sup>17</sup>. But as usual no consensus was developed among the

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<sup>12</sup>Bent Greve. (2008). *What is Welfare?* In *Central European Journal of Public Policy*. Vol. 2:No.1: p. 50–73; See also V. George & R. Page,(1995).*Modern Thinkers on Welfare* (London: Prentice Hall),p.14

<sup>13</sup> James Midgley. (1984). *Op.Cit.*

<sup>14</sup>Palmore, E., and C. Luikart.(1972).”Health and Social Factors Related to Life Satisfaction”. In *Journal of Health and social Behaviour*. Vol.13:p.68-80

<sup>15</sup>H. Willensky and C.Labeaux, (1958). *Industrial Society and Social welfare* (New York: Russell Sage)

<sup>16</sup>Kendall, Catherine A. (1961).The Significance of Social Welfare in the World Today. In *Social Service Review*. Vol 35(1961), p.235-245

<sup>17</sup>United Nations. ( 1963). *Report on the World Social Situation: the State of the World* .(New York: UNDP),p.51

scholars. However, individual strives continued when in 1980 two scholars from the field tried to define social welfare somewhat differently. Dolgoff and Feldstein (1980) related social welfare to human development. They called social welfare as intervention intended to enhance social functioning of human beings i.e. human development.

But Johnson and Contributors (1994) favored Dolgoff and Feldstein (1980) in calling social welfare synonymous to human development. According to them social welfare is considered to be the sum of societal activities aimed at maintaining and improving human well-being. To them improvement of human well-being is human development. To sum up, if one wants to measure women welfare one will have to measure it in context of human development. The objectives of this study were:

- 1) To evaluate women welfare in terms of Pakistan's achievement in MDG 3&5;
- 2) To compare women welfare in Pakistan with its neighboring countries (i.e. India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka); and
- 3) To verify the results through UN indices (GDI and GEM).

There are two reasons for choosing 'Women Welfare in Pakistan' as the theme of this study. First, Pakistan is a developing country struggling with complex and contentious development issues. Persistent poverty is one of them and the worst hit segments of this problem were women. In Ayub regime, Pakistan enjoyed significant reduction in poverty as a result of successful economic and rural welfare programs like Village Agriculture and Industrial Development Program (V-AID), Basic Democracies and Rural Works Program<sup>18</sup>. Second, despite the persistence of poverty as a major problem, this segment of society received little attention both from the state and from the scholarly community. It is, therefore, need of the hour to evaluate social welfare reforms for them from the ideological level down to the implementation level.

## **METHODOLOGY**

As has been said above in the section 'Review of Literature' that social welfare of any segment society is measured in terms of human development as human development is synonymous to social welfare. Every year UNDP issues its report on human development which reveals countries' progress in Millennium Development Goals. As the gender related Millennium Development Goals (i.e.MDG3&5) reflect

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<sup>18</sup>Muhammad Khalid.(2001). *Social work Theory and Practice with Special Reference to Pakistan* (Karachi: Kifayat Academy),p.535

the focal areas of CEDAW<sup>19</sup> therefore in order to measure women welfare of a country we will have to measure its progress in MDG3 and MDG5. Following the statistical methodology of the widely-used Human Development Index (HDI), the indices using indicators of MDG5 and MDG3 were constructed to measure women welfare in Pakistan. The results were triangulated by the In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) of 30 welfare personnel of the country. For this purpose an interview guide was used as a tool of data collection. These interviews were simply coded as ‘SWPI’ standing for ‘Social Welfare in Pakistan Interview’.

The general formula for the construction of indices was:

$$\text{Index} = \frac{\text{Given value of the indicator} - \text{Minimum value of the indicator}}{\text{Maximum value of the indicator} - \text{Minimum value of the indicator}}$$

In order to decide level of progress the researcher(s) made cut-offs based on range of values as follows:

Range	0.000-0.166	0.167-0.333	0.334-0.500	0.501-0.667	0.668-0.834	0.835-1.000
Level	Lowest	Low	Low-to-Medium	Medium-to-High	High	Highest

The chief reasons of selecting the above neighboring countries were their similarities with Pakistan with regard to their political environments and welfare systems. The researcher incorporated only those indicators of MDGs which are unanimously adopted by all the four countries. The evaluation is based on United Nations Asia Pacific MDG Report 2010-11. The reasons of making the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as basis of analysis are justified in the fact that (i) they address nearly all aspects of human welfare in terms of development; (ii) they do not represent abstract ambitions but are fixed and time-bound ; and (iii) they are basic to addressing poverty in its many dimensions. The Goals adopted by Pakistan are provided in Annexure-I. All the Eight (8) goals clearly advocate gender equality. But only two measures are directly related to women welfare which are: MDG 5. Improve maternal health: A mother’s education, income, and empowerment have a significant impact on lowering maternal mortality<sup>20</sup>

MDG 3. Promote gender equality & empower women: This central goal dedicated to gender equality and women’s empowerment depends on the achievement of all other goals for its success.

<sup>19</sup> www.weforum.org

<sup>20</sup> C. Grown; Gupta Rao ;and A. Kes .(2005). *Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women*, UN Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, (London and Sterling, VA: Earth scan)

## ANALYSIS

### **MDG 5: Improve Maternal Health**

This goal and its underlying indicators are related to women health. This goal will be evaluated by constructing a Women's Health Index (WHI).

#### **Women's Health Index (WHI)**

The major indicators involved to construct this index were: (i) Life Expectancy and Maternal Mortality Ratio; (ii) Ante-Natal Care (ANC) and Skilled Birth Attendance (SBA); and (iii) Contraceptive Prevalence (CP) and Fertility Rate (FR):

- (i) Life Expectancy and Maternal Mortality Ratio: Maternal mortality is considered to be the major cause of women's death in the world. About 1500 women die daily in the world from pregnancy- or childbirth-related complications. A total of 99% of maternal deaths occur in the countries where 85% of the world's population resides. More than one third of these deaths occur in South Asia. Maternal mortality ratio in developing countries is 450 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births versus only 9 in developed countries<sup>21</sup>. Bangladesh and India are worst regions in Maternal Mortality Rate having 570 and 450 respectively during the year 2010, whereas Pakistan and Sri Lanka are somewhat better having 320 and 58 respectively. The situation in Sri Lanka is, hence, very encouraging in the region<sup>22</sup>.
- (ii) Ante-Natal Care (ANC) and Skilled Birth Attendance (SBA): MMR depends upon ANC and SBA, which are particularly neglected areas of health in South Asia<sup>23</sup>. Pakistan and Bangladesh lag in both of these indicators. In ANC Sri Lanka scores 99, India 74, Pakistan 61 and Bangladesh 51 whereas in SBA Sri Lanka, consequent upon the high ANC, tops the region with a percentage of 99, followed by India with 47. But both Pakistan and Bangladesh at 39 and 18 respectively<sup>24</sup>. The proportion of births attended by skilled birth attendants, for Pakistan, has declined from 48 percent in 2004-05 to 41 percent

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<sup>21</sup> www.unicef.org

<sup>22</sup> UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). (2010). *Human Development Report 2010*. (New York: United Nations)

<sup>23</sup> UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). (2010). *Human Development Report 2010*. (New York: United Nations)

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

in 2008-09 and then to 39 in 2010-11. The situation demands immediate attention and consistent effort<sup>25</sup>.

The major reason of this fall is that majority of women reported that they are not allowed to go to a health facility unaccompanied and have to seek permission for that, typically from a male household member<sup>26</sup> who usually refuses.

- (iii) Contraceptive Prevalence (CP) & Fertility Rate (FR): Fertility rate is defined as number of children born to a woman till her childbearing age<sup>27</sup>. More contraceptive prevalence can reduce fertility rate<sup>28</sup>. Pakistan and India are the countries with high fertility rates. Pakistan has very high FR in the region (i.e.4 births per women)<sup>29</sup> which is due to its very low CP (29.6 percent)<sup>30</sup>.FR of Sri Lanka is 2.3, of India is 2.8 and of Bangladesh is 2.4 respectively<sup>31</sup> whereas CP of Sri Lanka 68,India56 and Bangladesh 55<sup>32</sup>. A UNICEF Report had already warned that lack of trained and appropriately deployed health providers is an underlying cause of Pakistan's health problems<sup>33</sup>.

The formula used for computation of WHI is:

$$WHI = \frac{1}{5 \left\{ LEIndex + ANCIndex + SBAIndex + CPIndex - \frac{1}{2(MMRIndex + FRIndex)} \right\}}$$

WHI value of Pakistan is 0.173.It is far less than that of Sri Lanka, slightly more than India and far more than Bangladesh. This low WHI value is due to low percentage of SBA and CP indices. (It should be noted that Maternal Mortality Ratio and Fertility Rate are negative indicators and each has been assigned a weight as 0.5 or ½ for this study).Lankan health model is a victory in the region with 68.00%. Among the rest India is at Low-to-Medium (39.10%), while both Pakistan (low SBA, very low CP and very high FR) and Bangladesh show a Low level progress with percentages 28.90

<sup>25</sup>Government of Pakistan. (2010). Op.Cit.

<sup>26</sup> Save the Children. (2009).*Opportunities for Newborn Survival in Pakistan*. (Save the Children Secretariat: London).p.45

<sup>27</sup> UNDP (United Nations Development Programme).(2009).*Human Development Report 2009*.(New York: United Nations).p.20

<sup>28</sup>National Health Policy,2009

<sup>29</sup> UNDP. (2009). Op.Cit.

<sup>30</sup> UNDP. (2010). Op.Cit.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> UNDP. (2009). Op. Cit.

<sup>33</sup>UNICEF. (2011). *The State of the World's Children 2011*. New York: United Nations

and 25.80, respectively. Bangladesh is deficient in nearly all the constituents. It is a country with a very high MMR with 570 per 100,000 live births, lowest ANC and SBA (i.e. 51% and 18% respectively) and very low CP (i.e.55.8%).

**Table No.1**

The Efficiency of Pakistani Health Model in Comparison with the Neighboring Countries

HDI Rank 2009	Country	LE Index	MMR Index/2	ANC Index	SBA Index	C P Index	F R Index/2	Women Health Index (WHI)	Progress	
									Level	%
102	Sri Lanka	0.837	0.018	0.988	0.989	0.741	0.138	0.680	High	68.00
134	India	0.683	0.263	0.675	0.411	0.604	0.157	0.391	Low-to-Medium	39.10
<b>141</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>0.726</b>	<b>0.182</b>	<b>0.513</b>	<b>0.322</b>	<b>0.289</b>	<b>0.225</b>	<b>0.289</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>28.90</b>
146	B'desh	0.690	0.338	0.388	0.089	0.598	0.138	0.258	Low	25.80

Source: .UNDP, 2010 & UNDP, 2009

It can be concluded from this discussion that except Sri Lanka, the rest three countries possess a residual type of health services. Lack of facilities as well as poor access to the available facilities has come out to be the major reasons of the above weak areas. About the lack of facilities an officer is being quoted here verbatim: “*Best quality state-based health services must be available to every woman at her doorstep. But unfortunately this doesn’t happen. In otherwise case, usually family or household takes this responsibility*”<sup>34</sup>. Defending the state another officer said: “*State should not be blamed in this matter. Services are there. But it is due to the Pakistani culture that women are not allowed to avail them*”<sup>35</sup>. But state is responsible:

We spend only 0.8% of the GDP on health. Do you think this amount sufficient to provide good health cover for all the segments of society? Certainly not! The government fails to provide adequate health cover to the vulnerable segments of the society including the old-aged and the in-firm<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>34</sup>SWPI No.01/Q.1

<sup>35</sup> SWPI No.06/Q.1

<sup>36</sup> SWPI No.17/Q.1

On the other hand, Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh spend 2.0 %, 1.1% and 1.1% respectively. Per capita government expenditure on health (in US\$) show nearly the same trend. Sri Lanka spends 105 US\$, Bangladesh 26 US \$, India 21 US\$<sup>37</sup> whereas Pakistan is at the lowest with 8 US\$. That is why a Pakistani family has to bear the brunt of purchasing private health services for its member from its usually meager resources. Another official justifies the same in these words: “*Household is handicapped in resources. How much can it afford for major surgery and chronic diseases. And if at all it does what will be left for the kids*”<sup>38</sup>.

Except Sri Lanka, the level of women’s health progress of the rest three countries (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh), as has been evaluated above, is low. Generally speaking Pakistani women have to cope with the lack of public-level health facilities by purchasing for them from the private hospitals, clinics and medical centers. There they have to spend their resources saved in different form of reared animals, a patch of land, jewelry and as food grains.

### **MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality & Empower Women**

This goal includes following three areas of gender equality and women empowerment: Education; Economic Participation; and Political Participation. Therefore in order to evaluate gender equality and women empowerment through this goal we will have to construct three indices namely:

1. Women’s Education Index (WEI),
2. Index of Women’s Economic Participation (IWEP), and
3. Index of Women’s Political Participation (IWPP).

The main emphasis of the National Policy for the Development & Empowerment of Women (2002) is women’s compulsory primary education<sup>39</sup>. But education in Pakistan suffers from countless issues like poverty, public-private discrimination, class distinction, violence against women, non-availability of educational facilities, coupled with lack of curriculum reforms .

### **Women’s Education Index (WEI)**

The indicators utilized for this purpose were :(i) Adult Literacy Rate (ALR); (ii) Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER); and (iii) Gender Parity Index (GPI) in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary.

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<sup>37</sup>[www.unescap.org](http://www.unescap.org)

<sup>38</sup>SWPI No.07

<sup>39</sup>Government of Pakistan. (2002). *NPDEW (National Policy for the Development & Empowerment of Women) 2002*.(Islamabad: Ministry of Women Development Social Welfare and Special Education)

- (i) Adult Literacy Rate (ALR): Sri Lanka leads South Asia with 90.6 percent of ALR whereas Pakistan is at the lowest i.e.53.7. India and Bangladesh are better than Pakistan with ALR 62.8 and 55 respectively<sup>40</sup>.
- (iii) Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER): GER of Sri Lanka, 69.9, is the highest among all the countries to be compared here. Whereas Pakistan lags to have 34.4.India and Bangladesh have GER 57.4 and 52.5 respectively<sup>41</sup>.
- (iv) Gender Parity Index (GPI) in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary: One of the most effective ways of enhancing women wellbeing is girls' education. Gender Parity Index (GPI) is the ratio of gross enrollment of girls to boys in primary schools<sup>42</sup>. GPI of Bangladesh is at the highest (i.e.0.887) and Pakistan at the lowest (i.e.0.813).Whereas India and Sri Lanka possess the value of this indicator as 0.843 and 0.833 respectively. Bangladesh, hence, exhibits more gender parity than other countries in terms of access to education<sup>43</sup>.

Women's performance in education has been determined in the light of WEI. The formula used for the index is:

$$WEI = \frac{1}{3(ALRIndex + GERIndex + GPIIndex)}$$

It can be noted from the Table No.2 below that like the health status, Pakistani women lag in educational status too. The EI (Education Index) value of Pakistan is at the bottom (0.453) while that of Sri Lanka at the top (0.768).The reason for this low EI is due to two factors: ALR and GER discussed above. As far as efficiency of model is concerned, Sri Lanka as usual exhibits best performance in women education. It falls in the High success level with a percentage of success 76.80%. Pakistan is the lowest among all the four nations showing Low-to-Medium level progress with percentage 45.30. Its efficiency is deplorably low (see Table No.2).

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<sup>40</sup>United Nations. (2009).*World Bank: Annual Report 2009*. (New York: United Nations); UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2010).*Human Development Report 2010*.(New York: United Nations)

<sup>41</sup>United Nations. (2009).*World Bank: Annual Report 2009*. (New York: United Nations) p.181; United Nations. (2009).*World Bank: Annual Report 2009*. (New York: United Nations)

<sup>42</sup> Save the Children. (2009).Op. Cit.

<sup>43</sup> World Bank. (2009); UNDP.(2010).Op. Cit.

**Table No.2**

The Overall Educational Status of Pakistani Women in Comparison with their Neighboring Countries

HDI Rank 2009	Country	Index of A L R	Index of GER	Index of GPI(Average)	Women Education Index (WEI)	Progress	
						Level	%
102	Sri Lanka	0.872	0.599	0.833	0.768	High	76.80
134	India	0.465	0.445	0.843	0.584	Medium-to-High	58.40
<b>141</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>0.289</b>	<b>0.257</b>	<b>0.813</b>	<b>0.453</b>	<b>Low-to-Medium</b>	<b>45.30</b>
146	B'desh	0.388	0.367	0.887	0.547	Medium-to-High	54.70

**Source:** World Bank, 2009; MDGs Report 2010/2011& UNDP, 2010

India and Bangladesh also exhibit almost similar possessing 58.40% and 54.70% respectively. The weak areas responsible for this residual progress are: ALR; GER; and GPI in primary, secondary and tertiary. Quite similar to women's health, we conclude that the educational services, too, at public level are in no sense better than those at private level. Therefore, the only well offs can (and do) spend on private education services. The second reason, as usual, is culture. About the low level educational services one of the respondents of this study said in these words: "*Some resourceful families spend lavishly upon women's education. But most of the poor families avail facilities from the public sector*"<sup>44</sup>. But a witness of the public level educational institutions is quoted here saying: "*I would simply ask: Despite the spacious buildings, free books to the students and low fees the overall performance of public level educational institutions is disappointing. Why*"<sup>45</sup>? Pakistan is at the lowest in South Asia in women ALR (i.e. 53.7%). It is worst in GER (i.e. 34.4%) and also in GPI (i.e. 0.813). (see Table No.2 above). An officer revealing the cause of this state of affair says: "... *Again the problem lies with the peculiar Pakistani culture. In various media reports we have watched so many girls schools set ablaze and (or) blasted-off*"<sup>46</sup>.

Local religious leaders, in tribal areas as well as in Baluchistan, usually exert their pressure against female education. In Friday prayers and in tribal gatherings they label girl's school as: *Centers of immoral activities and Western culture*<sup>47</sup>. But it is an undeniable fact that: *Educating a boy will be equal to educating one person while*

<sup>44</sup> SWPI No.16

<sup>45</sup> SWPI No.17

<sup>46</sup> SWPI No.15

<sup>47</sup> ibid

*educating a woman will be equal to educating one nation*<sup>48</sup>. Also, “*A healthy woman has healthy sons and daughters; an educated woman has educated sons and daughters and an empowered woman has confident sons and daughters*”<sup>49</sup>.

This obviously demands a change in culture and particularly the change in deep-rooted regional as well as tribal traditions of not sending their girls to school. The story of robust and rampant deterioration in the system does not end here. We must not overlook the deterring role of poverty, public-private dichotomy and class discrimination in women education also<sup>50</sup>. This demands a consensus of all the stakeholders, from state functionaries to the service recipients. The above discussion has revealed that except Sri Lanka, the rest three countries (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) fall at the low progress level in women’s education. Pakistan, however, is at the bottom among all the four nations. Again the reasons are: (1) Low public spending (2) Orthodox tribal and family norms and (2) Bad governance of public-level educational institutions.

### 1. **Index of Women’s Economic Participation (IWEP)**

The indicators needed for this index were: (i) Labor Force Participation Rate; (ii) Male & Female Share of Earned Income Ratio; (iii) Ratio of Administrative & Managerial Positions; and (iv) Ratio of Professional & Technical Positions

- (i) Labor Force Participation Rate: Sri Lanka tops in labor force participation in the non-agricultural sector with a 38.5 percent of women employment while Pakistan is at the bottom with 13.2. Bangladesh is somewhat better than Pakistan with 21.1 percent share. India’s data is not available<sup>51</sup>.
- (ii) Male & Female Share of Earned Income Ratio: Ratio of estimated female to male earned income of Pakistan is 0.18 which is very low in this region whereas Sri Lanka tops with 0.56. Bangladesh and India are at 0.51 and 0.32 respectively<sup>52</sup>.
- (iii) Ratio of Administrative & Managerial Positions: (discussed under Index of Women’s Political Participation (IWPP))
- (iv) Ratio of Professional & Technical Positions: Professional and technical positions include physical, mathematical and engineering science, life science and health and teaching

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<sup>48</sup> SWPI No.22/Q.1

<sup>49</sup> SWPI No.22/Q.1

<sup>50</sup> SDPI.(2008).Op. Cit.

<sup>51</sup> World Bank. (2009); UNDP. (2010).Op. Cit.

<sup>52</sup> UNDP. (2009).Op. Cit.

professionals<sup>53</sup>. Percentage of female professionals is highest in Sri Lanka (46%) and lowest in Bangladesh (22%). India has provided no data while Pakistanis at 25 percent<sup>54</sup>.

The formula for computation of IWEP is:

$$\text{IWEP} = 1/3(\text{Index of Women Employees} + \text{Ratio of Male \& Female Income} + \text{Index of Women Professionals})$$

Comparing the performance of the countries based on IWEP, we note that progress of none of the four countries is beyond Low-to-Medium level. Sri Lanka is, however, the best performer in economic participation of women with respect to high percentage (48.90%) nearly equal to that of Bangladesh. Whereas both India and Pakistan show a bottom level performance with a least percentages in the table to be 32.30 and 19.60 respectively (see Table No.3). Among the four constituent areas of Pakistani women's economic participation we found none to be strong. Our women's labor force participation rate is very low i.e. only 13.2 %; male & female share of earned income ratio of is also low being at 0.18; and the ratio of professional & technical positions is 25 percent. The factors responsible for this state of affair are: Uncongenial and insecure surrounding of a woman at her workplace; exploitation on the part of employer and cultural impediments to women employment.

### Table No.3

The Overall Economic Status of Pakistani Women in Comparison with their Neighboring Countries

HDI Rank 2009	Country	Index of Women Employees	Ratio of Male & Female Income	Index of Women Professionals	Index of Women's Economic Participation (IWEP)	Progress	
						Level	%
102	Sri Lanka	0.353	0.56	0.554	0.489	Low-to-Medium	48.90
134	India	0.323	0.32	---	0.323	Low	32.30
<b>141</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>0.176</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>0.231</b>	<b>0.196</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>19.60</b>
146	B'desh	0.594	0.51	0.185	0.430	Low-to-Medium	43.00

Source: UNDP, 2009+ World Bank, 2009+ UNDP, 2010+ Own Calculations

A professional of social welfare shared his views regarding uncongenial and insecure surrounding of a woman at her workplace in these words:

<sup>53</sup> UNDP.(2009).Op. Cit. p:209

<sup>54</sup> ibid

The working environment has never been congenial to the female employees. Most of the working women are teased on the way and (or) at the work place. The Pakistani society has never been encouraging to the woman's participation in the economic activities. She ultimately has to leave the job to seek pro-feminine atmosphere at her work place<sup>55</sup>.

Asian Human Rights Commission in its report about Pakistan confirms women's exploitation at work place in these words:

Women have to contend with lower salaries and uncongenial working environment<sup>56</sup>. Pakistan, culturally, is 'male breadwinner model'. A woman's income especially her bringing home salaries, wages or anything in return of her out-of-home work is considered to be hideous in this culture. The same has been said by a seasoned professional in the field of social welfare in these words: In my understanding women's being away from the labour market is due to the reason that Pakistan is 'male breadwinner model'. The female has to depend upon the resources of the male. She is not empowered. That is why she is exploited the most<sup>57</sup>.

This discouraging state of affairs for the female employees is one among the causes of household poverty. Pakistani women's participation in the labor market is at the bottom (13.2%), female to male earned income ratio is 0.18 which is also very low while the percentage of Pakistani women's professional & technical positions is only 25 (Table No.3). The factors responsible for this state of affair are: Uncongenial and insecure surrounding of a woman at her workplace; exploitation on the part of employer and cultural impediments to women employment. These are the vivid signs of poverty and misery of a household.

## **2 Index of Women's Political Participation (IWPP)**

The fourth index constructed for this study is an Index of Women's Political Participation (IWPP). The indicators needed to construct this index are: (i) Women's Seats in the Parliament; (ii) Women as Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers; and (iii) Women in Ministerial Positions

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<sup>55</sup>SWPI No.26/Q.1

<sup>56</sup><http://material.ahrchk.net/>

<sup>57</sup> SWPI No.19/Q.2

- (i) Women's Seats in the Parliament: Nordic countries lead the world in women seats in the parliament. Parliament in these countries is thronged with women members (usually more than 40%)<sup>58</sup>. South Asia has been slow in political empowerment and representation of its women<sup>59</sup>. In the present parliament, Pakistan leads South Asia with 22 percent women parliamentarians. Bangladesh is close to it with 19, India 11 while Sri Lanka is at the lowest with 6 percent of women members in the present assemblies<sup>60</sup>.
- (ii) Women as Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers: Women's positions include senior government officials, directors and chief executives, legislators, traditional chiefs and heads of villages etc.<sup>61</sup>
- (iii) We find greater percentage of women decision-makers in Sri Lanka (24%) than other countries. India provided no data for this indicator. Condition of Bangladesh is not very discouraging. But the condition of Pakistani women in this regard is desperate (i.e. only 3%)<sup>62</sup>.
- (iv) Women in Ministerial Position: It includes heads of departments or agencies where a woman exercises a ministerial function in the government structure<sup>63</sup>. Comparing women's ministerial positions India tops the rest with 10 percent women ministers in the present national cabinet. Pakistan has only 4 percent female ministers whereas Bangladesh has 8 percent and Sri Lanka 6 percent<sup>64</sup>. In order to calculate IWPP the following formula has been derived:

$$\text{IWPP} = 1/3(\text{Index of Women's Seats in Parliament} + \text{Index of Women Legislators} + \text{Index of Women Ministers})$$

Based on the values of IWPP we witness that all the four countries fall in the range of low progress whereas Bangladesh at the lowest with 13.90 percent progress in this indicator. (See Table No.4)

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<sup>58</sup>www.ipu.org

<sup>59</sup>Dr. Pareet Rustagi. (2004). Women and Development in South Asia. In *South Asian Journal*, April-June.2004.

<sup>60</sup> UNDP.(2009).Op. Cit. p:28

<sup>61</sup> UNDP.(2009). Op.Cit.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

<sup>64</sup> Ibid

**Table No.4:**

Overall Status of Pakistani Women's Political Participation in Comparison with their Neighboring Countries

HDI Rank 2009	Country	Index of Women's Seats in Parliament	Index of Women Legislators	Index of Women Ministers	Index of Women's Political Participation (IWPP)	Progress	
						Level	%
102	Sri Lanka	0.106	0.400	0.100	0.202	Low	20.20
134	India	0.167	...	0.167	0.167	Low	16.70
<b>141</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>0.386</b>	<b>0.051</b>	<b>0.067</b>	<b>0.168</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>16.80</b>
146	B'desh	0.115	0.167	0.134	0.139	Lowest	13.90

**Source:** UNDP, 2009; World Bank, 2009; UNDP, 2010 & Own Calculations

It may be suggested after these findings that women should not confine themselves to the households only. They should utilize their potential for the society also. Her role in the society can be best described as a decision-maker at national level. No doubt women's seats in the national parliament increased i.e.22% in the present parliament, the highest among the South Asian countries. But still the strong cultural constraints deter them play their due role in the society. In its report of 2008, US State Department presented an adverse situation regarding women's rights of decision making: *Religious and social conservatives in some parts of Pakistan prevented women from becoming candidates*<sup>65</sup>. Another source described the situation in these words: *In by-election of National Assembly Seat-26 on 29 March 2007, KPK tribal elders barred women from casting their vote*<sup>66</sup>. The same source added: Former CM Sindh Dr. Arbab Ghulam Rahim said, *women's leadership was a 'curse' on society during his election campaign on 26 August 2007 in Thatta*<sup>67</sup>. The source added further that:

In Upper Dir district of KPK most of the lady councillors have not attended sessions of district and union councils since 2005 on account of a ban imposed by a local jirga. These sessions are, instead, attended by their fathers, sons, brothers and husbands<sup>68</sup>.

<sup>65</sup><http://www.state.gov>

<sup>66</sup><http://www.achrweb.org/>

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Ibid

### **Composite Index of Women Empowerment (CIWE):**

This index is the composite of all the previously worked-out indices related to women health and empowerment. Simply a mean of the above four an index has been calculated to have this index as:

$$CIWE = \frac{1}{4} (WHI + WEI + IWEP + IWPP)$$

The final results noted in Table No.5 are based upon CIWE .Here we find Sri Lanka scoring very high (68%) exhibiting Medium-to-High progress. Both India and Bangladesh are next to it with score 36.60 and 34.40 percent respectively.

**Table No.5**

The Overall Status of Pakistani Women in Comparison with their Neighboring Countries

HDI Rank 2009	Country	WHI	WEI	IWEP	IWPP	Composite Index*of Women Empowerment (CIWE)	Progress	
							Level	%
102	Sri Lanka	0.680	0.768	0.489	0.202	0.535	Medium-to-High	53.50
134	India	0.391	0.584	0.323	0.167	0.366	Low-to-Medium	36.60
<b>141</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>0.289</b>	<b>0.453</b>	<b>0.196</b>	<b>0.168</b>	<b>0.277</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>27.70</b>
146	B'desh	0.258	0.547	0.430	0.139	0.344	Low-to-Medium	34.40

\*Average of Indices

Source: Own Calculations

Pakistan (27.70%), however, stands at Low progress level in both of the gender-related MDGs: MDG5&MDG3. It can easily be concluded that all the three countries (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) possess residual type of women welfare.

### **Gender-related UN Indices**

As a result of UN efforts, two indices to evaluate the state of women in a country had been constructed. Around the world these indices are frequently used to evaluate the state of women in a country. These indices are: Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure GEM.

- 1. Gender Development Index (GDI):** It is an index of gender development. In 2010, GDI score of Norway was the highest of all countries. Very rarely GDI differs from the HDI

(which is not gender-specific). Pakistan's ranking of HDI was 125 while GDI was 131 in 2010.

2. **Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM):** It is an index of gender empowerment. With respect to the ratio of women in the parliament, nearly all the countries belonging to the Nordic model, especially Norway, top the rest in the world. In past and present no other country in the world has as many women in the legislature as the Nordic countries<sup>69</sup>. GEM values of these countries is the highest in the world. On the other hand, Sri Lanka tops GEM values in the region while Pakistan and Bangladesh touch the bottom. (As shown in Table No.6). It can be verified from Table No.6 that GDI values fluctuate between 0.5 to 0.7 and 1.00 being the ideal value showing maximum gender development whereas GEM values fluctuate between 0.3 to 0.5 and 1.000 being the ideal value showing maximum gender empowerment. It means that level of gender development is higher in the world than gender empowerment.

However, in Nordic countries the GEM value is usually beyond the figure 0.900 and nearing 1.000 GDI is concerned with women's health, education and the matters related to their economic development while GEM is related to the enhancement of women's decision-making power pertaining to all matters of their lives. GEM, in this regard, is more comprehensive than GDI. It is very difficult for a country to GEM (or to gem) its women. That is why its value falls in the lower slots than that of GDI.

Seeing Table 5.6, we once again see Sri Lanka leading the course while rest to follow. In GDI, however, performance of all the countries is dazzling. But in case of GEM we find all the four countries at residual level, India and Bangladesh somewhat deplorable.

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<sup>69</sup><http://worldsavvy.org>

**Table No.6**

Showing Women Empowerment in Pakistan and its Neighbors on the basis of GDI&GEM

HDI Rank 2009	Country	GDI	Progress		GEM	Progress	
			Level	%		Level	%
102	Sri Lanka	0.756	High	75.60	0.389	Low-to-Medium	38.90
134	India	0.594	Medium-to-High	59.40	0.308	Low	30.80
<b>141</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>0.532</b>	<b>Medium-to-High</b>	<b>53.20</b>	<b>0.386</b>	<b>Low-to-Medium</b>	<b>38.60</b>
146	B'desh	0.536	Medium-to-High	53.60	0.264	Low	26.40

Source: UNDP, 2009 (GDI) + (GEM)

The contents of this table also verify the claim that the Women Welfare in Pakistan and its neighboring countries, especially India and Bangladesh, is residual in nature. Differently put Pakistan exhibits very low progress in women development especially in women economic empowerment (as shown in Table No.6).

## CONCLUSION

Results based on the self-constructed index namely Composite Index of Women Empowerment (CIWE), values of GDI and GEM for Pakistan and its neighbors and the expert opinions of the welfare personnel indicate that women welfare in all the three countries (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) gives a residual look. Pakistan (27.70%) stands at Low progress level in both of the gender-related MDGs: MDG5&MDG3. Pakistan also exhibits very low progress in women development especially in women economic empowerment. And this residual shape of women welfare in all the four countries (Sri Lanka included) is due to low welfare spending.

We conclude the discussion with this statement: A Pakistani woman's life is very miserable than those in the highly developed countries i.e. Sweden, Germany and USA. A Pakistani woman has to fight against the dearth of state-level health facilities, a culture-bound education, a teasing workplace environment and above all a bad governance of all the services meant for her.

- (1) As noted above women welfare in Pakistan is at a residual level. Low public spending, bad governance and regional norms are the main reasons of this residual progress.
- (2) Taxation is solution to the low public spending.
- (3) For good governance the previously mentioned strategy can be adopted but with the consensus of the stakeholders.
- (4) To address the cultural constraints on women's access to out-of-home facilities of health, education, employment etc. it is strongly recommended that media, both electronic and print, should intervene the situation. Electronic media should play its role in highlighting the issues attached with ante-natal care, skilled birth attendance, and importance of contraceptive use .It should also play its role in changing the norms and values against women's education, training as well as their access to the labor market. Similarly the print media should play its role of a 'watch dog' to implement gender instruments adopted by the State.
- (5) The Ministry of Social Welfare, as being focal machinery at federal level, should seek inter-ministerial partnership in implementing CEDAW, GRAP, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action effectively.

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## APPENDIX

### Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

#### **Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger**

**Target 1.** Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than a dollar a day

**Target 2.** Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

#### **Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education**

**Target 3.** Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

#### **Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women**

**Target 4.** Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015

#### **Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality**

**Target 5.** Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

#### **Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health**

**Target 6.** Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

#### **Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases**

**Target 7.** Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

**Target 8.** Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

#### **Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability**

**Target 9.** Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources

**Target 10.** Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

**Target 11.** Have achieved, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

#### **Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development**

**Target 12.** Develop further an open, rule based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system

More generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction

**Target 15:** Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long run

(Goals and targets adopted by Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh)