

**NATIONAL POLICY ON ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS**

**DRAFT 1**

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## NATIONAL POLICY ON ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS

### **Vision:**

The right to live a violent free life, with dignity and equality in a just and equitable society is firmly established under the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and its international obligations.

### **Introduction:**

The Government of Pakistan recognizes the importance of protecting the basic human rights of all its citizens', which is enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan. In true spirit with the Constitution it also truly believes that a socially just and economically prosperous Pakistan is one where the human rights of all citizens are protected and the violations are addressed through the available legal remedies. The Government of Pakistan is also clear that under international law it is the state's responsibility to exercise due diligence to prevent acts that violate basic human rights.

The Constitution of Pakistan 1973 enshrines basic principles towards a just society with provisions that include (but are not limited to) equality for all; freedom from all forms of exploitation and discrimination, special provision for the protection of women and children, full participation of women in all spheres of national life, and education and economic empowerment.

It is, however, unfortunate that violence against women and girls is still prevalent, both in public and private spaces. A large body of research, national and sub-national, confirms that gender based violence is an unfortunate and dire reality in present day Pakistan, where it is often uniquely legitimized in the name of culture, tradition and morality. The Government of Pakistan fully recognizes that violence against women and girls is a grave violation of a woman and girl's basic human right, as enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan, both in letter and spirit.

Recognizing the diverse manifestations of violence against women and girls, successive governments have ratified various international conventions, showing their commitment to the cause of elimination of all forms of discrimination, violence and injustice against women and girls. These include: Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Sustainable Development Goals, Convention on the Rights of the Child, The International Covenant of Social, Economic and Cultural Rights and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to include but a few. The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against

Women, adopted by the General Assembly, articulates under Article 4(e) that States should '*consider the possibility of developing national plans of action to promote the protection of women against any form of violence, or to include provisions for that purpose in plans already existing, taking into account, as appropriate, such cooperation as can be provided by non-governmental organisations, particularly those concerned with the issue of violence against women*'.

It is keeping in line with this basic fundamental human right and constitutional framework, and keeping its international obligations in the forefront that the State of Pakistan endorses a zero tolerance policy on violence against women and girls. This policy collaborates with and expands the points raised in the National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women 2002, where a zero tolerance policy stance, regarding violence against women and girls, was endorsed.

In light of its constitutional and international obligations successive federal and provincial governments have shown their commitment to women and girl's rights by enacting pro-women's legislation but the State recognizes that this grave issue needs further actions, beyond legislation.

### **Background:**

Violence against women and girls is manifested in layers of multiple faceted, interrelated and reoccurring forms. It can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional and economic abuse and exploitation, occurring in both private and public spaces and are grounded in elements of situational and socio-cultural factors. Women also experience violence across life courses in different ways and contexts. Often girls also experience these forms of violence.

The impact of violence against women and girls is seen as a social epidemic having consequences beyond the injuries, physical and psychological, on just the victim/survivor. The government of Pakistan fully recognizes the long term impact of the problem on the immediate family, community and society as a whole. It is also fully recognized that the impact of violence against the girl child is against national laws and international commitments and the implications of violence, both physical and otherwise, will have long term negative impacts that she will carry through out her life cycle. It is also recognized that violence against women is a public health risk of grave proportions.

Article 1 of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines violence against women. This definition has also been adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It states:

*"any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical,*

*sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."*

Forms of violence faced by women and girls in Pakistan include (but are not limited to): A. Physical violence which includes domestic violence, burning and throwing of corrosive substances, disfigurement, nutritional deprivation, forced abortion, castigation of women for not having produced a son and 'heir'; depriving girls of adequate levels of nurture, nutrition nor education; B. Harmful practices that include honour killings, vani/sawara, force conversion and marriage of girls, stoning, forced and early childhood marriages, marriage to the Quran; C. Sexual violence including rape, sexual harassment, sexual and reproductive violence, trafficking and kidnapping for sexual servitude and domestic labour, violence and abuse against women in prisons; D. Psychological and economic abuse including violence, which includes emotional abuse, denial of financial resources/income, inheritance deprivation of women; and E. Violence against women in the political arena including denial to attend political gatherings, to vote, political participation.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women defines violence against women as a form of discrimination. It states:

*"Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women" and that "violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men".*

The Constitution of Pakistan, Article 25 (2), clearly states that no person should be discriminated against on the basis of his/her sex alone. The Government of Pakistan recognizes that violence against women is a form of sex discrimination and that this is against the basic fundamentals of the Constitution.

It is well recognized that often sanctioned under the garb of cultural practices and norms, or through misinterpretation of religious tenets, violence against women in a patriarchal society reinforces male dominance and unequal power and control of men over women. This cuts across all economic classes and religious and ethnic groups throughout the country. In societies that value women's participation and representation in society and where there is a smaller gap in economic, social and political discrimination between the two sexes, there are lower levels of violence against women and girls.

In addition to sex discrimination, other forms of vulnerabilities can increase a woman's risk of violence and make access to support systems difficult. These include women and girls from minority groups, internally displaced women, destitute and women in detention, women with disabilities and older women.

The Government is committed to ending all forms of sex discrimination against women and girls, with particular emphasis on eradicating those forms and mechanisms where sex discrimination leads to violence against women and girls.

### **The Overall Purpose of the Policy:**

The overall purpose of this policy is to address incidents of all forms of violence against women and girls, including women and girls from all socio-economic backgrounds and religious denominations, married, single, divorced and/or widowed, through awareness around what constitutes violence and to eliminate it in all its forms and manifestations, under its constitutional and international obligations.

This policy aims to provide a framework on how to implement the international conventions and treaties ratified by Pakistan that speak of its commitment to protecting fundamental human rights and to eliminate gender based violence. In order to implement and put into action the commitments made on various international platforms, the Government of Pakistan recognizes that it is imperative that new domestic law and policies are incorporated across relevant sectors to help bring to life conventions ratified on paper. It is also the aim of the Government of Pakistan to bring existing law in line with this policy in order to address the already existing direct and indirect discrimination that exists against women and girls.

It is foremost that any future plan stemming from this policy in relation to violence against women and girls, should be ethical, culturally and gender sensitive, accountable and sustainable. The Government further recognizes that policy made at all levels; national, provincial and local, must be coherent and comprehensive. In order to eliminate violence against women and girls, this policy endorses that a zero tolerance policy must be adopted across all systems, sectors, structures and settings, formal and informal, without any loopholes or caveats.

### **The Objectives of the Policy:**

The importance of this policy is manifold. The policy provides a) strategic guiding principles and an overarching framework to provide minimum requirements, guide and support provincial and local governments to develop plans, strategies or laws to deal with present cases and raise greater awareness to prevent future acts of violence; and b) overarching policy directions in order to guide policy and law makers in areas of common concerns at national, provincial and local levels.

The Objectives of the policy are:

- **Survives Political Change:** Ensure that the policy's overarching framework draws the consensus of all major political parties and other relevant

stakeholders and survive with changes of government or political direction.

- **Budget Allocation:** To allocate a budget of 5% - 10% budget allocation towards prevention mechanisms & enhance and plug the gaps in respond systems in each province, as per the individual Provincial requirements. A dedicated and continuous budget allocation for violence against women and girls awareness and rapid relief to the victim/survivor is a proactive commitment towards elimination of this form of violence.
- **GBV seamless service model:** Violence against Women and Girls Centres be introduced in all districts of each provinces. A seamless service model where relevant facilities are provided to the victim/survivors. These include first aid, police reporting, FIR lodging, medical examination, collection and analysis of forensic and other evidence, psychologist evaluation and post-trauma rehabilitation.
- **Address Sex Discrimination:** To ensure that the gender gap between men and women, which inevitably leads to sex discrimination, is closed. This is one of the most effective ways of addressing violence against women and girls.
- **Strengthen structures and institutions:** To strengthen crosscutting and interagency structures and institutions to enhance support mechanisms and response. These would include National Commission on the Status of Women, Ministry of Human Rights and Ministry of Law and Justice.
- **Future plans:** Any action plan or legislation resulting from this policy must ensure that it is ethical, culturally and gender sensitive, accountable, comprehensive and sustainable.
- **Future amendments to existing legislation:** Future legislation or review and eventual amendment of existing legislation must adhere to the basic principles of this policy. This includes addressing issues of language or content that directly or indirectly gender discriminatory.
- **Standardized, accredited and comprehensive training:** It is essential that all relevant professionals across sectors and jurisdictions, such as health sector workers, teachers education institutions, police and judiciary and all those that respond to violence against women and girls receive standardized, accredited and comprehensive pre-service and in-service training on the issues surrounding violence against women, its causes and consequences. It should be ensured that training is not an isolated event but an on going process, which is part of the requirement of the job.
- **Public private partnerships:** Establish public private partnerships forums to promote coordination and establish legitimacy of collective efforts of

government and non-governmental bodies.

### **Guiding Principles:**

The policy will guide the State and various stakeholders to achieve the purpose and objectives of the policy on the basis of the following principles:

**Zero tolerance:** This policy is based on the fundamental principle that there will be zero tolerance towards any form of violence against women and girls. The State does not accept any caveat that allows for and covers up violence against women and girls. This shall be incorporated through coordinated, sustained and meaningful action, which challenges and deconstructs the prevalent deep rooted and entrenched social attitudes. The policy aims to ensure good practices and interagency coordination across all relevant sectors, structures and institutions, formal and informal, be gender equitable and provide swift response and justice to the victim/survivor, throughout the process.

**Justice and equality:** The policy will guide the State and its various organs in accordance with the fundamental rights as enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan, in particular the principles of justice and equality. Every person, regardless of sex or other difference, is equal before the law and shall be entitled to their basic human rights and facilities, including protection and recourse to free and fair legal protection.

**Human Rights Framework:** Viewing violence against women and girls within a human rights framework shifts responsibility for prevention from the private to the public sphere and focuses on public bodies' responsibility for the rehabilitation of the abused and punishment of the abuser. It shall be known that no person in authority shall use his/her discretion subjectively from punishing a person accused of a gender based crime. The human rights framework broadens the realm of various State and private institutions and the inter link between violence and public health, education and gender equality. This policy establishes its directions within the overall human rights framework, which entails a strategic guide to the national and provincial governments.

**Political Will and leadership:** The policy aims to build on a wide consensus between all relevant stakeholders, public and private, in order that it embeds itself in political will and survives party politics. This policy will ensure that present and future structures, private or state institutions at the highest government and political levels address all issues of direct or indirect situations that lead to violence against women and girls. Political will is imperative for societal change towards violence.

**Swift, Just & Confidential Response to the Victim:** Successive governments have accepted nationally and internationally, that violence against women and

girls can have long-term economic and public health costs to society. Additionally, the victim experiences long term negative health consequences (medical and psychological), loss of security, quality of life and loss of agency in her own life. It is also widely accepted that there are wide-reaching potential damaging implications for children, families and communities and burdens the health care system further. This policy will guide the State in enhancing mechanisms to eliminate discrimination and violence against women and girls. This shall be by protecting the victims through legal recourse and prosecutorial proactive sentencing to bring the perpetrators of the crime to justice. All national, provincial and local bodies must ensure that gender sensitive, accountable and transparent structures and institutions exist to provide immediate relief and response to the victim/survivor, including police, health care providers and the judicial system.

**Provincial Responsibility:** The 18<sup>th</sup> amendment has devolved powers to the provinces where policy makers and legislators have greater autonomy on the topic of violence against women and girls. Provinces should note that more allocation to areas for the emancipation of women and girls would result in greater progress as a whole. In particular it would in terms of women's and girl's development and education. This in turn will ensure less discrimination, better understanding of women and girls to access facilities and institutions, such as police and the judiciary and eventual equality and safety of women and girls.

**Education:** This policy recognises that education is the backbone of a successful country and the strongest primary violence prevention mechanism. The Government of Pakistan, under its constitutional obligations under Article 25A, is fully committed to education for girls, recognizing that education is the only long term solution to help bridge the discriminatory gap and for the future success of this policy. It is the responsibility of all provincial and local governments to further consolidate efforts and enhance mechanism to ensure that all school age going girls are enrolled and stay in school. The State through its various organs shall guide all levels of government to revise curriculum and teacher training to incorporate gender sensitive curriculum for both boys and girls. This shall be made compulsory across all disciplines from primary to college level. Gender sensitive concepts and underlying reasons shall be incorporated. Education including community education and legal literacy shall be invested in and disseminated from all relevant government platforms.

**Ethical, Cultural and Gender Sensitive Plans:** Any future strategy, action plan or legislation resulting from this policy shall be ethical, culturally and gender sensitive, accountable, comprehensive and sustainable. Future legislation or review, and eventual amendment of existing legislation, must adhere to the basic principles of this policy.

## Policy Framework:

1. Prevention, including primary prevention
2. Response, protection and rehabilitation
3. Implementation within citizen/state co-responsibility and actions.
4. Evaluation, monitoring and reporting.

### A. Prevention:

The Government of Pakistan is committed to a large preventative programme, which is multifaceted and encompassing of all formal and informal structures that can be a catalyst to future prevention of violence against women and girls. It is well recognized that the social and economic implications of prevention are far less than dealing with response to violence when it occurs. It should be a priority of every future plan and programme that women and girls are safe and live life free of violence or threat of violence and that they are knowledgeable and confident to prevent themselves from varying forms of violence against them, in both private, public and political spheres. This involves education and mass dissemination of information and training regarding a) the underlying root causes of discrimination and violence against women to all genders and across all sectors, b) breaking down the myths of masculinity and male dominance, c) train or retrain as to a new set of life skills that are gender equitable and violence free, d) visiting existing discriminatory laws and practices to ensure they are gender sensitive and carry equitable practices to be implemented in all sectors, formal and informal, and e) the use of mass media and communication channels by the State, at informal and formal levels, to disseminate awareness and knowledge to reject gender stereotypes; mass media awareness, through media and otherwise on anti-women customary practices that cause violence against women and girls and propagate legitimate societal and institutional actions to end these customary practices.

This policy is committed to reiterating that norms of the passive acceptance of violence and discrimination against women and girls must be challenged and deconstructed before violence against women and girls actually occurs.

#### **1.1Community involved: Parents and families:**

The State has always recognized that the most effective non-formal change mechanism is the family and community. Children learn behavior modeled in their own families and the relationship they see around them. Attitudes and beliefs are usually formed at adolescence. Programmes and training shall be created and invested in specifically aimed at families where it is essential that root causes of why violence occurs against women and girls is integral to the programme. Programmes that promote positive, respectful and non-violent parenting should aim to prevent violence against children but also model respectful and equal

relationships between parents. It is important to make parents aware of the negative impact on children who witness violence in the home.

It is particularly important to identify violence supportive attitudes in young people, particularly those who live with violence against their mothers or other primary care givers. Identifying and working with them should be through safe and supportive programmes and training that address the present behaviour in order to break the 'cycle of violence' that is very likely to be imitated by these young people later in their lives as adults.

## **1.2. Violence prevention programmes and life skill training:**

### **a) Group based training to empower women and girls:**

The main aim of prevention programmes and life skill training is to enhance a new set of skills of communication and conflict and violence free resolution. This would involve participatory group training, consisting of training workshops. This training may be embedded in other trainings such as vocational courses, livelihood programmes or reproductive health/education programmes/workshops. For young girls this could be incorporated in vocational courses and life skill training. It is essential to build confidence in young girls through sports and self-defence, which shall be essential part of any informal or formal education of girls.

### **b) Group based training that targets men and boys:**

This would involve participatory group training, consisting of educational workshops and prevention programmes, which enhance a new set of skills of communication. The training would further include challenging the constructions of masculinity that contribute to violence against women. The training for boys must be embedded in other training such as vocational courses, life skill training and self defence. Programmes for men and boys should focus on questioning the notions of male dominance, sense of entitlement and the importance of gender equality for healthy, equitable relationships.

Apart from group training across various fields, the most effective method of changing attitudes of masculinity and gender inequality amongst men would be in religious settings, maddrassahs and mosques. It is imperative to mainstream religious scholars and imams in order to formulate a policy regarding violence against women that is in line with the State's vision on the subject.

Any programme for men and boys should have a two-fold purpose: to break down existing notions of masculinity and gender stereotypes and secondly, to build a new set of skills, which entail positive masculinities, gender equitable and peaceful relationships, communication and resolution through non-violent ways. Men in influential positions are key to engaging with the wider public and

declaring publicly their own personal zero tolerance approach towards violence against women and girls in any form.

### **1.3. Community Education and Legal Literacy through Collective Women's Rights Platforms:**

Without legal literacy, people are alienated from the law. They do not know their legal rights, nor can they assert those rights effectively. The set up of collectives within districts, would provide a constant platform for raising issues and seeking legal advice. Collectives around the world have proven to be effective with holding governments accountable for the implementation of a law and enforcing the importance of the law to both the people and those that form it.

This policy recognises that the most integral and effective way of community education and infiltration is educating the family unit regarding the long term negative impacts of violence against women on the immediate victim but also on the children of a household.

### **1.4. Collective Community Support as a Detection of Early Warning Signs:**

Setting up of local community watchdogs, in collaboration with district and local governments, to help detect signs of gender-based violence is an effective early warning prevention mechanism. District and local governments shall set up local community watchdogs, to include women and men within a community, trained to identify early signs within households. Basic conflict resolution skills shall be imparted to the members of the watchdogs. Community watchdogs could be identified in different forms including Darulamans and crises centres, lady health workers or specifically set up groups within communities.

### **1.5. State-led MassCommunity Awareness and Mobilization:**

This encompasses a wider segment of society by creating mass public awareness campaigns through ongoing dialogue and public discourse on change of norms and practices towards violence and gender with community elders, tribal and religious leaders and political figures. The media should be used as an effective tool to enhance the outreach of such a discussion. Posters and flyers, widely distributed in hospitals, police stations, in community gatherings and schools, street theatre and audio messages on radio may also be used as a tool of communication. It is proposed that clear cut and systematic funding allocation and mechanisms should be put in place for such awareness raising campaigns.

The awareness campaign must be two fold:

- i) to raise awareness of the specific laws that exist to protect women. This incorporates the legal remedies provided and the punishment for the

perpetrator; and

ii) sensitization and social attitude campaigns regarding violence against women to increase awareness. The aim is to raise awareness of:

1) the zero tolerance policy stance towards violence against women and girls. 2) sensitize the community on violence against women as a manifestation of inequality and a violation of a woman's basic human rights.

This is to include a systemic and analytical approach to rid Pakistan of this form of violence through social and media campaigns, community mobilization, and training at various levels. Mass campaigns should address what constitutes violence against women, social attitudes towards violence against women, why these attitudes exist, why they are wrong - legally and religiously, and how to challenge their unacceptability.

Violence prevention programmes should be integrated more intensely into already existing development platforms, such as media, education and the health sector, justice system and educational institutions. This includes the promotion of positive, respectful and non-violent masculinities, which challenge gender stereotypes. Campaigns must include national, provincial and grass root levels taking into account sensitivities of a particular area or region.

Collaboration with relevant civil society organizations and other professionals can help create effective campaigns that accurately reflect the nature and dynamics of violence against women.

#### **1.6 Integrating VAW related contents in curriculum:**

As an ongoing practice, scenario based education is necessary in order to address anti-women and anti-girls customary practices and raise questions in the mind of youth to reject these customs. It is important to integrate concepts of anger management, conflict resolution; skills of assertiveness shall be part of the curriculum for both boys and girls. It is also important that the curriculum leaves room for youth to question concepts such as masculinity, self-entitlement, dominance of one sex or another, the notion of the weaker sex. Revising the curriculum to reflect this is imperative. Teachers and educators would then have to be trained in regard to this.

#### **1.7 Tracking the implementation of pro women laws and strategize on the implementation gaps:**

It is imperative to do continuous research to track implementation of pro women laws and strategies and to address the gaps identified at institutional

and other levels. Relevant law ministries/departments must carry collaborative research, using the platform of CSOs, law departments at universities and departments of social welfare and women's development. Interdepartmental and interagency coordination is required at a strategic level to assure success of this measure.

### **1.8 Amendments to gender discriminatory legislation:**

Though certain laws are not directly related to violence against women, they are discriminatory towards women, adding to the legal and social discrepancies between the treatment of men and women and endorsing a culture of gender inequality. Amendment to the lacunas in the present laws would be a progressive step forward to rid of the gender gap between the two sexes. It is also essential that any existing policy or action plan that may contradict this policy be revised and issues relevant to violence against women are incorporated. This is in order to address broader issues around discrimination to ensure compliance with this policy. It should be the responsibility of provinces to work towards a consolidation of this policy's objectives and guiding principles to ensure gender equitable, comprehensive and accountable plans and laws to bridge the gap on discrimination against women.

### **1.9 Education:**

Education is the most important component for poverty alleviation, the most effective and long term way to bridge the gap of discrimination between the two sexes and develop and maintain a strong human resource, where women and girls are empowered.

Female literacy is linked to economic and social empowerment. The longer a girl is enrolled in schools, it reduces the chances of child marriages, increases the girl's confidence and self-awareness. Educational curriculum should entail the importance of gender equality and economic independence. It is imperative that all levels of government focus resources to increase education for women and girls across the primary, secondary and higher levels.

It is imperative and a minimum requirement of all local, provincial and national policy and lawmakers to implement the already existing laws regarding compulsory education for children, be implemented, with tough penalties imposed on those denying children the right to go to school.

It is important to entail:

The concept of violent free schools and other institutions of learning, for

both girls and boys, to promote violent free communities should be encouraged to help end VAW trends. Provincial and local government shall engage with school leadership and the parent community to create mutually acceptable and culturally appropriate practices and activities. This includes formal and non-formal centres of learning. The catchment population around a school or college may be declared as the community to be reformed through education by using school going girls and boys as peers to disseminate best practices to end VAW&G.

Literature and curriculum that incorporates the promotion of human rights and gender equality should be made compulsory across primary and secondary education. It should challenge stereotypes and discrimination and build skills for equal and respectful relationships and for peaceful conflict resolution. This would require commitments of all provincial governments to review teaching and learning material and curricula.

### **1.10 Media:**

Media and advertising are important tools to help shape popular culture. Provincial and local governments will use the media to create awareness around the various forms of violence against women and girls, the underlying causes of it and the harm it has on wider society. This will be in local languages through media campaigns, talk shows, television dramas and other various forms.

Provincial and local governments shall use the media in local languages a) to inform the public of its various rights under the existing laws of the country and mechanisms to seek redress, and b) to receive complaints for any delayed or no response by concerned authorities.

Advocates and societal role models should be used to send the message of zero tolerance towards violence against women and girls and publicly commit on their stance towards a non-violent and anti-discriminatory society.

Provincial governments must commit to media training and require all media houses to adhere to a strict code of conduct across all forms of mediums to ensure that when dealing with or reporting cases of violence against women, it is done ethically and sensitivity. The confidentiality of the victim is of utmost importance. It is also to strengthen the regulatory framework around advertising imagery, texts and popular culture that portray women in a discriminatory and stereotypical way.

### **1. 11 Economic empowerment:**

The State fully recognizes that for long term sustainable goals to be achieved it is imperative that creating awareness regarding women's rights must be coupled with options of economic viability. Violence against women and girls cuts across all socio-economic and ethnic groups in Pakistan and evidence strongly shows that alleviating women and girls out of poverty helps reduce cases of violence against women.

For economic empowerment this policy requires that all provincial and local governments commit to meaningful employment opportunities for women across all public and private organisations and bodies. Public bodies must create policies to ensure a gender balanced employee base.

The measures considered by all provincial governments are mentioned in these four broad categories:

*Entrepreneurship:* Providing women with capital and proper income generated training and technical follow-ups. Access to credit may be through various government schemes such as First Women's bank, Khsukhali bank, Benazir Income Support programmes etc.

*Farming:* Providing women farmers' access to farmer collectives and groups with access to markets. To improve productivity and economic security ownership and/or control of farmland should be given to women.

*Wage employment:* greater employment opportunities for women in all fields, skills training and job search assistance should also be provided.

*Financial or material incentives:* may be made to families as an incentive to keep female children in school longer and help reduce child marriages. Cash transfers can include school uniforms, stationary, books, and livestock for the family.

This policy reiterates its commitment to all the measures already endorsed in the national policy for development and empowerment of women, 2002.

#### **1.12 Integrate EVAW&G policy in other policies and legislation.**

To break free from and then sustain a non-violent culture it is imperative to break down the engrained element of gender inequality. As a long term protective measure, it is necessary to embed the awareness and the zero tolerance stance on violence across all relevant areas. This would involve integration in areas of legislation and policy with regard to reproductive health, microfinance, mental health, educational curriculum and training, and economic and social rehabilitation for the survivor of violence.

Furthermore, to break down the spiral of violence it is necessary to strengthen programmes and campaigns to rehabilitate with the perpetrators in order to break the repetition of gender based violence.

## **B. Response, protection and rehabilitation:**

This deals with safeguarding measures that ensure that all agencies that respond to incidents of violence against women and girls are seamlessly integrated, work coherently and through best practices and are accessible to all women and girls to ensure safety and swift justice. This involves the basic guiding principles that the victim/survivor be 1) kept safe, 2) their situation kept confidential, 3) are provided swift redress, and 4) the perpetrators be held accountable and rehabilitated.

The establishment of a collaborative and coherent response system between all agencies is essential to ensure the safety of the victim/survivor. This entails strengthening already existing systems that respond to incidents of violence against women and girls. This also requires that systems that are weak or non-existent be strengthened or built to cater to respond to incidents of violence against women and girls.

The police, justice and health care system and any other relevant structures, are required to be guided by the following when responding to women and girl victims of violence:

- The system is accessible and available to all women and girls 24/7
- The confidentiality and privacy of victims/survivors is maintained
- The safety and wellbeing of women and accompanying children is ensured at all times
- A girl victim is provided adequate protection against family, if they are the perpetrators of violence
- The accountability of perpetrators is ensured
- Victims/survivors have access to effective and just legal responses
- The power imbalance and gender inequality that authorizes violence against women and girls is recognized for effective response to the victim and punishment of the perpetrators.

### **1. Categories of Response**

#### **1.2 Protection and adequate support.**

It is imperative that women and girls who have been victims of gender-based violence are provided adequate protection and support across all relevant agencies and institutions. This includes medical, psychological and physical assistance to women and girls through the medical services.

This further includes adequate support mechanisms are in place across all relevant structures starting from police procedures to the judicial machinery, to ensure a swift and just outcome, where the woman is provided all adequate legal protections. Support upholds the basic principle of confidentiality of the victim throughout the process. This would mean adequate support from her first point of entry into the system, be it the health care providers or a local police station all the way up to the judicial system. It is essential that child protection units/commissions in all provinces shall be immediately contacted when a girl child has been identified as a victim of violence.

Child protection units must ensure a code of conduct that is ethical, ensure confidentiality and complete protection of the girl child, particularly when she is vulnerable as a victim of violence from a member of her own family.

It is imperative to improve the level of cooperation and knowledge in support services, which deal with victims of violence in order to provide redress to the victim and effectively and swiftly prosecute the perpetrators. The approach to be adopted as per the policy and hereafter is that the victim is to be protected and her rights safeguarded throughout the process. When dealing with the perpetrator of any gender based violence, he must be treated as the offender under the criminal law and brought to justice. Supportive structures, throughout every relevant structure that deals with victims of violence, with procedural operational guidelines, must be up to date and in place in order to deal effectively with gender violence related cases.

### **1.3 Proactive Criminal Prosecutorial System.**

A proactive criminal prosecutorial system is essential to curb violence against women and girls. This is the most important preventive measure, to set an example of how perpetrators of gender-based violence are legally held accountable for their crimes. The criminal prosecution system shall 1) be equipped and trained towards more pro-active arrests, 2) understand the importance of heavy punishment meted out to the perpetrator to ensure deterrence within wider society, 3) be able to detect the underlying reasons for violence against women in order to protect the victim, and 4) to ensure that the victim is protected and information is kept confidential throughout the process.

To aid a proactive prosecutorial system, all provinces must dedicate funds towards effective and modern forensic gathering facilities.

#### **1.3. To ensure the victim/survivor is not stigmatized.**

The victim/survivor shall not be directly or indirectly criminalized or blamed for the offence. It is essential that with the requirements of keeping the victim safe, requires that a) the victim is respected without being stigmatized, throughout the process, and b) training is essential across all relevant structures that deal with violence against women and girls that the victim is not blamable for the offence committed against her. She is the victim and should be provided all adequate support and protection. This is relevant to all and across all departments that deal with victims of gender based violence.

#### **1.4. Establish Telephone Hotlines.**

To set up toll free telephone hotlines where women or girls who are in imminent danger or feel they need to leave a situation in which they are threatened can call and be put through to the police or other adequate department. It is essential that federal and provincial child protection and welfare departments are also taken on board in case they need to be contacted, should a girl child access the hotline and it is believed by the operator of the call that the police would not be the best point of contact.

Systematic and procedural training for those that attend the initial call and how to deal sensitively with next steps forward would be essential for an effective hotline. Basic counseling skills to operators of hotlines are an essential requirement. This would include providing information as to how to contact the police, explaining the police procedure and the victim's rights, contact details of nearest shelter homes and relevant legal information and next steps. Provinces should ensure toll free telephones hotlines are established through provincial funds. They shall be propagated through mass media and large awareness campaigns by the government, for effective utilization. It would be a minimum requirement of media houses to ensure publication of the telephone hotline numbers at the end of all press articles and media releases and to specify that the hotlines are for any woman or girl who is a victim of violence or is under threat of any form of coercion or violence.

#### **1.3. Shelter Homes/Darulamans:** These facilities are meant to provide immediate relief to women facing violence in the country and are a very important aspect of safety and confidentiality for the victim. They have effectively contributed towards rehabilitating and retraining women. It is important to focus on this structure by further fund allocation towards such homes. A minimum of 10 new shelter homes shall be set up in each province of the country; ensuring access is available to women in the remotest parts of the country. Funding shall

be allocated towards skills based training and psychological counseling. It is imperative that skill based training be economically viable so as to ensure an economically independent woman once she leaves the home.

For young girls, social protection units and child welfare departments shall provide shelter and other basic provisions for girl victims seeking protection against violence. It is essential that training is provided and basic guidelines be adhered to, for those that provide shelter to girl victims of violence. The essential principle of confidentiality and the ability to protect the girl child from propagators of violence particularly if they are members of her own family is strictly adhered to.

## **2. Structural reforms to institutionize a seamless system to end VAW:**

Seamless services model is where various existing agencies work across the board that respond to victims of violence and ensure the services provided to victims are systematic and smooth. This involves the cooperation of various sectors including health, help lines, shelter homes both private and public, recording and collection of database and legal aid are available.

It is a minimum requirement that relevant professionals across all sectors and jurisdictions that respond to violence against women and girls shall receive standardized, accredited and comprehensive pre-service and in-service training on the issue of violence, its causes and consequences. To challenge deep rooted patriarchal thinking in social attitude it is essential that any training must include: a) developing a shared understanding of the causes, consequences and nature of violence against women; and b) focus on processes and procedures that are used. This is to challenge prejudicial attitudes, which can undermine an effective response system. Keeping in view the importance of interagency corporation, public private partnership and cooperation is another tool essential to set up a seamless service system. It should include:

### **2.1 . Police Intervention:**

The first point of contact of women victims of violence is often their local or closest police station.

It is imperative to create further dedicated women police centres within general police stations, where at least one policewoman is present at all times, to deal with violence related incidents. In women's police stations, there shall be special training for policewomen to deal systemically, effectively and sympathetically with female victims of violence. The recruitment of more policemen is essential to deal with cases of incidents

of violence against women and girls.

Standard operating procedure, that lay out procedures on how to deal with gender-based violence, have been adopted across all police units in Pakistan. This policy reiterates that SOPs must be strictly adhered to and regular, ongoing gender based training must be provided across all police academies and serving police officers. It is imperative that care must be taken so that an operating procedure is standardized to deal with violence against women cases but at the same time the system is flexible enough to deal with cases on their individual merits and circumstances. Certain regions in Pakistan may have different demands and SOPs should be flexible enough to be adapted to cater for the needs of the environment in which they operate.

Gender sensitive training was launched for police academies in 2006. This training should be made mandatory, not only in police academies and schools, but also for serving policemen and women. The training should emphasize that protection is provided to the victim through out the process. It is essential that the police academies incorporate training on how to deal with girl victims of violence, where the response requires a different way of dealing.

It is essential that police departments and stations across all provinces and districts provide the victim written and simplified version in local languages of the following:

- Her legal rights and protections provided by the law
- Her options on the next steps and how to proceed forward
- Her immediate safety concerns and those of young children that may be with a woman, shall be addressed – shelters or medical/psychological assistance
- Legal aid options and judicial procedures

In case the victim cannot read, along with providing her written information, it should be read out to her.

## **2.2. Judicial reform interventions:**

It is a minimum requirement that judicial proceedings, inside the courtroom but also other procedures outside and around the courtroom, must ensure that all procedures are gender sensitive. The system must operate to ensure gender equitable standards, confidentiality and protection of the victim/survivor and recognize and uphold the human right of women and girls to live life free of violence. It must also ensure that the perpetrators are held accountable. The measures proposed include:

- Model bench books, drafted in collaboration and consultation with judges and legal academics that can help enhance the application of the law through the provision of social context and analysis and relevant case law.
- Introduction of systemic judicial training in family matters with particular emphasis on ending gender-based violence, incorporating an aggressive element of non-patriarchal, gender-neutral decision making training for judges.
- Provisions for designated violence against women and girls' courts
- Appointment of more female judges. It is well based evidence that shows that women bring a different, more gender neutral analysis to court proceedings.
- Revision of and dissemination of already existing information about court rules ensure that they are gender equitable and take into account women's human right to live life free of violence.
- To provide complete protection and confidentiality to the victim/survivor there shall be separate waiting rooms and toilets for the victim and any prosecution witnesses.
- Revised victim focused standardized procedures that recognize and uphold the safety and protection of the victim or any other person providing evidence against the perpetrator.
- Understanding that the girl child who is a victim of violence be dealt with further sensitivity and to the judge be responsible for ensuring that the girl child has understood all procedures and implications that are taking place. The girl child must always be accompanied with a qualified social worker from the relevant child protection unit, who are aware of court procedure.
- Free legal services to women and girls who are identified victims of violence.

### **2.3. Health Care & Medical Centres:**

This policy stipulates that more crisis centres should be set up either independently or as units within hospitals for women. Doctors, nurses and psychologist specifically trained to deal with gender-based violence are key

to comprehensive care, which requires budgetary allocations and ongoing training for staff. Procedural operating standards are imperative to the effective working for such units.

Training health care providers, including doctors, nurses and paramedics to sufficiently deal with women suffering from violence is a key policy requirement. A specific and sufficient budget should be allocated to properly train doctors and nurses in the health care system, in order for them to appropriately and safely deal with gender based violence cases. Initial identification of domestic violence by health care workers also requires training of health workers. Training of lady health workers to initially identify gender-based violence requires training to this affect. This requires ongoing cycle of training and reinforcement to help develop, maintain and sustain a health care system that can deal with victims of domestic violence safely and effectively. This requires inter departmental coordination and awareness of the next procedure – who to contact next, police, lawyers etc.

Health Information and Management System to gather appropriate data of women suffering from various forms of violence by differentiating if from the data of women of ill health, disease and disability. In particular, the data from burn units' needs to be carefully examined and recorded, in order to determine resource allocation and assist with analysis for decision-making. Appropriate guidelines and revision of Doctors' Manual is needed to depict a holistic picture and important understanding of violence and the role of medical and paramedical staff.

Simplified legal literature regarding a woman's rights and legal recourse shall be available at all medical facilities regardless of whether those centres or units deal with gender violence related cases.

### **2.3.1 Integrating VAW Education into outreach based programmes: The Lady Health Worker.**

The lady health workers (LHW) programme is a successful and biggest governmental project in the health sector.

Lady health workers are the closest the community and/or system will get to a private household. The LHW programme operates throughout the country and is the most effective way to identify violence or signs of violence within a home. The following steps can be taken to fully utilize this resource:

- Financially committing to allocate further funds into the LHW programme to allow LHW to take on this new role.

- Equipping lady health workers with the necessary training, to identify early signs of VAW in married women with children but also expectant mothers. These may work as an effective early warning system to prevent VAW at the doorstep.
- Training of lady health workers with the basics on how to guide the victim with what next steps are available when gender based violence has taken place – where and how to report to incidents to the police, how to access legal services, how and where to access medical services, if the case is beyond the health workers ability. Having information on and being able to contact shelter homes or other relevant authorities or organisations, when required.
- Bringing the case of the individual households onto the radar for purposes of data collection.
- Flagging up and revisiting and assisting, where possible households, where the threat of VAW may be prevalent.

### **3. Strengthening Inter-agency systems and procedures:**

To improve the level of cooperation and knowledge, a clear systemic and specific protocol, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and referral networks must be established between and across various departments that may come across gender based violence related cases. The principal sectors are the health care system, police and the judicial system as one of them is likely to be the first point of entry into the system by the survivor of violence – the woman and/or girl child.

Improving the level of cooperation amongst the departments will be needed to protect the victim through out the process. Adequate gender sensitive training of all professionals across the field will be necessary in order to question gender dynamics where the purpose is two fold. That is that the: i), victim must be protected immediately and provided relief and legal redress and ii), perpetrator of violence is a criminal offender and must be held legally accountable.

It is appreciated that SOPs are adopted across all police departments in the country. This should be revised to show a more gender equitable understanding of what causes violence and how to help prevent it. The policy requires that regular training and updated refresher courses be provided to police academies and serving police officers to take into account to the underlying causes of what causes violence and how to deal with women and girls who are victims of violence.

### **C. Implementation: state and citizen co-responsibility and actions**

The 18<sup>th</sup> amendment devolves powers to the provinces and it is imperative that for effective implementation, governance structures with time lines must be clearly laid out. Adopting the guiding principles at the provincial levels are essential, which will help lay down short and long term goals and objectives that are concrete and comprehensive. Furthermore, effective implementation requires that leadership, engagement and support be prevalent throughout all levels of governance structures. Budget allocation must be realistic and clearly outlined. Ensuring that all stakeholders are meaningfully engaged is an imperative requirement for effective implementation.

For effective and long lasting implementation, it is important to have broad political support across all levels of government, political parties and all other relevant stakeholders. To challenge and deconstruct the already existing myths of male entitlement and gender stereotyping, engagement with different groups must be broad and encompassing. This includes victims and survivors, individuals and families, community leaders, traditional and religious leaders, media houses, professionals across a broad spectrum, civil society organisations and workplaces.

The following should be in place for a coherent and integrated implementation plan:

#### **Governance Structures:**

Governance structures should ensure leadership and coherency throughout the process and at all levels. Implementation of the policy should be lead by senior government officials who take high level decisions regarding the policy and ensure that the decisions are in line with all relevant stakeholders and at all levels of government.

#### **Civil Society and Other Relevant Stakeholders:**

It is necessary to take into account the voices of victims and survivors and relevant organisations that hold a unique knowledge bank and experience with regard to gender based violence. Ensuring meaningful participation and dialogue with these groups enables any policy, strategy and plan to be comprehensive and sustainable. This involves direct participation and consultation of these groups throughout the process of development, implementation and monitoring. Given the long term nature of policies and any future plans that will stem from this policy, establishing formal useful structures and partnerships with civil society and other relevant stakeholders are important beyond the initial

consultation. Long term, meaningful partnership is necessary for a successful policy or any future plan resulting from this policy.

### **Budget and Resource Allocation:**

To help support, prevent and rehabilitate both the victim and perpetrator, budget and resource allocation is a necessary requirement. It is also imperative that budget allocation not be a single, isolated funding cycle. The most important and effective means of tackling violence against women is commitment to ongoing resourcing, which will allow sustainability of action. Limited resources and budget allocations to well intentioned schemes and programmes fail to be effective. Budgets also need to take into account resources for cross-cutting actions such as training, collection and analysis of date, legislative and policy reviews, as well as for the establishment and activity of institutions and mechanism necessary to ensure the plan's effective implementation.

Greater budget allocation to already existing structures, both state owned such as shelter homes and lady health workers and private such as civil society organisations or independent research bodies would help penetrate an already existent and proven effective system.

Budget and resource allocation is also linked to political will and commitment of any government to want to eradicate gender-based violence. It is recommended that all political parties should create a consensus to commit party funds dedicated to the issue of violence against women and girls.

### **D. Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting:**

A successful policy and any plans or strategies that stem from this should be undertaken with an approach, which is both evidence-based and build on the evidence collated. There must be regular, comprehensive and transparent evaluation of all systems and at all levels. There must also exist an effective and robust feedback mechanism for continuous improvement. This policy requires that the National Commission on the Status of Women and the Provincial Commissions on the Status of Women in all four provinces evaluate, monitor and systemize feedback data with regard to gender based violence. Statistics and data with regard to gender based violence committed against the girl child must be collated and analysis by Child Protection and Welfare departments in the federal and provincial regions. The minimum requirements are that qualitative and quantitative data be obtained and broken down and categorized to take into account the different forms of violence. Below is a breakdown of the data types needed for effective and informative evaluations:

**1 Data Collection:** The collection of accurate and comprehensive statistical data

and qualitative input is central to the endeavour of successful monitoring and evaluation. Apart from large scale population data surveys police, hospital or court records also contribute to the evidence base.

**2 Sex disaggregated data:** If systemic progress is to be made to eliminate violence, sex disaggregated data must be collected on the basis of age and gender. Such data will enable agencies to better assess specific needs and plans and monitor and implement measures as laid out in this policy. Further, there is increasing recognition of the need for better data collection in order to assess the most effective methodology for possible interventions. It will be the responsibility of the National Commission on the Status of Women for coordinating collection, production and analyze of data on violence against women.

**3. Health and Social Welfare MIS and Child Protection MIS:** these are programmes that provide real time information regarding disaggregated data on key indicators and on violence and child abuse. This can be used along side other data, helping in the analysis of specific needs of women and girls.

**4. National forensic science agency:** Evidence through forensics is an integral part of the criminal justice system. National Forensic Science Agency (NFS) is a project under Ministry of Interior and is an autonomous body to provide forensic services and guidance to other similar bodies within the country. This service must be enhanced through further budget allocation to allow set up and access across all provinces and districts. Comprehensive and modern facilities and equipment is necessary for effective forensic collection.

**5. Gender Crimes Cell:** GCC gathers, collates and analyses date on violence against women. At present there is only one GCC based in the federal capital. The policy stipulates:

- a) There shall be a GCC established for each province;
- b) It is imperative that GCC staff be properly trained, which includes gender sensitization training.

**6. Government and Independent Research:** Independent qualitative research such as case studies of victims and survivors experiences of violence and the systems designed to respond to it can provide insight into where policy and programming attention needs to be directed. The Government of Pakistan will support independent research on emerging issues in relation to violence against women carried out by academic and research institutions. This policy proposes a comprehensive and board research study to be carried out by a consortium of academic institutions, media houses and civil society organisations. It also proposes that international organisations dealing with issues of violence against

women be approached to gather a more international perspective on the issue and collaborating and contrasting it with local issues to take into consideration campaigns that may have been successful elsewhere.