

Cyclone of malnutrition

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That child's eyes were almost closing, he was not even able to see properly. The possibility of his standing up is distant .He is a resident of Ramgadhwa village which is adjacent to Atraila, another small village.. There are 22 more children like Deepak in this village who are reeling under malnutrition. As such, the 'anganwadi' building of Atraila is quite magnificent but these children have no access to it. It is unfortunate for these children that they neither get anything from the anganwadi center nor are their names registered under the category of children affected by malnutrition.. The center is near their homes but they have no access there.



When the weight of only 23 children of Java Block of Rewa district was taken, not even a single child was found to be of normal weight. All of them were found to be suffering from malnutrition, whereas the anganwadi workers who belong to higher caste claim that not even a single child is suffering from malnutrition. Actually Rewa district has always been a fortress of

feudalism and caste distinctions have always kept the deprived classes at a distance. The same happened here. And till these children are not considered as suffering from malnutrition the probability of their treatment will remain remote.

83 PERCENT CHILDREN MALNUTRITIONED

The gravity of the situation arising due to malnutrition in this area can be gauged from the fact that in eight villages 83 % children are suffering from malnutrition. Out of these, 9% children are suffering from severe malnutrition. In the villages of Mohaniya and Ramgadhwa of Jawa development block the situation is very serious. If we are to believe the 12th round of the Bal Sanjeevani campaign then the percentage of malnutrition is 48 in Rewa district when the serious cases of malnutrition are .54. In fact these 8 villages tell a different story which appears very grave.

Name of the village	Total no.of children who were weighed	Mal. Grade 1	Mal. Grade 2	Mal. Grade 3	Mal. Grade 4	Normal
Ramgadwa	23	10	4	8	1	0
Kuraily (Koni)	9	3	2	1	0	3
Mohaniya	5	1	2	0	2	0
Kalyanpur	7	0	1	4	2	0
Ram nagar	13	2	8	2	1	0
Kuthila	4	0	2	1	1	0
Harijanpur	10	0	0	0	0	10
Khaptiha	02	0	2	0	0	0
Total	73	16	21	16	7	13
Percent-age	100	21.9	28.9	21.9	9.58	17.00
Reference : Analysis of the weights taken by independent groups in each village in the						

presence of the people between 25th -30th September '09.

When the district officer in charge of the Woman & Child Welfare Dept. was asked for information regarding malnutrition cases, he replied that he is not authorized to talk to the media regarding the data. Only the collector will talk about malnutrition. So what should be inferred by this? The question here is, why will only the collector talk about this data? Due to this ambiguous situation a clear picture regarding malnutrition is not visible. Due to the effect of feudalism they are kept at a distance from their rights.

NUTRITION REHABILITATION CENTER. (NRC)

We are all aware that children who are suffering from severe malnutrition are admitted to the NRC for 14 days where they are treated completely and re examined 4 times, thereafter. But when these children are sent to the NRC they are sent back and advised to wait for their turn.

The same thing happened with Amar, seen in the picture alongside. One year Amar belongs to Ramnagar village and when his father Raghuvansh took him to the NRC for getting him admitting in Java a month back, he was sent back twice. He was also advised to wait for his turn. It should be known that 6 children are suffering from malnutrition in Ramnagar.



Ever since January 2008 when the NRC was started in the Community Health Center at Java it has had a capacity of only 10 beds. This means that only 10 children can be admitted there at one time. Other than this not a single additional child can be admitted even though he may be suffering from severe malnutrition and may even lose his life. Does that mean that the children will be admitted only when the authorities want.

WRONG FIGURES ARE PRODUCED BY THE WCD

There is neither a pediatrician nor an A.N.M. for this NRC, due to which a lot of difficulty is faced in the management. Shri M K Pande, (Block Medical Officer) acknowledges that he is unable to admit more children due to shortage of capacity although malnutrition is widespread in the area. The Women and Child Development department is trying to hide the real picture by producing erroneous figures. The figures produced by them after the survey are incorrect. In actual fact the situation is much worse. They also say that the children brought to the NRC are not examined on time. Even if the children have come once it is not clear as to what happens to them in future.

Left to Die

On the 30 of September '09 36 children from 22 villages were brought for being admitted to the NRC at Java village but only 10 were admitted and the remaining 26 were sent back. Now these children could live or die! The government did not take any responsibility for this. In simple terms

these children were left to die. The administration did not even consider referring them elsewhere.

15,000 CHILDREN DIED IN LAST THREE YEARS

According to the figure based on the infant mortality rate (72/1000) on an average 1.25 lakh children die in the state per year. In Rewa district, according to the infant mortality rate, on an average 4000 children die every year. If we are to believe the figures, 15,000 children have died in the last three years. Just in this year 1869 children have succumbed to death between April and September.

Two types of conflicting figures are seen in the table. According to the registration carried out by the

Year	Infant deaths (according to the Government)	Actual deaths (according to the Mortality rate)	Difference
2006-07	1324	4386	3062
2007-08	972	4833	3861
2008-09	702	3928	3226
Sept 2009	503	1869	1366
Total	2998	15016	12018
Reference: M.P. Government Health Department			

government 3000 children have died in three years but 15,000 children have died in Rewa district according to the death rate even though they were not registered. It means that the government did not exhibit these figure of 12,000 deaths on the website thus giving false figures. These are figures for infants only,

but if we consider figures for children upto 5 years this crosses 20,000.

SORRY STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE STATE

The figures of the third round of the National Family Health Survey reveal that in Madhya Pradesh 60 % children are suffering from malnutrition which is much scarier than the national average of 42.5 %. Out of these children also 13 % are affected by extreme malnutrition. According to the sample registration carried out by the Family & Health Welfare Dept. of the Government of India, in Madhya Pradesh 72 children below 1 year of age die for every 1000 children born live, which is the highest in the country. This means that in the state 1 lakh and 33 thousand infants die every year. 82 % children of the state are in the grip of anemia, that is, lack of blood. In spite of this only 186 NRCs are being run in the state, which is highly insufficient.

No serious efforts are being made to combat malnutrition in the state, wherever children die due to malnutrition some immediate action is taken but subsequently things return to their slovenly slipshod pace. This is visible from the fact that even though 60% children are suffering from malnutrition, the state government has neither formulated a nutrition policy nor has any serious effort been made to combat the scourge of malnutrition.