



PHRN Newsletter

**VOLUME 9
ISSUE #3**

July 2025

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We are pleased to share the April–June 2025 edition of our quarterly newsletter, highlighting our team’s progress across multiple states. PHRS has expanded its reach with a new project site in Jharkhand under the Rural Crèche Initiative, where 40 crèches will soon be launched in Basia and Palkot blocks of Gumla district. This milestone reflects our team’s dedication and commitment, alongside our continued work in Odisha, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh.

Public Health Resource Society, New Delhi, is honored to lead a consortium for the Asia Pacific Observatory (APO) on Health Systems and Policies as WHO’s strategic partner for the thematic area of tackling inequities in health due to gender, social disparities, and the exclusion of uncounted or unreached populations.

The five-year Consortium includes: Public Health Resource Society, as lead (Dr. Vandana Prasad, Dr. Rupa Prasad, Dr. Indira Chakravarthi), The University of Sydney (Dr. Meru Sheel, Dr. Neha Faruqui), Indian Institute of Technology–Delhi (Prof. Sanjay Dhir), University of New South Wales–Sydney (Prof. Shanti Raman), and Foundation for People-centric Health Systems (Dr. Chandrakant Lahariya). The Consortium brings together expertise in global health research, community and public health, clinical practice,

and health systems management across regions. Our team actively engaged in workshops, training programs, and field visits, ensuring capacity building. Advocacy for government adoption of crèches continues, with key meetings scheduled with relevant departments. Through diverse initiatives across multiple states, PHRS has identified strengths, addressed challenges, and found new opportunities for growth. Many success stories from the field testify to our commitment and resilience. We congratulate our team for their tireless efforts and move forward with hope, trust, and a shared vision of impactful collaboration.

A sincere thanks to our donors and partners for their unwavering support. Wishing everyone continued success in the months ahead.

**In this newsletter
you can expect:**

News from Secretariat

Leading a consortium for the Asia Pacific Observatory (APO) on Health Systems and Policies as WHO’s strategic partner .

News from Odisha

Annual review meeting
Strengthening Creche implementation
Case studies reflecting impact
Providing technical support to partner organization

News from Chhattisgarh

Creche worker’s refresher training
Induction training for sector coordinators and block coordinators

Staff Highlights

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT



PUBLIC HEALTH RESOURCE SOCIETY

Public Health Resource Society, New Delhi is proud to lead a consortium for the Asia Pacific Observatory (APO) on Health Systems and Policies as a strategic partner for the WHO's APO thematic area of "tackling inequities in health due to gender, social inequities, being uncared or unreached".

The five-year Consortium will consist of the following partnering organisations from India and Australia: Public Health Resource Society, as the consortium lead (Dr. Vandana Prasad, Dr. Rupa Prasad and Dr. Indira Chakravarthi), The University of Sydney (A/Prof. Meru Sheel and Dr. Neha Faruqui), the Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi (Prof. Sanjay Dhir), University of New South Wales-Sydney (Prof Shanti Raman) and Foundation for People-centric Health Systems (Dr. Chandrakant Lahariya).

The Consortium brings together expertise in global health research, community and public health practice, clinical practice and management across various levels of health systems and regions. Each partnering organisation has demonstrated successful outcomes in working with local, state and national level stakeholders with a positive impact on policy and practice. This collective experience will be reflected in the work undertaken for the APO's research and policy advocacy agenda in tackling inequities with a particular focus on gender inequities.

NEWS FROM SECRETARIAT

MSSRF Hosts Memorial Lecture Honoring Mira Swaminathan and 50 Years of ICDS

On 1st April 2025, the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) organized a special memorial event in Chennai at the Sambasivan Auditorium to honor the legacy of Mira Swaminathan and to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme. As part of this event, Dr. Vandana Prasad was invited to deliver a keynote lecture reflecting on the journey and impact of ICDS over the decades.

In her insightful address, Dr. Prasad traced the evolution of ICDS from its inception to its eventual universalization. She shared her own experience working alongside Mira Swaminathan and others during the advocacy for maternity entitlements, which eventually led to the universalization of maternity benefits and the inception of the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

Dr. Prasad emphasized the critical importance of focusing on nutrition for children under the age of three and drew attention to a largely overlooked demographic—infants under six months—calling them the "most invisible section of the population" when it comes to food security and nutrition.

While recognizing the achievements of ICDS, she also pointed out that its coverage still stands at only 50–55%, underlining both its potential and its limitations. Among the challenges she highlighted was the complete absence of community participation in the monitoring and decision-making processes of the programme.

She also raised concerns about the changing food environment for children, especially the increasing consumption of junk food. "Everywhere, children are eating biscuits," she noted, adding that as soon as they're able to hold a packet, they're seen with chips in their hands—an alarming trend with long-term implications for child health.

Dr. Prasad concluded her lecture with a forward-looking perspective, offering recommendations for strengthening ICDS and nutrition efforts in India. She acknowledged that while incremental progress has been made over the years, transformative change remains elusive. For that, she emphasized, there is a need for stronger networking and collaborative action across sectors and stakeholders.



NEWS FROM SECRETARIAT

National Stakeholder Consultation on Heat, Gender and Climate Resilience

A national-level stakeholder consultation was held to explore the intersection of heat, health, gender, and climate resilience. The consultation brought together experts, practitioners, civil society organizations (CSOs), and other stakeholders from across the country. The discussions emphasized the growing urgency of addressing heat as a public health risk and building climate-resilient systems, particularly for vulnerable populations, including women and informal sector workers. The consultation was organized by MSSRF in collaboration with CII. It was held in Ahmedabad on April 28, 2025.

Some key insights of the consultation were that there is a need to shift the narrative from viewing heat as a disaster to recognizing it as a risk factor. This reframing is essential for developing sustained and effective Heat Action Plans (HAPs) that integrate public health responses. The consultation also highlighted the need to associate morbidity and mortality data with heat exposure to inform policy and guide responsive planning. A central question posed during the consultation was whether heat is even recognized as a problem requiring systemic attention. One of the recurring themes was the gendered impact of heat and the challenges faced by informal workers who are often forced to choose between their livelihoods and health during climate shocks. Empowering women and vulnerable groups was identified as essential for building resilience. A noteworthy idea that emerged was the introduction of climate-based insurance mechanisms to protect those most affected by heatwaves, especially informal workers lacking financial safety nets. CSOs were recognized as pivotal actors in building awareness, mobilizing communities, and bridging the gap between data, action, and policy.

This consultation marked a significant step in strengthening the discourse around heat, gender, and climate resilience in India. With growing evidence of heat's health impacts, there is a pressing need for responsive planning, community engagement, and systemic reforms. Moving forward, stakeholders must build on these insights to foster informed, inclusive, and action-driven policies.



NEWS FROM SECRETARIAT

Meeting of the WBTi Core Group

The World Breastfeeding Trend Initiative (WBTi) core group held its third and final meeting on April 30, 2025, at the UNICEF India office in Delhi. Among the distinguished attendees was Dr. Rupa Prasad, who contributed to the group's review and recommendations.

During the session, members finalized the draft findings for each WBTi indicator and engaged in in-depth dialogue around critical policy gaps. The findings from 10 indicators of policy and programmes, present a composite index of level of support women receive to remove barriers. The group agreed upon a set of strategic recommendations to strengthen breastfeeding support systems across the country.

Looking ahead, the team proposed organizing a consultative meeting with key partners and government stakeholders to build momentum and drive collective action. Dr. Arun Gupta shared the concluding insights and outlined the roadmap for future engagement.

Looking ahead, the team proposed organizing a consultative meeting with key partners and government stakeholders to build momentum and drive collective action. Dr. Arun Gupta shared the concluding insights and outlined the way forward.

Draft Findings Shared for WBTi 6th India Assessment Report

On 22nd May 2025, a key stakeholder meeting was held in New Delhi to present and discuss the draft findings of the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi) 6th India Assessment Report. The session brought together core group members of WBTi, government officials, and other key participants committed to advancing maternal and child nutrition.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Zoya Ali Rizvi, Deputy Commissioner (Nutrition), National Health Mission, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. Dr. Nupur Bidla led the presentation of the draft findings, inviting suggestions and recommendations from the larger group.

Following the presentation, the session transitioned into an open discussion, where core group members and participants shared valuable inputs and feedback to strengthen the assessment outcomes.

The meeting concluded with a thoughtful summary of inputs by Dr. Vandana Prasad, Principal Technical Advisor, PHRS.



NEWS FROM SECRETARIAT

APO Consortium - Inequalities in Health

The first meeting of all consortium members was successfully held on 19th June 2025 in a virtual format, bringing together experts from across the globe to initiate collaborative work under the overarching theme of “Inequities in Health.”

The session was chaired by Dr. Vandana Prasad, who opened the meeting by inviting members to share their areas of expertise. This helped lay the foundation for identifying potential thematic directions for the consortium’s future work.

Through rich dialogue and exchange, several key themes emerged- gender-based violence, women in the informal sector and occupational health, women’s roles in vertical communicable and non-communicable disease programmes, tuberculosis and gendered health disparities. Dr. Prasad concluded the meeting by summarizing these themes, which will guide the consortium’s strategic planning and collaborative efforts.

It was also agreed that PHRS will issue a press release to publicly announce the formation of the consortium and highlight the partners involved. This will mark an important step in amplifying the consortium’s mission and visibility.

This inaugural meeting set a promising tone for global collaboration aimed at addressing deep-rooted health inequities through research, advocacy, and action.

Learning Webinar on Social Health Insurance and Other Health Care Schemes and Programmes: A Case Study from Rajasthan

On June 20, 2025, the Public Health Resource Network hosted an enriching learning webinar titled “Social Health Insurance and Other Health Care Schemes and Programmes: A Case Study from Rajasthan.” The virtual session focused on the pioneering ‘Rajasthan

Model’ and its contributions to advancing Universal Health Coverage (UHC) through a comprehensive suite of health initiatives.

A key highlight of the discussion was the evolution of the Chiranjeevi Scheme into what is now known as the Mukhya Mantri Arogya Yojana—an initiative that’s making a real difference in people’s lives across Rajasthan. The webinar provided a meaningful space to explore how such health schemes are not just policy tools, but powerful drivers of inclusive healthcare, helping bridge gaps and bring quality services closer to those who need them most.

The webinar was chaired by Dr Vandana Prasad and the two main speakers were Dr Narendra Gupta and Prof Jean Dreze. Dr. Narendra Gupta, who presented a detailed overview of the Rajasthan Model and its operational landscape. Prof. Jean Drèze, who offered a critical analysis of the scheme’s design, impact, and scalability. The event brought together a vibrant community of public health professionals and health systems experts, creating space for lively discourse and knowledge exchange. Participants engaged deeply with the presentations and contributed insightful perspectives, making the webinar a fruitful learning experience for all.

Session on Right to Health at NHRC

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) recently hosted Dr. Vandana Prasad as a distinguished speaker for its prestigious Summer Internship Programme, where she delivered an insightful session on the Right to Health. Her talk emphasized the importance of health as a fundamental human right and explored the intersections between public health, equity, and social justice.

This internship programme is one of largest and most diverse learning initiatives, drawing participation from

NEWS FROM SECRETARIAT

approximately 80 students representing 20 states and union territories across India. The session offered interns a unique opportunity to engage with critical issues surrounding health rights, and to reflect on the role of policy, governance, and civil society in ensuring accessible and equitable healthcare for all.

The cohort included students from a wide range of academic disciplines—from law to social sciences bringing a rich blend of perspectives to the conversation. The diversity of backgrounds among participants added depth to the dialogue, fostering a multidimensional understanding of health as a human right.



Summer Internship Programme at PHRS

The Public Health Resource Society (PHRS) continues to provide meaningful learning opportunities through its internship programme, designed to offer practical exposure and professional orientation to students and volunteers from a range of academic backgrounds. This quarter, the national office welcomed three enthusiastic interns—Dr. Shams Tabraiz Zangi, Mr. Yash Choudhary, and Ms. Akansha—who joined for one to one-and-a-half months, bringing with them diverse academic experiences. All three are currently pursuing their Master of Public Health degrees, with Dr. Shams and

Mr. Yash enrolled at Amity University, Noida, and Ms. Akansha studying at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University, Delhi. During their time at PHRS, the interns were deeply involved in various aspects of a research study—from drafting concept notes and mapping target areas to designing and conducting primary data collection on the ground, engaging with community-level insights and on-ground realities. Their internship began with a warm orientation led by Dr. Rupa Prasad, Executive Director, who introduced them to the organization's values and work culture. Mr. Vivek Goel, Senior Accounts Officer, guided them through the organizational policies, while focused sessions on research methodologies were conducted both individually and in groups by Dr. Tanya Lamba, Senior Programme Coordinator, and Ms. Ananya Datta. The programme gave the interns a chance to connect theory with practice and gain first-hand experience of grassroots public health work, laying a strong foundation for their future careers.

Listening, Learning & Breaking the Silence

By Shams Tabraiz Zangi Intern, Public Health Society | July'25 Edition

On May 12th, 2025, I stepped into the world of ground realities not from a classroom or a textbook, but from the streets & lanes of Sudhar Camp Colony, Kalkaji, Delhi. As an intern with the Public Health Resource Society, my task was to carry out area mapping. What I wasn't prepared for, though, was how much this journey would shape my understanding of empathy, silence, and strength.

A Conversation That Wasn't Easy to Start

During my visits, I met groups of adolescent girls with bright eyes full of curiosity, but clouded with unanswered questions.

NEWS FROM SECRETARIAT

When I asked if we could talk about menstrual hygiene, they looked away, fidgeted, and whispered to each other. Hesitation hung in the air like an invisible wall, But walls don't always need to be broken sometimes, they just need to be gently leaned on.

Over time, the awkwardness gave way to stories. Laughter slipped in. Questions bubbled up. Some girls shared how they used old cloth, passed down as the norm. A few mentioned that they received sanitary pads from school or NGOs but did not know why or how often they should be changed.

What struck me the most was not their lack of access, but their lack of confidence in speaking about something so natural and so normal. It reminded me how often society teaches our girls to hide their pain, rather than understand it.

Generations of Silence

I also sat with their mothers strong women, wrapped in layers of lived experiences. But when I brought up menstruation, many of them pulled back. Their discomfort wasn't anger, it was a lifetime of learned shame, of being told this isn't something we talk about.

One mother, with kind but cautious eyes, simply said, Hamare zamane mein toh yeh sab chhupane ki cheez thi. (In our time, this was something to hide.)

That moment stayed with me. Because even in that hesitation, there was a silent wish that maybe her daughter wouldn't have to live the same silence.

More Than a Project

This wasn't just an assignment. It became a bridge between silence and voice, shame and knowledge, fear and understanding. And somewhere between interviews and conversations, I realized: the smallest act of listening can become the loudest form of change.

These girls didn't just teach me about gaps in menstrual awareness. They taught me resilience. Curiosity. And the courage it takes to speak, even when the world has always told you not to.

Lets raise daughters who are not afraid of their own bodies and mothers who no longer fear the conversation.



ASHA Champion: Changing Lives in Sudhar Champ, Kalkaji Extension

By Yash Choudhary, Intern

A Journey of Commitment and Service

Amongst the busy streets of Sudhar Champ, Kalkaji Extension, New Delhi, is a remarkable woman whose commitment to community health has reached so many lives. Her journey is one of strength, change, and unshakeable commitment towards serving others—a journey that started with modest start-ups and took shape as an inspiration for her community.

From Basti Sevika to ASHA Worker: A Journey of Development

She was born in Uttarakhand and, early on, encountered financial difficulties that compelled her to drop out of school.

NEWS FROM SECRETARIAT

Marriage in her 20th year brought her to Sudhar Champ, where she would ultimately discover her vocation in community health service. She started working in healthcare in 1994 as a Basti Sevika for the modest wage of 125 rupees. It was her local ANM (Auxiliary Nurse Midwife) who spotted her aptitude and encouraged her to move into ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) work in 2008.

Nowadays, after decades of committed service, her monthly income has increased to 14,000 rupees—a reflection of her hard work and worth of her contribution towards the health of the community. This economic security has helped her to keep her family, including her two children, very well off as a result of her hard work and sacrifices.

Conquering Obstacles with Persistence

In spite of achieving her goals, she encounters huge challenges that mirror the wider challenges faced by grassroots health workers. Digital literacy and language gaps are recurring challenges in her line of work. With growing healthcare relying on technology and covering diverse population bases, these challenges underscore the imperatives for ongoing capacity development and support for frontline workers.

Looking Forward

As she remains in her service with Sudhar Champ, her story is an inspiration to other women with similar struggles. Her own transformation from an adolescent who dropped out of school because her family couldn't afford it to a community health leader with respect and accolades exemplifies the possibility of personal and professional development within India's public health system. Her work typifies the community-based health ethos that organizations such as PHRS

advocate for—local knowledge and cultural understanding blended with care to develop sustainable improvements in health. During an era when healthcare systems globally acknowledge the vital role played by community health workers, her commitment is a testament to the potential of grass-roots health campaigning.

By her daily work—from discovering pregnant women to giving them vital nutrients, from carrying out health surveys to holding awareness campaigns—she keeps crafting a tighter web of health and hope within Sudhar Champ, family by family.



NEWS FROM ODISHA

RCI Project – Annual Review Meeting (13–14 May 2025)

A two-day Annual Review Meeting of the RCI Project was held in Rayagada on the 13th and 14th of May 2025. The meeting was graced by the presence of Dr. Vandana Prasad and Dr. Rupa Prasad, along with other national team members, state team members, and field functionaries.

Participants were divided into teams for field visits to various crèches, where they engaged with caregivers, observed day-to-day functioning, and interacted with community members. These visits were followed by debriefing sessions and presentations that highlighted key insights and reflections.

The meeting focused on strengthening child nutrition and development outcomes through better community engagement, improved coordination with frontline workers, and increased use of age-appropriate educational materials. There was a strong emphasis on enhancing daily routines, promoting safe hygiene practices, and identifying locally available alternatives to packaged foods. In-depth discussions were held on supporting red-flagged children, optimizing crèche infrastructure, and encouraging the growth of kitchen gardens ahead of the monsoon. The need for greater community ownership, regular feedback loops between mothers and crèche workers, and adherence to a structured daily schedule was reiterated. With valuable inputs from Dr. Vandana Prasad and Dr. Rupa Prasad, the meeting concluded with renewed energy and a shared commitment to deepening the impact of the crèche program across Rayagada.

RCI & Gender Nutrition Project – MIS Update

A series of MIS meetings for the RCI and Gender Nutrition Projects were held

between April and May 2025, bringing together team members, technical experts, and program leads including Dr. Vandana Prasad and Dr. Rupa Prasad. These meetings served as platforms for in-depth analysis of data trends and the development of evidence-based strategies for strengthening the crèche model.

The first meeting, held on 4th April 2025, marked the beginning of a detailed review of MIS data related to child nutrition and growth in both projects. Key participants examined patterns of progress among children enrolled in crèches, particularly focusing on the duration of crèche attendance, age-based comparisons, and identification of children showing rapid improvement. Discussions also touched on red-flagged children and strategies for follow-up care and referrals.

A follow-up meeting was conducted on 10th April 2025, where the team explored more nuanced comparisons — such as nutritional differences between children aged 6 to 11 months attending crèches versus those not enrolled, and trends specific to Kalyansinghpur block. The discussions also emphasized the importance of improving attendance monitoring, drawing correlations between attendance and nutritional progress.

Further insights were gathered during the 9th May 2025 review, where secular trends in malnutrition indicators were explored in relation to children's age at entry into crèches. Special attention was given to first measurement data across all categories—stunting, wasting, and underweight—with additional focus on Kalyansinghpur block. The group also initiated discussions on natural growth-enhancing interventions and research-backed solutions to address stunting. Parallely, the Gender Nutrition Project sessions reviewed differences in nutritional measurements of children in crèches compared to those recorded at

NEWS FROM ODISHA

Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), with an interest in 6–11 month old children. Comparative analyses between Odisha and Chhattisgarh were also highlighted as an area for future publication.

These MIS meetings reflect a data-driven approach toward refining interventions and shaping the next phase of both the RCI and Gender Nutrition Projects. Upcoming sessions will continue to deepen insights into red-flagged cases, long-term nutritional trajectories, and scalable strategies for improving early childhood outcomes.

Strengthening Crèche Implementation

From April to June 2025, PHRS continued direct implementation of 62 crèches in Rayagada district, with a strong focus on consistent operations, quality enhancement, and community engagement. Crèche caregivers received ongoing handholding support to strengthen practices in early childhood stimulation, age-appropriate learning, hygiene, and nutrition. Block supervisors conducted regular weekly visits to ensure programme consistency, mentor caregivers, and address challenges on-site. Daily meal planning was further refined with active input from mothers to strengthen the link between crèche and home-based feeding practices, while efforts to improve infrastructure saw significant progress—crèches now have safe barricades, functional fire extinguishers, and vibrant kitchen gardens maintained with community support. Community contributions in the form of materials, labor, and local oversight played a key role in fostering a sense of ownership. Monthly review meetings facilitated capacity building, cross-learning, and course correction. Additionally, use of the Shishu Ghar mobile app improved real-time monitoring, data-based decision-making, and accountability across all locations. These combined efforts reflect a holistic, community-rooted approach to improving child well-being and early development outcomes.

Voices from the Field: Case Studies Reflecting Impact

Over the past quarter, crèche-based interventions in Rayagada have shown meaningful results through real-life stories of change. Case studies demonstrate how timely identification, referral, and sustained care help children overcome malnutrition, developmental delays, and poor hygiene practices. For instance, children with red flag indicators were supported through coordinated efforts between crèche workers, mothers, and frontline health staff. Improved feeding, regular health check-ups, and caregiver counselling led to visible gains in weight, activity, and overall well-being. Mothers reported greater confidence in feeding and hygiene, often crediting the crèche environment as a source of learning and support. These stories validate the program's approach and highlight the importance of early intervention and strong community-health linkages in improving childhood outcomes.

Krishna Mahanandia – Gradual Recovery through Consistent Crèche Support

Krishna, a 14-month-old from Alanda village, Rayagada, was enrolled in June 2024 after being identified as Severely Underweight and later classified as SAM. Born with low birth weight (2.13 kg) and frequent illnesses, he received Special Nutritional Care, hygiene support, counselling, regular check-ups, and IFA supplementation at the crèche. Despite setbacks, including recurring illness and a suspected seizure, Krishna gained 1.2 kg in a year, reaching 7.7 kg by June 2025, and has now begun walking—bringing joy to his family and showing the impact of consistent community and crèche support.

NEWS FROM ODISHA

Suhani Kadraka – A Journey of Hope and Progress



Suhani Kadraka, a 14-month-old girl from Bhataparsi village, Rayagada, enrolled in the crèche program in April 2024 with a birth weight of 1.8 kg and was identified as a Severely Underweight (SUW) and suspected Cerebral Palsy (CP) child. Initially dependent on baby food and breastmilk with delayed complementary feeding, Suhani struggled with poor appetite and weight gain. Through close monitoring, daily support from creche caregivers, and regular follow-ups by the PHRS team, Suhani's condition began to improve steadily despite some fluctuations. She was referred to CHC and later DHH, where a pediatrician suspected CP and referred her to DEIC for physiotherapy. Suhani has since been receiving regular physiotherapy and caregiver counselling at DEIC, with significant support from her mother and the crèche team. As of June 2025, her weight has increased to 6.5 kg, and her family expresses happiness at the visible improvements in her activity and overall health. Her journey is a testament to the impact of early intervention, consistent care, and community-based support systems.

Technical Support to partner organizations

From April to June 2025, PHRS continued to provide technical support to partner organizations under the Rural Crèche Initiative (RCI) by facilitating a series of induction and refresher training for crèche caregivers across multiple districts of Odisha. These trainings, held in collaboration with Gram Vikas, Ekjut, SOVA, Swasthya Swaraj, Harsha Trust, EKTA, and Jagruti, aimed to strengthen the capacity of caregivers in providing quality early childhood care and ensuring child nutrition, safety, and development. Refresher trainings were conducted for experienced caregivers, including a three-day training by Gram Vikas at Jana Vikas, Baliguda, attended by 23 caregivers, and sessions by SOVA in Nabarangpur, which trained 60 caregivers in two batches. Similarly, Swasthya Swaraj conducted refresher training in Bhawanipatna for 20 long-serving caregivers, while EKTA organized a session for 30 caregivers in Koraput. These sessions used interactive methods like games, role-plays, story telling, and hands-on demonstrations to revisit key topics such as child nutrition, food measurement, hygiene, safety, growth monitoring, and red-flag child management. Despite challenges like literacy gaps and logistical delays, active participation and contextual innovations—such as using standardized measuring tools and new food register formats—greatly enriched the learning experience.



NEWS FROM ODISHA

Induction training for newly appointed caregivers were also held across several locations. Ekjut organized two induction batches in Kendujhargarh and Keonjhar, training a total of 32 caregivers. Harsha Trust conducted two induction batches at Muniguda and B. Cuttack for 34 caregivers, with active involvement from supervisors and cluster coordinators. Jagruti conducted induction training in Daringibadi for 20 new caregivers. These trainings emphasized operational understanding, early stimulation, hygiene, food diversity, and caregiver responsibilities. Exposure visits and participatory sessions helped new caregivers quickly grasp essential concepts. However, challenges such as breastfeeding needs among young mothers and limited infrastructure occasionally delayed sessions.

The quarter's experience reaffirmed the value of using participatory tools and practical demonstrations to enhance caregiver understanding, especially for non-literate participants. It also highlighted the need for improved logistics, standardized tools for food measurement, and regular follow-up to support caregivers post-training. Moving forward, PHRS recommends early engagement of training teams, well-coordinated logistics, simplified technical content, and routine refresher sessions to sustain and build on the momentum created during these valuable training efforts.



NEWS FROM ODISHA

FARM-N - Meeting with DM cum Collector, Malkangiri, CDMO Malkangiri and DSWO Malkangiri

During a visit to Malkangiri, Dr. Rupa Prasad, ED PHRS alongwith Swati Das from the State team and Praful Baral, District Coordinator met with the DM cum Collector Malkangiri, Sh Ashish Eshwar Patil on 16th May'25 to inform him of the FARMN programme and seek support from the district administration. The team had also met with the CDMO, Malkangiri as well as DSWO Malkangiri on 15th May'25. Both the officials appreciated the programme and assured their support.

Baseline Study: to inform the design and implementation

Between March and May 2025, a comprehensive baseline study was conducted across three intervention blocks—Malkangiri, Mathli, and Khairput—of Malkangiri district. This study aimed to assess community knowledge and practices related to Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), food and nutrition, and sexual and reproductive health, while also evaluating the availability and accessibility of health and nutrition services in the project area.

Survey questionnaires were administered to 1,443 young mothers and 360 adolescent girls to capture insights into their knowledge and practices, focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with community members to explore collective experiences and perceptions, key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with local leaders and officials including PRI members, CDPOs, CMO, and the DM and a child data sheet format was developed to collect detailed information on children under six years of age.

Following the data collection phase, the team initiated data cleaning and preliminary analysis to prepare for deeper insights that will inform future interventions and programming.

This baseline study would provide essential empirical evidence to inform the design and implementation of context-specific health and nutrition interventions aligned with the community's actual needs.

Induction Training for Sector Coordinators and Block Coordinators

A four-day orientation-cum-induction training was held at Malkangiri from 18–21 June 2025 for sector and block coordinators from Malkangiri, Mathili, and Khairput, supported by the National and State teams.

The workshop covered the FARM-N programme, malnutrition, IYCF, life cycle approach, food diversity, and related government schemes. Participants actively engaged in group work, growth monitoring, and anthropometric measurement sessions, ensuring an interactive and practical learning experience.



NEWS FROM CHHATTISGARH

Gender and Nutrition Project - Creche Worker's Refresher training

Refresher Training Led By Mr. Rajesh Srivastava



A three-day Creche Workers Refresher and Capacity Building Training, organized by PHRS under the project "Gender Nutrition: Equal Access to Sufficient and Healthy Food Strengthens the Food Security of Women and Small Children. The training was held from 10th to 12th June 2025 at the Jagarnathpur Training Centre in Lakhanpur Block, Chhattisgarh, the training brought together 40 dedicated creche workers, 7 PLA facilitators, along with project coordinators, MIS personnel, and the Block Coordinator. Led by the senior resource person Mr. Rajesh Srivastava, the training focused on essential aspects of creche operations,function, emphasizing growth chart measurements, and meticulous health-related documentation.

The interactive sessions, practical demonstrations, and group activities provided valuable hands-on learning opportunities. The positive impact and collaborative spirit observed throughout the training underscore the success of the program in advancing the project.



NEWS FROM CHHATTISGARH

PLA modules training

On May 14, 2025, a one-day training program was conducted at the Resource Centre, Chaupal, Lundra Block of Surguja District, as part of the TDH project, specifically focusing on the Gender and Nutrition domain. The training aimed to empower 30 PLA facilitators and 2 block coordinators with comprehensive knowledge and skills related to PLA modules early childhood care and development. Enthusiastic participation was observed from 32 engaged attendees, with a thematic focus on childhood care and development, as well as gender and food security. The PLA training provided valuable insights into childhood care, developmental delays, gender, and food security. Participants are now well-prepared to positively impact their communities with acquired knowledge and skills, contributing to the success of the Gender and Nutrition project.



Creche Workers Review Meeting

A one-day monthly meeting for creche workers was held on 11th April 2025 at Jagarnathpur. The meeting aimed to review the progress, identify challenges, and discuss strategies to improve creche management. Discussions focused on addressing malnutrition, reviewing the status of growth falter children, and enhancing daily creche activities. Additionally, an action plan was developed to improve the overall efficiency of the creches. The creche initiative is part of the Gender and Nutrition Project funded by TDH, designed to provide nutritional support, health monitoring, and early childhood education for children under three years of age. The meeting at Jagarnathpur provided valuable insights into the operational strengths and challenges of the creche program. The identification of malnourished and growth faltering children remains a significant concern, but with collaborative efforts from creche workers, PLA facilitators, and the community, sustainable solutions are being developed. The program continues to work towards improving child health and nutrition outcomes in the region.



STAFF NEWS

<u>S.No.</u>	Name	Designation
New Colleagues Joined PHRS		
1	Ms. Sumita Gupta	Accounts Officer-Consultant
2	Dr. Tanya Lamba	Sr. Programme Coordinator
3	Ms. Megha Gupta	Programme Coordinator
4	Mr. Jagdish Kumar Padhy	Programme Coordinator-Capacity Building Officer
5	Mr. Chandrasekhar Nayak	Block Coordinator
Colleagues who left PHRS		
1	Ms. Rinila Das	Programme Coordinator-Capacity Building Officer
2	Ms. Priyanka Kumari	Programme Coordinator
3	Md. Wesal Ahmad	MIS-Officer

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 ongoing 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. PUBLIC HEALTH RESOURCE SOCIETY Block- DD, D-08, Flat no.- 04, first floor, Kalkaji Extension, New Delhi-110019 Contact No.: 011 26868118, 011 42576337
Email: delhi@phrnindia.org
Website: www.phrnindia.org

Thank you for reading!