

7th December, 2020

To
Shri Naveen Patnaik
The Chief Minister,
Government of Odisha,
Bhubaneswar, Odisha

CC to

1. The Minister of Food Supply & Consumer Welfare,
Government of Odisha
2. The Minister of ST & SC Development, Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare,
Government of Odisha
3. The Commissioner cum Secretary,
Department of Food Supply & Consumer Welfare
4. Principal Secretary,
Department of ST & SC Development, Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare
5. Collector cum District Magistrate
Malkangiri, Odisha

Subject: Regarding the recent announcement of Government of Odisha to supply Vitamin-C laced rice in Malkangiri district of Odisha

Sir,

On behalf of the Right to Food Campaign Odisha, National Alliance for People's Movement (Odisha Chapter), Desi BihanSurakhya Mancha Odisha and other concerned civil society groups, we, the undersigned, would like to register our disagreement regarding the Govt of Odisha's plan to introduce Vitamin C laced rice to the people of Malkangiri through the Public Distribution System (PDS). We came to know of the government's above decision through a news report in Odisha Post dated November 27th under the heading "Supply of Vitamin C laced rice in Malkangiri from February." We strongly object to this decision of the Government to introduce artificially enhanced vitamin C laced rice to PDS beneficiaries when there are ample substitutes in natural foods that are part of people's traditional food practices.

The Government of Odisha needs to learn about nutrition and develop a basic understanding regarding vitamin C and calcium abundance in natural food consumed by the people in general which are available in plenty of vegetables and citrus fruits commonly found in all village and city ecosystems. Vitamin C is water soluble and if the rice is laced with Vitamin C it will get washed away while the rice is cleaned before cooking. Therefore, it is futile to artificially lace the uncooked rice and that is reason why in tradition cooking practices, lemon juice is squeezed into cooked food before consuming it.

It has also been scientifically proven that natural source of vitamin C not just provides vitamin C but also many other nutrients and anti-oxidant. It is also need to be kept in the mind that only 50-55% of calories must come from cereals, now 70-80% of calories will come from rice because rice

is expected to be a vehicle for Vitamin C also. This will lead to long term chronic diseases like Diabetes etc

We are wondering about the basis of this current decision and questions arise about whether the government has taken this decision based on any statistical data around vitamin c and calcium deficiency among PDS beneficiaries of Malkangiri! **It is a travesty of food justice and mockery of food security to introduce artificially laced Vitamin C rice to the people of Malkangiri under the pretext of eradicating malnutrition.**

If the Government of Odisha is truly committed to eradicating malnutrition, it would be more socially and ecologically just to support the PDS beneficiaries in Malkangiri access Vitamin C and calcium nutrition through creating a support system around growing crops, trees and leafy vegetables like Amla, Guava, Papaya, Lemon, Kuler/ *Barada Saag*, *Gandhari Saag* and Tomatoes which are high in Vitamin C. These crops and fruit trees are commonly found and grown in most Adivasi villages of Malkangiri who are the major PDS beneficiaries being targeted under this initiative. Therefore, instead of the public taxpayers' money going to Mumbai and Delhi based companies, the government should use the same funds to incentivize the direct consumption of Vitamin C and Calcium rich foods found in village and forest ecosystems.

One of the major reasons why Adivasi communities, particularly children and women, face malnutrition is their restriction in access to forests where fruits and greens are readily available for people to consume in their everyday diets. Further, Adivasi families are facing increasing threats to their rights to land and farming practices due to several development projects which is also an impediment to their access to natural food supplements and dietary practices.

It is important for the Government of Odisha to understand from this issue that in order to eradicate malnutrition the policies of the government needs to be more proactive and sensitive towards immediate settlement of tenurial rights over farmlands and community forests, incentivizing traditional mixed cropping cultivation practices and promoting diverse natural dietary practices amongst the PDS beneficiary families who are largely from Dalit and Adivasi communities.

It is in this context that we urge the Govt of Odisha to consider the following demands:

- 1. To immediately withdraw the decision to supply Vitamin C laced rice to PDS beneficiaries in Malkangiri**
- 2. The state government should provide vegetables rich in Vitamin C with PDS.**
- 3. To use the funds allocated for the buying of machinery under the initiative to incentivize direct consumption of Vitamin C and Calcium rich foods found in village and forest ecosystems**
- 4. To immediately start the process of settlement of tenurial rights over farmlands and community forests to Adivasi and Dalit communities in Malkangiri**
- 5. To incentivize traditional mixed cropping cultivation practices and promoting diverse natural dietary practices among the PDS beneficiaries using funds from Odisha Millet Mission and Integrated farming projects being implemented in Malkangiri on a large scale.**

Signed by :

| Sl. Name | Designation / Organisation |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1 Aakash kumar | Student |
| 2 Anilal AG | Concerned Citizen |
| 3 Animesh Pradhan | XIMB |
| 4 Annie Raja | National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) |
| 5 Anuradha Talwar | Paschim Banga Khet Majoor Samity |
| 6 Apurv Vivek | Tata Institute of Social Sciences Tuljapur |
| 7 Arpan Das | Individual |
| 8 Arun | RTFC |
| 9 Arundhati Dhuru | NAPM |
| 10 Aysha | Right to Food Campaign |
| 11 Babitha P S | Concerned Citizen |
| 12 Basav Mohapatra | Individual |
| 13 Cyril Bastin M | Development Practioner |
| 14 Debarati | NAPM Yuva Samvad |
| 15 Debraj Bhoi | Right to Food campaign |
| 16 Deepika joshi | Jan swasthya abhiyan |
| 17 Dibya Ranjan Joshi | PRADAN |
| 18 Dipa Sinha | RTFC |
| 19 Dr Mira Shiva | Public Health Physician |
| 20 Dr Preeti E | Concerned Citizen |
| 21 Dr Sylvia Karpagam | Public health doctor |
| 22 Dr. V. Sasi Kumar | Climate Kerala |
| 23 Dr. Suhas Kolhekar | National Alliance of People's Movements and Jan Swasthya Abhiyan |
| 24 Evanjelina Kullu | Concerned Citizen |
| 25 Gabriele Dietrich | NAPM |
| 26 Gaurav singh | □□□□ □□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□ |
| 27 Geeta K | Concerned Citizen |
| 28 Johanna Lokhande | Individual |
| 29 Jothi SJ | Right To Food West Bengal |
| 30 Jothi SJ | Right To Food West Bengal |
| 31 Koninika Ray | National Federation of Indian Women |
| 32 Ialbijay singhdeo | individual |
| 33 Laxmidhar Singh | IPF, Odisha |
| 34 Layana | Concerned Citizen |
| 35 Lekshmy | Concerned Citizen |
| 36 Limikaya Rinku | Human koraput |
| 37 Mamata Singh | Right to food campaign Odisha |
| 38 Mamta Singh | Right to Food UP |
| 39 Manas Kumar Rout | WASSAN |
| 40 Manas Ranjan | Odisha Khadya Adhikaar Abhiyaan |

| | | |
|----|-----------------------------|---|
| 41 | Manoranjan bissoyi | Paribarttan |
| 42 | Maryam | Concerned Citizen |
| 43 | Meera Sanghamitra | National Alliance of People's Movements |
| 44 | Nachiket Udupa | Concerned Citizen |
| 45 | Nadim | Concerned Citizen |
| 46 | Nafin KS | Concerned Citizen |
| 47 | Neelanjana | Jan Swasthya Abhiyan |
| 48 | Nibedita Sahoo | RTFC |
| 49 | Nikita Sud | Oxford University |
| 50 | Nirakar Behera | RCDC |
| 51 | Paromita Dutta | USAF |
| 52 | Paschim Banga Khet | Majoor Samity |
| 53 | Prabhakaran | SEEK |
| 54 | Pradeep Baisakh | FSDCA |
| 55 | Pramod Kumar Pradhan | Concerned Citizen |
| 56 | Pranay manjari samal | Daughter Forever |
| 57 | Preetha Rajan | Individual |
| 58 | Priya Ranjan Bagarty | PARIVARTTAN, Malkangiri |
| 59 | Prof. Dr. P. Duraisingam | Consumer Research, Education, Action, Training & Empowerment (CREATE) |
| 60 | Rahul Mohanty | XIMB |
| 61 | Rahul Pandey | Xavier School of Rural Management |
| 62 | Rajaraman | Independent researcher |
| 63 | Rakesh Rajan | Alterschool- Vayali, Thrissur, Kerala |
| 64 | Rama S. Melkote | Caring Citizens collective, |
| 65 | Ranjana Padhi | Activist and Author |
| 66 | Rashmi Ranjan Patra | Xavier university |
| 67 | Ratikanta Behera | Odisha RTF Campaign |
| 68 | Ravi Shankar Behera | DAPTA, Kalhandi |
| 69 | Reema | Concerned Citizen |
| 70 | Remananda kumbhar | Concerned Citizen |
| 71 | Ria Singh Sawhney | Lawyer |
| 72 | Rosamma Thomas | Freelancer |
| 73 | Rupal Dalal, MD | Shrimati Malati Dahanukar Trust |
| 74 | S.Q.Masood | Centre for Peace Studies |
| 75 | Sameet Panda | Odisha Khadya Adhikar Abhijan |
| 76 | Sanat Kumar Samanta | Tata Institute of Social Sciences Tuljapur |
| 77 | Sandeep Kumar Pattnaik | Independent Reseacher |

| | | |
|-----|---------------------------|---|
| 78 | Sangeeta | Right to Food Campaign, Chhattisgarh |
| 79 | Sanjana Patro | Independent |
| 80 | Sarita Sahu | Patang |
| 81 | Sasmita Sahu | Patang |
| 82 | Sharada Gopal | Right To Food Campaign Karnataka |
| 83 | Sharanya | Rangmatipadar |
| 84 | Shashank S R | National Institute of Advanced Studies |
| 85 | Shibajee Pradhan | Odisha Millet mission |
| 86 | Shiva Shankar | Concerned Citizen |
| 87 | Shivani Gupta | Concerned Citizen |
| 88 | Shramajivee Mahila Samity | |
| 89 | Shubha Jindel | PUCL |
| 90 | Siddharth K J | Independent Researcher, Bengaluru |
| 91 | Simran Bagwan | Concerned Citizen |
| 92 | Siraj Dutta | Right to Food Campaign, Jharkhand |
| 93 | Sivakumar A K | Concerned Citizen |
| 94 | Soumya Ranjan Nayak | Right to Food Campaign |
| 95 | Stuti Choudhury | Sewak |
| 96 | SUBHASH BHATNAGAR | NMPS |
| 97 | Sudha N | Janapara Foundation |
| 98 | Sujata Jena | National Lawyers'Forum |
| 99 | Sulakshana Nandi | Public Health Researcher, Chhattisgarh |
| 100 | Suma Josson | Salt Films |
| 101 | Suneet Kumar | Ambedkar Univeristy |
| 102 | Sunita jena | Own |
| 103 | Swarna bhat | Right to food campaign |
| 104 | Swati Narayan | Institute for Human Development |
| 105 | Swayanshu Panda | Concerned Citizen |
| 106 | Tankadhar Nayak | Parivarttan |
| 107 | Tara Rai | Democracy Collective |
| 108 | Tarini Manchanda | Game On Productions |
| 109 | Tulanath Banchhor | Concerned Citizen |
| 110 | Usha Soolapani | Save Our Rice Campaign |
| 111 | Veena M | Eco solutions |
| 112 | Veronica Dungdung | Samajik Seva Sadan |
| 113 | VIKASH PRAKASH | Azim Premji University |
| 114 | Vinit Chavan | Concerned Citizen |
| 115 | Vipul Kumar | Rupayaan |
| 116 | Dr. Veena Shatrugna | Former Deputy Director, National Institute of Nutrition |
| 117 | Vyom Anil | Jawaharlal Nehru University |