

CHWs DELIVERING HEALTHCARE IN THE THAR DESERT, INDIA

APHA'S 135th Annual Meeting

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THAR DESERT

The Great Indian Desert or the Thar with nearly 22 million people in the world stands apart as the most densely populated arid region in the world. Extreme environmental factors coupled with the vastness of the desert, remoteness of settlements have made the smooth delivery of health services a challenge here.

ABOUT GRAVIS

GRAVIS works in different spheres to bring about an integrated development in the Thar Desert. GRAVIS believes it has an important role to play to help the marginalised rise from their gloom. The Gandhian concept of "Gram Swarajya" or village self help rule, is the means by which GRAVIS enables communities and individuals in the rural areas to improve their lives so that they attain self-sufficiency.

HEALTH ISSUES IN THE THAR

- Non-existent health care services in rural areas
- Government services scarcely available, poorly organized and ineffective
- Lack of education and awareness amongst the rural population
- Wide range of health problems including anemia, malnutrition and vitamin deficiencies
- High incidences of infectious diseases
- Poor reproductive child health
- Poor status of girl children's health

COMMUNITY ACTION ON HEALTH LED BY GRAVIS

- Strengthen cadre of Community Health Workers in rural areas
- Organize health awareness sessions & training programs
- Design modules for comprehensive health education
- Set up a fully equipped rural hospital
- Organize outreach medical services
- Liaise with the government authorities
- Implement reproductive health and nutrition programs
- Implement community-eye care project
- Implement projects focusing on Malaria and TB control, HIV/AIDS and control of Occupational Lung Diseases (OLD)

THE WAY FORWARD

- Enhance capacities of CHWs, community based organizations & grass root NGOs
- Linkages with government & health care institutions
- Research & Advocacy

" Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely absence of diseases "

- WHO



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