

Increasing Trend of Higher Education in Females and Surging Number of Unemployed Female Degree Holders in Pakistan: A Study to Highlight The Underlying Factors

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Motivation

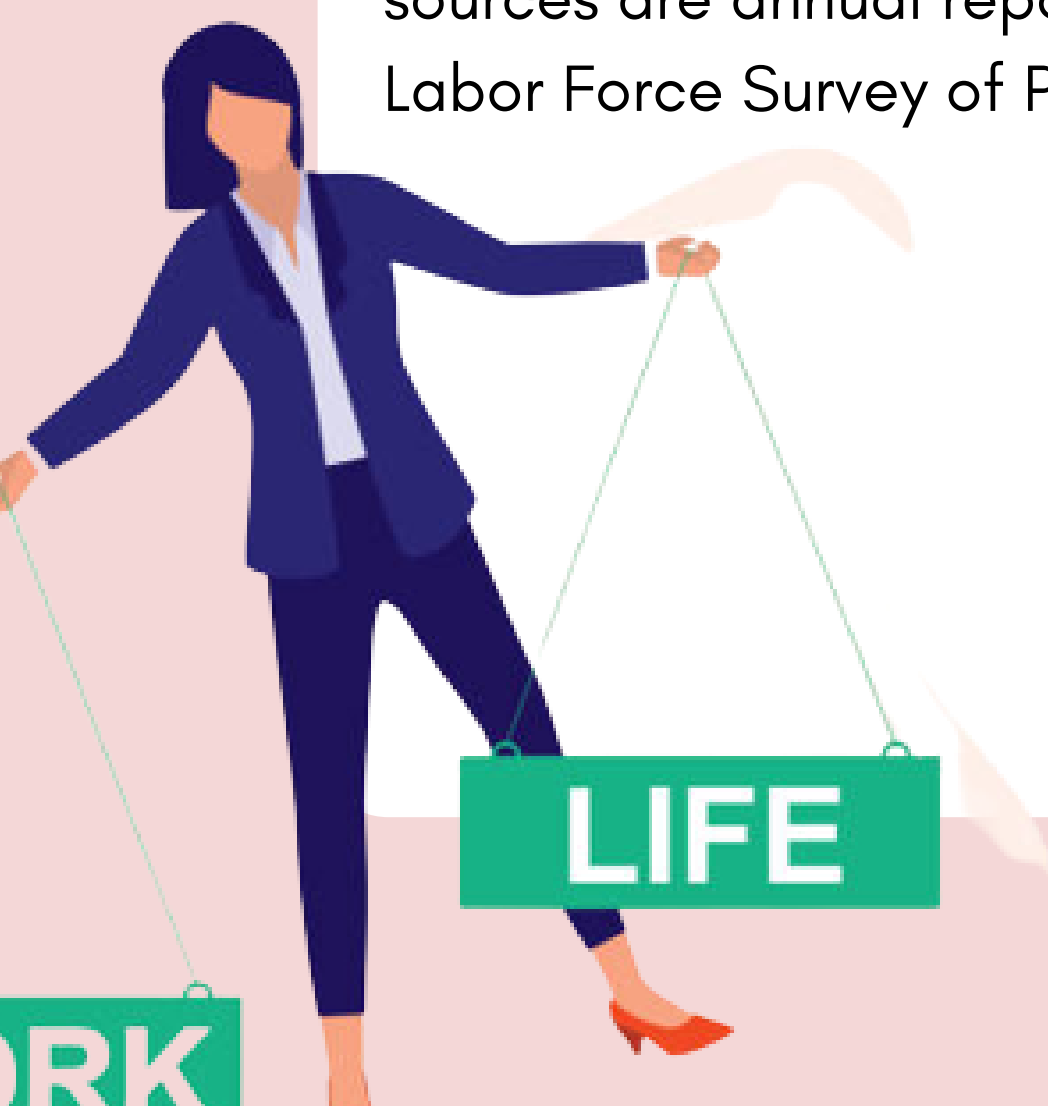
An increasing trend of higher education in the females is observed in the recent decade particularly in non-traditional fields as management and administrative sciences and engineering. The underlying motivation for the females is to gain financial stability and economic independence but, unfortunately, dynamics of employment are much slower resulting into the increase in under/unemployment female degree holders. Various factors are causing this unbalance which are lack of suitable job opportunities, inappropriate working environment, low salaries, gender-discrimination, workplace abuse of women rights, lack of support from family particularly the male members and burden of domestic duties.

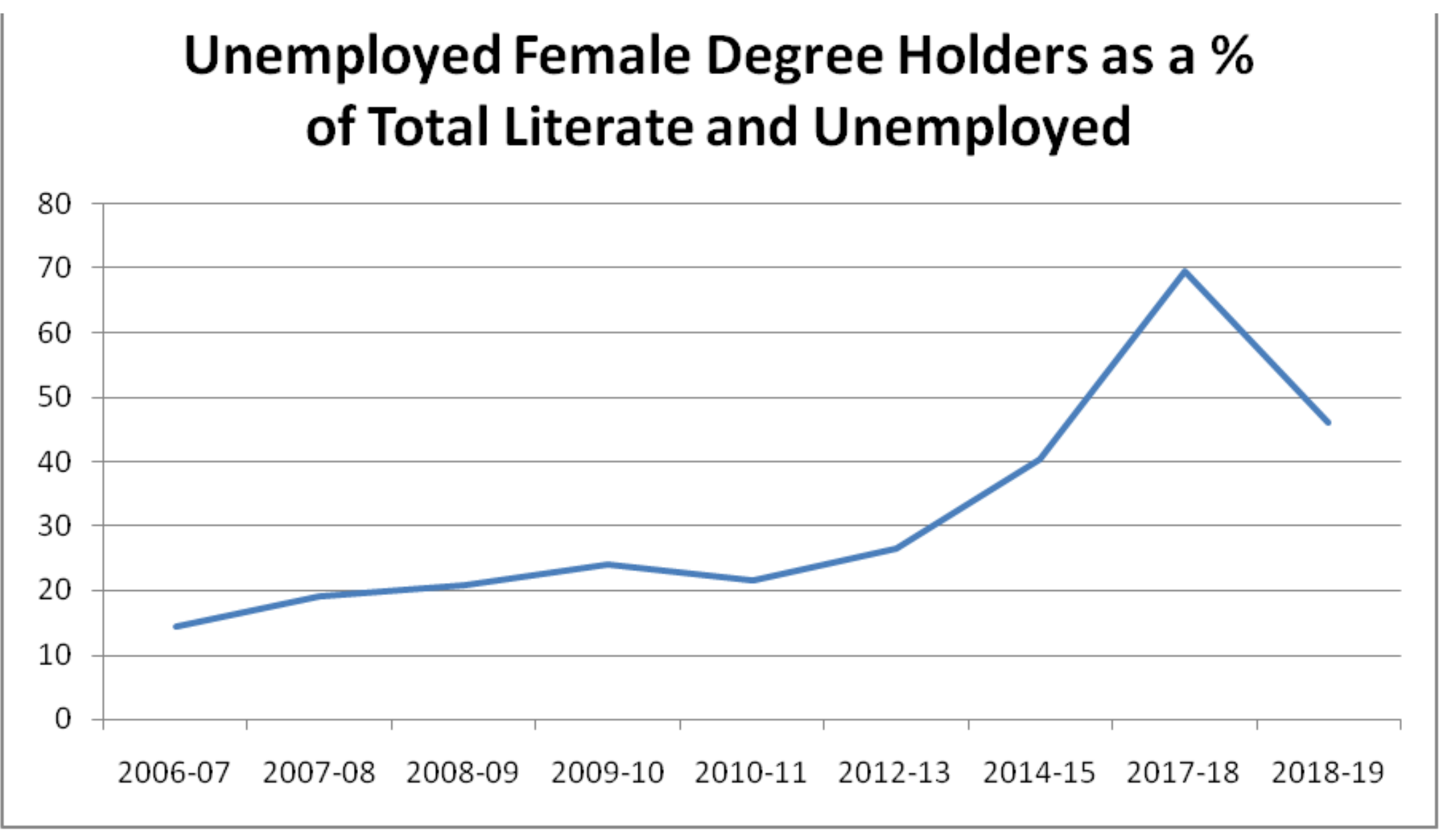
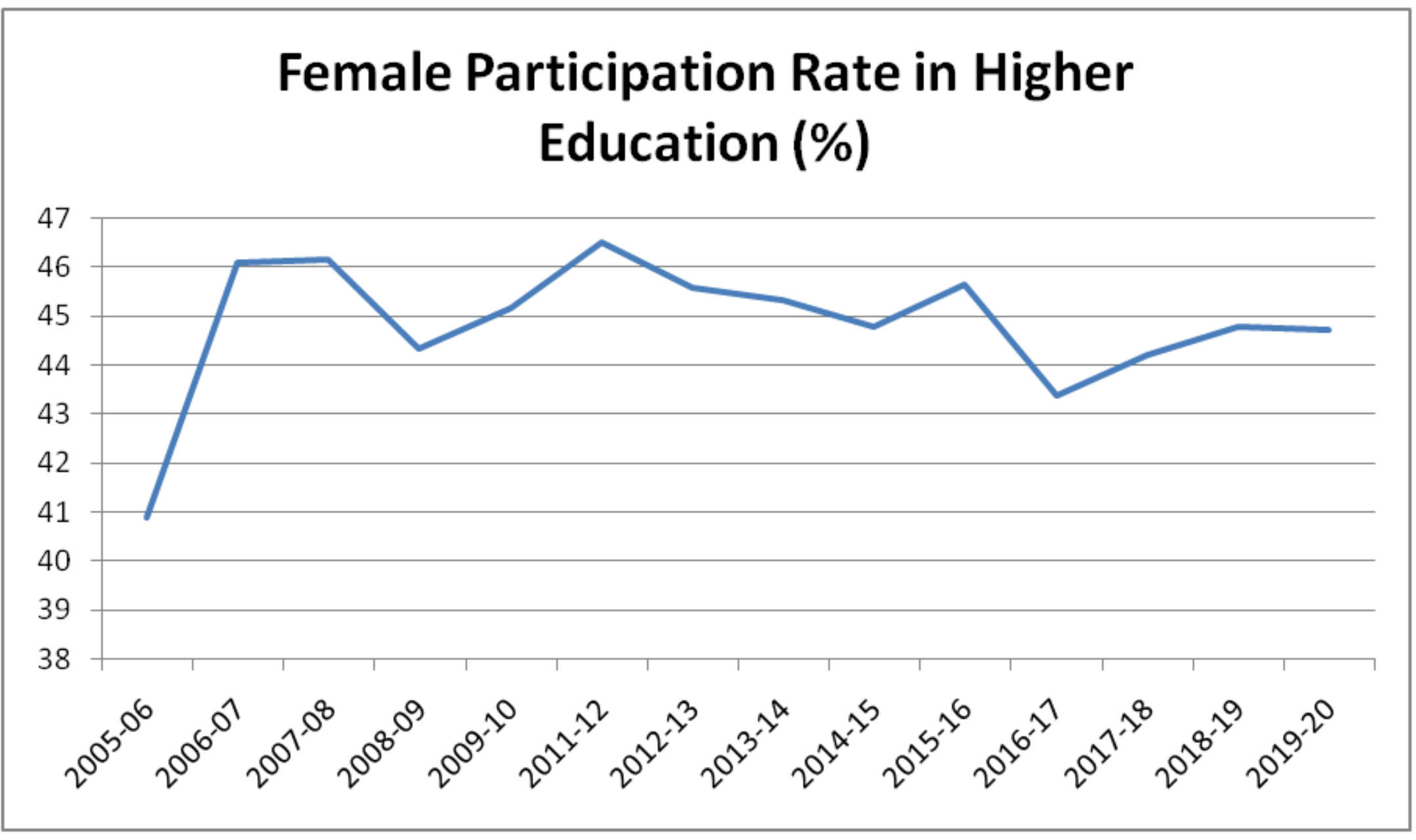
Key Words

Female education, Unemployment among women, Women empowerment

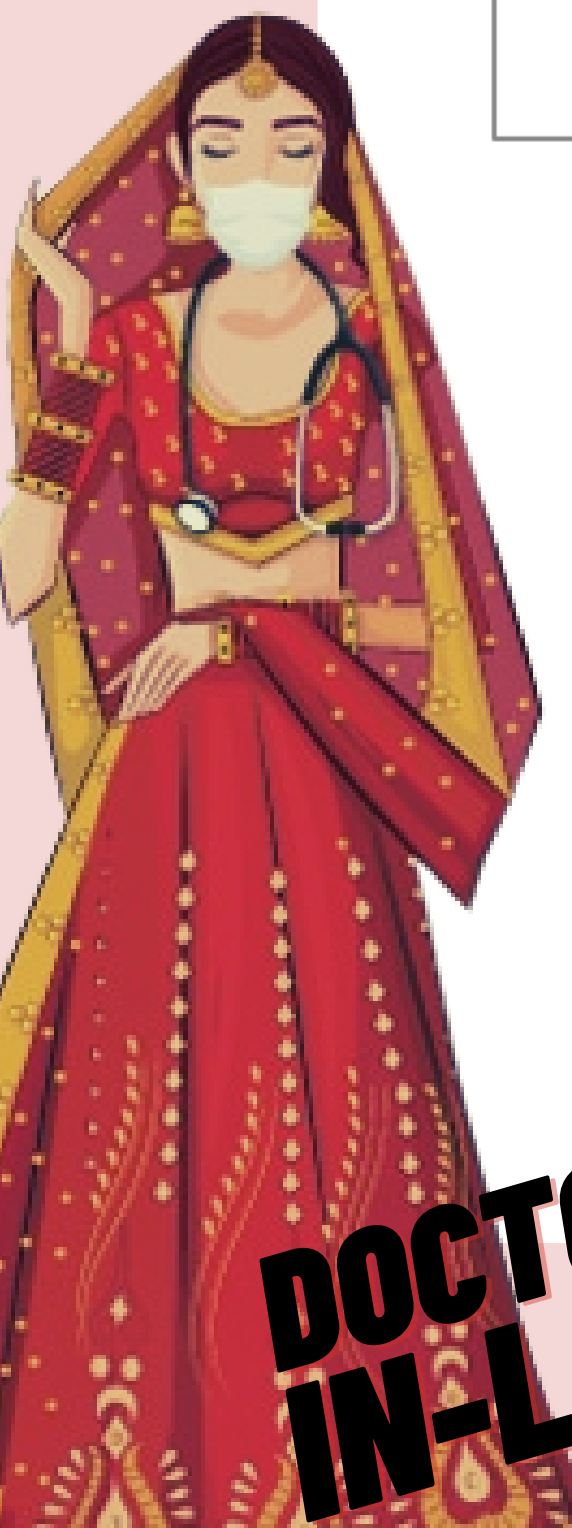
Methodology

On the basis of the higher education statistics and national labor force survey of the recent years, trend of women enrollment in degree programs and unemployed female degree holders is observed. Later various surveys conducted by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), United Nation Organization (UNO) and other independent researchers are used to find out the major reasons of persisting and even surging unemployment among educated women of the Pakistan. Main data sources are annual reports of Higher Education Commission, Pakistan and national Labor Force Survey of PBS.





Data shows that female participation in higher education is increasing moderately but on the other side unemployed female degree holders are constantly increasing at faster rates. It means that more number of females are getting higher education but dynamics of employment are much slower. On the basis of authentic surveys, reports and published literature, major factors underlying this dilemma are discussed below.



DOCTOR IN-LAW

Lack of Education

Specially in the rural areas of Pakistan (where 3/5th of the total population lives) women are allowed to work to support the households due to increasing poverty. Unfortunately, almost 62% of the total female population living in the rural areas of Pakistan are illiterate hence most of the employed women in Pakistan are involved in informal, low-productivity sectors and low-paid jobs. Approximately 70% of the total women employed in Pakistan are involved in the sectors of agriculture, fishery and forestry mainly as skilled workers.

Low Salaries

Women with advance level of education join the labor force only if they get a well-paid job therefore number of unemployed female degree holders is constantly increasing at alarming rates. Increasing inflation rate is now urging qualified individuals, specially females to accept low-paid jobs as well resulting into more dissatisfaction and frustration among the youth of the nation.

Cultural Norms

There is an increasing trend in females to attain higher education in the fields as Business Administration, Management, Law and Engineering which have been male-dominated in the country but among total population of professionals and managers, females' share is still only 24%. The major reasons include our socio-cultural norms where women participation in the labor force is dependent on the decision of the male head of the family as father, brothers or husband for whom a woman of their family working in a male-dominated place is not acceptable resulting into the increasing number of female degree holders out of the labor force.

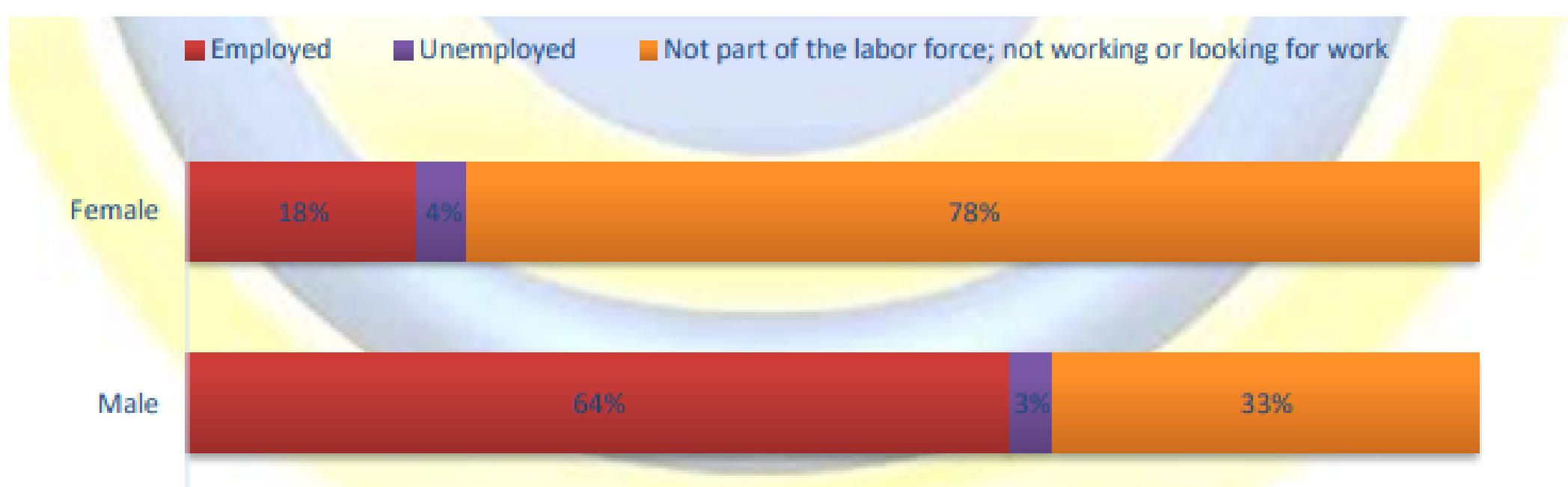
Domestic Duties

women who are participating in the labor force and generating income are spending weekly 79 hours in home chores while those women who are not involved in any kind of income-generating activity are spending 85 hours, a meager difference of only 6 hours (1). On the other side, male members of the family remain involved only in income-generating activities and mostly don't have to take part in home chores. Since working women have to play a dual role inside and outside of home therefore most of the educated females are either under/un-employed or prefer to stay out of the labor force.

83%
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REASON**

Inequalities

On average, women get low salaries in comparison with their male counterparts. There is considerable difference in the average monthly payments of male and females which is Rs. 22,172 and Rs. 15,461 respectively. Reasons include less job experience, lack of training, less exposure, less flexible job hours/working conditions and sometimes individual characteristics which further leads to a decline in the female labor force participation rate.

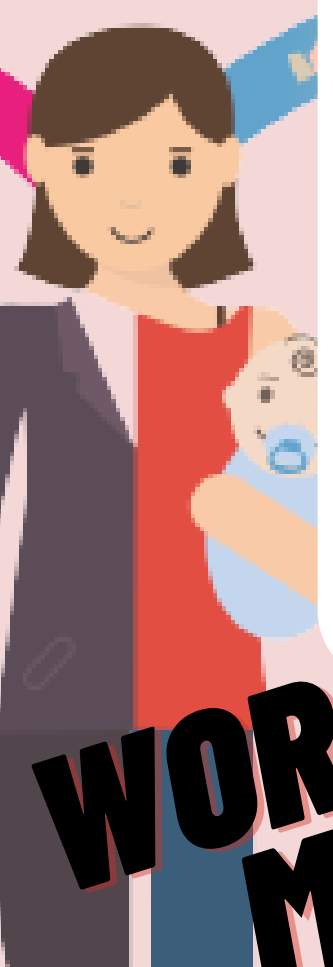


Conclusion and Recommendations

Almost half of the population of Pakistan is consisting of females. Without utilizing the potential of the massive human capital available, a country cannot flourish and growth is slowed down which is currently the situation in Pakistan. It is needed to improve the status of women in Pakistan by providing them opportunities specially to absorb the educated female into suitable occupations.

Females who are fresh graduates or below 24 accept low-paid jobs and compromise on working conditions due to the reason that it is less probable for them to get a suitable job considering lack of experience and training. This is a major factor for increasing underemployment in educated women. Therefore, apprenticeship opportunities, training programs and self-employment motivation sessions are needed to be organized at universities for the female students to help them recognize their potential and become an active member of the society.

Policies should be made to relieve the burden of domestic duties on the females as access to childcare centers and raising awareness of the importance of female workforce participation by providing them better education and training. On the other side, strong legal measures are also needed to protect the women rights at the workplace as defining job description including job hours and responsibilities, safe working environment, paid maternity leaves and addressing workplace harassment in the efficient ways.



WORKING MOM