

1. MARVI TERMS BHITTAI'S MESSAGE TOOL AGAINST TERRORISM AND VIOLENCE

Published in Pakistan Today, March 14, 2016

Minister of State and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Marvi Memon said on Sunday that great Sindhi poet Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai's message of peace, tolerance and women empowerment was universal in its reach.

She expressed these remarks while speaking during a ceremony of peace festival 2016 at the City Hall in London, as chief guest together with Member of the British Parliament, Rt Hon Stephen Timms. The event celebrated the poetry and sufi teachings of the famous Sindhi poet and saint, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai.



Speaking at the event, the minister said that Latif Sarkar's message was more relevant in this day and age, when terrorism and

intolerance have polluted the quest for prosperity, said a press release.

She emphasized that the message must be spread across geographical, cultural, religious and political divides to truly achieve a progressive society. She also highlighted the importance of connecting Sufi silsilas of Pakistan with those abroad as well as more inter provincial exchanges on same.

The minister also highlighted Bhittai's message on women empowerment. She noted that the sufi poet explained his philosophy in Shah jo Risalo through the courageous lives of women such as Marvi, Moomal, Sorath, Sassui, Noori, Sohni and Leila. She said that her work as the Chairperson of BISP, follows the philosophy of Bhittai, by providing women financial assistance, inclusion, empowerment and dignity.

She also thanked the prime minister and finance minister for giving her the opportunity to serve the people of Pakistan, particularly the vulnerable women.

Minister of State and Chairman BISP Marvi Memon is on a 3-day official visit to the United Kingdom. In addition to attending the peace festival, the minister will also visit the Oxford University and hold a roundtable discussion at the International Institute of Strategic Studies (ISS) in London.

(Express Tribune, Pakistan Observer, Daily Times, Business Recorder, Patriot, Jang, Nawaiwaqt, Express, Naibaat and Jinnah carried the story and picture)

2. BISP DISBURSED RS 362.25 BILLION SINCE ITS INCEPTION

Published in Daily Times, March 14, 2016

ISLAMABAD: Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has successfully disbursed about Rs 362.25 billion across the country since inception.

BISP has successfully achieved all the goals and objectives set by the federal government and international development partners from time to time since its inception. The official sources said that BISP has met all the Disbursement Link Indicators (DLIs) and targets set by the government and donor agencies.

BISP conducted poverty scorecard survey across the country and maintains the data of more than 27 million households considered as first of its kind and regarded as a great achievement.

BISP transferred its payment system from ordinary mode/paper based to more technology enabled system like transition of delivery of disbursement from Pakistan Post to innovative banking system like debit card, smart card and mobile banking.

BISP has exceeded the target of enrolling more than 1.0 million children in primary school through its Waseela-e-Taleem Programme and disbursed Rs 994 million on admission and attendance compliance of these children till end of 2015.

BISP shared its National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) and poverty profile data with more than 40 entities across the country for various programme which includes government

of Punjab, government of Sindh, government of KPK and other social protection entities.

BISP has developed a rigorous technology enabled beneficiary complaint management system being operated at tehsil level.

Sources said that they developed Management Information System (MIS) for all its operations and maintained a state of the art poverty database.

BISP participated in natural calamities like earth quake, floods etc. and provided full support to federal and provincial governments in implementing emergency relief programmes.

It has contributed a lot in women empowerment with the advent of BISP Civil Registration and CNIC of women has been increased up to 100 percent.

Now women of the country not only have the right of vote but they also have financial autonomy as transfer is being sent to women only. Financial literacy has been enhanced through issuance of about 4.9 million debit cards, smart cards.

A Toll Free helpline 080026477 has been established for addressing the beneficiary complaints. BISP has initiated a pilot of biometrics payment system to beneficiaries for ensuring real time beneficiary verification.

BISP has attracted all the major international donors because of its transparent and technology enabled operations and achieved all the major goals set by the international development partners and government from time to time.

(Frontier Post also carried the story)

3. DEFINING POVERTY

By Editorial

Published in Express Tribune: March 13, 2016

Poverty, as in exactly how many of the almost 200 million people in Pakistan qualify as definitively living at or below an agreed definition of poverty, is a political hot potato. It has never been suggested that Pakistan has anything other than a considerable reservoir of 'poor' — but the actual number has fluctuated. It is currently — and ludicrously — set at eight per cent, which among other things leads donor nations to conclude that perhaps we do not need quite so much of their largesse after all. Now the government seems prepared to grasp the poverty nettle; and change the methodologies of measurement (again), which may lead to a figure close to 30 per cent of the population defined as living in poverty.

The difference this time around is the inclusion of non-food items in the poverty calculus. Thus a lack of, or limited access to, health and education may be factored in, giving a more holistic picture. The Ministry of Finance and the Planning Commission are going to work together — itself a welcome development — and using a revised formula it is hoped that a new figure will be announced by mid-April. **There have been changes in the poverty profile in the last decade, in part a direct result of interventions such as the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) as well as changes in patterns of employment.** The latter has produced cyclic poverty, where families and individuals dip in and out of poverty dependent on their employment status, and the level of income relative to basic family needs.

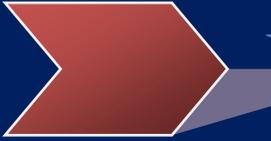
In terms of objective measurement, poverty has become something of a moving target — which is no excuse for not tracking it more effectively than it has been historically. Getting a better measurement of poverty is going to enable a more effective framing of the redistributive responses to the Sustainable Development Goals, which are the successors of the widely missed — in terms of hitting the target — Millennium Development Goals. Slaying the poverty monster is incremental, there is no single solution and is a generational struggle spanning many electoral cycles. Getting the numbers right is as good a place as any to start the battle.

4. BISP BENEFICIARIES CELEBRATE WOMEN WEEK BY VOICING VIEWS ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon on Friday said that BISP Beneficiary Committees video messages on women empowerment are one of the signs of the woman revolution taking place in Pakistan.

BISP has 5.2 million beneficiaries in entire country which are divided into 45,000 BISP Beneficiary Committees (BBC).

On the occasion of celebrations for Women week, 513 committees' 12,825 beneficiaries sent their videos thanking the efforts of Prime Minister, Muhammed Nawaz Sharif on women empowerment from districts Bagh, Kotli, Mirpur, Gwadar, Loralai, Nushki, Gilgit, Bannu, Malakand, Mansehra, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Rawalpindi, Khushab, Shaheed Benazir Abad, Sajawal, Thatta, Sukkar, Kamber Shahdad Kot, and Karachi South.



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Videos are available at <http://www.bisp.gov.pk/womenEmp.aspx> for people of Pakistan and entire world to see.

Marvi Memon said, it was for the first time in Pakistan's history that so many women had the courage to voice their views on women empowerment in support of the government's previous and future legislations.

Marvi Memon thanked the PM and the Finance Minister for their vision and support of BISP.

(Express Tribune, Pakistan Observer, Frontier Post, Jahan Pakistan, Jinnah, Dunya and Khabrain – March 12 & 13, 2016)