

## Strengthening the delivery of community outreach services through capacity building of frontline workers

KHPT is implementing the CARE India-MNCH project in Bihar to strengthen the capacity of frontline workers to mentor ASHAs and improve critical MNCH outcomes.

### KHPT trains 81 District Resource persons to capacitate frontline workers



■ **DRP training in Lakisarai**

CARE India has identified a team comprised of Block Community Facilitators and ASHA Facilitators to be District Resource Persons (DRPs). On average, 8-10 DRPs per district have been identified to roll out training for the frontline workers in their respective districts. In April, the KHPT team conducted trainings for 81 DRPs in four batches in Lakisarai, Gopalganj, Kishanganj and West Champaran districts. The trainings, which were facilitated in person with the Master Trainer with the online presence of the KHPT resource person, were halted due to the second wave of COVID-19 and will be resumed once the situation normalizes.

### KHPT reviews health module for Gram Panchayat and Urban Local Bodies

The National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC) is developing a module to train Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) on matters of health. KHPT staff reviewed the first chapter on understanding health and its determinants and the role of GPs and ULBs. The team guided the session framework and re-wrote parts of the training process to make it a more participatory one, using adult learning principles that would make it easier for illiterate or semi-literate participants to understand concepts.

## Reducing malnutrition among children, adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women in Koppal Block of Koppal district, Karnataka

KHPT's initiative intends to address the gap in additional nutrition need among critical population sub groups by improving the consumption of nutritious food through behaviour change communication, and improving access to Fortified Blended Food (FBF) through community structures. The project is funded by the HT Parekh Foundation.

### Adolescent girl nutrition volunteers innovate to ease their burden

Each Adolescent Girl Nutrition Volunteer (AGNV) with the project covers about 75 to 100 target population spread across in a village. They have carry 50-75 kilograms of Fortified Blended Food (FBF) packets for distribution. In addition, they also carry a weighing scale, measuring tape, communication material, tools and handheld tabs during their field work.

To address this challenge, Kavita Gaddi and Shilpa Halalli, two AGNVs from Vadaganal village in Hiresindogi cluster, found a unique solution for the problem. In these villages, the community members use locally-made handheld vehicles to transport water to their homes. These vehicles are commonly available and the AGNVs have started using them for distribution of FBF in their localities.



■ **An AGNV uses a handheld cart to distribute FBF**

## Evaluating the long-term efficacy of daily consumption of indigenously developed extruded micronutrient fortified rice

St. Johns Research Institute (SJRI) is carrying out a home-based study to scientifically evaluate the long-term efficacy (two years) of daily consumption of indigenously developed extruded micronutrient fortified rice in improving iron stores as the main outcome in school going children (6-12 years). The study is funded by the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India (DBT), and is implemented by KHPT in Koppal.

### Study shows the lockdown's effects on the nutritional status of children in Koppal

As part of the study titled "Long term (2 years) efficacy of indigenously developed micronutrient fortified rice in improving iron stores in school children and their mothers", around 200 primary school children were identified post screening for the study in Koppal in February 2020. Due to the pandemic, the study could not be continued and required a re-evaluation of blood biochemistry of the selected children to begin the study in



■ **Blood collection for re-evaluation of blood biochemistry**

February 2021. As a result of the lockdown, non-availability of mid-day meals in school and food insecurity, the prevalence of anemia and iron deficiency anemia almost doubled in these children, although the prevalence of iron deficiency did not increase. The prevalence of thinness as measured by the body mass index for age was also found to have increased. This strongly emphasises the need for social safety net programs to maintain nutritional status of children apart from the need for household level food security interventions.

## Research Publication

### KHPT paper on gender-based violence among ASHAs published in peer-reviewed journal

A research paper based on a KHPT's study to investigate the impact of gender-based violence on ASHAs, who act as a critical link between the village community and health systems, was published in the Journal of

Global Health Reports in June. The paper, titled "Investigating violence against Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs): A mixed methods study from rural North Karnataka, India", draws from KHPT's experience of engaging with ASHAs in Koppal and Bagalkot districts. It throws light on the multiple forms and experiences of violence among the ASHAs and the need for a multilevel approach to safeguard their rights. It can be accessed [here](#).

## Addressing micronutrient deficiencies through edible oil, milk and wheat flour fortification

KHPT works as a neutral representative in catalyzing, coordinating and implementing the scale up of large-scale staple food fortification across 13 states in India through effective government and other stakeholder engagement in partnerships with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN).

### Government Engagement

#### KHPT-GAIN recognized as technical support agency for large scale food fortification in Madhya Pradesh

KHPT-GAIN has been recognized as the technical support agency to the Food Safety Administration, Madhya Pradesh to provide technical assistance on large scale food fortification, to build capacities of food safety officials, to ensure quality assurance practices and to support strengthening the state food labs to align with NABL standards through gap audits and knowledge and skill development of laboratory staff.

#### KHPT-GAIN team attends Madhya Pradesh stakeholders meeting on wheat flour fortification

KHPT and GAIN teams on April 1 attended a state-level stakeholders meeting on the initiation of wheat

flour fortification in safety net programs in Madhya Pradesh under the chairmanship of Mr. Faiz Ahmed Kidwai, IAS, Principal Secretary Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection. The proposal to pilot wheat flour fortification in the state was made taking into consideration the high prevalence of anaemia, particularly due to iron and folic acid deficiencies, in children, adolescents, men and women of reproductive age in the state. The KHPT and GAIN teams sensitized all the stakeholders on the importance of large scale food fortification and also briefed them on the technical aspects of wheat flour fortification.

KHPT-GAIN will support the Food and Civil Supplies Department, Bhopal, throughout this intervention. Fortified wheat flour will be supplied by KHPT-GAIN to some Anganwadi centres to understand consumer behaviour and

sensory acceptability. KHPT will also support the organization of exposure visits for officials from the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department and the Madhya Pradesh Food and Civil Supplies Corporation to Himachal Pradesh, which has achieved 100% wheat flour fortification through its social safety net programs.



The KHPT-GAIN team at the stakeholders meeting

### Capacity Building

#### KHPT conducts gap assessment of government food testing laboratories in six states



#### A gap assessment meeting with a laboratory in Madhya Pradesh

KHPT staff conducted gap assessments of 10 laboratories under various government departments, including the departments of food safety and food and civil supplies, in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal

Pradesh. The exercise was carried out with respect to analysis of fortificants in fortified staples and prerequisites to obtain NABL certification for the fortificant analysis. The gap assessment was carried out with the support of TUV Nord, a certified lab audit agency. The recommendation reports of the audit were submitted to the respective laboratories. The gap assessment clearly indicated the need for training of laboratory staff in micronutrient analysis of fortified foods, along with equipment, chemicals and reference materials requirements.

Following the assessment, KHPT has requested all the laboratories to depute two analysts from their labs to join a 5-day training course to be held in July at the KLE Society in Belagavi, Karnataka. This course is being launched through the joint efforts of GAIN, KHPT and KLE Society and the principal trainer will be Prof. M. M. Godbole, a Distinguished Professor at the KLE Academy of Higher Education and Research (KAHER), Belagavi.

#### KHPT provides technical support to MP government and soybean oil producers' association

KHPT attended a virtual meeting on June 14 organized by the Madhya Pradesh State Civil Supplies Corporation (MPSCSC) with representatives of the Soybean Oil Producers Association (SOPA) under the chairmanship of Mr. Abhijeet Agarwal IAS, MD, MPSCSC. The aim of the meeting was to update SOPA about the state government's recent initiative to mainstream fortified edible oil through safety net programs in the state in order to tackle Vitamin and Vitamin D and to discuss the various conditions of the draft tender document for centralized procurement of fortified oil. KHPT provided technical support to the SOPA members, explaining the processes of fortification. The organization will be supporting the Food and Civil Supplies department in the preparation of the tender document.

### Knowledge and Learning Transfer

#### Research study finds gaps in industry edible oil fortification efforts

KHPT-GAIN developed a research brief on its study titled, "A Qualitative Assessment of Fortified Edible Oil Samples from the Open Market", which identified locally produced fortified edible oil brands available in the open market in 8 states to establish whether they met fortification standards for Vitamin A and D as prescribed by the Food



Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). 144 samples of fortified edible oil were collected from the local market and sent to a NABL accredited laboratory to test for Vitamin A and D, along with PV (Peroxide Value). The brief can be accessed [here](#).

The brief was shared with 229 partner industries across the eight intervention states, all of which were then contacted over the phone to discuss the market assessment activity in detail. Industries were requested to send the fortified edible oil samples from their plants for analysis of fortificants as a next step to identify the gaps in the fortification process, supply chain, storage, transportation etc.

#### COVID safety protocols developed and distributed to industries

The KHPT team developed a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) document entitled "Effective Safety Standards to be Applied in Food Businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic" to sensitize industries on measures to keep their workers safe and

prevent any avoidable disruption in operations. The SOP is designed to help food business operators in building the capacities of their management/staff on key measures such as upgrading of cleaning and sanitation measures, disinfecting surfaces and high-touch points, educating staff on the virus and how to protect themselves and others, and reinforcing protocols such as physical distancing, hand washing, and wearing masks.

1200 copies of the SOP were printed in Hindi (here) and English (here) and circulated widely to around 600 partnering industries, including edible oil industries, milk dairies and roller flour mills across 19 project intervention states.

#### KHPT facilitates press release for awareness on fortification and long-term immunity

KHPT worked with a media agency to disseminate a press release in English and Hindi on the importance of food fortification and its potential to improve long-term immunity. The press release also provided a short overview of fortification and how consumers can recognize fortified food brands from the blue F+ logo on the package. The press release was picked up by 85 English publications and 15 Hindi publications across the country.

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