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FIGHTING MALNUTRITION : BETTER WORKPLAN NEEDED

Editorial by Central Chronicle on Malnutrition

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There has been a 6.3pc rise in malnourished children in Madhya Pradesh. The deduction has been arrived from a report of the National Family Health Survey. In comparison to other states, the state of children in MP is a cause for concern. Percentagewise malnutrition has gone up from 54 to 60.3 whereas the State government has been claiming it to be at 49pc. One reason is also said to be improper use of funds allotted for eradicating the illness. Even the Supreme Court had raised questions over the distribution system of nutritious food to children in the State. The MP government has implemented anganwadi scheme for eradicating malnutrition. However, the number of anganwadis are too little compared to the population. The Supreme Court had, on October 7, given directives for opening an anganwadi centre in every locality, wherein children up to six years of age should be given nutritious diet. It also said that the work of distribution of the food items should not be given to contractors but to women's bodies of localities, self-help groups or other groups of the village people. However, this is not so. A healthy child needs 1700 calories whereas a child is given 80 gm `dalia' in Anganwadi which provides only 300 calories. The state government has achieved notable success in implementation of schemes/ projects but its success in supplying nutritious food to children has not met with desired success. Lack of budget is said to be one of the reasons; other is improper distribution. It is also important to pay attention towards the quality of food being given to the children. The need is for framing a large work plan so that not even one child becomes victim of malnutrition.
