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Assessment of **New Job Opportunities for Women** In Sindh and Balochistan



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List of Abbreviations

TVET SSP	Technical and Vocational Education and Training – Sector Support Programme
NAVTTTC	National Vocational and Technical Training Commission
STEVTA	Sindh Technical and Vocational Training Authority
BTEVTA	Balochistan Technical and Vocational Training Authority
SMEDA	Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority
NVQF	National Vocational Qualifications Framework
CBT&A	Competency Based Training and Assessment
BUITMES	Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences

Executive Summary

This study explores the new job opportunities for the women of Sindh and Balochistan in the wake of emerging patterns of change in the job market due to technical education. No country can develop without having women directly contribute to the economy. For centuries, the women of Sindh and Balochistan have contributed indirectly to the economy by working in the fields in horticulture and agriculture alongside the men of their families. In last few decades, however, a major change has occurred, and the women of Sindh and Balochistan are entering the formal employment sector. This change can be linked to several factors, including a greater focus on education and particularly technical education for women. This has resulted in a shift from the informal to the formal economy as women have moved from home-based activities to jobs outside the home. This study, based on qualitative anthropological research techniques, assessed the role of technical education for the emergence of job opportunities for women in Sindh and Balochistan and their contribution to the economy and various industrial sectors in these provinces. The data were collected through interviews and focus group studies. The results indicate that although more women in Sindh and Balochistan are opting for technical education, huge potential remains in various fields where interventions are required so that more women can contribute utilizing technical education.

Introduction

The objective of this report is to provide insight into the areas where the women of Sindh and Balochistan are currently being trained and working effectively. Based on detailed interviews and focus group studies, gaps are identified and sectors/ industries where women in these provinces could potentially work in the future are listed. The emerging opportunities for women in Sindh and Balochistan due to CPEC are also highlighted in detail.

Recognizing the critical role of skills development in achieving sustained economic and social development, maintaining global competitiveness, and responding timely to changes in technology and work patterns, the Government of Pakistan has committed to a major reform of its system of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Since April 2011, the TVET Sector Support Programme (TVET SSP) has assisted the Government of Pakistan in the implementation of TVET sector reform. The Programme is funded by the European Union, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Royal Norwegian Embassy. The Programme was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and is being implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in close collaboration with the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), provincial Technical Education and Vocational Training Authorities (TEVTAs), and a large number of private sector organizations.

At the federal level, support is being provided to the National Vocational Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) for implementation of the national TVET Policy and the National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF). At the provincial level, the Programme is facilitating the introduction and implementation of Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBT&A) together with public and private stakeholders. The current phase of the TVET Reform Support Programme aims at increasing the private sector's participation in TVET policy, design and delivery. For this purpose, the TVET SSP is being implemented in four cross-cutting thematic areas: (1) Policy and Governance, (2) Private Sector Participation in TVET, (3) Capacity Building of TVET Personnel/Human Resource Development (HRD), and (4) Implementation of Reformed TVET.

1. This study was conducted from 1 September to 31 October 2018 in order to identify areas for potential new job opportunities for women in Sindh and Balochistan. This includes employment in vocational training and entrepreneurship. The study was conducted with the following parameters:
2. Identification of priority areas for female employment as defined by the Government of Pakistan and the respective provincial governments.

3. Identification of vocations and businesses in Sindh and Balochistan where women are currently being placed.
4. Status of the vocational training being provided to women in Sindh and Balochistan.
5. Status of businesses run by female entrepreneurs in Sindh and Balochistan.
6. Identification of unaddressed areas in women's vocational training in Sindh and Balochistan.
7. Identification of priority areas as defined by female university students in Sindh and Balochistan.
8. Identification of job opportunities for women in Sindh and Balochistan under CPEC.
9. Social and organizational hurdles to pursuing a career as perceived by women in Sindh and Balochistan.

The study objectives were achieved with extensive desk reviews, followed by visits to Sindh and Balochistan. During these visits, almost all the stakeholders were interviewed, and in some cases, focus groups were also formed for more detailed input. The presidents of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in both Karachi and Quetta were interviewed in person; afterwards, focus group discussions were conducted in which members of both chambers participated. Similarly, the presidents and other members of the Women's Chamber were also interviewed. Visits to polytechnic institutes and technical training centres for women provided opportunities for direct interaction with their principals and faculty. In addition, trainees studying at these vocational centres were interviewed.

To consider the perspectives of educated women in both provinces, IBA Karachi and BUIITEMS Quetta were visited. The directors, faculty and trainees at NIC Quetta and AMAN CED in Karachi were interviewed. This was followed by detailed interviews with leading female entrepreneurs in Karachi and Quetta. Finally, female managers and business graduates were also contacted for a survey.

Scope of Assignment

Assignment Objectives:

- Identify new job opportunities and emerging trends for women in the labour market,
- Identify entry points and potential sectors for TVET SSP to support, and
- Identify challenges associated with women's participation in the labour market and the way forward for TVET SSP.

Methodology

1. The methodology applied in this study had two parts, one induction-based and the other deduction-based. First, relevant reports and studies about the status of female employment in Sindh and Balochistan were examined. There are even some good studies on this topic available in international research journals. Afterwards, the qualitative and quantitative data were collected using a mix of methodologies. The methods used for data collection included focus groups, interviews and questionnaires.
2. Second phase included visits to chambers of commerce and industry, technical training institutes for women, and Sindh and Balochistan TEVTA. Also, entrepreneurs were interviewed individually.
3. Detailed interviews at IBA Karachi and BUITMES Quetta also provided important insights on the issue.

This report is based on an in-depth study of different organizations and individuals in Balochistan and Sindh. Data were collected through interviews and focus group discussions. The participating organizations and individuals were selected because they had relevant knowledge about female employment in both provinces. Before the main interviews and focus groups could be carried out, an exploratory interview was carried out, followed by another interview to understand the overall employment trends among women in Balochistan and Sindh. The average interview length was 1 hour 15 minutes, with a range of 1-2 hours. When setting up the focus groups, organizations were requested to invite 4-6 participants for each focus group. Actual participation ranged from 2-8 participants; however, most focus groups had 4-6 participants. The average length of the focus groups was approx. 1 hour 45 minutes, with a range from 1 hour to 2 hours.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed (except for two brief sections that were not recorded at the request of the interviewee). All data were then coded using NVivo and analysed.

A summary of the data collection is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN BALOCHISTAN

Summary Table					
Organization	No. of Interviews	No. of FGs	No. of Interview Participants	No. of FG Participants	Words
QCCI	4	1	4	10	55,538
QWCCI	6	1	6	8	61,287
BTEVTA	2	0	02	0	9456

BUIEMS	8	0	8	0	38,318
NIC	8	1	8	20	110,024
PTIW	1	0	2	0	6718
WTTC	1	4	3	60	109,215
TOTAL	30	7	33	108	

QCCI= Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry, QWCCI= Quetta Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry,

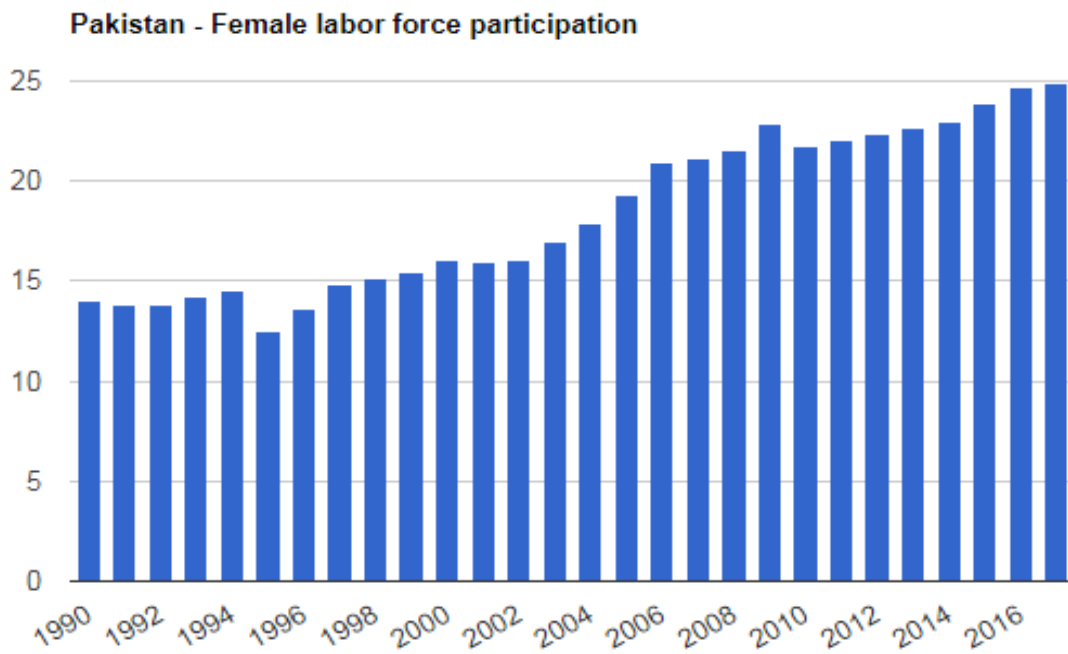
Socio-economic Framework

The economic advancement and social prosperity of a nation is an essential objective. It is to a great extent controlled by the nature of a country's work constraints and human capital alongside its capacity to use its human resources proficiently. Alongside several other economic issues, the participation of the female population in economic activities is crucial for development. Giving women the right platforms can open new doors and facilitate female labour force participation. Expanding job opportunities for women empowers them to contribute to genuine development at the national level.

Gender discrimination in job opportunities tends to be high in developing countries and is even worse among the world's poor nations (World Bank, 2001). Klasen (2002) suggests that this discrimination results in lower female labour force participation and in turn lower economic prosperity in a country. This is true for Pakistan, where which faces severe gender discrimination. Pakistan is confronting the gender imbalance in the workplace for various social and political reasons.

According to the Labour Force Survey in Pakistan, the country's female labour force participation is around 24 percent, which is even lower than in other Asian Muslim nations. In most cases, women's contribution to the Pakistani economy are not even reported (UNDP: 2003). Pakistan has one of the lowest rates of female labour force participation in the region, second only to Afghanistan. By comparison, in Vietnam and Bangladesh, the female labour force participation rates are 73 percent and 36 percent, respectively, and women are recognized as a key economic force. Low female labour force participation has clear implications for the acceleration of economic growth in Pakistan.

A 2016 IMF paper estimates that closing gender gaps in economic participation could boost Pakistan's GDP by up to 30 percent. In addition to being smart economics, closing the gender gap has intrinsic value due to the virtuous cycle it creates for families, communities and the national economy. Another reason for the low rate of female representation is a male-dominated society where women are supposed to stay at home rather than work and contribute to economic prosperity. The segregated gender roles (Hosftede, 1980) in Pakistan are part of the national culture.



Contribution of Women to the Economy of Pakistan

The economy of Pakistan is the 25th largest in the world and 42nd in terms of GDP. However, with the world's fifth largest population, of 207 million, Pakistan's per capita income stands at \$1,641, which is quite low and places Pakistan in 147th place in terms of per capita income. Thirty-six percent of the country's economy remains informal, giving it the potential to become one of the top tier economies of the world. Pakistan's greatest advantage is its youth. Sixty-four percent of the country's population is under 30 years of age, with 16-29 year olds making up 30 percent of the total population. These figures illustrate the immense potential Pakistan has to move up in the economic domain.

However, women's potential as a force for economic development in Pakistan has not yet been fully exploited, as most women remain at home and engage in household work. In rural areas, women make significant contributions to agriculture, but this is not recognized in any economic survey. The female employment rate in Pakistan is just 4.3 percent, placing it 126th out of 128 in the world. Most employed women work in the medical profession; however, 65% of female specialists don't work after marriage. 80% of female business graduates stay home after marriage and under 10 percent run their own businesses. Socially acceptable occupations for women are medicine, teaching, design and call centres.

The 2017 Global Gender Gap Report shows that Pakistan is the second-worst country for female economic participation and opportunities, ranked at 143 out of 144 countries. Pakistan ranks better in educational attainment, at 136 out of 144 countries and with a score of 0.802 compared to an average score of 0.953. Female enrolment in primary and tertiary education is high. The female-to-male ratio is 0.86 in primary education and 0.87 in tertiary education. In health and survival, Pakistan ranks 140 out of 144 countries with a score of 0.948, while the average score is 0.956. In terms of the sex ratio at birth, Pakistan ranks 139 with a score of 0.920. The gender gap scores numbers for Pakistan leave much to be desired. Yet, in terms of absolute numbers, Pakistan's scores in health and survival are

close to the parity end, even though in comparative terms, other countries rank better than Pakistan. The category where Pakistan receives the highest rank, at 95 out of 144 countries, is political participation. Pakistan's score is 0.127, while the average score is 0.227. Pakistan's literacy rate is 67% for males and 42% for females, corresponding to a female-to-male ratio of 0.63. Primary school enrolment is 67% among females compared to 77% among males. Women make up only 3% of senior officials, legislators and managers, which are 97% male. Similarly, professional and technical workers are 22% female and 78% male, which corresponds to a 0.28 male-to-female ratio. Pakistan's rank is 85th in political empowerment, as just 126 females (21%) are in parliament; in contrast, parliament is 79% male, representing a female-to-male ratio of 0.26. Pakistan has had only 5% female heads of the state over the past 50 years, as compared to 95% males, corresponding to a female-to-male ratio of 0.05 (GGG Report, 2017).

At the provincial level, the female-to-male ratio in the literacy rate is lowest in Balochistan, at only 0.41. The female literacy rate in the province is extremely low at only 25 percent. The corresponding ratio for Sindh is 0.49. As is the case for school enrolment, women in Pakistan have a substantially lower labour force participation rate and a much higher unemployment rate than men. Many women are forced to work in marginal occupations. This points to discrimination in the labour market. The female-to-male employment ratio is highest in Punjab, at 0.40, and is below 0.30 in the other three provinces.

Punjab also had the highest overall score on the Gender Inequality Index in 2015, followed by Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. The overall gender gap is 30 percent in Punjab, 44 percent in Sindh, 52 percent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 57 percent in Balochistan.

Women in these two provinces contribute in sectors like traditional dressmaking, teaching, medicine, and beauty parlours. A limited number of educated women work in banks and other sectors like health care.

Figure 1

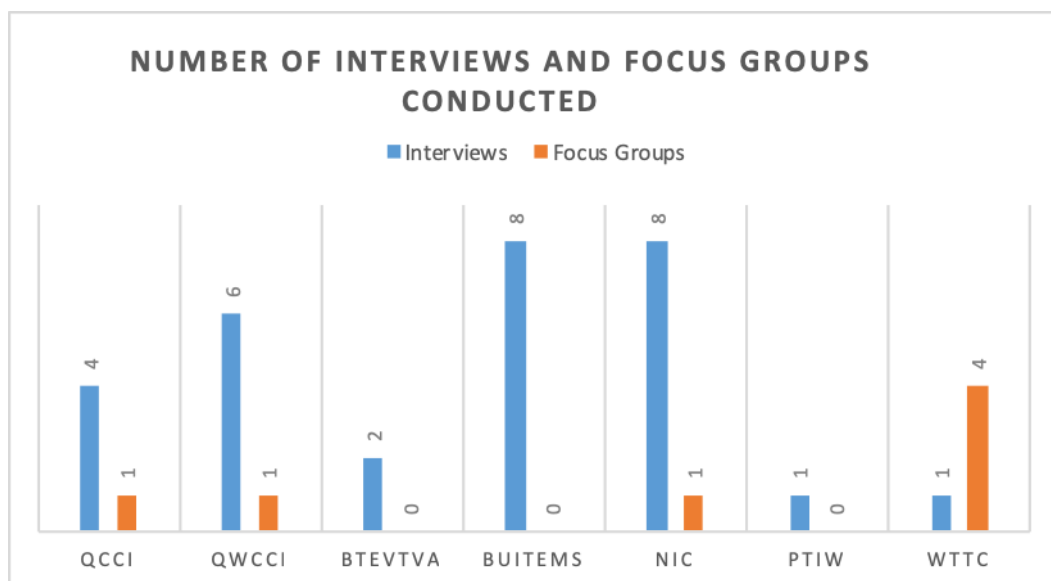
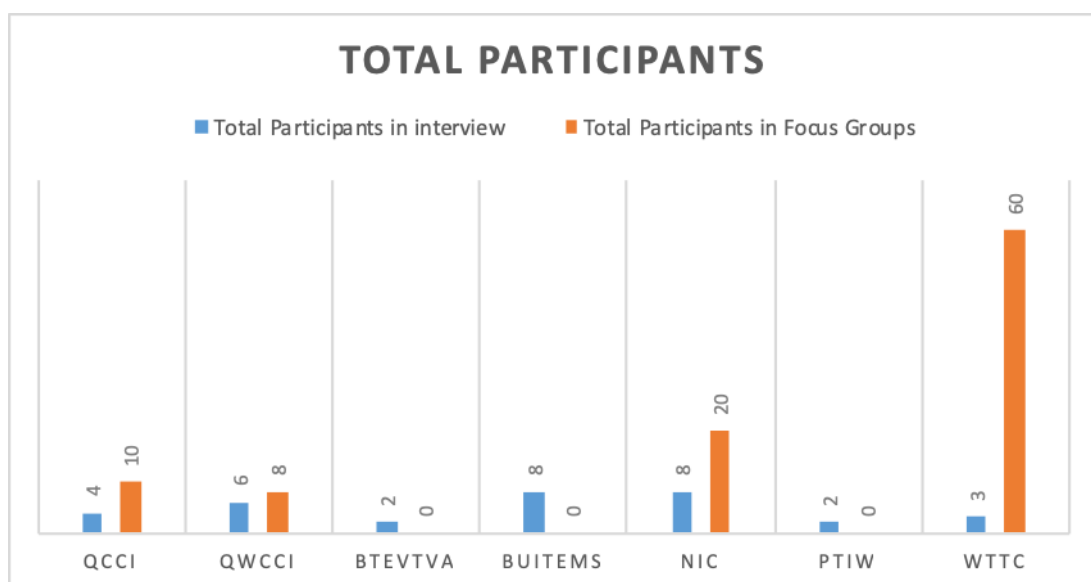


Figure 1 shows the organizations which were visited for interviews and focus group. A total of seven focus group interviews were conducted at QCCI, QWCCI, NIC and WTTC, while 30 individual interviews were conducted at all visited organizations.

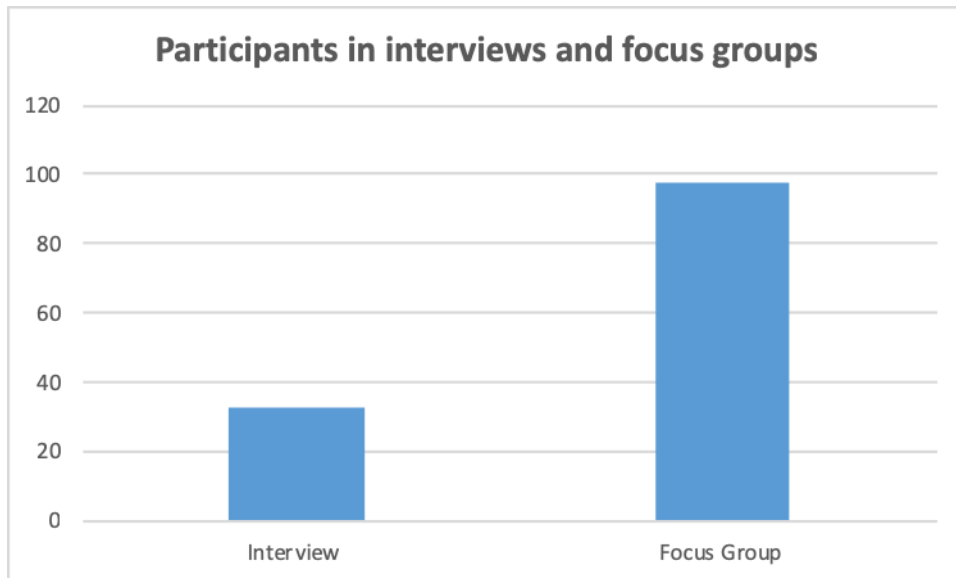
The visit to QCCI and QWCCI was quite productive. All the members of the chamber were kind enough to gather at QCCI and QWCCI. There was a detailed discussion of the technical education currently being pursued in Balochistan. The members of WQCCI gave comprehensive feedback on the issue. Individual interviews and focus group discussions were conducted as well.

Figure 2



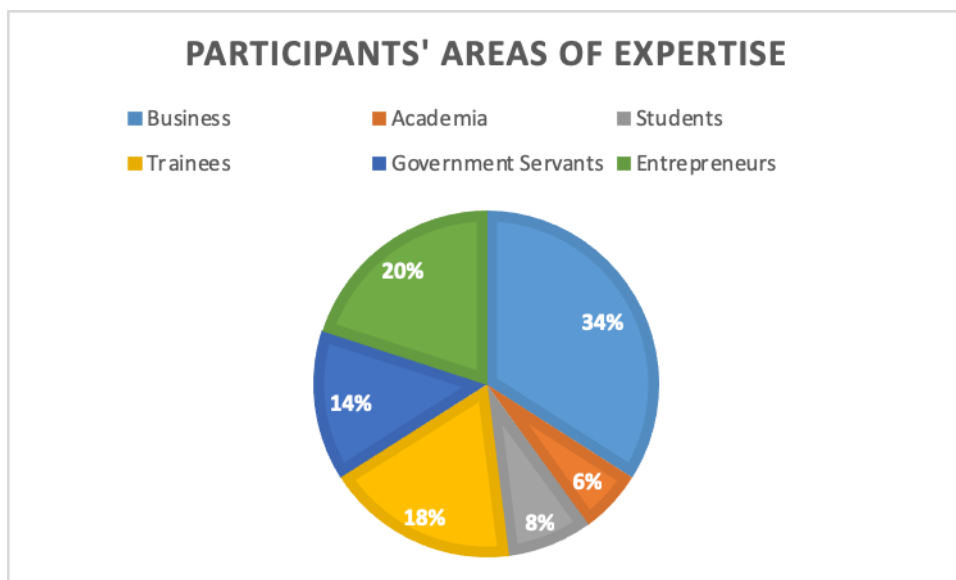
The focus group discussion with the trainees gave new insights. Several new areas were identified where females in Balochistan are either enrolled as trainees or want to enrol. Another important aspect was the interviews and focus group discussion at NIC. Several female entrepreneurs were being trained who provided real-time data about current employment trends among women in Balochistan.

Figure 3



A total of 131 individuals took part in this study. The above graph shows that 33 gave individual interviews and 98 participated in a focus group discussion. This is an adequate sample size for a qualitative study. Moreover, the data were collected at diverse locations in Balochistan, enhancing ecological validity of the study.

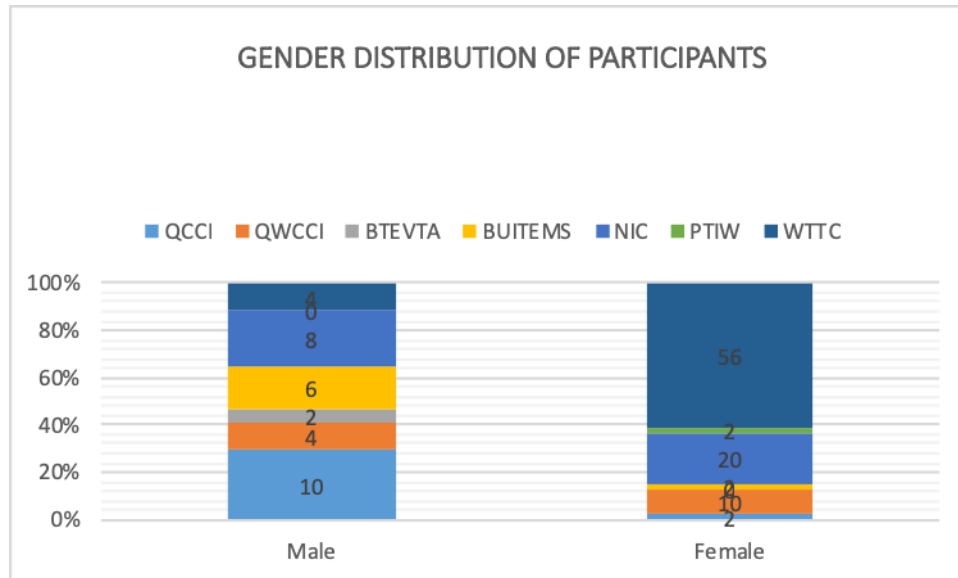
Figure 4



For any study, having a diverse sample that reflects the population is essential. Hence, this study reports the results of interviews and focus groups with women working in diverse fields in Balochistan. This includes employed women as well as those who run their own businesses and in part even employ workers in their organizations.

Figure 4 above shows the diversity of the respondents who participated in the study. Respondents primarily categorized themselves in the categories of business (34%) and entrepreneurs (20%). While the two seem similar, “entrepreneurs” referred to women who had recently launched successful businesses. The other fields included government officials, trainees, students and academics.

Figure 5

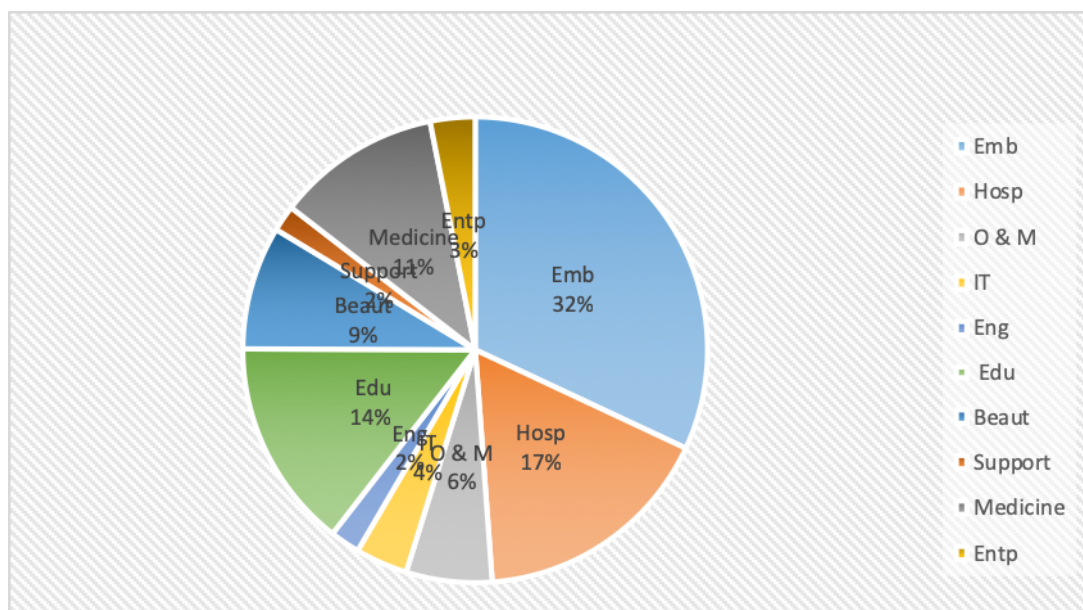


The above figure shows the gender composition of the respondents. A large share of respondents was female; however, men also participated in adequate numbers. The female respondents were mainly affiliated with training centres and were part of focus groups.

Results

The results section is divided into three main parts. In the first part, the results of the interviews are analysed to identify the areas in which most women are currently working in Balochistan and Sindh. Then, the results section moves on to present further areas where women can potentially be employed in the future. Finally, the lion's share of the section presents the key themes of the discussions with respect to societal values as well as noteworthy positive steps which are currently being taken or were proposed by the participant. Figure 6 presents a summary of the discussions on the 10 most common professions/industries where women are employed. The number of times a profession is discussed is taken as an indicator of how strongly the respondents felt about it.

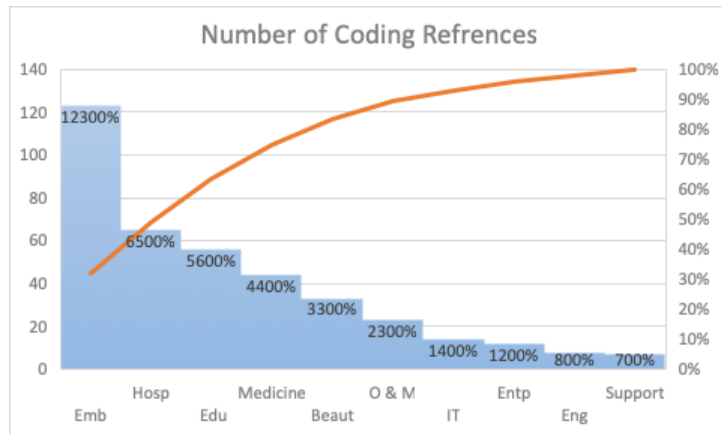
Figure 6: Common professions/industries where women are employed



Emb= Embroidery, Hosp= Hospitality, O&M= Office and Management, IT= Information Technology, Eng= Engineering, Edu= Education, Beaut= Beautician, Entp= Entrepreneur

Based on the coding shown in Figure 6 above, home-based embroidery is the most talked about profession for women in Balochistan, as 32 percent of mentions of specific careers concerned home-based embroidery by women. This was followed by hospitality and education. Other mentioned sectors include medicine, beauticians, office management, and information technology, where the percentages ranged from 10 to 2 percent. The exact coding references for each industry are presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Current employment trends among women in Balochistan

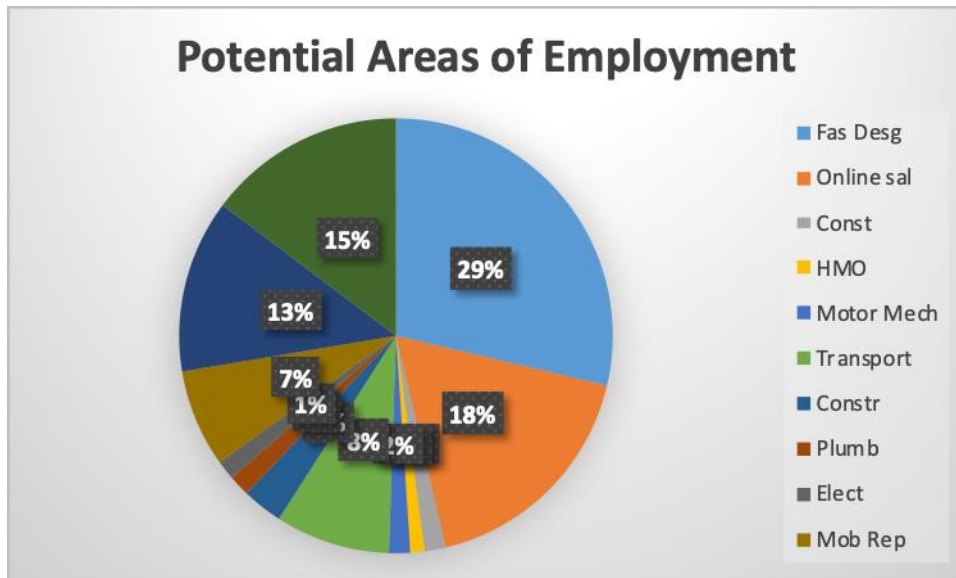


Emb= Embroidery, Hosp= Hospitality, O&M= Office and Management, IT= Information Technology, Eng= Engineering, Edu= Education, Beaut= Beautician, Entp= Entrepreneur

Figure 7 shows current employment trends among women in Balochistan. It is based on interviews and focus group discussions, the data from which were analysed using NVivo with respect to the frequency with which each sector was discussed during data collection. The figure shows that there are at least 9 sectors in which women tend to be employed. Due to social and cultural norms, embroidery is seen by all respondents as the most promising area for female employment, as it is acceptable in the social fabric of most areas of Balochistan. On the other hand, it was observed in the focus group discussions with trainees in different institutes that awareness technology, including social media, is limited. Women cannot directly place their work online for marketing and are dependent on traditional shopkeepers selling their work, who take a big share of the profits.

Among other professions, the hospitality industry and education also seem to employ a considerable number of women. However, women have a more limited presence in office work, information technology and self-employment/entrepreneurship.

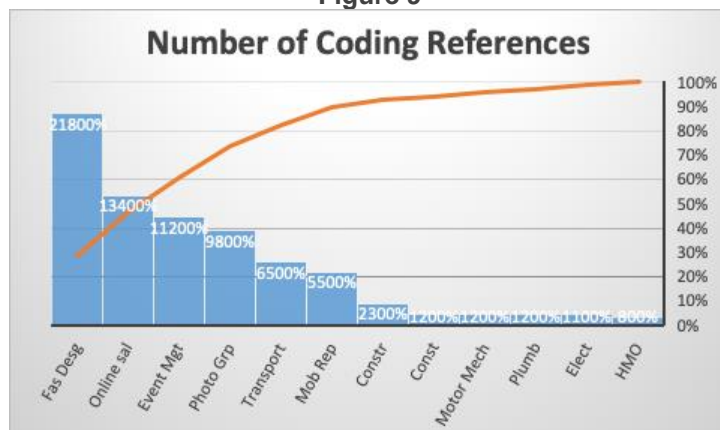
Figure 8



Fas Desg= Fashion design, Online Sal= Online Sales, Const= Construction, HMO= Health Management Organization, Constr= Construction, Plumb= Plumbing, Elect= Electrician, Mob Rep= Mobile Repairing

This figure 8 shows some prominent areas where women could be employed. Fashion designing is the area that was discussed the most. The major reasons for this are new trends in society that are making fashion designing a profitable business, while cultural norms in the province also allow women to work in this domain. Similarly, technology is shaping lives everywhere and online sales can easily be used by women to explore new business and employment opportunities. Interestingly, a considerable number also supported transport and event management as potential areas of employment. There are new options like online ride-hailing services that women can use as a source of income. Other interesting domains include mobile repairing, construction and plumbing, which are generally considered unsuitable professions for women in Pakistan.

Figure 9



Fas Desg= Fashion design, Online Sal= Online Sales, Const= Construction, HMO= Health Management Organization, Constr= Construction, Plumb= Plumbing, Elect= Electrician, Mob Rep= Mobile Repairing

The above figure provides the coding references for the professions that can provide women in Balochistan with some exciting career opportunities. These coding references provide some new insights about changing trends among women in Balochistan regarding jobs. Fashion design is seen as the most promising area due to the increased demand for and popularity of specific brands. Another reason why it received maximum attention is that it is seen as an extension of home-based embroidery work, which is culturally acceptable for women in Balochistan. In addition, a number of entrepreneurs were interviewed who are doing very well in the areas of fashion design and exporting garments.

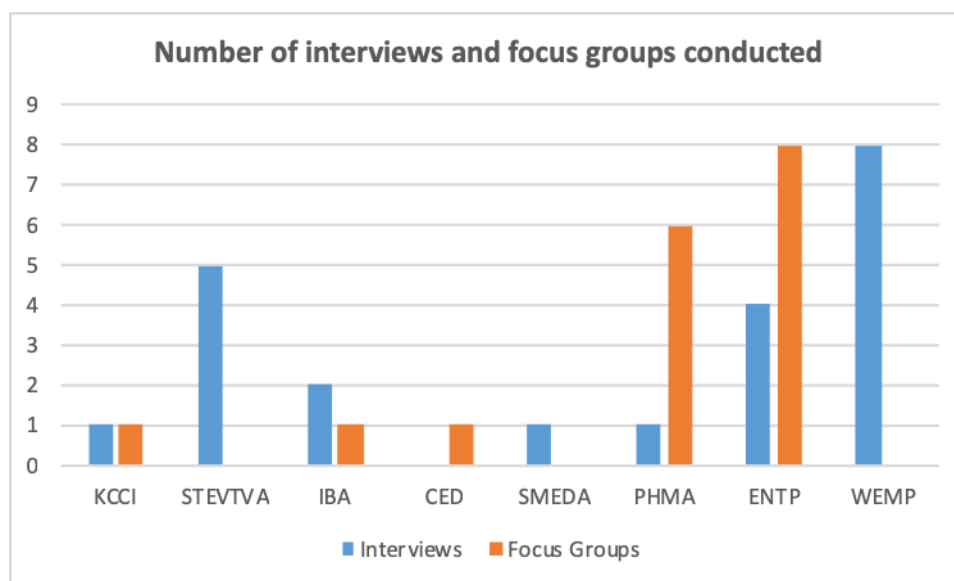
Online business is also seen as a highly promising area. The reason most respondents favoured it can be linked to the fact that it allows women to do business while sitting at home. Training for women in this area is being provided at the National Incubation Centre, Quetta. Other interesting areas identified with these coding references include management, mobile repairing etc. Some of the identified potential professions are quite unique; however, if proper interventions are introduced, there is great potential for women to contribute in these sectors.

New Job Opportunities for Women in Sindh

Summary Table

Organization	No. of Interviews	No. of FGs	No. of Interview Participants	No. of FG Participants	Words
KCCI	1	1	1	3	12,904
STEVTA	5	0	5	0	22,828
IBA	2	1	2	28	77,736
CED	0	1	0	14	26,818
SMEDA	1	0	1	0	4,212
PHMA	1	6	1	24	65,322
ENTP	4	8	4	48	98,545
WEMP	8	0	8	0	32,523
Total	22	17	22	113	

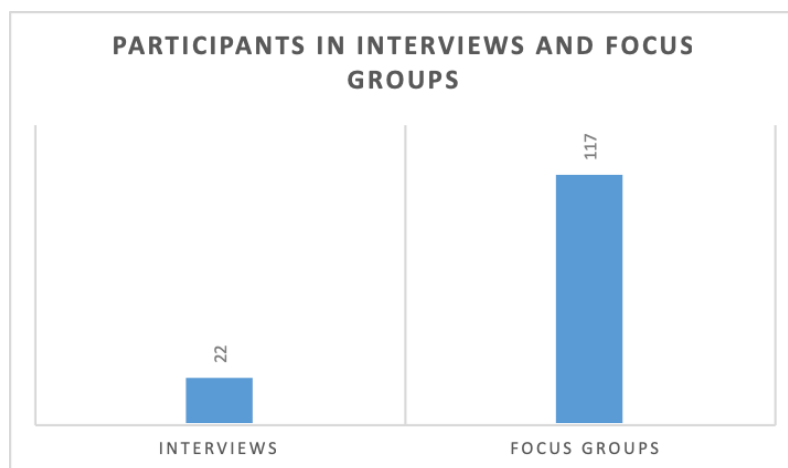
Figure 10



The above table shows the intensive data collection conducted for this study. Its main strength is the large amount of data collected through focus groups, which provide a better indication of what people think is lacking and what should be done to enhance female employment opportunities in Sindh. During this process, 17 focus group studies and 22 interviews were conducted.

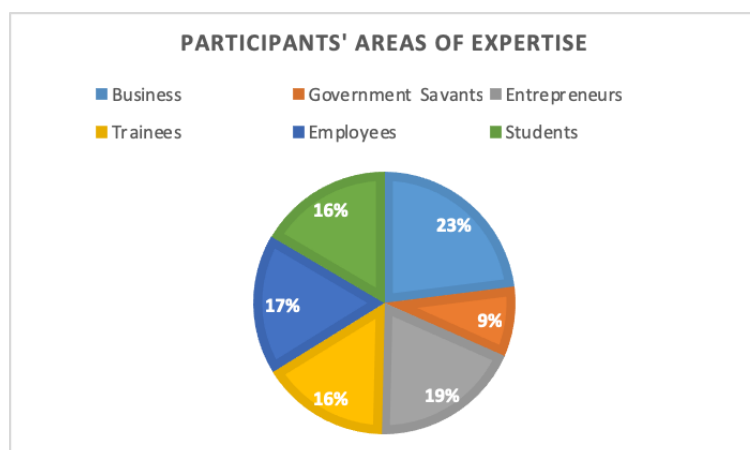
The interviews were conducted at different locations in Karachi and provided very useful insights on the issue. The President of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce along with his team were kind enough to dedicate one hour for an interview. He was fully supported by female officeholders in the chamber. In addition, a number of useful group discussions at CED and IBA gave us an opportunity to understand in which direction women entrepreneurs in Sindh are moving and what the way forward is.

Figure 11



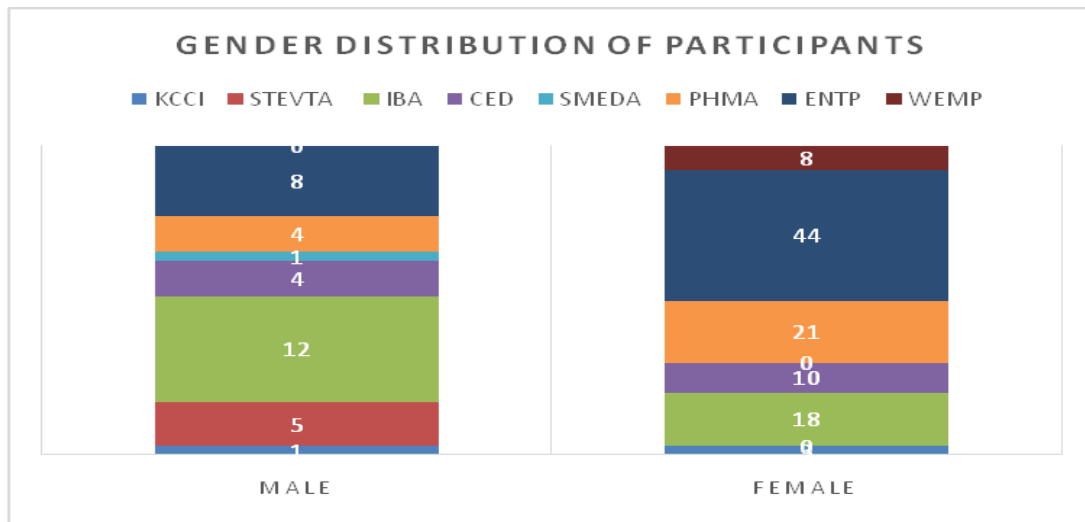
A reasonable number of participants were interviewed individually (22), while the focus group studies involved quite a good number (177). The sample size is quite adequate for a qualitative study based on interviews and focus groups.

Figure 12



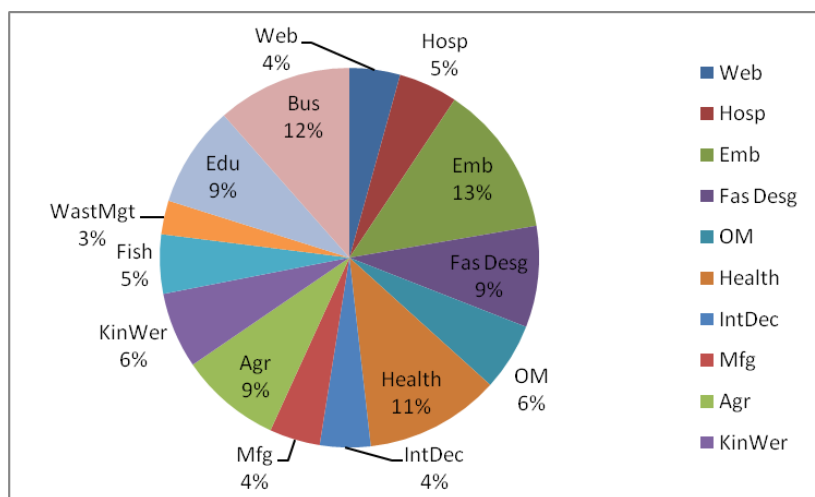
The above table shows the diversity of the sample's areas of expertise. 23 percent of respondents were involved in business, followed by entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs (19%) are also working in business, but the term refers specifically to individuals who launched a new business with some innovative idea and are successfully managing it. In addition, data were collected from employees, trainees and students as well. This diversity gave us access to the opinions of people from different walks of life who can tell us about the real employment opportunities for women in Sindh.

Figure 13



The above figure shows the gender distribution of the respondents in different organizations. It was ensured that women provided opinions on the issue in good numbers; thus, 75% of the respondents were female and 25% were male. The obvious reason for this distribution is that data were collected from institutions where women are working or being trained.

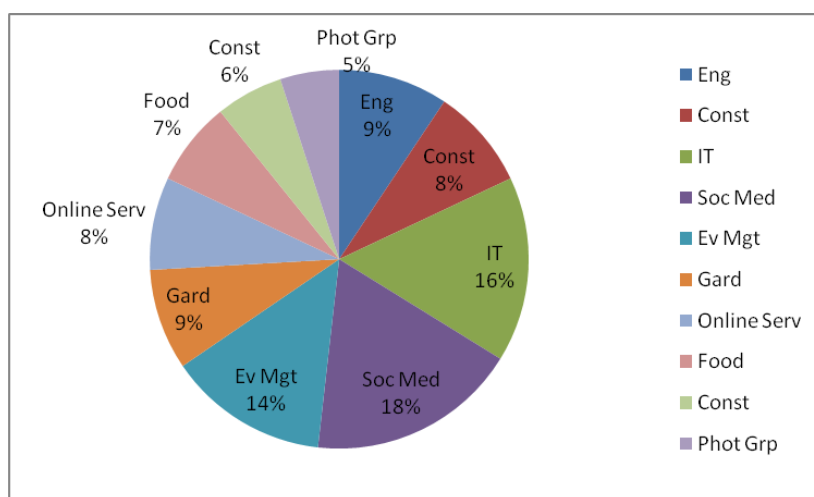
Figure 14: Current Employment Trends



Hosp= Hospitality, Emb= Embroidery, FasDesg= Fashion design, OM= Office Management, IntDec= Interior Decoration, Mfg= Manufacturing, Agr= Agriculture, KinWer= Knitwear

The above figure comprehensively explains the current employment trends among women in Sindh. The table reveals mixed results, indicating that no single occupation or industry is dominant among women in Sindh. While the largest number of women were working in dress designing and embroidery (13%), self-generated business (12%) and health (11%) had similar levels. These patterns provide several important pieces of information. The women in Sindh do not have career aspirations in any specific field. They are working in occupations which are suitable to them as per their needs and family traditions. While the results here are more diverse, they are also rather negative as we see only a minimal presence of women in many important areas of today's economy. Given that more than 50% of the population is female, keeping women out of so many important fields are not a healthy sign.

Figure 15: Potential Areas of Employment



Eng= Engineering, Const= Construction, IT= Information Technology, SocMed= Social Media, Ev Mgt= Event Management, Gard= Gardening, Online Serv= Online Services, Phot Grp= Photography

The above figure is based on the participants' opinions as to which areas must be considered for female employment in Sindh. The most commonly highlighted areas are social media (18%) and IT (16%), followed by event management (14%). These professions are quite unique and have a lot of potential. When asked why everyone is talking about social media, the answer was that it allows women to work at home and do business. A number of female entrepreneurs introduced themselves as doing business solely via social media. The most popular businesses are selling food using social media, teaching, and other services such as gardening, etc. Similarly, due to changes in social norms, event management can be a good avenue for women to work. This might involve managing social events or even business events.

Key Findings

The main aim of this study was to identify potential areas where the women of Balochistan and Sindh can be employed. It also focuses on ways to improve the quality of the training being provided by different organizations in these provinces. The report concludes with recommendations and a proposed way forward. As in the preceding sections, the final choice of recommendations was guided by the topics which were discussed most enthusiastically by the participants. The average female employment rate in Pakistan is 22.19, but just 6.64 in Sindh (Labour Force Survey, 2018). This shows that a large share of the potential female workforce is not contributing to the national economy.

1. There is lack of trust on the part of businessmen regarding women's empowerment activities by international consultants. Immediate steps are required to increase interactions with them and raise awareness.
2. CPEC is something unknown to the business community here. They don't know anything about CPEC beyond a network of roads. In these circumstances, considering CPEC as a source of potential jobs for women is out of the question. Intervention is required at a larger scale across Balochistan to raise awareness about CPEC and business/job opportunities associated with it.
3. Another issue that stops women from entering the business world is control over capital. They don't have any financial resources and are dependent on family members for everything. Similarly, they are unable to manage the difficulty of doing business. Most women are so afraid of tax procedures that they don't want to do business.
4. This province needs a divergence approach; if we wish to engage women in productive economic activities we need to work within the local culture. No encouragement can bring women out of the home if their families are not involved and supportive. This can be achieved through outreach programs involving local women, who can bridge the trust deficit.
5. There is no way to reach these women using any media. The only way to reach them is through direct contact, but that will require consent by family elders. Otherwise, any attempt to involve them will be a waste of resources.
6. It was found that the technical institutions have large spaces, most of which are underutilized. The reason seems to be a lack of resources and lack of will to start new programs. Since starting new programs is a challenge, BTEVTA-associated

institutions are conducting traditional programs and, in most cases, using obsolete technology. Awareness of the use of technology and modern tools is quite limited, hindering access to new knowledge.

7. In a few institutes, there are even no backup power sources, so during rolling blackouts due to electricity load shedding students sit idle as they cannot operate any machines.
8. In Sindh, the chamber is playing an active role in promoting female employment and entrepreneurship; however, there is so much division in the chamber that it is difficult to resolve issues with one voice. As per the opinion of the president, the Women's Chamber of Commerce was supposed to advance women's empowerment, but in reality, it did not. Instead, it is becoming a liability as members are not well aware of the systems and are contributing nothing to women's employability in Sindh. Regarding CPEC, the president seemed concerned over China's role in local affairs. He was of the opinion that the TPRs for CPEC must be reviewed and the interests of local businessmen must be protected; otherwise, it will cause a lot of problems for job markets in Pakistan.

There is a need to develop greater awareness about CPEC among the business community as currently they see it as a threat rather than an opportunity. Technical education for women is not seen as important for the business community for the following reasons:

- a. Male workers are easily available
- b. Women lack skills
- c. A harsh workplace environment is not considered appropriate for women
- d. Although many women trained here get jobs in factories, these jobs are low paid. Adding technical training will create more opportunities. Various donors are supporting programs that provide job opportunities for women being trained here.
- e. This area needs special attention as factories operating in Karachi prefer a female workforce. The intervention required here seems to be related to technical skills in making different dresses. For example, it was found that factories are willing to hire and pay high salaries to skilled workers in the area of dress making/designing.

The Way Forward

Based on the above interviews and focus group discussions, the way forward for advancing women's employment in both provinces should be as follows:

1. The most important aspect to bringing women into the workforce seems to be professions/jobs which are permissible in local cultures. This is only possible if women's families, especially the males, are involved in the process through outreach programs. It was observed that NIC Quetta is successful in bringing women out of the home for different entrepreneurial activities using outreach programs. They are able to reach far-flung areas and have local women contact homes and ask girls to participate in different activities. Due to the local culture, the families need assurance that the girls will not be participating in something which is not acceptable to them. It is expected that making local women part of this campaign will lead to a considerable increase in the number of women participating in these activities.
2. The use of technology and computer-based training (CBT) is another way to impart quality training and raise awareness. The issue in many areas is that families are not willing to send girls outside the home for trainings, particularly when they are conducted by males. If the key elements of such trainings and the associated knowledge can be conveyed using CBT, the message can reach many more families. If women don't have access to computers, they can visit a local girls' school and the trainings can be arranged there. In addition, male family members can be shown that the girls will work in a way that aligns with cultural norms.
3. SMEs' role in small-scale business is vital for the economy of Pakistan, and this is also the only way we can enhance the role of women. Most women in these areas don't even have national ID cards. We need to develop a strategy to give small-scale loans ranging from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 100,000 on personal guarantees rather than the culture of the province does not allow women to go out, which makes many professions problematic. Women who are working are discouraged at every step. The workplace environment is hostile to female workers/ employees. In many organizations, there are not even restrooms for women. Women have the least preference for entrepreneurship and their life revolves around family and children. This is a major cause of low labour force participation by women using complex banking systems. No women from rural areas are willing to even visit a bank. An outside-the-box solution is required for them to receive a loan to start a business from home. We have examples from many countries where such small loans have revolutionized the economy.
4. Social media is one of the most effective ways to promote businesses. During focus group discussions in different training institutes, it was observed that most of the girls had Face book accounts but had no idea how they can be used to market their

embroidery. Most were astonished when told how simple it is to do so. It is strongly recommended that trainings be conducted for entrepreneurs and even girls who perform embroidery on how to use social media to market their work. This can also reduce the role of middlemen who take a large share of the proceeds with minimal effort.



5. Home-based work, which is primarily performed by women, is currently contributing a great deal to the national economy. But this is not recognized or regularized by any formal system. Women working in these areas have no employment rights or business protections. Formally regularizing this work will be a major undertaking. The women working in these areas must be protected against exploitation and harassment.

Immediate Interventions Required

1. Awareness about CPEC. A massive intervention is needed to reach all schools, colleges, universities and organizations. No one at a functional level knows what CPEC is. Everything possible should be done - seminars, visits, outreach programs about CPEC and its specific benefits for the culture of the province does not allow women to go out, which makes many professions problematic. Women who are working are discouraged at every step. The workplace environment is hostile to female workers/employees. In many organizations, there are not even restrooms for women. Women have the least preference for entrepreneurship and their life revolves around family and children. This is a major cause of low labour force participation by women stakeholders, discussions, dialogues, etc. Moreover, differences in stakeholders' opinions on increased employment opportunities based on gender can be found. The females in the study believe that CPEC will provide them with fewer opportunities than males. The reason for this might be related to the geographic locations of the jobs, which may be seen as inappropriate for females, especially in the provinces of Sindh and Balochistan. This result raises doubts about females' lack of awareness of the benefits of CPEC.
2. There is a definite lack of trust concerning the benefits of CPEC in both provinces, but this issue seems more serious in Balochistan. However, it is not too late to increase the level of trust. The business community in both provinces must be on board about the benefits of CPEC. Furthermore, there is a dire need to revisit the role of media in propagating the facts about CPEC.
3. Chinese language programs can help to bridge the gap and create new opportunities. So far, there are few Chinese language programs in these provinces. It is suggested that Chinese language be taught as a compulsory subject in technical education centres for women.
4. The technical training institutions' capacity should be enhanced. Rather than teaching decades-old courses, technical education and vocational training institutions for women should ideally devise their technical education and vocational training according to the requirements of industry. This is only possible through strong corporate linkage programs. This element did not seem to be present in most of the institutions. If these institutes don't develop the types of female workers required by the market, trainees in these programs have no future employment prospects.
5. Business incubation centres need to be strengthened to promote small-scale businesses by women. A number of successful business entrepreneurs were interviewed at NIC Quetta and CED Karachi. The main source of their success was the financial support and guidance provided by business incubation centres. Unfortunately, these incubation centres can help few women. It is suggested that such incubation centres be established in every district of Sindh and Balochistan. This can not only significantly enhance women's role on the job but also create more jobs for women.

TVET Sector Support Programme

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