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# Violence against women on the rise

By A Reporter

ISLAMABAD, Feb 14: As many as 8,539 women had fallen victim to violence in the country during year 2011 registering 6.74 per cent increase in reported cases of violence against women (VAW) as compared to year 2010.

The situation was brought to light in 4th annual report on, 'Violence against Women' launched by Aurat Foundation on Tuesday. It says that 8,000 such cases were reported in 2010 while 2009 witnessed 8,548 cases and in 2008 there were 7,571 incidents.

According to the report, the sorry state of affairs regarding violence against women has been getting aggravated during last four years despite all-out efforts.

Based on media reports, the compiled data not only gives an overall glimpse of offences reported from all over the country but also provides a comparative analysis of different provinces with respect to VAW incidents.

In some forms of violence, there has been notable increase, for instance, sexual assaults have increased by 48.65 per cent, acid-throwing incidents have risen by 37.5 per cent, 'honour' killings by 26.57 per cent and occurrences of domestic violence have gone up by 25.51 per cent.

According to Aurat Foundation, the number shown in the report is just a 'tip of the iceberg' as the data collected by staff is based on cases reported in media. It is

an open secret that majority of violence against women incidents fails to draw media attention. The report shows that the sizeable number of incidents was not reported to police as in such cases no FIRs are lodged which reflects lack of confidence among citizens to approach police. Among the total 8,539 incidents, FIRs were registered in 6,745 cases whereas 911 cases were not reported to police and no information was available in 883 cases. The biggest number of unregistered cases was noted in Sindh province where FIRs were not registered in 605 cases and no information was available in 75 incidents among the total 1,316 reported cases.

In the process of collecting data, Aurat Foundation staff has observed some emerging trends that, if allowed to continue, will further aggravate the situation. According to them, one such trend was noticed in Balochistan where, in most of the cases of honour killing, the women were killed on the orders of Jirga but no such punishment was awarded to the men as in most cases heavy compensations were paid to the aggrieved party.

According to foundation spokesperson, the report has been launched with a view to identifying number of violence cases against women, creating supportive environment and exerting social pressure to eliminate violence against women from Pakistan.