

Government of Pakistan

Benazir Income Support Programme

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PRESIDENT LAUNCHES PM NAWAZ SHARIF'S WASEELA-E-TALEEM

PROGRAM OF BISP IN THATTA - LARGEST WOMEN JALSA OF PAKISTAN

WASEELA-E-TALEEM IS A LANDMARK INITIATIVE FOR EDUCATION AND LONG TERM POVERTY

ALLEVIATION: MAMNOON HUSSAIN

BISP AIMS TO PROVIDE DESERVING CHILDREN WITH CONSTITUTIONAL

RIGHT TO EDUCATION: MARVI MEMON

Thatta () BISP is the flagship social safety net program of the country and Waseela-e-Taleem is a landmark initiative of BISP with regard to the great causes of education and long term poverty alleviation. This was stated by the President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan during the launching ceremony of PM Nawaz Sharif's Waseela-e-Taleem Program of BISP in Thatta.

The event was organized by the joint collaboration of BISP and its partner organization, UK government DFID and Aurat Foundation. Representatives of development partners, academia, media and thousands of BISP beneficiaries associated with waseeletaleem program of Thatta district were in attendance.

PM Nawaz Sharif's Waseela-e-Taleem Program is a conditional cash transfer initiative of BISP funded by UK government DFID and technical assistance of World Bank. Under this program, BISP is providing education to around 850,000 beneficiary children of 5 to 12 years age in 32 districts of the country. The BISP mothers receive Rs. 250 stipend per month per child with a condition of 70% attendance in schools. BISP targets to increase the number of enrolled children up to one million by the end of December, 2015 and up to two million by the end of December, 2016. BISP also aims to extend this program to the whole of the country so that maximum number of deserving children may benefit from the facility of incentive based free education.

On the occasion, President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan said that poverty and ignorance have direct linkage with extreme tendencies in our society and hence, combating poverty has become imperative to eradicate extremism and create a peaceful society for social cohesion and sustainable development. Waseela-e-Taleem program has, therefore, been envisaged to promote education among children belonging to downtrodden segment of society and help them out in breaking the vicious circle of poverty.

The President congratulated Chairperson BISP and her team for expanding this initiative and addressing the issue of poverty through the provision of education to the beneficiary children. He added that being the President of Pakistan and patron-in- chief of BISP, he stood committed to support BISP and all its program interventions in general and Waseela-e-Taleem Program in particular.

BISP launched its new communication outreach strategy in the form of street theatre play during the impressive launch with women empowerment messages for the mostly illiterate beneficiaries who cant learn the same through written material. The purpose of giving bisp beneficiary committee leaders special cards was to empower them when faced with discriminations in society.

Chairperson BISP, during her speech, said that educated population determines the development and prosperity of a country and BISP through Waseela-e-Taleem program aims to provide deserving children with constitutional right to education. She said that it is a historic day as this important initiative was being launched in her native district Thatta where more than 60,000 students, out of which 45% are girl children, are direct beneficiaries of this program.

Chairperson BISP gave an overview of the evolution of BISP as an organization since 2008 and the milestones it has achieved under the present government of PML (N) who has increased budgets for BISP. She thanked the Prime Minister and Finance Minister for their complete support. Currently, BISP is providing a monthly stipend of Rs. 1500/- to its 5.15 million beneficiaries with an annual budget of Rs. 102 billion. She also thanked UK government DFID, World Bank and Aurat Foundation. She also described briefly about the technology based payment innovative solutions being adopted by BISP to reach out to remote areas and the social mobilization efforts.

During the ceremony, women leaders of BISP Beneficiary Committees (BBCs) were also invited on the stage for distribution of their BISP identity cards. BBCs comprise of around 25 women who elect their leader. These committees are forums for discussion on issues related to BISP and also other regional or general issues. These BBCs are an absolute goldmine for launching all women empowerment and inter provincial harmony campaigns. At present, 47,000 BBCs are functional in 32 districts of the country. BISP Women leaders were invited for sharing their experiences related to the impacts of BISP's financial assistance on their lives.

Secretary BISP Muhammad Saleem Ahmed Ranjha, British High Commissioner Philip Barton and President Aurat Foundation Dr. Masooma Hassan also spoke on the occasion and shared their views in the context of Waseela-e-Taleem Program's contribution in the welfare of the beneficiary children and their families.
