



LEGISLATIVE WATCH

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EDITORIAL

The results of the general elections 2008 and the statutory quota of reserved seats ensured a five-year berth for 216 women in the national and provincial legislatures. Of these, 205 were elected on reserved seats for women, one on reserved seat for non-Muslims and 27 came in on the general seats. This brings the overall proportion of women's legislative representation in Pakistan to 19.9 percent, with the proportion even higher in the National Assembly (22.2%). Although this falls far short of a minimum of 33% legislative representation through reservation, as demanded by women members of political parties, women's rights groups and activists, and also as per the demands articulated in recommendations by several officially-appointed women's commissions, it is still the second highest proportion of women's legislative representation in South Asia, after 33.6% in Nepal and followed by 9.1% in India and 5.8% in Sri Lanka.

The election of Dr. Fehmida Mirza as the Speaker of the National Assembly has reinforced positive perceptions of women's abilities, particularly the ability of decision-making. Ms. Shahla Raza's election as Deputy Speaker of the Sindh Provincial Assembly and the appointment of several women Ministers in the federal and provincial cabinets and as Advisors, will further strengthen the image of women's being not only equally eligible and entitled to these posts, but also, being equally capable to run these offices.

There exists, however, tremendous opportunities to expand the scope of women's leadership qualities and outreach to all sectors and walks of life, including the key secretary-level administrative posts in the public sector, in addition to the across-the-board reservation of 20 percent quota for women in the public sector. The higher judiciary, the Central Secretariats and decision-making Committees of political parties and state-run or semi-autonomous state institutions are other major arenas where women are required to be appointed at important senior positions through democratic principles and merit-based mechanisms for affirmative action.

Women's increasing political and legislative representation is a major facilitating factor in mainstreaming women's concerns in politics. One area, however, which still needs urgent attention, is the indirect mode of election, or the system of proportional representation currently in vogue to fill in the reserved seats for women. This indirect election modality is completely different from the mainstream direct election system and has several negative implications for women, e.g. it deprives them of the opportunity of dealing directly with the electorate since they do not have any geographical constituencies.

Without gaining electoral campaigning experience and without representing a specific section or geographic area of the electorate, their chances of winning a general seat at a later stage remain limited and, therefore, women remain dependent on their male-dominated parties, with complete control over their nomination/selection in the hands of the political party leadership, mostly on the basis of relationship or influence or fund-raising abilities. There are two ways to deal with this serious issue. Firstly, by changing the mode of elections for women's reserved seats to direct constituency-based elections and increasing the reservation to 33% in all legislatures, and; secondly, by ensuring a 25% quota of seats for women on the general seats by each political party contesting elections through an amendment in the law, i.e. the Political Parties Representation Act.

The objective of mainstreaming women into politics cannot be achieved through rhetoric and tokenism alone. This requires long-term and strong measures to enable women to develop their own constituencies, gain experience of electoral politics and marshal support of their electorate, both men and women. Unless this is done at the earliest, the phenomenon of women's legislative representation will continue to hover around more as a perception and a symbol, not as a sound reality, unlikely to be challenged or reversed by anyone, despite the increasing appearance of women in the legislatures.

Women's representation and immediate core issues

The elections on 18 February 2008 brought a total of 216 women into the national and provincial assemblies. By including the already existing 17 women in the Senate, the number of women represented in the legislatures of Pakistan rises to 233, taking their overall proportion of representation to almost 20%. These are exactly the same figures as from the elections of 2002 - 2003, which were the highest ever since the assemblies came into being.

A closer examination of the results reveals that while the overall figure has remained the same (19.9%) as compared to elections 2002, there have been many changes within the individual results of the national and provincial assemblies. The Senate elections were held in 2003 and the next elections are due in 2009. In 2006, half the House was retired, including one woman, reducing women's representation to 17; in the National Assembly, there are 76 female members, out of which 16 women were voted in on general seats - the highest number to date; in the Punjab Assembly, there are 76 women members, out of which 9 were voted in on general seats; in Sindh Assembly, there are 30 women members, out of which only one has been voted in on a general seat; in NWFP Assembly no woman won on a general

seat; and in the Balochistan Assembly, only one woman has been voted in on a general seat.

While it is encouraging to see that the figures have not decreased, it is disappointing to see that they have not increased either. There are also worries regarding



the drop in the number of women elected on general seats in Sindh and NWFP. This might raise questions with regard to the lack of party quotas for women on general seats or the need of award more party tickets to women on the 'winning constituencies'. This might also strengthen apprehensions about the indirect mode of election on the reserved seats for women. In any case, this is a matter of serious concern for those

who wish to see more women entering the parliament and mainstream politics.

The 216 women who have entered the national and provincial assemblies will continue to have a lot of challenges before them. A large number of them are returning to Assemblies for another term, and are therefore, familiar with the biases and challenges that they will face as women parliamentarians. Alongside the hurdles of succeeding in a patriarchal set-up, they will have their work cut out for them. As women public representatives, they should not only rely upon issues relevant to their constituencies, but also, to take up women's issues. We would like to highlight only some of the core issues currently pertaining to women here:

Violence against women and girls: The issue of violence against women and girls has been highlighted in recent years not only in the media, but has been given recognition as an issue. The law on curbing crimes in the name of 'honour' was enacted in 2004, and the Protection of Women (Criminal Law Amendment) Act 2006, was passed in 2006; a bill for the prevention of domestic violence is in the

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Women's current representation in legislatures

By Maliha Zia with input from LWP staff:
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After the general elections held in February 2008, women's representation in the national and provincial legislatures has been consistent with that of 2002 - 2003. While, as before, the proportion of the representation is still higher because of the substantial number of reserved seats, there are still a number of seats won by women on general seats.

- There are a total of 233 women overall in the national and provincial assemblies: 76 in the National Assembly, 140 in all four of the Provincial Assemblies and 17 in the Senate. Their overall representation (233 out of 1170) is 19.9 % [During 2002 - 2003 was also 19.9% - there has been a decrease of one woman each in the Provincial Assemblies and Senate but two increased in the National Assembly].
- Of 233 women, 205 are on reserved seats for women; 27 have won on general seats; and 1 is on reserved seats for non-Muslims.
- Of these: 78 belong to PPPP; 59 to PML N; 49 to PML Q; 15 to MQM; 13 to ANP; 9 to MMA; 4 to PML F; 2 are independent; 2 to BNP (Awami); and 2 to PPP (Sherpao)
- Of the 140 women in the Provincial Assemblies: 76 are in Punjab Assembly; 30 in the Sindh Assembly; 22 in the NWFP Assembly; and 12 in the Balochistan Assembly.

In the National Assembly:

- There are currently 76 women out of a total of 342 (22.2%). [During 2002 - 2003 their representation was 74 out of a total of 342 i.e. 21.6%].
- Of the 76 women: 60 are on reserved seats for women, 15 have come in on general seats and 1 came in on a general seat in the bye-elections.
- Of these: 31 belong to PPPP; 20 belong to PML N; 13 belong to PML Q; 6 belong to MQM; 3 belong to ANP; 1 belongs to MMA;

Women's Legislative Representation: At a Glance				
Legislatures	Elections 2002		Elections 2008	
	No of women out of total	% of women's representation	No of women out of total	% of women's representation
Overall	233/1170	19.9	233/1170	19.9
National Assembly	74/342	21.6	76/342	22.2
Senate*	18/100	18.0	17/100	17.0
Punjab Assembly	73/371	19.7	76/371	20.5
Sindh Assembly	33/168	19.6	30/168	17.8
NWFP Assembly	23/124	18.5	22/124	17.7
Balochistan Assembly	12/65	18.5	12/65	18.5

* Senate elections were held in 2003; nearly 50% Senators were retired in 2006 through draw and; the next retirement is due in 2009

1 belongs to PML F; 1 is independent.

In the Senate:

- There are currently 17 women out of a total of 100 (17%). The Senate was elected in 2003 after the general elections 2002. After the elections 2002, there were 18 women in the House (18%); of the 18 women, 17 have come in on seats reserved for women; one on a seat reserved for technocrats. In 2006, when half of the Senators were retired through a draw, the number of women Senators was reduced to 17, as one woman Senator was retired. Elections for the half of the House are due next year (2009).
- Of the 17 women currently in the Senate: 10 belong to PML-Q (some of them have formed a 'forward bloc'); 3 to MMA; 2 to PPPP, 1 to PML-N; and 1 to PPP Sherpao.

In the Punjab Assembly:

- There are currently 76 women out of a total membership of 371 (20.5%). [During 2002 - 2003 their representation was 73 out of a total of 371 i.e. 19.75%]
- Of the 76 women, 66 are on reserved seats for women, 1 is on a reserved seat for non-Muslims, 9 have come in on general seats.
- Of these 76 women: 20 belong to PPPP; 36 belong to PML N; 18 belong to PML Q; 1 belongs to PML F; and 1 is independent.

In the Sindh Assembly:

- There are currently 30 women out of a total of 168 (17.8%). [During 2002 - 2003 their representation was 33 out of 168 i.e. 19.6%].
- Of the 30 women, 29 are on reserved seats for women; only 1 has come in on a general seat. [During 2002 - 2003, 4 women had come in on general seats]
- Of these: 17 belong to PPPP; 2 belong to PML Q; 9 belong to MQM; 2 belong to PML F.

In the NWFP Assembly:

- There are currently 22 women out of a total of 124 (17.74%). [During 2002 - 2003, their representation was 23 out of a total of 124 i.e. 18.5%]
- All of the 22 women are on reserved seats for women. There was no woman elected on a general seat. [During 2002 - 2003, 1 woman had come in on a general seat]
- Of these: 6 belong to PPPP; 2 belong to PML N; 1 belongs to PML Q; 9 belong to ANP; 1 belongs to PPP Sherpao; and 3 belong to MMA.

In the Balochistan Assembly:

- There are currently 12 women out of a total of 65 (18.5%) [During 2002 - 2003, their representation was also 12 women i.e. 18.5%]
- Of the 12 women, 11 are on reserved seats for women; and 1 woman has come in on a general seat.
- Of these: 2 belong to PPPP; 5 belong to PML Q; 1 belongs to ANP; 2 belong to MMA; and 2 belong to BNP Awami.

Party Position of Women Legislators: After Elections 2008

R for Reserved G for general	National Assembly		Senate*	Punjab PA		Sindh PA		NWFP PA		Balochistan PA		Total
	R	G	R	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	
PPPP	23	8**	2	19	1	16	1	6	-	2	-	78
PML N	17	3	1	30	6	-	-	2	-	-	-	59
PML Q	10	3	10	16+	1	2	-	1	-	4	1	49
				1M***								
MQM	5	1	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	15
ANP	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	1	-	13
MMA	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	2	-	9
PML F	1	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	4
Independent	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
BNP- Awami	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
PPP(Sherpao)	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
Total	60	16	17	67	9	29	1	22	-	11	1	233
	76		17	76		30		22		12		

*Senate elections were held in 2003; half the House was retired in 2006 and next elections are due in 2009

** Ms. Farayal Talpur (PPPP) was elected MNA unopposed in a bye-election from NA 207

*** Ms. Joyce Rufin Julius (PML-Q) was elected MPA in Punjab on seats reserved for Non-Muslims

Gaps, irregularities in voters' lists

An election report by PACFREL (Pakistan Coalition for Free, Fair and Democratic Elections), a coalition of eight mainstream civil societies organisations of Pakistan, says that the Election Commission had prepared the electoral rolls for 2002 with the help of National Database and Registration

Authority (NADRA) which maintains a huge database of persons holding national identity cards in the entire country. Reportedly, the EC was not satisfied with the quality of these lists and opted to undertake a massive door-to-door enumeration exercise for developing rolls for 2008. The exercise was also not without problems. It was outsourced to a private party and the draft lists were issued six months after the scheduled date with up

Election 2008 - voter participation and turn out				
	No. of registered Voters	No. of male registered Voters	No. of female registered voters	Total voter turn out
Federal	4,82,801	2,61,697	2,21,104	3,83,603 (51.28%)
Punjab	44,485,869	24,481,520	2,000,4376	20,931,539 (46.52%)
Sindh	19,506,473	10,894,176	8,612,297	8,467,146 (45.52%)
NWFP & FATA	12,071,538	7,310,176	4,761,362	3,380,358 (34.07%)
Balochistan	4,363,610	2,358,971	2,004,639	13,798,08 (31.62%)
Total	80,910,291	45,306,540	35,603,778	34,542,454 (42.7 %)

No disaggregated data of male & female voters was available with Election Commission.

to 30 million voters less than it should have. The updating of these lists following the court orders too was fraught with serious problems as number of registered voters for some constituencies decreased sharply while for others it increased exorbitantly. Moreover, the lists were displayed at the EC designated centers for a certain time but were not provided in soft or hard form to political parties and candidates.

A case of 'missing' women

A report released by the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) expressed concern over the 45% drastic reduction observed in the number of women voters in NWFP - from 3.92 million in 2002 to 2.17 million in 2007. PILDAT reported that the number of women voters displayed a huge decrease by 96% in FATA, 41% in Sindh, 37% in Punjab and 19% in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). In contrast, Balochistan registered an unrealistic increase in the number of women voters. The number of registered women voters increased by 144% - from about 470,000

in 2002 to 1.14 million in 2007 in the province while the number of male voters increased by 104% only. The PILDAT analysis also showed that the percentage reduction in the number of women voters in the country was more than twice the reduction in the number of male voters. While the number of women voters dropped by 39%, male voters dropped by 18% in number, thus shrinking the share of women voters in the number of total voters. The women voters, who constituted 40% of the total voters in 2002, shrank to 30% of total voters in 2007.

Women contestants in elections 2008

A total of 192 women candidates entered the electoral race for 176 national and provincial assembly constituencies in elections 2008. Of these, 72 women contested 63 National Assembly constituencies; and a total number of 113 candidates contested 120 constituencies in all four Provincial Assemblies.

For the NA seats: There were 49 women candidates

Women contesting on Party Tickets										
	PPPP		PML-N		PML-Q		MQM		Others	
	NA	PA	NA	PA	NA	PA	NA	PA	NA	PA
Punjab	11	5	5	9	7	7	4	2	1	1
Sindh	3	2	1	2	2	1	3	2	2	1
NWFP	1	1	-	1	-	-	1	2	-	-
Balochistan	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
ICT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	15	8	6	12	9	9	8	6	3	2
	23		18		18		14		5	

for 46 NA constituencies in Punjab; in Sindh, there were 15 candidates for 12 NA seats; in NWFP and Balochistan each, there were three women contestants on two seats and; in Islamabad capital territory (ICT), two women were aspiring for one NA seat.

For the Provincial Assembly Seats: A total of 73 women contested 68 PA seats in Punjab; 28 women in Sindh for 29 seats; 11 women for ten seats in NWFP and; eight women for six seats in Balochistan.

41 women contested the elections for National Assembly on a political party's ticket along with 31 independent contestants. At provincial level 37 women were on a political party's ticket along with 83 independent contestants, as seen in the table.

Women's representation

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process of being introduced. However, such violence remains rampant in the country. Policy, legislative and programmatic steps need to be taken and properly implemented. Repeal or reform of discriminatory laws against women should also be kept high on the national agenda.

Women and health: Pakistan's health indicators, health funding, and health and sanitation infrastructure are generally poor, particularly in rural areas. These factors affect women more than men. The many problems women face with this regard, they include women not having access to the most basic health facilities, the lack of female doctors, women or their families not allowing them to be treated by male doctors, difficulty in rural areas to even find professional medical practitioners, bad sanitation and malnutrition etc. The present government's recent measure to double the number of Lady Health Workers in one fiscal year is commendable, but a lot more remains to be done in this area.

Women and education: In Pakistan, it is obvious to all that the ratio

of girls to boys in primary education, also the ratio of literate females to males is lower than equality and must be addressed. Attention needs to be focused on the fact that there is a lesser number of girls schools as opposed to boys, as well as a lower quality of education. It should also be noted the ruling party has made a firm statement to improving the quality of education and commitment to focus on, among other things, the enrolment and attendance of children in schools. Universal girl child/female literacy should be identified as a top priority.

Women and economic deprivation: Focus in this respect is usually in connection with the non-recognition of their contribution in rural and agricultural economy and the discrimination faced in the industrial and tertiary sector. However, there are several other economic issues on which policy decisions, laws, schemes and affirmative action measures are required. These include the areas of inheritance, ownership of property, financial rights in marriage, contract labour, the cover of labour laws to informal sector and exempted industrial zones, especially for home based worker women, discriminatory of inadequate aspects of labour legislation, inequalities in pay and job security etc.

Women holding key positions

First woman Speaker of NA

Dr. Fehmida Mirza was previously elected as MNA in 1997. In February 2008 she was elected into the NA seat from Badin. She is the first woman ever to be elected Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan.



In the Federal Cabinet

Out of 15 Ministers in the Federal Cabinet, only one woman Ms. Sherry Rehman has been appointed as



Ms. Sherry Rehman

Minister of Information & Broadcasting with the additional charges of the Ministry of Women's Development, Health & Culture. However, for the first time in the history of Pakistan, Ms. Shahnaz Wazir Ali and Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar have been appointed Special Assistants to the Prime Minister - the latter on Finance, Revenue & Economic Affairs. Both have the status of Ministers of State. All of these three women belong to PPPP.

In the Punjab Cabinet

Out of 41 Ministers, only one woman has been appointed as a Minister; Ms. Neelam Jabbar as Minister for Population Welfare. The only female Minister belongs to PPPP.

In the Sindh Cabinet

Out of 42 Ministers, five women have been appointed as Ministers; Ms. Shazia Marri as Minister for Information; Ms. Saussu Palijo as Minister for Culture & Tourism; Ms. Tauqeer Fatima as Minister for Women's Development; Ms. Nargis N.D.Khan as Minister for Social Welfare Department; and Ms. Nadya Gabol as Minister for Information Technology. Ms. Shahla Raza has been elected as Deputy Speaker of the assembly. Out of these six women, five belong to PPPP (including the Deputy Speaker), and one (Ms. Nadya Gabol) belongs to MQM.



Ms. Shahla Raza

In the NWFP Cabinet

Out of 27 Ministers, only one woman has been appointed as a Minister; Ms. Sittara Ayaz as Minister for Social Welfare and Women Development. The only female Minister belongs to ANP.

In the Balochistan Cabinet

Out of 44 Ministers, five women have been appointed as Ministers; Ms. Rubina Irfan as Minister for Law & Parliamentary Affairs; Ms. Ghazala Gola as Minister for Social Welfare & Women's Development; Ms. Rahila Durrani as Minister of Prosecution; Ms. Ruqayya Hashmi as Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination; Ms. Nasreen Rehman Khan Khetrani (post not decided); and Ms. Shama Parveen as Minister for Information Technology & Provincial Coordination on NGOs Program (National / International) & Universities. Ms. Piralizai has been appointed as Advisor to the Chief Minister on Education, Health & Social Welfare.

Women's rights issues in political parties' manifestos

By Naheed Aziz

This review takes a gender based analysis approach to identifying the extent to which manifestos of seven major political parties participating in the 2008 general elections focus on women's concerns, in explicit or implicit terms. It also attempts to highlight issues which have remained invisible in macro level planning. The manifestos reviewed included those of: The Awami National Party (ANP), Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Pakistan (JUI-F), Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), Pakistan Muslim League (N), Pakistan Muslim League (Q), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Peoples Party (Sherpa).

The manifestos reviewed did not include parties which were not contesting the 2008 elections, since they did not issue new manifestos.

The broad areas of analysis for the 2008 review included the following:

- The existence or absence of a gender focus in the:

- Vision Statement;
- Goals/Objectives;
- Fundamental or Human Rights sections;
- Social sectors to which women's concerns have traditionally been relegated almost exclusively;
- Structural issue related sections - Economy, Governance, Constitutional, etc.,

- The nature of the focus as to whether:

- The overall approach to women's rights is progressive, stereotypical/protectionist, symbolic/rhetorical, ambiguous, or retrogressive;
- Positive women specific, or broad statements of benefit to them, in the Vision, Overall Goals, Women's Empowerment, Rights sections etc., were followed up with relevant and sufficient proposed actions in the sectoral sections;
- The statements in one part of the text support, dilute, or negate those in another one.

[We are presenting below the author's concluding remarks on the party manifestos - Editorial Board Legislative Watch]

AWAMI NATIONAL PARTY

Overall: The document clearly recognizes the diverse aspects of women's deprivation, and the structural contributing factors. It contains strong progressive statements about ensuring equality of rights, through legislative action and positive support to ensure meaningful participation in political, policy formulation and other decision making processes. It is the only manifesto which: sets a 33% quota for this; talks of using education and the media to create awareness of gender equality; also promising compliance with international conventions to which Pakistan is a party and ratification of covenants against trafficking of women and children, and violence against women. It is also the only Party proposing a positive change in identification policies which would contribute to giving women a dependant status. Still, like the other

manifestos it misses out on gender specificity in some sectors of critical importance to women. The manifesto admits that it is not a detailed action plan, and only a statement of the Party's overall policy principles. Therefore if not already prepared, more defined women specific sectoral action plans also need to be developed by the Party, to comprehensively cover issues of concern to women.

JAMIAT ULEMA-I-ISLAM PAKISTAN (F)

Overall the manifesto gives a secondary status to women, marginalizing them within a few traditional sectors and curtailing their options even within these. Moreover it has a sectarian tinge in terms of eligibility for the top executive positions in the country, and in several respects an intolerant approach to differing religious beliefs.

MUTTAHIDA QAUMI MOVEMENT (MQM)

Overall, this is one of the more progressive manifestos from the gender and rights perspective, and with the most detailed urban development plan. It commits to the repeal of discriminatory laws against women and minorities, and rejects the misuse of religion in perpetuating injustices against any societal group. It recognizes injustices against rural and urban women, and expresses opposition to social evils which especially discriminate against them. Among all manifestos, it contains the most detailed list of such practices, and the only one highlighting injustices such as - marriage to the Quran, child marriage, and forcing the opponents' womenfolk to march naked on public streets. It is also clear that both legislative and public awareness action is needed to address gender discrimination and its associated social evils. However it does not go far enough in terms of outlining practical steps to strengthen women's political participation. Like all other manifestos reviewed, it misses out on incorporating interventions under various key sectors which are of structural importance to the empowerment of women and girls, including those belonging to the religious minorities.

PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE (N)

Overall while there are some strong and positive general statements about equality of rights (including of women and minorities), and representation of women in all key policy making bodies, there is a shortage of clear linkages between these and the measures proposed in various other sections. Women specificity is missing not only from key structural areas, but also weak in the social sectors to which female issues have traditionally been exclusively relegated. There is also considerable ambiguity associated with the statements regarding - subjecting the guaranteeing of fundamental rights to public law and morality; restoration of the Constitution to its pre-12 October 1999 status (which does not mention safeguarding post-1999 positive women related legislation); and repeal of discriminatory laws. This ambiguity could negatively affect women's legal status and their development and welfare prospects.

PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE (Q)

Overall the manifesto is stronger on general statements re women's empowerment and equality of rights, than on actual supportive measures, which are inadequate and in many cases completely absent. Positive aspects of the manifesto include the declaration of education as the number one priority with special emphasis on women, the commitment to protect women's property rights. Other positives are: the listing of unjust social practices as well as physical and domestic violence against women with the declared commitment to eradicating these, including through legal prosecution. It also contains a strong emphasis on the equal rights of minorities, and among the manifestos reviewed the most detailed supportive measures for the disabled. However there is no mention of reviewing or repealing discriminatory laws against women or the minorities.

PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY (PPP)

Overall this is among the better gender and rights oriented manifestos, with a particularly positive stated intention that social policy objectives will drive economic policy. It is the only one which proposes women's participation at senior levels in the Judiciary and as judges of the family courts; besides women specific prison reforms; besides involving the Ministry of Women Development in mainstream policy making. It also incorporates detailed measures addressing the rights of minorities and the poor. Yet, it misses out on the gender factor in several critical areas, and does not go far enough in others to ensure a proper linkage between general statements and the various sectors, by defining relevant and adequate specific measures in gender explicit terms, even under education and health.

PAKISTAN PEOPLE S PARTY (SHERPAO)

Overall the manifesto makes very strong statements of its fundamental commitment to women's equality under law, political participation, and development in all fields of life. It is the only manifesto which promises employment opportunities for women in the Civil Services and the Armed Forces, and sports and recreational opportunities for them (however these are not mentioned in the specific measures defined under the relevant sections). Yet, except for the very positive intention to review all laws, there are hardly any specific measures mentioned to ensure the other aspects, except partially with respect to education. The positive intentions are also likely to be somewhat offset by the reference to Islamic interpretations due to the related ambiguities, and would be further nullified by the intended strengthening of the jirga system, qazi courts etc.

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[For detailed review see Aurat Foundation's publication "A Gender-based Critique of 2008 Election Manifestos of Key Political Parties" by Naheed Aziz.]

Violations of women's electoral rights in NWFP

By Uzma Mehboob

Pakistan has achieved remarkable progress in the arena of women's participation in formal politics through reservation of seats in the national and provincial legislatures, as well as, in the local councils. However, despite this historic affirmative action to mainstream women into politics, they continue to face huge constraints and barriers that hinder the fullest realization of their potential in their roles as voters, candidates and public representatives, particularly in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).

Several areas of NWFP have a history of keeping women away from participating in electoral politics, even forcibly. Women were prevented from voting and contesting elections in traditionally backward and conservative parts of NWFP during local government elections in 2001 and 2005; and also in general elections 2002.

The same practice was repeated in the general elections held on 18 February 2008. Reportedly, women were barred from contesting elections and casting vote in the previous elections by male candidates through written and signed agreements in different tribal regions, however, this time the groups and individuals opposing women's participation in politics changed their modus operandi and preferred verbal threats and commitments for the purpose instead of making any written agreements.

The violations of women's fundamental right to contest election and cast vote freely were seen at a wider scale in these elections in NWFP. Entire segments of female population in some districts were kept away from voting in the name of tribal norms and traditions. Though such unconstitutional, illegal and unethical activities were mainly undertaken by certain extremist religious groups and militant organisations, the mainstream political parties contesting elections did not do anything practical to block or frustrate these moves, except for offering some lip service by issuing 'condemnation statements'. Some of them were even reluctant to talk about it describing it as a 'sensitive issue'.

Women were also barred from casting votes in certain parts of the provincial capital, Peshawar. According to a report in the daily *The News*, in its 19 February edition, male candidates of all political parties in Peshawar agreed to exclude women voters from the polling. The report says that "at one of the polling stations in the provincial assembly constituency PF-8 Peshawar VIII, the presiding officer showed a written agreement to a media team banning female voting in the constituency". The report further says: "Against the provision of the Constitution and all democratic norms, the candidates of almost all political parties contesting form the constituency had signed the accord. The agreement said: 'It is not the tradition of Pakhtuns to hold women polling, and, therefore they had decided to keep the tradition intact.'"

According to the daily *Dawn* (19 February 2008) women voters were barred from casting their votes in several parts of the NWFP on the polling day on 18 February. However, the paper reports that in a sharp contrast, they exercised their right to vote in South Waziristan for the first time in the region's history. Dr. Muneer Khan Orakzai, a candidate for the NA-38 seat, said that all candidates had decid-

ed to bring women to the polling stations in Wana. "People in other parts of the country are stopping women from voting but we have allowed them to cast their votes," Mr. Orakzai said. Women were also allowed to vote for the first time in the Yakaghund and Landi Kotal areas. In North Waziristan, however, women were forced to stay indoors.

There were several union councils in Peshawar

insufficient arrangement of Election Commission of Pakistan and apathy of political parties in this regards.

Women were able to cast their vote at a few polling stations of Shangla district, the hometown of former federal minister Amir Muqam. Women's voting was held only at the native polling stations of male candidates and in the rest of the areas women did not vote. Women took part in electoral

process only in a few areas of Malakand district.

In Swat, 329,644 women voters could not exercise their right to vote, though 219 polling stations and 623 polling booths were set up for them, but these remained deserted throughout the day. The absence of women voters in Swat was attributed to militants' threats and the precarious security situation due to activities of pro-Taliban elements.

The situation with respect to disenfranchisement of women was the same in most of the areas of Karak, D.I. Khan, Swabi, Hunu, Kohistan, Battagram, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tank, Buner, Mardan, Charsada

and Nowshera.

Out of the 1,524,284 women population Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) only 424,332 women have been registered as voters, however, a majority of them were not allowed to cast votes in the election 2008. The region has 12 National Assembly constituencies. Mangal Bagh, who is running a parallel administration in the area, was of the view that the tribal code did not allow women to visit polling stations. According to a newspaper report, he said while speaking to a rally on 14 February that they would not allow women in their area.

The writer is Coordinator Legislative Watch Programme in Peshawar



where women had been barred from voting, including UC Hazarkhawani, Pandu, Shakh Mohammadi. Local Taliban also distributed pamphlets in Peshawar NA-3, NA-4, and warned the people of suicide attacks or severe punishment "if they did not keep their women away from polling stations. Pamphlets were plastered on walls on Kohat road closed to Dara Adamkhel. Similar threats forced women to remain indoors in Baddabber, Surband, Matanai, Sungo, Daibahadur, Achar, Ghari Ata Mohammad, Bahadur Kaly and Mathra area.

The situation was the same in most of the districts of the NWFP. A total of 89,055 registered women voters in Dir Upper and 145,337 voters in Dir Lower stayed away from electoral process due to

ECP turns deaf ear to complaints

Several efforts were made by the Aurat Foundation and other civil society organization to bring these violations to the notice of the relevant institutions and authorities. They frequently warned the provincial authorities about the grave situation that was emerging in these areas. They informed the Provincial Governor, Provincial Election Commissioner, and the Chief Election Commissioner about the illegal agreements.

The Pakistan Coalition for Free, Fair and Democratic Elections (PACFREL), NWFP, of which Aurat Foundation is a member organization along with SAP-PK, HRCF, SUNGI, SPO, PILER, IRC and Ecumenical Advocacy Forum issued a press release on the emerging situation and urged the government to ensure that entire population, including women, is mobilised and exercise its fundamental right to vote. Aurat Foundation also sent a letter, on behalf PACFREL, to the Chief Election Commissioner, Provincial Governor and provincial presidents of all political parties to take urgent steps for ensuring maximum participation of women in election.

The partner organizations also demanded of the government to provide security to women voters to enable them to exercise their democratic right. Organizations also recommended to the Election Commission of Pakistan and the federal government to announce elections would be declared null and void in those areas where women would be barred from casting their votes.

Despite the widespread violations, the Election Commission remained a silent spectator and did not take any action against the violators. The mainstream political parties who were contesting election also did not bother to take any action against their local leadership which was part of illegal agreements.

Mr. Owais Ahmed Ghani, Governor NWFP, however responded with a letter, which said that the government was making efforts to create a favorable environment in the FATA and some areas of NWFP to facilitate women to exercising their right to vote. The governor, however, observed that it should also be kept in mind that change in society could not be imposed by force.

Undoing 'emergency' must for constitutional rule

By I. A. Rehman

The havoc caused to the country's constitutional order and the norms of responsible governance by actions taken during the 'emergency' is so enormous that their continuance in force will undermine some of the most fundamental rights of the people. During the six weeks of 'emergency' (3 November-15 December) the presidency unleashed on the people a Provisional Constitution Order, two constitution amendment orders (that altered 12 articles of the constitution and added one), four President's Orders and seven ordinances.

Since the prime objective of the 'emergency' was demolition of the superior courts the necessary provisions were made in the Provisional Constitution Order and Oath of Office (Judges) Order, both of November 3, 2007. The purge was extended protection vide a new indemnity provision (Article 270AAA of the constitution) in the Constitution Amendment Order of November 20, 2007 and the matter was again put beyond doubt in the Constitution (Second Amendment) Order of December 14 and yet again in the Order of December 15 that revoked the 'emergency'. But much other harm to the polity was also done during the emergency.

Four of the amendments to the constitution made by the Constitution (First Amendment) Order related to the creation of the Islamabad High Court. A more detailed order on the subject was issued on December 14, 2007. The court has started functioning since and the new parliament and government have been confronted with a fait accompli, a transaction concluded in a period of extra-constitutional deviation. Regardless of the merits of the case, the idea of a high court in Islamabad had been criticized by many jurists. The establishment obviously exploited the cover of 'emergency' to push a controversial piece of legislation and pre-empted a debate in parliament. No explanation has been offered as to why it was necessary to interfere with the hierarchy of courts by stealth.

The second constitution amendment order (December 14, 2007) introduced changes in six Articles of the constitution, two of which are related to the presidency. The first amendment (Article 41) deletes the reference to Pervez Musharraf's reelection on the completion of his first term and the purpose is obscure.

The second amendment, to Article 44, is quite strange. What the Article said was: "Subject to the constitution, the President shall hold office for a term of five years from the day he enters upon his office." Now the expression 'subject to the constitution' has been replaced with 'Notwithstanding anything contained in the constitution.' Does this mean that a President will stay in office despite his incurring disqualification under any constitutional provision? If this interpretation is at all possible no constitutional order can allow this provision to hold the field even for a day.

The revocation of 'emergency' order also makes it clear, perhaps unnecessarily, that after the general election the President alone will decide when the newly-elected assemblies shall meet. If promotion of democracy were desired the provision could have mentioned a definite time-frame.

A serious consequence of actions taken under the cover of 'emergency' is the transformation of short-period Ordinances into regular and permanent



additions to the statute book.

The extra-constitutional regimes have developed a tradition of exempting Ordinances issued while the constitution is in abeyance from the constitutional provision that limits the life of a presidential ordinance to four months unless it is approved by parliament or reissued. The ordinances issued by General Musharraf between October 1999 and November 2002, when the constitution was revived, are not subject to the lapse rule. These include the Industrial Relations Ordinance, Freedom of Information Ordinance, the Books, Newspapers, News Agencies Registration Ordinance, the Pemra Ordinance, the Press Council Ordinance, the Defamation Ordinance, etc. These laws have never received parliament's approval.

Now the Provisional Constitution Order of November 3, issued by the Chief of Army Staff, contains a provision specifically designed to extend the life of ordinances indefinitely. Sec 5 of this order says:

5 - (1) An Ordinance promulgated by the President or by the Governor of a Province shall not be subject to any limitations as to duration prescribed in the constitution.

(2) The provisions of clause (1) shall also apply to an Ordinance issued by the President or by a Governor which was in force immediately before the commencement of the Proclamation of Emergency of the 3rd day of November, 2007.

What this section means in simple language is:

(a) All the seven ordinance issued by the President between November 3 and December 15, 2007 have been made regular enactments. These include the two ordinances that amended the basic media laws - the Press, Newspapers, News Agencies and Books Registration (Amendment) Ordinance, and the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Third Amendment) Ordinance. The most oppressive feature of these amendments is the creation a bar to the use of any material "which defames or brings into ridicule the Head of State, or members of the armed forces, or executive, legislative or judicial organs of the state."

A more draconian curb on the freedom of expression cannot be imagined. No politics is possible if opposition parties, or any citizens, cannot expose the executive as ridiculous or foolish. Had this provision been thought of earlier nobody would have been allowed to criticize Gen. Yahya or Niazi for their blunders in 1971 or the commanders who failed in 1965 or 1971. The Pemra Ordinance also revived many harsh provisions of the amendment ordinance of June 2007 which had lapsed in

October. Following nation-wide protest the government had promised to withdraw this measure. Now these oppressive provisions have become permanent law without any debate.

Also in this category are the ordinances that amended the Army Act of 1951 to provide for court martial of civilians and the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils (Amendment) Ordinance that provided for high courts' intervention in lawyers' professional matters. Neither measure can bring credit to the statute book. The need for their cancellation cannot be exaggerated.

(b) The dozens of temporary ordinances that have been kept alive year after year by reissuing them every four months have also been regularized. These ordinances include measures of far reaching implications. For instance, amendments to the Police Order 2000 have been reissued every four months since 2003. The Police Order 2000 was never debated in parliament. That was bad enough, but what is infinitely worse is that the opportunity of a parliamentary scrutiny of the important law during a debate on amendments has been lost.

The National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO), whose survival has just been confirmed by the apex court, is included in the list of these ordinances. The ordinance should have lapsed on February 4, but for the miracle of 'emergency'. Nobody needs to waste time on this ordinance. If it is important the measure can be issued as a fresh ordinance any time.

The result is that scores of legal instruments have been sanctified without being endorsed by the legitimate law-making body - the parliament. This amounts to interfering with the parliament's right to scrutinise all adhoc legislation. True, the parliament's right to review any enactment is not affected but the procedure is much more difficult than the method that obliged the government to submit ordinances for ratification.

The need to clear the backlog of ordinances awaiting regularization has been stressed more than once. The practice of reissuing ordinances, sometimes on the eve of National Assembly sessions, is not only a most objectionable way of law-making, it also undermines the justice system. It was once suggested that all the ordinances awaiting ratification might be introduced in parliament in a single package and the formality of approval expeditiously completed. That option is still available but nobody will see the adoption of laws under emergency as a fair solution. It offends against all canons of justice, democracy and even commonsense.

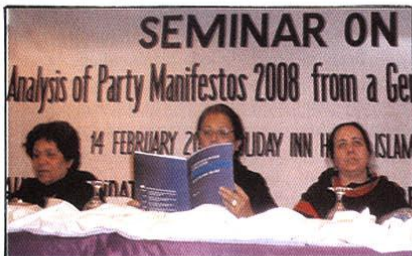
The writer is Director of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan & Member, Board of Governors, Aurat Foundation



Shahla Zia remembered

The friends and admirers of Shahla Zia (Shelly) gathered on 10 March 2008 at Aurat Foundation, Islamabad, on the third anniversary of her death.

Shahla Zia was the co-founder of AF and one of the pioneers of the women's movement. Her contribution, especially on the legal rights for women, is invaluable and unparalleled. Amidst the grief that still enveloped her loved ones, memories, stories and laughter was shared by all those present, including Nigar Ahmad, Anis Haroon, Dr. Masooma Hassan and Shahla's family members. Shelly will always be missed and remembered, her memory lives on in all those who continue the struggles she dedicated her life to.

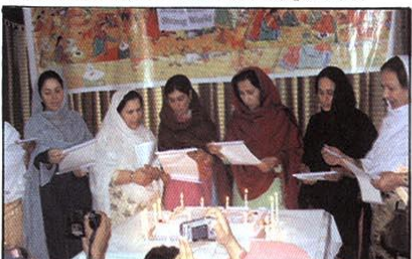


Ms. Naheed Aziz (L), the author of the "Gender-based critique of 2008 Election manifestos of key political party manifestos" at a seminar in Islamabad on 14 February 2008, to presents her findings. With her on the stage are Dr. Masooma Hassan, former cabinet secretary and member Borad of Governors, Aurat Foundation (in the middle) and Ms. Rukhshanda Naz, the Chief Operating Officer of Aurat Foundation.

Women legislators in NWFP take oath to protect women's rights

Aurat Foundation, Peshwar in collaboration with the HomeNet Pakistan, organised a round table meeting with women parliamentarians on 8 March 2008 to celebrate International Women's Day and discuss and highlight issues of women home-based workers. A huge number of people from different walks of life participated in the meeting. The event was marked with the participation of newly-elected women parliamentarians. Rukhshanda Naz Chief Operating Officer of AF in her welcome address said that the aim behind celebrating the day is to pay a serious consideration to women's rights issues and the mere celebration of the day does not fulfil the aim.

Rukhshanda Naz then presented a charter of demands on women's rights to the women parliamentarians, who took oath on this charter to protect these rights. The charter includes demands for taking comprehensive steps to improve the status of women and minorities and make firm policies for elimination of all kinds of discriminatory laws and customary practices.



Newly-elect women members of NWFP Assembly and women's rights activists are taking oath on a 'Women's Charter' at an 8 March meeting in Peshawar.



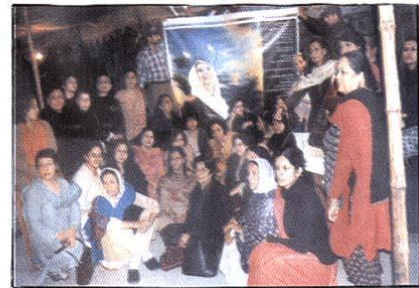
Representative of civil society are standing in solidarity during a 'Democracy Vigil' at the Super Market in Islamabad on 8 January 2008.

Tributes paid to Shaheed Benazir Bhutto

KARACHI: Women's Action Forum (WAF) organised a meeting to pay tributes to Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, in collaboration with LWP, Aurat Foundation Karachi on 12 January at Pakistan Institute of International Affairs Karachi. A sizeable number of people from different walks of life, i.e. lawyers, politicians, NGOs activists and other civil society members attended the programme. Nafisa Shah, Sherry Rehman, Fouzia Wahab and Justice (retired) Majida Rizvi, Mehtab Akbar Rashidi and Amar Sindhu, Shazia Marri, Sheema Kirmani, Fahmida Riaz, Anis Haroon and Irfana Mallah were present and spoke on the occasion.



Representatives of political parties, civil society and media are attending the condolence meeting in Islamabad on 1 January 2008, to pay homage to Shaheed Benazir Bhutto.



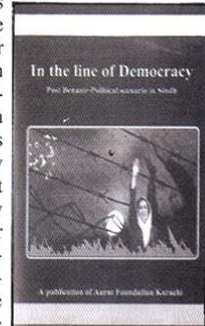
Women members of political parties and civil society together at a Women's Action Forum (WAF) condolence meeting on 12 January 2008 in Karachi.

Rights of women home-based workers stressed



Ms. Rubina Irfan, MPA, PML-Q, addressing a gathering organised by Aurat Foundation, Quetta to celebrate International Women's Day at Balochi Academy on 12 March 2008. The focus of the function was on advocacy for the formulation and implementation of national policy of home-based workers and amendments in labour laws. The participants included women parliamentarians, Ms. Roshan Khurshid Barocha, provincial care-taker Minister for Social Welfare and Women's Development, representatives of NGOs and Government Departments, lawyers, political activists, councilors etc. The resource persons for this seminar were Mohammad Azam Jan Zarkoon (expert on labour laws), Saima Haroon and Ms. Farkhanda Aurangzeb (member of the National Commission on the Status of Women) and speakers included the Ms. Roshan Khurshid Barocha and Dr. Zil-e-Huma (MNA, PPP).

"In the line of Democracy" is a publication by the Karachi office of Aurat Foundation. It is a documentation of the events sparked off by the announcement of Benazir Bhutto's assassination on 27 December 2007. It narrates the manner in which looting and arson was done in Sindh, and how the provincial government reacted to it and how workers of a particular political party were implicated in cases. It also contains the lists of people who lost their lives or were injured. The compilation is an effort by the Citizens' Action Committees of Aurat Foundation in Sindh



International Women's Day in Karachi

Women hold candles as they participate in a rally organised by the Aurat Foundation on 7 March 2008, on the eve of International Women's Day. Courtesy PPI



Lawyers' movement for restoration of judiciary

By Tahira Abdullah

Although in 2007 it started off being known primarily as the Lawyers' Movement for the Restoration of the Judiciary, it is no longer confined to lawyers. It now includes a wide range of civil society groups, the most prominent being judges, students, women's rights groups, human rights-based development organizations, urban traders, rural farmers and peasants, industrial workers and trade unionists, left-wing anti-globalization activists, right-wing as well as mainstream political parties, the private print and electronic media.

The movement has been joined most recently by retired senior bureaucrats, senior retired armed forces personnel and other professionals, most notably, members of the medical profession, and, most importantly, ordinary common folks with no affiliations other than to the rule of law and justice.

No one could have foretold that 9th March 2007 would be a turning point in Pakistan's chequered history of interminable spells of military misrule, interspersed with brief quasi-democratic elected governments, being regularly ejected for alleged corruption and misgovernance by far more corrupt, greedy and self-seeking military juntas.

But so it proved to be, when the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP), the Honourable Mr. Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry uttered that immortal monosyllable: "NO" - in unambiguous terms, in response to the Chief of Army Staff-cum-President, General Pervez Musharraf's pressurizing him to resign or face deposition and charges of corruption.

He was deposed, he faced and fought the charges in the Supreme Judicial Council, the full bench of his

peers in the Supreme Court threw the case out, and he was restored with full honour and dignity as the CJP on 20th July 2007 - celebrated as a day of universal rejoicing all over Pakistan.

But again, on 3rd November 2007, when Gen. Musharraf imposed his second Martial Law-cum-Emergency, the entire superior judiciary was required to take a fresh oath of allegiance to the amended Constitution (PCO or the Provisional Constitutional Order, 2007). The CJP and several other Supreme Court Judges, as well as almost 60 courageous Judges of the High Courts refused to do



so, after which they were not just deposed, but were pronounced and deemed to be retired - no longer considered serving judges.

The CJP and his peers were put under house arrest along with their entire families, and were released only after the PM-elect, Mr. S. Yusuf Raza Gillani succeeded in obtaining the vote of confidence in the Parliament on 24th March 2008 and ordered the Islamabad ICT Administration to release them. However, they are yet to be restored as the CJP and Judges of the Supreme and High Courts, despite a clear-cut signed Declaration and two unmet deadlines set by the coalition of the two largest political

parties, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), after the General Elections of 18th February 2008.

The movement witnessed exemplary determination and innumerable sacrifices by lawyers, including a number of innocent lives lost in the carnage on 12 May 2007. There have been regular protests outside the Supreme Court building on Islamabad's Constitution Avenue, or demonstrations outside the Judges' Colony, where the SC Judges were incarcerated for five long months; millions more have lined the Grand Trunk Road from Peshawar to Multan, and from Karachi to Hyderabad and Sukkur, in 50°C of bruising heat, or rain or -10°C cold, as well as in far-flung Quetta, Attock, Abbottabad, Faisalabad and Sahiwal for lawyers' rallies during the entire year.

Lawyers, women's rights activists, students, NGOs and political workers, traders and mediapersons have been arrested, jailed, manhandled, beaten, tear-gassed, water-cannoned and stoned with impunity. But such brutal repression has not succeeded in diminishing the fervour and spirit of the Movement, which has resolved to carry on until the restoration of the non-functional CJP and the Judges - with full honour and dignity.

In January 2007, it would have been inconceivable that a single word, symbolizing an act of defiance to a military dictator, could so fire the imagination of millions of Pakistanis across the rural/urban, age and gender divide, as well as across the political, economic, occupational, social, ethnic, linguistic and sectarian/religious spectrum.

The writer is a development worker & rights activist; member Governance Council, HRCF, member Working Committee, WAF and; member LWG Islamabad

Incidents of violence against women in Pakistan during First Quarter of 2008

There have been a total of 1321 incidents of violence against women in the four provinces of Pakistan and in the federal capital, Islamabad between January 01 and 31 March 2008, says a national quarterly report released by Aurat Foundation. The report is a collection and compilation of statistics on the incidents of violence against women during the first quarter under its national programme 'Policy and Data Monitor on Violence against Women' for the elimination of violence against women in Pakistan.

The report has shown that a total number of 1321 incidents of violence against women occurred in the four provinces and Islamabad (546 in Punjab; 298 in Sindh; 282 in NWFP; 151 in Balochistan and 44 in Islamabad) in the first quarter of the year. In addition to these figures, 30 men in Sindh and one man in Balochistan also lost their lives in the incidents of 'honour' killing in the same period.

Out of a total of 1321 cases of violence against women in Pakistan, there were 366 cases of murder (130 in Punjab; 110 in Sindh; 95 in NWFP; 25 in Balochistan; 6 in Islamabad); 90 cases of 'honour' killings (11 in Punjab; 35 in Sindh; 8 in NWFP; 36 in Balochistan); 25 cases of attempt to murder (13 in Punjab; 7 in Sindh; 5 in Balochistan); 246 cases of abduction (177 in Punjab; 38 in Sindh; 16 in NWFP; 4 in Balochistan; 11 in Islamabad); 179 cases of hurt and body injury (56 in Punjab; 32 in Sindh; 44 in NWFP; 42 in Balochistan; 5 in Islamabad); 119 cases of domestic violence (34 in

Punjab; 30 in Sindh; 46 in NWFP; 7 in Balochistan; 2 in Islamabad); 66 cases of suicide (27 in Punjab; 24 in Sindh; 8 in NWFP; 4 in Balochistan; 3 in Islamabad); 11 cases of attempted suicide (10 in Balochistan; 1 in Islamabad); 60 cases of rape (34 in Punjab; 14 in Sindh; 9 in NWFP; 3 in Balochistan; 1 in Islamabad); 18 cases of gang-rape (8 in Punjab; 10 in Sindh); 24 cases of sexual assault (13 in Punjab; 6 in Sindh; 10 in NWFP; 3 in Balochistan; 2 in Islamabad); 34 cases of custodial violence (10 in Punjab; 14 in Sindh); 16 cases of burning (4 in Punjab; 6 in Sindh; 1 in NWFP; 4 in Balochistan; 1 in Islamabad); 3 cases of acid throwing (2 in Punjab; 1 in Sindh); 6 cases of trafficking (4 in Punjab; 2 in NWFP) and; 57 cases of violence were of miscellaneous nature in the four provinces and Islamabad.

The percentage of the cases of murder of women among all these recorded/reported cases is the highest, i.e. 27.7%; followed by the abduction (kidnapping) of women (18.6%); hurt or body injury (13.5%); domestic violence (9%); 'honour' killing (6.8%); rape/gang-rape (6%); suicide (5%); offences of miscellaneous nature (4.3%); sexual assault (2.6%); attempt to murder (1.9%); custodial violence (1.8%) and; burning/acid throwing (1.4%).

Nearly 99% perpetrators of these incidents of violence against women were male, either relative or non-relative, according to the reading and scrutiny undertaken by the staff of Aurat Foundation of these cases.

The Legislative Watch Issue No. 23 before you has been produced after a period of two years. We hope you will accept our regrets, and we are pleased to announce that from now on, it will be produced on a quarterly basis. We will strive to provide articles, analyses and coverage of events on women's rights and governance issues. We hope you will continue to find it relevant, informative and useful. As always, we welcome all comments, feedback and contribution.

Editorial Board



**LEGISLATIVE
WATCH**



Dedicated to Shahla Zia, founder of the Newsletter

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