

Unique School Health Monitoring System

SHARP NGO, INTEL, NIIT and TCS launched a unique school health monitoring program at Chhindwara which was inaugurated by Mr. Kamal Nath, Hon'ble Minister of Commerce. The program is primarily focussed on digitalising school health records for students and these records can be easily accessed by the school principal, doctor at PHC or district medical officer and education department. The collected health data will then be used to make school health policies and programs according to the requirement of the specific area.

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The pilot project of School Health Monitoring System was successfully showcased by Intel India Ltd and SHARP NGO (School Health Annual Report Programme) in association with NIIT in the presence of **Hon'ble Minister of Commerce, Mr Kamal Nath**.

The pilot project was done amongst 70 students in the village nearby the NIIT centre. These children were frequent users of the NIIT Kiosks- provided to them under their 'Hole in the wall' project. All the children belonged to poor or lower middle class family and most of their parents and elder siblings were laborers. The age group of the children who were included under the pilot project was 3 yrs to 15 yrs.

'School Health Monitoring Program is a programme which has been developed to digitalize school children's health records. Our health educators trained the selected children (health scouts) to take basic height and weight measurement and also to diagnose common signs and symptoms of various major nutritional deficiency diseases with the help of specially designed questionnaire. The children were also trained by SHARP NGO to enter the data collected into the software, making the system completely self sustainable,' Bhuvaneshwari, project coordinator with SHARP said. The software used for the programme was provided by TCS. 'The unique feature of the programme is that the data is then made available through internet, for the school, doctor at the primary health centre, district medical office and also for the state or central govt. for efficient use. Personalized electronic health report cards can also be given to each child,' she added.

The programme started in the first week of May. The post programme statistical analysis clearly showed that almost 50% of the children had their BMI percentiles below 15, which clearly denotes poor health according to WHO standards. 30% of the children under the study were border line cases touching the 15th percentile line, whereas only 20% crossed it, the upper limit being 40th percentile. 60% of the children were found to have Vitamin A deficiency symptoms like watering or reddening of eyes and poor night vision. 55% of the children complained of frequent pain in the knee, legs or ankle bone. Dr Puran Prakash, Gen. Sec., SHARP added that, **'The clear message we get of the analysis is that a completely efficient health monitoring system for school children which would make necessary interventions possible is the need of the hour'**. Hon'ble Minister Mr Kamal Nath appreciated the efforts and was much interested in taking the programme to even the most remote districts of M.P. Intel announced to do the pilot programme in 5 more schools in Chhindwara city this year.

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School Health Annual Report Programme (SHARP) is a non-govt. organization (NGO) with scientifically planned health programme for school children, professionally managed under the guidance of eminent medical experts, sociologists, educationist, psychologists, nutritional specialists and others who have vision of promoting healthcare of children throughout the third world countries. The programme is unique in being the first programme to computerise and place health records of lacs of children on the internet in year 1999. The programme's innovative approach has made it the most popular school health programme amongst schools with lacs of children taking benefit out of it through its various projects.

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