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Visiting Scholar at Fukuoka University School of Law

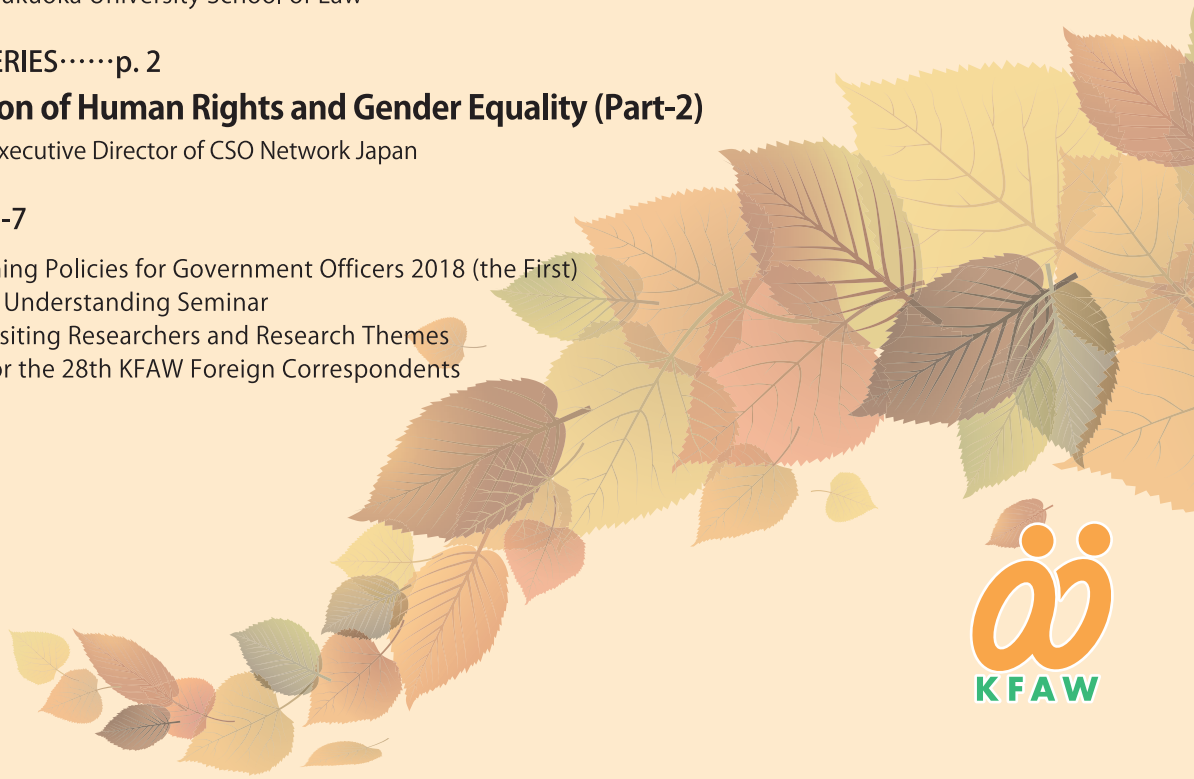
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### Relationship Between the Revision of Family Law and the Women's Movement in South Korea



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Ms. Seonja CHA

The Constitution of the Republic of Korea (CRK) was adopted in 1948. The Constitution states that “marriage shall be entered into and sustained on the basis of equality of the sexes.” (Art. 20 CRK of 1948). The Korean Civil Code was enacted in 1958. However, family law within the Civil Code did not reflect the gender equality that was put forth in the Constitution. On the contrary, Korean family law incorporated gender-based discriminatory regulations in the name of tradition. Specifically, family law had provisions regulating the “Hoju” system. In the Hoju system, men are responsible for supporting family members, and they also have the right to decide who is permitted to join the family. The order of succession to the status of “Hoju” is determined by gender, with priority given to male descendants. For example, when a father passes away, his eldest male son, regardless of age, would ascend to the status of “Hoju”. Thus, feminist groups argued that the “Hoju” system violated the values embodied in the Constitution and submitted several family law amendments to the National Assembly in an attempt to abolish it. However, these efforts failed every time. Conservative groups regarded the “Hoju” system as a part of Korea’s traditional culture that needed to be preserved. They exercised significant political pressure to ensure the amendments did not pass. In the meantime, abolishing the provisions for the “Hoju” system within family law became a symbol of the women’s movement in South Korea.

South Korea ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1984. In 1990, the family law was significantly revised to reflect the ideas contained in CEDAW. Nevertheless, the “Hoju” system remained for fear that its sudden abolition would cause social upheaval. Feminist groups acknowledged the reality that the National Assembly, consisting mostly of men, would not pass an amendment abolishing the “Hoju” system. They shifted strategies and petitioned the Constitutional Court of Korea (CCK) to determine whether the regulations of the “Hoju” system violated constitutional rights. In 2005, the CCK decided the “Hoju” system was incompatible with the Constitution because it violated the constitutional provisions for gender equality, marriage, and family life (Constitutional Court of Korea, 2005. 2. 3. 2001HeonGa9). As a result, the “Hoju” system was virtually abolished.

The CCK ruled that even though the Constitution seeks to preserve South Korean tradition (Art. 9 CRK of 1987), they could not uphold a traditional family system that violated gender equality. The CCK ruled that tradition as noted in Art.

9 of the Constitution is a historical concept, whereas gender equality in marriage and family life are fundamental principles set forth in the Constitution. Therefore the patrilineal succession inherent in the “Hoju” system would be incompatible with the Constitution.

It took about a half a century to go from the enactment of family law in 1958 to the decision of constitutional incompatibility in 2005. This has left several outstanding tasks for the women’s movement. First, the inability of the women’s movement to secure passage of the amendment abolishing the “Hoju” system highlights the need to strengthen women’s political power.

Second, through the CCK decision, people began to understand the constitutional provisions that express how our country’s ideological orientation influences family relationships. This can be understood within the context of the feminist slogan “The personal is political” by Carol Hanisch. In the future, the Constitution will play an important role in realizing women’s freedom and equality in the family.

Finally, while the CCK found that tradition is a historical concept, it provided the Korean women’s movement with a new means to address old customs that discriminate based on gender. CEDAW asks countries that ratify the Convention to take various measures, including legislation, to change gender discriminative customs (Art. 2 (f) CEDAW). In reality, old customs in most countries discriminate against women. Nevertheless, if they are justified and maintained in the name of tradition, they might be very difficult to change. However, if tradition is a historical concept, customs that discriminate based on gender should be scrutinized to determine whether they are meaningful today.

The efforts of the Korean women’s movement to change the gender discrimination embodied in family law show what has to be done to realize gender equality. I want to share this experience with women in East Asian countries so that I may contribute to the development of an equal society.

#### Profile

Professor at Chonnam National University School of Law  
Visiting Scholar at Fukuoka University School of Law  
Currently, serves as an Advisory Committee of Korean  
National Congress about Legislation, a Member of Board  
of Directors in the Korean Academy of Family Law and  
Chief Editor of the Korean Academy of Social Welfare and  
Law.



Executive Director of CSO Network Japan

**Ms. Kaori KURODA**

### Profile

Kaori Kuroda is the Executive Director of CSO Network Japan. She also serves as Japan Director of the Asia Foundation Japan. Ms. Kuroda was a Japanese NGO Expert for developing ISO 26000 (ISO Standard for Social Responsibility) from 2007 to 2010. She currently serves as a member of the Roundtable for promoting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the SDGs Promotion Headquarters at the Prime Minister's office.

The preamble of “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (hereinafter referred to as the “2030 Agenda”)<sup>1</sup> states:

*They (17 goals and 169 targets) seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.<sup>2</sup>*

The Denmark Institute for Human Rights, a world-renowned think tank, announced that more than 90% of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets are linked to international human rights and labour standards.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) emphasized that human rights are essential for achieving the SDGs in the process of formulating the Global Goals. OHCHR published a summary table on the linkages between the SDGs and relevant international human rights instruments. Below is an excerpt from the table of goal 1 and goal 5 and relevant international human rights instruments.

“Human rights” are specified in the preamble, declaration and several paragraphs of the 2030 Agenda. For example, paragraph 8 says, “We envisage a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination...”, and paragraph 10 says, “The new Agenda is guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including full respect for international law. It is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights treaties, the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit outcome.”

However, why are the SDGs not discussed in the context of human rights? One of the reasons may be due to the fact that out of the 17 goals and 169 targets, the word “human rights” was specified only in one goal (SDG 4.7). If we only look at goals and targets, we may miss the essence and philosophy of the 2030 Agenda. As far as Gender Equality is concerned, not only working on Goal 5 but also understanding this as an overarching issue are prerequisite for achieving all the goals, as mentioned previously. UN Women says, “Achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment is integral to each of the 17 goals. Only by ensuring the rights of women and girls across all the goals will we get to justice and inclusion, economies that work for all, and sustaining our shared environment now and for future generations.”<sup>3</sup>

In Japan, many companies and local authorities have begun making contributions to achieving SDGs. Many have started this endeavor by linking their existing activities to each goal. However, “cherry picking” should be avoided. It is recommended that appropriate goals be set and what is needed externally from a global perspective be identified.

The Government of Japan has appraised the five principles of universality, inclusiveness, participatory approach, integrated approach, and transparency and accountability in the SDGs Implementing Guiding Principles. It is important that efforts to attain the goals be based on respect for human rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment, in addition to the above principles to realize a sustainable and inclusive future.

### Excerpts of linkage documents between SDGs and human rights documents

Goal	Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere	Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Related Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rights to an adequate standard of living [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 11; CRC art. 27]</li> <li>• Right to social security [UDHR art. 22; ICESCR art. 9; CRPD art. 28; CRC art. 26]</li> <li>• Equal rights of women in economic life [CEDAW arts. 11,13,14 (2) (g), 15 (2), 16(1)]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women [CEDAW arts. 1-5] and girls [CRC art. 2], particularly in legislation, political and public life (art. 7), economic and social life (arts. 11,13), and family relations (art. 16)]</li> <li>• Right to decide the number and spacing of children [CEDAW arts. 12, 16 (1)(e); CRC at. 24 (2)(f)]</li> <li>• Special protection for mothers and children [ICESCR art. 10]</li> <li>• Elimination of violence against women and girls [CEDAW</li> <li>• Right to just and favourable conditions of work [ICESCR art. 7; CEDAW art. 11]</li> </ul>

Source: [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/MDGs/Post2015/SDG\\_HR\\_Table.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/MDGs/Post2015/SDG_HR_Table.pdf)

1 United Nations, “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

2 Words in parentheses have been added by the author.

3 <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs>



# Debriefing on Participation in the 62nd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62)

Date	Thursday, June 14, 2018 18:30-20:00
Venue	Small Seminar Room, 5 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center MOVE
Reporters	Ms. Mitsuko HORIUCHI, President of KFAW Ms. Yukiko ODA, Vice Convener, JAWW (Japan Women's Watch)
Participants	39

## Report by Ms. Mitsuko HORIUCHI, President of KFAW



The priority theme of CSW62 was “Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls”. Despite the fact that women account for 60% of workers in agricultural areas, mountain and fishing villages, and rural

districts around the world, they do not have rights related to social protections and labor. The major challenge is that there are very few women who have the right to own land. The percentage of medically-assisted births is less than 38% and access to safe drinking water continues to be low. The rate of child marriages is also high and literacy rates are low.

The key to empowering rural women and girls is decent work and social security, education and training, sustainable energy and technology, clean water, elimination of violence and harmful practices, and inclusion of women in decision-making processes. At CSW62, national governments and the United Nations were requested to take action on these issues and civil society organizations were also invited to take part.

## Report by Ms. Yukiko ODA, Vice Convener, JAWW (Japan Women's Watch)

On March 13, 2018, JAWW co-organized a side event related to the priority theme with the International Women's Year Liaison Group and the National Women's Committee of the United Nations NGOs, with the participation of 128 people from 23 countries and regions.

Around the world, women play significant roles in the maintenance and development of agricultural areas, mountain and fishing villages, and rural districts, but face disadvantages in many aspects. Even though situations differ, women in both developing and developed countries face similar problems. Four speakers were invited from Japan, Africa, Asia, and international organizations to this event to discuss what actions are needed to lead to women's empowerment. Emphasis was placed on creating movements based on networking, the need for policies to incorporate gender equality at every opportunity, cooperation with actions by the national government and society as a whole, and the importance of promoting policies to increase women's access to property, such as land.



## Gender Mainstreaming Policies for Government Officers 2018 (the First)



KFAW conducts a training program twice a year for central and local government officials in developing countries, who are in charge of gender mainstreaming, consigned by the

Japan International Cooperation Agency, Kyushu Center (JICA Kyushu). The first training course (A) in FY 2018 was held from Monday, June 11 to Wednesday, July 11, and government officials from 7 countries, Ghana, Kosovo, Palestine, Malawi, Nigeria, South Sudan and Tanzania, participated in the training.

One subject of the training is Gender Mainstreaming in Childcare System, which has been conducted over 30 times thanks to the cooperation of the Koutakuji Daycare Center and Koutakuji Daycare Center II in Kitakyushu City.

This time, the participants visited the Koutakuji Daycare Center II on July 2 and enjoyed an exchange

program celebrating the *Tanabata* festival with the children. They also learned about childcare in Japan today in a lecture given by Ms. Sakiko Fujioka, the Vice-Principal of the center.

After the visit, a participant from Palestine said, “I understood that fathers and mothers can go to work thanks to daycare centers in Japan. Child-rearing has been regarded as a mother's task for a long time. However, in Japan, daycare center is now playing an important role for promoting women's participation in the labor market. I would like to improve childcare services in Palestine based on this experience in Japan.” The visit to the daycare center further deepened their understanding of gender mainstreaming.



A warm handmade invitation card from children

## International Understanding Seminar

### "Gender in Africa – Let's talk about Africa, now and the future"

KFAW held a seminar for promoting gender equality and empowering women from a global perspective as well as for deepening understanding of Africa. For the seminar, government officials from Africa, who were visiting Japan for a JICA training course on gender mainstreaming, were invited and they talked about their countries.

**Date** Friday, June 29, 2018 13:30-16:00

**Venue** Main Seminar Room, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Kitakyushu Municipal Gender Equality Center MOVE

**Program** Presentation by government officials from Africa

Presenters:

- Mr. Twene James (Ghana)
- Ms. Ilunga Adventina Kato (Tanzania)
- Mr. Kalelo Phiri Joseph (Malawi)
- Ms. Keri Jane Tumalu Erasto (South Sudan)
- Mr. Edo Sunday Ekata (Nigeria)

Facilitator: Ms. Mitsuko HORIUCHI, President of KFAW

**Participants** 56



#### ◆Mr. Twene James (Ghana)



Ghana has ratified treaties concerning gender equality, but in reality women cannot equally access land, technology, information, credit, etc. as men can. Currently, a very important "Affirmative Action Bill" is in the process of submission to the Diet. If this becomes law, women will be able to obtain 20 percent of the decision-making positions for important policies.

#### ◆Mr. Kalelo Phiri Joseph (Malawi)



Malawi has had a female president elected for the first time in southern Africa. We have some achievements so far including the increased girl's enrollment rate in primary and secondary schools and decreased maternal mortality rate. We, however, have only a few female decision-makers and harmful cultural practices for women and girls still persist. We still have many things to do to achieve gender equality.

#### ◆Ms. Ilunga Adventina Kato (Tanzania)



In Tanzania, a big gap exists in the employment rates of women and men; many women are working in the informal sector. The government has taken measures such as the policy for gender equal education and a law requiring employers to eliminate discrimination in all workplaces. We

also have loans for women through the Women Development Fund and the Tanzanian Women's Bank. Now in Tanzania, a law allows both men and women to own houses and lands alone or jointly, and 39 percent of women possess their own land.

#### ◆Ms. Keri Jane Tumalu Erasto (South Sudan)



Women are considered second-class citizens in rural areas of South Sudan. They cannot claim their rights and cannot participate in important decision-making. Women are sometimes treated like a commodity. The maternal mortality rate is very high due to lack of medical facilities and staff. The recent civil war destroyed the country and poverty is rampant. Even in such circumstances, a project was conducted for promoting the financial empowerment of war widows. Some of them who were supported by this project successfully increased agricultural production and came to be able to support their families.

#### ◆Mr. Edo Sunday Ekata (Nigeria)



Nigeria has been promoting gender equality by formulating the National Gender Policy and National Action Plan. The problems are the lack of appropriate legislation, lack of human resources who are knowledgeable concerning gender issues, and remaining religious and traditional customs that discriminate against women. The roles of men and women differ in daily life. Men make decisions for families, watch TV or read newspapers after work, play with children and help children go to school, while women are responsible for family care and many household chores such as cooking, cleaning, washing, fetching water, collecting firewood, trading and grinding crops.



# FY 2018/19 KFAW Visiting Researchers and Research Themes

KFAW invites visiting researchers from universities and research institutes to conduct studies and research on various topics related to gender and women. The researchers for this fiscal year have been divided into three groups and will carry out studies and research over the next two years on the following topics.

## Comparative Study of Fukuoka and Taipei on the Promotion of Local Activities and Political Participation by Women

Teigetsu OH, Representative, Fukuoka Women's Studies Society  
Research members

Keiko TOMINAGA, Fumiko OTANI, Yoshiko SAKAI, Masako MATSUDA, Yoko INOUE, Reiko HAMAMOTO, Tsuruko NOTA, Shigeko AGO

An urgent task in local women's activities is the development of women leaders, in particular the training and utilization of women in the political field. In May of this year, Japan enacted the Act on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field, which stimulated discussions on the introduction of quota systems to set an allocated number of seats to women or men, so that there is no bias in the ratio of women to men in the policy decision-making process.

Both the central and local governments in Taiwan, Province of China have introduced quota systems and the proportion of female legislators is high. Surveys and analysis on the activities of women in politics in the country may offer considerable suggestions in reforming Japan's political system. In March of this year, we met with three local female politicians in Taiwan, Province of China in their 30s and 40s who had all



Discussions with city council members in Taiwan, Province of China

aimed to become politicians since they were in university. Through studies and research on the development and activities of local female politicians in Taiwan, Province of China, we will explore educational programs and institutional reforms needed to help women be active in the field of politics in Fukuoka.

## Empirical Study on Support for Mothers and Children Victimized by Domestic Violence: Through Practices in Japan and Singapore

Mariko OGAWA, Associate Professor, Kyushu University  
Emiko KOGUCHI, Assistant Professor, Ibaraki Women's Junior College

Miyoko SHIBATA, Chief Expert, Tokyo Women's Plaza, Gender Equality Center of Tokyo Metropolitan Government

Many victims of domestic violence (DV) are women. A typical case is where women escape to shelters with their children.

Numerous studies have shown that DV has devastating consequences on the mental health and behavior of children living with victims of domestic violence. However, children are not directly positioned as victims of domestic violence because current laws in place to prevent DV focus on support for female victims.

In light of this situation, we will examine the following points in this research through studies on maternal and child life support facilities and child care facilities, including support for children who traditionally fall outside of support frameworks.

We will (1) gain an understanding into the situation of damage to women and children who have been affected by DV and examine safe protection systems., (2) focus on maternal care and the relationship between mothers and children in particular to examine the mental stability of mothers and what is needed to support independence., and lastly, (3) consider developing a seamless, comprehensive support system for these mothers and children.

During our studies, we will dig deeper into progressive approaches in Singapore that support mothers and children victimized by DV and explore the potential of applying this to Japan

## Research on Promoting Career Development from a Female Perspective: Based on Interviews in Fukuoka and Kagoshima Prefectures

Rika TAKAMARU, Kagoshima University  
Kayo HASHIMOTO, Chikushi Jogakuen University  
Toshie IZUMO, Chikushi Jogakuen University

In the existing social structure, there are limits to women achieving better social status in modeling "male breadwinners".

For women, what type of career development would offer a feeling of purpose in life and work?

This research is not focused on results, such as income and equality, but rather focuses on the ideals and reality of the women concerned from the following three points: development of human resources, working environment, and awareness

related to employment. Through interviews with university students, workers, and companies, we will (1) look at how the perception of university students on employment has changed and what factors influence this, (2) study the differences between women's and men's awareness concerning preferred work styles and views of life through interviews with workers, as well as mechanisms that foster such ideas, and (3) then present the issues and feasibility of efforts to create flexible work styles in local businesses and opportunities to relearn. We want to identify the systems and laws needed to promote the development of women's careers and link these to recommendations that will contribute to the promotion of women's activities in the Kyushu area through interview surveys, analysis and discussion.

## The 28<sup>th</sup> KFAW Foreign Correspondents Kick-off Activities !

This year, 6 persons from 5 countries are selected and work as KFAW foreign correspondents. Through this network, KFAW will keep providing up-to-date information from various parts of the world. The profiles of the correspondents and other reports are available at the KFAW website (<http://www.kfaw.or.jp/correspondents/index.html>).



### Pakistan

**Ms. Jawaria KASHIF**

Lawyer, human rights activist and researcher



### Bhutan

**Mr. Chayku**

Radio anchor and producer, Bhutan Broadcasting Service Corp.



### Peru

**Ms. Carmen LEDESMA**

Jurist specialized in women's human rights



### Korea

**Ms. Jeong HYOMIN**

Studying social economy and gender research in graduate school



### Pakistan

**Mr. Muhammad SAJJAD**

Senior clerk at FATA University



### India

**Ms. Swapna MAJUMDAR**

Independent journalist

## Child/Early Marriage in Pakistan

Mr. Muhammad SAJJAD (Pakistan)

### Definition

Child marriage is defined as marriage of a male or a female prior to 18 years of age.

### Child Marriage Around the World

Child marriage is a truly global problem that cuts across countries, cultures, religions and ethnicities. Child brides can be found in every region in the world, from the Middle East to Latin America, and from South Asia to Europe. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia regions have one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world. According to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) report in 2017, across the globe, levels of child marriage are highest in sub-Saharan Africa, where around 4 in 10 young women get married before the age of 18. According to this report, it was found that 3 in 10 girls get married before the age of 18 in South Asia, 17% in the Middle East and North Africa, 11% in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and 25% in Latin America and Caribbean.

### Situation in Pakistan

Pakistan is a member of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC), an inter-governmental body which has adopted regional action plan targeting child marriage. Child marriage in Pakistan is connected with tradition, culture, and customary practices. It sometimes involves the transfer of money, settlement of debts or exchange of daughters (Vani/Swara or Watta Satta) sanctioned by Jirga or Panchayat (a council of elders from the community). The dowry tradition that is largely practiced in Pakistan consists of exchange of wealth, either in the form of money or gifts, before and after marriage between the bride's and groom's families. As a result, women are likely to get married at much younger ages, and become economically and socially dependent on family's support. These factors clearly compromise the productivity of women by limiting their role in family decision-making.

#### i. Puberty, Marriage and Childbearing

The mean age of puberty for females is 13.5 years and for males 15.0 years in Pakistan. The mean age of marriage for women in Pakistan has significantly increased from 13.3 years to 23.1 years with steady gains over time, but the overall age at marriage is still much lower. Women residing in rural areas tend to marry much earlier than those living in urban areas. According to UNICEF estimate, the prevalence of child marriage among all women aged 20 to 24 in Pakistan is 24.0%. The practice unduly affects girls of lower socio-economic status and those residing in rural regions. Despite steady increase in the age of marriage over time in Pakistan, the national data show close relationship between marriage and childbearing. It has been shown that marriage is almost immediately followed with pregnancy among females younger than 20 years old.

#### ii. Fertility, Contraception and Son preferences

By 2020, the population policy of Pakistan has a target of achieving stabilization in population by reducing annual population growth rate from 1.9% to 1.3% and total fertility rate to 2.1. However, there is only meager progress in achieving this

## Profile

My active role is concerned with education and social activities in community in the North South of Pakistan. My role as a beacon for the inhabitants, especially for school/college apprentices, is to guide and publicize latest information by social media and general gatherings. Growing-up situation in the countryside, where people suffer from poverty, lack of education and basic human rights, discrimination against women, and dropout of kids from school, makes me hard-pressed to step up! I am confident serving as a KFAW foreign correspondent will encourage me to act more positively in this taxing condition.



goal with overall contraceptive rate still hovering around 27%, which is quite low as compared to other neighboring countries. Adolescent women in Pakistan are culturally expected to prove fertility background for son after marriage. Husbands desire to have more children, and son preference is observed among couples. High fertility and low contraception use among women can be attributed to these tendencies. These young girls are faced with high maternal and infant mortality. When coupled with limited access to healthcare and low antenatal services, the situation surrounding them would lead to poor health outcomes.

### iii. Government's Legal Implementations for Male and Female

#### Age at Marriage

Pakistan's Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA) 1929 sets the legal age for marriage at 16 years for women and 18 for men. In February 2017, the Parliament adopted an amendment to the Penal Code that would toughen punishment against child marriage. Offenders face a minimum of five years in prison and may serve up to 10 years including a fine of up to 1 million rupees. In April 2014, the Sindh Assembly unanimously adopted the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, increasing the age of marriage to 18 and stipulating that marriage below 18 is a punishable offence. A similar bill proposed at the national level was unfortunately struck down by the Pakistan's National Assembly in May 2017. Punjab and Khyber Pakhtukhwa have introduced and adopted bills with harsher penalties for marriage under the age of 16. However, they did not increase the age of marriage to 18. Recently the Council of Islamic Ideology, a constitutional body which gives Islamic legal advice to the Pakistani government, declared that Pakistani laws prohibiting child marriage are un-Islamic. The rulings were widely criticized at the national and international levels.

### Significance of Child Marriage

Although the practice of child marriage affects both boys and girls, it poses disproportionately serious risks to girls, bringing about far more negative health outcomes among girls. The prevalence of child marriages, even though less than some of the neighboring countries such as India, Nepal and Bangladesh, is still substantial in Pakistan. Studies from other low-income countries have shown

that child marriage is associated with high maternal and child mortality/morbidity. Further, reports by UNICEF and International Council for Research on Women (ICRW) consisting of data from various countries found that, as compared to those married as adults, women married as children are mostly poor and uneducated, residing in rural areas with limited access to healthcare services. This disproportionate risk of high maternal and child mortality/morbidity seems to be related to their socio-economic, cultural and structural vulnerabilities.



Girl aged under 16 prepared for marriage in Sindh



## Economic Empowerment of Women Artisans Facing Natural Disaster in the North of Peru (Piura case)

### Women Artisans Network "Weaving Hopes"

Ms. Carmen LEDESMA (Peru)

Between December 2016 and March 2017, a natural disaster called the Coastal Boy Phenomenon (El Niño) hit northern Peru, leaving thousands of families affected by the overflowing of rivers that caused floods in several departments, including Piura. The catastrophe destroyed homes, agricultural lands, road access and basic services and, therefore, a state of emergency was declared. In Piura, a total of 141,860 people lost their homes as of March 31, 2017. There were 27,981 victims and 34 shelters were installed with a total of 1,985 tents to protect the population in the districts of Catacaos and Cura Mori in Piura.

The Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP) participated in the relocation of families and women, girls, boys and adolescents in different shelters, and selected the shelter of San Pablo in Catacaos, Piura to concentrate more women with a total of 267 families. In this context, the MIMP installed Violence Assistance Module where lawyers and psychologists were stationed in order to prevent violence against women, and "JUGUEMOS" (Let's Play) Module for children to stimulate their early recovery through games, taking into account the resilience situation of this population after the natural disaster.

During the period between 2016 and part of 2017, high rates of violence were recorded in Piura, averaging 55% cases of psychological violence, 36% physical, 9% sexual, in addition to 3 cases of femicide and 9 cases of attempted femicide. Behind this situation was a condition in which displaced women and children were exposed to other forms of violence. In Piura, 2,757 cases of violence were registered in 2016 only.

The economically active female population of Piura was 40% (370 thousand people), with 82.5% of women engaged in the informal sector.

In this context of displaced women, the MIMP, together with its National Program Against Family and Sexual Violence, designed an intervention strategy to promote the generation of income for women to achieve their economic autonomy through the development of their productive abilities to weave toquilla straw products—traditional crafts of Piura with great recognition—using natural resources in the area as a comparative advantage over other regions. Out of the total of 267 women in the shelter, in the first phase of the intervention in the second half of 2017, over 100 women were trained in the design of innovative straw products to enter the market. In order to support this pilot project of women entrepreneurs, a network of women artisans called Weaving Hopes was created in the district of Catacaos in Piura Region, aiming to promote future

## Profile

Jurist specialized in women's human rights who monitored the National Plan to Combat Violence against Women 2009-2015 and gave technical assistance at the regional level to local governments on the National Plan to reduce Gender-based Violence 2016-2021. I was Director of Policies for a Life Free of Violence and Economic Autonomy of Women in the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations.



sustainability and women's economic independence with the objective of promoting their economic autonomy by building their capacity for producing straw products and addressing commercial issues, as well as by cultivating their leadership while applying gender and intercultural approaches.

The MIMP has given technical assistance and been cooperating with the private sector, other state institutions, regional corporations such as BELCORP to facilitate the women's empowerment and economic autonomy, as well as with others with a knowledge about colors and fashion trends of the products and services to make them more competitive and promote them to the market with sustainable projections.

The artisan women displaced and located in the San Pablo shelter did not have a space for designing their products, and therefore a module was installed as a workshop (10 meters wide, 17 meters long, and 4 meters high) with a space suitable for preparing their products, receiving training, and exhibitions and sales, which is divided into 4 areas: the product elaboration area, the marketing area, the lactation area with cots to breastfeed their children while working, and the play area for their small children. It has an intercultural approach respecting the way the artisans work at round tables—talking and sitting on cushions as they do their work, with the model of the product put at the center.

Currently, there are approximately 200 women who have joined the network, selling their products in shopping centers and at the request of companies. The MIMP has designed the second phase of the intervention to expedite access to the international market that is in the process of being implemented. The strategy of this project helps the women out of violence and poverty as they say: "We feel free and weave hopes of growth for our life free of violence with economic empowerment."



External part of the Workshop Tent of the artisan women's network "Weaving Hopes", which was full of visitors during a sale at a fair.



Toquilla straw products handwoven by women artisans