

# India Child Nutrition Fund Newsletter Nov 2022

**The last two years for the Nutrition Program, like most areas of our life, have been dominated by Covid 19 and the responses to it.**

Within the first two weeks of lockdown we were able to assist over 2000 families in Hyderabad environs, involving over 5 tonnes of foodstuffs. Elsewhere, with wonderful assistance from local volunteers, we were able to assist over 1200



## A Meal Pack for the Young

families in Andhra Pradesh, and around 1000 in West Bengal, as well as financial assistance in some other states in India.

The demand initially was for hot meal packs, of which over 4000 were delivered. As the lockdown extended into months the need for the supply of basic food ration packs became a priority. What was supplied in a Ration pack varied a lot in each area, depending on food habits, and what they may have had access to.

## A typical ration pack contained:

Cooking oil – 1 kg  
Dahl (Pulses) – 1 kg  
Rawa (crushed wheat) – 1 kg  
Sugar – 1 kg  
Atta (chappati flour) – 1 kg

Rice – 5kg  
Personal washing soaps  
plus some cash for purchase of fresh vegetables.



## A Meal Pack for the Elderly

The areas of need were villages, towns, cities, and construction sites where the daily wage earners were mostly interstate ‘migrant’ workers who had come from poorer states in the north.

We had wonderful co-operation from the State Govt. Women and Child Welfare Dept, with their officers, where necessary, accompanying our volunteers, and arranging police escort where required. They also arranged special passes for our two distribution vehicles, according them, “Emergency Govt Vehicle” status so we could move more freely.



## A Distribution Vehicle & Team ready to Leave



**Shunem boys and staff help with the packing of Ration Kits in the C3 Hall**

As the migrants took to the streets, the police immediately blocked their movement and accommodated them in nearby Function Halls, large open sheds where a couple of thousand could gather (usually used for big Indian weddings). Having packed up and left their earlier construction site huts, many were not permitted to return. Early on the 3<sup>rd</sup> morning there were 300 in a Function Hall in an area accessible to us.

The police had arranged someone to sponsor lunch for the 300, but asked us to supply some snacks for breakfast. By the time our volunteers returned with breakfast (ORS drinks, fruit and Nutritive biscuit packs) the number had swelled to 600 who shared what had been brought. By noon this number had grown to 1500 and so when lunch for 300 arrived, the police returned it unopened feeling that the ensuing rush could lead to a dangerous situation. The police were doing registrations as fast as possible and were encouraging people to leave once that had happened.

Many just drifted onto roadsides as they had nowhere to go. We arranged another 1200 ORS and Snack Packs and supplied to those who were remaining. About 300 remained in the area over the next week, either on roadsides or at the Function Hall, and so our focus was to provide breakfasts as necessary, nutrition drinks for the children, and one good hot meal for them each day



**Migrant family with their Ration Kit**

As Covid lockdowns prevented the usual gathering and distribution of the nutrition drink, some Centres were able to distribute Nutrition Powder kits to families with instructions on preparation by the parents. This generally seemed to work fairly well, but it was not always easy to verify its actual usage, which is why we usually supervise the preparation and drinking of the Nutrition drink. At the time of writing all Centres have returned to normal practices.



**Enjoying a nutrition drink on the roadside**

## Details of the Centres

**Bracketed number [00] shows the average number of drinks distributed each time**

1. **Kalamavu, Idukki Dt., Kerala. [50]** – The tribal areas in the mountainous regions of Kerala continue to suffer from a poor diet due to poverty and lack of awareness. This Centre, run by Baby John and his wife Bindu, caters for about 50 children and has good community involvement. Special Health and Nutrition days are regularly run for the parents, motivating them to provide a good nutrition base for their children, and encouraging them to experiment with the addition of nutrition ingredients in the daily diet of their families.

One of the main features of the nutrition drink is that it consists of things which are mostly available in the village or town market at reasonable prices. The balanced variety of ingredients, plus milk powder, make it highly nutritious. One may then ask, 'Why not simply tell the parents that these are things their children need?' It is unfortunate but true, that familiarity breeds contempt, and if you told these mostly illiterate parents about the ingredients on the first day, you would find that as many as 70% may not bother to send their children again. Most know, especially those who assist, that it is cooked from a special flour, but most think that it contains something "super special": not common market grains which they don't even think worthy of their precious coins. The educational programme is therefore planned to start 12 months after the opening of a Centre. By this time the benefits of the drink will be generally evident to the parents, and the knowledge of the commonplace ingredients will not counter the evidence of their eyes.

2. **Hallahally Extn., Mandya, Karnataka– [70]**



**Sowbhagya with children - Mandya Centre**

Under the direction of Sowbhagya John, this Centre near Mandya, caters for children from a labouring community who basically live on a rice only diet.

3. **Bangalore, Lazar Road [40]** – This provides for the children in a slum adjacent to the Ecclesiastical and also for non-sighted young people involved at the Bartimaeus Centre.
4. **Kolar Dt. [100]** Run by Ms Kalpana in Kolar Dt of Karnataka, catering for the nutrition needs of children from poor backgrounds at risk of malnutrition due to a limited rice diet.
5. **Indiranagar – Adoni, A.P. [95]** Indiranagar is a huts colony where the children gather for their drink prepared and delivered by Devaputra and family. This is an area traditionally of vitamin A deficiency, and the nutritious drink with its overloading of vitamin A, both from the natural ingredients, and the additives, is vital to keep their sharp brown eyes bright and prevent night blindness, that in many



**Adoni – a drink in hand**

cases leads to total blindness. (Over a million of India's several million totally blind are such due to this). In conjunction with the Nutrition programme here, Jemima Catherine runs a small school for a number of children who would otherwise attend no school at all.

6. **Sunday School – Adoni, A.P. [45]** – The second centre at Adoni is one associated with the Sunday School. As most of the children at the Sunday School are from very poor backgrounds, a small centre is run from the Ecclesiastical meeting room to cater for them. It also provides an added incentive to turn up for Sunday School, as well as keeping in touch during the week. This programme provides Manikyamma, whose husband Rajanna died

suddenly some years ago, leaving her with six children, with a small regular income from supervising the program along with Jaypal, her son.



**Pot of precious drink which never seems to fail.**

7. **Aaradhana Home, Hyderabad, T.S. [50]** - This Home caters for poor and vulnerable children. Sponsored by Agape in Action – the children are able to attend our Nithsdale School and attend the Hyderabad SS at C3. The Home is run by Bro Kiran, and Sis Sirisha, members of Hyderabad Ecclesia. The benefit to the children of the regular Nutrition Drink is obvious.
8. **Soganur Road, Yemmiganur, A.P. [75]** – Run by bro Vijay Bhasker from the Ecclesial hall Many of these children also attend the weekly Sunday School.
9. **Model School – Yemmiganur, A.P. [60]** – A small school run by Bhasker and sis Indira supplies the Nutrition drink regularly to the most needy children in their school.
10. **Chigali, Kurnool Dt., A.P. – [95]** The home of Ramanjane is in a very traditional village comprising a few significant homes of wealthy landowners and many mud walled huts of the labourers. Their children attend, and are grateful recipients of the drink.
11. **Kavali, Nellore Dt., A.P. – [95]** Sis Rachel and Bro Suresh run this Centre in a colony on the edge of Kavali town, known as “Weaker Sections” Colony. This alludes to their economic status, and as such their children benefit much from the “Nutrition Gungi” (Gangi=porridge) The cry echoes around the Colony when the drink arrives.

**12. Kadium, A.P. – {40}** Run by Bro Andrew and Sis Shubha in conjunction with their Agape in Action funded Faith Home project, this provides for Faith Home children and some other SS pupils linked to the Kadium Ecclesia.

**13. Trimulgherry, , Secunderabad, T.S. [70]**



With the the Gayathrinagar Centre closing at the beginning of Covid due to local objections by the neighbours, we have opened a Centre at Trimulgherry, on the north side of Hyderabad. Here Mrs Lalitha runs a program for the Scheduled Caste children (erstwhile ‘untouchables’) in a colony ear-marked for them.

**14. Ibrahimpatnam, Hyderabad, T.S. [160]**

In several locations on the outskirts of Hyderabad, Sis Esther, who has been involved for many years in community social work, provides the Nutrition to many children, mostly girls, in very poor circumstances

**15. Atmakur, Prakasam Dt, AP [100]**



This is a new centre in a village area on the outskirts of Atmakur, where Sis Mary Kumari grew up. It also arose after the closure of Gayathrinagar

Run by Ms Vijaya, it caters to about 100 children and the elderly from a shanty town on Atmakur's fringe.

**16. Marica School,, Chevella, T.S. [150]** – About 30 kms from our residence at Kismatpur, Marica School has opened a branch for 157 children at their Chevella premises. Here the school is an agent on our behalf, providing the nutrition drink to these very poorly fed children. Such centres are particularly cost efficient for us as we only have to supply the ingredients, and the school cooks and distributes it through the school staff. We have always been very appreciative of the help of the manager of these schools, Mrs Marie Christine, in initiating these centres. She has been a dear friend and helper of our work for more than 30 years. With much sadness we report her brutal murder by known persons in an attempt to gain her property. The Schools she started are still keen to co-operate with us in the distribution of nutrition to needy children.

**17. Marica School, Kesaram Village, T.S. [70]-:** In the same area is the Centre in this poorly developed village catering for 70 children from particularly underprivileged back-grounds – their parents being engaged in seasonal rural labour, and begging.

**18. Hyderabad, TS. – [140]** In conjunction with Society for Rural Development – a community development NGO, we run four centres in slum areas of Hyderabad city. As well as regular nutrition, we provide a teacher's salary at one of the Centres as most of these children do not attend school, so our programme gives a basic education in preparation for streaming into formal education. A total of 185 children are currently involved in this programme.



**A Mothers' Education Proram**

**19. Gowliguda, Hyderabad, TS. [95]–** In conjunction with Society for Rural Development – we provide nutrition to the girls in the Home run by

this Society, in the centre of Hyderabad City. This Home is for girls who are abandoned or at risk, and runs in the upper floors of a Govt School building. A Govt Primary School operates on the ground floor, so all but the older girls have ready access to education.



**Nutrition time at the Girls' Home**

**20. Turkapally, Mulugu Mdl, Medak Dt, TS. [75]** This Centre is run by Bro John and Sis Molly, who earlier looked after our residential Leprosy Centre. They provide nutrition to about 50 children and some aged persons in need.

The Supplementary Nutrition Programme - is conveniently known as the "SUN" scheme, which we pray will bring some light, warmth and healthy growth into the lives of those who benefit from it. Although the programme is primarily for children, we cannot ignore other nutrition needs. We receive requests from many quarters. and it is difficult to say no. Whatever plans we may have in our mind can be changed by heart-rending situations which arise, drawing out compassion which cannot be ignored.

When an aged and under-nourished widow hobbles into the centre on her stick, who would refuse her? When a group of 40 children (5 to 11 years) is walked 4 kms each way for one glass of drink by concerned parents, who would not be moved to arrange rather to take the drink to them, than to require such an excursion three times a week?

The programme basically began as a rural one, but when a slum area on the edge of a town nearby, where malnourished and undernourished children cling to mothers who are forced to prostitution to survive, is within one's capacity to aid, then how can we ignore it?

**21. Shunem Home, Hyderabad, TS. [150]–** Our own Shunem Home children, all of whom are from families with leprosy under treatment in our Street

Leprosy programme, Hyderabad, are too precious to us to miss out on this health giving drink, so two cartons of Nutrition materials each delivery day, are supplied to Shunem for the 130 children in our care there, and the aged persons.

**22. SC Colony, Gajuwaka, Visakhapatnam, A.P. – .**

[180] This centre is run by Bro Philip of the LV Nagar Ecclesia'. It caters for about 110 children in the huts in SC Colony, where we also run a small school where Hannah of the Gajuwaka Ecclesia teaches. An associate Centre has now been set up in a nearby needy area for 70 children.

**23. Sironcha, Maharashtra [65]–**

This remote small town is where Sis Sarah spent her childhood. It is a very poor area and we have been able to arrange for the village children in the area and the hostel, to receive the drink. We are so happy to be able to do something for the families among whom Sarah grew up, and where her mother, Elvira, taught for many years. There are 65 children being helped at this Centre.

**24. Sarenga, West Bengal [90]–**

This programme is run by Tuphan Biswas and his wife Peuli, assisted by Soma Kotal. The Bankura district is a very poor area, with little development or job opportunities. Agriculturally it is poor, with only dry (non-



irrigated) lands and so the people depend on a single crop of rice per year. The Nutrition Programme is very beneficial for the children, and parents are very happy we are helping in this way.

**25. Compassion India, Kadium, A.P. [60] –**

In another welfare venture, Andrew Johnson and the Ecclesia have opened a Clinic for HIV positive patients. To assist we are supplying Nutrition to them.

## **ADMINISTRATION:**

The Nutrition Program is now part of the Hill of Hope Foundation, a registered Not for Profit Company in India with three Christadelphian Directors with backgrounds in Medicine, International IT Management, and Education and Social Work. This more official status gave us much more access to positive Govt Dept interactions during our Covid responses.