

Outlook

08 APRIL 2020 | SOURCE: PTI

NGOs ensure children in Kolkata's slums, orphanages get vitamin-fortified milk during lockdown

New Delhi, Apr 8 (PTI) Over 500 children living in slums and orphanages are being given vitamin-fortified milk in Kolkata, a child rights body said on Wednesday as the 21-day nationwide lockdown to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus entered its 15th day.

The milk is being distributed through non-governmental organisations that work for children living in marginalised communities, Save the Children said in a statement.

Vitamin fortification in milk is one of the effective ways to address deficiencies, especially in children while enabling them to receive their daily vitamin requirement, it said.

The milk is being distributed by FMCG major ITC Limited in collaboration with Save the Children

The statement said that on Tuesday, milk vans reached three of the most marginalised communities in Kolkata. In total 520 children living in slums and orphanages received the fortified milk.

"The entire distribution was done by community group members under the leadership of child and youth champions," it said.

They plan to reach more children in the coming days

Besides Save the Children, NGOs Hope Kolkata Foundation and SOS Children's Village India are part of the distribution management system.

Those who are distributing the milk are trained on social distancing and other hygienic practices. This service will continue during the entire lockdown period, it said.

Commenting on the initiative, an ITC spokesperson said that "through the move they hope to make a meaningful contribution in supporting their nutritional requirements during these trying times by providing uninterrupted access to Aashirvaad Svasti's Vitamin-A fortified milk to the children in need".

Save the Children's director programmes and policy Anindit Roy Chowdhury said, "Milk is a daily essential in a child's diet and helps them to protect themselves against illnesses. This gesture is extremely appreciated by all of us."

Speaking about the programme, Hope Kolkata Foundation director Geeta Venkadakrishnana said the lockdown has slowed down the process of receiving essentials making it a challenge to provide nutritious food to children. This gap has been addressed by the initiative, she said.

SOS Children's Village of India secretary-general Sudarshan Suchi said children need milk on a daily basis for strengthening their overall immunity. PTI UZM ANB ANB