HEALTH INFORMATICS

Introduction of information technology is one of the most significant achievements of 21st century, which brings with it a lot of benefits and opportunities. All sectors of the economy have benefitted from information technology and health sector has also responded well. However the penetration of IT in Indian Public Health was limited and maximum benefit of IT in health is yet to be explored. Within the NRHM various IT initiatives have been taken place both at the State level and national level and all of them can be broadly categorized into four groups-aggregate number reporting systems, patient tracking and hospital information systems, mobile-based initiatives and telemedicine.

Among these at the national level various program specific reporting systems were designed and implemented these include- HMIS Web Portal- for aggregate number reporting system, MCTS- a patient tracking system etc. These initiatives to a great extent have helped improve program data reporting, data quality and finally use of information.

6th CRM report documented that number of IT initiatives in the States have increased over a period of time and largely supporting local program needs. Tamil Nadu has taken maximum number of IT initiatives in the public health system followed by Odisha. In the aggregate number reporting systems, DHIS 2.0 has been one of the most sustainable initiatives

in the States from 2008 and currently nine States (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, and Maharashtra) are using this for HMIS data reporting.

State have also done innovations in managing hospital data by implementing hospital information system- these include Himachal, Punjab, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu etc and all of them are at various levels in terms of utilizations of these systems for day to day decision making. For mother and child tracking three States i.e. Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, and Gujarat have developed their own state specific applications and are relying on the data provided by them. However all of these applications are linked with the national pregnancy tracking system- MCTS. A number of states have taken up initiative to manage dynamic human resource through Human Resource Management Information System. States like Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, Karnataka, Odisha and Tamil Nadu are using HRMIS to manage large volume of HRH data. In terms of usability both Bihar and Karnataka are ahead of other states. Chhattisgarh has started reporting of tracking data from remote areas through Mobile phones however the impact and usability of that is yet to be realized. In Bihar mobile technology is used for ASHA payment which has improved transparency and timely payment to the AHSA worker. Maharashtra State has started e-filing system which has improved departmental

working and access to the documents from anywhere. Files are also being tracked to ensure timely decision making.

These various innovations are mostly developed to support one program and are not integrated to exchange data among each other. Out of these, seven initiatives which have made most positive impact in the Public Health Systems are shortlisted here as the best practice.