

Glenmark partners event on child malnutrition in India

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The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) alongwith Aditya Birla CSR Centre for Excellence and Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Ltd in a first of its kind initiative, on August 23, 2013, organized a conference titled 'Child Malnutrition: Sharing of Best Practices' at New Delhi.

Aimed at understand different solutions to address issues of child malnutrition and bring out a knowledge paper on best practices in combating the malaise, the conference brought leaders from government, corporate, NGOs and relief agencies on the same platform and share their wealth of experience.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Dr K K Upadhyay Head CSR at FICCI said "given that every third malnourished child lives in India and that zero to five age bracket constitutes the most vulnerable zone, corporate houses should incorporate child health in the core agenda of Corporate Social Responsibility".

Upadhyay also said what is surprising is the fact that slums of Mumbai house higher number of children malnourished as compared to even the remotest areas in the country.

Dr Sila Deb, Deputy Commissioner (Child Health) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India said "the foremost weapon to fight malnourishment among children should be to convince mothers to breastfeed children from the very first hour of birth.

Deb also said that severely malnourished children are 8 to 12 times more likely to die as compared to normal malnourished children and there is a clear need to build capacity of healthcare workers or ASHA to fight child morbidity and mortality.

Ms Cheryl Pinto, Director Corporate Affairs, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Ltd said, "We need to introduce innovative ways to disseminate information on right and healthy practices among rural masses. Time has now come to employ practical solutions rather than theoretical ones to ensure that our children remain healthy." She also re-affirmed Glenmark Pharmaceutical Ltd's long term commitment towards the social cause.

Addressing the session titled 'Sharing from the field: Innovative models in addressing Child Malnutrition, Dr Vandana Prasad, Member National Commission for Protection of Child Rights said " In India, infant mortality is low but malnutrition is high. So, while we are managing to save children, our children are not well nourished and healthy." She emphasised on the need for social sector to focus on the need for proper nourishment of infants.

ICICI Foundation chief Chinmay Sengupta said expressed concern over the problems in implementation of programmes and highlighted the hurdles in capacity building, poor data available and lack of referral within the system.

Dr Alex George, Director, Action Aid India spoke about unavailability of the right products and stressed there was no need for marketisation of the public services. Malnourishment is a public issue and should not be mixed with commercial interest, he added.

Dr Ashish Satav, Founder, Mahan Trust and Dr Prakash Michael of Spandan Samaj Sewa Samiti shared their experience of working at the ground level and spoke on the need to fight child malnutrition and bring positive transformation in the country.