

## Second Network Meeting Women-led CSOs in Punjab Lahore, 01 March, 2016 Meeting Report





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## I-Introduction

The second Network Meeting for the women-led CSOs in Punjab (Bint-e-Hawa Network<sup>1</sup>(BEHN) under the Sisters' Voice project was held in Lahore on 01 March, 2016.

The meeting brought together women from 14 civil society organisations (Annex-I) to share progress on the network's activities and discuss the way forward. This also provided them a chance to get some perspective on the role of civil society and police in expediting collaborative efforts for improved enforcement of pro-women laws.

## II-Summary of Proceedings

The proceedings of the meeting started with recitation from the Holy Quran, a prayer from the Bible and welcome. This was followed by a brief presentation on the introduction of the Sisters' Voice network by Ms. Samina Khushi, President of the Sisters' Voice network-Punjab.

Ms. Mumtaz Mughal, Resident Director, Aurat Foundation led a session on the need for collaborative efforts for implementation on pro-women laws and the perspective of civil society followed by Mr. Ahmad Ishaque Jehangir, Deputy Inspector General Police, Punjab (Research and Development) who spoke on the role of police in improving the implementation on pro-women laws. Representatives from judiciary and members of provincial assembly were also invited to present their views on the topic however they could not come due to other engagements.

Mr. Salman Abid, Regional Director, Strengthening Participatory Organisation (SPO) was invited as guest speaker to share his experiences regarding "Sustaining Networks: Opportunities and Challenges".

Network representatives gave brief presentations on the coordination meetings they held with various stakeholders in their respective districts. At the end of the meeting they also shared their experiences regarding network and planned the way forward. Meeting ended with network members reiterating their aim to keep the network intact and work towards improving the implementation of women protection laws. (For complete agenda please see Annex-II).

## III-Highlights

- Mr. Ahmad Ishaque Jehangir appreciated the idea of establishing a network consisting of women-led CSOs and assured that he will send letters to Deputy Police Officers (DPOs) or Chief Police Officers (CPOs) in the relevant districts to help network members in their research and advocacy initiatives

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<sup>1</sup> This name was selected by the CSOs at the first network meeting held in October 2015. The network was formed in that meeting

- Mr. Salman Abid offered to introduce and connect network member to the other networks working on similar issues
- The meeting started on a positive note as just a few days earlier the Punjab Government had passed the Women Protection Bill, and a day before a Pakistani female director, Ms. Sharmeen Obaid had won the prestigious Oscar award for her documentary on honour crimes, "The Girl in the River"
- Through the collective and individual coordination meetings the Sisters' Voice project, network and its objectives were introduced to a wide range of stakeholders
- It was heartening for the CAMP team to note that for all the members of the network coming together in the form of a network has proved to be an enriching experience.



Network members from Gujranwala, Nankana, Sargodha and Sheikhpura at the meeting

#### IV- Presentation–Bint-e-Hawa Network (BEHN)

The presentation was given by Ms. Samina Khushi, President, Bint-e-Hawa network. The objective of this presentation was to apprise the guest speakers of the idea behind forming a network of women-led CSOs working in Punjab. Her presentation contained brief introduction of the network, its mission, vision, objectives and office bearers. It also highlighted the future activities planned under the network.

#### V- Implementation of Women Protection Laws in Pakistan and the Need for Collaborative Efforts: A Perspective from the Civil Society

Ms. Mumtaz Mughal, Resident Director, Aurat Foundation, Lahore was invited to take this session. While addressing the participants she said that over the years considerable pro-women legislation has been done both at federal and provincial levels. In year 2013-14, 22 laws were submitted in various assemblies, out of which 12 were also passed. As far as legislative development at Punjab is concerned, there are few laws that need a special mention. These include: Sexual Harrassment at Work Place, The Punjab Fair Representation of Women Act 2014, The Punjab Land Revenue Act ( Amendment), Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act 2015 (XII of 2015) and recently approved Protection of Women against Violence Bill. In addition, Punjab Commission on the status of women (PCSW) has also been formed by the Punjab Government.

She elaborated that Punjab Ombudssman office has been established to receive grievances in case women feel that the committee made to address sexual harassment complaints in their respective work places have not dealt with the complaint fairly.

Under the Punjab Fair Representation Law any committee formed at either public or private level must have 33 percent women representatives and resultantly 99 laws have been amended under this law. Land Revenue Act has made the inheritance process for women easier and has ensured that no family member pressurises any woman to withdraw from her share of property etc.



Ms. Mumtaz Mughal speaking at the occasion

Similarly, under the Child Marriage Restraint Act, the minimum age for the marriage has been increased from 16 to 18 years and the amount of the fine and tenure of punishment is also increased. Protection Against Violence Law is also different from the laws enacted by other provinces as it focuses on the implementation and has been linked with all the other laws in the province.

While highlighting the role of the civil society, she said that as members of the civil society, it is our responsibility to ensure the implementation of these laws. The first step in this direction is to

have complete knowledge of these laws, mechanisms, changes/ amendments; and information about relevant departments and officials that are responsible for their implementation.

She further suggested that as members of the Sisters' Voice network these women leaders may select a specific law and after getting complete knowledge, they could start awareness and sensitisation campaigns at grassroots level.

She also answered the question asked related to the the representation of the civil society in various committess being formed to ensure implementation of the Protection against violence Bill. Participants were told by her that a committee comprising of 7-11 members will be formed at each distrct level and women rights' activists are advocating with government to ensure civil society's represenetation in these committees.

## VI- Implementation of Women Protection Laws in Pakistan and the Need for Collaborative Efforts: The Role of the Police



Mr. Ahmad Ishaque at the meeting

Mr. Ahmad Ishaque Jehangir, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Punjab (Research and Development) was invited as guest speaker for this session. Talking to the participants, he said that Punjab police is a very male dominated department. As per the international standards, at least 15 per cent of the police force should comprise of women, while, in Punjab, it is less than one per cent and out of total strength of 1, 80, 000 police force, only 2000 are women. However, as per new recruitment policy, five (05) percent quota is reserved for women and hopefully, the situation will improve in next 10-15 years.

He said help desks to facilitate women have been established in 680 police stations out of total 709 police stations in Punjab. The process to set-up help desks in other districts is also underway but the shortage of women police officers is delaying it.

He also shared that that a separate module on women protection laws has been added in the curriculum for police training and is now being taught in all the police training institutes in Punjab. Punjab Police is also working in close coordination with PCSW and is actively assisted in designing the Gender Management Information System that will be launched soon.

As a result of the steps taken by Punjab Government and police, the overall situation regarding crimes against women has improved a little and number of gang rapes has reduced. Nonetheless, the incidents of acid throwing have increased.

During the interactive session it was suggested by the network members that to help Punjab police in tackling the shortage of women police officers, these women-led CSOs can help. These organisations are working at grassroots level and some of these organisations are already working in collaboration with the local police to curb various menaces especially drug abuse in their communities, therefore, they can prove a useful resource for the police. This suggestion was noted by Mr. Ahmad and he said he will discuss it with other senior officials.

Meanwhile, he advised CSOs leaders to discuss this idea with the relevant police officials at their districts level also.

## VII- Presentations on the Coordination Meetings

One session of the meeting consisted of the presentations by the representatives of each district on the coordination meetings that were held with the relevant stakeholders. The following table presents a summary of various meetings held by network members in each district;

**District: Gujranwala**  
**Date: 02 February, 2016**  
**Stakeholder: Lawyers and representatives of other NGOs**

During the meeting various problems faced by women were discussed by the participants. The issue of domestic violence was discussed in particular. All the participants agreed on the need for joint efforts for ensuring implementation on women protection laws and raising awareness among women regarding their rights. Lawyers present at the meeting committed to provide free legal aid to the woman complainants referred by the network members .

All the members present at the meeting meet once a week and are working in close coordination with each other to ensure compliance on the commitments made in the coordination meetings.

**District: Kasur**  
**Date: 13 February, 2016**  
**Stakeholder: Mr. Ali Nasir Rizvi, District Police Officer (DPO), Kasur**

DPO Kasur welcomed network members in his office and told about the actions of Police department to establish help desk to facilitate women. He shared that there are 20 police stations in Kasur district and there are only 14 women police officers. Thus it is quite difficult to establish help desk for females in all police stations. However, so far 10 help desks have been established. These help desks have been established in those areas where the number of women complainants was high. These help desks are facilitating women from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. Emergency complaints are entertained round the clock. While, one model police station in Thana- A Division in city Kasur for women is also operative. Mr. Nasir was also introduced to CAMP and the Sisters' Voice project and network.

Network members plan to follow-up with Mr. Rizvi regularly through telephone calls.

**District: Sheikhpura**  
**Date: 13 February, 2016**  
**Stakeholder: Ch. Mohammad Riaz Virk, Chairman Union Council**

In this meeting Mr. Riaz supported the idea of collaborative efforts for improving implementation on pro-women laws and also assured that in his capacity as chairman of the local government system he will try to improve coordination with the police department so that women victims could get timely assistance.

Ms. Nazia Latif, Chairperson Al-Nisa Welfare Organisation is already working with the district government office on various projects; hence, she has been delegated with the responsibility to follow-up on the commitments made by Mr. Riaz in the coordination meeting.

**District: Sargodha**

**Date: 14 February, 2016**

**Stakeholder: Dr. Nadia, Member Provincial Assembly**

CAMP, the Sisters' Voice project and the process and objectives of formation of BEHN network were introduced to Dr. Nadia by network representatives. Advocacy briefs developed by the network members were also shared with her. She took keen interest in the presentations by network representatives and assured her full support in dealing with police.

Network representatives also requested her to raise voice about strengthening the mechanism to ensure implementation of women protection Laws in the Punjab assembly. To which she replied that Punjab Government is already taking effective measures to ensure implementation on pro-women laws. She in her capacity as member provincial assembly has always endorsed these initiatives and will continue to do so in future as well.

**District: Lahore**

**Date: 16 February, 2016**

**Stakeholder: Ms. Rahela Khadim Hussain , Chairperson, Parliamentary Committee on Gender Mainstreaming, Punjab Assembly**

Ms. Rahela appreciated the idea of establishing a network consisting of women-led CSOs. Out of the advocacy briefs she particularly liked two points. These included the one that suggested strengthening coordination between "Lumber-Dar" (Head Watch man) and local police department in cases of women rights' violation. The head watch man is given 100 Kanal lands by the government so that he can run his area's management tasks efficiently. Ms. Rahela promised to raise this issue in the Punjab Assembly. The other point is related to the delay by police in sending vital evidence samples to forensic department. On this she said that she will try to pass a resolution in Punjab Assembly to ensure that samples are sent to the relevant laboratories by police in time.

Currently, the focus of all relevant stakeholders is on recently approved Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Bill. Ms. Rahela is also busy in various consultations. Meanwhile, network members from Lahore are consulting with each other on the ways to follow-up with Ms. Rahela on the commitment made by her during the coordination meeting.

**District: Nankana**

**Date: 25 February, 2016**

**Stakeholder: Rana Afnan Khan, Chairman Union Council**

Mr. Rana Afnan Khan suggested to have a joint meeting with DPO Nankana District so that a separate section for women should be established in each police station. He also assured to make efforts in his capacity as Chairman, union council to increase inter-departmental coordination to help facilitate women victims. Additionally, he offered that network members can contact him anytime for redressal of grievances of aggrieved women especially those who are victims of sexual or domestic abuse. Network members plan to be in close contact with him on this..

He also suggested that every bar council has a panel of lawyers that provides free legal aid. However, mostly needy people especially women are not aware of this facility, therefore network members should execute an awareness campaign to sensitise masses on this facility.

After these presentations network members also shared that besides these collective meetings, the network members also held separate meetings and spread the information regarding network and its objectives at various platforms. In Lahore, the network was introduced to the female journalists that are members of Lahore Press Club. In Sheikhpura, network members held meetings with local bar associations and also introduced network at the District Coordination Committee Meeting and at the Sub National Governance (SNG) meeting. SNG is an alliance of all the NGOs/CSOs working in Sheikhpura district. In Gujranwala members conducted various meetings with various officials at district level. In Kasur a meeting was also conducted with Rana Naeem Safdar, Member provincial Assembly and advocacy briefs were shared with him. He suggested involving local bodies' representatives in the advocacy campaigns to improve implementation on pro-women laws. (A pictorial reflection of these meetings is presented in Annex-III)



Members from Nankana giving presentation on the coordination meeting

### VIII- Sustaining Networks: Opportunities and Challenges

Mr. Salman Abid was invited as guest speaker to facilitate this session. While reflecting on the topic he said that forming networks or alliances is not a new thing in Pakistan. While some are quite successful, many others collapsed with the passage of time. There is no one reason that can be attributed to the success or failure of these networks, nonetheless, some lessons can be derived from them. A successful network consists of many units and every unit contributes to its success and sustenance.



Mr. Salman Abid sharing his experiences at the meeting

He further said that networking is an ongoing process and requires investment in terms of time. As part of the network members should know about their targets. Members must know

about the people and institutions that can be vital for the success of the network. They should also be abreast of all the related statistics. Another important thing to keep in mind is that it is not necessary that as a network you always get what you demand. However, don't refuse whatever you are getting as a result of your demands. Accept what is being offered and continue advocating for the remaining demands.

As network or alliance members everyone should be treated on equal basis and share responsibilities on equal basis. Network members should also be free of any political affiliation and should not act as a spokesperson of any group or party. Another important element for the success of any network is that its members should not be dissuaded by the mistakes; rather they should learn from them and try not to repeat them.

He also offered to introduce and connect network members with other networks working on similar issues.

### IX- Way Forward

In this session the network members shared their experiences regarding the network. They said that being part of the network has proved to be quite useful. They got a chance to know about the other organisations led by women in various districts of Punjab. They are also sharing information and resources among themselves. Some of the members also shared the examples through which they have supported each other. Few also remarked that the training they got on women protection laws, advocacy and networking was very thorough and it was the first time that they got a chance to learn about pro-women laws in such detailed manner.

They also expressed their aim to keep the network intact and execute various activities under it. Lack of communication was pointed out as a short coming by some of the participants and it was agreed upon by them and CAMP team that two-way communication will be made better and more regular.

This was the second and last network meeting planned for network members in Punjab. The first meeting was held in October 2015. These network members will now be invited for the national network meeting in September 2016 along with some of the stakeholders with whom they conducted coordination meetings. Network members from Balochistan will also be invited. It is hoped that this national meeting will provide these women leaders to share their experiences and lessons learnt.

### *Reaching to Help*

Rehai, an organisation selected from Lahore under the Sisters' Voice Project, works with women and children in jails. It is currently working in five districts of Punjab including Lahore, Gujranwala, Sheikhpura and Kasur and Faisalabad. For a school set-up by Rehai in a jail in Kasur, a male teacher was required. Ms. Farah Hashmi, president, Rehai contacted the network members in Kasur to seek help in this regard. A coordination meeting of the Rehai Officials and network members in Kasur was held in the office of Ittehad Foundation Kasur. Candidates recommended by the members in Kasur were shortlisted and interviewed and final selection was made. The teacher is now teaching to juvenile children and Rehai is very happy with his performance.

During the second network meeting, Ms. Hashmi also requested network members from Gujranwala and Sheikhpura to help find teachers for the jails in these districts. Network members selected from these districts assured her of their cooperation in this regard.

### *Showcasing the Work*

Al-Nisa Welfare Organisation under the leadership of Ms. Nazia is working in suburbs of Sheikhpura since 2005. The organisation and its work are well known in the local community. However, it lacked national exposure. Through Sisters' Voice network, she met with Ms. Rani Shamim, Chairperson, Koshish Foundation, and Nankana. Ms. Rani helped her to present her success story at the Rural Women Conference held in October 2015 in Islamabad by Potohar Organisation for Development Advocacy (PODA). Her work was not only appreciated by all present at the conference, but now donors are also contacting her for work.

These examples show that coming together at a platform through the sisters' Voice network has not only provided these women-led CSOs to share information and resources but they are also exploring further avenues

Annex-I

List of participants

S. #	Name	Organisation
<b>Lahore</b>		
1	Ms. Farah Hashmi	Rehai
2	Ms. Samina Khushi	Oriental Women Organisation
3	Ms. Hadia Naz	Commission for Research and Human Development
4	Ms. Azbela Yasmin	Ecumenical Commission of Human Development
<b>Kasur</b>		
5	Ms. Sumera Rafique	Youth Advocacy Council
6	Ms. Irshad Safdar	Ittehad Foundation
<b>Sheikhupura</b>		
7	Ms. Nazia Latif	Koshish Foundation
<b>Nankana</b>		
8	Ms. Rani Shamim	Koshish Foundation
9	Ms. Shumaila Siddique	Sawani Saanjh
<b>Gujranwala</b>		
10	Ms. Surraya Manzoor	Women Development Organisation
11	Ms. Shazia Asim	Social Welfare Society for Women
12	Ms. Surraya Channan	New Hope Foundation
13	Ms. Khalida Anjum	All Workers Women of Pakistan
<b>Sargodha</b>		
14	Ms. Naseem George	Aezaz-e-Niswan

Annex-II

Programme Agenda

Time	Programme/Activity	Facilitator
09:30 AM -10:00 AM	Registration & Arrival Recitation from Holy Quran	
10:00 AM - 10:10 AM	Welcome & Introductions	CAMP Team
10:10 AM - 11:00 AM	Presentations on Coordination Meetings with Stakeholders at District level	Representatives from Districts Gujranwala, Kasur, Lahore, Nankana, Sargodha, and Sheikhpura
11:00 - 11:30 AM	Q&A, Comments on Coordination Meetings &Way Forward etc	
11:30 AM - 11:45 AM	Tea break	
11:45 AM -11:50 AM	The Sisters' Voice Network- Objectives and Progress	Ms. Samina Khushi, President the Sisters' Voice Network (Punjab)
11:50 AM -12:05 PM	Implementation of Women Protection Laws in Pakistan and the Need for Collaborative Efforts: A Perspective From the Civil Society	Ms. Mumtaz Mughal : Resident Director Aurat Foundation
12:05 PM-12:20 PM	Implementation of Women Protection Laws in Pakistan and the Need for Collaborative Efforts: the Role of the Police	Mr. Ahmad Ishaque Jehangir –DIG Police, Punjab
12:20 PM-12:35 PM	Implementation of Women Protection Laws in Pakistan and the Need for Collaborative Efforts: Challenges faced by Judiciary	
12:35 PM-12:50 PM	Implementation of Women Protection Laws in Pakistan and the Need for Collaborative Efforts: A perspective from the Punjab Government	Ms. Azma Zahid Bokhari, Chairperson Standing Committee on Law & Parliamentary Affair, Punjab Assembly
12:50 PM-13:00 PM	Q&A Session	
13:00 PM -02:00 PM	Lunch and Prayer Break	
2:00 PM - 2:30 PM	Sustaining Networks: Opportunities and Challenges	Salman Abid, Regional Director SPO
2:30 PM- 2:45 PM	Q&A Session	
2:45 PM- 3:15 PM	Group Work	
3:15 PM- 3:30 PM	Presentation of Group Work	
3:30 PM- 3:45 PM	Wrap Up /Concluding Remarks	

Annex-III

Pictorial Coverage-Coordination Meetings



Coordination Meeting-Kasur



Coordination Meeting-Lahore

Coordination Meeting-Gujranwala



Coordination Meeting-Sargodha