

Creating Mass Movement to Address Malnutrition

Rakesh Srivastava

POSHAN Abhiyaan

PM's Overarching
Scheme for Holistic
Nourishment



सही पोषण - देश रोशन

In order to achieve its true potential and play the role as a global superpower India will need to focus on eradication of malnutrition so as to ensure that the coming generations are healthy, enabling higher intellectual potential, leading to enhanced work productivity. This one factor will enable us to connect the dots between schemes like Make in India, Digital India, Skill India and grow to our desired potential as a Nation

It is a known fact that undernutrition is an outcome of not one but multiple detrimental factors. These factors play their role in helping sustain this continuous burden of undernutrition; leading to our inability to achieve our desired human resource potential, generation after another. In order to achieve its true potential and play the role as a global superpower India will need to focus on eradication of malnutrition so as to ensure that the coming generations are healthy, enabling higher intellectual potential, leading to enhanced work productivity. This one factor will enable us to connect the dots between schemes like Make in India, Digital India, Skill India and grow to our desired potential as a Nation.

On March 8, 2018; the Prime Minister launched POSHAN Abhiyaan – PM's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment from Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan. The programme through use of technology, a targeted approach and convergence strives to reduce the level of stunting, under-nutrition, anemia and low birthweight in children, as also, focus on adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers, thus holistically addressing malnutrition. The programme aims to ensure service delivery and interventions by use of technology, behavioral change

through convergence and lays-down specific targets to be achieved across different monitoring parameters over the next few years. To ensure a holistic approach, all 36 States/UTs and districts will be covered in a phased manner i.e. 315 districts in 2017-18, 235 districts in 2018-19 and remaining districts in 2019-20. More than 10 crore people will be benefitted by this programme. Never before has nutrition got so much prominence at the highest level in the country.

Different Ministries/Departments at the Centre and States/UTs deal with varied interventions required for reduction of malnutrition in a stand-alone manner. State/UT being the highest implementing agency for all such schemes, it is pertinent to achieve synergy of all interventions to effectively target malnutrition. POSHAN will provide the required convergence platform for all such schemes and thus augment a synergized approach towards Nutrition. Convergence at centre is being achieved through formation of the National Council for Nutrition and the Executive Committee for POSHAN Abhiyaan. Both these draw members from all the stakeholders of the Abhiyaan. Similarly, the Convergence Action Plan at State, district and block level define the implementation

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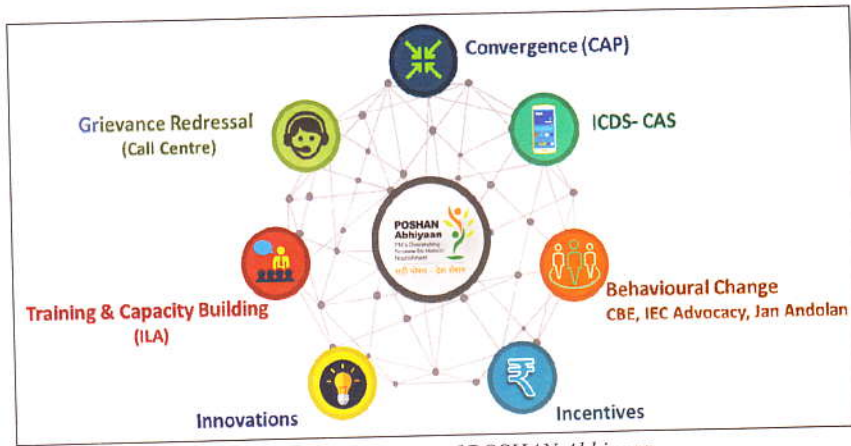


Figure 1: Components of POSHAN Abhiyaan

and monitoring mechanisms for the *Abhiyaan*. The Very High Speed Network (VHSN) day provides the

convergence platform at village level, for participation of all frontline functionaries.

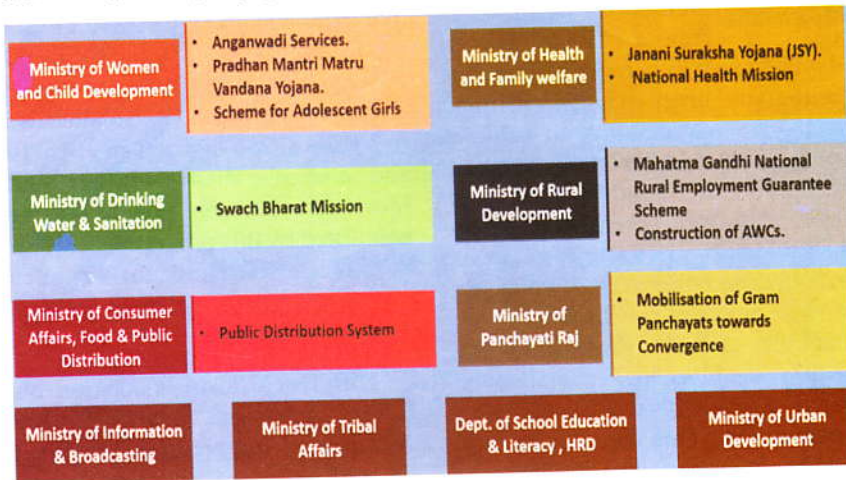


Figure 2: Convergence Matrix

The *Abhiyaan* empowers the frontline functionaries i.e. Anganwadi

workers and Lady Supervisors by providing them with smartphones.

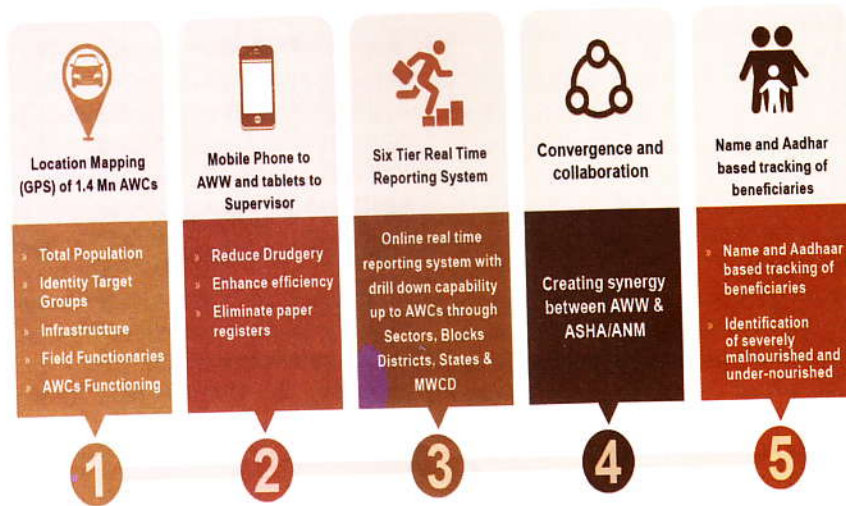


Figure 3: ICDS- Common Application Software

The software application, ICDS-Common application Software especially developed for this purpose enables data capture, ensures assigned service delivery and prompts for interventions wherever required. This data is then available in near real time to the supervisory staff from Block, District, State to National level through a Dashboard, for monitoring. The procurement and distribution of mobile devices is a part of the project. The application is aimed to augment system strengthening in ICDS service delivery and looks at improving the nutrition outcomes through effective monitoring and timely intervention. The software allows the capture of data from the field on electronic devices (mobile/tablet). It enables collection of information on ICDS service delivery and its impact on nutrition outcomes in beneficiaries on a regular basis. This information is available to the States and MWCD on real time basis on web-based dashboards. It is aimed to improve the ICDS service delivery and also enable the Mission to effectively plan and take fact-based decision making.

The problem of malnutrition is inter-generational and is dependent on multiple factors which, inter-alia, include optimal Infant & Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices, Immunization, Institutional Delivery, Early Childhood Development, Food Fortification, Deworming, access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation (WASH), Dietary diversification, and other related factors. Therefore, to address the problem of stunting, under-weight and wasting, especially in children, there is a need to take-up sustained efforts requiring multi-pronged approach and bring grass-root synergy and convergence. The problem can finally only be addressed through a socio-behavioural change. This aspect of POSHAN looks at deploying a multi-pronged approach to mobilise the masses towards creating a nutritionally aware



society. Community based events at ananganwadicentres to engage the beneficiaries and their families towards nutritional awareness; sustained mass media, multimedia, outdoor campaigns; and synergized mobilization of all frontline functionaries, self-help groups and volunteers towards nutrition, are the methods to be adopted. The aim is to generate a Jan Andolan towards Nutrition.

Ministry of Women and Child Development is the nodal Ministry for anchoring overall implementation; as described above, the vision is for all these Ministries to work together for addressing undernutrition. Never before has so many programmes been pulled together for addressing undernutrition at national level in India. The Prime Minister Office will review the progress every six months and similar review is expected at state level; and this process will be augmented by nutrition specific review in every district by the District Magistrate on a quarterly basis every 10th January, April, July and October. As the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) highlights that inter-state and inter-district variability for undernutrition is very high, so every state/district needs to develop its Convergence Action Plan which includes their specific constraints and bottlenecks and what can they address in short, mid or long term. It is very important that we put all the necessary processes in place before we start expecting miraculous changes in the undernutrition burden across the country. This *Abhiyaan* is going to be linked with incentives for the front line workers like Anganwadi workers for better service delivery, for the team based incentives for Anganwadi workers, ASHA and ANM for achieving targets together; and for early achiever states and UTs. For the non-performing states/UTs/districts/blocks/ Anganwadi centers there would be focused support and hand holding to make them start performing better.

Thus, the POSHAN *Abhiyaan* is to bring all of us together, put accountability and responsibilities on all stakeholders, to help the Country accomplish its desired potential in terms of its demographic dividend of 130 Crore human resource.

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I owe my success to AAI and wish the team so that it produces better results in years to come.

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