

Ministry of Women and Child Development

WCD Ministry launches Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh

Five-point action plan to make India nutrition secure: M. S. Swaminathan

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The Union Minister of Women and Child Development (WCD) and Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani, along with Bill Gates, co-chair of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation launched the Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh (BPKK) today in New Delhi. The BPKK will be a repository of diverse crops across 128 agro-climatic zones in India for better nutritional outcomes.

At the launch programme Secretary, Ministry of WCD, Rabindra Panwar, handed over the letter of intent to Mr. Hari Menon, Director, India Country Office, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. On this occasion, eminent agricultural scientist, Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, in his address, said that to make India nutrition secure a five-point action programme has to be implemented:

- Ensure calorie rich diet for women, expectant mothers and children
- Ensure intake of proteins in the form of pulses to eradicate protein hunger in women and children
- Eradicate hidden hunger due to deficiency of micro nutrients like vitamin A, vitamin B, Iron and Zinc
- Ensure clean drinking water supply
- Spreading nutrition literacy in every village particularly in mothers with children less than 100 days' old

Dr. Swaminathan further said that lack of proper nutrition among children affects not only the physical development of the child growing into adulthood but also affects brain development. He urged the Ministry of WCD to create a band of community hunger fighters who will be trained to deal with hunger among women, expectant mothers and children by following this five-point action programme.

Minister WCD while delivering the keynote address said that this is an unique occasion where a tech giant is on the same platform as farmers and civil society members to promote a nutrition strong India in order to fulfill Prime Minister of India's message for an ever green revolution that will bring together the nutritional needs of citizens with India's cropping patterns and agricultural production.

Minister of WCD, in her address, informed that the Government has created a separate Ministry of Jal Shakti which is now working on providing clean drinking water to every household in the country. She further informed that in September this year POSHAN Maah was celebrated and in one month 36 million POSHAN related activities were held across the country. The Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana Scheme (PMMVY) has reached out to 10 million beneficiaries by compensating for wage losses and since 2013 maternal mortality rate has come down by 26.9%. Minister of WCD said that on this occasion she would like to thank the 1.3 million

Anganwadi workers who help to keep the nutritional goals alive, the 1.2 million Anganwadi helpers and state agencies who have reached out to 85 million beneficiaries and digitally linked them with the Government of India through daily updates on the dashboard. But for India to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) it is now time to bring together the science of implementation with the science of communication so that nutrition is on the political and administrative agenda along with hygiene and clean drinking water.

Bill Gates in his address said that if there was one problem that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation would like to solve in India it is the problem of malnutrition among women, expectant mothers and children. Solving this problem will bring about a dramatic change in the development of India and help the country to attain the SDGs. He informed that the Foundation will be happy to partner with the Government of India, the Ministry of WCD and other Ministries in every way to deal with this multi-faceted challenge in order to create a sustained nutritional programme to bring down malnutrition in the country.

The programme was attended by Minister of State for WCD, Debasree Chaudhuri along with senior officials of the Ministries of WCD, Agriculture, Human Resource Development, NITI Aayog, Prime Minister's Office, UNICEF, World Bank and civil society members.

MM/ SB

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