

## **Afghan Women Excluded From Public Life**

**Author:** [IWPR Afghanistan](#)

Event hears how gender discrimination continues to be perpetuated.

Women need to actively demand their rights so as to play a part in Afghanistan's social and political life, according to speakers at an IWPR debate in the eastern province of Logar.

Around 100 women took part in the April 30 event at the provincial department of information and culture. Participants heard that women played little part in public life, excluded by conservative traditions and widespread discrimination.

"Women could play an active and central role in the country's political and social affairs," said Logar director of women's affairs, Shaima Zargar. "But some are victims of domestic violence, cruelty and threats, and cannot even leave the house if they want to."

Zargar argued that women needed to stand up for their rights, adding, "Women have remained silent for too long about some of the negative customs in the society. They do not come out to fight and just continue to live with their current problems."

Civil society activist Mir Samiulhaq Rashid said that there was a need for public awareness "to encourage husband and wife to cooperate with each other".

Shafiq Popal, a religious scholar, added that women were given much more independence under Islamic law than in Afghan society.

"Families in some villages, particularly in Logar province, deny their daughters the right to education - but Islam has given them this right," he continued.

Anahita Alamyar, the director of information and culture in Logar, agreed that if women understood their rights according to Islam, they would be much better able to contribute to their communities.

"It is women who build society with their husbands and families, who provide a new generation of children who will decide the future of the country," she said.

Debate participant Jaweda Fazli asked Alamyar about the role civil society could play in raising awareness among women.

"Civil institutions have organised various workshops in cooperation with other NGOs about women's rights and for the purposes of training women," she replied. "The programmes have been effective, but they are not sufficient and more needs to be done."

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**Location:** [Afghanistan](#)

**Topic:** [Women's rights](#)

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