

Child Sexual Abuse- We all are responsible!!!

Child Abuse is unfortunately a common occurrence in Pakistan and it is shocking and sad that pedophilia or child abuse is increasing day by day. The infamous Zainab case in Kasur and the Kasur child abuse scandals are just two infamous incidents and such cases have no limit till date that presents a very crucial picture of the disease that is plaguing our society. Government officials and other important persons fail to address this issue and even if they do, it is too late and the cycle continues.

Child abuse haunts Pakistani society due to many reasons. There are often chances that the perpetrator might be a family member and this is due to communication gap between parents and their children and their blind trust for family members contributes to child abuse. However, it is important to note that there are several cases which go unreported or are not often highlighted by the media.

Kasur—Bulley Shah’s once-famous town, is now the country’s notorious hub of frequent incidents of child sexual abuse-cum-murders due to the criminal negligence of the Punjab government, police, parents and local community. The instances of rape and murder continuous with eight-years-old Faizan, Suleman and 9 years old Ali Husnain; Children in Kasur have been liable to harm for years.

Ujala Network is putting continuous effort to raise voice on such issues at every possible platform. In Ujala phase I, we did a lot of advocacy through media platforms, dialogues with parliamentarians, government departments and grassroots mobilization with parents, teachers, doctors, community influencers to highlight the importance of remedial measures vis-à-vis child protection not only at policy level but also its strict enactment. Due to such constant advocacy, sometimes we become successful to come up with sufficient results and in case of child protection-the constant activism of Ujala and its district civil society organizations, the government also showed their concern on taking measures to stop such shameful incidents. Mr. Usman Buzdar-Chief Minister Punjab gave directives to the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB) to launch a dedicated campaign in Kasur to raise awareness regarding child sexual abuse and also to establish Child Protection Bureau in Kasur. Mr. Amin Ansari, the father of six-year-old Zainab volunteered to become the focal person of CPWB-Kasur. (link attached) We feel gratified that Ujala network has contributed in making Government and decision makers realize the importance of protecting children, and of the dangers revolving around sexual abuse. Awaz has also dedicated their study on “Status of SRHR in Pakistan” to little Zainab to never forget such notorious incidents for unstoppable journey for making every child safe in our country. Because we think, such notification in one district would be not enough. To strengthen our mission further, we are

doing an effort to define a concrete plan for our Ujala partner from Kasur where we will be doing additional mobilization efforts other than defined activities.

Children who are the victims of this menace lead a difficult life as they have to deal with this trauma for the rest of their lives. Some are able to leave it behind and others cannot let it go which has a negative impact on their mental health affecting their whole lives. To deal with this horror that has grasped our society, it is important to take measures from a grass root level. Protection services need to be improved and appropriate and proper training should be provided to police, doctors, parents, teachers, local communities and those dealing with this subject in order to provide a protective environment for children in Pakistani society. Last but not the least SRHR education which we called Life Skills Based Education should be mandatory in the Pakistani education system and the taboo regarding it should be erased so our children can live in a safer environment.

Children are our future; they deserve our devoted attention, not our divided attention.
