

## **Building Public Support for and Awareness on PPR Services with a Human Rights Approach**

### **Community Awareness Campaign**

Parallel to efforts made for providing access to justice at the legal and administrative levels, it is imperative that initiatives be undertaken in order to ensure that the social environment becomes conducive for implementation of the Protection System. Dastak proposes to create community linkages not only through the paralegal program, but to extend the program to more direct community involvement through awareness raising activities with community participation. Changing the external environment and transforming social attitudes, cultural practices, and religious mindsets becomes essential for ending prejudice and discrimination within the community (*Project Proposal Part C*).

#### **1. Introduction**

'Apney Saath Apna Mustaqbil Bhi Sawarein' is a campaign launched by Dastak in 2022 targeting beauticians working at or running small scale beauty salons in low-income communities of Lahore and Multan. The campaign aims to raise awareness about women rights related to marriage and Gender Based Violence Prevention, Protection and Response (GBV PPR) organisations/services where they can seek guidance, information and support for the restoration of their rights. A large portion of cases received by WPS service providers, particularly shelters and crisis centers, are those in which women and girls are suffering mistreatment and violation of the fundamental rights in marriage which often escalates to domestic violence and abuse. It was, therefore, considered important to not only build awareness on WPS services to victims but also on the legal and constitutional protections available to women and girls so that campaign information targets both prevention and protection of GBV

Beauty salons serve as safe community spaces where those who come to avail services often discuss/share their personal stories and domestic concerns. Having developed outreach in communities through its paralegals, Dastak saw this as an opportunity to improve knowledge on marriage rights and outreach of its services by providing basic training and information material to beauticians/salon owners and to enable them to guide their female clients as well as their employees to resources and knowledge concerning matters related to marriage and domestic violence.

#### **2. Campaign Rationale and Action Plan**

The campaign was designed with the aim of disseminating information on women's rights and the available GBV PPR services in Punjab. In Dastak's more than 20 year experience in the field, the vast majority of cases received are those of women facing marital and domestic problems which could have been avoided or mitigated if they were aware of the rights guaranteed to them under law. In many cases, a comprehensive and clear nikkahnama (marriage contract) with adequate conditions and financial security for the women could eliminate many concerns which develop over time within a marriage. Thus topics related to nikkah, maintenance, dower and custody were chosen. During its preparatory research, Dastak did not find any other

campaign that specifically targeted salons/beauticians at the community level for awareness-raising.

During initial planning and research, a common concern was identified that affected women who are most in need of such information have limited mobility and restrained social lives. Access to such women often proves a challenge unless door to door campaigns are initiated. Among the limited public spaces these women are allowed to visit are local beauty salons, which are women-only, women-led safe spaces. Such salons are run by women residents of the communities in either small rented spaces or inside their homes. These salons are frequented by women and girls living in adjacent areas, who become regular customers and form a bond with the salon owners and/or staff. The salon becomes an intimate community space for women to discuss their personal stories and issues. While salon owners may offer a kind word or piece of advice, they usually lack relevant knowledge to adequately guide the women on which protection service to avail for their particular concern. Salon owners and workers also serve as community leaders for women in the area because they maintain a social network among local residents as well as other salon owners.

Salons were thus chosen as the space for awareness-raising as it was well-suited to serve as a signpost to PPR services as well as holder of basis women rights information. The target group included the salon workers (campaign agents) themselves as well as the incoming clients. Preliminary conversations with the paralegals and target group revealed that as a woman becomes more regular at the salon, her tendency to share personal stories also increases which was indicative that they found salons as safe spaces. Some salon owners shared that sometimes relationship develops to such a degree, that the clients just come in for a chat and not for services.

Each salon owner referred by the paralegals would be invited for a short introductory meeting and given a brief training on gender concepts and information on women protection system and services. They would be provided with campaign packages including posters, pamphlets, flyers, GBV services directory and booklets to be displayed and placed at their workplace. This campaign was launched as a pilot exercise to closely study impact on a smaller scale and then decide a way forward based on results.

During initial planning it was decided that 30 to 40 salons in the communities of Lahore and Multan would be targeted. Dastak's trained paralegals in both cities were requested to shortlist salon owners and workers who would be willing to participate in such a campaign.

### Campaign Timeline



### 3. Campaign Publications

When the campaign was in the design phase, it was decided that such salon owners would be targeted for short trainings and requested to display information/guidance material related to women's matrimonial rights and relevant women protection services. Such topics were chosen in order to mainly target women who availed services at salons before or during their wedding preparations, however, it was useful for all women and girls, married or single.

The posters and pamphlets outlined the basic tenants of the *nikah*, dower, maintenance and common misconceptions related to the *nikkahnama/marriage contract*. The content was finalized using content from existing publications and input from field experts and the material was digitally designed by a graphic designer to match the aesthetics of beauty salons. In addition, participants were also provided with a directory of GBV services providers in Punjab to give them detailed knowledge of the existing PPR services,

Following is a poster with 10 important points related to marriage:

## شادی کے موقع پر اپنے حقوق یاد رکھیں

۱۔ شادی کے لیے دلہا اور دلہن کی آزادانہ رضامندی ضروری ہے۔ جبری نکاح کی قانون میں کوئی حیثیت نہیں ہے۔ کسی عورت پر شادی کیلئے جبر کرنا یا اسے مجبور کرنا جرم ہے اور اسکی سخت سزا ہے۔

۲۔ کسی مقدمہ یا جرم میں صلح کے بدلے عورت کو شادی میں دینا سخت جرم ہے۔

۳۔ وٹے سٹے میں نکاح کے بدلے میں کسی عورت کو نکاح میں دے جانے کی شرط رکھنے کی کوئی قانونی حیثیت نہیں۔

۴۔ پنجاب میں شادی کے لیے لڑکی کی کم از کم عمر 16 سال اور لڑکے کی 18 سال ہے۔

۵۔ نکاح میں حق مہر مقرر کرنا لازمی ہے۔

۶۔ اگر غاوند نے بیوی کو طلاق کا حق بغیر کسی شرط کے تفویض کیا ہے تو نکاح نامے میں واضح اندراج ہونا چاہیے۔

۷۔ دلہن کو سیکے یا سسرال سے ملنے والے حمایتی نقد رقم یا کسی بھی طرح کی جائیداد بشمول زیورات دلہن کی ملکیت ہوتے ہیں۔

۸۔ غاوند پر بیوی کا نقد ادا کرنا لازم ہوتا ہے۔ نکاح کے وقت ملایا نقد نکاح نامے میں درج کیا جاسکتا ہے۔

۹۔ نکاح سے پہلے اور بعد میں غاص شرائط باہمی رضامندی سے نکاح نامے میں درج کی جاسکتی ہیں۔

۱۰۔ رجسٹرڈ/Computerised نکاح نامہ کی ایک کاپی اپنے پاس منہضال کر رکھیں۔

اپنے ساتھ اپنا مستقبل  
بھی سنواریں



مسزید معلومات کے لیے  
دستک کی ویب سائٹ پر کال کریں

0333-4161610/ 0333-4169696

پیر - جمعہ (9:00 am to 6:00 pm)

www.dastak.org.pk

Following is a pamphlet with showing common misperceptions related to (Muslim) marriage:



experience of attending similar workshops or campaign and majority replied in the negative. During initial conversations on the telephone, the women were given a brief background of the campaign and asked if spreading awareness about women's rights in marriage was important and useful. All of them felt that distributing and sharing such information was extremely useful and helpful for them as well as their customers, family and friends. They were asked whether they felt women needed to be empowered in order to have equality in society and they agreed that until women had the knowledge about the rights and facilities ensured to them by the state, they would remain in servitude and have their rights violated.

The campaign agents were invited for an orientation workshop and distribution of the campaign material. It was attended by 19 beauticians from 16 salons in various locations of Lahore including Iqbal Town, Gulshan Ravi, Shahdra, Samnabad, Marghazar and Yateem Khana chowk.

In the first half of the workshop, the participants were introduced to Dastak, its history and services. They were encouraged to inform their clients, family members and friends about Dastak and guide women in need to seek assistance.

The second session focused on a few exercises on gender sensitivity to gauge whether the participants shared Dastak's vision of a human rights based approach. Multiple scenarios of customers seeking assistance from salon workers were shared with the participants to assess their reactions. For example, scenario one was that a customer left her home along with her children and went to live with her parents as a result of domestic violence by her husband. When she arrived at a local parlor and shared her story with beautician A, she was advised to return home and think about her children's future as she would not want them to grow up without a father. As a result the woman became upset and remained quiet for the rest of her stay. The activity went on to ask three questions; what mistake was made in this story? Who was at fault? Which human rights were violated in this scenario? During discussions, all participants were able to identify that beautician A should have empathized with the customer and offered her help instead of giving her problematic advice.

Campaign Methodology: The next session focused on explaining the rationale, plan, expectations of the campaign, how the beauticians viewed the campaign and whether it required any modifications based on their experiences. Since these participants have limited finances and time owing to their business and household responsibilities, the campaign execution was kept simple requiring minimum time and effort on part of the participant beauticians. They were expected to display the content at their salon and actively inform clients of the campaign message and availability of GBV PPR services mentioned in the publications provided to them. There was a consensus on the feasibility of the campaign and all participants agreed to undertake the responsibility. They were requested to share images of the publications displayed at their salon and also provide feedback on any relevant interactions they had with customers related to the content.

Participants Feedback: During this session, participants expressed their appreciation for the unique idea behind the campaign and felt that salons were an ideal location for

dissemination of such information. They felt that, while they were able to offer kind words to women who shared their domestic concerns with them, they often felt helpless and incapable of offering any concrete help to these women. This campaign would allow them to provide meaningful guidance to women in need with minimum effort. Most participants were eager to undertake this campaign mainly out of a sense of civic duty and had never attended such a training or been a part of a campaign for women's rights and were excited that they were being given the opportunity to learn something new and useful as well as share this information with others in need.

The final session was conducted by Dastak's Crisis Center Manager who briefly went over the content in the publications to create understanding and respond to any related questions about GBV laws and services.

## ii. [Multan 28 February 2022](#)

Similar to Lahore, Dastak engaged its trained paralegals in Multan to identify and coordinate with local salon owners and beauticians. The two hour introductory session followed the same format as the one in Lahore. Participant's legal questions were answered by Dastak's Crisis Manager via video call.

Participant Concerns: At the beginning of the meeting, participants in Multan expressed some confusion in regard to their connection with promoting human rights. They claimed that they had decided to attend because they were curious and interested in learning but were not sure what could be their possible role in this regard. While explaining the rationale of the campaign, the participants were asked whether they had encountered situations where customers shared personal domestic concerns with them and majority agreed and shared their experiences. When the campaign rationale and objective were shared with them, they expressed appreciation and felt it was an important and essential step towards women empowerment and adding more purpose to their work.

As the session progressed, all participants shared their personal stories of struggle and their previous lack of knowledge about women's matrimonial rights in Pakistan. They related the publications content to their own experiences as well those of their clients and agreed that it would prove useful to display such content in the hopes that women entering marriage or those in abusive relationships will be better informed of their rights and avenues of relief.

## [5. Campaign Risks:](#)

### Identified at the outset:

During initial planning and design, certain risks were identified and appropriate remedial actions taken in order to mitigate them. While finalizing content for publications, it remained under consideration that the content did not address issues such as divorce or criminal action directly. Direction mention of such topics could have been interpreted to mean that such concepts were being propagated, instead of just being an option available to women in abusive marriages. The content thus focused mainly on legal rights guaranteed under domestic law and the constitution, instead of subjective opinions or advice. Dastak shared drafts of the publications with the



beauticians before dissemination in order to get feedback and make edits in case any section or word was provocative or may prove problematic for them.

#### Damage to displayed content:

In one case a poster displayed in a public space outside the salon was taken down by unknown persons. It could either have been removed by children, some person who did not agree with the poster or someone took it with them for Dastak's contact information which was displayed on it. The beautician was provided with extra material in order to replace it.

#### Risks emerging after rollout:

A few beauticians shared concerns that there was an element of risk in undertaking this campaign as the family members of customers taking home publications might object to the kind of information being disseminated. While the material focused on legal rights and not on domestic violence or divorce per se, two controversial topics in Pakistan, there was a fear that if the customer went home to demand her rights from her husband or left home to seek protection at a shelter home, her family might raise issue with the salon for sharing such information with her. However, no such incident was reported during the campaign period.

### 6. Campaign outcome

After the initial meetings, the participants were requested to remain in touch and share updates with regards to relevant interactions with customers. During initial meetings, each participant was provided with a publications packet which included one poster, 50 campaign pamphlets, 20 pamphlets from Dastak's earlier campaign 'Tashadad Se Tahafaz Tak' on criminal procedures, 10 GBV PPR services directories, as well as an illustrated publication by Shirkat Gah<sup>1</sup> on Muslim Family Laws. A total of 550 pamphlets and 50 posters from the campaign were distributed among beauticians in Lahore and Multan.

A WhatsApp group was formed for easier coordination. Over the course of two months, beauticians shared images of content displayed at their salons and response received from their clients. (See pictures as Annex A).

Followups with the campaign agents/participants, provided important insights:

- Women frequenting these salons were married and single in equal number. Both categories of clients expressed found the information they read from the displayed posters useful.
- Parlors located in low-income areas were frequented by women who shared their domestic concerns more openly and frequently, while parlors located in high-income areas were mostly visited by women who focused solely on the service and did not engage much in conversation. When asked why the beauticians felt this was the case, they expressed that women belonging to middle/upper class were less likely to expose their domestic situation due to concerns about public image. This

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<sup>1</sup>Shirkat Gah is a women resource and publication center focusing on research of women and girls rights and GBV.



was also one of the reasons why small scale salons were chosen for this campaign which were run and visited by women most in need of such information.

- One campaign agent Zukhruf shared that a customer came for services and began mentioning her domestic concerns that her husband was a drug addict and did not provide adequate maintenance for her and her children. Zukhruf informed her about the campaign and shared Dastak's number with her. She informed her to contact Dastak's Crisis Center through its helpline.
- Some clients read the pamphlets on display at the salon while others saw the poster and inquired from the salon owner about what it was. A few customers also took pictures of the poster. Two participants shared that they had customers who read the poster and appreciated the campaign for displaying important and useful information that all women, married or single, should know.
- Some campaign agents who had attended the introductory meeting also informed other beauticians about the campaign. At least two other beauticians contacted Dastak and expressed an interest in being part of the campaign as well. Material was subsequently also shared with them.
- One campaign agent Maryam shared that a customer shared her domestic problems with her during a visit. Maryam informed her about the campaign and encouraged her to take action against her husband who engaged in domestic violence. However, the customer said that she was afraid to take action against him because she depended on him financially. Maryam still gave her Dastak's number and asked her to seek advice whenever she felt comfortable in doing so.
- A few campaign agents also shared their own personal concerns with Dastak's staff and sought advice. At least three salon owners contacted staff to discuss various concerns.
  - ⊕ One campaign agent called to request a meeting with Dastak's Crisis Manager because her daughter was getting married and she wanted advice on how to fill the nikkahnama so that her daughter's rights were secured. She felt that this was the right time to seek advice and ensure that her daughter starts her married life informed and on a secure and equal footing.
  - ⊕ Another campaign agent from Multan indicated during the meeting that she was undergoing domestic problems as well but did not feel comfortable sharing them in public. She said that she would find the time to give Dastak a call and discuss her case. Almost a month later she got in touch and shared her story. Her husband was physically and psychologically abusive and refused to divorce her. She had never been exposed to any such campaign before and was unaware that a women protection system exists in the city. When she came to the session, she noted important numbers and after 25 years of being stuck in an abusive marriage, she finally found the courage to take action. She visited the Violence Against Women Center (VAWC) in Multan to register her complaint. After three hearings, she got in touch with Dastak to assist her in her efforts to seek justice for her and her three sons. Dastak provided telephonic legal advice and also got in touch with their contacts in VAWC Multan to assist her in her case. She had the following to say about the campaign:

*"Dastak coming to Multan and me ending up at the meeting was a blessing from God that I had been waiting for. I found the courage to finally take action and use the mechanisms I learned about at the session. I have taken a bold and difficult step and I have hopes that I will get justice if Dastak stands by my side."*

## 7. Way Forward

A follow-up meeting was hosted at Dastak's office in Lahore to get participant feedback about the campaign and discuss potential avenues for expanding the current campaign in the future. During the meeting, the participants expressed that the campaign had been going well and will be continued. Dastak agreed to provide them with more copies of the campaign content.

Since the campaign had been initiated as a pilot exercise to assess whether interacting with communities this way could contribute to improving access to information about and usage of GBV response services by the affected population and increasing interest in the mechanisms and support structures for PPR will be created amongst communities (Project Expected Outcome 4). Feedback from all participants strongly indicates that the campaign has resulted in the desired outcome and that the campaign is suitable to be continued and scaled up.

The participants shared ideas that they could be tasked with finding more salon services within their networks to extend the campaign. Many salon owners and beauticians buy tickets to attend training sessions to learn hair and makeup techniques. During these trainings, they meet other women in the field and form networks. Participants suggested that they could speak to participants in these trainings and their ones in their community to spread the campaign in Lahore and Multan.

In the initial phase of the campaign, focus of the content was on Muslim Family Laws. However, if there is a scale up of the campaign, Dastak intends to involve salon owners and beauticians in religious minority communities and include content on their specific marriage laws as well. The campaign will also likely address other misperceptions, including those on domestic violence whereby it is largely considered an internal family matter rather than a serious offence against the state. Similarly, other topics related to women's legal rights can be designed in an easy to understand language and format.

It was also recommended that a Dastak should issue certificates for each campaign participants for being community change-makers which they can display at their salons. In this way, the customers would also begin to recognize the salon as a community space where they may share their concerns in confidence and receive trusted, referrals and advice.

The current campaign was executed in 50 salons in Lahore and Multan with over 500 pamphlets distributed till end of the project. The campaign message continue to be disseminated in salons as well other service providers including government shelter and crisis centers and campaign agents and paralegals are provided additional material when required.

This campaign has provided an opportunity to inform women of their matrimonial rights and on the existence of services that can help affectees seek relief in case those rights are violated. At least 20 women have approached Dastak with queries and complaints as a result of the campaign. The campaign has the potential to be extended within minimum additional costs as there are several small scale salons all over the city. There are salon networks across the country where women come together which creates an excellent platform for to sustain community interest and involvement for the usage of PPR services and the GBV Protection System. Campaign agents also now are permanent linkages that Dastak has created in communities, many of who are interested in working and supporting institutions like Dastak by referring women as well as carry awareness material on securing rights of women. As more women become aware of and engage with women protection services, the long term effect is that the services will also improve with better informed complainants and beneficiaries.

## Campaign Photographs

### Group Picture of Lahore Participants



### Group Picture of Multan Participants





## Display of Content in Lahore and Multan





## Names and Location of Participants

### LAHORE

No.	Name of beautician	Community/Location
1.	Nabeela Akbar	Iqbal Town
2.	Zukhruf Mamaal	Iqbal Town
3.	Anam Faiz	Marghzar Colony
4.	Sadia Younas	Marghazar, Multan Road
5.	Badsha	Marghazar
6.	Nazia Perveen	Main Market Gulberg
7.	Maryam Butt	Gulshan Ravi
8.	Rabia Butt	Shah Alam Market
9.	Shabnam Naz	Green Town
10.	Shahida Majeed	Shahdra
11.	Laiba Razaq	Shahdra
12.	Asifa Shahzadi	Shahdra
13.	Iram Tuffail	Shahdra
14.	Maham Jabeen	Yateem Khana
15.	Mariam Ayub	Pak-Arab colony
16.	Kiran	Samnabad
17.	Rukhsana Liaqat	Yateem Khana

### MULTAN

No.	Name of beautician	Community/Location
1.	Aneesa Faheem	Tankabaad
2.	Tayyaba Tahir	Ghanta Ghar
3.	Sumbal Zeeshan	Chungi 9
4.	Bushra Akram	Chungi 9
5.	Sumaira	Chungi 9
6.	Bushra Amin	Chungi 14
7.	Dure Shehwar	Chungi 14
8.	Sonia Bhatti	Naqshband Colony
9.	Jiya Shah	Garden Town
10.	Kiran Razza	Garden Town
11.	Sadaf Sajjad	Piran Ghaib Road
12.	Ushna Asghar	Tughlaq Road
13.	Amna Hafeez	Tughlaq Road
14.	Moona Khan	Bosan Road
15.	Nabeela Gohar	Nasheman Colony
16.	Zoha Afzal	Nasheman Colony
17.	Mrs Mehboob	La Salle Colony
18.	Mehak Atif	Razabad
19.	Hina Hameed	Razabad
20.	Ambreen Salman	Zikriya Town
21.	Sana Gohar	Zikriya Town



22.	Hina Shehwar	T.B Road
23.	Naila Razzaq	T.B Road
24.	Ayesha Rasheed	Gulshan Market