

First ever National Conference on “Mission Mode to address Under-Nutrition” held in New Delhi today

WCD Ministry to issue new guidelines on supplementary nutrition soon, separate nutrition protocol for SAM Children: Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi

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The first ever National Conference on "Mission Mode to address Under-Nutrition" was successfully held in New Delhi today. The conference was inaugurated by the Minister of Women & Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi in the presence of Minister of State for Women & Child Development, Dr. Virendra Kumar. The CEO, NITI Aayog, Shri Amitabh Kant, Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Shri Parameswaran Iyer; Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Shri Rakesh Srivastava and Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Shri Manoj Jhalani also addressed the participants. The conference was organized by the Ministry of Women & Child Development in collaboration with Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, keeping in mind the goal of "Mission Malnutrition Free India-2022".

Speaking on the occasion, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi said that after the resounding success of Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji's Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme, the WCD Ministry is now targeting malnutrition. For this, there is urgent need to improve the quality of supplementary nutrition and also make the delivery system efficient, she added. Smt Maneka Gandhi said that we must provide 1000 calories to women and 600 calories to children under ICDS. The focus of the entire programme should be to administer nutrition rather than feeding beneficiaries by giving "Nutrient Dense Food". A change in policy is required to implement this, the Minister said. The Ministry of Women & Child Development will soon issue new guidelines on supplementary nutrition in this regard in the next few days which will supersede all existing guidelines. Similarly, a separate self contained protocol for severely and acutely malnourished (SAM) children will also be issued shortly. The Minister also highlighted the importance of child protection alongwith nutrition.

The Minister of State for Women and Child Development, Dr. Virendra Kumar said that today's consultation is a landmark event. The MoS said that the country has succeeded in eliminating several difficult problems like chickenpox, polio etc. and it should not be difficult for the country to overcome the problem of malnutrition. The Deputy Commissioners/District Collectors along with other district level functionaries will have to take responsibility for the mission to eliminate malnutrition by 2022.

CEO, NITI Aayog, Shri Amitabh Kant said that the responsibility of tackling malnutrition lies on the shoulders of Deputy Commissioners/District Collectors who should now make a frontal attack on the problem using a convergence approach as well as with the help of IT tools for real time monitoring.

Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Shri Parameswaran Iyer said the problem of malnutrition is closely linked to the problem of drinking water and sanitation. The Swachh Bharat Mission is trying to achieve the goal of total sanitation which will also contribute to reducing problem of malnutrition.

Secretary WCD, Shri Rakesh Srivastava highlighted the issues related to stunting and anemia in India.

Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Shri Manoj Jhalani gave details of the initiatives of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare to promote maternal and child health care.

At today's conference, District Collectors/Deputy Commissioners/District Magistrates as well as the District-level officers of Health & Family Welfare, Nutrition (ICDS/SW), Drinking Water & Sanitation Departments in the 113 High Burden Districts along with the Principal Secretaries/Secretaries, in-charge of these three Departments of all States/UTs discussed a multitude of topics relating to stunting, under-nutrition and wasting and the key strategic interventions which are urgently required. Some of the important sessions at today's conference included efficacy of food fortification, sustainable solution through breast feeding, dietary diversification, improving maternal & child health through Mission Indradhanush, improving program delivery effectiveness, accelerating Real Time Monitoring among others.

Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi also gave away awards to three States i.e. Chattisgarh, Arunachal Pradesh and Gujarat for substantial reduction in stunting during the ten year period between NFHS-3 and NFHS-4. She also released a book "Forest Lanterns" containing essays on solutions to improve nutrition among children in tribal areas.

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