

## **MITANIN SUPPORT AND CAREER PROGRESSION IN CHHATTISGARH**

### **Problem Statement**

Chhattisgarh state was carved out of Madhya Pradesh in year 2000 inherited a Public Health system having a huge shortage of Health Human Resources including ANMs. It needs around 6,000 new ANMs for fulfilling the two ANM per sub-centre norm. The problem of recruiting and retaining ANMs is more severe for tribal and remote areas.

Government of Chhattisgarh started Mitandin Programme in 2002. Mitandins are Community Health Volunteers selected by community at hamlet level. Mitandins have received 56 days of residential training along with active field level on-the-job training and support. External evaluations have found them to be effective in areas like home-based newborn care, management of childhood illnesses, counselling for child nutrition, mobilisation of communities on prevention of diarrhea and malaria. It was necessary to create career avenues and social security for Mitandins to augment and sustain their motivation as a volunteer workforce.

### **Programme Description**

Studies have shown that the health-staff who have cultural affinity to local areas are more likely to stay in backward locations. Therefore with an aim to augment the availability of trained nurses and ANMs, especially in remote areas, Chhattisgarh started a Career Development Programme for Mitandins under NRHM. The idea was to recruit Mitandins from remote areas into ANM schools and send them back to serve as ANMs in their native areas.

#### **Experience of sponsoring Mitandins for ANM Training course:**

In 2009, Mitandins having 12<sup>th</sup> (Science) qualification were sponsored by NRHM for BSc (Nursing) courses. In 2010, it was decided to sponsor Mitandins for ANM courses in private ANM schools as Government controls 50% quota in private ANM schools. This opportunity was given to 310 Mitandins from the tribal districts (Bijapur, Dantewada, Narayanpur, Bastar, Kanker, Jashpur, Koriya, Kwardha and Korba). Government paid fees of Rs.38000 per candidate per annum and provided Rs.2000 p.m. as stipend to each Mitandin for food and hostel expenses. Around 300 Mitandins completed their ANM course in mid-2012. It provided an opportunity to fill the vacant ANM posts in backward districts.

#### **Reservation for Mitandins in ANM courses:**

In 2011, a significant policy decision has been taken by the Government in order to institutionalise this initiative. 40% of the seats in Govt. ANM Training schools were reserved for Mitandins. In this, first preference is given to 12<sup>th</sup> pass Mitandins. Around 400 Mitandins have got enrolled in Govt. ANM schools in 2011 and 2012. This has created a sustainable mechanism for Career Development of Mitandins. It has also solved the problems of paying stipends etc. as expenses of stay, food and studies in these institutions are directly covered by Government.

### Other Career Development Initiatives

- **Mitanins selected as Mitadin Trainers:** Mitadin Trainers who provide supportive supervision to Mitanins are selected out of the Mitanins of the concerned cluster.
- **Mitanins selected as Help Desk Facilitators:** Chhattisgarh has set up Help Desks in District and Block Hospitals to provide guidance and navigation support to patients coming to these facilities. These facilitators are recruited from amongst the Mitanins residing close to the concerned facility.
- **Mitanins elected into PRIs:** The number of Mitanins deciding to fight elections has grown. They are allowed to continue as Mitanins after getting elected. Apart from being members or Presidents of Gram Panchayats, many Mitanins have also got elected into Block and District Panchayats.

### Social Security Support to Mitanins through instituting a Mitadin Welfare Fund

- **LIC life insurance cum scholarship scheme coverage:** It provides life insurance cover of Rs.50,000 to Mitadin in event of death of Mitadin's husband. It also provides Rs.1200 scholarship per annum to Mitadin's children studying in standard 9-12<sup>th</sup> standard.
- **Support for education of Mitanins:** Mitanins are being given cash incentives to encourage them to study further. Any Mitadin who passes 8<sup>th</sup> standard after the commencement of the scheme is being awarded Rs.2,000. Mitanins passing 10<sup>th</sup> standard and 12<sup>th</sup> standard get Rs.5,000 and Rs.10,000 award respectively.
- **Swavalamban Pension Fund Scheme:** Around 60,000 Mitanins were enrolled in this pension fund scheme last year. They received Rs.1000 each in their pension fund accounts and central govt. (PFRDA) has also contributed a matching amount. This will enable Mitadin to earn an average monthly pension of around Rs.1000 per month once she crosses age of 60.

### Program Impact

The ANM training programme has already provided 500 trained ANMs to the state. Each year, another 250 Mitadin ANMs get added. It provided an opportunity to fill the vacant ANM posts in backward districts. This can help in inducting manpower with higher levels of motivation into the health system.

Around 1500 Mitadin Trainers have been selected from amongst the Mitanins. It has also helped the quality of supportive supervision in Mitadin programme as Mitadin having undergone several rounds of training gets inducted in this role. Around 400 Mitanins have been inducted into role of Help Desk Facilitators. 2,500 Mitanins are currently also functioning as elected representatives of PRIs.

Mitadin Welfare fund has provided scholarships to 13,000 children of Mitanins. 160 Mitanins have received the insurance amount of death claims. Around 3000 Mitanins receive education support benefit each year. Around Rs. 21 Crore has been accumulated in Mitadin Swavalamban pension fund covering 61,000 Mitanins.

## **Scalability**

There are around 10,000 Mitanins who are 10<sup>th</sup> pass. ANM Training Centres need to be set-up in all Districts to fill the gap in ANM availability everywhere. Reservations for ASHAs in ANM training courses and other career progression mechanisms can be replicated by most states. Mitadin Welfare Fund activities already cover 60,000+ Mitanins and other states can replicate it for ASHA. It requires computerised database of ASHAs. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (GoI) has already advised all states to enroll ASHAs in Swavalamban Pension Fund scheme.

## **Conclusion**

The potential of ASHAs can be utilised to bridge the gap in availability of ANMs. It can help in sustaining motivation of ASHAs. They need to be supported for this through career progression initiatives and social security support.

## **Contact**

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