

MINUTES OF PARTNERS MEETING-NIRMAN
ON
PREPARATION FOR COVID EMERGENCY-8TH APRIL'2020

A Zoom meeting of NIRMAN-Nutrition Partners Coalition in Chhattisgarh state was held on 8th April 2020 through teleconferencing. The main objective was to provide update on their work and support extended to government in the context of lockdown due to COVID-19 and get learnings on how the nutrition challenges were being addressed in this emergency. The meeting was attended by all NIRMAN Members including government partners (List attached), with an aim to effectively utilize the platform of coalition and complement to increase the reach of the system to the last mile.

The highlights of the Meeting are as under:

1. The meeting began with a welcome address by Dr Farhat Saiyed, Nutrition specialist, UNICEF who thanked all the participants for their participation and introduced the agenda for the meeting.
2. Mr Job Zachariah, Chief of UNICEF Field Office, with his wide expertise in the field of emergencies, greeted all the partners and explained the global scenario of the impact of disaster on children and mothers, which can undoubtedly cause sudden increase in the prevalence of malnutrition. Thus, requested all stakeholders to come together to overcome this challenging situation.
3. Each partner member was then invited to speak briefly on their work in context of COVID-19 and provide an overview of their contribution to government's efforts. Mr Kuntal of **PRADAN**, a mega NGO working on improving livelihood through empowering women/SHGs and thus working closely with SRLM the state explained that they work in six blocks as COVID Rescue Group. Their field team collaborated with office of district administration and worked with govt. field functionaries to increase awareness on precautionary measure for COVID 19. They also supported government in providing advance ration through PDS for two months to most vulnerable families to avoid shortage of food during lockdown. They also have in place a strategy to support farmers with financial capital that would be required in the post COVOD period. This would to overcome difficulties in the cultivation of crops like Paddy, *Mahua* and *Tendua Patta*.
4. Mr Bhupesh from **SAATHI** NGO in Narayanpur shared their support from field team of 20 who ensured lockdown was imposed strictly based on advisories and no outsiders or insiders could move into the interior of the region or come out their communities/villages. The *Haat* bazaar in Bastar were said to be suspended to avoid gathering of people which impacted the sales of local produce by farmers and health services too. The team ensured immunization sessions were held through VHNDs organised in hamlets where ANM was accompanied and assisted by SAATHI. They also took responsibility of making available masks, sanitizers, food ration to all villagers through monitoring support. Hand washing points were installed at entry points on highways, and key places where people with commonly using. The need for having cash with tribal villagers was a major problem and in this time they required hard cash to buy things other than foods such as fuel, fodder and others. The need for cash transfers by the government was the priority which they were talking to the government.

5. Dr Amar Singh Thakur, Deputy Director, Child Health from NHM explained the role of Health Department in ensuring basic services like Immunization, Health and Nutrition among children and IFA supplementation during the COVID emergency. As 50-60 per cent of VHND sessions were hampered due to lockdown, a catchup vaccination round was said to be happen within one month of lifting of emergency. Similarly, guidelines were issued for admission and discharge of SAM children in NRCs. Dr Thakur explained that arrangements have been made for availability of two months stock for school children to be given at field level, as done during holidays.
6. Dr Anil Goel of State Centre of Excellence (AIIMS, Raipur), explained his role in leading management of COVID cases in Chhattisgarh and that children admitted in NRC were followed up through support of AWW who was telephonically talking to parents as a follow-up. He also guided NHM mentioning that as NRCs are closed, SAM children should be admitted in paediatric ward of government hospitals and treatment protocol for SAM can be followed in hospital. This which was agreed by NHM (Dr Thakur).
7. Mr Anil Dewangan representing World Vision, presented his findings from the rapid assessment done in 5 Districts. The data suggested that hot cooked meal (HCM) in Anganwadi Centre (AWC) was not distributed; Immunization was impacted, and shortage of IFA was reported from the field. World Vision had ensured supply of Hygiene Kits; dry ration to needy families and helped economically weak families through cash donations.
8. Dr Goutam Roy of Krishi Vigyan Kendra threw light on challenges faced in the current emergency due to lack of farm-labourers available for harvesting. Mr job Zachariah suggested creation and use of *WhatsApp* group among farmers to dispel awareness related to crops and storage and exchange of other vital information.
9. Mr Gota from RKMA (Ram Krishna Mission Ashram) shared the status of lockdown in Tribal region of *Abhuj Maad* forest in Narayanpur where no inter or intra movement between villages was allowed even by the Naxalites operating there. The difficulties were said to be faced in identifying SAM children, their follow-ups and counselling mothers through house-to-house visits. RKMA managed to procure passes for few of the team members who worked closely with villagers that ensured THR and PDS ration are provided along with immunization given door-to-door by ANM. They were requested to also ensure reach of IFA to beneficiaries of the visiting families.
10. Mr Sunil Sharma, Assistant Director of ICDS explained the role of WCD in providing essential services like THR, counselling on COVID-19 prevention; ration from Mukhya Mantri Suposhan Abhiyan for malnourished children and anaemic mothers for which WCD has advance 70 crores to district administration across the state. Guidelines for ECCE were developed and shared with District Collectors Office in utilizing social media platform for orienting AWWs, which was further dispelled to communities and beneficiaries by AWWs. UNICEF requested to carry out Wajan Tyohar after the lockdown was lifted to which it was agreed by WCD and would undertake the round within two weeks from time the emergency is overcome. A dedicated control room was also available in WCD to ensure resolution of queries from District level.

11. Miss Bharti of ROSHANI centre and working for Swabhimaan program with SRLM shed light on the field activities carried out by done by field team to ensure availability of food and services during COVID emergency and also ensured availability of sanitizers, masks, soaps, sanitary napkins and ration to especially vulnerable families without having ration cards.
 12. Mr Pramod of SHRC explained the role in monitoring of services at field level. Till date, 24,000 families/migrants were identified/listed by SHRC that were without ration card and or migrants. They also donated Ration to people in need. It was expressed that the buffer stock of grains under PDS was found to be insufficient for distribution. Concern was also expressed to provide advance payment for economic help and wanted UNICEF to advocate on the same. Mr. Job Zachariah assured that a proposal in this regard has already been sent to Government of Chhattisgarh from UNICEF.
 13. Towards the end, the members including government partners thanked UNICEF for sharing guidelines and IEC materials that were very useful.
 14. Before closure, the following Action Points were reiterated by Dr Farhat followed by mutual thanks for time, insightful updates and field level monitoring support.
 - a) Admission of SAM children to be referred to regular wards or paediatric wards of government hospitals with management protocols for SAM to be followed by the hospital staff.
 - b) Continue sharing of material, guidelines with partners and key government depts. (WCD, NHM, SHRC, AIIMS Raipur, SRLM).
 - c) Sharing of Assessment tool By UNICEF for gathering comprehensive information on status of THR, IFA, PDS, COVID related counselling, economic sufficiency, for gathering of data on status of service implementation in the field.
 - d) Conduction of Wajan Tyohar, Vitamin A supplementation, Catch Up immunization round after uplifting of lockdown/emergency.
-

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

| Sl.No. | Name | Designation | Organization |
|--------|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Job Zachariah | CFO | UNICEF |
| 2 | Dr. Farhat Saiyed | Nutrition Specialist | UNICEF |
| 3 | Dr. Mahendra Prajapati | Nutrition Officer | UNICEF |
| 4 | Dr Amar Singh Thakur | Deputy Director (Child Health) | DHFW |
| 5 | Mr Sunil Sharma | Assistant Director | WCD |
| 6 | Dr. A. K. Goel | Head, Paediatrics | AIIMS Raipur |
| 7 | Dr Kiran Akhade | CoE co-ordinator | AIIMS Raipur |
| 8 | Tapan Daripa | SPM | Evidence Action |
| 9 | Bisnath Gota | TL | RKMA |
| 10 | Mr Bhupesh Tiwari | TL | SAATHI |
| 11 | Dr. Gautam Roy | Senior Scientist | KVK-IGKV-Raipur |
| 12 | Mr Anil Dewangan | Project Coordinator | World Vision India |
| 13 | Mr Pramod Nanda | Project Coordinator | SHRC |
| 14 | Kuntal Mukherjee | Team Coordinator | PRADAN |
| 15 | Mr Swami Vivekanand | Nutrition Consultant | UNICEF |
| 16 | Mr IN Jha | Nutrition Consultant | UNICEF |
| 17 | Miss Shruti Sachdeva | Nutrition Consultant | UNICEF |
| 18 | Miss Bharti | Consultant | Swabhiman Project |