



Editorial

Dr. Tara M.S.,

Freelance Consultant,

*Former Regional Director of National Institute of
Public Cooperation and Child Development- NIPCCD*



Reimagining the advocacy strategy for improved Nutrition

Nutrition, a vital driver of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), is key to achieve both nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive goals and targets. Undernutrition rates among children has declined minimally in the State of Karnataka, but what is astounding is that the level has remained unduly high and strangely affect the low and middle-income communities. Childhood undernutrition is associated with impaired cognitive, physical, and metabolic functions, leading to poor mental development and school achievement and behavioural deviations and increases the risk of Non communicable diseases.

The data from National Family Health Survey 5 (NFHS5) clearly indicates that the levels of improvements are not uniform across the State or districts and even within districts, inter-group disparities prevail. Inadequate improvements on nutritional parameters and deprived maternal child health and nutrition practices are some of the barriers that are counter productive to the nutrition goal. Attention needs to be drawn to the developmental lags among socially disadvantaged groups which raises several concerns, despite policy measures and allocation of resources.

Evidence suggests that stunting can be irrevocable if not addressed in the first 1000 days of child life leading to the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition. Therefore, instituting a strategy for this phase is given priority in all the schemes and programmes by all relevant sectors. Yet the improvements in promoting gender and social equity, infant and young child feeding practices, or bringing dietary diversity regime, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) related issues have not been able to make a dent at the household levels, though these nutrition sensitive issues compliment nutrition specific interventions. Perhaps these cross-cutting issues demands special consideration and innovative transactional approaches from policy to practice levels. The diversity in terms of resources, access, culture, awareness, habits vary and one size fits all approach would not pay dividends but localising solutions is the need of the hour.

Changes in behaviours is essential to improve nutrition, par-

ticularly among marginalised, vulnerable or socially backward and challenged to reach. As a strategy the Social and Behaviour Change in Communication (SBCC) may aid in shifting current behaviours, such as inspiring them to nurture, procure or choose healthier foods or encourage families to fortify their own food at home by blending nutrient dense local foods rich in micronutrient at household level, averting discriminatory feeding practices, early initiation of breast feeding, devising quality complimentary food etc.

Essentially SBCC is an integrated approach that improves nutrition outcomes through processes that foster community discourse and action, strengthen social contexts, systems that reinforce good nutrition, and sustain healthful individual and group behaviours. The following three harmonising domains of SBCC, that could be adopted in ongoing programmes and schemes are beneficial for strategic improvement and capability.

1. Communication using community appropriate and preferred channels of communication to address their nutrition/health needs, (eg community radio stations as a platform for airing local problems, resources and mindsets from local voices),
2. Behaviour changes to facilitate and maximise nutrition related actions, for instance food processing or cooking techniques that conserves nutrients or prevents wastage (eg engaging women's self-help groups in food processing for local foods),
3. Social change to achieve shifts that enable communities' engagement and participation in nutrition and health interventions, for instance promoting Agroecological practices (eg diversified crop rotation, organic farming, biological pest control, Agro forestry, integrated farming all have impact on safe food system).

Needless to mention that SBCC interventions, focusing on nutrition, are critical in addressing improved nutrition and child anthropometric outcomes. It's time that we innovate in our advocacy strategy to support individuals, families, communities, institutions, to adopt and maintain high-impact nutrition-related practices.



Stakeholder Interview

Dr. Anupama Shetty
Mission Director,
Biocon Foundation



Q: Tell us something about yourself and one experience that you would like to share in the area of nutrition for all?

A: Coming from a family of doctors, I always thought a busy practice in the suburbs would be my final and only calling. Little did I imagine that in my professional journey, I would take up diverse roles in hospital administration, public health research and strategic corporate social responsibility. A physician by training, following a few years in private practice, I undertook Masters in Hospital administration in TISS. After a stint in tertiary care settings, I decided to pursue a doctorate in health systems studies from my Alma Mater again, hoping to engage in the field of public health. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to lead a Pan-India telemedicine programme, as part of a CSR initiative at Narayana Health. Thus, began my journey in public health and an evolving CSR landscape, under the guidance of Dr Devi Prasad Shetty. After a wonderful tenure in NH, I transitioned to Biocon Foundation, reporting to Dr Kiran Mazumdar Shaw. I believe I have the unique honour and privilege of being mentored by two legends in the healthcare and entrepreneurship domain.

My experience in nutrition within the CSR domain, began with a challenging maternal health programme in an aspirational district in Karnataka. Set against the backdrop of low human development indices, patriarchal mind-sets and poor literacy rates, the pilot initiative on maternal health obstetric monitoring was besieged by several challenges. High parity levels, teenage pregnancies and birth spacing issues had impacted maternal health adversely. What was starkly evident was the lack of agency and awareness amongst women on malnutrition and anaemia as a risk factor leading to adverse outcomes in pregnancy.

At this juncture, we had the privilege and wonderful opportunity of partnering with a renowned nutrition partner, who too were seeking to address the issue of malnutrition & anaemia through an innovative programme. Thus, an ambitious pilot was rolled out in Rajasthan as a private-public partnership. The programme was modelled as an action research study, aimed at introducing iron fortified biscuits which would be an adjunct to the existing government led weekly iron & fol-

ic acid fortification (WIFS) programme in schools. This time around we built a component of behaviour change campaign, to engage students on the need for iron fortification and supplementation. I was actively involved in the field activities, and what made a lasting impression was the impact of our behaviour change campaign. While the biscuits were a definite draw at schools, the nukkad natak or street plays which we launched, struck a chord with the students and the wider community. Attendance levels rose and compliance levels for consumption of the biscuits reached more than 80%. Repeated surveys across the 100 days of distribution found a significant rise in the mean haemoglobin levels across both male and female students. There was an overall decrease in prevalence of anemia by more than 35%.

This programme and its unique challenges influenced my outlook towards nutrition programmes and their intricacies. From engendering traction on new models of healthcare delivery to securing a credible evidence base; from addressing cultural barriers to getting the stakeholders and community to own the programme; there were several contextual insights. I also believe that public healthcare concerns in general lend themselves beautifully to the Complex Adaptive Systems approach. By applying the principles of Complex Adaptive Systems theory, I believe we can move beyond linear approaches and address multifaceted challenges in a more holistic and effective manner. This approach encourages a deep understanding of the system's dynamics and empowers stakeholders to collaboratively create sustainable solutions. Recognising that complex systems are prone to disturbances, it's essential to create resilient systems that can adapt to changes.

Q: In your opinion what should the Government focus on with regards to health and nutrition?

A: As per recent estimates, wasting in children under-five in India is higher compared to international standards, with one in five being wasted. Studies have compared nutritional indicators in under-five population across National Family Health Survey 4 (NFHS 4) and National Family Health Survey 5 (NFHS 5). Worsening of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) were noted across several hot spots in various districts. As per NFHS 5, the prevalence of SAM is 7.7%, compared to a prevalence of 7.4% in NFHS 4. Although the prevalence seems stagnant, what the national average hides is the worsening of SAM in individual districts. Various factors influence chronic malnutrition in children, with maternal nutritional status being a prime factor. Several events predate malnutrition, including teenage pregnancies, maternal undernutrition, closely spaced births and high parity levels being major factors. Studies have indicated an intergenerational perpetuation with one third of women in their reproductive age group be-

ing malnourished and giving birth to malnourished babies.

A slew of government initiatives endeavours to address various aspects of the burden of malnutrition. Programmes such as Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), Mission Indradhanush, the Mid-Day Meal scheme, Rashtra Bal Swasthya Karyakram, WIFS & Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK), National Food Security Act have been functioning since decades. While we have well-articulated models and schemes with large coverage, gaps in implementation have lowered their impact. A systemic approach to gaps in implementation would be contingent to addressing the burden of malnutrition. In this article though, I'd like to limit the ambit and touch upon few aspects from a purely programmatic perspective.

1. **Robust Nutritional Surveillance:** Based on our work with Anganwadi's for instance, we realised that COVID had led to worsening nutrition indices in our local area of operation. Through the first, second and third wave, owing to the lockdown, unemployment and other socio-economic transitions in families, children became vulnerable for malnutrition which affected their holistic development. While AWW use the Poshan tracker for empanelment of the population or children under their care, continued entry was lacking and the option to track growth measures, for instance, through WHO standards, was not incorporated in the application. Continued capacity building of AWWs, use of technology and appropriate tools would enable a more proactive approach to monitoring key growth indicators.
2. **Nutrition Education and Awareness:** Implementing wide-spread nutrition education campaigns can raise awareness about the importance of balanced diets, micronutrient-rich foods, and the negative effects of malnutrition. These campaigns should especially target vulnerable populations. Our team observed for instance that several mothers' from migrant families at local Anganwadi's lacked the means, awareness levels and access to nutrition education. Cultural factors and language barriers can present challenges in their understanding. Regular feedback or surveys of caregiver's knowledge and practices would influence contextual strategies for awareness building exercises. Equal emphasis on quality of service in terms of changing the family/caregiver-based feeding practices, would yield greater results.
3. **School Health Programmes:** Schools can play a pivotal role in promoting health and nutrition. School health check programmes conducted by our team in nearby government schools, have found low BMI across more than 70% of male and female students with high prevalence of anaemia in female students. The discordant approach to addressing anaemia in student cohorts, both within RBSK and primary healthcare centres, was clearly evident. Regular health surveillance, increasing awareness levels towards anaemia

through innovative means, and a coherent strategy for addressing female adolescent anaemia would yield greater results. The role of CSR programmes as innovative pilots has great potential in introducing contextual, qualitative and impactful efforts which could seamlessly blend with ongoing government efforts. Could we nudge schools to compete on wellness?

4. **Behavioural Change Initiatives:** Promoting behaviour change is essential to overcome cultural and social barriers to improved health and nutrition. Tailored interventions that address specific challenges within different communities are necessary. While we focus on science quiz and maths quiz across schools for instance, we would never find a competition across schools on health parameters. At our Foundation, we have ventured on a health promoting school concept, which would focus on several inter-related concepts including nutrition. Could we nudge schools to compete on wellness indicators?
5. **Research and Innovation:** The role research cannot be overemphasized. Investing in research on nutrition, behaviour change and innovative solutions can lead to evidence-based interventions. The role of collaborative interventions, either as a public-private partnership, purely research driven enquiry through eminent academic institutions, or "lighthouse initiatives" with multiple private and public entities focusing on action research anchored within existing nutrition schemes, would go a long way in understanding role of interventions, technology aids, innovations, and their feasibility; which could help inform and scale robust interventions.

Q: Do you think that a nexus of corporate, Government and organisations like PAC work together to improve the quality of life of people in the communities? If so, how?

A: I believe that a collaboration of partners including PAC, the Government, Corporate CSR groups as well as grass-root NGO partners would help bring several strengths to the table. As mentioned earlier, I believe the role of "Lighthouse" initiatives or focused collaborations could highlight specific concerns and multi-level interventions. For instance, the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation has commissioned a lighthouse initiative to address the sanitation ecosystem through public-private partnership mode. A similar such collaboration could be anchored by PAC, bringing together several relevant stakeholders in a specific setting. An impactful, inclusive, and feasible model in one block could be replicated across several blocks, supported through Government schemes, CSR efforts and local NGOs. This would also create an active ecosystem for exchange, analysis and learning amongst collaborators.



Project Updates



Administrative Training Institute

As part of the Knowledge Partnership the following Functional Training Programmes were conducted for the ATI Faculty and the District Training Institutes (DTI) Principals and Vice Principals.

Common Foundation Course Training for ATI Faculty

- June 3, 2023 - Research methodologies
- June 17, 2023 - Listening skills
- July 11, 2023 - Centre for e-governance and Data Analytics
- July 31, 2023 - Prioritising, time management & listening skills

Functional Training for DTI Principals and Vice Principals

- August 18, 2023 - Team Work and its Effectiveness in an Organisation
- August 19, 2023 - Art of Providing and Giving Feedback & Presentation Skills



Activity on Time Management



Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander, conducted a training session on July 31, 2023



Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander, conducted a training session on Time Management Prioritisation on July 11, 2023



ATI Faculty during a FDP session



Training session of August 1, 2023

DTI Update



Role play by DTI participants



Dr Ranjini giving training on the Art of receiving and giving feedback to the DTI principals and Staff

will take place at the end of the month (after 30th) and the report will be submitted the first week of the next month. For understanding the grievance disposal mechanism, the team also visited education department since the education department had more number of grievances in June and they disposed majority of these grievances in July.

The team working in collaboration with the directorate of Economics and Statistics Department for the preparation of economic survey. The concept note on Economic Survey submitted to Mr. Cyril and it is under process. The initial chapter scheme and state profile is in progress and the department visit for data collection would be conducted after approval with the DES officials.

In addition, PAC submitted two concepts note to the Planning Department on Inclusive and Quality Education in Meghalaya- Assessment of School and Teacher Performance and Mid Meal Scheme in Meghalaya. These recommends a primary study with specific objectives, methodology, time line and budget.



Partnership with Govt of Meghalaya

The PAC team is working with Meghalaya Government on developing District Good Governance Index (DGGI), Grievance Redressal Report and Economic Survey.

The DGGI project is underway, started data collection from different departments and the indicators identified with DARPG framework. Also, the team is working on the introduction and methodology sections.

Further, the team is preparing the monthly grievance report for Meghalaya. June and July month reports already submitted to Mr. Cyril (IAS), Secretary, Planning. The data is collected from CPGRAM portal with multiple department logins. The data collection



Dr. Chaya Degaonkar, Director PAC presented a report to Shri Cyril V Darlong Diengdoh (IAS), Secretary, Planning, Investment Promotion & Sustainable Development Department, Govt. of Meghalaya



Director Dr. Chaya Degaonkar & Head of Public Engagement and Communications Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander made a presentation to the Research Officers in Planning Department, Government of Meghalaya



Public Affairs Centre team with senior Govt. officials in Meghalaya

PAC-GIZ Project

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is implementing the project “Sustainable Urban Development - Smart Cities II” (SUDSC II) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project supports the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and the partner State Governments (Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Telangana) in resilient, sustainable approaches and solutions for urban development including infrastructure that consider disaster risk management and the leave-no-one-behind (LNOB) principle. It also supports five Smart Cities (Mangaluru, Kochi, Bhubaneswar, Coimbatore and one city in the State of Telangana) in implementing concepts of risk-informed, integrated, resilient and sustainable urban development.

GIZ India has approved a consortium between the Public Affairs Center (PAC) and Swastik Harish and Associates (SHA) to support their SUD-SC II project, through a series of capacity building initiatives on working with data. As a part of this support project, PAC-SHA will conduct a Training Needs Analysis (TNA), conduct three (3) capacity building programs and develop training modules that can be institutionalized through e-learning approaches. PAC-SHA will conduct these training programs in three (3) partner states of GIZ, namely, Kerala, Telangana and Tamil Nadu

Current Progress

1. Training Need Analysis for Kerala is complete. The TNA for Tamil Nadu and Telangana is currently in progress
2. Training modules are developed for three-day workshop. The modules cover working with tabular data, working with spatial data and data visualisation and decision-making
3. The three-day capacity-building program conducted for Kerala in the month of July.



Training on Data Analytics and Visualisation by Mrinalini



Knowledge Partnership with Abdul Nazir Sab Institute of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (SIRD)

Developed a video on Waste Management Unit based on a visit to Gargeshwari Gramapanchayathi. This video will be uploaded on the LMS for training purposes.



- Develop and design a Compendium of GOs and Circulars issued by Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) department. Two meetings were held with team from DIRD and several Government departments to brainstorm the content and topics.
- Develop and Design a Commemorative Volume titled "Democratic Decentralisation-The Journey and Way Forward." To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the 73rd Amendment which provided constitutional status to the Panchayats recognising them as local self-governing institutions. This project kick started by developing:
 1. ToRs for Advisory and Editorial Committees
 2. Guidelines for authors
- Coordinate activities for a publishing a Peer-reviewed journal. To initiate the process, the following was developed:
 1. ToRs for Advisory and Editorial Committees
 2. Guidelines for authors



Social Media Analysis



Facebook



Views

381



New Followers

2457



Likes

23



Yearly

Tweets	66
Tweet Impressions	20451
Mentions	124
Profile Visits	10035
New Followers	26



LinkedIn

Yearly

Unique Visitors	92
Page Views	308
Clicks	15



Publications

Reports

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Opinion Articles and Commentaries





Visitors Comments

"The organisation is doing exceedingly well on many issues and wish the organisation all the best for all its future endeavors."



Dr. Tara M S
Frelance Consultant
August 3, 2023



Interns Speaks

PAC believes in encouraging interns to work on live projects, interact with stakeholders, write Policy briefs and Articles and exposing them to real life experience.

"Before joining PAC, I didn't know much about research. I must have done a little for the term papers and assignments but how actually it happens, what goes into this, the effort and the process, PAC brought it out of me and guided me. PAC never spoonfed, it makes it's intern learn by themselves, figure out things and helps them in between whenever there's is a need, for that the doors are always open."



Nancy Agrawal
Dr.B.R. Ambedkar School of Economics University, Bangalore

"First and foremost, I want to express my gratitude to PAC for giving me an opportunity to get real-world research experience. I was given the responsibility of conducting literature review, which allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the existing knowledge and identify gaps that our research might be able to address. This process helped me realize how much there was to learn and discover. Brainstorming sessions with my mentor and fellow colleagues pushed me to think critically, ask questions, and consider various angles. It was amazing to see how ideas developed, evolved, and ultimately took the form of research proposals and experiments. I now move forward with my newly acquired skills and knowledge, eager to continue my career as a lifelong learner and

aspiring researcher."eager to continue my career as a life-long learner and aspiring researcher."



Srujana Harshitha
Dr.B.R. Ambedkar School of Economics University, Bangalore

"Working with PAC teams, I have gained valuable knowledge and experience. As an intern, I have learned techniques from this internship and learned the importance of effective communication and teamwork.I am sure I will be able to learn even more techniques that I will apply in the future, to assist me in achieving my goals."



Pratiksha Thapa
St Anthony's College, Shillong

"As an intern at PAC, my day-to-dayresponsibilities involve researching statistics for the project I am currentlyworking on with my team leaders. The project I am working on is SustainableDevelopment Goals specifically SDG 4, which is the Quality of Educationin the state of Meghalaya, including a task on the Demographic Profile ofMeghalaya. What I have gained from my internship at PAC is anunderstanding of the various demographic data and information about the variousdistricts of the state I have also gained a portion of experience in the fieldof data analysis and data research. I have been discussing able to work on theproject smoothly and efficiently. With various discussions regarding mytasks and upcoming events, I began indulging in the work with keen interest andlearned many things. I am grateful to PAC for giving me this opportunityand for allowing me to work."



Bashisha Lyngdoh
St Anthony's College, Shillong

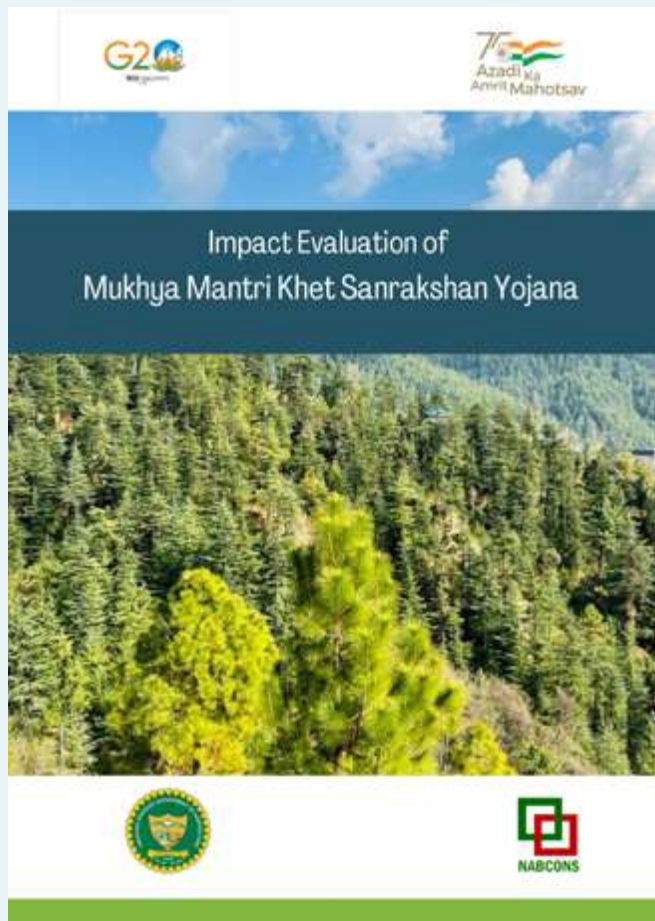
News from Public Affairs Foundation

The Public Affairs Foundation (PAF) is the sister organisation of PAC. This section captures a brief of the activities that was undertaken by PAF.

Projects

Impact Evaluation of "Mukhya Mantri Khet Sanrakshan Yojana"

To address the basic issue of crop losses due to animal menace, the State government has introduced the Mukhya Mantri Khet Sanrakshan Yojana (MMKSY) scheme in 2016. The scheme aimed at protecting the crops from wild animals, increase the income of the farmers and bring them back to agriculture. The present study is to assess the impact of the scheme.



Training and Capacity Building

Under the CSR programme from Tata Elxsi, PAF along with Mobility India and SOCHARA conducted a series of training programmes. The topic was "Training on Disability and WHO Priority Assistive Products for Village/Urban Rehabilitation Workers". The training was successfully delivered at Bengaluru Urban district, Chamarajanagar block in the Chamarajanagar district, the Turuvakere and Chikkanayakanahalli blocks in the Tumakuru district.





PAF continues to support and with its parent organisation-the Public Affairs Centre in delivering and designing meaningful training programmes. In this endeavour some of the modules for the Faculty Development Programme was delivered at ATI, Mysuru.



PAF jointly organised a State Level Consultation Programme on the 'Importance of FRont of Package Labelling (FoPL) FoPL in Addressing Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) with Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) International and the BMS College of Law, Bengaluru

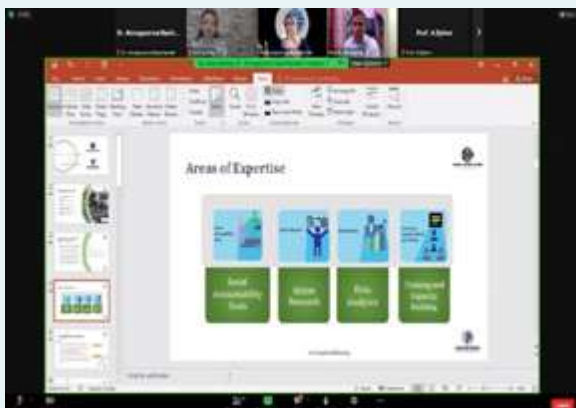


State Level Consultation on

Importance of FoPL in Addressing NCDs



- Public Affairs Foundation conducted a webinar on Public Policy for the students of St. Anthony's College, Shillong.



Blogs & Articles

INTERVIEW

In conversation with Uma Mahadevan: revitalising rural libraries in India

BY ANNAPOORNA RAVICHANDER



Communication Pulse
- Probe, Reflect, Act

Communicating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

DH

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Nurturing public policy professionals

Career opportunities are wide and cover a spectrum of domains and areas.

Harini Santhanam | Annapoorna Ravichander

Last Updated 14 July 2023, 01:41 IST



Communication Pulse
- Probe, Reflect, Act

Challenges in SDG 1 and Mitigation-Communication Angle

OTT

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In conversation with Prasanth Nair: fighting hunger with compassion in Kerala

By Annapoorna Ravichander | 10 August 2023



Intern's Achievement



Harshitha Choudary Pudota was with PAF as an intern From June 7, 2022 to July 18, 2022

Team PAF received this message from her *"My internship experience at PAF was incredibly enriching. I got the opportunity to take part in a variety of training and capacity-building initiatives, which gave me invaluable insights into the interactions between various stakeholders and highlighted the essential role that local governance plays in the implementation of policies. I greatly improved my writing and editing abilities under the mentorship of Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander. Moreover, I honed my research capabilities and developed effective time management skills throughout my internship. Collaborating with PAF not only expanded my professional network but also ignited my passion for pursuing a career in nonprofit organizations. I also had the privilege of working alongside exceptional fellow interns and a remarkable team".*

"I am happy to share that I am now selected for the Banyan Impact Fellowship Programme by the American Indian Foundation".

Team PAC and PAF wish her all the best in all her endeavours.

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