

Date: August 16, 2007

Workshop on Women Employment Concerns and Working Condition in Pakistan held in Parliament Lodges Islamabad.

Background

The national seminar was follow up of the same series of seminars, aimed at consolidating the recommendations of working groups and strategizing the actions imperative to create conducive environment for working women in Pakistan.

Proceedings

The seminar started at 11:15 AM at the Conference Hall of PIPS, Parliament Lodges, Islamabad. A group of 20 parliamentarians representing four working groups from Punjab, Sindh, NWFP and Baluchistan attended the training. Other participants included representatives from Media, PCHR and ILO, Islamabad Office. (*List of participants attached as Annex. 1*)

Socio-economic uplift of women has to be prioritized because Islam has also protected women from any type of discrimination, guaranteeing them respect in society. The constitution of Pakistan also has several provisions for gender equality. Government had taken many steps to women empowerment, yet all sections of the society have to play their due role for bringing about a tangible change in the existing circumstances.

A wide ranging group of 30 persons attended the seminar .The Key participants were ,Ms Kashmala Tariq MNA and Executive Director PCHR, Maulana Rahmatullah Khalil MNA, Ms. Mehnaz Rafi MNA Chairperson National Assembly Standing Committee for Women Development, Ms. Fouzia Wahab MNA, Ms. Parveen Sikandar Gill MPA(Punjab), Syed Talib Imam MPA (Sind), Shafique Ahmed Khan MPA (Balochistan), Rahmat Saleh Baloch MPA (Balochistan), Dr. Ishaque Baloch (Balochistan), Shamim Ara Parwar MPA(Sind), Farheen Mughal MPA (Sind), Shaheen Attique-ur-Rehman MPA (Punjab), Nighat Orakzai MPA (NWFP), Shafique Chaudhry Chief Coordinator PCHR & Dr. Tauqir Shah National Project Coordinator WEC-PK, ILO and representatives of media and civil society participated in this workshop.

Opening Session

The seminar started at 11:20 in the morning with the welcome remarks of Mr. Shafique Chaudhry, Chief Coordinator PCHR. He welcomed the Chief Guest, distinguished speakers and the participants. He explained the strategic importance of seminar and put forth the Agenda of the seminar. (*Agenda attached as annex 2*)

The seminar was formally inaugurated by Begum Mehnaz Rafi, Chairperson National Assembly Standing Committee for Women Development. In her opening remarks, she shared her recent experience and information regarding "Home Based Workers". She informed estimated 50million people are engaged in informal home based work and around 80 percent of them are women. Their presence is invisible in country's economy, since their contribution is not recognized as formal work. They are vulnerable and receive very low wages in return of hard work" she told.

Talking about women empowerment, she added women should get representation according to their proportion in the country's population. Stereotyping against women also hinders their access to job market. Generally household responsibilities are considered to be the sphere of women while earning as the responsibility of men. Given this mind set, the fundamentalists feel reluctant to accept women stepping out from their set domain and entering into work force. This mind set and attitude on the part of men make the work environment non conducive for women.

Talking about the transport issue she cited significant majority of women get discouraged to enter into the labour force due to the troubles faced while traveling to the work place through

public transport. Physical uneasiness, oral, physical, sexual harassment and sense of insecurity being faced by women while commuting in public transport not only affect their performance at work place, but is a major reason of quitting from job. Even woman on higher level job does not feel secure at her workplace and face harassment of different forms.

Begum Mehnaz Rafi said, as the world develops, values also change but with slow pace. Collective endeavor is needed to fight prejudiced practices. More the women come forward, worn-out the stigma would be. We need to get moving this process of change, step has been taken and we need to take it forward. She informed the audiences that she is presenting two bills in assembly for home workers and serving women. She stressed that making laws is not enough; implementation of these laws is the need of time.

Overview of Five Regional Seminars

Mr. Shafique Chaudhry, Chief Coordinator, PCHR provided a brief overview of the previous seminars held in four provinces, highlighting the major issues discussed and the recommendations made in each province (*Detailed overview is attached as Annex 3*).

Remarks of the participants on the overview of Seminars

She remarked that women have to come across barrier at work place, they are restricted to certain jobs as telephone operator, front desk person, personal secretary or assistant, nurses, etc. They lack opportunities to get progress. In addition, they face discrimination and most of the top positions have been occupied by men. Very few women are in the management, in the Federal Government, only few women are in top senior positions, while their share as officer is less. In Punjab, there are only two female vice chancellors serving in Women Universities. There is a need to resolve these problems at grass root level. She elaborated that Invisibility and Exclusion are major concerns of working women. In this context she highlighted the importance of Care Economy as a huge contribution on the part of women that enables men to work outside the home, household management, child care, social responsibilities and so on.

(Shafique Chaudhry Chief Coordinator PCHR is addressing on WEC-PK seminar in PIPS Conference Hall Parliament Lodges Islamabad, Dr Tauqeer Shah National Project Coordinator WEC-PK and Mehnaz Rafi MNA Chairperson National Standing Committee on Women Development are sitting on his right.)

Ms. Farheen Mughal, MPA, Sindh

She stressed upon the need of Labour Unions. She stressed the current budget is not gender sensitive. She stated education is most important for the empowerment of women. We need to provide girls schools and health centers. She mentioned women in bangle industry (Hyderabad) have been suffering the worst working conditions with low wages. She quoted an example that in Karachi, women workers of bangle industry made a union council, but owner of that factory dismissed lady union leader from job. Women are reluctant to come into mainstream. Their representation on higher level i.e. in army, in management level, decision making level is less as compare to their number.

Mr. Rehmat Saleem, MPA, Balochistan

Rehmat Saleem stressed upon the importance of education and awareness. Talking about the social security he cited mostly women work without conformation and registration. Female employees can not apply for other perks and facilities because of their status of job. *In Federal Public Service Commission* representation of women is negligible. In Punjab University, there is a male person recruited on female post. Criticizing upon the role of society he stated that we all talk a lot about corruption but do nothing to stop it.

Dr. Talib Imam, MPA, Sindh

Syed Talib Imam was pleased for noticeable representation of women in that workshop. Citing personal experience, he stated there are 5413 industries in slum areas of Landhi Bin Qasim, large number of women work in these industries but no man has dare to harass them due to strict check of administration and public representatives. He remarked that if public representatives fulfill their duties honestly then problem can be solved properly.

Begum Mahnaz Rafi, MNA.

She attributed the vulnerable condition of home based workers. She said Thekaydar (contractor) enjoys the profit. The actual workers receive no benefit of their hard labour. She mentioned that earlier the labour inspector used to monitor the working conditions, but this practice is no longer there. She stressed that during 60 years since the establishment of Pakistan, these workers have been living miserable life under extreme poverty and it is high time to address their needs. Since they have no regulation, laws and policies, they earn the least; have no medical cover or other fringe benefits.

Women Employment Concerns and Working Conditions in Pakistan

Dr. Tauqeer Hussain Shah, National Project Coordinator, *WEC PK* project at *ILO* started with a brief overview on the national facts and figures pertaining to the status of women's employment in Pakistan. He mentioned the difference between work and employment. Every person who is striving for livelihood is considered as workers; no matter he is an officer working at office, a fisher man, a shop keeper, a woman stitching clothes at home to earn money, person working in fields to lend a hand to family etc. *ILO* is working for women employment concerns and striving to make workplaces conducive for women.

Questions and Answer Session

Remarks by Mr. Rehmat Saleem, MPA

Providing existing scenario, Rehmat Saleem conceded freedom of press, pre-eminence of democracy and parliament are pre-requisite for the balanced society. Pakistan is signatory of different laws and treaties but it is useless without positive result. Controlling over gender discrimination leads solution of different problems. Budget should be masses friendly. In our country we spend more on defense rather on education and health sector. Stigmas regarding working women must be eliminated through mass awareness and education. There is a dire need for gender sensitization.

Second Technical Session of Working Groups

Second session was started at 2:00 pm followed by lunch. Working groups were assigned three themes to have deliberations and then presented the major recommendations in the plenary.

Theme 1. Need for Equal Employment Opportunity

Major issues of the deliberations

- There is a need of Commission in National, Provincial and District level for the implementation of the law to ensure the equal opportunity of women in employment in government and public sector.
- There is a need of legislation in National Assembly for specific legislation to ensure the Equal Employment Opportunities for Women.
- The provincial legislative bodies also adopt the law and legitimized it on provincial level.
- Laws should be implemented on local level by the district administration.
- For the awareness on grass root level, there is need of consultation workshop on national, provincial and district level. Mass Media can play effective role in this regard.
- Vacancies should be announced and priority should be given according to the experience, qualification and merit.
- Political parties should ensure women equal rights in their party manifesto.
- The word chairman should be replaced with the word chairperson in different legislative and official documents.
- Proper motivation, support of society, positive role of religious leaders and social and political groups can play important role in this regard.

- Gender mainstreaming and alleviation of gender discrimination is an evolutionary
- Legal Framework in order to protect women from sexual harassment
- Discrimination at work place

Recommendations

In general, constant struggle is required to bring women into mainstream and following are the specific recommendations made by the participants:

Dr. Syed Tauqir Hussain Shah said women empowerment issues must be added in different political parties' manifestos. Implementation of laws must be on local and district level. Women in politics are elected on special seats; they must come ahead on general seats. Talking about the harassment on work place he added an ordinance on federal level exists in this regard but it is not adopted on provincial level. Harassment is misconduct and to check that issue a committee should be formed comprising on 3 members. He suggested that counseling member of this committee should be women, so that women issues must be solve on priority basis.

Talking about representation of women in legislatures, Ms. Nighat Yasmin Orakzai, MPA said that political parties do not offer general seats to women workers. Women can only participate in politics through reserved seats. Elected women can not use funds according to their own will. Women should come ahead in politics on general seats as well. There must be laws for women empowerment. And their implementation should be on union council level.

Ms. Shamim Aara, MPA, remarked women of Pakistan have enough capability to be the Prime Minister of Pakistan like Benazir Bhutto. But unfortunately in her government development programs for women were not adopted and implemented. So women remained deprived in different walks of life. Women have the potential, but there is a need of proper institutionalization.

Ms. Farheen Mughal, MPA suggested laws should be implemented by women executive. They can emphasis women issues properly. Talking about low wages issue she remarked that women are less paid as compare to men for the same job due to gender discrimination. She remarked women teachers in private schools and primary level are low paid, and they have been working on contracts, with no benefits. Government needs to take action to improve their situation through regulatory laws. In addition, she highlighted the concerns of retired women facing enormous troubles in getting their pension processed. They have no supportive system so they suffer a lot.

Ms. Parveen Gull, MPA viewed we talked about equal opportunities but women create troubles for themselves by seeking favors and shortcuts in different matters. Women need to get awareness about their rights then they may raise their concerns and protect their rights. There prevails gap in information sharing. Information does not get to provincial levels. Gaps should be filled. Strong linkages need to be developed among Academia, research institute, legislators, civil society organizations and Government.

Ms. Shaheen Attiq Ur Rehman, MPA emphasized on the role and importance of media and remarked media can be use to bring awareness. It can be used as an effective gadget to change mindset of the society. Flaws can be rectified through mass media awareness. Misconception regarding gender role can be eliminated. She suggested that religious leader can also play important role to change mindset of the society. Women on national, provincial, district level must be linked with each other.

Theme 2. Legal Framework for Sexual harassment at workplace

Major issues of the deliberations

- Law formulation is useless with out proper implementation. Law implementation mechanism needs to be fostered effectively.

- Mindset of society needs to be changed toward working women, because attitudes and mindsets of society hinder the progress of women.
- In Japan, accountability system for sexual harassment is stern. Authorities take swift decision for these cases within 4 days. Sentence of crime of harassment can be imprisonment for 28 years.
- Women are sharing Triple Burden. There is extensive need to create awareness among women regarding their rights and responsibilities.
- For the protection mechanism of women, there is a need to recruit female staff in police stations.
- There is a need to form complaint cell and recruitment of female executive to deal with complaints which is necessary to bring changes in system.
- There is no proper definition of harassment adopted by government of Pakistan. Even in Constitution of Pakistan, no article is present regarding harassment.

Recommendations

- There is a need of Bill for equal employment opportunities policies.
- Legal framework, institutional arrangements.
- Need of ombudsmen, Commission.
- Council Courts Formation. (Retired judges/magistrates, human rights commission, women organization representation. Nazim, union councils. Media representatives can be members of these courts.)
- There must be protection mechanism for women police staff. Complaint cells at various departments.
- Execute women officer to deal with complains in women departments.
- Training and proper counseling of unskilled women staff.

Theme 3. Discrimination at Work Place

Major Issues of the deliberations

- In Civil Service of Pakistan quota for women is increased up to 10 %. Representation of women has increased and they are coming ahead on general seats as well.
- 10% quota for women was not followed in Punjab Traffic Warden conscription by Punjab Traffic Police.
- More gender diversity means more eco of women issues in policies regarding gender.
- There is lack of professional and networking facilities for women employers.
- Gender action plan has no transparency. Access to information is not possible.
- Women do not know about employment opportunity. Recruitment system should be easy and adoptable.
- Mostly social workers belongs to middle class, for their understanding documentation should be easy to understand and simple.
- System to facilitate the people should be clear and honest.
- There is need to increase the number of hostels for working women.

- Day care centers are also required in large number for working women. And these daycare centers must be formed with in the premises of workplaces.

Recommendations

- There is a need of rules for employment and legal framework that define complaints procedure and redressed issues.
- Clarity required on watchdog on recruitment in public sector especially at the provincial level.
- Skill development and women hostels to be included in the infrastructure support.
- Networking groups of women to be encouraged.
- Provincial Government to take lead in addressing issues related to discrimination.
- Women's Ministry to have a website for posting information related to women issues.

Closing Remarks by Ms. Kashmala Tariq MNA, Executive Director PCHR

Ms. Kashmala Tariq participated in one day workshop as a chief guest at concluding session of the workshop. In her concluding remarks she said appropriate and comprehensive legislation and intensified mass awareness campaign was required for ensuring equal employment opportunities for women and to protect them from gender discrimination. "Mindset of the society could only be changed through strong commitment and sustained efforts at all levels" she said. She further remarked that Equal Employment Opportunity Law was need of the time to ensure economic empowerment of women particularly the working class. Talking about sexual harassment on working place she said that she presented a bill regarding that issue in assembly but it was opposed by both genders yet main hindrance and opposition came from men because they felt insecure. She said in our society, women belong to every class face sexual harassment at every level.

Referring to "Equal Employment Opportunities and equal wages for women at work place", she suggested the forum to study the policies and laws of other countries in order to develop better understanding about different issues. Legislators should be given opportunities of study tours so they may learn from others regarding the strategies and measures taken by other countries to address these concerns. Mr. Shafique Chaudhry, Chief Coordinator PCHR, offered thanks to the Chief Guests for elaborative remarks and the contribution made by all participants.

Annex. 1
List of Participants

Representatives from Parliament		
1	Begum Mehnaz Rafi	MNA, Chairperson National Assembly Standing Committee for Women Development
2	Fauzia Wahab	MNA
3	Kashmala Tariq	MNA, Executive Director PCHR
4	Parveen Skindar Gill	MPA
5	Maulana Rehmatullah Khalil	MPA
6	Dr. Syed Talib Imam	MPA
7	Shafique Ahmad Khan	MPA
8	Rahmat Saleh	MPA
9	Shamim Ara Panhwar	MPA
10	Farheen Mughal	MPA
11	Nighat Yasmin Orakzai	MPA
12	Shaheen Attique Rehman	MPA
13	Dr Ishaque Baloch	Central Information Secretary
14	Niaz Butt	Personal Secretary to Riaz Fatyana MNA
15	Ramzan Hamjana	Personal Staff Officer to Riaz Fatyana MNA
Representatives from Academia and Media		
1 6	Prof. Sara Shahid	Chairperson Gender Studies Deptt.t, Lahore College for women
1 7	Afzal Javed	Journalist, Online
1 8	S. Mazhar Abbas	Chief Editor, Human Right Group
1 9	G.A.Zaidi	Photographer, Dawn
2 0	Imran Ali Tepu	Staff reporter, The Post
2 1	Afzal Javead	Staff Reporter, Online
2 2	Ismaeel Khan	PA to Molana Remat Ullah
Representatives from ILO		
2 3	Dr.Tauqir Hussain Shah	NPC WEC-PK, ILO
2 4	Munawar Sultana	Project Officer, ILO

2 5	Aliya Agha	Project Officer, ILO
2 6	Mohammad Anwar	Admin Asst, ILO
Representatives from PIPS & PCHR		
2 7	Shafique Chaudhry	Chief Coordinator, PCHR
2 8	Lala Rukh Farooq	Project Assistant, PCHR
2 9	Abid Parvez	PCHR
3 0	Muneeb Ahmed	Network Officer, PCHR
3 1	Muhammad Imran Qamar	PIPS

Annex. 2

Agenda

Time	Topic	Resource Person
1030-1100 hrs	Registration	PCHR's Staff
1100-1115 hrs	Introduction	Mr. Shafique Chaudhry, Chief Coordinator, PCHR
1115-1130 hrs	Welcome and Opening Remarks	Begum Mehnaz Rafi, Chairperson, Standing Committee of Women and Development
1130-1145 hrs	Overview of the Five Regional Seminars	Mr. Shafique Chaudhry, Chief Coordinator, PCHR
1145 -1215 hrs	Remarks of Participants	
1215-100 hrs	Presentation on Women Employment Issues in Pakistan	Dr. Tauqir Shah, ILO, Islamabad
100-200 hrs	Lunch	
200-330 hrs	Formation of Three Working Groups	M. Shafique Chaudhry, Chief Coordinator, PCHR
330-400 hrs	Presentation by Working Groups	
400-430 hrs	Closing Remarks by Chief Guest	Ms. Kashmala Tariq, MNA, Executive Director, PCHR
430-500 hrs	Vote of thanks	Mr. Shafique Chaudhry, Chief Coordinator, PCHR

Annex. 3

Overview of the Five Regional Seminars By Shafique Chaudhry, Chief Coordinator, PCHR

In general, all regions wished that separate policies need to be made for all provinces as depending on the diversity of infrastructure, socio-economic opportunities and constraints.

Major Concerns of Working Women (Karachi)

- Most of the informal work carried out by women goes unrecognized. Such labour remains uncounted in the labour force survey.
- Similarly, the domestic chores take considerable time of women folk and they work for longer hours than their male counterparts, however, their labour remains invisible in the labour statistics.
- Most of the men want their wives to be a teacher or doctor. They are reluctant to accept the women in other professions; this mindset needs to be changed.
- Among working women, over 66% of the women are engaged in farm labour as unpaid helper. Even if they get paid, mostly their wages are received by the husband or other male family member.
- Most of the women have to face harassment while waiting for and in the public transport.
- Women have no centers that may arrange exhibition of their products. They lack linkages with markets and resultantly fall prey to the exploitation of middleman who takes away most of the profit.
- The concerns of retired women facing enormous troubles in getting their pension processed. They have no support system and suffer a lot. Lack of institutions and lack of linkages to market, women can't get the fruit of their labour. They have the potential, but it needs to be institutionalized.

Recommendations

- In order to ensure safer mobility of women, separate conveyance needs to be provided.
- We need no more legislation; however, there is need of proper implementation of legislation in the country.
- Women need to get awareness about their rights then they may raise their concerns and protect their rights, they should be able to receive at least 50 percent of their wages.
- Strong linkages need to be developed among academia, research institute, legislators, civil society organizations and Govt. We need to develop the tradition of exchange of information.
- Govt. needs to take action to improve their situation through regulatory laws.
- Budget should be gender sensitive.
- Education is most important for the empowerment of women we need to provide girls schools and health centers.
- "Distributing stitching machines" to women, it as "Black and white movie" that needs to be modified now. This is not the era of stitching machine.
- Every woman irrespective of political association needs equal respect and rights and the Government should ensure it.

Major Concerns of Working Women (Lahore)

- Socio-economic uplift of women has to be prioritized because Islam has also protected women from any type of discrimination, guaranteeing them respect in society.
- Women enrolment in school and colleges is very encouraging in Sindh and Punjab, however, the labour force participation of women is very low as compared to enrolment rate. It indicates that in Pakistan, most of the work places are not conducive or women lack work opportunities.
- Labour is not a commodity; it needs to be considered as human resource. The total population of Pakistan age 10 years & above, 50.9% are males and 49.1% are females, however, huge gaps persist in labour force participation rate, 70.6% for males and 15.9% for females.

Recommendations

- Technical and professional educational opportunities should be provided to women to improve their access to labour force. With regard to working women, they should be provided occupational safety measures to avoid work hazards.
- All sections of the society have to play their due role for bringing about a tangible change in the existing circumstances.
- The wages in informal sector particularly in agriculture needs to be restructured.
- Technical and professional educational opportunities should be provided to women to improve their access to labour force.
- Political institutes are not strong enough to implement the conventions. We need informed debate in Assemblies. If Parliamentarians raise issues in standing committee then Government will be pushed to have the concerns voiced and legislation get implemented.

Major Concerns of Working Women (Islamabad)

- Stereotyping against women hinders their access to job market.
- Mind-set and attitude on the part of men make the work environment in-conducive for women.
- The unemployment rate is almost twice for women as compared to their male counterparts (16.5 and 8.2 percent respectively).
- Lack of protection affects their performance and efficiency at work place.

Recommendations

- We need to think to change our mind set. The stigma associated with working women needs to be removed.
- In order to make the work environment conducive for the women, men need to be sensitized, including the men in law and order agencies.
- In order to change the mind set of majority of people, we need to start it from home. Mothers at home discriminate daughters and give preferred care to sons. They need to change their mind set.
- Media needs to be instrumental in changing the mind set. Traditional and religious institutions like Mosques, Jirga and Molvi can play pivotal role to sensitize the people at community level.
- Educational programmes are supply driven rather than demand driven. This gap needs to be narrowed down.

- Jirga System is illegal and has no right to punish any one. We should discourage such institutions as working against the rights of women.
- We need improved IT skills to enhance the employability.
- There is no single recipe to address the concerns of working women. If organizations really wish to have women in leadership position, they have to give feminine touch to entire organization. It starts from the top, so unless there are women in top positions, the environment can not be conducive for women.

Major Concerns of Working Women (Peshawar)

- Wages gap and discriminatory hiring practices against women continue to be a significant contributing factor to keep the women in the spiral of poverty of women.
- High Glass Walls and Glass Ceiling, which is another form of discrimination, hamper women from upward movement.
- In urban areas women's representation in job sector is wide. And when they come to the rural areas for employment then after some time they get transferred to their native areas.
- Despite existing policies, there has been no visible positive change for working women.
- In urban areas women's representation in job sector is wide. And when they come to the rural areas for employment then after some time they get transferred to their native areas.

Recommendations

- There are almost 12 laws of labour, cooperative, women, child, minorities etc. For instance, the functioning within Labour Department needs major improvement. Community development departments need to implement their policies at local level.
- At the academic level, students need to come up with research papers on the issue of women employment concerns.
- Working women have to bear reproductive burden, work and burden of household management including childcare. Therefore, their needs should be considered and family friendly policies must be implemented at work place.
- Working hours of women must be flexible.
- Day care centers are essential for working mother.
- Transport facilities must be improved for them.

Major Concerns of Working Women (Quetta)

- Women have no legislative cover. We must have policies to support working women who have to endure the Triple Burden of work and family which includes delivering and raising kids, managing household and taking care of older family members.
- Social structure restricts women's mobility and engagement in paid employment outside the home. We need to have policies to balance the work and family life.
- Women working with livestock are highest in Baluchistan, but neither Govt. nor NGOs have concentrated on improving this area. Baluchistan has great potential; it is liberal and tolerant society.
- There is no middle and secondary school for girls, both boys and girls attend the same school just to get education. Only Rs.20 per child is spent annually on the education, more attention and expenditures are required to be allocated to improve the education in Baluchistan.

Recommendations

- Balance of labour may be possible, if both husband and wife share the responsibilities at home. The gender roles in our society need a little change to reduce the burden of working women.
- Access to opportunities is required to make the province developed.
- Working hours for women need to be reconsidered.
- There is a need to improve situation of illiterate and less aware women about their labour rights.
- Unless people get educated and get awareness, no progress can be made. We need to preach together so practical steps may be taken to enhance and develop education and economy. We need to strategize to get the policies implemented towards women's economic empowerment.
- We have no industries except in Hub, and more women are engaged in doing embroidery and they have no system to get access to market. If she is provided the opportunities and access to market, it would be a substantial step towards the welfare of women.
- Equal opportunities are required for equal employment. Affirmative actions are required through bridging the gender based discrimination.

Section Four: Major Achievements/Outputs

Major Achievements/ Outputs

The series of seminars have been successful in bringing about the following outputs:

- A group of 213 insightful national and provincial legislators, representatives of media and civil society organizations have got sensitized on the constraints of working women in the country;
- By and large, these seminars were well received and had positive bearings. Owing to the function of public representatives and legislation, a debate has been initiated at policy level regarding women's employment concerns in Pakistan. This debate would facilitate to level the playing field towards shaping policies and legislation surrounding women's employment concerns in Pakistan.
- Women employment concerns have started getting reflected in national assemblies in the form of Assembly Questions. A series of questions rose during particular sessions and their answers have been compiled in a matrix. (*Attached as Annex 8.3*)
- During these seminars, the parliamentarians had deliberations and came up with laws/draft bills which have been moved into the parliament for further consideration (*Drafted Bills are attached as Annex 8.4*).
- Moreover, two working sessions have held pertaining to the concerns of "Women Home Based Workers" organized by Begum Mehnaz Rafi, Chairperson, Standing Committee, and Ministry of Women Development.
- Parliamentarians play an instrumental role in monitoring the execution made by the Government. They keep proper check and balance system which makes the government accountable to improve efficiency. The process of legislation to address the concerns of working women rose during seminars, has begun and is heralding a change in the society about improving the working conditions for women.

- Partnership is developed with 25 members of strategic working groups to ensure the sustainability of central issue of project;
- Sustainability of the project agenda is ensured through the Standing Committees, which are the permanent feature in Senate and National Assemblies.
- It is hoped that Legislators will take effective measures, appropriate legislation and will carry out proper actions to monitor the progress regarding women employment concerns and working conditions within the country.
- A group of 213, strategic leadership has been made aware of ILO's work and International Labour Standards (ILS) and accompanying conventions to eliminate all forms of inequality at work place and foster gender mainstreaming.
- In view of the pivotal role of government organizations in implementing policies and legislations, representatives from various organizations of the Government were also brought on the board during these series of seminar, who actively participated and had useful discussions regarding how the working environment may be made conducive for women. Since Pakistan has regional diversity, therefore, the women are concentrated in slightly various occupations and likewise their concerns need to be addressed accordingly. The series of seminars facilitated in creating baseline information pertaining to the state and concerns of working women in various regions through informal deliberations during the sessions. Such rich information is extremely significant while devising policies or legislations for a particular region.
- Media is the eye and tongue of any modern society and in order to change the mindset of common people, role of media can not be overlooked. Recognizing this opportunity, a bunch of media representatives were also brought to seminars for two reasons:
 - a) To sensitize media regarding the concerns of working women in Pakistan.
 - b) To get the support of media to sensitize common people aimed at changing the mindset of society, which is indispensable to make the work environment conducive for women. Unless the working women are portrayed in a positive way, the mindset of society would not change.
- The initiative has been successful in influencing the media since it was highlighted to present non-stereotyped image of working women in society to raise consciousness. The leading media organizations in both print and electronic participated actively for the coverage of these seminars. The news of seminars was well covered, telecasted and published in almost all news channels and major newspapers. Their involvement in the working groups would have long term advantages as women employment concerns has become a regular aspect of their advocacy.
- The seminars not only targeted the government, parliamentarians and media but representatives from civil society organizations and academia. The audiences of the seminars were carefully selected including academia, renowned members of civil society and the youth, who provided positive feedback and suggestions regarding the issue in special context to their own region.

Section Five: (Annexes)

Annex 5.1

Terms of References for the Working Groups

Composition of Working Group

1. 02 Legislators (Male and Female)
2. 01 Government Official
3. 01 Civil Society Representative
4. 01 Media Representative

ToRs for the Working Groups

Following will be the terms of references for members of Working Groups:

Legislators (Male and Female):

- Raising the Project concerning issues in Assemblies and Standing Committees;
- Act as focal persons at various forums;
- Reduce the legislative gap by submitting assembly questions and resolutions, initiating debates in assemblies and using assembly platforms to create awareness on the issue;
- At least 02 assembly questions and 02 resolutions on the women employment concerns will be required to submit in each session;
- Helping PCHR-ILO to prepare final legislative policy measures to deal with the issue of women employment concerns;
- Regularly participate in Working Groups Meetings and any other meetings organized by PCHR-ILO on this particular topic.

Government Officials:

- Inform group members on current governmental policies, practices and initiatives;
- Information sharing with other concerned officials regarding developments on women employment concerns;
- Trigger the removal of doable hurdles in their own jurisdiction and inform the legislators about the required constitutional and legal support;
- Facilitate the implementation of such mechanism consensually envisaged by PCHR, ILO and members of Working groups;
- Helping PCHR-ILO for final recommendations to government to deal with the issue of women employment concerns;
- Regularly participate in Working Groups meetings and any other meetings organized by PCHR-ILO.

Civil Society Representatives:

- Sharing civil society understanding of the issues concerning women employment;
- Ensure maximum participation of civil society representatives in project activities;
- Manage the support of civil society on consensual initiatives introduced by the PCHR-ILO;
- Urge and facilitate the discussions by NGOs on women employment concerns;
- Helping PCHR-ILO in final legislative and policy recommendations;

- Regularly participate in Working Groups meetings and any other meetings organized by PCHR-ILO.

Media Representatives:

- Sharing media perspective during the meetings of Working Groups;
- Using all media channels to create awareness in masses;
- Arranging media forums (electronics/print media) on women employment concerns on monthly basis;
- Helping PCHR-ILO in finalizing legislative and policy recommendations;
- Regularly participate in Working Groups meetings and any other meetings called by PCHR-ILO.