

# From Gender Watch To FADAN

A Score Card of first decade of Fight Against Dowry  
(1999-2008)

By:  
AGEHI Resource Centre SACHET - PAKISTAN



*Engendering Development*

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Launched under

“Alternative Perspectives on Population and Health - Policy Dialogue Initiative 2008”

## Manavi - Women's Rights in South Asia

Source : <http://manavi.wordpress.com/2007/11/30/campaign-against-dowry-in-pakistan/>

### Campaign against Dowry in Pakistan

November 30, 2007 by Manavi

In Islamabad, on Friday, November 30, 2007. The Daily Times reported about the "Silver Ribbon Campaign against Dowry."

"There is a need to bring about a legal mechanism to end violence relating to dowry, which has been a deep-rooted social evil for centuries, said the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Gender Advisor Dr Suleman Asif at the 'Silver Ribbon Campaign against Dowry'."

*The Society for Advancement of Community, Health, Education and Training (SACHET) focused their campaign against 'Dowry Violence' which has been prevalent in the subcontinent for centuries.*

*"The efforts should not be confined to create awareness among the masses against the disastrous effects of dowry in the society but to introduce new behaviors and sustaining them," Asif said.*

*He added that Pakistan had multiple legislations including the Federal Law, Shariah Law and customary laws, which give refuge to those who indulge in such practices.*

*Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) Chairman Iftikhar Arif said that there was a need to take positive steps to eliminate dowry from society. "Everyone in our society prefers to make tall claims to end the menace of dowry but no one takes practical measures in this regard," he said. Arif said that it was the responsibility of the public to discourage the menace, which made thousands of parents unable to get their daughters married."*

Even the educated class of people tends to encourage dowry even today. Dowry can only be eradicated if that evil is taken out from minds of the people but otherwise, no law can prevent this.

Daily Times  
Saturday, March 8, 2008

## Violence against women



Dr Rakhshinda Perveen,  
Executive Vice President  
SACHET Pakistan

Violence against women is one of the most urgent agenda and concern of our times. Women are castigated for being women in all ways and at all places, whether it may be the bedroom, boardroom or battlefield. They are abused by the uneducated as well as by the well-taught with the same vehemence but in different manners. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is no exception. It would be too naive to reject any violence practices against human beings of lesser fortune in general and women in particular in our homeland. It would be equally unrealistic to claim that such practices would be eradicated by any half-cooked governmental policy or a donor-funded NGO project. However, remaining a silent spectator on this human or gender issue is not less equivalent to committing a crime like violence. On the International Women's Day, I request the decision makers, on behalf of our Silver Ribbon Campaign against dowry, violence in Pakistan, to vow for ending selective silence on issues of violence against women and girls. ■

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# The Nation

4th October 2002

**T**here is no concept of **Jahez** (dowry) in Islam. There is no word for it in Arabic. In Arabic Jahez means a slow racing horse. However, abundance of wealth in the Arab countries now has prompted the rich families to give gifts of their daughters at the weddings. But as there was no word for Jahez, they adopted a new word 'Bayana' for the purpose. It means the marriage gifts given to the brides.

Marriages were a simple affair in the early Muslim society, usually solemnised in the local mosques. Mosques being the centres of all the activities of the community, served as government offices and even cultural activities were held there. During the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) groups of Negro artists had staged a drama in Masjid-i-Nabwi seen by the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The expenses of the marriage were borne by the would-be-husband. In Islamic terminology these expenses are known as *Haq-i-Mehr*. Unfortunately this Islamic institution has now become a mere formality and never paid to the bride or her parents.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) gave the practical explanation of *Haq-i-Mehr*



## Ulema and Jahez Act

Prof Rafi Ullah Shehab

**In the early period of Islam marriages were solemnised in mosques.**

(dower-money) at the time of the marriage of his daughter Hazrat Fatima (RA) with Hazrat Ali (RA). Hazrat Ali was brought up in the house of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and he could bear the expenses of his marriage. But he had to present a model of Islamic marriage before the believers. When the time of marriage was near the Holy Prophet (PBUH) asked Hazrat Ali to arrange for the expenses of his marriage. He was obliged to sell his armour for 480 dirhams and handed over this amount to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as the *Haq-i-Mehr* of Hazrat Fatima. All the expenses of the marriage including the provision of some items of household, were met from this amount.

The marriage of Hazrat Fatima (RA) is acknowledged as the best model of Islamic marriage. Pious Muslims in every age took pride in following this model. Even in this age there is no death of the pious Muslims who follow this model in letter as well as in spirit. Jinnat Abdul Nasir, President of Egypt, and the most popular Arab leader took pride in following this model. He at the time of the marriage of his daughter had ordered that its expenses should not exceed those incurred on the model marriage of Hazrat Fatima. These were

evaluated equivalent to nearly five thousand rupees. Fifteen persons from the family of the groom and an equal number from the family of the bride participated in this marriage.

This marriage was appreciated throughout the world including Pakistan and India. Our government decided to follow this example. The Bridal Gifts Act of 1976 popularly known as Jahez Act was enforced in the country. In this Act keeping in view the marriage expenses of Hazrat Fatima (RA) maximum limit for expenses of a marriage was fixed at Rs5000.

Marriages in our country are solemnised by the Ulema. Instead of following the Jahez Act, they practically helped the believers to transgress this Islamic law. As a result not a single marriage was solemnised by them so

according to this law. These Ulema had been demanding the enforcement of Islamic system but they were in the forefront to transgress this Islamic law for monetary benefits. It exposed their love for the Islamic system. As a result of the transgression of this Islamic law parents of the girls were compelled to follow the Hindu rituals of marriages on which a huge amount of money is spent.

Marriage in every religion including Islam is treated as a sacred institution. Therefore they are solemnised in the religious centres in every country. In the early period of Islam these were solemnised in mosques. Some pious Muslims still follow this Islamic tradition but the majority of the believers is ignoring this tradition. Instead of mosques, they arrange grand marriage parties at their palatial homes and in five-star hotels.

The greedy businessmen took advantage of this situation and built grand marriage halls. These halls were not in vogue some two decades back. There are clearly the transgression of the beneficial teachings of Islam about marriages. The majority of the poor is not in the position to bear the expenses of these halls as a result of which the

marriages of millions of girls of the poor families could not be solemnised.

According to the latest statistics, the number of such unfortunate girls has exceeded the mark of ten million. There is every possibility that some of them may be compelled to adopt sinful life. Our Ulema and the owners of the marriage halls would be equally responsible for that situation. It is also possible that some of them may commit suicides and those who deprived them of their Islamic right of marriage would be accounted as their murderers.

In the light of these details it is expected that if our Ulema have any respect for the teachings of Islam they would unanimously declare that they would not solemnise any marriage outside the mosques. They should also convince the rich parents that any marriage solemnised outside the mosque will be devoid of religious sanctity. Even in the most advanced countries of the world, marriages are solemnised in the churches and other places of worship. Strict attitude by the Ulema in this respect will compel even the rich families to follow the teachings of Islam. Marriages in mosques will automatically compel even the rich families to confine themselves to the expenses as prescribed in the Jahez Act. It will be a great favour to the unfortunate girls of the poor families as it will facilitate the solemnising of their marriages.

E-mail queries and comments to: [rafi@shehab@nation.com.pk](mailto:rafi@shehab@nation.com.pk)

**This score card records a story of small efforts  
linked to a big dream of a dowry violence  
free society in Pakistan.**

## **Acknowledgments** \_\_\_\_\_

AGEHI extends a sincere most thanks to all the friends and allies in media, citizens sector and academia for encouraging us and translating the dream of doing dialogues on essential development issues outside the technical frameworks of programs and projects.

### **Concept, Research & Editor in Chief:**

Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen

### **Report Coordination:**

Mr. Amin Muhammad & Ms. Zartash Moomi

**Released on International Women's Day (8th March 2009)**

## **Disclaimer** \_\_\_\_\_

The views expressed in this report are those of the speakers, discussants and participants; and do not essentially reflect or endorse the policy, principles, values, practices and outlook of SACHET Pakistan.

# Table of Contents

■	<b>Abbreviations</b>	I
■	<b>From the Editor's desk: Challenging, Communicating, Changing</b>	II
<b>Part One</b>		
■	<b>The Mile Stones</b>	
■	Dowry and SACHET- A chronology of selected research work, talks and presentations	1
■	Dowry and SACHET. Thematic Yearly Planners/Calendars	2
■	Dowry and SACHET- AGEHI Theatre on issues of dowry	5
■	Dowry and SACHET- Message T Shirts and Badges for Social Advocacy	7
■	Dowry and SACHET- Posters for Information and Awareness	8
■	Dowry and SACHET FAD TV Series ( <i>Jahez kay khilaf Jang</i> ) for Policy and Social Advocacy	10
■	Score Card (1999-2008) From Gender Watch to FADAN	11
<b>Part Two</b>		
	Demystifying Dowry;	13
	Perspectives from academia, activists and advocates for policy recommendations on the issues of women rights' and child rights' violation in connection with the custom and institution of dowry in Pakistan.	19
	Summary of the final Policy Dialogue on 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2008.	
<b>Part Three</b>		
<b>Interviews</b>		
	An interview with Ms. Hilda Saeed	22
	An interview with Barrister Zafarullah Khan	24
	An interview with Mr. Iftikhar Arif (SI,HI)	26
<b>Part Four</b>		
<b>New Actions-Old Passion</b>		
		30
<b>Annex</b>		
<b>Annex 01</b>	Slides from the Presentation "Demystifying Dowry" by Dr. Rakshinda Perveen (27 <sup>th</sup> November 2008)	32
<b>Annex 02</b>	Transcriptions of Senator Choudry Anwar Muhammad Bhinder's comments; and Mr. Farooq H. Nak's( Federal Minister for law and justice) endorsements	35
<b>Annex 03</b>	Press Coverage of the Policy Dialogues on 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2008 and 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2008 at SACHET Gallery, Islamabad	37

## Abbreviations / Acronyms

AGEHI	Advocates of Gender Education and Health Information
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FADAN	Fight Against Dowry Advocacy Network
FAD	Fight Against Dowry
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
SACHET	Society for the Advancement of Community, Health, Education and Training
RH	Reproductive Health
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
VAW	Violence Against Women



## From the Editor's desk Challenging ,Communicating, Changing

SACHET-Pakistan completes its 10 years in 2009, and with that it has started assessing some of its groundbreaking and seminal initiatives, in order to seek wisdom from hindsight and share the learning with others. The purpose is to record the ordeals it faced during its determined journey while pursuing some of its campaigns - on the bumpy roads of awareness raising and policy advocacy. Another objective is to highlight some successes and impacts it generated during the course of campaigns.

This brief report looks at 'Fight Against Dowry', an original and flagship campaign that SACHET-Pakistan undertook with the inception of the organisation. Initially the issue of dowry was embedded in the rubric of 'Gender Based Violence (GBV) and violence against women (VAW)' but later it sprung up as a distinct issue, and independent campaign.

When SACHET-Pakistan started as 'an organisation by Pakistanis, for Pakistanis', it envisaged to offer a comprehensive service delivery package to the communities it planned to work with; the package entailed basic provisions in health; enabling elements (scholarships and training) in education; and facilitating inputs for economic empowerment. At that point, SACHET-Pakistan had confidence in its efforts, but did not have any presumptions about a mega change, overnight.

This report - campaign score card - demonstrates that things take time, but with consistent, resilient and steady walk, arduous journeys on bumpy and unfriendly roads become possible.

The report has three parts. Part One traces the milestones of a passionate and vigorous fight against a social evil (dowry) which has intimate and complex roots in our society.

Part Two, records a summation of the final policy dialogue convened to have debate on alternative perspectives on dowry. The dialogue was held at SACHET-Pakistan on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Part Three contains three exclusive interviews of renowned personalities on the issues of dowry. Part Four lists some of the new actions SACHET-Pakistan envisages to take in order to take the FAD campaign to a higher and larger orbit, so that the message could be spread to both the popular and powerful domains simultaneously.

This report, it is expected, will serve as a motivating factor to SACHET-Pakistan team, its partners, its supporters, as well as to those who have taken upon them the tough task of purging society from apparently *subtle* evils which have brazen effect on women's life and participation in the life of society. The report also expects to convince the proponents of dowry that it is about time to rethink, redesign and reform.

31<sup>st</sup> January 2009  
Islamabad  
Pakistan

## Part One

### The Mile Stones

Dowry and SACHET- a chronology of selected research work, talks and presentations

1	AGEHI News Letter, Issue 1, summer 2000. <b>Violence against Women</b> by Dr.Rakhshinda Perveen, p.2. Gender in Pakistan
2	AGEHI News Letter, Issue: 2, autumn, 2001- <b>"Population"</b> . <b>Gender, Population &amp; Pakistan</b> by Dr.Rakhshinda Perveen, p.2.Female Sexuality in Muslim Societies by Sarah Javeed. P. 3.
3	AGEHI News Letter, Issue: 4 spring-summer 2002 <b>"Development Issues"</b> . Hudood Ordinance, Gender and Pakistan, Zafra Bibi's case by Dr.Rakhshinda Perveen, p.2. Honor killings by Saleemullah Balg, p.2. Ever Rising level of Honour killings by Shafkat Munir, p.5. AGEHI's Fight Against Dowry (FAD) Pilot Phase: Project Update, p.7.
4	AGEHI News Letter, Issue: 3, winter 2002 <b>"Gender Issues"</b> . <b>Legal Empowerment of Women in Pakistan</b> by S.M.Zafar (Chairman Human Rights Society of Pakistan Former Law Minister, Government of Pakistan), p .3 &5. AGEHI's Fight Against Dowry (FAD), p.8.
5	<b>Dowry and Silence of the Civic Society as reflected by the Newspaper media- A micro analysis of the invisibility of dowry as a gender issue in Pakistan</b> by Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen Founder Director, AGEHI Resource Centre, Executive Vice President-SACHET presented at 3 <sup>rd</sup> conference of Population Council of Pakistan 2002.
6	<b>Violence against Pakistani Women: An analytical report on cases of Gender Based Violence as reported in the selected National Newspapers (7th Dec. 2000-11<sup>th</sup> Sep. 2001).</b> Report prepared by AGEHI Resource Centre SACHET, February 2002.
7	AGEHI News Letter, Issue: 5 spring-2003 <b>"civic will"</b> . AGEHI's Fight Against Dowry, project update, p.7. views on dowry, Dr. Nafees Sadiq, Dr. Riffat Hussain,p.7
8	AGEHI News Letter, Issue: 6 Summer -2003 <b>"Youth"</b> . Un-Islamic customary practices need to be abolished by Syed Zahir Shah Sharazi, p.3. Gender and Health by Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen, p.4. AGEHI's Fight Against Dowry-FAD, project update, p.7.
9	AGEHI News Letter, Issue: 7 Autumn-2003, <b>Interview of Justice Majida Razvi</b> , p.4. From FAD (Fight Against Dowry), p.8.
10	AGEHI News Letter, Issue: 8 spring-summer -2004 <b>"Men's Special"</b> Dowry P.6, FAD (Fight Against Dowry) p.7& 8.
11	<b>Fight Against Dowry (FAD)-Jahaz Kay Khilaf Jung: AGEHI Resource Centre-SACHET,2004</b>
12	<b>Dowry the most frequently forgotten form of gender violence in Pakistan</b> , December , 2006 by Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen <a href="http://sachet.org.pk/home/publications/FAD_Project_End_Report.pdf">http://sachet.org.pk/home/publications/FAD_Project_End_Report.pdf</a>
13	<b>Parliament Matters, strengthening democracy through Parliamentary development, Fight Against Dowry needs help of parliament</b> by Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen, News letter , Issue 2 volume 1 October 2007
14	<b>Policy dialogue: "The Issue of Dowry and Dowry Violence as Perceived by the Stakeholders in Pakistan"</b> On May 27, 2008
15	<b>Policy dialogue "Alternative Perspectives on certain traditional / Customary practices influencing Health &amp; population"</b> on 23 <sup>rd</sup> sep. 2008
16	<b>A pilot research study on dowry related violence and son preference.</b> Study was conducted in urban slums of Islamabad by AGEHI resource centre, 2008.
17	<b>Policy dialogue "Alternative perspectives on Demystifying Dowry: perspectives from academia, activists and advocates for policy recommendations on the issues of women rights and child rights violation in connection with the custom and institution of dowry in Pakistan"</b> on 27 <sup>th</sup> Nov, 2008.



**Dowry and SACHET- Thematic Yearly Planners/Calenders**

FAD Year Calendar 2003



FAD Year Planner 2004



FAD Year Planner 2005



FAD Year Planner 2006



FAD Year Planner 2007





FAD Year Planner 2008



FAD Year Planner 2009





## Dowry and SACHET - AGEHI Theatre on issues of dowry

It is one of the many creative expressions and communication tools of AGEHI Resource Centre, SACHET, which emerged in 2001 to Create awareness and sensitivity about different social issues through theatre performance at different forums and different occasions. AGEHI Theatre group consists of amateur performers who are development activist and practitioners and believe that theatre is an effective tool for communicating social change. AGEHI Theatre group has performed more than 300 theatre performances (street and interactive) including 5 mega performances on international conferences and civil bureaucracy of Islamabad to sensitize masses and classes on gender violence like dowry violence and its offshoots like honorkilling, HIV & AIDS and other youth issues relevant to the social sector development in Pakistan.





**AGEHI Theatre Group Presents...**

اپنی بیٹی کی نار جو میں پیدا نہ کر سکی - ایک چٹھی

*To my Son to whom I could not give birth - A letter*

This theater play reflects different forms of violence like gender discrimination, sex preference, dowry violence, honour killing, harassment etc., against women and girls in South Asia including Pakistan.

This reflection is done in an interactive format. The central character is a woman - an orphaned woman is talking to her unborn son through a letter that would never reach her obviously. Through this she tells her story, her burdens, her sorrows and her struggle. The play does not minimize but stimulates thinking of all sensitive and on issues like gender violence, empowerment, access, control, patriarchy.

AGEHI Theatre Group consists of amateur performers who are development activists & practitioners & believe that theatre is an effective tool for communicating social change.

The play would be presented in the cultural evening on 26th March, 2009 at World Social Forum (2009) to be held in Karachi, Pakistan.

**Written & Directed by:**  
**Dr. Rakshinda Perveen**

**Acknowledgments:**  
AGEHI, Advocate of Gender, Education and Health Information Theatre Group is grateful to the assistance provided by Zakat, Pakistan Program - "The girl and 'honour' killing campaign" & SACHET Theatre for the Education of Community, Health, Education and Training.



**Credits:**

**Cost:**  
Mr. Sami Zohoor  
Mr. Younis Khan  
Ms. Mujib Khan  
Mr. Ahsan Ali  
Ms. Aida Shams  
Mr. Younis Khan

**Background Music:** Dr. Rakshinda Perveen  
**Sound:** Mr. Shoaib Siddique  
**Light:** Mr. Faraz Amir  
**Technical Support:** Mr. Chingiz Shari  
**Producer:** AGEHI Resource Centre, SACHET  
**Group Manager:** Ms. Amrullah Khan

AGEHI Resource Centre was founded in September 2001 to serve as a resource centre of SACHET and other development partners. AGEHI is an acronym standing for Advocates of Gender, Education and Health Information. AGEHI is an interactive learning, teaching, life knowledge, awareness, thought and insight & it results in education for Gender Sensitivity, Education and Health promotion by disseminating information, networking and research on Gender issues. AGEHI Resource Centre utilizes the policy makers, educators, media professionals, concerned citizens, civil society, support bodies, students from urban as well as from remote areas of Pakistan, young professionals, researchers and program managers working in Gender, Education and Health through all the means through a broad range of activities.

AGEHI Resource Centre, Zakat Road, F-8 Markazi, Islamabad. Tel: 3572 51 221/552, 3572 51 222/553, Fax: 3572 51 222/553, E-mail: info@agehi.com.pk, agehi@agehi.com.pk, Agehi@net.net.pk




**Production Team**

Music	Wahid
Cost	Wahid
Production Design	Wahid
Tring and Lighting	Wahid
Light	Wahid
Artistic Director	Wahid
General Director	Dr. Rukhsar Khan

From AGEHI Resource Centre SACHET Production  
All rights reserved 2005

**AGEHI Resource Center Presents**




**A W A R A**

for  
RHIYA Youth Summit 2005

By

**AGEHI Theatre Group**  
agehi@icr.org.pk www.agehi.org.pk



**AGEHI Theatre Group**  
**SACHET**

**AGEHI Resource Centre Theatre Group**

**About "AWARA"**

AWARA is a shadow play based on a historical event written by Wahid. The poem is about a young revolutionary's struggle against nationalistic oppression, inequality and hypocrisy against their surroundings.

**About "AGEHI Resource Center"**

AGEHI is an acronym standing for Advocates of Gender Education and Health Information. AGEHI itself is an umbrella organization for the knowledge, Awareness, Promotion and thought.

The objective of AGEHI is to advocate for gender sensitization, education and health promotion by disseminating information. AGEHI aims to achieve its broad objective through EC, networking and research. The knowledge base comes from students from various areas of Pakistan, young professionals and researchers, media personnel and program managers working for the needs of gender, education and health.

**About "AGEHI Theatre Group"**

It has always been involved in a variety of creative activities. The group consists of creative and talented youngsters from Islamabad & Rawalpindi. This group has performed numerous plays on sensitive social issues.



**Dr. Rukhsar Khan** is the Executive Director of AGEHI. She is a social work expert in the field of gender equality and women's rights.

**Shahid** is a student of Gender Education at the University of Punjab, Pakistan. He is a member of AGEHI and has been actively involved in various social and educational activities.

**Yasir Hussain** is a student of Gender Education at the University of Punjab, Pakistan. He is a member of AGEHI and has been actively involved in various social and educational activities.

**RAJID** is a student of Gender Education at the University of Punjab, Pakistan. He is a member of AGEHI and has been actively involved in various social and educational activities.

**NIDA** is a student of Gender Education at the University of Punjab, Pakistan. She is a member of AGEHI and has been actively involved in various social and educational activities.

**YASIR Bhatti** is a student of Gender Education at the University of Punjab, Pakistan. He is a member of AGEHI and has been actively involved in various social and educational activities.

**SHABEEN** is a student of Gender Education at the University of Punjab, Pakistan. She is a member of AGEHI and has been actively involved in various social and educational activities.

**SADAR** is a student of Gender Education at the University of Punjab, Pakistan. He is a member of AGEHI and has been actively involved in various social and educational activities.

**AUBHA** is a student of Gender Education at the University of Punjab, Pakistan. She is a member of AGEHI and has been actively involved in various social and educational activities.

**HIGHER EDUCATION OF PARROT**

Story: Rukhsar Khan (Higher Education of a Parrot)  
Original story: Rabindranath Tagore  
Script & adaptation: Dr. Rukhsar Khan  
Presentation: AGEHI Theatre

*I had searched  
Wandering how far along  
But when I saw the world you found the  
Light of your world  
Light up my darkness*

Story: Rukhsar Khan (Higher Education of a Parrot), a light verse penned by Tagore, focuses the light on the richness of intellectuality & social activities. The American story is an attempt to bring on Parrot in contemporary age.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), was a combined culture icon of Bengal. He became India's first Nobel Laureate when he won the 1913 Nobel Prize in Literature.



**Dowry and SACHET - Message T-Shirts and Badges for Social Advocacy**



Join Silver Ribbon Campaign Against Dowry Violence



جھیز کا مطالبہ۔ مردانگی کی توہین ہے



جھیز سے انکار کریں



When a Gift becomes demand its a form of violence

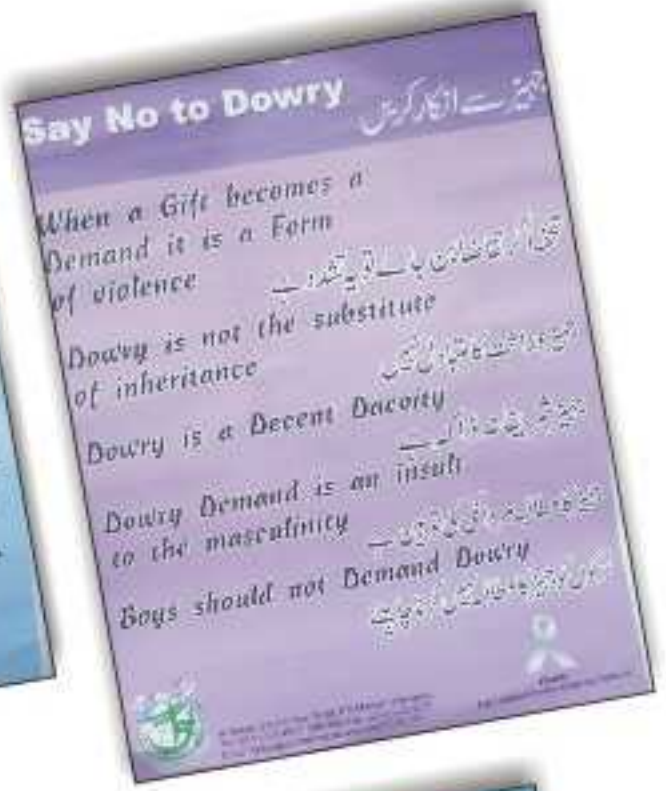


تختہ اگر تقاضہ بن جائے تو یہ تختہ دہ ہے





Dowry and SACHET - Posters for Information and Awareness



Dowry and SACHET - Posters for Information and Awareness



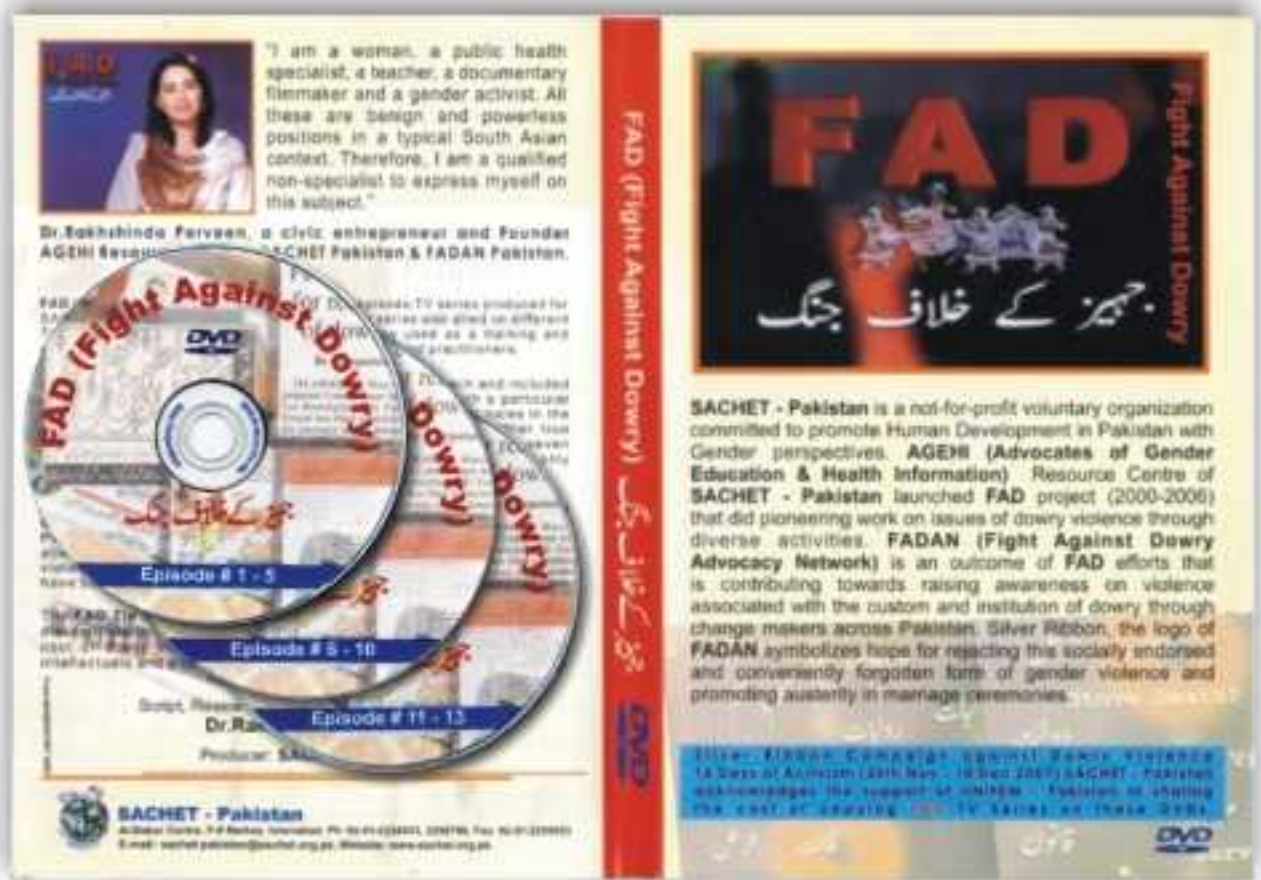


**Dowry and SACHET FAD TV Series (*Jahez kay khilaf Jang*) for Policy and Social Advocacy**

**Qualitative Data**

Sr #	Description	Number
1	Total Number of Programmes	13
2	Total Number of Respondents	242
3	No. of Men Respondents	96
4	No. of Women Respondents	146
5	No. of Experts from Academia	29 (Men: 5, Women: 24)
6	No. of Experts from Industry	3 (Men: 1, Women: 2)
7	No. of Experts from CSOs	14 (Men:7, Women:7)
8	No. of Respondents from Government	14 (Men:7, Women:7)
9	No. of Respondents from Media	3 (Men:3)
10	No. of Respondents from National / Provincial Assemblies / Senate	5 (Men:3, Women:2)
11	Total No. of Respondents from Youth	179 (Men: 72, Women: 107)
12	Total No. of Respondents from civil society organizations	63 (Men:23, Women:35)
13	Total No. of Students	50 (Men 19, Women: 31)
14	Total No. of Dowry Victims / Survivors	4

Title of Production \_\_\_\_\_ FAD (Fight Against Dowry)  
 Year of Production \_\_\_\_\_ 2002  
 Concept, Script, Research, Direction \_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen  
 Producer \_\_\_\_\_ SACHET Pakistan



## Score Card

1999-2008

### From Gender Watch<sup>1</sup> to FADAN

S#	INDICATOR	SCORE
1	# of TV documentaries on gender (Gender Watch)	19
2	# of TV Documentaries on Dowry and related violence (FAD)	13
3	# of videos on Dowry violence in the context of HIV & AIDS and MSM	01
4	# of electronic Infomercial on dowry violence as a Public health issue	01
5	# of theatre organized by AGEHI to highlight issues of Dowry	250
6	# of posters designed & disseminated for policy and social advocacy	08
7	# of messages designed in Urdu, English & Punjabi	20
8	# of thematic calendars developed	08
9	# of types advocacy products designed & developed	06
10	# of FAD evenings with intelligentsia and media	12
11	# of FAD evenings with youth	50
12	# of FAD session in national conferences	10
13	# of policy dialogues with legislators and policy makers	05
14	# of national consultation on legislation with law and Justice Commission and CSO of Pakistan	01
15	# of research papers on dowry issues by Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen	03
16	# of newspaper articles on dowry issues by Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen	10
17	# of FADAN districts	31
18	# of Journalists directly trained by AGEHI on dowry issues	250
19	# of youth leaders directly trained by AGEHI on issues of dowry	12,000
20	# of FADAN change makers	170
21	Impact of FAD campaign on policy	Dowry violence is heard in the floor of the parliament
22	Impact of FAD campaign in NGO sector	Dowry violence is mentioned in the discourse on VAW and domestic violence

<sup>1</sup>Gender Watch was a 19 Episode TV series conceptualized and directed by Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen and produced by SACHET in 1999-2000. It was designed to create awareness about gender issues in Pakistani context. Gender Watch also received PTV excellence award in March 2001. Gender Watch pioneered the public discourse of Gender Based violence and RH issues.



23	Impact of FAD Campaigns on International Development sector.	World Bank appreciated the efforts of SACHET Pakistan in their Country Gender Assessment Report (World Development Report 2005). UNIFEM Pakistan extended partnership in November, 2008 with SACHET to conduct a national study on Dowry violence in Pakistan.
24	Impact of FAD campaign in mainstream print media	Following the research paper on this issue in 2002 we have noticed a marked change. Even English newspapers started giving some space to dowry issues.
25	Impact of FAD campaign in mainstream TV channels	Estimated # of TV shows in which our research, panelists, change makers were included is 100

روزنامہ جنگ 10 اکتوبر 2007



روزنامہ جنگ 17 نومبر 1999



■ SILVER RIBBON CAMPAIGN

# Dowry demand is an insult to masculinity

**Mera Interview**  
Interviewer

In order to observe the global 18 days of activism against gender-based violence, the Society for the Advancement of Community Health, Education and Training (SACHET) held an exhibition of artwork here on Tuesday depicting related issues.

Though art pieces got on display at Sachi Gallery and Shopping Centre, the organisers tried to project violence connected to dowry issues which is so rampant in our society that it is not considered as violence. The exhibition is part of the Silver Ribbon Campaign against dowry violence.

The colourful art and craft done by victims of dowry violence from far being across were displayed in the Sachi for a Cause and activists urging to do dowry were put up at the art gallery. Sachi is calling for an awareness

dowry was exhibited at different public art centres asking them to show solidarity with the issue. Such banners have been posted in different areas including right along its town.

Banners especially designed to raise awareness about the dowry violence were also on display at the gallery. One of it read 'Dowry demand is an insult to masculinity' while another termed dowry a dowry darning. Comparing dowry with violence, one cartoonist said that when a girl becomes a demand, it was a form of violence.

Talking to 'The News', Sachi's Executive Vice President Bushra Zahid said that it was not an easy task to educate people who were committing violence by demanding or expecting dowry. Much has been done to curb all other forms of violence but combating dowry, that is the problem of every household, has never been given the importance, she pointed out.

The cartoonists took the local companies who promote dowry in their advertisements. Instead of acknowledging the trend, banks are offering loans for dowry and companies are tempting people to buy expensive stuff in the name of dowry, she said.

Sachi said that for those who could not afford to give large dowries would have to be rejected by in-laws to seek loans from banks. "These banks and companies have to know that they are becoming partners in violence by adopting such marketing strategies," she added. She urged electronic and print media to reject such advertisements in order to discourage the trend.

The organisers plan to hold a diverse set of activities in the days under the Silver Ribbon Campaign, which include shows in Chakwal and Pattanpur village, meetings with intellectuals and young people, a resource pool, and a portfolio of change maker in Chakwal.

The News Website copy: 28 November, 2007

## Part Two Demystifying Dowry

### A

Dowry is undoubtedly a cause behind many gender discriminations; and there are certain causes behind the continuation of this phenomenon.

Articulation of a problem is the first step towards its solution and resolution. SACHET, in a small brochure, did this assiduously when it critically denoted that



"... dowry stimulates substantial violence against women, as well as men ... when it takes the form of interfamilial harassment for additional payments of goods and money .... leading to killing (suicide and inexplicable death)".

### B

Good research can be classified in two categories: the rigorous research and the relevant research. While rigorous research needs academic commitment, particular zeal, higher (human and financial) resources, and dedicated time span; the relevant research is what comes out of the squeeze of resources and time but in the face of an activist zest and push of circumstances.

Different essays cum papers ([www.sachet.org.pk](http://www.sachet.org.pk)) put the cultural institution of dowry into perspective and scopes the hidden and obvious but ignored ramifications it has on society and individuals, particularly women.

*Dr. Rakshinda Perveen, on behalf of SACHET produced a number of papers after undertaking relevant research to further its advocacy agenda in its struggle to purge society of dowry*

**C**

Social resistance has many faces. As Allama Iqbal put it: *aaen e nau se dama, tarz-e kohn pe udna/manzil yehi kathan hae, qom on ki zindgi mein* (fearing the new rules of life, when people cling to archaic customs/this becomes a hard hurdle in the progress of nations). SACHET also faced many hurdles. The donors were reluctant to come out against this practice partially because of a lack of understanding regarding how anti-women this tradition was, and partially not finding dowry a glamorous and sensational issue as a few others appeared to be. The government was also trying to readjusts mall things from within, without challenging the paradigm.

A demonstrations is presented here.

**Daily Times** Sunday, 12 October 2008

## **Dowry is a tradition, no need to ban it, decrees CII**

**LAHORE:** The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) has suggested to the government that there is no need to ban dowry because it is tradition, Dawn News reported on Saturday. The CII said in its latest report that there was no need to legislate against the dowry because it was a social tradition, and legislation would just open more ways for police to take bribes. The council asked the government to legally define the terms Vani and Swara and propose legislation against them. These are the traditions practiced in rural and tribal areas in which women are married against their will, to resolve disputes. It also suggested the names of both parents be mentioned on official documents. **DAILY TIMES MONITOR**



**D**

When going gets tough, the tough gets direct. In advocacy, sometimes the direct approach is the best approach. SACHET-Pakistan, with tough experience of advocacy at higher levels, got direct with some high ups: the Members of the Parliament, and the elected public office holders.

**E**

In successful advocacy which aims at social transformation, there are three broad stages of effective engagement: Challenge not confrontation, Communication with respect, and Change that is transformational not ceremonial

These stages involve information dissemination, continued engagement of the stakeholders reforms and within the institutions and individual mindsets.

The change is prefiguring, and reform efforts are taking institutional shape in the form of Bills, the engagements are continuing with a variety of potential stakeholders, and the process of informing never stops. SACHET-Pakistan's Executive Director and a force behind this passionate and vigorous battle to end dowry Dr. Rakshinda Perveen took the effort to inform (the important people, that is) into a higher orbit, through her letter in the Dawn. The clarion call of conscience is like a magnet. It attracts compatible voices. Here is a Demonstration.





**SACHET**

Society for the Advancement of Community Health, Education &amp; Training

Promoting Human Development in Pakistan for the Disadvantaged Community with Gender Perspectives

Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen  
Executive Vice President  
Co-founder SACHET - Pakistan

بخدمت جناب عزما ب وزیر اعلیٰ پنجاب پاکستان

جناب شہباز شریف صاحب

عنوان: اسراف ضیاع اور نمائش کا خاتمہ

اسلام علیکم! آپ کا کھلا خط مندرجہ بالا عنوان پر پڑھا۔ ایک شہری ہونے کے ناطے میں آپ کو جواب دینا چاہوں گی۔ آپ اور آپ کی ٹیم یقیناً مبارک باد کے لائق ہے کہ ایک ایسے مسئلے پر جس پر "Elitist Consensus" موجود رہا ہے۔ (جیسا کہ شادی کھانوں پر "Ban" نامنظور کروانا، گزشتہ حکومت میں) آپ نے اتا جرات مندانہ قدم اٹھایا ہے جس سے اس بات کا اظہار ہوتا ہے کہ عوام کی بے بسی کو آپ محسوس کر چکے ہیں جنہیں سے جڑے الیوں سے آگاہ ہیں۔ میں گزشتہ دس سالوں سے ساشے کے پلیٹ فارم سے اس مسئلے کے حوالے سے شعور آگئی پیدا کرنے کی جستجو میں مصروف ہوں۔ پارلیمنٹ سے بھی رابطہ رہا ہے اور 2003ء میں Law & Justice کمیشن کے ساتھ قومی سطح کی مشاورت بھی کی تاکہ شادی پر بے جا اخراجات اور جھینگی رسم میں چھپے ہوئے تشدد (جس کا شکار تقریباً پورا خاندان ہوتا ہے تاہم چولہا پھٹنے سے صرف بہو مرنے ہے اجتنبی ہے) کے خلاف قانون سازی کی جائے مگر افسوس کہ یہ معاملہ سرد خانوں میں رہا۔ آپ کی حکومت سے التجا ہے کہ اس مسئلے پر موثر قانون سازی کریں۔ Demonstration سے جو نفسیاتی مسائل پیدا ہو رہے ہیں ان کی خوفناکی کا شاید ہمیں ابھی اندازہ تک نہیں۔ ساشے کو آپ اس مشن میں اپنے ساتھ پائیں گے۔

Rakhshinda  
6/11/09

دعا گو

ڈاکٹر رخشندہ پروین

**6 OPINION** DAWN Islamabad, TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2009

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Dowry prohibition**

I WAS shocked to learn from a mainstream English newspaper and a report by Dawn News TV in October last year that the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) has advised the government not to legislate on dowry as it is a custom and may encourage the police to take bribe.

Recently, I had the chance to get this confirmed from the CII that they have actually done this with a view that the murder needs to be changed before formulating any law. I respect the opinion of the experts but cannot agree with this stand.

As a gender violence survivor and a researcher on gender issues including dowry, I know

that dowry violence is a living fact that remains hidden under domestic violence. The cultural institution of dowry as practised in Pakistan stimulates substantial violence toward not only women/girls but men as well.

This takes the form of inter-familial harassment for the additional payments of goods and money which can conclude in divorce, murder or 'suicide' of the bride. Discrimination of this abuse of the disadvantaged, especially women, must be attempted through law, mass awareness and education.

The primary means of controlling these abuses can be a Dowry Prohibition Act and an

effective ban on the culture of demonstration at weddings. The distribution of dowry, dowry abuses, attitudes toward dowry and dowry violence and cross-cultural dowry systems must be addressed by the state and a more effective approach should be developed on related issues like bridal gifts, dower, divorce and inheritance laws.

Until that occurs, the question of whether dowry prohibition is actually in the interests of women may remain unresolved.

What our network — Fight Against Advocacy Network (FADAN) — wants is as follows:

— An effective law against dowry and dowry violence

— Acceptance of dowry violence as a public health issue and its reflecting in health, population and women development policy

— See more action by the court on the 'stove death', 'accidental death', 'kitchen death', 'death under unknown circumstances' of any bride or a newlywed woman, and these 'deaths' must be treated as 'dowry death' until and unless proved otherwise.

— Social and political advocacy on issues of dowry, including dowry violence.

DR RAKHSJINDA PERVEEN  
Founder, FADAN  
Pakistan

**6 OPINION** DAWN Islamabad, MONDAY, JANUARY 19, 2009

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Dowry prohibition**

THIS refers to Dr Rakhsjinda Parveen's letter, 'Dowry prohibition' (Jan 13), in which the doctor has very correctly said that she was shocked to learn that the "Council of Islamic Ideology has advised the government not to legislate on dowry as its a custom and may encourage the police to take bribe".

What an illogical argument is the so-called 'honor killing' also a 'tribal custom' and that should it also be condoned or left unchecked? Should innocent girls and women be left to die in the name of 'honor'? If there is a danger of the police taking bribes, let there be no traffic rules, no traffic signals then?

Dowry in our society is a disease that is spreading day by day with its main victim being the womenfolk of the country, as many girls remain unmarried throughout their life as their parents cannot arrange the dowry due to extreme poverty.

Dowry has been a prevailing custom in Hindu society, and is mostly practised in Indian subcontinent. We rarely see it practised in the Arab countries and most of the Muslim countries.

The bridegroom is responsible for arrang-

ing for all the necessities of life considered to be necessary for a newlywed couple, even the main reception to announce the wedding is arranged by the bridegroom side.

Unfortunately in our society it is quite the opposite. Poor parents of the bride have to bear all the expenses of the marriage, along with a dowry worth millions of rupees in some cases.

This dowry not only includes jewellery, clothes and furniture for the bride but also the clothes and jewellery for the relatives of the bridegroom, known as 'pahnawari' in the local language. This trend is unfortunately increasing day by day.

Is it not a matter of shame, disgrace and ignominy for the bridegroom and his family to accept such things from the parents of the bride? At times I really wonder how these people can put up with such things.

The solution of this unethical, unprincipled, illogical, fallacious, irrational and mad practice doesn't lie in legislation only. It's the responsibility of civil society to raise a strong voice against dowry, using all possible means of the media to educate people.

Moreover men should take the lead in eradicating this age-old tradition by refusing to accept anything from the family of the bride.

'Salami' is another form of handing over an envelope full of currency notes to the bridegroom which is nothing but a crude form of bribe in order to make the boy 'happy' so that he takes good care of his future wife.

How ridiculous and funny it looks when the bridegroom accepts cash in front of everybody from his in-laws.

It simply needs some courage and will-power on the part of the groom to resist dowry and make the bride happy and comfortable. Surely a newlywed girl will be proud of the gifts given by her husband.

It's time we behaved like a civilised and mature society. Voice should be raised against the prevailing custom of dowry.

Through these columns I request the readers, especially those aspiring to marry, to make sure that nothing gets into their houses in the name of dowry.

AAMIR AQIL  
Lahore



# Marvi submits private bill on crimes against women

■ Proposes life imprisonment for deaths related to dowry issues ■ Ten years in prison for acid throwing, depriving a woman of inheritance

By Irfan Ghauri

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid legislator Marvi Memon submitted in the National Assembly on Sunday a private bill proposing severe punishment for crimes against women.

The proposed legislation, named the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill 2008, proposes amendments in the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and the Code of Criminal Procedure, suggesting life imprisonment as the maximum punishment for causing a woman's death because of issues related to dowry, and 10 years in prison for acid throwing, depriving a woman of inheritance and concealing marriage.

Memon told Daily Times that noted jurist Senator Anwar Bhinder had helped her draft the bill and that she hoped the government would allow her to move the bill on a private members day and help her muster support of 'all the parties to pass it unanimously'. She said stern

punishments could deter crimes against women.

**Dowry issues:** The legislator said she had proposed adding a sub-section 306-A to Section 306 of the PPC to include deaths related to dowry issues.

"If the death of a woman is caused by any burn or physical injury or occurs otherwise than under normal circumstances and it is revealed that soon before death she was subjected to cruelty by her husband or any relative of her husband in connection with any demand for dowry, such death shall be called dowry death and such husband or relative shall be deemed to have caused dowry death," the proposed new section states.

"Whoever will commit criminal dowry death shall be punished with imprisonment for a term, which may extend to life imprisonment but shall not be less than seven years."

**Acid throwing:** A proposed sub-section 324-A in the PPC states that "whoever will cause any injury

by throwing any kind of acid on face or any part of the body of some person with intent to take some revenge or otherwise disfigures some one to put him or her in the mental or physical agony shall be punished with imprisonment which could extend to ten years but shall not be less than five years and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to Rs 500,000."

**Inheritance:** Another proposed sub-section in the PPC, 424-A, states that anyone who "frequently conceals information to deprive a woman from her inheritance rights "or frequently poses himself as the legal heir instead of actual legal heir or alienates the property of a female owner or heir through a registered deed, a mutation or any conveyances or a decree knowingly that it is not by the lawful heir or the owner, shall be punished with an imprisonment of either description which may extend to ten years and shall be liable to fine which may extend to Rs 500,000."



## Part Two

**Demystifying Dowry;  
Perspectives from academia, activists and advocates for policy recommendations on the issues of women rights' and child rights' violation in connection with the custom and institution of dowry in Pakistan.**

### The Dialogue Report

"SACHET convened a dialogue to deliberate, discuss and explore alternative perspectives to better understand and more effectively cope with the practice of dowry. The dialogue took place on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2008 at SACHET. The key speakers included Dr. Riffat Haq, Professor and Head of Women Studies; Professor Dr. Seema Pervez, Former Professor National Institute of Psychology QAU; Mr. Salman Asif, Gender Advisor to UN; and Mr. Haider Yaqoob, Country Director, Plan international Pakistan, was the chief guest. Ms. Azra Jamali, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Women Development; and Ms. Nuzhat Shireen from GRAP also attended the dialogue.

The session started with the recitation of the Holy Quran. Followed by this, the speakers were introduced by Dr. Rakshinda Perveen, who then made the opening presentation to set the context of the dialogue. (See annex 1)

She said SACHET-Pakistan focuses on reproductive health with a wider philosophy and keeps its linkages with poverty in view. She said the organisation took various issues such as reproductive health, gender violence and practices like dowry which bred violence as parts of an integrated chain. She wondered why the dowry as a practice and as an institution, that generates violence against women, was visibly absent from the agenda of both development players and rights' campaigners. She informed the participants that initially it was not part of the national Plan of Action (NPA). Whereas, in India and in Bangladesh Dowry is recognized as a problem and social evil.

She said advocacy and activism to undo the practice of dowry was number one on organisation's agenda, and currently the campaign's concentration was in five districts. Although the FADAN (Fight Against Dowry Action Networks) were present in 32 districts. The main tools used in this campaign were in person interaction of the youth who sign up to say no to dowry, and website was used to disseminate the message. The targets of the campaign were youth, parents, community gate-keepers, and legislators. She said SACHET-Pakistan understood it needed to engage with a variety of stakeholders on the spectrum of policy/legislation and practice.

She said with the moving of a bill to abolish dowry in the Senate, and after seeing several publications (articles and features) in the media, at least the silence was broken in the media and the policy circles.

After her presentation, the participants were shown two video recordings wherein Senator Chaudry Muhammad Anwar Bhinder's interview and a conversation with the Federal law Minister, Mr. Farooq H. Naik were shown. In the interview Mr. Naik said that "Dowry gifts are also exchanged in Europe and America, implementation of prohibition of dowry is impossible because you have to create awareness no to violate the law, especially in the elite. If elite class follows the law then it'll be a source of inspiration for the poor & middle class. It'll create an equality with in the society. According to me that your NGO SACHET is bearing lot of burden to raise awareness on this issue & act through conferences/seminars in the streets and mohalas and highlighting in the newspaper".

On asking about SACHET's working on Dowry Prohibition, Senator Chowdry Muhammad Anwar Bhinder said that "I think that its first step towards prohibition. It's very difficult to implement it immediately but gradually it'll work. This bill should be first step towards ending dowry. I think that all NGOs working on it should be encouraged. Majority people in our society do not like it and think it an impossible practice to prohibit dowry. But NGOs should start a campaign that people should implement it for their benefit, for the betterment of society & for their daughter's future. Campaign from NGO's should be in the favor of this act, which results ultimately the eradication of dowry".

(The complete transcription of both interviews are in annex 2)

<sup>1</sup> SACHET organized its first dialogue under "alternative perspective policy dialogue initiative 2008" in 27 May 2008. For the press coverage of this dialogue, please see annex 3

*"SACHET-Pakistan focuses on reproductive health with a wider philosophy and keeps its linkages with poverty in view. She said the organisation took various issues such as reproductive health, gender violence and practices like dowry which bred violence as parts of an integrated chain".*



Dr. Riffat Haq Professor and Head of Women Studies in her talk said if there was one thing that was understood immediately and by all that was dowry, so there was no need to define dowry. This is a problem of all classes, as it hits people of different classes in different ways, and with different intensity. However, she pointed out that there were two concurrent perspectives to dowry: one of the bride's family, and the other of the groom's family.

Although most families who have a daughter and a son, do switch roles (by being on the receiving end once), it was amazing how mutely people submit to this subtle violence, she wondered.

She said the institution and practice of dowry had very deep roots in our society and psychology and the challenge had become even more complex as dowry combined some good, some bad and some ugly aspects. It was a gift, it was a gesture of appreciation by the parents who feel their daughter would need some support to start a new life, it was also an excuse to deny a girl her share in family property, and it was a compulsory demand also in most cases.

She lamented the folklore which reinforced myths that a girl had no home and hearth. "A girl is considered in transit in her parent's home; she is a new comer and outsider in her in law's and husband's home, and when she is old, she is considered a dependent on her children. Where is a woman's home?" she wondered.

She said owing to a patriarchal conspiracy, religion, custom, culture and law were misapplied by men in perpetuating dowry and most women became part of this anti-women conspiracy without even recognizing it was a conspiracy. She said denial of property rights to a girl in some families also contributed to 'one time' dowry. She said in fact and in effect it was unethical and un-Islamic. She said the legislation regulating dowry was also toothless because the forces of social endorsement were so strong that the implementation was swayed to oblivion by these forces.

Concluding her talk, she said dowry was an institution and practice ingrained in our society and in order to end such vices, we must start with valuing our women. To do that we must take alternative perspective; we must allow women control our resources which belong to them, so that they did not look at dowry to meet their strategic needs.

Dr. Salman Asif captivated the participants with his beautiful and fluent presentation in Urdu which was full of historical examples of 'women in powerful settings' who were also subjected to gender discrimination. She gave examples of Empress Noor Jehan; Mumtaz Mahal, and Zebul Nisa. He said such women who were seen as *powerful* by outsiders were very *powerless* and they had to live a life of denial as they could not give their name to their creative and political expressions.

He remarked the age old maxims like '*dolli se jinaze tak pyak ghar se nahin nikln a'* (after her marriage, a woman must not leave her husband's house till her death) were treated as universal truths today.

He said dowry as historically portrayed as a pattern of conspicuous consumption, not a crime; and it was still understood as such. He pointed out that the inheritance law was formed in 1894 by the colonial government and it was continuing as such even today. But, law was nothing without its implementation in letter and spirit, he commented. And because of a toothless, half hearted and some times no implementation, we witness killing, kidnapping and acid throwing on women who opt court marriage. He said pressures that perceived to be emanating from family, clan and neighbourhood, people still resorted to taking heavy loans to marry off their daughters with a pomp and show.<sup>3</sup>

Pointing out inter agency coordination issues both in the government and the development sector, he said NGOs who were doing good work but had limitations needed to be more strategic in their advocacy campaigns on such issues as dowry.

After his presentations, Dr. Perveen denoted that what intellectuals lacked was not wisdom or understanding but courage to stand up to issues like dowry. (See annex 1 for presentation slides)

The next two speakers were from a community where SACHET-Pakistan worked. Ali Ahmad shared his story as to how did he arrive at saying 'No' to dowry. He said the best terminating force to end dowry were individual men and women as if and when they resisted and said 'No', it would become very difficult for parents and the community to force it on them. However, he reminded that such resistance could not take place in isolation, but there was need to make the social environment conducive to such refusals by portraying such acts of defiance as socially admirable.

<sup>3</sup> Reporter's note: This 'social pressure' has been taken up by market forces even today to sell their products. One example is a bank using marriage related expenses to market their credit card advertising that 'now marriage has become easier' with their credit card as it offers up to Rs. 1Million in loan.



Mr. Yasir Dildar, a young person from the community shared his story and thoughts in a very passionate and moving manner. He said that dowry was a vice as it could not only ruin a family's economic life, but it could also make young brothers resort to crimes (robbery, killing and stealing) to save face and honour of their families by marrying off their siblings and sisters with 'dignity'. He said such notion of dignity was in fact a shame that many were not willing to stand up and say 'No'.

Dr. Seema Pervez Former Professor National Institute of Psychology QAU in her talk shared her personal experiences which she went through while marrying off her son and daughter. She said though she and her children had the courage to say 'No' to dowry but they were not sure about the other party. Therefore, despite assurances from her daughter's in laws that they did not want dowry either, they feared a last minute reversal of stance. Similarly, at her son's wedding event, they had clearly conveyed her son's in laws that they did not want dowry, and she could see that her daughter in law's family was going through the same disbelief, till a few weeks after the wedding as no subtle or implied demand floated their way.

She said she agreed with young speakers that this personal act of defiance and courage needed a conducive social atmosphere to grow, glow and flourish. Because in a pro dowry social milieu, those who were saying 'No' to dowry had a pressure instead of a sense of jubilation and they seemed apologetic for not taking or giving dowry. She said the campaigners needed to generate symbols and highlight such refusals as iconic acts so that more and more people should find such individuals as their role models. She said in order to uproot such social evils, we must empower our women by offering them all their rights, privileges and facilitations as we offered these to our men.

After this an open discussion started where the participants threw lights on various aspects of dowry and why such practices were perpetuating. Mr. Zahoor Aftab Sadiq, Dr. Rehana, Mr. Shabhat Hassan UPU Manager Plan Pakistan, Dr. Irfan Ahmed Health Advisor- Plan Pakistan and others shared their views. They said the phrases like - *hasbe taufiq* (what you can afford); *'aurat ka ghar to hae, makan nahin'* (a woman has a house but no home); and, *ghar rahe na rahe, humari izzat zaroor rahe* (while giving dowry, even if we loose our home is acceptable, but not loosing our honour) must be eradicated from our living, social vocabulary. The participants said that for effective chair reaction to end dowry, the chain that involved: awareness raising- agents of change challenge to the practice by the subjects legal framework which prohibits dowry and social atmosphere which shuns the practice, must be strengthened.

In the end, Dr Haider Waseem Yaqoob - Country Representative- Plan Pakistan, thanked SACHET- Pakistan, the participants and particularly the young boy (Yasir Dildar-Community member), who exposed him to reality and inspired him more to contribute to a just society. He recalled that in Bangladesh, both dowry and child marriages were identified as issues by the government and the society, so it was easy to take measures leading to their solution and resolution. He said there was need to understand the harms social practices like dowry could do in the perspective of a web of gender based problems and discriminations. He said we need to get out of our comfort zones - both physically and psychologically and step in the real world for a real change.

He said there were many inspiring stories of people, who could become role models, and there were sad stories which could give reality bites; and we needed to highlight these stories to deter people from continuing with the vices, and also to inspire more and more people to challenge the onslaught.

He said dowry was not the only right of a woman; education, share in inheritance and true empowerment which was embedded in emancipation were also her rights.

*The press coverage of the Two Policy Dialogues Organized Under "alternative Perspectives initiative 2008" is attached in annex 3.*



## Part Three

### An interview with Ms. Hilda Saeed

18 Jan. 2009

#### Interviewer: Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen

*Ms. Hilda Saeed has worked in the development sector for many years (since 1978). She is a Collective member of Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre, and a member of WAF. Her main areas of interest are population and development, reproductive health and rights; she contributes articles for the national press, particularly on health, social sector development and women.*

Your Interpretation of VAW:

The extent of violence in society is high where class and gender disparity abound; it predominates in societies which live by patriarchal norms, such as in Pakistan. VAW is also the final evidence of power play between weaker and stronger individuals or groups.

Thus, VAW in Pakistan is overtly visible in sexual harassment, domestic violence, karo kari and many other forms. Covertly it is visible in the numerous traditions and customs which shackle women, restrict their mobility, force them to survive on non-nutritious diets, coerce them to marry early and produce large numbers of children, particularly sons; etc. Covertly VAW is also visible in many of the country's discriminatory laws, which translate into unfair policies.

In consequence, women are stifled, unable to grow to their full potential.

Your personal preference: VAW or GBV?

Personally, I prefer VAW, because this term describes the existing situation more clearly; when the reader comes across this term; he/she is immediately aware of the struggle that is needed to change this state of affairs.

GBV may not convey the same impact on a person's mind when he/she reads about it; nor are women mentioned in this term and the violence overwhelmingly affects women.

What is the Spectrum of Violence in Pakistan?

Extremely high read a report that VAW in Pakistan is sixth highest in the world. It starts even before childbirth. Feudalism, patriarchy, injustice, all lead to violence, evidenced in the 'justice' meted out by the *jirga* system, *watta satta* (exchange marriage); *vani* (bride price); *pet likhai* (promised in marriage while still in the mother's womb); and *karo kari* ('honour' killing).

Sexual abuse, domestic violence, sexual harassment, spousal murder, burning and disfigurement with acid, beatings, threats, and honour killings are common. Custodial abuse and torture by strangers and state agents are also included. Aurat Foundation has national data on VAW, I understand this is now ready for 2008.

Since 1979, discriminatory legislation has further perpetrated violence against women.

What are the Common Immediate and Underlying Causes of VAW in Pakistan?

- We do not have a pluralistic society, which could have promoted tolerance and consideration for others. The present society seems to encourage 'tunnel vision' and religiosity, rather than deep faith, sincerity, and tolerance for others, including women.
- The perennially low literacy rates have led to even lower literacy rates for women. Ignorance has continued to breed false beliefs; our educational curricula, such as exist, have added to those beliefs, and to gender discrimination. The burning of girls' schools has been the last straw. What future can girls from affected areas look forward to? more violence when they grow up?
- The current discriminatory laws, the Women's Protection Act 2007 has only solved part of the problem. Justice is not easily available to abused women.
- Feudalism, patriarchy, class and gender disparities.

Your definition of Dowry/ Stats/case study of Dowry Violence/ Bridal gifts.

Sorry don't know enough about these matters.

Your opinion about wedding meals/bans.

The wastage of food at wedding meals is alarming, particularly in the face of growing poverty and economic crisis. If by bans you mean the rules that the govt announces from time to time, there is no implementation of rules banning lavish ceremonies.

The need is to change the mind set of people, so that they themselves become aware of the unnecessary waste. The media could play an important role here, but will they? Their profits lie in the publicity given to fashion and food and glamorous events.

Any comments on Legislation against dowry?

Will it work? Who will ensure implementation?

Do you think that our Media has any role in promoting wedding expenses and dowry violence?

As stated earlier the change of mindset is a must. So the media has an important role. If such media broadcasts promote a desire to have more and more acquisitions, then yes, it could promote dowry violence, but I don't know to what extent this happens.

Your comments on: "Dowry and related issues have yet to be recognised as gender concerns. Not many NGOs are working against dowry violence. Donor agencies have never funded projects/programs on dowry and related violence."

True, dowry and related issues have yet to be recognised as gender concerns. But my own view on this is that unless we have some data as to the extent of dowry violence, it is difficult to say whether the issue of dowry violence should be handled as a separate issue. Shahnaz Bokhari in Islamabad, who handles numerous cases of women who have been burnt, could probably provide some relevant data, e.g. the high incidence of domestic violence (which probably includes dowry violence) necessitated the Bill on Domestic Violence.

Once it is proved that dowry violence is high in incidence, you could go further with legislation and policy.

Do you think dowry demand is contributing towards lower status of women? Do you think dowry demand is a form of psychological violence?

Do you think dowry systems endorse patriarchy?

Yes

Definitely.

Dowry systems definitely endorse patriarchy. It is one thing for parents and relatives and friends to give gifts to the bride and groom, and quite another for the parents of the bride to be coerced into providing everything possible to their daughter, for fear that she would otherwise be mistreated, and also of fear of what "society will say".

These are all customs that have risen over the years, and today are accepted as hallowed traditions. They have changed people's mind sets into accepting stifling and discriminatory patriarchal "norms", so they definitely endorse patriarchy.

MANY MANY THANKS



**An interview with Barrister Zafarullah Khan****Interviewer : Dr.Rakhshinda Perveen****Dated : 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009**

*Zafarullah Khan holds Master's degree in International Relations from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad; Bachelor of Law with Honours from City University, London; Postgraduate Diploma in Bar Vocational Studies from the University of West of England, Bristol; and Bar-at-Law from the Lincoln's Inn. He has different international courses, trainings, seminars etc to his credit. He has also the honour of representing Pakistan before United Nations' Committee on the Child, Geneva.*

*Before joining the legal professions, he joined the District Management Group of the Civil Service of Pakistan in 1987. He resigned from the Service in 2002 to work for Human Rights and Rule of Law. His major books are: KISI AOUR ZAMANAY KAI KHAWAB, 'Human Rights: Theory and Practice' and 'The Way Out'. Presently, he is a Partner in Nishtar & Zafar, a law firm, and specializes in Constitutional law, Human Rights and Corporate laws.*

**What is your own interpretation of VAW?**

Violence against women means negative expression of the injurious male power vis a vis women. It happens due to the lack of proper appreciation of the fundamental rights like right to life, dignity, freedom and due process of law. Man by using his sheer power wants to coerce women to a particular objective.

**Which terminology is preferred by you (VAW or GBV)?**

I prefer the word 'violence against women' as it is more generic and can encompass many facets of the violence against women. Secondly, it is in vogue and can easily be understood.

**What is the spectrum of VAW in Pakistan (types/forms, expressions)?**

The spectrum of violence against women ranges from staring, verbal abuse to honor killing. It has various types, forms, expressions like staring, staking, verbal abuse, assault, battering, grievous bodily harm, acid throwing, denial of property rights, physiological torture and lack of provision of maintenance and necessities of life.

**What forms of VAW are more frequent and in which areas?**

Various forms of violence against women are prevalent in various areas of Pakistan like acid throwing is common in southern Punjab; murder is all over Pakistan except NWFP; *wani, sawara* and exchange marriage are also everywhere; stove burning is common in Pothohar region, honor killing is more in southern Punjab, upper Sindh and Naseerabad Division of Balochistan. Denial of property rights and inheritance is all over the country.

**What are the commonest immediate and underlying causes of VAW in Pakistan?**

The common causes of the VAW in Pakistan are (i) the feudal culture, (ii) impact of the alien culture (iii) lack of proper understanding of relevant/Islamic values (iv) lack of sensitization of and awareness about fundamental rights, (v) lack of proper education and training;

**How would you define Dowry Violence?**

Dowry violence is of two types i.e. demand during marriage proposal negotiation; (ii) demand by the spouse after the marriage; both are prevalent but latter is more dangerous and harmful and leads to physiological torture and divorce.

**Do you think Dowry systems promote VAW?**

I agree that dowry system leads to certain forms of VAW, from verbal abuse to physical hurt. As an activist of human rights, we daily come across dowry related violence. In some of the cases, it is main reason for the separation between the spouses.



What is your opinion about existing Bridal gifts and dowry Restriction Act 1976?

- The limit set for dowry is unreal
- The limit set for gift is too low
- Penalties provided are insignificant
- Complaint can only be lodged by certain senior government officials

All these characteristics of the law make it not very useful; hence it needs a thorough revision.

What is your opinion about wedding meals and "bans"?

I strongly favor the ban on the wedding meals as it is not only an extravaganza on the part of the rich but also creates heart burning in the hearts of the poor.

Do you think Pakistan needs legislation against Dowry like India and Bangladesh?

We can strengthen our legal regime about the dowry and gift etc keeping in view our particular cultural traits and similar international experiences. Despite the lip service to the women rights in the recent past, we have not seen any proper legislation in this respect. However, it is emphasized that it is imperative to have a comprehensive legal regime to be passed by the Parliament after consultation with the stakeholders.

Do you think media has any role in promoting wedding expenses and dowry violence?

Media can play an important role in curbing dowry violence, wedding expenses and other forms of VAW. Sometimes media glamorizes rich marriages and irrelevant customs, rites etc relating to the marriages which create physiological problems leading to further social disequilibrium. The media need to focus on the entertainment programs especially the Drama to bring it in tune with existing realities on the ground.

"Dowry and related issues have yet to be recognized as gender concerns even by the development experts. This may be verified by the fact that not many mainstream NGOs are working against dowry violence. Donors agencies have never funded any project/program on dowry and related violence." Kindly comment on this statement and state the probable reasons

The issue of the dowry in terms of the VAW is generally felt by most of the common people in Pakistan especially the poor, hence it is needed that the organizations dealing with the human rights make it as one of the main focus area to root out this scourge from our society. The NGOs are sometimes driven by the availability of money provided by the donors who have their own priorities. In the recent past, more emphasis by the donor community has been on the 'particular' aspects of relationship of man and women; in other words matters like dowry related violence has not been given proper attention.

Thank you for your time and valuable inputs.

**An interview with Mr. Iftikhar Arif (SI,HI)**  
**Dated 10<sup>th</sup> Jan 2009.**

Mr. Iftikhar Arif born on March 21, 1943 in Lucknow, India is a renowned Pakistani Urdu poet, scholar and litterateur. He has headed Academy *Adabiyat* (The Pakistan Academy of Letters) and currently he is the chairman of *Muqtada Quom i Zaban* (The National Language Authority).

In recognition of his commendable contribution and efforts for the Urdu literature he has been awarded with *Hilal-e-Pakistan*, *Sitara-e-Imtiaz* and Presidential Pride of performance by the Government of Pakistan.

Mr. Iftikhar Arif's poetry has been translated into a number of languages, including English, Russian, German, Persian and Hindi. A number of theses have been written on his poetry by post-graduate students in various universities of Pakistan.

**What is your interpretation of VAW/GBV? How does it contribute to dowry violence.**

Domestic Violence on women is that issue that constitutes foremost importance in overall Pakistan's social problems. In all countries of the world, even in developing countries there are several cases of domestic violence. Those working on international level must be fully aware of the facts and figures of these cases and report the cases occurring in Europe and USA. Then there is a third world, Islamic countries, South Asian countries and then the Muslim society of Pakistan in front of us. We are answering questions raised in our Muslim society's perspective.

I think that instead of Gender Violence, it would be better if we call it Violence against Women. Gender Violence encompasses violence against both male and female gender, but in a society like ours violence on men are few. Bringing women violence under Gender Violence argument is not appropriate so that terminologies should directly reflect the main issue.

Pakistan society comprises of sectarian society and experts working on it are aware of it that this issue is mostly prevalent in lower and illiterate societies. The rate of occurrence of domestic violence in educated families is slowing down. The conditions is slightly better where women who are working and contributing more than their domestic budget. Problems multiply for those women who are illiterate and confined in the boundaries of the house. Big family, small house, lack of trust, illiteracy, hot argument between husband and wife and lack of sexual satisfaction contributes to this issue. Separate discussions can be done on these issues, but dowry contributes the major role in this regard.

**Your comments on violence in the institution of marriage?**

In constitution of marriage, another factor that plays a major role is the enjoyment or the spark in relationship instead of charming and consistent courtship. Living in for centuries the Indian culture of giving dowries to daughters on their wedding has penetrated in our culture. Dowry culture in Arab societies is non-existent. Low earning people use dowry as a tool to update their social status and manipulate their daughter in laws parents to give their desired items. House, car, gold jewelry, in fact all the major electronic items are asked from the girl's family. Dowry has now transited to become an exhibition culture in which the family takes pride to boost in front of the family members and invitees. Lack of commitment or shortage in dowry in this regard can give birth to fierce arguments which can later culminate in divorces. The transition period being the most vicious period, where the family can subject the girl to a devastating mental torture, taunts, and violence. For centuries, many social and religious organizations worked for the cause, but the societies that are subjected to violence are still helpless and the rate is still rising. People think giving dowry is dreadful but still loves to give dowry. There are some educated boys who decline dowry but their families never give an opportunity to miss it.

Ban on food on wedding is a welcoming but these laws are disregarded and to outlaw them several amendments are created.

**What is your opinion about Pakistani law on dowry?**

Like in India and Bangladesh, there are several laws in Pakistan that are made on dowry, but there are many hitches regarding the laws. Laws must be made and the efforts to implement should also be done. Civil Society must also play an active role. Ban on dowry in India and Bangladesh was not fruitful and could not restrain the society.

**What is the Role of media in this regard?**

Electronic media has always highlighted the issue but the irregularities in the name of dowry are still existent. Media should stress more on this issue. Increase in literacy rate and better economic condition of females can revert this issue.

**Any other comment?**

Nothing can be said for the ignorance and insensitive attitude of the concerned authorities. I have less knowledge about the donors, but you don't have to be a scholar to know the issues that are being given attention and are being addressed by them. Where they have no gain, they do not invest their resources on it. Since you had requested me, I am responding to it, obviously this is an answer of that person, who forty two years back, had refused to accept dowry and if their parents had given her something, I am still not aware of it.



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صدر نشین

افتخار عارف

صدر اختیار، جلال آباد

۱۰- جنوری ۲۰۰۹ء

محترمہ ڈاکٹر رشیدہ پروین صاحبہ!  
 سلام و رحمت

خواتین کے خلاف تشدد کا مسئلہ ان مسائل میں ہے کہ جنہیں پاکستان کے معاشرتی الجھناؤ میں ایک بنیادی مسئلے کی حیثیت حاصل ہے۔ دنیا کے تمام ملکوں میں حتیٰ کہ ترقی یافتہ ممالک میں بھی خواتین کے خلاف تشدد کے بے شمار واقعات پیش آتے ہیں۔ بین الاقوامی سطح پر کام کرنے والے ان اعداد و شمار سے یقیناً واقف ہوں گے جو یورپ اور امریکہ سمیت دیگر ملکوں میں ہونے والے واقعات کی رپورٹ کرتے ہیں۔ پھر تیسری دنیا ہے، اسلامی ممالک ہیں اور پھر ان میں برصغیر اور پاکستان کا مسلم معاشرہ سامنے آتا ہے۔ اس وقت ہمارے جو اہم پاکستانی معاشرے کے تناظر میں ہیں۔

میں سمجھتا ہوں کہ صنفی تشدد کے بجائے خواتین کے خلاف تشدد کی اصطلاح زیادہ بہتر ہے۔ صنفی تشدد کی اصطلاح میں عورتوں اور مردوں دونوں کے مسائل زیر بحث آ سکتے ہیں مگر سچی بات یہ ہے کہ پاکستان میں اور پاکستان جیسے معاشروں میں مردوں پر ہونے والے واقعات بہت کم ہیں۔ دوسرے یہ کہ صنفی تشدد کی اصطلاح کے تحت خواتین کے تشدد کے مسائل زیر بحث لانا نامناسب بالکل نہیں مگر ہمیں کوشش کرنی چاہیے کہ اصطلاحات براہ راست مسئلے کی نشاندہی کریں۔

پاکستانی معاشرہ ایک طبقاتی معاشرہ ہے اور مسئلے پر کام کرنے والے ماہرین نے ضرور اس بات پر غور کیا ہوگا کہ یہ مسائل طبقہ اشرافیہ کے مقابلے میں پسماندہ اور آن پڑھ اور روایتی معاشروں میں زیادہ پائے جاتے ہیں۔ پڑھے لکھے خاندانوں میں اب ان کی تعداد کم ہونے لگی ہے۔ جہاں جہاں خواتین شہری آبادیوں میں معاشی طور پر آزاد ہیں اور کہیں نہ کہیں کام کرتی ہیں اور گھریلو بجٹ میں اپنے حصے سے زیادہ رقم فراہم کرتی ہیں، وہاں حالات نسبتاً بہتر ہیں۔ مگر فیصد کی صورت حال کہیں بھی نہیں ہے لیکن اگر کوئی نقشہ بنایا جائے تو نسبتاً با اختیار خواتین کے مقابلے میں ان خواتین کے لیے مسائل زیادہ ہیں جو پڑھی لکھی نہیں ہیں اور گھر کی چار دیواری میں محدود رہتی ہیں۔ بڑا خاندان، چھوٹا گھر، شکوک و شبہات، تعلیم کی کمی، شوہر اور بیوی کے درمیان مکالمے کا



فہدان اور جنسی نا آسودگی ان بنیادی اسباب میں شامل ہیں۔ اس پر علیحدہ علیحدہ بات کی جاسکتی ہے۔ مگر ایک بنیادی کردار معاشی صورتحال کا ہوتا ہے۔ جس میں چیز ایک بنیادی کردار ادا کرتا ہے۔

بہیشہ سے شادی کے فطری محرکات کے علاوہ جو اور عناصر کا فرما ہوتے ہیں اس میں رفاقت کی خوشی سے زیادہ تعلق میں لذت کا عنصر کا فرما ہوتا ہے۔ صدیوں سے ہندو معاشرے کے ساتھ ساتھ رہنے کے سبب گنیاوان کی رسمیں پاک و ہند کے معاشروں میں چیز کی لعنت کو میسر کیا ہے۔ عرب معاشروں میں اس نوعیت کی چیزیں دیکھنے میں نہیں آتیں۔ کم تو ادا والے طبقے میں شادی اشیاء کی جمع آوری کا ایک طریقہ بھی ہوتی ہے۔ بعض اوقات دولہا والے اپنی ضرورت کی تمام چیزوں کی فہرست دلہن کو فراہم کر دیتے ہیں۔ دلہن کے گھر سجانے اور بسانے کے نام پر بے شمار چیزیں چیز میں مانگی جاتی ہیں۔ گھر، گاڑی اور زیورات سے لے کر زمرہ کی تمام اشیاء کا بوجھ دلہن کے والدین پر ڈالا جاتا ہے۔ چیز کی رسم نے اپنے چلن کے سبب سود و نمائش کی شکل بھی اختیار کرتی گئی ہے۔ زیورات اور قیمتی اشیاء کا دوستوں اور اہل خاندان کے سامنے مظاہرہ ایک معمول کی بات ہے۔ ان چیزوں میں کی بیشی کے سبب چھوٹی چھوٹی رقمیں بڑے جھگڑوں اور بعض اوقات طلاق کی صورتوں میں منبج ہوتی ہیں۔ اس کا درمیانی عرصہ انواع و اقسام کے تشدد کی شکل میں رونما ہوتا ہے۔ طعنے، دشنام، مار پیٹ کی صورتیں بدترین شکل میں رونما ہوتی ہیں اور شادی کو عبرت کا نشان بنا دیتی ہیں۔ صدیاں ہو گئیں، بے شمار تحریکیں چلیں۔ اصلاح احوال کے لیے دینی اور معاشرتی تنظیموں نے بہت کام کیا۔ لوگ اس لعنت کی تباہ کاریوں سے آگاہ بھی ہوئے مگر جن طبقوں میں تشدد کے واقعات زیادہ ہوتے تھے، آج بھی تشدد کا وہی عالم ہے۔ چیز کو لعنت سمجھتے ہیں مگر چیز دیے چلے جاتے ہیں۔ اصلاح احوال کی ساری نصیحتیں ہمارے منافع مند رویوں کی نذر ہو جاتی ہیں۔ بعض معاشروں میں خاندان کے تعلیم یافتہ نوجوان اپنی مرضی کی شادی کے مرحلے میں لپے چوڑے چیز کی وصولی پالی سے انکار کرتے ہیں مگر خاندان والے کسی نہ کسی بہانے اس موقع کو ضائع کرنے پر آمادہ نظر نہیں آتے۔

شادی کے کھانوں پر پابندی کے اعلانات بہت دل خوش کن مگر قانونی ضابطے صاحب اختیار لوگوں کی طرف سے مسترد کر دیے جاتے ہیں اور قوانین سے بچھکارے کے ہزار جھگڑے ابھار کر لیے جاتے ہیں اور ابھار کر لیے گئے ہیں۔

بھارت اور بنگلہ دیش کی طرح پاکستان میں چیز کے قانون پر پابندی کی ہزار کہانیاں ہیں مگر قوانین ضرور بننے چاہیے اور ان کے نفاذ کی کوشش حکومت کو بھی کرنی چاہیے اور سول سوسائٹی کو بھی اس میں رول ادا کرنا چاہیے۔ بھارت اور بنگلہ دیش میں چیز پر پابندی کے باوجود معاشرتی سطح پر ان قوانین سے کوئی خاطر خواہ نتیجہ برآمد نہیں ہوا ہے۔ بھارتی میڈیا خصوصاً ٹیلی ویژن اور فلم اس مسئلے کی طرف توجہ مبذول کرواتے رہتے ہیں مگر دیہاتوں اور شہروں میں چیز کے نام پر ہونے

والی بدعنوانیوں کے سلسلے جیسے کے جیسے موجود ہیں۔ میڈیا میں اس کی طرف توجہ دینے کی شدید ضرورت ہے۔ تعلیم کی شرح میں اضافہ، خواتین کی معاشی استعداد میں بہتری اور استحصال کے اس ادارے کی تہذیب میں چھپی ہوئی دنیا طلبی کے عناصر سے آگاہ کیا جائے تو اس برائی پر قابو پایا جا سکتا ہے۔

جہاں تک معاونت کرنے والے اداروں کی توجہ اور مسئلے کی طرف سے ان کی بے اعتنائی کا تعلق ہے تو میں اس کے بارے میں کچھ زیادہ عرض نہیں کر سکتا۔ Donors کے بارے میں میری معلومات اور میرا علم نہ ہونے کے برابر ہے۔ یہ ضرور جاننا ہوں کہ وہ کون سے مسائل ہیں جن کی طرف Donors زیادہ توجہ دیتے ہیں اور وہ کیوں توجہ دیتے ہیں؟ اس کے جاننے کے لیے بہت زیادہ وائٹس اور بصیرت کی ضرورت نہیں ہوتی۔ جہاں ان کا اپنا مفاد نہ ہو وہاں معاونت کر کے اپنے وسائل کو کیوں ضائع کریں۔

آپ نے مجھے حکم دیا تھا اس لیے جواب لکھ بھیجا ہے۔ ظاہر ہے کہ یہ سرسری سے جواب ہیں ایک ایسے آدمی کے کہ جس نے آج سے پچاس برس پیشتر ایک غریب نوجوان کی حیثیت سے جہیز لینے سے انکار کیا تھا اور اگر میری اہلیہ کو ان کے ثروت مند خاندان نے کچھ دیا بھی ہو تو مجھے علم نہیں ہے۔

مخلص  
بنیاد  
(انفارماریٹ)

محترمہ انور شمشاد پروفیشنل کی خدمت میں  
بھداوب

## Part Four

### New Actions-Old Passion

SACHET has learnt in its 10 years journey that destination is undoubtedly important, but perhaps even more important is how we reach there. This means, SACHET-Pakistan has learnt to give equal, if not more, importance to a) the paths it takes to reach that destination; b) various stopovers it makes in its journey whether when it is exhausted, or in order to reflect over possible mid-course corrections; c) the milestones it finds during the journey; and d) the partners and allies it finds during that journey.

In next 10 years, as result of our campaign, and other partners' efforts inspired by that campaign, we wish and envisage a complete absence of coercive and oppressive forms of dowry. That means, SACHET-Pakistan would like to deconstruct and unpack the practice of dowry and would advocate the end to what is wrong and bad. However, it is important to underscore that SACHET-Pakistan is not against the benign aspect and gesture of gift and present. But it does not mean we would endorse gifts which are substitute to lawful share of a girl in her inheritance.

In order to realize this dream of complete eradication of dowry from social psyche, space and familial transactions, we plan a set of symbolic and substantial steps.

The symbolic steps will help us make the societal atmosphere and social skyline more conducive and friendly to acts of resistance to this practice. We plan to do that through an effective use of popular, mainstream and alternate media. Our main focus will be on the Silver Ribbon Campaign; and building on that and along with that we plan to use popular cultural expressions through music and songs; videos and festivals.

On the substantial front, we plan to embed FAD in our work with education, skill development and economic empowerment to enable transformation for dowry free social and familial transactions.

AGEHI Resource centre of SACHET with the support of UNIFEM is currently conducting a pioneering national level research on dowry violence and related issues with aim to organize different perspectives on this much neglected gender issue and offer policy and programmatic recommendations to the concerned players.

SACHET-Pakistan believes that most of the battles are won (and lost) first symbolically and in the human psyche. The rituals of a formal, substantial victory (or defeat) then follow in due course. Hence, we would lay our bets, and efforts, for the symbolic victory in our passionate fight this intimate evil out.

*SACHET-Pakistan would like to deconstruct and unpack the practice of dowry and would advocate the end to what is wrong and bad. However, it is important to underscore that SACHET-Pakistan is not against the benign aspect and gesture of gift and present. But it does not mean we would endorse gifts which are substitute to lawful share of a girl in her inheritance.*

*In order to realize this dream of complete eradication of dowry from social psyche, space and familial transactions, we plan a set of symbolic and substantial steps.*

communities on reproductive health, more and more agents of change and

*Our main focus will be on the Silver Ribbon Campaign; and building on that and along with that we plan to use popular cultural expressions through music and songs; videos and festivals.*



## Our Pledge

### I / We Promise never to give or take Dowry

- Dowry Demand is an offence
- Dowry itself is a form of violence not only against women but men also
- Dowry is a decent dacoity
- Those people who ask for dowry lack vision, understanding and are greedy
- Dowry is one of the major causes of violence against women
- We feel saddened for the helpless parents of the women
- Hence, I/we make a solemn promise that whenever it is time for my/our marriage, I/we will not ask for dowry and nor will I/ we indulge or encourage our elders to - carry on this tradition
- Asking for dowry is an insult to our masculinity
- Our dignity, self esteem does not and should not let us demand dowry

I/We say no to dowry

I/We say no to dowry

جھیز کے خلاف جنگ

نوجوانوں کا مہر نامہ

ہم بگھتے ہیں:

- جھیز کا مطالبہ ایک جرم ہے۔
  - جھیز نہ صرف عورت بلکہ مرد پر بھی تشدد ہے۔
  - جھیز ایک شریفانہ ڈاکو ہے۔
  - جھیز جاہلانہ رسم تصور کی جائے۔
  - وہ لوگ جو جھیز کا مطالبہ کرتے ہیں نا سمجھ، بے شعور اور لالچی ہیں۔
  - جھیز خواتین پر تشدد کی ایک اہم وجہ ہے۔
- اس لئے
- ہم دکھی ہیں جھیز کا فکار خواتین کے مجبور والدین کی بے بسی پر چنانچہ ہم صدق دل سے یہ وعدہ کرتے ہیں کہ جب ہماری شادی کا وقت آئے گا تو ہم جھیز کا مطالبہ نہیں کریں گے، اور نہ ہی اس فضول رسم کو جاری رکھنے میں مدد دیں گے۔
- کیونکہ

- ہم جھیز کا مطالبہ کو مردانگی کی توہین سمجھتے ہیں اور ہماری غیرت، ہماری خودی ہم سے جھیز نہ لینے کا مطالبہ کرتی ہے۔
- ہم انکار کرتے ہیں جھیز سے۔
- ہم انکار کرتے ہیں جھیز سے۔

# **Annexures**



**Annex 1**

Slides From the Presentation "Demystifying Dowry" By Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen (27<sup>th</sup> November 2008)




Demystifying Dowry

By  
By Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen  
Founder, AGEHI Resource Centre

Slide 1

Why?

Visible absence of dowry violence in development agenda



Slide 2

What?

- Advocacy
- Activism
- Academic research



Slide 3

Where?

Across the country

5 districts directly

32 districts through FADAN



Slide 4

How?

Web site  
Electronic media (TV Docu.)  
Print media  
Workshop with journalists & other stakeholders





Slide 5

Who?

- Youth
- Parents
- Community gate keepers
- Policy makers
- Legislators



Slide 6

## Achievements

Silence in print media has been broken

Although there is no Noise as yet

Senate - Bill (though Not ideal and has yet to be discussed in the parliament)

Slide 7

## Challenges

- Conveniently forgotten by the activists (HR & gender)
- Absence of "shocking Data" (thus depriving us of stunning publicity)
- Not on Donor's agenda
- Elitist Consensus



Slide 8

## Way forward

**Fight**

SILVER RIBBON MOVEMENT  
of  
FADAN  
SACHET-Pakistan

**Struggle**

**Make a noise**

**Advocacy**

Slide 9

## Our Position

- Demand of dowry is an offense
- Dowry itself is a form of violence, not only against women but men also
- Courts should take Suo moto against deaths of married girls specially the newly weds under unexplained circumstances as

Stove death= An accident = Myth

Stove death=Dowry death= Truth



Slide 10



## Annex 2

### Transcriptions of Ch. Anwar Muhammad Bhinder's comments; and Mr. Farooq H. Naik's endorsements.

Interview with Mr. Farooq H. Naik, Minister for Law and Justice (This interview was recorded in May 2008)

*SACHET: Please give your comments on the dowry bill recently presented to the senate?*

Mr. Naik: It was "Dowry and dowry restoration Act 1976, but it was not properly implemented. With the passage of time it became redundant, as restriction under this act that no body could give gift above than Rs.5000, was violated by society because there was no valve of Rs. 5,000. Keeping that in view, new act Dowry and dowry gift act 2008 was initiated. The restriction under this act is that nobody can give bridal gift to bridegroom more than a value of Rs 50,000, which will be applicable to dowry also. Parents of bride cannot give her gift with a value exceeding Rs. 20,000. Relative can only give presents/ gift valuing Rs. 1000. Apart from this, several other restrictions are that the President,



the Prime Minister, the Governors, the Parliamentarians, Government officers of Basic Pay Scale 17 and above would not be allowed to take gifts from outsiders; only family members can offer gifts to them. The violators will be punished for one year and complaints can only be lodged with the family court. Nk ah registrar will register the dowry. If a woman lodges a case for divorce and court accepts her plea then according to the gift list, Dowry will be returned to the woman because that is her property.

*SACHET: What is your opinion about Prohibition (of dowry)?*

Mr. Naik: It is very good demand to prohibit dowry, but it will work gradually because majority thinks that it is very necessary to give some gift to the bride and the bridegroom. Situation in India is different to that in Pakistan. In India, it is like buying things through negotiations since the groom's family reportedly asks the bride's family bluntly and directly regarding how much dowry and money would be offered. In Islam, which has influence in our society, such things are considered wrong. The socio economic situation in India is very difficult than ours because their rules and regulations are according to Hinduism and we aspire to follow Islamic rules and regulations. Islam allows gifts to both parties but with some limits. Prohibition can be achieved with the passage of time and through education. Dowry gifts are also exchanged in Europe and America. Raid implementation of prohibition of dowry is impossible, because it is not possible without creating adequate awareness about law and its violation, especially in the elite. If elite class follows the law then it'll be a encouraging for the poor and the middle class people. It'll also create equality within the society. I have heard your NGO SACHET is taking lead on this issue. I would urge you to do it at bigger scale to raise awareness on this issue and use conferences, seminars and take the message to streets and neighbourhood (*mohala*) and highlight the ramifications of the violation in the newspapers so that people should know that they'll be punished if they violate the act.

Interview with Senator Chaudhary Mohammad Anwar Bhindar

*SACHET: President Ayub is said to be the first one to put restrictions on dowry; then came the 1976 Act introduced by Mr. Bhutto which was not properly followed. So what do you say is the current legal situation regarding dowry?*

Senator Bhindar: President Ayub had only curbed the exhibition of dowry; there was no restriction on dowry per se. I recall when *baraat* (wedding congregation of the groom) came, first they would stay for night and there used to be a ritual of exhibiting the dowry: a man with loud voice would stand up and announce in detail, along with display of items, that what was being offered by way of dowry - gold, cows, clothes, beds and bed sheets. The restriction on dowry came in 1976 through dowry act.



**SACHET:** *What difficulties do you foresee in the implementation of current act?*

Senator Bhinder: The implementation will face difficulties through non cooperation of people because now-a-days people want to give more dowry. Then the inflation and price hike have made gifts very expensive; now the price of a gold ring exceeds Rs. 30,000. But I believe gradually the people at large will accept the fact and less of dowry will be acceptable and possible. The purpose of the Act is that no body should ask for dowry, or condition it with accepting a female in marital union. In the new Act, dowry is prohibited for six months before and after the marriage ceremony. After this, parents can give dowry by way of gifts as much as they like and keep giving gifts the rest of their lives. This restriction is to overcome the one-time wedding expenses, which otherwise tend to skyrocket.



**SACHET:** *SACHET is advocating prohibition of dowry; what are your views on that?*

Senator Bhinder: I think that restriction is the first step towards prohibition. It's very difficult to implement it immediately but gradually it'll work. This bill should be considered the first step to end the practice of dowry. I think that all the NGOs working on it should feel encouraged by it. Majority of the people in our society do not like dowry but also think it is impossible to prohibit. But NGOs should start campaign in a way that people should see their own benefit in owning the movement that aims an end to dowry. It will after all make their lives easier and their daughters' future, better. So I would urge that the NGOs should support and favour this act, as it will ultimately will lead to the eradication of dowry.

The News International, Thursday, February 12, 2009

14 CITY NEWS

■ NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

## Sachet for stronger law to eliminate dowry violence

Rishan S. Khan  
International

Celebrating the first ever National Women's Day on February 12 (Friday), the Society for Advancement of Community, Health, Education & Training (SACHET) launched two posters with the Fight Against Dowry (FADAN) planners here Wednesday at Sachet Gallery.

The first poster primarily targeted the Pakistani intellectuals, who demonstrate a strong elitist and classist sentiment that in turn is one of the many subtle faces of patriarchy or signs of dowry, while the second poster was about challenging the elitist consciousness on dowry issues including denial by intellectual elites on dowry violence.

The poster launch and a dialogue on the occasion were attended by serious development practitioners from public and private sectors.

Fight Against Dowry (FADAN), a five-year voluntary advocacy project, was launched in 2001 by

Agfa Khattar Centre, founded by Dr. Rashidul Hasan as a secular wing of Sachet, while in 2003, the Centre launched the Fight Against Dowry Advocacy Network (FADAN), working specifically on legislation, media and community.

Dr. Rashidul Hasan, founder FADAN, while leading the journey of the National Women's Day on the occasion, said it was Zia-ul-Haq's regime in which women raised their voices against the government's Hudood Ordinance and Quocoon-e-Mudharat and were arrested in this day.

"Contrary to obvious forms of gender based violence like rape, acid throwing, Karo-Kari and child sexual abuse, dowry as a form of violence is yet to be accepted and understood by social activists, researchers and policymakers in Pakistan," she said.

Dr. Rashidul Hasan said since the last 10 years, her organization has been working for economic violence and dowry, adding that it was only last year that the World Bank in its report mentioned and appre-

ciated the violence of Afsar Foundation and Sachet.

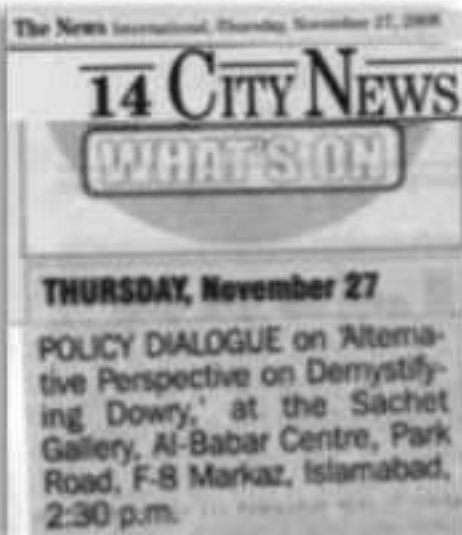
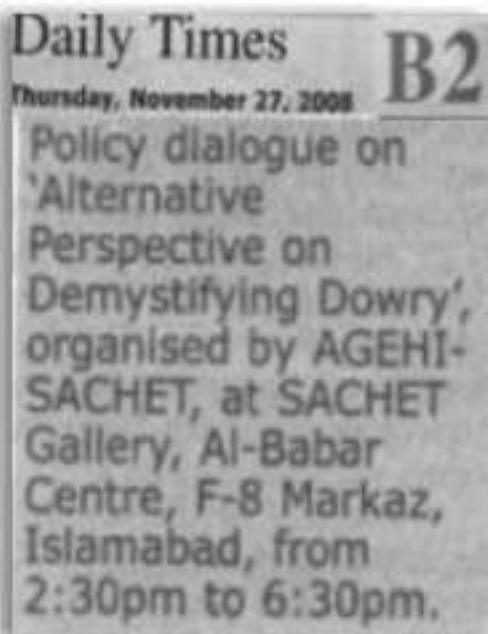
"It is quite surprising to witness the silence of media and civil society on this issue while last year, the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) suggested the government not to ban dowry, as it is a tradition and would open more doors for policies to take bribes," she said.

Dr. Rashidul Hasan said that policymakers should formulate a more effective legislation to eliminate dowry violence, which is breeding in the name of culture and tradition. She hoped the decision makers would remove the inclusion of a spirit of dowry violence in the final version of the bill titled Domestic Violence Against Women and Children (Prevention and Protection) Act 2009 (the existing draft does not mention dowry) that obligates the State to take action against the persecution of women and children caused by gender based violence. "Most of the times, dowry violence remains hidden behind financial violence," she said.



**Annex 3**

Media Coverage of the Policy Dialogue on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2008 at SACHET Gallery Islamabad





## 'Down with the dowry'

Wednesday

May 28, 2008

By Mariam Kiani

ISLAMABAD, May 27: Dowry is a deep rooted gender issue with social, economic and health consequences for the whole society but is treated as a menace for the bride's family alone.

This was the view taken by the participants in a dialogue on 'Dowry and dowry violence' organised here on Tuesday by AGEHI (Advocates of Gender, Education and Health Information) Resource centre, the technical wing of SACHET (Society for the Advancement of Community, Health, Education and Training).

They noted that the issue rarely figured on the agenda of gender experts. Only recently the dead silence on the issue has been broken by the tabling of a 'dowry and marriage gifts bill' in the Senate.

Talking about the factors that ensue continuity of the social evil they said, dowry often was considered an incentive to lure a suitable match, a support mechanism to help the new couple so that they have a convenient start of practical life, an excuse for the denial of inheritance to women (about 90 per cent women were compensated with dowry and were not given their share from property), which was not permissible either by religion or the law.

Talking about the salient features of the Dowry and Marriage Gifts Bill 2008 they said, it had restricted dowry to Rs30,000 and the bridal gifts to Rs50,000.

According to the legislation a list of dowry and bridal gifts will also be attached to the Nikahnama (marriage certificate) at the time of marriage and divorce, the bride

shall be entitled to the dowry or money equivalent to its value.

In case of non-implementation of the certificate, a woman would have the option to approach the family court and get it speedily implemented, the breach of the provisions of the Act has also been made to offence punishable.

The bill was prepared by Sachet, a non-government organisation, in 2003 and it took five years to reach to Senate, showing the lack of political will on the part of political leadership.

Legislation on dowry had been done twice in the past but could not be implemented as there was lack of political and civic will.

Implementing the bill was not possible without a 'civic will' for which stimulating public to think about the institution and practice of dowry and dowry violence was vital, they added.

They also urged media to play its role in curbing practice of dowry.

The focal persons included Dr Rakhshinda Parveen, of Agehi Resource Centre, Dr Faqir Husain, Secretary Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, Maliha Zia, coordinator Legislative Watch Programme, Aurat Foundation and Dr Khalid Masood, Chairman, Council of Islamic Ideology.



## SACHET's position on the issue of Dowry

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- Demand of dowry is an offense
- Dowry itself is a form of violence, not only against women but men also
- Courts should take Suo Moto action against deaths of married girls specially the newly weds under unexplained circumstances as

Stove death = An accident = Myth  
Stove death = Dowry death = truth



**FADAN**

Fight Against Dowry Advocacy Network

Silver Ribbon Campaign

Silver Ribbon, the logo of FADAN symbolizes hope for rejecting this socially endorsed and conveniently forgotten form of gender violence and promoting austerity in marriage ceremonies.

# Fight against Dowry Advocacy Network (FADAN)

“When a gift becomes demand it is a form of violence”

Based on this Philosophy FADAN a national network against dowry violence was formed in 2003. One of the major achievements of the project is the formation of this national level advocacy network to strengthen partnership with stakeholders. It aims to create and sustain a social movement against 'dowry by demand'. FADAN membership takes into its fold both individuals and organization, with the essential prerequisite criteria of determination, commitment and devotion of the members to the network's goals and objectives. FADAN is a national network of change makers who are working against dowry violence

## Vision Statement

### Speak.....

Speak-your lips are free  
Speak-your tongue is still yours  
Is still yours  
Speak-your life is still yours,  
Look inside the simithy  
Leaping flames, red hot iron.  
Padlicks open wide  
Their jawa,  
Chains disintegrate,  
Speak-there is little time  
But little though it is  
It is enough  
Time enough  
Before the body persihes.  
Before the tongue atrophies  
Speak-turth still lives,  
Say what your have  
To say.

Faiz Ahmed Faiz  
(Translated by Daud Kamal)

### بول

بول، کہ لب آزاد ہیں تیرے  
بول، زبان اب تک تیری ہے  
تیرا ستواں جسم ہے تیرا  
بول کہ جاں اب تک تیری ہے  
دیکھ کہ آہن گر کی دکان میں  
تند ہیں شعلے، سرخ ہے آہن  
کھٹنے لگے قفلوں کے دہانے  
پھیلا ہر اک زنجیر کا دامن  
بول، یہ تھوڑا وقت، بہت ہے  
جسم زبان کی موت سے پہلے  
بول، کہ سچ زندہ ہے اب تک  
بول، جو کچھ کہنا ہے کہہ لے!

(شعریں)



## **AGEHI Resource Centre** *Engendering Development*

AGEHI (Advocates of Gender Education & Health Information) itself is an Urdu word bearing meanings like knowledge, Awareness, Perception and Insight. The objective of AGEHI is to advocate for Gender Sensitization, Education and Health promotion by disseminating information. AGEHI supports policy and social communication and advocacy on gender issues through a broad range of activities. AGEHI provides technical assistance to programs of SACHET besides managing SACHET'S official website, AGEHI theater group, FADAN (Fight Against Dowry Advocacy Network) and DoSTI Youth Advocacy Network.



## **SACHET Pakistan**

*Promoting Human Development of the Disadvantaged with Gender Perspectives*

SACHET (Society for the Advancement of Community, Health, Education and Training) is a registered civil society organization working since 1999 with a vision of promoting human development of the disadvantaged in gender perspectives. The main thematic areas of interventions are Health care (including sexual and reproductive health care for women and adolescents), Education, Training and livelihood opportunities for the neglected masses.

SACHET is among the very few indigenous organizations in Pakistan who initiated advocacy cum service delivery packages to the marginalized communities.

Currently SACHET is offering tangible community services through its physical presence in 5 districts of Pakistan namely Chakwal, Attock, Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Skardu (Northern Areas).

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