



POLICIES WITHOUT PRACTICE: ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY AND SDG 5 IN PAKISTAN

ABOUT THIS BRIEF

Despite significant policy attention, gender inequality remains a major challenge in Pakistan. While 53 policies have addressed gender-based violence, workplace harassment, and women's empowerment; progress is hindered by weak implementation, limited stakeholder engagement, and a lack of intersectional approaches and accountability. Domestic violence, honor killings, and low female workforce participation persist. Urgent action is required to close the gap between policy and practice - strengthening enforcement, mainstreaming gender across sectors, expanding protection for survivors, and adopting coordinated, intersectional approaches.

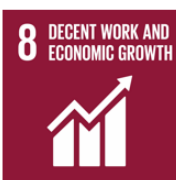


WHY GENDER EQUALITY MATTERS

Essential to SDG 5

GENDER EQUALITY

Directly linked to:



Gender inequality intersects with climate change and mental health, compounding risks and deepening vulnerabilities for women and girls.

■ SITUATION AT A GLANCE (PAKISTAN 🇵🇰)

📄 POLICY & PARTICIPATION

53

gender-related policies enacted — yet weakly enforced

1 in 3

girls are out of school in Pakistan

30%

of educated women are in the workforce, versus 83% of men

💎 VIOLENCE & SAFETY

28%

of married women experience domestic physical abuse

~1,000

women die each year from honor killings

56%

of gender-based violence survivors never seek help or report abuse

⚠️ COMPOUNDING RISKS

Climate & Conflict

Displacement, insecurity, and unpaid-care burdens fall hardest on women.

Intersecting Harm

Greater exposure to gender-based violence and adverse mental-health outcomes.

KEY CHALLENGES

Implementation Gaps

Despite extensive legislation, policy enforcement remains weak; especially in rural and informal settings.

Exclusion and Marginalization

Broad gender policies often overlook women at the intersections of religion, disability, ethnicity, and socioeconomic disadvantage.

Socio-Cultural Norms

Social norms and regional inequalities continue to restrict women's access to education, work, healthcare, legal protection, and decision-making.

Mental Health-Gender Disconnect

Climate-related displacement raises exposure to gender-based violence and mental-health challenges, yet policies address these separately.

Ineffective Monitoring & Evaluation

Fragmented data systems and limited evaluation hinder evidence-based policymaking and accountability.

Weak Laws Enforcement

Limited reporting, inadequate survivor support, and outdated legal mechanisms, including for online abuse, continue to undermine protections against violence.

WAY FORWARD | POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Institutionalize Participatory Policymaking

Institutionalize the inclusion of civil society, affected communities, health professionals, working women, marginalized groups, and multi-sectoral experts in policy design and implementation.



2

Integrate Gender into Development Policies

Mainstream gender equality across climate, health, education, and economic policy, recognizing the disproportionate impact of climate disasters on women.



3

Strengthen Awareness & Protection Mechanisms

Expand awareness campaigns and survivor services: legal aid, protection systems, rehabilitation, and accessible information channels.



4

Strengthen Institutional Capacity & Accountability

Empower the National Commission of Status of Women and provincial bodies to oversee implementation and accountability, and coordinate with education, labor, and informal-sector institutions.



5

Strengthen Monitoring, Evaluation & Data Systems

Build stronger data collection and monitoring to track implementation, identify gaps, and support evidence-based decisions.



CONCLUSION

Pakistan has made significant progress in developing gender-equality policies, but implementation gaps, weak accountability, and limited inclusion of marginalized groups continue to hinder meaningful change. Achieving SDG 5 requires coordinated, intersectional action that moves beyond policy adoption toward effective implementation.