

## Arogya Lakshmi – One Meal Programme, Telangana

The government of Telangana runs a 'One Full Meal' programme for pregnant and lactating women called *Arogya Lakshmi*, to reduce maternal and infant mortality. *Arogya* means healthy; *Lakshmi* is the goddess of fortune and prosperity and is a term used to refer to women. The programme had been launched in early 2013 by the undivided state of Andhra Pradesh under the name *Indiramma Amrutha Hastham*. The initiative ensures compliance with the intake of required iron supplements by pregnant women and can be seen as addressing the needs of the mother and infant during the first 1000 days.

A woman is covered under the *Arogya Lakshmi* scheme once pregnancy is confirmed, and coverage continues after delivery till the infant completes 6 months. The prescribed meal meets 40-45% of the daily calorie requirement for pregnant and lactating women. Freshly cooked food is served every day at lunch according to a pre-defined menu for the whole week. Table below gives details of the weekly menu. The Anganwadi helper cooks food at the ICDS centre.

### Weekly menu under the *Arogya Lakshmi* scheme

Day	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5
Day 1	Rice	<i>Sambar</i> with vegetables		Egg curry	Milk (200 ml)
Day 2	Rice	Dal	Green leafy vegetable curry	Egg	Milk (200 ml)
Day 3	Rice	Dal with leafy vegetables	Egg curry	Egg	Milk (200 ml)
Day 4	Rice	<i>Sambar</i> with vegetables	100 ml Curd	Egg curry	Milk (200 ml)
Day 5	Rice	Dal	Green leafy vegetable curry	Egg	Milk (200 ml)
Day 6	Rice	Dal with leafy vegetables	100 ml curd	Egg	Milk (200 ml)

Source: Department of Women and Child Welfare, Government of Telangana

The ICDS centres are closed on Sundays and to compensate for Sunday's provision of egg and milk, women are given 100 ml of curd on two weekdays and egg curry on one of the weekdays. The preparation of egg, *sambar* and curry is different each day to avoid monotony.

Along with the 'one meal', women are periodically monitored for weight, and are given iron/folic acid (IFA) tablets; they are also provided counselling by the AWW. 'Spot feeding' is a unique characteristic of the *Arogya Lakshmi* programme, and it ensures the food is consumed by the beneficiaries at the centre. Earlier, in the absence of this programme, take-home rations (THR) were provided to women; but this did not ensure consumption by them though it raised the availability of nutritious food within the household. Further, milk, a naturally nutrient-dense food often not affordable for women in economically-deprived families, is also provided under the programme. The table below summarises the cost and nutrient value of the food provided to the women under the scheme. The cost of the meal is Rs. 21/woman/day and it ensures 1192 kcal of energy and 37 gm of protein.

Cost and nutrient value of food per woman provided under the *Arogya Lakshmi* scheme

Sl. No.	Item	Quantity per day	Tentative cost per day (Rs.)	Nutritive Value	
				Energy (kcal)	Protein (g)
1	Rice	150 g	0.6	517.56	10.2
2	Dal (red gram)	30 g	2.55	104.4	7.25
3	Oil	16 g	1.1	144	0
4	Vegetables (leafy vegetables, potato, onion, beans, etc.)	50 g	1.5	52.5	1.8
5	Condiments		0.6	0	0
6	Milk (30 days) (@ ` 5.6 per day)	200 ml	9.85	273	10.03
7	Egg (30 eggs) (@ ` 3.5 per day)	1 No. (50 g)	4.2	100.92	7.76
8	Transport		0.1	0	0
9	Cooking		0.3	0	0
TOTAL			21*	1192.38	37.04

Source: Department of Women and Child Welfare, Government of Telangana

**Impact:** Provision of nutrient-dense foods at the AWCs also improves the administration of other health services for pregnant and lactating women. Pregnant women and lactating mothers at the three centres visited were appreciative of the hot meal they were provided. The AWWs also felt that the women found the *Arogya Lakshmi* scheme useful and came to the centre regularly for the noon meal. The kitchen was clean at each of the centres visited. Cooking was done on gas stoves. The helper –cum-cook keeps the place clean, fetches water and does the cooking; she is responsible for feeding the women and children.

**Source:** *Parasar, R. and Bhavani, R.V. (2018) Supplementary Nutrition Programme under ICDS: Case Study of Telangana and Tamil Nadu, LANS Working Paper Vol 2018 No 30, Brighton: IDS*