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**Aurat Foundation**



**GENDER EQUITY PROGRAM**

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**A word with Dr Masuma Hasan**

President Aurat Foundation and Member National Advisory Forum

Dr Masuma Hasan has been a member of the Board of Governors of Aurat Foundation for more than two decades. In her public service career, Dr Masuma Hasan's last posting was as Cabinet Secretary to the Government of Pakistan. She also served as Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office in Vienna, International Atomic Energy Agency, United Nations Industrial Development Organization and other international organizations in Vienna. She was elected Chairperson of the Group of 77 at the UN in Vienna. Concurrently, she was Pakistan's Ambassador to Austria, Slovenia and Slovakia. She served two terms as Director of the National Institute of Public Administration Karachi where she had begun her career as faculty member. She also held the post of Director General in the Management Services Division.



organisation. All its stakeholders, the Board of Governors, its senior staff and especially its founders, Nigar Ahmed and Shehla Zia, came together to formulate a vision to empower the women of Pakistan by actualizing their legal, economic and political rights. We seek to empower more and more women so that they can enter the mainstream, overcome social prejudices and discrimination and take control of their own lives.

**Q. Congratulations on becoming President of Aurat Foundation! Please share your vision for Aurat Foundation with us?**

A. The vision of Aurat Foundation (AF) has been developed collectively by those who founded the organization and those who have worked for it over the years. AF is a women's rights and empowerment

**Q. You have been associated with the Board of Governors of AF for over two decades now. How do you see the strategic direction of Aurat Foundation in the next decade?**

A. I have been associated with Aurat Foundation since it was founded in

1986 and have been on its governing board since the early years. A few years ago, I was elected the Treasurer and this year the President.

In the next decade, we should enlarge our vision and integrate our thematic areas in a holistic manner as governance issues. We must also build on what we have achieved so far. Aurat Foundation focuses on three thematic areas. First, women's economic empowerment which it seeks to further through its work with home based workers. We are part of Home Net South Asia.

The second area on which AF focuses is women's political empowerment—a very crucial area. We have made significant achievements in this field. Our aim is to develop women's leadership skills and encourage them to take part in politics. During the local government and provincial and national assembly elections we mobilized women to participate and facilitated by helping them during the election process. We also trained women councilors and other elected women representatives. We will continue this work in every election and hope we can raise enough resources to expand it.

Another strategic direction in the field of political empowerment is to strengthen women's leadership at the grassroots level. We started women leaders groups in 30 districts of Pakistan three years ago, with 50 women in each district, bringing the total to 1500 women. They are drawn from various professions such as doctors, teachers, entrepreneurs and even housewives. They are activists trained by AF in leadership skills who keep a watchful eye on violations of human rights and the rights of women.

The third area in which AF works is violence against women. AF has regularly collected information and statistics on violence against women. This data is shared with the press every six months. An annual report is also released. I would like this effort to become even more credible as, currently, our data is based on newspaper reports only and we know that many cases of violence go unreported. I feel that some mechanisms should be evolved to encourage women to report incidents of violence and to achieve this we need greater interaction and networking with government agencies and other institutions working in this field.

**Q. As Pakistan's Ambassador to three countries and a civil servant who reached the top of Pakistan's civil service, what is your assessment of Pakistani women working at top levels?**

A. Back in the days when I started working, there were very few women in the public sector. At that time, some parts of the civil service were closed to women such as the foreign service and district management. Women were recruited only in audit and accounts and lesser services. All that has changed and women who have reached top positions have performed well.

When Mr. Bhutto came to power, his administrative reforms made women eligible to all the occupational groups and they also sought to create inter-group parity. Women have had to struggle to reach positions of power because of anti-feminism and constraints within society. However, today we have numerous women ambassadors, more than in many western countries. Some of the prejudices are breaking down. As you know, there are many women judges in district courts though few have made it to the higher courts. The affirmative legislation passed by governments in favour of women and the appointment of women to key posts has helped. The present government has enacted many pro women laws. These factors shape the environment in which women have to compete. On the other hand, anti-women laws such as the Hudood ordinances clouded women's ability to move forward because the influence of conservative elements in society increased.

Secondly, there are international pressures such as the women's charter enshrined in CEDAW which can be used to bring about changes in favor of women. Thirdly, there is the impact of women's activism, awareness raising and their access to education but equally important, which we seem to overlook, are economic compulsions which bring women out of their homes to contribute to family incomes and push them into the mainstream.

All these factors have made it possible for women to compete for positions of importance in politics and in the bureaucracy. AF has conducted a study of the performance of women parliamentarians and they have come out with flying colors. All these women responded to pressures from the field and

helped in drafting and passing laws on women's rights.

In the light of these considerations, my assessment is that Pakistani women in high places have done quite well.

**Q. You have been part of national and international women's rights movements. How do you see the role of AF in women's movement in Pakistan?**

A. The women's rights movement has become stronger over the years but it is still mainly an urban phenomenon. There are many organizations working in the field of women's empowerment but AF takes the lead. And it has a presence throughout the country.

The big challenge today is posed by the conservative backlash of militancy which threatens to wipe off our gains. Fortunately, it has affected only limited areas of the country but where violence strikes, the women's movement loses all its gains. If there is no peace, women and girls will be deprived of education, healthcare, economic opportunities and mobility and will not be in a position to assert their rights. They will simply remain housebound illiterates. Some of the schools in far flung areas, which have been blown up by militants, were built in the face of great resistance and gradually people had started sending their daughters to school.

**Q. In your view how is the Gender Equity Program adding to Aurat Foundation's frame of work for Pakistani women?**

A. The Gender Equity Program has added a new dimension to our work as grant managers and is also a great responsibility. It is recognition of AF's commitment, achievements and networking and is also in line with its vision. The grants under GEP are given after due scrutiny, to organisations which have the ability to deliver. They are meant for baseline surveys, capacity building, awareness raising, training, and reaching out to women in different ways, all of which aim at narrowing the gender gap and create a framework to impact upon the lives of Pakistani women.

**Q. Aurat Foundation is closely working with**



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**government institutions like NCSW, NADRA and provincial Women's Development Departments. How do you see such Government-NGO partnership becoming useful for Pakistani women?**

A. The government-NGO partnership is useful, especially at the policy making level. AF has always collaborated with the government on women's issues and has lobbied and been consulted in the framing of laws which give protection to women and secure their rights. AF has also been consulted by the planning commission and women's development departments because it has the capacity to advise and can convey the true grassroots position to the government.

We operate at three levels: the community or grassroots level, the intermediary level and the senior policy-making level. At the senior policy-making level we interact with government agencies, parliamentarians, think tanks, other NGOs, and academia to collaborate in advocacy for pro-women policies. We gather, compile and disseminate information and literature and run campaigns to prepare the ground for the formulation of laws and policies to empower the women of Pakistan.

# GEP in Action

GEP's Strategy for Combatting GBV takes shape



*Left to right: Dr Masuma Hasan, President AF Board of Governors, Ms Anis Haroon, Chairperson NCSW, Ms Shahnaz Wazir Ali, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister and Chairperson NAF and Ms Simi Kamal, GEP Chief of Party*

GEP finalized its strategy for combatting Gender-Based Violence (GBV) during the third meeting of National Advisory Forum. The meeting was held on February 13th and 14th 2012 in Karachi. The main focus of the meeting was on further developing and finalizing GEP's Strategy on Combatting GBV. The recommendations of the second NAF meeting on combatting GBV were developed into a draft strategy which now forms the basis to implement GEP's next cycle of sub-grants.

Ms Simi Kamal, GEP Chief of Party, presented the GBV Strategy and briefed the participants at length on the key elements of the strategy. The participants were divided by province into six working groups and each group examined the strategy to develop their respective provincial interventions to combat GBV.

Ms Tauqeer Fatima Bhutto, member of NAF from Sindh and Minister for Women Development,

announced that the Government of Sindh would adopt GEP's GBV strategy. In line with the strategy, she proposed three model districts i.e. Jacobabad, Karachi and Benazirabad, to be covered in the first phase.

All the provincial governments were clear that post devolution they now had the responsibility for taking forward the women's empowerment agenda. Sindh and Balochistan have already upgraded their respective women's development directorates into full-fledged departments and subsequent to the meeting, Punjab also set up its Women's Development Department.

*On March 8, 2012 International Women's Day, Punjab Government announced the establishment of a full-fledged Women's Development Department, independent from Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal.*

Ms Shahnaz Wazir Ali, NAF's Chairperson, Member National Assembly and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister explained NAF's role and responsibilities. She highlighted the importance of NAF which has brought together all stakeholders on one forum and provides unparalleled outreach and ownership of strategic thinking on women's issues across both the public and private sector.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Speaker of the Sindh Assembly, Ms Shehla Raza along with two Members of the Sindh Assembly Ms Ayesha Khoso and Ms Shama Arif Mithani, Ms Ghazala Gola from Balochistan and Ms Sitara Ayaz from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, who are Ministers for Women Development, attended the two-day meeting. Former Senator Nilofer Bakhtiar, NAF member was a vocal and active participant of the meeting.

The second day of the meeting on 14 February highlighted the collaboration taking place on issues of mutual interest between GEP, National Commission on the Status of Women and UN Women. GEP is working together with them on developing national and provincial guidelines for gender equity in Pakistan.

Each province agreed to work with National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) to develop their own provincial strategies and to make the draft National Guidelines for Women Empowerment into a document which was owned by all.



*Left to right: Ms Ayesha Khoso, Member Provincial Assembly Sindh, Ms Tauqeer Fatima Bhutto, Minister for Women Development Sindh and Ms Shehla Raza, Deputy Speaker Provincial Assembly Sindh*

The third NAF meeting thus provided the opportunity to assist the provincial governments to focus on their respective strategies for both combatting GBV and to develop their own provincial frameworks for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

A large number of civil society members from Sindh also participated in the meeting.



*Left to right: Senetotr Nilofer Bakhtiar, Ms Shabina Ayaz, Resident Director AF Peshawar and Ms Sitara Ayaz, Minister for Women Development Khyber Pukhtunkhwa*

## GEP Grant Cycle Four: Changing attitudes of men and women

Aurat Foundation launched a grant cycle to raise awareness of both men and women on gender-based violence. The four months campaign ended in March 2012.

GEP partnered with 22 local Pakistani organizations through sub-grants aiming at affecting real behavioral change and contributing to a productive gender debate within the country. In this connection, GEP launched a focused campaign to mark the 16 Days of Activism, Pakistan's Women's Day and International Women's Day.

The campaign was envisioned as an opportunity to symbolically link these days of national and international significance to generate widespread recognition of human rights abuses against women and initiate a coordinated effort toward generating demand for women's emancipation and empowerment, by both men and women.

At least 94,243 people including men and women attended events in all provinces; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Balochistan, Sindh, Gilgit-Baltistan as well as Azad Jammu and Kashmir. GEP sub-grantees held 831 events, including 529



*Youth leaders cheering after a GEP seminar in district Charsaddah, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province*

events related to the 16 Days of Activism alone, across the country. The activities conducted including workshops, debate and painting competitions among students, screening of GEP documentary 'Main Safar Main Hoon', seminars,



*Women participate in a rally on National Women's Day in district Hala, Sindh province*



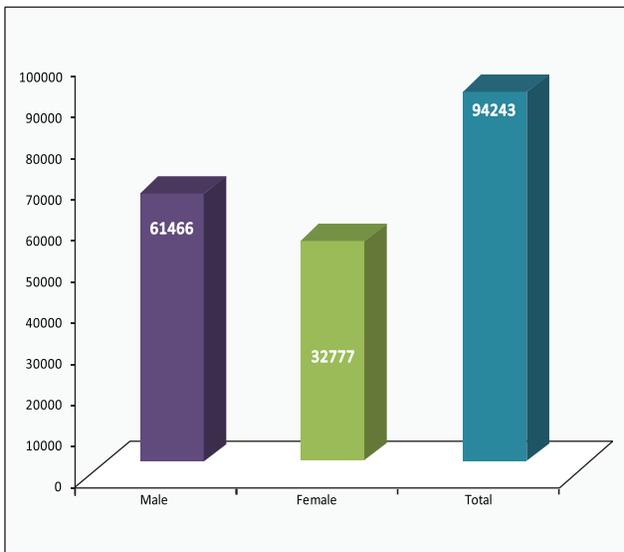
A student receives a prize after a debate competition held in a primary school in district Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province

rallies, theater performances and interactive discussions with religious leaders. Sub-grantees also produced informative and educational material on gender based violence.

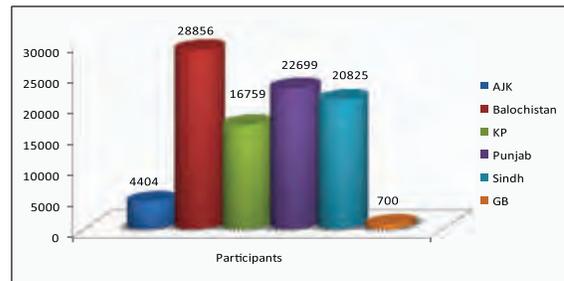
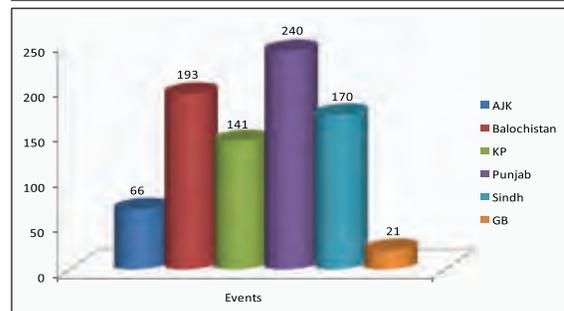
GEP sub-grantees developed radio messages which were broadcast through various FM stations in 120 districts of Pakistan. The radio campaign reached out to 25% population in the target districts.

Grants Cycle Four is an example of a synergetic coordinated national effort with a range of sub-grantees.

Direct Beneficiaries of Advocacy under 4th Grant Cycle	Male	Female	Total
	61466	32777	94243



Graphs showing number of participants and events held under GEP Grant Cycle Four



## GEP Grant Cycle Four at a glance



*Street Theatre performance during a seminar, on International Women's Day, held in Lahore, Punjab province*



*Girls participating in a poster competition*



*A student shares her thoughts on a poster she made during a competition, held in district Gilgit, Gilgit-Baltistan province*



Participants speak at a press conference held in Karachi Press Club



A girl shares her arguments on violence against women in a speech competition held in district Noshki, Balochistan province



Students attend a seminar held on girls' empowerment and right to education, held in Karachi, Sindh province

## Moving forward

"My eyes well up with tears of pride looking at my father who introduces his daughter to his relatives and friends as the first practicing lawyer in the whole of Malakand division. Yes, I am Saima Anwar, the very proud daughter of Anwar Ullah Jan of Swat. I completed my LLB in 1st division as a regular student of Muslim Law College, Swat.

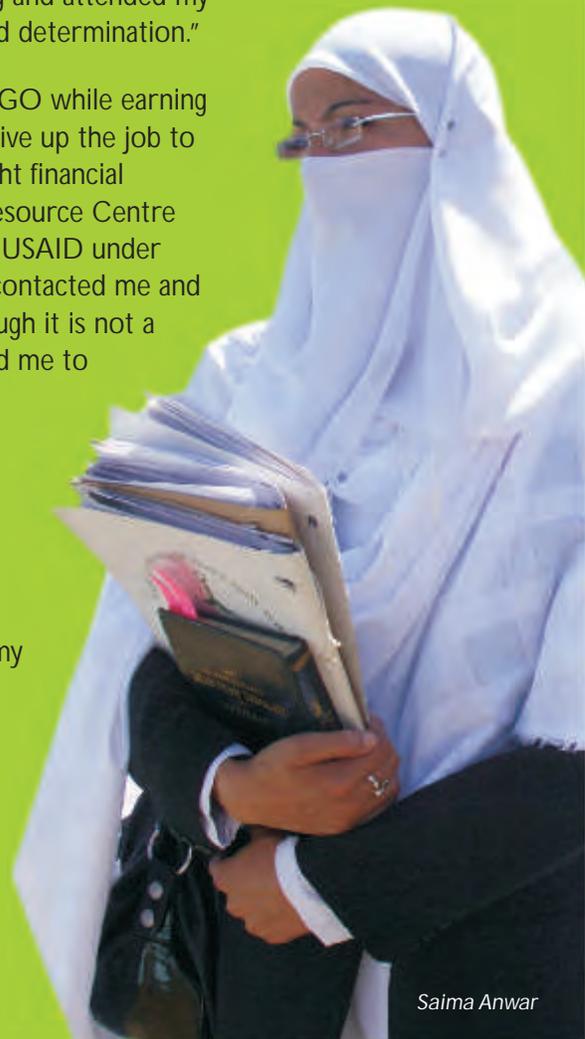
"In last fifteen years, my college an affiliate of University of Peshawar has seen only three female students, me and two other classmates of mine. I am the first and the only one in my family who has chosen law as a profession."

"My father is a petition writer in district courts. I have a sister and brother; both of whom are younger and studying. My father supported me a great deal to pursue the profession of law. My family extends cooperation and encouragement to work in courts. I started my career as a lawyer with Advocate Asghar Ali Khan, President of Bar Council Swat. Despite discomforts and lack of facilities for female lawyers, I enjoyed working and attended my office regularly with the same level of enthusiasm and determination."

"Before becoming a lawyer, I was working with an NGO while earning Rs. 30,000. In my third year of law studies, I had to give up the job to prepare for exams. Decision of practicing law brought financial constraints for my family. In October 2011, Youth Resource Centre (YRC) initiated an internship program supported by USAID under Gender Equity Program of Aurat Foundation. They contacted me and offered me an internship with the organization. Though it is not a lot of money but still YRC's internship stipend helped me to continue my law practice without putting a financial burden on my family."

"This program helped me stay connected with fresh law graduates, stakeholders like senior advocates, academics, civil society organizations and human rights defenders. I think I am an excellent law practitioner in Swat and for that the credit goes to my family and Gender Equity Program of Aurat Foundation for holding my hand in rough times."

"I would consider myself a living proof that women can accomplish anything if they put their minds to it. My decision to choose a field which was entirely male-dominated serves as a great example for women to move forward in all spheres of life."



Saima Anwar

# GEP Research

## GEP Policy Studies Launched in Karachi and Islamabad



*Left to right: Ms Amar Sindhu, Chairperson Department of Philosophy, University of Jamshoro, speaks at the launching ceremony of NCSW policy studies. Ms Sofia Noreen, Project Manager Operations NCSW, Ms Simi Kamal, GEP Chief of Party and Ms Anis Haroon, Chairperson NCSW, at the launch event held in Karachi*

National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), in partnership with Gender Equity Program (GEP), launched four policy studies in Islamabad and Karachi.

The studies include;

- Appraisal of Capacities of Women Development Departments at Provincial Level
- Shelter/Crisis Center and Gender Crime Cell
- Assessment of Disaster Management Institutions and Development of a Gender Responsive Preparedness Plan
- Reporting, Investigative Safety and Security of the Victim from the Police Perspective

Policy studies were conducted in collaboration with NCSW. Key findings of the studies can be seen on page 08.

Paying tribute to women parliamentarians, Ms Anis Haroon, Chairperson NCSW, said that their efforts for women's empowerment were valuable for pro-women legislation in Pakistan. She deliberated upon the role of NCSW, especially after the introduction of 18th Amendment in the Constitution.

Acknowledging the efforts of NCSW to produce policy studies, Ms Simi Kamal said that GEP

worked with critical Pakistani government organizations on a cooperative basis in support of gender policies.

Pakistan's first Oscar winner film director Ms Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy made a surprise appearance. Attributing her success to the struggle of Pakistani women she said that only educated women could make a contribution towards uplift of other women in society. She stressed that government should take concrete steps to protect and empower acid survivors. Ms Shahnaz Wazir Ali, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, presented a shield to Ms Sharmeen for her exceptional efforts in highlighting social issues in the country.



*Participants at the launch ceremony held in Islamabad*

# Key Findings of Policy Studies

## Assessment of Disaster Management Institutions Dr Riffat Haque

The objective of carrying out this research was to analyze and study current policies and practices in disaster management in Pakistan with a view to looking at ways in which these could be reinforced and made more gender responsive.

It was found that women have very little say in important decision making, such as where to relocate to; whether or not to move back home; what to spend compensation money on; whether



and how to diversify livelihood strategies; and what coping mechanisms to use. All of these decisions were generally made by men and women were hardly ever consulted on these important issues.

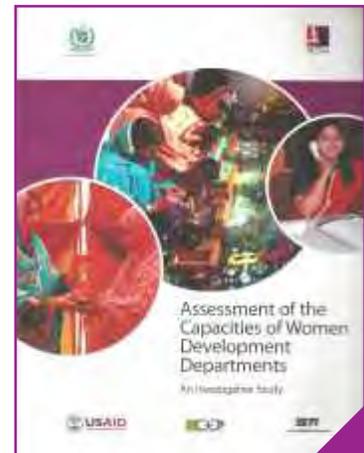
Although it is recognised that gender perspective is essential to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), very little has been done to mainstream gender into related policies and programmes. This shows there are gaps in the policies when it comes to Gender Equality. The study goes on to talk about Gender Integration Issues and how these affect less participation from women in disaster planning and management.

A number of recommendations have been put forward encouraging female participation as well as illustrating ways in which this could be achieved. Institutional recommendations have also been put forward.

## Assessment of the Capacities of Women Development Departments Ms Afia Zia

This study was carried out to assess the current working of WDDs at the provincial levels and to look at the impact of the devolution of power under the 18th Amendment with a view to assessing the status of readiness for change and suggesting ways in which to adjust to the new scenario.

This research talks about the key findings and highlights the main issues being faced after the devolution. It deals with staff positions and looks at the independent status of WDDs as well as capacity building through training in gender analysis; gender responsive budgeting; gender responsive project cycle management and gender institutionalization.



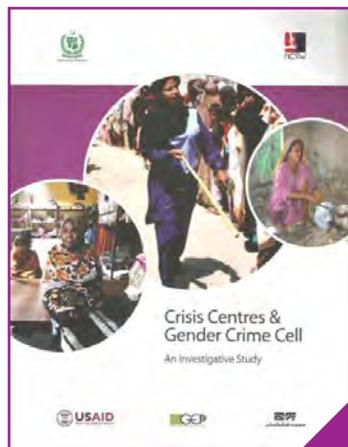
This research analyses the gaps in the structures and working of WDDs and talks about issues such as lack of awareness about gender concepts and technical skills; lack of basic facilities, like toilets for female staff; lack of basic office equipment; and lack of transport facilities for female staff. The study further goes on to make its recommendations and suggests ways in which matters could be improved, monitored and evaluated to achieve the desired objectives. It focuses on how important it is for the 18th Amendment to be understood and explained to all stakeholders involved and the fact that staff

should be oriented on the Amendment and the devolution so that they are confidently familiar and at ease with the new changes being brought about.

There is a plan of action incorporated into this study which outlines ways in which to develop a provincial policy and action plan on gender issues to integrate gender into every sectoral planning process based on gender disaggregated data. There is mention of other supportive structures and a list of these measures is provided.

### Crisis Centres & Gender Crime Cell Mr Sohail Manzoor

These centres have been designed to provide relief/support on an emergency basis and rehabilitate the survivors of violence and women in distress. The centres are believed to be playing an important and effective role to address the issues being faced by women and this initiative is working towards social and economic empowerment of women.



The aim of this study was to identify the flaws

and weaknesses in the structure, viability and effectiveness of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women's Centres and suggests recommendations to improve their overall working and enhance their effectiveness. The study focuses on the conditions and capacities of these Centres with regard to their structure, policies and practices.

The study reveals some positive findings in that these centres provide a crucial and invaluable service for women suffering from GBV. The gaps hindering the performance of these centres have been identified as institutional challenges and infrastructural flaws which include management/financial issues. A number of recommendations have been put forward which

include training interventions and support such as refresher courses and counselling and training.

### Police Reporting and Investigation Mechanism Alpha Consultants

This study was carried out to investigate the interrelationship between Criminal Justice System (CJS) and Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Pakistan. The main aim of this research was to look at the issues being faced by CJS in forming its policy proposals for its reform from a gender perspective. The study involved interviews to generate data from police, judiciary, prosecutors and lawyers.

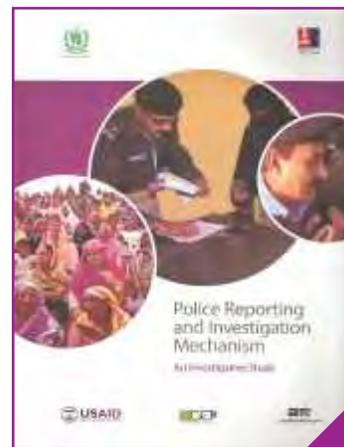
The research looked at the flaws in reporting and in the investigation system. It reviewed the court proceedings along with political interference at various levels and made recommendations.

Key findings of the study revealed that very little effort is being made to make the environment gender sensitive.

There are hardly any police stations which have separate rooms for women and these police stations are not at all conducive or user friendly for women. Lack of women police officers is also one of the main reasons why very few women report crimes.

Practical gaps highlighted in this study cover issues such as lack of training, moral judgements of the police about women complainants, delays in FIR registration, false reporting of GBV cases and tampering of evidence.

Finally, there is a list of recommendations, which emphasis the importance of professional training to be provided to all stakeholders.



# GEP Events

GEP celebrates the achievements of Pakistani girls

Focusing on this year's theme Connecting Girls-Inspiring Futures, GEP celebrated International Women's Day in a gathering, where achievements of courageous Pakistani girls, who made their mark in different walks of life were eulogized.

Held in Islamabad, the event started with background rendition about International Women's Day and the journey of Pakistani



*A young participant shares her views.*

women's struggle and achievements in different spheres of life. Proceedings of the program were designed to be interactive, offering the participants opportunity to share their personal experience.

A young boy spoke about his own contribution for the emancipation of female members of his family. They were dependent on their male relatives, whenever they wanted to commute. He imparted driving skills to his elder sister, pushing her on the road to independence. He believed that it was all about taking small steps and positive approach of male members of the society to contribute their tiny bit for women's emancipation.

Another woman liked the idea of picking up success stories of Pakistani girls and even ordinary survivors of extraordinary circumstances in life,

laced with their achievements in fields like sports, media, arts, and education, while celebrating International Women's Day.

Public service messages of GEP's media campaign featuring successful Pakistani girls were also shown, followed by clips of GEP-supported television show titled Lal o Gauhar.

The event was kept informal, as there were no chief guests and stage runners. It was organized by young members of GEP's team and participants comprised of young girls and boys. Participants contributed to the proceedings while sharing personal experiences. Screening of GEP's public service messages ensued a healthy dialogue with the participants.

Zainab Pasha, a young student, sang poems whereas Ms Johdah Bokhari of Aurat Foundation filled the air with her musical rendition of Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Shad Azeemabadi's inspirational poetry.

In his closing remarks, Mr Azhar Bashir Malik, Chief Operating Officer of Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment (DTCE), acknowledged Aurat Foundation for being the torch-bearer of women rights movement in the country, saying the very pioneering role of Aurat Foundation helped to address the challenges faced by Pakistani women.



*A boy shares his contribution for women's emancipation.*

# GEP Media

## Media Launch of GEP Talk Show



The show covers the following topics:

- Male Child Preference Issues of Girls
- Choice of Marriage
- Violence against Women
- Violence against Women and Legal Assistance
- National Commission on the Status of Women
- Govt. and NGO Collaboration
- Role of Women Parliamentarians
- Law of Inheritance and Dowry
- Women and Media
- Minority Women issues
- Nikah and Muslim Family Laws
- Aurat Foundation and Gender Equity Program

*Left to right: Justice (Retd) Majida Razvi, Ms Anis Haroon, Chairperson NCSW and host Ms Hina Khawaja Bayat on the set of Lal o Gauhar*

GEP Talk Show 'Lal o Gauhar' was formally launched on March 8, 2012, at a press preview meeting in Karachi. Promos and title song of the talk show, aiming to educate citizens on women's human rights and to generate debate on the prevailing situation, were shared with media.

Representatives from print and electronic media appreciated the latest GEP endeavour. The series consist of 13 episodes which focus on different forms of violence faced by women in Pakistan.

Considering the grassroots outreach of vernacular TV channels, it is aired every Thursday at ATV, Apna TV, KTN, AVT Khyber and Waseb TV.

The show is being hosted by renowned TV anchor and artist Ms Hina Khawaja Bayat and emerging talent Ms Quratul Ain Baloch has given her voice to the title song. The lyrics and title of the talk show is taken from a poem of feminist Urdu poetess Ms Fehmida Riaz.

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امریکی عوام کی خدمات

عورتوں کی طاقت دیکھیں

”میں پاکستان کی پہلی خاتون  
اسکو باڈائیور انسٹرکٹر ہوں“



روشین خان، کراچی

GEP

USAID  
امریکی عوام کی خدمات

عورتوں کی طاقت دیکھیں

”کراٹے جتنا بھی مشکل فیلڈ کیوں نہ ہو  
Try it once  
We can do it.“



سہیلہ محمدی، بلوچستان

GEP

Rosheen Khan, Pakistan's first female scuba diving instructor from Karachi and Sohaila Mohammadi, a Karate player from Quetta, feature in GEP media campaign titled 'Empower Women'. Nine Public Service Messages (PSMs) were aired nationwide from Nov-Mar 2012, during the media campaign. PSMs focused high achieving successful Pakistani girls

Concept: Samina Naz Editor: Rafat Yasmin

#### Information

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