

# **GENDER TRAINING IN PAKISTAN: AN ANALYSIS FOR WAY FORWARD**

***Dr. Anita Anis Allana***

M.B.B.S., M.B.A., Masters of Bioethics, The Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

***Kausar S. Khan***

MA Philosophy, PhD Candidate Religious Studies Dept. of Social Sciences,  
The Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

***Sohail Bawani***

MA, MPhil Sociology, The Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

---

## **Abstract**

The decade of 1970s focused on women and development, with 1974 declared as Women's Year by the UN, followed by the decade for women (1975 – 1985). The First World Conference on women (Mexico 1975) drew attention to the need for bringing women into the development sector; by 1985 global discourse recorded a shift from women in development (WID) to gender and development (GAD). In Pakistan the notion of gender entered the development discourse by mid 1980s, and a proliferation of gender training took place. By 1995, when the Fourth World Conference on women took place in Beijing, gender training was well established in Pakistan, and a loose network of gender trainers was also established. . As gender trainings took place in different NGOs, a sense of having hit a plateau began to be felt by some gender trainers. There was no evidence available to gauge the impact of gender training or ascertain whether new depths are being explored. Furthermore, gender training appeared to have become de-politicized.

This paper shares the findings of a scoping review undertaken to understand the scope (focus, depth and nature) of literature on gender trainings in Pakistan, and to highlight the gaps in training. The paper also discusses the efforts of an informal network of gender trainers that tried to extend the agenda of gender trainings and how these need to be incorporated in the gender agenda for a more holistic approach. A way forward is also identified in the paper.

---

**Keywords:** Gender training, Pakistan, scoping study, content, way forward

## **Gender: Its Importance and Training:**

Gender discourse draws attention that gender equity and equality concerns are a global phenomenon. Since Gender equality is the cornerstone of social transformation, hence its relevance cannot be undermined. It is important to note that gender equality is also a global struggle with UN Women having taken it as their central theme. One approach to address the gender related disparities is to gender sensitize players of all institutions be it public or private. These include the individual, the family, the workplace and the society at large.

Gender sensitization refers to the modification of behavior by raising awareness of gender equality concerns.<sup>65</sup> Gender sensitizing “is about changing behavior and instilling empathy into the views that we hold about our own and the other gender”.<sup>66</sup> It helps people in

---

<sup>65</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender\\_sensitization#cite\\_note-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_sensitization#cite_note-1)

<sup>66</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender\\_sensitization#cite\\_note-Aksornkool-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_sensitization#cite_note-Aksornkool-2)

"examining their personal attitudes and beliefs and questioning the 'realities' they thought they know."<sup>67</sup> Gender sensitization is a stepping stone for transforming social norms and Gender training is a potent tool for social transformation. Gender training is also the strategy/methodology that aims to bring about gender sensitization by raising of awareness regarding gender concepts and concerns, increasing knowledge and equipping the participants with skills and tools along with capacity building to change behaviour and to apply this knowledge for action and practice.

'Gender training' is a convenient label for conduction workshops for imparting gender concepts through a variety of exercises like brainstorming, use of case studies and group discussions. Gender training manuals from around the world offer many detailed ways of transferring gender-related concepts and ideas.<sup>68</sup> Many women availed gender training made available by some donors, while some started developing their own expertise.<sup>69</sup>

Globally, gender ideas and their underlying ideologies were also advanced through books and research papers. In Pakistan, one of the earliest books was *Engendering the Nation State*. (Simorgh, Lahore) but to date over a hundred books have been published.<sup>70</sup> This is an impressive state of affairs, but there is no forum where thinking embodied in these writings come together for a collective review. Consequently, there is no discourse among those who have written on gender or continue to write on gender. There are at least two journals<sup>71</sup> that cover women and gender related topics, and their review could help discern the depth available in Pakistan on understanding gender.

### **Gender training in Pakistan:**

The journey of gender training in Pakistan began more formally in the early 1990s with the development of indigenous trainers and contents (Yasmin 2014). Today gender training is well recognized in Pakistan, evidence being that a Google search of 'Gender Training in Pakistan' resulted in citations numbering to greater than 2 million, thus material beyond the scope of analysis was available(Kausar2014). Also diverse range of training manuals and handbooks are available on gender trainings in the context of Pakistan. These have been prepared by governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and UN bodies (Anita 2014).

Gender as an idea, to replace women-in-development approach that had been established globally and nationally, came to Pakistan in the early '80s. As this was an agenda emanating from the global events around women's development and their role in development, in Pakistan too it came as an agenda of the donors. However, its conceptual importance was soon recognized among many non-government organizations, especially those with a focus on women's rights. Soon gender began to be integrated in the training programs of the development sector. Both government and NGOs accepted this need, often because of the money available for such activities. However, the development sector alone was not to open itself to gender training. This notion began to be addressed in specific sectors like education, health, environment, rural development, to name some well-established sectors of development concerns in Pakistan. Thus there are many sites of gender training;

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Gender trainers in Pakistan used whatever material was easily available. Some of the popular manuals being: *Two Halves make a whole* (CIDA); Rani Parker's manual; and a manual by OXFAM.

<sup>69</sup> One such initiative was supported by UNIFEM, and it culminated in the publication of the first gender training manuals in Pakistan. See introduction in Kausar S Khan, *Gender Training. Manual*. Published by Shirkat Gah. Women's Resource Center. Karachi.

<sup>70</sup> Google search 'book on gender in Pakistan' yielded names of over hundred books. A review of these books is not included in this paper, and warrants a separate discussion.

<sup>71</sup> THE WOMEN Annual Research Journal of Gender Studies, Institute of Gender Studies, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Sindh Pakistan. L and Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

this paper focuses on the contents of gender training, and does not analyse gender training content with reference to specific sectors.

The purpose of this paper is to share the findings of a scoping study that aimed to explore the focus, depth and nature of literature available and work done on gender trainings in Pakistan. Moreover it also reviewed gender training material for their purpose, for gender concepts that were best highlighted, the methodology used or suggested and the audience to which it was catered. An overall analysis of the reviewed data was carried out. The paper moves beyond reviewing the data and discusses the need to expand the gender training agenda. It also talks of the extended agenda of gender training and the way forward.

### **Scoping Study**

The scoping study on gender training in Pakistan was guided by the York Framework outlined by Arksey O'Malley (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). As per Arksey and O'Malley (2005) Scoping Reviews aim to map rapidly the key concepts underpinning a research area and the main sources and types of evidence available. Moreover 'Scoping studies are concerned with contextualizing knowledge in terms of identifying the current state of understanding; identifying the sorts of things we know and do not know.....' (Anderson et. al., 2008, p.6-7). Purpose of the paper, to map the literature available on gender trainings in Pakistan, is the rationale for this methodology. This framework suggests five stages for carrying out a scoping review. These are inclusive of research question identification, identification of relevant studies, selection of studies, charting of data followed by collating, summarizing and reporting results.

According to York framework all areas of research area need to be considered and a wide approach taken to generate breadth of coverage. As per the guidelines of the framework, initial scanning of literature, expertise of our research team and informal discussions; research question was framed as "What is the focus and nature of literature on gender trainings in Pakistan". This broad question, it was felt, provides a wide enough range to capture optimum number of material on gender training.

Literature was collected from various sources so as to attain comprehensive results. We used electronic databases, contacted local NGO's and institutes and carried out hand search. Databases used for identifying relevant studies were PubMed, JSTOR, SCOPUS and Google. These databases were explored using developed search strategy with some deviation due to varied database responses. 13 NGO's were contacted of which 4 sent their training manuals. Selection of studies was done after applying the developed inclusion and exclusion criteria. Literature chosen was of English language and between 1985-2013. Also material relevant to the Pakistani context and whose abstracts and manuals were available was included.

The literature obtained was charted by entering the data on separate templates for training manuals and researches. Data on researches was charted for title of paper, journal, year published, study design, objectives and findings. Data on training manuals was charted for title of manual, source, year, key concepts, methodology and audience catered. The purpose of the final stage was to analyse the selected data. For training manuals we analysed the contents of the manuals, checking on frequency of use of gender concepts in each manual. For researches we analysed the focus of research and methodology used.

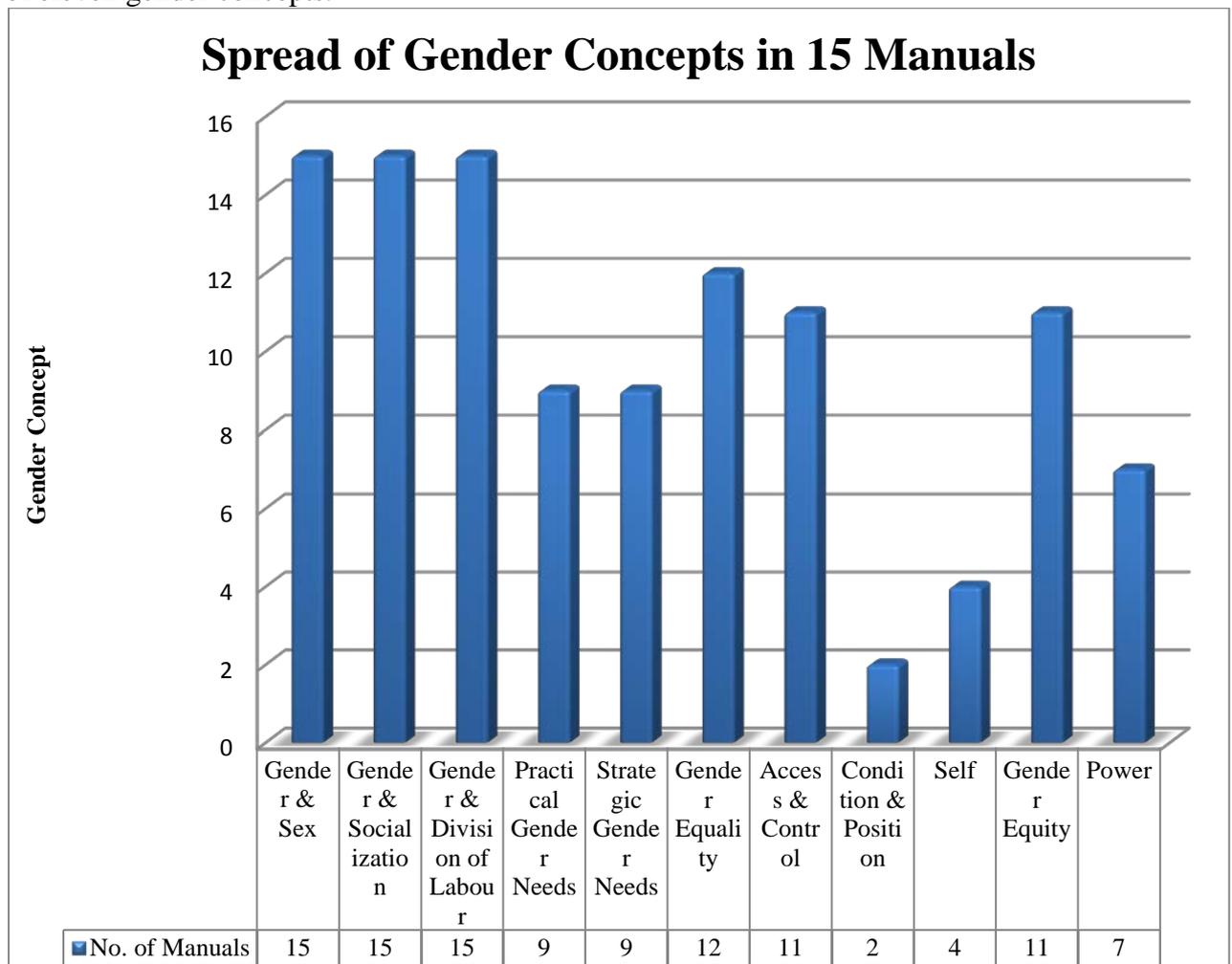
### **Results**

Literature retrieved by the used guideline and designed strategy included 436 documents. Selection based on study objectives and inclusion and exclusion criteria narrowed the chosen articles to 20, out of which 5 were researches and 15 were training manuals. Data was then

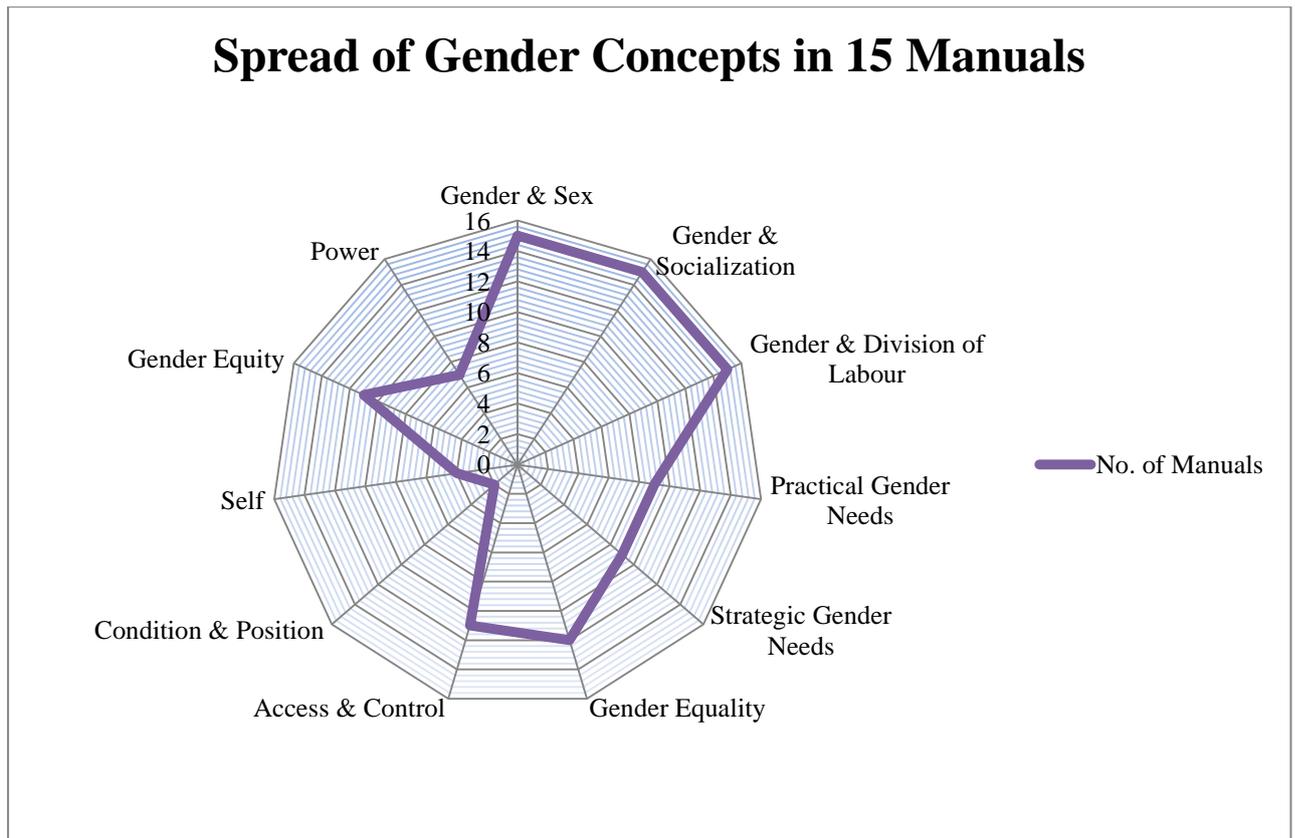
divided and analysed with the help of two broad headings which comprised researches/studies on gender trainings and training manuals designed for carrying out gender trainings.

Though literature was explored from 1985-2013 data extracted revealed that all studies were published between 2006-2010. Overall search revealed that very few studies had been carried out on gender trainings in Pakistan. These studies utilized qualitative or interventional methodology or were literature reviews. Most of the researches analysed stressed on the importance of gender training for health professionals and educators. Herein gender was taken as a unit of analysis i.e. gender as a concept was integrated and used but gender as content of analysis is missing. Only five studies were found on gender trainings in the Pakistani context these did not analyse gender training in terms of content and impact.

While analysing the training manuals for their focus and contents it was seen that more than forty gender concepts were used varying in different manuals. Use of Gender concepts was not consistent and only few concepts were taken up by all manuals. Concepts were charted as per frequency of their presence in the manuals. Diagram below shows the charting of eleven gender concepts.



(Figure 1)



(Figure 2)

**Following are the concepts that were found in the manuals**

**Concepts of Gender and Sex, Gender Socialization and Gender Division of Labour:** were the concepts that were most consistently used and included in all manuals and handbooks. Thus all manuals were discussing the difference between gender and sex, describing gender as a social construct, culturally based and changeable. On the other hand sex was explained to be biological, universal and not changeable. Gender socialization of girls and boys was also emphasized further elaborating on labour being divided on the basis of perceived gender roles and expectations.

**Concept of Self Awareness**

Understanding of the self and self-awareness are crucial if modification of behaviour which is the ultimate goal of gender training is to be achieved. Regrettably only four manuals out of fifteen took up this relevant concept.

**Concept of Gender Equity and Gender Equality**

Gender equity is often used interchangeably with equality and this needs to be clarified significantly that gender equity is the process of being fair to men and women. Equity can be seen as the means and gender equality as the end. Equity as a concept was taken up by 11 manuals and equality by 12 manuals. Three manuals did not accommodate these very relevant concepts.

**Concept of Power**

All gender relations are social relations and all social relations are power relations, thus clear inclusion of power in Gender Trainings, understanding of power and power relations is crucial and needs attention. However only seven out of fifteen manuals has dealt with the concept of Power.

### **Concepts of Access and Control of Resources**

The notions of access to and control over resources was taken up by eleven out of fifteen manuals. These relevant concepts need to be clarified as women usually have access to resources but are deprived of control over them.

### **Concepts of Practical and Strategic needs**

Women and men have differing gender needs which needs a sound understanding. Practical needs are needed to perform current roles easily and effectively while Strategic gender needs are concerned with changing the position of women. These relevant concepts were taken up by nine out of fifteen manuals.

### **Concepts of Condition and Position**

Condition and Position of women is influenced by fulfilling of practical and strategic needs. When practical needs are met the condition is addressed but realization of strategic gender interests can change the position of women. These concepts were explained by only two manuals out of fifteen.

Moreover there were cross-cutting themes in connection with which gender concepts were used such as Sexual and Reproductive Health, Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation, Gender Responsive Budgeting, Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction; these being included as per the purpose of the manual and the target group it was addressing.

Methodology Suggested /Used: Methodologically speaking, all manuals emphasized an interactive and participatory approach with hands on exercises and experiential activities. Also mentioned was participatory methodology and principles of adult education were advocated. The specific strategies included individual and group exercises, brainstorming, discussions, case studies among others.

### **Gender Training: the missing agenda**

Gender and Sex, Gender and Socialization and Gender and Division of Labour are the most frequently used concepts in training manuals. Gender Equality and Equity is stated in 11 while notion of Self is present in 4 manuals. Power is touched upon in 7 manuals whereas Condition and Position are hardly used, and mentioned only in 2 manuals. In short, Condition and Position, Self and Power are used occasionally as compared to others.

If looked closely, this situation raises several concerns for analysis. For instance, can Gender Equality and Equity be understood without knowing Power Relations or without knowing Position of the Self in the given gender hierarchy? Is knowledge of social construction of gender possible without knowing Self? Can goals of Equality and Equity be achieved without tackling inequalities and inequities present in the Conditions where people are engendered or socialized?

The idea that the personal shapes the political is missed out in the manuals as despite the emphasis on Self, there is inadequate material on how one's own being is constructed in a society. Similarly, Power is present in 7 manuals but focus on empowerment and processes that disempower women and men are overlooked. Gender Equality and Equity is referred in almost all the manuals but the processes that will help people transform social conditions around them are not clearly charted out.

The analysis of content of manuals shows that gender training in Pakistan has come a long way but how the current state is relevant to the socio-political situation of Pakistan is a matter of great concern. Rising intolerance, proliferation of militant forces among religious factions, and hegemonic forms of masculinities has raised new challenges which the current gender training is unable to grapple with. What is currently happening in the name of gender training is only awareness raising and gender sensitization for providing technical fixes. The

larger commitment of being politically transformative is completely diluted and reduced to behaviours of women and men.

In 2013, a Gender Network called Mubariza has raised similar concerns in their meetings and workshop to review the gender training agenda in Pakistan.<sup>72</sup> The 2nd National Conference on Gender organized by Aga Khan University (AKU) has also resonated what Mubariza has put forth (Yasmin, 2014). Following is the summary of key points proposed by Mubariza in their report and at the 2nd National Conference on Gender at AKU for expanding the gender training in Pakistan:

1. Attention towards the notion of 'Self'. Curricula to focus on self-awareness and consciousness raising both of trainers who do gender trainings and the audience of these trainings;
2. Different manifestations of 'power' is to be understood, especially, how it is exercised and influences others. Moreover it can also be shaped by who exercise it.
3. Focus on understanding men and various forms of masculinities and how they are shaped by social construction gender. For instance, many of the consequences that women face are actually result of societal pressures that men carry on themselves which is manifested in shape of aggression and other forms of power they exercised;
4. Focus religion and expressions of religiosity as important socio-political structures is to be integrated as they shape gender relations and outcomes. For instance, studies have found positive relationship between rising negative religiosity among men and women with violent outcomes.
5. Issues around conflict, peace and security. The rising issue of intolerance and intermittent instances of conflict have posed serious issues related to security of men and women and significance of peace building initiative in the regions.

In the light of this discussion, any deliberation that claims to be gender sensitive, especially, in relation to training, cannot remain aloof from issue being raised here.

## **Conclusion**

Research on gender training needs to be pursued as few studies have been found on gender training in Pakistan. Content of training, pedagogy of training and their impact needs to be studied. Also institutions and organizations need to become pro-active in impacting the public discourse on gender, by sharing their thoughts, programs and actions. Moreover, role of gender trainers and their education and training also require attention if gender is to be mainstreamed.

## **Way forward**

Gender training in Pakistan can acquire a critical perspective if gender trainers were to meet on a regular basis and exchange their experiences, and identify the challenges faced and areas for further investigation. Pakistan has some informal gender networks, Mubariza being one of them.<sup>73</sup> Research in Pakistan, especially qualitative research, needs strengthening, and agenda for gender research needs to be developed. If networks like Mubariza were to contribute to systematic advancements of gender related work, they could also take a lead in setting the research agenda. It is not that there is a dearth of intellectual competencies in Pakistan. The need is of leadership and funds to back that leadership. Institutions that offer courses in gender can also provide a robust leadership, but unfortunately the institutions of

---

<sup>72</sup> Final Report on South Asia Women's Fund (2013) Planning, Organizing and conducting a workshop to Build Capacities of Gender Trainers in Pakistan. Unpublished manuscript.

<sup>73</sup> See website of Rozan for information on Mubariza. Rozan is an Islamabad based non-government organization that acted as the secretariat for Mubariza for many years.  
<http://www.rozan.org/index.php>

higher education have not been able to provide the leadership. Pakistan thus appears to be caught in the paradox of the ‘non-doability’ of the ‘doable’. Who could cut this Gordian knot is yet to be seen.

**References:**

Aksornkool, Namtip. Joerger, Cindy; Taylor, Elaine, eds. Gender sensitivity: a training manual for sensitizing education managers, curriculum and material developers and media professionals to gender concerns. p. VIII.

Anderson S, Allen P, Peckham S, Goodwin N. Asking the right questions: scoping studies in the commissioning of research on the organization and delivery of health services. *Health Res Policy Sys.* 2008; 6:7. doi: 10.1186/1478-4505-6-7.

Anita Allana, Kausar S. Khan, Sohail Bawani. Gender Training in Pakistan: Reflecting back and moving beyond the basics. *Gender: Moving Beyond the Basics, Conference Proceedings, Karachi 2014.*

Arksey H, O'Malley L. Scoping studies: Towards a Methodological Framework. *Int J Soc Res Methodol.* 2005; 8:19–32. doi: 10.1080/1364557032000119616.

Bhowmick Soma. "Gender Sensitization and Police". Retrieved 17 February 2014.

Kausar S. Khan, Commentary on findings, *Gender: Moving Beyond the Basics, Conference Proceedings, Karachi 2014.*

Yasmin Zaidi. Extending the Agenda of Gender Training in Pakistan: Addressing Men, Mullahs and Militarization. *Gender: Moving Beyond the Basics, Conference Proceedings, Karachi 2014*