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PRESS RELEASE

Today, a Seminar on the Rights & Welfare of Transgender Persons was held in the Supreme Court of Pakistan under the aegis of the Law & Justice Commission of Pakistan in collaboration with the Punjab Social Protection Authority, Government of Punjab.

The Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan/Chairman, Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan chaired the concluding session wherein His Lordship was briefed about the recommendations formulated for Policy framework aimed at the welfare of the transgender community, advocacy for registration with NADRA and sensitization of the Government agencies as well as public for behavioral changes towards the community.

In his introductory remarks, the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan expressed his grief on way in which the transgender community is being treated and their social exclusion. His Lordship stated that rights to live a dignified and self-steamed life and to be treated equally are natural rights and the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan provides all such rights driven from such natural rights to a transgender. He assured that the Supreme Court of Pakistan is determined to protect the rights of this marginalized community. His Lordship urged the Federal and provincial governments to formulate a comprehensive policy for protection, rehabilitation and mainstreaming the transgender community in the society without any taboo or stigma.

The Supreme Court of Pakistan while hearing a Human Right Case related to a matter regarding issuance of CNIC in favour of Transgender directed the Law & Justice Commission of Pakistan to hold a Seminar of the stakeholders and representatives of the transgender community to formulate recommendations for protecting the rights and welfare of the transgender community.

Mr. Justice Khilji Arif Hussain, Former Judge Supreme Court of Pakistan chaired the plenary session of the Seminar while representative from relevant government departments and representatives of the civil society & transgender community attended the Seminar. Dr Muhammad Raheem Awan Secretary Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan moderated the Seminar.

Hon'ble Mr. Justice (R) Khilji Arif Hussain welcomed the Participant and underscored the need for protection of rights of this suppressed class of the society that can play useful in the development of the society. He stressed upon the government functionaries to adopt an inclusive policy for welfare of transgender.

Mr. Akbar Durrani, (TI) Chief Secretary, Government of Punjab presented conceptual note and shared the initiatives of the Government of Punjab for welfare of the transgender community in the backdrop of the Hon'ble Supreme Court's directions. Dr. Amjad Saqib, Chairman "Akhuwat Foundation" highlighted issues being faced by the transgender community and briefed the participants about the initiatives taken by the Akhuwat Foundation for welfare of the transgender community.

The representative from Transgender person shared the ordeal of the community and complained about the discriminatory behaviors of the society and its psychological impact. They raised the issues like right to inheritance, education social insecurity and derogatory attitude of the society towards the transgender community.

The Secretary Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) shared the initiatives taken to reduce the hardship of transgender community and outlines of the financial assistance packages implemented for supporting the transgender community. He informed that the BISP intends to extend educational assistance to transgender through "WaseelaTaleem Program".

Mr. Tariq Khilji from "the Vision" expressed the views about Community Development of Transgender persons, he expressed that social inclusion of transgender is integral for the development of society. The representatives of the provincial governments shared initiatives being taken by the respective provincial governments.

In concluding session, Dr. Sohail Anwar, Punjab Social Protection Authority shared the recommendations formulated during the discussion and explained the broader policy framework for the welfare and protection of rights of the transgender community.

The Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan appreciated the recommendations and asked the relevant authorities to publish the recommendations for feedback and comments.

Nasrullah Khan
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