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Aawaz II

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Inclusion, Accountability, Reducing Exploitation

Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practice (KAP) Survey:

Child Marriage, Gender-based Violence and Vulnerable Groups

Aawaz II

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Introduction

Aawaz II supports communities across 15 districts in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) to address harmful social norms and practices, including child marriage, gender-based violence (GBV), and discrimination and intolerance towards marginalised groups, persons with disabilities (PWDs), religious minorities, and transgender persons. Managed by the British Council and funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the programme operates from 2023 to 2027 through a community engagement model built on Aawaz Aagahi Centres (AACs), Village/ Neighbourhood Forums (V/NFs), and youth volunteers known as Aawaz Change Agents (ACAs).

A Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) baseline survey was conducted in 2023 to establish benchmarks for tracking programme progress. This midline survey (2025) measures changes in community knowledge, attitudes and practices since the baseline across the five priority thematic areas of child marriage, GBV, persons with disabilities, transgender persons, and religious minorities. It covers 15 districts (10 in Punjab and 5 in KP) and draws on 5,088 completed interviews. All analysis is conducted on the full consolidated sample, with every comparison drawn between the 2023 baseline and the 2025 midline; figures cited throughout should therefore be read as movements between the two rounds. Because the baseline and midline do not cover an identical set of districts, 11 are common to both, headline trends are read on a province-stratified basis, and reported margins of error apply within programme areas. The survey's objectives are to measure progress from the baseline across behavioural indicators, to identify where Aawaz II interventions have improved awareness, attitudes and community action, and to generate evidence to guide programme adaptation, communication and policy advocacy.

Key Insights

The midline survey documents substantial and broadly consistent gains in knowledge, attitudes and practices across all five thematic areas relative to the 2023 baseline, with the following cross-cutting insights emerging:

1. **Legal and rights literacy has expanded dramatically from a very low base, though knowledge gaps persist.** Awareness of laws protecting women from violence rose from 10% to 61%; awareness of disability rights laws from 12% to 61%; awareness of transgender rights laws from 8% to 50%; and recognition that all citizens have the right to worship freely from 35% to 96%. On child marriage, the share identifying 18 as the appropriate minimum age for girls rose from 23% to 67%, and awareness of child protection services from 8% to 52%. Absolute levels nonetheless remained lower among lower-educated and rural respondents, GBV legal awareness among those with no formal education rose steeply (6% to 45%) but still trailed the levels reached by graduates.

2. **Attitudes have shifted substantially toward rejection of harmful norms, but residual resistance persists in identifiable sub-groups.** Opposition to child marriage for girls rose from 13% to 90%; outright rejection of spousal violence from 21% to 53%; recognition of male PWDs as full community members from 38% to 76%; acceptance of transgender persons as fellow human beings from 34% to 55%; and support for equal rights of religious minorities from 26% to 95%. Conditional justifications for spousal violence, stigma toward transgender persons, and religious intolerance remain concentrated among men, older adults, and respondents with lower educational attainment, underscoring that norm change is underway but incomplete.

3. **Willingness to intervene rose sharply across all themes, and reported action increased, but a consistent willingness-to-action gap remains.** Willingness to intervene rose from 26% to 64% for child marriage (girls), 51% to 83% for PWD discrimination, 39% to 76% for transgender discrimination, and 37% to 71% for discrimination against religious minorities. Reported personal action also rose, child marriage 9% to 20%, PWDs 14% to 32%, transgender persons 4% to 26%, religious minorities 6% to 21%, and 28% for GBV at midline, but in every theme intent substantially outpaces action, indicating that stated support has not yet fully translated into protective behaviour.

4. **Protective action remains predominantly community-mediated, while formal institutional channels are underused.** Across all five themes, those who acted relied overwhelmingly on informal channels, speaking directly to the

perpetrator or to community elders, rather than formal reporting. For GBV, 77% spoke to the perpetrator and 57% to elders, while only 5% reported to relevant authorities; comparable patterns hold for child marriage (82% to the girl's parents, 56% to elders), PWDs (78% to the transgressor), and religious minorities (67% to the transgressor, 7% to authorities). Helplines, police, and Aawaz forums are gaining ground but remain secondary.

5. **Community organisations have emerged as the most visible prevention actors, outpacing government, though state visibility has also risen from a very low base and remains uneven.** Awareness of community organisations addressing harm rose from 7% to 57% (child marriage), 3% to 79% (GBV awareness-raising), 7% to 59% (PWDs), and 4% to 58% (transgender persons). Perceived government action improved markedly from near-zero baselines, departments acting in GBV cases rose from 14% to 53%, and awareness of government services for PWDs from 9% to 58%, yet only 12% of respondents reported strong government action on child marriage, and recognition remained consistently higher in Punjab than in KP.

6. **Gains are broad-based but stratified, and marginalised groups report sharper realities than the general population.** Education and wealth emerged as the strongest and most consistent predictors of positive outcomes, with awareness, willingness, and action all rising alongside both. Persistent provincial and gender differences remain: Punjab generally records higher awareness, KP higher reported prevalence of violence and discrimination, and women recognise intolerance more readily (66% vs 54% for religious minorities) yet report lower inter-faith interaction (44% vs 63%). Marginalised respondents themselves report markedly harsher experiences than the wider public, only 14% of transgender respondents said violence never occurs in their communities, and non-Muslim respondents reported far higher inter-faith interaction (80% vs 44%) and discrimination recognition than Muslim respondents, a perception gap suggesting that the scale of discrimination remains under-recognised by the majority.













Knowledge, Attitude, Practices towards Child Marriage

KNOWLEDGE

Child Marriage

- Awareness of the legal minimum age of marriage for girls increased substantially, with 67% identifying 18 years as the appropriate minimum age, compared to 23% at baseline.
- Awareness that women have the legal right to choose whom they marry increased markedly from 22% to 83%.
- Recognition that child marriage has harmful consequences increased from 63% to 80%.
- The most commonly recognised consequences were:
  - Early pregnancy and childbirth affecting girls' health (50%)
  - Increased risk of physical abuse (42%)
  - Health risks for children (38%)
  - Depression (37%)
  - Emotional abuse (32%)
- Awareness of child protection services increased from 8% to 52%.
- Among those aware of child protection services, respondents identified:
  - Emergency helpline (65%)
  - Women's protection helpline (40%)
  - Child protection helpline (37%)
  - NGOs (34%)
  - Social Welfare Department (26%)
  - Child Protection Unit (24%)

ATTITUDES

Child Marriage

- Nearly all respondents (99%) believed that girls' education is important, compared to 80% at baseline.
- Rejection of child marriage increased markedly:
  - Marriage of boys under 18 not justified: 28% → 89%
  - Marriage of girls under 18 not justified: 13% → 90%
- Among the minority who continued to justify child marriage, the most common reasons were:
  - Marriage is a religious duty (49%)
  - Reduces the economic burden on parents (24%)
- Preference for girls marrying at 18 years increased from 26% to 84%, while support for marriage at puberty or parental discretion declined.
- Willingness to intervene increased substantially:
  - If a boy under 18 was being married: 26% → 59%
  - If a girl under 18 was being married: 26% → 64%
- Attitudes towards girls' decision-making also improved:
  - Both parents and the girl should decide together: 16% → 61%
  - Parents alone should decide: 74% → 32

PRACTICE

Child Marriage

- Perceived prevalence of child marriage declined substantially:
  - 69% reported child marriage as rare in their community.
  - Only 7% reported it as widespread, compared with around 29% at baseline.
- Reported age at marriage shifted markedly, with 71% indicating that girls usually marry after age 18, compared with the majority previously reporting marriage before 18.
- Awareness of community organisations working to prevent child marriage increased from 7% to 57%.
- Reported community actions increased substantially:
  - Awareness sessions: 2% → 83%
  - Reporting child marriage cases: 2% → 32%
  - Referral and redressal support: 1% → 11%
- Awareness of government action improved modestly:
  - Government departments taking action against underage marriage: 2% → 12%
  - 40% still believed no action had been taken.
- Personal action to stop an underage marriage increased from 9% to 20%, although 80% still reported taking no action.
  - Among those who intervened, responses continued to rely primarily on community-based mechanisms:
  - Spoke with the girl's parents (82%)
  - Spoke with community elders/influentials (56%)
  - Discussed with Aawaz Forums (25%)
  - Called child protection helpline (11%)
  - Called emergency helpline (10%)
  - Reported to relevant authorities (4%)

Knowledge, Attitude, Practices towards Gender Based Violence

Gender Based Violence	Gender Based Violence	Gender Based Violence
KNOWLEDGE • Awareness that laws exist to protect women from violence increased substantially from 10% to 61%. • Recognition of the main forms of GBV increased, with respondents identifying: ▪ Physical violence (78%) ▪ Psychological violence (69%) ▪ Sexual harassment (22%) • Recognition of psychological violence showed the greatest improvement, reflecting a broader understanding of GBV beyond physical abuse. • Awareness that GBV has harmful consequences remained high (81%). • The most commonly recognised impacts were: ▪ Damage to women's mental well-being (77%) ▪ Physical injuries (68%) ▪ Negative effects on children's mental well-being (36%) ▪ Family conflict (31%) • Respondents identified the leading causes of GBV as: ▪ Lack of education among men (34%) ▪ Poverty and stress (33%) ▪ Women's lack of financial autonomy (27%) • Awareness of support services increased substantially: ▪ Emergency helpline (64%) ▪ Women's protection helpline (44%) ▪ Women's Protection Units/Crisis Centres/ Darul Aman (33%) ▪ NGOs providing support (33%)	**ATTITUDES** • Respondents stating wife beating is never justified increased from 21% to 54%. • Among those who continued to justify wife beating, the most common reasons were: ▪ Going out without permission (36%) ▪ Neglecting children (30%) ▪ Arguing with husband (29%) ▪ Refusing sex (22%) ▪ Burning food (15%) ▪ Wanting to work (9%) • Belief that women experiencing violence should seek help increased from 67% to 90%. • Preferred sources of support remained primarily informal: ▪ Family (77%) ▪ Community (34%) ▪ Relevant authorities/protection centres (29%) • Willingness to intervene increased substantially: ▪ Unknown woman (60%) ▪ Family member (58%) ▪ Woman from the community (46%) ▪ Woman with disability (36%) ▪ Woman from a religious minority (32%) • Among those willing to intervene, responses continued to rely primarily on community-based mechanisms: ▪ Speak directly to the abuser (60%) ▪ Speak to community elders/influentials (44%) ▪ Emergency helpline (15%) ▪ Aawaz Forums (15%) ▪ Women's protection helpline/shelter (13%) ▪ Relevant authorities (9%)	**PRACTICE** • Perceived prevalence of violence against women declined substantially: ▪ Reporting VAW as rare or non-existent: 26% → 72% ▪ Reporting VAW as widespread: 29% → 9% • Reported violence against women within households declined from 48% to 13%. • Help-seeking by women experiencing domestic violence increased from 43% to 63%, although this remained below the 90% who believed women should seek help. • Among those seeking help, responses continued to rely primarily on community-based mechanisms: ▪ Family (75%) ▪ Community (34%) ▪ Police (29%) • Awareness of government services for protecting women increased, with 53% reporting such services were available. • Perceived government action increased from 14% to 53%. • Awareness of community organisations responding to GBV increased substantially: ▪ Awareness sessions: 3% → 79% ▪ Reporting cases: 3% → 33% ▪ Referral and redressal support: 2% → 15% ▪ Community organisations doing very little: 48% → 2% • Personal action to stop GBV increased to 28% • Among those who intervened, responses continued to rely primarily on community-based mechanisms: ▪ Spoke to the perpetrator (77%) ▪ Engaged community elders/influentials (57%) ▪ Discussed with Aawaz Forums (21%) ▪ Called emergency helpline (13%) ▪ Contacted women's protection helpline/shelter (12%) ▪ Reported to relevant authorities (5%)

Knowledge, Attitude, Practices towards Religious Minorities

Religious Minorities	Religious Minorities	Religious Minorities
KNOWLEDGE • Awareness that all citizens of Pakistan have the right to worship according to their religion increased dramatically from 35% to 96%. • Recognition of discrimination against religious minorities increased across most domains: ▪ Social exclusion/lack of acceptance: 44% → 57% ▪ Discrimination in education: 28% → 45% ▪ Discrimination in employment: 25% → 33% ▪ Discrimination in health services: 11% → 16% • Awareness of discrimination in vocational training (15% → 12%) and public services (14% → 12%) declined slightly. • Recognition of intolerance towards religious minorities increased from 45% to 60%, indicating greater awareness of existing discrimination. • Religious differences (68%), social practices (26%), lack of religious understanding (15%), feelings of religious superiority (13%), and incitement by religious leaders (11%) were identified as the main drivers of intolerance.	**ATTITUDES** • Support for equal rights of religious minorities increased substantially from 26% to 95%. • Comfort interacting with someone from another religion increased from 27% to 93%. • Comfort interacting with someone from another sect increased from 28% to 96%. • Those who would not be happy having someone from another religion in their home declined sharply from 71% to 7%. • Those who would not be happy having someone from another sect in their home declined from 71% to almost zero. • Interfaith exposure increased considerably: ▪ Visited a Church: 3% → 36% ▪ Visited a mosque of another sect: 6% → 17% ▪ Visited an Imambargah: 7% → 25% ▪ Visited a Gurdwara: 1% → 11% ▪ Visited a Mandir: 1% → 10% • Respondents who had never visited another religion's or sect's place of worship declined from 100% to 8%. • Despite greater exposure, hesitation about visiting places of worship of other faiths remained: ▪ Mandir: 27% → 36% ▪ Gurdwara: 24% → 34% ▪ Church: 27% → 30% ▪ Imambargah: 19% → 26% • Willingness to intervene if witnessing discrimination or abuse against a religious minority increased from 37% to 71%	**PRACTICE** • Reported interaction with members of religious minorities more than doubled from 25% (baseline) to 53% (midline). • Reported disrespectful behaviour towards members of another religion declined from 9% to 5%. • The proportion reporting that discrimination against religious minorities never occurs in their community increased from 24% to 43%. • The proportion reporting that violence against religious minorities never occurs in their community increased from 39% to 52%. • Reported personal action to stop discrimination or violence against religious minorities increased from 6% to 21%, although the majority (79%) still reported taking no action. • Among those who intervened, action remained largely community-based: ▪ Spoke to the transgressor: 67% ▪ Engaged community elders/faith leaders: 61% ▪ Discussed with Aawaz Forums: 22% ▪ Called an emergency helpline: 19% ▪ Reported to relevant authorities: 7% • About 51% reported that religious minority survivors seek help when experiencing violence or discrimination, with police (64%) being the most commonly identified source of support, followed by village/family elders (43%), informal community groups (24%), NGOs (18%), and district administration (16%).

Knowledge, Attitude, Practices towards Persons with Disabilities

Persons with Disabilities	Persons with Disabilities	Persons with Disabilities
KNOWLEDGE • Awareness of laws related to PWDs increased substantially from 12% (baseline) to 61% (midline). • Awareness improved across all demographic groups but remained lower among transgender respondents (30%), respondents with no formal education (45%), and the poorest households (54%) compared to university graduates (70%) and the richest households (77%). • The proportion of respondents reporting "don't know" whether disability laws exist declined from 36% to 28%, indicating improved legal awareness. • Recognition of discrimination against PWDs remained high, with respondents identifying discrimination in: ▪ Education (43% to 39%) ▪ Within the home (47% to 37%) ▪ Employment (29% to 27%) • Awareness of discrimination in transport (15%) and health services (13%) emerged at midline, reflecting greater recognition of accessibility barriers. • Awareness of government services for PWDs increased from 9% to 58%, although awareness remained lower among poorer, less educated, transgender respondents and PWDs themselves. • Awareness of community organisations addressing discrimination against PWDs increased markedly from 7% to 59%, although visibility remained lower among transgender respondents (36%) and PWDs themselves (49%).	**ATTITUDES** • Support for the inclusion of male PWDs in community life increased from 38% to 76%. • Support for the inclusion of female PWDs in community life increased from 33% to 75%. • The proportion viewing disability as a source of shame declined: ▪ Male PWDs: 29% → 10% ▪ Female PWDs: 32% → 9% • The belief that PWDs should remain confined to the home declined substantially: ▪ Male PWDs: 36% → 13% ▪ Female PWDs: 37% → 14% • Comfort interacting with PWDs increased dramatically from 41% to 93%. • Reasons for discomfort shifted: ▪ Being "put off" by disability declined from 42% to 21%. ▪ Not knowing what to say became the main reason for discomfort (44% at midline), suggesting remaining barriers are related more to confidence than stigma. • Willingness to intervene if witnessing discrimination or abuse against a PWD increased from 51% to 83%, indicating a major positive shift in social responsibility.	**PRACTICE** • Reported interaction with PWDs increased substantially from 27% to 80%, representing one of the largest behavioural changes observed. • Respondents reporting PWDs are shunned, ignored or abused declined from 46% to 38%. • Those reporting PWDs are supported to access education, skills and lead full lives increased from 9% to 25%. • Awareness of help-seeking pathways expanded: ▪ Family remained the primary source of support (43% → 55%). ▪ Police (9% → 22%). ▪ Neighbours/community members (17% → 27%). ▪ NGOs (<1% → 11%). ▪ Community/religious leaders (5% → 13%). • Perceived government action against discrimination and violence increased substantially, with 50% reporting government action at midline compared to 6% at baseline. • Reported personal action to stop discrimination or violence against PWDs more than doubled from 14% to 32%, although most respondents (68%) still reported taking no action. • Among those who intervened, action remained primarily informal, with most: ▪ Speaking directly to the transgressor (78%). ▪ Engaging community elders (53%). ▪ Far fewer reported incidents to authorities (5%) or used emergency helplines (16%).

Knowledge, Attitude, Practices towards Transgender Persons

Transgender Persons	Transgender Persons	Transgender Persons
KNOWLEDGE • Awareness of provincial laws protecting the rights of transgender persons increased substantially from 8% (baseline) to 52% (midline). • The proportion reporting "don't know" about transgender rights laws declined from 45% to 34%, indicating improved legal awareness. • Recognition of discrimination against transgender persons increased across most domains: ▪ Discrimination in schools: 27% → 36% ▪ Discrimination in employment: 23% → 32% ▪ Discrimination in healthcare: 7% → 17% ▪ Stigma and social exclusion: 18% → 28% ▪ Psychological, physical and sexual violence: 33% → 35% • Recognition of lack of family acceptance declined from 47% to 34%, suggesting some improvement in perceived family acceptance. • Respondents identified the most common forms of discrimination as: ▪ Discrimination in schools (36%) ▪ Psychological, physical and sexual violence (35%) ▪ Lack of family acceptance (34%) ▪ Employment discrimination (32%) ▪ Stigma and social exclusion (28%)	**ATTITUDES** • Recognition that transgender persons face intolerance increased from 39% (baseline) to 70% (midline), reflecting greater awareness of social exclusion. • The main perceived drivers of intolerance were: ▪ Viewing transgender persons as low status (58%) ▪ Community beliefs (31%) ▪ Religious perceptions (17%) • Positive attitudes improved substantially: ▪ Respondents viewing transgender persons as fellow human beings with the same feelings and aspirations increased from 34% to 55%. ▪ Those believing transgender persons can make valuable contributions to society increased from 14% to 41%. • Negative perceptions declined sharply: ▪ Viewing transgender persons as abnormal or embarrassing: 31% → 10% ▪ Believing transgender persons deserve ill-treatment: 24% → 5% ▪ Willingness to intervene when witnessing discrimination or abuse increased markedly from 39% to 76%.	**PRACTICE** • The proportion reporting that violence against transgender persons never occurs in their community increased from 22% (baseline) to 41% (midline). • Reported help-seeking by transgender persons experiencing violence or discrimination increased from 28% to 47%. • Awareness of support pathways increased substantially: ▪ Police: 15% → 62% ▪ Family members: 6% → 40% ▪ Community members: 6% → 26% ▪ Community/religious leaders: 2% → 21% ▪ NGOs: 1% → 20% • Awareness of government services for transgender persons increased from 10% to 47%, although over one-third (37%) remained unsure. • Perceptions of government action improved considerably: ▪ 36% reported that government departments take strong action against violence and discrimination. ▪ 20% believed government makes some effort. ▪ 17% believed government does very little or nothing. • Awareness of community organisations working on transgender rights increased dramatically from 4% to 58%. • Reported personal action to stop discrimination or violence increased from 4% to 26%, although nearly three-quarters (74%) still reported taking no action. • Among those who intervened, responses remained primarily community-based: ▪ Spoke to the transgressor: 77% ▪ Engaged community elders/influentials: 41%

Key Recommendations

The report identified the limited visibility of government engagement as the most pressing institutional gap, and the distance between rising willingness and actual protective action as the central behavioural challenge. The recommendations below are thematic rather than strictly priority-ranked, and are mutually reinforcing.

A. **Consolidate and deepen rights and legal literacy across all themes.** Although legal awareness has risen sharply, gaps persist, particularly around the legal age of marriage and around disability and transgender rights among lower-educated and rural populations. Rights-based messaging should be embedded into community platforms such as Village/Neighbourhood Forums and AACs using simplified, visual, and story-based materials, with priority given to women, youth, lower-literacy groups, and underserved districts to ensure equitable gains. Information on laws, services, and helplines is most effective when framed within wellbeing and rights narratives rather than legal definitions alone.

B. **Address persistent norms through targeted male, elder, and faith-leader engagement.** Attitudinal resistance among men, older adults, and lower-educated groups remains the most significant barrier to full norm change, and the cited drivers of intolerance, religious framing of child marriage (49% of the minority who still endorse it), the perception of transgender persons as low status, and religious differences toward minorities (68%), are embedded in belief systems. Partnerships with progressive religious scholars, male-focused norm-change work, and sustained community dialogue rather than one-off sessions are essential for durable change.

C. **Convert rising willingness to intervene into safe, structured collective action.** The sharp rise in willingness must be matched by clear referral pathways and formal linkages to child protection services, GBV helplines, police, and relevant government departments. Training for community actors, anonymous reporting options, and monitored community-response mechanisms will reduce fear of retaliation and help close the willingness-to-action gap evident in every theme.

D. **Strengthen government responsiveness, service visibility, and institutional accountability.** Identified across all five chapters as the most pressing institutional gap, community organisations far outpace formal state systems in perceived effectiveness, only 12% of respondents reported strong government action on child marriage, and service coverage remains uneven (notably with Punjab ahead of KP). Provincial governments should increase budget allocations for prevention and protection, make existing services physically and operationally visible at union-council and tehsil levels, reinforce implementation of existing legislation, and strengthen citizen–state engagement so communities can make informed demands of duty-bearers.

E. **Adopt equity-focused targeting to close stratified gaps.** Because gains track strongly with education, wealth, province, and gender, outreach must be deliberately directed toward lower-educated, poorer, rural, and KP populations where awareness and willingness lag, and toward women whose inter-faith and public engagement remains lower. Equity targeting should be built into programme design and monitoring, including disaggregated tracking of awareness, willingness, action, and perceived safety, rather than addressed as an afterthought.

F. **Address internalised stigma and expand inclusive support for marginalised groups themselves.** A recurring finding across PWDs, transgender persons, and religious minorities is that members of these groups report harsher lived realities and remain comparatively disconnected from services. Targeted empowerment and psychosocial support, peer support groups, mentorship, and legal aid, should build agency within these communities, alongside trans-inclusive health and employment services, disability-inclusive household engagement, and dedicated support for minority women facing compounded marginalisation.

Conclusion

Thus, Aawaz II aims to transform individual and social behaviours through participatory and inclusive community engagement strategies. The programme seeks to empower vulnerable groups to participate in decision-making and improve their access to opportunities and resources, while also fostering collective action against inequality, exploitation, and violence. This approach strengthens protection and accountability mechanisms by supporting community-led safeguarding and referral systems, enhancing collaboration with service providers, and promoting inclusive community structures and sustainable action against GBV, child marriage, and discrimination.

Ultimately, Aawaz II aims to empower communities and government institutions to increase voice, choice, and control for women, girls, boys, youth, religious minorities, and other marginalised groups, protect them from exploitation, and prevent discrimination and intolerance at all levels, contributing to a more inclusive, tolerant, and peaceful Pakistan.













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