Aims: To demonstrate an acceptable and effective programme to improve reproductive, maternal and neonatal health for indigenous population of teagardens in Bangladesh.

Key strategies:
- strengthen reproductive, maternal and neonatal health service delivery in participation of Government of Bangladesh, Tea authority and garden communities.
- working through capacity development, knowledge and awareness building and service delivery in an integrated approach for improving reproductive and adolescent health situation in the teagardens.

Although Moulvibazar district ahead in many national level parameter but we are very much far behind to ensure maternal health care especially at teagardens. Government initiative with the support of UNFPA, Bangladesh and CIPRB will be effective to improve overall health status of reproductive age groups, mothers and adolescents. Our office will provide all support in this initiative” - Honorable DC, Moulvibazar district mentioned

Moulvibazar district planned to ensure continuum of care for the mothers at teagardens by launching “Bagan Mayer Jonno” Intervention

29 February 2016: A strategic meeting on reproductive, adolescent health care services in teagardens organized at the Deputy Commissioner’s conference hall, Moulvibazar. The meeting was chaired by the DC, Moulvibazar. Stakeholders at different level associated with teagardens were the key participants included managers of teagardens, Bangladesh Tea Board, Labour Association, Garden Panchayat (Sarder), Union Chairman and medical Doctors from the gardens. Upazila Nirbahi Officers, upazila chairmen, health managers from the upazilas also participated. The Civil Surgeon was the special guest of the programme. Meeting identified health needs for the mothers and adolescent in the gardens. Garden authorities mentioned about the scarcity of health care services for the mothers. Condition can be improved if initiatives taken for this particular group. Upazila managers also surfaced needs for quality of health care delivery at the teagardens. The Civil Surgeon of the district shared that though this Intervention special groups will be addressed, every pregnant mothers will be tracked and care will be given, that certainly reduce maternal and newborn mortality in this marginalized group. The Tea Board and garden authorities appreciated and welcome the intervention and committed to provide their best support for implementation. The Meeting come to decision to launch ‘Bagan Mayer Jonno’ Intervention in five teagardens at initial phase with an aim of ensuring continuum of care for the mothers and adolescent in the gardens.

“Majority of the maternal and newborn deaths are occurring in the teagarden catchment areas in Moulvibazar. Our health and family planning department jointly reported 47 maternal deaths at teagarden catchment areas in 2014 which was 39.1% of total maternal deaths in the district. That’s why this teagarden intervention ‘Bagan Mayer Jonno’ is extremely essential for the survival of mother and newborn of this marginalized community” – The Civil Surgeon of Moulvibazar stated.
Stakeholders at the teagardens developed plans to implement Began Mayer Jonno Intervention in five selected teagardens

Five planning meetings were held in five selected teagardens with the local level stakeholders at the gardens. A total of 76 participants including managers, doctors, birth attendants, panchayat members, union parisad members of respective teagardens were participated. Participants shared their views and proposed ways to implement health services in the gardens. The managers in the gardens assured their best support in implementation of the intervention. Whereas, the panchayat and union parisad members shown their commitment of participation in different events including build awareness, encourage mothers to seek quality care, safe delivery and improvement adolescent and reproductive health in the community.

"Mothers in teagardens can't identify their problems during pregnancy in majority cases. A pregnant garden worker work until last month of pregnancy. Early marriage & violence against women is common here. We have to address those issues together through this intervention" - Union Parisad member in Mirtinga teagarden described.

A baseline survey on health status of teagardens community in Sylhet division was performed

The baseline survey in teagarden was conducted to understand the maternal and neonatal health situation including socio-economic context in all teagardens of Moulvibazar, Habiganj and Sylhet districts. In-depth information on adolescent health, reproductive health including data on gender based violence also collected from selected 25 teagardens in Moulvibazar district. A household level survey was performed by interviewing mothers having a child under one year and with the adolescent girls.

In addition in depth qualitative information was also collected from the health care providers at the facilities in selected five teagardens as well as from the same community people to understand available health care services in the teagardens.

Primary results from 166 gardens in Sylhet division shown that about 0.5 million people live in teagarden catchment areas. In 2015, government health system reported 70 maternal deaths, 216 neonatal deaths and another 205 stillbirths from garden community. In-depth information of 25 selected teagardens in Moulvibazar district revealed that 56% of the mothers had lack of knowledge on antenatal care, 42.5% of the interviewed women did not receive any antenatal care during last pregnancy. About 77% of the delivery occurred at home. Among the adolescent girls, 56.2% adolescent had knowledge on early marriage and 29.7% had ideas on family Planning issues.
The intervention is empowering women in the teagardens

Twenty five Bagan Sebikas (Volunteers) were selected though a local recruitment process in five teagardens. As per suggestions from the district planning meeting, the garden authority selected Bagan Sebika from their own community based on the section criteria. Priority was given to the candidates who had experiences to work earlier as volunteer in the same community. The teagarden managers, garden panchayt and union parishad members of the union in presence of CIPRB personnel jointly recruited the candidates.

A two days orientation training was provided for the selected Bagan Sebika at Sreemangal. The key objectives of the training was to orient the Sebika on the teagarden project objectives, sharing information on maternal and newborn care, maternal & neonatal complication, sharing their role in the project and reporting system. The Bagan Sebikas were shown their high commitment to work for their own community though this intervention.
Field level government health staff has been oriented on the Intervention

31 March, 2016, Sreemangal: An orientation Meeting with government health care providers of Sreemangal and Kamalganj districts was organized in Sreemangal upazila health complex. Field level health staffs including health assistants, family welfare assistants, health inspectors, assistant health inspectors and family planning inspectors working in the project teagarden catchment areas were participated. Statisticians and health inspector in charge also participated in the orientation briefing. The meeting briefly discussed on the project implementation framework and role of health workers to support for improvement of quality health care services in the teagarden community. The field level health workers shown their commitment to participate in different health initiatives including awareness meetings, health camps, death reviews and stakeholders meetings at teagardens.

UH&FPO, Kamalgonj mentioned “maternal & neonatal death is higher in teagardens. This Intervention provide us the opportunity to utilize our knowledge and skills for reducing maternal & neonatal deaths, ensuring quality ANC, safe delivery, PNC and neonatal care at teagarden areas. It needs to establish emergency referral system for the high risk mothers in teagarden.”

Planning meeting with UNFPA

Prof. MA Halim, Director, RCH unit of CIPRB shared the intervention framework and implementation plan with Dr. Sathyanarayan Doraiswamy, Chief-Health and Dr. Sanchoy Chanda, Senior Technical Officer of UNFPA. Prof. MA Halim described the role of Bagan Sebika in supporting the health care services for the garden community. He also described the role of government health staff and teagarden health staff to work under effective coordination and co-operation to deliver services though this intervention.

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