



'Strengthening Poshan Abhiyaan through active engagement of Civil Society in 15 districts of Uttar Pradesh'

In 2018 Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched The POSHAN Abhiyaan with an aim to make India malnutrition-free by 2022. The Abhiyaan is based on 4 pillars of:

- a) Ensuring access to quality services
- b) Ensuring inter-sectoral convergence
- c) Leveraging technology (ICDS-CAS)
- d) Jan Andolan.

To further strengthen the Jan Andolan component of Poshan Abhiyaan, India Cowin Action Network (I-CAN) had reached out to NITI Aayog to work on demand –side determinants of malnutrition and improve key health and nutrition behaviors and contribute to achieving Honorable PM's vision of Kuposhan Mukh Bharat. ICAN is a technology-based platform launched by Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini in March 2020, in the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic to connect those in need of assistance with those who can provide the required help. During lockdown, I-CAN could provide help to more than 4 lakh people with the help of its 3800+ registered NGOs and 4000+ volunteers.

- NITI Aayog under the leadership of its Vice-Chairman Dr Rajiv Kumar is guiding this consortium of CSOs led by I-CAN in partnership with several major organizations like Tata Trusts and Marico India for providing financial support, and Lucknow University and Alive and Thrive as technical partners. The initiative will create a cadre of volunteers and build their capacities. These volunteers will then engage with the community through Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) strategy to change behaviors around evidence based key Maternal, Infant and Young children (MIYCN) interventions for improving health and nutrition outcomes.

The details about the status of implementation of this initiative is provided as under.

- **Baseline Study:** The baseline survey strategy has been finalized, along with the survey tool and methodology. To undertake the baseline study following steps have been undertaken.
 - Training of Block Coordinators and Poshan Mitras - on the questionnaires (survey tools) and on using the online survey platform has been done
 - Incorporation of suggestions in the survey tool, provided by all stakeholders in the last review meeting at NITI Aayog is done.
 - Field testing of survey tools by Coordinators / Poshan Mitras is complete and minor changes to the tools, as was suggested by them, have been incorporated.
 - Data collection from all sampling units, in the 15 districts, is now in its final stages; it has been completed in 1/3 of all sampling units.



- The next steps involve analysis of collected data and generation of the baseline report, which would be done by Dept. of Statistics, Lucknow University.



- **Coordination with state WCD ministry for Convergence:** To ensure coordination with the state, a meeting between CDPOs, DPOs of the select Districts/Blocks and ICAN was held under the chairmanship of Smt. Swati Singh, Hon'ble Minister, Women and Child Development, Government of Uttar Pradesh, on 24.02.2021. Following are major takeaways from this meeting:
 - To make sure that this initiative and efforts/services of the state government work together in synergy.
 - To ensure that the front-line workers of state (especially Anganwadi workers) and the field workers under this Abhiyaan (Poshan Mitra and Poshan Doots) are in close contact and can align the work that they do.
 - The ministry will share the list of schemes, services, and initiatives of the UP Government, in the domain of health and nutrition, so that the interventions of this project can be placed within this larger paradigm.



- **Review meeting at NITI Aayog with all key stakeholders:** To get a grip of the status of implementation of this project, a review meeting was organized for all key stakeholders, under the chairmanship of Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog on 18.02.2021. Following were the major updates of this meeting.
 - Content of the interventions and training curriculum covering all the themes of this project must be shared with Member, Health, NITI Aayog.
 - Report generation mechanism may cover process indicators as well as outcome indicators.
 - A project note for PMO has been made and shared, stating the rationale, novel approach, and expectation from the project, as was decided in this meeting
 - Focus must be on newborn children, and we should be able to track their improvement till their first year, and a strategy to collaborate with front line workers must be highlighted separately.



- It was decided that the interventions should be scaled up covering all the blocks of 3 Aspirational Districts of Uttar Pradesh.
 - It was established that the reporting of project status to NITI Aayog would be done quarterly and updates will be sent monthly.
 - NITI Aayog will also provide support by sending letters to district nodal officers in the 15 districts, the contacts and email address of these officers have been shared with NITI Aayog.
- **Review of training module and material by NITI Aayog:** As was decided in the previous NITI meeting (dated 18.02.2021) Member, Health, NITI Aayog had requested a meeting with I-CAN and Alive & Thrive team, under his chairmanship, to review the training modules and materials which are to be used for the orientation training of Block Coordinators/Mitras. This meeting was held on 25.02.2021. The major takeaways of this meeting were:
 - It was decided that the stage setting of this training will be done by Member Sir, Health and Nutrition. He would talk about the objectives and the goals of the project in introduction of the training.
 - Components like HBNC, HBYC, and Anemia Mukht Bharat were added to the training module, as per the suggestion of Member, Health and Nutrition.
 - A need to include ‘Health and Nutrition Counsellors’ under the project who are from health and nutrition background and are equipped to provide hand holding support to the frontline workers (e.g., Nurse) was highlighted by the Member, Health and Nutrition. He suggested that the model of implementation may be redesigned to include 1 Health and Nutrition Counselor in every 4-5 Panchayats.
- **Orientation Training by Alive and Thrive:** This was a two-day training held on 27th and 28th February 2021 in Lucknow. First day of the training covered sessions on nutrition and its importance, malnutrition and the types of malnutrition, the status of maternal and child nutrition in India and in UP, the importance of first 1000 days, introduction to Poshan Abhiyaan, ICDS, NHM and maternal nutrition. The day ended with summarization of the learnings. On the second day, following a recap of previous day’s learnings, sessions were conducted on Anemia Mukht Bharat, IYCF practices, Home based Newborn Care with a focus on the care of Low Birth Weight, Immunization and Vitamin A supplementation, Childhood diarrhea and roles and responsibilities of the block coordinators.

