

06 CORRIDORS, CULTURE & CONNECTIVITY

July, 2018

ROLE OF WOMEN IN CHINA-PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (CPEC)



Amna Syed
Ramlah Tariq



Pakistan-China Institute

Corridors, Culture & Connectivity

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House #27, Street # 37, F/6-1, Islamabad.

Telephone: +92-51-8438294

Fax: +92-51-8319767

www.pakistan-china.com

info@pakistan-china.com

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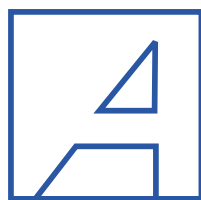
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Foreword

This report is instructive in how we enable the workforce of Pakistan, more than half of which is women, to benefit and participate from the most comprehensive development agenda which is the BRI, and its flagship project, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. This report is timely and increasingly relevant, as it compares other economies which have witnessed similar growth and projects and the impact which those have had on gender-equity.

This report will enrich the discourse on CPEC and Pakistan's economy by making it more sustainable, equitable and inclusive. The Pakistan-China Institute, with its dynamic team and partners, will continue to play the leading role in shaping discourse and debate on important issues like CPEC.

I am thankful to Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) for their continued support and partnership. We hope to keep publishing enlightening and insightful research together to facilitate policy-makers, faculty members, think-tanks and students to better understand the changing regional dynamics due to CPEC and their implications on the society.

Finally, I thank Amna Syed and Ramlah Tariq, for their immense hard work and contribution in authoring this first-of-its-kind monograph.

Mustafa Hyder Sayed

Executive Director, Pakistan-China Institute

About the Authors

Amna Syed has worked as an associate with Pakistan-China Institute and is now pursuing her Masters with a focus on Gender and Globalization of Modern Economy from The University of Freiburg, Germany. The author has a particular interest in Gender Studies in the developing world and has worked on projects specific to this theme. Her previous publications include Change in the Social Status of Home Based Women Workers, a research report for National Rural Support Programme (NRSP). Previously she has also worked closely as a consultant with Chinese companies on various infrastructure and energy projects in Punjab and KPK, along with performing the role of project coordinator. While working with PCI the author also has prior research experience with regards to the energy sector.

Ramlah Tariq has been working at Pakistan-China Institute as a Senior Associate where she has worked extensively with various stakeholders like government departments, companies and organizations from Pakistan and China. She has managed various projects over the span of her time here such as leading the “Chinese Language Program for Professionals” project and supervising the web portal on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) called CPECinfo. She also played a leading role in organizing the 3rd Media Forum along with other discussions and seminars.

Glossary

Employed persons: A person is considered as employed if he/she worked for at least one hour during the month preceding the interview or, even if the person did not work in the last month, he/she had a job or ran an enterprise such as a shop, business, farm or service establishment during the last year.

Employment status: Employed persons are divided in the following categories: employer, paid employee, self-employed and own account worker, unpaid family helper, and agricultural labourers (owner cultivator, share-cropper, and contract cultivator). An employer is a person who owns an enterprise and works himself as well as employs individuals for pay to help him/her in his/her enterprise but may have others working for him/her without pay. An employee is a person who works for others in exchange for wages and a salary that is paid in cash or in kind. A self-employed or own account worker is a person who, though owning an enterprise, does not employ any person for pay, to help him/her in his/her enterprise but may have others working for him/her without pay, such as family helpers. The self-employed are divided into two categories:

- Those that run their own business or enterprise without the help of any other person.
- Those own account workers who run their own business or enterprise with the help of unpaid family helpers only.

Crude activity rate is the currently active population expressed as a percentage of the total population in Pakistan.

Augmented activity rate is based on probing questions from the persons not included in the conventional measure of labour force, to net-in marginal economic activities viz subsistence agriculture, own construction of one's dwelling etc.

Formal sector encompasses all jobs with regular wages, which are recognized as income sources on which income taxes must be paid

Informal sector broadly characterized as comprising production units that operate on a small scale and at a low level of organization, with little or no division between labour and capital as factors of production, and with the primary objective of generating income and employment for the persons concerned (ILO)

Casual Contracts: These are contracts often in the formal sector of employment that offer no social security, old-age, or health benefits, signed purely to ensure little legal implications for the employers.

Corporate Social Responsibility: Corporate social responsibility, often abbreviated "CSR," is a corporation's initiatives to assess and take responsibility for the company's effects on environmental and social wellbeing. The term generally applies to efforts that go beyond what may be required by regulators or environmental protection groups.

Refined activity rate is the currently active population expressed as a percentage of the population 10 years and above. This rate enables international comparison by factoring in the effect of age composition.

Working age population: The working age population is defined as those aged 15 to 64. The basic indicator for employment is the proportion of the working age population aged 15-64 who are employed. The age dependency ratio is the ratio of dependents (people younger than 15 or older than 64) to the working-age population.

Elementary occupation: Elementary occupations consist of simple and routine tasks which mainly require the use of hand-held tools and often some physical effort. Most occupations in this major group require skills at the first ISCO skill level.

****Income effect:** The impact of changes in our income or wealth on our consumption decisions (in the absence of changes in opportunity costs) is known as the income or wealth effect.¹

*Definitions for this research have been taken from Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, International Labour Organization and the United Nations official websites.

**The definition of income effect is taken from Thomas Nechyba's "Microeconomics: An Intuitive Approach with Calculus".

¹ Thomas J. Nechyba, *Microeconomics: An Intuitive Approach with Calculus* (Canada: Cengage Learning, 2015) 181.

Abstract

“Women hold up half the sky”, said Chairman Mao more than half a century ago. Discourses on gender equality have taken centre stage in the recent past, with global social movements focused on female emancipation gaining worldwide support. Over time, identification of female contribution to the economy has increased accompanied with a cultural shift that has removed several barriers to entry for women not only globally but more specifically in the context of South East Asia. This has resulted in a greater degree of research being carried out to understand problems and challenges faced by women in economic participation. Consequently, more efforts are being put into understanding social gender dynamics that create an enabling environment for women to bring forth their complete economic potential.

In Pakistan, women form 48.76 % of the population.² The advent of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is envisioned to bring jobs to thousands of Pakistanis in various sectors of the market. Signed in 2014, the mega project has already generated a considerable number of jobs for Pakistanis and some research has been carried out to identify the impacts of CPEC on the labour market. However, most of this research has been focused on the formal sector where female representation is only 26%.³ The informal sector which employs a major part of the female population is largely missing from this employment narrative. CPEC is a mammoth project which will inevitably in the future (if not currently) have a major impact on the informal economy of Pakistan. The purpose of this report is to identify how female employment will be affected by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, in both the formal and the informal sectors of employment.

By first identifying the current employment trends along gender lines, this paper attempts to understand female representation in different sectors of the economy. To fully comprehend female representation in the economy of Pakistan both formal and informal sectors have to be accounted for as several studies indicate that female representation in the informal sector is far

²“Census 2017.” Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Accessed February/March 2018. <http://www.pbscensus.gov.pk/>.

³ “Labour force Survey 2014-15”, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Accessed February/March 2018. <http://www.pbs.gov.pk/labour-force-publications>

greater relative to the formal sector.⁴ While efforts have been made by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics to show greater gender sensitivity when collecting data, figures for female representation in the employment sector especially informal employment sector remain largely unaccounted for. In this context understanding and mapping the informal sector was a difficult task which was facilitated to an extent by several research studies carried at a smaller level providing different area snapshots of the informal sector.

The paper attempts to gauge what is known widely as the “CPEC Effect” on female employment. Some sectors are expected to grow more than others; if existing female representation in a particular sector is identified, a realistic forecast can then be extended to female employment in the future.

Lastly the research report focuses on policy recommendations which will provide some academic recommendations on this limitedly researched topic. Through extensive interview sessions with members from the academia, think-tank networks, corporate, non-governmental and governmental institutions we have tried to ensure that perspective of all the stake-holders was accounted for. Hence the proposed solutions have been put forth after much deliberation with both the private and public sector representatives. This paper should prove to be an important policy handbook for tackling the issue of female labour inclusion, female employability, labour force retention, gender equality; especially with reference to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

⁴ Shahnaz Kazi, Bilquees Raza and Ann Duncan, Duality of Female Employment in Pakistan (Pakistan, The Pakistan Development Review, 1991), 50-52.

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1.0 Introduction

Labour Institutions in Pakistan are not very strong, therefore data related to labour market analysis is restricted. Research conducted on these topics utilize figures which are either outdated or dependent on specific case studies of a smaller area, the analysis of which is then extended. Data used in this research for most of the analysis is from the Labour Force Survey 2014-2015. It is important to point out that Labour Survey data has not been published in the last four years and a limitation to this research therefore is the available data for labour market dynamics. However, an analysis of previously published labour force surveys indicates minor yearly changes hence analysis based on figures from 2015 show if not completely than a fairly realistic picture of the current market dynamics. It is also important to bring into perspective the inaccurate way of data collection and the faulty parameters set to define economic activities which leaves out a considerable proportion of female population out of the analysis. In the appended glossary, an employed person is identified as someone who has “worked for at least one hour during the month preceding the date of data collection”. This definition questions the notion of employment as only something that can be carried out if a person leaves the premises of their house in search of livelihood. The existing definition leaves room for interpretation and therefore women who are home-makers and are involved in the tasks of cooking, cleaning, taking care of their children etc. should also be included to have economic contribution. Naseer Memon, GM CSR Sindh Engro Coal Mining believes that the work performed by these women should be recognized for its economic contribution.⁵ In our one-to-one interview he highlights that a woman who cooks food for four at her house is also making a contribution, the economic value of which can be calculated by replacing the same kind of food with market bought food items.

2.0 Female Labour Force Profile

According to the Labour Force Survey (2014-2015), out of the total working age population of Pakistan (aged 10 or above), 51% are male and 49% are female.⁶ This figure identifies the percentage of the female population that is available for economic participation. The Global

⁵ Naseer Memon, Interview by Amna Syed, semi structured in-person interview, Islamabad, February, 2018.

⁶ “Labour force Survey 2014-15”, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Accessed February/March 2018.
<http://www.pbs.gov.pk/labour-force-publications>

Gender Gap Report published by the World Economic Forum illustrates the state of gender gap in the employment sector in Pakistan. The report takes into account data collected and creates an index, the purpose of which is to measure the relative gaps between men and women in four important areas: health, education, economy and politics. The index maps out the progress of a country in terms of gender equality. On the overall Global Index, Pakistan is ranked at 143 which is the second lowest in the world and is only above Yemen. In terms of economic participation and opportunities, Pakistan is ranked at 143 among 144 countries with a score of 0.039 making it the lowest not only in the region but also in the world.

2.1 Female Employment Statistical Analysis

Figure 1 shows the Crude Activity Participation rates of Pakistan with a provincial break-up.⁷ Crude activity rate is a measure by which current active economic contributors are seen in comparison to the population. This has an important bearing on analysing the productive capability of a country. According to Figure 1, 15.8% females are involved in some kind of economic activity; the figure also shows augmented activity rate (see glossary). Augmented activity rate incorporates those aspects of economic activities which are often skipped in the conventional measures of the labour force; to account for economic activities which are on the periphery. For example, if a person decides to construct their own house, it means that this person is saving some amount which would have generated quantifiable economic return, and the augmented rate takes this into consideration as well. The importance of augmented rate becomes more significant for women because it interprets the definition of economic activity less restrictively. For example, in KPK, the Labour Force Survey shows that there were 9.9% women involved in crude economic activity that number went up to 27.6% when the augmented rate was calculated.

⁷ Mahmood Ahmad Bodla and T. Afza, Status and Prospects of the Informal Sector of Pakistan, Pakistan Economic and Social Review, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Winter 1997), 11.

CRUDE ACTIVITY (PARTICIPATION) RATES - PAKISTAN AND PROVINCES

(%)

Province/ Area	2013-14					2014-15				
	Total	Male	Female	*Augmented		Total	Male	Female	*Augmented	
				Total	Female				Total	Female
Pakistan	32.3	48.0	15.8	36.5	24.4	32.3	48.1	15.8	36.0	23.4
Rural	33.8	47.2	20.0	39.8	32.2	34.0	47.4	20.2	39.3	30.9
Urban	29.4	49.7	7.7	30.2	9.4	29.0	49.4	7.5	29.8	9.2
KP	25.0	40.5	9.8	35.0	29.5	25.0	40.0	9.9	33.9	27.6
Rural	24.8	39.4	10.6	36.6	33.6	25.1	39.3	10.7	35.7	31.8
Urban	25.9	45.1	6.1	28.0	10.3	24.7	42.9	6.1	26.2	9.0
Punjab	35.7	50.3	20.9	37.3	24.3	35.4	50.2	20.5	37.0	23.7
Rural	38.7	50.1	26.3	40.5	30.9	37.9	50.0	25.8	40.1	30.1
Urban	30.8	50.6	10.1	31.2	10.9	30.4	50.4	9.7	30.9	10.7
Sindh	30.5	48.9	9.9	36.2	21.9	30.6	49.6	9.5	35.7	20.2
Rural	32.4	47.8	14.3	42.4	36.1	32.6	48.8	14.3	41.8	33.7
Urban	28.4	50.1	4.7	29.5	7.0	28.4	50.5	4.7	29.3	6.4
Balochistan	25.3	41.7	5.4	33.2	22.9	27.6	41.8	11.3	33.3	23.4
Rural	25.5	41.5	6.2	35.3	27.7	29.0	42.5	13.5	35.5	27.4
Urban	24.7	42.2	3.0	27.3	8.8	23.9	39.7	5.1	27.1	12.1

Note:- * Males augmented activity rates vary insignificantly from the standard crude rates are therefore not tabulated.

Figure 1: Crude activity (participation) rates

Out of the 55 million women in Pakistan aged between 15-64, only 26% are in the labour force, that come out to just over 14.4 million.⁸ Leaving a whopping 41 million women in that age group who are not being counted as contributors to the economy, equivalent to 36% of the entire population (male and female ages 15-64). While this is a crude measure of estimating women's inadequate access to the labour market, it does point to the huge gap between the policies that acknowledge women as contributors but that do not appear to be successful in removing barriers to their participation in the economy.

According to the Labour Force Survey, the distribution of the working age population between those in the labour force (both employed and unemployed) and those not in the labour force is

⁸ Ibid., 13.

68%:32% for males and 22%:78% for females. This implies that out of the entire female population available for employment, only 22% of the females are employed.⁹ Out of the total labour force (employed and unemployed) 76% are male and only 24% are female.¹⁰ Another very important statistic which speaks volumes about the dynamics of the labour market for females is the distribution of the labour force between literate and illiterate women. While the literate to illiterate ratio for males is 65%: 35% that for females is 30%:70%; meaning that amongst employed females, only 30% are literate.¹¹

Out of the total employed labour force 77% are males and only 23% are females. Moreover, male labour force participation rate is 68% and female labour force participation rate is 22%. The problem of female employment is multi-faceted. Not only are there cultural barriers to entry for women but even those looking for work are often not provided with adequate opportunities or facilitated making it difficult for them to find suitable jobs. This is evident from the unemployment rate comparison between men and women which is, 5% and 9% respectively.¹²

An important point to mention here is the lack of educational opportunities for females as compared to those provided to males. When girls are excluded from the educational system this has a direct impact on their future incomes.¹³ Indicators show that efforts for educational change on grass-root level have a very positive impact on the wage gap between men and women. In Pakistan today, women with primary education earn 51% of the incomes of their male counterparts, however, women with a secondary education earn 70% of the incomes of their male counter parts.¹⁴

All these figures have an important bearing on the lives of women and their empowerment through economic independence. These existing figures show a deplorable state of female employment. Our global standing and regional standing in terms of economic opportunities cry for immediate response of the government to address these problems. In order to delve further into the analysis of labour force dynamics in Pakistan we will divide our discussion into the formal and the informal sector.

⁹ "Labour force Survey 2014-15", Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Accessed February/March 2018.

<http://www.pbs.gov.pk/labour-force-publications>

¹⁰ Ibid., 9.

¹¹ Ibid., 15.

¹² Ibid., 16.

¹³ The State of world Population, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 2017,50.

¹⁴ Ibid., 52.

2.2 Formal Sector Employment

Formal sector encompasses all jobs with regular wages, recognized as income sources on which income taxes must be paid. This idea of regular wages makes formal sector employment more financially secure as compared to the informal sector. More importantly, state protection in terms of legislation is more readily available for the formal sector employees as compared to the informal sector employees. Hence formal sector employment is often more sought than informal sector employment.¹⁵ Out of the total employed women in the non-agricultural sector, about 74% are working in the informal sector and only 26% percent are working in the formal sector, it is true that these proportions are similar for men as well.¹⁶



Figure 2: Source Labour Force Survey | *Unpaid Family helpers/contributing family workers

Figure 2 shows that out of 100 women who are employed, 55 are working as unpaid helpers or contributing family workers and less than 1 woman is working as an employer per 100 female workers. More importantly only 19 per 100 are waged employees.¹⁷ In comparison, out of 100, 43 men are waged employees and only 15 are working as unpaid workers and contributing family workers; also 2 are working as employers per 100.¹⁸ This occupation-wise labour division when put in cultural and social context becomes understandable but also brings into focus how our women lag behind men in the sector of employment.

¹⁵ Women's Economic Participation and Empowerment in Pakistan Status Report 2016, UNWomen 2016, 82.

¹⁶ "Labour force Survey 2014-15", Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Accessed February/March 2018.

<http://www.pbs.gov.pk/labour-force-publications>

¹⁷ Women's Economic Participation and Empowerment in Pakistan Status Report 2016, UNWomen 2016, 82.

¹⁸ Ibid., 85.

Figure 3 shows the major industry division of the formal market by gender. The highest female participation is in the sector of Agriculture/forestry/ hunting and fishing where there are 72.7% women as compared to 33.1% men (figures for 2014-2015). It is important to point out here that female participation in non-agricultural wage employment is seen as an indicator of better economic circumstances.¹⁹ The lowest female participation is in the field of construction, transport/storage & communication and wholesale & retail trade which are all important sectors that will be affected by the China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

EMPLOYED - DISTRIBUTION BY MAJOR INDUSTRY DIVISIONS

(%)

Major Industry Divisions	2013-14			2014-15		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture/ forestry/hunting & fishing	43.5	34.2	74.0	42.3	33.1	72.7
Manufacturing	14.2	14.7	12.3	15.3	15.7	14.1
Construction	7.3	9.5	0.3	7.3	9.5	0.2
Wholesale & retail trade	14.6	18.5	1.6	14.6	18.7	1.4
Transport/storage & communication	5.5	7.1	0.2	5.4	7.0	0.1
Community/social & personal services	13.1	13.7	11.5	13.2	13.7	11.3
*Others	1.8	2.3	0.1	1.9	2.3	0.2

* Others (includes mining & quarrying, electricity, gas & water, financing, insurance, real estate & business services and extraterritorial organizations and bodies)

Figure 3 | Source: Labour Force Survey 2014-2015

According to the UN Population fund report out of 200 million people in Pakistan, 63% are youth (below the age of 24 years). Of these 58.5 million are between 20 to 24 years of age while 69 million are under the age of 15 years.²⁰ The progression of demographic transition i.e. the change from a state of high fertility and mortality to one of low fertility and mortality has resulted in the percentage of non-working age to decline and Pakistan is therefore entering the “demographic bonus” phase.²¹ It is for this reason that Pakistan now has a youth bulge meaning that the share of youth, as is common to most developing countries, is increasing.²² How we use this human resource and the extent to which it can benefit us depends on the opportunities provided to these people in terms of finding better employment opportunities. CPEC and the

¹⁹ Ibid., 86.

²⁰ The State of world Population, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 2017,53.

²¹ G.M Arif. and N. Chaudhry, Demographic Transition, Education and Youth Unemployment in Pakistan. Asian Development Bank, Islamabad 2007, 13.

²² Ibid.,14.

aspect of job creation through projects can enable us to incorporate this youth bulge into the formal economy. On the other hand, if active measures are not taken, this youth bulge can add to the economic burdens of the country.

Figure 4 shows refined labour force participation of individuals between the age of 15-24 years both male and female. The percentage of young women in the labour force both in rural and urban is extremely low in comparison to young men. The highest female participation is in rural Punjab 36% followed by Sindh (22%), KP (15%) and Baluchistan (13%). While the figures for rural female workers are not very impressive either but urban female employment is alarmingly low, with only 8%, 9% and 5% involved in labour force in Sindh, KP and Baluchistan respectively. Cultural and social barriers all play an important role in keeping out women from labour force participation. Religious sections of the society have always propagated the ideas of “chaddar” and “chaar diwari” (limitation put on women to be restricted to their households). However, this is just one aspect of the issue which is given most weightage. Lack of employment opportunities coupled with a severe lack of female-friendly labour policies have also played a major role in keeping Pakistan amongst countries with the widest gender gap ratio in terms of economic opportunities.

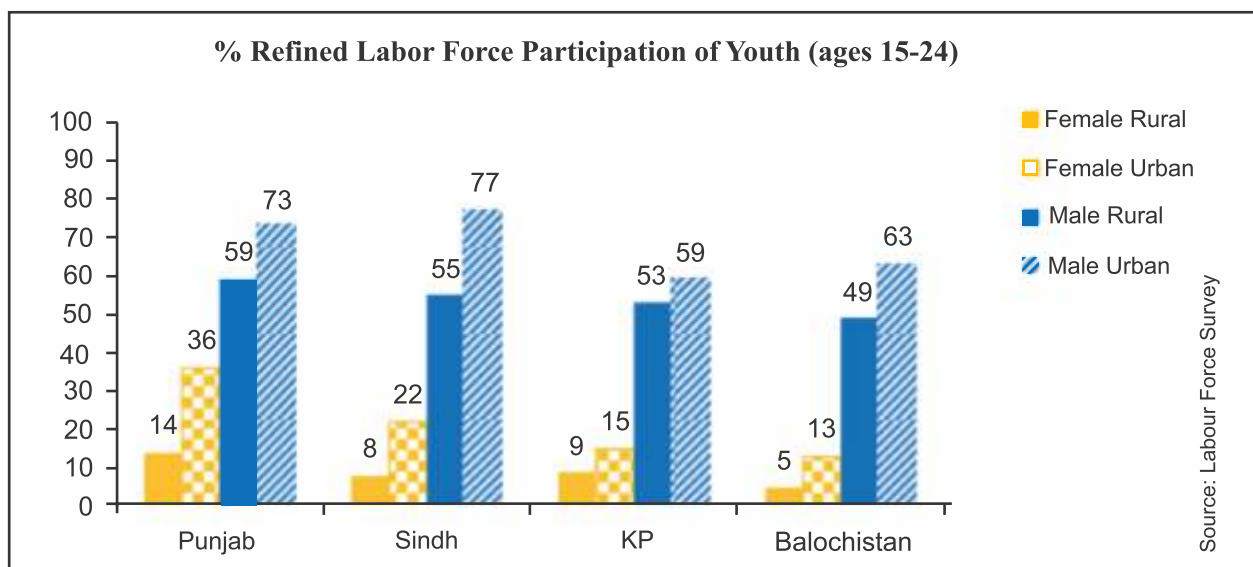


Figure 4 | Source: Women's Economic Participation and Empowerment in Pakistan 2016²³

²³ Women's Economic Participation and Empowerment in Pakistan Status Report 2016, UNWomen 2016, 82.

Figure 5 shows the Age Specific Activity Rate (ASAR) for Pakistan. The activity rate of men as compared to women is quite high. Two age groups 15-19 and 20-24 are commonly regarded as the “marriage age” and from the figure it is clear that female Activity Rate for women in this age bracket is evidently low. It goes up slightly from 35-39 and reaches its highest point between 45-49 (however, during 2013-2014 we see a dip in this) the reason for this can be that between the age of 19-34 marriage and reproductive duties of the woman followed by child care are of extreme significance.

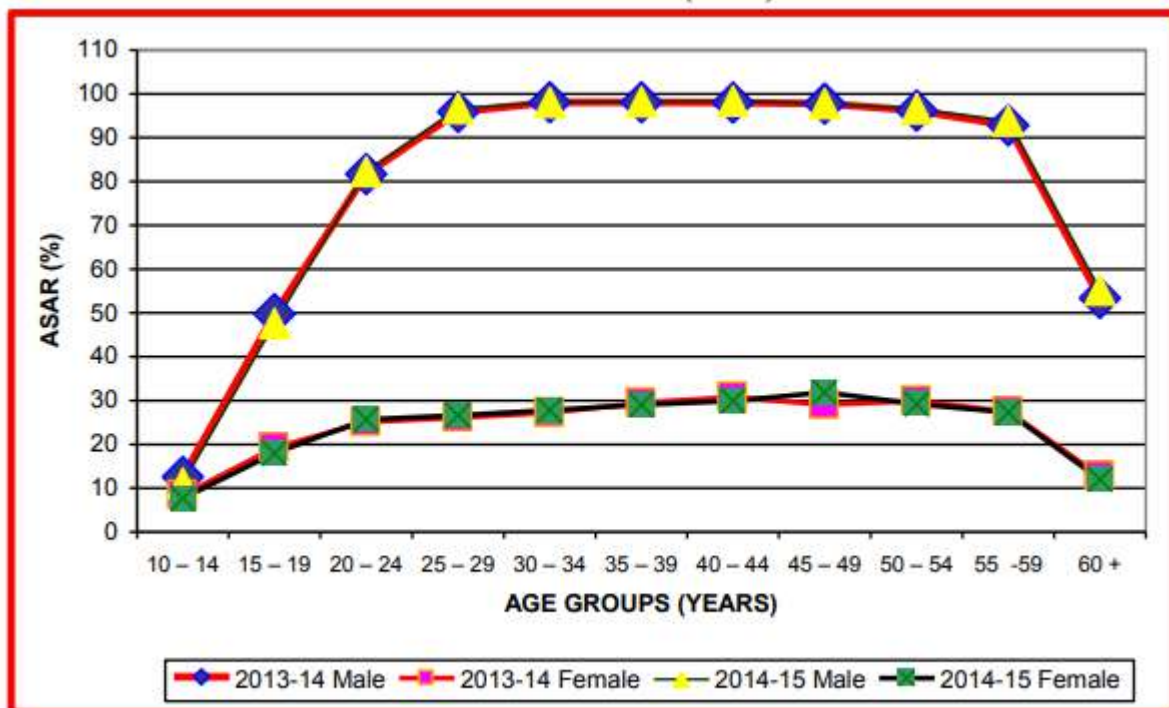


Figure 5: Age Specific Activity Rate (ASAR) by Sex for Pakistan | Source: Labour Survey Report 2014-2015

Shahnaz and Naqvi in their research identify the factors that influence female entry into economic activity.²⁴ According to their research, age, marital status and education are some of the most important factors.²⁵ Both age and marital status point towards a cultural stigma associated with female employment, the influence of these factors is evident from the data depiction in figure 3.

²⁴ Zareen F. Naqvi, Lubna Shahnaz and G. M. Arif, How do Women decide to work in Pakistan?, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad 2003, 496.

²⁵ Ibid., 497.

According to the UN Women Gender Gap report women are more likely to work as they age.²⁶ It is, however, true that married women are less likely to work but some important indicators like educational attainment inhibit the decision of a female to start working after she has been married.²⁷ Women who have received education post-graduation i.e. B.A degrees are more likely continue their job after marriage than those who have not attended undergraduate college, this is especially true in urban areas as compared to rural. In addition, households which are headed by females are more likely to allow women to work – studies have shown that the work status of the head of household has a significant effect on women’s labour force participation.²⁸

Estimates suggest that some 14.4 million women between the ages of 15-64 are currently in the labour force that leaves out some 36% of the entire population that are not active in the economy.²⁹ The percentage of married women is considerably high some 26%, and 24% of these have a child under the age of 3 years.³⁰ This further supports the earlier analysis of women finding more opportunities to work after marriage.

Female employment is significant in the occupational category of professionals (30%), in skilled agriculture and fishery workers (38%), and elementary occupations (see glossary) (21%). However, the representation of women in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics is very limited. This section will first focus on the types of occupations where female representation is seen in the formal economy and then identify the reasons for some occupations being adopted more readily as compared to others. Analysis also touch upon educational opportunities extended for women which provide a basis for occupational choice (often low-paid) or the choice of working at all.

Here it is also important to keep in mind the vicious cycle of traditions that even a working woman finds herself in. By virtue of the interlinkages between restricted job opportunities, low wages, societal norms women are often either kept out of conventional employment or pushed into the very bottom section of employment opportunities. A great percentage of the female working population is in sewing or handicrafts or similar low-paid occupations while there is

²⁶ Women’s Economic Participation and Empowerment in Pakistan Status Report 2016, UNWomen 2016, 75.

²⁷ *ibid.*, 77.

²⁸ Zareen F. Naqvi, Lubna Shahnaz and G. M. Arif, *How do Women decide to work in Pakistan?*, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad 2003, 520.

²⁹ Women’s Economic Participation and Empowerment in Pakistan Status Report 2016, UNWomen 2016, 75.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

obviously a connection of limited educational training of women, national and international donors are often found advocating female economic opportunities for women in these particular sections of the economy keeping women restricted to this traditional occupation.³¹

Another perspective that should be kept in mind is the attainment of empowerment through employment and the limitations of this sort of empowerment. It is true that economic participation is found to have positive effects on female involvement in important household decision making, acquiring better education and improved nutrition. The type of work, however, is a very significant measure of female empowerment. What further quantifies empowerment are factors like control on fertility, mobility, segregation and reproductive labour. The UN report on gender points out a very interesting observation, the trade-off between education, work and transgressing societal norms is not always very beneficial for a woman both monetarily and socially. It is for this reason, the report remarks, that employment is only regarded as a necessity by the low-income members and for those who are on the other extreme end of the social spectrum i.e. the educated “elite” women.³²

2.3 Informal Sector

Over the years the informal sector of the economy has seen considerable growth not only in male employment in the informal sector but also female employment. As mentioned earlier, about 74% women in the non-agricultural sector are involved in the informal sector. Yearly data collected shows very minor changes in the growth of labour force but there is a rapidly increasing influx of female workers in the informal sector.³³ The reason for this statistically invisible growth is a lack of insightful data collection on part of the authorities. Owing to this, a considerable portion of activity in the informal sector remains undocumented, especially home-based workers. It is interesting to note, however, that women entry into the labour market is either at the top or at the bottom with the largest inductions in the informal economy. While there

³¹ Ibid., 77.

³² Ibid., 55.

³³ M. Ghaffar Chaudhry, Zubeda Khan and M. I. Abella, *Female Labour Force Participation Rates in Rural Pakistan: Some Fundamental Explanations and Policy Implications*, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad 1987, 688.

is growing recognition of female economic contributions it is also true that a significant part of the female population inducted into the informal economy is left out.³⁴

2.3.1 Home-Based Women Workers

As established earlier the informal economy employs a great percentage of women both in the agricultural and non-agricultural sector.³⁵ Among these most are home-based women workers.³⁶ Home-based women workers can be divided into two categories; self-employed and sub-contracted (also called home workers).³⁷ Self-employed home-based women workers are exposed to all the risk involved in being an independent operator i.e. they buy their own raw material, equipment, and pay the logistical costs themselves. They market and sell their own goods locally and sometimes internationally as well. Often times, these women take help from unpaid family workers but almost never hire waged labour from outside. Sub-contracted, home-based women workers are those who are hired by an entrepreneur or a firm - often the role of the middle man is very pronounced with such workers. Unlike self-employed workers sub-contracted home-based women workers often do not sell their product themselves but are paid per piece by the middle-man through which they have been hired by the firm or the entrepreneur.

The sort of work these women do is usually labour intensive and involves handiwork in textile, footwear and garment industry. Changing nature of manufacturing has exposed home-based women workers to micro-electronics and pharmaceutical packaging as well as small machine parts among other things. It is also important to add here that in developed countries highly skilled professionals such as graphic designers will also be known as home-based workers.

Many organizations are working to provide greater visibility and legislative support to the “invisible workers” contributing to the economy, however, problem of identifying them still remains very crucial. Up until this point no large-scale national survey exists which has documented the existing number of home-based women workers. Figure 3 shows distribution of all employed workers (age 15-64) by place of work. 29.8% or 3.6 million females work for some kind of economic activity within the premises of their homes as compared to only 1 million men

³⁴ Ibid., 690.

³⁵ Women’s Economic Participation and Empowerment in Pakistan Status Report 2016, UNWomen 2016, 78.

³⁶ M.Zhou, Pakistan’s Hidden Workers- Wages and conditions of home-based workers and the informal economy, International Labour Organization 2017, 32.

³⁷ Ibid., 35.

working at their homes. In addition to this a small percentage of female workers who work at a family or friends dwelling can also be regarded as home-based workers. Some 0.5% of the females, approximating 0.1 million are working in this particular arrangement. All these figures support the earlier presented argument of a significant percentage of female being home-based women workers.

Table 3.16: % Distribution of All Employed Workers (age 15-64) by Place of Work

Place of Work*	Female		Male		Total	
	%	# Millions	%	# Millions	%	# Millions
At his/her own dwelling	29.8	3.6	2.5	1.0	8.7	4.6
At family or friend's dwelling	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2
At the employer's house	3.6	0.4	9.0	3.6	7.7	4
On the street/road	0.5	0.1	8.7	3.5	6.8	3.6
On country side	53.4	6.4	32.0	13.0	36.9	19.4
In a shop' business' office or industry	11.7	1.4	46.6	18.9	38.6	20.3
Others	0.6	0.1	1.1	0.4	1.0	0.5
Total	100	12.0	100	40.6	100	52.6

Figure 6 | Source: Labour Force Survey* (UN report on Status of female 2016 employees has used distribution of all employed workers by place of work provided in the Labour Force Survey 2014-15, data that can estimate the existing numbers for home-based workers.)

In this analysis it also important to factor in the economic contributions of these home-based women workers. Figure 6 shows the contribution of all employed workers by place of work, a parameter used to identify the contributions made by home-based women workers. According to this females working at their own dwellings contribute up to 222.5 billion PKR, moreover, home-based women workers have a share of 2.4% in the total GDP of Pakistan.

Table 3.17: Economic Contribution of All Employed Workers by Place of Work (PKR Billion)

	Place of Work	Female	Male	Total
1	At his/her own dwelling	222.5	122.9	345.4
2	At family or friend's dwelling	27.8	10.7	38.5
3	At the employer's house	47.8	456.4	504.2
4	On the street/road	29.5	467.8	497.3
5	On country side	418.4	1502.3	1920.7
6	In a shop, business, office or industry	206.1	3085.4	3291.5
7	Others	31.8	61.1	92.9
	Total	983.9	5706.5	6690.4
	% Share of Home Based Workers (# 1 +2)	25.4	2.3	5.7
	% Share of Home Based Workers in GDP (# 1 +2)	2.4	1.3	3.8

Source: Estimated from Labor Force Survey 2013/14

Figure 7 | Source: UN Gender Report* (The calculated figures have used data from the labour force survey)

These figures are not minor and they highlight the importance of these home-based workers in the total economy. In spite of these economic contribution no legal cover is provided to these women and they are forced to work in an exploitative environment where they are not paid their deserved remuneration. The ILO report on “Pakistan’s hidden workers” surveyed the existing home-based workers and found out that they work around 12.3 hours per day six days a week and from this have an income of 4342 PKR.³⁸ From this their average daily wage comes out to be around 41 PKR which is much below the minimum wage per hour set by the government of Pakistan.

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3.0 CPEC and Female Employability

This part of the research paper focuses on the effect of CPEC on employment in general and female employment in particular. While previous research on this topic is extremely limited, Pakistan-China Institute has worked on this topic in one of our recently published monograph of CPEC: Facts Vs Fiction. The economic activity of the scale CPEC will and does operate at naturally produces job opportunities - this argument holds true not only for the formal sector but also the informal sector. It is important to analyse the effect of CPEC on the labour market not

³⁸ M.Zhou, Pakistan’s Hidden Workers- Wages and conditions of home-based workers and the informal economy, International Labour Organization 2017, 32.

only in isolation of formal market employment gains but also the conjoined effect on the informal sector.

Figure 8 shows data collected through extensive research (sourced) which provides a general understanding in crude numbers of how many jobs will be created per project from the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The report quotes a study by the ILO which anticipates some forty thousand jobs being created by the year 2030 from the on-going CPEC projects. This includes the information reproduced in the table below, specifically for projects under Energy and Infrastructure. The technical skills and education level required for these jobs is unclear and the division along gendered lines is not present (i.e. what is the percentage of male and female employees in these projects). These projects of Energy and Infrastructure usually involve greater manual labour which, culturally, women are discouraged to take up. However, analysing the indirect effects of these CPEC projects on generating economic opportunities for women is a task taken up in this research.

CURRENT PROJECT	NUMBER OF JOBS
ENERGY	
Dawood Wind Farm	200+
Sachal Wind Farm	200
Jhimpir Wind Farm 100MW	850
Three Gprges 2 nd Wind Power Project	200+
Karot Hydro Power Plant	2000+
Suki Kinari Hydro Power Plant	4000+
Quaid-E-Azam Solar Power Plant	3000
Sahiwal Coal Plant	3000
Port Qasim Coal Power Plant	5000 direct + 300 (operational)
CPHGC Coal Power Plant	2000+
Thar Block II Lignite Mining and Coal Fire Power Plant Project	1000+
TRANSPORT	
Gwadar Free Zone	497 (274, most out of 130 at port) +2000 indirect
Peshawar-Karachi motorway	9800
KKH Phase II, Thakot -Havelian Section	2071
Orange Line Metro Lahore	956
Fiber Optic Project	580

Figure 8: Number of jobs created per CPEC project | Source: CPEC Facts Vs Fiction³⁹

Often illustrated as a major indicator for development, infrastructural progress has been central to the CPEC theme. The World Bank report from the year 2012-2015 presents excessive data supporting the idea of human development through the process of infrastructure development.⁴⁰ The electrification project in the rural areas of South Africa is quoted as an example. This project led to an increase in the female employment rate by almost 10 pc within the five years of its

³⁹ Anum Kuraishi, CPEC: Facts Vs. Fiction, Pakistan China Institute, 2017, 35.

⁴⁰ World Bank Annual Report 2015, World Bank Group, 2015.

operations.⁴¹ Similar trends were observed in Indonesia where provision of better infrastructure generated greater economic opportunities for the local population.⁴² CPEC Centre for Excellence in their study on “The Impact of CPEC and related Infrastructure Projects on Employment” quoting the World Bank report emphasizes the importance being placed on infrastructural development as a driving force for problems related to unemployment, poverty, human resource development, health education etc. The report goes on to highlight that infrastructure creates not only direct jobs in particular projects but better connectivity enables many indirect jobs to be created as well.⁴³ Consequently, the impact of infrastructural development cannot be solely captured by identifying jobs created through direct projects but in the long run other economic activity which springs up as a result of infrastructural development should also be considered.

3.1 Evidence from Literature

This section presents evidence from existing literature on the impact of economic growth and development projects on women empowerment. Few theories and practical examples have been quoted.

3.1.1 The U-Shaped Female labour force function in Economic Development

Claudia Goldin writes after extensive research that gender equality and economic development go hand in hand.⁴⁴ She talks about the U-shaped female participation in labour force function in economic development which posits that when incomes are very low and agriculture sector dominates the economy, and economic development takes place the participation of adult women in labour force declines at first and rises gradually.⁴⁵ She argues that the initial decline in participation of women in labour force is due to the income effect - women primarily work in the agriculture sector and with the beginning of development, more high paying blue-collar jobs are created in urban areas, so these families move to cities where there are limited opportunities

⁴¹ Muhammad Muzammil Zia, Shuja Waqar, The Impact of CPEC and related road projects on Employment, CPEC Center for Excellence, 2017, 4.

⁴² Ibid., 4.

⁴³ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁴ Claudia Goldin, “The U-Shaped Female Labour Force Function in Economic Development and Economic History” (NBER Working Paper Series, Massachusetts, 1994), 1-2.

⁴⁵ Ibid.,

available for the women.⁴⁶ As economic development advances the nature of jobs changes and more ‘white-collar’ jobs are created. The notion that social norms prohibit women to work in blue-collar jobs is imperative here. Furthermore, access to education for women, equips them better for these jobs and eventually their participation in labour force rises. Goldin uses data from 100 countries to test the U-shape hypothesis and concludes that it in fact does exist in most of the cases – particularly in the case of Hong Kong and Singapore.⁴⁷ She attributes the upwards sloping of the U-Shape to rapid increase in education as economic development advances in these countries.

Mammen and Paxson replicate Goldin’s model and use data from 90 countries for the years 1970, 1975, 1980 and 1985 and regress female (aged 45-59) labour force participation on the log of five-year averaged per capita GDP, used as a measure of economic development. U-shaped pattern can easily be seen in the data where female employment is more than 50 percent for the poorest and richest countries.⁴⁸ Moving along the pattern from the left side African and South Asian countries represent the downward sloping section. South and central American countries lie near the bottom followed by South European, east Asian and finally North European and North American on the top right side.⁴⁹ Mammon and Paxson also attribute the rise in labour force participation to the increase in the level of education for women with rise in per capita GDP.

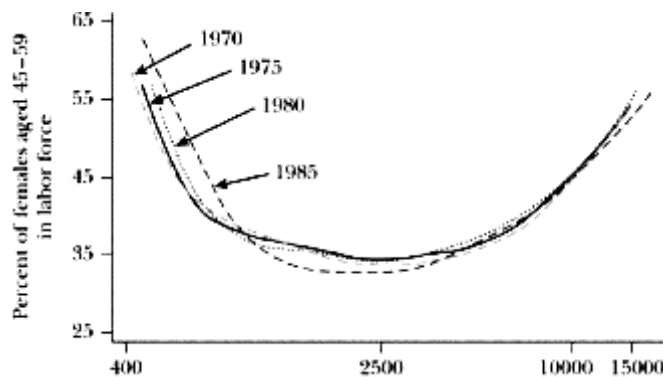


Figure 9: Figure shows relationship between the percentage of females aged 45-59 in labour force and GDP per capita

⁴⁶ Ibid.,

⁴⁷ Ibid.,

⁴⁸ Kristin Mammen and Christina Paxson, "Women'S Work And Economic Development", *Journal Of Economic Perspectives* 14, no. 4 (2000): 147-149.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 149.

Mammen and Paxson further present a rather interesting comparison of Thailand and India. India and Thailand have been compared because of the difference in their growth experience, the difference in the status of women and due to the differences in the distribution of land in these countries. While in Thailand the ownership of land is fairly even, in India, it is unevenly distributed and normally the farm workers are not owners of that land.⁵⁰ Female labour force participation is quite different for both the countries and the u-shape is more pronounced in the case of India.⁵¹ The analysis shows that the Thai female participation never drops below 60 percent for any level of per capita expenditure whereas for India, it never exceeds 60 percent. The analysis portrays that shifting population from rural to urban areas have a negative effect on female participation. The data patterns show that eventually with increase in white-collar jobs and education attainment in both males and females with economic development, the female participation in labour force rises.⁵²

As of 2016, Pakistan's per capita GDP is \$1,443 which puts it along the downward slope of U-shaped curve.⁵³ The per Capita GDP growth is expected to grow by 2.7% in 2018 and 2.2% by 2019.⁵⁴ With the initiation of projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), especially establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), workers from rural areas will move to these project sites in search of better opportunities. It is pertinent to mention that female employment rate might decrease at first as more blue collar jobs will be created. However, eventually when economic development will progress and GDP per Capita will rise more white collar jobs will be created which are more suited for women. Girls in Gwadar are being prepared for the opportunities expected to be created in the upcoming years. China-Pakistan Friendship School was established in Gwadar by China Fund for Peace and Development in collaboration with China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC) in 2016.⁵⁵ The aim of the initiative is to provide quality education to the youth in Gwadar, especially girls, to equip them better for

⁵⁰ Ibid., 151.

⁵¹ Ibid., 155.

⁵² Ibid., 156.

⁵³ The World Bank, GDP per Capita, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=PK&view=chart>

⁵⁴ Asian Development Bank, "ASIAN DEVELOPMENT OUTLOOK 2018", 2018, <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/411666/ado2018.pdf>.

⁵⁵ Syed Shahzad Sultan (Head of Marketing, China Overseas Port Holding Company) in discussion with Ramlah Tariq, June 2018.

suitable jobs. As of June 2018, out of 498 children enrolled, 348 are girls.⁵⁶ Government of Pakistan needs to take similar measures to promote education of young girls in all parts of the country. Quality education and vocational skills will enable these females to avail white-collar jobs.



Image 1: China-Pakistan Friendship School, Gwadar | Source: www.voiceofgwadar.com

3.1.2. FDI and Women Empowerment

CPEC is bringing in the much needed Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in major sectors of the economy of Pakistan. FDI gives the impetus for growth by creating more employment opportunities and increasing per capita incomes in the recipient countries. If the FDI is in the sectors that rely on female workforce then it is expected to have a positive impact on female

⁵⁶ Ibid.,

labour force participation.⁵⁷ FDI generally increases government's revenue which allows them to invest in facilities and resources that enhance women's empowerment.⁵⁸ Study of 94 developing countries over a span from 1990-2015 has established a relationship between FDI and two very important variables - Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Inequality Index (GII) - to have holistic and comprehensive results. GDI and GII have been chosen on account of their broad components. GDI encompasses three dimensions of measuring gender disparity, which are life expectancy, expected and mean years of schooling and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita.⁵⁹ The second variable GII measures the gap in maternity mortality ratio and adolescent fertility rate, female share of parliament seats and education attainment at secondary level and labour force participation of men and women.⁶⁰ The results are computed using Feasible Generalized Least Squares (FGLS) where the equations are estimated by OLS (Ordinary Least Square), residuals are estimated for full variance-covariance matrix of errors and finally estimates are weighed by the covariance of residuals from the two regressions. The graphs below indicate that FDI is positively associated with gender development and negatively with gender inequality.⁶¹ The results also indicate that the impact of FDI on gender development is stronger on middle income countries than in lower income countries.⁶²

⁵⁷ Rasmane Ouedraogo and Elodie Marlet, "Foreign Direct Investment And Women Empowerment: New Evidence On Developing Countries", IMF Working Paper Series 18, no. 25 (2017): 5-6.

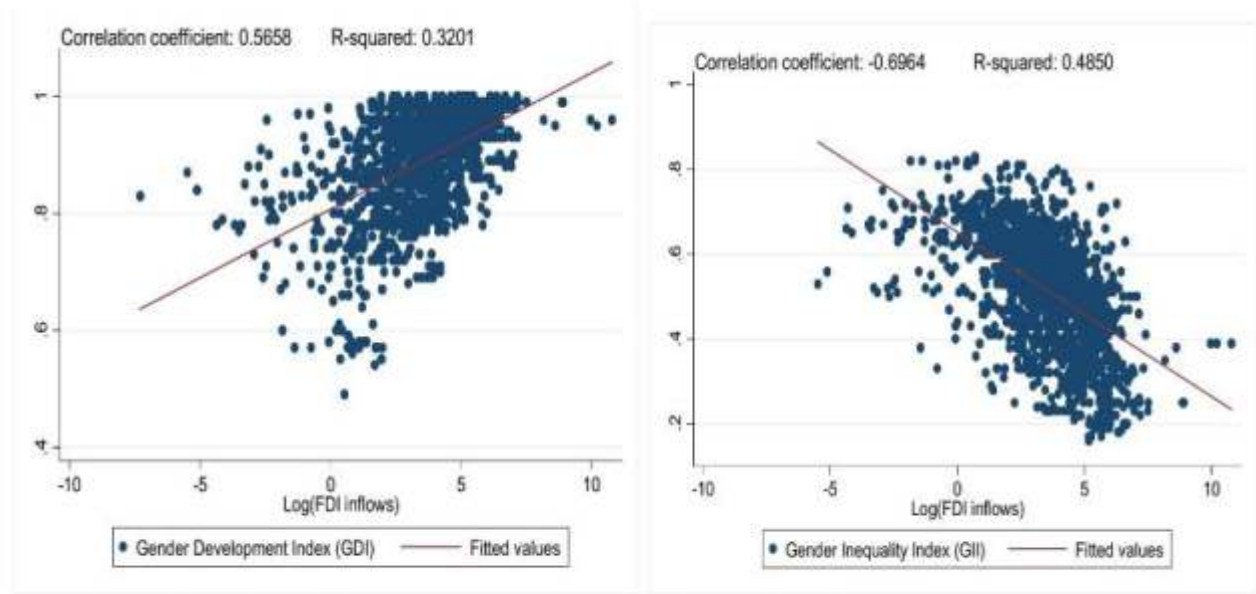
⁵⁸ Ibid.,

⁵⁹ Ibid., 11.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 12.

⁶¹ Ibid., 32.

⁶² Ibid.,



Source: IMF's Balance of Payments Database and authors' calculations

Figure 10: Figure shows the relation between GDI and FDI inflows and GII and FDI inflows

Pakistan being the lower-Middle income country will be affected by FDI.⁶³ With investment coming in the form of CPEC, gender gap in labour force will lessen and access to basic resources for better health and education will be available for women. Ouedraogo and Marlet write that owing to the good practices of Multinational Enterprises (MNEs), gender inequality is decreased and women are offered good opportunities and wages. For example, China Power Hub Generation Company Private Limited has a Pakistani female Vice President.

The Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) coming in the recipient country tend to establish Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, most of which are related to promotion of equal opportunities for males and females.⁶⁴ Such initiatives can also be seen as part of projects under CPEC. For example, Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company, as part of its CSR initiative, is empowering the poor women of Thar by investing in their skills development. (Discussed in detail in section 3.3).

⁶³ The World Bank Data, Lower Middle Income. <https://data.worldbank.org/income-level/lower-middle-income>

⁶⁴ Ibid., 32.



Image 2: A local woman, participant of the Women Dump Truck Driving Program, Thar | Source: Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC)

3.1.3 Access to reliable electricity and Women Empowerment

30 Access to electricity has positive impact on women; with access to electricity, women's labour force participation rises.⁶⁵ Improved energy conditions help women's household chores by minimizing their time doing tasks at home, hence increasing married women's labour force participation.⁶⁶ In rural South Africa, with access to modern electricity, the use of electric stove increased and women were less involved in menial work at home. Also, women's labour force participation significantly increased with access to energy, in Nicaragua.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Tanja Winther, "Electrification has a gender impact," Science Nordic, April 8 2016, <http://sciencenordic.com/content/electrification-has-gender-impact>.

⁶⁶ Kathleen O'Dell and Sophia Peters, "Women, energy, and economic empowerment Applying a gender lens to amplify the impact of energy access," Deloitte University Press, September 18 2014, <https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/topics/social-impact/women-empowerment-energy-access.html..html>

⁶⁷ Tanja Winther et al., "Women'S Empowerment Through Electricity Access: Scoping Study And Proposal For A Framework Of Analysis", JOURNAL OF DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS 9, no. 3 (2017): 398.

A study by Deloitte University Press examines the intricate relationship between access to energy and its impact on women. The report defines modern energy as reliable, sustainable and affordable.⁶⁸ Female participation in labour is not the only indicator used for women empowerment; different aspects of employment such as earned income, hours worked, class of work, job security, working conditions, and opportunity for advancements are also used as a dimensions of women empowerment. Evidence from Brazil, a country where access to energy increased by 2.8 percent between 1990 and 2010, submits that 59 percent girls in rural areas with access to electricity are more likely to complete their primary education.⁶⁹ It further states that in rural settings, incomes of self-employed women with access to electricity is 59 percent higher than the women who do not have access to reliable electricity.⁷⁰ The study also presents findings from on ground interviews in developing countries with energy programs. Access to modern energy, definitely provides better opportunities for women outside their homes as they are required to do less of manual work at homes.⁷¹

Apart from the “indirect” impact of energy projects, women can also be employed in the electricity sector (maintenance, distribution, billing and collection).⁷² Evidence from Ghazni, Afghanistan shows that the local water utility collections rose by 75 percent in the first month of the program when a girl and a boy were employed to read utility meters.⁷³ It was observed that the women were able to access electric meters more easily at times when only women were at homes.⁷⁴ Such opportunities can readily be available for women in Pakistan as well. A woman will be more welcomed than a man to read meters in households due to the cultural hindrances in Pakistan. Furthermore, this would empower women economically by providing more opportunities for them.

Energy projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are set to add 10,400 MW by the end of 2018.⁷⁵ Access to modern energy will improve baseline living conditions for women, especially in the rural areas. With access to reliable energy, girls of rural areas are more likely to

⁶⁸ Kathleen O’Dell and Sophia Peters, “Women, energy, and economic empowerment Applying a gender lens to amplify the impact of energy access,” Deloitte University Press, September 18 2014,

⁶⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁷⁰ Ibid.,

⁷¹ Ibid.,

⁷² Ibid., 10.

⁷³ Ibid., 10.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 10.

⁷⁵ Anum Kuraishi, CPEC:Facts Vs. Fiction, Pakistan China Institute, 2017, 26.

finish their primary education and will lessen the time women spend on household chores, enabling them to participate in the labour force.

3.1.4 Infrastructure and Women Empowerment

According to Mohun and Biswas there are six key factors which promote women's economic empowerment through improved infrastructure⁷⁶

- Time
- Mobility
- Expanded market activity and new job opportunities
- Increased and more stable incomes
- Reduced exposure to risk
- Planning, policy and decision-making

With improved infrastructure and facilities women will spend less time doing domestic tasks and will have more time for formal employment opportunities. With better transport infrastructure women's mobility in and across cities enhance expanding their employment opportunities and businesses.⁷⁷ Moreover, with expansion of infrastructure more industries expand such as the ICT, energy and transport providing women wide range of opportunities in these industries as well. Women who are self-employed or work from home gain access to stable incomes as the access to customers and suppliers improves.⁷⁸ Furthermore, access to better health facilities and clean water reduces the risks that women are exposed to.

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Case Study: Rural Development Plan 21, Bangladesh

The Local Government and Engineering Department of Bangladesh initiated the Rural Development Plan 21 between 1997 and 2004 in Bangladesh.⁷⁹ Women's participation was a major component where women were encouraged to participate in infrastructure development, construction, maintenance and management. Women were also involved in the planning stage of

⁷⁶ Rachel Rachel Mohun and Smita Biswas, "Infrastructure: A Game-Changer For Women's Economic Empowerment" (repr., UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT, 2016).

⁷⁷ Ibid.,

⁷⁸ Ibid.,

⁷⁹ UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, "EMPOWERING WOMEN ECONOMICALLY: ILLUSTRATIVE CASE STUDIES" (repr., Bangkok: United Nations, 2013).

the project. Gender Equity Strategy and Gender Action Plan was part of the project. Women were given different roles like maintenance or tree plantation work and were also provided access to acquire vocational skills. Furthermore, the wages given to all worker was the same, irrespective of gender. Women who were involved in the projects were reported to have opened their own bank accounts and were motivated to save money.⁸⁰ They were given trainings on different aspects including gender awareness sessions. All in all, the project proved to be more beneficial in reality than in theory. These women felt more empowered and took part in decision making in development projects around them.⁸¹ Moreover, improved infrastructure increased their mobility and access to goods, services and markets.

Under CPEC around \$ 15 billion are being allocated to Infrastructure projects.⁸² These projects aim to enhance connectivity between different cities of Pakistan. Upgradation of Karakoram Highway is set to enhance transport between Pakistan and China. Furthermore, transport projects like Orange Line Metro Train in Lahore will provide cheap means to travel within the city. We predict that establishment of such infrastructure projects, linking the main cities of Pakistan with each other, will enhance women empowerment. This will give them access to markets, quality education and better paying jobs.

The Chinese Strategy of Infrastructural Development - A Case Study

Infrastructure development is often seen as the pioneer of economic development, which is particularly true for developing nations. China in the past few years through accelerated growth in its economy has become not only a major power in the region but also in the world. In the past, China has had its fair share of problems with a considerable number of people living below poverty line. However, in the last few decades China has experienced high economic growth which has largely been investment based that led to an increase in the purchasing power of the common man. This accelerated growth spearheaded by competitiveness in the manufacturing sector has been underpinned by a huge development of infrastructure. It is evident from studies that infrastructure development, labour force, public and private investment all have played a

⁸⁰ Ibid.,

⁸¹ Ibid.,

⁸² Anum Kuraishi, CPEC:Facts Vs. Fiction, Pakistan China Institute, 2017, 18.

major role in the economic growth of China.⁸³ In Pakistan, infrastructure development for a long time was not a major goal of governments. Prior to CPEC this type of economic growth model was not a common idea being propagated by governments. In recent years this attitude has changed and several infrastructure development projects have been initiated and completed in Pakistan. It worth understanding the model of development China followed and how it can be replicated in Pakistan to bring about a similar degree of economic development and growth.

During the post-Maoist revolution in China the country underwent a remarkable transformation; for a population where 60% of the people were living under 1\$ a day in 1980's reduced drastically to 13.4% in 2003 and 8% in 2009.⁸⁴ The defining feature in China's development strategy has been a mix of foreign direct investment and domestic savings. These figures speak for the success of the policies adopted by the Chinese government after 1975. As mentioned earlier a very major driver of this sustained high economic growth is the enormous development of physical infrastructure.⁸⁵

The rural and economic reforms in the late 1970's and the early 1980's in China led to multiplied productivity in the rural labour's output. This resulted in more people entering the labour force in the manufacturing and the services sector. Coupled with an open economic policy this resulted in high degree of Foreign Direct Investment in the manufacturing sector in China.⁸⁶ The export-led strategy that was being followed was greatly supported by both the cheap availability of labour and a dependable infrastructural network. Since China like Pakistan had a huge population this was converted into manpower needed to run industries and manufacturing units. One cornerstone of the export led policy was supported by cheap labour but the other was to be supported by a strong infrastructural base. It was then that the Chinese government realised that major investments had to be directed towards this particular sector. Some internal policy changes largely associated with the 1994 tax administration reforms considerably increased the incentives and the general policy of decentralization encourages sub-national governments to follow the

⁸³ Pravakar Sahoo, Ranjan Kumar Dash, Geethanjali Nataraj, Infrastructure development and Economic Growth in China, file:///C:/Users/Amna%20Syed/Downloads/IDP000261_001.pdf

⁸⁴ file:///C:/Users/Amna%20Syed/Downloads/IDP000261_001.pdf

⁸⁵ Chatterjee, S. 2005. Poverty Reduction Strategies—Lessons from the Asian and Pacific Region on Inclusive Development, Asian Development Review 22: 12-44

⁸⁶ file:///C:/Users/Amna%20Syed/Downloads/IDP000261_001.pdf

plan of infrastructural development.⁸⁷ This policy structure was backed by several changes in the bureaucratic system to avoid the usual red-tape associated with bureaucracy worldwide. Other measures that were incorporated included simplification of review and approval by the government and the introduction of performance criteria which increased the government's capability of implementing these infrastructural developments.⁸⁸

Most of the infrastructural development in China is funnelled through three main channels⁸⁹

1. Direct Budget Investment (from fiscal resources)
2. Borrowing
3. Market based financing

In China, the local government is also responsible for urban development and therefore infrastructural development is a task taken up by the local governments. Another way adopted by governments to direct public financing is off-budgeting fees.⁹⁰ These are basically fees taken for public projects, fees related to construction permits, domestic and international business, etc. It is therefore more readily available from local income which was then funnelled into infrastructural development. Lastly, any gap that existed as a result of reduced direct budgetary spending was filled up by either borrowing or by market based financing. It is also important to note here that as China mostly had state-owned banks they ensured that bank policies complied with government growth policies i.e. lend on easy terms capital for infrastructure development.

Romp and De Hann in their paper on “Public Capital and Economic Growth: A Critical Survey, Perspective der Wirtschaftspoliti (Perspective of Economic Policy)” summarised earlier studies made on this issue.⁹¹ They concluded that public capital may, if the circumstances were favourable, increase the income per capita of the area. It is true that studies specifically related to the infrastructural development and economic growth for China are limited and most are at state level using panel data*. Demurger in 2001 identified the role of infrastructure in growth

⁸⁷ Ibid.,

⁸⁸ Liu, Zhi. 2005, " Planning and Policy Coordination in China's Infrastructure Development", A background paper prepared for East Asia and Pacific Infrastructure flagship study commissioned by ADB-JBIC-World Bank, World Bank, Washington DC, USA

⁸⁹ file:///C:/Users/Amna%20Syed/Downloads/IDP000261_001.pdf

⁹⁰ Ibid.,

⁹¹ Romp, W. and J. de Haan 2007. “Public Capital and Economic Growth: A Critical Survey, Perspektiven der Wirtschaftspoliti, 8: 6-52

performance across 24 provinces in China, he concluded that there was in fact a correlation between infrastructural development and economic growth, however, this he stated was to be in addition to liberal reforms. In addition to this the results also revealed that transport facilities are the differentiating factor between the growth gap in these provinces, as they had been quoted in the study.⁹² Extending on this argument Jalan and Ravallion also drew important correlation between an increase in road density and the positive effect this had on consumption expenditure of the local rural farmer households in poor regions within China.⁹³

Infrastructure Development- Beyond Bridges and Tunnels

Infrastructure does not only refer to merely roads but is an umbrella term for structural development within an area that leads to facilitating the local population. By virtue of this understanding of infrastructure it also includes telecommunication towers and the access to high-speed connectivity. Among other infrastructure development projects CPEC also proposes a Cross Border Optical Fibre Cable. This project which is estimated to be 44 million USD will provide virtual connectivity between areas of Pakistan (KP, GB and Punjab) and China.⁹⁴ Work on the project was started in 2015 and progress towards completion is quickening its pace, the project is expected to be completed by the end of this year.⁹⁵

Ding and Haynes in their research find a statistically significant effect of development of telecom infrastructure and regional economic growth in China during the years 1986-2002.⁹⁶ It is interesting to see that the regression run remains robust even after controlling for investment, population growth, past levels of GDP per capita and lagged growth. This point proves the strength of the resulting regression.

In conclusion the aforementioned study of Chinese policies makes it very evident that while physical infrastructural development has significant effects on economic growth yet there must

⁹² Sylvie Demurger, 2001. Infrastructure Development and Economic Growth: An Explanation for Regional Disparities in China?, *Journal of Comparative Economics*, Elsevier, 29(1), 95-117

⁹³ J.Jalan , M. Ravallion, 2002. Geographic Poverty Traps? A Micro Model of Consumption Growth in Rural China. *Journal of Applied Econometrics* 17(4): 329-46

⁹⁴ CPEC Projects, accessed May, 2018. www.CPEC.gov.pk

*Problem with Panel Data is that it is collected from the same individuals over a period of time and is used to analyse two dimensional data. A regression is then run over the two dimensions. However, it is a widely used method for most economic researches.

⁹⁵ Ibid.,

⁹⁶ Ding L. and K.E. Haynes, 2006. The role of infrastructure in regional economic growth: the case of telecommunications in China, *Australasian Journal of Regional Studies*, 12(3), 165-187

be other supporting policies that are able to implement plans. In addition, human capital formation for the purpose of economic growth is absolutely crucial for any sort of development but more importantly if sustained economic growth is to be achieved.

3.1.5 Special Economic Zones and Women Empowerment

For any developing country its special economic zones (SEZs) are considered the engine for growth because they encourage competition and attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). According to a World Bank report on women's empowerment and Special Economic Zones, SEZ's frequently employ a higher percentage of women, even when female labour force participation is lower in the country.⁹⁷ Kenya and Jordan are such examples where national female employment rate is low but the employment of female in SEZs is comparatively higher and that contributes to wide array of socioeconomic benefits for both the countries.⁹⁸ Women are a source of cheap labour for the industries operating within these zones to create export-quality products.⁹⁹ Whereas for women economic zones provide numerous job opportunities with better earning options compared to their previous workplace.

World Bank report lists three factors that affect women's participation in Special Economic Zones which are¹⁰⁰

- Legal protection and enforcement of women's rights
- Cultural and social factors
- Lack of facilitation for entrepreneurship and lack of business support services

Different countries have adopted different mechanisms and solutions to address the obstacles of women participation in the labour force, especially the economic zones. Here's how China and Jordan have addressed these issues

Grievance mechanism in Jordan and China

In Jordan the National Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) monitors human rights violations and provides legal advice.¹⁰¹ The centre can receive complaints from female workers and provides

⁹⁷ The World Bank, "Fostering Women'S Economic Empowerment Through Special Economic Zones" (repr., The World Bank and International Financial Corporation, 2011).

⁹⁸ Ibid.,

⁹⁹ Ibid.,

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 12.

them guidance on legal and other affairs. NCHR visits the companies in the economic zones to inspect the working conditions. Another national institute, Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) has a complaint office for women where they can report any case of injustice, discrimination and harassment.¹⁰² In China there are several NGOs that run hotlines managed by volunteers to help women who are facing problems in their workplace. Such as the Maple Women's Psychological Counselling Centre, that runs several hotlines. The program has helped women voice their issues and problems against the enterprises they work for in the zones.

Community outreach program in Jordan

A large majority of women in Jordan remain unemployed due to cultural barriers against women working outside of their homes. To tackle the issue, Jordanian government, zones and companies carried out outreach programmes in order to increase female participation. The programmes entailed lectures and seminars for parents of young women and visits to factories and offices.¹⁰³ The program helped the zone officials and enterprises to build a relation with the families which led to the families and communities trusting these enterprises. As a result of one of these programs, the zone was able to recruit 200 workers, most of them were women.¹⁰⁴

China's experience

Economic and technological development zones were set up in China in 1984 by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council.¹⁰⁵ Setting up of these zones was part of China's 'opening up' program which was led by the then president, Deng Xiaoping.¹⁰⁶ World Bank's report on SEZs studies four zones of China: Shenzhen Economic Zone, Wuhan Economic and Technological Zone, Guangzhou Luogang Economic Zone, Zhongshan Huoju Economic Zone and Haidian Science and Technology Development Zone in Beijing. There are multiple factors that affect the participation of women in the labour force. In China, the major obstacles for women can be categorized under legal policies and enforcement,

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*,

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*,

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*,

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*,

social and cultural challenges, and women's education and skills level.¹⁰⁷ Through the field research of this report programs and policies undertaken by SEZs have been identified that encourage participation of women in the labour force.

Since 2007, the Shenzhen Economic Zone Government has put 'Gender Equality Promotion Regulation' in the legislation track.¹⁰⁸ The legislation will implement poverty alleviation policies for women and will take into account female education and skills development.¹⁰⁹ The legislation is spearheaded by Women's Federation in Shenzhen Special Economic Zone. Another example is when women from Women's Federation branches all over China, including the economic zones were giving trainings on women's issues and gender mainstreaming.¹¹⁰ The topics of the trainings varied from Millennium Development Goals to political participation of women. The trainings aimed to train the trainer and train the women leaders. The training was expanded to all the districts in Shenzhen and women leaders are trained each year. Due to these trainings the women promoted gender equity in their business operations. An expert from Guangdong Women's Professional Technical College has included gender inclusion and mainstreaming into the training curriculum of Chinese Communist Party School in Guangdong.

Pakistan can largely benefit from the example set by China. In Pakistan the social barriers to women employment are more prominent; hence community outreach programs like the one introduced by Jordanian government will be have extraordinary impact here.

3.2 Special Economic Zones - A new Era of Development in Pakistan

The real opportunity for female employability, however, presents itself in the next phase of CPEC projects. The Nine Special Economic Zones approved by the government of Pakistan, one in each province of the country including FATA, GB and AJK, will result in unprecedented industrial growth.¹¹¹ By virtue of these SEZ's many industries will be relocated to Pakistan both manufacturing and assembling units of local and foreign companies will begin their operations. These industries range from apparel, food processing, textile stitching, and knitting, among

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 100.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 108.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 109.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 110.

¹¹¹ CPEC Info, Proposed SEZ's, Accessed on 12 February, 2018. <http://www.cpecinfo.com/proposed-special-economic-zones.php>

others.¹¹² Dr. Aliya H. Khan a leading economist and ex-dean of Social Sciences at the Quaid-e-Azam university believes that CPEC can provide ample opportunities for the local population to be absorbed in the labour workforce if accurate measures are taken.¹¹³ She points out that these SEZ's will require both skilled and semi-skilled labour meaning that high-levels of technical knowledge is not a defining criteria and some basic training provided to our locals would prepare them for the approaching challenge. In developing countries around the world women constitute more than 50% and in some cases 90% of employment in SEZ's.¹¹⁴ This high level of female employment and the important role of SEZ's in developing country exports means that export-oriented in the past three decades has been a gendered process.¹¹⁵ Hence the high degree of feminization in the SEZ's is unique to the recent era- of export-oriented industrialization.

This can have a very positive effect on the overall employment rate of the country both male and female. In the context of this particular research report, it has to be mentioned that evidence shows industrial growth does indeed lead to better employment indicators for women specifically, especially post-industrial growth.

Dr. Hadia Majid in her article 'Inclusive Growth' mentions how both economic booms and recession in Pakistan affect men and women differently.¹¹⁶ In her analysis of the labour market of Pakistan, Majid identifies key patterns that stand out in the three main sectors of the economy, namely – agriculture, industry and services. She remarks on growth in female employment as a result of growth of industry between 2000 and 2006 which she attributes to a rise in demand of consumer goods as a result of increased consumer credit services and reduced quota restrictions in textiles and clothing.¹¹⁷

These findings are supported by research carried out by Theo Sparreboom and Lubna Shahnaz in their study on Assessing the Labour Market Vulnerability among young people. Figure 11

¹¹² CPEC Government of Pakistan Official Website, Special Economic Zones, Accessed March 2018. cpec.gov.pk

¹¹³ Aliya h khan, interviewed by Amna Syed, semi-structures in-person interview, Islamabad March 2018.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*,

¹¹⁵ Aliya H khan, SEZ development and Job Creation, (presentation), Islamabad 2018.

¹¹⁶ Hadia Majid, Inclusive Growth?, Dawn News, March 20, 2017. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1321526/inclusive-growth>

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*,

mentions the percentage change in the indicators over the years.¹¹⁸ The first three indicators namely labour force participation rate, employment to population rate and unemployment rate all show progress. An increase of 4.8 pc was observed in female labour force participation and a decrease of 6.2 pc in Unemployment Rate for females, respectively, was seen from 2000 to 2006. Moreover, Figure 11 also shows a 5.3 pc increase in female employment to population rate. All these indicators quiet clearly show the positive results on female labour force induction into the system with the growth of industry. This should not come as a surprise since the table shows upward trends of employment both for male and females, and industrial growth inevitably leads to greater employment opportunities.

Selected Labour Market Indicators (%)

Population Aged 15+	1999- 2000	2001- 2002	2003- 2004	2005- 2006	Change 1999- 2000 to 2005- 2006 (Percentage Point)
Labour Force Participation Rate					
Both Sexes	50.4	50.5	50.7	53.0	+2.6
Males	83.2	82.7	82.7	84.0	+0.8
Females	16.3	16.2	18.0	21.1	+4.8
Employment-to-population Rate					
Both Sexes	46.8	46.5	47.0	49.7	+2.9
Males	78.6	77.6	77.6	79.6	+1.0
Females	13.7	13.6	15.6	19.0	+5.3
Unemployment Rate					
Both Sexes	7.2	7.8	7.4	6.1	-1.1
Males	5.5	6.2	6.2	5.2	-0.3
Females	15.8	16.4	12.9	9.6	-6.2
Share of Employees in Total Employment					
Both Sexes	35.9	40.4	38.5	38.4	+2.5
Males	36.4	40.9	39.8	41.2	+4.8
Females	33.1	37.1	31.5	26.6	-6.5
Share of Family Workers in Total Employment					
Both Sexes	19.5	18.8	22.0	23.9	+4.3
Males	14.5	14.3	16.2	16.2	+1.7
Females	49.9	46.1	51.4	57.0	+7.1
Share of the Employed					
Working 50 hours or more					
Both Sexes	41.9	41.0	43.1	41.5	-0.4
Males	46.7	45.6	49.2	48.8	+2.1
Females	13.0	13.5	11.8	9.6	-3.3

Figure 11 | Source: PBS

The aforementioned analysis paints a rather rosy picture of the existing realities, however, combining factors which have in the past and will continue to affect female employment must also be put to consideration. Hadia Majid in her article also mentions that owing to energy, financial and security crisis post 2007 the industry suffered immensely. The crux of her argument lies in the basic point that resulting labour dynamics from a recession caused more women to be laid off from formal sector employment than their male counterparts basically

¹¹⁸ Theo Sparreboom, Lubna Shahnaz, Assessing Labour Market Vulnerability in Young People, The Pakistan Development Review, Pakistan 2007, 45.

highlighting the inferior position women hold in the manufacturing sector. Another very important point she raises in this regard is the 89 pc of women as opposed to 47% of men who are employed under casual contracts (see glossary).¹¹⁹ Casual Contracts are a repressive measure taken up by employers where employer liability is extremely limited. Such contracts usually result in practically no benefits or job security provisions for employees (see glossary). These contracts exploit labours and the fact that more women are bound by these contracts than men show the grim situation our female labour force is currently in.

Even Sparreboom and Shahnaz in their analysis agree that while the three earlier discussed indicators- Labour Force Participation Rate, Population to Employment ratio and Unemployment rate show positive changes they provide a one dimensional analysis of reality.¹²⁰ Share of Employees to total Employment is an indicator which identifies the number of waged and salaried employees that are present in the economy. Figure 11 shows an overall increase in the percentage of employment status group of wage and salaried employees 2.5 percentage points, the same indicator has decreased for female by 6.5 percentage. These figures raise an important point, while female employment increased in the given period there were fewer females who were employed to the positions of wage and salaried employees. Sparreboom and Shahnaz mention how evidence has shown that wage and salaried employees enjoy greater benefits than people involved in the informal sector of employment.¹²¹

3.3 Truck Driving Women of Thar

Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SEMC) is a joint venture between the Sindh Government and Engro Corporation.¹²² Formed in 2009 the company was given the task of exploiting the coal potential in Thar and consequently develop coal-based power plants.¹²³ The company has a special focus on creating opportunities and raising living standards of the local population and therefore runs an extensive CSR programme. Thar foundation is an independent entity established under the umbrella of SEMC to handle its CSR portfolio. The foundation focuses on ten basic areas including health, education, livelihood, women empowerment and disaster management. In education, great emphasis is put on inducting female students and there is a lot

¹¹⁹ Hadia Majid, Inclusive Growth?, Dawn News, March 20, 2017.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1321526/inclusive-growth>

¹²⁰ Theo Sparreboom, Lubna Shahnaz, Assessing Labour Market Vulnerability in Young People, The Pakistan Development Review, Pakistan 2007, 40.

¹²¹ Ibid., 42.

¹²² SEMC, Accessed on 9th March 2018. <http://www.secmc.com.pk/>

¹²³ Ibid.,

of focus on providing teacher trainings. Health care provision is also an important area of focus. Mother and child care related issues are on top priority and extensive health awareness sessions are carried out engaging the local populace. According to Naseer Memon, investing in better health of the local has an indirect link to female empowerment. In an area like Thar where there is rampant malnutrition and high infant mortality rate focus on improved health facilities is much needed. Better health in-turn means a healthier population which is able to contribute towards economic productivity helping both themselves and the community.

Image 3: Lata, trainee in ‘Women Dump Truck Driving Program’ in Thar | Source: Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC)



Students in Thar Foundation Schools	Adult Literacy Centre
Boys 427	Female Students: 36
Girls 199	Male Students: 57
Total 626	Total Students: 93
Source: Data Provided by GM CSR	Source GM CSR SEMC

Figure 12: beneficiary population from specifically education related projects.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Naseer Memon, Interviewed by Amna Syed, semi-structured interview, Islamabad, 3rd March 2018.

There is a primary focus on women empowerment though. In an unprecedented break from cultural stereotypes the Thar Foundation has employed female dump-truck drivers. Training a batch of 26 local females as drivers, the foundation has proved a point; women cannot be restricted to certain roles. Naseer Memon points out that this CSR engagement is not only focused on equipping women with necessary skill to earn their livelihood but also aimed at tackling some cultural barriers which have persisted and as a result prevented female empowerment. To ensure that these women drivers are fairly compensated during their training they are paid 10,000 to 15,000 rupees but once they are inducted as full-time employees they are paid between 35,000 to 40,000 rupees and overtime benefits and medical coverage is provided. When asked if the wages between male and female drivers were different he highlighted that it is company policy to pay according to the position hired for and not with relevance to gender.

He, however, adds that it was not easy to bring these women out of their homes, bound by restrictions and years of male-dominance these women did not initially comprehend ideas of economic independence. Yet supportive policy mechanisms along with dissemination of cultural training led to the success of this project. Naseer Memon specifically mentions that to enable greater female participation a policy to employ one male member in addition to the female member was introduced.

The aforementioned analysis brings to light some very important issues which if not handled timely and with the utmost commitment will cause labour situation to worsen in the coming years, not just for women but for men as well. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and its focus on industry growth will naturally attract large numbers of both skilled and semi-skilled labour.

3.4 Long Term Plan and Female Employment

At the start of this year the much-awaited long term plan for CPEC was launched in a ceremony in The Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform in Islamabad. The plan is a code of cooperation between Pakistan and China from 2017 to 2030 and is expected to provide macro guidance up to the year for the approaching decades. Among the continued areas of cooperation which are being carried on from the previous agreement the long-term plan adds some other

areas of cooperation which can be crucial to employment in Pakistan and also to specifically female employment.¹²⁵ For the purpose of this research we will limit the scope of the effect of the LTP on female employment.

3.4.1 Agriculture, Horticulture and Forestry

In the Agrarian based Pakistani economy a great percentage of the population is involved in employment related to agriculture. As shown in the previous section a greater percentage of females are involved in agriculture related activities as compared other sectors (this stands true for the male population as well). One of the areas that Pakistan and China seek to cooperate is in Agriculture. According to the long term plan the long term plan proposes to “**Strengthen production of agriculture inputs particularly pesticides, fertilizer, machinery and support services including agriculture education and research**”.¹²⁶ If the ideas of sustainable development are parallel to this, it can have a very positive effect on the agricultural output of the country in the long run. It is also important to note here that the clause proposes to include agricultural education and research from which locals can also benefit. In addition to this The LTP also proposes to collaborate in the field of forestry and horticulture improving methods to improve the quality of product.¹²⁷ Again, as mentioned earlier, roughly 70% of the female employed workforce is associated with these sectors and any improvement through cooperation will have direct effect on the female employment rate.

3.4.2. Tourism

Another area of proposed cooperation is Tourism. Opening up Pakistani local sights to foreign tourists and development of local sites will enable local community of the area to benefit from the spending by foreign and local tourists. In the implementation of this plan, if special attention

¹²⁵ Long Term Plan, accessed May ,2018. <http://cpec.gov.pk/brain/public/uploads/documents/CPEC-LTP.pdf>

¹²⁶ Long Term Plan for China Pakistan Economic Corridor (2017-2030), accessed on May, 2018.

<http://cpec.gov.pk/brain/public/uploads/documents/CPEC-LTP.pdf>

¹²⁷ Ibid.,

*All information in this section has been quoted directly or indirectly from the government published Long Term Plan CPEC 2017-2030

is given to protect and create female employment opportunities then this can have a crucial effect in raising the status of females in areas where tourists spots are to be developed.

Tourism employment can be classified as follows¹²⁸

- Direct employment – which mean direct contact with the tourists like front offices in hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, etc.
- indirect employment – encompasses restaurants suppliers, construction companies, etc
- induced employment – which means creation of job opportunities in other sectors due to development of tourism in the vicinity

Developing the tourism industry is always a good step for developed and transitioning countries.¹²⁹ Tourism sector creates numerous opportunities for employment as well as for establishment of small and medium enterprises. The jobs in this sector are always attractive and highly respected. Evidence from European countries show that tourism industry attracts and employs more females.¹³⁰ The industry presents feasible opportunities for women whereby they can balance their work and family life. Study shows that the employment of women in this industry are highly influenced by legislation and cultures of countries.¹³¹

3.4.3. Cooperation in People-to-People Exchanges

46 Both China and Pakistan seek to strengthen cooperation between their two nations. The long term plan pays special attention the future cooperation between two countries in the field of public opinion communication, people-to-people friendships and more importantly people's livelihood improvement. This plan of improving people's livelihood should be implemented in a way that policy is created to benefit both genders.

¹²⁸ Alka Obadić and Ivana Marić, "THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TOURISM AS AN EMPLOYMENT GENERATOR OF FEMALE LABOUR FORCE", 2009, 95-111.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 109.

¹³⁰ Ibid.,

¹³¹ Ibid.,

3.4.4. Financial Cooperation

Another feature of the long term plan is cooperation in the field of financial cooperation. **“The two countries should explore the establishment of multi-level cooperation mechanisms and strengthen policy coordination.”** The long term plan also proposes that through financial reforms and innovation of financial products a better environment which mitigates risk should be prepared. As discussed in the following section rejuvenation of financial markets in Pakistan especially linked to smart financial solution for SME’s and other cottage industries plus startups can lead to very positive results. This can be especially beneficial for females if targeted financial products are created to support women entrepreneurs. However, the government will need to introduce programmes to educate women of Pakistan about financial services and how they are used.

Like any other developing country, garment industry is a critical source of employment for India’s poor, especially women.¹³² Business for Social Responsibility (BSR), a global Not for Profit Organization, took the HERfinance initiative in India which aimed at educating the poor women working in the garment industry on financial services and how to use them. The program aimed at including these women in the global supply chain. Financed by Walt Disney Company, the project improved access to financial services and increased women’s financial literacy.¹³³ Of the individuals who completed the program, 38 percent were likely to save their salaries in formal banks and 91 percent confessed that with financial education their savings have significantly improved with access to better services.¹³⁴ Similar programs will have to be introduced in Pakistan to improve women’s knowledge and access to better financial services.

¹³² "Herfinance: Increasing Financial Inclusion Among Women Workers In Global Supply Chains | Case Studies | BSR", Bsr.Org, 2015, <https://www.bsr.org/en/our-insights/case-study-view/herfinance-increasing-financial-inclusion-among-women-workers-in-global-sup>.

¹³³ Ibid.,

¹³⁴ Ibid.,



Image 4: A local woman, participant of Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company's SME program | Source: Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC)

4.0 CPEC and the future of female employment: Policy Recommendations

The preceding analysis shows labour market dynamics through a gendered lens and identifies the anticipated opportunities that will be created as a result of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. More importantly, it highlights the existing cleavages in the labour market especially with reference to the female working population.

CPEC is being viewed as a great opportunity by many, however, to fully exploit the potential of this mega project it is high time that we bring apt policies to support the approaching changes. The situation otherwise can drastically leave Pakistan at a disadvantage. The afore-mentioned analysis show how previously boom in the industry caused a large proportion of the female workforce to come into the fold of formal employment as well as employment in the informal sector. Pakistan has ratified 36 ILO conventions pertaining to labour rights yet we see a rampant

disregard to the protection of labours and specifically female labourers in Pakistan. Lack of social security, workplace harassment, lack of skill development, wage disparity are only some of the problems faced by women workers every day. The interesting part is that there are widely available instances of both labour class and those working at the top facing discriminatory behaviour from society. It is true that religious and cultural norms are often blamed for this but it is time that we begin to question why these norms are specifically left to subjugate working women. Until we acknowledge and apply the full potential of half of our population Pakistan will continue on its path of remaining in the third world. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has come as a breath of fresh air for an earlier stifling Pakistani economy. As mentioned earlier, a very important feature of CPEC are the proposed SEZ's. There is strong evidence to suggest that long term competitiveness of a zone depends on the quality and productivity of its workforce and labour-management practices inside the SEZ's.¹³⁵ For this it is important that labour regimes are fully in sync with International Labour Standards that have been identified in the ILO conventions.¹³⁶ This section of the research is focused on how we can adapt our labour market especially with reference to our female labour force for CPEC.

4.1 Skill-Set mapping and the creation of a Labour Market Information system

Skill-set mapping is an exercise where the skills required for a particular project are identified. A list of sorts is created which defines the number of people needed at each level for the job to be done. In the course of this research I met several individuals who feel this sort of an exercise is extremely crucial to ensure that we are able to provide the incoming Chinese companies with our local labour.¹³⁷¹³⁸ It is often argued that China will always prefer Pakistani labour as compared to Chinese labour which is far more expensive but if we are unable to provide these companies with enough skilled and semi-skilled labour our labour market will naturally suffer. The Special Economic Zones which are soon going to be set up in all provinces of Pakistan will definitely require labour, however, are we prepared to give this sort of labour to these SEZ's? More importantly, what is the kind of labour demand that these companies will bring in. High officials in the Ministry of Planning rightly identify the limitation to such a skill-set mapping. Since

¹³⁵ Aliya h khan, Interviewed by Amna Syed, semi-structured interview, March 2018, Islamabad.

¹³⁶ Ibid.,

¹³⁷ Naseer Memon, Interviewed by Amna Syed, semi-structured interview, Islamabad 3rd March 2018.

¹³⁸ Aliya h khan, Interviewed by Amna Syed, semi-structured interview, Islamabad, March 2018.

industry clusters have been decided for most SEZ's a question that still looms is what kind of industry will relocate to these places; the uncertainty here can only be dissolved in the approaching years. It is also true that some sort of skill mapping has already been started by the government from labour to managerial level but this exercise has to be enhanced in order to bring out its complete benefit.¹³⁹

It is true that even though some data on types of job creation exists there is no mechanism for job matching for the existing and anticipated labour force. As pointed out earlier there were systems in place by the Labour Department which carried out a similar exercise, however, over the years these have become defunct. For this purpose labour economists believe that Labour Market Information System should be created.¹⁴⁰ This can be an online portal where potential employers can be matched with potential employees since currently there is no formal way of reaching out for employment at all levels.

To understand how such a system would work we can take the example of one district. For that particular district some aspects related to the pool of potential labour should be identified. The number of university level graduated, college level graduates in a district should be registered, and the inflow from other areas of individuals should be accounted for hence a registration process should be created. On the other hand, employers should provide information on available jobs for the people on this portal. This will not only make the process of job attainment more transparent but will benefit both men and women in getting employment.

Pakistan is now in the need of such a system more than ever with the advent of CPEC. Job opportunities created as a result of CPEC should be present on an online portal for all the various sectors where there is job growth. This LMIS will enable us to cope with the approaching change and will greatly benefit all sections of the society. Public- Private Partnership for this sort of a system can be extremely beneficial. Currently, a crude type of LMIS is rozee.pk an online employment website, however, a portal created by the government in a joint venture with the private sector will have a wider reach. Moreover, by this process job matching for women will

¹³⁹ Hassan daud, Interviewed by Amna Syed, semi-structured interview, Islamabad, March 2018.

¹⁴⁰ Aliya h khan, Interviewed by Amna Syed, semi-structured interview, Islamabad, March 2018.

also become more convenient as it is a reality that a lot of qualified females are unable to find jobs (female unemployment rate is double that of male).¹⁴¹

In addition to this skill-set mapping and identification for particularly SEZ's must be carried out along gender lines. In fact, wherever space for women can be created it should be created. For example the SEZ in Rashakai will have industries for fruit, food packaging, textile, stitching and knitting.¹⁴² From this it is evident that even if these processes are highly mechanized the fact that these are processes very familiar to the female population in the local areas is a factor worth considering. More importantly, as Dr. Aliya points out the level of skills required for the manufacturing units of these areas should not be very high. Hence women can be trained to learn these processes. Moreover, local traditional skills acquired by people at a young age should be given importance and through trainings should be enhanced. For example, making of the Ajrak cloth is indigenous to interior Sindh, this skill should be enhanced and modernized with the help of Chinese for the local population after which it should be used to generate greater returns. Another factor worth considering is the extended Chinese market now available for Pakistani goods.

4.2 Financial Inclusion and SME (Small and Medium Enterprises) development

According to the Labour Force Survey a measure for financial inclusion of women is the number of bank accounts opened up by women. This percentage has gone up from 5% to 11% from 2008 to 2015.¹⁴³ However, to ensure more women participation in the economic sectors financial inclusion not limited to merely opening bank accounts but involvement in other financial tools is absolutely crucial. For development of financial products which are more in-line with the needs of women we should take help from the highly developed financial institutions in China. In this process tradition and culture should be used for the benefit and smart solutions that are relevant in the Pakistani context should be created. An example of this was pointed out by Dr. Nadia Farooq; it is common tradition to give women gold jewellery as a marriage gift instead of

¹⁴¹ Labour force Survey 2014-15", Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Accessed February/March 2018.

<http://www.pbs.gov.pk/labour-force-publications>

¹⁴² CPEC Government of Pakistan Official Website, Special Economic Zones, Accessed March 2018. cpec.gov.pk

¹⁴³ Labour force Survey 2014-15", Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Accessed February/March 2018.

<http://www.pbs.gov.pk/labour-force-publications>

keeping it locked away in their homes they can keep this in banks for the benefit of both themselves and the country.

In the process of industrialization China brought under its umbrella private companies and local entrepreneurs, providing them with loans on easy terms to increase monetary access to people this enabled rapid growth of industry in China. A great percentage of economic revenue is generated by SME's (according to some estimates this is 90%), however, little government support is provided to encourage the growth for this sector. For females this sector holds a lot of significance since many are involved in this sector. Not only should SME's be encouraged by providing financial incentives to them but also space within SEZ's should be created for these SME's. More importantly, development of the e-commerce sector through CPEC with the interest shown by huge e-commerce businesses like Alibaba the avenues for the products created in these SME's increases dramatically. These points should be brought into consideration and active working should be done to prepare policy framework for SME workers especially women to get access to e-commerce.

4.3 Legislative and Policy Measures

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has given us the opportunity to reorient our policy framework towards active development. The importance of mobilizing our large female population for the purpose of economic endeavours has been emphasized at several places in this research. It is also important, however, to understand that changes coming as a result of CPEC should be tackled from a policy and legislative framework. Pakistan has a history of able female politicians and legislators. It was the first Muslim country to elect a female Prime Minister. Recently, 5% quota for direct election for women in the parliament has been created; the female caucus in the parliament has played a major role in ensuring several legislations pertaining to important female issues like honour killing, rape and gender inequality were passed. However, it is the need of the time that these women are engaged in starting a process of dialogue to ensure female representation in CPEC. A committee especially designed to work for inclusion of women in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor should be created. The purpose of this committee should be to come into consultative dialogue with different stakeholders involved, including academics, home-based workers, formal market labourer's Chinese companies etc.

after which legislative solutions should be created to ensure female inclusion. Topics like gender wage gap, female harassment, the problem of invisible workers and female rights violation in the informal economy, all these should be tackled in reference to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Another aspect related to policy is the creation of a relocation policy by state institutions by which the number of foreign and local employees are pre-determined for every project. There are reports of BOI working on such a policy, however, nothing conclusive has come out till this point in time.¹⁴⁴

4.4 Human Capital Formation

The notion of human development was first highlighted in 1676 by Sir William Petty, it was later reintroduced by Adam Smith in his famous book *The Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, in 1776.¹⁴⁵ The theory highlights the importance of investment in educational trainings, nutrition and health in order to get returns which are future expected earnings from this human capital that is created. The productivity of each labourer is perceived to increase with educational and health investment. Consequently, it is necessary that extensive measures are taken to create this human capital for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. It is undeniable that the approach to creating employable female workforce for CPEC is multi-pronged. At one level policies created to provide facilitation and support should be implemented but at another level females should be provided with the requisite trainings to ensure better employability for them. Female literacy rate in Pakistan is only 48%, which means less than half of our female population (who form more than half of the entire Pakistani population) are not literate.¹⁴⁶ It is for this reason that cultural and traditional norms continue to exist in their most stringent forms. Immediate attention has to be paid to increase female accessibility to education. This will enable more women inducted in the fold of CPEC.

¹⁴⁴ Nadia Farooq, Interviewed by Amna Syed, semi-structured interview, Islamabad, April 2018.

¹⁴⁵ Fritz Machlup, *Issues in the Theory of Human Capital: Education as Investment*, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad 1982.

¹⁴⁶ Pakistan Economic Survey 2016-2017, Ministry of Finance Website, Accessed March/April 2018. http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey_1617.html

While the government is already working to create vocational training institutes especially in the proposed SEZ's where developers have been asked create vocational training institutes as part of the government to government agreement, there is still a great need to identify which sort of trainings will be provided in these institutes. Moreover, for the benefit of women it is necessary that special quotas are created for women and vocational institute specifically for female trainings are formed.

Another important aspect of education which should be addressed now that CPEC is moulding our economy is to develop a link between our academia and industry.¹⁴⁷ For this we can learn from the example set by China where there is a very strong link between industry and academia. Labour requirements and growth possibilities are shared by the industry with academics which then identify which sort of workers will be required in the approaching years.¹⁴⁸ Such a mechanism should also be developed in Pakistan. This will not only provide us with a highly skilled local labour work force but also enable to improve standards of education for our institutes.

Better education for both males and females will inevitably leave its mark on the mind-set of people and the strength of cultural and social norms will be tested. Many times the argument of culture as one of the most important barrier to female entry into labour market is incurred, one of the most effective ways of dealing with this can be better education.

¹⁴⁷ Nadia farooq, Interviewed by Amna Syed, semi-structured interview, Islamabad, April 2018.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.,



Image 5: A local girl focuses on the lecture at the Thar Foundation Primary School, initiative of Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC) | Source: Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC)

4.5 Labour Rights and Women

While influx of labour is an opportunity that can come as a result of CPEC it should also be ensured that future labour be provided protection to ensure that an enabling environment is created in the process. For this Pakistan should follow the terms set out by ILO in designing and revamping its labour policies with reference to CPEC.

The government is doing its part in creating labour friendly policies and the BOI has been working on consultation with the labour department, however, this exercise needs to be catalysed and policies on emergency bases should be brought forward. In this process women should not be ignored and every kind of support should be provided to not only induct them into the labour

workforce but also to ensure that they continue in a growth conducive environment. Labour policy in Pakistan needs immediate revision more so in the context of the approaching changes as a result of CPEC.

Labour policy should address the importance of child care centres for all public and private institutions. To increase female mobility option of travelling arrangements by the organizations should be provided to women.

Conclusion

Based on empirical data this research shows the marked difference between employment of men and women. It is true that while this gender disparity seems to find its roots in cultural, religious and social norms other factors that are largely concerned with a lack of supportive mechanism for women can be a reason for this disparity. The research highlights how the unemployment for women is twice that for men. This is a clear indicator of the fact that despite the presence of qualified females willing to work they are unable to find appropriate jobs for themselves. This points toward the implicit disadvantages in finding employment that are faced by women.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is anticipated to be a “game-changer”, this extensive FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) is expected to rejuvenate rising economy of Pakistan. Through modernization and industrialization, a lot of new jobs are expected to be created, however, it is our duty that we fully exploit the benefits of this mega project. With this in mind, we should also ensure that our female population is provided their due share in these benefits. Under CPEC 9 SEZ’s have been proposed, these Special Economic Zones will have certain industry clusters. It is in this area that many opportunities for female employment will occur and therefore the government should focus on ensuring that these are delivered appropriately. It is true that Pakistani female population find themselves at a disadvantage because of a lack of skill-development. For this reason, vocational and training institutes are needed to be established on an urgent basis in areas where these SEZ’s will form, pertinent to the type of industry that this area will have.

In addition, this paper identifies some steps that the government can engage in to ensure that the gender disparity figures for Pakistan improve in the coming years and better employment opportunities are created for women, including policy level changes that need to be addressed in order for us to move forward.

Both bottom-up and top-down approaches are needed on an urgent basis to tackle this problem which has existed for a really long time. In bottom-up, it is necessary that our education system penetrates all levels of the society and both male and female students are provided with an education that can enable them to be a contributing member of the society. This will create a

larger group in the society who will challenge the existing cultural and social norms depriving women of their due share. For top-down, it is important that supportive legislation and policies are in place to enable our female population to fully show their potential in the economy. Policies to support working mothers and those to increase female mobility are all much needed to create a female friendly working environment.

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