



# Annual Report



2015-2016



## Message from Executive Director

Dear Friends, I am pleased to present Annual Report of Bedari for the Year 2015-16. This report provides a summary of activities carried out during the reporting period, key achievements and some success stories to provide the reader an insight of the efforts Bedari has been putting in promotion and protection of human rights of girls and women.

It was a difficult year as the government turned quite antagonistic towards NGOs, and started looking at NGOs as spoilers instead of seeing us as partners in development. The policies were not clear, and there was a lot of confusion about the status of NGOs. We needed No Objection Certificates for the smallest activities.

Anyhow, I am delighted to let you know that Bedari came out of the difficult times unscathed. We did not have to cancel even a single event, let alone closing any of our projects. Our projects, policies, and procedures have been vetted thoroughly, and we have been allowed to continue our work.

Our focus on addressing the issue of child marriages has increased. Currently, we are working with three partners – ICDI, COL, and Oxfam Novib – to eliminate child marriages in 7 districts of Punjab province. Similarly, we are working with social welfare department in 8 districts to facilitate in the implementation of minimum standards for women's shelter homes (Dar ul Aman).

Bedari developed new partnerships and continued with the old ones. Amplify Change, Commonwealth of Learning, and Oxfam Novib are new additions to Bedari's prestigious list of partners from development sector. Our partnership with Plan International, ICDI, and Girls Education International continued to flourish. We are really proud of having such wonderful partners.

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.

**Safeer Ullah Khan**



## Introduction

Bedari is a national level non-government voluntary development organization in Pakistan working with women and girls for the promotion and protection of their human rights in society. It started its activities around awareness raising and self-growth in 1992 with setting up of Pakistan's first crisis center for women and girls. It has developed expertise on issues of women empowerment, addressing gender based discrimination, violence and abuse against women and girls and the processes of attitudinal change.

Bedari started with the provision of immediate rehabilitation support to women facing violence. The activities included psychological counseling, free legal aid and referral to other required services such as medical and temporary shelter. It was a very rewarding work but proving insufficient because of the rampant prevalence of violence against women and girls and its acceptance in the society. The natural expansion of work was to address the root causes and to raise awareness and sensitize masses about this menace and the importance of rights of women particularly the right of protection from all forms of violence. Therefore Bedari developed a three pronged strategy to address the issues related to gender based discrimination, violence and abuse against women and girls. It included;

a. (Continuation of) immediate support to survivors of violence: It, not only, helps the rehabilitation of the survivors but also supports the long term purpose of reducing the violence. A successful case where a female victim is rehabilitated and the justice is dispensed would encourage other women to take a stand against violence and assert their right to protection. It also discourages the perpetrators to restrain as the women may not take it silently and the justice may take its rout.

b. Awareness Raising and Capacity building of Right-holders and Duty-bearers: it is about raising awareness among masses about the impact of violence against women and girls and about the importance of their right to protection from all forms of discrimination, violence and abuse. It is about capacity building of key government and non government institutions so that they can perform their role for protection of women and girls from violence.

c. Lobbying and Advocacy for Policy and Legislative Reforms: Advocacy and lobbying is conducted to reform discriminatory policies and laws and to fill out the gaps in the legislation.

This three pronged strategy contributes to serve the immediate needs of survivors of gender based discrimination, violence and abuse and to bring long term sustainable change in the society in general and in the lives of women in particular.

Initiating its interventions as a small organization, entirely relied on the volunteerism, Bedari now has a formal, paid full-time working staff supported by a wide network of volunteers. It has established partnerships with donors to execute various projects with prime objectives, as the elimination of discrimination and violence against women. Bedari has expanded its wings to other areas which affects women's condition in the society. These include peace building, education, health and, economic empowerment of women to address discrimination and violence against women. It has also expanded its geographic coverage from Islamabad/ Rawalpindi to Chakwal, Attock, Jhelum, Muzaffargarh, Vehari, Lodhran, Sheikhpura and Multan.





Bedari believes that raising awareness of women or working in the community to reduce violence is not enough. Strong, comprehensive and accessible laws are needed to reduce violence against women. Hence, during the last 15 years, Bedari has been in close contact with parliamentarians for making women friendly laws and has played instrumental role in getting the laws related to sexual harassment (under the platform of AASHA) passed. Using this experience, Bedari co-founded another network of the like-minded organizations called AACM (Alliance against Child Marriages) and played a vital role in getting the law of Child marriages revised in the best interest of girls.

### Bedari Vision

"A just world free of gender based discrimination and violence"

### Bedari Mission

"Promoting human 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

### Bedari's Alliances

1. Child Rights Movement (CRM)
2. Alliance against Child Marriages (AACM)
3. Ending Violence against Women/Girls (EVAWG)
4. Mumkin Alliance
5. Pakistan Reproductive Health Network (PRHN)
6. Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Alliance (SUN – CSA)
7. Free and Fair Elections Network (FAFEN)
8. Girls not Brides
9. Civil Registration and Vital Statistics - CRVS Network for Asia Region





## BEDARI'S PARTNERS

1. Citizens' Voice Project – USAID
2. Creative Associates Under Umeed Jawan - USAID
3. Gender Equity Project - USAID
4. Girls Education International, USA
5. International Child Development Initiatives, (ICDI) The Netherlands
6. Plan International Pakistan
7. The Asia Foundation
8. Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability (TDEA)
9. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
10. United States Institute for Peace (USIP)
11. Individual Sponsors
12. Bedari Volunteers
13. Partner Communities



## Bedari Programmes

- A. Crisis Intervention Program
- B. Combating Child Marriages in Punjab
- C. Girls Education beyond Primary Level
- D. Bedari Theatre Program

Bedari designs and implements projects under these program to achieve its vision. All the projects implemented during the this reporting period are briefly described in the following.

## Projects

Bedari implemented the following projects during the year 2015-16

1. Girls Power Project (GPP)
2. Building Child Marriage Free Communities- Her Choice
3. Combating Child Marriages and SRHR Issues of Young People
4. Marriage No Child's Play
5. Improving Shelter Homes in Punjab
6. Post Primary Level Education for Girls
7. Enhancing women workers' Awareness of Their Rights and Labor Laws
8. Youth Economic Empowerment Programme (YEPP)
9. Deepening Democracy and Election Support Pakistan
10. Take a Child to the School - Monitoring Only
11. Girls Inspire



## Girls Power Project (GPP)

This project helps in addressing the core issues of gender based discrimination, violence and abuse against young women and girls. At the same time it does not leave the boys out either. Boys, particularly the ones who are in difficult circumstances and are vulnerable to violence and abuses are also served through this project.

Major activities of the project include the operation of three helplines in three cities, namely Multan, Vehari and Chakwal. Girls, young women and boys who face discrimination, violence and abuse can contact Bedari through these helplines. All three helplines provide the survivors with counseling services, free legal aid and referral and guidance to other services such as temporary shelters, and medical aid. The helplines also refer, guide and chevron to police station, if the need be. The helplines have served over 1030 survivors during the year.

Other than providing the direct support to the survivors of gender based discrimination, violence and abuse, the helplines also work on the preventive side. The people with influence such as social and political workers, media and other professionals are informed, educated and sensitized through various mediums including training workshops, seminars, conferences, street theater, radio programs and printed materials. During the year 500,000 (5 Laac) people are reached.

*ICDI has provided, technical and full finances for the project*



*Women and girls organize an event on their own to celebrate local festival*





## Building Child Marriage Free Communities

The ratio of child marriage in Pakistan is alarmingly high and it is perpetuated by social, economic, cultural and political factors in Pakistan. It is one of the core issues that Bedari try to address.

This is a long term project starting from beginning of 2016. Therefore this report will cover only the take-off of the project. The vision of the project is to have child marriage free communities. This will be achieved by implementing the following strategies of the project.

The project is being implemented in a very participatory manner. Men, women, girls and boys are all involved in the project. There is a process to raise awareness about the bad impact of child marriage on girls. The emphasis is on explaining the bad impacts of child marriage on health and education of the child mother and the survival and health of the baby. The initial signs are good. The strategies seems to be working. It is expected that the objectives of the project will be achieved and we together would be able to build child marriage free communities in target areas. The project has reached out to 3,000 people in 30 partner communities in the reporting period.

Another important strategy of the project is to train young people specially girls on sexual and reproductive health issues. This component of the project has benefited 300 girls and families. TOT for this purpose are conducted with teachers and village volunteers so that they can support young people of their schools and communities. The project is being implemented in Chakwal, Vehari and Lahore.

*ICDI has supported the project technically and financially*



*Women and girls attend a session on violence against women.*



## Combating Child Marriage and SRHR Issues of Young People

Child marriage is a wide spread in Pakistan. It contributes o many ills including the domestic violence, deprivation of young girls from their childhood, perpetuating poverty by moving it to next generation, large family size, compromised health of young mothers and their children and education and development of girls as established individuals. Therefore this has become Bedari's core issue and we are working at various levels to combat child marriage at various levels, from communities to policy and legislation.

Bedari started a 13 months project in July 2014. This project helped in highlighting the issue of chlid marriage in the province of punjab. A great leap was taken as we lobbied with the provincial legislature in Lahore. This was done in collaboration with other actors including NGOs, like minded professionals and media. This project achieved good result as Punjab Assembly taken the issue twice; a resolution was passed to express the desire of the provincial government and 2nd time when the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 was actually ammended. It still fall short of the ideal law that we demandedm but a step forward. This project encouraged us as well as ICDI, the excellent partners who provided us with the financial and technical support.

In addition to the successes at policy and legislative level, the project was also very successful at community lev. Several partner communities were freed from the menace of child marriage. This project provided us with learning to conceive a five years long project, which Bedari did together with ICDI.

It was a 13 months long project and was successfully completed during the first month of the current reporting year. The project was implemented in three districts Vehari, Lodhran and Lahore. However it had an impact on the whole of Punjab as legislative change was for the whole province and also the issue of child marriage was highlighted because it was taken twice by the Punjab provincial assembly.

*ICDI supported the project technically and financially.*



## Marriage No Child's Play

This is another project to address the issue of child marriages in target districts. It is a five year long project and being implemented with full participation of people using Gender Action Learning System (GALS). GALS is a community-led empowerment methodology that uses principles of inclusion to improve income of vulnerable people in a gender-equitable way. It positions poor women and men as drivers of their own development rather than victims, identifying and dismantling obstacles in their environment, challenging service providers and private actors. It has proven to be effective for changing gender inequalities that have existed for generations, strengthening negotiation power of marginalized stakeholders and promoting collaboration, equity and respect between value chain actors. This will help in empowering people to take care of themselves and to protect their children particularly girls from the menace of child marriage.

The training of communities specially young people on sexual and reproductive health is also an important strategy to help them know the bad impact of child marriage as well as to protect themselves from sexual and reproductive health issues.

It is a five years long project and just taking off. The current reporting period includes only the startup. The staff is hired and oriented, the field offices are established and the community work has started. It is being implemented in Muzaffargarh and Lodhran.

*Oxfam Novib is financially supporting the project.*



*Mr. Qizilbash, Country Director Oxfam, speaking at the launching ceremony of the project*





## Improving Shelter Homes in Punjab

Bedari has vast experience of supporting the survivors of domestic violence. One extremely needed service for women facing domestic violence is temporary shelter homes. Government of Punjab have these shelter homes in district cities in all 36 districts of Punjab. These shelter homes provide temporary shelter to 1000s of women and girls every year. It is common knowledge that these shelter homes are not in good conditions and the services need to improve to take better care of its residents.

Bedari has long experience of working with the staff of these government run temporary shelter called Darul Amans (DUAs). MDM France also has a decade long project to improve the situation of these DUAs. MDM completed its project in 2015.

Bedari prepared a proposal, based on its own experience and in collaboration with MDM to take over the thread from MDM. The project aimed at consolidating the achievements of MDM project. For instance MDM prepared

and notified minimum standards for these DUAs. They trained the DUA staff but follow ups were still needed. Bedari wanted to train any new staff and also to provide refreshers so that the minimum standards can be implemented in the best possible way. In addition to capacity building of staff, the project also includes services for inmates such as psychological counseling, emergency health services, hygiene kits, life skill training through self growth and vocational training.

This project started well in the last month of current reporting years. The staff was hired, trained, oriented and deployed in target DUAs. It is being implemented in eight districts namely, Multan, Khanewal, Muzaffargarh, Rawalpindi, Chakwal, Faisalabad, Gujranwala and Lahore.

*This project has received financial support from Amplify Change.*



*Women and staff of a government run shelter home sharing their problems in a session*



## Post Primary Level Education for Girls

It is encouraging that the numbers in primary level education for girls have improved significantly in recent times. However the primary level education is not enough for girls to bring a tangible change in their lives. After the completion of primary level education, a girl is only 11 years when she is no more engaged by education. There she becomes available for domestic labor or even for marriage. If married at this age she would be vulnerable to SRH diseases, teenage pregnancy, large family size and domestic violence. The poverty continues in the next generation as well. She may even lose her life due to these problems. Therefore either post primary level schooling has critical importance.

Bedari realizes that the completion of secondary level education has the potential to bring a significant positive change in the lives of girls. To complete secondary education, she would remain at school till the age of schools so her marriage would be pushed to at least this time. Bedari works with poorest of the poor families. If a girl from poor rural family completes secondary education then, in most cases, she becomes the most educated person in the family. That gives her some say in the decision in the family. She also has more chances of taking a paid job outside home after completing her secondary education.

These are the basis for Bedari to work for the post primary level education for girls. This project is implemented in remote villages which has a primary school but the secondary school is far away. Therefore families have to bear traveling expenditures to send their girls to secondary schools. Therefore the girls of poor families who cannot afford the travelling expenditure cannot attend the secondary schools. Bedari gives a scholarship to deserving female students to pay for travelling expenditures.

Bedari is working with 100 poorest families in five villages.

100 girls are attending schools with the help of financial aid provided by the project. The girls are also trained on life skills through a series of training arranged right in their villages.

*This project is financially supported by Girls Education International.*



*Girls at their school*



*Girls learning basic life skills in a self growth training*



## Enhancing Women Workers Awareness of their Rights and Labor Laws

The share of women in labor market in Pakistan is too low. And the ones who are out at work are usually paid low and are exploited more than their male counterparts because they are not aware of their rights and labor laws. Bedari has implemented this project to help working women to know about their rights and to stand up to demand their rights.

Bedari designed and implemented an advocacy campaign in Multan. It organized women workers in Multan and enhanced their capacities through training and meetings for organization and awareness raising. This helped women working in the formal and informal sector to get together on one platform. It was quite an innovative for their collective engagement.

Women workers getting basic information from one of the trained labor leaders

A major achievement of the project is the establishment of a group called Women Workers Leaders (WWL). The WWL was connected to the provincial and national level network to advocate the rights of working women in the country. Working women who participated in the project are volunteers of Bedari support Bedari to reach out to survivors of gender based discrimination, violence and abuse.

*This project is financially supported by Girls Education International.*





## Youth Economic Empowerment Project

Youth is an overwhelming majority of Pakistan's population; it makes around 68.4 % of the total population. There is a need to do a lot of work to ensure the protection of the rights of this large segment of the population. They need to have opportunities to grow, make good use of their potential and talents, and live a respectable life. However, Pakistan's economy is growing at around 3 per cent for past so many years, which means there is very little growth and more population is at risk of dropping below the poverty line.

This project is designed to support 40 youth in starting or enhancing business or self employment activities. It will also help another 100 youth to be familiar with the microfinance opportunities as well as institutions. Another part of the project is to mobilize youth and build their leadership skills and boost their self confidence so that they can engage in economic activity. Female youth is an important segment of the project.

This project has achieved its objective and support 60 young people 44 girls and 16 boys with loans and technical expertise. All the participating youth is happy with the project and responding brilliantly. The recovery rate of the small loans is 100%. The project is implemented in Chakwal.

*It was financially supported by Plan International Pakistan.*



*Newly trained girls go out into market to see how existing entrepreneurs work*



## Deepening Democracy and Election Support in Pakistan

Deepening Democracy and Election Support Project" (DESP) continued supporting time-sensitive actions to contribute to the strengthening of electoral and parliamentary processes ahead of General Election (GE) 2018. The actions will build on the gains made under the FCO-DFID-funded Citizens Action for Democratic Governance in Pakistan, which concluded in March 2016.

DESP focused on continued oversight of electoral and parliamentary processes and evidence-based advocacy for improved enforcement of existing statutes as well as legal and policy reforms through proactive engagement with political parties, parliamentarians, Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), civil society and media.

Bedari implemented this project in district Gujranwala especially those pockets of the district where the registration women voters was found low. The major achievement was the registration of 6450 women as legally recognized citizens of Pakistan having the right to vote. Other achievements were meetings with local chapters of political parties, journalists, Election Commission officials, representatives of civil society organizations, and other stakeholder for making registration of youth, transgender and women easier, and ensuring support from all stakeholders for the inclusion of such marginalized groups into electoral processes. Another important outcome was sensitization of youth on the importance of democracy, and their role in strengthening democratic values in the society. 250 youth were trained and sensitized on this issue.



## "Take a Child to School" - Monitoring Only

This is an education sector project to enhance the enrolment of children in primary schools. Bedari monitored the increase in enrolment of primary schools in two districts, Nankana Sahib and Kasur. It was great to see more and more children attending the schools. The project helped in enhancing the understanding of schools systems in Punjab and also in sharpening the field level monitoring capacity.

*Bedari received technical and financial support from TDEA-FAFEN to carry out monitoring activities.*

## GIRLS Inspire

This is a open distance project for young women who missed school and now are too old to go back to primary school. It increase awareness about benefits of girls' education and the open distance and technology based education and training. It increases awareness about the negative consequences of child/early and forced marriages.

The project has arranged vocational training for these girls at district level. The project has taken of in Muzaffargarh. It is the first phase of the project. The second phase will be in Multan.

*This project is funded by Commonwealth Organization for Learning, Canada.*



*Staff member introducing project Girls Inspire in the communities*



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