

Saturday, June 18, 2011

Ministry of Women Development

Devolution an opportunity, not the end

Speakers at a seminar hope that the amendment would not jeopardize women's rights as provinces gain autonomy

NEWS DESK

The devolution of Ministry of Women Development will not affect women's rights and their cause. It is not the provinces but the federal structure that needs to enhance its capacity, as women's issues are already discussed in all provincial assemblies except Punjab.

This was said by National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Chairperson Anis Haroon at a seminar "18th Amendment: Opportunities and Challenges for Provinces and Women" here on Friday, said a press

The 18th amendment has also made some existing institutions effective and active

release issued by Aurat Foundation, one of the organisers.

Centre for Peace and Civil Society Executive Director Jami Chandio said that under the 18th Amendment, 102 clauses of the Constitution have been amended. The amendment, he said, has reversed the centralisation of state institutions as was done

by the British colonizers.

This has helped give provinces autonomy, as about 21 ministries were unnecessarily being kept with the federation, while the issues they represented were predominantly of provincial nature, he added.

He said the amendment has also made some existing institutions effective and active. For example, he said, Council of Common Interest, which was a "good-for-nothing institution" that met occasionally before the 18th Amendment, now holds frequent meetings.

MODIFIED

102

clauses of the Constitution have been amended

Rehana Hashmi from Sisters Trust was disappointed that the government has still not been able to devolve MoWD to provinces, neither has it finalized the financial and administrative particulars of any independent commission

on women's development.

Chief Operating Officer Aurat Foundation Naeem Mirza said that some people take devolution of the MoWD as "termination", which is not true. He argued that instead of opposing the devolution the stakeholders should initiate a dialogue to frame modalities of the ministry for provinces.

One of the participants, a farmer councillor, demanded the government to immediately restore the Local Government System (LGS). She was of the view that with LGS in place the devolution

It is not the provinces but the federal structure that needs to enhance its capacity

of various ministries and institution would be effective. Most of the participants and speakers agreed with the observation.

Nayyar Shabana, National Coordinator, Legislative Watch Programme of Aurat Foundation moderated the seminar and Anis Haroon presided over it.