

## Exposure Visit by six Members of Parliament to ARTH's Field Programme to study an alternative Family Planning Strategy, 14-15 July 2016



### Background & the purpose of visit

As part of an advocacy effort to promote a better understanding of contraception in line with FP 2020 goals, Population Foundation of India (PFI), New Delhi approached ARTH for enabling a field visit by a group of members of parliament (MPs). ARTH agreed and the visit was facilitated in terms of contacting the MPs and arranging logistics and related costs by PFI along with the Indian Association of Parliamentarians for Population & Development (IAPPD). ARTH decided to have the MPs visit and study implementation of the Taruni intervention being implemented in Udaipur city and in surrounding rural areas, from Nov 2014.

### Visit Schedule

There was a short briefing followed by dinner on 14 July 2016. Apart from the visiting MPs, the local MLA, mayor and Chairman of the Udaipur Zilla Parishad, and some district officers (including those from the health department) participated.



On 15 July, the delegation arrived at 10:15 am at ARTH's School of Midwifery Practice & Primary Health Care for a briefing on the field visit. Dr. Sharad Iyengar, Chief Executive of the Society made a brief presentation highlighting the principal intervention stages and working of the Taruni program, and the field schedule for the day.

After briefing, the delegation divided into two groups and visited three villages namely Gundali, Selu and Majam, all Udaipur district. One team also visited the ARTH Taruni Clinic at village Lakhmavaton ka Guda in

Rajsamand district. The teams met and interacted with a total of 10 Taruni Sakhis, and 10 Taruni Sakhis (neighbourhood family planning volunteers). At the Taruni clinic, delegates observed the role of the clinic in backing up neighbourhood volunteers, and the range of services provided by it, including facility based contraception (DMPA, intrauterine devices) and safe abortion. After field visits, the delegation returned at 2:15 pm to a simple lunch provided at the Training School Mess. The post lunch session featured a short presentation on results thus far of the Taruni Intervention, an analysis and discussion on how an alternative approach for promoting contraceptive and RH service use among young women can be centered on pregnancy self-testing, can rely on volunteers and which does not promote any particular method or relies on targets, can be implemented on the ground. Delegates made suggestions as listed below:

1. The intervention should spread awareness of the age at marriage and its impact on fertility. Delegates suggested the counseling relating to the consequences of early marriage for women below the age of 18.
2. For those below 18 covered by the intervention, there was consensus about taking consent of the parents before providing adolescence or sex education.
3. Delegates strongly recommended that the intervention must additionally involve men and encourage their participation in greater utilization of contraceptive options.
4. There is need to motivate the younger generation towards this adopting intervention
5. ARTH is currently not receiving any government assistance for providing delivery care, even though each delivery costs about Rs 2500 and the recovery from patients is about Rs 500. MPs suggested that ARTH apply to the government for financing as part of the JSSK programme.
6. Delegates appreciated the innovative approach and services being provided with commitment, by members of ARTH's team.

They also stated that they planned to raise questions related to the National Family Planning Programme in Parliament, and would appreciate receiving further inputs from time to time from the co-organizers, so as to keep the spotlight on FP and RH services.

#### **Members of Parliament and the state they represent**

Mrs. Viplove Thakur, HP

Mr. Kantilal Bhuria, MP (Former Union Minister)

Mr. Laxmi Narain Yadav, MP (Former State Minister)

Mr. Jugal Kishore Sharma, J&K

Mr. Narayan Lal Panchariya, Rajasthan

Mr. Arjun Lal Meena, Rajasthan (representing Udaipur Lok Sabha constituency)

#### **Government of Rajasthan**

Dr Sanjeev Tank, Chief Medical & Health Officer

#### **Organizations that co-organized the trip**

IAPPD: Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary, and Mr Harish

PFI: Dr. Sanjay Pandey, Ms Madhavi Misra and Ms Simin Kaleem

ARTH: Dr Kanika Sharma (President, Governing Board), Dr S Ramakrishnan (Treasurer, Governing Board), Dr Sharad Iyengar (Secretary & Chief Executive), Ms Sunita Soni, Mr Rajesh Vaishnav, Ms Pushpa Sen, Ms Rekha Ameta, Ms Devu Prajapat, Ms Gopi Meghwal, Ms Hasira Banu

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