

**PRESS RELEASE**

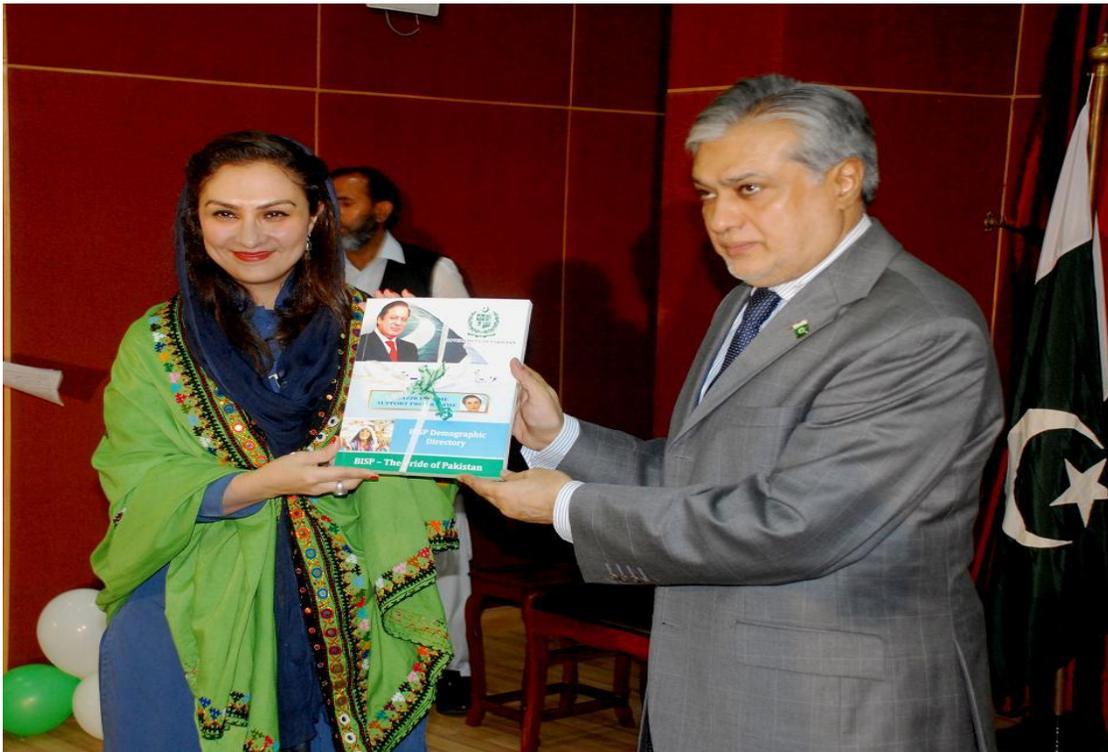
**14<sup>TH</sup> August, 2015**

**BISP CELEBRATES INDEPENDENCE DAY WITH BENEFICIARIES**

**BISP is changing the lives of 5 million households across the country: Ishaq Dar**

**BISP is fully committed to empower women: Marvi Memon**

Islamabad: ( ) It is a pleasure to see the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) beneficiaries as they have gathered to celebrate the country's independence and the independence that they have won for themselves by being a part of BISP. It was stated by the Federal Minister for Finance Senator Ishaq Dar during his address at an event "BISP Celebrates Pakistan's 69<sup>th</sup> Independence Day with vulnerable women of Pakistan" organized by BISP at its Headquarter today. He was invited as chief guest at the event. The event was attended by BISP beneficiaries, representatives of different government departments, national and international organizations, politicians and diplomats.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon presenting Demographic Directory of BISP Beneficiaries to Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar during an event "BISP Celebrates Pakistan's 69<sup>th</sup> Independence Day with vulnerable women of Pakistan" at BISP Secretariat. (Dated: August 14, 2015)

BISP is the largest social safety network treating women as heads of the families. The Independence Day was commemorated with the women beneficiaries of BISP with a range of activities which included the launch of Demographic Directory, a documentary on BISP narrative and a song containing the BISP theme.

In her welcome speech, Minister of State and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon said that BISP recognizes and applauds the role of women in nation building of Pakistan. The financial assistance by BISP aims at empowerment of women and feeds directly into Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. It is the promise of BISP to ensure large impact and to promote a bright and positive image of Pakistan.

Federal Minister for Finance Senator Ishaq Dar, in the beginning of his address, expressed his happiness over spending the Independence Day with the BISP family. He said when he conceived the idea of this programme 7 years ago, he envisioned that the stipends provided to the beneficiaries will improve the most vulnerable people's everyday lives and help them in the provision of health and education. When PML (N) came to power in 2013, he gave clear instructions on running the programme in an efficient and transparent manner. He directed the BISP Management to make all payments through technology based mechanisms and today more than 94% of the beneficiaries are receiving payments through debit cards, smart cards and mobile phones. The doors of the banks have been opened to the poorest of the poor and financial inclusion has been introduced. As a result, today BISP beneficiaries are financially empowered.

He stated that it is our collective goal to make BISP the pride of Pakistan as envisioned by the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. He praised the efforts of BISP management and officials for making BISP an efficient and competent government organization. He also thanked the development partners for their continued support and expressed hope to collaborate with them in the future on all projects of mutual benefits.

Secretary BISP, Mr. Muhammad Saleem Ahmed Ranjha said that Pakistan was founded on the principle of guarantee of rights to its citizens, therefore, it is the direct responsibility of the government to ensure that women are given their due rights and their social and financial needs are met adequately. BISP is the premier organization of the government working to achieve this goal by empowering women and assisting them in leading lives with dignity and independence.

While launching the demographic directory, which looks into the profiles of beneficiary families on economic, social, educational and other dimensions, Chairperson BISP said that through this directory we extend invitations to all our existing and potential internal development partners and multinational corporations to collaborate with BISP. We aim to advance global connectivity, promote overall safety and security of the region and debunk myths surrounding Pakistani women. We expect all our partners to develop their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities with BISP's scientific database of the poorest women so that they have the peace of mind of knowing that their philanthropic funds are being targeted to the real needy.

BISP also launched a documentary and its brand song on the occasion. The documentary focused on outreach, effectiveness and impacts of the programme. It contained the acknowledgment of BISP's interventions by the international community. The documentary captured the diversity of cultures throughout Pakistan and the experience of people with BISP. BISP's brand song, composed on a sweet melody, carried the national and BISP theme.