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Advancing Development

Building Alliances

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PRESS RELEASE

Affordable and accessible healthcare can impact poverty

Madurai, September 27: "Despite good quality of services in public health care systems, the people are often going for private health care services, in spite of higher costs. In many cases the poor are often trapped into debt due to exorbitant rates charged by private health care providers, even for small illness. Poverty and health are interrelated" said Dr. P. Padmanaban, Director of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Government of Tamil Nadu.

In his inaugural address in the National Seminar on Microfinance and Health Intermediation: Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) for reproductive child health organised as part of Madurai Symposium he advised doctors working in PHCs to work closely with the communities and suggested to use waiting times in the hospitals for creating awareness on healthcare and prevention among the public.

He said "this year forecasts show the possibilities for higher incidence of water borne diseases such as typhoid and diarrhea. Chlorination alone is not sufficient to prevent them; widespread awareness is needed for containing such menaces. Still a section of people does not believe dengue and chikunkunya are caused by mosquitoes that can be prevented by eradicating mosquitoes. Communication and education cannot be ensured by only posters and mass media; it needs community participation and involvement to work for prevention"

He further added that about 17.5 percent of urban women and 10 percent of rural women are experiencing gestational diabetes, that can be solved by simple diet advises. Village Health & Sanitation Committees created in each PHCs and Patient Welfare Societies have been empowered to use untied fund provided to them to a tune of Rs. 1.75 lakhs for upgrading infrastructure and equipments themselves.

Ms. Padmavathy, Chief Executive, Kalanjiam Foundation said "Health continues to be a major developmental issue in India. Poor nutrition, lack of sanitation, low vaccination coverage, low awareness on health and hygiene and poor access to quality health services contribute to the continued poor health status of India's population. Women and children are the most vulnerable as far as the health risks are concerned. Next to HIV/AIDS menace, reproductive and child health (RCH) is being given larger thrust by the Indian Government".

She said that the Involvement of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community based Organisations (CBOs) which have got expertise in working closely with the community is quite meager in the RCH interventions so far. Working at the grass roots, continuous capacity building initiatives and creating an enabling environment by NGOs/CBOs are the keys for achieving change in the behavior of the people. When organisations involved in microfinance diversify to health intermediation, there exists a greater scope for successfully accomplishing Behavioural changes in health issues.

Joint Directors of Public Health Department from all over the state, NOG representatives working on health programmes and health care professionals attended the event. They deliberated on appropriate information, education and communication strategy for reproductive and child health care.

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