

**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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January 11<sup>th</sup>,2008.  
ICDS/529/ Jharkhand.

Shri. P.P.Sharma  
Chief Secretary  
Government of Jharkhand  
Vidhan Sabha Bhavan  
Ranchi  
Jharkhand.

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

Dear Shri. P.P.Sharma,

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 Jharkhand .

1. Despite data being collected, compiled and Monthly Progress Reports being prepared on ICDS, it is noted that none is available on the state website. We request you to please take necessary steps to make these 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 preparing an 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 33,21,359 and of this 16,06,592 children (about 48%) are beneficiaries of the SNP programme. Efforts must be made to improve the coverage as more than 50% of the children do not receive the benefits of the SNP which is a critical part of the ICDS programme. 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 0-6 children in the state as per Census 2001 is 49,56,827. Therefore only about 67% of the eligible children have been identified by the anganwadi survey. 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. It is a matter of great concern that the percentage of children who are underweight actually *increased* from 54 to 59 between NFHS-2 and NFHS-3. Kindly examine the reasons for this, and let us know the assessment of the state government for this very worrying increase. We urge you to treat child malnutrition as a matter of top priority.

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5. We appreciate the fact that Jharkhand is one of the few states in the country that comply with the Supreme Court order of October 2004 banning contractors in supply of SNP.
6. The Office of Commissioners along with the Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) programme conducted a survey in six states on the status of food and employment schemes. This survey covered Palamu and Dumka districts in Jharkhand .The following are some of the findings:
  - About 84% of the respondents reported that the anganwadi centres are open everyday and about 71% that SNP is provided everyday.
  - Only 32.5 per cent of the respondents reported that the anganwadi worker makes home visits.
  - 84.2% of the respondents said that hot-cooked meals are being provided in the anganwadi centre (for 3-6 year olds)
  - It is heartening to know that 64.9% of the respondents found the quality of SNP provided to be “good”.
  - An alarming 72.5% of all the respondents from the state reported that BPL is still being used as eligibility criteria. This is clearly in defiance of the Supreme Court order stating that BPL must not be used as a criterion for enrolment into the anganwadi centre.The results clearly show that the ICDS programme is not functioning at an optimal level in the state and a lot of urgent attention has to be devoted in streamlining the existing system.
7. In the order of 13<sup>th</sup> December 2006 it was stated that “Chief Secretaries of all State Governments/UTs are directed to submit affidavits with details of all habitations with a majority of SC/ST households, the availability of AWCs in these habitations, and the plan of action for ensuring that all these habitations have functioning AWCs within two years.” However, the government of Jharkhand has not yet submitted this information to the Court. This has to be looked into at the earliest since the Supreme Court order specifically directs State Governments/UTs to ensure universal coverage of SC/ST habitations as a priority.
8. We recently sent you a letter requesting for information on coverage of SC/ST habitations and urban slums under ICDS ([icds.coverage/518/allstates](http://icds.coverage/518/allstates) dated 30.11.2007). We would be grateful if you could respond to this letter at the earliest.
9. 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 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.
10. 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.

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11. We would be grateful if the State Government ensures that 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

We request the Government of Jharkhand 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

CC: Shri. Balram ,Advisor to the Commissioners to the Supreme Court, Jharkhand.