



ICMR-ICAR Launches 'SEHAT' to Strengthen Agriculture-Nutrition-Health Convergence and Deliver Measurable Public Health Outcomes

**SEHAT- A Historic Step Reflecting India's Shift from Curative to Preventive Healthcare under PM Shri Narendra Modi:
Union Health Minister**

Strengthening Preventive Healthcare and Continuum of Care Central to Government Vision; ICMR to Play Key Role in Research and Innovation: Shri Nadda

“Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-System Approach is necessary, for which Integrating Science, Policy and Implementation are Essential: Shri J.P. Nadda

Awareness on Diet Crucial in Combating Lifestyle Diseases; Food Can Become Medicine with Right Approach: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare

SEHAT to Prioritise Biofortified Crops, Integrated Farming Systems, Occupational Health, NCD Prevention and Strengthened One Health Preparedness

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In a significant initiative to reinforce the convergence of agriculture, nutrition, and public health, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) jointly launched “**SEHAT – Science Excellence for Health through Agricultural Transformation**”, a national mission-mode programme designed to translate agricultural advancements into tangible health outcomes for the people of India.



The joint initiative of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), was unveiled by Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda, Hon'ble Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, along with Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Hon'ble Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, in the august presence of senior policymakers, eminent scientists, and key stakeholders.

Addressing the gathering, Union Health Minister, Shri J.P. Nadda, described the launch of SEHAT as a “historic step” and underscored the transformative shift in India’s public health approach under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. He noted that over the past decade, the country has moved decisively from a reactive and curative model of healthcare to a proactive, preventive, and holistic approach, driven by forward-looking policy interventions. He emphasised that SEHAT is a direct outcome of this paradigm shift.

He congratulated the Indian Council of Medical Research and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research for coming together to launch this important joint initiative, highlighting it as a model of inter-sectoral collaboration.



Shri Nadda further stated that in the last ten years, India has transitioned from dependence on imported technologies to the development of indigenous, home-grown innovations based on Indian data and needs. He noted that earlier, systems often functioned in silos, whereas today they are increasingly integrated and technology-driven, enabling more efficient and effective healthcare delivery.

Outlining the Government's vision, he emphasised the commitment to expanding access to affordable and high-quality healthcare, with a strong focus on prevention, early detection, and continuum of care. He highlighted the pivotal role of ICMR in advancing research, generating evidence, and guiding policy in this direction, while also underlining its responsibility in nurturing a robust innovation ecosystem.

He stressed the need to identify India's critical health challenges and develop targeted solutions, noting that financial resources would not be a constraint. He underscored the importance of outcome-based funding and accountability, adding that innovations must be low-cost, high-quality, and indigenous, particularly in the areas of diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines.



Drawing attention to the country's evolving health profile, Shri Nadda observed that India is currently facing a dual burden of disease, with persistent malnutrition on one hand and a rising prevalence of non-communicable and lifestyle diseases—such as hypertension, diabetes, and cancer—on the other. He highlighted the central role of diet and nutrition in addressing these challenges and reiterated the call of the Hon'ble Prime Minister for reduced consumption of sugar, salt, and oil.

He noted that while ICAR can play a critical role in ensuring the availability of nutritious and appropriate food systems, ICMR's role in validating these interventions through scientific evidence would be equally important. Emphasising the need for convergence, he stated that many of the solutions to emerging health challenges lie within the agriculture sector.

Concluding his address, Shri Nadda underlined the need for a whole-of-government and whole-of-system approach, for which integration of science, policy, and implementation is required. He noted that SEHAT represents a significant step in this direction and expressed confidence that such coordinated efforts would pave the way for a healthier and stronger India.

Speaking at the Occasion, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, emphasised the intrinsic link between agriculture and health, noting that the foundation of a healthy nation lies in a well-nourished population. Referring to wisdom from ancient Indian texts, he highlighted the importance accorded to a healthy body as the basis of overall well-being and national progress.

He described the joint initiative of the Indian Council of Medical Research and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research as “unprecedented and historic”, underscoring that agriculture and health goes hand in hand in addressing emerging public health challenges.

Shri Chouhan further highlighted the importance of generating scientific evidence to demonstrate the health benefits of specific crops and agricultural practices, noting that such validation would have far-reaching implications for improving nutrition and public health outcomes. He emphasised that what is consumed plays a critical role in determining health, and stressed the need to align agricultural production with nutritional requirements.

He stated that the SEHAT mission would serve as a cornerstone in ensuring that the food produced is aligned with the health needs of the population. He also highlighted the five priority pillars of the mission and underscored the need to promote organic and sustainable agricultural practices, which would contribute significantly to improving the health of citizens.

Emphasising the role of awareness, Shri Chouhan noted that educating people about what to eat and what to avoid—particularly in the context of lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and hypertension—is essential. He remarked that with the right approach, food itself can become medicine, and expressed confidence that the SEHAT mission would play a vital role in advancing this vision and contributing to the broader goal of One Health.



Highlighting the Need for this Initiative, Secretary, DHR & DG ICMR, Dr. Rajiv Bahl stated that India is currently navigating a dual burden of undernutrition and overnutrition, compounded by the rising prevalence of non-communicable diseases, underscoring the urgent need to align agriculture with public health objectives. He emphasized that agriculture must evolve beyond food production to become a key driver of nutrition and health outcomes.

Underscoring importance of convergence, he noted that integrating agriculture, nutrition, and health research can enable the development of nutrition-sensitive food systems that improve dietary diversity, address nutrient deficiencies, and contribute to better disease prevention and management.

He further outlined the key priority areas under the ‘SEHAT’ initiative, including the evaluation of biofortified products, promotion of integrated farming systems, strengthening the focus on occupational health of agricultural workers, and enhancing the contributions of Indian Council of Medical Research and Indian Council of Agricultural Research to the ‘One Health Mission’. Emphasizing a results-oriented approach, he highlighted that the initiative is expected to generate robust evidence on nutrition and health outcomes, develop scalable and context-specific models, strengthen inter-sectoral convergence, and create a data-driven framework to inform policy and programme interventions aimed at improving population health.

SEHAT has been envisioned as a mission-mode initiative to strategically align agricultural research and innovation with national priorities in nutrition, preventive and promotive healthcare, non-communicable diseases, farmer well-being, and One Health. The initiative embodies a structured convergence of the health and agriculture sectors, aimed at generating robust, evidence-based solutions to improve nutritional outcomes and strengthen public health.

The mission focuses on five priority areas of national significance, including the **development and evaluation of biofortified and nutrient-dense crop varieties** to address malnutrition and improve nutritional status; **strengthening integrated farming systems** to promote dietary diversification, enhance farm incomes, and build resilience; addressing **occupational health risks among agricultural workers** through targeted, evidence-based interventions; **advancing agriculture-enabled strategies for the prevention and management of non-communicable diseases** through the promotion of functional foods and nutritionally superior crop varieties; and **strengthening One Health preparedness through integrated surveillance, diagnostics, and research** at the human–animal–environment interface.



The launch of SEHAT marks an important step towards adopting an integrated approach to health by leveraging agricultural transformation as a key determinant of public health outcomes.

Shri. Bhagirath Choudhary, Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmer Welfare; Dr. Mangi Lal Jat, Secretary DARE & DG, ICAR; Ms. Anu Nagar, Additional Secretary, DHR; Dr. D.K. Yadava, DDG CS, ICAR were also present at the event.

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