Report on Poshan Mela

Organised by NCPCR an Initiative by
Ms. Rupa Kapoor Member, Child Health,
NCPCR

In Varanasi on
14-05-2018
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief Description of the Mela</td>
<td>4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>5-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCPCR</td>
<td>National Commission for Protection of Child Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFHS</td>
<td>National Family Health Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSOCHAM</td>
<td>The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSOC</td>
<td>Rapid Survey on Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCD</td>
<td>Women and Child Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Government Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children's Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICDS</td>
<td>Integrated Child Development Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICPS</td>
<td>Integrated Child Protection Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASHA</td>
<td>Accredited Social Health Activist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANM</td>
<td>Auxiliary Nurse Midwifery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nutritional level among children plays a crucial role in their overall mental and physical development. India is home to about 13.1% of all the children aged between 0-6 years in the world and hence, providing adequate nutrition and the basic health care facilities to all of them should hold a priority, because today’s children are tomorrow’s citizens. Child mortality is an important indicator of the country’s general medical and public health condition and hence the country’s level of socio-economic development.

India has one of the highest demographics of children suffering from Malnutrition. As per the NFHS 4 data, the prevalence of undernutrition is almost the same for boys and girls across the states in India. The national average weight at birth is less than 2.5 Kg for 19% of the children. The incidence of low birth-weight babies varied across different states, with Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh witnessing the highest number of underweight childbirths at 23%.

A report published jointly by ASSOCHAM and EY on 1*November, 2017 states how India is home to about 50% of undernourished children of the world.

According to the data revealed by the report, India is facing a serious threat of under-nutrition. About 37% of the children in India are underweight, 39% are stunted i.e. have low height-for-age, 21% are wasted i.e. have low weight-for-height and about 8% are severely malnourished. One of the primary reasons for the existence of such high levels of malnutrition can be the fact that only about 10 percent children under the age 6-23 months were reported to receive an adequate diet. Even wasting (low weight-for-height) occurs because of low intake of food and poor hygiene and sanitation, which can be seen in the context of poverty, poor hygiene, and sanitation. Moreover, 51 percent of the women of reproductive age suffer from anemia and more than 22 percent of adult women are overweight. The percentage of overweight men in the country is slightly lower and stands at 16 percent of adult men.

India is listed in the countries where child malnutrition and child mortality is alarmingly high. Nutrition is essential for survival. Adequate nutrition leads to proper development in the early stages of life. In spite of having largest food supplementation yet there access is challenging for many underprivileged citizens. Nearly half of the children under the age of five are underweight.
According to the data released by the Office of the Registrar General of India, indicate that although the mortality rate especially infant and the under-five mortality rate is declining over the years, yet there are some states where these rates are very high. This shows that instead of the progress in the healthcare sector in India, young population especially in the age group 0-6 years continuously lose their lives due to inadequate nutrition and proper care. The mortality rates and nutritional status of the children reflect the threats in child health.

According to Rapid Survey on Children (RSOC) data 38.7 percent of children were stunted, 15.1 percent were wasted and 29.4 percent of children were underweight in India in 2013-14 (RSOC 2013-14). Among the states, Uttar Pradesh (50.4) has the highest percentage of stunted children and underweight children with (34.3). The percentage of wasted and underweight children in India is 15.1 percent and 29.4 percent, respectively. The number of malnourished children are quite high in the country.

**Brief Description of the Mela**

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights has focused on the issues of malnutrition in Varanasi and accordingly a focused intervention is being carried out at Cholapur and Arajiline blocks of Varanasi. It is being seen whether a collaborative effort between WCD, Health, NGOs, and Commission can improve lives of malnourished children in these areas. The focus is being given on home-based rehabilitation with the use of local foods, hygiene and health measures. On Commission’s recommendation the National Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs) was established at the block level of Cholapur by Department of Women and Child Development, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, so that families of malnourished children could access the services easily.

To support the initiative, the District Programme Office, ICDS Varanasi in collaboration with NCPCR has organized a Poshan (Nutrition) Mela on 14th May 2018 at (5.30 P.M. – 7.30 P.M.) at Arajiline Block (near compound area), Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

**The objectives of organizing this Mela was**
- To create awareness and sensitize the beneficiaries on the issue of malnutrition
- To address the issue of malnutrition and to combat malnutrition in the Arajiline block
• To work in collaboration with different stakeholders like ICDS department Police personnel NGOs and beneficiary to combat the issue of malnutrition
• To showcase various schemes of Department of WCD,UP on nutrition

Overview

NCPCR in collaboration with District project office under the department of ICDS organized a Poshan Mela in Arajiline Block of Varanasi to address and combat the issue of malnutrition.

The Mela saw the participation of esteemed dignitaries like Smt. Rupa Kapoor Member, Health (NCPCR), Smt. Shaista K. Shah, STE, NCPCR, Smt Nagina Devi, Block Head Vikas Khand Arajiline, Chief Medical Officer Varanasi, Neelam Rai, District Program Officer Varanasi, Child Development officer District Varanasi, Chief Sevika district Varanasi and Different stakeholders NGOs Childline, Mamta UNICEF, Manav Aadhikar India also participated in the event.

The program was presided over by Child development administration Varanasi chief sevika (Anganwadi Worker) Smt. Nilu Mishra who welcomed the dignitaries and requested them to light the lamp after which a welcome song in the honor of the dignitaries was presented by child development workers.

The most interesting and attracting part of the Mela was the practical set up of the different informative stall on Health, Hygiene and Nutrition which was set up by the stakeholders like Child Development Department, Health Department, Child Protection Unit, Childline, Human Right Committee, and NGOs.
**Stall set up for the targeted Age group 0-6 years:**
As the focus of the child Mela was to address the issue of Child nutrition an informative stall containing information to address the nutrition and health belonging to different age group beginning from 0-6 month, was set up beautifully which disseminated information through posters banners about the positive indicators to improve their health and nutrition condition.

For proper age growth and development of a child a great deal of emphasis was laid on breastfeeding and as the child will develop after six months the mothers were sensitized about other digestive nutritious diet that a child needs through banners that contain a pictorial representation of food. Awareness on immunization of children was also given. Information about NRC center, facilities at NRC center for child and mother, facility of the ambulance and other government monetary services for the treatment of malnourished child was given in detail.

**Anganwadi Kendra:** A stall of Anganwadi Kendra was beautifully set up by Vedanta that focussed on different schemes available at Anganwadi Kendra for the age group 03-06 years. The Anganwadi Kendra had toys and LCD monitor that displayed informative songs to withhold the concentration of the children and made them aware of the beautiful environment of the Anganwadi Kendra
**Stall set up by Health Department:** The Child development department ICDS and health department had set up a stall focussing on the health aspect of the beneficiaries. They targeted the population in the age group from 0-6 years, adolescent girls and pregnant women. The beneficiaries were made aware of the immunization program available to the children and adolescent girls and pregnant women. Information about iron and folic acid was also given to the beneficiaries. Health check-up camp was also organized in collaboration with ASHA and ANM Workers.

**Pregnant and Lactating Mother:** To combat malnutrition pregnant mothers were sensitized to address the health status of the unborn child by getting proper treatment at NRC and taking nutritious diet through audio-based drama which was performed by the Anganwadi worker who talked about 10 important pointers which a woman must obey during pregnancy for a healthy child. The 10 pointers were based from the time of conceiving the child till the child is of one year and above. The information disseminated through important pointers was an eye-openers for the beneficiary.

To test the level of understanding of these ten pointers a small quiz was also played with the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries who successfully answered in the quiz were facilitated with a small token of gift which further motivated them to be a part of the program.

**Adolescent Help Desk:** As adolescent goes through different changes in their body they are often filled with doubt and confusion. To address such confusion a great deal of information on proper health and hygiene was disseminated to the beneficiaries through banners pamphlets. Through drama, a silent message was also shared to the adolescent girls about the ill effect of early marriage and how it also plays a role in giving birth to a malnourished child.

**ChildLine:** The Mela also emphasized on Child Rights and its awareness for which the Childline took the responsibility of sensitizing the beneficiaries. Through videos and audio, the Childline disseminated information about the importance of Childline helpline number, displayed and announced its helpline number 1098 for the beneficiaries. The child line also provided wristbands with
childline number on it to the children who participated in the Mela for their security.

**Mahila Samakhya:** Mahila Samakhya a NGO also set up a stall in the Mela where young girl through their creativity showed that they can use their wit and wisdom and create useful products for the society. It was also a motivation for many young beneficiaries to join their hands with them.

**Manav Adhikar NGO:** They set up a stall in the Mela and displayed through banners and posters about the variety of works done by them in Sewapuri Arjiline Block.

Apart from organizing stalls, a cultural programme based on the issue of malnutrition was organized by Anganwadi workers, Ramnagar protection homeboys, Rang Manch Theatre group.

**Inauguration of Cradle:** Amidst of these cultural plays and drama the ‘Cradle Palna’ facility for adopting the abandoned baby was inaugurated at the esteemed hands of the dignitaries by the ICPS Dept, Varanasi UP.

**Cultural Programmes on Theme:**

**Quwaali Folk song:** A folk song Quwaali based on the issue of malnutrition was performed by the Anganwadi worker. The song has the flavor of local folk music which appealed to the beneficiaries and captured their attention that laid emphasis on the role of Anganwadi workers.

**Drama:** To further sensitize the beneficiaries another cultural drama was performed by Rangmanch theatre group where through the story of Young married couple Budhwa and Buddhia the Dos and Don't during the time of pregnancies was shared. The beneficiaries were also made aware of the role of...
different stakeholders like the Anganwadi workers, Doctors, Government services etc. The major aspect of this roleplay was the ignorance of people which was highlighted by the character of fellow village men when it comes to taking care of their partner during the time of pregnancy which results in maternal and infant mortality. The issue of domestic violence, dowry system, alcoholism, Illiteracy and unhygienic condition was also highlighted.

The role of Anganwadi workers was constantly focussed which placed a greater ownership and responsibility on them as well as the trust of the community. During the time of pregnancies, a greater deal of emphasis was laid on consultation with the Anganwadi worker, timely visits to the hospital and timely immunization of the pregnant woman. Information like, the importance of feeding first breast milk colostrum, post child birth was also shared

**Drama by Anganwadi Workers:** A small drama which focussed on the responsibility and role of the family to combat the issue of malnutrition was also performed.

The symptoms of malnutrition and the severity of malnutrition were also shared through different color indicators like

- Red-Severe Acute Malnutrition
- Orange-Moderate Acute Malnutrition
- Yellow-Acute Malnutrition and
- Green–Child is well nourished

The role of Anganwadi with a Medical practitioner to address the issue of malnutrition was also shared. The provision for the treatment of a malnourished child was also made aware and the government service available for the treatment of malnourished child like a sum of Rs 100 per day is to be given to the beneficiaries. The child is to be admitted in NRC for a period of 14 days
where he is entitled to a sum of 1400 Rs, during the time of treatment of child the child and mother are entitled to government service which was also shared clearly and loudly. The importance of giving balanced diet to both the gender was discussed and the people were motivated to join their hands and raise their voice in order to make their block malnutrition free.

**Dance by Children from Ramnagar Boys home:** A heartwarming cultural dance play was performed by Ramnagar protection home Boys which depicted the condition of a child who was separated from their parents and mistreated at the hand of the community. The cultural dance awakened the sentiments of the audience.

The stalls captured the attention of thousands of participants including women and children from Arajline Block.

The Poshan Mela ended with the closing remarks from Smt. Rupa Kapoor Member, NCPCR where she talked about the silent killer malnutrition and the steps which one should adopt in order to combat malnutrition. She appreciated the collaborative efforts and shared her vision of organizing another Mela at the district level.

Smt. Nilu Mishra requested Ms. Rupa Kapoor Member, NCPCR to facilitate the efforts of people involved in the Mela and express her vote of thanks. The Mela ended on a positive note.

**Outcomes of the Mela**

- The awareness on the issue of malnutrition was created and steps to tackle malnutrition was understood by the beneficiaries
- The beneficiaries understood the role of different stakeholders on the issue of malnutrition and the mechanism to seek guidance from the stakeholder
- The information on NRC and its role were understood
- Pre and Postnatal care of the child was explained through cultural drama which sensitized the beneficiaries the importance of proper care during the time of pregnancy
- Information about nutritious food/diet was given that sensitized the beneficiaries about nutritious diet available at their disposal
- Call for another Poshan Mela was initiated