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End economic exploitation of women: hundreds joined the rally in Lahore (Pakistan)

Thursday 8 March 2012, by [MAQSOOD Riffat](#), [SHAD Azra](#), [Women Workers Help Line](#) (Date first published: 8 March 2012).

End economic exploitation of women, hundreds joined the rally and women Mela in Lahore, Women Workers Help Line mobilized the largest gathering of working class women in Lahore

Hundreds of working class women participated in a rally on the eve of international day of women in Lahore. The rally organized by Women Workers Help Line started from Charing Cross went through Queens Road and ended at Baghi Jinnah Lahore. The working class women chanted slogans for an end of economic exploitation, equal pay-equal wages, no to discriminatory laws, implementation of the minimum wages, end being silence and fight for the rights, No to violence against women, social and economic justice for women, our rights-right now, we are not half, strong women-strong democracy, no to privatization, no to contract labour, we want permanent jobs. The rally was led by Azra Shad, Razia Insari, Shamim Aslam, Jehan Ara, Riffet Maqsood and Nazli Javed.

Later the women joined a Women Mela at Open Air theatre Baghi Jinnah Lahore. Prominent artists of Pakistan performed to pay tribute to women struggle and express solidarity. Laal Band, Adeel Burki, Baba Najmi, Arif Shah Prohna, Rabia Shahzadi and Nadeem Fida performed revolutionary songs and hundreds of women danced on the performances.

Speaking on the occasion, Azra Shad chairperson Women Workers Help Line said that the status of women in Pakistan is not very much empowered because of the interconnection of gender with the other forms of exclusion in the society. She said that the women workers in informal sector face numerous problems. They are not paid proper wages. No labour laws are observed regarding women workers. The women are not given shares in the property. They face economic exploitation to an extent not seen by other workers. She said we are celebrating the international day of women with the most exploited women workers because they are the one who should come forward. Azra Shad demanded an end of discriminatory laws against women, the labour inspection must be ensured where women are working, government must ensure full implementation of minimum wage of Rupees seven thousand for eight hours work for women workers also.

Speaking on the occasion, Tanvir Jehan, chairperson Democratic Commission For Human development said that we must empower women to fight for the equal rights. Pakistani women are now in better position to claim their rights. They are not half, they are equal citizens and our constitution must ensure an end of all discriminatory laws against women. The Women Mela continued for over four hours. The women danced and joined in singing with the artists in a unique show of strength on the occasion of the international day.

It was the largest gathering of working class women on 8th March celebration in Lahore

Azra Shad

Chairperson

Women Workers Help Line

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