

**Kashmir Charitable Trust-AK**  
**Lower Plate near Four fields Mosque Muzaffarabad**  
**One day Workshop**  
**Entitled Gender Equality & Women Empowerment**  
**Dated: December 2006**



## **Introduction**

### **Summary**

Gender equality means that the different behavior, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favored equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

We all agree that the Goal "Gender equality and the empowerment of women" is a much broader goal than the sum of the single target. The elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education is a very important target. Education is a powerful instrument for the empowerment of young women. It increases their knowledge and skills base, it opens new opportunities and choices be it to earn better income or improve their health and status. The benefits of educating women surpass by far the costs of leaving

### **Objectives**

- Enhance the capability of women to comprehend and acquire the knowledge.
- It brings together the entire community of Muzaffarabad.
- Approximately all units focal point on the women Empowerment at the global level.
- To provide an understanding of the differences between the requirements of women and men with respect to Gender Equality.

### **Agenda:**

**Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women**

### **Trainers:**

**Mr. Aamir Khawaja, Regional Coordinator**  
**Mr. Ashar Awan, Resource Mobilizer**

### **Facilitators:**

**Mr. Fazil Mughal, Project Manager**  
**Ms. Shaista Jabeen Project Officer**

### **Participants:**

**Members of Hum Awaz Forum**  
**Local community of Plate**

## Activities

- **Inaugural session**

The workshop on women's empowerment in the context of Gender Equality convened by the Kashmir Charitable Trust-UK, in its regional office, Plate Muzaffarabad. The workshop was inaugurated by Mr. Fazil Mughal.

- **Presentations**

**Mr. Aamir Khawaja** portrayed the prospect of increased conflicts among men and women. Gender equality is about promoting equality between women and men in all aspects of our work in development. It is about giving people the opportunity to build a better life for themselves, their families, and their communities.



The question of gender equality is not a single issue, but one closely tied to protecting the environment, improving health, or achieving education. Women are more than a 'vulnerable group'. They are an important resource in backing, establishing peace, and rebuilding societies. They cannot play these roles if their basic security needs will not be provided them, if decision-makers will ignore them, and if they will fail to receive support.

At broad level, gender relations and inequalities influence both vulnerabilities and capacities including people's ability to respond. Vulnerability is influenced by social attitudes, economic inequalities between women and men, and the division of labor within the family. For example, women tend to be less educated, have less experience dealing with authorities, have access to fewer economic resources and, in many countries, have more restrictions on their mobility than men.

**Mr. Fazil Mughal** reminded participants that it is a well-known fact that women are active agents in solving their own problems and can turn adverse situations into sources of empowerment. God also raises women up within a congregation to do specialty work such as counseling or administration. But again, their ministry is often minimized because of their gender. Women faced threats from religious doctrine and traditional obscurantist particularly in Pakistan and its close neighboring countries.



He stressed that the critical challenge for multi-lateral and bi-lateral organizations was to identify the support, women needed and the best way to provide that support. Although the Platform for Action had identified many of the constituent requirements of women's human security, there had been no comprehensive analysis of these requirements.

**Mr. Ashar Awan** drew the attention of the participants towards the Human Development Report which had identified seven dimensions required for women empowerment, human security; economic security; food security; environmental security; personal security; community security; and political security.



He pointed out that while all people were faced with threats to their enjoyment of all these dimensions, women faced particular threats this

regard. Many women in leadership positions often unconsciously view themselves as having less authority than a man who might be in the same position. They confidently lead women but hesitate when it comes to directing men. Perhaps they find men unapproachable because of unhealthy male relationships from their past or they agree to a man because they misinterpret the scriptures and believe that women should put forward to all men.

By urging a consideration of inequalities between women and men, efforts to integrate a gender perspective can also highlight other power imbalances.

**Ms. Shaista Jabeen** mentioned that Education, as a part of empowerment, enhances the capability of women to comprehend and acquire the knowledge that is necessary to perk up the life's quality. All human beings have an inherited right to get education at equal bases, without any sort of gender discrimination. We all know that if girls are left behind in education, it is not only because there are few schools but also because poor households have to make hard choices. Even if schooling is free and access is non-discriminatory, there are deeply entrenched structural barriers and traditional values that perpetuate the exclusion of girls from education. In developing countries, girls have a full time home-based job at a very early age and a set traditional path to follow towards early marriage. Indeed, to achieve the target set for gender equality in education, access to water and energy, access to transportation, access to food processing technologies, access to reproductive and maternal health services are as important as building school facilities.



## • Questions for Discussion & Review

1. What is Gender?
2. The difference between men's and women's security and protection needs;
3. Who holds what responsibilities, who does what work, and who controls resources?
4. The differences in women's, men's, boys', and girls' priorities;
5. How women are currently organized or participating in social, economic, political, and religious structures?
6. The capacities of women, men, girls, and boys to participate in decision-making processes and reconstruction;
7. How men's gender identities influence their vulnerabilities, needs, and priorities?
8. The opportunities to narrow gender gaps and support women's equitable participation in decision making.
9. How have women and men been consulted on priorities and needs?
10. Should a woman be allowed to teach men?

## Outcomes

One of the key features of this workshop is that it brings together the entire community of Muzaffarabad. It is equally important that almost all entities focusing on the women Empowerment at the global level and at regional levels have been invited to share their experiences and challenges in ensuring that mutual-gender is a key dimension of our respective work.

The workshop provides a forum in which an



understanding of the differences between the requirements of women and men with respect to 'Gender Equality' would be examined. It also provides multilaterals and bilateral with an opportunity to address the potential of the Equal Gender agenda to advance women's empowerment, especially in their day-to-day work.

A framework of "Survival, Security and Autonomy for Women" was suggested as providing relevant indicators, at least in respect of poverty alleviation, and programmes will go beyond those directed at survival and include empowerment elements for results to be sustainable on a long-term basis.