

National Seminar on 'Strategies for Women and Child Survival'

According to the FSN baseline report, there is high prevalence of anemia in Wardha, Maharashtra (more than 80%) and Koraput, Odisha (more than 70%). Children in the age group of 1 to 5 years are highly affected followed by non pregnant and non lactating women and adolescents girls.

National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj at Hyderabad conducted a National seminar on “Strategies for Women and Child Survival” from 8th to 10th March 2016. There were 38 presentation under various themes: 1. Maternal and child mortality in India 2. National Health Mission & maternal and child health 3. Programmes for women and child survival 4. Role of Panchayati Raj in maternal and child health care 5. Civil Society Organization innovations 6. Gender and equity issues for health and nutrition 7. Nutrition and anemia among women and children 8. Child sex ratio and child survival.

Main debate was on different schemes provided by the Government for Women and Child welfare. Some studies showed the trends in mother and child nutritional status and mortality rates using secondary data analysis. This was explained with reference to tea growers in Assam. Another study, suggested that monetary support given by government during pregnancy and lactating period to women is mostly used for other purposes. So instead of provided money, it can be provided in form of coupons in ratio shops, so that they can buy food materials using that. It was also recommended that ASHA workers should compulsorily undergo all three trainings provided by the government as a study showed that ASHA workers are not properly trained. A study in Kerala showed that the difference in infrastructure for ICDS centers, mainly in tribal areas. Researchers from National Health Mission discussed the effect of introducing NRHM (National Rural Health Mission). It was also debated that human scavengers still exist, mainly in government sectors and emphasized that the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993 should be implemented strongly.

Anemia is one of the main reasons for high women and child mortality rate in India. D.J.Nithya presented an paper on “Impact of nutrient intake on prevalence of Anemia –evidence from two districts of India” under the theme “Nutrition and anemia among women and children”. This paper demonstrated that there is link between iron and vitamin A intake on blood hemoglobin levels and prevalence of anemia. Wardha, Maharashtra has sufficient iron intake from diet, it also had higher prevalence of anemia. This is due to other factors like antinutritional factors in diet, sanitation and hygiene. Malaria is one of factor for high prevalence of anemia in Koraput, odisha. Both locations are agriculture based and previous studies have showed that prevalence of anemia is high in agriculture based countries. Pro-nutritional agriculture was recommended for bringing down anemia which is currently in progress under LANSa FSN study.

Research scholars, researchers from NGO’s, from various institutes attended the seminar and presented their works and shared their experiences. Recommendations from the seminar were consolidated at the end of the seminar to be presented to policy makers.

D.J. Nithya

LANSA Nutritionist