



DATELINE GRAPHIC BY ABDUL QADIR

Gender-based violence too much to overlook

■ MUNIR AHMED



Rights

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VIOLENCE against women (VAW) increased significantly during the first half of 2011 with 4448 cases reported across the country, say biannual statistics compiled by Aurat Foundation (AF) and Violence Against Women Watch Group.

"The data monitored during January to June this year shows an increase in the gender-based violence incidents as compared to 4061 cases reported in the same period last year.

"Out of the total VAW reported cases, some 3035 were registered in Punjab, 819 in Sindh, 389 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and 133 in Balochistan. Seventy-two cases were reported in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT)," said Rabbia Haadi, AF's national programme coordinator while briefing media persons Tuesday.

Abduction was the most-reported violence against women with 1137 cases. Murder resulting from property dispute and men going for other marriages among other reasons was the second largest crime with 799 reported cases (this excludes honour killing).

Rape is the third widely-committed crime with 396 reported incidents in the same period. According to the statistics, 402 women committed suicide.

Contrary to overall increase in VAW in the country, the number of reported cases in Sindh province has decreased as compared to the last year.

Haadi said this might be due to the media's wide coverage against gender-based crimes and keeping an eye on the law and order situation there.

In the last six months, 940 cases were reported in Sindh while 819 incidents of violence against women were reported in 23 districts of

Sindh in 2010.

Haadi said these statistics are just a tip of the iceberg and majority of VAW cases remain unrecorded due to social and traditional norms and troublesome reporting system.

She said it is the fourth year Aurat Foundation monitored and highlighted the cases of violence against women from all over Pakistan.

However, she said they are in the process of setting up a system in Gilgit-Baltistan to monitor VAW incidents.

"The objective behind the qualitative and quantitative analysis on bi-annual and annual basis has always been to lobby with legislators, particularly women legislators in the national and the provincial assemblies for recognizing violence against women as an

offence and mobilising law enforcing agencies and communities to take necessary measures. These steps could be introducing required legislation, effective arrangement for legal literacy on the issue to the concerned implementing state institutions including lower courts, and sensitising police institutions towards reporting cases of violence against women properly," she added.

Haadi said the data was gathered and compiled from newspaper stories. By sharing this data with the media and concerned institutions, Aurat Foundation also expressed its commitment to shape a society with zero tolerance for violence against women.

Samar Minallah, a rights activist, said provinces' commitment is crucial

in curbing and monitoring this crime. She also asked for more integrated approach towards recording incidents at district level with the support of grass-roots and community-based organizations (CBOs).

Riffat Ara Baig, National Coordinator DEVCOM-Pakistan, told *Dateline* that increase in VAW incidents means advocacy and awareness raising campaigns could not get the message across at grass-roots level.

Poor legislation and stereo-types are the main hindrance in curbing this menace.

The women parliamentarians in particular should take up initiative on the domestic violence against women bill as soon as possible. Only then we can hope a better situation.

Category of crime	Total Cases		Region-wise Reported Cases				
	No.	%	Punjab	Sindh	KPK	Baloch	ICT
Abduction/Kidnapping	1137	25.6	986	101	28	9	13
Murder	799	17.96	405	160	179	40	15
Domestic violence	356	8.00	181	85	81	0	9
Suicide	402	9.04	271	76	41	11	3
Honour Killing	382	8.59	148	155	14	64	1
Rape/Gang rape	396	8.90	343	43	3	4	3
Sexual assault	57	1.28	25	29	0	0	3
Acid throwing	22	0.49	17	3	0	0	2
Stove-burning	16	0.34	16	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	881	19.81	---	---	---	---	---
Total	4448	100					