

Silence Aids the Perpetrator, Reporting Aids the Victim

“Silence is the biggest reason for the rise in gender-based violence. When an individual faces violence and cannot raise voice against it, it becomes the responsibility of witnesses to report the case to the relevant support mechanisms. Silence raises perpetrator’s confidence to repeat the act of violence!

Aawaz II is playing a remarkable role in addressing this problem through a two-pronged strategy. On the one hand, they are raising awareness to change attitudes and behaviours against gender-based violence, discrimination and community acceptance of this exploitation. On the other hand, the programme is also working to increase citizen-state engagement and community understating about the roles and responsibilities of citizens and duty-bearers. Aawaz II has set up their Aagahi Centres in different tehsils in Multan, bringing the victims and survivors of violence to the government institutions that provide services where all kinds of facilities are available.

The Punjab Women Protection Authority’s Violence against Women Centre in Multan, launched women helpline 1737, but we did not have the resources to publicise this initiative among the communities. Through Aawaz II Aagahi Centres and forums, we were able to spread awareness about this helpline. 6,000 flyers were printed and disseminated among communities through Aawaz II forum members and Aawaz II Change Agents.

It is our individual, collective and social responsibility to speak-out against violence. With support from Aawaz II, the centre plans to collaborate and work further to raise awareness, particularly among women in rural areas, and encourage them to report cases of gender-based violence without any fear so that we can help eliminate such harmful practices and crimes from our communities.”

Muneeza Manzoor Butt

Aawaz II District Forum Member and Manager Violence against Women Centre, Multan

Muneeza Butt is a clinical psychologist, government office-holder and district forum member of Aawaz II Multan who has been actively working to prevent gender-based violence and protect individuals who face violence.

The district forums facilitate communities’ access to available services at the village, tehsil and district and play a role in developing linkages with respective service providers.