



राजेश भूषण, आईएएस
सचिव

RAJESH BHUSHAN, IAS
SECRETARY



भारत सरकार
स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग
स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय

Government of India
Department of Health and Family Welfare
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
D.O. No. M.12015/56/2020-MCH
17th August, 2020

Dear Dr. Haque,

It has come to the notice of the Government that UNICEF is sponsoring webinars under the aegis of 'India maternal nutrition consortium partners' for promoting the implementation and use of Multiple Micronutrients and Vitamin D supplementation (MMS), as a recommendation by WHO, to be implemented by the States and the National Government.

However, the recently released 'Updated Guidelines on Antenatal Care and Nutrition for Multiple Micronutrients and Vitamin D supplementation (MMS)' clearly recommend the use of MMS which contain elemental iron of only 30mg or less in rigorous research context only and not as a routine practice.

Since anemia is a public health problem in India with its prevalence among women in the age group of 15-19 years to be as high as 53% (NFHS IV), the Government launched the Anemia Mukht Bharat (AMB) programme in the year 2018 (where UNICEF too was a partner) which recommends consumption of 60mg of elemental iron, for accelerating the annual rate of its decline from one to three percentage points. Hence if the 'new updated guidelines' with the recommendation of only 30 mg or less of elemental iron are adopted, it could lead to compounding this public health problem further.

You are therefore urged to continue supporting the existing national strategies which have been arrived at after detailed deliberations with all stakeholders and consensus including with UNICEF.

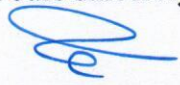
Moreover in future before sponsoring any new initiative or promotion of any new policy/guideline/product it would be advisable to seek approval of MoHFW in a spirit of healthy collaboration between the Development Partners and the Government. Any deviation from this practice has the potential to create avoidable confusion in the States/UTs. All programmatic and technical strategies are devised by the country through established mechanism of expert group consultation and communicating to the States/UTs. UNICEF experts are also included appropriately in these expert group consultations, wherever relevant.

I request you to ensure that in future UNICEF adheres to these mechanisms.

We look forward to our continued collaboration.

Kind Regards

Yours sincerely,


(Rajesh Bhushan)

Dr. Yasmeen Ali Haque
(Country Representative) UNICEF India