Women in Higher Education Leadership in South Asia: Rejection, Refusal, Reluctance, Revisioning

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Executive Summary

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The British Council in Pakistan commissioned the research in response to concerns in the profession about the under-representation of women in senior leadership positions in higher education (HE) in South Asia. The British Council in Pakistan was coordinating a series of high-level strategic policy dialogues for the South Asia region – Global Education Dialogues (GEDS), each of which was framed by research and think pieces to promote debate on critical issues in the region. As part of this research effort the South Asia GEDS wanted to commission a more significant research report into Women, Higher Education and Leadership. The research aimed to seek existing knowledge and baseline data from literature, policies, change interventions and available statistics on the situation for women in higher education leadership in six countries in South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). It also aimed to collect original data via 30 interviews with women and men academics in the region, and to construct recommendations about what specific future actions and interventions for change could be implemented in South Asia.

Research Overview

Our study discovered an overwhelming absence of statistical data in the region on women and leadership, with most countries, with the exception of Sri Lanka, not keeping or reporting systematic disaggregated staff data. It also found that gender was an absent category of analysis in most of the higher education policy documentation in the region. When gender was included, it related to students, rather than to staff. There was a lack of substantive scholarship and research on the topic of women and leadership in higher education in the region. The studies that did exist were largely small-scale unfunded postgraduate inquiries.

Our empirical study also found that women are not being identified and prepared for leadership. There is also evidence globally that when women do aspire for leadership, they are frequently rejected from the most senior positions. However, we also found that many women academics are reluctant to aim for senior leadership and perceive it as an unattractive career option.

A key question resulting from our findings is whether women are being rejected or disqualified from senior leadership through discriminatory recruitment, selection and promotion procedures, gendered career pathways or exclusionary networks and practices in women-unfriendly institutions or indeed whether women are refusing, resisting or dismissing senior leadership and making strategic decisions not to apply for positions which they evaluate as unattractive, onerous and undesirable.

We conclude that it is a complex combination of multiple factors. While some women are entering and flourishing in senior leadership positions, they are few in number. There are consequences of women's under-representation including depressed employment and promotion opportunities, democratic deficit, under-representation in decision-making fora and the reproduction of cultural messages to students, staff and wider society that suggest that women are unsuited to leadership. Multi-dimensional social, cultural, economic and institutional barriers to women in leadership exist, but there are also enablers including training and development, support and mentorship

and international networks and mobility. However, there is an urgent need to revision leadership to make it more attractive and hospitable to women and men, rather than focusing simply on counting more women into existing systems and structures.

Summary of Research Findings

Policy

- **Poor record on gender equality**. Five of the South Asian countries in the study (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) rank between 68 and 141 out of 142 countries in the Global Gender Gap (WEC, 2014). Afghanistan is unranked.

- **Gender is often an absent category of analysis** in higher education policy- unless it refers to participation rates of students.

- **Quality, rather than equality**. The dominant discourses in higher education leadership are frequently posed in the gender-neutral language of the knowledge economy with the emphasis on quality assurance, good governance, internationalisation, the digital economy, widening participation and concern for development of capacity in science and technology (STEM).

- When gender policies do exist, there is an absence of attention to **strategic management** of their implementation.

- There is an absence of **gender-disaggregated statistics** held at country or regional level with which to inform and evaluate effective policy implementation. The absence of gender disaggregated statistics for staff means that progress is not being monitored or managed.

- The statistics that are available provide **no evidence of any linear trends** in the gender distribution of academic staff in higher education, or in academic leadership. In a context of HE expansion, the numbers of women faculty may have increased, but the low representation of women, particularly in more senior positions, remains substantially unchanged.

- There is an absence of **research-based evidence** with which to inform policy development on gender and leadership in the region.

Barriers to Women's Leadership

- **The Power of the socio-cultural**: While there have been some women heads of state in the region (Sheikh Hasina is the current Prime Minister of Bangladesh and in 1960 in Sri Lanka, Sirimavo Bandaranaike was the first female Prime Minister in the world), women are largely still identified with the domestic sphere and with caring/nurturing, extended family roles.
Socio-economic backgrounds and socio-cultural belief systems were reported by participants in the interviews as significant constraints to women pursuing academic careers. Societies have potent messages about what is considered gender appropriate behaviour e.g. women should not be in authority over men.

- **Social class and caste** intersected with gender to determine which women could enter leadership positions. Women from more privileged socio-economic backgrounds often reported family support and cultural capital that helped them navigate education and employment structures. Opportunities were highly uneven across the region, and most often associated with urban elite families.

- **Lack of investment in women**: The absence of structured interventions to develop women's leadership was widely reported. Successful senior women discussed how they had had to learn on the job, or seek out their own development - often overseas. There were no formal mentoring arrangements, very few development programmes and no structured capacity-building or career advice.

- **Organisational culture**: Studies of academic cultures and reports in the interviews point to the patriarchal nature of higher education institutions (HEIs). They are frequently represented as unfriendly and unaccommodating to women. This is experienced as gender discrimination and bias, and in extreme terms, as gender based violence (symbolic and actual) on HE campuses including sexual harassment, and stalking.

- **Perceptions of leadership**: Many women in this study perceived leadership as a diversion from their commitment to research and scholarship, seeing it as a set of unattractive administrative functions requiring a 24/7 commitment in a globally competitive and performance-oriented academic culture. The few who had entered senior leadership were pleased with what they had been able to achieve, but stressed the lack of formal training and development for the position. It was assumed that their academic skills and competencies would be transferable into leadership.

- **Recruitment and selection**: Appointment processes for leadership positions were critiqued by 14 people in the interviews and the literature for their political and/ or precarious nature, lacking transparency and susceptible to gender bias. The appointment of leaders was often a political process, explicitly or implicitly, which required lobbying and the construction of highly visible public profiles. This often worked against women who were excluded from influential networks and coalitions because of their sex, domestic responsibilities or codes of sexual propriety.

- **Family**: Expectations of caregiving were described as constraining the extent that women can engage in HE careers. However, family support was also cited as critical to women academics' career progression.

- **Gender and authority**: The association of leadership with particular types of masculinity (competitive, ruthless and politically networked) meant that many women do not think of themselves as leaders, or resist assuming positions which could leave them isolated and subject to hostility from colleagues who do not recognise their authority).

- **Corruption**- The construction of leaders as being vulnerable to allegations of bribery and corruption was cited in the interviews. It was also suggested that they would be viewed as having gained leadership positions via corrupt practices.

Enablers

- **Internationalisation** and opportunities for mobility, networks and research partnerships. These contacts, not only provided resources, but also introduced women to new knowledge, contacts and professional approaches.

- **Institutional policies** and practices including affirmative action, work/life balance and family-friendly interventions. However, it was thought essential that policies are accompanied by strategic implantation plans.

- **Women-only** leadership development courses that offer practical support, but are also at an appropriate theoretical and research-informed level for senior women academics.

- **Mentoring programmes** at formal and informal levels.

- **Gender sensitisation programmes**- It was thought essential that women and men were made more aware of how gender operates as a verb as well as a noun in academic life. For example, it is not just about counting more women into existing systems and structures, but should include an understanding of how gender differences are produced and maintained by social and organisational practices.

- **Private higher education** - There is limited and somewhat contradictory literature on how the emergence of private education is affecting opportunities for women academics to enter leadership positions. The significant rise of the private sector (including women-only institutions) is providing complex and contradictory opportunities for women's leadership. For example, the Asian University for Women (AUW) in Bangladesh (a women-only university) and Symbiosis University in India both have female vice-chancellors.

- **Women-only learning spaces -** The preference for sex-segregated education in some contexts (often associated with religious belief systems) means that some single-sex higher education institutions are emerging. These create some opportunities for women to enter leadership positions. However, these leadership positions can be viewed as less prestigious that those in the co-educational sector.

- **Professional Development e.**g. opportunities for doctoral study, and regular updating.

Recommendations for Future Action

Policy

- Gender to be mainstreamed into higher education policy in relation to students and staff, with equality seen as a central constituent in quality.

- Policies on gender equality and gender mainstreaming need to be developed and accompanied by strategic action plans, resource allocation and reporting mechanisms. These should include time lines, goals/ performance indicators and effective evaluation procedures.

- Policy needs to be informed by gender-disaggregated statistics that are updated regularly and made readily accessible. These need to be for HE staff across different employment categories.

- Policies on recruitment and selection of senior leaders need to be reviewed to aim for more transparency and accountability in decision-making.

Developing Women

- Investment in women's capacity-building is essential in all countries. This includes research-informed, women-only leadership development programmes; access to doctoral degrees; training and continuous professional development opportunities, mentorship programmes and networks.

Research and Teaching

- More evidence is required from research studies on women in leadership to inform policies and practices in the region. Gender also could be integrated more successfully into research networks in the region (EIU, 2014a)

- The socio-cultural challenges identified in this study to be addressed via the curriculum e.g. Gender Studies, and also through professional development for staff e.g. gender sensitisation programmes.

Our study suggests that women are not being identified and prepared for leadership. There is also evidence globally that when women do aspire for leadership, they are frequently rejected from the most senior positions (Manfredi et al., 2014). However, we also found that many women academics are reluctant to aim for senior leadership and perceive it as an unattractive career option. There is an urgent need to revision leadership to make it more attractive and hospitable to women and men, rather than focusing simply on counting more women into existing systems and structures.

Chapter 1: Creating Knowledge from Sounds and Silences

Aims

This research aimed to seek existing knowledge and baseline data from literature, policies, change interventions and available statistics on the situation for women in higher education leadership in South Asia. It also aimed to collect original data via 30 interviews with women and men in the region, and to construct recommendations about what specific future actions and interventions for change could be implemented in South Asia. The British Council in Pakistan commissioned the research in response to concerns about the under-representation of women in senior leadership positions in higher education (HE) in South Asia. It builds on British Council investments in this topic more globally that included workshops in Hong Kong, Kuwait, Japan and Dubai on the topic of *Absent Talent: Women in Research and Academic Leadership*, and panel presentations at the *Going Global* Conferences in 2012, 2013 and 2014. The South Asian region in this study includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka- together these countries account for 25% of the world's population (EIU, 2013a).

Higher Education in South Asia

The region is characterised by its expansion of higher education systems - often described as unfunded and under-resourced. South Asian universities currently do not have any universities in the Top 200 in international rankings/ league tables, and the policy priority is to raise quality and standards in many of the countries in the region (THE, 2014). There are also concerns about graduate employability and lack of postgraduate provision and research. The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) estimate that there are currently 31 million undergraduate students in tertiary level education in the region- a participation rate of 43%, of which 13 million are women (EIU, 2014b).

Ramachandran (2010) suggested that there are 74 females enrolled in tertiary education for every 100 males. The expansion is largely attributed to the rise of the middle classes in the region, with increasing aspirations for higher education and professional lifestyles. Other features include the increasing number of private higher education institutions, the development of women-only provisions including the Asian University for Women (AUW) in Bangladesh and the Fatimah Jinnah Women's University in Pakistan, and the lack of women in postgraduate education and in leadership positions in universities. Three surveys of women academics in Commonwealth Universities were reported by Lund (1998) and Singh (2002, 2008), with Singh (2013) and Singh & Garland (2013) providing overviews. Figure 1 below shows the percentage of female Executive Heads and is compiled from data in these studies.

Figure 1: HE Institutions in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Percentage and Total of Female Executive Heads. Years 1997, 2000, 2006
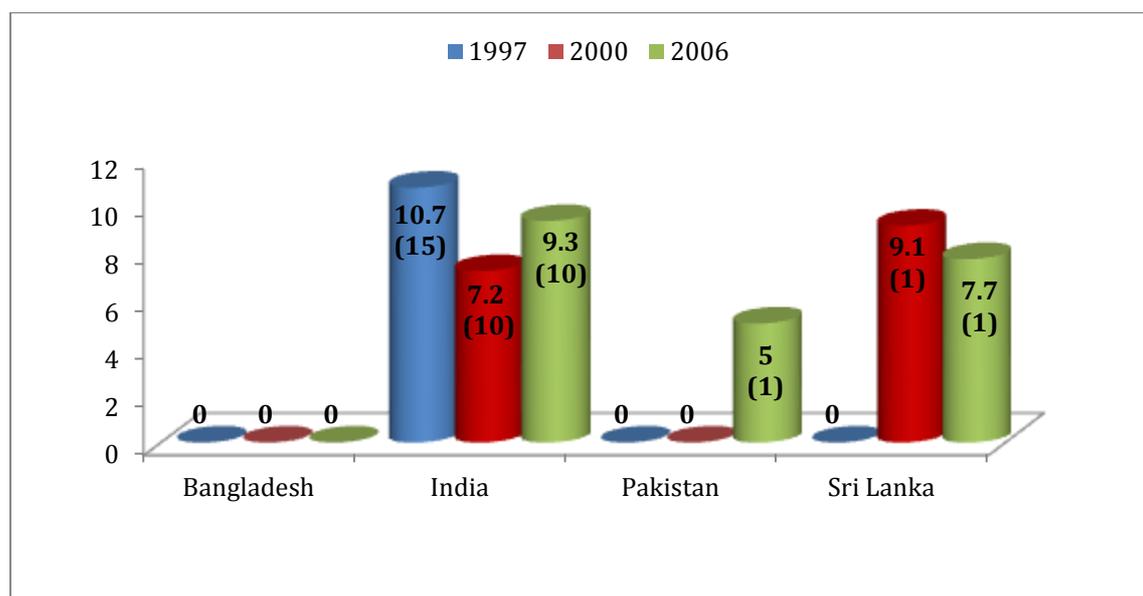
Source: elaborated from Singh (2008)

These surveys also showed South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) as having the second lowest percentage (22.1%) for female participation in senior lecturer positions and above after East Africa (15.8%), although the range was wide, e.g. between Pakistan (15%) and Sri Lanka (34.9%). It seems that while women's participation at undergraduate level is increasing in the region, there is still an absence of women staff in senior positions.

Figure 2: HE Institutions in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Percentage and Total of Female Deans
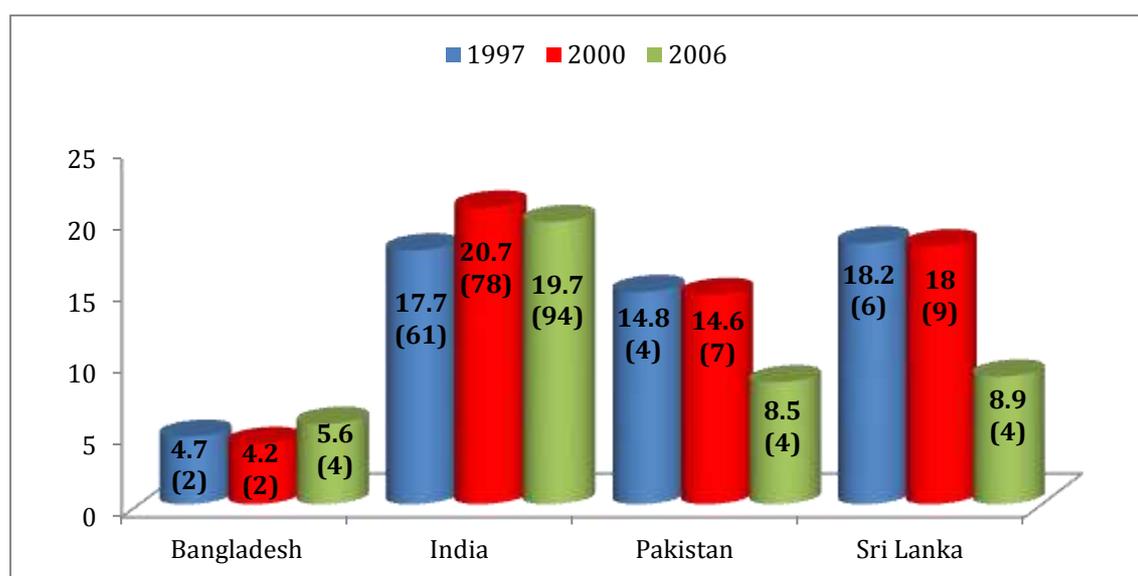
Source: elaborated from Singh (2008)

Figure 3: HE Institutions in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Percentage and Total of Female Professors. Years 1997, 2000, 2006
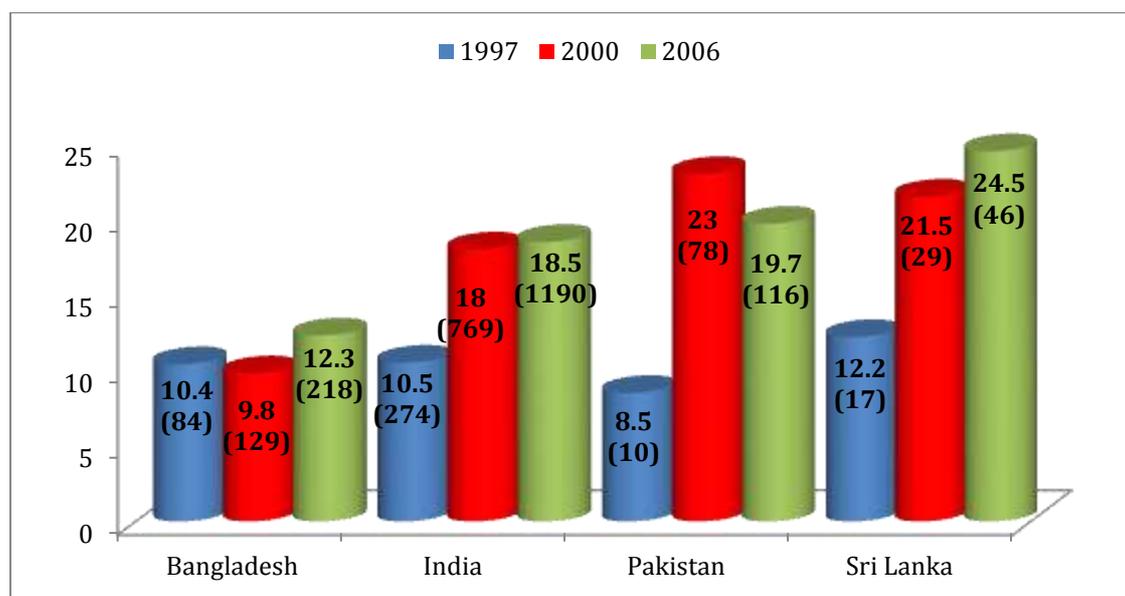
Source: elaborated from Singh (2008)

Figure 4: HE Institutions in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Total of Female Professors. Years 1997, 2000, 2006, 2010

	1997	2000	2006	2010	2012
Bangladesh	84	129	218		
India	274	769	1190		
Pakistan	10	78	116		
Sri Lanka	17	29	46	113	164
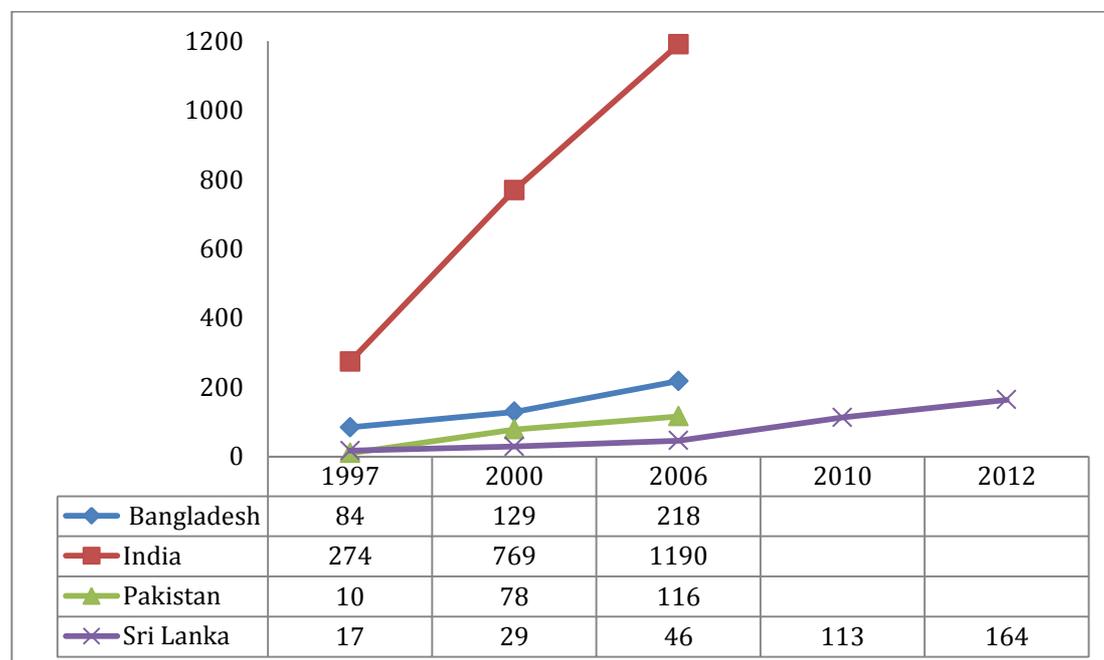
Source: elaborated from Singh (2008) and UGC Annual Reports (Sri Lanka) for 2010 and 2012

Figure 5: HE Institutions in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Percentage and Total of Female Heads and Directors. Years 1997, 2000, 2006
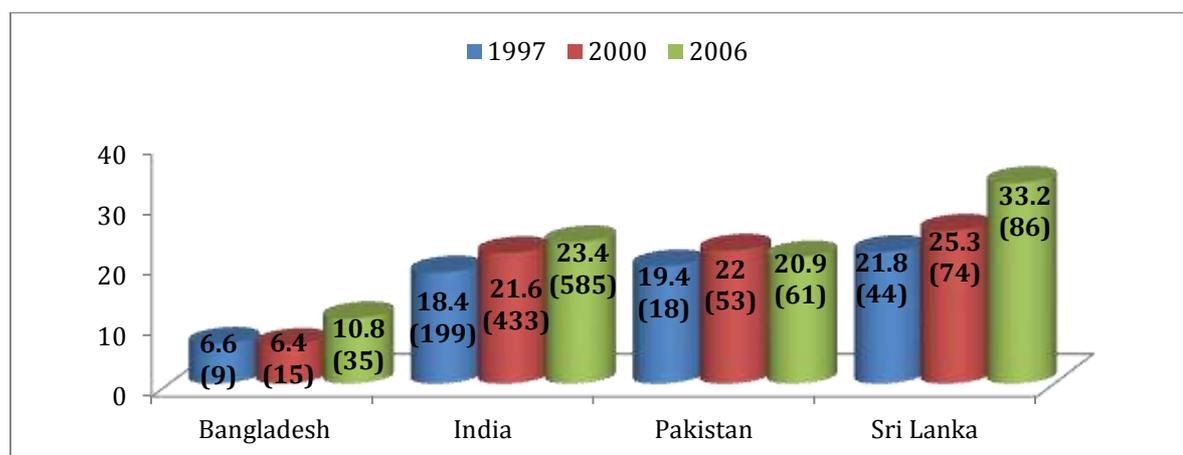
Source: elaborated from Singh (2008)

Research Methods

1. Reviewing Policies and Literature

The research utilised three main methods of data collection: critical review of literature and policies: statistical analysis of available datasets, and semi-structured interviews with 30 respondents (19 women and 11 men) in the region. The interviews revealed a range of original findings from the 30 voices in the study. However, the literature and policy review and statistical analysis also highlighted multiple silences and absences of data e.g. lack of gender disaggregated statistics or attention to gender in higher education policy.

The literature and policy review included the following questions:

1. What knowledge, studies, policy documentation and interventions exist on the topic of women in higher education leadership in the South Asian region?
2. What are the central findings, issues and challenges highlighted in studies to date?

The review of South Asian literature was set against findings from the global academy. For example, the pattern of male prevalence in senior leadership positions is visible in countries with diverse policies and legislation for gender equality. Morley (2013) draws on diverse statistical sources to show that in 2009, 19% of professors in the UK were women, 20% in Norway, and 28% in the USA, but 0% in Hong Kong- a country that is racing up the global league tables for the quality of its HEIs. The UK now has 20.5% women professors (ECU, 2013). However, Jarboe (2013) reports that only 17% of the 166 HEIs in the UK have female Vice-Chancellors. She Figures (EC, 2012) (data sets from the European Commission) reports that women represent only 20% of full professors and 15.5 % of heads of institutions in the Higher Education sector in the European Union. The exclusion of women from senior leadership roles is a recurrent theme in studies of women in HE in the Global North (e.g. Bagilhole & White, 2011). It has also emerged as a theme in studies from the Global South in the past two decades *e.g.* from Ghana (Ohene, 2010; Prah, 2002); Kenya (Onsongo, 2004); Nigeria (Adadevoh, 2001; Odejide *et al.,* 2006; Odejide,

2007; Pereira, 2007); Pakistan (Rab, 2010; Shah, 2001); and Sri Lanka (Gunawardena *et al.*, 2006). Research studies from both the Global South and the Global North, are attempting to offer some explanatory frameworks for women's absence from higher education (HE) leadership (Morley, 2013). Common themes include:

- The Gendered Division of Labour e.g. inside the workplace in addition to women's care responsibilities in the private domain.

- Gender Bias and Misrecognition e.g. women's skills and competencies are not seen or valued.

- Management and Masculinity e.g. the belief that men are more suited to positions of authority.

- Greedy Organisations e.g. the notion that leadership involves an unhealthy long-hours' culture that works against the principles of work/life balance.

One finding from this study was that gender is often an absent category of analysis in higher education policy, unless it relates to the participation of female students. The dominant discourses in higher education leadership are frequently posed in the gender-neutral language of the knowledge economy with the emphasis on quality assurance, good governance, internationalisation, the digital economy, widening participation and concern for development of capacity in science and technology (STEM).

In terms of literature, we found very few studies in the region that focused specifically on women and higher education leadership, with the exception of Pakistan and statistical overviews conducted by the ACU. The studies which were identified highlighted the following as key issues:

Main Findings from the Literature

Macro-level (society/ policy)

- **Structures of Inequality** - Gender inequalities in women's academic career progression intersect with other structures of inequality such as social class, caste, religion, ethnicity and language.

- **The Power of the Socio-Cultural -** Backgrounds and beliefs systems were reported as significant constraints to women pursuing academic careers. The primary identification of women was typically thought to be with the private, domestic sphere, in association with caring/nurturing extended family roles. Societies had potent messages about gender appropriate behaviour.

- **Implementation Gaps**- Gaps are identified between policy commitments to gender equality and the implementation of those policies.

- **Lack of Attention to Women and Leadership**- Although encompassing Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka only, the studies by Lund (1998) and Singh (2002, 2008), funded by the Association of Commonwealth Universities, suggest little improvement over that period in women's representation in leadership in higher education.

- **Gender-Based Violence -** Women's mobility and well-being was seriously constrained by the existence of physical and symbolic violence against women.

Meso-level (institutional)

- **Organisational Culture**- Studies of academic cultures point to their patriarchal nature; their unfriendliness to women and women's needs extends into concerns in some cases about gender discrimination and gender violence on HE campuses.

- **Recruitment and Selection**- Appointment processes for leadership positions have also been critiqued for their political and/ or precarious nature. Academic appointment and promotion processes are critiqued for their lack of transparency and gender biases.

- **Private Higher Education** - There is limited and somewhat contradictory literature on how the emergence of private education is affecting opportunities for women academics to enter leadership positions.

- **Women Only Spaces -** The preference for sex-segregated education in some contexts (often associated with religious belief systems) means that some single-sex higher education institutions are emerging. These create some opportunities for women to enter leadership positions. However, these leadership positions are often viewed as less prestigious that those in the co-educational sector.

- **Enablers** - include internationalisation, women-only leadership development courses, networking, mentoring, and gender sensitisation programmes.

Micro-Level (individual/ relational)

- Family- Expectations of caregiving can constrain the extent that women can engage in HE careers. However, family support can also be critical to women academics' career progression.

- Gender discrimination- Second- class citizenship has an impact on women's career opportunities e.g. women do not think of themselves as leaders.

2. Statistical Review

The absences in policy and literature are followed through into uneven data collection. Whereas some regions including the European Union have comprehensive databases such as the She Figures resource (e.g. EC, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012), South Asian countries appear to have very few publically accessible statistics on women staff in universities. The project sought to engage with those statistics that were available in the region. We made strenuous efforts to locate statistics, often without any success. At an early stage of our research, the websites of the relevant higher education bodies such as the University Grants Committee (UGC) websites in each of the six countries were scoured to seek whatever data might be available. This initial searching demonstrated that, with the possible exception of Sri Lanka, public reporting of such data was not common practice in this region.

While some websites provided annual reports on the higher education systems for the country, most did not provide a disaggregated report of academic employment, by gender, and by different employment categories. Where gender disaggregated data did exist for different academic employment categories, this did not include gender-disaggregated data on women in leadership positions such as Vice-Chancellors, or Deans (information on who currently held these positions was sometimes available on individual institutional websites, but this was not being collected for any of the annual reports identified). We also pursued the availability of statistics with various personal contacts. Through these, we discovered the publication by Islam (2012), which provided some statistical information on the gender composition of HE staffing in Bangladesh.

We were supported in our efforts to identify statistical sources by the British Council, after our initial reports to them of the lack of publically available data. Through their contacts, further data (not available publically) were shared with us which shows the gender composition of academic staffing of HEIs in Afghanistan from 2001-2012. However, no breakdown of this by different categories of staffing was available. This process also opened up communications with key officials involved in statistical reporting for the HE systems of India and Sri Lanka. In the case of India, this led to confirmation that no gender-disaggregated data for academic employment was available for the years preceding AISHE (Government of India, 2013), which provided this data for 2010-11. It was suggested that similar data for later years would be published in the future, but this had not been done at the time of this analysis.

For Sri Lanka, where data on academic employment by gender and employment category (also disaggregated by fields of education/discipline, and for different universities) are published within the University Grants Committee (UGC) Annual Reports, we requested that the data provided were made available in a format which facilitated analysis. We also earlier requested that annual reports for previous years be shared, as the UGC website suggests that similar annual reports have been conducted since 2002-03. However, no further files were shared with us.

Main Findings from the Statistical Review

Analysis of the statistical data that were available suggest that no linear trends in women's representation in higher education leadership can be identified. In a context of considerable expansion of higher education leadership, the numbers of female academics may have increased, but this does not seem to have changed in any significant way the gender distribution of male to female academics (see for example Figure 6 below in relation to Afghanistan). Where some gender-disaggregated data were available for different categories of employment at institutional level (see for example Figure 8 in relation to Bangladesh, and Figure 16 in relation to Sri Lanka), there was also no evidence of uniform or linear improvements. Increases in women's representation in one year could be followed by decreases the following year. Where data were available there are significant differences by disciplinary field of studies, with social sciences/humanities and medicine being feminised, while other STEM fields remain male domains.

3. Interviews

Unlike our statistical review, the interviews generated considerable amounts of data. The interviews included asking respondents about what they believe enables and impedes women from entering senior leadership positions, their experiences and aspirations for leadership, their views on the under-representation of women and what actions for change they recommend. The respondents were mainly drawn from participants in the British Council dialogues on women in leadership in higher education. In the case of Nepal, we relied on a long chain of our contacts to locate respondents as this country is often unrepresented in international seminars and conferences. Respondents were from the following South Asian countries: Afghanistan (2: 1 female, 1 male); Bangladesh (5: 2 female, 3 male); India (10: 7 female, 3 male); Nepal (3: all female) Pakistan (5: 2 female, 3 male) and Sri Lanka (5: 4 female, 1 male). In terms of occupational status, they included 5 Vice-Chancellors (2 female, 3 male), 1 President (male), 2 Deputy or Pro Vice-Chancellors (both female), 4 Deans (all female), 2 Associate or Vice Deans (1 female, 1 male), 5 Directors (3 female, 2 male), 4 Professors (2 female, 2 male), 3 Assistant Professors (1 female, 2 male), 1 Associate Professor (female), 2 Senior Lecturers (both female) and 1 Lecturer (female).

Main Findings from the Interviews

1. Policy- the importance of affirmative action, work/life balance and gender mainstreaming strategic interventions. Where gender equality policies exist, implementation seems weak, and these do not address HE leadership.
2. Recruitment and Selection- often highly political and lacking in transparency.
3. Socio-cultural beliefs that women are more preoccupied with domestic responsibilities than with institutional leadership.
4. Professional Development - lack of structured opportunities for capacity-building and leadership training. Current practices are fairly haphazard e.g. the right mentor, international invitations.
5. International mobility a key enabler e.g. overseas conferences, postgraduate programmes.
6. Gender is intersected with other structures of inequality e.g. class and caste, with more socio-economically privileged women having the social capital to support them to enter leadership.
7. Gendered professional and political networks can be major exclusionary devices for women.
8. Attractions include authority, influence, rewards and the power to make a difference.
9. Disattractions include inappropriateness or dislike of politics and networking, male domination, administration and leaving one's research/ discipline. Isolation and being the only woman at the top combined with hostility from colleagues who do not recognise women's authority also deterred some women from seeking seniority. Expectations of women leaders are perceived as doubly demanding, with lack of support from colleagues.
10. Gender-based violence on campus and in wider society e.g. sexual harassment, acid-throwing, ragging.

The following chapters focus on each of the six countries included in this study.

Chapter 2:
AFGHANISTAN

The Higher Education System

The higher education system in Afghanistan is re-emerging from conflict-torn damage to its infrastructure and human resources in the 1980s and 1990s. Education attainment levels declined and now higher education enrollment in Afghanistan is one of the lowest in the world at 3% (World Bank, 2013). Women comprised 19% of all students enrolled in public universities and higher education institutions in 2012 (MoHE, 2013). Explanations for under-representation include girls' exclusion from primary and secondary educational opportunities and poor services and facilities for young women to attend university including lack of transport, sanitation and residential facilities in campuses. It is estimated that there are 19 public universities and 12 public higher education degree awarding institutes and approximately 68 private higher education institutions, which offer degrees and professional courses (MoHE, 2013, cited in World Bank 2013). Acknowledging differences in definitions across the region, the EIU (2013) estimate that there are 26 public and 43 private universities. The EIU (2014b) also estimate that the proportion of women Vice-Chancellors is currently 0.04%.

Where are the Women?

No statistical data were publically available from the Ministry of Higher Education (http://mohe.afghanistan.af/en/page/396 statistics page had 'under construction' message). Some reports e.g. World Bank (2013) and Bahrustani (2013) provided some data on staff by gender and qualifications, citing Ministry of Higher Education reports. With British Council support, gender disaggregated summary data for academic staffing for all Afghan HEIs were made available, as presented in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Afghanistan: Total and Percentage of Female and Male Academics. Years 2004-2012
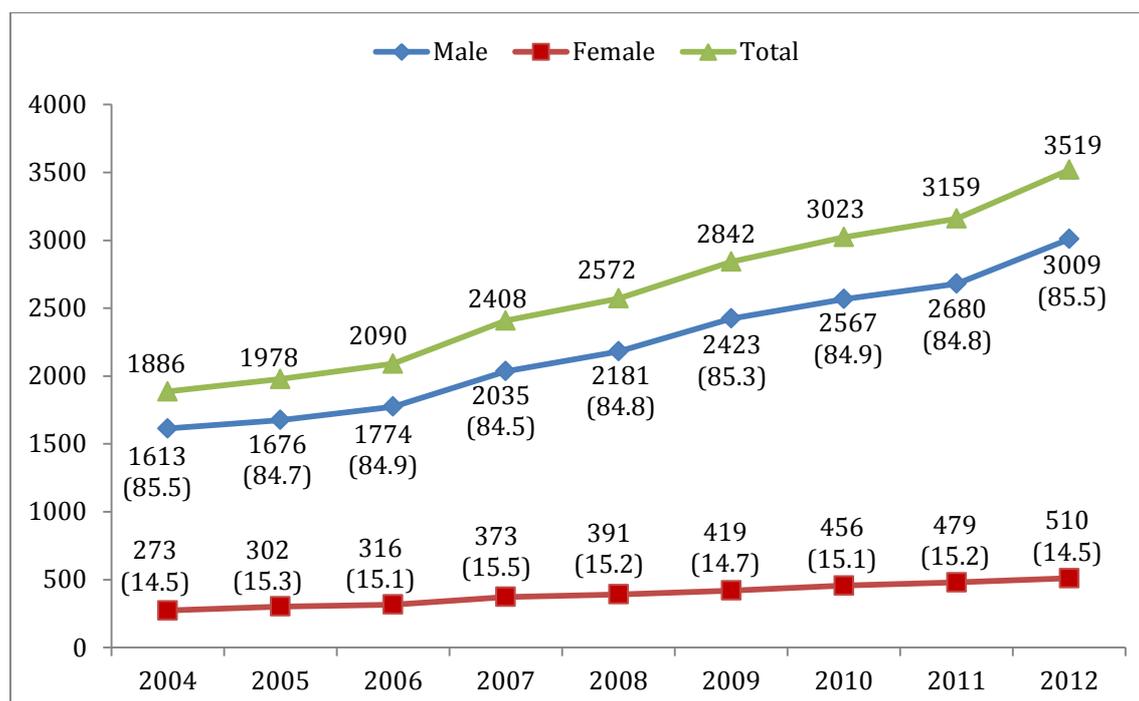
Source: elaborated from British Council, Afghanistan (2014)

Figure 6 shows the numbers of male and female academics employed in higher education in Afghanistan from 2004 to 2012 (no disaggregation by employment category was available). In absolute numbers male academics over this period has almost doubled, rising from 1613 in 2004 to 3009 in 2012, and the absolute numbers of female academics reflects a similar level of increase, rising from 273 in 2004 to 510 in 2012. However, this also means that the relative proportions of male to female academics show no change, being 14.5% in 2004 and in 2012, with only minimally higher representation of women during the intervening years. This suggests a reproduction of gender inequality, despite the policy commitment to affirmative action reported below.

Gender Policies

In terms of policy commitments to gender equality, Afghanistan has affirmative action and is, according to Farhoumand-Sims (2008), the only Muslim country to have signed The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) *without* qualifications. The Afghan Ministry for Women's Affairs (2008: v) National Action Plan for women includes the objective for 'increasing [women's] leadership and participation in all spheres of life'.

Gender equality, including affirmative action, is included in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy 2008-2013; Afghanistan Ministry for Women's Affairs National Action Plan for Women 2008-2018, and also in the Afghanistan Ministry of Higher Education Strategic Plan 2010- 2014.

This states that:

> *Special attention needs to be given to increasing the number of women students and women in higher education teaching positions, especially at the senior level where currently only two women hold ranks as high as associate professors and only one half of one percent (0.5%) of women have professional ranks.* (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Higher Education, 2009:5)

In international policy interventions, gender is often only related to school-based education. For example, the UK Government's International Development Committee (2014) identified women's rights and girls' education as fundamental concerns, with no mention of HE.

Other higher education policies often fail to mention gender. For example, the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education *Strengthening Higher Education Program* (SHEP) (2006) was a four and a half year programme, ending in 2010. Participating HEIs included Balkh, Herat, Kabul, Kabul Polytechnic, Kandahar and Nangarh. The focus for development was on engineering, management, finance/economics, IT, language, with no mention of gender. Afghanistan is unranked in the 2014 Global Gender Gap (WEC, 2014), but is cited as being the third worst country in the world (149th out of 151) for gender parity in a parallel UNDP ranking (UNDP, 2014)

Research Studies

A UNESCO/UNDP supported study in three universities in Afghanistan (Kabul, Balkh, Herat) conducted by the Gender Studies Institute, Kabul (2010) found that gender discrimination was prevalent, and some women felt treated as 'second class citizens of the university' (p.18). The study also concluded that women had 'less engagement in university activities and were given fewer roles to play. Compared to men, women (students and staff) [had] less access and opportunities at the universities' (p.18). Ahmed-Ghosh's (2013) study also pointed to a long history of social traditionalism and patriarchal kinship arrangements; power of tribal rulers in defining the place of women, tribal traditional law taking precedence over Islamic and constitutional law; confining women to the private sphere and debarring them from education, despite attempts at reform throughout modern monarchies and later regimes (Mujahedeen then Taliban). Azizi's (2008) Doctor of Education thesis examined the roles, beliefs, and leadership styles of male/female sample of leaders from HE/Parliament respectively. The findings included:

- Leaders having limited experience in higher education
- Lack of motivation for HE leaders
- Insufficient funding
- Ethnic biases
- Lack of organization and resources,
- Need for support and security.

This study was also quoted in EIU (2013) on appointments being political rather than based on academic criteria.

Farhoumand-Sims (2009) conducted a review of Afghanistan and international human rights and the gap between formal policy commitments and women's realities, pointing to the continuing oppression of women across the Global North *and* South. It viewed the future with caution while acknowledging that economic empowerment in conjunction with education is an essential route to political empowerment.

Change Interventions

Change interventions have been motivated by discourses of women and development and empowerment or 'smart economics'. Internationalisation has played a major part in opening Afghanistan up to interventions for gender equality. The following is an illustration of the types and range of recent projects:

- Gender Studies Institute in Kabul and Research Centre on Women and Gender Issues with UNESCO/UNDP support

- Externally supported leadership programmes (USAID 2014)

- British Council *Inspire* Leadership programme focusing on quality assurance, not women's leadership (British Council n.d)

- King's College, London programme addressing women's leadership in HE (KCL n.d)

- Asian University for Women, Bangladesh (aims include developing women leaders) has participation of Afghan students (AUW 2013a)

- Oruj Leadership and Management Institute/community college – to develop women's leadership in HE, with Bertini Fund support (Oruj, 2011)

- SOLA (School of Leadership Afghanistan) - a small, highly selective organisation founded in October 2008 to expand educational and leadership opportunities for the new generation of Afghan women (SOLA, n.d)

- USAID - Women's Dormitory Restoration project, financed by the United States Agency for International Development to facilitate women's participation in HE.

Structural Challenges to be Addressed

- **Low participation** of women in HE (SIDA, 2009); concern in HE research literature about access of women, mental health challenges in HE in conflict environment (Babury, 2013).

- **Gender based violence** e.g. in HE contexts (Gender Studies Institute, Kabul, 2010).

- **Lack of supply** of appropriately qualified women to enter HE as students and as staff members as a consequence of the exclusion of girls and women from formal education systems during the conflict period. Lack of women with postgraduate qualifications, especially doctoral degrees (Baharustani, 2012).

- **Lack of statistical data**- Afghanistan Ministry of Education announced data collection and management initiatives in its 2009 Strategic Plan (MoHE 2009), but gender disaggregated statistics for different staffing categories are not available (as reported above, with British Council support, figures were obtained for overall numbers of male and female academic staff since 2004).

Chapter 3: BANGLADESH

The Higher Education System

The higher education system in Bangladesh is characterised by an expansion of the private sector. Of its 87 universities only 32 are public and only 9 award PhDs. There is an 11% gross enrolment rate, described in UNESCO Bangkok (n.d) as one of the lowest in the world; they also report that only 31% of students at public universities are female (excluding the National University).

The EIU (2014b) estimate that currently 0.01% of Vice-Chancellors are women. However, there are no women Vice-Chancellors at co-educational public universities, only one at a co-educational private university (International American University of Bangladesh) and one at a women-only university (EIU, 2014b).

Bangladesh is home to the Asian University for Women (AUW). This is an independent, international university for women. The government donated land to the AUW in Chittagong. The University focuses on providing a high-quality liberal arts and sciences education to future women leaders, regardless of their background. AUW offers a one-year, pre-collegiate bridge programme called the Access Academy, as well as a four-year undergraduate programme. AUW provides need-based full scholarships to many of its students. Currently, AUW students come from 12 countries in Asia and the Middle East. Statistics are not presented on its website on the gender composition of its faculty; its Board of Trustees is made up of 10 males and 5 females, and its Board of Directors of 6 males and 5 females. According to AUW (2013), its leadership (Chancellor, Vice- Chancellor, Dean of Faculty, Dean of Students) are all female (AUW, 2013 a and b, AUW, n.d.)

Where are the Women?

Islam (2012) provides statistical data on HE staffing by institution for one year only (2010) and we obtained data for another year from UGC (2012). These data are disaggregated by gender for each Bangla HEI, but not by staffing category. The Bangladesh UGC pages link to a text in Bangla which reports on teachers, and other reports – many links did not however open. See http://www.ugc.gov.bd/teachers/.

Figure 7: Bangladesh: Percentage and Total of Female and Male Academics. Years 2010, 2012.
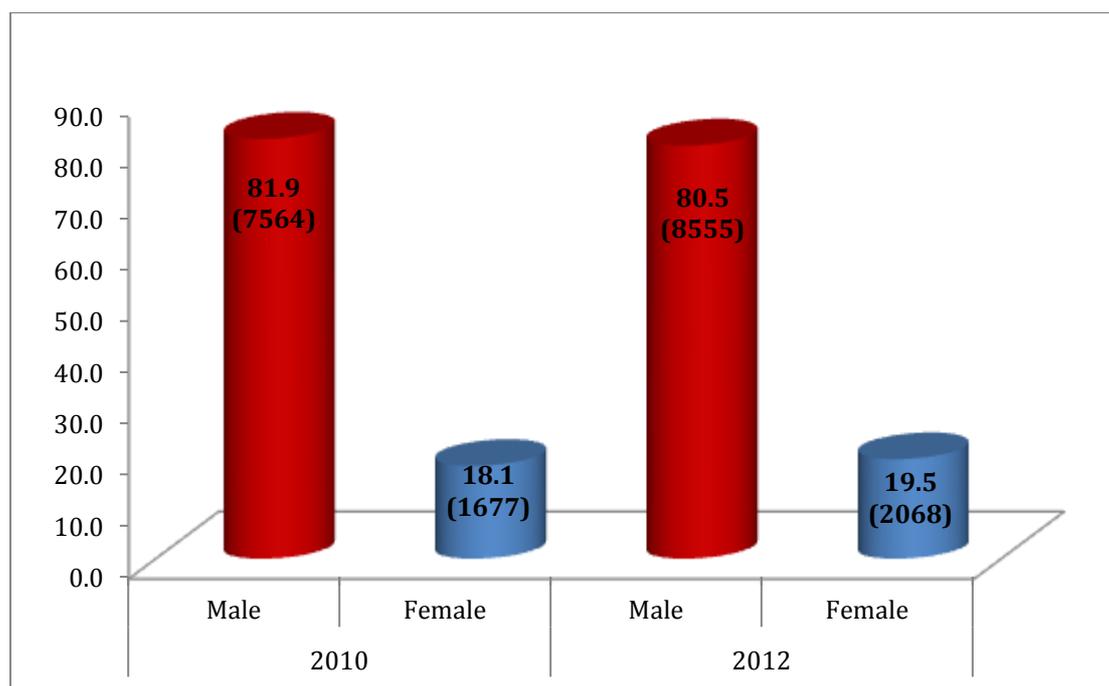
Source: Elaborated from Islam (2012) and Tarafdar (personal communication)

Figure 7 shows that women are in a substantial minority in Bangla HE and that the proportion of male to female academics has barely improved between 2010 and 2012 (both reflecting c. 60% more male to female academics).

Figure 8: Bangladesh: Percentage of Female Academics in Bangla Higher Education Institutions. Years 2010, 2012
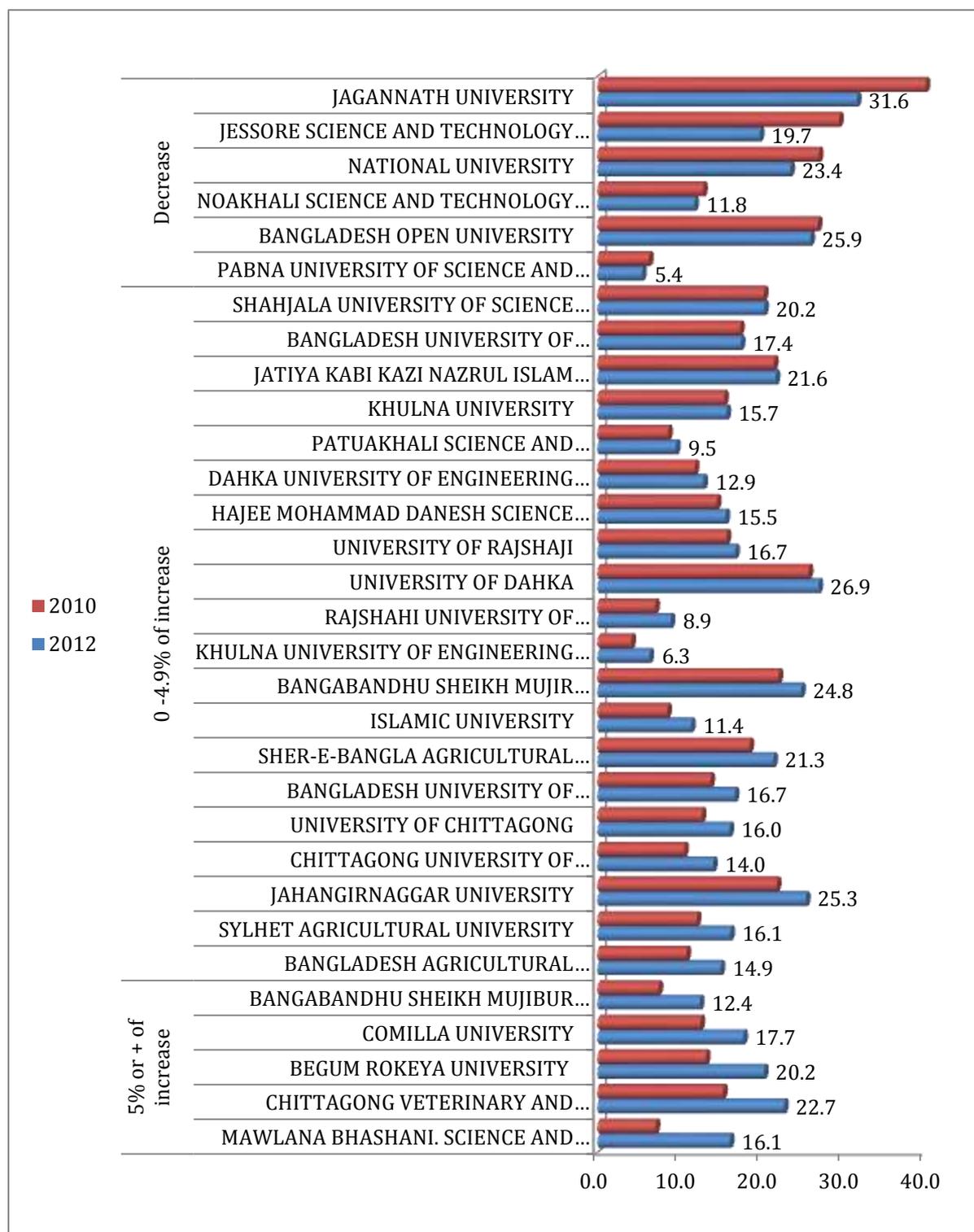
Source: elaborated from translations of Bangladesh University Grants Commission Annual Reports for 2010 and 2012 (Tarafdar, personal communication)

With respect to the distribution of female academics in individual universities, the lack of any significant improvement of women academics' representation is also apparent. In the majority of universities, the proportion of women academics has increased by less than 5% from 2010 to 2012. Moreover, six universities (the first 6 universities at the top of the graph) show a decreasing percentage of female academics. In two cases (Jannath University and Jessore Science and Technology University), the representation of woman academics diminished by around 10%. Only the last 5 universities (at the bottom of Figure 8) demonstrate an increase of between 5 and 10% in the proportion of women academics.

Figure 9: Bangladesh: Percentage and Total of Female Academics per Fields of Study. Years 2010, 2012*
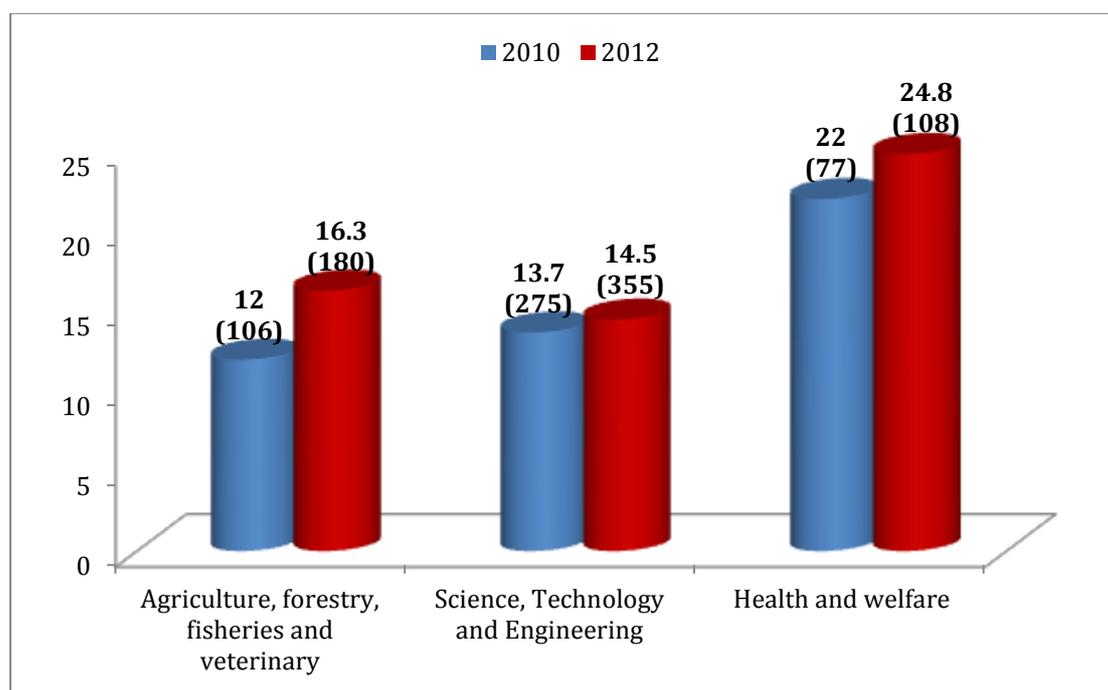
Source: elaborated from Bangladesh University Grants Commission Annual Report data for 2010 and 2012 (Tarafdar, personal communication)

*This excludes the following universities which had no information about participation in different fields of study: University of Dahka; University of Rajshaji; University of Chittagong; Jahangirnaggar University; Islamic University; Khulna University; National University; Bangladesh Open University; Jagannath University; Comilla University; Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University; Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University; Bangladesh University of Professionals; Begum Rokeya University.

Although not all Bangla Universities can be included in this analysis of women's representation in different fields of study, for those universities who provided relevant data, there are more male academics than women in all fields. A general improvement in the proportion of women academics between the years 2010 and 2012 can be discerned in the areas of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary, and Health and Welfare, in the former from 12% to 16.3%, and the latter from 22% to 24.8%. However, in Science, Technology and Engineering, there is no significant change.

Gender Policies

The National Education Policy (2010) does not seem to be available in Roman script, although the National Skills Development Policy (2011) is. While this is not aimed at HE, it includes the following evaluation of the work environment and a commitment to affirmative action (p.32):

> *11.10. The working environment in most training institutions is very male-dominated and not gender balanced, with males significantly over represented in senior management positions. Consequently, an affirmative action strategy will be developed and implemented to ensure that at least 30% of managerial and senior faculty positions are held by women and that the participation of disabled persons and other under-represented groups is encouraged.*

Bangladesh is ranked 68 out of 142 countries in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report (WEC, 2014).

Research Studies

There is a noticeable lack of recent high-impact research studies on women and leadership in Bangladesh. The literature that does exist discusses the weakness of Bangla HEIs e.g. Monem & Baniamin (2010) critique teaching methods, quality assurance, recruitment processes, and the politicisation of students and faculty, although they do not pay any attention to gender. A meeting of Heads of UGC (2004) shows regional HE leaders as having concerns for quality, qualifications frameworks, but not for women's leadership. The Leadership University College (2007) demonstrates a concern for Islamic education, but not for women's leadership. Many of the studies on women in higher education in Bangladesh were conducted some time ago and tend to include Bangladesh as one country in larger comparative studies e.g. Jayweera (1997a, b). Kabir (2010; 2013) critiques the neoliberalism at the core of a 20 year strategic plan implemented in 2006 e.g. linking education to market-driven forces, and also the unsatisfactory processes through which university leaders are appointed, although does not develop a gender perspective on this.

Change Interventions

As with Afghanistan, many of the drivers for change have come from internationalisation processes and practices, as the following projects indicate:

- **Asian University for Women** (AUW) is the first liberal arts university for women in South Asia and opened in 2008. It educates women from the region and beyond. Its curriculum includes a focus on women's leadership, and HE, although not necessarily combining these. AUW now has a new Grant of USD $6 million from the IKEA Foundation (AUW 2013a), bringing its overall commitment to AUW to $11 million. This funds full scholarships to 200 women students for all five years of their education (AUW, 2013b; n.d.).

- **Connecttask** – A memorandum of understanding between AUW (Chair: Cherie Blair) and L'Oreal (Connecttask 2013). Its interest is in women's leadership, but in commercial rather than HE settings. Jérôme Tixier, Executive Vice-President Human Resources, L'Oréal Group said:

The mission of the Asian University for Women, empowering women to become leaders of tomorrow, is an important one that resonates with L'Oréal's core values – to ensure a diversity of talent by promoting women at the highest level of the organisation.

- **British Council *Inspire* programme** (also Afghanistan, Pakistan) – this focuses on leadership in HE, but not on women's leadership.

Structural Challenges to be Addressed

There is a lack of publically accessible statistical data on women staff in higher education. The UGC Bangladesh Website - http://www.ugc.gov.bd/reports/ provides annual reports for 2010, 2011 and 2012, but files are often empty or in Bangla. UNESCO 2006/2012 Women in Science reports only have one page of statistics for 2012 for all education sectors, giving type of institution and management, student numbers, and numbers of female teachers. There are no data on women in management and no longitudinal data.

Chapter 4:
INDIA

The Higher Education System

India is one of the global economic rising powers, reflected in the development of scale and complexity of its higher education sector (Altbach, 2013). India had a nine-fold increase in planned higher education expenditure between 2007-12 (EIU, 2013). It is a challenge to keep track of the expansion of Indian HE. EIU (2013) estimate that there are 313 public and 154 private universities. The Government of India's *All India Survey of Higher Education*, for 2010-2011 (Government of India, 2013) reports that for the year 2010-2011, 178 universities were private; and seven universities were exclusively for women.

Gross enrolment ratio (GER) is reported to be 19.4% (for those of 18-23 years of age), with variations between district, and by scheduled caste and tribe and gender. The GER for males is 20.8; females 17.9%; for Scheduled Castes 13.5% and for Scheduled Tribes only 11%. Women constitute 44% of the 27.5 million students in Indian HE (Government of India, 2013: iii-ix), with Kerala enrolling 57% women but the Punjab only 35% women (EIU, 2014b).

Women constitute 1.4% of the professoriate and 3% of Vice-Chancellors (Banerjee and Polite, 2011). Major challenges for India include how to staff its rapidly expanding higher education sector, and how to guarantee quality and standards in such a large and diverse sector.

Where are the Women?

The *All India Survey of Higher Education* (Government of India, 2013) provides gender disaggregated analysis (and also analysis for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) for 2010-2011, but it is recognised as the first survey of its kind. Any similar reporting for subsequent years has not yet taken place. UGC Annual Reports provide data on staffing but do not disaggregate this by gender. See www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/pub/annualreport/annualreport_0910.pdf.

Figure 10: India: Percentages and Totals of Female and Male Academics. Year 2011
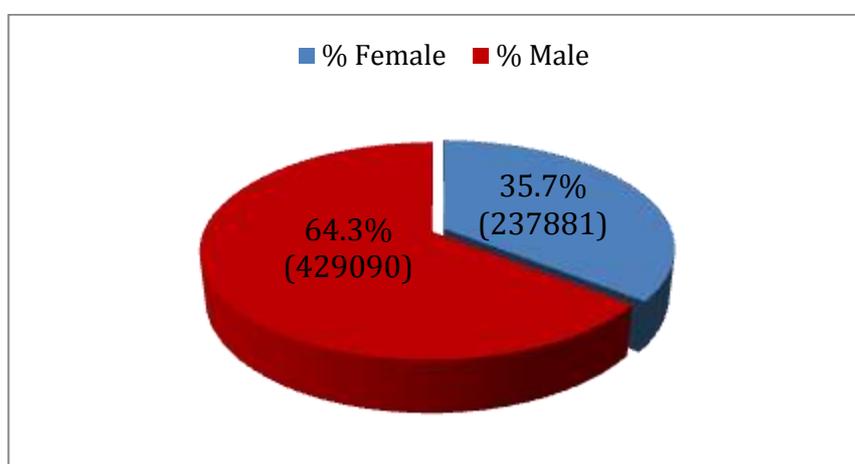
Source: elaborated from Government of India (2013)

Of a total of 666.971 academics in India, Government of India (2013) reports that 64.3% are male and 35.7% are women.

Figure 11: India: Percentage of Female Academics per State. Year 2011*
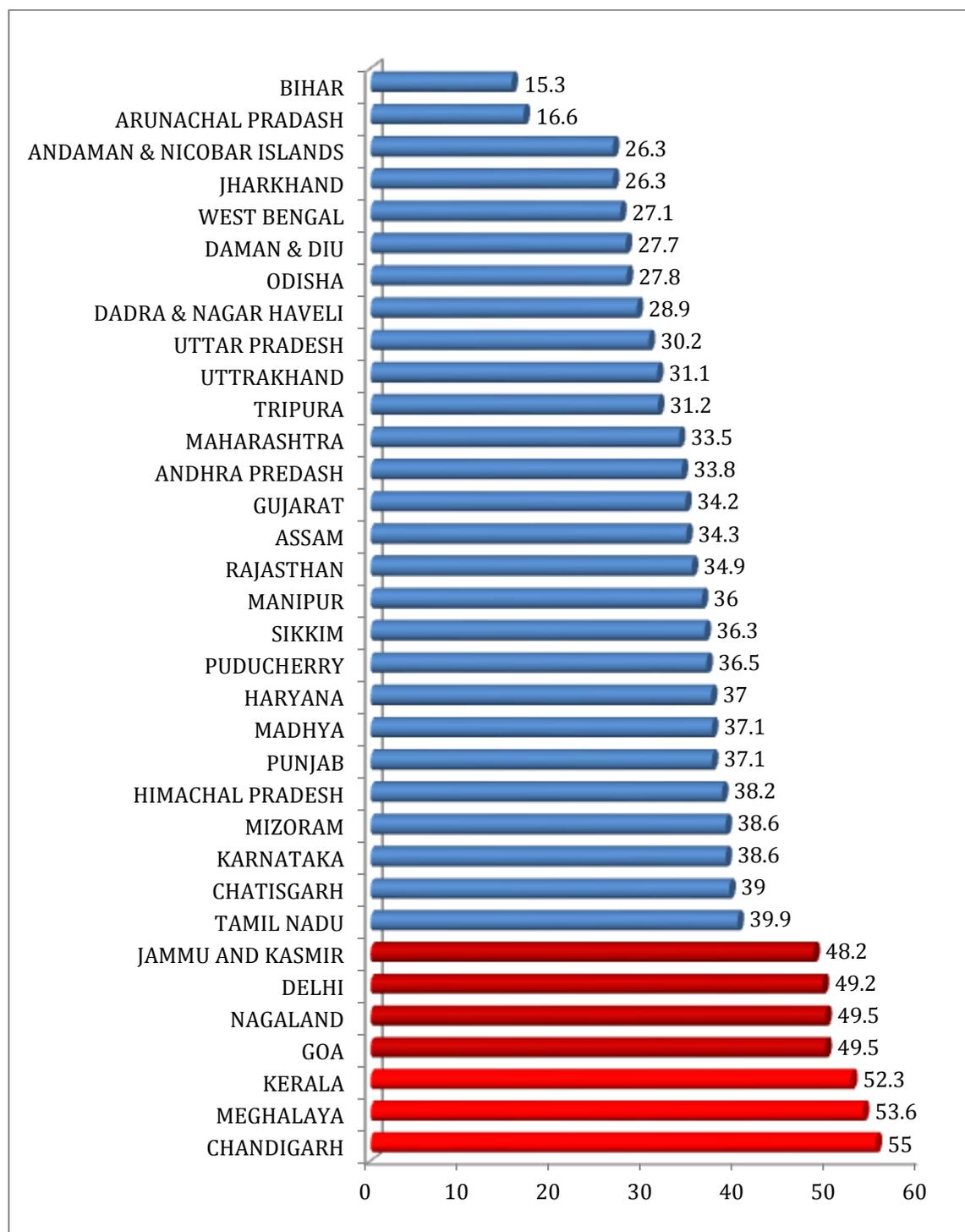
Source: elaborated from Government of India (2013)

* Lakshadweep is not included as no relevant data were provided.

In most Indian universities, the representation of female academics is less than 40%. Just seven universities (those in red at the bottom of Figure 11 above) have a more equal representation (including Kerala, Mghalaya and Chandigarh) where female representation is higher than 50%.

Figure 12: India: Percentage and Total of Female and Male Academics According to Academic Positions. Year 2011
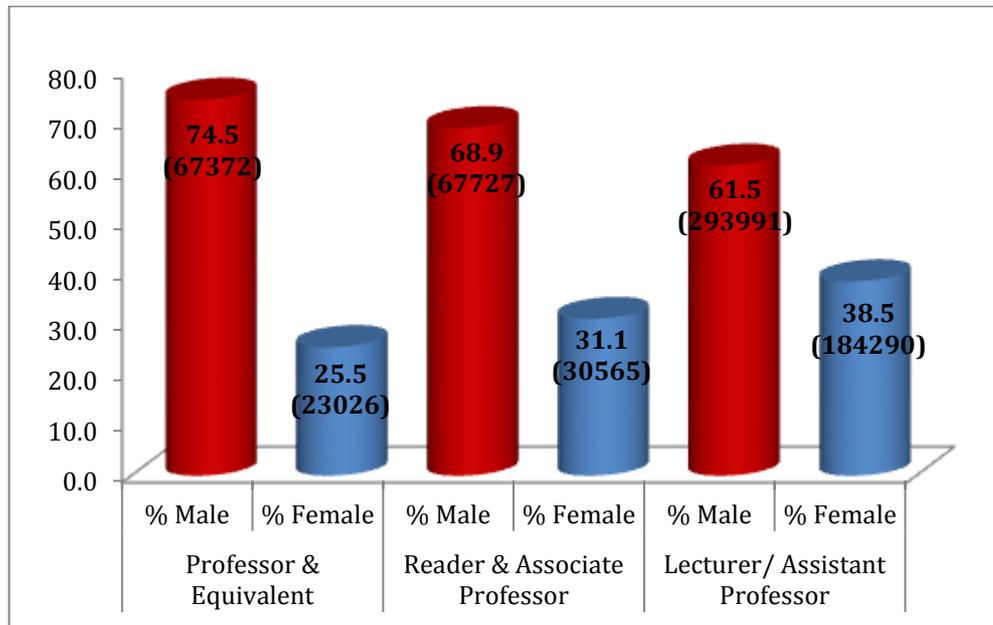
Source: elaborated from Government of India (2013)

While in all categories of academic positions women are under-represented, this increases for higher positions. Thus only 25.5% of Professors, 31.1% of Readers and Associate Professors, and 38.5% of Lecturers or Assistant Professors are women.

Figure 13: India: Percentage and Total of Female and Male Academics in Different Minority Categories. Year 2011
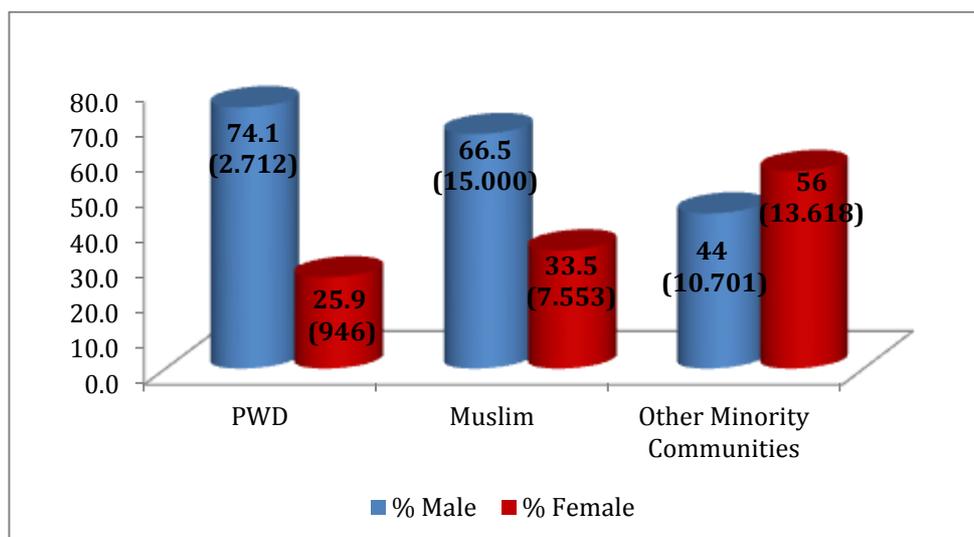
Source: elaborated from Government of India (2013)

*PWD: Person with Disability

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Within academics with disabilities, female academics are clearly under-represented in comparison to male academics, at only 25.9% (n=946). Female academics with disabilities represent only 1.9% of the overall total number of academics in India.

Muslim women are also under-represented in Indian higher education, both in relation to male academics and overall. Of those academics in India who are Muslim, only 33.5% are female. Furthermore, Muslim women academics comprise only 14.9% of the total number of academic staff in India.

Gender Policies

The Indian Government's Planning Commission 12th 5 year Plan 2012-17 Volumes 1 and 3 identify gender inequality as a key issue and show a concern for inclusion of all 'backward' groups (Scheduled Castes and Tribes) and also women in general.

Chanana (2013) cites 1986 policy declarations on education and gender equality when discussing interventions in progress following Verma *et al.* (2013). A major concern is still to make university campuses more women-friendly. This is the focus of a recent report, UGC India (2013b) (SHAKSAM), which followed up on Verma *et al.'s* study (2013), which had been commissioned by the Government of India after the rape and death of a female medical student in 2012. UGC India (2013b) makes recommendations on measures for Ensuring the Safety of Women and Programmes for Gender Sensitisation on Campuses. While focused predominantly on student cultures, this is critical of 'pervasive collective violence and the cult of charisma' which is seen as a 'recurrent feature' of South Asian cultures (p.143) which sustains and provides a justification for gender violence. The recommendations briefly address women's promotion in higher education:

> *'Glass ceilings' and fears over promotion must receive more attention, as the feedback received by the Task Force would indicate widespread practices of discrimination and harassment among women working in HEIs* (UGC India, 2013b: 85).

The recommendations also highlight the importance of Women's Studies Centres and 'Women's Development Cells', calling for these to be reinvigorated, at the same time as stressing that all staff, from VCs downwards, should be held accountable for change, rather than this being the sole responsibility of such units. Despite these strong recommendations, overall, there is a lack of attention to gender in many high-level statements on HE, even when addressing a 'faculty crunch' in HE (Academics India 2014). India is ranked 114 out of 142 countries in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report (WEC, 2014).

Research Studies

Agarwal (2013) summarised issues in the contemporary HE system including the significant expansion of the sector, the dominance of the private sector, poor academic organisation, linked to the affiliation system, concern about quality, adoption of English as the language of instruction, and the politicisation of campuses.

Despite increasing numbers in HE, participation rates are still low and reflect inequalities (women, regional, socio-economic). Leadership is also critiqued for being hierarchical and uninspiring but the study does not address *women's* leadership.

Chanana (2000) highlighted gender inequalities in women's participation in HE, up to doctoral level, including attention to changes for middle class professionals in urban metropolitan contexts. She also noted the wide regional disparities, linked to caste, ethnic group/language, religion, and wider socio-cultural barriers associated with these structures. Chanana (2003) focused on women HE faculty through the concept of 'visibility' (or invisibility) in this context, as opposed to their visibility in others, as sexual object/passive beings.

Two small-scale studies were conducted by Chanana (2003) that illuminated statistical difference in women's positioning. For example, women are less likely to occupy leadership positions when open selection rather than when nomination is the recruitment procedure (47.4% men, 26.2% women). Women had more frequent job changes; 26% of women and no men started in lower grade positions such as teachers, assistant teachers, demonstrators, and guest lecturers. 26% of women also reported career interruptions. Most women married and the demands of their husbands' career led to some of these disruptions. The study (Chanana 2003) draws on career profiles of department faculty in a residential university in a metropolitan city in northern India, in which women comprised only 18.57% of 400 faculty members in 2000, with women less present in higher offices e.g. only 13.44% of professors were women; 25% of associate professors and 40.57% of assistant professors, with no women VCs. It was reported that appointments on entry misrecognise women's teaching and research experience and publications, and that networking was more difficult for women because of codes of sexual propriety. The study noted some measures to promote equality and diversity e.g. the rotation of the position of head of department, rather than being in place until retirement, giving women opportunities for leadership. In a later study, Chanana (2012) focussed mainly on female student participation in HE, but also highlighted the absence of women in HE management, as well as showing the inadequacy of focusing only on numbers, and the complexity of the sociocultural landscape across India.

Work by women's studies groups have been important in sensitisation to gender violence on campus, in providing frameworks to redress this. For example the Women' Studies and Development Centre (WSDC) in New Delhi drafted Ordinance XV-D, 'Prohibition of and Punishment for Sexual Harassment' at the University of Delhi in 2002. This remained the legal position until 2013, when the Government of India issued the 'Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act. The WSDC took a leadership role in implementing the policy, conducting awareness programmes, counselling, contacting law and order officials, and housing the Apex Complaints Committee of the University. WSDC has also played a critical role in leading research on the status of women in India (see for example Lal & Kumar 2002). It continues to lead many gender-focused projects (see http://wsdc.du.ac.in/Research.html), including a recent Gender Audit of the University of Delhi (2011) and a recent five-day workshop (Feminist Theories – Indian Context) which included attention to 'glass ceiling' issues in higher education (WSDC 2013).

Research has also been undertaken in women in science and doctoral education. Karup *et al.* (2010) conducted a survey study with 568 women scientists and 226 men scientists with PhDs in Science, Engineering or Medicine to understand the reasons for women leaving science and to identify retention strategies. Questioning the 'myth of a 'one fits all'[approach] accepted by Science policymakers' (p.11) the study highlighted the importance of organisational factors to help women scientists balance careers and domestic responsibilities, and called for gender neutral policies and facilities, development of networking and mentoring opportunities for women scientists, greater transparency of selection and evaluation procedures, mandatory disclosure of the gender composition of staff across departments and levels, and for data gathering on career progression of PhDs in science in India (see also Karup, 2012).

Gupta (2007) conducted a mixed method study of women and men doctoral students in institutes of technology, showing many forms of gender discrimination within informal cultures of their doctoral education e.g. men were much more likely to have informal interactions with their supervisors, felt freer to contact them, and also got more support from administrative/clerical staff. Women's scarcity increased their visibility, putting them under greater scrutiny, and leaving them to shoulder the burden of 'maintaining decorum'. This study also indicated differences in male and female doctoral students' backgrounds i.e. the fathers of about half of the male doctoral students were at a lower occupational level (e.g. employed as clerks, school teachers, workers, and cultivators) and about 50% of the female doctoral students' fathers as opposed to 32% of the male students' fathers were in administrative, managerial, and professional jobs in the government or private sector. Finally, women and men researchers felt that their performance was correctly evaluated, although 56.4% (44 of 78) of the women felt that women have to work harder than men in order to prove themselves, against 26% (21 of 81) of the males. Gupta (2007) concludes from this that 'a general belief in meritocracy and impartiality masks the problems at the informal level' (p.518).

Again with respect to the sciences, Bal (2004) reviewed the numbers of senior and junior male/female faculty in research institutes, publications in high impact journals, and representation of women in prestigious groups (e.g. becoming fellow of national science academies). The finding was that women are not present in the numbers that might be expected from those formally qualified to take up careers in science. Bal noted the importance of gaining a permanent position after a postdoctoral fellowship, plus publications, research funding, gaining acceptance of project findings in research journals, all involving peer review. This raised questions about gender bias in this process, also bias in the allocation of resources, and lack of transparency in criteria for fellowships. Older studies e.g. Bajpai (1999) highlighted sexual harassment in university and college campuses in Mumbai.

Change Interventions

Drivers for change in India have come from both local and international initiatives, as the following examples of projects illustrate:

- AUW/IKEA Foundation – based in Bangladesh, but including Indian students (see also Afghanistan, Bangladesh).

- Connecttask – L'Oreal is linked to this initiative (see also Bangladesh).

- US Embassy Institutes on women's leadership (see also Bangladesh).

- The development of single sex education (see Renn, 2012) including within some elite universities, women's studies/gender empowerment sometimes an explicit focus, with leadership as part of this.

- Capacity Building of Women Managers in HE - Sensitisation, Awareness and Motivation (SAM) workshops, provided to 4,000 women since inception in 1997 (Chanana 2013). Since 2004 these have been provided through UGC/ACU cooperation, across different regions of India. The focus is on five dimensions: women's study perspectives, governance, academic leadership, personal and professional roles, and on research (see also Singh & Garland 2013 under ACU below).

- Mishrya (2013) – this is a media report on UGC India setting up a commission to consider how to make campuses around the country safer for women and more gender sensitive after the 2012 rape/murder of a medical student.

Structural Challenges to be Addressed

While significant efforts have been made by some scholars to excavate data manually to show lack of women's representation in HE leadership, despite growing presence at undergraduate level, statistical data are uneven and not readily accessible for India as a whole. It appears that statistics on HE employment are collected annually by the UGC, but are not reported by gender (Chanana, 2014-private communication). Although the All India Survey of Higher Education (Government of India, 2013) provides a wealth of statistical data, which is differentiated by gender, as well as Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe, it is not clear when this will be repeated and no previous survey exists from which a trend analysis might be developed. However, the Government of India Ministry of Human Resource Development Annual Report (2014) does announce the launch of AISHE 2012-13, and the development of a Higher Education Statistics and Public Information System (it does not provide any statistics on HE staffing).

Chapter 5:
NEPAL

The Higher Education System

Higher education is Nepal has a short history. It was only in 1959 that Tribhuvan University was established in Kathmandu. The Ministry of Education (2010) reports the existence of 6 HEIs in Nepal, with 3 more about to be opened. There is a growing recognition of the role that higher education can play in enabling Nepal to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development and economic growth. When gender is mentioned in higher education planning, it invariably relates to the need to increase access for female students. As an emerging sector, higher education in Nepal is now characterised by expansion (Sijapati, 2005). Glencorse (2014) reports that over 55% of the population is under the age of 25, and in the academic year 2013 a massive 370,000 students enrolled at various levels of study at Tribhuvan University, the main public institution of higher education in the country. The government's focus is on the overall quality enhancement of higher education and scientific research and development. However, Glencorse argues that universities are under-equipped to handle the size and the needs of the student body, pointing to issues such as lengthy power cuts, lack of internet access, lack of classrooms, outdated and ill-equipped libraries, lack of drinking water and clean bathrooms. There is also considerable student unrest. All staff recruitment is made on a political basis. EIU (2014b) estimate that there are no women Vice-Chancellors.

Where are the Women?

The UGC Nepal Annual report (2010-11) provides a list of members of governing committees but does not provide a gender analysis of this. It also provides numbers of teaching staff for universities including their gender and qualifications, although these are not intersected. The report for 2007-08 is not in English, and the report for 2009 does not give gender statistics.

Gender Policies

There is no attention to women or gender in the UGC Nepal Annual Report or statistical data. In the UGC (2012) Annual Report for 2011-12, there are no data on women in HE leadership, apart from a list of UGC members. Commenting on promotion of women in Nepal, Acharya (2003) reports that gender mainstreaming was part of the Ninth Plan (1997-2002), but highlights that the Tenth Plan (2003-7) recognises the need to address the failure of gender mainstreaming, noting the 'total neglect' of gender and equity issues in business and commerce. Nepal is ranked 112 out of 142 countries in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report (WEC, 2014).

Research Studies

There are very few research studies on gender and higher education in Nepal. Gender, is however, sometimes mentioned in studies of the emerging HE sector. For example, Sijapati (2005) argued that the mass expansion of education in Nepal without giving due consideration to the issue of accessibility to disadvantaged groups, has meant that instead of reducing social cleavages along gender and caste/ethnic lines, educational attainments have only helped reinforce traditional hierarchies.

A doctoral study of educational/school leadership (Poudel, 2013) makes an essentialised analysis of gender and claims that 'leadership styles and administrative contexts are gender neutral' (p.8). Studies that focus on STEM e.g. Singh & Bhuju (2001) exclude discussions of women's representation.

Within the International Federation of University Women report (2013), the Nepalese Association of University Women identified that the major barriers limiting women's access to senior academic and top decision-making posts included:

- Political appointments.
- Promotion criteria.
- Strong family obligations.
- Low level of girls' education.
- Lower salaries than men.
- Geographical barriers.
- Men are in the majority in teaching positions.
- Lack of implementation of gender responsive policies and programmes.
- Lack of control over budget and decision-making power.
- More career interruptions than men.
- Less mobility than men.
- Less access to resources for research work.
- Lack of technological development.

According to the UNESCO Global Education Digest (2010: 49) in Nepal, gender inequalities vary between members of different ethnic groups and women from lower castes are disadvantaged in the economic and political sphere compared to women from higher castes (Geiser, 2005). Gender disparities in school participation among Nepali children aged 6 to 10 years were reported to be highest for Dalits, Janajatis and Muslims, while there is virtually no participation gap between boys and girls from the Brahman and Chhetri castes (World Bank and DFID, 2006).

Research into women in management (not HE) in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Korea by Singh-Sengupta, (2001) suggests that patriarchal cultures, gender stereotyping and other socialised assumptions, such as, 'upper caste man is right', 'West is best' and 'Think manager, think male' - contribute to a masculine management paradigm.

As with many low-income countries, many studies and observations remain unpublished and in the 'grey' domain (Morley *et al.*, 2005). For example, in the report on the 2013 *Going Global* Conference, the *Times Higher Education* included a quotation from a Nepalese VC:

> *Nati Maiya Manandhar, head of Tribhuvan University's campus in Gulmi, Nepal, told her country's colloquium that female leaders were rare because married women were viewed as unable to hold decision-making positions. Women also had to shoulder the burden of raising children and looking after elderly family members, which restricts their ability to play a full role in university affairs, Dr Manandhar told the conference* (Grove, 2013).

Change Interventions

Changes in Nepal have been largely driven by internationalisation including:

- International Women's Human Rights Education Institute 2014 (2 week workshop conducted in University of Minnesota for ten years, offered for the first time in Kathmandu in 2014) – not including HE.

- AUW, as for Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

- UGC Capacity Development workshops for women managers in HE (Kashmir Images reports on India, but also in other SA countries)

Structural Challenges to Address

As with the other countries in the study, there is an absence of statistical data.

As reported above, the UGC Annual Report (2012) for 2011-2012 contains no statistics on women/gender. The Ministry of Education (2010) reports 9,477 teachers at university level. However, there is no gender disaggregation of these figures for higher education staff. Figures are presented for other education sectors, and these show women teachers becoming progressively scarcer through primary to the end of secondary education i.e. from primary (39.62%), lower secondary (24.69%), secondary (15.56%), and higher secondary (4.7%).

Chapter 6:
PAKISTAN

The Higher Education System

Like other countries in South Asia, Pakistan is rapidly expanding its higher education system. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) (2012) reports that there are 138 degree awarding institutions, of which 75 are in the public and 63 in the private sector, with six new universities established in 2010-2011, four of which are in the private sector. It reports enrolment to have risen from 276 million students in 2001-02 to 869 million in 2009-10, with a further 16% increase in 2011-12. While this report suggests that in 2010-2011, 45% of HE students were female, AEPAM (2011) puts female participation at only 33%. It reports the HE sectors as representing only 0.5% of Pakistan's educational system; gross enrollment is similarly around 0.5%. This low participation rate reflects socio-economic, gender and regional inequalities. While single sex colleges are developing, there is little attention to issues of women in HE leadership (Agarwal, 2013). The EIU (2014b) estimate that 0.04% of Vice-Chancellors are women.

Where are the Women?

Generally, statistics on gender for HE staff are limited e.g. HEC (2012: 165) provides numbers of faculty in public and private institutions, and in distance learning for 2010-11, differentiating also between those with PhDs and those without. However, it does not disaggregate these figures by gender. AEPAM (2011) also provides no gender disaggregated statistics for HE staffing.

See http://www.hec.gov.pk/MediaPublication/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx

Gender Policies

Gender is recognised at the level of schooling as an important priority – The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) in some regions being below 40% for girls in primary education, and below 10% in secondary education (AEPAM, 2011). In higher education, dominant concerns are the quality of HE, professional development of faculty, linkages of universities with industry, the relevance of programmes; while a general concern is expressed for 'equitable and enhanced access for underrepresented groups', this does not single out women or gender (Ministry of Education, 2009: 57). The Pakistan Council for Science and Technology (2013: n.p) declares an interest in gender mainstreaming to address women's under-representation in those areas, but notes that 'no survey of women in ST&I related parameters of the country has been carried out at national level'. Pakistan is ranked 141 out of 142 countries in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report (WEC, 2014).

Research Studies

Pakistan has a body of research on women and leadership in HE- albeit often small-scale studies. For example, for her doctoral thesis, Rab (2010a and b) conducted interviews with 15 senior women academics in Pakistan including a Vice-Chancellor, Dean or Head of the Department in public sector universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. She described how their professional experiences were framed by patriarchal cultures. However, she also noted the part that family support plays in women's career advancement.

Shah's study (2001) consisted of sending semi-structured questionnaires to all women college heads (30) followed by 10 interviews. The study suggested that the primary identification of women is with the private, domestic sphere, stereotypically associated with caring/nurturing family roles, and that women leader respondents took up these norms, describing their leadership activities in such terms. Women may hold leadership roles in colleges, but not in other parts of the education system, while within these colleges, their leadership can be undermined by male administrative/ financial staff. Shah (2006) also critiqued ethnocentric understandings of educational leadership (masculinist Western underpinnings) and how cultural backgrounds (including faith/religious beliefs and systems) within any context shapes how leadership is understood and performed. She highlighted the patriarchal nature of Pakistani culture, within which sex-segregated education is an important feature (see also Shah 2008; 2010; Shah and Shah 2012). Shah et al. (2013) are currently conducting research in 4 partner universities in Pakistan and 2 in the UK to raise awareness of issues around women's leadership..

Batool et al. (2013a) conducted a quantitative study of women's representation in HE management in Pakistan. The findings show that structural factors such as mentoring, networking, selection and promotion practices and gender equity are barriers to the career advancement of women.

Batool et al. (2013b) and Mumtaz (2005) drawing on studies for the Association of Commonwealth Universities (Lund, 1998; Singh, 2002; 2008), reviewed statistical data on Pakistan HE enrolment, for different levels of qualifications and institutions for three years between 2001-02 and 2003-04, but not beyond. Although no data are given for HE staffing, they show female participation to be lowest at PhD level, being only 28% in 2003-04, although at least rising in absolute numbers from 2001-2002 from 689 to 1810 and also in terms of representation (i.e. from 22% in 2001-2002).

Ghaus (2013) explored the barriers encountered by women managers in HE in Pakistan using a structured questionnaire with a stratified sample of 116 women in management across four public and four private universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The finding was that women encounter familial and organisational barriers which are more pronounced in private sector universities. The societal attitudes to women in HE management from this study were also reported in Khan (2013).

Although not focusing specifically on HE, Jejeebhoy's (2001) study points to the need to attend to regional variations in culture. This study compared the lives of women in different regions of South Asia-Punjab in Pakistan, and Uttar Pradesh in north India and Tamil Nadu in south India, including religion, nationality, or north-south cultural distinctions. While women's autonomy-in terms of decision-making, mobility, freedom from threatening relations with husband, and access to and control over economic resources-was constrained in all three settings, women in the southern regions fared considerably better than other women, irrespective of religion.

A range of other studies point to socio-cultural issues related to women's positioning, without directly addressing women's leadership in HE e.g. Malik and Courtney (2011) who focus on HE participation and women's empowerment; Mumtaz (2005) who addresses women's leadership in political but not in HE spheres; Tamim (2013) who focuses on how different forms of capital (class, language) intersect to exclude women students from HE. There is also a body of research on leadership with no gender focus (Ahmed *et al.* 2012; Ali *et al.* 2013; Amin *et al.* 2013). Older studies of gender in higher education in Pakistan included a focus on sexual harassment (Durrani, 2000).

Change Interventions

A major local initiative has been the women-only Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) (n.d). This was established in 1998. Its history and mission stresses the prestige of alumni, its connections to high Pakistani officials, and how it involves women in HE management:

Women working at the University have made history in more than one way. At the first Women's University the women are involved in higher education management, and offering courses to bring students to an international level of training. Women institutions from all over the world have been in touch to develop exchange programs of collaboration.

International initiatives include:

- The Asian University for Women (AUW) and the Ikea Foundation 2013 (see also Afghanistan and Bangladesh).

- Embassy of United States (n.d) Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSI) for Student Leaders are intensive short- term academic programmes (this one at University of Kansas) whose purpose is to provide groups of undergraduate student leaders with a deeper understanding of the United States, while simultaneously enhancing their leadership skills.

- Pakistani Educational Leadership Project (PELP) Plymouth State University (n.d.): Funded by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of Citizen Exchanges, this aims to provide Pakistani educators with the opportunity to explore U.S. innovations in educational leadership for adaptation in Pakistan and to build relationships with U.S. citizens. The project now has 238 alumni, of which 75% are women. Most work with marginalized populations in vulnerable rural regions.

⬥ Pakistan participates in the ACU Gender Programme to increase both the quantity and quality of women leaders and managers in higher education institutions in the Commonwealth (see ACU below).

Structural Challenges to Address

As with the other countries in the region, there is a major lack of statistical data. The HEC Website contains Annual Reports from 2002 for most years, but has no data for women's leadership or employment. In HEC (2012), reporting on 2010-11, the Section on 'Academics' does not include statistics on who is employed. In Finance (p.149), statistics on different categories of academic staff employed for different kinds of universities are included, but these are not gender disaggregated. In Statistics (p.159), there are details of student enrolment, including by gender, and by province, but it does not intersect these variables. The number of PhDs is recorded by discipline but not by gender.

Chapter 7:
SRI LANKA

The Higher Education System

Sri Lanka has 15 universities (public) and a 16% gross enrolment rate. The growth of private higher education has been much slower in Sri Lanka than in its neighbouring South Asian countries, with considerable resistance, including strikes by academics in the public sector (Haviland, 2012). Girls and women fare relatively well in the education system. More women than men are enrolled at the undergraduate level (54,000 women versus 38,500 men at end of 2011). One belief is that the system of strict entrance exams for undergraduate schooling contributes to a high female participation rate—because merit rather than other factors determine access. Gunawardena (2013) shows that almost 50% of lecturers/probationary lecturers in Sri Lankan universities were women at the end of 2011, against only one in four professors. The EIU (2014b) estimate that 21.4% of Vice-Chancellors are women.

Where are the Women?

UGC Annual Reports are available on their website for 2010, 2011 and 2012. These disaggregate staff by category and by gender, as well as by HEI and by disciplinary area. The UGC website suggests that similar reports have been conducted for almost all years since 2002-3, but the reports are not available from their site.

See http://www.ugc.ac.lk/en/university-statistics-2012.html.

Figure 14: Sri Lanka. Percentage and Total of Female and Male Academics
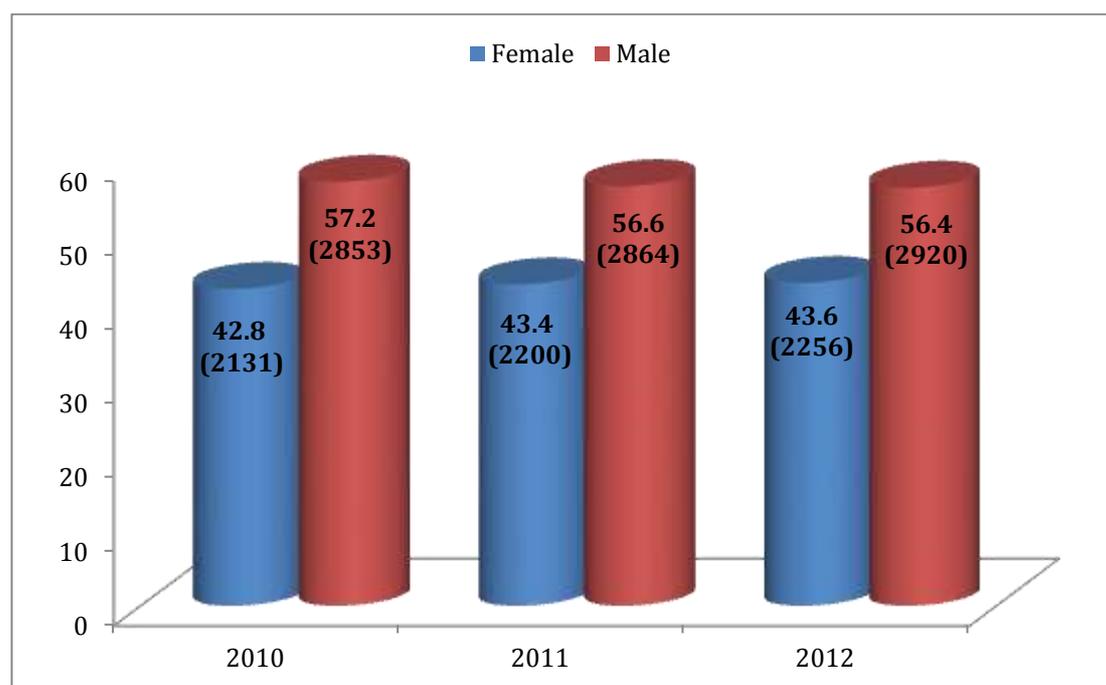
Source: elaborated from UGC Annual Reports (Sri Lanka), 2010; 2011; 2012.

Figure 14 shows that women's representation within the academic work force has increased very slightly from 42.8% (2131) in 2010 to 43.6% (2256) in 2012. However, this increase is not significant, as can be seen in the representation of the same data in Figure 14 below.

Figure 15: Sri Lanka. Percentages and Totals of Female and Male Academics
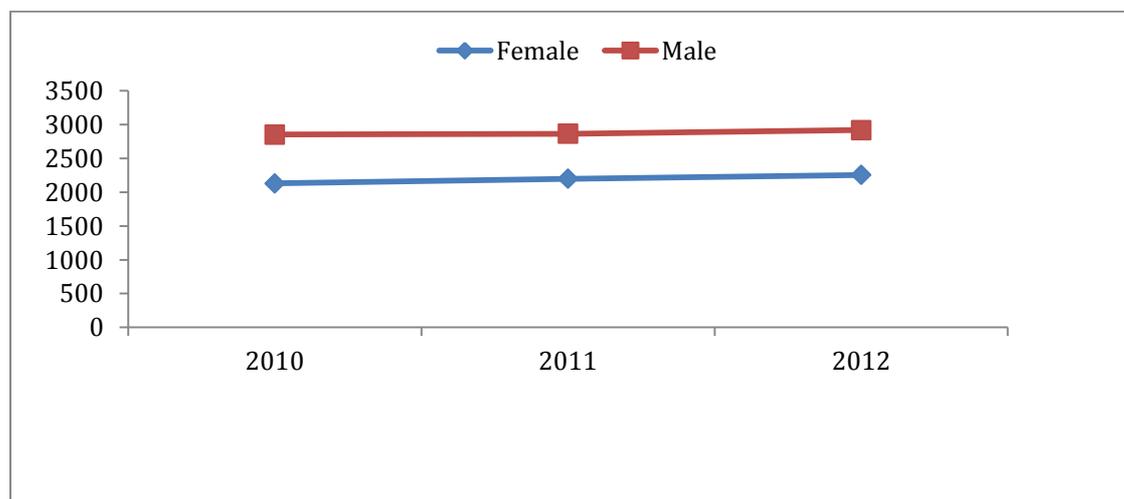
Source: Elaborated from UGC Annual Reports (Sri Lanka) for 2010, 2011, 2012

Figure 16: Sri Lanka: Percentage of Female Academics per Higher Education Institutions

Source: Elaborated from UGC Annual Reports (Sri Lanka) for 2010, 2011, 2012

48
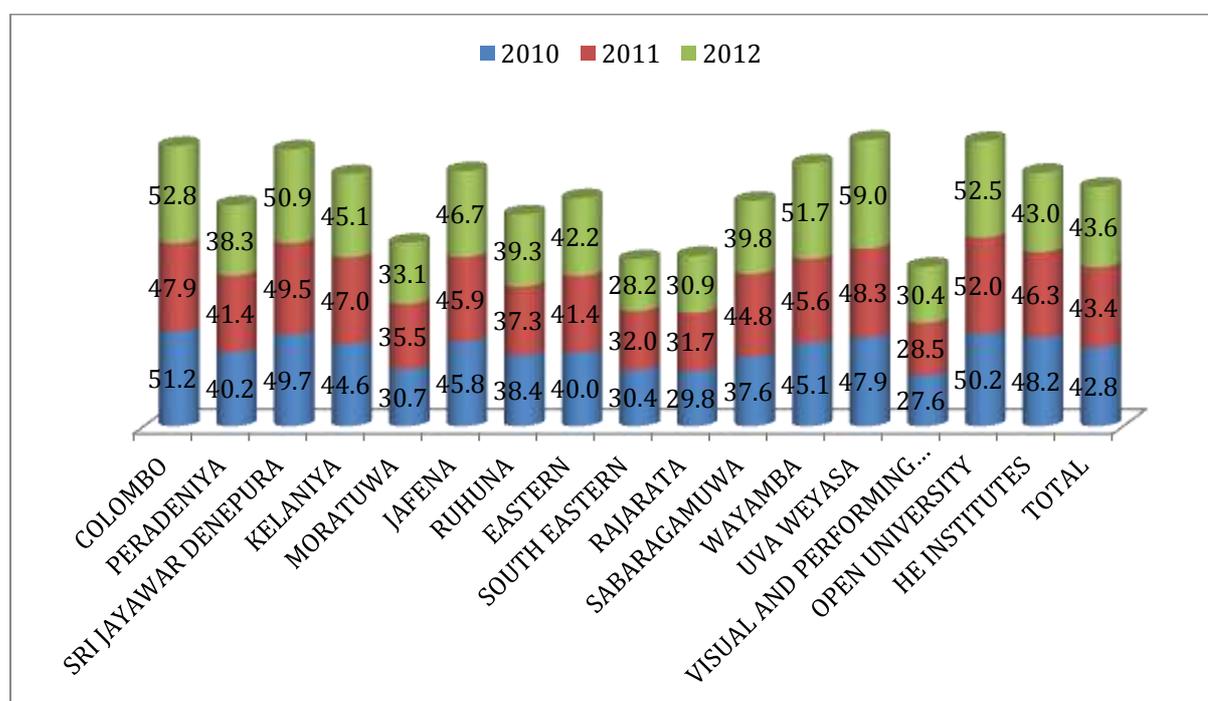
Figure 16 shows that although overall, the proportion of women academics in Sri Lankan universities has increased slightly between 2010 and 2012, no overall trend can be discerned. The annual statistics for the majority of the universities within these three years reflect fluctuations between increased and decreased levels of women's representation (see for example, Peradenyya; Kelaniya; Moratuwa; Ruhuna; South Eastern; Rajarata; Sabaragamuwa).

Wayamba and Uva Wayasa are the only universities which show a more or less systematic increase of proportion of female academics (see also Figure 17 below).

Figure 17: Sri Lanka: Changes in the Proportion of Female Academics per Higher Education Institution between the years 2010 and 2012
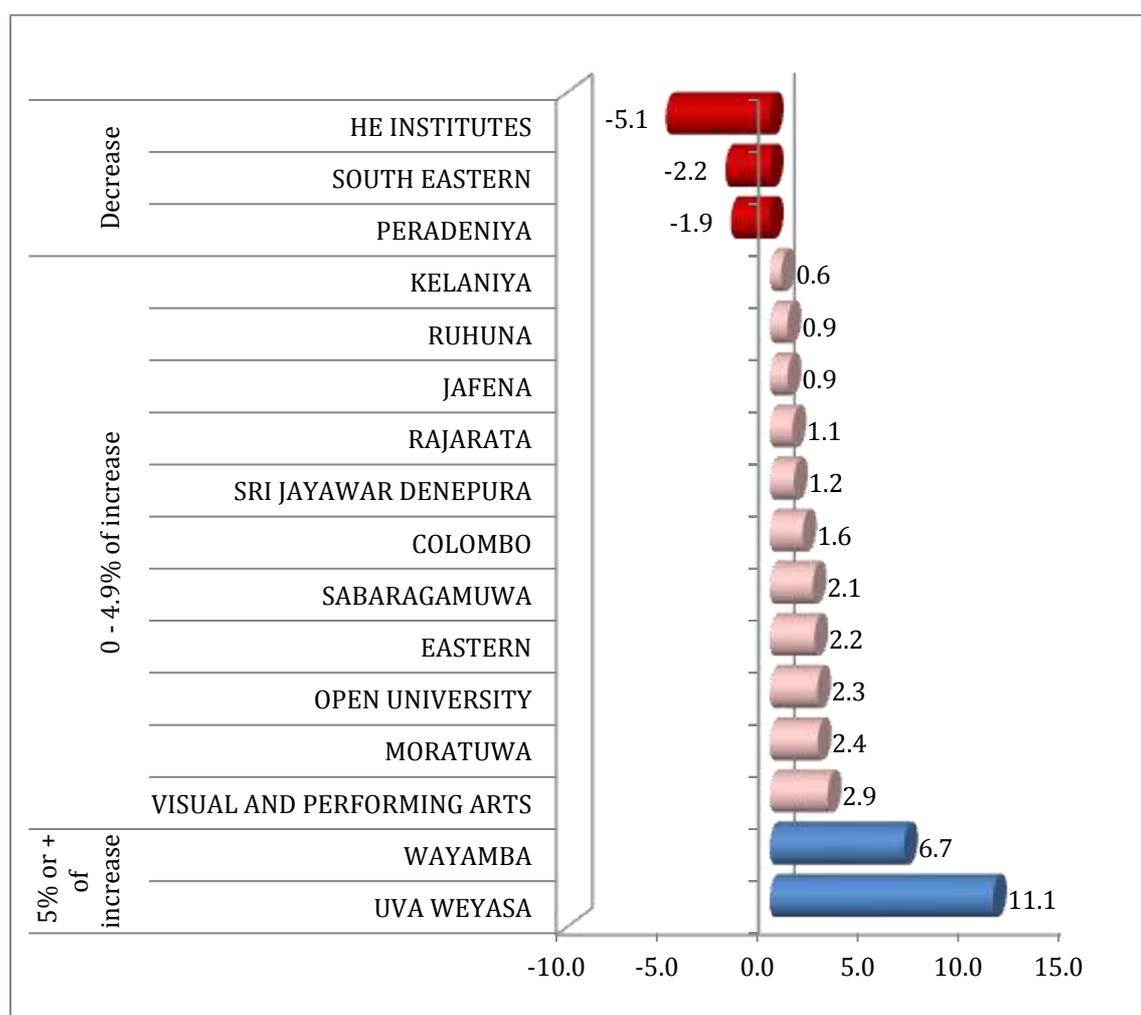
Source: elaborated from UGC Annual Reports (Sri Lanka) for 2010, 2011, 2012

Wayamba and Uva Weyasa show the most significant increases in the representation of women academics between years 2010 and 2012. In contrast, the representation of women academics in HE Institutes, South Eastern and Peradeniya has decreased. The remainder of the universities reflect an insignificant increase in women academics' representation.

Figure 18: Sri Lanka. Percentage and Total of Academics According to Academic Positions Years 2010, 2011, 2012
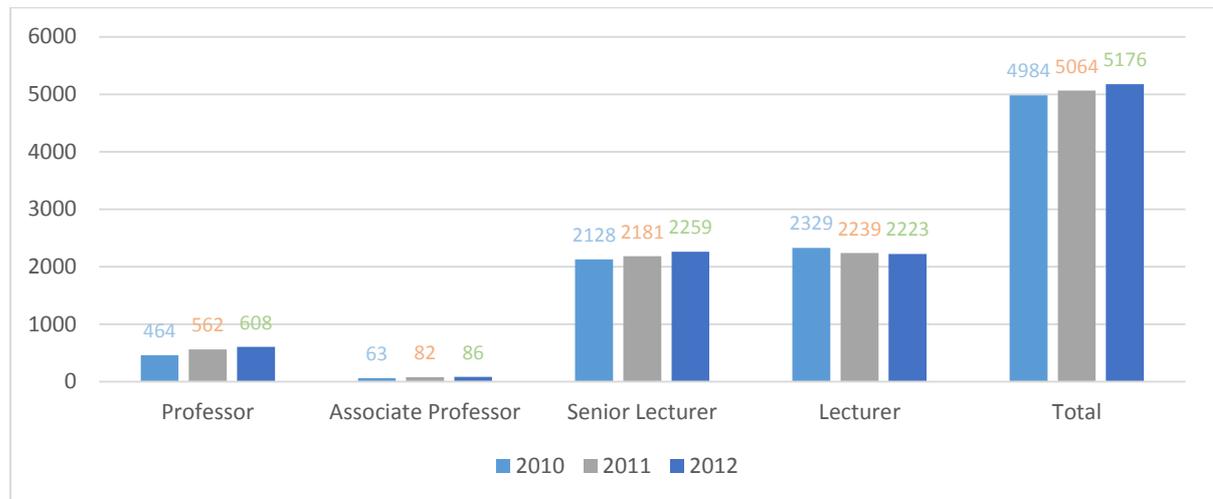
Source: elaborated from UGC Annual Reports (Sri Lanka) for 2010, 2011, 2012

Figure 19: Sri Lanka: Percentage and Total of Female and Male Academics According to Academic Positions. Years 2010, 2011, 2012
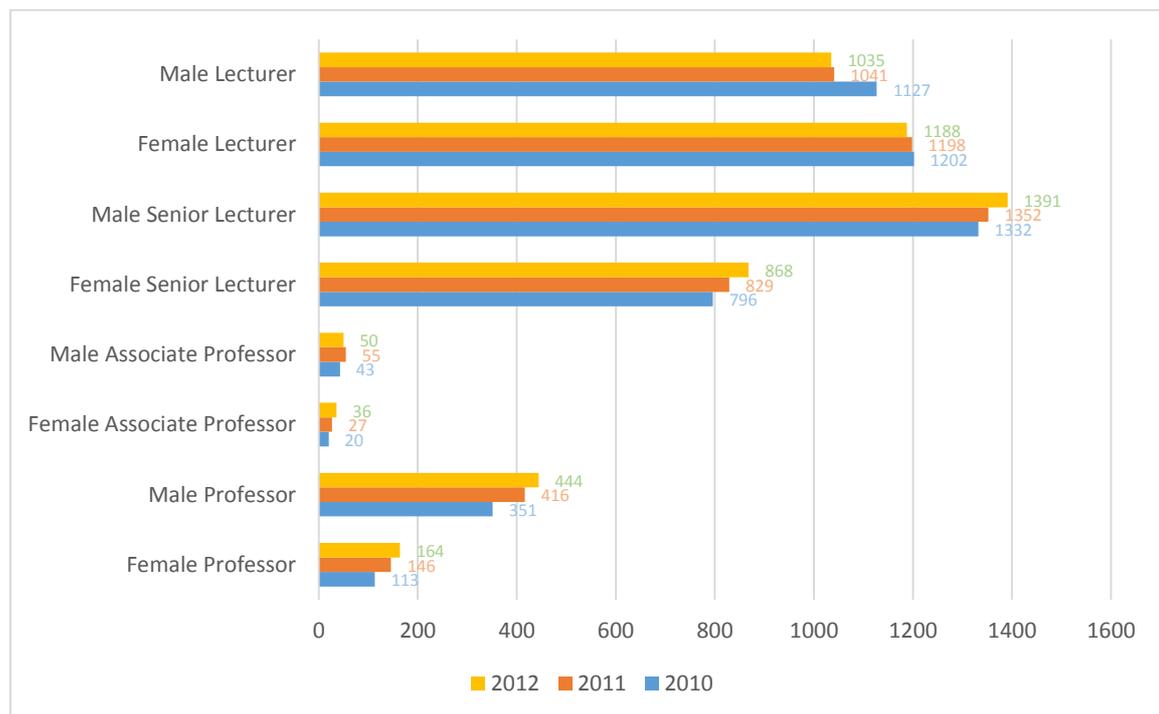
Source: elaborated from UGC Annual Reports (Sri Lanka) for 2010, 2011, 2012

Figure 20: Sri Lanka: Percentage of Female Academics According to Academic Positions. Years 2010, 2011, 2012
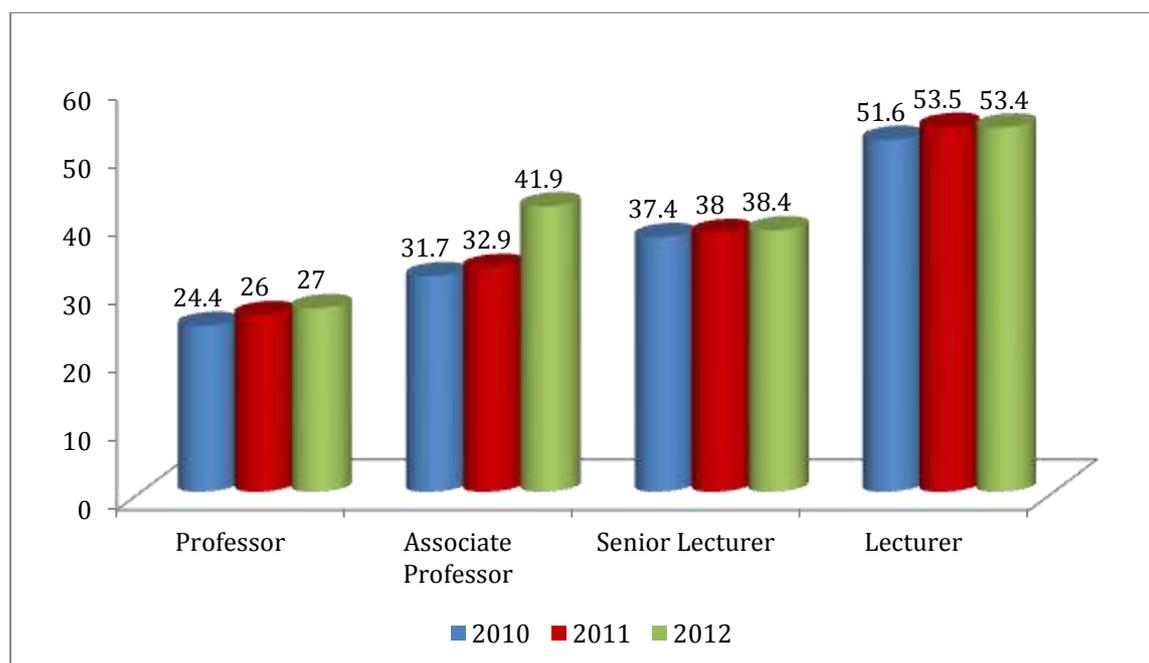
Source: elaborated from UGC Annual Reports (Sri Lanka) for 2010, 2011, 2012

Figure 20 shows that the most significant change in the representation of women academics has occurred at the level of Associate Professor. Nonetheless, the numbers of academic staff implicated at this level is marginal within the overall distribution of academic positions. Thus, as indicated in Figure 18 above, in each of the three years, Associate Professors made up less than 2% of the total number of academic staff. Figure 20 also shows an increase in the percentage of female Professors over this 3 year period from 24.4% to 27% (as shown in Figure 18 above, this group made up just under 12% of the academic workforce in 2012).

The level of Lecturer is the only employment category where women's representation is slightly higher than that of men, and where there is the most equal gender distribution (although falling back marginally from 53.5% in 2011 to 53.4% in 2012). However, this more equal representation is far from being realised in the next level of academic seniority. Thus at Senior Lecturer level, significant gender disparities remain, with women's representation at only 38.4% of the total in 2012, this being an insignificant increase from 37.4% in 2010.

In general, it is important to recognise that while the number of women academics has grown over these three years, the number of male academics has also increased over the same time.

Figure 21: Sri Lanka: Percentage and Total of Female and Male Academics According to Contract Type. Years 2010, 2011, 2012
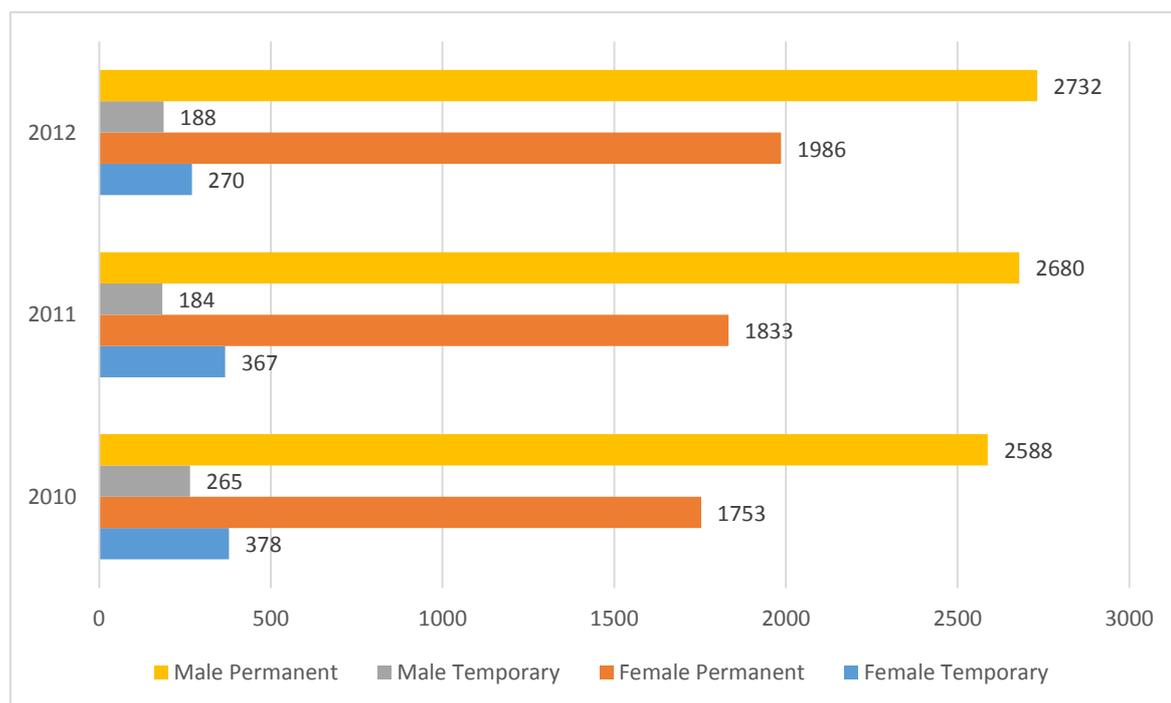
Source: elaborated from UGC Annual Reports (Sri Lanka) for 2010, 2011, 2012

Figure 22: Sri Lanka. Percentage of Female Academics According to Contract Type. Years 2010, 2011, 2012
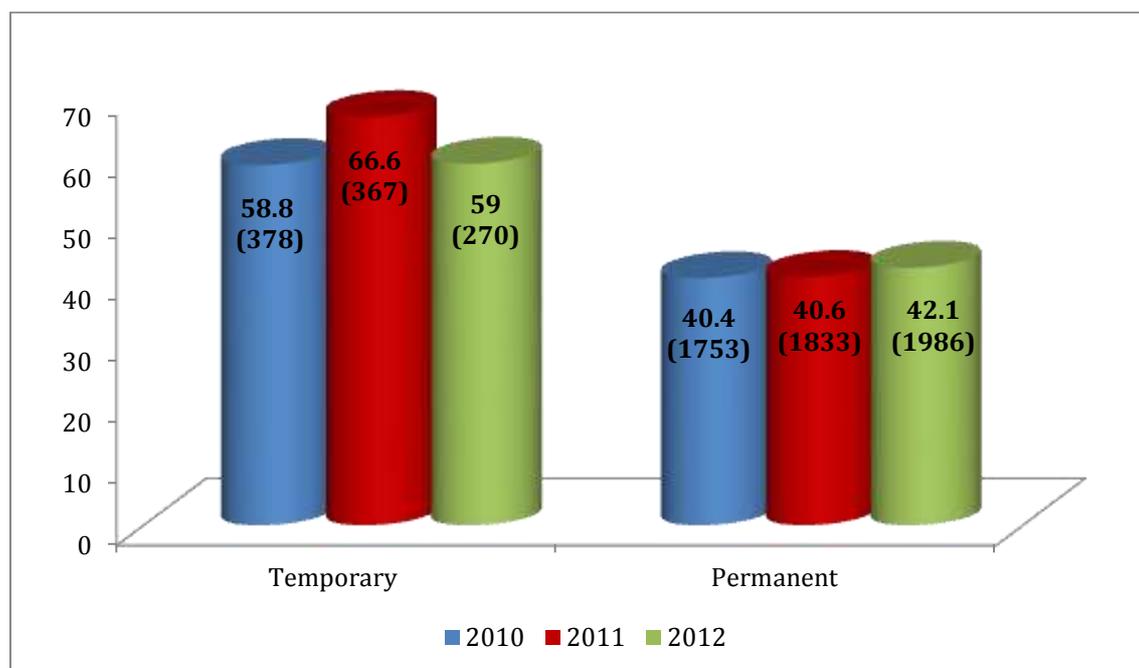
Source: elaborated from UGC Annual Reports (Sri Lanka) for 2010, 2011, 2012

Figure 22 above indicates a non-significant improvement in the proportion of female versus academics with a permanent contract. It also indicates that women are over-represented in those with temporary contracts, this being at 66.6% in 2011, although falling back in 2012 to a similar level as for 2010. This suggests that female academics have more precarious employment conditions than males.

Figure 23: Sri Lanka. Percentage of Female Academics per Fields of Study. Years 2010, 2011, 2012
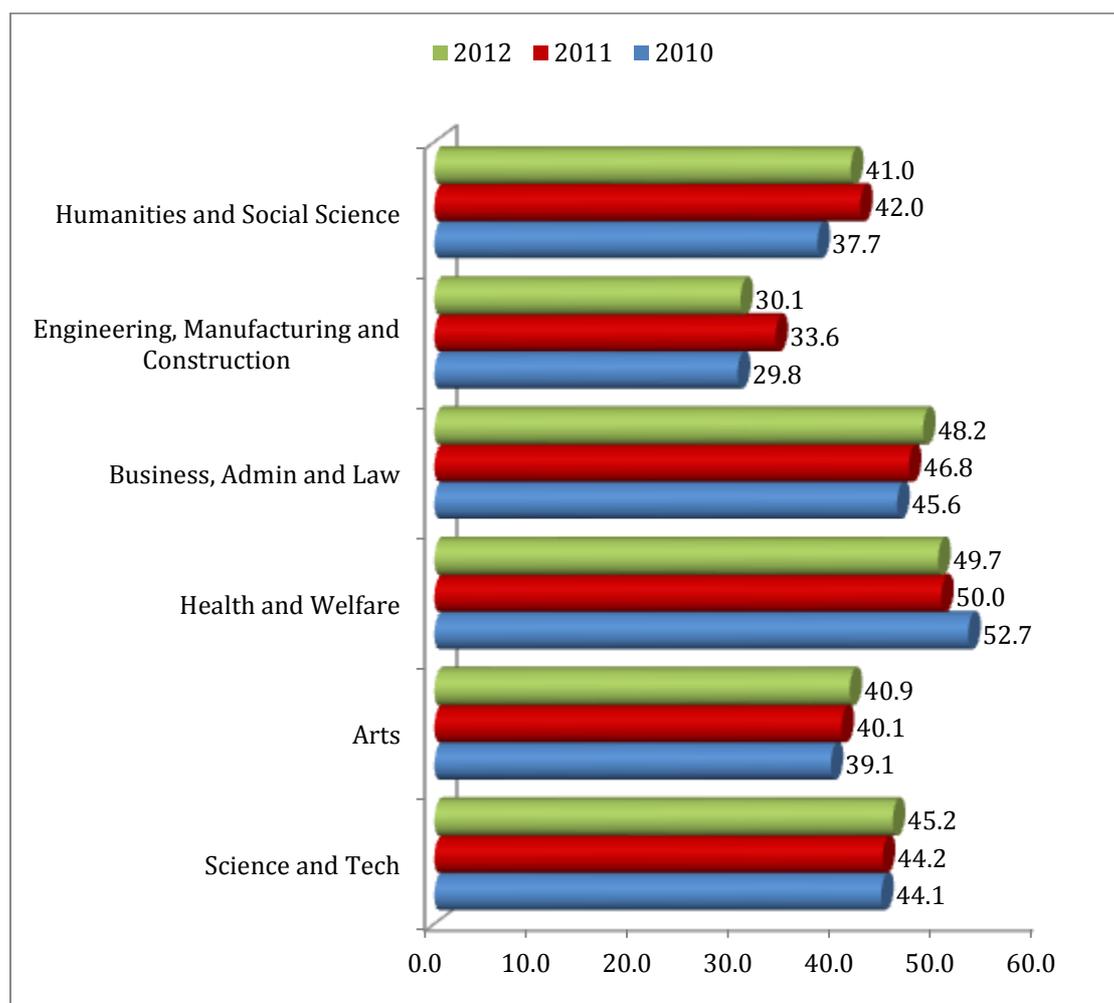
Source: elaborated from UGC Annual Reports (Sri Lanka) for 2010, 2011, 2012

Figure 23 above shows the proportion of women academics in different fields of study according to the total number of academics. This suggests that there is no clear trend in the proportion of female to male academics in these different fields.

Although there have been some small increases in the percentages of female academics in different fields, these have not been steady or significant across all areas. For example, while the proportions of females in Humanities and Social Science and in Engineering increased in 2011, they decreased again in 2012.

In addition, while the overall representation of women has increased by around 3% between 2010 and 2012 in Humanities and Social Science, and Business, Administration and Law, it has decreased by a similar amount in Health and Welfare.

Gender Policies

National and HE policy tend to overlook gender. In its country gender assessment, the Asian Development Bank (2008) recognises the failure of the education system to address gender issues in schooling and HE. Some statistics are available, showing lack of women's representation in HE management, and low representation of women in senior positions across different disciplines, except medicine. However, the National Higher Education Strategic Management Plan for Sri Lanka (2012-2015) Mid Term Plan does not include attention to gender or female participation in HE management. Rather, the goals focus on increasing access. All photos of the dignitaries on the opening pages are male, and the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on p.8 do not mention gender. Sri Lanka is ranked 79 out of 142 countries in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report (WEC, 2014).

Research Studies

Research activity by committed feminists studying HE has been notable over the years e.g. Goonesekere (2013), Gunawardena (1994, 2003, 2013 a and b), Gunawardena & Lekamge (2002), Gunawardena *et al.* (2006), Jayasena (2002), Jayaweera (1997), Kalugama, (1999) Karunaratne (2000), Maunaguru (2013), Morley *et al.* (2006); Wickramasinghe (2009). Morley *et al.* (2006) (Sri Lanka was one of five countries) included data on women professors from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), and interview data reflecting enablers and impediments to women's careers. Enablers included:

- Internationalism (networks, exchanges, attendance at conferences/seminars)

- Women-only staff development courses, included ACU management workshops experienced as particularly empowering for women, as women reported being silenced in mixed groups

- Networking/community building

- Training was perceived as empowerment/capacity building

- Mentoring

- Gender sensitisation courses.

Impediments to women's career development included:

- The challenges of work/life balance and expectations of women in the home

- Gendered division of labour in the university - e.g. around teaching/research and kinds of management/administration, e.g. women reported getting stuck in unpromoted, non-research roles

- Discrimination against women

- Favouritism towards men in promotion processes

- Retrogressive attitudes towards women in management - essentialised understandings of women bringing different more nurturing skills to this, or that women bring different kinds of leadership styles to such work (democratic/participatory)

- The gendering of time, space and course content, in general silenced women.

Gender issues continue to be marginalised in today's studies of HE leadership. Recent reports focus on how the curricula relating to women's issues are being reduced Gunawardena (2013) and Goonesekere (2013) report major disquiet about gender-based violence on campus. High unemployment rates of women graduates are also a cause for concern (Gunawardena 2013). The Asian Development Bank's (ADB 2008) country gender assessment highlighted negative gender norms, the failure of new curricula in schooling to tackle this, and the ways in which this has discouraged women from entering politics.

Change Interventions

Projects in Sri Lanka are characterised by a combination of national and international initiatives. For example:

- Centre for Gender Studies, University of Kelaniya. In addition to the organisation of workshops and conferences, this feminist centre has compiled research resources e.g. Women, Gender and Higher Education: Bibliography of Research on Women, Gender and Higher Education in Sri Lanka http://www.kln.ac.lk/units/cgs/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=35

- Sri Lanka also participates in the AUW, BRAC University's South Asian Regional Network of Women Parliamentarians and the ACU Gender Programme.

Structural Challenges to be Addressed

More gender-disaggregated statistics are available in Sri Lanka than in the other five countries in the study. Some UGC Annual Reports are publically available e.g. for 2010, 2011 and 2012 at the time of writing) and these provide gender disaggregated statistics for different HEIs, disciplines and staff categories. These reports have been drawn upon to develop the analyses presented above, and also allow Sri Lankan researchers to analyse the gender dimensions of HE staffing. For example, Gunawardena (2013) draws on Sri Lanka UGC reports for 2012 to provide statistics for its HEIs by gender/different HE positions, disciplines, HEIs.

Chapter 8:
Voices from the Six Countries: Macro, Meso and Micro-Level Experiences and Explanations

Interview questions included asking participants about their views on women's under-representation in leadership, what makes leadership attractive/unattractive to women, what enables/ supports women to enter leadership positions and personal experiences of being enabled/ impeded from entering leadership? We have classified the 30 interview participants' responses into three categories: macro-level (society and policy); meso-level (organisational/institutional) and micro-level (individual/ relationships).

The Power of the Socio-Cultural: Macro-Level Patriarchy, Male-Domination and Structures of Inequality

There were numerous observations about how patriarchal social structures and cultural practices served to limit opportunities and prescribe women's roles in all countries. A female Vice-Dean in Afghanistan summarises:

> *Afghanistan is a war-locked and also men-locked country and men dominate it; men have a main role in all places.*

Patriarchy dictated gender appropriate behaviour, as a female Pro-Vice Chancellor in Bangladesh observes:

> *You know a woman if she's networking and lobbying then immediately she's branded as being very ambitious and very pushy.*

The gendered division of labour, with women responsibilised for the domestic sphere was widely discussed. A female Vice-Chancellor in India describes how this prevents women from participation in public life:

> *I think we live in a world where the male view of the world is very strong. In a country like India, women have not found prominence. First, education was not common, although that's fast changing now. Traditionally, our women have, for very many reasons, been absent from the public view. A woman has to shoulder domestic responsibilities, and often she is without support.*

A male President in India describes how patriarchal privilege cuts across social class:

> *Men are gallivanting around, at a bar wherever, chit chatting with friends, buddies and then come home, get food and go to sleep. It happens the same way for senior professors and university readers as it happens for rural villagers. No difference.*

Patriarchy also means that authority, power and leadership are associated with a

particular type of masculinity that is aggressive and ruthless, as a female Assistant Professor in India explains:

> *This stereotype definition of leadership, probably that is what matters. ….* *But the way society understands is probably for certain roles a person has to be really aggressive or something, which the woman could have handled in a different way, not showing that kind of aggression per se. But then you are not selected for the role in the interview if you don't look like you can kill something.*

A potent symbolic order also exists in which women must never overtake or lead men, as a female Dean in Nepal outlines:

> *The men they also do not like the female to be a leader, that I have also faced the problem…They want to see the male as the leader, not the female.*

A female lecturer, also from Nepal, describes how socio-cultural practices favoured early marriage and motherhood for women, and that women had to be less educated that their husbands:

> *And the other one is that if the ladies or the females if they study higher or they gain higher education degrees before their marriage then it is difficult to find a groom… a husband won't accept a woman that is more qualified than him.*

Power and leadership were interpreted as zero sum, suggesting that if women's collective power increases this automatically and competitively reduces male power, as a female Senior Lecturer in Pakistan points out:

> *It hurts their male chauvinism concept that women are growing. Will I be the subordinate of this women? It hurts their ego.*

A female Vice-Chancellor in India also comments on how, as a young academic, she was seen as having usurped a male entitlement to a job:

> *It happened to me when I got my first job. I was all of twenty-three years old and I got a job in a college as an assistant professor, and one gentleman, he must have been about fifty or fifty-five, told me, "You know that you are taking away livelihood from a boy, who will support his family, but for you it is pocket money". I said, "Excuse me?" He said, "you have a husband, who will look after you, so why do you need to take away livelihood from another?" So, I think this mind-set definitely needs to change; it's not a zero sum game.*

She also observes how certain socio-cultural practices, such as arranged marriages, make young women passive and work against developing agentic dispositions. They are the chosen, not the choosers:

> *When I was young, we followed the system of arranged marriages and it's a very difficult thing to describe. You have the boy and his family come in to the girl's house and the elders in both families talk. The girl walks in so they could observe and question her—whether she can walk, cook, and so on. Then, the boy and his family decide whether the boy is to marry the girl or not. The girl was simply supposed to nod her head and say "yes". There*

was no question of a "no". If the boy has accepted, then the girl was duty bound to say "yes"…When I was in school, I used to hear my aunts talk of how men came for "bride viewing" and "rejected" them. My younger aunt was very dynamic, but for some reason, it wasn't working out. Whoever came to see her would say "no"…so it just wouldn't work out and she was so depressed.

The practice of men doing the choosing can also mean that many appoint in their own image, or clone themselves (Gronn & Lacey, 2006) as a female Dean in Sri Lanka notes:

I think it's to do with liking this gender power relationship. Some of the senior male academics who always want to have it go, even for an acting position, to another male…I think it is something to do with this gender power relationship…A lot of males in Sri Lanka believe that for women administration is not right.

A female Professor in India believes that the cloning is based on fear and risk-aversion:

They are used to seeing men as leading, right? So they are uncertain how will It be if it is a woman? Because they have not seen many. So I think it's a fear of uncertainty. And the society is not ready to take that risk so a known evil is better than unknown.

As the above participants indicate, patriarchy produces and sustains a range of socio-cultural practices and belief systems about what is considered gender appropriate behaviour and lifestyles. This can result in a potent symbolic order in which women are not expected to lead men, or seek authority outside the domestic domain. If they do, this represents a major challenge to the status quo and can surface considerable hostility to women who transgress socially prescribed boundaries.

Expanding Higher Education Systems: Meso-level Selection Procedures, Gendered Networks and Opportunities

Institutional practices frequently worked against women's socialised dispositions. For example, women, in many societies, are encouraged not to draw attention to themselves, often as a strategy to avoid unwanted attention. This can translate into a reluctance to engage with selection procedures that require a lot of self-promotion and high visibility, as female Professor in Sri Lanka explains:

Sri Lanka, although it's not as patriarchal as the rest of South Asia, you'll still have the male dominancy anyway, it's the old boys… the networking thing is very important. If you don't know people, you're not going to get anywhere and here everybody is appointed by the president. The president appoints all the vice-chancellors. There's only one decision-making … so if you're not good with them, you're not going to get there and females I don't think are generally pushy. They won't go and rub shoulders with the president or with important, ministerial people. They tend to be far more reserved.

Academic career progression was not just a question of merit, but also networking according to a female Registrar in Pakistan, and this process was highly gendered:

> *The demands of academia are very diverse. You do need to network. You do need to socialise in the evening… And for a lot of women it doesn't happen because they don't know how to go about it.*

A female Dean in India was one of many who described how universities' selection procedures were exclusionary and discriminated against women:

> *First and foremost, most of the selection committees have only men on them. Very, very few have any women. Most of the selection committees that I've gone through, they've been all men on the committee, for any position.*

Selection as a political process featured widely in the data e.g. in Nepal- how political affiliations control academic careers, as a female Lecturer in Nepal observes:

> *I mean to say, Director, Rector, VC, there is a huge political pressure is there… I am away from politics, I mean it just goes above my head. That is why I am a little bit reluctant to face the leadership as a female leader in future.*

In the other countries, Ministers are often involved in senior appointments and VCs are appointed by political parties. A male Assistant Professor in Bangladesh describes:

> *When they get in the Vice-Chancellor or Pro Vice-Chancellor or Registrar, or Proctors, actually it's been nominated by the government indirectly and they nominate, you know, those people who have the political affiliation. You know, that if they are the support of the government, then the government will recruit those people who are affiliated to them.*

A female Professor in India also highlights how political connections outweigh merit:

> *Selection is not by competence, it's not by efficiency, it's by political allegiance.*

In addition to the gendered social practices, universities, as built environments, were also constructed with the male as norm in mind. A female Pro Vice-Chancellor in Bangladesh comments on lack of facilities for women - an excuse that has historically and universally been used to exclude women's participation in higher learning (Dyhouse, 1995).

> *Like in the university when we were studying there was in the entire building one ladies' common room with maybe one washroom and in all the other floors there would be men's, you know, washrooms, toilets.*

A female Lecturer in Nepal saw gendered spaces and networks as exclusionary devices:

> *And the place they have chosen, the restaurant, the bar and the informal meetings and drinks and the longer hours, continuous discussions and all the things...that...maybe after some years that would be...that would fit with women, but now, culturally or socially also, it's very difficult for women to adjust with that atmosphere.*

The challenges described above outline how institutional processes, practices and the built environment are designed and executed in relation to male norms-

something that gender-mainstreaming policies attempt to address (Morley, 2010). These norms provide powerful exclusionary messages to women and can seriously deplete their aspirations and opportunities.

Gendered Divisions of Labour: Micro-level Experiences of Lack, Negativity and Women as Deficit Men

Universities, like many large organisations with a diversity of interests and roles, were represented as intensely political sites of struggle, with complex and competitive micropolitical relations. Gender was relayed and produced through everyday social relations and transactions as a female Dean in Sri Lanka reports:

> *I know colleagues in other universities have said that they feel sometimes put down by men in forums.*

Hostility and lack of confidence in female leaders is also noted by a female Professor in Nepal:

> *I could sense it, there is a sixth sense also, sometimes you can sense it that they don't want to help you out, and if you just request for help they never say no, it's fine, but the things are not being done rightly or on time, so you know that by the time you'll come to know that they are reluctant to help you out.*

Lack of confidence in women's leadership authority is also reported by a female Pro Vice-Chancellor in Bangladesh:

> *It's not even been a month where in one of the public universities we have got one lady Vice-Chancellor, she's the first one - but it's like I said it's not even a month and already there are murmurs that she won't be able to do it, she won't be able to do it, she won't be able to do it. Instead of saying, "Let's all, you know, help her to do it" - it's from her colleagues - mostly male.*

A female Assistant Professor in India outlines the negativity she received from a male colleague who felt uncomfortable with women in authority:

> *One thing I noticed, I don't know whether that is typical of India or not, men don't like to work as much under women as they would like under men… I had one research associate working with me, he was very good at his job but he didn't like me as a leader just because I was a woman.*

A female Senior Lecturer in Pakistan describes the envy and jealousy that she receives from colleagues in response to her evolving international career:

> *I have presented three papers abroad… People get jealous instead of feeling pride that's she growing…I realised that people are so jealous of people who, especially women, who were growing and getting out of the institution.*

An extreme manifestation of hostility to women was acid throwing and gender-based violence, as a male Vice-Chancellor in Bangladesh reports:

> *In many of the families, wives are beaten and acid-throwing and all these things are going on. … (On campus) sexual abuse is there. In my tenure for*

the first time, two males, one official and another teacher was sacked on the basis of these charges, in our syndicate I did it, this is first time.

Sexual harassment is not just confined to male academics pressuring female students. A female Senior Lecturer in Pakistan reported how she was stalked and sexually harassed by a male student:

But there are some factors which can retard your progress. For example, when I started, there was this guy who tried to harass me… he used to follow me and he used to make sure that I get harassed…He started to call me, he was a Major in the army, he was a military guy. And he was studying, he was doing his PhD, and he started calling me and I told him that you are a student and I am the supervisor here, so don't give me a call. So what he used to do is that first he started calling me, then he used to come to my office and tell me that you are so beautiful, I want to marry you. He was already married. So I told him that it is not possible for me to be with somebody who is already married with four kids…But he was trying and trying and I was not picking his calls up. He used to come to my office, barge in to my office again and again.

As the above narratives suggest, toxic relations were a source of stress and anxiety for many of the female participants in the study. Violence was both real and symbolic. The lack of confidence in their leadership abilities and potential and the desire to keep them in subordinate and often sexualised positions, corroded their sense of self-efficacy and represented an additional burden that depleted their energy and aspirations.

Section 2: Enablers

Macro-Level Enablers: Peace, Policy and the Power of the International

Enablers included basic freedom from fear in war-torn societies and the importance of international coalitions and an effective gender policy architecture. A male Vice-Chancellor in Afghanistan comments on how peace and security allow women (and men) to thrive:

I mean in security…as I mentioned in the conflict-affected area like Afghanistan, if a woman is in the leadership, if she is working and she is implementing the rules, regulation and law … the warlord and the people who are not obeying 100% the rules, they will create problems for these women who are at the senior position or the leadership. So I mean that first of all security is very, very important that a person or a human thinks that her life or his life is secured. If he or she is saying something, it will not cost her or him for her life.

It was believed that the power of the international could help re-position and broaden women's experiences. A female Vice Dean in Afghanistan suggests that international mobility and opportunities for women to further their education and professional development were essential enablers:

> *The number of PhD woman in Kabul University are very, very low; we have just two PhD women. But the Master's Degree, there are a lot of woman that have got their Masters Degree, inside of Afghanistan and also outside Afghanistan and Germany and India and some other countries.*

However, she highlights how international mobility is gendered:

> *There is not closed culture for the men, they are free to go outside but the women cannot because it's prohibited in some place of my country, for the women go alone abroad without their husband.*

The power of international experience was noteworthy in developing women's academic capital and sense of self-efficacy, a point also made by a female Dean in India:

> *But having been in the US, it kind of gave me that experience, the courage and the confidence to say that I think it's worthwhile that you listen to what I'm saying.*

Policy featured as an enabler in terms of national gender equality and affirmative action initiatives, as a Lecturer in Nepal identifies:

> *In developing countries like Nepal, government must have special provision to take women to higher position…there must be strong positive discrimination policy for certain period of time for women to pick them from the lower level to higher level, so that their representation … could be secured.*

She also emphasises the importance of the macro-level policy of universal education:

> *Education should start from the school level, because this is the time when the girls and boys are supposed to be moulded, right.*

Male participants often suggested affirmative action as an important change intervention, as a male President in India exemplifies:

> *In many higher educational institutions now, more than 50% of students are girls and you know, these are, many of them are first generation in the University, so for them to feel comfortable, women leaders can be very good role models, they can also provide necessary comfort and attention which will make women students do well in higher education institutions. I think they should be encouraged to enter, it will require a bit of affirmative action and supportive measures, but I think it's urgently required.*

As the above quotations imply, it is essential to examine the wider social context in which higher education is located in order to understand how women's subordination is reproduced in institutions.

Meso-Level Enablers: Training, Flexibility and Family-

Friendly Policies

The dominant enabler that participants identified at institutional level relates to policy including work/life balance and family-friendly interventions. Structural provisions including flexible working arrangements were seen to be a major enabler for women. A male Professor in India stresses the importance of institutional family-friendly policies:

> If you are in senior leadership position, you are invariably expected to spend long number of hours in your work. An important difficulty for women is their inability to spend long number of hours in any engagement in the light of their family responsibilities and expectations. …A good family-friendly family policy perhaps can take care of that. So that it can enable women free up their time for entry into senior leadership positions.

However, these measures were sometimes resented by male colleagues who viewed them as preferential treatment for women, as a female Assistant Professor in India reports:

> Like in our university again the Vice-Chancellor has stated that we should have some kind of flexible norms for the women, and flexibility, so that they can bring their kids in the campus, keep them in some day care element…But then the male faculty started saying that we have to take our classes anytime given to us and they are getting this flexibility? So they are actually not as productive as us!

Demographic changes mean that women are not necessarily living in extended families and require institutional support for childcare, suggests a female Registrar in Pakistan:

> I would like to emphasise a couple of good practices which kind of worked out in Pakistan in terms of women's universities, and one of them was the facility of daycare, that is the childcare facility for both faculty and students on campus at very nominal rates. Since most of the urban population in our part of the country is not living in a joint family, and they are single unit families, so women actually have problems pursuing their careers and their education, because they have to take care of young children. So this is one thing which has really worked.

A key theme running through these observations is how higher education institutions appear to have been designed to reflect the needs and traditional lifestyles of men, and the urgent need to factor diversity into working arrangements.

Micro-Level Enablers: Support and Social Capital

Support was interpreted as emotional, financial, socio-cultural and professional. Support was seen as both formal in terms of structured mentoring programmes, and informal in the sense of encouragement. A female Vice Dean in Afghanistan acknowledged the importance of emotional support:

> It's encourage, encourage was the first thing.. I got the energy to be more powerful.

A female Dean in India recommended formalised support in the shape of mentoring and the opportunity take on professional challenges:

> *Active mentoring and placing women in responsible administrative positions.*

The importance of informal mentoring in the form of invitations to apply for senior posts and follow up support was also emphasised by a female Professor in Sri Lanka:

> *So I would think the lack of these people who are inviting women into leadership, the lack of women perceiving themselves as leaders. Let's take the professorship applications ... a lot of the time you don't actually even look at the application forms because they're so complicated and so on, but if somebody tells you: 'Look, you look at it, I will mentor you, I will help you through the process', then you would really take a look…. So, I think that we need encouragement and mentoring to that extent.*

Family support was emphasised by a female Dean in India:

> *You need support, either from a spouse or from a family or from children, to create that space. Because in a competitive world, if you are to do better than others, then you must put in that much time. Nothing comes without that investment.*

The family occupied a contradictory space in many of the narratives. On the one hand, it could provide considerable support, positional advantage and privilege. A male Vice-Chancellor in Bangladesh suggests that social capital is key to professional success:

> *Basically it is merit, but in our patriarchal society, just merit is not enough. She needs help from her family background, her friends and relatives, and networking.*

The negativity associated with being a woman could sometimes be mitigated by the power of the social class/ caste system reports a female Professor in India:

> *Either you have a family connection, dynasty connection we say, in India that works I don't know in other countries, the family dynasty thing works. So some of the women who are at the top actually they are from good/enlightened families.*

In Pakistan, family wealth and privilege are also cited as enablers by a male Director:

> *Or if you look at some of the great leaders, like Benazir Bhutto, you would find that that her family … they were rich…that's how they became leaders.*

On the other hand, the family- particularly if it was uneducated- was often perceived as a barrier, or regulatory device for impeding women's participation in the public domain. In-laws were often seen as particularly problematic, as a female Senior Lecturer in Pakistan observes:

> *Maybe there are women who would like to go abroad… grabbing the opportunities they might think that they have to travel, oh my God, who's going to look after my children. Oh my God, who's going to cook, or my husband is not going to permit me, my mother-in-law is not going to permit me! Because*

mother-in-law is a very strong figure in Pakistan….She's a very strong figure, even the husbands, they cannot say no to their mothers.

As the above quotations suggest, individual leadership success is often based on considerable collective assistance.

Section 3a: Attractions

Participants had more to say about the disattractions rather than the attractions of leadership. While some identified power, influence, making a difference and financial rewards as attractions, the majority of female participants associated leadership with an unhealthily heavy workload, vulnerability to accusations of bribery and corruption and the affective burden of having to deal with conflict and negativity from colleagues in highly competitive professional cultures.

The importance of succession-planning and leaving a legacy for future generations were emphasised in descriptions of attractions. A female Dean in India illustrates the importance of influencing change by being a role model for younger people:

> *I think the only big advantage in being in a leadership position is to try and experiment and change things which were not there when you were stepping into those shoes, or in earlier years. Just giving an example from India, girls were never encouraged for higher education at all. My mother never went to college. So the fact that I have been able to do something in life can become very enabling for my children and my nieces and nephews, and that disparity between boys and girls can be reduced.*

Another female Dean in India explicitly refers to the power of leadership. In so doing she gendered the power *over* and power *to* dichotomy:

> *Attractive because it is a position of power and decision-making. I don't believe women leaders look at it as personal power but they look at it as social power and those who have had some training in gender would easily see that if you have to be an instrument of change then they have to be in the room with the change-makers.*

A female Vice-Chancellor in India describes the attractions in terms of autonomy and empowerment:

> *It's empowering and satisfying. It makes you feel that, yes, I am capable and there is so much I can achieve. I can touch so many people's lives and why shouldn't I? First and foremost, why should anyone tell me what I ought to be doing? I decide what I want to do…It's influence, and I choose what I want to do with my life and I won't have anyone telling me what I should do.*

A female Senior Lecturer in Pakistan felt that it was not just a question of having power, but more about how it is exercised. When asked about the attractions of leadership, she responds:

> *Power…Authoritativeness…They believe that authority is there. But leadership is not about having authority and power, it's about how you exercise power…If you understand the meaning that's why people globally do not believe that women can be good leaders. Why? Because they mostly, mostly, I'm saying mostly, in Pakistan women if they are given power and authority they will misuse it.*

Authority, influence and financial gains were mentioned by a male Director in Sri Lanka:

> *I think senior leadership, what makes it attractive is obviously the authority, the ability to wield power, also to mould the future. I think females in senior leadership have a very big role to play…you know, the policy decisions and things like that. Those types of things I think does make it attractive for them not to dismiss the monetary rewards.*

The attractions discussed in this section were hugely outnumbered by the disattractions outlined in the following section.

Section 3b: Disattractions: Administrative Burden, Affective Load and Corruption

While the concept of neoliberalism was never actually named as such, the functionalities associated with it were frequently cited including increased global competitiveness, financialisation and performance management of colleagues and of the institution. The intensification and bureaucratisation of higher education was seen as major barriers with many women preferring to focus on their research and scholarship, rather than on administrative responsibilities. A male Head of Department in Pakistan observes:

> *I need to spend about 8 hours a day just on administration, on really quite useless things. And of course I also have my research – however in my situation, as a man I can manage both, and spend time on those other aspects when I get home. However, when a woman gets home, she is involved with the family – so women will avoid those kinds of admin posts – they are doing very well as associate professors, as assistant professors, as students, as doctoral students, but their inclination is to the family, and not to put themselves forward for these kinds of posts where there is a lot of administration.*

Leadership as a diversion from research and scholarship was a central concern in the study, as a female Assistant Professor from India explains:

> *A leadership position - the reason I never thought of that as a goal is I don't want to compromise on my research, that is one thing for sure.*

A female Senior Lecturer in Sri Lanka also prefers knowledge creation to administration:

> *In my heart of hearts I'm an academic so for me, the leadership opportunities really hold no benefit as such. I would rather, you know, do research or write research papers, do my PhD, do, like go further in my knowledge than actually take up leadership positions or administrative positions.*

Passionate attachment to research also deterred a female Dean in India from seeking senior leadership positions:

> *I have been advised that I should forget about my disciplinary advances, which I'm not ready to, as yet, let go, so. I think for the next five years I will still trade off or balance these two roles. If I had the choice of moving to another place as a director and leave my lab behind, I don't think I'm ready for that. I would continue doing my research and work in the lab.*

A female Assistant Professor in India also emphasises her primary loyalty to her academic discipline:

> *I love my subject very much, so I strongly feel if I am attached to that subject I will be very good at whatever level. But if I am given administrative responsibility without doing anything for the subject, I won't be happy.*

Leadership was frequently perceived as onerous and unhealthy, as a female Director in India describes:

> *So there was one Senior Professor I was talking to, a very dynamic lady, very good researcher and internationally known and I said: 'Why are you not taking Headship of the Department?' and she says: 'It is too much of headache, too much of politics to manage and this will hamper my research. This will hamper my work/life balance', and she says: 'Anyway I'm not inclined' okay?*

A female Professor in Nepal also associates leadership with difficulty:

> *I became the Head of Department, to tell you frankly, I did not want to go through the hassle again, taking all the responsibilities and doing things so I just want to lead a peaceful life.*

A theme running through some of the narratives was that leadership was associated with bribery and corruption- in the sense of cultural beliefs that power corrupts and that leaders had gained power through nepotism and networks rather than merit. Additionally, there was a belief that anyone in a leadership position was open to bribery and corruption. A female Vice Dean in Afghanistan comments:

> *Mostly the high-ranking positions are polluted with the bribery. But as more experience says to me, there is not any woman to take the bribery yeah; they don't want to have to deal with some wrong things or with mistakes.*

A female Dean in Sri Lanka suggests that leaders are blamed and suspected of corruption if ever there are irregularities;

> *Also in Sri Lanka this Administration is somehow a dirty game…Rightly or wrongly, many of them are blamed for financial irregularities and things like that so I think women are more sensitive. We might be thinking okay, why go into that mess?...Corruption leading to all kinds of remarks and all kinds of things like that.*

A male Assistant Professor in Bangladesh believes that corrupt practices and lack of good governance deter women from seeking highly visible senior positions:

> *I think that good governance should be there… the governing body. Some of the members are from the government officials, so there is also chance of the corruption there. ..So these kinds of policies… personal interest, government affiliations, political affiliations, also the politics, these are the factors, you know, that discourage the women to come to the higher leadership positions.*

Outdated management styles and political interference also act as disincentives for leadership positions, as a male Assistant Professor in Pakistan explains:

> *For what is unattractive, there is a very autocratic system of management in universities in Pakistan, and a lot of political involvement with respect to decision-making.*

Another factor that was cited was the complex nature of interpersonal relations involved in hierarchies. Leadership positions can be rotational and fixed term, requiring resignifications and changing identities. Peers can be transformed into subordinates, as a female Pro Vice-Chancellor in Bangladesh identifies:

> *And then again you know what makes it unattractive is I don't know if this is the right answer for this, the thing is when I became the Pro VC then I see all my colleagues in a different light. Before you just saw them as your colleagues. Now you see them in various shades. So that is nice, at times it is not.*

A female Professor in Sri Lanka feels that the interpersonal dependencies in leadership are unattractive:

> *I'm not that much of a people person, so I would much prefer not having to deal with people administratively. And in leadership, obviously, you deal with people and you wait for responses, and you can't get on with it, because you don't have very much autonomy in terms of getting things done, so I guess that is not very attractive.*

Women often felt that they carried the additional burden of being different, or 'other'. This meant that they were more visible and had the additional workload of having to demonstrate their value, as a female Director in India comments:

> *You have to keep proving every time yourself okay? Whereas somebody sits in that position of power, he need not prove, but a lady has to prove every time.*

In addition to the stress of the long hours' culture, a Registrar in Pakistan mentions affective issues including isolation:

> *I think it's the burden and the stress of working in a senior leadership position, which makes it unattractive. Most of the people and most of the women realise that it's a very lonely job up there.*

The isolation is also reported by a female Dean in India:

> *I'm alone, even today I'm the only university-wide woman dean, I'm the only woman in the series of directors, deputy directors, university-wide deans and associate deans…then in these evenings when there's a networking dinner, you are completely left out.*

The 24/7 working culture was seen as highly unattractive to many women in this study, as a female Lecturer in Nepal illustrates:

> *The organisational culture...I have to mention one thing, the organisational culture and I am speaking from my part of the society, country...that the meetings are, almost all meetings, major decisions are taken after the work...after 5pm-6pm. And at that time, men are free to again have another meeting, stay longer, but women have to again go, women won't be that much free socially and mentally because they have also responsibilities.*

From the above observations, it appears that leadership narratives are frequently heard and understood as negative by the majority of women and many men in this study, demanding sacrifice, isolation and extensive self-protection.
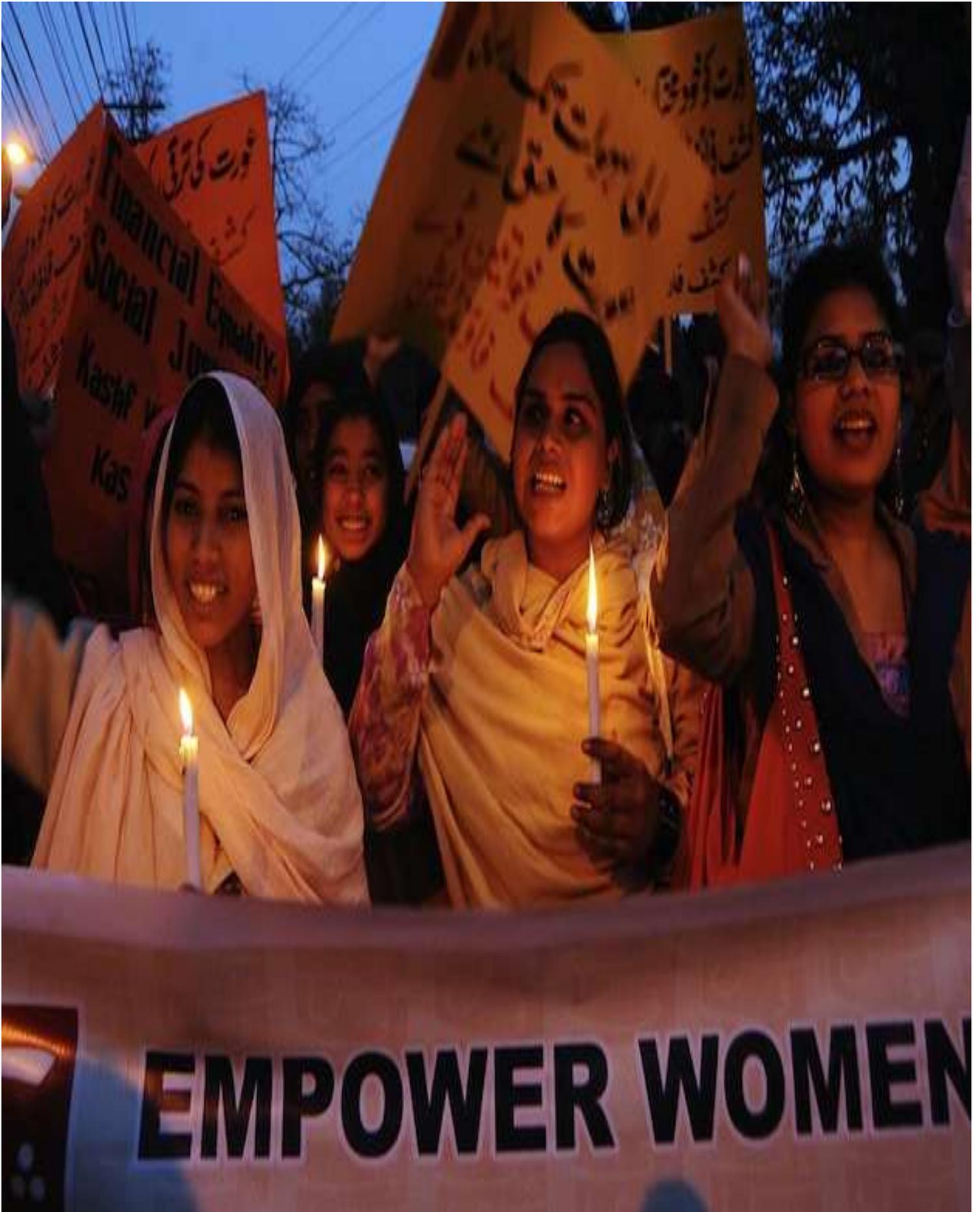
Section 4: Looking to the Future: Recommendations for Change

Recommendations related to enhanced professional development and mentoring opportunities for women, gender sensitisation programmes for women and men, more research and networking, and the need to develop gender equality, affirmative action and work/life balance policies.

There was a consistent plea across the six countries for training, professional and capacity-development programmes for women. In Afghanistan, this took the form of a desire for more higher degrees and English language opportunities for women and research as a female Vice Dean proposes:

> *Doctoral Programmes, Masters' Programme…Research about women and also scientific research …And also the other important thing for the women to be a leader in the future, they should know English, they should know many, the different programme of computer, they should access the computer too. Mostly most of the woman professors, they have high ranking but they don't know English.*

She also recommends the establishment of women's networks in the region:

> *My suggestion is that among the Asian countries, there should be a good network between the women. Especially between the universities, there should be a good website for them to exchange their ideas, to solve their problems, because mostly most of the Asian countries have the same problem, the same barriers.*

The call for women-only international leadership programmes was widely expressed. A female Director in India proposes:

> *I think maybe it's a good idea this research brings out some kind of plan for leadership development for women…We should have a programme but maybe laying down how it should run based on four/five countries.*

However, it was also stressed by a female Senior Lecturer in Pakistan that men need gender-sensitisation training:

> *First of all I want the training of men. Training of men, that they should be emotionally trained before giving them high positions to hire women. Those men should be trained emotionally.*

Mentoring programmes were also seen as an important change intervention, as a female Pro Vice-Chancellor in Bangladesh suggests:

> *In relation to women and maybe mentoring the potentials so that they can … take up leadership…you have to pick up the potentials and also mentor them because I think it's also important for people to believe in herself.*

Gender policy formation and implementation were recommended by a male Vice-Chancellor in Bangladesh:

> *We'd like to see gender-balanced society through a gender-balanced policy…
> That's the kind of policy formation we need in the country, and that should be
> implemented and fast.*

A male Director in Sri Lanka expressed similar recommendations:

> *I'd like to see gender policy put in place. Government needs to do that
> because government needs the framework. There has to be a general
> policy. There has to be more equal employment opportunity policies etc. put
> in place…If you set that policy and you legislate it and you make it law, then
> you will start to force the change.*

A male Professor in India called for stronger family policies, but stresses the need for
these to apply to women and men so as to avoid sealing women into domestic
responsibilities:

> *A good family policy that is in place, can deal with this interface between work
> and family better. But I want to add one important caution. Many of these
> family policies, in the process of helping the woman to handle their
> work/family, in fact end up pushing them towards greater care work instead of
> releasing them from the burden of care work. A family policy should shift a
> part of the responsibility to the male partner.*

A female Lecturer in Nepal recommends affirmative action policies, but cautioned
that they should not be tokenistic:

> *There must be proportional representation for certain period of time, for
> certain...in the leadership position, leadership position…The organization, the
> university should pick women, but the women with capacity. Not only
> the...women being only the physical women does not count much, that's why
> women should have the...women with capacity, they should pick women with
> capacity. … we have to have...the quota system for certain period of time. But
> … Women without capacity, are even worse than males with capacity.*

Underpinning many of these recommendations was a wish for more balancing of
power and fewer double standards between women and men. Dress code was often
cited as a vehicle for regulating women in the workplace. A female Professor in Sri
Lanka expresses the desire for a gender-free organisational culture in which gender
roles are not prescribed and policed:

> *One of our PVCs dresses quite flamboyantly… she has a range of clothing,
> this is the whole dress thing, right... So then that would vary from a sari to
> jackets with little peepholes and trousers and so on, right, and you know,
> wearing trousers is frowned upon in the university. Staff are.. assistant
> lecturers are told specifically not to wear trousers, that they should wear saris
> and so on and so forth. So now, when she applied for the VCship, she
> stopped wearing trousers and got a sari. So I want a place where you don't
> have to make such choices, make such compromises and so on.*

These observations suggest that women in leadership is not merely about
demographic change and the counting of more women into unhealthy, competitive
and sometimes toxic and dangerous organisational cultures. Rather, it is about
transforming organisations so they become more hospitable and generous to both
women and men.

Summing Up and Moving On: Recommendations for Actions

A key question resulting from our findings is whether women are being rejected or disqualified from senior leadership through discriminatory recruitment, selection and promotion procedures, gendered career pathways or exclusionary networks and practices in women-unfriendly institutions or indeed whether women are refusing, resisting or dismissing senior leadership and making strategic decisions not to apply for positions which they evaluate as unattractive, onerous and undesirable. We conclude that it is a complex combination of multiple factors. While some women are entering and flourishing in senior leadership positions, they are few in number. There are consequences of women's under-representation including depressed employment and promotion opportunities, democratic deficit, under-representation in decision-making fora and the reproduction of cultural messages to students, staff and wider society that suggest that women are unsuited to leadership. From our three sources of data (literature, statistics and interviews), we have identified the following recommendations:

Policy

- Gender to be mainstreamed into higher education policy in relation to students and staff, with equality seen as a central constituent in quality.

- Policies on gender equality, gender mainstreaming need to be developed and accompanied by strategic action plans, resource allocation and reporting mechanisms. These include time lines, goals/ performance indicators and effective evaluation procedures.

- Policy needs to be informed by gender-disaggregated statistics that are updated regularly and made readily accessible. These need to be for HE staff across different employment categories.

- Policies on recruitment and selection of senior leaders need to be reviewed to aim for more transparency and accountability in decision-making.

Developing Women

- Investment in women's capacity-building is essential in all countries. This includes research-informed, women-only leadership development programmes; access to doctoral degrees; training and continuous professional development opportunities, mentorship programmes and networks.

Research and Teaching

- More evidence is required from research studies on women in leadership to inform policies and practices in the region. Gender also could be integrated more successfully into research networks in the region (EIU, 2014a)

↳ The socio-cultural challenges identified in this study to be addressed via the curriculum e.g. Gender Studies, and also through professional development for staff e.g. gender sensitisation programmes.

Our study suggests that women are not being identified and prepared for leadership. There is also evidence globally that when women do aspire for leadership, they are frequently rejected from the most senior positions (Manfredi et al., 2014). However, we also found that many women academics are reluctant to aim for senior leadership and perceive it as an unattractive career option. There is an urgent need to revision leadership to make it more attractive and hospitable to women and men, rather than focusing simply on counting more women into existing systems and structures.

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