

Blind Industrialization

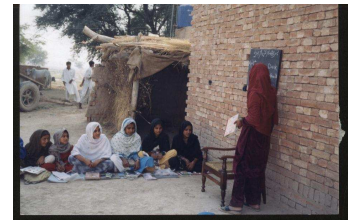
If urge for destruction is a creative urge, urge for construction, over and over again, happens to be destructive. So man is not only creator but at the same time, he is destroyer. Forests keep disappearing, rivers dry up, wild life is becoming extinct, the climates ruined and the land grows poorer and uglier every day. Walwat has been materialization of same gloomy picture that suffered from blind progress. Walwat, an area in the suburbs of Multan has been suffering badly from contamination of Earth's environment with materials that interfere with human health, the quality of life, and the natural functioning of ecosystems was under a potent threat.

Walwat is located in union council 94 old Sher Shah Multan. This area is peopled with two thousand souls, experiencing miserable and pathetic mode of existence. Village Walwat nestles 600 houses. People of this hamlet are, up till now, deprived of proper roads for traveling and other indispensable services. Nevertheless, the weighty issue for them was aforementioned environmental problem. In this area chemical barrage and effluent has been hurled against the fabric of life. Sewage, industrial wastes, and agricultural chemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides were, to some extent, causes of people's dismal condition but worst of all was water pollution. However in nature there are neither rewards nor punishments –there are consequences which are, deceitfully, directed to the poor who suffers for the luxuries of rich.

Industrial Area Multan had been pouring untreated effluent in torrents in that poor area, from its inception, in 1984. The area covers 16 acres and gives an idea about lack of forethought and lack of planning overtly. Myopic industrialists had done nothing for disposal and dumping of solid waste and effluent. It is said that sewerage system was developed in 1984 but it was a failure so industrialists hit upon an ingenious plan of open drainage system.

Due to effluent that comes form industrial Area Multan by open drainage system, passes through hundreds of acres of land to make lives of underprivileged people of the community even more wretched. On its way, contaminated water go by; *Basti Shor Kot, Basti Jhok Wali, Basti Walwat, Basti Panju Wali and Basti Sial Wali* and making the life of more than 10,000 souls more miserable.

In labor colonies of the industrial area too, the life is as miserable as the working environment of poor people working in industries. And old worker of tanneries at Industrial Estate said,



“We are facing the non-functional sewerage problem. The sewerage of the whole area is blocked which has worsened the situation of this area and had made it unfit for human habitation.”

The swampy duct of industrial waste had become something very troublesome for the people of above mentioned communities, as they felt as if they were living in a stinky cage where from there was no way out for them. It was affecting their economy, social conditions, social relations, health and natural resources. More than 10 families have left Walwat and had been settled somewhere else. Those who were living there complained that their relatives seldom visited them. None thinks of marrying the girls living there on the prospect of frequents visits that annoy those who think of getting their arms in marriage.

Because of effluent that emitted strong smell, as it had been stagnant there for last 20 years and it was 15 feet deep, people of that area were, in a social context, ostracized.

According to local people, the effluent had really mad their existence so deplorable that they were bound to drink ill-smelling undrinkable water. As a result they were frequently falling victims to cholera, jaundice and other intestinal diseases. An old man of Walwat said,



“This dirty water is a disease. It is greatest source of colic and malaria. It has made the water of hand pumps yellowish and carrier of serious diseases. The mortality rate has increased. We are obsessed with the fear that our children might fall into the marshy duct. Most of the children are suffering from whooping cough only because of this fountain of illness. I have a child of 2 years who suffering from whooping cough and falls a victim to malaria four times a year.”

Another wretched man said, “.” **An old woman cried that her child had drowned while he was playing near the pound.** Muhammad Mushtaq, a local farmer told,

“Malaria is the common disease people of this area are suffering from. It is all about effluent that had not only corroded the nearby land but also is a den of mosquitoes. The mosquitoes had made our nights sleepless and lives miserable. Ever-present stench is a real nuisance for us and nobody visits us because of this.”

It has also been reported that some of the children had stuck into the marshy part of the land where the disgusting effluent flows. Toxic waste incinerators from industrial area and solid waste dumps, they said, had made their presence felt everywhere. If someone happened to visit that area, he would feel ever-present evil smell of effluent in the area even after having gone back. It is reported that few children had lost their lives as they drowned in the stinky effluent.

It was a real matter of concern that duct of effluent flowed near the local unwallled primary school, (Awaz CDS got the boundary wall constructed). Therefore there was a constant danger of lives for the small children who were getting education on the threshold of illness and death. Many teachers got themselves transferred as the evil-smell was unbearable. People of that area were, no doubt, endowed with reason, with the power to set the things right, they were able to improve what was given to them. Nevertheless, they were lacking the key, which is confidence. Through mobilization campaign, AwazCDS infused confidence in them.



Noted politicians and members of Union Councils were representing constituency but not a single application was put forward for solving the problem of such a great magnitude.

In that ill-fated area, AwazCDS mediated and managed to evolve two VDCs through mobilization, sensitization and capacity building under its Integrated Community Development and Empowerment Program (ICDEP). *Vasaib Sojhla* (radiance of milieu) is a male VDC and *Noor* (soothing light) is a female VDC who are collaboratively functioning for the social uplift of the community. These VDCs are running a Home School successfully. For solution of environmental problems of the area, Awaz CDS and its VDCs jointly started extensive campaign in print and electronic media. This is the story of commitment, dedication and perseverance that reinforced and strengthened the cause of restoring healthy environment for the wholesome future of a poor community. President of Vasaib Sojhla Organization showed his commitment that;



“We the people of Walwat community made a unanimous decision that our area should have all the basic necessities of life. Our children should go to school. The environment should be healthy. There should be a school and dispensary. People should get rid of malaria, polio and whooping cough. If a survey of this community is conducted, the majority would be found suffering from whooping cough and measles”.

As Awaz CDS believes that no change could be brought in the social, political and economic life by promoting the culture of dependence, to strengthen the community of Walwat and to articulate their unheard demands, Awaz CDS started determined campaign on the environmental problems created by Industrial Estate Multan. The main objectives of the campaign were to;

provide safe hygienic environment

empower and mobilize the community so that people could be infused with confidence enough to raise voice for their rights

To highlight the environmental issue at national & international level, and to attract the attention of the decision makers towards this drastic situation, Awaz CDS and its VDCs made a documentary film **Voices of the Poor**. This documentary was distributed among all the stakeholders including district, provincial and national level elected representatives, environmental protection department authorities etc. It was also exhibited in World Social Forum held in Mumbai India.

On 5th June 2004, on the eve of World Environmental Day, a developmental forum on **“Environmental Problems and their Socio-economical impact on People”** was arranged by Awaz CDS in Multan Arts Council. One of the main objectives of this forum was, in general, to highlight environmental and ecological issues of Multan and, for the most part, to highlight problematic environmental situation in Walwat. It was one of the major objectives of this forum to evolve strategies for the solution of this severe environmental trouble.

In this forum, more than 500 people participated. Environmental documentary **Voice of the Poor**, concerning Walwat, was the main spotlight of interest for the people attending the forum.

On this forum, the matter was brought under the notice of District Nazim Multan who arranged a meeting of Awaz CDS with World Bank team. World Bank team visited the area and directed for detailed survey to be conducted by District Government. District Government planned to discharge the effluent directly into river Channab. This according to Awaz CDS was a threat to marine life. Awaz CDS advocated installing an effluent plant at Industrial Estate Multan with the help of Punjab Industrial Estate and Management Company.

As a result, a channel of communication with industrialists of Industrial Estate and other concerned stakeholders was opened. Owners of Three Star Hosiery made a promise to install treatment plant which later on was fulfilled. The unyielding efforts of Awaz CDS bore fruit when Asian Development Bank issued the grant of 145 million rupees for installation of treatment plant in six Industrial Estates in different regions of Pakistan and with the efforts of Awaz CDS and its VDCs Industrial Estate Multan was also included in the program of Asian Development Bank.

Stinky liquid waste from industrial area Multan, which had been one of the gravest environmental problems of Walwat, was on the way of solution. It is promising that due to continuous efforts of Awaz CDS for calling attention to the problems of the area and mobilization of the community that concrete effluent drainage system has been constructed to the benefit of people and coming generations. It is worth mentioning that Sikander Hayyat Bosan, Federal Minister for Food and Agriculture, has fulfilled his promise of 2.5 million funding for the construction of this drainage system. He had made this promise on the eve of world environmental day.

As a fruit of intensive mobilization campaign in the community, on national and international level, situation has been changed for people have been mobilized. By getting multiparty steps taken, Awaz CDS, not only succeeded in catching attention of authorities about environmental problems in Walwat but also succeeded in making people shed their lethargy to come forward for their rights, hand in hand with Awaz CDS on the way out of squalor and slum.

On this success, president of Noor Traqiati Tanzeem said;

“We are thankful to Awaz CDS which has supported us in such a dedicated manner. We look forward to its technical and moral support in future. That water was one of our greatest problems it has also been solved along with other problems. Awaz Skill Center and dispensary are the services, we were in dire need of.”

President of Vasaib Sojhla Traqiati Tanzeem said;

“We were scattered masses; Awaz has welded us into an organization. Awaz has taught us that success could be won by concerted efforts. It is all about efforts of Awaz CDS and our youth that we have done what we had only dreamed of.”

People of Walwat were happy and confident that they had been successful in their efforts when the proposed effluent drainage system was being constructed. They realized that it was necessary to the happiness of man that she/he should be faithful to one's cause. They did not know that authorities in Pakistan are mainly economical with truths. They did not know that some day they will learn that lies, injustice and hypocrisy are part and parcel of political business. Effluent drainage system was constructed to augment nothing but their miseries.

They had been suffering from several diseases for last twenty years because of that industrial effluent. The grant (worth PKR 2500000) given by Sikandar Hayyat Bosan was gulped down by dishonest people. Cheap and substandard material was used on effluent drainage system, which caused incessant seepage to add to the miseries of poor people. Mohammad Zia-ur-Rehman, speaking to FM 103 reporter said:

“Even though intensive efforts have been made by community and Awaz CDS, cries of poor people of Walwat have not so far been heard by hearing-impaired government. It is high time for people to step forward for their rights. We shall help populace in their great effort for their rights. Million of rupees have been allocated for development funds, but nothing substantial has been done so far for the people who deserve. People are even denied of their basic right, the water, and the health.”

On Tuesday, 22nd February 2005 Vasaib Sojhla and Noor Development Organization staged a protest against the insincere efforts of concerned personals and departments concerning environmental problem of Walwat. Chief Executive Awaz CDS Mohammad Zia-ur-Rehman and other staff members participated on behalf of Awaz CDS. Protesters demanded exacting disciplinary action to be taken against the people who were answerable for their miserable existence. They, in the presence of print media and electronic media representatives, said that, on effluent drainage system, substandard and shoddy material had been used that had made no difference for them but made their worries greater than before. They also demanded that construction must be completed according to the schedule, better material must be used and open duct must be covered so that school going children might not fall in the channel of ill-smelling water. Our struggle is still continued and we believe that one day we will get rid of this situation.

Talk Doesn't Cook Rice

Dreams indeed are ambitions. For the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream and a dream can be the highest point of one's life but ensuing action is obligatory. It is true of the story of the brave women living in Shore Kot.

Shore Kot is situated in Union Council 94 Old Sher Shah Multan. This hamlet is peopled when some poor families who started living there in 1973. Almost three thousand people of the area are barely eking out their subsistence and had lowest amount of opportunities to raise their living standards. People of the area are not only deprived of basic human needs but are facing severe problems of disease, illiteracy and lack of proper sanitation.

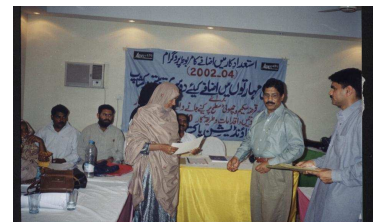
People, especially women and children, were facing the grave problems of pollution and fatal diseases when community mobilization campaign of AwazCDS was started in Shore Kot. Women used to sit together and dreamed of solving their problems. Nevertheless, their eager dreams knew no way to be materialized.

These brave women saw AwazCDS social organizers. Women who were leading their lives with their mobility and power to take independent decisions strictly curtailed, asked AwazCDS social organizers about the way out of their long-felt problems. AwazCDS social organizers gave them the lesson of union and struggle. It infused a new spirit in them. After some meetings AwazCDS social organizers, they managed to carve out a group of women. It was named *Sanjh Sahaili* (united friends) Development Organization on March 2003.

This organization filled them with a spirit of confidence and self-reliance. When it suggested itself to male members of the society, they too expressed their wish to make joint efforts for the solution of their problems like brave and confident women have done. So the scattered male members of the area made joint efforts and transformed themselves into organization in the same month. They named their organization *Sajjan Baili* (near friends).

Awaz CDS put the names of both of these self-motivated organizations down in its Integrated Community Development Program (ICDEP) to train them. They got Basic Skill Development Training (BSD) and Technical Skill Enhancement Program (TSEP) training to make more efficient efforts and crystallize their vision.

After having got these trainings, they started cherishing a pleasant dream for their community and organization. Soon their dream became a vision to transform *all* what was wide of the mark all around. Within shortest duration of time, they managed to develop a community center, 2 AwazCDS Home schools with 65 children getting education, separate offices of their organizations. Above all they had succeeded in solving their environmental problems through getting the authorities address their problems with their commitment and dedication. In this way people's passion and enthusiasm bore fruit in awakening the impatient spirit of change in people by action.



Great Occasions Make Great Men

We are living in a world where nothing is had for nothing. So who dares wins and who dares not loses. Daring people believe that every spark adds to the fire.

The same exemplary commitment and zeal was shown by Mr. Abid Ameen, President Awami Teraqati Akath who got to the bottom of a dangerous law and order situation at Youhana Abad, where Christian community live.

Youhana Abad is a small settlement surrounded by the Muslim population living in Gulzar Town in Union Council 54 Tariq Abad Multan. The Christian brotherhood was settled there in 1998. Population of this settlement is peopled with not quite nine hundred souls. People of the minority area of population are denied of the fundamental wants for leading livable life. The sole encouraging sign was the sense of unity and spirit of changing their future.

Abid Amin started taking interest in developmental activities of Awaz CDS's Integrated Capacity Building Program in neighborhood. He mobilized his fraternity to take initiatives in organized manner as a development organization do. They evolved a platform of struggle and named it *Awami Teraqati Akath (people's development unity)*. Apart from their development concerns, they tried to have fraternal relations with Muslim population.

Regrettably, due to infantile behavior of some hothead youths from both communities (Christians and Muslims) was going to result in an interfaith mistrust and blood feud. As it happened; some Christian boys were sitting with their Muslim friends in Gulzar Town. It has not yet been established that what actually led the situation towards a probable religious riot.

Mr. Abid Ameen was informed about the gravity of the issue. He reached at the spot where around eighty to ninety armed and angry hotheaded young men were showing their intent to burn the entire settlement Youhana Abad to ashes.

The daring soul ignored that the troublemakers were carrying weapons and that bigoted youth could kill him. He stood firm and tried his best to negotiate and sway the angry group to cool down. On his failure to do so, the situation prophesied an event of a serious disaster. He decided to call for emergency help from emergency police. So, he called rescue 15. In the meanwhile, the boys of Gulzar Town realized that police was about to come, so they fled away...

It is most unfortunate that the police considered that call from Abid Ameen to be a prank and arrested him without praising his efforts to cope with the feud. The genuine, heroic and courageous Abid Ameen mustered up courage to put across the seriousness of the issue in front of Police Officers.

In this manner the confidence of the local VDC of Awaz CDS was restored but also it raised the level of conviction from both sides (any foundation member and citizen) that if some one can take the stand for the right and can put one self as an instance eventually the result will be peace.

One Twig Will Not Sweep

To achieve things of our dreams we must live as though we were never going to die. It is nearly fact that everything that is great has been done by youth. Only those who can do common things of life in an uncommon way can command their world. Same is the story of valiant people of Raja Pur.

Raja Pur is a small village situated in Union Council 94, Old Sher Shah Multan. About one thousand people of this village are deprived of the basic needs of life. Some young people of Raja Pur, who were cherishing an irrepressible wish for to alleviate their miseries, came to know that Awaz CDS had organized the people of Shore Kot, which was four to five kilometers away from Raja Pur.

Social Organizers from Awaz CDS visited the village and tried to mobilize that community as people of this village requested Awaz CDS to organize them. They found that some people were nursing an uncontrollable desire to change their social life. They knew all of their problems and wanted to get basic facilities of living. Nevertheless, the only thing they need was road and direction. They were to know the resources allocated for their overall betterment.

In this context, Awaz CDS started advocacy campaign in that community to enhance their capacity and show them right direction and road ahead. The natives realized they cannot solve their problems unless they are united. Therefore the males organized themselves under the banner of *Roshan Zameer* (enlightened conscience) *Organization* and women organized themselves in the sign of *Sada Bhar* (unfading) Organization. These organizations were established in September 2002.

Almost immediately, member from *Roshan Zameer Organization* started making concerted efforts to bring electricity in their community. They started meeting with councilors and *Nazim*. They also went to WAPDA office and made the concerned officer realize their basic problem. For the solution of their dire need, they went to see Member National Assembly (MNA) of their constituency. They informed him about the entire situation of locality. They requested him for the supply of electricity in their community so that their principal predicament must be addressed.

They got success and every sincere effort gets. MNA showed his concern in this regard and approved budget for electricity. As an outcome of their effort, dark Raja Pur was lighted up. After having seen the fruit of their successful efforts they realize,

“Life is a short day; but it is working day. Activity tires, but inactivity cannot lead to good”.

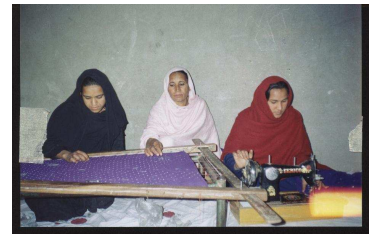
Only the Weakest Goes to the Wall

If there is no struggle there is no progress. Nevertheless, one discovers the secret that after climbing a great hill, there are many more hills to climb; not for wetting but whetting one's nerves. Let's go through the matching account of the triumphant valor of women from Chah Munshi Wala.

Chah Munshi Wala, an urban area, is a small town in Union Council 54 Terf-e-Mubark Doem Multan. One of the women of that area approached Awaz CDS to make their problems known. It was encouraging sign that the people were not uncommunicative to talk and find way for the solution of their problems. Women of the area responded warmly and shared their problems with Awaz social organizers when she visited. They told them that they were facing many problems and they were denied of basic amenities they should have.

Unavailability of proper sanitary system has been a main source of different fatal diseases in their community. The community was experiencing severe environmental problems as the atmosphere of the town had become impure with disease carrying germs due to many reasons.

Women of this community told the social organizers that they had great desire to change their living standard through determined efforts. However, they were unable to find the way to achieve their desired goals. On the demand of women, Awaz CDS helped them in establishing a VDC for women. They named it *Shaheen-e-Niswan (brave women)* Development Organization in 2003 in Chah Munshi Wala. After having organized themselves, they got lucrative trainings (BSD & TSEP) from Awaz CDS. Consequently, women of this community were enabled to employ their skills to solve their problems. These self-motivated women decided that they would depend on anyone and would strive for betterment themselves. For economic development of women, they saved 8000 PKR to launch a skill center. In this context Awaz CDS provided them Rs. 9,500 credits on their demand for skill Center. In the Skill Center in Chah Munshi Wala, more than twenty girls are learning new skills of embroidery, dress designing and stitching.



On the other hand, Amiran Bibi president of local VDC took a bold step and became an exemplary figure for other women of the area when she went to meet the Nazim of the area and asked him to take initiatives for the developmental work in their hamlet. She also inquired about the developmental budget from Nazim to be assured that it would be utilized for the general betterment of the common man of that neglected area. Furthermore, she informed him about the poor drainage system of their area and brought the other troubles of her community in his notice.

The Nazim's reaction was not encouraging. He flared up and condemned Awaz CDS for making the common man rude enough to interfere with their affairs. He condemned Amiran Mai attitude and criticized the policies of Awaz CDS as well. However, he compelled to take up their issue since he did not want to loose his voters.

Anyhow it is pleasing that the awareness has raised in common man, especially in women and they have become emancipated and aware of their rights. It was even more encouraging as the true worth of race is measured by the exemplary character of its womenfolk.

Quest for Excellence

Whoever fittingly considers the order of things may plainly see the whole race of woman-kind is by nature, custom, and the laws, made subject to man, to be governed according to his discretion: therefore it is the man-assigned duty of every woman who desires to have ease, comfort, and repose, with those men to whom she belongs, to be humble, patient, and obedient, as well as chaste. In many cases, a woman has proved to be more courageous than man. Fatima Bibi's story is sufficient to highlight this truth.

Fatima Bibi lives in Qasim Bela that is six km away from Multan. Nearly forty thousand people of this rural area had been experiencing curtailed existence as they were exposed to several problems like; poverty, poor health and lack of proper educational system.

However, Fatima Bibi met social organizers from Awaz CDS. She heard about the purpose and objective of Awaz CDS was building capacity of self-motivated people. She approached social organizer of Awaz CDS. She told her that their girls were not allowed to get education, and women of that community do not have basic health care facilities. She told that some women of that community were determined to work for their rights, to raise their living standards but fixed values, mores, and dogmatic approach of some of the elder members of their society was one of the biggest hurdles in the way of solving their problems.

Awaz CDS started mobilizing the women of this area. Consequently, Alhumdulila Development Organization (a VDS for females) was established on the demand of the local females of the community. Women responded Awaz CDS with all their heart unlike men. The organization took part in its Basic Skill Development Training (BSD). One of the girls from community wrote a letter to Chief Executive Awaz CDS and requested that they must be supported in getting education. As a result, Awaz CDS opened three Awaz Home Schools where 95 child are getting primary education. These schools are running with the management of Alhumdulila Development Organization.

After the short period of six months, local VDC for females started Skill Center in their locality. Number of girls who took admission in the center increased to twenty. A Mother Committee was established in the center, which regularly conducts meetings.

The area of that skill center has also been expanded from one to two rooms. Initially started with three sewing machines, they have twenty sewing machines now. According to their planning they have introduced their art and skills in different cities of Pakistan which has in turn helped them to improve their economical conditions and enhanced their skills as well.

Women's perseverance and determination offers a great instance not only for other women of their locality but also for the male members of the society.

Getting Rid of Fetters

Everyone finds it inconvenient to be poor but being poor and woman is double nuisance, at least in Pakistan. It is not easy for people to rise out of obscurity when they have to face straitened circumstances at home. But there are certain brave souls; Naseem Bibi is one of them, who manage to throw off fetters of poverty.

Twenty years old Naseem Bibi lives in hamlet Langrial, Multan. Straitjacketed by poverty, she was forced to get married when she was only twelve. Her husband spent all his time in gambling and drinking. In his heavy times, Naseem Bibi was the only target of his wrath and bad temper.



In such circumstantial misery, Naseem bibi had to depend on her parents for economical help. Soon she started working as a Traditional Birth Attendant with her mother who had been doing this for 25 years. She wanted to meet a qualified lady doctor and Lady Health Visitor to discuss some problems which she faced in her work but she had no opportunity to do that.

Naseem Bibi deemed herself lucky when she came to know that Awaz CDS had established Awaz Mother and Child Health Care Center in her settlement. This center was providing beneficial information and medical assistance to the women of that area. Naseem Bibi accessed that center and met social worker of Aawaz CDS. She arranged her meeting with lady doctor and LHV which helped her to achieve excellence in her profession by giving her opportunity to get 10 Days TBAs' training arranged by Awaz CDS on April 2003.

With her meticulousness and dedication, she was able to work more confidently as she was able to get a hold of as much as necessary knowledge about her work. She became able to earn sufficient amount for living and her son is also getting education in class two.

Poverty has a home nowhere but in heart of coward—like a quiet second skin. It may be the only place where it is worn with unconscious dignity.

A Step Towards Brighter Sight of Light

Though Pakistan is trailing far behind in female literacy rate, our outworn customs are active to make the situation worse. To sanctimonious populace education is plague for girls. Thousands of girls, who are denied of education, could not break the scheme of silence. Abida was not one of them.

Abida lives in Arjawain Shreif Multan. She was forcefully denied, by her parents, to get primary education, as it was against the norms and traditions of her family that they did not allow any women to go outside home with or without any purpose.

Abida was eager to go to school from her very childhood but she could not manage to realize her dream. She got information from her friends that Awaz CDS was running a Home School in surrounding area. She spoke to the teacher of that school and showed her desire and passion for studies. She also mentioned that her parents were insisting on marriage but she wanted to get education.

The teacher along with the female members of Vaseb Sanwar Development Organization (local VDC) met with Abida's parents and made them realize the importance of education. They told them about Awaz Home School. They not only resumed to generate the passion of studies in Abida's mind but also realized the significance of studies to her mother.

Abida, who is student of class 4th in Awaz Home School, is nursing a desire to become teacher in future. She said;



“Thanks to Awaz CDS and females members of local VDC, who helped me when I was worried about education. My teacher is providing me education whole-heartedly and her attitude with me and other fellows is very caring and loving”.

Future Favors the Brave

Awaz Mother and Child Health Care Center was established in September 2002 in Nundha Bagh Qasim Bela Multan to provide basic health facility and health education to the poor and deserving people of that community.

Zerina Bibi was down in the dumps, as she was facing terrible health problems. Opportunely, she got linked with AMCHC when she came to get checked up. She told the LHV about her broken health. She told her that doctors have advised her to take the diet which she could not afford to eat due to extreme poverty. So her real disease was poverty as she could only arrange to eat meager bread.



The center provided proper guidance in regard of Zerina's bad health. The social organizer from Awaz CDS motivated her to face the challenges of times boldly. In short, she not only got herself treated from that center but also got a job there. Now Zerina is earning to help her family and improving her health day by day because of AMCHC. She has also managed to arrange marriage of her young girl.

Now Zerina Bibi is very pleased and living with her family happily. She said,

“Now I am able to live happily, and have successfully arranged daughter’s marriage with the saving of my income. It is all about the proper guidance of LHV and my friends from AwazCDS”.

A Ray of Hope

Shabana, inhabitant of a very underprivileged hamlet Shor Kot in Multan, belonged to one of the most dispossessed families. Her father was a black-smith by occupation and her mother and her elder sister worked as maid-servants to make both ends meet. After doing matriculation, Shabana wanted to teach and earn some money in order to add to her family income but she had to face dismal situation everywhere. She felt humiliation while going to other homes and washing their pots and cloths and facing the leering lechers.

At the same time, newly organized Kainat (*universe*) Development Organization for females (local VDC) by Awaz CDS was striving to open a school for girls in their community.

Shabana, who was member of Kainat Development Organization, came to know about that school she decided that she would contact the president of the organization. She met the female members of local VDC and social organizer of Awaz CDS. She offered her services for being teacher in Awaz Home School and she was appointed.

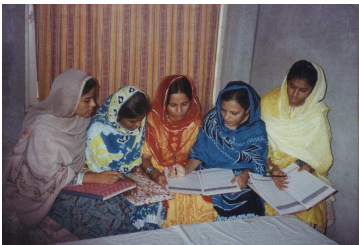
So her wishes came true when she got the job of her choice. At the present, she is member of local female VDC as a General Secretary. She has attended two training workshops, Basic Skill Development Training by Awaz CDS and Training Workshop for Community Mobilization by Church World Service. At the same time, she has continued her education.

Tomorrow Would Another Day;

Hope is essential in every condition. The gloom of poverty, sickness, of confinement would, without this comfort, be insufferable. One can melt away the clouds of despair with hope and struggle. Struggle materializes the dream of hope. Without struggle hope is nothing but daydreaming. This is what Tahira's story makes obvious.

Tahira was brought into life in an extremely poor family. Her father died in her childhood while her mother was, up to that time, deaf and dumb. She had two young brothers. Tahira's miseries did not end here. She was hit by a severe infectious viral disease that inflamed the brainstem and spinal cord and led to partial paralysis and muscular wasting (Poliomyelitis).

Now she could not even walk. Her mother, by some means, managed to provide her basic education. On seeing her family sinking in the cruel marsh of poverty, she started nursing a strong desire to become a teacher to earn so that she may earn something for setting the things aright.



She showed her interest for being a teacher in newly opened Awaz Home School. She contacted local VDC Vaseb Sanwar Developmental Organization; got training and was finally selected as a teacher. At that time she was teaching in a private school. It was really difficult for her to fulfill her needs within the short income earned from that institution.

She taught conscientiously and after one year she was earning as much that she felt it appropriate to quit her private school job so that she may continue her job with full concentration.

At this time Tahira is teaching 35 young of her hamlet and has gradually improved her economical and social standard. Now she looks quite satisfied. With her saving, she had been getting treatment of her disease. She still hopes and struggles for better tomorrow.

They Know Enough Who Know They Should Learn

Sixteen years old Tahira, is the eldest of the five sisters. She lives in hamlet Shore Kot Qasim Bela Multan. She had earnest desire to get education but as they belonged to Syed family where it was obligatory on all women to wear veil. To add to her miseries, she was advised to stay at home and observe *Perdah* in her teen-age.

The entire situation made her hopeless, she fell prey to a disease diagnosed as valvular incompetence by the doctor. It made her sadder than ever before. Due to the ailment, her parents started treating her kindheartedly. Once she got chance to disclose her intimate feelings, which was brought up with her, of going to school. But her parents thought that it was too late. The other problem was that there was no school nearby her village. This was another setback to her eager self. She tried to persuade her parents to get her younger sisters admitted in school. But her efforts did not come to fruitarians.

In such unpromising circumstances, a ray of hope appeared for Tahira when she came to know that a local organization has set up *Awaz Home School* where everyone could get education without the barrier of age.

Her dream of getting education was going to be materialized. Her joy knew no bounds. She contacted female members of local VDC and informed them about her passion to get education. Social organizer of *Awaz CDS* and local VDC members convinced her parents to send Tahira and her sisters to *Awaz Home School*. All the sisters got admission in school and worked hard. They have successfully passed class one and have been promoted to class two. They are hopeful to continue their studies in future.



Architects of Fate

Our existence is our garden for which our wills are gardeners. We are the originators of our own designs, the projectors of our own schemes and creators of the events that lead to our destination. This is the message that following story of self-motivated people points up. Awaz CDS selected Sultan Pur Hammer in UC 94 for its mobilization campaign. This settlement is peopled with three thousand souls; who are Khokher by caste. They were united and eager to raise their living standards. People of the area were eager to take developmental initiatives so they internalized the development models of AwazCDS to materialize them in their own settlements. They were also trying to minimize the minor conflicts among the people.

Self-motivated women of the area are very serious for developmental activities and working with their men for their collective betterment. They were dreaming for skill center in their area so they might be able to utilizing their art and skills and earn money for their living. Women were worried about the education of their wards. For this reason AwazCDS has established a Home School in that pastoral settlement where boy and girls of every age are getting education.



Both VDCs, of women and men, have saved 33,000 PKR and they are trying to save more money little by little. These VDCs are giving loans to the deserving people from this saving and these people are raising their living standards after starting small scale business. Some of the people have enhanced their indigenous skills and managed to get market access.

The most encouraging thing has happened that inhabitants of a nearby settlement Shahpur noticed the ever raising level of their neighboring hamlet's economical and social lives. They contacted Awaz CDS to come to their hamlet and infuse the similar spirit.

It must be noted that the motivational force of collective development and determination to change their fate has infused a fresh spirit of development in the people. The main trait that proved to be helpful for these people in their development is their being not afraid of growing slowly but being afraid of standing still.

Putting the Last First

Socioeconomic conditions in almost all the thirteen districts of Southern Punjab are dismal if we compare it with other areas of Punjab. Bottom low literacy rate coupled with conservatism of a rigid tribal culture make this region a haven for the perpetrators of human rights violations. In such a scenario women are worst affectees of who have to bear the brunt of the prevailing values. Talking women empowerment looks a wild goose chase in such environ.

Nevertheless AwazCDS has been making every effort to promote the process of women empowerment.

A dweller of a slum in Multan Tasneem Zehra, with five children, is a widow since 1996 when her husband died prematurely. Having complete faith in her abilities she chose the difficult way of earning a decent living for herself and her children and did not look for remarrying. During all these years she turned out to be a role model for women of the area.

In 200 when local bodies' elections were announced, some of her friends suggested her to contest for local government seat. But she knew nothing about campaigning for elections and the technical intricacies therein. In the mean time she came into contact with AwazCDS's field staffs that were already there to encourage women candidates as a part of SAP-PK's democracy and human rights education programme which was being implemented by AwazCDS in district Multan as focal point.

Tasneem along with other women candidates went through a number of training on voting, electioneering, and on scope of local governments' authority for development of their constituencies.

'I felt so confident and informed that I never encountered extra ordinary handicaps during all my campaign' says Tasneem with assurance glowing in her eyes. Eventually she won the seat with considerable margin of votes in her favor. 'In the local government of Multan we have created a pressure group of like minded women councilors so that we could effectively voice for women rights. AwazCDS has played a great role in giving me this understanding' says Tasneem

God Help Only Those...

Basti Shorkot is located at approximately 10 kilometers from Multan. The settlement is devoid of any civic amenities of potable water supply, sanitation, education and healthcare facility. And to add insult to injury a large sewer which carries industrial waste passes through this settlement. This even aggravates the already deplorable state of health and hygiene in the area. This situation has existed since long but the worst part of the whole affair was that the inhabitants had become reconciled to it and were waiting for government's attention, which nowhere around for many years.

When AwazCDS started its intervention in this area, it had to work really hard in helping the inhabitants to realize that nobody was going to act for them if they themselves remained inactive. As a part of its ICBP, AwazCDS helped the community in carving out a platform for the community. As AwazCDS believes in women empowerment, it motivated the community women to join forces under the flag of *Saanjh Saheli Taraqati Tanzeem* (Evening Friends Development Organization) for their own betterment.

This organization has 8 women on its Executive Body and 30 women on its General body. After going through a series of development training, the organization has started working for local problems. Among the few worth mentioning activities are

a) a monthly health camp for women and children where they are not only given medical checkups but medicines as well

b) a home school called AwazCDS Home School for children of the area, c) a small scale saving and credit initiative and etc.

Apart from these service delivery activities the organization has started voicing at local government level for the enhanced health and education facilities. This in combination with advocacy for human rights has made this organization a significant civil society organ of the area.

'The reason why we have come out is the fact that has been reminded to by AwazCDS that if we don't think for ourselves nobody will do it for us' says the president of this organization.

Ensuring Education for All

Basti Sher Shah is a settlement of around four thousand inhabitants. It is situated at a distance of 18 kilometers away from Multan. The dwellers of settlement are mainly laborers and farmers who live in abject poverty. Due to poverty and illiteracy the area is home to every kind of conservative and obscurantist traditions which further worsen the socioeconomic conditions of this settlement.

The situation in education is further aggravated by dysfunctional educational facilities provided by government. The area has a couple of private schools but for most of the population it is impossible to meet the expenses of sending their children to a private school.

AwazCDS was already working in this area so the whole community suggested that we want to get our children at least literate if not properly educated. A group people suggested that they are interested in running a low fee school if AwazCDS can provide some technical and financial support. Eventually the first home school called AwazCDS home school started wherein AwazCDS provided notebooks, syllabus and basic furniture to run the school. AwazCDS Also arranged for training of teacher in modern teaching methodologies. This initiative went successful as demand from neighboring settlements also kept coming.

In less than four years AwazCDS went ahead with 27 such home schools which are being run in partnership with local communities and their organizations. In these home schools children are given primary education in three years which means every class takes seven months to pass out instead of twelve months. Over 945 students, mostly female, are getting education in these schools which was otherwise impossible.

During this period Awaz Home School teachers and teachers of some surrounding private schools were given training on modern teaching methods like class management, attitudinal building of students, communication skills and multi subject teaching etc. In all more than 145 teachers are trained in this field unit area. Since they are skilled and trained therefore they are getting much better salaries as compared to the untrained ones.

Vocation for Development

Basti Shor Kot is situated 10 kilometers away from Multan. It is a settlement of laborers and farmers who live in abject poverty. Due to poverty and illiteracy the area is home to every kind of conservative and obscurantist traditions, which further worsen the socioeconomic conditions of this settlement. Government facilities in education and primary healthcare sector are dysfunctional if any.

When AwazCDS initiated its intervention in the area situation on the whole was quite discouraging for any kind of social change. However after months of mobilization campaign by AwazCDS's field team, a group of women shown some interest? But all of them were quite raw for any kind of development work. The group was sent for a series of training at AwazCDS as they eventually ended up forming an organization of their own called Alhamdulillah Development Organization. During all their effort they faced a cold shoulder from their men in family and relations, but these committed women remained undeterred.

As the area reflected abject poverty the members of organizations decided to take an initiative which would eventually supplement the family incomes in the area. With the technical and financial support from AwazCDS they started with a modest AwazCDS vocational centre for women, in which the students were to learn garment sewing, and embroidery. In the early months of centre only 10 females could be attracted. However the group women kept counseling and informing the mothers in favor of sending their daughters to learn vocation. This proved fruitful and soon the number of students got doubled and the organization had to get another room and few more sewing and knitting machines. Today the centre has more than 20 machines for learning and serious garment sewing. The clothes stitched at the centre are marketed in Multan.

'I am now able enough to supplement the income of my family and it helps us materializing our development dream as we no more fear that our children might have to leave their education in the middle' says a graduate of the centre Sidique Khaton who is a mother of four children as well.

Making Life Healthier & Happier

Basti Qasim Bela is a settlement of around forty thousand inhabitants. It is situated at a distance of 8 kilometers away from Multan. The dwellers of settlement are mainly laborers and farmers who live in abject poverty. Due to poverty and illiteracy the area is home to every kind of conservative and obscurantist traditions which further worsen the socioeconomic conditions of this settlement. The worst is the situation in terms of the health seeking behavior of the inhabitants. This situation in healthcare is further aggravated by dysfunctional healthcare facilities provided by government.

All this contributes to ever rising mothers' mortality rates, and widespread morbidity in the area. AwazCDS initially held monthly health camps, but this was not the answer to this problem as it hardly helped in addressing problems related to pregnancy and safe motherhood. Then AwazCDS in consultation with the community members decided to send a proposal to various donors for establishing an MCH centre. Fortunately the whole effort got a green signal from Trust for Voluntary Organizations (TVO) who funded this AwazCDS Mother and Child Healthcare Centre (AMCHC).

The AMCHC project is an integrated effort which not aims at providing healthcare facilities but health education through counseling seminars as well. The centre has developed 25 social health workers who volunteer AwazCDS in running health education campaign. Moreover in order to build the capacities of conventional birth attendants, 25 such birth attendants were provided training on safe motherhood techniques. In order to supplement its service delivery effort AwazCDS has created health committees and mothers club on health and hygiene, which have catalyzed the health seeking behavior in the community.

This integrated healthcare project has become so successful in the community that one can only imagine its depth by following statement from a member of mothers club.

'In our routine chit chat we now need not indulge in gossips, we have got this consciousness that we must try and learn ourselves to make our lives healthier and happier' says Shakeela who is a member of AwazCDS mothers club on health and hygiene.

Note: These case studies will be published in both Urdu and English and will be disseminated in all the stakeholders