

**Contact:**

HN 155, Ground Floor, Block-4, Alangir Road,  
C.P.Bener Society, Karachi, Pakistan.  
Ph: 00221-4010021, 00221- 7002002  
Fax: 00221- 4010021  
Email: info@wmc.org.pk  
Web Address: www.wmc.org.pk

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# Breaking the Barriers

Exploring media space for women journalists

**wmc**

Gender Equality in Media

**A compilation of three skill- training workshops  
Karachi-2006**



# **Breaking the Barriers**

**Exploring media space for women journalists**

**A compilation of three skill- training workshops  
Karachi-2006**

**Organized by  
Women Media Center Pakistan  
with support from  
National Endowment for Democracy  
Washington DC, United States of America**

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## **Acknowledgement**

The Women Media Centre Pakistan (WMC) wish to thank all those who attended all three workshops and the panellists for their presentations and contributions to the workshops and the individuals who conducted each session. Their participation ensured the proceedings to be informative and interesting.

WMC also wish to express its appreciation to everyone who assisted in the preparation, planning and running of the workshop. The WMC would also like to extend special gratitude National Endowment for Democracy, Washington DC, USA for its financial support.

### **Contact:**

H/N 155, Ground Floor, Block-3, Alamgir Road,  
C.P.Berar Society, Karachi, Pakistan.

Ph: 09221-4919321, 09221- 7002892

Fax: 09221- 4919321

Email: info@wmc.org.pk

Web Address: [www.wmc.org.pk](http://www.wmc.org.pk)



## Preface

Pakistan had a very fragile political history with three Martial Laws on its credit. This dented way to democracy not only affects the economic growth of the country but also socially retards its way in a gender sensitive society. Women participation was at its minimum in all walks of life. Pakistani women are not given importance in term of their rights for freedom of expressions either at domestic or international level. This situation helps create the culture of silence and distorts discourse about limited rather negligible presence of women in challenging fields. The representation of women in Pakistani journalism is inadequate. Moreover, the presence of female journalists is almost missing in media coverage of parliamentary sessions, political gatherings, political rallies, peace building and conflict resolution. Therefore, the role of women journalists is limited in strengthening the democratic process and its further growth. Now, it is mandatory that the women journalists are given considerable chances and wide-ranging opportunities to work at the news desks and reporting for country's major dailies in Urdu, Sindhi and English languages. They could than be able to play their significant role in reporting of parliament, judiciary, legislation, and good governance as an opinion builder. This is the very reason that due to ineffective representation of half of the population of Pakistani society, the democracy and its values are still untrue and out of practice.

"Enhancing the role of female journalists", project that initiated in July last year has been successful to establish a platform for enthusiastic women journalists. At the beginning, we didn't expect such an overwhelming success of this project. However, we were hopeful that at least we would have been able to put our share in achieving objective of gender equality in journalism. Now at this moment when we have concluded this project we have been able to produce three very well organized skill-training workshops on:

- Modern Parliamentary Democracy- Present Scenario
- Parliamentary Reporting: women journalists can meet the challenges
- Covering politics: building bridges between women journalists and politicians

In this report, every workshop has been compiled separately but all three are grouped together for the ease of readership and quick glance on each individually.

In no way this is the last step, we have a long way to go but we are confident that we have created a demand for gender equality for women in media and this initiative has generated a stir in the gender-biased society.

June 2006

**Fauzia Shaheen**  
Executive Director  
Women Media Centre Pakistan



# **Workshop I**

## **Modern Parliamentary Democracy-Present Scenario**

**Hotel Regent Plaza  
Wednesday 29 & Thursday 30, March 2006**

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## Introduction

It is very important to know certain facts before analysing the system of governance in Pakistan and we cannot discuss the issue of governance without familiarity with the information about the system. For example:

- Pakistan came into being through a constitutional and democratic struggle. No liberation army had taken part in the creation of this country.
- Pakistan is a country where several languages are spoken and there are different cultures with strong historical background.
- The basis of Pakistan was the 1940 Resolution. This resolution gave strong guarantees to the units of the federation.
- The leadership striving for the creation of Pakistan believed in provincial autonomy and the fourteen points of Quaid-e-Azam are regarded as the most significant document with respect to provincial autonomy.
- Before the general elections of 1946, Quaid-e-Azam in his address had very categorically said that the federation would keep defence, foreign affairs and finance departments and the rest of the departments were to be given to the provincial governments in the federating units. In 1946, even separate legislative assemblies for the centre and provinces were suggested.

In the light of above facts, only a federal parliamentary system could have satisfied all the provinces and their population. Different systems of government were experimented in this country, which has turned this country into a political laboratory where despotic rulers strengthened their personal rule instead of strengthening national institutions. Every national institution, centres of state power, all ministries and departments, judiciary and national and provincial governments and assemblies became subservient to one individual because of this experimentation.

There has been democracy in Pakistan for a very limited period and even during this period; the influence of dictatorship and despotic rule is evident. In parliamentary democracy, the parliament is the source of power, justice, administration, legislation and law making. No one in the country including President, Prime Minister or the judiciary or any other individual or institution is above the parliament. Parliament sets the responsibilities and rights of the state and its institutions. Parliament has the right to establish any social contract for the people and any unit of the federation. Military Generals have been playing with this country because they trampled over the constitution, parliament, the government and the judiciary at their will. Constitution was suspended, parliament was dismissed, and government was taken over consistently. Orders of an individual like the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) and Legal Framework Order (LFO) were issued in every military rule. Sweeping changes in the judiciary were brought about thus all the national and state institutions were destroyed by the despots.

Women Media Centre Pakistan stands for gender equality in print and electronic media because of its close link with democratic institutions and democrats and considers it necessary that the journalist, members' parliament, government officials and people associated with media and public representations should have complete knowledge of modern parliamentary democracy.

Women Media Centre Pakistan organised a two-day workshop with the support of National Endowment for Democracy, USA at hotel Regent Plaza Karachi. Training was imparted to the girl students of Mass Communication Department of Karachi University and Jinnah University for Women regarding modern parliamentary democracy. Several vital issues came under discussion in this workshop. The reporting of the workshop proved to be valuable for the readers. We hope that this report will also be useful for the readers.

Fauzia Shaheen  
Executive Director



## Summary of First Day Proceedings



(From right to left) Nasser Abbas, Ousle Tahid & Dr. Hanaa Nagai



(From right to left) Deputy Amour Jassat-al-Masri, Prof. Chafar Ahmed, Ghazala Malik & Razia Shaboun

## First Session

The two-day workshop began with the registration and introduction of the participants. Workshop module was distributed amongst the participants and senior journalists and students took great interest in the module.

The Executive Director WMC, Ms. Fauzia Shaheen, in her opening remarks said that parliamentary democracy in the country and role of women journalists would major topics of the workshop. The difficulties faced by women journalists in coverage of parliamentary proceedings would be assessed with special focus on improving professional skills required by the women journalists involved in parliamentary reporting.

She was of the view that experience of parliamentary democracy in Pakistan has been similar to other developing countries. In Bangladesh, during 35 years of its existence, military Generals damaged the parliamentary democracy and two of them, General Zia-ur-Rahman and General Hussain Muhammad Ershad dismissed the parliament, destroyed the parliamentary institutions and imposed dictatorship in the country. Turkey also became the testing ground for the Generals. Most recently, General Kanan Evran had dismissed the parliament and had introduced democracy of his personal likings. Military generals in Pakistan did not allow parliament to function properly and freely. Four army generals dismissed the Parliament and provincial assemblies and imposed military rule in the country.

Highlighting women role in the country Parliamentary democracy and media, she said Begum Ashraf Abbasi was the first Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly. Afterwards, Noor Jahan Panizai became the Deputy Chairperson in the Senate. Currently, Raheela Tiwana is Deputy Speaker of the Sindh Assembly. Similarly, women have reached professional heights in media as well. Maleeha Lodhi, Razia Bhatti, Sherry Rehman, Beena Hayat, Katrina Hussain, Huma Ahmed, Rehana Hakeem and Samra Paris served as Editors of English newspapers and magazines. Mariana Babar, Nafeesa Shaikh and Asma Shirazi, to mention a few, have become distinguished reporters.

Senior journalist, Nazir Leghari, talked about evolution of parliamentary democracy. He told the participants that in 17th century, parliament confronted monarchy and Church thus strengthening democracy. The British King Charles-I wanted the parliament to be a lame duck but the civil war followed by Cromwell rule ended in the victory of the people and the Parliament. After the civil war, the personal rule in Britain weakened and parliament became stronger and today, Parliament is the strongest institution in Britain.

Nazir Leghari apprised the participant of the functioning of parliamentary democracy in Pakistan and gave information about the National Assembly, the Senate and the Provincial Assemblies. A question answer session was held afterwards and the students were asked to fill in the quiz form in the module.



## Second Session

The second session was about the activities of the parliamentary democracy and Nazir Leghari provided the basic information about the parliamentary democracy and public representation institutions in Pakistan. He said that in the parliamentary system, President is the head of the state and the Prime Minister is the head of the government. In the Pakistani federation, the parliament is consisted of the President, National Assembly and the Senate. In the National Assembly, 272 members are directly elected by votes on basis of adult franchise. People of 18 years and above are eligible to vote to elect member National Assembly and provincial assemblies in their respective constituency where their names are registered as voters. Sixty seats reserved for women and 10 seats reserved for minorities in the National Assembly are allocated with respect to the seats won by the political parties in the Lower House.

In the Senate, which is also called the Upper House, 22 members are elected from each Province and Provincial Assembly is the Electoral College for these seats. Four members are elected from the federal capital and Electoral College for them is the National Assembly. Twelve members of National Assembly from Federally Administered Tribal Areas elect eight Senators to represent tribal areas in the Upper House.

According to the constitution, the Parliament is a sovereign legislative body of the country. National Assembly works under the majority party parliamentary system. Every member of the National Assembly has the right to express his/her views. The most important power of the National Assembly is to levy taxes through finance bill. After approval in the National Assembly, of these bills are sent to the Senate. Senate after discussion on the bill either approves it or return it back to the National Assembly for further amendments. After approving the recommendation of the Senate, the National Assembly sends the bill to the President.

The leader of the House in the National Assembly is the Prime Minister of the country. The Speaker presides over the meeting of the National Assembly. In his absence, the Deputy Speaker presides over the meeting. The Chairman of the Senate presides over the meetings of the Senate and in his absence, the Deputy Chairman chair the house proceedings.

Nazir Leghari also apprised the participants of the important aspects of the Code of Conduct for parliamentary reporting. A questions answer session was held afterwards. At the end of the session, the students were asked to fill in the Information Seeking Strategies column in the module.

## Third Session

The third session was consisted of discussion on parliamentary democracy and the role of women journalists. The session started with the talk by Dr. Huma Baqai. She particularly emphasised on the difficulties faced by women journalists in the parliamentary reporting.

The journalists responsible for covering Parliamentary proceedings are divided into groups on the basis of media group they belong to, political ideology, language and personal relations. It is very difficult for a woman journalist responsible for parliamentary reporting to make her place in any of these groups. These groups work as a syndicate and they do not help anyone outside their group. The male members of the parliament and male journalists have their own perception about women journalists. For example, male journalists think that the female journalists should always be dependent on male journalists. If a woman journalist wants to work independently then these male journalist withdraw their help. The women journalists also face the difficulties of personal likings and disliking.

Women journalists normally face discrimination because of their gender. Women work more but are paid less. In general, women are not trusted with responsible and important jobs. The male colleagues and other male acquaintances sexually harass women.

After the talk by Dr. Huma Baqai, a question answer session was held. Dr. Huma Baqai divided the students in smaller groups and asked them to discuss the difficulties faced by women journalists in parliamentary reporting and to present their recommendations.

In the last session on the first day of the workshop, the students were asked to present group work. One student represented each group and presented the group work.



## Summary of Second Day Proceedings



Mr. Akbar & Mr. Tariq presenting certificates to participants



A group leader giving a presentation

## First Session

On the second day of the workshop, the Executive Director of WMC, Fauzia Shaheen presented important points of previous day activities. Afterwards senior journalist of Nawa-i-Waqt, Ghazala Fasih and Soofia Yazdani presented their views.

Ghazala Fasih expressing her experiences said that she joined journalism after a long break in democratic process in the country when the parliamentary institutions were restored. She started working in Lahore. When her family moved from Lahore to Karachi, her newspaper transferred her to Karachi. She said that in her view one has to start afresh daily in journalism. Everyday, a journalist comes across new reports. According to her even now after so many years in journalism, she gets ecstatic when her report or column is published in the newspapers. She has covered the proceedings of Sindh Assembly and has always opened to advice from seniors and juniors alike regarding her reporting.

In her view, there are opportunities for women in journalism like any other field and women have a chance to get recognition but one needs to be committed to the job. She says that journalism demands commitment and persistence.

After Ghazala Fasih, the Deputy Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami, Professor Ghafoor Ahmed, was invited to present his views. Professor Ghafoor said that he started parliamentary politics by becoming a member of National Assembly in 1970. He said that the assembly elected in December 1970 was a constitutional assembly as well. Pakistan Peoples Party had two-third majority in that assembly. If, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto wanted to ignore the opposition and draft the constitution without their consultation, he could have done that but he did not. He thought that if the PPP had made the constitution unilaterally then that constitution would have of Pakistan Peoples Party and not the country. He took the opposition in confidence on constitution. In fact, our country had passed through a calamity and on 16 December 1971, East Pakistan had become Bangladesh. In those circumstances, it was not easy to make a unanimous constitution. The National Assembly made two constitutions in 1972 and 1973. After the interim constitution, ZA Bhutto lifted the marshal law and in 1973, the current constitution was implemented. The "give and take" approach from both sides made the constitution possible. According to this constitution, our system became parliamentary system under which the head of the state is the president and the head of the government is the prime minister. Parliament is consisted of two houses - the Senate and the other the National Assembly. From Article 8 to 28, a total of 21 Articles are regarding the basic rights of the people, which apply without any gender prejudice. Article 55 is against discrimination on the basis of gender. Article 34 says that women would be included in every field of life. The constitution also protects the institution of marriage and family. It gives equal rights to men and women to vote. In the elections of 1970, only one woman won election on general seats and afterwards a few more women were elected on reserved seats. In 2002 elections, the number of seats in the National Assembly were increased to 342 with 60 seats reserved for women. In addition to that, women have the right to contest the elections on every seat. Similarly, in the Provincial assemblies, 128 seats have been reserved for women who are nominated by their own political parties according to their strength in the respective provincial assemblies.

He said the incumbent Parliament was ineffective because all the powers have been accumulated



in one person. Important national issues are not brought for discussion in the parliament and an individual makes all important decisions. He urged educated women to come forward and try to improve the society where outmoded traditions have kept the society backward. His speech was followed by interactive questions-answers session.

## Second Session

Senior journalist, Soofia Yazdani narrated her experience in journalism. She told that when she entered journalism, there were only a few women in this field. Afterwards, the women representation increased but working for magazines and few other sections were reserved for women. Ms. Yazdani said that she was lucky and did not experience any discrimination because of her gender rather her male colleagues helped in her work.

Before the start group work, Huma Baqai briefly talked about difficulties faced by women journalists in parliamentary reporting.

## Third Session

The student participants of the workshop presented their recommendations on charts about overcoming the hurdles in practical life. The students took great interest in this exercise.

## Fourth Session

On the fourth session, the Bureau Chief of a worldwide news agency in Karachi, Mazhar Abbas and the Director News of current affairs of ARY TV channel, Owais Tauheed, shared their experience regarding reporting and parliamentary reporting.

Mazhar Abbas said that it is not right for women to differentiate between journalists because of their gender. He said that the issue is not of gender but of vision and opinion. According to Mazhar Abbas whatever views a journalist may have but if he or she does not know a few basic things about journalism then he/she cannot become a good journalist. If, one is entering the field of journalism then he/she should know about the Palestine issues, Nelson Mandela's struggle, the US supremacy etc. The Western media paints Palestinians as terrorist but Pakistani media terms them freedom fighters. A journalist should have vast knowledge and he should read newspapers from all over the world, books and other material on diverse subjects. A journalist should take extra care to be impartial while reporting.

He said that the female journalists should not confine themselves to only women issues rather they should work on all kind of stories. There have been very good women journalists like Razia Bhatti. She took out "Newsline" magazine and proved that professional expertise is very powerful. We are proud to have Razia Bhatti. She has been an outstanding editor of Herald and Newsline. She wrote against Generals during Marshal Law regimes. We remember her as a journalist and not as a woman

journalist. He said that the electronic media has brought women journalists to mainstream journalism.

Owais Tauheed, who remained associated with BBC and Associated Press of America, said that journalism is an addiction. In journalism, one learns everyday. He said that during his time in journalism he has noticed that journalists do not regularly read newspapers which not good for them.

He noted that for women journalists the working hours in media is an issue. Women should resolve this issue themselves.

He advised the young journalists to start reporting before working as anchor or host on TV. He said that it is unfortunate that the teachers in our universities are unaware of the difficulties in practical field. As long as professional journalists do not start teaching in education institutions the knowledge cannot be correctly imparted, he concluded.

**Concluding Session:**

Certificate were given to the participants at the end of the workshop.



## Conclusion

This today workshop proved to be a big event of the city, which got wide coverage in the media. The politicians, editors, senior journalists and students were of the view that a very important issue came to the fore through this workshop. The society may also have an opportunity to understand a very important issue. The participants took great interests in all the sessions of the workshop. The trainers and senior journalists made the training process interesting and easy to understand. The students were of the view that participation in this workshop was a unique experience and it would remain a source of inspiration for them for a long time.

# Recco

## Recommendations

- Women Journalists face a long and hard struggle for entering in the field of parliamentary reporting.
- Awareness is essential among both men and women for allowing space for women journalists.
- The women journalists should step forward to express their capabilities.
- Women journalists should be aware of democratic institutions, political parties, social and political system of different countries, the position of political parties, their performances, world famous crime stories, judicial decisions which effect peoples' lives, military operations, freedom movements, sport events and all the things which may make a good news.
- Journalists must have self-confidence but they should never display over confidence.
- Journalists should not hesitate to ask questions regarding his/her beat even from their junior colleagues.
- They should keep in mind the policy of their newspapers.
- They should work to the best of their abilities.
- They should aspire recognition only by their performance.
- They should use the latest and modern resources. They should not use their imagination to make news.
- One should depend on his/her capabilities and try to increase his/her expertise.
- They should take initiatives. One should try to get access to the news first using all available resources.



# THE STAR

Star No. 20431, Price Rs 6.00, Pages 6, Karachi, Friday, March 31, 2006, Rs

DAWA

Workshop held

11:00 AM  
The Women Media Centre (WMC) has organized a workshop for women journalists and media workers. The workshop was held at the WMC premises and was attended by a number of women. The workshop was organized to provide a platform for women to discuss their concerns and to share their experiences. The workshop was a success and was well attended.

QAU MI AKHBAR Karachi

## قومی اخبار

جلد نمبر 18، رختہ 2، سال 1427، دسمبر 2006ء



## Daily Times

### Women Media Centre workshop

ICHT: Inmatee - Almoos  
Anti-Fuel Guloo Almoos  
ed that women representa  
in the national and provincial  
bills cannot express them  
specially on matters relating  
to gender and other problems  
they are not mentioned by

## کائنات

جلد 8، دسمبر 2006ء



ABC CERTIFIED

## عوام

Daily Awam Karachi

## The Nation

On Sunday



WMC  
organises  
workshop

87 نمبر، 31 مارچ 2006ء



## **Workshop II**

### **Parliamentary Reporting: Women journalist can meet the challenges**

**Hotel Sheraton Karachi  
Saturday 10 & Sunday 11, June 2006**



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## Introduction

The aim of this workshop was to enable women journalists for parliamentary reporting. Women journalists are working in the newspapers and television channels but normally they are not entrusted with reporting especially the parliamentary reporting. Only a few English newspapers and TV channels have given opportunity to the women journalists. Women also had very few chances to report from provincial assemblies, the National Assembly, the Senate and the legislative assembly of Azad Kashmir.

Parliamentary reporting is a specialized field, which requires proper training and expertise. Women journalists rarely get such opportunities. The parliamentary reporter should know that what is a Point of Order, Point of Personal Explanation, Adjournment Motion, Privilege Motion, and Finance Bill etc. They should be aware of the procedures such as who presents the Finance Bill in the assembly, Why and how the members boycott the proceedings, how the Standing Committees are formed and how they function, How the assembly elects its Speaker and deputy Speaker, Leader of the House and leader of Opposition, how the no-confidence Motion is moved against the Prime Minister, Speaker or deputy Speaker, What is the procedure of legislation in the assembly and what are the First, Second and Third reading of the Bill etc. A parliamentary reporter should know as much as it is necessary to know for a member of the assembly to perform their duties well.

Women Media Centre Pakistan organized a two-day workshop for training the women journalist in parliamentary reporting. The women journalist had an opportunity to find out that what is the Parliament? How it works and how it should be reported? A large number of women journalists and photographer attended the workshop from different TV channels, newspapers, and students from the media department of different universities in Karachi. This workshop proved to be highly beneficial for these journalists and students of journalism.

**Fauzia Shaheen**  
Executive Director



## Summary of First Day Proceedings



(From left to right) APTF Secretary General Kazi Asad Akbar & Executive Director of OGC Zakirullah Khan



(From left to right) Shahid Jatoi, Farah Shafiq & Lala Raza



Group work by participant



Participant playing the role of news anchor



## First Session

Welcoming the participants the Executive Director of the WMC Fauzia Shaheen said that she entered the field of journalism at the time when an all-powerful president was about to dismiss an assembly, which had been elected on non-party basis. The working relations between the president and the prime minister were receding fast at the time. The assembly had passed a no-confidence motion against the speaker of the assembly who was elected against the wishes of the president. The Prime Minister who was elected through non-party based elections had formed and joined a party. This Prime Minister had started to spread his wings as he had said that he will cut to size all the three star generals ordering them not to use more than 1000 cc engine cars and also ordered to take away all the bigger engine vehicles from the General Head Quarter, (GHQ). The Prime Minister Inquiry Committee was about to expose the faces of the generals involved in the Ojhri Camp incident and the Prime Minister had signed Geneva Accord regarding Afghanistan against the wishes of the omnipotent president who was a general in uniform and chief of the army staff as well. Before the culprits of the Ojhri could be unmasked, the president removed the prime minister, sacked the cabinet and dissolved the assemblies and the parliament.

Three civilian presidents came to power after that president namely: Ghulam Ishaque Khan belonged to bureaucracy, Farooq Leghari was bureaucrat turned politician, and Rafiq Tarar was a retired judge. The first two civilian presidents dissolved three parliaments and when the third president refused to dissolve the parliament and the generals had to come to the fore and dissolved the parliament by putting the constitution in abeyance. After three years, another parliament was shaped but this was a totally subservient parliament.

During these interesting times, I always thought of reporting the parliamentary issues for some television channel or foreign media but that never materialized because of several reasons. I frequently visited the Sindh assembly to witness the events unfolding. I still go there to listen the debates and arguments by Arbab Ghulam Rahim, Ali Mohammad Mehar, Nisar Khoro, Makhdoom Jamiluzzaman, Shoib Bokhari, Qamar Mansoor, Mohammad Hussain Chaudhry Iftikhar and others but to listen to the debate and reporting it are two entirely different things.

The aim of this workshop is to facilitate and train women journalist for parliamentary reporting. Women journalists are working in the newspapers and television channels but normally they are not entrusted with parliamentary reporting. Parliamentary reporting is a specialized field, which needs training and without training the women journalists can not be equipped with the expertise of parliamentary reporting. Women journalists on joining a newspaper after completing their university education are normally given the task of women pages, Showbiz etc. They are not involved in parliamentary reporting despite the fact that women reporters have better understanding of the women issue discussed in the parliament. The WMC has organized this workshop to give a better understanding of parliamentary reporting to women journalists. Male journalists dominate the field of parliamentary reporting and women are few and far between. There has to be a balance between men and women journalists. Women can better report the injustices meted out to women in their homes and in the society.

Introducing the trainer for the workshop Fauzia Shaheen said that WMC has invited a renowned journalist and a respected civil society activist Zafarullah Khan who has been in students' politics.



His services for democracy, democratic values and the supremacy of parliament are notable.

After the introduction of the trainer and the participants, a quiz form was distributed among the participants to fill.

After that Zafarullah Khan said that a journalist should pen down what s/he wants to do in the profession and talk to herself/himself in writing. This kind of exercise is very beneficial in professional development. Sometimes one gets embarrassed as well but such realistic monologue helps you understand yourself, your skills, ambitions and finally set your priorities.

Politics is a very interesting subject for journalists. Only natural calamities can have more attraction than the politics. Politics is a subject, which is always fresh. The participants were informed about the following functions of the parliament.

1. The first function of the Parliament is to make, uphold, and amend the Constitution of the country. In some countries a constitutional assembly is elected for this purpose. In normal times the parliament works for the supremacy of the constitution.
2. Laws are made according to the constitution. The Parliament prepares the budget and lays down the income and expenditure for the coming year and imposes taxes. A bill is prepared to present in the parliament for legislation. There are two kinds of bills. One is the government bill and the other type of bill is the private member bill presented by legislators in their individual or group capacity.
3. The third function is to assure the implementation of the decisions of the parliament and hold accountability through the Public Accounts Committee.

## Second Session

The second session was about the Understanding Relationship between the Parliament and the Press. Explaining the topic Zafarullah Khan said that the job of a journalist is to define the most complicated issue in a manner, which every ordinary citizen can understand. The relationship between Parliament and press is important as it is said that the press is the fourth pillar of the state. The other three are Judiciary, Executive and the Legislature. Zafarullah Khan said that in his view the media is the fourth pillar of democracy. Democracy is not only casting votes in the elections but also the transfer of power. Democracy is the right of the people to vote in and vote out the governments.

We do not have real democracy in Pakistan. The job of a journalist is to assure accountability and transparency. This is essential for a journalist to report the proceedings on the floor of the assembly because the assembly represents people. There is a government assurance committee in the parliament, which ensures that the statement or commitments made by any minister on the floor of the assembly are fulfilled. If anyone issues an irresponsible statement then s/he is held accountable. All the record of the proceedings is kept in the parliament.

Further speaking about the Press Gallery, he said, "There is a press gallery in the parliament through which the media gets access to the parliament. In Pakistan, only the state sponsored Pakistan



Television (PTV) from electronic media has access to the Parliament and no other private channel has ever been allowed to cover the proceedings. The PTV functions according to the interests of the government. Every other channel shows the recorded proceedings by the PTV. The people have the right to assess the performance of their representatives. The former Speaker National Assembly Syed Fakhar Imam had once said that the press Gallery is the extension of the parliament"

The PTV also shows only recorded proceedings whereas this is the right of the people to see their representatives at work. People have the right to know that who is performing and who is not. There are several TV channels now in Pakistan but they could not be called totally independent because of their own business and corporate interests. Only a few people have the authority to allow watching the proceedings of the parliament. In Pakistan, this power is given to a government officer who decides to permit whoever he wants.

The Standing Committees in the parliament are called brain of the parliament. One can report several kinds of stories from the parliament for example, how much is spent on the library of the parliament and who gets benefits from it. There are representatives of the people in the parliament who do not speak at all despite getting paid by the taxes of the people. There are many private channels now but could not be called entirely independent and honest because of their own corporate and commercial interests. A journalist should rise above all those interests and work honestly. One should avoid reporting only prime minister's speech or speech by any prominent leader. The journalist should not leave the press gallery as soon as an ordinary member starts speaking. All the journalists reporting from the parliament must have a copy of the rules of business and conduct of proceedings in the parliament.

## Third Session

In the presentation given about the Reporting of the Parliament- Opportunities and Constrains Zafarullah said that it is unfortunate that our parliament was never sovereign. First it rarely formulates policies, if it does they are amended (not in the parliament) according to the vested interests through Statutory Regulatory Orders. It is the responsibility of a reporter to honestly report the proceedings on the floor of the house and the statement outside the assembly should not be mixed up with the parliamentary proceedings. There are different perceptions about the press in public. It is common perception that each newspaper or media group has its own policy and agenda and they function according to their interests and preferences. Competition increases with the increase in the number of media outlet. But media abundance is not resulting in pluralism of views.

Another basic responsibility of a journalist is to promote culture of accountability and rule of law. We do not have a culture of probing into the issue and we do not take initiatives for investigative reports. Today due to enabling information technology no one can hide any information in a society for a long. However in our country people's issue becomes news only after someone has taken an extreme step like committing suicide by jumping from Minar-e-Pakistan to highlight unemployment or denial of justice.

The parliament decides that how much access can be given to the media. Because of the insufficient financial package for the journalists, they distribute reporting jobs among themselves and then they



share the news. This is not syndicate reporting rather sharing or bartering news. The media owners have distributed the country in different zones with respect to the news. The journalists in Islamabad are unaware of the events taking place in Karachi and the journalists in Karachi are very ignorant of the events in Lahore and so on and so forth, unless something really big happens. Research and creativity play a vital role in journalism. I used to collect the question answer booklet because those gave me new stories while reporting from parliament. All the information about government departments, the figures etc of parliament proceedings can be found on the websites. A good quality journalist can articulate good questions and searches for stories. For example, how much was spent on education in the last five years and how the people were benefited from it etc. We have the department of anti-corruption; Auditor General, the National Accountability Bureau and the Public Accounts Committee in our country but the corruption could not be eradicated. Similarly we have the Bait-ul-Mall, the Zakaat system and the Poverty Alleviation Fund but the poverty is increasing. Every institution should be accountable to the parliament for its performance and services.

It is commonly said that if a newspaper is widely circulated, a television channel has huge viewer ship or a Radio Station has a wide audience then they are successful. For a news report about accountability of politicians it is necessary to compare them with other functionaries of the state like military generals, Judges of higher judiciary, Federal secretary and Ministers for a real picture to emerge.

Talking about the Corruption and Accountability he said that it is a tradition all over the world that budget is made by the party in the government so the head of the Public Accounts Committee is chosen from the opposition so that s/he can carry out real accountability. This is not so in our country and a journalist can take up this issue for her/his news story. One another issue should be raised by our reporters, which is that our Public Account Committee takes up cases over ten or twelve years old and the relevant functionary by that time leaves the country or the world. The public Accounts Committee should continue probing the cases in time and as they happen so that the culprits can be apprehended. We have freedom of information law in our country enabling every citizen to get information from government departments and assess the proceedings and functioning of the parliament.

The documents and the copy of question/answers are made available to the members a day earlier. The journalist should not report them before they are laid in the parliament because it is prerogative of the assembly to bring the issues on the assembly floor first and afterwards the media has the right to use them.

**Role Play Exercise:** The participants were divided in two different groups. Both the groups pleaded their case with their editor to get assignment of reporting the Parliament. Nazir Leghari who is an editor in real life played the role of the editor.

**Observations:** The first group was very pushy and lacked basic knowledge about the Parliamentary. While the second group requested the editor on the basis of previous examples of performances by the women parliamentary reporters and this group tried to charm the editor to get the job of parliamentary reporting.

Nazir Leghari explained the manner in which the editor should be approached. He was impressed by the courage displayed by the members of the group. He said that the female journalists should

have impressed the editor with their knowledge of the parliamentary reporting while asking parliamentary reporting beat. In this way the editor is compelled to assign the job to the woman reporter.

## Fourth Session

A renowned Sindhi editor, publisher and Secretary General of All Pakistan Newspapers Society Kazi Asad Abid linked with journalism for the last quarter of a century was invited to express his views. He had taken out a newspaper by the name of a legendary character "Bakhtawar". He is a member of APNS for the last 20 years and has been elected its secretary general for the ninth time. He said that the media has been very effective in this day and age. The people in power get notice of the editorials and articles in the media.

Kazi Asad Abid observed that the male-domination in the field of parliamentary reporting should come to an end now, and the women journalists, who were equally competent, should be given the chance to prove themselves.

Though, he said, the number of women journalists covering senate, national and provincial assemblies was scanty, however it was a known fact that they (female journalists) were more committed and active as compared to their male colleagues.

He said the active participation of female journalists would further improve the coverage of political, economic, educational and sports events both in print and electronic media.

The current expansion of electronic and print media, he observed, had provided opportunities to the female journalists, who should take the fullest advantage of the conducive conditions.

Hailing the role and initiative of the Women Media Center in training the female journalists, Kazi Asad maintained that it would help increase the number of female journalists in print and electronic media. He said that women are getting APNS awards on their performance in every discipline of reporting.

Question/Answer session was held after his speech and the participants took great interests in this session.

The first day of the workshop concluded.



## Summary of Second Day Proceedings



Participants of the workshop



Group photo of the participants



Experts from Aaj, ARY & GEO TV channels taking certificates



## First Session

The topic of the first session of the second day was Freedom of Information Ordinance-Tool for Good Journalism? Zafarullah Khan apprised the participants of the Freedom of Information law in the country and said that access to information is vital for transparent good governance. The concept entails that an institution provides information about its functioning and various decisions for example; during this workshop, we have produced some information. Similarly, the government also generates information during its functioning. The concept of freedom of information is an old one.

The people should be aware of the functioning of the government because people provide money through taxes and fees for governments for these functions. For example, the people should know that how old is the pipeline for water supply or how much taxpayers' money was spent on building roads or they should know that how many teachers are in a school etc. At the moment, this law is in place in 67 countries. Pakistan is the first South Asian country where this law has been introduced. The law was promulgated in 2002 after a long struggle to introduce it in Pakistan. It has its own deficits but they could be improved only in the culture where access to information is not denied on one pretext or another.

According to this law, every adult Pakistani citizen, holder of national identity card, can ask for information about government's function. For example how much money the government had and where was it spent? Any citizen can get this information by writing an application to the relevant department. There is a fee for this application as well. There is much information that cannot be provided through this law. A citizen should get the information, which is available to him/her. For example number of scholarships from foreign countries were offered to Pakistani students but they were never utilized. You can ask your university that how much money is being spent for the welfare of students in providing sports and transport facilities etc. Citizens can inquire about the detail of the university budget or about the policy? We have right to ask who was the contractor of any school or college building or roads and who had passed the contract and how much was spent. There is a law in Pakistan that companies involved in oil and other minerals explorations have to spend five percent of their expenses on the welfare of the people of the area where this exploration is being carried out. Once we asked ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources that whether is there any law, they answered yes, there is one. The other question we asked was that money ever spent? The answer was we could not provide this information. There is restriction on some kind of information. For example, we cannot ask for notes written on files, which pass through the Section Officer to the Secretary.

Once, we contacted the water testing people and found out that most of the brands of mineral water are contaminated. We asked them whether they have told the people about the contaminations in the water? They replied that this is secret information but we contested their response. Taxpayers



had paid for these testing but are not being informed about this fraud. Regarding trade and industry SRO culture was created in which a nominated officer unilaterally could have changed duty and tariff on goods. For example, if a person is hand in gloves with that officer and that person is importing something, which is coming to the port, he could have issued SRO through which the duty can be withdrawn. Journalists can gather these information for their stories informing people that what kind of orders are passed and how and who gets all the benefits.

## Second Session

In the second session, Zafarullah Khan spoke about the Legislative cycle, which consists on:

1. Election campaign.
2. Formation of new government
3. Legislation
  - (a) First reading
  - (b) Second reading
  - (c) Amendments
  - (d) Third reading
4. Dissolution of the parliament
5. Vote of confidence

Alertness of the journalist makes him/her professionally strong. A reporter should take care of morals and ethics and should not use a language, which can hurt anyone.

## Third Session

Role Play and Reporting Exercises:

1. A topic was given for a TV talk show. There was an anchorperson, a journalist, an opposition member assembly, a government minister and a citizen. Girl student executed this exercise very well.
2. Participants were asked to read news.
3. Another TV talk show.

The participants carried out these exercises very well. A few reporting exercises were also superbly carried out by the participants. A student Rubina performed the role of TV talk show host and was commended by the participants for her performance. All the girls performed role-play in a very professional manner. A few flaws were identified in the workshop. Host of the program talked to the government representative more than other participants of the program. Whenever there is a political program, every participant should be given equal opportunity. The other flaw was the lack of body language. Another group for performed a TV political program. In this program as well, more focus was on the government representative. The participants were advised about the sitting arrangements etc. in a TV program.

Two women participants played the role of newscaster. The participants were informed that a newsreader could also comment on news. The participants were asked to evaluate the workshop.



## Fourth Session

In the fourth session, a well known parliamentary reporter Shahid Jatoi was invited to share his experiences with the women journalists. Shahid Jatoi is reporting from the parliament for the last ten years and he has a very vast experience. He apprised the participants of impartiality of a reporting. A reporter should be aware of all the aspects of the reporting. A reporter should be well informed about politics and economy. Parliamentary reporting is a specialized job. One needs to know, the rules and regulations of the assembly. There is always an agenda of the assembly and order of the day is prepared in advance. If there is no violation of this order then it is easy to report but if there is breach and a lot of people start speaking simultaneously then it becomes difficult to report.

One should take care and must not misquote anyone. If the speaker expunges some part of the proceedings then the reporter should not report it. In some countries, working hours are set for journalists but in Pakistan, a reporter has to work 24 hours. Women have this difficulty. Shahid Jatoi offered his help to show the proceedings to the participants. S. M. Shakil of ARY and Lala Rukh (Camera person Geo TV channel) also shared their experiences with the participants.

## Evaluation & Conclusion

In the concluding session, participants were asked to express their views about the workshop and evaluate it.

Certificate were given to the participants at the end of the workshop.

# Workshops

## Workshop Achievements

The Workshop proved to be a valuable experience for the women journalists and students which highlighted different aspects of parliamentary reporting.

- The women journalists and students were made aware of the rules and regulations and functioning of the parliament.
- The members of the parliament and the journalists were apprised of the need of code of conduct for the members and the journalists.
- The role of Standing Committees was emphasized.
- They became aware of the procedure involved in the legislation process.
- Discussions were held regarding parliamentary reporting in general and the challenges for women journalists and ways to overcome them were debated in particular.

# achievements



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# SHE

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## LY N

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### Women should get opportunities to come forward in journalism

JEDDAH, June 14 (APF) - Women should get more opportunities to come forward in journalism, said a senior official of the Saudi Press Syndicate (SPS) during a meeting with the women journalists and editors of the Saudi Press Syndicate (SPS) in Jeddah.

He said that women are getting more opportunities in reporting. The women of the SPS are involved in various fields and the SPS is committed to their development.



The meeting was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and was attended by a number of women journalists and editors. The SPS is committed to the development of women in journalism and to providing them with the necessary support and resources.

The Women Media Centre in Karachi organised a two-day workshop entitled "Challenges faced by women journalists and parliamentary reporting."

Mr Qasim Asad Abid, Secretary General of All Pakistan Newspapers Society, lauding the efforts of female journalists, said that they were more committed and industrious than their male colleagues. "I had noticed as the Head of the Standing Committee for Information in the National Assembly that women engage enthusiastically in constructive and meaningful dialogue with MNAs to get news for their publications," he commented.



but the time has come to give all women the large number of women including parliamentarians and students of the Karachi University's Mass Communication department participated in the

## Crossing Hurdles

The women of the workshop, however, were not deterred by the challenges they faced. They were determined to overcome all obstacles and to continue their work in journalism.

The workshop was held in Karachi and was attended by a number of women journalists and editors. The Women Media Centre is committed to the development of women in journalism and to providing them with the necessary support and resources.

ABC 60  
DAILY HILAL  
جہاز  
دہلی پاکستان

# The Nation

## 'Women committed to journalism'

Women are committed to journalism and to providing the public with accurate and timely news. They are dedicated to their work and to the development of the journalism profession.



# STAR



# عبر روزنامہ



# **Workshop III**

## **Covering Politics: building bridges between politicians and women journalists**

**Hotel Regent Plaza  
Jun 21 & 22, 2006 Karachi**



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## Introduction

Pakistan has remained a political laboratory where new political experiments are made every now and then. Father of the nation Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah spelled out his vision about future of Pakistan in his address of 11th August 1947 to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. However, his health did not give him time and he died a year after the independence. In the absence of strong political parties, colonial-minded bureaucracy, opportunist military dictators and feudal lords filled the political vacuum. These three non-political state apparatuses did not allow political parties to flourish. They feared that in a public inclusive political process they would be subordinate to will of the people through their elected representatives. These three classes joined hands and did not let the political and democratic process to take firm roots in the country.

After the departure of the father of the nation, the non-political institutions made the post of the governor general and president of the country a symbol of their power. All the political and democratic individuals were victimized through the office of the president of the country. After the murder of the first prime minister Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan in 1951, non-political opportunists and bureaucrats took complete charge of the state affairs and initiated a drive to ruin the political parties and institutions. This destructive process continues till today.

The people of Pakistan had to wait for almost a decade to have a constitution in 1956 and that too was abrogated after two years.

The country's military junta and bureaucratic rulers not only imposed martial law to keep the public at bay from the issues of the state but also continued to create such an environment in which it was almost impossible for the political parties to work. In the beginning, these powerful non-political elements of the country hijacked the Muslim League, and from it emerged another party, the Republican. After this, Awami Muslim League was taken into the forefront which later turned into only Awami League and became an opposition party. General Ayub Khan then seized the Muslim League and declared himself head of the Convention Muslim League. General Yaha Khan wanted to prolong his ten years reign with the backing of the Muslim League but broke up the country before his whim was fulfilled. With his arrival General Zia-ul-Haq carved a role for the Muslim League in the house after convening a non-party based assembly and nowadays the Muslim League is again in power with the president, an army general.

There has always been deficit of political and democratic process in Pakistan. Even at this moment, popular political parties of the country are allowed only conditionally to participate in the political process. Only pro-establishment political parties are allowed to operate freely and rule the country while other parties are the victims of various types of restrictions.

Women Media Centre Pakistan arranged a workshop to create contacts and build relationships between political leaders and women journalists. Aim of the workshop was to bring together political parties, journalists, civil society organizations, and professionals to work for democracy and to initiate a process of purposeful dialogue.

**Fauzia Shaheen**  
Executive Director



## Summary of First Day Proceedings



Senior Reporter of Dawn Shamsul ur Rehman giving lecture on political rallies



Asst. editor of Daily Express Zahida Nadeem



Deputy resident editor of News-on-line Yusuf Khan sharing his experience



Deba Maiti of Daily Anura giving lecture on press releases



## First Session

Women Media Centre Pakistan with support from National Endowment for Democracy, Washington DC, arranged a two-day workshop on Building Bridges Between Politicians and Women Journalists for Political Coverage.

Welcoming the participants, Executive Director of Women Media Centre, Fauzia Shaheen, said that efforts were made to develop a relationship between politicians and female journalists. Ms. Shaheen, who is also editor of a leading Urdu monthly, said that it is necessary for journalists to have vast knowledge about the political parties. It is essential for a journalist to know how leaders and the members of the political parties think about the problems the country is faced with. How they communicate their messages and programs to the public? Whether their publicity programme is to raise the public issues or they are only using the publicity sources to promote their leadership? She said that journalists should also be aware of what sort of relationship is required between the media and political parties to promote democracy and democratic institutions in the country. In his presentation on the performance of the political parties' publicity, Nazir Laghari, Editor of Daily Awam, talked about the evolution of the political parties and political groups in Pakistan. He discussed tendencies of factionalism in the political parties and overabundance of parties in Pakistan.

At the end of his presentation, Mr. Leghari responded to questions from the participants. Question-answer session was held after this, in which women journalists and the students put their questions forward which were answered in detail. This was the end of the presentation

Mr Riaz Bhatti talked about propaganda instruments and resources used by different political parties. Mr Bhatti said that the Constitution of Pakistan guarantees fundamental human rights of the citizens. The charter of human rights comprises of articles 8 to 28 in the Constitution. The above-mentioned 21 articles of the Constitution guarantees freedom of gathering, freedom of association, freedom of forming political, religious, or business organizations, freedom of writing and speech, freedom of free movement, and freedom of performing religious rites, preaching, broadcasting and publication.

According to the constitution, the citizens are free to support or oppose any political party and the political parties have the freedom to deliver their messages to the public through writing, speech and other sources. Journalists are free in the same way to observe and report the programmes of the political parties through their writings. Moreover, they should cover the political activities impartially.

He said that different political parties in Pakistan issue press releases. They use press release as an important propaganda weapon. Besides central and provincial committees of the political parties, their district, tehsil, town, zone, sector, unit, and union council level committees also issue statements. With coverage of the party policies, press releases are a critique on the other parties and government as well. Press conference is another propaganda tool. The leaders of the political parties inform the public about important issues and make important party announcements at the press conference.

For their publicity campaign, the political parties also use posters and stickers. Whether they are to put demands to the government or to inform the public about some issue, they use posters and



stickers. Sometimes political parties regularly publish advertisements in the newspapers, and then use electronic media like television and radio as a tool of propaganda. He said that the electronic media in Pakistan is not so free as to give coverage to the political parties according to the demands and wishes of the public. But in America and Europe electronic media plays an important role. By purchasing time over electronic media, the political parties exploit them in a useful manner.

The political parties also use hoardings for the publicity of their programmes. In the previous local elections, the election campaign was run through hoardings. About 80 percent hoardings of the city were being used for election campaigns.

The political parties also use books and booklets for publicizing their programmes. Some parties issue their own newspapers and journals. Jamat Islami has its own representative newspapers Daily Jisarat and Friday Special while Pakistan Peoples Party has Daily Mussawat and Weekly Nusrat. In the same way Daily Nawa-i-Waqt is considered as representative of the Muslim League while Daily Aman is representative paper of MQM.

Some political parties are using websites for public outreach. Though all the political parties have their own websites but most of them do not update their web pages regularly. MQM is updating its website regularly.

Mr. Bhatti's presentation was followed by a question-answer session.

## Second Session

Ms. Fauzia Shaheen on behalf of WMC opened the second session and said the centre aims to develop coordination between female journalists and political leaders at length and it will help us establish a democratic society. She said there should not be any hindrance or hurdles in any field of journalism for women. Female journalists are working in every area of media including politics and war reporting. We believe that Arabs have conservative societies, but their newspapers sent their female reporters to the war zone and they got news of paramount importance.

Wherever war breaks out or any disturbance takes place, the person who is seen first on the screen is, CNN news reporter, Christina Amnpur, even the former in charge of AP in Pakistan was a lady named Kathy, who is now days on coverage of Afghanistan and Iran. WMC is looking forward to having these areas of journalism accessible for our female journalists so that they could work on the areas like politics, trade, sports, science and technology as well as war.

Zubaida Mustafa, Assistant Editor of daily DAWN, in her presentation said women in Pakistan create obstacles for themselves. Mentally they are not prepared to work outside the four walls of their house. For journalists mobility is necessary while woman journalists avoid running after news stories. It is not easy for them to go to offices, rallies and press conferences of political parties in different parts of the city. Some of them cannot work in late night shifts because their families do not let them to work late in the night. These problems are worth consideration.

She opined that women are not prepared for reporting about parliament and political activities. They do not take keen interest in politics and political issues. 'There is not a single woman in

reporting section and newsroom of DAWN. However, a lady is in charge of very important department of DAWN Business and Economic Review. Most of the women in DAWN are in the department of women magazine. If they specialize themselves in some fields, an opportunity will be provided to them.'

The veteran journalist said the most important thing required of women is to be industrious. They should study deeply and obtain maximum knowledge of their related working fields. They should be in contact with experts of that field. Journalists should meet political leaders and create news by questioning them. If the opposition criticizes the government, it should be cross-questioned about its alternative course and policy if in power.

Her presentation was well received and participants asked her several questions, specifically pointed-questions about the threats received by media and papers in Pakistan from different political parties. She described some important details about the pressure on newspapers from different political parties.

## Third Session

Third session was a Scenario workshop session. It was divided into three parts. In the first part, three students played the role of women leaders of three different political parties and participated in a talk show. Its topic was "Is the president of the country necessary to be in uniform?"

The second part of the Scenario workshop was the interview of the head of Pakistan Peoples Party Benazir Bhutto. She was interviewed after her return in the country. In the interview very interesting questions about Benazir's activities outside the country, problems after arrival in motherland, cases against her, her conjugal life and about her children were asked and the role-playing character answered them confidently.

The last part of the Scenario workshop was about the press conference of the president General Pervaiz Musharraf.



## Summary of Second Day Proceedings



(From right to left) Opposition leader of Shilla Assembly Mirza Ahmed Khairo, Farida Shahzad & Mr. Governor of Shilla Nazamuddin Khairo



(From right to left) Farida Shahzad & Mr. Mirza Begal



Prominence of group work



Opposition leader Mirza Ahmed Khairo giving certificate to the participants



## First Session

Senior reporter of daily DAWN Shamim-ur- Rehman gave his presentation about the political meetings and their coverage. He said that 'in South Asia women journalists are treated discriminately. I want to say to the women coming in journalism that while adopting this profession they should be resolute. It is said that these days, journalists use telephones to obtain reports and the reason is indolence on their part in different departments of the papers. It happens due to colleagues working in different newspapers, who attend some meetings and convey it to their colleagues in other newspapers. He narrated his own experience that Benazir was to address an election procession in the Nishtar Park in 1993 and when she reached there, the stage was already occupied by Murtaza Bhutto's companions. She had only two options either to leave or to accept the challenge of the situation and she thought it fit to remain at the stage and address. 'I gave importance to the situation more than the speech. I wrote in the paper that the Nishtar Park Rally for Benazir became a matter of death and life.'

The senior reporter said when I cover a rally I try to feel its attraction for the public and its after-effects. This is how I come to know about public thinking. Journalism takes much of your time. We have covered rallies more than 16 hours continuously. To report about a rally you should know its route fully to give it full coverage. If it is of some political nature, you should be aware of its agenda and if it is about some issue then complete information of that issue. 'There are some rallies in which element of violence is prevalent. You should protect yourself first and report later. You can support your story staunchly only if you are present at the spot. Nothing can be added from your own in political reporting. You are to report impartially. The reporter is to report instead of giving his opinion. Your partiality to some party will damage the credibility of your story. He advised journalists to cover the meetings and rallies from a safe distance and be alert to protect yourself. Keep in mind that the reporter is always reporter and there is no time limit for him.

## Group work

After the presentation of Shamim-ur Rehman, women journalist and students were asked to do group work. They were given a print of Urdu newspaper and asked to sketch the headline and subsequent headings. They were informed as to how many words should be in the subsequent columns, three columns, four columns and five column headings and how many words are necessary for the subsequent headings.

After group work, its presentation was prepared and presented, which was attended with keen interest.

## Second Session

The second session was Spin Doctors: spin over substance, relevance with Pakistan. It was about the publicity and coverage of the political parties. Dr. Huma Baqai gave her presentation on this topic. She said that the present decade is termed as a decade of spin. In media, spin means to say something, which outwardly seems to be against me but inwardly goes in my favour. It is used in advertising as well. You see 50% concession on the board but when you enter the store, it is only on few items. In communication, it means to catch attention of somebody. If someone is selling



shampoo, or house or cloth, he is catching the attention of the people by spinning. This is also used in politics and such persons are called spin doctors. The measures which are taken to get favourable results in elections, democracy and electoral process, called the working of spin doctors. He uses the power of media for his party. If a journalist writes in favour of some political party, it is considered as advocacy and if he is painting some false picture as a rosy one that is not spinning but yellow journalism.

Spin doctor's job is to judge the thinking of some journalist beforehand. He tries to know the public opinion and guesses about the nature of public reactions about some issues. The government ministers of information, secretaries of information, press secretaries, public relations spokesperson are some sort of spin doctors.'

'In this modern age of multitude of papers and television channels, spinning will automatically increase and if spinning brings out half truths, counter spinning brings out the full and open picture of it. It has its own effects. But the journalists are to work like filters to keep the people informed about the negative and positive effects of spinning. One thing must be kept in mind where personalities are centers of politics; spinning by media is much more. Spin doctors have their role in building and wrecking the image of political leaders and parties. But this is not the whole of the political parties in any situation.'

After the presentation, Dr Huma Baqai presented a questionnaire to fill in by the participants.

## Third Session

The topic of the third session of the workshop was as to How the Internal Differences and Contradictions of the Different Political Parties should be Reported. Deputy Resident Editor of Daily Nawa-i-Waqat, Mr. Yousuf Khan gave his presentation on this topic.

He said, 'the contradictions of the political parties can be exposed by comparing their past and present stances on some issues, for example one political party was against the presence of the Rangers in Karachi and when it came to power, it put the same demand on the backburner.' 'In order to look into the contradictions of the political parties we are to see as to how much some party is close to its manifesto that was presented before the public.

'About the reporting of contradictions in some political party I want to say there is zero tolerance in our society about it. A person who claims to be a great leader in Pakistan will be found to have zero tolerance. We observe that some parties claim to be democratic but are not prepared to democratize themselves internally. You must have a vast knowledge to report about the contradictions of the parties. You are also to keep an eye over the internal factionalism in the party and for this purpose it is your responsibility to have close and strong contacts with the high ups of the party, which you are going to report about and cover.'

## Fourth Session

In Political Dialogue session, the leaders of political parties and members of Sindh Assemblies were invited to have a dialogue over some vital issues facing the country. In this session for presentation, leader of the opposition in Sindh Assembly Nisar Khurou, ex-governor of Sindh Manoon Hussain, ex-minister of Sindh Sayyed Shakir Ali, two members of Sindh Assembly Asma Sherwani and Heer



Soho and president of Peoples Party Liari Malik Mohammad Khan were invited.

MQM's member of Sindh Assembly Asma Sherwani said that 'little is discussed about the problems faced by women. In media there are fewer women. In our party women are given much importance. I joined politics as a worker. There are only two women in the coordination committee of our party.'

'Where ever women are on the oppressed side in the country, they are made the victim of violence. Our leader Altaf Hussain takes firm stand on such issues. Our party took a firm stand on the issues of Shaista Almani and Dr Shazia Khalid.'

MQM's member of Sindh Assembly Heer Suhu said that 'she is happy to see such a great number of women participants in the workshop. In our society, women's problems and issues are not exposed on the media. Only issues of Hudood laws and Karokari are raised in media. The inclusion of women in journalism will hearten the women who are facing problems. Our party thinks feudalism to be responsible for social disintegrations. We are trying to abolish this system of feudalism. We promise to cooperate fully with the new generation of women joining journalism.'

The member of Sindh Assembly and ex-minister of Sindh Sayyed Shakir Ali belong to MQM. He said, 'we want justice for everyone at the doorstep, and MQM is striving to abolish feudalism. MQM wants protection for women in the society. The credit for effective representation of women in elected bodies goes to the current government'.

The former Naib Nazim Liari and the President Pakistan Peoples Party Liari Malik Mohammad Khan said that the PPP has always brought the women issue on the forefront and the party has women wing with branches in the grass root level. The party includes women in every level and recently a woman Sherry Rehman has been made Central Information Secretary of the party. The leader of the party is also a woman, he said.

The former governor Sindh and the Central Vice President of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Mamnoon Hussain said that women journalists can be successful with hard work and dedication. He asked the women journalists to keep working with integrity and they will succeed. He said that he wanted to handover the entire primary education to women during his tenure as governor of the province. He said that if the women journalists go to the parliament then they can establish cordial relations with the parliamentarians. He said that the institutions have been negatively effected by the repeated military interventions including the institutions of Judiciary and religious population. He said that his party believes that no journalist should side with the generals who usurp power.

The leader of the PPP and the leader of Opposition in Sindh Assembly, Nisar Ahmed Khoro said that to acquire knowledge and using brain are entirely different things. Observance is the basic requirement for acquiring knowledge and a person keeps observing all through his/her life.

Nisar Khoro said that there are two kinds of political reporting. One is the reporting of statement and the other is investigative reporting. If you are reporting from the parliament then you should be aware of rules and regulations of the parliament. You observe not only the floor of the House but also the guests' gallery and the bureaucrats who visit the assembly. You have to observe that whether the proceedings are according to the rules or not.



Criticizing the condition of graduation to become a member of the assembly he said that the society cannot advance by these measures. The budget of Sindh was 193 billion rupees but only 50 billions have been allocated for the social development. This 50 billion include the 13 billion which were not spent last year because of incompetence of the current Sindh government.

A question/answer session took place after his speech and the participants showed great interest in this session. This was a very informative session.

**Concluding Session:**

Certificate were given to the participants at the end of the workshop.



## Conclusion

The workshop was a great success in every respect and the aim of the workshop was achieved. The women journalists and the students acquired the practical knowledge of different aspects of reporting. The women journalists and the students displayed great interest in the different sessions of the workshop and became aware of the difficulties and challenges in the profession.



# Workshops

## Workshop Achievements

- This workshop proved to be a great success with respect to establishing cordial relation between the politicians and women journalists. They had the opportunity to discuss in detail their view and apprehensions on different issues.
- The journalists had the opportunity to acquire the knowledge of vital aspects of reporting for the coverage of big political and democratic events. The women journalists were made aware of the several aspects of coverage of big political processions and rallies.
- The women journalists also learnt how they should report the internal differences in the political parties. They were also trained about differentiating between the difference of opinion within the party and break-up in the political parties. They also learnt how they should hold discussion with the politicians and how the politicians themselves discuss issues.
- The women journalists attained the first hand knowledge regarding issues concerning talk shows, interviews and press conferences and how these should be reported.

# achievements





"There should not be any hindrance or hurdles in any field of journalism for women. Female journalists are working in every area of media including politics and war reporting. We believe that Arabs have conservative societies, but their newspapers sent their female reporters to the war zone and they got news of paramount importance. Wherever war breaks out or any disturbance takes place, the person who is seen first on the screen is, CNN news reporter, Christiane Amanpour, even the former in charge of AP in Pakistan was a lady named Kathy, who is now days on coverage of Afghanistan and Iran. WMC is looking forward to having these areas of journalism accessible for our female journalists so that they could work on the areas like politics, trade, sports, science and technology as well as war".

Fauzia Shaheen  
Executive Director, WMC

The logo for Women Media Centre Pakistan (WMC) features the letters 'wmc' in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. The 'w' and 'm' are connected, and the 'c' is a simple, thick-lined curve. The letters are dark grey or black.

W o m e n   M e d i a   C e n t r e   P a k i s t a n

## Indroduction

## Women Media Center Pakistan

Women Media Center Pakistan (WMC) is a nonprofit organization working to provide research and training facilities to the women in media.

It is an exceptional organization with respect to its ideology and working. It realizes the feeble nature of Pakistani democratic structure and limited women representation in the media. WMC is working to promote creativeness in ideas amongst women so that their recommendations can become a part of policies of the country.

WMC is currently working on several projects which if implemented can enable women journalist to work in a professional environment so that not only democracy could be strengthened but also focus could be directed towards other critical social issues.

WMC has begun working in the largest Pakistani city Karachi. We wish to reach not only other parts of Pakistan but also to extend our efforts to South Asia.



## National Endowment for Democracy, USA

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is a private, nonprofit organization created in 1983 to strengthen democratic institutions around the world through nongovernmental efforts. The Endowment is governed by an independent, nonpartisan board of directors. With its annual congressional appropriation, it makes hundreds of grants each year to support prodemocracy groups in Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and the former Soviet Union.

The Endowment is guided by the belief that freedom is a universal human aspiration that can be realized through the development of democratic institutions, procedures, and values. Democracy cannot be achieved through a single election and need not be based upon the model of the United States or any other particular country. Rather, it evolves according to the needs and traditions of diverse political cultures.



"Women journalists should emphasis on investigating reporting and learn to analyses the political situations impartially".

Nisar Ahmed Khuhro  
Opposition Leader, Sindh Assembly

"The male-domination in the field of parliamentary reporting should come to an end now, and the women journalists, who were equally competent, should be given the chance to prove themselves".

Kazi Asad Abid  
Secretary General, All Pakistan Newspapers Society

"Some women are not permitted from their families to work until late at night. These problems are worth consideration. I hope that Women Media Center will try to work out the solution of these obstacles and for this, workshops are necessary. In this way, women will be enabled to stay in journalism".

Zubaida Mustufa  
Asst. Editor Daily Dawn

"It is not right for women to differentiate journalists on the basis of gender because it may harm them instead of giving them any advantage".

Mazhar Abbas  
Bureau Chief of AFP

"From Article 8 to 28, a total of 21 Articles are regarding the basic rights of the people, which apply without any gender prejudice. The Article 55 explains that no one would be treated with bias on the basis of gender. The Article 34 also says that women would be included in every field of life. The constitution also protects the institution of marriage and family. It gives equal rights to men and women to vote".

Professor Ghafoor Ahmed  
Deputy Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami,

"One of the basic responsibilities of a journalist is to promote accountability and rule of law. We do not have a culture of probing into the issue and we do not take initiatives".

Zafarullah Khan  
Executive Director Centre for Civic Education

"Women journalist normally face the problem that prejudice is meted out to them for being a woman. Women work more but are paid less. In general, women are not trusted with responsible and important jobs".

Dr. Huma Baqal  
Asst. Professors Dept. International relation Karachi University

"It is unfortunate that the teachers in our universities are unaware of the difficulties in practical field. As long as professional journalists do not start teaching in educational institutions the knowledge cannot be correctly imparted".

Owais Tohid  
Director News & Current Affairs ARY Digital