

Women Peace Table 2015

By **Farhan Khan** - Oct 19, 2015

KARACHI: Tehreek-i-Niswan and Peace Women Across the Globe (PWAG) organized a conference with the theme of 'Karachi Women's Peace Table 2015' to highlight the import of women as global peace builders and to raise voice against the issues and problems the women are confronting with in the society. The event was held on October, 15th, 2015 at Arts Council of Pakistan- Karachi.



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There was unison among the speeches of different speakers on this occasion that the disparity between men and women in society had not been eliminated, despite the progress in the discipline of women's rights in the past few decades.

Four speech sessions were held at the beginning of the conference in which different speakers who were well informed about the ground realities of the problems women were facing even now and then discussed it in details. The issues included women and violence, from sexual harassment on the streets or at work to the lack of educational opportunities, economic status in the society and women's lesser representation in politics, public policy and decision making.

Nuzhat Shireen spoke about a report on women and their weak economic standing that tends to have negative effects on other aspects of their lives. She elaborated that for making wo

more economically mobile, the government needed to assure them equal representation in the job market.

“There are so many women working in the informal sector today, more than eight hours a day. However, their work is not considered at all and they are not provided any job opportunities for the work they put in,” she said.

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Naghma Iqtidar spoke about how women had been kept away from politics and as a result when someone would pick up history books, it seems as if women did not exist at all. According to her, this is the most prevalent problem in extremely patriarchal societies. “The representation of women in politics should be taken up from the grass root level and they should be encouraged to take active interest in the political on goings in the country.” she asserted.

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She further said, "If we want peace within our boundaries and outside, we need to include women in the political sphere,"

Space was also given to discuss the various forms of violence women are subjected to face. Further to this thread, several active names in the battle for gender equality were part of the conference that included Ansu Kohli, Humaira Bachal and Kainat Soomro.

Kainat Soomro, who was gang-raped when she was a teen, shared the battle she fought and also paid tribute to the men and women who have helped her along the way. Kainat was invited by Malala Yousafzai to attend the premier of *He Named Me Malala* in New York, and she had also shared with the audience her experiences about her visit.

Humaira Bachal had narrated her struggle against the belief rampant in certain segments of society that women should not be educated. Her belief is that "a powerful mother can very easily give birth to a peaceful society. And my mother is one such example."

Tehreek Niswan presented short skits at the conference in which they highlighted the problems women facing in our society from their birth- as the birth of a girl is not celebrated in the same manner like the birth of a boy, the women problems at bus stop and the attitude of law enforcers, the problem they face in the public transport, lack of education opportunities, attitude of society in general and police in particular towards call-girls, and above all the problems of divorcee women etc.

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Zahida Hina, a well-known writer and columnist, talked about the recent incident in Lahore which a twelve years old girl was killed by her father and brother for not making a round loaf (*Roti*). She criticized the role of electronic media, in an advertisement, it was shown that the family members were on a food table and a small girl appears with her mother, holding a round loaf, everybody congratulated the girl for making her first round loaf. She asked, 'is this the very mentality of the society that could also contribute to this sort of incidents'.

She harshly criticized the recently started practice in our society, when parents get to know their coming baby's gender through ultrasound. In many cases, the father and his relatives forcefully killed the baby girl in the premature stage in the mother's womb. She asked the government to make strict legislation in this regard and the surgeons found in this heinous crime should be dealt, severely.

