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Call to declare Pakistan a secular state

By A Reporter

ISLAMABAD, June 27: Aurat Foundation has given a suggestion to all political parties of the country to declare Pakistan a secular state besides banning props, campaigns, speeches, laws and policies based on religion to serve their own political ends.

The suggestion was proposed during national consultation on "Political parties' manifestoes – suggestions for empowerment with provincial legislators, political parties, women wings and civil society organisations", arranged by the foundation's legislative watch programme.

Balochistan Minister for Women Development Ghazala Gola who was present on the occasion said that due to PPP's political agenda Balochistan and all the provinces were enjoying provincial autonomy and better allocation of funds due to NFC Award.

She added that there was sufficient presence of women in Balochistan cabinet and pledged that her party would ensure that local government elections were held at the earliest.

Adviser to Balochistan Husun Bano said that her party's manifesto was based on the provision rights to women. She said that her

party believed in giving women their due status according to the teachings of Islam.

Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly Shehla Raza said the land reforms were not possible. However, she said the PPP-led government has distributed a lot of lands to the farmers and women in the province.

Aurat Foundation also suggested that women farmers should be allocated one to five acres of lands and added that they must be given their share of land-inheritance. It also stressed the need to repeal discriminatory laws including blasphemy law, Qisas and Diyat, law of evidence, and Haddoo ordinances.

For women's political empowerment, it was suggested that women should be given at least 10 per cent quota on winnable general seats in provincial and national assemblies' elections and women candidates should also be given funds for contesting elections.

The draft demanded that reserved seats for women in national and provincial assemblies and the Senate should be protected and enhanced from 17 per cent to 33 per cent and these seats should be filled through constituency-based direct elections.