Brief Write-up of the initiative ‘Project SAMPOORNA’

Project Sampoorna is an innovative, inclusive, and sustainable project launched by the District Administration, Bongaigaon during the third Rashtriya POSHAN *Maah* in September 2020. This Project focuses on United Nations’ Sustainable development Goal-2.The National Institute of Rural Development, IIT Guwahati, the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship, UNICEF, Tezpur University and Tezpur Medical College & Hospital collaborated on this project. It was implemented using the four-tiered institutional mechanism consisting of AWW, AW Supervisor level, CDPO-level, and DSWO-level committees along with convergences of Social Welfare, health, ASRLM, Education, Agriculture, and allied departments. This initiative has bought about significant results leading to a reduction in malnutrition among 95.6% of children of the targeted groups in the district and 90% mothers economically empowered by being included in SHGs under NRLM after one year of Project Sampoorna.

**The broad objectives of the Project were**:

1. Reduction of malnutrition among children.
2. Sustain the result by education and economic empowerment of the mothers of the children.
3. Community management of malnutrition and reduction of hospitalization.
4. Breaking the vicious cycle of malnutrition and ill health.

The project aimed at targeted nutrition-based interventions with plans such as the inclusion of mothers of malnourished children at Anganwadi-level committees, routine health check-ups, milk and egg distribution weekly. The POSHAN survey was conducted in five blocks of Bongaigaon district and focused on distributing nutritious food to pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children. Several sociological, epidemiological, and economic indicators have been surveyed to determine the course of action that should be taken

# Project interventions:

1. Assessment of the nutritional level of children using Simplified WHO Growth Chart by Anganwadi Centers instead of the Weight by Age Chart used usually. This helped in identifying and comparing malnourished children (SAM/MAM) in nationwide AWCs.
2. Creation of Buddy Mothers: The mother of a healthy child becomes the buddy mother of a malnourished child of the same Anganwadi Centre and they meet on weekly basis and discuss about various practices related to nutrition.
3. Pre and Post Questionnaires to assess the relevant knowledge of the buddy pairs. Based on the assessment, training was imparted on the basics of nutrition and indigenous food practices.
4. A dietary Chart was given to each mother of SAM/MAM child to follow regularly and the same was monitored daily by AWWs.
5. Providing protein supplements (eggs & milk) till the mothers became economically empowered by being part of the Self Help Groups. After 3 (three) months the mothers themselves provided nutrition rich food to their children since they were financially stable by then and educated about nutrition through Project Sampoorna.
6. Economic empowerment of the mother by inclusion in Self Help Groups under National Rural Livelihood Mission
7. 400 ml of milk and three eggs per SAM/MAM child per week were given as supplementary sources of protein to the children.
8. Convergence between ICDS and National Rural Livelihood Mission was done wherein every mother was included in Self-Help Groups and imparted training on income generation through livelihood activities to ensure regular income, empowerment of the mothers, and sustenance of the efforts to avoid and manage malnutrition.

**Outcome from the initiative:**

After active intervention using protein supplements, 88% of SAM children became healthy and 96% of MAM Children became healthy. The medical evaluations of rest of the children were done and treatment given at nutritional rehabilitation centre, Bongaigaon Civil Hospital and higher Centre as necessary. After three months of Project Sampoorna, 76.80% SAM Children became normal and 92.8% MAM children became normal. After six months 84.96% SAM children became normal and 97.30% MAM children became normal. After one year 92.3% SAM children became normal and 98.90% MAM children became normal. After three months of Project Sampoorna 74.30% mothers enrolled in Self Help Groups, after six months 75.60% mothers enrolled in Self Help Groups and after one year 90% mothers enrolled in Self Help Groups. Active intervention under Project Sampoorna was done only for first three months by providing protein rich food to malnourished children but the mothers who were already financially independent by then through the Self Help Groups continued to provide nutritious and protein rich food to their children thereby making 93% of children healthy at the end of one year, making Project Sampooorna a grand success. Project Sampoorna is the singular kind of project in India which ensured reduction in malnutrition by employment of mothers without any financial implication. It can easily be replicated anywhere in India and other similar countries.