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ARTIST launches 'Sweet Heart' to tackle gestational diabetes and heart ailments in women



Bengaluru: The Asian Research and Training Institute for Skill Transfer (ARTIST) on March 9 launched 'Sweet Heart' project for the benefit of pregnant women and their yet to be born children from gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM).

The GDM is known as a 'Sweet Disease', and its adverse impact on mother and child is well known. The project will focus on building awareness for women even before pregnancy and train the health workers to test and manage those with high blood sugar levels, through a framework of standard guidelines, issued by the government. These women will need care beyond pregnancy to prevent type-2 diabetes and heart ailments

Explaining the significance of the Sweet Heart project, Dr. Hema Divakar, CEO and Chairperson of ARTIST said, "There are 5 million pregnancies with high blood sugar every year in India and the children born to these women are prone to childhood obesity, and tragically likely to have diabetes at a much younger age. To save the next generation from the 'sweet disease', we have to act now."

"The 'Pehla Kadam' project launched last year was the first step to tackle diabetes. Its focus was on sensitizing and raising awareness on the fact that it is major health concern, but preventable. This year with the 'Sweet Heart' project ARTIST is on a mission to ensure the 'Single Step Test' (using S75 -75gm glucose) is offered to all pregnant women so that even a single case of Diabetes in Pregenancy is not missed," Dr. Hema said.

"Training healthcare providers and doctors for understanding the framework and administering the right test at the right time for 30 million pregnant women every year is no easy task. We have launched capacity and skill enhancement online training courses, which are comprehensive and ensure that the guidelines are followed strictly. Empowering women



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on this day - conjoining the 8th of March - the International Women's Day and 10th of March - the Diabetes in Pregnancy Awareness Day, to ensure a healthy 'generation next' is a sure way of staying ahead and staying healthy. Utilizing every possible avenue to raise awareness towards this cause is central to VISION 2022" remarked, Dr. Hema Divakar, who was also the former President of FOGSI and now the Vice Chair of the Diabetes in Pregnancy Working Group of FIGO and the FOGSI Ambassador to FIGO.

Dr. Dinesh Baswal, Deputy Commissioner, Maternal Health (In-Charge), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India stated, "National Guidelines for Diagnosis & Management of Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM) were released by Government of India in February 2018 with experts like Dr. V. Seshiah brainstorming on the urgent need for capacity building of healthcare providers, for screening. We are keen to implement the recommended guidelines for universal screening and management of GDM in India. We have integrated it with antenatal care package and linked it with NCD clinics for a continued care."

Stressing on the need for this progressive change, Dr. Sita Bhateja, veteran gynecologist and founder of Sita Bhateja Hospital, said "The generation I belong to did not see these issues primarily because our lives back then weren't as sedentary as it is today where technology and industrialization has reduced the amount of physical efforts we need to put through in our daily lives. This collective effort from ARTIST and the Government of India will go a great way in addressing one of the core health issues relating to women and bring about a transformation in their lifestyle which will be conducive not only for prevention of GDM but several other lifestyle diseases."

"KISS - Keep It Simple And Short. I believe that we must share with the youth of the country, simple messages for healthy lifestyle, so that they understand and are able to follow a pattern to eat right and exercise right. I am happy to launch the 'Sweet Heart' project and hope that 70 million sweet women (diabetic women) in the country maintain a lifestyle to be safe from breaking their hearts. I will do my bit to give right message to my young friends and fans in the country to start early and stay healthy." said Sreeleela, film actress and Brand Ambassador of the 'Sweet Heart' project.

Dr. Swarnalatha S, Gynecologist and Infertility Specialist at Sakra World Hospital, said, "Being a gynecologist, I see a lot of young girls with problems of obesity and PCOS, which is the foundation for future diabetes. We do tell them to modify their diet, stay stress free and get into a regular exercise regime. So, in the backdrop of women's day, whilst I celebrate my daughter Sreeleela's achievements in various endeavours, I would urge all mothers and teachers to be aware and ensure that it is very important to guide their children into the path of healthy living from a very young age. I am happy that Sreeleela is a Sweet Heart Ambassador and will influence the generation next to stay fit and stay healthy."

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