

Nutrition-Sensitive Micro-Planning in Madhya Pradesh

# Crafting a Community-led Initiative towards Securing a Nutri-Smart Community

A CASE STUDY



REGIONAL NUTRITION PROGRAM





A background illustration showing a group of people, including men and women, gathered outdoors. Some are pointing at a map on the ground, while others are looking on. The scene is set in a rural or semi-rural area with trees and a simple building in the background.

**Created, Published and Printed under Regional Nutrition Program:**

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Under Project IND 1374 | March 2022

# Introduction

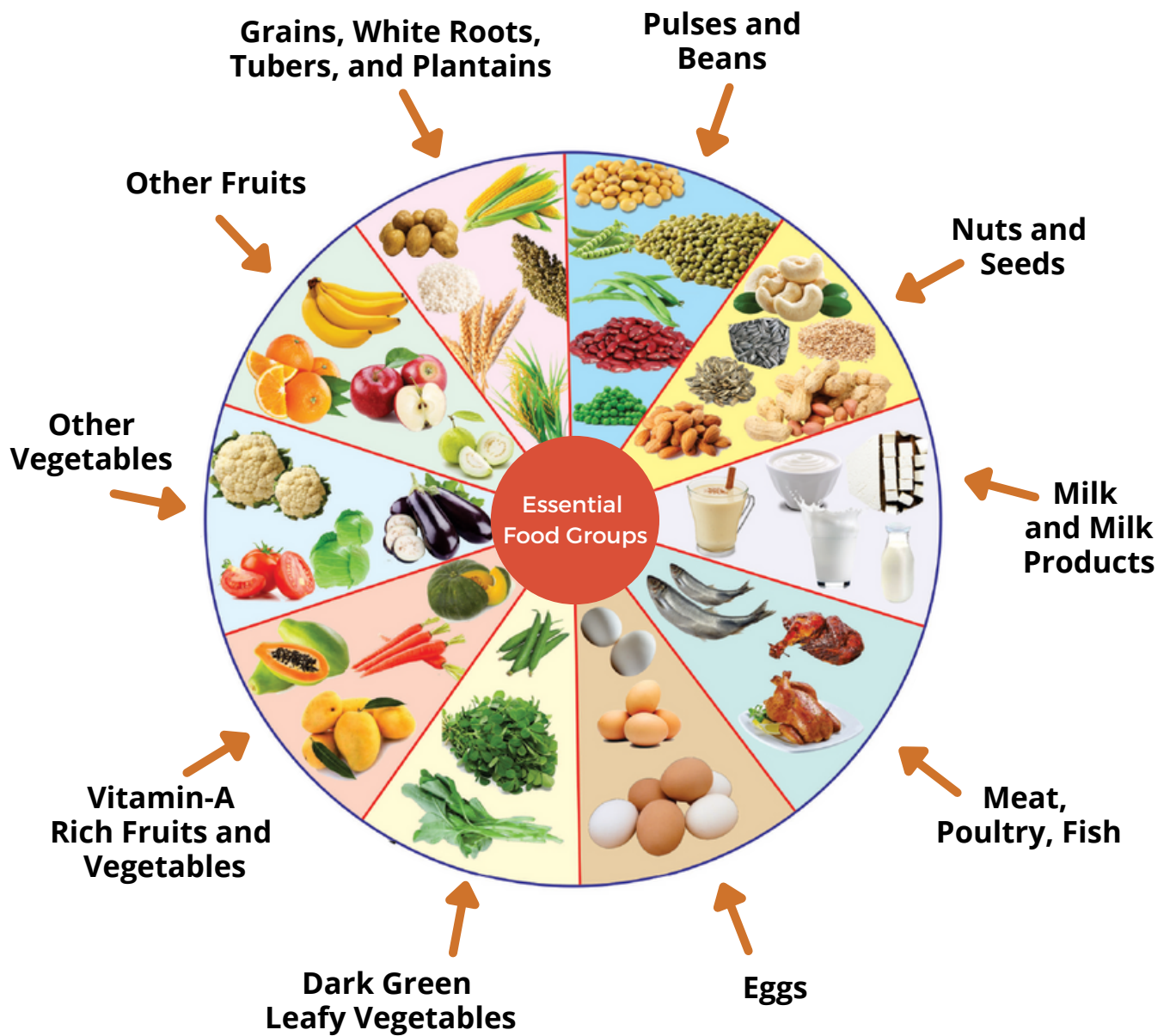
The paper has been prepared with an objective to share the concept and learnings of Nutrition-Sensitive Micro Planning (NSMP). NSMP is being implemented under the Regional Nutrition Program (Phase II) in two districts of Madhya Pradesh, India by implementing partners Mahatma Gandhi Seva Ashram, Darshana Mahila Kalyan Samiti, and knowledge partner Vikas Samvad with the support of Welthungerhilfe and BMZ. In the primary phase of this initiative, 78 villages have successfully developed their nutrition-focused development plans and are making efforts for its comprehensive integration in the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) with the government. This present paper is an effort to provide an understanding of the concept of NSMP through its on-ground learnings.

This paper is divided into the following sections:

- a. Introduction
- b. Operational Concept of Nutrition-Sensitive Micro Planning
- c. Nutrition-Sensitive Micro Planning on Ground
- d. Operational Framework of Nutrition-Sensitive Micro Planning
- e. Defining the Concept and Process of Nutrition-Sensitive Micro Planning
- f. Learning



# TEN FOOD GROUPS





# Profile

Promoting a multisectoral approach for demonstrating Nutrition Smart CommUNITY to address malnutrition, the Regional Nutrition Programme is implemented in the economically and socially vulnerable regions of India, since 2018. India bears a heavy burden of persistent malnutrition which perpetuates through the intergenerational cycle of poverty and deprivation and restricts economic development benefits. However, there are various more complex causes to this, like inadequate dietary diversity, gender inequality, low education and nutrition awareness, poor hygiene, sub-optimal caregiving practices, lack of on-farm diversity and inadequate access to government programs, and more. Thus, this project aims to introduce nutrition in its practical terms by delving into direct (nutrition-specific) and indirect (nutrition-sensitive) cost-effective and evidence-based interventions to address the varied factors of chronic undernourishment, foster behaviour change, enhance nutrition education and strengthen community-based institutions. The program presently demonstrates 200 Nutrition Smart CommUNITY (Villages) in Madhya Pradesh in India.

## OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Contribute towards food and nutrition security (SDG 2) of the vulnerable and food-insecure families in India.

## EXPECTED RESULTS AND PROCESS REFLECTIONS

- **Marked reduction in the status of chronic and acute malnutrition amongst the vulnerable rural communities.**  
*Thrust on systematic and effective scaling of evidence-based solutions.*
- **Identified best practices are instituted and scaled up in the select nutrition-smart villages.**  
*Extensive recourse to policy advocacy, capacity building and essential technical support and handholding.*
- **Multisectoral programming (convergence) occurs across and amongst the sector domains.**  
*Availability of and access to Knowledge Management platforms to guide and facilitate sector-wide programming.*

## INTERVENTION DOMAINS

The Regional Nutrition Program has 3 categorical intervention domains –

### a. Community-based Intervention

Community-level intervention (both Community-embedded and Community-led) ensure that the community is an active partner in planning and implementing the village-based activities across the spectrum of NSMP. It, thus, helps both the community as well as the project facilitating the team to gain ground experiences and learnings. Consequently, the result/impact of the project intervention is better appraised and focused. This domain covers Sustainable Integrated Farming System (SIFS), Nutrition Sensitive Micro Planning (NSMP), Resource Management, Community Engagement and Leadership through Land, Agriculture and Nutrition linked Participatory Learning and Action tool (LANN-PLA and N-PLA), and Multisectoral Convergence Application.

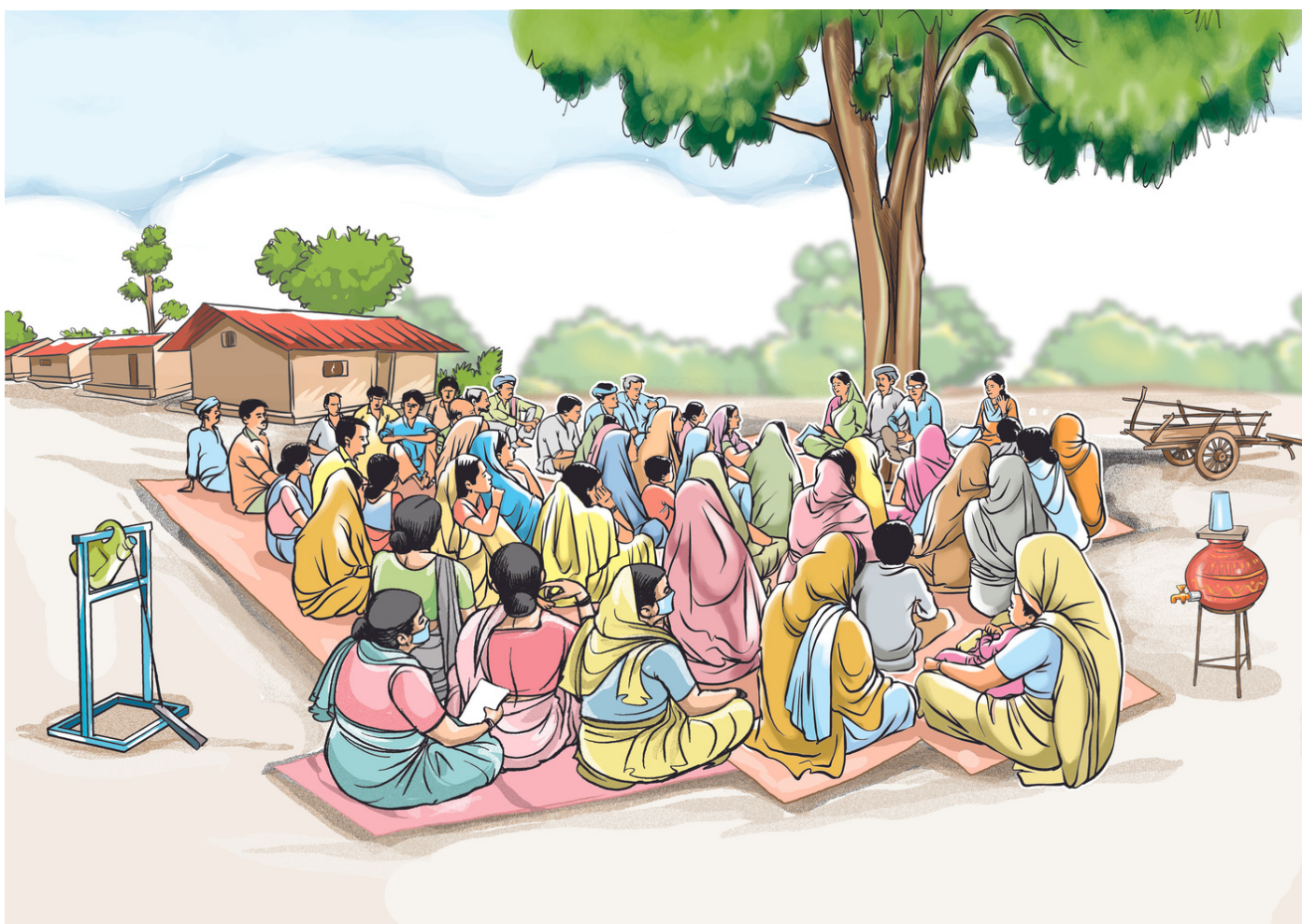


### **b. Association and Engagement with the Block and District Administration and the State Government**

The learnings and ideas are brought before the policymakers and the programme implementation agencies from the standpoints of adaptation, adoption, replication and scale-up. Concomitantly, this also helps to advocate the approach for multisectoral convergence by engaging different departments and state institutions through both horizontal and vertical integration and coordination.

### **c. Knowledge Management and Advocacy**

For intervening at both the community as well as the local/state levels, a specific model has been designed for the Knowledge Management platform. Usually, a final framework of the model is presented at the end of the intervention or program, but in Regional Nutrition Program-II (RNP-II), it is believed that every bit of the model may necessarily be captured during the intervention process itself. It has to be clearly emphasised that creating a diverse set of knowledge products is critical to ensure proper implementation of various strategic activities and that all such knowledge products need to be scientific in nature and user-friendly. The Knowledge Management Platform brings both insight and clarity in developing a sound understanding of the approach that is being followed in the project.





# Operational Concept of NSMP

Nutrition-Sensitive Micro Planning (NSMP) is a methodical and scientific framework-based approach for engaging the community to develop its roles for achieving the goal towards sustainable nutrition security and a zero-hunger society. NSMP follows an observant process, where the community is facilitated with understanding and skills to conduct an in-depth analysis of situations, causes, and process indicators that directly and indirectly impact Nutrition Security. Further, it leads the community groups towards finding and framing a plan towards the sustainable solution of hunger and malnutrition. This concept is called Nutrition-Sensitive Micro Planning, but in practical terms, it also addresses nutrition-specific interventions. The concept of NSMP envelops nutrition-specific interventions, nutrition-sensitive interventions and nutrition governance.

Nutrition-Sensitive Micro Planning addresses the Immediate, Underlying and Basic determinants of Malnutrition to take society towards a sustainable and equitable state of affairs for nutrition security. It is implemented with a target to ensure the needs and participation of individuals and takes shape at the community level. NSMP focuses on effectiveness in safeguarding community leadership for guaranteeing nutrition security.

Accelerating sustainable progress for nutrition requires a set of principled determinations i.e. informed participation of the community, responsible use and management of resources, value-based practices, public accountability and convergence in nutrition interventions.

It has been made clear from the findings of various research studies that political-economic-social-cultural-ecological factors directly influence the goal of nutrition security. A paper published in The Lancet Journal titled “Nutrition-sensitive Interventions and Programmes: How Can They Help Accelerate Progress in Improving Maternal and Child Nutrition” mentions that “a 10% increase in GDP/PC leads to a 7% increase in overweight and obesity among Women as well as 6% reduction in stunting, there is a positive association between dimensions of women’s empowerment and improved maternal and child nutrition, similarly there are negative associations between disempowerment (e.g. domestic violence) and child nutrition outcomes. Targeted Agricultural Programs have impacts on several underlying determinants of nutrition, such as Livelihood and Income, Household Food Security, Diet quality and Women’s income and empowerment”.





# NSMP on Ground

## SITUATION 1

*Kamli Pateliya is the Sarpanch (elected head of the Local Body) along with Punia Pateliya, Jay Singh, and 35 other villagers who drew their Kariyadeh village map on a big drawing sheet. Symbols were used to identify the houses, roads, water bodies, schools, etc. Separate symbols like small red circles were used for identifying the Severely Acute Malnourished Child and a yellow triangle on the house identifies those households that have one or more than one Moderately Malnourished Child in the family. Due to this marking, 40 houses are either having Moderately Malnourished or Severely Acute Malnourished children in the Kariyadeh Village. Some additional symbols also identify some of those families which do not have their names registered in the Public Distribution List (scheme of subsidized food grains) and they also do not hold any agricultural land and that a symbol of flowing water indicates a water stream/small river on the north side of the village.*

*During the process of designing the village map, many old-aged people were involved in the discussion, who described that their village was not earlier located in this particular place. Their village was less populated earlier and then gradually people started coming in search for their livelihood in the year 1962. Earlier, their village was having more God and Goddess statuettes, a few old broken houses, and a less human population.*

*Khair Jatav, a scheduled caste resident of Kariyadeh village further adds more information in the discussion, that our fore-fathers decided to reside at this village and started shaping the village. Few families were entitled to the land document in the year 1975. However, currently, many new families have started residing in the village. These families are also utilizing the forest produce through cultivation in the forest land and hence these newly residing families have submitted their claims for their entitlement rights under the Forest Right Act. However, they could not receive the entitlement, as the law states that the non-tribal families should submit evidence of their cultivation in the forest land since 1930 (75 years from the date of application). Khair Jatav's family was also one of them who received the "Patta" (land entitlement document in the year 1975). Hence, all the 40 families in the village were judged to be unentitled under the Forest Right Act. Out of these deprived families, 14 families have malnourished children in their homes.*

*It can also be seen that most of these families in the village do not get any benefit from these water structures for their irrigation work, even after holding a small piece of land. 10 families in the village have a bigger challenge for fetching water, as they have to walk around 300 meters to fetch water for their household consumption and utilization. This village has a water body as a pond but requires immediate interven-*

-tion for deepening it. However, since the pond is situated in the Forest Land, the difficulty is to seek permission and generate financial resources for the deepening activity. On the contrary, the Forest Department holds the perception that the villagers have encroached upon the forest area/land.

During the mapping exercise of the available resources, services, vacant land, etc. the villager could plot a particular area in the map as a potential location for the construction of a water structure. If this land could be developed, around 60 families will receive the benefit of water availability for Nutri-garden, irrigation, livestock rearing, etc.

While enlisting the available resources in the village, a total of 35 items were listed by the villagers which was used as the forest produce. Out of this list, 30 products are sold in the market. Among these products, 10 such products were also traced which are diminishing significantly. These declining products lead one to re-think the forest resources for posterity. It is the tribal society that knows the importance of diversification. Although the discussions focused on biodiversity resources, it was also observed that many wild animals, fishes, and birds are also getting extinct. Mahesh says, 'We started asking questions within ourselves – What to do now? Who will take initiative? Will anyone come from outside to protect our resources or we will have to think about it ourselves?'

When discussing the accesses to Food Security Scheme (Public Distribution System-PDS), they traced and counted 26 households, whose names were not listed in the PDS eligibility list. The reason was not having the required document of Caste Certificate (Scheduled Tribe Certificate).

Punia Pateliya mentioned that the Jhabua district is our native place and as per the government rules "Pateliya" tribes can get their Caste Certificate from the Jhabua district only. So, to get the Caste Certificate we have to travel around 400 kilometers, arrange a local address and file our application for getting the Schedule Tribe Certificate. Without having Schedule Tribe Certificate, our children cannot get admission in the Government Hostel and access to other schemes. After having the discussion, we all decided that we will take our request to the high-level government official. Kamli Pateliya stated that "during the visit of the Chief Minister in our district, we all attended in the public function; we decided to talk to him and present our demand while he was addressing from the stage. We succeeded in placing our demand to the Chief Minister, and he immediately declared that we all will start getting caste certificates here very soon."

When the issue of food production was discussed, we found that we are mostly growing Maize, Soybean, Urad, Wheat, and Muster seed in huge quantities. The weak area is that we do not produce enough vegetables and fruits. This process motivated us to think about future interventions for improvising the diversification in food production.

What did you do after knowing many things about food production, water, Anganwadi services, malnourished children, access to social security schemes, etc?



*Kamli Pateliya further stated that we started looking at possible avenues for interventions. We started collecting information about other government schemes and programs, which might help us to change the situation. We started discussing, which schemes we need to go and file a complaint or raise the issue.*

*In the process of understanding the problems, their causes and plan of action, villagers of Kariyadeh decided to intervene in the following areas –*

- All families will adopt and develop Nutri-Garden*
- Efforts will be made to ensure access to social safety net schemes for all eligible*
- Poultry Interventions*
- Fisheries Interventions*
- Development of Water Structures*
- Land Rights under Forest Rights Act*
- Efforts for Housing benefits under Pradhanmantri Awas Yojana for 183 families of Sahariya Tribal Community*

## **SITUATION 2**

*Morai village (Block-Karahal, District-Sheopur, Madhya Pradesh, India) has a total population of 1310 among which 224 are children under the age of 5 years. Mukesh Adiwasi shared that “Two years back, there were 75 children undernourished in our village, but significantly the situation is changing and currently there are only 11 children moderately malnourished and 6 severely malnourished children. This is the result of the efforts of the villager working hard to bring them out from the vicious cycle of malnutrition. He was further asked about the meaning of the word “Cycle” in the context of malnutrition, he responded that “children should be fed with diverse food, which has cereals, pulses, vegetables, eggs, fruits, and edible oil. They should be protected from diseases and infections and to ensure this, we are working towards ensuring access to health services, hygiene, and safe drinking water.”*

*These families, amongst 82 other families, have developed Nutri-gardens and fulfilled their dietary needs for 7 months in a year. We have prepared a plan, which has a component for the construction of toilets, hand pump, cleanliness, the inclusion of 21 families in the PDS list, demand for land entitlements under the Forest Rights Act for 26 families, and improved implementation of Anganwadi Services. This plan has been submitted to the Gram Panchayat (Village Council).*

*Mahatma Gandhi Sewa Aashram with the Support of WelthungerHilfe-German Cooperation under Regional Nutrition Program-II is intervening in putting up an operational framework of NSMP in place in Sheopur District of Madhya Pradesh.*

## NSMP Facilitator's Note

*Sandeep, a facilitator, shares the ground learnings. He says, “we started engaging with the community members with a clear idea that they should not be willing to join the process, but they should own it. Since we had a presence in the community, we could bring 50 persons on the dialogue platform. We had a focus on the issue of nutrition and allied areas, but people here were more interested in livelihood issues, water, irrigation, and social security pensions. We all listened to them patiently and also took initiative to resolve their “primary concerns” and this approach built their confidence in us. We played the role of facilitator – we just had curiosity and questions for them.*

*All information was to come out from the people. In the end, we were successful in making a Nutrition-Sensitive Micro Plan, but life is not that easy. We took the plan developed by the community groups to Panchayat and District Administration, which are responsible for putting all village plans into the Gram Panchayat Development Plan – GPDP. There we came to know that the Government is giving space and priority to only those areas, which are linked with the infrastructure development domain and have specific fund allocations. The administration informed us that our plans were more focused on “Social Interventions and linked with the benefits provided under various schemes. So, we should handle them separately with the respective government departments”. It was a learning for us because the GPDP manual mentions that Health, Nutrition, and Food Security issues will be given priority in Gram Panchayat Development Plan. It seems that still only infrastructure development is considered to be the core domain of social development. In this sense, NSMP is not merely an activity-driven intervention, but it is an advocacy driven intervention.*

*This process is called Nutrition-Sensitive Micro Planning.*



# Operational Framework

Over the last year, a significant understanding of Nutrition-Sensitive Micro Planning has been achieved by the project. This document intends to narrate the process of the same. Intervention NSMP captures the following –

## NUTRITION-SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN	RNP PROJECT DOMAIN
<b>DIETARY DIVERSITY</b>	Promoting consumption of ten Food Groups through production and conscious consumption
<b>PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF DISEASES</b>	Hand washing - Tippy-Tap, Use of Soaps, Matka Filter for Safe Drinking Water, etc
<b>PROMOTING BREASTFEEDING AND COMPLEMENTARY FEEDING</b>	through N-PLA
<b>EARLY DETECTION OF DISABILITY AND SEVERE ACUTE MALNUTRITION</b>	Growth Monitoring and Screening
<b>FEEDING BEHAVIORS AND GENDER EQUALITY</b>	through N-PLA
<b>ACCESS TO FOOD AND NUTRITION ENTITLEMENTS</b>	Improved implementation and eliminated exclusion in Targeted Public Distribution System, Integrated Child Development Services, Mid-Day Meals, Maternity Benefits, etc
<b>ESTABLISHING NUTRI-GARDENS</b>	13 Types of vegetables (leafy, rooty, fruits, etc) are being promoted under Regional Nutrition Program in Madhya Pradesh
<b>MANAGING NUTRITION SECURITY IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS</b>	Support to Communities during emergencies like Flood, Drought, and Pandemic by providing seeds, water structures, linking with government schemes, direct food support, etc

## NUTRITION-SENSITIVE INTERVENTIONS

CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN	RNP PROJECT DOMAIN
<b>SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATED AGRICULTURE/FARMING</b>	SIFS, Capacitation and Facilitation of processes for Seed Management, Organic Methods, Promoting uncultivated food, etc
<b>SOCIAL SAFETY NETS</b>	Identity Proofs, Caste Certificates, Social Security Schemes/Pensions, etc ICDS Strengthening (Child Care and Education promotion by promoting community's role in monitoring)
<b>DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION</b>	Planning for the course of intervention through N-PLA
<b>COMMUNITY MONITORING</b>	Capacitating women and community leaders and members of Sahyogini Matru Samiti-NFSA Vigilance Committee
<b>IMPLEMENTATION OF MGNREGA AND FRA</b>	Community Discussions, Sustained Engagement, and Capacity Building
<b>IMPROVED ACCESS TO EFFECTIVE HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE SERVICES</b>	Building better understanding and motivating community members for informed decision support to Public Health System, etc
<b>MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH &amp; NEWBORN CARE</b>	Preparing community to manage maternal health, dissemination of correct information and strengthening community support system through N-PLA, community dialogue, and capacity building sessions
<b>PROMOTING WATER AND SANITATION PRACTICES</b>	Tippy-Tap, Use of Soaps, Matka Filter for Safe Drinking Water and Use of Toilets

## NUTRITION GOVERNANCE

CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN	RNP PROJECT DOMAIN
<b>CATALYZING THE ROLE OF LOCAL BODIES (GRAM SABHA AND PANCHAYAT)</b>	Capacitation of Community Members, Sensitizing the Panchayats on Nutrition, Participatory Micro Planning and linking it with Gram Panchayat Development Plan



<b>TAPPING FINANCIAL ALLOCATION</b>	Infrastructure Analysis, Budget Analysis etc
<b>COMMUNITY MONITORING AND SOCIAL AUDIT</b>	Preparing Community Groups for Collective Monitoring of Health and Nutrition Services/Schemes
<b>ENGAGEMENT WITH STATE NUTRITION POLICY-MAKING PROCESS</b>	Bringing conceptual framework and approach of Nutri-Smart Community on the Policy Platform, Drafting of Policy framework, State Nutrition Policy, Social Audit, Tribal Nutrition, Nutrition Education Interventions, Nutri-Gardens, etc

## KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF EVIDENCE BASE

CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN	RNP PROJECT DOMAIN
<b>DEVELOPING CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS</b>	Concept of Nutri-Governance, Role of Women, Community Leaders and Panchayats
<b>MODULE AND MANUAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	Community Monitoring, Functioning of Sahyogini Matru Samiti, Sahyogini Matru Samiti Meeting Manual, Social Audit and Community Monitoring Manual, etc
<b>DEVELOPING OF CONCEPT NOTES AND CASE STUDIES (IN THE SPECIFIC CONTEXT)</b>	Conceptual Framework on Community Participation and Women Leadership in Nutrition Security, Concept Note on Public Accountability for Nutrition Security, etc
<b>DEVELOPING IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORKS</b>	Implementation Framework of State Nutrition Policy

# Concept and Process

We have learned from our interventions in the community as well as from the analysis of various food and nutrition security programs that isolated and merely government or private institution or facility-based interventions cannot bring about change in the situation. It is the most crucial approach to bring the individual (child, women, men, and persons from the third gender), family, community, village, and state in one thread of intervention, where the community has knowledge and understanding about the problem, its root causes, analyze the resources required and skills to use them.

**NSMP entails the following process:**

## **a. Community Engagement Without Prejudices**

It is also a fundamental principle that this concept does not intend to 'blame' the victim for nutrition insecurity. There are multiple social, economic, political, cultural, ecological factors that manufacture malnutrition and push people into the vicious cycle of hunger, poverty and deprivation. It was observed that when we are open to listening to the voices of the community and their silence patiently, we get much better options for our progress. It is essential to be patient in keeping our ideas to ourselves for the correct timing. In the end, we will come to know that with the support of moderation or facilitation for giving a structural shape to their living knowledge these communities have started knowing and understanding their problems and their causes. Furthermore, from the learning of the field interventions, it has resulted that it takes a few months for the community to become vocal and speak from their heart and using their brains.

In this process, our objective is to find answers/solutions from the people instead of throwing our answers or solutions to them. Our organization and team need to be equipped with curiosity and the correct questions. The following behaviours can be adopted while intervening the community group:

- Keen listener
- Engage in dialogue
- Asking more questions
- Responding without countering their statements
- Processing every piece of information received from the community
- Observant of eco-system/surrounding/expressions/facilities etc.

## **b. Village Mapping (Resources and Vulnerability)**

All pieces of information are extracted in a participatory process and put down on the maps/pictures and tables.

## **c. Information Collection, Compilation, and Processing**

NSMP gives us a great opportunity to find very useful, genuine, and realistic information if we listen and observe. We have to develop a system and skill in our team on what to document, where to document, and when to document! If we are just taking notes in the community meeting, we will get into a stage - "Connection Lost."



#### **d. Presentation of Information**

In the NSMP process, it is very clear that we present information/data in a community-friendly format. For this purpose, we use participatory tools and prepare different maps for depicting diverse issues and situations, such as Resource Mapping, Mapping of Food insecure Families, etc.

#### **e. Situation Analysis**

Information collection or knowledge generation is not activity-based work, it is a process-driven exercise. The efficiency of NSMP depends on the fact that our team needs to be open and alert towards new information and learnings every moment/ in every meeting or discussion. Observation and Qualitative information play a very crucial role in the analysis.

#### **f. Back to the Community**

After processing the information, we use the same section of information and findings in the community meetings. It means that we use a very specific and contextual set of data and information in the community discussion. This step can also be termed as “Step for verifying/ validating the received information and findings.”

#### **g. Documentation**

At every level, our team members, who are facilitating the process, keep documenting the procedural, case studies and set of issues/questions emerging from the process. It is a very important part of the NSMP process, as the principal analysis should be based on the village/community-specific information. We have also learned that, for making any effort towards food and nutrition security, local history (history of the village), caste and social relations, and gender relations should be analyzed seriously.

#### **h. Preparation of Village and Panchayat Development Plan**

At this stage under Nutrition-Sensitive Micro Planning, we facilitate the process of making of Village and Panchayat Development Plan from the perspective of Nutrition Security. As we have made it clear that the NSMP is fundamentally based on the 3 segments – Nutrition Specific Interventions, Nutrition-Sensitive Intervention, and Nutrition Governance, it is important to follow all of these segments in the planning framework. The NSMP process gives skills and confidence to the community leaders, Women, and Youth that they can also analyze their problems, their causes, and they can also develop a plan for a solution.

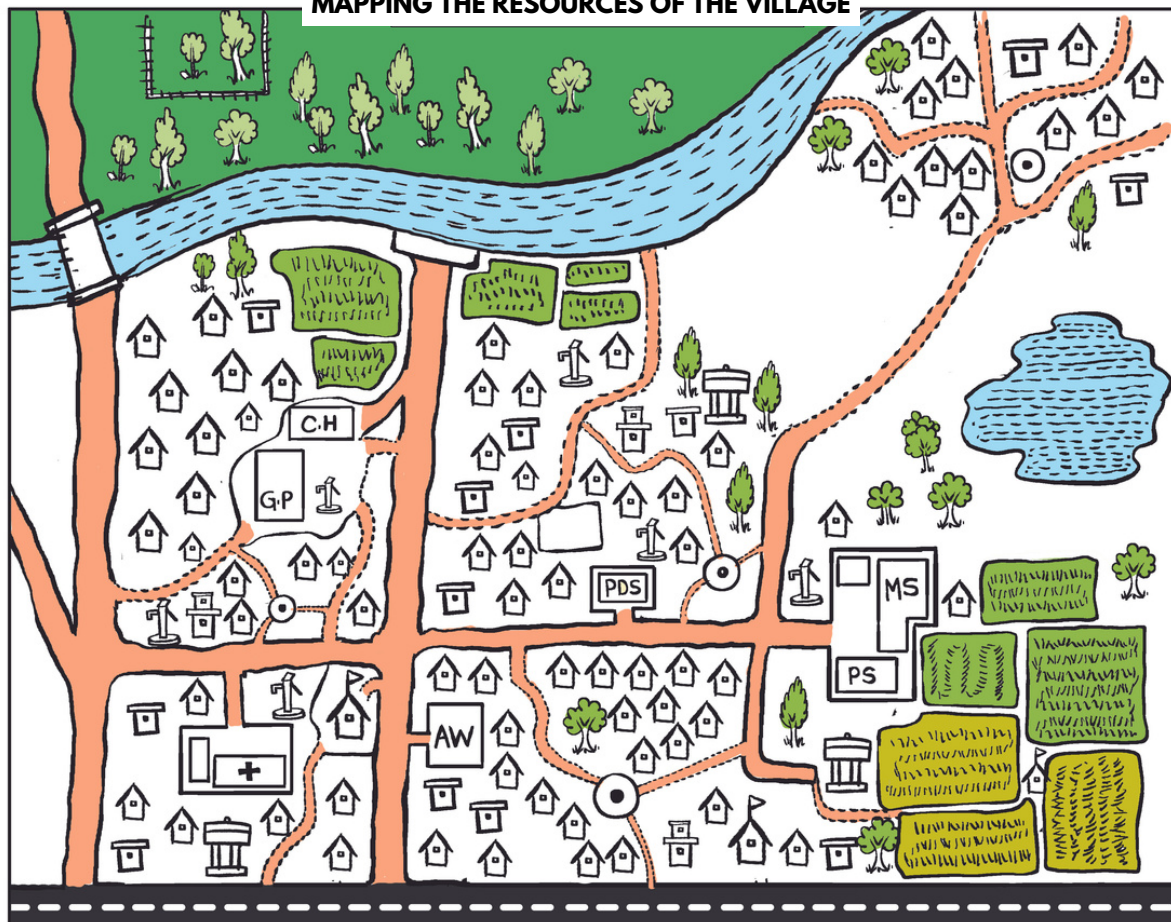
#### **i. Follow-up Processes**

It includes frequent discussions and sharing of the progress from both sides – the facilitator and the community.

## MAPPING OF HEALTH AND NUTRITION STATUS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF THE VILLAGE



## MAPPING THE RESOURCES OF THE VILLAGE





# Learning

## PROCESSES

Processes are more important than the outcome. We need to keep capturing the learnings. Usually, we do not consider community engagement and mobilization very seriously, although their involvement becomes the core pillar of the intervention.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Members can engage effectively in analysing the problem, its causes and possible solutions, if they are given space to think, talk and take the process forward.



## UNDERSTANDING

If causes are understood by the community, positive action towards the solution has an immense possibility.



## PERSPECTIVE

Nutrition-Sensitive Micro Planning is to be applied from the people's perspective, not as a sophisticated and complicated matrix.



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

To manage the issues of nutrition security, it is important to discuss the complete cycle of resource management – Resource Mapping, Access to Resources, Responsible Utilization of Resources and Protection of Resources



## ACCESS TO ENTITLEMENTS

Access to entitlements of Food and Nutrition Security, Forest and Other Natural Resources, Social Safety Nets etc. is a very important component of NSMP.



## MAPPING

Resource Mapping and Vulnerability Mapping are two very important tools in the NSMP Process. Often analysis and findings are kept aside after the initial processes. All maps and their findings need to be taken along with about every step.



## STORYTELLING

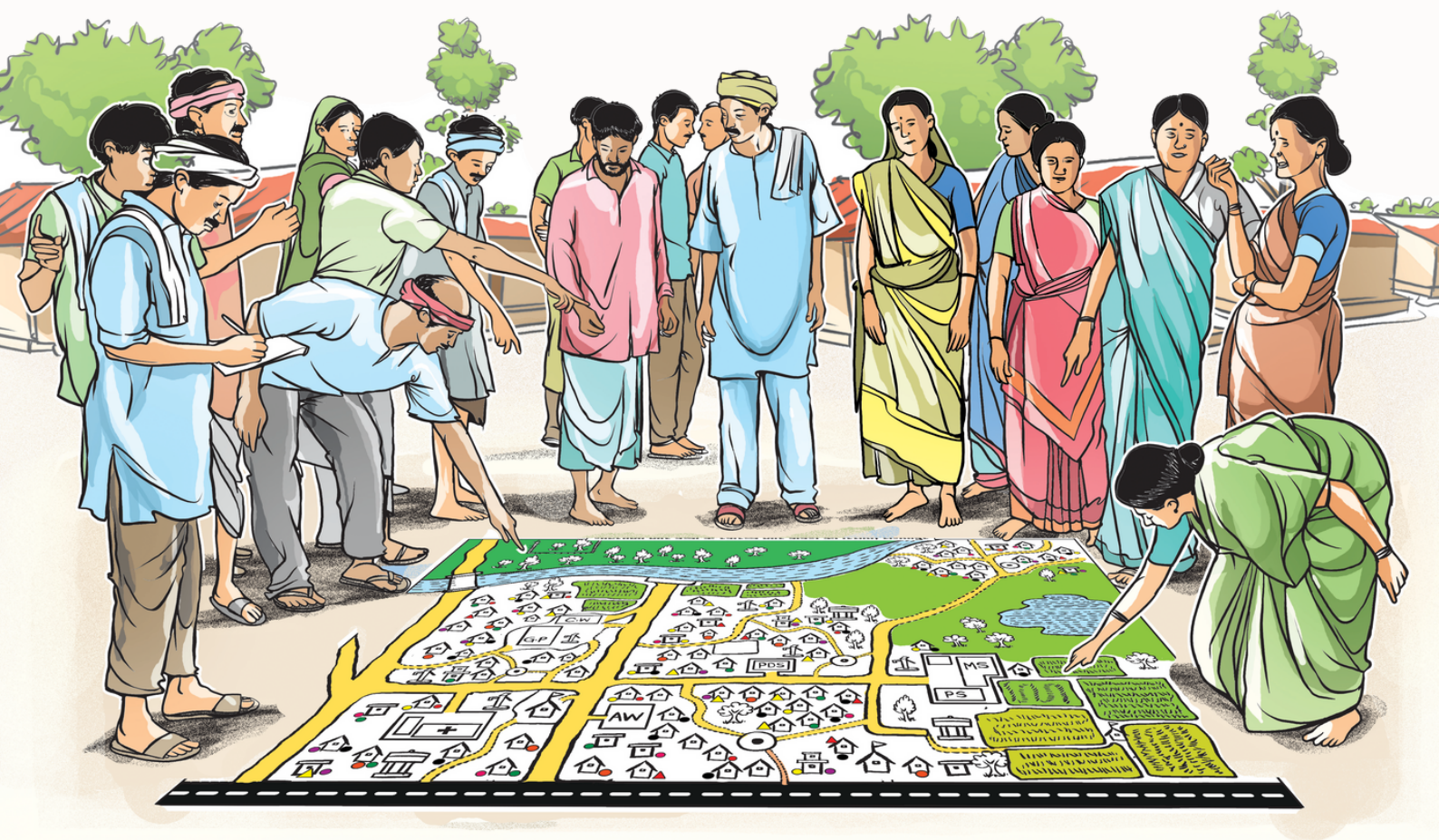
As a facilitator organisation and team, we need to strengthen our storytelling and communication capacities.



# NUTRITION SMART COMMUNITY







## REGIONAL NUTRITION PROGRAM | INDIA

