

Minutes of the Regional Consultation held under the Chairpersonship of Minister to discuss the implementation modalities of District Action Plans under the scheme of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao on 31st October, 2014 in Chandigarh.

A Regional Consultation was organized on 31st October, 2014 at Chandigarh to discuss the implementation modalities of District Action Plans with District Collectors/Deputy Commissioners of the 27 districts of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Chandigarh UT. The Consultation was collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the nodal Ministry and its Partner Ministries namely, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Development. The Department Women and Child Development, Govt. of Punjab had coordinated the Consultation. The Consultation was held the chairpersonship of Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Ms. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi. The list of participants of the meeting is at *Annex A*.

2. Ms. Preeti Sudan, Additional Secretary, MWCD welcomed the participants and set the context for the Consultation, briefly explaining the scheme and district Action Plan to the Collectors/Deputy Commissioners.

3. In her Inaugural Address Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi, Minister, WCD had stated that a multi-sectoral approach is required by Ministry of Women & Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resources Development in tandem for overcome the serious social issue of declining Child Sex Ratio(CSR).

4. Smt. Maneka Gandhi stated that the success of this scheme depended on changing people's mind-set and social behaviour. In order to tackle this, a media plan has been evolved whereby several short films are being prepared in regional languages and will be made available for use on National TV Channels and also Cable Channels. She urged the district officers to make extensive use of these, interspersed in commercial film show in theatres and the audio messages on FM, Radio and Community Radio to maximise its. She suggested the use of Bill Boards, Naming & Shaming people, Nukkad Natak and incentivisation of doers of good work in this regard to promote the cause of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and for ensuring positive time-bound results

5. The Minister, WCD was further stated that there is a need of strict implementation of Pre-Conception and Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act and strengthening the monitoring mechanism at the district level. She said that the progress in respect of the measures and success under the scheme will be monitored as the Central level so that determined targets may be achieved without fail.

6 Minister, WCD, while encapsulating her vision about BBBP, mentioned that there is the need of coordinated & convergent efforts to ensure survival, protection and education of the girl child. The District Collectors/ Deputy Commissioners being nodal officers can play a crucial roll in the successful implementation of this scheme, which would have very wide social and national ramifications in the long run and exhorted them to engage themselves fully in ensuring success of this scheme. The Minister also invited suggestions from the district officers for further betterment and fine-tuning of the scheme.

7. Shri Surjit Kumar Jyani, Minister for Women and Child Development Government of Punjab, in his remarks said that misuse of technology coupled with a specific mind-set, was instrumental in eroding the child sex ratio in Punjab from 875 in 1991 to 798 in 2001. This however was reversed between 2001-2011 when Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) went up by 48 points due to concerted efforts of the state government. He enumerated the steps taken by the Punjab government in raising the Child Sex Ratio(CSR) and furthering girl education. Shri Sarvesh Kaushal, Chief Secretary Punjab gave an overview of the steps taken for effective implementation of PNDDT Act and other schemes of the State Government to improve girl child and the empowerment of Women.

8. The inauguration Session was followed by brief presentation made by Additional Secretary, MWCD on the BBBP Scheme and Guidelines for deliberations and views of the participants. The Technical Session in which BBBP Scheme and the effective implementation of PC&PNDDT was discussed. Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Jt. Secretary to Govt. of India conducted the session on “Overview on the Implementation of PC&PNDDT Act”. During the Session, Dr. Rakesh Kumar shared their perspectives and Experiences in the State of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra with the DCs and suggested to visit any of these States for understanding their good practices and ongoing implementation mechanisms.

9. The afternoon session of the Consultation resumed with a Session on Experience Sharing by DCs from the Participating States. The key points of their Presentations are given below:

10 **Shri Ajit Balaji Joshi, DC, Panipat, Haryana** made a comprehensive presentation on Active Tracker (Silent Observer) device installed on all Sonography machines enables online monitoring of sonography. Shri Joshi stated that the active tracker not only keeps a record of the ultrasound machines but also connect them online with a central monitoring system and the keep check on pre-natal sex determination tests in the district.

11 **Shri Abhishek Jain, DC, Una, Himachal Pradesh** desired that concerted efforts should be made to ensure registration of pregnancy within the first trimester and birth registration at Panchayat level. Easy availability of over the counter drugs for abortion should be restricted. He emphasized on the need of district level workshops, Counselling sessions to understand the parents' perception, Brain storming sessions organized by Mahila Mandals, Self Help Groups & elected representatives, Decoy operations with police personnel and to make PC&PNDT as an agenda of Zila Parishad / Block Level Meeting and Gram Sabha meeting. should be encouraged

12 **Dr. A. Karthik, ADC, Gurdaspur, Punjab** stated that an Oath ceremony can be held during Night Halt Camps in villages, colleges and educational institutions and one day in every week can be dedicated to events such as Mamta Divas. He emphasised to provide Health education to girl children through ARSH clinics, free health care for girls up to 5 years of age and dietary supplements like iron and folic acid up to 12th standard. He also emphasised to incentivise for permanent sterilization in families having only girl children.

13 **Shri Nikhil Gajraj, DC, Kurukshetra, Haryana** stressed to initiate signature campaigns, oath in girls' schools on say no to gender based sex selection, in each and every district as they are the future mothers. There should be measures to encourage *Meena Manch* (group of specified girls volunteer) to identify drop-out girls & motivate the parents to re-enrol their girl child in school. Girls' cell unit should be set up to discuss the issue of girls' education in meetings that should be held every

fortnight. DC, Kurukshetra, was requested to send plays and success stories so that they can be shared with others.

14 **Shri Deependra Kumar Chaudhary, DC, Champawat, Uttarakhand informed that the** 6 inspections of Ultrasound Centres have been carried out by DIMC out of 11 Ultrasound Centres. Recognition letter, sweets and clothes etc are being provided to felicitate mother and girl child at District, Block and Village level for delivering a baby girl. Shri Chaudhary further state that they holds meetings of District Appropriate Authority (DAA) and organise induction and refresher training on PC & PNDT Act for frontline workers, teachers and Panchayat members regularly.

15 **Shri Rajesh Tripathi, ADC, Patiala, Punjab emphasized on** strict implementation of the PC&PNDT Act and organising training on PC & PNDT Act for frontline workers, SHGs members, teachers and Panchayat members.

16 **Shri R.C. Verma, DC, Rewari, Haryana** stated that stringent measures is being taken by the health department to enforce the PC & PNDT and recently past District Appropriate Authority filed court case against the 6 Ultrasound Centres, 9 machines were seized/sealed and 1 doctor has been suspended for violations under the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PNDT) Act

17 **Mohd. Shayin, DC, Chandigarh** stated that there are 75 Ultrasound Centres in the district. District Appropriate Authority has filed court cases against 4 centres. He further stated that strong convergence is required at district, block and village level. Involve the line departments, various stakeholders, NGOs, law department, religious leaders, municipal corporations and other local bodies. Enhancing the value of women and girls.

18 During the consultation following initiative/suggestions emerged during the consultation:

- Create awareness on BBBP during the Panchayat meeting and spread the message of BBBP through mobile vans, billboards, ringtone on girl child. Short films and audio visual IEC material of BBBP should be disseminated through local cinema halls.

- DCs may involve Religious leaders, Local MPs/ MLAs, corporates, school & college teachers, local institutions such as Rotary club, Lions Club etc. to help in generating awareness.
- Availability of Girl friendly schools with proper toilet facility and free sanitary napkins with adequate transportation facilities and located nearby should be explored. Incentives at various milestones like on passing school, college or delaying marriage etc. may be institutionalised.
- Release of sugar, ration, seeds etc. in villages may be informed through school going girls, lower the stamp duty for registration of the immovable property in the name of a woman, extra interest rate on the fixed deposit in the name of women, so that their value in the family and community is enhanced and lead to change in the mindset.
- Provision of incentives may be provided for good performing villages, frontline workers and School Monitoring Committees (SMC) Women/ girls who are an inspiration to the community must also be awarded in the month of March every year. DCs should also form Community Watch Groups and award them for their initiatives.
- *Gudda-Guddi* card should be displayed in Panchayat office providing the details of number of boys and girls born in a month.
- DCs should discourage involvement of Pradhanpatis in official matters and meetings and should insist on inviting the actual Mahila Pradhans/Sarpanch so that they are socially and politically empowered. Re-election should be proposed in Panchayats where Mahila Pradhan verbally transfers the authority to her husband/ son.
- Mukhbir' Scheme initiative of the Government of Rajasthan may be replicated in other States to incentivize the people providing information on illegal gender based sex selection related activities in the District.
- Special Border District Clusters need to be formed to combat inter-state movement of people to avail benefits of illegal diagnostic services.

- The Registration of marriage to be made compulsory and a Central Registration System should be established to ensure registration of every child birth with the active support of local Panchayat/Ward Committee. An MIS cell should be established in the office of DC for regular and effective monitoring with a special focus on number of i) pregnancy registration ii) abortions & iii) institutional deliveries

19. Based on the deliberations at consultation the following Actions Points emerged:-

- Minister, WCD solicited the Action Plan by for Village level, Block level as well as district level 15th November, 2014 so that the number of girl children registers an ongoing increase, as also their educational levels go up.
- Border District Cluster Strategy must be formulated to combat inter-state movement of people towards availing illegal diagnostic services by DCs and DAA.
- Mapping and registration of ultrasound/ IVF machines and to explore the possibility of Pocket-sized ultrasound machines to defeat the ban on sex determination of foetus effectively.
- Strengthening of School Management committees (SMCs) to prevent drop out and to ensure 100% enrolment in schools or re-enroll drop-out girls.

Meeting ended with vote of thanks to the Chair and the participants.

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