

Minutes of the Regional Consultation held under the Chairpersonship of Minister, Women & Child Development to discuss the implementation modalities of District Action Plans under the scheme of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao on 6th December, 2014 in New Delhi.

A Regional Consultation was organized on 6th December, 2014 at Vigyan Bhawan Annexe, Committee Room A, New Delhi to discuss the implementation modalities of District Action Plans with District Collectors/Deputy Commissioners of the 31 districts of *Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh*. The Consultation was held under the Chairpersonship of Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Ms. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi. The list of the participants is at Annexure 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** stated that the decline in Child Sex Ratio (CSR) is a powerful indicator of social health of our society. It is a direct result of preference for sons and discrimination towards daughters. Minister, WCD stressed on the need for a multi-sectoral strategy by Ministries of Women & Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resources Development to overcome the serious issue of declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR).

4. **Minister, WCD**, emphasized on the need for coordinated & convergent efforts to ensure survival, protection and education of the girl child. The District Collectors/ Deputy Commissioners have a crucial role to play in the successful implementation of BBBP scheme, and appealed to engage themselves fully in ensuring success of this scheme.

5. **Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi** stated that on one hand there is need for stricter implementation of Pre-Conception and Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PC&PNDT Act) and strengthening the monitoring mechanism at the district level. On the other hand, sustained efforts are also required towards changing people's mind-sets, social attitudes and behaviour.

6. **Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi** laid down major actionable points for 100 districts including rolling out of Media plan; ensuring registration of pregnancies; re-training and re-energising the grass root functionaries-ASHAs, AWWs and ANMs; creating gender champions at local level; rewarding people supporting the cause of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao as well as disincentivising the ones who discriminate or devalue girls. DCs were also encouraged to take up special project in their districts to ensure availability of affordable and high quality sanitary towels for reducing drop out of girls in schools.

7. **Shri V.S Oberoi, Secretary, MWCD**, in his remarks, highlighted the huge challenge Census data of 2011 has posed, as the girl child numbers in India have shown a sharper decline in the decade 2001 to 2011, leading to a highly skewed child sex ratio. The Child Sex Ratio which was 945 in 1991 dipped to 927 in 2001 and dropped further to 918 in 2011, the lowest since independence. This trend is attributed to the misuse of technology coupled with societal mind-set, which has eroded the child sex ratio in the entire country. In order to tackle this, Ministry has developed a media plan whereby several short films are being prepared and will be made available for use on National TV Channels and also Cable Channels. Secretary, WCD 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 outreach.

8. **Shri Sanjeev Kumar, Principal Secretary, Dept. of Social Welfare, NCT of Delhi** shared that Ladli Scheme has been launched in Delhi to enhance the social status of girl child, ensure proper education to make the girls self-reliant, ensure her economic security and protect them from discrimination and deprivation. Sh. Kumar also shared his concern about the Anganwadi Centres not able to perform to their optimum capacity as some of these centres are functioning from rented premises, thus limiting their effectiveness. In order to make these centres robust, more funds are required for the state.

9. **Ms. Durga Shakti Nagpal, CDO, Mathura** informed the participants about the Sanitary Napkin initiative undertaken by the District Administration of Mathura. Small manufacturing units have been set up and are being managed by SHGs. The napkins are being supplied to girls in schools in pack of two to help them manage their menstrual cycle and develop hygienic habits.

10. **Ms. Saumya Ghosh, Director, DWCD, NCT of Delhi** said that women hardly have any voice in reproductive decisions and are usually influenced by their husbands or other members in the family. It is very important to engage with men in the discourse about gender equality and declining Child Sex Ratio.

The Inaugural Session was followed by technical sessions. A brief presentation was made by **Additional Secretary, MWCD** on the BBBP Scheme and Guidelines for deliberations and views of the participants. It was re-iterated that the BBBP Scheme has been started to address the issue of decline in CSR through national level media campaign and multi-sectoral action in 100 districts. The skewed CSR remains a matter of priority concern and need convergent and coordinated action. It was informed that District Collectors/Deputy Commissioners are the Nodal Officials for implementation of the BBBP Scheme in the 100 selected districts. Hence they have a very crucial role to play; not only as leaders but also as an inspiring BBBP Champion. They need to implement this Scheme and meet its targets with missionary zeal.

Ms. Lopamudra Mohanty, Director, MWCD, shared that the Scheme has in-built strong monitoring mechanisms at national, state and district level. The District Task Force (DTF) headed by DC has the overall responsibility of planning, implementation and monitoring of the sectoral interventions as per the district action plans.

There were discussions over various components of the BBBP scheme, convergent actions, media plan, fund transfer mechanism, and budget of the scheme.

11. The technical session on “Overview on the Implementation of PC&PNDT Act” was conducted by **Dr. R.P Meena, Director, PNDT, MoHFW**. The guidelines for District Collectors in the context of strict implementation of Act, its salient provisions, new provisions and penalties were discussed. During the session, case studies were shared by the State of Maharashtra, Haryana and Rajasthan to bring out various perspectives and experiences in implementation of the Act. It was suggested to visit any of these States for understanding their good practices and ongoing implementation mechanisms.

12. **Ms. Meenakshi Jolly, Director, MoHRD** made a presentation about the targeted interventions for girls under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) and informed the participants of state level initiatives being undertaken by MoHRD.

13. In the afternoon, the Consultation was resumed with an interactive session on Experience Sharing by DCs & CMOs from the Participating States. The key points of their presentations were focused on situational analysis, gaps, issues and challenges in arresting the declining trend in CSR, initiatives undertaken by District Administration for implementation of PC&PNDT Act, programmatic interventions and advocacy efforts. The highlights of the session are given below.

14. **Shri Muktanand Agarwal, DC, Dausa, Rajasthan** made a comprehensive presentation on district level initiatives which have been dovetailed with various Schemes and Programmes of Rajasthan Government such as Shubh Laxmi Yojana; Mukhya Mantri Badhai Sandesh; 'Humari Beti' Express. Sh. Agarwal stated that active trackers have been installed on Ultrasound machines and online submission of Form F is being done within 24 hours to keep check on pre-natal sex determination tests in the district.

15. **Ms. Poonam, District Collector, Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan** shared initiatives undertaken at the district level to effectively implement PC&PNDT Act. 25 Ultrasonography Centers have been registered. There have been 4 convictions so far while 5 cases are pending. Active trackers have been installed on 28 machines. Active monitoring and redressal of complaints is being done through help line 104 and website. Plans are underway to devise strategy for monitoring the selling and buying of out of counter emergency contraceptive pills. Schemes and Programmes related to value of girl child are given wide publicity such as Mukhbir Protsahan Yojana, Jyoti Yojana and Chief minister Shubh Laxmi Yojana. It was admitted that changing mindset of people need longer interventions and postnatal girl child discrimination needs to be given more focus. There is a need to name and shame the defaulters.

16. **Ms. Madhu Rani Teotia, Deputy Commissioner, North District, Delhi** admitted that it is a matter of great concern that Delhi with CSR of 871 remains the worst four States/UTs of India inspite of the marginal improvement of 3 points. PC & PNDT Act is strong piece of legislation but is not taken seriously by the owners of Ultrasound machines. There are violation of Rules such as improper filling of F Forms & referral slips, non-renewal of ultrasound machines. The conviction rate under PC&PNDT Act is low as delay is seen in FIR registration and prosecution, even informers don't come forward. Some of the initiatives undertaken in the districts were outlined as 5% seats reserved for girl child in Pre-Primary

classes in all private unaided schools, self defence trainings with the help of Delhi Police Aawaz- Uthao Project:community outreach initiative of GRCs under Mission Convergence; DSLSA counselling; Roaster for Monthly Inspections of the registered centers has been prepared so that all the centers in the district can be inspected in 90 days as per the code of conduct; to establish the identity and to trace the owners, extra information is sought from the owners at the time of new registration such as Bank Account detail , Pan Card , Photographs , Voter ID Card, Driving License , Passport and Aadhar (if any); the District Advisory Committee Meeting (North District) of PC & PNDT Act 1994 are regularly convened.

17. **Ms. Smita Kumari, Assistant Director, District Child Protection Unit, Vaishali, Bihar** shared the initiatives undertaken to tackle the issue of CSR which include constitution of District Advisory Committee on PC&PNDT Act, 'Dhawa Dals' constituted for inspection of Ultrasound Centres, ensuring 100% registration of Ultrasound Centres and display of IEC Material on every PHC and handholding of pregnant mother by ASHA after 6th month of pregnancy. It was suggested that before birth, focus should be on effective implementation of PC&PNDT Act and its close monitoring so as to prevent female foeticide and ensure birth of a healthy girl child. After Birth interventions should be focused on effective implementation of ICDS, ensure social audit; Nutrition/Health/Sanitation, Effective Implementation of RTE, Awareness on Child Rights and Nutrition/ Health/ Sanitation/ Free Education to Girl Child, development of self defence skill.

18. **Dr. Robinder Khajuria, National Health Mission, Jammu & Kashmir**, shared his concerns regarding the shocking decline in Jammu & Kashmir from 941 in 2001 to 859 as per the 2011 census. It was informed that the regulatory bodies as mandated under the Act have been reconstituted. IEC / BCC activities are being taken up for educating the people about the importance of saving the girl child and also maintaining a healthy gender balance in the society through the medium of daily visual spots on local cable networks, workshops are being organized at divisional / district level in order to sensitize the members of Divisional Advisory Committees, Radiologists both from Govt. as well private sector, medical officers, Lab Tech, media persons about the PC &PNDT Act and gender equity. Rallies and debates on promotion of the issues related to girl child are being held in the schools on regular basis to educate the prospective parents. The State has also introduced a new initiative under which any person who informs the incidence of sex determination/ female feticide in any place shall

be given Rs.50,000/- as award under NHM. Appeal has been made to 1000 Religious preachers/leaders by the Mission Director, NHM, J&K with logo depicting Beti Bachao Beti Padhao.

19. **Following initiative/suggestions emerged during the consultation:**

- Create awareness on the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio and its societal impacts 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.
- Main focus needs to be laid on addressing post natal girl child neglect and discrimination at family as well as community level. Availability of proper functional toilets and free sanitary towels should be made in schools so that girls do not drop out of schools.
- Convergence with NREGA scheme may be explored for infrastructure development and other basic facilities such as toilets and drinking water in Aganwadi Centres for effective delivery of services.
- Role models at local level to be identified and recognized in public events. Their success stories to be covered in quarterly magazines and newsletter and through local media network so that their value in the family and community is enhanced and lead to change in the mindset.
- Engaging men and boys within a gender equality framework and working extensively with them, sensitizing them on gender issues and implications of declining Child Sex Ratio at the family level and at the community level.
- Active involvement of Religious leaders, Local MPs/ MLAs, corporates, school & college teachers, local institutions such as Rotary club, Lions Club etc. to help in generating awareness.
- *Gudda-Guddi* card should be displayed in Panchayat office providing the details of number of boys and girls born in a month.

- 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.
- Website may be launched by the States as has been done by Maharashtra Government ("www.amchimulgi.gov.in" website) for online registration of complaint of PCPNDT Act Violation and www.pcpndt.mahaonline.gov.in website for online A & F-Form.

19. The Consultation ended with concluding remarks from Additional Secretary, re-iterating that Minister, WCD has desired that the District Action Plans are to be submitted at the earliest so that the funds could be released to the districts for rolling out of BBBP Scheme and number of girl children registers an ongoing increase, as also their educational levels go up.

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

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