



Consultative Meeting with Nutrition Stakeholders

29th September, 2016

at BNR Chanakya Ranchi, Jharkhand

by

Jharkhand State Nutrition Mission

in collaboration with

United States Agency for International Development



Executive Summary

Despite India's rapid economic growth over last several decades, under nutrition continues to affect a large percentage of the population, particularly children. According to the Rapid Survey on Children (RSOC) by the Ministry of Women and Child Development 2013-14, in Jharkhand about half (47%) of the children under the age of five years are stunted, one-sixth (15%) are wasted, and about 42% are underweight. The Jharkhand State Nutrition Mission (JSNM) was launched in November 2015 with the aim to address the issues of malnutrition and find practical solutions at the grassroots.

JSNM aims to eradicate malnutrition in Jharkhand by creating a platform for convergent actions and to generate awareness for improving the overall nutrition status of all vulnerable women and children of the state. The USAID/India – Health Office is committed to reducing infant, neonatal and maternal mortality rates in India and brings together the knowledge and expertise of government and partners to accelerate the end of preventable child and maternal deaths through high impact interventions.

In an effort to work towards the shared vision of reducing the prevalence of maternal and child undernutrition JSNM in collaboration with USAID organized a round table consultation meeting on 29th September 2016, of partners from the government and civil society. The objective of the consultation was to share the work of the various partners in India and more specifically in the state of Jharkhand to pave a roadmap for a convergence between the government, academicians, civil society and other nutrition stakeholders. The round table brought together senior personnel from various civil society organizations, educational institutes, Department of Women and Child Development and Health and Family Welfare. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Mridula Sinha, IAS, Director General, JSNM. Other eminent speakers included Principal Secretary Women and Child Development, Ms Marietou Satin - Deputy Director, Health Office, USAID Washington and Dr A Laxmaiah – Head, Division of Community Studies, National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, India.

The speakers emphasized the need for all to work in a concerted, aligned manner, cross-sectorally, to bring about holistic change in the nutrition status of Jharkhand and the rest of the country.

The inaugural session was followed by three round table discussions. The workshop is a significant milestone as a first step towards the evolution of a consensus on moving forward to combat undernutrition. The discussions led towards development of a Stakeholder's State Action Plan to prevent and reduce undernutrition in a time-bound manner under the leadership of the Jharkhand State Nutrition Mission. The Mission will further follow up and collaborate with each organization present at the round table discussion.

The consultation meet was attended by over 45 participants from 17 organizations.

Background

Undernutrition continues to affect a large percentage of the population of India, particularly children, despite various welfare schemes introduced by successive governments. According to the RSOC 2013-14, almost 38.7 percent of children in the country, under age of five are stunted, and 29.4 percent are underweight. Around 69.5 percent of children under 6-59 months are anemic. In addition, one in three Indian women is underweight, and 58 percent of pregnant women are anemic. Maternal and child undernutrition has severely negative impact not only on public health, but also broader development outcomes.

Jharkhand is a hotspot in the global map of childhood stunting, with nearly half (47%) of the children under the age of five years stunted. One-sixth (15%) of the children are wasted, and about 42 per cent children are underweight.

The first 1,000 days of the life of an infant are identified as a significant window of opportunity for alleviation of malnutrition in the state. The Jharkhand State Nutrition Mission (JSNM) initiated with the aim to address the issues of malnutrition and find practical solutions at the grass roots intends to roll out a program for Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (C-MAM) to cater to the huge number of children with SAM and MAM. The Mission has already initiated activities that turned macro-data into action points through active screening of all children between 6 - 59 months for identifying the absolute number of children with SAM / MAM.

The Mission aims to eradicate malnutrition in Jharkhand by creating a platform for convergent actions and to generate awareness for improving the overall nutrition status of all vulnerable women and children of the state. The Mission also aims to make the effort visible and bring on board major partners and stakeholders.

USAID/India – Health Office is committed to reducing infant, neonatal and maternal mortality rates in India and brings together the knowledge and expertise of government and partners to accelerate the end of preventable child and maternal deaths through high impact interventions. Both the Jharkhand State Nutrition Mission and USAID/India are working together to reduce prevalence of maternal and child nutrition. This consultation workshop was organized in Ranchi on 29th September 2016 with the purpose of interacting with all development partners and gathering inputs from sector experts on aspects of nutrition, promising practices and innovations.

Inaugural session

Ms Mridula Sinha, IAS, Director-General, JSNM, welcomed Ms Marietou Satin - Deputy Director, Health Office, USAID Washington and the other participants.

Setting the tone for the consultation, Ms Sinha shared the burden of malnutrition that Jharkhand shared, which could be tackled only through a collaborative approach by all stakeholders. She also shared that the State has identified the gaps to tackle the nutrition challenge and now it was time to concentrate on how necessary changes could be made to tackle undernutrition, by focusing on critical strategy options that can make a significant difference.

She requested partners to join State efforts in plugging the gaps through appropriate intervention, streamlining efforts and without duplicating efforts. Reiterating the objectives of the workshop, Ms. Sinha said that the work should be in alignment with the JSNM goals.



Ms Mridula Sinha, IAS, Director General, JSNM welcoming Ms Marietou Satin - Deputy Director Health Office USAID Washington



Dr A Laxmaiah, Deputy Director, National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad

Dr A Laxmaiah, Deputy Director, National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) Hyderabad, presented findings of a recently concluded nutritional surveillance in five high burden districts in the state. The survey was undertaken to improve health and nutritional status of vulnerable segment of the population by implementing multi-component health and nutrition education interventions, focusing on dietary counseling and modification keeping in view the cultural and socio-economic status of the population.

Some of the major study findings from the study presented were:

- Overall stunting is very high at 57.2% compared to underweight (44.2%) and wasting (16.2%) in the five districts in focus
- 97% adolescent girls in these 5 districts are anemic
- 55% child death are associated with undernutrition
- Colostrum was not being given in more than a tenth of the babies (12.2%) and the cited reason was the belief that it was not good for health (5.5%) and elders advice (2%)
- Exclusive breast feeding upto 6 months was at 89%
- Only 45% mothers wash hands before feeding a child, less than 2% use soap for washing
- All members of the family share the supplementary nutrition provided by the Anagnwadi Centres to pregnant and lactating women
- Only 2.4% were availing ICDS services and only 0.8% were receiving ICDS food supplements

- Only about half were receiving mid-day meal at school (48%) but deworming was poor as only 20% received at least one tablet in the past one year
- Anemia was alarmingly high (97%) among adolescent girls and about 15.7% were suffering from severe anemia
- IFA tablets were not consumed by about 43.7% of adolescent girls
- The most common reasons for not taking the IFA tablets was lack of awareness of the need and fear of side effects

Dr Laxmaiah mentioned that NIN plans to develop an intervention model after due consultation with various stakeholders and the final intervention strategies will be implemented for 18 months in all the surveyed villages.



Ms Marietou Satin, Deputy Director, Health Office, USAID India

Ms Marietou Satin, Deputy Director, Health Office, USAID in her key note address shared that undernutrition is a complex problem affecting approximately millions of children worldwide. In India about 30% of the children under five years of age are underweight. Jharkhand faces a huge burden of malnourished children and anaemic women. She congratulated the State Government of Jharkhand and JSNM on drawing attention to the importance of convergence for a healthy Jharkhand. She was glad to see that the government has taken several initiatives in this regards and shared that USAID was proud to

work with the Mission. Ms. Satin expressed USAID's willingness to extended support to Jharkhand's plan to eliminate malnutrition in next 10 years.

Roundtable Session I:

'Role of key departments to achieve nutritional goals of the state and ways to collaborate with one another'



Mr M.S. Bhatia, Principal Secretary, Dept. of WCD, Government of Jharkhand

Mr MS Bhatia, Principal Secretary, Dept. of WCD, Government of Jharkhand, informed participants that political commitment towards eradication of malnutrition in the state is very high and it is unacceptable to have high prevalence of malnutrition in the state. He mentioned that the gaps in the existing programs need to be bridged and malnutrition must be made a development priority. He also stated that *Poshan Sakhis* (frontline workers for improving nutrition levels in the state) have been introduced in six high burden districts in the state and their responsibility is to provide nutritional counseling to pregnant and lactating women and other community members at the household level. *Poshan Dals* (Nutrition groups) are being formed in all the districts who would work towards solving the problem of malnutrition.



Dr Ajit Prasad, National Health Mission, Jharkhand

Dr Ajit Prasad, National Health Mission, Jharkhand, shared the situation of Malnutrition Treatment Centers in Jharkhand. These centers were establishing in 2009 however, parents of undernourished children were unable to bring their children to the centre for various reasons. He emphasized that the NGOs present should motivate the family to take their child to the centre and that the state needs an IEC campaign to break the myths surrounding this issue.

Roundtable Session II

'Collective efforts to promote nutrition in the state by implementing partners'

In the final session of this round table consultation, all the partner organizations present (BBC Media Action, DASRA, Project Concern International, IPE Global, Ekjut, Alive & Thrive, World Vision India, Digital Green, GAIN, ACF,



Valid, C3i, Project Hope and Reach) introduced their work and area of operations in brief. Each organization proposed new ways to look at and tackle the issue within their area of expertise.

Ms. Mridula Sinha thanked all participants for the deliberations and recommendations and concluded that this consultation meeting, apart from bringing all stakeholders on a common platform in pursuing state nutrition goals and outlining next steps, helped create a forum towards a common goal, and generated a consensus for moving forward. Ms Marietou Satin thanked the Government of Jharkhand and the participants for their valuable contributions. She concluded by highlighting the importance to act immediately to fulfill the rights of India's children to nutrition and health.

Way Forward

1. The Director General, JSNM, requested partners to support Jharkhand State Nutrition Mission in filling the identified gaps through collaborative action.
2. Community based management of malnutrition and the first 1,000 days were identified as the key intervention areas.
3. 15th October 2016 onwards JSNM would be inviting and engaging in detailed dialogue with each of the organizations present and discuss their commitment and action plans with timeline and responsibilities.
4. JSNM proposes to hold the second consultation meeting early in 2017 with more technical inputs to evolve a state action plans with an aim of making Jharkhand malnutrition free in the next 10 years.
5. The Director General, JSNM, would reach out to selected organisations to help devise and streamline a viable state strategy that can help achieve state nutrition targets aligned with national goals, priorities and timelines.

Glimpses from the workshop ([for more pictures click here](#))



