



mothersnight 2009

Report

گر ”ماں“ ہے رنگ کائنات
تو اس کا ”تحفظ“ ربط کائنات



World Population Foundation-Pakistan

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Safe Motherhood

Motherhood is foreseen as a time of expectation and great joy for a woman, her family and her community. Where the miracle of birth brings with it new aspirations it also involves risks inflicted both on the mother and child. Maternal death is one of the harsh realities of this picture.

An astounding number of maternal deaths occur every year due to both medical and non-medical causes. These include women's poor health before pregnancy; inadequate, inaccessible or unaffordable health care; and poor hygiene and care during childbirth. Socio-economic and cultural realities such as illiteracy, poverty, women's unequal access to resources, and their lack of decision making power in families and societies also contributes.

The most recent UN inter-agency estimates suggest that in 2005, 536,000 women died from causes linked with pregnancy and childbirth. The vast majority of maternal deaths (more than 99 per cent, according to the 2005 UN inter-agency estimates) occurred in developing countries. Half of these (265,000) took place in sub-Saharan Africa and another third (187,000) in South Asia. According to UNICEF's latest report "The State of the World's Children 2009", 1 in every 89 Pakistani women dies of childbirth related causes compared to 1 in 8000 in the developed world.

World Population Foundation (WPF), Pakistan's Safe Motherhood Campaign

Complications associated with pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death and disability among women of reproductive age in developing countries. In Pakistan, every 20 minutes 1 woman loses her life due to reproductive health complications. Thus, to have a safe and healthy pregnancy, delivery and post-delivery period it is important to promote the concept of **Safe Motherhood**.

World Population Foundation's initiative titled Safe Motherhood: "**Saving the Soul Bearers**" was launched in Islamabad on the eve of **International Mothers' Day**, in the form of "Mothers' Night 2008". It revolved around the social and behavioral aspects of Safe Motherhood issues. The purpose of the campaign was to raise awareness among masses on Safe Motherhood and advocate for policy reforms for an environment where every pregnancy is planned and safe.

This year World Population Foundation celebrated Mothers' Night in 11 countries across the globe. In Pakistan, WPF joined hands with National Trust for Population Welfare (NATPOW) to further the cause of "Safe Motherhood". A week prior to Mothers' Night 2009, WPF and NATPOW organized a string of provincial level consultations in collaboration with local partners to draw recommendations from all four corners of the country. This process culminated into the creation of "Call to Action", which will serve as the guiding document for this campaign for year 2009-2010. On the other hand mass media was also mobilized nation-wide in a bid to



sensitize people belonging to all walks of life about the collective role that we can play to prevent maternal deaths in our country.



Pre-Event

Review of related literature is considered an intricate task but plays an essential part in building a coherent understanding to construct a sound campaign. Accordingly, to uphold a sustainable Safe Motherhood Campaign, comprehensive literature review from various sources was carried out. This effort resulted in the development of three fact sheets based on the sub-themes adopted for the campaign, i.e. Maternal Mortality, Maternal Nutrition and Teenage Marriages (Annexure 1: Fact Sheets).

Maternal Mortality

World Health Organization (WHO) defines Maternal Mortality as death of a woman while pregnant, during delivery or within 42 days of the end of pregnancy from a cause related to or made worse by pregnancy.

In Pakistan, Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) is about 276 maternal deaths per 100, 000 births and post partum hemorrhage (excessive bleeding) is responsible for one third of all maternal deaths.



Maternal Nutrition



In developing countries women are more likely to suffer from nutritional deficiencies than men are, for reasons including women's reproductive biology, low social status, poverty and lack of education. In **South Asia** female nutritional deficiency begins in childhood and continues through teenage years into adulthood. For example, in Pakistan only 4 in 10 women take iron or calcium supplements during pregnancy (DHS, 2006-7).

This results in increased vulnerability to infection during pregnancy and childbirth and increased risk of pre-eclampsia (high blood pressure).

Teenage Marriages

About 16 million women 15–19 years old give birth each year; amounting to about 11% of all births worldwide (WHO). Many health problems are particularly associated with negative outcomes of pregnancy during teens. These include anemia, postpartum haemorrhage and mental disorders, such as depression (WHO).

In Pakistan 1 out of 6 women aged 15-19 is already married. Girls who give birth before the age of 15 are five times more likely to die in childbirth than women in their twenties.



Advisory Board

An **Advisory Board**, bringing together representatives from various backgrounds including those who have been involved in Mother and Child Health Care Projects in Pakistan was formulated prior to the event. The purpose was to learn from their experiences and enhance their participation as well as the effectiveness of the campaign. This year's Advisory Board included: Ms. Donya Aziz (MNA), Ms. Yasmeen Rehman (MNA), Mr. Iftikhar Durrani (CEO, NATPOW), Mr. Qadeer Baig (Country Representative, WPF) and Ms. Nazoora Ali (Programme Manager, WPF).

Provincial Consultations

World Population Foundation and National Trust for Population Welfare collaborated to launch the Safe Motherhood campaign in the provinces. NATPOW is a non-profit national trust working to strengthen the contribution of NGOs/CBOs in population welfare/reproductive health, mother & child health care, community participation and development in social sector. WPF and NATPOW carried out provincial consultations at the four provincial capitals with the help of local NGO's (Provincial Schedule: Annexure 2), namely Pakistan Voluntary Health & Nutrition Association (PAVHNA), Karachi; Community Support Concern (CSC), Lahore; Mehec Trust, Quetta, and All Women Advancement & Resource Development (AWARD), NWFP. The aim of these consultations was to draw recommendations and put them forward at the national level (Recommendations: Annexure 3. This ensured extended outreach for the campaign and brought together members of the civil society and provincial governments.



Media Campaign

For the success of any cause, media plays an integral role as an agent of reaching out to millions of individuals scattered across varied geographical settings and belonging to all walks of life. Resultantly, to create widespread awareness, WPF launched a mass media campaign, taking onboard print media, television and radio channels. The consequent alliances translated into the publication of a number of articles and TV programmes highlighting the cause of Safe Motherhood, taking along the themes of Maternal Mortality, Maternal Nutrition and Teenage Marriages. (Newspaper Clippings: Annexure 4)



Mothers Night 2009

After a month long media campaign, provincial consultations and national level arrangements prior to International Mothers' Day, Mothers Night was celebrated in Islamabad on 9 May 2009 (Schedule annexed).

Mothers' Night 2009 was formally commenced by Ms. Huma Nayani and Mr. Ahsan Naqvi warmly welcoming the guests followed by the recitation of specific verses from the Holy Quran, revealing the significance of mothers, by Qari Habibullah Ghazi.

Mr. Qadeer Baig, Country Representative, and Ms. Nazoora Ali, Programme Manager (WeAct), WPF were then invited on the podium to brief the audience about the significance of Mothers' Day and WPF's Safe Motherhood Campaign. It was shared that Mothers' Day has been celebrated throughout the world since time immemorial. Mr. Qadeer explained that the significance of international days is enhanced if a social cause is attached to them and it was for this purpose that WPF was celebrating Mothers' Day to raise awareness about the plight of forgotten mothers of our country who lose their lives every few minutes while bringing a new life to our world. Adding to this, Ms. Nazoora Ali went on to explain the gravity of Maternal Mortality as an issue and emphasized that with only a few interventions the number of maternal deaths could be reduced. Mr. Baig and Ms. Ali also highlighted the role our society can play collectively to save the mothers of tomorrow.

Panel Discussion

A panel discussion was orchestrated to discuss the sub-themes of this year, which were, Maternal Mortality, Maternal Nutrition and Teenage Marriages. The discussion, which was moderated by Ms. Seemi Raheal, brought together professionals from all walks of life. The learned panelists included:



Dr. Jabbar Khattak- General Secretary, All Pakistan Newspapers Society
Ms. Sarah Asad- Chief Operating Officer, Pehchaan
Dr. Rukhshanda Naz - Executive Director, Aurat Foundation
Dr. Adnan Khan - Research Advisor, Ministry of Health
Ms. Myra Imran - Journalist, The News
Dr. Sher Shah- Gynecologist, Qatar Hospital

The discussion took into consideration various aspects of the society, which lead to high rates of maternal deaths and can be prevented. The panel stressed that many determinants of ill-health, especially among women, arise from other sectors of development such as lack of education, healthcare, nutrition, environmental degradation and poverty. These issues can only be solved through partnerships for women development at all levels.

The panel also discussed that in spite of efforts by all sectors, women's health throughout the life span remains far from satisfactory. High maternal morbidity and mortality, malnutrition and inadequate freedom of choice to limit family size and improve their own health remain a challenge for a majority of women in our country.

Ms. Sarah Asad highlighted that there is a dire need to inculcate community work in the youth. Perspectives change when a young boy/girl is exposed to these realities.

Ms. Rukhsahanda Naz went on to explain that gender inequities still lead to serious social and nutritional deprivation of the girl child and women. Maternal Mortality in rural settings is associated with child brides, which may lead to early pregnancies and complications.

Dr. Sher Shah stressed that the government should invest more in nurses and midwives as women in rural areas of Pakistan do not have access to hospitals and doctors. He further stated that since a mother's death has severe consequences, the government must invest more in the health sector and especially on issues of Safe Motherhood.

Giving the Government's perspective, Dr. Adnan Khan advocated that the largest programme of the Ministry of Health is focused on Lady Health Workers, focusing primarily on family planning and safe deliveries. He said that the Government realized that it was a slow process and results would eventually manifest success.

Talking on the occasion, Dr. Jabbar Khattak stressed the need for print media to take up this issue of significance. Ms. Myra Imran added by explaining that since there were fewer female journalists, thus such women related issues were not written about. She specifically recommended that media personal need to be sensitized about these issues before they can actively participate in such campaigns.

The Panel Discussion concluded with emphasizing on the significance of collective action by civil society, policy makers, parliamentarians and media to realize the cause of Safe Motherhood in Pakistan.

Tribute by Ibrar ul Haq

A celebrity with a social cause, Mr. Ibrar ul Haq participated in the event to pay "Tribute to Mothers". He expressed his admiration for the mothers of our nation and expressed his deep gratitude to his own mother, without whose prayers and support he felt he could not have achieved much. On the request of the guests, he also recited a few verses from his poem honoring mothers.



Maa'on Ke Naam

A short documentary was screened at Mothers' Night 2009, which had comments of people from all walks of life including celebrities such as Mr. Tauseeq Haider and Ms. Asma Shirazi, mothers and children on the role of mothers in their lives and the importance of Safe Motherhood. *Maa'on ke Naam* focused on the various ground realities which need to be highlighted to achieve national as well as international commitments made by the Government of Pakistan.

Mothers Award



This year, WPF, Advisory Board for the Safe Motherhood Campaign decided to present two special mothers with the Mother's Award; while one recipient belonged to the social sector, the other had served vehemently in the political arena. These two incredible women were Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and Ms. Shahnaz Kapadia Rahat.

Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had many things to her credit including women's police stations, courts, and women's development banks. She highlighted women's plight on many occasions. While speaking at the International Conference on Population Development in 1994, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto set a vision for Pakistani women, saying:

“I dream of a Pakistan, of an Asia, of a world where every pregnancy is planned, and every child conceived is nurtured, loved, educated and supported”.

The second recipient of Mother's Award, Ms. Shahnaz Kapadia Rahat is the founder of an NGO, “Empowerment thru Creative Integration” (ECI) which focuses on women's empowerment by attempting to develop and give back to women their dignity. ECI is a training complex dedicated to the memory of her husband and son, which she hopes will become a place where people will have the gift of discovery, of finding themselves, and their pride and dignity. Regardless of a tough time in her life she has empowered thousands of women through entrepreneur trainings and prospects of a shining future.

Short documentaries were also prepared and shown on the lives and works of these women of substance.

Media Awards

In a bid to appreciate the efforts made by various media organizations and personnel that actively supported our Safe Motherhood campaign and to encourage others to follow suite, WPF presented Media Awards. Airwaves Media, Dunya TV and Ms. Nosheen Abbas (from Dawn)

were presented with the Media Awards as a token of acknowledgement for playing their role in disseminating our message to millions across the country!



Provincial Recommendations

Mr. Iftikhar Durrani, Chief Executive Officer, NATPOW and Ms. Rehana Rashidi, Project Director, Pakistan Voluntary Health and Nutrition Association (PAVHNA) presented the provincial recommendations to the Chief Guest, Ms. Farazana Raja. The consolidated recommendations from all provinces stressed the need to provide services to urban and rural women that can prevent maternal mortality and morbidity. All provinces stressed the need for the following:

- Strong political commitment and support
- Adequate resource allocations
- Strengthening public-private & NGOs partnership
- Extensive and intensive media campaign
- Enhance men's participation (and)
- Promote gender equality and equity with special focus on female literacy

Poster Launch

Chief Guest Ms. Farzana Raja launched WPF's especially designed poster for Safe Motherhood Campaign. The poster was disseminated amongst the guests and local NGOs. It was later also widely distributed through out the country with the help of NATPOW and WPF's partner NGOs to ensure widespread outreach vis-à-vis the Safe Motherhood Campaign.



Call to Action

World Population Foundation's Country Representative for Pakistan, Mr. Qadeer Baig announced the "Call to Action" demanding that to reduce maternal mortality in Pakistan, healthcare services need to be strengthened; community sensitization programmes initiated to ensure active male involvement and empowerment of young girls be guaranteed to facilitate informed decisions about their pregnancy. He stressed upon investing in youth organizations working on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights to reduce maternal mortality among teenagers, and community education efforts to raise awareness that preparation for healthy pregnancy and child birth begins well before adulthood with adequate nutrition for girls. The detailed document containing the Call to Action was circulated amongst media personnel (Call to Action: Annexure 5).

Tribute by the Chief Guest



Ms. Farzana Raja, Member National Assembly of Pakistan, presently Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) with the status of Federal Minister was the honorable Chief Guest on Mothers' Night 2009.

At the conclusion of the event, Ms. Raja pledged to improve the plight of countless Pakistani mothers who currently do not have ample access to healthcare facilities. She reiterated the Government's resolve to carry forward the mission of Mohtarhama Benazir Bhutto and said that efforts were already underway to reach out to the marginalized female population through Benazir Income Support Programme. She assured of her full support for the Safe Motherhood Campaign and thanked WPF, Pakistan and NATPOW for providing her the opportunity to pay tribute to the mothers of Pakistan.

Thematic Dance Performance



Mothers' Night 2009 concluded with a thematic classical dance performance by renowned classical dancer, Ms. Nighat Chaodhry depicting how teenage marriages can take away a young girl's dream and drive her towards the detrimental affects of early pregnancies.

Way Forward

This year World Population Foundation in full force took its Safe Motherhood Campaign forward with the national media taken onboard and the out reach extended at the provincial level.

As a next step, to spread wide spread awareness, the campaign will focus on Urdu translation and distribution of the fact sheets to civil society, government and media partners. The aim is to build on these important partnerships in the future from various sectors, for the cause of Safe Motherhood in Pakistan.

Media sensitization and training on Safe Motherhood issues is an important mandate of WPF. To achieve this goal WPF intends to educate the media through various capacity building workshops throughout the year to enhance their understanding of SRHR related issues and bring to light new advancements in research in this sector of development.

Moreover, WPF, Pakistan and NATPOW have approached the Ministries of Population Welfare and Human Rights to endorse the Maternal Mortality Resolution at United Nations Human Rights Council to ensure Pakistan's active commitment to this cause at the global level.

Annexure 1: Schedule of Provincial Consultations on Safe Motherhood

NATPOW Field Office	Affiliated Collaborating NGOs	Dates
NATPOW FO Karachi	PAVHNA (Pakistan Voluntary Health & Nutrition Association)	4 th May 2009
NATPOW FO Lahore	CSC (Community Support Concern)	5 th May 2009
NATPOW FO Peshawar	AWARD (All Women Advancement & Resource Development)	6 th May 2009
NATPOW FO Quetta	Mahec Trust	6 th May 2009

Annexure 2: Programme Schedule

**Safe Motherhood – Saving the Soul Bearers
Mothers’ Night 2009
Tentative Programme Schedule
9th May, 2009, Islamabad Club Auditorium**

S. No	Activity	Timing
1	Welcome	5:35pm
2	<i>In every story, ever told something is common....</i> Tribute to Mothers	6:00pm
3	<i>Every life counts... And so does every woman...</i> Panel Discussion Theme: Safe Motherhood Sub-themes: Maternal Mortality Maternal Nutrition Teenage Marriages	6:05pm
4	<i>When it’s about saving lives... EVERY idea has worth...</i> Presentation of Recommendations from Provincial Consultations	7:05pm
5	<i>Every effort matters...</i> Appreciation Awards for Media	7:15pm
6	<i>When words fall short...</i> Tribute to a Mother	7:30pm
7	<i>For the voice of every Mother...</i> Mothers’ Award	7:40pm
8	Closing Remarks	7:50pm
9	<i>Celebrating Motherhood...</i> Thematic Classical Dance performance by Ms. Nighat Chaodhary	8:00pm

Annexure 3: Recommendations

Generic Recommendations

- Strong Political Commitment and Support
- Adequate Resource Allocations
- Strengthening Public-Private & NGOs Partnership
- Extensive & Intensive Media Campaign
- Enhance Men's Participation
- Promote Gender Equality & Equity with special focus on Female Literacy

Reduce Teenage Marriages:

- Legislation and Law Enforcement
- Explicit Media Campaign for Community Sensitization & Mobilization backed-up by Community Leaders especially the Religious Scholars & Ullemas
- Pre-Marriage Couple Counseling

Promote improved Maternal Nutrition:

- Awareness Raising through Strong Media Campaign
- Create Income Generation Opportunities for Women to address Health Poverty
- Fortification of Flour & Salt with Essential Micro-Nutrients (especially Iron, Zinc & Iodine etc)

Reduce Maternal Mortality Promote Health Facility-based Deliveries by the Skilled Birth Attendants (SBAs)

- Strengthen EmONC (Emergency Obstetric & Neonatal Care) by providing Logistics and placement of Trained Personnel, especially in Rural/Under-served Areas;
- Repositioning of Public & Private Health Facilities to ensure equitable distribution;
- Decentralized Decision Making (District Level);
- Ensure Availability and Access of FP Services, especially for spacing Children.

Annexure 4: Call to Action

- 1. Strengthening health care systems in order to ensure access to Family Planning services, discourage teenage pregnancies and decrease maternal mortality by:**
 - a. Wide-scale training of community-based midwives and equipping them with basic supplies and medicines. In places without doctors, these midwives could provide clean, safe deliveries with low risk of maternal infections and initiate treatment where signs of such infection appear and stop postpartum hemorrhage.
 - b. Funding programmes that aim to improve communication and transportation systems that will offer the opportunity to give birth timely and in a safe environment in the presence of a midwife.
 - c. Investing in additional training positions, improved working conditions and increased salaries for a greater number of doctors and paramedics.
 - d. Strengthening the role of local communities (men and women, boys and girls) in demanding accountability of their government with regard to the use of funding for the benefit of health care facilities and family planning for mother and child care.
- 2. Ensuring involvement of men as partners through capacity building and awareness raising initiatives at grass roots level by:**
 - a. Sensitizing men about the importance of pre and anti-natal check-ups of their partners
 - b. Educating men about the importance of having their partners give birth at a healthcare facility under the supervision of skilled birth attendants
 - c. Encouraging men to accompany their wives for pre-natal and anti-natal check-ups
- 3. Empower young girls to make informed decisions about pregnancy:**
 - a. In the case of pregnancy, wanted or unwanted, provision of proper pregnancy counseling by a midwife/Doctor, proper counseling on the decision making process related to abortion, adoption or young motherhood as well as provision of youth friendly care during pregnancy, child birth, after child birth and after unsafe abortion.
- 4. Invest in (youth) organizations that are working on the issue of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and that make an effort to decrease maternal mortality among teenagers:**
 - a. Involve youth organizations in policy making.
 - b. Create an accessible long term fund for youth organizations in the Pakistan
 - c. Organizations and projects that receive funding for work on youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) should be demanded to explicitly include youth participation in their policy.
 - d. Comprehensive sexuality education for boys and girls, inside and outside of schools; access to reliable and affordable contraception for young people and access to affordable and safe abortion; youth friendly sexual and reproductive health care, free of stigmatization, and respectful of privacy.
- 5. Community education efforts to raise awareness that preparation for healthy pregnancy and child birth begins well before adulthood with adequate nutrition for girls should be propagated by:**
 - a. Providing quality education to Pakistani women to improve their economic as well as nutritional status.
 - b. Incorporating health and nutrition education in formal school curricula for girls and awareness programmes to improve women's health and nutrition status as well as their control over fertility and social development.