

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR THE CS MEETING:

J and K

20 Oct 2009

Integrated Child Development Services:

1. The anganwadi centres also do not function regularly. About 30% of the respondents reported that the anganwadi centre in their village does not open everyday. Further it was found that even where the anganwadi centres are opened regularly it is only the anganwadi helper who is present and the anganwadi worker only visited occasionally.
2. Even when centres open, there are very few activities apart from SNP.
3. People confirmed that no nutrition counselling is actually taking place under ICDS.
4. Pre-school activities for the 3 to 6 years children and awareness meetings with women do not take place.
5. Home visits are not being made by the AWW for creating awareness among the beneficiaries, motivating them to attend the AWC and other health and nutrition related issues.
6. In many villages, local AWW's have not being appointed and the AWW's appointed have to come from other districts, which is not viable financially for the AWW to attend the AWC regularly.
7. Growth monitoring doesn't take place and therefore, it can assumed that the malnourished children are not either being followed up, or referred to nearest govt, hospital and given double rations.
8. 40 per cent villages report irregular supply on SNP. There was no supply in many villages in the months preceding the survey.
9. The principal reason for the disruption of supply seems to be the fact that the Department of Social Welfare procures all the supplies, centrally at the district level and this is then supplied to the villages. This contravenes, in letter and spirit, the numerous orders of the Supreme Court which stress on the decentralisation of the supply. Except perhaps a few remote scheduled tribal hamlets where availability of food grains at the local level may be a problem, a decentralised procurement system can very easily be put in place across J&K, with village communities being given this responsibility. Wherever this has been undertaken, we find that the ownership of the ICDS scheme has gone up tremendously.
10. All the categories of beneficiaries including the 0 to 3 years children, 3- 6 years children, pregnant and lactating mothers are provided the same kind of food from the AWCs and

there are no special provisions of special food like weaning food to be given to the 0 to 3 years children. The same food which are consumed by the older children and adults couldn't be consumed the 0 to 3 years old children given their small digestive capacities.

11. Government of J & K officially reports that only 41.4 of children under 6 years who are identified by the AAW survey avail SNP under ICDS.
12. Only 64.4 of the AWWs sanctioned had been operationalised before March 2008.
13. Further, the infrastructure in the centres also seem to be very poor with almost 80% of the anganwadi centres visited running from the homes of either the anganwadi worker or the anganwadi helper, only two anganwadis had drug kits available, only 55.6% of the anganwadis had playing equipments and only 64.8% AWCs had weighing scales available. A thorough review of the infrastructure and quality of services provided by the ICDS must be undertaken and the state government must make universalisation with quality of the ICDS a priority.
14. More than 50% of the anganwadi centres had no disabled child attending the centre. We urge you please undertake the survey for identifying the children with disability in the all the hamlets regularly every year and undertake a campaign for the inclusion of the children with disability in the anganwadi centres and make all the necessary infrastructural arrangements like ramps, toilets etc to encourage children with disability to regularly attend the AWC for SNP, preschool activities and other services, with priority to those anganwadis where any child with disability has been identified and enrolled in the AWC. In the Annual census that the AWWs does in each village/hamlet, an additional column for the identification of children with disability must be added.
15. Many AWWs reported being trained only once at the time of recruitment and therefore, are likely to be unaware with the new developments in the scheme. The State government should make provisions for regular trainings of AWWs with special focus on growth monitoring and preschool education.
16. The State government should take necessary steps to make documents, reports and all the information related to the ICDS available on the website. This has also been directed by the Supreme Court in order dated Oct 7th, 2004.

Mid day Meal Scheme:

1. For 2008-09, the coverage of the children is 95 percent under MDMS. However, the off take of food grains allocated for MDM is only 59.1 percent which may indicate that either the sufficient quantity of the meal isn't being served or the attendance is being fudged.

2. Also the state has been able to utilise only 49 percent of the available budget (centre and state) for the cooking cost of meal which points to the fact that the quality of the meal is greatly compromised.
3. In the FGDs children confirmed that the meals are not being served this year. One of the government official said that the food grains for MDM are being used in the PDS system because the state has insufficient supplies of food grains to be distributed in PDS. Therefore, the meals have been discontinued from this year. This is very grave.
4. There is a high burden on teachers. The survey results also shown that the teachers are highly involved in the preparation of the meal which suffers the education of the students. Almost 76 percent respondents reported that teachers are involved in the organizing, procuring raw materials and cooking of the mid day meal. Further about 80% of the teachers said that they give up to one hour of their time everyday for the mid day meal while the rest give even more. The State government should consider the appointing one additional staff for the mid day meal in the schools, as done by the Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.
5. About 10% of the children felt that the quantity of the meal was not sufficient. About 30% of the children also felt that the quality of the meal was not good and 15 percent said there was no varied menu for the mid day meal. This must be looked into. The quality of the meal should be increased and the menu should be fixed for each day and the students should know which recipe would be served on each day in advance. The State government should also consider including eggs or cheese or meat in the menu.
6. The infrastructure for the mid day meal also needs improvement. About a third of the schools visited had no drinking water facilities; a third did not provide plates to the students.
7. Further, it has been noticed that the Zonal Education Officers procure all the cooking utensils including gas stove, cylinder and containers centrally at the zone level and then the utensils are supplied to the schools. The centralised procurements provide opportunity of money being siphoned away and therefore, any such procurement must happen at the school level by the school staff and village education committee.
8. As with ICDS, there are complaints of irregular supply of supply of grains in MDM, and complete stoppage in recent months. To avoid disruptions in the serving of the meal, money should be allocated to the schools in advance in a way that at any given point the school has the required funds for serving the meal for a period of three months. Opening of bank accounts in the name of Village Education Committee could also be considered as this will increase the accountability to the community.

Public Distribution System:

1. There is no proper identifying mechanism for the BPL and AAY. The state is not using the survey administered by the MoRD and the state for identifying BPL. In the villages

we visited the Namardar mentioned that he is being told to prepare a list of BPL and AAY families every year by the Patwari , but the final list is being decided by the patwari only and not in consultation with him or the people of the village. People also claimed that the list Namardar prepares in not being also prepared with any consultation with the people and therefore, any such list always excludes many poor, though deserving, from the BPL and AAY category.

2. In brief, people of the village do not have any say in finalising the list of the BPL and AAY categories in their own villages. In a state like J and K where panchayats haven't been functional from two decades, the government should necessarily evolve a mechanism of engaging the people in finalising BPL/AAY and any such list of their own villages.

3. Also the AAY list has not been prepared in compliance with the Supreme Court orders dated 2nd May 2003 which states that all households belonging to six "priority groups" would be entitled to Antyodaya cards. More precisely, the Government of India was directed "to place on AAY category the following groups of persons:

(1) Aged, infirm, disabled, destitute men and women, pregnant and lactating women, destitute women;

(2) widows and other single women with no regular support;

(3) old persons (aged 60 or above) with no regular support and no assured means of subsistence;

(4) households with a disabled adult and assured means of subsistence;

(5) households where due to old age, lack of physical or mental fitness, social customs, need to care for a disabled, or other reasons, no adult member is available to engage in gainful employment outside the house;

(6) primitive tribes."

4. People also confirmed that ration shops open for only a day, or a few days in a month. People also claimed that supplies to the ration shop are less than adequate and therefore, ration is supplied on the principle of "**first come first serve basis**". People even mentioned that if they do not have money to buy their quota on a particular day on which the shop is open or if they are not present in the village the next day they are being told that there is no ration available now.

5. The other problem face is that the ration shops are not available in each village. In Hartrath the people have to walk few kilometres to the ration shop of another village to buy their quota. People mentioned that the problem isn't just of the distance but it is aggravated by the fact that they do not come to know when the ration comes to the

store and when it is being distributed and therefore, are left many times just because they are not able to attend the ration shop on the day of distribution. They are also not allowed to purchase in instalments, contrary in Supreme Court orders.

6. We also noticed in the field visit that the entries, specifying the amount paid and the quantity given, are not being made on the ration card. Therefore, any attempt to monitor the delivery of services and transparency are likely to be mislead.
7. The recent step of the government in privatising the ration shops should be reviewed based on a study on the functioning of such shops where it has already being done. It is our experience in many states that privatisation of ration shops leads to black-marketing of ration.
8. Media has reported many instances of rice scam in the valley (attached). Therefore, the state should devise an effective model of monitoring the ration flow from the level of import to the delivery to people. Chattisgarh govt, has done this and have proved very useful.
9. It was also found that the records in the ration shop were not maintained properly. There was no public display of all the information related to the PDS in more than 85% of the ration shops visited. The entries in the ration cards were not properly maintained and the recall of the beneficiaries and the entry made in the distribution register did not always match. Only 50% of the respondents said that the ration shop was open everyday. Further almost 80% of the respondents reported paying a higher price of 50p. to Re.1 per kg. than what was declared by the state as the issue price. In order to rectify these gaps in the implementation of the PDS in the state we recommend that the state government issue strict instructions to all the fair price shops to publicly display information such as timings of opening of the ration shop, details of stocks, card holder names and food grain entitlements. Further they must also be instructed to make available all records for public scrutiny. The government should create a website and consider putting all record, documents and monthly progress report down to each PDS shop online regularly. The state government should also constitute vigilance committees in all the villages to monitor the functioning of ration shops in their villages. The details of stocks, allotment order, list of beneficiaries etc. should be made available to this committee. States like Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh have already put such transparency measures in place and it should not be difficult for J&K to do so.

National Maternity Benefit Scheme:

1. For the year 2007-08, the total number of home deliveries were 46846 and out of which only 530 women have been given any benefit under NMBS component of JSY, which amounts to just 1.1 percent coverage. This clearly shows that the scheme is almost non functional in the state, as also confirmed in the survey. The feed back from the ground also reveals that the nodal agencies of this scheme are confused about the guidelines of the scheme and feel that providing benefit for the home deliveries will incentivise and

will increase the population. The fact that the JSY scheme is no way different from the NMBS in this regard.

2. The results of the survey with respect to the functioning of the NMBS/JSY scheme are very disappointing. It seems as if the scheme has still not taken off in the state in spite of repeated orders from the Supreme Court and the high priority given to it under the National Rural Health Mission. The following are the main findings of the survey:
3. Only 6.3% of the eligible beneficiaries reported getting any benefit under the NMBS/JSY schemes. Out of 143 women who had institutional deliveries only 9 women and only 4 out of 60 women (BPL) who had home deliveries have been given benefit under the scheme.
4. Further, of the 9 women who had institutional deliveries; 5 reported getting only Rs. 500 as benefit whereas they should have got Rs. 1400.
5. There is clearly a lack of awareness about the scheme among the beneficiaries and also service providers. The State government must regularly advertise the revised National Maternity Benefits Scheme and Janani Suraksha Yojana on All India Radio and Doordarshan at primetime so that the beneficiaries may become aware of and understand the two schemes. This should be pegged on the themes of nutritional education, and promoting intra family equity in food and health rights.
6. The details of NMBS and JSY schemes must be pasted on all Panchayat buildings, ICDS centres, public health centres, public health sub-centres, and block & district hospitals. Further, a regularly updated list of selected and rejected applicants should be displayed quarterly at the Panchayat Bhavan/ any nominated place and ICDS centres. This should be pegged on the themes of nutritional education, and promoting intra family equity in food and health rights.
7. Women who applied for benefit and were rejected were given reasons such as not being BPL (although they had an institutional delivery and therefore are eligible for the beneficiary since Jammu and Kashmir is a Low Performing State, according to JSY guidelines); having more than two children (the Supreme Court order of November 2007 clearly states that there should be no restriction on the number of children for a woman to be eligible for benefit under NMBS); having a home delivery (again the Supreme Court has repeatedly clarified that Rs. 500 should be given irrespective of place of delivery) and lack of funds. All these reasons indicate that the state government has not given priority to this scheme and the provisions under this scheme have not been adequately conveyed to the district and PHC levels. We request the state government to immediately inform all the districts and PHCs about the provisions under the scheme, including the fact that there is no restriction on age, place of delivery or number of children to receive a benefit under the scheme.
8. Further since the Government of India is providing the funds for this scheme in advance, there should be no reason why funds are not available at the PHC level to be given to the women on time. The state government should review the bottlenecks in

the flow of funds from the state to the district and PHC levels and take steps to ensure that funds are available at the lowest level and women are paid the benefit in time.

9. The Village Health and Sanitation Committees under the NRHM should be made functional and empowered to review the status of these schemes and give feedback to the officials if the NMBS and JSY schemes are not functioning effectively.

Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme:

1. The NOAPS has been universalised among all the BPL old people who are above 65 years of age from November 2007. Therefore, it is estimated that the state would have almost 127000 potential beneficiaries for pensions under NOAPS, but the actual coverage for 2007-08 has been reported to be 77649 which substantiates into 61 percent coverage.
2. It has been over a year since the National Old Age Pension Scheme has been extended to cover all old people above 65 years and below the poverty line. However the results of the survey show that this expansion is yet to take place in the ground level.
3. The Government of India had also recommended that the state should bring their contribution into the pensions in par with the central government but the state has been contributing only 125 Rs. Per month for NOAPS beneficiary.
4. People confirmed in both the villages that many BPL old people above 65 years of age are not given any benefit under NOAPS. Which survey is being used is not clear. There is no grievance redressal system. Of the eligible people who were interviewed almost 65% were not receiving any pensions. Further almost 90% of those getting pensions were getting Rs. 200 or less as pension per month, with the rest getting Rs. 325 per month. With the enhanced scheme (Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme) in operation since November 2007, we request the state government to take immediate steps to cover all the old people who are BPL under the pension scheme and to also enhance the pension amount to Rs. 400 as the contribution of the Government of India has been increased to Rs. 200 per person per month.
5. The responsibility of identifying and selecting the eligible old people for the pension scheme lies on the state government and there are often delays. Therefore, the old people who are eligible but are not provided pensions for any time due to any reason should be provided arrears equal to amount they could have received if identified on time.
6. The delivery of pension doesn't happen on time. The Supreme Court has directed that the pension shall reach to the beneficiaries by 7th of each month. The state has established a policy of depositing the pensions into the bank accounts of beneficiaries only quarterly which also gets delayed. Due to small network of J and K bank branches the beneficiaries, who though are very old, have to travel long distances for collecting the pension. This also gets aggravated but the fact that the exact dates when pension gets deposited are not confirmed and therefore, the old beneficiaries have to make repeated visits to the Bank.

Many people confirmed that pensions are being paid on two Eids in a year. They also reported illegal cuts when bulk payments are made. Almost 30% of the respondents reported having to travel long distances to get the pension and also many complained that when went to the bank once in three months, the pension was not yet deposited. Further, there were complaints of the banks allowing the pensioners to withdraw their money only on a fixed day leading to overcrowding and long waits. The State Government should send instructions to the banks to allow the old people to withdraw their pension money on any day of the month, as other customers of the bank can do, and not necessarily on one day of a month or a quarter. This should be written clearly on the entitlement card (pass book) and should also be displayed on a notice board in each bank where pension is being distributed.

7. We further recommend that to prevent delays the amount of one quarter should be deposited in advance in the accounts of each beneficiary and if the pension amount for any quarter is not being deposited by the State government before a specified date, the branch managers should enjoy authority to pay the pensions to the beneficiaries from the advances as a credit to the government which has to be settled immediately.
8. The amount of pension and age of the person should be clearly written on the entitlement cards (pass books) of the old people with clearly marked entries in the pass book with details of dates and amount withdrawn.
9. The feed back in the survey also revealed that the old people are treated very badly by the bank personnel and there are always long queues to stand on to collect the pension because the pensions are being disbursed only for few days. In Wakura village of district Ganderbal, one old person has even died while standing in the queue for collecting the pension.
10. There is very week identification mechanism which always results either in delayed identification or no identification of beneficiaries for pension.
11. The systems of quota still prevail even though the scheme has been universalised among the all old people who are BPL and above 65 years in November 2007.

National Family Benefit Scheme:

1. The general feedback about the scheme is that people are not aware of the scheme. It is unfortunate that the National Family Benefit Scheme which provides a small support to poor families at a difficult time, seems to be almost non-functional in the state. We urge the state government to take this scheme seriously and ensure that it is implemented according to the guidelines of the scheme and the orders of the Supreme Court.
2. Of the eligible beneficiaries identified in the survey, 92% reported not getting any benefit under the NFBS.

3. Even the few people who received the cash benefit received this amount at least a year or a more after the death of bread winner.
4. The State government must regularly advertise the provisions of the scheme on All India Radio and Doordarshan at primetime so that the beneficiaries may become aware of. The details of scheme must be pasted on all Panchayat buildings, ICDS centres, public health centres, public health sub-centres, block & district hospitals and block development offices. Further, a regularly updated list of selected and rejected applicants should be displayed quarterly at the Panchayat Bhavan/ any nominate place in village and ICDS centres.
5. The state government should put in place a proper and transparent procedure to identify beneficiaries for this scheme. The procedure for application for benefit under the scheme must be simplified. The payment (by cheque) should be made immediately within a period of one month of the death and should be delivered at home of beneficiaries.
6. As the State government receives a consolidated amount from Government of India under NSAP to be spent on NOAPS and NFBS, therefore, the State government should make clear allocation separately for both schemes based on the estimates and ensure that all the money allocated for NFBS is spent under this scheme and not diverted to IGNOAPS or any other State scheme.

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act/JKREGS:

1. In 2007-08, the programme has generated only 7 days of work per rural household.
2. Though the NREGS guarantees 100 days of employment for each rural household, but in 2007-08 there have been only 1.4 percent of rural households which have completed 100 days of employment under NREGS.
3. The results of the survey on the rural employment scheme are discouraging. There is low level of awareness about the provisions of JKREGS and how to demand work, among the general masses. We further recommend that a campaign be launched to make people aware and issue job cards and to include women under JKREGS.
4. People haven't been provided job cards, as also reflected in the survey and it was difficult to find five persons with job cards in many of the villages surveyed. In Hartrath people of village said that they haven't been given job cards even though they had applied for it few months back. The survey had also revealed the fact that jobs cards haven't been issued to the most people.
5. People in both the villages I visited also showed a strong desire of working under JKREGS for the present wages and feel that the wages of 110 per days are much better than 150 to 200 per day which they get in Srinagar for construction work.

6. In one village people said that the last year one road was being constructed in their village and tractors were used for earth work and levelling but people weren't given job in that work.
7. The work should also be made available in the winter which is a off season for the employment for daily wage workers and it would have a large impact in controlling the migration of the people to Punjab and Himachal Pradesh during the winters. The JKREGS in the state has not been able to provide employment during the winters which is off season of employment for daily wage workers. Therefore, the JKREGS scheme has been designed to fail in the State. We request you to please make necessary arrangements and ensure that some kind of work is available in the winters to the people under JKREGS, which would have a drastic impact on the reducing the migration of people from Kashmir to other states during winters.
8. More discouraging was the fact that even the people who were aware of JKREGS and have secured job cards do not make demand for the work. Also among those who need work and had made demands for work under JKREGS haven't been provided work within a period of 14 days as guaranteed under JKREGS. Almost 74 % of the respondents said they couldn't get work within 15 days of making the demand for work under JKREGS. Further, not a single respondent reported getting unemployment allowance. Therefore, a campaign must be launched to make people aware and to issue job cards to all the households in rural areas. We also request you please take steps to ensure that the work is made available to the people who made demand for the work under JKREGS within a maximum period of 14 days of making the demand, as prescribed under the scheme.
9. The state government should take further steps to ensure that the wages are strictly paid on time, as prescribed under JKREGS, work is provided on demand and within the time frame, attendance is marked on the muster roll and worksites facilities including shades, safe drinking water, first aid and crèches for children under six are be made available on each worksite under JKREGS.
10. As there are no panchayats in the State, therefore, the State government should strictly make it mandatory for each VLW to organize the meeting of the village community once in three month for formulating plans and their implementation under JKREGS in the State. The village level worker should also visit each village in his list for a full day not less than once every week. The date and the place where village level worker could be approached by the community should be intimated to them in advance since there are no panchayat premises in the most villages of J&K which could have been used for this.
11. Creation of water harvesting structures in rainfed areas is a great opportunity in the State that can be explored to make work available under JKREGS, as a higher percentage of agriculture in the State is dependent on rainwater availability and this as high as 84 percent in Jammu division. This would be also useful for the State to increase the water

availability for the agriculture which will lead to increase the production of food grains and would also serve as an incentive to the farmers to work under JKREGS.

12. The State government must institutionalize the social audit under JKREGS and for other food schemes. This is a provision though provided under NREGA but has not translated into reality and practice. We are willing to assist in the process of institutionalisation of the social audit as an integral part of the JKREGS if the Government of J&K requires assistance.
13. Lastly, Government of India has already notified that NREGS funds can also be used for land development activities in the private lands of Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes and Below Poverty Line (BPL) households. This provides an unique opportunity to create durable assets in the private lands of vulnerable groups and is likely to lead to an increase in productivity of these lands in the long run.

Overall

1. Urgent need to implement Supreme Court orders on grievance redressal.
2. Review of instructions that all widows and half-widows need to be given coverage of pensions and AAY cards.