

For Favour of Publication

Patna, November 3. A workshop titled “Strengthening Disease Surveillance and Epidemic Preparedness in Bihar” was jointly organized by the Centre for Health Policy at the Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI), Patna along with State Health Society, Bihar (SHSB). Speaking on this occasion, Shree Pratyaya Amrit, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Health emphasized that a robust Integrated Disease Surveillance Program (IDSP) will be the fulcrum around which the resolution of all health issues will revolve in the future. He highlighted the lack of human resources as a major hurdle that Bihar’s health services face. 10-11 districts do not even have epidemiologists. He said this gap is going to be addressed by his department. The posting policy of ANMs also needs to be reviewed so that its workers are assigned to places where they feel comfortable. Pointing out the state’s achievements, he remarked that the Chief Minister’s digital health scheme was the first of its kind in the country.

Professor Prabhat P. Ghosh, Member Secretary, ADRI delivered the Welcome Address, where he announced that CHP-ADRI had done a study to examine how the IDSP system was working in Bihar. The aim of this workshop was to disseminate the findings of this research work. Also, academicians tend to forget about their research findings once they have published it. This workshop will address this shortcoming and ensure that findings are used properly by the government departments.

Shree Keshvendra Kumar, Additional Executive Director, SHSB said that it will be easier to control outbreaks of any communicable disease once the geographic location of cases gets reported real-time on the IHIP portal. Dr. Ranjeet Kumar, State Surveillance Officer, SHSB held out that the disease surveillance system in the country has become very sophisticated after being initiated during the British Raj. Dr. Paresh Kantharia, Regional Team Lead, WHO (Bihar) lauded the state of Bihar for excelling in surveillance of diseases like Measles. He said that real-time data entry is very important for surveillance. Dr. S. S. Reddy, Health Specialist, UNICEF praised Bihar for being one of the more successful states in containing Covid.

Earlier, a book entitled IDSP in Bihar was released on the occasion by Shree Pratyaya Amrit. The five best-performing districts of the state– Purnea, Nalanda, Jehanabad, East Champaran and Nalanda were felicitated for maximum improvement in indicators found on the IHIP portal.

In the post-lunch session, the epidemiologists of each of the 5 best-performing districts shared their experiences. Shree Navnit Kumar, State Microbiologist, IDSP Cell, spoke on quality assurance of laboratory reporting during any outbreak. Dr. Niraj Kumar, Consultant Epidemiologist, NCDC, New Delhi presented his views on developing scaling-up strategy and current concerns. Shree Anup Kumar Bhagat and Shree Shubham Bhattacharya of CHP, ADRI proposed a Vote of Thanks.

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