

# Fostering Nutritional Understanding Across India: Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2023

UNICEF | State Office

Nutrition is a non-negotiable right of every human being and it is the collective responsibility of the community to ensure that our fellow human beings do not have to compromise on the most basic prerequisite of quality human life. The month of September in India is observed as "Rashtra Poshan Maah" (National Nutrition Month). This year, the objective is to comprehensively tackle malnutrition through a life-cycle approach, the cornerstone of Mission Poshan 2.0. Anchored in this approach, the focal point of Poshan Maah 2023 is to cultivate widespread awareness concerning critical human life stages: pregnancy, infancy, childhood, and adolescence. The aim is to foster nutritional understanding across India through a theme centred on "Suposhit Bharat, Sakshar Bharat, Sashakt Bharat" (Nutrition-rich India, Educated India, Empowered India). POSHAN (Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition) Abhiyaan is a Multi-Ministerial Convergence Mission with the vision to ensure the attainment of malnutrition-free India. POSHAN Abhiyaan, earlier known as the National Nutrition Mission, on March 08, 2018, to address the problem of malnutrition in the country. Centre's initiative, POSHAN Abhiyaan, has been instrumental in advancing nutritional outcomes for pregnant women, lactating mothers, adolescent girls, and children under 6 years of age in a comprehensive manner. POSHAN program aimed at strengthening content, delivery, outreach, and outcomes. This month-long event witnessed concentrated efforts nationwide to enhance ground-level nutritional awareness through campaigns focusing on key themes around Exclusive Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding. Activities like Swasth Balak Spardha (Healthy Child Competition) aim to instil a spirit of healthy competition for nutrition and overall well-being. Other initiatives would include Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi (Nutrition as well as Education), Improving Nutrition through Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), Tribal-Focused Nutrition Sensitization, and addressing Anemia through Test, Treat, Talk Additionally, the Jan Andolan movement under Poshan Maah will serve as an extended platform for a united celebration under the 'Meri Mati Mera Desh' campaign, commemorating the nation's journey of freedom and progress. Poshan Maah 2023 aims to amplify community involvement on a large scale, harnessing the potential of Gram Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies to fulfil the

Honourable Prime Minister's vision of a Suposhit Bharat in the Amrit Kaal.

In lieu of Poshan Maah 2023, IMPAct4Nutrition (I4N) along with its partner IICA has hosted a citizen's pledge "Adoption of good nutrition practices" on the MyGov platform <https://pledge.mygov.in/nutrition/I4N> Platform urge everyone to take this pledge and also encourage everyone near and dear ones to take this pledge towards a Nutrition-rich India, Educated India, and Empowered India! The pledge is available in Hindi & English and after pledging there is a downloadable certificate which is made available. Please help in spreading its dissemination within your networks and don't forget to tag IMPAct4Nutrition when you post the certificate on social media.

### What is the concept of employee wellness?

Employee wellness is built on the premise that healthy employees positively impact the bottom line in many ways. 'Healthy employees' lead to 'Happy employees' and often translates to 'Engaged and Productive' employees – which is good for business.

### Need for Workplace Nutrition-

According to the WHO, 1/3rd of adult life has been spent at the workplace, and at least one meal is eaten at the place of work. Poor nutritional status of employees costs companies significant losses, as outputs suffer from deteriorating productivity and economic losses.

Employers can contribute to improving employee diets, ideally as part of a broader approach to employee well-being and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Holistic well-being relates to all the dimensions. To help employees improve across all dimensions, companies can employ a wide variety of solutions. The types of wellness programs below serve as a guide for what is practical, and approachable. Each solution addresses at least one dimension of well-being, but many address multiple dimensions.

### Biometric Screening:

Biometric screenings measure vital health metrics like BMI, blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels. Disease Management

These structured plans assist individuals in effectively managing chronic illnesses, involving healthcare professional dietitians. Programs may include patient education, counseling, and digital solutions to promote self-care. Access to Healthy Food: Employers are prioritizing nutritious snacks to encourage healthier eating habits. Stocking the workplace kitchen with whole grains, healthy fats, and protein-rich snacks promotes good nutrition, contributing to employee well-being.

### Health Counseling/Face-to-Face Interaction:

Personalized sessions with certified health experts, either one-on-one or in groups, offer guidance and support for various well-being aspects. Affordable and scalable, these programs deliver timely health information through seminars, webinars, newsletters, and brochures. Combating misinformation on the internet can be tailored to address specific wellness dimensions.

**Interactive Workshops:** Educational events during work hours inform employees about health benefits and well-being topics. Attendees can engage with booths and gain insights into available benefits. Consider remote employees' inclusion.

**Wellness Challenges:** These activities and contests encourage healthy behaviours, fostering team unity and employee engagement. Challenges can encompass physical, mental, financial, social, and environmental well-being, enhancing overall wellness.

### About ImpAct4Nutrition

I4N convened by UNICEF, Tata Trusts, Fit India Mission, Sight and Life, CSRBOX, CII, UN Global Compact, United Way Mumbai,

PATH and NASSCOM Foundation etc. was launched on March 18, 2019. Aligned with the National Poshan Abhiyan 2.0 of the Government of India, the platform works as a support unit for public and private organisations providing them with knowledge, technical expertise and ideation/activation nutrition programs either as business model or through employee engagement and CSR outreach strategy in company catchment areas.

### Who can be engaged with I4N?

I4N works with a large variety of companies, from garments to power to the technology sector to broaden the horizon of private sector action and investment in nutrition, moving it beyond the usual suspects in the food and beverage sector.

I4N secretariat works closely with its pledged partners on all their nutrition-specific interventions, either within existing CSR programs co-curating employee nutrition programs or engaging employees their families and extended community in good nutrition literacy.

### I4N impact so far...

I4N currently have engaged over 450+ businesses in India, engaging over 4.7 million employees and an estimated good nutrition literacy outreach of over 100 million individuals.

### How can businesses contribute towards I4N?

The public and private sectors can support I4N with their core assets including distribution channels, workforce, customers and community engagement, which we call the ACE card (Assets for Nutrition, CSR for Nutrition and Employee engagement for Nutrition).

ACE card accelerates behaviour change towards improved nutrition literacy and dietary habits in the work ecosystem:

- By leveraging on the company's assets such as infrastructure, network and expertise, nutrition sensitivity in employees can be provided.
- By investing CSR funds in nutrition-sensitive projects or integrating nutrition into existing allied sector such as

WASH, Education, Livelihood and Health, we can bring a larger change the lives of people. By educating employees on various aspects of nutrition, the intergenerational cycle

and the burdens of malnutrition, health can be improved. Below are the ready knowledge dissemination packages

### •Basic Commandments:

1. Nutrition Kiosk
2. Nutrition packages
3. Nutritious food at home
4. Anaemia
5. Diet charts and recipes

The I4N platform is a unique public-private engagement (PPE) focused on supporting the POSHAN Abhiyaan through two key activities: enhancing workforce nutrition and boosting Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) investments in nutrition programs. Companies can join by making a non-financial commitment to back the Government's POSHAN Abhiyaan.

The I4N State Secretariat in Madhya Pradesh, hosted by Jagran Lakecity University, recently organized a special meet-up on September 14, 2023. Ms. Cynthia McCaffrey, UNICEF Representative to India, addressed the gathering. This event brought together various associations and partners, including the Deputy Director of WCD, CII, BNI, Netlinks, SBI, Qura, MMC Convert, NGOs, UNICEF team members, and university affiliates, for a discussion on nutrition. The meeting resulted in important pledges to strengthen our commitment to nutrition. We are honoured to provide an update on the activities of the I4N State Secretariat.

## WHY CONSIDER IMPLEMENTING WORKPLACE WELLNESS TRENDS?

1. Companies with an effective wellness program realize an average reduction of 28% in sick days and 26% in health costs.
2. 70% of employees need their employer's help to make sure they are healthy and financially secure.
3. Over 50% of millennials have seriously considered switching jobs due to workplace stress.
4. Delivering more personalized wellness programs would motivate over 80% of employees to participate more.
5. 70% of employees have increased their use of technology over the past couple of years to manage or support their health.

