



PUNJAB POPULATION INNOVATION FUND

Empowering Communities, Enabling Change

Introducing Innovative Model For Improving Access to Family Planning Services for the Marginalized

FOR BENAZIR INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMME BENEFICIARIES IN RAHIM YAR KHAN

Message by

Sardar Usman Buzdar
Chief Minister, Punjab
on International
Day for the
Eradication of Poverty

As you know, poverty is a social phenomenon that assaults all aspects of social to economic rights such as the right to health, education, food and clean drinking water. It further impinges upon human dignity as it erodes the well-being, increases vulnerability and reduces choices required for reasonable standard of living and other fundamental civil and socio-political rights. There exists a critical complexity between poverty, population growth and sustainable development. This recognition serves as the basis for all initiatives aiming to improve the Human Development Index and achieve Sustainable Development Goals. Pakistan is the sixth largest contributor to the world population. This burgeoning populace has direct consequences towards resource allocation and government efforts towards poverty alleviation. Punjab houses half of Pakistan's population and the current growth rate compounds economic deprivation and makes the challenge of social uplift more urgent and acute. As the world observes International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and we reflect back on the significant strides made to reduce multidimensional poverty in Pakistan, so we renew our resolve to continue our efforts as there is still far we have to go. My government is committed to the allocation of maximum financial resources to realize the dream of the population planning in letter and spirit. The family planning is high on national agendas as evident from the constitution of Task Force on Population Chaired by the Prime Minister. I would like to share the recently-launched Innovative Model for Improving Access to Family Planning Services for the Marginalized which is a ground-breaking initiative synergizing human development through Family Planning in the remote and poverty-hit tehsils of district Rahim Yar Khan. The present government understands the problems posed by poverty to the common man and is consistently working towards the eradication of poverty by prioritizing the welfare of the masses. My Government is committed to accelerating efforts to ensure population stabilization to achieve the vision of Naya Pakistan where all citizens have equal opportunity and contribute to national development.

BACKGROUND:

Unwanted fertility is more common among poor, rural, and globally uneducated women than among their well off, urban, and educated counterparts, although this disparity is much smaller in countries with strong family planning programs. Evidence suggests that dependency ratio and household size have a statistically significant effect on poverty status while contraceptive use has the greatest impact on fertility and dependency ratio in Pakistan (FP2020 goals, Age Structural Changes and Poverty Reduction Strategies in Pakistan, 2014). According to the Punjab MICS survey, wealth is directly related to fertility rate; fertility for the lowest wealth quintile is 5.0 births per woman as compared to 2.9 for the highest while the unmet need figures for the lowest wealth quintile is up to 20%. Moreover, poor and rural residents with unmet need are faced with lack of local providers who have sufficient contraceptive information

and choices. Despite the existence of affordable government family planning facilities, it is difficult to ensure that quality services are affordable and people can choose, obtain, and use contraceptives

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND PPIF:

Since 1993, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is observed annually, marking the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 47/196 to increase awareness for "ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions." Fighting global destitution is also one of the primary Millennium Development Goals and at the forefront of the development of the post-2015 global development agenda. Poverty Eradication is among the eight Sustainable Development Goals targets under the new development framework, designed to replace and carry forward the aims of the Millennium Development Goals. This year, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is being observed following the formal adoption of the Sustainable



Development Goals by the United Nations General Assembly in the historic World Summit of 2015. Punjab Population Innovation Fund embraces the United Nation's campaign for 2019, "Acting Together to Empower Children, their Families and Communities to End Poverty." PPIF envisions to be a market maker with the immediate goal of accelerating a rise in contraceptive

enhanced provider motivation, and wider provision of quality family planning services. Recognizing the need for increasing both acceptability and availability simultaneously, the Fund supports interventions in areas of high poverty and high unmet need for family planning in all thirty-six districts of Punjab.

INTERVENTION:

To further realize this vision, Punjab Population Innovation Fund launched Innovative Model for Family Planning Service Delivery for the Marginalized on 16th September 2019 in all four Tehsils of district Rahim Yar Khan. This model is a collaboration between Population Council, with the support of UNFPA, and Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) to enable female BISP beneficiaries from the most underprivileged strata in Rahim Yar Khan to avail family planning services to avoid mistimed pregnancies and births to improve maternal and child health outcomes in their communities. The project will mitigate cost and information related barriers

by financing the uptake of family planning services for around 80,000 BISP beneficiaries that are married women of reproductive age (MWRAs 15-49) and create community-based information channels for an additional 0.5 Million BISP beneficiaries through BISP Beneficiaries Committee's (BBC)/ BISP Mother Ambassadors (MAs), social mobilizers and LHWs. The intervention will be based in all four Tehsils of Rahim Yar Khan for a duration of 18 months. A quality assured network of upto 60 private health service providers as well as public sector will be developed. The intervention will have a digitized voucher management system based on a mobile application for verification and disbursement of funds to beneficiaries and providers. The transportation costs to the nearest health facilities will also be reimbursed to the BISP beneficiaries for efficient improved access to service.

TRI-PARTITE RELATIONSHIP:

PPIF and Population Council have

co-designed the intervention. PPIF, being the innovation arm of the provincial government, is;

- 1) funding the intervention
- 2) ensuring quality field implementation including provision of services and community mobilization and
- 3) electronic funds disbursements against the vouchers utilized. Population Council, with the support of UNFPA, is developing a mobile application based voucher management system to be utilized for disbursement of funds to BISP beneficiaries and private health service providers. The Population Council will also conduct the impact assessment of the intervention. Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), being the premier safety net institution in Pakistan, is responsible for sharing data for the poor women beneficiaries in the district and providing access to a wide network of BISP beneficiary committees and BISP mother ambassadors, to be utilized for community mobilization.

“Education is the Best Contraceptive”

Col (R) Muhammad Hashim Dogar
Minister Population Welfare Punjab

How is the rapid population growth affecting human development in Punjab?

With a figure of 110m, Punjab houses half of Pakistan's population, that has now surpassed 200m and set to reach 280 million in 2030. It would definitely have consequences on human security of the citizens and availability of necessities of daily life, including food, water, shelter, health and education. Meeting an ever-increasing demand given the resources of the government will prove a relentless battle against the mushrooming multitude and impact its developmental targets unless the general public is sensitized to this alarming growth. Population development is high on the agenda of the current administration as is evident from the statements made by the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Task Force on Population has made a comprehensive set of recommendations and we are following through on progress

against each of these. These include implementation of an effective communication campaigns to evince public support for the issue.

How is your government ensuring not repeating the failures of the past and make significant gains towards population development?

My government is striving hard to make reproductive health and family planning services available to every household in the Punjab. Chief Minister has allocated ample financial resources to realize the dream of the population planning, in letter and spirit. The Government has established PPIF as a technical hub to pilot innovative, scalable and also sustainable family planning interventions to achieve the desired results. It is working on the innovative model for improving access to family planning services for marginalized. It is a ground-breaking pilot intervention extending access to family

planning services for marginalized. It is a ground-breaking pilot intervention extending access to family planning services to the Benazir Income Support Programme beneficiaries by reducing information and cost-related barriers. Transportation cost will also be reimbursed to these women, thereby eliminating the financial barriers for poor women in uptake of family planning services.

What further role do you envisage for the PPIF to pioneer innovations for Family Planning?

I believe, the people of Pakistan must be made cognizant through all platforms including PPIF, of the threat that unplanned population growth poses for the future of the country by severely depleting its resources. Communities must be sensitized to the benefits of planned parenthood through innovative mass communication campaigns in Bazaars, Cinemas and mass transit service can be utilized for such purposes.

“PPIF specializes in designing and piloting interventions that can supplement public sector efforts for improving family planning information and services. I am extremely optimistic that successful implementation of this pilot would pave the way for scaling up this model across the province of the Punjab.”

Another novel way to engage the masses would be, by drawing the link between overpopulation and crimes. We are working on engaging 721 Police Stations in Punjab to diffuse IEC material for responsible parenting and benefits of family planning. I am also of the opinion that provision of emergency contraceptives must be made easily available.

What measures can the Government of Punjab undertake to help stabilize the growth rate?

Punjab being the most populated province, housing more than half of the national population is among top priorities of the government. Unlike the past governments who had relegated it to the back burner, we are focused on population management than population control. To this end, our policies will focus on young people under 29, who account for more than 60% of the total population as per the Human

Development Index 2017, UNDP. It is thus imperative to make them aware of their responsibilities towards nation-building that include informed decisions on family size and debunking myths surrounding services that are more a fallacy than reality. I am working towards including this concept in curriculum to educate our youth and I am glad that PPIF has taken aboard a Youth Ambassador Ms Amna Ilyas and planning to undertake a campus sensitization campaign.

To counter the problem of stunting, I have instructed to incentivize nursing mothers for a period of two years as ordained in the Holy Quran. We are also going to replicate the successful Iranian intervention of pre-marriage counseling for prospective grooms to inculcate an in-depth understanding of their role as a partner. They will be issued a certificate to

be included as an annexure to the NikahNama (Marriage Certificate). In my personal capacity and as the Minister Population, whenever I have spoken about the issue of population growth, I have not encountered opposition even from religious quarters. We have constituted a committee of the religious scholars named Ittehad-e-Baynul Muslimeen under the leadership of CM Punjab. We will use this platform to engage and sensitize the ulemas to debunk misperceptions associated with Family Planning.

Our government will curtail urbanization pressures by establishing eight Education Cities in Punjab. These would include academic institutions like medical colleges and engineering universities and formal educational institutions. It would create ample choices for citizens for better education and employment beyond big cities.

FAMILY PLANNING: PATHWAY TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION

OCTOBER 17: INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY



LAUNCHING

Innovative Model for Improving Access to Family Planning Services for the Marginalized

VOUCHERS

For Free Family Planning Services

4 TEHSILS

of District Rahim Yar Khan

80,000

Poorest Beneficiaries Served

500,000

Sensitized with Family Planning Messages

2 MILLION

Potential BISP Beneficiaries for Scale-up

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES
ENABLING CHANGE

