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# Gender Assessment

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# Female Labor Force Participation in Asia:

## Pakistan Country Study

Preliminary Draft

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### Executive Summary

In Pakistan, women work primarily in the home or on the farm. Participation in other types of work outside the home, particularly formal employment, is extremely low. Despite increases in recent years, female labor force participation (FLFP) in Pakistan is well below rates for other countries with similar income levels. Even among women with high levels of education, labor force participation lags: only one in five women with a university degree in Pakistan is working. This is a major loss of potential productivity. In addition, it has potentially important implications for women's empowerment: compared to non-working women in the same villages – and even in the same families – working women are more likely to play a role in decision-making in their households. Yet in our analysis we find clear evidence that many women would like to take up paid employment. One of the main reasons they do not is restrictions on their physical mobility outside the home. For this reason, we explore physical mobility as the key focus issue in this country paper.

### Paper Structure

The Pakistan country paper is structured as follows: First, we present statistics on women's engagement in the labor force from several nationally representative household survey datasets that

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will form the basis of our empirical analysis. We then use these descriptive data to identify and explore a set of constraints on the labor force participation of women in Pakistan – a set we then further refine through a targeted review of existing research on each constraint. We focus in particular on mobility, which presents itself as an key constraint on FLFP in Pakistan. This diagnostic analysis provides insights for priority areas of focus for future data collection, research and policy, which we lay out in the final section.

## Key Takeaways

The analysis shows that factors such as home responsibilities and childcare do play a major role in limiting FLFP, as is often presumed. Women who are not employed are still very busy with home and dependent care responsibilities. Women who are not employed spend just as much time on housework and dependent care as employed *men* do working. And the women who are employed still do the same amount of housework and dependent care; they just have less time for leisure than women who are not employed.

But there is clear evidence that, despite this, many women would like to work. About 40 percent of women who are not employed say they feel they do not have enough to do. Furthermore, about a quarter of all women say they would like to work if they could find a suitable job, and this proportion is large even in the country's most socially conservative provinces, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. If all these women took up employment this would double the FLFP rate in Pakistan.

One of the most important reasons that women in Pakistan do not take up paid employment is that their mobility is restricted. Of women who work, 30 percent do so in their own home. Almost 40 percent of women who are not working report that the main reason is that their husband or father does not give them permission to work outside the home. Another 10 percent say that it is because they themselves do not want to work outside the home. Among those who say they would be willing to work, almost half say they would only be willing to work within their own home. Even those women who do leave the home to work do not go as far to their workplace as men do.

These restrictions appear to be very important for outcomes. Women at higher education levels who work outside the home earn more than twice as much as those who work at home. Of course, many more may not even be able to find any paid employment that allows them to work at home – so they earn nothing. While women's education is on the rise, its benefits can only be fully realized if women can leave their homes and work in jobs that utilize their skills.

Women's mobility outside the home is a function of a number of interconnected factors, including social, cultural and religious norms, safety and crime, and the quality of available transport services. Low mobility may also be self-perpetuating: the fact that few women move in public spaces may reinforce the social norm. If more women travel, this may in turn increase the acceptability of women's travel.

## **The Way Forward**

Our analysis highlights a number of gaps that would be valuable to address to provide better insights into how to best support the ability of women to enter and thrive in the labor force in Pakistan.

First, better linking of geographic areas between datasets, and more household panel data, would both be enormously useful in giving more credible quantitative estimates of any policy on female labor force participation – as well as being useful for understanding the impacts of many other economic and social policies.

Second, we discuss potential policies that could be considered in education, public safety, and public transport. All of these areas are understudied; they require more research to properly quantify their benefits and inform policy.

In education, intermediate (i.e. the last two years of secondary schooling) and tertiary education may be particularly important, since women only start to enter the labor force in greater numbers at these levels. These higher levels of education have barely been studied at all in Pakistan; researchers tend to overlook them in favor of primary and middle education. Research and experimentation with policies to increase women's access to higher education are critical. Mobility is a key factor here as well: many families do not want to send daughters to higher levels of education which are further away from the home.

To increase women's ability to move in public, a number of policy levers may be powerful. In particular, the police and criminal justice system must address threats to women's safety in public. We highlight findings from studies in India, a similar social and institutional context, where confidence in police is low and crimes against women go underreported, but interventions such as female local leadership and community observers in police stations have had a positive impact.

Secondly, better quality public transport services must address Pakistani women's needs and preferences. Given strong social norms against women riding bicycles or motorbikes alone, most Pakistani

women are dependent on public transport. Yet most cities in Pakistan have no state-provided transportation at all. In almost all cities, the existing public and private transport services are crowded with men, making riding them a major social obstacle for women in a society where close contact between the sexes is taboo. So far, there is no rigorous evidence quantifying the effect of quality public transport services on women's mobility and labor force participation. Better evidence on what works and the size of the impacts could be very important in informing future policies and programs offered by the government, ADB, and other lenders and donors. We highlight several ongoing and incipient research initiatives that we and colleagues are undertaking to begin to address this issue and point to areas of potential future research. Given its extensive engagement with the Government of Pakistan in developing public transportation, ADB is uniquely positioned both to encourage the government to consider the findings from ongoing rigorous research, and to support researchers and government to work together to quantify the social and economic benefits of these investments, especially for women.

## 1 Introduction

In Pakistan, women work primarily in the home or on the farm. Participation in other types of work outside the home, particularly formal employment, is extremely low. Despite increases in recent years, female labor force participation in Pakistan is well below levels for other countries with similar income (Figure 1). Even among women with a high level of education, labor force participation is low: only one in five women with a university degree in Pakistan works outside the home.

Women's low labor force participation creates an important potential loss of productivity. Female labor force participation in Pakistan has correlated closely with GDP over time: opportunities for women improve with economic growth, and working women contribute to overall production. Women's work has other important benefits. Work may be empowering to women: Fatima (2014) finds that women who work are more likely than others in the same village to have a say in whether to use contraception (controlling for village fixed effects), and much more likely than other women in the same household to have a say in household expenditures (controlling for household fixed effects). Ray (2000) observes that in households surveyed in a 1991 nationally representative sample, children's overall share of household earnings was only slightly less than that of women. He argues that, because of cultural or religious restrictions on women working outside the home, households in Pakistan rely more on child labor, especially that of boys.

Despite these observations, there is clear evidence that many Pakistani women would like to be

employed. About 40% of women who are not employed say they feel they do not have enough to do, and about a quarter of all women say they would like to work if they could find a suitable job. Strikingly, this proportion is large even for the country's most socially conservative provinces, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. If all women who were interested in working became employed, the rate of female labor force participation in Pakistan would double.

So why aren't more women working outside the home? One of the most important reasons that women in Pakistan do not take up paid employment appears to be that their mobility is restricted, due to both social norms and security concerns. This limits the ability of urban women to leave the home and the ability of rural women to move outside of their village or even sub-village settlement for work. Likewise, these factors limit the ability of younger women to attend further education or vocational training that could lead to better work opportunities.

Almost 40% of women who are not working report that the main reason for this is that their husband or father does not give them permission to work outside the home. Another 10% say that it is because they themselves do not want to work outside the home. Among women who say that they would be willing to work, almost half say they would only be willing to work within their own home. Particularly telling is the fact that, of those who do work, 30% work in their own home. Even those women who do leave the home to work do not travel as far to their workplace as men do.

These restrictions on women's mobility appear to be a major factor contributing to gender disparities in economic outcomes. Women at higher levels of education who work outside the home earn more than twice as much as those who work at home. Of course, many more may not even be able to find any paid employment that allows them to work at home - so they earn nothing. While women's education is on the rise, its benefits can only be fully realized if women are able to leave their homes and work in jobs that fully utilize their skills.

Women's mobility outside the home is a function of a number of interconnected factors including social, cultural, and religious norms; safety and crime; and the quality of available transport services. Low mobility may also be self-perpetuating: the fact that few women move in public spaces may reinforce the perception that women cannot or should not move about freely. If more women travel, this may, in turn, increase the acceptability of women's travel.

To explore mobility and other key issues affecting women's labor force participation, we bring together evidence from a comprehensive review of the literature on Pakistan, and from descriptive analysis of multiple nationally representative data sets from recent years and from the past 20 years.

The findings point to policy approaches that may help alleviate these constraints and thereby improve women's welfare. In particular, we discuss potential policies that could be considered in education, public safety, and public transportation. All of these areas are understudied, and hence require more research to properly quantify their benefits and fully inform policy in this area.

Given the ADB's existing work on public transportation in Pakistan, there is a clear opportunity for the ADB, government and researchers to collaborate to test out different approaches, quantify their benefits and help guide better policies, programs and lending decisions to enhance work opportunities for women and their contribution to the economy of Pakistan.

## **2 Data**

There are several sources of survey data that can be used to gain insight into women's labor market experiences in Pakistan.

### **2.1 LFS, 1984 - 2007**

The Pakistan Labor Force Survey provides data on detailed sector participation, wages, basic family characteristics, and geographic characteristics in particular urban and rural differences. This survey is nationally representative, and each wave covers approximately 30,000 households (with some variation by year).

The LFS allows us to analyze detailed descriptive statistics on the current state of women's wages and labor force participation in different sectors, across Pakistan and geographically (by province and by rural/urban areas). In addition, many key variables were collected over rounds of the LFS since the 1980s, allowing for analysis of time trends.

In addition, the LFS includes a detailed module on the availability and willingness of respondents who are not employed or who are working less than 35 hours a week to take up jobs in different locations.

### **2.2 PSLM 2005-6**

We also analyze the relationship between labor force participation and more detailed data on social norms on women's decision-making, and geographic characteristics, using the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM) 2005-6. The PSLM is a nationally representative

survey with sample size of approximately 15,000 households. The 2005-6 round is used because it included a detailed women's module, including questions on women's decision-making.

### **2.3 Pakistan Time Use Survey, 2007**

The Pakistan Time Use Survey (sample size 19,000 households) is representative of all four major provinces in Pakistan. Analysis of this data set will allow us to explore questions which bear directly on the impact of women's labor force participation on their well-being, including hours of market work, work at home, and rest.

### **2.4 Demographic and Health Survey, 1990 - 2013**

Three cross-sectional rounds of the Demographic and Health Survey have been collected in Pakistan. These are nationally representative surveys of ever-married women; each round covered approximately 10,000 respondents. The DHS is primarily a health-focused survey. However, it includes some questions which are very useful for our purposes, including questions on work and childcare arrangements, work and marriage history, and measures of women's empowerment in household decision-making.

We should note that subjective questions related to social norms or a woman's role in decision-making could be subject to more response bias than objective questions about behavior. These responses can be useful because they capture dimensions that objective questions may not be able to cover effectively. Ideally, though, they should be interpreted in conjunction with other types of objective questions.

### **2.5 World Values Survey**

The World Values Survey included Pakistan in three waves: 1997, 2001, and 2012. This survey focuses on respondents' opinions and values regarding political, social and personal issues. Here we draw on the questions focused on norms regarding women's work.

### **2.6 Lahore School of Economics PERI Survey**

The PERI survey at Lahore School of Economics is a sample of 924 households in rural Punjab.

The survey sampled clusters in tehsils that are primarily rural; it was stratified to cover all regions of

Punjab, except selected areas of West Punjab which had been hit by major floods in 2010. The survey and sampling strategy are described in greater detail in Ahmed, Amjad, Habib, and Shah (2013).

The PERI survey was focused on education, especially parental aspirations for their children’s education and future careers. Here we draw on this data to compare parental aspirations for sons and daughters.

Table 1: Description of datasets

Survey	Year(s)	Variables of interest
Labor Force Survey	19 rounds, 1984 - 2011	Long-term trends in sectors, occupation, hours, wages, education, training
Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey	2005-6	Women’s decision-making; fertility; reported constraints on LFP
Demographic and Health Survey	1990, 2006, 2012	Willingness to work, work and marriage, childcare arrangements, female empowerment
World Values Survey	1997, 2001, 2012	Social norms
Lahore School of Economics PERI Survey	2011	Aspirations for children’s education and career
Time Use Survey	2007	Time use, travel times and modes

### 3 Findings

#### 3.1 Women are active in housework and dependent care

Unsurprisingly, women who do not participate in paid employment in Pakistan still work a great deal. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of time for employed and non-employed men and women from the 2007 Pakistan Time Use Survey. After including housework and dependent care, women who are not in the labor force spend as much time in productive activities as *men* who are in the labor force. Women who are employed do just as much housework and dependent care as those who are not employed. Their work hours come instead mostly at the expense of rest and leisure. Conversely, men who are not employed do not take up a greater burden of these activities, but rather report spending more time in rest and leisure. This suggests that social norms on division of labor in the household are inflexible. Indeed, when asked about their availability to work, approximately 75% of women who

say they are not available to work cite these home responsibilities as the main reason.

These findings are consistent with Sultana, Nazli, and Malik (1994), who analyze data from one round of an IFPRI survey of rural households. They find that women who participate in the labor market are poor and actually work more at home than the non-participants. They suggest that women who do not work are often also wealthy enough to hire paid help for household tasks.

Despite the prevalence of a joint family system in Pakistan, the extended family does not seem to play a central role in childcare for working women. The vast majority of working women report that their children accompany them to work (Figure 3). A significant proportion do report that other relatives look after their children while they work, but almost as many say that older children do so - suggesting that work does come at a significant cost in terms of the quality of childcare. Qureshi (2013) uses data from rural Punjab to demonstrate that girls' education has positive spillovers on their younger siblings' learning, precisely because of the role they play in caring for younger siblings.

But childcare alone is not responsible for low female labor force participation in Pakistan. Figure 4 shows that the "M-shaped" curve found in some countries, in which women leave the labor force when their children are young and return later on, is completely absent in Pakistan. In fact, labor force participation is slightly higher among women with young children than among married women without children. This pattern persists even among households with larger numbers of children. In fact, women with larger families tend to work slightly more (this could be related to poverty or geography, since poor and rural women are more likely to work).

So do other kinds of home responsibilities constraint FLFP? Economic theory suggests that other household chores normally undertaken by women could be completed by substituting hired help or labor-saving devices, but this behavior is not apparent in the data. Thus, home responsibilities do not sufficiently explain for low labor force participation despite a majority of unavailable respondents citing these responsibilities as the reason for not being available.

### **3.2 Latent labor supply**

As described above, very few women indicate that they are "available" to work (Figure 5), and almost none report actively seeking work. Yet, Figure 6 shows that 40% of women who are not employed report that they did not have enough to do in the previous day. These patterns are similar among non-employed women in urban and rural areas.

Figure 7 shows that when women are asked a slightly different question, "would you work if you

could find a suitable job?”, the responses differ dramatically. Approximately a quarter of women answer “yes.” If all of these women worked, this would double female labor force participation in Pakistan. Similar proportions of women answer yes to this question in both rural and urban areas, and even in provinces where actual female labor force participation is very low (Figure 8). So the question remains, what makes a “suitable” job?

### 3.3 Wages

One potential explanation for low FLFP is that the jobs available to women simply do not pay enough. Women earn less than men and this difference has been persistent over time (Figure 9). (Note that all wages are calculated here on an hourly basis using respondent’s reported work hours in the last week, so they adjust for differences in work hours.)

Market returns to education appear to be highly convex for women (Figure 10). Only at the very last stages of secondary schooling and tertiary education do women’s wages really show an increase.

Given low wages, it may simply not make sense for many women to substitute into market work by paying for domestic help or investing in labor-saving devices to reduce the household burden. This is consistent with the pattern of employed women doing just as much at home as those who are not employed, as discussed earlier.

What explains this pattern? While wage discrimination is a possibility and merits additional scrutiny in future research, one plausible reason explored here may be the occupational segregation of women.

Low returns for primary and middle schooling, combined with occupational segregation and/or household-level income effects, could explain why women’s participation at these intermediate levels of employment is so low (Figure 11). The poorest and least educated women work by necessity; meanwhile, those who are slightly better off, and have male family members who earn more, stay at home. It may make sense only for the most educated women, to whom more comfortable, socially acceptable, and higher-paying white-collar jobs are available, to enter the labor market. This is consistent with a household-level income effect suggested by Azid, Khan, and Alamsi (2010), among others.

Figure 13 is consistent with the hypothesis that occupational segregation explains at least part of the wage gap and low participation of women. They show that women’s participation is concentrated in a few sectors and occupations. The three occupations with the highest participation of women

(skilled agriculture, craft and trade, and unskilled labor) are also among the lowest paid (Figure 14). Meanwhile, many of the more lucrative jobs available to men who complete intermediate levels of education are not commonly held by women. For example, clerical and service sector occupations are among the higher paid positions at intermediate education levels, but almost no women hold these positions.

This is consistent with Ahmed and Hyder (2009), who analyze occupational segregation at the two-digit level and find that 45% of workers would have to change their job for an equal distribution of job types between men and women. They also find that women are more concentrated in the public sector. Cheema, Khwaja, Naseer, and Shapiro (2012) find that a large percentage of firms hire no women at all. This is consistent with strong gender norms on the type of work taken up, but also with specific costs perceived by employers to having any women in the workplace, such as ensuring their security.

Figure 14 shows that occupational differences do not explain the differences in wages completely. Within almost all occupations, women's wages are still lower than men's. However, these are broad categories. They may still significantly understate gender segregation between more narrow job categories and even individual firms, as well as the extent to which this segregation explains the pay gap.

The overall pattern of FLFP— in which women at the lowest and highest education levels participate most in the labor force — holds up in rural areas. In urban areas, however, women's participation in the labor force is low for all groups except the most educated.

This suggests that even significant growth in girls' primary, middle and early secondary school attainment alone might not necessarily increase female labor force participation, especially in an increasingly urbanizing Pakistan. As 12 shows, women's educational attainment lags men's by decades in Pakistan, but there has been rapid and encouraging growth in recent years. However, the proportion of women who reach the highest levels of education, in which women start to enter the labor force in white-collar jobs, is still very small.

It is also important to note that even at higher educational levels where their returns are greater and they seem to be able to take up higher level white collar jobs, women's labor force participation is still very low - from 2000-2007 it was still at just 20%. Only one in five women who has an advanced degree in Pakistan is actually using it in the labor force.

### 3.4 Social norms and exposure

Social norms clearly have some role to play in restricting women's labor force participation in Pakistan - either keeping women at home entirely, or by reducing their labor force participation to only certain acceptable occupations.

Men are seen as the primary breadwinners in Pakistan, and most people agree that if jobs are scarce, employers should favor men. This is true for women almost as much as for men, and it holds across (self-identified) socio-economic classes. More educated respondents are only slightly less likely to agree with this statement, however.

But beyond a simple preference for men's access to work opportunities, women's work is generally actively stigmatized in Pakistan. Women who "leave the home" are not considered "respectable" in many social contexts (World Bank, 2006). Since this stigma affects the whole family, other decision-makers in the family - such as the woman's husband or in-laws - may restrict a woman's decision of whether to work outside the home. Figure 15 shows that in the vast majority of cases, women report that they do not even play a role in deciding whether or not they will seek paid employment they will work or not. As Figure 16 shows, the degree of control that a woman retains over the decision to seek employment is strongly correlated to whether she participates in the labor force.

The stigma attached to women's labor force participation also undoubtedly plays a role in the occupational segregation described earlier. Some work environments are considered more appropriate for women than others. This is related to both very real threats of harassment in the workplace, as well as a more general sense that women who are highly exposed to public space or to unrelated men are less respectable. Schools and universities are generally considered safe and controlled environments, which is likely a part of the reason why many parents of girls say they would like their daughters to become teachers (Figure 17).

Social norms are nuanced: women trained as doctors are widely considered desirable as daughters-in-law (although they are often expected to give up work once they marry), while nurses, who require less education and have more close physical contact with patients, are heavily stigmatized (Altaf, 2011).

### 3.5 Mobility

The same factors that make some workplaces safe or "appropriate" for women in Pakistan also affect women's mobility. Overall, the survey data indicate that female labor force participation in

Pakistan is greatly affected by their mobility outside the home, due to both social norms and security concerns. Even if the work environment itself is considered safe and acceptable, traveling to work may create a level of exposure that violates social norms. In addition, social taboos prevent women from riding bicycles or motorcycles by themselves, making them dependent on male relatives to use these modes of transport.

This limits both the ability of urban women to leave the home, as well as the ability of rural women to move outside of their village or even sub-village settlement for work; the same factors limit the ability of younger women to attend further education or vocational training that could lead to better work opportunities.

Ejaz (2007) finds that female labor force participation is positively associated with vehicle ownership in the household, despite the fact that other household durables are negatively associated. This may simply capture the U-shaped relationship between wealth and FLFP, but it may also reflect a mobility effect.

A number of recent studies on social and economic issues in Pakistan which do not specifically focus on women's labor force participation, nevertheless shed important light on this issue. For example, Jacoby and Mansuri (2011), in their study of caste and clan effects on education in Pakistan, find that parents, particularly low-caste parents, are much less likely to send their girls to school if the school is located across caste boundaries within a village. They present qualitative evidence to suggest that security is a particular issue for girls. These results have implications for female labor force participation in two ways. First, they have a direct implication, since these constraints on education also affect women's options in the labor market later on. Second, analogous issues are likely to apply to women's security in getting to work activities outside their home and immediate neighborhood.

Another recent study from the education literature which is relevant to our study is Andrabi, Das, and Khwaja (2013), who find that in areas where government rules in Punjab allocated a public girls' secondary school years earlier, low-price private schools are more likely to open. They present evidence that this occurs because women who have received a secondary education but are limited for social reasons to seek work in their own villages find work in these schools at a much lower wage than government school teachers. This has positive and negative implications: government investments in secondary education had a kind of multiplier effect, but it again serves to demonstrate the limitations that geography and mobility impose on women's labor force participation.

Cheema, Khwaja, Naseer, and Shapiro (2012) find that many households were willing to nomi-

nate female members for vocational training, but transport to the trainings has been an important constraint for uptake.

Figure 21 shows that even women who say they are currently available for work are far more restricted in their work location than men. Almost half these women say they are only available to work within the home - which severely restricts the opportunities they could take up. Of the remaining women, most are available only within their own village or town. Men, on the other hand, indicate that they are willing and able to commute or migrate much further for work opportunities.

Among people who are currently working, men go further from home: they are much more likely to spend any time commuting (Figure 22) and commute for longer when they do (Figure 23).

Figure 24 shows that in recent years there has been an increase in women's availability outside the home. It is also much greater for more educated women (Figure 25).

Women in urban areas are somewhat less likely to indicate they are available for work, but if they are available, they are more likely to be available to work outside the home (Figure 26). Urbanization can create its own challenges for women's mobility: traveling to work can mean greater anonymity, public exposure and crowding with strangers.

Figure 27 shows that districts with higher levels of women's mobility have much higher female labor force participation. The categories on the X-axis are from a district-level average (excluding the respondent's own observation) of women who traveled anywhere for any purpose in the previous day. In districts where other women travel more, a woman is more likely to work. This may reflect some combination of mobility in particular, and overall norms on women's roles.

The consequences of these mobility restrictions may be quite significant. Figure 28 shows women's wages at each education level, for women who work within their own home (not homemakers) and outside the home. At lower education levels they have similar earnings. However, at higher education levels, women who work outside the home earn far more than those who work at home. This is logical: their skills are more specialized and can pay off much more if they can get to work. Women who work outside the home are also somewhat more likely to make decisions independently, but there is too little evidence on empowerment to draw any conclusions.

## **4 Going forward: research and policy**

Most of the literature that looks at female LFP as an outcome variable in Pakistan is based on cross-sectional regression and cannot establish a causal relationship (for example Hussain, Rabbi, and

Ali (2012), Ejaz (2007), Faridi (2009), Azid, Khan, and Alamas (2010)). From these studies, we can conclude, for instance, that more women with higher education work in Pakistan than women with a middle school education. But we cannot determine whether expanding higher education will increase women's labor force participation. The same is true for any other determinant studied with this methodology. In addition, we also have not yet found any literature that attempts to quantify the effects of many important factors which could be influenced by government policy and ADB support, such as safety and crime, or mobility and transport.

Where credible analysis does not exist for Pakistan, researchers and policy analysts should consider rigorous evidence from north India and Afghanistan, which are socially and culturally similar in many ways to Pakistan (north India to Punjab and Sindh, Afghanistan to KP and Balochistan) when designing policy and experiments. Importantly, there is a much better evidence base from India. However, given that Pakistan has its own unique context, it would be much more reliable to also build up more of an evidence base from Pakistan to complement existing evidence from abroad. In addition, the focus issue of female mobility which we focused on this paper is understudied globally.

First, there is already a great deal of high quality micro data (in particular the data we have used in this paper) that could be used to address these questions more adequately than in the existing literature. More collaboration between international and local researchers is needed to help improve understanding and analysis of the existing data. We are working actively with researchers at a number of local universities on research projects on mobility and other issues.

In addition, the existing data could be used far more effectively if there were better geographic matching between data sets. Due to overlapping and inconsistent administrative boundaries at lower levels (below the *tehsil*), and lack of consistent identifiers by different government agencies collecting data, this is a major challenge. Teams of researchers at the Lahore University of Management Sciences and the Lahore School of Economics are working actively on this problem. ADB could support these researchers and encourage the government statistical agencies to improve data procedures consistent with these aims; geographically linked data is a public good which would have benefits for research and policy analysis across the board.

However, more *panel* data - even on basic household variables - would be a major step towards getting more credible estimates of the quantitative importance of any factor affecting women's labor force participation (and indeed many other important economic and social questions). Because household outcomes can be compared over time, estimates from panel data are much more reliable

than comparisons between households using cross-section data, which may be confounded by many unobserved differences between them.

The panel data sets of which we are aware (MIMAP, IFPRI, LEAPS, and PERI) are small sample and/or very geographically limited, which makes them unsuitable for testing the effects of new policies which are implemented over time in different areas of the country. Small sample panel data also gives researchers very limited power to estimate effects on outcomes which are infrequent, such as women's labor force participation.

Finally, there are many opportunities for well-designed evaluation of future policies and interventions through quasi-experimental or ideally randomized approaches. This is particularly important for social and economic factors which are the least well understood, such as social norms and women's mobility, but which clearly play a critical role in determining these outcomes in Pakistan.

Going forward, we suggest a number of key policy areas that may either affect FLFP directly, or through physical mobility. Interventions in these areas should be tested to address the challenges women face in accessing work opportunities in Pakistan. Many of these areas are under-studied. ADB could collaborate with researchers on a set of studies to quantify their benefits and costs, in order to inform the best policies, program designs and spending allocations.

## 4.1 Education

For example, one completed and one ongoing study look at the impact of the Punjab Girls' Stipend Program, a major CCT program (Hasan (2010), and Theresa Chaudhry and Mushfiq Mobarak, in progress). These studies examine educational and marriage and empowerment outcomes, respectively. However, neither of them looks at labor force participation. The descriptives we have shown above show that women educated at this level tend to participate in the labor market less, but this could be confounded by other factors such as wealth and caste. The roll-out of the program could be exploited to assess labor force participation outcomes.

In addition, existing policies and research on education has focused primarily on primary and middle levels of education. These are of course important, both because education has many purposes beyond preparing people for the labor market, and because attainment and quality are required at the primary and middle levels for young women to progress to higher levels. However, more research and policy attention is needed for women's access to higher levels of education; these levels have qualitatively different issues. Given the descriptive statistics we have shown, intermediate (final years

of secondary) and tertiary education may be particularly important to expand women's opportunities. Pakistan's Higher Education Commission has broad authority over public and private institutions of higher education, including setting standardized curricula for each course of study. Its policies could be informed by high quality research on higher education. Delavande and Zafar (2014) studied the expected earnings of students and find that credit constraints play a major role in their choice of institution. However, this study works with a sample of students who are enrolled, and cannot analyze the decision on whether to attend at all. Besides this paper, we have not yet identified any other quantitative work on higher education in Pakistan. There are many potential areas for useful work with secondary data (including the LFS) and, through collaboration with government and/or donors, potentially experimental research to help inform better policies.

Finally, given the high degree of occupational segregation in Pakistan and low FLFP levels at middle levels of education, the quality and relevance of vocational training for women should also be rigorously assessed. A number of the cross-sectional studies we reviewed made recommendations in favor of expanding vocational training for women, but there seems to be little support for this based in their empirical findings. An ongoing randomized control trial by Cheema, Khwaja, Naseer, and Shapiro (2012) studies the effects of vocational training in detail, including a focus on gender. ADB is supporting vocational training for women as a part of the Benazir Income Support Program; researchers could partner with ADB to study its impacts in greater detail.

Women are also affected by distance and mobility issues when they consider opportunities for higher education, far more than primary education, so mobility also links in with education. The transportation projects we highlight below will study education outcomes explicitly.

## **4.2 Security and criminal justice**

Security, criminal justice and other interventions focused on crime and public safety, which address safety challenges directly, are clearly a critical factor interlinked with social norms and affecting women's mobility and labor force participation.

Most of the existing literature on violence in Pakistan focuses on political violence. The existing data sets on political violence over time in Pakistan (such as WITS and BFRS, both maintained by Jacob Shapiro at the Empirical Studies of Conflict group at Princeton University) could be used in combination with repeated rounds of the PSLM, provincial Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, or other household surveys (preferably panel data, although most existing panel data is limited in

geographic scope) to test the impact of violence on women's mobility and work.

Ordinary crime (as distinct from political violence) is more likely to be a relevant threat for most Pakistani women. Evidence from India, where the social, cultural, and institutional context is similar in many ways, suggests that crimes against women are significantly underreported (Iyer, 2012); and that victims of public harassment against women tend to be particularly dissatisfied with the response of the police, more so than victims of other crimes (Banerjee, Chattopadhyay, Duflo, Keniston, and Singh, 2012).

Improving the public safety situation for women is clearly critical to improve their mobility. Institutionally, women's representation is important: when women come into leadership positions, crimes against women are reported more frequently (Iyer, Mani, Mishra, and Topalova, 2012). If and when the local government system is revived in Pakistan, this provides a good justification for keeping the women's reservations in that system.

It shows that community observers in police stations, as well as a freeze on staff transfers, improved police effectiveness and public and victims' satisfaction in a randomized control trial in Rajasthan. One possibility might be female community observers in police stations in Pakistan to improve responsiveness to complaints about harassment or violence against women. In the long run this could contribute to greater public safety and, thus, women's mobility in the public space. More data on crime and police activity are needed for analysis of public safety issues for women; experimentation and analysis with a focus on women's outcomes would be particularly useful.

Ali Cheema, Sohail Khan, Jacob Shapiro, Zulfiqar Hameed, and Shan A Rana have ongoing work in the field on crime in Punjab, which will be the first work to our knowledge in this area.

### **4.3 Transportation**

Another policy tool particularly relevant for the ADB is public transportation and city infrastructure development. Higher quality public transportation may alleviate some of the problems women face in reaching work opportunities.

Establishing the role of transportation in enabling women's LFP is empirically challenging. There are issues of reverse causality, simply because women who work are more likely to travel to get to work. Greater demand for public transportation in areas where more women work also creates a correlation in these variables. In addition, there is an issue of omitted variable bias: areas where social norms restricting women's behavior in general may result in a correlation between areas with low female

mobility and low female labor.

To understand the potential impact of transportation policies, researchers must disentangle these factors. Several ongoing projects address this challenge.

In their ongoing work on training, Cheema et al. (baseline survey report in Cheema, Khwaja, Naseer, and Shapiro (2012)) also test several possible ways of increasing women's uptake of training, and find that providing transportation to trainings was the most successful.

In an ongoing Randomized Control Trial, we are studying the impact of women's-only transportation in Lahore. This "pink" transportation has been implemented successfully in a number of countries, including on the Delhi metro. In Pakistan, women's organizations such as Aurat Foundation have actively lobbied the government for this kind of transportation; it has been implemented on a small scale, but women's organizations advocate for it to be expanded. However, the quantitative impact of this kind of women's only transportation option on women's mobility, labor force participation and empowerment has never been studied. Our project will introduce women's-only vehicles on randomly selected routes in Lahore, and test whether this can increase women's labor market participation and empowerment.

Hadia Majid, Ammar Malik and Kate Vyborny are carrying out a quasi-experimental analysis of labor market and higher education impacts of high quality transport in Lahore. This project studies the new Bus Rapid Transport system, and uses neighborhoods which would be served by transport lines which have not yet been implemented as a comparison group. This project will incorporate a focus on gender.

We would welcome continued engagement with ADB as these projects progress, especially given ADB's active work in the transportation infrastructure sector in Pakistan.

Figure 1:

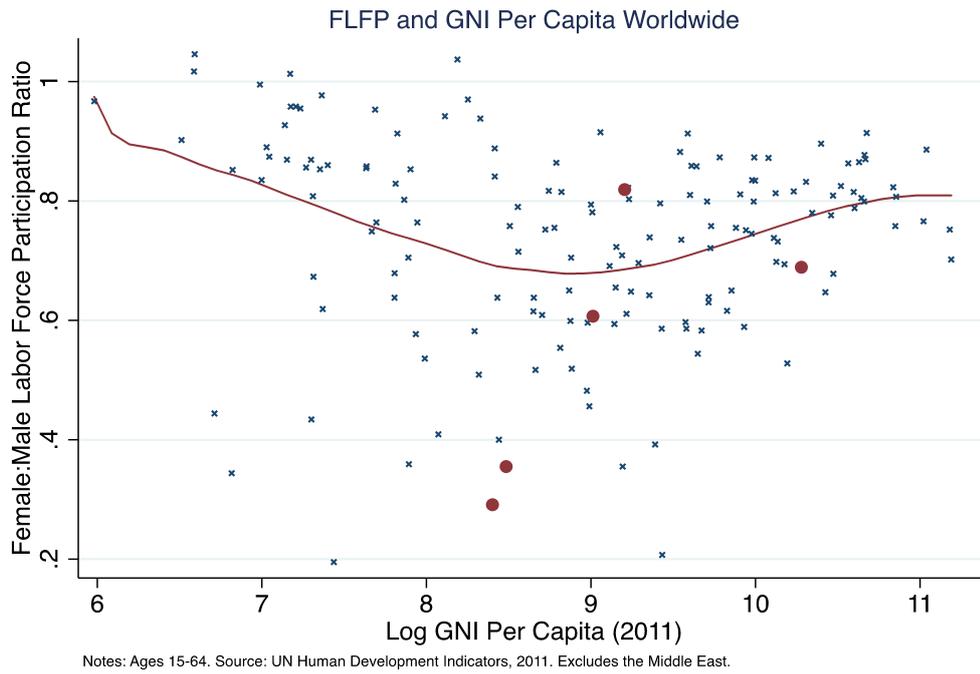


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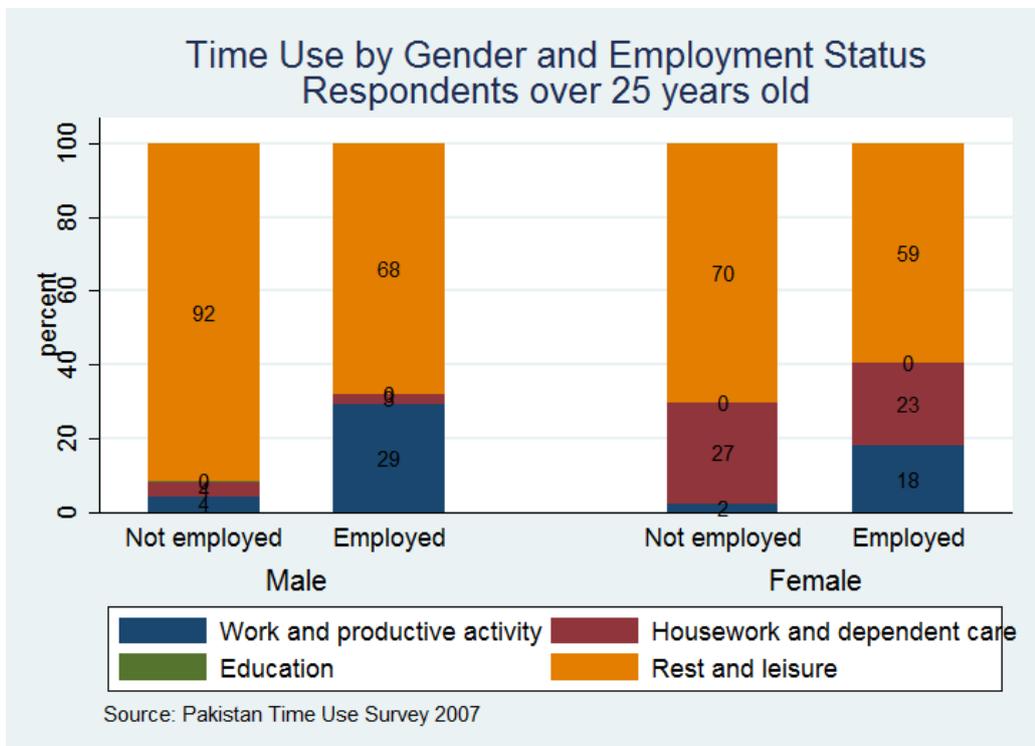


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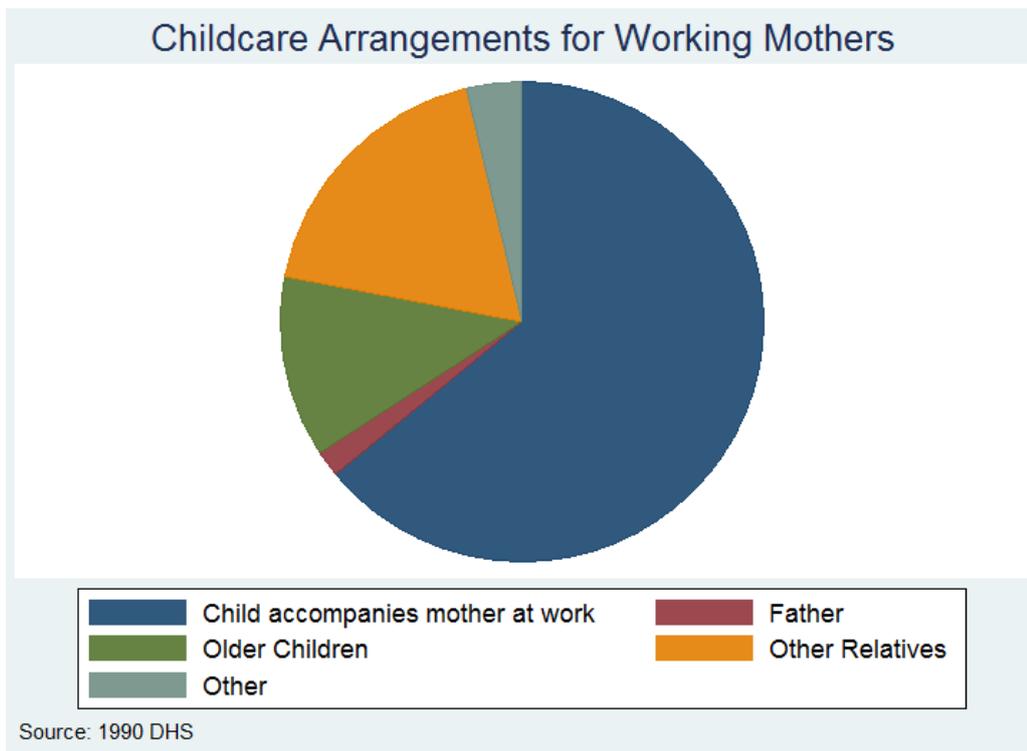


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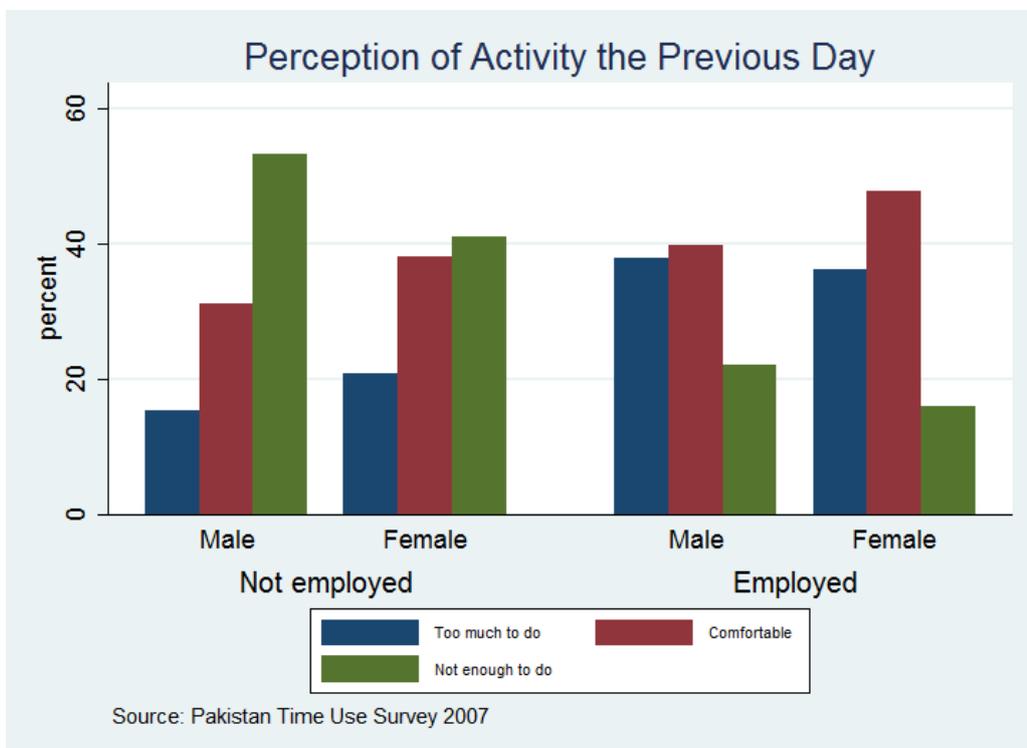


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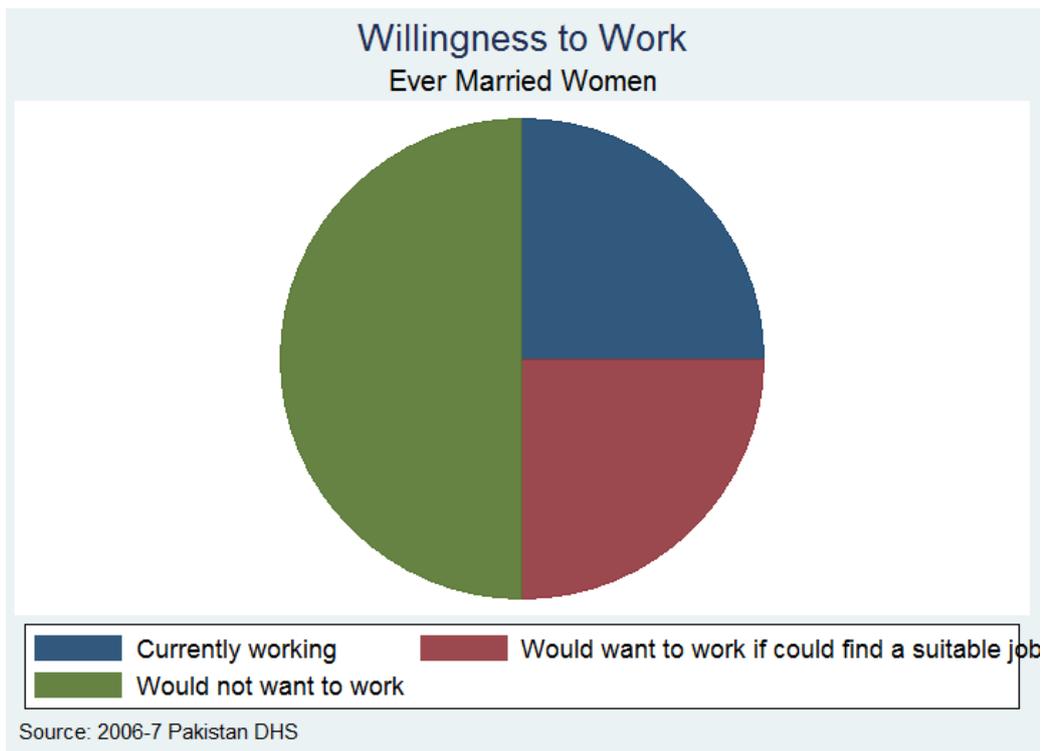


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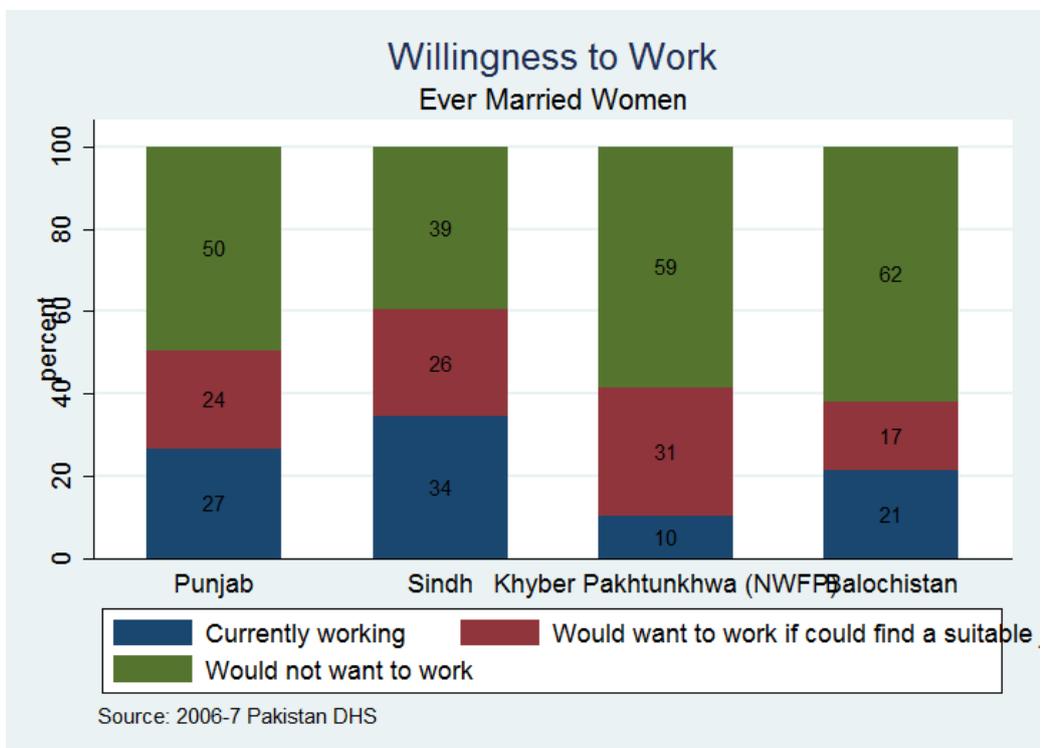


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Figure 10:

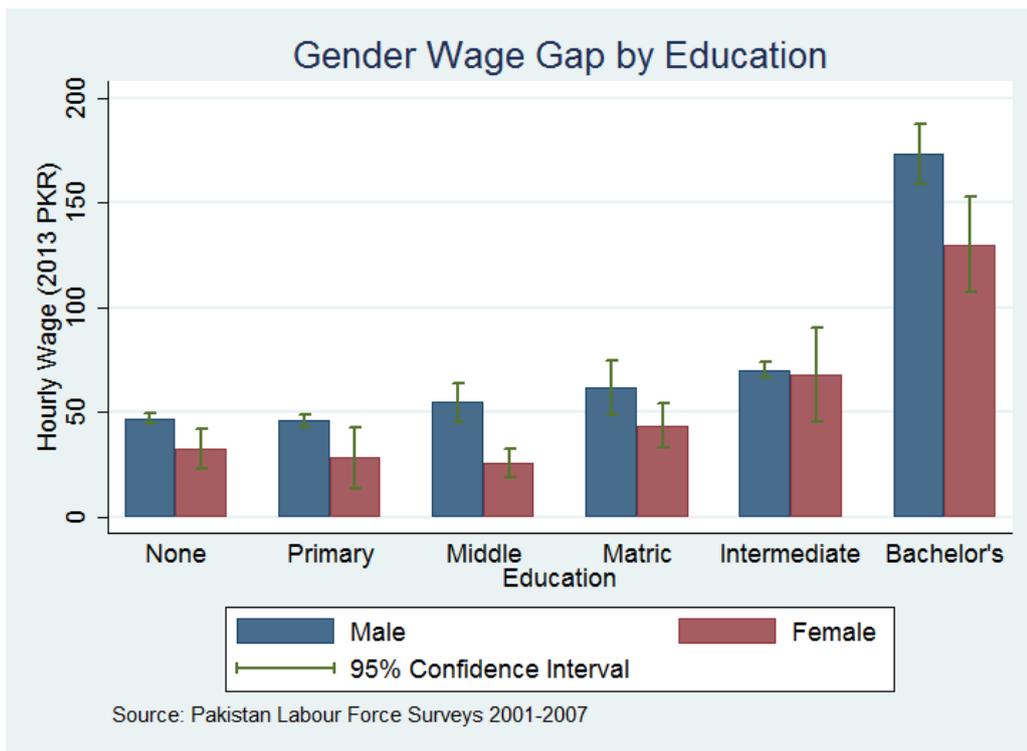


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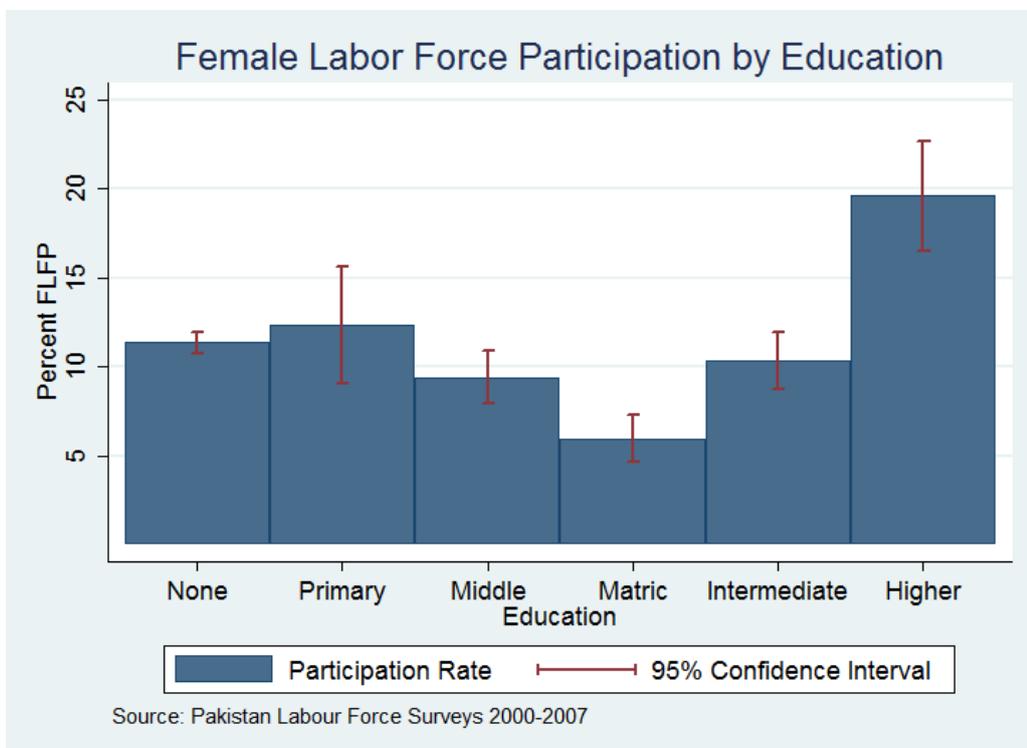


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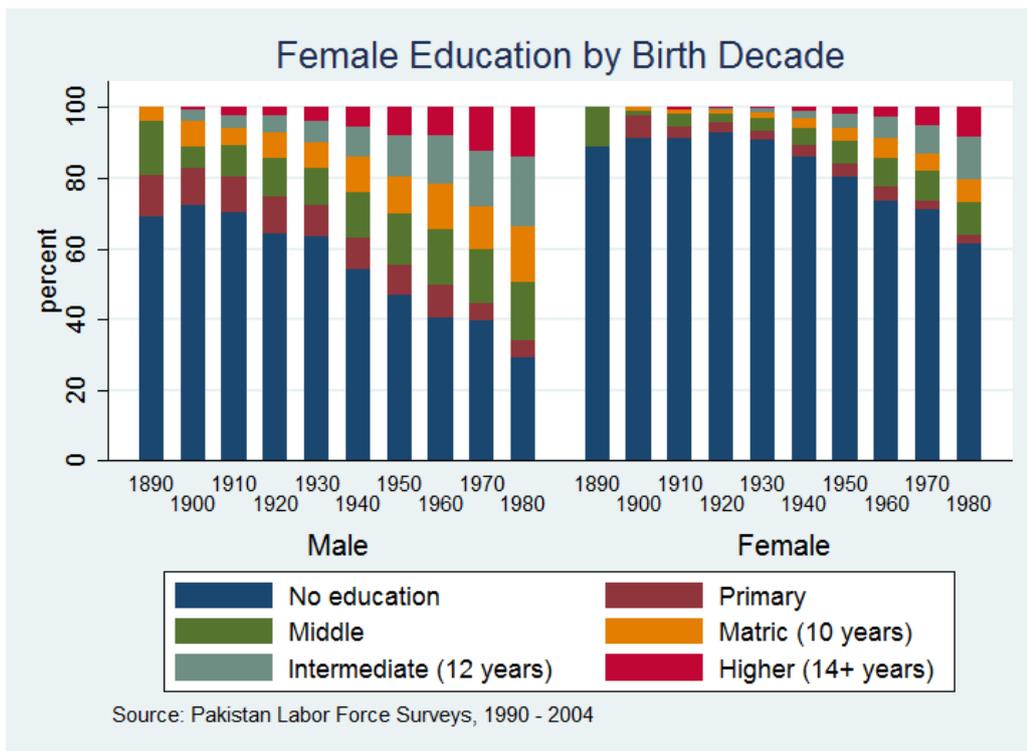


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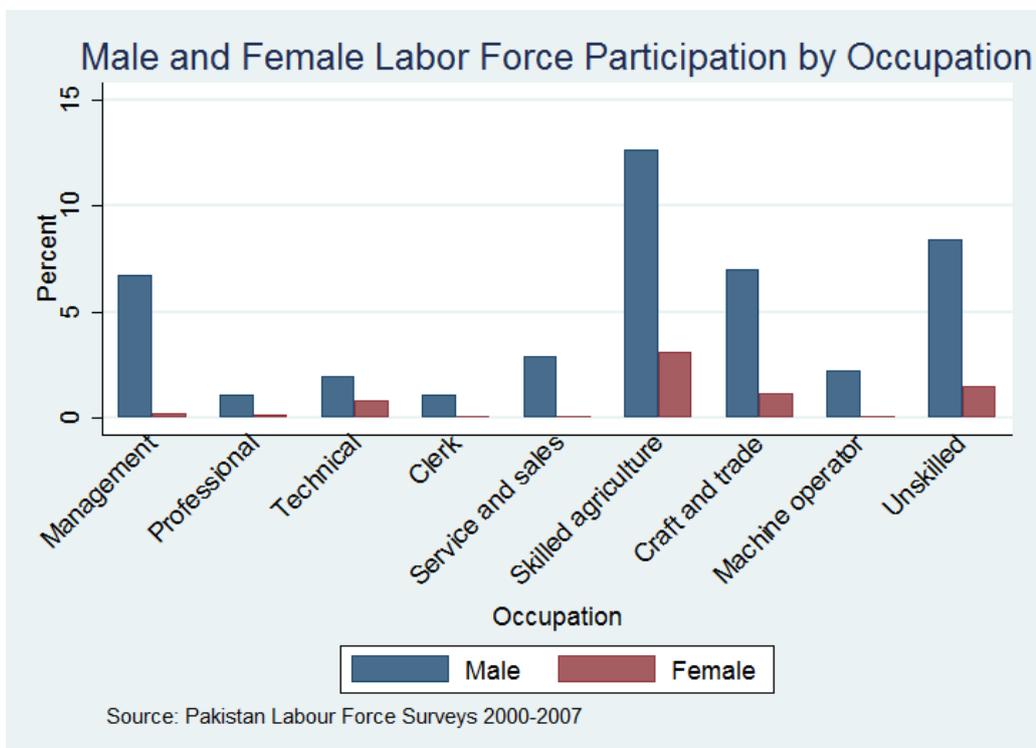


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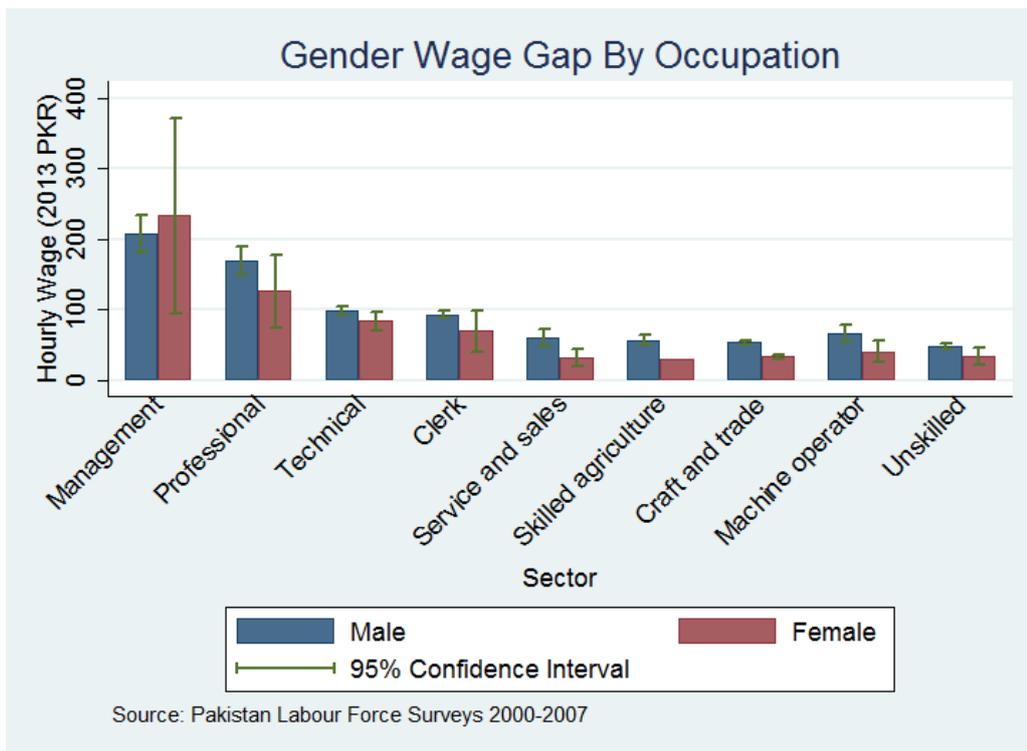


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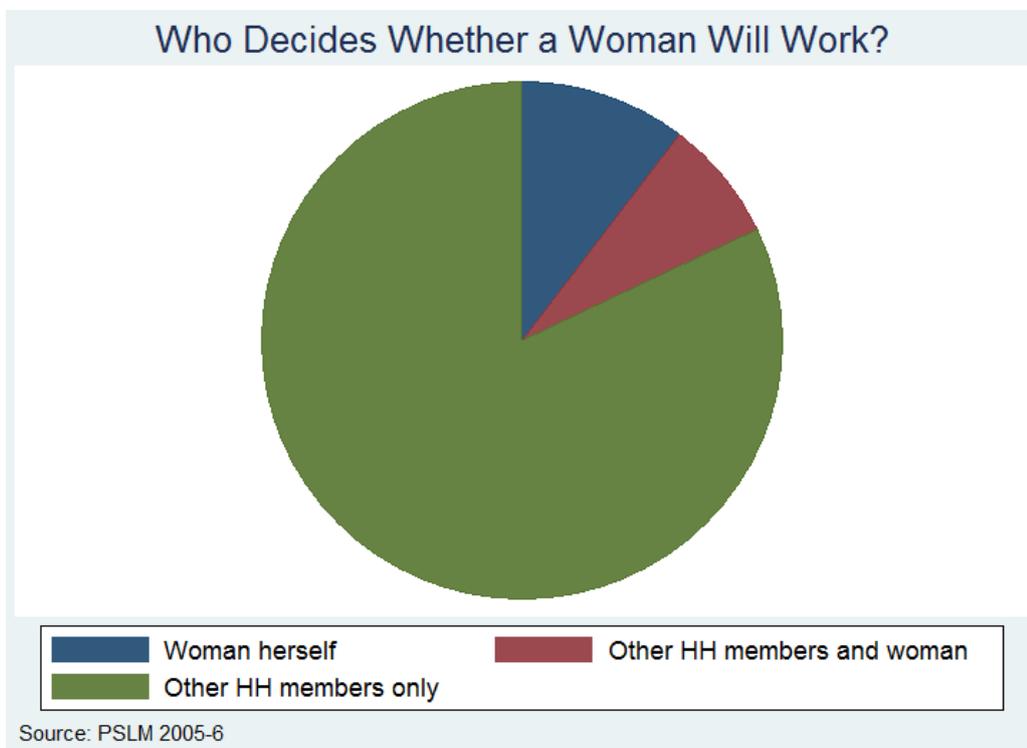


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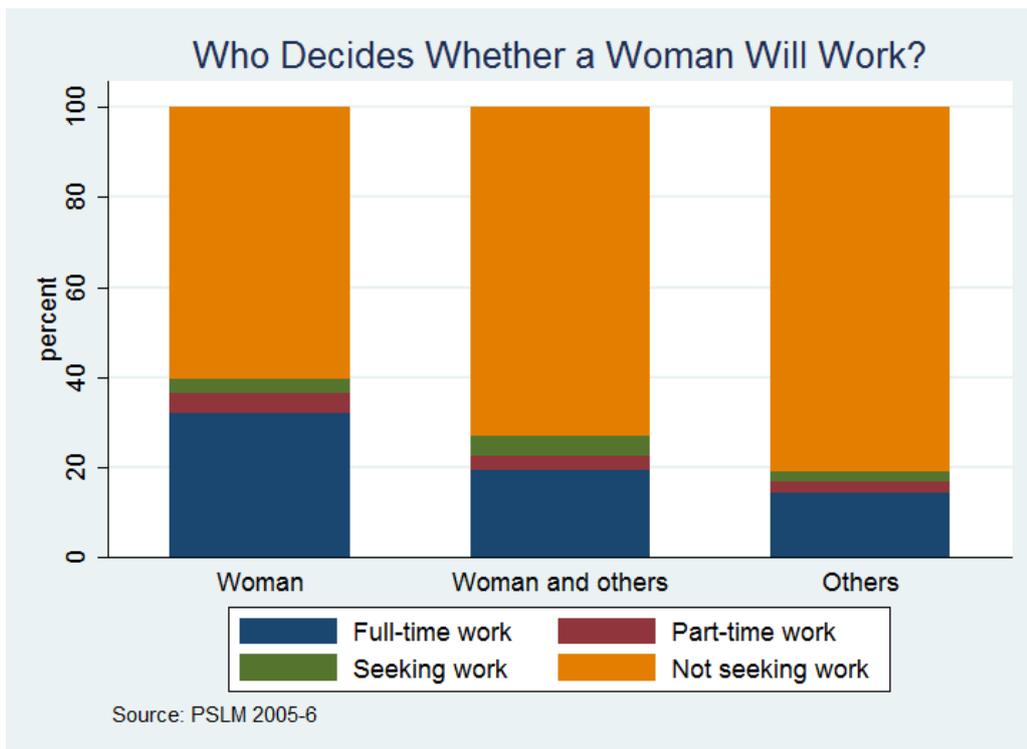


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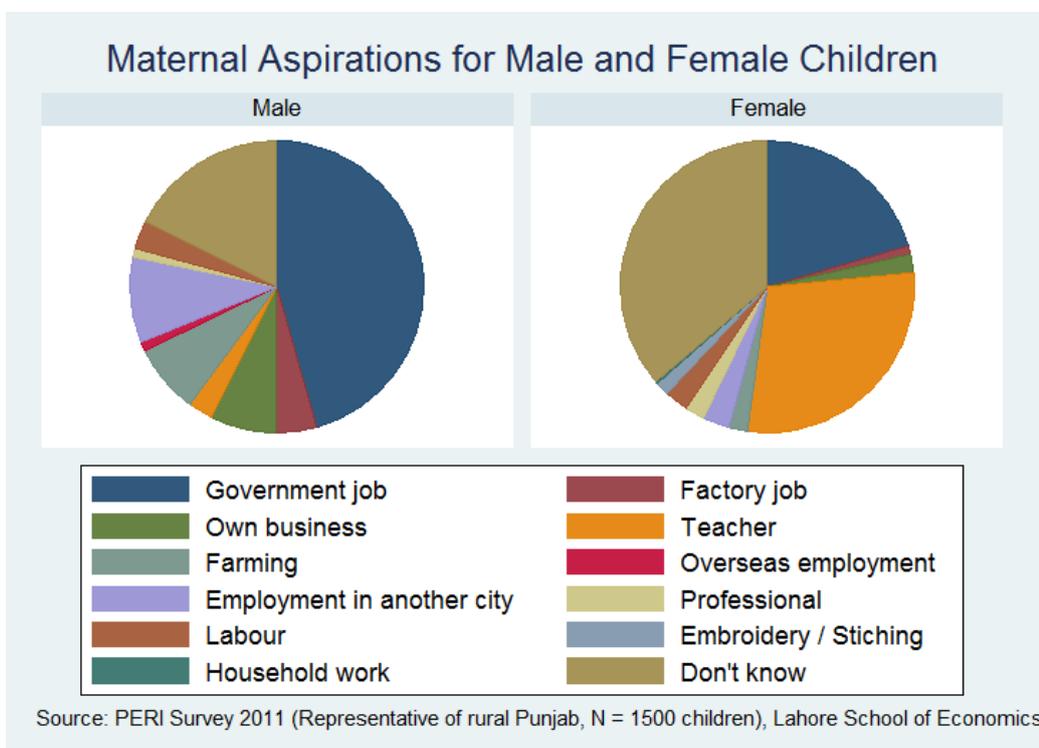


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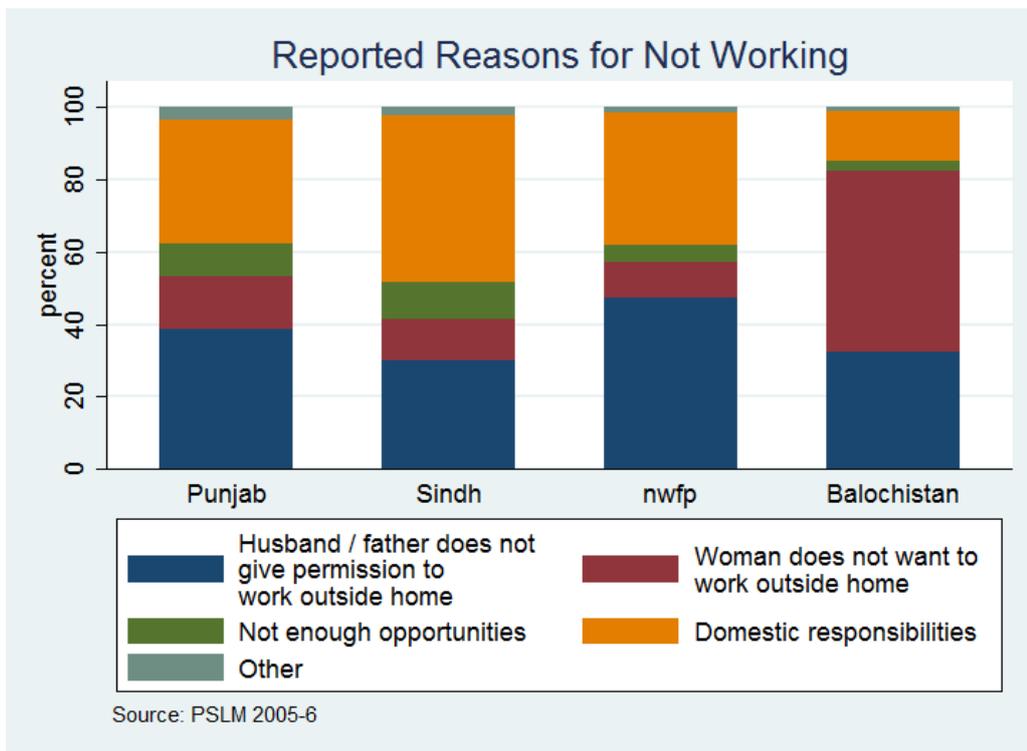


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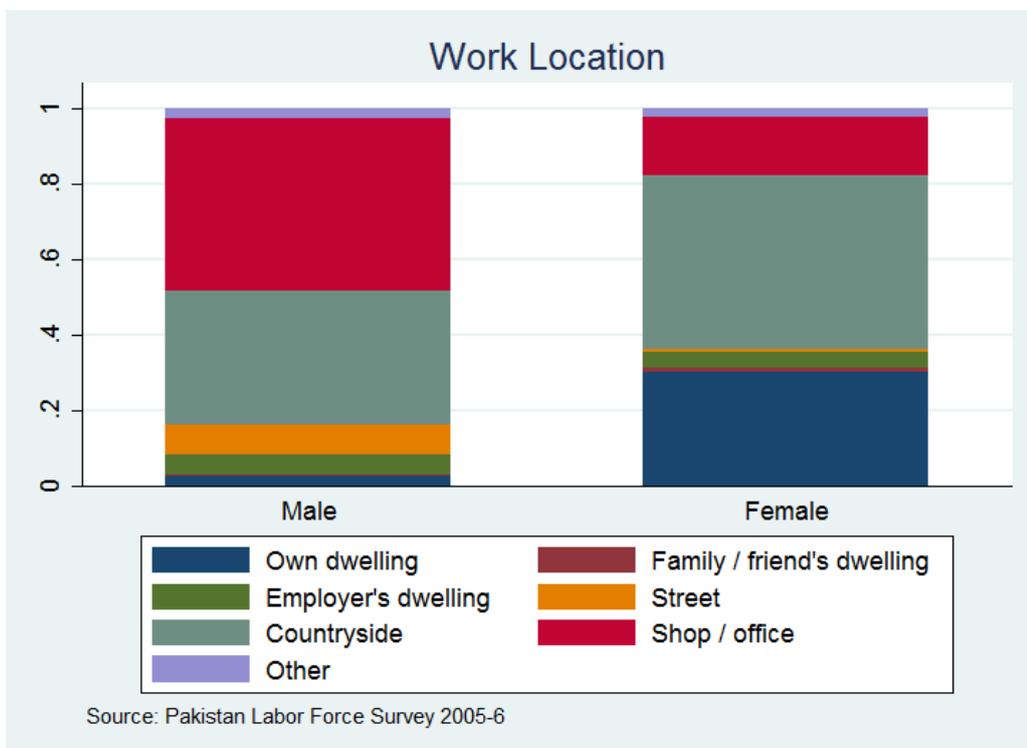


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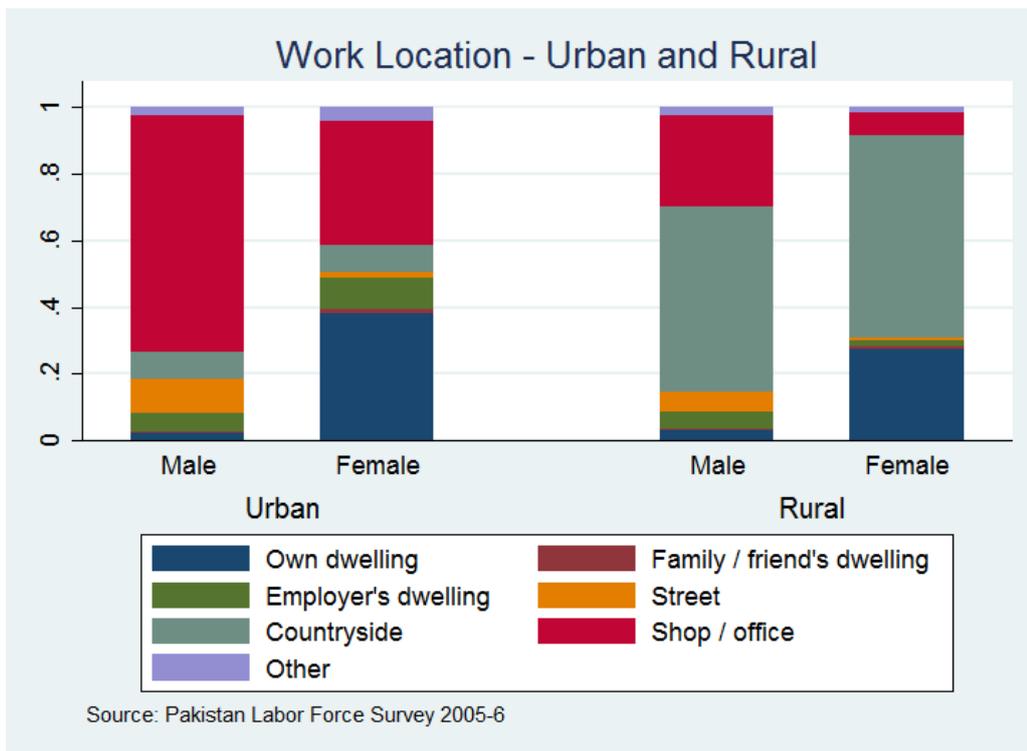


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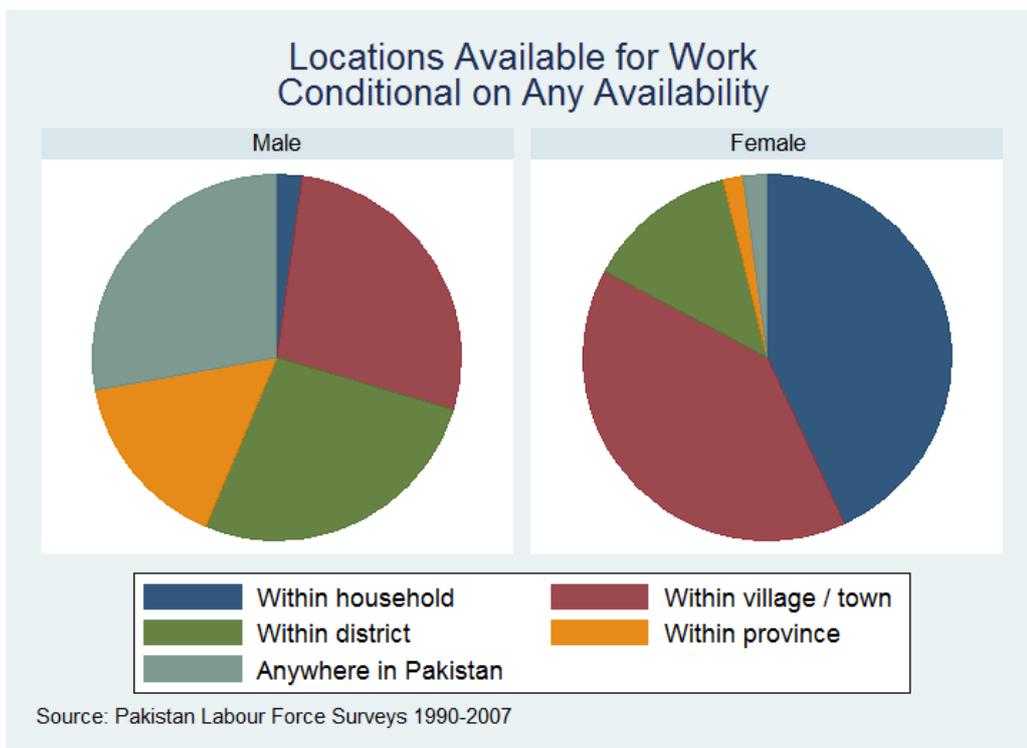


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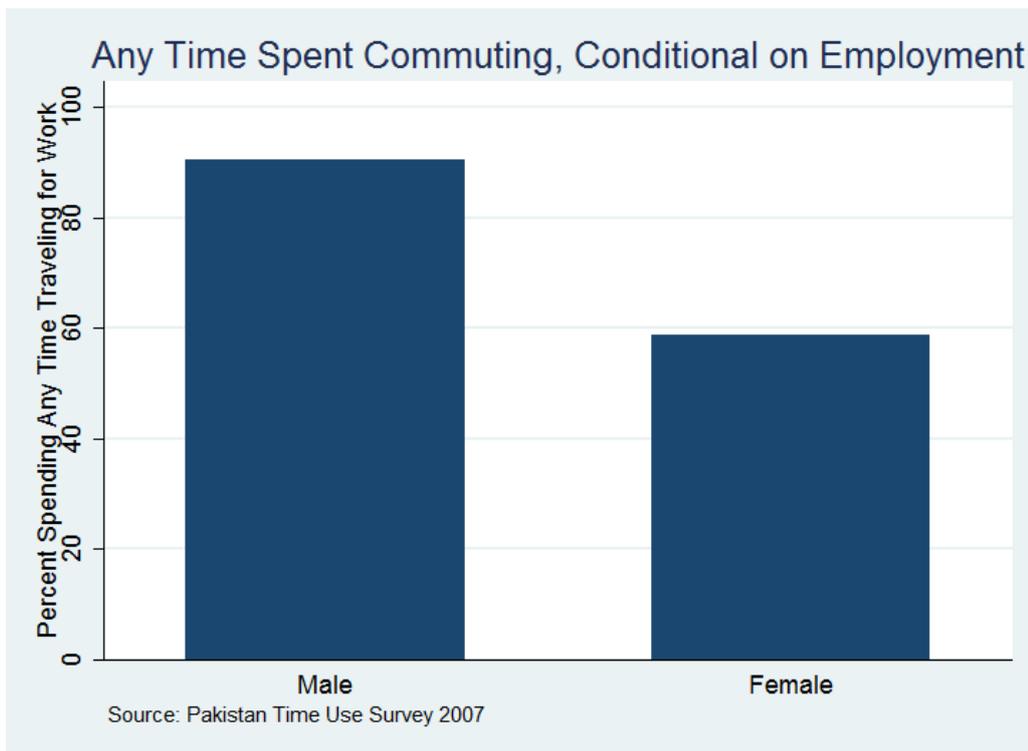


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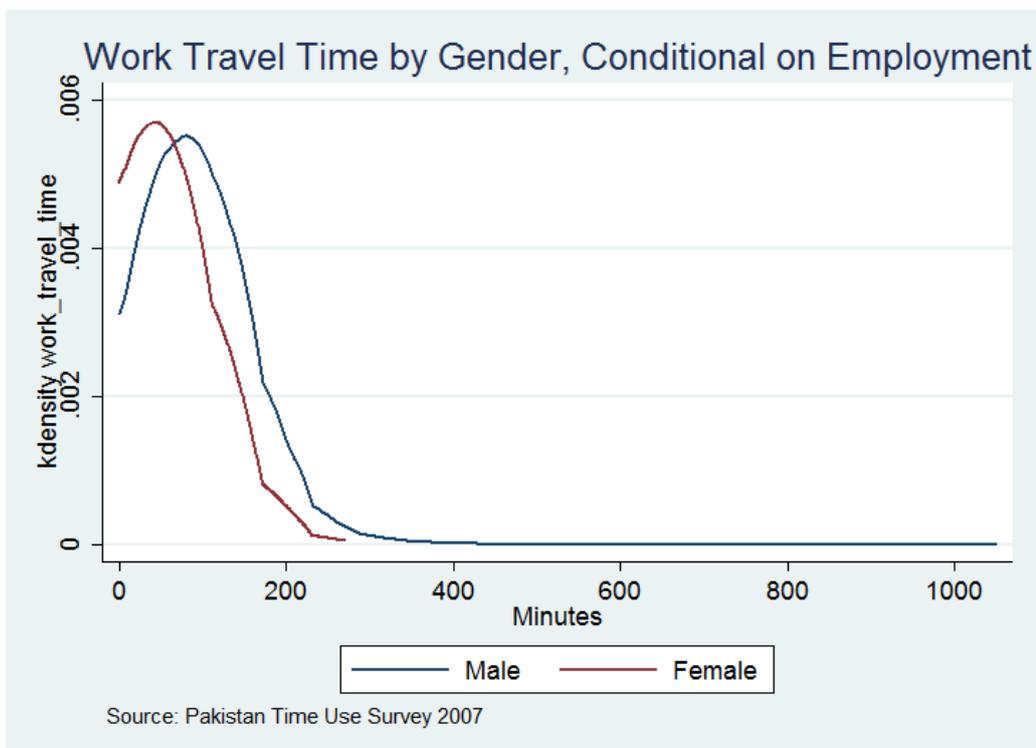


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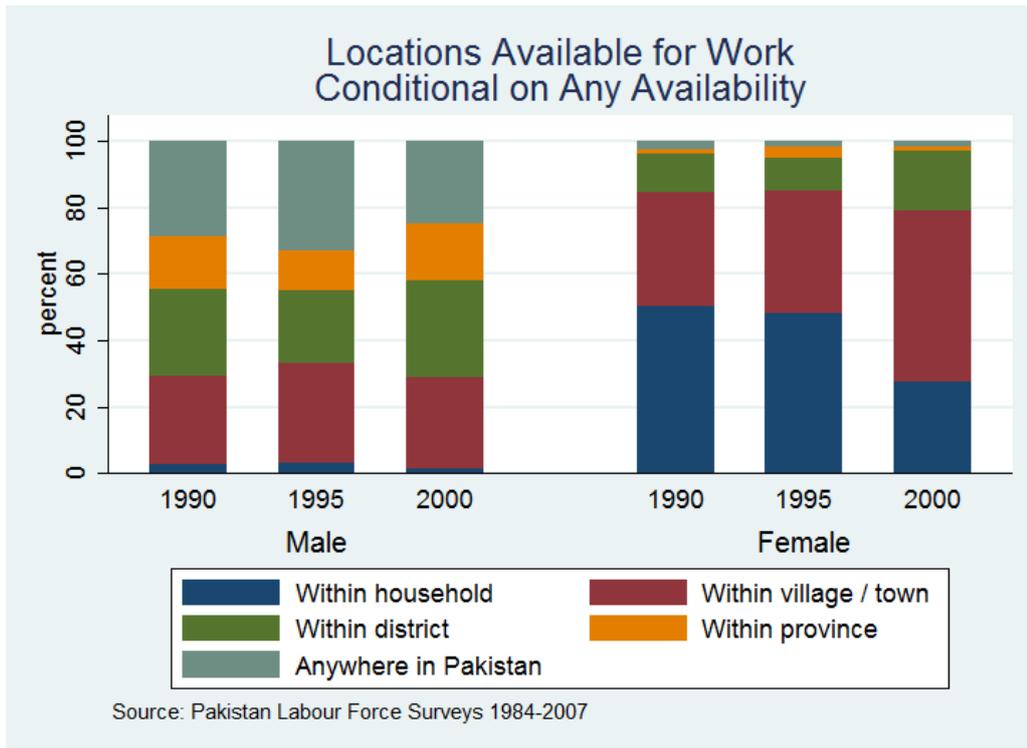


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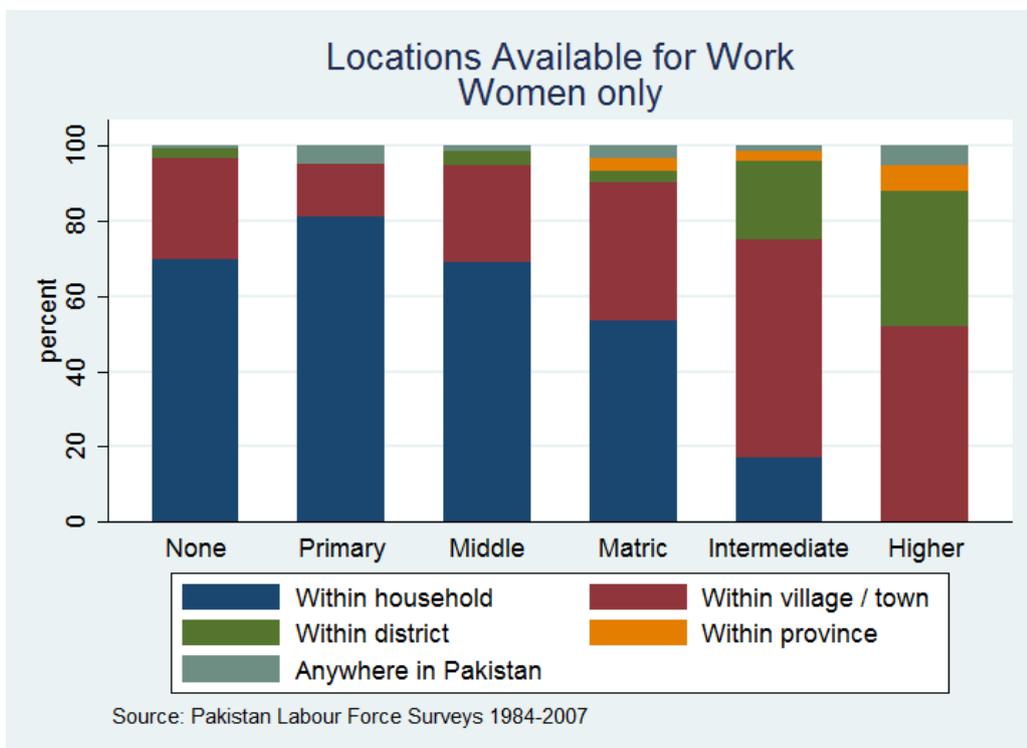


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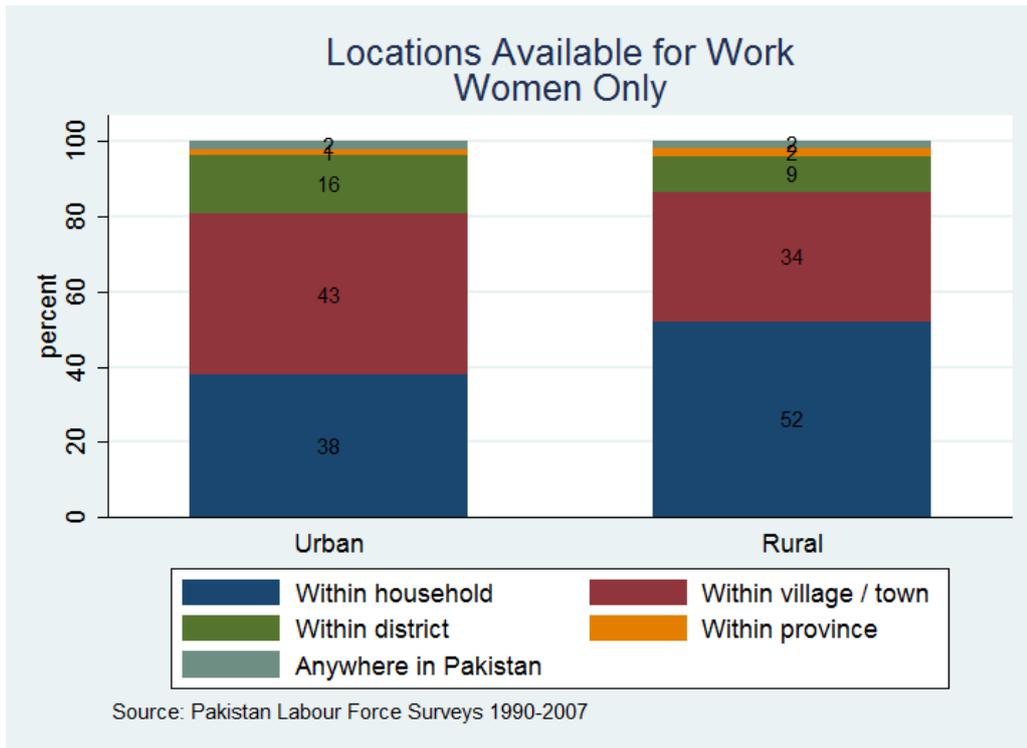


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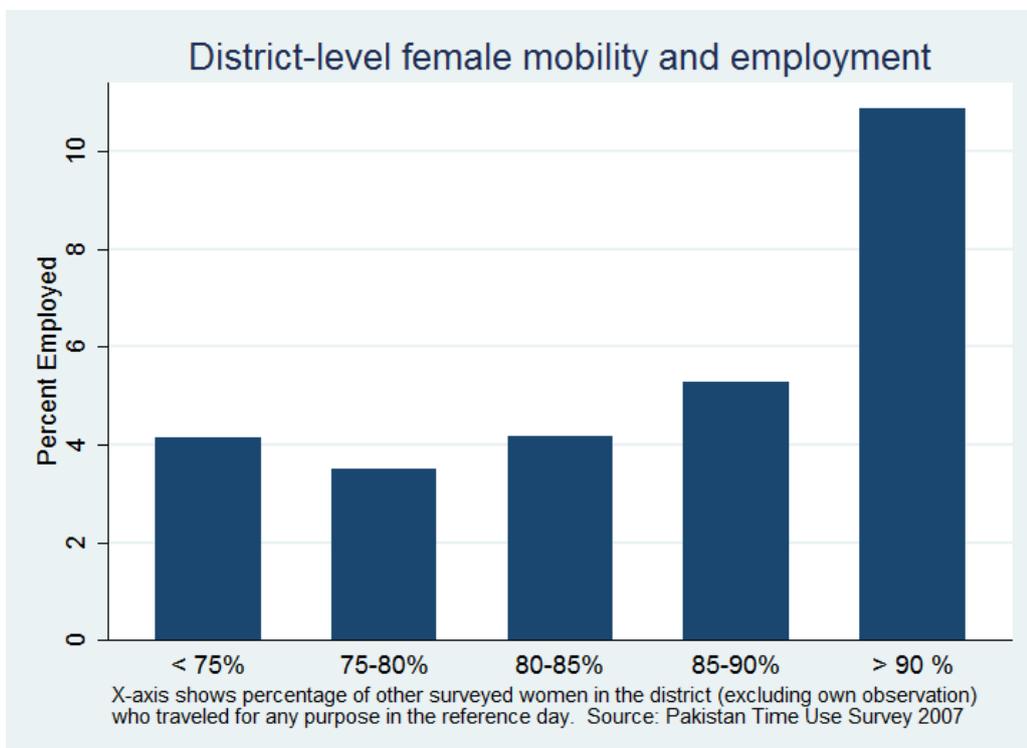
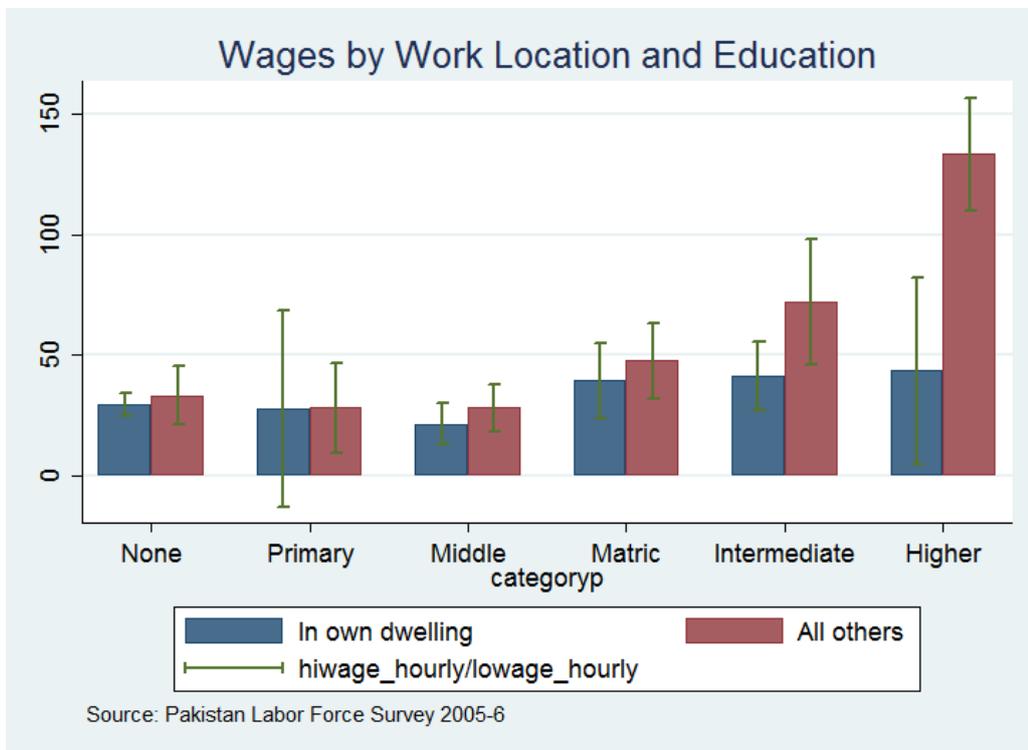


Figure 28:



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# Technical Assistance Consultant's Report

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Project Number: 44067

December 2014

## PAK: RAPID ASSESSMENT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND CONNECTED SPACES IN KARACHI

Pilot Project Final Report

Implemented from July 2014 - November 2014

Prepared by

Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC)

For

ADB RETA 7563: Promoting Gender Inclusive Growth in CWRD DMCs

This consultant's report does not necessarily reflect the views of ADB or the Government concerned, and ADB and the Government cannot be held liable for its contents. (For project preparatory technical assistance: All the views expressed herein may not be incorporated into the proposed project's design.)

**Asian Development Bank**

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US\$1 = Pak Rupee 100



## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This research is undertaken to assess harassment that occur in public transport and connected spaces in Karachi. It is intended to compute the experience of such harassment, identify the types of such harassment, and the reactions by and effects on victims. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected by administering a survey of females who commute in public transport such as buses, mini-buses and/or *chingchis*. Altogether, 230 female commuters, of age 15 years and above, were interviewed of which 35 percent were working women and 33 percent each students and homemakers. These females were of different age group, educational and family income level.

### **Experience of harassment**

The findings indicate a very high prevalence of harassment confronted by female respondents. For instance, 85 percent of working women, 82 percent students and 67 percent homemakers felt harassed, at least once, while commuting during the last year. The highest incidence of harassment is reported by working women, followed by students. Less than one-fifth of working women and students reported that they never faced any harassment while commuting. In case of homemakers, 33 percent said that they never faced any such action. Higher prevalence of harassment among working women and students could be related to younger age and higher frequency of commuting by them. The major culprits in this respect are fellow passengers (75 percent), followed by bus conductors (20 percent) and, sometimes, even the bus driver (5 percent). Over 90 percent of harassment incidents occur inside buses/mini-buses and *chingchis*.

### **Types of harassment**

Two major types of harassment accounting 34 percent responses each are staring/leering and deliberate contact/groping. Crude comments/remarks with sexual innuendos and obscene gestures are also fairly common. Other types of harassment include men blocking the way for women to disembark or following after disembarking and stalking. Men also use the women's section to enter and exit the bus and use the opportunity to engage in deliberate contact/groping. Men hanging on to *chingchis* also engage in deliberate contact with women passengers seated within. Boys on motor-cycles follow *chingchis* and touch women setting in the back set and speed away. Men and boys in cars stop at bus stops and invite them to sit and go with them. Respondents in every category largely attributed male nature and privileging as a major reason

for harassment. Within this, lack of education and awareness of gender sensitivity and sexual frustration are significant components.

### **Reaction and impact**

About two-thirds of women react to harassment, usually verbally, while the others just tolerate. However, some working women and homemakers also retaliate physically. Compared to working women and homemakers, students react less over the perpetrator on such incidences. They walk away by ignoring such actions as they get scared. Women hardly ask for help, including from the police. Usually, the reaction is in the form of verbal retaliation, but a few react physically as well.

Half of the respondents in each of the categories of working women and homemakers did not mention any immediate effect of such incidents. According to them, they have become used to such incidents and have learnt how to deal with them. They further expressed that they had to tolerate such incidences, as they cannot afford any privately hired transport to commute. About one-third of students and one-fifth of working women and homemakers have reduced using public transport and use privately hired taxis and rickshaws; which are more expensive.

The subsequent effect is more lasting where nearly 40 percent of students said that they avoid travelling after dark; thereby, restricting their mobility especially with regard to socializing. More significantly, about 40-45 percent of all three categories have started to wear the *hijab* and cover themselves with *chadar* as a means of protecting themselves from harassment.

An important factor prompting harassment is attributed to over-crowding in public transport. As such, all respondents suggested separate ladies buses or a larger women's section with strict separation between the male and female sections.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

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Mainstreaming gender in transport planning and implementation initiatives is important in order to have equitable social and economic development. Transport investments that are designed with due consideration to gender dimensions can bring significant benefits to women in terms of increased access to employment, markets, education, and health services, as well as directly reducing their time poverty.

However, in developing countries like Pakistan, the design of transport projects and services seldom recognise or address women's travel needs, concerns, priorities, and preferences. As a result, women – especially younger women and girls – often experience harassment in the form of verbal and physical innuendos, groping, leering, or even direct physical assaults inside public transport and connected spaces. It not only makes their daily business insecure and uncomfortable but also jeopardizes and often limits their mobility. Consequently, it reduces their ability to participate in educational and professional activities and in public life. These acts of harassment, if ignored, can cause long and lasting effects for both victim (physical and psychological effects on the well-being of women and girls) and perpetrator (heightened insensitivity to violence against women).

General Recommendation (GR) 19 of CEDAW Committee states that Violence against Women is 'a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men.' It defines aggressive acts against women as "violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately, it includes acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty...whether occurring in public or in private life".

While this definition is broad in nature, it encompasses the types of behaviors experienced by women in public spaces including public transport. Typically, harassment in public transport includes verbal and nonverbal behaviors ranging from lewd remarks, cat calls and whistling, obstructing female commuters' way, touching, pinching, groping and assault. Many argue that these types of behaviors should be not

be clustered with more serious forms of harassment such as rape and sexual assault and should be termed street rather than sexual harassment.

Broadly, street harassment or harassment in public places is defined as “any action or comment, motivated by gender or sexual orientation or gender expression, between strangers in public places that is disrespectful, unwelcome, threatening and/or harassing” (see SST.) It is also termed as “eve teasing, in countries like India and Bangladesh. Bowman (1993) meanwhile notes that although street harassment encompasses a wide variety of behaviors, gestures, and comments, it has some defining characteristics: the targets of street harassment are female; the harassers are male; the harassers are unacquainted with their targets; the encounter is face to face; and the forum is a public one, such as a street, sidewalk, bus, bus station, taxi, or other place to which the public generally has access.

Lack of provision of secure public transport by the state actually tends to cause acts of harassment that consequently restrain the mobility of women and thus deprive them from their basic human right. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights calls for freedom of movement to every citizen. Article 13, Clause 1 states “Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.” Further, Article 15 of the Constitution of Pakistan describes the freedom of movement by stating “Every citizen shall have the right to remain in, and, subject to any reasonable restriction imposed by law in the public interest, enter and move freely throughout Pakistan and to reside and settle in any part thereof.”

Both these documents refer to freedom of movement in its broader political context. However, inference can be drawn to apply the same principles to the facility of movement within one’s own individual spaces. As such, mainstreaming gender in transport policy initiatives can be viewed as a rights-based issue.

Laws exist around the world and in Pakistan to deal with harassment in public transport and connected spaces. Section 509 of the Pakistan Penal Code relates to “insulting modesty or causing sexual harassment” and makes sexual harassment, including in public transport, a punishable offence. It specifies imprisonment, which may extend to three years or fine up to Rs. 5,000,000 or both to whosoever conducts such acts. However, due to its tepid implementation,

it has proved to be ineffective. And, this lack of enforcement of policies also encourages violence in public transport.

This research aims to carry out a rapid assessment of harassment in public transport and connected spaces in Karachi. For this, it administered a survey of female commuters who commute, at least once in week, by using two major modes of public transport in Karachi; buses/mini-buses and *chingchis* (modified motorized rickshaw).

The lead Researcher for this report is Iffat Ara, Principal Economist at SPDC, with *Research Assistance from* Aasiya Kazi, Research Officer at SPDC. Acknowledgements are due to Aqsa Safder, Research Officer at SPDC, for data compiling and photographs; and to Rizwanullah Khan for composing this report and photographs. The research was conducted during July-November, 2014.

The report is organised as follows: section 2 illustrates the objectives of research; section 3 present review of literature, highlighting nature and consequences of harassment, methodologies used to estimate its incidence and policy response; section 4 describes the methodology of survey and research; section 5 portrays the demographic profile of sample respondents; section 6 explains the features of public transport usage in Karachi; section 7 gives the incidence, nature, types and consequences of harassment in public buses and *chingchis*; section 8 depicts the public attitudes and perceptions towards factors that motivate harassment; section 9 expresses the recommended actions put forward by female commuters and; section 10 concludes and spells out recommendations.

## **2. OBJECTIVE**

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Rapid assessment of harassment in public transport is undertaken to provide an in-depth understanding of the need to address sexual harassment issues in planning and operations of public transport services that are designed within the context of building safer cities and ensuring inclusive growth.

Specifically, it has the following objectives

1. Quantify the prevalence of harassment experienced by school girls, working age, and older women.
2. Identify the types of harassment, the reactions and effects
3. Look at the perceived factors that motivate or prevent its occurrence.
4. Examine public attitudes and perceptions towards sexual harassment.
5. Specify the recommended actions to prevent and address sexual harassment in public transport and connected spaces (i.e., bus stops).

### **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

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The review of existing literature from around the world and Pakistan points to a high incidence of harassment in public transport. It also highlights its nature, consequences and policy response in this regard.

Dear and Wolch (1989) describe accessibility to transportation as a necessary precondition to accessibility to the workplace, and those who use public transport due to non-availability of any other choices as “captive riders” or “transit captive.” Research shows that compared to men, women comprise a larger proportion of captive riders. For these women, access to public transport is crucial as it allows them access to employment, educational and leisure opportunities, and the public sphere in general (Smith, 2008). Public transport is an “important enabler in accessing the public sphere” without which girls may be kept away from schools [Latif (1999) and Fernando and Porter’s (2002) as mentioned in Harrison (2013)].”

Fitzgerald et al’s (1997) while studying effects of sexual harassment on work found that women who had been harassed reported higher frequency of absenteeism at work than those who had not been harassed. Some of them also think of quitting their jobs.

A study about the psychological impact of sexual harassment on white and Asian women indicated that a greater frequency of experiencing sexual harassment and post traumatic stress symptoms “predicated” more depression and overall psychological distress among women (Ho et al., 2012). This impediment to women's ability to freely access and utilise public spaces negatively impacts upon their social and economic well-being (Fileborn 2013).

Establishing the extent to which harassment in public transport and connected spaces occurs or estimating its incidence is somewhat difficult. For instance, studies indicate that such harassment is widespread, it has been pointed out that these studies seek responses only from those who experienced sexual harassment and hence came up with inflated rates of incidence. At the same time, it is also argued that rates of harassment might actually be underreported because many women are conditioned to accept harassment as ‘normal’ and do not report it. Nevertheless, whichever view one

subscribes to, there is no doubt that harassment prevails in public transport and connected spaces.

Radha (2011) investigated how masculinity reinforces occurrence of violence in public transport in Nepal. She collected data and information by observing four selected routes and rooming in four bus stations during busy and less busy timings. Interviews were held with women, men, girls and boys of age 15-49 years through purposive selection method. She interviewed five drivers and five conductors to examine the underlying causes, which create a sub-culture within men, ten boys and men to explore the motivation factors or condition against protection discourse, eight women who use public vehicles to discuss about the forms, frequency, timing, conditions, and strategies in two ways: violence and protection. Telephonic interviews were also carried out with officials from the Office of Prime Minister and Council Minister (OPMCM), National Women Commission, and Ministry Labor and Transport specifically to get insight about the seriousness of policymakers in taking up this issue. Her findings indicate that office hours times (mornings and evenings) are more risky times for violence and bus parks, roads and inside buses are major places for violence. Majority of the drivers reported that they considered this as their powerfulness as well as a means of entertainment. Men perceived violence as a symbol of power. However, conductors and men also take action sometimes in protection of women against violence, as they felt themselves superior by sex and physically strong in structure. Most of the women mentioned that they considered themselves physically weak, insecure and powerless while travelling in public transport especially during office hours. They also act to protect themselves from violence when they are in an enabling environment and felt secure; like day time or with a group of friends.

Jagori (2010) conducted a survey to investigate harassment faced by women in Delhi, India. The study used purposive sampling methods to collect information (through interviews) from 5010 men and women of diverse occupational categories spread across 50 sites in Delhi. Intercept survey technique was used to select respondents in a variety of public spaces, including markets, parks, bus stops, residential areas, etc. Their results reveal that sexual harassment is perceived as the biggest risk for women's safety across Delhi. Women feel unsafe and are afraid of being physically hurt, harassed, molested or raped in deserted spaces, as well as in crowded spaces, most commonly in crowded public transport.

Mitra-Sarkar and Partheeban (2009) assessed harassment faced by women commuters in Chennai by administering a survey of women ages 18 years and older. A total of 274 women respondents, majority of whom were college students, were randomly chosen from college campuses, dormitories, trains, and buses as well as at train and bus stops. The findings indicate that 66 percent of these women reported to have been harassed while commuting.

The literature suggests that consequences of the risk or experience of harassment in public transport can have profound effects on the lives of women everywhere. Given that transportation is a key factor in mobility, harassment restricts their mobility and hence limits their access not only to educational and employment opportunities but also to socialisation and recreational activities.

Countries have adopted certain measures to deal with this type of harassment. For instance, women-only public transport has been introduced in a number of cities. Tokyo was one of the first major capitals to introduce women-only trains and directed transit police to enforce it. Such transport is also found in Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Delhi, Cairo and Manila among others, while some other cities are also considering this option (Boros, 2014). In Pakistan too, women friendly buses have been operated on pilot basis between Islamabad and Rawalpindi by the ILO in collaboration with private sector (ILO and FCG, 2011).

However, there is a counter view in relation to women-only transport that considers it as a short-term solution. According to the World Bank, segregation is not the answer to this problem. It requires modification in behavior and attitude of society (WB, 2014). A study in Nepal found that women felt that it was “patronizing to make such provisions [reserved seats] and undermined the gains women have made in exercising their freedom of movement and rights to public space (WB and AusAid, 2013).

## **4. SURVEY AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

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### **4.1. Research Method and sampling technique**

Quantitative and qualitative data have been collected by conducting a primary survey. The universe for the survey consists of females (above 15 years of age) who travel in public buses and/or *chingchis* at least once in a week. In order to add diversity, the universe is further stratified into three categories: (1) students, (2) working women and (3) homemakers. Purposive sampling technique was used to select female commuters in the category of student from colleges and universities and working women from shopping malls, beauty parlours, food chain outlets, hospitals, etc. For selecting female commuters in the category of homemakers, snowball sampling technique has been used. These females were interviewed at their residences. In order to select female commuters with diverse socio-economic characteristics, heterogeneity sampling was maintained under purposive sampling.

Data obtained from the survey was processed using the statistical software SPSS.

### **4.2. Ethics**

The survey took into consideration the protection of all respondents and researchers. Respondents were advised that their participation was voluntary and were assured of complete anonymity. Furthermore, they were advised that they did not have to answer any question they felt uncomfortable about.

### **4.3. Questionnaire**

The data gathering instrument is a structured questionnaire consisting of both closed and open ended questions in-line with the objectives of the study. Prior to the designing of questionnaire a detailed review of literature has been conducted and different questionnaires designed for this purpose, were looked at. In addition, specific features of Karachi transport with reference to public buses have also been taken into account. The questionnaire was then designed to collect the following information.

1. General characteristics of commuters (socio-economic variables).
2. Travel characteristics like purpose of trip, frequency of trip, travel time.
3. Types of harassment, its intensity, the reactions and perceived factors that motivate its occurrence.

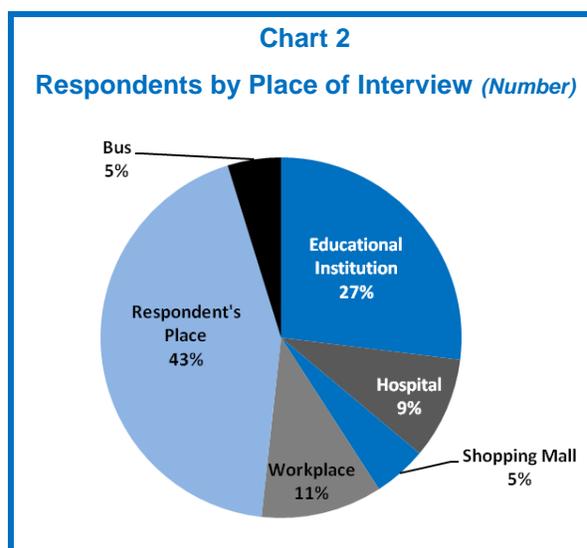
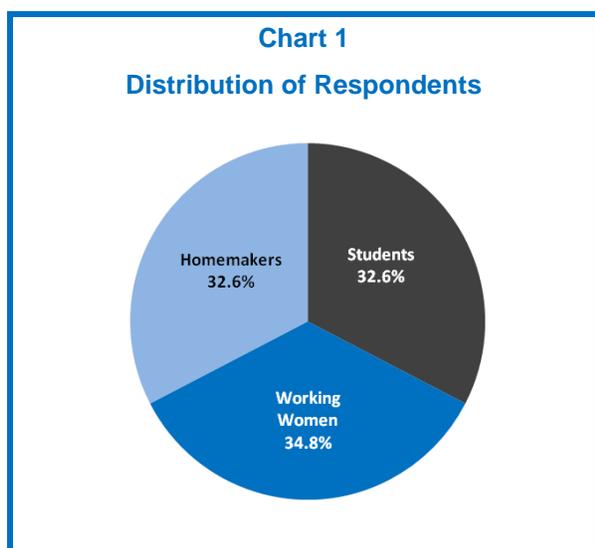
4. Respondent's opinion about addressing public transport service needs and measures to prevent harassment in public transport and connected spaces.

#### 4.4. Respondents

The sample consists of 230 respondents. Occupation-wise, the respondents were more or less evenly divided among homemakers 33 percent, working women 35 percent, and students 33 percent (Chart 1). Homemakers include housewives and unmarried non-student/non-working women, who although not employed outside their homes, live with parents/siblings and do work inside their household.

#### 4.5. Place of interview

Respondents were interviewed at their residence, at their workplace, at their place of education, at hospitals, at shopping malls, at bus stops and in the bus. The distribution of the sample is illustrated in Chart 2; which shows that 43 percent of respondents were interviewed at their residence, 11 percent at their workplace, 27 percent at their place of education, 9 at hospitals, and 5 percent each at shopping malls and in the bus or at bus stops.



## 5. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

The demographic profile covers age, marital status, and education and income status and throws light on the basic characteristics of respondents as illustrated in Table 1. The analysis reveals the transport choices of the different segments of the population. It needs to be mentioned here that transport choices available to commuters are quite limited.

### 5.1. Age profile

Overall, the sample respondents are young, with 90 percent of them in the age group 15-45 years. The largest segment (41 percent) is in the age bracket of 15-25 years, with 85 percent students and 25 percent working women. The second largest cohort is of age group 26-35 years, with 51 percent working women and 39 percent homemakers. About 28 percent of homemakers and 18 percent of working women are in the age bracket of 36-45 years. And about 18 percent of homemakers and 6 percent of working women are in the age group 46 years and above, with no student in this group.

	<b>Homemaker</b>	<b>Working Women</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Age bracket</b>				
15-25	14.7	25.0	85.3	41.1
26-35	38.7	51.3	13.3	35.1
36-45	28.0	17.5	1.3	15.6
46-55	13.3	6.3	0.0	6.5
56+	5.3	0.0	0.0	1.7
<b>Marital status</b>				
Single	11.2	31.2	57.6	54.1
Married	58.8	38.1	3.1	42.0
Divorced/Widowed	50.0	50.0	0.0	3.9

Education status				
Not literate	4.0	11.3	0.0	5.2
No formal schooling but can read and write <sup>1</sup>	4.0	5.0	0.0	3.5
Below Matriculation (Grade I-IX)	4.0	5.0	0.0	2.6
Matriculation (Grade X)	21.3	11.3	2.7	11.7
Intermediate (Grade XI-XII)	21.3	12.5	21.3	18.2
Bachelors	33.8	21.3	56.0	35.9
Post graduate (Masters/M.Phil)	13.3	33.8	33.8	22.9
Family income level				
Less than 10,000	2.7	6.3	1.3	3.5
10,000 - 20,000	24.0	15.0	2.7	13.9
20,000 - 30,000	20.0	25.0	12.0	19.0
30,000 - 40,000	13.3	18.8	24.0	18.6
40,000 - 50,000	24.0	12.5	28.0	21.2
50,000 - 100,000	16.0	18.8	29.3	21.6
More than 100,000	0.0	3.8	2.7	2.2

## 5.2. Marital status

More than half the sample respondents are single with nearly 60 percent students and 30 percent working women and the remaining 10 percent includes unmarried girls in the family, who are neither students nor working. Over 40 percent of respondents are married of which more than half are homemakers, one-third are working women and 3 percent of students. About 4 percent are divorced or widowed with half homemakers and half working women.

## 5.3. Education status

The respondents were generally better educated, with majority of them having attained a Bachelors' (35.9%) or Post graduate (22.9%) status. About one third of the respondents claimed they reached matriculation (11.7%) and intermediate (18.2%) levels. A small proportion did not have the benefit of formal schooling: 5.2% of the respondents were not literate, while

<sup>1</sup> Learned to read and write from relatives, friends, Madrassa school, etc.

3.5% of the respondents said they never went to a formal school but could read and write, having learned from relatives, friends or a Madrassa school.

Among homemakers, 33.8 percent possess a Bachelor's degree, 13.3 percent possess a Master's or M.Phil. degree, and 21.3 percent each have completed Matriculation and Intermediate level of education. Only 4 percent each are below Matriculation, can just read and write (4%) or are not literate (4%).

Among working women, 33.8 percent hold a Bachelor's degree, 21.3 percent hold a Master's or M.Phil. degree, 12.5 percent have intermediate or higher secondary qualifications, 11.3 percent hold matriculation or secondary qualifications, 5 percent could read and write but never went to school, and 11.3 percent were not literate nor ever went to school. Notably, bulk of the not-literates was in the working women group. By definition, none of the students are illiterate.

#### **5.4. Family income level**

The sample respondents appear to be from the middle class, with 62 percent in the income range of Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 100,000 per month. However, only about half the homemakers and working women are in this income group. Among students' families, 84 percent are earning more than Rs. 30,000 per month and of them 3 percent earning more than Rs. 100,000 per month.

Two income brackets Rs. 10,000 to 20,000 and Rs. 40,000-50,000 dominate among homemakers, with 24 percent each in these groups. The pattern indicates that half of homemakers are in the middle class bracket and about one-quarter can be classified as poor, with 3 percent classified as very poor. There are no homemakers in the more than 100,000 income bracket.

About half the working women are in the income bracket of Rs. 30,000 to 100,000 per month and 4 percent in the more than 100,000 bracket. However, the single largest share of working women (25 percent) is in income bracket of Rs. 20,000 to 30,000 and can be classified as lower middle class. About 21 percent earn less than Rs. 20,000 per month, of whom 6 percent earn less than Rs. 10,000 per month. This category can be classified as poor, with the latter as very poor.

Students appear to hail from relatively better off families, with a quarter of families earning over Rs. 50,000 per month. However, over one-third of students' families are in the less than Rs. 30,000 income bracket, with 4 percent of them in the less than Rs. 10,000 bracket. Income inequality among student families appears to be greater than in the other two groups and could imply lower affordability among the poor and the lower middle class for acquisition of education.

## 6. FEATURES OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT USAGE

This section describes the features of public transport usage by female commuters in Karachi. The largest share of trips using public transport is generated by working women, followed by students (Table 2). Over 80 percent of working women and 63 percent of students use public transport 5-7 days a week. Homemakers appear to be largely home bound, using public transport sometimes. This is indicated by the fact that 44 percent of homemakers use public transport 1-4 times a week and 47 percent use public transport 2-4 times a month (see Box 1).

### Box 1

#### Features of public transport

Different types of public transport are available in Karachi to commute within city. These include car taxis and auto rickshaws, big buses, mini-buses and *chingchis*. Big buses, mini-buses and *chingchis* charge per passenger basis while taxis and auto rickshaws are privately hired and charge per tip.

Big buses and mini-buses have two sections where the women's section is in the front and men's section in the back. Both of these sections have separate doors; the front door is for entry and exit into women's section while the back door for entry and exit into men's section. Though the two sections are partitioned, usually there is a gap or opening from inside the bus that allows movement between the two sections.

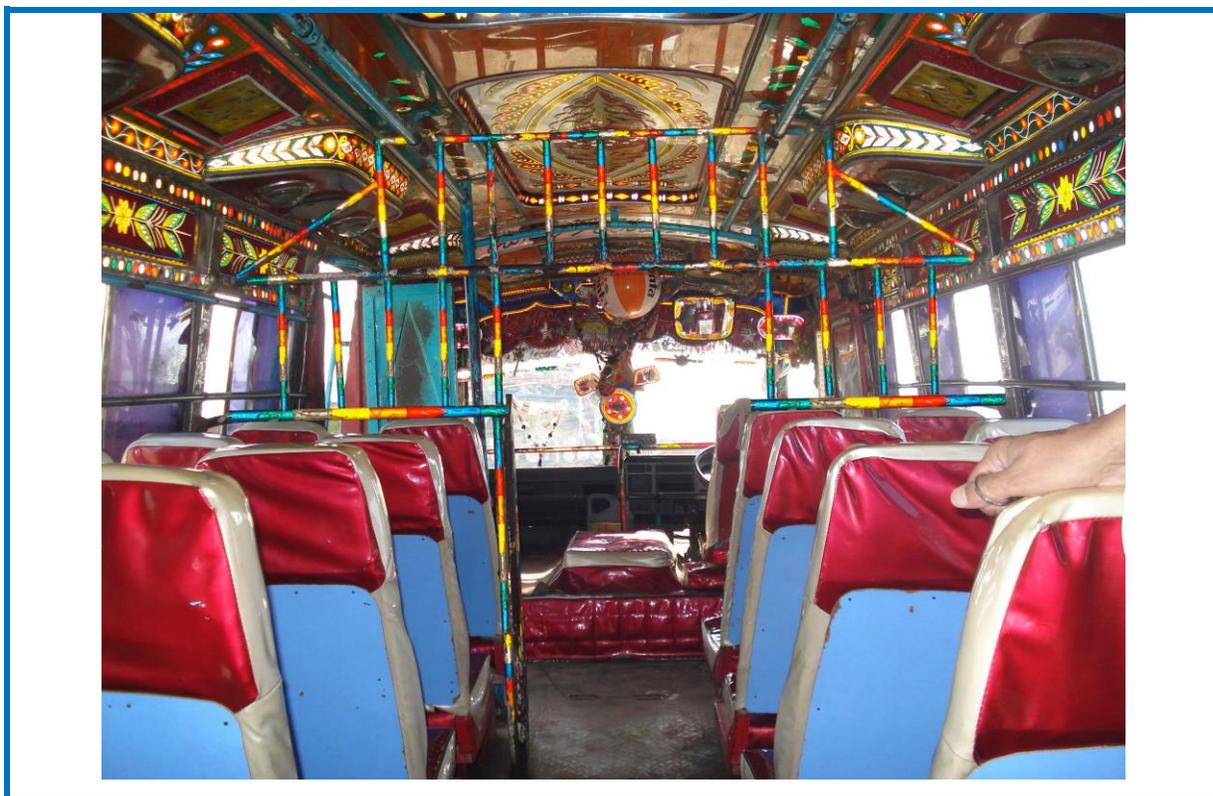
Mini-buses cover greater number of routes compared to big buses and, thus, people largely use mini-buses to travel. These (mini) buses have a seating capacity of 25 persons, of which seven are in women's section. As a result, women often have to sit on the engine, which is next to the driver's seat. At times, the driver's hand touches the female passenger's knee, intentionally or unintentionally, while changing gears. Also, they have to sit on the space at the back of driver's seat facing men's section. Being small, mini-buses have less space for people to stand; women's section has a capacity of four and men's section has a capacity of eight to ten people to stand. Given that mini-buses have greater number of routes and less capacity to accommodate people, these buses are generally found overloaded where men travel even by sitting on roof top. When the men's section is full, they also occupy part of the women's section and women have to share their section with the men.

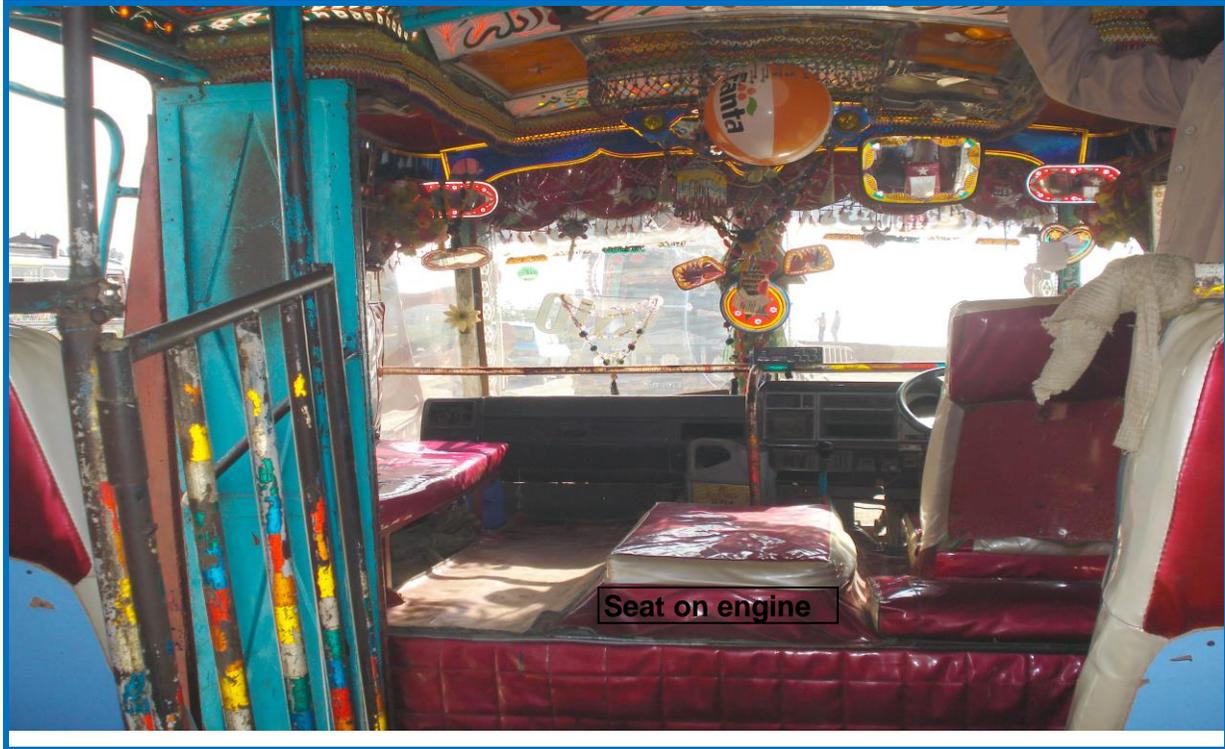
*Chingchi* is a modified form of Auto Rickshaw. It has different forms, having a capacity to carry six to

eleven passengers. One form of chingchi has three seats where three passengers can sit on one seat. Hence, it has a capacity to accommodate nine passengers. Two seats are facing each other while one seat faces backwards. There are no reserved seats for women and men. Social norms dictate that only a woman can sit beside another woman however women and men can sit on seats facing each other. Auto rickshaws have a capacity to carry three persons and are privately hired. They are relatively more expensive as the passenger has to pay the entire cost of the trip. Car taxis are even more expensive and seldom used by the lower middle class and almost never by the poor.

**Table 2**  
**Frequency of using public transport by females**

	Students	Working	Homemakers
Daily (5-7 days in a week)	62.7	80.2	9.3
Often (1-4 times in a week)	20.0	9.9	44.0
Sometimes(2-4 times in a month)	17.3	9.9	46.7
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0





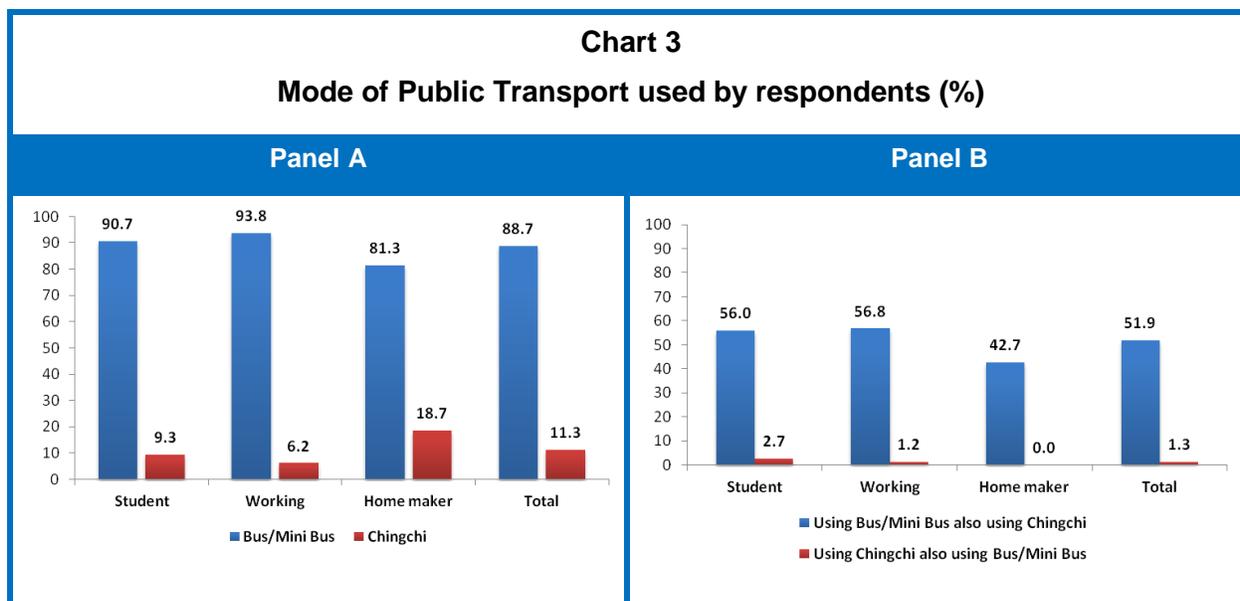


The pattern of trips and corresponding public transport use varies for the three categories of respondents as shown in Table 3. Students use public transport primarily for commuting to place of education, for shopping and for visiting relatives and friends. About one-sixth of trips using public transport are also for part-time jobs. Working women use public transport overwhelmingly for commuting to and from work place, followed by shopping and visiting relatives and friends. Homemakers use public transport primarily for trips to clinics or hospitals, shopping and visiting relatives.

Table 3 Purpose of using public transport									
	Students Response			Working Women Response			Homemakers Response		
	First	Second	Third	First	Second	Third	First	Second	Third
Number of Responses	75	30	20	81	57	36			
Share (%)									
Education	96.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	19.3	8.3	-	-	-
Work	-	-	-	92.6	0.0	0.0	-	-	-
Medical	-	-	-	1.2	0.0	0.0	54.7	-	-
Shopping	1.3	80.0	60.0	2.5	73.7	41.7	32.0	67.9	8.7
Visiting Relatives	1.3	3.3	40.0	1.2	5.3	38.9	9.3	23.2	87.0
Vocational training	-	-	-	0.0	0.0	5.6	2.7	5.4	-
Part time Job	1.3	13.3	0.0	-	-	-	1.3	3.6	-
Recreation	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	1.8	2.8	-	-	-
Religion	-	-	-	0.0	0.0	2.8	-	-	4.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Chart 3 gives the extent of usage of bus/mini-bus and chingchi by three categories of women. Panel-A indicates that bus/minibus is the major transport mode, accounting for nearly 90 percent of trips. Buses and minibus are largely used by students and working women (91 percent and 94 percent respectively), while *chingchis* are largely used homemakers (19 percent); however, the pre-dominant mode remains bus/minibus. Panel-B shows that out of 91 percent students who use buses, 56 percent also use chingchi. The proportion of working

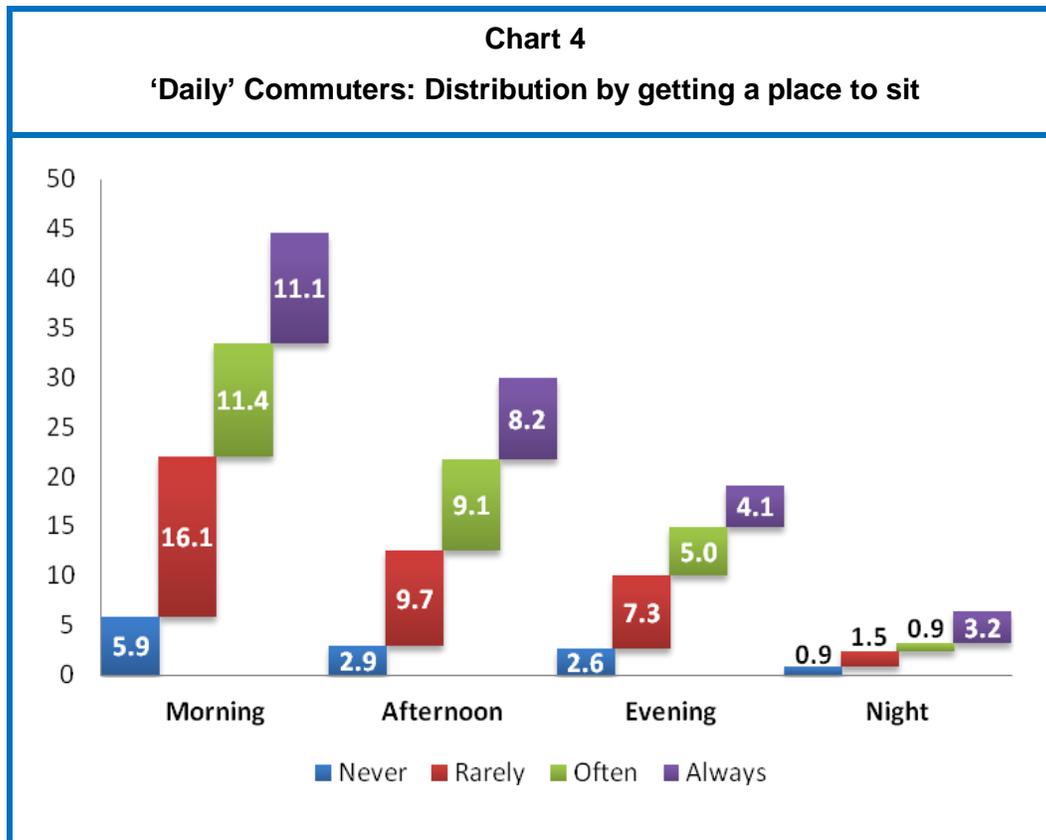
women and homemakers who also use *chingchis* is 57 percent and 43 percent, respectively. Interestingly, 19 percent of homemakers who use *chingchis* do not use buses and minibuses.



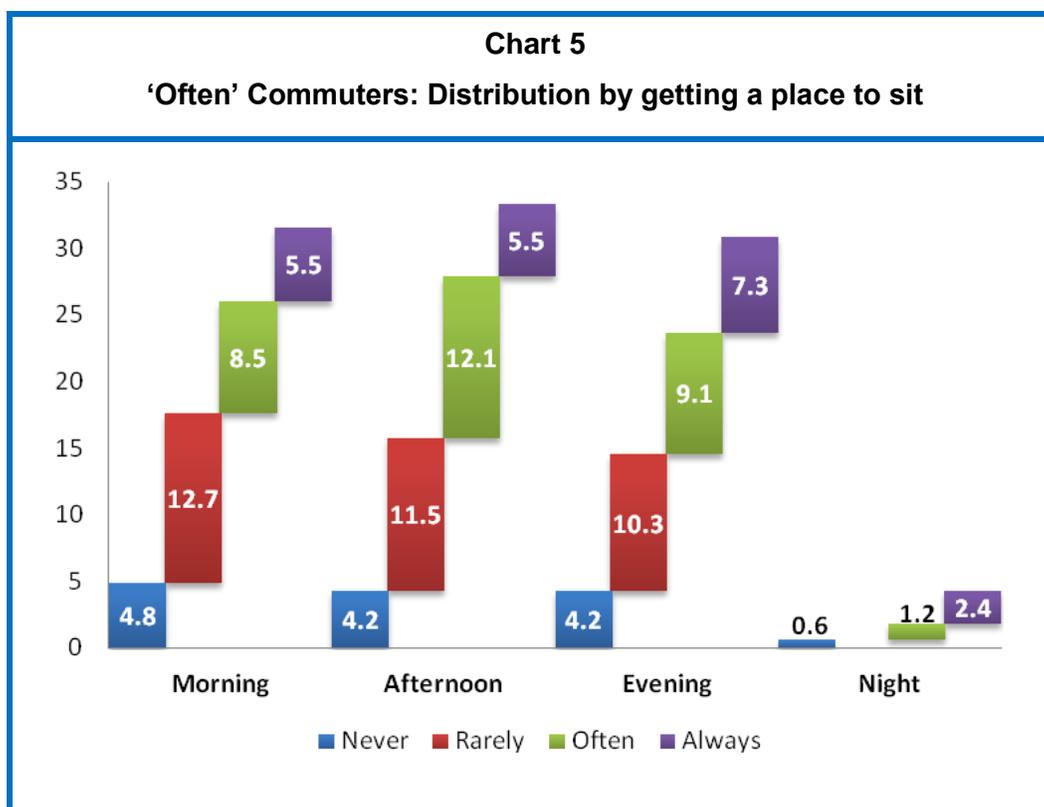
Buses and mini-buses are generally over crowded, particularly during peak hours (morning and evening). Women travelling during peak hours seldom get a place to sit. As a result they are subject harassment by men who use women’s section door to enter into and exit from bus. The discussion below illustrates the travel timings of daily, often and sometimes commuters by place to sit in order to draw attention towards this very important issue.

Chart 4 shows the time of travel of ‘daily’ commuters, which is distributed as follows: 45 percent of commuters travel in the morning hours, of whom 11 percent always get a place to sit, 11 percent get a place to sit often, 16 percent get a place to sit rarely, and 6 percent never get a place to sit. These commuters return at various hours of the day. Of those making the trip in the afternoon (mostly students, 30 percent), 8 percent always get a place to sit, 9 percent get a place to sit often, 10 percent get a place to sit rarely, and 3 percent never get a place to sit. Of those making the trip in the evening (working women, 19 percent), 4 percent always get a place to sit, 5 percent get a place to sit often, 7 percent get a place to sit rarely, and 3 percent never get a place to sit. Of those making the trip at night (working women, 7 percent), 3 percent always get a place to sit, one percent get a place to sit often, 2 percent get a place to sit rarely, and one percent never get a place to sit. ‘Daily’ commuters are largely working women and students and make their trips to work or educational institution in the morning, which constitutes

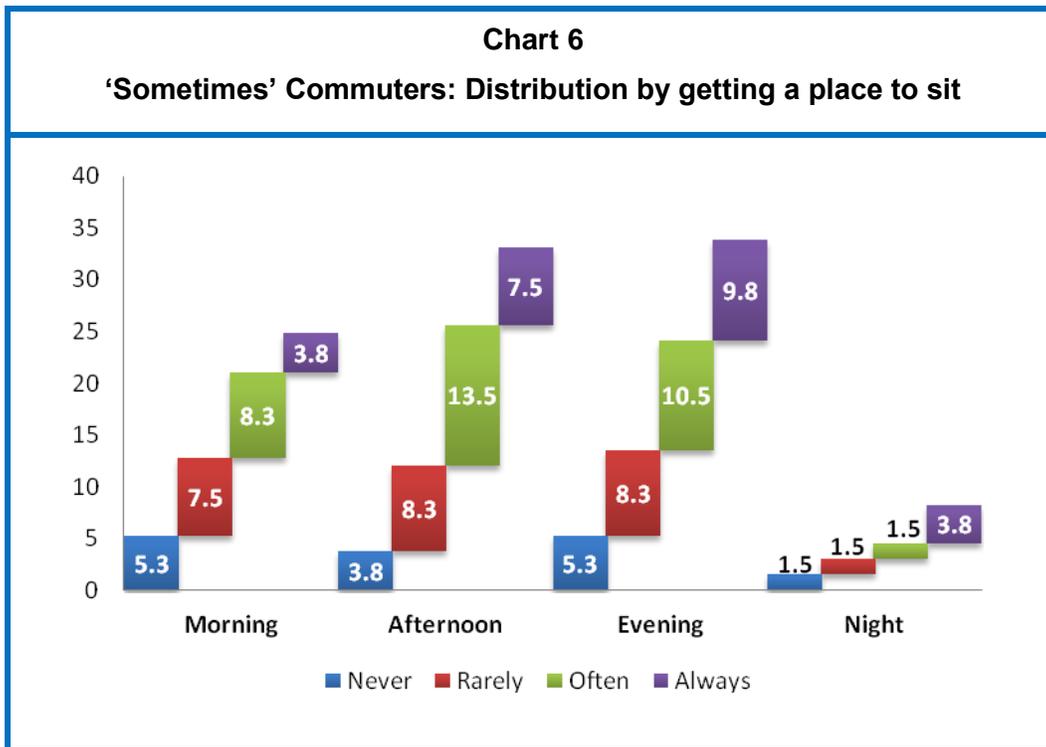
the peak hour. It can be seen that the largest share of commuters who never get a place to sit is highest during mornings and declines with time, as peak hour is distributed, to the lowest at night (Chart 4).



The time of travel of 'often' commuters is distributed as follows: 32 percent of commuters travel in the morning hours, of whom 6 percent always get a place to sit, 9 percent get a place to sit often, 13 percent get a place to sit rarely, and 5 percent never get a place to sit. Of those making the trip in the afternoon (33 percent), 6 percent always get a place to sit, 12 percent get a place to sit often, 12 percent get a place to sit rarely, and 4 percent never get a place to sit. Of those making the trip in the evening (31 percent), 7 percent always get a place to sit, 9 percent get a place to sit often, 10 percent get a place to sit rarely, and 4 percent never get a place to sit. Of those making the trip at night (4 percent), 2 percent always get a place to sit, one percent get a place to sit often, half percent never get a place to sit (Chart 5).



The time of travel of 'sometimes' commuters is distributed as follows: 25 percent of commuters travel in the morning hours, of whom 4 percent always get a place to sit, 8 percent get a place to sit often, 8 percent get a place to sit rarely, and 4 percent never get a place to sit. Of those making the trip in the afternoon (33 percent), 8 percent always get a place to sit, 14 percent get a place to sit often, 8 percent get a place to sit rarely, and 4 percent never get a place to sit. Of those making the trip in the evening (34 percent), 10 percent always get a place to sit, 11 percent get a place to sit often, 8 percent get a place to sit rarely, and 5 percent never get a place to sit. Of those making the trip at night (8 percent), 4 percent always get a place to sit while 1.5 percent each gets a place to sit often or rarely gets a place to sit or never gets a place to sit. 'Sometimes' commuters are mostly homemakers, whose trips comprises of shopping and/or visiting relatives and friends and, as such, make the trips in the afternoons and evenings. Given that 'daily' commuters load declines sharply in the afternoons and evenings, a larger percentage of 'sometimes' commuters (18 percent) are able to find a seat (Chart 6).

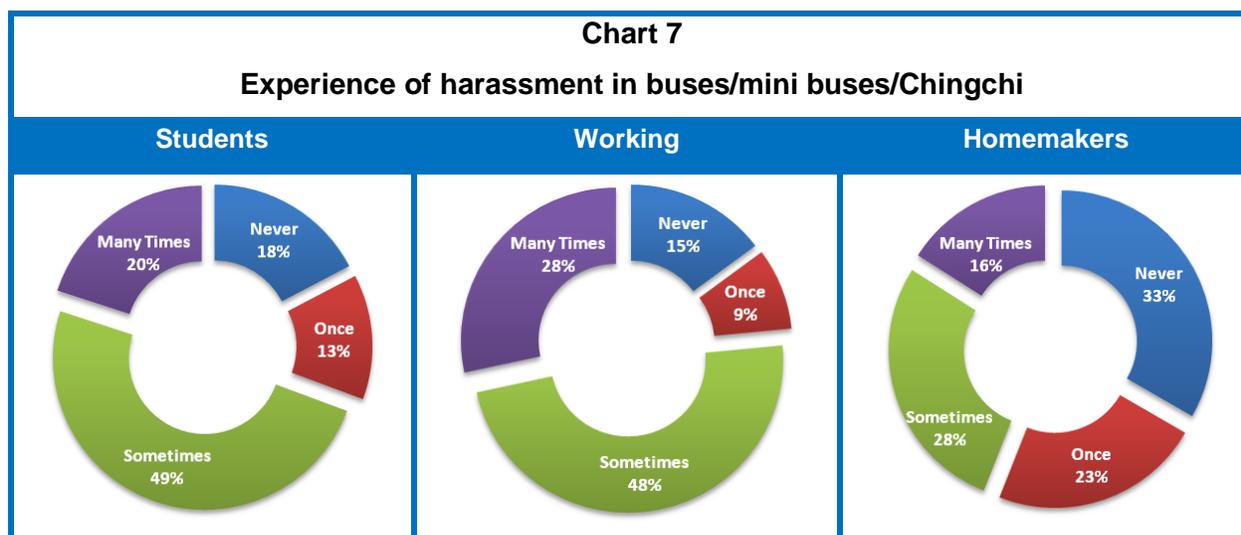


## 7. HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC BUSES AND CHINGCHI

This section examines the incidence of harassment in buses, minibuses and *chingchis*, types of harassment and its consequences, including reactions and effects.

### 7.1. Experience of harassment

Chart 7 shows frequency of incidence of harassment in buses, minibuses and *chingchis*. The highest incidence is reported by working women, followed by students. Only 15 percent of working women and 18 percent of students reported that they never faced any action during travelling in buses, minibuses or *chingchis* that made them feel harassed. Three-fourths of working women and 69 percent of students reported that they felt harassed more than once while commuting. In case of homemakers, 33 percent said that they never faced any such action, while 44 percent said that faced such actions more than once. Students and working women were more likely to experience sexual harassment compared to homemakers, which could be related to their younger age and higher frequency of commuting. Students and working women largely travel every working day and, thus, confront such incidences more frequently.

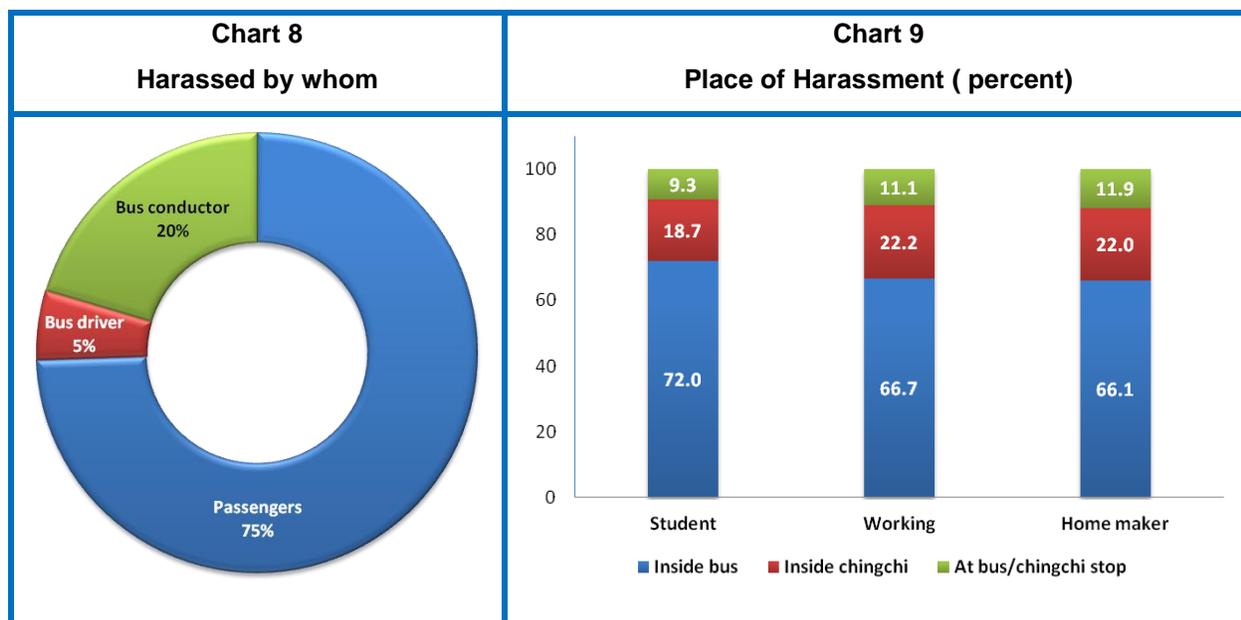


### 7.2. Perpetrator

Chart 8 points to the perpetrator or harasser. The major culprits in this respect are fellow passengers (75 percent), followed by bus conductors (20 percent) and, sometimes, even the bus driver (5 percent).

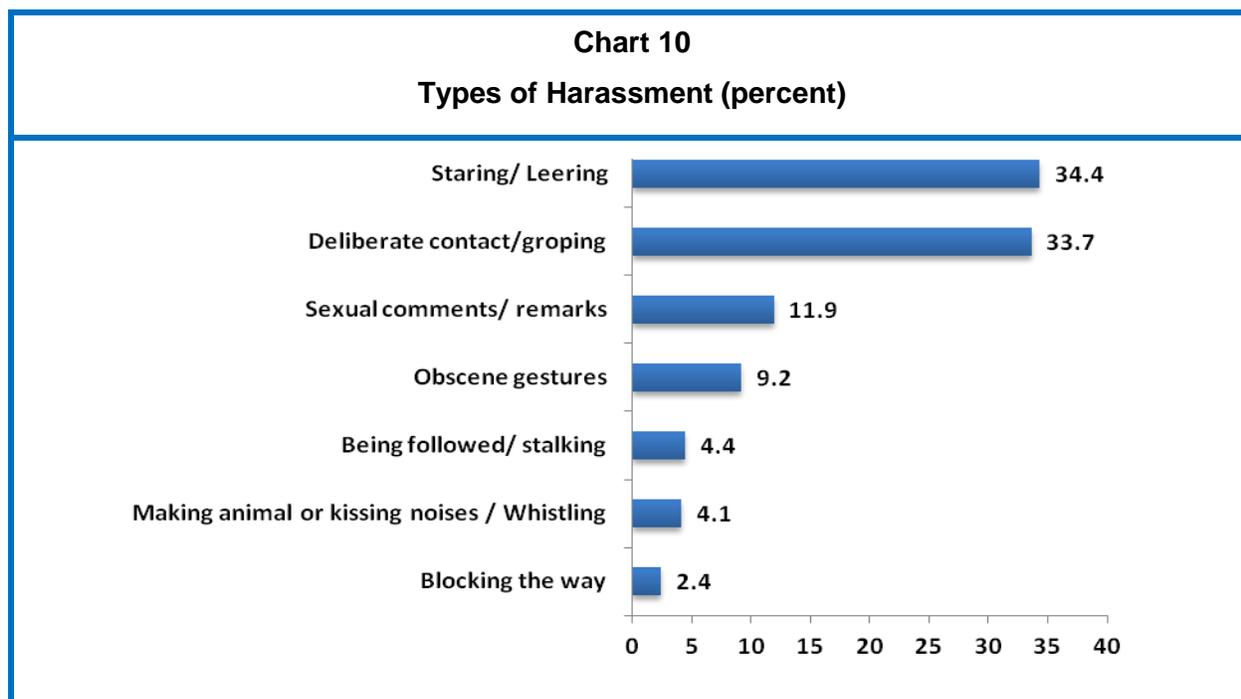
### 7.3. Place of harassment

Chart 9 identifies location of harassment in public transport: inside the bus/mini-bus or chingchi or at bus/chingchi stops. Among all three categories of respondents, the vast majority (90 percent) cited such incidents inside buses/mini-buses and *chingchis*.



### 7.4. Types of harassment

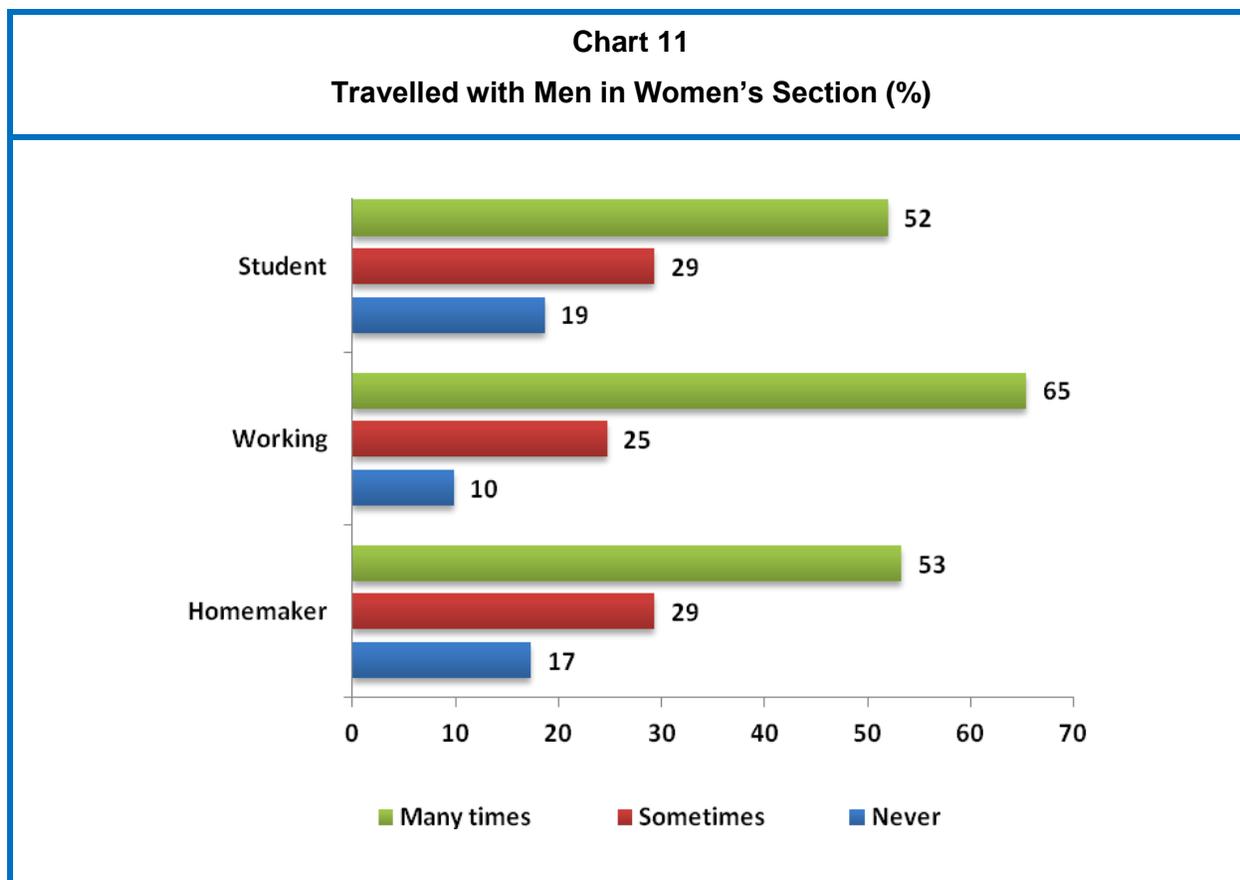
Chart 10 expresses the types of harassment reported by all three categories of female commuters. Two major types of harassment accounting for 34 percent responses each are staring/leering and deliberate contact/groping. Comments/remarks with sexual innuendos and obscene gestures are also fairly common constituting 12 percent and 9 percent respectively. Other types of harassment that are stated include men blocking the way for women to disembark or following after disembarking and stalking or making animal or kissing noises.



In Karachi buses/mini-buses have two sections; the women’s section being in the front one with less than a dozen seats and the larger men’s section in the back. The two sections are partitioned; usually, however, there is a gap or opening that allows movement between the two sections. Women do not prefer to sit in men’s section; although men sit in the women’s section if seats are vacant. Chart 11 shows that 60 percent of working women said that they travelled many times and other 25 percent said that they travelled sometimes with men sitting in women’s section. Among other categories of respondents, over 50 percent stated that they travelled many times and 29 percent stated that they travelled sometimes with men sitting in women’s section. These respondents reported that they feel uncomfortable in this situation as buses are usually overcrowded.

Interestingly, men also use the opening to enter the women’s section to exit the bus from front gate and vice versa. Nearly half (46 percent) of respondents consider that as a form of harassment; given that space in the women section is limited and crowded. Mostly, men using the women’s section to exit engage in deliberate contact/groping.



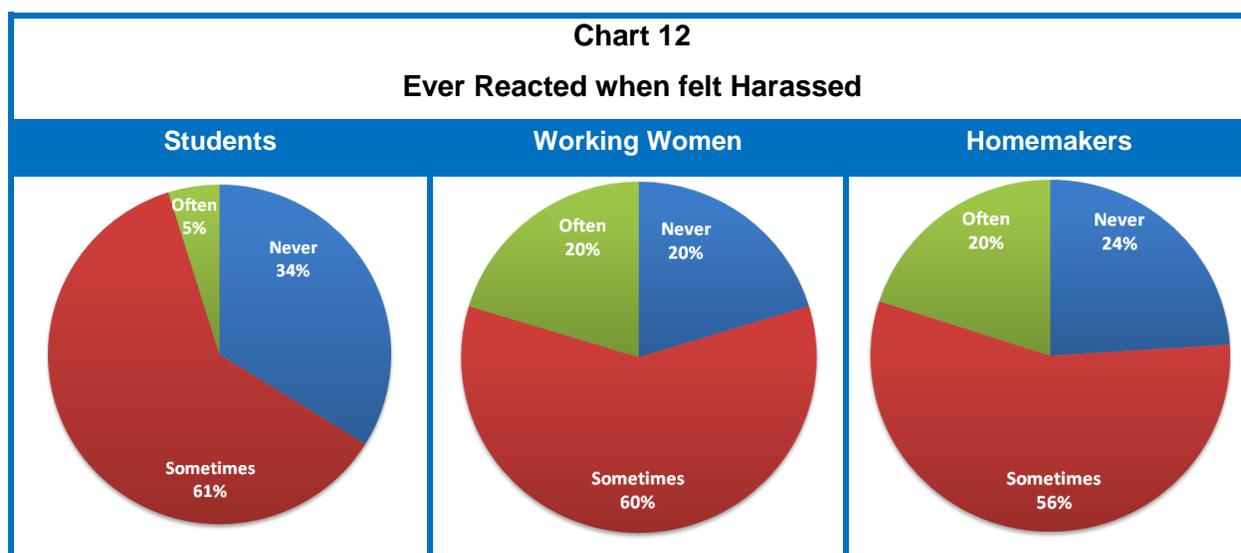


**Box 2**  
**Respondents' observations pointing out types of harassment**

- Men and boys on motorbikes follow *chingchis*, if we are sitting on a seat facing backwards, they pass 'obscene or crude' remarks as they pass-by; and some even touch us.
- Men and boys in cars and on motorbikes stop at bus stops and invite us to come with them.
- One man got hold of my *dupatta* (scarf) as I was about to get off from the bus and no one intervened.
- One man came and sat beside me in the women's compartment. When I asked him to get up, he replied that I was an educated women and can sit with men, "so why not with me". He got up when other women rebuked and asked him to go behind, but he kept smiling at me.
- One boy threw a chit at me which had his phone number.
- Since I take the bus at more or less the same time every day, men hovering around also board the bus at the same time.

### 7.5. Reaction when felt Harassed

The findings show that females react to incidences of harassment occurring in buses/mini-buses or *chingchis*. The proportion of those who react sometimes is about 60 percent in case of students and working women and slightly lower at 56 percent in case of homemakers (Chart 12). Comparatively, students react less on such incidences as the proportion of those who never react is 34 percent, compared to 20 percent and 24 percent in the case of working women and homemakers.

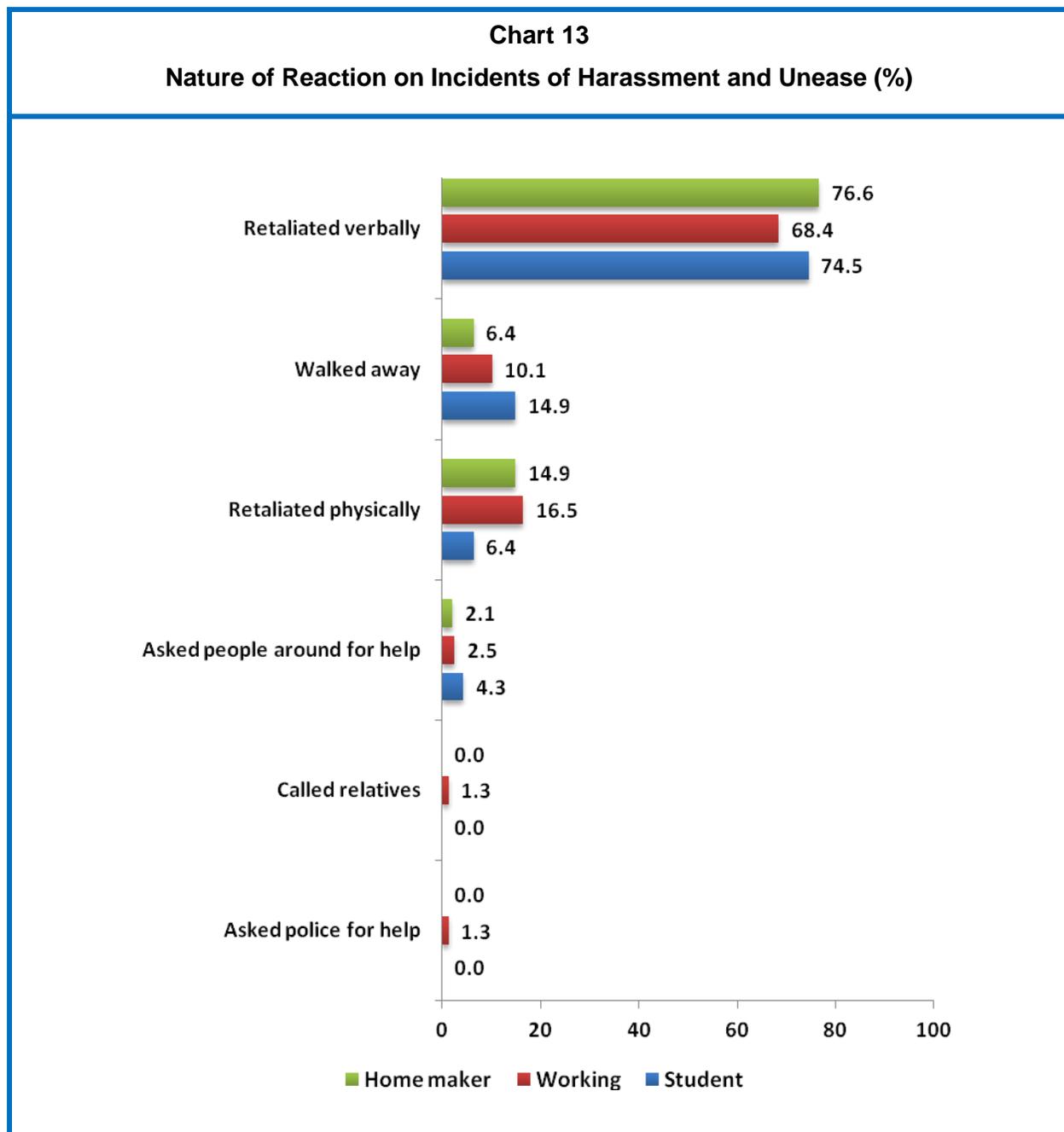


### Box 3

#### Respondents' observations stating types of retaliation

- I complained to the driver about harassment by a male passenger and the driver ordered him out of the bus.
- One girl got on to the bus and told me that a car was following her. I asked the driver to stop for a while and we got off and rebuked the car driver.
- A man tried to touch me; I began shouting and the other passengers beat him up.
- A man touched me and I punched him with my nail cutter.
- A man touched me and I punched him with my hairpin.
- A man touched me and I punched him with my pen.
- Once a conductor tried to touch me and the passengers beat him up.
- One woman slapped a man who was trying to touch her and he slapped her back.

Chart 13 shows that those who react on such incidences generally retaliate verbally. Working women and homemakers reported that they also retaliate physically. Proportion of those who walk away by ignoring such actions is higher among students, compared to other two categories of respondents. The findings also indicate that females hardly ask for help, including from the police.





### 7.6. Effects of harassment

Commuters, inevitably, cope with harassment and the responses are immediate and subsequent. Data of effects of harassment is tabulated in Table 4. The immediate effect is low for about half the working women and homemakers. Students, however, respond more. About 31 percent of students, 23 percent of working women and 20 percent of homemakers reduce using public transport and use privately hired taxis and rickshaws.

The subsequent effect is more lasting. Nearly 40 percent of students said that they avoid travelling after dark; thereby, restricting their mobility especially with regard to socializing. More significantly, about 40-45 percent of all three categories have started to wear the *hijab* and cover themselves with *chadar* as a means of protecting themselves from harassment.

<b>Table 4</b>						
<b>Effects of Harassment in Public Buses and Chingchi</b>						
Nature of Effects	Students		Working Women		Homemakers	
	Immediate	Subsequent	Immediate	Subsequent	Immediate	Subsequent
<b>Share (%)</b>						
No effect	37.1	-	50.7	-	51.0	0.0
Reduced commuting from public transport	30.6	-	23.2	-	20.0	0.0
Changed travel pattern/route	-	5.6	1.4	18.8	2.0	0.0
Someone accompany you while travelling	16.1	16.7	8.7	12.5	8.0	25.0
Avoid going out alone after dark	6.5	38.9	2.9	43.8	8.0	17.0
Prefer to cover/wear Hijab while travelling	9.7	38.9	11.6	18.8	4.0	42.0
Left educational institution/job	-	-	1.4	6.3	6.0	16.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>



<b>Box 4</b> <b>Respondents' observations showing nature of grievances</b>	<b>Box 5</b> <b>Respondents' observations revealing helplessness and tolerance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We don't complain, as men in our society don't tolerate women who take a stand and become abusive, if they do so.</li><li>• We don't complain for fear that the harasser will follow us home and cause more harm.</li><li>• Our parents ask us not make an issue of the incident, as it will invite ill repute. Girls have to be mindful of their honour.</li><li>• The law does not protect women, so we have to accept this situation.</li><li>• How can we ask the police for help, if they themselves harass us sometimes?</li><li>• I stopped using buses because of harassment and now hired a rickshaw, but it is very expensive.</li><li>• I dropped out of college, because one boy was stalking me.</li><li>• School and college girls get scared and don't retaliate, so these men take advantage</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Because of overloading, touching happens 'involuntarily'; we just have to tolerate.</li><li>• <i>Chingchis</i> are preferable as we have to wait less compared to buses; but space between seats is less, which causes knees to touch if men are sitting on opposite seats; we have no choice but to tolerate.</li><li>• When I complained to the driver about a man harassing me, I was told to get off from the bus.</li><li>• Men are prone to behave as such; but we have to commute for work and have to tolerate their behavior.</li><li>• I work applying henna and visit homes. Before my marriage I used buses and <i>chingchis</i> and faced harassment. Now my husband drops and picks me or I use rickshaws.</li><li>• We are poor and cannot afford rickshaws, are forced to use buses and face whatever there is.</li></ul>

## 8. FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE HARASSMENT

Women’s attitude towards perceived factors that motivate harassment in public transport is also explored. The responses are categorized in terms of self-blame, male nature, physical factors, and policy factors (Table 5).

<b>Reasons for Harassment</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Working Women</b>	<b>Homemakers</b>
<b>Share (%)</b>			
<b>Self-blame</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>16.9</b>
Women dressing that provoke indecent behavior among men	7.5	10.7	11.6
Women do not act decently/ appropriately	4.3	2.5	5.2
<b>Perpetrator’s nature, male privileging</b>	<b>44.4</b>	<b>47.2</b>	<b>50.0</b>
Men will be men, boys will be boys	9.6	15.7	9.3
Men are sexually frustrated	11.2	14.2	20.3
Lack of education among males	23.5	17.3	20.3
<b>Physical factors</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>22.7</b>
Bus is overcrowded	20.3	21.3	21.5
Poor lightening	1.1	0.5	0.0
Lack of security personnel/CCTVs	1.6	3.0	1.2
<b>Policy factors</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>10.5</b>
No implementation on law against indecent behavior & harassment	4.3	5.6	2.9
Police do not treat such complaints seriously	11.2	4.6	4.7
Perpetrators go unpunished	5.3	4.6	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It is interesting to find that respondents largely attribute male nature and privileging as a major reason for harassment. Within this, lack of education and sexual frustration are significant components. The next important factor is physical, i.e., over-crowding in buses. Students also

indicated policy factors like non-seriousness of police in treating such complaints and failure of implementation of laws and punishment of perpetrators. Some respondents also blamed women themselves in provoking such incidences by inappropriate dressing.

**Box 6**

**Respondents' observations indicating acts that promote harassment**

- TV plays show harassment scenes and plant ideas in vulnerable and cunning minds.
- Some buses display 'obscene' posters, jokes, cartoons, pictures or advertisements and play 'unethical loud music/songs', which encourages bad behavior.
- It is not only uneducated men who harass us; educated men too are as bad.
- Men who are unemployed spend time at bus stops and harass women for fun.
- If women dress improperly, they invite harassment.
- Women's dress is not the cause, even *burqa* clad (veil wearing) women have to face harassment.



## 9. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS PUT FORWARD BY FEMALE COMMUTERS

Respondents were asked to suggest measures they feel can help in preventing harassment and in providing women friendly facilities in public transport and were allowed more than one suggestion. These responses are presented in Table 6.

All respondents suggested separate ladies buses or a larger women's section with strict separation between the male and female sections. Students and working women also asked for the police to play their due role in providing help t female commuters who complain of harassment.

	<b>Students</b>	<b>Working Women</b>	<b>Homemakers</b>
Number of Responses	108	111	94
<b>Share (%)</b>			
Separate ladies bus	30	34	37
Increase size of female's section in bus and strict separation of the two sections	30	28	27
Police provide help to female commuters	13	15	4
Spread awareness regarding female harassment	5	8	7
Implement law properly	9	6	1
Increase number of buses	7	5	7
Seat by seat commute only	1	1	6
Operate only big Bus	3	1	5
Buses should have adequate light at night	0	1	1
Driver should stop bus at bus-stop while women are getting-off	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Box 7**

**Respondents' observations on shortage of transport**

- Shortage of buses causes congestion and provides opportunities for touching.
- Danger of harassment is less in big buses, as small buses are congested and provides more opportunities for touching.
- Shortage of public transport is a cause for men hanging out on *chingchis*, even if women are sitting on the seats.
- Media should raise awareness about respecting women and avoid obnoxious behavior.
- School curriculum should include material on respecting women.



## **10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The literature and findings from this research suggest that threat to girls' and women's safety while travelling restrains their mobility. This often results in decisions of not sending girl child to school or not letting women to seek employment. In a country like Pakistan, where enrolment rate of girls' and of female labour force participation rate are already low, lack of adequate and secure transport compounds the problem. Given this, mainstreaming gender in transport policies has also become an important aspect of women empowerment in terms of access to socio-economic opportunities.

An important prerequisite is to adopt a rights-based approach to gendered development. This approach demands a commitment to improvement in the well-being of communities and individuals within communities, on the basis of women's active, unfettered and meaningful participation in development as well as in the fair distribution of the resulting benefits (UN Declaration on the Right to Development; Mashiri et al, 2005). Women are often marginalised in the appraisal and decision-making processes, due to culturally embedded gender roles, statuses and time-constraints (Mahapa, 2003). Initiatives are required to take women on board, including beneficiaries, in decision-making processes for planning, implementing and evaluating gender-sensitive policies and programmes.

The analysis identified the following set of recommendations for government action to help prevent occurrences of harassment.

- A major factor that leads to harassment in buses/mini-buses is overcrowding. Findings from survey indicate that women's first priority is to introduce separate buses for them. Their second priority is to introduce bigger buses with larger women's section and strict partitioning between women's and men's section.
- Sensitizing police officials about handling gender related cases has also been suggested. Generally, women hesitate in going to police stations due to women unfriendly attitude of police officials and its overall environment. The process of registering a case is also very cumbersome and the police do not take such cases seriously.
- Women police stations need to be expanded and strengthened by bringing in motivated and result oriented lady police officers and training of the existing staff. These women police stations need to be in the mainstream, rather than a side-lined activity. Also, mobile vans of women police should remain on rounds on regular basis.

- Another important recommendation is to create awareness among the general public about respecting women and refraining from obnoxious behavior. None of the drivers, conductors or passengers are aware of the code of conduct in public transport and basic human rights of passengers. In this connection, media can contribute in raising awareness against harassment acts as well as providing information about laws on such harassment and punishment to perpetrators. Although a long-term process, inclusion of material in school curriculum on respecting women will pave the way in this regard.

The above suggestions appear to be plausible by themselves. However, the problem seems to be much larger and much more deep-rooted. One civic rights activist attributed the public transport situation in Karachi to the sharp divide between 'haves' and 'have-nots.' The haves are the policy making ruling elite, who own private transport – and multiples of them per family. They have never used public transport and are oblivious of the problems faced by the have-nots. In the absence of systematic change and change in the interests of the policy making class, the measures being suggested to address harassment of women in public transport remain mere palliatives.

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