

NHDR-Report on Consultation with Female Youth Group in Sheikhpura

A. BASIC DATA

Location	Sheikhpura Village
Date and Time	24 th November, 2014, 11:00-12:00 p.m.
Topic	National Human Development Report 2015
Participant Profiles	10 females aged 15-21, some currently studying and some who had dropped out of school
UNDP Team	Gemma Stevenson (UNDP), Amal (UNDP), Neelum Maqsood (Research Associate-IDEAS), Zohra Sohail (Research Associate-IDEAS)

B. OVERVIEW

The NHDR team held a consultation with the youth, aged 15 to 21 years, to detail them about the upcoming report and to obtain their input on the three main areas of the report (i) education (ii) employment (iii) engagement.

C. KEY ISSUES AND THEMES

Issues

The participants expressed their opinion on various topics and the main issues highlighted were as follows:

- Girls expressed their discontent with the severe restrictions on their movements in the village. If someone were to say something or pass comments on them, the blame would fall on the girls and no one would say anything to the boys
- They were also not happy with the education opportunities available to them. Most of them had to drop out of school after grade 8 because their village did not have a high school.
- The distance to the nearest college required them to either go on a bus or a riksha which was out of their budget. Therefore, their education was cut off at a very initial stage.
- They did not have any training centres where they could learn crafts such as sewing or embroidery. They could not start work from home and did not have any opportunities to start working on their own businesses. They said that they had no option but to sleep all day.
- When asked about politics, they said that they did not have much information about what is going on in the country. They did not have access to television since cable was not allowed in their area.

- All of them had mobile phones which they used for contacting with friends and listening to music.
- They were not happy with the quality of education they have received. The consensus was that the teachers did not invest in their profession and just saw it as a duty they wanted to get rid of.
- They knew about the political parties through the discussion of the elders. The male head of the household would dictate what political party each of the family members should vote for.
- If any representative of a political party would come to the village, he would mostly talk to the men in the village. The women are not allowed interaction.
- The girls did not have any say in marriage. If their parents said that they should marry a specific person they had in mind, they would have to consent. There was no option to refuse because it would be viewed with suspicion and as severe disobedience.
- Their parents also viewed their education as not worth the investment since they were doing exactly the same things that other girls who were not educated. In terms of marriage it did not have benefit as well. The male population of the village was usually not educated and they got married to a male who was usually less educated than them.

Hopes, fears and recommendations for betterment

- Their biggest fear was damage to reputation. They did not want anything to happen to them when they step out of the house. It would ruin their lives and reputation.
- They had clear desire to get more education and have better employment opportunities.
- There was strong desire to have training centres.
- There was a sense of foreboding for the country. They were afraid of the country's conditions becoming worse.
- Many of the girls wanted to move to the city where they would have better opportunities.

Quotes

- ❖ 'Everyone wants to study but when the school is far parents don't send their children to school.'
- ❖ 'Girls don't have professional education so they don't have jobs. They have no place where they can get trained.'
- ❖ 'Girls are married off to less educated men. Parents just look at his capability to earn enough to feed a family.'
- ❖ 'When parents don't listen to girls, then girls just surrender and accept what their parents have chosen for them.'
- ❖ 'There is no opinion of women, just of men'
- ❖ 'If a woman gives a list of political priorities to men, they will get beaten by the man!'

