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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **NITI Aayog Vice Chairman: women's empowerment one of the most important conditions for India to realise its demographic dividend**

**New Delhi [12 October 2018]:** Speaking at the JRD Tata Memorial Awards and Oration organised by the Population Foundation of India (PFI) in the national capital, Dr. Kumar said, **"One of the most important conditions for realising the demographic dividend is women's empowerment. Women constitute half the country's population, shoulder three-fourths of the responsibility to run society, yet get only one-fourth of the respect they deserve. This needs to be changed by focusing on '4 Es' – Educate, Employ, Empower and Enjoy."** He added that adequate investments in family planning are essential for overall growth and development of the country.

Dr. Kumar presented the 6th JRD Tata Memorial awards to three states, one Union territory and 10 districts for showing proven and sustained efforts in stabilising population levels. The states of Chhattisgarh, Punjab, and Sikkim, the Union Territory of Chandigarh, and districts of Hamirpur (Himachal Pradesh), Jagatsinghapur (Odisha), Baksa (Assam), Ernakulam (Kerala), the Nilgiris and Nagapattinam (Tamil Nadu), Akola (Maharashtra), Aizawl (Mizoram), Upper Siang (Arunachal Pradesh) and Phek (Nagaland) received the awards this year.

The awards, instituted by PFI, recognise performance in the areas of family planning, age at marriage, fertility rates, maternal and child health and nutrition, anaemia, sex ratio, neonatal, infant and child mortality rates, women's education and empowerment, gender-based violence, and water, sanitation and hygiene. This is in line with PFI's commitment to address population policies through a comprehensive women's empowerment and human rights lens. The selection criteria and key indicators were based on the National Family Health Survey III and IV, and the Census of 2011.

Dr. Kumar also released a study entitled 'Cost of Inaction in Family Planning in India: An Analysis of Health and Economic Implications' (COI). The study projects the opportunity cost of inadequate investments in family planning over 15 years (2016 – 2031), and the potential economic benefits if family planning programmes are fully and efficiently implemented.

Speaking about the JRD Tata Memorial Awards, PFI Executive Director, Poonam Muttreja, said, "The JRD Tata Memorial Awards and Oration are a tribute to our founder JRD Tata and his vision to promote gender sensitive population, health, and development strategies. We believe that Family Planning has to be at the centre of national development agenda to help achieve sustainable development goals. By investing in family planning, we are making smart investments for our families to be healthy, productive and prosperous."

The COI study was commissioned by PFI and conducted in collaboration with the Institute of Economic Growth (IEG). It projects that if India proactively pursues its family planning commitments, it could add 13 per cent to its per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over 15 years from 2016 – 2031. "While we have quantified the demographic and economic impacts of inaction in family planning, it is equally important to understand the hardships of families, particularly the quality of life of mothers and



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children. Clearly, in one way or the other, inaction affects our daily lives and this can be a momentous occasion to realise that all is not lost.” said Dr. William Joe of IEG, one of the lead researchers of the study.

The study estimates that with increased investments in family planning over 15 years, India would not only save as much as Rs. 27,000 crores in public health spending and redirect it to other health priorities, but also enable its citizens to save Rs. 71,500 crores of out-of-pocket expenditures (OOPE) on child birth and child hospitalisation. It highlights the benefits of strengthening family planning strategies at the community, state and national level.