



# LEGISLATIVE WATCH

**AURAT**  
PUBLICATION  
AND  
INFORMATION  
SERVICE  
FOUNDATION

Founded by Shahla Zia

Patron-in-Chief: Nigar Ahmad

## Anis Haroon NCSW chairperson



Ms. Anis Haroon, one of the leading figures of the women's movement in Pakistan and a renowned human rights and peace, has been appointed as chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) for a three years term. This was announced by the Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani at a convention in Islamabad to mark the International Women's Day on 8th March. Ms. Anis Haroon has remained associated with Aurat Foundation for almost over two decades.

The total strength of the NCSW is 18 which includes its Chairperson Ms Anis Haroon and four ex-officio members. The other regular members of the NCSW include Ms Ali Begum, Ms

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## Women's Parliamentary Caucus formed

Political and legislative representation of women in Pakistan had another milestone in year 2008, when a cross-party Women's Parliamentary Caucus was formed on 21 November 2008 under the leadership of Dr Fehmida Mirza, Speaker of the National Assembly, who was also elected as the Patron of the Caucus. The Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) is aspired to provide women parliamentarians a platform to collectively contribute in making the Parliament gender sensitive and increase its influence and interaction with organizations working on women's rights and empowerment both nationally and internationally.

The WPC consists of two tiers, the General Body, a larger forum of 93 members, which include 76 women members of National Assembly and 17 women Senators, and the Working Council which comprises 10 members including the two office-bearers, the Secretary and the Treasurer, one member each from seven major political parties and one member from independents. Ms Nafisa Shah, MNA



**Dr Fehmida Mirza,**  
Patron of WPC



**Ms Nafisa Shah,**  
Secretary of WPC



**Ms Nuzhat Sadiq,**  
Treasurer of WPC

(PPP) and Ms Nuzhat Sadiq, MNA (PML-N) were elected as Secretary and Treasurer of the Caucus, respectively. The names of other members are: Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho (PPPP), Ms Ishrat Ashraf (PML-N), Dr Doniya Aziz (PML-Q), Ms Khushbakht Shujaat (MQM), Ms Bushra Gohar (ANP), Ms Aasia Nasir (MMA), Ms Reena Kumari (PML-F) and Ms Saima Akhtar Bharwana (Independent). The Caucus would be further extended with the inclusion of women members from Provincial Assemblies.

According to its stated objectives, the WPC is committed to inspire women parliamentarians beyond party lines so that to build a consensus on priority issues concerning women both within and outside the parliament. The Caucus will also provide capacity building opportunities for women parliamentarians.

The Caucus will enhance the role of women parliamentarians in proposing gender sensitive legislation, reviewing and amending discriminatory laws and

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## Globalization and women in the informal economy

By Rubina Saigol

Globalization is a term that refers to advanced corporate capitalism that is global in nature. Capitalism is a mode of production that is based on the principle of private good and maximization of profits, accomplished through the appropriation of surplus value. Capitalism has a built in propensity towards periodic crises resulting from various factors such as overproduction. A severe crisis of capitalism was witnessed in the early 1930s, known as the Great Depression. Since 2008 the world is undergoing a major global capitalist crisis that has struck the heartland of capitalism - the United States.

Capitalism advances competing and contradictory ideologies as it struggles with spirals of inflation, deflation, recession, unemployment and financial collapse. In the 1930s, the ideologies of capitalism favored state intervention in the market to stabilize the economy and provide protections to the vulnerable. The fear of a Russian-style revolution induced capitalist countries to

ensure certain basic economic, social and political rights to workers which were subsequently enshrined in UN human rights instruments. The Welfare State was born out of a historical compromise between capital and labor and it was agreed that the state, as a representative of public good, would take care of citizens and workers against exploitation by a heartless market.

In 1973, the Arab-Israeli war led to the oil-rich countries of West Asia blocking the flow of oil to the energy-hungry countries of the Western world. At that moment, capitalism invented new and different ideologies premised on the idea of a 'free market economy'. It was argued that states should not intervene in markets as they distort markets which have self-regulating and self-correcting mechanisms. The new mantra of the economic managers of the global economy was based on three salient features: privatization, de-regulation and trade liberalization. Large multinational companies, whose budgets were larger than the combined budgets of several developing countries, found the state to

be a hindrance in the free movement of capital, goods and information across borders. As the assumed repository of public good, states tended to be protectionist and created trade barriers against the import of cheap goods produced through large-scale manufacturing. The new capitalist ideology falsely separated the economy from politics and the market from the state.

In the post-world war II period, the ruling elites of developing countries accumulated enormous and unsustainable debts, and the money received was spent unproductively and misused by corrupt bureaucracies and unscrupulous rulers. Through the major engines of world capitalism, the World Bank and IMF created after WWII, the major creditor countries could arm-twist weak, corrupt, inefficient and insolvent ruling elites to collude with global capitalist elites in the process of liberalization, de-regulation and privatization. Hence, the infamous Structural Adjustment Programs which were implemented in 70 countries across the world with disastrous results.

### Structural Adjustment Programmes

Structural Adjustment Programs mainly involved borrowing expensive loans from the IMF and World Bank, tied with harsh conditionalities, to pay off previous debts. The conditionalities included the following: higher taxes and higher utility charges; lower wages for workers; cutting back expenditure on social services such as health and education; opening markets to the luxury goods from rich countries; reduction of subsidies on food and agriculture; privatization of public enterprises after downsizing (read, unemployment); emphasis on export-orientation with less food for local consumption; provision of incentives to private investment and concessions to the global private sector; devaluation of the local currency so that foreigners would get more goods for less money; de-regulation of the labor-market by creating Export Processing Zones where labor had no rights; lifting of price controls and allowing full repatriation of profits to rich countries. With Structural

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# Globalization and women in the informal economy

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Adjustment Programs, capitalism was basically able to socialize costs while privatizing profits.

When the devastation caused by Structural Adjustment policies surfaced, the major global powers attempted to bring back a reformulated and redefined state. The restructuring of heavily indebted states was accomplished in the name of 'good governance' to re-orient the states to serve private rather than public interest. Democratic terms like 'rule of law', 'accountability', 'transparency', 'law and order' and 'anti-corruption laws' were no longer designed to protect public money or transactions but private investment and profits. The Access to Justice Program was designed to ensure that Foreign Direct Investment was protected against fraud rather than to provide justice to people.

Structural Adjustment Programs greatly intensified poverty in the indebted countries leading to unrest and social breakdowns. Two of the serious consequences of Structural Adjustment are relevant for this discussion: one, the informalization and casualization of labor; and two, the feminization of poverty. With the de-regulation of the labor market, large numbers of workers became part of the informal or unorganized sector of the economy. They became temporary, part-time and casual labor that could be laid off without any qualms. Informal labor had no rights or benefits including medical, life insurance, accident insurance or other rights that protect workers in formal sectors. Over 90 per cent of Pakistan's workers now fall in the informal sector, the most exploited of all sectors in the economy.

## Women and the Informal Economy

By far the greatest number of workers in the informal economy are women. It has been estimated that over 80 per cent of the workforce in Special Economic Zones and Export Processing Zones consists of women. They work long hours for paltry sums and are laid off at the first sign of economic contraction. Every developing country, eager to attract Foreign Direct Investment, offers workers at cheaper rates and with fewer rights than others. Workers in the informal economy have none of the legal rights recognized in international rights instruments, ILO regulations or national labor policies since they are not recognized officially as workers.

A large number of women in the informal sector are home-based workers who produce goods at home and market them through the middle man who exploits their lack of access to markets. Capitalism, by creating worldwide informally-run sweatshops, has saved itself the trouble of procuring buildings, buying electricity or providing any facility by shifting the work to the home. A large segment of the garment, packaging and electronics industry runs along the lines of home-based work, which reinforces the patriarchal notion

of homemaking and childcare, it would have to tax the productive sector heavily, once again cutting into profits. Women's unpaid labor carries the edifice of the capitalist economy and state on its shoulders. By reproducing labor, literally through childbirth and figuratively by refreshing male labor for the next day's work, women are the hidden and silent prop on which capitalism rests. Household labor is therefore often extracted from them through direct violence or indirect coercion built into patriarchal marital and sexual

Women are believed to have nimble fingers, so the most delicate work is given to them. They are considered docile and subservient, and more amenable to control, as they do not have time between home and work to join trade unions. They are considered the most supple, flexible and dependable reserve army of labor.

As the state lifts subsidies from health, women not only suffer more as the end-users of health services, they are also expected to nurse family members based on their traditional knowledge of herbal remedies. As commodities become more expensive, women still have to feed their families and walk long distances to fetch cheaper food. As the state lifts subsidies from food items, women get lesser nutrition as they are the last to eat the leftover morsels after feeding the family. As education and health are pushed into the private sector, women are denied schooling and healthcare within families that can only afford to educate one or two children (who are invariably male) and better health facilities are provided only to male children. As the cost of living rises, girls are pulled out of school to help the mother at home or take care of younger siblings while the mother is at work. Women step in and fill the gap where the state recedes.

In a study of Structural Adjustment Programmes, carried out by PILER, it was found that, "The intensification of poverty, a result of the liberalization and privatization policies undertaken by the government of Pakistan under the aegis of Structural Adjustment Programs is going to lead to increasing misery among the marginalized. Given these realities, it is imperative for women workers to devise strategies to organize themselves in order to protect their rights and acquire better bargaining position vis a vis their employers." With Pakistan having once again signed a stabilization program with the IMF involving harsh conditionalities, workers in general, and women workers in particular, will have to mount resistance against the government's capitulation to a global agenda that is detrimental to the interests of all workers. As markets for exports contract due to the economic downslide, women workers may be the first to lose jobs and income in the fierce global competition for European and US markets. —*The Author is an independent researchers on social development.*

## Redirecting Political and Economic Decisions towards People

The major economic and political decision-making today rests with powerful countries which control and manipulate the Unholy Trinity comprising the World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organization. The UN, as the symbol and guardian of peoples' rights across the world has been marginalized, while the trika consisting of WB, IMF and WTO has gained enormous clout. The World Bank has more control over education than UNESCO, more control over food than the Food and Agricultural Organization, more control over health than the World Health Organization, and more control over the environment than the United Nations Environmental Program. Decisions that are made in powerful backrooms of these organizations lack transparency, accountability and participation of people. With enhanced corporate control over decision-making democratic space is shrinking.

The state needs to re-orient itself towards public good by enacting legislation for the protection of workers in the informal economy and for ensuring that they get the rights defined by the International Labor Organization and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Civil society organizations, particularly those concerned with women's rights, labor rights, legal rights and human rights, need to exert pressure on the government to guarantee that workers in the informal economy are protected against the prevailing economic downturn, not only through safety nets but through serious structural transformations that redistribute wealth, land, resources and power in the country.

that a woman's place is in the home. Saba Gul Khattak concludes in her study of women in the informal sector: "Our findings indicate that these policies have affected women workers negatively in different contexts, i.e. in certain contexts such as large scale manufacturing the negative effects are comparatively less than in the context of home-based work."

Capitalism exploits women directly through the mechanism of home-based production, and indirectly through the patriarchal ideology of women as homemakers. Women's free labor in the home, extracted through the ideology of 'labor of love', is the mainstay of capitalism. If wages were to be charged for housework and childcare, capitalism would have to pay the family wage so that the worker may buy such services. This would cut hugely into its profits. If the state were to provide basic services

norms. As Eileen Sudworth observes in Free Trade Zones and Women Workers, "Thus women, in both developed and developing countries, are at the mercy of a system over which, at present, they have little or no control or influence, victims of a logic based not primarily on the well-being of the many but on the increased profitability for the few. And it is women who are paying for these profits - with their labour, with their health, with their unemployment."

Nevertheless, capitalism is heartless towards women. They are the first to be retrenched in times of economic contraction. Women are paid two-thirds of the amount men are paid for the same work. Women do 60 per cent of the world's work and earn 10 per cent of the income. They own 1 per cent of the world's property and cultivate lands that men own and bring up children who carry men's name down generations.

## NCSW chairperson

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Bushra Ali Zulqarnain, Ms Charmaine Hidayatullah, Dr Fouzia Saeed, Mr Jamy Chandio, Ms Khawar Mumtaz, Ms Misbah Momin, Ms Nasreen Aslam Azhar, Ms Noor-ul-Ain, Ms Raashda Anwar, Ms Rukhsana Ahmed, Ms Romana Tanvir and Ms Ratna Bhagwandas Chawla.

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policies; ensure effective parliamentary oversight of implementation of international and regional commitments, policies and programmes; facilitate exchange of views and information sharing on criti-

## Women's Parliamentary Caucus

cal areas of concern at different levels both nationally and internationally; and liaise and build working relationship with key state and civil society institutions.

The women members in the Punjab Assembly also

formed a cross-party women caucus on Monday, 23 February 2009, at Lahore. The Caucus members vowed to work for legislation and policies important to women and to their empowerment.

The establishment of Women

Parliamentary Caucus has been a long standing demand of women's rights groups. The demand picked momentum soon after the entry of as many women parliamentarians as 74 in the 12th National Assembly (2002-07) on reserved and general seats.



# HBWs striving for equal status as workers

By Ume-Laila Azhar

The informal sector has acquired great significance over the years as a source of employment and livelihoods for an increasing number of people, especially women, in both rural and urban areas of the developing world. It has particularly become a key mechanism for distributing goods and services to the urban poor.

According to the ILO, the informal sector is made up of very small-scale units producing and distributing goods and services and owned and operated by largely independent, self employed producers employing family labour or a few hired workers and apprentices. Informal sector enterprises are extremely diverse and are to be found in great numbers in all the main economic sectors, most of all in trade and services but also in manufacturing, construction, transport and urban agriculture. They operate with very little capital or none at all, and utilise a low level of technology and skills. Employment in these enterprises is highly unstable and incomes are generally very low and irregular.

It is important to note also that in many developing countries, the informal sector is often equated with 'parallel' or 'black' market activities, hence looked down upon by society. Consequently, public policy towards the informal sector is as ambivalent as it is contradictory - usually oscillating between benign neglect to periodic harassment. The prevailing attitude of officials seems to be given sanction by the range of activities that are seen to constitute what is popularly, and sometimes, pejoratively, referred to as informal sector activities: from home-based petty trade, commodity production or provision of services by poor women to similarly home-based highly-paid work by professional consultants; from 'recycling' waste and living off the refuse of others to hawking to trafficking in illicit goods to commercial sex work.

Home Based Workers (HBWs) of Pakistan may they be men or women and who are workers and working 12-16 hours a day, but are not considered as "workers". They contribute in the national economy and add to the figures annually but are not considered as laborers, as those are of formal sector. Homebased worker falls under the informal sector.

Since ages we have been buying stunning hand made stuff like expensive hand woven silk carpets, silk scarf's, immaculately designed colorful rugs, special pulkari work kurties , dresses , leather products like diaries and office accessories , paper meshi products, classy and funky bangles, various home products like marvellously designed chikhs , table matts , caps , and God knows what .Not only this we enjoy buying stuff like this from multi

storied shopping malls and feel pride in spending money on them ; but have we ever once thought how they are made or what hands are involved in the production of these beautiful artefacts .....no. We have never once thought about the poor invisible hands producing beautiful products and out fits for the ladies of elite class.

According to figures released by Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) there are 8.52 million home based workers representing

These women usually come from lower or lower middle income background and form various age groups and with very little or no education at all. Young girls of age 6 to 14 are working and helping their mothers in making and finishing the tasks handed to them by the middleman, in hope of getting 36 Rs for making 12 shalwars or 20 Rs for filling 12 dozen( gross) of match boxes. This is a Home Based worker.

Sadly enough the home based worker in Pakistan is not covered by the defi-

social services and gender inequalities. They operate with very little capital or none at all, and utilise low level of technology and skills. Employment in these enterprises is highly unstable and incomes are generally very low, irregular and seasonal.

## Looking at the constraints they face:

- ❖ lack of access to productive resources due to discriminations in property ownership and in employment;
- ❖ lack of time because of unequal gender division of labour in unpaid productive and reproductive activities;
- ❖ lack of skills due to lower levels of literacy and formal education;
- ❖ lack of access to labour as a result of norms of gender hierarchy and separation; and
- ❖ lack of access to markets due to their exclusion from the most lucrative markets.

The lack of access to informal and formal credit by women micro and small entrepreneurs has been identified by numerous studies as a major, some even say, the major constraint.

With informal sources of finance being relatively easy to access, women rely on moneylenders and pawnbrokers, rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAS), and friends, relatives, suppliers and shopkeepers. While these sources are providing the bulk of financial resources for female entrepreneurs and offer a number of potential advantages, such as proximity between borrower and lender, immediacy of loan disbursement, small loan size, flexible repayment schedules and minimal collateral requirements, they can be costly and discriminatory.

Formal financial institutions are even less receptive and welcoming to female entrepreneurs. Their collateral requirements, bureaucratic loan application, disbursement procedures, the time and resources necessary to visit the banks and discriminatory banking culture virtually exclude poor women as clients. The provision of sustainable access to financial services for women has therefore become a core component of many women's micro enterprise programmes, and is at the center of the attention of governments, social partners, civil society organizations and international donors.

While the data about informal activities are somewhat unreliable, there is consensus that the informal sector is steadily growing in almost all developing countries so much so that it was widely accepted at the South Asian level that there is no policy or legislation for the informal sector and specifically talking about women in the formal sector. — **The author is National Manager of HomeNet Pakistan.**

## Home Work Convention, C177

(We are reproducing below the Preamble and Article 1 of the Home Work Convention, C177, which provides the definition of homemaker)

### PREAMBLE

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization,

Having been convened at Geneva by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, and having met in its Eighty-third Session on 4 June 1996, and

Recalling that many international labour Conventions and Recommendations laying down standards of general application concerning working conditions are applicable to home workers, and

Noting that the particular conditions characterizing home work make it desirable to improve the application of those Conventions and

Recommendations to home workers, and to supplement them by standards which take into account the special characteristics of home work, and

Having decided upon the adoption of certain proposals with regard to home work, which is the fourth item on the agenda of the session, and

Having determined that these proposals shall take the form of an international Convention;

adopts, this twentieth day of June of the year one thousand nine hundred and ninety-six, the following

Convention, which may be cited as the Home Work Convention, 1996:

### Article 1

For the purposes of this Convention: (a) the term [ home work ] means work carried out by a person, to be referred to as a homemaker,

(i) in his or her home or in other premises of his or her choice, other than the workplace of the employer; (ii) for remuneration; (iii) which results in a product or service as specified by the employer, irrespective of who provides the equipment, materials or other inputs used, unless this person has the degree of autonomy and of economic independence necessary to be considered an independent worker under national laws, regulations or court decisions;

(b) persons with employee status do not become homeworkers within the meaning of this Convention simply by occasionally performing their work as employees at home, rather than at their usual workplaces;

(c) the term [ employer ] means a person, natural or legal, who, either directly or through an intermediary, whether or not intermediaries are provided for in national legislation, gives out home work in pursuance of his or her business activity.

(This Convention can be accessed online at : <http://www.ilo.org>)

60 per cent of the women work force in the country. Most of these home-based women workers (HBWWs) are piece rate workers involved in manufacturing and post manufacturing tasks such as embroidery, carpet weaving and handlooms, wood work and other handicrafts, bangle making, dates cleaning and packing prawn peeling and packing , pottery , making incense sticks or agarbati, filling matches, binding and making boxes, stitching jute bags or boories , binding , gem cutting embroidering for branded multinational companies and many other tasks similar to what I have mentioned .

definition of "worker" in the following laws and statutes of the country legislation :

1. Payment of wages Act , 1936
2. West Pakistan Shops and establishment Act , 1969,
3. Industrial Relations Ordinance, 1969
4. Maternity Benefits Ordinance or Employers Old Age Benefit Act , 1958

The capacity of these poor women to improve their conditions of living is constrained by their powerlessness within political and social systems and is linked directly to inappropriate government policies, no access to information and resources, poor quality of

# Journey of HomeNet Pakistan

By Samina Khan

In 2000, UNIFEM organized a South Asia regional meeting in Kathmandu. Nepal, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka governments were represented at Secretary level, along with civil society representatives. Sungi, Aurat Foundation and Roots for Equity represented Pakistani NGOs.

## Objectives:

1. to understand the situation of home-based women workers, who are the backbone of the economy in South Asia, and are especially impacted by globalization;
2. to evolve a strategy towards policy-making and legislation;
3. to provide social protection;
4. to provide labour rights to home-based workers.

The idea of setting up HomeNet South Asia was floated and terms of reference were discussed. Each country decided to work towards setting up its national HomeNet. Nepal took the lead followed by India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan (2005). Bangladesh had a Bangladesh Homeworkers Association (BHA) since 1986. Pakistan delegation nominated Aurat Foundation (AF) as the focal organization since AF has offices in all provinces plus:

In 1982 the preliminary results of 1981 population census showed that women workers were only 1.76% in livestock and agricultural workers and 2.1% total in Pakistan. Only men were counted in family unpaid help but women were not.

- ❑ 1982 agriculture census 54% women who were included in the labour force survey by simply adding "do you work on your own family farm"
- ❑ 1983 AF lobbied with govt. to change the definition of work from paid to unpaid for recognition of women's work
- ❑ AF conducted research with the support of ILO in 1988 on piece-rate women workers in Punjab,
- ❑ AF convened 1st national Peasant Women's conference in 1991 where the informal sector the issue of non recognition of women's work came out as a glaring concern.
- ❑ Sungi working for rights of HBWWs since 1994 in Hazara (NWFP) by raising awareness on fair trade practices among producers, entrepreneurs and buyers, (member of HomeNet Pakistan and International Fair Trade Association (IFAT))
- ❑ 1998 UNIFEM supported AF campaign on inclusion of

women's work in population census. 'Other than household what else are you doing or did last year?' this question was added.

- ❑ After 2000 Aurat Foundation started mapping non profit and development organizations working for disadvantaged including HBWWs in different capacities. oHomenet Pakistan started Capacity Building training courses for HBWWs in 2005 and exposure to marketing etc. HomeNet Pakistan had awareness raising events with women parliamentarians at National and provincial level.
- ❑ In April 2006, Sungi participated in Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) General Assembly in South Africa.

## Two major concerns emerged:

- ❑ Advocacy for social protection for HBWWs;
- ❑ Collection of Data and Statistics on HBWWs.

In 2007, Sungi translated into Urdu and disseminated 6 WIEGO handbooks on advocacy tools for HBWWs on social protection:

- ❑ Informal employment and social protection: an introduction
- ❑ Value Chains and social protection
- ❑ Health insurance
- ❑ Occupational health and safety
- ❑ Child care
- ❑ Organizations, networks and alliances

## Regional & National Initiatives

A woman Parliamentarian, the Secretary MoWD (GoP), Aurat Foundation & Sungi (besides others) attended UNIFEM's South Asian Regional meeting on HBWWs (Delhi, Jan.2007) to prepare a Regional Plan of Action for HBWWs.

During 2007, Sungi, together with Action Aid Pk, organized a series of consultations to take forward the Regional recommendations - with HBWWs, entrepreneurs, govt. line department reps, parliamentarians, civil society, the private sector and the media.

- ❑ Consolidated findings / recommendations of these consultations were presented to the MoWD for incorporating in the national policy on HBWWs and for ratification ILO Convention 177.
- ❑ The MoWD requested Sungi and UNIFEM to collaborate in organizing a two-day national consultation meeting on HBWWs with relevant stakeholders in June 2007.

- ❑ The event was organized in response to the MoWD's commitment to UN-CSW while reporting on CEDAW in May 2007, that it would work on the issue of HBWWs with UNIFEM

## MoWD's initiative appreciated

Organizations of HomeNet Pk, who felt that this was an appropriate time to move towards formulating a policy to protect HBWWs' rights, as Minister for Women's Development and Youth Affairs, in her inaugural address promised to get Cabinet approval for a national policy on HBWWs.

Members of HomeNet Pakistan, Sungi, Aurat Foundation, Hawwa Crafts Cooperative, Karavan Crafts together with PILER, FIDA, Working Women's Association, Labour Education Foundation, Action Aid Pk, and others, advocated and lobbied to build a conducive environment, policy and legislation for HBWWs' rights.

- ❑ In 2007 the Chairperson of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Women's Development called a Standing Committee (SC) meeting, to share outcomes of HBWWs consultation and to obtain inputs for formulation of National Policy.
- ❑ The SC meeting was attended by its members who were women MNAs from various political parties: PPP, MMA, PML(Q) & (N) and MQM, the Secretary MoWD, DG Health, and reps of Ministries of Labour, Education and Women's Development. UNIFEM, HomeNet Pakistan and Sungi were invited as observers

- ❑ The Ministry of Women's Development requested Sungi's assistance to prepare a draft National Policy on HBWWs.

- ❑ Drafting of a National Policy on HBWWs in Pakistan, is based on: literature review including GoP's draft National Employment Policy (NEP) and draft Employment and Services Condition Act (2007), with reference to HBWWs and consultations with stakeholders;

Consultation for a situation review and inputs to the draft policy with stakeholders Quetta, Karachi, Peshawar and Lahore with the relevant govt. depts, NGOs & HBWWs for; Sharing of draft with stakeholders;

## Pakistan-Specific Govt. Data

- ❑ Pakistan spends 1.4% of GDP on social protection (World Bank).
- ❑ 80% of Pakistan social protection expenditures are devoted to pensions and social security, benefit-

ing those in the formal sector and non-poor (WB).

- ❑ 20% of social protection spending (0.3% of GDP) is spent on social safety nets (WB).
- ❑ Safety net spending on the two main programs (Zakat and Bait-ul-Mal) declined from 0.4% of GDP in 1991-92 to 0.14% of GDP in 2004-05 (WB).
- ❑ The formal organized sector labour force in Pakistan has a social security system with mandatory contributions from employers, including inter alia: Pensions through the Employees Old Age Benefits & Insurance (EOBI);
- ❑ Health facilities through the provincial Employees Social Security Insurance (ESSIs);
- ❑ Workers' Welfare Board (WWB), supporting registered workers' families' education and other immediate needs

## The Constitution & Legislatures

- ❑ Articles 37 & 38 provide Constitutional guarantees for, inter alia, social protection: "The State is responsible for social security of the people".
- ❑ To recognize HBWWs' work, a Parliamentary Resolution was passed in the National Assembly on 3rd April 2007.
- ❑ In 2007 a draft Bill on HBWWs was endorsed by a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Women's Development of the former government.
- ❑ The Balochistan Provincial Assembly passed a Resolution on HBWWs (drafted by HomeNet Pakistan) on 31st May 2007.

## Concluding thought...

Once the Policy is in place, there is a need for the Govt. to work together with HBWWs, NGOs and the private sector to develop a comprehensive action plan and an enabling, conducive environment, through a consultative process, to facilitate and support the empowerment and development of home-based women workers, in a non-threatening or intrusive manner, according to their own wishes and aspirations. —*The author is Exective Director of Sungi Development Foundation*

(The presentation was made at South Asian Reginal Consultation jointly organized by HomeNet Pakistan, HomeNet South Asia, Aurat Foundation, SUNGI Development Foundation, UNIFEM and ILO, at Islamabad on 14-15 October 2008)

## EDITORIAL

Pakistan has witnessed a regular pattern of increase in the violence related to religious extremism since 2002. During 2002-2008, around 1518 citizens were killed and 2817 were injured in 642 incidents of this kind of violence. The shocking aspect of recent surge in violence is the increasing frequency of suicide attacks across the country. The magnitude of suicide attacks is best illustrated by the fact that there were 22 suicide attacks in four years i.e. between 22 March, 2002 (when the first suicide attack took place) and 2006, while the figure rose to 56 attacks in 2007 and 59 in year 2008. The immediate human loss of this violence were the precious lives: 729 persons in 2007, including 552 civilians and 177 security personnel, who were killed and 1,677 persons who were injured in 56 suicide attacks, while at least 852 persons, including 712 civilians and 140 security personnel, were killed and more than 1,867 persons were injured in year 2008.

This wave of extremism and terrorism, in addition to immediate loss of lives and economy has significantly diminished the space for human rights politics in Pakistan. The threat to 'right to life' overshadowed the other basic human rights - the right to mobility, livelihoods, speech, education and culture. The extremism is fast tearing apart the socio-cultural fabric among diverse ethno-culture groups. The damage to this socio-cultural fabric, woven by a long socio-political and cultural interaction, in fact, is a loss of humanity and history in the region, because the values and heritage which bring peoples, cultures and gender together to stand for justice loses its significance. The threat to life has thus significantly reduced space for opportunities in life and hope for change.

The wave of terrorism has also affected the working of government and non-government institutions and by weakening the processes of justice, accountability and transparency in formal and informal life. The civil society, which was emerging in the role of service provider and watch-dog towards peoples' access to basic human rights, has to divert its resources, both human and capital, to the emergency relief and human rights violations in the conflict zone. The marginalized sections of populations were further marginalized; the peoples already striving for justice were inflicted further injustice; people born to live and love were forced to die and despair. We need to re-collect, re-group and re-energize ourselves with determination to make space for hope, change and pave the way for realization of our rights, equality and justice for all.



**LEGISLATIVE  
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*The contributions or opinions, other than by the Aurat Foundation, reflect the views of the individual contributors and do not necessarily always reflect the views of the organization.*

## Conflict in Swat: viable solutions

Insani Haqooq Itehad (IHI) is a network of rights based civil society organizations and concerned individuals of Islamabad-Rawalpindi. On 12 February 2009, the IHI held a public discussion on "Conflict in Swat: Viable Solutions" at Islamabad. The main discussion points and recommendations made by the participants are given below:

- ❖ Swat operation is badly affecting women, as they are barred from working outside the house, and from going out without a male companion. Women and girls are being raped in Taliban controlled areas.
- ❖ A total of 248 schools had been affected and 119248 girls had been forced to stop their education.
- ❖ The military had occupied 28 schools and 8 colleges to use them for their stay.
- ❖ Tourism industry has collapsed and livelihoods destroyed in the area. Around 40000 person working in hotels had lost their jobs, and they are being paid and forced to join the Taliban.
- ❖ That people don't want Taliban-style sharia and no special package is needed for Swat. The Constitution of Pakistan is already based on sharia, thus the Taliban's demand for sharia is only a political ploy. The problem was in the delay in delivering justice.
- ❖ IDPs are in a dreadful condition. Those in Mingora have insufficient food and no winter clothes. Alternate arrangements for children's schooling must be made urgently. A permanent body should be set up to deal with the crisis on an emergency basis. We need to be assured that the government is with us!
- ❖ The military is not serious in attacking the Taliban, which is proved by the fact that:
  - i) Maulvi Fazlullah's FM radio broadcasts, started five years ago, have not been jammed yet; ii) The Taliban leaders have not been captured when everyone knows where they could be found; iii)

Taliban continue to have access to sophisticated weapons without hindrance; v) Schools are mysteriously destroyed during curfew hours and no one is caught.

- ❖ Whether they are Taliban or the military, the people are victims of both. If people step out of their homes during curfew hours they are shot and killed. Children and women are particularly vulnerable to army attacks. The militants are perpetrating horrific cruelties on anyone who opposes them. The military operation has seriously affected all business activities in the area.

The consultation made the following recommendations:

### Recommendations:

- Indiscriminate shelling and aerial bombing must be stopped, as it killing innocent peoples and destroying their property and livelihoods and other infrastructure.
- IDPs must immediately be provided with basic needs, such as food, shelter, education and health facilities.
- All political parties and civil society must forcefully condemn Taliban and militancy and declare their support to the people of Swat and FATA.
- All illegal FM radios that are spewing hate and violence and terrorizing the people, must be closed down and alternate FM radios shall be set up to promote peace and harmony.
- Government should ask PTV to telecast more programs in Pushto and other languages as cable operators have been forced to close down.
- All decisions related to the Swat operation and internally displaced persons (IDPs) shall be taken by the elected representatives.
- Government must dispel the impression that Army and Taliban are two sides of the same coin.— *AF Correspondent*

## 'Progress of the World's Women 2008/2009: Who Answers to Women?'

The UNIFEM's latest report 'Progress of the World's Women 2008/2009: Who Answers to Women?', released in September 2008, makes some interesting observations about the present state of women in legislatures and governments around the world. It states: "Today there are more women in government than ever before. The proportion of women in national assemblies has increased by 8% to the current global average of 18.4% in the decade from 1998 to 2008, compared to an increase of just 1% in the two decades after 1975. Yet even at the current rate of increase, developing countries will not reach the 'party zone' where neither sex holds more than 60% of seats until 2045".

The report highlights that political accountability to women requires:

- Strong mobilization: Women's movements have played an important role in challenging authoritarian regimes in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Nepal, Peru and the Philippines; in building pressure for peace in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, Burundi, Timor-Leste and the Balkans; in lobbying for legislative change to stop genital mutilation in Senegal and Burkina Faso, guarantee inheritance rights in Rwanda, and promote rights in marriage in Brazil and Turkey.
- Strong representation: Quotas and other temporary special measures, such as reserved seats, are a proven means for supporting women's engagement in political competition; they are currently used at nation-

al and sub-national levels in 95 countries. In elections held in 2007, the average representation of women was 19.3% in those countries that used some type of electoral quota, as opposed to 14.7% for those countries without quotas, regardless of electoral system.

- Strong Legislation and policy: Higher numbers of women in parliament generally contribute to stronger attention to women's issues. A 2008 study of UK politics, for example, confirms that since the number of women in parliament doubled to 18.2% since the 1997 election, issues of particular importance to women - such as childcare and social protection - have received more attention.
- Strong implementation: Even when the political will does exist, many governments do not have the capacity, resources, or know-how to ensure that gender equality policies are carried out. In Afghanistan, the government recently committed to fast track the increase of women's participation in the civil service at all levels to 30% by 2013. Currently, only 22% of all regular government employees are women and only 9% of these are at the decision-making level.

The UNIFEM report concludes at some point in the discussion that "political accountability to women begins with increasing the number of women in decision-making positions, but it cannot stop there. It requires governance reforms that equip public institutions with the incentives, skills, information and procedures to respond to women's needs". — *AF Correspondent*



# CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations on Pakistan's Country Report

Pakistan acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on 12 April 1996. Countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention (CEDAW) are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. They are also committed to submit national reports, at least every four years, on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations. In Pakistan Ministry of Women's Development is responsible for the CEDAW Country Report, in consultation with key line ministries. Pakistan Compliance report was due with in a year's time but somehow it could not be produced along with subsequent two periodic reports. The Ministry of Women Development prepared the combined initial, second and third periodic report of Pakistan, covering the period up to December 2004, which was later extended upto 2006, in response to some queries by the CEDAW Committee.

The Government of Pakistan presented this combined initial, second and third periodic report before CEDAW Expert Committee on 22 May 2007 in its 38th session at the United Nations in New York. The Committee considered the report and after discussions delivered the following concluding observations: [we are reproducing below most of these for public knowledge while summarizing some of the observations]

- The Committee commends the State party for its accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It expresses its appreciation to the State party for its combined initial, second and third periodic report.

## Positive aspects:

The Committee commends and appreciated the State party on its following steps:

- On legal reforms aimed at eliminating discrimination against women and promoting gender equality; and increasing women's political participation in the National Assembly and the Senate; and the 2000 amendment to the Pakistani Citizenship Act, 1951, providing for nationality to the children of foreign spouses;
- The adoption, in 2002, of the Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance; the adoption, in 2004, of the Criminal Law Amendment Act to facilitate prosecution of "honour killing"; the adoption, in 2006, of the Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act amending some of the Hudood Ordinances; the adoption of the National Plan of Action, in 1998; the adoption of National Policy for Advancement and Empowerment of

Women in 2002; and in 2005, the Gender Reforms Action Plan; the establishment of National Commission on the Status of Women in 2000; and the establishment, in 1989, of the First Women's Bank.

- The Committee welcomes the initiatives undertaken to provide support to women victims of violence, including the creation, by the Ministry of the Interior, of the Gender Crime Cell in the National Police Bureau and the establishment of a Human Rights Wing under the Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights, mandated to address human rights violations in the country with a special reference to women.

## Principal subjects of concern

The Committee express following concerns over the report:

- The Committee urges the State party to withdraw its declaration to the Convention without delay.
- The Committee recommends that a definition of discrimination against women in line with article 1 of the Convention, which encompasses both direct and indirect discrimination, and provisions on the equality of women with men in line with article 2 (a) of the Convention be included in the Constitution or in other appropriate legislation.
- The Committee calls upon the State party to undertake a comprehensive and systematic review and revision of all discriminatory legislation, including the Citizenship Act of 1951, the Law of Evidence of 1984 and the Hudood Ordinances of 1979, without delay and with time-bound targets, in order to achieve full compliance with all the provisions of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations, in consultation with civil society, including women's organizations.
- While welcoming the efforts of the Ministry of Women Development and the National Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee is concerned that the national machinery for the advancement of women does not have enough authority or the human and financial resources to comprehensively carry out its mandate and promote the advancement of women and gender equality. It is also concerned about the limited capacity of the Ministry of Women Development to undertake effective coordination and cooperation with all gender equality mechanisms at the federal and provincial levels, as well as cooperation with women's organizations. The Committee is further concerned about the lack of an effective mechanism to monitor the implementation of the National Plan of Action and the Gender Reform Action Plan based on the standards and provisions of the Convention.
- The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen the national

machinery by providing it with adequate human and financial resources so as to make it more effective in carrying out its mandate. This should, in particular, include sufficient capacity and authority for coordination of the various gender equality mechanisms to proactively implement the Convention.

- The Committee notes with concern that violence against women and girls persists, including domestic violence, rape and crimes committed in the name of honour. The Committee is especially concerned about the Qisas and Diyat law, which allows for the victim of violence or his/her heir to determine whether to exact retribution (Qisas) or payment of compensation (Diyat) or to pardon the accused, thus providing impunity for perpetrators of violence against women, especially perpetrators of crimes committed in the name of honour. The Committee notes with concern the lack of data on all forms of violence against women in the report.

- The Committee urges the State party to accord priority attention to the adoption of a comprehensive approach to address all forms of violence against women and girls, taking into account the Committee's general recommendation 19 on violence against women. The Committee calls on the State party to ensure that the Qisas and Diyat law has no application in cases of violence against women, especially crimes committed in the name of honour, and to adopt the Bill on Domestic Violence, within a clear time frame, in order to ensure that women and girls who are victims of violence have access to protection and effective redress and that perpetrators of such acts are effectively prosecuted and punished.

- The Committee urges the State party to, without delay, implement the judgment of the superior court to eliminate informal dispute resolution forums (jirgas) and to ensure that members of such forums who have participated in decisions that constitute violence against women are held accountable.

- The Committee is strongly concerned about pervasive patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted traditional and cultural stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family, in the workplace and in society, which constitute serious obstacles to women's enjoyment of their human rights and impede the full implementation of the Convention. The Committee is also concerned that prevailing trends of fundamentalism, intimidation and violence incited by non-State actors, including through illegal media, are seriously undermining women's enjoyment of their human rights in the name of religion.

- The Committee remains concerned that The Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance of 2002 does not adequately address the needs of women and girls who are victims of trafficking; the

State party should amend the Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance of 2002

- The Committee encourages the State party to take sustained measures, including temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention to accelerate the increase in the representation of women in elected and appointed bodies in all areas of public and political life.

- The Committee urges the State party to step up its efforts to ensure universal registration of births and marriages and to ensure that all women have national identity cards.

- The Committee calls upon the State party to place high priority on the reduction of the illiteracy rate of women, in particular those who are from rural areas.

- The Committee urges the State party to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market; the Committee also calls upon the State party to ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 177 on Home Work.

- The Committee calls on the State party to take concrete measures to enhance women's access to health care, in particular to sexual and reproductive health services

- The Committee urges the State party to pay special attention to the needs of rural women and women with disabilities

- The Committee urges the State party to amend the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act of 1939 to eliminate all discriminatory provisions,

- The Committee encourages the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW and to accept, as soon as possible,

- The Committee urges the State party to utilize fully in its implementation of its obligations under the Convention, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Committee also emphasizes that a full and effective implementation of the Convention is indispensable for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Committee encourages the Government of Pakistan to consider ratifying the treaties to which it is not yet a party. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Pakistan of the present concluding comments in order to make the people, including government officials, politicians, parliamentarians and women's and human rights organizations, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de jure and de facto equality of women and the further steps that are required in that regard. The Committee requests the State party to respond to the concerns expressed in the present concluding comments in its next periodic report under article 18 of the Convention, which is due in April 2009. —AF Correspondent

# Violence against women in Pakistan during 2008

A total of 7571 cases of violence against women were recorded all over Pakistan during 2008. Of these, 4416 cases of violence were recorded in Punjab, followed by 1380 in Sindh, 779 in NWFP, 767 in Balochistan and 209 in Islamabad Capital Territory (Islamabad). These incidents of violence against women occurred during a period of one year commencing from 1 January 2008 and ending at 31 December 2008. Almost 90% of these cases were reported in the print media and were picked from there by the Aurat Foundation's teams. Out of a total of 7571 cases of violence against women in Pakistan, the offence-wise and province-wise breakdown is as follows:

According to the statistics gathered primarily through Aurat Foundation's Press Clipping Service, the crime rate of violence against women is on much higher side in big cities or the main urban centres of the country, including the federal and provincial capitals.

During the first quarter of the 2008, there were 1172 cases in Pakistan (545 in Punjab; 275 in Sindh; 160 in NWFP; 149 in Balochistan; 43 in Islamabad); there were 1669 cases in second quarter (878 in Punjab; 325 in Sindh; 170 in NWFP; 233 in Balochistan; 63 in Islamabad); 2580 cases in third quarter (1600 in Punjab; 428 in Sindh; 267 in NWFP; 219 in Balochistan; 66 in Islamabad and; 2150 cases in fourth quarter (1393 in Punjab; 352 in Sindh; 202 in NWFP; 166 in Balochistan; 37 in Islamabad).

It appears from the data collected and presented below in tabular form that over half of the total cases of VAW were occurred in Punjab i.e. 4416 out of 7571 with the percentage of the total at 58%. In Sindh, the number of such incidents was 1380 with 18 percent of the total cases. In NWFP, the number of cases were 799 (11%), and in Balochistan the number of such cases was 767 (10%). In Islamabad, the number of these cases was 209 (3%).

It is observed from the data produced above that murders of women have occurred with some similar proportions in all provinces and Islamabad, though most cases of murder have occurred in Punjab, followed by NWFP. Twenty women were killed even in Islamabad in 2008. However, killings of women in the name of 'honour' are mostly committed in Sindh and Balochistan, and more noticeably, in some districts of the two provinces situated in close proximity to each other forming a geographical belt.

This is also surprising that out of the 12 districts where at least 150 or more cases of violence against women were actually reported, 8 were in Punjab; and 7 of all the 12 districts were City Governments.

The District Lahore has the highest crime rate in terms of the incidents of violence against women with 911 cases out of a total of 7571 cases in Pakistan and a total of 4416 cases in Punjab; followed by Faisalabad (494); Rawalpindi (492); Quetta (334); Peshawar (331); Sheikhupura (322); Multan (235); Islamabad (209); Kasur (196); Gujranwala (184); Sahiwal (176) and Karachi (163).

**Murder and 'Honour' Killing:** The prevalence of the crimes of murder and 'honour' killing in the four provinces and Islamabad Capital Territory is broadly shown in the graphs below. Of the total 1,422 cases of murder, there were 695 (49%) cases from Punjab; 352 (25%) from NWFP; 240 (17%) from Sindh; 115 (8%) from Balochistan and the remaining 20 (1%) cases from Islamabad.

Category of Crime	Total Number of Cases	%age of the Total
Murder	1422	18.8%
Honour' killing	475	6.3%
Attempted murder	143	1.9%
Abduction/ Kidnapping	1784	23.6%
Hurt & body injury	846	11.2%
Domestic violence	281	3.7%
Suicide	599	7.9%
Attempted suicide	208	2.7%
Rape	473	6.2%
Gang-rape	305	4.0%
Sexual assault	172	2.3%
Custodial violence	125	1.7%
Stove burning	61	0.8%
Acid throwing	29	0.4%
Violence threat	74	1.0%
Torture	312	4.1%
Vanni /Customary practices	32	0.4%
Miscellaneous	230	3.0%
Total	7571	100%

During 2008, 475 women were killed in the name of 'honour' (karo kari) all over Pakistan. Out of these 475 cases, 244 (51.37%) were reported from Sindh; 127 (26.74%) cases mainly from some districts of Balochistan, 89 (18.74%) from Punjab; 13 (2.74%) from NWFP and 2 (0.42%) cases from Islamabad.

The cases of 'honour' killing are found to be higher in rural/tribal areas where jirgas and panchayat system is still operational and override the law of the land and formal institutions of conflict resolutions. The highest cases of 'honour' killings were reported from the following districts of Pakistan: 44 from Jaffarabad; 31 from Naseerabad; 36 cases from Ghotki; 28 from Kashmore; 27 from Shikarpur; 24 from Sukkur; 29 from Jacobabad; 25 from Khairpur Mirs; 11 from Qambar Ali Khan Shahdad Kot; and 16 from Lahore.

**Abduction and Suicide:** In contrast to 'honour' killings which were committed more in numbers in Sindh and Balochistan, the highest number of cases of abductions of women occurred in Punjab.

In fact, abductions or kidnappings of women appeared to be a major crime in Punjab, and 1439 cases of abductions out of the total of 1784 abductions occurred in the province of Punjab, which is 81% of the total figure in the province, meaning thereby that four women were reportedly abducted everyday on an average in Punjab. Also alarming and quite 'unthinkable' is the figure of abductions from Islamabad as compared to the provinces of NWFP and Balochistan.

The total numbers of reported cases of

ruins the lives of the women along with their family and children for the rest of their lives, with the situation going even worse when they do not find any recourse to justice.

The highest number of cases of rape and gang-rape were committed in Punjab, i.e. 608 of the total 778 cases (365 or 77% cases of rape and 243 or 80% cases of gang-rape), or 78% of the total cases. Sindh, too, have a higher degree of occurrence of this crime and 139 (18%) cases of rape and gang-rape (85 or 18% cases of rape and 54 or 18% cases of gang-rape) were reported from the province. In NWFP and Balochistan, the incidents of rape/gang-rape were reported significantly less than other provinces, 9 and 12 cases, respectively. However, there were ten such incidents in Islamabad during 2008.

**Acid throwing and stove burning:** Acid throwing and stove burning are the most ignominious of all gender-based crimes. Acid throwing is a form of violent assault. Perpetrators of these attacks throw acid at women, usually on their faces, burning them and mutilating and damaging their skin tissues, often exposing and sometimes dissolving the bones. The consequences of these attacks include blindness and permanent scarring of the face and body.

In majority of the cases, the motives behind the offence are domestic conflict or husband's desire to remarry, demand of dowry items, demand of divorce or showing resistance against husband's second marriage. In most of the cases the perpetrators were in-laws, specially husbands of the victims/survivors. It was found that most of the victims were young married women, and also daughters-in law.

**Domestic Violence:** Overall, the number of cases in the category of domestic violence is small i.e. 281 (out of a total of 7571). However, it was observed that the majority of the cases in the category of hurt and body (846), as well as, 312 cases of torture, 172 cases of sexual assault, 74 cases of threat to violence, and even 61 cases of stove burning were related to one or the other form of domestic violence, mostly relating to physical violence within the domestic sphere. This brings the total number of cases, having some linkage with the domestic violence, to roughly about 1746 cases out of a total of 7571 during 2008. The percentage is around 23.06. Sadly, it is a huge ratio of the total figures suggesting the wide prevalence of domestic violence in Pakistan despite the non-inclusion of data in the present report about the emotional and psychological violence against women due to its non-availability for various reasons mentioned earlier. — *AF Correspondent*



## AF study praises performance of women parliamentarians of the 12th National Assembly

In order to critically see women parliamentarians' performance in the 12th National Assembly (2002-07), and document and highlight their achievements, Aurat Foundation did a detailed study, titled "Five Year Report on: - Performance of Women Parliamentarians in the 12th National Assembly (2002-2007)", in 2008. The study was first inaugurated by Ms Sherry Rehman, former Minister for Information, on 5 March 2009 at Islamabad, and followed by regional launch at all the four provincial headquarters. The study not only attracted the parliamentarians, concerned civil society but equally inspired the print media where eminent journalists wrote their analysis and opinion on the study. At Peshawar, Provincial Minister for Social Welfare, Ms Sitara Ayaz inaugurated the Five Year Report on 26



**Ms Sherry Rehman, Federal Minister for Information, addressing at the launching ceremony of the report on Performance of Women Parliamentarians at Islamabad.**

March 2009. At Lahore, the study was inaugurated by Ms Yasmeen Rehman and Ms Beelum Hasnain, on 31 March. The LWP-WE Quetta staff held

the inaugural ceremony of the report on 28 March 2009 which was chaired by Ms Rubina Irfan, Ministers for Law & Parliamentary Affairs, Balochistan.



**Ms Shabina Ayaz presenting the report to Ms Sitara Ayaz, Provincial Minister for Social Welfare, at Peshawar.**



**Ms Yasmeen Rehman, Ms Beelum Hasnain, Justice (R) Nasira Iqbal and Ms Mehnaz Rafi at the Lahore ceremony.**



**Ms Rubina Irfan, Ministers for Law & Parliamentary Affairs, Balochistan, chairing the report launch at Quetta.**

## Long March for Justice

Karachi: In support of lawyers' movement, Aurat in collaboration with civil society organizations gathered at High Court in small groups to avoid the violation of Section 144. Mr Rasheed A Rizvi, president of the Sindh High Court Bar Association, and eminent lawyer Mr Munir A Malik addressed the lawyers, civil society members and political workers that the struggle



would succeed and would continue till the re-instatement of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry (Mr Chaudhry was re-instated as Chief Justice of Pakistan on 16 March 2009). During the protest demonstration, Aurat's team including Ms Anis Haroon, the Resident Director, Karachi, were dragged and taken to the police station. During the long march, LWP-WE coordinator Ms Rubina Brohi, along with the LWP member Ms Noor Naz Agha Advocate, also had a meeting with the Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry to discuss the lawyers movement.

## Balochistan's Resolution on rights of HBWs

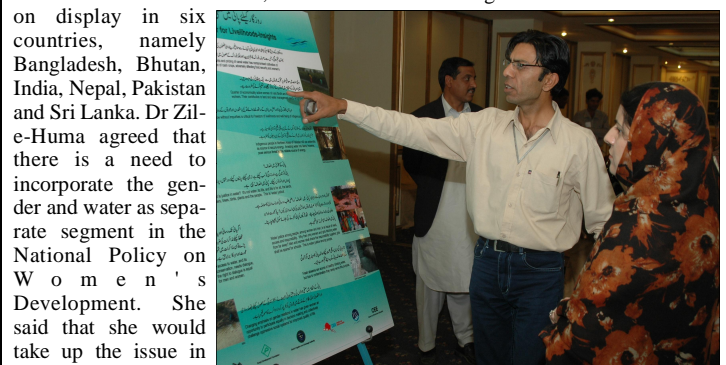
On 20 March 2009, Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Balochistan Assembly Ms Rubina Irfan tabled a resolution on the rights of Home-based Women Workers (HBWs), whereas Ms Ghazala Gola, Minister for Women Development and Ms Roqayya Hashmi seconded it. After discussion, the House passed the resolution unanimously.

The resolution asked the provincial government that it should approach the federal government with the information about the present situation of women workers. The great numbers of

home Based workers are working in their houses seeking work from the contractors to earn their livelihood; they do not have opportunity to get jobs in factories. Further the contractors engage them with petty works or they themselves work in their houses for earning income. The resolution said: "If we desire to save Pakistan from this terrible situation, and want to develop it in real means, then we must have to include and consider all labor workers and especially women workers in Labour Laws and funds should be allocated for their development in order to protect them under Labour Laws."

## Gender and Water Insights - the Case of Pakistan

Aurat Foundation, in collaboration with DAMAAN Development Organization and SUNGI Development Foundation, organized a seminar and travel exhibition on 'Gender and Water Insights, Innovations and Transformation - the Case of Pakistan', in Islamabad on 13th March 2009. Ms Zil-e-Huma, MNA and Parliamentary Secretary Ministry of Women Development participated as Chief Guest. Among various strategies of highlighting the gender and water relation, Travelling Exhibition (TE) is a new concept which has been on show in Latin America for the past 1.5 years, as well as in South Africa and now embarking on South Asian. In South Asian, the travel exhibition on gender and water has been



**Wasim Wagha explaining features of the exhibition to Dr Zil-e-Huma, MNA and Parliamentary Secretary MoWD**

on display in six countries, namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Dr Zil-e-Huma agreed that there is a need to incorporate the gender and water as separate segment in the National Policy on Women's Development. She said that she would take up the issue in the parliament and expected that her men colleagues in the National Assembly would support the cause of gender and water justice. Some participants pointed out that Radio Pakistan, in its programme for farmers, uses the terms 'kashkar bhaio' (cultivator brothers) which sends the message as if the cultivation or farming is only a men's business. It was agreed that the participating organizations would write letters to Radio Pakistan to sensitize its broadcaster / announcers to address 'kashkar behno aur bhaio' (the cultivators brothers and sisters). Mr Naeem Mirza, Ms Farhana Wagha, Mr Mohsin Baber and Mr Wasim Wagha also spoke on the occasion.



**The participants of a two-day training workshop on 'Women Participation in Political Process', organised by Aurat Foundation, in collaboration with The Asia Foundation in Karachi on 13 January 2009.**