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Working Paper No.5 - Pakistan: The Economic and Social Impact of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

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1 Introduction

Among the many challenges which Pakistan faces to forge a sustainable development path, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) receives relatively little attention. While the problem is recognised as an abuse of human rights and a public health challenge, the threat that it poses to Pakistani society and economic development has not been fully described or quantified.

Pakistan confronts a challenging internal and external environment, with particular threats from climate change, global financial and energy crises, and terrorism and extremism; as well as serious deficiencies in education, health, gender equity and social services (Ministry of Planning 2014: 3).

This Working Paper provides the background for a project aiming to illustrate the invisible drag that VAWG places at every level of the Pakistani economy and society: on families, communities, businesses, institutions, and on the country as a whole.

This paper serves as an introduction to the impacts of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Pakistan. What Works Component Three is a three year multi-country project that estimates the costs of VAWG, both social and economic, to individuals and households, businesses and communities, and states. It breaks new ground in understanding the impact of VAWG on community cohesion, economic stability and development, and will provide further evidence for governments and the international community to address violence against women and girls globally. While it is widely recognised that VAWG constitutes a significant human rights and public health emergency, there is less detailed understanding of the multiple ways in which violence affects and holds back social and economic development. This paper outlines the nature of VAWG in Pakistan, and the social and economic context in which it occurs.

The paper begins with an introduction to the status of women in Pakistan, and the prevalence and types of VAWG that affect them. It explores the various contexts that are affected by violence: economic, social and political, and discusses the action that has been taken to address violence to date. It goes on to identify some literature on the costs of violence to society and the economy, and to highlight the gaps in the literature, which this project aims to fill.

2 Status of women in Pakistan

Pakistani society is characterised by profound gender inequality, albeit with geographic and social diversity. The Global Gender Gap Report for 2014 ranked Pakistan 141st out of 142 countries, second only to Yemen in terms of gender inequality (World Economic Forum 2014). Low levels of female education, literacy and labour market participation, weak legal rights, and inequitable gender norms all work to limit women's equality in Pakistan (World Economic Forum 2014).

Pakistan is a predominantly Muslim state with Islam recognised as the State religion, and Islam is deeply significant to the development of Pakistani laws and culture. However, many other factors are also important in determining women's status, including different ethnic and tribal identities; class; education; and location – in particular the rural/urban divide. In many cases, attitudes towards women's rights and gender equality are extremely conservative.

On the whole, the role of women is seen to be within the domestic or private sphere, and in many cases women's education and employment is not valued as important (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 2013, Karmaliani et al. 2012, p.821). The demarcation between public and private, inside and outside worlds is maintained through the notion of honour and the institution of *purdah* in Pakistan. Since the notion of male honour and *izzat* (honour) is linked with women's sexual behaviour, women's sexuality is considered a potential threat to the honour of the family. Therefore, women's mobility is strictly restricted and controlled through interlocking cultural systems of *purdah*, sex segregation, and violence against them (Asian Development Bank 2000, p.2).

The spread of patriarchy is not even in Pakistan. The nature and degree of women's oppression and/ or subordination vary across classes, regions, and the rural/urban divide. Patriarchal structures are relatively stronger in the rural and tribal setting where local customs establish male authority and power over women's lives. On the other hand, women belonging to the upper and middle classes have increasing access to educational and employment opportunities and can assume greater control over their lives.(Asian Development Bank, p.2)

With extremely low rates of female labour force participation (see section 4.1, below), most women are economically dependent on men and are often excluded from decision-making both in the home and in the public sphere. In a highly segregated and patriarchal society, violence towards one's wife is often seen as being a normal and anticipated part of marriage: among South Asian countries, Pakistan is the one with the highest levels of acceptance of domestic violence amongst ever-married

women (Solotoroff and Pande 2014, p.37). In 2014, 49% of women in Sindh aged 15-49 years old believed that a husband was justified in hitting his wife in certain circumstances (Sindh Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF 2015). Formal reporting of violence against women is low in Pakistan, with most forms of intimate partner violence being seen as a private matter for family resolution (Zaman and Zia 2013).

3 Violence Against Women and Girls in Pakistan

Violence against women and girls is a persistent and pervasive issue in Pakistan. As elsewhere, many different forms of violence against women occur, mediated by prevailing social norms. Trends in Pakistan, as elsewhere, indicate that domestic violence including rape and incest are common forms of VAWG; others which also occur include: abduction and kidnapping; so-called honour killing; stove and acid burning and other forms of disfigurement; forced marriages including child marriage; and sexual violence by non-partners (Aurat Foundation 2015, Khan n.d., p. 132).

While some prevalence studies have been carried out, there is no single comprehensive source of prevalence data for VAWG in Pakistan. Indeed, in its 2013 review of Pakistan's obligations, the CEDAW committee expressed concern at the inconsistencies in the collection of data on violence against women (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 2013). All existing studies have limitations, whether of sample size or methodology. Furthermore, certain forms of violence are more easily quantified than others: thus, a certain amount of data exists for prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV); but much less for early and forced marriage, or for non-partner sexual violence (NPSV). It is difficult to draw comprehensive conclusions, although it is clearly the case that violence against women and girls, in its many forms, is endemic, and likely more widespread than any official data suggests.

3.1 Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

The most comprehensive data available on IPV in Pakistan is drawn from the 2012-2013 Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS). This is the only representative, population-based study on violence against women in Pakistan. However, since domestic violence represents a single module out of a total of 14 health-related modules, we can expect lower rates of reporting from participants than would be the case in a dedicated survey on violence (UNDESA 2014). The questions asked, while informed by WHO best practice, were a limited sub-set from the complete WHO guidelines.

According to the PDHS, among ever-married women in Pakistan aged between 15 and 49, more than one in three (39%) have experienced physical and/ or emotional violence from their spouse since the age of 15. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, this figure rises to as much as 56.6%. 52% of Pakistani women who had ever experienced domestic violence never sought help, or never told anybody about the violence they had experienced (PDHS, 2012-2013).

A 2012 household survey of over 4,000 women in six districts of the conservative south Punjab belt, Sindh and Balochistan, indicated high rates of prevalence of IPV (Qayyum 2014). While these figures cannot be generalised to all of Pakistan, they indicate the likelihood that prevalence is higher than suggested by the PDHS. Among ever-married women interviewed in accordance with the WHO multi country study questionnaire on women's health and domestic violence, as many as 85% had ever experienced domestic violence. Of these:

- 75% had experienced physical violence;
- 66% had been victims of sexual violence;
- 80% had been victims of psychological violence;
- 47% of ever-pregnant women had experienced physical violence during pregnancy.

The study found comparably high figures of violence in the past 12 months among respondents (Qayyum 2014), suggesting that violence occurred multiple times in participants' lives.

Smaller, more detailed studies have been carried out in recent years, which describe the incidence of VAWG in greater detail, and often suggest even higher prevalence rates (Ali et al. 2011). One 2011 community-based prevalence study of IPV in the city of Karachi indicated that more than 83% of women had experienced some form of violence (physical, sexual or psychological) in their lifetimes; it also showed that violence was most commonly experienced as repeated acts occurring more than three times per year (ibid).

3.2 Other forms of VAWG

Relatively little information is known about prevalence rates of other forms of VAWG, including forced marriages and non-partner sexual violence. The CEDAW committee notes with serious concern "the persistence, amongst others, of child and forced marriages, Karo-Kari, stove burning and acid throwing, marriage to the Quran, polygamy, honor killing." (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 2013). The committee draws particular attention to violence committed against women and girls in the context of education: "It expresses its deep concern at reports of on-going violent attacks and public threats on female students, teachers and professors by various non-State actors, as well as the escalating number of attacks on educational institutions, in particular a large number of girls' only schools, which has disproportionately affected girls and women's access to education." (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 2013).

One study estimates that about a third of marriages in rural Pakistan involve the exchange of brides between two households (Jacoby and Mansuri 2010). This may be as a means of avoiding bride price or to resolve inter-family disputes. Such marriages are often forced and may involve child brides (Solotoroff and Pande 2014, p.32). A quarter (25%) of married girls and women surveyed in six districts in Pakistan reported having been forced to perform a sexual act by men other than their husband (Solotoroff and Pande 2014, p.55).

Sexual harassment in the workplace is nearly ubiquitous, with one study finding that 93% of women working in private and public sectors were sexually harassed by supervisors or senior colleagues (Naved, 2003 – cited in Solotoroff and Pande (2014)). Sexual harassment occurs across sectors: in a small qualitative study of approximately 60 women in key sectors, the Alliance Against Sexual Harassment in the Workplace found that 58% of nurses and doctors interviewed admitted being sexually harassed, while 91% of domestic workers, and 95% of women at brick kilns and agricultural fields also complained of sexual harassment (Jawaid et al. n.d.). In a separate study of harassment among female commuters, 85% of working women reported feeling harassed while commuting in the past year (SPDC 2014). As a consequence of harassment, about one-third of students and one-fifth of working women and homemakers have reduced their use of public transport and are using privately hired taxis and rickshaws instead, which are more expensive options. In some extreme cases, women quit their jobs or left educational institutions as a result of sexual harassment on public transport (ibid).

3.3 Patterns of incidence

Incidents of VAWG are higher among some social groups in Pakistan than others. Studies indicate high rates of VAWG among refugee groups in Pakistan (International Medical Corps Pakistan 2010), and among women from lower socio-economic strata (Ali et al. 2011, p.111). Economic stress factors, including the number of children, and living with extended family, appear to increase women's vulnerability to violence (ibid.), while there is a strong correlation between educational attainment and decreased vulnerability to violence (PDHS 2012-2013: 228). Women living in rural areas experience higher rates of violence (42%) than those living in urban areas (32%) (PDHS 2012-2013). Those living in more rural areas may also face greater risk of certain types of violence, such as the exchange of women to settle conflicts and early marriage (Khan n.d., p.132).

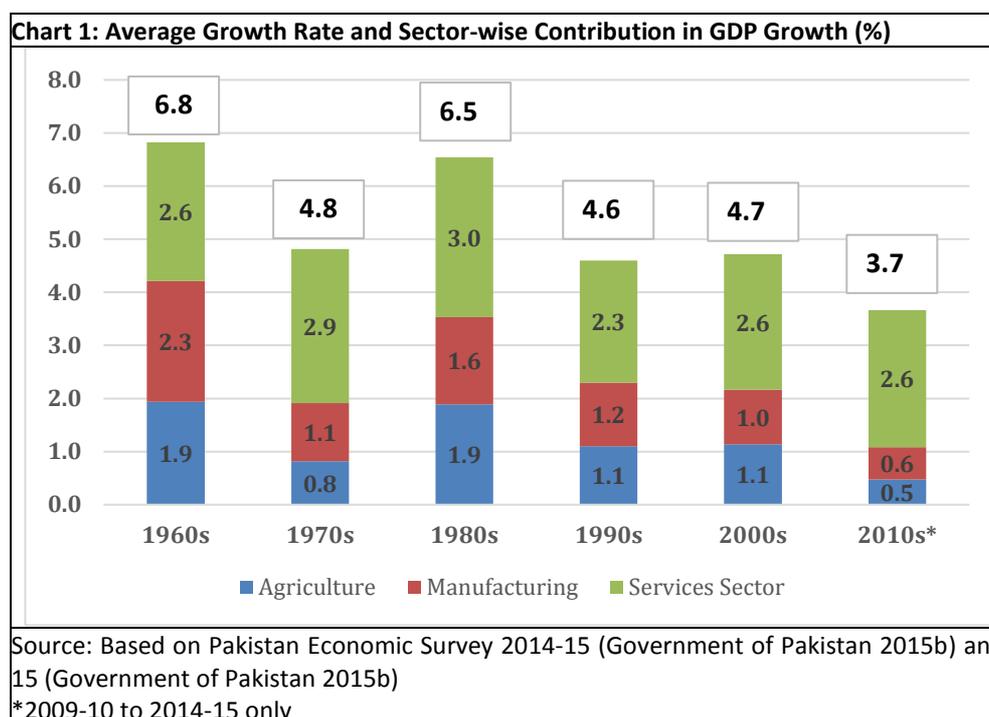
With regard to Pakistan's rapid urbanisation, a study conducted by the Aurat Foundation demonstrated that although women are still considered the repositories of honour across all locations, attitudes and practices with regards to GBV are slightly more progressive in urban communities and some change has been witnessed in recent years. As a result, traditional practices such as *wattasatta*, *vani* (forced marriage as compensation for a male relative's crime) and honour killings are more common in rural areas than urban.

4 Pakistani development: Social, political and economic context

Violence against women and girls occurs in every country of the world, but it has different expression and different impacts depending on contextual factors. The following section outlines the national context in which violence occurs in Pakistan. This helps us to understand some of the structural causes of violence, such as economic deprivation, the policy environment, and social and cultural norms. The section describes the state of the field in which VAWG will be tackled in Pakistan, and indicates those areas which are most impacted by failure to invest in elimination of VAWG.

4.1 Economic context

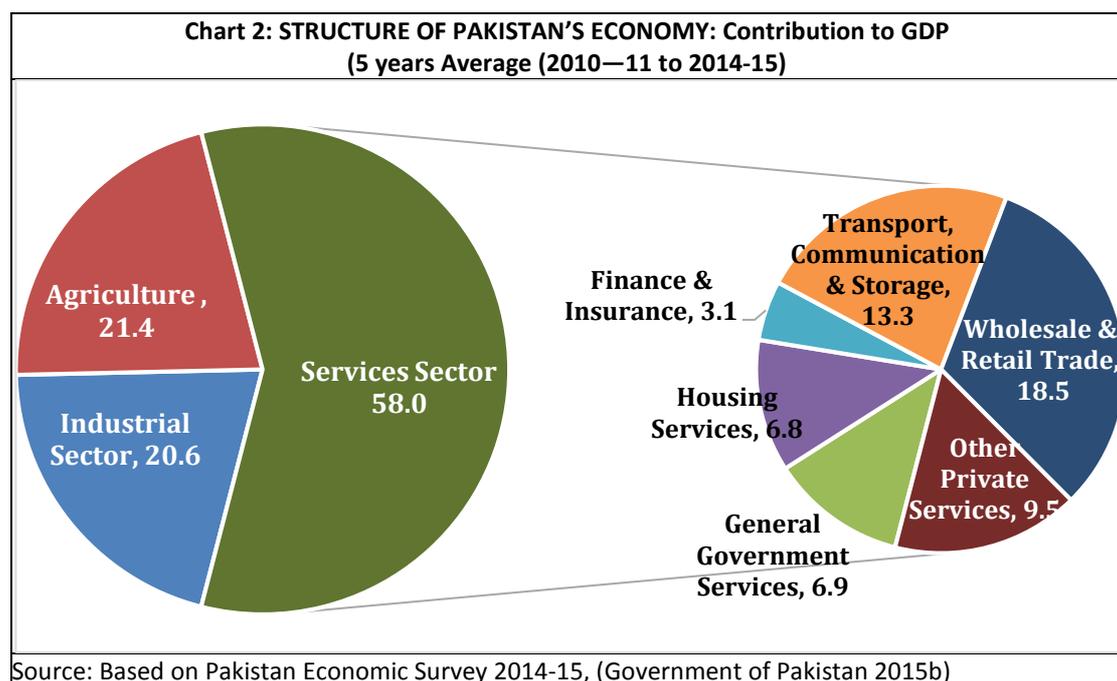
Traditionally an agricultural economy, Pakistan is moving towards a more service-led economic base, but it has struggled to capitalise fully on its significant potential. Pakistan has a mixed history of economic development, as reflected in the volatility of the country's average GDP growth rates since the 1960s (Chart 1).



At independence in 1947, Pakistan inherited an economy lacking in adequate industrial infrastructure. During its early years, significant efforts were made to bridge this gap, and during the 1960s, Pakistan became “one of the fastest growing economies in Asia”, “tipped to become the next Japan” (Ministry of Planning 2014: 21). In this period, average GDP growth rate was higher than 6%, with all three sectors contributing equally (Chart 1). However, political turmoil and the wars with India in

1965 and 1971 derailed this growth episode, culminating in the separation of East Pakistan and the creation of the state of Bangladesh. Pakistan experienced another high-growth period in the 1980s with the services sector making up almost half of all of this growth (46%). Since then, despite one or two high growth years in which GDP growth rate reached as much as 9%, the average decade-wise GDP growth rate has not touched the 6% mark. The economy of Pakistan has experienced its lowest average GDP growth in the current decade since 2010. This lower growth is an outcome of both internal and external challenges including natural and manmade disasters like floods, drought and the on-going war on terror. In recent years a severe energy crisis has had a negative affect across the board, but particularly on the industrial sector. While the country has come a long way, it has certainly not performed to its full potential.

During the last six decades, Pakistan has undergone a significant shift from an agrarian focus to a service led economy. The contribution of the agriculture sector to GDP declined from 46% in 1960 to 21.4% in 2014-15. In contrast, the share of the services sector in the same period increased from 38% to 58% of GDP, while the share of the industrial sector increased from 16% to 20.9%. Within the industrial sector, manufacturing has shown little dynamism, and today contributes just 13.2% of GDP, almost identical to the 12% it registered in 1960. Despite its declining share, agriculture remains critical to the economy, possessing important forward linkages to both industry and services (Government of Pakistan 2014). In recent years, growth in the agricultural sector has been sluggish, and the sector is highly vulnerable to natural disasters. Even so, it remains the engine of national growth and is besides the main source of employment for women. The current sectoral breakdown is illustrated in Chart 2, including a detailed breakdown of the composition of Pakistan’s service sector.



The Government of Pakistan is optimistic for the medium term macroeconomic outlook. The medium-term budget statement shows projected real GDP growth rates

of 5.5%, 6.5% and 7.0% in 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 respectively (Government of Pakistan 2015a). The IMF also foresees a positive future outlook for Pakistan's economy, however, their projections are less optimistic ranging from 4.5% to 5.5% (International Monetary Fund 2016). Both of these projections are predicated on macroeconomic stabilisation and minimum government intervention. In addition, the IMF has linked this positive outlook with a reform package in which Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is one of the components.

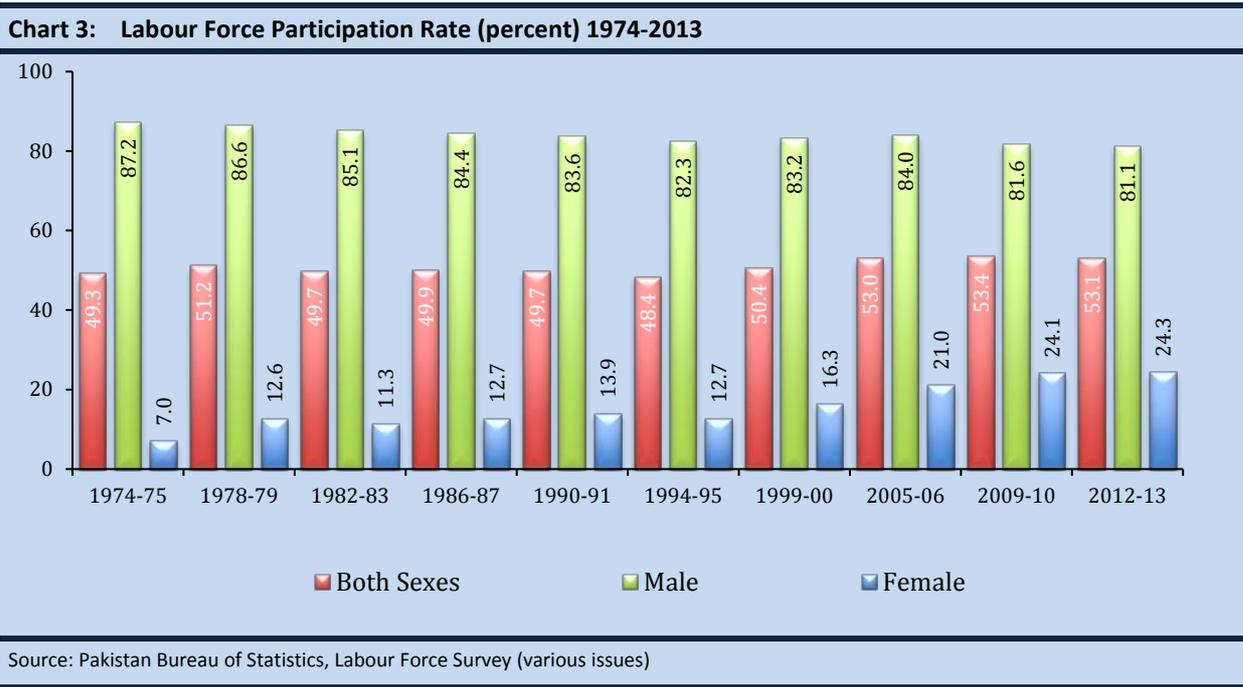
Pakistan's chequered economic development history is the outcome of a reliance on external financial support, and a failure to develop a sustainable basis for economic growth. In spite of – or perhaps because of – twenty-five years of IMF bailouts, Pakistan has failed to secure a sustainable base for economic growth. Investment in human capital is badly needed for the country to compete in the 21st century. Structural adjustment mandated by a series of IMF packages left limited resources for domestic investment. The Government of Pakistan, in its strategic vision document, notes: "While economic indicators situate the country among lower middle-income economies, the social indicators are comparable to those of least developed countries. The result is a fractured socio-economic platform for development" (Government of Pakistan 2014, p.23). In order to address this situation, long-mandated governance reforms remain essential, including an increase in domestic resource mobilisation, investment in human capital, along with research and development, tackling bureaucratic inefficiency, and above all addressing the country's energy crisis. Meanwhile, pervasive violence against women limits the possibility and effectiveness of all such reforms.

Gender inequality in socioeconomic indicators constitutes a threat to a positive future macroeconomic outlook. The IMF recognises this fact in its emphasis on gender responsive budgeting, arguing in a recent country report: "gender equality is a key factor contributing to rapid and broad-based economic growth" (International Monetary Fund 2016, p.60). In this respect, it should be noted that VAWG contributes to persistent gender inequality in all areas of Pakistani life. It restricts women's mobility, creating barriers to accessing education and health services and participating in the labour market; it also negatively affects the overall productivity of the labour force.

Pakistan's labour force productivity is low on the whole, and especially low among women. The Labour Force Survey 2012-13 shows the overall labour force participation rate for age 15 years and above to be just 53%. A contributory factor to overall labour force participation is the scant inclusion of women in the workforce (see Chart 3, below): the majority of women in Pakistan are engaged in unpaid domestic and care work, an economic activity which is not visible in formal statistics. Just 24.3% of women were working outside the home in 2013, compared with 81% of men (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2012-2013). Nonetheless, women's labour force participation has increased, from just 7% in 1974 to 24.3% in 2013. The rate increased gradually up until 2009, and has not increased significantly since.

Women's employment is predominantly informal: the share of female employment in the formal sector of the economy is just 7% of all workers. (SPDC 2009: Women at Work). 74% of working women are employed in agriculture, while 65% of working

women are identified as unpaid family helpers (Sarwar and Abbasi, 2012: 211-212), most likely working in small family businesses from which they don't draw a salary. Even among those women who earn a wage, their average monthly income is just 65% of that of men (Sarwar et al, 2009: 212). Given women's dependence on agricultural activity for survival, on-going declines in agricultural output in Pakistan (World Bank, 2014: 7) are likely to impact on women disproportionately.



Violence against women affects the economy of Pakistan, while at the same time, economic factors have an impact on violence. The data on the relationship between violence against women and economic activity is incomplete in many ways. Some research suggests that employment is a protective factor against the experience of violence (Duvvury et al. 2013: 9). On the other hand, increasing women's economic independence can work to provoke further violence, in a backlash against a woman's increasing autonomy (ibid). Duvvury et al argue that IPV can have significant impacts on economic growth through its negative impact on both labour force participation and employment stability. There is a need for longitudinal data to establish the impact of IPV on long-term unemployment, and there is also a need for more data to explore the impacts of different forms of VAWG on economic activity, in addition to IPV. In this project, we aim to outline the many ways in which violence impacts on workplaces and women's productivity in the Pakistani economy.

4.2 Human development, poverty and inequality

With a population of more than 180 million people, Pakistan ranks 147th out of 186 countries in the 2014 Human Development Index; a fall from its relative rank at 128th of 174 countries in 1995. The UN's multidimensional poverty index places 52% of the country's population in multidimensional poverty, and 26.5% in severe multidimensional poverty (UNDP 2015). Human development indicators, as we shall see, are worse for women than for men, as well as displaying significant regional disparities.

According to recent estimates, more than 60% of the Pakistani population is living in rural areas and less than 40% in urban areas (Govt of Pakistan 2014). However, the population is urbanising rapidly at a rate of over 3% per annum (SPDC 2016: 3). Owing to a poor economic outlook, on-going conflict and recurrent humanitarian emergencies, migration is high in Pakistan, both internally within the country and externally. In addition to internal displacement and labour migration, Pakistan is host to some 1.7 million refugees, mainly from Afghanistan (Pakistan Migration Report). As mentioned above, the rates of VAWG are particularly high in refugee populations.

Unfortunately poverty-related data is highly contested in Pakistan, resulting in little or no consensus across government and other stakeholders as to the macro-level changes in poverty over the past fifteen years. According to official figures, the share of people living below the national poverty line dropped from 25.5% in 1992 to 12.4% in 2010. These figures are disputed however, on the basis of a series of methodological errors, and many policy stakeholders draw attention to declining growth and per capita GDP, as well as nutritional data indicating real increases in child stunting and wasting (Hoy 2015). Owing to this dispute, few macro-level conclusions can be drawn about progress or otherwise in tackling poverty (Hoy 2015).

Assessments of multi-dimensional poverty reach beyond economic indicators to gain a more complete perspective on poverty levels. Such approaches assess outcomes across education, health and living standards (including housing, water supply and access to electricity). Multidimensional indices indicate that 49.4% of the Pakistani population live in multidimensional poverty – in contrast with the official 12.4% consumption-based figure (Khan 2015). The same studies suggest that between 2005 and 2011, only a very small drop in the multidimensional poverty figures was recorded, from 49.4% to 45.2% (Khan 2015).

Educational attainment is a particular challenge for Pakistan. In 2014, the mean years of schooling across the population was low at 4.7 years, while adult literacy was also low at 54.7% (UNDP 2015). These facts mask deep gender discrepancies: women report half the mean years of schooling as men have, at 3.1 years to 6.2 years. Even given progress made for the next generation, Pakistani girls still expect 7 years of schooling compared to boys' 8.5 years (ibid).

Reproductive health outcomes for women are particularly bad. Maternal mortality is high at an estimated 178 per 100,000 live births (World Health Organisation 2015). Access to reproductive health care is limited, with just 52% of deliveries attended by

skilled attendants (National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS) and ICF International 2013, p.139), although the percentage of women accessing pre-natal care increased significantly, from 60% in urban areas in 1999 to 83% in 2011 (ibid, p.132). While improvements are apparent, the gap between urban and rural outcomes persists doggedly, and Pakistan shows the largest gap in health indicators between urban and rural women in South Asia (Gill and Stewart, 2010).

National spending on health (1% of GDP) and education (2.1% of GDP) is well below internationally recommended standards, and as a result, basic service provision is weak. This is especially the case for women, for people in the conflict-affected areas of FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, and for marginalised parts of Punjab and Sindh (Benmessaoud et al. 2013). One explanation for the gender gap in key development outcomes is unequal distribution of public spending. The example of education is instructive. Education spending is conducted at the provincial level, and it varies from province to province, however there is no province where there is parity in spending on girls and boys. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2010-2011, for example, 34.8% of all spending was allocated to females at the primary level, just 22.9% at the secondary level and 20.9% at the tertiary level. The remainder was spent on males. This is in contrast with Punjab, where in the same year 47.6% of spending was allocated to females at the primary level, 43.8% at the secondary level and 48.6% at the tertiary level (SPDC: Formative Research Report).

Poor human development indicators have an impact on macro-level factors including economic growth and social cohesion. The World Bank highlights that Pakistan's poor educational outcomes and low investment in education are significant long-term challenges for economic growth (World Bank 2015, p.43). All elements of human development are affected by VAWG, and it is probable that Pakistan's poor outcomes for women are in part due to pervasive violence. This project aims to trace the connections between violence against women and these individual level outcomes, as well as the macro impact on social cohesion, stability and peace.

4.3 Social cohesion and stability

Both economic and social well-being are dependent on the environment in which they occur. Crucial to this is the quality of governance in a country: the ways that society is organised for the division of resources and resolution of disputes. The existence of conflict and tension within and across society places a drag on social, human and economic development, and militates against the fair and efficient distribution of resources, while more cohesive societies encounter less friction and more sustainable social and economic development.

Pakistan's history and geopolitical location result in complex and highly contested governance structures. A legacy of colonialism, a separated territory and sectarian conflict hampered the early development of a legitimate and unified nation state. To this day, central government is a distant entity for many Pakistani citizens (Mezzera and Aftab 2009, p.8). Pakistan's strategic geopolitical location and its uneasy alliance with the US in the global war on terror have contributed enormously to internal and

external governance challenges. The country has gone through repeated periods of military dictatorship since independence, although on each occasion these were ultimately rebuked by a robust political party system and independent civilian voices (Waseem 2011). While each return of military rule has seen a collapse of fragile democratic systems, a deepening of democratic rule is apparent after the 2013 elections, marking the state's first transition from one democratically elected government to another (Mezzera and Aftab, 2008: 17). Notably, according to the *Global Competitiveness Report 2012-2013*, on measures such as judicial independence, Pakistan outperforms countries including Australia, Brazil, Finland and Spain (Benmessaoud et al, 2013: 208).

At a national level, governance has long been characterised by an uneasy tension between the military, the civilian civil service, and Islamic political parties (Waseem 2011). Locally, overlapping conflicts characterise daily life in many districts of the vast country. Conflicts exist across the long and porous borders with India and Afghanistan, related to resources (principally water) and control of the tribal areas (Mezzera and Aftab 2009, pp. 10-11). Control of land remains in the hands of a small rural elite which has been in place since pre-colonial feudal times – fewer than half of all rural households own any agricultural land (Haq and Zia 2013, p.1010). Control of water tends to follow land tenure, with smaller farmers located far from river sources and irrigation, and with access controlled by those who own the land (Mezzera and Aftab 2009). Added to this mix are both ethnic and caste dimensions. Ethnic Punjabis make up a majority of the population at 64%, and both political and military power is disproportionately held by Punjabis, over ethnic Baluch and Sindhi people (Mezzera and Aftab 2009, p.16).

Continuing tensions related to these divisions are exacerbated by deep poverty and inequality: most Pakistanis cannot rely on the state at any level to provide for their most basic needs (Benmessaoud et al. 2013). These tensions have been exploited for ideological ends, most frequently those of political Islam. The poor assimilation of the tribal areas of FATA¹ and KPK² into the federal state left governance gaps, which in the late twentieth century were increasingly filled by the Pakistani Taliban (Waseem 2011). By 2007, proto-Taliban jihadi groups were active and spread widely through Pakistan, well outside of the traditional Pakhtun heartland, extending to South Punjab and Sindh (Waseem 2011, pp.10-11).

Historically, political parties have swung between repressive military control of tribal regions, and political deal-making with extremist leaders. It has been argued (eg by ICG 2015, Waseem 2011) that Pakistan must now seek the integration of peripheral regions into the mainstream legal and political system, from which they have been excluded since colonial times.

Popular support for fundamentalist Islamic militias can often be explained by the absence of alternative forms of governance; however, Islamist rule in Pakistan has proven to be particularly exclusionary, especially for women. As civilians in the conflict-affected areas of Pakistan withdraw from public spaces, social norms that

¹ FATA: Federally Administered Tribal Areas

² KPK: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, formerly known as the North West Frontier Province

already work to restrict women's mobility are compounded by fear of violent attacks against women for breaking strict sharia laws. In 2013, the CEDAW committee expressed particular concern about the impact of political violence on women and girls in education, undermining advances towards gender equality in the sphere of education (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 2013). In the elections of 2008, Islamic militants prevented one third of women in FATA from voting, while in 2013, flyers distributed by the Pakistani Taliban in KPK warned women against voting or they would be kidnapped and killed. 44 % of eligible women voted anyway – demonstrating an appetite among those women for democratic participation and women's equality (ICG 2015). Clearly, if the Pakistani government is to tackle VAWG, this must include action to address Islamic fundamentalism throughout the country.

In recognition of the governance gaps, which exist throughout the country, successive governments have worked to build more transparent, effective and democratic institutions. Since the turn of the 21st century, attempts at bringing about decentralisation have aimed to temper elite and military political control, and to bring a degree of political stability to the country (Benmessaoud et al. 2013, p.256). The 18th amendment to the constitution goes further than any previous attempts towards devolving decision making and accountability to local levels – however, it has been argued that in seeking to resolve issues of national political stability, the federalisation process has not addressed the enormous challenges of service delivery or bottom-up accountability, and indeed it has not really attempted to do this (Benmessaoud et al. 2013, p.245). The process of devolution is a complex one, and concerns have been expressed, for example by the CEDAW committee, that policy integration and coordination from national to provincial level will suffer as a result of the constitutional amendment, ultimately resulting in weaker policy implementation for the advancement of women (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 2013).

In spite of the many connections between gender inequality and governance and stability, the issue of violence against women is perceived by many in Pakistan as a feature of the private domain, separate from public engagement and discourse. The task of building an effective state with the integration of all citizens cannot be achieved without addressing gender inequality. Violence against women and girls is a function of gender inequality: it feeds into the maintenance of patriarchal systems; and it undermines the capacity of societies to develop into functioning, cohesive units.

4.4 Political and legal context

Established as a homeland for the Muslim population of the Indian state, Pakistan was nevertheless founded as a “modern liberal secular nation-state that embraced Islamic universal principles” (Critelli and Willett 2012, p.203). Gender equality is contemplated in the country's founding documents: Article 25 of the Pakistani Constitution asserts that “There shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone”; and further, that “nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the protection of women and children.” The Government of Pakistan is signatory to a number of international human rights instruments including

those which specifically ensure women's rights, such as CEDAW (signed in 1996) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (signed in 2000).

Nonetheless, tensions between political Islam and secularism have played out consistently in Pakistani politics, as shown in section 4.3 above. This resulted in legislation against gender equality, most notably through the Hudood Ordinances, introduced in 1979 as the mechanism for the application of Shariah law in Pakistan (Burki 2015). Under the Hudood Ordinances, not only were women not protected from gender based violence, but they were held responsible for it, under the Islamic concept of *izzat* or honour. Thus, all consensual sexual intercourse between adults outside marriage was criminalised, and there was no legal definition of rape – meaning that sexual violence was classified as adultery, and prosecuted accordingly. The tradition of Islamisation initiated during the military regime of General Zia ul-Haq runs deep, and it was 2006 before the most controversial provisions of the Hudood Ordinances were revoked.

Progress towards more democratic governance promises gains for women, through increased participation in decision-making and greater accountability from policy-makers to citizens. In 2008, quotas requiring the reservation of 33 per cent of seats in all three tiers of local government, and 17 per cent in the national and provincial legislature for women were introduced. This move has resulted in an increase in women's parliamentary representation, and the introduction of key pieces of gender-equitable legislation (ICG 2015, p.17). However, with the passing of the 18th constitutional amendment, the local government system expired and with it the system of local seat reservations (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 2013).

In recent years, specific laws and policies have aimed to address both gender inequality and violence against women and girls, including (inter alia) the Protection of Women Act (2006); the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill (2009); the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act on sexual harassment (2010); the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act (2010); the Acid Crime Prevention Act (2011); the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Act, (2011); and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act on offences relating to rape and honour killings (2016).

As a result of recent legislation, combined with existing legislation, rape is now a crime to be prosecuted under criminal law rather than sharia law (IRB - Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2013). There remains much ambiguity about whether or not marital rape is considered a crime under the law (Zaman and Zia 2013), to the extent that it must be considered effectively legal (IRB - Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2013). Promulgation of the Protection of Women Act (2006) has been inconsistent, so that the changes it brought in are neither universally known or observed (IRB - Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2013).

The legislative situation for domestic violence is equally complicated. While a Domestic Violence Bill was brought to parliament in 2013, the passing of the 18th constitutional amendment meant that the provisions fall under provincial (rather than federal) authority. The Bill defines Domestic Violence (DV) thus:

“Domestic Violence includes but is not limited to, all acts of gender based and other physical and psychological abuse committed by a respondent against a woman, children or other vulnerable persons, with whom the respondent is or has been in a domestic relationship.”

As such, the Bill is rather broad in scope. It covers violence committed against an intimate partner (known as IPV), and also other forms of violence committed within the home. It does not provide a definition of “vulnerable persons”, who presumably could be male as well as female.

To date, only the provinces of Sindh and Balochistan have ratified the Domestic Violence Act. The act recognises domestic violence comprehensively as including physical, sexual and emotional violence, and puts in place protections for victims including financial compensation, protection orders and residence orders. In Punjab, instead of ratifying the DV Act, in March 2016 the Punjab Protection of Women from Violence Bill was passed in spite of opposition including a challenge at the Federal Sharia Court. While the bill represents real advances in the protection of women’s rights, it has been criticised for providing remedy for victims, but limited provision for punishment of perpetrators. In the absence of the specific provisions included in the Domestic Violence Act, there is no legal protection for women against domestic violence; rather perpetrators can be charged only for inflicting injuries, such as broken bones or severe battery (Ashfaq 2016, Zahid 2015). Injuries caused through domestic violence remain under-reported and under-investigated (IRB, 2013). Laws to prevent domestic violence have encountered resistance from conservative members of government.

In October 2016, legislation was passed against honour killings with the Criminal Law Amendment (Offences relating to rape) Act. This legislation addresses a longstanding situation whereby families could “forgive” the killers of women and so-called honour killings would not be prosecuted under criminal law. In addition, the legislation addresses some loopholes related to rape, with the objective of increasing reporting and prosecution of the crime.

While it is true that improvements in the legislative framework mean that some of the most egregious abuses of women’s rights have now been removed from the statute books, much legislation does not go far enough to prevent or even respond to VAWG. In some cases, implementation is itself discriminatory. The International Crisis Group, in a 2015 report on Women, Violence and Conflict in Pakistan, highlights two connected dimensions of what it describes as institutionalised violence against women: discriminatory legislation, and the state’s failure to protect³ (ICG 2015). On a general level, it is worth noting that both police and court services are over-burdened and under-resourced, to the extent that one World Bank publication asserts that: “For the ordinary citizen, the time, effort, and expense involved effectively mean that “access to justice” does not exist” (Bennmessaoud et al. 2013). Basic issues of accessibility are compounded by gender-based discrimination.

³The ICG report focuses on the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

In the case of rape, for example, while the Protection of Women Act (2006) recognises rape as a criminal offence, few cases of rape are ever brought before the court, and women who report rape still risk being charged with adultery, even though this distinction has been made in law (IRB - Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2013). Rape cases in Pakistan are tried publicly in open court. The judiciary is heavily dominated by men, and victims may be confronted by perpetrators or family and may be questioned extensively about their sexual history (Zaman and Zia 2013: 3). It is well established that few cases of rape are ever reported to any authorities. The passage of the Criminal Amendment Act in 2016 promises to address some of these issues: it provides for victim confidentiality, free legal aid, and mandates DNA testing. It remains to be seen whether legislative and cultural changes will result in a reduction of the level of impunity currently seen.

Even where cases of VAWG are prosecuted and receive a conviction, punishments are often minimal for offenders. In the case of child marriage for example, the punishment under the law is one month imprisonment and a fine of approximately \$16 USD. Further, the marriage is not annulled resulting in the child remaining the wife of the perpetrator (Khan n.d.).

The police services are ill-equipped to deal with cases of VAWG. Reports suggest that police continue to perceive DV and IPV as private matters, and all but the most severe cases are often referred back to family mediators or police, who attempt to mediate cases in front of victims and perpetrators. A shortage of female police officers compounds the problem, and a woman needs to file a formal application for her case to be transferred to one of the handful of women's police stations (Zaman and Zia 2013). There are few protections in place against forced and child marriages and such cases, like DV, are largely perceived as family matters. Lack of awareness of laws hampers the implementation of legislation to protect women and girls. For instance, marriage to the perpetrator continues to be seen as a valid resolution to rape cases (Zaman and Zia, 2013:6). What's more, constitutionally guaranteed protections and legislation do not necessarily extend to all parts of Pakistan. Owing to local arrangements with ruling militias, formal court services and police have not been present in FATA for many years (Crisis Group, 2015: 16). Proposed reforms to this arrangement promise to extend the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and the Peshawar High Court to FATA. However, the proposed FATA reforms package would leave civil and criminal matters (including VAWG) within the jurisdiction of traditional courts called *jirgas*, composed of elders, and highly likely to protect family structures and male perpetrators above the rights of women.

Pakistan has introduced women's police stations in some regions, however, reports indicate that these are even less likely to file reports on domestic violence or other VAWG than ordinary police stations (IRB, 2013). For police and shelters, the primary goal appears to be reuniting the family, with one report suggesting that over 70% of women who stay in shelters return to the spouse or other family member who abused them (ibid.). There are reports of women's shelters being closed due to fears that they promoted the 'erosion of the family unit' (Brohi 2006)

International guidance on legislation for violence against women recommends tackling violence in a comprehensive fashion, through prohibitions and prosecutions,

and also the empowerment, support and protection of survivors (UNDESA 2010). Accordingly, a programme of investment is required to address a range of issues including legislative change, resourcing for prevention and service delivery, and technical capacity building across a wide range of prevention and response services.

A significant programme of legislative reform has transformed the landscape of women's rights in recent years, against much opposition. The work of moving from legislation to meaningful change is now underway.

4.5 Advocates for change

The International Crisis Group contends that women have been “the principal victims of state policies to appease violent extremists”. Yet it is also the case that women have opposed and on occasion overcome discriminatory practices in Pakistan (ICG 2015). Since the return of democracy in 2009, progressive legislation has been passed, often authored by women's rights activists in federal and provincial legislatures who have benefited from quotas to increase women's representation (ibid).

The elimination of VAWG requires a broad based alliance in favour of multi-sectoral change. An important institutional base has been established to drive the necessary action for gender equality beginning with the establishment of the Ministry for Women's Development in 1979. The National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women was adopted as a working document in August 1998. It stresses the eradication of poverty of women, emphasising health, education, violence against women and economic, political and social empowerment of women. The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) was established in July 2000 by the Chief Executive of Pakistan. The main purpose behind this development was to make comprehensive strategies to end domestic violence and abuse against women, and to direct government to implement these strategies for long-term purposes (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

Since the 1980s, civil society groups have made efforts to address the issue of violence against women, both through the direct provision of services, and by making demands on government to eliminate the problem. From the 1990s on, funding became available for women's rights work from international donors, interested in funding human rights and “women in development” programmes. In general, civil society activism in favour of women's rights has been characterised as urban, elite and educated (eg Mumtaz and Shaheed, 1987, Shaheed and Hussain, 2007, cited in Critelli and Willett, 2013), although Critelli and Willett highlight consistent efforts made by specific organisations to mobilise women across class and location (ibid: 209).

The movement to tackle VAWG in Pakistan has been led to date by feminist activists and women's rights organisations. It has had some impact on central government decision-making. However, the issue remains marginalised as a minority concern, rather than as one that is central to sustainable economic and social development. Improved evidence on the macro impact of VAWG on Pakistan should mobilise a wider set of actors to demand action to tackle the problem.

5 Impacts of VAWG on Pakistani Economy and Society

While it has been estimated that violence against women and girls costs the global economy to the tune of US\$8 trillion (Fearon and Hoeffler 2014), there are few studies, particularly of developing countries, that outline the national-level economic costs of such violence. In Vietnam, a 2011 study found a productivity loss to the country of the equivalent of US\$2.26 billion (Duvvury et al. 2012). A study carried out in Bangladesh in 2009 found that the average income lost per family due to domestic violence was Taka 8,228, adding up to a total of the equivalent of 0.87% of GDP (Siddique 2011).

Violence has a clear impact on individual victims and survivors, and it is highly likely to contribute to the overall burden of disease in Pakistan. A 2012 household survey of more than 4,000 women living in Pakistan found that 44% of women had experienced physical injuries due to domestic violence in the twelve months preceding the survey. Of those who had experienced injuries, 63% did not seek help from health care settings (Qayyum 2014). The most extreme impact of VAWG is death, which can be a result of a deliberate act of murder, a result of injuries, or suicide. The Aurat Foundation tracks reports of VAWG in the print media, which captures the small proportion of overall incidents with a public profile. The Aurat Foundation reports 1,425 cases of murder in 2013, and a further 487 cases of honour killings. The number of incidents of VAWG resulting in death may well be much higher (Aurat Foundation, 2014).

While there is limited data on the mental health impacts of violence against women in Pakistan, a WHO meta-analysis claims that IPV results in an increased likelihood of suicide attempts (Duvvury et al. 2013). Women who experienced partner violence are also twice as likely to experience depression (ibid: 6). The impact of violence on the health of individual women affects the overall workforce, and thus GDP and economic growth (Howitt, 2005, quoted by Duvvury et al. 2013). In addition, isolation and shame may cause women to withdraw from social networks and political participation. The current project aims to map some of these impacts at a macro-social level, and to assess their economic as well as social impacts.

Some indications of the economic costs of violence to women and the Pakistani state have been documented, in a study by SPDC entitled “The Socio-economic Cost of Violence against Women: A Case Study of Karachi” (SPDC 2012). This 2012 study identified the impacts of violence experienced by 50 women in the city of Karachi. Like the other small qualitative surveys of violence against women in Pakistan, this study found 44% of women surveyed had sustained physical injuries; while all suffered psychological impacts (depression, stress or trauma). It further outlined the expenses incurred through violence, and who bore those expenses:

- 77% of injured women sought healthcare (a higher proportion than in other studies), at an average cost (including transport) of Rs10,100 per incident.
- Just 18% sought support from the police, and an average cost of Rs34,900 was incurred in the filing of a formal report (FIR and formal registration of the case). The cost of transport to access the police was, on average, €Rs1,500.

- 42% sought legal support, at an average cost of Rs48,200, plus average transport costs for repeat visits of Rs2,100.
- Most healthcare costs were born by the victim herself or by her mother – although in some cases others (husband/ family) paid these costs. Where victims accessed judicial services, in up to 70% of cases, the costs were covered by an NGO or a shelter home.
- The majority of women surveyed were not in paid employment; but of those who were, a number left their work immediately after the violent incident, resulting in a drop in family income.

These data indicate some of the ways in which violence against women places a drain on Pakistani social and economic development. The aim of the current project is to map these impacts in greater detail, in order to assess the impact at multiple levels.

6 Conclusion

Pakistan has a limited but growing body of data outlining the prevalence and incidence of violence against women and girls in many different forms. However there has been no systemic analysis of the impacts and associated costs of VAWG for the economy and society as a whole. The discourse on VAWG in Pakistan is steeped in a cultural and/or religious framing of gender, in particular women's roles and responsibilities and the consequent sanctions for non-fulfilment of these roles. While there is an improving institutional base for addressing the issue of VAWG, the policies and national actions suggest that VAWG is perceived by government as a peripheral issue with minimal connection to the more dominating concerns around economy and polity. While Pakistan confronts a complex array of development challenges, all of these are closely bound up with gender inequality and gender based violence against women, and without addressing the particular challenge of VAWG, sustainable development will remain elusive.

There is growing international awareness that VAWG has both economic and social impacts that are important to rigorously establish as well as demonstrate their import for economic and social dynamics. Research must focus on exploring these diverse and dynamic impacts with a view to highlighting their macro-level influence on both economic and social development. Extending our conceptualisation of VAWG to recognise that it is not separate from other forms of violence, both structural and inter-personal, but is a driver of, and driven by, social and economic processes, allows for a holistic approach to understanding the impacts of VAWG that provides a more accurate account of the impacts of VAWG on society as a whole. The research project in Pakistan will seek to provide empirical evidence to bring VAWG centrally to the discussions of economic and social policy.

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