



## NAVDISHA- National Thematic Workshop on Best Practices for Women and Child Development

Organised by Ministry of Women and Child Development  
Government of India and Government of Haryana

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Panipat, Haryana

### **I. Introduction**

Women and children constitute around 70 % of India's people and are the critical foundation for national development - at present and in the future. More inclusive growth must begin with children and women- breaking an intergenerational cycle of inequity and multiple deprivations faced by women and girls, as related to poverty, social exclusion, gender discrimination and undernutrition. This intergenerational cycle of multiple deprivation and violence faced by girls and women is reflected in the adverse and steeply declining child sex ratio in children under 6 years of age which reached an all time low of 918 girls for every 1000 boys in 2011. Discrimination against the girl child is also evident in other forms of gross neglect and gender based violence after birth - in infancy, early childhood and adolescence. It is also reflected in the unequal access to health, nutrition, care and education. If not addressed, child marriage, early and frequent pregnancies result in the adolescent girl child being denied her right to be a child - her right to childhood.

Critical development imperatives are the fulfillment of children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation and the recognition of women as equal partners in social, economic, development and political processes. These commitments are embodied in the Constitution and in several enabling legislations, policies (such as the National Policy For the Empowerment of Women 2001, National Policy For Children 2013 and the National Nutrition Policy 1993), Five Year and Annual Plans and programmes. Despite this there are several challenges that remain and key issues which need to be addressed urgently. These include ensuring Women's Safety, Protection and Empowerment, improving the Child Sex Ratio, ensuring Child Protection and preventing and reducing Maternal and Child Undernutrition and controlling anemia across the life cycle.

### **II. Women's Safety, Protection and Empowerment**

Despite some recent positive momentum, the pace of progress in realizing women's safety, protection and empowerment has not been adequate. This is reflected in the National Crime Records Bureau data, which highlighted that 3,09,546 incidents of crime against women (both under Indian Penal Code and other laws) were reported during the year 2013, as against the 2,44,270 cases reported during 2012, showing an increase of 26.7% (despite the fact that not all crimes against women are reported). The policy commitment to ensuring the safety, security and dignity of women

and girls in public and private spaces was reaffirmed – including through the Twelfth Plan provisions, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013. The redesign of an overarching framework for the protection and empowerment of women has not yet fructified. Similarly, despite the efforts to initiate Response Centres with an integrated women’s help line, adequate prioritization to prevention, care and counseling remains a challenge. State initiatives have come up - such as the Maharashtra “Manodhairya”, a scheme for providing financial assistance and end to end socio legal support services to survivors of sexual violence and acid attacks; Dilaasa- a hospital-based Crisis Counseling department for women facing violence, a joint initiative of CEHAT and the Municipal Corporation of Mumbai (BMC) and the integrated Women’s Helpline in Gujarat. Building on these experiences, there is need for developing a comprehensive strategy to end violence against women and girls - that includes prevention, protection, response, restorative justice and reintegration.

Ensuring women’s social, economic and political empowerment, fulfillment of their rights, promoting their participation and leadership requires comprehensive gender-responsive measures at different levels, including through legal, policy and institutional frameworks. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act has given a new dimension to the process of women’s empowerment, with women panchayat members emerging in many settings as change leaders. Now progressively, many states are earmarking 50% reservation for women in panchayati raj institutions.

A major thrust for economic empowerment has been through the formation of thrift and credit based self-help groups (SHGs) formed by women - with states such as Andhra Pradesh demonstrating effective ways of making this a mass movement. Increased support for women SHGs in the National Rural Livelihood Mission and in MGNREGA with women having a share of 115.54 (53%) crore person days in 2013-14 have been positive developments. Successful linkages between SHGs and Micro-Finance institutions such as RMK, NABARD, SIDBI besides private micro-finance institutions have helped in generating additional income, jobs and in creating small enterprises for women. It is this innovation that needs to be developed and built upon by achieving synergy in the SHG activities through formation of clusters and federations, building institutions for imparting skills (which challenge gender stereotypes) and achieving social and economic empowerment of women. It is clear that “transformative” and not only “incremental” reforms may be necessary to alter social dynamics and to ensure gender equality and gender justice.

### **III. Child Rights**

Fulfilling the rights of India’s children - around one fifth of the world’s children - to survival, development, protection and participation remains a continuing challenge. The recently formulated Draft Nation Action Plan for children (NPAC), critical for achieving monitorable targets for Child Survival, Development, Protection and Participation, is a major step in this direction. This seeks to implement the commitments embodied in the updated National Policy For Children and also envisages State and District Plans of Action. This is aligned to and builds further on the Twelfth Plan framework for realizing child rights.

ICDS is today the world’s largest community based outreach programme for early child development. It reaches out to over 8.5 crore young children below 6 years of age (around half of the total of 16.45 crore, as per Census 2011), around 1.9 crore pregnant and breastfeeding mothers through 7066 projects and a network of 13.4 lakh operational anganwadi centres across the country. ICDS was strengthened and restructured in 2012, seeking to enhance both nutrition and early development outcomes. The recently adopted National Early Childhood Care and Education Policy 2013 also emphasizes the criticality of the first few years of life as the foundation for cumulative

lifelong learning and human development. Ensuring universal access to integrated early childhood development services -with quality and equity - is a key priority, bringing together efforts of the public sector (through the restructured ICDS programme), private and voluntary sectors.

Reaching the younger child through family and community based approaches; expanding maternal, infant and early child care through crèches, using locally responsive flexible approaches; improving the quality of early learning and strengthening the linkages with elementary education are issues that continue to merit attention. States such as Jharkhand and West Bengal have evolved new approaches for quality improvement and strengthening of the early learning continuum, linking the family, community, child care centres and schools. The effective implementation of The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009 (effective 1 April 2010) has contributed to improved outcomes in elementary education, progressively closing the gender gap in school enrolment and retention and also providing a protective environment to children.

Addressing trafficking, missing children, sexual abuse, tackling juvenile crimes and strengthening child protection systems are priority areas for action. Major recent steps taken to address these priority areas include the introduction of the Juvenile Justice Bill, 2014; revision of the Adoption guidelines with simplified and online processes and with fixed timelines and revamp of the CARINGS web portal. Other steps include the strengthened implementation of ICPS and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012, enacted to protect children from sexual violence, abuse and exploitation and the launch of Khoya Paya, complementing TrackChild.

A multi-sectoral approach to Prevent and Combat Trafficking of Women and Children for Commercial Sexual Exploitation has been taken up in partnership with other sectors, states and civil society and states such as Jharkhand and Telengana have introduced innovative approaches. The Ministry of Home Affairs has also set up an Anti Trafficking nodal cell to act as focal point for enabling follow up on action taken by States, to combat the crime of human trafficking. These initiatives will be consolidated and taken forward.

#### **IV. Nutrition**

India faces persistently high levels of maternal and child undernutrition and anemia, characterized by an intergenerational cycle that includes low birth weight babies, growth failure in young children, inadequate care of the undernourished and anemic girl child, compromised nutrition status and anemia in adolescent girls, negatively impacting upon women's nutrition. DLHS 3 highlighted that 43 per cent of currently married women in the age-group 20-24 years were married before attaining the age of 18 years. Adolescent girls married before the attainment of the age of 18 years, often go through early and frequent pregnancies, with inadequate inter pregnancy recoupment, which also negatively impact upon maternal nutrition and birth outcomes in the next generation, thus perpetuating an inter generational cycle of undernutrition.

NFHS 3 (2005-06) highlighted that nearly every second young child in India was undernourished (42.5 % of children under 5 years were underweight); seven out of ten children were anemic; every third woman in India was undernourished (35.6 % with low Body Mass Index) and every second woman (15-49 years) was anemic (55.3%). Reinforcing legislative, policy, plan and programme commitments that address the multidimensional nature of the nutrition challenges, nutrition focus in relevant sectoral programmes has been reflected in the Twelfth Plan sectoral strategies. Nutrition is also included in the over arching Twelfth Plan Monitorable Targets, binding sectors and states to collective action.

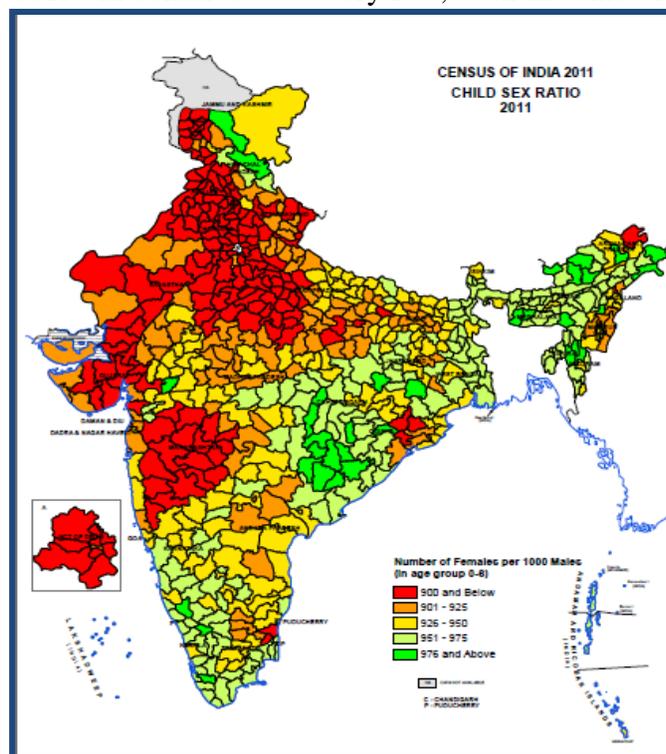
The policy commitment to preventing and reducing undernutrition through a more comprehensive strategy with monitorable targets in a time bound manner was reaffirmed by the Budget 2014-15 speech of the Finance Minister. Based on these policy directions, a new National Nutrition Mission is being formulated. This is informed by innovative initiatives that have been taken up in several states. These include innovative approaches to improve Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices - especially early and exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life - such as the Lalitpur model in UP, taken up in collaboration with Gorakhpur Medical College and Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India and Bal Sukham in Gujarat. Other innovative models include those for improving early child nutrition and development in West Bengal (Keno Parbo Na); for Community Nutrition taken up in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Maharashtra and for addressing anaemia across the life cycle. The strategies also address the criticality of ensuring the prevention and management of diseases, through universal access to health care in the National Health Mission and ensuring hygiene, sanitation and universal access to safe drinking water through Swachh Bharat, in convergence with ICDS and with greater community ownership, for improved nutrition outcomes.

## V. Improving the Child Sex Ratio: Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

Breaking an intergenerational cycle of multiple deprivations faced by girls and women is critical for more inclusive and sustainable growth. This cycle is epitomized by the adverse sex ratio in young children in the 0-6 years age group, denying the girl child her right to be born and her right to life. It is also evident in other forms of gender based violence. The Census 2011 data was a call for urgent action, because this highlighted that the girl child is increasingly being excluded - not only from economic development and growth- but from life itself. If not reversed urgently, the steeply declining Child Sex Ratio will alter demography; erode gender justice, social cohesion and human development.

The findings highlighted the need to urgently address the unabated decline in the CSR (0-6 years) in India, which has fallen from 927 in 2001 to an all time low of 918 females per 1000 males in 2011. It is also clear that this problem is becoming more widespread – with this decline being seen in 18 states and 3 UTs. The absolute levels of the CSR still continue to be very low, even in some of the states where improvement is seen between Census 2001 and Census 2011. The CSR has declined in 429 districts, which are more than two thirds of the total districts in the country. In 143 districts the decline has been of the order of 20 to 49 points. In 25 districts the decline has been by more than 50 points. District wise Child Sex Ratio as per Census 2011 is shown on the map below.

There are also significant gender differentials of 8 points (All India) in the mortality rates of children under 5 years - which was 59 for girls as against 51 for boys (aggregate was 55) in 2011. The data on the CSR when looked at in conjunction with available data on child mortality rates highlights the need to address pre-birth elimination as well as to ensure care and protection of the girl child in infancy and



in the most critical and vulnerable early years. This requires concerted community and societal action, with strengthened implementation and compliance of existing legal provisions such as the Pre Conception and Pre Natal Diagnostics Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act 1994, focusing on care and protection of the young girl child, along with sustained interventions across the life cycle, which create value for the girl child and women and address deeply entrenched gender discrimination more comprehensively.

Longer term interventions include girls' education, nutrition, health, protection against violence and exploitation, female literacy, skill development, work participation, maternity protection, access to micro finance, credit, asset creation and ownership, support to most deprived groups, women's security, empowerment and their participation in local governance. Ensuring girls' education and female literacy is a major priority. To promote girls' education, various steps are being taken. These include girl child friendly schools, targeted interventions under SSA, School Management Committees (SMCs) to ensure universal enrolment of girls, balika manches to encourage participation of girls, availability of separate functional toilets for girls, guidelines and protocols for girl child friendly schools, including residential schools (KGBVs)/hostels for habitations un-served by regular schools.

A major comprehensive initiative to improve the Child Sex Ratio and ensure girls' education towards ensuring gender equality- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao- is now being launched. This focuses on multisectoral interventions in 100 gender critical districts, where the Child Sex Ratio is very low. Multi-sectoral action in 100 districts will focus on implementation of the PC &PNDT Act, strengthen community action, improve retention of girls in elementary and secondary schools, ensure the availability of functional toilets for girls, capacity-building and sensitization of government officials and grass-roots functionaries. These interventions will be supplemented by a national media campaign. Several community initiatives are emerging, including those involving panchayati raj institutions.

## **VI. Twelfth Five Year Plan Perspective**

Ending of gender based inequities, discrimination and violence is an overriding priority in the Twelfth Plan, and improvement in the adverse and steeply declining child sex ratio, is recognised as an overarching Monitorable Target of the Twelfth Plan for Women and Children. Another key Monitorable Target of the Twelfth Plan is the reduction in the levels of child undernutrition by half. The strategy focuses on preventing undernutrition, as early as possible, across the life cycle, to avert cumulative and largely irreversible growth and development deficits that compromise child health and development. It is envisaged that improved child nutrition will also enable the achievement of optimal learning outcomes in education and gender equality.

## **VII. A National Thematic Workshop on Best Practices in Women and Child Development**

In this context, a National Thematic Workshop on Best Practices in Women and Child Development is being organized by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, at Panipat, Haryana on 20-21 January 2015.

The National Thematic Workshop seeks to evolve focused strategy recommendations for Women and Child Development, informed by best practices and innovative approaches on key themes that have worked well in different states and districts. The workshop provides a theme based platform for presenting and discussing these innovative models, through dialogue (*chintan*) with other States/UTs, sectors, experts and voluntary agencies- enabling inter state sharing and learning. The focus is on understanding what is new in these best practices and how is the innovation "different". The workshop also enables a synthesis of lessons learnt for the shaping of a strategy framework that



- State Secretaries of Women and Child Development /Social Welfare.
- Identified District Magistrates / Collectors.
- Representatives of Zila Parishads, Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies.
- National Commissions, Councils and Boards such as NCW, NHRC, NCPCR, CSWB, CARA and RMK.
- National Institutions such as NIPCCD, NIIHFW, NIN, NHSRC, PHFI and NCERT.
- Experts and professional bodies.
- Civil society groups, voluntary agencies, alliances and networks.
- Representatives of field functionaries and women's /community groups.

## 5. Design and Session Flow

The National Thematic Workshop will be conducted for two days 20 -21 January 2015, leading up to the launch of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative scheduled on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015. Prior to the start of the workshop sessions, time has also been provided to enable self introductions, for state teams to meet and for all to view state poster presentations.

### **Inaugural Session on 20 January 2015**

The first day will start with an inaugural session which will set the context for the workshop and reinforce the policy commitment to strategy recommendations emerging from the best practices. This will be followed by thematic sessions. Each thematic session will be conducted for 45 minutes, with presentation of best practices by identified states and with 20 minutes for open discussion. Upon conclusion of each thematic session, session rapporteurs will also display major learning from the session and strategy recommendations on charts displayed at the venue.

### **Thematic Sessions on 20 January 2015**

The first day will cover the major thematic sessions related to Nutrition in the first half of the day, followed by Child Development and Protection in the second half of the day. The identified themes for Nutrition are Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices; Community Nutrition and Addressing Anaemia. The identified themes for Child Development and Protection are Early Childhood Care and Education and Combating Trafficking.

### **State Experience Sharing Session on 20 January 2015**

Deliberations on the first day will conclude with an open Dialogue Session to enable experience sharing by state teams on state specific innovations, to listen to voices from the field and identify enabling conditions for innovation.

### **Thematic Sessions on 21 January 2015**

The second day covers major thematic sessions related to Women: Safety, Empowerment and Protection in the first half of the day. The identified themes include Adolescent Girls (which provides the continuum, linking the previous day's sessions on Child Protection with this session); Ending Violence against Women & Girls and Women's Empowerment. This will then be followed by a critical thematic session on - Community Initiatives for Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, which brings together different sectoral interventions for the care and protection of the Girl Child, in a community perspective, learning from voices from the field, such as members of panchayati raj institutions, anganwadi workers and ASHAs.

### **Concluding Session**

The workshop will then culminate in shaping a collective commitment to time bound action for Beti Bachao Beti Padhao. This will be signed by States, UTs and participants.

After the concluding session, state teams will also have the option of meeting in state cluster/ interest groups which will continue as forums for inter state dialogue, learning and mentoring on key themes. Field based learning hubs may also emerge from this process.

## 5. Methodology

The workshop is designed to promote experiential learning, using the sharing of best practice case studies to stimulate learning and innovation. The sessions are structured to enable interventions from a mixed group, including practitioners, experts and civil society - blending the state of the science with the state of the practice.

The display of learning from each session is designed to encourage transparency, reflection and feedback from participants, which will shape the form of the commitment sheet to be finalized in the concluding session.

The workshop will use participatory methodologies- including during state poster sessions and cluster interest groups to enable peer learning and mentoring. Learning hubs are also envisaged with field based best practice sites viewed as possible “learning centres/ living universities”. The use of Real Time Strategic Change methodologies is also envisaged, as well as an adapted use of the quality circle concept.

## 6. Expected Outcomes

- **Synthesis and dissemination of best practices related to key themes** for Women, Child Rights, the Girl Child and Nutrition.
- **Strengthening of an enabling environment for innovation-** through enhanced familiarity of national/ state teams with innovative approaches and capacity development.
- **Strategy Recommendations that reflect innovation** and synthesize learning from these models, for use across States and UTs.
- **Systems and mechanisms evolved for continued inter state learning** and mentoring support, with e-networking.
- **A shared commitment finalized for time bound action for addressing key themes in innovative ways** - especially as related to Beti Bachao Beti Padhao.