Project Progress Updates

Project Title: Improving Maternal and Child Health Care Services (SDG target-3.1 and 3.2) through Citizen Engagement in Odisha State in India

Proponent: Youth for Social Development, Berhampur, Odisha in India

Project inception:

The starting of the activities of the project has been delayed due to the general election in the country and the state of Odisha. Soon after the election completion in the month of June’2019 we have started the process of collecting information and selection of the field areas where we will be implementing the project. The project officially started in the months of August, 2019.

Pre Preparations:

In between we have prepared all the resources specifically the public health schemes on maternal and child health where we have identified more than 12 schemes their guidelines, provisions, entitlements, beneficiary eligibility, health facilities, roles and responsibilities of various officials and frontline workers, citizen led statutory committees, layers of accountability and grievance mechanism at various level.

We have also prepared the tools for physical verification of public health facilities and the structures of the baseline survey have been prepared.

Engagement with the Government:

We have presented the proposal and discussed with the district magistrate (collector) and the chief district medical officer (CDMO) of Ganjam. Since the government of Odisha has set a priority agenda1 for better health care services to the people and reducing IMR and MMR, they have agreed to support us in this project by providing information, data and participate in various consultative and interface meetings in this project. We are waiting to receive the formal ‘letter of support’ from them in this week.

On the other hand the frontline workers on ground are cooperative to the field team in provision of information and raised issues during the bilateral discussion with them. Most of the frontline workers (ANM, ASHA and AWW) and block level officials (Supervisor, CDPO, BPM) have already supported us by providing necessary data and information on IMR, MMR, facilities and human resources details in the intervention blocks.

Baseline Survey:

We are in the process of conducting baseline survey in both the intervention and non intervention blocks. We have little delay in this process due to the selection of better research agency and individual

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researcher for this purpose. Finally Dr. Sita Sekhar, former director of Public Affairs Foundation/Public Affairs Centre has been agreed to conduct the survey design including the sampling and questionnaire and other tools for the baseline survey. We hope the baseline survey will be completed within 2 months.

Focused Groups Discussion:

We have completed focused groups discussion with the beneficiaries of the MCH services in the 10 selected gram panchayats of 2 blocks to understand the major issues related to service delivery, accountability and governance. This helps in preparation of tools for the baseline survey and the community score card.

Preparation of IEC materials:

We have also prepared the IEC materials for the beneficiaries on maternal child health schemes, benefits particularly the rights of the beneficiaries, entitlements and accountability of various service providers at different level. The entitlement sharing to the beneficiaries will be commencing soon after the baseline survey.

Training of Project Team:

Training of the project team has been organized to understand the schemes, project strategies, methods and tools. Mr. Gouranga Mahapatra of People’s Health Movement (Jan Swasthya Abhiyan) expert in health rights and MCH and Dr. Sita Sekhar of Public Affairs Centre (PAC) trained to the staff on various public health schemes and social accountability tools i.e. community score card on MCH schemes, public hearing and collection of information and physical verification of health facilities.

Challenges and mitigation:

In the beginning it is delayed due to the general election and currently on track and at the same time it is also difficult for us achieve the support of the government. Many back and forth and bilateral meetings and discussion held with senior, district and block level meetings and finally we got the support to implement the project.

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2 Pregnant Women, Lactating Women and Children 0-6 years