

Dissertation Workshop on Gender Issues in Pakistan
November 1-3, 2010
Final Report

The third AIPS/HEC dissertation workshop for PhD and M.Phil candidates in Pakistani universities was conducted in Islamabad November 1-3, 2010. The workshop leaders were Dr. Saba Gul Khattak (Member, social sector, Pakistan Planning Commission) and Anita M. Weiss (Professor of International Studies at the University of Oregon).

This workshop's theme focused on gender issues in the context of wider social science concerns in Pakistan. The twelve participants were from departments of sociology (5), women/gender studies (3), political science/international relations (2), social development, and history. Universities represented were Punjab (2), Sindh at Jamshoro (2), Quaid-e-Azam (2), Karachi, Arid Agriculture at Faisalabad, Peshawar, International Islamic University, Bahauddin Zakariya, and Gujrat; no applications were received from the Universities in Baluchistan. Most participants are currently teachers at colleges in Pakistan. Research interests included women and food security, different aspects of political participation, domestic violence, promoting peace, status and change, microcredit, and various dimensions of economic transformation affecting women's lives.

Prior to the workshop's commencement, all participants were provided with electronic copies of each other's proposals, an article on methodology¹ and a sample literature review chapter from one of Anita Weiss' students in the U.S. Included in the physical folder handed to students the first day was the final agenda, an additional article on conducting feminist methodology, and James P. Davis *The Rowman & Littlefield Guide to Writing with Sources* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007).

The three day workshop was divided into two major parts: the first day focused on general issues in conceptualizing, researching and writing a thesis or dissertation, while the next two days were detailed discussions of topics and research questions, arguments, structure of individual proposals, and sharing ideas about sources and methods in focusing on participants' proposals.

Student engagement increased as they became experienced with commenting on and questioning each other's proposals. As another important goal of these workshops is to facilitate the creation of a cohort among themselves that they can rely on in the future, the coordinators were very pleased with the rapport that developed between the students.

Time was set aside at the end of the third day to discuss publication issues, especially how to transform a completed dissertation into a book, submit it for publication, and to extract parts of it into a publishable article and conference presentation. We discussed how to participate in international conferences and other international scholarly networks.

¹ W. Lawrence Neuman "The Meanings of Methodology" *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* Allyn & Bacon, 2000, pp. 63-88.

The students who participated were each serious and dedicated to writing a superior thesis or dissertation. The coordinators were concerned, however, about the preparation they had previously received. They seemed overly concerned with methodology and doing what their supervisors told them to do, than with developing original ideas and critical or theoretical perspectives on them. All students commended the atmosphere that was created and were especially thankful to Ghulam Rasool, the AIPS office manager in Islamabad tasked with making many of the arrangements.