

Friday, December 14, 2012

Women's (dis)empowerment Lack of political will, resource constraint major factors

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The government despite tall claims and rhetoric has failed to empower women, who are denied access to resources, and to their rights as equal citizens in society, reveals a report prepared by a non-governmental organisation working for women rights.

Women are not involved in decision-making process, the report, prepared by Aurat Foundation. The report "Pakistan NGO Alternative Report on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 2012" was launched at a local hotel on Thursday.

Inadequate budget allocation, resources, lack of political will for addressing women's issues and ineffective implementation of laws meant for women protection and welfare are major factors that contribute to the plight of women.

The Ministry of Women

Development and the National Commission for the Status of Women established for safeguarding women's rights face a financial crisis and shortage of human resources. A weak institutional link and impractical administrative relationship between them did not allow the commission to function as an independent body which resulted in institutional tension and prevented them from working as complimentary organs of the state, said the report.

Despite rulings of the Supreme Court, jirgas still continue to be held, violating the law and citizens' fundamental rights.

The Criminal Law Amendment Act 2004 has failed to check cases of 'honour killings' as murderers continue to escape punishment mainly because of the Qisas and Diyat laws, which permit the victims' heirs to reach a compromise with their murderers, stated the report.