

International Policy Conference

Lahore, Pakistan

Nov. 28-30th 2018

The Punjab Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) is a government institution created through the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women Act, 2014 as an oversight body to ensure laws, policies and programs of the Government of Punjab promote women's empowerment; that efforts are made for expansion of opportunities for socio-economic development of women, and discrimination against women in all forms is eliminated. PCSW is also collaborating with the Punjab Bureau of Statistics on a province wide survey on the *Economic and Social Wellbeing of Women in Punjab*, collecting data across five domains, ensuring that the different dimensions of women's work, the triple burden of work, access to economic opportunities, services, finance, technology, training, social benefits etc. are captured at district level. The survey will also collect data on impediments to women's economic and social wellbeing and factors that facilitate their full potential as citizens. The findings from the survey across the five domains are expected to be available towards the end of the year and will be shared at the Conference.. The three primary domains of interest are Economic Participation and Access to Resources, Public and Community Life and Decision-making, and Human Rights of Women and Girls (includes early marriage and violence against women). The remaining two domains of education and health covers specific aspects, such as identifying barriers to transitioning to higher education or the workforce, and to reproductive health, and that which impacts economic participation. The survey includes a special sample of women with disabilities and minority women.

Conference Objectives

The PCSW intends to bring together policy and program experiences from within the country, South Asia and internationally, to deliberate on the drivers of change and what works best to advance gender equality in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDGs 5 and 8. To this end papers that have a policy focus are solicited, drawing on quantitative and qualitative research as well as advancing theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The conference hopes to facilitate the exchange of learning, ideas and knowledge across academia and practitioners, government and civil society to advance the agenda for gender equality.

Conference Thematic Areas

The thematic focus of the Policy Conference is on SDG 5, “Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls” and SDG 8 “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. Under SDG 5, the conference solicits, but is not limited to, policy papers on ensuring rights and access to economic and productive resources and enabling technologies, the recognition of unpaid care work and social protection policies, the representation and leadership of women in the economic, political and public life, and the elimination of violence against women and girl. In SDG 8, the focus is on papers that recommend policies and interventions to promote full and productive employment and decent work for all women (including young adults and those with disabilities) and equal pay for work of equal value. However the Conference is open to papers that address any of the five domains noted above, with the objective of enhancing economic participation and empowerment of women.

We know that empowering women requires an enabling environment and policy actions on multiple fronts: whether it be changing social norms and addressing social and economic exclusion, legislation, regulatory frameworks for labour, for improving access to credit and economic opportunities, transport, tax credits for women and businesses employing women, gender justice, personal safety and freedom from gender based violence, care work need, tackling the informal economy etc. There is an increasing emphasis on engaging men and the private sector in creating a supportive environment and generating opportunities.

Some key questions and topics that the Conference is expected to address are:

Economic Participation and Opportunities: What policies, programs and strategies have worked best to advance women’s economic empowerment, particularly in the context of low and mid-level income countries? What lessons are to be learned from policies and strategies in countries, in South Asia and globally, that have succeeded in improving women’s social and economic wellbeing? How can trajectories for increasing women’s employment and economic opportunities be engineered for equitable employment within the changing global and macro-economic context? What strategies are needed to recognize and value women’s unpaid work? There is also an interest in understanding the care economy, of how it influences women’s lives and its potential for change. What policy actions can be drawn from the results of time use surveys, to increase productivity and to alleviate the drudgery of reproductive work.

How can the private sector—big business—move from employing women to empowering women, forming productive partnerships and supporting research and innovation.

Drivers of Change for Economic and Social Gender Equality: What are the drivers of change for women in the 2030 agenda and how can Pakistan and similarly placed countries leverage these drivers, operating as they do within a resource constrained environment? This includes technologies, urbanization, productive assets, transportation, decision making and representation, to name a few. An area of specific interest are the potential implications of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), envisioned as a game changer for the economy, for women’s work and lives.

Social protection: What social protection policies respond best to women’s interests? Has the relief provided to poor families and women by cash transfers translated into graduating out of poverty and improving families and women’s lives substantially?

Violence and Costs (social and financial): Finally what are the social and economic costs of violence against women and girls? What are the lessons from programs for prevention, protection and rehabilitation of women who experience violence? What strategies and resources are needed to eliminate gender based violence.

Submission Process

The submission process will be open from 16 April to 30 May 2018. The following submissions are possible:

Individual Papers: The Conference Committee will review all abstracts and assign to a session.

Full Paper Panel (90 min): A full panel proposal is a fully formed panel session. You must submit all panel details, including panelist names, paper titles, and abstracts. No more than 4 papers are permitted. One or two discussant(s) and one chair needed. All panelists must be in agreement that they will participate if the panel is selected.

Associated Roles: Author, Non-presenting Co-author, chair, discussant

Theme Panel (90 min): Theme panels can be submitted by individuals during the Call for Proposals process or can be proposed by the Conference Research Committee who also review all panels submitted to this category and accept sessions that best explore the thematic areas of the conference. *Associated Roles:* Presenter, Chair, Author, Non-presenting Co-author, Discussant.

Submissions are accepted in English only.

For any of the above please submit the following:

- Your contact information and institutional affiliation
- An extended abstract (approximately 800-1000 words), outlining the main issues, hypotheses, arguments, approach and methodology, country/regional focus, case studies to be considered, structure of the paper and keywords
- CV

Please submit the above to: abstracts.pcswcon@gmail.com

If submitting a panel or theme panel please put the Panel Submission or Thematic Panel in the subject line of the email.

Key Dates

The Conference is tentatively scheduled for the last week of November 29-30, 2018

The Call for Papers and Panels: April 16, 2018

Submission of abstracts (800-1000 words): May 30, 2018

Abstract accepted, Authors informed: June 30 2018

Full papers due: Sept. 30, 2018

Selected papers will be published in an edited volume as a PCSW publication after peer review.

For further information and details:

Conference website: http://pcsw.punjab.gov.pk/international_policy_conference

Information on travel, accommodation and other logistics will also be available on the conference web-page.

Conference Secretariat:

Email: pcsw.policyconference@gmail.com