

HWA is deeply concerned on increasing cases of violence against girl children in Sindh

“11 October International Day of Girl Child.”

Nawabshah: (11 October 2018): The violence against girl children has alarmingly increased in rural areas of Sindh and children marriages, child sexual abuse and child abduction were the top serious crimes committed against children, said the press statement issued by Hari Welfare Association (HWA). HWA noted that in 2015, 695 cases of child marriages, child sexual abuse, and child abduction were reported in Sindh. In 2016, the instances of such crimes against children, especially girls, increased to 829 in the province. HWA said that from 2010 to 2016, 6690 cases of violence against children in the province mainly in rural areas of Sindh which include 378 cases of child marriages took place tribal and rural parts of Sindh, 2673 cases of child sexual abuse and 3281 cases of child abduction. In all these cases, the vast majority are girl children living in rural areas.

HWA said that the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act 2013 have had remained useless since its implementation at the grassroots level is zero. The parents, police, NADRA, marriage registrars have kept aside the law and helping the occurrence of child marriages prohibited in the Act. HWA said that in most of the cases, officials have the knowledge but they easily maneuverer the system and issued fake certificates to prove the raised ages of children. There are estimated 6000 villages in Sindh, and in the majority of villages, every year 4-5 children were married in their early ages either with the same age fellow or with adults. HWA also observed that the most common marriageable age in rural areas is 13 to 14 years because parents believed that at this age if girls were not going to school, they should be married so that the responsibility or burden of their care, feeding and honor protection should move to the other houses. HWA said that in 2015, 57 cases of child marriages were reported in the media in Sindh, which increased to 112 in 2016.

HWA showed deep concerns that the Sindh Child Protection Authority Act was introduced in 2011 and then the Authority was set up under the Act. However, unfortunately, neither the authority nor the provincial government has taken measures to bring an end to violence against children especially sexual abuse and abduction which have increased alarmingly. In 2015, 296 cases of child sexual abuse were reported, which increased to 340 cases. In 2015, 342 cases of child abduction and 2016, 377 cases were reported. HWA said that the Authority was neither able to function at the grassroots levels nor has coordination with the line agencies on the matter. Lack of power, authority, and financial and human resources had disabled the authority to perform its duties efficiently and effectively.

HWA said that October 11 is the International Day of the Girls, and on this day the government to go beyond forming committees to look into issues of child sexual abuse and provide unconditional authority, power, and resources to play its role to protect the rights of children especially in rural areas and also in urban gang-ridden areas of Sindh such as Karachi and Hyderabad.

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