

## 952 women fell prey to violence in six months

### OUR STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI - At least 952 women fell prey to violence during the six months (January to June 2011) in Sindh province. This was unveiled by Aurat Foundation in its report released on Friday.

Mahnaz Rahman, Resident Director Aurat Foundation, PML-F MPA Nusrat Sehar Abbasi, Coordinator AF Shireen Aijaz and Fareeda Hanan programme officer of Policy and Data Monitor project of AF while addressing to a press conference at Karachi Press Club said that huge increase in the incidents of violence against women including murders, honour killings, sexual harassment, acid throwing incidents and rape was observed in the province.

A total of 952 women fell prey to violence in six months (January to June), showing rise of violence against 819 incidents re-

ported during July to December of last year, 2010, they said.

The 75 cases of rape have been reported during six months data, while 76 incidents of suicide took place in the reporting period. A number of 167 women victims/survivors of murder have also been reported in all 23 districts of Sindh province. At least 101 cases of abduction/kidnapping; 29 of sexual assault; 85 cases of domestic violence; while 54 incidents of custodial violence; murder attempts; customary practices; attempt to suicide; threat to violence; trafficking and torture were reported in different parts of the province.

As per the report, 46 Jirgas were held on women related issues, in which 16 women/girls were given as compensation to settle the tribal conflicts or free will marriages issues. More than 30 cases were registered against

Jirga holders and parents. Most of the parents of survivors and tribal leaders were denied of conducting any Jirga or bail before arrest through courts, the report said.

In most of the cases, the accused used different weapons and methods for killing and victimising women including gun, axe, hatchet, pesticide, rope, poison, knife, Kalashnikov, stick, rifle, kerosene oil and petrol.

According to the gathered data, 91 women/girls were tortured or arrested by police as male members of their families could not be arrested. Most of the women were released next day or after one or two days.

They said that the stakeholders are pinning hopes on post-18th Amendment set-ups to curb violence against women, but incidents of harassment and sexual abuse at workplaces are on the rise. The consequences of

this violence against women are long lasting as both rape and domestic violence, frequently accompanied by psychological abuse, are associated with a host of short-and long-term problems including physical injury, illness and psychological symptoms. The women leaders pointed out that despite banned imposed by the Sindh High Court, jirgas were held on women-related issues in the province. Although, there might be many causes and reasons behind the ever-increasing trend of violence against women in our society including lack of awareness, education etc. However, there is a common perception held by the civil society that tribal jirgas are the main and basic cause of increase in the cases of violence against women including the cases of honour killing in Sindh province, they remarked.