

Mobile Phones: A tool for Social & Behavior Change

A two-day long multi-stakeholder consultation on the topic, '*Mobile Phones: A tool for Social & Behavior Change*' was organized by the joint effort of UNICEF India and Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) on 17th -18th of June 2014 at the Courtyard by Marriott in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

The main objectives of the consultation were to explore and understand various mobile-based practices that have been effectively using mobile phones in area of health, education, water and sanitation and women and empowerment; and to create a formidable platform to provide knowledge on diverse mobile-based implemented projects and help in developing partnerships between state government and MSBC players.

The consultation was inaugurated by Mr. Faiz Ahmed Kidwai, Mission Director, RCH-NRHM, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Madhya Pradesh. Thereafter, the consultation followed with the "*Status Overview on Mobile Reachability, Accessibility, Usability and Potential in Madhya Pradesh*" session wherein Mr. N. K Yadav, Chief General Manager, BSNL, M P Circle and Mr. Osama Manzar, Director, DEF shared their thoughts.

The session was followed by case-study presentations, specifically concerning endeavors regarding monitoring, tracking and dissemination of information.

More than 70 participants representing various departments of Government of Madhya Pradesh and other states and mobile practitioners participated in two-day long consultation.

While concluding the Day 1 of the consultation, Mr. Bhupinder Singh, Honorable Minister of IT, Government of Madhya Pradesh asserted, "Madhya Pradesh is the first state in the country that has e-mail policy." Setting the context of mobile usability in the state, he also stated that today mobile has become our daily necessity of life and the state is trying to enable mobile in providing citizen-oriented services. Further, he also described how mobile phones have enabled farmers to purchase crops in support prize and reduced middle-market management system in the state. Various other practitioners, NGOs and app developers gave an insight on

the powerful technology of mobile phones and how it can be used for the benefit of masses.