

Case Study

From Ignorance to Enlightenment

A tiger mother's effort to get her daughter educated

As it's rightly said that knowing self is the first step towards change and dialogue is an effective tool to trigger thinking and self awareness process ultimately leading to change process. It was realized during a gender session at Nakholi (UC Ichrian) when women who appeared to be reserved and indifferent slowly started opening up and sharing their life stories, their hardships due to many socioeconomic and cultural realities and how they struggled past them on sheer will and persistence.

After attending gender session and discussion gender equality; how women themselves can act as a catalyst to change the whole gray picture, Gulab Un Nisa shared her faced ordeals caused by social taboos and biased perceptions & her persistence to overcome the odds is exemplary.

Gulab un Nissa in 30's is the mother of three daughters and two sons is the resident of village Nakholi (Union Council Chattar, District Mansehra). Her husband Bashir

previously served in police department and after retirement now working in Islamabad in private sector. Like many other women who were deprive of the right to education (due to absence of such education facility locally) Gulab un Nissa is down right focused on getting her children esp. daughters educated as according to her" I know education is key to independence and a better life". But after having said that her facial expressions gave way to a whole lot struggle is going through to realize those dreams. "There is only one school in the village



Nakholi for girls and its providing education only up to 5th grade after which most of girls stay home and help out in daily household chores. When my eldest daughter Ayesha passed 5th grade I had to make decision about her future; make her sit at home and marry her off when she reach teen age or take a bold step and get her admitted in a school where there was coeducation. No other girl could carry her education due to this restraint as people around the area had very negative opinion about girls studying in coeducation."

“I faced strong resistance at domestic level by my in-laws esp. my mother-in-law and even my own mother didn’t stood by me “says sad but determined Gulab un Nissa.” My husband didn’t readily agreed to this saying we have to face social pressures and our daughter may have to face pointing fingers and even harassment. But I was determined to the point of even disobeying him if he didn’t allow Ayesha to get education to which he finally acceded”. But the struggle didn’t stop here says Gulab un Nissa. “I was rebuked and slandered at the hands of local community esp. women from neighborhood who called me names and kept passing pungent remarks about my family on the account that Ayesha is getting education in co education. My 13 years old son is also facing same treatment at the hands of neighborhood boys who keep testing his patience through passing nasty remarks about Ayesha and me”. Through this rare platform of women VCC (village coordination committee) initiated and now facilitated by HAASHAR has provided me an outlet to share my ordeals and dreams. It will also help giving those women courage to come forward and get their daughters enrolled who had been kept mum by social pressures”. When asked about what her future plans for Ayesha Gulab un Nissa smiled and said,” My husband says that we will get Ayesha admitted in a reputable college in Islamabad after her matriculation from this local school”, continues Gulab un Nissa. ” Ayesha wants to join police department after completing her education as she wants to serve her community through working on protection issues being faced by local women and make this dream of a tolerant and healthy society come true” says an illiterate but an enlightened mother.