

Health dept signs MoU for curing malnourished kids

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Jaipur: The health department on Monday signed an MoU with Unicef and Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (Gain) to deal with severe acute malnutrition in the state.

"As per a new report of the Unicef, 6.5 lakh children in the state are affected. Under the new programme, 10,000 children between 0 to 14 years would be monitored and provided with medicines and nutritious food regularly," said health minister Rajendra Rathore. When asked if all the 6.5 lakh children were malnourished, he said, "not exactly malnourished but affected".

The MoU was signed for community-based management of children with severe acute malnutrition. It's a joint commitment for reducing stunting in Rajasthan. The health department has identified 13 districts in the state for the launch of the programme.

Among the 13 identified districts, 10 are categorized as high priority districts as they have not so good health indications, while three other districts are tribal-dominated districts, which require more focused approach to deal with health-related problems among children especially.

At present, the health department is providing treatment to the malnourished children at malnutrition treatment centres (MTC). According to the health department figures, around 9,891 malnourished children in 2014-15 were provided with treatment at the MTCs in state. There are 10-bedded 40 MTCs in the state. Also, there are another 107, 6-bedded MTCs in state, which are providing treatment to the malnourished children.

The health department felt the need to provide treatment outside the MTCs to the children too. So, it has decided to introduce community-based management of children



Health minister Rajendra Rathore with officials of Unicef and Gain after signing the MoU on Monday

with severe acute malnutrition in cooperation with Unicef and Gain. "It has been proved by studies and researches, that a malnourished child can be treated outside the hospitals in community-based care," Rath-

ore said. UNICEF state chief Samuel Mawungidze and Gain country manager and senior advisor South Asia Rajan Shankar signed the MoU.

The children who are malnourished with no complications like infection, etc., will be provided with care under the new project. Those who have complications and need medical attention will be treated at MTCs and hospitals.

The government is targeting to provide care to 10,000 children under the new project in 13 districts of the state. Rajan said that Gain is an international body having an aim to make world free from malnutrition. He said that at present, Gain is helping Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) and the state government in providing people with fortified flour, salt, cooking oil and milk. It also helps in reducing infant mortality rate.

Gain, manager, India operations, Salil Kumar said, "Anganwadi workers, accredited social health activist and other healthcare staff will help in the project's aim, which is timely detection, timely treatment and timely home-based care. They will be provided with medical nutrition kits. Training will be imparted to them."

Besides, IIHMR president Dr SD Gupta said, "The state government has announced provisioning of fortified wheat flour, oil and double fortified salt through public distribution system in financial budget. Since last four years, we have approached 8 major cooking oil refineries to fortify the oil, and they are now producing nearly 2.4 lakh metric tons of fortified edible oil annually. Rajasthan Cooperative Dairy Federation through 22 Saras milk unions and one another dairy processing unit are producing more than 5 lakh metric tons of fortified milk annually."

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