

Thursday, November 26, 2015

16 Days of Activism

MPs, activists highlight systemic gender-based violence

Parliamentarians, both men and women, asked to eliminate inequality, discrimination

OUR CORRESPONDENT
 ISLAMABAD

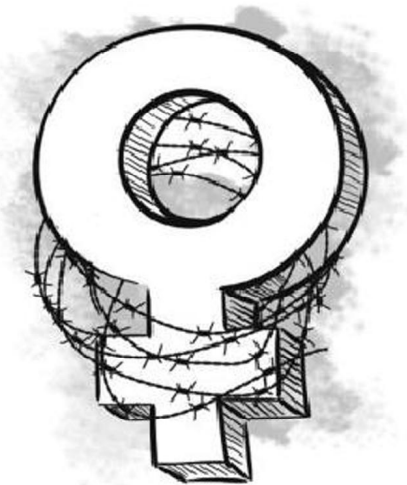
A study circle was organised by the Aurat Foundation (AF) in collaboration with Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) on Wednesday to mark the International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women.

The circle was held at Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS). Participants included women members of the National Assembly, who are also members of WPC, women journalists and representatives of civil society.

The theme of the study circle was 'Significance of 16 Days of Activism and Role of Parliamentarians in Elimination of Violence against Women'.

The gathering was intended to highlight the systemic nature of gender-based violence that encourages inequality and discrimination, and how women parliamentarians can play an effective role in its elimination.

MNA Tahira Aurangzeb said violence against women is not confined to any particular political or economic system, but it prevalent in every society in the world. A World Health Organisation report revealed that physical and sexual



violence against women affects more than one-third of women globally, she added.

Prof Farkhanda Aurangzeb, AF's director coordination and resource mobilisation, spoke on the significance of the '16 Days of Activism' campaign and traced its historical perspective.

AF Director Advocacy Rabeea Hadi presented the history of the campaign and situation of violence in the country between January and June this year.

The circle agreed there is a notable absence of state response and larger framework to strengthen institutional mechanisms

She said November 25 was declared a day against gender-based violence by the first Feminist Encuentro for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Bogota, Colombia, in 1981.

The participants agreed on some daunting challenges and recommendations for their solution. They agreed that there was a notable absence of state response and larger framework that needs to strengthen institutional mechanisms, including gender crime cell, women caucuses, and a national policy framework on violence against women. They agreed on the need for male parliamentarians to be taken on board.