

District Convergence Planning Committee Meeting,

24 June 2019, Zilla Parishad, Pune

Draft Minutes and Action Points

The second meeting of District Convergence and Planning Committee (DCPC) formed through an MOU establishing a partnership between the Pune Zilla Parishad and the 3D Program for Girls and Women was held on 24th June 2019 in the Mahatama Gandhi Auditorium of the Pune Zilla Parishad. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Prabhakar Gavade, Hon. Acting CEO, Zilla Parishad, Pune. The focus of the meeting was to provide a brief overview of the progress made by the 3D Program, discuss the findings of data collected from girls and women in the Purandar and Khed blocks of Pune district and get DCPC members' inputs on possible convergent actions to address the issues. Members who participated in the meeting are:

- Mr. Prabhakar Gavade, Hon. Acting CEO, Zilla Parishad, Pune and Project Director, DRDO
- Mr. Deepak Chate, Deputy CEO Zilla Parishad, ICDS Pune
- Dr. S. B. Vidhate, District Animal Husbandry Officer, Pune
- Mr. Sunil Kurhale, Education Officer, ZP, Pune
- Dr. Ajit Karanjkar, District Health Officer, Zilla Parishad, Pune
- Mr. Amar Mane, Deputy CEO, Water and Sanitation Department, ZP, Pune
- Mr. Bala Saheb Dhavade Patil, BDO, Khed Block, Pune
- Mr. R. Vhi Lakhe, TPO, Purandar Block, Pune
- Ms. Sonali D. Avachat, DM, MSRLM, District Rural Development Agency
- Dr. Sana Amreen, District Quality Assurance
- Dr. Tanuja Kulkarni, ADHO, Pune
- Ms. Ratnaprabha Potdar, Supervisor, ICDS, Pune
- Mr. J. P. Donde, Extension Officer, Education, Pune
- Mr. S. S. Aauti, Dy. Engineer, Minor Irrigation Department, ZP, Pune
- Mr. S. D. Sonavne, Extension Office, Village Panchayat Department, ZP, Pune
- Dr. Geeta Rao Gupta, Executive Director, 3D Program for Girls and Women
- Sia Nowrojee, Programme Director, 3D Program for Girls and Women
- Vanessa Coello, Programme Coordinator, 3D Program for Girls and Women
- Pranita Achyut, Director Research and Planning, International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), New Delhi
- Amajit Mukherjee, Director of Operations, ICRW, New Delhi
- Shailaja Aralkar, Consultant, 3D Program, ICRW
- Dr. Ramesh Awasthi, Managing Director, MASUM, Pune
- Kajal Jain, MASUM and 3D Program for Girls and Women
- Dr. Anjali Radkar, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune
- Sonal Choudhari, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune

The meeting started with Dr. Geeta Rao Gupta, Executive Director, 3D Program for Girls and Women welcoming the members and providing a brief overview of the 3D Program's findings from data collection conducted with girls and women in Purandar and Khed blocks. The key findings and recommendations presented included:

1) *Institutionalizing village and block convergence mechanisms for planning, integrating girls' and women's feedback and monitoring government schemes and programmes (Purandar and Khed Blocks):*

Dr. Rao Gupta highlighted that it is evident from the data that women in Purandar and Khed feel disconnected from government processes and need a platform to provide feedback to improve government schemes and programmes. For the feedback from women and girls to directly reach block and district authorities, the 3D Program recommended establishing Village and Block level Convergence Committees (VCPCs and BCPCs). These committees could also serve as a way for

front-line government workers to provide block and district-level officials with their feedback on how schemes are working on the ground.

This proposal had already been discussed with and approved by Mr. Suraj Mandhare, former CEO, Zilla Parishad, Pune and Mr. Milind Tonpe, Block Development Officer, Purandar. Two villages in Purandar, Bhivari and Naigaon, were selected to establish and pilot the VCPCs, to test their feasibility and effectiveness. Kajal Jain of MASUM, a 3D Program NGO-partner, described the structure, membership, purpose and functioning of the proposed village and block convergence planning committees and asked for input and approval from DCPC members. She also informed the members that the first BCPC meeting in Purandar was scheduled that afternoon.

Mr. Karanjkar, District Health Officer, Pune suggested that either the ANM from Health Department or Anganwadi worker from the ICDS program should be appointed as secretary of VCPC, responsible for organizing VCPC meetings every two months and maintaining a record of proceedings. With that suggestion, the DCPC approved the structure, membership, purpose and functioning of the BCPC and VCPC committees.

2) Skills development programme:

Dr. Rao Gupta briefed the DCPC members about a pilot initiative on skills development training that the 3D Program has established, in collaboration with MASUM, the CSR partner Tech Mahindra Foundation and SNTD Women's University, Pune, for GST Accounting and Office Assistant jobs for rural girls in Purandar. MASUM mobilized 45 girls from Purandar block to enrol for a two-month residential course, with boarding and lodging facilities at the SNTD Women's University hostel, where the rooms are empty during the summer. Tech Mahindra Foundation covered the cost of the tuition and the 3D Program covered the cost of boarding and lodging and the salary of a job placement officer familiar with openings for suitable jobs in rural towns in Purandar. The purpose of the pilot, Dr. Rao Gupta explained, is to prove that rural girls are interested in and can complete skills training, if proper arrangements are made for their safety and security and if their parents are involved and informed of the benefits of the training. The girls have almost completed the two-month course and have already had placement interviews, which resulted in a few of them being selected for jobs in Pune City.

Dr. Rao Gupta suggested that the DCPC should create similar skills development and job placement opportunities for girls in smaller towns in blocks across Pune, closer to where rural girls live. She asked DCPC members if the ITI department and local colleges in rural towns could be used as venues for such programs. She offered to explore if other corporates who run skills training programmes might be interested to run their programmes in these locations.

DCPC members suggested that the 3D Program should contact the Self Employment Department of Zilla Parishad, Pune rather than the ITI department because the government has recently sanctioned a budget of Rs. 3 crores to the department for skill development programmes. Ms. Sonali Avachat, DM, MSRLM (DRDA) suggested exploring the R-Shetty scheme which runs skill building programmes for young girls in Khed and Purandar blocks.

3) Strengthening the Asmita Yojana:

The lack of high quality, reusable and eco-friendly sanitary napkins for girls and women in Purandar block is another priority issue that was revealed in the 3D Program's data collection. In addition, women in rural areas have no disposal facilities for used disposable sanitary napkins, which poses another barrier for menstrual hygiene management.

To respond to this need, sanitary napkins were made available by government under the Asmita Yojana or scheme of the Rural Development Department for a cost of Rs. 1. Dr. Rao Gupta shared with the DCPC members that the women and girls in Purandar reported that the scheme was not successful because of the poor quality of sanitary napkins and the complicated app-based system for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to enrol in the scheme and obtain a supply of sanitary napkins to sell. Additionally, it was pointed out that the Asmita scheme runs in parallel with another program run by

the Health Department to provide sanitary napkins for Rs. 6 to girls and women through ASHA workers in Pune district.

The duplication in schemes and channelling of resources through two different departments highlighted the need for convergent planning at the state level. Mr. Prabhakar Gavade, Acting CEO, Pune agreed and suggested that the 3D Program should give feedback to state officials regarding the Asmita scheme and the need for quality sanitary napkins, even if at a higher price.

Dr. Rao Gupta agreed to discuss this with state officials in Mumbai and also shared that women were asking for other methods, such as reusable, cloth sanitary napkins that could be tailored and produced by SHGs and sold for a fee. She described an initiative run by Yardi Foundation that provides reusable sanitary pads in urban slums of Pune. This model is currently being monitored and evaluated by Yardi and as soon as the results are available, the 3D Program will share them with the DCPC. Mr. Gavade asked that a sample of the reusable sanitary napkins being provided by Yardi be shared with the Zilla Parishad.

Mr. Amar Mane, Deputy CEO, Water and Sanitation Department, Pune informed members about a scheme of the Water and Sanitation Department, with financial support from the World Bank to purchase incinerators for schools to help with the disposal of sanitary napkins. However, the cost of an incinerator machine is Rs. 15,000 and the World Bank is only willing to provide Rs 7,000 for the purchase of each machine. The Department cannot meet the extra cost and hence cannot implement the scheme. They have informed the state authorities about this but suggested that this issue should also be followed up with state officials.

4) Improving transportation options for girls' secondary education in Pune District:

Dr. Rao Gupta raised the need for improved transportation options for girls who travel long distances for higher secondary education or to attend college. Girls in Purandar and Khed reported the challenges they face while traveling to and from school and college, including concerns about their safety. Dr. Rao Gupta underscored that the lack of a reliable and safe state transportation facility is one of the major barriers to girls' secondary and college education.

Mr. Gavade, Hon. Acting CEO Zilla Parishad, Pune assured DCPC members that he will invite the state official from Maharashtra State Road Transportation Corporation to attend the upcoming Zilla Parishad Standing Committee meeting to discuss this issue and come up with a solution. Mr. Chate, Deputy CEO and head of the Women and Child Department, Zilla Parishad, Pune said that he will also discuss this issue of transportation at the WCD committee meeting.

5) Sharing data across departments in Pune district:

Dr. Rao Gupta informed members that the 3D Program is working in partnership with the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE) to explore ways to institutionalize data sharing across departments within the Zilla Parishad to prevent duplication of efforts and promote the effective utilization of data for planning and monitoring programmes for girls and women.

Dr. Rao Gupta shared the example that ASHA and Anganwadi workers are collecting the same data from the same households but are doing it separately because they report to two separate departments, Health and Women and Child Development, respectively. Though the purpose and utilisation of data varies from department to department, data can be collected from each household just once to benefit multiple schemes and departments in order to conserve existing resources of the Zilla Parishad.

The state of Andhra Pradesh has implemented a model where they identified common indicators across various departments and collected data on those indicators just once for all departments. The 3D Program will learn more about that model to see if there is any way to replicate it in Pune district.

Dr. Anjali Radkar from GIPE presented the information her team had gathered on the collection and use of data across various departments of the Zilla Parishad and shared examples where a convergence of efforts could save costs and effort. Based on her inputs, the 3D Program offered to

initially explore the possibility of data convergence across three departments in the ZP: Health, Education and Women and Child Development. The DCPC agreed to this as the next step.

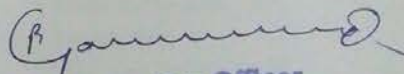
Mr. Deepak Chate, Deputy CEO Zilla Parishad and head of the Women and Child Department of the Zilla Parishad asked all department heads to cooperate with the 3D Program and continue to share data and information with GIPE staff to develop recommendations on data convergence.

Action Points:

- Progress related to VCPC and BCPC will be shared by the 3D Program team at next DCPC meeting.
- The 3D Program team explore opportunities for job skills development programmes for girls at local level and will engage with the DRDA and the Self-Employment Department of Zilla Parishad Pune, and find out more about the R. Shetty scheme.
- The 3D Program will:
 - Share the feedback provided by girls and women in Purandar on the Asmita Yojana with state officials and explore the production and distribution of other menstrual hygiene products such as high quality, eco-friendly and reusable cloth sanitary napkins for girls and women;
 - Provide a sample of the reusable sanitary napkin to Mr. Gavade and the results of the study being conducted by Yardi to the DCPC.
- Mr. Gavade will invite an official from the Maharashtra State Transportation Corporation to the upcoming Zilla Parishad Standing Committee meeting to discuss the issue of reliable and safe bus service for girls to go to secondary school and college.
- Mr. Chate will raise the issue of transportation as a barrier to girls' higher education in the upcoming WCD meeting
- The Health, Education and WCD Departments of the Zilla Parishad will cooperate with the members of GIPE to explore ways to converge data collection and use for indicators of common interest.
- All departments of the Zilla Parishad will cooperate with GIPE in gathering the information they need to develop a model for data convergence for Pune district.
- The 3D Program will share further information about the Andhra Pradesh model for data convergence at the next DCPC meeting to discuss if there are ways to replicate the model in Pune district.

It was decided that the next DCPC meeting will be held in the month of September 2019.

Mr. Chate delivered the vote of thanks.


Chief Executive Officer
Zilla Parishad Pune