

Promoting Employment through Women Empowerment in Pakistan's Textile Industry

Enhancing employability and employment opportunities for women and People with Disabilities (PWDs) in Pakistan's textile and fashion industry.

The Challenge

Women make up more than half of Pakistan's population; however, their representation in the labour market remains low, accounting for only 23.3% in 2022. This underrepresentation also echoes within the textile and fashion value chain, a major industrial sector in Pakistan, contributing significantly as one of the largest global exporters with a volume of USD 19.33 billion and employing nearly 15 million people.

However, this growth doesn't translate into equal opportunities, notably evident in managerial positions, where women hold a mere 0.6% representation. Challenges persist for women in this industry, including inadequate working conditions, unstable job prospects, limited chances for career growth, mobility restrictions, and barriers to accessing crucial infrastructure for childcare and education.

In Pakistan, People with Disabilities (PWDs) continue to face stigma, and there is a lack of systematic data collection on PWDs. About 6.2% of people in Pakistan live with some form of disability, 50% of whom are women. For PWDs, finding employment in the textile and fashion industry is more challenging, despite the fact that textile companies in Punjab are required by law to employ 3% of the workforce with PWDs. In addition, factories are usually not barrier-free and PWDs are often unable to meet the qualification requirements.

Project name	Promoting Employment through Women Empowerment in Pakistan's Textile Industry (WE)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Pakistan
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Commerce, Government of Pakistan
Duration	01.01.2024 – 31.12.2026

Our Approach

The project 'Promoting Employment through Women Empowerment in Pakistan's Textile Industry (WE)' collaborates closely with the public sector, private sector and civil society stakeholders to drive transformative changes towards gender-equitable and inclusive development of Pakistan's textile and fashion industry. In line with the integrated approach to employment promotion of the German Development Cooperation, the project addresses both the supply and demand sides of the labour market, emphasising their interaction. The project's central focus lies on fostering close cooperation with the textile and fashion industry, especially with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).



Pg. 1, Left: Through change management interventions in the textile companies, women workers are capacitated for higher positions.

Right: Speakers from partner factory discuss best practices for gender, inclusion, and diversity in the textile & fashion industry during an exposure visit.



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Pg. 2, Left: Participants in soft skills training are seen at the GIZ organised sessions with vulnerable group.

Right: Women are trained on multiple skills that are applicable across diverse professional settings.

Promote a decent and inclusive working environment in the textile industry

The project promotes a humane, gender-equitable and inclusive working environment in the textile and fashion industry. This involves introducing fundamental strategies and practices in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that form the basis for further process and system improvements in the areas of productivity, working environment, occupational health and safety, quality management or diversity according to gender and disability. The project relies on the Dialogue for Sustainability (DfS) methodology, which has already been successfully used in the Labour and Environmental Standards in Pakistan's Textile Industry (TextILES I) project.

Strengthen cooperation among stakeholders on diversity and employment of women

The project focuses on enhancing collaboration among stakeholders in the textile and fashion industry, specifically addressing inclusion and women's employment. Dialogue and cooperation formats on equality and diversity are promoted that support the discourse on women's employment, work-life balance and greater equality in leadership and management. These include public-private dialogue forums, private sector exchange forums and women's networks. Unemployed women and PWDs

are identified through civil society organisations and receive career guidance on employment opportunities in the textile and fashion industry. In addition, the project organises cross-organisational innovation competitions aimed at fostering collaborative solutions to common challenges. This initiative seeks to enhance employment prospects for women and PWDs within the industry.

Improve employability of women and People with Disabilities (PWDs)

The women and PWDs in the textile and fashion industry are capacitated through On Job Trainings (OJT) to equip them with essential skills for securing employment. Moreover, the project introduces customised leadership training programs that pave career paths for women and PWDs, aiming for leadership positions within the industry. Through partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the project delivers financial and digital literacy training to empower women and PWDs, reducing their vulnerability to exploitation.

Gender and Diversity

The project promotes the skills of women and PWDs and anchors strategies to promote gender equality and inclusion in the textile and fashion industry.

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