



LEGISLATIVE WATCH



Founded by Shahla Zia

Patron-in-Chief: Nigar Ahmad

JAZBA initiative launched to strengthen democratic processes and women's empowerment

AF Report

"Democracy and Empowered Women or Jamhuriat aur Baikhtiar Aurat "JAZBA Programme" was launched by South Asia Partnership Pakistan (SAP-PK) and Aurat Foundation (AF) on March 14, 2020 at a local hotel in Lahore, for strengthening inclusive democratic processes and the advancement of women's rights and at-risk populations, such as minorities & trans-gender communities in approximately 40 districts of Pakistan spread all across four provinces and GB.



Ms. Feroza Zehra presenting JAZBA approach

Muhammad Tahseen, Executive Director of SAP-PK addressing the ceremony said that the project will articulate democratic demands based on evidence, inclusion and broad mobilization of diverse groups including women, especially the youth. He said the initiative would support systemic improvements on the supply side i.e. national and sub-national governance structures and representatives to respond effectively and efficiently to the demands of constituents and be accountable.

Minister for Human Rights, Minorities

Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Ijaz Alam Augustine, while speaking at the event said women's participation had always played a great role in politics since the creation of Pakistan. He said women made up 49 per cent of the population and hopefully one day they would be able to elect their own government. However, during the PTI's tenure, many important initiatives had been taken to curb acid attacks, child labour and violence against women. He said the Zainab Alert Bill had also been passed by the National Assembly.

MPA Uzma Kardar said that no doubt the PTI government ensured representa-



Panel Discussion on Women in Local Government.

tion of women on every forum that could be easily analysed through the prime minister's programme, Dukhtar-i-Pakistan Vision 2020-21. MPAs Samibia Tahir, Shawana Bashir, Aisha Chaudhry and Ayesha Iqbal claimed that under the leadership of Chief Minister Usman Buzdar, the Punjab government had taken historic steps for the elimination of gender discrimination, protection of women's rights and socio-economic empowerment of women.

Mr I.A. Rehman said the performance of women parliamentarian in national and provincial assemblies was better

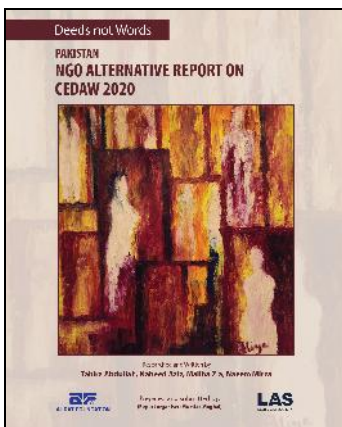
than men. Women should be given more representation in the decision-making bodies and they would prove to be better performers. Representatives of various schools of thought also expressed their views and applauded the effort of non-government organizations to protect women's rights. Women, religious minorities, transgender persons, special people, and social activists participated in the event.

Mumtaz Mughal, Director Programmes Aurat Foundation said

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Civil Society's Alternative Report on CEDAW 2020

AF Report



Aurat Foundation in collaboration with Legal Aid Society prepared Pakistan's Civil Society Alternative Report on CEDAW 2020 covering the period from 2013-2017. The report was

researched and written by Ms. Tahira Abdullah, Ms. Naheed Aziz, Ms. Maliha Zia and Mr. Naeem Ahmed Mirza. The report was endorsed by 200 NGOs and four National Alliances of Pakistan.

The 2020 Alternative Report covers women's critical concerns in relation to their rights as enshrined in the Pakistan Constitution. Besides responding to the CEDAW Committee's 2013 and 2019 Observations, the Report draws attention to key issues emerging since the submission of Pakistan's Fifth Periodic Report (October 2018).

The Government's responses in the Fifth Report gave the impression that it had complied fully with CEDAW Articles in letter and spirit. Ground realities belie these tall claims, says the civil society report. The report, however, appreciated some progress,

e.g. enactment of women-friendly laws at federal and provincial levels, including positive amendments in electoral laws. Yet, there exist many unresolved issues within the bitter reality that women and girls risk being discriminated against, humiliated, raped, and "dishonour"-killed, on any pretext that offends patriarchal and misogynist mindsets. There are signs of regression instead of progression in several respects, says the civil society report.

The alternative report gave several recommendations in each area of critical concern. Some of these included:

Article 1 - Definition of 'discrimination':

"The GoP (through Parliament) to forthwith insert a representative and intersecting definition of discrimination in the Constitution.



Ms. Mumtaz Mughal, Director Programmes, Aurat Foundation speaking at UN Headquarters, Geneva.

Article 2 - National Machinery for the Advancement of Women:

1. A well-resourced and empowered Balochistan Commission.
2. Reinforcement and empowerment

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Covid 19 pandemic and humanitarian assistance response

By Nosheen Khurram

With the sudden emergence of Covid 19 pandemic, social and economic situations all around the world changed dramatically. In Pakistan, Covid 19 was much more than a health crisis and resulted in further slashing economic growth of already weak economy. The consequences of this economic downturn increased unemployment and poverty, decreasing the average income of the common people and further exposing the vulnerabilities of marginalised segments of society, particularly women, transgender people and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) all over the country.

By September 2020, there were over 275,225 officially confirmed COVID-19 cases and over 5,865 deaths, Pakistan became one of the countries badly affected with the novel coronavirus. Although Pakistan's economy was struggling hard to stay afloat before this pandemic but wasn't in imminent danger of collapse but this outbreak not only exposed the health crises of the nation but also virtually pushed the nation's economy to a very precarious situation.

Keeping in the view the imperative needs of communities, where AF and SAP-PK were working, immediate changes in JAZBA Programme were made and emergency relief plans were executed to support the most vulnerable segment of the society by providing them the humanitarian assistance. So, in compliance with the national measures to restrict the pandemic, JAZBA suspended its formal project activities and planned to provide humanitarian assistance to the needy and helpless/jobless -labor, farmers, factory workers, private school teachers, house made, destitute, minority, special women and old- women and the people who are in much need of food.

The main objective of this COVID-19 humanitarian assistance was to swiftly detect and effectively provide immediate relief to the most marginalized segments of society who lost their source of income because of this pandemic.

Before going into implementation of humanitarian assistance program, AF



Relief package distribution event during COVID-19

and SAP-PK conduct a rapid assessment. 848 respondents (100% women) from three major categories including home based workers, farm laborers and industrial workers were surveyed

So, based on the finding of the survey, management of JAZBA Program decided to provide relief assistance to the most deserving women including home base workers,

Shabana - Domestic Worker/Widow Okara

Shabana is a domestic worker and lost her job due to Covid-19. She said "I am a widow and have four children to support. After losing my job I was very upset and tried to find out the way to register in Govt Ehsas Program but no one guided me for registration process, I am very happy after getting this relief package and thankful for the way of distribution."



with a specific set of question. The purpose of the survey was to gauge the community's perception on Govt's relief response and awareness among communities. So, as many as 81% of the responses showed dissatisfaction towards the mechanism of relief provi-

Goshi - Transgender Quetta

Goshi belongs to transgender community, as well as she is family head of old transgenders. Her job is going to door to door and attending wedding ceremonies to earn for survival, which is now totally banned due to Coronavirus. She said "I am very thankful to Aurat Foundation for approaching us and to give relief in the most difficult time. May Allah bless you all."



domestic workers, minority women, transgender and women with no other source of income. Aurat Foundation identified 30 most deserving women from each target district, profile them and provided the assistance with help of district level committees to maintain

the transparency and accountability intact. In all this process a closing coordination remained between the AF-staff and Govt. official to avoid any duplication.

Formal distribution ceremonies held in each district where it has been coordinated with the concerned authorities to organize the distribution events and after the assurance of respect of Government's SOPs for COVID-19, the offices allowed to organize the event.

Seeing these ceremonies as an opportunity AF took advantage to spread awareness on precautionary measures to restrict the spread of coronavirus and invited influential and representative from line department to give their insight on the pandemic. For example, Ms. Nuzhat Shereen, Chairperson Sindh Commission status of women, Ms. Rabia MPA (MQM) Sindh Assembly from Karachi, Ms. Zaib un Nisa - MPA (PMLN) Rawalpindi, Syed Sabtain Gulzar Shah Spokes Person Punjab Gov't in Okara and Ali Sher Khan (Additional Assistant Commissioner Haripur) participated in relief activities. Media representative also participated in all district and spread the message in mass community. Overall, 360 families (5*30*12=1800 individual as on average of five family member) benefited from humanitarian assistance initiatives.

Other than Projected activities, team of Aurat Foundation Peshawar played their philanthropy role on voluntary basis to protect the most affected vulnerable populations in order address the most pressing needs and arranged funds from different sources (friends and family) and distributed food item packages among 350 women. Approximately 100 persons (80 women and 20 men) were supported with cash grant from 3000 to 26000 rupees. Small business was also established for two deserving persons to earn their livelihood and distributed the food items and cash.

In addition, Aurat Foundation's Balochistan team also played vital role in carrying out emergency response in collaboration with local /overseas philanthropist and helped around 80 families with food assistance.



Civil Society's Alternative Report on CEDAW 2020

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- of Women's Commissions and implementing entities, with clarity of mandates, plus adequate and secure funding.
- Timely appointment and capacity building of personnel, provision of clear rules of business, and operating protocols.

Article 7 - Women's Participation in Political and Public Life:

- Accelerated NADRA-ECP gender gap reduction voter registration campaigns.
- Amending the Elections Act 2017 to:
 - institute the direct mode of elections for women on reserved seats; increase reserved seats for women in all legislatures, adding seats for PWD women and men and TGLs; more minority seats stipulating a percentage allocation for minority women; NA/Senate: 1 seat each for ICT women;
 - bind political parties to allocate 15% tickets for general (winnable) seats to women; include - 33% women in all organizational structures at all levels, at least 33% women in the list of 2,000 members required by the ECP at the time of enlistment;

Women in Public Positions

- Preparation of a comprehensive regularly updated, easily accessible data base on quotas filled for women, as per service tiers.

Article 9 - Nationality:

- Alignment of the Citizenship Act with CEDAW Articles of gender non-discrimination.

Article 10 - Education and Training:

- Increasing provincial education budgets substantially - with disbursement data reporting.
- Objectively verifiable data regarding reported numeric increases in: girls-only schools with boundary walls, toilets, water, women-only teachers; co-education/"gender-free" primary schools.
- Increasing girls' enrolment/retention through: Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) enhanced conditional cash transfers (CCTs) upon evidence of girls' enrolment/retention; expanding WFP's food-for-education grant programme in poverty-mapped districts.

Article 11 - Employment:

- Respecting/valuing/counting women's economic productivity/GDP-contribution linked to Article 13-14 and SDGs.
- Legislation to change the definition of the formal "labour force" - to include women farmers; foresters, livestock/dairy farmers, fisherfolk; home-based and domestic workers.
- Recruitment/training women enu-

General Recommendations 19: Violence against Women

The GoP must look beyond legislation to measure the impact of efforts to eliminate VAWG and GBV through:

- Consistent, regular GBV/VAWG-related data collection, disaggregated by sex, age, district, category of violence, among others, to eliminate the currently scattered, disorganized, unanalysed information. Permanent GMIS and data collection systems must be available in all provinces, without dependence on the Status of Women Commissions.
- Strengthening protection systems for VAWG/GBV victims/survivors to provide a seamless service. Focus to be placed on provision of long-term shelter for women as opposed to temporary shelter only for the crisis timespan; separate shelters for girls who may require long-term care, e.g. child brides. Options such as low-cost housing, or half-way houses, for violence victims/survivors to be explored to support and facilitate women venturing out on their own.
- Allocating required resources to different initiatives under the NPE-VAW, with well defined, verifiable, closely monitored indicators.
- Gender-sensitization training of key justice sector actors: first responders, police, medicolegal officers, public prosecutors, court staff and judiciary. The Supreme Court, High Courts and other overseeing authorities to put in place regular qualitative monitoring and assessment of trainees.
- Assessing the types of cases brought to Gender-Based Courts, with close monitoring of how courts address and dispose of them.
- Instituting a multi-departmental, coordinated, holistic approach, to respond to VAWG/GBV, with all concerned actors working collaboratively in creating an effective prosecution case; developing a case management system, where all actors have access and are able to submit reports and evidence, in addition to hard copies, to allow for smoother investigation process.
- Completion of adoption and scaling up Aahung's LSBE initiative; adoption and replication by other provinces and ICT.
- Acknowledging women's economic empowerment as a core mechanism for prevention of violence.¹⁹ Additionally, employing women in the job market; ensuring a safe environment; establishing their leadership skills; support for housing for women and their children.
- Adopting zero tolerance for all forms of VAWG/GBV. No compromises or out of court settlements to be allowed. Justice sector institutions must continue with cases as the aggrieved parties, in order to take the pressure for compromise/settlement off the victim/survivor or her family. The police must not encourage such compromises and strict action must be taken against those who do so. The judiciary must consciously not accept compromises in cases that are non-compoundable under the law; especially in women's property inheritance cases.
- Revising core training curricula of police, medico-legal officers and judiciary personnel; gender-sensitizing them all for mainstreaming pro-women appropriate behaviour, as opposed to a stand-alone subject. For public prosecutors and the judiciary, specific training to be provided on interviewing girl child survivors, as opposed to conducting general GBV interviews.
- Formulating measures for implementation of laws; developing protocols to ensure confidentiality, e.g. a system to provide pseudonyms for under-trial cases.

merators for LFPR data collection to: elicit accurate information for LFS; sex-disaggregated data (FLFPR); inclusion of PWDs/ TGLs/ rural agricultural women's work/productivity in LFPR and GDP data.

(Nairobi 2019).

Articles 13 & 14 - Economic/Social Benefits; Rural Women; Food/Nutrition; Environment/Climate-Change:

Article 12 - Women's and Girls' Health and Reproductive Health Rights:

- Merging provincial Population and Health entities into one Department, reducing funds wastage and operational duplication (RH services/staff/outlets).
- Ensuring updated statistics and mandatory inclusion of MMR data collection in all future health/RH surveys, especially PDHS.
- Demonstrating political commitment to tackle the alarming population explosion (PGR 2.4%, not GoP's 1.9%); following-up on GoP's statement at 25th ICPD Conference

- unions/cooperatives/associations; (ii) agricultural extension training by women trainers.
- Recognizing women farmers' need for assets ownership - leading to access to affordable credit and union membership. Granting all women farmers minimum one acre of arable land (starting with de facto women-headed households, widows/divorcees/single women), with title deeds in their own names.

Article 16 - Marriage and Family Relations:

- Implementing positive women-friendly laws; high priority to verifiable results.
- According women equal rights of divorce under Muslim and other personal laws (vide Algerian and Tunisian post-divorce maintenance laws). Some Pakistani court judgements support and recognize the reciprocal benefits a wife may receive post-marriage for her contribution during marriage.
- Repealing the legal provision of Restitution of Conjugal Rights in personal laws of various communities/sects.
- Taking socio-cultural measures to decrease tolerance for and commission of DV and IPV.
- Harmonizing the age at marriage of girls at 18 years across the country (e.g. Sindh), as supported by Islamic interpretations and medical evidence in particular. Justice sector actors must adopt a sensitive approach, recognizing children in child marriages as victims and not as consenting adults using their free will. They must not adopt a "protectionist approach" arising from their own internal biases, based on a culture of attaching shame to victims. Provide shelter, education, health to support child brides post-marriage until they reach adulthood.
- Amending Guardianship and Custody laws to recognize single mothers' rights as guardians; particularly protecting their right to remarry without impacting their guardianship/custody of male/female children.
- Taking legislative and administrative action to end legal recognition of Jirgas/Panchayats as an ADR system.

Withdrawal of 'Declaration' upon State accession to the Convention:

"The State to withdraw the Declaration, to create enabling circumstances for full CEDAW implementation in letter and spirit.

Ratification of CEDAW Optional Protocol:

- Compliance with repeated directions of the CEDAW Committee to ratify the Optional Protocol;
- Accepting the amendment as per CEDAW Article 20 (1), to allow more flexible time to the CEDAW Committee to meet annually.

Staff Orientation and Planning Meeting

With the kick start of implementation Phase, 3-day staff orientation and planning workshop on JAZBA Program held in Lahore on 12th -15th January 2020 at Park lane hotel, Lahore. The workshop was chaired by SAP-Pakistan and the senior management of AF national and regional offices along with newly hired district staff in operational districts attended this workshop.

The primary agenda of the workshop was to develop a clear understanding of the participants, especially the new staff of JAZBA Program. Detailed sessions of program's objectives, the logical framework, activities under each program output, and theory of change were conducted by Team Lead Mr. Irfan Mufti and National Program Managers Ms. Feroza Zahra and Mr. Sharjeel. Budget and financial reporting formats and concerns of the participants were discussed in detail with finance



team. MIS team shared the Program indicators and narrative reporting format. Other topics covered in the orientation beside the programme sessions were on Women and Local Government system in Pakistan. The main focus of the session was to explore the avenue for civil society interventions. Introduction to the meeting was carried out by the team lead Mr. Irfan Mufti. He gave the participants

time and space to introduce themselves and share name, district, designation. This served as an ice-breaker and also enabled the participants to open up.

Other than the program orientation, a comprehensive session on Local Government conducted by M. Zahid Islam, a known expert on political and civic education. He gave an ample overview of the existing Local Government system in Pakistan and also gave a comparison between the different local government strategies prevailing around the world. He also underlined the reasons of ineffective Local Government System in Pakistan and presented the lope holes in existing Local Government laws across the all four provinces. He further added that this is an opportune time for civil society organizations for making substantive contribution in Local Government system by raising their demands.



Certificate Distribution among TOT Participants

4-Day Training of Trainers (TOT)

Under this output, SAP-PK organized a TOT from 17-20 Feb 2020 in Lahore and in this training total 26 participants from district, region and national offices' representatives participated. AF five districts (Quetta, Peshawar, Sukkur, Haripur and Rawalpindi district) project officers and CSO representatives participated and learnt about project overall results and intervention and concept of leadership, LG system in Pakistan and current situation of women in politics.

The main themes were covered in the training were; Gender Concepts, Power Walk, Power and its Dynamic, Gender Based Violence, Understanding Leadership, History and Importance of Local Government System in Pakistan, Citizen's participation in Politics, Analysis of Existing Local Governments in Provinces, Pre and Post-Election Role and Skills for Ideal Representation. Training techniques were participatory, group works with fun, brainstorming with their experience and ideas that enabled participants to innovate ideas and per-

spectives. The medium of training was Urdu and manual and hands outs distributed among participants were also developed in Urdu for their more clarity on the topics.

The training team was comprised of capacity building experts Ms. Saima Munir, Ms. Shabina Ayaz, Nabeela Shaheen and Ms. Shamaila Tanvir from Aurat Foundation, Mr. Shakeel Abbas from SAP-PK and Mr. Salman Abid, Executive Director IDEAS.

Training techniques were participatory, group works with fun, brainstorming with their experience and ideas that enabled participants to innovate ideas and perspectives.

TOT was ended with vote of thanks and hope that all human kind will be successfully survived from this COVID 19 virus and field activities will be resumed in the mid of April 2020. At the end, certificates were also distributed among the participation as an appreciation token for their active and energetic participation.



2-Day Replication Training at Karachi

Replication Training at District Level

As per workplan, replications of the above-mentioned TOTs were conducted in 12-targeted districts. Although initially these trainings were planned to engage 20 women, youth, ex-councillors, representatives of excluded groups, social and political activists in a joint session but due to Covid-19 pandemic, all sessions were divided in more than one session to reduce the intensity of this pandemic and to ensure the safety of participants, the SOPs issued by the government were strictly followed. Masks and sanitizer were provided to participants. The prime objective of these replications was to enhance the capacity of participants on leadership, citizen rights and local government systems in Pakistan as per training manual.

In this TOT, the women and girls shared that they have learned new ideas, techniques and now feel more empowered/confident to exercise their human rights. They prepared their action plan to further transfer this knowledge to at least 20 more people in their respective areas. The male par-

ticipants also condemned the gender-based violence and showed their full support to work against all types of violence against women.

Due to COVID-19, hotels were closed in many of the target districts and found it difficult to arrange a place where teams could organize these replication but the issue was resolved by using local contacts who arranged this training in Govt. officers like social welfare conference hall, community center or the training halls of local CBOs.

It is learning that such type of TOTs needs to be organized on a regular basis to break traditional behaviors and develop new behaviors which may help men, women and youth to join hands for a society, which is free from all types of gender, based violence and discrimination.

In next level, follow-up of action plan prepared by participants will take place which is that each participant will further transfer this knowledge to 20 more people.



Sharing progress for Women's Empowerment and launching ceremony of Punjab Women's Parliamentary Caucus

Aurat Foundation organized an exercise sharing meeting of women parliamentarians on December 13, 2019 at Avari Hotel, Lahore. Overall, more than 73 persons from different walk of life. 30 women MPs participated. The session was chaired by Ms. Ashifa Riaz Fatayana, Minister for Women Development, Government of Punjab.

The objectives of the meeting were:

- Reflect on WPCs achievements to date, challenges and strategies to strengthen WPCs
- Build a shared vision and identify broader objectives to ensure continuity and an effective transition to the newly elected members
- Agree on short term, strategic actions to ensure institutionalization of the WPC post elections
- Explore key gender issues and propose solutions to advance gender equality in parliamentary business and sustainable development.

Justice (r) Nasira Iqbal said that this is a very optimistic future scenario. It is hoped this collective thinking among women parliamentarians would go a long way in shaping the caucuses. The challenge is to keep up the cross-party spirit and build on the



Women's Empowerment and launching ceremony of Punjab Women's Parliamentary Caucus

spaces the former caucus created.

On the launching of Punjab Women Parliamentary Caucus, Ms. Ashifa Riaz Fatayana, Minister for Women Development, Government of Punjab said that the collective learning and actions would be proven as a beneficial tool to intervene the desired initiatives at the general public to break stereotypes about women's status in the society to achieve targets

set forth in the "Sustainable Development Goals and Portfolio alignment to contribute towards.

In the end of event, Justice (r) Nasira Iqbal along with Minister for Women Development Department were presented the shields to women MPs to appreciate and acknowledge their efforts for women empowerment.

Launching Ceremony of Democracy and Empowered Women

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that previously, the number of women representatives in the local government bodies was around 33pc, but later amendments were made to minimize it to 15pc.

The General Elections 2018 had "12.5 million women are less than men" on the electoral rolls; Although, special efforts made by Election Commission of Pakistan and NADRA. Yet, the special efforts are needed to reduce the gap of 12.5 million. Without women's fair representation in political and public life, how can possible to achieve gender equality. She urged the government representatives to ensure 33% representation of women in political spare (General and Local Governments Systems of all provinces), ensure 33% representation of women in public sphere of all decision-making structures in all provinces of Pakistan.

One-Day sensitization sessions on "Gender Base Violence" with young men and boys conducted at district level

Engagement with key stakeholders at various levels is the key strategy of JAZBA Programme and it is proven fact that young men/boys can play a vital role in

bringing gender equality and addressing GBV issue. So, under JAZBA Programme, specific GBV sensitization sessions were conducted during the month of

September 2020, with young men/boys in target districts.

Group was identified with support of District JAZBA Forum. All sessions were interactive and participatory. Sessions were very focused on gender-based violence against women and girls. They defined types of violence against women and girls by discussion and listed all forms on charts. They oriented about "Mobile application" for recording of GBV issues as well as complaint forms shared with them to instant record of issue in their areas. This app will help young boys and men to record issues of GBV and to take collective action with the help of the district forum in future record of the issues shared complaint forms.



Baseline Survey

Jamhooriyat aur Baikhtaiar Aurat (JAZBA) is a four-year programme to enhance political empowerment and enjoyment of rights by women and the marginalised in Pakistan. The programme will include interventions that promote and protect women's civil and political rights and enhance equitable and inclusive participation in democratic processes and civic life by women, particularly of young and marginalized women.

Programme will support voters and constituents to articulate democratic demands based on evidence, inclusion and broad mobilization of diverse groups includ-

ing women, marginalized and youth. So, before going into the implementation phase, a comprehensive baseline survey was designed and conducted to benchmark the current status of the indicators included in the programme logframe. Broadly these include indicators of women's participation as voters and candidates at different tiers of governance; information about their rights and laws; use of information technologies and media; access to elected representatives and duty bearers and participation in political and civic life; decision-making and gender-based violence.

Total of 6108 households from 15

sampled districts were interviewed. The process of conducting the baseline was conducted by engaging "Center of Gender and Policy Studies" CGaPs as technical resource organization. Data collection tools were designed and enumerators were hired and trained. Digital resources including smart phone, tab phones were used for data collection, verification and compilation. Preliminary findings of baseline were included in PMF.

The sample included all the potential target groups such as young and adult women, young men and vulnerable groups i.e. religious minorities, transgender and persons with disabilities (PWDs).





Legislative Watch is produced by the Resource Service of the JAZBA Programme of Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation at Islamabad.

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Charter of Demands-Women in Local Governments

Pakistan has nearly half of its population comprised of women belonging to various nationalities, creeds and classes living with many miseries and different types of oppressions in patriarchal society. Thus became a marginalized section of society who has been denied of equal human, social, economic and political rights. Although they have been granted equal rights of vote but in practical life, majority of women could not exercise that right of vote without any pressure and influence from their counterparts.

Considering that gender inequality the government had developed a strategy of granting special representation to women in all governance bodies through reserved seats as a quota on very minimum level. According to Constitution of Pakistan currently seats have been reserved for women in National Assembly, Senate and in the provincial assemblies. Moreover, in all Provinces due representation have been ensured in local government institutions. This is not legal and constitutional obligation but also a true need for a democratic republic state. Despite that marginal representation the modus-operandi to fill these seats put women much dependent to main political and influential elite.

Local government in Pakistan is also a constitutional obligation upon provinces and also our constitution describe some basic characteristic of local governments, democratically elected with powers of administrative

Charter of Demand

We the women activists and supporter of women in politics demand the following;

1. Ensure 33% representation of women in national, provincial and local governments.
2. Political parties should ensure 33% representation of women on decision making positions in the administrative structure of their parties at all level.
3. Political parties should ensure 33 % membership of women and at least 5% membership minorities, persons with disabilities and Transgender people in the list of 2000 members provided to the Election Commission at the time of elections.
4. The quota for women seats at every level of government should and must be filled with direct elections.
5. An equal and equitable status of women local government councilors should be ensured legally and practically, in terms of decision-making and running Local Government Institutes.
6. It should be mandatory for all political party to grant five percent tickets to women candidates against each and every slot of various tiers in local governments like national and provincial assemblies.
7. Ensure at least one reserved seat each for minorities, persons with disabilities, transgender People and youth at the district level in local governments.
8. Women Caucuses should be formed at district levels to unite and strengthen the role of women councilors in LG.
9. Training programs should be made mandatory to improve the political capacity of women councilors.
10. Special campaigns should be launched to ensure registration of women, minorities, persons with disabilities and transgender voters.
11. Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure access to polling stations for women, minorities, persons with disabilities and transgender voters.

control, financial autonomy and political independence but also comprising elected representative including the women and the representative of work-

ing people. Since here in our country the subject of local government falls in jurisdiction of provincial governments therefore, in all provinces laws related

to local government varies a little bit but women representation is there in all laws, not adequate to their population but nearly 20-33 percent of total strength of elected councilors; it is much lessor and again the electoral procedure is in-direct, that becomes mere selection instead of election under universal adult franchise.

Local government has some specific features, which concern women.

- Irregular functioning of local government institutions. Less representation by women, working people and the religious minorities; nominal functions. Too much control of provincial governments; financial dependence;
- Parallel structures run-supervised and controlled by provincial government.
- Too much centralization and patriarchal structures;
- Very politicized and factionalized functioning;

Despite many weaknesses and flaws, local government is the best political training institute available to newcomers in governance. Since; local government institutions relates with day to day problems of citizens and primary functions of Local government cover municipal obligations facing residents of a particular local area; therefore women being the manger of their house-holds could be the best option in running their area local government institutions.

Voter education trainings with women and youth groups in 25 districts



A more open, inclusive and accountable democratic process in Pakistan can be reinforced by nurturing the greater gender inclusion in public places in general and in politics in particular. It is widely recognized that women's voices are indispensable for democracy to cuddle the plurality of needs and interests as a whole.

Women are often more successful negotiators and are more capable for managing development plans and resources in a manner that benefits the entire

society. Placing women in position of leadership often decrease the corruption and improve capacity of consensus building. Elected women also contribute to the social recognition that women can be confident leaders, thereby directly combating cultural stereotypes that prevent women from influencing policy. So, the under representation of women in politics still remains a serious impediment to an open democracy in Pakistan overall.

JAZBA is a conscious effort to improve women

political awareness and status. Groups were the mix of students, teachers and house-wives. These one-day sessions were coupled with political awareness and actions needed to motivate women participation in political and democratic processes, preferably, participate in local government elections as candidates, voters and watchful citizens holding their representatives and government officials accountable to public and their constituencies as well as formation of AAN's functional network at distinct level.

4-day (TOT) sessions at provincial level for CSOs, youth, women leaders on leadership, citizen's rights and election process

The second of 4-day ToT and orientation session of newly hired staff of Aurat foundation under JAZBA Project held on 20th-23rd September at Chinnar Hotel, Bhurban-Murree. The participants included newly hired Project Officers (POs) as well as community activists from Karachi, Nowshera, Sibi, Jhang and Sargodha participated.

The workshop's themes included Community Leadership, History and significance of LGS, Concepts of gender and forms of gender base violence. Women Political Participation, Advocacy and communication skills. The workshop's training methodology and materials were developed with due consideration to the particular needs of programme staff.



Mr. Irfan Mufti Project team lead delivering on his session on leadership.



Group Photo after 4-day training of trainer on community leadership of Government System.

The training was imparted by internal expert and trainer on Leadership and Local Government System. Mr. Irfan Mufti, Team Lead-JAZBA Programme also conducted a session on the significance and understanding of community leadership while Ms. Feroza Zahra, National Programme Manager conducted a session on costed workplan and financial obligation of team as per the budget notes given with each activity. The MIS sessions

was conducted by Khurram and Nosheen, similarly Saima Munir and Shabina Ayaz was main trainer for Women political participation and gender concepts and Shamaila Tanveer facilitated session for local Govt history. The training was good refresher and opportunity for old staff because they have conducted different sessions and for new staff it was a space to enhance their understanding.

Women Safety Response Mechanism

Under JAZBA Project, women safety response mechanisms established in all targeted districts to address women issues. These forum aims to protect women's rights and to address/aware to minimize violence against women in different spheres of life as well as to encourage women to maximize their participation in electoral processes. The group comprised of members from political parties, civil society, government department, lawyers and teachers, transgender community, PWDs, and minorities. Each participant was asked to fill out membership forms after explaining the roles and responsibilities of the forum and their consent to abide the rules thus they now are official a member of JAZBA District Forum. These forums will play a vital role in increasing awareness on women political participation and gender base violence and will enhanced interaction and engagement with district administration, media, political parties, legislators, legal community, CSOs and other stakeholders.



Women Friendly Spaces

A more open, inclusive and accountable democratic process in Pakistan can be reinforced by nurturing the greater gender inclusion in public places in general and in politics in particular. In order to promote safe public spaces, Aurat Foundation and SAP-PK conducted a day long session on women friendly spaces in target districts. The majority of participants, which included young girls (between the ages of 18 and 25 years old), students, former councilors, community leaders, farm and factory workers etc., were of the opinion that there was a dearth of friendly spaces for women.



Outbreak of Covid -19 possess serious concerns on financial condition of poor people. The measures taken to contain Covid-19 affected households in many ways, including job loss, loss of remittances, higher prices, rationing of food and other basic goods, and disruptions to health care services and education. This is also a story of a small girl living with her parents and five siblings in UC-42 of Rawalpindi. Her name is Lubna and she is 15 years old. Her father is a daily wagger and suffered a lot during Covid-19 pandemic. Her mother is a house wife but very active as social activist of her community.

Due to Covid-19, they are suffering more and their financial situation became worst and left with no choice but to wait for help from

Equality is Blessing



others. Lubna loves to study but due to their financial situation, they weren't able to afford her education expenses. So, they choose to send their only son to school and not their daughters. This pandemic has fully contributed in their suffering and it became more harder for them to manage foods for their kids.

Jazba team has helped them with the humanitarian assistance and they were very thankful and said "we are happy to get the food for our kids and it is also very fortunate that Aurat Foundation also maintain our dignity even during distribution of food". After getting food package, her mother also joined JAZBA program as a volunteer. So, JAZBA team working in Rawalpindi also invited Lubna's mother in their training.

They taught her the basic concepts about the gender discrimination. Separate counselling session was held with her mother and told how daughters are basic and important part of our generation. By all the efforts, she promised that she will also send Lubna to school along with her brother as she will never discriminate among her children.

Let's talk about consent

By Beenish Riaz

Section 375 of the Pakistan Penal Code defines rape as sexual intercourse without consent. Central to this definition is the word "consent." The term separates rape from lawful sexual intercourse, zina, and adultery.

But what does consent mean? How can you legally prove lack of consent?

A simple dictionary definition describes it as "giv[ing] permission for something to happen." Applying this to specific cases, though, is complicated. If a woman says nothing when a man assaults her, is she permitting it? If she is his wife, does she automatically agree to intercourse?

Some courts, like Pakistan's, define consent narrowly. Here, to prove that a woman did not consent, the prosecutor has to show some physical injury to her person or a threat of force from the perpetrator. Also, the man assaulting her cannot be her husband. An early Human Rights Watch analysis of case law in Pakistan found that courts often require "marks of violence" on the rape survivor's body before they deem the offense rape and presume marriage as

consent to intercourse always.

This traditional view stems from the common understanding of rape as a crime committed by a stranger using a weapon or brute force. Here, a man unknown to the woman accosts her and physically forces himself on her while she resists and screams and fights. Lack of consent is visible on her bruised body.

However, the vast majority of rape cases do not fall into this group. More often, perpetrators of rape (over 80% according to the rights organization WAR) are not violent strangers but people the woman already knows and is unlikely to physically resist - a husband, a family member, a friend, a class fellow, an employer, a coworker etc. In most cases, a woman is not forced to submit

at knifepoint but finds herself coerced by threats like "I will fire you if you don't..." "I will divorce you if you don't..." etc. Sometimes she can only respond with a verbal no. Other times she freezes up in response to the

attack, shocked, and says nothing. In still other cases, even when she physically resists that is not enough because she is the man's wife or considered promiscuous - a prostitute or a trans woman.

Recognizing the problems with a restrictive definition of consent, courts globally are moving away from the limited understanding. One common alternative is the "no means no" standard where verbal resistance (even if not accompanied by physical action) can prove lack of consent. Another is "yes means yes" where consent is shown only if a woman either by affirmative conduct

or verbal assent indicates that she agrees to the act. Yet another approach treats consent as subjective and covers emotional, economic, and other non-physical coercion.

Fundamentally, in making these changes, countries struggle with balancing the rights of the accused and that of the rape survivor. The debate goes back to whether criminal law itself should set standards for conduct (i.e. we want a society where everyone explicitly and affirmatively gives consent to intercourse so we should require people to affirmatively ask for consent) or should only punish culpable conduct (the reality is that an average man wouldn't know a woman doesn't consent unless she actively physically resists his advances).

This article does not attempt to promote any particular definition or understanding. It only wishes to begin the debate. In raising the question of consent, it posits that thinking critically about how we as a society define rape is crucial if Pakistan is to truly address the problem, end the system of patriarchy that permits some to take advantage of others and reform the broken criminal justice system.



“Democracy and Empowered Women - Jamhoriyat and Ba-Ikhtiar Aurat (JAZBA)”

South Asia Partnership Pakistan (SAP-PK) and Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation (AF) envisage a five-year program (2019 - 2024) in collaboration with Global Affairs Canada (GAC) to enhance inclusive democratic processes and participation for the advancement of women's rights and at risk populations, such as minorities & trans-gender communities in 25 districts of Pakistan.

The program responds to challenges posed by the gender gaps in women's electoral and political participation and limited opportunities for inclusion in democratic and civic spaces exercising agency and define gender based governance priorities.

The overall strategy is twofold: to influence both demand and supply side of governance, institutionalizing democratic rights & interests of women and the marginalized into structures & processes of the democratic governance.

On the demand side it will support voters & constituents to articulate democratic demands based on evidence,

inclusion and broad mobilization of diverse groups including women, marginalized and men, especially the youth; and support systemic improvements on the supply side i.e. national and sub-national governance structures and representatives to respond effectively and efficiently to the demands of constituents and be accountable. It recognizes that promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls is the most effective approach to achieving a better society.

Goal: Enhance inclusive democratic processes and participation for the advancement of women's rights and at-risk populations, such as minorities and transgender communities.

Key Results: The Project will leverage existing groups of women, men and youth in 25 districts formed by South Asia Partnership- Pakistan (SAP-PK) and Aurat Foundation (AF) in collaboration with local community-based organizations, and spaces available in other like-minded civil society organizations.

They will be organized into women forums, assemblies and network of



women voters for civil and political rights mobilization, demand articulation, access to informal decision-making processes within the communities, formal political and electoral participation and inclusion in local governance processes.

The project will engage young men and boys as change agents supporting the agenda of addressing GBV and advocate for enabling conditions for women's political participation as voters and candidates.

The methods used for mobilization include capacity building for political education, advocacy and social accountability. Cultural forums, such as folk "melas", that have traditionally been non-segregated, liberal & egalitarian spaces drawing on feminist writings of revered sufi poets will be promoted and revived. Research, particularly action research with community women and men as research partners, not just participants will be an integral part of the project.