

WOMEN'S VOICE AND LEADERSHIP

PAKISTAN

GOAL 5 GENDER EQUALITY NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

By Peace & Justice Network

SYNOPSIS

Goal 5 Gender Equality National Action Plan

The Government of Pakistan has identified Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 Gender Equality as one of the priority goals in Pakistan's 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development. The SDG 5 aims to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls." Empowering women and promoting gender equality is crucial to accelerating sustainable development in Pakistan. While Pakistan has developed a strong mechanism to achieve the SDGs, several challenges to the achievement of Goal 5 remain.

To ensure Pakistan has a strong legislative policy and institutional framework to achieve Goal 5 and its targets, the Peace & Justice Network (PJN) conducted a National gap-analysis study on Goal 5 Gender Equality. The study covered all the provinces and Federal capital territory with a primary focus on the identification of reform actions to achieve gender equality and women empowerment by addressing legislative, policy and institutional gaps.

The holistic conversation generated through consultations and expert interviews form the basis of the comprehensive policy recommendations found in the Goal 5 Gender Equality National Action Plan. The Action Plan sets out the reforms necessary to ensure gender equality and empower all women and girls in Pakistan through a minimum, though necessary set of actions.

The Reform actions were identified via information received during 15 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and over 50 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) at the National, Provincial and Regional level. These consultations were carried with over 350 rights-based, civil-society organizations, and relevant government departments including Parliamentary SDGs Task Forces, Women's Parliamentary Caucus and National Commission for the Status of Women (NCSW).

Despite the passing of 06 years, field analysis shows that a comprehensive National approach to Goal 5 legislative, policy and institutional development for localization and implementation has yet to be turned into actions. Since the ratification of the 18th amendment of the Constitution of Pakistan, many actions related to women empowerment are now required to be implemented by the provinces. In the absence of the 'approved' Provincial frameworks and effective post legislative scrutiny mechanisms, it is hard to see what each province has prioritized and implemented to assess their impact.

The field analysis identified significant challenges to the implementation and achievement of SDG 5 which include the following:

1. The thematic and institutional ecosystem for Goal 5 is overcrowded and spread across the executive, legislative and judicial organs of state at both National and sub-National level. This thematic disharmony creates overlapping institutional diversity (i.e. there is a wide array of institutions that are mandated to deliver on one or more targets). Since a formalized coordination mechanism among institutions is missing, isolated efforts with very little impact exist.
2. Currently there is no central agency responsible for acting as a hub for coordinating, reporting, monitoring, planning and taking the lead on ensuring Goal 5's progress. This leads to a limited oversight of SDG 5 implementation.
3. As the data to track indicators of Goal 5 are not regularly produced, standards need to be developed since there is no National Gender Management Information System (GMIS) in place.

4. Effective implementation of pro-women's laws is a key challenge at Federal and the Provincial level. Many laws/acts required subordinate legislation and rules for their proper enactments.
5. Limited financial resources is another key challenge to the development of effective women's protection and empowerment institutions including commissions established by Federal and Provincial governments.
6. National, Provincial and Local governments must ensure gender-responsive budgeting by ensuring gender equitable distribution of resources. The Planning Commission must integrate SDGs framework with budget heads to identify specific allocation of resources and expenditure for each target and goal. The development budget and development schemes must be aligned with SDGs reporting framework.
7. A policy framework for the empowerment of women from minority communities, women with disabilities and the transgender community seems to be not present.

These institutional and data gap challenges are compounded by socially and culturally embedded norms and attitudes which bar women from access to equal opportunities within both private and public spheres of life.

To address these gaps and challenges to achieve SDG 5 Gender Equality in Pakistan, the study identified key recommendations that include the following:

1. There is a need for a GMIS to help in transforming women related statistics/information to produce regular analysis and reports on different targets and indicators of Goal 5 for the decision makers at the National, Provincial and District levels. The state and its provinces are subject by obligation for the development of GMIS for Pakistan SDGs Reporting. Currently at the Provincial level, only Punjab has

comprehensive GMIS. Also, the NCSW is in the process of finalizing the National Gender Data Portal (NGDP). Current systems are not able to address Goal 5 data needs completely. Ministry of Human Rights at the National level is also making efforts to develop a human rights information management system. Therefore, there is a need for integrating these systems with Goal 5 targets and indicators

2. For effective coordinating, reporting, monitoring, planning and leading on Goal 5 progress, Federal and Provincial governments, a Goal 5 Lead Agency is recommended.
3. To end discrimination and all form of violence against women and girls, there is a need for effective implementation of women protection and empowerment laws and policies. All pending rules and legislation should be enacted and post-legislative scrutiny of existing laws must be conducted.
4. There is a need for an integrated women's protection mechanism. It is recommended that a dedicated Working Group to end GBV be formed. It is also recommended that more women should be appointed in the police, judiciary and in the legal profession in order to create a conducive environment that encourages women to report incidents of violence and can access justice institutions and courts without any fear.
5. Sufficient resources should be allocated for development of a proper tracking mechanism to ensure Goal 5 legislative, policy and institutional framework implementation.
6. A strong policy framework for unpaid care and for Women Use of Technology is recommended.
7. To further strengthen the role of women in decision making and in leadership position by building capacity and promoting women empowerment, as well as through legislative (Election Law) and constitutional amendments to increase women representation.

8. To ensure protection of women and To ensure guaranteeing their access to justice, legal aid mechanisms should be activated and GBV Courts must be operationalized as per their approved SOPs.
9. To ensure the impact of Goal 5 Gender Equality achievements on marginalized and excluded communities, development of a dedicated policy framework for women with disabilities, women from minority community and transgender community is recommended.
10. Autonomy for the Commissions for the Status of Women especially financial independence must be ensured. Government must take immediate steps to ensure all the National Human Rights Institutions (NCRC, NCSW and NCHR) are working as per Paris Principles. Also, the Ombudsperson for the Protection of Women against Harassment at Workplace should be awarded with suo moto powers to be provided for immediate action on cases of workplace harassment.

The Goal 5 National Action Plan gives clear pathways for collective actions to support women's rights organizations. It also supports legislators, policymakers and government departments for taking focused steps to form joint integrated and inclusive strategy to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls in Pakistan.