

Lady Irwin College and Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India Sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for establishing Roshni - Centre of Women Collectives led Social Action

On 16th October 2018, Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India and Lady Irwin College, New Delhi have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for establishing Roshni - Centre of Women Collectives led Social Action. Roshni will work with women collectives on layering Food, Nutrition, Health and WASH (FNHW) interventions on community platforms created by DAY-NRLM. Roshni is technically and financially supported by UNICEF and will collaborate with UNICEF's ongoing initiatives with similar vision.

The MoU was signed by Joint Secretary, Ms Leena Johri, MoRD, and Dr. Anupa Siddhu, Director, Lady Irwin College. The signing ceremony was attended, amongst others, by Shri Alok Kumar, Advisor, Niti Ayog, Ms. Leena Johri, Joint Secretary, MoRD and Ms Nita Kejrewal, Joint Secretary, MoRD, Ms Rita Menon, Chairperson, Governing Board, Lady Irwin College, Mr. Arjan de Wagt, Deputy Representative UNICEF and Dr Vani Sethi, Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF India.



Speaking on this occasion Ms Leena Johri, Joint Secretary, MoRD hailed the strategic partnership as a bridge between knowledge and social action for health, nutrition and WASH for addressing maternal and child undernutrition. Advising on the role of NRLM Dashasutra strategy to strengthen women collectives, she said the partnership would help in addressing undernutrition through convergent action as envisaged under POSHAN Abhiyaan. Dr Siddhu, Director Lady Irwin College alluded to the targets set out by POSHAN Abhiyaan to reduce the proportion of Indian children born with low birth weight, stunting and under-nutrition by 2 percent points per annum and anaemia among children, adolescent girls and women by 3 percent points per annum. While achieving this ambitious target, will require accelerating coverage and quality of proven maternal nutrition before and during pregnancy, overall, as Indian women enter pregnancies too early as adolescents (8%, ~4.5 million) and with poor nutrition status, too thin (23%) or with anaemia (58%), however, such districts will need added attention and support (Add data source here). Mr. Arjan de Wagt (Deputy Representative, UNICEF) emphasized on building centres of excellence for research, technical assistance and advocacy on key issues impacting undernutrition in academic institutes which have decades of experience in steering policy planning and public opinion through movements like Jan

Andolan. Ms Nita Kejrewal spoke on the NRLM's vision for women collectives for social action in capitalising these platforms for transformative change. Mr Alok Kumar, Advisor, NitiAyog highlighted the role that the Centre of excellence can play to achieve desired impact and scale through innovations and knowledge creation to meet the targets of POSHAN Abhiyaan.

MOU Terms and Highlights

The Centre will be the technical and capacity building wing for scaling up initiatives like Swabhimaan in alignment with NRLM *Dashasutra* strategy and supporting the four pillars of the convergent action plan of Jan Andolan- POSHAN Abhiyan –

- (1) Convergence through Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Days (VHSND) – a monthly fixed day for door step delivery of a comprehensive package of basic health nutrition and WASH services,
 - (2) Convergence for behaviour change communication to promote optimal nutrition
 - (3) Convergence through common use of infrastructure at district, block and village levels
- and
- (4) Promoting nutri-based livelihoods for women's collectives

Links to press coverage

- <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=184224>
- <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/delhi/rural-development-ministry-inks-mou-with-lady-irwin-college/669370.html>
- <https://www.jagranjosh.com/current-affairs/lady-irwin-college-ministry-of-rural-development-sign-mou-for-establishing-roshni-1539774025-1>
- <http://banktoday.in/2018/10/17/lady-irwin-college-ministry-of-rural-development-sign-mou-for-establishing-roshni/>
- <https://dailynewstelecast.in/lady-irwin-college-ministry-of-rural-development-sign-mou-for-establishing-roshni/>
- <http://www.etenias.com/daily-current-affairs-2017/october-17-2018.html>
- <http://www.thefastmail.com/page/detailnews/mou-signed-between-lady-irwin-college-mord-for-roshni/69618>
- <https://www.manglatimes.com/mou-signed-between-lady-irwin-college-mord-for-roshni/>
- <http://iasipstnpsc.in/deendayal-antyodaya-yojana-national-rural-livelihood-mission-day-nrlm/>
- <https://www.talentsprint.com/blog/2018/10/current-affairs-october-18-2018.html>

About ROSHNI - Centre of Women Collectives Led Social Action

Roshni –Centre of Women Collectives Lead Social Action is established in 2018 as a technical support unit at national level for NRLM., embedded in the Department of Development Communication and Extension, Lady Irwin College, New Delhi as an autonomous government body under Lady Irwin College Society. The department was established in 1964 as Rural Extension under aegis of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, GoI, which was restructured and renamed as Development Communication and Extension in 2007.

Roshni works with women collectives for social action on Food, Health, Nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (FNHW). The centre has been setup to serve as a technical and capacity building wing for scale-up of FNHW initiatives in alignment with DAY-NRLM *Dashasutra* strategy and supporting the four pillars of convergent action plan of Jan Andolan under POSHAN Abhiyaan, i.e. convergence through VHSND, convergence through behaviour change communication, convergence through common use of infrastructure and promotion of nutri-based livelihoods for women collectives.

To achieve the vision, the Centre would work to create a knowledge repository of resources like training modules, job-aids, IEC BCC tools and monitoring mechanisms on women collectives led social actions for public domain and at the same time test and develop IEC and social behaviour change communication tools and training videos. The Centre aims to provide training and capacity building anchorage support to scale-up interventions across States along with participatory evaluations and community audits. The Centre also aims to document best practices with scalability and stories of transformative change through social development initiatives led by women collectives and also undertake evidence-based policy advocacy on high impact implementation strategies capitalising the social platforms.

The Centre would function as a platform to exchange knowledge and learnings through seminars, study circles and learning exchange visits on women collectives led initiatives in India and South Asia including partnering with media and communication academia.