

## **Deteriorating state of children's rights in Sindh – (Universal Children Day 2018)**

Nawabshah (19 November 2018): Millions of Sindh's children are deprived of basic rights including education, health and survive. Children from different school clubs urged the provincial governments to invest funds and take extraordinary steps to protect the right to life, survival, health, education in the province.

Several children from different schools and civil society representatives gathered on Monday at the Hari Training Hall and addressed the issues of children. Hari Welfare Association celebrated Universal Children Day 2018 with the theme of **“To promote peace through children by wearing blue”**.

Kashif Parveen, a Child Club Leader, said that 32 percent of children were out of school that includes 53 percent girls. They added that these out of school children were unable to attend school because of poverty, lack government's interests to invest in education, lack of awareness and higher rates of corporal punishment. They claimed that in almost all schools corporal punishment is common, but children out of fear do not share with anyone. Children also informed that around 48 percent of the district population has ever attended the schools that include 26 percent of females. The higher rate of illiteracy is the outcome of a feudal structure that forces the poor to stay in the cycle of poverty and marginalization. They also said that most of the schools in the province were without basic facilities which hampered the provision of education. They noted that in some areas schools did not exist, if these exist but without school buildings.

Iqra Hesbani, a youth group leader, said that free and compulsory education is the right of every child that they owe from the state but despite being the signatories of the UN charter, our country has failed to provide this right to its citizens.

She further said that 55 percent children are stunting meaning such a vast number of children are facing the issue of physical and mental growth because of poor nutrition. They said that the district did not have district headquarter hospital and around 40 percent in the district were not immunized especially in rural areas. They further said that in Sindh 50 percent of the children under five years of age are stunted due to chronic malnutrition, a condition that has lifelong consequences on their physical and mental development.

On occasion, the Executive Director, Akram Ali Khaskheli said that on the universal children day, each district department should have organized activities to aware children and adults of their rights but the government had little interest in it. He said that worst forms of child labour and child bonded labour are also prevalent in the district, but no steps are taken to address these issues.

Children demanded the government to allocate more funds for building schools, appointing female teachers, and initiate rigorous monitoring. They also requested that the scale of children and women immunization should be spread to rural areas and special services should be started to support malnourished children.

