

Women and Security in Pakistan

By: Mohammed Asif Rana and Kishwar Sultana

Background

Women and Security in Pakistan is a background paper in order to broadly understand diverse issues and conflicts that have a bearing on women and girls security in Pakistan and to inform Women Regional Network's future action.

Women Regional Network is a body of women's rights organizations and experts, from South Asia and other regions, getting together with the purpose to assist communities of women leaders in Pakistan, Afghanistan and India to learn from each other and construct common agendas across borders on the inter-linkages between security and extremism; corruption and the militarization of aid and development as they impact women's lives. The Network is motivated with the vision to build enduring and productive relationships among women leaders in South Asia to ensure women's concerns and voices are included in the highest levels of dialogue; as well as engage a network of global champions who support women to meet these critical issues with greater resiliency.

WRN rolled out in 2010 and it was in the process in 2011 when a regional consultation was held in Nepal and the need of expansion of the Network was underscored that the participants of the Consultation identified the rise of extremism, the persistence of corruption and the militarization of development and aid as they impact women's overall security as one of the most important areas of deliberation and future action.

What is Security?

Security for militaristic consumption is a state of the absence of and/or the capability to combat or avert any threat to its assets, sovereignty and the life of its citizens from any foreign and/or local element(s). Theoretically, it is the degree of protection against danger, damage, loss, and crime¹. The Commission on Human Security (CHS) however puts 'human' in the center and "defines human security as the protection of 'the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and fulfillment'. Human security² means protecting fundamental freedoms. It means protecting people from critical and

¹<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Security>

²Dr. MahbubulHaq first drew global attention to the concept of "human security" in the United Nations Development Programme's 1994 Human Development Report and sought to influence the UN's 1995 World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen (Wikipedia). Human security is an emerging paradigm for understanding global vulnerabilities whose proponents challenge the traditional notion of national security by arguing that the proper referent for security should be the individual rather than the state. Human security holds that a people-centered view of security is necessary for national, regional and global stability. The concept emerged from a post-Cold War, multi-disciplinary understanding of security involving a number of research fields, including development studies, international relations, strategic studies, and human rights. The United Nations Development Programme's 1994 Human Development Report[1] is considered a milestone publication in the field of human security, with its argument that insuring "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" for all persons is the best path to tackle the problem of global insecurity. Critics of the concept argue that its vagueness undermines its effectiveness; that it has become little more than a vehicle for activists wishing to promote certain causes; and

pervasive threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that, when combined, give people the building blocks for survival, livelihood and dignity. In this sense, human security is far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance and access to economic opportunity, education and healthcare. It is a concept that comprehensively addresses both "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want". To attain the goals of human security, the Commission proposes a framework based on the protection and empowerment of people.

- Empowerment implies a bottom up approach. It aims at developing the capabilities of individuals and communities to make informed choices and to act on their own behalf.
- Protection refers to the norms, processes and institutions required to shield people from critical and pervasive threats. It implies a "top-down" approach. States have the primary responsibility to implement such a protective structure. However, international and regional organizations, civil society and non-governmental actors, and the private sector also play a pivotal role in shielding people from menaces³."

Women rights defenders however ascribe "integration of different conditions, values and feelings" to the term "security" and define it as the combination of:

"Freedom from Constant Threats - The absence of war, living without fear and [all forms of] violence, freedom of movement, stability, security, smiling children, homes, going for a walk at night unimpeded, etc.

Economic Security - Employment, food, social justice, the absence of oppression, etc

Political Security- Democracy, freedom of thought, freedom of choice, legitimacy, the rule of law, solidarity, the United Nations, etc.

Environmental Security- Eco-friendliness, environmentalism, unpolluted air and water, etc.

Health Security - Health protection, accessible medical treatment, etc."⁴

This security paradigm is not exhaustive in its given form however it is certainly inclusive and spans over the personal wellbeing to that of the community also and is therefore "different from the centuries-old, 'traditional' sense of security, which is rooted in the set, militaristic concepts of war and conflict, which are inextricably linked to weapons, armed forces and patriarchy. A stand-alone concept that is somehow separate from other parts of their lives. This concept of integrated security recognizes that women's security is about everything. That justice and reparation are as important as gaining the right to communal land, as freedom to speak, travel and to work without any obstacles, and as access to spiritual leaders. It is about not having to explain your work. Or that you are human. It is all connected. The concept breaks down artificial boundaries between the 'public' (open, real,

that it does not help the research community understand what security means or help decision makers to formulate good policies (Wikipedia).

³<http://ochaonline.un.org/Default.aspx?alias=ochaonline.un.org/humansecurity>

⁴Source: Women Human Rights Defenders' Security Strategies, Jane Barry with Vahida Nainar

important,hard, serious) and the 'private' (closed, hidden, soft, less significant) sides of security.And it links them together. Real life is not separate, so security isnot, either.Every aspect of the life of a woman's human rights defenders affects how she thinks about security - and whethershe thinks about it at all. Her health, happiness, well-being, stress levels. Her family.Whether she can keep her job and pay her bills. Her identity, who she loves. How shefeels about herself -her sense of worth and self-respect. Whether she feels expendable,particularly in comparison to others"⁵.

The Women Regional Networksets before itself the same paradigm of integrated security. This background paper tries to explain Pakistan's context versus women and girls.

Situation of Security and its Impact on Women in Pakistan

Security paradigm for women is inclusive in nature and is not restricted to a specific case. This paradigm is based on the understanding and experience of different regional, national, sub-national, ethnic and sectarian conflicts, familial, communal, social, political and economic issues that have direct and/or indirect bearing on the accumulative sense of security for women and early warning indicators that prompt women, of different classes, ages, ethnic, sectarian and professional backgrounds to take necessary action. This is why that even though the Constitution of Pakistan, Acid Throwing Bill, Harassment at Workplace Act, Pakistan Penal Code (Amendment 509 particularly), Domestic Violence Bill (ICT) and Anti-Women Practices Bill are great milestones and are very comprehensive in protecting women's interests and wellbeing, but they fail to address the question of security from women's perspective.

Pakistan in fact presents an abysmal scenario with respect to the regional, national and ethnic and sectarian conflicts and issues. The country shares its longest border of about 2500 kilometers with Afghanistan, which has been a volatile place for over three decades now, and then there is a disputed territory of Kashmir between Pakistan and India that make security challenges for women complex, more serious and protracted in nature.

With respect to Kashmir, "there is hardly any AJK women narrative on the Kashmir conflict. Dr.ShaheenAkhtar, senior Research Fellow, at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), maintains that the women in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, especially ones from the dividing families; and those living along the LoC and in refugee camps are directly affected by the conflict across the Line of Control (LoC) in the Indian held Kashmir". This impact appears in terms of division of their family members, physical insecurity at times of tensions between India and Pakistan, economic insecurity when male members of the family – who are mainly the bread winners - are trapped on the other side of Kashmir,there is high ratio of unemployment amongst youth, and the sense of insecurity concerning life, health and honor of women prevailing in general conditions of refuge. Based on the refugee flows at different times in 1947, 1965-1971 and pso-1990, Dr. Shaheenhighlights that around 8 per cent of the total population in AJK is composed of refugee families and nearly half of them happen to be women⁶.It is also relevant to note with respect to economic insecurity that among different ironies imposed by this international dispute, Kashmiri women have to forego their right to inheritance if they marry men who are Pakistani nationals.

Pakistan-Afghanistan context with respect to security concerns for women is also not very different. The cold war, the rise of Taliban and the subsequent war on terror combine together to push Pakistan to

⁵Source: Women Human Rights Defenders' Security Strategies, Jane Barrywith VahidaNainar

⁶<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-6-105383-AJK-women-narrative-missing-on-Kashmir-conflict>

host the world's largest refugee population, and an unending agony for about one million women and young refugee girls and about one million internally displaced since the war on terror. "With the political instability and upheaval that began in the late 1970s, Afghanistan descended into a pattern of conflict, instability and chaos that has continued through the present [and has a spill-over effect in Pakistan]. More than two million Afghans are estimated to have been killed, over a million disabled and state institutions all but collapsed. Rape of women and children became an all too common occurrence, as did arbitrary detentions, summary executions and torture. Though no accurate counts exist of those who have disappeared, many Afghans still do not know what has happened to missing family members⁷.

War in itself is a volatile phenomenon and a masculine narrative, and even if we take in purely economic terms, it eats on resources before, during and even after its eruption. In the context of Pakistan and Afghanistan, it cuts into the development spending, and pushes women out because they are already somewhere down the masculine priority. Much has been written about the wars in Afghanistan and its fallout in Pakistan and the basic narrative of the conflict, in one form or another, has been repeated in countless books, academic articles and news reports. But the voices of ordinary Afghans and IDPs are often absent from these accounts, and yet it is the Afghan and Pakistani women who are most affected by the violence. Kunar, an Afghan refugee in Pakistan, narrates his views in a study carried out in 2009 that three decades of war created a lot of problems for them. They migrated to Pakistan, their houses were destroyed, their land and property were grabbed by warlords, the economy was badly affected, their sons and daughters were deprived of education, their women were 'insulted'...schools, hospitals, roads and factories were destroyed and fear of war caused many mental problems. He is one among two to three millions who have the same experiences. He is among many refugees who have never known Afghanistan to be at peace, have spent most of their lives outside of their country and have not been able to develop the skills that would enable them to integrate into life in Afghanistan. According to a recent survey of refugees living in Pakistan, 71% reported having no formal education, 89% having no skills and 71% no monthly income⁸. This consequently have a bearing on women. They have to put up domestic violence meted out by the male members. The male refugee members, who are often jobless, act so to exhibit their superiority over women of their family who happen to find some work as maids/domestic servant. As refugees in Pakistan, Afghan women have in fact several challenges that stem out once they acquire the status of refugees and have to live their life in camps. It has been observed that camps are unfriendly for women, because there is:

"My cousin was abducted and raped during the Mujahideen time. It was very bad. She had to leave school. All of the girls in my village were kept home from school after that, because of fear of the Mujahideen." – Female, Herat

"Women in our district suffered the most, especially during the Mujahideen period since both sides raped many women from the other side's ethnic group." – Male, Kunduz

"The majority of those who have suffered are women. Some are widows and sometimes they were raped, sexually assaulted or physically attacked during the war." – Female, Daikundi

Source: The Cost of War: Afghan Experiences of Conflict 1978 – 2009

The UNHCR estimates that 80% of all refugee women [in the world] experience rape and sexual abuse, which are used as weapons of war. In this context, sexual assault and rape not only affect individual survivors but also the family and the community to which the survivor is related. It is designed to humiliate and destroy women targeted because of their ethnic, religious, racial, or political identity.

<http://www.startts.org.au/default.aspx?id=201>

⁷ The Cost of War: Afghan Experiences of Conflict 1978 – 2009

⁸ The Cost of War: Afghan Experiences of Conflict 1978 – 2009

- “Inadequacy of light or absence of light within camps increase women's vulnerability
- Constant fear of sexual abuse, harassment, physical and psychological violence and incidences of abduction are much more
- Absence of privacy for breastfeeding mothers, males thronging around toilets designated for females and relief provision areas, absence of women-only washrooms or construction of washrooms too far away from the camps in dark conditions. This context increases the likelihood in making women more vulnerable
- Possibility of marrying girls at the tender age or selling them off to avert the danger of ‘dishonor’
- Lack of knowledge and skills among the relief and rehabilitation teams about women's protection and women specific needs
- Social problem of considering women a problem instead of efficient and equal member of the family/team/refugee in order to mitigate the odds

Women IDPs problems are not very different from Afghan women. Starting with the denial of right to education as Taliban razed down about 500 girls school in less than three years of rampagewhich made women’s future bleak, their problems become more complex as IDPs. There is little planning seen even in military operations that are meant to free local population from the menace of extremists. Pregnant women for example who were uprooted by the violence in the Malakand region, northwest Pakistan, were reported to be suffering acutely in refugee camps between 2009 and 2011. Displaced women from Swat, Buner and Dir - the three affected districts –in 2009 for example, were reported to face critical health problems that military operations should have urgently addressed. According to the estimates of the United Nations Population Fund, some 69,000 pregnant women were displaced since the start of military operations on Apr 27, 2009 in the three adjoining districts of the province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa”⁹.

With respect to sub-national and ethnic and sectarian conflicts and issues in Pakistan, women from Karachi to GilgitBaltistan and from FATA to Lahore have a shared agony when it comes to the integrated concept of security. There is even a sublime acceptance of violence and insecurity as in the case of Malala Yousafzai who was shot by Taliban in the head, in Swat, for her love for education, and it was followed by a campaign of right-wingers that thought the case was only fabricated to support military operation in Waziristan. Before that we witnessed manhandling of 14 years’ down-syndrome girl-child, Rimsha Masih, in the heart of capital of Pakistan, who was charged under a fabricated blasphemy crime, and she and her family got almost killed by the hands of vigilantes. The family had to re-locate even though a culprit religious-zealot was found involved in messing with evidence against Rimsha so that she get a punishment for a crime she did not commit. But this is of course not the end. Shakeela, from Sindh, for example, is a witness to massacre of 16 young boys, who belonged to different ethno-political groups of her area, at Karachi. One of them was her nephew and three were his mates whom she knew given the cultural privilege that youths’ friends do come to their mates’ houses easily. She told that she knew them from their childhood. She shared the list and revealed that all of them were educated but remained unemployed for a long time until 2005 when the local government elections took place and these young boys fell to different political parties to secure some economic support. Later, they found jobs but also became a target of each other political rivalries. One of them was the only son of a widow who doesn’t leave the grave of his son for she has almost lost her senses and every social protection that her son could get for her.

⁹ Women Action for Peace and Non-violence, Insan Foundation Trust, 2012

A woman from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa shared the agony of fear that her family is currently experiencing. "My sister and her husband are both human rights activist. They had been receiving warnings from different zealots for their services to the women in distress, especially those who were victims of violence. They kept relocating themselves but still they could not save their young son who got assassinated in front of their own doors by one of the militant factions. This is how one gets paid in our society for their services for the betterment of human kind", she gasps with anguish and pain in her heart.

An elderly woman from Lahore, and a religious minority group, upon condition of confidentiality of her name and identity, posed a serious challenge to the assurance of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Islamic teachings which guarantee security of life to all citizens including religious minorities, no matter they are "muahid¹⁰" or conquered. She told that her brother was shot dead in front of her eyes because he was believed to be a non-muslim. She told that she locks herself up in a bathroom whenever her husband leaves house to fetch edibles from the market or to do something else because of constant fear in the back of her head. "I look at my children as if they are tiny sparrows, who grow in my nest but will have to leave it never to return." She walks a tight rope of hope and threat whenever her children decide to visit her from abroad. She doesn't leave Pakistan for the love of this country.

A young Hazara woman from Balochistan shared her experiences and thoughts, "An incident of target killing has claimed my younger brother's life while its shock took my father away from us within four months. When my father died, I was in a state of shock and anger that why he forgot his seven daughters before dying. This is a horrible reality which Hazara people dwelling in stupendous mountains of Balochistan and surrounding areas are facing. Being inflicted with fear and disappointment, she shares her feelings in these words, "What is the status of those families whose male members have lost their lives in such havoc incidents is well known to me. Each of these families has four or eight daughters and many of them have lost their brothers without any of their fault. Today we are so much depressed and helpless and we have to come out of our homes to earn our livings. What problems we are facing in search of employment or jobs is only known to us. We remain fearful and come out of homes while putting our prestige, integrity and life into danger. We even don't know from which corner of a street sniper may hit us or drag our shawls. We have doubts and fears that we might not be able return and see our near and dear ones. Our mothers pray for our safe return."

"Hazara community is dwelling in two areas of Quetta. Some at Alamdar Road and some at Bruri and there is much distance in between these two localities. We don't have transport facility from the government rather we have made some arrangements for this on self help basis. We are peaceful citizens and pay more taxes than other locals, believing to play our role for the national development instead of mere lip servicing, but even then since the last many years our community is being unduly punished. It seems that some vigilantes of divinity are deciding about our life and death. Our places of worship are being attacked and youth being targeted. They are kept away from jobs. Few days back, a group of vegetable venders of our community, while they were on a way to vegetable market at Saryab Road and Hazara Kunji, were killed. Assailants selectively asked them to step down from the transport and killed them instantly. Similarly, multiple attacks have been made at a van driver we hired for ferrying us from Alamdar Road to Bruri. So, those among the killed ones are our fathers, brothers, elders, mothers, sisters and sons. Our homes are getting deserted and graveyards turning into dwellings. For the whole day we keep looking at doors waiting that our fathers or brothers will return and knock at

¹⁰Muahid is a person or group of persons who accept to live in the Islamic society after it is conquered by the Muslims and the Islamic State is then responsible for their wellbeing and protection.

door, but in return we either receive their dead bodies or information that some unidentified corpses are lying at Saryab Road, HazaraKunji, BMC Hospital or civil hospital. Have their killers ever thought that with which pain the bereaved families are inflicted with or who will be bringing milk for innocent babies? How stoves of these families will be lit and who will be looking after them? It is in fact a Day of Judgment for an eight or a 10 member family whose sole bread earner is viciously killed. Our grief hit hearts appeal for the lives of our dearer but who listens to it?" She questions, "why feuds, conflicts and wars end at the cost of women' helplessness?" Dying souls depart anyway but women left behind have to pay the price for everything.

Her family resides in an area surrounded by mountains from three sides at the other side of which are *Pushtun* dwellings. She informed that a few years back all of them (Pushtun, Baloch, Hazara and other tribes) used to live peacefully and share joy and grief. Children of all those communities used to play together. This togetherness had given them a comfort that whenever any mishap takes place, they would run to take refuge on the other side of the mountain. But now the situation is in the opposite direction and Hazara Community feels that someone from behind those mountains may intentionally attack them.

With perforation of fear in her eyes, she says, "The way our male family members are being killed in front of our eyes, it appears that the day is not far away when attackers will be hurling into our homes to shoot us too. Sometimes we think we must kill ourselves instead of living under this constant fear. My mother says that hunger is so cruel that one has no option but to expose his/her daughters to the dangers of the outside world. Although, in our community much attention is paid to girls' education but traditionally males are family caretakers. Daughters and sisters are not usually allowed to work outside especially among non-family member males. So, one can well understand that what it means for such families when their male members are killed." She continues, "Hatred and blind revenge against Hazara community has reached to such level that even our children are not safe. In schools, we are blamed to be traitors and not citizens of Pakistan. We are falsely blamed for smuggling weapons into Pakistan from Iran and Afghanistan. All picnic spots for our children are closed and since the last eight years we have not been on a picnic. Hunna, Arak, Uskari Park, HazaraKunji and PirGhaib are some small picnic spots but even at those places we cannot enter without proving our identity or showing identity card. It is difficult for us to get jobs. Balochs or Pukhtuns get them." She became silent. She knows hatred cannot be answered with hatred.

Kashmala from AJK said that while travelling from her home to Islamabad, the capital territory, she had a strong sense of deprivation, that people and women from far flung areas do not have opportunities. She also read a poem '*mujhkodexhoizat say, auratnahininsanhood main*'.

Balochistan, for some years, has been a theatre of insecurity both for women and men alike. Stories of missing persons, target killings and the socio economic and psychological impact on the lives of their families, especially women, are now an open secret. Here we discuss a case of a woman to understand what it means to be a woman in a conflict ridden society.

Twenty six year old Nazia Khan[not being introduced with real name for security reasons] comes from Hazara community of Balochistan. Hazara, being third largest community in Afghanistan, makes about 18 percent of Afghan population. According to an estimate about 0.5 million Hazara people live each in the provincial capital of Balochistan (Quetta) and Iran. Ancestors of Hazara people, several years before, get themselves settled in the said province and now are Pakistani nationals. A large number of Hazara people also entered into Pakistan as refugees while their own country (Afghanistan) was at War.

Hazaras are mostly *shiats* or followers of *Fiqah Jafaria* and being members of a sectarian minority in Pakistan are an easy prey of target killings and are subjected to sectarian violence. Nazia presents before us combination of different 'insecurities' that many women in Pakistan face. She is a woman in the first place and then an ethnic minority and a sectarian minority too. Her younger brother became prey of the target killing and she herself feels she might become "missing" one day. The latter two factors add into the overall sense of insecurity that she is up against every moment. She came in contact with Insan Foundation Trust – a WRN member – in a workshop in 2011 and narrated her ordeal.

One of Nazia's brothers is serving in the armed forces and visits home rarely. When he came last time, he trained Nazia and her sisters how to use a 9mm caliber pistol. He advised them to sleep in corridor and fire over seeing even a shadow. He also suggested them to shoot themselves in case they fail to stop suspects from entering into their home. Her brother says he can hear the news of his sisters' death instead of hearing that they were 'missing.' This is a horrible reality which Hazara people dwelling in stupendous mountains of Balochistan and surrounding areas are facing. Being inflicted with fear and disappointment, Nazia shares her feelings in these words, "What is the status of those families whose male members have lost their lives in such havoc incidents is well known to me. Each of these families has four or eight daughters and many of them have lost their brothers without any of their fault. Today we are so much depressed and helpless and we have to come out of our homes to earn our livings. What problems we are facing in search of employment or jobs is only known to us. We remain fearful and come out of homes while putting our prestige, integrity and life into danger. We even don't know from which corner of a street sniper may hit us or drag our shawls. We have doubts and fears that we might not be able return and see our near and dear ones. Our mothers pray for our safe return."

Nazia explains that they are peaceful citizens and pay more taxes than other locals, believing to play our role for the national development instead of mere lip servicing, but even then since the last many years her community as she said was being unduly punished. She said it seems that some vigilantes of divinity were deciding about their life and death. Their places of worship were being attacked and youth being targeted. They are being kept away from jobs. She told that a few days before, a group of vegetable vendors of our community, while they were on a way to vegetable market at Saryab Road and Hazara Kunji, were killed. Assailants selectively asked them to step down from the bus and killed them instantly. Similarly, multiple attacks were made at a van driver that was hired for ferrying them from Alamdar Road to Bruri. So, those among the killed ones are their fathers, brothers, elders, mothers, sisters and sons. Nazia questions, "Why feuds, conflicts and wars end at the cost of women's helplessness?" Dying souls depart anyway but women left behind have to pay the price for everything. Nazia's family resides in an area surrounded by mountains from three sides at the other side of which are *Pushtun* dwellings. Nazia informed that a few years back all of them (*Pushtun*, *Baloch*, *Hazara* and

"A father of five daughters was a vegetable vendor in our area. My mother used to buy vegetables from this vendor and he used to ask her for pray that he could lessen his burden by arranging marriages for his daughters. Just few months ago that vendor has been killed. Yesterday, I saw his younger daughter standing at a railway crossing. That poor little girl is now a 'maid'. The so-called custodians of Islam have provided this future to that poor little soul!!!"

Nazia, from Hazara Ethnic Minority population in Balochistan

other tribes) used to live peacefully and shared joy and grief. Children of all those communities used to play together. This togetherness had given them a comfort that whenever any mishap takes place, they would run to take refuge on the other side of the mountain. But now the situation is in the opposite direction and Hazara Community feels that someone from behind those mountains may intentionally attack them.

With perforation of fear in her eyes, Nazia says, "The way our male family members are being killed in front of our eyes, it appears that the day is not far away when attackers will be hurling into our homes to shoot us too. Sometimes we think we must kill ourselves instead of living under this constant fear. My mother says that hunger is so cruel that one has no option but to expose his/her daughters to the dangers of the outside world. Although, in our community much attention is paid to girls' education but traditionally males are family caretakers. Daughters and sisters are not usually allowed to work outside especially among non-family member males. So, one can well understand that what it means for such families when their male members are killed." She continues, "Hatred and blind revenge against Hazara community has reached to such level that even our children are not safe. In schools, we are blamed to be traitors and not citizens of Pakistan. We are falsely blamed for smuggling weapons into Pakistan from Iran and Afghanistan. All picnic spots for our children are closed and since the last eight years we have not been on a picnic. Hunna, Arak, Uskari Park, HazaraKunji and PirGhaib are some small picnic spots but even at those places we cannot enter without proving our identity or showing identity card. It is difficult for us to get jobs."

Nazia's account unfolds before us a range of issues that may be different from the ones that women in Karachi or GilgitBaltistan (Shiites are also target in GilgitBaltistan) face in the daily mayhem but the ordeal of insecurity in itself is not very different.

Pakistan is a society where security for women and young girls is masculine dictate. This concretely means that for a woman or young girl to be alone, or living alone as a single or widow, is a constant threat. There are many examples that mothers forgive their sons or husbands despite the fact they are killers of their own sisters/daughters [honor killing]. Mothers would do it, not because they love their sons/husbands more at that time but because they cannot afford to live without 'protection' of male, for that situation would invite many insecurities in their subsequent life. They feel they would be harassed in the first place. They know their parents will not accept them back in their homes, because they cannot afford to digest taunts of the rest of the family [that their daughter knowing all what might fall onto her, sacrificed her son/husband, and therefore she does not possess dignity]. They know they cannot survive economically. They know their daughters will also become easy prey of molesters. They know there is more likelihood of their being a soft target for dacoits [and thieves], who might

Afghanistan, Congo and Pakistan are the world's most dangerous countries for women.

This situation is attributed to a barrage of threats ranging from violence and rape to dismal healthcare and "honor killings. India and Somalia ranked fourth and fifth, respectively. TrustLaw asked 213 gender experts from five continents to rank countries by overall perceptions of danger as well as by six risks: health threats, sexual violence, non-sexual violence, cultural or religious factors, lack of access to resources and trafficking. The polled cited cultural, tribal and religious practices harmful to women, including acid attacks, child and forced marriage and punishment or retribution by stoning or other physical abuse.* More than 1,000 women and girls are victims of "honor killings" every year, according to Pakistan's Human Rights Commission.* 90 pct of women in Pakistan face domestic violence

Source: Global Perceptions Survey, TrustLaw (www.trust.org/trustlaw)

also sexually abuse them. Therefore, they don't have any option but to compromise.

In this understanding of the term "security", one is able to feel how insecure a rural woman might feel who is less advantaged because she is often illiterate and her security often depends on what local panchayat decides. She is afraid of becoming another Mukhtaraan Mai. And if she belongs to a religious minority community, insecurity adds up. This is further triggered if she happens to be from an ethnic minority from within a religious minority group and is also HIV positive. A Pakistani semi urban city Gojra witnessed carnage on August 01, 2009 when announcements through mosques in the town urged the Muslims to gather and 'make mincemeat of Christians' — according to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan report. Witnesses told that on Aug 1, around 1,000 people gathered in the town and marched towards Christian Colony. A police party present in the neighborhood did not try to stop the mob which included a number of masked men, the report said. Witnesses told the attackers went about destroying Christians' houses in a very professional manner and seemed to be trained for carrying out such activities¹¹. During the incident, body of a three year old Christian girl was found in the nearby fields. She was killed after being brutally raped. The attackers also made fun of a Christian woman who was having a bath during the attack. They pulled the woman out of bathroom and made her run and beg before them for her life and she was literally naked¹². This incident takes place in Punjab. Sindh also presents a sad picture for women of religious minorities with regards to issues concerning their security. While the world was celebrating International Women's Day under the theme, 'Connecting girls, inspiring futures', women of religious minorities in Pakistan, especially Hindu girls in Sindh, felt humiliated in 2012. Four Hindu girls (Lata Kumari from Karachi, Rinkal Kumari from Mirpur Mathelo, Aamna Kohli from Tando Bago, the constituency of NA speaker Dr Fehmida Mirza, and Aasha Kumari from Jacobabad) were kidnapped and converted to Islam allegedly at gunpoint. The report highlighted that more than 700 families reportedly migrated to India and Southeast Asian countries in a few months¹³.

However this does not mean that urban women are secure. For them challenges are different. We have many examples from Karachi. Karachi is a hub of Pakistan's economic activity and therefore a target of many ethnic, sectarian groups and political groups to mark their respective share in power. The fact-finding team of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan maintained in its report in 2008 that all of the main political parties in the city bear responsibility for the people being massacred in Karachi. Even the political parties that have not assigned armed wings to pull the trigger have a lot to answer for. The report said that in the form of ruling political parties' patronage for criminals, state power and militant powers have come together and the citizens are viewed increasingly through their identity with an ethnic / linguistic / political group. The political parties focus on and watch out for their own financial and political interests rather than the interest of the people at large. State intervention in Karachi's politics has been unlike that in any other big city in Pakistan. Since 2002, political power and state machinery have been used to grab land. While gangs of land-grabbers and mafias have tried to exploit the breakdown of law and order, they do not appear to be the main directors of the horrible game of death and destruction; that distinction belongs to more powerful political groups and it is they who hold the key to peace¹⁴.

¹¹<http://www.pkhope.com/when-gojra-became-godhra/>

¹²<http://friendsoftheoppressed.org/?p=152>

¹³<http://dawn.com/2012/03/09/plight-of-hindu-girls-in-sindh/>

¹⁴<http://www.balawaristan.net/Latest-news/karachi-unholy-alliances-for-mayhem-report-of-an-hrcp-fact-finding-mission.html>

Males become target of this particular situation that exists in Karachi. It is heavily weaponized city and contributes its part in destruction caused by the nearly 900 million small arms in the world today, of which more than 75% are in the hands of private individuals - most of them men - and stored in homes. A gun in the home is much more likely to be used to intimidate or physically injure family members than be used against an outside intruder. Perhaps most shockingly, the greatest risk of gun violence to women around the world is not on the streets, or the battlefield, but in their own homes¹⁵. The estimated total number of guns held by civilians in Pakistan is 18,000,000. The rate of private gun ownership in Pakistan is 11.6 per 100 people. The number of licensed gun owners in Pakistan is reported to be 7,000,000. Possession of weapons is permitted under license. Applicants for a gun owner's license in Pakistan are not required to prove genuine reasons to possess a firearm¹⁶. But besides these bigger glaring realities that come to fore, it is very relevant to note that different health complications are now on the rise among women in Karachi. According to a study carried out in the city, 40 percent pregnant Karachiites suffer stress and depression¹⁷. So, their agony eats into their own mental and physical wellbeing and consequently the entire fabric of the family gets disturbed.

Conclusion

The discussion in this background paper covers less than tip of an ice-berg. It is an established fact in view of various reports of civil society organizations and research institutes, reports and journals of feminists groups, media reports, groups' feedback and notes of day to day observations that 'security' for women is inclusive. It appears to defy the principle of 'the art of defining something' because it is about their inner feeling of dignity, self respect, protection, sacrifice, aspirations, vision and hopes ,it is about their immediate surroundings, of their homes, schools, colleges, streets markets, place of employment, it is about their families and even extended families, it is about their neighbourhood and communities and it is also of strategic nature that is not directly in sight even when they are young girls and venture to look into a distant future. In fact, a very detailed research work is needed on how Pakistani women define security amidst the host of conflicts and issues existing at the regional, national, sub-national, ethnic and sectarian, familial, communal, social, political and economic levels.

To scale it on a pertinent ground, it is advisable to start by putting women in the center of the framework of Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), Constitution of Pakistan, CEDAW, international laws on refugees, and SAARC Social Charter to which Pakistan is a party and which provide for the wellbeing of women in general sense. It is also important that women's insecurity is interpreted with respect to Personal Security, Economic Security, Food Security, Health Security, Environmental Security, and Community Security, and others, both at times of peace and war. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 may also be a very relevant document to guide any possible advocacy on national and regional policy and programs framework formulation.

Pakistan's official position with respect to UNSCR 1325 is not very encouraging though. The state believes that if Pakistan signs the UNSCR 1325, it is tantamount to accepting the fact that Pakistan is at war and then NATO forces have the legitimacy to land in here and take control. So, in different moots at Islamabad, the officials covertly or overtly maintained that only Article 6 of the UNSCR 1325 is relevant to Pakistan which asks to sensitize peace keeping forces in gender related issues. However, in so

¹⁵ IANSA Women's Network

¹⁶ <http://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/pakistan>, <http://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/pakistan>

¹⁷ <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/01/30/city/karachi/40-percent-pregnant-karachiites-suffer-stress-and-depression/>

believing, our State, in a way or other, is denying women's inherent right to participate even in those processes of decision making that relate to their own safety, security and wellbeing. This is what makes "security", "conflict resolution", and even "policy formulation" a masculine narrative. In believing so, the State defies 4Ps, i.e., Prevention, Protection, Participation and Prosecution [even though some at the higher corridors of power may agree, for the sake of rhetoric, that women have the right to participate].

The future action of WRN is therefore rooted on and around the same context. It is about claiming the space available within the Constitution of Pakistan, Pakistan Penal Code, CEDAW, National Plan of Action, Gender Reform Action Programs, SAARC Social Charter and other documents. So, the crux of this paper underscores at least the significance of 3Ps, i.e., Prevention, Protection and Participation with respect to the women's overall sense of security/insecurity. To negotiate the practical obstacles, let's do without the 4th P and stick efforts of the WRN to the mentioned documents. This means WRN needs to focus its efforts on and around Prevention, which means the Network advocates and lobbies for actions aimed to ensure 'prevention' of circumstances that lead to make women insecure and unsafe in view of the accumulative sense explored above. This is a call of gender justice programs and policy thrust with respect to Personal Security, Economic Security, Food Security, Health Security, Environmental Security, and Community Security, and lot more that has yet to be defined by common women themselves. This also means WRN should mobilize its efforts on and around Protection, which in turn means policies and programs on local, provincial, national and regional mechanisms that guarantee women's protection. And last but not least, it means programs on Participation that protect, promote and support women's right to participate in all decision making, especially in conflict resolution, so that women's perspective about peace and Security should have its foot in the discourse and subsequent actions taking place from a street in FATA to a high powered meeting at a five star hotel at Islamabad and elsewhere.