

January 11th, 2008.
ICDS/530/ Madhya Pradesh.

Shri. R.C. Sahni
Chief Secretary
Government of Madhya Pradesh
Mantralaya, Vallabh Bhavan
Bhopal
Madhya Pradesh.

Sub: Status of Implementation of ICDS in Madhya Pradesh.

Dear Shri. R.C. Sahni,

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 Madhya Pradesh.

1. Despite data being collected, compiled and Monthly Progress Reports being prepared on ICDS, it is noted that the latest one available on the state ICDS website is from 2002. 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), 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 66,70,504 and of this 38,69,502 children (about 58%) are beneficiaries of the SNP programme. Efforts must be made to improve the coverage as more than 40% 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 10782214. Therefore only about 61% 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 60 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.

5. Our calculations show that per beneficiary per day expenditure of the state is a mere Rs. 1.21, much lower to the norm which is Rs 2 for children, Rs 2.70 for severely malnourished children and Rs 2.30 for pregnant/lactating women. What are the reasons for this, and what are our plans within what time frame to bring these to national norms.
6. We acknowledge that Madhya Pradesh 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. We are aware that the government has directed districts to stop using contractors once existing contracts expire. We hope that the supply is soon handed over to local groups. 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.
7. 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 Balaghat, Betul, Chhatarpur, Mandla and Tikamgarh districts in Madhya Pradesh. The following are some of the findings:
 - About 83% of the respondents reported that the anganwadi centres are open everyday and about 75% that SNP is provided everyday.
 - Only 47 per cent of the respondents reported that the anganwadi worker makes home visits.
 - 31.6% of the respondents said that hot-cooked meals are being provided in the anganwadi centre (for 3-6 year olds)
 - Only 13.6% found the quality of SNP provided to be "good".
 - 11.1% of all the respondents from the state reported that BPL is still being used as eligibility criteria. This is despite there being a clear Supreme Court order stating that BPL must not be used as a criterion for enrolment into the anganwadi centre.The results show that though better than many other states, the ICDS programme is not functioning at an optimal level in the state and a lot could be improved.
8. Of the 17,153 SC/ST habitations of the states, 4168 are yet to have an Anganwadi Centre. We would therefore request you to accord this the highest priority in the ICDS expansion since the Supreme Court order specifically directs State Governments/UTs to ensure universal coverage of SC/ST habitations as a priority.
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.

**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**

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.
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 Madhya Pradesh 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: Dr. Mihir Shah, Advisor to the Commissioners to the Supreme Court, Madhya Pradesh.