

Title: Comprehensive strategy to accelerate Sustainable Development Goalss related to Child Malnutrition - VOICES OF THE UNHEARD: PUTTING THE LAST FIRST

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Abstract

Although India has shown progress in improving child nutrition, undernutrition continues to be unacceptably high. UNICEF's (1990) conceptual framework of the determinants of child malnutrition illustrates the multisectoral nature of the problem. It indicates that inadequate dietary intake and diseases at individual level are immediate determinants of malnutrition, resulting from underlying causes like inadequate food security, poor feeding practices and poor water and sanitation conditions at community level. These are largely linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Zero Hunger and Good Health and Wellbeing. Assam is one of the first states in India to integrate the SDGs into its policy making and planning process. It has set up the Centre for SDGs (CSDGs), a think tank on all issues relating to visioning, planning, monitoring and evaluating plans and programs directly linked to furtherance of SDGs and works in close coordination with all the government departments.

The Coalition for Food and Nutrition Security (CFNS), a multi stake holder alliance comprising of policy makers, program leaders and experts, in partnership with the World Bank provided technical support to Government of Assam and in particular its Centre for SDGs to strengthen its efforts aimed at improving health, nutrition and early childhood development outcomes. As part of the technical support, the Coalition carried out series of consultation on Assam specific malnutrition issues with Government Leaders, CSOs and other key stakeholders, conducted multi-stakeholder nutrition advocacy workshops at state and district level, and formed Nutrition Working Groups- Strategic think tank for Government of Assam. The Coalition in close coordination with CSDGs organised series of policy seminars to gather the field perspective and recognise gaps in inter sectoral convergence of key departments and identify probable solutions. Eat right Mela (first of its kind at district level) was also organised by the Coalition as part of its advocacy efforts. The Coalition also demonstrated some of the key

strategic ideas (to be scaled up by the state) like strengthening of District level SDGs cells and capacity building of frontline functionaries (FLWs).

Brainstorming sessions at national, state and district level helped to develop a multisectoral district nutrition plan which was shared with the district administration and the State Government of Assam, the implementation of which has a huge potential to ensure convergence between all the key line departments like Social Welfare, Health and Panchayat and Rural Development (Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission) to ensure nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive interventions to address child malnutrition. However, implementation of multisectoral district nutrition plan is a huge challenge and needs additional hand holding support at district level.

Keywords: SDGs, multisectoral, malnutrition, strategy, advocacy

Biography

Sujeet Ranjan has completed his PhD at the age of 38 years from Vinobha Bhave University, Jharkhand, Indiaool of Medicine. He is a public health professional having excellent leadership and management skills and has a broad experience of managing large programs with demonstrable result. Focused, results-oriented professional with 25 years of experience in progressively responsible position. Possess a persistent track record of demonstrating impact at scale, scaling up models, steering evidence based advocacy, developing strategy, country business plans and program delivery framework for a sustained impact. A committed professional, known for creating high performance culture, successfully managing change and advancement of rights of women and children. Represent in key policy advisory bodies and steering changes.

He is the Executive Director, The Coalition for Food and Nutrition Security, New Delhi, India, the largest nutrition coalition in the country. He has published more than 15 papers in reputed journals.

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