

## POSHAN GHAR STORIES

# Chhattisgarh's Initiative Towards Jan Bhag in Suposhan—"Potth Laika Pehel"

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In Chhattisgarh, a transformative initiative—**Potth Laika Pehel** (PLP, aka Child Mission), is transforming the fight against malnutrition. This initiative is a tripartite collaboration between the Rajnandgaon District Administration, Chhattisgarh Field Office (as a knowledge partner), and Abis Pehel (as a partner). This initiative aims to address child malnutrition through targeted counselling, behaviour change, and community engagement across 241 Centres (AWCs) with the highest number of undernourished children.



Potth Laika Pehel Activities

## PLP's Implementation Approach

The need for this initiative arises from the fact that despite rising income literacy, malnutrition in Chhattisgarh remains high due to poor nutrition li

existing myths, and unhealthy habits. PLP bridges these gaps through behaviour change interventions and community participation, and for this, PLP follows a systematic implementation approach as follows-

1. **Training Cascade:** UNICEF's Nutrition and Behaviour Change Wing trained block and cluster nodal officers (Health, WCD, and NRLM) as master trainers. Master trainers further trained Anganwadi Workers (AWWs), ASHAs, and Self-Help Group (SHG) didis, who in turn educated the communities.

2. **Community Engagements:**

**Paalak Chaupals** (Caretakers' Meetings): were held every Friday as Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Days. These sessions educated pregnant women, sarpanches, panchayat sachivs, the elders in the community, and newlyweds. The sessions focused on healthy and balanced diet, what to eat, when to eat, and why it matters through simple activities like Tir Bhojan.

**SHG Meetings** (Bihan Chaupals): SHG women conducted nutrition sessions at the Village Organisation level and Cluster Level Federation.

**Home Visits & Health Check-ups:** ASHAs, AWWs, and youth volunteers (Yuvodaya) provided personalised support during weekly home visits for nutrition counselling, monitoring children's growth, and tracking mother's weight. PLP involved 1,00,00+ SHG didis and 1000+ Yuvodayas.

**Resource Materials:** Village Organisations, Cluster Level Federation, ASHAs, SHG Didis, and Yuvodayas used the Poshan Margdarshika toolkits to enhance health and nutrition awareness and capacity-building. Initial toolkits provided clear, contextualised, and replicable training and SB resource materials.



Potth Laika Pehel Activities

## PLP's Massive Outcomes

With these efforts, within just six months, the initiative yielded remarkable outcomes. Of 3413 children, 2136 (62.58%) recovered from malnutrition, and 12 AWCs became completely malnutrition-free in Rajnandgaon district. The impact of the initiative extended far beyond children, with 1,20,000+ individuals benefited directly and many more indirectly through 8878+ Paalak Chaupals and 30 meetings, fostering widespread community engagement and enhanced awareness.

## PLP's Promising Third-Party Evaluation Results

The Behavioural Insights Unit at NIT Raipur conducted a third-party evaluation to measure the initiative's success and potential for scale-up. Researchers gathered data from 500 individuals across 50 AWCs through surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews. They also gathered secondary data from government officials and staff to understand public perceptions. The preliminary findings of the third-party evaluation have been highly positive, reinforcing the initiative's potential for large-scale replication. For instance, mothers of young children demonstrated a clear understanding of the causes and effects of child malnutrition, particularly the lack of a balanced diet. 92% of respondents attributed PLP to their awareness of the importance of exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months. Mothers also reported significant improvements in their children's physical and mental health.

development post-PLP intervention.

Poth Laika Pehel Activities

## PLP's Potential To Be Replicated

PLP's replicability stems from its core focus on behaviour change, achieved through targeted training and capacity building rather than providing extra foods/supplements, which could be costly and unsustainable. With zero

cost, PLP leveraged existing human and monetary resources that are available in any district across India. Rather than implementing top-down solutions, PLP strengthened the capacity of various departments such as Health, WCD, and others to ensure lasting impact. PLP's scalable and cost-effective model provides a framework for enhancing nutrition literacy and reducing malnutrition. Districts across the state can easily adopt and implement this approach to drive visible impact.

Have such stories, insights, or case studies on health, nutrition, WASH, child protection, or social behaviour change? We would love to hear from you. Reach out to [arpita.d@zealgrit.com](mailto:arpita.d@zealgrit.com).

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