

POSHAN

Led by IFPRI 

Overview



The Problem

India, home to the largest number of undernourished children in the world, has made several important policy decisions related to nutrition in recent years. The use of evidence in nutrition policymaking and program design in India has also increased in recent years; many current nutrition policies and programs include the latest recommendations on global and national nutrition interventions in their designs.

However, coverage of interventions is highly variable and there is a limited evidence base on how best to implement and scale up essential nutrition interventions. Decisionmakers also lack accurate and updated data on the nutrition situation in India, as nutritional surveys are conducted infrequently. Finally, although there are a variety of online and face-to-face venues for stakeholders to share knowledge about nutrition in India, these largely operate in isolation and are challenged by a lack of resources.

There is, therefore, a real need for mechanisms that can support evidence-informed dialogue and decisions in an inclusive way.

About POSHAN

POSHAN (*Partnerships and Opportunities to Strengthen and Harmonize Actions for Nutrition in India*) is a 4-year initiative (2011-2015) that aims to reduce the evidence gap in nutrition in India by supporting a process of synthesizing, generating, and mobilizing nutrition evidence of diverse types to support decisions. POSHAN is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The goal of POSHAN is to bring up-to-date evidence on nutrition to decisionmakers and stakeholders and to facilitate decisionmaking that can support actions to improve maternal and child nutrition in India.

To **synthesize existing knowledge**, POSHAN:

- Conducts program and policy reviews at the national-level and in selected states.
- Compiles and features findings from the latest global and national research studies on its website, in a bi-monthly *Abstract Digest* and a newsletter, the *Nutrition Quarterly*.
- Supports the public launch of landmark global and national nutrition studies such as the *Lancet Series on Maternal and Child Nutrition* (in 2013).
- Develops primers on nutrition topics for nutrition stakeholders.
- Develops district data profiles on nutrition.

To **generate knowledge**, POSHAN conducts studies on key themes identified in our inception research as being most relevant to ensuring effective nutrition actions in India.

These include:

- **Working across sectors.**
While addressing undernutrition in India requires interventions from multiple sectors, including health, water, and agriculture, a greater understanding is needed on how to facilitate effective collaboration across ministerial sectors, and with other actors inside and outside the government. POSHAN's work in this area includes evidence reviews and secondary data analyses.
- **Implementing nutrition-specific interventions at scale.**
India's policy frameworks cover most recommended nutrition-specific interventions.

However, research is needed on resources and strategies needed to implement, deliver, and scale up these interventions. A key focus of **POSHAN's** work has been to examine the role of intersectoral convergence between the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) operations and their implications for service coverage. Our studies are also assessing the national and subnational costs needed to deliver nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions outlined in India's policy frameworks.

- **Generating data on nutritional status.** **POSHAN** is working towards strengthening the dialogue around the availability and use of data to track nutrition status. Our work includes secondary analyses of available data, development of district nutrition profiles to support nutrition dialogue, and reviews of available data on nutrition.

Findings from **POSHAN's** studies are disseminated in peer-reviewed journal articles, POSHAN's own *Research, Implementation, and Policy Notes*.

To **mobilize knowledge**, **POSHAN**:

- Brings together diverse stakeholders who work at the district, state, and national levels and facilitates dialogues, learnings, and consensus building among them to advance the nutrition agenda forward.
- Strengthens and links existing nutrition networking groups and online portals and systems to promote better knowledge sharing in nutrition.
- Engages with the media to report on nutrition-related issues and new findings through the OneWorld-POSHAN Media Fellowship program and other media engagement.

Taken together, POSHAN's actions aim to fill gaps in evidence and knowledge and support diverse decisionmakers at the national, sub-national, and global level in making evidence-informed decisions about nutrition in India.



POSHAN Partners

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