

PRESS RELEASE

Date: 9th March 2006

A lot of work is yet to be done for protection and promotion of women rights in the country

Islamabad. Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights (PCHR) firmly believes that to speed up the progress and development of a nation, it is imperative to concentrate upon women and ensure protection of their rights, because no country of the world can make progress, unless half of its population is granted with full rights. The pursuit of Millennium Development Goals will remain a cherished goal without giving due importance to the development of women in the country. It was stated in a statement issued by PCHR on International Women Day.

Chief Coordinator PCHR Mr. Shafique Chaudhry said that both Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Islam designate high and respectable status to women and ensure their protection in all spheres of life, but in spite of this, women continue languishing economically, politically, and socially. The reason is discrimination and bias prevailing against women in society and criminal justice system. In recognition to the growing violations of women rights in these three spheres, PCHR has taken number of legislative measures to provide security & protection of women rights.

Members of PCHR have submitted many bills dealing with various issues relating to women rights. They include;

- Amendments in controversial Hadood Ordinance by Executive Director PCHR Ms. Kashmal Tariq MNA,
- Enactment of Honor Killings Laws and bill on domestic violence against women by Member PCHR Ms. Mehnaz Rafi
- Amendments in the Qazf and offence of Zina and repealing many clauses of Code of Criminal Procedure & various family laws by Ms. Kashmala Tariq MNA
- Bills on prohibition of custom of “Wani” by Ms Mehnaz Raffi MNA and Ms. Fauzia Wahab.
- Uplift and Welfare of Women Bill 2005 by members PCHR Ms. Jamila Ahmed MNA and Maulana Rehmat-u-Llah Khalil MNA.
- West Pakistan Family Courts (Amendment) Act, 2004 by Chairman PCHR Mr. Riaz Fatyana MNA.
- Prohibition of Marriage with Quran Act 2005 by members PCHR Ms. Gule Farkhunda MNA, Ms. Mehnaz Raffi MNA, Dr. Noor Jehan Panezai MNA, Ms. Fauzia Wahab MNA, and Mr. M.P. Bhandara MNA.
- Economic Stability of Women Bill 2005 and Working Women Protection Bill 2005 by member PCHR Senator Dr. Kousar Ferdous.

Giving short sketch of these legislative measures, Mr. Shafique Chaudhry said that attempt have been made to make criminal justice system friendly towards women and tackling their cases with evasion of discrimination and biased attitude. The bills on Hadood ordinance and existing honor killings laws centre round the main object of eliminating the clauses which provide the base for committing violence and discrimination against

women. Similarly, amendments in sections 345 A, 401, and 417 of Code of Criminal Procedure tackle the issues of compound ability and Qisas & Diyat in cases of honor killings crimes so that criminals do not go scot-free. The main objective of bills on domestic violence against women is to formulate and provide legal mechanism for protection of victims of domestic violence and safeguarding their constitutional rights. It is a step in good direction because in spite of constitutional guarantees, practically there is insufficient legal protection for the victims of domestic violence against women. Similarly, women who wish to join the national workforce come across with violence in the form of sexual harassment.

The bill on prohibition of custom of “Wani” provides punishment for the person involved in such an inhuman act. Similarly, Uplift and Welfare of Women Bill 2005 addresses many issues women face in education, health, workplace, transport, and inheritance etc. Giving reference of West Pakistan Family Courts (Amendment) Act, 2004, he said that there is no remedy available for transfer of a family matter from one province to another. The spouses are put to a great hardship when either of them has to face a case pending in a different province. Therefore this bill empowers the Supreme Court of Pakistan transfer a matrimonial case from a court of one province to a Court of another province in the interest of justice. In the same way, the bills on Prohibition of Marriage with Quran, Economic Stability of Women, and Working Women Protection Bill 2005 tackle numerous issues leading to human rights violations in socio-economic perspectives.

Chief Coordinator added that still there is a lot of work yet to be done for the protection of women rights in Pakistan and in future too, PCHR will continue streamlining the issues of women and taking legislative measures for protection of their rights for which Islam and Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan have guaranteed.

Following numbers will be reachable round the clock for any information or help:
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