



# PHRN NEWSLETTER

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## IN THIS ISSUE

### EDITORIAL

#### PHRN@18 and PHRS @15: Some thoughts and a call

This year, the Public Health Resource Network (PHRN) has achieved citizenship age of 18 years, and the Public Health Resource Society (PHRS) entered 15<sup>th</sup> year of its foundation. During the initial 3 years till the formation of PHRS in 2008, the PHRN was hosted as the extension unit of the State Health Resource Centre in Chhattisgarh, PHRN's mother organisation. As one of the persons at the centre of affairs of PHRN and PHRS from the very beginning, except for 4-5 years in between, I was trying to look back the years we passed and think about where and how to set out its future course of focus and action.

What all were the key achievements of the PHRN during these 18 years? I was trying to list 15-18 such important milestones:

- Building focus onto the most needy and challenging states of India, bringing several other actors forward, as a response to the key challenges faced by the National Rural Health Mission
- Setting the capacity building agenda under the National Rural Health Mission
- Bringing out training material for district health planning in both English and Hindi languages, on 18 important topics that are critical for district level action
- Setting up a well pursued post-graduate education program in district health planning in partnership with the Indira Gandhi National Open University
- Setting up collaborative initiatives with internationally renowned academic centres on public health
- Training and forming teams of trained public health personnel across 100 districts of India, both

from the public health systems and the civil society

- Supporting districts and blocks for planning and action at the community level, through community health fellowship programs
- Bringing forward key determinants of health outcomes such as community participation, water and sanitation and related issues, as key components of health action
- Building actions for health of most vulnerable tribal populations
- Contributing critical evidences for health policy and systems strengthening across states and at national, international levels
- Shedding attention on the health-related human rights, through partnerships with National Human Rights Commission and people's movements on health
- Building convergent action on health and nutrition
- Suggesting strategies for health and nutrition of children under six
- Demonstrating viable models for health and nutrition of children under three, through models of community run crèches
- Working together with government as well as civil society initiatives for building evidence-based policies and action on food and nutrition security
- Organising international knowledge events on malnutrition, in order to build policy focus on the issue of double-burden of malnutrition
- Building models for Improving health and lives of adolescent populations
- Building community-led action models during the pandemic

There are more, but I think these form the key ones at this point.

### EDITORIAL

#### NEWS FROM SECRETARIAT

*Mobile Crèches Training on Health and Nutrition*

*Prevalence and causes of malnutrition among U5 children in selected geographies of India*

*Advocacy for Importance of Girl Child through Evidence Generation and Mass Media Campaign in Jharkhand*

*Internship program of PHRS*

*Invitation for National Conclave on Sustainable Food systems*

*JSA-NCC Meeting*

*Report of the fact-finding, rice fortification, Jharkhand*

#### NEWS FROM ODISHA

*Updates on Mainstreaming Crèches to Reduce Malnutrition in Odisha*

*Odisha PVTG Nutrition Improvement Programme*

*Capacity Building of NCs and GNPA*

*Visits to the crèches and SFCs*

*Capacity building intervention of women of SHGs on health and nutrition*

*PHRS team supported the TOT programme of ICDS as a resource person in the Kalahandi district*

*Collective efforts aided in resolving issues in Turunji creche*

*Community members of Guruthi village proved their contribution is not only as co-operating users but also as owners of the creche*

#### NEWS FROM JHARKHAND

*Case Study of Bridge Education AGYW "Binita Tirkey"*

*Update on Suposhit Godda programme*

#### NEWS FROM CHHATTISGARH

*Rejected Lancet Letter on Primary Health Care Financing*

*Flawed prescription for PHC financing*

*Publications*

#### STAFF NEWS

Now, while all these are critical contributions and interventions, are these enough? The answer is NO. There are much more to do and achieve, over the years to come. I recall the report of the get together in 2018, to celebrate PHRS' completing one decade of its foundation wherein there were several important areas for focus has been discussed and agreed upon, for the future course of action. While the last few years have been challenging for the functioning of non-government organisations including PHRS, it is important to regain strengths and build further much awaited action agenda of this network and organisation, and move forward. Maybe for the upcoming five years, while the PHRS will turn twenty and the PHRN, twenty-three, we may need to focus on the following issues:

- Revamping the network, by way

of identifying and including more public health leaders and actors, and expanding the action into the next set of challenging themes and geographies

- Expanding the work for the health and nutrition of the most marginalised population groups and communities
- Renewing the agenda of health systems strengthening at state, district and local levels based on the new developments that happened and learnings from the pandemic, and preparing action models for the same
- Building attention on the rural and urban local self-governments or Panchayati Raj Institutions and strengthening their capacities for planning and imparting health and nutrition initiatives
- Looking at the emerging needs, reviewing and revising the

knowledge contents for public health and nutrition action at district and block level

I think these make sense. Maybe more is needed. As the present National Convenor of the PHRN, I invite thoughts from colleagues and readers to share thoughts and suggestions, also commitments from their end in terms of how they can contribute in this much needed mission. As we wrote at the inception, **"A mission needs missionaries and it needs them where the challenges are highest"**.

Looking forward to your suggestions and commitments

Mr. V R Raman  
National Convenor  
Public Health resource Society



## NEWS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

### Training on Health and Nutrition

*(Dr. Nousheen Fatima)*

PHRS conducted a two-day training for Mobile Crèches team on health and nutrition on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of May, 2022. The training was facilitated by Dr. Vandana Prasad (Technical Advisor, PHRS), Mr. Shah Nawaz Khan (Senior Programme Coordinator, PHRS), Dr. Aditi Hegde (Senior Programme Coordinator, PHRS) and Dr. Nousheen Fatima (Programme coordinator) from PHRS. On day one; Dr. Vandana Prasad and Dr. Aditi Hegde undertook multiple sessions across the spectrum of malnutrition including food, nutrition, hunger, lifecycle approach and first 1000 days etc. The various causes of malnutrition were explained to the team using UNICEF and Lancet framework.

A group activity session was also undertaken in which Mobile crèches team was divided in three groups to design a comprehensive intervention to address the issue of malnutrition following which a brief group presentation on designed intervention was also done.

On the second day, technical theory session was undertaken by Mr. Shah Nawaz Khan and Dr. Aditi Hegde on Anthropometry following which a practical session on anthropometric measurements was also conducted. The training ended with a question answer session and vote of thanks.

### Prevalence and causes of malnutrition among under-five children in selected geographies of India

*(Dr. Nousheen Fatima)*

PHRS is conducting a research study that is supported by the National Human Rights Commission, New Delhi on malnutrition among under-five children enrolled at the Anganwadi centres across four sites in India namely Delhi, Odisha, Rajasthan and Assam. Along with continued desk review; a comprehensive study protocol and data collection tools were developed. Ethical clearance was granted to the study following a meeting with the members for Institute Ethics Committee. A pilot survey has also been initiated to examine and validate the methods and procedures of the study.

### Advocacy for Importance of Girl Child through Evidence Generation and Mass Media Campaign in Jharkhand

*(Dr. Aditi Hegde)*

Public Health Resource Society is undertaking a project titled 'Advocacy for Importance of Girl Child through Evidence Generation and Mass Media Campaign in Jharkhand' in 20 villages of Madhupur block, Deoghar district, Jharkhand. This project is supported by Jhpiego India under the aegis of 'Momentum Country and Global Leadership'. The 10-month project includes components of research, implementation, and advocacy. While the formative study includes both quantitative and qualitative elements, the case study documentation is purely qualitative and will take place throughout the project. Further, the project includes community mobilization and peer advocacy which will strategically address the issues identified in the formative study. Lastly, appropriate, community-based mass media techniques - such as local groups performing street plays and youth clubs taking out rallies - will be implemented across all the selected villages.



*Training for Mobile Crèche team in Delhi*

### **Internship program of PHRS (Dr. Nousheen Fatima)**

PHRS has been successfully running its internship programme to provide orientation and practical exposure to students/volunteers from various fields and institutions. In this quarter, four stu-

dents namely; Ms. Nidhi Ahlawat, Mr. Ashish Sharma, Ms. Anjali Sharma and Ms. Shveta Nagar joined PHRS national office as interns for a period of one month. Ms. Nidhi Ahlawat has a Bachelor degree in Food Technology along a Diploma in Dietetics and Public

Health Nutrition. Mr. Ashish Sharma has a Master's degree in Political Science, Ms. Anjali Sharma has a Bachelor degree in Pharmacy and Ms. Shveta has a Bachelor degree in Arts (Sociology). These interns are enrolled in the Master of Public Health course, batch 2021-2023 in Ambedkar University, New Delhi.



*Ms. Nidhi Ahlawat and Ms. Shveta Nagar visiting an Anganwadi centre*

Mr. V R Raman (National Convener, PHRS), Dr. Rupa Prasad (Executive Director, PHRS) and Dr. Aditi Hegde (Sr. Program Coordinator, PHRS) are mentoring these interns. From designing a research proposal to doing a pilot survey in the field, interns were exposed to various transects of a research study. Orientation sessions for interns on urban health and health systems, literature review etc were undertaken by Mr. V R Raman and Dr. Aditi Hegde .

### **National Conclave on Sustainable Food systems (Dr. Nousheen Fatima)**

Dr. Vandana Prasad (Technical Advisor, PHRS) was invited to CSE's 'National Conclave on Sustainable Food Systems' held between 19th and 21st April, 2022 at Anil Agarwal Environment Training Institute at Nimli, Rajasthan. The meeting involved discussions across array of topics such as benefits of non-chemical agriculture, need for front-of-pack warning labels, State-level initiatives for better market for non-chemical food produce, Farmer Producer Organisations for promotion of non-chemical agriculture, growing intensive food-animal systems at the risk of antimicrobial resistance, zoonosis, biodiversity and climate change and sustainable food systems for

better nutrition, livelihood, environment and climate etc.

### **JSA-NCC Meeting (Dr. Nousheen Fatima)**

PHRN has been a member of Jan Swasthya Abhiyaan since its inception. JSA organised its National Coordination Committee meeting on 14th and 15th of May 2022 in New Delhi. Mr. V.R. Raman (National Convener, PHRS), Dr. Rupa Prasad (Executive Director, PHRS), Dr. Sulakshana Nandi (State Convener, PHRN, Chhattisgarh) and Dr. Nousheen Fatima (Programme Coordinator, PHRS) attended the two day meeting. During this meeting, discussions were held on the updates of major decisions taken in the previous JSA-NCC meeting and organisational framework of JSA at the national level was discussed in detail.

### **Report of the fact-finding, rice fortification, Jharkhand**

Dr. Vandana Prasad accompanied a team to Jharkhand for a fact finding visit on 'rice fortification in government food schemes' from 8th to 11th of May, 2022. The team visited Khunti, Ranchi and East Singhbhum district. The Fact-Finding team concluded that Jharkhand Government needs to reject rice fortification in government food schemes as an approach to tackling malnutrition, and should communicate the same to the Government of India immediately.

Some observations can be found here:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jqarV\\_9LCJ3qYH0P3WfkWdHTVe4zssEb/view?usp=drivesdk](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jqarV_9LCJ3qYH0P3WfkWdHTVe4zssEb/view?usp=drivesdk)

## NEWS FROM ODISHA

### Updates on Mainstreaming Crèches to Reduce Malnutrition in Odisha

(Mr. Shahnawaz Khan)

#### State Programme Management Unit for crèches in Odisha

One of the objectives of the project “Mainstreaming Crèches to Reduce Malnutrition in Odisha” is to assist the mainstreaming and scale-up of the community-based crèches in the state of Odisha. The Department of Women & Child Development is the parent department for all the initiatives related to the development of women and children. Thus, it is imperative to have greater involvement with the de-

partment on day-to-day basis. Public Health Resource Society has set-up an SPMU at the state level to support all crèche initiatives in the state. The SPMU has been supporting the ST&SC Development Department, Govt. of Odisha in the implementation of the crèche and other initiatives for more than a year. Now, PHRS has also started supporting the DW&CD, Govt. of Odisha and a team has started functioning from the DW&CD office at the state secretariat, Odisha.

#### Mainstreaming 125 crèches under Kalika scheme

150 crèches under the project “Mainstreaming Crèches to Reduce

Malnutrition in Odisha” were initiated in five districts of Odisha by Public Health Resource Society with the financial support from Azim Premji Foundation in partnership with DW&CD, Govt. of Odisha. After a successful implementation of the project, 25 of the crèches were taken over by the ST&SC Development Department, Govt. of Odisha in April 2021 while the remaining 125 crèches continue to run by PHRS and APF. Now, the Department of W&CD has given a go ahead in taking over the remaining crèches and to function them with the state funding. These crèches will soon be taken over by the department by the month of October 2022.

#### Odisha PVTG Nutrition Improvement Programme

(Ms. Swati Priyambada Das)

With the re-opening of Anganwadi centres in the state of Odisha from 28th March, 2022, the new crèche centres, and SFCs under OPNIP were made operational across all the 17 MPAs with the serving of Hot Cooked Meal (HCM) at both the crèches and Spot Feeding Centres (SFC) from 7th April, 2022. A total of 61 crèches (new + existing), 75 (out of planned 131) SFCs started serving HCM at the centres. The 169 planned MSFCs are currently on hold as the geographies are overlapping with that of the SOPAN intervention of WCD and clarity on the same has been sought. The opening saw great excitement from the community, especially the children who were delighted to see the colorful outdoor play equipment and enjoyed playing on these. Mothers were happy to see the children having a good time and stayed on to support the cooking and feeding of the children. SHG members also participated in helping the crèche

workers in serving the HCM. At the tagged villages where SFCs were made operational it was heartening to see the children dressed in their AWC uniforms sitting down together to enjoy

their lunch. Many GPNAs are even imparting some basic ECCE activities at these centres and it is wonderful to see the children actively doing these activities.



**Capacity Building**  
*(Ms. Swati Priyambada Das)*

During this time, capacity building of the Nutrition Coordinators (NCs) and Gram Panchayat Nutrition Assistants (GPNAs) was also undertaken on different themes. A training on Safety, Security Norms and Health Hygiene Practice for Children under OPNIP was convened through the virtual mode on 6th May, 2022. Resource persons from Technical Support Unit (TSU)/Nutrition HUB, WCD, Govt of Odisha imparted the ses-

sions. An Orientation on e-Kalika for NCs & GPNAs was held on 13th May, 2022 again on virtual platform. A state level training programme on 'Health, Nutrition & Education for PVTG Community" for NCs & GPNAs was held on 24th-25th May, 2022 at Bhubaneswar. Resource persons from different departments and organizations such as SSD, WCD, NHM, UNICEF interacted with the participants. Sessions on schemes under different departments for women and children and the PVTG community were held. The

sessions saw active participation from the NCs and NAs who were eager to learn how these services could better reach the community and shared their experiences from the field regarding these services. A review meeting chaired by the Programme Director (PD) OPELIP was also convened on the concluding day. Presentations on the progress of OPNIP from all the 17 MPAs were made by NCs and NAs. There was also a discussion on issues and challenges faced by them in their areas.



**Visits to the crèches and SFCs**  
*(Dr. Swagata Tarafdar)*

Subsequent to the opening, the OPNIP centres across the MPAs have seen many visits by various dignitaries in this period. Sh. Arjun Munda, Hon Min of Tribal Affairs, GoI visited the crèche centre at Banigaon, KKDA Lanjigarh.





Ms. Roopa Mishra, Joint secretary (SBM), Mo-HUA visited creche centre at S. Lobarsing, SDA, Chandragiri.

Visit of Programme Director, OPELIP to creche centre in SDA, Chandragiri and SFC at PBDA, Rugdakudara



UNICEF team visited creche centre at Durdura village, HKMDA Jashipur

**“Capacity building intervention of women of SHGs on health and nutrition”**

**(Mr. Satya Pattnaik)**

With the completion of Capacity Building project in Puri supported by GAIL Gas Limited, PHRS decided to continue the intervention with internal funding while scouting for funding opportunities with other CSR projects in Puri. This six months extension starting from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2022 was granted keeping in view the community demands and district health administration and ICDS officials support to continue the intervention. Major activities

undertaken during the last quarter are as follows:

- The emergence of Saharanchal swasthya O’ Poshan Sabha has provided platform to the SHG women as well other stakeholders of the intervention area to continue the advocacy efforts on health and nutrition as well as strengthen PRHN network activities in the Puri district.
- PLA meetings are being undertaken by the change vectors with supportive supervision of program facilitators across themes such as rights and enti-

tlements, IYCF practices, gender and adolescent health.

- The patients identified with NCDs such as diabetes and hypertension are followed up for regular check-ups and counselling
- The project team facilitated two RBSK camps in each intervention areas
- The program facilitators are undertaking growth monitoring for children under six and are also recording BMI of the SHG women.

**PHRS team supported the TOT programme of ICDS as a resource person in the Kalahandi district**

*(Ms. Pramita Satapathy)*

Since the inception of the project “Mainstreaming Crèches to Reduce Malnutrition in Odisha” PHRS has been working in close coordination with the ICDS from the grass root to the district level in the Kalahandi district. Most of the time the ICDS and PHRS teams jointly visit the crèches and exchange ideas for the better functioning of crèches. The ICDS team has clearly understood the efforts that have been made by the PHRS team for ensuring optimum growth and development in the first 1000 days of a child’s life by providing a stimulating environment. Apart from that, for transforming the knowledge and the practices on children’s growth and development at the community level, repeated meetings and

training are being conducted by PHRS. With this recognition, our district lead – Kalahandi Mr Mukesh Behera was requested by the office of the District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) for providing facilitation support (virtual mode) during the district-level Master Trainers (DLMT) training on early childhood care and Development. As per the request, Mukesh participated in the event in virtual mode on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2022 and facilitated the session on “the importance of nutrition for brain development and home-based stimulation practices in the early childhood period”. A total of 13 CDPOs and 73 lady supervisors of ICDS participated in the training. During the session, he highlighted the important practices being undertaken by the crèche workers at the crèche and their impact on children, discussed how a stimulating environment will help in the development

process, the responsibilities of parents and caregivers to engage children in different learning activities, some safety measures for children focusing on the factors that affect children’s growth and development, guided in the preparation of low-cost and no-cost ECCE materials for children at the AWCs. He focused on the relation of nutrition with growth and development. He emphasized the importance of interaction with children by telling fun stories, talking about the shapes, colors, textures and tastes of food the child is eating etc., and mentioned forcing or intimidating children would not help quality feeding.

Lastly, he suggested participants identify the actual gap in the implementation process of ECCE activities and provide supervision support to the AWWs would help to ensure the growth and development of children at an early age.

**Collective efforts aided in resolving issues in Turunji creche**  
*(Ms. Pramita Satapathy)*

The collective effort made by Turunji creche committee of Nabarangpur district was truly magnificent. After the reopening of crèches in the month of April 2022, it was difficult for the mothers of Turunji crèche to leave their children at the crèche for the whole day due to the heat wave. The current enrolment of the creche is 15. Every day after lunch, mothers take their children home. Looking into the conditions, the crèche workers organised a crèche committee meeting to find out a solution. They discussed the matter with the mothers and explained that along with getting proper nutrition, enough

sleep is essential for children to grow and function their best as well. And under three age is the appropriate period for the rapid growth of children. So, feeding, resting, and playing are more important for children at this age. The district coordinator wanted to know if the non-functioning of the existing fan is the only problem for mothers not to leave their children at the crèche, then he will try to repair the fan, but it might take time. Hence, he asked mothers to discuss it among themselves and let him know the alternative to resolve this issue. However, children’s care is important. Discussing the matter among themselves, crèche committee mothers decided to purchase a new fan and install it at the crèche to get the release from

heat wave conditions so they can leave their children at the crèche for the whole day. For making it happen they decided to contribute Rs. 50/- each and the crèche workers volunteered to contribute Rs. 100/- each. From the crèche balance money, they decided to utilise Rs.200/-. All total, they had Rs.1200/- for purchasing fans. On the same day, by taking the support of some male persons of the village they bought two wall fans at the cost of Rs.600 each and installed them at the crèche. Every member was there when the fans were installed, and it was an exciting movement for all the mothers and children. The mothers proved that, unitedly, they can solve any issue or challenge for the betterment of the community and live life happily.



**Community members of Guruthi village proved their contribution is not only as co-operating users but also as owners of the crèche**  
*(Ms. Pramita Satapathy)*

Community participation is the cornerstone of good governance and the PHRS has been giving importance to community participation in the sustainable management of crèches across the five districts of south Odisha. And it is ex-



perienced that in most of the crèches community participation is found impressive. Here is one example of Guruthi village of Rayagada district where the community has come forward to provide crèche children with a safe place to stay. They have contributed to the crèche implementation process not only as co-operating users but also the owner-managers. The Guruthi crèche is being run in a government building. Everything was going well, and the community supported the crèche's day-to-day management. Once the crèche workers noticed that the back side wall of the crèche house is getting damaged due to rain and gradually soil erosion is happening. Around the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of June 2022 due to heavy

rain, the foundation of the house started weakening. Crèche workers were worried about the safety and security of the children coming to the crèche due to the weak condition of the wall. They were looking for guidance and support to resolve the issue.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022 during the block level review meeting of crèche workers, every crèche worker was requested to share the progress

and any challenge they are facing with the implementation of the crèche. During the discussion, the crèche workers Sita didi and Bhabani didi of Guruthi crèche shared the challenges they are facing due to the weak condition of the crèche house. After listening to all the issues from the crèche workers it was facilitated by the DCPMU and PMU team members about the role of the crèche committee and the community in the village development process. A motivational session on the coordination role of crèche workers and the importance of strengthening the crèche committee was done. That stimulated all the crèche workers to put their best effort into resolving community-level issues in the crèche implementa-

tion process. With this inspiration both the crèche workers of Guruthi village discussed the crèche house issue with some crèche committee mothers immediately after returning to their village.

They decided to discuss the matter with all the villagers and youth groups in the village meeting which was supposed to happen on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2022. On 26<sup>th</sup> June night, the meeting was held and where the

crèche workers raised this matter before the village committee emphasizing the safety front of children coming to the crèche. Crèche committee mothers requested villagers' support for the crèche house repair work. A decision was taken by the village committee that, next day nobody will go outside for work, and all will contribute to repairing the

crèche house foundation and wall. As decided in the village committee meeting, on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022 nobody went out for work and contributed to the crèche house repair work. By utilizing the crèche balance money Rs 485/- and adding Rs. 265/- (contributed by the crèche workers) they purchased two bags of cement and other materials like stone, pebbles collected from the village and sand they brought from the river. Within a day they completed the 40 feet long foundation and other repair work of the crèche house. Now, all are happy that they could able to create a safe environment for their children and the centre is functioning well. It shows the true spirit of community participation in the development process.

## NEWS FROM JHARKHAND

### Case Study of Bridge Education AGYW "Binita Tirkey" (Mr. Rajesh Shrivastava)



My name is Binita Tirkey and I am a permanent resident of Chandna village of Pakuria block. My Panchayat name is Bichpahari and I am a member of Tejaswini Club Salpani. Before joining the Tejaswini project, I was busy with my domestic work. I was lived every time inside the house. I could not even talk to anyone about my problem and was very Scared to talk to anyone. But one day survey of Tejaswini project was being done in my village by CCC. That day CCC had also come to my house to conduct a survey. After that CCC informed me and my family members about Tejaswini project in details and requested me to come to Salpani Anganwadi. Where she was told that Tejaswini project is run by Women and Child Development and Government of Jharkhand and World Bank. Which is working with adolescent girls in the age group of 14 to 24 in 17 districts of Jharkhand. The main objective of this project is social and economic empowerment of adolescent girls in the age group of 14 to 24 years. For which girls who have been deprived of education of 14 to 20 years of age have to be re-educated and girls of 16 to 24 years of age have to be connected with employment and self-

employment by providing training according to the demand of the market. After that Tejaswini Club was formed on 11/12/2019 and we decided the club named is Tejaswini Club Salpani. After that Peer Leader was elected and I was also made a member of that club. After that we take seven days orientation training by the youth facilitator and the CCC. In which I got to know a lot about the project and since then I started attending weekly club meetings regularly. After which I became friends with many AGYW's and we all started listening to each other's problems and also started giving suggestions for solutions. Then suddenly my family members started refusing me to go to the club. But I didn't give up and kept attending club meetings. I was attending meetings regularly. Then the four modules of life skills education organised from time to time in my TC for 5-5 days. In which I got to



learn a lot. Which I am using in my life. In which I got to know about the obstacles coming in life and its solution. About which I talked to my family members and now I am not forbidden by my family members to come to the meeting and now I solve such problems in other houses around me also. After joining the club, I am not afraid to talk to anyone. I can talk to everyone and I can put my points in front of everyone. By

joining the club, I have got a very big and good platform to move forward in life. After that it was told by the CCC of the club and the youth facilitator that the AGYW's (who have missed their studies) in the age group of 14 to 20 of the club, all of them will get a chance to join studies again through bridge education. After which I got detailed information about Bridge Education and informed my family members about it. I really wanted to join studies. After which I informed my family members about filling the bridge education form and requested to get my admission also. After a lot of Struggle, the family members ordered for admission. After which I immediately met CCC didi, filled my form and submitted. I chose Bridge Education to get back to my drop education and to stand on my own feet. After all this, CCC didi called me to the club one day and took my pre-test. After which our first Bridge Education School was inaugurated in Tejaswini Block Office Pakuria. School was very far from my village. Still, I did not leave school and continued to go to the school. After which a new Bridge Education school was started in my panchayat in

Ramdevkundi. Which was close to my house. Where I go to school every day. I am very happy to be Joined with Tejaswini Project and Bridge Education Program. Bridge Education has supported me in fulfilling my dream and goal and the project has given me a beautiful platform to make a Future and identity in my village and society.

**Thank You So Much "Tejaswini Project"**

### **Suposhit Godda Programme (Mr. Rahul Chandra)**

PHRS has partnered with UNICEF to support the Godda District Administration in strengthening the 'Suposhit Godda' programme. This programme is focused on community based management of Severely Acute Malnourished (SAM) children and is funded by the District Mineral Foundation Trust, Godda. While it is currently being implemented in two blocks of Godda - Sunderpahadi and Poraiyahat, the

programme will be scaled up across all the Anganwadi centres in the district.

- As part of the implementation, PHRS has been providing hand-holding support to ASHAs, AWWs and ANMs (AAA) during VHSNDs, sector meetings etc.
- PHRS facilitated a one-day orientation session for the AAA on the programme protocol on 24 June 2022, in the presence of the MOIC of Sundarpahari CHC.

- Refresher trainings were undertaken for AWWs on the protocol and reporting formats of the programme during their monthly review meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

- A three day training of trainers was undertaken for by Ms. Pratima Singh and Ms. Madhushree Banerjee from UNICEF with facilitatory support from PHRS between 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> June. This training was held to orient AAA on maternal nutrition.

## **NEWS FROM CHHATTISGARH**

### **Rejected Lancet Letter on Primary Health Care Financing (Dr. Sulakshana Nandi)**

*Sulakshana Nandi (PHRN Chhattisgarh) co-wrote a Correspondence that was submitted to The Lancet Global Health on 21 April 2022 in response to the article titled "The Lancet Global Health Commission on financing primary health care: putting people at the centre" (published on 04 April 2022). It puts forth some of the key concerns regarding the Commission's Recommendations. This letter was rejected by the journal and can be read on PHM's website and here:*

### **Flawed prescription for PHC financing**

The Lancet Global Health Commission for financing primary health care (PHC) claims to provide evidence-based lessons, putting people at the centre (1).

Unfortunately, its recommendations are neither evidence-based nor people-centered because they fail to address the crucial role played by the public sector in PHC provisioning. The Commission makes a distinction between essential public health functions and basic health interventions, erroneously presenting only the former as public goods while placing the latter under market's purview. The Commission highlights the advantages of public financing of PHC, including low cost and great-

er equity, without acknowledging that private sector involvement in financing and delivery will eventually compromise both (2).

In recommending publicly-funded PHC "packages", free at points of use, financed through capitation-based payment, within "pluralistic" healthcare systems, to ward off market failure, the Commission ignores evidence that private ownership of PHC has been a fiasco (3).

The Commission misrepresents the Thailand example by overlooking the predominant role of public provisioning in expanding PHC. Additionally, it side-steps experiences of Costa Rica, Cuba, Sri Lanka and other Majority World health systems that have achieved remarkable improvements in PHC by relying on public sector provisioning (4).

The discussion of PHC financing in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic omits the price gouging and profiteering of for-profit providers and private sector contracting disasters throughout the pandemic (5).

Moreover, the Commission's approach marginalises people-centered perspectives. Distorting and bowdlerizing critical political economy approaches, the Commission distills long-standing people's struggles over power and resources in such settings as Kerala and Costa Rica, to questions of "social contracts" sanitized of the role of (left-wing) politics. In sum,

the Commission's findings present (pro-private sector) ideology rather than bona fide evidence. Public funding alone will never deliver people-centered PHC unless it is publicly provided and remains free of profit imperatives.

### **Publications**

**By Sulakshana Nandi, Samir Garg, Ramya Kumar, Roman Vega-Romero and Anne-Emanuelle Birn**

*The pdf of the letter can be found here:*

[https://phmovement.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Correspondence\\_Lancet-PHC-Financing-Commission.pdf](https://phmovement.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Correspondence_Lancet-PHC-Financing-Commission.pdf)

*Subsequent to PHM self publishing its above letter, the internal response by the authors of Lancet letter was made public and can be read here:*

<https://www.thelancet.com/commissions/financing-primary-health-care>

Sulakshana Nandi was invited to speak as part of the webinar series titled "Health Economics and Policy in South Asia" organised by the Young Scholars Initiative's South Asia Working Group on 28<sup>th</sup> March. She presented on Implications of publicly funded health insurance (PFHI) schemes for UHC in LMICs. The recording of the talk is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZPbl3vNmus>

## STAFF NEWS

S.no.	Name	Designation
<b><i>Following colleagues have joined PHRS</i></b>		
1.	Ajit Yadav	Accountant, Delhi
2.	Rahul Chandra	Programme Coordinator, Jharkhand
3.	Roushan Kumar Jha	Block Coordinator, Jharkhand
4.	Satya Ranjan Bhagat	Block Coordinator, Jharkhand
5.	Putul Kumari	Block Coordinator, Jharkhand
6.	Anshumaan Kashyap	Data Entry Operator, Jharkhand
7.	Manoj Kumar Nayak	Block Project Coordinator, Odisha
<b><i>Following colleagues have transitioned from PHRS</i></b>		
8.	Mahamaya Mahadeb Pal	Programme Coordinator, Odisha
9.	Binash Kumar Mishra	Accounts and Logistic Assistant, Odisha

Mr. Suryakant Nayak, who has been working as a Block Project Coordinator in Nabarangpur block for past three years has now been promoted as the Lead Project Coordinator in Nabarangpur district, Odisha.

Public Health Resource Network (PHRN) is a growing network of individuals and organizations with the perspective of strengthening technical and management capacities to take action towards the common goal of 'Health for All'. Its main objective is to contribute and strengthen all efforts directed towards the goal of 'Health for All' through promotion of public health, social justice and human rights related to the provision and distribution of health services, especially for those who are generally left underserved. PHRN is currently working directly in the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha and has contributed to the on-going work of strengthening public health systems in other states through its partnerships with other institutions.

Public Health Resource Society (PHRS) is the core group that has initiated the network. PHRS is a national level organization that is registered in Delhi under Societies Registration Act 1860 (Act XXI). It comprises of a small group of members and full timers that provides leadership to the network as well as functions as its secretariat.

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