



सत्यमेव जयते  
Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare  
Government of India



# PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

UN World Food Programme's Contribution in India's  
Journey Towards Food & Nutrition Security: 1968-2018



**50** Years

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UN World Food Programme's Contribution in India's  
Journey Towards Food & Nutrition Security: 1968-2018



## **Acknowledgements**

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'WFP Strategic Engagement in India 1963-2014', a document developed by WFP's global Policy, Programme and Innovations Division, has been referred to extensively for this compendium.

Design and Print: Creative Curve Communications Pvt. Ltd.

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### **Disclaimer:**

The following compendium is based on WFP's archives along with secondary research, anecdotal accounts and interviews with retired employees. It does not claim to represent the complete work undertaken by WFP, the Government of India or its partners during the period mentioned. The utmost care has been taken to capture the chronology factually, however, there may be gaps, given the limited availability of information. The objective of the publication is to provide a visual presentation of key milestones achieved by WFP in collaboration with the Government of India and other partners in India.

50 *Years*

**PARTNERSHIP  
FOR CHANGE**

UN World Food Programme's Contribution in India's  
Journey Towards Food & Nutrition Security: 1968-2018

नरेन्द्र सिंह तोमर  
NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR

D.O. No. 51/...../AM



सत्यमेव जयते

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण,  
ग्रामीण विकास और पंचायती राज मंत्री  
भारत सरकार  
कृषि भवन, नई दिल्ली  
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE,  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYATI RAJ  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
KRISHI BHAWAN, NEW DELHI

28 JUN 2019

### Foreword

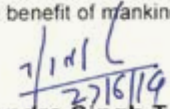


I am very pleased to know that the Government of India and UN World Food Programme have completed 50 years of collaboration and partnership.

Our country has had an arduous but rewarding journey in achieving food security for her people. The Green Revolution that changed the face of agriculture and lives of farmers, and their families, was a key milestone for our agrarian country. It is a judicious mix of traditional knowledge of our farmers and infusion of science and technology that has enabled record production of food grains, pulses and horticulture commodities. The White Revolution changed the lives of dairy farmers – men and women alike – setting the country on the path of progress and becoming the largest producer of milk. And we now move to Blue Revolution harnessing the potential of fresh water and marine fisheries. These achievements, in the face of an increasing population and challenges posed by climate change, is a laudable achievement with few parallels.

A signatory to the resolution adopted on 'Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' at the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly, India has developed its vision and strategy for achieving the targets set therein by effectively making them a part of government policies and programmes. Given the importance of rural India and linkages of agriculture with multiple targets of SDG 2 the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare is playing a critical role in achieving the collective target of 'end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture'.

UN World Food Programme is one such partner who has stood by the side of Government of India and made significant contributions in this journey from a food deficit to a now food surplus state. WFP continues to implement innovative pilots in India, the rice fortification in Mid Day Meals program in Odisha being among these. These experiences need to be scaled up in India as well as shared with other developing countries. A pilot project in India, considering its sheer size and diversity, is equivalent to country-wide programme in many other nations. I therefore, look forward to upscaling of the experiences and expertise generated by this partnership for the benefit of mankind in the world

  
(Narendera Singh Tomar)



World Food Programme  
Programme Alimentaire Mondial  
Programa Mundial de Alimentos  
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES

## Preface



As WFP marks 50 years of its partnership with the Government of India, we take the opportunity to reflect on our cooperation and the milestones achieved by the country towards eradicating hunger and malnutrition and WFP's evolving role from food aid to technical assistance, in supporting the Government's priority initiatives.

WFP's journey in India has been a long and successful one. It has been fortunate to witness significant positive changes in the food and nutritional security status of people, and substantial efforts made by the Government to address malnutrition. The successes achieved have been, in large part, due to the leadership of the Government of India and its commitment to its people in uplifting the nation — towards a better and brighter future.

While we still have some way to go in addressing malnutrition, there have been numerous ongoing efforts and substantial investments and the nation has already become an inspiration for many others who are striving to achieve the targets set under Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), including Goal 2, which is to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture globally by 2030. The remaining, much shorter road towards achieving the SDG 2 targets in India is clearly plotted out through the current policies and initiatives and is achievable within the set timeline.

Through this compendium, which details the success and challenges of WFP's work and partnership in India, I hope, we can inspire deliberation and encouragement to all those who are working for a world with zero hunger and no malnutrition.

Bishow Parajuli,  
Representative and Country Director- India  
World Food Programme

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# ABOUT THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME



The formation of the World Food Programme was first considered in 1961, when, at the behest of US President Dwight Eisenhower, the Director of the United States Food for Peace Programme, George McGovern, proposed the establishment of a multilateral global food-aid programme, with a fund of \$100 million in commodities and cash, on a three-year experimental basis to the UN.

WFP was formally established by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO) and the UN General Assembly, through a resolution passed on November 24th, 1961 and, in February 1962, WFP's governing body held its first session. Two months later, Addeke Boerma of the Netherlands, an agricultural economist and FAO veteran was appointed as the organization's first Executive Director.

Today, WFP is not only the world's largest humanitarian organization, but also provides technical expertise and assists in strengthening government initiatives to reach the targets under Sustainable Development Goal 2 — end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

The first Memorandum of Understanding between WFP and the Government of India was signed in July 1968 and since then, the agency has been supporting Government of India's development programmes aimed at achieving food and nutrition security. The work of WFP in India has evolved over the past five decades from humanitarian response, to supporting India to achieve self-sufficiency in food production, and now focuses on providing technical assistance for achieving India's targets under SDG 2 by 2030.



*WFP's Executive Director (1976-1977), Mr. Thomas C M Robinson speaking at a United Nations meeting.*

# INDIA'S JOURNEY TOWARDS FOOD & NUTRITION SECURITY



India gained its independence in the backdrop of the great Bengal Famine of 1943, which affected millions of people and, as a result, many lost their lives to hunger. Post-independence, several efforts were undertaken towards improving food security by accelerating increases in agricultural production<sup>1</sup>.

As a result, India witnessed its Green Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s, with improved production and productivity of major crops, development of new varieties of hybrids and use of new technologies.

The Indian dairy industry also progressed from a situation of scarcity to that of plenty. Dairy farmers today are better informed about technologies of more efficient milk production and its economics. Application of modern technology and advanced management systems in milk processing and marketing have brought about a marked change in the market place. The Operation Flood programme implemented by National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) played a key role in bringing about this transformation<sup>2</sup>.

With the launching of major reforms in 1991, although liberalization was already under way since the 1980s, India has grown out of a period of acute shortages and heavy dependence on food aid to self-sufficiency, or broadly, self-reliance in food<sup>3</sup>. While the achievements of Indian agriculture since the early 1970s, together with a robust economy and buoyant private sector, have helped to ensure macro-level food security to a large extent, yet a considerable number of people have continued to live in poverty and hunger<sup>4</sup>.

To address this, significant investments are being made by the Government in food safety nets to cater to the food-insecure population. In the last few years, India has also witnessed major reforms in the public distribution system through digitization of food safety nets to increase accountability and access.

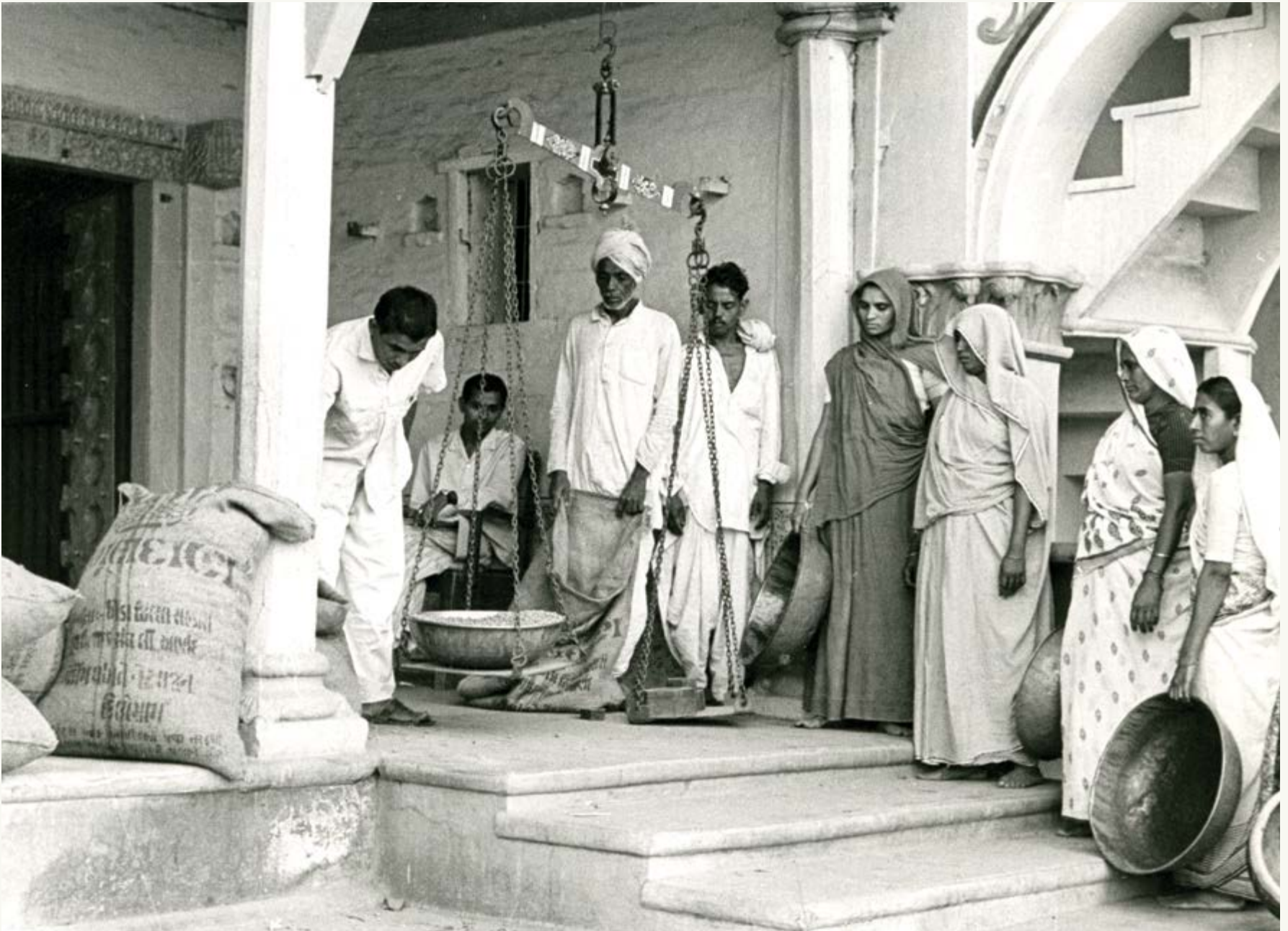
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1. *50 Years of Green Revolution: An Anthology of Research Papers*

2. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/748851468771700148/pdf/308270IN0Milk01ion01see0also0307591.pdf>

3. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/28561/adb-wp16-food-and-nutrition-security-status-india.pdf>

4. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/28561/adb-wp16-food-and-nutrition-security-status-india.pdf>



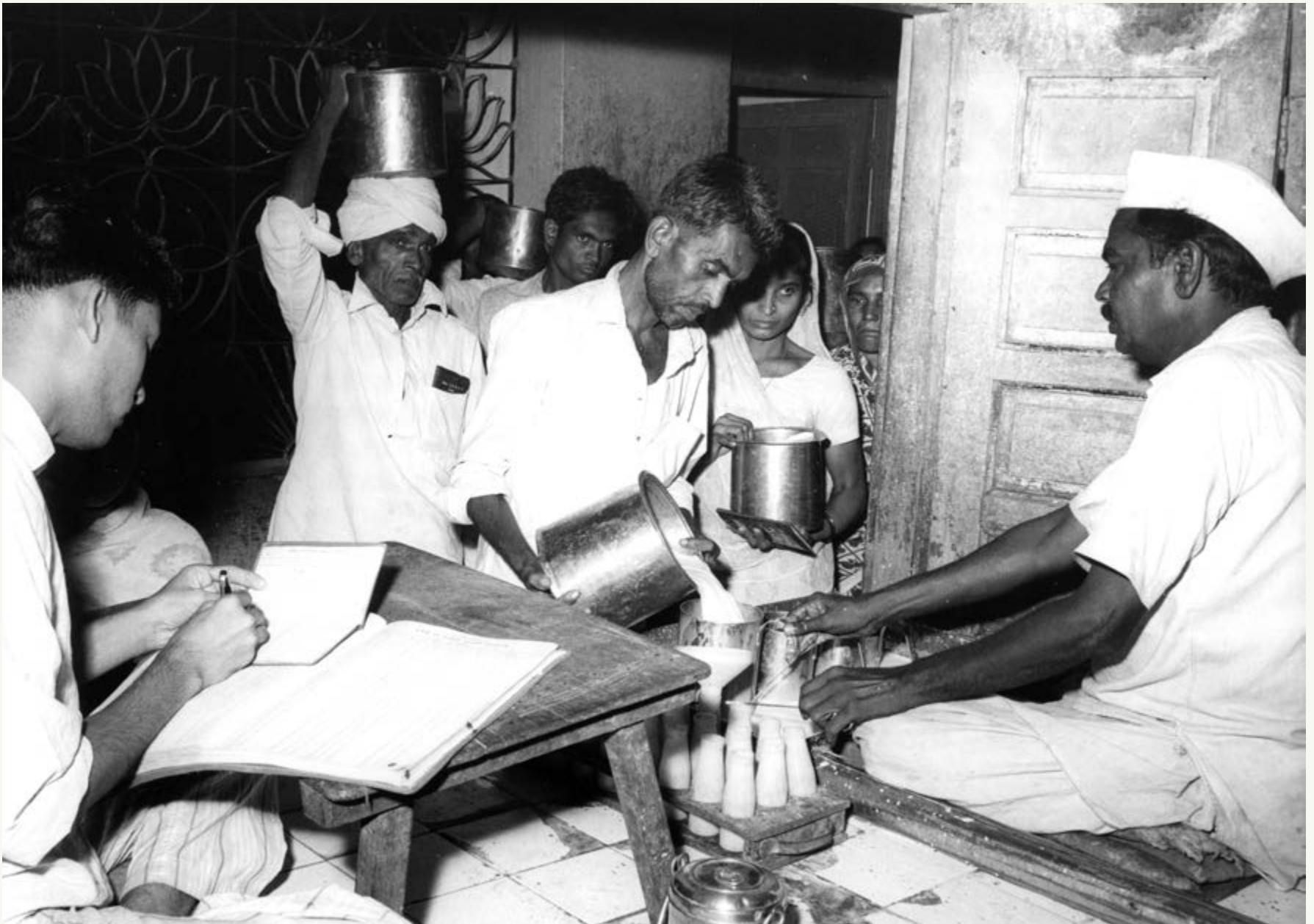
1966 Anand District, Gujarat: A cattle owner loads his supply of Amuldan mixed feed onto his bullock cart.

In the area of nutrition, the Government of India launched the massive Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) in the year 1975 to address the problem of malnutrition among children less than 6 years of age, with a special focus on pregnant and lactating women. The key elements of ICDS are supplementary nutrition, immunisation, health check-ups, referral services, pre-school informal education, and nutrition and health education.

The Government of India has a strong policy environment for addressing hunger and malnutrition in the country. The National Food Security Act, 2013 makes food a legal entitlement for more than two-thirds of the population, more than 800 million Indians.

In September 2017, the Government also launched the National Nutrition Strategy, which is a major step towards addressing malnutrition and hunger in a sustainable way. As part of the strategy, the POSHAN Abhiyan, the Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment — with a three-year budget of ₹ 9046.17 crore (approximately \$1.35 billion)— has set targets for reducing the levels of child stunting, undernutrition, and anaemia as well as low birth weight babies by 2022.

India's commitment to SDG 2 has been reiterated through various initiatives including the National SDG 2 Roadmap Framework that was launched by the NITI Aayog in 2018. While challenges continue to exist, India has all the ingredients in place to achieve the 2030 targets, and agencies such as WFP are constantly striving to support the nation to achieve these goals.



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1972, Anand District, Gujarat: Farmers bring milk to a collection centre for purity and fat content analysis. In 1969, Government of India launched 'Operation Flood', a dairy development programme, that transformed India from a milk-deficient nation into one of the world's largest milk producers. WFP supported this project for more than 10 years.

# THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME IN INDIA



The World Food Programme (WFP) continues to be committed to India's efforts to improve food and nutrition security in a sustainable and consistent manner. To do this, WFP has always aligned its work closely with the Government's development plans. Since the early days of WFP in India, the programme has built a close relationship with the Government, in particular, with its nodal ministry- the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, as well as other ministries and state governments.

**In 1968, WFP's assistance to the Government of India was formally agreed, with the signing of a basic agreement between the two, according to which the Government of India would request assistance of WFP in the form of food for supporting economic and social development projects or for meeting emergency food needs arising at the time of natural disasters or as a result of other emergency conditions.**

Although this formal agreement was signed in 1968, between 1964 and 1968, states like Bihar and Odisha (formerly Orissa) were struck by drought, leading to lack of agricultural productivity and loss of employment for farmers. During this time, WFP assisted the Government in carrying out development programmes to improve the situation of the farmers as well as the food security and nutritional status of the most affected people. This included assistance to livestock projects, (WFP provided poultry and cattle feed), dairy development (milk production and distribution in Anand and Delhi) and agriculture development (increasing food production by improving irrigation in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh).

While assistance to some key projects began prior to the signing of the agreement (including dairy and agriculture), after 1968, WFP began to provide strategic support to the Government's development projects, with the nature of support evolving in accordance with the growth trajectory of the country and its changing assistance needs.





© WFP/Bhansali

*1966: A mother feeding milk to her child in Poona District of Maharashtra. India was hit by severe droughts in 1965-1966, in response to which, WFP provided 54,000 tons of wheat and 7,300 tons of skimmed milk.*

**During the 1960s and '70s**, WFP supported the Government of India's priorities as defined under the Five-Year Plans — these included projects aimed at improving poultry and agricultural production, development of tribal populations, and forestry through the Food for Work model, and improving the nutrition of women and children through the 'Food for Education and Development' model. Along with the development and policy work, WFP also assisted with several large-scale emergency responses in the 1960s and 70s.

**In the 1980s to 1990s**, WFP's development assistance was focused on three core areas of work: nutrition, agricultural improvement and tribal and forestry development. During this period, WFP's programmes evolved in their approach from food distribution to innovation and partnerships for change. The 1990s was a critical period in defining WFP's global strategy. The emphasis shifted towards serving food insecure people rather than distributing food commodities (WFP, 2002: 13). This is described as a shift in focus from 'what' it does (provide food aid) to 'why' it does this (WFP, 2002: 25).

**WFP India developed its first Country Plan in 1994**, which, while outlining the modalities of WFP's assistance in India, focused on three target groups: vulnerable women and children, scheduled castes and tribes<sup>5</sup> and people living in drought-prone and difficult to reach areas. Additionally, WFP continued to support employment for workers of the Rajasthan Canal. In consultation with the Government, it was decided that these three thematic areas of focus would be maintained but reorganized to be managed through three consolidated programmes covering all targeted states. This restructuring of assistance marked the first step toward a transition to the Country Programme approach that began in India in 1997.

**Through the Country Programme for 1997 to 2002**, WFP undertook two core activities: support to ICDS and improvement of food security in tribal areas through the Tribal Forestry Development Project. Additionally, between 1999 and 2008, WFP carried out several emergency responses to natural disasters, including the cyclone in Odisha in 1999, the earthquake in Gujarat in 2001, the 2004-2005 Indian Ocean tsunami that prompted WFP response in five different states, and flooding in Bihar in 2008.

This period also marked the initiation of WFP's role in shaping the policy landscape around the area of food security. This began with the launch of its flagship 'Food Insecurity Atlas of Rural India', in collaboration with the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation in 2001. The report, which was released by the then Prime Minister, late Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, was followed by the first ever consultation of its kind focusing on food security: "Towards a Hunger-Free India". This consultation attracted eminent experts, academicians, government luminaries and representatives of non-governmental organizations.

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5. Scheduled Castes and Tribes and other Backward Classes are identified in India population census as the neediest population groups. They represent large part of the population of India and are especially numerous in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Bihar.



1986 Agathirtha village, Karnataka: Project Participants collect fodder from project shop in the village.

Following this, WFP and the M.S Swaminathan Research Foundation also collaborated to launch the Food Insecurity Atlas of Urban India in 2002, the Atlas of the Sustainability of Food Security in India in 2004 and the Report on the State of Food Insecurity in Rural India in 2008.

Moving forward, WFP developed a series of state level Food Security Atlases for Rajasthan, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. Receiving traction in the academic world, the atlases managed to steer the conversation on food security in the country.

WFP mapped its strategic intervention **from 2003 to 2007** through its third 5-year Country Programme (CP). During this period, WFP's objective was to play a catalytic role in the country's efforts to reduce hunger and promote models that enhance food security. To this end, WFP supported flagship government programmes, such as, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS); Food-For-Education that complemented the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) programme, which aimed to increase enrolment and attendance in primary schools; and the Food-For-Work programme that aimed to protect livelihoods. Together, these activities were to contribute towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals 1 through 5.

In addition to the core CP activities, a pilot project on support to people with HIV and AIDS was initiated in the state of Tamil Nadu, where they received specialized fortified foods. Other innovative technical assistance initiatives that continued from prior years included: fortification of food provided by the government for ICDS; Food for Human Development; empowerment of adolescent girls for health promotion; and a project on support to small-scale producers of iodized salt.

**The period from 2008 to 2012** marked a shift in focus to technical assistance. In early 2012, food delivery in India was completely handed over to the Government of India by WFP. The **period of 2013-14** was used to analyse and consolidate the work around technical assistance and to build on previous initiatives that were aligned with the global targets and priorities of the Indian Government. The new initiatives included projects such as fortification of wheat flour with iron and folic acid at rural mills; capacity building assistance for establishing grain banks; strengthening the Public Distribution System (PDS); fortification of locally cooked meals in schools; and supporting ready-to-use supplementary food for infants and young children.

WFP continued to work in close partnership with the Government of India and state governments. Partnerships with Micronutrient Initiative (now Nutrition International), the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and other UN agencies such as UNICEF, had multiplier effects on outcomes of its work.

India's self-sufficiency in cereal production and initiation of one of the world's largest food safety nets allowed WFP to provide tailored technical assistance to strengthen programme design and delivery as well as policy legislation led by the Government.



© WFP/ReinSkullerud

*Women at an 'Indiamix' production site in Rajasthan. In 1995, WFP supported the development of 'Indiamix', a locally-produced, low-cost, blended food, fortified with vitamins and minerals to be added to the food basket under ICDS.*

### **Strategic Plan 2019-2023: WFP as a connector, catalyst and facilitator**

In 2018, through a series of reviews, analyses and extensive consultations, WFP developed its Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023. The CSP is the outcome of an elaborate consultative process with key stakeholders including government, civil society and private sector. Subsequently, the Government of India and WFP signed an MoU for the implementation of the CSP 2019-23 in February 2019. With three strategic outcomes and four activities, WFP India intends to focus on providing technical assistance and strengthening capacities to support the country's achievement of the SDG 2 targets.

**Strategic Outcome 1:** Most vulnerable people in India are better able to meet their minimum food and nutritional needs all year round.

**Strategic Outcome 2:** People at high risk of malnutrition in India, especially women, children, and adolescent girls, have improved nutrition by 2025.

**Strategic Outcome 3:** National and state institutions have enhanced capacity to deliver on SDG 2 and related targets and collaborate with regional and global partners towards the attainment of SDG 2. Supporting SDG 17, this outcome will focus on collective action and the sharing of knowledge and expertise in order to achieve optimum impact.

The Country Strategic Plan 2019-23 aims to deepen WFP's engagement in the areas of nutrition (particularly stunting) and safety nets, to improve access to food, from supply chain to service delivery through scale up of transformative approaches-including gender specific approaches. This includes policies that deliver food and nutrition security through improved government systems and convergent actions by other stakeholders.

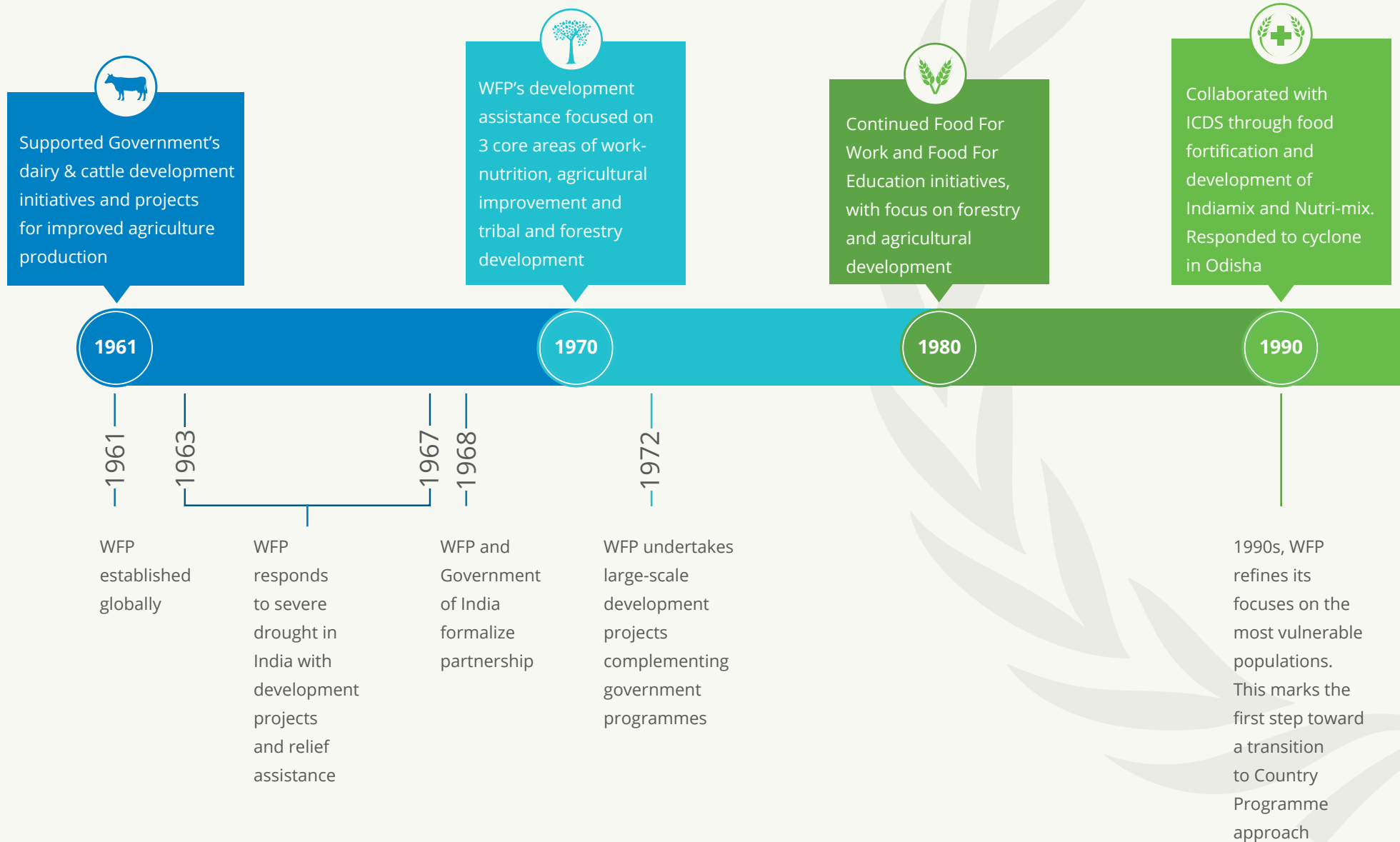
However, with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 and its subsequent impact on food systems and livelihoods systems all over the world, the focus of WFP's work shifted to support the Government in their response to the people of India, in any way possible.



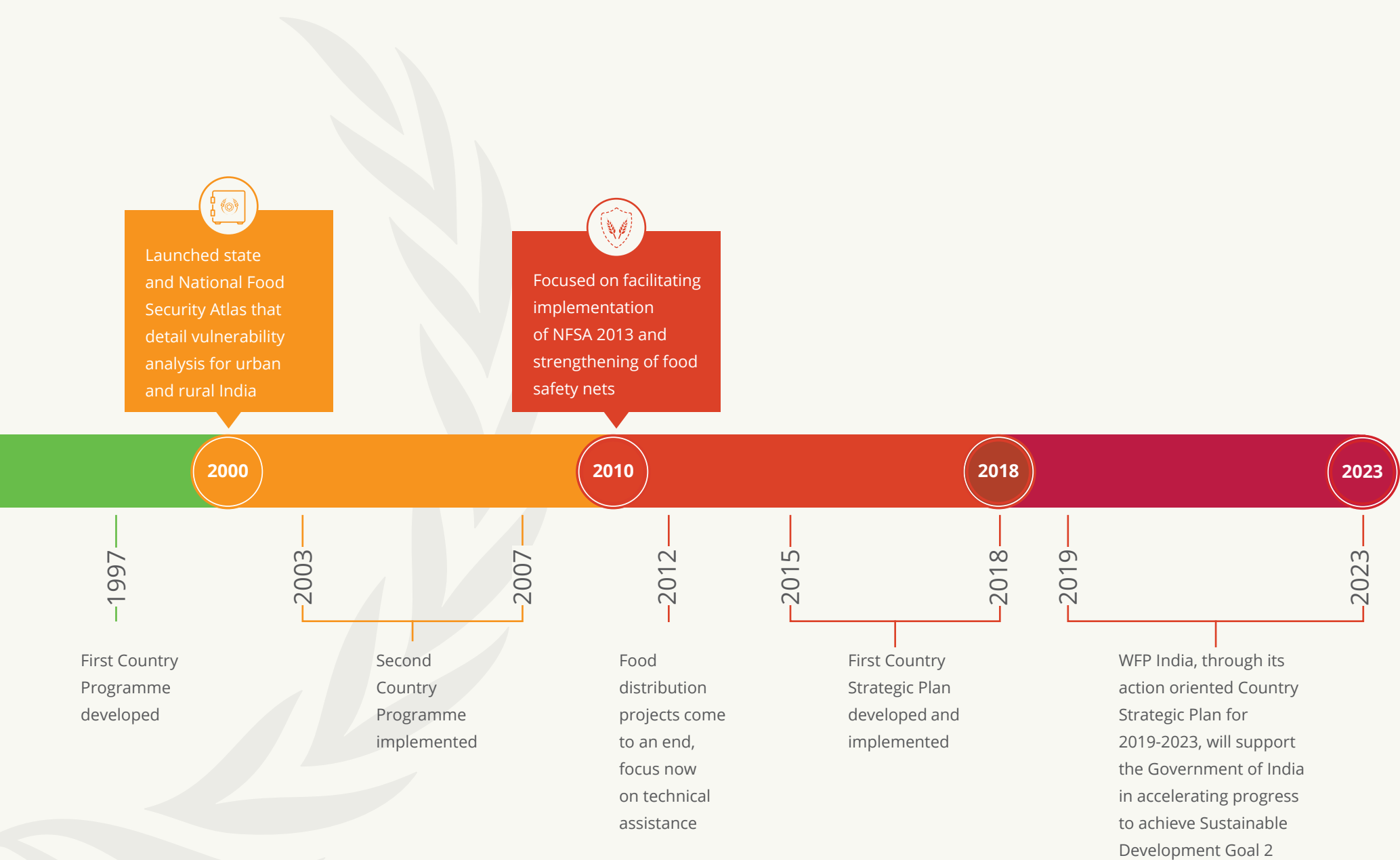
© WFP/AdityaArya

2014, Gajapati District, Odisha: School children enjoying their Mid-Day Meal in Gajapati District of Odisha. In 2012, WFP supported the Government of Odisha by piloting a project to fortify rice with micronutrients for school children.

## 3.1 Transition of WFP's role in India: A decade-wise journey







## 3.2 WFP's leadership in India

1968-Present

### *List of Heads/Country Directors at the WFP India Country Office*

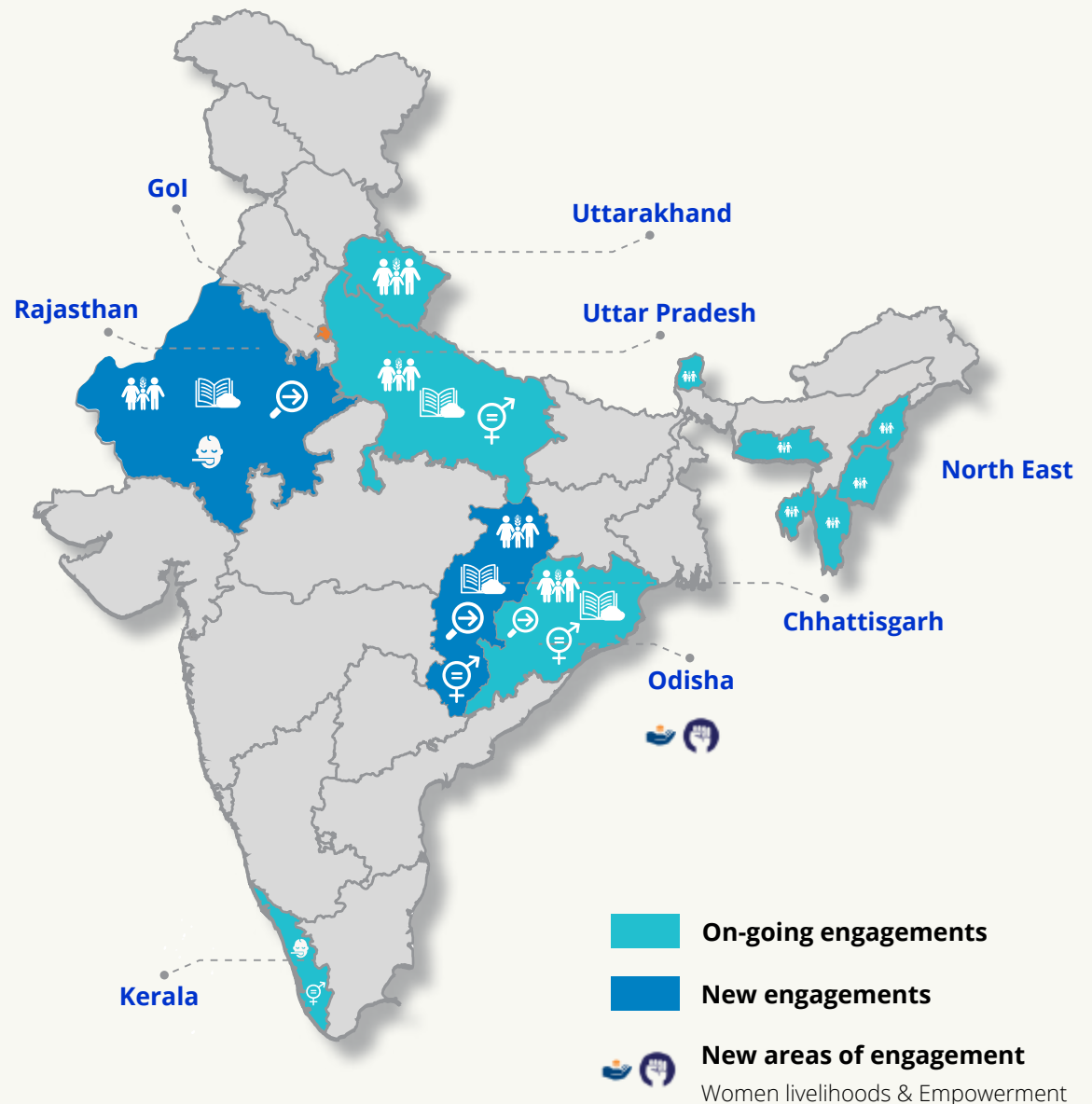
<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Duration Dates</i>	
		<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>
<i>Mr. Bradford</i>	<i>Senior WFP Adviser</i>		
<i>Mr. Ewart Reit</i>	<i>Senior WFP Adviser</i>		
<i>Mr. Emannel Muttukumar</i>	<i>Senior WFP Adviser</i>	1968	1978
<i>Mr. Larry Moyse</i>	<i>Senior WFP Adviser</i>		
<i>Mr. K. Nordenskiold</i>	<i>Senior WFP Adviser</i>	1978	1980
<i>Mr. Trevor Page</i>	<i>WFP Deputy Representative</i>	1980	1982
<i>Mr. Gaston Eyben</i>	<i>Director of Operations</i>	1983	1988
<i>Mr. Taiyeb Essayem</i>	<i>Director of Operations</i>	1988	1992
<i>Mr. Michael Ellis</i>	<i>Director of Operations/Country Director</i>	1992	1996
<i>Ms. Angela Van Rynbach</i>	<i>Representative &amp; Country Director</i>	1997	1998
<i>Mr. Pedro Medrano</i>	<i>Representative &amp; Country Director</i>	1999	2004
<i>Mr. GianPietro Bordignon</i>	<i>Representative &amp; Country Director</i>	2005	2008
<i>Ms. Mihoko Tamamura</i>	<i>Representative &amp; Country Director</i>	2008	2012
<i>Mr. Torben Due</i>	<i>Country Director a.i.</i>	2012	2012
<i>Mr. Michael Jensen</i>	<i>Country Director a.i.</i>	2012	2013
<i>Mr. Edward Kallon</i>	<i>Country Director</i>	2013	2014
<i>Mr. Torben Due</i>	<i>Country Director a.i.</i>	2014	2015
<i>Dr. Hameed Nuru</i>	<i>Representative &amp; Country Director</i>	2015	2019
<i>Mr. Bishow Parajuli</i>	<i>Representative and Country Director</i>	2019	Present

## Government of India



### WFP Nodal-MoA&FW

-  **SDG Monitoring- Niti Aayog**
-  **SO1 (Access)- MoCA&FPD**
-  **SO2 (Nutrition)- MoWCD, MoHRD**
-  **SO3 Activity 3 (Monitoring)- MoSPI**
-  **SO3 Activity 4 (SS-TC)- MoA&FW**
-  **Gender-MoA&FW**



# SUPPORTING THE GREEN REVOLUTION



## 4.1 Improving agricultural production (1964-1998)

The policy goal to attain self-sufficiency in food-grains in a sustainable manner resulted in a major effort led by the National Government, in collaboration with domestic partners and international agencies, to mobilize technical, administrative, and financial resources to launch the Green Revolution. While all-India production of wheat grew at 3.8 percent in the triennium ending 1959–1960, it registered a growth of 10.3 percent in the triennium ending in 1969–1970<sup>6</sup>.

The World Food Programme's entry in to India coincided with the commencement of the Green Revolution in the country. During the agency's first decade in the country, (1960s-1970s), WFP focused on supporting National efforts to attain self-sufficiency in food production by improvement in agricultural productivity. WFP did this by implementing a unique blend of food assistance and development programmes.

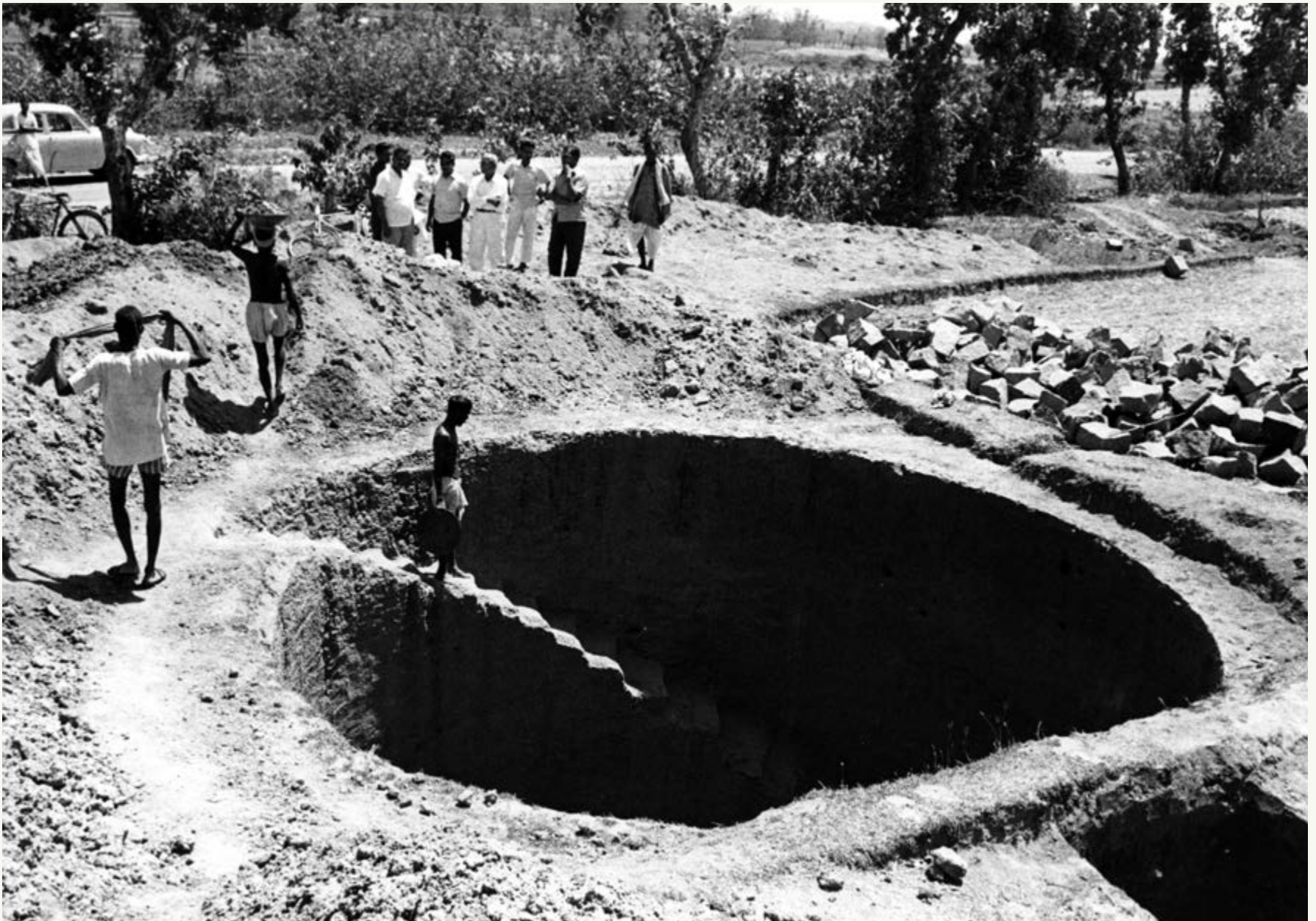
WFP contributed to the government programmes aiming to bring the Green Revolution to India by implementing projects that were designed to increase agricultural production, improve rural infrastructure and support agricultural settlement schemes. These projects included a transfer of food for participation in labour-intensive activities.

Even prior to the basic agreement being signed in 1968, the Government of India sought assistance from WFP for a pilot project under the Madhya Pradesh Rural Works Programme for contour bunding, as well as to test the response of labour to the system of partial payment of wages in-kind in 1964. The objective of the pilot was twofold: to increase the yield of the land by contour bunding<sup>7</sup>, utilizing rural manpower especially in areas exposed to pronounced seasonal unemployment or underemployment and secondly to

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6. *Food and Nutrition Security Status in India- Opportunities for Investment Partnerships*

7. *To increase the yield of land by preventing erosion of soil and enabling fields to retain moisture*



*1970, Gaya District, Bihar: A 30-foot percolation well being constructed. WFP supported the Government's irrigation improvement programme by providing wheat rations to the workers. Post the 1966 Bihar drought, several initiatives were undertaken to reduce the impact of such disasters on agricultural production and on farmers.*

improve the nutritional status of workers by providing wheat — the staple food (with its distribution as part wages), in areas that had experienced drought in the previous years. The amount of wheat assistance supplemented the diminished local food resources and resulted in higher consumption than would otherwise have been possible in the area which was struck with drought for three consecutive years, thus, serving not just as a development project but also as a relief effort.

Gaya District in Bihar experienced a reduction in agricultural production due to irregular maintenance of the dam and the need for rehabilitation of the minor irrigation systems was highlighted in 1966, by one of the most severe droughts to affect the state, with severe food shortage as a result of crop failure. It was at this time that WFP provided assistance in the form of wheat as partial payment to mobilize the collective efforts of the farmers benefitting from the irrigation schemes to restore the systems to their former capacities.

A similar project was undertaken in the state of Uttar Pradesh around the same time, for the development of bunds and tanks.

In the late 1970s, WFP assisted two major irrigation schemes in the state of Maharashtra. Under this project, workers obtained their full wage and were able to collect WFP food through special shops at subsidized prices, according to the number of man-days worked. Sales proceeds were then deposited into a 'special sales proceeds fund' that was used for development of the command area and the provision of welfare facilities to workers.

During the 1970s and 1980s, WFP assisted several large-scale projects for soil conservation, irrigation and command area development undertaken by the Government of Karnataka. Notably, supporting the development of the Upper Krishna

## FOOD FOR WORK

India is one of the few countries in the world that developed its own national food-for-work programmes. Launched in 1977, the nationwide programme aimed to increase the employment opportunities for the poorer sections communities in rural areas. The programme was executed by the Union Ministry of Rural Reconstruction.

“The most sought-after activity was the construction and repair of village roads and streets on which 2,28,733 man-days were employed. This item alone constituted 61.4 percent of the total man-days generated on all works in the villages investigated. The next in importance was minor irrigation works which generated 75,337 man-days (20 percent) followed by construction of community works like school buildings, dispensary buildings, panchayat ghars, drinking water wells, Harijan Chaupals, latrines and bathrooms and Kanji Houses etc., which generated 23,617 mandays (60 percent). Other items of programme were drainage, soil conservation and forestry programme, levelling of house sites and construction and repair of huts for the flood affected people”.

Final Report- Evaluation of Food for Work Programme, Government of India (August-October 1979)



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1972, Mysore, Karnataka: Workers engaged in road-works between Raichur and Ballare. In order to facilitate increase in irrigation and agriculture, the Government undertook roads and land development projects in Mysore (Karnataka). Workers received part of their wages in form of food rations supplied through WFP, including wheat, skimmed milk and sorghum.

Project (UKP) and the Malaprabha Project, where WFP partnered with the Government to provide in-kind food as partial payment of wages to the labourers. A similar intervention was undertaken for road and land development under the Tungabhadra Dam Project in the state, where WFP provided commodities such as wheat, sorghum, dried skimmed milk and vegetable oil as partial payment to labourers.

In the 1980s, WFP extended assistance to irrigation projects in Dharwad, Belgaum, Bijapur, Gulbarga and Raichur, by providing food rations that could be purchased by labourers at subsidised rates. The funds generated were then used to finance development activities for the area. WFP continued to provide food rations at concessionary prices to workers employed in various irrigation schemes in the state up till the 1990s, when WFP assisted in the development of the Krishna Basin Command Area.

By the 1990s, India had made tremendous progress on key areas of development including economic growth, poverty reduction, adoption of technological solutions and self-sufficiency in food-grain production as a result of the Green Revolution.

## 4.2 The Rajasthan Canal

One of the largest and most well-known projects to which WFP contributed was the Rajasthan Canal, which successfully helped to transform a substantial and inhospitable part of the Thar Desert and, as a result, attracted World Bank funding for an expansion of the project.

In order to increase the agricultural potential of the area and raise the level of rural incomes, the Government of Rajasthan launched the Rajasthan Canal Project in 1958. This longest in India, at more than 9,000 km, this canal was designed to bring water from the Beas and Ravi rivers to a large stretch of desert in the northwest region of Rajasthan with the aim of developing it into cultivable land.

The introduction of canal irrigation brought about a perceptible transformation in the agricultural economy of the region where it led to increase in area cultivated and intensity of cropping. This intensive irrigation resulted in tremendous increases in agricultural and livestock productivity<sup>8</sup>.

WFP supported this project for more than three decades through provision of Food for Work opportunities. Food rations and interest-free loans were also provided, where the latter acted as an income transfer to poor settlers. This was greatly appreciated by beneficiaries especially during the initial years of settlement as it enhanced their possibilities of investment in farm development.

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8. T. Nandakumar, Kavery Ganguly, Pravesh Sharma, and Ashok Gulati No. 16 | November 2010





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*1972, Mysore, Karnataka: Villagers working on a soil conservation project in Mudigere, near Bangalore, queue up to receive their WFP ration. During the 1970s and 1980s, WFP supported several large-scale projects for soil conservation, irrigation and command area development undertaken by the Government of Karnataka, including the development of the Upper Krishna project and the Malaprabha project.*

WFP's support to the development of the Canal was in two phases: initially from 1968 to 1972 and then from 1973 to 1975, which was followed by food assistance projects for new settlers in the region. During this period, construction of a portion of the main canal was undertaken, along with the Bikaner lift canal and branch canals plus other subsidiary work like canal roads, buildings, and tree-planting. The workers received their full wages from the Canal Board or from the contractors who employed them. They then purchased their entitlements of WFP commodities (wheat, ghee, beans and dried skimmed milk) from 44 special shops set up by the Canal Board. The WFP commodities were priced 50 per cent lower than the prevailing local market prices. The proceeds from sales of the commodities was further used for the Canal development activities such as soil conservation, crop rotation experiments, desalinization of land on plots allotted to settlers, animal husbandry activities and forest nurseries and plantations.

From 1983 to 1993, WFP implemented a project aimed at providing food assistance for new settlers in the Rajasthan Canal project area. Each settler family was also granted an interest-free loan from a revolving fund.

The agricultural development programmes were implemented consistently over long periods of time, in different modalities and therefore, even though most of WFP's assistance to agriculture development programmes came to an end in 1990s, the Food for Work Programmes continued to be supported by WFP for forestry and tribal development up until the early 2000s.



© WFP/Paul Mitchell

*1968, Rajasthan: Living quarters of workers of the Indira Gandhi Canal (later known as Rajasthan Canal). To increase the agricultural potential and raise the level of rural incomes in Rajasthan, the Government launched the Rajasthan Canal project in 1958. WFP supported this project between the period of 1968 to 1996, initially through provision of low-cost food for workers and later through initiatives for new settlers of the canal area. Proceeds were used to provide further benefits to the workers.*

# LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT



The basic aim of India's development plans during the 1960s was the attainment of self-sufficiency in food grain production. However, given the country's large cattle population, improvements in livestock and dairy occupied an important place in the development plans.

The Government prioritised animal husbandry, poultry, livestock and dairy development in its Five-Year Plans (especially between 1951-74), with the aims of poverty alleviation, increasing rural employment and increasing dietary diversity. One of the key areas of work mentioned in the Third Five-Year Plan on animal husbandry was to improve feeding and nutrition of livestock. In order to increase the consumption of animal protein, which was deficient in the local diet, the Government of India initiated a national level programme to increase the production of eggs and chicken. Several intensive production, distribution and marketing centres for poultry were established during this time and emphasis was on the development of specialized and balanced poultry feed.

To contribute to this, WFP supported poultry and cattle development projects during the '60s to '70s, in over 17 states across the country, through the supply of low-cost balanced poultry and cattle feed. WFP provided grains (such as maize) that were mixed with local ingredients to produce balanced poultry feed. This poultry feed was then sold at subsidized prices to poultry farmers. The funds generated by the sales were reinvested in the Intensive Poultry Development Projects for expansion or construction of infrastructure, in consultation with local project authorities and state governments. WFP's support was extended on a project basis as a response to drought faced by several states during 1964, prior to its formal partnership with the Government of India in 1968.

According to a 1968 WFP project report, "before the project was undertaken, poultry feed was very expensive and in short supply with the rise in the price for maize due to droughts in several states in 1964. Threatening the closure of work for many poultry farmers. WFP's assistance, along with the fulfilment of the Government's obligation under the project, carried these farmers through a critical time and helped them establish their business on a continuing basis".



© WFP/John P. Bradford

1967: Unloading poultry feed at one of the Intensive Poultry Development Centres. The Government's efforts to develop the poultry industry and increase supply of protein were supported by WFP. Poultry and cattle development projects were undertaken by the agency in 17 states across the country, through the supply of low-cost balanced poultry and cattle feed through the Intensive Poultry Development Centres.

Since in many parts of the country, milk and other dairy products were the most acceptable source of animal protein, dairy development became one of the most effective ways of solving India's nutritional problems. In 1964, WFP assisted the Government, along with agencies such as Oxfam, FAO and UNICEF, to increase milk production in the Anand district of Gujarat. During the same period, it also worked in Andhra Pradesh to provide feed for dairy cows.

After the formal agreement between the Government of India and WFP in 1968, the agency supported improvements in the milk supply through balanced feeding of cattle and milk toning in nine states across the country. In these states, WFP provided food-grains to 14 Integrated Cattle Development Projects (ICDPs) that were associated with National Dairy Development schemes. The grains were used for production of low-cost mixed feed as an interim measure until local production increased. Simultaneously, WFP also provided dried skimmed milk for 11 associated milk schemes to be used for the toning of high-fat fresh milk in order to augment the milk supply in the main cities and produce low-cost milk for vulnerable groups.

Apart from provision of dry skimmed milk, WFP also facilitated improvements in rearing techniques and provision of feed mixing plants, with the aim of contributing to the growth and stability of poultry and cattle production, particularly among small producers.

WFP was one of the many supporters of poultry and dairy development initiatives in India along with other UN agencies (like UNICEF and FAO), INGOs and the private sector, assisting the Government to achieve its ambitions for the industry. In the past five decades, the poultry industry in India has witnessed a paradigm shift, transforming from a mere backyard activity to a major commercial activity. Today, the poultry industry is one of the fastest growing sectors of agriculture in India, with the country becoming the fifth largest egg producer and 18th largest producer of broilers<sup>9</sup>.

While poultry development projects were the first few projects implemented by WFP in India, they were entirely phased out by the late 1970s to allow for greater focus on more immediate poverty alleviation measures. WFP, however, continued to support dairy development projects over the next decade. One of the most prominent and sustained contributions of WFP to dairy development in India was Operation Flood. Between 1969 to 1981, WFP made its biggest allocation of aid to the largest dairy development project in the world at the time.

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9. T. Nandakumar, Kavery Ganguly, Pravesh Sharma, and Ashok Gulati No. 16 | November 2010



1968, Andhra Pradesh: During delivery at a milk collection centre in Vijayawada, where local farmers brought milk for sale twice a day. WFP supported the project to increase milk production by making balanced feed rations available to farmers and demonstrated that dairy cows receiving such feed gave more milk.

# CONTRIBUTING TO THE WHITE REVOLUTION



## Initiating Operation Flood (1970-1981)

Operation Flood was an initiative of the National Dairy Development Board supported by the World Food Programme and later through the World Bank. Known as “WFP INDIA 618”, the project was later titled Operation Flood by Dr. V Kurien, founder-Chairman of National Dairy Development Board from 1965 to 1998, and also known as the architect of the White Revolution in India. This was the world’s largest milk drive and aimed ultimately at establishing a broad basis of accelerated development for India’s National dairy industry. The project was implemented in three phases — Operation Flood Phase I from 1970 to 1980; Phase II 1981 to 1985 and Phase III from 1985 to 1996.

### Phase I

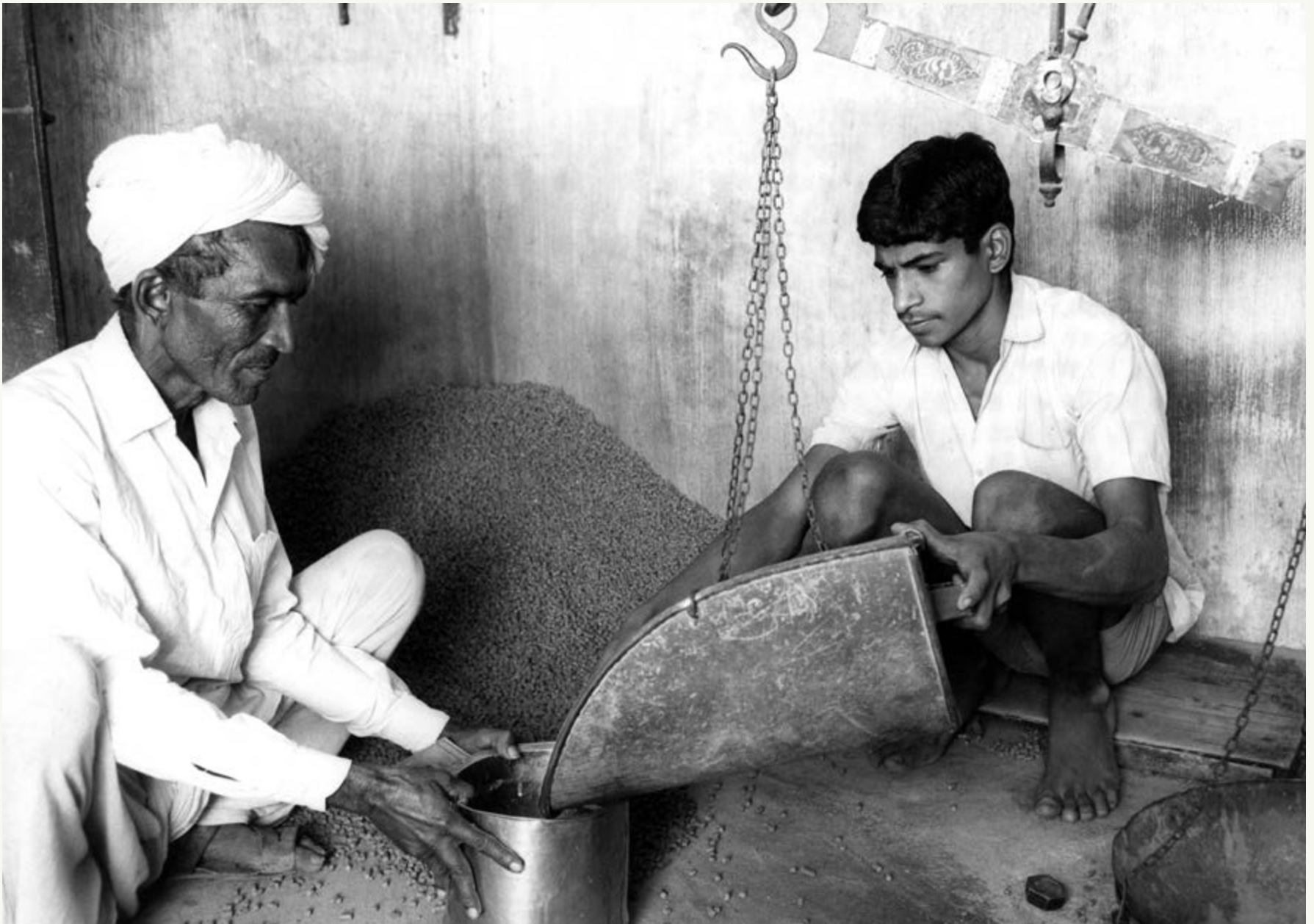
Phase I (1970-1980) was financed by the sale of skimmed milk powder and butter oil which was donated by the European Union (then EEC) through the World Food Programme, to India. It sought to establish 18 “Anands” linked to the four urban markets – Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai. In total, these donated commodities amounted to 126,000 tonnes of skimmed milk powder and 42,000 tonnes of butter oil over the project period. The commodities were recombined as liquid milk and sold in these cities at prevailing market price that went in to building of cooperative dairies under the programme, while capturing the urban market for rurally produced milk<sup>10</sup>.

### Phase II

Operation Flood Phase II (1981-85) increased the milksheds from 18 to 136 while 290 new urban markets expanded the outlets for milk. By the end of 1985, a self-sustaining system of 43,000 village cooperatives covering 4.25 million milk producers had become a reality. Domestic milk powder production increased from 22,000 tons in the pre-project year to 140,000 tons by 1989, with all of the increase coming from dairies set up under Operation Flood. In this way the EEC gifts and the World Bank loan helped to promote self-reliance. Direct marketing of milk by producers’ cooperatives increased by several million litres a day.

10. <http://www.amuldairy.com/index.php/white-revolution>





© WFP/BanounCaracciolo

1972, Anand, Gujarat: Farmers in the region of the Anand dairy cooperative brought milk for sale to the collection centre. Some farmers, such as the one seen here, preferred to take their payment in the form of cattle feed. Along with other UN agencies and bilateral donors, WFP supported the National Dairy Development Board to improve milk marketing and production, by supplying maize and sorghum to be mixed with local ingredients and provide a balanced feed known as 'Amuldan'.

### Phase III

Phase III (1985-1996) enabled dairy cooperatives to expand and strengthen the infrastructure required to procure and market increasing volumes of milk. Operation Flood's Phase III consolidated India's dairy cooperative movement, adding 30,000 new dairy cooperatives to the 43,000 existing societies organized during Phase II. Milksheds peaked to 173 in 1988-89 with the numbers of women members and Women's Dairy Cooperative Societies increasing significantly.

From the outset, Operation Flood was conceived and implemented as much more than a dairy programme. Rather, it was seen as an instrument of development, generating employment and regular incomes for millions of rural people<sup>11</sup>.

FAO data shows that India surpassed the USA as the largest milk producer in the 1990s, as per capita consumption tripled, and the population doubled. Cooperatives returned profits from procurement, processing and marketing to farming families, and invested monetized aid in the National milk grid infrastructure to stabilize supply.

*"Operation Flood started the White Revolution in India and made our country self-sufficient in milk and this was achieved entirely through the cooperative structure. Today around 12 million farmers in more than 22 states across the country own around 250 dairy plants handling around 20 million litres of milk a day. This is a remarkable achievement", late Dr. V Kurien<sup>12</sup>.*



Dr. V Kurien with Mr. Francisco Aquino,  
Executive Director WFP (1969)

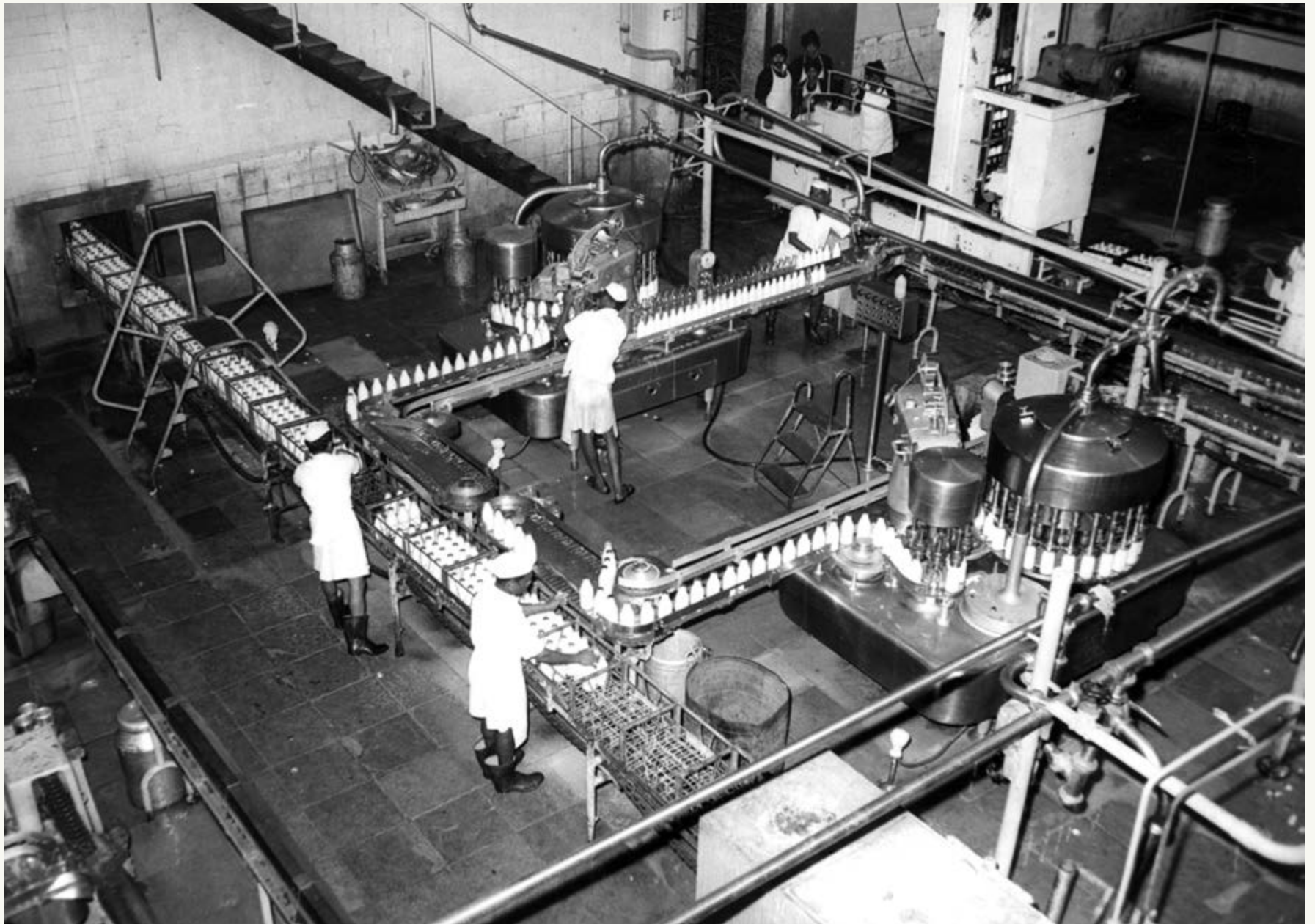
11. <https://www.nddb.coop/about/genesis/flood>

12. [http://www.drkurien.com/white\\_revolution](http://www.drkurien.com/white_revolution)



© WFP/BanounCaracciolo

1972, Bombay (Mumbai): General view of the bottling installation of the Worli milk plant, Bombay. The plant processed some 5,000 litres of milk per day. 'Operation Flood' was launched by the Government to improve milk marketing and development. Initially known as "WFP INDIA 618", the project was later titled Operation Flood by Dr. V Kurien, Founder-Chairman of National Dairy Development Board from 1965 to 1998 and also known as the architect of the White Revolution in India.



*"There are 176 Anands in 22 states of India. India owes its massive increase in milk production, its emergence as the largest milk producing country in the world, it owes all this to WFP"- Dr. V. Kurien*

# Memoirs



**Pedro Medrano**

## **Some thoughts on India**

As Representative of the World Food Program of the United Nations in India, 1998-2004, I had the privilege of working with the Central and State governments, the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Universities and Civil Society Organizations on numerous initiatives contributing to achieve a Hunger Free India. Since then, I hold a deep gratitude to the people of India for everything they taught me and for allowing me to share their lives even in the remotest parts of the country.

Sadly, there are still millions who go hungry to bed every night, and malnutrition, especially among women and children is widespread. This should not happen because India has enough resources to ensure that no one suffers from hunger.

I strongly believe that food is the essence of existence and represents the first pact of the cosmos with man which seals his belonging to the world. Food gives life and is the first language, the first word, which allows all of us to enter into relationships with other human beings. Therefore, hunger is the collapse of everything, it is the failure of history, of politics, of the economy. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee once said that "democracy and hunger cannot go together. A hungry stomach questions and censures the system's failure to meet what is a basic biological need of every human being."

It is not written in any law that hunger should continue. On the contrary, hunger can be defeated,

and there is sufficient food now that would allow to eradicate hunger both in India and in the rest of the world. For this to happen, it is also important to recollect the proverbial Akshay Patra - or the inexhaustible plate - in the Mahabharat, which was blessed with the powers of producing unlimited food, provided no part of it was wasted.

Apart from the moral obligation to solve the problem of hunger and malnutrition, there is also an economic reason. It is well established that a malnourished child will not be able to benefit from the school system; they will be less productive in work and will certainly have health problems throughout. Hence, all the investment that India makes in health, education and economic development will be wasted..

Historically, India has shown its determination to fight hunger from its journey of being food deficient to being a food surplus nation, thanks to the commitment of successive governments and the work of Professor Swaminathan. India was able to adopt a strategy that powered the green revolution which made it possible to eradicate famines and to produce enough food to meet domestic demand and have surplus. This shows that when there is a firm political will, the most difficult objectives can be achieved. I am sure that sooner rather than later hunger and malnutrition will be eradicated from India. In this effort, let us remember the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "To a hungry man a piece of bread is the face of God." .

## FORESTRY AND TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT



Despite the increased agricultural yields of the Green Revolution, India continued to be classified as a low-income food-deficit country with most farmers dependent on subsistence agriculture. WFP projects offered opportunities for community development through irrigation works and fisheries development as well as under a variety of forestry projects aimed at increasing forest cover or improve resource harvesting. The latter specifically targeted extremely poor and food-insecure scheduled castes and tribes living in marginal areas and highly dependent on the forests for their livelihoods.

Beginning in the 1970s, WFP continued to engage in Food for Work for forestry and tribal development programmes up until 2012, a period of nearly four decades. Over time, the vulnerable populations of tribal areas became the main target group for WFP's Food for Assets schemes and was aligned with Government of India's Food for Work Programme, as well as its emphasis on forestry and tribal development, as detailed out in the Five-Year Plans between 1956 to 2002.

Several projects on social and economic development through forestry activities in states like Maharashtra (1971), Bihar (1986-1993), Odisha (1986-1993) Madhya Pradesh (1986-1995) and Rajasthan (1993-1997) were undertaken by WFP, jointly with the Department of Forestry of the respective states. As part of WFP's intervention, labourers working on afforestation activities or other activities were offered the option to receive part of their wages as an in-kind ration or food-coupons (or vouchers) supplied by WFP. This support acted as a subsidy which enabled the local forestry authorities to generate additional funds for reinvestment in the development of the community.

In the early '90s India introduced social forestry principles under its new Joint Forest Management (JFM) policy. This aimed to achieve constructive engagement with local communities, joint responsibility for management and protection of forests, and sharing in the income flow from forest products (mainly timber, bamboo, and minor forest products). While forest protection and re-afforestation remained a primary goal, participatory planning through Joint Forest Management and Protection committees was introduced.



© WFP/BCraig

*1984, Maharashtra: Women working in a tree nursery. Through forest development programmes, the Indian Government tried to reverse the trends that had stripped half its forest cover and combat poverty among forest tribal population. Since 1971, WFP partnered with the Government towards this by providing food aid to forest workers and their families as part of their wages. The money saved was put into a welfare fund for the workers. From this amount, houses, schools and medical centres were built for the families.*

Thus, from the early '90s, the various state-based projects and the Forest Departments sought to improve the food security of poor tribal and scheduled caste groups by providing direct assistance for short-term food security through expanded cash and Food for Work schemes and development initiatives. These new initiatives aimed at creating alternative sources of food and income at village level through investments in agriculture and other income generating activities. During this time, WFP was able to maximize the outcomes of the forestry programme with the government authorities increasing the reinvestment of resources to build creative assets or improve social services for the community. WFP also created strong partnerships with the civil society, thus facilitating increased participation of the beneficiaries and especially of women. One important success of this new approach was the reinvestment of the funds generated by the forestry project and a credit scheme for 50,000 poor women in a programme managed by CARE.

In the early 2000s, WFP supported Food for Work activities in eight states in partnership with State Forest Departments, Tribal Welfare Departments and IFAD. WFP interventions assisted beneficiaries in creating and preserving assets that enhance income-earning opportunities, boost agricultural production and improve their livelihood base through forest regeneration. These activities targeted women and increased their participation in decision-making processes.

According to a 2014 World Bank study, food intake of tribal children and adults in India falls much below the recommended dietary allowances laid down by the Indian Council of Medical Research, particularly involving deficiencies in proteins and other micronutrients. Therefore, ensuring access of quality food to this community remains a priority.

Although the modality of WFP's work has shifted to technical assistance and capacity strengthening of the food distribution system in India, it continues to focus on improving food and nutrition security to the most vulnerable communities in the country.





2004, Banswara District, Rajasthan: Eco restoration site where the reforestation activities converted dry and degraded land into a healthy forest, repopulated with several medicinal plants. In early 2000s, WFP supported Food for Work activities in eight states in partnership with state Forest Departments, Tribal Welfare Departments and IFAD.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RELIEF WORK IN INDIA



While globally, WFP is known for its emergency response expertise, in India, WFP has primarily played the role of a development partner, supporting the Government to build sustainable programmes that would mitigate the risk brought by large-scale disasters.

However, WFP also brought its expertise in disaster management to support the Government of India in responding to some of the major natural disasters that the country witnessed from the 1960s to the 2000s.

WFP's first emergency response operation was for the drought of 1965 that affected around 100 million people and resulted in approximately 1.5 million deaths in the state of Bihar (EM-DAT). In 1967, when another drought struck Bihar, the Government's Planning Commission invited international partners such as WFP, UNICEF, WHO and CARE to join the coordination of the relief assistance, which was essentially channelled through the public distribution system and successfully contributed to averting famine.

During the 1990s and up to the early 2000s, WFP carried out several emergency operations in response to natural disasters, including the 1999 cyclone in Odisha, the 2001 earthquake in Gujarat, the 2004-2005 Indian Ocean tsunami, and flooding in Bihar in 2008.

WFP's emergency support during this period mobilized resources originally allocated to its development projects, supporting those states where WFP was already working on ICDS implementation to provide fortified biscuits and blended foods to cyclone and flood victims in Odisha and Bihar.

During the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh, which resulted in the transformation of the province of East Pakistan in the independent State of Bangladesh, WFP worked on crisis response by communicating the needs of the refugees to UNHCR and immediately mounting an emergency operation with a planned budget



© WFP

2004, Tsunami response. During the 1990s and up to the first decade of 2000, WFP carried out several emergency operations in response to natural disasters, including the 1999 cyclone in Odisha, the 2001 earthquake in Gujarat, the 2004-2005 Indian Ocean tsunami and flooding in Bihar in 2008.

of around US \$4 million<sup>13</sup>, which supported around one million refugees per day. Rations were distributed in refugee camps, including high-energy blended food for children. In addition, UNHCR and India's Department of Rehabilitation requested WFP to support the overall coordination of the broader US \$100 million relief operation.

For more than 20 years, WFP, through its various initiatives has worked on improving the livelihood of food-insecure communities through asset creation to build resilience to natural disasters and degraded environments. In 1990s and early 2000s WFP sought to build disaster mitigation, rapid response and capacity strengthening into its routine planning and development activities. This approach is relevant even today and is echoed in the current Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023, through its focus on exchange of knowledge and expertise on disaster risk reduction through South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC).

### Orissa Cyclone 1999

When the super cyclone hit the coast of Odisha in 1999, WFP immediately responded with an Emergency Operation (EMOP), followed by two Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRROs) to prioritize not only relief but also reconstruction and rehabilitation of social programmes, community and infrastructure. Though the main priority of WFP's response was to prevent further nutritional deterioration of women and children, an overall strategy was put into place to abet and sustain the recovery process.

Through its assistance, WFP was able to provide high protein ready-to-eat foods to over 300,000 people, primarily pregnant women, nursing mothers and children less than six years of age in the worst affected districts. In addition, WFP assisted with income generation activities for more than 2.3 million people, one-third of whom were women.

### Gujarat Earthquake 2001

A strong earthquake struck the west coast of the state of Gujarat on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2001, causing immense damage to infrastructure and loss of life. WFP was able to provide immediate relief by distributing high energy biscuits through the ICDS system in villages in the affected areas. WFP transported commodities and carried out distributions in the initial stages and also conducted nutritional assessments in the affected area.

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13. All the budget figures in this document are the original figures provided in project documents and have not been adjusted for inflation.



© WFP

2004, Tsunami response. Today Government of India is self sufficient in emergency and disaster response. Moving forward, WFP aims to support India's engagement with other countries on disaster risk management, including bringing WFP's global experience to provide capacity development support.

In response to the earthquake WFP launched an Emergency Operation (EMOP) valued at \$4.15 million in order to provide food relief to 300,000 people for four months, with a focus on the special nutritional needs of young children and pregnant and nursing mothers. Subsequently, daily rations of fortified blended food (Indiamix) were distributed. In addition, 120,000 of the people with the greatest needs received rations of wheat flour and lentils.

In partnership with other UN agencies, WFP launched a Special Logistics Operation valued at \$2.3 million to establish a United Nations Joint Logistics Cell (UNJLC) for facilitating logistics coordination of the relief efforts as well as the airlift of relief materials from the UN Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) in Brindisi, Italy to Bhuj in Gujarat.

During the early 2000s, WFP also sought to build disaster mitigation, rapid response and capacity building components into routine development and planning activities of its programmes, in partnership with other agencies.

Disaster response in India has undergone a paradigm shift in recent decades moving from a purely reactive, relief-based approach to a proactive risk management approach that aims to prevent and mitigate risks related to predictable natural disasters<sup>14</sup>.

Today, the Government of India, both at central and state levels, has the capacity to respond to natural disasters and emergencies across the country. Their effective and efficient responses to recent disasters such as Cyclone Fani in Odisha (2019) and floods in Kerala (2018) is a great attestation to the progress and development made by the Government in this area of work.

In the Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023), WFP is supporting India's engagement with other countries in the area of Disaster Risk Management, including bringing WFP's global experience to support capacity development, including emergency preparedness. WFP is also facilitating enhancement of regional capacities in Disaster Risk Management, including reaching out and facilitating linkages within the SAARC (South-Asian Association for Regional Corporation) framework with Ministry of External Affairs and other UN entities.

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14. <https://nidm.gov.in/pdf/guidelines/new/Guidelines-Cultural-Heritage.pdf>

# Memoirs



**Gianpietro Bordignon,**  
Representative and  
Country Director,  
WFP India,  
2005 to 2008

## Looking back, looking ahead

“Mind, young man, in India everything is true, also the contrary of the truth”, Professor MS Swaminathan, told me, as a way of welcoming me to this great and complex nation. It was in the summer of 2005, as I took up my first posting as the Representative and Country Director of World Food Programme in New Delhi.

In the mid-2000s, India was experiencing phenomenal economic growth. The whole Indian society was apparently transitioning fast to accelerated progress and social change. Well, not the whole of the population, as many could not benefit from this bonanza, not yet. As it happens too often at times of swift changes, there are those who are left behind. Something WFP knows well and firsthand, as the largest humanitarian and food assistance organization globally.

The key question was: how and what could we humbly, but effectively and efficiently, contribute to the betterment of those populations still inching ahead? (Of course, do this, in coordination with all major partners in the country). Were we going to deliver foods, especially nutritious food, or also ideas and models that could be tested, costed and proved worth for scaling up?

From this realization, came the strategic approach of focusing our work in the years to come on the key ‘what’ and ‘how’. On the ‘what’, two major initiatives came to light: the first to further strengthen the nutritional support to children

through increasing and enlarging production of fortified blended foods, using all local (desi) products. The second, was to give a digital identity, through a biometrics identification of tribal people as a way of protecting their entitlement under the Food Distribution System. What started in 2007, as a one million people test and biometrics (eye scan and thumb print) identification, later contributed to the Government of India’s programme to use biometrics for the targeted food distribution.

The ‘how’ has, in my view, been as important as the ‘what’ and this boils down to a full and inclusive partnership approach: The biometrics test pilot would not have been possible without the backstopping of the Government, the involvement of a bilateral partner (the High Commission of Australia who provided financial support) and the private sector (the Boston Consulting Group who provided free of charge experts).

In my view, here lies the real comparative advantage of WFP’s contribution: the role of ‘honest broker’ between the Governments and its most food-insecure citizens, between policies and their correct implementation at the field level, between national capacities and international references and expertise. It is still some way to go but I trust the Great Indian Nation will continue to progress on its quest for an equitable and sustainable development of all its social components.

## GENDER AND INCLUSION



WFP recognises gender equity and women's empowerment as priority areas for action. Its focus on vulnerable groups, including women, children, adolescent girls, tribal populations, people living with HIV and AIDS, or landless labourers has been clear and visible in supporting inclusion for all. Throughout its journey in India, WFP has prioritized activities that benefit girls and women, thereby helping offset deprivations caused by gender-based discrimination.

In WFP's Country Programme of 2003-2007, women's empowerment was explicitly stated as one of the focus areas, alongside improving the status of children and women. This focus was maintained in subsequent years as well. Programmes accordingly incorporated significant women's empowerment components. The Food for Work Programme targeted women; aiming to improve their livelihood base and increase their participation in decision making and management of resources. Under its support to the ICDS programme, WFP launched initiatives such as food compensation for women managing creches or empowering adolescent girls and improving their nutritional and health status. Projects such as 'Operation Durga' in Gujarat worked to reduce dropout rates among girl students through scholarships, capacity building and access to food through safety nets. Under the Food for Human Development project, 570 women Self-Help Groups (SHG) comprised of 8,200 women, were trained on educating their peers on nutrition and health issues, supporting schools and creches, community sanitation and managing grain banks. WFP also worked with local NGOs to in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha to create and manage village grain banks. WFP paid special emphasis capacity strengthening of women's SHGs who played a vital role in operationalizing grain banks.

WFP's 2009 Gender Policy marked a shift in approach from women-centred projects to a broader analysis of gender equality, by evaluating the challenges and opportunities in the lives of women, men, girls and boys assisted by WFP, and tailoring food assistance to meet their specific needs. WFP's Gender Policy (2015-20) clearly states that a hunger-free world is not possible unless everyone has equal opportunities, equal access to resources, and equal voice in the decisions that shape their households, communities and societies.





2004, Banswara District, Rajasthan. Village women sitting in front of steel containers used to store grains. In the foreground the scales used for weight operations. This was part of a set of income generating activities undertaken in villages of the District, triggered by WFP. The villages ran grain banks, where cultivators in need could borrow grains to be used either as food or as seed for cultivation. The interest gained and the borrowed quantity would be returned by the farmer at harvest time.

WFP's current Gender Policy aligns well with the Government of India's gender mainstreaming priorities and offers an opportunity to strengthen WFP India's technical assistance to the Government on food security and nutrition. A systematic gender assessment of WFP's work in India, conducted in 2016, stated that the organization should identify ways of deepening its work on women's access to food security, and ways of using this to impact utilization of food. The Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023 articulates a firm commitment to enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment by incorporating gender as a cross-cutting theme across all components of the plan and incorporating gender-transformative approaches in the implementation of the strategic objectives.

In 2019 WFP conducted a study on intra-household food allocation and consumption among poor households in two districts of Uttar Pradesh to explore the norms and practices and to assess how they influence food consumption by members. The study found that in poor households, the norm of women eating the last meant that they ate the least. Food restrictions and taboos were also targeted mostly at women and children and seemed to be adversely affecting their consumption of several nutritious foods. Findings of the study are being utilized for advocacy on social behaviour change communication to address these gender norms in household food access and consumption.

Recognizing the importance of empowered women in improving food and nutrition security, WFP is currently partnering with the Mission Shakti, the Government of Odisha's directorate of women empowerment, which supports more than 600,000 women's SHGs in the state. This initiative also aligns with the current Country Programme (2019-2023)'s mandate to improve livelihoods, market linkages and incomes of women smallholder farmers who form the core of these SHGs. Under this initiative, WFP will enhance Mission Shakti's managerial system for supporting women's SHGs and undertake capacity strengthening activities in the areas of improved livelihoods, nutrition and women empowerment.



© WFP/JamesGiambrone

*2008, Jharkhand: In its Country Programme of 2005-07, women empowerment was explicitly stated as one of the focus areas, alongside improving the status of children and women. This focus was maintained in subsequent years as well. The Food for Work programme targeted women; aimed to improve their livelihood base and increase their participation in decision making and management of resources.*

Expanding on the inclusion portfolio in 2020, WFP will carry out assessments of tribal populations to understand the traditional food habits and gendered norms of food distribution and consumption, and accordingly support state governments in enhancing the inclusiveness and quality of food safety nets for these vulnerable groups.

**Rameela:** WFP's empowerment initiative for women provided various opportunities to its women beneficiaries, helping them overcome adverse circumstances and re-establish a life of self-respect. One of the case stories talks about Rameela, who was struggling to find her independence, despite an alcoholic husband. This happened when she joined a tribal women's cooperative. "The start of our Indiamix factory provided the much-needed source of regular income for me. I did not have to migrate out of my area to look for work like other tribal women with similar domestic problems as mine. My work has provided me many opportunities and learning. The WFP project has been a turning point in my life. It has also changed the lives of all my women partners in this initiative."



© WFP/AradhanaSrivastava

*A mother with her child at one of the Districts in Uttar Pradesh where WFP conducted the study titled 'Who eats When, What and How Much?' in late 2019.*

# IMPROVING NUTRITION



WFP's partnership with the Indian government's nutrition programmes began in the 1970s and, over the decades, WFP has worked closely with various line ministries and commissions towards the common goal of improving access to adequate and nutritious food to the most vulnerable groups.

WFP's support has transitioned from providing food aid to children in educational institutions and ICDS centres, to developing innovative solutions, undertaking pilots for scale up, as well as advocacy initiatives to facilitate policy change. The focus of each phase has been the specific needs of the beneficiaries, such as women, children under five years of age, adolescent girls, HIV patients and tribal groups.

Since 2012, WFP support has been focused on increasing the effectiveness of the Government's food safety net schemes such as the ICDS, MDM and TPDS which seek to supplement the basic food requirements for the most vulnerable people.

WFP's support to improve the nutritional content of the food in these schemes has been in various forms - from capacity building, training of frontline health workers, improving quality of nutrition in food baskets (including fortification) and Take-Home Rations, to community awareness and technical support.

## 10.1 Improving nutritional status of women & young children

### Supporting Special Nutrition Projects (1972-75)

WFP's first nutrition project for pre-school children and pregnant or nursing women in India was a Quick Action Project (QAP) approved in 1972 for the state of Odisha. In 1975, similar projects were approved in Gujarat, Assam, Bihar, and Rajasthan. Following the success of these pilots, WFP launched an integrated approach and assisted close to 1.4 million people with daily rations in 16 States which also focused on the areas of food safety and kitchen hygiene, mainly by establishing model kitchens.



© WFP/PaulMitchell

*1972, Mysore, Karnataka: Children, many of whom came from remote villages, eating school meal prepared using WFP supplies in the courtyard of their hostel in Bangalore. From 1970 to 1977, WFP supported institutional feeding projects in vocational institutions, boarding schools for students from vulnerable communities and social welfare institutions (orphanages and medical centres). Under these projects, WFP contributed to the improvement of the diets of more than 150,000 beneficiaries in Karnataka and Maharashtra.*

### **Support to Government of India's ICDS scheme (1976- Present)**

Support to children and women was initially provided under the Government's Special Nutrition Programme and, since 1976, has been under the multi-sectoral Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), which provides health and nutrition education, health services, supplementary food, pre-school education and gender promotion.

In the 1980s, this programme reached its maximum coverage of around two million beneficiaries per day, including around 1.8 million children which was maintained into the 1990s.

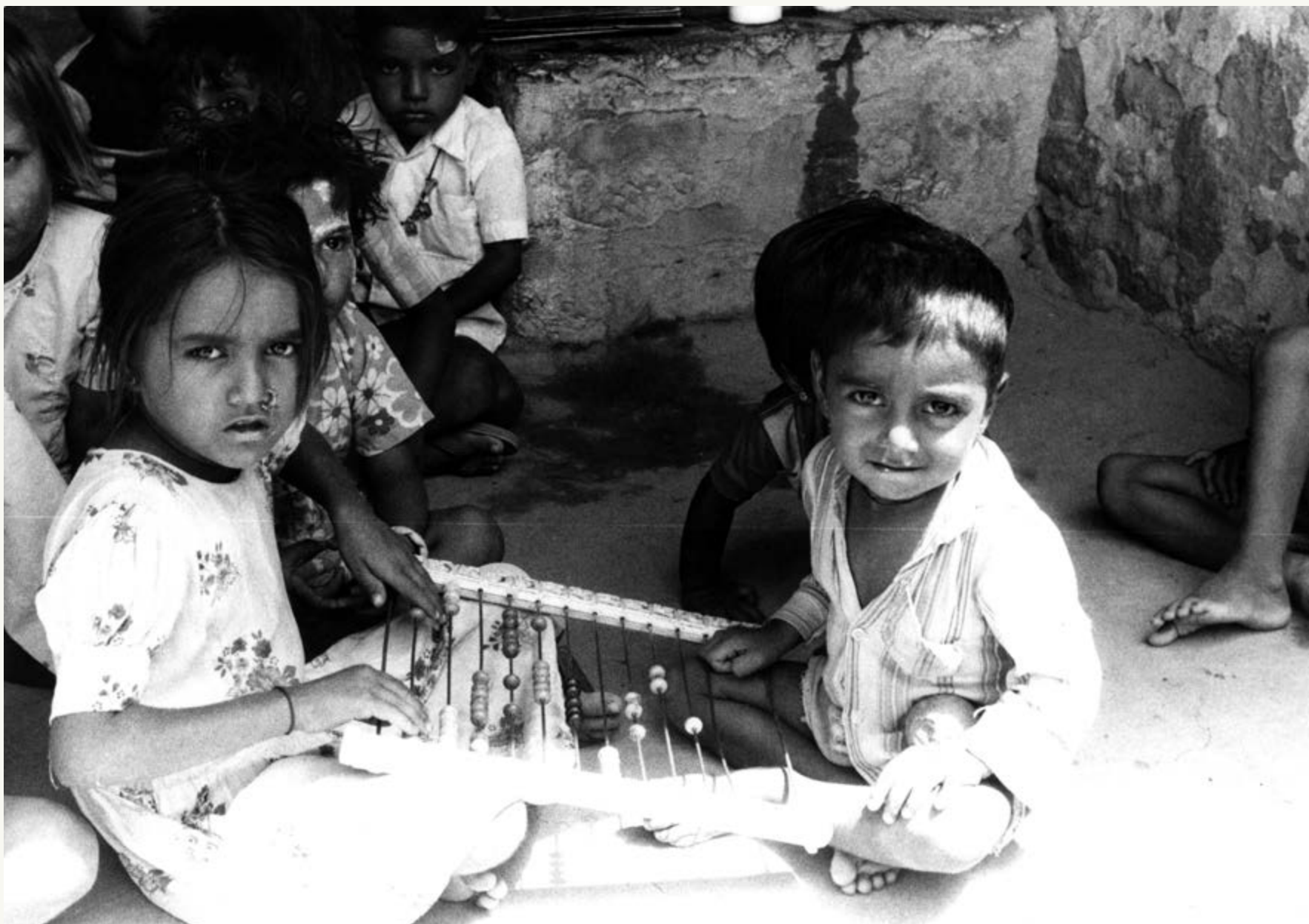
From 1995 onwards, WFP provided Indiamix- a locally produced, low cost blended food composed of wheat, maize and soya beans and fortified with vitamins and minerals - for ICDS in six states across the country. This replaced similar types of imported foods in a time of progressive reduction of international food assistance to India. Indiamix passed all quality and safety controls and was added to the food basket under ICDS.

From late 1990s to early 2000s, the scope of WFP's work with ICDS expanded to strengthening technical and management capacities of the service providers. This included development and promotion of Indiamix, computerization of the monitoring system-known as 'Nutri-monitor' - to trace commodity flow and several pilot initiatives for enhancing the impact of the scheme through community participation.

The procurement of locally produced blended food also continued as a way of supporting the ICDS. In addition to continued support for the production and distribution of fortified foods, a larger capacity strengthening component for the ICDS was undertaken, which was first mentioned in the Country Programme 1997-2001 and continued till the end of the decade. This Country Programme specified that it will "improve ICDS and the capacity of state governments to manage it through better targeting, better field worker training, increased community participation, better nutrition and health education and local production of blended foods."

In 2011, WFP undertook a project on building capacities of women's self-help groups to produce the take-home ration (THR) for distribution in the ICDS in Banswara district of Rajasthan. WFP implemented a project in collaboration between with the Department of Tribal Affairs, Government of Madhya Pradesh between 2010-2012 to improve the nutritional status of the vulnerable Sahariya community through fortification of wheat flour. The Public Distribution System (PDS) allocations received by the Sahariya tribals were fortified at the local Chakki mills. The project proved that Chakki level fortification was operationally feasible but with challenges of monitoring and logistics. In 2019, a country wide mapping of the composition of THR in each state and Union Territory was done by WFP, in partnership with the Public Health Foundation of India.





© WFP/PaulMitchell

*1977, India: Children at an ICDS centre. WFP's first nutrition project for pre-school children and pregnant/nursing women started in 1972 in Odisha followed by projects in Gujarat, Assam, Bihar, and Rajasthan. Thereafter, WFP launched an integrated approach and assisted close to 1.4 million beneficiaries with daily rations in 16 states. Post 1976, this support was rendered through the Government's ICDS scheme, which provides health and nutrition education, health services, supplementary food, pre-school education and gender promotion.*

This review also included production, nutritional composition, composition, quality control and packaging. At the same time, it provides guidance on how each component can be strengthened for improving IYCF practices. This review also provides recommendations on the way forward, to guide policy and planning.

## 10.2 Improving nutritional status of school children

From 1970 to 1977, WFP conducted institutional feeding projects in vocational schools, boarding schools for destitute students and social welfare institutions (orphanages and medical centres). Under these projects, WFP successfully contributed to the improvement of the diets of around 150,000 beneficiaries in Mysore (today known as Karnataka) and Maharashtra.

### **Food for Education (2003-2007)**

WFP introduced Food for Education, a school feeding programme, in 2003, whereby fortified biscuits were provided as a mid-morning snack to complement the Mid-Day Meal, especially targeting remote and food insecure tribal communities and girls. During this time, WFP provided biscuits to 700,000 school children in ten districts in five states resulting in significantly reduced anaemia and improvement in Vitamin A status.

### **Fortification of Mid-day Meals, 2007-Present**

Recognized strategies to address micronutrient malnutrition include dietary diversification, supplementation and food fortification. Of these, food fortification is a very effective strategy by which micronutrients are added to the most common foods leading to rapid improvements in the micronutrient status of targeted population groups at a very reasonable cost and without need for any behaviour change on the part of the consumer.

WFP launched a pilot project in 2007 to add essential micronutrients to meals prepared for school children under the Mid-Day Meal Scheme. This was a technical assistance project, undertaken in conjunction with the Department of Basic Education and the Government of Uttarakhand. WFP supported the first year of the activities, with the Government of Uttarakhand supporting all costs thereafter. The project continued till 2010, reaching approximately 71,000 children aged six to 14 years. Academic as well as clinical studies were conducted in sampled schools and found a 13 percent improvement in the anaemia levels among the

#### **Pilot to scale up**

Since the transition from food aid to technical assistance, WFP has followed the 'pilot to scale up' model approach for nutrition programmes. With the model, WFP creates evidence and demonstrates results through a pilot in a particular district or state, and then supports government for a scale-up.



© WFP/AdityaArya

*2014, Gajapati District, Odisha: School meals being prepared. In 2012, WFP partnered with the Department of School and Mass Education and the Government of Odisha for iron fortification of rice served under the Mid-Day Meal Programme in Gajapati, Odisha. The project was implemented between 2012-2015 and catered to 99,231 school children in the age group of 6-14 years across 1,473 schools.*

beneficiary children, and a reduction in vitamin A deficiency of nearly 30 percent. The findings from the study encouraged the state of Uttarakhand to expand the intervention throughout all districts of the state.

In 2012, WFP partnered with the Department of School and Mass Education (DS&ME) and the Government of Odisha for the iron fortification of rice served under the MDM Programme in Gajapati. The pilot project was implemented between 2012-2015 and catered to 99,231 school children in the age group of six to 14 years across 1,473 schools, with iron-fortified rice provided as part of the MDM. The pilot project demonstrated operational feasibility and technical effectiveness while facilitating necessary 'know how' in the government, for the management of such a project. It also generated interest among other rice-consuming states, as well as the National Government to include rice as a vehicle for fortification along with other commodities, such as wheat, oil and milk.

Since 2017, WFP has been supporting multi-micronutrient fortification of Mid-Day Meals served to school children in Dhenkanal, Odisha. WFP's project is aimed at setting up a model to mainstream fortified food into the MDM, which can be replicated throughout the state. The Dhenkanal project has successfully completed one year of implementation and touched the lives of 127,000 students through either multi micronutrient fortified rice. Building on the success of WFP's work on fortification of school meals in Odisha, the Government of Odisha has expressed an intent to scale-up fortification to 15 tribal districts of Odisha. The project also had a strong training and capacity building component, that is enhancing knowledge and skills of government counterparts, teachers and cooks-cum-helpers on fortification.

In 2018, WFP started a pilot project for fortification of wheat flour and rice used in the Mid-Day Meals served to children in government schools in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. The results will be used to develop a state-wide scale up.

In addition to fortification, WFP has also worked closely with several state governments to improve the nutritional intake of school children. One example is the Model Kitchen Programme which was implemented in Odisha where 8 model kitchens were established in Dhenkanal as a part of the project. To ensure a high level of hygiene in the school kitchen, model kitchens that facilitate proper storage of food, adequate washing areas and proper lighting. The Government has approved a scale-up across the state.



© WFP/AdityaArya

2014, Gajapati District, Odisha: Children having iron fortified rice under the Mid-Day Meal at a local government school in Gajapati District of Odisha. The pilot project demonstrated operational feasibility and technical effectiveness for mainstreaming fortification. The project also generated interest among other rice-consuming states, as well as the National Government, to include rice as a vehicle for fortification along with other commodities, such as wheat, oil and milk.

### 10.3 Improving nutritional status of vulnerable populations

#### Nutrition in the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)

Beginning in the early 1990s, one of the most important ways in which WFP has been supporting the improvement in the nutritional value of food distributed through food safety nets, is by demonstrating effective models for fortification of food based on target beneficiary, geographical location and socio-cultural acceptance.

WFP also conducted a study in 2014-15 that outlines a strategy for increasing the nutritional effectiveness of the TPDS food basket which recommended changes in the food basket to enhance the nutritional content and thus, addressing nutritional gaps in the diets of the target population.

An important milestone for WFP in 2019, was the announcement of the Centre Sector Scheme to scale-up rice fortification through the TPDS in 15 states, by the Government of India. WFP has been working closely with relevant stakeholders, State and National government agencies, and advocacy partners such as the POSHTIK Network, to first demonstrate the effectiveness of rice fortification and then support the development of the scheme. Moving forward, WFP is in the process of providing technical assistance for this initiative to one district in each of the 15 selected states.

#### FORTIFICATION

fortification of food was globally accepted as an efficient low-cost technology with direct results for improved nutritional status, WFP in India also undertook several steps to improve nutritional status of vulnerable groups through various fortified foods such as:

- Fortified biscuits: Providing primary school children essential micronutrients such as Thiamine, Riboflavin, Niacin, Vitamin A, B6, B12, Folate, Iron, Zinc and Iodine.
- Indiamix: Used to provide essential micronutrients to women and children beneficiaries of the ICDS programme.
- Atta-Premix: Containing iron and folic acid, designed to combat anaemia, and Sampoorna a micronutrient premix, used to fortify locally the curry cooked as part of mid-day meals for primary schools.
- Iodised salt: Between 2006-2010, WFP supported the Government of Rajasthan in improving availability and quality of iodised salt for the marginalised communities.
- Wheat flour fortification pilot: Between 2010-2012, WFP, in partnership with the Government of Madhya Pradesh undertook a village level wheat flour fortification project. The project aimed at providing access to fortified flour to 162,000 Sahariays through the local village mills towards reducing prevalence of anaemia.
- Advocacy for PLHIV patients: In 2006, WFP launched advocacy and work with PLHIVs, that led to issuance of national guidelines on care and management of nutritional requirements of PLHIV patients.



© WFP/AdityaArya

2014, Odisha: Rice mill in Odisha, where fortified rice kernels are blended with regular rice in a ratio of 1:100. This fortified rice is then sent to schools, where it is cooked under the Government's Mid-Day Meal programme and served to children aged six to 14 years.

# EVIDENCE AND RESULTS

## LANDSCAPE



One of the most prominent aspects of the transition of WFP's work when the support to the Government of India shifted from programme implementation to technical assistance and policy engagement, which began in the early 2000s.

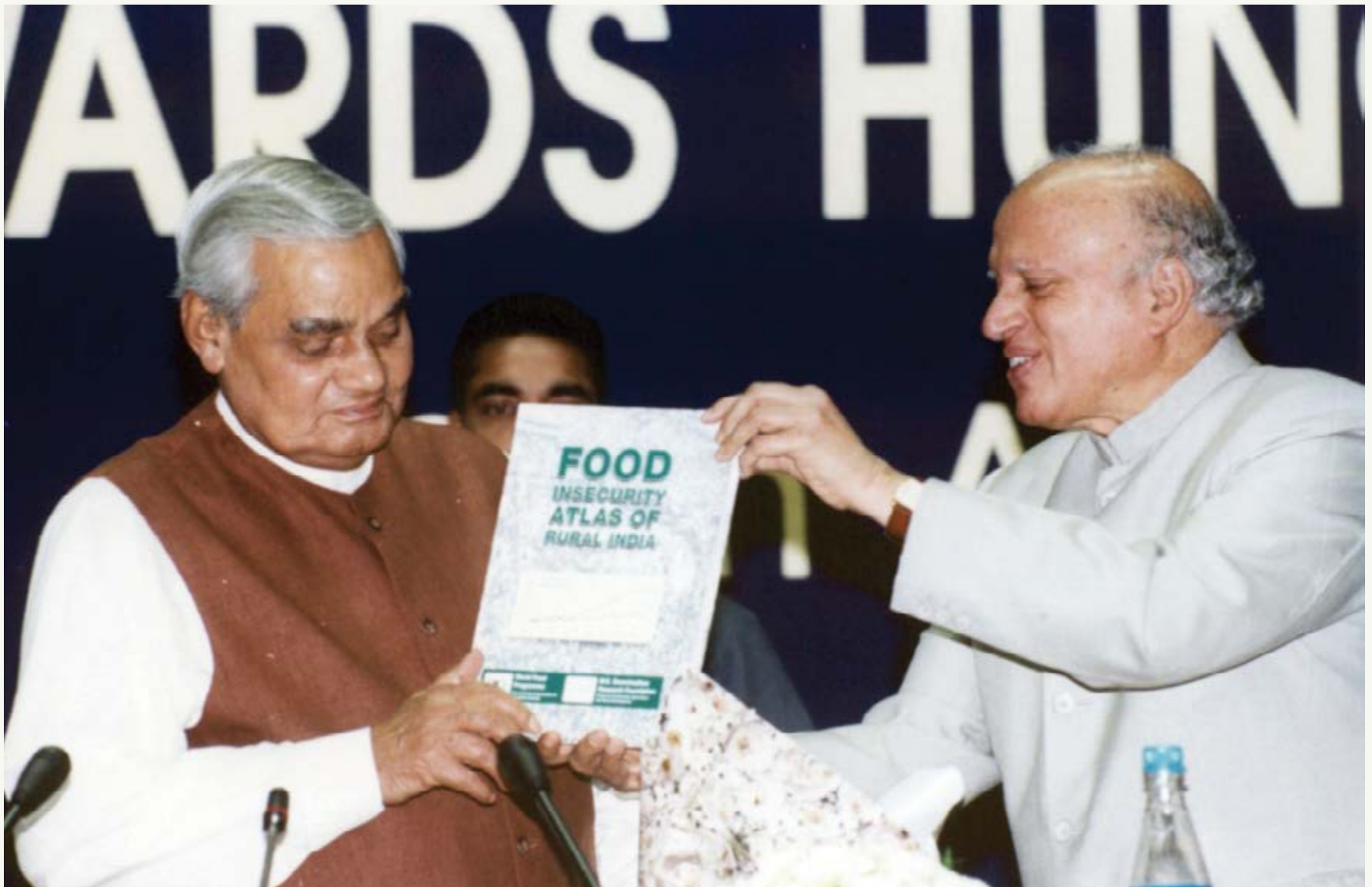
This shift, which continues to be relevant in WFP's work today, included National and State level policy engagement on addressing issues of food and nutrition security in the country. The decade from 2001 to 2011 marked an era of concrete deliberation and discussion on these issues amongst the academia and policy makers. The launch of WFP's flagship Food Security Atlases further added momentum to this. WFP also took forward the partnership with the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) by supporting a series of consultations and the National Food Security Summit between 2001 to 2004. As a result, WFP published a compendium of white papers collating the thoughts of leaders and experts on policy reforms in this direction.

WFP's advocacy efforts have always centred around supporting more effective implementation of current government policies while working within the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF) to achieve complementarity with other UN efforts in India. More recently, WFP prioritized support to the NITI Aayog, a premier policy think-tank of the Government of India, in the development of a framework for the roadmap to achieve SDG 2 targets.

### 11.1 Food Security Atlases and their impact

***"This is a unique instance of the coming together of the Government, an international agency and a non-governmental organization to deliberate on a critical challenge before our nation- namely, how to ensure food for all"***- Late Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, then Prime Minister of India during his key note address at the National Consultation — 'Towards Hunger Free India', November 2nd, 2001.





© MSSRF/WFP

*“This is a unique instance of the coming together of the Government, an international agency and a non-governmental organization to deliberate on a critical challenge before our nation - namely, how to ensure food for all”, Late Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, former Prime Minister of India during his key note address at the National Consultation — ‘Towards Hunger Free India’, November, 2001. Shri Vajpayee also launched the Food Insecurity Atlas of Rural India earlier that year, as seen in the photograph with Dr. M.S Swaminathan, Founder, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation*

WFP started pursuing policy engagement with both India's State and Central governments, using its Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) capacity to broach food security and nutrition issues with a range of partners both within and outside the government.

In 2001-2002, WFP India worked with the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation and the Institute for Human Development to produce the Food Security Atlas of India reports, which analyses and visually represented trends in food security in the country. These reports were also updated in 2008-2010. The Food Security Atlas of Rural India was launched by the Prime Minister of the country at that time, late Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the Urban Food Insecurity Atlas was launched by then President of India, Shri A P J Abdul Kalam.

WFP continued this policy engagement and vulnerability analysis and mapping in subsequent years. In 2004 and 2005, the agency prepared and published, in collaboration with the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation, the Atlas of Sustainability of Food Security in India, co-organized regional ministerial consultations on mother-and child nutrition, and held, with the central Government and the World Bank, a national consultation on social safety nets.

In 2008-2011, additional food security reports were prepared and published, with a focus on rural India, including state-specific Reports for Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Maharashtra, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan.

Between 2012 to 2018, WFP collaborated with the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) at the national level and as well as with related representatives at the state level. WFP partnered with the Department of Planning and Co-ordination of the Government of Odisha, to jointly undertake food security analysis at the state and district levels with the objective of institutionalizing the food security analysis systems within the government at all levels. The results of the food security analysis helped national and state planning bodies and policy makers to draw a complete picture of who is at risk of hunger and malnutrition, identify food in-secure pockets and take informed and evidence-based policy decisions to ensure food and nutrition security for all. The atlases have also served as a tool for benchmarking the results of the National Food Security Act, 2013.

Institutionalization of food security analysis within the Government system was a key element of WFP's Country Strategic Plan (2015-18). The institutionalization process involved capacity development of the statistical and research institutions of the National and state governments for conducting the analysis of food security and bringing out publications on food security.



© WFP/India

2013, India: Ms. Ertharin Cousin, former Executive Director, WFP with Prof. MS Swaminathan. Professor Swaminathan and his research foundation has been a highly valued partner of WFP in India.

## 11.2 Advocacy efforts to mainstream rice fortification into Government's food-based safety nets

According to India's National Family Health Survey (NFHS IV), 53 percent of women aged 15 to 49 years and 58.6 percent of children 6 to 59 months of age suffer from anaemia. Micronutrient deficiency disorders, especially anaemia, are associated with a range of short and long-term consequences, such as increased maternal and child mortality, increased illnesses and poor cognitive and physical development. An effective way to deliver micronutrients to the most vulnerable population is through fortified food in the existing food safety nets. Working closely with the government, civil society organizations and UN agencies, WFP has been supporting the Government's food-based safety nets to make them more efficient and effective. Building a case for the mainstreaming of rice fortification into these schemes was a firm step in this direction.

Given that 65 percent of Indians consume rice and that it constitutes a significant percentage of the grains distributed under the Government's current food safety nets, WFP has focused its work over the last decade to create models for showcasing operational feasibility of rice fortification into safety nets such as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), the Mid-Day Meals (MDM) for school children and the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) as well as working closely with state and national governments and other critical stakeholders to facilitate policy change in this direction.

The experience gained by WFP through its projects on rice fortification of Mid-Day Meals in Gajapati and Dhenkanal districts of Odisha has been extensively shared with various stakeholders, including state governments of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Dadra Nagar Haveli, agencies such as J-PAL, TATA Trust and PATH, as well as with policy makers at national and state levels.

WFP has also been working closely with the Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). In 2016, a national Food Fortification Summit was organized on World Food Day by WFP in partnership with FSSAI where the staple food fortification standards were operationalized. Furthermore, under this collaboration a consultation on food fortification (including rice) was organized for the Northeastern states in 2017. Also in 2017, WFP presented and advocated on rice fortification at all the regional consultations on fortification organized by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and FSSAI. The advocacy on rice fortification, based on the Odisha experience, was not only limited to India but was shared globally. WFP-hosted inter-ministerial delegations from Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Bangladesh have visited India and Dhenkanal in particular, to learn more about rice fortification.

In 2018, WFP developed an approach paper on integrating fortified rice in all social safety nets in TPDS for the Ministry of Food, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, with the hope of integrating rice fortification across all safety nets in India.

## Banish hunger by 2007: Vajpayee

Tribune News Service



President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam being garlanded at the inauguration of the National Food Security Summit - 2004 at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Thursday. © PTI

### The fight against hunger

The National Food Security Summit held in New Delhi calls upon central govt to accord high priority to food security with a view to banishing hunger by 2007.

**New Delhi, April 24** — The Prime Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, today emphasized that efforts were needed to banish hunger from the country. He said the high cost of managing food stocks was a major problem in the way of reaching cheaper food to a greater number of needy families.

The father of the Green Revolution, Dr M S Swaminathan, said Punjab and Haryana, which currently serve as the nation's bread basket, may become 'food insecure' in another 15 to 20 years if adequate measures were not taken to harmonise economic growth and environment.

"The mission of a 'Hunger Free India' needs the cooperative efforts of the Central and state governments, local self-governments bodies, non-governmental organisations and international agencies. We can indeed banish hunger from our country in a short time successfully by 2007," Mr Vajpayee said while inaugurating a seminar on consultation on "Towards Hunger-Free India" here.

He also released two books — *Food Insecurity in Rural India: Atlas and Analysis* and *Enabling Development: Food Assistance in*

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South Asia. This is the first time that food insecurity in India and South Asia have been analysed and it gives a comprehensive overview on the evolution of food based intervention in the region. He said there was need to ensure the Centre's annual food subsidy, which has gone up five times in a decade to reach Rs 13,000 crore this year, was better targeted.

The Deputy Executive Director of World Food Programme, Mr Namanga Ngongi, said three different food based interventions — supplementary feeding, food for work and incentives schemes for girls' school attendance — are to be promoted in the same area, in carefully identified and targeted communities.

"It is the combination of these interventions that can make a difference in the lives of the poor people and particularly of women. Strengthening opportunities and options are the key to alleviating hunger and poverty. It is the key to a hunger free India," he said.

The Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission, Mr Pant, said the government was concerned about the fact that in spite of surplus production of foodgrains, we have still not been able to eradicate hunger.



### 11.3 Advancing SDG 2 Agenda through SDG 2 Roadmap Framework

India has adopted the resolution on the '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' that has 17 Goals and 169 Targets. As part of achieving the SDGs by 2030, India is committed to support all the 17 goals through a dedicated institutional mechanism under the leadership of NITI Aayog. Among all the SDGs, WFP contributes significantly towards action on SDG 2 that aims to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture adopting while the approach propagated in SDG 17 which focuses on partnering for the Goals.

In 2017, WFP partnered with the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), an autonomous think tank, along with Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) to formulate a National Roadmap Framework for achieving targets under SDG 2.

The analytical report provides inputs to the policy dialogue by drawing the projections and trajectories that India will need to follow to achieve SDG 2 targets, clearly highlighting linkages with other SDGs, and areas where most significant work will be required by all stakeholders and partners. Under the leadership and guidance of NITI Aayog, WFP supported a consultative process to develop the report and also provided inputs to various state SDG 2 plans.

# Memoirs



**Ritu Mathur**  
M&E Officer

1989-2003

I joined WFP India in January 1989 and worked for the next 14 years in the organization before moving to UNDP in January 2003. During this period, the country was experiencing a transition from an era of relying on external aid for some food-based programmes, to being fully sufficient and WFP adapting its strategies to respond to this emerging context.

WFP provided food for supplementary nutrition to pregnant women, nursing mothers and children below six years of age in the most backward pockets of five states through ICDS, which was one of the largest global schemes in terms of its outreach. I was responsible for managing an IT-based platform for monitoring the project. The work provided me an opportunity to visit the remotest parts of India and it always used to be a humbling experience to see WFP supplies being used by women and children; and to work with grassroots level functionaries on strengthening reporting.

Over a period of time, beginning in the late 90s, one witnessed shipments being replaced by local production, with WFP building capacities of self-help groups and the private sector for local production of fortified food supplements.

The Government of India no longer wanted food commodities to be imported as part of international aid for its programmes. Some quick, nimble and visionary thinking on the part of WFP India leadership led to a shift in the strategy to

focus on advocacy for a holistic concept of food security which goes beyond ensuring availability of food. This readily found takers within the government because while food availability was no longer a constraint; close to 50 percent of children in India were malnourished.

The first Food Insecurity Atlas of Rural India, prepared in partnership with MS Swaminathan Foundation, was a product of this strategic shift. The Atlas was released by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. It is one of my privileges to have been part of the team that prepared this Atlas. The Atlas was perceived as an extremely useful document in understanding the underlying determinants of food insecurity in rural India and identifying food insecurity hot-spots.

I was fresh out from my college when I joined WFP. I found an extremely supportive work environment and learnt a lot from my seniors. I cherish the friendships that I developed which helped me sail through good times and the difficult times.

WFP provided tremendous opportunity for personal growth. The exposure of working with a range of stakeholders—government, resource institution and beneficiaries as well as working on field-based projects to advocacy-based projects was immensely valuable. In a sense, the association with the Food Insecurity Atlas was my launch pad for the working on Human Development Reports in UNDP India.

## STRENGTHENING FOOD-BASED SAFETY NETS



### Improving efficiency of food-based safety nets

WFP has been supporting India's objective of food security by supporting the effective implementation of schemes and plans of the Government of India, through technical assistance and innovative models. Since 2008, WFP has been assisting on-ground reforms in partnership with state governments while at the national level, the focus has been on working to develop and disseminate best practices, build capacities of stakeholders and subsequently inform policy formulation.

To ensure effective implementation of these reforms, WFP brings in its global expertise in the areas of cash transfers, warehouse management, procurement, distribution, logistics, supply chains, post-harvest losses etc.

In close collaboration with National and state governments, government institutions, partner UN agencies and wider stakeholders, WFP has developed innovative approaches that address the challenges in existing food-based safety nets, with the aim to make pilot projects scalable and adaptable, across the diverse conditions found in different parts of India.

WFP's engagement with the Targeted Public Distribution Systems (TPDS) began in 2008 when, in partnership with the Government of Odisha, a pilot project was implemented in Rayagada district, where multimodal biometrics and Point-of-Sale devices were used to replace manual registers in food distribution. This was one of the first pilots by WFP where biometrics were used for distribution of entitlements in the country. The project tested the suitability of several potential transfer instruments and focused on tackling the issues of beneficiary targeting, transparency, accountability, while ensuring access to food to intended beneficiaries.

In 2013, based on the pilot in Rayagada and review of pilots initiated by eight other states and in consultation with various stakeholders, WFP documented a "Best Practice Solution" to serve as a replicable, technology led best practice framework for digital reforms of the TPDS. Since then,





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2014, Rayagada District Odisha: In 2008, WFP in partnership with the Government of Odisha, implemented a pilot project in Rayagada District of the state. This project used technology to improve targeting and efficiency of service delivery of the Public Distribution System. Multimodal biometrics and Point-of-Sale devices were used to replace manual registers in food distribution.

WFP has supported the digitization of TPDS in 3 states: Odisha, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh. The enhancements introduced by the automation of the TPDS have a direct impact on the food security of the local population. By identifying the right beneficiary, the government is improving the efficiency of its programme while saving money and time and, more importantly, it is ensuring that the most vulnerable populations are targeted and that their needs are covered by the scheme.

In 2015, based on the request of Department of Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, WFP carried out assessments of the cash transfer pilots in two Union Territories, which resulted in the provision of 14 policy recommendations by WFP, of which several were implemented to reform the existing operational process.

In 2018, WFP launched a “Handbook for Implementation of Cash Transfer of Food Subsidy”, in partnership with the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India. The publication serves as a guide for states to implement cash-based transfer modality, detailing the processes, mechanisms and roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

Currently, WFP supports improvements of service delivery, through technological solutions and evidence-based research for both in-kind and cash-based food safety nets, (particularly TPDS) in the following states: Odisha (since 2013), Kerala (from 2014-2018) and Uttar Pradesh (since 2018). WFP is also providing support to the Government of Odisha to enhance and integrate the supply chain system for Mid-Day Meals with that of TPDS, to improve service delivery, governance and optimise the use of existing resources.

Going forward, WFP is deepening and expanding its engagement with the Government in using safety nets to improve access to food, especially for the most vulnerable. Some of the key areas of WFP’s continued work include:

- institutionalization of data analytics for informed data driven management, increased transparency and accountability of the safety nets,
- improvements in existing systems to cater to future progression such as National portability of PDS rations for migrating population and other such evolving needs of partner governments enhancement,
- optimization of the procurement and supply chains, reduction of storage losses and improvement in the quality of grains through improved warehouse and transport management
- mainstreaming of cash-based transfers by providing policy inputs, supporting the development of robust guidelines, testing transfer modalities and identifying solutions.
- Increasing efficiency in distribution of food grains at FPS by designing, developing and piloting an automated multi-commodity dispensing solution “Annapurti” with the objective of providing a solution that enables the beneficiaries to avail their full entitlement at the Fair Price Shops (FPS).



© WFP/AdityaArya

2014, Rayagada District Odisha: Beneficiary claiming subsidized ration under the Targeted Public Distribution System in Rayagada district of Odisha from a local Fair Price Shop. WFP intervention brought in technological innovations such as use of biometric authentication into the system to improve its efficiency and ensure the right people get access to their rightful entitlements.

- Increasing storage capacities for state Government, by introducing Mobile Storage Units (MSU) which are used by WFP worldwide as temporary warehouses for the food which WFP procures and distributes to vulnerable households across. The MSUs are also being produced locally to ensure sustainability and facilitate country-wide use.
- Capacity building through developing a Learning Management System for GOI that will provide an easy, accessible and understandable learning platform for government functionaries, which will allow to register and monitor learning achievements of functionaries through integrated quizzes on an online portal.
- Developing innovative solutions for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Government's food safety nets through a partnership with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, for advanced analytics and operations research to develop practical solutions that support long term strategic planning of procurement, storage, and movement of food grains by agencies such as the Food Corporation of India (FCI). At the same time, they are creating cost-effective supply chain networks for distribution of these food grains under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) at the state level. The models created under this partnership shall ensure sustainability and replication across the country.

The aim of WFP's systems strengthening approach is to achieve a scale-up of transformative solutions, including policies to deliver food and nutrition security, through improved Government systems and convergent action by other stakeholders, including communities, to ensure India has a coherent and well-functioning system that delivers, accelerates and sustains results to achieving goals on zero hunger.



© WFP/India

*Empowering access especially through digitalisation has been a core part of WFP India's work in the last few years.*

## COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS



Food security is an issue that cuts across several human development needs and sectors. It is therefore imperative to work through sustained partnerships. Conscious of this, WFP has valued the experiences, expertise and strengths that its partner agencies and institutions bring to the collaborative process.

### Working with the Government of India

WFP operates within the framework of existing government policies and programmes and strives to support them in achieving maximum impact. Within the Government of India, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare is WFP's nodal Ministry. Further the Ministry of External Affairs has also extended support to WFP's global operations in Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, DPRK and Iraq through the provision of food commodities.

WFP also works closely with other central ministries, state governments and government institutions and agencies such as the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office of NITI Aayog, NITI Aayog (in general) and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. During the implementation phase of its tribal and forest development projects, WFP also worked in close tandem with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the state forest departments, and tribal welfare departments. Such collaborations are enabled through continuous dialogue and development of programmes based on the needs and priorities identified through consultative processes.

### Working with other UN agencies

As a part of the United Nations System, WFP is also a part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework to achieve complementarity of efforts by various agencies within the UN in India, especially those supporting efforts under SDG 2. For the COVID response, WFP is partnering with UNDP to support the Government's initial response through funding from the Secretary General's Multi-Partner Fund for Socio-Economic response to COVID.



© WFP/India

*Hameed Nuru, Country Director of WFP in 2015-19 with Dr. Alka Bhargava, Additional Secretary (International Cooperation) during the signing of CSP (2019-23) MoU on Behalf of Ministry of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare, GoI*

During the early phase of WFP's programme implementation, joint review and assessment of projects was undertaken in consultation with the Government and included representation from FAO. Support from ILO experts was also sought during assessment missions of Food for Work programmes. In the initial response to the Odisha emergency in 1999, WFP played an active role in a joint UN intervention that was an exemplary case of joint agency action, which might be taken as an indicator of the potential for collaborative interventions.

Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) — FAO, IFAD, and WFP- is a core priority for all the three organizations at local, regional and global levels, to deliver on the 2030 agenda. An impressive example of UN agencies coming together for a common goal is that of IFAD and WFP's partnership that took place in 2001. The two organizations entered into a partnership to synergise their activities towards the common goals of poverty eradication and food security in India. The aim of the partnership was to pool the combined strengths of the two agencies to strengthen the livelihoods of the rural poor and to achieve sustainable household level food security. The partnership involved sharing of logistics infrastructure, local coordination and liaison, inputs into design, joint funding of projects, supervision and advocacy. This unique and innovative interagency partnership was in the form of the IFAD India Field Presence Unit in the WFP Country Office at New Delhi and has been replicated in 15 other countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in unprecedented health and socio-economic crises that jeopardized India's tremendous gains in reducing poverty and improving access to food and nutrition for 1.3 billion people. In order to contain its spread and manage grave health risks, a country-wide lock down was announced on 24th March. At the onset of the crisis, the Government of India took proactive action to prevent new infections, provide treatment, support economic relief and ensure delivery of basic services and essential commodities. Eleven inter-ministerial Empowered Groups were formed by the Prime Minister to oversee India's response and a USD 22.5 billion relief package was announced, including insurance for frontline health workers, increased subsidies for food grains, and cash transfers for the poor, vulnerable women and daily wage earners. On food and nutrition, the Government response ranged from ensuring availability of the right commodity to the right person at the right time, and at the right place at a fair price to adapting the existing food safety nets to respond to emerging needs of the newly vulnerable.

To support a cohesive UN response, the Secretary-General established the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (COVID-19 MPTF) which was a UN inter agency funding mechanism to support low- and middle income programme countries to respond to this crisis and recover from its socio-economic shocks. In April 2020, WFP-UNDP prepared a joint proposal which was approved in New York. The joint proposal focused on reaching those most in need, with food and livelihoods assistance to enable them to cope, while also supporting the right to food and right to work as legislated in the National Food





*Snapshot of WFP India team members in late 2019*

Security Act (2013) and the National Employment Guarantee Act (2005). The initiative supported National and State-level responses to COVID-19, facilitating collaboration between Government, civil society, private sector, UN and other development partners.

### Working with civil society

Over the years, WFP has collaborated with a series of non-government organizations and think tanks. The partnership between WFP and MSSRF is notably one of the most extensive partnerships that lasted more than a decade. WFP has also worked closely with organizations such as Nutrition International on salt fortification initiatives and SEWA in Gujarat for a livelihoods project. WFP was also the Secretariat for Poshtik, a consortium of CSOs working on issues of nutrition, between 2014-2019.

Since 2017, WFP India has been working with a youth-run NGO, Feeding India, through an awareness campaign, "Have you been served? #togetherfornutrition". The campaign conducted in collaboration with private sector organizations, seeks to create awareness and equip employees of organizations about the critical issue of malnutrition among women and children and suggests ways that they can contribute towards the solutions.

Following the COVID lockdown and with a larger vision of strengthening India's response to disasters and building in-country capacities on Disaster Risk Reduction, WFP established connections with NGOs that were active on the ground in COVID relief operations. WFP prepared and shared guidance on several topics such as food distributions, gender and protection considerations, food safety and hygiene, etc. to support NGOs who were already on the ground conducting food distributions, whether as dry rations or hot cooked meals.

WFP also established a partnership with SPHERE India, a network of more than 200 NGOs and civil society organizations working on disaster relief operations in India. Under this partnership, WFP will work to build capacity of civil society organizations across the country who are working in food and nutrition security through a set of digital trainings which are expected to improve NGO capacities in responding to food related crises in the longer term, especially to conduct food and nutrition programmes in emergency contexts. In addition, WFP staff participated in capacity building sessions on SPHERE's digital learning platform called the COVID Academy. The partnership also includes development of standardised region-specific food baskets and contextualised food distribution standards, and development of a joint Report on the State of the Humanitarian System in India, with the aim of strengthening the national humanitarian response capacity and accountability.

An important partnership undertaken by WFP at a global level, as well as in India, was through the 'Feed Our Future' campaign. This cinema campaign by WFP and SAWA (the global trade organization for cinema advertising) was developed to engage and motivate moviegoers to help create a world with zero hunger.



*Ericsson receiving the CSR Project of the Year at the 6th CSR Impact Awards 2019. The awarded project was implemented by WFP India in collaboration with Government of Odisha*

At the centre of the campaign is a 60-second film spot about the terrible price we pay in lost potential every time a child dies of hunger. The global campaign was showcased in more than 30 countries, including UFO Moviez's screens in India in October 2018. The campaign had an India launch on 4th October as a Facebook Live event from Facebook's office in Mumbai.

### Contributing to knowledge networks

WFP is a member of various technical groups, including multi-stakeholder fora on undernutrition and fortification. WFP has been co-chair for the UNSDF thematic cluster on Zero Hunger and works closely with FAO, UNICEF and others to coordinate support to the Government to contribute to joint initiatives on SDG 2 under the UNSDF.

Up until 2018, WFP also held the secretariat and chair of POSHTIK – a network of agencies working in the area of food fortification in India. The network works closely with National and state governments and has been spearheading the move to fortified foods as a complementary method to enhance the nutritional status, overall health, and well-being of the Indian population. In 2016, the Government endorsed POSHTIK as a technical expert on food fortification, and the network expanded to include government partners like the Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and FSSAI. The network supported the National symposium on the launch of food fortification standards in the country.

### Working with the private sector

WFP relies entirely on voluntary contributions to finance its humanitarian and development projects. The Government of India and the private sector are the major funding partners of WFP to support its work in India. WFP collaborates with its global partner companies and with Indian companies who are committed to contribute to Zero Hunger and achieving targets under SDG 2. Through the WFP Trust for India, the agency collaborates with the Indian private sector under their Corporate Social Responsibility. The Stop Hunger Foundation, a non-profit organization created by Sodexo group, Sodexo Onsite Solutions India, Teck Resources Limited, Mastercard, Yum!, General Mills Foundation, Ericsson India Global Services, Jubilant Bhartia Foundation, Cargill Inc are some of the corporate partners who have supported WFP in our endeavour.



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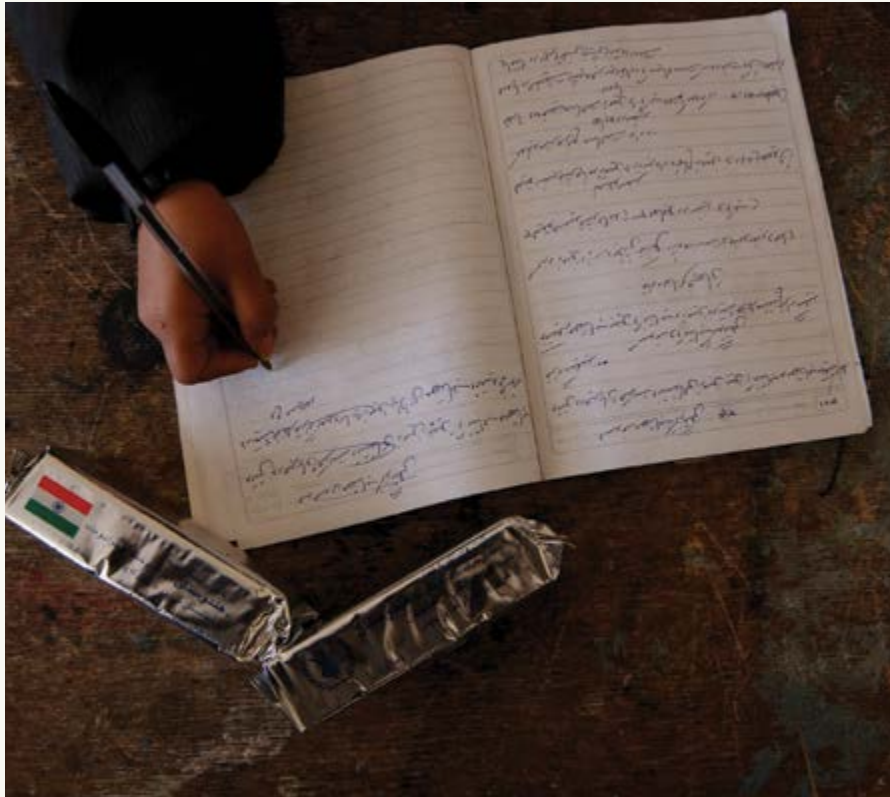
2018, Dhenkanal District, Odisha: Mr. Pradeep Chavda, Human Resources Director, India, Sodexo On-site Solutions and Dr. Hameed Nuru, Representative and Country Director, WFP India, at the launch of two model kitchens in Odapada and Kamakhyanager blocks. WFP partnered with Sodexo to promote food hygiene and quality nutrition among schools in Dhenkanal District of Odisha.

## INDIA AS A DONOR

With the onset of the new millennium, India transformed from a beneficiary country to one of WFP's largest emerging donors. The most important donation from India was in 2002, where one million metric tons of wheat, (valued at US\$160 million) was donated to the Government of Afghanistan. In 2004, the Government of India contributed approximately US\$23.6 million towards WFP's local and global operations. In 2005, the contributions increased by 50 percent, reaching US\$ 35.5 million, as India became WFP's 15<sup>th</sup> largest donor. In 2010, India contributed US\$ 9.21 million to projects globally, and US\$ 12.2 million in 2011. In 2010 and 2011 India supported WFP assistance to Afghanistan, flood victims in Pakistan and for the first time in 2011, for WFP's humanitarian operation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

### Afghanistan

In 2001, the Government of India announced a donation of one million tons of wheat to Afghanistan through WFP. By 2002, the Government of India supported the school feeding programme in Afghanistan by providing High Energy Biscuits (HEB), enabling WFP to annually support over one million vulnerable school children. Up to the end 2011, the Government of India had provided approximately 77,000 MT of HEB valued at US\$ 121 million. The HEB provided 450 kcal of energy with between 10 to 15 grams of protein per 100 grams serving and were fortified with vitamins and minerals. The biscuits accounted for 20 to 25 percent of the daily kilocalorie requirement. Individual packaging made them easy to distribute and provided a quick solution to improve the level of nutrition in school-aged children. Similarly, under Government of India's donation, 5,853 MT of fortified high-energy biscuits were procured and shipped to Iraq during 2005-07.



© WFP/AlejandroChicheri

*2003, Afghanistan: The arrival of nearly 10,000 MT of fortified biscuits donated by the Government of India in November 2002 allowed WFP to reach school children in Afghanistan through its Food for Education programme. Take home rations and on-site feeding were undertaken to address the impact of short-term hunger on learning, school performance, enrolment, attendance and drop-out rates as well as community participation.*



© WFP/AlejandroChicheri

*2003, Afghanistan: The High Energy Biscuits provided 450 kcal of energy with between 10 to 15 grams of protein per 100 grams serving and were fortified with vitamins and minerals. The biscuits accounted for 20 to 25 percent of the daily kilocalorie requirement. Individual packaging made them easy to distribute and provided a quick solution to improve the level of nutrition in school-aged children.*

## Pakistan

Widespread heavy rains in August 2011 caused devastating flooding across Pakistan's Sindh province, affecting about 5.5 million people, and destroying more than 361,000 houses. Some two-thirds of food stocks in the affected areas was destroyed, as was nearly three-quarters of the crops in the field, and more than one-third of the livestock. In response to this disaster, India contributed US\$ 6 million to WFP. With these funds, WFP purchased Indian-manufactured high energy biscuits for distribution through their on-going school feeding programme. The biscuits provided immediate essential assistance to affected households and helped to alleviate micronutrient deficiency among children.

## Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

In March 2011 India contributed US\$1 million to WFP's relief operation in DPRK, following a series of harvest failures compounded by a severe winter, in the country. The contribution was used to purchase around 900 MT of soya beans and 373 MT wheat, which was used to make Super Cereals and biscuits enriched with vitamins and micronutrients. The soya bean was protein enriched and provided a key ingredient for locally produced WFP Corn Soya Milk, enriched with vitamins and minerals. The Indian wheat, together with other raw materials, was used to produce one month's supply of Cereal Milk Blend enriched with vitamins and minerals. These blended foods were distributed through institutions to approximately 120,000 children and pregnant and lactating women under WFP's emergency assistance. In 2016, in the aftermath of severe drought in DPRK, another Government of India donation enabled WFP to procure 1200 MT of Soya bean which was used to make fortified biscuits provided to pregnant and lactating mothers and children less than five years of age.

As India rises on the regional and global stage as an economic power, it is anticipated and hoped that India will play a much greater future role as a global donor not only for funding, but also SSTC, through sharing its experiences, learnings and expertise with other countries.





© WFP

*In response to the 2011 flooding in Pakistan's Sindh province, Government of India contributed US\$ 6 million to WFP to provide high energy biscuits, for distribution through WFP's on-going school feeding programme in the area. The biscuits provided essential immediate assistance to affected households and helped to alleviate micronutrient deficiency among children.*

## COVID19 RESPONSE: CONTINUING TO BE AN EFFECTIVE CONNECTOR, CATALYST AND FACILITATOR



The year 2020 has been a challenging one for people around the world. The coronavirus pandemic seriously challenged national and local health systems and compromised the food, nutrition and livelihood security of millions of people. In India, millions of migrants suffered in the face of mounting hunger because of the pandemic's impact on urban economies. The World Food Programme's Headquarters in Rome estimated that COVID-19 is set to increase the number of people facing acute food insecurity around the world – up to 265 million in 2020, up from 130 million. This will also result in an increase in malnutrition among children and overall, threaten the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. No one was fully prepared for this crisis and some experts even stated that the virus is here to stay. Therefore, in the midst of this, from March 2020, WFP India stepped up to support India's federal and state governments to support food and nutrition security work. This was done by demonstrating scalable pilots and best practices, providing specialized knowledge and international experience for effective implementation of food safety nets and supporting evidence-based analysis.

### **Support to Empowered Group #5 on Logistics and Food Supply Chain**

WFP India has been the Nodal agency for UN support to the Empowered Group #5, along with FAO and IFAD. The group shared daily reports on supply chain and logistics for food with the EG5 since the creation of the Empowered Group till the Unlock 1 got implemented. The daily reports collated real-time information, challenges/red flags, dynamic anecdotal data, and good practices relating to the situation during the lockdown, from their various sources in the field. The reports created a mechanism of real-time monitoring of the lockdown on the supply chain of food and related essentials enabling right action at the right time. The reports prompted swift action in terms of resolving bottlenecks and ensured progress made on addressing red flag issues. There was a decrease in the overall red flag issues that reduced or were being managed at the state/district level.



WFP India Country Director Bishow Parajuli alongside Prof. V. Ramgopal Rao, Director, IIT Delhi at IIT Delhi campus in June 2020 for an MoU signing. This MoU aims at developing innovative solutions for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Government's food safety nets through operations research.

## Essential Commodities Dashboard

Using regularly reported government data on 22 essential commodities from 140 locations, WFP developed a real-time dashboard to monitor changes in key commodities across all states and UTs. The dashboard is still being refined but it allows users to note which commodities have had the highest increase from which location and also established state-specific basic food baskets of staples in order to monitor changes in their costs. It was presented to the Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs in June. Link to dashboard: <https://tabsoft.co/2YCXDdT>

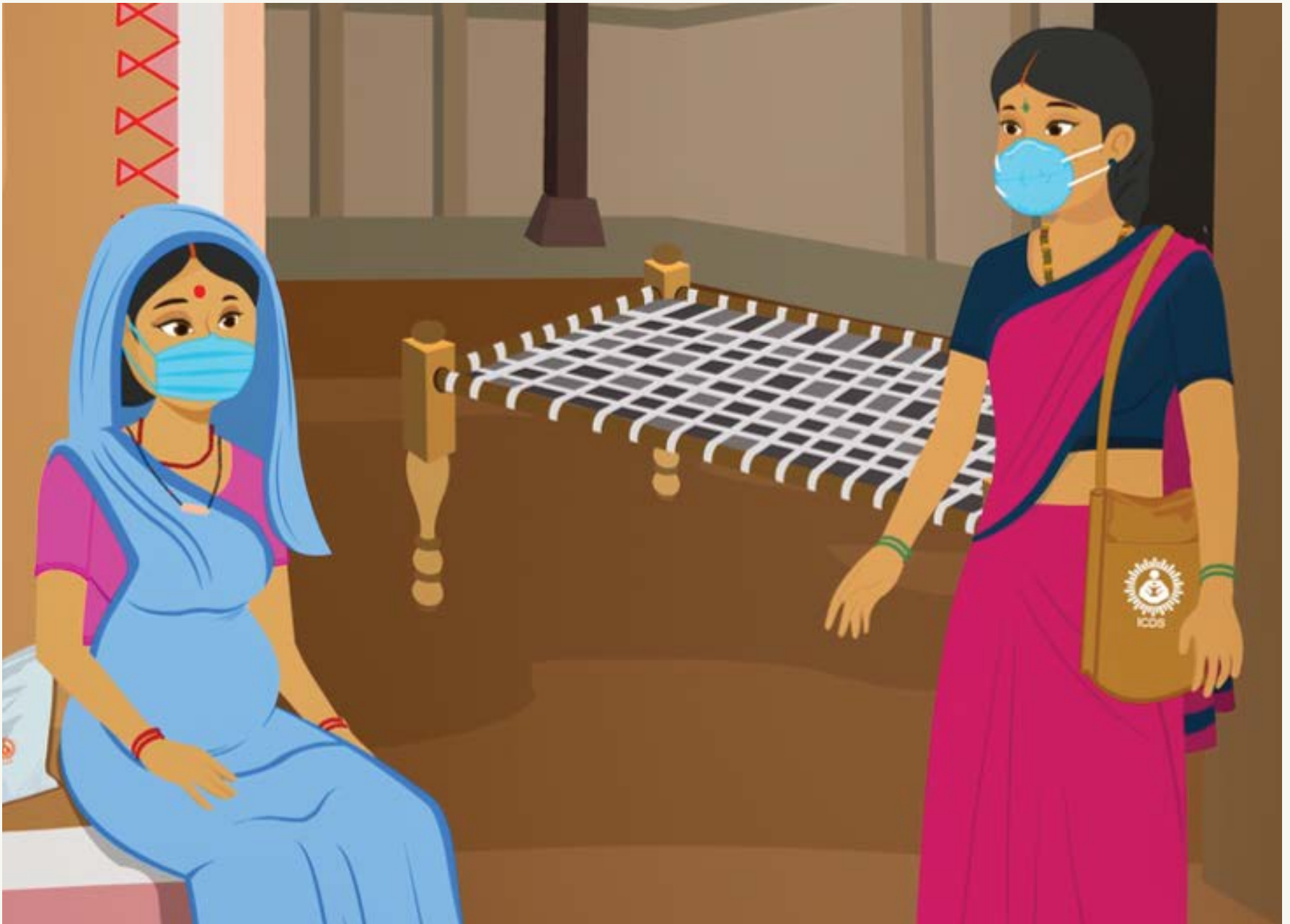
## One Nation One Ration Card

WFP closely supported work by the Department of Food in Uttar Pradesh to launch the implementation of National Portability allowing migrants from 20 other states to avail their public distribution food entitlements from any Fair Price Shop in the state and vice-versa. This was something WFP India was already advocating with the government prior to the COVID crisis; but following COVID19 lockdown this was a timely initiative.

WFP also supported the Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD), Government of India in developing awareness materials such as banners, newspaper advertisements and radio announcements to promote ration card portability under 'One Nation One Ration Card' campaign. These materials helped National Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiaries to learn how to access their entitlements in any of 20 states across the country.

## Creating awareness on preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus

In order to create awareness on preventing the spread of COVID-19, WFP prepared four social media friendly animated videos as a key SBCC tool in three languages. These videos were officially used and launched by the state government of Odisha followed by Kerala. The Hindi version too was shared across the country via UN agencies, states' PIB and NGOs and together with Odiya and Malayalam versions, had thousands of viewers access these videos for awareness in their communities and families. In addition to this In April, WFP prepared a Guidance Note on "Gender and Protection Considerations in the context of COVID-19", based on WFP's corporate guidelines. The note highlights why gender and protection considerations are important and lays down practical steps for action, such as including a gender and age analysis in planning a response, ensuring a gender-based violence referral pathway for the beneficiaries, and setting up a complaints and feedback mechanism. The note was shared with more than 150 NGOs in Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and other states who were implementing various front-line COVID responses.



Snapshot of one of the 4 Hindi-videos on COVID19 Prevention Developed by WFP India

## Digitising in the time of crisis

To facilitate the home delivery of the essential commodities to all the citizens of the state, WFP developed a mobile application to support the Uttarakhand Government in ensuring that food reaches every corner of the state. The app, which has over 20,000 downloads now, allows users to submit their requests to the open market retailers in their vicinity and get food-grains delivered home. To support this initiative, WFP prepared radio jingles and audio messages for dissemination to the public for the Government of Uttarakhand. This includes information about the timing of operations of shops, safety measures for COVID, helpline numbers and an appeal to discourage panic buying. WFP also designed and developed an automatic grain dispensing machine “Annapurti” (Hindi for ‘providing food’). Well-received by the Department of Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, which has now authorized pilots of Annapurti in five locations, through Fair Price Shops in August, in partnership with WFP. This solution has become even more relevant during the COVID-19 crisis, as it allows beneficiaries to avail their entitlements accurately and at the time of the choice, thereby allowing for social distancing with minimal human contact.

Furthermore, WFP is piloting the use of Mobile Storage Units (MSU) with State Governments of Odisha and Uttarakhand to mitigate the gap between increased food distribution during COVID-19 crisis and limited availability of covered space for storage of food grains by increasing storage capacities through the use of MSUs, which are used by WFP globally. In order to promote ‘made in India’ and for sustainability of the project, WFP is engaging local manufacturers to produce MSUs for the pilot. A note on the MSU pilot can be accessed here: [bit.ly/3iEfS8Y](https://bit.ly/3iEfS8Y)

## Evidence and Results

In order to constantly learn and grow our work during such critical times, a huge focus of our work has been gathering evidence and results. In May this year, WFP finalised ‘A Detailed Analysis of Food and Nutrition Sector during COVID-19’ which captured the impact of COVID-19 on food and nutrition security during the early days of the lockdown in Odisha. The report was well received by the Government of Odisha, and they included it in the repository of COVID-19 information management for the state. The report can be accessed here: [bit.ly/2BBI3Wp](https://bit.ly/2BBI3Wp)

The long-term vision of WFP is to continue contributing to India achieving SDG-2 targets and sustain nutritional outcomes through effective policies and efficient National social protection systems; although the work WFP is now undertaking is about responding to India’s food and nutrition needs for a speedy post-COVID19 recovery. This is to ensure that the gains made up till now are not lost to the pandemic. All in all, moving forward, WFP will continue to be an effective connector, catalyst and facilitator amongst key stakeholders to accelerate eventual progress on Sustainable Development Goals.



© SAMARTH

As part of its Covid19 response (supported by Multi-Partner Trust Fund), WFP worked with SAMARTH a CSO in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh to build the organisation’s capacity for food distribution activities targeted at marginalised communities

**SAVING LIVES. CHANGING LIVES.**

### GENDER AND PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

**IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19**

The national response to the COVID-19 pandemic in India has necessitated action on multiple fronts, one of the most urgent being the provision of food and other essential support to the millions of informal sector workers and wage labour who suddenly found themselves without jobs and incomes. Government and non-government agencies are providing on-ground support to fulfil these needs. **However, it is critical for response actions to consider differentiated impacts on vulnerable groups, girls, boys, women and men.**

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) is the world’s largest humanitarian agency with the mandate to ensure targeted food and cash assistance to millions of people across 83 countries. This brief summarizes WFP’s Gender and Protection Guidance in the context of COVID-19 and aims to support organizations conducting COVID relief operations in India to ensure that no one is left behind.

**WHY GENDER AND PROTECTION MATTER IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

- During crises, women and girls are often at greater risk food insecurity and malnutrition due to social and cultural norms. In addition:
- Women and girls face greater risk of mental stress and gender-based violence (GBV) during lockdown, due to restricted movements, loss of income and other frustrations which lead to increased domestic workload and abusive behaviour of some household members.
- Women and men both are at risk of losing livelihoods and incomes.
- Women and girls’ reproductive health and hygiene needs may not be met.
- Women and girls have poorer access to water, sanitation and hygiene as compared to men.
- Factors such as disability, ethnicity, gender identity, being a female head of household, and poverty can exacerbate economic vulnerability and food insecurity during the crisis.
- Persons with disabilities are more likely to lose their job during lockdown and experience greater difficulties returning to work post-crisis.

**WHAT WE MUST DO**

**Learn**

- Undertake a **gender, age and protection analysis** of the targeted population while designing response to identify the differing risks and barriers, and also the required mitigating measures for the most vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, disabled and the elderly.

**WFP**  
World Food Programme

© WFP/India

Snapshot of our guidelines on Gender Protection Considerations in the context of COVID-19

## **WFP receives Nobel Peace Prize for 2020**

The World Food Programme is humbled to be honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize 2020. The award celebrates the work of WFP staff who put their lives on the line every day to bring food and assistance to more than 100 million hungry children, women, and men across the world. We do this through partnerships with governments, institutions, private corporations, civil society, and ordinary people who contribute time and resources. The Norwegian Nobel Committee has recognised that for a lasting peace it is imperative to attain the goal of Zero Hunger; while shining a light on the struggles of the 690 million people who go to bed hungry.



## THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE 2020



### World Food Programme (WFP)

“for its efforts to combat hunger,  
for its contribution to bettering conditions  
for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting  
as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use  
of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict”

THE NORWEGIAN NOBEL COMMITTEE







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