

The State of Pakistan's Children 2007 Launched

“Don't Turn Children Into Suicide Bombers”

The latest and one of the gravest violations of child rights being perpetrated against children is the use of children in terrorist acts. The age of suicide bombers is getting younger while the number is growing. The young man allegedly held for attacking Ms Benazir Bhutto has been declared a juvenile. How worse can it get? Meanwhile, the infant mortality stands at 78 per 1,000 live births, higher than India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka and according to UNICEF, Pakistan ranks 183 out of 220 countries in terms of infant mortality.

Speaking at the launching of the SPARC flagship publication *The State of Pakistan's Children 2007*, (SOPC) on July 23 in Islamabad, Executive Director Mr Qindeel Shujaat said “half of the country's population is children but there is no separate ministry for them. There is only a commission which actually is an advisory body, which is not even a commission in true sense. Pakistan has spent a huge amount of money on defense in last so many years and still Pakistan is not a safe and secure state. Had this investment been made on education and welfare of the State, Pakistan would have been a different country today.”

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Cabinet Panel Suggests Drastic Changes In FCR

A cabinet committee has recommended drastic changes in the Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR), including allowing the right of appeal against actions of political agents or district coordination officers in some tribal regions, a media report on October 13 said in Islamabad. A meeting of the committee, presided over by Law Minister finalized its recommendations for submission to the prime minister.

The FCR, in force in seven federally administered tribal agencies and six frontier regions, basically deals with procedure for settling inter-tribal matters. Instead of its abolition as was

hinted by the prime minister in his first speech in the National Assembly, the government would amend some draconian provisions of the FCR, a legal expert observed.

The British Raj had devised the FCR as an instrument of subjugating and disciplining the Pakhtoons to establish its writ in tribal areas. While drafting the law, the British relied on some tribal customs and traditions, but distorted them to suit their plan of securing convictions at will. The proposed amendments will require political agent

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PHC Rejects Bail In Jihadi Training Case

The Peshawar High Court (PHC) dismissed bail petition of a man from Swat district who was charged for sending three children from the district to a seminary in Bajaur Agency for Jihadi training against the will of their parents, according to a media report on August 12.

Kabal Police Station lodged a First Information Report (FIR), against him under Section 365 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).

The parents stated that the petitioner called their children at his tailoring shop and they did not return homes after that. The tailor sent the children to his friend's seminary in Bajaur Agency against the will of their parents.

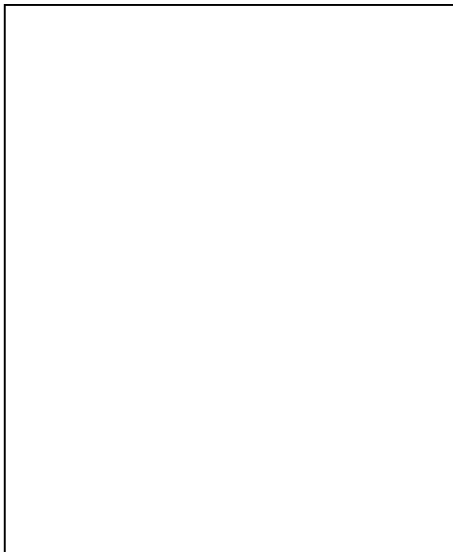
Toxic Milk Kills Four Babies, 53,000 Hospitalized

China's tainted milk scandal spiraled into uncharted territory on September 20 with the government announcing that up to 53,000 children were taken to hospitals after drinking milk thought to have been contaminated by the industrial chemical melamine. Four infants have died in the scandal, which prompted countries to ban or limit Chinese dairy imports. Most had "basically recovered" after developing kidney stones, the main symptom of drinking the tainted milk, but 12,892 of them remained in hospital, a health ministry official said.

Melamine, normally used in making plastics, was first found in infant milk formula in Chinese markets but has since been detected in a range of products with dairy ingredients both in China and abroad. The Centre for Food Safety, a Hong Kong government body, said it had found melamine in a Nestle Dairy Farm pure milk sample from northeastern China. Nestle said it was "confident" its products in China were safe and that none had been adulterated with melamine. ☞

A PHC single bench heard the bail petition of the accused. His lawyer submitted before the court that the government has not extended Section 11 (v) of Anti Terrorism Act (ATA) to the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) and thus the petitioner is entitled to be released on bail.

The respondent lawyer, however, told the court that the accused had committed an 'inhuman' act and has also confessed of sending the children for Jihadi training. On this the judge dismissed the petition. ☞



13 –Year- Old Boy Needs Immediate Medical Help

Dilbar Magsi, 13, of Sikandarabad Hari Camp, Kotri lost his hand while working in a factory about four months back.

The authorities in the factory took him to Civil Hospital Hyderabad and left him there without making any arrangement for his treatment. SPARC and CRC Hyderabad took up the case and got the boy admitted to the Bone Care Hospital (Private) Hyderabad. He remained there for about 15 days and was later ask to leave the hospital. The poor boy's hand has been amputated. He needs a prosthetic limb which he cannot afford without some help. His future has been destroyed and the factory did not take any responsibility to compensate the child laborer. ☞

Church: Child Abuse Scandal Flares

The scandal over child sex abuse by Catholic priests flared again on July 16 as Pope Benedict XVI prepared to take center stage at the world's biggest Christian festival in Sydney.

While more than 200,000 young pilgrims attended beach concerts, barbecues and religious classes, the pope and the head of the Australian church, faced the parents of two victims of abuse.

The pilgrims were in Sydney for World Youth Day celebration. But the scandal over sex abuse by clergymen partly overshadowed the festival, despite pope's pledge to apologize to victims as he did in the United States in April. ☞

Amendment In FCR

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or the DCO, as the case may be, to appoint a council of elders in civil matters with the consent of the parties.

The safeguards provided under Article 10 of the Constitution about arrests and detention will be incorporated into the law by proposing to produce an arrested accused before the authorities concerned within 24 hours.

Referring to the provision of collective responsibility, sources said no woman or child under 16 years of age or a person above 65 years would be arrested. Under the FCR, family members are jailed for the crimes committed by the head of the family, brother or any other blood relative.

SPARC's Role

SPARC has been in the forefront for the repeal of the FCR for the past many years mainly because of the Collective Responsibility Clause under which women and children as young as months old were given jail terms for crimes committed by their male adults. Under the FCR the authorities have the right to raze houses of alleged criminals and their relatives as punishment. ☞

HIV Children Turned Away From Schools In UK

Children with AIDS-related HIV are being turned away and excluded from primary and secondary schools throughout the UK in contravention of anti-discrimination laws. An investigation by the National Aids Trust has uncovered six cases of discrimination against children as young as four after their HIV status was disclosed or discovered. Head teachers have told parents of affected children that other teachers, parents and even dinner ladies would need to be told of their confidential medical status. In one 'shocking' example, a child who did not know about her condition was made aware of it by a teacher. She was later bullied and had to leave the school.

The National Aids Trust began investigating after social workers in Hertfordshire and Lancashire reported cases where parents looking for new schools were told their children were not welcome after they revealed the diagnosis. Under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 it is illegal to discriminate against anyone with HIV. The charity has repeatedly asked for specific guidance on HIV for teachers from the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

Largest Number Of Child Laborers In India

Center of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) president said in New Delhi that India has the largest number of child laborers in the world with about "50 million children having no other choice but to work whatever is available to them at a paltry wage".

Speaking at a workshop on *Media and Child Labor* on September 10 he said, "unfortunately in India, the definition of poverty line takes into account only the nutritional standard or daily consumption level. It does not provide for a living standard that would ensure that children go to school regularly."

He said over 20 years ago, India passed a law to prohibit child labor in hazardous industries but practical experience shows that child labor in hazardous industries has "increased after adoption of the law".

"Urge to survive is much more powerful than the threat of dangerous working conditions," he pointed out and said "adequate media coverage on the issue will contribute a great deal in creating public pressure on both Central and state governments to take concrete measures to tackle it in the right earnest."

Five Deported Boys Handed Over To Child Bureau

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on September 3 handed over five boys to the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau in Gujranwala who were deported by the Turkish government along with other deportees on September 2, directing it to give the custody of these boys to their heirs after completing legal formalities. The boys were between the ages of 13 and 17.

FIA Assistant Director said these boys had been sent to Turkey by human agents after extorting heavy amount from their parents about a month ago. The boys belonged to Gujrat and Sialkot.

Where 'Saying No' Costs Girl Her Life

A 17-year-old girl was shot dead by her father in the presence of police after a senior civil judge decreed dissolution of marriage on her plea on September 3 in Sahiwal. The girl had been staying at the Darul Aman for the last two months on the court order.

S, was hardly nine when her parents married her off to a man of 45, in 2001. Although the Nikah was solemnized, her parents did not send the girl with her husband as she was minor. The girl at the age of 16 refused to accept her husband while her family forced her to go with her husband. She argued that she was a minor when her Nikah was held and her consent was not taken. The girl's father, husband and two others were taken into custody but no case had been registered.

Rights Bodies Urged To Help Find Missing Student

Mohammad Anwar Baloch of Turbat has appealed to human rights organizations to raise voice against detention of his brother Iqbal Baloch for more than 15 months.

Addressing a news conference along with members of his family at the press club in Quetta on July 29, Mr Baloch claimed that Frontier Corps personnel arrested Iqbal, a student, and his friends on March 14 last year.

He said that Iqbal's friends were freed on Feb 17 this year in Quetta, but his brother was still under detention.

He said a petition was filed in the Balochistan High Court but although several dates were fixed, the detainee was neither produced nor the defendants appeared before the court.

Baby Born To Surrogate Indian Mother In Legal Limbo

The future of a 12-day-old baby girl born to an Indian surrogate mother in India hung in legal limbo on August 6, after the Japanese couple who planned to take her home divorced.

Her biological father split from his wife after the fertilization process, and his former spouse no longer wants the baby. In the absence of a surrogacy law, the child who is an Indian citizen will have to be adopted by her Japanese father.

"There is a legal complication as the father is alone and Indian adoption law says a single male can't adopt a girl," the doctor who is looking after the baby, said.

The baby cannot leave the country without a passport and is being looked after by her paternal grandmother and an Indian friend of the father in Jaipur.

"With India emerging as a destination for surrogate pregnancies, a law (to regulate surrogacy) will have to be brought into effect," a leading lawyer said. Critics call the practice "wombs for rent", but surrogacy has emerged as a booming business in India.

India Probes UN Sex Charges Against Peacekeepers

The Indian army said on August 13 that it was investigating United Nations allegations that its troops had engaged in sexual abuse while on peacekeeping duties in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

A UN statement said a probe had "revealed prima facie evidence" that the soldiers may have engaged in sexual exploitation and abuse. One anonymous UN official said the case involved abuse of young girls and boys by at least 100 Indian peacekeepers over several years.

India pledged that the allegations would "be promptly and thoroughly investigated and, if proven, strict and exemplary action would be taken," the earlier UN statement said. UN Chief Ban Ki-moon said he was "deeply troubled" by the allegations. Local sources in the DRC said that the probe focused on an alleged child prostitution ring in Masisi, northwest of North Kivu province's capital, Goma.

Child Labor Used To Sell BBC Magazines

The BBC is profiting from child labor in India where boys as young as eight are being forced by gangs to sell *Top Gear* and *Good Homes* magazines, for as little as 12 pence a day. According to campaigners, the children, who are sold by their families for about £12.50, suffer abuse at the hands of gangsters who control the roadside pitches where they hawk magazines.

In August, The Sunday Times interviewed young boys selling BBC magazines at road junctions throughout Delhi. They had left their farming families in Bihar after drought had ruined their crops, and were now working 12-hours a day.

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Asia's Growing Wealth Gap Puts Children At Risk

The fast-growing Indian economy needed "across-the-board" improvements in healthcare, gender equality and child protection. Particularly troubling was that South Asia spent so little - with only 1.1% of gross domestic product allocated - on health, according to a UNICEF Report *State of Asia Pacific's Children 2008* released in Bangkok on August 5.

"It is not just bigger health budgets. We could make a big difference by focusing on the three or four states in north India where most of these children die. Governments need to tackle female discrimination in the region too. Half the child deaths recorded in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan occurred in the first month of the baby's life," said regional director for Unicef.

With half the world's children living in the region, Unicef said it was imperative for governments to act if the 2015 global goal of reducing under-five mortality by two-thirds of 1990 levels was to be met. "India could learn from China's experience in two big ways," he said. "One is getting health services out to the villages ... the other is female education. Educated women making educated choices has a big impact on the survival of their children."

Pakistan Lacks Proper System Of Child Labor

Pakistan still lacks an adequate national system of child labor statistics which could provide reliable quantitative information on the number of working children. The children's geographical and sectoral/occupational distribution, age, sex and other relevant characteristics are also not available, according to a media report released on July 13.

Statistics on various socioeconomic characteristics, especially those related to the development of the child into a responsible adult, such as education status and achievements, the time allocated to various non-school activities, the income or expenditure level of the household, and important aspects of participation by children in economic activities and its impact, should also be generated to permit the analysis of the economic and social situation of particular groups of working children.

The Population Census which the government plans to hold in October this year will provide an opportunity to gather information on child labor. Gathering of essential data would help design intervention policies specifically aimed at combating child labor, and at monitoring and evaluating progress in the implementation of action programs.

The ILO, in a new report, has called for national statistical program on child labor in all its member states including Pakistan. Indicators relating to nature of work, circumstances and harm therefore should be core elements of a national statistical program on child labor, the ILO recommends. The statistical program should also provide baseline information on the reference child population engaged in what Convention No. 138 terms 'work or employment', of which child labor is a subset. National statistical programs should also collect detailed information on working hours as an important proxy for the potential harmfulness of work.☞

35 Bonded Laborers Rescued

At least 35 bonded laborers were rescued on the directive of the district and sessions judge Umerkot on August 20.

Police raided a brick kiln situated at Chhor-Umerkot road and recovered 35 laborers who were detained in a private prison and were doing forced labor.

The released bonded laborers included 11 children and 10 females, who were produced in the court and after hearing them the court set them free.

The freed laborers said that their nine families were detained at the brick kiln for the last two years and during this period they were neither provided with medical treatment nor proper food, while their movement was also restricted.☞

"Let Us Listen To The Plight Of Child Laborers"

Azeem Iqbal, a known calligrapher and artist from the Rawalpindi Arts Council, worked out a palette of colors, sketches and panels to amuse the children engaged in rag picking and other labor activities to make the innocent souls forget their anxieties and enjoy the artwork on August 12 in Islamabad.

Despite spending millions of dollars to highlight the menace of Child Labor, the issue is yet to be addressed and the government needs to pay more heed to the woes and miseries of the children involved in rag picking and other related activities. The innocent scavengers are no ordinary kids but young citizens of the country who are fighting against all odds but still wait their basic rights enshrined in our constitution and laws.☞

Child Labor Becoming A Problem In Saudi Arabia

Child labor is becoming a problem in Saudi Arabia, where nearly 1.54 percent of the child population works, a study said. The study, first of its kind in the Kingdom, put the Eastern Province on top of the list at 2.3 percent followed by Makkah, Madinah, Asir and Riyadh. Some 2,000 Saudi children included in the study, published in September in Riyadh.

The study attributed lack of education to be the prime factor behind child labor among certain segments of Saudi population. In case of foreigners, especially African expatriates, poverty has been identified as the major cause of child labor.

Children "are mostly employed in the business sector followed by agriculture." Saudi Arabia has enacted a number of laws on child labor including setting the minimum employment age at 13 in all fields, with the exception of family businesses and domestic labor, as well as animal herding and some agricultural jobs

According to another study conducted by Saud-Al Shahri, a Saudi social worker, there are more than 83,000 homeless children in the Kingdom.

"Nearly 69 percent of child beggars in Riyadh are Saudis," said the study, adding that about 88 percent of mothers of child beggars are illiterate and only nine percent of them hold an elementary school certificate.☞



Government School Show Zero Result

Results of ninth and 10th classes of the Government Boys High School Mianwala in Attock has remained zero for the last three years despite availability of teaching staff, causing a setback to the career of large number of students, a media report from Attock said on September 15. This was disclosed by the Education Committee of Union Council Mianwala through a resolution presented in the session of the district council. The resolution said Nazim UC Mianwala had reminded headmaster of the school and concerned education authorities for the improvement of the educational standard but, it added, no one paid heed to it.

People of this far-flung area send their children for education and bear financial expenses and others hardships but the poor performance of the school has forced them to shift their children to private schools where hefty fees are charged, he said. ☹

India To Spend Rs 20 Billion On Building Girls' Hostels

India will spend Rs 2, billion (US \$424.6 million) on building girls' hostels for students of secondary and higher secondary schools in each of the country's 3,500 educationally backward blocks according to a report in new Delhi on October 5.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) agreed for the revised centrally sponsored scheme for construction and running of girls' hostels for students of secondary and higher secondary schools in each of the educationally backward blocks during the 11th Five Year Plan (2007-12), Finance Minister said.

This will help improve the educational level of girl students in these backward blocks, Minister said. ☹



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103 Schools Torched Between 2007- 2008

Swat Conflict Takes Toll On Girls' Education

In conflict ridden Swat, 103 schools have been torched between 2007- 2008, out of which 99 percent are girls' schools. "Matta, Kabal and Kooza Banday are worst affected, although outside Mingora and Saidu Sharif, no area enjoys the government's writ," according to spokesman of the government's Planning and Development Department on September 16. Where schools are still intact, unannounced curfews, shelling and bombing have disrupted the lives of the pupils.

For the 300,000 children of Swat aged between three and nine, there are 842 boys' and 490 girls' government-run primary schools. But only 163,645 boys and 67,606 girls are enrolled at either private or public schools, according to official figures. Even before the destruction of schools began, about 50,000 were unable to get an education due to the scarcity of places.

In Matta, not a single girls' school remains unaffected. Many of the boys' schools, too (there are between 20-25 high schools) have closed down indefinitely, partly due to fears the school may be blown up. But partly, the teachers have become so demotivated with the uncertain situation that they don't want to teach any more".

According to regional manager of Khwenda Kor, an NGO working for the empowerment of women in NWFP, each year the provincial government budgets for 100-200 new primary schools across the province. It has been estimated NWFP needs 20,000 new schools. The torching of so many schools, he said, means "an estimated 14,000 girls are out of school at the moment". ☹

49pc Of Parents Abuse Stipend Given To Girls

Almost half of parents in Sindh spend the stipend given to their daughters for their education to pay for food or personal items, whether out of poverty or negligence, according to a study conducted to determine the effectiveness of the European Union (EU)-funded Sindh Education Reforms Program (SERP), a report on September 17 said in Karachi.

Under the program, the Reform Support Unit (RSU) of the provincial education department distributes Rs 500 million to about 300,000 poor girl students studying in classes VI to X in the province.

Each student receives up to Rs 1,000 per year. The program administrators distribute the money through money orders delivered by post to ensure transparency in the distribution and delivery of the support amount. ☹

The School Where Teachers Carry A pen, Ruler And Gun

When teachers return for a new school term in the tiny Texas farming town of Harrold in the US, they can bring an extra tool of the trade alongside books, pens and worksheets. To defend pupils from any gun-toting maniacs, they can carry loaded pistols into the classroom.

With barely 300 residents, the remote community has appalled gun control advocates by becoming the first in the US to allow its teachers to bear concealed firearms. "We are 30 minutes from law enforcement," school superintendent, said. "How long do you think it would take to kill all 150 of us? It would be a bloodbath."

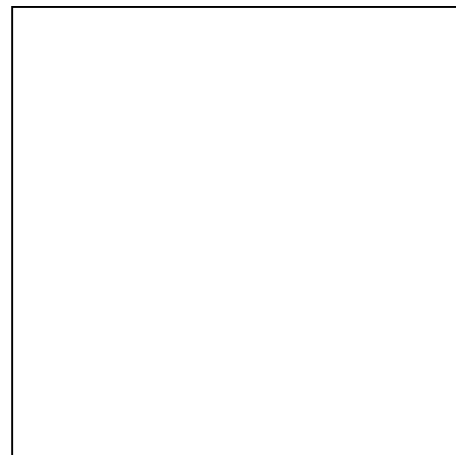
More than a dozen mass shooting tragedies have hit US educational establishments over a decade, including the Columbine massacre which claimed 15 lives at a Colorado high school in 1999 and last year's Virginia Tech massacre which left 33 people dead. "We've had a very disturbing trend of school shootings in the US," he said. When schools were made gun-free zones, they became targets for people who wanted to rack up the body count." ☞

Drive Launched To Enroll Out-of-School Children

The Ministry of Education launched a campaign to enroll all out-of-school children in Islamabad on July 30. The launching ceremony was attended by head teachers of 410 federal and model schools and colleges. The campaign is aimed at achieving the target of 100 percent primary enrolment in two years, said program coordinator. He said the ratio of primary enrolment was not satisfactory which was obvious from the statistics showing six million children aged 5-7 out of school.

He said the drive aimed to enroll an estimated 5,590 children who, according to a survey conducted by the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), were out-of-school within the federal capital. The drive will also be launched in all provinces by the provincial governments.

Under the campaign, enrolment will be launched from the coming academic session and will continue till September 8, which is observed as International Literacy Day. Children enrolled will be provided free books and stationery in addition to transportation facility by the FDE, he added. Secretary Education urged the teachers to start a door-to-door drive along with the staff concerned to identify the out-of-school children. ☞



G.H. Zaidi/ DAWN

Education For Children In Emergencies

The new publication *Delivering Education for Children in Emergencies: A Key Building Block for the Future* lays down why education is a critical part of humanitarian response and demonstrates that it is possible to provide quality education even in the midst of conflict. It also shows that much more can be done if donor governments take action.

The report launched in September is a key advocacy tool in the Rewrite the Future objective to persuade governments to include and fund education as an integral part of their emergency response, as well as bridge the transition from emergency to development, and it is an important component of our work in Alliance Cooperation in Emergencies.

The report recommends donors to:

- Ensure adequate financing of education
- Coordinate emergency response programming with long-term programming
- Support the Global Education Cluster and ensure that it is adequately funded. ☞

CRIN

SPARC CRC ACTIVITIES

PUNJAB

CRC Bahawalpur Independence Day Celebrations

August 14: CRC Bahawalpur organized debates and performance on national songs with the juvenile inmates in the Borstal Institute and Juvenile Jail to celebrate the Independence Day.

CRC Mianwali Independence Day

August 14: CRC Mianwali displayed banners in the city on imprisoned juveniles on Independence Day. District Coordinator, CRC Toba Tek Singh visited Germany and France along with the Finance Minister's delegation in connection with August 14.

Say No to Drugs

June 26: CRC Mianwali observed International Day against Drugs and displayed banners and disseminated pamphlets in the Tehsil Dadu Khail.

Ban Child Labor

September 1: Members of the CRC Mianwali passed a resolution to persuade the district government to ban child labor especially in the restaurants and automobiles.

Facilitating Young Passengers

CRC Mianwali wrote a letter to the Federal Minister of Railways and demanded facility of half ticket for children aged five to 12 as per the Railway

Rules. Earlier the ex-railway minister had changed the rule and charged half ticket for children up to three years and full ticket for children above.

CRC Faisalabad MNA Visits Borstal Institute

July 24: On the request of CRC Faisalabad, Member National Assembly visited the Borstal Institute and Juvenile Justice Faisalabad (BI&JJ). She was accompanied by the CRC District Coordinator. The Superintendent Jail briefed the minister on the need and purpose of Borstal Institute. The MNA visited different departments of the institute and interviewed some juvenile inmates. She appreciated SPARC's work and committed to take steps for the welfare of juvenile inmates.

Solidarity With Vani Victim

CRC Faisalabad followed a child rights violation case to free a young girl from clutches of Vani. 12-year-old (S) was declared a "vani" by the local *Panchayat*. CRC contacted the Station House Officer of Civil Lines Faisalabad and obtained a copy of First Investigation Report (FIR). CRC wrote a letter to the Deputy Inspector General Police and demanded a strict notice and the CRC has also assured free legal aid to the victim.

CRC Muzaffargarh Child Reunited

July 24: CRC Muzaffargarh reunited a missing child with his family. Moreover, it successfully persuaded higher authorities

to lodge a FIR in case of a sexually abused child. Legal coordinator is pursuing the court proceedings.

Good Practices

CRC Faisalabad has taken the responsibility of running three schools (two primaries and a middle level). The CRC has signed a partnership agreement with the City District Government, Faisalabad. A Member Provincial Assembly also provided funds for boundary wall of one of the schools upon request, whereas, another CRC member (member city district council) also committed for the repair and construction of the classrooms, with the development funds at her disposal.

CRC Rahim Yar Khan Legal Aid

September 5: District coordinator CRC Rahim Yar Khan visited the District Jail with the legal coordinator. They held meetings with the Assistant Superintendent Jail. Purpose of their visit was to identify the juvenile inmates who needed legal aid and to assess the needs of the juvenile section.

CRC Rajanpur Panel Of Lawyers

August 4: CRC Rajanpur visited the flood affected areas and delivered goods to the affected children. On July 12 the coordinator met with the Sessions Judge to follow-up SPARC's application for setting up a panel of lawyers.

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Eid Gifts For Inmates

September 9: In a meeting of CRC Rajanpur it was decided that the CRC will provide Eid gifts to the juvenile inmates of District Jail Rajanpur. The CRC coordinator told the participants that on August 29 he again visited the office of the district and sessions judge Rajanpur for the follow up on the application given by SPARC for setting up a panel of lawyers. He said that the superintendent demanded a copy of the relevant Law for the establishment of such a panel which was later sent to him from SPARC office in Lahore. The legal coordinator informed the meeting that he had provided free legal aid to three juvenile offenders and got them released from the police custody on September 4.

**CRC DG Khan
Focus Child Rights**

July 6: CRC Dera Ghazi Khan in its monthly meeting took a decision to force the government departments to secure Child Rights. The CRC coordinator visited the District Jail, Labor Department, Education Department, Social Welfare Department and Health Department to discuss ways and means to focus on child related issues.

**CRC Sialkot
Ban Domestic Child Labor**

July 29: CRC Sialkot and all its members committed to keep their homes free from domestic child labor and to promote the practice in other homes in the neighborhood.

District Jail Visited

August 2: The team visited the District Jail Sialkot and discussed the issue of providing education to the young inmates. In this regard the jail authorities requested the CRC to provide the inmates with textbooks.

177 Inmates in Gujranwala Jail

September 23: SPARC's Lahore office visited the Central Jail Gujranwala to observe the living conditions of the juvenile inmates in the Jail. The superintendent shared that there were 177 juvenile inmates in his jail and offered to take the SPARC team to the Juvenile Section to check out their living conditions. The team found that 177 children were packed in two (medium size) cells of the section.

The accommodation was poor and there little light, no sports facilities, and the floor and floor mats were not in good condition. The juveniles were not provided with the educational facilities as well. The authorities informed that textbooks were urgently needed and shared that there was a college student and a student of University of Engineering Taxila, who were unable to continue with their studies because of being in the jail. SPARC provided 115 sets of textbooks for classes one to ten, apart from sports items as demanded by the children and the authorities.

NWFP

**CRC Bunner
Bunner Jail Visit**

July 25: Members of CRC Bunner and SPARC's Wajid Ihsan visited District Jail Bunner and held meeting with the superintendent jail. The team met with the juvenile prisoners and asked them about the problems they commonly encountered. SPARC donated items for infrastructure support and repaired the television set.

**CRC Mardan
Funds From PBM**

Through its concerted efforts the CRC Mardan was able to get the Pakistan

Baitulmaal (PBM) to extend financial support to some poor families whose children were involved in child labor. Members of the CRC held meetings with federal minister and sought his support for directing the PBM to help the needy families. The concerned minister directed the PBM to support the said families with Rs 5,000 each.

**CRC Nowshera
Strict Action Urged**

July 3: Members of CRC Nowshera held a meeting with the director labor and expressed deep concern on non-implementation of labor laws in the district. They demanded a ban on child labor in hazardous occupations like brick kiln and match factories, under Employment of Children Act (ECA). The official assured the CRC of strict action against violators of the law.

**CRC Swat
Polio Campaign**

A three member team of the CRC Swat carried out monitoring visits during the Polio campaign. They visited the far flung mountainous areas of the district and observed the drive against this crippling disease. It was learnt that in addition to parental hesitation; the ongoing military operation is also a stumbling block, thus depriving thousands of children of polio drops. The CRC raised the issue with the relevant health officials and demanded a one month extensive media campaign on Polio in these areas.

**CRC DI Khan
Jail Visit**

July 31: Members of the CRC Dera Ismail Khan visited the juvenile Ward of Central Jail DI Khan. The Jail Superintendent briefed them on the condition of juvenile inmates

27 juvenile inmates were in the jail. SPARC also repaired two electric water coolers as a relief from scorching heat.

CRC Malakand

Help to Homeless in Homeland

Due to the ongoing military operation in Bajaur Agency, thousands of people were internally displaced from their areas. Many of them have gone to Malakand to seek refuge. Approximately 65,000 people have shifted to Malakand, a large majority comprises women and children. CRC Malakand collected money and other relief items for these displaced and held a media campaign to seek financial support for these people.

CRC Bannu

Jail Visit

July 3: Members of CRC Bannu visited Central Jail Bannu where assessment of legal aid for needy juvenile inmates was carried out. The juvenile prisoners shared their problems with the team. 32 juvenile prisoners were languishing in the jail at the time of visit.

SINDH

CRC Mithi

CRC Mithi Honored

August 2: The Red Crescent Society, Tharparkar held its maiden session during which the participants selected executive committee members. Two members of CRC Mithi were chosen to be its members. Under the supervision of this committee, a Disaster Management Cell will be setup which will respond to emergencies in District Tharparkar.

Child Bailed Out

August 18: CRC Mithi bailed out a 16-year-old child on personal surety. Earlier Mithi Police had arrested him on charges of stealing fans and some other stuff from a Degree College. Upon arrest, his parents contacted the CRC which met with Station House Officer, Mithi and bailed out the child on the assurance that he will not do it again.

Rally Against Burying Women

September 6: CRC Mithi joined hands with civil society organizations against gruesome act of burying women alive in Balochistan and held a protest in front of

Press Club, Mithi. Protestors included representatives from Aurat Foundation and Malir Welfare Association. The CRC and NGOs strongly condemned the act and demanded fair trial.

Boy Assaulted

September 7: In the Village Gothiar of Mithi, an influential of the area sexually abused a nine-year-old boy. Upon learning the news, the CRC accompanied the child's parents and registered a case against the culprit in the local police station. The police initially arrested the culprit's father to pressurize his son to surrender. Later he was released on political grounds. The perpetrator was not arrested even after a lapse of four days. CRC Mithi staged a strong protest against police officials and demanded immediate action against the influential. The demonstration was also joined by civil society organizations as well as children belonging to private and government schools of Mithi.

Hyderabad

Bonded Labor Petition Filed

Sindh High Court Hyderabad bench has issued notice to Secretary Labor and Transport, Chairman Minimum Wage Board, DIG Police Hyderabad, District Nazim Hyderabad, Director Labor Hyderabad and President Brick Kilns Owners Associations Hyderabad for appearing before the Court on October 22 regarding non registrations of brick kilns, Abolition of Bonded Labor and implementation of minimum wages for brick kiln workers in response to a petition filed by SPARC on the above provisions.

Bonded Laborer's Plight Discussed

September 23: SPARC and Bonded Labor Project Coordinator in a meeting with the DIG Hyderabad discussed abolition of bonded labor and curbing sale of children because of poverty. The DIG was told that 350 bonded laborers had been released through the court and that the 200 odd brick kilns working in Hyderabad were not registered. According to the labor law any brick kiln with 10 workers must be registered.

The team also spoke about the plight of the poor bonded laborers and that many of them were kept as captives in personal jails of the landlords. The DIG assured his willingness to work with SPARC or any other organization for peace and justice and that he has set up a Human Rights Cell in his office to curb human rights violations. He also spoke about holding trainings for police with SPARC's help.

Selling Children

September 26: SPARC organized a consultation following the increase in the incidence of parents selling children in Sindh, at Hyderabad Press Club. Members of the civil society organizations expressed concern and at the same time condemned this act as a grave violation of child rights. They said the government should take action against parents who are indulging in such activities and also the society should not encourage such incidents by doling out money to parents.

Release of Bonded Laborers

September 5: On SPARC's action the Additional Session Judge of Sessions Court Hyderabad ordered the Police to immediately raid the brick kiln of Koka Pathan to free over 150 bonded laborers working there. Mr Pathan is also known for human trafficking in the area. ☞

64 Juvenile Inmates Have Eye Problems

On July 31 SPARC Punjab held an eye care medical camp at the Central Jail Sahiwal to provide free medical aid to juvenile prisoners.

An eye specialist was provided by the Medical Superintendent, District Hospital Okara. It was found that 120 juvenile inmates from Sahiwal, Okara and Pakpattan, were detained in the juvenile section of the jail. This number is higher compared to both Borstal Institutes of Punjab. 64 children were diagnosed with different types of eye diseases. The team visited the new juvenile ward and found the living conditions satisfactory. SPARC also gave 360 textbooks (primary to matric) for the juvenile inmates. ☞

Land For Freed Women Bonded Laborers

The Pakistan People's Party MPA assured SPARC and the CRC Hyderabad that the government will give lands to freed bonded laborers in Sindh.

A delegation comprising Protection Manger SPARC Kashif Bajeer and Shafique Kandhro of CRC Hyderabad met with the PPP Women MPA regarding government lands, which are being distributed among the women under the Scheme of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Land Reforms.

SPARC and CRC Hyderabad appealed to the member Sindh Assembly that the government should give priority to free women bonded laborers under this scheme. The reason being that they have already gone through too much misery, deprivation, exploitation and abuse and this is a good opportunity to compensate them by giving them lands and the freedom to earn their own livelihood.

The MPA said that she had discussed the issue with eth Chief Minister Sindh and that he has promised to give priority to freed women bonded laborers. She suggested to the CRC to follow the proper procedure for submitting the application of these women. ☞

Workshop Held With Jail Wardens

SPARC Punjab organized a one-day workshop on *Juveniles and Responsibilities of Jail Wardens* at Central Jail Staff Training Institute, Lahore, on August 12. Jail wardens from Punjab, Sindh, NWFP, Azad Kashmir and Balochistan were sensitized on their role towards young juvenile offenders.

Vice Principal CJSTI, said compared to the age classification as per the Pakistan Prison Rules, JJSO has brought uniformity in the age of child as below 18 years. To assess the understanding of the participants, pre and post tests were conducted which showed a 98 percent improvement in knowledge level of the wardens at the end of the workshop. ☞

Children Worst Victims of Tribal Feuds In Sindh

“Tribal feuds in upper Sindh have led children to militancy and crimes. Besides, consistent tribal rivalry, which has affected socio-economic fabric of the society, the main victim of feuds are children. Instead of carrying pens these children are compelled to hold guns for their own survival as well as their kith and kin.

This was the consensus reached by the speakers at the occasion of provincial conference entitled *Tribal Feuds- Impacts on Children* organized by SPARC Sindh in collaboration with Child Rights Committee (CRC) Sukkur, held at Sukkur on August 24. More than 500 participants from different walks of life attended the event.

Mr Jakhriani, Advisor to Chief Minister for Prison, stated that the non democratic forces have played a pivotal role in strengthening the tribal culture in the area. He shared his ministry's plan to organize a national workshop on jail reforms so as to bring a drastic change in existing jail manuals. He appealed to civil society organizations and experts to help in chalking out comprehensive plan for jail reforms.

District Nazim Sukkur offered a liaison between district government and child rights NGOs. He said facilitation in form of financial assistance and technical

guidance will be provided to them. He announced a reward of Rs 100,000 for CRC Sukkur.

District Police Officer, Sukkur, admitted that children are badly treated in lock-up and jail. He pointed out that violation of child rights in jails is because of lack of awareness of these laws on part of jail staff. He said that if the purpose of child rights protection is to be achieved, than it is necessary that sensitization and awareness of laws should be provided to police officers. He proposed that in every district training sessions should be conducted to educate police officers about the child protection laws.

Speakers condemned the role of tribal lords in using children for their own benefits, and thus turning them into criminals. They said that the power politics revolved around tribal lords who had no interest in the social development.

SPARC's Iqbal Detho and Kashif Bajeer, stressed on bridging gaps and loopholes in the non-implementation of laws such as the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance 2000, abolition of Bonded Labor etc. Salam Dharejo and Sadia Baloch, highlighted the vulnerability of children and talked about the child militancy and child kidnappings which are rapidly increasing in Sindh. Fazila Gulrez, concluded the conference on the note that children should be provided a conducive environment where they can live with security and peace. ☞

“Don’t Turn Children into Suicide Bombers”

Contd. From Page 1

The report reveals that despite getting almost as much as 17 percent of the total international aid given to three countries, Pakistan is called the ‘home of illiterates’ and account for 27 percent of the world’s out-of-school children along with two other countries in the region. The grim situation is worsened when there is no actual education policy to help improve the prevailing situation in education sector, thus depriving children of one the basic right –education.

Children working in roadside hotels, auto workshops, homes, mining, bangle factories, carpet weaving, scavenging in the rubbish, vending on the street, farms, are among the popular sights of Pakistan.

The chapter on children in prisons paints a grim picture and reveals that juvenile offenders’ population in all the jails of Pakistan is around 1,800 but it varies between 2,100 and 2,200. Among them over 60 percent are under trial, not more than 20percent are actually convicted and over 30 percent children are in need of legal assistance, which under the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance 2000 (JJSO) should be given by the State, according to the data collected by SPARC.

There is a dire need to make probation department functional to save children, who come in conflict with the law, form going into the jails, besides set up panel of lawyers, exclusive courts, Borstal Institutions to reform the convicted children, and abolish death penalty according to the provisions given in the JJSO. The report also highlights the need to promote birth registration which can play a critical role in saving or convicting a juvenile offender. It also further demands that the age of criminal responsibility set at 7 years as given in the Section 82 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) should be revised and made at least 12 years.

In 2007, Pakistan suffered one of the worst floods in two major provinces of Balochistan and Sindh affecting almost 3.5 million people. As seen in natural and man made catastrophes the worst off were the children and women. At least 300,000 of the affected children were under five years old and remain at risk of infectious diseases, epidemics and poor nutritional status, according to the report.

Ironically, neither Pakistan nor the AJK have a Child Protection Bill. This means that children affected by emergencies and disasters are not “legally protected.” The government’s ban on adoption means that children find themselves in institution which may not be as safe from abuse and exploitation as compared to living with their own kith and kin. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is a ray of hope at national level with provincial chapters as one focal body dealing with disasters. ☹

Peshawar

Plight of Children Highlighted

SPARC Peshawar launched *The State of Pakistan’s Children 2007* at the Peshawar Press Club on July 26. The ceremony was attended by NGOs, lawyers, media, elected representatives and officials from various government departments.

Minister for Education NWFP said the government would pursue steps to

provide education and other facilities to the children but parents should also take interest and vigilance in the upbringing of their children.

The minister praised SPARC for the valuable report on the plight of children in Pakistan. Participants raised questions and concerns on the government’s performance regarding child protection and promotion. SPARC Regional Manager urged for effective measures to reach out to children displaced in the Bajaur conflict and those living in areas like Swat. ☹

Quetta

Children Neglected in Pakistan

Provincial Education Minister, Quetta urged the government to liaison with the non-governmental organizations to eradicate child labor, reduce poverty and adult unemployment so that the society is rid of the evil menace of child labor.

Speaking at the launching ceremony of *The State of Pakistan’s Children 2007* at the Quetta Press Club on August 2, he said that despite being a government representative, he admitted that not much has been done in protecting child rights in Pakistan, and this neglect will have serious consequences not only on the future of our children but country as well.

He added that the consequences of not taking these core problems seriously are apparent today. He said that he would request his government to take special note of these sensitive issues and work with the NGOs to improve the situation of child rights in Pakistan.

Speaking at the launch, SPARC Assistant Protection Manager lamented the absence of a proper Education Policy at the moment while almost 25 percent of children were out of school. ☹

Sindh

No Legal Protection For Children

“It is a fact that the main victims of violence in our society are children, as violence against them takes a variety of forms and is influenced by many factors”, said Justice Zafar Sherwani at the launch of *The State of Pakistan’s Children 2007* on August 15, at the YMCA Auditorium in Karachi.

He regretted that our legal system is not providing proper protection to children. Even though eight years have passed since the formulation of the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance System 2000 (JJSO), proper implementation of the System is still lagging with no separate courts for juveniles.

Pakistan Institute of Labor, Education and Research (PILER) Executive Director said that the report highlights the important issue of child militancy. He said the lack of social protection increases the chances of social delinquency. He said that at present, children have weapons because the state has diverted all its resources to the military, and subsequent governments have never thought about the social protection of children. Proper compensation to laborers by increasing the minimum wage and social security can be a step towards reducing violence.

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan Coordinator said that the picture portrayed in the Report gives the impression that the state has ignored the education of children, and spent little money on it.

SPARC Regional Promotion Manager criticized the role of political parties, he pointed out that mainstream political parties involve children in election campaigns and give guns to them at victory celebrations. Providing comparative data, he said that 2007 has the highest number of cases of child sexual abuse.

SPARC Regional Manager said the report portrays a dismal picture of child protection in Pakistan. ☹

PUNJAB

Ministry For Children Advocated

The *State of Pakistan’s Children 2007* was launched in Lahore on August 28 at the Press Club.

Member Provincial Assembly said that he would advocate to the Chief Minister, Punjab for the establishment of a Ministry of Child Affairs.

Provincial Minister for Human Rights stressed on collective efforts to protect and promote child rights. Assistant Director, Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB) shared the data of children seeking shelter under the protection of the CPWB.

Mr. Justice (R) Munir Ahmed Mughal, Member Islamic Ideology Council emphasized on treating all children alike, and courts should develop a lenient approach on the subject of juvenile prisoners. Regional Manager

Lahore shared data pertaining to child labor and juvenile prisoners languishing in jails.

He said that SPARC is working specifically for the protection and promotion of Child Rights.

Media persons present on the occasion showed a high level of interest in the latest report. ☺

SPARC Demands

- A separate ministry for over 50 percent population (children) of Pakistan
- Quality, uniform education for every child
- Elimination of child labor
- Revise ban on adoption of children in earthquake areas
- Proper and strict implementation of all laws relating to children
- Education budget must be increased with proper and meaningful utilization of funds
- The State should provide legal aid to children in jails, widespread awareness on the JJSO among the stakeholders concerned
- Ban on corporal punishment
- Provide safe and healthy environment to children
- Treat children as human beings and not as commodities. ☹

Legal Aid To Juvenile Prisoners In Punjab

SPARC Punjab provided free legal aid to 12 juvenile prisoners whereas CRCs provided free legal aid to 15 inmates.

Breakdown of the legal aid provided by CRCs is as follows:

S. No	Name of CRC	Cases
1	RahimYar Khan	5
2	Jehlum	5
3	Faisalabad	3
4	Okara	2
	SPARC Lahore	12
Total		27

Concern Expressed Over Child Protection in Conflicts

SPARC Peshawar on August 18 organized a NGO networking meeting on *Child Protection Laws and Policies*. The meeting was attended by participants from NGOs, government and media.

SPARC's Ijaz Khan stressed for a fresh child labor survey to determine the exact number, which stands somewhere between 9 to 10 million according to non-governmental sources.

Mr. Said Afzal, said the National Plan of Action 2006 expressed concern on government's slow approach towards its goals including child labor. He said despite continuous efforts by SPARC, the government is unable to notify rules to FATA under the JJSO. He added that the section 21 and 22 of the Frontier Crimes Regulation must be abolished which is against basic human rights, religion and fundamental rights under the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan.

The participants also expressed concern over the ongoing military operation in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Swat and other areas. They said child protection has become a major issue due to the large number of internally displaced people from the conflict zones.

They demanded immediate relief and rehabilitation and also sought an immediate end to military operations in parts of NWFP and FATA. ☺

Legal Aid To Juvenile Prisoners In NWFP

SPARC NWFP provided free legal aid to 22 juvenile prisoners from July to September 2008. The volunteer lawyers from Child Rights Committees of NWFP provided free legal aid to 27 inmates.

Breakdown of the legal aid provided by CRCs is as follows:

S. No	Name of CRC	Cases
1	Swabi	11
2	Swat	2
3	Mardan	10
4	Bunner	4
	SPARC Peshawar	22
Total		49

Workshop On Child Protection in Emergencies

SPARC's Jahanzeb Khan attended one week training from August 24- 29 on *Child Protection in Emergencies* at Aman, Jordan under the auspices of UNICEF. Global updates on the monitoring and reporting mechanisms on violations of children rights were shared with participants. Moreover, they were given an overview of child soldiers, responses to child recruitment and essentials of child protection incase of an emergency. ☺

Roundtable Held On Bonded Labor Act

SPARC Lahore organized a Roundtable of experts to review the Bonded Labor System (Abolition) Act, 1992 (BLSAA) on July 29 to identify the gaps in the law and to formulate recommendations for its proper implementation.

Despite the enactment of the BLSAA, there has been little improvement in lives of the bonded laborers that include men, women and children.

A consensus was reached that Rules 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the BLSAA Rules 1995 need to be revisited in light of the proposed changes in the Act. Constitution of the District Vigilance Committees (DVCs) should be changed and simplified so that the objectives assigned to them under the BLSAA could be achieved.

A monitoring body must be constituted at the provincial level to monitor the DVCs. Sections 9 and 10 of the BLSA Act-92 still carries the word District Magistrate for implementing the provisions of the Act and defining the functions of District Magistrate which does not exist after the devolution and separation of Executive from the Judiciary. These changes also need to be revised and redefined. ☺

Dead Man, Child Booked

Police have registered a criminal case against a dead man and a three-year old boy, along with nominating 18 others on August 26 in Sanghar.

A FIR lodged by the ASI of Sanghar police station revealed that a police party arrested an accused Lalio, who had tried to take cover in a home. The police forcibly entered into the homes and misbehaved with women and children. Police asked the inmates to produce the criminal to which they showed ignorance.

This irked the police who in desperation registered a case against 10 known and the same number of unknown people. However, one of the accused had died three years ago and another accused was hardly three years old.

AFP

Court Concerned Over Child Labor On Court Premises

Expressing concern over the increasing number of child laborers in the capital, the Delhi High Court on August 20 pulled up some shop owners in its own premises for employing children.

A bench headed by two Chief Justices made these observations while hearing a public interest petition on rehabilitation of child laborers in New Delhi. It is unfortunate that we are passing orders against other units whereas children are working in the court premises,' the judges said.

'We should begin charity at home,' the bench observed and asked the labor department to submit by August 27 a comprehensive report on the situation of child labor over the past five years. The bench was hearing a petition by an NGO, seeking direction for the government to develop a mechanism to rehabilitate rescued child workers.

Five States Allow Death Penalty For Children

Five countries, account for all executions of children in the world, Human Rights Watch said on September 10, urging an end to the practice. Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Yemen are the only countries that continue to impose the death penalty on people younger than 18 when they committed a crime. The United States outlawed execution of juvenile offenders in 2005.

Human Rights Watch urged the UN, to pressure for greater protections for children.

"We are only five states away from a complete ban on the juvenile death penalty. These few holdouts should abandon this barbaric practice said HRW's spokeswoman. All states have ratified or acceded to treaties ensuring that children are not sentenced to death, HRW said, but the

Juvenile Prisoners Score Well In Exam

Educating juvenile prisoners is an effective tool towards ensuring a better life after their acquittal. SPARC is currently providing educational facilities to the juvenile inmates of the Borstal Institute and Juvenile Jail, Bahawalpur through CRC Bahawalpur. Two teachers make regular visits to educate child prisoners.

This year, 29 juveniles appeared in the Board examinations of classes 5, 8, matriculation and secondary level (class 12). 24 juveniles successfully passed their exams as notified by the jail authorities.

About 575 textbooks were distributed among the juvenile prisoners of Sahiwal, Jehlum and Mandi Bahauddin Jails. District Jail Lahore's inmates were also provided with complimentary textbooks. Drinking water system was installed for the juvenile section of the district jail Muzaffargarh.

Women, Children Recovered

Seven women and 12 children, were kept in illegal confinement were recovered from women police station Sukkur on September 10, without making any entry in the record.

The women and 12 children were picked from a house which was raided by the police following a Rs. 1.6 million robbery from goldsmith's premises.



34 Indian Juvenile Prisoners Released As Goodwill Gesture

Thirty-four Indian fishermen, under 18 years of age, were released from the Youthful Offenders' Industrial School, adjacent to Central Jail Karachi, on August 14. The notification for their release was issued by the Pakistan Government as a gesture of goodwill on the occasion of August 14.

The juvenile fishermen were taken to Lahore and handed over to the Indian authorities at the Wagah Border on August 15. Saiban Welfare Organization (SWO) made arrangements for the transportation of these fishermen.

Sindh IG Prisons told the fishermen that they have been released by the government of Pakistan as a gesture of goodwill, and he hoped that India will show similar response by releasing Pakistani fishermen.

He said the young fishermen had been kept in the Youthful Offenders, Industrial School like guests. The fishermen thanked the government for their kindness.

Polio Cases, Deaths On The Increase In Pakistan

Inadequate anti-polio campaigns are responsible for emergence of a number of fresh cases in Punjab, maintain officials of the health department on September 28 at Lahore.

The total number of victims of this disease has increased to 64 this year across the country, which has shaken the health authorities to the core, and raised serious questions about the efficacy of the preventive drives. 26 children have been tested positive for poliomyelitis in the NWFP and Fata, 16 in Sindh, 14 in Punjab, six in Balochistan and two in Islamabad.

"Only two anti-polio drives were launched during the last two years in Punjab, which may be one of the main reasons behind the emergence of the disease," a senior officer said.

He said since hardly any polio case had surfaced in Punjab during the last two years, the authorities concerned were satisfied that they had succeeded in 'almost' eliminating the disease and a campaign a year would be enough.

Polio Deaths: Health authorities on August 4, confirmed the prevalence of polio virus in a child who died in July in Karachi. Earlier, an eight-month-old boy tested positive for polio and died in June. The manager of Sindh's Expanded Program on Immunization, said that 13-month-old Afghan boy, had a history of three doses of vaccine against preventive diseases and six supplementary polio preventive doses.

Two-year-old Shakila of Battagram tested positive for poliomyelitis. The child frequently suffered diarrhoeal bouts which affected the efficacy of the oral polio vaccine doses she had received. Polio it appears has resurfaced in the country.

Pakistan Facing Rotavirus Diarrhoea Threat: PPA

Pakistan is under threat of Rotavirus diarrhoea outbreak, said Pakistan Pediatric Association's (PPA) Vaccination and Health Education Chairwoman on September 4 in Islamabad. She said virus caused 35 percent diarrhoea cases in children under five years of age. She said both bacteria and viruses caused diarrhea.

She said bacterial diarrhoea could be prevented by simple measures such as drinking clean water, eating safe hygienic food and washing hands before eating.

There is no prevention for the deadly Rotavirus diarrhoea except vaccination of children before the age of six months. It is the commonest cause of diarrhoea in children worldwide.

Almost 25,000 children in Pakistan die of Rotavirus diarrhoea each year. The disease can be prevented by oral vaccination available in the market.

High Child Mortality Owing To Water-borne Diseases

Around 99 percent of water supplied to the population is unfit for human consumption due to which over 200,000 children under five die from diarrhea, typhoid fever, cholera and hepatitis A and E every year.

Pakistan Council for Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) scientist said at a workshop in Islamabad on July 29.

She said that contaminated water was responsible for 40 percent of all diseases in the country. Water contains over 60,000 friendly and harmful bacteria nine of which cause dysentery, typhoid, cholera, gastroenteritis etc. Water table in Pakistani cities and villages contain arsenic that causes deadly health problems.

She said the untreated hospital waste contained hepatitis virus. Children were the main victims of this virus due to low immunity. The other viral diseases caused by contaminated water could be polio, meningitis and cancer, she added. The Dutch expert asked how the managers of different water supply agencies could help the government achieve clean drinking water for everyone by 2015.

Children Die Of Drugs' Shortage In Kurram Agency

Two children died due to shortage of medicines in the conflict-ridden Parachinar in Kurram Agency on August 5. Due to closure of the main road, leading to Parachinar, the hospitals had run out of essential drugs. Eight-month-old Yasir Ali and Jamshed, 3 died of gastroenteritis. So far eight children have died due to lack of drugs in the area. Doctors at local hospitals fear that the number of casualties could go up, if essential medicines were not supplied to the health facilities immediately. They said drugs for Parachinar had been purchased at the cost of Rs20 million, but could not be supplied to the area due to the conflict.

www.cache.daylife.org

www.mothersfightingforothers.com

New Vaccine For Childhood Diseases Introduced

The federal government is introducing new vaccines to safeguard children against influenza in addition to diphtheria, whooping cough, hepatitis and tetanus, a media report said on September 22 in Peshawar.

The government had imported the new vaccines that would be launched after training of the vaccination staff in all the provinces, officials said.

“We are in the process to plan training of workers of the Expanded Program on Immunization regarding its administration to children and the method of its storage,” they added.

The Officials said that children would get the vaccine in one shot, avoiding parents to visit health facilities several times for vaccination of their children.

The new vaccines have been imported by Bill Gate’s Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunization free of cost with a view to improve the routine immunization program in the country in line with the objectives set forth by the Millennium Development Goals. There are several studies regarding the efficacy of the new vaccine the world over, they said, adding that the government was required to improve immunization for childhood diseases. ❧

Children Die In US-Led Assault

At least 20 people, most of them women and children, were killed in a ground assault by US-led coalition forces (ISAF) on a village near the Afghan border at WANA on September 3. It was the first known ground assault of its kind. The troops later flew back to Afghanistan. According to people in Musa Neka Ziarat, two children, three women and five men were killed in the attack on the house, where two families were residing. Moreover, people who had come out of their houses were also targeted by the forces, leading to 10

more casualties. Local people said the two other families had no association with militants.

Bajaur: The ongoing military action in Bajaur region has displaced more than 300,000 people. The number of registered Internally Displaced People (IDPs) was 248,000 (39,100 families). More than 220,000 IDPs had migrated to Lower Dir and the rest had moved to Malakand and Peshawar. This internal displacement has negative repercussions on children. Meanwhile, the health department has constituted special teams to administer polio vaccine to the children and distribute medicines among the affected people in the camps and other areas. ❧

Proposed Children Hospital In Doldrums

Efforts are afoot to allot a plot, pledged by the former provincial government for the construction of a children hospital in public sector two years back, to a group of ‘influential’ doctors for the establishment of a private medical college in Peshawar.

“The government is in the process of allotting a plot in Hayatabad Township, which had been pledged by the former chief minister for establishing a children hospital, to a group of doctors,” sources in health secretariat informed on July 17 in Peshawar, saying that 15 million children in the NWFP would suffer if they were deprived of the proposed hospital. On June 28, the government of Japan, which had already pledged \$20 million grant-in-aid for the proposed hospital two years back, issued a survey report wherein it had given top priority to the children hospital in the NWFP. ❧

Deadly Toys Being Designed For Accuracy

The US has called for proposals to develop a new type of cluster bomb that can lock on to a target and chase it for more than five kilometers according to a report on September 25 in London. The new design aims to ‘increase accuracy and reduce collateral damage’.

Cluster bombs are made up of a big container which opens in mid-air, dropping hundreds of smaller individual sub-munitions, or “bomblets”, across a wide area. Many do not detonate and are often found years later by children who mistake them for toys. Concern has been voiced about the ethics of giving robots the power to decide when and who to attack.

An estimated 80 million landmines are still buried worldwide. Over one-third of the landmine victims are women and children. ❧

Cleric, 10 Seminary Students Booked On Terror charges

The City police on August 18 registered a case against a cleric and 10 students of a Madrassah in Toba Tek Singh, on charges of sending students of his seminary to Waziristan to help Taliban militants fight against Pakistani security forces.

According to the FIR under Anti-Terrorism Act, an assistant sub-inspector, said that when he visited the seminary in plain clothes, the cleric was speaking to students and encouraging them to proceed to Waziristan to join Taliban's fight against security forces.

Meanwhile, the police in Mianwali arrested 14 students of Toba Tek Singh seminaries on August 16 who were going to Waziristan and handed them over to the police. But the FIR registered against 10 students out of 14 shows that they were arrested from Toba. The police, however, were reluctant to talk about the whereabouts of 14 arrested students from Mianwali. ❧

Employers Torture 13-Year-Old Maid

Police registered a FIR (first information report) on August 27 against a local landlord, and his wife on charges of burning their housemaid's arm and cutting her hair as a punishment in Larkana.

Police lodged the FIR on behalf of the state after a medical report confirmed the 13-year-old maid, (Z) had been tortured.

A source privy to the dispute said that the wife got annoyed and subjected Z to

torture when she announced that she was planning to get married soon.

They asked her not to marry now because they needed her, the source said, adding, that Z's employers were concerned about who would do the household chores and tried to force her to change the decision.

The medical report confirmed that the housemaid had a month old burn mark on her right arm, sources said.

Police, meanwhile, released Z, her mother and maternal uncle after recording their statements. The alleged accused couple is absconding. ❧

12-Year-Old Tortured By Husband

Police at Larkana took custody of a 12-year-old girl allegedly tortured by her husband and sent her to a women's police station as reported on September 23.

Her husband and brother have been arrested. "We picked (S) after receiving information that her husband was torturing her," in charge of the Waleed Police Station said.

According to her one of her brothers had earlier sold her in Hyderabad for Rs80, 000 when she was only five years old. Later, at a tender age of 12, another brother sold her to a man for Rs125, 000 and the marriage was solemnized in June.

She alleged that her husband was a drug addict who used to beat her and kept her locked in a room. She also said that her in-laws used to threaten to kill her. She said she had no mother and would prefer to live with her father after divorce.

SPARC Hyderabad has condemned the criminal activity of the brothers of the minor girl. The marriage at such a young age is a clear violation of the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929. ❧

Parents Take Extreme Action To Combat Hunger

A laborer clubbed to death four of his six children between the ages of 11 years to 18 months in June, which shocked the residents of Muzaffargarh.

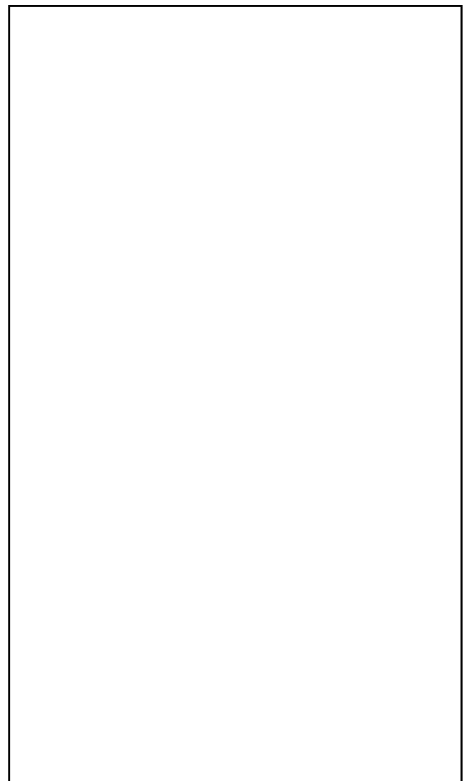
Two, who had also been badly beaten, survived. He said he took this extreme action because he could not feed them.

In March, in a village near Faisalabad, a father of seven killed two of his daughters, and then committed suicide by jumping in front of a train.

In Lahore, a young mother threw herself and two small children in front of a train. In a suicide note, she said she would rather see her children die than suffer poverty, hunger and deprivation.

Edhi Center in Hyderabad, Sindh, reported cases of parents asking the Center to take in children because they could no longer provide for them.

Meanwhile, Karachi Stock Exchange has embarked on a program to offer free meals to 3,000 people in the city. ❧



Legislation On Child Protection Demanded

Immediate legislation and implementation of National Plan of Action (NPA) on child protection was demanded in a media consultation on August 12 at Islamabad.

The consultation on *Role of media as an advocate on child protection issues* was organized by Working Group (WG) against Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSA&E) comprising six members — Pakistan Pediatric Association (PPA), Sahil, Rozan, SACH, Save the Children (Sweden) and Save the Children (UK).

The participants said that Pakistan was a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Stockholm Agenda for Action and other international instruments and yet failed to implement NPA in its true sense.

"Cabinet approved the draft of the NPA in May 2006 but the work on its legislation has not started," said Country Director, Save the Children, UK. He said that the purpose of the consultation was to sensitize media persons from social and crime beats on child protection issues in the light of the NPA. "Media should act as a pressure group and as an advocacy panel for officials at community, district, regional and national level for the implementation of the NPA for children," the NGOs agreed. ☞

Militants Recruit Youths In Swat

Despite having signed a peace agreement with the Frontier government, militants in Swat are continuing to recruit youths for training – a fact also acknowledged by the government, according to a media report from Mingora on July 17. Local people say that about 26 boys, aged between 13 and 18 from militancy-infested areas have been lured by the local Taliban to join their camps.

Parents usually do not report to police about disappearance of their children because of fear, and pretend that the boys have gone to their grandparents. Four 'missing' boys returned home after a month. "All the villagers know they went to training camps," local people said.

The youth living in Swat met with the Taliban at check posts set up by them in several parts of Swat valley. Some of the boys even spent nights with the militants at the check posts and the Taliban allowed them to use their weapons.

Taliban assess the temperament of the young recruits and those they think may be trained to carry out suicide attacks are equipped with skills needed for the deadly mission. Others are trained to use arms.

According to the district coordination officer and the district police officer, these camps are a 'flagrant violation' of the peace agreement the Taliban signed with the NWFP government on May 21. It binds the Taliban to close all militant training centers in the region. A Taliban spokesman said that youth join them at their own free will and they are not forced to go to training camps. "We do not force boys to join our camps." ☞

CJ Orders Speedy Trial Of Child Rape Accused

Lahore High Court Chief Justice on July 29 took suo motu notice of the frequent adjournments of a seven-year-old girl's (T) rape case and directed the trial court to dispose of the case within the shortest possible time. He issued these directions on a news report on July 27 wherein girl's mother had appealed to him to issue directions to Ferozewala Additional District and Sessions Judge to hold speedy trial of the accused.

On March 11, four men allegedly raped (T) when she was going home from school. She thanked the chief justice for issuing directions for the trial court. ☞

Efforts To Save Children From Militancy Stressed

SPARC has urged the State machinery to make concerted efforts to check the surge in the use of children in militancy by various vested interests.

SPARC Islamabad on August 27 held a Media Consultation to highlight the sharp increase in the number of children being recruited for militancy and violence by religious seminaries, gangsters, political factions, tribal chiefs, various sects and national movements to wage a war inside the country.

The discussion dissected one of the dangerous trends taking roots in the poverty-stricken Pakistan in general and its most vulnerable tribal areas and Balochistan province in particular.

SPARC's Executive Director lamented that despite spending a huge chunk of the budget on defense, Pakistan is unable to provide security to its people and save children from falling prey to militancy and conflicts. ☞

Underage Boys Arrested for Flour Smuggling : A dozen underage boys were arrested in Torkham on July 24 for allegedly smuggling flour in small bags to Afghanistan. The local administrator was monitoring the border to check flour smuggling when the boys were arrested. Earlier on July 23, eight underage boys had reportedly been put in Landikotal Jail. Officials said underage children had been warned against smuggling flour and the administration was left with no option but to send them to jail. ☞

L E T T E R S

Working For the Poor

The Social Help and Research Organization (SHRO) is a non-profit, NGO of Southern Punjab. SHRO is a social development organization working for the welfare of human beings, without discrimination of caste, color, creed, religion and race etc.

SHRO is working to improve the socio-economic condition of the poverty stricken community, disadvantaged and vulnerable segments of the society through adopting multi-dimensional approaches based on Social Development process by active involvement of local community and key social actors for the welfare and betterment of the target population at grass roots level.

Our mission is to create awareness amongst vulnerable segment of society to have easy access to basic Education, Health, and Human Rights at grass roots level through active involvement of the local community.

We request you to send us your reports, books, journals, Newsletters, Brochures, Posters, IEC material as complimentary for our staff and placing them in the NGO's library for public use. Please include us in your mailing list for future communication/publication.

*Muhammad Nasir
Secretary General,
SHRO*

*83/B, Ehsan Awan Block, Phase-I,
Sajid Awan Colony, Bahawalpur,*

Bulbs Lit Up Huts

GRDO (Green Rural Development Organization) is pleased to inform that village Azad Nagar received power connection. WAPDA (Water and Power Development Authority) provided 13 electric meters to provide electricity to the villagers.

The GRDO struggled for two years to get the village electrified and finally electricity connections were given to the 13 families and it was for the first time in their life they were using electricity and bulbs were lit in their small huts.

This village was established with the financial support of Actionaid International to rehabilitate 309 released bonded labor families.

*Aijaz Ali
GRDO
Hyderabad, Sindh*

Eliminate Child Labor

SPEED is a member of the Coalition Against Child Labor (CACL). We would like SPARC team to work with us and support us in the eventual elimination of child labor as well as cooperate in the improvement of child rights in the country.

*Ubedullah Lakhair
SPEED
2nd & 3rd Floor
SAHAR House*

*Near Ghanta Ghar Main
Road Mehar, District Dadu*

Need Literature

I am a PhD scholar at the Department of Public Administration of Gomal University Dera Ismail Khan. Presently, I am working on *Analytical Study of Child Labor Laws in Pakistan with Special Reference to N.W.F.P.* I need literature on child labor and existing child labor laws in Pakistan. SPARC has produced a lot of material on this subject and I would like you to share it with me to help me complete my thesis. Please place my e-mail address in your database so that I can receive your publications in the future

*Hamad Khan
hamaddik@hotmail.com
Street No.1, Gulberg Town,
Post Office Muryali,
D.I.Khan*

Stop This Grave Violation

Selling Children is becoming a common practice in Sindh. Using poverty, and unemployment as a ploy women come to the Shahi Bazaar in Hyderabad and offer their children for sale because they cannot afford to give them food or care for them.

One of the women said that her husband was in the jail and she

NGO Website

We are happy to announce that the new NGO Group website has gone live! The address is www.childrightsnet.org.

We hope that it will provide our members, national NGOs and other partners with relevant information on the reporting process, the work of the Committee, our working groups and so on. You are welcome to link to your website if you so desire. We hope that you will find it useful.

*The NGO Group secretariat
NGO Group for the Convention on the
Rights of the Child
1 rue de Varembe
CH-1202 Genève, Switzerland*

could not feed and clothe her two children and therefore wanted to sell them. She was later helped by some civil society organizations.

This has encouraged a lot more couples to offer their children for sale, in the hope that someone will come to their help.

Selling children is a grave violation of child rights and parents under no circumstances should be encouraged to deprive their own children of parental love and care. It is a criminal act and should be condemned in the strongest terms.

This can start a whole new gamut of violation of child rights leading to abuse of various types including child marriages, prostitution, child labor, trafficking and exploitation.

There are other ways of responding to poverty and unemployment, and I appeal to the government and the civil society to take action against such parents who are using wrong means to gain sympathy and financial help.

This practice should be condemned, discouraged and parents found involved should be arrested and taken to court.

*Shafique Kandhro
Hyderabad*

SPARC Membership

I am a Consultant Physiotherapist, Consultant Clinical Homeopath, Human Rights and Peace activist. I am practicing at Karachi. I am honored with the Fellowship and Membership of the National as well as International Organizations.

I wish to become a Member of SPARC and work on child rights.

*Dr. Farhan Abdul Rauf
Karachi*

Literature for library

Memon Welfare Association District Tando Allahyar Sindh is working on "Self help" basis. We work for the betterment of people of the area focusing on education, health, and environment.

We are trying to open a Library for our younger community for two reasons, one because there is none and secondly to develop reading habits among our children.

We are approaching various Organizations/Institutions to provide us with their Publications/ and other literature. We would like SPARC to give us their assistance/help to set up our Library so that we can provide better/ healthy knowledge to our readers through their reading material

*Mr Tufail Ahmed Memon
Memon Welfare Association
C/o Shakeel General Store,
Memon Muhalla, Taluka &
District Tando Allahyar Sindh*

Publications Appreciated

Shehri is a civil society advocacy group focusing on issues relating to the built and natural environment.

There is a special emphasis on tackling illegal construction and zoning violations, and their related symptoms, e.g., pollution, traffic congestion, drainage, encroachments, parking unavailability, overloaded utilities and infrastructure.

Shehri monitors the regulatory bodies and government agencies, and encourages civil society to do the same. I liked the SPARC publications.

I hope that you can help Shehri with volunteer work. We need support of good people in Shehri.

*Sameer H Dodhy Shehri,
206-G, Block-2,
PECHS, Karachi-75400.
info@shehri.org
www.shehri.org*

Free Education

There are 100 child laborers, who work during the day and in the evening come to our Workers' Child Center (WCC) where we provide them with education. The education given is free of cost that includes free books and other activities as well.

We would like SPARC to visit our Center in Thatta.

*Jeev Raj Lal Mashwery
KDA Road (LaL Mashwery School Gharo)
Worker Child Center Gharo City
District Thatta*

Visit SPARC

Thank you for sending us the Newsletter. It gives us an in-depth knowledge of your work and struggle for the human rights especially child labor.

Our organization also focuses on child related issues and that is why we would like to visit SPARC to get more ideas on how to tackle issues and problems relating to children.

*Seraphine Shahbaz
Social Development For
Deprived Of the World
P.O Box 56
Toba Tek Singh 36050*

Interest In SPARC

I am a social activist from Peshawar University Campus. I am attached with an NGO working for the welfare of orphans, their sponsorship and education. Educational development and literacy, health care and economic well being, human rights including child rights and women rights and their violation, social development, rural development in Pakistan are my special areas of interest.

I received your contact details from a government office so your organization seems to be a renowned one; therefore I want to know about your NGO, its mission statement, thematic focus, record activities and efforts in any area of development in Pakistan.

I have special interest in your organization and I would like to know about your geographic coverage and areas of operation too. I would also like to work as volunteer and contribute in this noble mission of human development as much as I can.

Please do inform me how can I join you? I want to study the awareness raising printed materials, brochures, magazines and newsletters, books and literature of your organization.

Please do send me complete information about your organization and also a set of its informative publications. Place me on your mailing list for upcoming materials and updates in future etc.

*Saeed -Ur- Rahman
Abubakr Road, Hamza Street
Lalazar Colony
University Campus Peshawar*

Family Dispute: Man Throws Acid On Child

A man partially mutilated a child's face by throwing acid on him as a result of family dispute, according to the members of Child Rights Committee Qambar on September 9. On learning about the incident, members of CRC took up the case and informed the District Police Officer about it.

The inhuman act of punishing children for adult grievances is common in Pakistan. The CRC members demanded a speedy investigation and trial of the case on which DPO assured of arresting the culprit. The CRC threatened to hold protest rallies if the case is not pursued seriously by police.

Later, the team visited the victimized child in surgical ward of Larkana Hospital and held a detailed discussion with his parents. They informed CRC that the culprit belonged to their clan, but any progress in this regard will be shared with CRC. The CRC also offered free legal aid to the parents.

In this connection, protest rallies were held in Qambar and Larkana demanding strict action against the culprit and condemning such acts. ☹

SPARC's Website: SPARC has launched its website www.sparcpk.org with a new look. A specialized news search engine for child rights has been included along with a special corner for children views and contributions.

New Publications

ICC Courting History: The 244-page report, released in July *Courting History: The Landmark International Criminal Court's First Years*, examines the International Criminal Court (ICC's) accomplishments and shortcomings since it began operations in 2003. The court was created to bring justice to the victims of gross human rights violations; so far the court has issued arrest warrants against suspects in four countries, though none have yet been tried. Human Rights Watch urged greater international support of the ICC to meet the political and financial challenges ahead. www.hrw.org

Physical Punishment: In the 125-page report, released in August, *A Violent Education: Corporal Punishment of Children in US Public Schools*, the ACLU and Human Rights Watch found that in Texas and Mississippi children ranging in age from 3 to 19 years old are routinely physically punished for minor infractions such as chewing gum, talking back to a teacher, or violating the dress code, as well as for more serious transgressions such as fighting. Corporal punishment, legal in 21 states, typically takes the form of "paddling," during which an administrator or teacher hits a child repeatedly on the buttocks with a long wooden board. The report shows that, as a result of paddling, many children are left injured, degraded, and disengaged from school. www.hrw.org/english/docs/2008/08/19/

Over-Cautious Parents Stop Play: Children in the UK are being denied adventurous play because their parents are nervous about exposing them to risk, a new survey released in August suggests. The UK-wide poll, commissioned by Play England, found half of 7-12 year olds have been stopped from climbing trees. It also showed 21 percent of those surveyed had been banned from playing conkers, and 17 percent were not allowed to play chase. The ICM poll interviewed 1,030 children and young people aged 7-16, and 1,031 adults during July 2007. The poll found showed 51 percent of children aged 7-12 were not allowed to climb a tree without adult supervision, with 49 per cent stopped from climbing trees altogether because it was considered too dangerous. *Source: BBC;* www.bbc.co.uk

HIV and AIDS: Make it Matter: UNFPA, IPPF, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, in collaboration with Young Positives and the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, this week launched *Make it Matter, a guide to help prevent HIV among girls and young women* in August, in Mexico. *Make it Matter* focuses on three goals that are recognized as important components of a successful response to the epidemic. info@ippf.org , www.ippf.org

Health Equity: Social factors - rather than genetics - are to blame for huge variations in ill health and life expectancy around the world, a report concludes. The WHO has carried out a three-year analysis of the "social determinants" of health. The report released on August 28 concludes "social injustice is killing people on a grand scale". "Health inequity really is a matter of life and death," said Dr Chan. "But health systems will not naturally gravitate towards equity. Unprecedented leadership is needed that compels all actors, including those beyond the health sector, to examine their impact on health. Primary health care, which integrates health in all of government's policies, is the best framework for doing so." info@who.ch, www.who.int

Sexual Exploitation: *Sexual Exploitation: Semantics or Substance? Towards a shared understanding of terminology referring to the sexual abuse and exploitation of children*, child sex tourism, paedophiles, incest, child sexual abuse – these terms are well-known to many of us working to promote the rights of children and to protect them from violation. These terms, however, are often used interchangeably and inappropriately to define what are in fact very specific acts. As governments, United Nations agencies and NGOs working to prevent sexual violence against children and to assist those children who have been violated, it is important that we understand clearly what we are talking about when we use terms such as these. The confusion around terminology may not seem like a substantive issue. But the implications of confusion are considerable. This publication seeks to highlight the confusion around several of these terms and the potential implications. www.crin.org/NGOGroupforCRC

Enabling Education Newsletter: In this year's publication there is a special 16-page section focusing on the issue of language and how it helps or hinders the educational inclusion of millions of children. Several articles focus on inclusion in post-primary education. On page 25 there is some guidance for anyone interested in writing an article for the next newsletter. If you know anyone who would like to submit an article, they should send an outline of ideas or a first draft by February 2009. Pages 29-31 provide information about inclusive education networks for Asia, Eastern Africa, Zambia and Portuguese-speaking countries. If you live or work in these areas, get in touch with your local network – write an article, share your experiences or join in an email debate. www.eenet.org.uk, www.crin.org

Corporal Punishment: In Australia, a study by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute found that harsh discipline and parental stress increases the risk of mental ill health among children even as young as 3. Analysis of more than 700 toddlers aged 3 months to 3 years found that those who experienced physical punishment were more likely to kick, hit and bite others and become socially withdrawn. *TopNews Health, July 30* .

Child Labor Used To Sell BBC Magazines

Contd. from page 4

Top Gear magazine was launched in India in 2005. The BBC formed a joint venture with the Times of India group to create Worldwide Media, India's biggest magazine publisher, which also produces Good Homes magazine.

The publications are sold on bookstalls for about £1 each, but it is a ferociously competitive market and the battle for readers is fought on the main roads in big cities.

Retailers appointed by the joint venture hire distributors, who in turn employ gangs who use trafficked children to sell to motorists.

They include Sanjay, aged nine, who was selling both magazines at Delhi's busy flyover. He said he had come to the city two months ago with his 11-year-old brother, after drought ruined his parents' rice crop in Bihar. He said he earned 60 p-75 p a day.

His fellow magazine seller, Anand, said that on an average day he sold four

www.ggpht.com

magazines and received five rupees (6p) per copy. "Yesterday I earned 50 rupees [60p], but today just 10 [12p]," he said.

The Indian Save the Children foundation raided one of Delhi's junctions and rescued 13 children selling magazines earlier this year.

An activist for the foundation, said: "The BBC has a responsibility to police their subcontractors." A spokeswoman for BBC Magazines admitted the use of child labor in India and said the corporation was "working urgently" to tackle the problem. "Plainly this is something we condemn utterly," she said. "We have a rigorous ethical policy which covers all our activities around the world and take these matters very seriously indeed."

Five States Allow Death Penalty For Children

Contd. From Page 15

five in question allow the punishment in certain cases.

According to HRW, Iran executed 26 of the 32 juveniles put to death since January 2005. Iranian law allows such penalties for girls of at least nine and boys of 15 or older, the report said. Six juvenile offenders have been executed there this year, the report said.

Complicating the issue is the low rate of birth registration in some countries, making it very difficult to determine a defendant's true age, HRW said.

For example, "with more than 35 percent of Sudanese births not registered, even very young juvenile offenders can face execution in absence of birth certificates to prove their age at the time of the offense," HRW said.

Bonded Labor Abolition Urged

SPARC NWFP organized a national consultation on bonded labor at Peshawar on July 26.

The consultation was attended by representatives from Brick Kiln Union, trade union, transport union, International Labor Organization, Directorate of Human Rights, Pakistan Bait-ul-Maal, Labor department as well as media and NGOs.

Participants termed bonded labor as a modern day slavery and declared it a major human right violation.

Children belonging to families entrapped in debt payment, spend their childhood in deprivation of health and education rights.

They expressed concern over the poor implementation of the prevailing laws and suggested a strong network on the part of civil society to exert pressure on the government to take practical steps for the elimination of bonded labor.

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“Please Purchase My Children”

On September 20, a man came to Moro Town, District Naushehro Feroz, along with his seven children and called out: “Purchase my children. I am sick and unemployed and cannot afford to feed them.” Surprisingly many families rushed to buy the children. Sometime ago, a woman brought her children for sale in a bazaar in Hyderabad. On April 19, a woman in Multan, put her five children up for sale. Later the police took the woman and her five children into custody.

SPARC Condemns

Expressing deep concern over the issue, SPARC Hyderabad with the help of CRC staged a protest on September 21 against those parents who were offering their children for sale due to 'poverty'. They called for arresting the parents who were offering their children for sale due to 'poverty'.

SPARC demands of the government, civil society organizations and parents to come forward to condemn the victimization of children. It is time to raise voice for the rights of children and mobilize the society to provide protection to the innocent from becoming a victim of circumstances. In this regard, the State is obligated to ensure safe and secure environment for children through new protection mechanisms for the children. The State is also accountable to ensure children's rights enshrined in the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Children allowed To Vote In Austria

Austria made history in the European Union first member of the 27-nation bloc to give 16-year-olds a voice in national elections. And Stanke, one of up to 200,000 eligible Austrian teenagers, was not about to pass up this opportunity.

The two main parties were flirting with first-time voters and - to some extent - making an effort to cater to a younger crowd. For the Social Democrats, 27-year-old Laura Rudas, was doing most of the reaching out. "During this election, it could be decisive," she said.

"Every vote counts." Rudas, who has held a seat in Parliament since January 2007, said she considers it her role to show young people that "politics can change the world." With her leather jacket and tight jeans, Rudas does not quite fit the picture of a politician.

Neither does her counterpart at the People's Party, Silvia Fuhrmann, who is also 27. She said that how young people vote "won't be decisive, but is still important." Brazil, Cuba, Nicaragua and the Isle of Man, allow voting at 16.

SC Takes Suo Motu Notice On Live Burial Of Women

The Supreme Court of Pakistan on September 18, took suo motu notice of the alleged gruesome live burial of women in Balochistan and ordered the Balochistan Inspector General of Police to thoroughly investigate the Naseerabad, Balochistan incident and submit a report to the court.

Moreover, Federal Information Minister said that two of the five women allegedly killed for honor were buried alive; she said that the existing laws to

safeguard women from being killed for honor were defective and would be rectified soon.

Naseerabad police on September 2 arrested seven suspects after the government ordered an investigation into the killing of three girls and two women who were allegedly shot and buried alive around two months ago (presumed in July) in Babakot village, near Quetta. The women were killed when they attempted in vain to save their girls. Two Senators from Balochistan supported the killing of women in order to save their brutal customs and traditions from dying out.



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SPARC is an independent NGO founded in 1992, working for systematic & concerted action to promote & protect the rights of the child. This newsletter is part of SPARC's endeavors to give voice to the plea of millions of children dwelling in a state of abject poverty and neglect. SPARC is in consultative status with ECOSOC & UNDP, & is a partner of Child Workers in Asia, Global March, Anti-Slavery, DCI, GCE & IBFAN.

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