

**MINUTES OF THE 1<sup>st</sup> MEETING OF THE THREE MEMBER COMMITTEE HELD ON 25<sup>TH</sup>  
AUGUST, 2017 AT VIGYAN BHAWAN ANNEXE, NEW DELHI**

The following attended the meeting:

1. Prof. V.K. Paul, Hon'ble Member, NITI, Aayog, New Delhi
2. Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Secretary, DHR & DG, ICMR, New Delhi--**Convener**
3. Dr. AK Singh, DDG (Horticulture) , New Delhi
4. Prof. Ram Rajasekaran, Director , CFTRI (CSIR), Mysore
5. Mr. BK Singh, Commissioner, Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti, Noida
6. Mr. AN Ramachandra, Joint Commissioner, Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti, Noida
7. Dr. Meenakshi Singh, CSIR, New Delhi
8. Dr. Anil P Joshi, Dehradun
9. Shri Suresh Kumar, Scientist 'F', Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Govt. of India
10. Dr. G.S. Toteja, Scientist 'G' & Head, Division of Nutrition, ICMR, New Delhi
11. Dr. Bharti Kularni, Scientist 'F', NIN, Hyderabad (ICMR)
12. Ms Zian, Scientist B CNRT, ICMR, New Delhi

**Dr. Soumya Swaminathan**, Secretary DHR and DG, ICMR welcomed all the members and briefed them about the initiative taken by Prof. R Chidambaram, Principal Scientific Adviser, Government of India, to address 'Nutrition and Health'. She further briefed about the last two meetings held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017 & 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017 wherein it was recommended that a vision document on Nutrition is to be prepared both with a short term (year 2020) and longer term (year 2032) perspective. Dr Soumya Swaminathan also said that in last meeting following recommendations were made:

"To begin with projects need to be formulated for two target groups having trackability. This will ascertain quantification of the impact of nutritional intervention on the target group. The intervention could be a combination of the utilization of modern and traditional knowledge along with appropriate region-specific variation. Two such target groups identified are as follows:

- i) **adolescent group**: Navodaya Vidyalaya which is a residential school spread across the country, catering to the disadvantage section of the society could be a possible option
- ii) **0-2 years target group**: This may be preferably in the tribal belt having limited number of people for effective tracking"

She then requested Prof. VK Paul, Hon'ble Member, NITI, Aayog, to give his remarks.

**Dr. VK Paul**, also appreciated the initiative taken by the PSA and highlighted the issue of under nutrition in children with special reference to stunting and anaemia. He further mentioned that nutrition needs to be addressed with intersectoral approach focusing on agriculture, dietary diversification, food fortification and hygiene.

Dr. GS Toteja informed the members that since Prof Ramesh Chand, Hon'ble Member of NITI Ayog, informed that he will not be able to attend the meeting, he along with Mr Suresh Kumar met Prof Ramesh Chand on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2017 and brief him about the agenda. Prof. Ramesh Chand said that ICDS scheme should be revisited; nutrition supplementation should be region specific. He also said that nutrition education campaign in organized manner should be carried

out in both urban and rural areas. Prof Ramesh Chand also supported proposed study in Navodaya Vidyalaya, however suggested to have a control arm.

Dr. Swaminathan, then asked Dr. Bharti Kulkarni, Scientist 'F', NIN, Hyderabad, to make a presentation on the study protocol to be taken up in Navodaya Vidyalayas. Dr. Kulkarni then gave a presentation on study protocol 'Development and impact evaluation of an integrated nutrition intervention program to reduce under nutrition and anaemia in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) students.' She mentioned that the study aims to establish sustainable mechanism for improvement in health and nutritional status and alleviation of anaemia in adolescents studying in JNVs. Mr. Singh, Commissioner, JNVs & Mr. Ramachandra, Jt. Commissioner, JNVs also briefed the members on the existing system of JNVs.

Dr. Paul suggested that the term 'under nutrition' in the objectives of the study could be defined; dietary intervention on fats and starch may not be excessive; local recipes to be emphasized; and intervention outcome such as overweight and obesity should also be measured. The members also suggested that the study may be restricted to two JNV regions in consultation with Commissioner, JNVs.

Dr. Swaminathan, then requested Prof. Ram Rajasekaran, Director, CFTRI, Mysore, to make a presentation on success stories of nutrition intervention among children in Anganwadi centres of Mysore, Karnataka. Prof. Rajasekaran then gave a brief presentation on nutrition intervention among children in Anganwadi centres of Mysore, Karnataka where fortified foods developed by CFTRI were provided to the children. He also briefed the members about the situation of Mid Day Meal Programme in 2400 schools of Mysore, Karnataka.

This was followed by a presentation from Dr. Anil P Joshi on changing pattern of Indian food habits with less dependency on millets. He mentioned that in the past, dependency on millets was around 40% whereas the present dependency is around 4-5%. He also emphasized that production and consumption of millets should be promoted. He further stated that regional and economy based approach in food systems is needed for sustainability.

**Dr. AK Singh, DDG (Horticulture), ICAR** also supported the view that millets should be promoted as it has high nutritional values. **Dr. Poornima Menon, Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI** was of the view that evidence of millet's impact on nutritional outcomes seems limited and would be worth doing a literature review to examine the scientific evidence. She further mentioned that millets have better nutritional properties than cereals like rice or wheat, but in the end, they are also a staple food and do not add additional dietary diversity beyond the cereal food group. **Prof. Rajashekhar** also expressed his concern on processing of millets and its acceptability among industries.

This was followed by a detailed discussion among the members expressing their views on how to strengthen the nutrition situation of the country. **Dr. Menon**, mentioned that India's average improvement on stunting progress is masked by state variability – several states have made excellent progress and these should be looked at carefully. In addition, IFPRI analysis of high-versus low-stunting districts in NFHS-4 suggested that women's well-being (BMI, education,

early marriage and access to antenatal care) together account for close to 45% of difference. She also mentioned that on district-focused efforts, it would be useful to look at the extent to which existing schemes, programs and services have the potential to close important gaps in determinants of nutrition, in addition to examining potential for new actions. In many places, the challenge is limited implementation and coverage/quality of existing programs.

The members also deliberated on agriculture-nutrition linkages. **Dr. AK Singh**, was of the view that nutrition intervention should be linked with agriculture. **Dr. Menon** also mentioned that there are a few studies that are ongoing that would be worth reviewing to know what the interventions are, what outcomes they are examining and in what agricultural contexts. She offered to provide an overview of ongoing impact evaluations/trials on agriculture-nutrition linkages if needed.

**Dr. Paul** suggested that whether cash transfer or vouchers could be one of the interventions to address undernutrition. **Dr. Menon** informed that there are recent findings from cash transfer plus nutrition behaviour change supporting impacts on stunting in other South Asian countries and can be looked as an option for India too. She also offered to provide overview on cash transfers and nutrition with the idea of potentially doing a test of cash transfers for nutrition in India.

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan also mentioned that better delivery of existing programmes, Swacch Bharat Abhiyan, biofortified gardens needs to be focused to improve the existing nutrition of the country.

After a detailed discussion, the members concluded the following:

- I. The evidence based document on millets may be prepared by NIN, Hyderabad (ICMR) with ICAR help.
- II. Success stories on nutrition linkage with agriculture intervention may be prepared by Dr. Purnima Menon, Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI with inputs from ICAR on agronomic situation of high burden districts of malnutrition.
- III. The Study protocol on Navodya Vidyalaya may be modified as suggested and may be submitted to the office of PSA within couple of weeks.
- IV. All focus should be made for now to address I to iii above

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

  
(Dr. Soumya Swaminathan)  
Convenor

