



# LEGISLATIVE WATCH

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## Internally Displaced Women: Problems and Needs

By Samar Minallah

Salima Bibi from Madyan, Swat, frantically swaddles her newborn daughter while wiping her own tears. These are tears of both physical and emotional pain. The two-day old infant sweats in the tightly wrapped cloth called 'suzni'. While the nameless infant lies there motionless, Salima feels the suffocation generated by the tent, floor mat, and the sweltering sun of the month of June. On top of it all, strangers keep peeping into their tent; some out of concern, some out of curiosity. Human dignity is yet another casualty of displacement.

This is the story of one Salima among nearly 66,000 pregnant women who are displaced as a result of clashes in Swat and other regions of NWFP. According to UNFPA, 'some 4,375 internally displaced women in the Northwest Pakistan were due to give birth in June with very few trained medics and meager facilities'. A large number of women and children have been affected by health related problems that are largely not addressed. Premature births, pregnancy complications and high prevalence of infant mortality are some of the consequences that are yet to be fully tackled.

An unnoticed aspect of displacement is the loss of

privacy and 'honor' of womenfolk who are culturally kept protected from the eyes of strangers. This has further confined women to the stifling tents in the camps. Shukrullah from Bajaur Agency says, "We may have all been herded and dumped into these camps but we will still try to maintain our dignity and honor. All we can do to achieve this is to further



confine our women and children into the tents. Their condition only grows worse. Can anyone dare to spend even a short while in these tents?" Back home, these women would go out to pick 'saaba' (spinach), wash clothes at the stream ('goodar') and move around to attend social and cultural events. But, when it comes to their lives in these camps, privacy is not an option.

In the Pukhtun code of life called Pukhtunwali, 'Honor' has always been seen as vital. There is a Pushtu proverb, "Da khazay chay poza pa makh na wee, no kando kay ba mordaree khoree" ('A woman without 'honor' will die of misery in desolate places'). Another proverb goes, 'Khazay la ya kor day ya gor' (For a woman either home or grave). The tents fail to give women the culturally sensitive protection that they require.

For every woman here, 'home' remained her domain, her kingdom. The plants she watered, the chickens she fed, the dung-cakes she slapped onto the walls, all provided a feeling of purpose. As displaced people, women lose the purpose. The spirit to go on is hard to revive. In the current scenario, majority of tents shelter women experiencing feelings of alienation and helplessness. As Farhat Bibi from Buner puts it, "I feel exposed like a pot without a lid. Anyone can come and interfere."

According to Professor Khalid Mufti, former Principal of the Khyber Medical College, it was observed that 85 per cent of the IDPs examined at the camp were suffering from anxiety, depression and trauma-affected symptoms with partially fulfilled unmet needs of housing, clean water, congestion and

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## Ignoring Substantive Issues: The Federal Budget 2009-10

By S Akbar Zaidi

What made the immediate headlines of the Budget 2009-10 presented in the National Assembly on 13 June 2009, was not so much the substance of what the Budget promised - or did not, as I argue here - but a symbolic gesture which, in some, albeit limited ways, emphasised how women in Pakistan had emerged at the forefront of politics and in the public sphere. The Budget was presented by Ms Hina Rabbani Khar, State Minister for Finance, the first woman to present the Federal Budget in Pakistan's history in front of the first woman Speaker of the House. Clearly, the fact that the current National Assembly contains the largest number of women parliamentarians - 74 - of which 14 have been elected directly on general seats, challenges the constant attempts at misogyny and of patriarchy which undermine the position of women in society, and are ingrained in Pakistan's social and cultural institutions and behaviour. Clearly, the presentation of the Budget, on grounds of symbolism, at one level, rates high.

Yet, there were other aspects to this symbolism as well, which present a rather inconvenient truth about Pakistan's democracy and its institutions. Ms Hina Rabbani Khar in her budget speech, condemned and

blamed the previous government for creating many of the problems which the present democratically elected government was grappling with. Yet, the rather sad truth is, that Ms Khar was a high-profile member of General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz's economic team which is now being blamed for many of the ills that afflict Pakistan. Indeed it was hypocritical for Ms Khar, as well as for the Pakistan Peoples Party government to say so, and to have the same Minister from an undemocratic government hold the same - or any other - portfolio in a democratically elected government. In fact, this fact only underscores the point that elections need not bring in able and competent elected representatives, or substantive change, and that individuals can remain unprincipled and opportunistic by switching political sides and still be assured of high public office.

A final symbolic statement that emanates from the fact that Ms Khar presented the Budget is, that she actually has no power and little understanding of financial issues. The real finance minister is Mr Shaukat Tareen, the unelected advisor on Finance. It was and has been Mr Tareen who has formed Pakistan's economic programme before and after the budget. It was Mr Tareen who defended the budget at press conferences and it was Mr

Tareen who was approached by different lobbies seeking concessions. Clearly, all the bravado of having Pakistan's Budget being presented for the first time by a woman, shows how limited such symbolism is in essence, and that women must wait their time, and continue their struggle for equal rights, to be in real and substantive positions of authority and power.



**Ms Hina Rabbani Khar, State Minister for Finance, delivering budget speech in the House.**

### The Economic Meltdown of 2008-09:

In order to understand how critical the 2009-10 Budget was and will be for the rest of the financial year, it is necessary to take a brief look at how the last financial year 2008-09, has ended. Only when

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# Issues of Protection and Violence for Internally Displaced Women and Children

Aurat Foundation organized a Focussed Group Discussion in Islamabad on 30 June to identify issues related to protection and violence among internally displaced women and children staying in camps in Mardan and Swabi, as well as those are staying off-camps. Ms. Samar Minallah, a prominent human rights activist and media specialist, moderated the discussion. Ms. Tahira Abdulla, a renowned human rights activist and development practitioner, and several other civil society representatives who had been working in IDP communities, gave their input. The following four main issues emerged as the core issues.

## Trafficking:

The issue of women and child trafficking is getting worse at the camps of IDPs and other areas where they are staying. However, there is lack of proper reporting and data due to government's apathy towards the issue. Government agencies, specially established by the government (FIA, Special Branch and special cells etc.) for combating trafficking are not playing their role to combat trafficking at this critical time. The NGOs community is also not taking the issue seriously. It was asserted that print and electronic media is silent over the issue as they are not giving time and coverage to the issue of trafficking. Some participants believed that many traffickers were adopting girls and others were using 'fake marriages' for trafficking purposes. They were of the view that Mardan and perhaps Swabi had become the hub of women's trafficking.

## Violence:

The participants while sharing their field-based findings said that violence had increased within the IDPs'

camps due to stress on men. Due to increasing burden and displacement, men usually target women for physical violence and verbal abuse and women target children as a consequence. In fact, it's a chain of vio-

Taliban. Some of the participants while sharing their field experiences said that most of the children either wanted to become a Talib or to join army after growing up and going back to their homes, perhaps as a

## MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

### The FGD suggested the following:

- Human dignity of the IDPs should be protected and ensured.
- As over 90% IDPs are living outside the camps, the government, UN agencies and non-government organisations should supply food, livelihood items and medicines to them.
- The Government should direct all the concerned departments, special cells and agencies to curb and eliminate child and women trafficking of IDPs.
- Most vulnerable groups among women and children who are exposed to trafficking should be identified
- Civil society organisations and their activists should play the role of vigilante or watchdog to identify traffickers and their local and inter-provincial gangs. They should also develop coordination with the government against trafficking.
- Trauma and rehabilitation centers should be established at camps and host areas to heal and minimize the influence and scale of war and displacement trauma.
- Guidelines for combating psycho-social trauma within the IDPs should also be developed.
- NIC cards should be issued to IDP women on priority basis without going into formal procedures that are applicable in peace times.
- Educational institutions should be reconstructed and repaired before the return of the IDPs to their hometowns; and the similar institutions should be vacated in Peshawar valley before their opening after summer vacations by the end of August.
- The participants deplored the decision of closing registration of IDPs and demanded of the government to restart it as soon as possible.
- The financial assistance of Rs. 2500 should be given through joint accounts of men and women at household level.
- Information and accurate date on IDPs at the Southern districts of NWFP should be urgently provided to media, government departments and civil society organizations so that they could also get relief funds and proper shelters.

lence prevailing in the tents at the camps. They were of the view that if not checked, the violent atmosphere at camps could help in producing violent and aggressive youngsters, an easily available 'potential force' for

reaction to what had happened to them during the 'war on terror' by the army or during the 'reign of terror' by the Taliban; the prevailing conditions might have further reinforced their perceptions at the camps.

## Trauma:

Another main issue identified during the discussion was trauma and distress particularly among women. Some of the participants pointed out that women identified themselves more with their home and household belongings. When they are deprived of their homes, they plunge into extreme trauma and distress. One of the participants said that besides other reasons, a major reason behind trauma in old age women was the fear of death outside their homes or native villages. Other major reasons of trauma shared by the participants were fear of alien people, abduction, loss of family members, destruction of homes and uncertainty about returning to their hometowns and villages. The participants were of the view that major reason for this uncertainty was lack of coordination between the people and the government.

## Health:

Health facilities specifically related to women are extremely meager at the camps and non-existent at other places where IDPs have taken shelter. They do not have enough separate toilets and kitchens to utilize them freely and frequently. According to one participant, infectious diseases like scabies, fungus, viral infections, typhoid etc are spreading across the camps. Water contamination, poor sanitation and lack of washing facilities could be found in every camp. Women are particularly suffering from ailments related to reproductive organs and, but they are shy of complaining and sharing these with their elders or doctors, even if they are available. Apart from that, depression, insomnia and anemia are common among women within the camps and off-camps.—*AF Correspondent*

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privacy. Panic reactions for missing family persons were also seen.

It is important to recognize that an internally displaced woman's experience is different from that of children or men. It is a crisis where age and gender play a vital role. It is imperative that women are provided with gender sensitive and gender appropriate communal spaces in the camps.

Despite continued humanitarian efforts, the needs of women and children are overwhelming. Protection and security are yet another concern. Given the vulnerable situation, women trafficking may be difficult to check amongst the displaced people. In Shah Mansoor Camp, a father desperately speaks in front of television cameras, appealing for the recovery of his 15-

year-old missing daughter. "She worked as a maid servant in Peshawar. While her family fled Swat seeking protection, she fled her workplace looking for her parents. No one knows where she is! We are extremely worried for her safety!"

It is important to explore the possibility of devising indigenous mechanisms to protect children and women from exploitation, violence and abuse a resultant of prolonged displacement. A lady Councilor at Mardan, who works at the Shah Mansoor Camp, shows her concern over the fact that 'behind the endless tents sheltering thousands of families, it is hard to ensure protection of girls and women? No one knows if girls are being trafficked in the form of fake marriages and other illegal deals secretly being struck.'

It is because of such concerns that a larger population of the internally displaced people resides with host families all over Pakistan. 'Milmastiya' and 'Nanawatay' or the Pukhtun code of 'hospitality' and 'providing refuge' have indeed proved a blessing in the face of displacement of many. Naseem Ara and twenty of her family members have been provided refuge by her distant relatives residing in Dargai. "Our hosts can hardly make ends meet, but they have shown us generosity and hospitality like real Pukhtuns. We feel secure and protected living with them. May God bless them!"

But those providing refuge to the displaced people are poor too. As aid efforts continue, the host families continue to bear a burden for which they

were not prepared. Will the aid reach out to those thousands of people too who are performing 'Milmastiya' and 'Nanawatay' by sacrificing their own comfort and space? Will we be able to assess and address their challenges and needs?

An organized plan is needed to address all aspects of displacement. Given the countless problems faced by women, it is important that gender specific interventions are devised. Rehabilitation programs and policies should focus on the need for restoring the human dignity of the people and the need for them to regain their self respect and identity that they have lost.

— *The author is a human rights activist and media specialist, associated with Ethnomedia.*

## Aurat's Survey Report on IDPs

This survey report encompasses the statistics that were compiled after conducting a survey in ten selected IDP camps. In order to assess the reproductive health, psychosocial needs of IDP women and their access to the services provided in camps, Aurat Foundation held a survey in ten selected districts, namely Jaloza Camp, Benazir Camp, Katcha Garhi Camp No. 1, Katcha Garhi Camp No. 2, Palosa Camp, Munda Camp, Samar Bagh Camp, Degree College Timergara Camp, Sadbar Killi Camp and Khungi Camp, and interviewed 1791 IDP women. The survey was done in collaboration with four other organizations namely Youth Resource Centre (YRC), Pakistan Village Development Programme (PVDP), Media Master (MM) and Community Research development organization (CRDO).

Findings of the survey are given below:

### Part 1: Access to General Services.

- Some 81.24 % women told that their camps have been surrounded by fencing, and 76.9 % women have access to donations.
- Although most of the women (78 %) told that they were provided with sufficient protection but 99 % of women at Sadbar Killi Camp and Samarbagh said that local authorities were not providing sufficient protection to their families.

### Part 2 : Personal Hygiene.

- 83.36 % women said that they use latrines for defecation.
- 93.24 % of the women use cloth to take care of their menstrual needs while 71 % of the women shared that they had no proper place to take care of their menstrual needs.

### Part 3 : Reproductive Health.

- The distance from the tents to medical services varies from 10 feet to 2 kilometres.
- The medical facility is not available 24 hrs a day in most camp villages.
- Around 94.75 % of the pregnant or lactating women were receiving no special food.

### Part 4 : Psychosocial Situation of Women IDPs.

- 70 % of the women told that they had no idea for how long they will stay in the camp. This uncertainty increases stress among women.
- 90 % of the women replied that they find no proper place to sit together and discuss their problems.
- 66 % of the women discuss the current situation when they sit together among their families.

### Part 5: Skills Popular among Women.

This part was included to collect information on type of skills popular among IDP women living in camps so that to arrange vocational trainings for them for trauma healing - 55 % women knew stitching. —AF Correspondent

## IDPs and UN Guiding Principles

In order to identify major issues confronted by IDPs, Aurat Foundation initiated an assessment study, January to April 2009, against four of the UN Guiding Principles namely Articles No.1, 2, 13 and 14. The assessment was based on following objectives:

- To assess linkages between human rights activists from conflict area with established networks;
- To develop a charter of demand for internally displaced persons with special focus on women;
- To raise issues of internally displaced persons through advocacy campaign.

For the purpose, Aurat Foundation in collaboration with Aryana Institute for Regional Research and Advocacy (AIRRA) and Swat participatory Council (SPC), organized meetings of IDPs at Peshawar and Islamabad to facilitate the process of information dissemination and organization of the displaced persons. All the three institutions and IDPs representatives are working together as a network to support IDPs, highlight their issue at the respective forums and commence lobby for their genuine right as citizens of the country.

The network representatives held a press conference in Islamabad last month and shared their problems and concerns with journalists and civil society representatives through a charter of demands. They shared the adversities they were faced with, especially the miseries of women and children during and after displacement. They were critical of civic, political, social and economic discrimination in their places of asylum. They demanded an end to all kinds of discrimination in their own country and appealed to the government and international donors to come forward and listen to their demands. The network is working to establish IDPs chapters in all the four provinces.

The network is being represented by Mr Ishaq Advocate at the centre and Punjab and Shad Begum at the provincial and FATA. AIRRA and Disaster Response Net (DR- Net) provides space and logistical support to the network at their Islamabad and Peshawar offices respectively.

### CHARTER OF DEMAND

On the basis of consultative meetings, focussed group discussions and camp visits, members of the IDPs' Network prepared following charter of demand:

- In order to have peace, shall initiate a politically vibrant process and stop indiscriminate shelling, bombardment and genocide of local inhabitants. The government must provide security of life, property and a life without fear, end to robbery and high way robbery.
- In order to allow food edibles to reach Waziristan, Zilla Bandi must

end and communication channels be re-opened in Waziristan.

- The Government shall change its foreign policy vis a vis policy towards Afghanistan and unnecessary Pak-Afghan borders must be sealed.
- Peace and development work to take place in the affected areas as well as reconstruction of all damaged property so that IDPs could repatriate to their own areas.
- The Government shall provide safe passages to IDPs so that the dead be buried back in their ancestral graveyards.
- IDPs within camps and outside camps be compensated for life and property.
- The Government and civil society shall impart skilled training (vocational training like stitching, embroidery etc) to women IDPs residing in camps.
- Admission and scholarship must be available to IDP children (from camps as well as those residing with host families) in Government and private schools. Most of these children do not have any school leaving certificates and are unable to get admission in Government schools. The government, therefore, must come up with an alternate mechanism to accommodate these children.
- More schools to be established within camps with a strong emphasis on separate school for boys and girls rather than co education even for younger children.
- It has been recognized that most IDPs and specially women and children are going through post traumatic disorder, therefore, psychological counselling is required on urgent basis.
- Health facility in Government Hospitals shall be free of cost.
- Self respect of IDPs shall be recognize and ensured particularly when food is distributed among them.

### Demands made by IDPs residing out of NWFP

- Issuance CNIC, Form B, Passports, NOC, Registration of IDPs, shall be provided under one window operation.
- A committee with representation of NGOs, govt. and different advocacy groups shall be formed to resolve IDP issues.

### FINAL ANALYSIS

At the level of IDP policy objectives there has been a very little programming focus on women and children, as well as on peace-building, communication, and advocacy activities.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), who have been forcibly uprooted from their homes by violent conflict, have witnessed traumatic events. As a result of which they (in particular women and children) suffer from severe deprivation and hardship. Although the Government and international donor organizations (UNICEF and UNFPA in

particular) recognizes that they require protection and psychological counselling but a broad plan needs to be shaped keeping all stake holders on board which must also include local NGOs, psychologists and camp administration.

Most of the male IDPs are without work which is increasing their frustration and anger. Since Government cannot create jobs for all, still there is a need to start vocational trainings which on one hand will keep them busy and on the other impart skills useful once they re settle.

In the short term, the concept of regional Lashkars comprising area inhabitants can be beneficial from security point of view but in the long term it may backfire when they are used to taking up arms.

So far there is no state guarantee for the safe return and resettlement of the inhabitants of Bajaur and Swat. Due to this uncertainty there is a possibility that IDPs resentment towards the Government will only increase. The possibility of fresh violence and more displacement in the absence of any concrete work plan to resolve problems, in the long run, would be detrimental to both the Government of NWFP as well as donor community busy in relief efforts.

The inability of political representatives (MNAs and MPAs) to resolve problems faced by their constituents (inhabitants of Bajaur and Swat), and lack of preparedness by NWFP establishment highlights the collapse of democratic and administrative institutions in Pakistan.

The Government must examine legislation and administrative provisions impacting on IDPs to conform to fundamental human rights principles, the Deng Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and where necessary.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have lost confidence in the Government; nearly half of them do not believe that authority will foresee their demands. Thus state should develop special economic programmes for IDPs and give them financial credits with low interests. This will help them to start and develop small and middle business.

In order to change IDPs nihilistic attitude towards government and to build confidence, it is important that the IDPs shall be invited to study their problems according to their priority and to find durable solutions. Mass media should serve as a source of disseminating the information.

The government shall form a state policy for IDPs. The provincial government must be a part of policy formation process since they are the biggest stake holders. —AF Correspondent



# Harsh realities of life in displacement for women and children

By Abida Swati

With the intensifying crisis in Swat, more and more displaced families are hammering in Mardan, Swabi, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Haripur and other areas of NWFP. Women and children issues are the most daunting among the problems being faced by the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) both in camps and in host communities.

Those who visited the camps have observed that life is miserable for these families in the sizzling heat. It is hard to imagine life in the tents with no electricity, poor food, unfriendly weather and poor facilities. Due to poor medical services a large number of people, especially women, elderly people and children, are suffering from diseases like diarrhea, dysentery, skin disease, eye sore, throat infection due to the consumption of unsafe drinking water, smell from filthy toilets. Provision of inappropriate food and relief goods is another issue.

Women are afraid of the likely outbreaks of diseases among children if the weather got worse and the sanitary conditions didn't improve in the camps. The weather in planes is very hot, even worse in the camps, which these mountainous people are not used to. Many may not survive June and July, when temperatures may rise more.

Women hardly sleep in the night, because of the fear of snakes, rats and scorpions as there is no light in the night and it is pitch dark, people often enter the wrong tents and that causes much discomfort for women observing 'purdah'. At night, women cannot take the young ones to the toilets because they fear stepping on snakes.

Lack of medicines for IDPs especially for pregnant women is a problem. There

are number of pregnant women living in different camps and with host families, but there are not enough medicines for these women. These women are highly vulnerable to hot and adverse climatic conditions. They also have not adequate health facilities in case of emergency. These women are in dire need of better accommodation, multi vitamins, including proper food with milk and fruits etc. Most of the women and children in trauma need counselling to get out distressing conditions.

Water availability is also poor. Families have to use same water tank intended for toilet as well as drinking purposes. Water purification tablets are provided to families but due to lack of orientation only few women use these tablets. The situation of pit toilets is very bad as there is no water supply system to these toilets. They are becoming breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Moreover, absence of separate washrooms and toilets for women has added to their miseries. The IDPs living in camps are provided with cooked food, prepared in Digs and distributed among the people standing in queues. Only men and children go to these distribution points to get food. Women do not come out of their tents to get food due to misappropriate and gender insensitive distribution mechanism. Quality of food is another area that needs improvement. Most of the women said that they are not used to eating spicy meals but here we have to. Little kids and elderly are not able to consume this food with lot of spices. Most of the mothers complaint that food distributed in camps is not good for children. They told that separate food should be prepared for elderly people, children and pregnant women.

The mobility of women in camps and outside camps is highly restricted, due to strict religious norms and tribal culture, which impose upon women invis-

ibility in all relief work. In order to get food and relief items, IDPs have to stand in queues for long. Due to restricted mobility, women and young orphan girls are, however, not able to go to the distribution points. Thus, in most cases women are ignored and deprived of the food and other goods of very basic needs.

The well-being and development of children is closely linked to the security of family relationships and a conventional environment. Internal displacement disintegrates communities and breaks down the social fabric and support networks including education, health, and recreation, discouraging the foundation of children's lives. There are number of IDP families having an orphaned, separated or unaccompanied child living with them. Experience from other emergencies suggests that these children may face increased risks and require special attention, such as referrals to services, family tracing, or income support to care givers. The vast majority of households among the host community have no access to recreational facilities for children. There is a need to support the establishment of child friendly spaces within host communities. These children are also exposed to extreme vulnerability as they are out of school living in unhygienic condition with no proper food, water and health facility. The children who are living with host families need a focused emergency education programming.

Children - both boys and girls - miss their school friends and books. The majority of children did attend school prior to the conflict. They want to go back to school. Children desperately need supports and recreational facilities such as swings, toys and other outdoor games and equipment.

— *The author is associated with SUNGI Development Foundation*

## The load on Pakistan

According to the UNHCR report '2008 Global Trends', released on 16 June 2009, one fourth of the refugees in the world is from Afghanistan, spread in 69 countries worldwide, and 96 per cent of them were located in Pakistan and Iran. With roughly 1.8 million Afghans still in Pakistan, the country is host to the largest number of refugees in the world. According to international estimates, the country hosted the largest number of refugees in relation to its economic capacity i.e. 733 refugees per one dollar GDP per capita.

Having gone through, and still with, a responsibility of such a huge population, the internally displaced persons (IDPs) adds into the responsibility and economic crisis of the country. The number of IDPs in Pakistan had approached the three million mark as compared to 156,000 by the end of 2008. As far as the relief and rehabilitation is concerned, no single agency has the responsibility for all of them, but the UN has introduced a 'cluster approach' where individual organizations are assigned roles in displacement situations based on their expertise. This 'cluster approach' has a significant feature of 'people with specific needs to be cared by specific organizations'.

According to the data released by the Emergency Response Unit of the Provincial Relief Commissionerate, Government of NWFP on 17 June 2009, the number and status of IDPs is as under:

Number of IDPs Registered by NADRA	268674
Number of IDPs in New Camps	164886
Number of IDPs estimated off the camps	3725938

## Exposure and opportunities

This crisis situation, which the internally displaced persons are going through, does carry along some spaces or opportunity for displaced persons especially women who otherwise had little space for exposure and interaction. One such opportunity, with lasting impacting in the long run, is the legal literacy and training to women IDPs on their legal and constitutional rights as well as awareness against discriminatory laws and practices stands. This legal literacy on gender rights would at one hand safeguard women and girls against any immediate threat of gender-specific violence in this situation of lawlessness, while on the other hand it will pave way for realization of women's legal rights and gender equality. Another component of this awareness campaign would be women's right to land and inheritance.

## Disaster Management Authority for IDPs?

New Authority to Handle IDPs in the Offing: The NWFP government is mulling establishing a new authority to deal with the facilitation of the IDPs from Malakand Division and their rehabilitation. Name for the proposed office is yet to be finalized. It is said that the government was considering a name quite similar to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), which is already on the ground with little visibility in the recent IDPs crisis. Official sources told that the need for establishing the new office was felt following question marks at the role of the existing offices in the rehabilitation of the uprooted people. Besides the rehabilitation and facilitation of the IDPs, the officials said the proposed authority would be responsible for holding talks with donors about aid for the displaced people and their sending back to their respective areas and rehabilitation there. Presently, the central government is interacting with the donors and the aid coming from the international community for the affected people is chanelising through the federal government. Sources said the provincial government was unhappy with the centre over conceding a

small chunk of aid to NWFP for the displaced people and keeping major portion of the amount with it or spending it through centralised organisations. The sources said the provincial government was likely to register a protest with the federal government for releasing advertisements directly to newspapers regarding distribution of books among the IDPs' children. They said the provincial education department was not informed in this regard. In reaction, the provincial government was likely to register a protest with the logic that it was the provincial and not the central government that should distribute books to the IDP children according to its curriculum. The proposed authority would also help create harmony in the relief activities for the IDPs as more than three government agencies, namely the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), office of the Relief Commissioner, the Emergency Response Unit (ERU) under the provincial Relief Commissioner and the Special Support Group of the armed forces are involved in relief activities these days.— *Courtesy: PGF, The Researchers*

## EDITORIAL

The country had not yet recovered from the aftermaths of October 2005 Earthquake, which resulted in deaths of thousands of peoples, destruction of their abodes and livelihoods and dislocated millions of them from their native homes, the war against terrorism and recent army operation in NWFP displaced around 4,000,000 people to end up in camps and with the host communities mainly in Mardan and Swabi. These internally displaced persons, better say peoples (IDPs) are forced to live like refugees in their own country and face the crisis of food, shelter, education, uncertainty about future, as well as the crisis-induced violence which mostly fall upon women and children.

For years, the world dealt with the refugees and the internally displaced peoples without realizing the difference between the two: contrary to refugees who have to cross borders and end up on foreign lands where they are alien with no rights, the IDPs are dislocated within their borders of citizenship and within the scheme of their inborn cultural and constitutional sphere. The fact that recent displacement is a result of a planned army operation, make another difference between the two that if refugees come as 'un-expected' pressure for any state, the IDPs are usually an 'expected' consequence for which the governments are supposed to be prepared.

This experience points to prevailing gaps in the government and all concerned institutions: One, despite the fact that the army operation was very much planned, the government and the army did not prepare themselves for such a huge displacement of their citizens, neither in terms of receiving the displaced in an organized way nor for providing emergency relief. Two, the registration of IDPs and preparation of disaggregated data and right assessment of relief and basic human needs, is another sector which point to incapacity of national institutions and available human resource. Three, lack of national policy on internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Every crisis also brings some opportunities, for the government as well as the crisis-ridden citizens. For the government and its line agencies, this is an opportunity to identify the gaps and deficiencies and prepare for: the development of 'national policy on IDPs'; establishment of permanent funds for such a situation and training the staff of existing Pakistan Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) for efficient and proper registration of the 'displaced' and provision of emergency relief; gender mainstreaming of all government institution and capacity for maintaining gender disaggregated data.



**LEGISLATIVE  
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## NCSW's Concerns on IDPs

Members of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), at a recent meeting in Islamabad, discussed the problems and difficulties being faced by women who had left their homes in Swat and other areas of NWFP, and were living in camps or with friends and relatives. The meeting was attended by members from the four provinces and the Federal Capital and was presided over by the NCSW Chairperson, Ms Anis Haroon. After the meeting, Ms Anis Haroon and Ms Rukhsana Ahmed Ali, member from Balochistan, visited camps set up for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Peshawar and Swabi to assess the situation, especially as regards to women and children.

The Commission was concerned about the condition of women and young girls, which is particularly dire, mainly because of oppressive social norms that force them to remain imprisoned in tents, often with infants, in stifling heat. It was noted that women, especially those who had no male family member with them, were finding it difficult to register and to obtain food and other relief. Several women were pregnant and needed special care.

Women who met the NCSW team complained that the Taliban had made their lives very difficult by restricting their movements and stopping them from working. They also complained that neither the government nor the elected representatives came to their help or provided security. Young boys described how the Taliban brutally cut people's throats and killed people for petty reasons.

Though children are now being attended to, and some arrangements for their education are also being made, many are traumatized and urgently need psychological counselling. The Commission recommends that special arrangements must be made for children to continue their studies that were disrupted by the conflict.

The Commission expressed its concern that incidents of sexual abuse of children are also being reported; and recommended that of IDPs themselves should be given an active role in managing and monitoring of relief and protecting the vulnerable members from such abuse and exploitation. Local people have been generally helpful, but some were also exploiting the situation. Landlords were charging high rents and women were being persuaded to sell their jewellery at abysmally low prices. There were disturbing reports that some unscrupulous elements may be involved in trafficking. The government must investigate if these reports have any substance.

The Commission stresses that it is the right of IDPs as citizens of Pakistan to move to any part of the country and provincial governments and political parties should not restrict their mobility.

The Commission also emphasized that an effective strategy must be developed to confront and counter the ideology of talibanization and extremism that seeks to deprive women of their basic human rights, destroy our culture and civilization, and that has unleashed so much violence in society.

## IDPs: Constraints and Fears

By Zubeida Mustafa

Since the Pakistan Army launched its offensive against the Taliban in Swat and Fata a massive displacement of humanity has taken place in that region. The Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), who was forced to flee their homes in the face of heavy bombardment and artillery fire, found their miseries intensified by what was in store for them. They had already been suffering at the hands of the Taliban before the war uprooted them. Since their evacuation was unplanned and no preparations had been taken in hand they faced immense agony while escaping from their towns and villages - they had to walk for miles for days-- before they reached a sanctuary which was at best a camp set up by the government in the NWFP with rudimentary facilities.

As such many of them travelled south to Punjab and Sindh where they had relatives - the migrant labour who finds work to eke out a living in the major cities. This migration created a reaction in the local population. In Sindh the IDPs' entry, which began as a trickle in November 2008 to pick up by May 2009, has now assumed serious political implications. The precise number of the IDPs in the province is not known because they are not being registered. No

camps have been set up. At one point it was decided to register them so that information about the displaced people would be available and they could be provided assistance in an organized manner. But the process was so ineptly undertaken that one does not know if any work has been done on that and if reliable data has been collected.

Meanwhile most IDPs are being supported by the ANP or their own families. In the absence of organized assistance and with not enough finances available, the plight of the displaced is by no means enviable. Most of them are living in crowded conditions, do not have sufficient food to eat and lack health-care. Their children do not have access to schools.

Without any organized source of information about the IDPs which only registration can provide arrangements are difficult to make. The Sindh government has allocated Rs200 million in its 2009-2010 budget. The irony is that the ANP and others sympathetic to the IDPs feel this amount is too small. But Sindhi nationalists and the MQM who have opposed the influx of the IDPs are not happy at any sum being allocated for them. They fear the IDPs will not return home and thus upset the ethnic balance in Sindh.

## Resolution on IDPs in the Upper House

In order to discuss the issues of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Upper House, Ms Farah Aqil Shah, Senator from NWFP and member Legislative Watch Group, Aurat Foundation, Peshawar, submitted a resolution in the Senate of Pakistan on April 23 2009. The text of the resolution is produced below, as an effort to highlight the good work done by women parliamentarians:

"I would like to draw your attention to the fact that some families of internally displaced persons are

forced to live outside their campus provided by the government in Peshawar. They are not registered as a result is not getting any aid. They are vulnerable to all sorts of troubles. The government is requested to take immediate notice of the matter and provide all necessary facilities to the aggrieved families"

The resolution resulted in a detailed discussion in the Upper House on the problems being faced by IDPs, both inside and outside the camps, particularly the plight of women and children.



# Ignoring Substantive Issues: The Federal Budget 2009-10

## From Page 1

we get an understanding of the extent and impact of the economic meltdown that has taken place, will we understand the urgency for substantive interventions to revive the economy and to create conditions for high growth with increasing employment and lower poverty.

According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2008-09 released a day before the Federal Budget, Pakistan's growth rate of its GDP is expected to be 2 percent, at best. The target set for GDP growth a year earlier was a mere 4.5 percent, but even this fell short by a huge margin. Moreover, the 2 percent growth needs to be seen with regard to the GDP growth rate of a few years ago, when on average over 2004-08, it had been around 7 percent. By all standards, Pakistan's GDP growth has been dismal and in fact, is the lowest this decade. This low rate will have major repercussions on the quality and standard of life of Pakistanis, for employment and for poverty. With the large scale manufacturing sector showing a declining rate of minus 7.7 percent since last year, it has only been the agricultural sector due also to favourable weather conditions, that has allowed even such low levels of growth to persist. A bad crop due to poor weather conditions could have resulted in much lower growth.

Unlike earlier years where GDP has been as low as it has in 2008-09, what makes the last fiscal year far worse, is that it experienced the highest inflation rate, of around 23 percent, over the last forty years. Low GDP growth is bad on its own, but along with high rates of inflation, life for all Pakistani men and particularly women who are responsible for managing the household budget, has worsened considerably over the last twenty months or so. Food prices, in particular, soared to annual rates of inflation at times crossing 25 percent. The low growth and high inflation, have probably affected poverty and employment. The Planning Commission of Pakistan has stated, that Pakistan's poverty rates are closer to 40 percent today, implying that almost every second Pakistani is below the poverty line. While exact figures are hard to come by, there is no denying the fact that poverty must have risen over the last two years on account of the factors identified above.

Other negative features worth highlighting from the Pakistan Economic Survey include the fact that Pakistan's tax-to-GDP ratio is a mere 9 percent, the lowest in the region, with indirect taxes contributing about twice as much as direct taxes. Indirect taxes are regressive taxes, in that they have a greater incidence proportionally on the poor; direct

taxes are usually income based and progressive in that they tend to tax those with higher incomes at a higher rate. There has also been a devaluation of the Pakistani rupee in eighteen months of more than 30 percent affecting imports and the current account deficit, and with international oil prices having risen by leaps and bounds, the import bill has also increased as a consequence. In addition, power shortages and the chronic law and order situation in Pakistan have only made matters for economic development far worse. One must also mention the fact that in 2008-09, the Government of Pakistan went

Government to address concerns faced by Pakistan's men and women, had never been this high. Sadly, the Federal Budget 2009-10 failed to address most of these concerns.

## The 2009-10 Budget and its Impact:

The Government of Pakistan in its budget announced that its agenda included the following: macroeconomic stability and real sector growth; protecting the poor and the vulnerable; increasing productivity and value addition in agriculture; making industry internationally competitive; and increasing and improving human sec-

## The Budget and Women:

While it is clear that the economy is not soon going to move on a growth-oriented path, the expectations of citizens, particularly women, are also not likely to be met. It is improbable that the government will achieve its target of single-digit inflation, which will continue to be a burden on women who manage household finances. Similarly, the economic revival strategy of the government does not seem effective enough to reduce unemployment and poverty, adding to issues which affect households. Moreover, if the growth rate of the economy stays as low as it has, one can expect unemployment and poverty to grow. Often, the PSDP is a means which allows growth-oriented projects to take off and for benefits to reach the poor and underprivileged. If the government does meet its enhanced target of expenditure, one can hope to see some relief filter down to the poor. However, past experience suggests that whenever an economic crisis takes hold, it is always development expenditure which is cut first. This seems probable this financial year as well.

The flagship social safety net of the government has been the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), which has had its contribution in this year's budget doubled. The BISP is a cash transfer programme where deserving families are expected to get cash handouts of Rs 1,000 per family per month. The experience of safety nets in Pakistan, such as the zakat distribution programme, have been fraught with numerous problems of design and implementation. Leakages and corruption have been cited in such income support programmes and there is no reason to suggest that the BISP will not face similar challenges. It is still early days for the BISP and it is difficult to predict how the programme will progress, but fears do exist which suggest that implementation may suffer. Moreover, the argument has also been made that Rs 1,000 per family as charity is unlikely to help most women and other family members who are struggling in inflationary times like these, where the real value of the rupee, even of Rs 1,000, is depreciating on account of high and persistent inflation. The expectations from the BISP, as well as from other aspects of the government's economic strategy and the Budget 2009-10 seem to be very high, but nowhere likely to be met.

Sadly, there is very little that one can celebrate in the PPP government's Budget for 2009-10 at a time of economic crisis and growing unemployment and poverty. Citizens, and particularly women who bear multiple burdens, from managing and running the household to facing gender discrimination in the public spaces that they occupy, will continue to face further economic crises. The budget announced and approved by the democratically elected National Assembly allows neither relief or recovery for the economy as a whole, nor for its citizens, whether men or women.

back to the IMF to borrow around \$ 7.6 billion. All loans from the IMF come with often severe conditions attached to them, and the insistence to do away with subsidies on petroleum products and on utilities, has been one such condition enforced by the IMF which the Government of Pakistan has agreed to, adding a further burden on the poor and the common man and woman.

In summary then, 2008-09 has been a particularly bad year for the economy, and hence for Pakistani citizens and there have been very few positive economic developments. Under this backdrop, the expectations from the

percent from the revised estimates of 2008-09. Other features of the budget included the announcement, that cigarettes would cost more, that each SMS would incur an excise duty of 20 paise (since then taken back), a carbon tax would replace the Petroleum Development Levy and that domestic petroleum prices would follow international trends and be passed on (or reduced) as the global price of oil changed. Moreover, other features of the budget included a tax for the IDPs in Pakistan and those earning an excess of income of Rs 1 million, would pay a one-time tax which would go towards the rehabilitation of IDPs. Other measures in the budget included Rs 10 bn access credit guaranteed to the SME sector, and a subsequently revised 20 percent increase in the salaries of government servants in the civil and armed services as ad hoc relief. Some measures to meet the shortfall in the power supply sector were also announced.

If we were to highlight some of the key issues that the economy faces at the moment, they would include the following: revival of economic activities, particularly the industrial and export sectors; increasing overall economic growth; lowering inflation; and, relief and social safety nets for the poor and underprivileged. Does the second budget of the PPP government suggest that some of these measures can be met?

It is clear that Pakistan faces numerous challenges at the moment, with the revival of the economy one of the most important of these. Sadly, Budget 2009-10 does not address most of the concerns of the economy overall, or of the citizens more generally. It seems clear that even the 3.3 percent GDP target that is part of the government's revival plan, may not necessarily be met. Other areas of revival, in particular the industrial sector, depend on cheap finance and uninterrupted power supplies, both of which do not seem to be forthcoming at the moment. With subsidies on petroleum and power to be further removed, it is clear that industrialists will have to pass on these costs to consumers and for their exportable products. This does not bode well for industrial revival and Pakistan's exportable goods will continue to be uncompetitive in the global market. Inflation too, will probably not fall substantially, for the removal of subsidies and the projected price rise of international petroleum prices will make the cost of doing business dearer. Under IMF constraints, it seems that the stabilisation programme of the government will be extended by a further year at least, and the prospects for economic revival look slim.

— *The author is an independent social scientist who specialises in political economy and development.*

tor development. The following targets for the economy have been set for this financial year: a GDP growth target of 3.3 percent; inflation to be brought down to 9.5 percent; the tax-to-GDP ratio to rise to 9.6 percent, and the fiscal deficit to be contained around 4.6 percent of GDP.

In the budget speech that was announced in the National Assembly, the Minister of State announced, that the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) would be allocated Rs 646 bn, Rs 660 would go to debt servicing, Rs 175 bn would be administrative expenses, and Defence would receive Rs 343 bn, an increase of 10

## 'The gender-blind budget'

By Rehana Siddiqui

The Federal Budget for the year 2009/10 was announced on June 13, 2009. First time, in the history of Pakistan the budget speech was delivered by a woman in the presence of women speaker of the national assembly. This is a big achievement for women of Pakistan.

The budget of 2009/10 is presented at a time when the country is facing various internal and external challenges. In addition, the implementation of stabilization program and adverse socio-political conditions resulted in GDP growth rate of only 2.00 percent during last year. The global economic conditions, like the financial collapse, rising fuel and food prices, also affected the economy adversely. Given the internal and external environment, the responsibility on the current government is huge to meet the challenges posed by the 'war on terror' and issue of 'internally displaced people', rising food and fuel prices and poverty and yet a target for a higher growth rate of GDP than the last year.

Before discussing its relevance to gen-

der related issue it will be appropriate to mention the salient features of budget. The total budget for 2009/10 is for Rs. 2.897 trillion. The size of the development budget is 32 percent of the total budget. The deficit of 4.9 percent is expected to be met from external sources (1.5 percent) and internal sources (3.4 percent), particularly additional taxation. Since the borrowing from the State Bank of Pakistan is not an option, the additional taxation will be the main source of revenue. Given this scenario the economy is facing huge challenges. The objective is to boost the commodity producing sectors, viz., agriculture and manufacturing.

The budget, except for income tax exemption and Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), is silent on gender related issue. It seems the initiative of 'gender responsive budgeting' is not practically implemented in the budget-making process by the Ministry of Finance. Following issues can be highlighted from the gender perspective:

The Budget-2009/10, despite the gender responsive budgeting claims of the

Ministry of Finance seems to gender sensitize the budgetary process is not taken into account, and the efforts are not focused to the sectors where the women/girls are expected to benefit.

The major incentive proposed in the budget is extension of tax-exemption limit. The exemption limit is proposed to increase, for men, from Rs. 180,000/- in 2008/09 to Rs. 200,000/- in the current budget. For the women it is increased from Rs. 240,000/- in 2008/09 to 260,000/- in 2009/10. However, despite increase in the limit, the gap in the income tax-exemption limit and the parity of tax exemption limit, 1:1.33 between men and women, remained same in 2008/09 and 2009/10.

The budget lacks the coverage of informal activities where the women workers are concentrated. This will result in unequal benefit of rise in income tax-exemption limit to the working women. It will not benefit the poor working women because the gender disparities in access to education and to labour market results in concentration of women workers in the low pay-

ing informal jobs.

The most important aspect of the budget is BISP. The focus of the programme is on the poor women. The immediate impact was significant increase in the women applicants for the national identity card (NIC). The reason is that in BISP the recipients will be women and in order to qualify for receiving a transfer payment of Rs. 1000/- per month a card will be issued to the eligible women. The NIC is a necessary condition for getting the card. The amount allocated is Rs. 70 billion and women in about five million families are expected to benefit from the programme. In addition to BISP, the employment guarantee program is expected to result in sustainable reduction in poverty, however, the focus of the employment guarantee programme is not on women, it is gender neutral.

In general, we can say that the budget is gender blind.

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## Civil society perspective on Federal Budget

Realizing that there is a need to analyze the Annual Budget 2009-10 and later track it in its implementation phase in a coordinated and concerted manner, three civil society organizations, namely ActionAid Pakistan, Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) and Rural Development Policy Institute (RDPI) jointly analysed the budget documents and issued a preliminary statement on June 15 2009. The statement was later endorsed by the civil society organizations and networks in Islamabad, including Aurat Foundation.

Some of the major issues and concerns related to social sector development and process of budget-making are reproduced below::

### Social Sector Expenditures:

The social sector expenditures remain the lowest in the current budget; and fall drastically short of meeting even the very basic needs of the people. The budget fails to show any meaningful shift in terms of priorities, as the main expenditure lines continue to include debt servicing and defence. Although the allocations for public sector development program have been increased, it may be noticed that their total size is less than the resources that are expected to be raised through domestic and foreign loans.

It is encouraging that government has increased allocations for certain programs meant for social protection. One such example is that of Benazir Income Support Program, which has

been allocated an amount of RS 70 billions. However, such allocations need to be more efficiently utilized in order to create and sustain livelihood opportunities as well as to improve access to health and educational services. Furthermore, there is a need to have a comprehensive social protection policy and a well structured mechanism to address the issue of poverty and food security of around 84 million people.

The current budget for the Ministry of Education has been increased from RS 19.1 billion in 2008-09 to RS 25.2 billion in 2009-10, which shows an increase of 32 percent. On the other hand, the development budget of the Education Division has increased from RS 6.3 billion in 2008-09 to RS 8.1 billion in 2009-10, meaning an increase of 28.6 percent. While these increases are encouraging, these are still not adequate in the face of extremely bad shape of our existing public sector education system.

In the development budget for education, RS 1464 million have been allocated for building 24 cadet colleges across the country. On the other hand, allocation for programs like Adult Literacy (under ESR) has been reduced by 98 percent. This is scandalous to say the least, as the cadet colleges cater to the needs of middle and upper middle sections of society, who can afford to send their children to private schools as well. The public funds must be utilized efficiently and with a focus on education for all; and not to serve the elite and affluent segments of society.

The approval of Bt. Cotton in Pakistan with the help of Monsanto will jeopardize not only the cotton sector but all associated sectors like textile. Researches from ActionAid and National Agriculture Research Centre underscore that Bt cotton cultivation has devastated thousands of hectares resulting huge losses to poor farmers. Therefore, the decision should be reverted back and a broader consultation with farmers group and NGOs should be started on this issue.

It is encouraging that the government has announced to create social security protection program for harais. However, the scope of this program needs to be broadened to cover other agricultural labourers including muzaras and sharecroppers across the country.

### Salaries and Wages:

The annual budget includes no announcement for increase in the minimum wage of workers, which had been fixed at RS 6000 per month. Given the high rate of inflation in the country, this omission is a matter of serious concern, as it would adversely affect a highly vulnerable section of the society. It is also a deplorable fact that even the minimum wage of RS 6000 is not being paid to a large number of workers in many public and private organizations as well as in the informal sector.

### Transparency in Budget:

The annual budget is prepared in a

completely non-transparent and non-participatory manner, as the relevant stakeholders are not consulted in the process of defining priorities, assessing needs, making current allocations or identifying new development projects. This concern should be addressed, as without the participation of real stakeholders, the budget would continue to serve the interests of powerful groups, as opposed to the general public.

The budget approval process should start in March each year when parliamentary committees should be allowed and empowered to analyse draft budget documents of respective ministries and finalize recommendations after public hearings involving independent experts, stakeholders and civil society.

The process of budget implementation should also be made completely transparent especially with regard to any revisions, re-appropriations, cuts, releases and utilization. In the existing situation, the allocated budgets of social sector are generally reduced after the parliamentary approval; and even smaller amounts are actually utilized. It is urged that government must put all the relevant information on website in order to ensure maximum transparency in budget utilization.

It is further demanded that the government must introduce the system of participatory budgeting involving people from local levels in the process of preparing local, provincial and national budgets, as it is being practiced in Brazil.



## Women Parliamentarians Caucus for mobilizing women voters

In order to discuss the obstacles faced by women in getting registered as voters and obtaining CNICs, Aurat Foundation convened a meeting of National Caucus of Women Parliamentarians on April 16, 2009 at Islamabad. Speaker of the National Assembly Dr Fahmida Mirza chaired the meeting which was participated by 83 (out of its total membership of 90) MNA's and Senators. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and National Database Regulatory Authority (NADRA) were also invited to present their point of view.



**Islamabad: Parliamentarians in their Caucus meeting**

Aurat Foundation's representatives Shireen Aijaz and Mazhar Laghari elaborated in detail the obstacles in realizing women's right to vote and obtaining the CNICs, and identified several administrative and procedural problems in making the Electoral Rolls error-free. The corporate Managers of NADRA came up with elusive

responses when they were grilled for not being able to issue all women citizens the CNICs free of costs as per their pre-elections promise. The parliamentarians criticized ECP for failing to come up with an accurate electoral list. The concern was expressed that ECP and NADRA had diluted the integrity

of computerized list by simply adding 26 million names without entering their CNICs numbers while complying with the Supreme Court directives. The Chair directed that ECP and NADRA should come up with the answers to various queries as put by the participants.

## Performance of Women MNAs: book-launching ceremony

Legislative Watch Programme of Aurat Foundation Karachi organized Inaugural Ceremony of Five-Year Report on "Performance of Women Parliamentarians in the 12th National Assembly" on 15 April 2009 at hotel Regent Plaza Karachi. People from different walks of life i.e. parliamentarians, lawyers, NGOs activists, women activists, including media persons participated in the ceremony.

The event was marked with the participation of Ms Sharmilla Farooqi, Advisor to the Chief Minister, Sindh, as Chief Guest while three former women legislators of National Assembly, Ms Kaniz Ayesha Munawar (MMA), Ms Nafisa Munawar Raja (PPPP) and Ms Shabina Talat (MQM) spoke as guest speakers.

## Aurat with IDPs: Creating Friendly Spaces

Aurat Foundation, Peshawar office, worked with IDPs in Kacha Ghari 1 Camp in Peshawar, under its "Gender Protection Project in IDPs camps" of NWFP. The main target of the project were women and girls living in the



camps. Aurat conducted a survey to assess the needs of women. For the purpose, 300 women IDPs were contacted to fill in the detailed survey forms.

Aurat arranged tailoring and embroidery workshop for 60 women and pro-

vided 'life skills' training to 110 young girls and women. As the displaced women were under stress and trauma, a psychologist was hired to conduct psychosocial session for 85 women and 2 girls. Two Focus Group Discussions were arranged with the IDPs men and women to discuss their problems and their immediate needs. A meeting was also arranged with camp administration and other organizations to improve the coordination among the administration and NGOs working there for IDPs. Aurat also distributed 'women kits' to 126 women.

Aurat Foundation also provided toys and books to 'child friendly spaces' created by two partner organizations, Youth Resource Centre (YRC) and Pakistan Village Development Programme (PVDP). Through its Citizen Action Committees (CACs) children were provided 'energy drinks' in Swabi camp while IDPs from Malakand were provided with medicines.



**Karachi: Aurat Foundation's Director Programmes, Naeem Mirza, presenting the report to the Chief Guest Ms Sharmilla Farooqi, Advisor to the Chief Minister, Sindh.**

## The plight of homebased women workers

Almost 76% of the women workers in Pakistan are employed in the informal sector. Their work is insecure, irregular and often unrecognized. They have to balance between child rearing, home caring and kitchen, and their work, and more often their income does not commensurate with their work. Most of the times, they are relegated to subordinate roles. In order to discuss the plight of these women workers with the women

parliamentarians, Aurat Foundation held a one day advocacy workshop on the 'Implementation of National Policy of HomeBased Workers' on 21 May 2009 at Lahore. The workshop participants discussed that home-based women workers suffer most of the impact of globaliza-



**Islamabad: Aurat Foundation along with other civil society activists held a protest demonstration against 'talibanization', in front of Parliament House on 7 April 2009.**



**Lahore: One day Advocacy workshop with women parliamentarians on "Implementation of national policy for HomeBased workers" held on Thursday 21 May 2009.**