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GE4DE news

Promoting Gender Equality for Decent Employment
Volume # 2, March 2011

RESEARCH, DISCLOSURE
DEVELOPMENT

EYE OPENERS
FROM THE FIELD

تحقیق، افشا کے راز، ترقی

حیرت زدہ کر دینے والے تجربات



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The image "Visible Invisible " on the cover is taken by Khalil Shah with NIKON D90, using an aperture of 2.97 and a focal length of 105 mm. Khalil Shah came 2nd place in the ILO Photography Competition on Gender Equality and Decent Work 2010, focusing on the achievements and challenges of women and men, boys and girls in the world of work.

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NOTE FROM THE TEAM

This edition of the newsletter comes to you in the wake of Pakistan Women's Day in February and International Women's Day in March, and the host of news features, documentaries and songs we have seen about women bearing the brunt of domestic violence, sexual harassment, 'honour' crimes, discrimination at work and general secondariness in life.

But amidst this bleakness we have also seen extraordinary stories of courage, inspiration and survival; stories of women who have challenged social expectations and men who have supported them. GE4DE has talked to several such women; apparently ordinary women but who through perseverance, determination and self-belief have achieved extraordinary success. The stories of these remarkable women are a testament to the reality of gender equality – the notion that women can perform equal to men, and deserve the same opportunities, rewards and recognition.

Various projects and research studies from Pakistan also prove that women are not and cannot be confined to the home and hearth, no matter how contrary to our expectations and preconceptions it may be. We have found women in the construction sector, building roads and designing them; in law enforcement, behind the desk and at the frontline; in the transport sector, as drivers and car rental business owners; in all sectors, women working side by side with men. Their stories prove that the crux of gender equality is economic empowerment for women.

Economic empowerment for women has long been used as a strategy for social empowerment and gender equality by development organisations all around the world. Economic empowerment through skills development is also a central feature of GE4DE as a route to increase and enhance women's employment and, in turn, their status within the community and household.

Even though training may start off as simply a practical gender need – helping women to be better at the work they do without challenging social relations – as women find employment and economic independence, they will negotiate and reconstruct the power relations between women and men. GE4DE and other organisations promoting women's employment therefore, must also be mindful of the need to help women meet these strategic gender needs. We have to start with the family, by involving men and showing them that caring for children and household work is a 'family' responsibility, not a woman's alone, and valuing reproductive work not for its economic value necessarily, but for its social worth. We have to work with the community to facilitate the development of support structures such as women's hostels, childcare facilities for parents (not only mothers), safe and comfortable transport. We have to work with high level decision makers to ignite the debate on policy change, revising school hours, reforming technical and vocational education and training, and gender mainstreaming in policies and projects. And perhaps most importantly we have to work with women and men in general, to remind them that gender equality is not a 'foreign' concept. Gender equality is enshrined in Pakistan's Constitution; Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam, stressed that progress was not possible "without women participating side by side with men". In short, gender equality is not something western or alien, but something fundamental to the very genesis of our country.

We want to listen to what you have to say...

Contribute to our next Newsletter edition on Face book; ge4de.org@gmail.com

Research Disclosure Development

by Syed Hasan Rizvi



As promised in our last edition, this section presents findings of nation wide situation analysis, or more popularly the research for our readers. During the two months of Oct and Dec 2010, team of 35 researchers, including 18 women, were engaged in a unique partnership model spread over 3 researches and 5 local organizations. This fostered exchange of expertise and encouraged indigenous knowledge as evident by end evaluation. The research looked at gender and employment in two sectors; Textiles and Hospitality and Coastal and Riverine Communities.

Clothing & Home Textiles	Hospitality	Coastal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personality traits, marital status and low skills/ education create employer-biases towards women workers. Skill shortages reported in woven cloth, knitted cloth and home textiles sub-sectors GEN-PROM and AHAN (among others) identified as best practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies on safety, sexual harassment and maternity leave exist and awareness amongst employees high. Women concentrated in jobs requiring client interaction; front office, sales and recruitment was most challenging in banquet, room service and Food & Beverages. COTHM and LABARD (among others) identified as best practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shrimp/fish cleaning is the main livelihood for 25% women. Poor and unhygienic working conditions in fisheries; women/men reporting harassment. Other than traditional fish processing skills, opportunities exist in alternative energy, niche agriculture & man-grooves /shrimp farming. Pakistan Wetland's Programme (among others) identified as best practice.

The research reports formed the basis for three regional stakeholder consultations held in December 2010 and January 2011. The regional consultation for Sindh and Baluchistan was held in Karachi. Punjab's consultation was held in Lahore and Stakeholders from ICT, Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa were invited to a consultation held in Islamabad.

Participants profile of the Stakeholder Consultations by Group and Sex

Region Stakeholder Group	Punjab	Sindh and Baluchistan	KPK, GB and ICT	Individual meetings	Total
Government	8	18	20	10	46
Employers	22	22	5	10	49
Workers	8	11	2	10	21
Media	6	12	10	5	28
Civil Society	41	32	33	13	106
Academia	5	9	4	10	18
Total	90	104	74	58	326
Women	22	33	22	10	77
Men	68	71	52	48	191
Total	90	104	74	58	326



Govt representatives, employers workers, NGOs academia & sector specialists attended all consultants.

The consultations in Karachi were organised as three concurrent sessions on textiles, services and coastal and riverine communities; in Lahore there were two concurrent sessions on textiles and services, and in Islamabad the consultation looked at each of three areas together. Each consultation was designed to present 'what we know' and elicit 'what you know'.

The group work aimed at generating ideas about possible districts; target groups; skills training program and capacity building initiatives. The advantage of selecting a mixed group was to encourage participants considering possible partnerships for implementation of proposed activities. They were very useful in identifying pilot project ideas, implementing partners, best practices and strengthening the situation analyses.



A brave woman from Chitral

by Rabia Razzaque

It's not easy being a woman and it becomes hard if you are not born in a privileged background and even harder if you are working in the hospitality business. It's like a muddy construction site filled with disrespectful hard hats. Then there's the catalogue of skewed gender-related assumptions—everyone knows women are related with pink, frilly, candy-boxes, softness and expected to behave in that way. It's all enough to make a girl go home and play with her doll.

Given the potholes, the inroads women have made in recent years in the male-weighted hospitality industry are all the more impressive. Women now control real estate, they are in construction business and as designers they influence not just one another but the entire home furnishings business. And women designed hotel interiors are recognized as some of the world's most innovative.

Rubina Qadeem Khan is a career oriented woman who wants to bring change and an ambassador of the women in hospitality business. Rubina shared her dream and her struggles with us...

I was free after my first year exams. My sister was working in a hotel and she told me to join hospitality business like her. It seemed like one roof with all the opportunities. I went with her and the moment I crossed the kitchen I just ceased there realizing my true calling. Later, I graduated and got a diploma in hospitality and tourism Management.

When I started working in the Kitchen at the hotel, I didn't get any support and appreciation other than from my father. Other family members had concerns that I wouldn't be able to give time to my studies and they didn't want that. I promised my family that if I failed I will resign. My mother was not happy with my decision at all. She did not consider my job good for me. She used to cry when I get home with burned and wound hands but my father had a different approach, he was relaxed and used to say "hey don't worry she must have learnt something new today". But my mother used to shrug in a big denial that I could prove myself.

Since childhood we had seen our father working hard for us. He worked in the government and would run a small food court as a part time job. I was eleven when I used to help him in the kitchen. I remember my early growing days in Chitral, my birth place. The highest peaks of the Hindu Kush make up Chitral district in Pakistan's north-westerly corner. The area is characterized by its beauty, extreme conditions and isolation. We used to work in the brunt

of cold weather but when I used to look at my father, I would forget the cruel cold. That tough training with my father made me so determined that today I am a scholar of Culinary Arts at a University in United States.

We lived in a small village strung along the valleys where life and economy was based on subsistence farming. The

“As a child, I wanted to become an artist. I wanted to study fine arts. Never knew that I would do my art on plates rather than on canvas”

Rubina Qadeem Khan,
chef de partie at Islamabad
Marriott hotel.

“Experience is the key answer for success in this area. Work every department, intern at hotels, network at hotel/hospitality events - get involved in our hospitality culture and the world will be your oyster!”

Rubina Qadeem Khan, chef de partie at Islamabad Marriott hotel.

idea of going out of my small village was novel and thrilling. But since father used to go to another city to work, it was easy to ask him to take me along. Once I stepped out, my success was evident.

I was stubborn and naughty as a kid and got punished a lot, but never hurt anyone. I was very adventurous. Hiking, climbing and camping was my passion. I am also very determined and once I take a decision I don't step back. I wanted to study in hospitality industry. When I came to know about COTHM, I applied for a student loan from my community. I went to the college dean and showed him my educational background. And I managed to get scholarship from the college. At that time I could only afford to have one meal in a day and few hours to rest with my full time study and full time job. I faced all the hardships but retreat was not written for me. I use to tell myself that this time is not going to stay for long and it didn't. When USEFP announced scholarships in 2007, I was working in Lahore and had completed my certification. I applied for scholarship. Only 11 people were selected out of hundreds of applicants. And I availed it on primary basis. I went to States for furthering my education and was enrolled as president honored list. Now when someone asks my mother about my work she proudly says my daughter is a chef and it makes me smile.

My work demands mental and physical strength. It's not about cooking for a small family. I am talking about feeding thousand people every day and if you are not strong enough to work then you won't stay on your job for long. It's a place where ratio of male staff is a way more than female and when it comes to work you would find two types of people, few of them will appreciate your work, they will help, guide & reward.

I have learnt that hard work, loyalty and sincerity pay off. If you want to become something then decide once, and stick to it. Work hard and leave the results to God. He will make things happen.

It's true that not many people recognize the efforts and struggle of women in the world of work and working in hotels is specially



“ it is an industry where we are outnumbered. I think it has been difficult at times during my career dealing with some very big egos and getting respect. I do feel I have worked with some wonderful people and built very sound and rewarding working relationships with these individuals. I prefer to reflect more on the positive experiences that I have had.”

Rubina Qadeem Khan, chef de partie at Islamabad Marriott hotel

frowned upon but I believe that with wider education spread, more and more people will understand the importance of woman in this industry.

When I was at junior level, I was supposed to follow and do what was assigned. I was the only girl in food production area and worked with all male staff. I didn't

know how to work in a male dominated crowd. So I used to be very quiet and observant. Everyone was good to me. But then I got senior position and things started changing. My seniors showed there high expectation from me. They used to counsel me. They vested their trust in me and supported me a lot. But on the other hand there were other few who became a hurdle but I think it's very natural that you come across such people who don't always appreciate. One should learn how to tackle with them and focus on the job.

I work in hospitality industry which is all about interacting with people from diverse origins, gender and faith. And it demands from me acceptability to change and diversity.

Being a chef de partie, I work in continental kitchen where food for buffet and parties get prepared. I teach HACCP (sanitation and safety) class to my colleagues. I do outside caterings as well. And office work related to kitchen when required.

I would say it is a challenge for young women to be taken seriously. Women need to project a great deal more confidence than their equal male counterpart to be noticed as an authority. Once her head is held high and her eye contact is direct, there is no stopping a woman in our great hospitality industry because we are naturally care takers and warm humans. Hospitality is about relationships and women naturals in this area!

I think media can play a positive role in encouraging women to pursue professions other than the conventional jobs such as teaching, medicine, or customer services where women have a symbolic presence only. Hospitality industry is a multibillion dollar industry that has a potential to absorb many female workers in different departments such as housekeeping, beauty salon, massage centers, guest relation, kitchen etc. If this opportunity is projected in the right light in the media then this can attract many interested women to join the hospitality industry. It is important to encourage women to strengthen their economic role by working and contributing to



development activities.

Few years ago I use to earn to get my degree. Today I am not only supporting my family and maintaining a lifestyle but I am also saving money for a sustainable livelihood.

For me, there is still a long way ahead. It's important to take decisions for your own self, think what you really want to do- look at its pros and cons don't let society to decide for you. Yes, appreciate people advices show concern but at the end of the day it's your life so you should be the one to take the decision. I am fortunate that my parents always preferred their children education and career over social pressures and wrong taboos. And this has really helped me to concentrate and focus on my profession. I wish every girl is given that chance.

“Believing in myself...YES! Success comes from belief. If you don't believe your instincts you would never be determined. I read it somewhere “believe in your heart, it belongs to God. It never lies”. Nothing is impossible once you start believing in it.”

Rubina Qadeem Khan, chef de partie at Islamabad Marriott hotel.

Pathways and Purse Strings

by Munawar Sultana

Pathways and Purse Strings is a joint CIDA- MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) intervention in Pakistan that focuses on increasing the income of homebound women living in marginalized and impoverished areas. P&P was launched in 2008 and since then it has worked for the economic empowerment of disadvantaged communities and households. P&P is working with a unique approach of value chain development involving four key facilitating partners (KFPs) in four viable value chains.

1. Embellished Fabric
2. Bangles
3. Fresh Milk
4. Seedlings



MEDA shared its good practices at the CIDA Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) partnership forum where all CIDA implementing partners including ILO GE4DE project exchanged information on systems, process and products that have had impact on the lives of disadvantaged poor men and women in the world of work. MEDA shared that the P&P builds on the capacity of selected partners in innovative pro-poor business oriented development approaches to achieve scale and sustainability of market led development initiatives.

MEDA believes that women's economic empowerment in Pakistan requires a concerted and deliberate effort that goes beyond establishing micro enterprises or providing employment opportunities. Access to business and skills training, market exposure,

technology transfer, availability of credit, awareness of rights, knowledge of pricing, negotiation skills, are a few of the challenges faced by women. Once these barriers have been overcome, women will not only earn increased incomes but they will also be able to assume a more active role in the decision-making for their families and their communities.

MEDA Pakistan has established unique partnerships with private companies tapping

80%
improvement
in women
producers'
access to
market and
business
development
services,
through sales
agents.

WEE impresses for an increased need for greater synergy; cooperation; sharing of resources and information; and coordination amongst partners



corporate social responsibility and building on their community development strategies. Haleeb Foods Ltd. in Dairy sub-sector is one of these private partners. Development partners include Kaarvan Crafts in Embellished Garments sub-sector, Pakistan Social Welfare Society (PSWS) in Bangles sub-sector and Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) in Seedling sub-sector along-with ECDI as a capacity building lead partner.

The P&P project attempts to facilitate isolated rural women with sustainable market linkages, product information, quality control, skills development, improved input supplies and other support that will enable them to access growing and dynamic markets with the products demanded by contemporary consumers.

Enabling Smallholder Prosperity

Household dairy is one of the largest fresh milk producing sources in Pakistan and is of great importance for milk processors. The role of women involved in the fresh milk production and collection is evident from the fact that 6 million women are working in dairy sector directly. MEDA and Haleeb Foods Ltd partnered to seek ways and approaches to link women farmers with potential markets and business development services. During the initial project life, extensive efforts and resources were spent on capacity building of the Value Chain project team on evolving Value Chain concepts and approaches in development sector. Village level women farmer groups were bridged with a lead women farmer as Village Milk-collection Center Agent (VMCA). These VMCA's were trained on technical and entrepreneurial competencies.

In dairy sub-sector, the distributed roles and responsibilities are in a way that women perform basic livestock management activities; animal feeding, milking and routine care, whereas, men control marketing and financial transactions. With the introduction of VMCA model, these women are having improved control of financial transactions. This has also enabled them to interact with downstream value chain actors, share experiences and to have an improved market understanding. Project highly discouraged dependencies throughout the interventions with limited provision of smart subsidies to avoid market distortions.

Realizing the financial needs within sub sector, several Microfinance Institutions introduced and presented their products. Due to limited flexibility in MF products, high interest rates, process complications and collaterals, women farmer's financial needs were not met. As alternate, local resources were mobilized, MEDA ion and de-worming of the animals. It is also interesting to know that the idea of community based saving group is highly accepted and in a matter of less than six month, CBSGs mushroomed to 12 from initial pilot of 3.

Communication Transportation

70% or more
households own
televisions,
mobile phones
and motor cycles

Gender Units: a Step towards ---- Strengthening Gender Expertise of Ministry and Departments of Labour

by Sajila Sohail Khan

Pakistan is a signatory to various international commitments including Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declaration. The government has also prepared a National Plan of Action (NPA) and a National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women. Additionally, the government has ratified International Labour Convention 100 and 111 on discrimination based on gender, despite these national and international commitments the gender related gaps have not decreased substantially. These gaps have their implications for women in the world of work and for the overall economy.

To fulfill national and international commitments, gender perspective is to be mainstreamed in government structures and systems. By strengthening the expertise of the Ministry and Provincial Departments of Labour (MoL and DoL), the project will enable the Government to address gender gaps through labour law reforms, administrative/institutional reforms, reforms in public sector employment and other policy and fiscal reforms focusing on implications of existing laws for both men and women.

As a first step towards gender mainstreaming, the GE4DE project seeks Government's will to embed gendered policies and programs. To make this possible, the MoL has taken up the establishment of gender units. It is necessary that these gender units are operationalized and sustained for positive policy changes and affirmative action. The second step is designation of officials appointed as Gender focal persons to ensure that a dedicated team can develop programmes, projects and budgets that are gender sensitive and that gender dimensions of labour and their concerns are adequately addressed. Five gender focal persons are nominated from Baluchistan, KPK, Punjab, Sindh and the Federal Ministry, and four of them underwent training in Oct, 2010 on gender mainstreaming at the ILO International Training Centre in Italy.

The government has ensured its commitment by agreeing to mainstream the costs of the gender units in their regular budgets and/or making positions created under the project, permanent staff posts.

Proposed support ILO will provide to the government:

- (i) Training programs on rights of working women and related International labour standards so that they can effectively identify gender related issues and recommend solutions
- (ii) Equipment to Units, such as computer and printer for operational purposes;
- (iii) Coordination and monitoring frameworks to assess effectiveness
- (iv) Local and/or international experts

Till date a number of meetings have been held with Ministry and Provincial Labour departments, during which the operationalization of Gender unit, their modus operandi and work plans were discussed.

A support team consisting of women officials will also be appointed with the GFP. The support team will be from the Ministry's/Department's regular positions. The gender units will serve as a source of expert advice, guidance and assistance in developing its policies, work programmes and projects. It will also keep the ILO GE4DE team up to date on progress made on gender mainstreaming in their respective provinces. The MoL and DoL have designed a job description for the GFPs and support staff. They following will perform the following roles:

- Mainstreaming of Gender in programmes, projects and budgets
- Addressing gender dimension of employment
- Assessing impact of projects and programmes through a gender lens

- Networking with other bodies and frameworks on decent work vis-à-vis gender equality at workplace
- Managing knowledge and media for dissemination of information related to gender issues and best practices
- Building a culture of gender sensitivity in the department, by creating women friendly and decent work environment

While the change process is far from completion, some achievements have been realized. The experience will be rich in insights into and lessons on the nature of organizational change required in strengthening both gender equality and gender equity.

Upcoming...

In an upcoming meeting, the Terms of Reference and action plan for the gender units will be endorsed.

Ngender -----Bridging the Knowledge gap

Under the project an online forum named NGender is formed for the gender focal persons; a unique platform where all the provincial gender focal persons share information, experiences, best practices and success stories on gender equal policies, practices and programmes. The use of ICT is rare in the government, specially to share information and exchange ideas; using this online discussion forum, GFPs rapidly share, collaborate and work in a team environment to contribute to the mandate of the Gender Units that falls under the ambit of provincial and national priorities.



Media to PUSH Women Empowerment

by Rabia Razzaque



Safia wants the new Play Station she saw in the TV advertisement the other day. Bilal read about an art show and now he wants to take up art classes and dear aunty Lubna wants to vote for the new political party who presented its manifesto in the current affairs talk show she watches every day after her favorite soap!

Undoubtedly, the role of media as an informer and influencer is immense. It contributes to the freedom of expression which underpins sustainable development and good governance. But can its role go beyond reporting news and events? Can the media also be an actor in social development? Can we use its power of persuasion to influence the development process?



These were questions were put to test through a partnership with media where they become active agents of social change. GE4DE and Television Media Network collaborated to develop a plan to orient a group of reporters to gender sensitive interviewing and use the interviews in various forms to raise awareness and support to gender equality and the world of work.

It is to be remembered that media is a reflection of society, views, opinions, fears, strengths and media itself is created by elements and people who are products of the same society. The idea of involving media as development partners is to involve media at different levels; those in the field,

policy makers who decide the news content, those who give a face to the news, those who transcribe news for reporting in radio and other platforms. Only by doing so gender sensitive reporting and media coverage is ensued.

WOMEN OF COURAGE- is a product of one such unique tool that has been developed in collaboration with media employers, producers, editors, reporters, cameramen, enthusiast photographers and junior radio producers. A dedicated team came together to discuss and brainstorm on how best can the successes of regular, unprivileged ordinary women be projected and spread to a wider audience.

A list of names was identified, information gathered- cases from literally all provinces; Gilgit, KPK, Punjab, Sindh, ICT, Baluchistan were compiled and ten most exciting profiles were selected. Coming from humble backgrounds these women have only challenged stereotypes and put a bold face to

hurdles and said NO to obstacles to attain economic empowerment for their wellbeing and their family's prosperity. These were women belonging to diverse backgrounds who have surpassed all boundaries, be it gender, culture, ethnicity, age, or language and have demonstrated the steps, mindset, and tools, but most importantly, their belief in themselves, which helped them achieve their goals and find balance and harmony in their lives. There were women from a diverse range of sectors, more traditional ones such as textiles and teaching, and unconventional ones such as construction and transport; women from the performing arts and law enforcement who proved that their physical strength was no less than any man's and from The team deliberated on the interviewing ideas, the cameramen exchanged their shooting techniques, and the radio producer added her experience of interacting with female respondents particularly their fears and apprehensions. A round of field interviews was initiated in late January, 2011, everyone was excited. These interviews produced as a result will be used as print features in newspapers, journals, magazines and other publications while they will be aired on TV and Radio. Social media is another tool that is spreading deep and fast reaching out to global partners, seeking their expert views and influencing the news followers. An excerpt of the documentary was launched at the 12th Feb, Pakistan Women's Day.



Presenting these interviews at the Pakistan Women's Day would show us a general response of how women, men, children, elderly and the stakeholders at state level; government, employers, workers, academia, donors and the rest feel about the successes of these women, I am particularly looking forward to people's perception changing after they watch the amazing circus performers

Fatima Ali, Reporter, Express News leading the Punjab team.

This effort does not end here, this is going to create a ripple effect, people will start thinking about the issues of women and men; the social values that should enable women and men to work together towards a greater economic goal. These people will be you and me and many others like us who want to see a fair and equal tomorrow.

For featured interviews follow Express Tribune and quarterly editions of GE4DE News that will take you into the lives of these amazing women. We will be including one interview in each of our editions. In this edition, you will learn about how a woman from the valley of Chitral got caught up in tides but sailed her way to success, meet your hero Rubina Qadeem Khan!

“Shaheen and Naheed, two acrobats from the Lucky Irani Circus performed spectacularly and they showed all of us in the audience that it is their strong will and ability that has brought them to this pedestal”

A housewife in the audience

The Pride of Nation

by Rabia Razzaque



The purpose of commemorating events that hold historic importance and significance for development of mankind is to drive and inspire and engage masses to join in a cause.

GE4DE's event to mark Pakistan Women's Day was dedicated to the celebration of women. Women are not always passive victims, demanding sympathy, but are active protagonists of social change. These women are forging new directions for themselves, working, contributing as equals to their families prosperity, and their

"Women in Pakistan do not only require a favorable working environment but also need equal access to opportunities,"

ILO's Officer in-charge Margaret Reade Rounds

"I have always maintained that no nation can ever be worthy of its existence that cannot take its women along with the men. No struggle can ever succeed without women participating side by side with men. There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a great competition and rivalry between the two. There is a third power stronger than both, that of the women."

Quaid-e-Azam, at Islamia College for women, 1940.

Unfortunately, women are often prevented from realizing this power because of a mix of social and political constraints. Though it is recognized that women's empowerment is central to social and economic development, this is a goal that perhaps meets the greatest number of obstacles. Every year, International Women's Day focuses the world's attention to these obstacles, the discrimination and injustice.

Some two decades ago, Pakistan began celebrating its own National Women's Day on February 12th, to recognize the efforts and struggle of women to end discrimination in political, legal, economic and social spheres.



stories have the power to inspire and motivate other girls and women, and importantly men and boys. Through film and photos, through songs and performances, GE4DE's celebration of National Women's Day demonstrated the power and potential of women in the world of work, and sought to celebrate women as economic participants and agents of change through small business efforts, in leadership positions, engaging in community organization work, and striving for financial independence for their families.

The photography exhibition depicted a range of themes were depicted; vulnerable employment in the informal economy, women's uncounted contribution to productive agricultural work, fair wage for work and fair price for product, women's reproductive work, opportunities to set up and sustain small businesses, challenged working conditions, women in unconventional professions, a chance to realise dreams. Mehrang, the Band performed Ali Azmat's motivational song, Jazbe Junoon, and Amna Javed, working at Warid, but aspiring to break into the music industry, shared her singing talent and determination to break into this difficult industry. A poem, written and put to music touched the audience with its sensitive rendering of the hopes and aspirations of a woman, though it was written and sung by a young schoolboy, Mubashir Ehsan.



GE4DE's aspiration is to get women and men to work together for gender equality in the world of work and create the circumstances so that Women's Days every year can become the cause for celebration they should be.

A Big Thank you ...

To all the contributors and friends of the project, who are passionate about the cause of gender equality and see its vitality for a prosperous, just and economically strong Pakistan.

Yasir Nisar (photographer for not charging us any commercial fee for his technical inputs to the ILO photo exhibition under the project), Mehrang the Band (for their hard work and efforts in making Pakistan Women's Day a celebratory occasion), Amna Javed (professional singer for empowering women with her singing), Samar Minallah (for her presence at the National women's day), Jamal Shah (for his ownership of the cause), Lucky Irani Circus (for coming all the way from Alipur to perform and amaze audience with their stunt), Television media network and field team (for dedicating a team of reporters and cameramen to make a documentary and for waiving off the broadcasting and printing fee); Javed Iqbal, Inspector General Punjab Police (for identifying women in elite police force for interviews), Hussain Iqbal (TV anchor), Ashir Nazir and Haroon Yusuf (NGO workers) and Saad Gillani (ILO), Ahmed Shafique (COTHM), Tasneem Ahmar (UKS) [all of them to find us women achievers]

Dil tu mera bhe hai ...

Dil tu mera bhe hai ...

Dil tu mera bhe hai aur tera bhe
Jan tu mujhe mein bhee hai aur tujhe mein bhee
Kam jo tu karay pechay mein bhe naheen
Zindagii ki har dord mein sang teray chalii

Chand per gaya tu
nazrien meri bhee hain waheen takii

Phir bhee rog tujhe ko hai kia
Mein hun ghar kay liyay baniii
Sari zindagii mein ghar kay kaam karti rahee
Kia sila diya mujhe ko phoote koree bhee na dee
Ghar say jo nikali tu dar hai tujhay, bun na jaun mein
Is duniya mein koi roshan kali
Kia kasur hai mera jo mujhe char derwarii hai mili
Han mein janti hun mein hun aurat banii
Bata ?
Kia hath meray naheen
Bata ?
Kia ahkein naheen
Bata?
Kia yeh zindagii merii naheen



"When I saw the announcement of GEDE photo competition on FACEBOOK, I thought to myself, this theme should be captured in a song, this is when I composed the lyrics",

Mubashir Ehsan, an O levels Student at
Khaliduniya

Gender equality in Media

by Frida Khan



Now there are some that might see the title and silently groan, 'oh no, they're going to ask us to increase the number of stories we run about women's issues. If we have five stories about men, there should be five about women as well.' Well no, that's not what we want. All we are hoping to do is to get more and more people in the media to look at news with a gender lens. To look at the news and ask yourself, are women, men, girls and boys affected differently by this event? Is this differential impact something that needs highlighting? For instance, news items on minimum wage do highlight the fact that minimum wage legislation is often flouted. But from a gender perspective, asking the question, what is the impact on women, men, girls and boys, will tell you that not only do women and men often get paid below minimum wage, but women

are paid far less than men, sometimes 70% less than men. So the result of contravention of the country's commitment to minimum wage, equal remuneration and non-discrimination is bad for everyone, but even worse for women.

And then there's often the feeling that women's issues in the world of work are simply not newsworthy enough. Whoever makes the news deserves the spotlight. True to some extent, but that sometimes springs from the fact that we don't always know where to look for the women. Business pages often talk about the seafood sector as an important economic sector and what needs to be done to improve it. Reports often centre on the quality of fishing boats, the length of time fishermen are at sea and how that affects the freshness of the catch. But I have not seen any reports that look at the work women do in sorting the catch, cleaning the fish and shrimp, separating the fish that is going to be packaged and sold to us, and the rejects that are going to go into chicken feed. Despite our commitments to decent work, these women work in the filthiest conditions, anyone from Karachi will now how bad the smell is when a fish truck merely passes by, that's what they endure for hours on end. They often have their children with them and they squat for hours in dirty water. So in the world of work, if you look for women, you will find them. Everywhere.

Again, you might agree. But I wouldn't be surprised if someone said that okay, all this is fine, but there are so few women in the workforce that these issues only affect a small number of women so are not really of general interest. This is a common misconception, and a misconception that is unfortunately backed by labour force statistics. Why I say this is a misconception is because a lot of work that women do, that contributes to economic production, is simply not captured in statistics. That is because when women and men are asked to report on work, activities like home-based



work is often conflated with housework that women are already doing. So if a factory outsources stitching work to a man, and he gets his wife to do it, it is not reported as her productive economic activity. Work like tending to livestock is taken as part of women's reproductive work, caring for children and caring for cows, same thing. Therefore this work remains uncounted and invisible in national statistics. During data collection for a survey on labour force participation a man was asked if his wife worked. 'No', he said straight away. 'If your wife were to die', he was asked, 'would you have to employ someone?' He thought about it and after a while replied, 'yes, I would have to employ two or three people actually.'

These stereotypes we have about women and men and work are part of our psyche, part of our socialization process. And all of us are a product of this process; process that tells us that men carry briefcases, women carry babies. Men bring in the money and therefore yield the power and this is the natural order of things.

An interviewer interviewing Pakistan's Women's cricket team captain asked if she wore nail polish and eye shadow. This is why the same interviewer asked a woman sprinter whether she knew how to cook. Would a man have been asked if he had chest hair? Would a man have been asked if he knew how to change a car tyre?

An article written about the height of summer, talks about the unrelenting heat and humidity, the reporter gives a vivid account of the effect of the heat on the body - "Sweat is streaming down from head to toe... pouring out of each and every pore in the body (it) leaves one immensely exhausted, agitated and short-tampered" (sic) - before concluding that "Men suffer the most as they have to go out every day to earn livelihood."

And there it is again, the notion, slipped in seemingly innocuously, that it is men alone who go out to work to provide for the women who sit comfortably at home. Again, it wouldn't be so objectionable if that was the



truth. What about the women who also go out to work every day, who often have to walk long distances in the heat because it is unacceptable for them to ride bikes and motorbikes, or can't take public transport? What about women who are collecting water, firewood, working in the fields? Aren't they contributing to their families' livelihoods? Aren't they affected by the weather just as much as men?

These may seem small things but they're not. Gender stereotypes are pernicious. Gender stereotypes enter our consciousness in small and subtle ways. Like the microscopic viruses hidden in the air we breathe, they quietly enter our minds, often unnoticed, sometimes disguised. And like viruses, they settle in our bodies, strengthen and solidify, until they have a shape, a form, a manifested reality. Just like viruses become diseases, ideas become ideologies, words become worldviews.

And unless we resolve these ingrained issues now, these viruses will become chronic diseases that will become incurable. So the first step to address this problem would be the assessment of the content and portrayal of women by media that remains to be a neglected area of research and a matter meriting redress by the regulatory bodies. And this can only be achieved by engaging people working in the media to assess progress on gender equality, identify challenges, and contribute to local and national debates leading to the formulation of concrete policies to promote gender equality and the advancement of women in the society.

The media content analysis of print and electronic media was carried out by UKS & WJP & it included

ILD built the capacity of women journalist Group by enabling them to look at News through a Gender lens. Myra Imran (The News)

Out of 1610 news items in business and finance section, only 30 reported by women and only 14 report some issue related to women.

46% of stories reinforce gender stereotypes, almost eight times higher than stories that challenge such stereotypes; findings of media content analysis by ILO

news and entertainment, social issues and finance and business. The selection of news items from print was made for Dec 10-Feb11. The findings were presented to senior media personnel on 12th march. The objective of this dialogue was to:

1. Promote gender-equality in the world of work through; mainstream, alternative media and the Internet by sensitizing media personnel at all tiers
2. To analyze gaps and challenges in media at policy, production and coverage levels and to promote gender responsive reporting through advocating gendered analysis and mainstreaming in these media products

25 participants from mainstream print and electronic and social media participated in the consultation on media's role in portraying women and work. Some renowned media experts shared their views on the role of media in promoting rights of women for a gender equal society; these included **Amir Mateen**-the News, **Rana Jawaad**, Bureau Chief GEO TV, **Hasan Khan**, Director News and Current Affairs Khyber TV and **Badar Alam**, Editor at Herald.

“Glass ceiling and glass walls exist everywhere but Pakistani women have successfully broken these barriers. And affirmative action is much needed in the media itself as much as it is needed anywhere else,”
Rashid Rehman, Editor, Daily Times

“there is 80% female representation in the mentioned Newspaper, it is only by affirmative action that women can get equal rights in the media.”

The analysis showed that sex stereotype is very much evident in television portrayal of men and women in their appointed roles. Invariably masculine personality attributes are emphasized and women, in the world of television, are presented in roles of a domestic help, a wife, a mother etc.

As against this, men are depicted as employed, competitive and those who are seen calling the shot in the society. Such figures among women who are shown in similar competing roles with men are far

less in number and are considered to be oddities and deviations from the norm.

Radio programs “Aaj Shaaam”, “Shariat”, and the “News Bulletin” all revealed a weak gender influence. What it lacked was acknowledgments of women's issues and women experts as panelists and guests to talk about these issues.

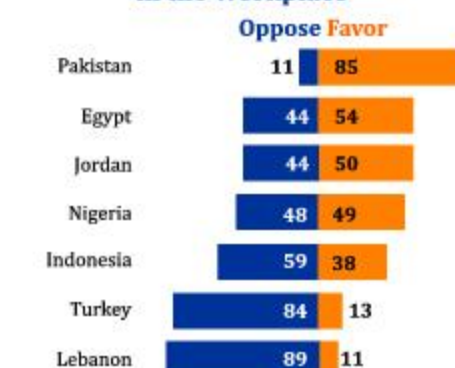
When it comes to portraying gender roles in the economy, farming is one area where women contribute more than 60 percent of the country's agricultural production but they hit only a very tiny percentage of news headlines. The reason is the people who pay for the news products are not interested in those who help feed and clothe them. This is a big reason to the issue of absence of social security and benefits to these women.

Even when women are presented as power holders, the patriarchal context is unmistakably present. In fact the attributes of power and aggressiveness are portrayed as something unnatural to a woman and a challenge to the male ego.

However for media to promote balanced and non-stereotype portrayal of women in their multiple roles, it is imperative that government, media, NGOs and private sector should come together and forge joint strategies to promote gender equality and gender justice. However this presupposes gender sensitivity among media owners and managers. In its new-found expansive role, media should foster a broad ethical content and moralizing impulse in the society so essential for the emergence of a civil society.

The dialogue ended. But it left all of us with a new beginning, a beginning where media is a development partner, where gender sensitive reporting through research, training and exchange of knowledge is practiced.

Gender Segregation in the Workplace



Asked of Muslims only.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q108a

ILO & UKS unique collaboration can lead to media and gender advocacy, with the help of people working in the media,
Tasneem Ahmar, CEO-UKS

Eye openers from the Field

CIRCUS: WORK FOR SOME ENTERTAINMENT FOR MANY!



The atmosphere of the circus has served as a dramatic setting for many artists. The famous circus theme song is actually called "Entrance of the Gladiators", and was composed in 1904 by Julius Fučík.

A circus; commonly a travelling company of performers that may include acrobats, clowns, trained animals, trapeze acts, musicians, hoopers, tightrope walkers, jugglers, unicyclists and other stunt-oriented artists. The word also describes the performance that they give, which is usually a series of acts that are choreographed to music and introduced by a "ringmaster".

My memory of circus as a child has always fascinated me to have a behind-the-stage look at one of the most popular forms of entertainment for a commoner, a spectacle that, at one time, was more eagerly awaited than a National Holiday. The spring festivity, rich bright colors and loud music at the Lucky Irani Circus was not any less than my imagination of Disney Land. The one in tents was my favorite. They were surrounded on three sides by a fence. Tents that were taller and bigger than some buildings in the small communities, the sheer enormity and magical allure of the enterprise often closed a few businesses. People traveled by wagon from suburbs of Islamabad (the capital where security situation has driven away all the entertainment and fun) to get a glimpse of the artists, laugh at the clowns and marvel at the ferocious animals that yielded to a daring trainer's will.



I got my chance at the age of 28, when men and women decide lavish dinners at exquisite restaurants and a trip to Hawaii. My trip was to Alipur, a place some 130 kms ahead of Muzafargarh, Punjab. I thought I'd reminisce a little about circus from my childhood when I, mom and dad used to go because my other older three siblings thought it was a waste of time. And see how courageous men and women performers put up a show that has captivated its audience for as long as I remember. This experience was going to be documented in video so a wider audience sitting at home could also see the wonders of the circus that is not considered an income generating opportunity but merely an entertainment arena. This was going to be presented as part of the celebrations on Pakistan Women's Day, organized by the ILO GE4DE Project to recognize the efforts of women in the world of work.

Dad used to say the circus was the reality TV of its day. Some of its features could be unsavory, pandering to base urges and ignoble impulses. Along with being the most-anticipated form of entertainment, the circus also was viewed with some trepidation. Fires broke out in circus tents and animals escaped and wreaked havoc. Pickpockets abounded, circus workers sometimes lost their lives while putting on a show and it was not unusual for a small community to lose at least a couple of its youth to the traveling extravaganza as it pulled out of town.



took my breath away and the smells and the hurly burly of the crowd were unforgettable.

The manager was already instructed to facilitate us and I must say he did a wonderful job, he took us back stage where I was hoping to see performers getting ready in their caravans as I had seen in movies but the reality had to unveil now.

Our media partners were upstage shooting the circus stars; it opened with the ring master. Every guy in the audience seemed to envy the ringmaster. He was completely masculine, intelligent, confident, dressed, and had a booming voice. He introduced all the acts, beginning with a pony show after that came clowns splashing around.



All the child hood memories came back to life as I entered the circus, the thrill of the interior volumes

The way the circus visually presented women did solidify the sense that times are changing and women are no

longer seen as sex objects. Here were courageous strong, women swinging through the air. They were showing such incredible strength and agility and independence. Clans of circus performers would travel together under the watchful eye of their elders; parents and guardians, we were told.

Although the women who performed in the ring were well-trained, they were not adequately facilitated with safety nets or ropes. The knives throwers were extremely daunting. They stood there in front of a wooden plank blind folded throwing sharp edged knives with such firmness and surety, as if they were immortal. "That is the struggle and achievement in our profession. Fame, respectability and decent income that comes from performing in the Circus is a valuable experience for us" said Shaheen, an aerialist.

Shaheen and Naheed while dressing up for their second stunt, told us how empowered they feel when they are up there on the stage, with hundreds of men, women and children applauding them for their zeal

and other women coming to them asking them for counseling in order to join the circus.

Starting at the bottom of the labor hierarchy, Mitho, a mother of four, worked her way up to being a one wheel cyclist and eventually became the queen of this act, her trademark.

Mitho is very satisfied being a circus performer; the nomadic life does bother her a little but without that exposure her husband, four children and she couldn't have enjoyed all the bounties of life that are coming her way. Mitho the fancily dressed woman in yellow and red is like any other woman around us who has the dream to educate her four children; two sons and two daughters. She believes in giving her children the responsibility to choose their profession as long as they enjoyed freedom, dignity, decent income and safe working conditions.

After Mitho, the sound of roaring lions heralded the lion tamer. He came and went, I made sure I was far



One Wheel Cycle Performer

“This is a Circus, always packing and moving away”
Mitho

away from the stage or the cage but the lions also made sure that their presence if not felt, is heard!

The grand finale where everybody came out and performed all at once then peeled off, one by one. The crowd went nuts and applauded almost till the skin came off their hands.

The owner, Mian Rashid Farzand, is leading the legacy of his father who ran this circus, giving it millions of profit and the heir believes that it was possible only because the labour was given its dues on time, provided security, maternal leaves, job retention and competitive pay.

"At so many points the circus has been an excellent symbol for the nation's development, whether you're looking at the circus's business operations and the way they used transportation developments like the railroad to superb advantage, or at gender and race issues, the circus was a real cultural barometer."

Mian Rashid Farzand said acknowledging the economic contribution of men and women to this field.

The trip was a real eye opener for me and some accompanying media fellows; they also were of the opinion that circus and women performers in the circus refute the artificial boundaries which are imposed on women's body and what they're told they can and can't do. Through presenting strong and positive image of women's physicality we can reclaim the skewed image presented in adverts and media of what is 'feminine' and 'female', confronting the stereotypes so often presented.

Did my thoughts reshape after the visit...for me the circus continues to be; a big funhouse mirror, reflecting the values, fears and issues of society at large.

That was quite a show. Quite a show.



Mitho, Single Wheel Performer, Lucky Irani Circus



DRIVEN BY PASSION

by Rabia Razzaque

WHAT'S OUR MOTTO? (shouted Afzal)

"NO FEAR"... (stumping of feet, ground shaking)

I hear loud and clear standing on side of the huge training ground in Bedian Lahore. It leaves me ecstatic to look at these women so agile and so fresh, determined to serve their country.

Undoubtedly the true spirit of their motto – NO FEAR...

...from danger



...from challenges



...from perils



...from uncertainty



...from death



We are a special police force, says Mugheesa, Sub Inspector Punjab Elite Police, "the Elite Punjab Police, also known as the "Elite Force" or "Police Commandos", is a branch of the Punjab Police specializing in Counter-Terrorist operations and VIP security duties, as well as acting against serious crimes and performing high-risk operations which can't be carried out by the regular police".

Right now, police is considered as a service rather than a force. It is hardly possible to get a service, which can serve the people more than of police. Only Police personnel engage themselves for countrymen 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Police personnel offer their service for 16 hrs physically and 24 hours mentally while others do for 8 hours.

I was passionate to prove something since early teens, I joined the Police force to prove my five brothers and my parents that I and my five brothers have no different aims and ambitions, we all want to serve our country- our Pakistan. I soon joined

the Elite Police Force and became the "commando" at home. Continued Mugheesa, only 27.

Talking to the commandant of the Elite Police Force Training institute, we found out, Women police officers use a style of policing that relies less on physical force. They are better at defusing and de-escalating potentially violent confrontations and are less likely to become involved in incidents of excessive force. Additionally, women officers often possess better communication skills than their male counterparts and are better able to facilitate. Thus, hiring and retaining more women in Special Agencies is beneficial to the Elite Force itself.

Increasing the representation of women on the police force should address another costly problem for police administrators—the pervasive problem of sex discrimination and sexual harassment. Finally, female officers often respond more effectively to incidents of violence against women and are found to be more determined.

Punjab Elite Police Force has strong policies and directives that prohibit misconduct, sexual harassment or other manifestations of exploitation or discrimination on basis of gender. Directives for immediate investigation of allegations of unlawful acts, and appropriate disciplinary measures are in place in case such allegations are substantiated; this sense of security has been another retention strategy for women to continue their services in the SSG.

Every member of police service has to undergo tough training, which includes physical and academic side. Rigorous and hard training make them physically fit so that they can do the job for a longer period. At the same time they have to know the law to perform the job within the legal frameworks.

I wondered if these women too have to face the social stereotypes; that women act upon emotion rather than logic and rationale.

I am a mother of two; I don't let domestic issues, kids' problem at school come between me and my duty. In police; training, logic and common sense guide your good judgment. It holds true for a woman as much as it does for a man, says Nasreen (ASI- Punjab Elite Police Force).

Nasreen took a break during her maternity and resumed back her duties; Nasreen enjoys an equitable pay, maternity benefits, special allowances and special recognition awards.

Police work is no picnic, and somebody has to cut through the blood, broken glass, and fire to make sure that our city streets are as safe as they can be. Even with all the stereotypes and the ways they likely have to prove themselves, they still manage to uphold and represent what police is supposed to be--the ones who protect and serve.



"When people engage themselves in sleeping with sweet dream, police play role of safe guard of the society",
Rehana- (ASI) Punjab Elite Police Force

"Police personnel perform their duties with most hazardous situation even knowing that their dearest family members never can see them alive again. As many casualties of police service have been taken place every year."

Nasreen (ASI) Punjab Elite Police Force

"The basic police training involves outdoor training such as drill and parade, fire arms exercise, musketry, obstacle. This training becomes rigorous when we opt for the elite police force; here we are trained in personal combat, martial arts, crowd control, close quarters battle (CQB), and reconnaissance," told Afzal (Instructor, Elite Police Force)

So let me just say, kudos to all the women in Special Agency for putting their safety and lives at risk to protect the people of our country.

The MOHANAS by the River Indus

by Sajila Sohail Khan

It was from the port towns of this region that Arab dhows laden with merchandise set sail for distant towns in the days of yore.

Today, 400,000 Mohana's rely on River Indus as source of their livelihood...What this fact implies was beyond my imagination; poverty, health problems, Illegal capturing of soft-shell turtles and fishes, exploitation of labour rights and so much more.

Fisheries in the Riverine areas has become a perpetual struggle against poverty due to procurement, distribution and marketing mechanism of the catches and also pressures from other socio-economic and political sources. The landlessness, continuous indebtedness are the major causes for jeopardizing the life and work of the fisher folk and breakdown of the community as a whole.

Fishing is the only source of income for the Mohanas. The decline in the catch has brought many families to the point of starvation."

In January 2011, I got a chance to visit the Kot Adu, Allah Wali and Daira Din Panah, to accompany our research partners, Pakistan Wetland Programmes in conducting a survey of riverine communities under ILO GE4DE project. I wanted to get first hand information about the



conditions and livelihoods of people living in these areas, so that a sound programme based on the real on ground challenges and opportunities is planned, a programme that will benefit the community and leave sustainable impacts.

The Mohanas live on the belt of Indus near Taunsa Barrage, located 20 km southeast of Taunsa Sharif city on the Indus River in the Punjab province. The native language of the Mohanas is Saraiki but some castes speak with a jatki accent. They are from different castes, some of them are "Merani" and mostly they belong to the Sindh Province.

In today's world, where technology and basic facilities are common, the living conditions of such communities are quite a shock. It is devastating to see the poor living conditions even worse that these communities are completely overlooked by local authorities. These are landless, homeless people dwelling on the same

place for the last 40 years. Sanitation and drainage systems are nonexistent. Recent floods added to the misery of the Mohana's; before, there were hand pumps installed in these communities, but all of them were damaged by flooding. The situation of women is particularly alarming; with no Basic Health Units in the area, the reproductive health problems are on the rise. Lack of general awareness in the community further complicates their problem especially during pregnancies and delivery. In any case, each

Mohana household comprises on an average 8 to 15 members, all of whom; including the children, have to earn to ensure the family's survival. The lack of educational facilities in the area also discourages the parents from sending their children to school. The very few children who make it to school are mostly boys. Very few young girls have studied till 6th grade. The whole community has produced only one man and one woman who hold a Masters and a bachelor's degree respectively. The woman does not originate from the native community but is a migrant. There is

one primary school which is 1 km away from the village. Very recently a community based school has started by some organisation in the area. The teacher's salary and books for the children are provided by the organisation. The teacher daily travels from Kot Adu which is about 10 km one way.

Based on their livelihood options and movements, the Mohanas can be classified into four types; one that depends

mainly on the Sindh River. They don't have any other source of income, yet they don't want to move to any other place. The second type of Mohanas is the nomadic sort that goes to the cities for labouring, when the river doesn't hold enough catch for them. Their settlement is not permanent and they move around for their livelihood. The third type relies on fish for their own need and for small scale subsistence earning. They take their catch to cities on bicycles and sell it in streets. The fourth type visits the nearby areas and work with local farmers to reap crops,

“Mohana not only need the benefit of a well-thought-out conservation education programme but also require assistance with the establishment of viable alternative livelihoods to enhance their subsistence economy”

Ahmad Khan, WWF

Women work

"Work inside the four boundaries of home is respectable",
a woman from focus group discussion

particularly wheat and sugar cane.

Drawing statistics is very easy; almost 90% of the women and men community are involved in fishery; while 10% are in small livestock rearing, driving rickshaw, tractors, and daily wagers.

It is interesting to see how most of the Mohanas have preserved their traditional lifestyle over centuries. They spend their entire life on boats. The boat is a complete home with rooms, sitting places, kitchen, furniture and utensils. The Mohanas use small boats called 'batelo' for fishing in the lake. They also use the batelo to reach the embankments for shopping or selling the catch.

Some malpractices are also seen in the area. Minimum wage policy is not being adhered to which forces fishermen to secretly fish for their family in the night. If caught, they are physically harassed by the contractors.

Manifestations of bonded labour and internal trafficking are evident; due to extreme poverty and no other source of income, the fishermen take loan from the contractors for net making and renting boats. These loans some time reach the amounts of Pkr. 100,000 -200,000, so much more than the principal amount that it becomes impossible to pay off the debt.

The payback period of the loan is usually a year. If the contract expires and the loan is not paid back, these workers (fishermen) are

passed on to another contractor without their consent. Women face the brunt of these exploitations too. Though cases of sexual harassment are not reported, psychological blackmailing and abduct does not look like an alien practice.

Women folk of the Mohana Community are skilful in the traditional handicrafts. The income from handicrafts is small and these women do not have a proper training in producing quality products, which is why they cannot market their product for a wider audience. Some elderly women make beautiful baskets with a thin and strong wood which called "TOKRE" and "PAKH. The "Rilli work" of the Mohanas women is a speciality that is sold for triple the amount in urban cities and even more in exhibitions in other countries, but the benefit that goes back to the hands that made them is negligible. The labour dues for a bed sheet may range from Pkr. 50 – 80 to 200-1000 in places like Samaka Chachran.

Looking from rear view of my car when I left the community, I thought of our global commitments, our national priorities, our regional preferences, our organizational mandates- they all in one way or another propose contribution to alleviation of poverty. What seems missing is our personal obligation. It's time we show our devotion to social justice and decent employment. Or else we will be left with a dismal future where poverty will only lead to militancy and disbelief in humanity.

"We lived our entire life on the river and we know techniques of catching fresh water fish. Deep sea fishing is not possible for us"

Liaqat Hussain

UPDATES AND UPCOMING

Endorsed !

National Steering Committee chaired by Federal Secretary Ministry of Labour, endorsed GE4DE Project's implementation strategy at the first meeting on February 17, 2011 held in the MoL. The NSC members include senior representatives from Ministry of Labour; provincial departments of labour; the Ministry of Women's Development (MoWD); National Commission on Status of Women (NCSW); Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); academia; research/ NGO partner, media experts and the ILO.

SECOND PHASE -TRAINING ON GENDER SENSITIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES:

GE4DE Project team imparted training on gender sensitive research methodologies to partners to carry out research on riverine communities in Gilgit Baltistan.

GE4DE GOES FOR DIRECT ACTION PROGRAMMES:

Request for Proposals for Skills Development in Coastal and Riverine Communities (For more details: www.ilo.org/islamabad)

Upcoming:

- Trevor Riordan, Skills Specialist visits Pakistan
- How skilled are we: an update of the training programme
- Communicating research effectively: training workshop
- Launch of Research Reports on Gender sensitive analysis of economic opportunities and occupations in Textiles, Hospitality, Coastal and Riverine communities, construction and portrayal of women through media



"We need to particularly focus on backward and disadvantaged districts of Pakistan to build their capacities and to eliminate the gender disparity that is acute and damaging for the future workforce of the country and eventually its economy"

Arif Azeem, Secretary, Ministry of Labour



Huang Xiayun, a student of International Development and Affairs visited Pakistan and showed special interest in learning at the ILO, he interned for a week with the ILO GE4DE project – While his stay he shared his views and experience.

He strongly believed that "Media can play an important role in propagating the message of gender equality. Private companies have a special role to play when it comes to outdoor advertising to reach out to masses. This medium has been an important tool to generate interest and create significant perceptual changes vis-à-vis social issues and rights be it for the animals or humans"