Welcome to the fifth issue of quarterly newsletter “The Sisters’ Voice”.

This issue is special as it celebrates the efforts of women in Pakistan to achieve gender equality and address gender based violence. And there is no better time to acknowledge this than on International Women’s Day, which falls in March!

Some breakthroughs in pro-women legislation, over the last few years at federal and provincial levels indicate that both the efforts of parliamentarians and the consistent advocacy by women rights’ activists are taking effect. Punjab takes the lead over other provinces when it comes to pro-women legislation. Additionally, a group of female members of the Punjab Assembly have formed the Punjab Women Parliamentary Caucus to improve legislation and to promote women’s rights in the province. For the main feature of this issue Ms. Samina Khushi, President the Sisters’ Voice Network-Punjab has interviewed Dr. Farzana Nazir, Chairperson of the Caucus to know more about its work.

International Women’s Day (IWD) on 8 March is celebrated in many countries around the world. It is a day when women’s achievements are celebrated globally irrespective of any ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political divisions. The idea of International Women’s Day first emerged as a result of activities of labour movements at the beginning of the twentieth century in North America and across Europe. Since those early years, its status is increasing strength by strength. In the current issue we have presented a chronology of various developments that led IWD to become one of the major days of global celebration of women achievements.

For our regular series “Knowledge Corner”, a glossary of gender related terms has been compiled. As always, an update on project activities is also made part of the newsletter.

The project team is thankful for our readers’ feedback on the previous issues and we look forward to your support in the future too! Please write to us at camp.sistersvoice@gmail.com

Fareeha Sultan
Project Manager
The Sisters’ Voice Project

Update on Project Activities

Second Network Meeting of Women-led CSOs in Punjab

The second Network Meeting for the women-led CSOs in Punjab (Bint-e-Hawa Network (BEHN) under the Sisters’ Voice project took place in Lahore on 01 March, 2016.

The day-long meeting brought together women from 14 civil society organisations to share progress on the network’s activities and discuss the way forward. This also provided them a chance to gain perspective on the role of civil society and police in expediting collaborative efforts for improved enforcement of pro-women laws.

Ms. Mumtaz Mughal, Resident Director, Aurat Foundation represented civil society and highlighted that despite many pro-women laws being passed by the Punjab Government there is still not enough awareness on these laws, both among masses and the civil society organisations (CSOs). Ms. Mughal suggested that as civil society members, every organisation of the network should have a complete understanding of one or two laws and later aim at spreading awareness on these laws among target communities.

Mr. Ahmad Ishaque Jahangir, Deputy Inspector General Police (Research and Development), Punjab reflected on the role of the police in improving the implementation of pro-women laws. He told the participants that out of 709 police stations in Punjab, help desks to facilitate women have been established in 680 police stations. The process to establish help desks in the remaining police stations is slow because of shortage of women police officers. However, since 15 percent quota is allocated for women as per new recruitment policy, it is hoped that the situation will improve in next few years. He appreciated the idea of establishing a network consisting of women-led CSOs and assured that he will send letters to relevant Deputy Police Officers or Chief Police Officers to help network members in their research and advocacy initiatives.

The session on “Sustaining Networks: Opportunities and Challenges” was facilitated by Mr. Salman Abid, Regional Director, Strengthening Participatory Organisation (SPO). While sharing his thoughts on the topic he emphasised that as network members, the participants should treat everyone equally and make an effort to remain in contact with each other. They should also focus on their strengths and try to address one or two objectives/issues at one time.

Network members shared updates from the network’s activities, mainly coordination meetings with stakeholders. The meeting also provided network members with an opportunity to plan the way forward. It was heartening for the CAMP team to know that for all the members being a part of the network has proved a great learning experience. The meeting ended with network members reiterating their aim to keep the network intact and work towards improving the implementation of women protection laws.

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2. This name was selected by the CSOs at the first network meeting held in October 2015. The network was formed in that meeting.
3. Details of these meetings are included in this issue of the newsletter.

The Sisters’ Voice Issue 5: January - March 2016
Establishing Linkages

Coordination Meetings with the Stakeholders

Coordination meetings with the policy makers, police and judiciary constitute an important element of the Sisters’ Voice project. These meetings aim to establish linkages between women-led CSO’s with stakeholders for improving implementation of pro-women laws. Network members in Punjab held six (06) coordination meetings in their respective districts in February 2016. In these meetings they not only shared advocacy briefs highlighting challenges in the implementation of pro-women laws but also introduced CAMP, the Sisters’ Voice project and network to these stakeholders. After establishing these preliminary linkages, network members intend to follow-up regularly with these stakeholders to continue their advocacy and networking efforts to improve implementation on pro-women laws. The detailed description of these meetings is as follows:

Gujranwala

In Gujranwala a meeting was held on 02 February 2016 with lawyers and representatives of some other NGOs and CSOs working for women’s rights. During the meeting the issue of domestic violence was discussed, among many other issues faced by women in the area. 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.

As an outcome of the meeting lawyers present at the meeting committed to provide free legal aid to the woman complainants referred by the network members. Additionally, it was agreed that since all the attendees of the meeting are in regular contact with each other, they will continue to exchange information so that maximum number of women can benefit from the network.

Kasur

In Kasur, network members met with Mr. Ali Nasir Rizvi, District Police Officer (DPO) Kasur on 13 February 2016. Mr. Rizvi highlighted the efforts of the Police department including the establishment of a help desk to facilitate women. He also shared the challenges in establishing help desk for women in police stations. The biggest being the shortage of women police force. There are 20 Police stations in Kasur district but the total number of women police officers is only 14. Nonetheless, 10 help desks have been established in areas where the number of women complainants was high. While help desks are facilitating women from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, emergency complaints are entertained round the clock. The model police station for women is located at Thana A-division in Kasur city.

Another meeting was conducted with Naeem Safdar Abbasi, Member Provincial Assembly on 11 February 2016 and advocacy briefs on the hurdles in the implementation of pro-women laws were shared with him. He suggested involving local bodies’ representatives in the advocacy campaigns to improve implementation on pro-women laws.

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

Sheikhpura

Network members met with Mr. Muhammad Riaz Virk, Chairman Union Council on 13 February 2016. Mr. Riaz supported the idea of collaborative efforts for improving implementation on pro-women laws. He 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.

Chairperson Al-Nisa Welfare Organisation is already working with the district government office on various projects therefore she has taken responsibility to follow-up on the commitments made by Mr. Riaz in the coordination meeting.
Sargodha

The meeting was held on 14 February 2016 with Dr. Nadia Aziz Member, Provincial Assembly. Network members were also joined by other NGOs working for women in district Sargodha. In the meeting advocacy briefs developed by the network members were shared with her. She heard the presentations on project’s objectives and introduction of the Sisters’ Voice network with keen interest and assured her full support in dealing with police.

Network representatives also requested Dr. Nadia to highlight the issue of strengthening mechanisms to ensure implementation of women protection laws, in the Punjab assembly. She assured the network members that Punjab government is already taking right steps in this regard. She has always encouraged initiatives such as the Sisters’ Voice network, and will continue to do so.

Lahore

Coordination meeting in Lahore was held on 16 February 2016 with Ms. Rahela Khadim Hussain, Chairperson, Parliamentary Committee on Gender Mainstreaming, Punjab Assembly. She 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. The other point is related to the delay by police in sending vital evidence samples to forensic department.

Ms. Rahela committed to raise the issue of delay by police in sending evidences in the Punjab Assembly and also said she would 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.

Nankana

Network members in Nankana held a meeting with Rana Afnan Khan, Chairman Union Council on 25 February 2016. Rana Afnan suggested to have a joint meeting with District Police Officer 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 intend to keep contact with him.

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

Besides these collective meetings, the network members also held separate meetings and shared information regarding network and its objectives. In Lahore, the network was introduced to the female journalists that are members of Lahore Press Club. In Sheikhupura, 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 Sheikhupura district. In Gujranwala members conducted various meetings with various officials at district level.
Encouraging Empowerment and Partnerships

An interview with Dr. Farzana Nazir

A group of female members of the Punjab assembly formed the Punjab Women Parliamentary Caucus in 2014. The main objective of this Caucus is to encourage women empowerment and improve pro-women legislation.

Since its formation, Dr. Farzana Nazir has been working as the Convener of this Caucus. She is a medical practitioner and has been elected as Member Provincial Assembly of the Punjab on one of the reserved seats for women. On behalf of CAMP, Ms. Samina Khushi, President of the Sisters’ Voice Network-Punjab recently conducted an interview with Dr. Farzana to know more about the Caucus and the work it is doing for improving the enforcement of pro-women laws. We are extremely grateful to Dr. Farzana for her time and interest. Below are the excerpts from the interview.

CAMP: Please tell us about the Punjab Assembly Women Caucus and its main objectives?

Dr. Farzana: Women Caucus Group was formed to give socio-economic and political empowerment to women of Punjab. Additionally, it is also working on pro-women legislation.

CAMP: In your opinion, what are the major forms of violence against women (VAW) in Punjab?

Dr. Farzana: Acid throwing, rape and domestic violence are the most prevailing forms of violence against women in the province.

CAMP: Connected to the previous question, which areas do you think are most affected when it comes to VAW?

Dr. Farzana: Unfortunately, there is no specific region or area that we can single out where women are most affected. In my experience, it is found in equal proportions in rural/urban areas both in North and South Punjab.

CAMP: What are the main steps Punjab Government is taking to improve implementation on women protection laws?

Dr. Farzana: Currently, the Punjab Government has adopted a step wise strategy for the implementation of pro-women laws especially for the recently approved Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Bill. A pilot Women Protection Center has been established in Multan. We are closely monitoring it and also gathering feedback from the relevant stakeholders. These lessons learned will assist in establishing such centers in other cities. However, it is a very costly mechanism so currently we are trying to allocate sufficient budget for this in the upcoming budget of next fiscal year.

CAMP: What are the main hindrances/gaps in the effective implementation of women protection laws?

Dr. Farzana: Lack of education and lack of awareness among men regarding women rights are two of the greatest problems in effective implementation of the women protection laws. In my opinion, traditions that enforce patriarchal attitudes and wrong interpretation of Islam sanction men to inflict violence on women. Most men in our society consider themselves the custodian of women and family honour and if a woman tries to assert her rights, they feel that it is against the power this society or religion have bestowed upon them. Unfortunately, very few of them know that Islam has given equal rights to women 1400 years ago. Islam is a religion that gave women the right to inheritance at the time when people were burying them alive. The fourth chapter of Qur’an, Sura Al-Nisa, talks specifically of women rights. Moreover, VAW is completely prohibited in Islam.

Ms. Samina Khushi interviewing Dr. Farzana Nazir
CAMP: Do you think that the situation on VAW in Punjab will improve after the Punjab Women Protection against Violence Law? If yes, how do you think the Law will play a role in reducing the incidents of VAW?

Dr. Farzana: Yes, it will surely result in better and safer conditions for women. Sense of protection will increase their productivity. It is a balanced law and punishment for those women is also prescribed who will try to mis-use this law.

CAMP: In your opinion how can women-led CSOs working at grassroots level play a role in the implementation of women protection laws?

Dr. Farzana: They should conduct awareness raising sessions and seminars particularly with male members of society. The objective of this awareness should be to make men realise that women protection laws are not against them. Balance is nature’s law; hence a family or a society at large cannot function properly with domination or subjugation of either gender. While on the other hand, the only rule through which a family or society can function properly is rule of love and respect for each other. Therefore, grassroots women-led CSOs should design campaigns to urge men to work jointly for the uplift of the status of women in society.

CAMP: Are there any other women friendly/protection law(s)/steps under consideration by Punjab Government?

Dr. Farzana: Women are almost 52 percent of the total population of Pakistan, therefore, currently; our main focus is on economic empowerment of women because we believe that it will ultimately lead to the overall economic growth and stability of the country. We are introducing and encouraging small scale cottage industries for women, as are prevalent in many other countries such as China. We are also giving them loans without interest to encourage use of modern means of income generation.

Recently, “Women on Wheels” initiative was also introduced by the Punjab Government to encourage female bike-riding. A 15 per cent quota for women is also allocated for women in all the employment and we hope that all these steps will eventually contribute to the overall welfare of women, particularly in Punjab.

CAMP: Is Punjab Assembly Women Caucus/ Punjab Government taking any steps to increase women in leadership roles especially at grass roots level? Or is women caucus/ Punjab Government taking any steps to uplift women-led CSOs?

Dr. Farzana: NGOs especially women led CSOs are our hands. How can we exclude them or not think about their betterment. I believe that Government should acknowledge the work of women-led CSOs/NGOs if they are not working against the state.

CAMP: In the end, would you like to give some message to the members of the Sisters’ Voice network?

Dr. Farzana: Through the platform of this network, all the members should arrange interactive sessions with members of parliament in Punjab and Balochistan and with other women-led NGOs/CSOs to strengthen the bonds we all share as women. These interactive sessions will also be helpful to share the experiences on how we can improve the status of women. Civil society is an integral part of the country and it should work for women empowerment and rights and not in any case should mislead the women who follow them. Moreover, its work should also be not against the country.
Knowledge Corner

Gender roles, gender relations, gender discrimination, gender equality, gender equity, gender analysis, gender balance, gender mainstreaming – over the past few decades, these terms have been used widely into declarations, plans of action, policies, programmes and various projects. However, the generous use of these terms does not mean that they are also always fully understood. We share a list of some commonly used terms in an effort to understanding them better!

Gender: The term gender refers to the social roles and relations between women and men. This includes the various responsibilities of women and men in a given culture or location. Gender roles of women and men are socially constructed and can change over time and vary according to geographic location and social context.

Gender Analysis: Refers to the variety of methods used to grasp the relationships between men and women, their access to resources, their activities, and the constraints they face relative to each other.

Gender Analytical Information: Qualitative information on gender differences and inequalities is called gender analytical information.

Gender Awareness: Is an understanding that there are socially and culturally determined differences between women & men, which affect their ability to access and control resources. This awareness needs to be incorporated through gender analysis into projects, programmes and policies.

Gender-Blindness: Is the inability to acknowledge that gender is a vital element of social outcomes impacting on projects and policies.

Gender-Sensitive Budgets: or ‘women’s budgets,’ refers to those processes and tools, which aim at gauging the impact of government budgets, mainly at national level, on different groups of men and women, through analysing gender targeted allocations.

Gender in Development (GID): This concept emerged in the late 1980’s as an alternative to the prevailing Women in Development (WID) approach. Unlike WID, which focused on women only, GID focuses on the interdependence of men and women in society and on the unequal relations of power between them.

Gender, Institutions and Development Data Base (GID-DB): The Gender, Institutions and Development Data Base (GID-DB) represents a new tool for researchers and policy makers to determine and analyse hurdles to women’s economic development. It covers a total of 161 countries and comprises 60 various indicators on gender discrimination.

Gender Equality: Gender equality entails the concept that all human beings, both men and women, irrespective of cast, creed, religion, socially defined stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices are free to nurture their personal abilities and make choices. It also means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally.

Gender Equity: Gender equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs, rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

Gender Mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that integrates women’s and men’s different concerns and interests into the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages of all policies, programmes, projects, policies and laws at all levels and in all economic, political and societal spheres.

5. Sources
https://www.cbd.int/gender/decisions/terminology.shtml
http://www.gender-in-german-development.net/terms.html
http://www.osce.org/gender/26397?download=true
International Women’s Day- A Journey Through Time

International Women’s Day (IWD), originally called International Working Women’s Day is commemorated on the 8th of March every year. It has been celebrated for over a century and is increasing in status year by year. The timeline depicts various developments that contributed towards 8 March becoming a global day to honour economic, political and social achievements of women.

Throughout all these years, there has been a significant change in both women’s and society’s thoughts about women’s equality and emancipation, and great improvements have been made. However, the unfortunate truth is that a lot still has to be done. Women still get less salaries compared to that of their male counterparts, women are under-represented in business or politics, and have less access to education and health facilities and suffer from violence in different forms.

No one government, NGO, charity, organisation, think tank, women’s network, human rights activist or media house is entirely responsible for International Women’s Day. It belongs to “collective efforts of all who care about human rights.” We all needs to do our bit to make everyday International Women’s Day.

The UN began the adoption of an annual theme for IWD in 1996 - which was “Celebrating the Past, Planning for the Future.”

The Socialist Party of America declared last Sunday of February as National Woman’s Day (NWD) and consequently first NWD was celebrated on 28 February 1909.

At the second International Conference of Working Women held in Copenhagen, Denmark, Clara Zetkin (Leader of the ‘Women’s Office’ for the Social Democratic Party in Germany) presented the idea of an International Women’s Day to be celebrated every year in every country. The suggestion was approved by 100 women from 17 countries present at the conference.

Following the decision agreed at Copenhagen, International Women’s Day was celebrated for the first time by the United Nations on 19 March 1910.

The International Women’s Day was transferred to 8 March and to this day has remained the global date for International Women’s Day.

At the beginning of the new millennium, International Women’s Day activity around the world had already started in many countries. But it was realised and agreed that International Women’s Day needed new themes and realistic strategies.

In 1996, the UN began the adoption of an annual theme for International Women’s Day which was “Celebrating the Past, Planning for the Future.”

2011 saw the 100 year celebrations of International Women’s Day.

15,000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter work hours, increase in wages and voting rights.

1911 was the first International Women’s Day that was observed in a number of countries.

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The issue of shorter work hours and increase in wages was a key demand of women’s movement in the early 20th century.

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International Women’s Day in 1909

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شہرستانی اردو آموزشی اسکول کے حوصلہ افزائی (افزش)

2014 میں جامعہ آئی او پی کے معاون نے کیا کہ پاکستانی گروہ کے خلاف قانونی فروپرائیزی کی فتوحات کے جنگ کے ساتھ ساتھ دوسرے قانونی سائز کو کھلا کر لیا گیا۔

ایک گروہ کے قیام پر سو ہزار پر افغانستان کا گروہ کی کوئی بھی ہماری تحقیق پر ایک اور نئی پر ہے۔ CAMP کو پہچان کر کیونکہ ہماری کمپنی نے پاکستانی گروہ کو مارے کے ساتھ ساتھ دوسرے قانونی سائز کو کھلا کر لیا گیا۔

CAMP کی حوصلہ افزائی?

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CAMP کی حوصلہ افزائی?
مختصر فی الحال، لا يوجد أي معلومات متوفرة في هذه الصفحة من الكتب المترجمة إلى العربية. لا يمكنني قراءة النص العربي بشكل طبيعي.

من فضلك قارن بين النص العربي ونص الكتب المترجمة إلى العربية للحصول على المعلومات المطلوبة.
Strengthening Participatory Networks: Opportunities and Challenges (SPO)