

Toward nutrition-specific social protection:

Addressing micronutrient malnutrition through wheat flour fortification in Himachal Pradesh

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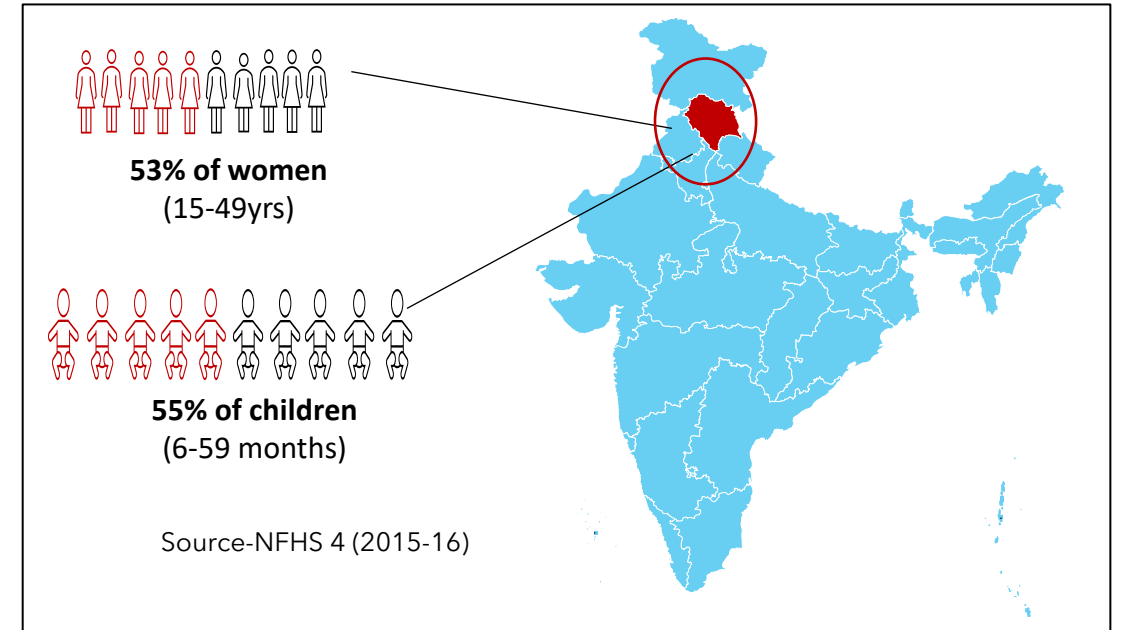


Rationale

- The Government of Himachal Pradesh recognized **anemia as a foremost concern**
- Anemia can have various causes, and the leading cause is inadequate intake of dietary iron
- Population group most **at risk** of anemia-



- Nutrition-specific social protection programmes can enhance access to nutritious foods
- **Objective:** Reduce the risk of anemia by expanding access to micronutrient-fortified staple foods through nutrition-specific social protection mechanisms



Anaemia prevalence- Himachal Pradesh

social protection

noun (uncountable) /ˌsəʊʃ(ə)l prəˈtektʃ(ə)n/

Transformative programmes, processes, and systems (public or private and at any scale) that aim to alleviate the adverse effects of **poverty**, resolve **social inequities**, and reduce the likelihood and prevalence of poverty in the future.

Methodology

- **Project Geography:**

Himachal Pradesh, a mountainous state in North India

- **Timeline:**

2019-2020

- **Commodity Choice:**

Wheat flour distributed under PDS program

Suitable vehicle for the inclusion of added quantity of iron through fortification

- **Fortification standards:**

As per Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2018



Fortified wheat flour includes the added quantity of **iron**, **folic acid**, and **B12**

What is PDS?

- Programme distributing foodgrains at affordable prices
- Important for management of the food economy in the country
- Commodities typically supplied: wheat, rice, sugar, and kerosene
- Supplemental in nature, not intended to satisfy entire dietary requirements
- Coverage: up to 75% of the rural population and up to 50% of the urban population



Approach for inclusion of fortified wheat flour in PDS



Capacity building of wheat flour mills

- ✓ **Onsite training** for millers supplying wheat flour to PDS
 - process of wheat flour fortification,
 - quality assurance and quality control.
- ✓ Building the linkages of wheat flour millers with the premix suppliers, to source quality-assured premixes for fortification.



Policy advocacy and program awareness

- ✓ The active engagement with
 - Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs
 - Himachal Pradesh Roller Flour Millers Association
- ✓ **Technical consultations with millers** to understand their perspectives and raise awareness.
- ✓ State-level launch event for the program



Quality assurance

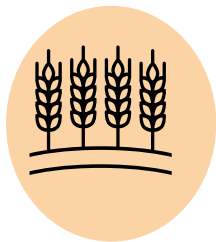
- ✓ Capacitation of Food District Controllers on process monitoring
- ✓ **Refresher training** and periodic support to industry to apprise on new developments, as appropriate
- ✓ Supported **lab testing** of fortified wheat flour samples from industries

Key Findings



Capacity building of wheat flour mills

- 80 millers trained on process of fortification
- Annual production

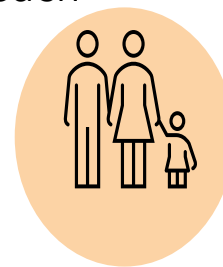


Fortified wheat flour
3,25,992 MT/annum

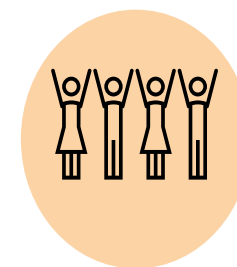


Policy advocacy and program awareness

- Even during COVID, the state continued to provide fortified wheat flour through PDS
- Government expanded the program eligibility to all PDS beneficiaries.
- Program reach



Families
1,800,000



Beneficiaries
7,300,000

Policy Implications: A scalable model of nutrition-specific social protection

- This initiative enabled the State to provide quality-assured fortified wheat flour through the PDS since **January 2020**
 - Bolstered political will to address the challenge of anemia
 - Project built up capacity at industry and govt. level
 - Encouraged intersectoral cooperation
- Himachal Pradesh has become a **role model for other states** to tackle micronutrient malnutrition through safety net programs
 - Government of Madhya Pradesh visited Himachal Pradesh to learn from their experience and initiate a similar program in the State
 - Government of Madhya Pradesh plans to initiate the pilot project on wheat flour fortification in 17 districts



Media coverage of the program

Thank You

