

Officials: Chaibasa study shows 78% recovery rate in malnourished kids

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Ranchi: A nutrition intervention piloted in Chaibasa (West Singhbhum) has demonstrated a promising 78% recovery rate among children suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), signalling potential for a scalable solution to the state's ongoing child malnutrition crisis.

The results were presented on Tuesday at a state-level dissemination programme held at Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (Rims) to assess the impact of the augmented Take-Home Ration (THR), known as 'Shishu Shakti'.

The supplementary food product was developed in collaboration with the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad, under the Strategic Action for Alleviation of Malnutrition and Anaemia Reduction (SAAMAR) programme.

The pilot study was conducted in the Chakradharpur block of West Singhbhum district from January to May 2025, enrolling 139 children diagnosed with SAM. Of the 124 children who completed the intervention, 97 (78%) achieved recovery. The ready-to-eat formulation offers nutritional value, providing 490 kilocalories and 17 grams of protein per 100 grams, compared to 455 kilocalories and 12.7 grams of protein in the standard Take-Home Ration.

Director of social welfare, Kiran Kumari Passi said, "The pilot was implemented in one of the most difficult districts in terms of terrain and economic development. Understanding community-specific challenges is essential.

Factors such as low milk consumption, alcoholism, child marriage, and high dropout rates among girls leading to low maternal education directly impact child nutrition."

Palamu DC, Sameera S, stated, "Training of master trainers at the state and district levels has been completed, and block-level training of ASHAs and Anganwadi workers is underway. We anticipate expanding Shishu Shakti across Palamu shortly."