



IAPPD Newsletter

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ICPD30 - Shaping Policies to Navigate National and Regional Population Trends—A Prelude to G-20 Summit, New Delhi

In pursuit of fostering collaborative strategies to formulate effective policy responses aligned with the ICPD framework, IAPPD organized a workshop titled 'ICPD30: Policymaking Initiatives to Address the National and Regional Population Trends' in association with the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, Tokyo (Japan), on 22 August 2023, in New Delhi, India. This workshop served as a precursor to the G-20 Summit held on 9-10 September 2023 in New Delhi. (Details on page 8)



Prof. P.J. Kurien, former-Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Chairman, Indian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (IAPPD) presented two IAPPD publications to Hon'ble President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, on 22nd February, 2023, (Details on page 4)

"Empowering Parliamentarians and Legislators: Enhancing Reproductive Health Programmes in India during and after Pandemic/Endemic Periods" – IAPPD-WHO-India Project

"Within the intricate fabric of India, discussions concerning reproductive and sexual well-being have gained momentum and importance as time has progressed. This issue of our newsletter takes a look at the strategic engagement of parliamentarians and legislators, facilitated through collaboration between the WHO India Office and the Indian Association of Parliamentarians for Population and Development (IAPPD)."

As part of this initiative, IAPPD conducted a series of six informative workshops, including two tailored for MPs and four designed for MLAs/MLCs. The primary goal of these workshops was to provide participants with comprehensive insights into reproductive health concerns, enabling them to spearhead transformative initiatives within their respective electoral areas. (Details on page 6)



MPs Workshop at Delhi.

"Empowering Communities: IAPPD's Impactful Workshop for PRIs on Sustainable Development Goals and Gender Equality in Rajasthan, Haryana, and West Bengal"

In a significant step toward fostering positive change in the heart of India, the International IAPPD conducted transformative workshops for Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the states of Rajasthan, Haryana, and West Bengal. This workshop aimed at empowering local communities to tackle the pressing challenges of sustainable development and gender equality. Participants from diverse backgrounds, including government officials, community leaders, and civil society representatives, gathered to engage in meaningful dialogue, share best practices, and explore innovative strategies for enhancing the well-being of their regions. (Details on page 5,10,11)



Exploring the Landscape of Reproductive and Sexual Health in India



In the diverse tapestry of India, conversations surrounding reproductive and sexual health have gained both momentum and significance over the years. This edition of our newsletter delves into the various facets of this crucial topic, shedding light on the challenges, progress, and on-going initiatives in the realm of reproductive and sexual health in our country.

Empowering Education: One of the cornerstones of advancing reproductive and sexual health lies in empowering individuals with accurate and comprehensive information. It's heartening to witness the growing efforts in schools, colleges, and communities to promote inclusive and age-appropriate sex education. By equipping the youth with the knowledge they need, we foster a generation better equipped to make informed choices about their bodies and relationships.

Breaking Taboos: While progress is being made, certain cultural taboos surrounding reproductive and sexual health still persist. Conversations about menstruation, contraceptives, and LGBTQ+ issues are often relegated to hushed tones. Initiatives that challenge these taboos, encouraging open dialogue within families and communities, are essential for creating an environment where every individual's health and choices are respected.

Access to Healthcare: Providing equitable access to reproductive healthcare remains a critical challenge. Rural and marginalized communities still face barriers in accessing quality services, be it contraceptives, maternal care, or sexually transmitted infection (STI) treatment. Collaborative efforts between healthcare providers, NGOs, and governmental bodies are instrumental in bridging this gap and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Technology and Telemedicine: The digital age has ushered in new avenues for enhancing reproductive and sexual health. Telemedicine platforms have emerged as a convenient and discreet way for individuals to seek medical advice, obtain

prescriptions, and access counselling services. Leveraging technology ensures that geographical constraints don't hinder anyone from receiving the care they need.

Inclusivity and Diversity: Reproductive and sexual health is a deeply personal matter, often influenced by cultural, religious, and social factors. Recognizing and respecting the diversity of these factors is essential in delivering effective and sensitive care. Creating safe spaces that cater to various identities and orientations contributes to a more inclusive healthcare landscape.

Future Perspectives: As we move forward, the path to comprehensive reproductive and sexual health in India requires collaboration on multiple fronts. It involves policymakers, educators, healthcare providers, and society at large. By challenging stereotypes, advocating for policy changes, and embracing open conversations, we can collectively shape a future where every individual's reproductive and sexual health rights are upheld and protected.

In this edition, we hope to spark thought-provoking discussions and inspire action. Let's embark on this journey together, as we strive for a healthier, more informed, and empowered India.

Prof. P.J. Kurien
Editor-in-Chief

Dear Readers,

I am happy to inform you that we have started the publication of our newsletter though after a gap of two years. We sincerely apologize for this gap which was caused by the unforeseen challenges posed by COVID pandemic and certain other unexpected hurdles. Now I can assure you that we will continue the uninterrupted publication of the newsletter. I thank all the readers for their patronage to IAPPD and the newsletter.

- Chairman, IAPPD



Late Shri Sat Paul Mittal, MP

Founder Chairman of IAPPD

Shri Sat Paul Mittal, started his political career when he was a student. He was actively involved in addressing problems concerning the youth. In 1958, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru picked him as Deputy Leader of the Indian Youth Delegation to the former Soviet Union where he met top Soviet leaders including the then Prime Minister Nikita Khrushchev.

An excellent orator and a keen debater, Shri Mittal gained prominence in Punjab's legislative circles in 1961 when he was elected to the Legislative Council. He became Deputy Minister for Home in Punjab. He was elected twice to the Rajya Sabha for a term of six years each in 1976 and 1982. Further, President of India nominated him as a member of the Rajya Sabha in appreciation of his contribution to the public causes especially his dedication to the cause of the downtrodden and towards population issues globally.

Throughout his political career, Shri Mittal was part of several industry associations and policymaking bodies and served as Member of Parliament; Chairman, Indian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (IAPPD) and Centre for Parliamentarians on Population and Development (CPPD); Founder, Secretary General and Vice Chairman, Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD); Secretary General Emeritus, Global Committee of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (GCPPD); Co-Chairman, Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders on Human Survival; Chairman, Parliamentarians Action for Removal of Apartheid (PARA-India); President, Nehru Sidhant Kender Trust (NSKT); Vice President, Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC); Member, All India Congress Committee (AICC); Member, Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and Member, Advisory Panel of Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) for South and South-East Asia.

As Chairman of IAPPD, he took upon himself the daunting task of tackling the problems of population facing the country and made it a peoples' movement. He single-handedly established the Centre of

Parliamentarians on Population and Development involving all Parliamentarians irrespective of their political affiliation. Unique in Asia, the Centre catered to ideological orientation courses, seminars and data information on population, development and related subjects.

Shri Sat Paul Mittal's perseverance and zeal in promoting new ideas on population control, world peace and development were recognized world-wide when the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Javier Perez De Cuellar, decorated him with the prestigious United Nations Peace Medal in 1987.

He organized several National and International conferences which involved spiritual and parliamentary leaders as he believed that they could influence communities. He spoke passionately at the historic Global Survival Conference at Oxford in 1988 and in Moscow in 1990 and made valuable suggestions for human survival and sustainable development.

He was equally concerned about apartheid in South Africa. He organized a conference of parliamentarians from several countries in Delhi where a joint declaration was made condemning apartheid. It was presented to the Indian Prime Minister. Shri. Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister appreciated his Shri Mittal's efforts.

At a prayer meeting held in Shri Mittal's memory on January 24th 1992, the then Prime Minister, Shri. P.V. Narasimha Rao described Shri Mittal as a man of very strong will power who was passionately involved in activities related to population and development and had observed that Shri Mittal's presence at any meeting would ensure that a balanced result would emerge out of the discussions.

Posterity will gratefully remember the significant contribution made by him in giving direction to the parliamentary movement in promoting basic awareness and understanding of population and human survival issues in the world.



Late Shri Sat Paul Mittal, MP

President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu Presented Research Monographs by a Parliamentarians Body (IAPPD)

New Delhi. February 22, 2023

The Indian Association of Parliamentarians for Population and Development (IAPPD) presented its two research publications to the Hon'ble President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhawan, by Prof. P. J. Kurien, Chairman, IAPPD and the former Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, along with the lead authors of the research monographs, Dr. Deepak Gupta and Prof. J. S. Yadav and Dr. Sudesh Nangia, and Mr. Manmohan Sharma, IAPPD, on February 22, 2023.

Hon'ble President appreciated the IAPPD in bringing forth the research analysis that shall go a long way in further strengthening the health and development sector in the country, especially in the ongoing 'Amrit-Kaal'. She underlined the critical need for ensuring inclusion of 'Value Based Education' into the system wherein not only the gender equality issues are well ingrained, even the primary key life-saving critical behaviours are imbibed in young minds.

The monograph, titled '**Social and Behaviour Change - SBC for SRHR, including FP: India on the Move**' by **Dr. Deepak Gupta and Prof. J.S. Yadav** has concluded "effective and results-based SBC strategies use concepts that range from psycho-social learning theories of role modeling communicated via multiple modes, including mass media, to the use of advocacy and social mobilization.

The publication titled, '**Gender Equality, Equity and Women Empowerment in India – Status, Challenges & Opportunities**'



by **Prof. Sudesh Nangia** concluded that a paradoxical scenario exist in India wherein women have been accorded the position of deity and thus worshipped, yet at the same time, subjected to various forms of maltreatment, discrimination and inequalities.

Prof. Kurien expressed gratitude to the Honorable President and informed that IAPPD is further motivated with her encouragement and that the parliamentarians' organization will further strengthen its efforts in engaging with the elected leaders.



Research publications presented to the Hon'ble President of India

IAPPD's Impact on India-Bangladesh Border Empowering PRIs for Women's Empowerment and SDGs

North Dinajpur (West Bengal), November 5, 2022

IAPPD successfully organized a Sensitization/Mobilization Workshop focused on the 'Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Women Empowerment and Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).' This significant event took place in North Dinajpur, West Bengal, which lies at the very edge of the India-Bangladesh border. The workshop, held on November 5, 2022, was meticulously coordinated under the initiative of Md. Nadimul Haque, Hon'ble MP, and Member of the Standing Committee of IAPPD.

Md. Ghulam Rabbani, Hon'ble Minister of Minority Affairs and Madrasah Education Department, Government of West Bengal, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The workshop drew the participation of approximately 150 PRIs, district officials, and other dignitaries.

Addressing the gathering, the Hon'ble Minister extended his appreciation for IAPPD's endeavours in organizing this pioneering workshop. This platform marked the first of its kind to delve into the vital roles of PRIs in North Dinajpur's history, especially concerning women's empowerment and SDGs. The district predominantly comprises a minority community.

A pivotal aspect of the event was a technical presentation by IAPPD focusing on the 'Situation of Reproductive, Maternal, Child, and Adolescents' Health [RMNCH] in West Bengal and Uttar Dinajpur: with reference to Sustainable Development Goals.' This insightful presentation aimed to engage PRIs on a range of critical issues, including maternal and child mortality, early marriage, improved indicators of women's empowerment, and more.

Outcomes and Commitments

- During the discussions, underscored by the presence of the Hon'ble Minister, PRIs pledged to:
- Combat Early Marriage: Work towards discouraging early



Md. Ghulam Rabbani, Hon'ble Minister, West Bengal, addressing the participants.

marriages.

- Enhance Maternal Health: Contribute to improved maternal health.
- Advocate Neo-natal Health: Spread awareness about neo-natal health.
- Address Malnutrition: Raise awareness about and combat malnutrition among girls and women.
- Promote Family Planning: Educate communities about various family planning methods.
- Empower Girl Education: Foster awareness and support for girl education.

In his concluding remarks, the Hon'ble Minister highlighted the state's pioneering role in empowering women through distinct policies. He drew attention to the State Mission led by the Hon'ble Chief Minister and the creation of Women's Development Centres to bolster this endeavour.

The workshop left an indelible mark, fostering commitment, collaboration, and the shared goal of advancing women's empowerment and achieving SDGs in the border district of North Dinajpur.



Technical Presentation by IAPPD in progress.

" Empowering Parliamentarians and Legislators: Enhancing Reproductive Health Programmes in India during and after Pandemic/Endemic Periods" – IAPPD-WHO-India Project

In a collaborative effort to bolster India's reproductive health initiatives amidst the challenges posed by pandemics and endemics, the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MH&FW), Government of India, joined forces with the World Health Organization (WHO) India Office. The result of this partnership is the SAMARTH (Sustain, Accelerate, and Mainstream Access to Reproductive Health through Health System) project, a comprehensive endeavour aimed at fortifying the nation's reproductive health programme. A notable facet of this initiative is the strategic engagement of Parliamentarians and Legislators, facilitated through collaboration between WHO India Office and the Indian Association of Parliamentarians for Population and Development (IAPPD).

The primary objectives of the SAMARTH-2 project were two-fold - sensitization and awareness, and advocacy and commitment.

The project aimed to sensitize Parliamentarians and Legislators (MPs & MLAs/MLCs) on critical reproductive health (RH) care matters during and after periods of pandemics or endemics. By fostering an understanding of these issues, MPs & MLAs/MLCs were empowered to advocate for effective RH services within their constituencies. It also seeks to inspire and secure the commitment of MPs & MLAs/MLCs to establish a conducive environment for reproductive health through advocacy efforts at both the

national and state levels.

Under this project, IAPPD organized six sensitization workshops, two for MPs and four for MLAs/MLCs. These workshops attempted to empower participants with in-depth knowledge of reproductive health issues, and equipping them to drive change within their constituencies.

Experiences of Parliamentary Members with Reproductive Health Programmes during and after Pandemic/Endemic Periods

The participants shared a comprehensive compilation of first hand experiences of MPs and MLAs/MLCs with the reproductive health program during and following the Covid-19 outbreak.

- All MPs, MLAs, and MLCs unanimously agreed on the profound impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. They recognized the importance of drawing lessons from this unprecedented situation. While acknowledging their relatively limited involvement in the program thus far, they expressed a strong commitment to increasing their engagement during similar health crises in the future.
- Numerous participants acknowledged their prior engagement with health programs, although not in the specific manner highlighted during the workshop. They voiced their dedication to amplifying their participation across the three levels emphasized in the current session—within the state legislature, at service centres, and when interacting with individuals and groups within the community. They assured that their involvement would align with the presentation's suggestions at all three levels.
- Many attendees expressed gratitude for the insights shared during the meeting and extended their thanks to the IAPPD for hosting this valuable event. The participants recognized the utility of similar activities in the future. While they pledged to advocate the messages they received to their colleagues, they emphasized that organizing comparable meetings for other members would yield an even greater impact.
- Participants went a step further by expressing their appreciation for the workshop organized by IAPPD and recommended more such interactions with state governments. They believed that such engagements keep the state authorities focused on appropriate policies and serve as reminders to involve legislators more actively.
- MPs inquired about the availability of funds within certain reproductive health program schemes to support community-related initiatives. They were informed that IAPPD would provide comprehensive technical assistance for all reproductive health activities. However, if any funds were required, they



Group Photo of the two Workshops for Members of Parliament in New Delhi.

should utilize their own allocated resources. One MP suggested exploring the potential of using resources from their Member of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) and similar funds, particularly during pandemic or endemic periods.

- Throughout the Covid-19 period, governmental officials, including sub-divisional magistrates, district commissioners, and chief medical officers, held significant authority. The government did not issue guidelines on utilizing the services of parliamentarians and other civil society groups to collaborate with the government machinery for addressing people's needs. In the absence of such guidelines, powers, and funding, MPs and MLAs took initiative within their capacity. An emerging suggestion is for the government to instruct its machinery to involve parliamentarians, at least during emergency situations. Parliamentarians also expressed a desire to be included in the mailing list for pandemic-related guidelines, ensuring their alignment with evolving governmental strategies.

Noteworthy suggestions were put forth to enhance reproductive health services:

Offering free transportation services to health facilities to overcome transport barriers faced by people.

Implementing a robust communication strategy to dispel fears and disseminate information about accessing sexual and reproductive health services through various media channels.

Incorporating Elected Representatives (ERs) into health, nutrition, and sanitation committees. This move is expected to bolster their participation at all levels, encompassing policy advocacy, program implementation, and community engagement. The importance of such involvement is magnified during pandemics and endemics.

The elected representatives were gently reminded of their responsibility to assist all constituents in accessing health services, be it related to COVID-19 or other health needs. Such actions were highlighted as advantageous both for the community and their roles as parliamentarians.

The Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh noted that, based on the experience of Covid-19, the state had increased its budget allocation for health, dedicating 6.6 percent of the state budget. They committed to addressing infrastructure shortcomings identified during the pandemic, highlighting this as a valuable lesson learned from the crisis.

Special recognition was extended to IAPPD for their diligent efforts in generating documents that evaluate the performance of reproductive health services across India, various states, and their aspirational districts. The resulting Resource Book was emphasized as an invaluable reference tool for elected representatives.



MLAs Workshop Himachal Pradesh



MLAs Workshop Chhattisgarh



MLAs Workshop Bihar



MLAs Workshop Jharkhand

Workshop

ICPD30: Policymaking Initiatives to Address the National and Regional Population Trends

New Delhi, India, 22 August 2023

With the objective to enhance collaborative approaches for effective policy responses to national and regional population trends within the ICPD framework, a workshop on 'ICPD30: Policymaking Initiatives to Address the National and Regional Population Trends' was organized by the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, Tokyo (Japan) and hosted by IAPPD, on 22 August, 2023, in New Delhi. The workshop was on hybrid mode.

During his welcome address, Professor P.J. Kurien, Chairperson of IAPPD, while providing a concise summary of the workshop's objectives, aims, and the anticipated benefits for participants, also expressed gratitude for the attendees' dedication in joining the workshop and conveyed his optimistic outlook for a productive and enjoyable experience for all.

Addressing the participants, Prof. Keizo Takemi said that India faces formidable challenges, including an aging population, a substantial unemployment rate, and a constrained education system with a notable prevalence of high school dropouts. Prof. Takemi emphasized the need for prioritization in addressing these issues. Additionally, he highlighted the importance of healthy life expectancy as a crucial indicator of a nation's overall well-being. He said that India stands as one of the world's prominent leaders, making it imperative for the nation to assume a role as a global leader, even in the face of serious political conflicts. To achieve this, India must leverage its influence to foster cooperation and diplomacy, striving for solutions that transcend national boundaries and benefit the global community as a whole.

During his address, Mr. Deepender Hooda, Member of Parliament, took the opportunity to discuss the significant impact of welfare schemes for students that were initiated by previous governments. He highlighted essential programs such as the mid-day meal scheme and Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan, which played a pivotal role in reducing school dropout rates across the nation.

A presentation on 'Addressing Adolescent and Youth issues towards ICPD30' (AFPPD supported- Survey by IAPPD), was



Prof. Keizo Takemi addressing the participants. Also seen in the picture from left, Mr. Deepender Hooda, MP; Prof. P.J. Kurien, Chairman, IAPPD; and Ms. Andrea Wojnar, Resident Representative for UNFPA India .

made by Dr. Suneeta Mukherjee, Ms. Geeta Narayan and Mr. Parvin Kr. Jha, IAPPD consultants.

In Session 2, another presentation was made by Ms. Josephine Veronique Lacson-Noel, MP Philippines, on Parliamentarians' Role to Implement ICPD PoA and 2030 Agenda, emphasizing the significance of economic development that goes beyond mere growth and respects rights while expanding choices for the people. She highlighted the vital role of legislators in advancing their constituents' interests through legislative action and ensuring proper implementation and accountability.

Dr. Jetn Sirathranont, MP Thailand, Secretary General of AFPPD, in his presentation addressed several key topics related to reproductive health and population dynamics. It began by discussing the "Adolescent Pregnancy: Prevention and Solution Act 2015," highlighting its significance in addressing issues related to adolescent pregnancy and reproductive health and then moved to the "Adopted Criminal Code 2021," shedding light on the legal framework changes and their implications. The presentation also touched upon the concept of "Healthy and Active Ageing," emphasizing the importance of promoting health and well-being in older populations, possibly discussing strategies and policies to achieve this goal.



Group Photo of the Participants

Ms. Andrea Wojnar, Resident Representative for UNFPA India and Country Director for Bhutan, highlighted the importance of comprehensive sexual education and provided an interesting example from popular culture. She cited a recent Bollywood movie, "OMG-2," which conveys a crucial message about parents providing sexual health information to their children for the sake of their physical and mental well-being. This cinematic reference underscored the significance of open and informative dialogues between parents and children regarding sexual health. She expressed a keen interest in understanding the specific support required by IAPPD from UNFPA.

Workshop Outcome

By the conclusion of the workshop, participants gained a deeper understanding of the challenges posed by evolving national and regional population trends, and will have developed a comprehensive toolkit of policymaking strategies rooted in the ICPD principles. These strategies will enable participants to contribute to more informed, inclusive, and sustainable policy decisions that address demographic shifts and promote the well-being of communities. Additionally, participants established a network of cross-border collaborations and knowledge-sharing, fostering on-going dialogue and cooperation for effective population-focused policymaking.



Handing over the Declaration adopted at GCPPD organized by AFPPD

The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), Tokyo, Japan, is a network of parliamentarians from 30 countries in the Asia Pacific and Central Asia regions.

Prior to Hiroshima G-7 meeting, held in Tokyo, Japan, AFPPD organized the 'Global Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development Toward the 2023 G7 Hiroshima Summit (GCPPD)', Tokyo, Japan, during 25-26 April, 2023, where the parliamentarians from Asia, Pacific, Central Asia and Europe participated. During this conference, a statement/declaration on ICPD-94-PoA and achieving SDGs was adopted and was handed over to the G-7 Japanese Leadership in Tokyo, to Hon'ble Prime Minister of Japan on 26th April, 2023. During the GCPPD, it was decided to handover the Statement adopted during the conference to G20 Leadership, in New Delhi.

The GCPPD declaration was handed over to Mr. Amitabh Kant, SHERPA, G-20 India, by Shri Deepender Hooda, MP, Vice Chairman of AFPPD & IAPPD, on 29th August, 2023, in New Delhi.

The 95th Executive Committee Meeting of AFPPD

22 August 2023 , New Delhi, India



The 95th Executive Committee Meeting of AFPPD (hybrid mode) was held in New Delhi on August 22, 2023, under the Chairmanship of Prof. Keizo Takemi , Chair of AFPPD. Mr. Deepender Hooda, MP (India), Vice Chair AFPPD; Ms. Josephine Veronique Lacson-Noel, MP (Philippines); Ms. Dil Kumari Rawal Thapa 'Parbati', MP (Nepal); Mr. Ram Guragain, Executive Secretary NPPFD; Dr. Farrukh Usmonov, Interim Executive Director of AFPPD; and Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary, IAPPD, attended the meeting in-person. Also, other members of the Committee and NC Officers attended this meeting on-line.

IAPPD's Workshop Empowering Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the Heat of Rajasthan: Enhancing Health, Empowering Women, and Achieving Sustainable Development Goals

Kaya, Udaipur (Rajasthan), May 13th, 2023

The scorching heat of Rajasthan did little to deter the enthusiasm of participants at the Sensitization/Mobilization Workshop on the "Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Health, Women Empowerment, and Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," held in Kaya Village, Udaipur, on May 13th, 2023.

Kaya, situated in the Girwa Tehsil of Udaipur District, may be characterized by challenging conditions, but this didn't hinder the successful organization of the workshop, spearheaded by Mr. Arjunlal Meena, Hon'ble MP and Member of the Standing Committee of IAPPD, representing the Udaipur constituency.

The event was graced by Mr. Avinash Rai Khanna, Ex-MP and Vice Chairman of IAPPD, as the Chief Guest. Special Guest, Mr. Phool Singh Meena, MLA, added to the significance of the occasion. With over 50 PRIs, along with MLAs and Councillors from the district, the workshop delved into pertinent issues:

- Women's Empowerment (Aligned with the Prime Minister's call)
- The Role of PRIs in Achieving SDGs
- Maternal, Infant, and Neo-natal Mortality
- Strengthening Health Infrastructure

The attendees of the event were heartily welcomed by Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary of IAPPD. With a deep sense of purpose, he shed light on IAPPD's mission and the precise goals of the workshop.

During his address, Mr. Avinash Rai Khanna extolled IAPPD for orchestrating a workshop that spotlights the paramount role of PRIs in Kaya, Udaipur. He underscored their potency in driving health initiatives, championing women's rights, and fostering innovation at the grassroots level. Serving as conduits of trust and acceptance, these community leaders wield considerable influence in promoting health and

nutrition services.

In a moment of significance, Mr. Arjunlal Meena brought to the fore the immense importance of this trailblazing workshop in a remote tribal region. His insights underlined the capacity of PRIs to confront local challenges and drive transformation. By harnessing platforms like Village Health, Sanitation, and Nutrition Committee meetings, along with 'Gram Sabha' deliberations, PRIs can trigger constructive dialogues that transcend individual communities. He fervently called upon PRIs to become the driving force behind comprehensive health and nutrition discussions spanning entire communities.

Views from the Participants

- **Healthcare in Rural Villages:** Participants asserted the right to quality healthcare, regardless of location, calling for well-equipped centers, essential medicines, and mobile medical units. They emphasized regular health camps and awareness programs for preventive measures.
- **Health Education and Awareness:** Participants highlighted the role of health education in rural areas, focusing on hygiene, sanitation, nutrition, and disease prevention, especially for women's empowerment.
- **Women's Empowerment:** The consensus centered on enabling women through education, skills, vocational training, and entrepreneurship support, with an emphasis on their involvement in decision-making.
- **Women's Healthcare:** Participants advocated for comprehensive reproductive healthcare, safe childbirth, and family planning, stressing the need for improved infrastructure and specialized clinics.
- **Collaboration:** Participants emphasized collaboration with government bodies, NGOs, and healthcare providers to efficiently implement healthcare and empowerment initiatives.



PRIs Workshop Rajasthan

Rising to the Challenge

Empowering Newly Elected PRIs: A Workshop on Women's Empowerment and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Nuh (Mewat), Haryana, January 6, 2023

Panchayats in India stand as time-honoured entities governing village life. With the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) emerged fortified with distinct roles, jurisdiction, and funding. PRIs embarked on diverse development missions, including health and population stabilization.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister's assertion that women's empowerment is integral to national development resonates strongly. PRIs, particularly women PRIs, are positioned to lead in enhancing pivotal health indicators.

In this context, IAPPD organized a Sensitization Workshop on the Role of Newly Elected Members of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in achieving Women Empowerment and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), held in Nuh (Mewat), Haryana, on January 6, 2023. Nuh, classified as an Aspiration District by NITI Aayog, envisions comprehensive transformation for 112 of the nation's most underdeveloped districts. Around 200 PRIs and state officials convened participated.

The esteemed event welcomed Rao Inderjit Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), as Chief Guest. The stage was presided over by Mrs. Viplove Thakur, ex-MP; Vice-Chair of IAPPD.



Mrs. Viplove Thakur, while welcoming the PRIs, hoped that the newly elected women PRIs would work hard to eliminate child marriage/female foeticide in their respective villages. She called the PRIs to work with government health facilities, village heads, community leaders, Anganwadi and Asha workers.



Rao Inderjit Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), in his address thanked Mrs. Viplove Thakur and IAPPD for organizing the sensitization workshop for newly elected PRIs in Nuh. He said that the objectives of the Panchayati Raj system as envisaged by the Constitution

of India are to ensure local economic development and social justice. In Haryana, though 50 per cent reservation for women in Panchayats was given a little late but the state is performing very well in development activities. He hoped that women would get 50 per cent reservation in state assemblies and Parliament soon.

Hon'ble Minister appealed to the male PRIs to give freedom and authority to their female counterparts to work for the development of their villages.

Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary of IAPPD, affirmed PRIs' role as a crucial mechanism for community involvement, particularly for marginalized sections. Highlighting the institution's historic significance, he urged the newly elected women PRIs to confidently shoulder their responsibilities for community betterment.

A technical presentation, "Panchayat Leadership and Good Governance," was delivered by Ms. Kaniz Fatima Muneeza and Ms. Madhuparna Das Joshi from C3India, an NGO devoted to empowering Indian women and girls. A productive Q&A session followed, culminating with actionable insights for the PRIs.

Workshop Outcome

The workshop marked a groundbreaking initiative in the wake of the State Government's 50% reservation for women in Panchayats. Despite adverse weather conditions, newly elected women PRIs displayed remarkable enthusiasm for enhancing village development. These women PRIs openly shared their experiences and insights, a departure from traditional practices. Critical challenges, including family planning, child immunization, and maternal and child health, were identified, along with a growing awareness of the significance of family planning.

Women PRIs sharing their experiences and insights



Group Photo of the Participants

PRIs Workshop Nuh (Rajasthan)

Technical Committee Meeting for Planning and Preparation of Regional Parliamentarians Meeting

Kathmandu, Nepal, 27-28 October, 2023

IAPPD in collaboration with South East Asia Regional Coordination Mechanism Forum (SRCMF) and the Ministry of Health and Population, Nepal, organized a Technical Committee Meeting (in hybrid mode) on 27-28 October, 2023 in Kathmandu, Nepal. This meeting aimed for planning and preparation of Regional Parliamentarians Meeting to be held in the first quarter of 2024. The agenda of the meeting include discussions on challenges of



Nepal

international cross-border malaria elimination and role of Parliamentarians and engagement of parliamentarians to support for mobilizing resources particularly domestic and regional funding ensuring sustainability of the programmes. Proposals for organizing the upcoming Regional Parliamentarians meeting based on the recommendations.

The Indian parliamentarians/legislators attended this meeting include Dr. Rajdeep Roy, MP; Dr. Shantanu Sen, MP; Mr. Ghulam Rabbani, Cabinet Minister, Government of West Bengal, India; Mr. Jakir Hussain Sikdar, MLA, Assam; Dr. Celestine Lyngdoh, MLA, Meghalaya; Mr. Gabriel Wahlang, MLA, Meghalaya; Mr. Pradyut Bordoloi, MLA, Assam; Mr. Kamalakhya Dey Purkayastha, MLA, Assam; and Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary, IAPPD, attended this meeting. Mr. Sharma also facilitated the session on engagement of parliamentarians to support for mobilizing resources.

Workshop on Strategic Policy Dialogue and Advocacy for Financing of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

2-3 October, 2023, Thailand

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA) jointly conducted a two-day in-person training workshop titled "Workshop on Strategic Policy Dialogue and Advocacy for Financing of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights" in Bangkok, Thailand, on October 2-3, 2023.



Bangkok (Thailand)

The primary objective of the workshop was to empower its participants, which included Parliamentarians, Members of National Committees, and UNFPA officials, with the necessary advocacy skills to effectively promote increased, efficient, and fair resource allocation for programs related to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

The workshop featured sessions on various topics, including the significance of SRHR, strategic planning and costing, the budgeting process and public finance, as well as equity and universal health coverage.

Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary, IAPPD, attended this workshop.

The workshop was a resounding success. It empowered participants with the tools and insights needed to drive positive change in the field of SRHR and reinforced the commitment to achieving increased, efficient, and equitable resource allocation for SRHR programmes. This workshop's outcomes will undoubtedly contribute to the advancement of sexual and reproductive health and rights on a broader scale.



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