



Observing National Nutrition Week

1st to 7th September 2017

Organized by

National Association of Man for Mankind (NAMM)

With the support of

The Hans Foundation, New Delhi

National Nutrition Week is observed every year across India during the period of 1st to 7th September. It was conceived by Food and Nutrition Board, Government of India in the year of 1982 as an annual event to raise awareness among various stakeholders on different aspects and importance of Nutrition. The theme for 2017 was "Optimal Infant & Young Child Feeding Practices: Better Child Health". National Association of Man for Mankind (NAMM) organized campaign in its project areas on this theme during the 1st week of September 2017.

Introduction:-

Adequate nutrition during pregnancy and first two years of childhood is essential to ensure the growth, health, and development of children to their full potential. Poor nutrition increases the risk of infection, illness and in many cases death of the children. Nutrition deficiency in first 1000 days (9 months of Pregnancy and first 2 years of childhood) is directly linked to long-term impairment in growth and health. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-IV) report highlights the status of stunting, wasting and underweight children which is a cause of concern in whole of India. There is evidence that adults who were malnourished in early childhood have impaired intellectual performance. They may also have reduced capacity for physical work. It is also like a cycle for the women. Those women, who were malnourished as children, their reproductive capacity is affected, their infants may have lower birth weight. However the best part with malnutrition is that it can be stopped at any stage of the life. However, focusing in first 1000 days is extremely important.

In 2017, the women and child development ministry announced to spread the message of “Optimal Infant & Young Child Feeding Practices: Better Child Health” during the observation of the National Nutrition Week from 1st to 7th September 2017. In this context, NAMM organized village level meetings in all its project areas of Nayagram to spread the messages on the theme of Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices. The Participatory Learning & Action (PLA) method was adopted by NAMM while organizing this meeting.

Campaign Launching:-

On 1st September 2017, NAMM organized the campaign launching meeting in Khas Jungle village of Nayagram. Mothers, village leaders, Panchayati Raj representatives, Anganwadi workers, ASHAs, School teacher, ASHA and other villagers were participated in this campaign launching meeting. The objective of this launching meeting is to kick start the programme, share with the key community level stakeholders about the aims and objectives of the campaign and also raise awareness among the villagers on the theme. NAMM has been involved, different government stakeholders in this launching meeting as a strategy who have inaugurated the campaign. The posters developed for the campaign were also launched by these stakeholders.

In the launching meeting, NAMM has shared its understanding on the following points with different stakeholders and villagers.

- What is National Nutrition Week?
- Why celebrate Nutrition Week?
- Importance of Optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding.

What is National Nutrition Week

The National Nutrition Week (NNW) is observed every year across India from 1st to 7th of September. It was conceived by the Food and Nutrition Board in the year 1982 as an annual event. The basic objective of the event is to increase awareness generation on the importance of nutrition for health which has an impact on development, productivity, economic growth and wellbeing of people in the country.

Why celebrate Nutrition Week

Nutrition is an issue of survival, health and development for current and succeeding generations. Child born underweight have impaired immune function and increased risk of diseases such as diabetes and heart diseases in their later life. Malnourished children tend to have lower IQ and impaired cognitive ability, thus affecting their school performance and then productivity in their later life. It has to be realized that the nutritional health in all age groups represents a National economic asset.

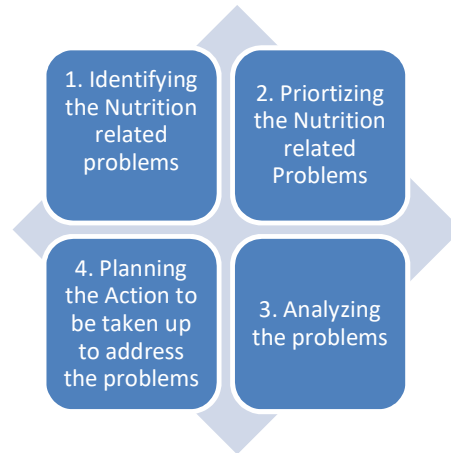
Importance of Optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding

Optimal infant and young child feeding practices include early initiation, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, timely and appropriate complementary feeding and continued breastfeeding up to two years and beyond. These practices ensure young children the best possible way to start life. Breast-feeding is undoubtedly the nature's way of nurturing the child and creates bond between the mother and the child. It provides development and learning opportunities for the infant stimulating all five senses of the child – sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch. Breast-feeding fosters emotional security and affection with a life- long impact on psycho social development. Special fatty acids in breast milk lead to increased intelligence quotient (IQ) and better visual acuity. The complementary nutrition must start from 7 months of the child and it should be done along with breast feeding. The complementary food and breast feeding must be done in more frequencies. Along with it, there must be timely and complete immunization. Weight measurement, growth monitoring and plotting needs to be done in every month to understand the status of the child. Along with this, regular counselling needs to be done for the mothers so that they could take regular care of their children.

Participatory Learning Meeting at the Village Level:

NAMM had planned to organize focused programme during the nutrition week. Therefore it has designed a special meeting titled **“Participatory Learning Meeting on Nutrition”** with the mothers and adolescent girls in all the 24 project villages. The objective of this meeting was not to give a solution to the community but to discuss the same with the community and come out of a feasible solution which is accepted locally and is sustainable. NAMM’s has used the method of Participatory Rural Appraisal and Participatory Learning and Action to design this meeting.

4 areas of Participatory Learning Meeting on Nutrition



Before the Nutrition Week, a plan has been developed and all the staffs were oriented on the same. Different IEC materials, posters and standees were developed to be used during the community meetings to start the discussion. NAMM has also detailed out some community games to be played during the meeting to motivate the mothers and the adolescent girls.

After the launching meeting in Khas Jungle villages, NAMM’s health workers started the Participatory Learning on Nutrition Meetings in different villages on different dates.



Generally, the meeting started with a story of a malnourished child who died in the absence of proper food, care and treatment. The health workers after sharing the story asked the women and adolescents about what they understood from the story. Based on the answers, the health workers establish the fact that how first 1000 days (270 days of Pregnancy + 365 days + 365 days) are important and shape the child's future. Then the health workers showed the poster and standees and facilitate discussion on the need of proper IYCF. The women and adolescents then share about the problems they face, prioritize the problems, analyze the prioritized problems and discuss on the ways of addressing them. NAMM has been planned to follow up the action plans with the mothers and adolescents.



These meetings were unique and were totally different from the normal village meetings done by the organization. These meetings were focused and more importance was given to the women and adolescents to share their understanding and experience. It is expected that the involvement of the mothers and adolescents will stimulate them and they will start taking positive action at their household level on the aspects of Nutrition.



List of villages where PLA meetings were held during the week

SI No	Name of the Village	Date of Participatory Meeting	No of Women and Adolescents participated
1	Khasjungle	01-09-2017	24
2	Gulpha	01-09-2017	28
3	Panchkahania	02-09-2017	23
4	Chiripiti	02-09-2017	33
5	Chotakhankdi	02-09-2017	31
6	Barakati	02-09-2017	27
7	Charpada	03-09-2017	29
8	Podasia	03-09-2017	38
9	Banskhali	03-09-2017	31
10	Sathatia	03-09-2017	35
11	Baligedia	04-09-2017	33
12	Chandua	04-09-2017	31
13	Murakhunta	04-09-2017	27
14	Dhumsahi	04-09-2017	21
15	Kuldiha	05-09-2017	38
16	Jhagadi	05-09-2017	42
17	Srirampur	05-09-2017	36
18	Chotatalpada	05-09-2017	30
19	Baksha	06-09-2017	33

20	Balimundi	06-09-2017	38
21	Rakhalban	06-09-2017	29
22	Jambani	07-09-2017	32
23	Khandarpada	07-09-2017	27
24	Arra	07-09-2017	29
	Total		745

Learning of NAMM from the Nutrition Week Campaign:-

NAMM has used the participatory learning method for the first time to spread awareness and initiate discussion on nutrition among mothers and adolescent's. The team felt that the focused meetings could be more effective if properly facilitated. Some of the health workers facilitated the meetings very well where as some others could have been better. NAMM has learnt that Participatory learning methods could be well designed and executed in the larger scale to raise awareness and address nutrition related problems.



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