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Consultation

Literate, politically active women can secure their rights, say speakers

Event held to present suggestions for political parties' manifestos

OUR CORRESPONDENT
 ISLAMABAD

Speakers at a national consultation agreed that without increasing the female literacy rate in rural areas, encouraging women's active political participation and ending sectarian and ethnic violence, women's empowerment would remain a distant dream.

Participants including representatives from political parties and rights activists were expressing their views at a "National Consultation on Women's Empowerment in Political Parties' Election Manifestos" on Wednesday.

The main objective of the consultation was to dialogue with political party representatives to persuade them to adopt "Suggestions on Women's Empowerment for Election Manifestos of Political Parties."

Mir Khursheed Jamal Deeni, from Balochistan National Party (BNP) said violence and terrorism, which have spiked since Gen. Musharaff's rule, have drastically affected women's rights as well as the female literacy rate in Balochistan.

Agha Hassan from BNP, while pointing out the issues of 'missing persons' in Balochistan, said that

women and children were the most affected by the issue.

Anisa Zeb Tahirkheli, from Qaumi Watan Party, Balochistan said her party was against discrimination against women and believes in enhancing women's participation in politics and governance. My party fully supports women voters' 10% participation as mandatory in all constituencies.

Anwar Soomro, General Secretary of Awami Tahrik, Sindh was of the view that change was impossible unless people specially women from grassroots joined politics. Malaika Raza, member of PTI's Manifesto Committee, said her party had ensured at least 20% participation of women at all levels and committees and they were very active in shaping PTI's manifesto.

Senator Farah Aqil, from ANP, agreed that although the situation is not very good in her own party, but leaders of her party believe in bringing more women in the parties and in the parliaments.

Riaz Fatyana, chairperson, Standing Committee on Human Rights recommended that the Election Commission invalidate polling results in constituencies where the number of women voters was less than 10%.

The event was organised by Aurat Foundation in collaboration with Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights.