

WOMEN'S VOICE AND LEADERSHIP

PAKISTAN

EXPLORING CHANGING FORMS OF GENDER ISSUES IN URBAN CONTEXT OF PAKISTAN

By: Prof Raana Malik – Punjab University-Lahore

SNAPSHOTS

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Rapid urbanization is shifting social, economic, and political dynamics, with particular impact on gender equality and women empowerment. Even though urbanization offers greater economic independence, social, political and employment opportunities and access to better services to women, but women face unequal access to work, housing, health, education, information and technology, and representation in governance structures due to significant barriers. Urban labor markets offer more job opportunities but also require higher-level skills and extra effort for women to compete for the safest and highest-paying jobs. The digital transformation offers immense opportunities for entrepreneurship, economies, and societies.

However, the benefits of the digital transformation are currently not equally balanced between genders and access, use and ownership of digital tools are not gender neutral. Poverty does not only mean lack of money, it also includes deprivation of justice and same human rights, and unjust division of the resources among the people on the basis of class and gender. The very idea of the feminization of poverty deals with the bias against the women. In the growing urban economies, women are facing the burden of poverty on one side and gender discrimination and violence on the other side. The situation has made women's position in the cities more marginalized.

Methodology

The combination of the qualitative and quantitative data collected through primary and secondary sources was used.

Quantitative

Semi structured questionnaire women's perceptions about gender issues in cities with 1000 women of different category (special person, transgenders, working women, domestic workers, students, housewives and below poverty line) of Lahore, Peshawar, and Quetta.

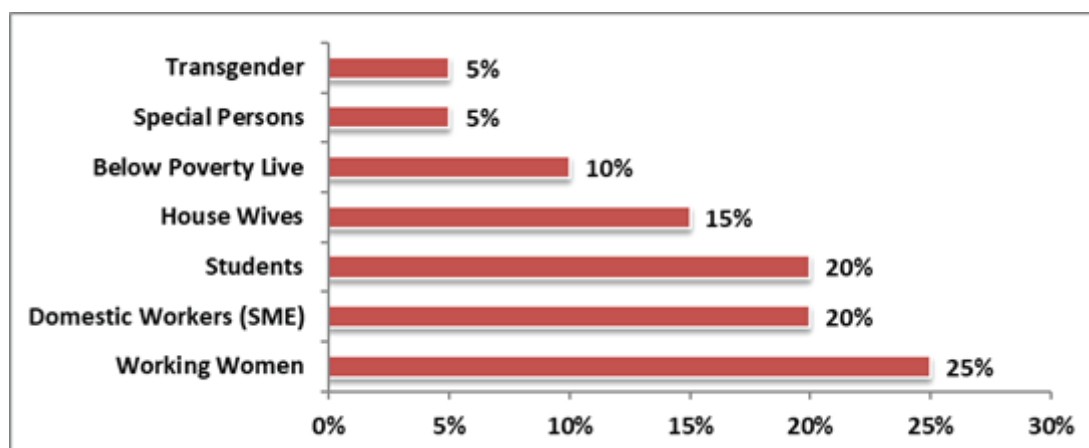
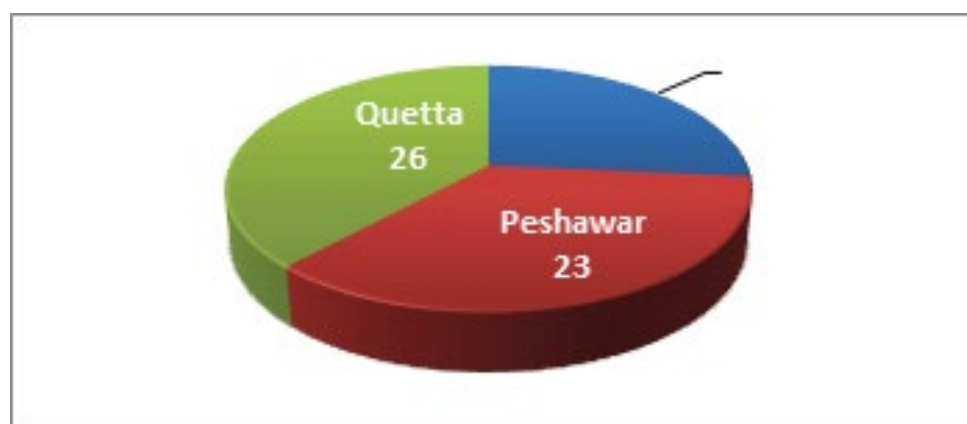


Table of Distribution

Category	Lahore	Peshawar	Quetta	Total
Transgender	18	17	15	50
Special persons	18	17	15	50
Below Poverty Line	36	33	30	99
Below Poverty Line	54	49	45	148
Students	72	65	73	210
Domestic Worker	72	65	60	197
Working Women	90	81	75	246
Total	360	327	313	1000

Respondent in different category:

Qualitative through consultative dialogue sessions with various stake holders like representatives of Local Bodies Department, Planning and Development, Urban Planning and Development, Chamber of Commerce, Technical & Vocational Educational Development, Cyber Crime Cell, Gender Mainstreaming Units, Ombuds persons on human rights and sexual harassment, Media, MPA/MNAs etc



Findings:

- The double-burden workload on women, which, combined with other discriminations (intra-household and in the labor market) restrains the type of income-generating activities available to them and can lower the value of their work contributions in the labor market
- Higher levels of education, use of social media, awareness about women rights, exposure etc. has developed in general positive attitude towards women in cities as compared to people living in rural areas.

- Freedom of choice and movement is still very limited due to socio-cultural norms and values, restricted mobility and discriminatory behavior.
- Only 26% of the women has a right to spend their earning according to their choice, rest has the family pressure on spending their earnings
- There is still disparity in giving the inheritance rights to women, its better in Lahore as compared to Peshawar and Quetta due to socio cultural norms and values.
- Women representation is less in the organization event on the government assurance of 33% representation, hinderances in promotion, Job salary and insecurities in job is highest in Peshawar followed by Lahore and Quetta
- Harassment is one of those issues which women suffer on daily basis during their jobs. Moreover, harassment issues are not only observed in private sector but also in government departments, women are harassed during their duty
- By urbanization and on job women enjoy more freedom and dignity as compared to rural women.
- Most of the women has no access to IT technology and have only basic knowledge to use it.
- More than two-third women in all the three cities have least knowledge about the policies and programmes initiated by government for empowerment of women. The percentage was highest in Quetta (80.2%) and about 60% in Lahore and Peshawar.

Recommendations:

Lahore

- Establishing Day Care Centers should in both public private sector organizations.
 - Awareness campaigns for use of Digital Apps should be undertaken. They must be used as referral system to harassment at public places in big cities.
 - IT industry should provide training to women working from home and doing business at small scale.
 - Soft loans should be given to women entrepreneurs on easy conditions.
 - Safe transportation system like Pink buses should be developed for secure travel for working women in metropolitan cities.
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- A comprehensive skilled training program should be started to equipped women with latest skills.
 - Loan and grant system in banks and other organizations should be made easy and accessible for all working and skilled women.
 - Government line departments should ensure sexual harassment committees in each public and private department and institution.
 - Government should train women on software and other technologies to promote e-commerce.
 - A comprehensive awareness program on learning ICTs and digital technology should be started.
 - Awareness on human rights laws and laws related to cyber harassment should be started.

Quetta

- All public and private institutions should be sensitized about implementation of Protection of women against harassment at workplace Act.
- Government should develop skilled based training centers for less educated women in big cities.
- Maturity leave rules should also be followed in private organizations.
- Referral system should be developed for women safety of working women in Quetta.

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