

**Bedari – working for the protection and promotion
of women’s and children’s rights**



Annual Report 2013-14



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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to present another Annual Report of Bedari. This report provides a summary of many activities carried out from July 2013 to June 2014. It was another momentous year for Bedari as it moved further towards ensuring its position as a non-governmental organization striving for the human rights of women and girls and working for elimination of Violence against Women.

This year, Bedari expanded its operations in the southern districts of Punjab. It started a new project 'Peace through Arts' in Muzaffargarh. It is a unique project aimed at engaging youth in artistic and cultural activities and makes them change agents for peace in the society. Another important milestone was culmination of 1st phase of girls' education program, which has brought significant changes in the social fabric of Laphi and Sarkalan – two villages where the project was being implemented. Bedari started the third phase of the same project in 5 more villages in the same district – Chakwal.

The quality of our work and interventions reflect the collective knowledge and know-how of our members. But without Bedari's small, highly professional and committed staff, and highly motivated volunteers, we would not have been able to make such a difference. On the other hand, Bedari received unprecedented support from its partner organizations and various government departments especially the law enforcement agencies. We are grateful to all of them for their backing and patronage.

Last but not least, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to the partner communities who share the same cause with us for their support and uncomplicated cooperation. I know that this is not something that can be taken for granted. Bedari team shall do its utmost this year also to justify the trust invested in us by our partners for the cause of a society where women and girls live as equal human beings without any fear of violence and discrimination. .



Saleem Malik

(Executive Director)

BEDARI VISION

"A society where Women and Girls enjoy Equal Status as Human Beings"

BEDARI MISSION

"Promoting equal rights of all (including women, men, boys and girls) in society through capacity building, education and advocacy"

BEDARI OBJECTIVES

1. *Advocacy and lobbying for appropriate legislation to address gender based discrimination and violence*
2. *Raising awareness and building capacities (across duty bearers and right holders) around women's human rights*
3. *Combating gender inequalities through girls' education beyond primary level*
4. *Providing direct support to women survivors of gender based violence (GBV)*
5. *Promoting peace and tolerance through revival of cultural activities and by engaging young people both male and female*

NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES

- *Child Rights Movement (CRM)*
- *Alliance against Child Marriages (AACM)*
- *Ending Violence against Women/Girls (EVAW)*
- *Insani Huqooq Ittehad (IHI)* Bedari currently holds the secretariat
- *Mumkin Alliance*

BEDARI'S PARTNERS

- *International Child Development Initiatives, (ICDI) The Netherlands*
- *United States Institute for Peace (USIP)*
- *United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)*
- *Free and Fair Elections Network (FAFEN)*
- *Give to Asia (The Asia Foundation)*
- *'Citizens' Voice Project - USAID*
- *Gender Equity Project - USAID*
- *Girls Education International, USA*
- *Individual Sponsors*
- *Bedari Volunteers*
- *Partner Communities*

INTRODUCTION:

Bedari is a national level non-governmental voluntary development organization in Pakistan working with women and children. Since 1991, it is working for the protection and promotion of basic human rights for women and children while working around the awareness raising campaigns.

It works for women survivors of violence in different areas of Pakistan while providing them legal and psychological support and brings its expertise on issues of gender empowerment, addressing violence against women and girls and processes of attitudinal change. Bedari has also developed a national Helpline for providing counselling and legal aid to the survivors of violence.

Bedari has contributed in raising awareness on women and girls' rights and gender issues. It has highlighted disparities towards marginalized groups of society and launched advocacy campaigns on women and girls' human rights issues by organizing events, theatre/puppet shows, talks, training, workshops and seminars and conferences.

BEDARI PROGRAMS

To realize its objectives, Bedari has been running following programs:

1. Crisis Intervention Program
2. Combating Child Marriages in Punjab
3. Girls Education beyond Primary Level
4. Bedari Theatre Program

CRISIS INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Bedari is running a Crisis Intervention Program for women and children who faced any kind of violence. It provides psychological counseling, free legal aid and referral to other services such as hospitals and shelters. Any case of violence against women can be reported to Bedari on its toll-free helpline 0800-13536 (Free from land line phones only, and services available in Pakistan only). On average, Bedari has extended support to around 1000 women per year. Thus, Bedari has served around 23,000 women till June 2014.



Bedari is running this program in Islamabad/Rawalpindi since 1991. It has replicated this program in its sub-offices in Chakwal, Attock, Multan, Vehari, Muzaffargarh, Sheikhpura and Nankana Sahab.

COMBATING CHILD MARRIAGES IN PUNJAB



Bedari has been striving hard to put an end to child marriages in Pakistan. It has been working with communities in South Punjab and other areas to raise awareness among people especially parents to delay marriages of their children especially girls till they attain the age of 18 years. At the same time, it has been running an advocacy campaign to influence the policy makers and legislators for effective legislation on the issue.

A draft of the bill, Child Marriage Prohibition Bill, for Punjab has been prepared in consultation with communities, human rights activists, media, political workers and government officials. The lobbying process is on to get this important piece of legislation approved by the Punjab assembly for the

protection of children particularly girls from the curse of marriage. The financial support for this project has come from Actionaid International and UNFPA.

GIRLS EDUCATION BEYOND PRIMARY LEVEL



Education is the universally acknowledged basic human right of every human being. But there are many children who are unable to go to school because of poverty, inadequate facilities, and discrimination. Girls also face discrimination, and are deprived of quality education. Bedari started this program “Girls’ Post Primary Level Education” in 2006. Bedari mobilizes families and communities and supports them with scholarships to send their girls to schools to complete their secondary education. The support continues for 5 years or up to higher secondary level (12 years of education).

It piloted this program in Ransial (District Chakwal) with financial support from Athens Network for Collaborating Experts (ANCE) – an organization based in Greece. After successfully completing the pilot phase, the first phase of the program was started in 2009. Bedari sent 30 girls from two villages to a nearby secondary school situated in Buchal Kalan nearly 10 kilometers away from their homes. This phase was implemented with support from Girls Education International, USA (GEI). Bedari and GEI have started the 2nd phase of the program from April 2014. The number of girls has been enhanced to 70.

BEDARI THEATRE PROGRAM

Street theater has, time and again, proved its effectiveness in awareness raising campaigns especially to change attitudes and behaviors. Its strong appeal to the masses makes it a most cherished tool for development workers, especially the ones involved in advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns. As the sub-continental version is more affordable and culturally acceptable, it becomes more important for awareness raising campaigns. There is no need to hire professional actors and actresses, as members of a community can themselves prepare short plays with minimum training.



As raising awareness among communities is one of the core objectives of Bedari, it becomes all the more important to have a dynamic theater program. Theater is usually an integral part of most, if not all, of Bedari's projects. Bedari has performed street plays on the following issues:

- Violence against Women
- Child Marriages
- Domestic Violence
- Extremism and its impact on women and children
- Sexual Harassment at Work Place

BEDARI PROJECTS

In the reporting year, Bedari has executed following projects:

1. Girls Power Program
2. Supporting Transparency, Accountability & Electoral Process
3. Advocacy for Effective Legislation against Child Marriages Marriages in Pakistan
4. Peace through Arts
5. Girls' Education beyond Primary Level Education
6. Participation of Youth in Legislation and Policy Making
7. Long Term Election Observation and Oversight Project

GIRL POWER PROGRAM

Girl Power Program is launched by Child Rights Alliance (CRA) based in The Netherlands. It is funded by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands. CRA is an alliance of six organizations - Plan the Netherlands, Child Helpline the Netherlands, Defense for Children the Netherlands (ECPAT), Free Voice, International Child Development Initiative (ICDI) and Women Win. CRA is working for the protection of the child rights in the light of UNCRC and CEDAW. This program is being implemented in 10 countries including Pakistan. It started in January 2011 and would end in December 2015. Bedari is implementing this program in partnership with ICDI and Plan Pakistan in the following districts of Punjab, Pakistan:

1. Multan
2. Vehari
3. Chakwal

Following are the details of the activities carried out during 2013-14.



A speaker at the regional conference on child marriages

1. 68 new grassroots organization were added to the program.
2. Capacity building of 87 organizations was done. These include 68 new and 19 identified in the previous year.
3. Free legal aid was provided to 261 girls, while counseling was provided to 1571 girls during the year.
4. A regional conference on Child Marriages was held in Multan. It was attended by people from various walks of life in large numbers.
5. A resource center was established in Dar ul Aman (government-run shelter home) in Multan.
6. 108 villages were reached with activities aimed at promotion of gender equality and girls' rights. This was done by partner community based organizations (CBOs).

7. 590 community leaders were reached through partners with an aim to sensitize them on girls' rights and gender equality.
8. 490 government officials including police personnel, shelter home staffs, health department professionals were trained on protecting women and girls from violence.
9. 953 officials of different government institutions (district and province level) were reached for lobbying on various issues faced by girls.



Bedari staff donating TV set to the Shelter Home

STAEP:

STAEP (Supporting Transparency, Accountability & Electoral Processes in Pakistan) is a four year project conceived by FAFEN (Free and Fair Election Network), a network of 42 leading civil society organizations working across Pakistan for “a democratic and just society that guarantees right, respect and dignity to all individuals”. The project focuses to enhance the effectiveness of government in addressing the critical challenges now facing Pakistan by increasing citizen's participation in ensuring transparency, accountability of elected and public institutions in Pakistan. Bedari is implementing this project in five constituencies of Districts Sheikhupura and Nankana Sahib.

Following activities took place during this year:

1. Formation and strengthening of Citizens and District Governance Groups. They monitored the district governments and elected political leaders of the area and measured their performance. Furthermore, they raised local governance related issues at the relevant platforms and got them resolved.
2. These groups raised 45 issues (28 from Sheikhupura and 17 from Nanakana Sahab) with local government and political leadership. 13 were completely resolved, 29 were partially resolved, while 4 were pending at the conclusion of the project.
3. 704 people (304 men and 380 women) were helped with registration as citizens. They were issued Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs) by National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA).
4. Voter mobilization activities were organized.
5. Conventions were held in four Tehsils (sub-districts) for raising the issue of local government elections which are due since 2009.

ADVOCACY FOR EFFECTIVE LEGISLATION AGAINST CHILD MARRIAGES IN PUNJAB

The project aimed for the effective legislation on child marriages in Pakistan. Bedari has been running a program on this issue for quite a few years. Previously, it had held community sessions and consultation which resulted in the drafting of a comprehensive law tackling all aspects of the issue. In the year 2013-14, Bedari's focus remained on taking the new bill to the legislature.

It was a short advocacy campaign carried out by Bedari with support from UNFPA Pakistan in 2013. The campaign was carried out in five districts:

- Rawalpindi
- Lahore
- Faisalabad
- Multan
- Bahawalpur



Following activities were carried out under the project:

Provincial Conference on Child Marriages held in Lahore

1. Individual meetings were held with 45 legislators of Punjab Assembly to discuss the matter and gain their support for the new legislation.
2. After individual meetings, dialogues were held with groups of legislators in the above-mentioned target districts.
3. Press Conferences were held to highlight the issue in the print and electronic media.
4. Radio Programs were also aired in the 5 target districts to raise awareness about the issue in the general public
5. The campaign ended with a provincial level conference in Lahore. It was attended by people from various walks of life including political leaders from different parties, lawyers, doctors, human rights and child rights activists, and media persons.

PEACE THROUGH ARTS

"Peace through Arts" is a unique project that aims at creating a forum for youth where they can interact with one another, discuss various issues pertaining to their everyday lives and express their desire for



Members of Theater Group - Peace through Arts

peace and prosperity through different art forms. It has been funded by United States Institute for Peace. It is a youth led project. Bedari staff is there to facilitate them. It has ensured participation of young girls, youth from religious and ethnic minorities as well as from different social/economic classes. It is a diverse group coming together to raise awareness about peace and its significance for prosperity and well-being of the communities.

The youth has been organized into five groups: Theater, Art/Photography, Music, Poetry and Social Media. The four groups create art work focusing on the importance of diversity, peace and tolerance. Theater group creates plays, Artists make drawings/paintings, Musicians compose songs, and Poets and Writers write poems and prose on peace and tolerance. The social media group is there to disseminate this information on the social media



Participatns of training on Peace

especially Facebook.

Following activities took place in the year 2013-14:

1. Selection of the 100 young men and women in 5 groups.
2. Selection of the 5 mentors for each group.
3. Baseline Survey has been conducted with these 100 pre-selected young men and women. In addition, focus group discussions were held with various community groups.
4. Mentoring sessions for all five groups have been conducted.
5. Training on peace and tolerance for diversity has been conducted for all five groups.

GIRLS' EDUCATION BEYOND PRIMARY LEVEL

The 1st phase of this project came to an end in April 2014. It was a 5 years long phase started in 2009 in two remote villages – Laphi and Sarkalan of district Chakwal. It is receiving financial support from Girls Education International. 16 girls have completed their secondary education (10 years of education), while 5 of them up to higher secondary level or 12 years of education. 9 more girls have appeared for secondary school examination this year (2014) and are waiting for their result.

The project has been concluded in two villages Laphi and Sarkalan. Bedari paid the last tranche in April 2014 to the beneficiaries. As the exams came to an end, the financial support was withdrawn.

THE IMPACT:

Girls Education is now a trend in Laphi. As per our volunteer Mr. Murtaza, Laphi has got another batch of girls with secondary education after a gap of 30 years. There are 20 girls going to secondary school without any support from any NGO.

This project has contributed/impacted immensely the issue of child marriages. Of all the girls who benefitted from this project, only one girl got married at the age of 17. Some girls are now 20 years old, and still unmarried. This is going to have huge impact on the health, family size, decision making, and overall empowerment of girls in the community in the long run.

THE 2ND PHASE LAUNCHED:

The 2nd phase of Girls Education beyond Primary Level was launched in June 2014. The launching ceremony was held at Government Girls Primary School Hattar (Tehsil Kalar Kahar, District Chakwal). In



A girl receives scholarship certificate from Bedari at launching ceremony of 2nd phase of the project

this phase, 70 girls from 5 remote villages have been awarded scholarships. The villages are:

- Thirchak,
- Natto Wala,
- Maira Aemah,
- Chakki Rangpur,
- Hattar

They would continue to receive this support till they complete their education up to secondary level (extendable by another two years if a girl and her family want to continue).

PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN LEGISLATION AND POLICY MAKING

This is an advocacy project, which aims to organize urban youth forums in Multan district. It is funded by USAID through Citizens' Voice Project. It is enabling youth to prioritize, advocate and take up their issues proactively; and oversee the implementation of the Punjab Youth Policy 2012 in Multan. Under the project, Bedari is building and strengthening linkages between youth and concerned district-level public departments (i.e. Health, Education, Information Technology and Community Development). It is also facilitating youth to engage with the Secretariat of Punjab Chief Minister and provincial level departments of Finance, Youth Development, Education and Health for advocacy.



Group Photo of Members of Town Youth Council Gulgasht Town, Multan

Bedari has established Town Youth Councils in 6 Towns of Multan city. These Councils are linked through District Youth Council which has equal representation of each Town Youth Council. The members are being provided with thorough training on policy making and Punjab Youth Policy 2012. Furthermore, they are being taken to Lahore on exposure visits. They meet officials of Ministry of Youth Development,

Government of Punjab and secretariat of Punjab Assembly. They are watching out the implementation of Punjab Youth Policy, and are lobbying with relevant officials if there are any gaps or issues in implementation.

It was started relatively late in the reporting year. However, Bedari carried out following activities in the 2014:

1. Mobilization of youth in the 6 towns of Multan city.
2. Selection of 180 Youth; 30 from each of the 6 towns.
3. Baseline Survey with selected youth.
4. Formation of 6 Town Youth Councils.
5. Establishment of District Youth Council.
6. Regular monthly meetings of all the youth councils
7. Initial meetings of the town youth councils with district government officials of various departments including Education, and Health.

LONG TERM ELECTION OBSERVATION AND OVERSIGHT PROJECT



Elections in Pakistan have been dogged by controversy, coupled with lack of efforts to understand the whole process and recommend ways to make them credible. As a member of FAFEN, Bedari is implementing Long Term Election Observation and Oversight Project (LTEOOP) as 2013 is election year in Pakistan. It is being implemented in Sheikhpura and Nankana Sahab districts of Punjab.

Bedari hired around 1200 election observers, and provided them basic training in election monitoring. These observers played instrumental role in monitoring elections in 5 constituencies, and reported the issues to FAFEN. Later, the project team did lobbying with the local chapters of political parties for local government elections.

NEW PROJECTS SIGNED

Bedari signed two new projects towards the end of the reporting period. These are:

- ILM Possible – Take a Child to School Project
- Enhancing Women Workers’ Awareness of Their Rights and Labour Laws

ILM POSSIBLE – TAKE A CHILD TO SCHOOL PROJECT



This project aims at facilitating women’s economic empowerment through raising awareness not only among working women but also among employers on relevant laws including anti sexual harassment laws, and labour laws. The project is being implemented in Multan district. It has been funded by USAID through Gender Equity Project.

ENHANCING WOMEN WORKERS’ AWARENESS OF THEIR RIGHTS AND LABOUR LAWS

This project is being implemented in partnership with British Council, Children’s Global Network (CGN), School of Leadership (SOLF) and 30 local partners in 60 districts of four provinces. Bedari, as member of FAFEN, is implementing this project in three districts – Sheikhpura, Nankana Sahab and Qasur in Punjab (Pakistan). It is collecting data on children’s enrollment, and identifying pockets where enrollment ratio is very low. Its responsibilities include monitoring of 185 schools and 4,495 children’s enrollment and retention.



Shabana* – the girl saved from child marriage

As Shabana's parents could not afford to send her to secondary school, they selected a groom for her and wanted to marry her off as soon as possible. It would have reduced their burden as they would have one less mouth to feed. But Shabana wanted to study further and was looking for ways to get out of that difficult situation.

Then she came to know about Bedari's program 'Girls' Education beyond Primary Level'. She applied for the program and got selected. Community leaders convinced her parents to delay her marriage, and Bedari completed the formalities for her admission in secondary school.

She made the most of the opportunity, cleared her secondary school exam. Seeing her performance, Bedari decided to continue the scholarship for another two years, and Shabana cleared her higher secondary exam as well. As per policy, Bedari could not extend its scholarship program any further.

Her extended family stepped in. Her grandmother and uncle joined hands to bear the expense of her further education. In another two years, she became the first ever graduate in her entire family.

Now she is 21 years old married woman with one kid teaching at a local adult literacy center. Bedari project "Girls' Education beyond Primary Level" saved her from child marriage on the one hand, and made her an educated, earning mother on the other hand. In fact, this project saved 28 other girls from child marriage.

**Name has been changed to protect the identity of the beneficiary.*

Victim turns into an activist !!!

Farzana Shah belongs to Choa Saidan Shah – a small town nearly 35 kilometers to the south of Chakwal City in Pakistan. She was facing domestic violence for a long time but did not know what to do about it. Her own parents and other relatives would advise her to bear with the situation. But it became really difficult. Finally, she decided that enough was enough.*

As she started looking for ways and means to put an end to her misery, she heard about Bedari from another woman who had faced similar situation and got counseling from Bedari. Farzana, too, contacted Bedari for help. It was immediately clear to Bedari staff that she was not just another violence survivor seeking help but a very different lady.

With counseling and free legal aid, her problem was solved in a very short span of time which made her immensely happy. She decided to stay in touch with Bedari and volunteered to help more women in her neighborhood. She referred many more cases to Bedari.

Seeing her passion and hard work, Bedari provided her opportunities to attend training sessions on various issues related to gender-based violence, community mobilization and institution building. She made the most of all the opportunities and became a very good counselor. With a little more support, she established a Community Support Center for Women in her home. She receives cases of violence survivors and provides them counseling and basic level legal advice as well. If the case is complicated for her, she would refer it to Bedari office in Chakwal City.

“I thought counseling was a very tough job, and I would never be able to help anyone. But the training sessions organized by Bedari were so helpful. Though counseling remains a very tough job, but I can do it now, and I am glad I have already helped scores of women in my town”, says Farzana.

Note: Real name and photo of the lady has been withheld as she did not feel comfortable about it.*

