

## ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

### Women in Nonagricultural Sectors: Pakistan, India, Bangladesh & Afghanistan

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Bangladesh, Pakistan and India have all been governed by female heads of state. In Bangladesh, Khaleda Zia was Prime Minister from 1991 to 1996. Benazir Bhutto was Prime Minister of Pakistan twice from 1988-1990 and from 1993 to 1996. In India, Indira Gandhi served as Prime Minister twice from 1966 to 1977 and from 1980 to 1984. <sup>1</sup>

- ❖ The share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector in Pakistan (% of total nonagricultural employment) was at 13% in 2008.<sup>2</sup> Despite low employment numbers in the nonagricultural sector and low literacy rates (61.5% of women between ages 15-25 are literate) women have made headway into corporate leadership positions in Pakistan. <sup>3</sup> Women have taken major leadership positions in both government and private corporations. In 2008 a woman was hired as chief executive for the Karachi Port Trust (KPT), Pakistan's premier business association, and in 2007 The Overseas Chamber of Commerce and Industry was headed by a female CEO as was the Pakistan Software Houses Association. <sup>4</sup>
- ❖ In Bangladesh 18% of women are employed in nonagricultural industries (this number is expressed as a percentage of the total employment in the nonagricultural sector countrywide).<sup>5</sup> In 2014 Bangladesh was the world's second largest importer of garments largely to Western countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom (China was the largest). This industry falls into the nonagricultural sector and accounts for 80% of the Bangladesh's export earnings. There are some four million garment workers in the country; 85% of which are women. Garment works in Bangladesh rarely have access to child care. They are paid around \$68 USD per month. Garment works who have tried to unionize have been repressed. <sup>6</sup>
- ❖ In India the percentage of women employed in the nonagricultural sector is 19%. <sup>7</sup> An August 2011 survey of large local and multinational corporations in India found that 11% of the companies had female CEOs. More than half of female CEOs in India are employed in the banking and financial services sector; this was followed by the media and life sciences sector. <sup>8</sup> In 2012 the percentage of female CEOs in the United States 4%. <sup>9</sup> Globally, 1.5% of international businesses had female CEOs in 2009. <sup>10</sup>
- ❖ In 2008 18.4% of Afghani women were employed in the nonagricultural sector. <sup>11</sup> Roya Mahboob, an Afghani technology entrepreneur was named by Time magazine as one of the 100 most influential women in the world. In 2013 Mahboob's IT consulting firm employed 25 people, 18 of which were women. Her employees develop software and databases for private companies, government bureaus and NATO. <sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> September 1, 2014 [http://womenshistory.about.com/od/rulers20th/a/women\\_heads.htm](http://womenshistory.about.com/od/rulers20th/a/women_heads.htm)

<sup>2</sup> August 25, 2014 <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/pakistan>

<sup>3</sup> August 25, 2014 [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/pakistan\\_pakistan\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/pakistan_pakistan_statistics.html)

<sup>4</sup> June 24, 2008 [http://www.cipe.org/blog/2008/06/24/women-leadership-in-pakistan%E2%80%93a-change-in-the-making/#.U\\_uw38WwL9U](http://www.cipe.org/blog/2008/06/24/women-leadership-in-pakistan%E2%80%93a-change-in-the-making/#.U_uw38WwL9U)

<sup>5</sup> August 25, 2014 <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/bangladesh>

<sup>6</sup> February 1, 2014 <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/monitor/bangladeshis-victims-corporate-exploitation>

<sup>7</sup> August 29, 2011 <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.EMP.INSV.FE.ZS>

<sup>8</sup> August 3, 2011 <http://www.ema-partners.com/articles/gender-split>

<sup>9</sup> August 22, 2012 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/carolinehoward/2012/08/22/introducing-the-new-class-of-female-ceos/>

<sup>10</sup> December 21, 2009 <http://blogs.hbr.org/2009/12/women-ceo-why-so-few/>

<sup>11</sup> August 29, 2014 <http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=MDG&f=seriesRowID%3A722>

<sup>12</sup> April 18, 2013 <http://time100.time.com/2013/04/18/time-100/slide/roya-mahboob/>