

Unique school health programme launched for combating malnutrition in India

SHARP NGO along with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, District Education Council and C.R.C. Bakrol initiated a school health programme for combating malnutrition in India. The unique feature of the programme is that all the health records of school children will be digitalised and will be kept for till the child passes out from the school. School Health Analysis and policies will be made school wise and the mothers of the students will be educated on nutrition, food hygiene and food adulteration. The mothers will be encouraged to make self help groups (SHG) where they'll make healthy snacks for students which can be consumed by their own kids and surplus can be sold at school site or market.

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School Health Annual Report Program (SHARP), a Delhi based national NGO, today launched its '**CHILD HEALTH AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM**' at Kumar Shala, Bakrol with association of Gujarat Government under the mission of **SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN**. The program was inaugurated by **Hon'ble Collector Shri R N Joshi** and in the presence of Hon'ble MLA Smt. Jyotsanaben Patel, Anand District primary education officer Sh. B.K Trivedi, Member of Anand Taluka Development Smt. Kokila ben , Smt. Sejal ben, Municipal Corporation Anand and Other dignitaries.

According to the Progress Report of Children - A Statistical Review December 2007 by UNICEF India, Malnutrition is the underlying cause in up to 50 percent under-five deaths. About 25 percent of children under age five in the world are underweight. In India the underweight prevalence rate is 43 per cent. Average annual rate of decline since 1990 has been 0.9 percent - accelerated progress is needed to meet the solutions of the problem. As this data does not only affect the health status of children but also affect the academic performance of children and later on their productivity. Studies have proven that poorly nourished children are often tired, apathetic, and unable to concentrate on their academic performance, thus results into drop out. Poor enrolment and high school dropout rate are attributed to poor socio-economic conditions, child labor, and lack of motivation and poor nutrition status of the children." she added.

To focus on school health, Government of Gujarat has declared this year (2008) as **Healthy School Children** year under its **SARVA SHIKSH ABHIYAN MISSION**. To strengthen this mission, SHARP in association with District Education Council and C.R.C Bakrol has launched a school health checkup program.

The beneficiaries of this project are the underprivileged children of Municipal School in Bakrol. Under this project, health check-up will be conducted for all the students and the collected health data will be stored at SHARP repository. It will be updated regularly by follow up checkup. The health profile of each child will be available on SHARP NGO website at www.schoolindia.org . The children can assess their health profile through ID number allotted to them on their 'SHARP Smart Card'. School Health Analysis report will be prepared school wise.

On the basis of this school health data analysis a special camps for mothers will be organized where they will be given education regarding various health issues like malnutrition, sanitation and hygiene, food adulteration and many others issues of day to day life problems of their child health. The

mothers of the students will be encouraged to make self help groups (SHG) with the help of Sakhi Mandal Scheme and will be the mothers will be trained to make healthy snacks for children which will take improve the nutritional status of their children and the extra production can be marketed at a local level. The mothers will also be trained to maintain good food hygiene. This will increase the income generating activities for women and will also help to overcome problem of malnutrition.

At the inauguration, **Sh. R.N. Joshi, District Collector, Anand**, applauded the efforts done by SHARP NGO to promote school health to combat malnutrition. He also appreciated the project conceived by SHARP for Bakrol and would like to replicated the same project in the whole Anand District. He also said that innovative projects like this will surely help Gujarat to become zero malnutrition state by 2010.

According to **Ms Urvashi Pande, State Coordinator Gujarat, SHARP NGO**, 'Our objective of the program is to promote positive health by early diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of deficiency and to edify mothers of these children on various issues like problems of malnutrition, unhealthy diet, food adulteration, sanitation and personal hygiene.'

We are proud to be associated with **All India Shree LaxminarayanDev Yuvak Mandal, of Shree Swaminarayan Sect Vadatal and Jan Kalyan Mandal, Anand**, Who have made it easy task for us by providing the helping hands, financial and moral support in promotion of this project.

'Health is wealth and let our school children enjoy good health with good education, better health with better education and best health with best education.'

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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 programmeamongst schoolswith lacs of children taking benefit out of it through its various projects.

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