

Home Based Women Workers rally on 8 March in Pakistan

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Rally on women's day by HBWWF and LHW in Karachi

Thousands of women of working class march with red flags through the streets of busy Sadder area Karachi to press for their demand to accept them as worker and cover under social security schemes and to regularize the lady health workers. The rally was organized by Home Based Women Workers Federation (HBWWF) and Lady Health Workers Association (LHWA) to commemorate the 101th International woman Day (IWD) on 8th March.

The rally was started from Regal Chowk and culminated at Karachi press Club. The participants of the rally carrying the placards and banners of their demands and chanting the slogans to high light their struggle.

At the end of rally, addressing the gathering women workers leaders said that 8March would be remembered as day of struggle and sacrifices of working women who lit the flame of movement to liberate the womenfolk from all kind of discrimination and injustice from all over the globe. The speakers pledged to continue their movement in all circumstances what may come to achieve the equal rights and elimination of all laws, customs and tradition which call them second class citizen and less human being. Women have been deprived of their basic rights on the name of religion and reactionary traditions having roots in feudalism while capitalist system exposed the women as cheap labor and market commodity.

The speakers explained that nearly 12 million women contributing in the economy through their production as home based workers in different industrial and commercial sectors including garments, leather, embroidery, sports goods, shoe making, glass bangle and many other sector but their role was not recognized anywhere, labour laws of land didn't recognize them as worker so they would not be covered under social state run security schemes including health insurance, education, pension. They also said that ILO Home Based Convention 177 ask government to recognize Home based women workers as lawful workers and formulate National policy for the progress and well being of the most depressed and vulnerable section of the workers called home based women workers.

The lady health workers leaders reiterate that more than 130,000 LHW have been successfully running the basic health campaigns for last 17 years to eradicate polio and other contagion diseases from the society and provided the health facilities on the door step on very low salary of merely 7000 and their services were still not regularized. The struggle of lady health workers will carry on till the fulfillment of their just demand to regularize them and announcement of pay scale.

They also showed their solidarity with human right activist Asma Jehangir for her steadfastness on human rights issues especially on missing persons' plight and condemned the character assassination campaign of reactionary forces against Asma Jehangir. They also expressed their deep concern on growing menace of kidnapping of girls belong to religious minority and their forcibly conversions which would not be tolerated at any cost and in camaraderie with Miss Rinkle Komari

and her family who was kidnapped and forcibly converted with the backing of influential feudal lord.

In the rally it was demanded that

- All discriminatory laws should be abolished
- Recognize home based women workers as labour in law and registered them with all state run social security schemes
- Collective bargaining right of the home based women workers organization should be recognize
- All lady health workers immediately regularize and formulate pay scale with the consent of LHW representative body.
- End the feudal system and introduce radical land reforms and land holding be given to women peasants
- End the Jirga system and declare it an criminal act
- 8March declare public holiday
- End all kind of harassment of women workers/employees in factories, offices and work places
- Lower the cost of utility including electricity, Gas and water and end the privatization of these utilaties.
- Regularize all temporary, casual, daily wager and contract workers of public and private sector establishments
- Release all political prisoners including comrade Baba Jan and other arrested comrades, and six Faisalabad power loom workers
- Recover all kidnapped women including Rinkle Komari and arrested the culprit and their master involve in the heinous crime, restore the respect and confidence of religious minorities
- To end character assassination campaign against Amsa Jehangir systematically launch by reactionary forces with the backing of so called establishment
- End military operation against Baloch Nation which has very hart the baloch women
- Resort state subsidy on essential item including flour, rice, pulses, sugar, cocking oil and other food item
- No to the privatization of health, education and transport.

Zehra A Khan

General Secretary

Home Based Women workers Federation (HBWWF)

On the eve of 101th International Woman Day

Dear All

On the eve of 101th International Woman Day, Home Based Women Workers (HBWW) and Lady Health Workers (LHW) going to celebrate it with zeal and great valor in Karachi.

Home based women workers (HBWW) and lady health workers (LHW) have turned a new page of struggle in recent days and give courage to other segment of downtrodden working masses to stand for their rights.

The HBWWs have been campaigning to recognize them as workers and cover them under social security schemes while more than 130,000 LHW have launched a forceful movement for their regularization and pay scale.

It is great achievement that on one hand HBWW formed their first ever national body called Home Based Women Workers Federation (HBWWF) and registered it with NIRC, while on another hand LHW formed All Pakistan Lady Health Workers Employees Association (APLHWEA) to protect their rights.

Both women workers representatives' bodies HBWWF and APLHWEA are jointly going to organize Women Workers Rally with the support of National Trade Union Federation (NTUF) on the auspicious occasion of INTERNATIONAL WOMEN DAY (IWD) on Thursday 8 March at 3pm from Regal Chowk Karachi.

Please join the rally with red flag of struggle for revolutionary change. HBWWF has also produced a poster in connection with women struggle on the day.

Zehra Khan
General Secretary
Home Based Women Workers Federation, Pakistan (HBWWF)
Ph: 0300-3770755
Fax: 021-34853685
Email: hbwwf yahoo.com

Press Conference of HBWWF: Workers seek rights under labour law

HYDERABAD, March 7: The leaders of Home-Based Women Workers Federation and Home-Based Women Bangle Workers Union have demanded facilities for home-based workers under the social security scheme.

Speaking at a news conference here on Wednesday on the eve of International Women Day, Zehra Akbar Khan, Irfana Abdul Jabbar and others said that it was an irony that home-based women workers were engaged in labour from dawn to dusk but they were not even included in the definition of 'worker' under the labour laws.

They said that they were hardly paid Rs50 to Rs60 per day without any weekly holiday and deprived of all other facilities, including social security cover, pension and right to form trade unions.

They said that in Hyderabad alone, 500,000 women were associated with the bangle industry but were being exploited by the factory owners and contractors.

The women labour leaders said that chemicals used in bangle manufacturing were hazardous for human health and causing respiratory, skin and eye diseases to women workers.

They said that the bangle manufacturers were earning tens of millions of rupees but paying only a pittance to the women workers. They regretted that even during the regime of democratic government, fate of home-based women workers had not changed.

They demanded that women workers should be registered with the social security institution, Industrial Relations Ordinance should be introduced in Sindh and home-based women workers should be included in the national labour policy.

Zehra Khan
