

## FOGSI announces national program to improve women and maternal health in India

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With the aim of helping India achieve the Millennium Development Goal on reducing maternal mortality rate by 2015, The Federation of Obstetric & Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI), the apex body for all Obstetricians & Gynaecologists in the country has launched the theme for the year 2014 "Empower Women Empower India - Pledge for Excellence". In this they are looking at "Women Empowerment through the lens of Health awareness, access and affordability". FOGSI in partnership with the Government of India, NGOS and educational grants from corporates will roll-out a host of initiatives covering various stakeholders in urban and rural areas across India to address women and maternal health issues.

To mark the onset of the program, Dr. Suchitra N. Pandit, president, FOGSI felicitated women achievers from different walks of life who have contributed towards the society and made a mark for themselves. Some of the key achievers were Ms. Neeti Mohan, singer, Mrs. Jyoti Tanna, founder Each one Teach One, Ms. Suhita Thatte ,Actor, Dr. Armida Fernandez, social paediatrics & founder trustee - Sneha, Mrs. Vandana Krishna director general, RJMC Health and Nutrition Mission, Government of Maharashtra and so on.

Announcing the theme, Dr. Pandit said, "Maternal mortality is one of the basic health indicators of a society. It is a benchmark of humanity. Although MMR is showing a reducing trend yet we have a long way to go. FOGSI will work in collaboration with the Government of India and various stakeholders and reach out to the interiors of India including the tribal areas where there is an unmet need for contraception, comprehensive abortion care, adolescent reproductive health, mother and child care and menopausal health."

"We will be also addressing issues related to female sexual health and formulate strategies to reduce the burden of Cervical Cancer in India. FOGSI will continue to play a major role in implementing policies in various aspects of maternal and child health and will collaborate and partner as far as knowledge sharing is concerned", she further added.

The initiatives that will drive the theme "Empower Women, Empower India - Pledge for Excellence" this year are:

- Sensitization program for women, husbands and mothers-in-law in rural areas on pre-natal healthcare, reproductive health, avoidance of discrimination and violence, issues of sexuality, understanding of joint responsibilities etc.

- FOGSI Youth Mela for empowering the future generation of India by creating awareness on staying fit and healthy, importance of contraception, prevention of HIV/sexually transmitted infections and cervical cancer by vaccination, self-defence and first aid

- Advocacy and education program for doctors on skills upgradation and knowledge and focused workshops for training and capacity building of maternity care providers

- FOGSI anti-obesity drive for creating awareness regarding lifestyle changes, healthy diet, exercise and pharmacotherapy when required

- FOGSI Medical college initiative for promoting awareness and prevention of Cervical Cancer and promoting reproductive health

"Women in India continue to die due to hemorrhage at child birth, low awareness and lack of access to suitable health infrastructure and resources", says Dr. Nozer Sheriar, secretary general, FOGSI. The state of India's healthcare is at a very critical stage which relies on private medical care without the availability of public health services. Also, the patients and their families lack adequate healthcare knowledge which adds to the problem. Considering this, we have tailored our initiatives to address these huge problems. Currently maternity and newborn package is not covered by most existing insurance companies and this year FOGSI will attempt to facilitate medical insurance for pregnancy coverage."