

Nutrition Webinar- FOLU

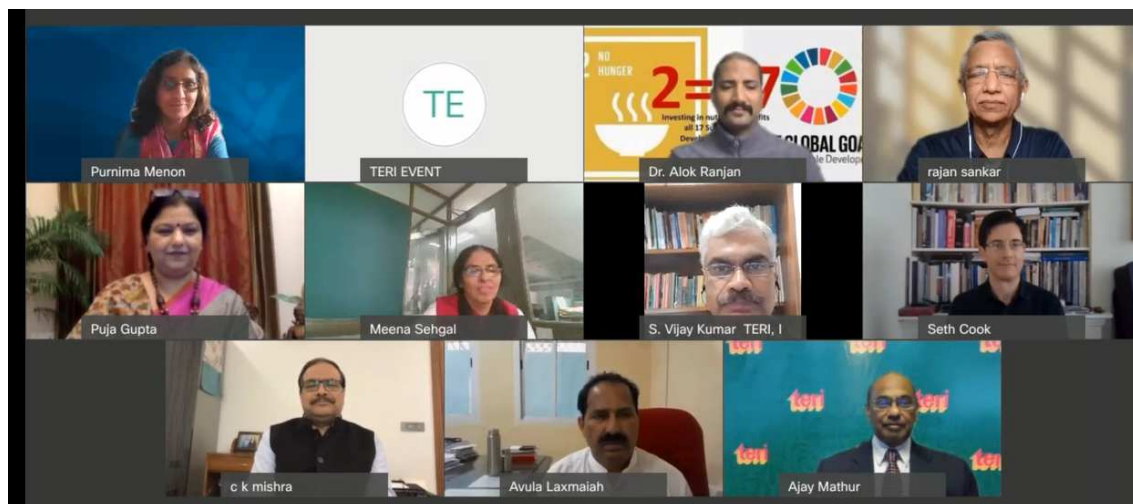
The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), a partner in the Food and Land Use (FOLU) Coalition India, organized a webinar on the theme “**Nutrition Status and Response Strategies for India**” on December 11, 2020 at 3:00- 5:30 PM IST.

Background

India is facing a “triple burden of malnutrition”, i.e. undernutrition (such as 43.3 million children under age of five years are stunted), overnutrition (around 21% of adult females are obese), and micronutrient deficiencies, making the achievement of SDG 2 (zero hunger and ending malnutrition) a challenge for India. Thus, the issue is not only the calorie and protein adequacy but also the production and consumption of micro- nutrient and mineral dense foods. In addition to these, individual nutrition status is also dependent on several environmental determinants, particularly sanitation and hygiene, required to ensure nutrient absorption by the body. The Government of India has initiated various impactful initiatives and programs such as *Poshan Abhiyaan*, and ‘*AnemiaMukt Bharat*’ under the National Nutrition Policy to address malnutrition in India.

Panel and Participants

The nutrition webinar comprised of an eminent panel of experts from the fields of nutrition and health. The speakers included Dr. Alok I Ranjan, Country Lead- Nutrition, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; Ms. Meena Sehgal, Senior Fellow, TERI; Dr. Ranjan Sankar, Director, The India Nutrition Initiative, TATA Trusts; Dr. AvulaLaxmaiah, Head, Public Health, National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and Dr. Purnima Menon, Senior Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). The event was chaired by Shri C. K. Mishra, Former Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and was moderated by Dr. Puja Gupta, Associate Professor, Resource Management and Design Application Department, Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi. The Keynote was delivered by Dr Ajay Mathur, Director-General, TERI. The webinar was attended by participants from various backgrounds such as nutrition, agriculture, environment science, policy, and academics.



Key Messages

The key messages obtained from the event are given below:

Speaker	Key message
Dr. Ajay Mathur	It is time to focus on local needs, local food, local habits and what nutrients are available at the local level. The cold chain for fresh produce in rural areas is required to improve off-season availability of micro-nutrients.
Shri C K Mishra	Locally available solutions need to be harnessed to fill the micro-nutrient gap. Culture variation across Indian population should also be considered in nutrition programs, since nutrition is not only about the science and the medicine, but also culture.
Dr. Alok I Ranjan	SDG2 to achieve "zero hunger" helps in achieving all the SDGs and vice-versa. India has many programmes, but convergence of services needs to happen at the household level. Need systems strengthening both to cut the risks and secure health of the community. There had to be overall ownership for delivering nutrition successfully.
Ms. Meena Sehgal	Food fortification micro-enterprises spread across rural areas can help fill the wide micro-nutrient gap in the population. PDS, MDM etc need to be leveraged. However, social and environmental factors like women literacy, sanitation, drinking water and clean cooking are crucial to improve nutrition uptake.
Dr. A Laxmaiah	Digitalization of tracking system is being expanded for better tracking of nutrition status and tackling the nutrition challenge. We need to create an independent M&E system. This is important because while convergence is happening at the policy and grassroots-worker level, it is not there at the middle (sub-district) level.
Dr. Rajan Sankar	Fortification is a complementary strategy to long-term nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive strategies to strengthen food systems. Several foods, wheat flour, rice, oil, ensure fortification when the industry is dispersed and not formalised, as in the case of wheat flour. Targeted fortification is necessary as we cannot wait for full food security before tackling nutrition security.
Dr. Purnima Menon	Convergence for bringing a change at the household level is the need now. The new behaviour change messages need to be integrated into existing norms. We need to be able to use data strategically for better implementation.

Overall Conclusion/ Message

In his concluding remarks, Shri C K Mishra stated that in India, food security is largely addressed and there is an urgent need to emphasise on gaining nutrition security. This requires a multi-dimensional approach and convergence of multiple-sectors. Cultural aspects influence nutritious consumption and need to be looked at from both problem and solution side.

Summarising the discussion Shri s Vijay Kumar stated that it was clear that the issue of nutrition was a complex multi-dimensional one; direct strategies of improving nutritional content and fortification had to be supplemented by strategies that took into account environmental and social dimensions to increase both intake and uptake.