Committee: Commission on the Status of Women



Topic A: Women and Sustainability

Country: Pakistan

**Introduction**

Environmental issues plague the world everyday. Only 2.5% of all water in the world is potable and earthquakes happen daily. Scientific studies have shown however, that these problems effect women most of all. Pakistani women are no exception. The lack of water and the aftermaths of the Kashmir earthquake in 2005 have caused many women of our country to suffer. This delegation does believe that women should have alternate solutions to these problems and that there must be something done. However, our cultural and traditional beliefs should not be ignored or removed as they help form bonds throughout the country, region by region, making Pakistan the way it is today.

**Country Policy Per Subtopic**

Women already have a large role in the agricultural aspect of Pakistan. About 50-60% of all women are involved within the industry, their main jobs focusing on planting and weeding. All Pakistani women play a productive role to Pakistan’s yet all their constraints in this field are worth mentioning. 84% of the Pakistani women face these major issues: the cultural norms, male dominance, traditional belief system, and less availability of time. While the delegation of Pakistan has attempted to release policies to try to assist the agriculture industry-thus women working in agriculture-, it has been noted that to truly make a difference, there just needs to be backing from gender-segregated data. Regions of Pakistan still believes in it’s patriarch systems, holding back from the government’s policy’s such as the *GRAP* (Gender Reforms Action Plan) and *National Commission on the Status of Women Bill.* (Prakash 2003)

In terms of Pakistani women and natural disasters, the Kashmir earthquake in 2005 brings the most telling data. Around 80 000 civilians died that day and a large amount of that population were women. (E., 2006) There are three reasons for this. Firstly, it was because it occurred around the time of day when most women were inside, cleaning up after a morning meal. Secondly, the cement block houses and apartments they resided in were badly constructed, collapsing easily and trapping the women inside. Thirdly, the cultural practice of women not spending time in public space was being performed, making it so many women were in the privacy of their own homes. In the aftermath of the earthquake however, women still caring for their families in the tent camps, scabies, inadequate sanitation, poor hygiene conditions, and constant fears of waterborne disease outbreaks persisted. At the time of the attack, our government agencies began to place women’s ideas, concerns, and perspectives to the forefront of disaster risk planning and, to relief, recovery and reconstruction efforts. (Hamilton, 2007)

It is the wish of this delegation that when sanitary objects are bought, to place them in a brown paper bag. (Payton, 2016)This process makes it easier for both men and women, as it allows women to hide their shame and so that men do not have to think about it. It is a cultural belief that should be respected by the committee. In terms of menstrual waste however, most girls would most likely throw away their sanitary napkins inside the paper bag they got with it. Perhaps there could be a system like India’s where they could be special disposal bags not too unlike the brown paper bags currently being used.

Local governments in Pakistan have began to set a 33% quota established for women at the district, municipality, and union councils-the local legislative bodies mandated to approve by-laws, taxes, long-term and short-term development plans, and annual budgets. (KSC, Spevacek) That allows the voices of women to make a change in environmental terms. In terms of national government, only 19.5% of women hold seats. However, since men are more suited to the complex and aggressive style of politics, this is for the greater good. We believe that political parties should hold seats for family members primarily, to help uphold traditions and keep influential legacies. Through this, women can hold political power such as Nafisa Shah, daughter of the Chief Minister of Sindh in 2013.

Topic B: Elimination on Gender-Based Violence

**Introduction**

The abuse of women is a highly contradictory subject. The parameters between the various types of abuse (physical, psychological, sexual) are not strictly defined and the cultural influences around abused women are strong. In Pakistan, 90% of women in marriages get abused in at least one of the three forms stated above. It must be kept in the forefront of the committee’s mind though, that the cultural influences keep many countries united and together. Therefore, especially in a religious sense, this delegation wishes that the traditional binds stay as much as possible without eliminating any,

**Country Policy Per Subtopic**

Pakistan has the highest forced marriage rate in the world. Around 46% of all marriages are arranged. However, most of them are for a good cause. We believe that arranged marriage is not necessarily a bad thing as it alleviates the load off families in poverty and many of our people are in said state. It raises the honour of the family and the girl. (Devan, 2014) The Human Right Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) protests arranged marriages, noting that prosecution rates for domestic violence and sexual offences in arranged marriages were low. It was not mentioned by the HRCP that this was because most women were afraid to report the crimes. This is not this delegation’s fault as we have tried to help the women. A bill was passed in 2015 that declares physical violence, abusive language, stalking, cyber crimes, sexual violence, psychological and emotional abuse against women a crime in the region of Punjab-where 60% of Pakistan’s population resides. (Punjab Gov. 2015) While the strongly Islamic and right wing parties were opposed against it, the bill still passed, with the intention to improve the lives for all women who were getting abused in arranged marriages. It is the cultural aspect of the matter that is keeping arranged marriage as a problem within Pakistan.

Since 2014, female infanticide has been on the rise. (Karimjee, 2014) It is important to note that parents do not murder their children in cold blood. Parents do it to help feed their sons, who are much more important in Pakistani society. It is also important to know that many of these infants being killed are *harami* or illegitimate. Being a child out of wedlock is almost worse than dying in our culture. The merciful thing to do is kill them, unless it’s a boy and another relative is willing to pretend the child is theirs. Abortions also are not an option. About 200 000 women get hospitalized each year thanks to illegal abortions. It is also noted that most mothers who had children out of wedlock are relieved their child died, as the child was a physical manifestation of their sin. The government has tried to enforce this with a 7 year prison sentence to those caught committing infanticide. However, in 1968, cradles were being placed around Karachi for people to place unwanted infants in. The infants then were collected to live at a site Today, there are 335 cradles spread out all around Pakistan, and through them, the Edhi Foundation receives at least 15 abandoned babies per month. Nearly all of them are girls. In 2014 alone, 212 babies were dropped off in their cradles and 195 ­were girls. We believe this is a fine enough solution and nothing else should be done about it.

The Pakistani Islamic Council has decreed that men can lightly beat their wives if they defy Islam or greatly misbehave. However, this in terms does not mean violence against women. If against a disobedient wife, the council suggests to take these steps: advise her, stop talking to her, stop sharing her bed, and then if all else fails, hit her with a handkerchief, hat, or turban. It would be against Islam and this delegation however, if the wife was hit in the face or private parts, or got any physical injuries-even a scratch. The Punjab assembly had tried to pass a bill-Protection Of Women Against Violence-that would have protected all Pakistani women against every form of abuse, yet it was shot down by the Islamic council, with them seeing as women should be the domestic property of their husbands. The Pakistani government had made a bill in 2012 that punished acid and burn attacks on women with 14 years to life prison time and a fine of almost 1 million Pakistani rupees.

Pakistan has attempted to ban child marriage around the country, but the bill has been shut down by the Council of Islamic Ideology as the bill was un-Islamic. 21% of women in our country are married under the age of 18. Do not think that this delegation does not care though. There is a 1000 PKR (Pakistani Rupee) fine to those who marry under-age girls and the offenders can stay up to a month in prison. To add to that, in 2008, the Anti-Women Practices Criminal Law Amendment Bill was formed which criminalizes practices such as forcing young girls to marry to settle tribal disputes

Topic C: Women in Education and Employment

**Introduction**

In rating a country’s quality of life, economics come into play. Unfortunately, many in Pakistan are in poverty and one way to improve other countries like us is to let women have a part in our economy. While there are cultural restraints against them, this delegation is beginning to realize that women can be more than the people in charge of the home. There are women now in seats of power in the government. There are still many factors to improve though, such as the education of women. Many people in Pakistan are still illiterate and teaching women is just the first step to improve our great country.

**Country Policy Per Subtopic**

Pakistan has an extremely low literacy rate of 42% for women above the ages of 15. This may be due to the low number of females in schooling. In 2010, over 3 million girls did not go to primary school. This is because in Pakistan, girls are not allowed to go to school unless they are taught by a female teacher. In every school in Pakistan, they are always more male teachers than females- making it even harder for girls to gain a good education. The low amount of education in Pakistan is also due to the cultural views on the topic. Women’s roles in society are viewed primarily as household managers and caregivers so their need for education is not considered a priority, especially if there are children to provide education for. In families with both male and female children, the male children are often provided the better education due to cultural bias. In rural areas, though, the problem is not bias-it’s distance. Families were seen to respond positively to sending their female children to schools if they were closer. There is not enough money to construct more schools closer to rural areas though and there shouldn’t be more strain on families to pay for a bus to take their children to school. (usaid, 2013) This case becomes even harder for girls, as schools in Pakistan do not have adequate sanitation-which results in drop outs or higher rates of absenteeism when girls are menstruating. However, the main reason most females cannot get a good education is poverty. Over 50% of people in Pakistan are in poverty and female education does not take any semblance of thought to them.

Of the 180 million people in Pakistan, only 12.5 million women in Pakistan work. While most of them work in agriculture, those women are the backbone of the industry. Those 74% of women who work in the industry are usually extremely knowledgeable yet they do not get paid. With families in extreme poverty, getting paid would make a huge difference for Pakistan. In urban areas, few women work. Pakistan’s statistics for women in the labour force is one of the lowest in the whole world. This may be because occupational choices for women are limited due to social and cultural constraints, inherent gender bias and lack of supportive facilities. Therefore, women’s labor power is considered inferior to society. When asking the working woman’s family if they liked their daughter having a job, a surprising 77% said yes, with only 23% saying no. In the Five-Year Plan (1998–2003), the Government of Pakistan committed itself to promote women’s employment by creating more opportunities for them. The specific sectoral programs include education, training, and skill development of women and the promotion of female labor based industries. There is a 33% quota for women in each major Pakistani council and the employment of women in Pakistan is slowly rising. (Ferdoos, 2007)

One suggestion to increase female employment and education is to recruit more female teachers in Pakistani schools as this benefits both young girls and the grown women teaching them. To fully advance this, the gender wage gap must decrease. Women only make 61% of their male counterparts per average monthly wage. (Hisam, 2016)