

# Homoeopathy in Public Health: Insights from a Rural Malnutrition [under nutrition] Project in India

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**Abstract-** Malnutrition is a global issue. Developed and Developing countries are facing this problem. Malnutrition is termed as “man-made disease”. Limited studies are available to justify role of homoeopathy in this issue of global concern. Dr. Hahnemann's Organon of Medicine provides guidelines for public health management through curative, preventive, and promotive aspects. While homeopathy effectively addresses many communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases and nutritional disorders like childhood malnutrition remain challenging. Malnutrition, termed a "man-made disease<sup>1</sup>," is prevalent in India, which is home to 46.6 million stunted children—one-third of the global total. Nearly half of under-5 child mortality in India is due to under-nutrition<sup>2</sup>.

**Key words –** Malnutrition, anthropometry, IEC, BCC, Public Health.

## OBJECTIVES

- To reach underserved populations using a homoeopathic approach to public health
- To develop strategies to manage malnutrition through homeopathy,
- To evaluate the efficacy of homeopathic intervention combined with Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) through Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) and counselling.

The findings gave us the insight that homoeopathy can make inroads in the Public Health & can become mainstream rather remaining as alternative system of medicine.

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Malnutrition is a hydra-headed disorder<sup>1</sup> which affects not only developing countries but developed countries as well. The effects on malnourished child is beyond

our imagination; especially in the rural sector. The stunting, low birth weight and suffering from repeated opportunistic infections and infestations makes the child entangled in a vicious cycle of morbidities<sup>3</sup>. Its effect on cognitive development of the child is much more than physical development which many a times goes unnoticed and therefore unattended.

Our institute is working in the Karjan block since 2004 with the motto of –“*Reaching to the Unreached*”. Knowing about this challenging situation we asked support from LIPOID STIFTUNG- Germany. They, without any delay accepted our proposal and plea and is supporting us till date.

We started the project on the auspicious day of Gandhi Jayanti- 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2020 in the august presence of CDHO, Former mayor of Vadodara, Block Health Officer along with other dignitaries. As government is also making its efforts in controlling malnutrition; it was very clear that we are not going to replicate their efforts but will have value addition by applying concepts of Homoeopathy.

## METHODOLOGY

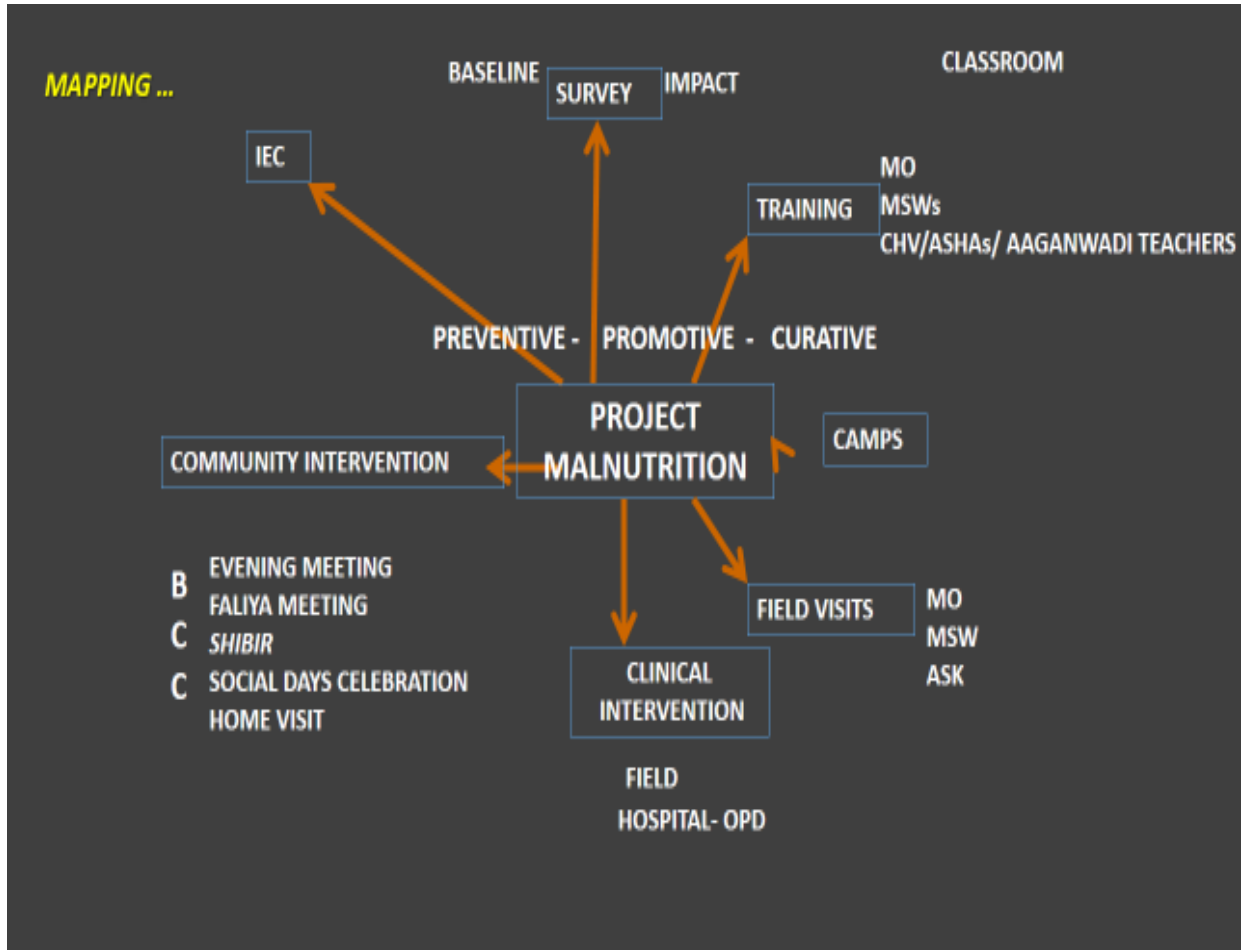
Our objective is to cover major part of the Karjan block. When we have to work at large scale it always requires TEAM WORK. We are fortunate to have young team coming forward to take the challenges of Malnutrition and more importantly working in the field which poses additional adversities while working in various villages.

Team consisted of Project Director, Social worker, Junior Research fellows, Assistant Junior Research Fellows (our Interns!) & 15 Ayush Swasthya Karyakars (Our Trained Health Workers) plus driver cum dispenser. We are privileged to get active support

from the ICDS-Karjan. We took active support of aanganwadi workers & ASHA workers. Strategies included detailed case assessments, anthropometric measurements, and administering homeopathic medicines at regular intervals. BCC, IEC and counselling were also used.

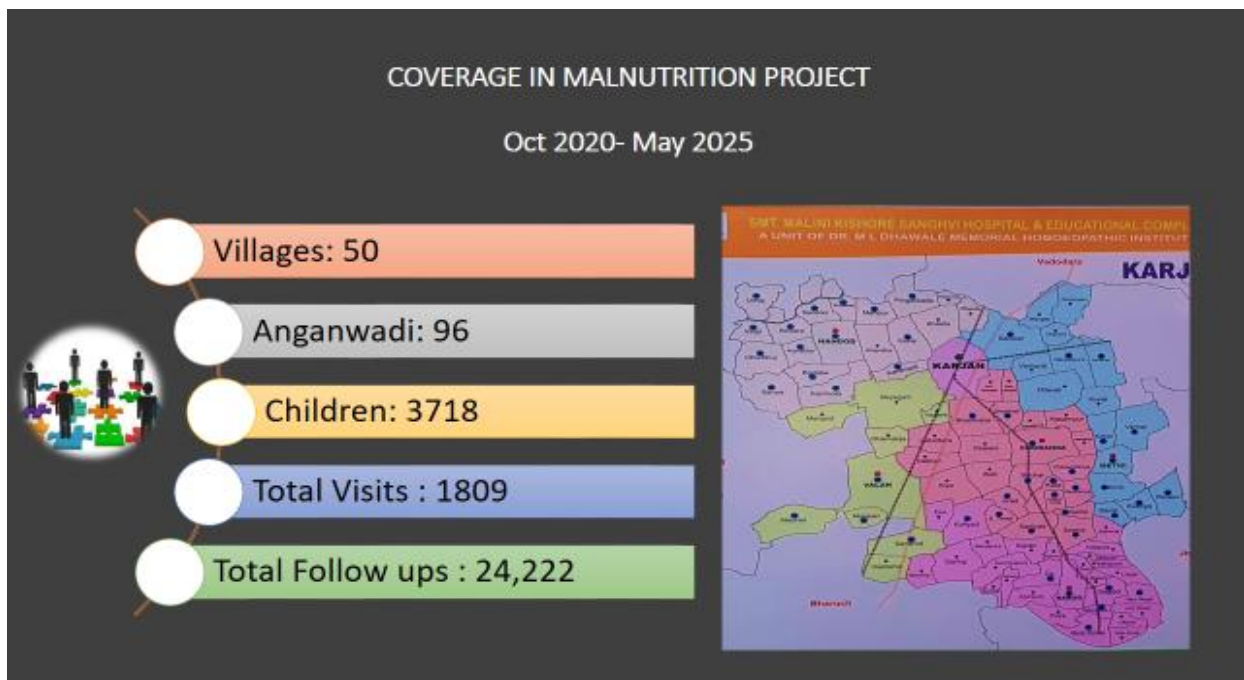
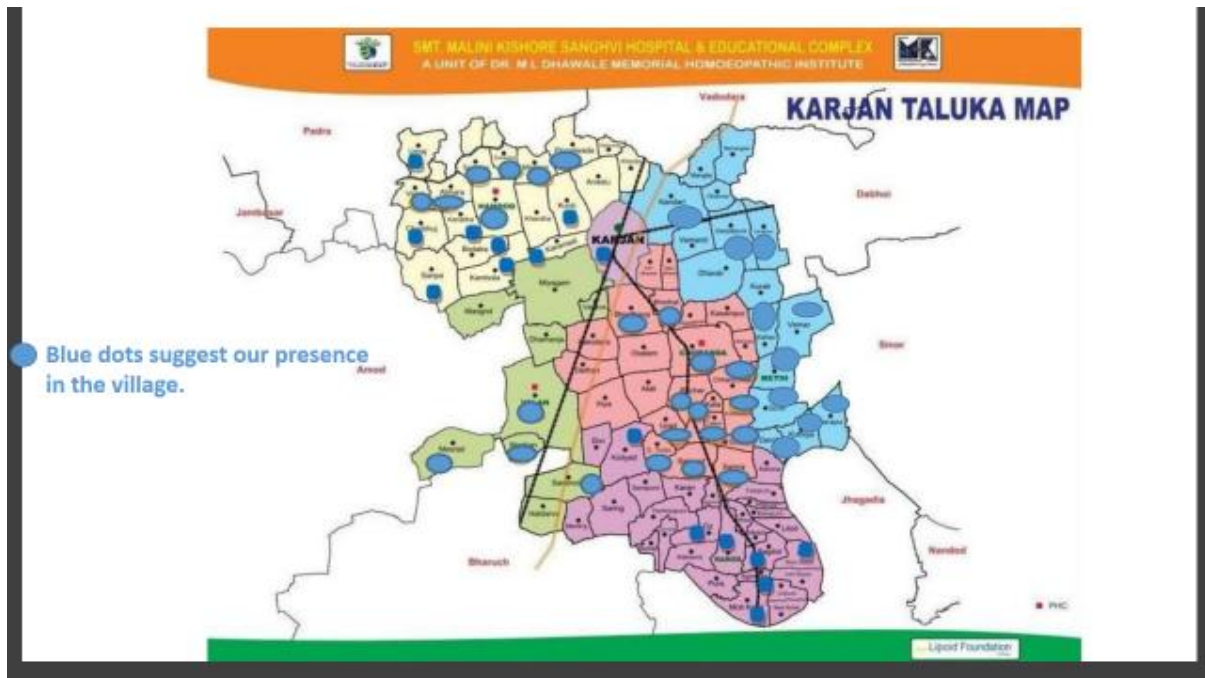
Training programs for the team were done for doing surveys, counselling of parents. Their consent and assent were taken for the enrolling them in the project. Standardized digital weighing scales, Height chart, Tape for measuring MUAC & HC were given to the team for exact measurements.

For implementing the project, proper mapping was done which required various activities to be done.



All the above mentioned activities were done in coordination and on regular basis. Therefore, the changes in the team of JRFs and Asst. JRFs, it did not give any irregularities in the project. More importantly, beneficiaries of this project are happy with the Approach, Attitude & Aptitude displayed by our TEAM.

The project will complete 5 years in October-2025. Till now [Till May-2025], we have covered 96 Aaganwadis of 50 villages & has treated nearly 3900 children.



#### CONCLUSIONS & LEARNINGS

- Public Health Initiatives requires sustained long term efforts.
- Behavioral Change Communication [BCC] with help of Information- Education & communication [IEC] is the hallmark of Public Health Initiatives.
- Homoeopathic Organizations/ colleges with objective of Community Health Services can take the initiative.
- Team consisting of Homoeopaths, Research Fellows, Social workers & Community Health Workers required to take up the Project.
- Permission & Coordination with Government machinery is most important key.

- Orientation of Government Health Workers [ASHAs & Aanganwadi workers] should be oriented about the benefits of homoeopathy in Public Health by the Authorities.[Ministry of AYUSH, NCH & CCRH- in India]
- Homoeopathy has a major role in public health.
- Homoeopathic colleges can contribute in a major way to improving public health
- Homoeopathic College can provide sustainable, cost-effective, and collaborative model to public health.
- All stakeholders, Community, Homoeopathic Colleges and Homoeopathic Science are benefited while working on Public Health

- [2] K.PARK. Park's Textbook of PREVENTION AND SOCIAL MEDICINE: 23<sup>rd</sup> Edition: Jabalpur, India: BHANOT;2015. P. 608 –667.
- [3] <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/malnutrition>

#### OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT-

- Reduction by Grade 1 of the existing grade of malnourishment in at least 50% of the enrolled children.
- Reduction in the frequency of infections of the gastro-intestinal tract (diarrhea) & Respiratory tract (Cold & Cough) in 50% of the cases.
- Improving the consumption of the food supplements provided by the government to Anganwadi children by 70%.
- Increase in the readiness of the mothers & care takers to use the food supplement provided by the government & use it in a more palatable form by 70 % from the existing level.

Homoeopathy has to make its impact in the domain of Public Health. The above findings gives us the insight that homoeopathy can make inroads in the Public Health & can become mainstream rather remaining as alternative system of medicine.

Homeopathy demonstrates significant potential to improve the nutritional status of children, complementing government efforts. This model is replicable and should be considered for broader implementation to enhance public health outcomes. The integration of homeopathic approaches with government health initiatives can effectively address malnutrition and improve children's health in rural India.

#### REFERENCE

- [1] K E Elizabeth. Nutrition & Child Development: 5<sup>th</sup> Edition: Hyderabad. New Delhi, India: Paras Medical Publisher; 2019.