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Education policy needs tweaks to end gender disparity: CII chief

Aurat Foundation organises seminar to reduce violence, highlight women rights

By Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: At a seminar organised by 'Aurat Foundation' to highlight gender disparity and empower women in society, Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Chairman Dr Qibla Ayaz said there was a need to review the education policy to change perceptions.

Speaking about the role of the government in policymaking, he said the education sector had been handed over to the private stakeholders for the sake of profits, which was counter-productive.

He said that there was a perception among men in the country that women were somehow "weaker and that they

should not work". He said there was a need to highlight this issue and urged men to raise their voices to seek equal rights for women.

Quaid-i-Azam University Defence and Strategic Studies Head of Department Dr Shabana Fayyaz shared she was the only woman in her family who started working.

"The general perception in society is that men should not take from a woman's income; however, with the passage of time, these perceptions are changing," she added.

"We have not invested in training the women of our country. As an educationist, we have to reduce the violence [against women] in our society," she stressed.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Special Federal Secretary Naela Chohan said that both genders have "separate responsibilities" in society.

"All young men and women should be taught how to respect and behave towards

each other and we need an empowering environment as well," she said.

International Islamic University Islamabad's Islamic Research Institute Director General Dr Ziaul Haq lauded 'Aurat Foundation' for its data on women and said it was considered the "most authentic and original" in the country.

Speaking about violence, he said that a few people began the countering violent extremism (CVE) project of Paigham-i-Pakistan and then thousands of people became part of the movement. He said that primarily the Paigham-i-Pakistan project aimed at behavioural change.

Speaking about the rights of women, he said one of the gates of the Masjid-i-Nabwi was called 'Bab-un-Nisa' (door of the women). Dr Zia added women in Pakistan were not even safe from their so-called protectors. "Although we claim to be a very religious society, we are not even the best followers of Islam," he said.

Wing Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime Deputy Director SP Beenish Fatima said there was a need to understand extremism.

"Extremism is prevalent in our society as well as in our education institutions in different forms," she said, adding since men at their houses were in a position of power they felt the need to accompany women everywhere.

"The economy will never be able to grow if half of the society remains confined in their houses and does not engage in productive work," she added.

Shahid Rahim spoke about the need and purpose of the SHE -The Peacebuilder project by 'Aurat Foundation'. He said the project began in May 2022 and will end in September 2024. "This project aims to train 50 women peace architects (WPAs) and increase their capacity to participate in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes," according to the website of 'Aurat Foundation'.