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#SupremeCourt is hearing a Public Interest Litigation seeking directions by Top Court, to provide food and healthcare facilities to children and lactating mothers, because the entire Anganwadi system has shut due to the lockdown.

On November 28, the Top Court had directed the Centre & States to file affidavits with regard to implementation of guidelines issued on operation of Anganwadi in the context of COVID-19.

Senior Advocate Colin Gonsalves says he has prepared a chart wrt to the laxity of the Union with regard to the Aanganwadi system.

The Central Govt's survey on what states had done points to the fact that states had not reopened anganwadi systems in light of the notification of the Govt dated November 11, says Gonsalves.

The system is totally at a standstill, says Gonsalves.

The NHRC study and recommendation states that he Anganwadi's must immediately restart, says Gonsalves

38% children in India Stunted and 20% children wasted (before death) and more than half anaemic. [These are NHRC figures], says Gonsalves.

Yes you are right this needs to be looked into, Justice Bhushan says

I am asking for an order by your lordships today, then I'll leave it to your lordships, says Gonsalves

Gonsalves continues to go over recommendations and advisory by @India_NHRC to substantiate why the re-opening of the Anganwadi system is important. He has argued that the system has collapsed with the onset of the pandemic.

Gonsalves quoting statistics for malnutrition deaths and starvation deaths amongst children.

Funds have been received for restarting anganwadi's but hot-cooked meals are still a far cry, Gonsalves tells #SupremeCourt

The national family health survey data released a couple of days back indicates mortality indicators (child mortality gone down) and that malnutrition statistics have risen, Gonsalves reads a Sunday Times Analysis of the survey.

This data will emerge for all states, Gonsalves says. Starvation deaths across the country will rise, he adds.

The National Food Security Act makes it mandatory to supply nutrition to lactating mothers and pregnant mothers. There is also a mandate for a midday meal per day, Gonsalves tells #SupremeCourt

States are saying we are getting them take-home ration. What is this take home ration? This is a chhooda package. once in 15 days. Instead of a hot cooked meal, they are getting this. This is for 75 Rs. per packet and per day the costing of this only 5 Rs. per day, Gonsalves says

With all the humungous resources of the Central Government, this is what they are giving their people in need of meals, 5 Rupees for the whole day. The Food must go to people, Gonsalves says.

So articulately Mr. Gonsalves has been working towards the cause, of course we didnt have the chart that he was showing my lords. I want to draw your lordships attention to the Union's chart now, says ASG Aishwarya Bhati

6 states already opened anganwadi's. Andaman and Nicobar 719 anganwadi's opened, Chattisgarh over 12000 anganwadi's opened, Goa - over 1200 anganwadi's opened,
In Gujarat, meals being given and education being given to children, says ASG Bhati for the Union.

State have not started .... interjects Gonsalves.

I did not interject when he was arguing, would like my time, says the ASG

All states are implementing, in fact anganwadi workers have stretched themselves throughout the pandemic for beneficiaries. These beneficiaries are vulnerable to the disease so to open anganwadi's indiscriminately can be catastrophic. Pandemic has not gone, ASG Bhati says

The mandate under National Food Security Act, 2013 being followed in letter in spirit. Of course there are shortcomings but we are implementing it, says ASG Bhati

Duty and responsibility of the state to implement the Food Security Act, we are concerned about that, says Justice Bhushan

5 rs. Argument is incorrect. The calories are to be seen. However, i have instructions even on the 5 rupee amount. The amount is from 9-16 rupees which has been approved by Finance committee, says ASG Bhati

Advocate Sachin Patil for Maharashtra: We are providing all benefits under the NFA, 2013. After pandemic, the beneficiaries increased. Whatever is mandated under the act, we are providing.

State of Bihar and Assam tell Court that Nutrition being supplied to the beneficiaries though Anganwadi's not opened due to susceptibility to virus.

States of Karnataka and UP tells Supreme Court that the mandates under the Food Security Act are being followed.

State of Punjab says over 27000 anganwadi's have been opened in the state from December 9.

Waiting for an approval from Health Min for hot cooked meals, State of Punjab

So you have opened but you are not providing anything? Justice Bhushan asks

Dry ration being provided, says Counsel for Punjav

If you had safety reservations, why did you open the Anganwadi's? Justice Shah asks

We are doing this step by step, says counsel for State of Punjab

If hot cooked meals are not served to beneficiaries, I shudder to think what will happen, says Gonsalves

Okay judgment reserved, bench says