

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



## Annual Report 2012-13



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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 2012 to June 2013. This year, Bedari continued with its campaign for effective legislation against child marriages in Punjab. It received support from UNFPA and managed to draft a new comprehensive law after ample consultation with the relevant stakeholders from communities to policy makers, legal experts, and legislators. The draft is ready and has been handed over to the legislators.

Elections were held in May 2013, and Bedari played its due role in the registration of women voters. Furthermore, Bedari conducted election observation in 5 National Assembly constituencies. It was a huge task, as it involved hiring and training of 100s observers and then conducting the actual exercise. FAFEN provided us with necessary support and technical expertise.

As we are close to the conclusion of the first phase of our program 'Girls Post Primary Level Education', we are negotiating with the donors for the second phase. We will be reaching out to new villages and helping more girls in securing their post primary level education in the next phase. We look forward to your support in this regard.

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. 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



## **Bedari Vision**

*“A society where Women and Girls enjoy Equal Status as Human Beings”*

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## **Bedari Mission**

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

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## **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)*
- *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)*
- *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.



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 Action Aid International and UNFPA.

## Girls Post Primary Level Education



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 Theatre Program

Street theater has, time and again, proved its effectiveness in awareness raising campaigns especially to change attitudes and behaviors. 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. 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 2012-13.

1. 70 new grassroots organization were added to the program.
2. Capacity building of 90 organizations was done. These include 68 new and 19 identified in the previous year.
3. Free legal aid was provided to 250 girls, while counseling was provided to 1500 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. 100 villages were reached with activities aimed at promotion of gender equality and girls' rights. This was done by partner community based organizations (CBOs).
6. 600 community leaders were reached through partners with an aim to sensitize them on girls' rights and gender equality.
7. 370 government officials including police personnel, shelter home staffs, health department professionals were trained on protecting women and girls from violence.



A speaker at the regional conference on child marriages



Bedari staff donating TV set to the Shelter Home

8. 900 officials of different government institutions (district and province level) were reached for lobbying on various issues faced by girls.

### **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.

## **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 NankanaSahab 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.

## Upcoming Projects

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

- Peace through Arts
- Participation of Youth in Policy Making and Legislation

### 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 peace and prosperity through different art forms. 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 would be organized into five groups: Theater, Art/Photography, Music, Poetry and Social Media. The four groups would 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 especially Facebook.

### Participation of Youth in Policy Making and Legislation

This is an advocacy project, which aims to organize urban youth forums in Multan district. These platforms would enable 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 would build and strengthen linkages between youth and concerned district-level public departments (i.e. Health, Education, Information Technology and



Community Development). It would also be facilitating youth to engage with the Secretariat of Punjab Chief Minister and provincial level departments of Finance, Youth Development, Education and Health for advocacy.