



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Status of Women and Girls in South Waziristan 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 South Waziristan 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 North Waziristan 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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Project Lead

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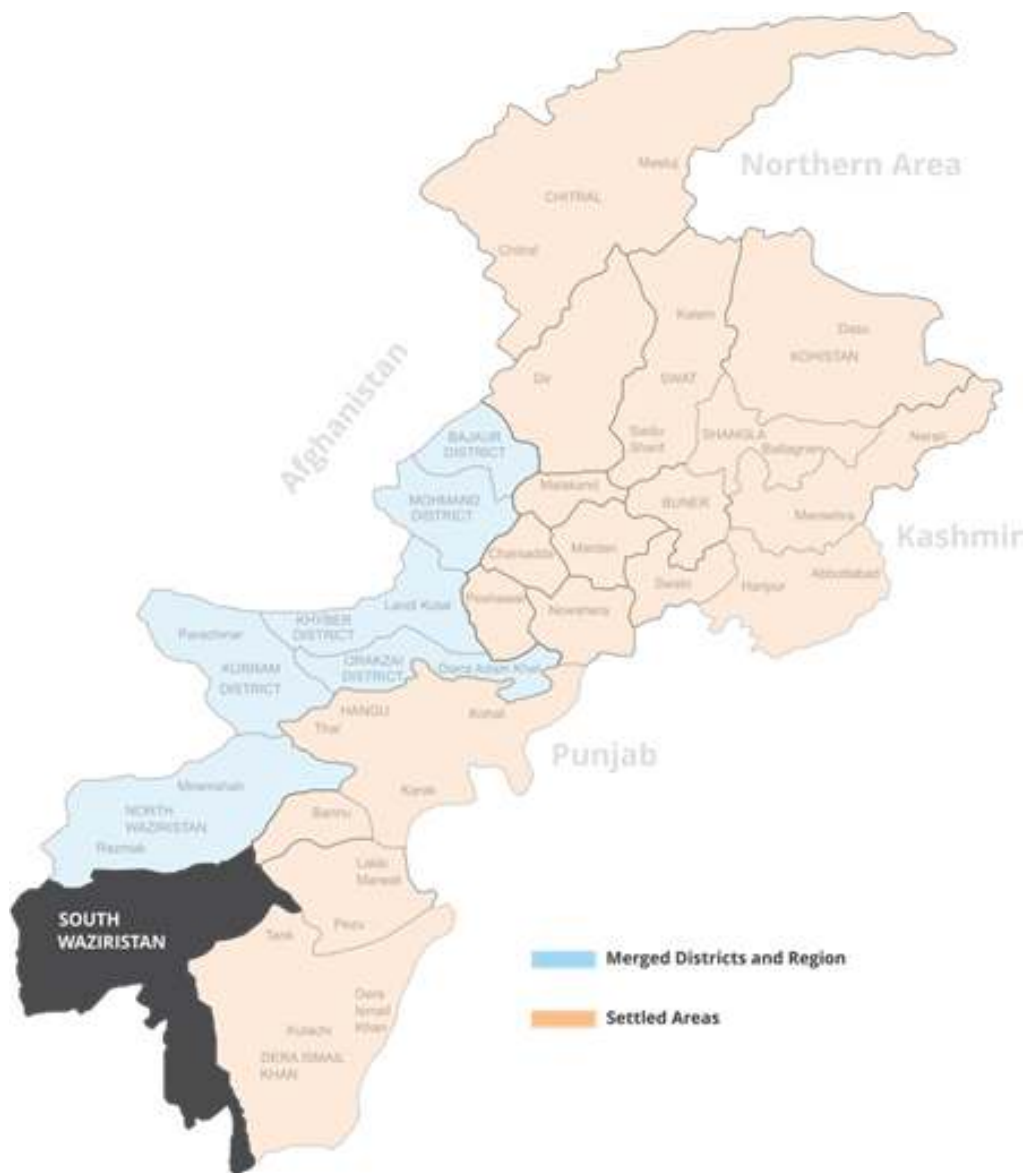
Section 1 Gender Profile South Waziristan District

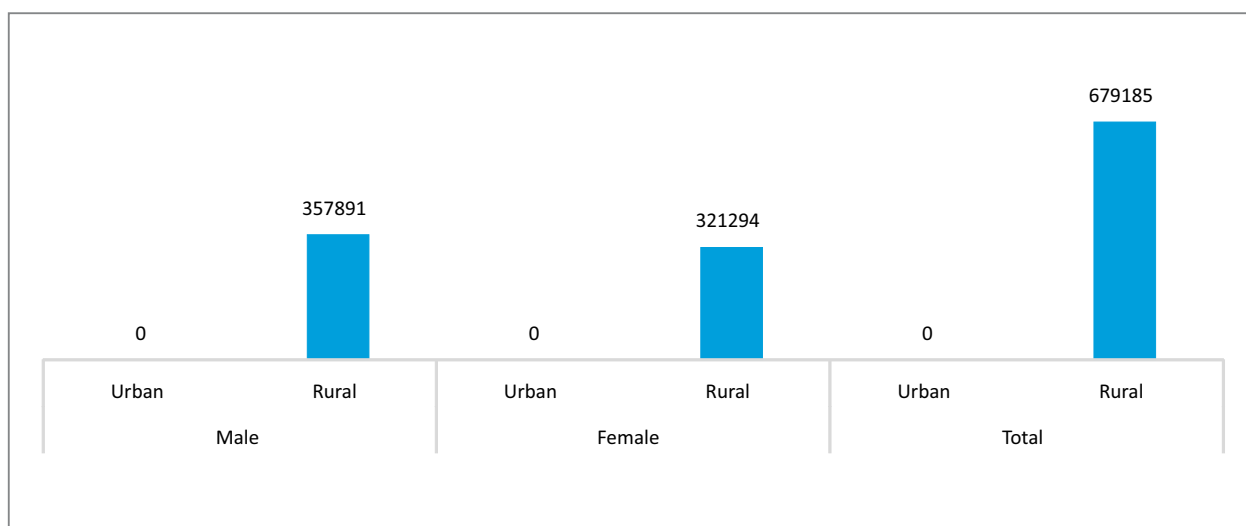
Demographics

Before its merger, South Waziristan was a tribal area, known as the 'South Waziristan Agency'. After the merger, it has been renamed as South Waziristan District and attached to the Dera Ismail Khan Division. The district headquarter is Wana. Administratively the district is structured into three subdivisions, namely Ladha, Sarwakai and Wanna. It comprises eight tehsils namely Ladha, Makin, Sararogha, Sarwakai, Tiarza, Wanna, Barmal and Toi Khwla.

1.1 District - At a Glance

Covering a land mass of around 6620 sq. Km, South Waziristan is the largest among the Merged Districts. It shares its borders with district North Waziristan to its north, Bannu and Lakki Marwat on the northeast, towards the south Zhob (Balochistan) along with Dera Ismail Khan, and on its west, it shares borders with Afghanistan. Pak-Afghan border at Angoor Adda is open for trade, but the volume of trade is low. The route has a high potential for more active trade with Afghanistan. However, due to security and trade issues, it is not as busy as Torkham and Chaman.





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

Population Density	94/sq.km.
Major Tribes	Mehsud, the Ahmadzai Wazir of Wana, the Bhattani of Jandola, the Burki (or Ormur) of the Kaniguram area, and the Dotani near the border of Zhob
Languages Spoken	99.6% speak the Pashto Language

The land is distributed among tribes, sub-tribes, clans and families. 19.58% of the land is cultivated, of which 35.5% is irrigated, and the number of persons per hectare of the cultivated land is 35 and 99 persons / irrigated hectare.

Apart from small businesses, livestock and orchards, South Waziristan has the largest number of pine nut producers, which makes Pakistan the second highest exporter of pine nuts after China. Remittances from within the country and abroad contribute to the overall sources of livelihood. Due to sharing a border with Afghanistan, the district has been used as an international trade route. Many families are, therefore, engaged in the transportation business as well.

Female involvement in agriculture and paid employment is minimal. They mostly work on family-owned agricultural lands. Women, though in a small number, are employed as teachers and health care providers with government and non-governmental organizations located in different parts of the district.

Some of the major issues prevailing in the district include:

- Militancy and subsequent military operation leading to security threats
- Low on the socio-economic index of the country
- The wide gender gap in all development indicators
- Marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as women and girls
- Marginalized and vulnerable groups, including women and girls

Section 2 Secondary Data for South Waziristan District

2.1 Education

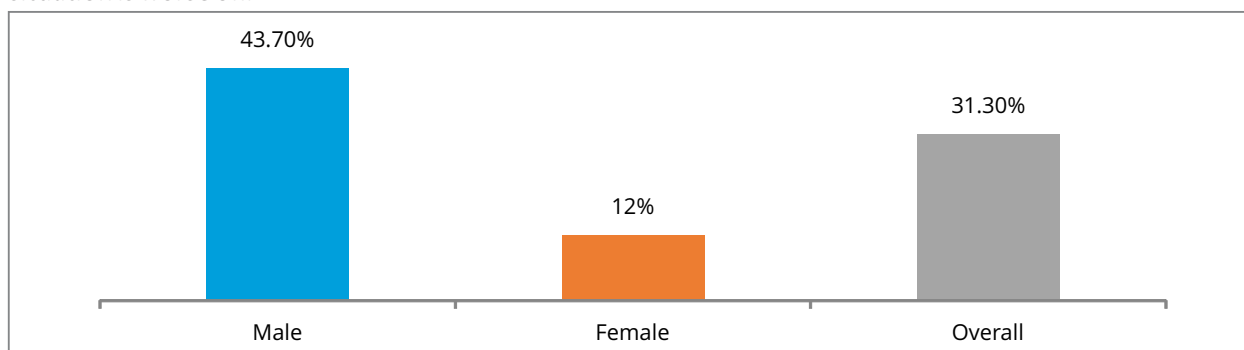
Education shapes various dynamics of the social, political and economic lives of nations. It shapes social realities and helps in understanding and connecting to nature and the rest of the people in the world. The following is an outline of the current situation of the education sector in South Waziristan.

Like, many other countries, the Constitution of Pakistan also recognizes free education for every child irrespective of gender, color, religion, social status, etc. However, due to various structural and cultural reasons, South Waziristan is among the regions where education statistics portray an ominous situation.



*A public school in South Waziristan
Source: The Borgen Project*

The total literacy rate among the 10 years and above age-group in South Waziristan is 31.3% (both sexes), which is comparatively less than those of Khyber, Kurram and Orakzai, where the ratio between boys and girls is 43.7% and 12.3% respectively. The large literacy gap applies to adults as well, i.e. 36.1% males and only 4.7% of females, making total adult literacy 23.1% (FATA Development Indicator Household Survey – FDIHS, 2013-14). The education department has no segregated rural and urban data, however, areas, such as Wana, Tanai, Makin and Sam, have more and better-equipped schools, it can conveniently be implied that the population of these areas is more literate than other rural areas. Indeed, data indicate that both boys and girls and men and women are faced with issues such as low literacy. Nevertheless, the women and girls' situation is worse off.

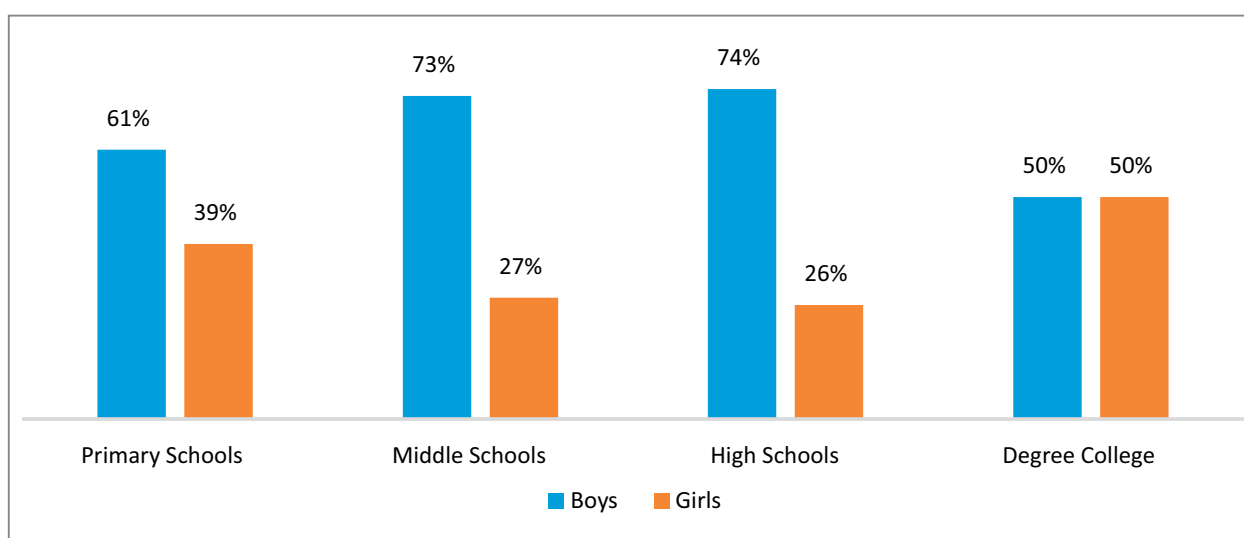


*Graph 2: Literacy rates in South Waziristan
Source: FATA Development Indicators Household Survey 2013-14*

There are 388 boys and 252 girls primary schools in the district. The graph clearly shows the gender disparity at all levels. There are comparatively 136 fewer girls' schools than boys. Similarly, there are 35 fewer schools in middle and 17 fewer schools of high-level education for girls. Though there is only one college for girls and one for boys, these colleges may not be able to cover the needs of the entire district. Boys can travel to DI Khan for their higher education, but girls need at least 8 colleges, one in each Tehsil to proceed with their higher education.

Level		Primary School	Middle School	High School	Higher Secondary	Degree College
South Waziristan	Boys	388	56	26	-	1
	Girls	252	21	9	-	1
	Total	640	77	35	0	2

Table 1: Number of Available Schools
Source: District wise education statistics 2017-18

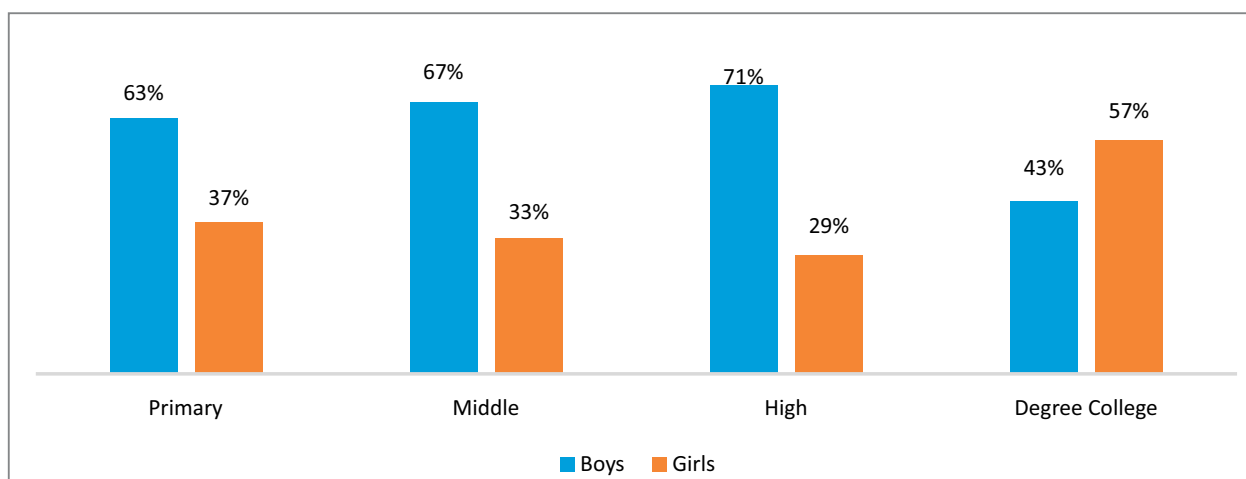


Graph 3: Number of available schools for boys and girls.

In terms of the number of enrollments, gender disparity is conspicuous at all levels of education, except in higher education. At the primary level, girls' enrollment is about 60% lower, and at the high school level, there are 41% fewer girls enrolled as compared to the boys. Higher education provides an opportunity for girls to better understand their social, economic and productive and reproductive roles. Higher schooling for girls needs more attention to encourage enrollment and to check the dropout of girls after the primary level. The only college existing in the district shows that girls' enrollment is higher than boys', i.e. 347 for girls and 257 for boys.

Level		Primary School	Middle School	High School	Higher Secondary	Degree College
South Waziristan	Boys	31511	976	1447	257	0
	Girls	18702	486	596	347	0
	Total	50213	1462	2043	604	0

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

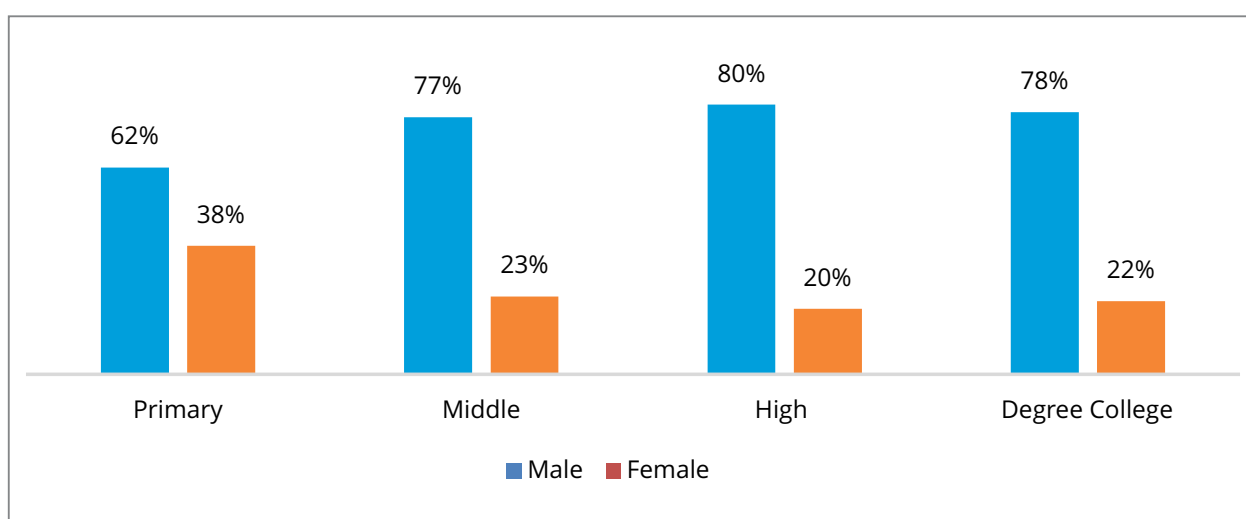


Graph 4: Enrolment figures for boys and girls in various levels of education in the District

The graph below discusses the availability of the teaching staff in the functional educational institutes in the district. Except for the primary level, at all other levels, the gap between the availability of male and female teachers is significant – female teachers are almost three times less than the male teachers. For instance, there are only 98 female teachers as compared to 324 males at the middle level. The gap further widens at the high school and college levels. The ratio of the number of students per teacher stands at 36:1 (boys) and 35:1 (girls) at the primary level, not a significant gap. At the high school level, the student ratio per teacher is very low for both boys and girls, i.e. 5:1 for boys and 8:1 for girls.

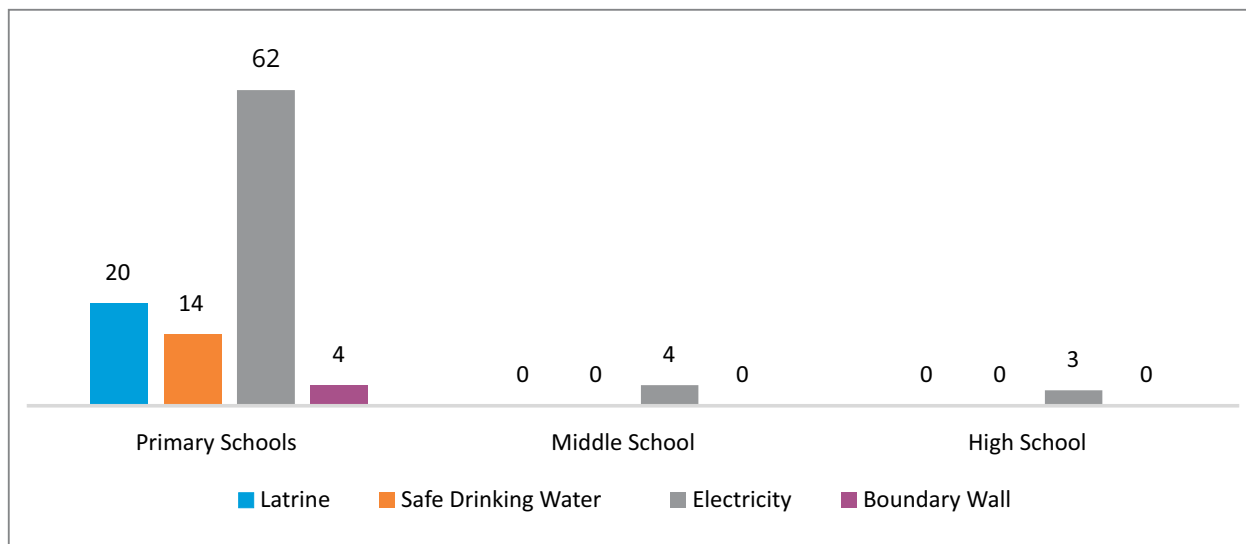
Level	Primary	Middle	High	Higher Secondary	Degree College
South Waziristan	Male	876	324	325	79
	Female	544	98	79	22
	Total	1420	422	404	101

Table3: Availability of male and female teachers for all school levels in selected districts
Source: District wise Education Statistics, 2017-18



Graph 5: Proportion of male and female teachers in schools.

For this study, only the girls' schools were analysed concerning missing facilities. Basic facilities were considered, i.e. availability of latrine, safe drinking water, electricity and boundary wall. At the primary level, out of 252 girls' schools, 4 schools were without boundary walls, 14 lacked safe drinking water, 62 schools were without electricity and 20 were without latrines. In middle and high-level schools, only 7 schools (4 middle and 3 high) were without electricity. To conclude, the majority of schools have basic facilities. But there are many primary level girls currently deprived of the basic needs and facilities of health and hygiene, which results in an excuse for dropouts.



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

Overall, 73% of students, including 69% boys and 79% of girls quit school at the primary level in the erstwhile FATA, noted by the FATA-Education Management Information System (EMIS). The current situation of inadequate and/or missing facilities provides a strong indication of poor learning and physical environment at girls' schools and one of the main reasons for higher education dropout indicators in the Merged Districts including South Waziristan. The needs must be addressed at the policy and program levels to ensure a favourable educational ambience through the provision of improved physical and learning facilities; hence, combat girls' low retention and attendance rates.

2.2 Health

Access to health care in South Waziristan is limited. This district is also among those that have major issues in providing health care services to the entire population, and more specifically to the women.

Some of the factors that cause these issues are as follows:

- Lack of gender responsiveness of the health institutions
- Poor socio-economic conditions of the communities
- Social and cultural norms regarding women's mobility and health privacy
- Deficiency in health-related awareness among the masses of South Waziristan

The aforementioned factors are conspicuous in shaping the overall trends and dynamics of Women and Child and Sexual and Reproductive Health in South Waziristan, which also limits women in meeting their health needs.



A hospital in Ladha without basic facilities
 Source: Tribal News Network

The following are the highlights of secondary research conducted on the health situation in South Waziristan. The figures available were a little old as the current data was not available. However, during this time no pertinent effort was put in the area to alter the situation, which makes the available data still valid and reliable.

- 48% of the women aged 15-49 years received antenatal care at least once during the last pregnancy
- 34.7% of children aged 0-11 months were protected for neonatal tetanus through immunization of their mother
- 31.7% of women were seen by a health provider within six weeks of delivery
- 51.8% of birth were attended by skilled health personnel
- 14.2% of births were delivered at the health facilities

Besides, among many other negative practices, several FGD female participants mentioned the existence of several unqualified traditional health healers, like local hakims, religious and spiritual healers available throughout the district. Furthermore, the minimally qualified Lady Health Visitors (LHVs) are working as a substitute for the doctor. A few LHVs have established separate private clinics where they perform delivery cases privately and charging heavy amounts for providing such services; for instance, the one in WANA city is famous among the communities.

Like other Merged Districts, Health Service delivery in South Waziristan is also ensured through primary and secondary level health care facilities.

Primary level Health Care Facilities	Secondary Level Health Care Facilities
Facility-Based Services	Secondary Care Referral Centers
<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

For major health needs, the total population of the district mainly relies on major health facilities in the district, including the district headquarters hospital Wana, Sholam, Mawlve-Khan Sarai and Sararogha hospitals. Due to its closer proximity to Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu, the majority of the population, particularly those who can afford, travel to these cities for serious illnesses. Most of the serious cases are also referred to medical institutions in Peshawar, Rawalpindi and Multan. There is a total of 88 health facilities in the district as shown in the following table and each facility caters around 7831 patients in the district.

Hospitals	Dispensaries	CHCs	BHUs	MCHCs
10	56	4	16	2

Table 5: Health Resource Availability and Mapping System (HeRAMS) in health facilities of FATA Pakistan (2018)

Around 93 health facilities are fully or partially damaged, which are functional or partially functional, providing minimal services to the population. The district also has the largest number of Maternal & Child Health Centers and LS/SFC centres that are almost non-existent in few other Merged Districts. Seven are secondary level health facilities, like the district headquarter hospital and tehsil headquarter hospitals, while the rest includes CHCs, BHUs, CDs and MNCH.

Besides the district health care facilities available in South Waziristan, people also depend on public and private health facilities available in the neighbouring Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu districts because of its closer proximity.

Availability of Healthcare Professionals

A minimum health care package includes essential staff for women and children's health, i.e. LHVs, nurses, trained Traditional Birth Attendants-TBAs, Dais, health educators, and provision of mother and child health services, including family planning and pre- and post-natal services, availability of safe delivery kits, and the routine immunization. Such services are practically non-existent across South Waziristan, particularly in rural areas. The unavailability of staff and facilities prevents women from getting appropriate health care and causes severe health and gender-based violence issues.

Ideally, the District Head Quarter (DHQ) Hospital should be the best health care provider in a district. Unfortunately, the South Waziristan DHQ hospital is lacking in facilities and staff. The statistics available from the HeRAMS (2018) portray a dismal picture and depict a wide gap between the health staff available and required in the Wana DHQ hospital. For example, there is only one general surgeon and one paediatrician, while the rest of the services and human resources, including gynaecologist, psychiatrist, radiologist and physician are missing. Moreover, there are only 23 (21% of the total required 108) medical officers available for Wana, in particular, and the general population of South Waziristan in general. Therefore, in the absence of the essential professional staff, people suffer both health-wise and financially because they have to travel to other parts of the KP province to seek health services.

Staff Category	BHU/CHC Level			CD Level		
	Required	Available	Gap	Required	Available	Gap
Male/Female MOs	7	3	4			
LHVs	10	6	4	16	10	6
Health Technicians	20	13	7			
Health Educators	19	0	19			
Dispenser/Medical Technicians				16	12	4
EPI Technicians				16	10	6

Table 6: Status of BHU/CHC/CD

Description	BHU		CHC		CD	
	A*	E*	A*	E*	A*	E*
Service Provision						
Routine Immunization	6	7	12	19	13	33
Child Screening & Malnutrition Growth Monitoring	0	7	1	19	0	33
Antenatal Services	0	7	0	19	0	33
Basic EmONC	0	7	0	19		
Postpartum Care	0	7	0	19		
Equipment Availability						
Refrigerator	1	7	8	19	2	33
Safe Delivery Kit	1	7	7	19		
Sterilization Facility	6	7	7	19		
Microscope	1	7	9	19	2	33
Delivery Table	1	7	8	19		

A*: Available E*: Expected

Table 7: Diagnostic Capacity and Essential Medicines to provide Adequate MNCH/SRH Services.

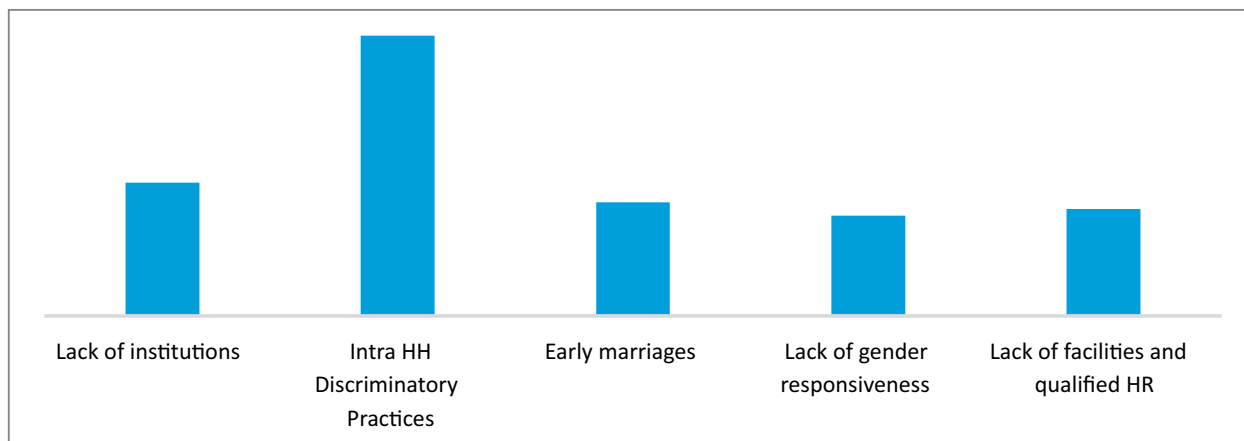
According to Director General Health Services (DGHS), the limited available physical infrastructure, lack of service provision (both staff and services) of health facilities further worsens the situation for the people. There is an evident gap between the required and available qualified human resources, relevant services and the essential equipment to effectively address health issues. Another important aspect is the training of the staff in satisfactorily dealing with and responding to the women-specific issues particularly the gender-based violence. The majority of these health care providers lack the skills to carefully report and refer them to the relevant corners, as stated by the KP Ombudsperson on harassment.

The entire Merged District's population has suffered tremendously because of regional and local violent conflicts and hundreds of people, especially women, suffer from mental health issues and trauma. The region needs psychiatrists. Unfortunately, there is not a single such professional appointed in the entire region. Data also indicates that the majority of health care providers are not gender-responsive, or sufficiently trained in dealing with gender-based violence and women's sexual and reproductive health-related issues.

Section 3 Primary Data for South Waziristan District

3.1 Education

The graph illustrates the opinions of the research participants regarding educational challenges in district South Waziristan:



Graph 7: Challenges and barriers with regards to girls' education reported by research participants

33% of the respondents said that Intra-household discriminatory practices at family, household and/or the state level are the biggest challenge. In support they said that women are seen as custodians of their homes and their illiterate parents find no cause to educate their young women. Boy preference is evident in the culture. Families enrol their boys in schools, while they send their girls to madrasahs. These madrasahs are abundantly available across South Waziristan, which is in closer proximity to poor and rural parents. Earlier, female madrasahs were not a common phenomenon. They were established, and they flourished, during the Taliban regime. The research respondent highlighted the existence of gender discrimination both at the household level, as considerably as the institutional level; in the Madras as well as in schools. Female Madrasahs normally only teach Quran and about basic religious rites, while male Madrasahs teach Quran, Hadiths, Rituals, logic and modern topics like basic math, science and oral communications. A few FGD participants were of the opinion that:

“For young women, it is enough to learn Quran and to recognize the basics of religion necessary in her daily life; the boys need to get a higher religious education, they can become scholars and imams.”

Though there are a great number of schools in South Waziristan, they still seem insufficient to manage up with the overall demands of the territory. Respondents expressed the lack of schools as the second biggest concern. In urban centres, people were more concerned with the lack of high schools and colleges, and the calibre of instruction. In rural areas, it was more about the lack of all types of educational foundations, including primary schools. Insecurity, poverty and females' culturally restricted mobility hindered enrolment and retention in schools. One of the key informants said that:

“[...] Even if the parents want to educate their girls, there are hurdles from the government side in educating them as it is not providing people with proper opportunities to attain education.”

The situation of early marriages was no different in South Waziristan as compared to other Merged Districts. This has emerged as a major educational challenge. The average age of marriage for girls is 17 years and for boys, it is 22 years in the district. This is the main reason for low enrollment and retention after primary

education. According to a few of the respondents, in rural areas, the average marriage age for girls is as low as 14 to 15 years and that of boys is 18 to 20 years. Early age marriage becomes a huge barrier to girls' education. A male key informant while commenting on early marriage said that:

“Traditionally, in remote areas, boys get married when they passed their 10th-grade school, and it is always parents' priority that the girls should be younger than the boys— one can easily estimate that they marry their girls when they are in 8th grade or so”

The trends indicate that early marriages are more common among the uneducated families and households with low socioeconomic status. Generally, no significant variations were observed between urban and rural families because the cultural practices were equally followed.



*A public school in South Waziristan
Source: The Express Tribune*

The participants considered the lack or non-availability of basic facilities in schools as another challenge for girls' education. Missing facilities deteriorate the learning environment. Particularly boundary walls and latrines/toilets are the foremost facilities that are necessary for girls to be enrolled, and continue through secondary and higher schools. In purdah-observing societies across South Waziristan, the absence of such facilities results in high dropouts. These views were expressed by the people across the districts. People in South Waziristan mentioned that schools must fulfil the traditional and religious obligations. An NGO worker who has been working with the returned IDPs from South Waziristan noted that:

“Government planners must adhere to the need and importance of school and health facilities' latrines and boundary walls to ensure culturally practised purdah and security of the children; otherwise, people hesitate to avail these opportunities at the cost of their and their children's safety and security.”

Likewise, a few women in the FGDs also mentioned that:

“Unless parents feel secure that their children are provided with good physical and learning environment at the schools, they would prefer their children stay home and assist their families in the household chores or work with them in the fields.”

Lack of gender responsiveness was another obstacle faced by families and children in South Waziristan. According to many, the education department has given a blind-eye to the needs of girls' education. Many schools do not have any particular programs addressing the educational needs of females. Several schools were reported lacking female teachers, facilities, for instance, latrines, and preparation of learning aids and other inducements to promote young women in schools and minimize the gender inequality in education. Other issues hindering female education include lack of proper monitoring of schools, deteriorating educational quality, and overall prevailing poverty in the South Waziristan.

3.2 Health

As per the research objectives, the central issues of discussion were women and child wellness. The respondents were encouraged to discuss the structural, institutional and community level challenges that they face in acquiring satisfactory MNCH services. Some of the important and most negatively impacting factors included lack of services and qualified health care providers, lack of gender responsiveness in the health facilities, prevailing social structure and discriminatory norms. Since the area had been under the FCR rule, people's expectations from the state had been limited. Nevertheless, after the displacement, and nowadays with the merger, people are more vocal about their rights to services.

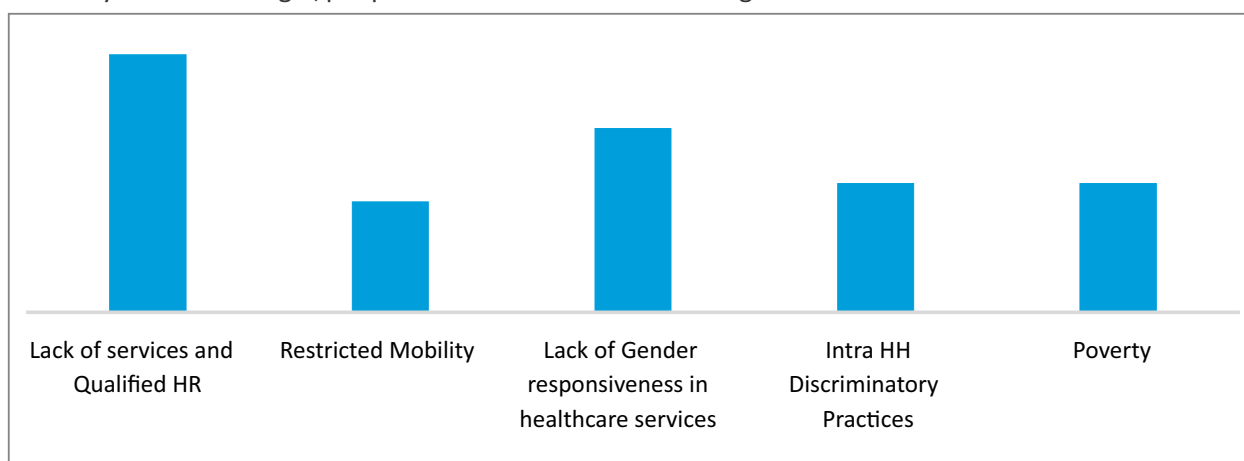


Chart 8: Key Challenges & Barriers for Females to Access MNCH/SRH Services:

The bulk (40%) prioritized a lack of services and qualified staff as the most expressed challenge in acquiring health service in South Waziristan. Field research revealed the dissatisfaction of people from local health institutions. The second tier responsible for female health like LHVs and nurses were also non-existent in BHUs, CHCs and CDs, whereas the availability of female health care providers is a pre-requisite for females to avail treatment in South Waziristan. For instance, according to several respondents:

“A large number of the primary health care facilities available to rural South Waziristan communities lack the presence of qualified staff, e.g. a simple female doctor, direly needed for women to openly discuss their health issues with. Unfortunately, most of the rural health facilities are run by LHVs or simple health dispensers.”

27% of the participants also showed their concern that even the available health facilities are not gender-responsive i.e. they are incapable of addressing women and child's health-related issues. These available health facilities are generally in urban centres, or sparsely scattered around the rural areas, which makes accessibility difficult for adult females. Additionally, many participants mentioned a non-availability of female doctors and other female health care providers, and a lack of services, such as proper labour rooms, medicines and immunization (for instance, TT vaccine and other children's routine immunization), at the facility level to meet the needs of mother and children, and the reproductive health needs of the women and girls. A few females even mentioned they had never visited a health care provider, since there is no female, and their health difficulties are dealt with by either the parents or other family elders.



*Public Health centre in rural South Waziristan
Source: Foundation for Rural Development*

Intra household discriminatory behaviours and women restricted mobility due to cultural reasons also play a substantial part in minimising the prospects of receiving proper health services by women in South Waziristan. The existing cultural norms severely limit women's and girls' unaccompanied mobility and interaction with the external universe. Unlike males, women in South Waziristan cannot make decisions about their health. A woman is completely dependent on males and must seek permission from husbands, fathers, elder brothers and other male family members – and elderly women in case there is no male member – to seek health support from outside. A woman's health is considered personal, and a matter of great secrecy, and not discussed by men. In most cases in a tribal society a sick woman, particularly a pregnant woman, is hesitant to openly talk to their men, including their husbands. A female in the FGD said:

“When women or girls are seriously sick and/or have a complicated pregnancy – even then they mostly do not talk to males about their issues – only the elderly woman is informed who then seek permission for the sick or pregnant woman to be taken to hospital. Simple illnesses are normally taken care of at the household level by elderly women using their 'traditional wisdom.’”

According to the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS, 2017-18), 33% of the women surveyed in the former FATA had to ask for permission from male members of the household. The statistics also report other gender-based constraints; more than 87% of the women said that the health facilities are at a distance, and they (women) could not go there alone (DHS, 2017-18). Due to insufficient health institutions in the district, the distances are larger, particularly for those in rural areas. These long distances are among the major gender-based constraints because of women's and girls' restricted mobility outside their homes. Expensive, poor and unreliable transportation further aggravates rural women's health situation.

Due to lack of locally available health facilities, the poor families of South Waziristan have to be dependent on the local and traditional cure mechanism, unless the situation gets exacerbated to the point where a woman's life is in jeopardy. The majority of the South Waziristan population belongs to lower socioeconomic status and many women and men said that it was difficult to bear the rising health costs. Poverty has further complicated the situation for poor women. Female FGD participants believed that the financial status of the residents determines how good a health facility can be accessed.

“The wealthy and influential can easily choose better health options, like good private clinics and hospitals in Peshawar or even Islamabad, while the poor have to live with whatever is available”, as stated by a Key informant from the district.”

3.3 Women Economic Empowerment

The semi-governed status under the FCR left the former FATA region lacking socio-economic and political developments and stability, while the security threats from the Afghan war since the 1980s has never let the people sufficiently establish their business and improve livelihoods, and has created numerous challenges for women in this regard.

Though South Waziristan is rich in minerals, and mostly covered with the beautiful mountainous region, the true economic potential of the area is yet to be explored. As per erstwhile FATA Development Authority's Annual Report 2015-16, South Waziristan holds mineral reserves of copper, gold, chromite, marble and granite. However, the reserves are not yet estimated.

Economic Avenues for both Men and Women

- High reserves of mineral deposits in the area
- Possibility of value addition to marble products
- Employment generation and skill development opportunities for the local community
- Proximity to Central Asia – for trade and export Current Livelihood Opportunities
- 19.58 % of the total land is cultivated
- 35.5% of the cultivated land are irrigated
- The number of persons per hectare of cultivated land is 35 persons per irrigated hectare
- Apart from small businesses, livestock and fruit orchards are the major livelihood sources. South Waziristan is the largest pine nuts producer, which makes Pakistan the second highest exporter of pine nuts after China
- Remittances from within the country and abroad contribute to the overall sources of livelihood. Due to sharing a border with Afghanistan, which has been used as an international trade route, transportation has also evolved as an important source of livelihood for many families

Female involvement in agriculture, businesses and paid employment is minimal. Women, if any, are mostly employed as teachers and health care providers in the local education and health institutions.

In South Waziristan, around 60% to 70% population is associated with agriculture. Women's involvement in the agriculture sector exists, but to an extent of merely supporting their male family members involved in the agriculture activities on their family lands. Our FGD and KIIs respondents also referred to very few women involved in agriculture for their livelihoods.

The existing practice of land distribution and property ownership which gives rights to only males; and therefore, gender discrimination, common persists across the rural and urban areas of South Waziristan and there is no significant variation between the rich and poor and educated and uneducated. Field research also found that while women were involved in livestock raising, this did not extend beyond family consumption. It was shared that some women get pocket money if they oversee livestock for others. Respondents added that in addition to women's role to take care of the family, they are also responsible to take care of household-level small herds of livestock. Respondents particularly mentioned that women

don't get the due share of appreciation or financial awards for their hardships. Agricultural lands are distributed among immediate male members of the family, with no share for women.

“Even among the families involved solely in agriculture, all women of those families do not partake in agricultural activities. However, comparatively elderly women might help their husbands or sons in agricultural activities. Women participate voluntarily and they do not receive any direct share in the income because the income is spent collectively by the joint family.”

A male key informant stated

During FGDs and KIIs, many rural women indicated their interest in engaging with some farming activities on their family lands or lands closer to their homes. Their interest was mostly in kitchen gardening, backyard poultry farming, cattle raising, and packaging and processing of agricultural products like vegetables, fruits, and pine nuts. They also showed interest in getting capacity-building support from the government and NGOs.

There is a lack of employment opportunities for both men and women in South Waziristan. The secondary data and field research revealed that the district lacked viable employment options for women. Particularly in the presence of military and resultant mobility restrictions, no social development is taking place for women. The continuous lockdown situation in the district is not allowing economic activities to take place, therefore, employment opportunities are bleak. Women, if any, are mostly employed as teachers and health care providers, in government and private entities.

Every year, dozens of girls graduate from high schools and college, but there are no employment opportunities to accommodate these graduates within the districts or closer to their homes. With the recent merger move, the locals are optimistic that the new initiatives will introduce new employment opportunities in the district. However, the young female graduates need support in capacity building to be prepared for the upcoming potential openings; for instance, “girls can receive training in education, teaching and health sector skills like health technicians, nurses and/ or lady health visitors”, as suggested by a young adolescent school-going girl from South Waziristan.



*Tailoring and embroidery training centre for women in South Waziristan
Source: Sarhad Rural Support Program (SRSP)*

Women's involvement in the business sector is almost invisible in the overall larger economic sphere of South Waziristan. Women's work, if any, is only confined to their family-owned lands or in the education and health sector, where they encounter only with female students or female patients.

Despite the cultural barriers, women showed interest in getting engaged in some employment and/or home-based business opportunities closer to their homes. In the absence of employment opportunities for women, the other viable option is to get engaged in small home-based identified on-farm and off-farm businesses such as packing and packaging of pine nut, fruits and vegetables, small home-based grocery shops, tailoring and stitching normal and bridal dresses. Most respondents were interested in participating in programs focusing their livelihood uplift, provided, they are organized near their residencies.

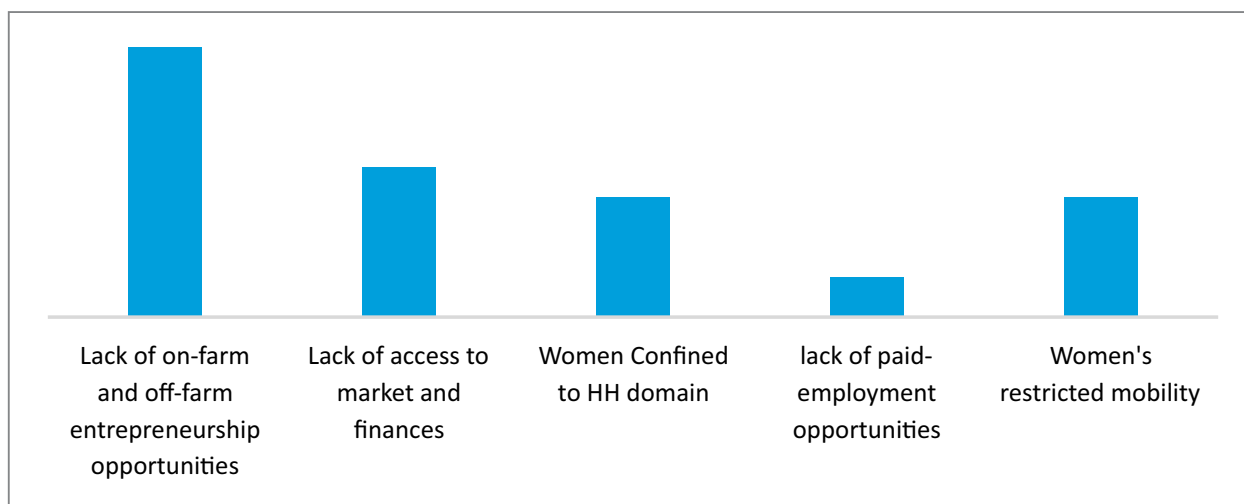
Key Informants explained that Public and private sectors, including the national and international donors and NGOs, can assist in creating awareness regarding capacity-building opportunities and providing required resources for women engagement with the economic activities. They can also help in developing value chains and in establishing a new enterprise in the agriculture sector. For this, a fact-finding study is required to be conducted. To substantiate the efforts, vocational centres local industries for embroidery, dress designing, stitching and sewing skills, beauty salon, computer training, English language, nursing, etc. can be promoted.

The general literacy and education ratios are very low among women and their exposure to the outside world is limited. Women have no access to finance to invest in business neither they have assets or guarantees to offer in collateral to access credits and interest-free loans. They can be provided with some start-up grants as an encouragement to get involved in economic activities. The survey revealed that particularly women were unaware of financial support programs like SMEDA and Kamyab Jawan or Ehsaas programs initiated by the present government. Many women don't have even some basic identification documents such as ID Cards, domiciles, etc. According to the DHS 2017-18, less than 5% of erstwhile FATA women had bank accounts; those who have belong to urban centres and might be employed by the government where they receive their monthly salaries.

Besides, due to lack of exposure and restricted mobility women do not possess knowledge of markets and their activities; therefore, many women need to rely upon their men or third-party middleman. Thus, to avoid the middleman, women producers (and their male family members) need a network with the market. Since many women hesitate to interact with the outside males, the establishment of a women-only market where only women sellers and buyers could interact is suggested to be piloted in the district.

Among the Merged Districts, the Waziristan region (including North and South Waziristan) has been the most affected by the continued militancy and military operations. Like in other districts, women-headed households also increased in South Waziristan, due to a loss of male members in these conflicts. Women here also cannot freely participate in economic activities; therefore, their reliance is mostly on the support of close family members or philanthropists from the village. The majority of the women had no contact with Benazir Income Support Fund (BISP) because of their illiteracy and inaccessibility. However, urban and IDP returnee women had better access to the government provided relief services because of the exposure they got during their displacement. In urban areas of the district, some were able to find domestic labour work at the houses of wealthy and influential. Some of these household head also showed their interests to be part of any capacity building programs and incentives provided by the government and/or NGOs. Although there is no data available on the exact number of such households the elected representatives were willing to provide such data if needed for any future interventions. Investment in capacity building of such families would help the already marginalized household in enhancing their livelihood.

Major challenges faced by women to actively participate in economic opportunities include the following:



Graph 9: Major Challenges in Women Economic Participation

3.4 Gender-Based Violence

Militancy and the subsequent military operations in South Waziristan have compelled around 200,000 people to flee from South Waziristan. They mostly moved to the urban and rural centres of Tank, D.I. Khan, Peshawar, and Karachi and to some districts of Punjab like Bhakkar.

Impact of Conflicts and Shifts in Gender Dynamics

According to IDPs Vulnerability Assessment and Profiling – Snapshot 2019 (IVAP), a substantially large portion (78%) of the IDPs are still displaced from South Waziristan. The still displaced families are divided into two categories; 1) Families that chose not to return to their areas after de-notification; 2) Families that chose to return to their areas of origin but returned to the host districts for multiple reasons i.e., secondary displacements (UN OCHA, 2019), mainly for the following reasons:

- There is no proper shelter available for the families to live in origin areas because of the damages made during displacement; and
- Livelihood opportunities to fulfil their family needs stood second big reason for the family's relocation

Displacement impacted the lives of the IDPs in various ways. The IDPs in urban centres were exposed to urbanity, with a diverse culture, with society's and markets, whereas the IDPs in rural areas tasted a different culture system, which was almost the same, but slightly different than their own. Since their migration, the IDPs have been engaged in various economic activities in urban centres, like small businesses, trade and retail, transportation and even real estate. The settled IDPs efficiently cultivated agricultural land of the host population, in the outskirts of Tank and Dera Ismail Khan; positively impacting the agricultural production of the area.

The displaced women of South Waziristan witnessed both rural and urban environments. In rural areas, a light impact on gender roles could be observed, borrowed from the local communities, whereas migration to the urban centres improved the lives of the migrated women. The IDPs in rural areas had almost the same societal structure and value arrangement, thence, deep changes in gender roles could hardly be seen. One of the main grounds for no change in gender roles is the already existence of Wazir and Maseed [aka Mehsud] tribes in Tank and D I Khan. They have mostly been seasonal migrants to these districts long before the 2009 military operations. Wazir tribe of South Waziristan mostly resides in urban and rural areas of district Dera Ismail Khan, while most of the Maseed of South Waziristan live in Tank. Since the majority of the

displaced population preferred to live with the people they already knew, therefore displacement to the rural areas of Tank and D I Khan could not implicate the lives of IDPs of South Waziristan, except improving in their economic activities in the form of taking agricultural lands on share or lease.

The exposure to a larger urban market with multiple sources of livelihood and urban facilities significantly changed the gender roles among IDPs. Since women's mobility in the urban areas of settled districts, particularly in Dera Ismail Khan, was not restricted, the displaced women started putting in efforts to find domestic work (small commercial enterprises and employment) to supplement family livelihood. Looking at the host community women, they also enrolled their children in schools and started visiting local markets for their daily needs.

In group discussions and individual interviews, many women and men pointed out that due to less strict culture and fear of stigmatization which they used to face in their place of origin, for the first-time women got access to cell phones, public transport, market place and educational and health facilities.

Due to cultural and traditional norms, women's mobility has remained limited in South Waziristan. The militancy and heavy-handed military operations disrupting normalcy, peace, displacing communities and destroying houses and livelihoods in South Waziristan further aggravated the situation for women. The Taliban restricted the mobility of women and announced that females could only go out with male companions, even to seek medical treatment. They also restricted girls from going to schools. Adult females in urban regions were equally threatened like female doctors and paramedical staff and school teachers.

For several years, people did not see a significant change because of military operations, curfews and frequent security checks. The situation was though equal for both men and women, but women's dependency on males further increased.

The research participants added that the mobility of women in urban areas like Wana is more restricted as compared to rural areas, where women at least can go out to work on their agricultural land. Aged women are, however, somewhat independent and can visit places in the village and are allowed to accompany other women and children to hospitals and schools.



*Protests against the alleged harassment of tribal women by Pakistani soldiers
Source: Gandhara Radio Free Europe*

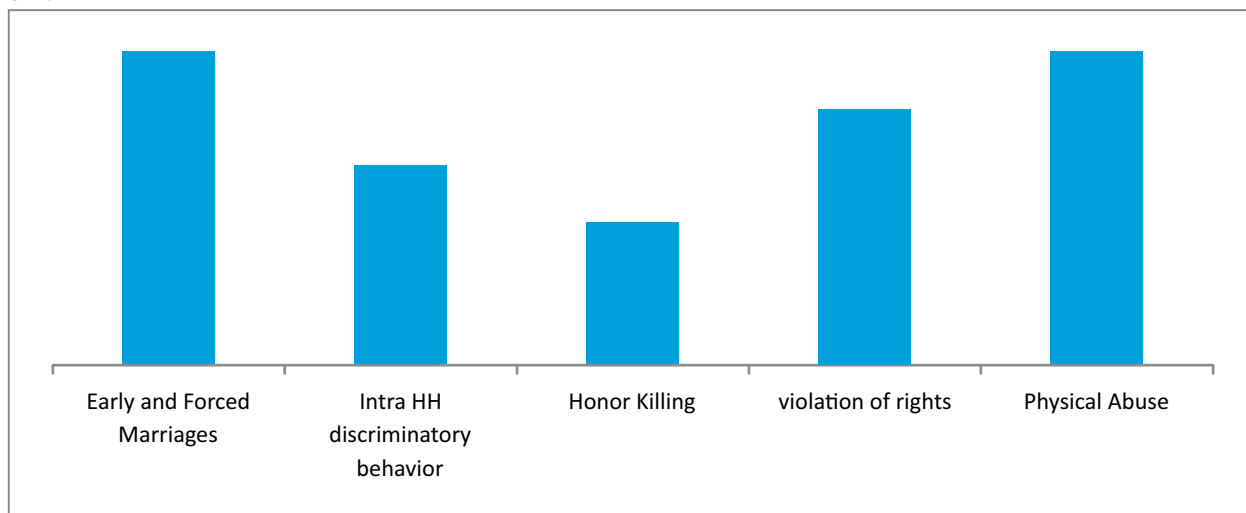
During the field research, data were collected on the prevalence and occurrence of various types of gender-based violence. It was interesting to find out that people responded more openly in private consultations. For example, in FGDs, participants reported that the intensity of GBV including physical abuse was decreasing day by day, but some other respondents from the same region, during the individual interview, reported a wide prevalence of domestic physical violence and maltreatment.

“The difference between people in cities and this region is that people in urban districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa report GBV cases to police, courts, media and other state authorities, while here we cannot even discuss such cases in our conversations”
A political activist from South Waziristan said

No extensive research on GBV has ever been conducted in South Waziristan. There were neither media reports on the subject. This could be because of the absence of mainstream media in the region. Because of tribal traditions and conventions, that have attained the status of law, economic and social rights are men-centric¹. Religion is another prominent determinant that shapes women's roles and responsibilities. For example, due to purdah, women's mobility and other rights have been traversed. Participants of FGDs and KIIs reported that the situation of GBV invariably exists in both urban and rural regions of South Waziristan.

However, GBV occurrence is less frequent in urban areas like Wana than rural areas and among the educated families, particularly where the females are also educated. For instance, gender-based violence occurrence is less frequent in the surrounding or nearer areas to Wana such as Mughal Khel, Doag and DabKot, and areas that are far from Wana like Birmal Shakai, Sara-Rogha,

Making, more cases of GBV are witnessed, reported by a key informant. Participants of FGDs and KIIs were asked about the GBV occurrence in South Waziristan; their responses are depicted in the corresponding graph.



Graph 10: Prevailing Forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

As stated earlier, the average marriage age for girls is 17 years and that of a boy is 22 years in South Waziristan. In rural regions, girls even marry at the age of 15 years. The majority of our participants reported the incidents, where girls were married at the age of even 13 years. The prevailing belief is that girls should be married soon after they attain the age of puberty. 29% of the participants mentioned that early and forced marriages as their biggest concern and challenge in gender equality. Most of the participants believed that very few people, mostly educated, would ask their children before their marriage.

¹ FATA Research Center, 2019)

“As part of the culture, parents do not ask for the choice of marriage from their daughters; parents want to fulfil their responsibility at the earliest possible.”

An adolescent expressed in a group discussion

Also, the early marriages, girls in South Waziristan also faced threats of forced marriages. Following are the various types of forced marriages in practice in the Merged Areas:

Without “formal” or proper consent of the girl [and boy] – girls and boys even don't oppose. Young women were vocal about not having a say about their marriage decisions. Girls told that they are informed only when their parents, primarily fathers, finalize the decisions. These cases are common in South Waziristan. Against the will of girls [or boy] – when they oppose the wedding -, they are then coerced to marry and parents uphold their decisions. These types of marriages are also quite in practice.

“The biggest problem is that a girl cannot marry the boy of her choice, and in many cases, the girl is married to a man older than her, or jobless and lunatic person.”

Another female key informant expressed her fear

Women exchange for blood feuds -- Traditionally, when a family or tribe wanted to settle blood feud, the family who has killed more members of the opponent family has to exchange girl(s) to settle the dispute. This is called Swara in Pashto. Such marriages were common but not anymore.

Widowed women [compulsory] marriage with husband's brother -- In case a man dies young, their young widow is compelled to marry a husband's brother (or any other very close relative if there is no brother). These are some of the worst types of “forced marriage”, which can very easily become the cause of the gender-based violence if the woman refuses such marriage. These types of marriages are still in practice in South Waziristan.

Ghag – (boy's claim over a girl), the type of forced marriage when a male announces marrying a certain girl at the doorstep of the girl or shoots some aerial fires in front of the girl's house. Due to education, awareness, and exposure, forced marriages, like Ghag has decreased and is a somewhat abolished practice in South Waziristan, as reported by various research participants.

The second biggest challenge reported to the research team was the women's physical (and verbal) abuse. Women and/or wife-beating was very common in South Waziristan, however, some men and women believed that it was on a decline. Interestingly, many elderly females believed that being a woman it was their destiny and considered it a part of their daily life. However, a few educated men and younger girls considered physical abuse as an inhuman and oppression by the males.

“Domestic violence is a serious issue faced by women, they face violence from close male relatives like a brother, father, husband, brother-in-law, and father-in-law.”

A female key informant viewed

As in many other areas, in South Waziristan also, many informants reported that child beating at homes was also common, and corporal punishment of boys and girls in school and madrasahs is considered normal.

The human rights charter protects women from all kinds of discrimination within the household domain as well as at the state level. Women around the globe, including Pakistan nevertheless regularly suffer violations of their human rights throughout their lifetimes. In the context of South Waziristan, women are most vulnerable and are stripped of their rights such as:

- Attain education

- Vote according to their choice
- Participate in economic opportunities
- Own a property or be a shareholder in inheritance

Despite having exposure to other societies and urbanities, women's inequality is still very high in South Waziristan.

“Women are not considered equal to men. They do not enjoy the same rights and privileges and rights as men do. In the area, women do not get a share in their fathers' property or wealth.”

A female FGD participant raised the concern

Giving preference for boys over girls in every sphere of life is also common practice in South Waziristan.

“Women and men are not considered equal in the area. Women are considered weak and men strong and powerful, which is not true; in the settled districts of the country, women are stronger than men. Yet, here they are suppressed.”

A female key informant

Masses in South Waziristan use the word “Tor” – interpreted as “black” – means when a man and a woman have intimate affairs and/or commit adultery. Honour killing is still in practice in South Waziristan, but this has been decreasing with time. According to a recent study, only 2 to 3 cases highlighted in the last six months. These kinds of killing even happened after the complete disarmament of the local tribes in South Waziristan. This case of killing invariably exists both in urban and rural expanses, with slight severity in rural regions. FGDs and KIs participants agreed that with the insurgence of Pakistani Law in the region, the incidence of honour killing will further diminish.

“Husband of a beautiful young woman was mentally unstable, and when he went to Kabul, Afghanistan. After a few weeks of his departure, rumours spread in the locality that he will not come back home again, as some said that he was dead. The husband's brother asked the woman to marry him, but she declined on the basis that she was not sure and will wait for her husband's return. The husband's brother got violent on her response and after a few months, he blamed and charged the woman for adultery with a young boy in her neighbourhood and shot her dead while she was sitting and sewing her dress on the house courtyard. However, the locals believed and said that she was not involved and have not even met the boy ever.”

A female Key Informant from South Waziristan

During discussions and interviews, the respondents shared that “most of the time, women silently bear the violence happening to them, but in more or less severe cases of violence, particularly physical abuse, the families may involve the Jirga, but only when the woman's family reports. Due to the lack of legal resources, such issues do not get proper attention. Even the local Jirga refrain from entertaining such cases, and do so only when the local influence is strong,” noted a female key informant.

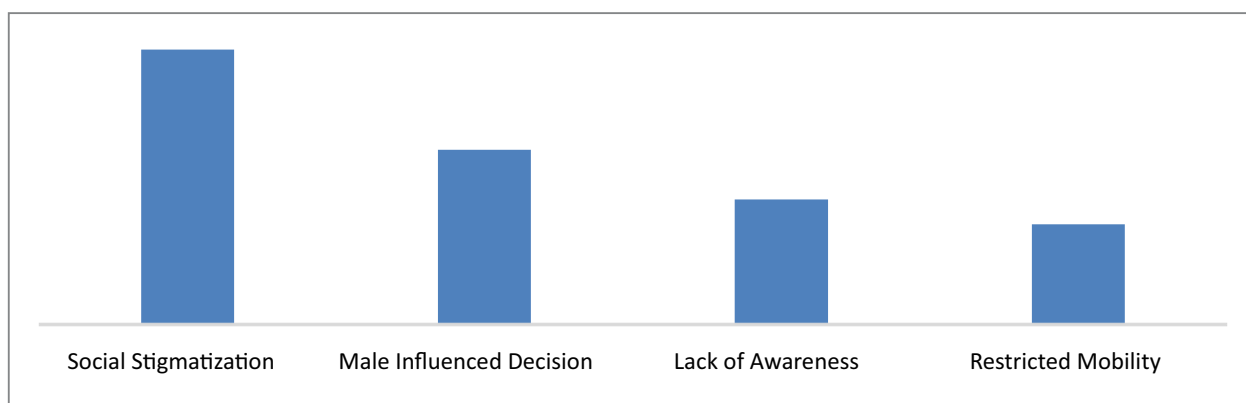
Traditionally, the local Jirga worked as a rescue and relief service. However, with recent reforms after the merger, all women related laws have been extended to the Merged Districts as well. People are hopeful that they can now access the courts of law. So far, the district lacks judicial infrastructure that can provide relief and justice to women in matters of violence against them. Presently, there are no women police stations or women police desks established to facilitate their grievances. The local police are yet to be developed to deal with the cases of violence against women in South Waziristan. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Human Rights Policy 2018 covers women related issues, including the recommendations for filling the gaps.

In PK-113, SW-Constituency, out of 218,835 registered voters, only 35,318 voters came out to vote. In PK-114 SW-II, there were a total of 167,980 registered voters: 38,044 polled their votes. Women's participation and voting in South Waziristan was historic for the region; however, South Waziristan was among the districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where women voting practice was at the lowest.

Despite the militancy, heavy military presence, states' negligence, insufficient physical, societal and legal infrastructure for women's development and protection, the women came out of their houses for the first time and took part in the recent elections. It is like families supported the women's existence as an active social being in South Waziristan. The absence of the district and tehsil level political parties was conspicuously noted, which has limited political participation for both adult males and women. It was noted that there were no female memberships in political parties in South Waziristan so far.

Barriers and Challenges expressed by Respondents

The following graph highlights the barriers, identified by the research participants, hindering women participation in politics and any other civic engagements in South Waziristan; the weightage is given by participants to various challenges, and their comments in various FGDs and KIIs were also noted:



Graph 11: Barriers and Challenges expressed by Respondents

The major cause of women's lack of political participation was found to be social stigmatization. Hesitation among males and their families to support women in their political participation was because of some eventual bad name to their family name and honour. However, in the tribal society where “women are restricted and going out of their homes is viewed as inappropriate, it is very difficult for a woman to come forward and openly show her presence in male-dominated open forums”, as suggested by a female key informant.

“Since women's open movement in South Waziristan is not common and carries a stigma with it, political women also face social stigmatization.”
A male political activist from South Waziristan

Exclusion and under-representation were other important factors discouraging females to participate in the electoral processes, mainly highlighted by key informants. They voiced, how the boys are prepared to assume the role of future family and community level leaders, whereas young women don't hold that prerogative. Many of the participants of FGDs regarded politics as 'the only men's job'. However, the girls showed eagerness to perform if provided with the same kind of training and opportunities as the boys receive.

31% of the participants considered that males influenced women's decisions, which was a major cause of women's low engagement in public affairs in South Waziristan. People prefer to vote for the nominee of their clan, which leaves no choice for women when casting a ballot. In response to a question, that how their

first experience with the recent provincial assembly elections was, a female FGD participant while sharing her accounts of participations said that:

“This was my first time participating in the elections. I was very enthusiastic about my participation and asked my father in law about how we could cast the votes. In response, he said that I did not have to worry because there will be people (from the candidate's family), they will tell you what and how to do. But I said that I want to learn and want to vote on my choice. He at once stopped me and said I had to follow and vote to the person whom he supports – so I had to do what he ordered.”

There are no women's wings in any political party nor are there any women in the leadership and decision-making positions because political parties are male-dominated, and can create informal rules to restrict the mobility of women. One of the respondents added, that the political process required huge human and financial capital, women, being already dependent on men's financial support, cannot dispense with such huge sums for expenses; thus, no space in the political parties.

The research participants told that in the recent elections, in that location, there was a visible difference between arrangements in male and female polling stations. Many women said that they observed that the women polling stations lacked facilities and arrangements as compared to male pollen, for instance, they waited in lines for hours, but there were no arrangements of basic facilities like shade and drinking water.

“Many women returned hungry and thirsty from polling stations late in the evening. Some women returned to their homes even without casting votes because of severe weather and no arrangements to facilitate them.”

A female key informant while sharing her experiences

3.5 Grassroots Leadership Development

According to a political activist, over time, exposure to the urban centres of the settled districts, use of media and youth engagement with the PTM, a sense of consciousness of citizen's social, economic and political rights prescribed by the constitution of Pakistan has increased in South Waziristan. Because of the recent nationalistic politics, male youth in South Waziristan is more receptive to change and work for the overall social and political development of the masses, including women.

Many of the political parties who were reluctant to go to the Merged District before the recent merger, they are now establishing district and tehsil level political organization (zili tanzim-saazi). The political and social activists from South Waziristan informed that some political parties have started conducting youth training workshops on the political leadership to create political leaders at the grassroots level (for example, Awami National Party's {ANP} recent move). The past two elections (national and provincial) have mobilized political parties to establish their roots in these newly Merged Districts at district and sub-district levels. Besides the interest of the political parties, the locals of the region have also got immense political exposure during the process of actualizing the demand for mainstreaming in the last few years. During multiple interactions with the people of South Waziristan, the research team identified several young men and women as potential leaders and activists – from the business, education and political sectors, enthusiastically willing to participate in South Waziristan's development as gender influencers, grassroots leaders and change agents.

In South Waziristan, potential grassroots leadership can be identified from the pool of activists and potential candidates participating in the upcoming local government election, and their capacity can be built. This elected youth, particularly the elected females, can play an important role in the identification and implementation of women's development focused schemes at the grassroots level. Also, within the fabric of tribal identity, the majority of the people are willing to accept change, including preparing their daughters.



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