



TRUTH TRACKER

WATCHING OUT FOR PAKISTAN

It's true that obscenity is a matter of taste and in the eye of the beholder.
Christopher Hitchens

Obscenity



Obscenity is whatever happens to shock some elderly and ignorant magistrate. :Bertrand Russell

Pakistani televisions caught up in 'obscenity' debate

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Child sexual abuse looming in Pakistan.

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Editorial

Keep momentum on Federal Right to Information Law

For the past decade, Pakistan has been waiting for freedom - the freedom for the people to see records that belong to them.

The worn-out Freedom of Information Ordinance of 2002 still controls access to federal-level government information. This law fails to establish broad access to government records, a detailed procedure for requesting them and an appeals process for decisions that rule against access. The Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in the historic Charter of democracy, signed between Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif in London in 2006, agreed to make legislation to update and improve the right to information.

PPP tried to pass the Federal Right to Information Law (RTI) during its regime 2008-2013 but failed. PML-N has also been striving for the Federal RTI since it came into power in 2013 but has yet to succeed. The crowning achievement of the PPP-PML-N through joint efforts was insertion of Article 19-A in the constitution in April 2010 through 18th Amendment that declared right to information as a fundamental constitutional right.

Amongst the four provinces, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Punjab have successfully promulgated comprehensive laws that protect and make easier the right of the public to obtain government records. Just last month Sindh replaced its Freedom of Information Act 2006 with the Sindh Transparency and Right to Information Bill, passed on March 14, 2017. Balochistan has not introduced any RTI law and is using the old Freedom of Information Act 2005 as there is lack of political will for such laws in the province.

PML-N stalwarts repeatedly claimed during last four years that the government will table the right to information proposed law soon. The last statement came from the State's Minister for Information Mariyum Aurangzeb that Right to Information Act 2016 will be moved in the house in a few days.

We are trying to be positive and hope this time it will happen. But movers and shakers of the bills, in their off-the-record chats with Truth Tracker, are again doubtful. They say that a steering committee of the parliament has approved the bill after which it would be tabled before the federal cabinet in a week or two. Once cabinet approves that the bill, the government would table it as a Government's Bill in the parliament for final approval.

But they expect some resistance again. The bill is always blocked by military and judicial establishment of Pakistan.

PPP veteran leader Senator Fahatullah Babar showed exemplary courage during a debate in the Senate in 2015. He said the slogan of accountability will sound meaningless without across-the-board accountability, rejecting 'sacred cows' whether in the security establishment or in the judiciary.

He said that as long as the 'sacred cows syndrome' exists, accountability will remain a dream. Several parliamentarians commented off the record that these sacred cows are the major obstacle in the way of Federal RTI law.

RTI laws and requests for information often involve information about corruption of individuals. No one is above the law, even if they are prime ministers, ministers, generals, judges or journalists.

We can only wonder what secret grazing ground these sacred cows are trying to keep for themselves. Meanwhile, it's time for the ranchers of democracy - our elected members of parliament - to show unity for the achievement.

Mubasher Bukhari

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Editor's Note

Surveillance hegemony and NSA Leaks

Data security is the most significant concern for individuals and organisations around the world today. International governments and organisations are devoting considerable financial and human resources to ward off cyber crime. Simultaneously, some governments pour funds to gather data from the world in an effort to create the surveillance hegemony. This information is shared, sold or kept secret for use later.

Edward Snowden's whistleblower organisation WikkiLeaks started divulging data about National Security Agency, NSA's, (U.S.A) covert activities of surveilling individuals and organisations from the around the world. This was year 2013 and four years hence the world of data and technology is no safer.

The impact of the data theft on masses is strong. It arouses fear in the masses, as grave as the theological fear of being watched by the all powerful. What we lose without knowing exacerbates in some a cognitive distortion, instilling fear, self-doubt and, anticipating repercussions. Some, akin this to a kind of global surveillance McCarthyism.

The latest leaks by the whistleblower organisation accused NSA to compromise Pakistani Internet Service Providers, ISPs. Mobilink GSM network was named as a possible target. The telecommunication companies denied any knowledge of the event. This raises worries among the consumers who want to ensure personal privacy and wonder if the government would take action to safeguard its citizen's interests.

Although we now know that there is another kind of surveillance that the global citizenship is coerced into through social media and software applications. Here at least we feel some iota of control on what we share. However, the information that is achieved from individuals through clandestine means really worries them.

While considerable laws are introduced, whistleblowers have less and less treading ground. The alternative culture of information gathering and security is fading. The telecommunication organisations that guarded privacy have been defeated by hegemonic interests and effectively pushed back. This culture of fear isn't a foreign reality...laws at home are also impacting local netizens and watchful eyes monitor every movement made online. The mass dissemination of media, games and applications have distracted the public so much that they are less and less guarded and aware as to their rights and responsibilities.

The larger information ecology while demoralizes many with their hegemonic interests is also problematized by resistance groups. Across the world individuals and groups make alliances to raise awareness and celebrate the Snowdens and Assanges. However, while media and international propaganda dubs the whistleblowing anarchists as deranged, traitors and, immoral, these alliances will always make sure that our future generations know the value of civil liberties.

Ameerah Javeria

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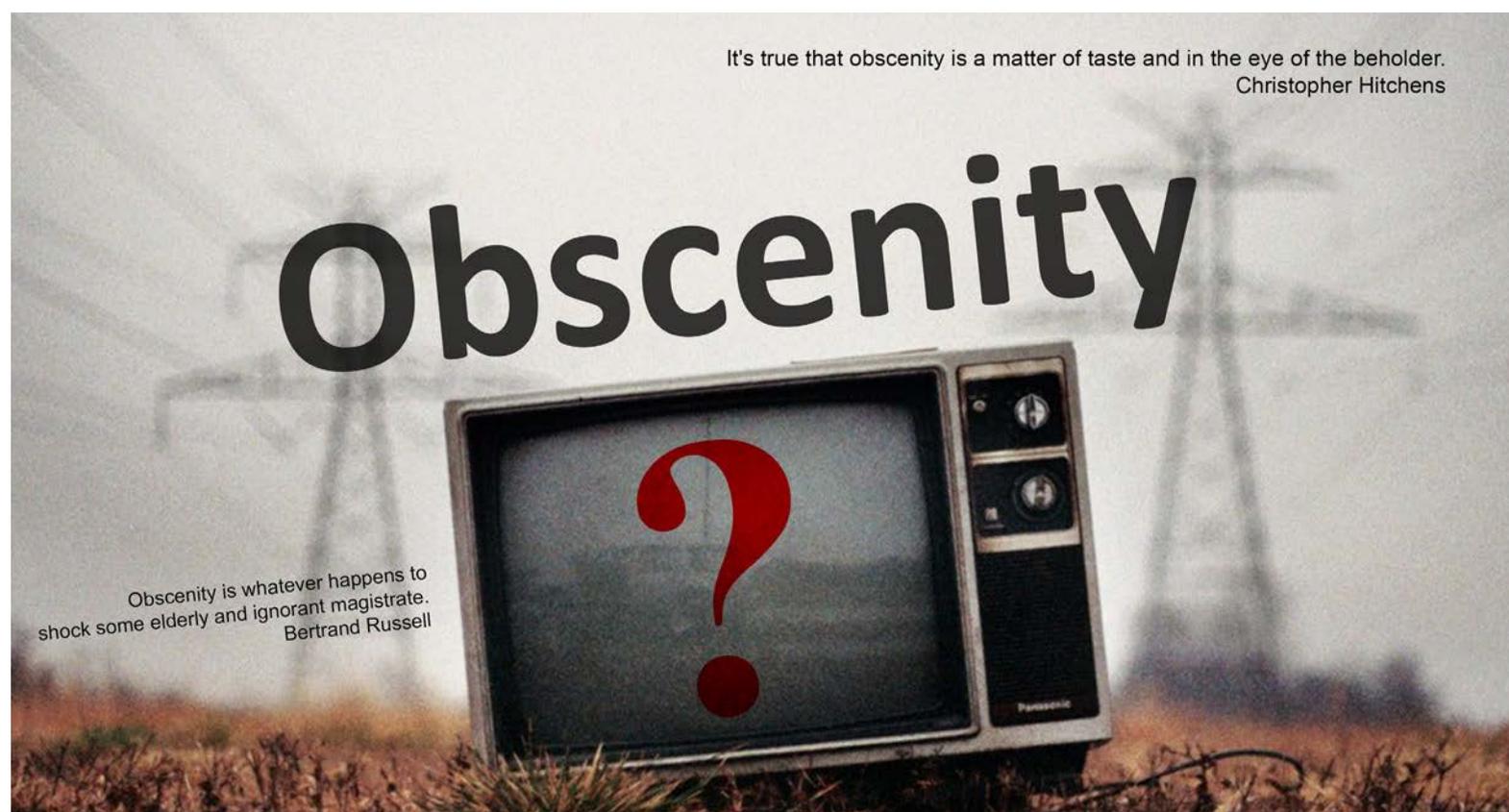
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Human Rights

Pakistani televisions caught up in 'obscenity' debate



Waqar Gillani

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan, once again, is caught in the debate on “obscenity” and “indecenty” on television channels and role of regulators, amid the formation of a committee to monitor ‘indecenty’ on tv shows, advertisements; channels, hosts and guests and take action.

The issue came in the spotlight following a sudden move by a judge of Islamabad High Court (IHC) Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui who set up a committee comprising of representatives of officials bodies and one senior journalist with strong religious views to monitor “obscenity” on television channels and suggest recommendations to the surprise of many from media who consider this step as “strange” and “bizarre.”

The IHC judge, on March 17, constituted a committee to “examine the contents of TV programs and identify obscene material.” Justice Siddiqui formed this committee during simultaneous hearing of two different petitions involving PEMRA and the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. The hearings were about blasphemous content on social media and obscenity. During the hearing on the blasphemous content on social media, the court decided to take up petition of a private citizen against obscenity which was filed in 2013 and was subsequently brushed under the carpet. The petition was against the obscene contents on TV channels.

“Obscene content - regardless of whether

it comes from Saudi Arabia, Turkey or India... we don't need it,” the judge reportedly said in one hearing, adding, “There is a well-thought agenda in practice to ruin the youth of this country, which non-governmental organisations are attempting to encourage sexual proclivity in Pakistan.”

The committee comprises of secretary of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Department; Chairman and Director General (Technical) of Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA); an Additional Attorney General of Pakistan and; senior journalist Ansar Abbasi.

“PEMRA has taken some significant steps (to regulate electronic media) but most alarming issues of obscenity and pornography require immediate actions as these menaces are ruining the entire society, especially, youth of the country,” the notification of the committee, available with Truth Tracker, read. It further stated, “The PEMRA has already witnessed content in a morning show on a tv channel against the set code of conduct so the court finds it appropriate to constitute the committee to examine the content of different (tv) shows (particularly morning shows), dramas and advertisements in order to submit report as whether contents being shown are within the limits of Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in particular Article 19; code of conduct of television channels and conditions to give them license.” The committee will compile a report highlighting the violations with proposed actions against the responsible channels, hosts and guests etc. The court further directed that the committee report must contain number of violations made by

different channels and reasons of inaction on the part of PEMRA.

Article 19 of the Constitution of Pakistan (1973) reads “Every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, and there shall be freedom of the press, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defence of Pakistan or any part thereof friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, [commission of] or incitement to an offence.”

In some recent developments, a petition has also been moved in a provincial Lahore High Court to make dupatta (scarf) compulsory for female news anchors and hosts to cover their heads. The court has directed PEMRA to listen to the demand of this private petitioner, accordingly. Earlier, during a military dictator Ziaul Haq's rule in 1980s, Dupatta scarf was made compulsory for PTV's female newscasters, talk show hosts and actresses during its programs.

In another development, the PEMRA issued a notice to a private music television channel for airing a “vulgar” and “unethical” video song taken as “highly objectionable. The television channel aired that almost nude song on April 2 which was PEMRA, later, in its official statement considered against social and cultural values of the society. Later, following a column by Ansar Abbasi, member of the IHC formed committee, Supreme Court of Pakistan also took notice of this video and directed PEMRA to seriously look into this issue. The channel has been issued a show cause

notice.

“We see actions against hate-speech on political matters in different talk shows but there are least actions against obscenity and indecency being shown on tv channels through dramas and advertisements. Still limits are being crossed and this is a big cause of concern of society,” senior journalist Ansar Abbasi told Truth Tracker, adding, “There are direct attacks on our social and religious norms in tv channels content and PEMRA seems failed in taking action.” He said the committee should not be considered a supra body to take the matter. “We will only submit a report with suggestions to control this situation.” He also feels though initial orders of the court call for monitoring but it is almost impossible to monitor more than 100 channels by this small committee. Legally, it is responsibility of PEMRA.

Talking about obscenity, Abbasi said other than receiving complaints from public he himself has many complaints against television channels’ content. “I believe obscenity and indecency is what vast majority of our society is not comfortable to watch what is shown on television channels, he said. “There are objectionable dramas, advertisements and videos of songs. Just ask people in general whether they are comfortable watching such things at home with families, which I feel should be a standard to check the content,” he said. While citing airing of an almost complete nude song on a music channel; a recent drama with two lesbian characters; a recent mobile phone ad with a half-naked dancing girl; and a recent ad where boys and girls play cricket together and a batting girl hits ball dropping at sensitive part of the fielding boy. He said Pakistani laws and rules of such regulatory bodies are very clear about obscenity and parliament is the supreme forum to further define it and this forum should play a role. There is no implementation of law, he bemoaned. He also said that there is no editorial check in electronic media and the condition of having ombudsman and to oversee the content and complaints is not being practiced at all. He said if you start

defining obscenity you cannot resolve this matter so just take the set rules and laws.

“I don’t say that taking off dupatta is obscenity. The obscenity is what you are uncomfortable to watch mainly sitting with family,” he opined, adding, “We need to set some limits in any case because this is our society and these our children. Even there are limits of liberalism and secularism in societies too. And we have different values than the West.” “We should highlight taboos but with some positive messages rather encouraging negativity. If nobody takes up this use I alone will continue to fight,” he concluded. He called for focusing on Article 31 of the constitution that addresses “Islamic way of life” with steps “to enable the Muslims of Pakistan, individually and collectively, to order their lives in accordance with the fundamental principles and basic concepts of Islam.”

On the other side of this debate, the critics of this ‘obscenity’ campaign term it “moral policing” and call for sensible approaches viewing that obscenity is a subjective matter.

“To define obscenity is more than 300 years old issue of societies. In my view, obscenity has no definition because it is a subjective matter. Some things are obscene for some but not for others,” Dr Mehdi Hasan, academic, media historian and chairman of PEMRA’s complaint cell in the largest province of Punjab viewed. “The laws and code have considered this issue but actually this is the issue of editorial boards and role of gatekeeper in media houses which seriously lacks.” Hasan, who has recently been elected as chairman of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, added. He expressed this is responsibility of television channels to enforce the role of gatekeeper and editorial board rather becoming victims of any moral policing. He argued for giving authorities to PEMRA and making the regulatory bodies control television channels and instituting punitive measures and fines for the violaters. In his view, the heads of editorial boards and gatekeepers need to be held responsible for reviewing

objectionable content. Hasan stressed that consideration of what should be aired varies according to education level of society. He argued that highlighting lesbian issue in a play is not about obscenity but education level of society, he concluded.

“The constitution of committee to monitor and report obscene content without any clear definition of ‘obscenity’ by the legislature is an unprecedented move. The committee includes private citizens, who are known for their (rigid) views about women and their appearance,” Marvi Sirmed, activist and columnist viewed in her recent column. She feels the committee, therefore, will work on subjectively without taking into consideration the universally acceptable definitions and strictures of obscenity and immorality.

Moreover, she considered if the newly constituted committee overlaps the mandate and function of PEMRA, which is the primary institution for such oversight.

Code of Conduct for Media Broadcasters or Cable Television Operators of 2010 and 2015 is very clear in not airing any advertisement “designed in such a manner that it conforms to the laws of the country and is not offensive to morality, decency and religious sects of the people of Pakistan.”

The codes for television channels content further bar dramas and shows which contains anything pornographic, obscene or indecent or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality; and stops airing the content that is against ideology of Pakistan or Islamic values. The first such code for private television channels came in 2002.

In August 2012, PEMRA started deliberations to define “obscenity” on the directions of Supreme Court of Pakistan. The move was considered compelling millions to abide by a controversial code and authoritarianism.



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Accountability

Punjab Forensic Science Lab (PFSL) losing public confidence



Anwer Sumra

Lahore: The significance of forensic science evidences has tremendously grown with time in Pakistan owing to leading a national war on terror to eradicate terrorism, extremism and miscreants from its soil. The repeated occurrence of terrorist/suicide attacks across the country presents a challenge for forensic science experts to reach at a conclusion via evidences (limbs, fire arms particles and other identifying clues) collected from crime scenes in the shortest span of time. The secured collection and accurate forensic analysis of evidences can help investigators round up terrorist's remnants and, identify hideouts and facilitators for effective prosecution in the courts of law.

The Punjab government established a state-of-the-art Punjab Forensic Science Laboratory (PFSL) with the estimated cost of around Rs. 2.5 billion over an area of 53 Kanals during 2009-2011. The prime objective of Laboratory was to support criminal investigations, manage evidence in criminal cases, and train other labs and analysts in forensic techniques for effective input in criminal justice system, says a document acquired by Truth Tracker (TT).

For the first time, thirteen forensic disciplines including Audio Visual Analysis, Computer Forensics, Crime Scene & Death Scene Investigation, DNA & Serology, Forensic Photography,

Narcotics, Toxicology, Trace Chemistry, Polygraph, Fire Arms & Tool Marks, Latent Fingerprints, Pathology, and Questioned Documents were introduced at lab under one roof. The aim was "To receive physical evidence from law enforcement agencies, on criminal and civil cases, analyze and provide accurate results of forensic analysis in timely manner, and testify in courts of law on analytical findings for the people of Punjab," PFSL website disclosed.

Initially the government hired the services of Dr Muhammad Ashraf Tahir, a DNA and Serology expert as a forensic consultant at the rate of \$750 per day to supervise the project. Later, he was appointed Director General (DG) in 2011 and was offered lump-sum package of Rs.1.2 million per month. The services of his real brother, a chemical examiner Dr. Muhammad Sarwar were also sought to run the lab on modern techniques and parameters. Another relative of Tahir, Dr Muhammad Amjad was appointed as Additional Director General to support the high ups in official work and input. The selection of the three top posts at the PFSL relates it to a dynasty, another document with TT reveals.

In all, the government recruited about 500 employees including 317 officers (directors, forensic scientists) to make the laboratory functional to support criminal justice system with accurate, reliable and, authentic forensic reports. The government allocated Rs.870.6 million during current financial year (2016-17) to meet the operating expenditures of lab, budget document says.

However, now reports are surfacing

that fake and bogus reports in various disciplines are being allegedly provided by PFSL to affect the merit of the criminal cases. It is also evident that sub-standard and fake samples of confiscated narcotics are being submitted by police to the lab, which are accepted for re-examination, ultimately helping the drug pushers and paddlers, inquiry report with TT says. Even a committee headed by Additional Inspector General of Police sorted out issuance of four fake and bogus reports in various high profiles criminal cases. Whereas, the committee further unearthed around 65 cases of submission of sub-standard and fake narcotics seized for re-examination in the lab by police. Although action has been initiated against the involved officials and private persons but it is an alarming situation that fake and bogus reports are being issued that are hindering the criminal justice system, the report says.

Punjab Forensic Science agency management was required to maintain a quality management system to meet the requirements of international standard for laboratories, ISO 17025:2005, ASCLD-LAB International (American Society for Crime Laboratory Directors' Laboratory Accreditation Board) to achieve high level of customer satisfaction.

A forensic official requesting anonymity disclosed that while the PFSL boasts to follow internationally accepted standards of testing and reporting, but in actual fact, a majority of its reports are based on presumptive testing which is only a screening technique. The number of reports with confirmed results is

alarming low. Due to low level of awareness at local level among the law enforcement, laboratory misrepresents the presumptive reports as final judgment, and in this way it is befooling the criminal justice system rather than helping it, the official iterated. The methods used for examination of physical evidence at PFSL are replete with shortcuts and omissions. This goes unchecked because no third party performance check is in place, he maintained.

The laboratory has problems in timely disposal of cases. According to a data, as many as 6400 cases of all thirteen disciplines were pending with 739 of firearms and tool marks, 5540 of DNA and serology, 70 of narcotics and 50 of trace chemistry. The lab has closed about 1600 cases over non traceability and alleged damage of evidences at its part, a document with TT reveals.

Authorities must look into the matter to increase the cost benefit ratio of PFSL. On part of police, further resources must be deployed towards a prompt response and to secure the crime scene professionally. Capacity building and exhaustive training of police/investigators should be done at an acceptable level. Investigation police should be provided with modern evidence handling tools and relevant trainings to avoid spoiling of accurate and truthful physical evidence from crime scene. Supervising investigators must ensure tat appropriate evidence material is sent for examination. This will minimize unnecessary expense of time and resources.

On part of PFSL, government must make regulations concerning the qualifications and competency of forensic scientists, and notify minimum standards which should govern methods and facilities used by forensic examination and reporting. Regular third party audits of forensic case work must be in place to root out work aversion by forensic scientists.

Defense attorneys and judicial officers should also familiarize themselves with the standards of forensic reports. Cross-examination of forensic experts and review of all documentation will eventually minimize the flaws in expert testimony, which are currently going un-noticed.

The government should put in place a strict monitoring and vigilance system to curb all sort of misdeeds and to punish the accused involve in issuance of fake and bogus reports. Otherwise, the public will lose confidence over another public institution and criminal justice system will definitely collapse and ultimately it will encourage crimes in society. If there is a security system, it must be accurate and foolproof to ensure that all doors of forgery have been shut, the official says.

Former IG Punjab Police Tariq Saleem Dogar said the government should replicate forensic lab set up at divisional



level as in some cases of far flung areas collection of evidences become an incredible task owing to time factor and long distances. He stressed that the government should impart dedicated training to police officials about effective collection of evidence and promote public awareness for preservation of evidence at crime scenes. "Presently the forensic science laboratory lacks a strong liaison with the police department, creating a hurdle to reach at the truth in interrogation and criminal justice system," said Dogar adding, "There is need for capacity building of police investigators as well as judicial officers to use forensic evidence for the prosecution of criminals in high profile cases."

Forensic sciences play vital role in criminal justice system by incorporating scientific evidence to ascertain the criminal liability. Evidence can come from varied sources, as it can be genetic material or trace chemicals, dental history or fingerprints, says Dr Humayoun Temoor Baig, Pakistan's only Forensic Odontologist. Evidence can serve many roles in an investigation, such as to trace an illicit substance, identify remains or reconstruct a crime. In Pakistan, Punjab Forensic Science Agency brought

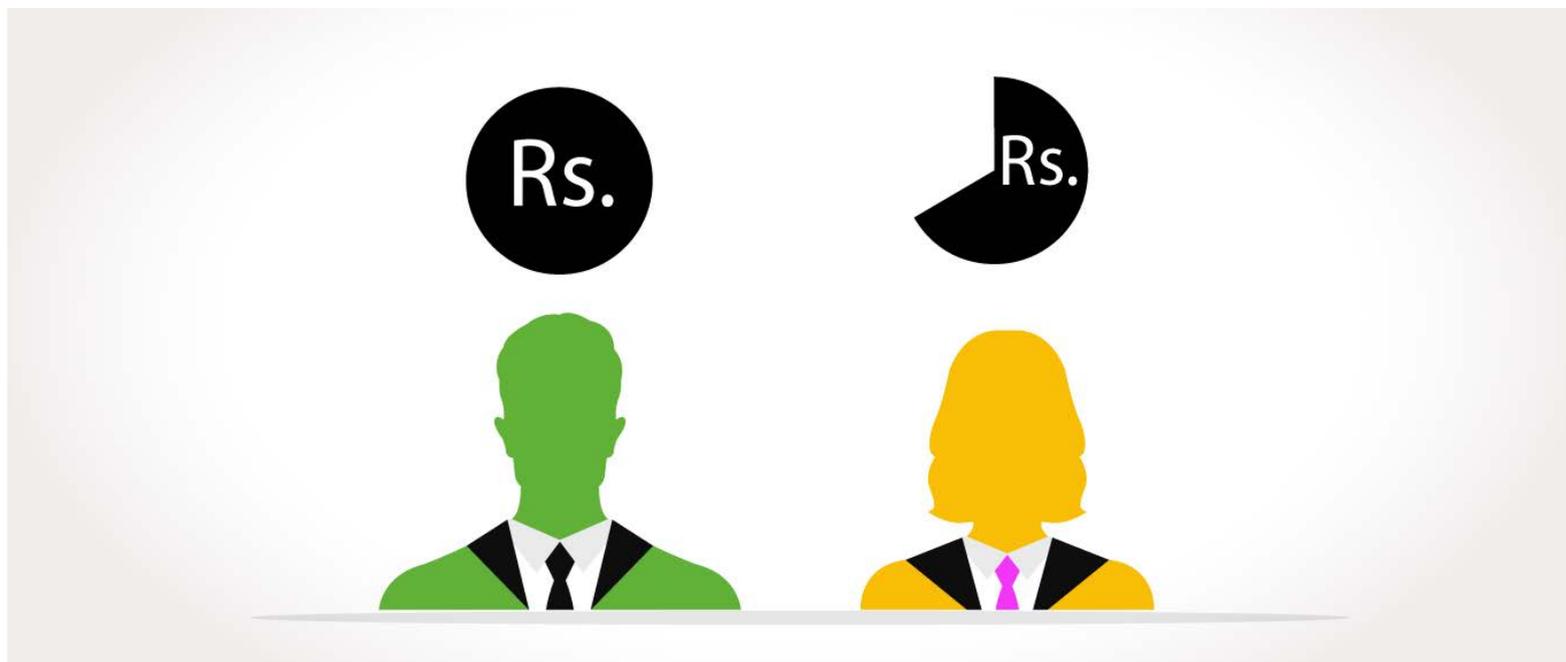
a modern Forensic lab concept but due to ill interest in capacity-building and corrupt intention by its founders it is not serving the purpose fully, he adds.

Baig accused PFSL authorities and said that the Forensic science agency is basically a laboratory establishment but it behaves like Pentagon in terms of security. He pointed out that the lab Director General carries a dual nationality, which is a violation of Government rules. Baig also accused the Director of PFSL for not welcoming other experts to join fearing a Pandora box of complaints. He also criticised that most of PFSL employees are not qualified for the job and many were taken abroad for unaccredited trainings, which result in un-accredited results in many cases. "There is no way you can counter check the results declared by PFSL which is a clear question mark on the judicial system of Pakistan as on the other hand for the Medicolegal cases there is a three tier structure in place where the observations of the Doctors can be checked at different levels by senior forensic experts," Baig concluded.



Accountability

In KP, private schools teachers suffer gender discriminations in wages



Abdus Salam

Peshawar: Women private school teachers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) face gender discrimination in wages at the hands of school owners. These teachers, while working to break the gender discrimination among our future generations, are victims of discrimination themselves. In contrast to the male teachers of private schools in KP female teachers get lesser wages for the same workload.

In the 21st century, teachers of private schools receive less salary despite the fact that they are skilled workers. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minimum wages Act, 2013 (section 9), meant for unskilled workers, has been fixed at Rs.15000 but that doesn't promise an improvement for private schools and the amounts fixed by employers for skilled workers dwindle on and below the minimum wages. The absence of a monitoring system ensures profits for the private school owners at the cost of teachers' misery. According to a rough estimate, 70 per cent of the private schools teachers are paid an average minimum Rs.3000 to Rs.15000 with no such extra perks. The elite schools offer handsome salary packages, ranging from Rs.15000 to Rs.50000. However, in very rare semi government schools, teachers are paid up to 120000 rupees for a double shift (morning and evening).

Sources from private schools shared that all of the private schools raise students' school fees annually but don't commit to the same in case of its teaching staff. In contrast, public school employers pay teachers handsome wages and benefits without any gender discrimination. When contacted, a private school owner

admitted that it's a common practice that salaries for Peshawar's private school teachers vary according to the gender.

Private schools charge student fees for summer ahead of the vacations but some private schools try to avoid paying their teachers during these holidays and sources have confirmed that this could be the reason some teachers are fired as summer arrives. As the June vacations draw near, the local government should take this issue into consideration. Some amendment in education and labor policies for private institution is required to alleviate such instances and to make private schools adhere to ethical practices and not run schools only like profitable business initiatives in KP.

In 2010 ANP government, the first draft by education department was submitted for regularizing private schools in KP. However, it lacked action as no initiative was taken to ensure accountabilities and proceeding against private schools in the light of the regulatory draft. Sources that do not want their identities to be revealed fearing backlash alleged that a lack of initiative to the education draft could be attributed to those lawmakers with their shares in private schools.

An annual report of KP Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) in year 2014-15 stated that total number of private schools in KP is 6743, scattered across different districts of KP, however most of the private schools are located in Peshawar district. Furthermore, the official data of education department states that total number of enrolment in these private school as 18,24,784. The total number of teachers is 85325 out of which female teacher are 44466 and male teachers estimated at 40859. Whereas, there are 27506 public schools in KP are and their overall enrollment is 4.2 million. The total

number of sanctioned posts of teachers in public schools is 143399 out of which 92243 are male and 51156 are female teachers.

One private school principal anonymously told Truth Tracker that while men and women teachers serve in the same manner but regulation of an egalitarian remuneration seems an uphill task for the private school sector. Other than wages, the issue of terminations have been seen as unfair by many a teachers. Sources from the teachers deem terminations mostly as arbitrary decisions and claim that demanding their rights, including those of a salary raise, can place them at risk for losing their jobs. Teachers would like their contract to be protected for one whole academic year. The clauses of termination of job at a notice should be abolished. Usually private school owners have their teachers agree to another clause in their job contract that they cannot take their grievances to the labour department.

A very small percentage of private schools in KP have the policy to bound teachers for one session at least, but even these institutions fire teachers and attain substitutes to avoid such annual increase in their salaries. One private school teacher anonymously divulged that while reasoning with the principal about a serious issue the principal simply responded, "please do not come to school from tomorrow." Moreover, sources from the women teacher added that in some of private schools male principle smoking in front of their students and the school principals resort to harsh and abusive language scaring students not to divulge any of the goings on to their parents for fear of reprimand.

When law enforcement officials were asked about these issues one local anonymously replied that the evidence

to such events aren't strong and police usually avoids raids on schools because of safety concerns and that of instilling fear in the young students.

The department of Labour is known to actively engage with public complaints about minimum wages. They are even known to monitor business districts and commercial markets to ensure that business helpers are paid the minimum. But in the case for private schools, they say that the same rules are not applicable.

Surprisingly, further investigation by Truth tracker revealed that the labor department, indeed, has a law for the private school

issues. The law was initially launched during the ANP government but in the same time when new governing body came into action, they received a notification that the private institutions minimum wages sections be removed from the law. The notification was issued bypassing the provincial assembly. Legally, no changes can be made to the department of labour laws without asking provincial assembly to discuss and authorize it.

Truth Tracker further confirmed with inside sources from the labour department that some parties from within the labour department have file petition against these amendments in the Peshawar High

court with aim to reclaim the private educational institutions. The court case is still under process. Minister Elementary and Secondary Education KP, Muhammad Atif, said," it is in our priority to regularize private schools by the education department very soon."

While the litigation continues, the lack of initiative by KP's local government clearly indicates that it is clearly in no mood to establish such a regulatory system to regularize private schools and has failed to address issues of student fees and low and unequal salaries of teachers.



Security

We are under big threat –Massive Data Collections by Law Enforcement Agencies Underway



Abdus Salam

Peshawar: In today's world, the Internet has become the most important part of our lives. Social media influence brings more and more people together and the massive crowds congregate with each other. Edward Snowden leaks have left everyone feeling insecure and worried about their data privacy. Various social media applications transparency reports further revealed receiving user data requests by different governments and their law enforcement agencies making it the biggest privacy issue of this time with name surveillance for preventions of such crimes.

Surveillance, which is used by law enforcement agencies for prevention of crimes both online and offline, is often a violation of user privacy. Surveillance agencies, during collection of user data

from different social media portals can only identify suspects. This however does not help with crime prevention or offer solutions but the mere act data collection on a massive scale violates privacy of the citizen. Different civil liberties groups and activist opposed are now waging a movement against law enforcement agencies to stop such incidental data collections in this way. Furhan Husain, Digital Rights Researcher and Trainer, Bytes for All Pakistan says that the surveillance in current time is a big challenge for all of us and until we know how can to prevent this we all remain unsafe.

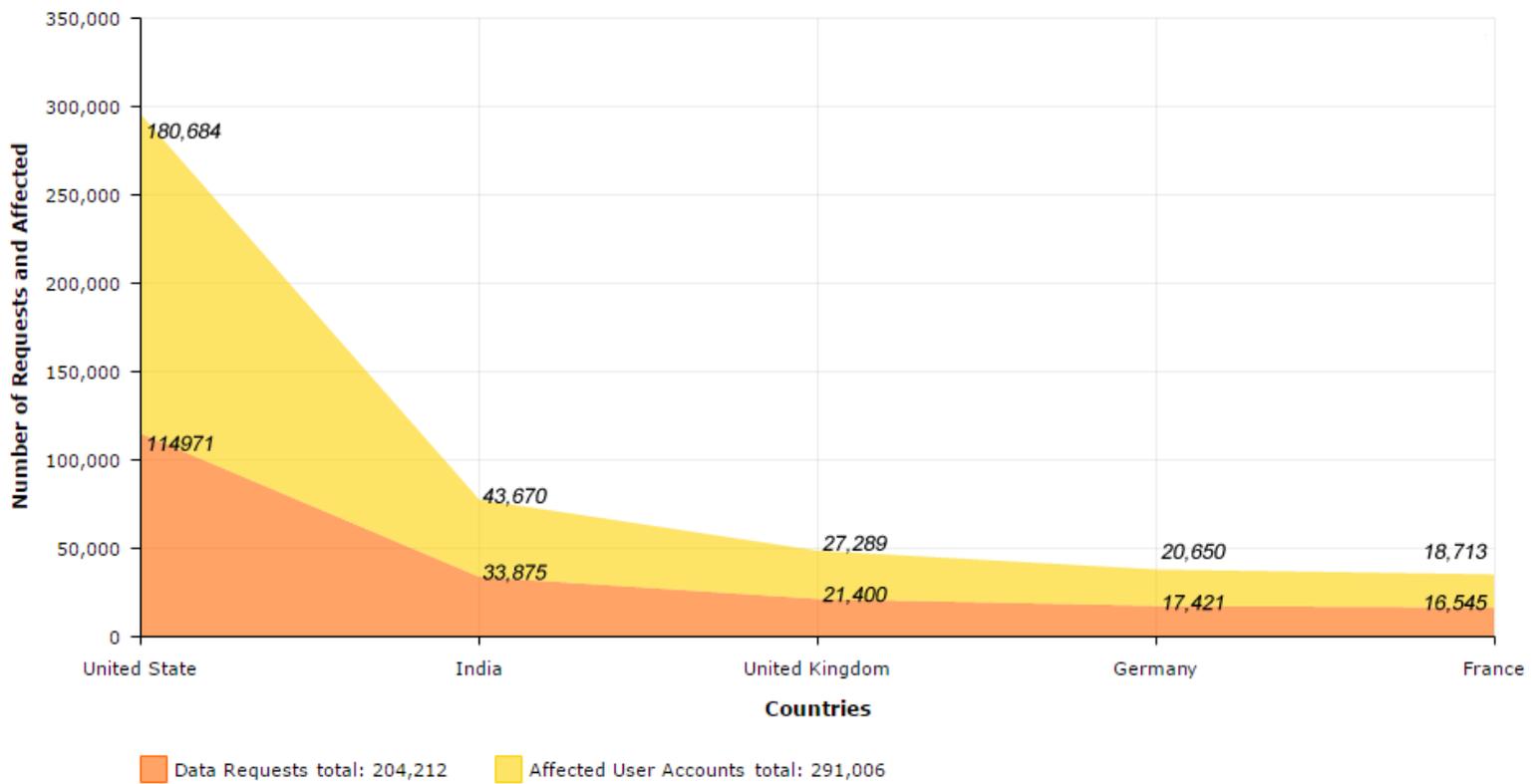
The question arises here, is if the user data requests by authorities worry us. Despite different country officials keeping a close eye on different online platforms, motives may vary. Government law enforcement agencies request different social media platforms for relevant data. This data can be about online crimes, terrorist or, to determine online track report for proof or,

other reasons. Most of these data requests demand the last login location, coordinates and, personal information. This is beside the fact that these social media platform also have their own struggles to tackle abuse and hatred on their platforms.

As the worldwide user data request to different social media application are on an increase, the last two years have seen different social media portals publically releasing government data request reports. It may not be a surprise to many that the most data request in 2015 was submitted by United State law enforcement agencies, consequently, affecting 56,620 user accounts. In the recent international magazine Mike Janke, co-founder and chairman of Silent Circle (Geneva), says that "Our digital life has so many footprints, we now see government asking companies like Netflix, Hulu, HBO and cable providers for information,"

The graph shows that from 2013 to 2016, the top five countries to make data

Top Five Countries Those Requested More Data From Facebook
2013-2016



Source: Facebook

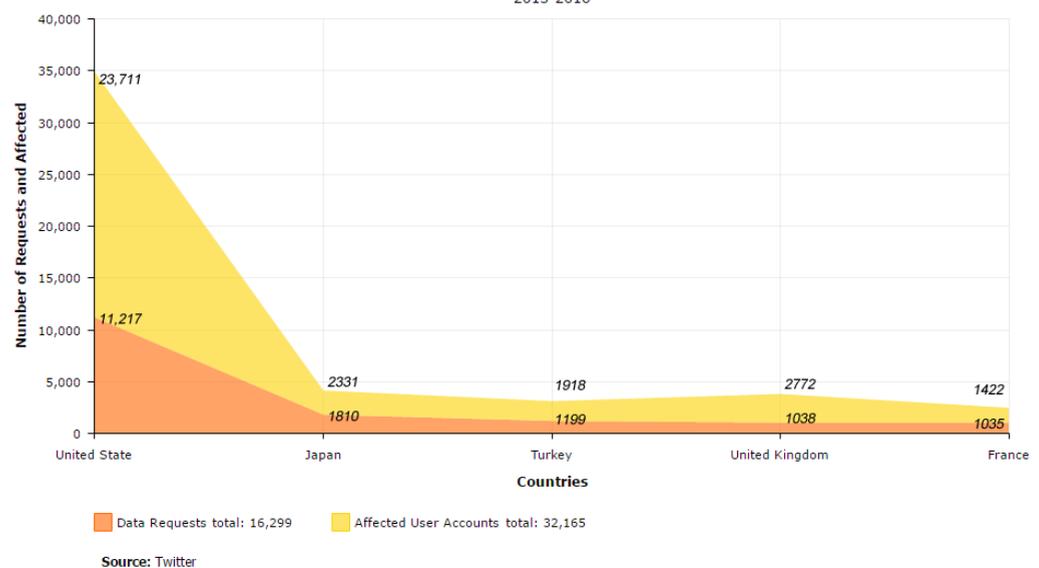
requests to Facebook were US 102971, India 33875, UK 21400, and Germany 17421 and France 16545. And those requests affected 291006 user account data by these top five countries which is the big threat to Facebook user's privacy from law enforcement agencies. While overall data requests by all countries are 271904, which impacted on 388133 user accounts data during 2013 to 2016. During the same period Pakistan was listed as 18th with 1759 data requests to Facebook, affecting 2532 user accounts data. It is significant to know that out of 200 million population of Pakistan around 27 million currently use Facebook.

Ayzaz Syed, Senior Journalist comments, "As the internet and social media is a public space, which is the only place, being journalists, where we can speak openly, however, being followed by different sources make us uncomfortable in that space."

A very great initiative taken by Facebook to prevent such third party applications, including different law enforcement agencies accessing their user data for surveillance purpose, is to publically publish transparent reports. Further Facebook, now, binds any of the these application developers, including law enforcement agencies, which may want to use Facebook developers APIs, to share the purpose of their access to the user data may be after which approval can be granted accordingly.

Further investigation on Twitter transparency data reports disclosed that US government law enforcement agencies requested the most data from twitter during years 2012 to 2016. The total data request during this period made by all countries was 18536, specifying 41496 user accounts data. While Pakistan have

Top Five Countries Those Requested More Data From Twitter
2013-2016



been made only 5 data request to twitter in which the total specified user account was 7. Further 16299 data request have been placed by top five countries under which 32165 user accounts were specified during 2012 to 2016 as shown in the graph.

US not only requests to Facebook and Twitter but also to the other social media portals too like Google, LinkedIn, Yahoo, Tumblr, Apple and many others. Even this is a big threat to the Internet connected users that different law enforcements agencies and many others organizations are illegally accessing online user information from different portals through their own applications.

This leaves the global citizen with no choice but to restrict our activities and personal information and configure such privacy settings on Internet connected devices. If we aren't vigilant we face victimization at the hands of, the so-called, surveillance activities directly or indirectly. The recent revelations by 'Shadow Brokers'

about NSA hacking tools informed that the batch documents were stolen from US intelligence agencies to access the hacking tools. This is clear that all the devices and tools we are using under big threat by those agencies, which violate privacy and should be made accountable.

Mansoor Zeb Khan, Technology Researcher, based in Islamabad says, "This is not new thing to us as these (user accounts) were already bugged and kept under a close eye and; an advice for the folks of social media to please make your activities limited and professional."



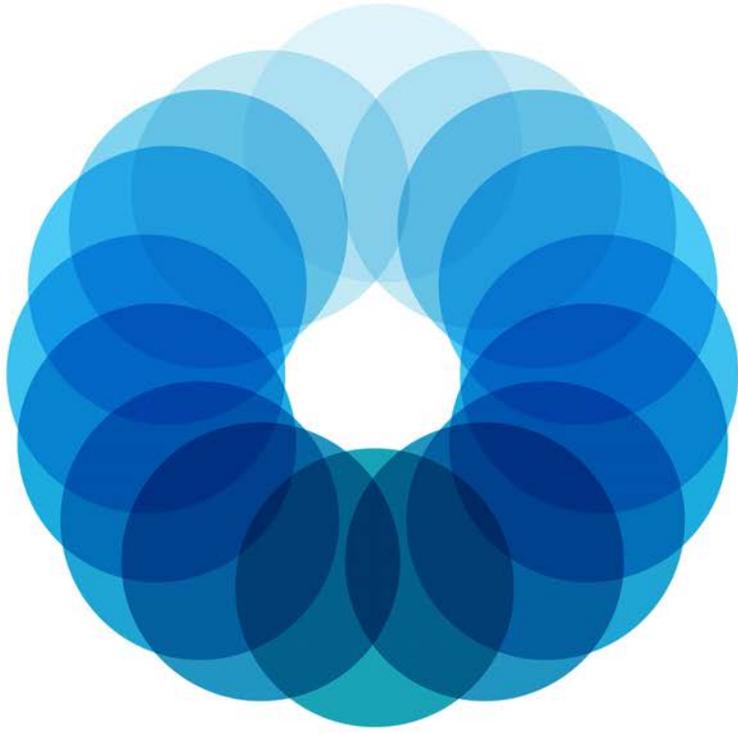
fb.com/truthtracker

Media Tracker



Media Tracker lists the challenges and achievements of the journalists and media organisations worldwide. Here's a list of journalism at risk stories in the recent month. We would like to thank international media protection organisation and news outlets for their content.

- Independent reporter **Abdimalik Muse Oldon** was arrested on 15th February upon arrival at the capital Hargeisa's (**Somaliland**) airport over comments he supposedly made on social media against Somaliland's President and a video showing his "support" for the Somali President, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmaajo. On April 8th Regional Court, found Oldon guilty of anti-national activity of a citizen abroad" and "publication or circulation of false, exaggerated or tendentious news capable of disturbing public order" and sentenced Oldon to two years in jail. As many as 19 journalists have been charged under this penal code in the past 3 years.
(IFJ)
- Journalists **Ales Levchuk** and **Milana Kharitonova**, correspondents for the independent broadcaster **Belsat TV**, are to face charges of "violating regulations on manufacturing and distributing [illicit] mass media materials" and disobeying police for covering a March 18 protest in the city. Protests erupted in February after the imposition of a new tax on long unemployed **Belarusians**, and have since developed into broader protests against the 23-year rule of President Aleksandr Lukashenko. CPJ reported on dozens of cases of detention and other forms of intimidation of journalists covering the protests. At least eight journalists were sentenced to 5-15 days of arrest following the March 25-26 rallies with heavy fines up to \$500. "I have no doubt that we will be found guilty and ordered to pay huge fines tomorrow," Belsat quoted Levchuk as saying today.
(CPJ)
- Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly suggested to a committee hearing that the **U.S. could request social media profile and password information as a condition to entering the country from applicants**. Such requirements would have an impact on journalists and undermine their ability to protect sources, and would represent freedom challenges journalists could face at U.S. borders.
- International journalists question the validity of the approaching referendum in **Turkey** on changes to its constitution due to the massive curbs on freedom of information. The result will be crucial for the country's future but the government's tight grip on the media has robbed the masses of a proper debate. The state of emergency announced after last July's abortive coup attempt has ended most pluralism in Turkey. More than 150 media outlets have been closed by force for allegedly collaborating with "terrorist" organizations. Some, such as **Zaman**, **Bugün**, **Millet** and **Taraf**, were accused of collaborations with the US-based cleric Fethullah Gülen, accused for masterminding the coup attempt. Others, such as **İMC TV** and **Hayatın Sesi TV**, were alleged to have supported the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).
(RSF)



media
foundation360

THE WHOLE JOURNALIST

As a part of journalism profession we, at Media Foundation 360, have been seeing the problems and pressures journalists face within the organization and out in the field regarding their rights and security ranges from salary payment issues to murders and kidnappings. This is when we decided to be their voice and stand up for their rights.

With the slogan of “A Whole Journalist”, we are here with the ambition of helping media professionals getting their rights as well as their training to improve journalism standard in the country. In this regard, we arrange workshops and discussion sessions for journalists with country’s top media professionals and foreign trainers. We also intend to be a watchdog of media outlets in the country, keeping an eye on journalism standards and practices they follow, and pointing out the areas where they failed to follow ethics and laws.

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Promise Tracking

PML-N compromises promise to make state-run PTV an independent channel



Durdana Najam

The Promise

Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) had promised in its 2013 manifesto that upon coming to power, they would make Pakistan Television an independent channel.

Background

Pakistan Television was established in 1964. It expanded quickly and by 1974, it was broadcasting from Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar and Quetta. Right from the beginning, PTV has been dubbed as a mouthpiece of the government; disseminating propaganda and portraying the state's policy. Pakistani media could not find the freedom it required for unbiased reporting and programming until the dawn of Musharraf's era—a military dictator. However, PTV does not enjoy the credibility of being an impartial channel. The government directly owns and controls it, due to which, it reflects the government's views in the news coverage.

Over the past 15 years, the media has grown exponentially in Pakistan, and there are countless TV channels. The competition among the channels is tough but it appears to have no effect on the quality of the programmes run on PTV. Poor production quality has become its hallmark.

It has been reported that in the tenure of the existing PML-N government, PTV has suffered the loss of worth Rs 1.12 billion. Nearly 70 per cent of PTV's budget is spent on human resource, and a meagre 30 per cent goes to programming. Experts believe that there could be two reasons behind this disproportionate spending of funds. Either, like any other state run organization, the PTV is overstaffed, or the employees are being paid unreasonably high salaries that do not consummate with their professional calibre.

PTV has almost no independence and enjoys a poor reputation for impartiality. It even does not stand among the top 10 channels of the country, in spite of having the potential to penetrate into areas where other broadcasters cannot reach.

Because of the deteriorating quality of PTV in both news and programming, it has been suggested to run it along the lines of BBC, which despite being a state-run broadcaster does not serve as a mouthpiece for the government in power.

It is the taxpayers' money that is being used to run PTV; people deserve to see their views and taste reflected in the channel.

Tracking

Truth Tracker talked to the former Minister for Information, Pervez Rasheed about the promise of making PTV independent. He said: "It was our intention to make PTV an independent body and we still believe that it should be made autonomous and that like BBC, PTV should serve the objectives of the state and not of any government."

Giving reasons for the inability of his government in not getting PTV independent, he said, "When the PML-N came to power, they had bigger issues to address, such as terrorism and load shedding that demanded undivided attention." He lamented that the government was thrown into a situation of political chaos by the Imran Khan-led sit-ins in 2014. He said that under such circumstances, it became difficult for the government to follow the true spirit of its manifesto. Further explaining the issue, Rasheed said that making PTV an autonomous body, involved



legislation, for which they would needed the Senate on their side. "We have experienced," the former minister for information said, "that whenever the government had taken the step of either privatizing or making a state-run institution independent, unions intervene due to support from the opposition and the pace of progress was halted."

General Manager Pakistan Television Lahore, Basharat Khan, told Truth Tracker that the PTV had never received any policy instruction from the government about making PTV free of government influence. "However, we have never been forced by the government to avoid the participation of the parties in opposition in our current affair programs or to give a distorted version of their views." He further said that as a policy matter we could not broadcast anything that was against the ideology of Pakistan or the army or Islam.

Fawad Chaudhry, a PTI spokesperson, while talking to Truth Tracker said that it was difficult for this government to make PTV autonomous. "When the bureaucracy in this country serves the purpose of the government, how can PTV, being a media house, become independent?" he asked. However, Chaudhry said that the PTI had been in favour of eliminating the Ministry of Information. "A board of independent people should be appointed to head PTV." "The idea of having a state-run television station," elaborated Chaudhry, "should be to give the view of the state and not of the government in power."

Independent Viewpoint

Mansoor Afaq, columnist and news analyst while talking to Truth Tracker, said that PTV, like any other state-run organization had been mercilessly used to hire useless people. He added that under the previous Managing Director, PTV had stopped in-house production and was outsourcing programming. "This trend of taking PTV away from in-house programming damaged the quality of the programs." "However, Afaq said, "under Attaul Haq Qasmi, as the Chairman PTV, at least a revival of in-house programming had started and people are made to earn their salaries."

Ruling

The PML-N government, according to its statement, has been unable to fulfil its promise of making the PTV an autonomous body. Hence, their promise stands compromised.



Promise Tracking

PTI compromises yet another promise by failing to create 10 million jobs in KP.



Rehmat Mehsud

The Promise

Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) had promised that it would revive the industry and create 10 million new jobs for the youth by shifting focus to skill development.

Background

Unveiling a 9-point industrial policy, a PTI leader, Asad Umar while announcing the industrial policy back in March 2013 had made this promise.

PTI Chairman Imran Khan on the occasion had said, "The country would no longer need any foreign aid if his party was voted to power, as the main focus of PTI would be on human development and eradicating corruption."

"Industry in Pakistan is in dire straits due to a crippling energy crisis, lack of access to finance and skill shortages, hence the PTI industrial policy aims to build solid foundations for the revival of industry by creating 10 million new jobs for the youth over the next five years and to make the sector more viable and competitive in international markets," Umar had said.

Tracking

In his telephone interview with Truth Tracker, Abdul Karim, special assistant to chief minister on commerce and industry, said, "The provincial government is navigating on that promised path to achieve its economic targets after identifying as many as 18 sites for establishing industrial estates."

"At this time, initially, we have started work on establishing three industrial estates," he remarked. First, he said, "Extension work on 1,400 acres is underway on the Hattar Industrial Estates for which investors have started forms submission."

Secondly, he said, "Preliminary MoU has been signed with the Chinese to develop another zone at Rashakai Interchange to hand them over 2,000 acres of land while its feasibility study is in progress."

Thirdly, he said, "An MoU has already been signed for allocating 1,500 acres of land in Dera Ismail Khan (D. I. Khan) and further planning is underway." Similarly, he went on to say that 500 acres of land has been allocated for industrial zone purposes in Karak and Kohat districts respectively.

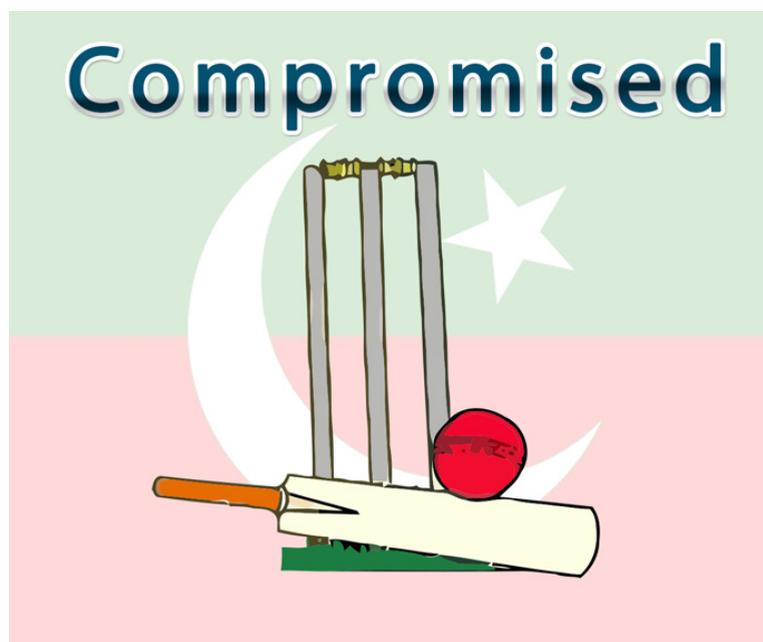
"This is dead investment that we are doing but the credit will be claimed by another government," he remarked.

By doing that, he said that the provincial government firmly expects Karak and Kohat regions would cash oil and gas sectors while the D. I. Khan region would serve as a CPEC junction, connecting Afghanistan, Gwadar and Gomal Zam Dam, which offers fertile position.

In addition, he said, "The long awaited Gomal Zam Dam has started function, which helps irrigate 150,000 acres of land, sparking competition among industrialists to establish sugar mills in the peripheries of Gomal Zam locality."

"These all are unprecedented changes for a better tomorrow," he observed. "And we are heading to achieve our set targets of creating employment opportunities," he said.

He said that he is not in a position to out rightly mention the exact number of jobs but the environment and practical position



clearly depicts there would be record direct and indirect jobs' opportunities.

"New job opportunities would open because there will be direct employees for people opening restaurants, mechanical workshops, filling stations and other such businesses," he noted.

He said that the main focus of the provincial government is to attract investors following capital flight from the province.

"The province is on a take-off position in terms of economy," he added.

"The merging of Fata with KP," he said, "would offer yet another opportunity because the area is rich in minerals, precious stones with hydropower capacity."

He said that 65,000 megawatts of electricity could be generated in the province but investors need to be wooed.

"We have Khyber Pakhtunkhwa road show in Beijing on 16th to showcase our products and to show investors what opportunities we have in KP," he added.

But Sahibzada Sanaullah, Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) from Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP), said the PTI-led government has not created as little as 1,000 job opportunities.

"I don't know but it's totally unbelievable to create 10 million jobs," he noted. He said that he did not observe any industrial revival while the provincial government could not even make the closed industries operational.

Sardar Aurangzeb, another provincial lawmaker from Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), said: "Forget about jobs, all the promises made by Imran Khan to the people of KP are fake and concocted."

"Khan," he said "couldn't create 1,000 jobs, and yet he talks about making 10 million vacancies." He recalled that the PTI chief promised to control corruption within 90 days but what the nation witnessed was that even the PTI speaker in provincial assembly is blamed for involvement in rampant corruption.

He said that the finance minister of KP government who is from the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) was blamed for massive embezzlement by the MD of Khyber Bank. "These are fraudulent and empty promises without an iota of truth," he remarked.

"The province," he reiterated, "is experiencing a financial crisis, which is ample proof of the inefficiency of the PTI government."

Zahid Khan, a senior leader of Awami National Party (ANP), asked

why the PTI chairman removed DG anti- corruption because the latter talked about corruption regarding the PTI billion tree plantation campaign.

“These are just a pack of lies,” Khan noted.

“There is no change on the ground and the hospitals present a dismal picture,” he noted. He asked, “Could the PTI tell me about establishing a single new college or university in KP?”

“The PTI is against corruption but today their speaker is being accused of misappropriation, which has happened for the first time in the history of KP,” he added. “How will they create jobs when the province is in an intense financial crisis,” he noted.

“How would the provincial government create jobs at a time when the dead industries could not be made functional?” he questioned.

Independent Viewpoint

Safullah Gul, a Peshawar-based senior journalist and independent analyst, told Truth Tracker, “The development budget of the province is showing a ‘negative lapse’ of more than 70% during

the last three years.”

“We don’t see any new mega projects being launched to multiply job opportunities,” he added.

Similarly, he said that the construction of industrial zones is not in sight, which could make a pitch for more economic activities.

Gul recalled that the Chief Minister Pervez Khattak in his meetings complained that the central government often refused to issue NoC whenever the provincial government wooed foreign investors or investment.

“That’s the reason foreign investors are not willing to come,” he noted.

Ruling

Keeping in view the facts and comments by the ruling and opposition’s lawmakers, assistant to chief minister on commerce and industry and independent analyst, Truth Tracker rules that PTI compromised yet another promise of creating 10 million jobs in KP.



Promise Tracking

PPP broke its promise about women’s induction in police force in larger number



Durdana Najam

The Promise

Pakistan People’s Party had promised in its 2013 manifesto to ensure that women will be inducted in larger numbers to offset gender imbalances in the police force.

Background

Women were brought into the police force through legislation passed in 1994. Following the law, one police station was immediately established in Sindh and women police officers from constable to sub-inspectors were hired. The law did not auger well with many people, who later went on to challenge it in court. Siding with the dissenters, the court ordered the abolition of the law. However, later an appeal against the decision helped restore the law through a service tribunal.

As of today, the situation of Sindh women police officers is deplorable. Superintendent Police, (SP) City Division Karachi, Shehla Qureshi, told Truth Tracker that the pay scale that ranges from 12 to 22 thousand hardly enables a junior female police officer to make her ends meet. “Most of the pay,” she said, “was spent on transportation fare.” Talking about the facilities given in women police stations she said even the sitting arrangement was not appropriate. “Because women police officers were in short supply,” Shehla elaborated; “each officer was forced to do 12 to 18 hours duty.” However, Qureshi added that the officer was not provided with any room in the police station where she could rest. When asked about the postings and promotion details, she said that there are only three Station Head Officers, One SP, one SP training, one ASP and a few DSP in Sindh. Qureshi added: “Women were not posted as moharar (clerk), beat officers, and petrol officers. There was a dearth of women SHOs, but no recruitment to that effect is being done.” “These are the main issues because of which women feel discouraged about joining the police force.” She requested the Sindh government to computerize the service data of the women police force so that each one of them should know where they stand in terms of merit and seniority. “Punjab and KP have done it, what is stopping the Sindh government from doing so as well?” asked



Qureshi.

According to a study carried out in a book ‘Women police unfurled in Pakistan: Perspective, Status and Perspective’ by Saima Manzoor Arain, there is no policy for upgrading their skills in professional areas for the women police officers in Sindh. “Females are considered as waste products and a show piece in the police department.” Highlighting the psycho-socio-cultural issues, the study revealed that the general thinking is that women police officers are ineffective and are usually engaged in family matters. “It is because of this mind-set” argues Arain in her book, “that many women police officers are not posted in areas where they can prove their professional worth by performing efficiently.”

It is appalling to note that despite the fact that women make up half of the country’s population, their representation in the police force is one per cent even though a quota of 10 per cent is reserved for them.

According to the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)’s report titled ‘Rough Roads to Equality: Women Police in South Asia August 2015’, the total strength of women police officers in Sindh was 902 (0.61 per cent). The total number of police officers had been recorded just over 4,000 out of the total police force of 425,000. SP City Division Karachi Shehla Qureshi told Truth Tracker that this data was still relevant, as there have been no

significant changes over the past two years.

Talking about the importance of having women police officers, Qureshi said that 98 per cent of the cases involving women pertain to domestic violence. “The male police officers,” she said, “usually made the women feel victimized by telling her that she should reconcile with the situation. This sermonizing usually leads to a patch-up that aggravates domestic violence against women.” “In the case of a women police officer,” Qureshi explained, “at least a FIR is registered against men, which in many cases has led to a reduction in violence against women even after the patch-up.”

Tracking

Sharmila Farooqi, Pakistan People Party’s senior leader and a member of the Sindh Assembly agreed that women police officers were not only in short supply but were also paid deplorably low salary. According to Farooqi, “A low pay scale, long working hours, the absence of promotion, and a dearth of women police officers at the top positions have discouraged women from joining the police force.”

“I have suggested to the Chief Minister Sindh that there should be one women’s police station in every district.” She said that in the next session of the Sindh Assembly she would take up this issue. “The situation is so bad that we were unable to meet the quota for women in the police force,” she said. “The only way to motivate women to join the police force is by increasing their pay scale and by improving working conditions,” she added.

“The promotion issue not only affects the police department, but it prevails in nearly every department in Sindh,” said Farooqi. She recommended that the solution lied in establishing a system that governs departmental promotions.

Shazia Mari, the member of National Assembly from PPP, told Truth Tracker that the situation is not as bleak, however, it cannot be called encouraging either. She confirmed that police stations in every district of Sindh did have a women’s desk and that there were eight women police stations in Sindh out of which three were in Karachi and one in Hyderabad, Shaheed Benazirabad, Mirpurkhas, Larkana, and Sukkur. She agreed that the strength of the female quota in Sindh police should be made proportionate to the strength of the overall police force to have a fair representation of the female police officers.

“Currently there is a ban on the recruitment of new women police officers, which has contributed to the shortage of women police force.”

“It is wrong to say that women police officers have not been promoted,” said Mari. “Nine inspectors and 16 sub-inspectors have been promoted to the rank of DSP and Inspectors, in March 2017,” she added. “The existing women cadre in Sindh Police is not enough,” Mari concluded.

Faisal Sabzwari from MQM and a member of the Sindh Assembly sneered at the performance of the Sindh government regarding women police force. “Do you expect the PPP to do anything substantial for women police officers when the condition of the general police force is substandard?” said Sabzwari. He said that reforms and governance were not the real issues of the PPP government.

“I am not surprised to know that the women police force has been neglected in Sindh.” He agreed that given our culture, we direly need more women police officers to provide a comfort level to the women coming to police stations.

Independent Viewpoint

Humaira Masihuddin, Lawyer and Criminology Consultant, based in Islamabad, said that it was vital to have women comprising a good number of the police force. She said, “Women do not come to police stations as victims only, they have also been brought to jail as offenders as well.” “Women required a certain kind of handling,” Masihuddin said. “It is unfortunate that deliberate structural obstacles and biases have been created in the system to de-motivate women police officers.”

“We need to, however, keep one thing in mind that it is not about quantity only, it is about the quality of the police force as well. It has been observed that women police officers are not imparted the required modern techniques or skills that would make them efficient and effective police officers,” said Masihuddin.

Ruling

PPP agrees that it has been unable to balance gender disparity in the police force while being equally ignorant of the deteriorating basic work environment and job satisfaction for women police officers. The promise stands broken

Promise Tracking

PTI promise to establish 10 forests in KP underway.



Rehmat Mehsud

The Promise

Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan had said that his government would establish 10 man-made forests like Changa Manga in various parts of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Changa Manga is one of the largest man-made forests in the world, which is located in the Punjab province.

Background

In his speech to a large gathering at Garhi Chandan back in November 2015, the PTI chief had said these forests would create job opportunities for people.

“The government will pay each employee Rs. 15,000 a month,” he had added.



Tracking

Truth Tracker repeatedly tried but KP Agriculture Minister Ikramullah Gandapur could not be reached for comment.

However, Malik Amin Aslam, chairman of the province's Green Growth Initiative, said: "God willing, the target (billion trees plantation campaign and establishing of forests) will be achieved by the end of 2017."

He said that the KP government has planted around 80 million saplings so far.

Referring to Khan's promise of establishing 10 man-made forests, Aslam said that around 150,000 hectares of land has been added to the KP forest sector for that very purpose.

"The areas in Bannu, Karak and Peshawar districts are have been allocated for these forests," he noted. He said that an area of around 7,500 hectares has been reserved for a forest like Changa Manga, which has 6,000 hectares of land.

"Most of the trees planted last year have now matured while the rest of the saplings would take two more years to turn into fully grown trees," he added. "We asked for an audit of the trees from WWF," he noted.

He went on to say that the billion tree tsunami project has encouraged community based protection of natural forests so that natural regeneration can enrich degraded forests.

He said that the natural reserve forests are mostly government owned and, under the project, have been managerially divided into blocks measuring 1,000 and 6,000 kanals.

Currently, over 600 such blocks of natural forests are being protected by community organised village development councils, which enforce a complete ban on tree felling. In turn, they are also incentivised through green jobs as they hire 'forest nigahbans (protectors)' from the community.

He said that the results in the first year are encouraging, with an average of 125 plants getting naturally regenerated on each kanal of protected forest at a much lower cost.

He said, "Most of these forests are being planted on the degraded range land of southern parts of the province."

"The public- private arrangement," he said, "is aimed at ensuring the ecological interest of the provincial government, as the growing trees will match the economic interest of the private sector of sustainably harvesting the plantations."

"A total of 578 million saplings would have been generated and planted by the end of 2017," he observed.

Zahid Khan, a stalwart from Awami National Party (ANP), said he did not see any new forest established by the PTI. However, he said, "Yes, the provincial government has removed director general of anti-corruption because he spoke of corruption in PTI's billion trees campaign," Khan noted.

"The PTI chairman is saying one thing and doing another," he noted. "The previous ANP government," he recalled, "was comparatively better than the PTI because the ANP established ten universities and 12 campuses during its tenure."

"Can the PTI prove that they have established even a single university or college," he asked. He said he fails to see the planted trees.

Sardar Aurangzeb, Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) from Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), said: "Imran Khan has never fulfilled any of his promises."

He reiterated that the exchequer of KP province has no money to pay its employees. The provincial government pays its employees from the Rs. 17 billion GP and pension funds.

"Forget about establishing new forests, there has been a record in corruption in the PTI's billion trees campaign and even a small

chunk of the funds is not spent on the Green Pakhtunkhwa drive," he alleged.

He offered to visit his union council where the PTI-led government could not plant even 10 percent of the plants.

When asked whether the provincial government has established new forests, Sahibzada Sanaullah of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), said, "Establishing a new forest is a distant dream, all you have to do is ask the PTI forest minister whether he (the minister) knows what kind of plants would suit a particular region."

"My area, Malakand region, is providing a huge amount of timber to the country and the PTI officials are unaware about what kinds of trees are suitable to plant there," he remarked.

When asked whether the PTI has established the 10 promised forests, Sanaullah said that the provincial government has planted some pines rather than eucalyptus in parts of the province. "They are planting eucalyptus in Peshawar City and claiming that they are planting forests," he added.

Independent Viewpoint

Truth Tracker approached Hassan Khan, a senior journalist and independent analyst, who said of PTI chairman's promise to establish 10 man-made forests, that their (PTI) claim does not match the ground realities.

He said the PTI has established nurseries in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but without proper care. "The PTI, had claimed that they will be planting 80,000,000 saplings but experts questioned how it is possible because the entire land of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is 70,000,000 to 80,000,000 square meters," he added.

"I wonder how those figures match," he added. "However, it does not mean that there are zero plantations, rather the PTI has planted saplings in various areas such as Galayat, Hangu and Kohat regions," he noted.

"The KP government has made some plantations but they could not achieve their target," he remarked. He said the PTI has, "Liberal counting of the planted saplings and secondly there is no post-care plantation mechanism."

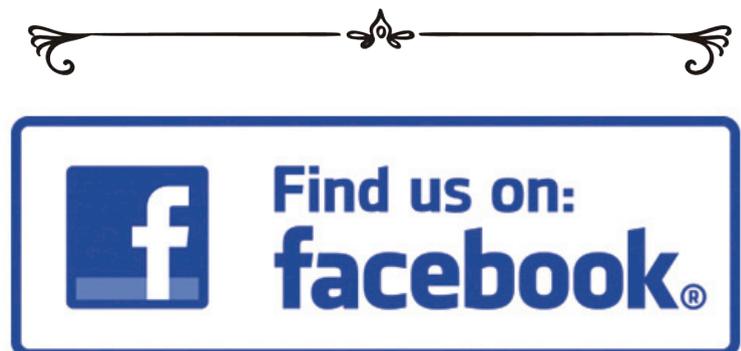
"The people hired by the PTI-led government for care of the plants have not received their salaries for the past five months so how will they take care of the plants," he added.

The provincial government, he said has some plantation in southern districts of the province but he didn't observe establishment of a formal forest by the PTI.

"I have not noticed any man-made forest, on the scale of Changa Manga, being established by the PTI," Khan remarked.

Ruling

In light of comments and views by the ruling, opposition lawmakers and independent analyst, Truth Tracker concludes that the PTI's promise of establishing 10 forests in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is underway.



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Commentary

Saudi-Iranian rivalry fuels potential nuclear race



Dr. James M. Dorsey

Saudi Arabia is developing nuclear energy and potentially a nuclear weapons capability.

The Saudi focus on nuclear serves various of the kingdom's goals: diversification of its economy, reduction of its dependence on fossil fuels, countering a potential future Iranian nuclear capability, and enhancing efforts to ensure that Saudi Arabia rather than Iran emerges as the Middle East's long-term, dominant power.

Cooperation on nuclear energy was one of 14 agreements worth \$65 billion signed during last month's visit to China by Saudi King Salman. The agreement is for a feasibility study for the construction of high-temperature gas-cooled (HTGR) nuclear power plants in the kingdom as well as cooperation in intellectual property and the development of a domestic industrial supply chain for HTGRs built in Saudi Arabia.

The agreement was one of number nuclear-related understandings concluded with China in recent years. Saudi Arabia has signed similar agreements with France, the United States, Pakistan, Russia, South Korea and Argentina.

To advance its program, involving the construction of 16 reactors by 2030 at a cost of \$100 billion, Saudi Arabia established the King Abdullah Atomic and Renewable Energy City devoted to research and application of nuclear technology.

Saudi cooperation with nuclear power Pakistan has long been a source of speculation about the kingdom's ambition. Pakistan's former ambassador to the United States, Husain Haqqani, asserts that Saudi Arabia's close ties to the Pakistani military and intelligence during the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan in the 1980s gave the kingdom arms' length access to his country's nuclear capabilities.

"By the 1980s, the Saudi ambassador was a regular guest of A. Q. Khan" or Abdul Qadeer Khan, the controversial nuclear physicist and metallurgical engineer who fathered Pakistan's atomic bomb, Mr. Haqqani said in an interview.

Retired Pakistani Major General Feroz Hassan Khan, the author of a semi-official history of Pakistan's nuclear program, has no doubt about the kingdom's interest.

"Saudi Arabia provided generous financial support to Pakistan that enabled the nuclear program to continue, especially when the country was under sanctions," Mr. Khan said in a separate interview. Mr. Khan was referring to US sanctions imposed in 1998 because of Pakistan's development of a nuclear weapons capability. He noted that at a time of economic crisis, Pakistan was with Saudi help able "to pay premium prices for expensive technologies."

The Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) said in a just published report that it had uncovered evidence that future Pakistani "assistance would not involve Pakistan supplying Saudi Arabia with a full nuclear weapon or weapons; however, Pakistan may assist in other important ways, such as supplying sensitive equipment, materials,

and know-how used in enrichment or reprocessing."

The report said it was unclear whether "Pakistan and Saudi Arabia may be cooperating on sensitive nuclear technologies in Pakistan. In an extreme case, Saudi Arabia may be financing, or will finance, an unsafeguarded uranium enrichment facility in Pakistan for later use, either in a civil or military program," the report said.

The report concluded that the 2015 international agreement dubbed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to curb Iran's nuclear program had "not eliminated the kingdom's desire for nuclear weapons capabilities and even nuclear weapons... There is little reason to doubt that Saudi Arabia will more actively seek nuclear weapons capabilities, motivated by its concerns about the ending of the JCPOA's major nuclear limitations starting after year 10 of the deal or sooner if the deal fails," the report said.

Rather than embarking on a covert program, the report predicted that Saudi Arabia would, for now, focus on building up its civilian nuclear infrastructure as well as a robust nuclear engineering and scientific workforce. This would allow the kingdom to take command of all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle at some point in the future. Saudi Arabia has in recent years significantly expanded graduate programs at its five nuclear research centres.

Saudi officials have repeatedly insisted that the kingdom is developing nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes such as medicine, electricity generation, and desalination of sea water. They said Saudi Arabia is committed to putting its

future facilities under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Saudi Arabia pledged to acquire nuclear fuel from international markets in a 2009 memorandum of understanding with the United States. In its report, ISIS noted however that the kingdom could fall back on its own uranium deposits and acquire or build uranium enrichment or reprocessing plants of its own if regional tension continued to fester. It quoted a former IAEA inspector as saying Saudi Arabia could opt to do so in five years' time.

Saudi Arabia's nuclear agency has suggested that various steps of the nuclear fuel cycle, including fuel fabrication, processing, and enrichment, would lend themselves to local production. Saudi

Arabia has yet to mine or process domestic uranium.

Saudi insistence on compliance with the IAEA and on the peaceful nature of its program is designed to avoid the kind of international castigation Iran was subjected to. Saudi Arabia is likely to maintain its position as long as Iran adheres to the nuclear agreement and US President Donald J. Trump does not act on his campaign promise to tear up the accord. Mr. Trump has toughened US attitudes towards Iran but has backed away from tinkering with the nuclear agreement.

"The current situation suggests that Saudi Arabia now has both a high disincentive to pursue nuclear weapons in the short term and a high motivation to pursue them over

the long term," the ISIS said.

Saudi ambitions and the conclusions of the ISIS report put a high premium on efforts by Kuwait and Oman to mediate an understanding between Saudi Arabia and Iran that would dull the sharp edges of the two countries' rivalry.

They also are likely to persuade Mr. Trump to try to pressure Iran to guarantee that it will not pursue nuclear weapons once the JCPOA expires in a little over a decade. That may prove a tall order given Mr. Trump's warming relations with anti-Iranian Arab autocracies evident in this week's visit to Washington by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and an earlier visit by Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

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Human Rights

Child sexual abuse looming in Pakistan.



Shaukat Korai

Karachi: A feeling of panic grew among the parents in Pakistan's largest commercial city Karachi as six-year old girl Savera became a victim of sexual abuse, says Zia Ahmed Awan a founder member "Madadgaar Helpline".

According to police and medical reports, Savera was abducted and raped, later found brutally injured from sewerage drain of city.

Pakistan is facing a hike in cases of child sexual abuse (CSA). The number of such crime has increased by 36 per cent during the first half of 2016 compare to previous year 2015, reveals a research by Sahil, an Islamabad based non-governmental organization.

Sahil is a research organization, which monitor all forms of violence against children in country.

Zia Ahmed Awan viewed poverty, illiteracy, weak legislation and poor action by authorities as basic causes of CSA in Pakistan. He argued that reducing or controlling cases of CSA is quite impossible without removal of basic causes in country, he added.

"Save the Children" Published, a research by author 'Cath Slugget' in 2003 titled, "Mapping Psychosocial support for girls and boys affected by child sexual abuse in four countries in South and Central Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and

Pakistan." The study pointed out to the lack of research in developing countries particularly in Pakistan regarding CSA. The statistics indicated that 44 per cent children among the affectees, become victims of CSA due to poverty. The report hence alluded to the fact that poverty may have been seen major contributing factor to child sexual abuse.

Child Sexual Abuse is complex issue in Pakistan, where tremendous reserve is practiced about discussing issues pertaining to sexuality in the society. Educational System does not permit also to discuss the issue of CSA in Pakistan.

A recent study, Cruel Numbers, by non-profit organisation, Sahil, reveals that more than 10 children are being abused in Pakistan daily. The year 2016 annual report by the organisation claims that as many as 2127 cases of CSA were reported during January to June 2016 in the country. Figures corroborate that the incidents of CSA have snowballed in 2016 by 36 per cent from those collected in January to June 2015.

Usually, victims of CSA belong to slum area where parents have less time for their children, says Media Manager Sahil, Mumtaz Ali Gohar. He added that poverty and illiteracy are the major causes of CSA in the country. Children wander alone in slum areas and risk becoming victims of CSA, as in Savera's case, he added.

According to the police report, Savera was abducted nearby her house and raped later. Her neck was gashed, possible the culprits left her dead in sewerage drain, says police. "She was abducted while wandering around her house," said her

father Shabeer Hussain. Savera's parents live in Korangi, one of the localities in slum areas of the largest commercial city Karachi.

Savera's father reported that she is well and stable now, however he deplored the lack of progress to arrest the culprits. Savera's incident terrified the whole family and residents of locality, he added. He has no hope regarding arrest of culprits.

Dr Sumera Aziz Ali Senior instructor in Aga Khan University did research along with Dr Savera Aziz "Child Sexual Abuse leads to Psychological disorders" in 2014, <http://www.mednifico.com/index.php/elmedj/article/view/317>. She reaffirmed that their research findings revealed that most victims of CSA belong to slum area and poor family. Eighty per cent cases of CSA are not reported in Pakistan, it is another painful than others, she said.

Among its recommendations the research suggested an integrated approach to be focused on teacher, parents and medical professionals to resolve the issue of CSA, but it hasn't been taken its course in Pakistan. Ali's research also proposed the Government to adopt legislation on CSA, awarding stern action against the culprits.

According to Ali CSA damages our nation's future, because children build the nation and they are unsafe in country; these incidents also cripple the victim's family socially and economically, she added.

Statistics obtained from Sahil's "Cruel Numbers" report indicate that gang sodomy is on the rise by 71 per cent;

April 16-30, 2017

attempts of rape have increased by 61 per cent; sodomy has shot up by 46 per cent and; cases of rape have soared by 20 per cent as compare to the data from the first half of 2015.

The report indicates that the highest number of cases occurred in Punjab, while Sindh is second with 24%. The reported cases from Sindh increased to 77 per cent and; 66 per cent cases grew in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as compared to the data from Jan-Jun 2015. Ali confirms that CSA is rising annually in Pakistan because no stern action has been taken against culprits and no policy has allowed to evolve to curb the CSA.

Another report, "A Five year Analysis" of 'Sahil' from 2007 to 2011 revealed the unfortunate continuous ascending trend in child sexual abuse in Pakistan. According to data of "Five years analysis" the 2331 incidents of CSA happened during 2007,

while rise in CSA continued till 2011, excluding the year 2008.

The data Analysis shows that CSA increased by 9.4 per cent during 2009 and by 10 per cent in 2010. CSA mounted to 17 per cent in 2012 compared to 2011 in Pakistan.

Awan said that CSA is a serious issue in Pakistan, in order to prevent it the government should act boldly and announce an emergency in the country, otherwise rise in CSA will continue. He said that earlier the crime wasn't reported widely but during 2016 it looks positive, 897 women and children from across Pakistan came forward and fought for protection by calling, visiting or contacting their organization.

He stated that, only 10 per cent cases of violence are being reported in the media in Sindh and Punjab with even less

reporting from Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"An inefficient social justice system is the reason for different forms of violence in Pakistan," said Awan. He suggested stern action by special courts in lower judiciary of the country to accelerate the cases against culprits of CSA.

It is too difficult to overcome CSA without removal of its basic causes; Government of Sindh is belligerent to remove issues related to children including CSA, said Dr. Sikander Ali Mendhro provincial minister Sindh for parliamentary affairs and health. He added that the provincial assembly completed the legislation to overcome the issues but work still needs to be done.



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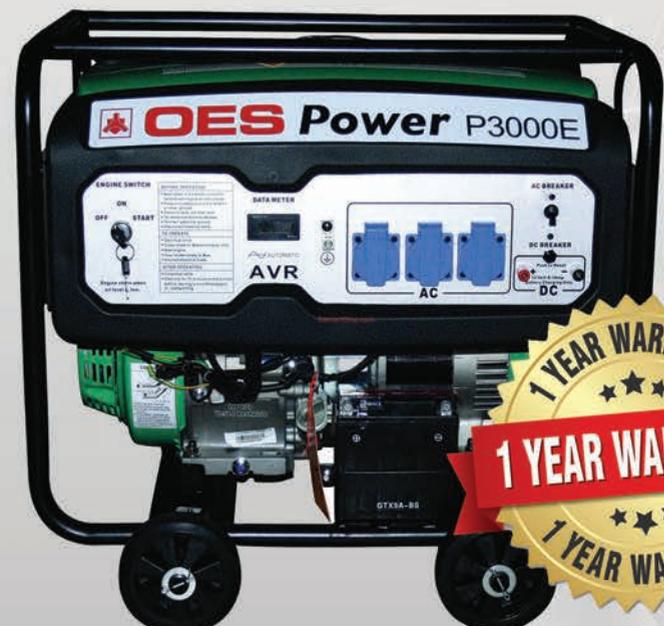


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