



Poshan Abhiyaan mein Panchayat Ki Bhumika

THE ROLE OF PANCHAYATS IN POSHAN ABHIYAAN

EXPERIENCES FROM THE FIELD



BACKGROUND

Since a majority of people in India live in villages, the number of children in villages is higher compared to the towns. In India, around 40 per cent of our total population is children. Therefore, it is very important for the Panchayats to understand the crucial aspects of their care, protection, and development and take the necessary steps in their best interests.[1] It needs to be mentioned that NFHS-4 data indicates that the prevalence of stunting, wasting and underweight children has been higher in the rural areas i.e. 41.2%, 21.5%, and 38.3 percent respectively as compared to urban areas which are 31.0%, 20.0%, and 29.1 %. Poshan Abhiyaan was launched on 8th March 2018 by the Prime Minister of India in Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan. The Abhiyaan targets to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively. The target of the mission is to bring down stunting among children in the age group 0-6 years from 38.4% to 25% by 2022.[2]

[1]<http://www.panchayatgyan.gov.in/documents/30336/0/Child+Development+in+GP.pdf>

[2]<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177746>

THE ROLE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS IN POSHAN ABHIYAAN

(POSHAN ABHIYAAN MEIN PANCHAYAT KI BHUMIKA)



The role of Panchayati Raj Institutions is very important for the success of Poshan Abhiyaan. The Panchayati Raj Department through Panchayats can play a very active role for malnutrition free India through the Gram Sabha.[3] The aim is to generate a Jan Andolan towards Nutrition. The Gram Panchayat (GP) can play its role in ensuring that children in the GP area access all opportunities for development. Awareness generation is the first step. Platforms like the Gram Sabha or special Gram Sabha, Mahila Sabha, Children's Gram Sabha etc. can be used to discuss the issues of development and sensitize people about the importance of developmental opportunities for children and services to be provided by various functionaries at the village level. Functionaries of the Anganwadi Centre, health, sanitation, drinking water, Public Distribution System,

education, mid-day meal, agriculture, horticulture, dairy, and fisheries etc. may be invited for such meetings. The deliberations of the meetings should be followed up thoroughly.

Understanding the importance and role of Gram Panchayat and its members in overcoming the problem of malnutrition, Action Against Hunger-India (AAH) came up with an initiative to organize orientation and sensitization sessions at Panchayat level in six districts (Baran, Barmer, Bundi, Sirohi, Jaisalmer, Jhalawar and Udaipur) of Rajasthan covering 12 Gram Panchayats.



[3] http://www.icsd-wcd.nic.in/nm/NNM-Web-Contents/LEFT-MENU/Convergence/Joint_DO_Letter_PR_WCD_16-03-2018.pdf

OBJECTIVES

1. To sensitize local governance towards the issue of malnutrition
2. To discuss the role of the local governance in Poshan Abhiyaan to make Kuposhan Mukta Panchayats
3. To increase active participation of PRI members in generating a Jan Andolan towards Nutrition

FIELD LEVEL ACTIVITIES

AAH planned to organized these meetings in collaboration with the National Health Mission (NHM) & Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) at the district and block levels. The initiative covered nine districts and 64 meetings were conducted with 567 participants involving the Sarpanch's, panchayat members, NHM & ICDS officials, ASHAs, ANMs, AWWs & civil society organizations. The details of panchayats and participants are as mentioned in table at the end of the report.

SUGGESTIONS

- I. Continuous meetings with PRIs can be conducted at Panchayat Samiti on the prescribed date mentioned by State Government where all Sarpanches come together.
- II. Find out nutrition champions from both male and female Sarpanches covering all blocks and districts and to observe how they can involve the agendas in their meetings of Gram Panchayat.
- III. Regular publication of success stories of active Gram Panchayat and SAM child and other new initiatives by PRIs for the health and nutrition of children
- IV. An orientation meeting/ workshop should be arranged for the Sarpanches before implementing the program at field level for their active support. The agenda of malnutrition should be pushed in Gram Sabhas, since as per the Model Governance Code, Health and AWW are the topics to be included[4].
- V. It was communicated by the Sarpanches that the program should be continuous and should be implemented in every village.
- VI. It was also communicated that the agenda of the nutrition and malnutrition in the area should be included in their block level meeting at BDO office.
- VII. The agenda of malnutrition should be pushed in Gram Sabhas, since as per the Model Governance Code, Health and AWW are the topics to be included[5].

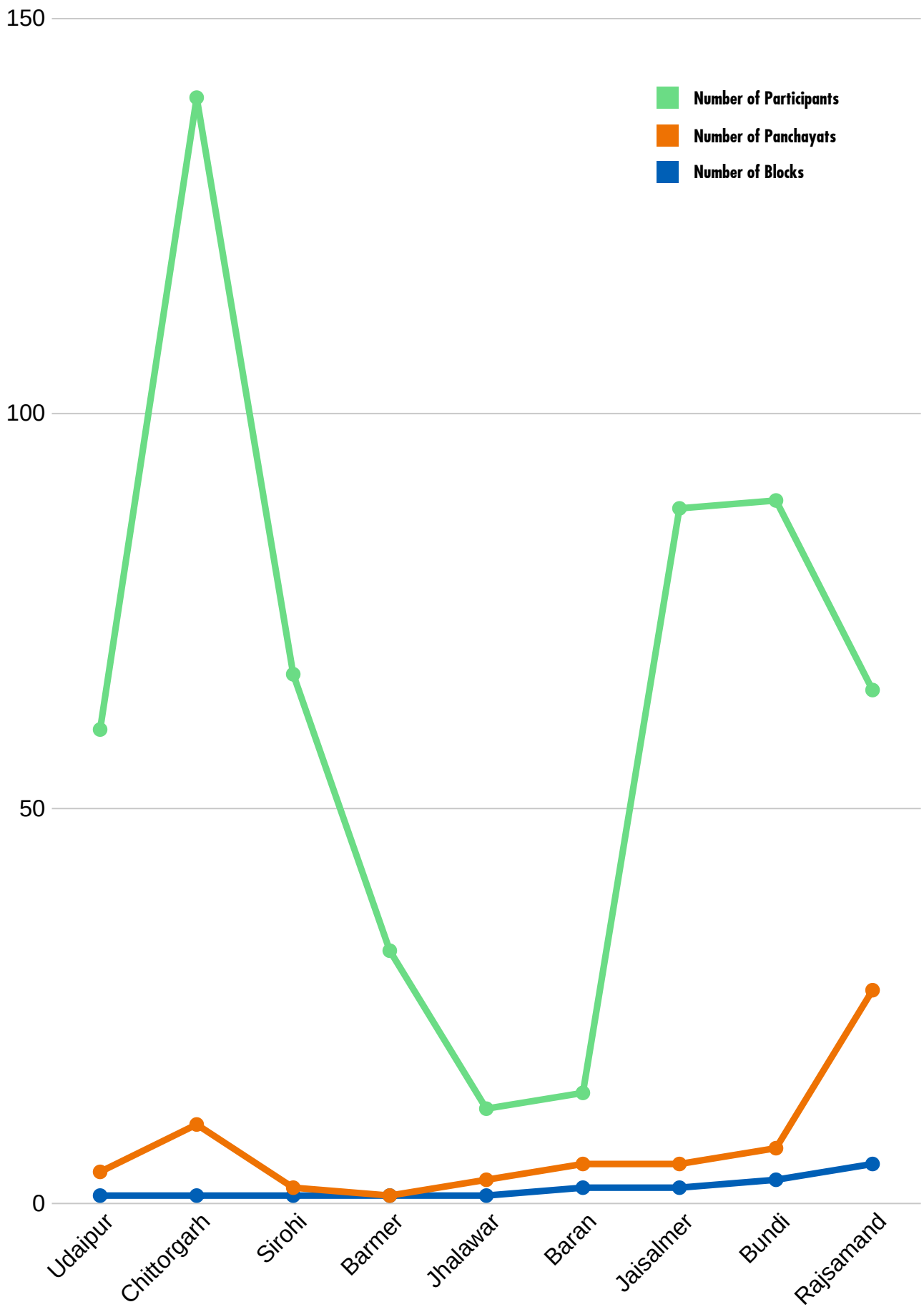
[4]https://www.icsi.edu/media/webmodules/Model_Governance_Code_for_Panchayat_Meetings.pdf

[5]https://www.icsi.edu/media/webmodules/Model_Governance_Code_for_Panchayat_Meetings.pdf

FIELD EXPERIENCES OF THE TEAM & CONCLUSION

The meetings were very insightful and interactive with the active participation of the PRI members, health department, ICDS and local people. During the meetings, the cause of malnutrition and its treatment and prevention was discussed in details along with defining the role of Panchayats and the Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHSNC) to eradicate malnutrition in villages and panchayats. Most of the PRI members also shared that this was the first time that they got to know about the issue and causes of malnutrition and how their participation could help in overcoming this issue. It was also shared that they will make it a priority agenda for discussion in their GP monthly meetings.





Graph: In Rajasthan, Action Against Hunger India, ushered engagements with the Panchayats in 9 districts since 2017 and mobilized a total of 567 participants including 64 Sarpanches on the role of the Panchayats in Poshan Abhiyaan.

GLIMPSES OF THE PRI MEETINGS



Jogiwad



Karunda



Kotdi Kalan



Talera



Kaucha



Matunda



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