

REVITALIZATION OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN KERALA – A JOURNEY THROUGH ‘AARDRAM MISSION’

Mrs. Anjali Krishnan R, State Health Systems Resource Centre Kerala

Dr. Rekha Ravindran, State Health Systems Resource Centre Kerala

Background and Objectives: Kerala state is well known nationally and internationally for its better health indicators and low-cost model of care. But the state faces substantial burden of non-communicable and communicable diseases tote up with unregulated privatization and catastrophic health expenditure. In the backdrop of Sustainable Development Goals the state decided to strengthen public health care system with special focus on primary health care services through a utilitarian mission called “Aardram”. This paper would provide an overview about the transformation happened in primary health care through Aardram Mission. **Methods:** The study was done based on WHO’s operational framework for primary health care. We used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Twenty in-depth interviews were conducted. The secondary data analysis was also done to understand the utilization pattern. The information obtained were recorded, transcribed and analysed deductively. Meta-themes were developed and n organized into overarching themes. **Results:** The results can be summarized into five overarching themes (See Table 1). (i) Process of implementation, ii) Operationalization of mission, iii) Paradigm shifts in primary health care, iv) Benefitted during pandemic, v) Way to universal health care. The mission brought a new notion of ‘Comprehensive People-friendly Services’ to all families instead of individuals. The existing Primary Health Centres were remodelled into Family Health Centres with people friendly infrastructure, expanded human resources, outreach services, speciality services, digital platform, uninterrupted supply of medicines and active participation of community health care volunteers. With the advent of mission, the utilization of primary health care services get improved. The revampment of primary health care centres helped the state in combating COVID 19 by integrating the preventive activities with the existing system. **Conclusion:** The mission is unique with its principles of comprehensiveness, equity, rationality, financial security and community participation. Therefore this mission can be considered as a primary health care model for other countries to achieve universal health coverage.