

SOCIAL PROTECTION IN PAKISTAN

THE SOCIAL PROTECTION CANVAS

Gender-sensitive social protection programs facilitate women's economic and social empowerment, reducing their vulnerabilities and improving prospects of employment status, ownership of productive assets, decision making, and control over income, political participation and broadening of social networks. Social protection can be a key driver of economic empowerment for both men and women, if adequately targeted and implemented. SP can be informal (family, social networks involving sale of assets, loans etc.) or formal. The main formal SP instruments are:¹

- **Social Assistance/Safety Nets** – maintains a minimum acceptable standard of living through (cash transfers, food aid and subsidies, public works)
- **Social security** - support the employed from falling into poverty: unemployment and health insurance, funeral assistance and disaster insurance; minimum wage; eliminate child labour and forced labour
- **Human development and child protection** - limit the impact of poverty and prevent school dropouts, reduced food consumption and health in affected households
- **Microfinance** – smoothes income and consumption through provision of microcredit, savings, micro-insurance

CONTEXT

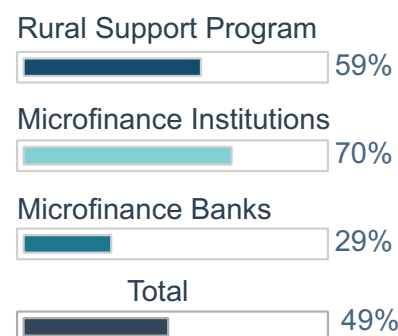
Pakistan has the following mechanisms for social protection:

- Employee Social Security
- Workers Welfare Fund
- Employees Old Age Benefits Institution
- Zakat and Ushr
- Benazir Income Support Program (BISP)

The first three are only available to those engaged in formal employment. Initial steps to bring home based workers into the ambit of social security have yet to be formalized. BISP is the only targeted, means tested program and the only one that focuses on women.

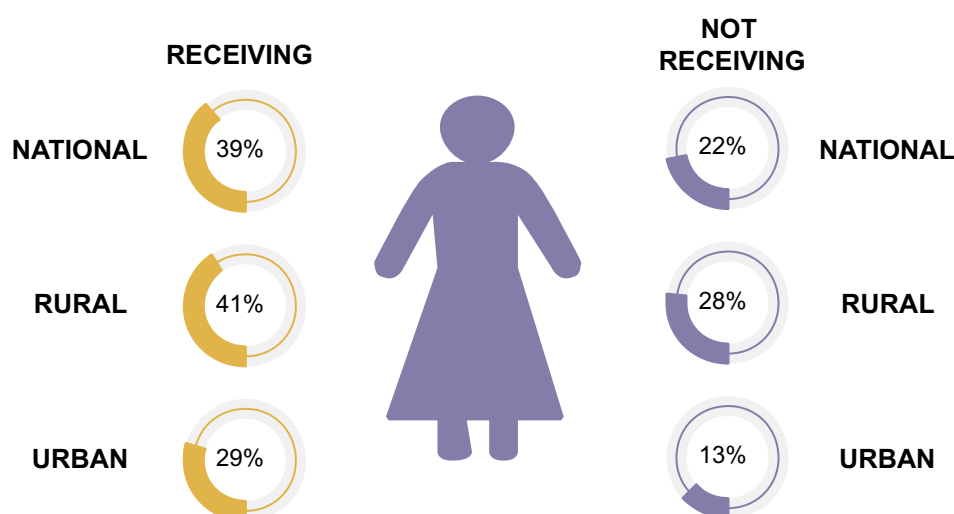
WOMEN AND MICROFINANCE INSTITUTIONS²

Share of Active Female Borrowers by Credit Outreach



LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE (AGES 15-64) BY STATUS OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE³

LFPR is higher among the social assistance recipients compared to non-recipients, for instance, LFPR is 39 for recipients compared 22 for non-recipient.



Note: Zakat and Ushr are also included in social assistance

1 Source: State Bank of Pakistan 2008

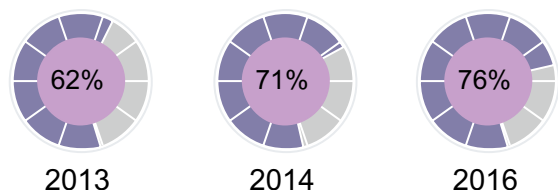
2 Source: Pakistan Microfinance Review 2017

3 Source: Estimated from HIES 2015-16

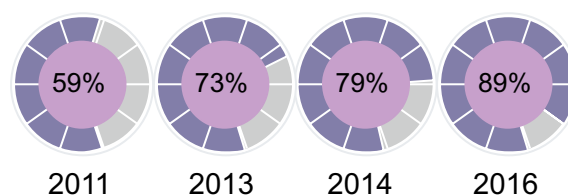
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BISP RECIPIENTS AND EMPOWERMENT⁴

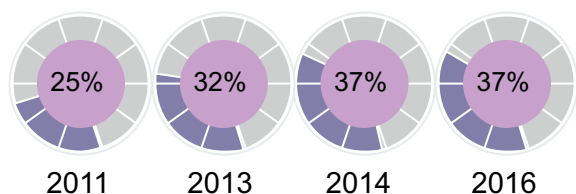
% of Women Who Retain Control over Cash



% of Women Voted in Local/National Elections



% of Women who can Visit Market Alone



Cash Transfers Work but...

Despite substantial shift from casual labour to small business among BISP beneficiaries, asset growth is unlikely to happen due to low value of cash transfers.

Without meaningful investment in human capital and substantial injection of financial capital, the struggle to break the vicious circle of poverty will continue.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that program design targets uses objective means tested criteria and targets women as cash transfer recipients with control over its use.
- Support the graduation of the poor and vulnerable women and their households from poverty. Assets transfer, and provision of training to manage these assets⁵ has the potential to encourage entrepreneurial behavior among the recipients and drive employment shifts from low wage employment toward self-employment.⁶
- Social protection programs linked with complementary services such as financial services, education, agricultural extension and rural advisory services, have a multiplier effect and effectively support the economic advancement of women and drives community engagement. Mandatory training for literacy, self-awareness and confidence building, information on legal rights and laws for protection against harassment and gender based violence as well as mechanisms for assistance (Helplines, Ombudsperson etc.) should be part of the program.
- Social protection and social assistance programs should be integrated and target oriented. These should enhance people's capacities to cope with financial shocks, natural and man-made disasters. This requires a stringent and effective monitoring system at federal and sub-national levels.
- Promote equitable and accessible social health insurance initiatives irrespective of employment in the formal or informal economy or place of work.

This infographic was developed by the Center of Gender and Policy Studies (CGaPS) for Awaz-e-Niswan (AAN - National network of women voters). CGaPS gratefully acknowledges the support of UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF). Please send any comments on the infographic to CGaPS at program.cgaps@gmail.com



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⁴ Source: BISP Impact Evaluation Survey 2011, 2013, 2014 & 2016

⁵ Bandiera et al. 2016

⁶ PPAF, CERP Asset Transfer Program – One year impact report (2017).