

ASIAN  
DECENT WORK  
DECADE

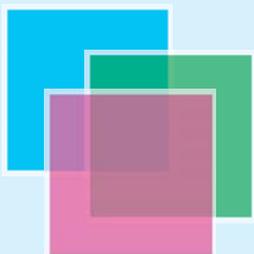
2006  
2015



International  
Labour  
Organization



# Baseline Study to Assess Gender Disparities in Construction Sector Jobs

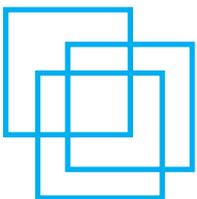


**Towards Gender Parity in Pakistan (TGP) Project**

ILO Country Office for Pakistan



# Baseline Study to Assess Gender Disparities in Construction Sector Jobs



**Towards Gender Parity in Pakistan (TGP) Project**

ILO Country Office for Pakistan

Copyright © International Labour Organization 2011

First published 2011

Publications of the International Labour Office enjoy copyright under Protocol 2 of the Universal Copyright Convention. Nevertheless, short excerpts from them may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to ILO Publications (Rights and Permissions), International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland, or by email: [pubdroit@ilo.org](mailto:pubdroit@ilo.org). The International Labour Office welcomes such applications.

Libraries, institutions and other users registered with reproduction rights organizations may make copies in accordance with the licences issued to them for this purpose. Visit [www.ifrro.org](http://www.ifrro.org) to find the reproduction rights organization in your country.

---

Baseline study to assess gender disparities in construction sector jobs / International Labour Organization ; ILO Country Office for Pakistan, Towards Gender Parity in Pakistan (TPG) Project. - Islamabad: ILO, 2011  
xii, 50

ISBN: 9789221257523 (print); 9789221257530 (web pdf)

International Labour Organization; ILO Country Office for Pakistan

equal employment opportunity / women workers / construction worker / labour supply / labour demand / construction industry / Pakistan

13.02.3

*ILO Cataloguing in Publication Data*

---

The designations employed in ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labour Office concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the International Labour Office of the opinions expressed in them.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

ILO publications and electronic products can be obtained through major booksellers or ILO local offices in many countries, or direct from ILO Publications, International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. Catalogues or lists of new publications are available free of charge from the above address, or by email: [pubvente@ilo.org](mailto:pubvente@ilo.org)

Visit our web site: [www.ilo.org/publns](http://www.ilo.org/publns)

---

Printed in Pakistan

The primary goal of the International Labour Organization (ILO), a specialised agency of United Nations, is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. The ILO is devoted to promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights, pursuing its founding mission that labour peace is essential to prosperity. Thus, the ILO considers gender equality in the world of work as a key element in its vision of Decent Work for All Women and Men for social and institutional change to bring about equity and growth. The main focus or thematic areas of the ILO on gender equality coincide with the organization's four strategic goals, which are to: promote fundamental principles and rights at work; create greater employment and income opportunities for women and men; enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection; and strengthen social dialogue and tripartism. The ILO believes that investment in gender equality and women empowerment is not only a **right** thing to do but a **Smart** thing to do.

Today, Pakistan faces multiple challenges of low economic growth, humanitarian crises, internal and external security issues, and low social development indicators. Women in Pakistan continue to face constraints due to the prevalent socio-cultural norms that deny them equal access to facilities and opportunities. Pakistan still ranks 128 out of 182 on Human Development Index (2010), 124 out of 155 on Gender Development Index (2009) and 132 out of 134 on the Global Gender Gap Report (2009). Pakistan women have limited access to resources; restricted rights, limited mobility and somewhat muted voice in shaping decisions make them highly vulnerable.

Women are increasingly joining the work force but often in the informal economy dominated by low paying and poorly protected jobs that pose threats to their reproductive health and consequently to the welfare of their families. During the reporting period waged and salaried employment increased by only 2.4 percentage points of the unemployed (15+), whilst own-account workers decreased by more than 7 percentage points. The proportion of those working excessive hours has declined slightly since 1999-2000 but only because the proportion of females in total employment, who work less than 30 hours has increased. The proportion of males working excessive hours has risen by 1.4 percentage points since 1999/2000.

Despite recent gains in terms of employment and unemployment a clear gender gap is evident. The female labour force participation rate is 19.6 per cent as compared to males at 69.5 per cent. Women continue to be under-represented and under-utilised in the economy and labour market and tend to predominate as unpaid family workers in agriculture, and hold low paid, low skill jobs and at the lowest tiers of the industrial labour force in urban areas.

Women counted as employed include employees, self employed, unpaid family workers and those generally engaged in low skilled, low wage economic activities. More than half of these women earn less than 60 per cent of men's incomes. The bulk of the female labour force is employed in the informal economy, and is not covered under legal protection and labour welfare institutional mechanisms. In the urban informal sector

67.5 per cent of women work as home-based or casual workers on low wages, or as domestic workers with extremely low remuneration. Women generally appear to be mostly unaware of labour laws and do not have a collective voice, therefore unable to exercise their rights.

For the ILO, Pakistan has been an important and active member and the government of Pakistan has ratified 34 ILO Conventions including C 100 and C 111, which indicates its commitment to pursue the attainment of high standards for its people, particularly for women. Pakistan's Government, Employers' and Workers' representatives have also repeatedly expressed their commitment to work for promotion of a right-based work environment.

The ILO approach is grounded in the rights-based argument and the economic efficiency rationale: not only is gender equality in the world of work a matter of human rights and justice for workers, it also makes good business sense for employers and is instrumental in achieving economic growth and poverty reduction at national levels.

The ILO is pleased to present to you the study named “**Baseline Study to Assess Gender Disparities in Construction Sector Jobs**” carried out by the ILO project entitled “Towards Gender Parity in Pakistan (TGP)” as part of its knowledge-creation for its tripartite constituents in Pakistan. One major objective for this project was to establish benchmarks from gender-perspective regarding various aspects of employment and to work more effectively towards achieving a marked change in the policies and practices.

It is understood that decreasing poverty and inequalities is like chasing a moving target where with the ever increasing population there is a need for more efforts to uphold principles of social justice and rights-based decisions. For this to happen, joint efforts by all the partners, collaborators and institutions would be required and I am glad that the ILO has taken lead in forging such collaborations and coordination among key stakeholders.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the Government of Pakistan, Employers' Federation of Pakistan, Pakistan Workers' Federation and other partner organizations for their demonstrated commitment and immense support to us in our efforts for promotion of Decent Work in Pakistan.

I congratulate the TGP project team of on their successful initiatives to develop a much-needed knowledge base on Pakistan labour market from gender perspective. I am sure these efforts would help ILO and its partners in taking steps towards taking gender equality endeavours to new heights.

Thank you,

**Francesco d'Ovidio**

Country Director

ILO Office for Pakistan

# CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1. LABOUR FORCE – SUPPLY AND DEMAND</b>	<b>03</b>
1.1 The Supply Side	03
1.2 The Demand Side	04
1.3 Labour Supply and Demand – Gender and Regional a Perspective	06
<b>CHAPTER 2. BASELINE STUDY TO ASSESS GENDER DISPARITY IN CONSTRUCTION SECTOR JOBS</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 Gender Disparities in Construction Sector	12
2.2 Survey Design Considerations	13
2.3 Survey Methodology	14
<b>CHAPTER 3. SURVEY FINDINGS</b>	<b>19</b>
3.1 Getting Involved: Women in the Construction Sector Job Market	19
3.2 Decent Work: Working Conditions and Workplace Environment	20
3.2.1 Gender Wage Gap	20
3.2.2 Means of Transportation	21
3.2.3 On-Job Facilities for Women Workers	21
3.3 Glass Walls: Barriers of Women’s Participation in Construction Sector Jobs	22
3.3.1 Non-Traditional Trades for Women	24
<b>CHAPTER 4. ACHIEVING GENDER PARITY: AREAS TO IMPROVE WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN CONSTRUCTION SECTOR JOBS</b>	<b>29</b>
4.1 Policy Interventions and Resource Allocation	29
4.2 Access to Resources and Information	29
4.3 Skills Up-grading and Training Opportunities	30
<b>CHAPTER 5. POSSIBLE FUTURE STEPS</b>	<b>37</b>
5.1 Macro/ Policy Level Interventions	37
5.2 Institutional/Micro Level Interventions	38
<b>ANNEXURE:</b>	<b>42</b>
Annex 1: Questionnaire	42



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is generally agreed that women do not enjoy equal rights and status especially in less developed countries. They are discriminated against in all walks of life. Various theoretical and empirical studies show gender inequalities in salaries, earnings, income and pay scales, and the construction sector is no exception. This gender gap between men and women in the labour market is due to both the contribution of human capital differences and discrimination. These empirical research studies confirm that there is acute gender disparity in the construction sector job market. Although female workers have been catching up, this is happening slowly. This is because women do most of the work in their homes and they are mostly responsible for taking care of their children. It is also evident that some socio-economic and cultural/religious constraints also hinder the participation of women in the construction sector job market. However, some studies show that women's productivity is no different from that of men, and if discrimination does not exist women can earn as much or more than men in some cases.

In order to increase women's participation in various trades in the construction sector in Pakistan, the ILO assigned Complete Human Resource Solutions (CHRS) the task of carrying out a survey of the construction sector to assess gender disparities in various areas. The main objective of this study is to assess and identify those gender disparities and challenges for women in entering and participating in the construction sector due to social, cultural, and religious barriers, which are the main hindrances in attaining gender mainstreaming. The study aimed to contribute to drawing up strategic policy guidelines and suggestions to be incorporated through the ILO to contribute to creating conducive working environments for women.

The specific objectives of this baseline study are as follows:

- To identify and assess the reasons behind gender disparities and discrimination in the construction sector, such as the number of each sex employed, wage gaps, differing work tasks, discrimination in employment and promotions, sexual harassment, facilities available such as toilets and resting areas, and maternity protection.
- To highlight potential areas for women (where women are and can participate) in the construction sector labour market, by analyzing market and employment related trends and requirements.
- To identify and assess the challenges for women within the construction sector regarding human resource quality and the possible lack of required skills through targeting employers and working women.
- To identify potential opportunities that can be further strengthened or focused on to achieve gender equality and acknowledge women's roles in the construction sector.
- To identify academic, vocational and technical institutes which are providing HR and other construction related trainings/courses as well as the job placements for women. This will provide support in highlighting the constraints/barriers: i.e. why the number of women in the construction related work force is still minimal in this sector.
- To identify a number of strategic measures and recommendations for the ILO and other stakeholders to achieve gender mainstreaming in the construction sector.

CHRS conducted a survey of different stakeholders of the construction industry including road contractors, architects, building designers, crush makers, construction related machinery and service providers, interior

decorators, welding works, sanitary fitters, glass fitters, ceiling decorators, tiles fitters, aluminium works and furniture makers in rural and urban areas of Pakistan. Need to say which cities and Districts. Respondents were randomly selected from a number of registered construction related sub-sectors covering all the trades of the labour market.

The results of the survey indicate that the overall working environment is not favourable for women. Very few employer or workers supported the idea of increasing women's participation in construction trades due to socio-economic and cultural/religious constraints. However, the majority of respondents supported women's participation in some construction trades, in particular Contractor/Managers, Architects and Interior Designers. Although the overall percentage of women's participation in these occupations is low, it is on record that those women who were pursuing these trades have been as successful as their male counterparts.

**The key findings of the study are as follows:**

- a. The overall environment of the construction sector shows that there is a very low percentage of women working in the different trades. Women's participation in this important sector should be increased by taking various steps in the several areas identified in this study.
- b. Those women presently working in the construction sector have been facing many type of socio-cultural barriers, religious issues, discrimination, harassment and a lack of equal opportunities.
- c. Generally there is no gender wage gap in most of the sub-sectors of the industry.
- d. There are fewer promotion opportunities available for women than for men.
- e. The majority of women in the sector work as unskilled labourers. They lack skills and training and thus competencies to compete for skilled and technical jobs.
- f. Women's participation in the different trades of the construction sector can be increased by introducing technical and vocational training programs.
- g. Social, religion and cultural barrier refrains women from taking part in various trades of this profession. In this regard, advocacy and awareness raising are necessary if the stereotypical perceptions are to be eliminated.
- h. The enforcement of gender sensitive policies can also ensure interventions to address gender disparities in the construction sector.
- i. The provision of on-job facilities for women in different sub-sectors may be ensured by implementing existing labour laws in letter and spirit.

Based on these finding following interventions are recommended.

**At the macro level:**

- a. Introducing vindicated policy guidelines
- b. Promoting dialogue and enhancing linkages between stakeholders
- c. Promoting advocacy on specific issues.

**At the micro level:**

- a. Enhancing focussed functional skills training programs for young women
- b. Increasing employability of women graduates
- c. Increasing access to information and resources
- d. Analysing market demand
- e. Introducing integrated interventions
- f. Promoting favourable working conditions.





# CHAPTER 1



## 1.1 The Supply Side

Pakistan is the 10th largest country in the world according to the size of its labour force (reference). On the basis of a participation rate of 32.8%, as per the latest available Labour Force Survey (2008-09), the labour force is estimated at 53.72 million. This is a 3.75% increase from the previous year when the labour force was 51.78 million.

Pakistan also has the sixth largest population in the world and has enjoyed a healthy population growth rate in recent decades. Because of this high growth rate, the population – and therefore the labour force - is young with a median age of only 21.3 years.

The Federal Bureau of Statistics (FBS) of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Statistics collects and publishes employment data for the annual Labour Force Survey. Demand for labour has gradually increased during the last decade as the total population and total available labour force have increased during the same period. In 1999-00 approximately 92% of the labour force was employed while in 2008-09, almost 95% of the available labour force was employed. Detailed employment figures are given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Pakistan: Population, Labour Force & Employment (millions)**

Year	Population	Labour Force	Employed Labour Force	Annual Increase	Annual % Increase
2005-06	155.4	46.8	43.2	0.8	1.9
2006-07	158.2	50.5	47.3	4.1	9.5
2007-08	161.0	51.8	49.1	0.8	1.7
2008-09	163.8	53.7	50.8	1.4	2.9
2009-10*	166.5	55.8	52.7	3.2	6.5

Source: FBS Labour Survey Data. Note: \* = Government of Pakistan Estimate

Since 1999-00, overall labour demand has increased by 42% and the total employed labour force has increased from 37.2 million to 52.7 million. Reference Over the last ten years, as had been the case earlier, “agriculture and associated industry sectors” have been the largest employers. In the services industry, the “wholesale and retail trade” and the “community, social and personal services” sectors have been the largest employers. Table 2 shows the sector-wise employment rates since 1997-98.

**Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Employed Persons by Major Industry Division, 1997-2008**

No.	Industry Sector	97-98	99-00	01-02	03-04	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
1	Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting & Fishing	47.25	48.42	42.09	43.05	43.37	43.61	44.60	45.10
2	Mining & Quarrying	0.19	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.09	0.11	0.12	0.12
3	Manufacturing	9.96	11.48	13.84	13.73	13.84	13.54	13.00	13.00
4	Construction	6.26	5.78	6.05	5.83	6.13	6.56	6.30	6.60
5	Electricity, Gas, Other Utility services	0.70	0.70	0.81	0.67	0.66	0.75	0.70	0.69
6	Commerce (wholesale & retail trade)	13.87	13.50	14.85	14.80	14.67	14.42	14.60	15.16
7	Transport, Storage & Communications	5.48	5.03	5.90	5.73	5.74	5.39	5.50	5.23
8	Financing, Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services	0.87	0.82	0.89	1.06	1.10	1.14	1.41	1.56
9	Community, Social & Personal Services	15.36	14.20	15.50	15.01	14.35	14.41	13.70	12.51
10	Other Activities	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.10	0.01
<b>Total Employed Labour Force (millions)</b>		-	37.20	39.50	40.50	43.20	47.30	49.10	50.80
<b>Total Share of Services Industry in Employment (%)</b>		42.54	40.03	44.00	43.10	42.65	42.67	42.14	41.77
<b>Total Employment in Services Industry (millions)</b>		-	<b>14.89</b>	<b>17.38</b>	<b>17.46</b>	<b>18.42</b>	<b>20.18</b>	<b>20.69</b>	<b>21.22</b>

Source: FBS Labour Survey Data. Note: Data for some years is missing as a detailed Labour Force Survey was not carried out.

## 1.2 The Demand Side

In 2008-09, the services industry accounted for almost 42% of the total employed labour force with the largest contributors being the “wholesale and retail trade” and the “community, social and personal services” sectors. Demand for labour in the services sector has grown steadily during the past few years. In 1999-00 the total number of people employed in the services sector was 14.89 million. During the last ten years this has grown by 42.5% to 21.22 million (see table-4). This number will grow to 31.8 million by the year 2024-25 if the growth rate remains the same.

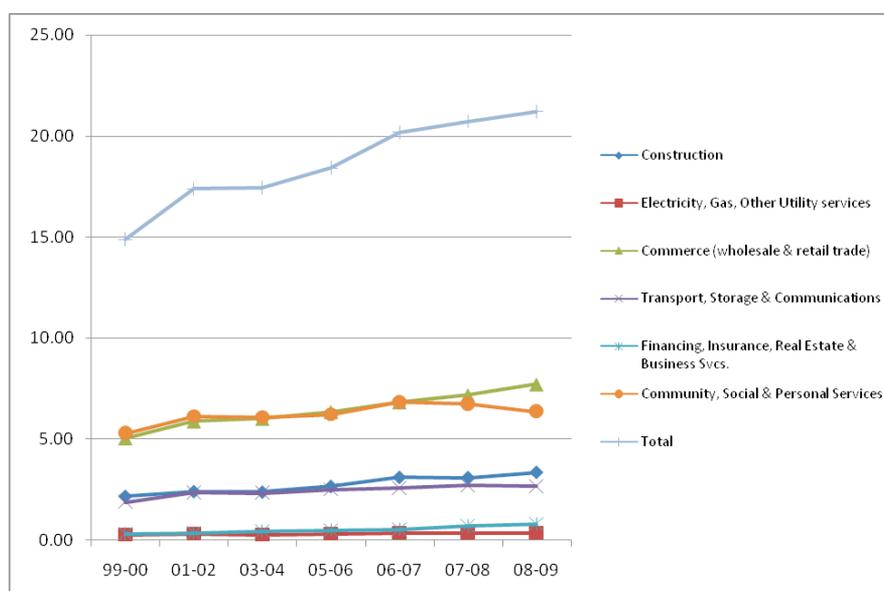
**Table 3: Labour Demand Increase in Services Industry Sub-sectors (millions). 1999 - 2009**

No.	Industry Sector	99-00	01-02	03-04	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
1	Construction	2.15	2.39	2.36	2.65	3.10	3.09	3.35
2	Electricity, Gas, Other Utility services	0.26	0.32	0.27	0.29	0.35	0.34	0.35
3	Commerce (wholesale & retail trade)	5.02	5.87	5.99	6.34	6.82	7.17	7.70
4	Transport, Storage & Communications	1.87	2.33	2.32	2.48	2.55	2.70	2.66
5	Financing, Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services	0.31	0.35	0.43	0.48	0.54	0.69	0.79
6	Community, Social & Personal Services	5.28	6.12	6.08	6.20	6.82	6.73	6.36
	<b>Total</b>	<b>14.89</b>	<b>17.38</b>	<b>17.46</b>	<b>18.42</b>	<b>20.18</b>	<b>20.73</b>	<b>21.21</b>

Source: FBS Labour Survey Data

All of the services industry sectors have shown an increase in labour demand (see Tables 5 and 6). In terms of absolute demand increase, the “Wholesale and Retail Trade” sector leads with an increase of 2.68 million jobs followed by the “Construction” sector with 1.20 million jobs.

**Figure 1: Services Sector Employment Increase (millions)**



In terms of percentage increase the “Financing, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services” sector has shown the greatest increase where employment has grown by 160% between 1999-00 and 2008-09. This is followed by the “Construction” sector where employment has increased by 56% over the same period. The “Community, Social and Personal Services” sector shows the lowest increase at only 20%.

**Table 4: Overall Increase in Services Sub-sector Employment (1999 to 2009)**

No.	Industry Sector	Absolute Increase (millions)	%age Increase
1	Construction	1.20	56%
2	Electricity, Gas, Other Utility services	0.09	35%
3	Commerce (wholesale & retail trade)	2.68	53%
4	Transport, Storage & Communications	0.79	42%
5	Financing, Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services	0.49	160%
6	Community, Social & Personal Services	1.07	20%
	<b>Total</b>	6.32	42%

Source: FBS Labour Survey Data

## 1.3 Labour Supply and Demand: Gender and Regional Perspectives

Women constitute 48.6% of the total population of Pakistan but their share in the labour market is not in proportion to their share in the population. Only 11 million (21.2%) women were in the labour force as compared to 41.05 million (78.8%) men. Only 10.08 million (20.4%) women are employed compared to 39.3 million (79.6%) men. The total unemployed labour force is 2.7 million, with unemployed women at 0.9 million, which is 34.6% of the total unemployed. Female unemployment is 8.5%. However, the female participation rate increased by 4.1% and unemployment has decreased by 8% between 2001-02 and 2007-08. This indicates that female participation in economic activities is increasing and the economy is moving toward reducing the gender gap.

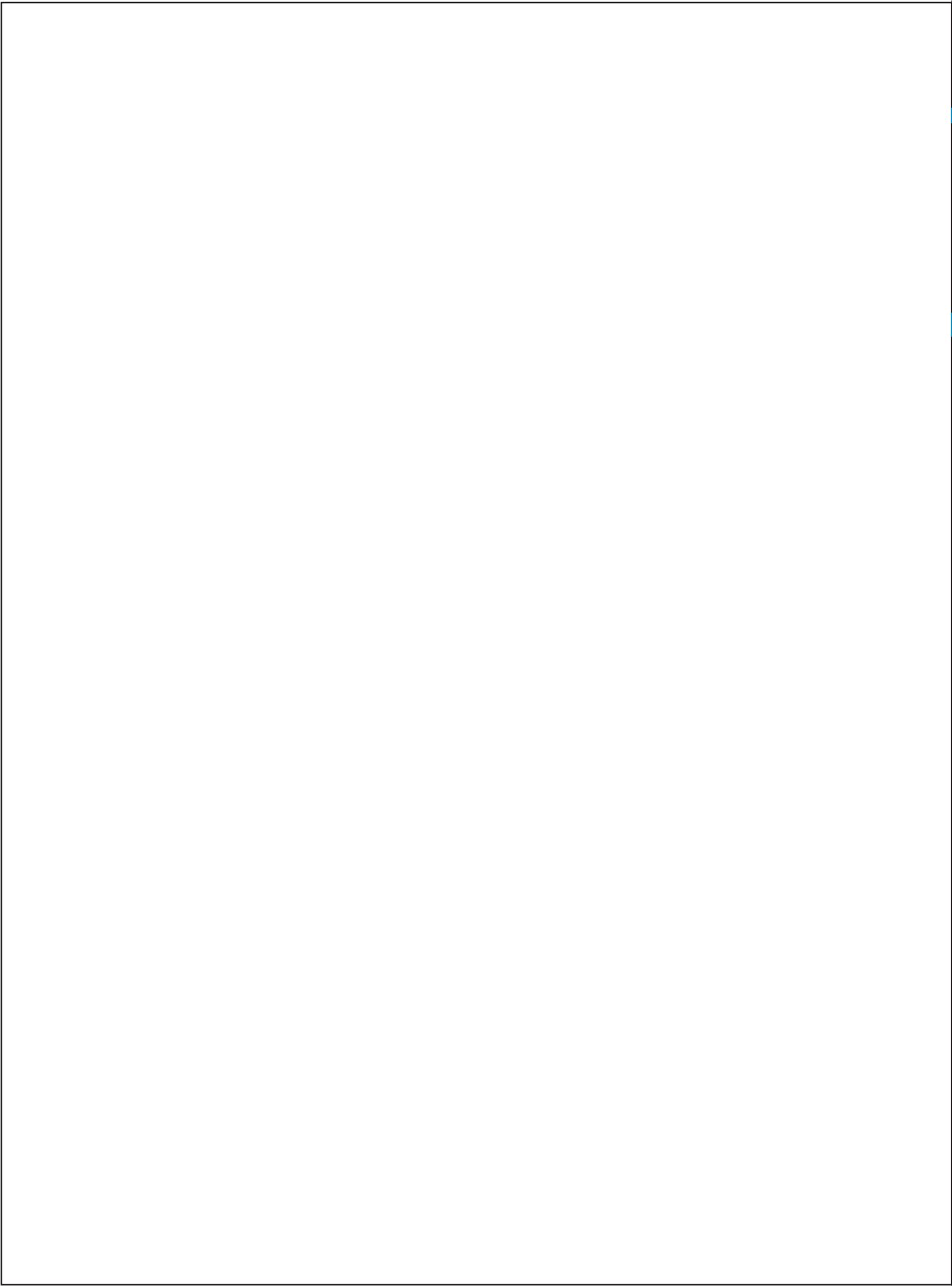
Table 5 provides a regional and gender based perspective on the labour supply for the last two years. The labour supply at the provincial level is directly proportional to the population: Punjab, therefore, has the largest labour force and Baluchistan the smallest. In terms of an urban rural divide, there is a much larger supply of labour in the rural areas as compared to urban areas. However, the proportion of the urban labour force in Sindh is much larger than the proportion in any other province. (In 2008-09 the urban labour force in Sindh was 43% of the total whereas as it was 30% overall in Pakistan and 29% in Punjab). Similarly the overall share of women in the Pakistan labour force was 22% in 2008-09. At the provincial level, this is the highest in Punjab (25%) and dismally low in Balochistan (only 9%).

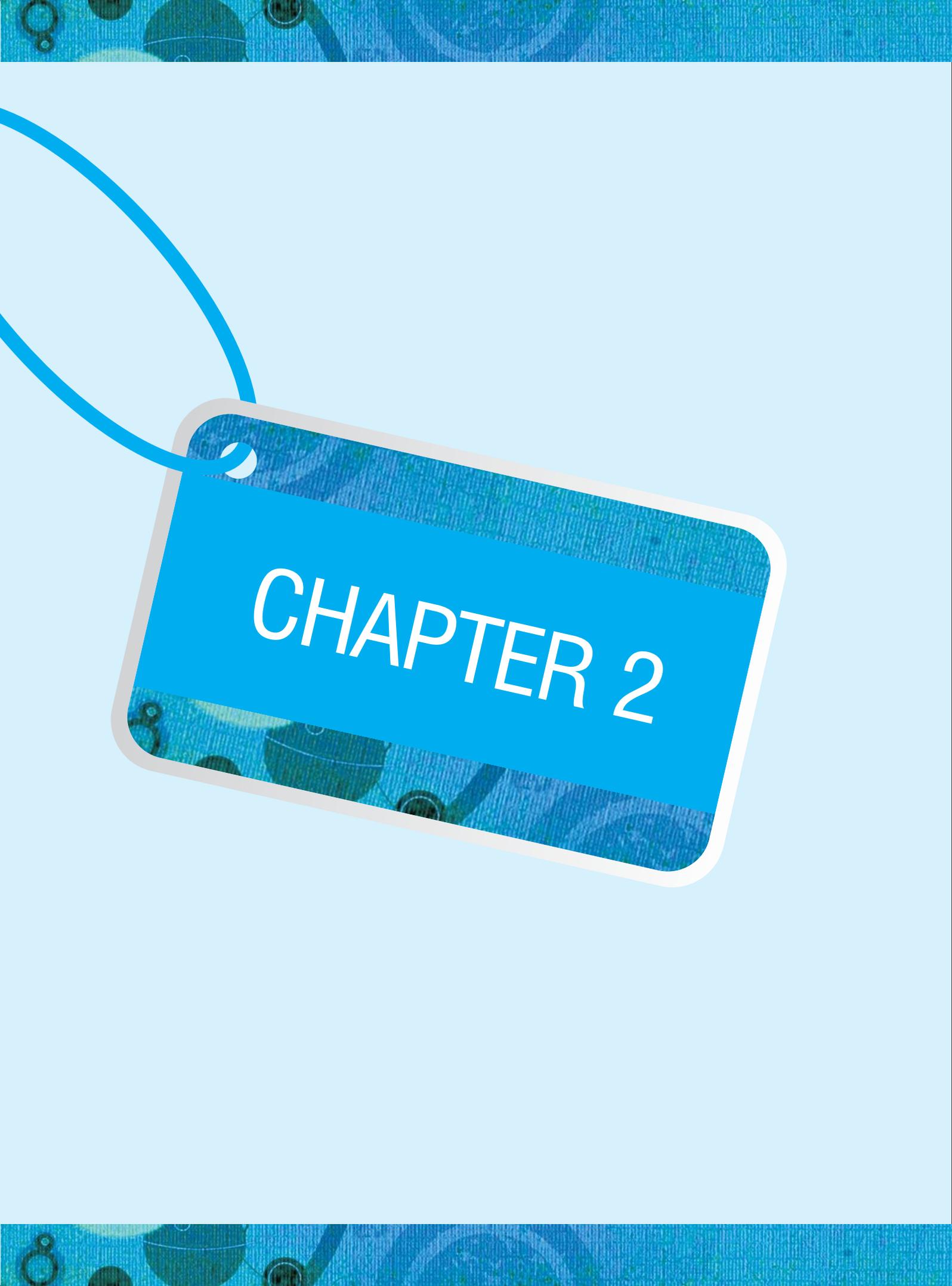
**Table 5: Labour Force Supply: Regional and Gender Perspectives, 2007 -2009**

	2007-08			2008-09		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>51.78</b>	<b>40.82</b>	<b>10.96</b>	<b>53.72</b>	<b>41.91</b>	<b>11.81</b>
Rural	36.18	26.85	9.33	37.30	27.51	9.79
Urban	15.60	13.97	1.63	16.42	14.40	2.02
<b>Punjab</b>	<b>30.67</b>	<b>23.19</b>	<b>7.48</b>	<b>31.82</b>	<b>23.89</b>	<b>7.93</b>
Rural	21.91	15.56	6.35	22.58	16.01	6.57
Urban	8.76	7.63	1.13	9.24	7.88	1.36
<b>Sindh</b>	<b>12.65</b>	<b>10.69</b>	<b>1.96</b>	<b>13.16</b>	<b>10.95</b>	<b>2.21</b>
Rural	7.27	5.68	1.59	7.50	5.76	1.74
Urban	5.38	5.01	0.37	5.66	5.19	0.47
<b>KPK</b>	<b>6.27</b>	<b>4.99</b>	<b>1.28</b>	<b>6.53</b>	<b>5.13</b>	<b>1.40</b>
Rural	5.27	4.08	1.19	5.48	4.23	1.25
Urban	1.00	0.91	0.09	1.05	0.90	0.15
<b>Balochistan</b>	<b>2.19</b>	<b>1.95</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>2.21</b>	<b>1.94</b>	<b>0.27</b>
Rural	1.73	1.53	0.20	1.74	1.51	0.23
Urban	0.46	0.42	0.04	0.47	0.43	0.04

Source: FBS Labour Survey Data

In terms of labour force growth, the overall increase from 2007-08 is only 3.7% with the largest increases being in Sindh and Balochistan where the growth is as high as 12%. Growth in the women's labour force is, however, very high. In KPK, for example, while the men's urban labour force has decreased by 1.1%, the women's urban labour force has increased by 66%. This phenomenon is true for all provinces, except Balochistan, where zero growth in urban women labour force has been recorded.





# CHAPTER 2



# BASELINE STUDY TO ASSESS GENDER DISPARITIES IN CONSTRUCTION SECTOR JOBS

The construction industry can be reckoned as an integral part of the development process of any country. The development of a country's infrastructure and industry is closely linked to the construction industry. Construction activities include building schools, hospitals, houses, offices, townships, highways, roads, ports, airports, railways, power projects, irrigation projects, and so on. Besides being the basic input for economic and industrial development, the construction sector is the second largest sector providing employment opportunities to the poor people especially from the rural areas, both as unskilled labourers and skilled workers.

Infrastructure building and commercial construction are two core components of the construction industry. Due to socio-economic processes like urbanization, mechanization, informalisation of the labour market, and economic liberalization policies, employment trends are changing the world over. These processes have resulted in a reduction in overall employment, decreased demand for unskilled labour, increased demand for skilled labour, and decreased skills training by employers.

Globally, the construction industry is considered to be one of the most significant in terms of contributing to GDP and in terms of its impact on the health and safety of the working population. Therefore, this sector is both economically and socially important. However, the construction industry is also recognized as amongst the most hazardous, for which there is a need for improvements to maintain strict safety practices for workers.

The construction sector is the most neglected sectors in Pakistan. Although it provides jobs to 9% of the total work force, the lack of foreign investments and socio-economic circumstances, this sector cannot be maintained as required. The sector includes the construction of hospitals, schools, offices, houses and other buildings as well as urban infrastructure and irrigation and agriculture systems in rural areas. It involves both skilled and unskilled occupations like bricklaying, surveying, carpentry, concreting, demolition, dogging, painting and decorating, rigging, roof tiling, scaffolding, solid plastering, steel fixing, wall and ceiling lining, wall and floor tiling and many other sub-trades.

The current decade is witnessing massive infrastructure growth in Pakistan. There are numerous infrastructure development projects in progress as well as in the pipeline. All of these projects have the potential to lead the local industry to gain status and international recognition if appropriate efforts are made. With the stage set for a golden era for development, the challenges are still higher. The activities in the construction industry have a direct impact on employment, particularly in low-to-medium skill segments, as well as direct effects on the construction related industries.

Recognizing the potentially large impact of this sector on growth and income distribution, there is a need for drastic improvements in terms of technical skill development, equal wages, working conditions, trainings and capacity building and most importantly gender mainstreaming in the sector. It is essential that the overall wellbeing of the workers and their working conditions be given due attention. There should be an effort to raise the level of awareness of employees and employers of the importance of fulfilling workers' needs in terms of workplace conditions and facilities as well as professional career growth.

## 2.1 Gender Disparities in the Construction Sector

Several research studies reveal that women are systematically streamed away from science, trades and technology careers by the very educational pathways intended to expose them to opportunities in these sectors. Women tend to join the few traditional professions labelled as best suited for women. Studies have found that the gender stereotypes seen in different professions are inculcated in high schools in students' interactions with teachers and career counsellors, who tend to steer female high school students toward certain fields.

Although women are beginning to break these barriers and 'glass-walls', and have made some gains in occupations traditionally occupied by men, construction trades remain overwhelmingly male dominated. The construction industry, the world over, has inherent gender biases owing to the perceived nature of the work and the mainstream notion of it being an industry appropriate only for men. When women are involved, it is largely as unskilled and low paid workers: i.e. as head-loaders, carrying bricks, cement, sand and water, digging earth, mixing cement, and breaking stones.

The growing body of international research literature related to the career choices of girls and women reflects efforts to expand domestic labour pools by opening the construction industry to more women. However, in most industrialized countries, male-female ratios of participation in the construction industry remain unequal. More success has been observed in professions such as medicine and law, but in engineering, a discipline that prepares some workers for careers in construction management, much less has been achieved. Despite overall increases in the rate of women training in apprenticeships, their share of apprenticeships in the construction sector has not increased significantly. Similarly, despite the success of various programs in overcoming the historical barriers to the recruitment and training of girls and women, overall participation levels remain low.

This gender disparity in overall male-female employment ratio in construction has an impact on all professionals and trades. Many men and women regard construction as “men's work.” Such gendered perception have long lasting impacts in that few women attempt to break these barriers and glass ceilings and make their way towards the top of the ladder. A shift in mentality – among employers, the current mostly male workforce, and potential women workers – can take generations. In addition, it is unclear how to define “success” in attracting women into construction trades and construction management occupations.

As part of the assignment, CHRS was required to recommend a strategy to minimize gender disparity factors within the construction sector and to highlight those construction trades in which an increase in women's participation could be ensured by preparing women technically for these occupations. Therefore CHRS conducted a survey of sub-sectors of the Construction Sector of Pakistan. This exercise has enabled CHRS and the ILO to design an intervention that can cater specifically to the requirements of women who might benefit from greater access to employment in the construction sector.

The main objective of the study was to assess and identify gender disparities and challenges that hinder women from participating in the labour force in the construction sector. On the basis of this study, various recommendations have been highlighted for the ILO and other stakeholders such as Line Departments and relevant Ministries so that they might be able to create conducive environments for women.

### **The specific objectives of this baseline study are:**

- To highlight, identify and assess the reasons behind gender disparities and forms of discrimination in the construction sector, such as the number of each sex employed, wage gaps, differing work tasks, discrimination in employment and promotions, sexual harassment, the physical facilities available and maternity protection.
- To highlight potential areas for women (where women are and can participate) in the construction sector labour market, by analyzing market as well as employment related trends and requirements.
- To identify and assess the challenges for women within the construction sector regarding human resource quality and the lack of required skills through targeting employers and working women.
- To identify potential opportunities that can be further strengthened or focused on to achieve gender equality and to acknowledge the potential of women's roles in the construction sector.
- To identify academic, vocational & technical institutes which are providing HR and other construction related trainings/courses as well as on the job placements. This will highlight the reasons for the low number of women in this sector. The study will also identify a number of strategic measures and recommendations for the ILO and other stakeholders striving to achieve gender mainstreaming in the construction sector.

## **2.2 Survey Design Considerations**

The primary research instrument (Annex 1) was designed in collaboration with the ILO team. It was developed keeping in view the following considerations:

- i. Most of the respondents were expected to be semi-literate; therefore, simple and straightforward questions were designed without going into complex details.
- ii. All questions were structured so that they could be answered by the respondents immediately without having to refer to business details.

The first part of the survey instrument was designed to collect data from employees/workers on the following aspects to assess gender based disparity:

- i. Basic information about employees/workers.
- ii. Information about the trade/occupation of employer/worker to determine disparity factors in job opportunities and potentially discriminatory attitude in the work place.
- iii. Information about work environments to evaluate the importance of women's work in relation to that of men.
- iv. Information about facilities/benefits to assess whether or not favourable conditions and facilities are available for women.
- v. Information about social factors that discourage women from entering the construction sector.
- vi. Information about future needs which can increase women's participation in the construction sector.

Part 2 of the survey instrument was designed to collect data from employers/business owners on the

following aspects to assess gender based disparity:

- i. Basic information about the employer/owner of business.
- ii. The number of male and female employees/workers in the company.
- iii. Key characteristics and criteria for hiring male and female employee.
- iv. Employers' opinions regarding equal opportunities for men and women to participate in different occupations in the construction sector.
- v. Employers' opinions for or against the suitability of construction sector jobs for women.
- vi. Reasons for lack of women's participation in the construction sector.
- vii. The factors through which women's participation in the construction sector can be increased.
- viii. Identifying the barriers and difficulties women face in the construction sector.
- ix. Identifying sexual harassment factors at different levels of the hierarchy.

## 2.3 Survey Methodology

The methodology of this baseline study is the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. It includes a desk review of the relevant literature, a review of construction related legal issues, in-depth interviews with key resource persons, and a questionnaire survey form for employers and workers in the construction industry.

The comparative advantages of quantitative methods lie in their ability to furnish a broad macro picture that covers a large number of people based on a representative sample. Therefore, the data gathered through quantitative methods has provided a broader picture of gender disparities in the construction sector. Data gathered through qualitative methods has provided an in-depth analysis of issues pertaining to gender disparities in the sector. Both kinds of tools are utilized for generating data so that the best of both types of method can be used to obtain a comprehensive picture of gender disparities in the construction sector.

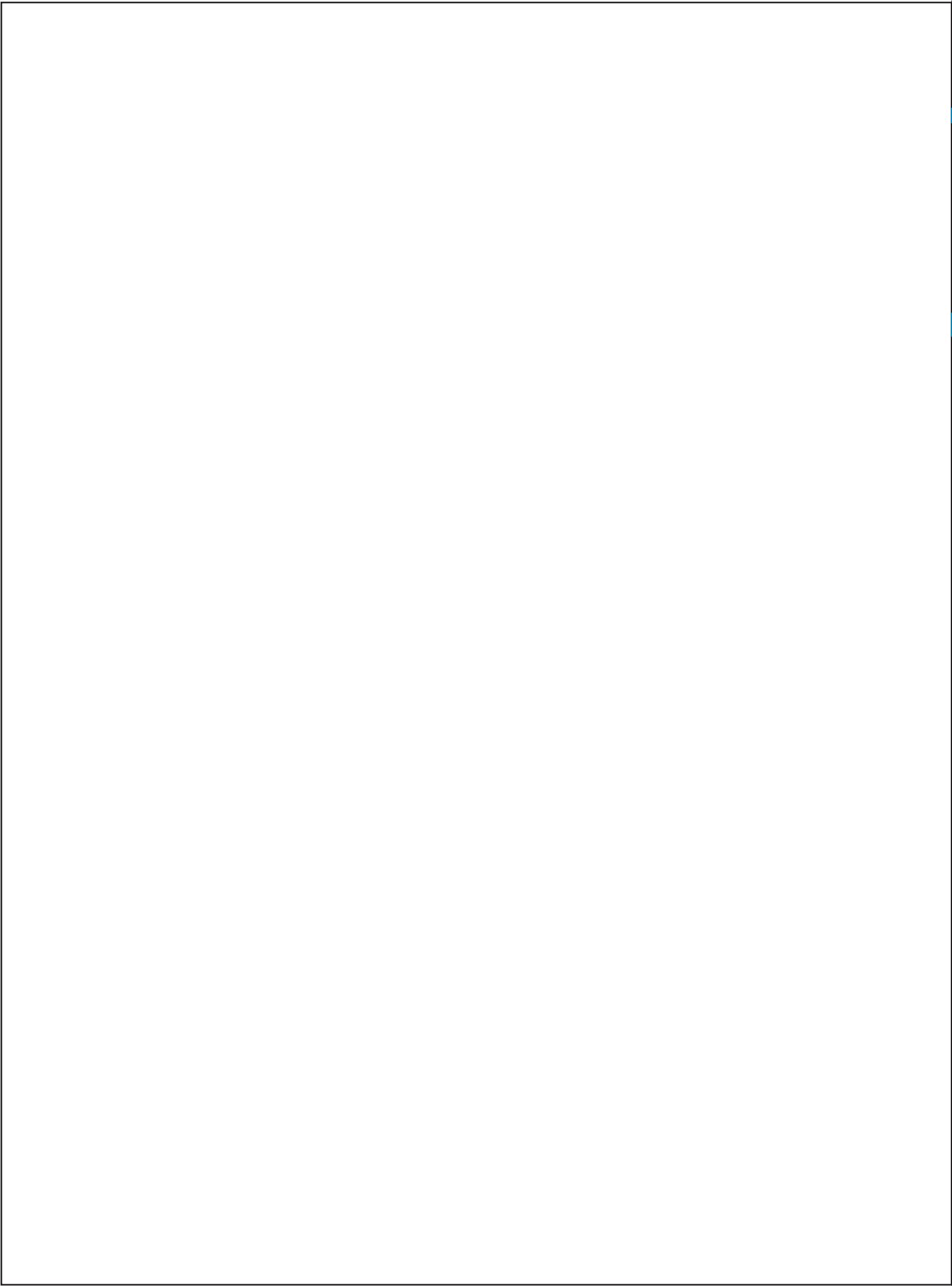
The study mainly focused on the major construction sites where workers are on site. For that purpose, available databases of major construction projects were collected and different key regulatory authorities such as the CDA, NESPAK, NAVTEC, TEVTA, and the Pakistan Engineering Council were contacted. From there on, stratified random sampling was used in order to reach to the constructions companies and/or sites, where women workers were easily available. Within each site and company, the focus was on covering all relevant departments and sub-trades; that is, construction sites as well as administrative units, which include skilled, unskilled, technical, and contractor to managerial levels in order to capture gender variations. Overall, in the categories of employees, the total sample size is 564. Of these, 524 were men and 40 were women. In the category of employers the total sample size is 480, 461 men and 19 women.

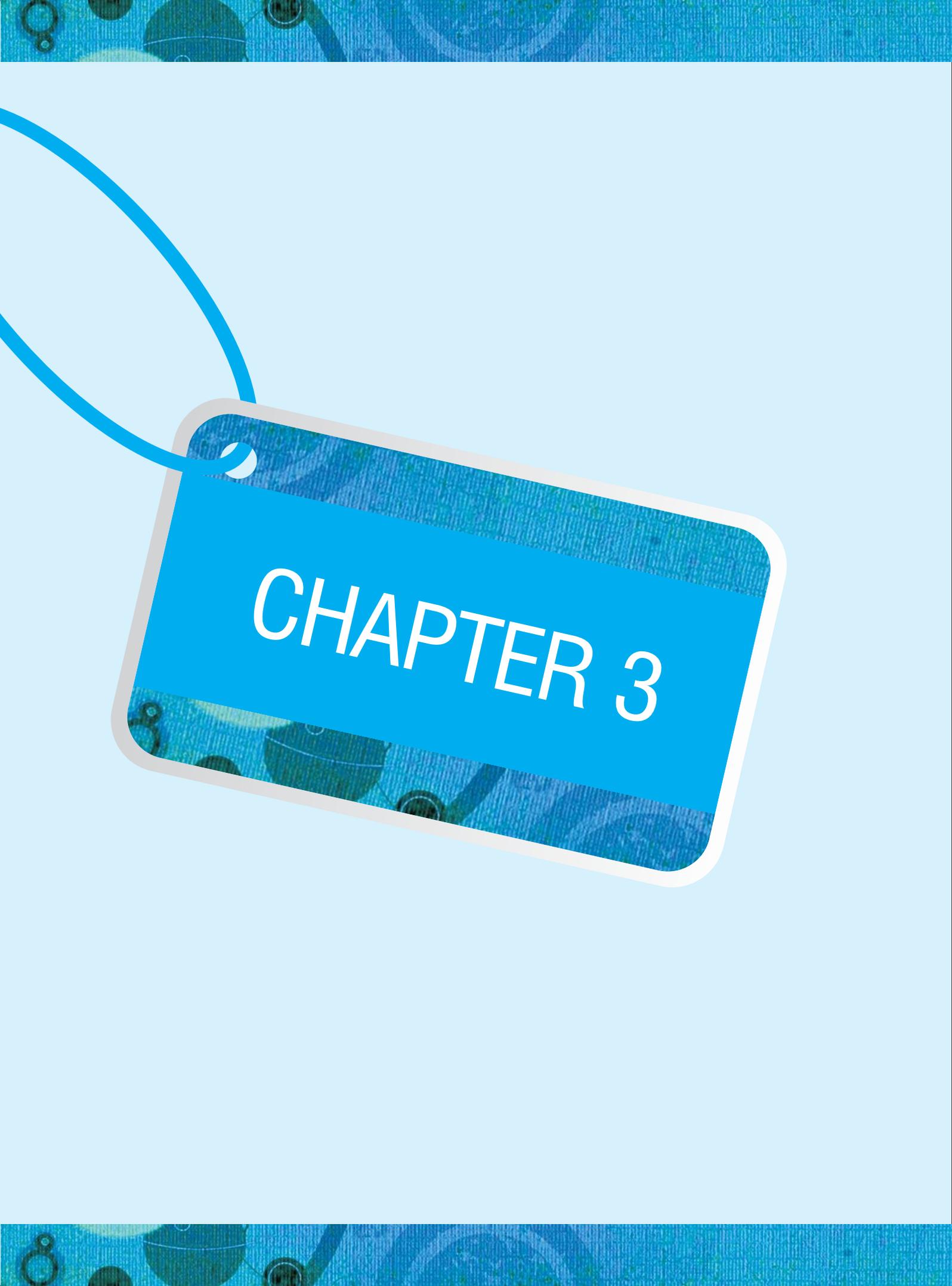
Different sets of questions and identified broad themes that were to be used in the fieldwork were included in the questionnaire. Key persons were identified whose input into the issues would be useful for our research purpose and who would be able to give us access to the men and women workers on construction sites.

Case studies were also recorded of some key informants to quote as best practices of women working in the construction sector, and thereby breaking gendered barriers and 'glass walls'. Detailed life histories of women

contractors, including their experiences of joining, the problems and issues faced during their jobs and different success stories were gathered. The information collected for the case studies included interviews of the participants, consisting of general information, work experience, family restrictions, the triple burden of women's work and a needs assessment of women workers.

Later, a consultative meeting was organized in order to involve all major stakeholders in highlighting the reasons for gender disparities in the construction sector and identifying solutions at different levels from grassroots to policy. Key findings and recommendations from those stakeholders, based on finding ways of ensuring gender equality in the construction sector, were included in the analysis.





CHAPTER 3



This section presents the findings and analysis of the data gathered through primary research. This was carried out through a questionnaire to respondents in different sub-sectors of the construction industry: these were employees/workers and employers/owners. The analysis is done by analyzing and cross-tabulating different variables presented in the questionnaire.

## 3.1 Getting Involved: Women in Construction Sector Job Market

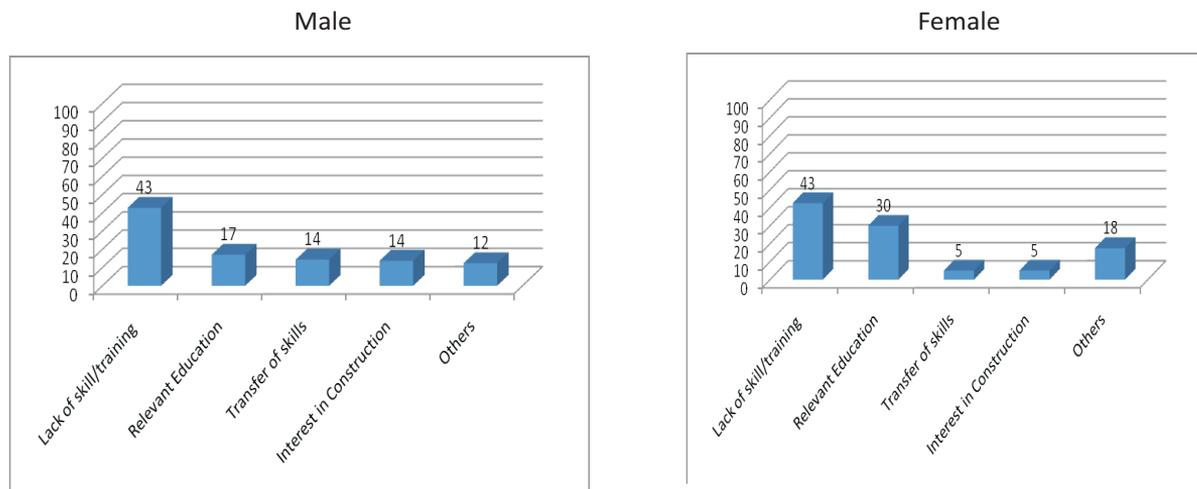
Women in societies like Pakistan face many challenges in breaking gendered traditions; however, many of them have managed to come forward and become a critical mass in challenging gendered notions regarding women's work. During the field survey it was revealed that only a few women are involved in a continuous effort to become part of the construction industry. Women are less visible but are present at every stage of the ladder: they hold skilled, unskilled, technical, and managerial positions. However, the level of visibility differs at every stage.

The study showed that more women can be seen working at the very lowest level, as unskilled workers. They work as labourers, helpers, movers and carriers. Women are also represented at the technical and managerial levels, where they work as architects, surveyors, and engineers with different companies ranging from small scale private contractors/service providers to big construction companies. Women also serve in key managerial and administrative positions in many construction firms. However, there are almost no women working as skilled workers. The skilled trades (i.e. masons, carpenters, electricians, and painters) were mainly occupied by men. These trends show the 'green' and 'red' areas for women within the construction industry, with 'red' areas having little or no opportunity for women's participation, and 'green' areas where there some prospects for trades in which women can be encouraged to participate and excel. A detailed discussion on these two categories is provided later in this chapter.

Moreover, the data shows that those women who enter the construction job market show varied trends of staying in their jobs: unskilled workers tend to stay longer because they do not possess any other skills, so cannot find any other type of work. Despite the difficulties they face, they remain in the construction industry. Unskilled labourers join this sector as it provides increased work opportunities for them, and there is never a lack of demand for such workers. The statistics show that about 42.5% of women feel themselves completely handicapped for any other occupation due to the lack of skills/expertise except construction trades.

Of those women who are working as technical and managerial staff, there is a high ratio who have the relevant education and/or technical training, so they prefer to enter the construction sector. However, they have their own reasons for not staying long in construction sector jobs, with male dominance and unfavourable working conditions as the leading factors.

**Figure 2. Reasons for Joining Construction Sector Job (%)**



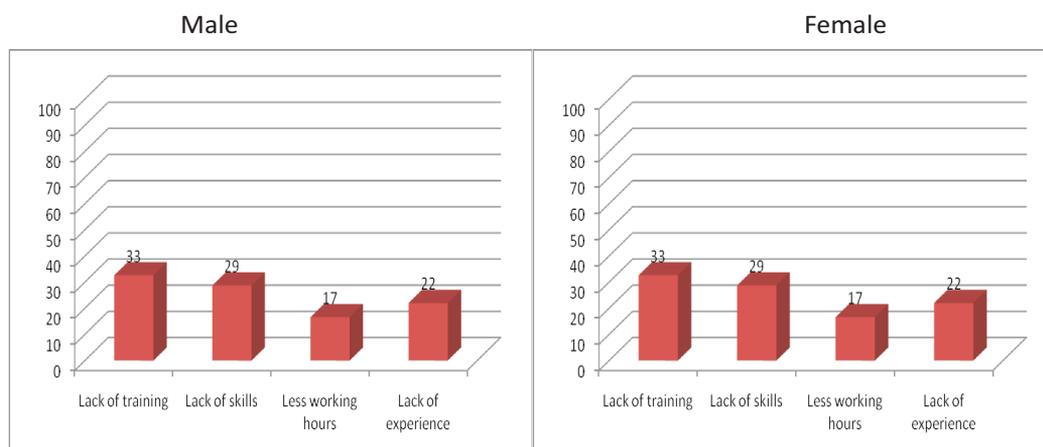
## 3.2 Decent Work: Working Conditions and Workplace Environment

### 3.2.1 Gender Wage Gap

Studies of the formal and informal sectors indicate that women are empowered only if the remuneration is fair, if the employment conditions are decent, and if the conditions and hours of work are regulated. The survey data indicates that the unskilled workers were earning equal wages regardless of their gender. However, as no or very few women were found to be working as masons, electricians or plumbers, no comparison was possible. At the managerial level, it was seen that as the nature of the job is project/task based, the profit/loss margins are correlated with many other factors such as efficiency, regardless of gender.

Overall, 66% of the male respondents amongst the worker/non-professional class were of the opinion that there are equal wages for men and women for a similar kind of job in construction sector. Likewise, 72.5% of the female respondents said that their wage are at par with those of their male counterparts, while 27.5% of the female respondents said that their wages are not equal to those of men. When they were asked to highlight the reasons behind unequal wages, the majority of both men and women respondents stated that factors such as lack of training and lack of skills/experience are the main reason for the gender wage gap.

**Figure 3. Reasons Given for Gendered Wage Gap**

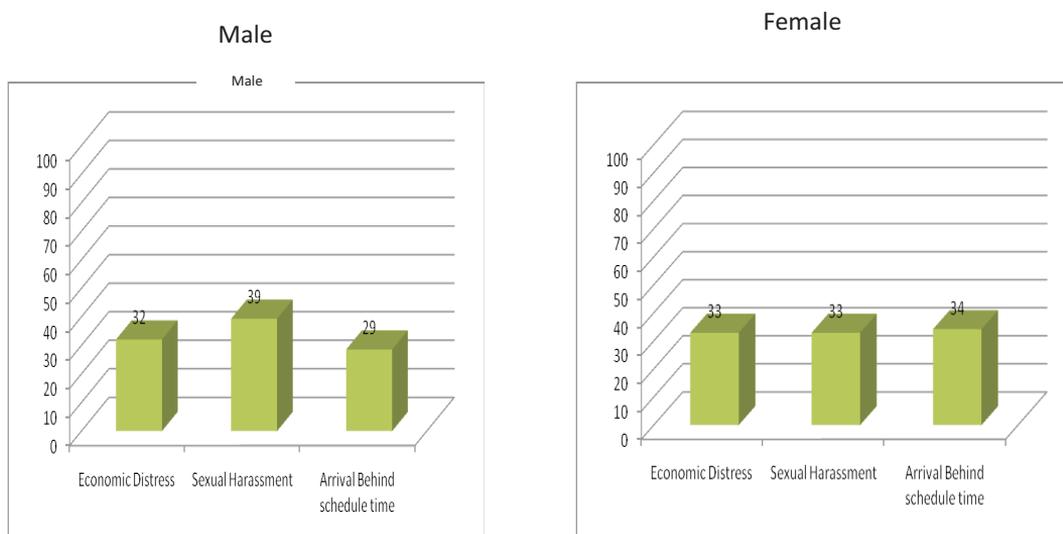


Overall, 54% of the male respondents were of the opinion that the women's work is given equal importance in the construction sector as compared to their male counterparts.

### 3.2.2 Means of Transportation

Most of the men and women respondents who are unskilled workers recorded that they do not use any transport to reach to their work sites and they come to the sites on foot. Very few respondents use public transport, private vehicles or taxis to reach their place of work. The data reveals that the workers, who have to go to the field on daily basis, live close to their work sites. However, when respondents were asked whether distance to the work site affects women workers, the majority of the men and women respondents in the workers' class agreed that distance to the work station affects women in different ways. These include economic distress, sexual harassment, and working late to complete the working hours.

**Figure 4. Opinions of Effects of Distance to Work Station**



The women respondents reported that when they arrived late at the work sites due to long distances, they either have to stay longer to complete their working hours, or the contractors/managers manipulates the situation and sexually harass them. Others said they have to face economic distress as their wages are cut.

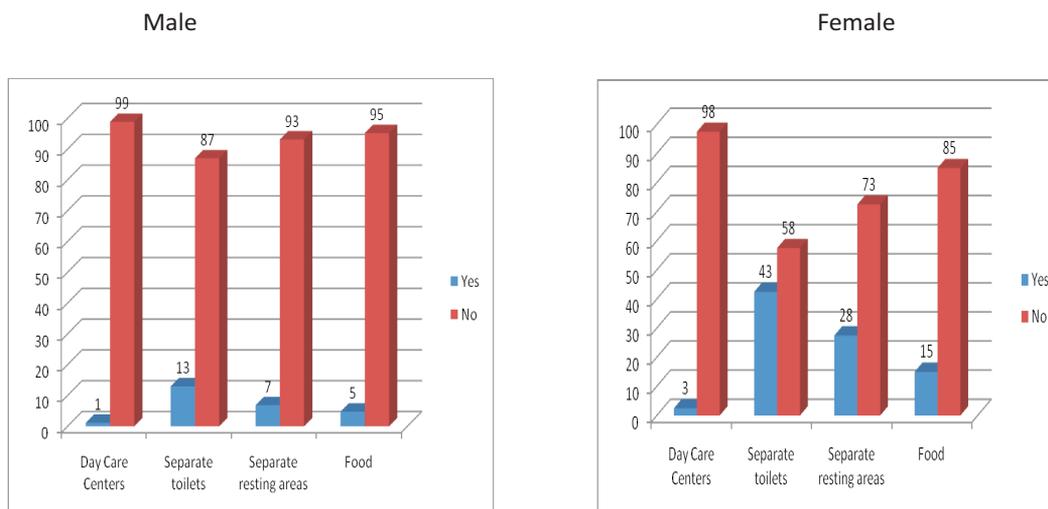
### 3.2.3 On-Job Facilities for Women Workers

Most of the men and women respondents who are unskilled labourers said that they do not receive benefits such as bonus, travelling allowance, pick and drop or advanced salary from the employers/owners. The data shows that the employers/owners do not provide on the job-facilities that include day care centres, separate toilets, separate resting areas or food to women workers. These factors were considered the major cause for women's lower participation in construction sector jobs.

Women working as unskilled labourer on construction sites reported that in some cases they have to bring their children as they have no support mechanism at home. The children who come to the construction sites with their mothers are prone to many dangers and hazards. However, the women workers said they have no choice but to take their children. Women respondents who were doing office jobs related to the construction industry reported that the male-dominant environment in organizations/companies meant that employers do

not provide working conditions appropriate for women employees. The nature of construction related jobs and the unfavourable working conditions are the major factors which discourage women from joining the construction industry.

**Figure 5. Provision of Favourable Working Conditions for Women**

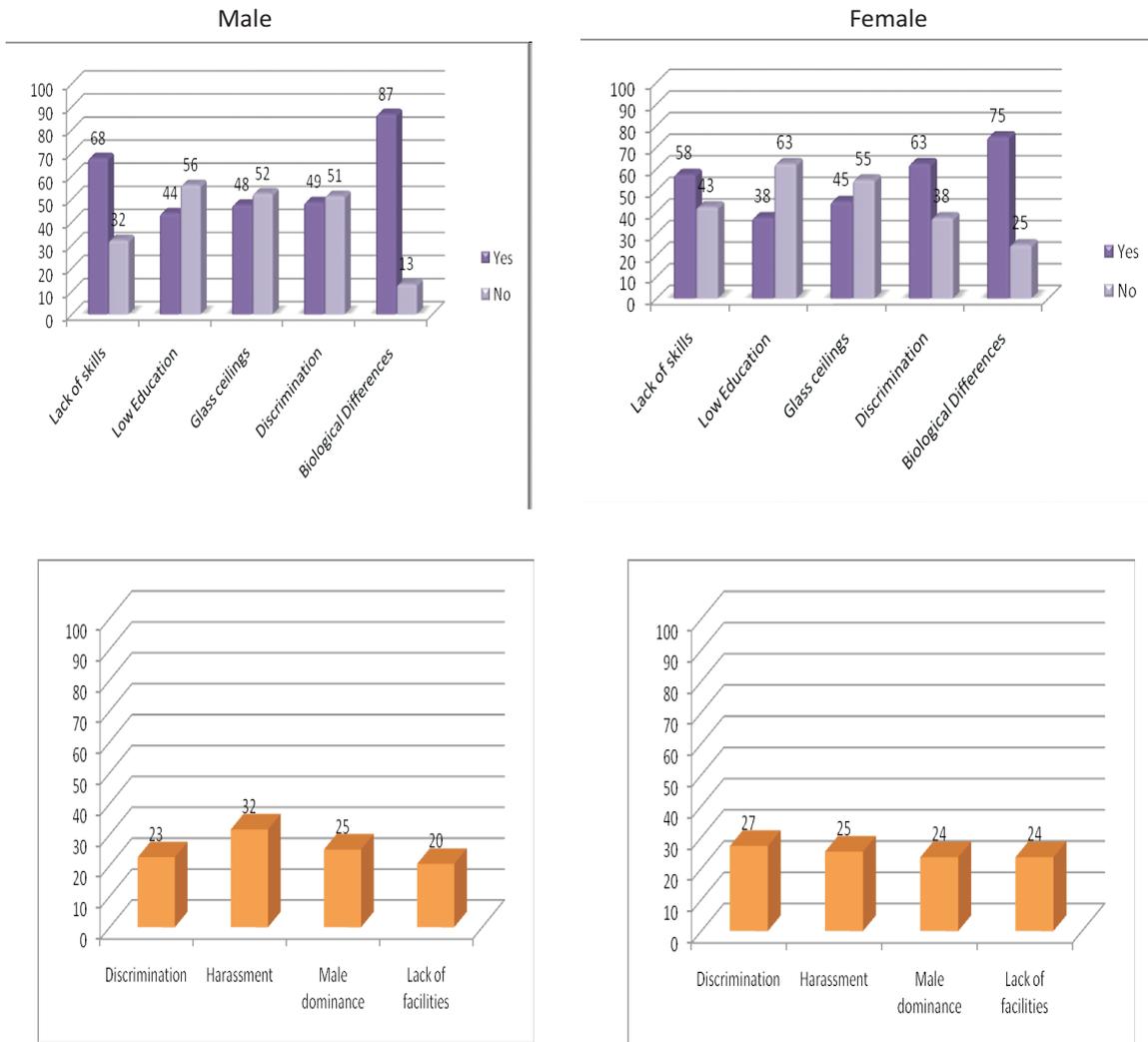


### 3.3 Glass Walls: Barriers to Women's Participation in Construction Sector Jobs

The study has also focussed on identifying the barriers which hinder women's participation in construction sector jobs, so as to identify future courses of action and measures and steps to be taken for women's increased participation. The majority of respondents said that women are not present in the construction industry because the nature of the work is not suitable for women due to biological differences and because the jobs are hard and hazardous in nature. Overall, 60% of men in the employer class attributed biological differences to the idea that women should not work in the construction sector. However, very interestingly, the data collected from female respondents depicts the opposite picture: 80% of women reported that male dominance was the reason for their difficulties in entering the construction sector. Moreover, due to the unfavourable working conditions, they feel more insecure and generally do not opt for a profession in the construction sector. They also believed that as there are very few women in the construction sector, the overall atmosphere does not encourage women to become part of it.

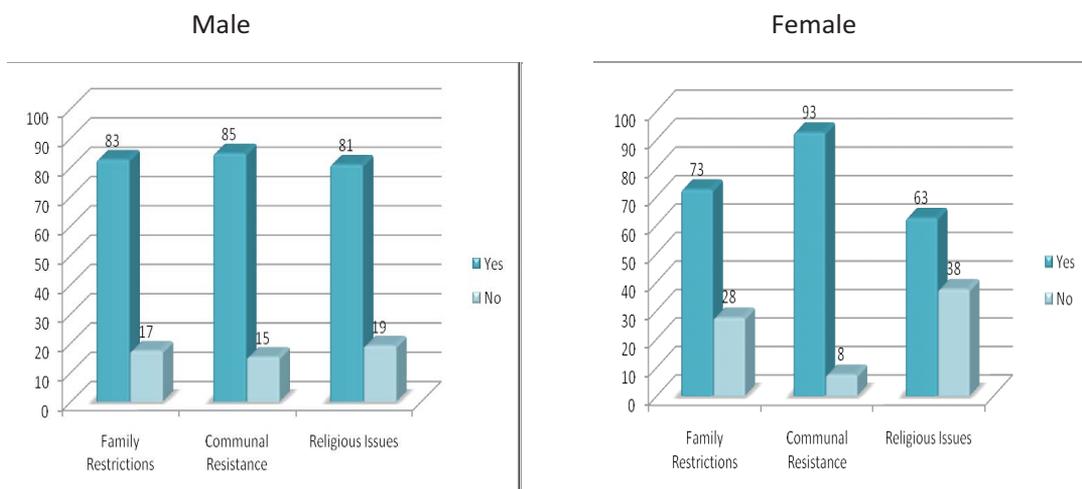
Many female respondents were of the view that if it was possible to establish a critical mass of women in different trades in the construction sector this could be an encouraging factor for more women to enter the field. Such a critical mass could change the stereotypical perceptions regarding women's participation which would in turn open doors for more women. In addition, a lack of skills was also highlighted as a key factor hindering women's participation. The respondents reported that as women have low levels of skills and are either not provided with or are not aware of the skill enhancement opportunities, they cannot either enter or excel in jobs related to the construction sector.

**Figure 6. Factors in Women's Lower Participation in Construction Sector (Workers)**



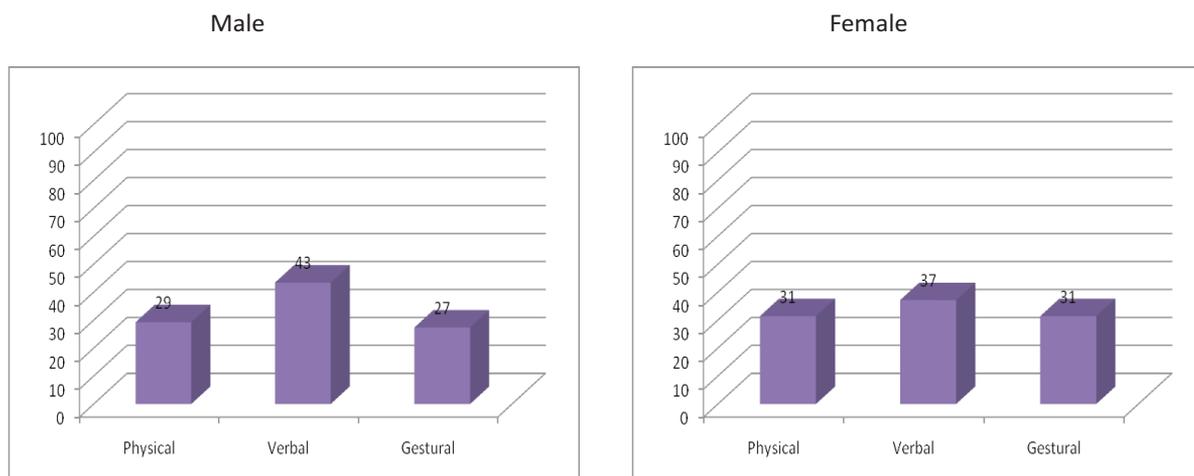
Moreover, in a society like Pakistan, it is very important to consider socio-cultural and the religious factors in terms of women's labour force participation. When asked, both men and women respondents indicated that religious and socio-cultural barriers were an issue. The survey data shows that certain socio-cultural values do not allow women to engage in the kind of work required in the construction industry. Therefore, either women do not try to break these barriers, or if they do, they have to face challenges and severe resistance.

**Figure 8. Socio-Cultural and Religious Barriers**



Besides socio-cultural and religious barriers, the data also revealed that women face sexual harassment, which discourages them from continuing their jobs in the construction sector for a long time. The men and women respondents from the employer category highlighted that different types of sexual harassment are generally seen when the women work with their seniors, co-workers and juniors.

**Figure 9. Sexual Harassment as a Barrier**

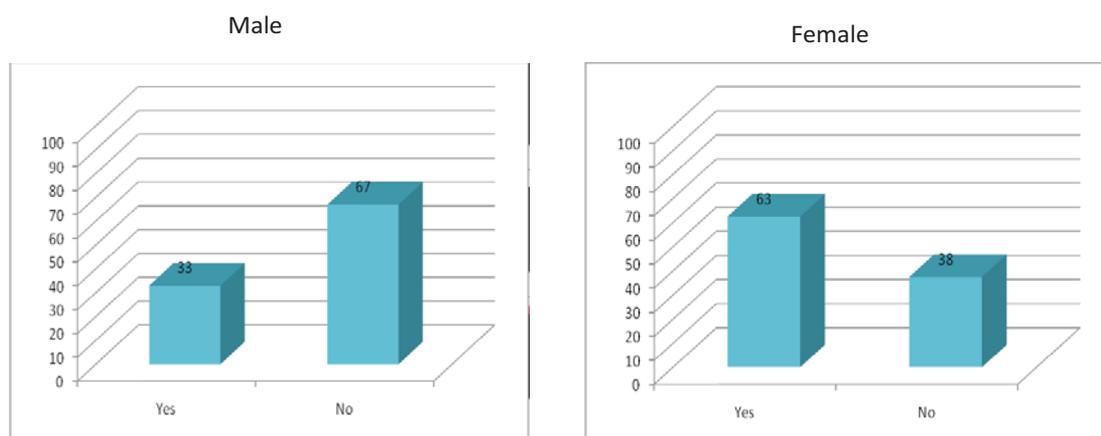


First male dominance and then these attitudes from co-workers make the construction sector a no-go area for women. Therefore, the majority of women prefer to stay away from construction-related jobs.

### 3.3.1 Non-Traditional Trades for Women

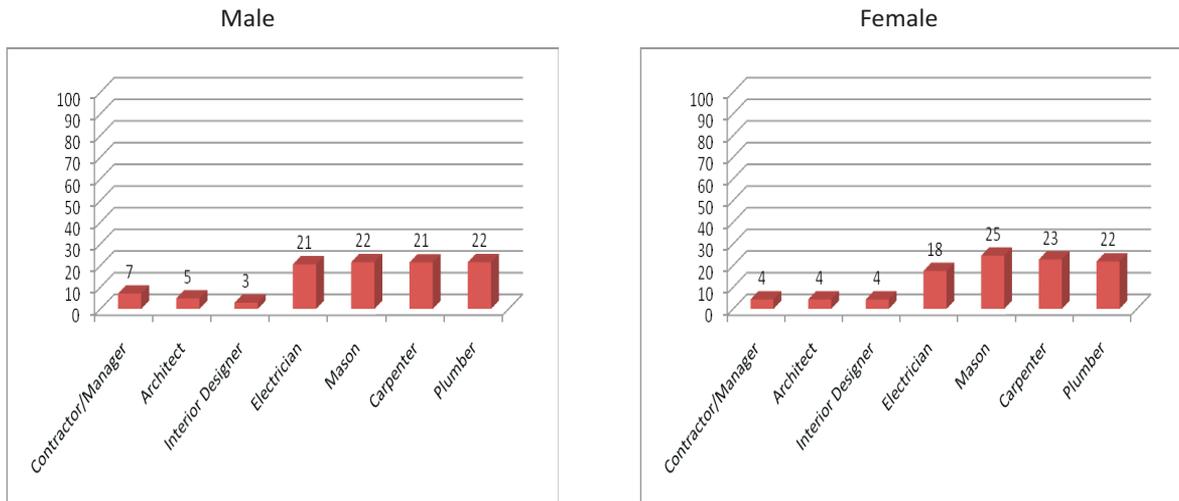
There are certain trades of the construction sector which are considered non-traditional for women in Pakistan's construction industry. The gender disparity can clearly be seen and is more visible in some trades than others. Overall 33% of the male respondents were of the view that women can participate in all construction sector trades but 67% of the men rejected this idea, saying that women are not strong enough for construction work due to biological differences and long working hours. However, women responded differently to the same question: 62.5% favoured their suitability for all types of trades in the construction sector and 37.5% said that there are certain trades in which they should not or cannot participate.

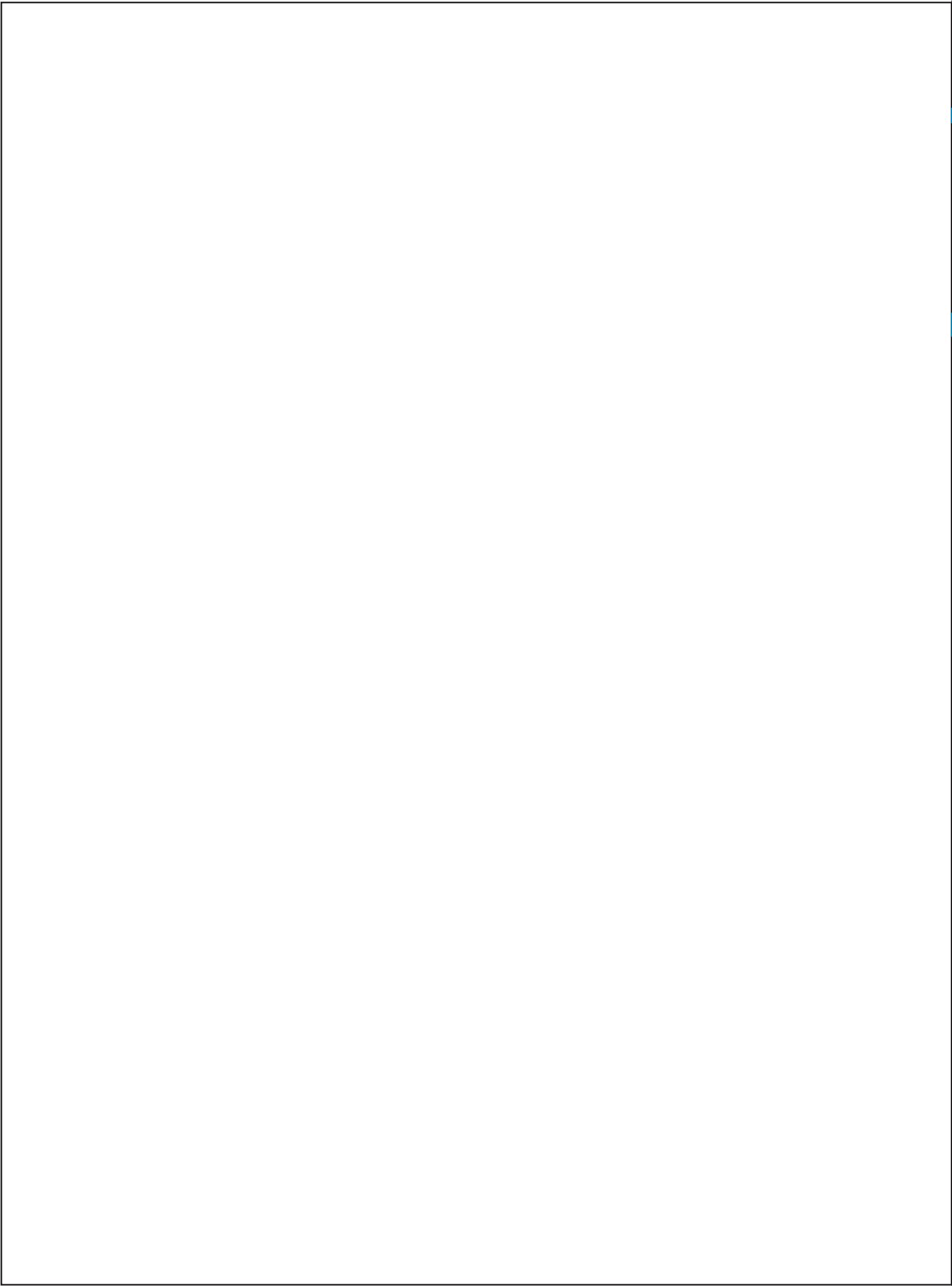
**Figure 10. Can Women Participate in all Trades of the Construction Sector?**

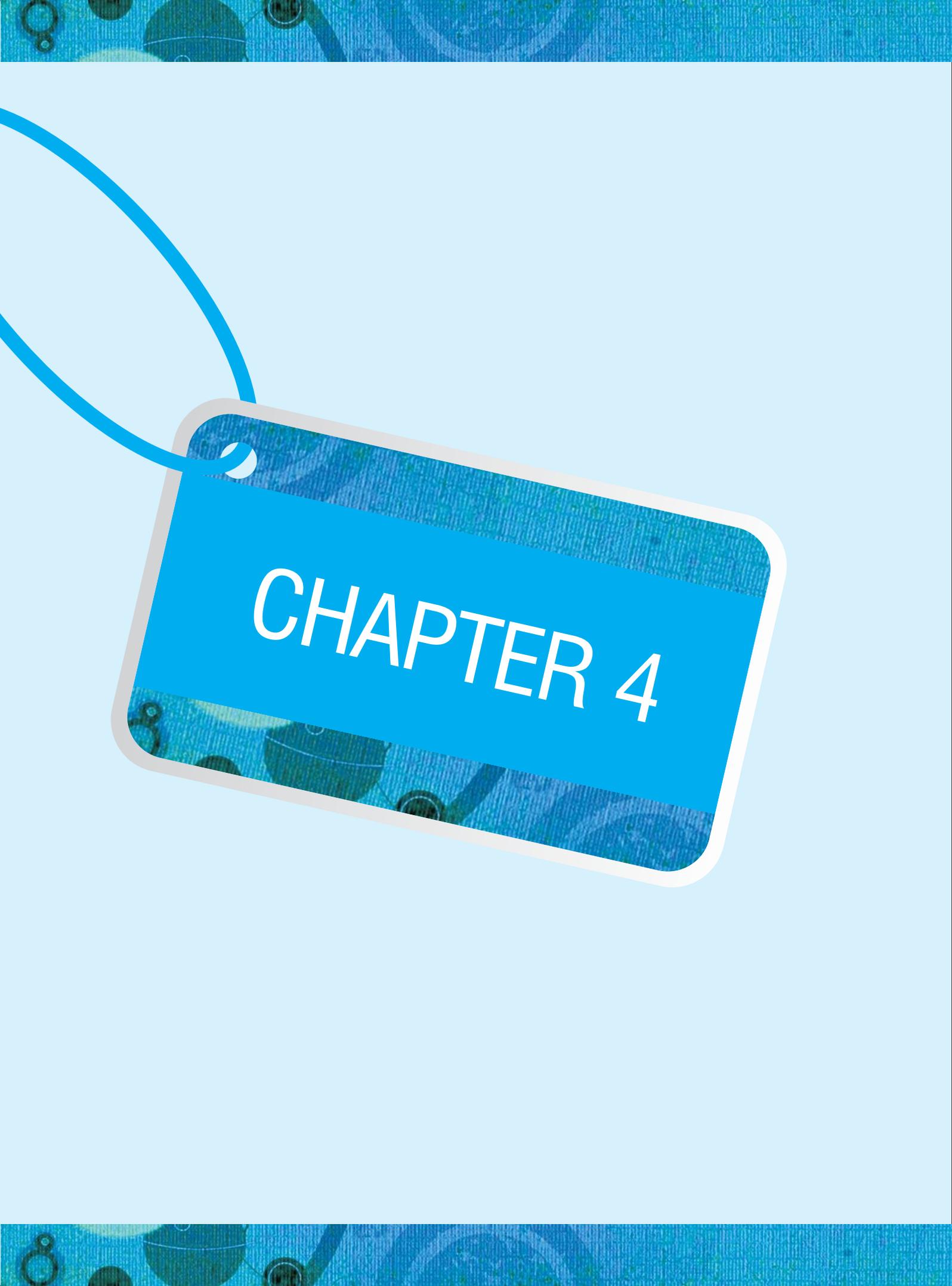


The data show that trades such as electrician, mason, carpenter and plumber, are considered non-traditional or 'red' areas for women as compared to the 'green' areas: that is, the trades of contractor/manager, architect and interior designer. Respondents were of the view that non-traditional trades are the ones in which women should not participate at all.

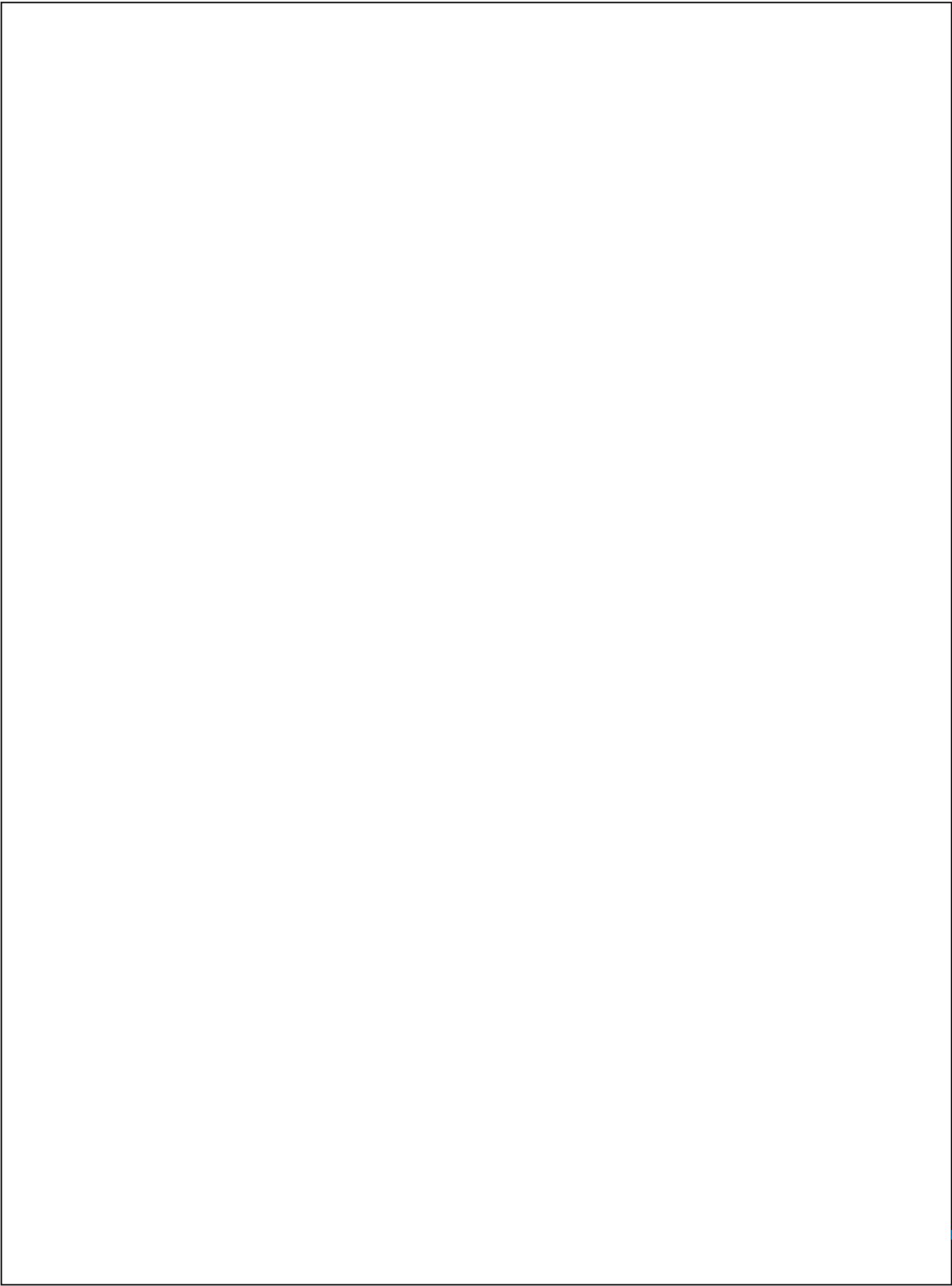
**Figure 11. Trades Considered Non-traditional for Women**







CHAPTER 4



# Achieving Gender Parity: Areas to Improve Women's Participation in Construction Sector Jobs

## 4.1 Policy Interventions and Resource Allocation

Ratification of various international commitments and devising national policies based on the notions of gender equality are clear indications that the Government in Pakistan is convinced that in order to make women equal partners and shareholders in development, gender mainstreaming is a necessary step. In this bid, there are various actors such as NGOs, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and donors which are promoting gender mainstreaming to help the Government. However, it can not be denied that the Government, as the major service delivery provider, has the leading responsibility to initiate efforts and focused interventions to achieve gender equality in the social, economic, and political spheres.

Similarly, in order to improve women's participation in construction-related jobs, allocating adequate resources as the first step occupies a pivotal position. Various national policies – Labour Policy, Youth Policy, National Skills Strategy, National Employment Policy and Action plans and Schemes – which have a direct impact on increasing women's entry into and participation in the labour force, especially in non-traditional sectors such as the construction industry, have correctly identified the problems being faced by policy makers. These include:

- a. The large, and ever growing, number of unemployed persons in Pakistan for which there is an urgent need to create jobs in the formal sector while protecting their basic human rights
- b. The large gender imbalance that exists in the Pakistani workplace environment
- c. The large increase in the number of people working in the informal sector due to lack of jobs in the formal sector
- d. The issue of the rural vs. urban economy and large scale migration to urban centres.

However, none of the key policy documents seems to address in any detail the issue of how these policies will be implemented or by whom, what the resource allocations will be, how these policies will address the gender specific need of the labour force, or how these policies will address sector specific issues and problems such as those of the construction sector.

Without sufficient resource allocations to translate the policies into practice, interventions cannot be designed to increase women's participation in construction sector jobs. Moreover, due to the 18th Amendment, the issue of Centre vs. the Provinces has become very significant as a number of issues and plans discussed in these documents are now part of the provincial domain. Consequently, most of the policies need to be updated to take into account the after-effects of the 18th Amendment.

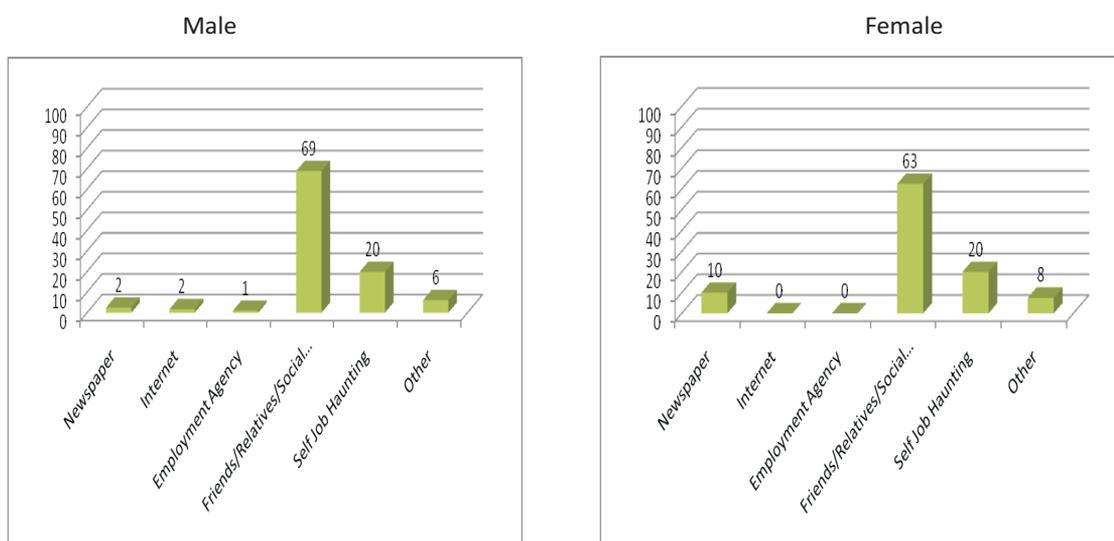
## 4.2 Access to resources and information

One of the major objectives of the study was to identify potential entry points for women workers to enter into construction-related jobs. For that purpose, the study tried to look deeply into how men and women enter the construction industry. The data reveals that the majority of men and women working in the construction

industry get to know about job openings through friends and relatives. The survey shows that most women cannot avail job opportunities in the construction sector as they do not possess the necessary social connections. This finding highlights the need to mainstream job information for construction-related jobs, so that women can also have access to this information.

This huge gap observed in terms of lack of access to resources and information requires attention. Women not only have less knowledge about the job openings, they also have little knowledge about technical training institutions pertaining to the construction sector. Therefore they lag behind men in acquiring and up-grading their skills. This highlights a huge gap between institutions providing technical education and the general population, especially women who want to establish careers in the construction industry. With increased access to resources and information, women who are willing to join construction industry and who possess the relevant competencies, can be encouraged.

**Figure 12. Sources of Information for Job Openings**



### 4.3 Skills Up-grading/ Training Opportunities

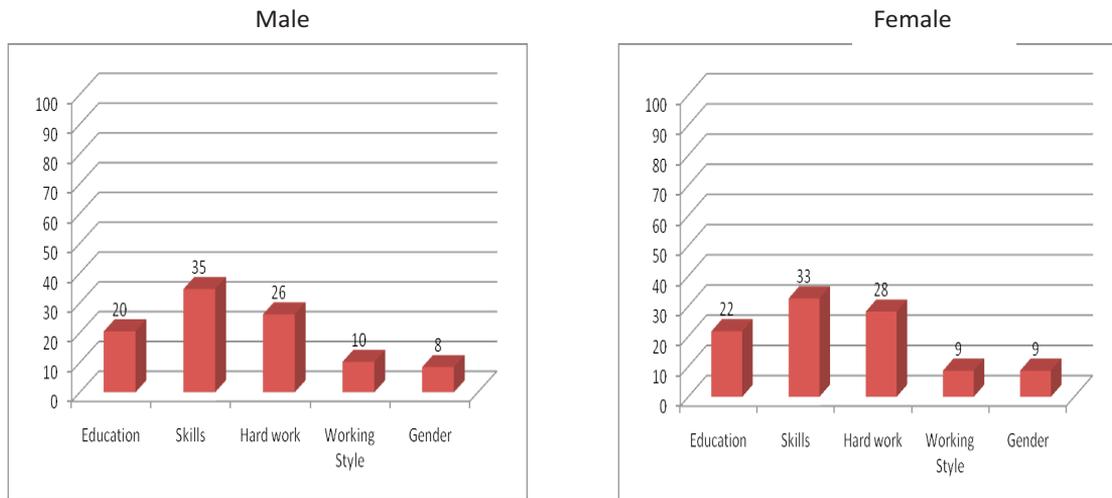
Those employees, either male or female, who are working in the construction sector and want to pursue extended careers in the construction industry, highlighted the needs to upgrade their skills. Most of the respondents indicated that they would like to enhance their skills in order to excel in their fields. Although it was raised as a common concern, the women workers tend to emphasize this need more than the men. They were of the view that in some cases training opportunities are provided to the male workers but the women are not made aware of these opportunities. They lack both the knowledge and linkages with the training institutions which provide relevant trainings. This lack of training and skill up-grading becomes a major cause of women lagging behind their male counterparts.

Additionally, when the respondents were asked whether there should be equal opportunities for men and women to get training in fields related to the construction sector, the majority supported the idea. The Level of skill is regarded as a major factor while hiring an employee, whether male or female. When the employer category was asked about the key characteristics they consider, they termed the level of skills as one of the most important factors, in addition to working style, relevant education and hard work.

These responses reveal that as women are lacking relevant skills due in part to either the lack of information

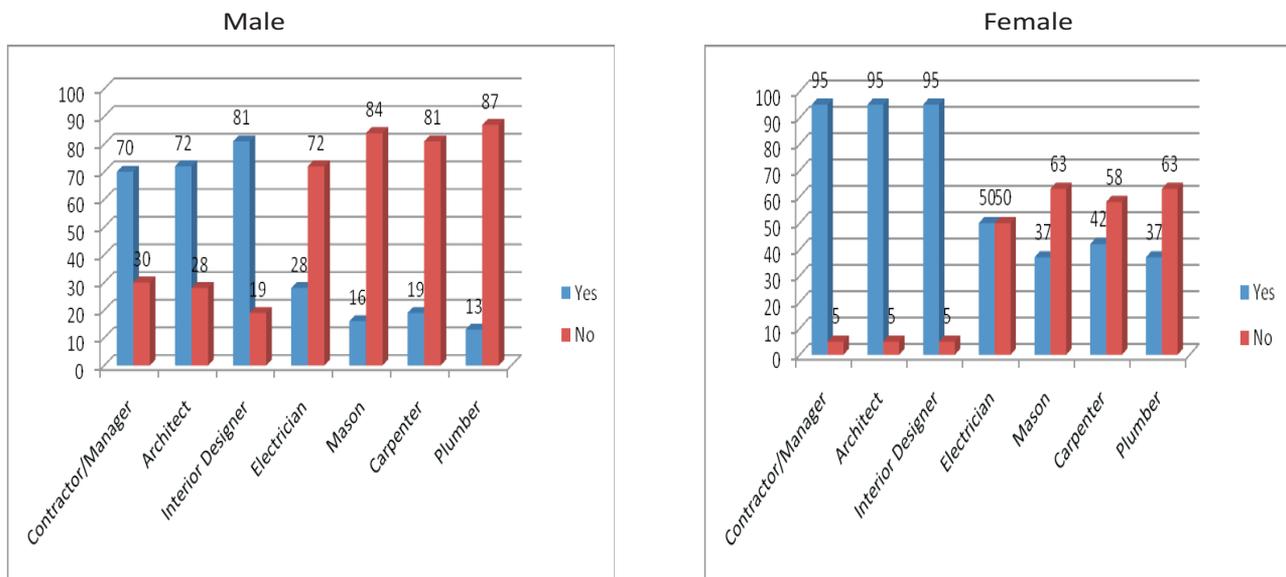
about training opportunities, or the actual lack of training opportunities, they cannot compete in the job market with their male counterparts. This phenomenon ultimately leads to a situation where women are less visible. Most of the employers indicated that they hire their employees (whether male or female) on the basis of their skills, while others consider some other characteristics for recruiting a worker. For some employers gender was also a factor to be considered in terms of suitability for the job. They said that it is a general trend that very few women apply for construction-related jobs.

**Figure 13. Key Characteristics for Hiring an Employee**



Few employers supported the idea that they try to fulfil the criterion of being an equal opportunity employers while hiring; however, they do not hire women for certain types of trades which are considered non-traditional for women. In general, male respondents strongly supported the idea that trades such as contractor/manager, architect and interior designer are those which offer equal opportunities for women.

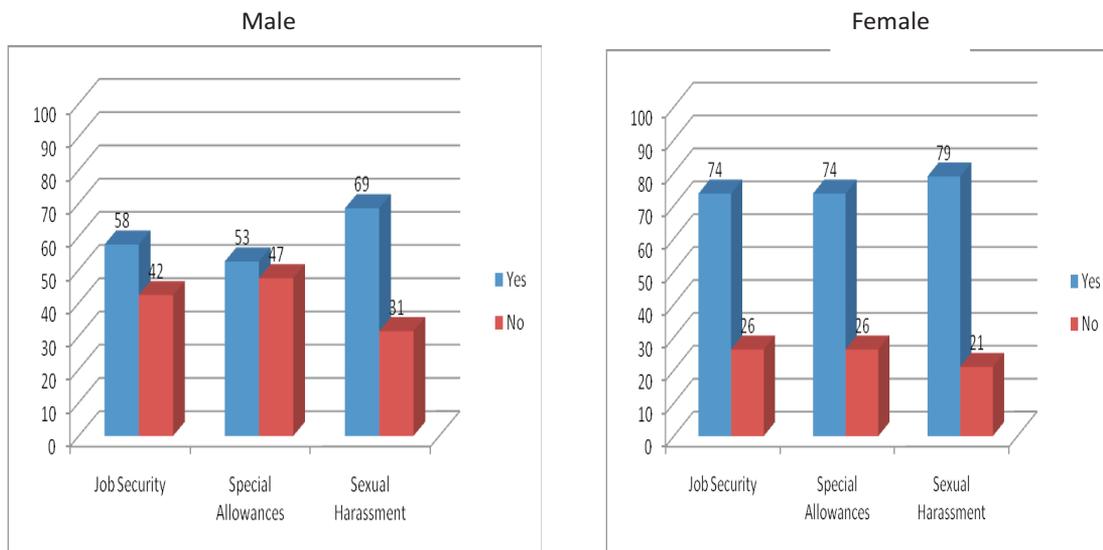
**Figure 14. Trades Considered Non-traditional for Women**



In order to find out future courses of action to increase women's participation in construction sector jobs, the study tried to look for areas of improvement. There were three key areas which were highlighted by the men

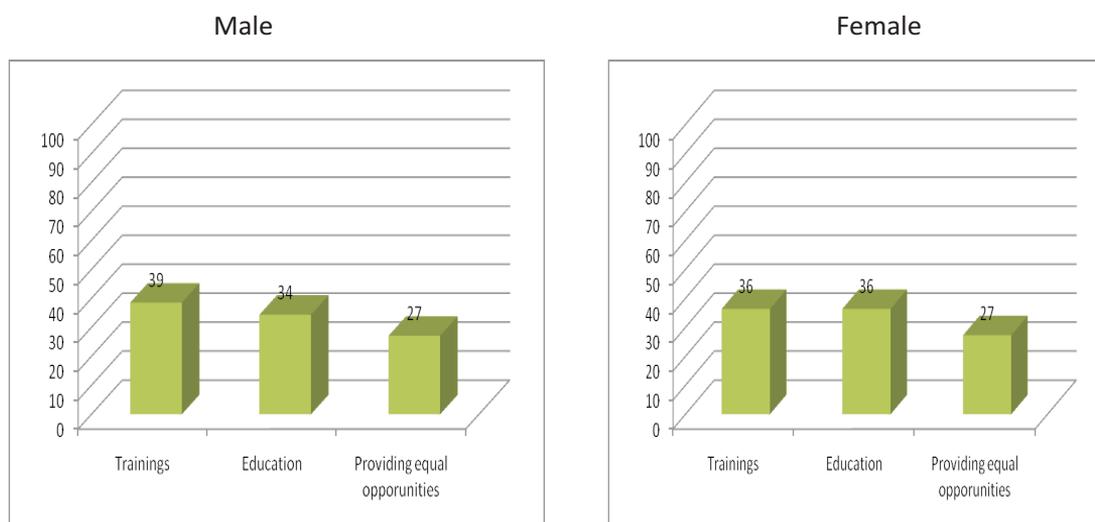
and women respondents in the employer category. They regarded provision of trainings, promoting construction-related education and providing equal opportunities as the core areas which can bring gender parity in the construction industry. The results show that if women are encouraged to gain the relevant education, and if they have access to and information about relevant training opportunities, they can break the glass walls and ceilings, and can participate in trades where women currently are invisible, where they can excel and pursue careers in the construction sector.

**Figure 15. Key Areas to Increase Women's Participation in Construction Sector**



Besides these factors, the data also highlights that the absence of women in high profile jobs like managers and supervisors in the construction sector affects the needs and interests of women employees working at lower levels. Trends show that the presence of more women in key management positions can better address women's labour issues and can play a catalytic role in creating favourable conditions for women employees.

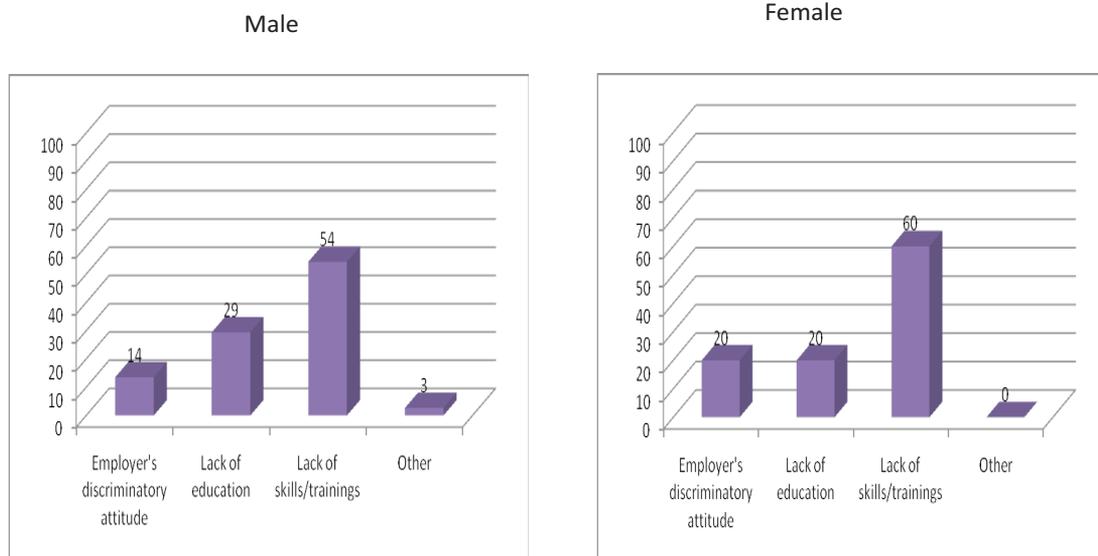
**Figure 16. Factors which affect women's presence in key decision making positions**

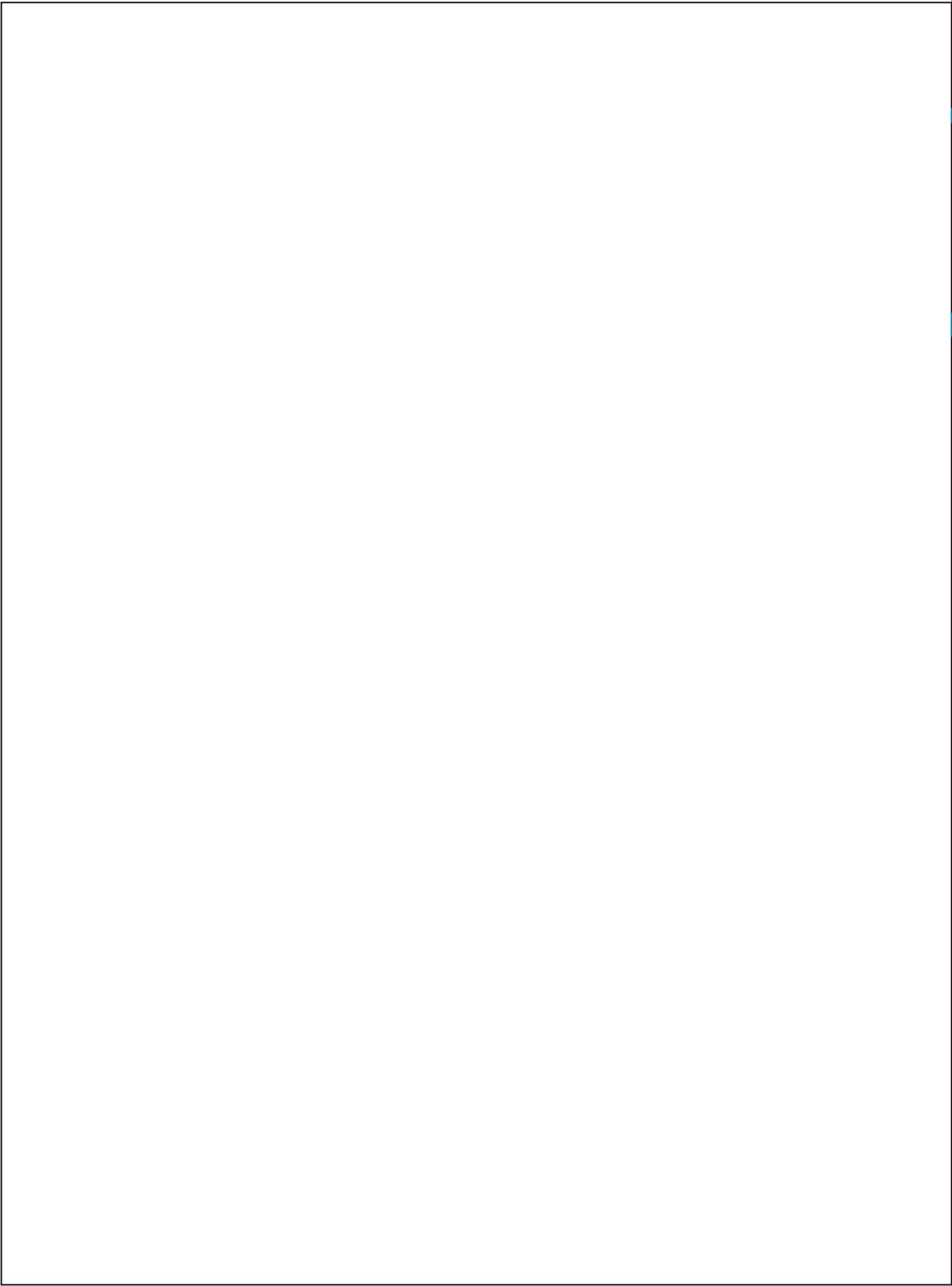


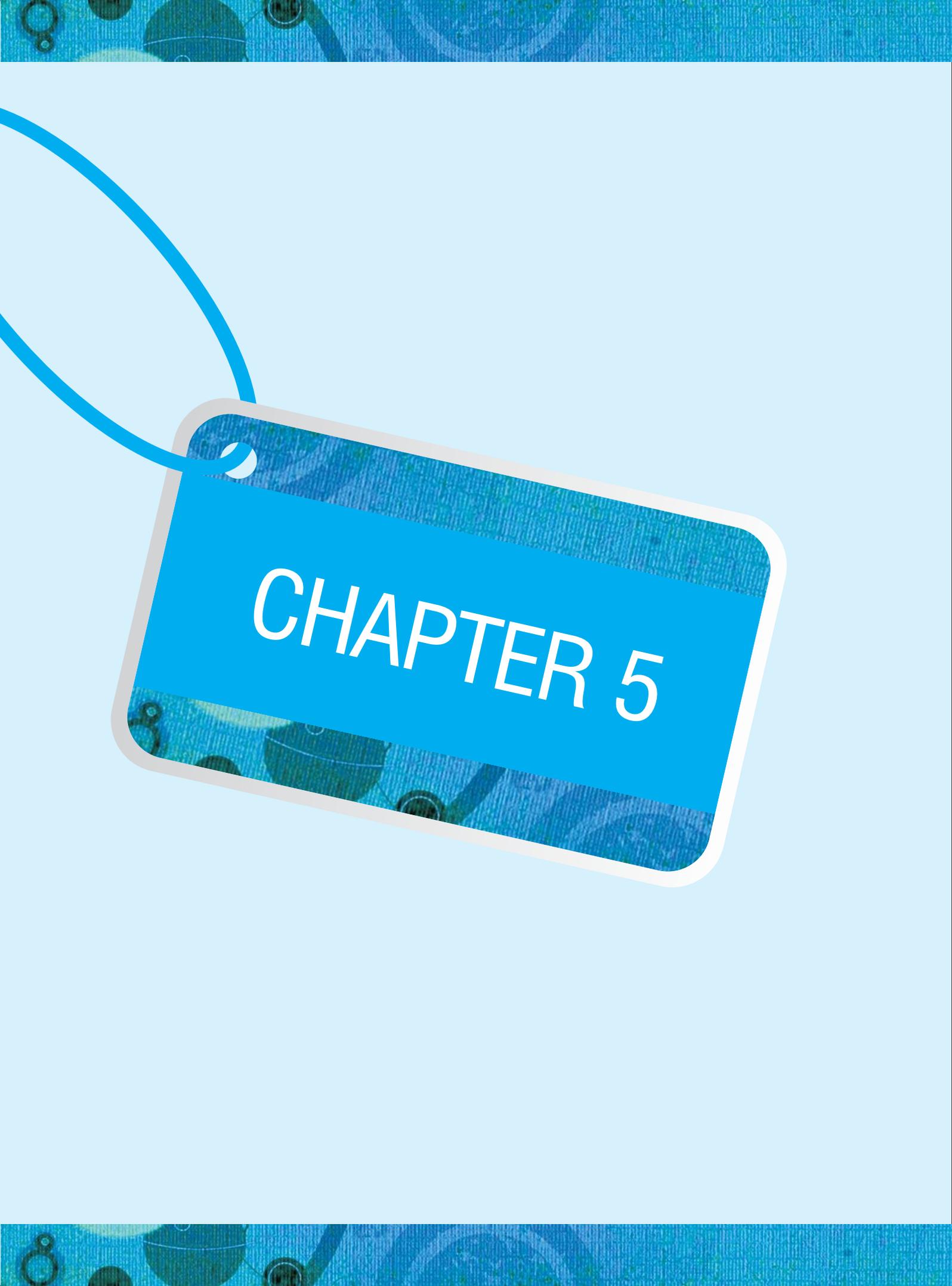
This critical mass of women working at key positions in the construction industry could then address issues like the gender wage gap, decent working conditions, day-care centres, equal training and skill up-grading opportunities, and equal promotion opportunities for both male and female employees on the basis of skills and competencies.

As highlighted earlier, there are several factors which produce cumulative effects to put women in a disadvantageous position in the construction sector job market. As women who are working in the construction sector do not possess relevant competencies. However, if efforts are made to mainstream women in the areas which cause this situation, gender parity can be increased in the construction sector. As noted earlier, when respondents were asked about unequal promotion opportunities for male and female employees, they recorded several factors, amongst which lack of skills and trainings was the most frequently highlighted.

**Figure 17: Reasons for Unequal Promotion Opportunities**







CHAPTER 5



### 5.1 Macro/ Policy Level Interventions

#### Policy Guidelines

The economic empowerment of women is not a linear and straight forward process. It is a policy issue created by a series of interconnected processes. Therefore, in order to achieve gender parity in the construction industry, it is important to take steps to incorporate gender aspects in policies such as the Labour Policy, Youth Policy, National Skills Strategy, National Employment Policy and Action Plans and Schemes, in general.

These policies and plans should be devised in a way that they provide clear and direct guidelines for various sectors, such as the construction industry. The policy framework is engendered by the mutual efforts of different stakeholders in which the commitment of the Government is the most important because traditionally Governments are responsible for making investments in social sectors which have ends other than commercial interests as pursued by the private sector. The development of a macro-economic policy that stimulates growth and supports women's participation in non-traditional sectors such as construction-related jobs is a key to achieving gender parity in the construction industry.

#### Promotion of Dialogue between Stakeholders

A sustainable and gender balanced job creation policy can only be developed and executed successfully if all the concerned stakeholders – the Government, employers and society – are brought together to work for a common goal. Therefore all stakeholders should be facilitated by providing a neutral forum where ideas can be exchanged and developed freely, and relevant international best practices can be introduced. In this regard, seminars, training programs and the support of the media can be very helpful. Moreover, after the 18th Amendment, another issue that has surfaced is the distribution of roles and responsibilities between the Federal and Provincial governments. This is further compounded by the presently unclear role of the District governments in the future.

#### Close Linkages between Various Stakeholders

The overall construction sector outlook and consequently employment prospects for women entering the labour force can be increased. The trends show that efforts are being made at different levels (individual, institutional and policy level) to achieve gender parity in the construction sector. However, conscious efforts are required to enhance linkages between various stakeholders. In this context there is a need to start interventions from the macro level policies that govern the job market which can have an impact on future employment prospects for women. While doing this, we need to focus on introducing specialized educational degrees in construction related areas, and to encourage women's participation in those areas. There is a need to allocate sufficient financial resources to introduce technical skill trainings throughout the country which include women's participation; and a corresponding need to enhance the social linkages of women to enable them to compete on an equal basis in the job market. This is a tri-partite issue in which employers and social sector organizations have a very important role to play.

## Advocacy on Specific Issues

There are a number of specific issues which require social awareness and inputs from policy makers. These include:

- Advocating the addition of service sector industries especially construction industry into the apprenticeship system along with the traditional manufacturing industry. In addition, there are a number of sectors where there are equal opportunities for women to be inducted and trained. There is need to advocate the induction of such sectors into the apprenticeship system.
- One pragmatic way of addressing gender inequality in the workplace is to highlight instances and organizations where women are making positive contributions to the economy and to society. This can be done by identifying and recognizing such firms that are 'women friendly' through a nationwide survey of employers. In this process, support from other stakeholders and from the media can help in creating awareness and in disseminating information on a broader scale.
- In order to increase women's participation in the construction sector of Pakistan, it is pivotal to first of all recognize as well as raise awareness about the potential, capacities and rights of women. There is need to remove stereotypical perceptions that women are not suitable for construction-related jobs due to biological factors.

## 5.2 Institutional/Micro Level Interventions

There are a number of possible interventions to stimulate women's increased participation in the 'green' areas of the construction sector. The need for these has been identified through the survey of sub-sectors of the Construction Industry of Pakistan. Possible interventions include:

### Focused Functional Skills Training Programs for Youth

The survey of the construction sector in Pakistan shows that regardless of the sub-sector, there are a number of functional skills that are in demand and are now becoming a pre-requisite for all types of jobs. These include:

- Spoken English courses that would enable a business' employees to understand basic customer requirements.
- Computer literacy courses enabling employees to perform basic operations such as data entry and generate and print invoices.

Therefore, there is a need to develop and launch short courses for the youth especially young girls with a special focus on the needs of the construction industry. These will supplement any technical training programs that they might already be enrolled in and will substantially improve their chances of finding jobs at various levels of the industry.

### Improving employability of women graduates

There is a need to improve the participation of women in the workforce along with creating an environment through which disparities can be removed. The primary reasons for gender disparity in the construction sector can be attributed to factors such as a vulnerable and non-conducive working environment; lack of

decent opportunities; lack of knowledge about job opportunities; lack of skills which can make students better candidate for a job; a lack of entry-level opportunities into the job market.

Due to the above-mentioned factors many women either opt to remain economically inactive by not venturing into the job market or remain underpaid or have to work in a vulnerable environment.

Investment in women's empowerment is the key element for improving the economic, political and social conditions of Pakistan. Working environments for women can be improved by adopting a strategy which can shift the situation in favour of women.

Stakeholders can help improve this state of affairs by starting a program for women job seekers in the construction sector. This program can be run in collaboration with women's educational institutions and can focus on the following:

- Imparting life skills to educated young women so that they can compete in the job market
- Creating awareness among educated young women about construction sector jobs
- Informing them about potential job openings in the construction industry.

## **Increased Access to Resources and Information**

There is need to enhance women's access to institutions which are facilitating women's increased participation in the work force and especially in non-traditional sectors such as the construction industry. Moreover, the creation of a labour market regulatory environment which facilitates employers and at the same time protects the interests of the workforce is also a key step to addressing gender disparities in the construction sector.

Results of the survey of construction sector of Pakistan show that a majority of businesses do not use any formal means to announce vacancies or to recruit employees. Similarly, prior work done by CHRS indicates that the job seekers also may not have access to formal employment channels due to economic or technical reasons. They usually do not have the skills and resources – such as a PC, Internet and computer literacy – necessary to search and apply for jobs elsewhere and have to contend with whatever is available locally. Therefore, there is a need to streamline access to information in way which is accessible to majority of the target group.

## **Analysis of Market Demand**

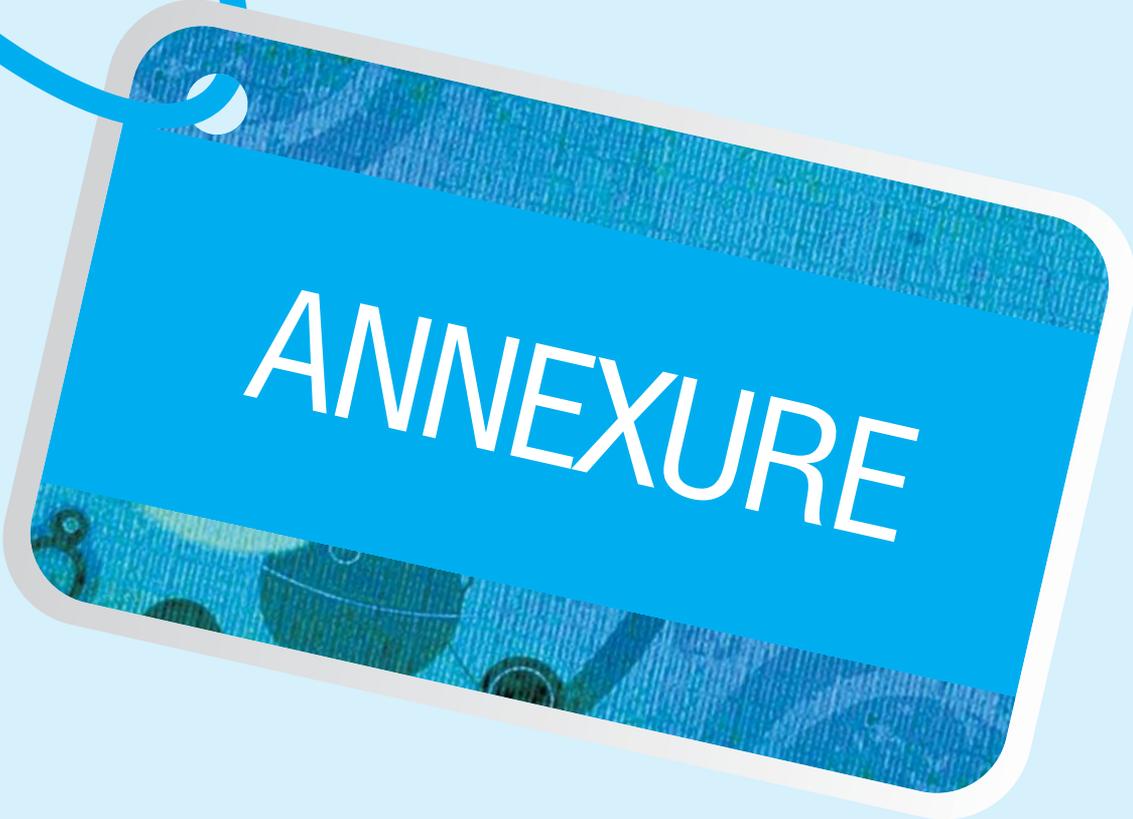
Analysis of employee demand in each trade of the construction industry and ways to meet this demand are key areas through which to integrate women into the construction sector. Once a detailed market demand survey is conducted, this demand could be met by providing relevant training to the women. The vast majority of women are still trained in skills that produce goods requiring high labour inputs (carpet weaving, tailoring, and embroidery) for which there is little market demand. Therefore, there is a need to introduce technical training in areas which were initially regarded as non-traditional. Training can be introduced as per the market demand focussing on the trades which are culturally and socially acceptable women to participate, in the context of Pakistani society.

## **Integrated Interventions**

The system also lacks linkages between training providers and potential employers, which could facilitate job placement of female graduates. There is need to integrate interventions of all key stakeholders including members of society, NGOs and development sector organizations, to put together and pursue a shared vision and strategy for addressing gender disparity in the construction sector. The stakeholder should realise that this issue cannot be addressed through short-term piecemeal initiatives. Instead, a comprehensive and cohesive strategy and framework are needed to tackle this problem in the short, medium and long term.

## **Favourable Working Conditions**

Another key area of intervention is to create favourable working condition for women in construction-related jobs. They should be provided with work place facilities such as separate toilets, separate resting areas, and day care centres. Making the environment women friendly will encourage more and more women to join this sector.



ANNEXURE



## Questionnaire

### 1. Employee/Worker

#### B. TRADE/OCCUPATION

A. PROFILE				
Gender	= Man	= Woman		
Age Group	= =20 = 20 – 30 = 31 – 40 = 41 – 50 = 51 – 60 = >60			
Marital Status	= Married	= Unmarried	= Widowed	= Other _____
Type of Work	= Skilled	= Unskilled		
Average daily/monthly wage	= Daily _____	= Monthly _____		
Family Size	= No of Children _____ = No of Old Age People _____ = No of School Going _____			

- How long you have been working in this trade? (in years)
  - = Less than two
  - = Up to five
  - = More than five
- Were you previously involved in any other trade of construction industry?
  - = Yes
  - = No
  - = If yes, Type of trade i) \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_ iii) \_\_\_\_\_
- How did you came to know about job opportunity in construction sector,
  - = Newspaper
  - = Internet
  - = Employment Agency
  - = Friends/Relatives/Social Networks
  - = Self Job Hunting
  - = Other, Please Specify: i) \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_
  - = iii) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why did you join specifically this sector to work?

- = Lack of skill/training for any other profession
- = Relevant education
- = Transfer of skills from one generation to other
- = Interest in Construction
- = Other i) \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_ iii) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you think women can easily participate in all types of trades in construction sector?

- = Yes
- = No; why not: \_\_\_\_\_

6. What are those jobs/tasks which are considered non-traditional for woman within construction industry?

= Contractor/manager	= Electrician	= Plumber
= Architect	= Mason	= Other
= Interior Designer	= Carpenter	_____

7. In your view, which trade of the construction industry is suitable for women?

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. \_\_\_\_\_

8. What are the reasons in your view for women's lower participation in the construction industry?

Lack of skills	Y/N
Low education	Y/N
Glass ceilings	Y/N
Discrimination against women	Y/N
Women are not considered suitable for this industry	Y/N
Any other i) _____	

9. Do you think that there is any kind of demand for women workers in construction sector?

- = Yes
- = No
- If no; why not: \_\_\_\_\_

### C. WORK ENVIRONMENT

10. Gender of your Supervisor?

- = Man
- = Woman

11. What type of work do you often do on construction sites?

† Skilled	= Unskilled
Contractor/manager	Labour
Architect	Helper
Interior Designer	Carrier
Electrician	Mover
Carpenter	Other
Mason	_____
Plumber	
Other _____	

12. Do women and men workers get equal wages for the same type of tasks?

- = Yes
- = No

If no, the reasons behind that:

- = Lack of training
- = Lack of skills
- = Less working hours
- = Lack of experience

13. Do women and men workers get equal promotion opportunities within the construction sector?

- = Yes
- = No

If no, what are the reasons?

- = Employer's discriminatory attitude
- = Lack of education
- = Lack of skills/trainings
- = Other \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_ iii) \_\_\_\_\_

14. Do you think women's work is given equal importance as compared to their male counterparts in different construction trades?

- = Yes
- = No

15. Do you have any trade unions or labour unions in your current work environment?

- = Yes
- = No
- = Any informal Union

16. Labour unions are important to address problems related to? (In %)

- = Job Security -----%
- = on-job Facilities -----%
- = Benefits and Allowances -----%
- = Sexual Harassment -----%

17. Do you feel comfortable while dealing with your colleagues in following areas?

	With men Colleagues	With women Colleagues
Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>= Asking for help</li> <li>= General Communication</li> <li>= Conflicts/Difference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>= Asking for help</li> <li>= General Communication</li> <li>= Conflicts/Difference</li> </ul>
Co-Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>= Asking for help</li> <li>= General Communication</li> <li>= Conflicts/Difference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>= Asking for help</li> <li>= General Communication</li> <li>= Conflicts/Difference</li> </ul>
Juniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>= Asking for help</li> <li>= General Communication</li> <li>= Conflicts/Difference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>= Asking for help</li> <li>= General Communication</li> <li>= Conflicts/Difference</li> </ul>

#### D. FACILITIES/ BENEFITS

18. Do you get any additional benefit from your firm/employer

- = Bonus Y/N
- = Medical allowance Y/N
- = Travelling allowance Y/N
- = Pick and Drop Y/N
- = Advance Salary Y/N
- = Any other i) \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_ iii) \_\_\_\_\_

19. Means of transportation which you are currently using?

- = None/ On Foot
- = Public Transport
- = Private vehicle
- = Taxi
- = Other \_\_\_\_\_

20. How much time does it take to reach you to the site?

- = Less than 1 hour
- = 1 hour
- = Less than 2 hours
- = 2 hours

21. How does distance to work station affect women workers?

- = Economic Distress
- = Sexual Harassment
- = Arrival Behind Scheduled Time
- = Other : i) \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_ iii) \_\_\_\_\_

22. Does your firm provide the following on-job facilities for women workers?

- = Day care centres Y/N
- = Separate toilets Y/N
- = Separate resting areas Y/N
- = Food Y/N
- = Any other i) \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_ iii) \_\_\_\_\_

23. Do you think that on-job trainings and skill learning opportunities are equally available for men and women workers?

- = Yes
- = No

#### **E. MEDICAL ISSUES**

24. Have you faced any of following medical issue because of the nature of your job during work?

- = Physical strain Y/N
- = Chronic body aches Y/N
- = Back-pain Y/N
- = Chest-pain Y/N
- = Skin diseases Y/N
- = Others i) \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_ iii) \_\_\_\_\_

25. How do you cope with paying for your health issues?

- = Medical Allowance
- = Salary
- = Loan
- = None

**F. SOCIETAL FACTORS**

26. Do you think women have to face religio-cultural barriers when they join or work in construction industry?

- = Yes
- = No

If yes, what are the types of these barriers?

- a. Family Restrictions Y/N
- b. Communal Resistance Y/N
- c. Religious issues Y/N
- d. Other i) \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_ iii) \_\_\_\_\_

**G. FUTURE NEEDS**

27. What are the favourable changes you would like to have in your work environment?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

28. Do you see any promotion opportunities for you in this trade?

- = Yes
- = No
- = If no, what are the reasons? i) \_\_\_\_\_
- = ii) \_\_\_\_\_

29. Do you feel a need to upgrade your skills or get new skills?

- = Yes
- = No

30. What types of training/skills would you like to have?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

## 2. Employer/Owner

### BASIC INFORMATION

Gender	Man		Woman	
Age group	=20 = 20 – 30 = 31 – 40 = 41 – 50 = 51 – 60 = >60			
Marital Status	Married	Unmarried	Widowed	Other
Type of Firm/Company				
Type of Firm's Work	Skilled	Unskilled	Both	
Registration	Yes	No	Type of Registration _____	

1. Number of men and women workers in your firm/organization?

Men workers

Women workers

2. In your opinion, what are the key characteristics required for hiring an employee?

Men Employee	= Education	= Skills	= Hard work
	= Working Style	= Gender	=
	Other _____		
Women Employee	= Education	= Skills	= Hard work
	= Working Style	= Gender	=
	Other _____		

3. Do you think that there are equal opportunities for men and women to participate in different construction related occupations?

Contractor/manager Y/N	Electrician Y/N	Plumber Y/N
Architect Y/N	Mason Y/N	
Interior Designer Y/N	Carpenter Y/N	

4. Do you think the construction industry is suitable for women?

= Yes

= No

If no, what are the reasons?

Type of Occupation	Reasons	Codes for Reasons
Contractor/manager		1= Biological differences
Architect		2=Lack of Education
Interior Designer		3=Lack of Skills
Electrician		4=Lack of Training
Carpenter		5= Other
Mason		
Plumber		

5. Why there is a lack of women's participation in construction industry?
  - = Biological differences
  - = Lack of education
  - = Lack of skills and trainings
  - = Male Dominance
  - = Others \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Do you think participation of women can benefit construction industry?
  - = Yes , reasons; i \_\_\_\_\_, ii; \_\_\_\_\_
  - = No, reasons; i \_\_\_\_\_, ii; \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. How can women's participation be increased in the construction industry?
  - = Training
  - = Education
  - = Providing equal opportunities
  - = Others i) \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_ iii) \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. What are the trades/occupations in which women should be trained?
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_
  - D. \_\_\_\_\_
  
9. Do you think that the absence of women at higher level of job, like manager, supervisor etc. can affect the needs and interests of women workers at lower level? (Yes or No for the following).
  - = Job Security of Women Workers Y/N
  - = Special Allowances/benefits for Women Workers Y/N
  - = Incidents of Sexual Harassment Y/N

10. In your opinion, what barriers and difficulties do women face in the construction industry?

- = Discrimination
- = Harassment
- = Male dominance
- = Lack of facilities
- = Others \_\_\_\_\_

11. What sort of sexual harassment do usually women face while working in construction industry?

	Types of Harassment		
	Physical	Verbal	gestureal
Senior Workers			
Co-Workers			
Junior Workers			

Enumerator's Name & Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

ILO Country Office for Pakistan  
ILO Building, Sector G-5/2,  
Islamabad, Pakistan.  
Tel: +92-51-2276456-8  
Fax: +92-51-2279181-2  
E-mail: [islamabad@ilo.org](mailto:islamabad@ilo.org)  
[www.ilo.org/islamabad](http://www.ilo.org/islamabad)



ISBN: 9789221257523