

## Newsletter

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# Literacy and Population

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## Empowerment of adolescent girls through 'Sabla'

The Centre on Monday cleared for implementation the Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls — known as 'Sabla' — aimed at enhancing their nutritional and economic status.

The scheme will be run along with the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) project in anganwadi centres in 200 select districts, targeting girls in the age group 11-18. The districts will be selected using a set of indicators and will be a combination in equal proportion of good, moderate, and not-so-well-performing districts.

Adolescent girls will be provided take-home rations. States can also opt for serving cooked meals, the standards of which will have to be set.

Separately, the Women and Child Development Ministry will explore the feasibility of implementing a Conditional Cash Transfer scheme as an alternative in 100 more districts. Cash transfer will be contingent on conditions — to be laid down — being fulfilled. An allocation of Rs.4,500 crore has been made for implementing 'Sabla' during the remaining period of the 11th

Five-Year Plan. For 2010-11, a budget provision of Rs,1,000 crore has been made. In the initial years, 40-50 per cent of the girls accessing the scheme — or 0.92-1.15 crore per annum — are expected to be covered in the 11th Plan. While the scheme will be implemented at the ICDS' anganwadi centres though infrastructure is inadequate there, alternative arrangements will be made in schools, panchayats and community buildings.

The cost of the scheme will be shared equally by the Centre, the States and the Union Territories on provision of nutrition — including 600 calories and 18-20 gm of protein which will cost Rs. 5 a beneficiary per day for 300 days a year for school girls in the age group 11-14 and all others aged 15-18. A provision of Rs.3.8 lakh per ICDS project per annum has been made for various components of the scheme such as purchase of training kits at each anganwadi centre, literature on health, purchase of iron folic tablets, printing of registers, health cards and referral slips, and vocational training under the National Skill Development Programme.

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## Trial shows an AIDS gel can protect women

A trial of women in South Africa shows that a gel made using Gilead Sciences Inc's HIV drug Tenofovir lowered the rate of HIV infections in women by 39 percent over two and a half years.

It is the first trial to show a microbicide might protect women from the deadly and incurable virus, which has killed 25 million people since the AIDS pandemic started in the 1980s and which infects 33 million today. Here are some facts about the trial:

- The trial was run by the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa or CAPRISA at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa.

- It enrolled 889 South African women aged 18 to 40 who were HIV-negative, sexually active, and at high risk of becoming infected

with HIV.

- All were given packets of applicators filled with gel and told to insert one dose up to 12 hours before sex and a second no more than 12 hours afterwards.

- Half the women got placebo gels and half received gels containing a very low dose of Tenofovir, an inexpensive HIV drug.

- At the end of the study 422 women remained in the tenofovir arm and 421 in the placebo arm, a retention rate of 95 percent, which suggests the gel was not unpleasant to use.

- At 30 months, 98 women were infected with HIV — 38 of them had been given tenofovir and 60 were on placebo. This is a 39 percent reduction in HIV incidence for tenofovir.

- At 12 months into the study,

women who got tenofovir were 50 percent less likely to be infected than women who got placebo.

- 54 of the women became pregnant and delivered 31 babies. None had any congenital problems and the miscarriage rate was normal.

- Blood tests showed the tenofovir stayed in the vagina and did not cause effects elsewhere in the body. This suggests side-effects will be low and also suggests that women who become infected with HIV will still be able to take pills without being resistant to their effects.

- In a surprise finding, researchers said the gel also reduced the risk a woman would get genital herpes by 51 percent.

- The main side-effect was slightly more mild diarrhea in the women who got tenofovir.

## Family planning cannot be forced

Discussing the issue of population stabilisation specifically for the first time after 33 years, the Lok Sabha arrived at the consensus that there was no scope of legislative force for family planning and called for tactical use of "incentives and disincentives" to achieve population goals. The discussion was piloted by Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad.

"Members across party lines today reminded about (Sanjay Gandhi's family planning exercise)

Emergency years. That was a different era when the Congress was in power on its own in the Centre and in most of the states barring a few. I believe that it (population stabilisation) cannot be achieved through legal force. There are 14 states from all parts of the country which have demonstrated that population can be stabilised without any legal force or coercion," Azad said. Azad singled out UP, Bihar, MP, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and

Chhattisgarh as areas of "serious concern" as the total fertility rate (TFR) in these states stood at 3.8 per family. This was in contrast to the 14 states that have managed to achieve a TFR of 2.1 (required for population stabilisation) by 2010 as envisaged in the Population Policy 2000 during NDA regime. He said early marriage was one of the worst social customs contributing to population boom.

# Panchayats on gender issues to be sensitise

A United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)-supported programme on “Strengthening gender response of panchayats in Rajasthan” was launched in Jaipur with a call to panchayat bodies to optimally utilise their mandates and institutional resources to address the issues of maternal health and sex selection.

Gender experts, academicians, demographers and development practitioners attending the inaugural function at the State Institute of Health and Family Welfare said the socio-cultural and economic barriers “undervaluing women” should be removed to prevent female foeticide and check the declining sex ratio in population.

The three-year-long project, to be implemented in 1,000 village panchayats of 21 districts across the State, aims at making the elected representatives of Panchayati Raj institutions sensitive to the gender issues with the intervention of civil society organisations. UNFPA's partner for executing the programme is

the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA).

Noted economist and Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council Member Prof. V. S. Vyas, inaugurating the project, said all indicators had suggested that the healthcare situation was deteriorating in the State, resulting in an increase in the maternal and infant mortality ratios and a decline in the sex ratio.

“It seems we have not been able to take people along in the health sector, even though it is the most important among the four subjects on which a roadmap is being prepared for devolving the powers on panchayats by this year-end,” said Prof. Vyas.

S. C. Mathur, Executive Director, State Health System Resource Centre, National Rural Health Mission, said the declining sex ratio and sex-selective abortions were a reflection of the “feudal atmosphere and patriarchal practices” prevailing in the State, even though a large number of women were elected as Sarpanches and ward members in the panchayat elections held earlier this year. Ashok Bapna,

chairperson, State Planning Board's working group of health, said convergence of services at the grassroots would help improve the conditions to some extent. Alwar-based activist Virendra Vidrohi said proper advocacy, such as preparation of status papers on women, could bring the gender issues to the mainstream of planning and public consciousness.

The project, divided into two phases, expects to sensitise and bring about orientation of panchayats by September 2011 with the dissemination of knowledge packs and tools addressing sex selection. The second phase will be operative from October 2011 to March 2013.

PRIA State coordinator Krishan Tyagi said this would be the second major partnership of UNFPA with the voluntary group working for promotion of democratic governance at the grassroots to set the agenda of gender at the panchayat level. The U.N. body had earlier supported a pre-election voters' awareness campaign during the last round of panchayat elections in the State.

## Make a difference

*Lives of hundreds of thousands of women can be saved if proper medical care reaches them in time, says Nanda Das, after attending the multimedia launch of Stories of Mothers Saved by White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood*

When Ritu started bleeding on the morning of August 18, 2008, she went to a private hospital where she was told she would be able to deliver without complications in a few days time. But two days later, Ritu's pain and bleeding got worse and she was taken to another doctor. The latter said Ritu had lost a lot of blood and the family must find donors as there was no blood bank available. This was difficult due to the monsoon season and lack of transport but Ritu's mother succeeded in finding some local youth who agreed to donate blood. Meanwhile, the doctor recommended a Cesarean Section to save the lives of Ritu and her baby. That night, her baby girl was delivered, but by morning, Ritu's whole body was swollen and the baby was shivering. After receiving the blood transfusion, Ritu had to remain in hospital for 12 days. Ritu now says she is grateful that her family knew the dangers of bleeding and made sure she had a Cesarean Section and access to blood donors. Their swift action saved her life and that of her baby. In a country where women have broken the glass ceiling (we have a woman

President, Speaker, innumerable business tycoons), 70,000 maternal deaths occur every year which means one every eight minutes. These women who die every year are in the prime of their life and the biggest injustice is that 70-80 per cent of these deaths are preventable. But things can be different.

The White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood India (WRA India) launched *Stories of Mothers Saved*, a multimedia campaign supported by UNFPA. This campaign showcases stories of women who did not die needlessly in pregnancy or childbirth. They provide proof that change can happen through small but significant efforts. The *Stories of Mothers Saved* had its global launch during the Women Deliver conference in Washington DC earlier this year. Stories have been collected by WRA members in 60 communities across 30 countries. Each one is a powerful and moving tale of a woman who survived childbirth, due to a key action taken by the woman, her family, the community, a health worker, a political leader or others. Many stories from various

communities in India formed a part of this global campaign.

Sarah Zeid, princess of Jordan and a champion for Safe Motherhood, WRA, said she was proud to launch the Indian *Stories of Mothers Saved* and that the right to be alive and healthy is one that every woman across the globe is entitled to. "We can and must make every effort to see that this becomes a reality." Clad in a black tunic and hands clutching full of sheets, she said, "This is my first visit to India and I have learnt a few Hindi words to connect with the masses. I have done lots of research on the causes that have led to such a high mortality rate of to-be mothers in India." Zeid added it was a conscious effort to join this campaign as she survived post-natal complications around few months back. Dr Aprajita Gogoi, national coordinator, White Ribbon Alliance of India, said, "Around 70,000 women die due to pregnancy related causes every year in India. These stories move out of gloom and spread hope. One small act can make a difference between life and death and the stories of these women prove this."

# The use of mobile phones in education in developing countries

**The World Bank is embarking on a new study investigating issues related to the use of mobile phones in education in developing countries**

The study is intended to help to raise awareness among key decision makers in the public, private and civil society sectors about the potential importance of the use of low cost mobile devices — especially mobile phones — to help benefit a variety of educational objectives. By documenting the existing landscape of initiatives in this area and emerging ‘good practice’, it is also hoped that this work will serve as a common base for further analytical work in this area, and inform the impending explosion of development of new hardware, software and business services occurring on mobile devices, to the benefit of these educational objectives.

This activity is one component of a larger ‘mobile flagship’ program at the World Bank consisting of studies and activities related to mobile services and applications in selected sectors, including “Mobile Banking Users and Non Users Behavior Study”; “Extending Mobile Applications in Africa through Social Networking”; and “Mobile Applications for Sectoral Development”.

## **Activity Description**

Drawing on examples of the use of mobile phones and related handheld technologies for educational purposes in advanced economies like Korea, Japan, the U.K., the United States and Finland, and an emerging evidence base of pilot projects from countries as diverse as Tanzania, Kenya, the Philippines, Mongolia, China and South Africa, this study proposes to:

1. Map the existing universe of projects and initiatives exploring the use of mobile phones in education in developing countries.

2. Map the existing and potential uses of mobile phones in this regard, comparing and contrasting such uses with other ICT devices..

3. Document lessons learned so far from key initiatives in this area, proposing tentative guidance for policymakers and various stakeholder groups in this fast moving area.

4. Propose a conceptual framework and way forward for further analytical work to aid in the documentation and rigorous impact cost and impact assessment of the use of mobile phones in education.

While ‘education’ is the focus here, the area of inquiry is not be limited to the formal education sector itself. Lifelong learning and educational outreach activities utilizing the mobile phone to benefit the health and agricultural sectors will also fall within the scope of this study. This work will draw heavily on organizations and expertise active in these areas on-the-ground.

The results of this study will be disseminated and discussed at a landmark global event on mobile applications sponsored by the World Bank as part of the ‘mobile flagship’ initiative, involving sets of key stakeholders from the public, private and civil society sectors.

## **Background and Context**

It is more likely that the ICT tool of choice for students in developing countries will be the mobile phone, and not the computer?

This is a question of hot debate in many circles. Whatever the eventual resolution of this debate (and no doubt it will not yield a simple either/or answer), there are still precious few widespread examples of the use of phones for education purposes inside or outside of classrooms in developing countries that have

been well documented, and fewer still that have been evaluated with any sort of rigor.

28% of Africans now have a mobile phone subscription, according to data released by the ITU earlier this year, part of a larger trend that sees two out of every three mobile subscribers around the world living in a developing country. The flagship ITU publication Measuring the Information Society notes that two-thirds of the world's cell phone subscriptions are in developing nations, with Africa, which has a 2% subscriber rate as recently as 2000, growing the fastest. And it is not only adults who are making use of this new technology. Recent survey work at a low-income high school in South Africa's Samora Machel township (for example) suggests that mobile penetration among youth in some places might be higher than one might suspect.

While the explosive use of mobile phones in developing countries is well-documented — and undeniable — and evidence is emerging that phones are slowly making their way into the hands of teens, just what this might mean for the delivery of education in developing countries is a little less clear.

Five years ago infoDev commissioned work to map out what was known about the nascent topic of 'mobile banking', and the resulting study, the first of its kind, helped frame the issues for donor agencies,

governments, NGOs and private sector firms alike. 'M-banking' has exploded since then, and this study proposes to do for the use of mobile phones in education what the earlier infoDev study did for the use of mobile phones in the financial services sector. We are at a similar point now with where we were with m-banking five years ago, and this study will provide guidance for World Bank technical assistance and investment activities related to the much-hyped potential for the use of mobile phones in education. There is an opportunity here to contribute to the global knowledgebase in the very early stages of what is poised to become a potentially massive area of investment by ministries of education, civil society and (especially) the private sector in the decade to come.

Nascent efforts are underway to explore various aspects of the emerging phenomenon of the use of mobile phones in education, but no institution has stepped forward to help catalyze global collaboration and cooperation around research directions and agenda setting in this area. This work will tap the expertise and convening power of a number of key partner organizations and experts active in this area.

This work, expected to run through December 2010, is being funded by the Korean ICT Trust Fund at the World Bank.

## जन्म दर गिरावट में हैं पंजाब और बंगाल आगे

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## New course in gender studies

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University, Delhi, has launched an M.A. course in gender studies. The M.A. programme is unique in its three-tier conception which provides for an inter-disciplinary approach to gender studies.

In the first tier, students enrolled in the programme have to complete three core inter-disciplinary courses that involve psychological, anthropological, philosophical and political aspects. In the second tier, the students will complete 12 compulsory courses. These courses will familiarise them with the tools required for analysis of gender. Indian and South Asian

contexts will be central to the discussions.

The third tier will provide students scope for specialisation in areas of their preference. Students will also be undertaking research, completing a project and doing field work.

The programme will be of two-year duration but will offer an exit option with a diploma after one year. The team involved in designing the programme included faculty and researchers from the Centre for Women's Development Studies, the Indira Gandhi National Open University, the Institute of Economic Growth, the Nehru Memorial Museum and

Library, several Delhi University colleges as well as a number of independent scholars and activists.

Delhi Technological University organised an orientation session for its newly admitted students in B. Tech. and M. Tech. courses earlier this week.

Students were briefed on the new syllabus which has been developed in consultations with several experts and universities. The first-timers were also informed that they would have to maintain a minimum of 75 per cent attendance in each semester to be eligible to appear in the examinations.

## World conference on early childhood care and education

*The first-ever World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (WCECCE) is being organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the City of Moscow and the Russian Federation from 27 to 29 September 2010.*

The Conference theme highlights Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) as a right and a public good. Every young

child deserves a good start: a healthy environment, clean water, adequate nutrition, care, development and education. ECCE is also the first and foundational step in building the wealth of nations.

The objectives of the WCECCE are to strengthen political commitment to early childhood care and education and map a course of action that

will reinforce international education and development agendas, in particular Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Some 1000 participants – ministers, experts, representatives of civil society organizations, representatives from private sector and practitioners – are expected to attend this event.

Bhandare, Murlidhar C. ed. **Struggle for Gender Justice: Justice Sunanda Bhandare Memorial Lectures.** Penguin Books. 2010. 288p.

Struggle for Gender Justice comprises fifteen lectures delivered by eminent persons in memory of Justice Sunanda Bhandare besides a lecture delivered by her in 1991.

A judge of the Delhi High Court in the 1980s and 1990s, Justice Bhandare sought to remove the many prejudices and biases against women, and worked towards promoting their freedom of choice and the right to excel without fear or favour.

This volume illuminates various aspects of the predicament of women in today's world and explores ways in which they could be empowered. These lectures vividly highlight the sufferings women have

undergone and the injustice meted out to them. Instances of civil society's successes and failures in ensuring women a life of dignity have been offered in an attempt to project a roadmap to future generations.

Rao, V.K. **Vocational Education.** New Delhi, A.P.H. 2010, 400p.



This book has been divided into eight chapters which cover the following topics: Enterprise Learning, Vocational System, Vocational Training, Work Based Learning, Social Awakening, Contemporary Scenario and

Education and Training Programmes.

This book provides information about the crucial problems and challenges in the field of education. It examines the educational process of all levels.

Selvam, S.K. Panneer ed. **Personality Development.** New Delhi, A.P.H. 2010, 148p.

A lot of creativity and innovation are needed to face the challenges of modern times. A deep insight into the nature of the creative faculty and techniques to foster creativity are reflected in this book. Teacher's positive attitudes and their concern for quality are pivotal to the success of the educational enterprise and this book provides information about research done in this field. Research studies such as efficacy of innovative approaches like ABL and ALM are explained.

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