

India gets \$200 million loan for nutrition mission

A mid-day meal school in Odisha. Biswaranjan Rout

India on Monday signed an agreement with the World Bank for a \$200 million loan for implementing the National Nutrition Mission across 315 districts of the country.

Approved by the Union Cabinet last year, the mission aims at reaching 10 crore beneficiaries, mainly children upto the age of six years, pregnant women and lactating mothers and adolescent girls. The programme will be implemented in three phases between 2017 and 2020 across all districts of the country.

Targeted reductions

The mission targets a 2% reduction in both under-nutrition and low birth weight per annum. It also aims to bring down anaemia among young children, women and adolescent girls by 3% per year until 2020.

The government will also strive to reduce the prevalence of stunting from the current level of 38.4% (as per the National Family Health Survey 4) to 25% by 2022.

The National Nutrition Mission has an approved budget of Rs. 9,046.17 crore. The total contribution of the Centre will be Rs. 2,849.54 crore and nearly Rs. 1,700 crore will be contributed by the States. The remaining will be funded through the government's tie-up with multilateral agencies such as the World Bank.

All-round upgradation

At the current rates of exchange, the loan translates to Rs. 1,344.6 crore — 14% of the total budget approved by the government and 30% of the amount it plans to borrow.

The project will include investments in improving the skills and capacities of ICDS staff and community workers.

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