

Minutes of the Video Conference held under the Chairpersonship of Minister, Women & Child Development to discuss the implementation modalities of District Action Plans with the 10 DCs of Maharashtra selected under the scheme of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao on 31st December, 2014, New Delhi.

A Video Conference was organized under the Chairpersonship of Minister, Women & Child Development to discuss the implementation modalities of District Action Plans with the District Collectors (DCs) of Maharashtra selected under the scheme of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) on 31st December, 2014, New Delhi. The video conference was attended by the DCs of **Beed, Jalgaon, Ahmednagar, Buldana, Aurangabad, Washim, Kohlapur, Osmanabad, Sangli and Jalna**. Senior Officials from concerned ministries of Health and HRD also attended the video conference. The list of the participants is at Annexure A.

2. At the outset, **Sh. V.S Oberoi, Secretary, MWCD** welcomed the participants and set the context for the video conference, briefly explaining the scheme and district Action Plan to the Collectors/Deputy Commissioners. The participants were informed by Secretary, WCD that the BBBP is a joint initiative of the Ministries of Women & Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resources Development to tackle and arrest the declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR).

3. **Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi, Minister, WCD** drew the attention of the DCs to the importance of the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Programme, which is getting launched by the Prime Minister of India on 22nd January, 2014 in Panipat, Haryana. A Workshop-cum-Seminar will be held for brainstorming on several important issues related to Women and Child Development on 20th -21st January 2015 in Panipat, Haryana as a run up to the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao launch. The workshop and launch event is likely to be attended by the Chief Ministers of Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal; WCD Ministers of States and other Senior Officials and experts.

4. **Minister, WCD** urged the DCs to provide their personal attention and commitment to the said programme and appealed to engage themselves fully in successful implementation of BBBP scheme. Smt. Gandhi urged DCs to focus on both- stricter implementation and monitoring of Pre-Conception and Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PC&PNDT Act) and as well as advocacy efforts towards changing mind-sets, social attitudes and behaviour.

5. **Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi** laid thrust on the key actionable points for 100 districts which should include focus on ensuring early registration of pregnancies; institutional deliveries, registration of birth; training and sensitization of front line workers- ASHAs, AWWs and ANMs; creating gender champions at local level; celebrating birth of girl child & felicitating the mother, incentivizing and recognizing individuals, villages, gram panchayats supporting the cause of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao. Smt. Gandhi encouraged the DCs to develop a mechanism through informers and community watch groups to keep a vigil on the ultrasonography centres or persons indulging in unfair or illegal practises. *Gudda-Guddi* board should be displayed in every panchayat office providing the details of number of boys and girls born in a month.

6. **Shri V.S Oberoi, Secretary, MWCD**, in his remarks, highlighted the alarming trend of decline in the Child Sex Ratio witnessed all over the country. The Child Sex Ratio which was 945 in 1991 dipped to 927 in 2001 and dropped further to 918 in 2011, has posed a huge challenge and needs to be tackled from all fronts. There have been efforts however they have been sporadic and fragmented. Secretary, WCD said that the issue of declining CSR has to be addressed and tackled as a national commitment and priority through inter-departmental, inter-sectoral efforts at all levels. Secretary, WCD stated that sustained media engagement and advocacy efforts are required to challenge the societal mindset and called out on DCs to be creative and innovative in their approach to address this grave problem.

7. **Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Joint Secretary, MoHFW** shared the important actionable points related to implementation of PCPNDT Act which include constitution of State Supervisory Board, and District level Appropriate Authorities and Advisory Committees; Identification of vulnerable blocks and pockets using HMIS data; mapping of ultrasound centres and machines in the district; Form-F duly filled and submitted Online as well as Offline. He stressed on the need to act proactively through the district level intelligence network to keep a vigil and report any incidence of sex determination or violation under the PC&PNDT Act to the district appropriate authority. Dr. Kumar, highlighted the need to engage actively with the Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies to mobilize communities. Incentivizing ASHAs and AWWs on one hand and strict possible action on the defaulters has to go hand in hand.

8. **Shri Ujjwal Uke, Principal Secretary, DWCD, Govt. of Maharashtra** was present with his two Commissioners from the WCD Commissionerate. Sh. Uke suggested to involve CEO,

Zila Parishads in the districts to complement the efforts on BBBP led by the District Collectors.

9. This was followed by an interactive session on experience sharing by DCs from the 10 districts of Maharashtra. 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:

10. **Sh. Naval Kishore Ram, DC, Beed** admitted that CSR of the district is worse in the state however efforts are being made towards effective implementation of PC&PNDT Act. 22 cases have been registered under the Act. Data is being sourced from ICDS as well as Mother Child Tracking System (MCTS) to monitor the Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) and CSR. Expectant mothers are being hand-held and tracked to ensure positive health outcome. Special Gram Sabhas are being held and resource persons are specially invited to sensitize community on gender, declining CSR, PC&PNDT act.

11. **Dr. Prashant Narnaware, DC, Usmanabad** shared that CSR of the district has dropped to 867 in 2011 from 894 in 2001 as per Census data. Taking note of the problem, efforts have been undertaken at the district level in a comprehensive manner through convergence of health, Education and WCD's schemes and programmes focussed on implementation of PC&PNDT Act, organization of special ANC weeks for pregnant mothers to provide counselling and check-ups, *Saas-Bahu Sammelans* wherein daughter-in-laws and mother-in-laws are called and sensitization on CSR is done through cultural programmes. Social workers conduct session to create awareness on child sexual abuse and self defense training is imparted to adolescent girls.

12. **Ms. Vibha Agarwal, DC, Jalgaon** informed about the Savitri Bhai Phule scheme and Sukanya scheme through which incentive to girl child is being given ranging from Rs. 10,000-21,000/-. It was suggested to increase the amount of the incentive being given especially to the families with only one or two daughters. It was also suggested that each and every school must have at least one lady teacher.

13. **Sh. R.G Kulkarni, DC, Washim** informed that CSR of the district has fallen down from 863 in 2001 to 905 in 2011. The district level initiatives have been mainly focussed on effective implementation of PC&PNDT Act and advocacy measures by engaging with the ASHAs, AWWs and local ambassadors and felicitation & recognition.

14. **Sh. Raja Ram Mane, DC, Kolhapur** shared the efforts at the district level mainly targeted at implementation of PC&PNDT Act and promotion of institutional deliveries and birth registration. Awareness and sensitization on the issue of CSR is being done through Jingles in local channels and bus-stops.

15. **Sh. A.S. R Naik, DC, Jalna** shared his concerns regarding the decline in CSR from 903 in 2001 to 870 in 2011. Cases under PC&PNDT Act are being registered, centres are being sealed. Sensitization drive on the issue of CSR is being done regularly. It was suggested that interventions should be in such a manner that girl child is seen as an asset rather than a liability. Linking release of grants by government with improvement in CSR was suggested as is being done under Sanitation schemes.

16. **Sh. Deependra Singh Kushwaha, DC, Sangli** spoke about recognition and financial assistance being given to villages which have shown improvement in CSR. It was informed that additional fund of Rs. one lakh other than the regular funds have been given to the village which has CSR above 1000. Action against the erring doctors under the act has been undertaken. Sensitization workshops have been organized for doctors by FOGSI, experts on MTP Act. *Chitra Raths*, the mobile vans go around villages to sensitize community on issue of CSR, felicitation of mothers is being done by Divisional Commissioner thus creating positive environment for valuing girl children.

17. **Sh. Kiran Kurundkar, DC, Buldhana** shared that strict monitoring and inspection of ultrasound centres under the PC&PNDT Act is being done. Due to severe monitoring, out of 67 sonography centres, 42 centres have closed down voluntarily. 7 cases of violation of act are in the court. These efforts towards preventing gender biased sex elimination will be maintained in future as well.

18. **Sh. Sase, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Ahmadnagar** informed that 29 cases have been registered under violation of the Act and engagement with village sarpanches on the issue has yielded some improvement as is seen through the SRB data.

19. **Sh. Vikram Kumar, DC, Aurangabad** said that all the pregnancies in the 23 PHC Blocks is being regularly monitored through a software which is installed in a control room in the district through internet line and linked to all the 23 PHCs. The cost of the software is rs. 1 lakh/ PHC block. There is a visible improvement in the institutional deliveries. Simultaneously sensitization of the community is being done through local folklore covering villages.

19. **Following were recommendations/suggestions that emerged during the Video Conference:**

- The issue of CSR can not be tackled as a mere fight against technology. Any intervention strategy has to equally focus on addressing the mindset issue of the problem. Hence maximum visibility needs to be build around the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio and its societal impacts.
- Involve Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies on the issue of declining CSR and reach out to communities through gram sabha, special gram sabha and mahila gram sabhas.
- The message of BBBP should be spread through mobile vans, billboards, ringtone on girl child. Short films and audio visual IEC material of BBBP should be disseminated through local cable network and FM channels. Radio jingles could be played in the buses and other forms of public transport across the district.
- 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. Naming & Shaming of the villages/ grampanchayats/blocks not performing well should also be done.

- Role models at local level who have contributed towards enhancing value of girl child in the community to be identified and recognized in public events and information should be widely disseminated through the local media network.
- The Software to monitor and track institutional deliveries developed on the initiative of District Collector, Aurangabad be adopted by other BBBP districts for replication.
- Explore innovative mechanisms to acknowledge and reward families with daughters through economic safety net, attractive loans, schools of their choice, subsidized rate of interest, reward & recognition.

19. The Consultation ended with concluding remarks from Secretary, re-iterating that Minister, WCD has desired that the District Action Plans should be sent by 7th January, 2015 so that the funds could be released to the districts for rolling out of BBBP Scheme. Secretary, WCD offered that Ministry would facilitate availability of village level data from RGI to DCs on special request to help districts to identify vulnerable pockets/blocks and devise suitable strategies for tackling the problem.

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

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