

## Ascertaining Impact Of Economic Conditions Of Pakistan On Women Working In Industrial Sector Of Karachi

Shagufta Nasreen  
Nasreen Aslam Shah  
&  
Aliyah Ali  
Women's Studies  
University of Karachi

### Abstract

Economic conditions and economic policies are major factors influencing labour force participation rate, division of labour, conditions of work and overall impact on the society. In Pakistan, women participation in productive activities have increased due to globalization, increasing ratio of education, international and national commitments to reduce gender discrimination and poverty but the quality of work conditions and change in status and position of women needs consideration. This research shows that ratio of female labour force participation in industrial sector of Karachi has not shown significant increase, conditions of work has not improved, yet more and more women are pushed into the workforce due to poverty. Further, the analysis of secondary data of selected indicators shows less improvement in macroeconomic conditions creating a difficult economic situation for general population and women in particular. A gender analysis of selected macroeconomic indicators shows that the economic policies adopted in 1980s and onwards lead to weak economy there by leading to increase in poverty and stagnation of employment opportunities for women in industries. Further it suggests for conscious efforts to adopt policies focusing not only on increase of women in paid jobs but improved work conditions there by leading to empowerment of women.

### تلخیص مقالہ

معاشی حالات اور پالیسیاں بنیادی طور پر مزدوروں کی شرح، کام کی تعمیر، کام کرنے کے حالات پر اثر انداز ہوتے ہیں جس کے معاشرے پر بہت واضح اثرات نظر آتے ہیں۔ پاکستان میں خواتین کی تعداد پیداواری سرگرمیوں میں بڑھ گئی ہے اور اس کی بہت سی وجوہات ہیں جیسا کہ صنفی تفریق کے خاتمے کے لئے کئے گئے اقدامات، تعلیم کی بڑھتی شرح، عالمگیریت مگر اس کے نتیجے میں کام کرنے کی خصوصیات، خواتین کی حیثیت اور رتبے میں کتنی بہتری آئی ہے یہ جاننا ضروری ہے۔ زیر نظر تحقیق میں یہ بات نظر آئی ہے کہ کام کرنے والی خواتین کی شرح صنعتی اداروں میں سست رہی مگر غربت نے زیادہ سے زیادہ خواتین کو غیر رسمی شعبے میں دھکیل دیا ہے۔ علاوہ ازیں معاشی اعداد و شمار کا تجزیہ یہ واضح کرتا ہے کہ معاشی حالات عوام خصوصاً خواتین کے لئے مشکل حالات پیدا کر رہے ہیں۔ ۱۹۸۰ء کے بعد جو معاشی پالیسیز مرتب کی گئیں ان کی وجہ سے غربت میں اضافہ ہوا اور ساتھ ساتھ خواتین کے لئے رسمی شعبے میں ملازمتوں میں رکاوٹوں کی ایک وجہ بن گئی۔ اس تحقیق میں یہ مشورہ دیا گیا کہ ایسی پالیسیز کا انتخاب کی جائے جو صرف اس بات پر مرکوز نہ ہوں کہ خواتین کی تعداد پیداواری شعبوں میں بڑھائی جائے بلکہ ان کو خود مختار بنانے میں اہم کردار ادا کرے۔

“My home is dependent on my job, how would I make both ends meet? I want a bright future for my children so they can live a happy life without worries. This is the aim of my life and therefore I am working hard to send them to school properly.”

This is unambiguous response of a woman during interviews in the research to explore conditions of work in an urban industrial sector. In Pakistan if we compare the economic participation of women with the past it shows an increase. This quantitative increase leads to a concern about the qualitative conditions in terms of type of employment opportunities available, conditions of work and change in status of women. Pakistan is signatory to some of the major international commitments such as Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to ensure social equity and justice. Pakistan has taken some major initiatives in this regard for poverty reduction namely the Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP)<sup>1</sup> and the Gender Support programme (GSP) 2003-2012. The aim of international organisations and the government is to reduce poverty and gender discrimination. These two goals become achievable when all policies made under the term ‘development’ are constantly reviewed in order to suit and meet changing circumstances. Further and more importantly, success in the implementation of a policy is subject to monitoring the whole process. This requires periodical review of the policies as well as their implementation process. From 1990s economic policies based on economic liberalization, free trade and deregulated labour, goods and financial markets were introduced. It was expected that these policies would increase women’s labour force participation. Is that what really happened? If yes, then, does the increase in number empowered women in real?

In Pakistan almost 50 percent of the total population comprises of females. Female economic activity rate for ages 15 and above is 36.3 percent and the percentage varies in different sectors, the highest in agriculture and lowest in industry (Human Development Report, 2009). The latest reports from Government of Pakistan accept that Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP) is increasing but it is low for Pakistan. Pakistan Employment Trends for Women 2009 is an updated and detailed report about the issue. The report illustrates that during the last decade women’s labour force participation grew to a large extent in Pakistan. In Pakistan, the female population was estimated at 78 million out of 161 million in 2008. Approximately 45.9 million women in the country were at working age (15 years and above) compared to 47.2 million men. In line with increases in the female population, the number of women at an employable age is constantly growing with the large increases in rural areas.

Women in Pakistan, like other parts of the world are not a homogenous group in Pakistan. There is a great difference in the status and conditions of women based on class, age,

ethnicity and urban rural divide. In 2008, almost two thirds of women at an employable age (29.8 million) were living in rural areas and just 16 per cent in urban areas (Pakistan Employment Trends for Women 2009). Women of urban areas have advantage of better education facilities and employment opportunities as compared to rural women who are mainly working as agricultural workers. Nevertheless, employment ratio was 22 percent in 2008, a low number, if considered from an international or regional point of view.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, female participation has increased in the labour market but working conditions and job quality has not improved. The majority of females are in the agricultural sector with little or no economic security. The share of employment for females has increased from 69 to 71 percent in informal sector. There are enormous wage discrepancies for male and female employees. The participation of women in agriculture is highest, 73 percent, 12 percent in industry and 14 percent in the services sector (Pakistan Employment Trends for Women 2009).

In the service sector, the rate of women workers is gradually increasing, a higher proportion of females, especially in the fields of teaching, medicine and domestic helpers are being employed. The males are concentrated in manufacturing, services and trade sectors. The share of female employment in the informal economy is 72 percent and it is expected to increase further. The percentage of females subject to difficult working conditions increases as 8 out of 10 women are employed in dangerous working conditions.<sup>3</sup> The report calculates 'hours of work' by the time period a worker does his or her economic activities and shows that 41 percent women work less than 35 hours a week in a normal working week as defined by Pakistan (Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Employment Trends for Women: Series No.5, 2009, p. 22). This also raises a question that if we are measuring hours of work for women only in paid activities then what about the unpaid work that she is responsible for back home? There is a large wage gap between males and females mostly due to women being part of the informal sector. The report also lacks any linkages of economic restructuring and SAP policies and the increase of the informal sector in Pakistan.

Earlier, Pakistan's Economic Survey, 2006-07 highlighted that labour force participation has been increasing over the years but it is still low and even lower for the female segment of the population. It stated that both male and female unemployment rates declined in rural as well as urban areas. It also raises another point that the Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP) is different by provinces. Female participation in Baluchistan (12.6%), NWFP<sup>4</sup> (13.0%) and Sindh (9.1%) are low (Government of Pakistan, Economic Survey, 2007). The economic survey also states that 'the low Labour Force Participation rate (LFPR) indicates huge reservoirs of human resources that can be effectively utilized for future economic growth'. These assumptions especially with the complex economic conditions, only focusing on increasing the number of women in

workforce, lack the gender analysis of economic conditions, budgets and impacts of globalisation on women.

The Country Gender Profile (CGP) of Pakistan 2008 explains that poverty and economic restructuring has increased women's demand in labour force but the conditions are putting them under pressure. A marked increase is seen in informal sector leading to their invisibility and un recognized status as a workforce (Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Employment Trends for Women: Series No.5, 2009; Kazi & Sathar, 1993; Ayub, 1994, Shah, 1986, Wiess, 1999).

Gender inequality has many dimensions that stem from women's dual role in paid and unpaid activities performed in the market and the non-market spheres of social life. Empirical research on gender and trade has predominantly focused on the nature of job opportunities and labour income brought about by trade expansion, with a secondary focus on the impact on the intra household allocation and distribution of resources. Both, lack of data and methodological problems explain the lack of empirical research on the size of female labour reallocation in import-competing industries as the direct result of trade liberalisation. In case of Pakistan, where a majority of women are illiterate, represent a small fraction in formal sector employment, have only a symbolic representation in decision making bodies and are unaware of the international agreements with IMF and World Bank and yet their lives are directly affected by these policies. It needs to be analysed that what the results on the economy, employment, households with reference to women are. It is assumed that a weak economy, low income generating activities in the formal sector and increased work burden would lead to further exploitation of women.

This study was conducted to explore the impact of economic policies and its impact on women workers in urban industrial sector. Based on both qualitative and quantitative data, it explores the linkage between the economic policies and their impact on the economy and the effects of the economy on Women's lives in particular. The study also focuses on women work conditions and experiences. For this research, factories from the three industrial areas of Karachi<sup>5</sup> were selected,<sup>6</sup> these are namely the Sindh Industrial Trading Estate (SITE) Karachi, SITE North Karachi and Korangi Industrial areas.<sup>7</sup> The first task was to identify the number of industries in which women are employed. From earlier studies it was noted that women are mostly employed in textile, food industries, and pharmaceutical industry (Hafeez, 1989). For this study a total of 200 women workers were interviewed from 13 garments industries of Karachi. Interviews were conducted by questionnaire method comprising of both close and open ended questions. Some of the hurdles and challenges faced during the study and collection of data was lack of sex segregated data of workers, unwillingness in sharing of information, reluctant administrative staff of the factories, long distances, poor transport facilities, the law and

order situation in the city, sudden disappearance of the respondents etc. The raw data obtained from the questionnaires filled by the respondents was converted into statistical form of tables and graphs. Carefully drawn tables and charts are used to interpret the major findings of this research. The questions provided by the respondents are interpreted in the light of the researcher's field observations. Another method used in this research is secondary analysis. This type of study focuses on archival data such as those maintained by various institutions holding survey data or census data. This method has been used to study official data and recent reports of government to relate employment with selected macroeconomic indicators in the period between 1980- 2009. This will help in analysing the economic conditions developed due to globalisation. For this purpose Economic Survey of Pakistan 1980- 2009, labour force surveys and other relevant documents were analysed. Unstructured interviews were also conducted with three women rights activists and four employers/ supervisors in these factories.

To explore the economic conditions and changes due to economic policies adopted after 1980's an analysis is carried out by selective indicators. Table 1 shows selected macroeconomic indicators from 1981- 2009. The objective was to understand analyze the conditions of work place for women against the backdrop of economic conditions of Pakistan in the given time period. This time period is selected to have a quick look at the impact of economic globalisation and the macroeconomic condition. The change in economic policies was based on the idea of economic growth, openness of markets, improving the efficiency of public institutions by privatisation and reducing fiscal deficit. These macroeconomic indicators show that economic conditions did not improved much.

**Table 1- Key Macroeconomic Indicators: 1981-2009**

Years	GDP	Current Account deficit	Inflation (Consumer Price Index)	Budget deficit	Public Investment	Total investment	Exports (Goods and Services)	Foreign direct investment
	Growth % per annum	% of GDP	Growth % per annum	% of GDP	% of GDP	Growth % per annum	Growth % per annum	net inflows (% of GDP)
1981	6.4	4.3	12.0	n.a.	9.1	18.4	12.31	0.38463493
1985	8.7	3.1	5.2	n.a.	8.9	17.99	10.42	0.421864139
1990	4.6	4.51	12.7	7.18	8.58	19.52	15.53	0.612997637
1995	4.1	4.5	13	6.46	6.4	17	16.70	1.19175194
2000	3.9	2.13	3.6	4.1	4.63	16.97	13.44	0.416484258
2005	9.0	3.1	12.2	4.3	4.07	21.95	15.68	2.008211679
2009	4.1	2.0	17.9	n.a.	n.a.	18.9	12.84	1.473547967

Sources:

- 1) Hand book of Statistics on Pakistan Economy, 2010, [http://www.sbp.org.pk/departments/stats/PakEconomy\\_HandBook/index.htm](http://www.sbp.org.pk/departments/stats/PakEconomy_HandBook/index.htm)
- 2) Economic Survey of different years

3) World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/country/pakistan>

The results here show that these policies couldn't bring about the changes promised. GDP growth rates are fluctuating. There are other contributing factors such as weak economic policies, continuous changes of governments, natural disasters and the law and order situation of Pakistan. Inflation has increased manifold, raising the cost of living. Various studies show that simultaneously with the introduction of SAPs, especially the liberalisation policies, poverty has increased in Pakistan (Kemal & Amjad, 1997, MHCHD,1999) and inflation has increased many folds thereby leading to an increase in daily use items. Often quoted by Pakistani economists and common people are the prices of diesel and petrol. In 1999 it was Rs.10.80 and in early 2010 the cost was as high as Rs. 73 per litre. It directly effects the rates of everything else making life more difficult for the minimum salaried population. Khattak and Sayeed (2000) point out that poverty in Pakistan has led to an increase in labour supply, especially for women who have never worked before.

One of the major objectives of these economic policies has been to reduce the budget deficit. Statistics shows that it has not been achieved yet. On the contrary different taxes is levied to reduce fiscal deficits such as the General sales tax (GST), Value added tax(VAT) etc. GST was initially rejected by the business community<sup>8</sup> in Pakistan. The business community was blamed for they didn't want to show their actual sales. It is accepted by economists, that the tax collection system has become ineffective which results in fiscal deficits.<sup>9</sup>To reduce fiscal deficits another measure was the privatisation of public institutions. But it was also not a successful scheme. It resulted in negative results, one of the example quoted is the privatisation of KESC.<sup>10</sup> It has been five years since it was privatised and it has neither become efficient nor has the quality of service has improved. Value added tax (VAT) was another tax highly resisted by all groups,<sup>11</sup> unfortunately, in Pakistan most taxes are paid by salaried people. This leads to the imbalance reflected in the indicators.

Another macroeconomic indicator in Table 1 is exports. It has not increased after globalisation policies. Although this is true, in the case of Pakistan, the direct link between impact of globalisation and development is very difficult to measure because there are some major factors contributing to the poor condition of the economy. These are the law and order situation especially after 9/11, natural disasters-earthquake in 2005 and floods in 2010, corruption and unstable political conditions. But the fact remains that the choice of policies in such conditions is also very important. Economists suggest different ideas and plans to improve the economy but the government takes different paths because they have agreements with the IMF and World Bank. In 2011 according to a news report, 40 percent population was living below the poverty line.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 2**

Year	Population	Education Expenditure (% of GNI)	Health Expenditure, Total (% of GNP)	Labour Participation Rate		
				Female (% of Female Population Ages 15+)	Male (% of Male Population Ages 15+)	Total (% of Total Population Ages 15+)
1981	85096000	1.5	0.6	12.3	86.4	51.6
1985	94794433.82	2.0	0.7	11.6	85.7	50.7
1990	107975060.2	2.3	0.7	13.5	84.5	50.7
1995	122374952.6	2.4	0.8	12.5	83.3	49.4
2000	138080000	2.3	0.7	16.1	84	51.3
2005	155772000	1.51	0.4	19.4	84.4	52.9
2009	169708302.6	2.15	n.a.	21.7	84.9	54.3

Source: World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/country/pakistan>

The primary responsibility of a woman in Pakistan is considered her reproductive role. So even when she is not doing paid job macroeconomic conditions directly affect her life because high prices means malnutrition, inaccessibility to education and health services, a push towards menial jobs both for males and females, migration and living in poverty. Women are effected as home managers by inflation. Table 2 shows that the population of Pakistan has doubled from 1980 to 2009 and the expenditure on the contrary health and education has reduced. For accessibility to health services, education people are being pushed towards the private sector which has created two types of groups, vying for health and education. The private sector is affordable for the rich and the middle classes while public sector is affordable for poor classes.

A brief review of these statistics shows difficult economic conditions for people at large and women in specific. Women primary role is considered reproductive role however poverty, changing socio cultural conditions, increase in level of education for women and push from international community and its efforts for gender equality has pushed women into productive role as well. Traditional development economists and modernisation theorists have viewed economic development as a process in which economic growth and women's incorporation into the labour force go hand in hand. Others however argue that the process of industrialization and economic development is accompanied by marginalization of women (Bhattacharya, 2007). The changes in the world economic and social structure to make a uniform system for all are known as globalization. Feminist schools and researchers have explored different aspects of globalisation. To some restructuring, as a result of globalisation, tends to reinforce and exacerbate existing gender inequalities (Marchand and Runyan 2000). For others, impacts of globalisation have been multiple and contradictory and there have been conflicting interactions between local and global economies, cultures and faiths (Afshar and Barrientos 1999). Momsen (2004) discusses that there is new international division of labour (NIDL)

associated with the process of globalisation, which involves a search for cheap labour and is reinforced by national and international trade agreements and policies. As discussed earlier the development being carried out by integration of economies is showing imbalances in the world. These imbalances can be identified by the fact that different countries claim that their growth rate has increased but that “growth” is not reflected in light of other indicators.

The analysis of primary data shows conditions of work in urban industrial sector of Karachi. They have less control over resources; have limited decision making power and less knowledge and awareness of their rights. Despite these conditions, the fact remains that most women work and they work hard.

The first objective of the research was to explore the industries in the urban sector which have high female labour force participation. Findings show that, in Karachi, the trend of female employment has not changed much. Sabiha Hafeez’s study in 1989 had the same industries as the ones in 2009-2010 in which women are employed. These are mainly garments, pharmaceuticals, food and beverages. A comparative study by Nayyar and Sen in 1987 explored similar trends which show that not much has changed. The employment of women in the organised manufacturing sector was low; women were mainly confined in textile and garment industries. (Nayyar & Sen, 1987, p. 129).

Another major finding regarding data of industries and number of workers was that they lack data based on gender. For example, The “Development Statistics of Sindh 2008” shows that the number of manufacturing establishments in Sindh was 1852 in the year 2005-2006 with average daily employment 290,400, in total with no distinction for male or females. Thus, to identify the number of industries in Karachi, those with high female employment and ratio of male and female workers became quite difficult. Many researchers identify that the data about FLFP is not complete or under-reported in Pakistan (ADB, 2008; Nayyar & Sen, 1987; Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987; Shah, 1986). It is also accepted by the government’s official Medium Term Development Framework 2005–10, which mentions “...continued invisibility of women’s economic contribution to the GDP and ... the continued lack of accurate gender disaggregated data” (Government of Pakistan, MTF, 2008, p. 57).

All the major sources such as Industries and Commerce Department of Sindh, Sindh Bureau of Statistics, Employees Old-Age Benefit Institution (EOBI), Sindh Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (STEVTA) and National Institute of Labour Administration and Training (NILAT) were visited to collect this data. They all had generalised data. During informal interviews and conversations they all agreed that the ratio of males to females in industries is 80 and 20. The primary data explores and confirms the low status of working women in most cases. Karachi is the largest city of

Pakistan and the main financial centre of the country. There are many benefits for women living in Karachi for example transport accessibility, accessible educational institutions and fewer restrictions on employment. But discrimination is existent in the labour force participation.

### 1. Demographic Profile

To understand the demographic profile of women workers in these industries age, ethnicity, literacy level, and marital status were analysed. The age of women workers is very important because it gives an idea as to what age women enter into paid activities.

**Table 3**  
**Distribution of the Respondents According to their Age Groups**

Age Groups	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 18 years	02	1.00 %
18-22 years	52	26 .00%
23-27 years	75	37.50 %
28-32 years	35	17.50 %
33-37 years	08	4.00 %
38-42 years	10	5.00 %
43-45 years	16	8.00 %
Above 45 years	02	1.00 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents according to their age. Of the eight age groups presented in chart the largest is of 23-27 years. There are only 2 who were less than 18 years out of 200 women. Most of the respondents fall in the range of 18 to 32 years. This is usually the age group which falls in youth group. It appears that young women are employed because they can give more time and energy to work. Middle aged (33-45) years were less employed in because they have more pressure of work due to their domestic responsibilities and household burdens. At the same time one cannot overlook the factor of early aging in Pakistan. This leaves one to wonder how women beyond the age of forty would be coping with work pressure, health problems and other worries that come along during work.

**Table 4**  
**Distribution of Respondents According to Literacy Level**

Literacy level	Frequency	Percentage
Literate	168	84.00 %
Illiterate	32	16.00 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 4 shows that majority of women were literate. It shows that in urban formal sector mostly literate women were employed. Although their jobs were assembly line jobs and require minimal educational qualifications. It also shows that women who have achieved education prefer to work in formal sectors where they assume that their job is comparatively better than income generating activities in informal sector. The literate group of women was not highly educated as clear from the table below

**Table 5**  
**Distribution of Respondents According to Level of Education**

<b>Level of education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Primary	15	9.00%
Middle	27	17.00%
Matriculation ( 10 years of education)	52	31.00%
Intermediate ( 12 years of education)	43	25.00%
Bachelors	21	12.00%
Masters	05	3.00%
Religious education	05	3.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100%</b>

Of the seven levels of education presented in the table 5, the largest is the group who has ten years of education. It shows that once entered in paid jobs, they were unable to continue their studies. This shows that the cultural or social restrictions are not the only factor creating hurdles but socio-economic conditions are also responsible for it. The remaining 16 percent illiterate women told that due to house hold responsibilities, work burden, lack of financial resources and in few cases lack of interest in education impede them from education.

Results showed that the majority of these women are living in rented houses and their income goes in paying off the rent and fulfilling the daily food needs of the house. They are earning for survival and do not complain to their employers because they do not want to lose their jobs. The major demand from government was to reduce inflation as they complained about high prices. It is clear from the findings that it is in this exploitative and oppressive frame work that women are dealing under neo liberal policies, where the cost of living is high. Another problem is that work is not available for their husbands or the male members of the household so the men are at home. In some cases, men were not willing to do work. Sparr (1994) criticised the origin of ‘development’ based on the neo-classical theory on the assumption that all societies will be fully monetised and market-oriented societies. This is a real problem especially in those countries where well-developed labour, capital and markets are not available. A gender analysis shows that some countries laws and customs restrict or prohibit women’s independent control of

money, ownership of property, and paid employment. This leads to invisibility and subtle acknowledgment of ‘women’s work’ which is child-rearing and ‘keeping house.’

**Table 6**  
**Distribution of Respondents According to Marital Status**

<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Unmarried	125	62.50%
Married	63	31.50%
Divorced	07	3.50%
Widow	05	2.970%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 6 clearly indicates that majority of women workers were unmarried. It shows that either they or their families have delayed their marriage due to pressure of job because usually women of this age group get married. During interviews it was also identified that industries are choosing unmarried women for work because they are assumed to have less family responsibilities as compared to married women, they can do long working hours and are not expected to apply for maternity leave or day care centre facilities. This is not a written policy but a trend followed by employers. Those who were divorced shared reasons of divorce. Major reasons were beating by husband, behaviour of in-laws and second of marriage of husband. In Pakistan’s cultural context divorced women are considered a ‘burden’ on family as usually she goes back to her parent’s home. There is poor support system culturally, legally and socially to treat her as a ‘normal’ woman. It has more of cultural rather than religious back ground because Islam gives a right of remarriage after divorce, provision of *mahr*<sup>13</sup> and financial support after divorce. In practice the society does not follow it. Results also show that these women are mostly young and unmarried. They want to get married but due to financial problems at home, their marriage is delayed. It also creates a feeling of incompleteness. Even highly educated, well paid young women have the same feelings.

The impacts are not only on economic grounds but gender relations as well. The woman’s role in the family has not changed yet she has to do her job. Women are considered responsible for doing household activities. They leave their children when they go for jobs because day care facilities are limited. Out of 200 women only 6 availed day care facility at the work place.

**Table 7**  
**Distribution of Respondents According to the Person Responsible for Child Care in Mother’s Absence**

<b>Guardian of children in mother’s absence</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No one	27	41.00%
Maternal grandparents	17	27.00%
Grandparents	16	25.00%
Father	04	6.00%
Uncle	01	1.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100%</b>

Taking care of children is assumed to be responsibility of mothers. This trend has not changed even if women enter in paid job in fact it increases work burden for women. It is very risky to see that 41 percent of such children are on their own; in other cases maternal grandparents are taking care of children as compared to paternal grandparents. The reason of differentiation is because in Pakistani cultural context children are usually more close to mother’s family. In some cases mother feels that her parents would take care of her children more as compared to father’s family but this is a general observation.

Why women enter into paid jobs is a complex question. Majority women identified economic problems for their entry into work force. Respondents were analysed according to their marital status to see the difference in reasons. In both cases answers were similar and out of 200 women only 33(20 married and 13 unmarried) said they were doing this work for their personal needs. As identified earlier widows and divorced women are considered a burden, this also became a reason of doing paid work out side home. These answers were confirmed with another question about spending of their income which showed that most of income is spent for family and household needs. Other reasons such as for fulfilment of self, empowerment or to put their education to use is not the motive of work for these women. Women are usually hired for assembly line jobs and men are in higher positions such as supervisors and managers. Along with that, the restructuring of the economy also leads to restructuring of social relations, including gender relations, as markets recruit specific gender, age, ethnic and religious groups. These changes transform household, communities and markets and the changes in gender relations reflect shifting gender identities. Parent-child relationships change as young women become the major earners in the family, and working in factories for transnational companies while living in urban dormitories with other young workers introduces rural women to new ideas (Wolf, 1992).

Unionisation is also very low amongst these workers. This also confirms the study of Hisam (2009) that trade unions are decreasing or if present, they are full of males. Similar

findings are analysed by Syal (2004) showing that the working conditions of women are linked with their participation in trade unions. She notes that women themselves lack the importance of organised movement (Syal, 2004). Pakistan's Statistical Year book 2010 shows that out of the 460,000 members of the 7000 registered trade unions in 2007, there were only 15000 female members.<sup>14</sup>

There are also some studies such as the one conducted by Ali and Haq (2006) which conclude that labour force participation is not making women 'happy' in the context of Pakistan. It seems that the majority of Pakistani women seek work out of necessity and the money earned by them is used either for household needs or is taken over by the husband. Not only this, the women in Pakistan bear the double burden of house and work. Economic independence rarely leads to individual independence (Ali & Haq, 2006).

High cost of living pushes more women to look for employment. These jobs are not improving their standard of living but fulfilling their basic needs. Through this research it was identified that women's decision making power has not changed. The reason being is the lack of acceptance for income generated by females as societal norms and customs dictate that it is a man's job. Though many households are financially headed by females they do not have a say in other decisions. The perception of the researcher based on the review of literature was that that they would have gained in self-confidence due to an increase in mobility, decision making powers access to and control over money and other resources thus leading to changed power relation with men. But this perception changed during interviews with women rights activists and women workers. In their opinion globalisation policies has not expanded formal sector. They do not have job security. They are waiting for their confirmation letters. Analysis of case studies revealed that they have been working for more than three years on probation however according to the labour laws, the probation period is three months. The job is not leading to women's autonomy. The perception by traditional theorists that women participation in employed work will lead to empowerment is not supported by this study. They are doing this work to sustain their lives, support their families' needs. Khattak (2001) find that the sexual division of labour has by and large not changed due to increased participation of women in employment. The study shows that household responsibilities are shifted to other female members. Women are taking part in productive as well as reproductive 'responsibilities'. This confirms that women's employment is not leading to a change in gender roles. Koggel (2003) analysed the increase in labour force participation of women and its linkage to freedom and choices. She criticises Amartya Sen's strategy of women's work outside of home to achieve development because there are several factors involved which need attention such as MNCs and their power of exiting and entering in a country, the social norms of a country, poverty, political corruption, environmental disasters, peace, security and the absence of labour laws. Such conditions weaken the position of workers and become disadvantageous for them. She concludes that women's freedom and

agency do not always improve when they enter the work force so the need is to take an 'informed discussion of development processes and policies that must include accounts of global forces of power and their intersection with and utilization of local systems of oppression. These factors are particularly evident in the area of women's work and have a direct impact on women's freedom and agency in this and other domains' (Koggel, 2003, p. 179).

Further it was proved that women are mostly engaged in low skilled jobs. They are in assembly line jobs on contract bases. Mies (1998) pointed out coercive job losses of women in developed countries and creation of low paid jobs for women in developing countries by capitalism. At present the number of women in paid jobs has increased but we need to understand the quality of this change.

Occupational health is another very important aspect of women who work. Most of the women complained about their health. It has physical as well as psychological impacts. Usually they are in stitching and repetitious work causes back pain, headache and eye strain. From field observation, it was noted that in majority of work places the conditions were difficult with low lighting and uneasy seats.

"I usually feel stress and pain in my back and I want to quit the job but I don't have a choice"

"When I go back home I get tired and my legs ache because most of the times I stand to supervise the work"

Even an employer said that "Women come to work in factories in looking fine but during their employment they seem to lose their health day by day."

All of the respondents shared they feel tension, depression, have fear of losing their job and are fatigued.

The study identified that most women work to help their families in their economic disparities. However, the general impression of the society is contrary. Women suffer from some of the assumptions and prejudices which males have towards them. The management feels that women are not serious or efficient workers. They put in less work and come only to pass time. As soon as they get married they will go away. If they continue the job after marriage they will demand leave for reasons such as maternity leave, childcare, transfer of husbands and then become inefficient. For these reasons women are not preferred. Some management groups think that women may spoil the strict atmosphere of the workplace. At the time of selection, women face discrimination,

male colleagues stare, pass remarks at her looks or usually think that because she is female she has been selected otherwise she doesn't have skills. If the young woman mixes freely with colleagues she is considered "too liberal", if she limits her interactions only for work, she is labelled arrogant. If the boss appreciates her efforts, rumours are spread about her.

During interviews respondents shared that they realize that women also have an identity of their own. But there are too many expectations from them. There are also many situations where in urban areas working women's problems collides with their multiple role expectations. Women also have to fulfil their roles as mothers, wives, home makers, workers and citizens. A woman also has to look after domestic chores even with employment. One of them shared that she cooks in the morning when she leaves home at eight and when she reach home at eight in the night. This dual responsibility has overburdened working women, thereby leading to multidimensional problems. Where there are joint families exists, she is expected to fulfil the demands of her role as a daughter-in-law. She has a much larger area of social interaction. So her informal work increases more if she is part of voluntary associations. Due to her multiple roles she has no time to relax. Chronic fatigue, weakness are some of the results of such high level stress. Some other factors related to working conditions are poor ventilation, unfriendly working atmosphere and discrimination at the work place.

When economic conditions and existing workplace conditions for women are analysed in the context of globalisation, a difficult position for women is revealed. The shift in economic policies leads to increased costs of production so the only way for the employer to reduce overheads is to make cuts in labour costs further leading to contract based jobs with low wages (Sayeed, 2001). Statistics shows that population living below poverty line is increasing, according to a news report, in 2011, 40 percent of the population is living below the poverty line.<sup>15</sup> Given the conditions of high inflation, low wages, less opportunities, household responsibilities, poor health conditions and work burdens in women are doing paid jobs but not feeling empowered because it is fulfilling their basic needs only. The promises of globalisation defined as everything free to access and people have more choices in free market economies is a dream because reality is different and increasing the differences in the power relationship, globally and locally. Secondly, these policies are interconnected to other dimensions and give shape to them. A gender analysis in this case becomes very important because men and women have different roles in the society. In the four domains of society i.e. production, reproduction, community, and decision making men and women play different roles, which vary from culture to culture and region to region. It was, therefore important to analyse, what are the results on the economy, employment, and domestic activities with reference to women. With weak economy and low income generating activities in the formal sector, the increased work burden is leading to further exploitation of women. An empirical study by

Yasmin (2009) found an increasing gender pay gap during the period of trade liberalisation. But the study does not link it to trade liberalisation rather, it is suggested that the labour supply needs to be adjusted according to the needs of the market. The study shows that the average wage in all educational categories is successively higher than that of workers with no formal education and the rate of return also tends to increase from lower to higher with the degree of education over time. It is therefore suggested that literacy levels must be in accordance with the new demands of technically-induced trade liberalisation (Yasmin, 2009). Some researchers also identify that the wage gap and limitations of women to some jobs is not due to 'glass ceilings' because there is little evidence for it. However, the major hindrances in the way women are moving upward are gender discrimination on account of cultural restrictions, household responsibilities and low levels of education and skills (Hyder, 2005).

The roles of women are changing in present day Pakistan. This change is brought by many factors and globalisation is one of it. Although the study is not showing a direct negative or positive impact due to trade liberalization, privatization and fiscal austerity on women workers but the reality is that, not just women, but people in general do not consider the intensity of the policies that are planned for them by governments or international institutions. For many their first priority has become the survival for which they accept all conditions of employment. Women are the ones who are more affected. In discharging her dual role at home and work place and to strike an optimal balance amongst them, her satisfaction level varies. They are victims of poverty that has a central role to join industries. They are concerned about bad working conditions, bad environment, and harassment but they have no choice rather than accepting it due to poverty. They are not usually active in labour unions. Policy makers continue to stand by liberalisation, fiscal austerity and privatisation because they think it is the only way to improve the economy. But in this process they do not count women in labour force participation rates. At the time of decision making or budgeting the priority is not centred on gender but an increase in GDP growth and other macroeconomic indicators.

### **End notes**

1. The goal of GRAP is to bring about such changes in the structure and process of the government that it promotes equity among men and women, and to enable it to deliver on the rights and entitlements of women. <http://grap.gop.pk/index.htm>
2. Globally, 52.6 percent of women in working age were economically active (employed or unemployed) in 2007. Furthermore, the regional average labour force participation of women in South Asia was with 35.6 percent, much higher than Pakistan's labour force participation rate for women.

3. Vulnerable employment means the sum of own account workers and contributing family workers. For details see Pakistan Employment Trends for Women, 2009
4. The name of North West Frontier Province (NWFP) is renamed as Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).
5. Karachi has an projected population of 15 million, which is at present growing at about 5% per year, mainly because of rural-urban internal migration.( For details see City District Government Karachi, <http://www.karachicity.gov.pk/>).
6. Karachi accounts for the majority share of national GDP and revenue. Seventy percent (70%) of income tax and 62% of sales tax collected by the Government of Pakistan comes from Sindh Province and of this 94% is generated in Karachi, while it produces about 42 percent of value added in large scale manufacturing. In its formal sector, the city has 4,500 industrial units. However, there are no estimates available for the informal sector. For details see (Hasan, 2003)
7. For details visit  
[http://www.findpk.com/yp/Biz\\_Guide/html/industrial\\_zones\\_sindh.html](http://www.findpk.com/yp/Biz_Guide/html/industrial_zones_sindh.html)
8. See for example this news report about protest against GST in 1998  
<http://www.gapcpakistan.com/G.S.T%20in%20Pakistan.php>  
<http://dailymailnews.com/0910/29/Business/index.php?id=4>
9. [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story\\_23-8-2005\\_pg5\\_1](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_23-8-2005_pg5_1)
10. [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C05%5C14%5Cstory\\_14-5-2010\\_pg5\\_8](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2010%5C05%5C14%5Cstory_14-5-2010_pg5_8)
11. *"Ifraat-e-zar, Mulk ki Chaalis fi sad aabadi khat-e-ghurbaat say neechay chali gayee"*( Translation. Inflation: 40 per cent population is living below poverty line) July 19 2011, Daily Jang, p. 4
12. Mahr: Under Muslim law is the exclusive right of the wife. It is the sum of money or property which becomes payable by the husband to the wife in terms of marriage contract or as subsequently agreed to.
13. In Statistical year book 2010 the data is mentioned till 2007 only. For more details See [www.statpak.gov/fbs/sites/default/files/other/yearbook2010/labour/12-18.pdf](http://www.statpak.gov/fbs/sites/default/files/other/yearbook2010/labour/12-18.pdf)
14. *"Ifraat-e-zar, Mulk ki Chaalis fi sad aabadi khat-e-ghurbaat say neechay chali gayee"*( Translation. Inflation: 40 per cent population is living below poverty line) July 19 2011, Daily Jang, p. 4

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**Dr. Shagufta Nasreen** is Co-operative Teacher in the Centre of Excellence for Women's Studies, University of Karachi.

**Dr. Nasreen Aslam Shah** is Professor in the Department of Social Work & Director of the Centre of Excellence for Women's Studies, University of Karachi.

**Dr. Aliyah Ali** is Co-operative Teacher in the Centre of Excellence for Women's Studies, University of Karachi.