

**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**

February 14th, 2008
ICDS/543/ Chhattisgarh

Shri. Shivraj Singh
Chief Secretary
Government of Chattisgarh
Dau Kalyan Singh Bhawan,
Mantralaya
Raipur 492001.

Sub: Status of Implementation of ICDS in Chhattisgarh.

Dear Shri. S Singh,

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 Chhattisgarh.

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. 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) is not only very informative but is also a very good example of proactive disclosure of information about the programme. You may consider re-modeling 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 23,49,402 and of this 16,52,830 children (about 70%) are beneficiaries of the SNP programme. Efforts must be made to improve the coverage.
3. As per the Census (2001), the number of 0-6 children in the state are (35,54,916). Therefore only about 46.5% of the eligible children have been identified by the anganwadi survey. A mapping must be done to ensure that every habitation has been covered by an anganwadi centre and within each area every child has been reached out to (as per Supreme Court orders).

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4. We appreciate the fact that the percentage of children who are underweight *decreased* from 61% to 52% between NFHS 2 and NFHS 3. We also note that the percentage of immunisation coverage has increased from merely 22% shown by NFHS 2 to 49% between in NFHS-3. It is significant that the decrease in malnutrition that Chhattisgarh has shown is the second highest in the country after Orissa. However, there is little room for complacency because at 52%, Chhattisgarh still ranks amongst the states with the highest proportion of malnourished children. In fact only the following States: Madhya Pradesh (60%), Jharkhand (59%) & Bihar (58%), have higher percentage of malnourished children than Chhattisgarh. Therefore the Government of Chhattisgarh must treat this with a sense of urgency and as an area of utmost priority for State intervention.
5. We acknowledge that Chhattisgarh is one of the states in the country which has implemented the Supreme Court order of October 2004 banning contractors in supply of SNP w.e.f 1.4.2007. 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. We have received many field reports, including those from our Adviser, Samir Garg, which indicate that there persist many bottlenecks in the transfer of funds to the womens' SHGs and other decentralized bodies which are undertaking the supply of supplementary nutrition in the State. The State Government may kindly ensure that such inordinate delays which affect the quality of the programme in the field do not recur. One of the suggestions that we have, which you may like to consider, is to provide a three months advance to each SHG and then provide them with additional funds once two thirds of this money is exhausted, on a bi-monthly basis.
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 Sarguja and Rajnandgaon districts in Chhattisgarh. The following are some of the findings:
 - All the respondents reported that the anganwadi centres are open everyday and about 97% said that SNP is provided everyday.
 - The study findings are that hot cooked meals are provided in all ICDS centres, but 21 % of the children responded that the quality of food provided was "bad".
 - Only 26% of the respondents said that anganwadi workers make home visits.

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- 8% reported that BPL is still used as a criterion for getting benefit under ICDS. The Supreme Court has clearly stated that no such conditions should be applied restricting access to ICDS services. Every child under six, every pregnant and lactating mother and every adolescent girl should be eligible for ICDS.
- 7. We 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). We would be grateful to receive a response to this letter at the earliest.
- 8. Further, we urge you to conduct a campaign to include disabled children under ICDS
- 9. Admission of children of migrant workers in anganwadi centres must also be ensured.
- 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.
- 11. Further, we urge you to conduct a campaign to include disabled children under ICDS
- 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. .

We request the Government of Chhattisgarh to look into the above listed matters on a priority basis and send us an action taken report at the earliest.

With regards,

Dr. N.C. Saxena

Harsh Mander

CC: Shri. Sameer Garg, Advisor to the Commissioners to the Supreme Court, Chhattisgarh.

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