



“MERI LAADLI”

A MANDI DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION
INITIATIVE

TO

SAVE THE GIRL CHILD

-By

Deputy Commissioner, Mandi,
Himachal Pradesh



Introduction

“Meri Laadli” is an Initiative conceptualized by District Administration, Mandi to check the growing disparity in the sex ratio in the district.

Current situation of sex ratio

The child-sex ratio of Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh as per the census report of 2011 is 916. While on the face of it, the sex ratio appears to be in line with the sex ratio of the state (909 as per census of 2011), but on deeper analysis it was found that the sex ratio of certain areas of the district was far worse and it was compensated by a favourable sex ratio in other areas. Medical Blocks of Sandhol, Baldwada and Ladbhadol are areas of concern. These three blocks have been selected as target areas for specific intervention for improving sex ratio and stop pre-birth sex selection.

The declining sex ratio of Mandi district and specifically the target areas described above has long term implications on the well being of the society if not checked.

The dwindling sex ratio is a matter of concern especially in a state like Himachal Pradesh, which is considered a model state with respect to various developmental parameters. Serious efforts are being made by the state Health and Family Welfare department to increase the sex ratio. The District Administration, Mandi has gone a step further and launched a special initiative named “Meri Laadli”.

Causes

On deeper analysis it was found that the reason for the adverse sex ratio was the preference for the male child. While such a preference always existed in the society, the use of technology was the reason

that the preference was being translated into fetus abortions in case of the undesired sex of the fetus.

The major challenge before the administration was the social aspect of the problem. It was observed that the preference for the male child was deeply engrained in the minds of the local people

Objectives of initiative

Most of the campaigns relating to adverse sex ratio focus on enforcement approach that intends to scare people and doctors about legal consequences. Generally, emphasis has been on direct command of what to do (SAVE GIRL CHILD) or not to do (STOP FEMALE FOETICIDE). This approach relies on preaching & emotions like pitying the victim or fear of action against offenders. The approach of “Meri Laadli” tries to evolve and graduate to a more positive level of creating a positive energy around the notion of “Baby Girl”. Though, this initiative uses all elements of traditional approach, additionally also focuses more on generating positive energy about the “birth of a girl”. It is a graduation from “SAVE GIRL” to “CELEBRATE GIRL”. Therefore the slogan of entire campaign is **“Celebrating the Girl Child”** .

It was realized that the adverse sex ratio could not be corrected merely by the administration. It required the active participation of the local public.

The objective of the initiative is to make the “Save Girl Child” programme a **community centric and ultimately convert it into a social movement**. The aim is to bring about a change in the mindset of the society towards the girl child and thereby bring in behavioural change.

This initiative is being executed by the collaboration among Health Department, District Red Cross Society, ICDS Department, Welfare Department and Mandi Saksharta Evam Jan Vikas Samiti, an NGO.

Components of initiative

The “Meri Laadli” initiative was officially launched in Sandhol area by the Deputy Commissioner at Government Senior Secondary School, Sandhol on 11 July, 2015.



Picture 1



Picture 2

Picture 1,2 : Launching of “Meri Laddli” .

Three-pronged strategy was devised for tackling the issue.

1. To generate positive notion about girl child by celebrating birth of baby girl.
2. Information dissemination and creating awareness among the people with community participation.
3. Enforcement of laws and vigilance against sex determination and consequent abortion of the childbirth with community participation.

1. “Celebrating Girl Child” :

Generally, in our society girl is looked down upon as a liability and therefore birth of a girl is viewed negatively. Relatives and neighbours sympathise with parents if a girl is born. This creates social negativity about birth of a baby girl. The initiative envisages that every girl’s birth must be

celebrated so as to kill this negative social attitude and generate positivity about birth of a girl. And District Administration, Mandi decided to do its bit in this celebration by participation through several means.

- A. Administration will send a greeting card to parents on birth of girl child.
- B. A gift will be sent to the parents of a newly born girl in “Target Areas”.
- C. Visit to families of new born girls by district administration to congratulate them.
- D. Participation in celebrations by such families.



Picture 4 : Greeting Card being sent to families of the baby girl.



Picture 5



Picture 6

Picture 5, 6 : Addl Deputy Commissioner and SDM visiting Families of newly born Baby Girl.



Picture 7 : Deputy Commissioner and Secretary, Red Cross visiting Families of Newly born Baby Girl.

2. Information dissemination

Teams were constituted at the panchayat level comprising of the Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) of the health department, Anganwari worker of the Women and Child Development Department, a member of local NGO – Mandi Saksharta Avam Jan Vikas Samiti (MSJVS) and one active Mahila Mandal of the area. These teams have been constituted keeping in view the specific skills and clout that each of the members exercise over the local public. These teams have been imparted training regarding the issue and given two specific tasks.

First activity was that the teams would visit each and every household and have an interaction with the members of the community about the problems arising out of sex selection. The teams would apprise the people about the sex ratio of their area. The teams would make people

aware about the crime of sex-based abortion as well as the provisions of PC and PNDT Act 1994.

The team will work as a group. It will be a group of people from the community itself having sufficient numbers to try to change the mindset of the people they would interact with.

The teams would paste specially made stickers on the door of each house. These stickers contain the programme logo along with details of phone numbers where people can make anonymous calls in case any person/ family is resorting to sex determination and is likely to go for sex-based abortion. The identity of the informer will be kept a secret and strict action will be initiated against the culprits.

The teams would motivate the people to create a favourable social atmosphere for the girl child. People of the area would be encouraged to report any information about people conducting sex determination.

These teams would act as vigilante groups against sex determination and sex based abortions.

The team members have been asked to participate in celebrations of birth of baby girl especially by attending community feast "Dham" if such feast is organized by the family.

To further strengthen the teams and to create a positive momentum in favour of the programme, officers viz. Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Tehsildar, Naib-tehsildar, Block Medical Officer etc. were directed to accompany the teams wherever possible. Officers were also directed to visit the house of the new-born girl child with the gift.



Picture 8



Picture 9

Picture 8,9 : Training of Panchayat Level Teams



Picture 10 : Door to Door Campaign



Picture 11 : Door to Door Campaign



Picture 12 : Door to Door Campaign



Picture13



Picture 14 : Panchayat Level Committee and Mahila Mandals visiting family of newly born baby girl to congratulate with a gift.

3) Enforcement of Laws :

The executive magistrates have been directed to visit all the ultrasound centers in their areas and conduct thorough inspection and ensure compliance of the PC and PNDT Act. These executive magistrates were to visit all such centers where Medical Termination of Pregnancy is carried out. The Chief Medical Officer of the district has issued directions to all medical practitioners in the district to register themselves with the CMO for the purpose of conducting medical termination of pregnancy.

Campaign on Social Media

It is noticeable able that these incidents are high in areas with better technology penetration. Therefore, offline campaign is complemented by online campaigning. Present era is of technology and the district administration, recognising due importance of Social Media, has also launched this campaign on facebook with a purpose to widen community participation. Administration has launched a special Facebook Group named “Meri Laadli” on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan (www.facebook.com/groups/merilaadli). More than 7500 people have given their support to this facebook group within 5 days. In this group people are posting thoughts, poems, pictures and above all selfies and videos of their daughters. There is overwhelming participation of people on this group. Along with this, a Whats-App group named “Meri Laadli” is being used for monitoring progress.



Picture 15 : Launching of “Meri Laadli” on Social Media.

Educating Girls

District administration has shown commitment to promote girl education. In Himachal Pradesh, education is free upto 10th standard. Many students especially girls drop out after that due to inability to pay fees and unwillingness of parents to take financial burden of girl's education. District Administration has sponsored 26 girls for higher education. As demand for such sponsorship is growing, it has been decided to institutionalize this effort by creating a special society named "Mandi Shiksha Uththan Samiti" which will dedicatedly pursue the cause of supporting poor students for higher education.

Present Status

The committees have been constituted in all panchayats of the target area. Also, training has been imparted to all committee members.

The teams are pasting the stickers of 'Meri Laadli' in every house of these three identified target blocks so that people may be made aware. There are around 20000 to 30000 households in each of the three blocks. The teams would aim at covering one village per day. Stickers have phone numbers displayed so that information regarding sex determination and female foeticide can be provided. More than 40000 houses have already been covered.

Many people are donating generously to make the campaign a success. Greeting Cards, dolls, Nutritional supplement like protein powder, Jhula, photo-frames etc have been donated by various philanthropists.

divyahimachal

अब बेटी के जन्म पर मिलेगा प्रोटीन पाउडर

मेरी लाडली कार्यक्रम के तहत महिलाओं को कुपोषण से बचाने के लिए प्रशासन आया आगे

■ अमन अग्रिहोत्री, मंडी

मंडी जिला प्रशासन द्वारा तीन खंडों में शुरू किए गए मेरी लाडली कार्यक्रम में अब प्रशासन के सहयोग के लिए आम जनता आगे आने लगी है। इस कार्यक्रम के तहत बेटी के जन्म पर अब गर्भवती महिलाओं को बेटी के जन्म के बाद प्रोटीन पाउडर भी उपहार दिया जाएगा, ताकि प्रसव के बाद उनकी सेहत में आई गिरावट को दूर किया जा सके और उन्हें कुपोषण से बचाया जा सके। प्रसव के बाद महिलाओं को अकसर कमजोरी का सामना करना पड़ता है। इसलिए प्रशासन बेटी को जन्म देने वाली महिलाओं को यह प्रोटीन पाउडर का डिब्बा उपहार में देगा। विशेष बात यह है कि यह उपहार प्रशासन की तरफ से नहीं, बल्कि मंडी शहर की ही एक आम महिला द्वारा महिलाओं के लिए दिया गया है, जो कि प्रशासन के माध्यम से दिया जाएगा। मंडी की ही एक आम महिला देवेन्द्रा सुद ने महिलाओं के इस दर्द को जाना है। उन्होंने 35 हजार रूपए की लागत के 200 डिब्बे उपायुक्त मंडी संदीप कदम को भेंट किए हैं। उल्लेखनीय है कि इस समय मंडी के जिला संघोल, बलदाड़ा और लडभडोल में बेटीयों की संख्या काफी कम हो चुकी है। इन तीनों खंडों में शून्य से छह वर्ष के बच्चों का लिंगानुपात काफी कम है। संघोल तो इस मामले में पूरे प्रदेश में सबसे बुरी हालत में पहुँच चुका है। इन तीनों खंडों में अब कन्या भ्रूण हत्या को रोकने, लोगों में जागरूकता पैदा करने और बेटीयों को बचाने के लिए प्रशासन ने मेरी लाडली कार्यक्रम शुरू किया है। इस कार्यक्रम के तहत जागरूकता कैंपेन के साथ ही महिला के गर्भ धारण से लेकर प्रसव तक प्रशासन की टीम निगरानी कर रही है। इसके साथ ही बेटी के जन्म पर प्रशासन की तरफ से ग्रीटिंग कार्ड और बेटी को उपहार में एक गुड़िया भेंट की जा रही है। वहीं अब देवेन्द्रा सुद की पहल के बाद मिल्क पाउडर भी उपहार में दिया जाएगा। उधर, उपायुक्त मंडी संदीप कदम ने इस उपहार के लिए देवेन्द्रा सुद व उनके परिवार का आभार प्रकट किया है। श्रीमति सुद की पहल से समाज में और जागरूकता आएगी।

मिल्क बोतल भी देंगे उपहार में

प्रशासन ने इसके साथ बेटी के जन्म पर मिल्क बोतल भी उपहार में देने का निर्णय लिया है, ताकि कुछ समय बाद जरूरत पड़ने पर उस मिल्क बोतल का प्रयोग बेटी को दूध पिलाने के लिए किया जा सके। इसके लिए प्रशासन हालांकि प्रायोजकों का इंतजार भी कर रहा है।

गादाशैल में

Picture 16 : Various donors coming forward to participate in “Meri Laadli”

मौजूद थे।

‘मेरी लाडली’ कार्यक्रम के लिए भेंट की 200 गुड़ियां

जागरण संवाददाता, मंडी : जिला प्रशासन द्वारा चलाए जा रहे मेरी लाडली कार्यक्रम को विभिन्न संस्थाओं का सहयोग मिलना भी अग्रंभ हो गया है। इस कार्यक्रम से आम जनता का जुड़ाव बढ़ रहा है। इसी कड़ी में मंगलवार को अतिरिक्त उपायुक्त अरुणेंद्र ठाकुर के माध्यम से विजय ग्रुप ऑफ इस्टीट्यूट के अध्यक्ष गौरव मारवाह ने इस कार्यक्रम के लिए 200 गुड़ियां उपलब्ध करवाईं ताकि बेटी के जन्म पर यह परिजनों को भेंट स्वरूप प्रदान की जा सके। इस अवसर पर अतिरिक्त उपायुक्त ने कहा कि इस कार्यक्रम का शुभारंभ उपायुक्त संदीप कदम द्वारा हाल ही में धर्मपुर उपमंडल के संघोल से किया गया है। मेरी लाडली कार्यक्रम के तहत क्षेत्र की प्रसूता महिला से संपर्क कर उन्हें जागरूक किया जा रहा है तथा उनका पंजीकरण समीप के स्वास्थ्य केंद्र में कराया जा रहा है। जिला प्रशासन की पहल पर बेटी के जन्म पर अब बधाई कार्ड तथा एक गुड़िया भी उन्हें भेंट की जाएगी। उन्होंने उम्मीद जताई कि इस कार्यक्रम से लिंग अनुपात के अंतर में कमी आएगी। उन्होंने आम जनता से इस कार्यक्रम से सक्रिय रूप से जुड़ने का आह्वान भी किया। इस अवसर पर जिला रेडक्रॉस सोसायटी के सचिव ओपी भाटिया भी उपस्थित थे।

मंडी में गुड़ियां भेंट करते गौरव मारवाह।



Picture 17 : Various donors coming forward to participate in “Meri Laadli”

Officials are also visiting the houses of the newborn girl child to congratulate the parents and present gifts and greeting cards to the newborn child. This kind of social recognition & appreciation makes family feel special especially in rural community and also sensitizes them towards health of newly born girl child.

Media Coverage :

To amplify the effect of initiative, media is being actively involved. Dainik Jagaran has been roped in as Media Partner.



घर में बिटिया होने पर मनाया जश्न

मंडी। सामाजिक संतुलन के लिए बेटियों को बचाने के लिए चली हर स्तर पर मुहिम का असर मंडी जिले में देखने को मिल रहा है। 'बेटी बचाओ बेटी पढ़ाओ' के राष्ट्रव्यापी आह्वान पर लोग बेटियों के जन्म पर खुशियां मनाने लगे हैं। जिला मंडी में प्रशासन की ओर से 'मेरी लाडली' अभियान शुरू किया गया। उपायुक्त मंडी संदीप कदम एवं जिला रेडक्रॉस सोसायटी ने स्वास्थ्य विभाग के सहयोग से 11 जुलाई को जिले के सबसे दूरस्थ क्षेत्र संधोल से इस कार्यक्रम को शुरू किया था। 'मेरी लाडली' कार्यक्रम के तहत बेटी के पैदा होते ही रेडक्रॉस के कर्मचारी जाकर परिवार को बधाइयां दे रहे हैं।

रविवार को मंडी शहर के साथ लगते चड़याणा गांव में महिला मंडल की प्रधान कांता देवी के घर पर जश्न था। कांता देवी के घर पोती ने जन्म लिया है। उनके बेटे नवीन की पत्नी सुनीता ने नन्हीं बच्ची को जन्म दिया। बेटी के पैदा होने पर 11 दिन के बाद आयोजित होने वाले नामकरण संस्कार यानी गंतरयाला था। जिला रेडक्रॉस सोसायटी के सचिव ओपी भाटिया उपायुक्त संदीप कदम की ओर से एक गुड़िया व बधाई कार्ड लेकर उनके घर पहुंचे। इस मौके पर मंडी साक्षरता एवं जन विकास समिति के महासचिव राजेंद्र मोहन भी मौजूद थे। जिला रेडक्रॉस सोसायटी के सचिव ओपी भाटिया ने बताया कि अब तक 21 नवजात बेटियों को बधाई कार्ड व गुड़िया भेंट की जा चुकी है। ब्यूरो