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Patna, 6 May: Delivering the Inaugural Address at the National Consultation on “Child Budgets and Programs in Bihar: Current Practice and Future Directions”, organised by ADRI, UNICEF and the Government of Bihar today, **Dr. Rathin Roy**, Director, NIPFP, New Delhi held out that there is a need for mainstreaming child budgeting in our society and financing for children should take the automatic route. Bihar’s performance is excellent as it spends at the golden mean of 66 percent while it is investing for the future. Citing the example of Bangladesh, he said that focusing on the delivery of public services is very important. **Dr. S. Siddharth** (IAS), Principal Secretary, Department of Finance, Government of Bihar, stressed that a slippage in the parameters of child development is nearly impossible to recover and must not be allowed to occur at any cost. He said the Government of Bihar will have a separate budget for children from October or December. **Mr. Asadur Rahman**, Chief, UNICEF, Bihar hoped that the partnership between ADRI, UNICEF and the Government of Bihar would be effective in improving the condition of children in Bihar. **Prof. Prabhat P Ghosh**, Director, ADRI, gave the Welcome Address.

During the Technical Session-1 on “**Child Budgets in Bihar**”, **Ms. Sumita Dawra**, Programme Specialist (Governance), UNICEF, New Delhi was of the opinion that cognitive capital formation is essential for improving the productive capacity of children. Presently, the focus is mostly on the educational outcome. In order to improve cognitive capital formation, the early stages of pregnancy require increased attention. She also concluded that spending on children in the early ages, i.e. 0-6 years, is lowest while it is the highest during 6-14 years, the years of primary education. Though Bihar has witnessed an increase in spending on children during the last 7 years, yet the improvement is inadequate. Hence, it is important to address the adequacy of allocation and expenditure of child budget. Moreover, the need to understand a basic minimum threshold is essential for efficiency of child budgeting. **Dr. Barna Ganguli**, Assistant Professor, CEPPF, ADRI also presented her views on child budget in Bihar. **Dr. H.K. Amarnath**, Associate Professor, NIPFP, New Delhi was the commentator of this session. **Mr. A K Chauhan**, State Election Commissioner, Bihar chaired the session.

During the Technical Session-2 on “**Social Protection Programmes for Children in Bihar**”, **Ms. Shailey Tucker**, Project Consultant, ADRI gave the only presentation of the session. She said Bihar has around 48 per cent young population (0-18 years). Total 153 social protection programmes have been evaluated which includes 59 states and 94 centrally



sponsored schemes. All these schemes were categorised into four major domains – survival, health and nutrition, educational development, protection and participation. Findings suggest that we need to bridge the gap of targeting the coverage, convergence and accountability, budget constraints, lack of transparency and state capacity. **Dr. Nilachala Acharya**, Research Coordinator, CBGA, New Delhi and **Mr. Anindo Banerjee**, Director, Programme Initiatives, PRAXIS, Patna were the commentators of this session. **Prof. Prabhat P Ghosh** chaired the session.

In the Panel Discussion on “**Enhancing Public Service Delivery for Children**”, moderated by **Dr. Urvashi Kaushik**, Social Policy Specialist with UNICEF, **Ms. Avani Kapur**, Director of Accountability Initiative of Centre for Policy Research, **Dr. Madhusudan Rao**, Research Advisor with CBPS Bengaluru, **Ms. Nisha Jha**, Former Chairperson of Bihar Child Rights Protection Committee, and **Mr. Rafay Hussain**, Regional Head with Save the Children, Bihar shared their ideas. **Mr. Gopal Meena**, Labour Commissioner, Bihar chaired the panel discussion.

Mr. Asadur Rahman, Chief, UNICEF Bihar, gave the Valedictory Address. The Valedictory Session was chaired by **Mr. A.K. Chauhan**, State Election Commissioner, Bihar. **Prof. Prabhat P Ghosh** gave the Vote of Thanks on the occasion.

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