

Policy Support for Family Planning by Pathfinder International

Pakistan's Parliament enacted 18th Constitutional Amendment in June 2010, as a result, a number of Federal Ministries ceased to exist and the functions devolved to provinces. This devolution process included the Ministries of Health and Population Welfare.

The implementation of population welfare programme was already vested in the provincial governments and that policy formulation being a major function was now entrusted to provincial governments as well to support programmatic and development process within the provincial development framework. In this regard, several development partners enquired from the Provincial Health and Population Departments regarding family planning policy.

Pathfinder had previously supported the Federal Ministry of Population Welfare in drafting a National Population Policy 2010, which provided an opportunity to take on the challenge. After the devolution of the subject to provinces, Pathfinder formulated draft policy documents for the four provinces based on hard data (using PDHS, PDS and MICS data) to emphasize and advocate for the importance of family planning and evolve strategies for it focused implementation.. The policy drafts thus prepared were shared with Secretaries and Director Generals of Health and Population Welfare of all the provinces.

The draft document was well received and appreciated by the Population Departments across provinces and Pathfinder was requested to further facilitate in the preparation of formal policy document. Pathfinder pursued the matter by organizing joint meeting of all stakeholders including Population Welfare, Health, Social Marketing and NGOs, with participation of selected development partners in the dialogue. An initial dialogue meeting has been held in Sindh and Punjab, which contributed to establishing a formal forum for exchange of views, put forward suggestions, and express concern as to why family planning is not picking up in the provinces. Some of the basic areas include the following:

The feedback from Departments of Health is quite encouraging as Director General Health Services of Sindh and Punjab have categorically desired that family planning be treated as a

- Critical Policy focus is on following areas:
- Inter-departmental coordination
 - Enhance Access for Comprehensive Service Delivery
 - ⇒ Provision to Quality of Services
 - ⇒ Contraceptive Commodity Security and its all-time availability at distribution points
 - Demand Generation and Advocacy
 - Training and Capacity Building
 - ⇒ Strengthening of human resource development mechanism
 - Monitoring, Record Keeping and Evaluation
 - Mainstreaming Population in Development Planning

part of essential service package and effectively dispensed through all the Basic Health Units and Rural Health Centres. The Lady Health Workers Programs too are gearing to streamline refresher training in Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancies for all the workers along and ensuring uninterrupted supplies of contraceptives.

Pathfinder has received requests for Technical Assistance from other two provinces (Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa and Balochistan) as well to start the policy dialogue and support in formulating formal documents to enable them to process the same within the provincial government and for assistance by development. Pathfinder is now engaged in encouraging inter-departmental dialogue and for developing critical linkages with donors and other related projects like USAID|DELIVER to build broad-based support including contraceptive supplies and its distribution. Pathfinder will continue to support this important strategic objective.