**Paper Title:** Feminisation of the education sector in Pakistan: Push and pull factors responsible for women’s choice of career as teachers

**Author:** Mahwish Khan\*

**Abstract**

Women’s labour market participation rate in Pakistan remains low compared to other South Asian countries (World Bank, 2011) but it is nonetheless increasing. It has risen to 25.92% in 2011 compared to 16.3% in 2000 (Labour Force Survey, 2010-11). In the last decade, the number of women employed in education in Pakistan has increased dramatically and much more rapidly than the number of men, making it critical to investigate the reasons and processes of feminization in this sector.

The purpose of the paper is to analyse the employment trends of women in the labour market of Pakistan while giving particular attention to the increased number of women in the teaching profession. The paper will explore the reasons for the feminisation of teaching in Pakistan by focusing on the following questions: *What factors influence the domination of women in the education sector of Pakistan?* *How do women decide to work in the teaching profession? Do women feel they have a choice in career or is teaching one of the few options?* The paper will address these questions through analysis of Labour Force Survey data, the policy reports and documents of the Ministry of Education in Pakistan, and semi-structured interviews with male and female teachers at various levels within the education sector. Seventy interviews in total were conducted over January to June in 2011.

The analysis will be organized over three sections. The first section will set the background by discussing women’s employment situation in the labour market of Pakistan and representation in the education sector. It will discuss the expansion of the education sector and ways in which it has been facilitated by the ‘mobilisation’ of a female labour supply. Based on statistical and theoretical data it will provide the analytical framework which considers processes of feminisation to include economic, social and cultural aspects. The second section will present the research design and methodology and discuss the statistical and secondary data sources. The third section will introduce the interview data, which is arranged around three main arguments. First, teaching is considered as an extension of women’s role of domesticity, care giving and nurturing in the patriarchal society of Pakistan. Views about the sexual division of work are very strong and teaching is associated with the traditional female gender roles. The *gendering* of the teaching profession attracts women and at the same time discourages men to join it. Second, due to cultural norms and religious values women are restricted by their families to work in the professions where they have to interact with men. The education sector provides the prospect to work in a segregated environment with little interaction with males. Third, the short working hours in the education sector and flexibility to take work at home, like class/lecture preparation, marking etc., give women an opportunity to combine work and family responsibilities. The teaching profession attracts women because it allows them to be at home before the male family members and carry out their domestic responsibilities.

**References**

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*\* PhD Candidate and Associate Lecturer, Centre for Employment Studies Research (CESR), Business and Law Faculty, University of West of England. Bristol BS16 1QY, UK. Email:* [*mahwish2.khan@live.uwe.ac.uk*](mailto:mahwish2.khan@live.uwe.ac.uk)*.*