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Seven women murdered, commit suicide every day, reveals study

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: A study released on International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women has revealed that seven women fall prey to murder, honour killing and suicide every day.

The study circle has exposed that five women are kidnapped or abducted per day, three are raped or gang-raped daily and one faces domestic violence every day. The participants were informed that since January to June 2015 recorded 4,308 violence, murder, gang rape etc cases of women registered. During the six-month period, the women kidnapping/abduction cases were 1,020, murder 709, suicide 399, honour killing 186, domestic violence 256, sexual assault 36, acid throwing 30, burning 23 and other miscellaneous are 1053 cases were registered. The unregistered cases of violence against women are much more as the registered cases.

Aurat Foundation, in collaboration with Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) organised the study circle, the International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women. The study circle was organised at Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS) and participants included women member of National Assembly, who are also member of Women Parliamentary Caucus, women journalists and representatives of civil society. Parliamentarians who attended the study circle included Dr Fauzia Hameed MQM, Asia Naz Tanoli PML-N, Ms Mussarat Rafique PPPP, Dr Shazia Sobia, PPPP, Suraiya Jatui, PPPP, Shahida Rehmani, PPPP, Shakila Luqman Chaudhry, PML-N, Shazia Ashfaq, PML-N, Naseema Hafeez Panezai PMAP, Munazzia Hasan PTI, and former MNA and member Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Dr Samia Raheel Qazi.

The theme for study circle was 'Significance of 16 Days of Activism and Role of Parliamentarians in Elimination of Violence against Women'. The study circle 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 and member Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) briefed the participants on the significance of 16 days of activism and role of parliamentarians in elimination of violence against women.

She said that 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's report reveals that physical and sexual violence against women affects more than one-third of women globally, she further said. The constitution of Pakistan under Article 25 (2) states that "there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone", however Article 26 (2) observes that "Nothing in clause (1) shall prevent the state from making any special provision for women and children". However, the situation on ground is different, she said.

While elaborating the work of Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), a cross-party forum for women parliamentarians, Ms Aurangzeb said the Caucus has proposed some of the most innovative legislation including the 'National Commission on the Status of Women Act 2012', 'Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Bill, 2011', 'The Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Bill 2010', 'The Criminal Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010', and 'The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2009'.

Prof Farkhanda Aurangzeb, Director Coordination and Resource Mobilisation, Aurat Foundation, spoke on the significance of 16 Days of Activism, tracing its historical perspective and relating to our own social systems related to attitudes of violence prevalent nationally and globally. Rabeea Hadi, Director Advocacy, Aurat Foundation, gave a detailed presentation on the history of '16 Days of Activism' and situation of vio-

lence in Pakistan during January - June 2015 period. Telling the history of 16 days of activism she said that November 25 was declared as a day against violence against women by the first Feminist Encuentro for Latin America and the Caribbean held in Bogota, Colombia, 18 to 21 July, 1981. It originally marked the day that the three Mirabal sisters from the Dominican Republic were violently assassinated in 1960 during the Trujillo dictatorship (Rafael Trujillo 1930-1961).

Syed Shamoos Hashmi, Joint Secretary, Project Management Unit (PMU), National Assembly, talked about how social attitudes and domestic environment contribute in violence against women and its prevalence Pakistan. Shahida Akhtar Ali, MNA, concluded the study circle. She paid tribute to the first and only women pilot Marriyum Mukhtar, who died in a plane crash during a training flying session yesterday. The 16-days, starting from November 25 - International Day Against Violence Against Women, till December 10 - International Human Rights Day, were chosen to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasise that such violence is a violation of human rights.

The 16-day period also highlights November 29 - the International Women Human Rights Defenders Day, December 1 - the World AIDS Day, December 3 - the International Day of Persons with Disability and December 6 which marks the Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. The participants agreed on some daunting challenges and recommendations how to resolve these. She said that there is a notable absence of state response and larger framework that needs to strengthen institutional mechanism including gender crime cell, women caucuses, national policy framework on VAW (internally displaced, disability). They agreed that for implementation of laws and criminal justice system for VAW we need to take male parliamentarians on board.