Accountability to the World's Women

Progress of South Asian Women 2005

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Development Fund for Women
UNIFEM

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United Nations
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A Series For The Fifth South Asia
Regional Ministerial Conference
Celebrating Beijing Plus Ten

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Foreword - Progress of South Asian Women 2005

It gives UNIFEM great pleasure to offer '*Progress of South Asian Women'* for the fourth time. Particularly this year, a year that is noteworthy for several landmark events on gender equality.

The year 2005, commemorates: 30 years since the first UN World Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975; 10 years since the Beijing Declaration and the adoption of the Platform of Action (BPFA) by UN Member States; 5 years since the approval of the historic Resolution 1325, by the UN Security Council; and 5 years since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS). For us in South Asia, it marks the added milestone, of the Fifth South Asia Regional Ministerial Conference, Celebrating Beijing + 10, which is being held in Islamabad in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan.
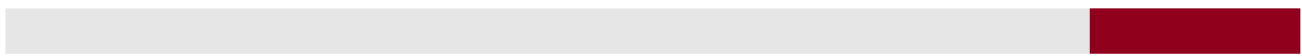
This meeting is a part of the biennial review meetings, which has been successfully used by Governments and civil society to address the BPFA and CEDAW. Apart from providing a unique platform for all stakeholders, the review meetings have also been instrumental in fostering accountability and in keeping the Beijing torch burning in the region. A collective journey undertaken by UNIFEM and governments, the SAARC Secretariat, women's groups, civil society and experts, the process facilitates a tracking of progress and gap identification with regard to the commitments made. Developing a common South Asia agenda of priorities for action, the process simultaneously promotes cross regional peer learning, sharing of best practices, as well as regional cooperation and collaboration.

This fourth issue of '*Progress of South Asian Women'* forms the base document for the above meeting, which will help in chalking out a regional way forward. It is a comprehensive analytical report, which maps the situation and status of women in South Asia, within the framework of the twelve critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action. Along with this, it also provides one of the mechanisms to track progress on gender equality in the region. Furthermore, it fills the need for a single combined document, showcasing some Government and civil actions on the twelve critical areas of concern.

The document presents a snapshot of the situation of women in South Asia and an overview of the processes that have been at work in South Asia, both to promote the advancement of women and to identify gaps between the years 2000 –2005. Giving a comprehensive picture of where the various South Asian countries are in their journey to implement the BPFA, it reflects the varied mosaic and contrasts of South Asia. Significant progress in commitment, institutional development, stakeholder synergy, judicial and legislative activism and vibrancy of civil society is accompanied by grave poverty, deprivation and inequalities in all spheres – economic, civil, cultural, social and political. Disproportionate returns to contributions, unequal returns, the added burden of 'care', a declining sex ratio, increased gender-based violence, trafficking of women and girls and the spread of HIV/AIDS, are some of the challenges that have been noted. The document draws linkages between the remarkable economic growth of the region and trade liberalization on the one hand, and gender inequalities on the other.

In an effort to draw attention to both advancements and challenges, the document has spotlighted key interventions in South Asian countries as well as challenges, both new and old. Highlighting inter-linkages between different areas, the report conveys the message that for concrete change to happen there is a need for intensive action on all fronts.

I would like to take this opporttunity to acknowledge and thank the Ford Foundation, for the extensive support they have provided to UNIFEM with regard to the Beijing + 10 processes in South Asia. They include not only this publication, but also UNIFEM activities and events, which span the pre-during and post periods, dedicated to Beijing + 10.
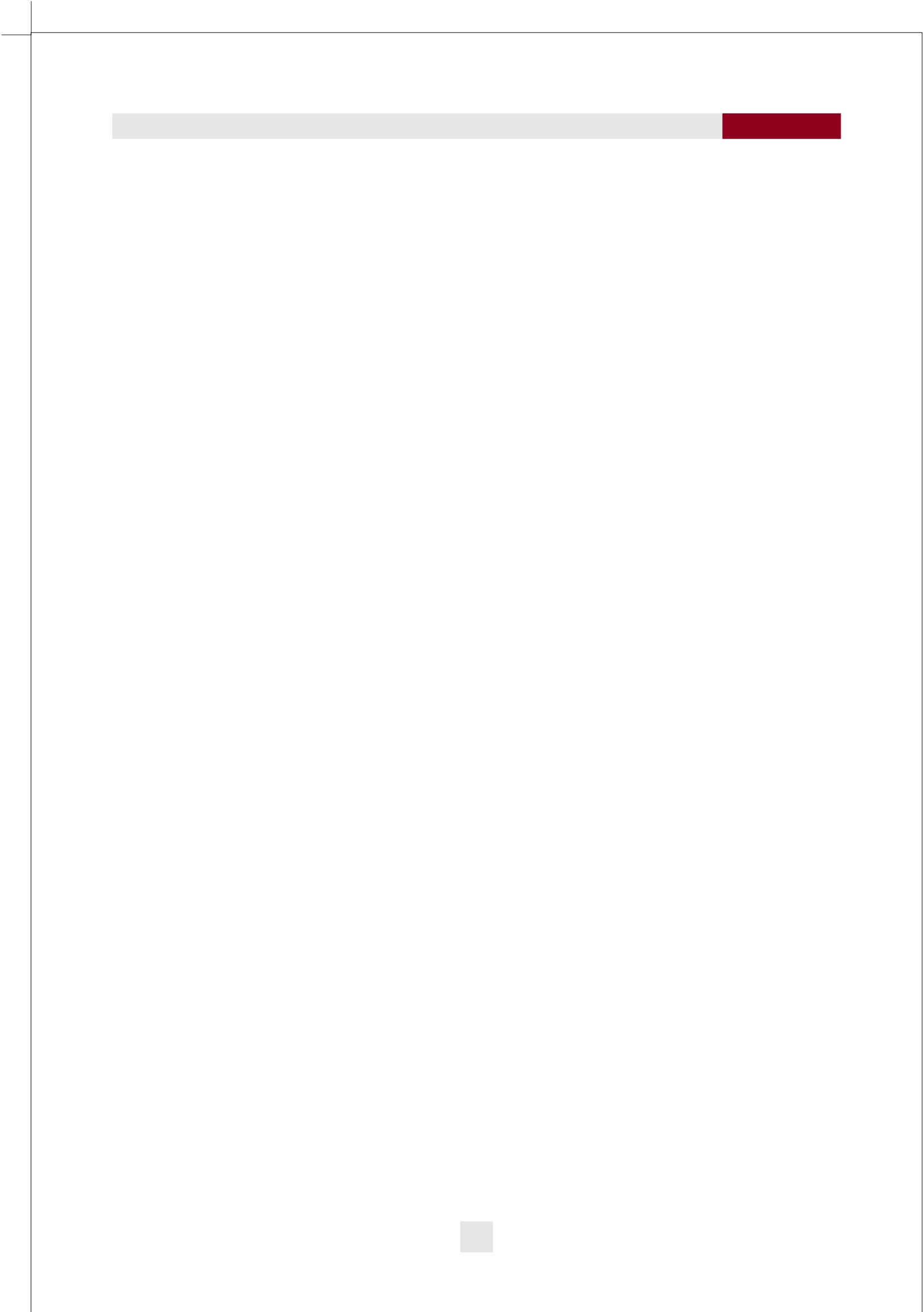
I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to Ms. Ratna Sudarshan and her expert team at the Institute of Social Studies Trust, (ISST), for this excellent report. Their thorough research, sharp analytical skills and painstaking hard work, have made available an invaluable resource for those working on gender equality. Providing comprehensive, detailed and updated information, this publication adds to resources on the progress of the implementation of the BPFA in the South Asia region. It is especially relevant now - with the conclusion of the Commission on the Status of Women meeting on Beijing + 10 early this month in New York, and the upcoming review of the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs in September this year. Critical links exist between the MDGs and women's human rights, with gender equality being a crosscutting goal and an imperative pre-requisite for the realization of all other goals. This publication also makes available a reliable point of reference for those working on gender issues and development in South Asia, and provides a building block for further related work.

Chandni Joshi
Regional Programme Director
UNIFEM, South Asia Regional Office
New Delhi
31st March 2005

Contents

List of Acronyms

ADB	:	Agriculture Development Bank (Pakistan)
AFFPD	:	Asian Forum for Parliamentarians for Population and Development
AIE	:	Alternative and Innovative Education
ATC	:	Agreement on Textiles and Clothing
BBC	:	Beyond Beijing Committee
BPEP	:	Basic and Primary Education Program
BPFA	:	Beijing Platform for Action
BWCO	:	Bhutan Women and Children Organization
CBO	:	Community Based Organizations
CEDAW	:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
FAR	:	Centre for Advocacy and Research
DWA	:	Department for Women Affairs
DWCD	:	Department for Women and Child Development
EGS	:	Education Guarantee Scheme
FIFA	:	Federation of International Football Associations
FWB	:	First Women Bank
HNPSP	:	Health Nutrition and Population Sector Programme
HNSA	:	HomeNet South Asia
HPSP	:	Health and Population Sector Programme
ICCPR	:	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICDS	:	Integrated Child Development Service
ICESCR	:	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDEAL	:	Intensive District Education for All
IEC	:	Information Education and Communication
INGAD	:	Inter-Agency Gender and Development Group
IT	:	Information Technology
MFA	:	Multi Fibre Agreement
MoU	:	Memorandum of Understanding
MOWD	:	Ministry for Women's Development
MS	:	Mahila Samakhya
MTEF	:	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MWCA	:	Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs
MWSW	:	Ministry for Women and Social Welfare

NABARD	:	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NCHR	:	National Commission for Human Rights
NCRB	:	National Crimes Record Bureau
NCW	:	National Commission on Women
NEMAP	:	National Environmental Management Action Plan
NLM	:	National Literacy Mission
NWMI	:	Network for Women in Media
PLAGE	:	Policy Leadership and Advocacy for Gender Equality
PNDT	:	Pre- Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of isuse) Act
PPAF	:	Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund
PRS	:	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	:	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RCH	:	Reproductive and Child Health
RMK	:	Rashtriya Mahila Kosh
RSP	:	Rural Support Programme
SAARC	:	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAFAHT	:	South Asia Forum against Human Trafficking
SAFTA	:	South Asian Free Trade Association
SAPAP	:	South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme
SAPAT	:	South Asia Professionals against Trafficking
SAPTA	:	South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement
SGRY	:	Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana
SGSY	:	Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana
SHG	:	Self Help Group
SNA	:	System of National Accounts
SSA	:	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan
STEP	:	Support to Training and Employment
UDHR	:	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNIFEM	:	United Nation Development Fund for Women
URC	:	Units for the Rights of Children
WFS	:	Women's Feature Service
WTO	:	World Trade Organisation

INTRODUCTION

South Asia: The Context

The South Asian region has witnessed in the last ten years innovative and dedicated action by both government and non-government organisations, complimented by a vibrant women's movement, even though the world environment of globalisation, unrest and strife has posed new and serious challenges in the march towards gender equality. South Asia, home to nearly half of the world's poor, has the highest illiteracy rate in the world, and the schooling of females still lags behind that of males, despite the progress that has taken place. One third of the world's maternal deaths occur in South Asia and nearly half of all children in the region less than 5 years of age are reported to be malnourished. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has hit this region as other parts of the world, and its feminisation raises many new concerns. Patriarchal structures and values are deeply entrenched in South Asia, as in other parts of the world. Family hierarchy and gendered roles therein play a major role in shaping and undermining women's position within the family structure. Women's secondary status gets embodied in policies which tend to deny women their citizenship rights and their correlative access to services and opportunities. Women are generally kept subordinated and marginalized in decision-making processes and in other forms of engagement. Their struggle is not confined to their lifetime— it starts even before birth. A major issue confronting the region is the adverse sex ratio and the increasing number of 'missing' girls in the countries of the region.

The macro economic policy framework in South Asia has witnessed tremendous change over the last 10-15 years, with economic reform agendas being put in place and trade liberalisation introduced. Globalisation has encouraged new possibilities in production and trade, but its impact on women has often been negative. While some opportunities have been created, there has been extensive loss of jobs among poor women in activities and sectors that have not been able to withstand competition, or where the introduction of new technology has displaced women. The predicted benefits have not come about and the need for social protection has gone up, while the capacity and the commitment of governments towards social protection have weakened. South Asia continues to be a region with intense poverty and deprivation, and with traditional social norms associated with gender bias and inequality. Feminisation of poverty reflects both adverse economic change and the underlying inequitable social structure. At the same time, women across the board have learned to assert their agency more today than earlier and have become active participants in development processes rather than mere targets and beneficiaries. It is important to acknowledge women's participation outside the home, whether in the village development councils, development projects, or in other community activities and in the workforce. Women are involved in agricultural activities, industries and in providing services. Yet the opportunities and benefits available to them are not sufficient and often do not allow them the same kind of growth as men working in similar occupations. A range of issues, economic, civil, political, cultural and social continues to hold them back. Even today women are paid lower wages than men. The opportunity of paid work and/or of capital and wage differential notwithstanding, the burden of contributing to the family upkeep clearly remains with women – economically and otherwise.

It has been pointed out that the South Asian region has seen momentous changes in the last two decades in terms of economic growth coupled with changing patterns of work, especially for women, and that today it is the most "globally integrated" region in the world, with the highest average ratios of trade to GDP, the largest absolute inflows of foreign direct investment, substantial financial capital flows and even significant movements of labour.[1] Over the last decade, South Asia has been the second fastest growing region after East Asia, with an average annual rate of growth of 5.3 per cent. The patterns of growth have stimulated higher rates of migration among women, and the special situation of women migrants is a new and emerging issue in the region. Migration

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[1] *Ghosh, Jayati, Globalisation and Economic Empowerment of Women: Emerging Issues in Asia, Paper for Intergovernmental Meeting on the Beijing Platform for Action, UN-ESCAP, 7-10 September 2004*

in its positive aspect implies greater mobility and autonomy for women in relation to the decision of where to work and live. The negative aspect that has been a cause of increasing concern is the greater vulnerability of women migrants to trafficking. Trafficking of women and girls is on the rise in South Asia. While trafficking into forced begging, forced marriage and work ghettos in the informal sector have all increased in Asia; it is the commercial sexual exploitation of women that continues to dominate as far as trafficking of women and girls is concerned.[2] There is a general consensus that trafficking in women (and girls) is able to flourish in many developing countries because of the combined effects of poverty and gender discrimination, a situation that persists because of the 'collusion of the market, the state, the community and the family unit'.[3]

Positive developments over the last decade include the increasing visibility of women in local levels of decision making, although it is not clear how many women in such positions are actually acting on their own and with the ability to 'feminise' the agenda of local and political action. But the numbers are impressive, and the great effort that has gone into this change needs to be applauded. It is reported that there are a million and a half women in institutions of local governance, and 200 in parliaments within the region.[4]

The importance of ecology sensitive development and planning has been brought home in a particularly traumatic way by the Asian tsunami experience.

Table 1 below presents some selected indicators on the status of women in South Asian countries.

South Asia and the Beijing Platform for Action

Considerable progress has been made in the movement for gender equality since 1975, when issues concerning women's status and awareness were articulated at the First World Conference on Women in Mexico City. The Second and Third World Conferences at Copenhagen in 1980 and Nairobi in

Table 1 : Status of Women in South Asia

Country	Total Females (in millions) 2005	Lifetime Births per Women (TFR)	Percent of Women Ages 15-19 Giving Birth in One Year	Percent of Births Attended by Skilled Personnel	Maternal Deaths per 100,000 Live Births 2000	Lifetime Chance of Dying From maternal Causes 1 in:	Percent of HIV-Infected Adults Women	Literate Women as Percent of Literate Men (age 15-24) 2000/04	Percent Enrolled in Secondary School 2000/2003		Percent Economically Active Ages 15+ 1995/2002		Women as percent of non-farm wage Earners	Women as percent of Parliament	
									Female	Male	Female	Male	2001/02	1995	2004
Bangladesh	74.4	3.0	11	13	380	59	15	71	49	45	56	87	25	11	2
Bhutan	1.2	4.7	5	15	420	37	-	-	-	-	58	90	-	0	10
India	531.9	3.1	11	43	540	48	37	81	42	57	41	86	18	8	8
Maldives	0.2	3.7	5	-	110	140	-	100	68	64	37	72	40	6	6
Nepal	12.9	4.1	11	11	740	24	27	75	37	50	57	86	-	-	6
Pakistan	78.7	4.8	7	20	500	31	12	64	19	29	16	83	8	2	22
Sri Lanka	19.4	2.0	2	94	92	430	17	100	89	84	36	77	45	5	5

Source : Population Reference Bureau, 2005. www.prb.org

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[2] "Information Sheet: Trafficking in a Global Context", GAATW, 2002.

[3] Coomaraswamy R, 2000, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its causes and consequences, on trafficking in women, women's migration and violence against women, submitted in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1997/44." E/CN.4/2000/68, 29 February, para 57, in An Agenda for Moving Forward, in Not a minute more: Ending Violence Against Women, UNIFEM, New York, 2003, p 77.

[4] UNIFEM, MYFF, 2004.

1985 took forward these commitments. With the Fourth World Conference in Beijing, in 1995, countries accepted the need for a gender perspective in all areas of development planning and implementation. Beijing served as the meeting ground for long-drawn demands from the women's movements across the globe as well as commitments from various governments. And, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) which came out of the Conference, provided clear and comprehensive guidelines towards advancing the rights of women. The implementation of the BPFA lies in the main, however, with the State and the document serves as the basis upon which the implementation shall be assessed.

The BPFA was a remarkable consensus, and a vision and strategy for change. Five years after, and again ten years after, national governments have given full and unequivocal re-affirmation of the principles and strategies outlined in the document. As a region, gender equality in South Asia poses many challenges, as it requires addressing, often challenging, deep rooted traditions and social norms. It is notable that all the governments in the region have taken a positive and constructive approach, and have moved the agenda forward despite occasional roadblocks and opposition. All the South Asian countries are committed to implementing the BPFA, and all have ratified CEDAW.

Recent national initiatives have included the formulation of national plans and strategies for the empowerment of women, engendering of the Census and other official data collection; use of gender budget analysis; addressing issues relating to the migration of women; and many others.

National efforts find reinforcement in regional agreements to focus effort on key priorities. In South Asia, a unique accountability mechanism has been evolved to monitor progress in the twelve critical areas of action. UNIFEM has instituted a process of biennial meetings to track progress and enable debate on new and emerging challenges. The meetings also offer a forum to examine various opportunities for joint action. So far, the meetings have been held at New Delhi, India (1996), Kathmandu, Nepal (1998), Bandos Island, Maldives (2000), and Paro, Bhutan (2003). The fifth meeting is to be held at Islamabad, Pakistan in 2005. Major regional initiatives that reflect the region's commitment and response to concerns of gender equality include a Memorandum of Understanding between SAARC and UNIFEM; the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution, adopted in 2002; a regional campaign on violence against women; catalysing of a number of networks, including Positive Women's Network, South Asia Forum Against trafficking, South Asian Women Entrepreneurs, network of Feminist economists, NGO-SAARC Women for Peace. An important initiative currently in process is the setting up of a gender data base for South Asia at the SAARC Secretariat.

Looking ahead

The chapters that follow review the progress made in South Asia, with special focus on the last five years. While each chapter looks at one critical area, the inter-linkages between the different areas of action are clearly strong. It needs to be emphasized that this report does not seek to be comprehensive, nor in any way to substitute for more nuanced and detailed country reports. Its purpose is to draw some broad trends, highlight some key issues, and identify areas where focused attention is still needed.

The report has also tried to connect, where relevant, the debates and discussions around the CEDAW reports presented by the different governments, and the responses of the CEDAW committee, with the review of the BPFA. CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women or the Women's Convention, can be referred to as a women's "bill of rights". It defines broadly the parameters of human rights to include culpability for violence against women. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), which is more recent, is a set of twelve critical areas of concern intended to support the goals of CEDAW. This document identifies strategic objectives under each critical area of concern and actions to be taken by various stakeholders including the Government, the United Nations, the international community, women's organizations/NGOs, etc. The synergies between CEDAW and BPFA are strong and evident.

However, the question has arisen as to how relevant either the CEDAW or the BPFA are today. No doubt, the BPFA can still provide the inspiration and the momentum for actions that advance the cause of gender equality — but how relevant is it in a context where the Millennium Declaration and the corresponding Millennium Development Goals seem to overshadow all other thinking on development? This question was seriously debated at the recently concluded 49th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at New York. The unequivocal reaffirmation by the governments that had gathered there of the BPFA is one part of the answer. The equally clear message that went out to women's advocates from stalwarts in the movement was that important and central as the BPFA is, it is necessary today to examine and engender the processes and analyses that surround the Millennium Development Goals, which at times appear to be elbowing out any other framework for action and development discourse. The Political Declaration passed at the CSW in 2005 (See

Annex1) established a strong link between the BPFA and the Millennium Declaration. A detailed analysis in this regard is at Annex 2. Seven strategic priorities have been proposed in the MDG Task Force on Gender Equality, which reaffirm the importance of action designed to combat violence against girls and women, guarantee sexual and reproductive rights, guarantee women's and girls' property, land and inheritance rights, eliminate inequality in employment, increase women in national and local governments, invest in infrastructure that reduces women's and girls' time burdens, and expand access to education.[5] The Millennium Summit later in 2005 will no doubt reinforce the above. Looking ahead, then, the achievements and the challenges of the BPFA review needs to be made an integral part of the thinking within national governments, at regional and international levels, to ensure that the MDGs do not become a 'substitute' for the BPFA, but rather, a new strategy for the same goals.

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[5] Turning Progress into promises', statement of the Linkage Caucus from the 49th session of the CSW, March 11, 2005.

A

WOMEN
AND
POVERTY

Strategic Objectives

1. Review, adopt and maintain macro-economic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of poor women

2. Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources

3. Provide women with access to inputs of production such as credit, seeds, technology including information and communication technologies etc.

4. Develop gender based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminization of poverty

It is estimated that nearly 40 per cent of the world's poor who earn less than a dollar a day, live in South Asia. While this estimate reflects income or consumption expenditure, poverty has other attributes such as powerlessness, dependence, or isolation. Low economic status and social exclusion combine to influence health and educational status, nutritional levels, access to sanitation and safe drinking water, to credit and skill training, and ability to exercise one's democratic rights. The incidence of poverty among women in South Asia is especially high, with women and men experiencing poverty differently and often becoming poor through different processes.[6] The process of feminization of poverty in South Asia is closely linked to the cultural and institutional constraints that restrict women's participation in economic activity, the macro economic framework and technological choices that have often tended to reinforce pre-existing constraints. Women continue to be largely concentrated in informal employment, as unprotected and sub-contracted labour, there are persistent wage gaps between men and women, and women bear near total responsibility for care and nurture. With increased migration and displacement, new groups of vulnerable women and greater numbers of female headed households have emerged. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show the persistence of high levels of poverty, and the disparities in earned income of men and women.

Table 2.1

Country	Population below Income Poverty Line (%)		Population below Income Poverty Line (%)	
	$ 1 a day (1993 PPP US$) 1983-1999 a	$ 1 a day (1990-2002) b	National Poverty Line 1984-1999 a	National Poverty Line 1984-1999 b
Bangladesh	29.1	36	35.6	49.8
Bhutan	**	**	**	**
India	44.2	34.7	35	28.6
Nepal	37.7	37.7	42	42
Pakistan	31	13.4	34	32.6
Sri Lanka	6.6	6.6	25	25
Maldives	**	**	**	**

Note: ** Data not available
Source: a. HDR 2001,   b. HDR 2004

Table 2.2 : Estimated Earned Income of Men and Women (PPP US $)

Countries	1998*[1]		2000[2]		2002[3]	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Bangladesh	744	1949	1151	2026	1150	2035
Bhutan	**	**	**	**	**	**
India	1105	2987	1267	3383	1442	3820
Maldives	3009	5100	3329	5582	**	**
Nepal	783	1521	880	1752	891	1776
Pakistan	776	2594	916	2884	915	2789
Sri Lanka	1927	4050	2270	4724	2570	4523

*Note: ** means in the year 1998, instead of using the term 'estimated earned income', GDP per capita (in PPP US$) for men and women are provided, by the HDR 2000. However, the methodology for calculation is same as in the years 2000 and 2002. Estimated Earned Income is taken as a proxy for wages.*
Source: 1. HDR, 2000; 2.HDR 2002; HDR 2004

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[6]   Kabeer, Naila (2003), *Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals—A Handbook for Policy-makers and Other Stakeholders, Commonwealth Secretariat, International Development Research Centre.*

This chapter seeks to highlight some recent initiatives taken to eradicate poverty, with a focus on women. The need for sex disaggregated data to evaluate the impact of such policies and programmes is an area in which sustained effort is still needed (See Box 1). In South Asian countries, poverty levels vary across region (including rural-urban gaps), gender, and ethnicity (such as caste). A broad picture of poverty levels is presented

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Box 1

Choosing Indicators

(a) Choice of an indicator: It is not always obvious which the best indicator is. For example, in case of education, one could use gross enrolment ratio of women in primary education, or adult literacy rates, or the level of computer literacy among women. While composite indices can be used, the process of averaging may hide important differences. Selection of indicators, therefore, gets influenced by the objective behind any particular comparison, as much as data availability itself.

(b) Lack of correlation among various gender-based indicators: In addition, not all indicators may show the same pattern of change.

(c) Incompatibility of data from different sources: There may be contradictions between the data from different official and non-official sources.

(d) Unavailability of data: Sometimes, it might happen that sex disaggregated data in specific areas in all the countries for all the years are not available. Thus, the Human Development Reports from 2000 to 2004 show that Gender Empowerment Measures could not be calculated for all countries in South Asia for all the years.

(e) Qualitative versus quantitative data: Some aspects of discrimination are difficult to quantify, such as mental health and well being. Similarly, data generated from micro-level surveys and studies cannot be aggregated at the national level, and have limited use in cross country comparisons.

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through estimates of the head count ratio and Gini-coefficient figures (see Appendix A). For all the countries, the head count poverty ratio (or poverty incidence) is higher in the rural areas compared to the urban areas, whereas the value of the Gini coefficient (or inequality) is higher for the urban areas and lower for the rural areas.

Strategic Objectives and Steps Taken

1. Review, adopt and maintain macro-economic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty

The PRSP process (Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers) has been introduced in several countries, and some efforts are under way to ensure gender sensitivity of the process. In Bangladesh, the PRSP is in the final stages of formulation. In Bhutan, the process is under way. In India, the Ninth Plan introduced the Women's Component Plan to ensure that 30% of funds/ benefits under various welfare and developmental schemes were to be earmarked for women, and the Tenth Plan reaffirms the major strategy of mainstreaming gender perspectives in all sectoral policies and programmes and plans of action. Women specific interventions will be undertaken to bridge existing gaps. The commitment of the Government of Maldives to sustainable human development and gender equity is reflected in its allocation of 40 per cent of public expenditures for social services in 2001. In Nepal, the MTEF (Medium Term Expenditure Framework) and associated budget reforms provide an effective mechanism to adjust the annual expenditure programme to the changes in the government's resource position, while protecting the Tenth Plan's priorities including poverty alleviation programmes. In Pakistan, a number of tangible recommendations have been made for gender mainstreaming in the PRSP. In Sri Lanka the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) is being launched. The impact of conflict on women and households is an area of concern, and Sri Lanka has given top priority to developing poverty eradication programmes for female headed households in areas affected by conflict.

Gender budgeting is another tool to sensitise development strategy. Pilot work by the Policy Research Unit in the Ministry

of Health in Bangladesh has attempted to link gender-disaggregated beneficiary assessment with local service delivery. In India, the Government of India with UNIFEM support has introduced the concept and all Departments have been advised to present gender budgets. The Gender Sensitive Budget initiative in Nepal consisted of a gender audit of the health, education and agriculture sectors. Sri Lanka has undertaken a gender-disaggregated public expenditure incidence analysis.

2. Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources

The Government of Bangladesh has formulated a National Policy for the Advancement of Women in 1997. This seeks to make women's development an integral part of all national development programmes, remove barriers to equal participation, create awareness and increase commitment. Promoting gender equality, and "realising the constitutional goal of equality between all citizens - women and men", was a major aim of the Fifth Development Plan (1997-2002).

India announced the National Policy for Empowerment of Women in 2001 to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. One of the commitments made in the National Common Minimum Programme for the empowerment of women concerns ensuring women's equal rights in ownership of assets like houses and land. The Government of Tamil Nadu has already taken steps towards increasing women's access to land. The Comprehensive Wasteland Programme, initiated in 2001-2, allows the allotment of land to Federations of Self Help Groups and Self Help Groups with a minimum of one year track record. Preference is to be given to exclusive women's groups. Many state governments in India have made amendments related to women working in night shifts, keeping in mind the growth of IT (Information Technology) which requires changes in legislation for 24x7 work schedule.

In Maldives, a programme for women's empowerment has been implemented and an overview document 'Gender and Development in Maldives: a review of 20 years' produced.

3. Provide women with access to inputs of production such as credit, seeds, technology including information and communication technologies etc.

An effective strategy for empowerment of poor women is increased access to credit, new technology, skill training and other inputs of production; with economic security, women are better able to confront social norms and traditions that restrict their freedom. While credit plays a critical role, it will help to empower women only if their decision making power and control over resources also goes up, so that it is one component of the multiple interventions needed.

In Bangladesh, an estimated 12 million women are micro credit borrowers, with loan of 1.2 billion and a loan repayment rate of over 90%.[7] The Vulnerable Group Development Programme, a multi donor nationwide programme, currently reaching 7.5 million hard core rural women, seeks to provide poor women with training to encourage self employment, and nutrition support. An innovative intervention has been the 'Village Phone', *Grameen* Bank's unique method of bringing the information revolution to the rural people of Bangladesh. There are currently 1,425 Village Phones in operation and the emphasis is on developing women's entrepreneurial skills.

In India, the Self Help Group (SHGs) movement has been supported through schemes of a large number of departments including the Women and Child Development, Rural Development, Urban Development, Handlooms and Handicrafts, Sericulture, Agriculture, etc., at the national and state levels. *Rashtriya Mahila Kosh* (RMK) provides credit for livelihood and related activities to poor women. The *Indira Mahila Yojana* has been more successful in states like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. An estimated 1.9 million women are beneficiaries of schemes run by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and RMK (March 2003). SHGs have also been formed under the South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme (SAPAP). The *Kudumbashree* programme in Kerala is a poverty alleviation initiative based on the SHG concept. Skill and capacity building

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[7] *World Bank Report 2004, cited in Bangladesh Country Paper*

interventions for self-employment are supported through programmes such as STEP (Support to Training and Employment Programme), *Swawlamban*, *Swashakti*, *Swayamsiddha*, Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme and *Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna* (SGSY). Wage employment programmes such as *Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana* (SGRY) aims at 30 per cent of the employment opportunities created to be provided to women. Programmes such as the targeted Public Distribution System, *Antodaya Anna Yojana* are also run by the government to ensure food security to the poor. The *Indira Awas Yojana* stipulates that houses under the scheme are to be allotted in the name of the female member of the beneficiary household.

In Nepal, a Poverty Alleviation Fund has been incorporated into the government's Tenth Five-Year Plan. *Grameen* Bank facilities are available in some areas to provide low interest loans for income generation to poor women who have no collateral. NGOs and CBOs are conducting various income generation and micro-enterprise development programmes for women in low income families. Provisions are being made by the Council of Technical Education and Vocational Training for skill upgradation among women.

Pakistan is working towards providing women's access to micro-credit especially through channels such as Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), Rural Support Programmes (RSPs), First Women Bank (FWB), Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) and *Khushali* Bank. The Government of Pakistan is making targeted interventions to address poverty and generate income and employment through public works. Programmes such as *Khushal Pakistan programme*, *Tameer-e-pakistan programme*, *Tameer-e-Punjab*, *Tameer-e-Sarhad Programme*, Drought Emergency Relief Assistance and micro-credit are aimed at improving life in the rural areas, and facilitating development of small and medium enterprises.

4. Develop gender based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminization of poverty

In Bhutan, the Gender Pilot Study[8] has helped to know the extent to which women have access to resources. Efforts are on in India for systematic production and dissemination of gender disaggregated data, with the lead being taken by the Central Statistical Organisation. In Nepal, UNIFEM and the UN system collaborated to engender the Population and Housing Census, 2001. One of the activities of the engendering process was the adoption of the System of National Accounts (SNA) 1993, to capture women's work in the care economy. For the first time, the Central Bureau of Statistics produced classification beyond 4 digits in the Occupation and Industry Sector. The National Planning Conmmission in collaboration with the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare has developed gender sensitive indicators with support from the Mainstreaming Gender Equity Project. The National Planning Commission with assistance from UNIFEM has started the setting up of a Gender Management System. The Ministry of Women's Development in Pakistan commissioned a study of the interim PRSP document with the assistance of members

Continuing Gaps and Challenges

- Poverty reduction strategies need to examine the impact of macro economic policy on poverty, and address gender as a cross cutting issue

- Strengthen efforts to increase women's access to productive resources, skill training, new technologies and social protection

- In addition to micro credit programmes, ways in which commercial banks could mainstream credit programmes for women need to be developed

- Ineffective implementation of poverty eradication programmes is a continuing challenge

- Need for more extensive sex disaggregated data

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[8] *PRSP, Bhutan*

of the UN Inter-Agency Gender and Development Group (INGAD) to see if it contained a gender perspective. One of the main recommendations of the study is introduction of gender budgeting in Pakistan. In Sri Lanka, while a third of the population is below the poverty line, positive social development indicators have been sustained.

APPENDIX-A

Head Count Ratio and Gini Coefficient (Consumption) of Different Countries in Different Rounds of Surveys

	Poverty Head Count Ratio			Gini Coefficient Consumption		
	Rural	Urban	National	Rural	Urban	National
Bangladesh[1]						
1991-92	61.2	44.9	58.8	0.243	0.307	0.259
2000	53.0	36.6	49.8	0.271	0.368	0.306
2000 (a)*			36.0			
Bhutan[2]						
2000 m	2.9	29.0	25.3	0.35 (e)	0.36 to 0.42 (e)	0.36 (e)
2000 n	6.4	41.3	36.3			
India[3]						
1993-94	37.1	32.9	36.0	0.277	0.339	0.315
1999-2000	26.8	24.1	26.0			(0.378)
1999-2000 (a)*			34.7			
Nepal[4]						
1995-96	44.0[j]	23.0[j]	42.0 [j]	0.31 [i*]	0.43 [i*]	0.347 [i*]
1995 (a)*			37.7			
Pakistan[5]						
1998-99 [k]	34.7	20.9	30.6	0.251	0.353	0.296
2000-01[l]	38.98	22.67	32.1			
1998 (a)*			13.4			

	Poverty Head Count Ratio				Gini Coefficient Consumption			
	Rural	Estimates	Urban	National	Rural	Estimates	Urban	National
Sri Lanka[6]								
1990-91	22.0	12.4	15.0	19.9	0.42	0.25	0.62	0.47
1995-96	27.0	24.9	14.7	25.2	0.48	0.44	0.46	0.43
1999-2000								0.35 o
1995-96 (a) *				6.6				

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Notes:

1. The Gini-coefficient figures for all the years are taken from Jayasuriya (2002). But the poverty figures for 1991-92 and 2000 are taken from the Bangladesh Government document (2003). Data for 2000 (a) * is taken from the World Development Indicators, 2004 (produced by the World Bank) and are based on expenditure and not income. The corresponding figures show the percentage of people living below the poverty line of $1 per day, at the national level;

2. The data taken from Royal Government of Bhutan document (2004). m means the food poverty line. n means the income poverty line. (e) Means Gini coefficient based on expenditure;

3. Gini coefficients data for all the years have been taken from Jayasuriya (2002). Poverty data for 1993-94 and 1999-2000 has been taken from Deaton and Dreze (2002). Data for 1999-2000 (a) * is taken from the World Development Indicators, 2004 (produced by the World Bank) and are based on expenditure and not income. The corresponding figures show the percentage of people living below the poverty line of $1 per day, at the national level;

4. Data taken from Jayasuriya (2002) except for j and j'. j means the data is taken from Government of Nepal (2003). j' means the data is taken from the background paper on "Poverty Over Time" in Prennushi (1999). Data for 1995-96 (a) * is taken from the World Development Indicators, 2004 (produced by the World Bank) and are based on expenditure and not income. The corresponding figures show the percentage of people living below the poverty line of $1 per day, at the national level;

5. Gini-coefficients data for all the years have been taken from Jayasuriya (2002). k means the head count index is based upon the officially (in Pakistan) notified national poverty line of Rs. 748.56 per adult equivalent per month at the prices of 2000-01 PIHS Survey. Since the methodology of measuring poverty is still evolving, we expect to arrive at rural and urban estimates as the methodology is finalized. It may be noted that the estimates for previous years may also be revised to ensure consistent application of the finalized methodology. l means the PIHS/HIES survey was carried out in 2001 and for the purpose of uniformity to correspond to the financial year, it is labeled as 2000-01. Taken from Government of Pakistan (2003) document. Data for 1998 (a)* is taken from the World Development Indicators, 2004 (produced by the World Bank) and are based on expenditure and not income. The corresponding figures show the percentage of people living below the poverty line of $1 per day, at the national level;

6. All the data pertaining to the year 1995-96 is taken from Jayasuriya (2002). In Sri Lanka, the Ginis are for *income*; consumption Gini for 1995/96 was 0.33. 1995/96 was affected by a severe drought and that is likely to have resulted in a higher than normal level of income poverty; data from a survey that was conducted by the Central Bank in the following year estimated national poverty to be almost the same as that in 1990/91, though the surveys are not strictly comparable. 1995-96 (a)* means the data is taken from the World Development Indicators, 2004 (produced by the World Bank) and are based on expenditure and not income. The corresponding figures show the percentage of people living below the poverty line of $1 per day, at the national level. o means the data is taken from: Regaining Sri Lanka: Vision and Strategy for Accelerated Development, Govt. of Sri Lanka, December, 2002. pp 132.

Sources: 1. Deaton, Angus and Jean Dreze (2002), Poverty and Inequality in India: a re-examination, EPW September 7; 2. Government of Bangladesh (2003); 3. Government of Sri Lanka (2002); 4. Prennushi (1999); 5. Government of Pakistan (2003); 6. Jayasuriya (2002); 7. Government of Nepal (2003); 8. Government of Bhutan (2004).

B

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN

Strategic Objectives

1. Ensure equal access to education

2. Eradicate illiteracy among women

3. Improve vocational training science and technology and continuing education

4. Develop non-discriminatory education and training

5. Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms

6. Promote life long education and training for women and girls

The gaps in educational achievement of girls and boys are still wide despite recognition that education plays a critical role in social, economic and political empowerment of women. The combined gross enrolment ratio at primary, secondary and tertiary levels has gone up for both boys and girls compared to the 1999 data in almost all countries (Table 3.1). The gender gaps in literacy and average years of schooling continue to be high in all countries except Sri-Lanka (Table 3.2, 3.3). Maldives and Bangladesh have achieved gender parity as far as primary enrolment ratio is concerned (Table 3.4).

Table 3.1: Combined Gross Enrolment Ratio for Primary, Secondary and Tertiary School

Year	Bangladesh	Bhutan	India	Maldives	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
1999 (F)	33	0	49	77	52	28	71
1999 (M)	41	0	62	77	67	51	68
2000-01 (F)	54	0	48	78	55	31	66
2000-01 (M)	53	0	62	78	67	43	64

Source : HDR, 2002 and 2004

Table 3.2: Adult Literacy Rate

Countries	Female		Male		Combined	
	2000	2002	2000	2002	2000	2002
Bangladesh	29.9	31.4	52.3	50.3	41.3	41.1
Bhutan	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	47.0	47.0
India	45.5	46.4	68.4	69.0	57.2	61.3
Maldives	96.8	97.2	96.6	97.3	96.7	97.2
Nepal	24.0	26.4	59.6	61.6	41.8	44.0
Pakistan	27.9	28.5	57.5	53.4	43.2	41.5
Sri Lanka	89.0	89.6	94.4	94.7	91.6	92.1
South Asia	43.8	0.0	66.2	0.0	55.6	57.6

Source : HDR, 2002 and 2004

Table 3.3: Average Years of Schooling for the Selected Countries of South Asia, 2000

Countries	Male	Female
India	6.3	3.7
Pakistan	5.1	2.5
Bangladesh	3.3	1.8
Nepal	3.3	1.5
Sri Lanka	7.2	6.6

Source : Human Development in South Asia 2003

Table 3.4: Male and Female Gaps in Gross Primary Enrolment Ratio, 1998-2001

Countries	Male	Female
India	111	92
Pakistan	85	63
Bangladesh	101	101
Nepal	131	104
Sri Lanka	107	104
Maldives	133	134

Source : Human Development in South Asia 2003

Even though most countries are close to universal enrolment both for boys and girls, drop out is higher among girls and retention lower; there is continued prevalence of gender stereotypes in textbooks and gender differentiated choice of subjects; the quality of education is of increasing concern. This means that the extent to which and the manner in which education could provide an avenue of empowerment, and of new and different life choices, remains limited. Socialization through education often re-affirms prevalent norms and stereotypes rather than providing the means to critique them. At the same time South Asia provides important examples of innovation and experimentation some of which are mentioned below.

1. Ensure equal access to education

Ensuring equal access to education in a context of disparity and underlying biases requires that special measures be taken to reach the most disadvantaged, especially girls. In some countries and regions where ethnic minorities, people living in rural areas, and the poor face discrimination and exclusion, girls often suffer a multiple disadvantage because of their gender. Developing systemic and innovative responses for ensuring equity in access and retention in the education system is crucial for the empowerment of girls.

In Bangladesh, the Intensive District Education for All (IDEAL), an initiative for parent and community school management, now covers 9.9 million children. Additionally, the Basic Education for Hard-to-Reach Urban Working Children Project has enabled 14,000 children with disabilities to complete a two-year, non-formal education course. Half of those children are girls.[9] Flexible and contextualized school calendar and time table has been shown to enhance equal access to education, as demonstrated by the experience of some innovative programmes. To increase enrolment and reduce drop out, the government has introduced a stipend project for primary education.

In Bhutan, the ratio of girls in primary schools in 2000 shows considerable improvement over 1991. Enrolment of girls at the secondary and tertiary are both comparatively lower than at the primary level. Lower enrolment rate of girls at all levels is a continuing challenge, especially in rural areas. With 80 per cent of Bhutan's population being scattered across mountain slopes, the system of community schools has been an innovative way of reaching out to remote areas. Other initiatives include creation of boarding facilities, school feeding programmes, provision of separate toilets, as well as strengthening advocacy for girls' higher education including in technical and vocational institutes.

The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 makes free and compulsory education a justiciable fundamental right for all children in the 6-14 age group in India. The *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA), launched in 2001-02, is the national umbrella programme that is spearheading the universalisation of elementary education. SSA has relied on the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) to provide access to habitations without schools. Schooling is free for girls in most states upto to the higher secondary stage.

Promoting sports might be an effective way to reduce school dropout rate. An initiative undertaken in two districts of West Bengal, India, with the support of UNICEF and FIFA (Federation of International Football Associations) started in 2004, aims to cover around 600 primary schools in Murshidabad and Jalpaiguri districts. Girls are encouraged to play soccer in school, and it is hoped that this will spur attendance in a region that boasts one of the highest rates of dropout at the elementary school level. The project started by sensitizing parents, and hopes to inculcate a sense of competition and participation among girls while also encouraging them to attend school.[10]

Maldives has universalized primary education, but access to secondary education is limited. This is largely due to the fact that secondary schools are present only on a few islands. There is only one high school (for Class XI and XII) in the

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[9] *www.unicef.org/girlseducation/ index_regionalprespectives.html*
[10] *www.oneworldsouthasia.net*

country with a very limited capacity compared to demand. There is no gender discrimination in the access to, or provision of, primary education. However, students have to depend on universities abroad for tertiary education. There is a definite gender disparity in higher secondary technical and tertiary education. Efforts are being made to remove the barriers that women face, such as low mobility, to enable them to have equal access to higher education. The Government of Maldives has started to put an emphasis on selecting equal numbers of male and female candidates for higher education opportunities.

The Government of Pakistan has taken a number of steps to reduce the gender gap in education. The number of schools has been increased, public-private partnerships developed, and special incentives are offered for girls (free textbooks, stipends and nutritional food). Primary education has been made compulsory through legislation. Efforts to sensitise parents and increase the participation of local communities have been undertaken, and special effort made to recruit female teachers.

2. Eradicate illiteracy among women

Non formal education and adult literacy programmes exist in most countries. However, special effort is needed to remove residual illiteracy and prevent lapse into illiteracy.

In India, sustained effort of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) over the last decade has shown interesting results, with faster growth rates in rural areas as compared to urban areas. Between 1991 and 2001 the female literacy rate increased at a faster rate than the male literacy rate. The *Mahila Samakhya* (MS) programme started in 1989 endeavours to create an environment for women to learn at their own pace, set their own priorities and seek knowledge and information to make informed choices. The programme emphasizes the process of learning, and seeks to bring about a change in women's perceptions about themselves, and that of society

about women's roles. The programme is now operational in over 12,000 villages in 59 districts across nine states. Distance education has been used in Maldives to provide non-formal education since 1987 and seeks both to facilitate participants' entrance to employment related training as well as entrance to post-primary education.[11] In Pakistan, the Ministry of Education undertook a Crash Literacy Programme as a pilot project in 1998. The focus was on rural girls, illiterate women and out of school children. A second phase is currently under way.

Several initiatives have also been initiated by NGOs, recognizing the need to find ways to take learning to the learner and to link literacy with life skills.[12]

3. Improve vocational training, science and technology and continuing education

In Bangladesh special emphasis is being given to skill development. Various training schemes are being implemented both by the government and by NGOs. Vocational training is being introduced in all district level schools. Different ministries offer training in handicrafts, vocational and technical skills and trades, livestock, fisheries, and other agro-based activities. Training is also available on co-operative management, and social awareness raising.

In India, several programmes are available to women for skill training, including *Swawlamban*. Among recent and innovative efforts, one project hopes to use the potential of information and communication technologies to empower rural women and men with the technologies associated with the digital age, allowing them to access relevant and timely information on weather, management, marketing and entitlements, information on education and health.[13]

The government of Nepal has taken a few initiatives such as the Basic and Primary Education Program (BPEP) started in 1992 and now is in the second phase; vocational and skill development training to women under Technical and Vocational

[11] Shareef, A.F. and Kinshuk, 2003. Distance Education Model for Secondary Schools in Maldives. In N. Ansari, F. Deck, C-Yhin and H. Yu (eds), Proceeding of the International Conference on Information Technology: Research and Education USA: IEEE, 479-483.
[12] http://www.worlded.org/projects_topic_10.html
[13] www.mssrf.org

training to Women and establishment of Council of Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT). It has also revised the curriculum and teacher's manual for grade 4 and 5 with inclusion of gender perspectives. The government has also made primary education free and compulsory.

Programmes in functional literacy and skill training are conducted by several agencies in Pakistan, both government and non-government. Programmes available include courses in vegetable growing, food and nutrition, poultry farming, family planning, baby care, carpet weaving and environmental pollution.

In Sri Lanka, vocational-technical education has been identified as the weakest sector in the educational system. Educational reforms introduced since 1998 are expected to especially benefit women.[14] Although only 1% of the population has access to university education in Sri Lanka, the percentage of women in this group has gone up from 42% in 1982 to 52 % in 1999; however women are under represented in many disciplines.

4. Develop non-discriminatory education and training

Progress in eliminating gender bias from textbooks and learning material has taken place albeit at a slow pace. This is an area in which collaborations between official and non-government agencies have been very successful. In India, the State Council for Educational Research and Training in partnership with an NGO has developed gender sensitive textbooks for students up to class eight. Examples of gender equality in the syllabus include depicting the woman as the breadwinner in a single-parent family. An illustration in the chapter on government and democracy depicts a woman politician speaking from a podium. The textbook attempts to portray women in their diverse roles as homemakers, students, agriculturists and professionals. In Maldives, the National Primary Curriculum has been revised to ensure that there is no gender stereotyping and to eliminate gender bias. For example, in Practical Arts, modules such as needlework, cooking, fishing and carpentry are now available to both boys and girls. In Pakistan, supplementary reading

material has been developed through partnership with different institutions, in which care was taken to see that gender stereotypes were removed from the texts.

5. Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms

Increasing the allocations for education is a priority across South Asia. The need for increased allocations reflects the shortage of schools and need for increasing investments in school buildings and facilities within the schools, the shortage of teachers, the need to provide incentives and ensure that basic schooling is genuinely free to the students, and to continue efforts to improve the quality of education.

6. Promote life long education and training for women and girls

Learning opportunities for young adult women are a right and a goal by themselves but they also enhance the chances that young girls will receive an education. Literacy training is

Continuing Gaps and Challenges

- Lower enrolment and higher drop out rate of girls

- Gender stereotyping in curriculum and choice of subjects

- Disparity in quality of education due to absence of common schooling system

- Quality and relevance of curriculum

- Lack of empirical data for monitoring learning achievements by gender

- Inadequate resources and dependence on external aid.

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[14] *Asian Development Bank, Country briefing paper: women in Sri Lanka. 1999*

being increasingly combined with the acquisition of skills in the areas of saving and credit, maternity, health and family planning. The impact of such learning opportunities can be widespread. For example manuals developed to educate women about their legal rights have been used by several community based groups in their education programmes to raise issues of equal wages or fight for the prevention of early marriages. UNIFEM has facilitated legal literacy workshops in India focussing on laws. Some of these workshops were with existing UNIFEM partners across sectors to enhance their legal awareness and develop linkages across thematic areas like, for example, positive women, NGOs working on trafficking, groups working on VAW etc. These workshops use a participatory methodology, role-plays, film screenings, case studies to raise awareness and build the capacity of NGOs as well as grassroots women on legal literacy issues.[15]

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[15] *http://www.unifem.org.in/haryana.pdf*

C

WOMEN AND HEALTH

Strategic Objectives

1. Increase women's access throughout the lifecycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services.

2. Strength preventive programmes that promote women's health

3. Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues

4. Promote research and disseminate information on women's health

5. Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health

The World Health Report 2004 noted that with the exception of Sri Lanka, all the countries in South Asia fall in the 'high child and high adult' mortality stratum. Women's access to health and health seeking behaviour is affected by their low economic status, social norms and cultural values. Son preference influences survival and intra-household resource allocation.

Early and forced marriages, young motherhood continue, and malnutrition, anaemia and higher morbidity persist. As a result young adolescent girls discontinue their education and vocational training, are denied information about their bodies, thereby constituting a life cycle of deprivation and

Table 4.1: Maternal Mortality Ratio (per 100,000 live births)

Country	1990	1995	2000
Bangladesh	850	600	380
Bhutan	1600	500	420
India	570	440	540
Maldives	-	390	110
Nepal	1500	830	740
Pakistan	340	200	500
Sri Lanka	140	60	92

Source: http://milleniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp

discrimination, resulting in a continuum of health related vulnerabilities for women and young girls[16].

Poor sanitation and lack of safe drinking water is another major challenge. Incidence of diseases such as malaria, cholera, diarrhea and tuberculosis continues to be unacceptably high, and the spread of HIV/AIDS is a major source of concern. Poverty, food insecurity and lack of information further weaken women's health status.

Table 4.1 and 4.2 outline the high maternal mortality rates prevailing in the region (with the exception of Sri Lanka and Maldives) and the low access to maternal health services. Total fertility rates continue to be high in most countries (Table 4.3). Complications following abortion are a major cause of maternal mortality in the region. In India, a recent study has found that the overwhelming reason for seeking abortion among married women was to limit the family size.[17] Adolescents (those between 10-19 years of age) comprise a sizeable and growing proportion of the total population (more than a fifth).

The reproductive health of this group which is at risk for unwanted pregnancies and HIV, is a key concern. Data shows that sustainable access to affordable essential drugs varies considerably in countries of this region. Access to medical practitioners in remote and rural areas is lower than in urban areas, where the majority of doctors and hospitals are located.

Table 4.2: Access to Maternal Health Services

Country	National Estimates of Antenatal Care (%) 1996*	Births attended by skilled health personnel (%)1995-2002
Bangladesh	23	12
Bhutan	51	24
India	62	43
Maldives	95	70
Nepal	15	11
Pakistan	27	20
Sri Lanka	100	97

Source: Human Development Report 2004

*http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/publications/MSM_96_28/msm_96_28_table4.html

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[16] Positive Speaking: UNIFEM et al 2003
[17] Abortion Assessment Project - India, Summary and Key Findings. CEHAT 2004

Table 4.3: Total Fertility Rate

Country	1970-75	1995-2000*	2000-2005
Bangladesh	6.2	3.8	3.5
Bhutan	5.9	5.5	5.0
India	5.4	3.3	3.0
Maldives	7.0	5.8	5.3
Nepal	5.8	4.8	4.3
Pakistan	6.3	5.5	5.1
Sri Lanka	4.1	2.1	2.0

Source: Human Development Report 2004.
*Human Development Report 2002

1. Increase women's access throughout the lifecycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services.

All countries in the region have made a commitment to the ICPD Declaration and Safe Motherhood. Specific targets have been set for the reduction of maternal mortality and for better coverage with maternal health services. The following is a quick glimpse at key initiatives.

The Government of Bangladesh has adopted a comprehensive National Health Policy and recently approved the Health, Nutrition and Population Sector Programme (HNPSP) for 2003-2006. The HNPSP aims to reduce Maternal Mortality from 3.3 to 2.75 per 1000 live births, reduce total fertility rate and ensure access to reproductive health services. The Maternal and Child Health Programme of Bhutan has been expanded into a Reproductive Health Programme, and includes among its objectives, education on reproductive health for adolescents, and reduction of early marriages and teenage pregnancies. An important dimension of Bhutan's Eighth Five Year Plan was to reduce maternal mortality rates, increase coverage of antenatal care, and raise the proportion of pregnant women with access to skilled personnel for safe delivery.

In India, the National Health Policy 2001 gives high priority to women's health. The Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Programme (second phase started in 2003) is designed to meet women's needs across their life span. A community needs

assessment approach has been formulated for determining the needs of the local population for RCH services and particularly for contraceptives. The National Population Policy 2000, National Health Policy 2001 and the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) all place a special emphasis on adolescents' needs and empowerment of women. It has been emphasised that the infant mortality rate and maternal mortality ratio are unacceptably high and need special attention.

The Health Master Plan in Maldives (1996-2000) has set targets to increase the contraceptive prevalence rate from 15 per cent to 50 per cent and to significantly increase the number of women with a birth interval of more than three years. A key focus of the Health Master Plan in Maldives is specific targets for the safe motherhood programme aimed at reducing the current level of live births by 50 per cent, ensuring that all pregnant women receive at least three antenatal checkups, and have access to safe delivery and skilled obstetric assistance when needed. A number of governmental initiatives have been introduced to address persisting disparities between the nutritional and health status of women and men during the reproductive years, and the media has launched public awareness campaigns on reproductive health.

Nepal's National Health Policy, adopted since ICPD, recognizes the reproductive and sexual health rights of women, adolescents and youth. A comprehensive Reproductive Health Strategy has been developed and is being implemented through a multi-sectoral, incremental approach to strengthen the existing Safe Motherhood and Family Planning programmes. Service components that have been added include STI/RTI/ infertility and adolescent health. The 11th Amendment to the Country Code, 2002, ensures women's right to reproductive health. The court permits conditional abortion. The age of marriage for women has increased to 20 years without parental consent and with consent of parents it is 18 years.

In Pakistan the National Plan of Action emphasized the need for sex disaggregated data collection and analysis. There has

been growing commitment to public health issues and to women's health issues. The Women's Health Project is helping to develop human resources in professions of Nursing and Midwifery, and seeks to provide services in improving health status of women, reducing maternal mortality, infant mortality and morbidity, and increasing awareness about reproductive health and family planning.

Under the new Population and Reproductive Health Policy in Sri Lanka, a number of programmes have been initiated aimed at youth and the elderly. These include sex education in schools and for youth workers, counseling on human sexuality and the prevention of substance abuse, and minimizing suicides among young people. Programmes to provide health and welfare services for the elderly are also being designed.

2. Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health

Violence against women is beginning to be addressed as a public health concern. An initiative in India, the Family Violence Prevention Fund seeks to ensure that women who come to a partner hospital in Mumbai are asked about their possible experience of sexual abuse or violence, and are offered counseling and care in case of need. In Nepal, a bill has been drafted to protect women against domestic violence and to establish a family court to deal with such violence.

In the context of ante-natal services, local health practices, including access to traditional systems of medicine and practitioners, home based remedies, birth attendants and the often demonized shamans or witch doctors are accessed in many parts of South Asia. These are all issues which need to be factored into reforms of public health systems in the region to strengthen preventive programmes[18].

3. Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues

In recent years, the overall proportion of HIV positive women has steadily increased. In South Asia, women's low economic and social position has profound implications. Congruence between indicators of women's poor status and their HIV vulnerability suggests a close link between patriarchy and HIV in the region[19]. Access to sexual health services is abysmal.

The HIV/AIDS scenario in South Asia is dominated by the epidemic in India, where about 5.1 million people were living with HIV in 2003 of which 1.9 million are women aged 15-49 years. In Bangladesh and Nepal, the HIV prevalence rate has remained under 1 per cent, but high risk situations and lack of awareness demand concerted action. The few HIV surveillance studies available for Pakistan suggest that HIV prevalence among injecting drug users and sex workers has been low (ranging from 0 per cent to 11.5 per cent), with a median prevalence of 0 per cent.

Data on prevalence in the region is presented in Table 4.4.

Women are more likely to be infected, and are often more adversely affected by HIV/AIDS pandemic than men due to biological, socio cultural and economic reasons. Women have limited access to reproductive health services and are often ignorant about HIV, the ways in which it can spread and prevention options. Social and cultural norms often prevent them from insisting on prevention methods such as use of condoms in their relations with their partners.

In South Asia vulnerability to HIV is a shared reality. Thousands of refugee and mobile populations in search of livelihoods move across borders and are exposed to situations that they have little control over. Poverty, depleting rural employment opportunities and caste and gender − based exploitation, violence against women, including trafficking of young women, girls and boys into sexual and domestic servitude heighten vulnerabilities.

HIV/AIDS transmission in South Asia is understood to be *predominantly heterosexual.* In India, the majority of people infected with HIV are in the age group of 15-45 years, and many of the women are monogamous married women. Violence and sexual coercion have a severe impact in increasing women's

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[18] *Gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS UNIFEM, UNAIDS 2004*
[19] *UNDP 2003*

Table 4.4: HIV/AIDS

Country	HIV Prevalence				Condom use at last high risk (% ages 15-24) 1996-2002	
	Year	Estimated Number of HIV	Adults (15-49)	Women (15-49)	Children	Women	Men
Bangladesh	2001	13000	13000	3100	310	-	-
Bhutan	2001	<100	<100	-	-	-	-
India	2003	5100000	5000000	1900000	120000	40	51
Maldives	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nepal	2003	61000	60000	16000	-	-	52
Pakistan	2003	74000	70000	8900		-	-
Sri Lanka	2003	3500	3500	600		-	44

Source: Human Development Report 2004, www.youandaids.org

vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Women are often burdened in the care economy exclusively as care givers rather than as receivers of care. When a woman tests positive for HIV, there is an escalation of domestic violence by family members, especially after the death of the spouse/partner. Many of them are thrown out of their marital homes and deprived their property rights and maintenance and have to constantly struggle and fight for what is their very own[20].

Women's experiences must be considered in a holistic framework and alternatives that consider women's and children's access to treatment needs to be explored — for example, making antenatal services accessible to women, enabling them access to longer and safer regimens and treatments. Right to information is critical here and the involvement of women and women's groups in programmatic decision making is crucial.

4. Promote research and disseminate information on women's health

Research on women's health issues is severely lacking in all South Asian countries, and there is some concern that with further reductions in health budgets due to structural adjustment reforms, funding for research on women's health might be affected.

5. Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health

Budgetary allocations for health have not increased significantly in the region except in Maldives (see Table 4.5). The shortage of female health personnel and of infrastructure especially in rural areas needs to be addressed by all governments.

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[20] Lawyers Collective HIV/AIDS Unit, 2001, Positive Speaking -CFAR/PWN+/UNIFEM, 2003

Table 4.5: Public Health Expenditure

Country	Public health expenditure, % of GDP, 1998	Public health expenditure, % of GDP, 2001
Bangladesh	1.7	1.6
Bhutan	3.2	3.6
India	-	0.9
Maldives	3.7	5.6
Nepal	1.3	1.5
Pakistan	0.7	1.0
Sri Lanka	1.7	1.8

Source: Human Development Report 2004

Continuing Gaps and Challenges

- A rights based approach in health policies in the region is still to be adopted; recognise women as agents in health related policies

- Health programmes in most countries have not sufficiently addressed the impact of violence against women on their health

- Special needs of women with disabilities need to be factored into health policies and programmes

- Adequate facilities and resources for women's health to be made available in a holistic manner, addressing reproductive morbidity not just for maternal health

- Facilities and resources for mental health needs to be invested into

- Special initiatives are still needed to raise the age of marriage, which in turn, will reduce several maternal health related problems

- Public spending on health is inadequate

- Gender related interventions can be successful if only they build on the supportive role of men and boy abuild leadership on gender sensitive issues with all key stakeholders

D

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Strategic Objectives

1. Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women

2. Study the causes and consequences of violence and the effectiveness of preventive measures

3. Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking

Violence against women is a reality that many women live with. VAW knows no boundaries and is widely prevalent and pervasive both in women's private and the public spheres. It appears across class, caste, ethnicity and race, and across age, religion, culture, location, profession, etc. At the same time, however, violence against women is further compounded by these many dimensions in different ways.

"One in three" is the stark figure that sums up the crisis confronting women throughout the world…globally, one in three women will be raped, beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Violence against women has become as much a pandemic as HIV/AIDS or malaria." [21]

South Asia is witness to growing incidences of violence against women despite initiatives from government organizations and non-government organizations to curb it as well as the extensive campaigns being undertaken by women's groups. Some studies attribute the increasing trend to a conservative backlash but the increase may be occasioned by the fact that *because* of initiatives from both government and non-government organizations, especially the women's movement, the "culture of silence" that earlier surrounded violence has finally been broken. Women are coming out in the open to talk about issues of violence and to report instances of violations. No doubt, the magnitude and nature of violence against women are overwhelming.

Violence against women is alarming across the region but there is disturbing dearth of information and statistics on the issue in some countries, a fact that has been duly noted by CEDAW in its *Concluding Comments to Government* reports. There is an absence of reporting, as also under-reporting, of cases of violence against women in the entire region. As a result of this, there is inadequate official response to counter VAW, whether by way of policies, services or resources. While most countries would have initiated crisis centers or half-way homes for women and child victims of violence, the services available are far less than what is required to deal with the situation. Likewise, while there have been initiatives to introduce

special cells for women in police stations, these are few and still at a very preliminary stage. Besides the governments, it is the women's groups and NGOs who take the lead in providing support mechanisms and services to survivors of violence by setting up one stop crisis centers and providing counseling and legal services to them.

While other sections of this report provide details of women's situation in the contexts of health, employment, education, etc., it is important at this point, to underline the linkages between the discrimination and inequality that women face, and the violence that is perpetrated against them. There are interactive roles in perpetuating this violence.[22]

- The family socializes its members to accept hierarchical gender relations expressed in unequal division of labour between the sexes and power over allocation of resources;

- The community (through social, economic, religious and cultural institutions) provides the mechanisms for perpetuating male control over women's sexuality, mobility and labour;

- The state, finally, legitimizes the proprietary rights of men over women, providing a legal basis to the family and the community to perpetuate these relations. A State can do this through the enactment of discriminatory laws and policies or through the discriminatory application of laws.

Violence happens to women and girls merely because of their being female, because of their relationship to a man and because of the social group to which they belong. (Table 5.1)

Violence against women may be categorized as:[23]

1. Overt physical abuse (battering, sexual assault, at home and in the workplace) and psychological abuse

2. Exploitation of women's labour (non-payment or under-payment for labour and denial of benefits in the formal sector; sexual division of labour in the home leading to multiple burden on women)

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[21] *Preface by Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM, in Not a minute more: Ending Violence Against Women, UNIFEM, New York, 2003, p 6.*
[22] *Training Handout, Framework for Viewing Violence Against Women, source unnamed, Philippines, 1992.*
[23] *Ibid.*

Table 5.1 : Violence Against Women Throughout the Life Cycle

Phase	Type of violence
Pre-birth	Sex-selective abortion; effects of battering committed against the mother during pregnancy on birth outcomes; * effects on the child of positive person
Infancy	Female infanticide; physical, sexual and psychological abuse
Girlhood	Child marriage; female genital mutilation; physical, sexual and psychological abuse; incest; child prostitution and pornography; discrimination in family and education; *trafficking; HIV/AIDS
Adolescence	Dating and courtship violence (e.g. acid throwing and date rape); economically coerced sex (e.g. school girls having sex with "sugar daddies" in return for school fees); incest; sexual abuse in the workplace; rape; sexual harassment; forced prostitution and pornography; trafficking in women; partner violence; marital rape; dowry abuse and murders; partner homicide; psychological abuse; abuse of women with disabilities; forced pregnancy; *HIV/AIDS
Elderly	Forced "suicide" or homicide of widows for economic reasons; sexual, physical and psychological abuse,branding as witches

Source: Ganesh, M., Gender, Violence and Sexuality, Web-Enabled Gender Training Series, ActionAid Asia, 2002; [*added for this report].

3. Deprivation of access to and control of resources for physical, social and economic development (health/ nutrition, education, means of production, etc.) to keep women dependent

4. Oppression through cultural and religious practices (sati, honour killings, etc.)

5. Commodification of women (trafficking, prostitution, pornography)

The existence of violence against women and girls in any society reveals the following features:

● It is a human rights issue;

● It is socially and culturally sanctioned and manifested;

● It is basically a display and use of power by men over women and girls;

● It happens across class, caste, ethnicity and race, age, religion, culture, location, educational status, profession, etc.

● It is likewise compounded by class, caste, ethnicity and race, age, religion, culture, location, profession, etc.

● It is manifested physically, mentally, emotionally, economically, etc.

● It is intended to perpetuate or promote hierarchical gender relations in all social structures including the family, the community and the state.

● Its negative effects on the sexuality of women and girls, on their physical health, their reproductive capacity, their economic productivity, their mental and emotional health, their political participation are far reaching and irreversible in many cases.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), also known as the Women's Convention, adopted in 1979 and in force since 1981, defines discrimination against women as "...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of

their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."[24] Thereafter, Recommendation No. 19 was passed by CEDAW to reinforce the Women's Convention by categorically defining "gender-based violence (a)s a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men."

A landmark achievement for women's activism worldwide was the official recognition, at the Vienna Conference in 1993, of violence against women as a human rights violation and the expansion of human rights culpability from State to non-State actors. The UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women defines violence against women, as: "any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life."[25]

It can well be argued that equality and non-violence are two sides of the same coin. And unless women attain full equality with men, violence against women will remain a constant threat looming large over their heads.

1. Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women.

2. Study the causes and consequences of violence and the effectiveness of preventive measures.

That most of the countries in South Asia have recognized the existence of inequality and violence is a good starting point to work out mechanisms and action plans to advance women's agenda. Studies and research projects have been undertaken by both government and non-government organizations to understand the dimensions and contexts of violence against women and its changing manifestations. The process of rectifying inequalities primarily through legal reform and programme interventions was set in motion especially keeping in view the local Government's commitment to international declarations and conventions. Countries in South Asia have all ratified the Women's Convention and most have written constitutions that recognize fundamental human rights to life, equality, freedom, security, privacy etc. In many cases, affirmative action for women and children is also constitutionally mandated. There has been a spate of changes in domestic laws and government policies in the area of citizenship, property rights, inheritance, etc. Through time, institutional mechanisms[26] have been put in place to implement the various commitments toward achieving women's advancement, generally and to address issues of violence against women and girls. Legislative and policy reforms which are specific to violence against women have been undertaken. (See Table 5.2)

It is true that a mere count of the number of law reform proposals and/or amendments is not sufficient to capture the essence of the changes taking place, because more than the letter of the law, it is important that the spirit of equality be served. Legal strategies to prevent violence against women have to challenge not only legal norms but also existing social constructions of gender.

Bangladesh has introduced a number of legislative measures to protect women and girls from violence, e.g., the Suppression of Violence against Women and Children Act, 2000 (amended in 2003), the Acid Control Act, 2002, the Acid Crime Control Act, 2002, and the Speedy Trial Tribunal Act, 2002 aimed at expediting the trials of those accused of committing acts of violence against women. A law addressing domestic violence has also been proposed in Bangladesh. One Stop Crisis Centres to provide immediate legal, medical and other required assistance to women victims has also been set up. A Foundation of Acid Survivors was likewise put in place in 1999. A national Road March programme was launched by the Prime Minister to raise awareness about all forms of violence against women, including trafficking in women and girls.

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[24] Art 1, Part 1, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

[25] Resolution A/RES/48/104, dtd 23.2.94, UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women.

[26] For detailed discussion hereon, please refer to the section on Institutional Mechanisms.

Table 5.2

Country	Domestic violence	Rape & sexual assault	Sexual harassment	Marital rape
Bangladesh	2	1	1	0
Bhutan	0	1	0	2
India	4	2	2	0
Maldives	4	0	0	0
Nepal	4	2	0	2
Pakistan	2	2	0	0
Sri Lanka	4	2	2	2

Key: 0=no provisions or unknown; 1=specific legislation; 2=non-specific legislation; 3=non-specific legislation, being planned, drafted or reviewed; 4=specific legislation, being planned, drafted or reviewed.

Source: Appendix 1, Legislation on violence against women by country, "not a minute more: Ending Violence Against Women", UNIFEM, New York, 2003, p90.

In Bhutan, the Rape Act of 1996 was being incorporated into the Draft Penal Code, intended to protect women against sexual abuse and provided for severe financial penalties and prison sentences for offenders. There is no specific legislation to counter domestic violence and sexual harassment at the workplace, and there is a lack of systematic data collection on violence against women, especially domestic violence. The CEDAW Committee said 'while acknowledging that several traditional perceptions and practices in Bhutan favour women, including those with regard to inheritance, the Committee remains concerned that some traditions and stereotyped views in the country may be discriminatory of women and girls, and perpetuate sex-specific roles and responsibilities in some spheres of life.'

In India the Amendment to the Pre-natal Diagnostics Technique Act was made in 2002 aimed at stopping the practice of sex-selective abortion. A Draft Bill on Violence against Women has been prepared and is with the Law Ministry pending its introduction. The *Lok adalats* (people's courts) and *parivarik mahila lok adalats* (family women's courts) had been established to provide less formal but speedy systems of justice delivery.

In Vishaka & Ors vs. State of Rajasthan & Ors,[27] the Supreme Court of India took cognizance of sexual harassment at the workplace, defined it and mandated that all employers must put in place guidelines to ensure the prevention of sexual harassment of women and mechanisms for redress in case of sexual harassment. The judgment also underscores that the onus of proving innocence must shift to the abuser, instead of the victim/s. This was seen as path-breaking in the absence of statutory law. The Supreme Court of India premised its decision on the constitutional principles of "Gender Equality" and "Right to Life and Liberty"[28] and accordingly referred to International Conventions and norms for the purpose of interpretation of the constitutional principles.

Domestic abuse is a problem in the Maldives, despite a cultural norm against aggression. Though statistics are unavailable, one health counselor reports that there are several cases of sexually abused children, and that it is mostly girls who are abused.[29]

In 2002, the Supreme Court of Nepal passed a judgment recognizing marital rape. The punishment for rape has been

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[27] *Writ Petition (Criminal) Nos. 666-70 of 1002, Supreme Court of India*

[28] *Petition filed as parallel motion in the Supreme Court of India to the case State vs Ramkaran and others, District and Sessions Court, Jaipur, 15 November, 1996, cited in "Introductory Guide to CEDAW Application", APWLD, 1997.*

[29] *IPPF, IPPF Country Profile: MALDIVES cited in <www.iwraw-ap.org>*

increased through the Eleventh Amendment of the Country Code which calls for punishment to be increased with diminishing age of the victim, and an additional 5-year imprisonment in cases of gang rape, the rape of pregnant or disabled woman, as well as additional years of punishment over and above the sentence imposed on rape for paedophilia which is deemed rape. [30]

In Pakistan, the Penal Code now recognizes honour killings as premeditated murder under Section 302 (April 2000). The National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women (2002) was promulgated to promote women's participation while declaring zero tolerance towards violence against women and girls. A Code of Conduct for Gender Justice at the Workplace

was proposed in 2002 to address the issue of sexual harassment.

In Sri Lanka, the law on sexual harassment was introduced as part of the Penal Code Amendments of 1995 when Section 345 replaced the offence of outraging the modesty of a woman. Likewise, Section 363 of the Penal Code which dealt with rape was also amended and the definition of rape was changed [31]. There is no need to show evidence of resistance by the victim as penetration is sufficient to establish sexual intercourse; the age of statutory rape was increased from 12 to 16 years; the offence of custodial rape was introduced.

Apart from legislation, new research projects and studies continue to focus on the issues of violence in a bid to understand

Table 5.3 : Possible Health Consequences of Violence Against Women

Physical Health Outcomes	Mental Health Outcomes
Injury (from lacerations to fractures to internal organ injury)	Depression
Unwanted pregnancy	Fear
Gynaecological problems	Anxiety
STDs including HIV/AIDS	Low Self-Esteem
Miscarriage	Sexual Dysfunction
Pelvic Inflammatory Disease	Eating Problems
Chronic pelvic pain	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
Headaches	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
Permanent disabilities	
Asthma	
Irritable bowel syndrome	
Self-injurious behaviour (smoking, unprotected sex)	
Suicide	
Homicide	
Maternal Mortality	

Source: Violence and Injury Prevention: Violence and Health; Violence Against Women: A Priority, cited in Shah, V with Sahdev, D, "Strength in Action", Breakthrough, 2004, p.68.

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[30] The Country Code (Eleventh Amendment) Bill received the Royal Assent on September 26, 2002.

[31] "sexual intercourse with a woman without her consent; or where her consent has been obtained by use of force, threats or intimidation; where she is judicially separated from the man; with her consent when her consent was obtained when she was of unsound mind, in a state of intoxication induced by drugs or alcohol; with her consent when the man knows he is not her husband and she is under the belief that she is married to him; with or without her consent when she is under 16 years except when she is his wife who is over 12 years and not judicially separated from him."

more profoundly its dimensions and contexts, especially where health and economic costs are concerned. There is a close link between violence and the spread of HIV-AIDS, particularly in conflict situations, but also wherever power imbalances make women particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.[32] Various other health-related costs may be identified. (Table 5.3)

In pioneering studies in India and select countries, the economic costs of violence have been assessed to include the costs incurred by the individual (leave/absence from paid work and/or lost productivity, medical and mental health care expense, lost lifetime earnings, etc.), the government through its health sector, social sector and criminal justice system, the employer and third party. The India study, although conducted on a small scale, showed that domestic violence can be the cause of pushing an economically fragile household into economic crisis.[33]

3. Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.

In the spirit of cooperation and concerted action, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children (2002) was adopted. A Regional Task Force was subsequently created to monitor its implementation, and a voluntary fund was set up with contribution from Member States. Member States adopted national plans and implementing guidelines to prevent and/or stop trafficking.

Bangladesh ratified the SAARC Convention against trafficking and laid down the *Counter Trafficking Framework Report: Bangladesh Perspective* as a guideline for the adoption and implementation of a multidimensional and multi ministerial approach to effectively address trafficking. Bhutan too ratified the SAARC Convention in 2003.

In India measures to address prostitution and trafficking in women have included a proposal to amend the Immoral Traffic

(Prevention) Act to widen its scope and increase penalties; the appointment of special police officers; and the establishment of protective homes and child development and child-care centres for the children of sex workers. A National Plan of Action to combat trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of women and children and to integrate victims into society has been developed. An Action Research on Trafficking in Women and Children in India 2002-2003 was conducted recently and 464 victims of commercial sexual exploitation were interviewed along with 561 survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, 852 clients, 412 brothel owners, 160 traffickers, 510 rescued children (who had been trafficked into labour) and 852 police officials in order to get first-hand information about trends and dimensions of trafficking for better development of policies and programmes to combat trafficking.[34]

The Maldives, as a member of the South Asian Association Regional Cooperation (SAARC), has participated in a number of conferences and workshops in the past few years addressing the problem of trafficking of women and children in and from South Asian countries. Maldives hosted the 9th SAARC Summit, which resulted in the Male Declaration on Trafficking. In Nepal a National Rapporteur on Trafficking has been appointed and placed within the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal. The prime responsibility of the National Rapporteur is to effectively oversee and monitor the implementation of the programme and interventions against trafficking. The government of Nepal is an active partner in the 'Joint Initiative Against Trafficking' which is a project being implemented jointly by the MWCSW HMG Nepal and the UN agencies. The overall objective of this initiative is to reduce trafficking by redressing the gender inequities and discriminatory practices that make women and children vulnerable to being trafficked. The Government had also drafted and proposed the adoption of the Human Trafficking Control Bill, which is pending approval of the government.

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[32] *Not a minute more: Ending Violence Against Women, UNIFEM, New York, 2003, p74.*

[33] *A Multi-Site Household Survey on Domestic Violence, ICRW-INCLEN, 2000; also, "Male Violence: The Economic Costs – A Methodological Review", Paper contributed for the Seminar Men and Violence Against Women, Council f Europe, Strasbourg, 8 October. www.eurowrc.org/06.contributions/1.contrib_en/28.contrib.en.htm, cited in Not a minute more: Ending Violence Against Women, UNIFEM, New York, 2003, p69.; also, "A Multi-Site Household Survey on Domestic Violence, ICRW-INCLEN, 2000.*

[34] *Executive Summary, Action Research on Trafficking in Women and Children in India 2002-2003, NHRC UNIFEM-ISS, New Delhi, India 2004, p.1.*

In Pakistan, the Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance was promulgated in 2002. Sri Lanka has a law against sex tourism and a National Child Protection Authority. The setting up of this authority has had a lot of success in reducing incidence of paedophilia and in successfully prosecuting traffickers and paedophiles.

Strategic and practical interventions undertaken at different levels by various stakeholders abound in the region. The formation of effective regional networks like the South Asia Forum Against Human Trafficking (SAFAHT) and the South Asia Professionals Against Trafficking (SAPAT) have succeeded in creating a lot of synergy amongst different governmental and non-governmental stakeholders/duty bearers in combating trafficking. NGO initiatives at the cross border points to ensure safe migration and prevent trafficking have met with a lot of success in the recent past. There is a concerted attempt by government and non-government agencies to develop and adhere to human rights standards of operation in relation to rescue, rehabilitation and repatriations process concerning trafficked persons.

Legal literacy programmes are a strong component of development interventions in South Asia alongside gender sensitization. Aside from effective women's activism, campaigns for children's rights are equally strong in the region. The world-wide campaign on "16 days of Activism Against Violence against Women", has gained momentum in the region and International Human Rights Day on 10 December provides one more opportunity to stress the human rights of women.

There have been innovative interventions in the region like the Gender and Judges Forum aimed at sensitizing the judiciary to women's situation. Test cases and public interest litigation cases are also being explored to expand the application of laws and international instruments. In its Concluding Comments, CEDAW has appreciated "the contribution made by the Supreme Court of India in developing the concept of social action litigation and a jurisprudence integrating the Convention into domestic law by interpreting constitutional provisions on gender equality and non-discrimination."

Continuing Gaps and Challenges

- Intersectionality, or forms of multiple discrimination against women, needs to inform policy reforms and responses to violence against women

- Sustain the campaign for the implementation of CEDAW and removal of reservations in the name of culture

- Rectify gaps in data on the incidence of VAW in order to better strategize on responses

- Increase resources and trained staff allocated to dealing with violence against women and girls

- Set up adequate one stop crisis centers across countries with well-trained, gender-sensitive staff and holistic services (legal, psychological, medical, social, etc.).

- Encourage women's economic independence through equal property and land rights, inheritance rights, equal access to credit, employment and to equal remuneration for work of equal value so that women can move away from violent relationships

- Continuous gender-sensitization across sectors so as to change mind-set of women, men, communities, government agencies including the legislative, executive and judicial branches

- Need to work with men and boys to address gender based violence and intergenerational socialization patterns.

- Need to focus on community based initiativesbuild leadership on gender sensitive issues with all key stakeholders

In recent times, corporate social responsibility, especially towards women's and gender issues, is growing. Faith-based groups are also slowly opening up and ensuring channels for advocacy and change. Acknowledging their strategic location within communities, faith-based groups are using their influence in changing practices and beliefs among their constituencies to facilitate gender equality. The engagement of men with these issues is being encouraged increasingly in order to address violence against women. Issues of being male, and masculinity in the context of gender relations are also being discussed in order to contest preconditioned ideas about gender relations that are often the root for discrimination against women and girls. The emerging focus on the role of men and boys in realizing gender equality brings the discourse back to the central importance for the socialization of both sexes and the need for inputs to correct the existing imbalance in society presently. On a global level, the White Ribbon campaign[35] is helping teenagers and the youth to rethink their relationships and the mutual respect that they must build into them. A recent study that has redefined the changing roles of men could well be replicated in other parts of South Asia. There are initiatives and processes unfolding everywhere — and if consolidated in an appropriate way, the agenda for change, and the issue of violence against women and girls can, perhaps, be tackled in a more purposeful manner.

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[35] *www.WhiteRibbon.org.ca*
[36] *Chopra, R. (ed), From Violence to Supportive Practice: Family, Gender and Masculinities in India, UNIFEM, India, 2002.*

E
WOMEN IN ARMED CONFLICT

Strategic Objectives

1. Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation

2. Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments

3. Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations

4. Promote women's contribution in fostering a culture of peace

5. Provide protection assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women

6. Provide assistance to the women of colonies, and non-self governing territories

Gender based violence in conflict situations has been gaining international recognition in recent years. The journey of recognising and redressing violence against women in armed conflict began with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and reached a landmark in Resolution 1325.[37] For the first time, "rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity" when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population as a "crime against humanity", were included in the Rome Statute.

Violence against women can take many forms but especially pernicious is violence committed against women in a situation of armed conflict. Women know the cost of violence, extremism and exclusion, the cost of destroyed states and economies, and the cost of accumulated conflicts. They have experienced the loss of sons, brothers, husbands, and even daughters who have fought and died in conflicts. Many women and young girls are sometimes forced to flee and migrate, so as to not be coerced into slavery like conditions[38]. The powerlessness faced by women in a situation of conflict is further exacerbated by sexual violence against women - torture, rape, mass rape, forced pregnancy, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution and trafficking. As refugees, internally displaced persons, combatants, heads of household and community leaders, as activists and peace-builders, women and men experience conflict differently. Women rarely have the same resources, political rights, authority or control over their environment and needs that men do while, in addition, their caretaking responsibilities limit their mobility and ability to protect themselves. [39]

The impact of armed conflict on women may be immediate and overwhelming while other consequences may be more insidious but no less severe. Armed conflict may bring with it displacement from the homeland and forced separation from the family. As female headed households, single women, widowed women, they experience increase in impoverishment, risk of maternal and child mortality with limited access to health care, increased vulnerability to sexual abuse, torture, enforced labour and other forms of exploitation.; they are the first to be affected by the infrastructure breakdown, carry the ever increasing burden of caring and providing for their families, the injured and the wounded, while being forced to adopt survival strategies at the margins of conflict created economies[40]. They mobilise within their communities and across borders to gain support for ending violence, protecting the future of their societies, as well in shaping that future.

Women in conflict zones are not just victims but active agents in creating peace constituencies, working on reconciliation as well as demanding gender-justice. Women are activists, caretakers, providers and survivors. It has been noted that 'Domestic activism', which is what women do in their everyday life is not only crucial for the survival of family and community, but is a political activity as well. Domestic activism can be analytically structured as comprising two broad activities—one, is managing survival of the family and community and the other, is minimizing the impact of violence. [41]

Key Issues:

Education of women and girls - in every field visit, women pleaded for their girls to be educated. Women are conscious of their own need to be literate and educated so that they can participate fully in brokering peace, in decision-making and in post-conflict reconstruction.

Sexual violence, prostitution and trafficking - Conflict forces many women and young girls on sites of commercial

[37] http://www.ukun.org/articles_show.asp?SarticleType=17&Article_ID=765
[38] Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM - Women, War and Peace: Mobilizing for Security and Justice in the 21st Century, The Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture 2004
[39] Rehn, Elisabeth, Sirleaf, Ellen Johnson, Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-building, http://www.unifem.org/index.php?f_page_pid=149
[40] ibid
[41] Manchanda, Rita, Sijapati, Bandita, Gang, Rebecca, Women Making Peace, Strengthening Women's Role in Peace Processes, Kathmandu, June 25-28, 2001, South Asia Forum for Human Rights, March 2002.

sexual abuse to make a living or even to buy food for the family. Conflict provides a breeding ground for other forms of sexual exploitation such as trafficking. Violence during the conflict is inextricably linked to an increase in violence after the conflict, particularly in the form of domestic violence.

HIV/AIDS - In many conflict situations, rape is used as a weapon of war. In some countries in Africa, HIV/AIDS has been called a weapon of war. As the linkages between gender, conflict and HIV/AIDS are better understood, so too are the devastating consequences for women.

Economic Security - Conflict affects women's economic security. Women and girls are heading households but in many cases, struggle to do so without income, basic resources, or control over decision-making.

Women and the peace process - Women are fighting their way to the peace table within political parties and through civil society.

The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-building" (Progress of the World's Women 2002/Vol.1

Many of the countries in South Asia experience multiple forms and levels of conflict concurrently.

1. Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation

Women's participation in the peace process needs to be strengthened.[42] The participation of women in peace-making, peace-keeping, and peace-building ensures that their experiences, priorities, and solutions contribute towards stability and inclusive governance. The rebuilding process must address all forms of injustice embedded in conflict and must restore all dimensions of justice — legal, restorative and distributive — from a gender perspective[43].

UNIFEM, South Asia organized a regional Round Table on Women and Peace in Kathmandu in November 2004, with participants from Afghanistan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka to share experiences and examine ways in which women's groups and NGOs have been responding to conflict resolution and peace building processes. The discussions highlighted the need for building an effective knowledge base, capacity building and cross-regional learning, strengthening women's solidarity through South-South partnerships, and acknowledging the new roles that women can play in peace building processes. The group recommended the formation of a South Asia Network on Women and Peace and the need to bring in representatives from other countries.

2. Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments

Countries in South Asia continue to spend heavily on arms and armaments. Table 6.1 shows the public expenditure on military spending, on health and education.

A review of the Beijing plus ten undertaken by ESCAP in 2004 indicated that though *there is a shift from military security to human security,* such a conceptual shift has not yet been reflected in policy measures. There is low participation of women in these processes and there is utmost urgency in undertaking a *gendered human security approach.*

3. Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations

International standards of human rights including women and children' rights as well as humanitarian law need to be incorporated in the peace process. Gender justice and women's rights must be integrated in peace agreements and in the legal and institutional structures supporting post conflict reconstruction. There is need to develop common goals, norms and standards to guide interactions of all stakeholders, as they are the guarantors of human security.

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[42] *http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/responses.htm Nepal.*
[43] *ibid*

Table 6.1: Priorities in Public Spending

	Public Expenditure on Health (% of GDP)	Public Expenditure on Education (% of GDP)	Military Expenditure (% of GDP)
	2001	2002	2002
Bangladesh	2.3	1.5	1.1
Bhutan	5.2	3.6	
India	4.1	0.9	2.3
Maldives		5.6	
Nepal	3.4	1.5	1.4
Pakistan	1.8	1.0	4.7
Sri Lanka	1.3	1.8	3.1

Source: UN HDR 2004

Based on their experience, women demanded the creation of an internationally agreed upon mechanism that could ensure the protection of their fundamental human rights, and guarantee their participation in processes of peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. It was this mobilization, with the support of UNIFEM that resulted in the formulation and adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. With this landmark resolution, women have shown it is possible to redefine international frameworks and policies using their own diverse experiences in conflict areas around the world.

Four Years of Resolution 1325

October 31, 2004 marked the four-year anniversary of Resolution 1325. This Resolution, adopted by consensus in 2000, marked a turning point in the work of the Security Council. For the first time, the Security Council specifically addressed the rights of those affected by conflict and not only recognised the disproportionate effect of conflict on women, but also underlined the essential contribution that they make to preventing and maintaining

peace.[44] The Resolution also addressed the need for social protection for women in conflict situations. Further, Resolution 1325 tasked the UN system and its Member States to ensure that gender considerations are thoroughly integrated into all aspects of the UN's peace and security work - from conflict prevention to post-conflict reconstruction, including in establishing and developing the rule of law. It remains to be seen how Resolution 1325 will inform practical improvements for women facing and affected by conflict and in what way women are involved in peace building and post-conflict initiatives.

4. Promote women's contribution in fostering a culture of peace

Without women's equal participation and full involvement in peace-building, neither justice nor development will be possible in a society's transition to peace. From the grassroots level to the negotiating table - women's voices need to be heard, their realities and concerns brought to the fore and their experiences facilitated into the formal peace-building process. There is need to also consider increasing the presence of women in the different aspects of peace-keeping operations.

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[44] http://www.ukun.org/articles_show.asp?SarticleType=17&Article_ID=765

Sustainable peace is, in many ways, contingent on community-based involvement and ownership of the peace process. Special support for strengthening women's groups on the ground, providing communities of hope, and reaching out across all kinds of barriers towards reconciliation, healing and dialogue would enhance women's security and opportunities. There is need to put in place a gender responsive framework based on three dimensions of justice: legal justice to address discriminatory laws against women at institutional and policy levels, such as inheritance laws which prevent women from owning property; restorative justice to address violation of human rights and war crimes so that people can move beyond their trauma and begin to construct new lives for themselves; and distributive justice to address structural and systematic injustices such as the political, economic and social inequalities that are frequently the underlying causes of conflict.

Women's empowerment and equal participation in leadership and political decision-making position are necessary elements for ensuring that gender equality is integrated into policy making and constitutional, electoral and judicial reform.

5. Provide protection assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women

Today, in South Asia, there is still not enough recognition of the kinds of hostile and vulnerable situations women face due to armed conflict. However, some efforts are being made by governments to work on this issue. Special programmes for rehabilitation, reintegration and support for girls and women who have been abducted into armed groups, women combatants, dependents of combatants, and former soldiers who are trying to return to civilian life need to be considered.

Continuing Gaps and Challenges

- Lack of gender disaggregated data on violence against women in conflict areas and need to incorporate gender sensitive indicators on all information collected and analyzed

- Stronger representation of women's resources, experiences and perspectives in peace building and peace making processes as well as in post conflict resolution

- Protection of women's human rights at every stage of the peace process

- Gender sensitization at all levels of policy formulation and implementation of peace and reconstruction efforts including integrating gender analysis as part of early warning activities and conflict prevention measures

- Special focus on single women, widowed women and female headed households

- Strengthening the gender focus in prevention and early warning mechanisms, improving protection and assistance for women affected by conflict, especially IDPs;

- Special effort to build women's leadership and centrality in development strategies

- Strengthening approaches to protection and assistance for women affected by conflicts

- Strengthening gender justice in post conflict peace building processes

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F

WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

Strategic Objectives

1. Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment and appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources

2. Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade

3. Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women

4. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks

5. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of discrimination

6. Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men

Since the Fourth Conference on Women, in Beijing, in 1995, efforts have been made by governments in South Asia to redress and reduce the many challenges women face as workers in the economy. Ten years later, the results are mixed. While women have got greater employment opportunities, especially in export-oriented firms as well as greater social recognition of their work, they still face discrimination and lack social protection. Further, the gains from globalisation and trade liberalisation have not materialised for most women and the increase in informalisation of women's work has impacted women's labour in myriad ways.

In South Asia, women's economic activity as a percentage of male rate differs across the countries in South Asia. In Pakistan it is 44 per cent, India 50 per cent, Nepal 55%, Sri Lanka 56%, Bangladesh 76%, and Maldives the highest at 80 per cent (2002).[45] (see Table 7.1). While some women have breached glass walls and ceilings, the majority are still on the bottom rungs of their occupations and overwhelmingly in gender-stereotyped occupations, which are lowest paying and least protected. More and more women are entering paid work but the increase has been mainly into the informal sector and home-based work and they still earn only half of what men do (see Table 7.2).

Table 7.2: Earned Income

Ratio of female earned income to male earned income (2002)	
Bangladesh	0.56
India	0.38
Nepal	0.50
Pakistan	0.33
Sri Lanka	0.57

Source: HDR 2004

Women are increasingly migrating, both legally and illegally, for employment and are extremely vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Women continue to be mainly responsible for the "care economy". For women entrepreneurs, assets, markets, service and regulatory frameworks as well as institutional environments are often unfriendly. Women continue to have less access than men to investments in skills, and knowledge building. In a world increasingly dominated by information and communication technology, gender inequalities lead to new forms of social exclusion.

It is in the context of status of women in the economy that BPFA assumes great significance both as a road map for bettering the lot of South Asian women and as a monitoring device to see how much progress is being made.

1. Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment and appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources

The effect of globalization has been felt in the last decade in the increase in demand for female labour in export-related manufacturing and service sectors. This trend towards

Table 7.1: Female Economic Activity Rate

	Female Economic Activity Rate			
	Total	As % of male	Total	As % of male
	1999		2002	
Bangladesh			66.4	76
India	42	50	42.4	50
Nepal	56.9	67	56.8	67
Maldives	65.9	79	65.4	80
Pakistan	35	41	36.3	44
Sri lanka			43.3	56

Source: HDR 2004

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[45] HDR, 2004

feminisation of employment in Asian countries has resulted from the employer's need for cheaper and more "flexible" sources of labour, and the perception of female employees as being more compliant and subservient, less prone to organise into unions, more willing to accept lower wages, and easier to hire and fire.[46] The increase in female labour has been mostly in the informal sector and is associated with the moves towards casualisation of labour, and shift to part-time work or piece-rate contracts. In South Asia, it is estimated that the informal sector constitutes almost 90 per cent of the economy and that more than half the employed persons are engaged in agriculture or agriculture related activities, often as unpaid helpers in family farms. In Nepal 78 per cent of women are in agriculture while in Sri Lanka the proportion is 49 per cent.

Women's work in the informal economy is characterized by employment and income insecurity. They get poor pay and often have to work long hours in unsafe working conditions. They are often outside the purview of National Labor Laws as well as any social protection. Their livelihoods are dependent on current and future economic policies of not only their own national government but also the world economic situation.

In this context, South Asian governments have launched programmes seeking to alleviate some of the problems women face.

In Bhutan, the Ninth Plan encourages establishment of childcare centres and nurseries since, with the emergence of rapidly increasing rural-urban migration, many girls and women find themselves employed as domestic help particularly in childcare. Initiatives taken in India include the 'Unorganised Sector Workers Social Security Scheme' which is being implemented by the Employees Provident Fund organization. The scheme provides pension benefits, personal accident insurance and medical insurance. A Universal Health Insurance Scheme was launched by the government in 2003. In Nepal, the Tenth Plan (2002-07) has identified "gender equality" as one of its goals of poverty alleviation. The Plan puts emphasis on reducing wage differentials between men and women through appropriate

revisions in minimum wages. Also, in Nepal, the Census 2001, for the first time, presented sex disaggregated data on the ownership of land, livestock and the house. This data showed that women had ownership of land in 11 per cent of total households; ownership of livestock in 7 per cent of households and ownership of the house in only 5 per cent of households. The Government of Pakistan has formulated a National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women with many policy measures laid out to benefit women in the economy. Special efforts are being made to encourage women entrepreneurs, including training, extension of credit facilities, and provision of technical assistance.

2. Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade

South Asian women are engaged primarily in the agricultural sector, making their living mainly from subsistence farming. However, rights of women to ownership of land are still an issue in most South Asian countries. "Rights (in any form of property) are defined…as claims that are legally and socially recognized and enforceable by an external legitimized authority, be it a village-level institution or some higher level body of the State."[47] Legal right to property may not always translate into actual reality if they are hampered by social and institutional biases. Archaic inheritance laws, administrative biases, as well as social norms pose obstacles to women acquiring land rights in South Asia. In Bhutan, daughters can inherit property especially if they are the ones taking care of parents. In Sri Lanka, land reform laws introduced in 1972, which allow for pooling of husband and wife's property may result in the wife losing land if it is found to be in excess of the ceiling.

The issue of land rights for women has been actively lobbied at international meetings and is one that is being given serious attention by governments. Access to credit is extremely difficult without the collateral of land and homestead. In India, inheritance laws are being amended to benefit women.

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[46] Ghosh, Jayati, Globalisation and economic empowerment of women: Emerging issues in Asia, Paper for Intergovernmental Meeting on the Beijing Platform for Action, UN-ESCAP, 7-10 September 2004

[47] Agarwal, Bina, Are We Not Peasants Too? Land Rights and Women's Claims in India, p.2, http://ccc.uchicago.edu/docs/AreWeNotPeasantsToo.pdf

Nepal is attempting to collect sex disaggregated data, a lack of which is a serious obstacle in the way of land rights for women. In Pakistan, the National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women seeks to create awareness of legal and constitutional rights of women related to land and asset ownership and to introduce legislation for equitable distribution of productive assets.

While women constitute the majority in the informal economy, their share in the organized sector and at the decision-making managerial level is quite low (see Table 7.3). Within the organized sector women tend to be relegated to lower levels of responsibility or highly feminized professions like nursing or teaching. Of all employees in central, state and local governments in India, only 17.47 per cent were women in 2001. In Maldives, only 2 per cent of architects, engineers and related professionals, 6 per cent of physics and engineering science technicians and 2 per cent of legal professionals are women. On the other hand 100 per cent of nursing and midwifery professionals and 92 per cent of pre-primary education teaching professionals are women. Sri Lanka has the

Table 7.3 : Women Workers in the Organized Sector

	Women in the Organized Sector			
	Female administrators and managers (% of total)		Female professional and technical workers (% of total)	
	1998	2002	1998	2002
Bangladesh	4.9	8.7	34.7	25.0
Maldives	—	15.4	—	40.2
Pakistan	8	8.7	25.1	25.6
Sri Lanka	17.3	4.0	27.2	49.2

Source: HDR, 2004

Table 7.4: Classification of Workers in the Informal Economy

Employment Status	Categories
Non- Wage Workers	
Employers	Owners of informal enterprises
	Owner operators of informal enterprises
Self- Employed	Heads of family businesses
	Own-account workers
	Unpaid family workers.
Wage-workers	Employees of informal enterprises
	Domestic workers
	Casual workers without a fixed employer
	Homeworkers (also called industrial outworkers)
	Temporary and part-time workers
	Unregistered workers

Source: Supporting Workers in the Informal Economy: A Policy Framework,
Martha Alter Chen, Renana Jhabvala,Frances Lund, International Labour Office Geneva, p.5

best representation of women in public sector employment at 45 per cent.

Within the informal economy too, women are often concentrated in stereotypical activities like food processing, garments and childcare, in tasks that pay less, and at the lower-end of the production chain (Table 7.4). Moreover, in addition to constraints faced by workers and producers in the informal sector with regards to assets, markets, services and regulatory frameworks, women face additional gender-specific barriers (e.g. household and childcare burden). Lack

of collateral or asset ownership by women often results in disparities in credit allocation.

Home-based workers constitute a large part of the informal economy. In India official estimates suggest that almost 30 million workers were engaged in home-based work in 2000. An estimated 45 per cent of the women non-agricultural workforce is home-based in India. According to HomeNet Nepal, women (61%) outnumber men (42%) as home based workers in Nepal. Incense and bidi making in India, football in Pakistan, and coir making in Sri Lanka account for 60-90 per cent of home-based women workers.

Taking cognizance of women's unequal access to employment and markets, the Government of India launched '*Swa-Shakti*' in 1998, to create an enabling environment for the empowerment of women by setting up Self Help Groups (SHGs), and developing linkages with lending institutions to ensure women's access to credit facilities for income generation activities. Gender Budgeting initiatives have been started as a way of more effective targeting of public expenditure. In Nepal, the Tenth Plan proposes to expand ongoing targeted programmes for women (like entrepreneurship development and skills training, income generation programmes, production loans and marketing programmes) with priority given to women heads of households, all of which would help increase incomes of women. In addition for the first time the Tenth Plan has recognized the contribution of migrant women workers and has laid out policies to protect their rights.

3. Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women

In recent years there have been a number of ICT-related initiatives aimed at the social empowerment of women. Some initiatives have specifically addressed rural women like the Grameen Phone Programme in Bangladesh and the use of the village telecenter in Pondicherry, India, by women engaged in herb processing, to market their products. In India, "telecenters and fax booths have created 250,000 jobs in the last four years alone, and many of these have gone to women. Women-owned businesses such as these generate a higher rate of female patronage than male-owned businesses."[48] A scheme of the Indian Government, "Swawlamban" helps provide training and skills to women to facilitate them to obtain employment or self-employment on a sustainable basis. Some of the trades where training is imparted are computer programming, medical transcription, electronic assembling, consumer electronics repair, radio and television repair, garment making, handloom weaving, secretarial practice, and community health work and embroidery. Pre departure training for the migrant workers has been made mandatory in Nepal and the curriculum has been reviewed (with technical inputs from UNIFEM) from a rights based perspective. Sri Lanka also provides pre-departure training to its outgoing migrants.

4. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks

Women's economic empowerment involves a degree of financial autonomy and independence, and participation in economic decision-making. However, given the preponderance of women in the informal sector as well as home-based work where they have no recognition as workers and no legal rights, it is important to strengthen their organisations and develop marketing linkages in order to improve their working and living conditions.

The ILO Convention No. 177 on Home working was passed in 1996 and seeks to address the needs and priorities of home based workers everywhere. Today efforts are underway to spearhead national and international campaigns to obtain ratification of the ILO Convention, as well as legislation and policies for home-based workers in all countries of South Asia. HomeNet is an international solidarity network, for home-based workers and their organisations in Asia, Africa, North and South Americas, Australia and Europe and is representing, organising and supporting home-based workers around the world for regional networking, organizing home-based workers and lobbying for policies. HomeNet South Asia (HNSA) is a network for home-based workers in South Asian

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[48] *ILO, World Employment Report 2001, p. 58*

countries and was started in October 2000 jointly by *SEWA* and UNIFEM. The objective of Homenet South Asia is strengthening the network of homebased workers and their organisations and to advocate for social protection for these workers. HomeNet South Asia aims to advocate and lobby for a National Policy on Homebased Workers in five South Asian countries Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and India and the ratification of ILC 177.

5. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of discrimination

South Asian women still face discriminatory practices in both the formal and informal sectors, as well as differentials in wage and employment advancement. Women in the informal economy are usually outside legal or social protection and are vulnerable to exploitation. South Asian governments have initiated measures to assist employers in issuing non-discriminatory job advertisements, prohibition of sexual harassment to protect female employees and revision of equal employment opportunity law to remove discrimination with regard to maternity leave, restrictions on overtime work, holiday work and night work by women. In India, in 2003, the discrimination between male flight attendants and female air hostesses in respect of age of retirement and other benefits has been removed. In Maldives, efforts are being made by the Island Women Development Committees to encourage women to venture into non-traditional professions and also facilitate training opportunities in different fields. In Nepal and Bangladesh the ban on female workers to migrate to Gulf countries has been partially removed. Nepal has removed this ban for those working in the organized sector and Bangladesh has allowed women above 35, preferably married and accompanied by husband to migrate to Saudi Arabia if they satisfy all the criteria fixed by the government.

6. Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men

The prevailing socio-cultural norms in South Asia still perceive women as mainly responsible for the "care" economy. The lack of childcare and other facilities prevent many women from seeking employment outside their home. It is for this reason that many women prefer home-based work even at the cost of lack of social protection and low wages because it helps them to take care of their household and childcare needs. The region will have to undergo an attitudinal change before there will be an effective harmonization of women's work and sharing of family responsibilities by men.

It is clear then, that although many women have been drawn into paid work for the first time as a result of globalisation and trade liberalisation, they are still hampered by gender stereotypes and prevailing socio-cultural prejudices in South Asia. Globalisation has, in fact in some cases, intensified existing inequalities and insecurities for many poor women and even led to loss of livelihoods. Some studies have suggested that where export growth is based on labour intensive manufactured goods, as in Bangladesh, it can generate large income gains for women.[49] However, the case of Bangladesh is special because it had benefited hugely from the Multi-Fibre Agreements. In Sri Lanka, globalisation had an unfortunate, unintended consequence, that of marginalizing women's traditional economic activities in the coir industry where export-promotion policies led to a shift in the supply of coconut husks to mechanized units owned by men away from manual units operated by women who had little access to credit.[50]

From the 1970s, drawing on previous international trade rules which allowed countries to restrain their clothing imports through a series of quotas, the Multi Fibre Agreement (MFA) was used to limit exports from leading developing countries

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[49] Jha, V et. al. *Background and Introduction in Veen Jha (ed.) Trade, Globalization and Gender: Evidence from South Asia*, UNIFEM in collaboration with UNCTAD

[50] Chen, Martha Alter, Jhabvala, Renana, Lund,Frances, *Supporting Workers in the Informal Economy*, ILO, p.21

such as Hong Kong, Korea and India to major markets in North America, Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Manufacturers invested in new production in other countries with competitively priced labour once their MFA quota was exhausted. Bangladesh was able to benefit from quota restrictions on other countries' exports under the MFA, by rapidly expanding its garment industry.

An agreement was reached to phase out the MFA through implementation of Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC) during the Uruguay Round negotiations related to the World Trade Organization (WTO) by December 2004. With the MFA phase out quotas will no longer be assured and countries benefiting from these quotas will have to compete in the international economy. There could be huge job losses, with women being the worst sufferers. This is because they have been the main beneficiaries of the garment industry boom in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka brought on by the MFAs.

Another impact of globalisation has been on the migration of women, both legal and illegal. The 1990s saw the feminization of migration with greater number of women migrating overseas for work. Migrant women face discrimination, abuse (both economic and sexual) and are extremely vulnerable to exploitation. Recognizing the participation and contribution of women in the remittances through foreign employment which is as high as 10 per cent, the Tenth Plan in Nepal puts emphasis on facilitating women in safe and just foreign employment, especially those affected by insurgency, the poor, oppressed and those from the indigenous ethnic groups. In countries like Sri Lanka, women migrant workers outnumber their male counterparts by 84 per cent. Some 53 per cent of the total migrants and 81 per cent of the total female migrant workers are domestic workers and private remittances from abroad constitute 22 per cent of the total foreign exchange earnings (2002).

Continuing Gaps and Challenges

- Globalisation and international trade in the contemporary world pose new challenges to women's employment and effort has to be made to provide skill enhancement and capacity building to help women take full advantage of the opportunities offered by international trade

- Continue efforts to remove gender barriers to women's use of Information and Communication Technologies

- Continuing effort to improve levels of education, access to markets and credit, social protection, and non-discriminatory work environment for women

- Concerted and joint efforts by the national governments, international organizations and voluntary agencies need to be strengthened

- In view of the increasing number of migrant women workers, safety nets have to be ensured and their rights protected both in the country of origin and the country of employment

- Put in place social security mechanisms for women

It is in the context of the effects, both positive and negative, of globalisation on women's work, that trade negotiations between the countries of South Asia can provide a window of opportunity for women's employment and help in absorbing some of the vicissitudes of the global market. Greater regional trade can help in boosting and stabilizing exports while making it less susceptible to fluctuations in the global market. Increased market access as a result of multilateral trade commitments and agreements can lead to the expansion of production in sectors where women are predominantly employed. Attempts have been made to encourage regional trade under the aegis of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), established in 1985 and the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) drawn up in 1993. The achievements of SAARC and SAPTA notwithstanding, it has not so far been possible to initiate the establishment of a free trade area in South Asia (SAFTA).

G

WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION MAKING

Strategic Objectives

1. Take measures to ensure women's equal access, and full participation in power structures and decision-making.

2. Increase women's participation and leadership.

The participation of women in politics and decision-making is influenced by the actions of political parties and the extent to which parties are committed to the promotion of women's involvement in politics. Quotas and reservations are a first step in increasing women's participation. (see Table 8.1) This chapter briefly reviews the current situation.

1. Take measures to ensure women's equal access to, and full participation in power structures and decision-making.

In Bangladesh, prior to 1975 there were 300 seats in the National Parliament of which 15 were reserved for women. Post 1991, 30 seats out of 330 have been reserved for

Table 8.1: Existing Provisions for Women in the Parliament (National and Local Level)

Countries	Quotas for women candidates at the National Level	Quotas for women candidates at the Local Level	Affirmative action taken since BFA	% of women in the parliament 2004*
Bangladesh Year: 2004 14th constitutional Amendment introduced.	Reserves 15 per cent seats for women in parliament.	The *Pourshava* and City Corporation Ordinance reserves 1/3rd of the total seats for women.	National policy for advancement of women, adopted in 1997. Spelled out commitments and policies for women	2
Bhutan	No quota for women	No quota for women	Women, children and gender constitute an important area in the Ninth Five Year Plan, 2002-2007.	9.3
India	No quota for women.	33 per cent of seats in all local bodies (panchayats and municipalities) are reserved for women.	Political empowerment is an objective of the Tenth Plan	9.3
Maldives	No quota for women	No quota for women	Gender management system introduced in 2001.	6.0
Nepal Year: 1991 Artcle 114	Reserves, 5 per cent in the lower house and 3 seats in the upper house	The Local Governance Act reserves 20 per cent of seats for women in local bodies.	Tenth Plan 2002 envisages 20 per cent of female participation in decision-making at all levels.	9.7
Pakistan Year 2002: Election Law Quota, 2002.	33 per cent seats reserved for women. (National Assembly) —36 out of 342 seats (Senate) —17 out of 100 seats	The Devolution Power Plan reserves 33 per cent of seats for women at the local level.	Election Law Quota, passed in 2002. Devolution Power Plan was adopted in March 2000.	20.8
Sri Lanka	—	The Cabinet has approved in principle the reservation of 33 % of seats in local authorites for women	—	4.4

Source: UNDP, HDR 2004; CSDS Data Unit; CENWOR website. The figures for the local level are not available.

women.[51] Every political party has a women's wing to encourage women to join politics at the national and the local levels, and NGOs, women's organisations and civil society organisations have been active in this regard. The Parliamentary Committee for the Ministry of Women's Affairs conducts regular meetings. Fifty Women In Development focal points in government ministries and departments have been established. At the local level, the reserved seats for women are equivalent to 1/3 of the number of commissioners fixed by the government. The women ward commissioner is elected directly. In the 1998 local government elections more than 12,000 women members were directly elected for reserved seats. Before the *Pourshava* Ordinance (1998) there were no women candidates. The government has also initiated different programmes for locally elected women, so that they can play a proactive role in the decision-making process.

In Bhutan, there has been an increase in the percentage of women representatives. In 2003, 14 out of 99 elected representatives were women and one of the six Advisory Councilors was a woman. At the local level the participation of the women is low. Findings from a 2001 baseline study suggest that while women are under-represented in block and district development committees, their participation in village meetings is high.

In India, women were 8.8% of the members in the *Lok Sabha* and 10.3 % in the *Rajya Sabha*, in 2004. At the sub national level 33 per cent of seats in all local bodies (panchayats and municipalities) have been reserved for women by the 73rd and 74th Amendments passed in 1993, and this has brought over a million women into Panchayats and urban local bodies. In some states further efforts have been made. In Madhya Pradesh one third of the participants in the regular open village meetings must be women before the quorum is fulfilled. Kerala earmarks 10 per cent of all development funds received by local councils for women's development.

The Government of Maldives ensures women the right to vote in all elections. Women are eligible for candidature to all elected and public bodies except for the Head of the State. Women are not represented in the Maldives Chamber of Commerce, the Maldives Traders Association for Tourism Industries. In 1990 as well as in 2004, women held 6 per cent of the seats in the *majlis*.

In Nepal, a democratic Constitution was put in place in 1991 under which it is mandatory to nominate at least 5 per cent of women candidates for the House of Representatives, the Lower House and at least three women in the Upper House. In 2004 women were 5.9 per cent in the Lower House and there were nine women or 15 % in the Upper House. The Government of Nepal passed the Local Self-Governance Act in 1999 which foresees at least 20 per cent representation of women in local bodies. It is estimated that in 2004, as many as 40,000 women had been brought into local governance. In 1999, this number was 10,000.[52]

In Pakistan, sixty out of 342 seats have been reserved for women in the National Assembly and 17 out of 100 seats in the Senate. In the six provinces, the 17 per cent quota is applicable. In 1990 women constituted 2 % of the National Assembly, and this went up to 20.8 % in 2004. In local government, a 33 per cent quota has been reserved for women.

In Sri Lanka women's political representation has come down declined from 5.5 per cent in 1989 to 4.4 per cent in 2004 even as human development has improved substantively. The Cabinet has approved in principle the reservation of 33 % of seats in local authorities for women. A cabinet sub-committee has been appointed to study the required amendments to the law and modalities for implementation. At the recent elections in April 2004, there were 337 women candidates but only nine were elected to Parliament.

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[51] However, this provision ceased since April 1, 2001. The impact was that women representation dropped from 11.2 per cent in 1996 to 2 per cent in October 2001. See, Sharmini Fernando, Accessing Political Power: South Asian Women's Experiences', South Asia Partnership Canada, available at http://action.web.ca/home/sap/south_ asia_ resources.shtml?x=62676

[52] A significant feature of this Act is that local elections in 1997 required all political parties to field at least one candidate at the ward level. Representation of women is also mandatory at the village development council and district development level and amongst the nominees there should be at least one woman.

Table 8.2:

Countries	Female legislators, senior officials and managers. (% of total)	Seats in the Parliament held by women, 2004 (% of total) Lower House	Upper House
Bangladesh	8	9.7	—
Bhutan	9.3	9.3	—
India	17.47	8.8	10.3
Nepal	—	5.9	15
Pakistan	—	21.6	17.0
Maldives	15	6.0	—
Sri Lanka	4	4.4	—

Source: UNDP, HDR 2004.

Overall, the presence of South Asian women in decision-making and legislative positions is quite low, as shown by Table 8.2.

2. Increase women's participation and leadership (capacity building, gender training and awareness raising)

As women are relatively new to politics at the local level, capacity building and training in political processes is extremely important across South Asia. In Bangladesh gender training is being conducted in the National Institute for Local Government for ward commissioners, government officials etc. The programme schedule includes women's empowerment, gender and development, women's rights, etc. Programmes are also conducted by NGOs on awareness raising and sensitization for political empowerment of citizens. In India, both government and non-governmental organizations conduct capacity building programmes for elected women members. In Kerala, systematic gender training programmes for women in Panchayats have been conducted and technical training on gender budgeting imparted.

In Maldives, programmes on legal literacy for women have been held to create awareness in the five wards of Male in 2001.

The Ministry for Women, Children and Social Welfare in Nepal has initiated coaching classes for women. To empower women, training is also being provided to women ward representatives with the help of various NGOs. In Pakistan, the Women's Political Participation project trained about 37,000 women councilors in four phases in the last two years

Continuing Gaps and Challenges

- Continue (or create) quotas at sub national and national levels

- Increase women's engagement in development decisions and conflict resolution

- Strengthen mechanisms for legal and political literacy

- Strengthen links between the women's movement and women politicians

- Create and strengthen information systems

- Strengthen the role of men in increasing women's participation in decision making

- Use media to encourage debate and help in ending stereotyped imagery

- Encourage gender sensitive decentralisation

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(2002-4). MOWD is also setting up a political school in pilot districts. Resource centres have also been set up by non-governmental orgnaisations.

Awareness campaigns for political participation are being conducted through the media in Sri Lanka. An intensive media campaign against the spread of political violence during elections was organized by the Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum. In view of the provincial council elections in 2004, the Forum launched a campaign to appeal to the political parties to include more women candidates in their electoral lists and to address women's concerns in their campaign manifestos. They encouraged more women to vote and appealed to all citizens to ensure a violence-free election. Once the 33 % quota comes into effect, 1287 women will hold office in local government authorities throughout the country, and there is now the challenge of training potential women contestants.

H

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Strategic Objectives

1. Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies

2. Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects

3. Generate and disseminate sex-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation

1. Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies.

In keeping with commitments to the Beijing Platform for Action, creating and/or strengthening existing infrastructure for implementation was necessary. National machineries and mechanisms have been set up in all countries in South Asia, as depicted in Table 9.1.

responsibility for implementing the NAP include the National Women's Development Council (1995), the Parliamentary Standing Committee for MWCA, The Women's Development Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, Department for Women's Affairs (DWA), *Jahiya Mohila Sangstha, Shishu* (Children's) Academy, the WID focal points, the district and *thana* level WID coordination committees, the National Council for Women's

Table 9.1: National Machineries for the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

Country	National Machinery	Year Established
Bangladesh	Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs	1978*
Bhutan	National Commission for Women and Children; Planning Commission	
India	Department of Women and Child Development (within the Ministry of Human Resources)	1985*
Maldives	Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Welfare	1998
Nepal	Ministry of Women and Social Welfare, now renamed as Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare	1995.
Pakistan	Federal Ministry for Women's Development, previously combined with Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education	1997
Sri Lanka	Ministry of Women's Affairs	1998

Sources: "Progress of South Asian Women, 2003", UNIFEM, New Delhi; "Say NO to Gender Violence, Responses from South Asia", UNIFEM, 2003; *preceded by other institutional arrangements.

Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have Ministry-level institutional mechanism to oversee and monitor implementation of the BPFA.

In Bangladesh, the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs (MWCA) facilitates the mainstreaming of gender equality in all areas; undertaking advocacy, policy leadership, communication, coordination, follow-up and monitoring of the National Action Plan. The MWCA is mandated to act as the focal point and catalyst for action on issues of women's equality and development in all departments. Other agencies with

Development. A National Advisory Council for the Prevention of Violence Against Women, an inter-ministerial committee headed by the Minister of MWCA, was set up for the prevention of oppression of women and children.[53]

Bhutan has a National Commission for Women and Children and it acts through the Planning Commission to coordinate and monitor gender related issues. Gender focal points have been appointed in ministries to ensure that issues are taken care of in every governmental unit. All government institutions are expected to take the responsibility of implementing women

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[53] 'Initiatives to end VAW in Bangladesh' in 'Say no to gender violence, responses from South Asia', UNIFEM, 2003, p 143-5.

related activities. Bhutan had undertaken a Gender Pilot Study in 2001 designed to support the Ninth Plan process, CEDAW implementation and the UN Development Framework, and this has made important new data available for purposes of planning and policy formulation.[54]

Records show that India started its institutional interventions for women about 6 decades ago. The Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) is located within the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Government of India, and several other agencies have been set up to work with women. The National Commission for Women (NCW) was established in 1992 through an Act of Parliament "to examine legal safeguards provided by the Constitution and other laws of the land, recommend measures for their effective implementation and improvement, take *suo moto* notice of abuses of women's rights and correct these conditions in collaboration with the appropriate authorities,"[55] among others. State level commissions for women have been set up in most states. The National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) was set up in 1993, and the NCW and NHRC link together in investigating cases of violence against women. Aside from the official machinery, partnerships have been developed with the voluntary sector, bilateral and UN agencies. Crimes against Women Cells have also been set up in most states to mediate between the police and survivors of violence. Legal-aid cells and all-women police stations have been initiated in some states. The National Crimes Records Bureau (NCRB) has been instituted for monitoring registered cases of violence against women and district-level bureaus have also been recently set up for the purpose. The Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (National Credit Fund) was established in 1993, as an arm of DWCD, to enable women to access credit support and micro-finance.

The Government of Maldives' erstwhile Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Welfare and now the Ministry of Gender, Family Development and Social Security implements its activities through the National Women's Council (reconstituted as a Gender Equality Council chaired by the President of Maldives) and counterpart local committees. The Sixth National Development Plan reaffirms gender mainstreaming as a priority and seeks to incorporate gender issues within all sectors.[56] Gender equality is highlighted in the Maldives Vision 2020 plan.

The setting up of the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare (MWSW) in 1995 was deemed a path breaking initiative for Nepal as there had been no women in the Cabinet in the first half of the 1990s. The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) of Nepal included on its agenda gender mainstreaming, eliminating gender inequality, promoting access to justice for and empowerment of women. The Tenth Plan (2002-07) initiated a gender budgeting process. Post-Beijing, the Government of Nepal established the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, and gender focal points in all the line ministries. A National Task Force to prevent girl trafficking was formed in 1997. The National Commission for Women (NCW), formed on Women's Day 2002, is entrusted with promoting the welfare of women by involving them in mainstream development. The NCW was created through a Cabinet decision and comes under the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare. Activists and women's groups are demanding an independent Commission.[57]

The Government of Pakistan has developed institutional arrangements at the federal and provincial levels. A National Commission on the Status of Women was set up in 2000, with the objective of 'the emancipation of women, equalization of opportunities and socio-economic conditions amongst women and men and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women'. The Commission is empowered to review policy, programmes, legislation concerning women, monitoring the

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[54] *Bhutan presentation, session on 'Status of implementation of the convention in general: methodology used, good practices, problems and issues', Report of the South Asia regional Consultation on CEDAW, Sri Lanka 2002, UNIFEM 2004, p 113.*

[55] *"Initiatives to End VAW in India" in "Say NO to Gender Violence, Responses from South Asia", UNIFEM, 2003, p176.*

[56] *Maldives' presentation, session on "Status of Implementation of the Convention in General: Methodology Used, Good Practices, Problems and Issues", Report of the South Asia Regional Consultation on CEDAW (Sri Lanka, 2002), UNIFEM, 2004, p121.*

[57] *"Initiatives to End VAW in Nepal" in "Say NO to Gender Violence, Responses from South Asia", UNIFEM, 2003, p103.*

mechanisms and institutional procedures for redressing the violation of women's rights, encourage and sponsor research on women's issues. The Ministry of Women Development is committed to protecting the rights of women, formulating appropriate policy and projects. Over the last five years the Ministry has taken on a more policy oriented and advocacy role, a shift away from being project focused. A National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women has been in place since 2002, which aims at gender equality and social, political and economic empowerment of women.

Sri Lanka's Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Social Welfare, as it is now called, acts through the National Commission on Women (NCW) by monitoring the implementation of the Women's Charter of 1993, the national document that provides for the eradication of sex-based discrimination, enhanced gender equality and standards in the areas of political rights, education, health, and also violence against women. The Centre for Gender Complaints, set up in 1999, within the NCW allows for mediation and special Women's and Children's Desk in 34 police stations across the country. Sri Lanka's National Plan of Action on Women was revised in 2000.

It is interesting to note that the CEDAW observed in its Concluding Comments for every country in South Asia that "national machinery is weak in implementation" without distinction as to whether the national machinery has Ministry-level status or not. [58] This observation needs to be looked at seriously. That national machinery is deemed "weak" must be seen in the broader context in which they operate. The Ministry-level status is important for its very location within the governmental structure, its attendant authority and for its resources. But, the challenge of promoting gender equality and advancing women's status does not end with the creation of an implementing office. Almost all countries highlighted the lack of resources for institutional machineries looking into women's programmes in the region. Further, national machineries for the advancement of women are as much bogged down by the same stereotypes and prejudices that women face in society. The Third Beijing Biennial Regional Ministerial Meeting (Maldives, September 2000) aptly observed the "(m)arginalization of the Women's Ministries: gender continuing to be seen as a "women's issue" and as responsibility of Women's Affairs Ministries only."[59] The change of mind-set about women and about gender relations is necessary for the successful realization of government commitments.

The BPFA places the main responsibility of ensuring the advancement of women on national machineries, but in all countries partnerships with the non government sector are important. As an example, India has introduced issue specific linkages as in the UNIFEM-Indian Railways (South Central Railways) gender equality zone approach, parliamentary forum to prevent and combat HIV/AIDS, and an Inter-faith Committee of Religious Leaders to address trafficking in women and children and gender inequality. At a larger level, the SAARC Secretariat and UNIFEM have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to "reinforce and formalize synergies" on activities relating to CEDAW, BPFA, SAARC Convention on Trafficking, etc.[60] An Asian Forum for Parliamentarians for Population and Development (AFFPD) has been working closely with the UN system including UNIFEM for women's empowerment.

2. Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects.

To some extent, a welfare approach continues to persist. [61] Besides the required institutional machineries and mechanisms (policies, plans, programmes, guidelines, procedures) a gender perspective is integral to actually push forward the women's agenda for progress. And, basic to gender perspective is the understanding of women's and gender issues upon which accurate strategies in dealing with the issues could be drawn.

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[58] except for Pakistan which has not yet submitted its report to the Committee.

[59] Appendix II, "Progress of South Asian Women, 2003", UNIFEM, New Delhi, p55.

[60] "The Gender Dimensions of HIV/AIDS: Challenges for South Asia", UNAIDS-UNIFEM, New Delhi, June 2004.

[61] India Report, Concluding Comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW Twenty-second session, 17 January- 4 February 2000.

With a view to implementing international commitments made through the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), CEDAW, and other instruments, continuing efforts at perspective-building can be seen across South Asia. In the manner that institutional machineries have evolved along with needs, analysis of issues has to be in sync with the changing context within the countries, the regions and in the world. Yet, basic to the challenge is to change society's mind-set of gendered assumptions about men and women.

The recent trend at gender budgeting exercises in most countries in South Asia intends to highlight existing biases and suggest ways of promoting equality. [62] Gender Budgeting is not a separate budget for women, but an analysis of the government budget to see what its gender -differentiated impacts are, and to enable better translation of policy commitments into resource commitments. A gender sensitive budget is one that improves the gender balance in outcomes and more effective targeting of expenditures. It is one of the most recent and effective tools for gender mainstreaming. Governments may allocate budgets for a certain purpose (e.g., education, healthcare, etc.) but given gender differentials in society, the impact on men and women, boys and girls is not the same. The challenge is to provide budgets and programmes that are able to counter pre-existing social biases. To enable this, capacity building of government officials and staff has been done in almost all the countries in the region.

Political will is a major factor that has helped to move forward the women's agenda. In the context of institutional machineries and mechanisms, political will can be shown in different ways. For example, a directive from the highest office in the land lends imprimatur to processes and initiatives towards gender mainstreaming. This has also been recognised by the CEDAW committee which has commended governments that have shown this kind of political will and given directives from the highest level.

3. Generate and disseminate sex-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

Conscious effort is needed to generate nuanced information on the situation of women and men from the household level and upwards to ensure realistic inputs to planning and policy-making. Sex-disaggregated data is crucial to counter the long-standing issue of women's invisibility. The CEDAW Concluding Comments noted, and governments have conceded, that while efforts at recording participation of women in government bodies and select few areas have started, part of the weakness in implementation is the general lack of data on women.

Continuing Gaps and Challenges

- Speedier implementation of National Plans of Action

- Continuing need for a monitoring system to encourage implementation of international commitments

- National machineries are under-resourced and marginalized

- Institutionalisation of gender budgeting

- Avoid duplication and confusion in terms of mandate of different agencies, strengthen their impacts across sectors

- Collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data at the household, community and national levels

- Capacity-building within the governments, as with the constituencies

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[62] Banerjee, N., Krishnaraj M., "Sieving Budgets for Gender", EPW Special Articles, Oct 30, 2004. http://epw.org.in

I

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Strategic Objectives

1. Promote and protect the human rights of women, through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

2. Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice.

3. Achieve legal literacy.

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (also referred to as the Women's Convention) celebrated it's twenty-fifth anniversary on 13 October 2004, on the occasion of which the United Nations declared, that "Twenty-five years after the adoption of the convention, there has been significant progress in the recognition and implementation of the human rights of women. Laws have been strengthened to ensure equality, courts and judicial processes in many countries have been guided by the Convention's principles, and national institutions have been developed for the advancement of women."[63]

In actuality, it has been *more* than 25 years of individual, collective and concerted actions and processes for women at the personal, community, national and international levels around the world to get to this point. Looking back, the principles of equality and non-discrimination were guaranteed fifty-six years ago. In order to provide a code which would guard the rights of people post-World War II, the governments of various nations put in place a document that established human rights standards across the world. Thus the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR)[64] was codified in 1947, and adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1948.

At the outset, the Declaration enshrined the following rights and freedom:

- the right to life, liberty and security of a person

- the right to equality

- the right to be recognized as a person before the law to seek a remedy by a competent tribunal

- freedom from slavery, torture and degrading treatment

- freedom from discrimination

- freedom of expression and political participation.

While the UDHR is non-binding in nature, its principles have been translated into binding instruments for State Parties through the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, adopted in 1966, entered into force in 1976) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, adopted in 1966, entered into force in 1976). The ICCPR contained an Optional Protocol (also known as first Optional Protocol, entered into force in 1976) which required separate ratification by State Parties to the ICCPR. Alongside the ICCPR and ICESCR, other relevant human rights treaties on specific situations were facilitated within the parameters of the UDHR including, among others, the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (adopted in1951, entered into force in 1954), Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (adopted in1984, entered into force in 1987), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted in 1989, entered into force in 1990). Treaties and human rights documents specific to women included, the Convention for the Suppression of Traffic of Persons and the Exploitation and the Prostitution of Others (adopted in 1949), the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (opened for signature in 1953, entered into force in 1954), Convention on Consent to Marry, Minimum Age for Marriage and the Registration of Marriages (1962) and the precursor to the Women's Convention, the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (1967).

Human rights broadly refer to the inherent and inalienable rights of every human being simply by virtue of being human. Central to the concept of human rights is human dignity inherent in every individual that must be respected and promoted regardless of sex, religion, race/ethnicity, caste, class, culture, nationality, sexuality, etc. Since 1947, human rights have been deemed to encompass civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights and entitlements for *all*. But, the experiences

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[63] *Press Release, Note No. 5895, UN, www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/note5895.doc.htm*

[64] *UDHR: Basic United Nations document establishing human rights standards and norms; it sets out principles for State Parties to observe although the declaration was intended to be non-binding. Through continued reference and adherence over time, its various provisions have become so respected by States that it can be said to embody norms of Customary International Law.*

of women across the globe has been living proof to the contrary and, as such, constantly challenge the inherent nature, the universality and the indivisibility of human rights as propounded in the various treaties mentioned above.

At the initial stages of the women's movements, women sought to reclaim their voice through the right to vote and to be voted for. They sought to participate in the political and public arena in the same way as men and demanded equal pay for equal work and for work of equal value. However, their subjective realities were far too varied. The struggle for women's rights needed to be rooted within the particular context in which women found themselves.

The deeply entrenched patriarchal structures and values in South Asia have determined relations in the family, the community and the society. Gender has always been a central issue while class, caste, ethnicity and religion stratify society in very specific ways. Underlying social arrangements is the notion of the private-public divide and the tension between individual and community interests. The woman's place has been generally subordinated and marginalized despite their direct and indirect contribution to nation-building through the freedom/independence movements, the agricultural and industrial revolution, as well as the production and reproduction of capital.

The adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women has been hailed as the biggest achievement within the decade following the First World Conference on Women in Mexico (1975). It was the first binding document against any and all forms of discrimination against women whereby the State was not just committed to desisting from acts that violated the Convention, but committed themselves to actively taking steps to eliminate discriminatory practices and policies affecting women in keeping with the principles and provisions of the Convention. Considered as the women's international bill of rights, it is a comprehensive document that specifies a gamut of entitlements for women.

While the Women's Convention reaffirmed women's human dignity and women's equality in all spheres of life, the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna put women at centre stage with the recognition that, "women's rights are human rights". The Vienna Conference "helped broaden the core human rights concepts of 'violation' and 'violator', directing the movement away from exclusive focus on state actions to examine the culpability of state inaction in the face of known abuses by private sector."[65] The Consensus Document (morally but not legally binding) arising out of the Vienna Conference reiterated the universality and indivisibility of human rights as it recognized violence against women, and rape in times of war as human rights violations. From Mexico to Copenhagen (1980), to Nairobi (1985), to Beijing (1995), the women's rights-human rights agenda gained ground. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA) was adopted as a Consensus Document at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, reviewing and reaffirming women's human rights in all aspects of life.

South Asian countries have historically recognized international human rights standards through signature and/or ratification of treaties. As members of the United Nations, all countries have signed the UDHR and are thus committed not to violate its principles, although only India, Nepal and Sri Lanka have ratified the ICCPR and ICESCR. Table 10.1 below gives the status of ratifications in South Asia on some instruments.

The Women's Convention is notably the most widely ratified document to date with over 90 per cent of the members of the United Nations globally being party thereto[66] but it also has the most reservations[67] and declarations[68] as compared to any other human rights instruments. It is a point worth noting here that while governments have recognized the reality of widespread prevalence of discrimination against women and as such have committed themselves to ending discrimination and promoting equality for women by ratifying the Women's Convention, they undermine their own commitments by enacting

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[65] "Right Side Up: Reflections on the Last Twenty-Five Years of Human Rights Movement" (2004, p.2)
[66] as of October 20, 2004, 178 ratifications & 98 signatures, www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/sigop.htm
[67] refers to the exceptions that State Parties make and exempt themselves from being particularly bound
[68] explains what the State understands a word or sentence in the Treaty or instrument means

Table 10.1: Status of Some Treaty Ratifications

Country	Women's Convention1979	CRC1989	ICCPR1966	ICESCR1966	Optional Protocol to ICCPR
Bangladesh	*	*			
Bhutan	*	*			
India	*	*	*	*	
Maldives	*	*			
Nepal	*	*	*	*	*
Pakistan	*	*			
Sri Lanka	*	*	*	*	

Women's Convention: *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*

CRC: *Convention on the Rights of the Child*

ICCPR: *nternational Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*

ICESCR: *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*

reservations based on cultural, traditional, and religious justifications.

The ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women by *all* governments in South Asia (see Table 10.2 below) needs to be accordingly appreciated. Bhutan and Sri Lanka were the first of the countries in the region to ratify the Convention in 1981 without any reservation and Pakistan acceded to the Women's Convention after the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Nepal also ratified the Convention without reservation, in 1991.This region-wide commitment to end

Table 10.2: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women - Ratifications

Country	Date of Signature[69]	Date of Receipt of Instrument of Ratification, Accession and Succession
Bangladesh		06 November 1984 a/ b/
Bhutan	17 July 1980	31 August 1981
India	30 July 1980 b/	09 July 1993 b/
Maldives		01 July 1993 a/ b/
Nepal	05 February 1991	22 April 1991
Pakistan		12 March 1996 a/ b/
Sri Lanka	17 July 1980	05 October 1981

a/ *accession*[70]; b/ *declarations or reservations;* c/ *reservation subsequently withdrawn;* d/ *succession*

Source: *www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/sigop.htm (19/10/2004)*

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[69] *signature does not bind the State to the Convention or Treaty but commits the State in principle*

[70] *when a State Party accepts to be bound by the instrument; has the same legal binding effect as ratification but unlike ratification, may be entered without prior signature.*

discrimination against women augurs well for the women's rights agenda.

On closer review, the over-all ratification of the Women's Convention in South Asia is betrayed by the reservations and declarations made by a majority of governments in the region. "Articles 2 [71] and 16 [73] are deemed core provisions of the Convention. Article 2 in particular is central to the objectives and purpose of the Convention...(and) CEDAW[73] remains convinced that reservations to Article 16, whether lodged for national, traditional, religious or cultural reasons, are incompatible with the Convention and therefore impermissible and should be reviewed and modified or withdrawn."[74] Any reservation thereon would run counter to the spirit of the Convention and undercut commitment made on ratification. Table 10.3 shows declarations and reservations on CEDAW.

The Women's Convention requires the submission of periodic reports by State Parties to it to the Secretary-General of the UN who in turn forwards the reports to CEDAW for perusal and comments. Reporting on CEDAW Convention has generated intense involvement of NGOs and women's groups in most countries in the region, providing space for shadow or alternative reporting which ensures greater accuracy and transparency of Government reporting. The process attests to at least two factors in the region, the presence of vibrant women's/civil society involvement in monitoring the implementation of the Women's Convention, and the presence of the required political space to engage, dialogue and report alongside the official mechanism. Table 10.4 hereunder gives us the picture of Government reports facilitated thus far, as well as the alternative reports undertaken in certain countries.

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[71] "Article 2. States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:
(a) To embody the principle of equality of men and women in their national constitutions or appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;
(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;
(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;
(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions act in conformity with this obligation;
(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;
(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;
(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women."

[72] "Article 16. 1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:
(a) The same right to enter into marriage;
(b) The same right to freely choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;
(c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;
(d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;
(e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;
(f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interest of the children shall be paramount;
(g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;
(h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.
2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registation of marriages in an official registry compulsory."

[73] CEDAW refers to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the treaty- monitoring body created by the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women to monitor State compliance with that Convention. It is composed of 23 experts elected by State Parties to the Convention (Art 17, Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women).

[74] www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/sigop.htm

Table 10.3: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women - *Declarations and Reservations*

Country	Reservation/s
Bangladesh	Reservation: Articles 2 & 16.1(c)
Bhutan	-
India	Reservation: 29 (1)Declarations: 16.1 & 16.2
Maldives	Reservation: Articles 7(a) and 16
Nepal	Statement: "If provisions of any Convention are inconsistent with national law, national law supercedes"
Pakistan	Reservation: Article 29(1) & Declaratory Statement
Sri Lanka	-

Source: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/sigop.htm (19/10/2004)

Table 10.4: Reports Submitted to and Examined by CEDAW

Country	Government Reports		Alternative Reports
	Reports Submitted	Examined At	
Bangladesh	Combined 3rd and 4th periodic reports, 5th periodic report	17th session (1997), 31st session (2004)	yes
Bhutan	Combined initial, 2nd and 3rd periodic reports	30 th Session (2004)	
India	Initial report	22nd session (2000)	yes
Maldives	Initial report	24th session (2001)	yes
Nepal	Initial report, combined 2nd and 3rd periodic reports	21st session (1999) 30 th Session (2004)	yes
Pakistan	Report finalized	Yet to be examined	
Sri Lanka	Combined 3rd and 4th periodic reports	26th session (2002)	yes

Source: data on Government Reports - www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/sigop.htm (19/10/2004), data on Alternative Reports, Progress of South Asian Women 2003, UNIFEM, 2003, p42.

The Optional Protocol to the Women's Convention offers complaints mechanism for individuals about violations of any of the provisions of the Convention. It does not confer any substantive rights to State Parties but it aims to complement State commitments under the Convention by establishing communication and enquiry procedures for CEDAW to monitor and review compliance by the governments with the Convention.

There have been minimal ratifications of the Optional Protocol in the region.[75] Except for Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, all other countries have not ratified it although Nepal entered its signature to the instrument (see Table 10.5) Clearly, the function of 'checks and balances' afforded by CEDAW as mandated does not gain support from all State Parties to the Women's Convention in South Asia.

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[75] as of October 5, 2004, there were 76 signatories to the Optional Protocol and 67 Parties (www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/sigop.htm (19/10/2004); as of January 12, 2003, there were 75 signatories and 49 Parties (Progress of South Asian Women 2003, 2003, p.40)

Table 10.5: Optional Protocol*

Country	Signature	Ratification, accession (a)
Bangladesh	06 September 2000	06 September 2000
Bhutan		
India		
Maldives		
Nepal	18 December 2001	
Pakistan		
Sri Lanka		15 October 2002 (a)

*(adopted on October 6, 1999 & entered into force on Dec 22, 2000)

Source: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/sigop.htm (19/10/2004)

1. Promote and protect the human rights of women, through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

2. Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice.

The CEDAW Committee conceded gaps in the legal framework of most of the countries in the region. For India, it noted that there are many gaps in the legislative framework and an urgent need to introduce comprehensive legislative reform to promote equality and the human rights of women. It appreciated the contribution made by the Supreme Court of India in integrating the Convention into domestic law by interpreting Constitutional provisions on gender equality and non-discrimination. Maldives, in its report to CEDAW in 2001, noted that the existing laws and policies did not discriminate against women in the areas of access to health services, education and employment, but socio-cultural factors restricted women's *de facto* enjoyment of rights in these areas.

- Human rights of women guarantee their Right to Nationality and Citizenship and confer on them political and economic rights.

In Bhutan, the CEDAW Committee has expressed concern at the low representation of women in decision-making bodies in the various areas and levels of political and public life.

In Maldives, women and men have equal rights to acquire, retain or change their nationality. Political participation of women as both voters and candidates however has remained low. In Pakistan, 33 per cent reservation for women has been provided at all levels of local government since 2000. Overall, progress towards equal participation in political and economic affairs has been positive but slow.

- Most legal systems were silent earlier on matters of sexual violence but soon after the Women's Convention, changes in the law picked up and this trend has been reinforced after the BPFA.

One can actually draw a trend on the law reform and advocacy initiatives and processes since the 1980s. The strength of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women must be recognized in this regard. From the time of signing to the time of ratification, several laws were passed and amendments made, incorporating changes which would impact on the rights of women (both at the State and National levels in India). In terms of sexual violence the most far-reaching changes took place from 1983-85.[76] (India) Events in India two years ago led to some realization that penal law provision on rape is not sufficient, although relevant, when rape happens in situation of conflict. Recommendation for a law to deal with rape in such situations as mentioned was put forth for the Government's consideration (se also the chapter on Violence for further discussion of actions taken against rape and trafficking in the region).

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[76] Kapur, N., "Equal But Different Sexual Harassment in India" in Women's Right at the Workplace: Emerging Challenges and Legal Interventions, Bajpai, A (ed) 1996, p96.

The respective countries in the region need to come up with more purposive legislative and institutional mechanisms to take their commitments forward. India has a specific law on the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of 1956, amended in 1986. In other countries, legal provisions drawn from other laws, e.g., illegal immigration, slavery, etc., might result in undue violation rather than help to the victims of trafficking.

- The connection between discrimination and violence has to be recognized and within this continuum, its economic costs on women cannot be ignored.

The CEDAW Committee expressed concern that in India, the feminization of poverty and growing income disparities prevent the benefits of economic development being transferred to women, and that social practices resulting from the caste system and son preference might contribute to violence and make the implementation of the Convention more difficult. Nepal, in a bid to rectify contradictions in its legal system, came up with major changes to ensure women's equality and non-discrimination. After years of legal advocacy and consultation processes, Nepal set in place massive legislative reforms in the Country Code through the Eleventh Amendment. Highlights of the Amendments included:

- the acceptance of the daughter as heir

- providing full rights to the widow to inherit

- providing rights to the woman over the husband's property

- right of bringing up a daughter

- mechanisms for speedy and effective execution of judgments relating to partition of property.[77]

After a series of consultations the Human Trafficking (Control) Bill was amended adopting a rights perspective. Similarly the Domestic Violence Bill was prepared after a lot of consultation. Both these Bills were passed by the Lower House of Parliament and were being considered by the Upper House of Parliament. When the parliament was dissolved in 2002, causing both the Bills to lapse.. Women's rights activists are continuously

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[77] FWLD, Nepal in www.iwraw-ap.org

Continuing Gaps and Challenges

Those with regard to normative standards (law reform/reporting to treaty bodies) —

- Review, modify or withdraw reservations and declarations

- Comply with periodic reporting to CEDAW; and, encourage alternative reporting;

- Ratification of Optional Protocol

- Amend discriminatory legislation

- Continued legal reform and advocacy at the national level to bring in congruence constitutional principles of equality and non-discrimination and the legal system;

Those with regard to institutional mechanisms responsible for implementation of human rights (training for law enforcement/judiciary/health care and social service sectors/media/elected representatives) -

- Strengthen implementation of laws by making the law and the legal institutions accessible especially for women

- Continue gender sensitization alongside legal and judicial reform processes; law must be informed by inclusive social analysis rather than mere legal technicalities.

Those with regard to changing attitudes and prejudices at the community level (campaigns for raise public awareness on rights, legal literacy etc.) -

- Increase public awareness on human rights-women's rights

- Greater male involvement and participation

advocating for citizenship rights to be conferred through mothers.

3. Achieve legal literacy.

To ensure realization of commitments made at the international level, multi-pronged initiatives and processes have been undertaken at the national level. Enacting legislation was one of them. Given the duality of the law, feminist engagement was necessary to ensure that the law would actually advance women's rights. Laws must be aimed at promoting substantive equality for women and for that to happen, the entirety of the legal system needed to be dealt with. The Legal system has to be understood to include three interrelated components: (1) substantive (the content of the laws); (2) structural (the overall organization of the legal system and its institutions); and, (3) cultural (the shared attitudes about the law, its uses, its efficacy, and its role in the overall life of the community).[78]

Whether for the purpose of proposing a new law (or an amendment or repeal of existing law) or promoting the spirit or substance of the law, parallel legal literacy processes have been facilitated around the region. Legal literacy programmes became widespread in the wake of the Nairobi Conference where themes concerning women, law and development were explored and questions about the law's assumptions on women were strongly debated. Both India and Pakistan have assiduously pursued gender sensitization and perspective-building processes within the government and with private sectors, too.

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[78] *"Asian and Pacific Women's Resource and Action Series, Law"*, 1993, p.2

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WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

Strategic Objectives

1. Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication

2. Develop within mass media and advertising organizations professional guidelines and the codes of conduct and other forms of self regulation to promote the presentation of non-stereotyped images of women, consistent with freedom of expression

3. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media

The media plays a critical role in awareness raising and sensitizing, in communicating the significance of policy formulations and mediating between the public and the private spheres. In South Asia most radio and television stations remain government owned or publicly funded, but in recent years many new alternative media forms have emerged.

1. Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.

In Bangladesh the role of the media in promoting gender equality and rights of women has become more visible over the last few years. Training has been organized on gender sensitivity in reporting, and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs holds regular dialogue with the free press. The number of women journalists exceeds 150, and they have formed their own organisation, the Women Journalists Centre. In Bhutan, the print media is largely owned by the Government. Information on the status of Bhutanese women (apart from government sources) can be accessed from the Bhutan Women and Children Organization (BWCO), which is an independent non-profit, non-governmental, human rights organization. In India, since 1995, women journalists have organized themselves into media groups. The emergence of the Women's Feature Service (WFS), Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR) and the Network for Women in Media (NWMI) are examples. A Media Watch Group has been set up that can recommend specific cases that the National Women's Commission can take up with the Government and the Press Council of India.

The Government of Maldives has used media to expose the problem of violence and to make people aware of the issues involved. Programmes that examine how women balance family life and work, and critique stereotyped notions of women's role in the society, are regularly broadcast. In Nepal the media is playing an important role in bringing issues to the public domain and creating awareness. In 1997 women's participation in the workforce in state media organisations was 9.16 per cent, and in 2002, this had increased to around 20 per cent. This marked change is attributed to the workforce composition in the form of common FM radio stations, where women comprise 43 per cent of the staff. Two women's groups are operating audio towers in *Fikkal and Jhumka*, two remote areas in Eastern Nepal. These groups have been formed under the Women Development Programme. Radio in Pakistan is becoming a cheap and accessible source of information for the majority of the population. By June 2004, six stations were already operating. Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation relays women focused programmes. Only 3 per cent of journalists in Pakistan are women, and the first generation of women radio journalists, have received intensive training in radio reporting and technical production at the Uks Foundation. [79] A media law was passed in Pakistan in 2002, when the Press Council passed an Ordinance stipulating that the constitution of the Press Council should include one woman member who should be nominated by the National Commission on the Status of Women in Pakistan.

Community Radio plays an important role in reaching out to communities who live in remote areas. Community radio stations in South Asia are playing a significant role in increasing participation and opinion-sharing, improving and diversifying knowledge and skills, and in catering to health and cultural needs. Even before governments give official sanction to electronic community media, an increasing number of communities are exploring the different avenues open to them to get their voices and messages heard.

2. Develop within mass media and advertising organizations professional guidelines and codes of conduct and other forms of self-regulation to promote the presentation of non-stereotyped images of women, consistent with the freedom of expression.

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[79] Uks (an Urdu word that means Reflection) is a research, resource and publication centre working on women and media. Primarily, a brain-child of its Director, Ms. Tasneem Ahmar, it was started in December 1997, in Islamabad, strongly supported by a group of like-minded women. Uks is a national organization. It has conducted media workshops in many cities in Pakistan. The project is funded by USAID.

In 2002, the Government of Bangladesh, banned photographs of rape victims from being aired/shown on mass media. The Policy Leadership and Advocacy for Gender Equality (PLAGE) project of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs has undertaken and completed two research publications titled, *Gender Sensitivity of the Bangladesh Press'* and *Screening Television and Radio Programmes from a Gender Perspective.* The main objective of the reports was to reveal how national politics influences the newspaper industry and also ways to improve media's credibility.

In India, according to the National Readership Survey 2002, print media has grown since 1999 and acquired 17 million more readers. All India Radio has proved to be the most effective channel of communication in the rural areas. For instance the Directorate of Audio Visual Policy under the Minister for Information and Broadcasting has produced programmes on welfare schemes, Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare etc. The National Commission for Women in collaboration with the Press Institute of India, which also helped executing it, initiated a project on the status of women journalists in the print media. The objective of the research was to examine the problems and issues confronting women journalists in the media; to gauge the extent of direct and indirect discrimination in the workplace; and identify the contemporary issues that need to be addressed. The report was released on July 2004. Some major concerns that emerged from the study included job insecurity because journalists were employed on daily wages, or on a contract basis, neglect of maternity and childcare provisions, and sexual harassment. Some recent policy initiatives in India include a code for commercial advertising, and 50 per cent representation of women in the Film Censor Board. The Information Technology Act has declared pornography a punishable offence and the Parliamentary Committee has issued a stricture against the depiction of domestic violence by the media. The CFAR has been involved in media advocacy processes which have led to the development of a media tool for gender sensitive reporting on HIV/AIDS.

In Nepal, according to the *Journalists Code of Conduct, 1998,* journalists should not publish or broadcast any news that violates individual rights to privacy and personal dignity. The Gender Mainstreaming in Media Report was released in Nepal in September 2004. The report was based on an analysis of news content, feature writings, intermediate and entertainment programmes and advertisements in the print and the electronic media. [80]

The Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC), formed soon after the Beijing Conference is an independent organization of a national coalition of leading organizations working on women's rights and gender justice and on advancing the status of women in Nepal. One of the strategies it has identified for the future is to aim at a wider dissemination of international treaties and obligations among the SAARC member countries, by way of media, advocacy programmes and Information Education and Communication material (IEC).

In Pakistan, Gender Committees have been established in all five PTV centers which periodically meet to address concerns at the programming and the organizational level.[81]

Women journalists in Pakistan have begun producing the country's first independent syndicated radio programmes that feature women as both producers and subjects. Programmes discuss issues like educational opportunities for girls and women in Pakistan. Awareness campaigns (print and non-traditional media), both by the government and NGOs are being launched on violence against women.

3. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

A workshop on gender sensitive reporting was held in Bangladesh on March 5, 2004, where journalists were urged to be careful not to write or use any photographs that impaired the dignity of women. It was emphasized that while media must focus on gender sensitive issues, journalists should exercise responsibility in their writing on gender issues. The Policy Leadership and Advocacy for Gender Equality, an initiative of

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[80] Funded by Sancharika Samuha and IMPACS, the reports were expected to create gender awareness in the Nepali media.
[81] The project is funded by USAID (April 2003-March 2004).

the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, in cooperation with the Dhaka Reporters Unity organised the workshop.

In India, *Doordarshan* is making conscious efforts at organizing useful and gender-sensitive programmes concerning women through tools like panel discussions and chat shows focusing on women's roles within and outside the household. A special programme cell has been assigned the responsibility of providing gender inputs to the public service broadcast by *Doordarshan*.

Alternative media forms have been gaining popularity in Nepal. Nepali women's groups are turning out magazines, audio and video productions and various print materials to voice their concerns. In the broadcast cluster, though there are only a handful of women's programmes on community radio, these are of high quality. *Sancharika Samuha*, a forum of women communicators established after the Beijing Conference, seeks to promote a more gender sensitive media and undertakes various forms of media advocacy.[82] Sections of the print and electronic media have been receptive to orientation on gender, leading to engendered reporting with regard to some critical issues such as that of Migrant Women Workers. In fact a multi-pronged media campaign was a contributory factor in the lifting of the ban on the migration of women workers to the Gulf countries in the organized sector.

In order to eliminate traditional gender biases and derogatory representations of women in the media and the new communication technology, including the Internet, Pakistan is promoting gender sensitive programming. [83] The objective is

Continuing Gaps and Challenges

- Spaces for women within traditional and alternative/parallel media forms
- Access to training on gender issues and gender sensitive reporting/ portrayal
- Gender sensitive media laws
- Gender sensitization of both men and women in media
- Greater space in print and electronic media for social issues
- Stop portrayal of women in stereotyped roles and project more positive and empowering aspects
- Gender sensitive programming of development issues
- Broadcast norms that facilitate more equitable and realistic representations
- Greater community participation
- Self-regulatory mechanisms and media codes of conduct
- Media regulatory and monitoring mechanisms at regional and national level
- Laws to protect women journalists from harassment at their place of work

[82] SAS has been taking out a monthly Women's Feature Service since 1997. The main purpose of this publication is to encourage journalists to write about gender issues and mainstream such issues in the media. Five articles related to gender discrimination, violence faced by women in the family and society, and other gender issues are published every month in the feature service. In its advocacy programme SAS has been advocating for equal inheritance rights of women to ancestral property since 1996 through the media. In 1996 when this programme started 90 per cent of the media was totally negative about the issue. However in 2001, when the findings were released majority of the media was positive towards the issue.
[83] For instance UNDP has initiated the 'Portrayal of Women in Media' project. The project is being implemented in collaboration with PTV, the largest domestic electronic media outlet.

to project a positive, balanced and diverse image of women in media.[84] A number of capacity building programmes are found in PTVs daily broadcast of *Khawateen Times* (Women Times). With regard to traditional media forms, Interactive Theater is an emerging genre in Pakistan which focuses on the involvement of the people and highlights the significance of service delivery in issues such as water, sanitation, health care or mortality rates. Interactive theater addresses a large number of issues like gender equality, micro-credit, bonded labour, intolerance, drug addiction, honour killings, child marriage, child labour, access to basic services for the poor and also food security issues. The aim is to bring these issues to a larger audience and to create a dialogue with policy makers.

Media campaigns are also underway in Sri Lanka to highlight the critical contribution of women to national development and to promote a positive portrayal of women.

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[84] *Uzma Haroon is managing this venture. Her activities are inspired by the statement proclaimed at the Beijing Platform of Action, 1995, which states 'women empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all the spheres of society, including participation in decision-making and access to power.* http://www.un.org.pk/unworks/stories/uzma.htm.

K

WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Strategic Objectives

1. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels

2. Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development

3. Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

When you start working with the environment seriously, the whole arena comes: human rights, women's rights, environmental rights, children's rights, you know, everybody's rights. Once you start making these linkages, you can no longer do just tree-planting." Wangari Maathai

Women's relationship with the environment extends from the management of natural resources to the identification and naming of different plants and species, knowledge of the use of plants as vegetables and medicines, to a crucial role in fish sorting, cutting, processing and marketing, post-harvest activities, and raising livestock and poultry as an integral component of farming systems. Environmental degradation thus has a severe impact on rural livelihoods in general and on women's lives in particular (Table 12.1). Economic, social, institutional, and legal constraints affect women's and men's right to own land and control resources. Globally, 70 per cent of the poor depend on land, water and forest for subsistence and income.[85] However women's involvement in the formulation, planning, and execution of environmental policy remains low at all levels.

1. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels

Worldwide, women are poorly represented in governments and decision-making bodies. This lack of representation limits women's influence over public policies and programmes. The Beijing Platform for Action outlines an extensive vision with more than 30 recommendations for increasing women's involvement in environmental decision-making, mobilizing resources for women in environmental protection and conservation, and engendering government programmes for sustainable development. In the first Global Women's Assembly on Environment, Nairobi 2004, it has been recorded that the number of women in environmental decision-making institutions, for example, remained unrepresentative and undemocratic, and women worldwide were not able to purchase or possess land as freely as men.

The Government of Bangladesh has prepared a National Environmental Management Action Plan (NEMAP). The government, with the support of various development partners, has undertaken several environment-related projects including the Sustainable Environment Management Plan, Coastal Greenbelt project, Biodiversity Conservation Project, Urban Environment Management project, and others. The Bangladeshi women's movement has had a great impact on concerns about environment and sustainable development.

Table 12.1 Estimated Number of Rural Women Affected by Fuelwood Scarcity in some Countries of the Region

Country	Forest as % of land area	Fuelwood status	Rural women 10-59 year (thousands)	Estimated rural women affected by fuelwood scarcity (thousands)	% of rural women affected by fuelwood scarcity
Bangladesh	6	Deficit	30,721	25,498	83
India	17	Deficit in many states acute scarcity in western Himalayas	204,928	172,140	84
Nepal	37	Deficit in foothills acute scarcity in hills	5,384	4,523	84
Sri Lanka	27	Deficit	4,753	4,040	85

Source: WHO, Women of South-East Asia: A Health Profile 2000

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[85] *World Development Report 2000-01*

The Ministry of Environment, Government of India, has taken several initiatives for incorporating gender perspectives. Reservations have been made for women to ensure their involvement. The implementation strategy seeks to ensure that programme benefits reach women, and to institutionalize and deepen their participation in the decision-making process at grass roots level. For example, women's participation has been built into the Joint Forest Management (JFM) Committees which are grass root level institutions for conservation, protection and management of degraded forests. At least 50 per cent of the members of the JFM General Body are required to be women, and at least 33 per cent of the membership in the JFM Executive Committee/ Management Committee is to be filled by women.

The Government of Nepal's *National Assessment Report on Sustainable Development 2002*, mentions that the principles of sustainable development have been incorporated in all the major Perspective Plans in different areas such as forestry, agriculture, water resources, environmental management, and local governance including the protection of rights of women and children. The Report highlights the importance of women's rights and empowerment both from a human rights perspective and as a key factor to slowing down population growth in the country.

The forestry management policies of Pakistan, under the National Conservation Strategy has highlighted the role of women in farm and watershed forestry by placing special emphasis on removal of social inhibitions, information exchange and empowerment entailing decision-making and user rights. This Policy Document also emphasizes the training programmes for women on employment and earning, with priority given to human ecology, agriculture, social forestry and basic health services.

The National Plan of Action for Women (NPAW) prepared by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka, has been incorporated in national and sectoral programmes. The NPAW has identified eight areas of critical concern including environment.

2. Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development

South Asia's environmental problems include resource depletion and ecological degradation, indoor and outdoor air pollution, lack of access to clean water supplies and sanitation (Table 12.2 and Table 12.3). Even toxic and hazardous agro-industrial waste generation and disposal and vulnerability to natural disasters. These problems pose a threat to the life and livelihood of millions of people. Most energy and water related institutional and technological interventions have traditionally failed to consider women as primary beneficiaries, even though they are primarily responsible for managing energy and water requirements at the household level. Women farmers and workers are frequently exposed to dangerous pesticides, in pesticide applicators or during harvesting, planting and soil preparation. Several pilot projects have attempted to improve knowledge and practice in integrating gender concerns in programmes and policies for sustainable development. Efforts have been made to increase the use of organic pesticides.[86] Environmental management and education has been another area of significant effort, and activities such as training of personnel to strengthen environment management, monitoring and impact assessment have been supported. Special effort has been made to enable local communities to manage their own environmental resources.[87] Other innovative pilot projects include attempts to tackle problems of loss of agricultural biodiversity and stagnation of food production, by developing a viable and cost-effective model for exploiting the genetic potential of regional biodiversity resources and the capacity to innovate among farmers and scientists working with these resources.[88]

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[86] *Project supported by United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)*
[87] *Project Fact Sheets, UNDP, Bhutan and Small Grants Programme, UNDP.*

Table 12.2 Selected Environmental Indicators in South Asia

Region	GNI per capita (USD)	Agricultural l and (as % of land area)	Forest Area (as % of total land area)	Annual deforestation (% change 1990-2000)	Nationally protected (% of land area)	CO$_2$ emissions per capita (mt)	Fresh water resources per capita (m^3)	Access to sanitation (Rural) (as % of rural population)
World	5120	38	29.7	0.2	10.7	3.8	8513	38
South Asia	460	55	16.3	0.1	4.8	0.9	2684	21
Bangladesh	380	70	10.2	-1.3	0.8	0.2	8922	41
Bhutan	600	12	64.2	0	25.1	0.5	111633	70
India	470	61	21.6	-0.1	5.2	1.1	1819	15
Maldives	2170	33	3.3	0	..	1.8	..	41
Nepal	230	35	27.3	1.8	8.9	0.1	8713	22
Pakistan	420	35	3.2	1.1	4.9	0.8	1534	43
Sri Lanka	850	36	30	1.6	13.5	0.6	2636	93
High Income	26490	36	26.1	-0.1	19.5	12.4	..	..

Source: The Little Green Data Book 2004 (From the World Development Indicators 2004); GNI Current UDS in World Bank Atlas method

Table 12.3 Population with Sustainable Access to Improved Sanitation and Improved Water Source

	Population with sustainable access to improved sanitation (%)		Population with sustainable access to an improved water source (%)	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Bangladesh	41	48	94	97
Bhutan	..	70	..	62
India	16	28	68	84
Nepal	20	28	67	88
Maldives	..	56	..	100
Pakistan	36	62	83	90
Sri Lanka	85	94	68	77
South Asia	22	37	72	85

Source: HDR, 2004

3. Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

Collecting sex-disaggregated information is a first step toward developing gender-responsive policies and programmes. Data that provide information on women's and men's resource use, access to resources, and participation in environmental decision-making contributes to sound policies. Currently, sex-disaggregated information is rarely used in national environmental policies or programmes. However, some agencies have begun collecting disaggregated information at the local level. Gender equality, justice and environmental sustainability are all inextricably linked. There is an urgent need to tackle the dominant economic paradigm. Global threats to the environment include impacts of the dominant economic model, international trade, as well as patterns of consumption.

WOMEN AND THE TSUNAMI

The devastation that communities have experienced in the wake of the earthquake and Tsunami in Asia is unprecedented. In South Asia alone three countries - India, Maldives and Sri Lanka - have been badly affected and women in the communities along with children have been particularly affected. There are reports of several women having died or been washed away because of their different vulnerabilities. Reports of incidents of rape and molestation of women and girls in rescue operations and in temporary shelters are emerging and need to be probed. There is an immediate and compelling need for governments, donors and civil society to ensure that the relief and reconstruction efforts take fully into account the human rights, protection, livelihood and leadership of women and women's organizations and ensure that a gender-responsive approach is adopted in long-term reconstruction plans and action. UNIFEM is initiating a coordinated effort in Sri Lanka, that will address quick impact projects, build databases on women affected by the tsunami, address the different dimensions of trauma faced by women, support initiatives to build capacity to restore and strengthen livelihoods, track, better protect and promote women's human rights, and highlight the leadership roles of women in the context of the disaster.

Continuing Gaps and Challenges

- Acknowledge, preserve and use women's knowledge and expertise in managing resources

- Gender mainstreaming in the policies and operations of all natural resource management institutions

- Engender all environmental agreements, projects and programmes

- Protect the interests of local communities

- Encourage the active participation of men and women in natural resource management, research, planning and decision-making at all levels

- Sex disaggregated data on environmental concerns

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THE GIRL CHILD

Strategic Objectives

1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child

2. Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls

3. Promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs and potential

4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training

5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition

6. Eliminate violence against the girl child

7. Promote the girl child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life

8. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child

In South Asia, the girl child is discriminated against from the earliest stages of life, through her childhood, and into adulthood. This discrimination begins, in fact, even before she is born. Female foeticide and infanticide, neglect of health, and gender biased feeding practices are prevalent across the region. Girls continue to have lower access to education. The practice of child marriage, although illegal, is still prevalent. There has been an alarming increase in the trafficking of girl children in the region with a large number of young girls being sold into prostitution. The causes for the increased vulnerability of the girl child to being abused, trafficked and violated are to be found in her unequal social status and economic marginalization, which play out through social practices like dowry, child marriage, desertion, female foeticide and so on. More often than not, young girls are trafficked with the lure of a good job in the city, or marriage. A complete lack of skills that can enhance their ability to earn a livelihood, and the lack of education are the primary reasons that leave young girls with few choices and make them so vulnerable to exploitation.

Many of the practices that are still prevalent in the region such as child marriage, honour killings, depriving women of inheritance rights, reflect deep-rooted traditional beliefs. A recent study provides insight into the need to integrate cultural analysis in development programmes, especially in the critical areas of gender equity and equality, and reproductive health and rights. Mainstreaming cultural analysis in programmes, and strengthening key alliances and partnerships to mobilise communities is shown to result in increased ownership. [89]

South Asia has one of the most distorted sex ratios in the world. Men outnumber women in most countries of South Asia except in Sri Lanka. However, the recent trend shows there is decline in sex ratio in Sri Lanka too. In the absence of systematic data on juvenile sex ratio, the overall general sex ratio for different countries has been presented in Table 13.1. The life expectancy at birth has gone up for both males and females in most countries (Table 13.2).

Table 13.1: Sex Ratio

Countries	Women/100 men	Women 100/men
	2000	2003
Bangladesh	95	95
Bhutan	98	98
India	94	94
Nepal	97	96
Pakistan	94	95
Sri Lanka	102	93

Source: United Nations, The World's Women: Trends & Statistics, 2000
http://unstats.un.org

1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl-child

2. Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls

In India, the huge numbers of 'missing girls' is a crucial issue. The Census reveals a national decline from 945 to 927 in the number of girls per 1000 boys aged 0-6 between 1991-2001. Legislation has been strengthened to end sex selective abortion with the amendment of the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 in 2003. The Act provides a total ban on the pre-conception sex selection techniques and the misuse of pre-natal diagnostic techniques for sex-selective abortions and has made punishments for infringement severe and more stringent. To complement this, a number of advocacy strategies have been initiated. The Indian Medical Association, in collaboration with UNICEF and the National Commission for Women, held a meeting of religious leaders in 2001 at which sex selection was widely condemned. The *Akal Takth*, a Sikh religious body in Punjab, issued a dictum to the Sikh community to stop the practice.

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[89] *http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/267_filename_CultureMatters_2004.pdf*

Table 13.2: Life Expectancy at Birth

Countries	2000			2002		
	Female	Male	Average	Female	Male	Average
Bangladesh	55.4	53.2	59.4	61.5	60.7	61.1
Bhutan	62.3	57.2	62.0	64.3	61.8	63.0
India	64.7	59.9	63.3	64.4	63.1	63.7
Maldives	65.4	66.8	66.5	66.8	67.7	67.2
Nepal	53.7	52.3	58.6	59.4	58.9	59.6
Pakistan	58.8	59.9	60.0	60.7	61.0	60.8
Sri Lanka	82.8	71.1	72.1	75.8	69.8	72.5

Source: HDR, 2002 & 2004

3. Promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs and potential

The Government of Bangladesh has passed an order requiring compulsory birth and marriage registration. The Government of India observed 1991-2000 as the decade of the girl child. The National Plan of Action for the Girl Child (1992) was drawn up for the same decade, recognizing the rights of the girl child to equal opportunities, to eliminate all forms of violence perpetuated against the girl child and to provide inputs for her personality development.

In Nepal the 11th Amendment of the Civil Code, enacted in 2002, has also changed some discriminatory practices in law against the girl child, such as restricting adoption in the case of a family having just one daughter, etc. The punishment for child marriage has been increased from six months to three years and the fine has increased from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 10,000.

In Sri Lanka recent legislation regarding compulsory education, and minimum age of 15 years for employment, have strengthened the rights of the girl child to equal treatment. The minimum age of marriage in Sri Lanka is 18 years.

4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training

The Government of Bangladesh set in place a policy to provide free education to girls up to grade 12. This is seen as a positive step towards improving enrolment of girls in schools. The government has also arranged to give stipends to girl students at this level. Another positive step taken by the government is to provide highest allocation of resources to the education sector in the national budget.

In India, some positive measures have been taken to improve the status of education of girls in India. Under the DPEP and *Sarva Shiksa Abhiyan* specific strategies have been designed to enhance girls' access, enrolment and schooling. Bridge schools have been established for girls and boys to enable re-entry and late entry into schools.

The Government of Nepal's announcement of elimination of the fee during the beginning of the academic year and use of local language for the primary education in 2002 opened up newer avenues and opportunities for girls to get a primary education. The government's promise to reimburse the fee paid for girl's enrolment in the secondary schools ensures better opportunity for secondary education.

5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition

The Government of Bangladesh has declared its Health Policy in 2000. A Health and Population Sector Programme (HPSP) 1998-2003 has been implemented as part of this, which aims to improve the family welfare status of women and children, and the poor.

Recognizing the health and nutrition needs of girls, the Government of India has initiated a number of programmes. Under the RCH programme of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, immunisation of the girl child is being given special attention. *Kishori Shakti Yojana*, an intervention for adolescent girls between 11-18 years was launched in 2000-01 as part of the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) programme. The scheme is currently being implemented in 2000 ICDS projects. Iron and folic acid supplements for adolescent girls is being undertaken in the World Bank assisted ICDS project, as well as through the reproductive and child healthcare programme of the Department of Family Welfare as a pilot project.

The *Tawana* (Healthy) Pakistan Programme was launched in the 29 poorest districts of Pakistan to combat malnutrition and lack of education. Under this programme girl children are given nutritionally balanced meals in schools. Girls also receive micronutrients to treat diseases such as iron deficiency and anemia.

6. Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and provide protection to young girls at work

The Government of India has been working on the issue of child labour and improving the quality of life for women and children. A National Child Labour Project (NCLP) is being implemented in 13 states where child labour is endemic and UNICEF is working closely alongside the government. The 'learning in action' interventions supported by UNICEF in Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka influenced state policies on and approaches to, the elimination of child labour. The Government of India is also working at expanding its services by providing rehabilitation and reintegration programmes through the *Swadhar*[90] scheme. But progress on these issues has to be sustained to meet the continuing challenges.

In 1994, about 10,000 children were estimated to be working in *Magadi's* silk twisting units in Karnataka. This figure was reduced to 1,000 by 2003. This was a result of the collaboration between the community groups and Department of Labour, Government of Karnataka, UNICEF, and the four community based NGO's under the *Magadi Makkala Dhawani* project (Voices of Children in *Magadi*). The project focused on raising awareness, strengthening families against indebtedness, forming community based groups and educating families and employers on the pitfalls of child labour.[91] Four bridge education centers were set up to facilitate the transition of children from work to education. After six months, the children were admitted into mainstream schools or, if over 14 years old, given vocational training. In 2000, the Government declared work in the silk industry as hazardous, giving an additional fillip to this initiative.

7. Eliminate violence against the girl child

In order to combat child trafficking, the Ministry of Women and Child in Bangladesh, has undertaken a project to develop an effective administrative set-up and mechanism to address the issue of trafficking, and provide for the rescue and rehabilitation of victims, and effective legal protection and justice in trafficking related cases. The Prevention of Women and Children Repression Act, 2000 was enacted to provide stern punishment including death sentence and life imprisonment for the crime of rape, abduction, dowry and trafficking related violence.

In Bhutan, a number of legal measures have been taken to promote the rights and interest of women. Under the revised Rape Act, offenders will have to serve prison sentences in addition to paying financial compensation to the victim. In Bhutan the minimum marriageable age for both males and females have been increased to 18 in 1998. Earlier the age was 16 for females and 18 for males.

Trafficking in women and children is a serious crime in Bhutan. Bhutan is a signatory to the SAARC Committee on Prevention

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[90] *The scheme was launched by the Department of Women and Child Development during 2001-02 as a scheme to provide holistic and integrated services to women/girls in distress. The package of services made available under the scheme include provision for food, shelter, healthcare, social and economic rehabilitation through education, skill upgradation etc.*

[91] *http://www.unicef.org/india/child_protection_197.htm*

and Criminalisation of Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution and the Government of Bhutan is planning to ratify it in the National Assembly.

The revamped Juvenile Justice Act, 2000 in India assures protection of the child in need of care, vulnerable and likely to be inducted in drug abuse or trafficking. Sections 23 provides for punishment to a person having actual charge of, or control over, a child and who assaults, abandons or willfully neglects the child or procures him to be assaulted, abandoned, exposed or neglected in a manner likely to cause unnecessary mental or physical suffering. In addition Section 24 provides for punishment for employment or use of a child for begging. Section 25 provides for penalty for giving intoxicating liquor or narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances to a child. Another significant step taken by the Government of India against child trafficking and prostitution is to get approval from the Cabinet for ratification and signing of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

In India, the state government of Andhra Pradesh in collaboration with UNICEF and a local NGO has set up a database of trafficking routes, traffickers, and trafficked minors and women, in order to help make effective interventions. The focus on community mobilisation and prevention has facilitated the establishment of village based anti trafficking committees comprising of local youth, self help group members and elected representatives. These committees monitor, follow up and counsel girls and women who are approached by relatives or friends in the guise of offering employment. The committees have also initiated action against traffickers by registering police cases against them. And, motivated by the local administration, they have linked vulnerable women and girls to development schemes. Minors and women are trained in livelihood skills and facilitated to find alternative options.[92]

The Unit for the Rights of Children (URC) within the Ministry of Gender Family Development and Social Security, Maldives in 2003, established a mechanism to deal with all cases involving children in difficult circumstances. This includes abuse in all its forms, physical and psychological and sexual, as well as neglect. It includes all children whose rights are compromised. However, there is a need to establish adequate legal and structural systems to deal with and support victims of abuse.

The Ministry of Women Development and Social Welfare in Nepal has adopted NPA against trafficking in children and their commercial sexual exploitation. A joint initiative in the Millennium against Trafficking in Girls and Women project launched since 2001 also addresses the preventive, rescue, rehabilitation and the reintegration (to family/community) of the girl child vulnerable to trafficking. Though the Government of Nepal has implemented programmes to combat trafficking of women and children it has not yet ratified the Convention on Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution, adopted in 2002 during the SAARC Convention.

The Government of Pakistan has signed the Draft Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2001) and ratified the SAARC Convention on Prostitution of Women and Girls. The Pakistan Penal Code now recognizes honour killings as 'premeditated murder' under Section 302 (April 2000).

In Sri Lanka, a special effort is being made to eliminate sexual abuse and exploitation, especially of young girls. Seminars and workshops for adolescents and their parents to discuss reproductive health issues have been sponsored by government projects. A counseling programme has been introduced in a medical clinic where women and girls receive reproductive health information. In addition, the projects have helped the police to detect cases of child abuse and bring the offenders to justice. Policewomen have been trained in counseling traumatized children and special Child Abuse Desks were set up at all police stations with trained staff. Through legal advocacy, a law was passed prohibiting child abuse.[93]

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[92] http://www.unicef.org/india/child_protection_197.htm
[93] http://www.unfpa.org/intercentre/beijing/girl.htm

8. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child

The Government of India launched schemes like the *Balika Samridhi Yojana* in 1997 with an aim to raise the overall status of the girl child and bring about a positive change in family and community attitudes towards the girl child, by depositing money in the name of the girl child. The Government of Maldives has enacted a Family Law which came into effect in 2001, making the minimum age for marriage in the Maldives 18 years. Under the Family Law it is illegal to employ a person even in dire familial circumstances who is less than 14 years of age. It is an offence to force a woman or a man to enter into marriage under the Islamic Shari'ah and the Family Law.

Continuing Gaps and Challenges

- Lack of age-wise sex disaggregated data to understand the vulnerability of girl children.

- Minimum age of marriage is not strictly adhered to in many countries

- Absence of an effective machinery to enforce the rights of the girl child.

- Rights of the girl child in some countries in the region remain violated in several aspects.

- Girls in the region continue to suffer from malnutrition.

- Prevailing patriarchal and stereotypical attitude in some countries of South Asia have a negative impact on women's health and nutrition.

- Mortality rates of girls under the age of five years remain high.

- Low enrolment and high dropout rate from school still prevails in the region.

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Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Agenda item 3 (c)
**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women
and to the special session of the General Assembly
entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development
and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation
of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas
of concern and further actions and initiatives**

Declaration *adopted* by the Commission on the Status of Women
at its forty-ninth session *as orally amended on the 4 March 2005*

We, the representatives of Governments gathering at the forty-ninth session of
the Commission on the Status of Women in New York on the occasion of the tenth
anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, in
the context of the review of the outcomes of the Conference and of the twenty-third
special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality,
development and peace for the twenty-first century", and **its** contribution to the
high-level plenary meeting of the Assembly on the review of the United Nations
Millennium Declaration,[1] to be held from 14 to 16 September 2005;

1.   *Reaffirm* the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[2] adopted at the
Fourth World Conference on Women and the outcome of the twenty-third special
session of the General Assembly;[3]

2.   *Welcome* the progress made thus far towards achieving gender equality,
stress that challenges and obstacles remain in the implementation of the Beijing
Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special
session of the General Assembly, and, in this regard, pledge to undertake further
action to ensure their full and accelerated implementation;

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[1] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.
[2] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United
Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.
[3] Resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

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3.   *Emphasize* that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is essential to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration,[1] and stress the need to ensure the integration of a gender perspective in the high-level plenary meeting on the review of the Millennium Declaration;

4.   *Recognize* that the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the fulfilment of the obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women are mutually reinforcing in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women;

5.   *Call upon* the United Nations system, international and regional organizations, all sectors of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, as well as all women and men, to fully commit themselves and to intensify their contributions to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

Linkages between the Millennium Development Goals and the Beijing Platform for Action

by

Bandana Rana, Sancharika Samuha, Nepal - January 2005

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have opened a new door for the advancement of gender equality. Used to their best potential, they can be the means by which the insidious link between gender inequalities, the waste and destruction of women's human potential, and the seemingly endless reproduction of poverty is brought into sharp focus, and finally overcome.

Noeleen Heyzer
Executive Director, UNIFEM

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were born from the Millennium Declaration an unprecedented global consensus reached in the year 2000 by 189 member states of the United Nations. In the declaration these nations together undertook to advance a global vision for improving the condition of humanity throughout the world in the areas of development and poverty eradication, peace and security, protection of the environment, and human rights and democracy. Eight of the key commitments set out in the Millennium Declaration came to form the Millennium Developments Goals:

Eight Goals:

1. Eradicate poverty and hunger;

2. Achieve universal primary education;

3. Promote gender equality and empower women;

4. Reduce child mortality;

5. Improve maternal health;

6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;

7. Ensure environmental sustainability; and,

8. Develop a global partnership for development.

Achieving the MDGs has become a high priority for all development partners- national governments, the UN system and international financial institutions. The MDGs are accompanied by 16 global targets and 48 global indicators. The targets and indicators were created to provide concrete measurements of the extent to which countries are making progress towards achieving the Goals, and this progress is being assessed on a regular basis at the country level through national MDG reports. However, many women's human rights advocates have noted that gender equality, as a crosscutting concern for the achievement of all the MDGs is not well reflected in the global targets and indicators. There is concern that the more far-reaching obligations and commitments embodied in Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other globally and regionally agreed documents have been poorly represented. This holds true if the MDGs are looked at as a separate commitment from the Millennium Declaration

The Millennium Declaration reconfirms the central role of gender equality from the perspective of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and other major world conferences. These world conferences organized by the UN in the 1990s provided the impetus for the international community to come together at the Millennium Summit in 2000 to agree on steps needed to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. The Millennium Declaration renewed the commitments made by all member states at these conferences.
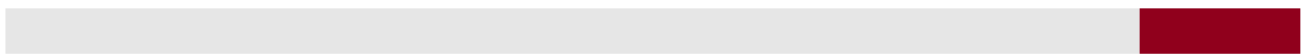
The Declaration pledges explicitly to combat all forms of violence against women and to implement CEDAW. It further recognizes the importance of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment as an effective pathway for combating poverty, hunger and disease and for stimulating truly sustainable development. Therefore, the Millennium Declaration must be taken as the principle guide for bringing the MDGs to real life. The MDGs must at all times be infused by the vision set out in the Millennium Declaration. Taken in this light the MDGs provide a valuable opportunity for advancing the gender equality agenda forward.

By using CEDAW and Beijing as the lens through which the MDGs are understood and implemented, principled conviction and development effectiveness can be brought together in a powerful way. Because the MDGs have become the centerpiece of a common agenda embraced by all development partners, including the development assistance community, they are positioned to be a genuinely effective engine for change.

The opportunity provided by the MDGs can be embraced - without lowering the existing standard of gender equality analysis and strategies and without weakening recognition of established global gender equality processes - if we keep true to the spirit of the Millennium Declaration. Efforts to achieve the MDGs must be guided not only by the global goals, targets and indicators but also, most crucially, by the Declaration's recognition of the central importance of gender equality to all progress in development. So the MDGs must not be looked upon as a brand new agenda but as a new vehicle for BPFA and CEDAW. There is much to be gained by approaching BPFA, CEDAW and the MDGs as mutually supporting processes

Efforts to achieve the MDGs will bring together a wide range of government sectors, development partners and civil society organizations. This provides an opportunity to improve coordination on gender equality concerns and raise them to new and higher policy levels. If gender equality considerations are successfully incorporated into efforts to achieve the Goals, the MDGs process will help serve to mainstream gender in a broader range of national programs and policies than may previously have been possible. In many countries including Nepal the BPFA strategic objectives have been supplemented by national action plans and reviews conducted for B+5 and B+10. All of these sources can be drawn on for authoritative guidance on specific gender equality measures that could be implemented to achieve each of the MDG goals.

The drafting of national MDG reports is the first step in initiating a monitoring process to ensure that the MDGs are achieved and these reports will be subjected to periodic review and updating. Gender activists should take up this challenge by calling for the inclusion of a broader range of gender-sensitive targets and indicators at the national level. Using the BPFA and CEDAW monitoring and review processes to draw attention to progress, obstacles and failures to implement the necessary gender equality measures under the MDGs can help to ensure that national and international commitment to the gender dimensions of the MDGs does not wane.

Beijing + 10, to be held as the 49th session of the commission on the Status of Women (28 Feb- 11 March 2005) will provide the opportunity for a gender equality stocktaking by high-level government policy makers. It will involve a review of progress in achieving the commitments made related to Beijing and the identification of current challenges and appropriate forward-looking strategies. In preparation, each government will have produced a self-assessment of its progress, based on a standard questionnaire, and civil society organizations also have opportunity to provide alternative information on progress and obstacles. The information on country-level progress that is provided will be consolidated into a global report that will be issued by the UN Secretary General.

These assessments of progress and challenges, as well as the outcomes of the regional B+10 recommendations will be brought to the Millennium Summit +5 to be held in September 2005 to inform deliberations on paths forward to achieve the MDGs. Therefore B+10 provides an opportunity to strengthen and focus the gender equality dimensions of efforts to achieve the MDGs. Information on the adequacy of existing plans to advance gender equality throughout the MDGs and proposals for more effective measures need to be brought to the government representatives' attention. Strong gender equality recommendations from B+10 and the Millennium Summit will be powerful tools for use at the national level to stimulate greater action on gender equality.

Therefore the BPFA and the CEDAW Convention must be our touchstones for realizing the potential held out by the MDGs. The first step in making use of BPFA framework for fine tuning the MDGs in its agenda of gender equality is for gender activists to identify and understand the specific linkages between the two.

Linkages Between the MDGs and the BPFA

MDG Targets	BPFA Linkages
1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger	
• **Target 1** Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day.	• Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources (Strategic Objectives A.2)
• **Target 2** Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.	• Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions (Strategic objectives A.3).
	• Develop gender based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminization of poverty (Strategic Objectives A.4)
	• Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources. Strategic Objectives F.1)
	• Facilitated women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade (strategic objective F.20
	• Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women (strategic objective F.3)
	• Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks (strategic objective F.4)
	• Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination (strategic objective F.5)
	• Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men (strategic objective F.6)
MDG Targets	**BPFA Linkages**
2. Achieve Universal Primary Education	
• **Target 3** Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.	• Ensure equal access to education (strategic objective B.1)
	• Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training (strategic objective L.4)
	• Develop non-discriminatory education and training (strategic objective B.4)
	• Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms (strategic objective B.5)
	• Eradicate violence against the girl-child (strategic objective L.7)

MDG Targets	BPFA Linkages
3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women	
● Target 4 Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015.	● Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice (strategic objective 1.2). ● Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects (strategic objective H.2) ● Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation (strategic objective H.3) ● Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies (strategic objective H. 1)

MDG Targets	BPFA Linkages
4. Reduce Child Mortality ; 5. Improve Maternal Health	
● Target 5 Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five ● Target 6 Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio.	● Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services (strategic objective C.1) ● Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health (strategic objective C.2) ● Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health issues (strategic objective C.3) ● Promote research and disseminate information on women's health (strategic objective C.4) ● Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health(strategic objective C./5) ● Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition (strategic objective L.5)

MDG Targets	BPFA Linkages
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases	
● Target 7 Halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS ● Target 8 Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other diseases.	● Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls (strategic objective L.2) ● Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women (strategic objective D.1) ● Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources (strategic objective F.1)

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	● Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services (strategic objective C.1)
	● Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives to address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health issues (strategic objective C.3)
	● Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision making (strategic objective G.1)

MDG Targets	BPFA Linkages
7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability	
● **Target 9** Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources	● Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels (strategic objective K.1)
	● Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development (strategic objective K.2)
● **Target 10** Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water	
● **Target 11** Achieve significant improvements in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020	● Strengthen or establish mechanisms at national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of developmental policies on women (strategic objective K.3)

MDG Targets	BPFA Linkages
8. Develop a global partnership for development	
● **Target 12** Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system	● Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty (strategic objective A.1)
● **Target 13** In cooperation with pharmaceutical with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries	● Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making (strategic objective G.1)
● **Target 14** In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies.	

Source: Pathway to gender Equality; CEDAW, Beijing and the MDGs

Glossary

Akal takth	:	A spiritual and temporal authority amongst Sikhs.
Balika Samridhi Yojana	:	A programme for Adolescent Girls
Doordarshan	:	Television channel, India.
Fikkal and Jhumka	:	Audio towers in Nepal.
Grameen Bank	:	Village Bank
Indira Awas Yojana	:	A scheme under which houses are to be allotted in the name of female members.
Jahiya Mohila Sangstha	:	Agency responsible for implementing NAP in Bangladesh.
Khawateen Times	:	literally, women times; a television programme
Khushal Pakistan Programme	:	A Poverty Alleviation Programme.
Kishori Shakti Yojana	:	A programme for adolescent girls
Kudumbashree	:	Poverty Alleviation Programme in Kerela.
Lok Adalat	:	Peoples' Court
Lok Sabha	:	House of the People
Magadi Makkala Dhawani	:	Voices of Children
Mahila Samakhya	:	Programme for Women's Empowerment.
Majlis	:	Parliament
Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalat	:	Women's Court
Pourshava	:	City Corporation
Rajya Sabha	:	Council of States
Rashtriya Mahila Kosh	:	National Credit Fund for Women.
Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana	:	Wage Employment Programme.
Sancharika Samuha	:	A forum of women communicators
Sarva Shiksha Abyiyaan	:	Education for All
Shishu Academy	:	Children's academy.
Swadhar	:	A scheme for holistic rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances.
Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana	:	A Programme for Skill and Capacity Building.
Swa-Shakti	:	Programme for Women's Empowerment.
Swawlamban	:	A programme on Vocational Training for women.
Swayam Siddha	:	A poverty alleviation programme.
Tameer-e-Pakistan Programme	:	A Poverty Alleviation Programme.
Tamer e sharad	:	A Poverty Alleviation Programme.
Tammeer e Punjab	:	A Poverty Alleviation Programme.
Tawana	:	Healthy

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