

## Repeal of discriminatory laws demanded

Our correspondent

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Showing continued support for women's rights, the civil society organisations Thursday demanded repeal of discriminatory laws and mechanisms.

A resolution passed at the culmination of a torch-bearing rally organised by Insaani Haqooq Ittehad (IHI) that started from China Chowk and ended at Parade Choke in front of the Parliament House held here to mark World Women's Day emphasised the need to enact laws for women on domestic violence, acid crimes, traditional discriminatory practices ('badal-e-sulah', 'sang chatti', 'vanni', 'swara', 'wulwar'), 'honour killings, forced conversions, under-age marriages and non-Muslim minority women's personal laws.

It also underlined the need for immediate eradication of illegal 'jirgas' and 'panchayats', training and re-training of law enforcement agencies, judiciary and medico-legal community on the laws and their implementation, gender sensitisation, gender justice and equality norms. "Electoral reforms be introduced to ensure women's participation in all three tiers: universal adult franchise; contesting through 17 per cent general and 33 per cent reserved seats; immediate legal and administrative actions against 'agreement' by political parties to deny women the right to vote on contest; and 50 per cent representation in all legislative and party committees," it said.

The resolution highly endorsed by all the participants of the rally who remained present during light rain also highlighted special provisions for girls and women in humanitarian and conflict responses e.g. Balochistan, Fata, Malakand; participation in conflict resolution, peace building and development processes.

Paying rich tributes to on-

going struggle for rights, equality and justice for women the resolution stated: "We affirm our commitment to creating an enabling environment where every day of the year would be Women's Day. We acknowledge and appreciate the support and solidarity of progressive Pakistani men in the women's rights movement." It also acknowledged the recent parliamentary affirmative legislation as an initial step the resolution called upon the provincial legislatures, under the 18th Constitutional Amendment (2010), to enact stronger laws and the provincial governments to implement them.

The participants of the rally also showed grave concerns over impact on girls and women of rapidly escalating extremism, intolerance and Talibanization along with increased poverty and its feminisation, unemployment and exploitative labour, food insecurity, galloping inflation, shortages and unaffordable prices of food and deteriorating human security and human rights.

A women activist also recited a poem by great revolutionary poet Habib Jalib that enthralled the participants who chanted full-throat slogans in favour of the rights of the women.

Speaking on the occasion women's rights activist Tahira Abdullah said besides the rise in women's participation in low-paying urban, informal sector economic activities and agricultural non-remunerated work are also indicators of feminisation of poverty.

Samar Minallah, another rights activist, said although guarantees are ensured in the constitution of Pakistan, such as Articles 25, 27, 34, 35, 37 of the 1973 Constitution, women continue to suffer from poverty and are still victims of the patriarchy and feudalism in the country.



ISLAMABAD: Members of the civil society taking out a rally in front of the Parliament House to celebrate women's day. — Naveed Akram