

January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008.

ICDS/527/Assam.

Shri. P.C. Sarma  
Chief Secretary  
Government of Assam  
New secretariat  
Guwahati  
Assam.

**Sub: Status of Implementation of ICDS in Assam.**

Dear Shri. P.C. Sarma,

As you know we have been appointed by the Supreme Court to monitor food and employment schemes under PUCL vs. Union of India, CWP 196/2001. We have recently submitted the Seventh Report on the implementation of these schemes all across the country to the Supreme Court. We would like to bring to your notice some issues of concern in relation to the ICDS in Assam.

1. We would be very grateful if you could kindly take necessary steps to make the reports and all the information related to the ICDS available on the website. The ICDS website of the Maharashtra Government ([www.icds.gov.in](http://www.icds.gov.in)), for instance, is not only very informative but is also a very good example of proactive disclosure of information about the programme. You may consider re-modelling your ICDS website along the lines that Maharashtra has done.
2. The number of children in the 0-6 age group according to the anganwadi survey register is **3356205** and of this **914369** children (only about **27.2 %**) are beneficiaries of the SNP programme. This is much worse than national average which is 56.6%. Efforts must be made to universalise all the six services of ICDS in full among all the children (Supreme court order dated 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2007). We would be grateful if you could please also examine and let us know the reasons why such a large gap still persists in this basic element of ICDS operationalisation.
3. Moreover, the number of children in the age group of 0-6 in the state as per census 2001 are **4498075**. Therefore, only about 20.3% of the eligible children have been identified by the anganwadi survey who are actually getting SNP. A mapping must please be done to ensure that every habitation and slum has been covered by an anganwadi centre and within each area every child has been reached out to (as per Supreme Court orders).
4. The coverage of pregnant and lactating women under SNP of the ICDS is also low. We, therefore, request you kindly take steps to ensure all the beneficiaries are being reached out under ICDS.

**DR. N. C. SAXENA, COMMISSIONER AND  
HARSH MANDER, SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF THE SUPREME COURT  
IN THE CASE: PUCL v. UOI & Ors. WRIT PETITION (Civil) No. 196 of 2001**

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5. Out of the **37082** AWCs sanctioned upto 31.03.2007, only **25329** AWCs have been operationalised as on 30.06.2007. Efforts must be made to operationalise all the AWCs at the earliest.
6. The NFHS-3 data has shown the coverage under immunisation in the state has increased from 17 % to 32% during the last eight years since NFHS-2. We appreciate the fact state is taking efforts to increase the immunisation coverage, however, there persist still a huge gap. We would like to request you to give the utmost priority towards increasing the immunisation coverage in the state.
7. It is matter of great concern that the percentage of children who are underweight (under 3 years) have increased from 36% to 40% during the last eight years since NFHS-2. Kindly examine the reasons for this, and let us know the assessment of the state government for this very worrying increase.
8. We acknowledge that Assam is one of the states in the country that are making concerted efforts to comply with the Supreme Court order of October 2004 banning contractors in supply of SNP. As we have repeatedly pointed out in the past, the direction of the Supreme Court is unambiguous and efforts must be made to ensure that a total decentralisation of the SNP procurement, processing and supply is completed without any further delay. This entails the handing over of this process to the most appropriate decentralised unit at the village level like the women's SHGs, Mahila Mandals, Panchayats, Mother's/ Parent Committees etc. This must happen both for the 0-3 age group, lactating and pregnant women and adolescent girls where THR is being provided as well as the 3-6 age group where hot, cooked meals are being provided at the centre. We would appreciate it if the State Government can kindly send us a detailed report documenting the experience as this can be proposed as a model to other states.
9. The Supreme Court in its order dated 13<sup>th</sup> December 2006 made it clear that at least Rs. 2/- per child per day, Rs. 2.30 for every pregnant women, nursing mother/adolescent girl per day and Rs. 2.70 for every severely malnourished child per day should be spent for supplementary nutrition. However, due to non availability of data we could not make calculations regarding per beneficiary per day expenditure of the state for the SNP under ICDS. We request you kindly send us the detailed information on total expenditure on SNP, total number of beneficiaries and allocations (State and Central) for the entire year 2006-07 and also the current year 2007-08.
10. Similarly, in line with the Supreme Court orders, we would also request a detailed survey of all urban slums and universal coverage of children living in all urban slums, across the State on a priority basis. Please separately list the numbers of SC and ST dominated hamlets and the population in each urban area under slums (both authorised and unauthorised) in the state, what is the current coverage of ICDS centres in these hamlets and slums, and the plans for filling the gap. We also recently sent you a letter requesting for information on coverage of SC/ST habitations and urban slums under ICDS ([icds.coverage/518/allstates](#) dated 30.11.2007). Kindly respond to this letter at the earliest.

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11. Further, we urge you to conduct a campaign to include disabled children under ICDS. For this Anganwadi level survey of disabled children should be undertaken in a time bound manner, and in future data at ICDS centre upwards to project, district and state levels disaggregated for coverage of disabled children.
12. We would be grateful if the State Government ensures that the necessary steps are taken to ensure that children of all migrant workers have access to all the six services of the ICDS. Please send us a copy of the state Governments instructions in this regard.
13. Kindly refer to our letter (relief colonies/Assam/514 dated October 19<sup>th</sup>,2007), we are not sure if any of the steps that State Government agreed upon and assured us during our meeting regarding ensuring the ICDS services in all the relief camps of Assam have indeed been carried out by Assam Government. We had requested the state Government to send us the information on some parameters mentioned in above referred letter regarding ICDS for each of the Camps but we didn't received any response yet. We, therefore, request you steps must be made to put in place ICDS centres in all the relief camps and kindly send us an Action taken report and the information we sought regarding ICDS within two weeks time.

We request the Government of Assam to look into the above listed matters and send us an action taken report on the same at the earliest.

With regards

Dr. N.C. Saxena

Harsh Mander