



# Women at the (Water) Table

Despite the presence of some brilliant women experts on water-related issues in Pakistan, none were taken on board in the formulation of the National Water Policy.

Pakistan's water managers and water users seem to be living on two different planets. There seems to be a serious disconnect with the needs, hopes and aspirations of almost half the population of the country. Despite the focus on mainstreaming gender in all development, the relationship barely progresses beyond that of giver and receiver, the giver distributing largesse quite unmindful of whether it is having a positive impact on the receiver or not.

The National Water Policy, that took its time in seeing the light of day

works, including the Technical Committee of the Global Water Partnership. She has also served on Pakistan's Commission on the Status of Women. Her expertise ranges from grassroots institutions and projects, right up to major national and international programmes and multi-million dollar grant funds. Kamal is the founder of several private and non-profit organisations, including Hisaar Foundation, a foundation for water, food and livelihood security.



**Laila Kasuri**

Laila Kasuri is a Water Analyst with Global Green Growth Institute's Investment Policy Solutions Division. Prior to joining GGGI, she was leading research on climate-smart irrigation at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) Centre for

Water Informatics and Technology, and consulting with the World Bank as part of the South Asia Water Initiative (SAWI) on river basin planning and management. She has previously worked on projects focused on flood risk reduction and the "room for the river" concept in the Lower Mississippi River, the Indus River, the Sacramento-San Joaquin River and the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna Rivers. Laila has also worked with the Asian Development Bank, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences in California.



**Sharmeen Tariq**

Tariq works on promoting water stewardship efforts in Pakistan through the Scotland-based Alliance for Water Stewardship. Their main focus is industry, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Multinational Corporations (MCs), but she has been trying to broaden the focus to institutions, offices and homes, through a series of trainings based on the Project Water Education for Teachers (PWET) training structure. She is developing programmes and trainings for Women in Water Stewardship and Leadership. Tariq is an environmental auditor by profession.



**Sanaa Baxamoosa**

She is an environmental practitioner with more than 10 years of experience in the water sector. She graduated with a degree in Integrated Water Resources Management from Hampshire College, Massachusetts in 2007 and is pursuing an MSc. in Sustainable Development from the Centre for Development, Environment and Policy, SOAS, University of London. She has worked with Hisaar Foundation as an integral member of the team since 2009. She also serves as secretary of the think tank on the Rational Use of Water, Convener of the Universities for Water Network and Country Network Manager for Cap-Net Pakistan. She was the Business Development Associate at Micro Drip Private Limited.



**Dr. Rukhshan Roohi**

She has a Ph.D in Range Science (1984) and another is expected this year in Environmental Geoscience. She is also a research cum education professional with more than 25 years experience of conducting research, teaching at graduate and postgraduate levels; curricula revision and addition of new area; initiating new programmes; developing research proposals and seeking funds through competitive grants from national and international donors; developing multi-disciplinary teams and enhancing their capacity through on-the-job trainings; and strengthening national and international linkages.



**Kausar S Khan**

She is a social sector analyst with a primary focus on communities and their right to address their issues by connecting with government departments, NGOs and the private sector for support. Khan uses participatory approaches with communities, subscribing to Paulo Freire's framework of social transformation.



**Aban Marker Kabraji**

Currently Regional Director Asia of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), she was instrumental in setting up of the World Wild Life Fund (WWF) and IUCN in Pakistan. She has represented Pakistan and Asia at international forums and has a complete command over environmental issues in Pakistan. Kabraji rates water among the most critical areas of concern. She has led policy dialogues and negotiations across the world. She is Director of the IUCN Regional Hub for Asia-Oceania. Aban Kabraji was recently awarded the Tamgha-i-Imtiaz (Medal of Excellence), Pakistan Civil Award for 2018, in recognition of her outstanding achievements in the field of conservation. Earlier, in 1984, she was awarded the Order of the Golden Ark, a Dutch award given to luminaries in the field of conservation. Earlier winners include the late Roger Tory, Jane Goodall, Sylvia Earle and Ravindra Kumar Sinha.



**Mehjabeen Abidi Habib**

An ecologist and resource equity specialist, Mehjabeen Habib worked in the NGO sector, the UN and academia; as an environmental consultant with Global Climate



# WOMEN WATER PROFESSIONALS

**DR. LUBNA GHAZAL**  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI

Dr. Lubna Ghazal, Assistant Professor at the University of Karachi, specializes in water resource management and climate change. With 20 research papers, multiple national projects, and extensive student mentorship, she combines academic excellence with impactful initiatives like water conservation, plantation drives, and beach cleanups, championing a sustainable future.



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# WOMEN WATER PROFESSIONALS

**DR. SHEHLA BATOOL**  
FOUNDER - WATER STEWARDS (PVT) LTD

Dr. Shehla Batool, founder of Water Stewards (Pvt) Ltd., designed a patented groundwater treatment solution to remove arsenic, turbidity, and microbes, providing safe drinking water to low-income rural communities. With expertise in water analysis and environmental impact assessment, she also educates on sustainable water use and conservation as a researcher and guest lecturer at Quaid-i-Azam University.



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# WOMEN WATER PROFESSIONALS

**KAUSAR HASHMI**  
MANAGER - PHWI AT NED UNIVERSITY

Kausar Hashmi, a geographer from the University of Karachi, has over 20 years of experience in water-related research & social development sector. She currently serves as the Manager at the Panjwani-Hisaar Water Institute (PHWI) at NED University, focusing on water, climate change, and gender issues. Kausar has played a pivotal role in research documentation, data analysis, & stakeholder engagement. Previously, she worked extensively with the Hisaar Foundation and Raasta Development Consultants. In the past, she has also served as Secretary of the Universities for Water Network (UWN) and the Conference Academic Committee for Hisaar Foundation.



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JUSTICE

# Women in Pakistan's Sindh win historic recognition to manage water

Excluded from water management for years despite being a major part of the agricultural workforce in Sindh, women farmers have been granted a role in water governance after the passage of a new amendment



Woman farmer carrying her child while cutting rice crops from the field, in village Qasim Solangi, Hyderabad [image by: Manoj Genani]

Manoj Genani

January 20, 2021

This week, a [landmark amendment](#) passed by the Sindh province's legislative assembly recognised – for the first time – the role of women farmers in water management. It has been a

Dhani Bux, a farmer and advocate for efficient water management in his district Badin, was one of many men demanding a share of water in the 'tail-end areas' of the Sindh province. For the last decade, Bux and his fellow farmers have faced a serious scarcity of water that has turned their fertile lands in Badin and Thatta barren and spurred mass migration. He is the leader of the District Badin Alliance, formed after legislation titled the 'Sindh Water Management Ordinance' (SWMO) was passed in 2002 which required that farmers' organisations be formed at each distributary for the equitable distribution of water.

**The Sindh Water Management (Amendment) Bill, 2018** now guarantees women's representation in around 45,000 water course associations, over 350 farmer organisations, and 14 area water boards in the province.



A view of Akram wah canal which supplies irrigation water to Hyderabad, Tando Muhammad Khan and Badin tail areas [image by: Manoj Genani]

Unfortunately, there was no specific provision or requirement for women farmers, therefore women were kept out of this important fight. "Unfortunately, I was not part of the farmers' organisation that decides the distribution of water resources," Farzana (who uses one name) told [The Third Pole](#). From the village of Qasim Solangi, she rears cattle, takes part in several agricultural activities, brings water home and does housework.

Farzana added, "If women are given a chance in water resource management, we know the lands more than men, and can decide what suitable measures should be taken."



Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund

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