



**Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**

**Information received from Pakistan on follow-up to the  
concluding observations on its fifth periodic report\***

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## **I. Introduction**

1. Pakistan presented its 5th periodic report before the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on 12th February 2020. CEDAW shared its concluding observations with Pakistan in March 2020 and advised submission of an interim follow-up report on the steps taken to implement its recommendations.

2. This report is an outcome of broad-based and inclusive consultative process, led by the Ministry of Human Rights (MOHR) with the Federal and Provincial Departments.

## **II. Follow-up information**

### **A. Follow-up information relating to paragraph 32 (a) of the concluding observations**

3. The Federal Government has drafted various laws for protection of women from various forms of violence. In 2022, the Parliament passed the Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace (Amendment) Act 2022, which made significant amendments to the existing harassment law of 2010 by broadening the scope of harassment to gender-based harassment. The Parliament passed two crucial laws in 2021 to address the issue of rape; Criminal Laws Amendment Act 2021 effectively tackles the prevailing instances of rape and sexual abuse in respect of women and children through changes in the substantial law on Rape and the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act of 2021 seeks to ensure expeditious redressal of rape and sexual abuse crime in respect of women and children through special investigation teams and special courts providing for an efficacious procedure, speedy trials, and evidence. The Legal Aid & Justice Authority Act 2020 was enacted to establish legal aid and justice authority to provide legal, financial, and other assistance for access to justice to the poor and vulnerable segments including women. The Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act 2020 protects the rights of ownership and possession of properties owned by women ensuring that such rights are not violated by means of harassment, coercion, force, and fraud. Moreover, the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2021 is undergoing parliamentary procedures.

4. Provincial legislatures have also enacted laws to criminalize various forms of gender-based violence. The Punjab province already has legislation i.e., the Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act, 2016. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the provincial legislature has enacted several laws, including the Domestic Violence against Women (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2021, the Reproductive Health Care Rights Act, 2020, the Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace (Amendment) Act, 2020 and the Enforcement of Women Property Rights Act 2019.

5. Sindh and Balochistan have also enacted legislations on domestic violence, namely the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2013 and the Balochistan Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection), respectively. These legislations establish an effective system of protection, relief, and rehabilitation of women, children, elders, and other vulnerable persons against domestic violence, providing relief to victims of domestic violence who are in a domestic relationship. They also address offences such as assault, criminal force, intimidation, emotional, economic, psychological, physical, sexual, and verbal abuse, harassment, hurt, stalking, trespassing, and wrongful confinement.

## **B. Follow-up information relating to paragraph 32 (b) of the concluding observations**

6. A National Action Plan for Human Rights, developed through extensive consultations with all stakeholders, is already in place and implemented all over Pakistan. It broadly encompasses six thematic areas. The Action Plan for Human Rights under Thematic Area II, “Protection of Women Rights and Elimination of Gender Based Violence (GBV),” provides for the formulation of National Policy Guidelines on Gender-Based Violence; study to review all discriminatory legislation against women and execution of Men Engage Model to eliminate GBV. Various laws have been enacted as part of this Action Plan. Furthermore, a Model Policy to combat Violence against Women and Girls has been drafted, which aims to provide a framework to implement the international conventions and treaties ratified by the State of Pakistan vis-à-vis violence against women and girls.

7. All the provinces have already formulated a framework for policies and packages at their level. These include the KP Women Empowerment Policy Framework, 2015; Sindh’s Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Policy, 2019 and Punjab Women Empowerment Packages. Balochistan’s government is finalizing the realignment of the Provincial Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE) Policy of 2013 with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will serve as a roadmap for the betterment of the women of Balochistan in all fields of life.

8. In addition to policies, various bodies are functioning at the federal and provincial levels to address violence against women in Pakistan. An Inter-Provincial Ministerial Group (IPMG) comprising Ministers and Secretaries of Provincial Women Development Departments, the Chairperson National Commission on Status of Women, and representatives of MoHR meets periodically to agree on crucial priorities for gender equality in line with national and international commitments. Provincial CEDAW Implementation Committees are working to ensure the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Treaty Implementation Cells (TICs) are in place at the National and Provincial levels to monitor the implementation of the core international human rights treaties and conventions ratified by Pakistan, including CEDAW.

9. Critical structures, including shelters, helplines, referral mechanisms, police, judiciary, and health, remained open and available during the pandemic under SOPs in case women were required to report domestic violence and sought protection in case of incidents of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). At the federal level, a Family Protection & Rehabilitation Centre for Women (FPRC) Islamabad under the MOHR extends shelter and free psychological counselling services to women. The Centre protects and promotes women’s rights through the refuge, rehabilitation, legal and medical support.

10. At the provincial level, women-friendly helpdesks have been established in 98% of all Police Stations across Punjab, whereas three Women’s Police Stations are also functional in Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Faisalabad. Moreover, all police stations have exclusive helpdesks for women. Human rights and women’s rights desks have also been established in police stations in 15 districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The KP Integrated Victim Support Network has been set up to synergizes relevant services providers (police, hospital, and social welfare shelters, among others). The network is being introduced in five districts – Swat, Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda, and Abbottabad.

11. Meanwhile, in Sindh and Balochistan, District Complaint Cells, Women Complaint Cells, Safe Houses, Police Helplines, and Police Stations have

mechanisms to deal exclusively with women-related issues. Sindh has established a helpline (0800-70806). The Sindh Legal Advisory Call Centre provides legal advice to women and victims of GBV. Meanwhile, in January 2021, the Balochistan government launched Balochistan Women Helpline (1089) for the registration of complaints against women's harassment at home and workplace. Women can register their complaints on the helpline regarding domestic violence, harassment at the workplace and property issues.

12. Other initiatives have also been undertaken to ensure the protection and safety of women. These include the establishment of a Women in Distress & Detention Fund to provide financial and legal assistance to women.

### **C. Follow-up information relating to paragraph 34 (a) of the concluding observations**

13. The Trafficking in Persons Act 2018 provides that the offender will be punished with imprisonment, which may be extended to 14 years and which will not be less than three years. The Prevention of Smuggling of Migrant Act 2018 provides that the perpetrators will be punished with imprisonment which may be extended to 5 years.

14. A Directorate in Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has been established for coordination among its field offices in Pakistan and foreign link offices working on human trafficking/smuggling. Furthermore, the Directorate also interacts with national and international organizations. FIA has finalized and is implementing a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrants Smuggling in Pakistan (2021–2025), with a particular focus on taking affirmative action to increase women's participation/representation in key institutions mandated to combat Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants (HTMS), especially law enforcement agencies, criminal justice institutions, and the judiciary. The overall goal of this plan is to combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling in Pakistan by strengthening the capacities of key institutions through capacity building, awareness raising, coordination, gender and age disaggregated data management, establishing necessary mechanisms, and international cooperation.

15. A separate Anti-Human Smuggling (AHS) Directorate established in FIA in September 2007 coordinates with all the Zones of FIA, and monitors the activities of Human Smugglers/Agents throughout Pakistan. Specialized teams have been formed to arrest the absconders of human smugglers/traffickers in their concerned Zones/Anti-Human Trafficking Cells (AHTCs). The field units submit regular monthly and daily reports of the human smugglers to AHS Directorate, based on which an annual booklet of the most wanted human traffickers/smugglers is compiled, and the names of the smugglers are placed on Black List so that they are apprehended at immigration entry and exit points.

16. An Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) has been established to collect intelligence and share information to control Human Trafficking/Smuggling. The task force comprises personnel from the FIA along with the Frontier Constabulary, Coast Guard, Balochistan Police, Levies, Maritime Security Agency, and intelligence agencies. Besides, Treaty Implementation Cells have been set up at the Federal and Provincial levels.

17. Periodic trainings of relevant stakeholders for effective implementation and enforcement of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act are conducted by FIA regularly. Due to COVID-19-related restrictions, a total of 31 Capacity Building sessions were conducted during 2020, wherein capacity of 2525 officials of various

departments, including FIA, Provincial Police, Social Welfare, Child Protection Bureau, and labour, was built concerning trafficking laws.

18. As far as labour issues are concerned, Labour Departments at provincial levels are the custodians of labour rights and pay special attention to the rights of female workers in informal sectors. In order to protect women from these challenges, the provincial governments of Punjab and Sindh enacted the Punjab Domestic Workers Act 2019 and the Sindh Home-based Workers Act, 2018 respectively to regulate terms of employment and working conditions of service, social protection and labour inspections of these women. Similarly, at the federal level, child domestic labour has been inserted in part 1 (occupation) of the schedule of the Employment Children Act 1991.

19. In collaboration with UN Agencies and International and National Organizations, the Federal and Provincial governments have taken various steps to eliminate child labour.

20. The Ministry of Human Rights has conducted a “National Child Labour Survey” in collaboration with UNICEF. The study findings will provide information on enacting evidence-based policies and legislative and programmatic measures to eradicate child labour/trafficking of children.

21. An ADB Scheme, “Business Reengineering & Strengthening of Labour Inspectorate” of Labour & Human Resource Department Punjab (2019–2020), is working on strengthening of Labour Inspection System by introducing real-time Labour Inspection through Android tablets and capacity development of the labour inspectors. Necessary training and support are being provided to the inspectors to monitor the implementation of labour laws and standards. The Industrial Relations Institute and Saeed Ahmad Awan Center for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment (SAACIWCE) are also working to build the capacity of Labour Inspection Staff, employers and workers, and trade union representatives in the areas of occupational safety and health, labour laws and improvement of the working environment in industries. These institutions are also providing counselling and advisory services and developing training/information materials for promoting awareness on the issues of Labour Rights.

#### **D. Follow-up information relating to paragraph 40 (a) of the concluding observations**

22. The Constitution of Pakistan, under article 25-A, enshrines compulsory and free education for children between 5–16 years. Accordingly, the Federal and Provincial legislatures have enacted legislations i.e. The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2012 (Islamabad). The *Sindh Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act*, 2013, Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2014. The Baluchistan Compulsory Education Act, 2014, and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Free Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education Act, 2017. The number of out-of-school children (OOSC) is estimated to be around 22.8 million children. In Pakistan, this represents around 44% of the total population in this age group. Girls are consistently less likely to attend school than boys, especially as they get older. Nearly, 77% of OOSCs are in rural areas.

23. However, the overall education landscape based on the key indicators, such as enrolments, number of educational institutes, and teachers, has shown improvement. The total number of enrolments during 2019–20 was recorded at 55.7 million compared to 53.1 million during 2018–19, which showed an increase of 4.9 percent. It is estimated to increase to 58.5 million during 2020–21. The number of educational

institutions recorded 277.5 thousand during 2019–20 compared to 271.8 thousand during 2018–19. However, the number of institutions is estimated to increase to 283.7 thousand in 2020–21. Similarly, there were 1.83 million teachers in 2019–20 compared to 1.79 million previously. The number of teachers is estimated to increase to 1.89 million during 2020–21 (Economic Survey of Pakistan 2021–22)

24. The Federal Government formulated a National Education Policy Framework in 2018, with four priority areas: decreasing OOSC and enhancing access to and Relevance of Skills Training. Additionally, a Single National Curriculum (SNC) has been designed with the vision of one system of education for all, in terms of curriculum, medium of instruction, and a joint assessment platform, so that all children have a fair and equal opportunity to receive a high-quality education. The government plans to implement SNC in three phases and to complete the third phase by March 2023. To implement Vision 2025, the Government of Pakistan targets achieving 100% primary school enrolment, decreasing the gap between urban and rural enrolment.

25. To provide uninterrupted education during the pandemic, the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training launched the country's first educational television channel, "TeleSchool," with the collaboration of Pakistan Television (PTV) and Allama Iqbal Open University and with additional input from several non-governmental organizations. The channel helped the government reach remote areas that do not have access to education facilities and infrastructure, including providing education to girls.

26. During the COVID-19 pandemic, National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), following National Vocational Qualification Framework (NVQF), designed special online courses in advanced technology, which are at par with international certifications. It resulted in the enrolment of more than 12,000 applicants in these courses. About 2,500 students were being trained through these online courses to address the issue of out-of-school children.

27. The provincial governments have prioritized areas of interventions in the education sector, such as the provision of missing facilities, improvement in the physical infrastructure, establishment of IT/Science labs, and up-gradation of girls' primary schools to the middle, high and secondary levels, construction of new girls' schools and colleges, provision of scholarship through endowment funds and other scholarship schemes. Initiatives taken by each province are as under:

### **Punjab**

28. The provincial government developed Punjab Education Sector Plan (PESP) 2019/20–2023/24 to address education challenges in Punjab. The Education Sector Analysis for the PESP proposes interventions to promote quality education in a safe, inclusive, and conducive learning environment for children, improving teaching and learning practices for better learning outcomes and strengthening education sector governance for equitable access and high-quality education.

29. The Government of Punjab initiated a program in 2013 that offers cash stipends to enrolled girls in middle and secondary schools under Punjab Education Sector Reform Programme (PESRP) to increase girls' (age 11 to 16 years) enrolment in secondary and middle schools, increasing gender parity while enhancing female prestige. A standard stipend was announced on a quarterly basis, initially for all the enrolled adolescent girls in 16 selected districts with a low literacy rate. This amount has been enhanced in 2016 from Rs. 600 to Rs. 1000 per quarter as a Supplemental Stipend, to compensate for inflation and to cater to parents' demands from the selected districts.

30. E-Learn is another project of the School Education Department in collaboration with the Punjab Curriculum & Textbook Board and powered by Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB). It is the official repository of digital textbooks. Through this website, students can access 30 science and maths textbooks for Grades 1–12, augmented with video lectures (13,047), simulations (592), audio minutes (2100), and animations (1830). Each book has Video Lectures, Illustrations, Animations, Simulations, and Interactive Assessments.

### **Sindh**

31. In Sindh, the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education has initiated free online curriculum-based learning materials that students may use to continue their education during school closure. They have created a learning portal for students to use digital materials to enhance their knowledge. The official YouTube Channel of the Elementary & Secondary Education Department has been designed for students and contains video lectures on different subjects in grades 1 to 10. The digital contents are dubbed for easy understanding by students.

32. Moreover, the Girls' Right to Education Program by UNESCO has been implemented by the School Education & Literacy Department, Government of Sindh, in collaboration with UNESCO, in district Tharparkar; Girls' Transition Program (Primary to Secondary) by UNESCO in Mithi, Diplo, Kaloi, Nagarparkar & Islamkot; GirlsCan project by AzCorp which is a research-driven and advocacy-based idea that aims to overcome problems faced by girls in education and WHM-WASH Program for Schools by UNICEF.

33. Moreover, Sindh has also launched School Education Sector Plan & Road Map for 2019–2024. This project entails developing district school infrastructure based on needs assessment against enrolment targets.

34. The provincial government carried out a gender review of education sector policies and programs. The study concluded that out of 4560 High Priority Schools – those 4005 schools are included where girl students are enrolled (both girls only and mixed schools). Moreover, out of a proposed total of 554 schools for up gradation – 419 schools are included where girl students are currently enrolled. Concurrently, it led to the upgrading of 54 girls' schools under JICA assistance to elementary schools, 29 girls' schools have been constructed and handed over to authorities, and 25 girls' schools are under construction.

35. Further steps include the Notification & Implementation of Corporal Punishment Act 2016 and the re-constitution of the Committee on Protection against Women Harassment in March 2020.

### **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

36. In December 2020, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly passed a bill to regulate the weight of children's schoolbags. Violators of the Act are liable to be fined Rs. 200,000. Additionally, the KP Government has launched Second Shift at a school program in the entire province from 1st September 2021. Under this program, the primary schools will have the status of the middle, the middle ones that of high, and the high schools be upgraded to higher secondary schools. In the first phase, the second shift program will start in 120 schools in 16 districts of KP. These include 44 girls' schools, of which 28 to be upgraded from primary to middle and 16 from middle to high. The 2nd shift program aims to reduce the dropout rate and balance the number of students in overcrowded schools by bifurcating the number into the evening and the morning shifts.

37. The Education Support Scheme is a unique initiative of the Government of KP to enrol “out-of-school” children in the age bracket of 4–16; 25,122 girls are beneficiaries of this scheme. The KP government has a partnership with 614 schools. The Elementary & Secondary Education Foundation KP established Girls Community Schools to serve “out-of-school” children belonging to families lacking access to educational opportunities. It established the schools in areas where the government does not provide schooling facilities; it includes 85,689 girls’ students.

38. The KP Government also provides scholarships to 442030 Girls students by spending Rs. 53.04 M. This intervention increased the enrolment rate by 2%.

### **Balochistan**

39. To address the issues of enrolment and dropouts, especially of girls, the Government of Balochistan initiated a five-year Plan in 2020. The Balochistan Education Sector Plan (BESP: 2020–25) provides a holistic and integrated roadmap for delivering quality education for all. The plan reflects the government’s vision and aspirations and the people’s needs regarding education. The Government of Balochistan Education Department is implementing a “Global Partnership for Education-Balochistan Education Project” (GPE-BEP) under the supervision of the World Bank. The development objective of the proposed three years project is to increase enrolment and retention in project-supported schools, with a particular focus on girls’ participation, and to develop mechanisms to improve the quality of school management. The project helped enrol 50,174 girls in project-supported schools. There was 81% retention of the students in the project-supported schools during Jan–Mar, 2018 against the project target of 75%.

40. Earlier, the provincial government initiated a five-year Balochistan Basic Education Programme (BBEP) in 2016 with an €18 million grant from the European Union (EU). The program helped achieve substantial progress despite widespread school closures linked to COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020. To make up for the academic time lost due to the pandemic and as a follow-up to the program, another plan, the Balochistan Education Support, has been launched as a five-year education development program in 2021 with the grant of Rs. 4.5 billion jointly provided by European Union (Rs. 3.5 billion) and UNICEF (Rs. 1 billion) to improve quality education and to support and strengthen education management systems. It builds on the overall education reforms that the Department of Education. The Balochistan Education Support will improve literacy, numeracy, skills, and qualifications by improving equitable access to quality primary and middle-level education for every girl and boy. These include tailoring enrolment drives to ensure that children return to education and providing alternatives for children who drop out due to the economic impact of the crises. The plan will build on BBEP’s achievements such as a new performance management system; the newly established Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission; strengthened and expanded parent-teacher school management committees, local education councils, and school development process. The Department of Secondary Education in Balochistan is responsible for implementing this program.

## **III. Conclusion**

41. Pakistan is committed to promoting rights of women and strengthening protection from all forms of violence. The Federal and Provincial governments have undertaken measures to implement the recommendations made by CEDAW in 2020. These measures have already shown encouraging results in areas such as education and new mechanisms to secure rights of vulnerable women. Despite the Covid-19



pandemic and the economic losses caused by the recent floods and other exogenous shocks curtailing fiscal space, the Government will continue to make efforts in partnership with the international community, to keep the on-going momentum on strengthening domestic human rights framework, especially in areas identified by CEDAW.

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