

Editorial

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

CMHT needs to be reviews ; a lesson learnt from JNIMS

A good initiative sometimes brings bad name to the government if the policy frame for implementation of any good programme is not properly framed. We can take the example of CMHT, a scheme that the Chief Minister of Manipur N. Biren Singh launched on January 21, 2018 with great enthusiasm to help the poor people who cannot afford medical expenses at time of illness. Among the CMHT card holders, except some near and dear one of influential people, there are many who felt unhappy while going to government hospitals or any other empanelled private hospital as don't meet the expectation that they assumed as per the facilities announced by the Chief Minister. As per a statement by Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, a total of 3,68,684 people of the state have been enrolled and distributed CMHT card. Among this a total of 12,624 CMHT card holders have been treated with an expense of Rs. 16 crore. The Chief Minister announced this during a press conference held on December 27, 2019.

Hardly, no person underwent treatment with CMHT card complaint, but this does not mean that the patient undergone treatment using CMHT cards are satisfied. The reason obviously is the fear of the patient party that they may not be treated properly if any complaints are made to them. Above these most CMHT beneficiaries are poor people who have no knowledge about the benefit of CMHT.

Imphal Times had reported regarding this matter about a patient holding CMHT card on Jan 10, 2020 under the heading "Forked by CMHT At JNIMS - CMHT card holder patients cannot spend more than Rs. 1500/- a day; Consultants sent patient to private clinic for KFT, LFT and Eco test. The news report states that CMHT's counter in JNIMS informed the patient that there is a cap of one thousand five hundred rupees per day. She was informed that she could not buy the medicine as the cost of the medicine was way more than the per day cap. The patient later informed Imphal Times that the concerned doctor even requested that the medicine should be given to the patient. But, CMHT's counter denied it. It is quite surprising that information on the per day cap is not mentioned in the government website for this scheme. It does not seem to be publicly and readily available information. Furthermore, there should be a health coordinator to help the patient in the whole process of treatment and coordinate with the medical officer for the good of the patient. However, it is quite evident that such assistance was not offered to the patient, as per the recent report on CMHT in Imphal Times.

The matter was enquired by the CMHT implementing agencies and found that there is serious loophole in the implementation of the CMHT.

Following this incident Medical Superintendent of the JN Hospital circulated an order to Arogya Mitra and MEDCOs, that is implementing the CMHT to visit the hospital wards twice everyday at morning and evening preferably at 9.30 am and 5.00 pm. The JNIMS authority also circulated another notice to ensure maximum benefit to the CMHT/AB-PMJAY card holder patients. The initiative needs to be appreciated. And every hospital needs to take this matter seriously as incidents of this kind may bring bad name to the auspicious CMHT programme.

As some loopholes in the implementation of the CMHT is notice it is time the Chief Minister review meeting of the implementation of this auspicious scheme to make sure that the poor gets the benefit of CMHT.

Causes & Effects of Soil pollution

By: Sanienbam Jugeshwor Singh

Soil contamination or soil pollution as part of land degradation is caused by the presence of Xenobiotic (human-made) chemicals or other alteration in the natural soil environment. It is typically caused by industrial activity, agricultural chemicals, and improper disposal of waste. The most common chemicals involved are petroleum hydrocarbons, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (such as Naphthalene and Benzo (a) pyrene), solvents, pesticides, Lead and other heavy metals. Contamination is correlated with the degree of industrialization and intensity of chemicals substance. Mapping of contaminated soil sites and resulting cleanup are time consuming and expensive task, requiring extensive amounts of geology, hydrology, and chemistry, computer modelling skills and GIS in environmental contamination as well as an appreciation of the history of industrial chemistry.

Soil pollution can be caused by oil spills, Mining and activity by other heavy industries, corrosion of underground storage tanks, Acid rain, intensive farming, Agrochemicals such as pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers, industrial accidents, road debris, drainage of contaminated surface water into the soil. Ammunitions, chemical agents, waste disposal, oil and fuel dumping, nuclear waste to the soil, discharge of sewage, landfills and illegal dumping, coal ash and electronic waste also help to contaminate the soil. The most common chemicals involved are petroleum hydrocarbons, solvents, pesticides, Lead and other heavy metals. Any activity that leads to other forms of soil degradation (erosion compaction etc.) may directly worsen the contamination effects in that soil remediation become more tedious. Historical deposition of coal ash used for residential heating as well as for industrial process such as ore smelting were a common source of contamination in areas that were industrialized before about 1960. Coal, naturally concentrates Lead and Zinc during its formation as well as other heavy metals to a lesser degree. When coal is burned, most of these metals become concentrated in the ash (the

principal exception being Mercury) coal ash and slag may contain sufficient Lead to quality as a characteristic hazardous waste, defined in the U.S.A as containing more than 5mg/l of extractable Lead using the TCLP procedure. In addition to Lead, coal ash typically contains variable but significant concentration of poly-nuclear aromatic hydrocarbon (PAHs.). These PAHs are known human carcinogens and acceptable concentration of them in soil are typically around 1mg/kg. Coal ash and slag can be recognized by the presence of off-white grains in soil, grey heterogeneous soil or (coal slag) bubbly, vesicular pebble-sized grains. Treated sewage sludge, known in the Industry as bio solids has become controversial as fertilizers. As it is the by-product of sewage treatment, it generally contains more contaminants such as organisms, pesticides and heavy metals than other soil.

A pesticide is a substance or mixture of substance used to kill a pest. A pesticide may be a chemical substance, biological agent (such as a virus or bacteria), antimicrobial, disinfectant or device used against any pest. Pest include; insects, plant pathogens, weeds, mollusks, birds, mammals, fish, nematodes (round worm) and microbes that compete with humans for food, destroy property, spread or are a vector for diseases or cause nuisance. Although there are benefits to the use of pesticides, here are also drawbacks, such as potential toxicity to humans and other organisms. Herbicides are used to kill weeds especially on pavements and railways. They are similar to auxins and most are biodegradable by soil bacteria. However, one group derived from trinitrotoluene (2,4 D and 2,4,5 T) have impurity dioxin, which is very toxic and causes fatality even low concentrations. Another herbicide is Parquet. It is highly toxic but it rapidly degrades in soil due to the action of bacteria and does not kill soil fauna. Insecticides are used to rid farms of pests which damage crops. The insects damage not only standing crops but also stored ones and in the tropics it is reckoned that only third of the total production is lost during food storage. As with fungicides, the first insecticides

used in 19th century were inorganic e.g Paris green and other compounds of arsenic. Nicotine has also been used since the late 18th century. Organochlorine include DDT, Aldrin, Dieldrin and BHC. They are cheap to produce, potent and persistent. DDT was used on a massive scale from 1930s with a peak for 72,000 tons used in 1970. The usage fell as the harmful environment effect were realized. It was found worldwide in fish and birds and was even discovered in the snow of Antarctica. It is only slightly soluble in water but is very soluble in the blood stream. It affects and cause the eggshells of birds to lack calcium causing them to be easily breakable. It is thought to be responsible for the decline of the numbers of birds preys like Ospreys and peregrine falcons in the 1950s- they are now recovering. As well as increased contamination via the food chain, it is known to enter via permeable membrane, so fish get it through their gills. As it has low water solubility, it tends to stay at the water surface, so organisms that live there are most affected. DDT found in fish that formed part of human food chain caused concern. Organophosphates e.g parathion, methyl parathion and about 40 other insecticides are available nationally. Parathion is highly toxic, methyl-parathion is less so and Malathion is generally considered safe as it has low toxicity and rapidly broken down in mammalian liver. This group works by preventing normal nerve transmission as cholinesterase is prevented from breaking down the transmitter substance acetylcholine, resulting uncontrolled muscle movement.

Contaminated or polluted soil directly affects human health through direct contact with soil or via inhalation of soil contaminants which vaporized; potentially greater threats are posed by the infiltration of soil contaminants into ground water, aquifers used for human consumption, sometimes apparently far removed from any apparent source of above ground contamination. This tends to result in the development of pollution related diseases. Health consequences from exposure to soil contamination vary greatly depending on pollutant type, pathway of attack and vulnerability

of the exposed population. Chronic exposure to chromium, Lead and other metals, petroleum, solvents and many pesticides and herbicide formulation can be carcinogenic can cause other chronic health conditions. Industrial or man-made concentrations of naturally occurring substances such as nitrate and ammonia associated with livestock manure from agricultural operations have also been identified as health hazards in soil and ground water. Chronic exposure to Benzene at sufficient concentrations is known to be associated with higher incidence of Leukemia. Mercury and cyclodienes are known to induce higher incidence of kidney damage and some irreversible diseases. Not unexpectedly, soil contaminants have significant deleterious consequences for ecosystem. There are radical soil chemistry changes which can arise from the presence of many hazardous chemicals even at low concentration of the contaminants species. These changes can manifest in the alteration of metabolism of endemic microorganisms and arthropods resident in a given soil environment. The result can be virtual eradication of some of the primary food chain which in turn could have major consequences for predators or consumer species. Even if the chemical effect on lower life form is small, the lower pyramid levels of the food chain may ingest alien chemicals which normally become more concentrated for each consuming rung of the food chain. Many of these effects are now well known, such as the concentration of persistent DDT materials for avian consumers, leading to weakening egg shells, increased chick mortality and potential extinction of species. Effects occur to agricultural land which have certain type of contamination. Contaminants typically alter plant metabolism, often causing a reduction in crop yields. This has a secondary effect upon soil conservation, since the languishing crops cannot shield the Earth's soil from erosion. Some of these chemicals contaminants have long half-lives and in other case derivative chemicals are formed from decay of primary soil contaminants.

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More News

No Compromise on Sovereignty of Assam: Paresh Baruah to Modi Govt



Courtesy G Plus Media Guwahaty, Jan 29

GUWAHATI: ULFA commander-in-chief Paresh Baruah on January 28 made it clear and simple that he would not accept Modi's central government's peace talks offer if the 'sovereignty' issue is not included in the agenda of discussion in a telephonic

conversation with a local TV channel.

"We do not want to participate in any form of peace talks unless the government of India is willing to take the (issue of) independence of Assam into consideration and practice it in their constitution," said Paresh Baruah in a statement. "You have repeatedly asked us to join the false, biased and

ridiculous peace talks held by the Indian government. We would like to decline your request again to join the 'mainstream' peace talks because we only follow the revolutionary stream that will lead to an independent Asom. Our struggle will continue until our ultimate goal is achieved. I urge

you not to ask us to lay down our arms in (the) hope of your empty promises. I suggest you stick to your pretentious religion and let us continue our journey to freedom," the ULFA leader said. Paresh Baruah in a statement also said that his group had taken up arms "not to threaten" any

individual or sovereign nation, but to protect themselves. The rebel leader, who is currently said to be close to the Chinese border in Myanmar, also described peace talks with the government of India as "false, biased and ridiculous". Baruah's statement has put a full

stop to all the speculations over the ULFA-I group's possibility of the ongoing peace process. The elusive ULFA commander-in-chief has always been demanding that talks would be possible only if the issue of "sovereignty of Assam" is included in the agenda.

PPFA slams Sharjeel for anti-national statement, appreciates patriots of northeast India

IT News Guwahaty, Jan 29

Patriotic People's Front Assam (PPFA), a forum of nationalists in northeast India, while slamming Sharjeel Imam for anti-national statements amidst the Shaheen Bagh protest in New Delhi, appreciates people of the region for strongly opposing the separatist point of views in the name of anti-CAA (citizenship amendment act) demonstrations. Sharjeel, a former student-activist of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), has already been arrested from Jahanabad in Bihar after the

Delhi Police booked him for delivering inflammatory and instigatory speeches while opposing the CAA and a conceived countrywide National Register of Citizens. The confrontational media columnist lately delivered provocative statements (in a mix of Hindi and English) at Jamia Millia Islamia University and Aligarh Muslim University.

The young activist was heard saying in an audio-visual clipping, which went viral in social media, that Assam and Northeast could be cut off from the rest of India to teach a lesson to the government

as Bengali Muslims had to face tremendous hardships following the updation of NRC in Assam. Sharjeel also added that if the permanent cut off to Assam was not possible, few months would also work.

Social media users, particularly from the region, have condemned Sharjeel for his derogatory outbursts. Many States including Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur etc have also filed FIRs against Sharjeel for his 'cut Assam/ Northeast from India' statement insisting that the kind of provocation inciting secession of Assam and other northeastern

States from the rest of India can create communal disharmony, hampering sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. "PPFA strongly argues for proper actions against Sharjeel Imam along with those who led their voices for the separatists," said a media statement adding that the northeastern people have come forward denouncing Sharjeel's anti-national comments which should be wisely appreciated by every patriot as the region was once a hub of separatist armed militants sponsored by a section of biased activists, intellectuals and media personalities.

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