



INDIA PROGRAMS



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NUTRITION INTERNATIONAL IN INDIA

India is the second-most populous country in the world. Despite rapid economic growth, the country is challenged to provide optimal nutrition to its 1.3 billion people. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) 2019–21 reported that nearly 32% of children under five were underweight, 19% were wasted and nearly 36% were stunted – with some states showing substantial increases in wasting and stunting.¹ Since the NFHS-4 in 2016, wasting among children under five rose in 12 of the 22 states surveyed, stunting increased in 13 states and the percentage of underweight children increased in 16 states. Every year, India loses more than US\$12 billion in gross domestic product to vitamin and mineral deficiencies.^{2,3} There is a critical need to address the burden of malnutrition in the country by scaling up core nutrition interventions.

With support from the Government of Canada, Nutrition International has been working in India for the past 25 years, alongside the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Food and Public Distribution, and other relevant ministries. It also provides technical assistance to the State Health Mission, the Department of Women and Child Development, the Civil Supplies Department, and the Departments of Public Health of various state governments to address the country's nutrition challenges. The key interventions are aimed at improving the survival and health of those in vulnerable situations, especially pregnant women, newborns, young children and adolescent girls. This is achieved through micronutrient supplementation, food fortification and health systems strengthening.

1 From NFHS-4 (2015-16) to NFHS-5 (2019-21)

2 UNICEF and the Micronutrient Initiative. 2004. Vitamin and Mineral Deficiency: A Global Progress Report

3 World Bank. 2009. World Development Indicators (Database)



PRIORITY PROGRAMS AND GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

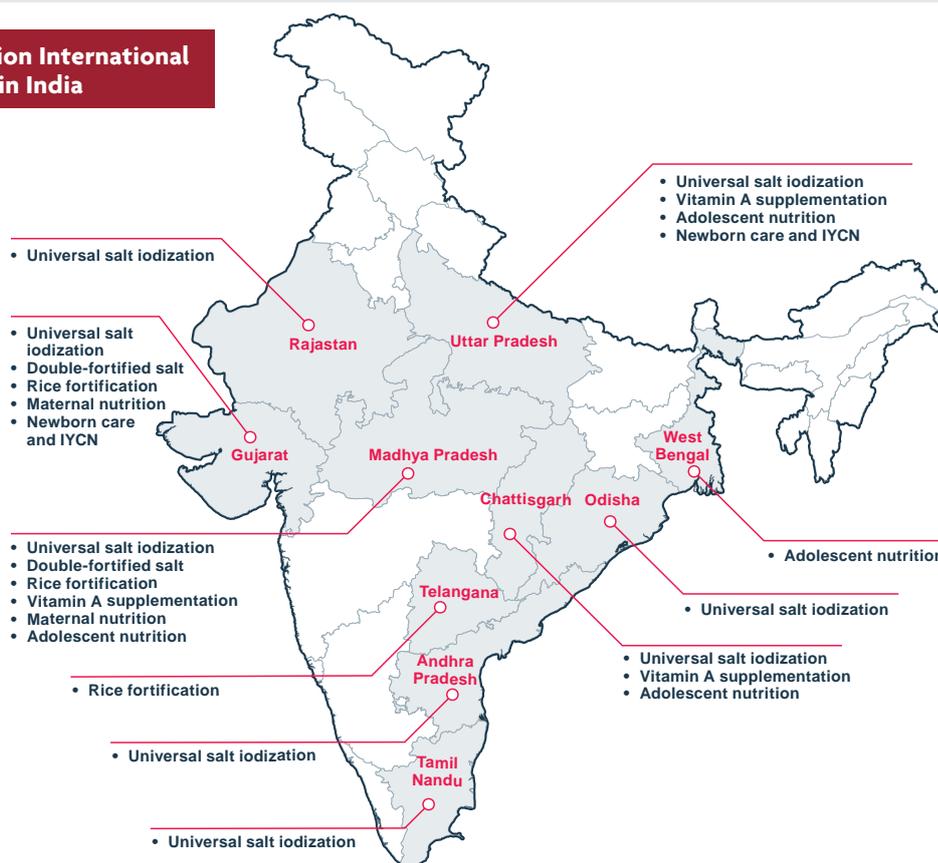
In India, Nutrition International aims to achieve the following strategic objectives:

- Achieve universal salt iodization (USI), through improved production, monitoring, and consumption of iodized salt
- Introduce and promote the use of fortified rice and double-fortified salt through social safety programs to reduce the prevalence of anaemia
- Improve maternal and essential newborn care services
- Increase biannual administration of vitamin A to children aged 9–59 months
- Strengthen adolescent nutrition through weekly iron and folic acid supplementation
- Improve consumption of iron and folic acid and calcium supplements among pregnant and lactating women

National programs supported by Nutrition International:

- National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Program
- *Anaemia Mukta Bharat (Anaemia Free India) Campaign*
- National Health Mission, including RMNCH+ A
- Food-based social safety net programs, including the Public Distribution System, Integrated Child Development Services and Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM-POSHAN)
- India Newborn Action Plan
- Home-based newborn care
- Facilities-based newborn care
- Mother Absolute Affection Program
- *Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan*
- *LaQshya – Labour Room Quality Improvement Initiative*
- National Quality Assurance Standards
- *Navjat Shishu Suraksha Karyakram*
- *MusQan- Ensuring Child-Friendly Services in Public Health Facilities*
- *Rashtiya Bal Swasthya Karyakaram*
- Intensive Diarrhoea Control Fortnight
- National Vitamin A Supplementation Program

States where Nutrition International is working in India





CURRENT PROJECTS

FOOD FORTIFICATION

Salt Iodization

Since 2000, Nutrition International has supported the Government of India to achieve universal salt iodization to combat iodine deficiency disorders. This support includes working with the salt industry to build their capacity to produce adequately iodized salt and strengthening regulatory monitoring agencies such as the Food and Drugs Control Administration, Department of Legal Metrology, and Salt Department to improve enforcement of iodized salt standards. Nutrition International also provides technical support to the national and state Iodine Deficiency Disorder Cells towards the implementation of the National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Program, and advocate for the revision of national program guidelines.

Nutrition International engages with various other government departments, including the Department of Panchayat and Rural Development, Department of Women and Child Development, and Department of Education, to leverage existing programs and platforms such as Gram Sabha, Village Health and Nutrition Day, and *Poshan Maah* to raise awareness on the benefits of consuming iodized salt.

Through Nutrition International's support, salt processors collectively produce 2.7 million metric tonnes of iodized salt annually, 64% of which is adequately iodized.

Double Fortified Salt

Nutrition International supports the Government of India's initiative to improve nutrition through the fortification of staple foods and introducing them in existing public sector programs such as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), PM-POSHAN, and the Public Distribution System (PDS). Double-fortified salt (DFS) with iron and iodine is an innovative scientific breakthrough developed more than twenty years ago by researchers at the University of Toronto in collaboration with Nutrition International and approved by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in 2014.

In Madhya Pradesh, Nutrition International is supporting the state government for the introduction and scale-up of DFS in the PDS of 37 districts and in ICDS and PM-POSHAN programs of all 52 districts in the state. In Gujarat, Nutrition International is providing technical support for the distribution of DFS through social safety net programs across all 33 districts. The technical support provided to the government includes support in tendering and procurement, quality assurance and quality control, capacity building, and regular monitoring and program evaluation.

Rice Fortification

Nutrition International has partnered with the governments of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Telangana to support the introduction and distribution of fortified rice through social safety net programs. In Madhya Pradesh, Nutrition International is providing technical support for the distribution of fortified rice in all 52 districts through the PDS, PM-POSHAN, and ICDS. In Gujarat, Nutrition International supports the distribution of fortified rice through the ICDS and PM-POSHAN in all 33 districts, and currently in 14 districts through the PDS, which will scale up to the entire state. In Telangana, fortified rice is being distributed throughout the state in 33 districts through the ICDS and PM-Poshan, and in four districts through the PDS.

Nutrition International's collaboration extends to institutionalizing quality assurance mechanisms, supply chain mapping, designing behaviour change intervention activities, capacity building, and regular program monitoring.





CURRENT PROJECTS

ADOLESCENT HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Nutrition International's adolescent nutrition program focuses on reducing anaemia and improving the nutritional status and overall wellbeing of adolescents, particularly girls, through gender-sensitive nutrition education and counselling, and weekly iron and folic acid supplementation (WIFAS). Nutrition International aims to improve quality and coverage of WIFAS in 135 districts across five states.

The program also integrates menstrual hygiene education in Uttar Pradesh, drives adolescent health and wellness days under the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram program, and demonstrates nutrition-smart schools in Gujarat. At the national and state levels, Nutrition International supports the implementation of the Anaemia Mukta Bharat (Anaemia Free India) initiative.

VITAMIN A SUPPLEMENTATION

Nutrition International assists the governments of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh in effectively planning and implementing biannual rounds of vitamin A supplementation (VAS). Nutrition International provides technology solutions for monitoring and awareness generation, and conducts evaluations to understand program coverage and identify bottlenecks. Nutrition International actively engages in advocacy efforts to prioritize and allocate appropriate budgets for the VAS program and ensure the timely delivery of the two annual VAS rounds in the states. Nutrition International's contributions have led to the improvement of VAS coverage, reaching more than 70 million children aged 9-59 months.





CURRENT PROJECTS

NEWBORN CARE

Nutrition International supports the state governments of Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh in implementing the birth package program to strengthen maternal and essential newborn care services and practices in healthcare facilities and community settings. The program supports eight districts in Uttar Pradesh and ten districts in Gujarat, aiming to improve the identification, referral, and management of high-risk pregnant women, improve care during labour, strengthen facility- and community-based care of preterm and low birthweight newborns through kangaroo mother care and ensure essential newborn care services at health facilities by promoting zero separation of a mother and her newborn.

Strengthening maternal death surveillance and response, child death review and stillbirth review are also key components of this program.

OUR IMPACT

INTERVENTION	LIVES IMPACTED ⁴
No. of people reached with adequately iodized salt	141 million ⁵
No. of people gained access to adequately fortified salt	20 million ⁶
No. of beneficiaries reached with fortified rice through social safety net programs	1.16 million
No. of adolescent girls consuming full WIFAS scheme	0.5 million
No. of children under five reached with two doses of VAS through delivery support	13.5 million

⁴ All figures are as per Nutrition International's Annual Global Report for the period January 2021–March 2022

⁵ This includes included over 35 million women of reproductive age and close to 2.5 million newborns who were protected from iodine deficiency disorders

⁶ This includes 4.9 million women of reproductive age



CURRENT PROJECTS

IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH PROJECTS

From 2021 onwards, Nutrition International has commenced two implementation research projects on maternal nutrition and infant and young child nutrition (IYCN). To be completed by 2024, these implementation research studies aim to address crucial gaps in program knowledge and service delivery. The projects consist of formative research, a baseline and an endline, process evaluation and an improved model of implementation.

The two implementation research studies are as follows:

a) MATERNAL NUTRITION: *Improved Adherence to Iron & Folic Acid and Calcium Supplementation Among Pregnant and Lactating Women*

The implementation research on maternal iron and folic acid (IFA) aims to investigate the barriers and reasons for low adherence to IFA and calcium supplementation and recommend an improved program model for better adherence in the Damoh district of Madhya Pradesh and the Vadodara district of Gujarat.

The key objectives include:

- Improve nutrition and build awareness of IFA supplementation among women, particularly those who are newly married or may soon become pregnant
- Increase the awareness of calcium supplementation during pregnancy and lactation
- Improve coverage and adherence to IFA among pregnant and lactating women through health systems strengthening

b) INFANT YOUNG CHILD NUTRITION: *Elevating Quality Nutrition Services Across the First 1000 Days*

Nutrition International has initiated implementation research in four selected districts, Mathura and Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh and Kheda and Tapi in Gujarat, to demonstrate a model for improved quality of nutrition services across the first 1,000 days. The findings will contribute to improved health and nutrition outcomes for pregnant and lactating mothers and children until the age of two. It will also strengthen the capacity of the healthcare systems in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh to deliver comprehensive, integrated, and quality nutrition and health interventions across the first 1,000 days.

The key objectives include:

- Develop a model for improved quality of nutrition services with improved health and nutrition outcomes
- Formulate a package of tools to support integrating quality nutrition services and counselling into the health system
- Assess the impact of enhanced interpersonal nutrition counselling on improved coverage and uptake of nutrition services