



RLM- Religious Leader's Mobilization at grass root community level to promote Responsible Parenthood & to eradicate Extreme Behaviour



NATPOW is a Not-for-Profit Organization established by the Government of Pakistan in 1994. NATPOW works throughout Pakistan with 363 CSOs/Private Sector Partners at the grass roots community level. It builds effective partnerships for interventions, with special emphasis on Community Mobilization and Participation, Advocacy and Awareness Raising, Capacity Building, HRD, RH & FP and to provide better Health Services to the communities.

Religious/Madrasa education is a common practice in the under-privileged communities due to the economic deprivation in the society. There are more than 12,000 Madrasas that are registered with the provincial governments and over 2.6 million students are believed to be undergoing the religious training through these kind of institutions. These institutions play a very significant role in the life of common people and can be utilized for effective interventions through orientation, support and involvement of these Imams, Khateebes, Nikah Registrars and Qaris, comprising our RL community. As the social behaviours and customs are largely influenced by the indigenous Religious Leaders (RLs), these RLs are also important opinion makers in the adoption of Family Planning (FP) and their involvement is considered pivotal for Population Development. Almost all RLs are aware of the implications and consequences of rapid population growth. These facts were successfully highlighted by NATPOW and were reciprocated by CIDA-PSU Islamabad, through their support for this pilot program.



Project Objectives:

To bring about long-term behavioural change in the community by effectively involving 100 RLs at the village level, to mobilize communities to seek women's reproductive rights, to inculcate Responsible Parenthood, to remove socio-religious myths & misperceptions related to use of FP methods & to promote tolerance and compassion.

Geographic Coverage/Scope: District of Rajanpur in Southern Punjab

Trainings/Workshops:

In the Tehsil Rajanpur, 105 male RLs and 35 Female RLs were given orientation over three days of sessions. The information during these sessions were imparted by the locally renowned Resource Persons and Professionals accepted by the entire regional religious community.

Turning Point:

The most fundamental achievement of this pilot program is the effective engagement of Female Religious Leaders (RLs) in Southern Punjab and that to, for the first time in the history of the region. The Provincial departments at the district level were instrumental in orchestrating this engagement. The female RLs are evolving into an essential part of the rural social fabric and thus, hold a unique position in the rural society, as they are the foremost recipients of the prevailing societal prejudices. They can understand the gender specific challenges faced in exercising their reproductive rights and are familiar with the associated violence and abuse. This makes them quite an effective change agents in the society and an appropriate tool in this necessary and important struggle in the rural society for uplifting their reproductive rights. The female RLs group encountered during this Project reflected tremendous optimism regarding the change that, interventions like these, can bring.



Female RLs Comments:

"Before coming to the orientation our perceptions were different, but after the orientation, they have changed. We have realized the important of birth spacing for our health. I want to share this information with other women in my community. And according to Islamic ideology, these issues should be focused upon", Ms. Qurat-UI-Ain (RL).



"When we control our population, then we realize a more balanced life style. Islam also gives directions towards achieving such a balance in life. It is important to have a planned life", Ms. Hurmat Raza (RL).

"It's a part of Islam that we should follow in our daily practice, and I am glad to see that this issue has been discussed in the Madrasas for the very first time, that this feels like the much needed start of a successful intervention", Ms. Razia Sultana

For any further information please contact:
info@natpow.org.pk www.natpow.org.pk