

Press Release
September 4, 2015

**BISP TO TAKE ALL QUARTERS ON BOARD FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:
MARVI MEMON**

ISLAMABAD: Empowering women is the vision of BISP under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and therefore all the concerned quarters will be taken on board to achieve this purpose. This was stated by Minister of Sate and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon while addressing the first women empowerment conference organized at BISP Secretariat.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of Sate and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon addressing the first women empowerment conference organized at BISP Secretariat. (Dated: September 4, 2015)

Women empowerment conference was called by BISP to deliberate upon how could BISP beneficiaries be best empowered, what could be done to promote the agenda of

empowerment of BISP beneficiary women, how can the platform of BISP Beneficiary Committees (BBCs) be used for successful implementation of the ideas of the participants of the conference and what special programs are being designed for women empowerment in Pakistan or around the world, which can be replicated here.

The participants of the conference included Senator Rubina Khalid (PPP), MNA Ms. Ayesha (JI), MNA Naeema Kishwar Khan (JUI-F), Dr. Zeba A. Sathar member of BISP board and Country Director of Population Council, Ms. Fatima Naqvi (DFID), Ms. Saba Khatak and Mr. Gul Najam Jami from World Bank, Ms. Masooma Butt from WHO, Ms. Gillian McFarland (UNICEF), Mr. Zulfiqar Rao and Mr. Sultan Mehmood from WFP, Ms. Khawar Mumtaz Chairperson National Commission on status of women, Dr. Nabeela Shahid and Ms. Saira Bano from NRSP, Ms. Sarwat Tahira Habib Chief Collector Customs North, Mrs. Raana Seerat Chief Commissioner LTU, Ms. Anjum Asad Amin Additional Secretary Economic Affairs Division, Ms. Farzana Bari Professor Quaid-e-Azam university and social activist and Ms. Nudrat Gillani.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon addressing the first women empowerment conference organized at BISP Secretariat. (Dated: September 4, 2015)

During the brainstorming session in the conference, the participants appreciated the efforts of BISP for poor women of the country and gave their invaluable inputs. It was discussed that BISP may coordinate with those organizations which are already undertaking projects of women empowerment. Through this coordination, financial and

educational support to women may be initiated. The institutional coordination may be made successful by social mobilization and promoting the concept of women leaders.

It was also discussed that the areas, in which beneficiaries have abundance of certain products like milk and dates, may be identified. These beneficiaries may be connected to the markets and a market place may also be allocated for them where they can showcase their products for sale.

Another idea focused on demand driven solutions to the problems of beneficiary women. This idea highlighted the role of BISP Beneficiary Committees (BBCs). The feedback of women included in BBCs on their problems may help to design projects which can address their issues related to education, health and finances.

A project “Zero Hunger Programme” under National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) also came under discussion. NRSP is already using data of BISP for carrying out its projects. It was discussed that the engagement of NRSP with BISP may be enhanced to achieve the desired results as NRSP has technical training institutes at tehsil level and for this purpose socially viable and gender sensitive interventions can be introduced.

It was deliberated that areas of employment and income generation for beneficiaries can be identified. There are women especially unmarried women who are extremely poor but they have certain skills like stitching. They do not have enough understanding and the resources to channelize their skills. By identification of options of income generation, their skills can be channelized and further polished. The importance of family planning in the financial improvement and the role of BBCs in creating awareness regarding family planning were also discussed.

Deliberation were also made on using BBCs for highlighting certain issues like dysfunctional schools and other facilities which cause great loss to poor people. Many other social and family problems like gender violence and families’ preference to male children can also be addressed by focusing on the leadership role of women and BBCs.

It was discussed in detail that for women empowerment, the most important thing is financial independence of women from their male family members. To achieve this purpose, vocational trainings and small industries like cottage industry can be promoted with the assistance of already existing projects of other organizations.

The issue of transparency in BISP for better serving the purpose of women empowerment was also deliberated. The organization needs transparency at administrative level and also during the resurvey. Chairperson BISP said that we are committed to ensure transparency in our organization. We are trying to adopt IT driven service solutions to make our monitoring affective and to reduce middleman culture. She added that BISP has initiated the process of resurvey and this time it will be more comprehensive, transparent and fool proof.

Secretary BISP, Mr. Muhammad Saleem Ahmed Ranjha said that women empowerment is something which is related to faith. He quoted the example of Hazrat Khadija who, being a woman, provided every kind of support to the Prophet and the cause of Islam. He thanked the participants for their valuable suggestions and stated that such brainstorming conferences on women empowerment will also be held in provinces. He said that BISP will design projects for beneficiaries with the assistance of academia, civil society, corporate sector and development partners.