



An Initiative of The Researchers

e- Newsletter

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Issue: February, 2007

I. Gender

I Women & Economics

1. **Women Underrepresented in Bureaucracy**

Women constitute only 4.66% of the **federal bureaucracy**. Out of 2,34,933 government civil employees only 10,958 (4.66%) are women. Out of them, 1,552 are serving in officer grades – BS 17 to 22 – whereas the remaining 9,406 are serving in BS 1 to 16.

According to the 12th census of federal government civil servants, 4.4% of female employees are serving in the **federal secretariat**, whereas 94.76% are employed in attached departments and subordinate offices. Only 0.47% of female employees are serving in constitutional bodies and other departments.

The female civil employees, serving on **deputation** in autonomous or semi-autonomous bodies corporations under the federal government are 17 (0.16%). The female civil servants, working in and on deputation in provincial governments, are 19 (0.17%).

The **grade-wise comparison** of women civil servants as on July 1, 2003 shows that an overwhelming majority (58.51%) were in BS 5-15. Almost 14.16% of the total female employees were in BS 17-22, 12.28% in BS 16 and about 15.05% in BS 1-4.

2. **Women's Share in Jobs Still below 20 Percent: Labour Force Survey 2005-06**

Despite Government claim of empowering women after the enactment of Women Protection Act, their share in major occupation groups amongst employed persons is less than 20 percent compared with men all over Pakistan. According to the latest Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2005-06, men dominate major occupations with 80.52 percent share against women's 19.48 percent of the employed persons. There is a total 69.19 percent among employed persons in rural areas of the country with 53.26 percent men and 15.94 percent women. In urban areas of Pakistan, the total workforce stands at 30.81 percent with 27.27 percent male and 3.54 percent female.

The share of neglected agriculture sector is declining in the overall growth of the country. Similar trend applied in its contribution towards providing skilled jobs. The share of **skilled agriculture and fisheries** workers, stand at 35.31 percent. The share of elementary (unskilled) occupants is alarming, which stands at 19.23 percent with 15.56 percent men and 3.67 percent women. The total unskilled workers in rural areas stand at 14.23 percent and 5.01 percent in urban areas.

The share of **legislators, senior officials and managers** stand at 11.98 percent of the total employed persons including 11.58 percent men and 0.40 percent women. In the rural population it is 5.32 percent with 5.10 percent male and 0.22 percent female. In this category, the urban employed persons are 6.66 percent with 6.48 percent male and 0.28 percent female. The professionals are only 1.67 percent with 1.44 percent male and 0.23 percent female all over the country. In rural areas the, the professionals are 0.62 percent with 0.57 percent men and 0.05 percent women. In urban areas, there are total 1.05 percent professionals with 0.87 percent men and 0.18 percent women.

According to LFS 2005-06 **technicians and associate professionals** share 5.09 percent all over Pakistan, with 3.57 percent men and 1.52 percent women. There is a total of 2.51 percent technicians and associate professional in rural areas with 1.83 percent men and 0.67 percent women.

The percentage of total **clerks** in Pakistan is 1.43 percent including 1.37 percent men and 0.06 percent women. The rural areas have 0.43 percent clerks with 0.42 percent men and 0.01 percent women. The urban Pakistan has 1 percent clerks with 0.95 percent men and 0.05 percent women.

In the category of **service workers and shops and market sale workers**, they are 5.37 percent in the country including 5.20 percent men and 0.17 percent women. There are only 2.47 service workers in rural areas of which 2.42 percent are men and 0.05 percent women. It is almost the same for urban areas with 2.90 percent including 2.78 percent men and 0.12 percent women.

The total **craft and related trade workers** in Pakistan are 15.76 including 12.91 percent men and 2.84 percent women. In rural areas they are 7.68 percent with 6.06 percent male and 1.62 percent female. In urban Pakistan they are 8.08 percent with 6.85 percent men and 1.23 percent women.

The **plant and machine operators and assemblers** are 4.16 npercent all over the country with 4.11 percent men and 0.05 percent women. In the rural parts of the country, they are 2.32 percent with 2.29 percent men and 0.03 percent women. There are total 1.84 percent workers in the same category in urban areas with men sharing 1.81 percent such jobs while women stand at only 0.02 percent.

II Women & Laws

1. Bill Moved in National Assembly to Ban Customs Targeting Women

Pakistan Muslim League (PML) President Chaudhary Shujaat Hussain introduced the much-touted bill in the National Assembly to scrap certain despicable practices, traditions and customs targeting women, and said he had done so at the behest of President General Pervez Musharraf.

If passed, it will abolish practices like **females' marriage with Qur'aan** (confined to Sindh alone), **refusal to give women due share in inheritance, sale-purchase of women, Vani, Sawara** etc. It seeks to amend the Pakistan Penal Code 1860 and the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 (the Prevention of Anti Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Bill 2006 and prescribes substitution of Section 310A and insertion of new Chapter XXA, Act XLV of 1860).

2. Family Laws Bill Presented in National Assembly

State Minister for Law Shahid Akram Bhinder tabled the Family Laws Amendment Act 2007 in the National Assembly. The act is the second part of the Women's Protection Bill. The bill was tabled unopposed and was sent to the standing committee concerned by the NA speaker. The bill is designed to provide speedy **relief to women for the dissolution of marriage**. The bill would also **check the practice of exchange marriages**.

III World Bank Study

According to a policy research paper on the World Bank (WB) website: *Watta Satta* marriages, a years-old practice of bartering bride for bride, helps reduce the probability of domestic abuse and is clearly in the interest of women regardless of whether the institution is motivated by parents' altruism toward their daughters or by their desire to maintain family honour.

The paper, **Bride Exchange and Women's Welfare in Rural Pakistan**, conducted by the

World Bank and authored by Hanan G Jacoby and Ghazala Mansuri, says a bride exchange accompanied by mutual retaliatory threats could be a mechanism to coordinate the actions of two sets of in-laws, each of whom wish to restrain their sons-in-law, but only have the ability to restrain their sons. According to the paper, the likelihood of marital discord is lower in *watta satta* arrangements as compared to conventional marriages. “This result emerges most strongly in the case of estrangement, the clearest and most publicly observable expression of marital discord.”

The paper says that there is no difference in the rate of divorce or separation (around 1.5 percent) between women in *watta satta* marriages and those in conventional marriages. The paper stresses that exchange marriage might serve as a mechanism to curtail the financial burden of dowry. It adds that if dowry is principally a price for husbands, the advantage of marrying a daughter into her sister-in-law’s family is clear: it establishes a double-coincidence of wants, obviating the need to exchange money or wealth at the time of the joint marriage.

The data used in the paper has been taken from the Pakistan Rural Household Survey-second round (PRHS-II) undertaken in 2004-05. The authors said: “Our sample consists of about 3,100 married women aged between 15 to 40 in households randomly sampled from 171 villages in Punjab and Sindh provinces.” The paper says that a vast majority of *watta satta* marriages (94 percent) involves at least one brother-sister pair, and most (72 percent) involve a brother-sister pair on both sides. “The second most popular *watta satta* arrangement (16 percent) is when at least one of the households (but rarely both) contributes an uncle-niece pair.” The study adds that various other combinations occur as well, though none in significant numbers.

The results of the samples taken for the paper show that nearly two-thirds of the women (62 percent) have married men from the same or a neighbouring village and only 20 percent have married outside their tehsil. Even more striking is the extent of marriage within the clan and caste: 77 percent of women have married a blood relative, mostly first cousins with a preference for the paternal side; 4.13 percent have married someone not related by blood but within the same caste.

Complete Report is available on following link:

http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/01/29/000016406_20070129120048/Rendered/PDF/wps4126.pdf

II. Democracy Watch

I Presidential Elections

1. EU to Monitor President's Election

French Ambassador Regis De Belenet said that France and European Union (EU) wanted free and fair elections in Pakistan and the EU would monitor the Presidential Election. Belenet further said that he would send suggestions by Pakistani politicians to the EU. He said the EU believed that a democratic, prosperous and strong Pakistan could play a better role in the international community.

He criticised President Pervez Musharraf for asking votes for the ruling party in public meetings and called it pre-poll rigging.

2. View – Re-Electing Musharraf

Dr. Hasan Askari Rizvi in his write up "Getting Re-Elected Ain't Difficult" analyzed that it is not much difficult for President Musharraf to be re-elected from the present assemblies. He put forth three major reasons for this. He also mentioned that it is crucial for the ruling party to re-elect Musharraf otherwise there fate in the General Election 2007 will be at stake. Furthermore Dr. Hasan stated the options available to opposition.

President Musharraf does not have to adopt a controversial course of action to stay in power. He can get re-elected from the new assemblies, provided he engages the major opposition parties for evolving a mutually acceptable arrangement. It appears that the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and the affiliates of the presidency have made up their mind to get President General Pervez Musharraf re-elected from the current provincial assemblies and parliament while he's still in command of the army. They are convinced that his re-election would remove political uncertainty and help the PML to win the General Elections. In their view this would ensure the continuity of the current political arrangements in Islamabad for another five years.

If President Pervez Musharraf opts for this strategy, in total disregard of constitutional and ethical considerations, Pakistan will be faced with a head-on collision between the pro-and anti-Musharraf elements. Such a confrontation will undermine the political interests of both General Pervez Musharraf and the opposition. It will also have negative ramifications for Pakistan's political credibility at the global level. ruler's side.

There are three major reasons why official circles think they would be able to get General Pervez Musharraf re-elected from the current assemblies. First, the state apparatus is at their disposal for going ahead with this agenda. Second, the opposition is too divided to put up a joint and nationwide resistance. They cannot come together on a shared platform to take on the government. Third, in the absence of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, the opposition does not have leaders that could effectively engage in popular mobilisation.

If there is some agitation, the government can easily contain that. The over all assessment among official circles is that President Pervez Musharraf's election can be held without any serious problem from the present assemblies, and that he can continue with the command of the army.

No doubt the opposition is divided and the government can use the intelligence agencies and other means to accentuate their differences. However, the holding of the presidential elections through the existing assemblies creates such a challenging situation for the opposition that they can either join together in a one-point agenda or engage in parallel efforts to stall the presidential elections.

The decision to hold presidential elections before parliamentary elections would create a 'do or die' situation for the opposition. If the government gets away with it without any problem,

the opposition will lose whatever freedom of speech it has at the moment and its fate would be sealed in the General Elections.

Most opposition leaders are talking of resigning their seats in protest against such a move. The Chief Minister NWFP can recommend the dissolution of the provincial assembly and the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) can withdraw from the Balochistan government. This will deny moral and ethical basis to the presidential election. Further, when the presidential election schedule is announced the opposition is expected to raise constitutional and legal issues about General Pervez Musharraf's re-election while he holds on to the office of Army Chief. Despite the law passed by the current parliament to allow General Pervez Musharraf to continue in this position for a specified period, some constitutional provisions provide ample opportunity to raise the election issue before the Supreme Court.

One key issue relates to the oath laid down in the constitution for military personnel, which disallows them to take part in politics. The Supreme Court justified the assumption of power by General Musharraf in the judgment delivered in May 2000. Does this mean that this oath has become ineffective for General Pervez Musharraf for all time to come? If he continues as the army's chief, can he be a Presidential candidate? If he retires now, will the two-year restriction apply to him?

The option of getting Musharraf re-elected by the current assemblies is a hazardous path. The opposition has several options available if it wants to challenge him politically, legally and constitutionally.

II General Elections

1. Political Parties' News

n PML:

Mian Azhar Rejoins PML

Mian Muhammad Azhar, former Punjab Governor and annoyed leader of the PML, has rejoined the PML. PML President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain and Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi called on Mian Azhar at his residence. Senator Naeem Chattha and MNA Nasrullah Dareshak were also present on the occasion.

It was the first meeting between Chaudhry Shujaat and Mian Azhar during the last three and a half years. During the meeting, the two sides agreed to fight political challenges together. Chaudhry Shujaat and Pervaiz Elahi said that Mian Azhar's joining the PML would help boost the organisational structure of the party. Mian Azhar said that he had been in the Muslim League for the last 30 years and would utilise all his energies for the party. He said that in the past he had been criticising the PML for its betterment.

n PPP:

PPP Starts Preparations for General Elections

At a time when major opposition parties are busy formulating a common strategy to foil General Pervez Musharraf's attempt to get himself re-elected as President through the incumbent assemblies, the Pakistan People's Party has geared up its preparation for the forthcoming General Elections and has started finalising list of candidates.

The party's Sindh chapter meeting took place under the directive of PPP Chairperson Benazir Bhutto to shortlist the deserving aspirants of the party ticket.

By holding the **poll preparation meeting**, the PPP has made it clear not only to the Government but all other parties that it would not leave the arena but contest in the upcoming General Elections at any cost. In the broader context, the meeting may be seen as a clear message to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leadership and other opposition parties that the PPP will not be a part of any move to boycott the elections.

PPP Leaders Warns of 'Orange Revolution' if Polls Rigged

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leaders warned President General Pervez Musharraf to hold free and fair General Elections, otherwise there would be an 'Orange Revolution' in Pakistan akin to the people's movement against poll rigging in Ukraine in 2004.

n **MQM:**

MQM to Set-up Punjab Election Cell in April

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) will set up its election cell for the forthcoming General Elections in Punjab in April.

MQM MNA Syed Haider Abbas Rizvi said the cell would evaluate the candidates for the General Elections and send a list to the party chief in London for approval. He said Altaf Hussain had directed central leaders to complete the party's organisation in the province by the end of March so that preparations for the forthcoming elections could be started in April.

Another MQM official said Altaf Hussain is personally monitoring all matters of the MQM organisation in the province because he has received several complaints about feudal and lethargic attitude of some party leaders. The official said that the MQM would soon emerge as a powerful national party because party leaders and workers are striving to make it a popular party in all provinces.

n **MMA:**

MMA not to resign from National Assembly

The Supreme Council of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) finally said no to resignations from the National Assembly to save the alliance from disintegrating.

MMA Deputy Secretary-General Liaquat Baloch said that after the council meeting that the unity of religious alliance is more important to us in view of challenges and crises being faced by the country and Muslim Ummah. He said that after reaching a consensus the council also re-elected Qazi Hussain Ahmad as the MMA president for another term.

The decision to stay in the National Assembly was 4-2. Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan voted for resignations while four parties favoured a continued struggle against the Government inside and outside of Parliament.

n **JWP:**

Brahmdagh Bugti New JWP Leader

The Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) appointed the rebel militant leader Nawabzada Brahmdagh Bugti who is under ground since military operation which was launched in Dera Bugti and Kohlu as Chief Organizer of the party.

2. Election Commission/Electoral Rolls' News

n **EC Extends Date for Voter List Publication**

Election Commission's Secretary Kanwar Muhammad Dilshad said during a briefing to newsmen that Election Commission (EC) has extended the date for the publication of draft electoral rolls from January to May.

The voter registration campaign began on July 14, 2006, and draft electoral rolls were to be published on January 20, 2007, and final electoral rolls on May 30, under the original schedule. The schedule has been altered after several political parties objected to it. EC Secretary Kanwar Muhammad Dilshad said that Pakistanis who turned 18 on or before January 1, 2007, would also be eligible to vote in the next General elections. During the recent enumeration proceedings, staff had only enrolled people who turned 18 on or before January 1, 2006.

After the draft electoral rolls are published in May, the Election Commission will begin the process of correcting the rolls. The EC chief would appoint “revising authorities” to hear applications from people for additions, deletions and corrections in the draft electoral rolls. He said display centres would be set up all over the country to show the draft electoral rolls to the public. The application forms for filing claims and objections would be available for free in the offices of the revising authorities, registration officers, assistant registration officers and the display centres.

n **Call to Carry on with Voters’ Registration**

A number of major political parties called for continuing with the voters’ registration process till the formal announcement of next General Elections. The parties also demanded that the process be made simple and inclusive, and expressing concern that millions of eligible voters had been left out of the computerised electoral lists.

The following demands were made by leaders, legislators and activists of all mainstream parties including the Pakistan Muslim League, Pakistan People’s Party, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Jamaat-i- Islami, Muttahida Qaumi Movement and Awami National Party at a multi-party roundtable, arranged by the Centre for Civic Education Pakistan and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

- § They publicly announced to join forces to make sure that nobody is deprived of their basic democratic right.
- § The parties called to abolish fee of computerised national identity cards, so that those who could not afford, were not disfranchised.
- § Complete set of recommendations on voters’ registration will be sent to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).
- § The parties were of the view that the ECP should proactively consult them and listen to their genuine concerns besides disseminating simple, clear and timely information about the computerisation of electoral rolls.
- § The political leaders asked the commission to use all modern and traditional means of communication.
- § They were also unanimous on doing away with the routine lengthy forms prescribed for claims, objections, notices, hearing, etc.
- § The opposition parties did not miss the opportunity to express their reservations about the possibility of free and fair elections under present circumstances.
- § But focusing on the issue of electoral lists, they called for special efforts to ensure that female staff was available to facilitate eligible women voters and the voter lists were displayed at easily accessible places.
- § The display centres should remain open during the evening so that working people can visit them after duty hours.
- § The Electoral Roll Act-1974, new voting lists could only be compiled at the time of census.
- § An independent Election Commission was a prerequisite to make the results of the upcoming polls credible. He said there were many flaws in the electoral rolls that had to be removed.
- § Photograph on the national identity cards of women should be made mandatory to avert the possibility of their misuse during polling.

n **Statements Regarding Voters’ Lists by EC Secretary**

Following was stated by EC Secretary Kanwar Muhammad Dilshad during a discussion arranged by the International Republican Institute and during a 3-day workshop arranged by Internews:

- § Draft electoral rolls would be displayed at specified display centres across Pakistan in mid May, which would be displayed at between 40,000 to 50,000 prominent places.
- § All Pakistani citizens over the age of 18 effective January 1, 2007, and all those whose names do not appear in the draft electoral rolls can file claims for inclusion of their names in the lists.
- § The Election Commission (EC) has dropped its plan to put up computerised voters

lists on its official website for security reasons and people will now have to rely on hard copies of these lists.

- § Objections regarding deletion of names or any bogus entries could also be submitted to authorities concerned.
- § EC had decided to introduce improved electoral commodities to conduct the upcoming General Elections, which would enhance credibility of the EC.
- § The code of conduct for political parties and contesting candidates would be prepared in consultation with all stakeholders and would be implemented strictly.
- § No individual or political party would be allowed to set up hoardings, posters or banners larger than the sizes mentioned in the code of conduct.
- § Any unlawful interference by government officials, ministers, advisers and nazims would not be tolerated during the polling process and state resources would not be used exclusively for any political party.
- § EC had decided to use transparent ballot boxes, voting screens and coded plastic seals for ballot boxes during the elections. It was estimated that 0.43 million ballot boxes would be required for the elections. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had agreed to supply 0.3 million voting screens for the General Elections.
- § Around 65 million voters could be taking part in the upcoming elections under the computerised electoral rolls.
- § He brushed aside the opposition's criticism and apprehensions that a big chunk of voters would not be able to take part in the electoral process, owing to a deliberate attempt by the some Government functionaries to deprive pro-opposition voters from being enrolled.
- § He said around 30 per cent people in the electoral rolls of 2002 were not allowed to cast their vote as they did not have ID cards. As per electoral rolls, 72 million were shown as voters. These people managed to get enrolled without producing ID cards and hence did not qualify for voting.
- § About the use of electoral machine to ward off any possibility of misuse of ID card, he maintained that this option could only be employed after the legislation. The machine identifies if a voter tries to cast his vote second time by his thumb impression.

3. Election Observations

n **NA-250 and PS-71 By Elections: Observations**

FAFEN Observations:

The Election Commission of Pakistan, has authorised a 20-member delegation from Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN), to monitor by-elections in Karachi and Jamshoro "in the spirit of mutual cooperation and with the shared goal of ensuring that elections in Pakistan are transparent and legitimately represent the will of the voters."

The observers noted following in their final report:

- § The **voter turnout was low** in both constituencies, once again showing the inability of political contestants to bring out people to vote.
- § In almost all observed polling stations, the observers said, **serious flaws were found in the electoral rolls** e.g. names of same household were split between two polling stations, details of voters were wrong, etc.
- § **Weak enforcement of electoral laws** tops the findings of the independent observers' team.
- § More alarming is the revelation by the monitors that in some instances, "the Election Commission took notice of the complaints made by contesting candidates, but **could not ensure implementation of its orders**".
- § In some polling stations in Jamshoro, the observers noted the **presiding officers did not fulfil the legal requirement of being grade-17 or above** to be able to exercise the magisterial powers that are vested in them for election purposes.
- § The report also recorded **abuse of the government resources** categorically stating that the federal, provincial and local governments supported the candidates of the Pakistan Muslim League in PS-71 and Mutahida Qaumi Movement in NA-250.
- § The FAFEN observers also stated that the **government vehicles were extensively used** in election campaign of these candidates, election adverts of PML and MQM

candidates

- § The report also recorded that a night before the election the **acting DCO and DPO of Jamshoro were seen discussing polling day plan with the campaign team of the PML candidate** at his election office.
- § The observers also noted that many **presiding officers reported that they were being coerced by senior government and elected officials to support MQM candidate**. Similar claims were made by election officials in Jamshoro, which was a violation of the Article 92 of The Representation of The People Act, 1976.
- § The ECP-authorized observers also claimed clear or sufficient evidence that **senior members of the executive branch participated in the election campaign of the government-backed candidates** while Sindh Chief Minister was actively campaigning and canvassing for the government-backed candidates in Jamshoro, visited and inauguration of 'six mega projects' of the MQM-controlled city district government by General Pervez Musharraf a day before the by-election was seen as an effort by the centre to influence the voters in favour of the MQM candidate.
- § The by-election monitors said they are not aware of any actions taken by ECP officials in response to these breaches of law and regulation. The observers noted that **electoral officials did not seem to have sufficient skills or knowledge to enable them to tackle problems or complaints arising from the voting process**.
- § In many polling stations, the observers pointed out, that **polling staff was not checking National Identity Cards properly** who were even accepting voters using coloured photocopies of the NICs while in some polling stations in Karachi, thumbs of voters were not marked with indelible ink, rather with ordinary ink.
- § The observers also noted that **supporters of the contesting candidates were seen canvassing for votes** on the by-election day inside polling stations and outside the polling stations in complete violation of the rules.
- § Ironically, the FAFEN monitors also pointed out that the **security arrangements on the polling day were weak** and isolated incidents of firing between the supporters of the rival candidates were reported from both constituencies.
- § Last but not least of the important flaws in the by-election processes included a very low turnout in both constituencies, showing disinterest of voters in the election. **The preliminary results of NA-250 showed a turnout as low as less than 15%. However, the turnout more than doubled at the end of the counting at all polling stations.**

Detailed report is available on FAFEN's website: www.fafen.org

HRCP Observations

The HRCP undertook the observation of polling in this by-election largely with the object of assessing the level of preparation by the EC and the administrative department to cope with their responsibilities. Some of the salient features of the HRCP observers' report said:

- § The polling started with a delay of as much as 90 to 150 minutes at several polling stations, due to the non-availability of polling material, lack of authentic voters' list and the late arrival of the polling staff.
- § Turnout was quite low as well and it was difficult to believe that the final vote count in a by-election came close to the total votes cast in the General Election in 2002, in spite of the fact that the party that had polled the highest number of votes in 2002 had boycotted the polls this time round.
- § The security arrangements at the polling stations were also quite unsatisfactory.

HRCP detailed concerns regarding by-elections are available on Dawn's February 13 issue.

4 Other News

n FAFEN's Demand for Free and Fair Polls

A delegation of the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) called on ECP Secretary Kunwar Dilshad and sent a letter to Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice (Retd) Qazi Mohammad Farooq, containing 14 demands and steps to ensure transparent polls in Pakistan. FAFEN demanded that ECP should ensure free and fair elections in the country

next year. The delegation was led by Sarwar Bari and comprised of Mukhtar Ahmed and Musarrat Qadeem. The Executive Director of Asian Network for Free Elections Somsri Hananuntasuk and its Secretary General Kingsley Rodrigo also accompanied the team.

The ECP Secretary told the team that about 90,000 voter registration centres would be established all over the country to verify the new computerised lists. **The delegation suggested that women staff must also be designated at the centres.** The team informed the ECP Secretary that there were reports that a large number of eligible voters had not received registration or were not visited by the ECP enumerators, which could deprive many eligible voters of their right to vote. Moreover, the ECP decision to waive the condition of production of computerised national identity cards for registration as a voter and allowing use of the previous non-computerised cards might enable registration of multiple votes. This may have serious repercussions on the voting in the upcoming elections.

The team noted that the ECP was allowing only those individuals to register who were born on or before December 31, 1987. It may also disenfranchise a considerable number of young people, who will turn 18 before the next elections. Similarly the non-registration of nomads is also a cause of concern. Members of team suggested that **individuals who were born on or before December 31, 1988 must be allowed to register as voters** to enable maximum participation in the polls.

The **14 steps** suggested to the CEC included:

- § To issue postal balloting
- § Training to polling staff
- § Enforcement of the code of conduct
- § Launch of mass awareness campaign
- § Strengthening internal mechanism to take timely action against violations of the code
- § Ensure gender balance in the key appointments in the national and provincial election commissions

n **Emergency Option under Study**

The Government is giving serious consideration to a proposal for the President to issue a proclamation of emergency on account of internal disturbance and fears of politics of agitation by the opposition. The imposition of emergency by the President would be one option and if the proclamation is endorsed by a joint sitting of parliament it would automatically extend the term of the National Assembly for a period not exceeding one year and not extending, in any case, beyond a period of six months after the proclamation has ceased to be in force.

The **proclamation of emergency** is issued by the President under **Article 232 (1)**, which says: "If the President is satisfied that a grave emergency exists in which the security of Pakistan, or any part thereof, is threatened by war or external aggression, or by internal disturbance beyond the power of a Provincial Government to control, he may issue a Proclamation of Emergency."

Article 232 (6) says: "While a proclamation of emergency is in force, Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) may, by law, extend the term of the National Assembly for a period not exceeding one year and not extending in any case beyond a period of six months after the Proclamation has ceased to be in force, **(7)** A proclamation of Emergency shall be laid before a joint sitting which shall be summoned by the President to meet within thirty days of the Proclamation being issued and (a) shall cease to be in force at the expiration of two months unless before the expiration of that period it has been approved by a resolution of the joint sitting; and (b) shall, subject to the provisions of paragraphs (s), cease to be in force upon a resolution disapproving the proclamation being passed by the votes of the majority of the total membership of the two Houses in joint sitting.

Several basic rights as enshrined in the constitution under Article 15 to 18 and 24 would be the immediate causality. These articles deal with freedom of movement (Article 15), etc., freedom of assembly (16), freedom of association (17), freedom of trade, business or profession (18), and protection of property rights (24).

n **18 NWFP MPs Form Bloc against MMA Government**

Eighteen members of the NWFP Assembly, including seven women, have formed a separate bloc against the MMA government for not releasing funds to them and ignoring their constituencies. These members are also considering boycotting the coming assembly session and a symbolic walkout besides adopting several other measures in this regard, and they would announce their strategy at a meeting before the assembly's session.

Those neglected women MPs include Rukhsana Bibi (MMA), Yasmin Khan (MMA), Nighat Orakzai (PML-Q), Nasreen Khatak (PPP Sherpao) and Salma Babar (PPP Sherpao), while male MPs include Inder Kamal Khan (PML-N), Maulana Dildar Khan (MMA), Malik Hayat Khan (MMA) and Goasaran Lal (MMA).

III. Governance at Large

I Workshop on Structural Issues in Poverty Reduction

A workshop on “Structural Issues in Poverty Reduction” was organized by Asian Development Bank in Collaboration with PRSP Secretariat of Ministry of Finance.

Minister for Economic Affairs Division Hina Rabbani Khar said that the ‘dividends’ of economic growth have not reached to the poor and a lot needs to be done to eradicate poverty. She said that lack of access to knowledge and empowerment are because of non-transferring the benefits of economic growth to the poor. To get rid of poverty the benefits of economic growth must reach out to the poor, and to achieve this objective more pro-poor initiatives are required. She said that the economic growth is a condition for poverty reduction not mandate therefore primary concerns should be given to micro finance programmes along with targeted strategies for poverty alleviation.

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1. Maulana Ameer Hamza, Jammāt-ud-Daawa: The perpetration of suicide attack is a terrorist act beyond doubt. The attacker kills himself and also accounts for the sins of those who are killed by his attack. A Hadith (saying of Holy prophet PBUH) quoted by Imam Ahmad Bin Humbal says that the killed person will ask God of the crime for which he was murdered on the Day of Judgment. He said that no suicide attack is justified in a country which has Islam as the state religion, ruled by a Muslim ruler and is not under occupation by infidels.

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Child rights groups have estimated that:

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- § Most of the juvenile population continues to be vulnerable to bonded labour, harassment, sexual abuse and trafficking, and lacks access to health, education and other basic needs.
- § Many street children are also addicted to drugs and have been sexually assaulted. It has been reported that 56 percent of street children run away from their homes due to domestic violence, 22 percent because of hostile behaviour of their parents and 12 percent due to their parents' drug addiction.

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The Government, in its last '**Economic Survey of Pakistan**', acknowledged that the country lagged well behind other countries in the region with respect to indicators on the situation of children.

According to data compiled by the **Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)**, at

least 500 cases of violence against children were reported in 2006, including kidnapping for ransom.

In its 2006 report, **Sahil**, an NGO working for the rights of children, stated that in the first six months of the year, some 1,164 children had been sexually abused. From among these victims, 213 girls had been subjected to gang rape. Of the 1,164 reported cases, some 849 victims were girls and 315 boys. Over 50 percent of the accusers were acquaintances of the victims. Although Pakistan ratified ILO Convention 182 on the 'Worst Forms of Child Labour' in 2001, children continue to be employed in all sectors. In most cases they are forced to work due to the financial needs of their families.

The **Federal Bureau of Statistics (FBS)** has indicated that 25 percent of the total labour force of Pakistan, which number over 50 million, is aged between 10 and 19 years.

The **Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)** says that there are a total of 70 million children in the country and 25 million of them are engaged in labour.

Children affected by poverty were the most vulnerable to being trafficked within or outside the country. The rights organisations have urged the Government to prioritise the rights of children and comply with international conventions. The HRCP has also called for policy guidelines on responses to complaints about the abuse of children.