

Wednesday, June 8, 2011



ADDRESS: Chief Operating Officer, Aurat Foundation, Naeem Mirza addressing a seminar Tuesday. — Online

Call for gender equity

'Research is needed due to policy and legislation on gender issues'

■ HAMID HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD — Gender-based equity is necessary to empower women, to end gender-based violence against women and enhance their capacity.

Speakers said this at a seminar entitled "Mainstreaming Research in Gender Interventions" organized by a US-funded programme, Aurat Foundation Tuesday.

Catherine Johnson, Senior Advisor, Democracy and Governance, USAID, was the chief guest.

She highlighted how building knowledge and data for advancing and empowering women is essential and central to USAID's plan.

She said after reading through all the studies, they see a lot of space for policy discourse and legislation.

She said they were concerned how

gender-based violence in Pakistan is blocking women progress in socio-political and economic fields.

Naeem Mirza, Chief Operating Officer (COO), Aurat Foundation, said research is a serious subject as it provides grounds for policy discourse, awareness and good practices.

"The research on gender issues is even more important work due to the much required policy and legislation," he added.

Simi Kamal, Chief of Party, Gender Equality Programme, and expert on gender and water issues, shared with the participants the vision, objectives, strategies and matrix of Gender Equality Programme (GEP).

She briefed the audience about the rationale of scoping studies, key finds and gaps left in the studies.

She said one of the key findings among others was that women lack information of and access to relief and compensation services.

She said the programme aims at closing the gender gap in Pakistan by

proactively supporting the development of women and seeks to facilitate behavioural change in society by enabling women to access information, resources and institutions, and improve societal attitudes towards women's rights issues.

Simi said they were working in Pakistan for the past 25 years and was acting as a catalysing critical group in society with objectives of influencing policy, legislation and programmes for women's greater economic and political power in the society.

They said the studies identify current status of knowledge and actions under each objective area and post-floods scenario, gaps that need to be addressed.

They said in the aftermath of 'Effects of the 2010 Floods on Women, ending Gender-Based Violence, Capacity of Pakistani Organizations to carry out the Gender Equity Initiatives and the Gender Equity-Justice and Governance was crucially important to empower women.