



Pakistan can face serious problems at international level: experts

The status of implementation of Bonded Labour laws is very poor in Pakistan and government is not giving any heed to implement existing laws. Meanwhile BLSA 2002 has become dis-functional after devolution of power as the whole law was moving around the office of the "District Magistrate" which has been abolished and no amendment has been made so far to shift the responsibilities of former District Magistrate to Session Judge or DCO.

This was gist of a seminar "Bonded Labour in Pakistan" organized by Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights (PCHR).

A number of experts also expressed their concern that existing status of handling bonded labour issue could create serious problems for Pakistan at international level.

Chairman PCHR Riaz Fatyana MNA expressed his concern over the status of implementation of bonded

labour laws in Pakistan and maintained that government must come out of slumber before it was too late to address international commitments regarding labour rights.

Gul Farkhanda MNA, Dr. Rozina Tufail MNA and Parliamentary Secretary of Statistics Division, Mualana Rahmat Ullah MNA, Michael Semple, Ellen Golz First Secretary Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Farhan Sabih, (Chief, Governance Unit) UNDP, Brigadier Sarfrarz Managing Director Pakistan Baitul Maal, M. Awais But, M.Asif Javed, Shah Khawar Advocate, Dr.Alia Imam, Amber Saleem (The Researchers), Saba Khan from HRCP, Yasir Saleem, M. Zubair Abbasi and Nazoola Ali were major among the participants. Earlier, Chief Coordinator PCHR Ch. Shafique briefed participants about the working of PCHR and the objectives of seminar.

Riaz Fatyana maintained that certain flaws in the devolution plan had created multiple problems in the country and administrative system has totally collapsed due to loopholes in the system that should have been fixed without further delay.

Riaz Fatyana was of the opinion that provinces should have been directed by the federal government to implement the labour policy and bonded labour laws. He added that federal government without further delay must ask the provincial

governments to look into the affairs of bonded labour issue.

Chairman, Senate Standing Committee on Ministry for Labour, Manpower and overseas Pakistanis Senator Mir Naseer Mangal took serious notice of the observations and concerns of experts and pledged to take up the issue with provincial governments through the platform of Senate Standing Committee. He offered his support to experts and activists for implementation of existing laws and for amending the law if necessary.

Chairman Senate Standing Committee Cabinet Division Senator Dr. Shahazad Waseem was of the opinion that parliamentarians should play their role to ensure protection to innocent people against the menace of bonded labour and maintained that PCHR was ready to support activists and expert in this regard and could assist the government in the process.

Executive Director PCHR Kashmala Tariq MNA while addressing the seminar maintained that there must be some serious work done about collection of data regarding bonded laborers, total number of organisations including NGOs working in the field and the total amount of funding which had been used by these NGOs in past to address the situation. She added that International Labour Organisation (ILO) could play a major role in this regard.

MNA Mahnaz Raffi was of the view that bonded labour issue was creating problem for Pakistan at international level and forces against Pakistan were trying to malign the country which did not respect the issue of bonded labour. She was of the view that government must take serious measure to press provincial and district governments to implement the laws without further delay.

Earlier, Siris Sajjad Qazi, Director Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dr. Tauqir Hussain Shah Advisor Bonded Labour ILO gave very informative presentations over the issue of bonded labour and the position of Pakistan over this issue at international level.

They also briefed the participants about legal, administrative and operational problems to eliminate bonded labour from Pakistan.

