



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Status of Women and Girls in Orakzai District

Gender Profile of Merged District



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Merged District Gender Profile
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Abbreviations/ Acronyms

AIP	Accelerated Implementation Plan
BHU	Basic Health Unit
BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme
CD	Civil Dispensary
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHUs	Comprehensive Health Units
CHC	Community Health Centre
CRVS	Civil Registration of Vital Statistics
CRC	Convention on Rights of Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CNIC	Computerized National Identity Card
C&W	Communication and Works (Department)
DDA	Drawing and Disbursement Authority
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DHQ	District Headquarter Hospital
DHIS	District Health Information Systems
DRC	Dispute Resolution Council
DPO	District Police Officer
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EmONC	Emergency Obstetric and New-born Care
EVAWG	End of Violence Against Women and Girls
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (United Nations)
FR	Frontier Regions
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Area
FCR	Frontier Crimes Regulations
FDIHS	FATA Development Indicators Household Survey
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GE	Gender Equality
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GRAP	Gender Reform Action Plan
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
HeRAMS	Health Resource Availability and Mapping System
HMIS	Health Management Information System
ICERD	International Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination
ICCPR	International Convention on Civil & Political Rights
ICESER	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICPD	International Conference on Population Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Population/Person
IDS	Integrated Development Strategy
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
JJSO	Juvenile Justice System Ordinance KP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practices
KII(s)	Key Informant Interview(s)
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
KPCSW	KP Commission on the Status of Women
KPMD	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Merged Districts (Support Programme)
LG	Local Government
LHV	Lady Health Visitor

LRC	Legal Reform Committee
MA(s)	Merged Areas(s)
MCFC	Mobile Citizen Facilitation Centre
MDs	Merged Districts
MICS	Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey
MNA	Member of National Assembly
MNCH	Mother and Child Health
MPA	Member of Provincial Assembly
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NMDs	Newly Merged Districts
P&DD	Planning and Development Department
PLC	Police Liaison Council
PPC	Pakistan Penal Code
PPP	Public Private Partnership
QIP	Prime Minister's Quick Impact Programme
RHC	Rural Health Centre
SMEDA	Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority
SoPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SW&WDD	Social Welfare and Women Development Department
TDPs	Temporary Displaced Population/Persons
TDS	Tribal Decade Strategy
THC	Tehsil Headquarter Hospital/Tertiary Health Care
UC(s)	Union Council(s)
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UNCAT	United Nation Convention Against Torture
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
VCNC(s)	Village Council and Neighbourhood Council(s)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WEE	Women Economic Empowerment

Preface

UN women proposed to develop an analytical report, based on primary and secondary data, highlighting the present-day situation of women and girls in the five Newly Merged Districts – Khyber, Kurram, Orakzai, North Waziristan and South Waziristan – of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The analysis and data provided will facilitate the federal Government and provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; UN Agencies, particularly the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Merged Districts (KPMD) project partners; and other associates in the development and planning, and implementation, of policies and programs that will effectively serve the needs of the most vulnerable groups in the underserved Merged Districts (MDs), particularly women and girls.

A comprehensive analytical report, representing the situation of women and children in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's five MDs, was prepared in collaboration with government ministries, non- governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and in consultation with other semi-government entities. The complete report (separately available) provides a comparative account off all five MDs; it also provides sectoral recommendations for immediate interventions, in light of the Government's proposed Tribal Decade Strategy (TDS), and the Accelerated Implementation Plan (AIP), to accelerate the social, economic and political development of the MDs.

The subsequent report is a gender profile of Orakzai District, one of the five MDs. It highlights the current status of women and girls, and the disparities that exist between women and men, boys and girls, in the district. The indicators used for the study were aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Human Development Indices' (HDIs) and the Gender Equality Ranking (GER). Combining multiple primary and secondary data sets, the situational analysis explores gender disparities, vulnerabilities, and social exclusion, as a result of poverty, social and cultural constraints, governance and security situations. The secondary data was collected from public sources, private and development sectors, through surveys, publications, guidelines, directives, research papers and reports. The reviewed material highlighted the salient features of the Orakzai District in terms of demography, administration, social services and infrastructure, cultural barriers preventing women and girls' access to, and control over, various resources. Primary data was collected through consultative meetings, focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs); the reports incorporate stakeholder voices from the district, providing an insight into the challenges that women and girls face, and their current status with regard to education, health, economic participation and empowerment, gender-based violence, and leadership and political participation.

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Section 1 Gender Profile Orakzai District

Demographics

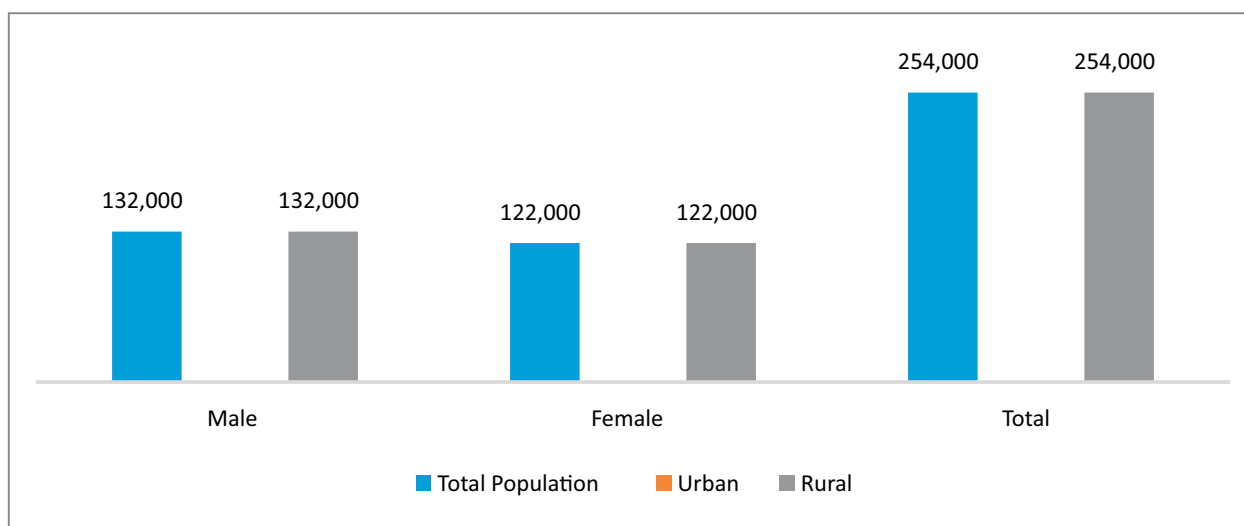
After the merger in May 2018, the Orakzai Agency of the erstwhile FATA has been renamed as Orakzai district of KP. Administratively, this district is now annexed with Kohat division. The district headquarter is in Kalaya (lower Orakzai) and comprises of 4 tehsils, namely, Central Orakzai, Ismailzai, Lower Orakzai and Upper Orakzai.

1.1 District - At a Glance

Covering a landmass of 1538 sq. kms, district Orakzai borders with Kurram district on the west, Khyber on the north, Kohat on its south and Peshawar district towards the east. It is a land of mountain ranges, with numerous dry watercourses, as well as fertile valleys with two major water streams, i.e. Mastura river and Khanki Toi river. As per the FATA Development Report, Orakzai is a scenic district with multiple potential tourist attraction sites, and coal, iron core and oil and gas reserves.

According to the 2017 census of Pakistan, the entire population of the district is considered rural and the total population consists of around 254,000 people out of which female population is 122,000 and male population is 132,000.





Graph 1: Proportion of total population in urban and rural areas in the district

Population Density	165/Sq.km.
Major Tribes	Kheil, Mlakhel, Mamozai, Ali Sherzai, Kalaya, Bar Muhammadkhel, Manikhel, Ferozkhel, Utmankhel, Bezoti, and Storikhel.
Languages Spoken	100% speak Pashto

No land revenue record is available or maintained. Lands are distributed on the basis of tribe or clan. Most of the land is hilly, and only 11.5% cultivated. 3.5% of the land is reported as forest area, which are also owned by various tribes of Orakzai. Major sources of livelihood include meagre agriculture and livestock rearing (FATA socio-economic indicators report (2019)).

Moreover, a large number of people from Orakzai work as labour in gulf countries and other cities of Pakistan and send remittances to their families in the district. For educated women, livelihood opportunities are mostly limited to paid employment in the government or private education and health care sectors.

The district has low socio-economic status because of the following issues:

- Lack of peace and security
- Insurgency and militancy
- Sectarian violence
- Inadequate adherence to development by state authorities

In addition to the above, tribal patriarchal culture and traditions are some major reasons for women's weak health, low literacy, and low enrolment of girls in educational institutions.

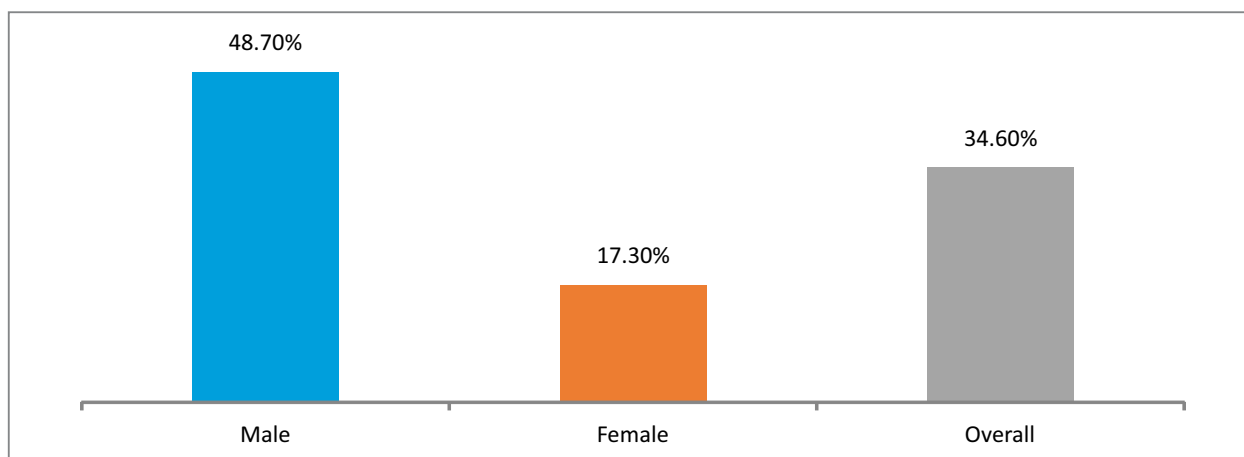
Section 2 Secondary Data for Orakzai District

2.1 Education

The following outlines the research findings of the most important human development sector, i.e. education, and its impact on the population of the district Orakzai.

Education is a basic human right for every child, legally guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan. This requires the State to provide equal educational opportunities to all, without discrimination based on sex, colour, caste, ethnic background, religion, or wealth. Given the cultural issues and gender discriminatory practices in district Orakzai, gender-based disparity is high, specially at secondary and higher education levels.

In Orakzai, the overall literacy among those that are 10 years and above is lowest in the Merged Districts, i.e. 34.6%. The male literacy is 48.7%, whereas female literacy is as low as 17.3%. The situation further deteriorates when we review those that are 15 years and above, i.e. the literacy rate falls to 27.4%. Orakzai district ranks 125th in Pakistan in terms of primary school infrastructure and 132nd for middle school infrastructure. In terms of the national ranking for education, the Orakzai District stands at 103 in number¹.



Graph 2: Literacy rates in Orakzai District

Source: FATA Development Indicators Household Survey 2013-14

Out of the total 431 primary schools in the Orakzai district, approximately 63% are boys' schools and only 37% are for girls. There are only 32 schools for middle level education (18 for boys and 14 for girls)². At high and higher secondary level there are 34 schools, of which 25 are boys and only 9 schools are girls' schools. In the entire district, there are only 2 degree level colleges, out of which one is for males and the other for females. The graph conspicuously shows gender disparity. The overall situation is very bleak in terms of the number of institutions available for both boys and girls at all levels. While the male and female population of the district are almost equal, there are 114 fewer schools at the primary level for girls, 4 less at the middle level and around 16 less at high and high secondary level. The education infrastructure in the district is collectively insufficient and calls for immediate attention by the government.

¹ Alif Ailan, ASER Publications, 2017

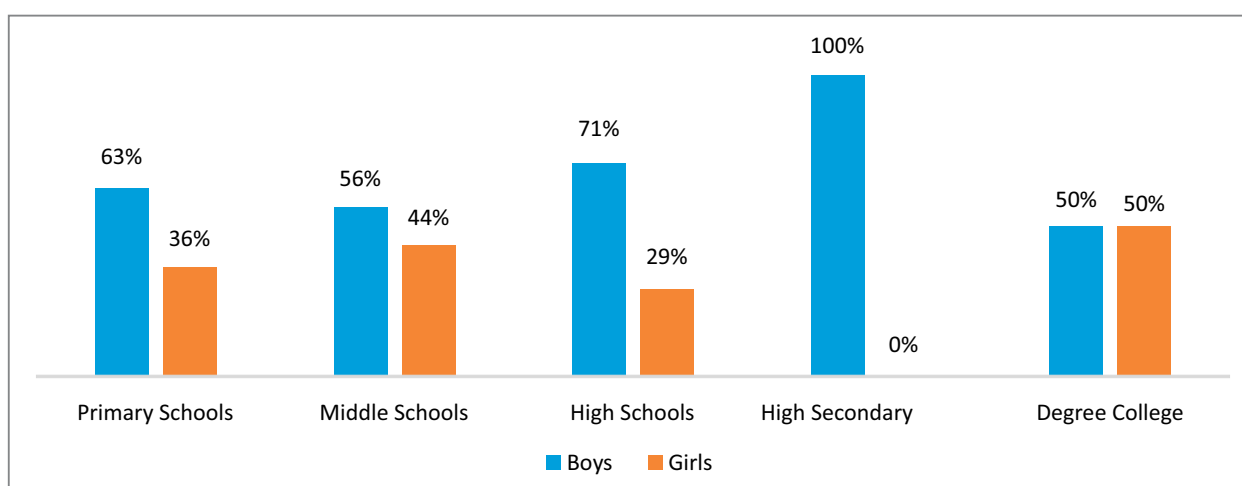
² District Wise Education Statistics of KP 2017-18



A public school in lower Orakzai
Source: Relief Web

Level		Primary School	Middle School	High School	Higher Secondary	Degree College
Orakzai	Boys	270	18	22	3	1
	Girls	156	14	9	0	1
	Total	426	32	31	3	2

Table 1: Gender disparity at all school levels in Orakzai District
Source: District wise education statistics 2017-18



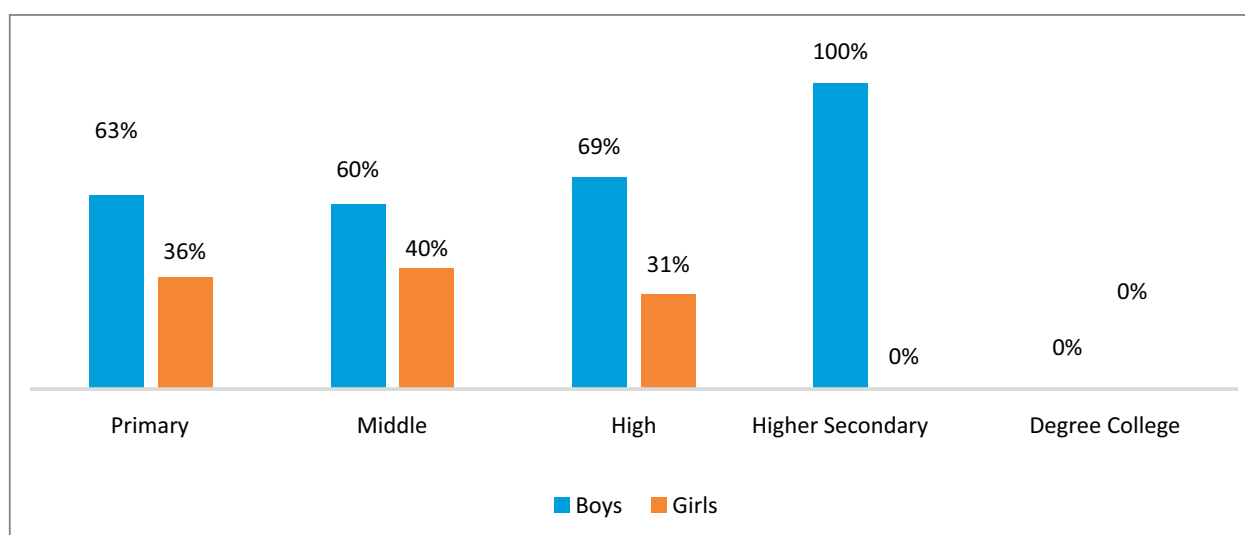
Graph 3: The proportion of educational institutions reserved for boys and girls in the District.

Primary education provides the foundation for a lifetime learning. Providing universal access to, and ensuring the completion of, primary education for all girls and boys is one of the key areas of concern. Considerable progress has been made in achieving universal primary education and closing the gender gap

in enrolment in Pakistan, and to some extent in the province as well. But in Orakzai this progress is still not visible. Moreover, the higher education opportunities for girls and boys in the district also remain a challenge. The district has only two-degree colleges – one each for boys and girls and one college of technologies and polytechnic institute; however, available report does not show any data on sex-segregated enrolment in these institutions³. Gender disparity in education is visible from a very early stage and it continues till high school level. Beyond that there is limited data available regarding female enrolments. The above situation calls for an immediate attention by the government to establish secondary level institutions for girls at the closest possible to communities. A deeper analysis is also needed to determine why there is a high dropout rate for girls after primary education, and strategies developed accordingly to overcome the situation.

Level	Primary School	Middle School	High School	Higher Secondary	Degree College	
Orakzai	Boys	19061	544	2035	934	-
	Girls	10908	357	905	0	0
	Total	29969	901	2940	934	130

Table 2: Enrolment for boys and girls in all schools in Orakzai District
Source: District wise Education statistics of KP 2017-18



Graph 4: Enrolment figures for boys and girls at various levels of education in Orakzai

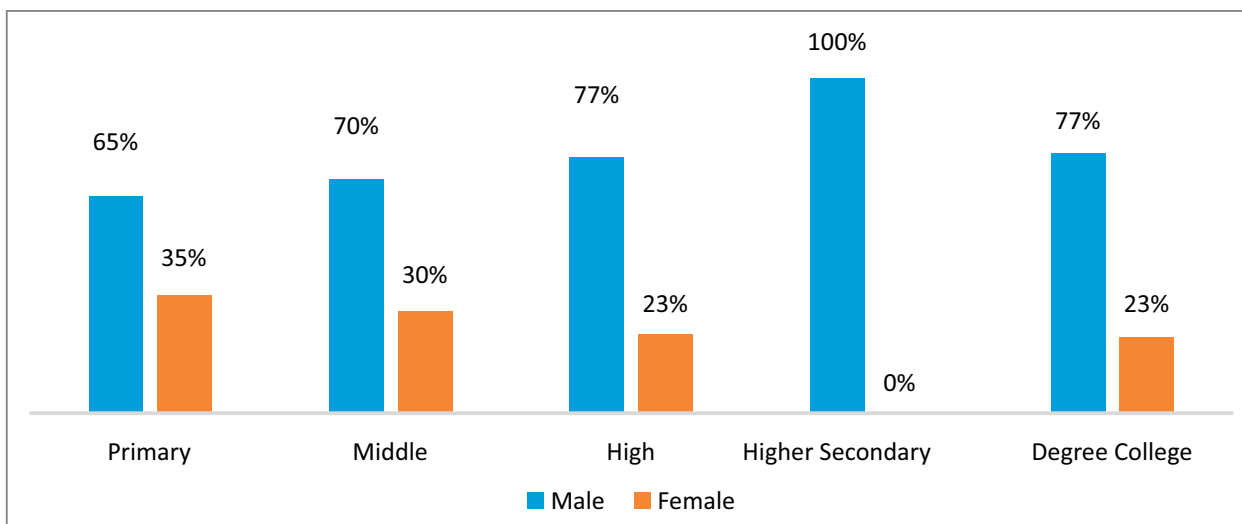
Transformative development for girls requires that they have access to secondary education. Higher education can bring significant benefits to girls, and through them to the larger society – from increased lifetime earnings, to reductions in adolescent child marriage, stunting, and maternal and child mortality.

Significant gaps are evident regarding the availability of male and female teachers. The gap is around 50% or more at all levels. At the primary level, there are only 325 female teachers against 600 male teachers. This gap widens at the middle and high school level. The student-teacher ratio stands at 32:1 for boys and 34:1 for girls at the primary level. At the high school level, it is 10:1 for boys and 15:1 for girls.

³ Department of Education, Statistical Report, 2017-18

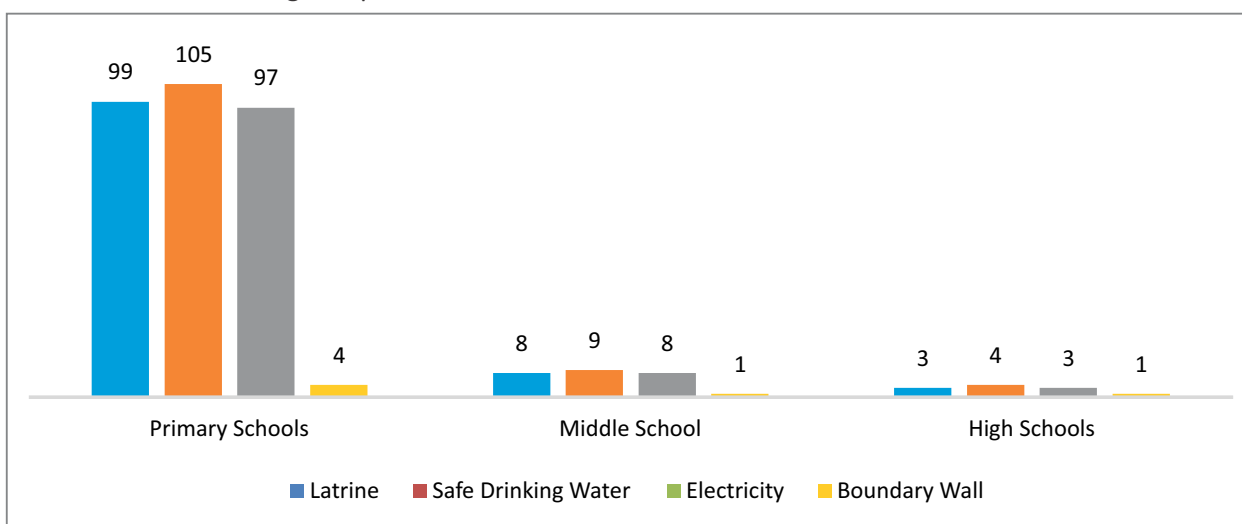
Level	Primary	Middle	High	Higher Secondary	Degree College	
Orakzai	Male	600	94	202	47	89
	Female	325	41	62	0	26
	Total	925	135	264	47	115

Table 3: Availability of male and female teachers for all school levels in Orakzai District
Source: District wise Education Statistics, 2017-18



Graph 5: Proportion of male and female teachers in schools

The corresponding graph below shows the state of the basic facilities in schools in district Orakzai, such as latrines, safe drinking water, electricity and boundary walls. While the provision of basic facilities, particularly in girls' schools, depicts a grim situation, it is particularly worse at the primary level. Out of 156 primary girls' schools, 105 lack safe drinking water, 99 are without latrines, 97 have no electricity, and 4 are without boundary walls. Of the 23 middle and high schools for girls, 2 are without boundary wall, 11 have no latrines, 13 are without safe drinking water and 11 have no electricity. The middle and high school female students have particular privacy, health and hygiene needs. The unavailability of required latrines and clean water results in either high dropouts or more absenteeism in these schools.



Graph 6: Number of girls' schools with infrastructure or facilities that are missing.

2.2 Health

Amongst the many factors that restrict fundamental human rights for women, unavailability of gender responsive and adolescent friendly health care services is a leading one. The research findings highlight the grim health and survival situation, especially for women, in district Orakzai.



Specialized medical services in Orakzai

Source: The Asia News

Access to health and other social services is generally poor in Orakzai district due to various factors, including damaged health facilities. Because of the war, 80-90% of the physical infrastructure (health and educational facilities) were destroyed and is yet to be rehabilitated⁴. Some of the areas are worse than others, for example, the situation in upper Orakzai presents a much worse situation than the rest of the district (UNICEF, 2017). It was observed that no comprehensive health related assessments have been conducted in the district, as a result of which limited data is available. However, whatever statistics are available, shows that wide disparities exist in erstwhile FATA, compared to the national figures.

- Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (DHS, 20187-18)
- The fertility rate in erstwhile is 4.8 as compared to Pakistan's average 3.6, which means that an average married woman has 5 children
- As for key MNCH indicators, around 49% of births are attended by the skilled birth attendant, with more than half of the mothers giving birth without the support of any trained health worker, midwife or other skilled provider
- 32% of the women receive appropriate postnatal care, compared to 78% in Islamabad
- The infant mortality rate is 29 between birth and the first birthday per 1000 live births
- Basic immunization coverage is 30%

⁴Mid-year Humanitarian Situation Report, UNICEF Pakistan.

- The mean age of women at the marriage in MAs is 18.2 years as compared to the rest of Pakistan, which is 20.4
- The current use of modern contraceptives by married women is lowest at 14% with the unmet need of 17%

Primary level Health Care Facilities	Secondary Level Health Care Facilities
Facility Based Services	Secondary care level referral centers like:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Dispensaries (CDs) • Basic Health Units (BHUs) • Rural Health Centers (RHCs) • Community Health Centers (CHCs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tehsil Headquarter Hospitals • District Head Quarter Hospitals.

Table 4: Primary and Secondary Level Health Care Facilities

Currently, the population in the Orakzai district rely mainly on 5-major/mid-level health facilities in the district, including the district headquarter hospital at Kalaya for serious illnesses. Due to its closer proximity to Kohat and Hundo, majority of the population, particularly those who can afford, travel to these urban centres and even Peshawar for serious cases.

The total number of health facilities in district Orakzai are 71. However, only 53 report to the Directorate of Health Services (DHS) through the District Health Information System (DHIS).

Hospitals	Dispensaries	CHCs	BHUs	MCHCs
5	21	5	22	0

Table 5: Type of Health Facilities (HeRAMS, 2018)

There are 22 Basic Health Units, 21 Civil Dispensaries, 5 Community Health Centers, 5 Hospitals/Rural Health Centers that cater to 3,931 patients per health facility at an average. One of the major missing facility in the district are non-availability of any 'mother and child health centre'.

Availability of Healthcare Professionals

An ideal health package encompasses the availability of required health care providers, services and necessary equipment for women health-related issues, mother and child health services, family planning, pre- and post-natal services, provision for safe delivery kits and routine immunization. However, the current situation reveals that almost all the health facilities in the Orakzai district are deficient regarding qualified health care providers and necessary services and equipment.

The district headquarter hospitals are normally the best-equipped hospitals in every district. However, statistics reveal a large gap about the availability of critical professional health care providers particularly needed in the areas where women suffer from severe health and gender-based violence issues. There is only one gynaecologist, one paediatrician, one physician and only 20 (19% of the required 108) medical officers available for the Orakzai district (HeRAMS, 2018). These limited numbers are insufficient to serve the needs of the entire district population, especially women and children. Many women have suffered post-traumatic stress due to war and gender-based violence. There is a need for psychological support, but there is no such facility or psychiatrists in the entire district.

Staff Category	BHU/CHC Level			CD Level		
	Required	Available	Gap	Required	Available	Gap
Male/Female MOs	20	15	5			
LHVs	24	18	6	16	12	4
Health Technicians	48	31	17			
Health Educators	20	0	20			
Dispenser/Medical Technicians				16	10	6
EPI Technicians				16	7	9

Table 6: BHU/CHC Level

In the primary level of health care facilities such as the BHUs and the CDs, the necessary staff availability gaps are bulging. The table above shows a dismal picture regarding the required health care providers. Keeping in mind the numbers of patient catered by a health facility, adequate and trained staff is a must. The above table shows that in total there is a deficiency of around 48 health care providers at BHU/CHC level and 19 health care providers at CD level, whereas it is pivotal that Health Technicians (HT), Lady Health Visitors (LHVs) and Health Educators (HE) play an important role in women's health; however, both in the BHUs as well as the CDs, a large gap exists between the required and the available number to serve the basic needs of women and children in the rural district.

In Orakzai, readiness to deliver health service package is questionable, particularly regarding staff, equipment and essential medicines required to provide adequate MNCH/SRH services.

Description	BHU		CHC		CD	
	A*	E*	A*	E*	A*	E*
Service Provision						
Routine Immunization	17	20	1	5	11	22
Child Screening & Malnutrition Growth Monitoring	14	20	3	5	4	22
Antenatal Services	7	20	2	5	4	22
Basic EmONC	6	20	2	5		
Postpartum Care	6	20	2	5		
Equipment Availability						
Refrigerator	13	20	2	5	10	22
Safe Delivery Kit	7	20	2	5		
Sterilization Facility	12	20	2	5		
Microscope	6	20	1	5	4	22
Delivery Table	15	20	4	5		

A*: Available E*: Expected

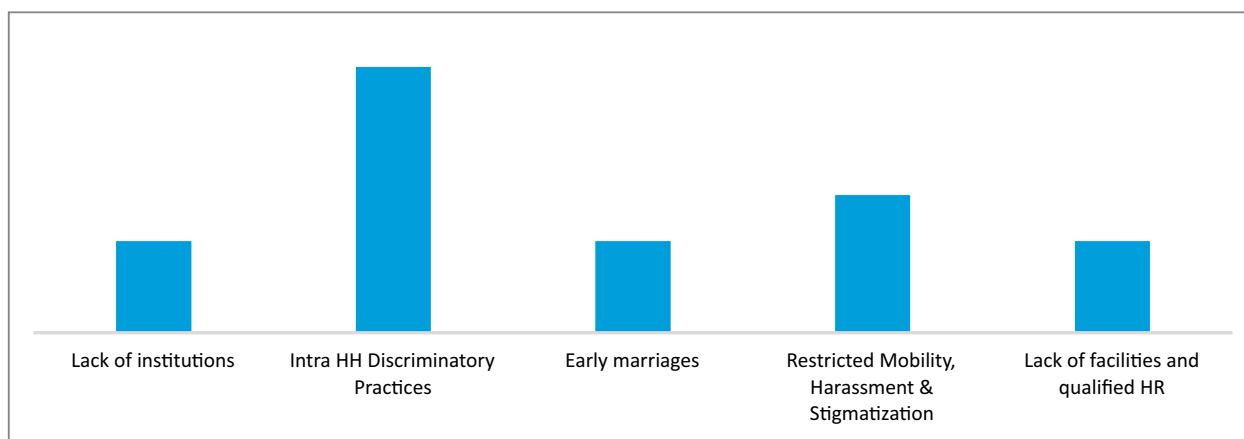
Table 7: Availability of MNCH/SRH Services and Equipment

The above table elaborates on the disparity between the available and expected services and necessary equipment required to satisfactorily meet the health care needs of women and children in the district. Another critical gap that was discovered during the survey was the lack of evidence, or quantifiable data, on any capacity building of healthcare professionals, or the availability of treatment protocols and referral guidelines for victims of gender-based violence, as noted by several research participants.

Section 3 Primary Data for Orakzai District

3.1 Education

The graph below shows the results of the FGDs and KIIs conducted with women, girls and men based on their views of the priority educational challenges in the Orakzai district.



Graph 7: Categories of responses to the challenges and barriers with regards to girls' education

30% of the respondents gave the highest weightage to Intra HH Discriminatory Practices, both at the household and community levels. Various aspects of gender discrimination were highlighted, e.g. women and girls confined roles with regard to household chores; family care and reproductive aspects of life; preference of investing in boys instead of girls, since boys are considered as bread earners and future household heads. Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to these discriminatory practices. During the FGD, an adolescent girl commented as following:

"The lives of men are easier and more privileged as compared to women. Men enjoy every pleasure and labour far less than women. It is women who perform hard tasks but still get way less than men."

An adolescent girl from Orakzai

Restricted mobility, harassment and stigmatization were mentioned by the participants as the second highest constraints and challenges. Most schools are located at a distance, requiring the girls to travel far from home. Given the mobility restrictions for girls, particularly with regard to going outside the village, a large number of girls end up as non-literate.

Widespread poverty in the district is another reason people hesitate to spend on girls' education. The general perception is that girls will marry and leave their parents' house. They are considered therefore a liability rather than an asset. Even when educated, girls do not engage in economic activities and therefore bring no economic benefits to the family. Some of the respondents quoted examples of girls that had received college education were still unable to find employment or were not permitted by their families for employment.



A public school in a rural village in Orakzai

Source: Tribal News Network

13% of the female participants highlighted fewer numbers of girls' schools as a huge challenge. This issue was highlighted several times during various FGDs and KIIs by the people in Orakzai. Given the cultural restrictions, lack of mobility, insecurity and poverty – the non-availability of nearby schools is a significant reason preventing girls from going to school. Even when education is free, the families may find it challenging to meet the associated costs or put in the required efforts. A father, participant of the FGD in Orakzai, was of the opinion:

“Times have changed, people want all their children to be educated. But they don't have access to schools, and they can't guard their children 24/7 from going to, and coming from, schools.”

A male FGD participant from Orakzai

Around 13% of the participants mentioned early marriages as a reason for female dropouts and discontinuing higher education. Early marriage is a normal practice in the district. Most parents see it as a religious obligation and a cautionary measure to prevent any unfavourable situation. The normal marriage age for girls in district Orakzai is between 15 to 18 years. In most of the tribal region at age 15 a girl hardly reaches the 8th grade, so once married she has to quit school. A female FGD participant from Orakzai was of the opinion:

“To settle down (get married) for a girl is more important than education. She has to raise a family, and take care of that family. She does not go for a job, so I don't think that education is important for her. Family matters must precede education.”

A female FGD participant from Orakzai

Provision of basic facilities like latrines, boundary walls, drinking water and electricity are a must for creating an enabling environment for effective learning. The schools in Orakzai suffer from lack of basic facilities. The data reveals that 33% of high schools (where girls age 15 plus study) do not have a most essential facility, i.e. a latrine. In a purdah-observing tribal society, lack of a boundary wall, latrine and clean drinking water would

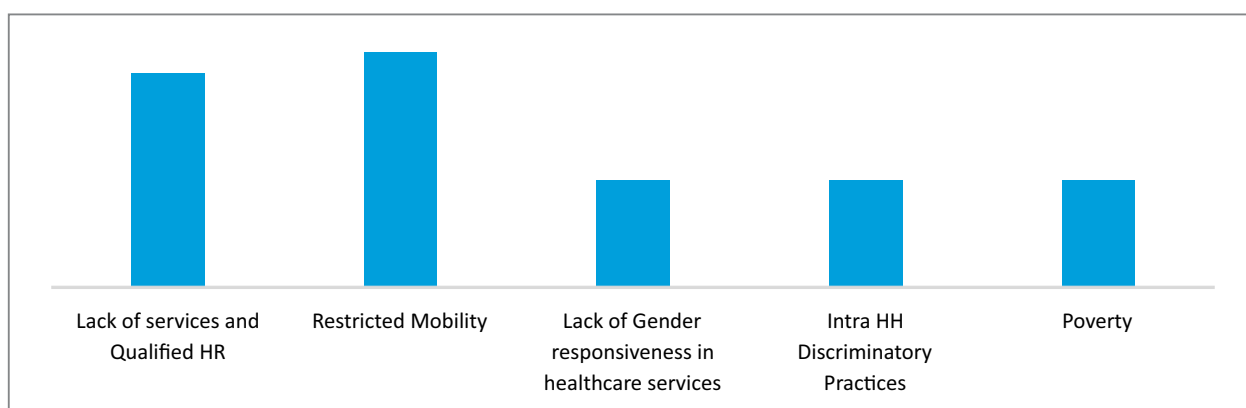
prevent many parents from enrolling their girls. At puberty, the menstrual hygiene management for girls becomes a critical issue if schools lack basic water and latrine facilities.

Respondents also highlighted the need for engaging local female teachers for girls' schools. They were of the opinion that teacher absenteeism is a huge problem, which can be managed if teachers are appointed from within the district or close by, they are given safe transportation, or the female teacher and her family are given housing facilities within the area. Furthermore, few suggested that local females should be provided incentives to engage in education sector and ready to serve in rural areas.

3.2 Health

Besides analysing the service availability and readiness of the health care system within the district through available secondary data, KIIs and FGDs were also held at the community level to document concerns, challenges and barriers faced by women in accessing the MNCH and SRH services. The discussion held was mainly around:

- Availability of health facilities
- Lack of services and qualified health care providers in the available health facilities
- Cost and quality of the treatment received
- Issues that the women face at home and at the community levels between their homes and reaching the facilities and at the facility level



Graph 8: Key Challenges & Barriers for Females to Access MNCH/SRH Services

Approximately, 26% participants reported gender-based constraints of which restricted mobility was a prominent issue. Such barriers exist throughout the district, where rural women and girls are more at risk. This cultural norm of restriction on women's mobility, where she cannot travel without a male escort, puts both women and children 'at greater risk'. Women's health is generally not a priority for the people, and they are less likely to spend much money on her health, despite their want for more children, particularly boys. Unlike men, women and girls in Orakzai cannot make decisions with regard to their health. Such decisions are mostly dependent on male consent where permission to seek external health services must be sought from husbands, fathers, elder brothers and other male family members.

"I met a pregnant woman in the hospital who was severely bleeding during her entire pregnancy. She was very weak. I asked her why she did not visit the hospital for treatment before. She replied that she shared her condition with her husband, but he did not allow her to seek health services, saying that it was normal to bleed during pregnancy, and arguing that our mothers and grandmothers didn't go to hospitals during pregnancies and deliveries, so there was no need for her to do so."

A female health care provider in Orakzai narrated



*Recently established district hospital in Orakzai
Source: Tribal News Network*

Lack of services and qualified staff, particularly female staff, was reported by around 25% of the female FGD respondents and most of the key informants. Most of them said that the health institutions that they experienced, could not provide satisfactory services to fulfil their needs. Many rural-based small facilities lack some very basic facilities to meet the needs of women and children. Lack of services, such as labour rooms, medicines, delivery kits, and immunization (for instance, TT vaccine or routine immunization for children) at the facility level (as illustrated in the above tables) adding to the sufferings of the marginalized groups of the society. An adolescent girl shared her feelings as following:

"A few days ago, my mother, father and I took my younger brother for the vaccine, but the staff said that we should come on Thursday for the vaccine because they did not have. Then my father and mother went again on Thursday, but they were yet again returned and asked to visit the following week."

Adolescent girl from Orakzai

Many of the health institutions are miles away from homes, particularly in the rural areas of the district wherein there are lack of some very basic services, such as labour rooms, medicines and immunization at the facility level. Moreover, because of the long distances issue, majority of the childbirth takes place at home through unskilled traditional birthed attendants, which results in high maternal and infant mortality and morbidity.

"People here don't plan in advance and they do not take women to hospitals for normal deliveries. Unless very serious, when a woman needs surgery. Our families prefer women to deliver inside their homes in 'Purdah' – because of this (no planning) women face last minute complications – and sometimes end up in either woman or child deaths, or sometimes even both."

An Orakzai Female in the FG Discussion

Several respondents mentioned that many primary health care facilities (BHUs & CHCs) in far rural Orakzai communities, lacked the presence of a female doctor. Moreover, the second tier of responsible female

health care providers – the Lady Health Visitors (LHVs) or female nurses, were also non-existent in many of these rural-based Basic Health Units (BHUs), Community Health Centers (CHCs) and Civil Dispensaries (CDs). Culturally seeking health care from a male is not acceptable to a vast majority tribal population.

A high proportion of Orakzai people belong to low socioeconomic sections of the population; hence, difficult to bear the health care associated with high costs. As in other parts of the MDs, there is an overall prevalence of poverty. Many men do not earn enough money to pay for the services their wives desire or require, even if they relate to their health. Furthermore, because the women control no financial resources of their own, they are entirely dependent on their husbands for access to MNCH services. 16% of the respondents mentioned that poverty restrains people to seek health care facilities.

People, especially poor resort to locally available cure unless the situation gets exacerbated to the point where women's health gets in jeopardy.

Besides the above, factors such as lack of awareness related to women's health, hygiene, clean drinking water, political interference and poor governance structure also add to putting women and adolescents' health at risk.

Like most of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's tribal belt, women in Orakzai also face intra household gender discriminatory practices and/or experience gender-based constraints outside their homes while accessing health care. Given the gender roles and existing norms in the tribal communities, men's role is perceived as important and vital to the family affairs. Women lack autonomy and cannot take decisions even regarding even their own health. Some barriers are institutional, while others are the product of decades of conditioning and existing cultural norms that limit women's and girls' mobility.

3.3 Women's Economic Empowerment

The Orakzai soil is fertile and suitable to grow wheat, maize, sorghum and bear with some shrubs, grasses and various trees. There are around 8 substantially forested areas. Livestock rearing can also be promoted in these areas. Orakzai district has coal reserves, iron ore and oil & gas, as per the FATA Development Authority. The same report further reveals that work in Orakzai district on Metallic Minerals Exploration and Decorative & Dimension Stones is active and local people should be benefitted. Moreover, a substantial number of district residents work as labour in middle eastern countries and a large portion of the local population receive remittances.

Currently, most of the economic dependence is on subsistence agriculture, nomadic pastoralism, and local level small businesses, which also got adversely impacted because of the war and military operations. However, women face a number of cultural constraints which limit their abilities to participate in the public economic domain; hence, burdening families with economic pressures. A very minimal number of females participate in paid employment, mostly as teachers and health care providers, in various services providing governmental and nongovernmental entities located in different parts of the district.

According to various MD secretariat reports, Orakzai district generally has great economic potential and three sectors can be developed i.e. Tourism, Agriculture & Forestry and Minerals. The important tourist sites in this area include Kalaya, Samana, Gulistan Fort, Feroz Khel, Zaira, Landok, Manawar and Khalwat. Few of these sites have great potential. Tirah valley laden with scenic beauty, hills, streams, forests make Tirah valley a prime tourist place.

Despite the scarcity of vast farmable lands, women in the Orakzai district play an important role in the agriculture economy, particularly in the valley of Tirah (Orakzai side), and lower Orakzai. Women play active roles in plantation and harvesting on their family lands. Around 24% of the respondents explained that due to purdah-observance and mobility issues women do not undertake paid agriculture activities. Like in many

other societies of the adjacent merged areas, “women's paid work' on other peoples' land or farm is considered 'un-ethical' and against the 'honor' of the family men as noted by various female FGD participants. Like in other areas of merged districts, rural women also are involved in livestock rearing but mainly for their own domestic and family use. Along with other domestic chores, caring for the small herds is also the responsibility of the women.

During the FGDs and KIIs in Orakzai, women requested support from the government and non-government entities for capacity building and allocation of resources for kitchen gardening, backyard poultry farming, lamb fattening, green fodder farming and fruit and vegetable production and processing.

Generally, there is no access to paid jobs for women due to prevailing cultural restrictions. Women are mostly dependents, however, few educated females', mostly from families in Kalaya, and also from families that have migrated to adjacent districts like Kohat and Hangu, are engaged in paid employment as teachers and health care providers both in nearby government and private entities. Most men go to either bigger cities or abroad and their women and family member receive remittances from them, which is the biggest livelihood source for them.

Participants highlighted that Orakzai women are aware of females' involvement in small businesses in other districts of the province. Women in the Orakzai district are also interested in small women-owned businesses, like grocery shops, clothing shops, embroidery and stitching units and also in opening beauty parlours and women's saloons. Educated girls were very hopeful to have better employment opportunities after the merger once the proper extension of government departments takes place. Girls in Kalaya and Sada showed great hope and prospects after the merger.

People in the Orakzai district need a mind-shift. The long prevailing customs and practices have shaped the views that women are considered “queen of the house” and are only responsible for their household chores; a woman needs to skilfully fulfil her role as a wife, daughter, sister and mother. However, with the high inflation rates and existing economic pressures on males and their households, trends of allowing (by their male family members') women to participate in skill enhancement training was clearly observed.

“Our people are uneducated and have very limited exposure to the outside world. It is only because of the recent displacement that our people had the opportunity to live outside the district for some time. Now some of us know a little bit about the world outside. But still, we don't know how to deal with outside businesses because we don't have proper knowledge and documentation.”

Besides, a very small number of women were reported to be involved in house-based entrepreneurship, such as stitching clothes, making embroidery and running a small grocery shop from within their homes. Women in districts, however, were found more inclined towards small businesses instead of paid jobs because for jobs they normally have to leave their homes while businesses they can run from their homes. Many were keen to participate in the economic activities, should there be the availability of raw materials, some cash and a source to connect them with the outside market through their men, because they were unable to jump in the ventures without permission and support of their males. Women and their family members wished that such trainings be arranged at the village level closer to their homes.

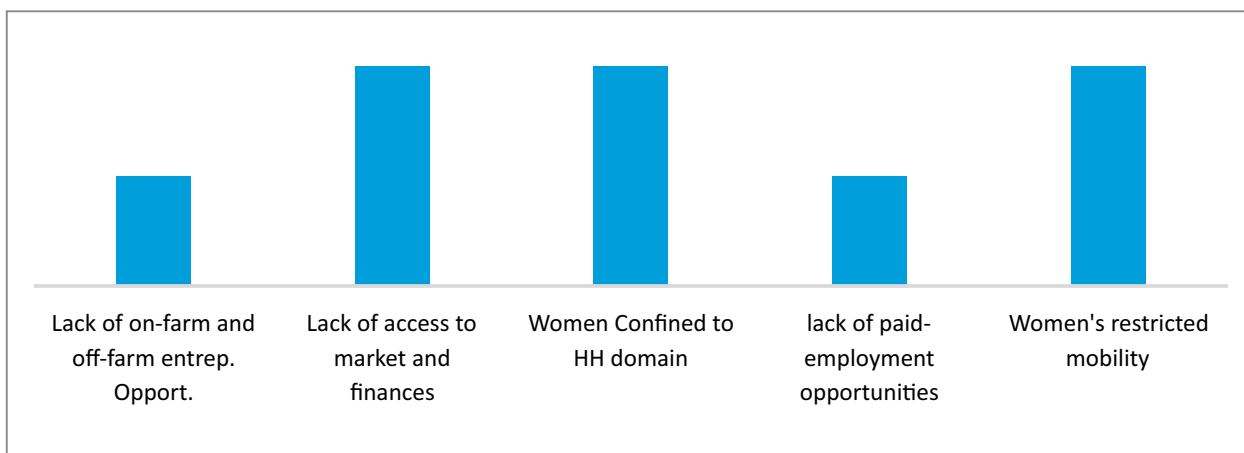
Due to lack of education and awareness regarding economic opportunities, markets, bank procedures, resistance to borrow money from banks with interest, etc. hindered women's access to credit and finances; hence, away from economic participation. Their lack of mobility (including men's) due to security check posts was also mentioned another obstacle in contacting the outside world/markets. A male KII participant from Orakzai while commenting on various procedures said that:

As mentioned above, after displacement people have received some exposure to the outside world and are willing to change their lifestyle if an enabling environment is provided to them. They need support to receive businesses know-how and some seed money to indulge in small home-based businesses.

As in other parts of the merged areas, in Orakzai also, the economic burden has increased for families, especially women headed households. There were no reliable statistics available on the exact number of female-headed households. However, in discussion various women heading their households were referred to. Many of these women either do not have any males to support families' livelihoods, or the males are aged or sick, and are therefore unable to financially support the family. Except for a couple of examples of women who were engaged in stitching and sewing related work, or running small shops in various villages, most such women were mentioned to be experiencing severe type of poverty. Some of these families are supported by their immediate relatives or through the Benazir Income Support Fund, or charities. Most children from such families are sent to Madrasahs instead of government schools. The elected representatives showed great interest in working for such families along-with the donor community.

The recent merger has given people hope, but they are hindered by some challenges they face, e.g. no access to markets or finances, lack of economic opportunities and scarcity of paid employment opportunities. The research respondents pointed to the prevailing poverty, state's inattentive behaviour, lack of government administrative structure, roads, and irrigation channels, that adversely impact the socioeconomic conditions of Orakzai.

During the FGDs and KIIs, the following challenges were highlighted by the participants that restrict the women's socio-economic contribution. The graph below shows the weightage given by a participant to each challenge for its severity and occurrence.



Graph 9: Major Challenges

3.4 Gender Based Violence

Conflicts by default create challenges for the socio-political, moral and ethical structures of the society. Long wars and conflicts, to which the Orakzai districts remained exposed, also disrupted its social and economic structure. This situation has worsened conditions for women, hindering their general security, and restricting their mobility. Conflicts and wars deteriorated and disturbed the lives of the common people. Given their role in the household, and their lack of access to, and control over resources, women have been the most vulnerable and affected segment of the patriarchal society.



Consultations about psychological trauma post-Taliban rule

Source: Relief Web

Years of militancy and sectarian conflicts have almost diminished the economic activities in the area. Even before the conflicts, the in-forced FCR abrogated basic human rights. The military operation was launched in 2009, which displaced thousands of families. These displaced families took refuge in the adjoining districts of Kohat and Hangu, while some settled in Peshawar⁵.

Life as IDPs for the women of Orakzai district had been both liberating and confining. Traditional gender relations, especially the role of men as heads of households and breadwinners, in some instances, broke down due to economic necessity as women took up work outside the household. However, this role reversal has also been problematic as women face conflicting demands to earn money and maintain households simultaneously⁶.

During displacement, particularly to the urban centers, families were exposed to better services like good education, health service, education and transport, which made them feel displacement as “blessing in disguise”. Those who opted to live with their families settled in developed cities like Peshawar, Islamabad, and received urban exposure which changed their measure for a 'good' living standard. Many secured their CNIC for the first time, experienced better health facilities, visited parks, walked on paved roads, housing with sanitary facilities in their houses and the cities they lived in. Economic opportunities for women in these areas still remained very limited because of their level of literacy and skills⁷.

The immediate impact of displacement included:

- Attitude towards the girls' education started to change. More girls got enrolled in settled districts
- Girls got permission to work, in closer vicinities of their homes
- Women also found a support system by reaching out to each other, with women in the neighborhood and at times even service providers/staff in camp, despite issues of mobility

⁵OCHA, Peshawar, 2015

⁶Mosel & Jackson, 2013

⁷Khan M. A., 2015.

- Women began to take on some roles that were traditionally undertaken by men, e.g. going to markets, grocery shops, hospitals, and schools

Snapshot of resettlement status:

- Approximately only 22% returned to their original districts while 73% never returned
- Whereas from Orakzai 91% of the families became IDPs. Mostly IDPs stayed in the cities instead of returning to their native lands
- The reasons noted were those families who had no land or houses in Orakzai, and families whose houses, lands were completely destroyed, had no ability and resources to reconstruct
- Some families returned to their places of origin. However, the men returned to the cities where they had found jobs or established business
- There was another group that left their families behind in the cities for education and other services, and only a male or two returned to the villages to take care of their holdings

Security situation can be divided into two conditions; one is the 'security threat' and security arrangement'. Women's mobility in both the afore-mentioned situations is rare in the merged areas. The concept of security can be understood from three aspects, i.e. pre military operations; during military operation; post military operations situation. In pre-military operation situation, mobility was restricted due to local customs and culture and later was structured by the Taliban. They declared a parallel government and restricted the movement of women without companionships of their men even to doctors and hospitals. During military operations, for women who stayed back, mobility was further deteriorated due to frequent security checks and curfews. However, in the post military operation situation, mobility was restored to some extent.

Mobility of women in the urban districts is equally restricted, however, older women are allowed to go to the markets along with the young women and with girls to schools. Before invasion of militants, there was a mobility freedom to an extent that they were able to go to their female relatives. They were allowed to move to collect firewood, fodder, water and labour in their own fields. However, culturally movement beyond their own area or outside village was restricted before as well. After displacement and resettlement, our respondents told that there is a clear change in attitude and girls are allowed to go to schools. However, lack of security and law and order situation is still an issue. The prevailing security situation has severely challenged their economic, social and cultural lives.

As for other parts of the MDs, there is no authentic data or study available about gender-based violence for Orakzai district as well. There are a few overall (erstwhile) FATA reports with a small mention of Orakzai district. According to the Demographic and Health Survey Pakistan 2017-18:

- 66% of the women have experienced some form of GBV in the erstwhile FATA, which is highest in Pakistan. We assume the situation of Orakzai district may be no different
- 80% of the victims never sought any help from any quarters
- 95% of the women themselves justify wife beating under one of the specific circumstances such as food preparation, raising argument, moving out without permission, etc.

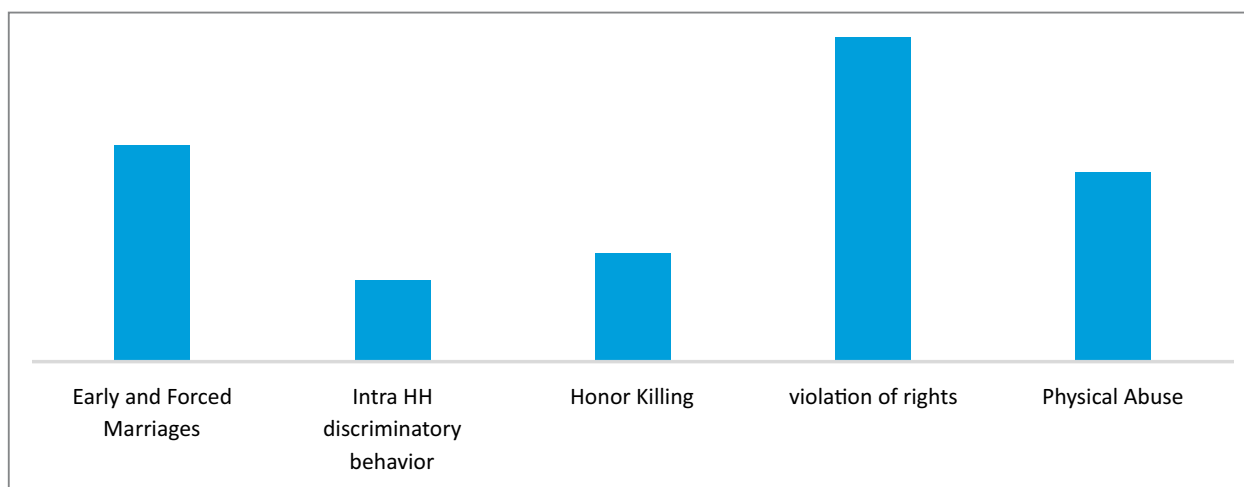
News or other media do not sufficiently cover any GBV related stories. Most of the studies consider tribal culture and interpretation of religion as being instrumental in promoting gender-based violence. For instance, "Gender & Socio-cultural Norms in the KP Tribal Districts (Former FATA)", gender roles are

⁸FATA Research Centre's Report

determined by the patriarchal system which is a result of tribal culture.⁸ GBV types reported during IDPs' Vulnerability Assessment Profiling (IVAP) include, but are not limited to, physical assault, emotional violence, child marriage, female trafficking, domestic violence, denial of health services, honor-related crimes, rape, domestic violence, unwanted pregnancy, dowry-related crimes, etc. Among them, emotional violence by an intimate partner, physical violence, and denial of health services were found to be most common for Orakzai district as well.

During the FGDs and KIIs, respondents highlighted the severity of various forms of GBV in Orakzai district. The responses are self-explanatory in the bubble graph in terms of the intensity of a certain of GBV. Respondents highlighted that GBV invariably exists in both urban and rural areas. However, they particularly emphasized on the following two points:

- GBV occurrence in uneducated families is more common than the educated families
- GBV is a serious issue in Orakzai district



Graph 10: Types of GBV Occurrences

Violation of rights was consistently raised as the biggest issue by the FGD and KII respondents in Orakzai. Despite significant changes that have taken place in the lives of women and girls, gender inequality is still high in Orakzai district. 39% respondents said that the rights of women are severely violated, e.g. females in this district have no inheritance and property rights; a gender discrimination faced at family level. Though men and women recognized women's significant role in agriculture and at the household level, as per the traditional tribal practices, women have no agency over the use of family resources, including land. In a resource-scarce region like Orakzai, land ownership can play a vital role in economic uplift of the marginalized segments, particularly women.

“With access to land ownership women would be able to cultivate and earn subsistence livelihood for herself as well as the family,”

Adolescent Girl in Orakzai FGD

“Despite the law of the state guaranteeing inheritance and land ownership for women, in Orakzai people (men) do not seem to relinquish their supremacy and land entitlement and ownership rights.”

A female key informant from Orakzai

In Orakzai, after the death of family's sole male land owner, according to the customary laws and practices, the inheritance does not transfer to the immediate female heirs of the house. It is taken away by the other males of the extended family, such as uncles and male cousins. To fulfil the desire of an overwhelming majority of the females, the state must extend the strict implementation of the laws, and make court

support available to women within each of the merged districts. Furthermore, in majority of the merged areas, including Orakzai, women are not aware of their constitutional rights of ownership and entitlement. There is a need to create such awareness considering the existing state laws, international standards, and particularly the teachings of Islam.

As reported by 26% of the respondents, marriages in Orakzai district take place at a very young age, with no or very minimal consent of girls. Tradition prevails that girls should be married as soon they attain the age of puberty, and any delay brings a bad name to the family. Because of the tradition of early marriages, it is challenging to find a good match for an older girl.

Participants from Orakzai district suggested that the ideal age for marriage should be between 16 to 18 years for females, whereas a few mentioned that it should be 15 years. If girls get married at this early age, they will have to discontinue their education. Girls were of the view that boys should be economically stable before marriage so that they are able to take over the responsibility of raising a family. However, the data concluded that people in urban areas have started observing the appropriate marriage age, i.e. 18 years.

Respondents were also asked about the occurrence of different types of forced marriages to which they responded as follows:

Without “formal” or proper consent of girl [and boy] - marriages are decided by parents, particularly fathers, often without taking consents from the boy or girl. Even if a boy or girl dissent the decision, they are coerced to uphold the decision taken. However, the situation seems to be changing in educated families, where consent is to some extent taken from boys and girls, particularly boys. Generally, in Orakzai, taking marriage consent from boys and girls is still not a common practice. In a response to the question on consent for marriage, an adolescent girl from Orakzai, who had recently got engaged, said that:

“No, no one asked me, and I don't know the boy that I am engaged with, but I am sure my parents have made a good decision for my future life”.

Adolescent Girl in Orakzai FGD

Marriage taken place under the custom of Ghag or Zhagh – boy's claim over girl. This custom or tradition is almost non-existent in other parts of MDs, but in Kurram and Orakzai it is still in practice.

Women exchange for blood feuds -- Another type of the forced marriages is the “women exchanged for blood feuds (Pashto = swara)”. In the past, girls have been used to end family feuds by offering them in marriages to the offended family (Levine, et al, 2019). However, with the passage of time, like in other parts of the tribal region, this custom is almost non-existent in Orakzai as well.

Child Marriage commitment – these are the types where relatives commit for their children's marriages once they grow to the marriage age/puberty. These commitments are normally contracted between close relatives, mostly first cousins or at least between families within the same tribe. Marriages outside the immediate family are normally not considered.

As reported by 18% of the participants, the situation of physical and verbal abuse and violence is common in Orakzai, just as in other parts of the country. The research team in Orakzai ranked physical abuse as the third biggest challenge under GBV. According to a key informant, who is also a health worker, 'domestic violence – beating, abusing and mentally torturing of women, is on the peak in this district'. She shared a story as follows:

“One day a 15 or 16 years old married girl came to the hospital with bruises on her face. On my inquiry, she said that her husband beat her because she could not give him meal on time since she was passing through severe labour pain. He became angry and beat her. The woman informed me that before coming to the hospital she gave her husband the meal, and then came to hospital with an elderly woman from her in-laws.”

A female key informant from Orakzai

The tragedy is that elderly women from the family support physical and verbal abuse and consider it 'normal'. During FGDs many believed that it is due to the carelessness on the part of the women that makes them deserve the beating.

Another place where physical abuse is rampant are the Madrassas and schools. According to the respondents, this was a cause of concern and should be looked into. However, some elderly women (and men) consider corporal punishment a normal practice for disciplining youth and ensuring that they abide by required values and morals. Nevertheless, the girls participating in the group discussions wanted the government to take strict measures against corporal punishment in their schools, Madrasahs as well as at homes. The young generation foresee a change in the attitude of their elders with the passage of time.

A few FGD and KII participants also reported the occurrence of honour killing in Orakzai and considered it a serious issue. The FRC (June 2019) report claims that in Kurram and Orakzai, there are 1-2 cases of honour killing every two weeks. Several respondents disagreed with the claim and said that honour killing was on a decline, and there are probably 1-2 cases per year. Participants mentioned a couple of cases, where in 2017 girls were killed in the name of honour. One of these murders was committed at the order of the Jirga.

Gender discrimination is commonly practiced throughout the country – and the merged areas is no exception rather more at risk because of its traditional norms. Male preference is considered and practiced in all walks of life, including education, health, mobility, choice of food, clothes, marriage, and financial and decision-making agency. As quoted by an adolescent girl from Orakzai:

“Birth of a boys is widely celebrated, while that of a girl remains quiet and confined affair at home.”

An Adolescent Girl in Orakzai FGD

Findings from DHS 2017-18

Within the house, females are not involved in major decisions and they do not have any agency in using the resources available to the family.

80% of the survey respondents said that only the husband has control over family income, 9% said wife has and 11% said other like family elders.

Interestingly, on the contrary, control over wife's earning - 3.7% said the women herself, 7.3% said joint, 65% said control is of husband and 24% said of others.

Most of the FGDs and KIIs respondents, particularly the females, seconded the above figures and agreed with study observations.

In response to a question of rescue and relief services available to GBV victims, three types of responses were received, i.e.

- Majority of the women stay silent and bear what is happening to them because of shame, stigma and family 'honor'

- Women who suffered more and even got hurt or injured, reported to their (paternal) families
- In very rare but severe cases the victims report such incidents to the local Jirga or the village and family/tribe elders

During the research, it was observed that no GBV cases have been filed in the district so far. However, it was widely believed that it is a matter of time before women and girls will approach the justice system of Pakistan for relief. The uneducated FGD female participants were almost ignorant of the state laws and did not comment on where to go, or who to approach, in such situations. Three suggestions were given by the respondents, as follows:

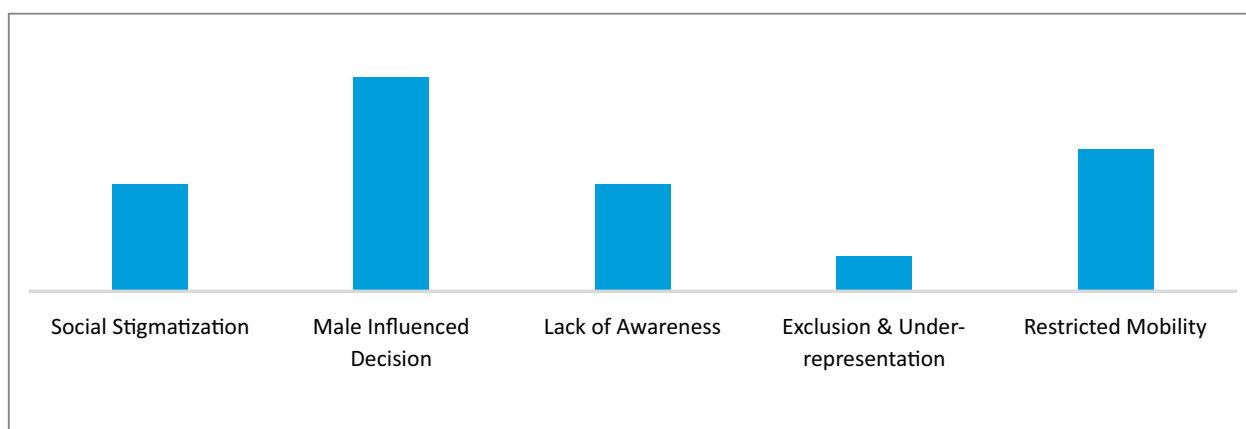
- The government should shift the courts to the districts at the earliest possible, and provide free of cost assistance and services to such survivors
- The justice system needs to create confidence amongst the people, especially women, so that they may access justice for GBV
- Female staff and lawyers/attorneys be available and trained and encouraged to deal with women cases
- Secure women safe houses should be established

3.5 Women's Leadership and Political Participation

Around 24 candidates contested the election from PK110 in the Orakzai district and one elected male member reached the provincial assembly of KP from the Orakzai district in the 2019 election. A total of 176 polling stations were set-up for the election. Because of the law and order situation in the district, 23 polling stations were declared sensitive, with voter population ratio 77 and the female voter turnout was 27.18% (FAFEN Elections Report, 2019).

During the FGDs and KIIs, the research team raised questions to explore the respondents' thoughts on the recent provincial elections, and their expectations from future local government elections in their area.

Unlike in Khyber and Kurram, the people's enthusiasm to participate in the electoral process was low in the Orakzai district. Research team observed that less than 50% of the female respondents casted their votes in the previous general election. Upon probing, several challenges were discussed regarding the overall lack of participation of women in this first-ever democratic process. The corresponding graph shows the weightage given to the various challenges highlighted by the respondents:



Graph 11: Women's Political Participation Barriers and Challenges

Orakzai lags in almost all the development indicators, including women's role and participation in the public domain. Around 40% of the respondents were of the view that women's decisions are confined to their household affairs, and political participation falls under the male area of interest. In Orakzai women mostly vote and support a certain candidate as per the choice of their males. A female FGD participant from Orakzai quoted:

“A woman's place is at home; the outside political affairs are for men. They know better than us what and who is right for our leadership.”

A female FGD participant from Orakzai

The people of Orakzai also supersede their tribal affiliation over any other factors of judgment related to the sanctity of the candidate, including candidates' priorities, program and plans and an overall manifesto for the area. The prevailing cultural, traditional and structural norms and practices have severely restricted women's mobility and have affected their daily lives, including their decision to vote. A female key informant from the district noted that:

“For women in Orakzai, involvement in politics is at the bottom of their list of priorities. Because of their restricted mobility, they are even unable to achieve their most basic rights like health and education,”

A female key informant from Orakzai

There are several issues faced by women on the institutional level as well, for example, the polling stations are far away, they are neither secure nor women friendly, most women do not have CNICs, and poor families are reluctant to spend money to go and cast a vote.

Participants also mentioned that women easily get stigmatized as soon as she steps out of her home and runs for politics. The fear of stigmatization has severely constrained the 50% women population's exposure to the outside world. A female social worker (research's key informant) was of the view:

“We fear to lose a good name by going out and participating in community affairs. Instead of appreciating women's involvement and help, many, even educated families, consider females' active participation as un-Islamic and against the local norms. I have heard many educated political leaders being abusive about their women's opponents.”

A female key informant from Orakzai

Women's exposures to media and the internet is severely limited in the Orakzai district. Hence, they have limited knowledge and awareness regarding current political affairs. To participate in politics, women require a lot of courage, strong financial footings, strong family background and sufficient knowledge of the procedures and processes. Many women were unable to make a choice in their own and who to vote and why should they do so. They, therefore, either abstained from casting their vote or depended on the decisions of their males. Male dominated environment of the overall tribal structure is a challenge for women's participation in the political process.

Orakzai women hardly participate in any political activities. They are excluded at the household as well outside their homes. According to the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN), in 10 Orakzai electoral areas/villages, women were barred from voting in the 2019 election; in 7 electoral areas/villages, the reason was reported to be cultural customs and tradition. On the other hand, so far women are not actively made part of the any political campaigns through political parties. Political parties are male dominated; therefore, no decision-making positions for women.

3.6 Grassroots Leadership Development

As compared to other merged districts, the literacy ratio and business-related mobility in Orakzai is much lower, and several parts of the district are least developed.

People have recently started receiving exposure to the outside world through frequent visits and meetings with the people from the government and non-government sectors. Social media use and exposure has also increased amongst the youth. Such exposure has mobilized groups of youth activists, female social and political workers, educated families and the current young member of the provincial assembly who are willing to lead the future development process. These individuals have passion and potential for future leadership. They, however, need proper guidance, support and enhanced technical capacities to become effective leaders, change agents and gender influence against the rigid cultural and tribal traditions obstructing gender-equality in Orakzai.

Merged areas, including Orakzai, will soon hold local government elections, which will be a platform for the identification of leaders from the grassroots level and from a pool of existing activists. These people, particularly the elected local government youth and women, can play an important role in the identification and implementation of women development focused schemes at the grassroots level. Indeed, affirmative action to ensure opportunities for women and girls' representation is an important step towards inclusion and engendering the overall development process.



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