

# **Pushti : The Project for Our Dear Ones**

## **Abstract**

The Uttar Dinajpur District Administration has launched the Project PUSHTI on 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 to provide an 'Additional Nutritional Supplement' free of cost to the mal-nourished children of the age group 0-6 years, enrolled with different ICDS Centres of the district. The especially designed project was initially funded by the Uttar Dinajpur Administration; ICDS Programme, Uttar Dinajpur; district Rural Development Cell and all 9(nine) Block Development Office and Panchayat Samities, and is being implemented through the existing SHG network of the district with technical support from Krishi Vigyan (KVK), Chopra of Uttar Banga Krishi Viswa Vidyalaya has provided required technical support in preparing the PUSHTI in the line of National Institution of Nutrition, Mysore.

The project PUSHTI, as stated is a packet of several nutritious cereal dust enriched with vitamin and other micro nutrients of vegetable origin is being prepared by the Self-Help Groups women at 9 (nine) different production points of the district who are well trained by the KVK Faculties on procurement and preparation of PUSHTI to provide it to mal-nourished children of ICDS(AWCs) of the district. As proved from the experiments both at the Laboratory level and Field level that a regular use of the 'Supplement' alongwith the regular food provides required nutritional value for the mal-nourished children. The Uttar Dinajpur District Administration within its financial constraints has taken the oath to make the district ' Free from Mal-nourishment, and it thinks that the desired result will be yielded in the very tomorrows.

## **PUSHTI: The Project**

The District, Uttar Dinajpur ranks 13<sup>th</sup> amongst West Bengal districts as per the West Bengal Human Development Report(2004). Child mortality as an ingredient of 'Helath Index' is too grim here. As researches revealed mal-nourishment is one of the prime causes that leads to high rate of children mortality rate in the district. Mal-nourishment amongst the children (0-6 year's age-group) in Uttar Dinajpur is alarming in comparison to the enrollment ratio in ICDS centers of the district itself. The Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS), Uttar Dinajpur Project through its 3737 Service Centres (AWC) although provides different services including 'Supplementary Nutrition' to the children, it needs further intervention for an overall development of the scenario.

The Uttar Dinajpur District Administration has taken a holistic approach of supplying ' Additional Nutritional Supplement' in the form of "PUSHTI" to the Severely Mal-nourished Children, who are officially called 'Red-Children' through the existing Self Help Group Network of the district.

The District Administration uses to think here the approach of 'Supplying Additional Nutritional Supplement' to the pre-school children through the existing Self Help Group Network, so that on the one hand there will be an

improvement of child health in rural areas as well as there will an increase in pre-school enrollment; on the other hand there will be an 'Employment Avenue' for the poor SHG members too.

As data received from the District Project Office, ICDS, Uttar Dinajpur that out of 328392 children enrolled with 3737 AWCs of the district, 3007 children are severely under-weight and defined as the 'Red-Children' as on 31th March, 2014 and 2062 as on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2014.

These Red-Children or the Severely Acute Mal-Nourished Children (SAM children) are being provided a 500 gm packet of PUSHTI, a Weaning Food of different cereal dust per week, which provides required calories for their physical as well as mental growth of the indentified SAM Children.

As proposed that these Red-Children (under-weight children) will be provided a 500 gm packet of different cereal dust per week, which provides required calorie amount for their physical as well as mental growth. Calorie measurement and the texture of its ingredients has been development by the 'Krishi Vigyan Kendra of Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya, Uttar Dinajpur Chapter at Chopra. As calculated, the unit cost of each packet is approximately Rs. 35.00(Rupees thirty five) only. The entire job of procurement, preparation, packaging and distribution is being done by the Self-Help Group Network.

## **Relevance of the Project**

The project is holistic in nature because it will surely increase the enrollment scenario of the pre-school children in the district slashing down the drop-out ratio. It will develop physical and mental child-health so that mortality rate may also be increased. On the other hand, employment generation for the poor SHG members is proved to be relevant for implementing the project.

These red-children (SAM children) as being provided a 500 gm packet of Weaning Food of different cereal dust per week, which provides approximately 410 kcal per 100 gm for their physical as well as mental growth. Calorific measurement and the texture of its ingredients have been development by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra(KVK) of Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya, Uttar Dinajpur Chapter at Chopra, in 5(five) different varieties as mentioned below:

<b>Weaning Variety No.</b>	<b>Ingredients and their ratio as</b>	<b>Mixing Ratio</b>	<b>Food Value in K Cal</b>
1.	Roasted Wheat,	40	378
	Bengal Gram,	26	
	Pea Nut,	10	
	Jaggery	24	
2.	Roasted Wheat	40	410
	Green Gram	26	
	Pea Nut,	10	
	Jaggery	24	
3.	Malted Maize	70	384
	Jaggery	10	

	Moringa Leaves	20	
4.	Cereals (Whet/Maize/Rice/Oats)	60	321
	Pulse (Bengal Gram/ Green Gram)	17	
	Pea Nut	14	
	Jaggery	09	
5.	Buck Wheat Flour	20	395
	Jaggery	20	

### **Cost Configuration**

As per latest data available as on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2014 from the District Project Officer (DPO), ICDS, Uttar Dinajpur total no of 'Severely Acute Mal-nourished Children' between 0-6 years block wise are as follows:

Sl. No.	Name of the Block	No. of ICDS Centres	Total no. of Children Enrolled	No. of Severely Underweight Children(0-5 years)
1.	Chopra	362	32257	419
2.	Islampur	411	41697	540
3.	Goalpokher-I	381	43102	406
4.	Goalpokher-II	345	37243	566
5.	Karandighi	523	51704	505
6.	Raiganj (Rural)	591	47454	102
7.	Raiganj (Urban)	110	4322	08
8.	Hemtabad	252	16272	59
9.	Kaliyaganj	370	25675	178
10.	Itahar	393	36183	224
		3737	335909	3007

However, the number of SAM Children has decreased as the data collected on the 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 and it stands as 2062.

Initially, the cost per packet of 500 gms of PUSHTI was calculated as Rs. 30.00. But implementing the project for consecutive 4 weeks, it was found that the actual cost per packet of 500 gms of PUSHTI comes as Rs. 35.00. On basis of the actual cost structure of Rs. 35.00 per 500 gms packet i.e., Rs. 5.00 per child per day, annual fund requirement per child has been estimated as

### **Actual Cost Structure (Rs.)**

Cost for one child per day	Cost for one child per annum	5% contingency per child per annum	Total
5.00	1825	91.25	1916.25

Fund requirement (on data based)

As on 31 March, 2014 = Rs. 57,62,164.00 (Rupees fifty seven lac Sixty Two Thousand One Hundred and Sixty Four ) only and as on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 = Rs. 39,51,308.00 (Rs. Thirty Nine Lac Fifty One Thousand three Hundred and Eight ) only.

On basis of the initial cost structure, it was decided at the Administrative Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 at the Circuit House, Karnojora that the cost of implementing the project will be borne jointly by the Additional District Magistrate & Additional Executive Officer, Uttar Dinajpur, the District Project Director, ICDS, Uttar Dinajpur and the Block Development Officers and the Executive Officers of the nine Block and Panchayat Samities.

The share-holders were requested to deposit/ transfer the following fund amount in favour of the Project Director, District Rural Development Cell, Uttar Dinajpur Zilla Parishad within the 3<sup>rd</sup> (third) week of the previous month, so that a timely payment is possible to the SHG members in order to smooth and uninterrupted implementation of the proposed project:

1. The ADM & AEO (ZP), to give Rs. 090 Lakh per month
2. The Project Director, DRDC, UD to give 0.50 Lakh per month
3. The DPO, ICDS, UD, to give Rs. 1.50 Lakh per month
4. The BDO and the EO, Chopra/Islampur/goalpokher-I/Goalpokher-II/Karandighi/Raiganj/Hemtabad/  
Kaliyaganj/Itahar, Development Block/Panchayat Samity, Uttar Dinajpur each to give Rs. 010 Lakh per month.

The revised supply order of Pushti packets for both SAM Children and 'At Risk Pregnant Mothers' will as follows w.e.f. 22/07/2015:

Sl. No.	Name of the Block	Name of the SHG Cluster to implement the project	No. of PUSHTI packets (500 gms each) needed per week for SAM Children since 22/07/2015	No. of PUSHTI packets (500 gms each) needed per week for 'At Risk Pregnant Mothers' since 22/07/2015
1.	Chopra	Chopra Sonapur Sangah	128	52
2.	Islampur	Gunjaria Santi Sangha	180	179
3.	Goalpokher-I	Goalpokher Mother Terisa Sangha	171	59
4.	Goalpokher-II	Kanki Nari Shakti Sangha	210	22
5.	Karandighi	Karandighi-II Mahila Kalyan Sangha	127	157
6.	Raiganj (Rural)	Serpur Trimoni Sangha	4	Nil
7.	Raiganj (Urban)	Serpur Trimoni Sangha	86	88
8.	Hemtabad	Bangalbari Swadhin Mahila Sangha	38	493
9.	Kaliyaganj	Bhander Surya Kiran Sangha	149	374
10.	Itahar	Itahar Amra Swadhin Mahasangha	193	755
		Total	1286	2176