

Formation of Provincial Fortification Alliances (PFAs) to end Malnutrition across Pakistan

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Editorial

Institutionalization and sustainability of provincial fortification alliances matters for citizens of Pakistan. PFAs may provide grounds for voicing on issues and challenges related with malnutrition and further provide ways and means for addressing implementation level gaps on fortification. There must have great collaboration among PFAs and Pakistan flour mills and Pakistan Vanaspati manufacturer's associations for strengthening public private partnership on food fortification.

Ending micronutrients deficiencies through zero hunger is at the heart of UN sustainable development goal and interesting thing is that, Pakistan representative to United Nations, Ms. Maleeha Lodhi also conducted meeting with Federal minister, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal and Prime Minister of Pakistan. While it is assured by the federal minister, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal that sustainable development goals are well incorporated in vision 2015 by the Ministry of Planning and Development. Which means government of Pakistan is committed to do efforts and sustainable initiatives with respect to sustainable development goals for the people of Pakistan and great progress is being made for ending malnutrition in Pakistan. Large-scale fortification with essential vitamin and minerals in wheat flour, edible oil and ghee is the key to improve nutrition status of Pakistan and this may be achieved by these PFAs with representation of Pakistan flour mills and Pakistan Vanaspati manufacturer's associations.

Rationally, alliances. Networks and platforms play pivotal role in strengthening initiatives towards solution of challenges facing by people of Pakistan. Alliances indicate the amplification of voices of deprived and marginalized segments of society. Following to the nature of issue on which alliance is formulated, representatives are identified and selected for the alliance. Electronic and print media, vocal and progressive members of civil society and mainly elected representatives and relevant government representatives are brain of alliances.

Realistically, I was happy to hear the news published in The Nation newspaper on 14-Jan-2016 that PFAs formed to end malnutrition in Pakistan. Formation of PFAs in all the provinces have constituted and notified provincial fortification alliances to eliminate malnutrition in the country. Which is applauded initiative by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination. It is envisaged that PFAs provides a platform for implementation of all nutrition policy and program. The constitution of National Fortification Alliance (NFA) in 2013 and its first all Pakistan meeting in May 2015 provided foundations and grounds regarding formation of PFAs at the provincial level. It is important to note that all the provinces have completed the constitution of their Provincial Fortification Alliances (PFAs with the constant support of ministry of national health services,

regulations and coordination and health departments at provincial level.

Keeping in mind the local government ordinance 2015 (amended 2013), there is need to form district fortification alliances (DFAs) at the district level in order to ensure mass public awareness raising and advocacy campaign on the implementation of nutrition policies and programs. Indeed, district level fortification alliances may provide practical implementation of nutrition policies and programs. District level fortification alliances may be linked with provincial level fortification alliances in order to get constant strategic guidelines. Implementation of policies related programs occurs at the district level, however, there is close link between policies making and implementation in order to achieve desired results and objectives.

We believe that the constitution of PFAs may be made wisely in order to achieve desired results regarding technically support with respect to development of relevant multisector policy framework and legislation on food fortification across Pakistan for the implementation of the food fortification specific programs in Pakistan. Further, PFAs may provide guide regarding research on fortification and may identify sustainable solutions to address micronutrient malnutrition in Pakistan. Provincial Fortification Alliances may be successful if district fortification alliances are to be formulated at the district level. I believe that district fortification alliances may provide on the ground issues and practical information regarding implementation of fortification programs at the local government level.

It is interesting to note that, according to business recorder, 2016 "Pakistan flour mills association (PFMAs) announced fortification of wheat flour" which is magnificent decision and initiatives by PFMAs contributing to ending iron and folic acid deficiencies among infants, children and pregnant and lactating mothers in Pakistan. Believe that Pakistan flour mills and Pakistan Vanaspati manufacturer's associations are great icon and ally for the implementation of fortification programs in Pakistan. There is great need of public private partnership and political will for the successful institutionalization and sustainability of PFAs at the provincial and further needed at the district level which may be taken as greater carrier and initiative of ending micronutrient malnutrition in Pakistan. Food Authority is in place in Punjab and need to be establish in all provinces along with provincial fortification alliances. There must have greater coordination among PFAs and food authorities in Pakistan. Institutionalization and sustainability of provincial fortification alliances matter for citizens of Pakistan specifically speaking out citizens needs and policy level issues on food fortification in Pakistan. PFAs may provide grounds for voicing on issues and challenges related with malnutrition and further provide ways and means for addressing implementation level gaps on fortification. There must have great collaboration among PFAs and Pakistan flour mills and Pakistan Vanaspati manufacturer's

associations for strengthening public private partnership on food fortification and actual implementation of food fortification programs in Pakistan.

There must have extensive outreach advocacy and mobilization initiatives by the Pakistan flour mills and Pakistan Vanaspati manufacturer's associations on the benefits and consumption of "fortified diet" and specifically the consumption of fortified wheat flour and edible ghee which will automatically swift consumers for the consumption of fortified wheat flour and edible ghee/oil on the face of fortification benefits and cost effectiveness of routine consumption of food. Therefore, public private partnership among National, provincial and district level fortification alliances, Pakistan flour mills, Pakistan

Vanaspati manufacturer's associations is demanding for the actual implementation of policy level initiatives on food fortification in Pakistan.

Provincial fortification alliances may play central role in conduction of issue based research on food fortification in Pakistan which will further leads to evidence based and data driven policy making on food fortification in Pakistan. There must have stronger partnership and collaboration among provincial fortification alliances, research and academia institutes, Pakistan flour mills and Pakistan Vanaspati manufacturer's associations for converting citizens/consumers' needs into policy level actions.