

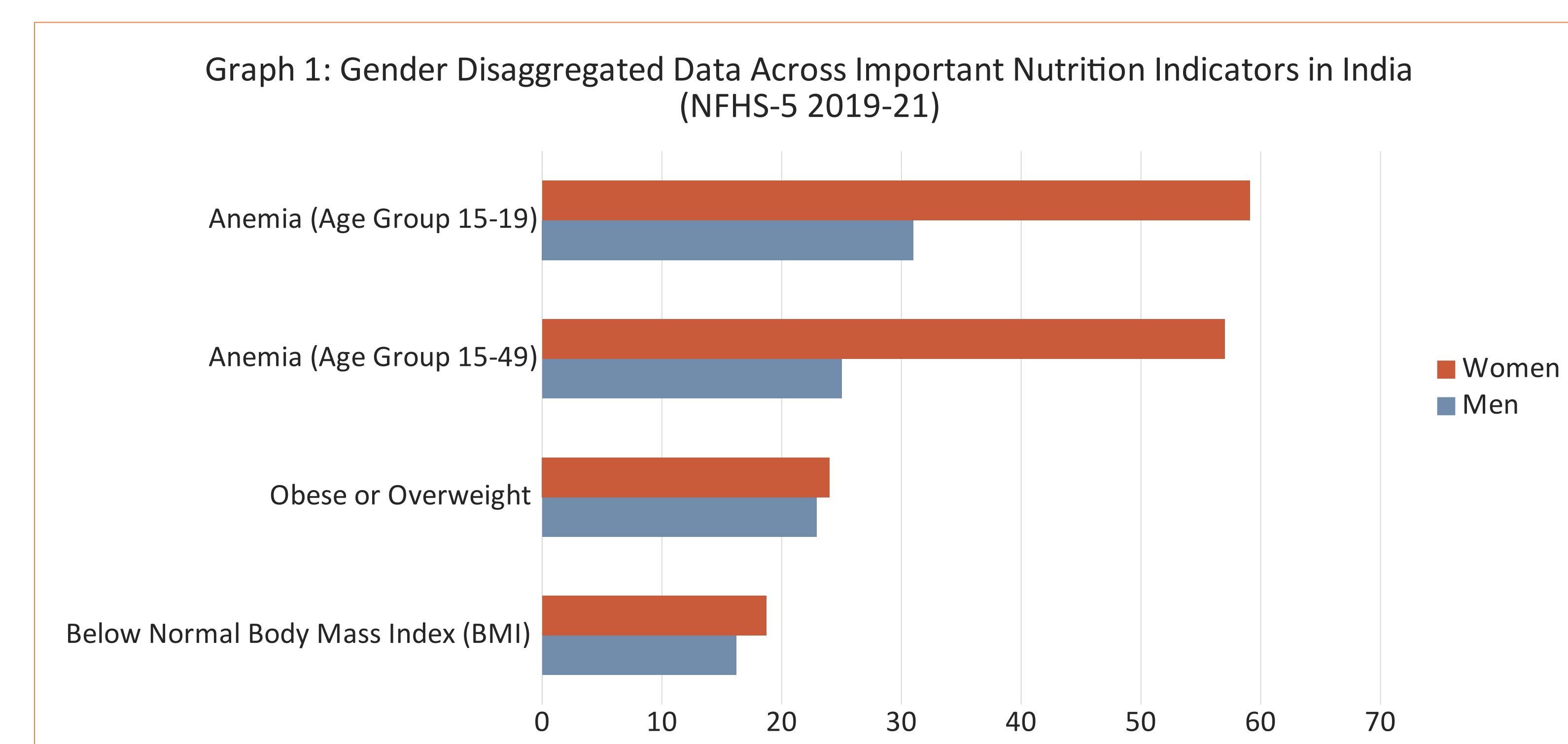
Taking action to close the gender nutrition gap: program experience launching a global Action Agenda for women's and girls' nutrition and its contextualization in India

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RATIONALE

Globally, levels of food insecurity and malnutrition are unacceptably high, and progress on women's and girls' nutrition has been slow. **Malnutrition is a gendered issue:** there are 150 million more women and girls who are hungry than men and boys.¹ More than **one billion adolescent girls and women suffer from undernutrition worldwide** (including wasting and short height), deficiencies in essential micronutrients, and anemia, with devastating consequences for their lives and well-being.² In India, more women are anemic (57%) compared to men (25%), and nearly two in three adolescent girls are anemic (59%).³ See Graph 1.



APPROACH

FHI 360 led more than 40 organizations to co-create a global Action Agenda for women's and girls' nutrition. The global Action Agenda, Closing The Gender Nutrition Gap: An Action Agenda for women and girls, was launched at Women Deliver in July 2023. The Action Agenda is a resource for advocates, policymakers and decision-makers across sectors to guide actions for women's and girls' nutrition while advancing gender equality and maternal, newborn, and child health. In India, FHI 360 worked with Global Health Strategies and a coalition of partners to inform the development of the Global Action Agenda, and to contextualize and adapt it for in-country use. There was a two-way process where country-level consultations informed the global Action Agenda, and the global framework was contextualized and adapted for use in-country. The coalition co-designed a national advocacy strategy for improving women's and girls' nutrition in India with a focus on Uttar Pradesh and developed a joint plan of action for its implementation.

1. Food Security and Gender Equality. (2022, August 18). CARE International. <https://www.care-international.org/resources/food-security-and-gender-equality>.
 2. United Nations Children's Fund. (2023). Undernourished and Overlooked: A Global Nutrition Crisis in Adolescent Girls and Women. United Nations. <https://doi.org/10.18356/9789213626764>
 3. International Institute for Population Sciences. (2020). NFHS-5 Factsheet. Retrieved June 8th, 2023, from http://rchiips.org/nfhs/factsheet_NFHS-5.shtml.

KEY FINDINGS

The topic of women's and girls' nutrition and gender equality resonated with stakeholders as an underprioritized issue that required urgent attention to ensure that good nutrition is promoted throughout the lifecycle. The coalition designed the advocacy strategy to focus on three objectives: promoting an informed policy shift prioritizing investments and increased commitment for women's and girls' nutrition through a cohort of champion voices; increased convergence among relevant departments, ministries, institutes and facilities to strengthen the response towards women's and girls' nutrition; and drive transformative change at the grassroots level by empowering local champions through community engagement.



Figure 1: The Four Areas of the Action Agenda

IMPLICATIONS

The advocacy strategy is a first of its kind in India that focuses solely on women's nutrition across the life stages. The experience demonstrated how early implementation in India informed the development of the global Action Agenda, and how a global Action Agenda can be adapted and contextualized for country use. The experience can be a roadmap for other countries keen to invest in women's and girls' nutrition.



Global Action Agenda Launch at Women Deliver Conference 2023



Participants engaging in the focus group discussion on Day-2 of the national expert group consultation to locate urgent priorities in improving women's and girls' nutrition in India.



The state coalition meeting in Uttar Pradesh of the state level stakeholders to identify the state priorities in improving women's and girls' nutrition in India.

