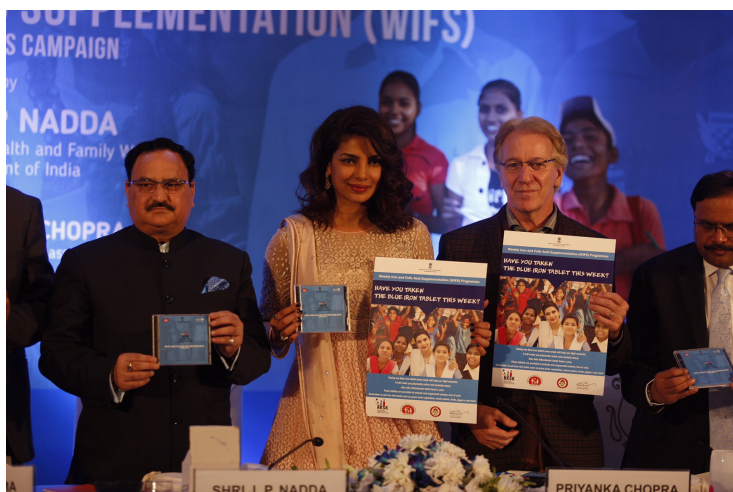


## UNICEF Ambassador Priyanka Chopra launches WIFS Awareness Campaign

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"It is our responsibility to ensure that the young energy is channelized in the right direction. This can only be achieved if the adolescents are physically and mentally well-prepared for the future of their country" said, Mr J P Nadda, union minister of health and family welfare. He was speaking on the occasion of launching of media campaign for the Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Programme (WIFS) under the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) programme of the Health Ministry. He also said that to provide one IFA tablet each to millions of adolescents every week is in itself a huge achievement.

Nutrition among adolescents is one of the priority areas for concerted action under the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram. The minister said that the ministry is working continuously to strengthen the services provided under this programme and the support of the community i.e. parents, teachers and adolescents are critical to defeat anaemia. Also present at the function was Ms. Priyanka Chopra, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador who is supporting the WIFS campaign by encouraging young adolescents to take one IFA tablet every week. The health minister stated that the association of Ms Priyanka Chopra's with this programme through the media campaign will help generate awareness on this critical issue.

Sharing her experience, Ms Priyanka Chopra said that her health improved by taking iron tablet every week to remain healthy. Adding further she said, "I am sure through our concerted efforts we will be able to bring down the prevalence of anaemia amongst the adolescents."

Highlighting the importance of IFA in one's diet, Mr BP Sharma, Secretary (Health) said, "Ministry is partnering with other departments to supplement food with Iron." He further added that awareness among adolescents about anaemia is low and Media can play a key role in delivering healthy messages across.

Mr Louis-Georges Arsenault, UNICEF Representative for India commended the WIFS programme and highlighted the importance of "awareness" and "prevention" by simple and profound nutrition. He also laid emphasis on spreading awareness about anaemia among adolescents.

The WIFS programme is implemented in both urban and rural areas among both adolescent boys and girls in school; and

only to out of school adolescent girls (both married and unmarried). The WIFS strategy involves a "fixed day" approach for WIFS distribution. It is recommended that Monday be the day on which all schools undertake the programme, with one additional designated day for absentees. To ensure high compliance in IFA supplementation supervised consumption of the IFA tablets is recommended. The programme also encourages and provides for the consumption of IFA tablets by the frontline workers such as AWW, ASHA, and teachers to enhance the value of WIFS among adolescents and community members.

MoHFW is responsible for policy formulation, technical support, yearly planning of the WIFS programme, including the allocation of resources for supply of IFA supplements and deworming tablets, developing resource material for awareness, establishing monitoring systems and reviewing the programme progress.

Under the WIFS programme for adolescents, IFA supplements are distributed free on a weekly basis to the target groups. In addition to IFA supplements, Albendazole tablets for de-worming are administered twice a year, to the same target groups.