

Concept Note on “Promoting Nutri Garden for Nutrition Security”

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF NUTRITION

A child's survival, growth and development depend on the quality of care as well as child's health and nutritional status. Therefore, good nutrition is a completely non-negotiable element for all children. Globally, child malnutrition is a public health problem with major consequences for child survival, damaging the cognitive and physical development of children and the economic productivity of individuals and societies. Children with low birth weight are 2.6 times less likely to go on to higher education or graduate. Stunted (Low height for age) children will earn at least 10 percent less in lifetime earnings. Eliminating malnutrition boosts gross national productivity by 11% in Africa and Asia, prevents more than 1/3 of child deaths per year (health), improves school attainment by at least one year (education), increases wages by 5-50%, reduces poverty while well-nourished children are 33% more likely to escape poverty as adults (protection), empowers women to be 10% more likely to run their own business (gender equity), breaks the inter-generational cycle of poverty (Source: Haddad 2013).

Investments made on a child's growth and development with adequate care and nutrition will yield benefits for the country's future generation and will augment growth, economic development and prosperity for the country.

1.2. LANDSCAPE: NUTRITION INSECURITY AND BURDEN OF MALNUTRITION

Zero hunger and good nutrition have the power to transform and empower the present and future generations. Stunting, anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies inhibit productivity, proper cognitive development and health outcomes. With investments in nutrition related initiatives; the country can go forward on the development path with healthy, skilled human resources. Poshan Abhiyaan targets to reduce Stunting (low height for age), Wasting (low weight for height), Underweight (Low weight for age) and Anaemia by 2%, 2%, 2% and 3% per annum respectively by 2022. The prevalence of stunting, underweight and wasting among the under-5 children in India is 38.4%, 35.8% and 21% respectively (NFHS-2015-16). Around 53.1% women aged 15-49 years and 58.6% children aged 6-59 months are anaemic in the country. It is a matter of concern that adult obesity and overweight is also increasing in India. 20.6% women and 18.9% men are obese (NFHS-2015-16).

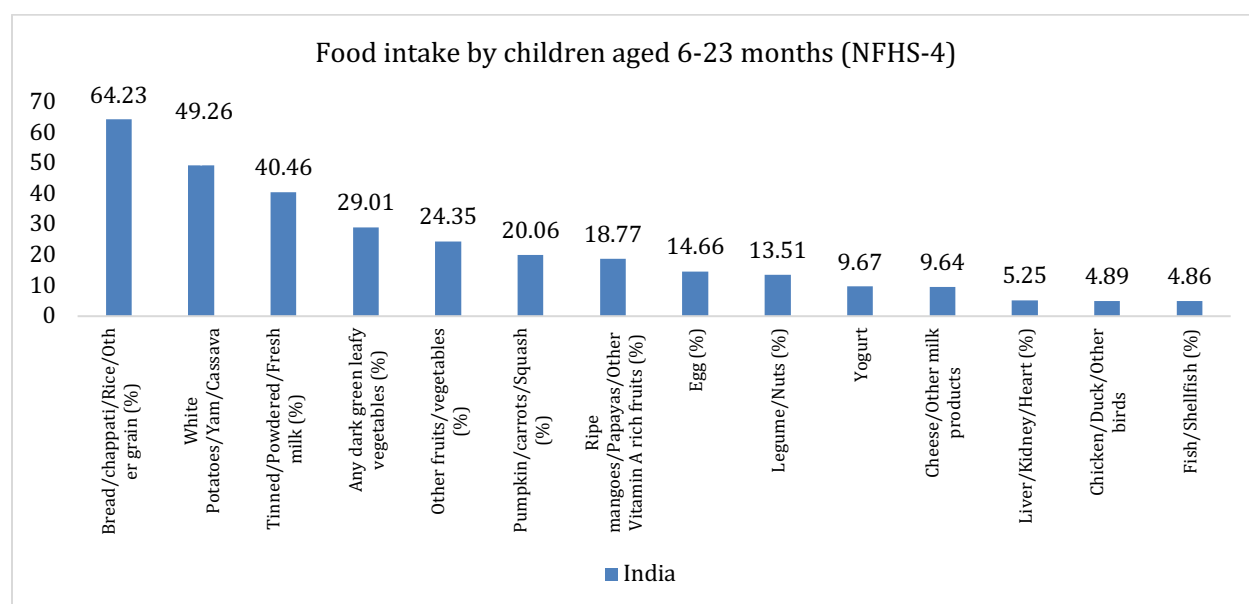
1.3 NUTRI GARDEN

Nutri garden is a multidimensional effort to reduce malnutrition. Nutri garden not only ensures food and nutrition security as well as food safety. Nutrition garden is an indigenous and sustainable solution to malnutrition and can demonstrate desired changes in the nutrition scenario in the country if integrated with the existing government system such as ICDS. In nutrition context, A nutrition garden is a habitat from which we get nutritionally rich fruits, vegetables and food from

livestock source. Nutri-garden is intended for proper utilization of backyard or front yard space around house to support the dietary requirement of a family. Vegetables are grown according to seasons by utilizing the locally available wastes. Once prepared, it can be used for a long period for fulfilling the daily needs. The primary objective is to fulfil the nutritional requirement of the family. It fulfils the body needs in form of carbohydrate, protein, fiber or roughage, fats, vitamins and minerals. A nutri-garden is technically developed to fulfill the requirement of family consumption in the form of vegetables, fruits and animal proteins, and is purely organic in nature. Nutri-garden is based on diversity in terms of vegetable, fruit, spices cultivation and livestock rearing (Mixed farming approach), and focuses more on soil fertility enhancement in organic approach which is targeted for long-term aspect.

2. RATIONALE

Only 54.9% children between 6-8 months receive solid and semi-solid food and breast milk and 8.5% children age 6-23 months receive an adequate diet in India (NFHS-4). Micronutrients of public health importance in childhood and adolescence generally include iron, vitamin A, iodine and zinc. More recently, folate, vitamin B12 and vitamin D have received greater attention. Published and unpublished data from some regions and individual studies suggest a high prevalence of these micronutrient deficiencies in India¹.



In 2016, only 13 percent of children (6-23 months) in India consumed foods from legumes & nuts group. Less than a quarter of children (24 percent) consumed other fruits and vegetables. Only 15 percent of children consumed eggs and just about 9 percent consumed flesh foods, in 2016².

Enhancing the food diversity at anganwadi center level: At Anganwadi Center (AWC), THR is provided to the malnourished children and a hot cook meal is provided to all children. However,

¹ Eilander, 2010; Kapil, 2011; Menon, 2011; Agarawal, 2013; Kapil, 2013a; Kapil, 2014; Kumar, 2014; Gonmei, 2017

² Data Note-IFPRI, December 2019, Feeding India's Babies: Trends and Patterns in Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices Across India's States and Districts

Nutri-garden at AWC is a way to promote indigenous foods and bring the understanding till the household level there by improving their diets. The nutri-garden at AWC will also address the micronutrient deficiencies in children as it will provide more options in terms of food diversity in the hot cook meals given to the children especially in terms of green vegetables.

Food security and diversity at household level: Food and feeding behaviors in children are closely linked to and shaped by their family's preferences, practices and backgrounds. Many families cannot afford or access sufficient nutritious foods like fresh fruits and vegetables, legumes, nuts, meat and milk. Parents also may lack knowledge on appropriate foods and feeding practices for the child's age and have inadequate awareness and or means for proper caring and health-seeking behavior. There are many issues with the PDS such as unavailability of ration cards, shortage of different commodities etc. and the ration form PDS is only sufficient for 2 weeks or less than that. In such a scenario nutria-garden is a much-needed long term sustainable solution, which caters to the food security and diversity of the household. The present scenario of Covid-19 has a huge ramification on the food security and diversity of the households and provision of nutri-garden not only ensures food security and diversity to the family but also a prospect for livelihood.

Empowering rural women through nutri garden at household level: Family labour, especially efforts of women, becomes particularly important in the management of nutria-garden. Empowered with reasonably minimum amount of skills and knowledge, these women members of rural families can easily fight crop losses and other negative implications and play a major role in decision making alongside men related to what crops to plant and sell, how to use harvests and what foods to include in diets and hence ensure food and nutritional safety of growing children.

3. Objectives

The primary aim of the workshop is to generate an awareness on nutria-garden and its role in improving food security at various levels (community, household) by highlighting the extensive works done on this field by some of the organizations across the country and highlight best practices. Ministry of Rural Development in its directive dated 4th May 2020 has already issued guidelines for promoting nutri-garden for individual beneficiaries and community in convergence with state schemes and NRLM.

The webinar will focus on:

1. Awareness generation through deliberations on Innovation, methodology, strategies, scaling up and best practices from the representatives of major organizations working on Nutri-garden programmes
2. Critical role of Nutri-garden in eliminating malnutrition through convergence with other line Departments

The webinar is expected to achieve the following output:

Identification of opportunities and challenges in terms of scaling up nutri-garden across the country, integration with the existing government program.