

MORE THAN 15 CRORE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER VARIOUS THEMES, ACROSS THE COUNTRY DURING POSHAN MAAH 2022

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

More than 15 crore activities were conducted under various themes, across the country during the 5th Rashtriya Poshan Maah (1st to 30th September, 2022) contributing in the Prime Minister's vision for a Suposhit Bharat. Prior to the 5th Poshan Maah, four Poshan Maahs and 4 Poshan Pakhwadas have been held since the launch of the Abhiyan, with a collective activity count of more than 40 crores.

This year, the Gram Panchayats were triggered to be the focal points of all the activities during Poshan Maah. This helped mobilize various committees at the ground viz. Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committee (VHSNC), School Management Committee (SMC)/ Education Committee, Water & Environmental Conservation Committee, Planning and Development Committee, Social Justice Standing Committee etc. Considering Poshan Panchayats as the nucleus of all the activities, the broader themes for Poshan Maah 2022 were Mahila aur Swasthya, Bachcha aur Shiksha, Gender Sensitive Water Management and Traditional Food for Women & Child.



Under the theme 'Mahila aur Swasthya' prominent activities conducted across the country, included, Anemia screening and awareness campaigns (approximately 32 lakhs), Ante natal check up camps (approx 11 lakhs), awareness campaigns on menstrual hygiene (approx 7 lakhs), Activities on hand wash and sanitisation (approx 41 lakhs) etc.



The other key theme , *Bachcha aur Shiksha– Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi*, that called for focus on quality pre-school education for children under 6 years also gained momentum during Maah 2022. Under this theme close to 81 lakh activities were conducted focussing on early childhood care and education. Besides general sensitisation for early learning, use and development of indigenous and locally available toys for learning at AWCs was promoted nationwide.

A National Seminar on Indigenous Toys for Nurturing Early Childhood Development was organized in Delhi under the chairperson-ship of Union Minister of WCD. The workshop / seminar was live streamed on Youtube for the benefit of all ICDS functionaries upto the Anganwadi Workers / Helpers. Besides panel discussions on age-appropriate toys and universalization of toys by experts, the seminar included live display of indigenous toy creation by master crafts-persons and sessions on creation of local toys by Anganwadi Workers from different regions of the country.



Further, in keeping with the theme, several States undertook activities such as State Toyathon / Toy Fair in Manipur , Mini children's toy/ play and learn fair organized in AWCs in Gujarat, Local Toy making workshops organized in AWCs in Jharkhand, Toy making by children and mothers at AWCs in Odisha etc.

Further, after the successful activities witnessed in Poshan Pakhwada 2022 under the themes Gender Sensitive Awareness on Water Conservation and Management in AWCs and Focus on Traditional foods in Tribal Areas, activities under these key themes have continued in Poshan Maah 2022 as well. Close to 43 lakh activities on the theme of Gender Sensitive Water Management and Conservation through workshops, seminars and drives for identifying Anganwadi Centres for installing rainwater harvesting structures were carried out.

Swastha Balak Spardha was successfully piloted in the four States of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Assam during the Poshan Maah. The key objective of the Spardha was to identify and celebrate the 'Healthy child' thus instilling a sense of competitiveness among children and families for good health and nutritional status. Intensive activities were carried out during the event relating to growth measurement for children under 5 years. In order to felicitate the winners, recognition in terms of providing certificates to the

winning child and parents and rewards/gifts like nutrition kit/hygienic kit, locally available indigenous toys, water bottle etc., were distributed in all 4 States.

The 5th Rashtriya Poshan Maah culminated with a Poshan Utsav at Kartavyapath, New Delhi from 30th September to 2nd October 2022. The Poshan Utsav served as a platform for disseminating to the people at large, the critical messages on the importance of correct nutrition, particularly for young children and women, and sensitizing them on age-appropriate good health practices to address the challenges of malnutrition in the country. The Poshan Utsav was conducted in the nature of a celebratory fair centred on the theme of Poshan or Nutrition centred on Poshan related Poshan Parades, healthy-food stalls, health check-up stalls etc.with cultural programmes and AR photo op with Honble PM to attract children and people at large.

As part of the Utsav, Ministry of Ayush set up stalls with literature related to Ayush nutritional practices and Ayurveda products/ formulations for exhibition / sale. Booths for free health check-ups were also put up, which included machines to check the BMI of the guests. Since indigenous toys are a significant tool for early learning and development of children in Anganwadi Centres, stalls were set up with indigenous toys from close to 9 local traditional toy clusters from different parts of the country, such as Etikopakka (Andhra Pradesh), Kondapalli (Andhra Pradesh), Chitrakoot (Uttar Pradesh), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Kathputli Craft (Rajasthan), Mysore (Karnataka), Mangalore (Karnataka), Channapatna(Karnataka), Indore (Madhya Pradesh) etc.



In order to attract children and public at large, an AR photo-booth, for photo with the Prime Minister was set up. This was a huge attraction for visitors. It is estimated that close to 1.5-2 lakh visitors participated in the Poshan Utsav on the 3 days.

Gradually over the years the Jan Andolans has served as an important tool in bringing about important change among the mind-sets of masses that has contributed in increased participation of men and boys in activities focused around the health & nutrition of women, children and adolescents. Poshan Maah 2022 has also witnessed around equal participation of men and women (including boys and girls).

Launched on 8th March, 2018 by the Prime Minister, POSHAN Abhiyaan is Government of India's flagship programme to improve nutritional outcomes for children, adolescent Girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers. Through Jan Andolans, the Abhiyaan aims at bringing nutrition linked behaviour changes across India, thereby contributing to the Prime Minister's vision of Suposhit Bharat.

For the 15th Finance Commission period, POSHAN Abhiyaan along with Anganwadi Services (AWS) and Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG) are part of an Integrated Nutrition Support Programme named as Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0. Under Poshan Abhiyan, nutrition-centric Jan Andolans, held twice a year in form of Poshan Maah and Poshan Pakhwada continues to remain one of the key components for bringing desired behaviour changes among masses.

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