Democracy is a means of selecting policymakers and of organizing governments so that public policy represents and responds to the citizens’ preferences. Hence translating people's desires into public policy becomes critical to the successful working of democracy. Indeed, to be effective and useful, the public policies need to evolve out of intensive consultative process. Therefore, democratic societies empower their constituencies to participate in the process of formulation of public policy. Similarly Government's policy agenda keeps on changing to attend to the problems that concern the voters.

Women are roughly more than half of the world’s population. By virtue of their twofold roles in the productive and reproductive spheres, women’s contribution to the social and economic wellbeing of the world exceeds that of men. However, women’s representation in legislatures around the world is not somewhere near to desirable level. Hence their involvement in formal political and governance structures and processes where decisions regarding use of ‘societal resources’ are concluded, remains highly insignificant. ‘Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women’ (CEDAW) 1979 and the ‘Beijing Platform of Action’ (1995) reiterated international commitment to gender equality and to eliminating gender gap in political arena and yet there are only twenty nine (29) countries where women hold 33% or more seats in the parliaments with Rwanda being at the top with 64% women in the parliament. Pakistan has also introduced some significant initiatives to include women in the process of decision making at the national, provincial and local levels. Currently Pakistan has 21% women in the parliament against 10% in 1990.5

Under LGO 2001, Pakistan had 33% reserved seats for women at the local level. However, recent promulgation of Local Government Acts 2013 in Punjab and Sind has drastically reduced the quota for women from 33% to 10% and 22% respectively. Currently Pakistan
National Legislature reserves 60 seats (17 – 17.5%) for women. Similarly in the provincial assemblies, about 17–17.8% seats are reserved for women. The seats are filled through proportional representation based on the number of popular votes received by each political party in the elections. Devolution Plan 2001 actually offered women a great opportunity to excel in power. Government’s affirmative and proactive policies mainstreaming the genders in the public services have considerably been productive. Women’s share in foreign services, in police and ambassadorial positions has been increased significantly. However, these pro-women policies are still failing on women equality and offering gender sensitive public and private services.

Pakistan has been one of the front runners on political empowerment of women. With increased participation of women in the political showground, Pakistan has the privilege to have the first ever woman prime minister and the speaker of the national assembly in the Muslim world. As everywhere else, still the contribution of women to the development and growth of the nation goes unacknowledged. The founding father of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam (the greatest of all leaders) Muhammad Ali Jinnah very aptly encapsulated the significance of women in the development of the nation in the following words “No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you; we are victims of evil customs. It is a crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of the houses as prisoners. There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live.”

Pakistan views women’s enhanced participation in power structures integral to level out gender inequalities in Pakistani society. The discourse on political empowerment of women revolves around ‘intrinsic and instrumentalist’ arguments. Based on the human rights approach, intrinsic argument contends for equal participation of women in politics as women account for half of the population across Pakistan. Based on the specific gender role as mothers and wives, women mostly have different ideals and approaches to national politics. Instrumentalists therefore, believe that women will cast a new perspective of care to politics hence women deserve greater role in the politics. Whatever is the argument behind this discourse; both the approaches recognize the imperative role of women in politics and national development in Pakistan. The real challenge facing women political empowerment in Pakistan comes from the wide gap between the national policies and practices. Another critical concern is women’s ability to effectively use their critical mass to influence the public
policies affecting women. Even greater challenge comes from the fact that how successful and rewarding has been the experience of inclusion of women in Pakistan’s political and power structures! Is there a difference for women with increased quota in legislature? Are the public policies now more women friendly? Are the women having greater voice in the society? Are the women having greater participation in resource allocation decisions….? A candid and honest response to these critical questions is not very encouraging. Increased participation in the national and sub-national legislatures amassed only very and modest gains for women. Indeed, women still face the family violence; women are still engaged in petty services and paid less and women still are known by their male descendent as mothers and wives and nothing else and women are still considered as incompetent of doing right things by their employers.

Global Gender Gap (GGG) Report (2014)\(^1\) ranks Pakistan at 141 among 142 countries in overall gender equality index. Pakistan holds the same ranking (141\(^{st}\)) in the field of Economic Participation and Opportunity (2014) among 142 nations. However, Pakistan stands at 85\(^{th}\) position among 142 countries in the women Political Empowerment field. The journey from zero representation to 17.5% reserved quota has not at all been an easy one. Women’s historic exclusion from political power results from multiple social, economic and religious dynamics. Many ideological, social and cultural factors held the women from political empowerment in Pakistan.

Needless to say, women empowerment and gender parity needs ‘change’ in formal as well as informal institutions. While formal institutions such as constitution, charters, rules and regulations can be changed relatively in a shorter period of time, informal institutions such as norms, social values and customs need longer period of time to take ground and are not easy to change\(^1\). Formal institutions are greatly influenced by local settings; social norms, culture, traditions and customs. Informal institutions become more important in developing economies where formal institutions lack stability and maturity\(^1\). Unfortunately our socio-political and economic institutional mechanisms are weak and fragile. As a result, the so called patriarchal norms and economic imperatives reverse the gains of state’s measures to achieve gender parity in Pakistan. Therefore, in order to empower women and harness their potential, while we need to strengthen our formal institutions, we also need to reform our informal institutions to optimize the impact of change and reform. Our policymakers need to
take into account the local dynamics and ensure that policy reforms are coherent and consistent with the existing social, political and economic structures of our society. Invisible barriers fostered by our informal institutions reverse the gains of most initiatives and changes in the formal institutions on gender equality front. Mere participation of women in political processes cannot automatically ensure their equal sharing of development gains and gender equality. Systems need to be revamped and reframed to eliminate gaps between the so called development claims and actual practice for gender equality in Pakistan.

Women political participation doesn’t need to be dependent on whims and wishes of political parties the women represent. The negative aspect of quota systems is that the women are not elected directly from the constituencies. They are actually nominated by their respective parties. The political parties are assigned quotas as per their share or majority in the legislature. The proportional representation is criticized on many grounds. Women activists believe that reserved quotas for women tie the women members of parliament to the patriarchal manifestos of their political parties. Moreover, the status of women members of the legislature always remains that of a second rate members. With their own mass base, women will be better harnessed to respond to their needs and share the rewards of political empowerment.

Institutionalized patriarchy has historically placed male in a dominating role in Pakistani society. While explaining the consequences of patriarchy, Adrienne Rich observes that patriarchy is a “social, ideological, and political system in which male by force, direct pressure or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male”.

Patriarchy assigns ‘gender specific’ role to men and women. Subsequently, this ideology assigns women to family roles and opens the outside avenues to the men. This is very much similar to Valian’s gender schemas. Virginia Valian, author of "Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women,” explains that the ‘gender schemas’ are stereotype expectations and perceptions that are reared by both men and women and are deeply rooted in our culture. These ‘schemas’ lend so called ‘basis’ to unfair social norms and very discretely yet systematically overrate men and underrate women. Such trivial discriminations finally end up accumulating advantages for men and disadvantages for women in all spheres of life. Valian also refers to the notion of ‘Glass Ceiling’ that explains the invisible barriers and covert
bias that keep women from rising to positions of significance or leadership.

Hence, women are confined to private life as mothers, wives; sisters etc. and men are entitled to public roles as leaders, economists, jurists and what not? Pakistan is no exception to this ideology. The gender schemas are very well in place in Pakistan. Women role as mothers and wives is lauded everywhere, however, their contribution as politician and leader is not acknowledged at all. Under the pressure of international commitments, civic society pressure and economic necessities, government has allowed women a significant share in the legislature, yet their voice and brains are beholden to their political parties which are dominated by males and their patriarchic ideologies. We fail to observe any improvement in the socioeconomic status of woman on account of enhanced participation of women in political processes within Pakistan. The women parliamentarians are no more than the extension of old feudal political families. It is unlikely to find a women parliamentarian without a male political descendent. However, the improvement is there though implicit or discrete. Women are after all women either they are from political aristocracy or labour union; they are women. Most of them think, speak and work like the way women do in Pakistan. Sooner or later, these women will assume the role of leadership. Presence of these women encourages other women to step forward to assume significant roles in public affairs. While negotiating with economic, social and political realities in Pakistan, ‘gender role ideology’ has cracked significantly; yet women still carry on with their private assigned roles.17

The nature of political institutions significantly affects the level of women participation in public affairs. Politics is art of articulation within an existing power structure in the process of resource allocation among the people.18 This ideology views politics as public activity as against family life. This complex relation of public and family roles has kept the women away from political life in Pakistan. Quite unfortunately, as parliamentarians and members of legislature, women are considered mothers and wives and nothing else. It becomes real hard to struggle for political empowerment in a male dominating society. Roles assigned to women as mothers and wives leave them with no time to engage in political enterprises. Economic constrains also affect women political emancipation. With fewer resources, they are unable to fight the male dominated field of public affairs and politics.
Civil society organizations play an important role in enhancing the awareness among women of their rights and privileges. As such, fewer movements originated in Pakistan that targeted women political empowerment. Women played an important role in the independence of Pakistan. They fought and struggled side by side the male counterparts. But their struggle was for the independence from the British regime and not the women political and economic empowerment. They never knew that they would lose their freedom to nobody else but to their own men.

Pakistani women always remained deficient of capable leadership. Without a leader, struggle for political emancipation has been a mere ‘toddle’ in the wilderness. The first political struggle for women political liberation manifested itself in the person of Fatima Jinnah, younger sister of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. She contested election against the then military ruler, Muhammad Ayub Khan. The ‘1965 Elections’ are reported to be highly controversial by analysts. Fatima Jinnah lost to Ayub Khan and the first ever hope for women political freedom vanished away quietly. However, the movement left behind legacy, track and a precedent to be followed by the posterity. Late Benazir Bhutto took up the struggle as a leader of the nation and not that of women. However, her ascendency to power boosted the moral of Pakistani women; ‘if Benazir Bhutto can do it why not me’ and many women joined the politics. When male political leadership failed to crack Benazir Bhutto’s political popularity, opposition parties on purpose brought forward potential women leaders though from political families to challenge Benazir Bhutto’s political power. This political struggle proved very useful for enhancing political awareness of women in Pakistan. Women felt confident with a female counterpart as supreme power of the country. It is really hard to isolate the impact of women’s rise to power. Prime Minister or the President is not for women only; they become the public property once they assume the office of the head of the state. We see fewer policies designed by the women, implemented by the women and meant for the women. Women share in the political arena reached its best under the Devolution Plan. As stated above, women were given 33% quota of reserved seats at the local level. A huge number of women reached local assemblies. However, women capacity issues ate up the government initiative in this context.

The commitment to harness the women potential for robust and broad based economic development is very much evident from the development budget allocated to education sector during financial year.
2007-08 in the largest province of Punjab\textsuperscript{19}. However, pro-women expenditure as percentage of total provincial expenditure remained 31\% during financial year 2008-09 in the Punjab\textsuperscript{20}. Indeed, with these skewed resource allocation policies, any improvement in women’s fate seems a distant dream.

Government with the help of international development partners actually launched specific interventions to address the capacity issues at the local government level such ‘Women Political School’ a UNDP assisted initiative. More and more capacity building interventions would develop better and potential women leaders for national solidarity and wellbeing. However, this seems to be one isolated effort to produce trained and aware political leadership. Government needs to offer more and more such opportunities. As a matter of fact, hardly any formal political training facility exists in the country that helps produce a pool of young politicians that knows the art of engaging with people, understanding the local context and big picture and formulate people centric and evidence based public policies; who are aware of their divine responsibilities towards national solidarity, honour and prestige.

Looking at the historical patterns of women struggle for political and economic independence in Pakistan, affirmative actions remain a viable strategy to redress the political economic imbalances for women. Networking of women politicians is another strong policy recommendation\textsuperscript{21} to ensure women inclusion in the mainstream political arena. The strategy allows sharing of personal as well collective experiences of patriarchal resistance and different means to confront such challenges. Pakistan has already some success stories on this strategy. With the help of nongovernmental organization, women councilors created Women Councilors Network (WCN) at the provincial level after introduction of Devolution Plan 2001. The network provided a common platform to effectively learn from each other for better working of women councilors. We need to create more and more such networks and alliances to create awareness of women rights and political power. Having power is one thing, using it is another. Devolution Plan 2001 has created significant awareness and understanding of political processes among the nascent lot of women politicians. However, it needs further nurturing and care for full blossom.

Successful local and international experiences need to be documented and disseminated to encourage women’s participation in politics and development in Pakistan. Pakistani women need to have at
least 33% reserved seats at the national and provincial level to be filled through direct election by joint electorate. This is justified in the sense that women elected through direct elections will show the real worth. One effective way to ensure at least 33% women in the national and provincial legislatures is to amend the relevant Political Parties Act. The political parties must field at least 33% female candidates. While this will ensure 33% election of women parliamentarians against 33% quota, it will give them the needed confidence and the constituency to fight and work for. Similarly women reserved seats in the local councils also needs to be enhanced at least to 33% as provided under LGO 2001 to have fresh minds and thoughts join the politics.

Local governments always prove to be a training field for the politicians. In Pakistan, 33% quota for the women seats in local assemblies opened the door for the socially marginalized groups of women. As compared to the provincial and national legislatures, it is easier for women to penetrate into local government assemblies. The institution of local government needs to be strengthened and the capacity of the local government councilors needs to be enhanced sufficiently to understand the dynamics of male dominated political parties and system of government. Local government councilors are relatively young and energetic. They will prove to be a valuable asset for the women movement for political and economic emancipation. This also shows their confidence in the system. With them, they bring freshness and new insights, vision and perspective that political veterans may have lost over time.

The link between gender and poverty is an established fact. Women make 70% of the poor of the world. ‘Feminization of poverty’ is a global reality. Women are considered to be the poorest among the poor masses. Economic emancipation could be one effective way to give political voice to the women in Pakistan. Women-focused employment policies such as microfinance etc. should be designed to enable women enter the national workforce for personal as well as national economic development.

Women’s participation in trade unions and civil society organizations remains minimal. An enabling environment needs to be created to encourage active women’s groups and advocacy organizations to push the agenda on women’s rights. In democratic societies, pressure groups always play crucial roles. Unless there are enough women organizations that are active and unrelenting in their demands for women equality, any significant change is hardly to materialize. For women to fully and equally participate in the decision-
making processes at all levels, we need to explore ways of overcoming the cultural and structural obstacles to women political empowerment in Pakistan. Therefore, policy reforms in political parties and electoral systems remain imperative to overcome structural barriers.

The 21st century has witnessed a significant shift in the attitudes of society and women themselves towards women’s social, economic and political roles. The younger generation feels that the battles has been won, however, many feminists from the 1970’s understand too well the deep rooted dynamics of patriarchy in Pakistani society. More women in the boardrooms and the legislature - increased critical mass of women look impressive and soothing. Under an optimistic perspective, one thinks of true equality between men and women. However, the unfortunate fact is that when compared with men, women are still paid less, women still are underrepresented in business, nation building institutions and legislature, still more women are illiterate, still the mothers’ mortality rate is higher, and still more women are the victim of poverty and violence.

Women account for about half of the population in Pakistan. Excluding women from the decision making processes means wasting half of Pakistan’s resources, potential and talent. Any improvement in the lot of women, will add to the social welfare of the country. Improved status of women is actually good for the household and the society as well. The gains of political empowerment of women are not restricted to women only rather will benefit the entire society. Politically aware and empowered women are very important for the nation building. They are better able to participate in the process of national development and household welfare. Women have a different perspective to politics as referred to above. Their fresh perspective will change the face of politics and its dynamics. Political empowerment will ensure effective monitoring and accountability of the process of development at all levels. Greater empowerment and confidence will improve women’s economic performance as well that will add to the much needed development of the nation that is broad based and sustainable.

Despite the fact that religion and the constitution of Pakistan grant equal status to women and men, significant gender schemas are active in Pakistan. The gender discrimination could be observed in almost every department and profession. People who consciously or unconsciously disregard gender as basis for discrimination are exception to the system. ‘Glass ceiling’ fails capable women from contributing to the national and as well household economic wellbeing.
Lack of education remains the most significant limiting factor on women capacity to exploit their potential for their personal as well national growth. Evidence suggests that unfortunately Pakistan women have had not enough educational opportunities. The girls’ schools are not enough in number and fail to provide sufficient awareness and employment opportunities to the women particularly in the rural Pakistan. The gap between the girls’ school and boys’ school keeps on widening painfully with each next higher level. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2012) reports that out of 154,000 primary schools, only 57,000 (37%) are for girls. Ratio is better in case of middle schools where 21,000 (50%) school are for girls out of 42,000 middle schools. However, out of a total of 28,700 high schools, there are only 11,600 (40%) for girls. Female make only 30% of the total enrollment in professional colleges. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2012) further reports that out of 603 professional colleges only 40 (6.6%) are for women. In fact, out of 72 universities, 5 universities are for women. Disparity doesn’t stop here. Out of 21,131 teachers, only 6,517 (31%) are women teachers in the universities. We should not forget here that Pakistan has almost 50% female population.

Sen. (1999), a noble prize laureate in his paper ‘Missing Women’ states the various forms and upsetting consequences of gender bias in the third world economies. His approach to development goes beyond the basic needs of life such as water, healthcare, shelter etc. and incomes levels. He emphasizes the status of the person as free agent who seeks her potential through pursuing her own choices. He believes that freedom to realize full human potential is the ‘real development’. While ‘missing women’ are constrained to make full use of their capabilities, Governments fail to provide adequate support and resources to women to fully develop and pursue their plans of life. This hampers the individual as well as the national development. Human beings have the capability to realize their potential of living a full life (education, health, nutrition, family life, and etc.) however, its full realization is blocked by scarce resources, cultural constraints, political restrictions and poverty.

Gender schemas are a huge hurdle to realize full human potential of women in the education sector of Pakistan. Pakistani women working in the education sector are exposed to double burden of underdevelopment. They lack the access to enough basic needs on the one hand, and cannot realize their full human potential on the other. Social policies fail to create an environment conducive to the development of women’s capabilities to pursue a life, women really
value. Knowingly or unknowingly, they are just left unaided in the wilds of scarcity and bias. A careful analysis of education department reveals a somewhat familiar process of development. Under the international dependency theory, the developing nations are considered to be on the ‘periphery’ supplying raw material to the developed nations the ‘core’ that produce the finished goods. Women in Pakistan are relegated to unskilled and basic assignments such as household chores, rearing children etc. These trivial services provide fuel to the male workforce and they generate the income for the family.

Pakistan education labour market is plagued with gender inequalities in many ways. The inequalities manifest themselves through various forms in education sector. The most common form of inequality is the wage discrimination where the women are paid less than their male counterparts. This is particularly true in the private sector. The discrimination is least in the public sector for the reason that salary and promotion of the employees is subject to a set and notified procedure. In the public sector education institutions, situation is the same for the men and women. Male and female are dealt separately for the purpose of administrative and career progression. The salary follows the grade system. Higher the grade is higher the salary will be. Similarly, in co-education institutions, women and men work together yet there seniority follows the same logic, the senior most (one who has the number of years of service) will be promoted first once the vacancy becomes available in one’s respective stream. Women compete with each other not with men. Again women essentially don’t compete for promotion but follow a given seniority which actually tells who has served how much period. If the positions are available, the senior most will be promoted against the vacant position. However, women do have the setback in terms of number of education institutions for women only. Since few schools or universities etc. are meant for women, therefore, comparatively few positions are available for further promotions. This creates higher competition among women themselves.

The situation is entirely different in the private sector. Definitely a great number of women work in the private education sector. However, the women in the private sector are subjected to double burden of discrimination. At the first place, they are forced to join the education sector and then within the education sector, they are discriminated with lower wages and harassment. In the private sector, the women mostly are not from the rich families. Women working in the private education sector mostly hail from low income strata of the
society or from the middle class families. They need to work to support family with though slim yet much needed contribution.

Yet, there is another aspect of gender inequality that is even more crucial than any other form of discrimination against women. This inequality or discrimination is wrapped under the myth that women don’t work. Under this myth or gender schema, it is taken for granted that women generally fail to add to the national economy. This ‘myth’ is quite detrimental. It not only hurts females’ economic status as an individual but also that of the national economy. Women’s share in the national GDP value added is just ignored. The net result of these unrealistic assumptions is that the nation building institutions or any organization of some import refuse to accept women. Where, women are able to overcome the gender schemas, they face other dilemma. People don’t expect from them any grand performance hence they are not tasked with any challenging assignments. For effective and meaningful contribution, high morale and incentives play a pivotal role. This aspect has a heavy toll. While women’s self-respect is hurt and they are restrained to enhance their skills and effectiveness, they are unable to contribute effectively to the sector and the economy. On the contrary, women are actually contributing to the society, but outside perception portrays them to be on the ‘periphery’ with little recognition of their contribution. For this myth to hold, there are several so called ‘justifications’ essentially representing gender schemas. Given the cultural constraints, women are not visible in the society as men are. They are obliged to keep themselves discrete and invisible. Another is the ‘middle class psyche’ and so called ‘self-respect’ or so to rightly say ‘egoism’ which maintains that “men should not live on the earnings of women”. This outrageous ideal discretely creates barriers for women to enter the workforce. The net result of these preconceived notions is that although women work, yet the common perception prevails that women from middle class don’t really work. Men’s egoism caught in the gender schemas takes better part of their sense and women are not allowed to join the workforce despite the fact that family really needs additional financial support. Reality is that women and men are two wheels of the same cart. In order to run the cart, both need to work and move together.

Profession of education is considered to be the best profession for women ‘stereotype’ career- gender schemas in action. Given the social and cultural constraints, most women are obliged to adopt this profession. The significance and worth of the education profession cannot be denied at all. However, despite its immense potential and
significance, perhaps this is one of the lowest paid professions in Pakistan. Dynamics of gender schemas confine women to this profession for many so-called ‘rationales’ such as least interaction with male colleagues, lots of paid vacations, minimal time and least responsibilities. Female workers have enough time to look after household chores. During free hours, they can engage in part-time jobs for extra income. They also get three months maternity leave. These realities contribute to create the gender schemas which we knowing or unknowingly keep on practicing in Pakistan. However, this is not exactly the situation. ‘Judiciary’ also enjoys the same perks yet with significant presence and ‘nuisance value’ in the society.

In fact, education sector is as time-consuming and responsibilities laden as any other nation building department. These perquisites actually result from specific assignments which are less important and hence need modest efforts. Here comes the second form of discrimination that is the ‘job discrimination’ wherein the women are confined to certain ‘stereotype’ assignments, which are generally low paid and have less demand in society such as teaching art and languages.

Education sector is considered to be a safe abode for women in Pakistan. As an obvious outcome of the ‘gender schemas’, middle class conservatism neither supports girls to study with boys nor the women to work with male counterparts. Hence, government has established separate schools for girls and boys. The girls’ schools are not enough in number and fail to provide sufficient employment opportunities to the women particularly in the rural Pakistan. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2013) reports that only 13% of the women get wage more than 15000 rupees. Similarly women professional on average get about Rs.15000 (38% less) as compared to their male professional who receive wage amounting to Rs.24000 or more. The disparity continues in the clerical and support staffs where women workers get Rs.13500 (32.5% less) as compared to their male counterparts who get Rs.20000. These numbers clearly speak for the gender schema that is operative behind the public policies. This schema essentially excludes the middle class women from the employment opportunities. Few numbers of schools for girls have its implication for women employment prospects in Pakistan. Education sector is considered to be women intensive where women can work without interacting with males. With limited number of same sex education institutions, women are left with very few job openings. Middle class conservatism also leaves negative impact on women employment status.
in the education department in Pakistan. This conservatism on the other hand, creates greater demand for separate schools for girls. However, this demand remains unmet as discussed above. With separate education institutions for boys and girls, there are greater opportunities for women to be employed in the education sector. Women compete for employment in girls’ as well as the co-education institutions. This is also true in the private sector as well. Parents demand female teachers to teach their girls. Therefore, in the public sector, this very constraint has turned into blessing for women to a certain extent.

Optimism and perseverance is the key to development. We need to remain always optimistic and believe things to get better very soon. Same is true for education sector in Pakistan. Although, the situation is worse in rural Pakistan, yet the evidence confirms that things are improving in the urban education sector. More and more girls are getting education. Economic Survey of Pakistan (2013-14) reports that net enrollment rate 54% for girls compared to 61% for boys. The gap in literacy rate is much higher among males (71%) than female (48%). Literacy rate among urban girls is much higher (69%) than their counterparts in rural (37%) areas. Low level of literacy among women in the rural areas creates deficiency of qualified women who can be employed in girls’ schools. Public as well as private girls’ school need female teachers, but significant barriers to female mobility, relocation and commutation prevented educated women to fill in the gap in the rural areas. More, educated girls means more qualified candidate for employment in the education department.

There is growing awareness among women about their needs and rights. Globalization is exposing women to the dynamics of social schemas and there are deliberate efforts on the part of women to struggle for their rights and self-realization. Their capabilities are finding various means and channels of expression and accomplishments. Accomplishments - success in itself is great energy, booster and addiction. Women in education sector are now getting addicted to success and independence. Education department is a women intensive department. The individual as well as collective status of women will be enhanced with more and more qualified and hopeful women joining the education department.

Social policies need to be revisited to allow women human potential to blossom and flourish in a constructive manner. Dynamics of unemployment, ever hiking prices, high inflation and other such vices have forced the middle and lower class to redefine the role of women in the family. Hence there is a growing realization about the
importance of the women participation in the family decision making and subsequent financial contribution. On the other hand, government is determined to ensure women’s full inclusion in the economy in order to fight poverty and underdevelopment in Pakistan. Good teachers, especially female teachers, are particularly important for helping girls stay in school. Female teachers play an important role in terms of girls’ access to primary education. Therefore, newer incentives are being proposed to retain the women workforce in the education sector and more and more girls’ education institutions are being established to accommodate the women. These are very ambitious and hopeful developments, which assure us of a just and bright future of our women and girls with a very vibrant role in decision making across all spheres of life including political, economic and social.

3 Pakistan ratified CEDAW on 12 April 1996.
4 World Development Indicators (2015), Women in development, World Bank.
5 Ibid
8 IDEA (2002). Quotas for Women for legislative Seats at the Local Level in Pakistan – A Case Study.
12 Global Gender Gap Report (2014), World Economic Forum (The Global Gender Gap Index was first introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006 as a framework for capturing the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress. The Index benchmarks national gender gaps on economic, political, education and health criteria)

13 Johannes (2003), Institutions and Development: An Overview, OECD Development Centre


28 Economic Survey of Pakistan 2013-14), Islamabad, Pakistan