

KP Parliamentarians Capacity Building Program in Collaboration with British Council

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Women Parliamentary Caucus delegation visit to UK

Date: September 4 - 9, 2016

Participants: 11 Members Provincial Assembly
1 Assembly official
2 British Council staff

Women Parliamentary Caucus delegation from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly visited London UK where they had opportunity to visit Westminster to discuss strengthening the role of women legislators. The eleven MPAs had opportunities to explore the role and responsibility of parliamentarians and, more specifically, the role of women parliamentarians in promoting gender equality.



The program was organized by the British Council under the MOU signed with the Honorable Speaker and the Steering Committee of Capacity Building Program for the Members of Provincial Assembly.

The topics covered during the extensive sessions included the role of MPs, the impact of devolution, the Women and Equalities Select Committee, equality legislation, and the promotion of gender equality in parliaments and political parties.

The participants also spent a day shadowing UK MPs in their local constituencies (Ealing Central & Acton, and Lewsham and Deptford) to observe the role of parliamentarians in public outreach and representation.

The program was nicely rounded up with a visit to the Secretariat of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to meet senior officials and learn about their latest strategic initiatives and plans.

It was a well-planned visit packed with a number of activities which were all very informative as well as interesting. Availability of a large number of resource persons proved the excellent networking of the British Council with key partners. Sessions were interactive with active participation by all members of the delegation. The presence of British Council and KP Assembly officials was an added bonus in the overall facilitation process.

While the benefits of the tour are manifold, the main outcome is the strengthening of the relationship between the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly and the U.K. Parliament. It also helped contribute to the existing work of CPA and Women's Parliamentary Caucuses in Pakistan, while identifying future issues for discussions.

The preparation for the tour was in itself a huge learning exercise. Selection of the group (eleven female MPAs and owner Officer) members, filling in application forms for the UK visa, the visit to Gerry's in Islamabad for submission of passports and the excitement of the travel by Qatar Airways were all memorable moments. The eagerness with which the group participated in the whole tour right from the start was amazing. Even after sixteen hours of travel, every member was ready on time for the first appointment of the day i.e. Visit to Barking and Dagenham Burrough at 9 AM.

The Beginning:

The tour started with a visit to police headquarters in Barking and Dagenham which provided useful information about the holistic approach used to provide support to victims of domestic violence. It was interesting to learn from the speakers that they were also faced with serious issues of violence in the Burrough which has a population of 190000 Out of which 4.3 % are migrants from Pakistan.

The government spends £15.7 billion on the safety nets created to facilitate the victims. There are shelters and refugee centers where victims are provided basic education and some skills to help them earn for themselves and be independent. The beauty of the system is in the cooperation and collaboration of all caregivers with the police. The local



government, civil society organizations and charities all play an effective role in creating a violence-free healthy community.

According to their statistics, 25 % cases are registered every month' usually there are two cases per week. The main reasons behind this are financial problems, low income and honor based violence. Women from the Sub-Continent call the police after being beaten but then refuse to leave their home when the police arrives. However, a case is registered.

The British Council Head Office, London

Speakers: Ms Shazia Khawar, Regional Head
Ms Anna, In charge, Society Work.

The Delegation of WPC attended a Session with British Council UK staff on British Council's global agenda on WOMEN and GIRLS and an informative session with the ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP STAFF. The delegation was given briefing about the main tasks/projects of British Council regarding gender development, equity.

The Regional Head, Ms. Shazia Khawar, informed us that the BC is working in 110 countries in the fields of Education, Sports & Arts and Creativity, Recreation ,Youth Assemblies, Uniformity and Text Books. The multi- faceted Society Work focuses on strengthening individual and collective power by working on civil society and governance, justice, security and conflict, justice for all, social enterprise, women and girls empowerment etc. MENA, VAWG, WPIPL & Shakespeare Lives are the different programs by increasing awareness in public dialogues and theatre about attitudes towards women & gender inequality.

The delegation was also briefed about ALL PARLIAMENTARY PARTY GROUP. BC has round table conferences and panel discussions with MPs, experts and key government officials enhancing and understanding of their work.

Day 1 in The Parliament

On arrival at the Portcullis House of Entrance of the Houses of Parliament, the delegation was met by Ms. Helen Gardener, International Outreach Program Officer, CPA,UK. Next

was a tour of the Houses with elaborate explanation about its history and its making. Despite repeated outbreak of fire and the bombing in WW2 the historical structure has maintained its aura of grandeur and elegance. Just as the structure has withstood the ravages of time, the U.K. Parliamentary system has remained a political constant for other countries to look up to.

This speaks of the resilience of the parliamentary system and commitment of the British nation to the incomparable Westminster and its functions in building a powerful nation.

Our guide, Ms. Monica, tried to give minute details of every hall and nook and corner. Portcullis House is a new addition to the Westminster. It was opened to the public in 2001 and is currently used as the only access to the Houses. The building is named after the chained portcullis used to symbolize the Houses of Parliament on letterheads and official documents.

The Palace of Westminster is the meeting place of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, the two houses of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Commonly known as the Houses of Parliament after its occupants, it is also known as the 'heart of British politics'.

The first royal palace was built on the site in the eleventh century, and Westminster was the primary residence of the Kings of England until a fire destroyed much of the complex in 1512. After that, it served as the home of the Parliament of England, which had been meeting there since the thirteenth century, and also as the seat of the Royal Courts of Justice, based in and around Westminster Hall. In 1834, an even greater fire ravaged the heavily rebuilt Houses of Parliament, and the only medieval structures of significance to survive were Westminster Hall, the Cloisters of St Stephen's, the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft, and the Jewel Tower.



The Palace of Westminster contains over 1,100 rooms, 100 staircases and 4.8 kilometers (3 mi) of passageways,[38] which are spread over four floors. The ground floor is occupied by offices, dining rooms and bars; the first floor (known as the principal floor) houses the main rooms of the Palace, including the debating chambers, the lobbies and the libraries. The top-two floors are used as committee rooms and offices.

The Palace features separate entrances for different user groups. There is the Sovereign Entrance for the Monarch at State Openings of Parliament. Member of the House of Lords use the Peers' Entrance while members of Parliament enter their part of the building from the Members' Entrance.

We entered from the St Stephen's Entrance roughly in the middle of the building's western front, the entrance for members of the public. From there, through a flight of stairs to St Stephen's Hall we were led onward to the octagonal Central Lobby, the hub of the Palace, where constituency members meet their MPs. This hall is flanked by symmetrical corridors decorated with fresco paintings, which lead to the ante-rooms and debating chambers of the two Houses: the Members' Lobby and Commons Chamber to the north, and the Peers' Lobby and Lords Chamber to the south. Another mural-lined corridor leads east to the Lower Waiting Hall and the staircase to the first floor, where the river front is occupied by a row of 16 committee rooms. Directly below them, the libraries of the two Houses overlook the Thames from the principal floor. Due to time constraint we could not tour every section of the Palace.

The color green represents the House of Commons while red is the color of the House of Lords and blue, the color of the Sovereign. Unlike the spectacular Gothic architecture of the building, the House of Commons is shocking in its simplicity and humble arrangement. A narrow rectangular hall contains rows of benches on either side of the Speaker's Chair. There are 650 members in the Parliament but the Hall can accommodate a little over 300. Members have to reserve seat for themselves before the Sitting otherwise they have to stand if seats are not available to them.

The House of Lords, though narrow, is remarkable in the opulent golden sections reserved for the Monarch and her entourage. Members of this House were until recently all life time peers selected on the basis of inheritance. However, a recent law now brings in people with exceptional educational and professional background. There are over 700 members in the House of Lords including members of the clergy.

Suffragette Displays

A permanent display about the suffragettes showcases a suffragette medal awarded to Emmeline Pankhurst (1858 - 1928) and a scarf belonging to Emily Wilding Davison. The display is located off Central Lobby, on the way to the public gallery of the House of Commons. The display is a reminder that it is only ninety years since women in UK were given the right to vote.



Emmeline Pankhurst was the founder of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU).

Visit to Education Centre

Session 1: An Introduction to the UK Parliament: Najma

Session 2: The Role of an MP: Amna Sardar

Moderator: MP Dawn Butler, Chair Parliamentary Labour Party, Departmental Group for Women.

Questions asked by the delegates.

- What is the Role of an MP in the UK Parliament?
- How can MP balance various commitments and prioritize their time between their constituencies, Westminster, special interests and many other political and special pressures?
- What is the relationship between the political party & the MP? (Perspective of female MPs)

The questions were very complicated but most of the questions were answered. She started with this statement, "People assume an MP can do everything and continued to explain that an MP has three main responsibilities:

- Legislation.
- Representation.
- Scrutiny



It's a full time job. There is no security in this job. Especially female MPs have too many problems and hurdles. They have financial issues in elections. They have difficulties in their election campaign due to lack of funds. Men can generate funds from different sources but women cannot do so. They have to get support from different sources but its not an easy task. They spend the time in constituencies when they are not attending sessions. They are provided the staff of four members (2 part time) who assist them in their legislative, research and field work. That's why they can pay attention on both sides. The party supports them by giving them seats/tickets but they have to create an election fund by their own means/resources. Parties in UK do not discriminate on the basis of gender. But the preference is given to his / her performance. She added women are more

intelligent, competent and hardworking but still they have many hurdles to face. Their job is much harder than men because they have dual responsibilities.

Session 5: *Political Parties Support for Female Candidates.....Uzma, Rashida, Khatoon*
The delegation attended a session with UK parliamentarians on the subject “ Political Parties support for Female Candidates
Below mentioned were the Honorable Speakers:

- (i) Baroness Jenkin at Kenington (Conservative)*
- (ii) RT Hon. Tom Brake MP (Liberal Democratic)*
- (iii) Helen Jones MP (Labour)*

Before election-2015 the strength of female was low because many females were defeated in election, main reason was the finance required for the election.

There were no reserved seats for women while political parties reserved some constituencies from where only female can contest election which increased the strength of female in the Parliament.

They also added that in case of demise of a candidate the seat shall be filled by a female.

They informed the delegation In the House of Commons there are 191 females out of a total of 650 members while in the House of Lords it is 22% these were the.

Session 6: The Women and Equalities Select Committee: Fozia & Nagina

Select Committee Women and Education Presented by Gaven Shaker

The Committee consists of 13 members, 11 members are women and 2 are men from Labour Party.

Last six months they did research on gender equality and women issue. Their job is only to make Recommendations. They will present them to govt.

The govt is not bound to follow the Recommendations but he said that it does not give a good message if the government rejects all its Recommendation. So far the Committee has not moved any legislation. But they are working on amendments.

we noted the following differences between our system and theirs:

(I)Suo moto powers of Select Committee in UK, whichour Committees do not have

(ii)The Chairman does not have the power of two votes while we have

(iii)Number of Committee Members are 13 while we have 9 Members.

Recommendations

(i)Women and Equality Committee should be created in our Assembly.

(ii)Suo mofo power should be given to the committee Chairman.

Session 7: Cross - Party Efforts to Promote Gender Equality.....Fozia

Flick/C/party Chair:APPG was the moderator in this session.

There are (150) groups around the country who meet twice a year. APPG is working on specifically gender related issues, which include, women and work, women in parliament. They do not have a Caucus. She said that In UK only Labour Party is trying to promote women in politics, she said. She insisted that all political parties have to allocate seats for women, but it is possible only if women come forward and show interest in joining politics.

Recommendations

(I)Lobbying among the parties for general seats

(ii)Increase reserve seats

(iii)Fund Raising for those womenwho are going to contest general Election.

Session 8: Equality Legislation.....Nagina

Sarah/Kate

First Sarah shared the data regarding girls abuse. According to her survey about 170 thousand girls were abused per year.

These were reported cases of data abuse in work places.

She further informed that UK had legislated regarding gender and Equality in 1971. In 1984 the legislation was criticized by common people. She said that after the amendment some good things happened like in transport department there are seats for disabled women. She said that civil society organizations are working for gender and equalitybut still UK women are facing issues like low representation in parliament, broken employment, low pension.

Recommendations

Beside the legislation, Education and behavior change are needed to guide our children and **serialization**.

(i) To move gender and equality legislation in KP Assembly.

(ii) Women and Equality should be established in KHyber Pakhtunkhwa

(iii) Separate Women and Equality ministry should be created at the national level

(vi) Domestic Violence Bill should be tabled.

Visit to Waterhouse Shoreditch Charity

Ms. Ingrid, the Director of Delivery, explained that the Charity was set up some sixteen years ago based on evidence that there is a need for community-based organization. They work with councillors. They manage health clubs and projects titled Food for Life, Smokefree Hackney, Peace for Mind, Blue Marble Network, and Training/Warehouse - catering training for children. A special project for pregnant women, Bump Buddies, is managed by Ms. Jane Lovelle.



Majority of the people we met were volunteers. We were informed that Asians are reluctant to volunteer but they use the services. It is also difficult to interact with them.

Visit to Lewsham Constituence to shadow MP Vicky Foxcraft

Vicky Foxcraft was elected to a shortlisted constituency. She has an office in Westminster as well as in her constituency. Both offices are well staffed. It is the job of the Whip in the parliament to assign offices and staff to the MPS.

The big issue in Lewsham is housing. Ms. Foxcraft had a meeting with some workers who made recommendations for housing reforms. She also took us for a walk in a section of her constituency and showed her the point where she held her 'surgeries'.

On the issue of women's involvement in politics, she stated that politics is a difficult and very competitive sector. Women especially have to work extra hard to survive as people are quick to criticize. The most difficult part is fundraising for the election campaign. An MP in UK needs £10,000 for election. They depend on trade unions and their activists to help raise this amount.

Ms. Foxcraft was of the opinion that creating a personal website with stories about barriers to participation and sending requests for donation helps a woman in her struggle to succeed. She added that successful women must help and guide other women to stand up for their rights.

On Monday 12th of September 2016, the Caucus visited the Headquarter of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association at 7 Milbank, Westminster London.

The Caucus was welcomed by Mr. Joe Omorodion Director Administration and Finance, Ms. Meenakshi Dhar, Direction programs and their team.

First, Ms. Meenakshi introduced the officers of the headquarter and asked the caucus chair to introduce her team and the caucus.



Ms. Meraj Hamayun Khan introduced the Caucus and stated that the caucus was established only a few months back with the support of Mr. Speaker which was duly helped by the UNDP, Pakistan.

Since then, the caucus has been showing its presence where it matters including the issues related to the women parliamentarians in and outside the Assembly.

She said that this visit is part of the struggle of the caucus focusing on capacity building and strengthening of the women cause.

She asked the CPA to put efforts in the cause of the women caucus from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Ms. Meenakshi appreciated the efforts of the caucus and offered their support in every effort the caucus is interested in.

She introduced the platform of the women parliamentarians section of the CPA and asked the caucus to take part in the activities of the platform.

She went on to say that there are numerous programs in each calendar year and they will be more than welcoming to offer support wherever they can.



Mayters of mutual intetests were discussed and the caucus wad asked to keep close contacts with the headquarter for the subjects of mutual interests.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks by the Caucus and the officers of the headquarter were appreciated for their worm welcome.

Ms. Meraj Hamayun Khan signed the register placed for the visitors with her commending remarks.

The caucus was seen off by the officers of the CPA headquarter Day and an hour should be fixed for the Chief Minister to attend one sitting during a Session. The leader of the Opposition should begin the question hour by asking a predetermined number of questions.

1. Resignation of Speaker from his political party after election to the position will ensure that the Speaker is unbiased.
2. Empower Standing Committees and bring in gender equality including Minority and disabled women by increasing their number in each committee and electing them as Chair to 30% of the committees.
3. Reduce the vote of the Chair of the Standing Committee. Instead of two, the Chair should have only one vote.
4. Chair of the Standing Committee should take suo-moto notice on critical issues.
5. Develop a video on KP Assembly and history of KP for the education of the general public at large and students in particular. Educational institutions should be encouraged to send their students to the Assembly in order to understand the role of the Assembly and its impact on their lives.
6. Question hour is a very important segment of the Assembly proceedings. It should be handled efficiently so that maximum numbers of questions brought by the members are answered satisfactorily. Unnecessary debate should be avoided during this hour.
7. The practice of appointing Shadow ministers from the opposition should be introduced in the Assembly. This will enhance the accountability of the Minister in charge and ensure good governance within the line Departments
8. Each MPA should be facilitated by creation of a reasonable budget to help them in better management of their work in the assembly as well as the constituency.
9. Assembly doors should be closed after the time fixed for entry has passed. In Westminster the doors were closed after eight minutes of the start of the ringing of the bell.
10. The history of the Assembly should be preserved eg Jirga hall should remain as it is.
11. Use of stationery should be curtailed.
12. There should be a separate room for media where cameras are fixed for them to follow the proceedings.
13. Seating arrangement should be such that women are not always given the back rows.
14. A special area should be designated where constituency workers can come and meet their MPAs.

15. There should be a "Message Board" where messages for MPAs can be posted. Legislation to bind the political parties to give ten percent tickets for general elections and to

British Council

1. *This should not be just a onetime exercise. Opportunities should be explored to create linkages with other Commonwealth Parliaments.*
2. *In addition to the MOU with the the Steering Committee of the Capacity Building Programme, the British Council should chalk out a separate programme for the strengthening of Women Parliamentary Caucus. The programme could include development of documentaries on Women Parliamentarians worldwide, printing newsletters, arranging discussion groups and organizing visits within the country as well as to parliaments of other commonwealth countries etc.*

Women Parliamentary Caucus

1. The Caucus would ensure active participation of women in the Assembly proceedings.
2. The Caucus Secretariat will assist the members in drafting legal documents and understanding Assembly business and procedures.
3. The WPC Secretariat will strive to establish strong linkages with civil society organizations working for gender equality.
4. Efforts should be made to reach out to male members and encourage them to become members of the Caucus.
5. Raise awareness about importance of women in the Assembly and try to change peoples' preview about women in politics.
6. Conduct research on crucial issues and submit to Government demanding quick response.
7. Try to earn the goodwill of the Chief Minister and the Speaker.

Political Parties

1. Ensure gender equality in their manifestos
2. Encourage women by giving and supporting women to contest elections on general seats.
3. Strengthen Women Wings and build capacity of prospective women MPAs through a well-planned and efficiently implemented capacity development programme.

4. In case of demise of a member his wife, daughter or sister should be given that seat.
5. Political Parties should support women and men from humble background and people with disabilities.
6. Women should be appointed on key decision making posts (protection against discrimination)