

Best Practices at MGIMS Sevagram

1. Title of the Practice

Community Mobilization for Health Action

2. Objectives of the Practice

The Department of Community Medicine, MGIMS, Sevagram engages in community mobilization with the following objectives:

- To mobilize and empower community networks (with focus on women) for leadership in health
- To create platform for community dialogue in health
- To catalyze partnership between health and ICDS sector on one hand and Panchayati Raj Institutions, Village Health Nutrition and Sanitation Committees and other Community-based Organizations on the other hand for health gains

3. The Context

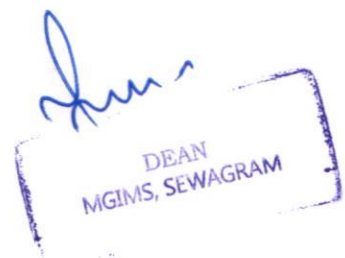
Community Participation is a process by which people are enabled to become actively and genuinely involved in defining the issues of concern to them, in making decisions about factors that affect their lives, in formulating and implementing policies, in planning, developing and delivering services and in taking action to achieve change. It is an active two-way process that may be initiated and sustained both by individuals and community and by local authorities, health authorities and other local organizations.

A high level of community participation is very important for any programme to succeed. Under NRHM, several strategies were included to get a high degree of community participation in health. However, implementation of these strategies has been extremely poor in most of the states of India.

The Department of Community Medicine at MGIMS, Sevagram, is working with community-based organizations in more than 80 villages in Wardha district for almost two decades and has developed a model of community mobilization for health action.

4. The Practice

Over the last two decades, in the field practice area of MGIMS, Sevagram, a strong community network has been developed. The process of development of community network started with community mobilization and formation of community-based



organizations. In an average-sized village a minimum of 3-4 women's self-help groups (SHGs), one 'Kisan Vikas Manch' (KVM - Farmer's Development Association) and one 'Kishori Panchayat' (KP - Adolescent Girls Forum) was constituted. These community-based organizations were oriented on health issues in the rural areas through discussion held during their monthly meetings. Later, Village Co-ordination Committee (VCCs) was constituted in every village by including representatives from each of these community-based organizations, Gram Panchayat, village informal leaders and frontline workers from health and ICDS.

The community-based program operated through the Village Co-ordination Committees (VCCs), thus constituted. These village committees entered into an agreement under this project where the VCC will ensure provision of essential maternal and child health services to the villagers, while MGIMS, Sevagram took responsibility to build capacity of these committees and develop tools and techniques for community-based activities to be done by the committees. With strong and sustained capacity-building in form of regular handholding for more than a year, the VCCs could take charge of community-based activities at village level. In most of the program villages, the VCCs participated in assessment of community health needs, developed village health plan, implemented the activities decided in coordination with other stakeholders, and monitored the community-based health activities in their respective villages. The community networks were especially effective in disseminating health messages in the village and for creating new social norms.

When guidelines for formation of Village Health Nutrition and Sanitation Committees (VHNSC) were issued by Government of Maharashtra under NRHM, we engaged with them and worked to build their capacity. Currently, we are working in more than 80 villages in Wardha. There are total 275 Self Help Groups and 89 Kishori Panchayats functional in the three PHC areas adopted by the department of Community Medicine. We also conduct Kiran clinics (Community owned health clinics) in 26 villages.

5. Evidence of Success

The following table shows the changes observed endline and compares it with baseline level:

Table: Change in MCH indicators from baseline to final estimate after implementation of CLICS (Community-led Initiatives for Child Survival)

Indicators	Baseline Estimate 2004	Final Estimate 2008
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