

Gender Patterns in Employment-Related  
Public Sector Expenditures in Punjab

Gender Responsive Budget Initiative

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## FORWARD

It is now a universally recognized phenomenon that sustainable patterns of socio-economic development cannot be attained without mainstreaming women as equal contributors to, and beneficiaries of, the development process. In his *Vision 2020*, the Chief Minister, Punjab has emphasised the vital role women must play in Punjab's future. The paradigm of this vision commits the Government of the Punjab to making men and women equal partners in development.

The Government of the Punjab has in recent times introduced multidimensional reforms for the empowerment of women in the Province. Consistent with international best practices, one of our key reforms is *Gender Responsive Budgeting*, under which the project 'Gender Responsive Budgeting Initiative' (GRBI) has been launched to promote gender perspectives in financial policies and allocation of resources. A recent milestone achieved through the GBRI is the incorporation of certain gender-based amendments in the Budget Call Circular (BCC) of the Finance Department, including a requirement for all Provincial Government establishments to provide sex-disaggregated data relating to their employees.

This study, entitled *Gender Patterns in Employment-Related Public Sector Expenditures in Punjab*, carried out by the GRBI, is aimed at providing a clearer picture of female employment patterns in Punjab's public sector and to offer insight into the overall employment preferences of women in Punjab. The study is also expected to assist the Provincial Government in shaping policies that would increase employment levels of women in the public and private sectors.

I must utilise this opportunity to thank the UNDP for the technical and financial support that the organisation is providing for the implementation of the GRBI, as well as our cost-sharing partners, i.e. the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Royal Norwegian Embassy, for their assistance.

**SOHAIL AHMAD**

Secretary to Government of the Punjab  
Finance Department

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2005, Government of Pakistan (GoP) started Gender Responsive Budgeting Initiative (GRBI) at the federal level and in the Punjab province for mainstreaming gender in budgeting. UNDP and other donors are assisting the Ministry of Finance and the Finance Department, Punjab in this project.

The project is expected to produce the following results:

1. Government spending addresses the needs of women and men equitably and attends especially to the needs of the poor.
2. Budget reviewed through a gender lens, in order to analyze if budget allocations are in line with women's and men's different priorities and needs.
3. Civil society and government partnership promotes transparency in the determination of government priorities and in public spending.

Economic independence of women has been acknowledged as a precondition for gender equality. Increasing employment opportunities for women should, therefore, be high on the priority list of any government. Employment of women in the public sector is important for two additional reasons. First, the gender patterns in public sector employment are important not only in terms of the direct benefits enjoyed by those employed, but also because the presence of women in decision-making and implementing positions can affect what is delivered and how it is delivered. Secondly, experience shows that if societal discrimination against a group in employment has to be ended, then public sector has to take a pioneering role in this effort. For example, one of the major advances in racial integration of coloured-Americans in US was

Executive order 9981 by President Truman and the subsequent desegregation of the US military. Desegregation in broader society came much later<sup>1</sup>.

## SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

To implement gender mainstreaming, the budget call circular (BCC) 200607 issued by the Finance Department, Government of the Punjab for the Provincial Government Departments in late 2005 for the first time asked for some sex-disaggregated information. The data given in response to the BCC, gives us sex disaggregation of employment-related budget estimates as well as gender patterns in public sector employment and remuneration. The scope of the study is limited to the above-mentioned data.

Several points need to be clarified. First and foremost, the report does not cover all the provincial employees or departments. As this was the first year, at least six departments did not give sex-disaggregated data<sup>2</sup>. For some other departments, like services & general administration health and excise & taxation departments, data was partially available in the finance department<sup>3</sup>. Secondly, for the purposes of the analysis, departments were allocated to three 'sectors' and although the allocation of different departments to the economic, administrative and social sectors was done after great thought, a different person might come up with a different division. Finally, this study does not represent all the public servants working in the province as under the devolution scheme started in 2001, a district service has been created and

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<sup>1</sup> Article on Desegregation in Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desegregation>

<sup>2</sup> These departments are housing and physical planning, environmental protection, Punjab public service commission, planning & development, agriculture and population welfare department.

<sup>3</sup> Each department has several demands under which budget is assigned to it. For some departments, budget for all demands was not available. The relevant files were missing from the finance department and despite efforts of around three weeks, data were not available for analysis. It is difficult to know whether the data were not provided by the concerned department or were lost by the finance department.

thousands of employees have been transferred to the district governments<sup>4</sup>. For example, before devolution, the majority of the education department employees were teachers in primary and high schools. Now, all these people are employees of district governments and so are not part of this study. It is probable that devolution has adversely affected the number of women employed in provincial public sector as some of the programs/ areas where women are employed in large numbers, such as primary schools, have been shifted to districts.

#### **ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS BY SECTOR**

Looking across the three sectors, we see that the percentage of women employees is poor as compared to their share in total population of approximately fifty percent. One possible explanation of this disparity/ gender gap is the small number of educated women available. As the following table shows, nearly two out of three women in Punjab are illiterate. Lower participation rates of women in Pakistan (9.9% for women as compared to 48% for men in Pakistan in 2001-02<sup>5</sup>) and the higher overall unemployment rate of women (9.6% as compared to 6.7% for men of Punjab province in 2003-04), possibly due to 'male breadwinner' division of responsibilities, can be cited as other reasons<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Amendments in Local Government Ordinance made it mandatory on provincial government of Punjab to establish a dedicated district service by 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2005. To comply with these amendments, Government of the Punjab made rules and regulations and transferred employees from provincial service to districts. Information from EAD website <http://202.83.164.7/PDF/Devolution.jsp> and from Additional Secretary, Health Department, Punjab

<sup>5</sup> CEDAW Report. From Ministry of Women Development website. [http://www.pakistan.gov.pk/divisions/ContentInfo.jsp?DivID=20&cPath=185\\_191&ContentID=2340](http://www.pakistan.gov.pk/divisions/ContentInfo.jsp?DivID=20&cPath=185_191&ContentID=2340)

<sup>6</sup> State Bank of Pakistan. 2005. *State of Pakistan's Economy*. Karachi

**Table 1.1 Literacy rate (Population ten years and above)**

Literacy rate	Punjab province			Pakistan
	Urban	Rural	Overall	
Male	71	51	57	58
Female	60	26	36	32
Total population	66	38	47	45

Source: Punjab Economic Report (2005)

**Table 1.2 Total number of women employees and their proportion in Punjab public sector**

	Administrative sector	Economic sector	Social sector	Total
Total employees	120928	53188	35891	210007
Women employees as percentage of total employees	0.5%	0.3%	28.4%	5.2%

Table 1.2 above tells us how well women are represented in the different sectors in provincial government. In the administrative and economic sectors, women account for less than one percent which is much lower than the five percent quota fixed by the government. Only in social sector is the proportion of women adequate, although it is still lower than their share as percentage of population. The difference in proportion of women employees, however, shows that the above explanations of lower employment of women - such as low literacy rate and participation rates - are only partially correct. A better explanation of these figures could be the power of stereotypes which allow women to work in some sectors but restrict their employment opportunities in other areas.

Within the three sectors, we find that the gender gap is worst in administrative departments/ services. Looking at the various studies and books written on the subject of gender and employment in Pakistan and other developing countries, we can argue that this state of affairs is due to the societal stereotypes that hinder women's employment in the police service, courts or as probation officers<sup>7</sup>. The situation of women in economic services/ departments is similar. Women account for less than five percent of total employees. Here again a societal notion of what is proper for a woman to do puts women in a disadvantageous position. Women are not 'supposed' to be engineers or technicians as the environment for most of these trades is difficult and dangerous. The female proportion of employment in social services/departments is, however, much better as work of women in this sector is considered appropriate. Here, around twenty percent of employees are women.

**Table 1.3 Division of employees in sectors**

	Administrative s ector	Economic sector	Social sector	Total
<b>Percent of women employees</b>	5.5%	1.3%	93.2%	100%
<b>Percent of men employees</b>	60.6%	26.5%	12.9%	100%

Table 1.3 shows the distribution of female and male employees across different sectors. It further demonstrates the power of stereotypes by illustrating that more than ninety percent of women employees work in the social sector while less than two percent work in the economic sector of Punjab government. The situation in the administrative sector is also abysmal where only 5.5% of women are employed. The

<sup>7</sup> Mirza, J. 2002. *Between Chaddor and the Market*. Oxford:Oxford University Press, Haeri, S. 2002. *No Shame from the Sun* Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, Social Enterprise Development Programme's thematic areas women website [http://www.sedc.org.pk/portal/general/theme\\_desc.php?themeid=32](http://www.sedc.org.pk/portal/general/theme_desc.php?themeid=32) and World Bank. 2006. WDR 2006(Equity and Development). Washington: World Bank, page 514

distribution of male employees also shows a stereotypical pattern with most men working in administrative and economic sectors and only 13% working in social sector.

Although the present situation is nothing to be proud of, in at least one respect the future augers well for gender equality in public sector employment in Punjab. The sectors where women's employment is very small appear to be decreasing. Table 1.3 shows that employment in the administrative sector has decreased by around 19% as compared to last year while in the economic sector it has gone down by 13%. Conversely, employment in the social sector, where women are employed in relatively large numbers, has increased, albeit by a small percentage. However, the impact of the increase is limited by the fact that the social sector/services account for the smallest proportion of total employment of the departments covered.

**Table 1.3 Change in number of employees as compared to last year**

	Administrative sector	Economic sector	Social sector	Total
<b>Total employees (2005/6)</b>	148,956	61,007	34,852	244,815
<b>Total employees (2006/7)</b>	120,928	53,188	35,891	210,007
<b>Percentage increase/decrease</b>	-18.8%	-12.8%	3.0%	-14.2%

Till now, we have been discussing gender issues in term of sector. Sectoral analysis gives a good overview but glosses over the differences within sectors. To have a feel of issues at department level, we have chosen two departments (Education and health) for detailed analysis. Table 1.4 gives us the proportion of women in these departments

of provincial government. Education department has a significant presence of women employees, with almost one-third of employees being female. Health department on the basis of the incomplete data available, falls in between the laggards like departments in administrative and economic sectors and stars like education department in terms of women employment. Only sixteen percent of health department employees are women.

**Table 1.4 Women employment in education and health departments**

	Education department	Health department
<b>Total employees</b>	21,492	2,743
<b>Women employees as percentage of total employees</b>	30.6%	16.4%

#### **ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS BY PAY SCALE**

Before analyzing the employment patterns, it is important to first take a look at how remuneration of an employee is determined in the Punjab public sector. An All Pakistan Unified Grade System was adopted in Pakistan, at federal level and in provinces, in 1973 as part of broader civil service reform effort<sup>8</sup>. All public sector jobs were divided into twenty-two pay scales (grades), with scale one being the lowest with the least amount of emoluments and scale twenty-two being the highest with the best pay package. The analysis of employment patterns is presented in terms of two broad categories of officers and staff, as most of the departments did not give sex-disaggregated data on each pay scale. Officers in public sector are those employees who are holding jobs having pay scales of sixteen and above and staff are employees who are holding jobs having pay scales one to fifteen.

<sup>8</sup> Cheema, Ali and Asad Sayeed. 2006. 'Bureaucracy and Pro-poor change'. *PIDE Working Papers* 2006. From PIDE website  
<http://www.pide.org.pk/pdf/Working%20Paper/Working%20Paper%20Series%202006-3.pdf>

**Table 2.1 Percentage of women employees in Punjab public sector**

	Administrative Sector	Economic Sector	Social Sector	Total
Percentage of women officers in total officers employed	1.3%	2.3%	40.2%	28.8%
Percentage of women in staff in total staff employed	0.5%	0.2%	14.9%	1.7%
Percentage of women employees in total employees	0.5%	0.3%	28.4%	5.2%

Table 2.1 gives us information about the share of women officers and staff in total employees of provincial government. It shows us that women account for only 5.2% of the total employees that is just above the quota of five percent set by the government. It also tells us what percentage of these women employees are working as officers and as staff in each of the three different sectors. As we look at the consolidated figures in Table 2.2, it appears, quite surprisingly, that more than two-thirds of women are employed as officers. This goes against the popular perception that as women are less educated, they are mostly doing lower-level clerical jobs. As data for all the provincial departments are not available, this might be due to incomplete/imperfect data. However, by looking at the nature of provincial public sector employment, a partial explanation of this anomaly emerges.

**Table 2.2 Share of women in Punjab public sector**

	Of total employees of all Sectors	Of total women employees of all sectors
Officers	28.8%	71.3%
Staff	1.7%	28.7%
All employees	5.2%	100.0%

Education and health are the largest departments of the provincial government and the vast majority of women employees are employed in these departments. These departments also have the distinction of being part of a small group of departments where women are not only employed in large numbers but also have attained the highest level like university vice-chancellors, director general, health or principal of medical colleges<sup>9</sup>. Table 2.3 shows the percentage of women officers and staff employees in these departments. In the case of education department, almost half of the officers and one-sixth of the staff are women. In health department, although the women proportions of officers and staff are 13.2% and 18% respectively, it is still much better than what we have seen in administrative and economic sectors. As our sample consists of more than ninety percent of women employed in social sector, which broadly consist of these two departments, therefore, the proportion of women officers is unusually high.

**Table 2.3 Share of women employees in education and health departments**

	<b>Education department</b>	<b>Health department</b>	<b>Social sector</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Percentage of women officers in total officers employed</b>	42.6%	13.2%	40.7%	28.8%
<b>Percentage of women staff in total staff employed</b>	15%	18%	15.1%	1.7%

Another reason for the high proportion of women officers as compared to staff is the creation of district services, as discussed above, and transferring of large number of staff to these services. For example, in education, although the majority of women are employed in non-officer scales as primary and secondary school teachers, these

<sup>9</sup> From Government of Pakistan and Fatima Jinnah University websites  
[http://www.pakistan.gov.pk/ministries/ContentInfo.jsp?MinID=22&cPath=251\\_253&ContentID=1774](http://www.pakistan.gov.pk/ministries/ContentInfo.jsp?MinID=22&cPath=251_253&ContentID=1774)  
and <http://www.fjwu.edu.pk/administration/index.htm>

women have been transferred to the district governments<sup>10</sup>. In health department, according to Additional Secretary, dealing with administration, around fifty thousand provincial employees were transferred to district services during last year and most of these employees belong to lower level staff scales<sup>11</sup>.

Table 2. 4 shows the change in number of employees in all three sectors as compared to last year. In terms of two broad categories of officers and staff, it is clear that the proportion of staff as compared to officers is increasing in all three sectors. In administrative and economic sectors, the number of officers is decreasing much faster than those for the staff. The number of officers decreased by 21% in administrative sector while staff decreased by around 19%. Similarly, the number of officers decreased by 18% in economic sector while the number of staff decreased by 13%. In the case of social sector, although posts of both officers and staff are increasing, posts for staff are growing quicker. If this trend continues, how will these changes affect women in term of pay scales?

**Table 2.4 Percentage change in employees as compared to year 2005-06**

	Administrative sector	Economic sector	Social sector
<b>Percentage increase/decrease in employees</b>	-18.8%	-12.8%	1.8%
<b>Percentage increase/decrease in officers</b>	-21.2%	-17.6%	1.3%
<b>Percentage increase/decrease in staff</b>	-18.7%	-12.6%	2.3%

Overall, the affect can be considered beneficial for female employees. There will be a decrease in officers as compared to staff in administrative and economic sectors but

<sup>10</sup> As primary and secondary school teachers belong to lower staff pay scales, their transfer to districts meant that the proportion of women officers to women staff increased

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Imdad Ullah Bosal, Additional Secretary, Health Department, Government of the Punjab

this will be partly offset by an increase in officers in social sectors. This increase in officers in social sectors should result in a large addition in the number of women officers because women are well represented in these sectors.

#### **ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS BY REMUNERATION**

Remuneration is related to scale. Officers or people in higher grades get more pay and allowances than those employed at lower levels. The issue of discrimination against women in terms of unequal pay for the same level of work, which is important in the international context and outside of government, is almost non-existent as remuneration for different pay scales/ posts are decided at federal level and whosoever occupies a particular post, gets the pay for that post. Although, a lot of departments didn't give sex-disaggregated data for allowances, explicit discrimination in allowances is not possible as allowances are also decided at federal level. However, there might be an implicit gender discrimination as allowances are linked to such factors like travel, rent etc and men are more likely to travel or rent house in their own name because of being head of household, fewer domestic duties and restrictions on movement. There might also be discrimination in terms of various benefit/perks attached to various posts as these sometimes depend on the goodwill of the superior officer. Looking for such discrimination is, however, difficult and is outside the purview of this report. Further, there can also be hidden discrimination in the fact that women and men tend to congregate in different types of jobs, and the way these are categorised in terms of rank/level can sometimes be biased.

**Table 3.1 Pay and allowances of women employees as percentage of total expenditure on pay and allowances**

	All sectors*
<b>Women officers pay percentage of all officers pay</b>	32.7% (29%)
<b>Women staff's pay as percentage of all staff pay</b>	1.3% (1.7%)
<b>Women employees pay as percentage of total pay</b>	12.1% (5.2%)
<b>Women employees pay and allowances as percentage of pay &amp; allowances of all employees</b>	7.5% (5.2%)

\*The figures in parentheses give the share of women in employment in that particular category

Table 3.1 illustrates the relationship between pay and allowances earned by women and total pay and allowances of Government of the Punjab. Although women account for only 5.2% of all employees, they earn 12.1% of total pay and 7.5% of all pay and allowances. The variation between number of women employees and pay earned is due to the fact that most women employees in our sample are officers and officers earn proportionally more pay and allowances than staff. This explanation is substantiated by the above figures, which tell us that while women earn 32.7% of the total officer pay, they earn only 1.3% of the total staff pay.

**Table 3.2 Comparison of women employees share in employment and pay & allowances**

	Administrative sector	Economic sector	Social sector	Total
<b>Women employees as percentage of total employees</b>	0.5%	0.3%	28.4%	5.2%
<b>Pay of women employees as percentage of total pay</b>	0.4%	0.3%	40.0%	12.1%
<b>Pay &amp; allowances of women employees as percentage of total pay &amp; allowances</b>	0.8%	0.3%	39.3%	7.5%

The variation in pay and allowances earned by women employees may appear as discrimination but Table 3.2, which gives us sector-wise information, tells us a different story. Only in case of economic sector, the number of employees and their pay and allowances are proportional. In case of administrative sector, women are getting only 0.4% of pay but double (0.8%) of pay and allowances while in case of social sector, women are getting 40% of pay but 39.3% of pay and allowances. These statistics do not allow us to say anything categorically about discrimination in payment of allowances. On one hand, government may be discriminating in social sector as there are more women, so a larger amount of money can be saved. But on the other hand, it seems much easier to discriminate against women employees in administrative and economic sectors where they are few than in social sector where they are present in large numbers and most of them are working as officers. Therefore, the lower share of pay and allowances may not be due to discrimination but due to the lack of data from all departments.

**Table 3.3 Women employees pay as percentage of pay of all employees in different sectors**

	<b>Administrative sector</b>	<b>Economic sector</b>	<b>Social sector</b>
<b>Women officers as percentage of all officers</b>	1.3%	2.3%	40.2%
<b>Women officers pay as percentage of all officers pay</b>	1.5%	2.1%	46.2%
<b>Women staff as percentage of all staff</b>	0.5%	0.2%	14.9%
<b>Women staff pay as percentage of all staff pay</b>	0.2%	0.1%	13.7%

Table 3.3 illustrates the differences between share of women in employment \_\_as officers and staff \_\_ and their share in pay in all sectors. As allowances of officers and staff are not disaggregated in budget data, their effect on the above differences cannot be determined.

Looking at the data for women officers in Table 3.3 we see that they earn more than their share in employees implies in administrative and social sectors but less in economic sector. In case of women staff, women earn less than their share of employees in all three sectors. These differences, at least in case of women staff, may be due to discrimination but another explanation also exists. Staff positions in Punjab government, as explained above, consist of pay scales one to fifteen. Therefore, average pay of staff will be close to pay scale eight if staff are more or less equally distributed across the different pay scales. Hence, employees who belong to pay scale eight to fifteen will get more than average pay of staff and those who belong to scales one to seven will get less than average pay. This means that lower share of women staff may be due to the fact that most of them belong to scales one to seven and consequently get lower than average pay. Similarly, higher share of women in officer's pay as compared to their numbers maybe due to the fact that women officers, on average, are employed on higher grades than other officers.

Table 3.4 gives us the comparison of share of women employees in employment and remuneration in health and education department. As both these departments belong to the social sector, the pattern of earning is repeated. Officers of these departments earn more than their numbers. However, in case of staff, while women in education department earn almost what their numbers suggest, health department women staff

has a very small share in total pay. As explained above, this may be due to discrimination against women or due to the employment of most of the women staff in lower pay scales.

**Table 3.4 Comparison of women share in employment and remuneration in education and health department**

	Education department	Health department
<b>Percentage of women officers in total officers employed</b>	42.6%	13.2%
<b>Women officers pay as percentage of all officers pay</b>	46.7%	18.6%
<b>Percentage of women in staff in total staff employed</b>	15%	18%
<b>Women staff's pay as percentage of all staff pay</b>	14.7%	2.7%

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An increase in women's employment is not only important for gender equality and equity but is also critical for economic growth. A World Economic Forum study last year found a strong correlation between GDP per head and gender equality, which included economic participation as one of its components. The Economist weekly has called women the most powerful engine of global growth and argues that women have been crucial to the growth of East Asian economies<sup>12</sup>. If Punjab is to achieve annual growth of around eight percent in its GDP as desired in the Chief Minister's Punjab Vision 2020<sup>13</sup>, employment of women, both in public and private sectors, has to be given increased importance.

<sup>12</sup> The Economist. 2006. 'A guide to womenomics'. London. 12<sup>th</sup> April

<sup>13</sup> 'Punjab's Vision 2020' from Punjab Resource Management Programme website <http://www.punjab-prmp.gov.pk/Punjab%20Vision%202020.pdf>

The data analysis shows that the public sector of Punjab clearly has to do more if Punjab is to achieve a high growth trajectory. The level of employment of women in the public sector of Punjab ranges from inadequate to abysmal. Women account for around five percent of total employees of the government of the Punjab. In social sector, including health and education departments, the career prospects of women are improving but in administrative and economic sectors, the situation is depressing. Women are an under-utilized resource even after considering the small pool of educated women available.

Some of this dismal state of affairs is no doubt due to prejudices and stereotypes but do government employment policies also contribute to it? The Government of the Punjab has no clear employment policy. Even at the national level, no proper employment policy exists for the public sector. There are a number of rules and regulation existing in various different documents that relate to employment issues. Almost all of them are either gender blind or specifically forbid discrimination on the basis of gender. The Constitution of Pakistan clearly says in Article 27 that there will be no discrimination on the basis of sex in appointment to the government of Pakistan. In other documents like Civil Services Act, 1973, Rules of Business and Establishment Code, explicit preference for male applicants for a job is non-existent<sup>14</sup> except for some defence-related jobs or police and even here the taboos are being broken. For example, recently women were inducted as pilots in Pakistan Air Force, a girl cadet won the sword of honour and currently two women are working as superintendents of police in Punjab<sup>15</sup>. However, Government of Pakistan has recognized the need of affirmative action. A five percent quota has been fixed for

<sup>14</sup> Preliminary draft of CEDAW report. Downloaded from [http://www.pakistan.gov.pk/divisions/ContentInfo.jsp?DivID=20&cPath=185\\_191&ContentID=2340](http://www.pakistan.gov.pk/divisions/ContentInfo.jsp?DivID=20&cPath=185_191&ContentID=2340)

<sup>15</sup> Punjab police website <http://www.punjabpolice.gov.pk/page.asp?id=458>

women in recruitment for federal government jobs in the past and recently for Central Superior Services this quota was raised to ten percent<sup>16</sup>. Coming back to Punjab province, budgeting for employment related expenses is gender-blind. The recruitment of public servants is also gender-blind except for the police department. Examples of both gender blindness and discrimination are present in the currently posted advertisements on the website of Punjab public service commission (PPSC), the main recruiting body of the Government of the Punjab. While the posts are open for recruitment in provincial management service and for civil judges, they are restricted to men in the case of legal inspectors to be inducted in Punjab police in the Punjab province.

Gender-blind policies, however, contribute to discrimination of women as has been proven in different contexts, societies and countries as these policies have different impact on women and men. The level of women's employment in the Punjab public sector again shows the ineffectiveness of gender-blind policies. The present gender imbalance can be reduced provided there is gender sensitivity in policies, budgets and decision-makers. Currently, although gender sensitivity has been introduced in many provincial policies (like health, education etc), employment policy is still devoid of any measure to decrease the gender gap. The Medium Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF) also includes many gender-specific policies but in the context of increasing/facilitating women employment only one policy intervention can be mentioned (Establishment of day care centres for working women) and it is also not limited to the public sector. There are no goals or targets to achieve in case of

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<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Women Development website  
<http://www.pakistan.gov.pk/ministries/index.jsp?MinID=17&cPath=182> and preliminary draft of CEDAW report

women's employment in public sector so it should not be asurprise that there are no explicit budgetary provisions for it.

Perhaps, the decision makers in Punjab would argue that the public sector is downsizing and they are trying to change the mindset where everybody is looking for a government job. So, although it is important to have gender equality in the public sector, it cannot solve the bigger issue of women's unemployment. Punjab public sector can only employ a small portion of the unemployed women and this is corroborated by the 2001/02 Labour Force Survey which indicates that only 18.3% of urban and 8.5% of rural women are employed by the government<sup>17</sup>. It is the private sector which is expanding, and most of the new jobs are in that sector so efforts should be made to increase the share of women in private sector. However, except for establishment of day care centres, we do not see any efforts in that direction either.

To decrease the gender gap, it is recommended that the Government of Punjab take the following initiatives. One of the most important things Government of Punjab can do is to facilitate the transition of pregnant women back into the job. Increase of maternity benefits, day care facilities and easy extension of leave can help. Transport facilities for women, at least in big cities, will also allow many women to decide to apply for government jobs. Very few women in our society dare to work outside their home cities due to the absence of secure accommodation. Working women's hostels in major cities of Punjab province can help increase women's employment in the public sector. In some of the professions, women have consistently performed better than men. One such professional role is that of primary schools teachers. In UK,

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<sup>17</sup> Federal Bureau of Statistics. 2002. Labour Force Survey 2001-2002. Islamabad

eighty five percent of all the primary school teachers are female<sup>18</sup>. Moreover, female primary teachers are better able to attract girls to schools. If the Government of the Punjab can give incentives to female teachers through its district governments, not only the current public sector employment in districts will improve but also the quantity of educated women will increase, thereby expanding the pool of women who can be later employed in provincial public sector.

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<sup>18</sup> United Kingdom's national literacy trust website  
<http://www.nationalliteracytrust.org.uk/Research/boysresearch.html>