

# Rajasthan to include milk, fruits, laddoos in anganwadi menu

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**JAIPUR:** Hot dal, roti, til and besan laddoos will soon make it on to the menu of anganwadi centres that cater to around 40 lakh children and pregnant and lactating mothers in the state, officials said.

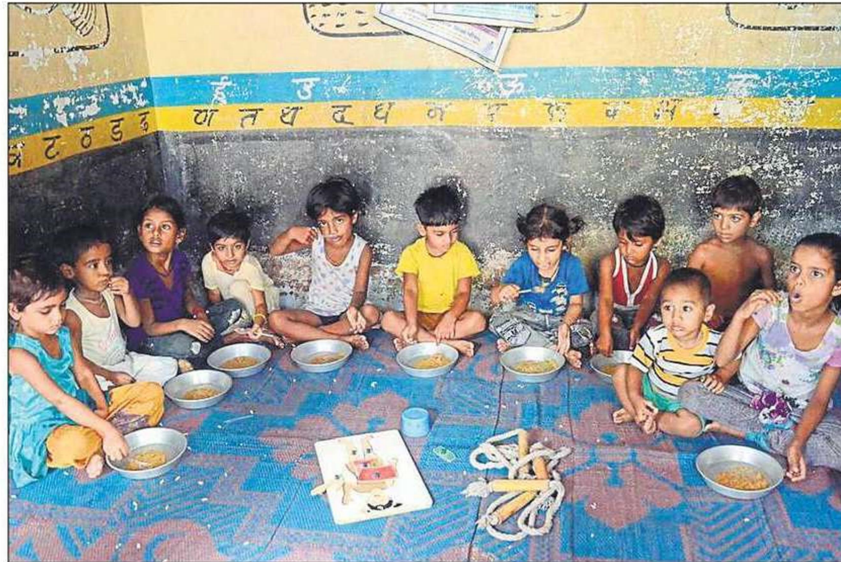
The women and child development department has proposed to revamp the menu to counter lack of interest in the state's 62,000 anganwadi centres, which play an important role in providing nutritious food to women and children and are an important agency in fighting malnutrition.

As per the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey figures, 40.9% children under five years are underweight and 44.4% are anaemic in Rajasthan. Malnutrition has posed a challenge to the state government and despite targeted interventions and schemes, the rate of malnutrition is still high.

KK Pathak, secretary, women and child development department, said the menu is being changed to bring in more variety. "The same menu everyday makes it boring and we have noticed that over time children and women are losing interest in the food."

Anganwadi centres were started in 1975 under the Integrated Child Development Scheme to cater to nutrition, health and education needs of children. The centres provide supplementary nutrition, pre-school education, and health services for children from six months to six years and to pregnant and lactating women.

Morning snacks and afternoon



■ According to the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey figures, 40.9% children under five years are underweight and 44.4% are anaemic in Rajasthan. HT FILE PHOTO

While women and child development minister Mamta Bhupesh has approved the changes, a nod from CM Ashok Gehlot is awaited before they can be implemented

KK PATHAK, Secretary, women and child development department

meals are served in anganwadi centres. Currently, the children and women are given gud and chana or murmura and gud or halwa as snacks.

Pathak said, "It is now planned

to add milk one day per week and fruits and poha to the menu."

The department has suggested that rotis, rice, lentils and vegetables be given as hot cooked meals instead of only khichdi and dalia.

In addition, changes are proposed in the take home ration too which is given to pregnant and lactating women and children from six months to three years. Instead of the multi-grain powdered mixture, it is proposed to give grains, lentils and besan or til laddoos and peanut and gud chiki. In summers, the til laddoos and chiki will be replaced by moong barfi or some other suitable item, said Pathak.

"While women and child development minister Mamta

Bhupesh has approved the changes, a nod from chief minister Ashok Gehlot is awaited before they can be implemented," said Pathak.

Under the ICDS scheme, the Centre gives Rs 8 per child to provide 500 calories and 15 gm protein per day. For women, Rs 9.50 is given to provide them 600 calories and 20 gm of protein per day, said Pathak. The Centre has given Rs 800 crore to the state under the ICDS.

Pathak said that of the 40 lakh beneficiaries under the scheme, 10 lakh are children from 3-6 years who get hot cooked meals in anganwadis and 30 lakh are children and women who get take-home ration.