



children 21/1/04 The News

Are children our future?

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In this part of the world, do we have time and resources to please children around us, to take them where they long to go and play with them? Celebrations of such days in countries like Pakistan can only help in creating an awareness for the government to reconsider how children are treated in the world. This itself is a reasonable contribution, though not very practical. Each and every child deserves the right to be protected, educated and respected. But in Pakistan, children belong to that group which is not given much importance regarding what they feel and how they feel towards the handling of their respective lives by elders. It is a misconception that children are not much capable of experiencing certain emotions such as loneliness, importance of money, or self-respect. They are not indifferent; rather they are more sensitive.

Children are our future; a collective hope for humanity but may be for the developed countries. Here in the developing part of the world, we have children as domestic labour with no specific rules defined for them, such as fixed number of working hours, a day-off, decent salary, minimum

age, etc. Then, we have working children who are usually taken by their own parents to some garages, hotels on subways, many a times as punishment for wandering in the streets or joining bad company. Another set of kids constitute of refugee children who are spotted in every nook and corner of the vicinity fishing for food or some useful item from the garbage. Not the least is the group of juveniles in prisons with many caught for petty crimes as theft, shoplifting, pocket-picking, etc. Most of them are waiting for months, even years for the hearing of their cases.

A campaign shall also be launched with focus on 'Better Parenting for Kids'. Many children report aggressive behavior at home. It is quite common in rural areas that women take out their frustration on their kids. The process of Confidence Building is largely hindered due to this reason alone. Not only beating but use of hostile words, discouragement at children's intention to express themselves and communicating in an orderly manner also affect a child's personality. Childhood is entitled to special care and assistance

Children with disabilities and children from socially disadvantaged group are also treated unfairly. It is not the feelings of sympathy or pity to be thrown in the less lucky kids; it is a general attitude of acceptance such children need. Likewise, when we talk of juveniles, we need to shift our

perspective about them from 'bad children to the bad circumstances'. Children need to be placed at the center of the policy and the program by the government. Health and Education are two sectors where the government must work hard to produce better generations of the country.

On the celebration of this particular day, another aspect must also be brought into the knowledge of our education ministry: it is 'Better Teacher-Student Relationship'. School is the main topic of children's conversation with friends, regardless of those who go to school or not. Except for very few private schools with big fee, majority of the children have fear for their teachers than respect. It is quite evident in various primary school in rural sects, where a child may receive good beating for coming late to school or forgetting his book at home. Very little work done in this aspect calls the NGOs to step forward and make up for what the government has not been able to done due to limited factors. An uncomfortable relationship of children with teacher makes them feel the lack of space to express themselves.

Investment in children is the best investment a government can make and it shall be centralized with child's health, nutrition and education. Countries with powerful economy need to show leadership in the pursuit of child's right. It doesn't mean that developing countries like Pakistan exempt their government to bring in efforts for a secure, healthier and better future for the children. We shall honor each child as a person in need of our continuous presence and protection.