

Sanjha Vehra – A voice to the Neglected

Alishbah Ashraf, a girl child enrolled in the ECD center Basti Malook. She was 3 ½ years when got enrolled there. After admission, for many days, she had been behaving strange, looked around surprisingly but kept quiet and said not even a single word. Initially, her teacher / care giver Zartashia observed her to understand her strange behavior. After a week, when filling Alishbah's ICP, she asked Nafeesa Bibi (Alishbah's mother) about her (Alishbah) medical history if she had suffered from any physical or mental disability. Her mother said that Alishbah is not dumb at all but she avoid speaking in front of others as she cannot speak correctly and people often make fun of her wrong pronunciation which is not in her control, she is very shy and has no friend, often she likes to play alone. Even she does not play with her siblings too. Her mother was very much worried for her non friendly behavior. Ms. Zartashia listened to her mother keenly and ensured that Alishbah will be better with the passage of time.



She started encouraging Alishbah to speak up in the daily activities e.g. greeting circle, group work, storytelling, play time etc. with the help of teacher and fellows' encouragement and love, Alishbah started giving single word reply; "YES" or "NO". At times she kept quite yet.



Simultaneously Ms. Zartashia and LHW shared her ICP (Individual Child Profile) with doctor in weekly medical checkup since it was identified in the ICP that she was underweight and the other problem was that she could not speak correctly. The doctor examined her thoroughly and prescribed her supplements to take from BHU (basic Health Unit) to improve her health. He also said that Alishbah had a problem which is called "tongue Tie" (her lower middle tongue is joined with inner part of lower teeth) that is why she could not speak correctly. He referred her to THQ (Tehsil Head Quarters) for a test and further treatment. LHW took her to THQ along with her mother where she went through the recommended test. As per reports, hopefully she might be able to speak right after a minor surgery of tongue. Her parents agreed on it. It took her a week to recover completely and Alishbah got able to speak better.



After one year at the center, Alishbah has now improved in terms of better peer relationship and correct pronunciation after the surgery. She has got many friends in the center and neighborhood. She enjoys singing rhymes and songs.

Her mother says gratefully *“Sanjha Vehra granted voice to my daughter otherwise she would live voiceless forever”*

