CSSF Women, Peace and Security Helpdesk

Gender and conflict analysis at the national level (Pakistan)

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WPS Women, Peace & Security Helpdesk

The Women Peace and Security Helpdesk, managed by Saferworld in partnership with Conciliation Resources, GAPS UK, University of Durham and Women International Peace Centre (WIPC), was established in December 2021 to increase capability across the UK Government on WPS policy and programming in order to make its work on conflict and instability more effective. If you work for the UK Government and you would like to send a task request, please email us at wpshelpdesk@saferworld.org.uk. If you do not work for the UK Government but have an enquiry about the helpdesk or this report, please email us at enquiries.wpshelpdesk@saferworld.org.uk

Direct Audience:
The primary audience will the CSSF programme team and thematic advisers involved in or assisting programme design, implementation and adaptation. They will use it to assess/add to their existing conflict/context analysis and develop ideas for programme adaptation and new projects. It will also be of interest to the wider High Commission, including to enable their understanding of the importance, relevance and applicability of gendered analysis. The analysis may also highlight or identify areas for potential intervention from wider FCDO departments (outside of the CSSF).

Confidentiality Status:
Not confidential

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List of abbreviations

AASHA	Alliance against sexual harassment
AJK	Azad Jammu and Kashmir
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CII	Council of Islamic Ideology
CNIC	Computerised national identity card
CPEC	China–Pakistan Economic Corridor
CSO	Civil society organisations
DRM	Disaster risk management
FAO	The Food and Agriculture Organisation
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross domestic product
GII	Gender Inequality Index
HBWs	Home-based workers
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
IWD	International Women's Day
JuD	Jamaat-ud-Dawa
JUI-F	Jamiat Ulema-e Islam
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LoC	Line of Control
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCSW	National Commission on the Status of Women
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
NHDR	National Human Development Report
NSAG	Non-state armed group
PATA	Provincially Administered Tribal Areas
PICSC	Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies
PKR	Pakistani Rupee
PLWDs	People living with disabilities
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PTPA	Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDPI	Sustainable Development Policy Institute
TIP	Trafficking in person
TNSM	Tanzeem-i-Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Muhammadi
TOCs	Transnational organised crimes
TTP	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
URSS	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

USIP	United States Institute of Peace
VAWC	Violence against women centres
WAF	Women Action Forum
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WRN	Women's Regional Network
ZARRA	Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Agency

Summary

This report focuses on some of the gendered drivers of conflict and instability in Pakistan. This includes exploring how a lack of opportunities or access to rights are exacerbating women's, girls' and other minority groups' vulnerable to violence and conflict (1); the specific threats of the rise in religious extremism and terrorism (2); serious and organised crime, terrorism and cross-border criminality (3); and climate change as a driver of conflict and inequalities (4). The starting point of this analysis is that the gendered drivers of conflict in Pakistan are embedded in structural inequalities and sustained by traditional social norms, roles, attitudes and expectations.

Patriarchal values in Pakistan are driven by religion, history and customs. They define respective roles and identities for women and men, causing the socio-economic and political exclusion of women, girls and minorities. As a result, these groups have a limited access to education and health services as well as to financial and physical assets, such as house and land ownership. These factors make it more difficult for women to access leadership positions at the political level and in turn influence legislation and increase their vulnerability to gender-based violence (GBV). It also means that they tend to be absent from conflict resolution efforts, and opportunities for mediation and peacebuilding, although many women have organised to resist violence and contribute to gender equality, as well as directly and indirectly engage in conflict.

The role of women in violent extremism and terrorism in Pakistan is more complex than what traditional gender norms reflect. They are both victims and supporters of extremist groups and ideologies, and they contribute to mitigating conflict and violence within their communities. Their involvement in extremism has been linked more to providing ideological, logistic and financial support than to being actively engaged in violent actions. Their contributions to preventing conflict, have been linked to negotiating with extremist groups or organising for change through civil society structures, including through lobbying to increase the seats reserved to women in parliament in order to contribute to legislation and policy making. Further research to understand the role of women and men in supporting religious extremism is key to addressing its root causes as well as to ensuring that responses support women's movement, instead of co-opting their agendas.

In the case of organised crimes, men and women have different roles and they are also impacted differently. While more young men are recruited into organised criminal groups, more women are at risk of GBV, particularly domestic violence, or being trafficked. Youth violence (the majority of which is committed by and against men) is increasing, and population growth, migration and a lack of economic opportunities are important factors as are changes in economic and social structures, along with household compositions that are resulting in difficulties for men to fulfil socially expected behaviours.

Finally, the report looks into how climate change has a role in indirectly increasing the risk of conflict by exacerbating social, economic and environmental factors behind conflict. Gender discrimination makes women disproportionally more vulnerable than men to its impacts and

increases the chances of being exposed to violence and further inequalities after a natural catastrophe.

The report explores all these aspects in depth and exposes recommendations to policy and programmatic responses to these drivers of conflict in Pakistan.

Introduction

This report seeks to provide a broad overview of the gendered drivers of conflict and instability in and around Pakistan, as well as the gendered impacts and consequences of conflict and instability. The focus is deliberately on areas most relevant to the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) programming themes (as shared with the drafting team). This report includes an analysis on gendered roles and relationships, norms, attitudes and behaviours as well as structural issues including political, educational and religious institutions and decision-making which drive gender-specific forms of conflict. As recommended and wherever feasible, the team has focused on issues and data that may not be as accessible or likely to be on the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO's) radar.

The report is structured in two main sections agreed with CSSF – first a 'Context' section providing an overview of how gender is reflected in systems of power in Pakistan, including looking at gendered roles and relationships, norms, attitudes and behaviours, and which groups are privileged or excluded from these systems of power. Secondly, a 'Gendered analysis of drivers of conflict and instability' section which looks at gendered drivers of conflict and instability in and around Pakistan organised around CSSF programming themes, including a reflection on the gendered impacts and consequences of each driver, as well as opportunities for change. In a final paragraph, opportunities to fill in data gaps are mentioned. Given the tight timeline to deliver this report and existing gaps in the literature (including on sexual and gender minorities, and people with disabilities), the report addresses areas prioritised through participatory primary analysis to compensate for this.

The team which authored this desk-based research and developed the report is composed of Prof. Dr Shaheen Akhtar (Department of International Relations, Faculty of Contemporary Studies (FCS) National Defence University, Islamabad; Editor, Journal of Contemporary Studies), Cecile Pentori (South Asia Programme Manager, Conciliation Resources), Tahir Aziz (Senior Advisor South Asia, Conciliation Resources), Zara Hussain (South Asia Programme Officer, Conciliation Resources) and Amy Dwyer (Head of Gender and Peacebuilding, Conciliation Resources).

Context: gender and systems of power in Pakistan

To be able to provide a gender and conflict analysis at the national level in Pakistan requires examining how power is organised within Pakistani society, how gender is reflected within systems of power, and which groups are privileged or excluded from these systems of power. To achieve this, we have provided a brief overview of the status of gender equality and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) indicators in Pakistan in the sub-sections below.

The socio-economic, political and religious milieu of Pakistan, its regional disparities and its geo-political environment greatly shape the realities in which gender norms and power relations operate. Pakistan is mainly an agrarian society where the agriculture sector contributes 18.9 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) and absorbs 42.3 per cent of the labour force. The vast majority of the population live in rural areas (estimated at 63 per cent)[1] where customary laws and practices remain important. Politics in Pakistan is strongly aligned to ethnic and provincial divisions. Uneven distribution of natural resources between different provinces has been a source of conflict and internal dissent. Regionally, Pakistan shares borders with Iran, Afghanistan and India. Pakistan has fought three wars with India including two over Kashmir (Oct 1947–Dec 1948, April–September 1965, December 1971) and tensions have erupted from time to time along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border (the last round of skirmishes started in 2007).[2] Pakistan became a nuclear power after testing its first bomb in 1998. Throughout Pakistan's history, the military has seized power in three coups and remains a key political actor in the country. Pakistan is a majority Muslim country (96.2 per cent according to the 2017 census and with approximately 85–90 per cent following Sunni Islam, a 10–15% minority following Shia Islam and 0.1 per cent following Ahmadiyya), with approximately 1.6 per cent following Hinduism, 1.59 per cent Christianity, and 0.01 per cent Sikhism.

Gender norms (identities, roles and relations)

Women constitute almost half of the Pakistani population of 220 million people.[3] Patriarchal values heavily govern the social structure in Pakistani society, defining roles and identities for women and men, who are conceptually segregated into two distinct worlds: a woman is expected to take care of the home as a wife and mother, whereas a man dominates outside the home as a breadwinner.[4] Gender norms – identity, roles and power relations – are predominantly driven by religion, history and customs.[5] Patriarchy has strengthened over time due to unchanged conservative social norms.[6] This means that discriminatory gender norms are

[1] The World Bank (2018), 'Rural population (% of total population)': https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?locations=PK

[2] Center for Strategic and International Studies (2009), 'The Afghan-Pakistan War: The Rising Intensity of Conflict 2007-2008', August

[3] 48.76% as per the 2017 census of Pakistan.

[4] Patriarchy is a system of relationships, beliefs, and values embedded in political, social, and economic systems that structure gender inequality between men and women. Attributes seen as "feminine" or pertaining to women are undervalued, while attributes regarded as "masculine" or pertaining to men are privileged.

[5] Ana Luiza Minardi, Maryam Akmal, Lee Crawfurd and Susannah Hares (2021), 'Promoting Gender Equality in Pakistan Means Tackling Both Real and Misperceived Gender Norms', August

[6] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2021), 'Pakistan's Gender and Human Rights based Response to Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling', January

maintained and the structures and processes that underlie them remain intact which can contribute to explaining the wide prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) and the socio-political and economic marginalisation of women in Pakistani society. While some of the historic drivers of harmful gender norms have evolved over time (e.g. economic development, increased access to education and changes to relevant legal frameworks), social and political mobilisation to influence them has been slow. Promisingly, however, literature indicates that attitudes related to women's roles at home and in the public space are in flux and generally moving towards greater gender equality, at least in aspirations.[7]

Feminism and Women's Activism

In contemporary Pakistan, the word 'feminism' is perceived as unfamiliar and foreign and has been gradually replaced by 'gender' as a more neutral, inclusive and less provocative concept. As highlighted by women activists,

> *'feminism is a word sometimes used as an insult and as a mechanism for control and setting limits and boundaries' and 'the word feminism is a rebuke, a condemnation of sorts'.8*

Women activists are perceived as 'secular', 'pro-West', educated and elitist, and opposed to traditional Pakistani culture. Women tend to be caught between different – sometimes stereotypical – images of womanhood. Women from liberal organisations, identifying as feminists, generally emphasise pro-public-sphere engagement of women and rebel against religious fundamentalism. While conservative 'anti-feminist' women tend to be in favour of women's engagement with the private sphere engagement.[9] Nevertheless, liberal civil society organisations (CSOs) advocating for gender rights, justice and empowerment in Pakistan are widespread and include the Aurat Foundation, Shirkat Gha, Women Action Forum (WAF), Bedari, Pakistan Women Lawyers Association, Simorgh, War Against Rape, and the Alliance Against Sexual Harassment (AASHA). On the other hand, very few organisations propagate more conservative views on women – for example, right-wing Jamiat Ulema-e Islam (JUI-F), Jammat-i-Islamai and Al Huda led by Dr Farhat Hashmi, a movement of Islamic education and reform with a dedicated women's following in Pakistani cities.[10]

The position of women activists is complex, as shown by the extreme polarisation of Pakistan's annual *Aurat Azadi* (Women's freedom)march (with a slogan of "my body, my choice"), whose organisers are facing increasing threats from right-wing groups and were even the target of pelting stones attacks by JUI-F women members in 2020.[11] Religious groups in Pakistan have held their own events on International Women's Day to counter feminists. Women wings of religious parties, for example Jamaat-i-Islami, also organise the *Haya* Day (the day of piety) on March 8 to promote Islamic values about women.

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[7] Saman Amir and Ahmad Shah Durrani (2018), 'Why should we care about changing attitudes on gender roles in Pakistan?', June

[8] Shama Dossa, Saliha Ramay and Tabinda Sarosh (2014), 'Caught between an onslaught of Imperialism: Constructing Feminist Identities in Contemporary Pakistan, in Sustainable Development in South Asia: Shaping the Future', SDPI, Sang-e- Meel Publications, p. 312 and p.318.

[9] Gulnaz Anjum (2019), 'Women's Activism in Pakistan: Role of Religious Nationalism and Feminist Ideology Among Self-Identified Conservatives and Liberals', Open Cultural Studies 4: 36-49. December

[10] Faiza Mushtaq (2010), 'A Controversial Role Model for Pakistani Women', South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal, 4

[11] Mavra Bari (2021), 'Why Women's Day march irks conservative Pakistanis', DW, March

The concept of masculinity in Pakistan

The Aurat Foundation's[12] research on masculinity in Pakistan shows that patriarchy and masculinity are mutually reinforcing. It argues that masculinity is associated with men's ability to control the power dynamic over women's bodies, decision-making power, mobility and relationships, leading to their subjugation. In that regard, the social construct of honour and its preservation are fundamentally linked to the concept of womanhood in Pakistani society but also seen as an objective and an identity of masculinity. Masculinity in Pakistan is predominantly associated with characteristics such as aggression, dominance, strength, courage and control. These characteristics result from a combination of biological, cultural and social influences, and relate to power in society as a whole. These traits of masculinity are termed to be the major contributor to men's violence. Traits associated with masculinity require men to participate in the labour market, while the pressure to do so and earn a living can make men more likely to report depression, commit suicide, get into trouble with the law and use violence against their wives. The narrow social definition of manhood and the perceived failure to live up to these expectations can compromise men's health and invoke anti-social behaviours.[13] It can also have an impact on violence, including against women and girls, as outlined below.

These interpretations of masculinity can be nuanced to a certain degree from province to province as per the Aurat Foundation's report. For example, in Sindh, a man's masculinity is questioned if women relatives work outside of the home, as a powerful man should not permit such activity[14]. Similarly men members of the family are not expected to take on household chores due to their 'feminine' nature. In their role as protectors, men are expected to control women's behaviour, dress codes and activities outside the home, and guard them at all times. The report then shows that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) men are not only expected to safeguard their women's honour but also that of their family. A family's honour includes aspects such as participation in tribal conflicts and the safeguarding of one's tribal identity. The social fear of their power being compromised can trigger men to commit honour crimes against women out of revenge, anger and aggression. Additionally, the possession of weapons is a manifestation of how masculinity is understood. Traditionally this has been more common in Pashtun culture but it is also a significant and common symbol of masculinity and power in Punjab.[15]

Rozan's (one of the few organisations working on masculinity in Pakistan) research has explored how perceptions and practices of masculinity influence and inter-connect with issues including relationships, sexuality and violence.[16] The insecurities that underpin men's identity such as the ability to earn and provide for their family, the need to establish clear dominance and control in relationships with the opposite sex within and outside marriage, look after one's parents and take major decisions in the family, means that forms of violence against women – such as sexual harassment and domestic violence – are regarded as acts which are sometimes necessary when a 'limit' has been reached to put a woman in 'her place' and reaffirm gender roles. A key learning Rozan draws is that:

> *'traditional notions of masculinity put men in positions of dominance where relationships are often characterised by unequal power relations and violence is seen as a tool for maintaining control. [...] These expectations are particularly unstable in the context of rapidly changing demographics with shifting gender*

[12] Aurat Foundation is a Pakistani NGO working for rights of women

[13] Aurat Foundation (2016), 'Masculinity in Pakistan: A Formative Research Study'

[14] Aurat Foundation (2016), 'Masculinity in Pakistan: A Formative Research Study', p.13

[15] Aurat Foundation (2016), 'Masculinity in Pakistan: A Formative Research Study'

[16] Rozan (2010), 'Understanding Masculinities: A Formative Research on Masculinities and GBV in Pakistan', January

dynamics, reduced livelihood opportunities, and an increased need for women to work and supplement family incomes'.

The literature further suggests that there is not much effort being made in schools, religious institutions or families to promote gender sensitivity amongst boys and young men. Any men digressing from expected norms and roles –for instance advocating for gender equality – are perceived as more 'docile' and 'feminine' and might be socially marginalised as a result.

Beyond cultural norms, both print and electronic media have contributed to relaying and portraying a particular and distinct image of women and men. The media in Pakistan reinforces gender stereotypes of men and women, whereby women are generally portrayed in advertisements as homemakers and dependent on men, while men are portrayed as dominant, authoritative figures.[17]

Sexual and gender minorities

Sexual and gender minorities are disproportionately victims of discrimination, violence and persecution. Tolerance for different sexual orientations is very low. Pakistan's penal code continues to criminalise same-sex sexual conduct, placing men who have sex with men and transgender people at risk of police abuse, and other violence and discrimination.[18] Our desk-based research shows that there is a real data gap in terms of how sexual and gender minorities are impacted by violence and conflict in Pakistan.

Groups privileged or excluded from power

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan's National Human Development Report (NHDR) of 2020 puts emphasis on the strong level of inequalities within Pakistan and how powerful groups[19] are using their privilege to capture additional resources, and perpetuating structural discrimination through prejudice against others based on social characteristics. Policies are often unsuccessful at addressing the resulting inequity, and sometimes may even contribute to it.[20] The country is split into two different 'Pakistan's - one with multitudes of opportunities to pursue quality education, secure responsive health care, and live off generational wealth; and the other without. Women and sexual and gender minorities generally belong to the second category. For the purpose of this report, we will not provide additional details on which groups are considered powerful and privileged, but we will look at how these structures create an environment that is very hostile to women's rights and enhance their vulnerabilities.

Women's political empowerment

The political gender gap remains wide in Pakistan but has changed over time. On the one hand, Pakistan has shown some cosmetic progress in appointing women to positions of political power, such as its first female Prime Minister (1988), Speaker of the National Assembly (2008), the first female Foreign Minister (2011), and the first female United Nations (UN) representative (2015). Women are able to run for elections directly, and can attain seats through women's

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[17] Hazir Ullah, Ahsun Nisar Khan, Hifsa Nisar Khan, Ammara Ibrahim (2016), 'Gender Representation In Pakistani Print Media: A Critical Analysis', Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies, Vol. 12, pp. 53-70

[18] Human Rights Watch (2021), 'World Report 2021 Pakistan'

[19] Which they identify as 'the feudal class, the corporate sector, exporters, large scale traders, high net worth individuals, the military establishment and state-owned enterprises' in UNDP (2020), 'Pakistan National Human Development Report 2020'.

[20] Overall, the total privileges enjoyed by Pakistan's most powerful groups amounted to Pakistani Rupee (PKR) 2,660 billion in 2017–2018. Equivalent to 7 percent of the country's GDP in UNDP (2020), 'Pakistan National Human Development Report 2020'. pp. 21-39.

reserved quotas in national and provincial assemblies, the Senate and local government institutions.[21] After the 2008 elections, Pakistan even had the highest representation of women in national and local parliaments in South Asia.[22] However, women are still underrepresented in a meaningful way in politics and in national and local government bodies. After 19 April 2022, the number of women in Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's Cabinet of 37 is five, while the proportion of seats held by women in Parliament is 20 per cent (20.5 per cent in the lower Chamber and 19 per cent in the upper Chamber[23]).[24]

The 2018 general elections saw more women coming out to vote and standing for election, and for the first time five transgender candidates contested seats. In another first, Krishna Kumari Kohli became the country's first woman senator from the Hindu Dalit community.[25] She was nominated by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and expressed her commitment to rights of the oppressed people, especially for the empowerment of women, their health and education. On International Women's Day (IWD), she chaired the Senate session on the subject.

The Constitution (18th Amendment) Act of 2010 introduced changes in legislation and regulations to create a more level playing field for women's active and effective political participation.[26] The focus on inclusivity benefited not only women but also transgender people and people living with disabilities (PLWDs). The great strides in women's political participation created opportunities at the grassroots level for women to reclaim public spaces, promote active citizenship and raise awareness on social accountability, along with key non-traditional allies for civil society such as faith allies.[27] Women Members of Parliament worked actively to introduce 'pro-women' bills, specifically covering areas like domestic violence and harassment.[28] However, the literature also shows that for the 2018 elections, while most mainstream political parties kept to the minimum percentage of women for party tickets, they sometimes strategically gave tickets to women for constituencies where they had no chance of winning.[29] In addition, over 45 per cent of political parties did not field a single female

[21] For example, the 1956 Constitution only had 10 reserved seats for women, which were increased to 20 in 1985 and 60 under the General Musharraf era in 2002. Currently, there are 60 seats reserved for women in the National Assembly (out of 342 members); 17 seats reserved in the Senate (out of 104 members) with a total of 168 reserved seats in the provincial assemblies i.e. Balochistan 11 (out of 65 members), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 26 (out of (124 members), Punjab 66 (out of 371 members) and Sindh 29 (out of 168 members) under Article 106 of the Constitution. Eight women were directly elected in the national assembly elections in 2018.

[22] Inter-Parliamentary Union (2008), 'Women in Parliament: World Classification'

[23] This positions Pakistan at the 114th position out of 186 by the IPU ranking, https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=4&year=2022

[24] Dawn (2022), 'A glance at the only five women in Shehbaz Sharif's 37-member cabinet', April https://www.dawn.com/news/1685774 and World Bank data 2021

[25] Aljazeera (2018), 'Krishna Kholi Pakistan's first hindu dalit senator', March https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/3/4/krishna-kholi-pakistans-first-hindu-dalit-senator

[26] Including a 33% minimum quota for women's representation in parliament and reformed Election Laws where direct sanctions were imposed on political parties that failed to award at least 5% of party tickets to women, and results would be declared null and void unless 10% of voters in any given constituency were women - Ghulam Dhastageer, S. Zaidi and R. Safdar (2018), 'A look into the turnout of women voters for the 2018 elections', Herald, 18 September.

[27] Oxfam International (2020), 'Strengthening Women's Political Participation in Pakistan', November.

[28] The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010; The Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Bill 2010; The Criminal Law (Third Amendment) Bill 2010; Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Act, 2010; The Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act, 2011; Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2011; Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2011; National Commission on the Status of Women Bill, 2012 ; Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act 2020 to deal with child rape and kidnapping cases ; a new disability law that aims to end discrimination against PLWDs in Islamabad, the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act 2020.

[29] Stimson South Asian Voices (2019), 'Female Representation in the Parliament: What Pakistan Can Learn from India', July

candidate. In some cases, the seats allocated to female candidates were often reserved to women who had close family ties to the party's men-dominated leadership.[30]

The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) was also set up as a key institution for Pakistan to deliver on its international commitment in terms of gender equality and women's development, with each province having its own Commission. While there isn't a thorough review of whether the NCSW's recommendations have been fully integrated, the literature mentions two strong initiatives: the first being its role in building parliamentary support for the 2006 reform to a controversial *zina* law banning all sex outside of marriage and the second being its role as a petitioner in a successful bid to ban *jirgas* or tribal councils. These successes are attributed to the NCSW having developed good working relationships with government and policy circles, which helped the institution fulfil its mandate. Ultimately, however, political and bureaucratic constraints have undermined its effectiveness, while the strength of its voice in policy circles is also contingent upon political commitment of the Government to women's issues, as well as its leadership and composition.

Province to province disparities

Within the devolution agenda, women's development has become the responsibility of each province. Sindh Assembly has passed four women-specific bills, including the Sindh Commission on the Status of Women Act (2015) and the Sindh Child Marriages Restraint Act (2013). Punjab Assembly in 2016 passed the Protection of Women against Harassment at Workplace Act (2010), considered among the strongest pieces of legislation to prevent violence against women in Pakistan. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), despite strong legal provisions and mechanisms to eliminate discrimination face by women, implementation remains weak, as women only form a small part of the labour workforce (e.g., only 2.1 per cent are in managerial positions and 10.2 per cent are in the legislative assembly –5 in reserved seats and 1 elected).[31] The KPK provincial assembly passed over 30 Acts, of which at least 17 were directly related to human rights, including the rights of religious minorities, women and children, and aimed at addressing people's needs with respect to good governance, safety, justice, health, education, shelter, property, and potable water, among others.

Balochistan is considered as lagging behind; there are only 11 reserved seats for women in the Balochistan Assembly (out of 65 members), with one currently lying vacant. There is also no Commission on the status of women and of the nine acts passed by the provincial assembly in 2020, none related to women's rights.[32] Multiple factors – institutional, political, legal, economic and social barriers – could explain a gender lag in the province. Access to justice for example is unequal and informed by power dynamics. As an example, costs are a major obstacle in accessing the formal justice system (costs relating to filing a case, hiring a lawyer, paperwork, travel and lodging expenses). While some of these costs are minimal (for example to file a court case) there is no regulation on legal expenses (e.g. on lawyer fees). Information on how to access legal aid is very sparse and less available for rural inhabitants. The huge backlog of cases also means unresolved issues drag on over time. Formal access to justice is seen as 'skewed towards the rich and powerful', and inaccessible for the poor and marginalised. The lower judiciary is often considered as ill-informed of the law, particularly with regard to women's empowerment provision, while a lack of awareness of one's rights and how the police and courts system work plays against women. There is a lack of political will and political party manifestos do not clearly spell out their gender policy mandates, with negligible funds to

[30] Dawn (2018), 'For PML-N, only family seems to matter', 14 June; The Express Tribune (2018), 'How reserved seats for women are reserved for privileged', 12 July

[31] Article 4 of the Constitution of AJ&K, AJ&K Commission on the Status of Women Act 2014; a Policy Framework for Women Empowerment and Gender Equality; AJ&K Baseline Document 2018.

[32] HRCP, p. 119.

gender issues. Societal attitudes and fear of reprisal due to customs and norms restrict people, particularly women and girls from going out of their house in Balochistan. In tribal areas particularly, women's mobility is restricted and they are confined to the domestic sphere, further restricting opportunities for participation in economic, political and social processes.[33]

Legal framework and Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

Legal framework

Deeply embedded in social norms, gender inequality has been institutionalised through Pakistan' systems and laws. The fact that some customary laws co-exist alongside codified law has raised concerns from treaty bodies. For example, despite progressive codified legislations (for example, the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961, the Family Courts Act, 1964, the Family Courts (Amendment) Ordinance 2002, (Ordinance LV of 2002)) on family and marriage, these are not observed in various regions of Pakistan where customary laws dominate social values. To illustrate the harm that this can have, although Article 23 of the Constitution gives women the legal right to own and dispose of property, according to customary practices, women have only usufructuary rights over land.[34] Even when women do own property, it is the husband who manages it.[35]

Pakistan has adopted and is party to key international commitments on gender equality and women's rights including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[36] Local commitments adopted include Gender Equality Policy Frameworks and Women's Empowerment Packages and Initiatives.[37] What's more, efforts to promote gender equality are also apparent within Pakistan's Vision 2025.

The influence of religious leaders on political and social norms can however be seen through the actions taken by the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) which delegitimised legal frameworks and commitments and restricted women's rights groups working to advance and implement these. For example, in January 2016, the CII rejected a bill to ban girls under 18 from marrying and punish those carrying out child marriages. The CII called the efforts to ban child marriages "blasphemous" and anti-Islamic. On 20 August 2016, the CII rejected a bill criminalising domestic violence, which was passed by the KPK provincial government.[38]

Women, Peace and Security

The WPS agenda, and in particular UN Security Council Resolution 1325, calls for increased women's participation in decision-making and the incorporation of a gender perspective in

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[33] LEAD Pakistan (2017), 'Sustainable Development Goal 5: A Legislative and Policy Gap Analysis for Balochistan', October, pp:3-6

[34] Usufructuary right is defined 'as the legal right to use someone else's property temporarily and to keep any profit made from it' (Cambridge online dictionary), it represents the right to use property and to collect income from it without owning it. The right to usufruct is temporary.

[35] The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) (n/d), 'Gender and Land Rights Database, Pakistan'.

[36] National commitments in place include a National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women, Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offences in the name or pretext of Honour) Act, Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offences Relating to Rape), a Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act in 2018, and National Plan of Action on Human Rights. There is however no National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security despite commitment by civil society to have one.

[37] UN Women (2020), 'Gendered Impact and Implications in Pakistan'

[38] Civicus (2016), 'Civil society working on women's rights in Pakistan restricted by Council of Islamic Ideology', September.

response to conflict and post-conflict reconstruction/peacebuilding. In conflict situations, gender hierarchies and power inequities exacerbate insecurity for women and girls in particular, and the consequences of conflict for women, men and wider marginalised groups differ in their severity. Gender norms, roles, responsibilities and expectations also shift significantly in these contexts, as demonstrated below.

This was particularly visible in KPK and the tribal belt of Pakistan in the early 2000s as illustrated under Driver 2 (see below). However, women from Swat, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Provincially Administered Tribal Area (PATA) regions played an important role as conflict actors and peacemakers alike. In some cases, women took up arms to protect their homes or to avenge the murders of husbands, fathers or sons. However, they relied primarily on peaceful means to defy jihadist intimidation and repression. Many women flouted militant bans on females leaving their homes, in order to fetch water and other necessities, unaccompanied by a man guardian. In Swat and FATA, girls and their teachers found ways to circumvent prohibitions on girls' education, including by holding classes at teachers' homes. Despite militant threats, women professionals also continued working with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) delivering health and other services.[39] The cumulative effect of these actions was to mitigate, though not fully break, the fear spread by jihadists in society. Widows and their female relatives, for instance, took the lead in ensuring community support for families of victims of Taliban violence, and attended funerals of those killed by the Taliban as an act of defiance.

Women's participation in formal mediation, negotiation and peacebuilding efforts is quite low in Pakistan. There seems to be an underlying assumption that women do not have the wide-ranging skills necessary for higher levels of mediation.[40] At the Track I (state) level, the low numbers of women with prior diplomatic and policy experiences (as highlighted above) is reflected in lower numbers of women in high-level and formal peace processes. This can also be seen in the number of women representatives for the Pakistani side for Track II (civil society) and Track 1.5 dialogue processes.[41] At the Track II and Track IV (community mediation) levels, women coming from remote regions and conflict contexts (including KPK or AJK by the Line of Control (LoC)), are often lacking the connections and networks required to advance peacebuilding or facing increased pressures to conform to certain norms in order to carry out their work.[42]

[39] International Crisis Group (2022), 'Women and Peacebuilding in Pakistan's North West', February, p. 11.

[40] Nikhat Sattar (2019), 'Women Peace mediators', Dawn, 4 March

[41] This statement is informed by Conciliation Resources' own experience in coordinating a Track 1.5 dialogue process between India-Pakistan, which only has one woman member for four male members on the Pakistani side. It also considered past Track II initiative (Neemrana Dialogue), the Chaopraya Track II dialogue process.

[42] This is evidenced by Atia Anwar Zoon' story within the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth's latest report Conciliation Resources (CR), Women Mediators across the Commonwealth (WMC) (2021), 'Beyond the Vertical: What enables Women Mediators to Mediate', p.8 and p.14

Gendered analysis of drivers of conflict and instability

This report will not provide an exhaustive list of gendered drivers of conflict and instability in Pakistan, and instead focuses on issues that might be more relevant for CSSF programming. This includes exploring how a lack of opportunities or access to rights are exacerbating women', girls' and other minority groups' vulnerability to violence and conflict (1); the specific threats of the rise in religious extremism and terrorism (2); serious and organised crime, terrorism and cross-border criminality (3); and climate change as a driver of conflict and inequalities (4). Drivers of conflict and instability at the regional level and with neighbouring countries will be explored further in a separate regional gender and conflict analysis covering Pakistan, Afghanistan and India. For each driver, this report provides a gendered analysis of the factors contributing to it, the key actors, the gendered impacts and opportunities for change which may guide CSSF programming and decision-making. To the extent possible and where data is available, an intersectional lens has been adopted. The starting point of our analysis is that the gendered drivers of conflict in Pakistan are embedded in structural inequalities and sustained by traditional social norms, roles, attitudes and expectations, as highlighted in the preceding sections.

1

Socio-economic and political exclusion and marginalisation of women, girls and minority groups

In this section, we will explore through a gender lens what is causing the socio-economic and political exclusion and marginalisation of women, girls and minorities and how this is in turn making them more vulnerable to violence and conflict. We will also look at the opportunities for change.

Factors behind women, girls and minority groups' exclusion

Women suffer from a multidimensional inequality of opportunities in Pakistan society.[43] As explored in preceding sections, some of this is linked to the patriarchal nature of the society and embedded norms and values, while existing inequalities are further exacerbating sociocultural differences and disparities in access to rights and services, magnifying the gender divide in conflict and crisis scenarios.[44] Women's underrepresentation in legislatures is also seen as a factor of inequity, and Pakistan continues to rank very low on global gender indices.[45]

[43] UNDP (2021), 'Pakistan National Human Development Report 2020'.

[44] USIP (2017), 'Women Peace and Security in Pakistan', February

[45] 153 out of 156 countries assessed in the World Economics Forum Global Gender Gap Index of 2021 with a widening gender gap compared to previous year. Its Gender Development Index (GDI) value is

Overall inequalities are highest in Punjab province, followed by Sindh, KPK, and finally Balochistan. However, Gender Inequality Index shows that Punjab performs better than the national average, followed by Sindh, KPK and Balochistan.[46]

Gender inequalities and systemic social exclusion have adversely impacted women's agency to exercise their rights – this is especially true for those coming from marginalised families and groups. Further patriarchal norms and customs reinforce discrimination against certain groups based on identity, representation and region of residence. Women's mobility is already constrained due to social norms and time constraints as women spend more time at home caring for other household members and looking after the house, which limits their ability to work outside the home.[47] Further, Pakistan's cities are often not 'gender-friendly' owing to an exclusive 'street culture' dominated by men. Workplaces, transport, marketplaces, public buildings and even family spaces like parks and entertainment areas primarily cater to men's mobility, access, usage and purpose.[48]

Women's access to key services such as education and health is also limited. Girls are less likely to attend school, with an estimated 12.5 million girls out of school, and only 12 per cent of young women (15–29 years old) completing middle-level education in Pakistan – meaning less opportunities for meaningful future employment.[49] The majority of families in rural areas of Pakistan do not allow their daughters to go to school, which has created a huge education disparity between rural and urban women. In deciding whether a girl should attend school key determining factors for a family include the cost of girls attending schools versus the opportunity cost of losing their labour (at home, for example); distance between school and home; and the quality of school facilities (including safe water supply and separate toilet facilities) – all of which would, in comparison, not be deciding factors for a young boy's attendance.

Women have less access and control over financial and physical assets (for example, houses and land), with 68 per cent of women financially excluded from accessing beneficial financial products and services that cater to business and household needs compared to 42 per cent of men.[50] Women own only 2 per cent of land Pakistan,[51] and in rural contexts these are usually smaller land holdings with crops that are less remunerative, and with lower yields. Although Article 23 of the Constitution underscores that every citizen has the right to acquire, hold and dispose of property, women in Pakistan often find it difficult to exercise these rights in practice due to customary laws.[52] Finally, only 76 per cent of women have been issued a computerised national identity card (CNIC), compared to 91 per cent of men, which means less access to certain reparation services or government subsidies.[53]

All of these factors make it more difficult for women to access leadership positions at the political level and in turn influence legislation (as highlighted in the Context part of the report). It

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0.777 putting it in the lowest of the index's five categories from UNDP. In 2019, Pakistan ranked 135 (out of 162 countries) on the Gender Inequality Index (GII) - highlighting the loss in human development caused by gender inequality.

[46] When it comes to Provincial Gender Inequality Index, Punjab performs best, followed by Sindh, KPK and Balochistan. UNDP (2020), 'Pakistan National Human Development Report 2020'.

[47] Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2009), 'Time Use Survey 2007'.

[48] UNDP Pakistan National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) (2022), 'Climate Equity: Women as Agents of Change', p.54

[49] Lower literacy levels for women (52.4% vs 72.5% for men), lower enrolment rates and educational attainment, from UN Women, Gendered Impact and Implications of COVID-19 in Pakistan, 2020; UNDP (2020), 'Pakistan National Human Development Report 2020'.

[50] State Bank of Pakistan Data.

[51] Ministry of Human Rights, NCSW, and UN Women (n.d.) 'Gendered Impact and Implications of COVID-19 in Pakistan'

[52] UNDP (2020), 'Pakistan National Human Development Report 2020'.

[53] State Bank of Pakistan Data.

also makes them more vulnerable to GBV, particularly in situation of tension or conflict, when they are more exposed sexual abuse with long-term consequences. It also means that they tend to be absent from conflict resolution efforts and opportunities for mediation and longer-term peacebuilding.[54] The impact crisis and conflict can have on them (loss of livelihood, absence of relatives, exacerbated vulnerabilities, as highlighted below and under Driver 2) can also encourage women to either organise to resist violence or directly and indirectly engage in conflict.

Gender-based violence (GBV) and the gender impact of conflict

While Pakistani society is demographically heterogeneous and the status of women varies depending on region and socio-economic position, GBV affects women and girls across the country. The prevailing gender norms inextricably linking women to the notion of honour (highlighted in the Context section) are held in high esteem in the conservative society of Pakistan and are the predominant drivers of GBV.

As rape is considered a social stigma for survivors,[55] cases remain largely unreported – but, along with honour killing, they are known to be in large numbers. 430 cases of honour killings were recorded by the HRCP in 2020, involving 148 male and 363 female victims.[56] GBV and forced early marriages are the leading factors behind suicidal tendencies in women and girls. HRCP estimates that more than 10,000 women are victims of violence every year, while between 70 and 80 per cent of women in Pakistan are estimated to have experienced domestic violence at least once in their lives.[57] In urban areas, the tendency to report crimes against women is higher than in rural areas, but so is the phenomenon of psychological violence, which is not reported.[58] GBV and the underlying factors of these forms of violence manifest in the forms of '*watta satta*'[59] and '*wanni*'[60] in Punjab and Sindh and *'swara*'[61], '*ghag*'[62] , or '*walwar*'[63] in KPK and Balochistan's Pashtun-populated districts, while cases of stove burning and immolation have been recorded in Punjab. Sexual harassment and rape also remained a source of concern for women and children in AJK, especially in rural areas close to the LoC. Most victims of harassment and rape avoid reporting incidents to avoid victim blaming, or because of the risk of unreliable investigations and weak and insensitive systems of redress – both statutory and customary / informal.

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[54] Nikhat Sattar (2019), 'Women Peace mediators', Dawn, 4 March

[55] Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2020), 'State of Human Rights in 2020', https://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/website-version-HRCP-AR-2020-5-8-21_removed.pdf, p. 161

[56] 189 honour killings from Punjab involving 226 victim (37 male and 189 female victims); 26 honour killings from KPK, involving 42 victims (21 male and 21 female victims); 197 honour killings from Sindh involving 215 victims (136 women and 79 men). HRCP (2020), 'The State of Human Rights in 2020', p.24

[57] HRCP as well as an informal study conducted by the Women's Ministry concluded that at least 80 percent of all women in Pakistan are subjected to domestic violence. HRCP (2020), 'The State of Human Rights in 2020', p.130

[58] Sabir Shah (2021), 'An overview of crimes against women in Pakistan', *The Tribune*, July 28.

[59] Watta Satta is an exchange marriage within the families, quite prevalent across Pakistan.

[60] *Wani*, found in Punjab, is a form of arranged or forced marriage and result of a punishment decided by a council of community elders.

[61] *Swara* is a practice prevalent in Pashtun rural areas. Girls, often minors, are given in marriage to an aggrieved family as compensation to end disputes, often murder.

[62] *Ghag* means a custom in which a person forcibly demands or claims the hand of a woman without her own or her parents will by making an open declaration that the woman shall stand engaged to him and no other man shall make a marriage proposal to her; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elimination of Custom of Ghag Act 2013.

[63] *Walwar* is a girl married in exchange of money by would-be groom's family.

Compounded vulnerabilities

Compounded with factors such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion and (dis)ability status, we can see how certain groups are further marginalised in Pakistan society. Sexual and gender minorities face a higher rate of discrimination and violence than men and women due to traditional social norms and beliefs. Many are deprived of their rights to basic health care, education, employment, political participation and inheritance.[64] Direct violent attacks on transgender women occur in all provinces. Since 2015, at least 65 transgender women have been killed in KPK. In April 2020, a 15-year-old transgender boy was gang-raped and killed in Faisalabad district (Punjab), and in July 2021 an unidentified gunman in Rawalpindi district (Punjab) killed a transgender woman.[65] An unidentified assailant fatally shot a transgender woman activist in Peshawar in September 2021 and the murder prompted widespread condemnation on social media.[66]

Social exclusion due to religion also reinforces gender- and class-based marginalisation, with religious minorities facing social intolerance and lacking adequate support structures to protect their rights. As a result, every year approximately 1,000 girls belonging to Christian and Hindu communities are converted to Islam and forced to marry Muslim men.[67] Furthermore, women living with disabilities face increased vulnerability to sexual harassment, forced sterilisation or menstrual suppression, and greater discrimination when seeking marriage, compared to men with disabilities.[68] Finally, available research suggests that young girls from poverty-stricken families remain the most vulnerable group and easy targets for clandestine rackets engaged in human trafficking and smuggling of migrants.[69]

Gendered impacts of conflict and crisis

The Covid-19 pandemic drove an increase in domestic and online violence complaints registered by the HRCP, indicating increased vulnerability of women due to social isolation, closure of shelter homes, reduced access to health care for victims of GBV and insufficient protection responses from the federal and provincial governments.[70] The pandemic further exacerbated women's already precarious working conditions and access to relief programmes which is a core pillar of the WPS agenda. Women, who mostly work in the informal sector in Pakistan, were the first to be laid off, and could not register under the Ehsaas programme (a social safety and poverty alleviation programme launched by the Government in 2019) as they did not have CNICs.[71] Regions facing stricter lockdowns such as AJK saw their economies even more affected than others, exacerbating and deepening inequality between men and women. In AJK, the compounding impacts on women encompass social and economic dimensions, increased burdens of unpaid work, a rise in domestic violence and increased negative effects on women's emotional and psychological wellbeing.[72]

There is a considerable physical, financial and emotional cost for women living in or fleeing conflict-affected regions of Pakistan. As highlighted under Driver 2, many women living in Swat lost a father, husband or son who joined the militants, died in combat or "disappeared"

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[64] UN Women, Gendered Impact and Implications in Pakistan.

[65] Human Rights Watch (2021), 2021 Country Report Pakistan,

[66] Human Rights Watch (2021), 2021 Country Report Pakistan,

[67] US Commission on International Religious Freedom, December 2020

[68] UNDP (2020), Pakistan National Human Development Report, p. 33.

[69] UNODC, 2021, p. 6.

[70] 'HRCP, Webinar on 'Covid-19: Gender-based violence data and why it matters' held in December 2021 following a 2020 report.

[71] UNDP (2020), 'Pakistan National Human Development Report 2020', p. 34.

[72] Atia Anwer Zoon (2021), 'The Impact of COVID-19 on Women of AJK', Kashmir Institute of International Relations

(kidnapped for ransom or held in a military-run internment centre). With already scarce livelihoods worsening because of military operations or militant violence, many men have also left to work elsewhere in the country or abroad. Women left behind are then largely dependent on their extended families, but without a husband or a son to represent them, their needs, including healthcare and other necessities, are often neglected.[73] In AJK, since the 1990s heavy cross-LoC shelling and firing has impacted the lives of everyone living by the LoC, with a more profound and multidimensional effect on women, as highlighted in a report from Neelum Valley.[74] While women have been profoundly affected by the Kashmir conflict, their narrative, role and voices are missing in any dialogue or peacebuilding processes in Kashmir.[75] Very few analyses of the Kashmir conflict are gender sensitive, and the potential role women could play in building bridges in and across Kashmir as an important civil society actor and a major stakeholder in strategic peacebuilding is often overlooked.

Notions of masculinity in Pakistan (as defined in the Context section above) create expectations that men should be primary breadwinners and should in situations of conflict express their masculine authority by taking up arms to defend their community or supporting militarised solutions to violence. National military institutions back up this messaging and idealise men as warriors, echoing both faith and customary decision-making systems.[76] More research could be done into the role played by military institutions in channelling these images of masculinity and their implications on conflict drivers including at the regional level.

Opportunities for women and vulnerable groups to meaningfully participate in democratic processes, dialogue and peacebuilding

The United States Institute of Peace's (USIP) 2017 report on WPS in Pakistan provides three main recommendations for increasing meaningful participation. Firstly, there is a need to engage young people by helping to transform harmful narratives around gender roles and eliminating gender stereotypes, while recognising that both young men and women need to be provided with social and political forums in which they can engage in dialogue and discussion on matters related to national security and foreign policy. Secondly, the role of the media should be harnessed, recognising its ability to change stereotypes and garner support to address pressing issues across the country. Finally, women's networks locally and regionally require more targeted support; this includes bringing together women leaders from neighbouring countries (for example, the Women's Regional Network (WRN), a network of Pakistani, Indian, and Afghan women leaders working to resolve peace and security issues that affect women and girls in the region). Similarly, local networks of women such as Aman or Nisa, Nisa being based in FATA, advocate for peace and contribute to the struggle against extremism in Pakistan, and could benefit from increased support.

Drawing from Conciliation Resources' experience working on peacebuilding issues between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, we have identified the following opportunities to advance women's participation in peacebuilding in Pakistan: working with the media including social media to provide safe spaces for women and other excluded groups to participate in political dialogue; engaging with retired politicians, diplomats and military officers (some of whom are women) in high-level peacebuilding processes; strengthening the networks of active and informed civil society, including women's led organisations; and exploring working with the

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[73] International Crisis Group (2015), 'Women, Violence and Conflict in Pakistan', April

[74] Atia Anwer Zoon (2017), 'Voices Unheard, Stories Untold: The Plight of Women in Neelum Valley - AJK', *Kashmir Institute of International Relations*

[75] Shaheen Akhtar (2013), 'AJK Women and Strategic Peace building in Kashmir', *Regional Studies*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1, Winter

[76] Findings from a Gender Conflict Analysis facilitated by Conciliation Resources in 2017 with key thinkers and participants from Pakistan government and civil society.

private sector to support women's leadership and employment diversity.[77] At the community level, finding ways to enhance the voice and break the isolation of marginalised groups – including women, young people, and people living by the LoC – is critical. This requires analysing conflicts with a gender perspective, strengthening the capacities of local CSOs and community networks to foster local capacities for peace and advocate for the rights and representation of women in peace structures and political processes.[78]

2

The rise of religious extremism and terrorism

The rise of religious extremism and terrorism in Pakistan is linked to regional factors including the rise of religious nationalism in neighbouring Iran and Afghanistan (from the 1980s), the Afghan Jihad (1980s)[79], the impact of the global war on terror,[80] the rise of Islamophobia in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, and the rise of Hindu nationalism in India (in the 1990s and 2000s). These factors have in different ways enabled violent terror groups and non-state actors in Pakistan to exploit existing religious and sectarian fault lines, people's religious sentiments and anger, and increase their influence in society. From the early 2000s, religious Jihadi organisations in KPK began targeting civilian and security forces in Pakistan, and merged together under the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) umbrella, whose main objective was to expel US and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) forces from Afghanistan and to enforce Sharia law in Pakistan.

The Pakistani province of KPK shares an international border with Afghanistan and the people living on both sides of the border belong to the same tribes, living on one side while having relatives and jobs on the other side. This affinity explains how KPK has been directly influenced by Afghan culture. In tribal settings where the society is mainly conservative, these cultural similarities have had a significant impact on women's empowerment (or lack thereof). Instances of gender discrimination increased – based on conservative cultural traditions, religious teaching and gender prejudices – but so too did poverty. Interpretation of familial relations is often derived from the Quran, strengthening it with the tribal code '*Pakhtunewall*'[81] , a hybridised compromise of religion and a tribal code of masculinity. It mostly negates female rights,[82] while it portrays an image of strength and bravery for men. This prevailing cultural

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[77] Findings from a Gender Conflict Analysis facilitated by Conciliation Resources in 2017 with key thinkers and participants from Pakistan government and civil society.

[78] Atia Anwer Zoon (2017), 'Voices Unheard, Stories Untold: The Plight of Women in Neelum Valley - AJK', *Kashmir Institute of International Relations*, p.8

[79] The US-URSS proxy war in Afghanistan in 1980s gave birth to a generation of 'Jihadists' in Pakistan and Afghanistan, propagating religious extremism. When the Taliban gained power in Afghanistan in the early 2000s, they imposed draconian laws curtailing women' role and denying their rights, including limiting their access to education, employment and their mobility.

[80] 9/11 and the subsequent fall of the Taliban government in neighbouring Afghanistan saw the proliferation of Jihadi organizations in KPK and FATA region of Pakistan with the Tanzeem-i-Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Muhammadi (TNSM) and Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) gaining influence especially in Swat.

[81] Pashtunwali or Pakhtunwali is a non-written ethical code about tribal traditions, which is followed by Pashtun people. It is a system of law and governance that began in prehistoric times and is valid even today, especially in rural tribal areas. It is a set of customs and manners of the Afghan tribes. It originated in the pre-Islamic era. Every Pashtun feels pride in following it whether he lives in Afghanistan, Pakistan or any other place. Aftab Yasmeen Ali (2013), 'Understanding Pashtunwali' *The Nation*, August 6

[82] H. Ahmed-Ghosh (2013), 'A History of Women in Afghanistan: Lessons learnt for the Future or Yesterdays and Tomorrow', Journal of International Women's Studies, 4, no. 3

environment has made women exceptionally vulnerable to abuse, and men more prone to violence.

The role of women in violent extremism and terrorism in Pakistan

The role of women in violent extremism and terrorism is multifaceted. In Pakistan, women have been both victims and active agents in promoting the spread of extremist ideologies. They have also played a role in its prevention and building interfaith harmony within their communities. For the purpose of this report, the role of men and perception on masculinity has not been delved into in detail.

The literature shows that women tend to be less actively engaged in violent jihad[83] but have provided key ideological support and contributed through donations. During the Afghan jihad, women provided logistical and financial support to the mujahideen but were usually confined to the private sphere. After the formation of the TTP, women's roles became more diversified as the emir Mullah Fazlullah focused on women as an active support base through his radio broadcasts in the Swat region, urging them to sell their jewellery to raise funds for the organisation. His messaging focused on social injustice and the exclusion of women and used Islamic sermons to discuss rulings on women's rights, such as the role of being a good wife, inheritance, and polygamy, garnering support from women.[84] Women also made suicide jackets for men, acted as informants and raised funds for the group's operations. Interestingly, Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD, previously known as Lashkar-e-Taiba) heavily relied on women's traditional 'feminine' roles as mothers and wives, but did not encourage them to engage in violence.[85] In September 2017, the TTP released Sunnat-e-Khaula, its first English-language magazine targeted towards women, which urged them to wage jihad by carrying out physical training in using weapons and grenades, distributing the group's propaganda and training their children.

The literature also shows evidence of gender roles changing or deviating from what would be expected in the face of rising religious extremism. For instance, in a sharp departure from social and cultural constraints on female mobility, women in some situations took the lead in negotiating with the Taliban, advocating for their men relatives' release at times of abduction. Concerned about the spread of militancy, women often also worked proactively to counter Taliban recruitment of family members, by dissuading sons from joining the militancy, or being trained for suicide bombing.[86] Samina Afridi, a Peshawar-based academic from Khyber district, noted: "*Militant commanders had charisma and power. Many young men in Waziristan were emulating them and would see them as role models. Mothers would move the sons out of Taliban-controlled areas so that they wouldn't fall under militant influence*". Zainab Azmat, an activist from South Waziristan (FATA's representative to the NSCW) cited the example of a woman who *"sat outside the mosque, where the trainers had a base, every day and would quote from Islamic teachings to say that her son cannot be trained for conflict without her permission*".

In FATA, women began to organise for change working through civil society structures. A number of tribal women's networks and forums emerged, including *Taqra Qabaili Khwende* and *Qabaili Khor*. Taqra Qabaili Khwende appointed a man focal person in each tribal agency and

[83] There are expectations such as the role played by female students in the Lal Masjid incidents of 2006-2007 and the recent female suicide bomber from the Baloch Liberation Army

[84] Khattak, Shabana Shamaas Gul, 'The War on Terror is a War on Women: The Impact of Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism on Women's Education in Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Pakistan)', Journal of International Women's Studies, 19(6), 2018, p. 165.

[85] Sara Mahmood (2019), 'Negating Stereotypes: Women, Gender, and Terrorism in Indonesia and Pakistan', p.14.

[86] International Crisis Group (2022), 'Women and Peacebuilding in Pakistan's North West', February, pp.11-13

frontier region, who enjoyed sufficient trust among and access to women in his area. Women lobbied with political party leaders for reserved seats for FATA's women in the federal parliament. Women activists' ultimate targets, however, were the repeal of colonial-era laws and an end to *rewaj*.[87]

Mainstream media and policymakers however still provide an overwhelmingly gendered explanation when it comes to men and women's participation in violent extremism aligned to traditional norms and culture. Within this logic, men are motivated to join violent terror groups for political reasons, to fight against the persecution of Muslims, and to defend the ideology or goals of their organisations. Women provide a more supportive function by assisting the men in defending and facilitating violence through supplementary functions or to aid personal motivations, such as finding a husband, protecting children or taking revenge for atrocities against families. Compared to other contexts faced with violent extremism, however, women in Pakistan were keener to protect their sons and dissuade them from joining armed groups (as highlighted above), while the phenomenon of women driving expectations that other women should be 'martyrs' brides' was not as prevalent in Pakistan. For example, while Taliban commanders attempted to force women whose husbands were killed in militant attacks to re-marry in the militants' families, scores of widows refused. This is despite Pashtun tribal customs compelling a widow to remarry into her husband's family, and at a time when many families had at least one militant family member.[88]

This analysis and understanding of the situation not only underestimates women's own motivation in joining violent terror groups, but can overlook some of the critical drivers behind the rise of extremist ideologies. It is important to understand the social and political conditions behind women joining radical Islamist groups and under what circumstances they oppose it. The literature suggests that women are often more religious than men and that makes them more vulnerable to the Islamist propaganda of Jihadi militant groups. However, women's levels of exposure to Islamist organisations, affiliation with religion-political parties and ties with religious institutions play a role in women's decisions to participate in militant activities.[89] Women engaged in violent terror groups remain unnoticed and invisible because they are not visible in the public sphere and use private social gatherings and home visits to carry out their agendas while broader society continues to believe that violent extremism, like war, is man's domain.[90]

Gendered impact of the rise of religious extremism and terrorism

The shared border between KPK and Afghanistan, and in particular, the tribal regions of FATA and Swat, have been strongly influenced by the years of Taliban rule in Afghanistan and by religious political parties. This form of religious extremism and terrorism has strongly affected women's mobility as well as their access to health care, education and livelihoods, and ultimately household incomes.[91] For example in Swat and (now ex-) FATA regions, social lives and landscapes were profoundly altered by Taliban rule and women were confined to a very traditional role, but the literature shows that customary laws had a more profound effect on women's lives than the later rise of the jihadists.[92] Both are further explored below.

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[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Farzana Bari (2010), 'Gender Perception and Impact of Terrorism/ Talibanization in Pakistan', Heinrich Boll Stiftung.

[90] Mossarat Qadeem (2019), 'Preventing and Countering Women's Participation in Violent Extremism in Pakistan: A Practitioner's Perspective', December.

[91] USIP (2017), 'Women Peace and Security in Pakistan'.

[92] International Crisis Group (2022), 'Women and Peacebuilding in Pakistan's North West', February

In Swat, the Taliban banned women from working altogether and from leaving the house unless accompanied by a man family member (*mehram*). In January 2009, they banned girls from going to school, forcing 900 schools to close or stop enrolment for girl pupils.[93] Girls' schools were targeted, attacked, bombed and destroyed by the Taliban, who perceived modern education as a threat to religious orthodoxy.[94] Militants also threatened women healthcare workers in hospitals, while women employees of international NGOs were forced to wear the veil (burqa) and were prohibited or discouraged from working away from their homes. One such example was the NGO Khwendo Kor which became the militants' target allegedly for educating and empowering women and girls through opening community-based girls' schools, and whose staff were threatened and targeted with grenades.[95] Additionally, women could not conduct daily household activities such as walking to riverbanks to wash clothes, collect water and firewood, and visit graveyards and shrines – where they would traditionally socialise with other women and establish a support network. This rendered them further isolated.

Interestingly, Taliban restrictions on women's mobility resulted in a tremendous increase in men's workload. All unpaid work that women used to undertake (work in agriculture fields, fetching water and fuel, washing clothes on riversides and taking animals for grazing) were shifted to men, who lost control over women's free domestic labour too. Men also had to ensure that at least one man was always present at home in case women had to go out. This created tension given that men were keen to 'dominate and control their wives and womenfolk, (but) they were not willing to let go of their own power'.[96]

The merger of FATA and PATA into KPK province in 2018 meant that basic constitutional protections could now apply across the region, including national laws prioritising women's security, political and economic empowerment over customary laws.[97] Before 2018, there was a *rewaj* or customary law that allowed for child and forced marriages and *swara* (giving away women, mainly minors, to settle disputes) – this was dispensed by *jirgas.*[98] The Frontier Crimes Regulation (which still applied before 2018) not only failed to protect women from the worst *rewaj* abuses but also discriminated against them. In its only reference to gender, the Regulation subjected any woman committing adultery to up to five years' imprisonment and/or a fine, a sanction not applicable to infidelity by men. *Jirgas* endorsed abuses against women, including *swara*, rape and so-called honour killings. *Maliks* also used *jirgas* to curtail women's social, political and economic mobility. Following their *jirga*'s directives, for instance, tribal followers might threaten to burn the homes of families that allowed women to work or to participate in politics. Militants exploited anger at *rewaj's* abuses to win the support of women in the tribal belt.

Opportunities to address findings and promote gender equality in programming

Better understanding men and women's role and influence in the spread of religious extremism and terrorism is useful for programming but also fundamental in addressing the root causes of conflict that lead to it. The below is based on a non-exhaustive desk review and recognises the risk that countering violent extremism (CVE) approaches that leverage women's movements and activism can delegitimise these groups or co-opt their agendas.

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[93] Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2010), 'State of Human Rights in 2010', p.270.

[94] Bari, F., (2015), 'Gender Perception and Impact of Terrorism'.

[95] Riaz Ahmad (2013), 'Aid Workers Targeted? Armed men Storm Khwendo Kor Office', The Tribune, April 21: https://tribune.com.pk/story/538420/aid-workers-targeted-armed-men-storm-khwendo-kor-office/

[96] International Crisis Group (2022), 'Women and Peacebuilding in Pakistan's North West', February.

[97] Ibid.

[98] The male elders or *maliks* running the j*irgas*, who derived their position from a hereditary patriarchal lineage and Muslim clerics were the interpreters of *rewaj*

Although women have been amongst the main targets of militants' efforts to impose ultraorthodox Islam, they have been consistently excluded from military-led negotiations. Gender perspectives are also largely absent from state strategies to counter violent extremism more generally.[99] Nevertheless, women in Pakistan's tribal belt have long been at the forefront of activism to bring peace and security in the region, as illustrated earlier, with the conflict contexts explored raising awareness and providing opportunities (albeit limited) for women's activism. For example, women started questioning the constraints placed on their mobility when in internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps in KPK, and why 'their men were holding them back'. Exposure to other contexts through activism has also raised women's awareness of the causes of conflict at home, which they began to see as a product of misrule by the state, its bureaucracy and allied tribal elites.[100]

Through our desk review, we identified two interesting processes which could be leveraged by CSSF. The first is the Paigham-i-Pakistan Declaration (2018),[101] a joint declaration signed by 4,000 clerics from all schools of thought who declared suicide attacks absolutely prohibited (*haram qat'i*), condemned 'sectarian hatred', and urged intellectual jihad against extremist mindsets – especially in educational institutions. The declaration provides an illustration of how religious institutions were engaged to also highlight commitments to women's rights (including voting, education and employment) and condemn the destruction of girls' schools as contrary to human values, Islamic teachings and the law of the land. The second is the National Security Policy of Pakistan (2021),[102] which places a significant emphasis on promoting the WPS agenda and ensuring the 'integration of gender equity into national security narratives through full and meaningful participation of women in decision-making, law enforcement, justice sector, and peacekeeping'.

3

Organised crime and cross-border criminality as a threat

This second driver relates to the rise in the incidence of organised crime, including human trafficking, child sexual abuse, illegal drugs and firearms trade and terror-crime which are affecting domestic and cross-border security and stability in Pakistan. Bringing a gender-sensitive and intergenerational lens to the reflection on organised crime debates is key to identifying needs, patterns, trends and drivers to target assistance in ways that are meaningful and cognisant of both women and men's experiences.[103]

Gendered drivers behind serious and organised crime

The literature available on this subject (including in Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) reports) tends to suggest that social norms, poverty and the search for better livelihood opportunities are key factors in explaining the gender drivers behind serious and organised crimes.

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[99] International Crisis Group (2015), 'Women, Violence and Conflict in Pakistan', Asia Report

[100] International Crisis Group, *Women and Peacebuilding.*

[101] Islamic Research Institute (2018), International Islamic University, Paigham-e-Pakistan

[102] National Security Policy of Pakistan 2022-2026, https://onsa.gov.pk/assets/documents/polisy.pdf

[103] United Nations (2019), 'Gender and Organised Crime',.p. 7.

The rise in trafficking of women and girls as well as in child sexual abuse in Pakistan.

Pakistan is a source, transit and destination country for trafficking in persons.[104] An estimated 300,000 people are trafficked from Pakistan each year,[105] while children from lower- and middle-income countries such as Bangladesh and Myanmar are trafficked into Pakistan for sale. The issue of trafficking ranges from sex trafficking, forced child labour, bonded labour, domestic servitude, forced begging and child, early and forced marriage. Economically vulnerable women and underage girls are targeted in particular,[106] and the literature shows that a significant number of women involved in agriculture and micro-enterprises were found to be victims of sex trafficking and bonded labour, subjected to sexual abuse and often receiving meagre or no wages at all. Pakistan is predominantly a rural country where 9.1 million women agricultural workers face particular vulnerabilities. While they play a substantial role in food production and food security, they are largely unpaid, suffer from longer working hours, and are far more vulnerable to exploitation than men.[107] Furthermore, of an estimated 20 million home-based workers (HBWs) in Pakistan, 12 million are women, accounting for 65 per cent of the PKR 400 billion (US$2.8 billion) that HBWs contribute to Pakistan's economy. They receive low wages and are denied legal protection and social security,[108] making them easier prey for trafficking.

Another factor is the practice of girl brides, whereby 'clients' from different parts of Pakistan and abroad marry or purchase young girls from economically impoverished areas where the trade takes place in the name of bride-price custom [109]. Child marriage is exacerbated due to deeply entrenched patriarchal norms and the belief that the younger the girl, the easier it is to condition her to obey and serve her husband and in-laws as well as by family practices (arranged marriages, which are frequent, and marriages among families or tribes (*addo baddo)* which are still common) and by traditional harmful practice (*swara*, *badl* or *watta satta*, *pait likkhi*). Religion also plays a role with the requirement to marry off daughters once they reach puberty as a desire to protect a girls' honour. Other factors include poverty and the level of education whereby some girls drop out of school early, placing them at heightened vulnerability to child marriage.[110]

In many cases, fake *nikahs* (formal marriage contract in Islam that requires the consent of both groom and bride) are performed to validate the transactions and avoid any legal repercussions. Traffickers are particularly interested in minors as they can easily be trained, controlled and yield long-term benefits. Recently, media reports showed that hundreds of Pakistani girls had been sold as brides and were trafficked externally for labour and sexual exploitation, including Pakistani Christian girls trafficked to China as brides[111]. At the transnational level, sex trafficking occurs in the Middle East, where women are trafficked from developing countries such as Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka for the purposes of forced marriages, prostitution and the sex trade.

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[104] "Modern slavery: HRCP report on trafficking in women and girls", Press Release

[105] World Bank. (2018). A migrant's journey for better opportunities: The case of Pakistan

[106] HRCP, Modern Slavery Trafficking in women and girls in Pakistan, 2022. p.10.

[107] UNDP, Pakistan National Human Development Report, 2020.

[108] UN Women's Status Report, 2016 on Women's Economic Participation and Empowerment in Pakistan

[109] Noor Education Trust. (2008). Brides for sale: Internal trafficking nexus at a glance

[110] Girls not Bride Pakistan, https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/child-marriage-atlas/atlas/pakistan/

[111] AP News, "Pakistani Christian girls trafficked to China as brides", May 7, 2019; The News, 629 Pak women sold as brides to Chinese in 18 months, 5 December 2019.

Vulnerability of young men to violence and crime

Pakistan has one of the fastest growing populations in the world, with 60 per cent being considered in the youth category. The two leading age groups consist of 36 million aged 20–24 years, and 58 million below 15 years of age. Youth violence (committed overwhelmingly by men) is increasing, and population growth, migration and a lack of economic opportunities are important factors, as are changes in economic and social structures, and household compositions which are resulting in a 'crisis of masculinity' and causing a 'demasculinizing' effect.[112] Examples of such changes include how women have started sharing income generation activities, especially in urban areas (out of necessity too) and that beyond earning a livelihood, men are increasingly expected to have a sound career. Compounding this, Pakistan is one of the fastest urbanising countries in South Asia.[113] Urban migration, if not well managed, can put pressure on larger metropolitan areas especially when the labour market cannot absorb a bulging youth population, which compromises men's ability to earn a living and fit the persona of the main breadwinner.

The shape of youth violence is different from province to province, exacerbating and reflective of local dynamics. In high-profile recent lynching cases, perpetrators were mostly young men between 18 and 30 years old.[114] In Karachi, the main factors behind youth violence include poverty, illiteracy and limited access to positive interactions. Political, ethnic and religious groups' 'militant wings' recruit young men from colleges and universities, providing appealing alternatives and incentives in the shape of weapons and funds. Increasingly these groups are using young men for extortion and blackmailing.[115] In KPK, youth violence was emboldened with the Taliban taking over Kabul and becoming the de facto rulers of Afghanistan. The Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSC) observed a recent increase in militancy attacks in KPK (the most illustrative example being the devastating suicide blast in the Shia Mosque in Peshawar in March 2022). In Balochistan, youth violence is connected to both the situation in Afghanistan but also the resurgence of Baloch insurgent groups opposing the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects. The Baloch Liberation Army is instrumentalising and exploiting youth frustrations and grievances over the exploitation of natural resources and the treatment of the Baloch minority and the unresolved issues of missing persons.[116]

Pakistan is also faced with the issues of drug trafficking along its Afghanistan border, with 4.25 million people considered dependent on substances and requiring structured treatment for their drug use disorder.[117] Similarly, the crime–terror nexus has developed, with kidnapping for ransom being ripe in areas where the TTP operates. Karachi experiences ransom, bank robberies, street crimes and a number of other violent crimes. To fund violent extremism, major forms of crime are involved, included money laundering, kidnappings for ransom, contract killings, human trafficking, bank robberies, illicit car lifting, smuggling of weapons and narcotics.[118] Due to time constraints and lack of easily accessible literature or data on the subject, this report is not able to explore the gender and intergenerational considerations behind drug trafficking and cross-border criminality.

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[112] Which meant that 'men, consequently seek affirmation of their masculinity in other ways particularly reported as gender-based violence' from Aurat Foundation, Masculinity in Pakistan, p.47.

[113] UNDP Pakistan, Development Advocate Pakistan, Sustainable Urbanization, May 8, 2019

[114] "Violent Youth", Editorial, The News, 28 February 2022.

[115] Search for Common Ground Pakistan, Youth Violence in Karachi, 2014. p.4.

[116] Discourse with Balochistan Youth on Society, Religion, and Politics, By PIPS Published On Jan 4, 2022.

[117] Country Profile, https://www.unodc.org/pakistan/en/country-profile-pakistan.html

[118] Farhan Zahid, "Crime-Terror Nexus in Pakistan", Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses, Vol. 10, No. 9 (September 2018).

Gendered impacts of serious and organised crime

Crimes have different impacts on women and men. While more young men are recruited into organised criminal groups, more women are at risk of being attacked in their home by someone that is known to them or being trafficked.[119] There is growing evidence that understanding gender relations, identities and inequalities can help improve rule of law and paralegal assistance.[120] It remains difficult to determine the magnitude of the challenge due to a dearth of reliable data on trafficking, constant underreporting, lack of awareness of the various dimensions of trafficking, and gaps in coordination among stakeholders including law enforcement agencies.[121] Gendered stereotypes have played a major role in silencing women's voices, who might have internalised certain behaviour (such as GBV) or inequalities as 'normal'.[122]

The limited data available shows that the issue of sex trafficking and forced labour is more prevalent in Punjab and Sindh. In 2019, the provincial police reported identifying 19,954 trafficking victims, including an overwhelming number of 15,802 female victims.[123] Sporadic interventions of Sindh courts on trafficking cases to remove victims from perpetrators are mentioned while the Courts failed to criminally prosecute alleged traffickers for bonded labour offences.

Opportunities for a gender-sensitive response to serious and organised crime

Through our desk review, we identified a glaring need for additional research and data to fully grasp the scale of trafficking, organised crimes, the nexus between crime and terrorism and how different groups (men, women but also young and elderly people, sexual and gender minorities, people living with disabilities and religious and ethnic minorities) are affected, involved or impacted.

Two related laws passed in 2018 by the Government of Pakistan including the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (PTPA) 2018 and the Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act 2018 provide interesting opportunities and entry points for CSSF to consider. These laws empower the law enforcement agencies of Pakistan to effectively prosecute the organised gangs perpetuating and benefitting from these crimes, while providing safeguards to the rights of victims of human trafficking and smuggled migrants.[124] Pakistan is also signatory to a number of multilateral treaties on transnational organised crimes (TOCs) including those related to drug trafficking and corruption, while the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is working closely with the Government of Pakistan and civil society to develop effective implementation mechanisms at the national level. The extent to which these efforts are gender sensitive and informed by disaggregated data remains unknown but could be explored.

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[119] UNODC, Pakistan's Gender and Human Rights based Response to Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling, 2021.

[120] The Perspective of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

[121] "Modern slavery: HRCP report on trafficking in women and girls", Press Release

[122] UNODC, Pakistan's Gender and Human Rights based Response to Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling, 2021. p.5.

[123] U.S. Department of State, 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report: Pakistan

[124] Country Profile, https://www.unodc.org/pakistan/en/country-profile-pakistan.html

4

Climate change as a driver of conflict and inequalities

Climate change is explored here not as a direct driver of armed conflict and instability, but for its role in indirectly increasing the risk of conflict by exacerbating social, economic and environmental factors behind conflict.[125] Gender discrimination arising with pre-existing inequalities makes women disproportionally more vulnerable than men to the impacts of climate change. This is partly because they are more dependent on dwindling natural resources (water and wood for cooking) for subsistence and livelihood and are more likely to live in poverty.

This is particularly relevant and timely as Pakistan is likely to face an increase of extreme weather episodes that could pose threats to energy, food, water and health security, which could potentially 'exacerbate poverty, tribal or ethnic intercommunal tensions and dissatisfaction with governments, increasing the risk of social, economic and political instability'.[126] In the last two decades, Pakistan was impacted by four devastating natural calamities: the devastating 2005 earthquake (in the Kashmir region, with over 80,000 deaths and 3.5 million people left homeless),[127] the Swat floods of 2010, a glacier melting resulting in the 2010 Attabad landslide, and a 16-month dry spell in Sindh and Balochistan. These kinds of natural disasters affect vulnerable groups disproportionately such as women, children, transgender people and people living with disabilities.[128]

By 2025, Pakistan will progress from being 'water stressed' to 'water scarce'[129] which will impact provinces with weaker and underdeveloped public services most intensively.[130] For example, in Sindh, 70 per cent of households cannot access or afford water from the source and 65.4 per cent of households receive water contaminated by E. coli.[131] The effects on health care are extreme: as an estimated 39,000 children under five years of age die every year from diarrhoea because of contaminated water and lack of sanitation hygiene.

Climate change and violence against women

While under Driver 3, we mentioned key factors being GBV and violence against women, the literature shows that increasingly the unequal treatment of women during climate disasters should be added as a factor. The World Health Organization (WHO) warns that during any type of disaster, natural or otherwise, women are the most vulnerable with an increased rate of sexual and domestic violence causing serious repercussions to their reproductive and sexual health. During disasters or the post-disaster period, women are further victimised by physical and emotional violence within households and relief-settlement camps – for example, cases of sexual and physical violence and sexual harassment, of even young girls, were reported during the 2005 earthquake in Kashmir.[132]

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125 ICRC (2020), Seven things you need to know about climate change and conflict, 9 July

126 USA National Intelligence Council (2021), Climate Change and International Responses Increasing Challenges to US National Security Through 2040

127 Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (2006), The Kashmir earthquake of October 8, 2005: Impacts in Pakistan.

128 UNDP Pakistan, NCSW (2022), 'Climate Equity: Women as Agents of Change', p.3 in Foreword

129 Ministry of Water Resources, Government of Pakistan (2018) 'National Water Policy'

130 UNDP (2016) 'Water Security in Pakistan: Issues and Challenges', Development Advocate Pakistan, Vol 3, Issue 4.

131 UNDP Pakistan, NCSW (2022), 'Climate Equity: Women as Agents of Change', p.62

132 Falak Shad Memon (2020), 'Climate Change and Violence Against Women: Study of Flood-Affected Population in The Rural Area of Sind, Pakistan', p. 67.

There is an emerging pattern of women's exposure to violence subsequent to natural catastrophes. This violence may be aggravated by discrimination that persists even after disaster and impairs physical and social wellbeing, thus multiplying the likelihood of domestic violence.

Gendered impacts of climate stress

Women's lack of access to resources, information, education and disaster preparedness campaigns makes them more vulnerable compared to men. Gender norms typically do not allow women, during times of need, to leave their houses to reach shelter homes or access other rescue facilities due to fear of being blamed for being disobedient to their husbands, fathers, brothers or even sons. Their lack of access to knowledge of means and methods of self-protection often tends to make their position more vulnerable and exposes them to both domestic and community-based violence.

The literature shows that women are also more likely to suffer casualties from natural disasters. This is because they are less likely to receive early warning signals through telecommunications than men, are often not taught survival skills like swimming, and face cultural barriers which prevent them from leaving their homes unattended without permission of their men family members. Lack of training and awareness also means they cannot participate in relevant decision making which impacts the whole household during or after a disaster.[133] The rehabilitation process also tends to favour men over women, with men being provided resettlement compensation while women often lacked adequate identification documentation.[134] In the aftermaths of the AJK 2005 earthquake, maternal health was badly affected as most traditional birth attendants either died or moved to safer places while pregnant women were not able to get pre- and post-natal care.[135]

In the Swat district (mentioned under Driver 2), the devastating flood of 2010 forced the displacement of approximately 2.5 million people and the destruction of key district infrastructure, agriculture facilities, schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, and businesses.[136] Following counter-TTP operations by the military in 2010, the Government started a repatriation scheme for IDPs and launched rehabilitation projects in various sectors such as transportation, health, education, and agriculture. However, given that many women did not possess a valid registration document, their access to relief support was limited.[137] Compounding this, women and girl IDPs in Pakistan faced GBV, trafficking, and specific health issues [138] while women in refugee camps often lacked access to basic health services.[139]

Women play a critical role in looking for and accessing natural resources, which means that depleted water resources or contaminated water heightens their vulnerability in both urban and rural contexts. Women are forced to walk longer distances in search of new freshwater sources, while they face an increasing risk of sexual and gender-based violence (especially girls and younger women) while traversing mountainous areas or deserts on their own. Ultimately, the time spent in fetching water is taken from time they could have for productive, educational, and

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[133] UNDP Pakistan (2022), 'Foreword of Nilofar Bakhtiar, Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women'

[134] UNDP Pakistan, NCSW (2022), 'Climate Equity: Women as Agents of Change', p.55

[135] Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (2006), The Kashmir earthquake of October 8, 2005: Impacts in Pakistan

[136] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) (2018), 'Global Report on Internal Displacement'.

[137] Sarah Chatellier and Shabana Fayyaz (2012), 'Women's Roles in Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Rehabilitation in Pakistan', Washington, DC: Institute of Inclusive Security, August, p. 3.

[138] The International News (2010), 'Most Women-Headed Households Not Documented During Military Operations'

[139] Thomas, A. (2011), '16 Days: A Dangerous Climate for Women, Refugees International'

other tasks – further reinforcing inequalities. Women are more likely than men to consume contaminated water, including due to reduced mobility in account of cultural barriers and gender norms.[140]

Opportunities for a more gender sensitive response

UNDP Pakistan and NCSW's March 2022 report 'Climate Equity: Women as Agents of Change' makes the link 'between climate degradation and women's deteriorating plights as managers of the natural environment, homes and communities'.[141] It provides valuable data and information including a region-by-region analysis, and encourages a deeper understanding and awareness on the link between the two, as well as through increased research and policy review. It makes a strong argument to assess women's capacities and capabilities in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and to support building up their own resilience and those of their families and communities during climate stress.

5
Existing data gaps

Based on this desk review exercise, we would recommend further in-depth research and analysis through participatory gender-sensitive conflict analysis workshops or discussions on the following areas where there is a lack of data and where sensitive discussions are best held in person. These could be facilitated as part of the CSSF WPS Helpdesk, drawing on Conciliation Resources' and Saferworld's gender-sensitive conflict analysis toolkit and facilitator guide:[142]

A. The role of women in peacebuilding and mediation in Pakistan – including assessing success stories and opportunities to further leverage their roles at the community level;[143]

B. The role of powerful institutions (religious leaders, the military, political parties) in defining and driving negative forms of masculinity within the Pakistani context;

C. A gender-sensitive review of current programming to address individuals supporting or joining violent terror groups to assess whether it is working or having a positive impact;

D. The 'triple nexuses of gender, conflict and climate change', including drivers of vulnerability, gendered coping strategies, and how this manifests at the regional level by bringing together participants from Pakistan, India and Afghanistan. This would provide a unique opportunity for CSSF Pakistan to pave the way in responding to several recent recommendations outlined in the UN Report on Gender, Climate and Security (2020), which notes an urgent need for better analysis and concrete actions to address linkages between climate change and conflict from a gender perspective; the White Paper on the Future of Environmental Peacebuilding (2022), which recommends including a gender lens in conflict analysis; and GAPS's, LSE's and WIPC's

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[140] UNDP Pakistan, NCSW (2022), 'Climate Equity: Women as Agents of Change', p.48

[141] Ibid, p.11

[142] Conciliation Resources and Saferworld (2020), 'Gender-sensitive conflict analysis. Facilitators Guide', https://www.c-r.org/learning-hub/gender-sensitive-conflict-analysis-facilitators-guide

[143] Findings and recommendations can be find in the following report: Conciliation Resources (CR), Women Mediators across the Commonwealth (WMC) (2021), Beyond the Vertical: What enables Women Mediators to Mediate, p.8

Defending the Future (2021) report which notes a stark gap in the intersection of gender, peace and the environment in practice and in policy.