

Egg Campaign 12th October 2023

A state level meeting of the Right to Food Campaign was held on 13 and 14 September 2023. In which members of the campaign from Palamu, Garhwa, Latehar, Lohardaga, Ranchi, East Singhbhum, Bokaro, West Singhbhum and Simdega districts participated. In this meeting it was also decided to organize a symbolic state-wide Egg Campaign in Anganwadi centers.

The objective of the egg campaign was (a) to highlight the nutrition benefits of eggs for children and (b) to draw attention of the government to its promise to provide eggs in anganwadi centers and MDM 6 days a week. A provision had already been made in the state budget of 2021- 22 and thereafter for the same although it is yet to be implemented.

Accordingly, the egg campaign was organized on 12th October 2023 in over 100 Anganwadi centers across 20 districts of the state such as Palamu, Latehar, Gumla, Khunti, Garhwa, Dumka, Pakur, Godda, Sahebganj, Giridih, Dhanbad, Koderma, Bokaro and West Singhbhum. Altogether about two thousand children participated in the event and they were fed freshly boiled eggs. The children were happy to eat the eggs provided. The participants included PRI representatives, gram pradhans, CBOs, parents, mothers, women and members of the community. Those present were briefed about the nutrition and health benefits of eggs for the physical and mental growth of children. The eggs provided to the children across the Anganwadi centers on the day of the campaign was bought through voluntary donations by CSOs and individuals.

Egg campaign in project areas:

Manika – 5 Anganwadi centers of Bariyatu, Pagar, Jagtu, Jerua and Purani Dundu (3). 250 children participated.

Karra – 4 Anganwadi centers of Bandu, Khartanga, Jaltanda, Kanshili. Altogether 82 children were given eggs.

NGOs & villagers fill state
void on school meal

Jharkhand gets egg reminder

ANIMESH BISOEE

Jamshedpur: Villagers, NGOs and Right to Food Campaign activists collected funds and distributed eggs in over 100 anganwadis in more than 20 districts (out of 24 districts in the state) in Jharkhand on Thursday to remind the state government of its promise of distributing eggs in schools and anganwadis.

Anganwadi centres are operational as part of the Integrated Child Development Services of central and state government to combat child hunger and malnutrition.

"We had no option but to collect funds from villagers, like-minded NGOs and also took support from food security activists to purchase and distribute eggs in over 100 anganwadis on Thursday. We hope that at least now the government will wake up and fulfil its promise of providing eggs daily in anganwadis and at least five days a week in mid-day meals at schools," said Asharfi Nand Prasad, state convener of Right to Food Campaign.

The state cabinet last year sanctioned distribution of eggs in anganwadis and in mid-day meals in schools.

The move assumes significance in a state like Jharkhand which, according to a recent report on multidimensional poverty index (MPI) by NITI Aayog, has the second highest rate of MPI among Indian states with 29 per cent of its population affected.

According to National Family Health Survey-5, 2019-2021, Jharkhand's 56.8 per cent pregnant women are anaemic, while 39.6 per cent children

are stunted.

According to the same survey, 67.5 per cent children below the age of five were anaemic in 2021 and 39.4 per cent of them were underweight.

Development economist and one of the architects of MGNREGA, Jean Dreze, has on several occasions strongly pleaded that egg should be made part of the mid-day meals every day and in anganwadis as it is most nutritious commodity and its introduction will go a long way in enhancing nutrition in the state and also increasing the school attendance.

"Over 2,000 children were fed eggs in the presence of village heads, public representatives, anganwadi workers, parents of children and social workers. We also discussed the situation of malnutrition and the need for eggs at the local level and in the entire state," said Prasad.

According to media reports, centralised contracts are being arranged for private contractors to provide eggs in anganwadi because of which there is a delay in providing eggs.

"There is bound to be corruption and delay in centralised contracts which will have a direct impact on malnutrition of children. There is no need for contracting in anganwadi — anganwadi can purchase eggs locally. At present, two eggs are available in the mid-day meal in schools a week, which are purchased locally. If this system is running successfully in schools, then it will work in anganwadi also," said James Herenz, a food right activist.



Children have eggs at an anganwadi centre in East Singhbhum on Thursday. Picture by Bhola Prasad