



# Working Across Sectors for Impact on Nutrition in India: Rationale for the Together for Nutrition 2014 Conference

*Purnima Menon*

IFPRI, New Delhi

October 29, 2014

New Delhi, India

# Undernutrition is the story of women and children living in challenging environments

**Enabling environment:** Society, culture, economy, politics, governance

## Underlying home and community conditions

Food security and quality  
Sanitation  
Income  
Women's empowerment and education  
Health and other services



## Immediate conditions

Food and feeding  
Care  
Hygiene  
Illness prevention & treatment  
Women's health



Photo: P. Menon, UP, 2013

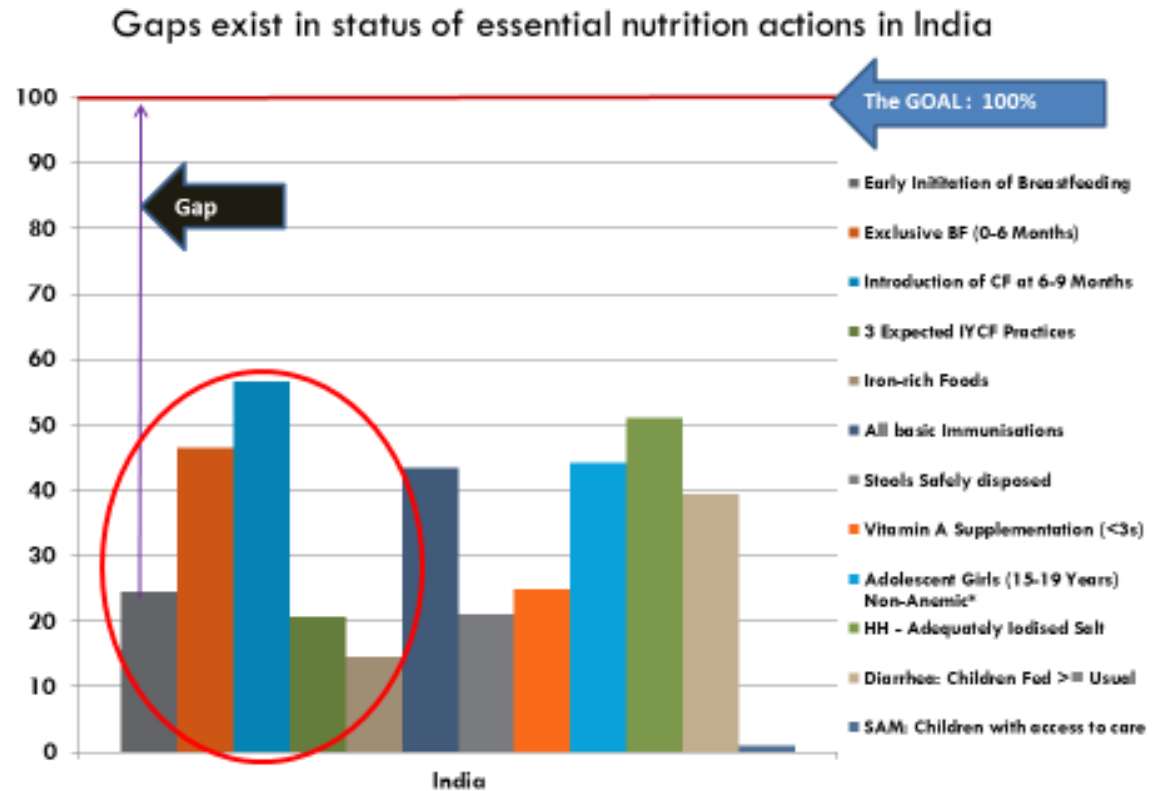
# We know that coverage and linkage of nutrition-specific interventions to reach every mother-dyad across the continuum of care is crucial

Policy is mostly in place and evidence-based but strategy needs work

National programs include a good set of evidence-based interventions for most nutritional problems

Program funding outlays are impressive, but assessments of adequacy still need to be done

ICDS and NRHM have put frontline workers in place; service delivery is still limited



Menon, Raabe & Bhaskar, 2009

# We also know that improving underlying household conditions is key to nutrition success

Empirical studies on factors that have led to improvements in undernutrition over time point to:

Global (Smith & Haddad, 2014)	Brazil (Monteiro et al., 2010)	Bangladesh (Headey et al., 2014)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Women's education</li><li>• Sanitation</li><li>• Household assets</li><li>• Food security (energy and non-energy)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equity in all underlying determinants<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Income</li><li>• Antenatal care</li><li>• Assets</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Asset accumulation</li><li>• Antenatal care</li><li>• Fertility</li><li>• Decreasing open defecation</li><li>• Agricultural growth</li></ul>

Gaps exist in all these areas, to differing extents, across the India

# But what does our conceptual and empirical understanding mean for action in India?

**Shaping enabling environment:** leadership, commitment, capacity, accountability

Improving underlying home and community conditions through *strengthening and linking up key sectors that are already ramping up programs:*  
Food security and quality

Improving immediate conditions  
*By scaling up*



Critical question is how to put in place *\*at the same time\** and at the same place, for the same mother-child dyad\* the conditions at both the underlying and immediate levels to reach adolescents, women and children?

Education  
Health and other services

to improve essential actions

*Economic growth must continue because it puts more resources in the hands of families.*

# The conference process

**2013:** Reviews & consultations on cross-sectoral work, with MWCD and Planning Commission

**April 2014:**  
Call for abstracts for T4N 2014, review and selection

**October 2014:**  
T4N 2014, in the context of new government in India and development of new nutrition strategy

**January 2014:** MWCD launches Multisectoral Nutrition Program; POSHAN Policy Note 001 on Working Across Sectors also launched

**June-August 2014**  
Development of Implementation Notes of select experiences; New government elected in India

# Conference goals

---

---

1

Learn about what actions in diverse sectors can enable greater nutrition impact

2

Learn about how to bring about effective cross-sectoral action

3

Identify where we need to know more, and do more

# Conference format

---

## Submitted abstracts

- Cross-state and state-level experiences (Maharashtra, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh)
- Using women's self-help groups
- Intersectoral convergence between ICDS and NRHM
- Innovative partnerships

## Invited speakers/panels

- Contributions of nutrition-sensitive sectors
- Perspectives from biology, economics, gender, sanitation, agriculture
- Evidence on how to strengthen work across sectors
- Mobilizing for action at the district level



# Topics covered across the conference

---

- Nutrition-specific/immediate determinants
  - IYCF
  - Supplementary nutrition within the ICDS program
  - Improving implementation of health/nutrition services
  - Management of acute malnutrition
- Nutrition-sensitive/underlying determinants
  - Reaching/working with marginalized groups
  - Gender, including women's self help groups
  - Making programs/interventions more nutrition sensitive (such as WASH, agriculture, PDS and NREGA)
- Enabling environments
  - Leadership and coordination at state level
  - Capacity strengthening (such as ICDS, Health)