

# Business Standard

## Making India nutritious: 300 preraks deepening impact of POSHAN Abhiyaan

POSHAN Abhiyaan is a multi-ministerial, multi-sectoral and comprehensive approach to reducing malnutrition by ensuring convergence of various nutrition-related schemes

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*Representative image*

The much quoted proverb, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away,” underscores the importance and value of nutrition.

As we are what we eat, nutrition as an issue is vital, for us and the country. While India has made remarkable progress, its growth has been hampered by malnutrition. It is the underlying cause of over 45 per cent of child (under 5 years) mortality. Malnutrition is also responsible for a high prevalence of childhood stunting, and maternal and childhood anaemia.

While there have been many programs to address the issue, the results were less than satisfactory. But in 2018, the government’s [POSHAN Abhiyaan](#) is a multi-ministerial, multi-sectoral and comprehensive approach to reducing malnutrition by ensuring convergence of various nutrition-related schemes.

The [POSHAN Abhiyaan](#) consciously placed a catalysing resource of young and committed professionals — the Swasth Bharat Preraks — at the disposal of the district administration to provide techno-managerial support and ensure effective implementation and the results are visible.

Driven by the passion to make a difference, over 300 Preraks are making change happen across the country. Working closely with district officials and communities, they are innovating, inspiring, catalysing and deepening the impact of [POSHAN Abhiyaan](#).

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is a well-designed and comprehensive scheme to improve India's nutrition status. It has a reach of over 13 lakh anganwadi centres across the country to deliver comprehensive nutrition services. However, its potential to transform the lives of mothers and children hasn't been fully realised.

It is with this purpose that many states have begun to innovate. Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh are refurbishing anganwadis.

The results are encouraging. Refurbished anganwadis are showing increased attendance, better quality of services, and creation of community-based facilities for delivery of multiple services.

An important and complementary strategy for fighting malnutrition is food fortification. It is the addition of key vitamins and minerals such as iron, iodine, zinc, vitamins A & D to staple foods such as rice, wheat, oil, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has notified the standards of fortification for wheat, oil, milk, double fortified salt and rice. It is a major step towards promoting fortified staple foods as a key intervention for improvement in the micronutrient status of the population at a reasonable cost.

The nutrition interventions need to be guided and informed by latest research and evidence. The National Nutrition Resource Centre (NNRC) and the Food Fortification Resource Centre (FFRC) are providing this institutional support.

Nutrition has come centre-stage and there is a strong ground-swell of movement for a 'kupooshan-mukt' India. Diverse stakeholders are coming together and it is becoming a people's movement. However, it would be important to further step up the momentum to reduce stunting and anaemia, and improve health and nutrition for a healthy and prosperous India.