Supply and demand from the regional perspective

Experiences from India
Introduction: Malnutrition status in India

Malnutrition is the underlying cause of India’s high under-five mortality - 55

World Bank: “Malnutrition is India’s silent emergency”

Eradicating malnutrition is a part of Sustainable Development Goals

National Family Health Survey (’16): 35.7% children below 5 years are underweight, 38.4% stunted and 21% wasted.

Total SAM Load = 7.5% of under-five children; approx. 9 million children

The 2017 Global Hunger Index(GHI) Report ranked India 97th of 118 countries with a serious hunger situation.
Current Policy for SAM: Room for improvement

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<th>Current SAM treatment framework</th>
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<td>India has adopted the facility based approach towards dealing with the issue of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) through establishment of Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres (NRC).</td>
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<th>NRCs</th>
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<td>NRCs usually deal with only medically complicated cases of SAM.</td>
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<td>Low coverage – less than 1200 NRCs (each with about 10 beds) in India.</td>
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<td>Logistic difficulties for poor families</td>
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How policy-making works in India?

- India is a federal polity - 29 states and 7 Union Territories
- Health, constitutionally, is a state subject; but states guided by Centre
- Division of Labour - Centre lays the standards and provides the funds; States do the brick and mortar implementation
Nuflower initiatives on Ground

- **Generated awareness** on RUTF amongst the policy makers, CSR funds and other public health ecosystem players. Activity Bandwidth – Face to Face conversations & preparation of quick briefs on the subject matter etc.

- **Materializing discussions into pilot programs** - Pilots have happened in some shape or form in over 5 states in India.

- **RUTF/CMAM visibility in media, academia and conferences** - Evidence generation has taken place in controlled settings as well, passionate debate over pros and cons in the media – CMAM and RUTF is well-known amongst public health ecosystem players today.
The Debate!

TODAY'S PAPER

Unicef initiative to tackle malnutrition in children

Rajulapudi Srinivas
Vijayawada, October 12, 2015 06:00 IST
Updated: November 01, 2016 17:47 IST

Proposes to launch pilot project in State to supply therapeutic food

The United Nations Children’s Fund (Unicef) is planning to launch a pilot project of supplying nutritious food for children in the State.

No quick-fix solution: Don't use packaged food to fight malnutrition, says govt

Rema Nagarajan | TNN | Updated: Sep 12, 2017, 08:00 IST

NEW DELHI: The Women and Child Development ministry has written to all states and union territories that there isn't enough evidence to support the use of Ready-to-Use-Therapeutic foods (RUTF) for the management of severe acute malnutrition (SAM). This is a blow to the multi-crore complex of international NGOs who push packaged food as a strategy to address severe malnutrition and companies that produce them.

Business Standard

States can feed malnourished children therapeutic food: Centre

Press Trust of India | New Delhi | November 12, 2017 Last Updated at 17:57 IST

In a major change in its nutrition policy, the central government has decided that states are free to take a call on providing ready-to-use therapeutic food to children suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

The Centre had so far maintained that the use of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) was "not an accepted policy" and that "enough evidence" was not available for treating children suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM).

Give Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food a chance

Over the past few weeks, there has been a vigorous debate about Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) in the media. Reportedly, certain Indian states are trying to experiment with the use of it - mostly by drawing on already successful pilots that have happened in states like Rajasthan, Gujarat and others, and perhaps more importantly, by drawing on the fact that internationally over 2 million Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) children are treated across the globe using the RUTF commodity.
Current Status of RUTF in India - AMBIGUOUS

- In 2017, Ministry of WCD issued directives and informed state governments, “RUTF is not an accepted policy for treatment of severe acute malnutrition” – drawing on RUTF’s contentious history in India.

- Later in fall 2017 - early 2018; Government of India eventually decided, “For management of SAM children the decision to provide RUTF may be left to the discretion of individual states in consultation with the National Technical Board on Nutrition, which has been constituted by NITI Aayog”.

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A NU PATH TOWARDS A HEALTHY LIFE
Long term challenges to CMAM in India

• **Bad Press & Messaging Issues:** The first initiation of RUTF in 2008-09 without collaboration with local govt gave it bad press; RUTF has often been construed to be in opposition to local recipes/food types, breastfeeding and other local practices – all of which is FALSE!

• **Ideological Issues:** The debate surrounding RUTF has been emotional and ideological rather than simply a matter of figuring out what works. Some public health ecosystem players who influence policy fundamentally opposed to presence of packed foods or private players.

• **Cost Factor:** While RUTF is cheaper than facility-based options. Presence of other health and nutrition programmes along with no Central funding for CMAM leaves less room for state governments to finance large CMAM programmes.
Way Forward

**DEVELOPMENT OF CMAM GUIDELINES OR A NATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**
- To standardize practices across India on treatment of SAM
- To set stringent quality standards on the procurement and manufacturing of RUTF
- To settle the delegation of responsibility w/n govt.

**INTEGRATION WITH EXISTING NUTRITION PROGRAMMES**
- Instead of positioning as a wholesale new health programme, CMAM should find a way of integrating itself with existing nutrition feeding programmes in India.

**ALTERNATIVE FORMULATIONS**
- Use of different recipes shall help in acclimatizing the product with Indian decision-makers and Indian taste (non-peanut based).

**CLEAR MESSAGING**
- “RUTFs are meant to TREAT SAM children with appetite and without complications and a temporary measure at that”. NOT A SILVER BULLET for every malnutrition problem.
THANK YOU!