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Twin cities come to life on Women's Day

■ Seminars, rallies, functions held to celebrate achievements of women, raise awareness on violence against women



By Kiyya Qadir Baloch

ISLAMABAD: Public and private departments, educational institutions and civil society members celebrated the International Women's Day in the twin cities on Friday.

The largest event took place in Blue Area, where a women's organisation held a rally, which was attended by a large number of activists from all walks of life.

Hundreds of women and men from different walks of life partici-

pated in the rally held by the Aurat Foundation with great enthusiasm.

Another mass rally commenced from China Chowk Islamabad, followed by a massive campaign among workers, particularly women, which was jointly organised by Insani

Huqooq Ittehad (IHI), End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW/G), Women Action Forum (WAF), Fight Against Dowry Advocacy Network (FADAN) and YAN (Youth Advocacy Network).

The participants of the rally

were holding placards inscribed with slogans like 'Come out ladies, come out friends, let's create a new world of equal rights and status for ourselves' and 'We want equitable work and equitable wages for our gender'.

The participants of the peaceful rally demanded equal representation of women at par with men in all fields of life.

The participants also called for the need to increase women's role in decision making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.

Civil society activists, along with working women and women labourers, joined the rally and celebrated this historic day.

Addressing the gathering, speakers demanded that those who had committed heinous crimes against women must not be allowed impunity.

They called upon the nation to pledge on this day to stand up for a peaceful and just Pakistan - a tolerant and just country that was dreamed by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Meanwhile, a grand exhibition titled 'The Empowered Womanhood' was organised at the Awan Quaid, F-9 Park, showcasing the work of 38 women artists from different colleges.

The event was organised by the Development Communications Network (DEVCOM-Pakistan) in collaboration with the ICIMOD, Pakistan Baitul Maal, Islamabad Crescent Lions Club (CLC), Nazria Pakistan Council, and the Debating and Literary Society of the Quaid-e-Azam University.

Taking to this scribe, the festival's director Munir Ahmed said, "The festival is aimed at promoting the theme of the year 'The Gender Agenda: Gaining Momentum'."

He said that the event also aimed at mainstreaming the efforts, initiatives and the work of the government and non-governmental organisations on women rights, violence against women, gender policy advocacy and governance.

It was also arranged to raise public awareness on the gender issues for better work environment and a more socially equitable status for women.

Separately, a painting exhibition titled 'Art for a cause - Merging generational perspective' was organised at the Rawalpindi Art Council.

It featured the work of senior artists, including Mansoor Rahi, Hajra Mansoor, Raja Changez Sultan, Nasir Malik, Aliya Mirza, Raja Najamul Hassan, Mir Waiz and Zainab Nawaz, and the efforts of students of the Foundation University.

Ambassador of Norway to Pakistan Cecilie Landsverk and renowned rights activist Tahira Abdullah inaugurated the event.

The works of Mir Waiz, Aliya Mirza and Nasir Malik drew special attention of art lovers. Waiz depicted the misery and suffering of children and women of Afghanistan. Aliya's 10 feminist paintings included 'missing women' and 'buried alive'.

'Journey of decade through violence against women'

RAWALPINDI: To commemorate the International Women's Day, the Fatima Jinnah Women University on Friday organised a seminar titled 'Journey of decade through violence against women'. Students and faculty members from almost all the departments attended the event. In her welcome note, Dr Iftikharun Nisa Hassan - a social sciences research consultant at the Karakoram International University - highlighted the history and significance of Women's Day and resilience among women. She also discussed the theme of International Women's Day 2013 - 'A promise is a promise: Time for action to end violence against women - during her speech. She said that the importance of educating women had been neglected in the past because of which they were unaware of their rights. "But now girls were more conscious and aware of their rights and responsibilities." She added that economic freedom was the real freedom and women should get education to be independent in real term. She was of the view that women should come forward in every field of life for their rights. She shed light on how women reconstruct their self throughout different stages of life. Apart from that she also shared her personal life experiences with the audience and said the role of the women in the development of any country could not be ignored. Speaking on the occasion, Gender Studies Department Chairperson Dr Rubhana Hassan expressed her appreciation for the efforts of students, faculty and staff. In the end, a university souvenir was presented to the guest as a token of appreciation. **APP**

