

Government of Pakistan
Benazir Income Support Programme

Press Release
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**WELFARE OF THE CITIZENS IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE:
PRESIDENT MAMNOON HUSSAIN**

BISP LAUNCHES ITS FIRST EVER IMPACT EVALUATION REPORT

Islamabad: Welfare of the citizens is the responsibility of the state. The constitution of Pakistan under article 38 ensures the promotion of social and economic well being of all the citizens of Pakistan and, in this regard, BISP is playing a key role for the welfare of the poorest and most vulnerable in the country. It was stated by the President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Chief Patron of BISP, Mr. Mamnoon Hussain during the launching ceremony of “First Ever Evaluation Report of BISP’s Impact” organized at BISP Secretariat, today. The event was attended by Cabinet members, parliamentarians, diplomats, business community, government officials, academia, civil society members and media.

Evaluation Report of BISP’s Impact focuses on the objective of evaluating whether BISP has achieved its objective of providing direct support to the poorest families by supplementing their incomes and also its impacts on key intended areas including consumption smoothing and poverty alleviation. The impact evaluation exercise is globally taken as a standard to measure the performance and to facilitate evidence based policy making. Evaluation Report of BISP’s Impact will guide policy makers, stakeholders, international communities and donors, on the scope, efficiency and effectiveness of BISP as an anti-poverty instrument. In this regard, BISP has initiated a series of impact evaluation studies through Oxford Policy Management (OPM), which is a globally renowned research organization.

In her welcome remarks, Minister of State and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon thanked the honorable President for gracing the occasion when BISP is going public

with its First Impact Assessment. She said that this report only surveys impact between April – June 2013, a period of the last government when payments were not being made regularly, but it has some important findings for future years. She assured that this is the first of many such assessments and surveys that will be shared with the world as a part of PML-N's policy of Right to Information. Payments to the beneficiaries have been regular since 2014 so the future impacts would be much better. The increment in the monthly stipend from Rs. 1000 to Rs. 1500 by the present government will also prove to be more beneficial. She also mentioned the factor of communication strategy, recently developed by BISP management, and the use of technology solutions and BISP Beneficiary Committees (BBCs) will have significant impacts in future.

While highlighting the key findings of the report, Chairperson BISP said that 64% beneficiaries have control over BISP's stipend which means empowerment of women and more expenditure on children's nutrition needs. She also talked about commencement of women empowerment roundtables by BISP regarding reduction in violence, education of women on civil rights, child protection system and controlling fertility for demographic dividends. She highlighted an important finding of the evaluation report which states that BISP has contributed in the poverty reduction by 22 percentage points, for a subset of BISP beneficiaries, through its financial assistance.

Chairperson BISP apprised of other findings related to health of beneficiaries, grievance redressal system, impact on child labour, travelling by beneficiaries for receiving payments and children education. As the report focuses on the period from April to June 2013, Chairperson BISP gave an overview of the recent initiatives taken by BISP which will help to address the issues mentioned in this report like resurvey, QPCMS/Tablets as solution for grievance redressal system, biometric payment mechanism, graduation programs with organizations like Akhuwat and consideration for more conditional cash transfer programs. She stated that the battle against poverty can be won by giving dignity, empowerment and meaning of life to the beneficiaries.

In his opening remarks, President Mamnoon Hussain commended the efforts of BISP management and said that the team of BISP, under the leadership of Minister of State and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon, is working diligently for ensuring the transparency and

efficiency in the operations of BISP. Making the impact evaluation report public is a giant leap in this direction. He said that there is nothing more satisfying and rewarding than knowing the fact that our meager efforts are bringing change in the lives of millions of families around Pakistan.

The President said that with the right approach, increased budget and implementation of focused policies by PML-N Government, BISP has truly become a pride of Pakistan as it is the largest social safety net initiative in South Asia and one of the largest around the world. PML-N Government has made significant investment in BISP Waseela-e-Taleem Program which is being run in 32 districts of the country and more than 700 thousand children have already been admitted to schools under this initiative.

In the beginning of the event, Secretary BISP, Mr. Muhammad Saleem Ahmed Ranjha, said that evaluation of any program is crucial for its transparency and accountability. BISP includes a comprehensive evaluation component that not only measures the well-being of beneficiaries but also informs the management whether the programme is achieving its intended goals or not. Having monitoring evaluation from independent third parties, BISP has effectively started the process of self accountability, transparency, learning and openness.

During the ceremony, Women heroes from amongst the BISP beneficiaries were also introduced to the audience. These were the women who have successfully utilized the platform of BISP for the social and economic uplift of their families. These women are part of “Sisters and Success” initiative of BISP in which three women committees are being constituted. First committee will comprise international women leaders; second committee will consist of Pakistan successful women and; the third one will have BISP beneficiaries.
