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KITAKYUSHU FORUM ON ASIAN WOMEN (KFAW) June 2014 Triannual Publication

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Women Today

Amid Hardships: Thailand Attempts to Raise the Status of Women

Although the 21st century began 14 years ago, I feel that genuine gender equality, world-wide, is still very far from reality. Discrimination exists in society, based on class, hierarchy, and skin color. However, I'm confident that nothing is more important than for people to recognize each other's differences and good points, to acquire cooperativeness, and to respect the dignity of other people regardless of gender, generation, and cultural differences. Recently, there have been many media reports from various countries regarding violations of human rights. In many cases, good traditions are abused by persons in power, or parents kill their babies immediately after learning their gender. In addition, based on customs requiring girls to engage in household chores and child-raising, some parents deprive their daughters of opportunities to go to school and allow only their sons to receive education. This, of course, means that women lose opportunities to advance in society. At the same time, many women are killed by their husbands and sons in domestic violence.

In Thailand, 82 years have passed since the Constitutional Revolution in 1932. In 2011, as the result of a general election, Ms. Yingluck SHIBAWATRA assumed office as the country's 28th prime minister. As the country's first female prime minister, however, she is experiencing extreme gender discrimination, in various forms. Under such circumstances, few women in Thailand aim to become politicians, and women face many obstacles.

As indicated by the expression "Laws established by an influential person are beneficial for those belonging to that person's community," it is not unusual in Thailand for the gender of influential persons to affect the country's administration and politics. In 2012, the year after she was inaugurated, Prime Minister Yingluck launched Thai Women Empowerment Funds (to support activities improving women's status in Thailand) as a measure to tackle women's issues by promoting women's employment and increasing their income. Funding totaling 7.7 billion baht finances various efforts to support Thai women, including low-interest loans and subsidies. Groups consisting of five or more women can submit a project application for discussion and if it is approved, they can go ahead with the project.

The key management members for Thai Women Empowerment Funds are elected from across the country. In the capital, Bangkok, a total of 17 members have been elected and I myself am a chairperson. We have received project applications from 50 districts in Bangkok, and the amount of subsidies provided has so



Founder of the Duang Prateep Foundation
Prateep UNGSONGTHAM HATA

far reached 130 million baht. The subsidy provided for each project is up to 200,000 baht, creating a very good opportunity for housewives and other women in slums to change their situations. Previously, it was impossible for poor women with few assets to borrow money from banks, making some of them borrow money from the Mafia (usurious lending) at an annual interest rate of 24% (monthly rate of 2%). The annual interest rate for Thai Women Empowerment Funds is 3%, and these funds have enabled housewives in slums to transform their position from employees to employers.

The 130 million baht already provided has improved the lives of some two to three million women in Bangkok. It can be said that this is like creating an oasis in a desert. However, regrettably, this subsidy funding for women has not yet been approved officially by the national assembly. Since last year, Thailand has been politically unstable. Although Prime Minister Yingluck has announced the dissolution of the national assembly, there is no likelihood yet of the political confusion being settled.

The Duang Prateep Foundation will continue to advocate for the rights of women and other people in difficult situations and to promote a wide variety of efforts, in cooperation with various organizations. No matter where they live on this planet, human beings are equal. To eliminate gender and racial discriminations, and to ensure that the lives of elderly people and others in vulnerable positions and difficult situations improve step by step, we strongly hope to walk and live together with you all.

Profile of Prateep UNGSONGTHAM HATA

She was born in Khlong Toei, a slum in Bangkok. Recognized for her various efforts, such as the operation of the Baht a Day School (1968-1975) for children from poor families in slums, in 1978, she received the Ramon Magsaysay Award (for Public Service). In the same year, using the award reward, she founded the Duang Prateep Foundation and became the organization's Secretary General. She still holds this position.

In 1980, she also received the John D Rockefeller III Youth Award (Rockefeller Foundation), and with the prize money she established the Foundation for Slum Child Care. In 2000, she was elected to the Senate, and until 2006 she was engaged in the national administration, developing political measures to support socially vulnerable people. In addition, she is currently the Chairperson of the Coordinating Committee for Slum Development. She holds a diploma in education from Suan Dusit Teachers College, Bangkok (1976).

*This article was written in March, 2014

Message to Women in Japan: Let us work together for gender equality in Asia

Ms. Kristi POERWANDARI

(Head of the Graduate Program in Women's Studies, Universitas Indonesia)

I have been actively involved in women's issues since 1990, when I was one of the first batch of students in the Gender Studies Graduate Program at Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta. With the support of some funding, at the beginning of the study program, we – as a very small study program – had the opportunity to participate in some of the international women's events in the world to learn about women's issues worldwide.

Even so, the program faces challenges in strengthening its institutional status within the university. As the university underlines the policy of higher education in Indonesia, which tends to perceive women's studies as having no significant 'academic' value, the program needs to address various issues. Meanwhile, the university partly evaluates the program as to whether it is important from the viewpoint of its investment.

When our institution joined the Asian linkage for women's studies initiated by Ewha Woman's University in Korea, I began to realize that – rather than wandering around in the global world with no clear focus – it would be better to deepen our understanding about ourselves, women and the gender construction in Asia. With this perspective, women in Asia can mutually reinforce themselves to construct knowledge and the new civilization with respectful partnerships between women and men, and among the countries and people in Asia. The linkage initiated by Ewha Woman's University is now transforming into the Asian Association of Women's Studies, with 540 members from 35 countries.

We might have different issues to work on in each country. Perhaps women in Japan still face challenges to ensure their active roles in the public arena and in the public decision making. This would be due to its working culture in which men and women are expected to work until very late at night, while at the same time, women are still expected to take care of the family. It is then almost impossible for women to commit themselves fully to their careers, unless they choose to remain unmarried.

In Indonesia we face different issues such as poverty and challenges to good governance, both of which are implicated in lowering the quality of life of women. We still have high maternal mortality rates, gender-based violence in different forms, multiple burdens for women,

as well as the recent tendency of 'morality discourse' which restricts the freedom and might reduce the roles of women in the public arena and on the state decision making levels.

However, men have similar aspiration for respectful partnerships between women and men in a gender equal society. Therefore, it is our hope that we can consistently enhance our cooperation in works of gender study, and at the same time strengthen all the institutions involved.

A new hope is now with the new head of the Interdisciplinary School at Universitas Indonesia, Dr. Sulistyowati IRIANTO. She is one of our gender equality advocates and has very visionary thoughts about interdisciplinary works as well as international networking. Therefore, we will be very determined to fight for the advancement of gender studies in Indonesia and in Asia.

From this standpoint, we look forward to enhancing our cooperation with women in Japan in disclosing (1) the continuing existence of gender discrimination and gender gaps in our society; (2) the widespread negative impacts of such discrimination and gender gaps on all of us women and men, girls and boys; and (3) the positive impacts of gender equality and justice on all members of society. Also we will place same importance on developing possible strategies to eliminate discrimination through the building of expertise in gender analysis, gender-responsive policy formulation, budgeting and implementation, as well as its monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Let us work together for gender equality in Asia!

Profile

Kristi POERWANDARI



Lecturer in the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia. Head of the Graduate Program in Women's Studies at the same university. One of the founders and board members of PULIH Foundation (Center for Psychosocial Intervention of Trauma.)

She is interested in prevention and intervention of gender-based violence and human violence in general, care for caregivers, capacity building for humanitarian workers, and empowerment of poor community. She is also concerned about ensuring gender justice and mainstreaming psychology in the legal paradigm and processes.

KFAW Consulate Series Part 3 "Vietnamese Historical Culture and Families"

■ Date & Time: November 27, 2013, 15:00–16:30

■ Number of Participants: 66

■ Lecturers: Bui Quoc THANH (Consul-General of the Consulate-General of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in Fukuoka)

Nguyen Viet DUC (Vice Consul-General of the Consulate-General of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in Fukuoka)

In the third round of the KFAW Consulate Series, seminars delivered by consuls of consulates located in Fukuoka, we invited the Consul-General and the Vice Consul-General from the Consulate-General of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in Fukuoka.

Consul-General THANH first talked about Vietnamese relations with Japan,



Consul-General Thanh (right) and Vice Consul-General Duc

and also with Kitakyushu City. Vice Consul-General DUC subsequently spoke about Vietnamese historical culture.

As seminar guests, members of the Hanoi Women's Federation participated in the seminar in *ao dai*,

Members of the Hanoi Women's Federation traditional Vietnamese costume. Despite the rain, the event attracted many citizens, and an active Q&A session was held.



“Learn International Cooperation in the Philippines”

From February 23 to March 2, 2014, we held a study tour under the theme of “Learn International Cooperation in the Philippines,” with the focus on the country’s poverty, gender problems, and international cooperation. We had publicized this tour mainly in Kitakyushu, eventually attracting 13 participants. Although they were all different in terms of age, gender, and occupation, we feel that they were able to learn a lot from the tour.

The following is a report written by Ms. Mayumi IWAO, one of the participants.

Report on the KFAW Study Tour Ms. Mayumi IWAO

PREDA Foundation

After arriving in the Philippines, we left Manila and headed to the PREDA Foundation, an NGO in Olongapo City. It took us three hours to get there by bus. Then, we rode a small bus called a jeepney, the popular



Home for Boys

public transportation in the country, and travelled to Home for Boys run by the foundation. The bumpy ride made me feel as if I had been riding a horse-drawn carriage.

Social workers from the PREDA Foundation help children get released from a prison and give them support and education at Home for Boys. Most of these children were victims of cruel treatment such as sexual exploitation, or abuse/neglect by their parents. They had no choice but to simply become street children and steal food or money in order to survive. They ended up in jail, where they were abused by other inmates since these places are not made for kids but for adults. We need to realize these children are not perpetrators but victims of distorted social structures.

After an orientation, the staff showed us some rooms where boys were actually taking support programs. We first visited the Yellow Room, whose walls were covered with soft material. In this room, the boys can freely express their feelings such as anger, sorrow, and pain—the emotions that they cannot show anywhere else—while punching and kicking the walls. I thought this practice would help them feel better and learn how to control their emotions. This sight put me into deep thoughts. These boys live together in this friendly and open facility. They exchange jokes and look just like real brothers. After an exchange party with the boys, they showed me lots of animals and vegetables they were looking after. I hope that there will be a bright future for these boys.

Next, we paid a visit to Home for Girls, another facility run by the foundation. We received warm welcome from the staff and girls under the care of the foundation, and watched a play adapted from these girls’ grueling past experiences. I could not put into words what I felt then, and wondered if it would be really all right for these young girls to watch such

< Schedule >

- February 23: Departure from Fukuoka and arrival in Manila
- February 24: Visit to the PREDA Foundation
- February 25: Visit to the indigenous Aeta MAO Community and homestay
- February 26: Feeding volunteer at the MAO Community
- February 27: Visit to a fair trade group
Visit to the Women and Gender Institute, Miriam College
- February 28: Visit to the Crisis Center for Violence against Women and Children, National Bureau of Investigation
Visit to slum area in Navotas
- March 1: Visit to DAWN
- March 2: Departure from Manila and arrival in Fukuoka

a realistic play drawn from their horrific and painful experiences of becoming victims of abuse and human trafficking committed by their own parents and relatives. It must be unbearable for anyone to face such a past. All children should feel loved by their parents or people around them. However, here in Japan as well, many children do not feel loved by their abusive parents. This issue is not just limited to the Philippines but applies in most societies in the world. Receiving necessary support and programs provided by the PREDA Foundation, the boys and the girls become strong enough to squarely face their past and learn how to control their emotions. Then, they can look toward the future.

Indigenous Aeta MAO community

The next morning, we rode a jeepney again and headed to a local market. We bought vegetables, chicken, drinks, rice, snacks and more. These foods were for us and our host families. Yes, we were going to stay



MAO Community

overnight with Aeta families! It sounds so exciting, doesn’t it? We arrived in the MAO Community in the afternoon and had a session about the MAO Community. Then, we introduced ourselves. I said, “Ako si Mayumi” in Tagalog. I should have learned a bit more of the Tagalog language. I had a chance to talk to some of the host families, and at this point, I did not know who would be my host family yet. I found a lovely girl. She was very shy at first, but she held my hand after a minute. Later on, I came to realize that she would be my host sister. Lucky me! Her name was Cecil, and she was three years old. There were another two little kids in my host family and they were all so cute.

At last, we were introduced to each family, and that was one of the most exciting moments in this trip. One of my host sisters Paula, also aged three, came to call me. The family told me to rest first in a bamboo bunk bed. But as soon as I

left my bag there, I decided to have more communication with my family. Somehow, the kids were very curious about me and peeking at me from the lower bunk. And when I went downstairs, my host brother Edmond was preparing dinner. He was really a good cook. My host mother Lita showed me around the kitchen. She spoke her local language, and her two daughters Monette and Claudia explained what mother had said in English for me. I heard that most people did not speak English in the MAO Community, but I was lucky to have my two high school sisters who spoke English so well—actually they spoke much better than me! Then they took me outside to show their newborn puppies, garden, vegetable field, pigs, pets, and pump well. After that, we had a good chat over a cup of coffee, and enjoyed watching TV. Although I did not understand any Tagalog on the TV shows, it was fun to watch it anyway. And it was a great feeling just being with my host family and their friends at home. Time was passing so slowly with such lovely people and I really enjoyed every moment of it. In Japan, people seem too busy to spend time with their families. I prefer how time passes in the Philippines to that in Japan. We had dinner prepared by my host brother Edmond, and everything was wonderful. We had rice, two kinds of chicken dishes, cooked vegetables, traditional Filipino soup, mango fruit and a glass of mango juice. Claudia told me that traditionally they eat with their hands instead of using a fork and spoon. I tried to do so, but it wasn't easy to pick up rice since Filipino rice wasn't as sticky as the Japanese one. The next morning, I tried to eat fried fish with my hands and did it very well, I suppose.

At 8 p.m., we gathered together at the center of the MAO Community and enjoyed a big party night. Although the community had electricity, it was pitch-dark outside as there was no neon lighting. We walked to the party venue with a flash light under a night sky full of twinkling stars. They showed us their traditional bamboo dance, and kids sang some songs for us. I was so impressed. In return, we sang the “Sukiyaki Song”. These cultural exchanges truly strengthened our bonds.

Fair trade organization

On February 27th, we visited the SAFRUDI (Social Action Foundation for Rural and Urban Development, Inc.) and SAFFY (Social Action for Filipino Youth) for fair trade. We were lucky to meet some leaders of Orientation on fair trade at SAFRUDI producers from different communities. These groups were established to eliminate one-sided exploitation of developing countries by advanced countries and facilitate fair trade. The move first started in Europe in the 1960s, and is now expanding worldwide with the U.S., Australia, Canada and Japan as major advocates. Some organizations in Japan are earnestly engaged in promoting fair trade. After receiving an orientation, we visited a store called Mano Mano to see fair trade commodities actually marketed in advanced countries. I bought a lot of banana chips and stationery for souvenirs.



Orientation on fair trade at SAFRUDI

WAGI at Miriam College

In the afternoon, we went to Miriam College. We attended a lecture on women's studies at WAGI (Women and

Gender Institute) for three hours. The lecture was mainly about gender issues. Japan is far behind when it comes to the empowerment of women. I remember that every time the gender discrimination was mentioned, it was Japan that students cited as a bad example when I was an international student at the University of Wollongong, Australia. My Aussie classmates often said, “There are very few female politicians in Japan,” “Female employment rate is low,” “It is difficult for women to return to their full time jobs after marriage and childbirth,” etc. And to my regret, that is very true!

The latest Global Gender Gap Index, a comprehensive measure of gender equality, places Japan at 105th whereas the Philippines at fifth, the highest ranking in Asia. Looking at the situation in terms of gender equality, I think Japan should learn a lot more from the Philippine society.

Slum area in Navotas City

On February 28th, we visited a slum area in Navotas city, and were given an opportunity to sell food at a stall on the street. How lucky! We sampled some. It was sticky rice rolled in banana leaf.



Slum area in Navotas City

Wherever I went, children smiled at me and that made me quite happy.

Conclusion

I met so many friendly and nice people there, and I miss everything and everyone in the Philippines. I thank all the people I met during this study tour and would like to close this report by introducing what my Filipino friend said 23 years ago—of course, we have been friends ever since and were reunited during this study tour: “I remember Japan because of you.” The Philippines means a lot to me because I have special friends there. I renewed my determination to keep myself engaged in this country.

Opinions and Comments from Other Participants

Even though the study tour lasted only a week, I was able to obtain standard information on global social problems. It was a good opportunity for me to start thinking about international cooperation.

I was able to visit many places that I could not have done on a private tour. Also, I was able to observe the reality of the Philippines that I would have overlooked on an ordinary tour.

The tour gave me many opportunities to interact directly with local children and adults, making me feel the reality of the Philippines. I am happy that local people welcomed me as a close friend, rather than as just a sightseeing visitor from a rich country.

“Wave the Magic Wand – In Communities Take Advantage of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women!”

■ Date & Time: March 6, 2014, 14:00–16:00

■ Number of Participants: 172

■ Lecturers:

Ms. Ryoko AKAMATSU, President Emeritus of the Japanese Association of International Women's Rights (JAIWR), Chairperson of the Japan Committee for UNICEF

Ms. Yasuko YAMASHITA, President of JAIWR

Mr. Masao KOTSUBO, Executive Director of the Gender Equality Promotion Department, Child and Domestic Affairs Bureau, Kitakyushu City Government

Ms. Chinatsu KURUME, Assistant Manager of Administration and Human Resource Department, Shinryo Corporation

Ms. Sumiko YAZAWA, Managing Director of JAIWR

The Word Report “Wave the Magic Wand – In Communities Take Advantage of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women!” took place on March 6. The seminar focused on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It drew so many people, including people associated with women's organizations in Kitakyushu City that we needed to arrange additional chairs at the venue.

Keynote Lecture

Ms. Ryoko AKAMATSU talked about the CEDAW in an easy-to-understand manner. Based on her experience of having worked for the establishment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law and the signature of the CEDAW during her days as Director General of the Women's Bureau of the Labour Ministry, she disseminated a strong message toward the realization of a gender-equal society. With an occasional touch of humor, she strongly attracted the attention of the audience at the venue.



Ms. Ryoko AKAMATSU

Panel Discussion

< Ms. Yasuko YAMASHITA >

Ms. YAMASHITA spoke about the theme “28 Years since the Ratification of the CEDAW: What Has Changed and What Has Not Changed.” She said that changes generated by the ratification included the establishment or amendment of the Nationality Law, the Childcare Leave Law, the Part-time Work Law, the Basic Law for a Gender-equal Society, and the Domestic Violence Law, as well as the revision of the course of study, such as ensuring that both boy and girl students study home economics at high school. On the other hand, some aspects remained unchanged for the past 28 years, especially insufficient improvement of civil laws, such as gender differences in minimum marriage age and waiting period before remarriage again, and discrimination against illegitimate children. She also indicated that many problems remained unsolved even after the establishment or revision of necessary laws. For example,

in many fields such as politics, education, and employment, the relevant newly-established or revised laws were not appropriately practiced due to social environment problems. Ms. YAMASHITA concluded her lecture by stating that it was necessary to further introduce the temporary special measures (the affirmative action) recommended by the CEDAW. The future challenge would be to realize a quota system in the field of politics.

< Mr. Masao KOTSUBO >

Mr. KOTSUBO explained the city's measures to promote women's participation in society. Kitakyushu is the first ordinance-designated city with the ratio of women in its council exceeding



Panelists

40%, and now strives to increase the figure to 50% by 2018. The city's action plan to promote women's participation in society is to enhance women's presence in the policy-making process, strengthen the development of human resources regardless of gender, and create an environment where all staff members enjoy working actively. In addition, to establish the foundation to help women fully demonstrate their capabilities to the fullest extent possible, the city has solved the shortage of nurseries, and now there are no children on the waiting list for admission.

< Ms. Chinatsu KURUME >

Ms. KURUME explained measures carried out by the Fukuoka Prefecture Organization for the Promotion of Empowerment of Women. This organization strives to further promote women's participation especially in economic activities, thereby revitalizing the local economy and creating a future society with vitality. Under the leadership of the economic circles, the movement involves the industry, academia, government, and private sectors. With the background of the age of comprehensive competition, the declining birthrate and aging population, and an insufficient use of women with high capabilities, the organization tries to improve an environment to ensure that both men and women can fully demonstrate their capabilities. Ms. KURUME indicated that the empowerment of women was not just a problem of women, but it concerned a reform in how all people in society, of course including men, should work.

< Ms. Sumiko YAZAWA >

Ms. YAZAWA shared her views to practice CEDAW in a community. It is important to promote gender equality for men.

It is essential to have various role models of men who already have connections with communities so as to create an environment that attracts more men to be engaged in communities.

The subsequent discussion and Q&A sessions dealt with many comments and questions. It was noted that Kitakyushu citizens' stereotyped perceptions of gender roles was weakened, and Some people at the venue indicated that this result had come about due to the communities-based efforts by the Council of Women's Groups of Kitakyushu over 30 years.

24th Seminar on KFAW Research Activities Held

At the 24th Seminar on KFAW Research Activities, two KFAW visiting researchers reported the results of research based on a gender perspective, with the focus on Indonesia, Taiwan, Province of China, and Japan. They also exchanged various opinions with the seminar audience.

“The Roles of Women in the Recovery of Tsunami - Affected Coastal Communities: A Comparative Study between the Aceh Province of Indonesia and the Tohoku Region of Japan”

FY2012/13 KFAW Visiting Researcher

Kazuko TATSUMI, Professor, Faculty of Economics, Fukuoka University

“Gender and Various Aspects of Wording about Child Care in Modern Taiwan, Province of China”

FY2012/13 KFAW Visiting Researcher

Seiko MIYAZAKI, Associate Professor, International College of Arts and Sciences, Fukuoka Women's University

■ Date & Time: February 2, 2014, 13:30–15:30

■ Venue: ICSEAD conference room, 6th floor, Otemachi Bldg., Kitakyushu City



Seminar venue

Visit to Korea (Incheon Metropolitan City)

An interaction program between KFAW and Incheon Metropolitan City's women's organizations is to be held in Korea this fiscal year. With the purpose of its preparation and preliminary survey of visiting facilities, some staff members of KFAW visited Incheon Metropolitan City in March 2014.

On the first day, we first visited the Incheon Foundation for Women and Family. Expected to play a role as a local research center specializing in policies for women, this organization became independent of the Incheon Development Institute (IDI) in January 2013. Featuring its own research group, the Foundation provides educational programs and job training programs to encourage more women to participate in society. At the entrance on the first floor of the Foundation there was a coffee shop. What impressed us there was that the shop employed elderly staff with barista qualification.



Coffee shop at the entrance of the Incheon Foundation for Women and Family

We also visited an in-house nursery next to Incheon City Hall. This nursery is only for children of staff

working for the Incheon City Government. In Korea, there are many such nurseries and other similar facilities (2,200 facilities in Incheon Metropolitan City). Thanks to financial support from the national and local governments, people can use these facilities at a little expense.

We also visited a support center for female migrants in Korea and an employment support center for women.

On the second day, we first visited the One Stop Center, where women victims of violence are protected in cooperation with the police and hospitals. Next, we visited the Incheon Council of Women, where we were greeted by the new president, WON Buhee. According to the president, the council's visit to Kitakyushu last year was compiled as a detailed report. She said that the interaction was very significant and that they shared similar views with the people of Kitakyushu.

This visit proved fruitful to confirm that the both organizations had a will to continue our good relationship.



Meeting with the Incheon Council of Women

International Understanding Seminar

“Save Children in the Philippines!” / KFAW Study Tour Debriefing Held

■ Date & Time: March 29, 2014, 14:00–17:30

■ Number of Participants: 41

We held an international understanding seminar and invited staff members from the PREDA Foundation, which we had visited on the study tour. Ms. Marlyn CAPIO was protected at 14, when she was forced to work as a child prostitute. Now, with the support of the PREDA Foundation, she works as a social worker at the foundation in order to save children in similar difficulties. Ms. Rodelyn ARROZ, now placed under the protection of the foundation, spoke about

her very painful experience in tears.

The second half of the event was a debriefing of the study tour. Four participants gave outlines of the facilities that they had visited and spoke about how they had felt in the Philippines. The details are available on our website.



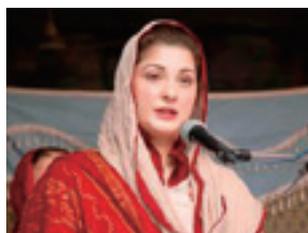
Young Female Leaders for the Future

Mr. Saboor AHMED (Pakistan)

Historically, Pakistani politics has always been dominated by a few families and dictators, and they have reserved their rights in the country's politics. Also history tells us that political parties have always used the youth to achieve their political targets and, looking at the bigger picture, the role of the youth in Pakistani politics has always been limited. In retrospect, it is evident that little or no representation has been bestowed upon Pakistani youth, particularly the women. However, in recent times, hope has arisen in the shape of Youth Parliament of Pakistan. Besides, it has brought optimism, a breath of fresh air. Young intellectuals, comprising both genders, are given importance, and finally it seems that Pakistan is on the verge of a revolution—an in-house revolution that would change the face of Pakistan not only on the political front but also on others as well.

Moreover, "Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Founder of Pakistan" saw the youth as a major asset to the newly created state, i.e., Pakistan, and repeatedly emphasized the role of the youth in Pakistani politics. And he believed the youth was vital driving force for taking the country forward. His sayings reflected his belief that the young men and women are the leaders of the future.

"Pakistan is proud of her youth, particularly the students who have always been in the forefront in the hour of trial and need. You are the nation's leaders of tomorrow and you must fully equip yourselves with discipline, education, and training to cope with arduous tasks lying ahead of you. You should realize the magnitude of your responsibility and be ready to bear it", said Muhammad Ali JINNAH. Keeping this message in mind, Pakistani youth have prepared themselves to take leading roles in politics, education, social work, sports and other spheres. On the political front, the youth of Pakistan, especially the women, have got the highest representation since the creation of Pakistan. A number of young female leaders have taken responsibility to lead the youth from the front. To mention a few, Maryam NAWAZ, the daughter of Prime Minister Nawaz SHARIF, joined the active politics a few years back, and now she is the chairperson of Youth Business Loan Scheme. Also, the daughters of former Prime Minister Benazir BHUTTO (Asifa and Bakhtawar BHUTTO) have



Ms. Maryam NAWAZ

Profile

I am from the most deprived province in Pakistan and the background of my family is a tribal family. I have experience of working in three provinces of Pakistan in the fields of disaster management and gender-based violence. Now I have a community-based organization which focuses on human rights, women's education, etc. I am a student in the gender studies department of Qaid e Azam University in Islamabad. I wish to empower women in Pakistan, give equal opportunities to them, and promote gender mainstreaming.



announced to vigorously participate in Pakistani politics.

In addition, Ayesha Gulalai WAZIR, the first woman ever elected as the member of National Assembly from FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas), is aged just 26, but nonetheless, she is ready to take up the challenges that her tribe, area, province, and country are facing for a long time. There are still many others who are ready to lead the youth and the nation with great strength and vigour.



Ms. Ayesha Gulalai WAZIR

Meanwhile, on the educational front, Malala YOUSAFZAI, a 16-year-old school girl, rendered unforgettable service by putting her life in great danger, as she was shot in the head by an extremist. Since her recovery, she has become a globally-recognized symbol of the promotion of education. Malala YOUSAFZAI has received numerous prestigious awards for her sacrifice, and is still committed to promoting the awareness of education among all people.



Ms. Malala YOUSAFZAI

Today, Pakistani women enjoy a better status than most Muslim women in other countries. However, on average, the women's situation vis-à-vis men is one of systematic gender subordination, although there have been attempts by the government and enlightened groups to elevate the status of women in Pakistani society. Now, due to a heightened awareness among people, educational opportunities for Pakistani women have increased in the past few years.

Also, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, the first Pakistani woman to win an Oscar (Academy Award) for her documentary film "Saving Face", rendered great service by highlighting the brutal and inhumane act of throwing acid at women in Pakistani society, which is tarnishing the image of the country on a global level. Thus she has become a role model for social scientists, shedding light on the social evils that prevail in our society. To sum up, it can be said that all these endeavours by young female leaders have brought about the beginning of long-awaited dawn that will always be shining on each and every one of us without bias and prejudice.



Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women

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KFAW

The Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women (KFAW) was established in October of 1990 with a special government fund for revitalization projects. Subsequently, in 1993, the KFAW was recognized as a foundation by the Ministry of Labour (the present Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare). The purpose of the KFAW is to promote the improvement of women's status through various projects as well as their mutual understanding and cooperation in Asia.