

National Nutrition Week: Nutritional resilience is a key element of a society's readiness

~ JICA India promised to make continuous efforts to tackle malnutrition ~

New Delhi, September 1, 2020: As per the Global Nutrition Report 2020, India is among 88 countries that are likely to miss WHO's global nutrition targets by 2025. It also identified India as one with the highest rate of domestic inequalities in malnutrition.¹ The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) celebrates National Nutrition Week from September 1- September 7, 2020, in its commitment to end such domestic inequalities in the country. Especially in the world with COVID-19 pandemic, nutritional resilience is a key element of a society's readiness to combat the threat and JICA shows its intention to continuously support Government of India's efforts in the sector as it has been cooperating through Agriculture projects and loan to support India in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Speaking on the occasion of National Nutrition Week, Mr. Katsuo Matsumoto, Chief Representative, JICA India said, "All activities to address eradication of malnutrition is absolutely necessary in combating such infectious diseases because balanced intake of nutritious food is essential for improving fundamental immunity. With the aim of ensuring food sufficiency and reducing regional inequalities, JICA has been supporting small farmers through its projects across Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. With strict lockdowns and economic halt, easy access to food has proved to be a challenge in the COVID-19 pandemic, however JICA India has been supporting farmers in the production process and consumers through logistical support to realize equal access to food and nutrition through an established supply-chain system. Also JICA is supporting NITI Aayog's programme to achieve SDGs. In several areas including "Health and Nutrition". We should emphasize the importance of improving nutritional status as a preventive measure, key to establishing a resilient society"

Since 1981/82, JICA has extended ODA loans of 271 billion Japanese Yen (approximately INR 16,000 crore) towards the agriculture sector. 19 ODA Loans, 14 Grant Aids and 17 Technical Cooperation's have been extended for the sector in India. JICA's support in the sector has helped in solving production challenges and improving farming techniques so as to improve farmer's income and to achieve more equitable resilient and sustainable food systems.

Accessibility and affordability of healthy, sustainably produced food has been challenging as food system has been affected by the impact of containment measures. With the help of Jharkhand Horticulture Intensification by Micro Drip Irrigation (JHIMDI) Project and Andhra Pradesh Irrigation and Livelihood Improvement Project (Phase 2), JICA has been able to increase local productivity and ensure last mile delivery of the produce to the end- consumer. With the 'farm to family' initiative, the farmers didn't have to bear bagging charges, transportation charges, loading and unloading charges and received appreciated price. Moreover, the initiative enabled consumers to easily procure these fruits and vegetables in their local vicinity.

In addition, JICA is helping the household to maximize the nutrition they take from those products. In Himachal Pradesh, a Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) has reached female groups to intimate the members with the nutritive value of soya through series of lectures and cooking demonstration.

¹ <https://globalnutritionreport.org/reports/2020-global-nutrition-report/>

Simultaneously, the JOCV has visited a local school to teach the importance of vegetable intake to the students by playing games aiming to cultivate the knowledge of vegetables from childhood.

JICA's assistance is not limited to individual states. JICA has signed a loan agreement in 2019 to support India's policy actions on the SDGs. This loan aligns with the Government of India's unique programme that focuses policy attention towards addressing inequity, social injustice and exclusion in Aspirational Districts to improve the performance of services in districts. The program expedites the five themes, namely, health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion and skill development, and basic infrastructure. Each of these themes is weighed as per the Government's commitment to inclusive growth with the maximum weightage on Health and Nutrition, and Education. JICA is supporting this programme through provision of loan and Japanese knowledge sharing with NITI Aayog.

About JICA

Established, by a specific law, as an incorporated administrative institution under the Government of Japan, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) aims to contribute to the promotion of international cooperation, as a sole Japanese governmental agency in charge of ODA implementation. JICA is the world's largest bilateral donor agency. JICA works as a bridge between Japan and emerging countries, and provides assistance in forms of loan, grant and technical cooperation so that the emerging countries can strengthen their capabilities.

JICA India Office Web: <https://www.jica.go.jp/india/english/index.html>

JICA India Brochure:

https://www.jica.go.jp/india/english/office/others/c8h0vm00004cesxi-att/brochure_15.pdf

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