

Quality health care to address population issues: experts

Our correspondent

Islamabad

Health experts on Tuesday called for providing the people with better access to quality health care to help address population issues.

Addressing a seminar on 'Sukh Initiative - progress through sharing, we move forward together' at a local hotel, they warned that lack of health services would overburden infrastructure.

Organised by the Sukh Initiative, a multi-donor funded, family planning project serving one million under-served population in peri-urban areas of Karachi, the event targeted the families not wanting more pregnancy with an aim to provide them with proper family planning facilities at sustainable level.

The results of the project's Midline Evaluation were shared with diverse audience, which included the family planning experts, government dignitaries and civil society representatives.

The experts said under the Sukh initiative, Aman Community Health Programme trained 100 lady health workers of the National Programme for Family Planning and Primary Healthcare (LHW Programme) to strengthen the programme and increase their efficiency and effectiveness.

The LHWs provide basic contraceptive methods like oral pills, condoms and follow-up dose of injectable contraceptives.

They said that Pakistan was the sixth most populous coun-

try and was grappling with several challenges, including rapid population growth. The Contraceptive prevalence Rate (CPR) stands at 35%, which include 26% of modern contraceptive users and nine percent traditional users and one out of every five women in Pakistan has an unmet need for contraception.

While presenting technical review of the project, Dr Harris Ahmed, chief of the party, Sukh Initiative, appreciated the support of health department, and government of Sindh for a momentous decision to allow LHWs to provide first dose of two-month Family Planning Injection (of Depo Provera) after training and supervision.

This was a concrete contribution to FP2020 goals.

"I am honored to lead this unique project which actively engages and connects demand generation, service delivery, youth engagement, system strengthening and sustainably.

With a focus on peri-urban areas in Karachi, it was essential to engage communities by acknowledging their culture, providing access and holding their hands to progress to next level of well-being," he said.

Dr. Yasmine Qazi, Senior Country Advisor, Lucile Packard Foundation, Pakistan, said the project was yet another value addition to women empowerment and increased access to Family Planning services in Pakistan.

She said access to and provision of quality health care services was the key that could transform the popula-

tion issues.

"We are hopeful that projects like Sukh Initiative will significantly contribute to FP2020 goals in Pakistan," he said.

The event consisted presentations and interactive panel discussions highlighting fundamental elements of Family Planning including Community Mobilisation, Improving Access and Quality of Family Planning Services and System strengthening. Critical issues, challenges and best practices were also discussed.

Dr. Talib Lashari, technical adviser to the CIP, Dr. Ghulam Hussain Shaikh - PC, KHW programme, and Dr. Alia Ali - NCMNH also shared their insight during the panel discussion.

Dr. Azra Peecho, MNA and chair FP2020 Sindh, appreciated the performance and Sukh initiative, which reflected on the project's success, "It is heartening to see the success of the Sukh Initiative.

She said that Sukh II should be initiated because it helped a lot to Health department of Sindh government to overcome the issues regarding Family Planning.

She said the collaborative efforts of Sukh along with diverse portfolio of partner organisations was creating impact with sustainable solutions.

"With the continued support of our stakeholders across multiple levels, I am confident that this programme will make an indelible mark in health sector of Pakistan," she said.