

**NITI Aayog calls renewed focus on Nutrition, launches the National Nutrition Strategy****NITI Aayog calls renewed focus on Nutrition, launches the National Nutrition Strategy**

Leader of the Green Revolution Dr. M.S Swaminathan and Padma Shri Dr. H Sudarshan, today, launched the National Nutrition Strategy, along with Vice Chairman Dr. Rajiv Kumar and Member Dr. Vinod Paul.

With a benefit to cost ratio of 16:1 for 40 low and middle-income countries, there is a well recognized rationale, globally, for investing in Nutrition. The recently published NFHS-4 results reflect some progress, with a decline in the overall levels of under nutrition in both women and children. However, the pace of decline is far below what numerous countries with similar growth trajectories to India have achieved. Moreover, India pays an income penalty of 9% to 10% due to a workforce that was stunted during their childhood.

To address this and to bring nutrition to the centre-stage of the National Development Agenda, NITI Aayog has drafted the National Nutrition Strategy. Formulated through an extensive consultative process, the Strategy lays down a roadmap for effective action, among both implementers and practitioners, in achieving our nutrition objectives.

The nutrition strategy envisages a framework wherein the four proximate determinants of nutrition – uptake of health services, food, drinking water & sanitation and income & livelihoods – work together to accelerate decline of under nutrition in India. Currently, there is also a lack of real time measurement of these determinants, which reduces our capacity for targeted action among the most vulnerable mothers and children.

Supply side challenges often overshadow the need to address behavioural change efforts to generate demand for nutrition services. This strategy, therefore, gives prominence to demand and community mobilisation as a key determinant to address India's nutritional needs.

The Nutrition Strategy framework envisages a Kuposhan Mukh Bharat - linked to Swachh Bharat and Swasth Bharat. The aim is to ensure that States create customized State/ District Action Plans to address local needs and challenges. This is especially relevant in view of enhanced resources available with the States, to prioritise focussed interventions with a greater role for panchayats and urban local bodies.

The strategy enables states to make strategic choices, through decentralized planning and local innovation, with accountability for nutrition outcomes.

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