

MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTNER NGOS – 9TH OCTOBER, 2017

The Ministry of Women and Child Development organized the first ever Conference of Partner NGOs: Implementation of Policies, Schemes, Programmes for Women and Children: Challenges and Way Forward on October 9, 2017 at the Ashok Hotel, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. The Conference was inaugurated at 09:30 a.m. by the Chief Guest, Hon'ble Minister of Women and Child Development, Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi. Hon'ble Minister of State, MWCD, Dr. Virendra Kumar was the guest of Honour. Secretary, MWCD, Shri Rakesh Srivastava and Addl. Secretary, MWCD Shri Ajay Tirkey were also present in the inaugural session. Representatives of 167 NGOs from across the country and officers of the line Ministries and MWCD attended the conference. The objective of the conference was to provide NGO partners an opportunity to share their experiences and insights and to deliberate upon the various challenges confronted at the grassroots level for the welfare of the women and children.

2. Addl. Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Shri Ajay Tirkey gave the welcome address setting up the premise and context for the Conference. He set the agenda for the day by highlighting the themes on which deliberations and discussions were to be held. He called upon the NGOs to give constructive opinion on the following themes: 1) Violence against Women: *Prevention & Facilitating Access to Justice*, 2) National Policy for Women: *Policy Interventions for Gender Parity*, 3) Trafficking of Women and Children: *Role of State Institutions*, 4) Cyber Crime and Children: *Prevention and Harm Reduction*, and 5) Implementation of JJ Act: *Structural Challenges and Mainstreaming of Children*. The Addl. Secretary, in his welcome note, stressed upon the need to discuss these themes for formulation of improved policies and programmes to bring overall development of women and children of the country. The importance of NGOs in achieving the success of implementation of the schemes of MWCD at ground level was also brought up in his speech. It was mentioned that existing policies and schemes in the country need introspection and modification given the changing needs and demand of the economy.

3. In his keynote address, Secretary, MWCD, re-emphasised the importance of the conference by stating that it will give NGOs a platform to express their experiences from the grassroots with regard to the implementation of policies and programmes related to women and children. Secretary pointed out the importance of effective support of the NGOs in implementation of Ministry's programmes and schemes and also to make the society aware about the existing imbalances with respect to the welfare and development of women and children. Highlighting the need for ensuring protection and well-being of women and children, Secretary said that it is not only our constitutional commitment, but, also a necessity for the growth and

development of the nation. He raised concerns regarding violence that women are often subjected to at domestic and public spheres of life and mentioned about the programmes that the Ministry is taking in this direction. On similar note, he also spoke about issues of human trafficking and cyber crime and encouraged NGOs to work in the direction of ensuring help and justice to the affected individuals. Secretary also informed the gathering about some of the schemes of the Ministry like Ujjawala and the draft anti-trafficking bill for rescue and rehabilitation of victims.

4. The Guest of Honour, Dr. Virendra Kumar, MoS, MWCD, addressed NGOs as the eyes and ears of the Govt. at the grass root as they bring in huge information from the ground that can be utilized effectively. He credited NGOs for their outreach to those segments of the society and places where Govt. fails to reach. Reinstating the need to work together, the Hon'ble MoS said that the NGOs can help the Govt. in bridging the gap in policy implementation. He expressed his concern and pain on multiple cases of cyber game related deaths in the country which has victimised not only children but also housewives and adult individuals in recent times. Hon'ble Minister of State felt optimistic that the conference would turn out to be an effective platform to discuss on issues like safety and security aspects of women and children who are more vulnerable to be abused, harassed as well as threatened on the cyber spaces. He ensured that under the able guidance of the Hon'ble Minister, the Ministry will relentlessly work towards bringing in stringent policies and implement stricter mechanisms to prevent violence and crime against women and children.

5. The Chief Guest, Hon'ble Minister, Smt. Maneka Gandhi, presented an overview of the various policies and programmes of the Ministry. She applauded the efforts of the officers of MWCD for the successful implementation of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme of the government and expressed that its success is not only due to effective sensitization programmes but also due to the willing involvement of the men in the society. Hon'ble Minister also held that success or failure of welfare schemes formulated by Govt. depends upon its outreach to the targeted section in the society. Emphasizing the importance of NGOs in reaching out at the grassroots, the Hon'ble Minister mentioned that NGOs can act as communication network as well as implementing agencies of various policies and schemes of the Govt. The contribution of the NGOs in providing valuable inputs for drafting the National Policy for Women was highly appreciated by her. She, however, mentioned her concern that the existing communication gap needs to be completely filled so that information from the ground becomes available to the Government for formulation of need based policies and schemes. She emphasized that NGOs can be that effective channel of communication to provide feedback and inputs. The Hon'ble Minister said that the Ministry has been trying to create a communication network with the NGOs and

this conference would bear fruit in this effort. She desired a half an hour direct interaction with the participant NGO representatives and asked them to voice their opinions and concerns to her.

6. The Hon'ble Minister raised her concern on the issue of child pornography and trafficking and the need for collaborative action to combat such heinous crime. She expressed her desire to launch National Alliance for Child Security to fight trafficking and abuse. She sought concrete suggestions from the NGOs for tackling the network of online offenders. The Hon'ble Minister also invited suggestions to stop violence against women in asylums and prisons.

7. Keen note of all the issues and opinions raised during this interactive session was taken by the Minister. Many of the queries raised by the participants were also addressed. On one of the NGO's concern over lack of Sexual Harassment Committee at work places, Hon'ble Minister informed the audience that "SHe-box" (Sexual Harassment Electronic Box) has been launched by the Ministry to enable women employees in the Central Government organizations to register their complaints of sexual harassment at work place. Very soon, this complaint mechanism will be made available for Public Sector Undertakings and Private Organizations. She also directed the officers to ensure necessary action and inform concerned Ministries to make it compulsory for industries of the public and private sectors to have Sexual Harassment Committee in place. To bring awareness about the rights of the migrant women workers and to sensitize them about their rightful minimum wages, Hon'ble Minister sought the production of short films by the Ministry in regional languages. She asked all concerned NGOs to make the message reach to every corner of the country through screening of these films based on various issues. She said that Government cannot reach everywhere, and thus it is the NGOs' moral responsibility to communicate to the needy and the downtrodden. On a question related to trafficking and rehabilitation of the children, the Hon'ble Minister said that along with rescue of the children, the ultimate aim should be to provide economic opportunity to the affected family.

8. Hon'ble Minister also directed that programmes should be compulsorily made to train anganwadi workers and women sarpanchs under the monitoring and direct supervision of Joint Secretaries. NGOs should take up the responsibility to help Govt. in this regard. She appreciated one of the suggestions made by an NGO to provide self defence training to women and girls. Hon'ble Minister directed further interventions for the empowerment of women and provision of more power to "Mahila Mandals" at panchayat levels. She informed that training to women sarpanchs should be given in regard to making village girls aware about their rights

while they move out of their areas in search of work. Many NGOs were concerned that their grievances remained often unheard. In solution to this, Hon'ble Minister asked her officers to make sure that a dedicated website, which is easy to understand and use, be created for speedy redressal of grievances of the NGOs. Hon'ble Minister also urged upon the NGOs to take active and innovative measures so that information from the ground level reach the Ministry. She reaffirmed her commitment to help those NGOs who strive for the betterment of the lives of the needy women and children of the society. The Hon'ble Minister ended her speech by wishing success to all NGOS.

9. The Minister's speech was complemented by a Vote of Thanks by Smt. Ratna Jena, Statistical Adviser, MWCD. She emphasized that Hon'ble Minister has provided the direction to organize such kind of conference, the deliberations of which will provide a future roadmap for effective implementation of schemes and programmes and realization of the vision of the Ministry of empowered women living with dignity in an environment free from violence and discrimination and well-nurtured children with full opportunities for growth and development in a safe and protective environment. She set the tone of the conference of Partner NGOs by stating "Together we share and together we grow". She assured the Hon'ble Minister to continue to work even better, in the direction of percolating welfare measures to the most needy women and children in the country. Statistical Adviser Smt. Jena also stated that the Ministry will reach great heights and shall become successful in its efforts under the brilliant and able leadership of Hon'ble Minister. She expressed her heartfelt thanks to Hon'ble Minister, Hon'ble Minister of State, Secretary and Additional Secretary for their support.

10. Post Tea break, a 120 minutes breakaway session was held at 11:30 A.M. wherein NGOs were placed into 5 groups based on the core themes: 1) Violence against Women: *Prevention & Facilitating Access to Justice*, 2) National Policy for Women: *Policy Interventions for Gender Parity*, 3) Trafficking of Women and Children: *Role of State Institutions*, 4) Cyber Crime and Children: *Prevention and Harm Reduction*, and 5) Implementation of JJ Act: *Structural Challenges and Mainstreaming of Children*. The conveners for these groups were NGOs namely Cequin, Alternative Futures, Prayas, Cyber Peace Foundation and Butterflies respectively. The brainstorming discussions yielded fruitful outcomes in the form of useful suggestions and policy recommendations. The suggestions were presented by the representatives of each of the groups during the "Presentation Session" chaired by Shri Rakesh Srivastava, Secretary, MWCD and moderated by Shri Chetan B. Sanghi, JS, MWCD and Smt. Astha Saxena, JS, MWCD in the presence of Addl. Secretary. The suggestions given by the NGOs during the "Presentation Session" is listed in **Annexure I**.

11. The day long conference of partner NGOs was summed up by Shri Rakesh Srivastava, Secretary, MWCD. The overall suggestions and recommendations provided by the NGOs and some other important points regarding steps needed to be taken by the Ministry were addressed during this session. Laying emphasis on the need of increasing funds for different schemes of the Ministry, the Secretary also emphasized the importance of gender budgeting to provide more opportunities to the women.

12. There were many questions regarding One Stop Centres, and also on the funding. Responding to question on One Stop Centre, the Secretary acknowledged the fact that the number of One Stop Centres and the budget for this scheme need to be increased. On the issue of violence against women, the Secretary assured for the strengthening of counselling centres to address the post-trauma disorders, and acknowledged the need for new infrastructure requirement for the safety and security of women. It was mentioned that number of cases against the women belonging to marginalised section of society needed to be treated with extra care and efficiency. On the issues of trafficking, the Secretary reiterated the problems raised by the NGOs, especially in the Indo-Nepal border areas. On the issue of allocation of funds for Ujjawala, the Secretary said that the present budget structure has been changed and the funds allocated for the schemes are now in proportion of 60:30:10 (where Centre contributes 60%, State 30% and 10% of the cost is to the borne by the NGO). Short delays do happen in the allocations of funds due to this new budget structure.

13. The Secretary also mentioned that the Ministry has benefited from thousands of suggestions and inputs sent by its partners NGOs which has helped in the formulation of a proper Draft National Policy for Women. With regard to women farmer issues, the Secretary assured that the Ministry will work with the land department to register the property in the name of women farmers. It was also mentioned that the Govt. shall make every effort towards bringing convergence of the different programmes of the various Ministries. As an example to the issue of convergence, the Secretary said that the Prime Minister of India has recently called upon a meeting of DMs of all districts to take on the issue of Nutrition in which different Ministries are involved. This kind of meetings on specific issues can bring in convergence of different schemes through discussion and dialogue.

14. The Secretary also highlighted that MWCD is in talk with Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for providing more opportunities to girls in the field of sports. Finally, it was emphasized that MWCD will go to every length to help deserving

NGOs who give constructive output at the ground levels for the welfare of the women and children of the country.

15. Final concluding remarks and vote of thanks were offered by Smt. Ratna Anjan Jena, Statistical Adviser, MWCD. She stated that the conference was successful in its objective to engage NGO Partners in offering constructive insights on the themes taken up for discussion. She assured all the participants and the delegates that the valuable inputs provided by them shall be taken into consideration and the deliberations of the conference shall be presented in a report. The report will be shared among all Partner NGOs, Ministries and Niti Aayog for their consideration for future improved policy formulations. She thanked all the Officers and staff and everyone who was engaged relentlessly in the organization of the conference. She also conveyed her appreciation and thankfulness to all the NGOs for their participation.

ANNEXURE I

Suggestions by NGOs for different themes.

Theme 1: Violence against Women: *Prevention & Facilitating Access to Justice*

- **One Stop Centre** and **Women Helpline** should be extended to cover vulnerable and marginalized women and women in conflict zones.
 - Horizontal and vertical training of the personnel engaged in police force, One Stop Centres (OSCs) and other stakeholders engaged in facilitating help to women facing violence.
 - Advisory should be issued to MHA & MHFW to include sensitization programmes and training of personnel at all levels.
 - Survivors including released women prisoners to be provided proper rehabilitation and reintegration with society and Investigating Officers (IOs) should track and do successive follow up.
- For Effectiveness of **Swadhar Greh** Scheme:
 - Linking Swadhar-Greh to skill development centres. The Swadhar Grehs in Temple Towns should be linked to Temple Trusts for providing employment to women.
 - Merging of all different homes that cater to women in distress.
 - Framing of mandatory timeline for the monitoring and review of projects under Swadhar Grehs.
 - Family Counselling Centres to be used for spreading awareness about schemes related to violence against women.
 - Use of mass media to communicate strategy from Centre to the grassroots.
- To effectively address Domestic Violence & Sexual Harassment at Workplace:
 - An online portal for providing 24*7 psychological counselling by MWCD, Hospitals and Police to deal with women in distress.

- Utilization of Nirbhaya Fund for setting up of an integrated counselling platform for women affected with violence.
- Strengthening of Women Study Centre for combating violence against Women
- Involving men as stakeholders in spreading awareness on the Domestic Violence Act.
- Gender infrastructure development in the cities.

Theme 2: National Policy for Women: *Policy Interventions for Gender Parity*

- For economic empowerment, **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** Scheme to be linked with skill development.
- Schemes in collaboration with DST to promote locally relevant, appropriate, sustainable and economically viable technologies for women at district level. Special focus by DST on innovations by women.
- Mapping of home based workers and evaluation of women's unpaid work need to be included in next Census.
- Special focus on blocks and districts which have higher percentage of vulnerable and marginalized sections, including disaster prone areas.
- Special sensitization programmes for various problems faced by women.
- Not only fund allocation but proper Gender budgeting right from planning stage is important and related training is required at all levels (State, District & Panchayat).
- Land ownership, Land Lease and Kisan Credit Card to be made available for women farmers and should be linked with Aadhar. Promotion of joint ownership of houses nationally is emphasized.
- Empowering of **Mahila Mandal at Panchayat** and district levels, and, schemes to be implemented on self-defense and moral education.
- More vocational training component need to be included under **SABLA**.
- Increased fund allocation for programmes and schemes related to women and child development.
- Convergence of policies of violence against women at district level.
 - Involvement of Mahila Mandals for better convergence of programmes at panchayat level and district level. Federate Mahila Mandals at district level. DCs need to take the charge.
 - Linking of menstrual hygiene related awareness to education and health apart from its inclusion in mere sanitation programmes.
 - State level and district-level consultations of NGOs.
- Programme focus
 - Need to include adequate funds for short stay homes and timely disbursement; need to include administrative cost of the NGOs.

- Moral education and sex education in schools to improve gender parity.
- Comprehensive self-defence, including physical and mental aspects, to be made part of the school curriculum from Class 1 for all children, especially girls which should include Judo. Karate, etc, Yoga, meditation, life skills, etc.
- Focus on sensitive areas for trafficking with appropriate shelter homes and counselling
- Surveillance groups in local police stations in partnership with local NGOs for trafficking women and substance abuse (drugs, mentally challenge)
- Disabled women and children need to be integrated with society for which adoption, admission in schools, shelter homes stays should be made available. Skill development should ensured of such distressed women and children.
- Need to derive alternative ways for Leprosy patients, laborers and elderly women who cannot authenticate Aadhaar.
- Provision of free treatment of women and children affected by cancer, cerebral palasy and mental illness.
- Special helpline, special shelter and skill development for mentally ill women.
- Mapping at city, State and National level of homeless women and increase in the number of shelter homes; can be linked or accommodated in senior citizen homes or NGOs for care giving which will ensure mutual benefit.
- For promoting girls in sports, district level facilities, scholarships, training and diet and nutrition provision is required.
- More number of hostels to accommodate sports girls' trainees is required at district level.
- Focus on single women in all programmes.
- Women to be made part of decision making to locate liquor shops at panchayat level.
- Mahila panchayats to be given more teeth.
- Sensitization of all panchayat members on women and children's issues and programmes.
- Adolescent girls, young mothers to be recognized at the community level and for decisions and programmes.
- Cash transfers to be replaced with cooked hot meal to ensure nutritional security in the ICDS scheme.
- Mapping children in the streets to enable their enrolment in schools.
- Cyber service providers to be made responsible for any cyber offence or crime.

- Regular updates should be made available to NGOs on WCD website.

Theme 3: Trafficking of Women and Children: *Role of State Institutions*

- Comprehensive and integrated legislation on human trafficking that takes into account other laws like Sexual Exploitation Act, Slavery and bonded labour Act, Removal of Organs Act, etc. Bringing conformity in the existing laws on human trafficking and implementation of the existing schemes to combat trafficking. Legal issues and technicalities in all existing laws need to be sorted out.
- Police, Judges, Civil society members and all other stakeholders should be given proper information and training on the existing laws and protocols.
- Building up of a mechanism to link Ujjawala and Swadhar schemes to provide rescue and rehabilitation services to the victims; Institutionalization of rescue operations.
- Establishment of a National Anti Trafficking Bureau, State and District level committees; Mechanism of DCPU can be utilized.
- Enforcement, Rescue and Rehabilitation at the level of District Committees.
- Creation of a chain of network (District CWC links) to detect and prevent human trafficking.
- Confidentiality on pre-rescue, during rescue and post-rescue operations.
- Treatment needs to be differentiated for victims of trafficking and sexual offences; Tie-ups and integration of the schemes on skilling.
- Provision of shelter, psychological support, educational and vocational programmes for the victims.
- Compensation package for the victims need to be brought into the process of rehabilitation; Labour Ministry has a role to play here.
- Anganwadi workers under the ICDS and Asha workers need to be integrated to provide welfare support to victims.
- Sarpanch training programmes and linkages of programmes like PMGKY to prevent movement of children and women from villages.
- The role of placement agencies in preventing trafficking; these agencies must be brought under the human trafficking law.
- Mapping of voluntary sex workers and forced sex workers for differentiation; mapping of child beggary; vulnerability mapping for identifying chronic areas of human trafficking (i.e. origin and destination).
- Establishment of a National trafficking control bureau in line with the National Crime Control Bureau.
- Expansion of the purview of One Stop Centres to accommodate trafficking.

- Purview of Criminal Law Amendment Act and JJ Act to be expanded and tied up.
- Reviving of Anti-Human trafficking Cell.
- Video conferencing facilities for deposition of victims to connect them to court hearings from their place of rehabilitation and stay.

Theme 4: Cyber Crime and Children: *Prevention and Harm Reduction*

- Tackling cyber crime needs sensitization at all levels. Inclusion of modules on online safety in the existing Govt. campaigns like Digital India and PMG Disha.
- Expansion of mandate for National Alliance and sensitization programme on cyber crime. Inculcation of safe cyber navigation practices.
- Creation of a centralised hotline supported by a web portal.
- Categorization of crime related data for proper monitoring and evaluation for also emphasized. Emphasis on more research, both quantitative and qualitative to understand cyber related crimes and issues.
- Defining minimum standards for existing resource materials. Greater accountability of cyber service providers towards the users.
- Education and training to Counsellors, Teachers, Parents, Caregivers.
- Inclusion of Cyber Security in the school curriculum; Counselling for technology addicts in institutions like NIMHANS, AIIMS.
- Greater engagement with media for responsible reporting.
- Capacity building for responders. Trained responders to tackle cyber crimes.
- Collaborations and trans-national arrangements with global alliances like WeProtect and Interpol Child Sexual Exploitation database network to address the offences of cyber crime.
- Simplification of *Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs)* to facilitate inter country cyber crime and other criminal investigations.

Theme 5: Implementation of JJ Act: *Structural Challenges and Mainstreaming of Children*

- Sensitization and capacity building of statutory bodies, Capacity building of DCPU.
- Interventions at school levels including training of the principals and teachers to recognize substance abuse and sexual abuse and regular inspection including monitoring of children living in institutions.
- Information availability and availability of referral mechanisms.

- Mapping of services and district need analysis under ICPS. In this regard, Government's directions to States is required.
- Awareness on registration of Child Care Institutions at district level; up-gradation of Standard by Adopt a Home Programme to ensure registration.
- Role of Child Care Institutions as help-lines.
- Funds need to be disbursed from State to district and district to institutions, twice a year; Tracking of funds released from Centre to State; Timelines for all milestones in the fund disbursement and utilization process.
- Creation of a compendium of best practices; Implementation of Rehabilitative sponsorship guidelines.
- Follow up National research on children who have been rehabilitated and or reintegrated.
- Direction across CWCs regarding transfer need to be shared with relevant stakeholders.
- Mandatory and regular inspection including monitoring of children living in institutions and checking family tracking efforts; Constant review of Individual Care Plan;
- Analysis of human resources, its number and capacities; Human Resource Policy for JJ and ICPS functionaries.
- Hotline and child for protection policy in CCIs- Template for child protection policy.
- Mandatory linkage at the National level for skill development/ recreation etc. of children. MoUs can be considered with allied Ministries.
- Utilization of components like foster care, open shelter to address whether the component is being implemented properly. Evaluation of ICPS and its components comprehensively
- Mainstreaming child protection and rights in academic courses for various stakeholders.
- Synchronization of various Acts such as Child Labour Act, JJ Act, Child Marriage Act, etc.

