

# NURTURING CHAMPIONS

INSPIRING TALES OF MATERNAL AND  
CHILD NUTRITION SUCCESS







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## INSPIRING TALES OF MATERNAL AND CHILD NUTRITION SUCCESS

**CIFF** CHILDREN'S  
INVESTMENT FUND  
FOUNDATION



राजस्थान सरकार









**ममता भूपेश बैरवा**

मंत्री

महिला एवं बाल विकास, बाल अधिकारिता  
एवं आयोजना विभाग  
राजस्थान सरकार, जयपुर



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### Foreword

Malnutrition has long been a pressing issue that hampers the growth and development of our children and poses significant challenges to the health of pregnant women. We firmly believe that every child deserves a healthy start in their life and every mother should have the necessary support and care during this critical phase.

The Government of Rajasthan stands committed to ensuring well-being and nurturing the future of the people of Rajasthan. We are implementing an integrated scheme 'Indira Gandhi Matritva Poshan Yojana', a conditional cash transfer scheme for pregnant and lactating women of Rajasthan. While we take pride in the strides we have made, we remain steadfast in our resolve to continue our fight against malnutrition, leaving no stone unturned until every child in Rajasthan is free for the shackles of this preventable condition.

Sincerely

(Mamta Bhupesh Bairwa)

# FOREWORD



**Mamta Bhupesh Bairwa**

Minister

Women and Child Development,  
Child Directorate and Planning Department,  
Government of Rajasthan

# MESSAGE

It gives me great pleasure to extend my heartfelt congratulations on the publication of this Coffee Table Book 'Nurturing Champions – Inspiring Tales of Maternal and Child Nutrition Success' which is a compendium of success stories that highlight the triumphs achieved in our joint efforts towards combating malnutrition among pregnant women, lactating mothers and children in Rajasthan.

The Government of Rajasthan firmly believes that the future of the state lies in the hands of our children. Thus, we have placed their health and well-being at the core of our agenda. Through comprehensive programs, strategic partnerships, and community engagement, we have made significant strides in ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive. Additionally, we have taken steps to improve the availability of nutritious food through cash transfers, ensuring that no child or mother is deprived of a nutritious diet and essential nutrients.



**JITENDRA KUMAR UPADHYAYA**



**Jitendra Kumar Upadhyaya**  
Secretary, Department of Women  
and Child Development,  
Government of Rajasthan





# MESSAGE

Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) is deeply committed to its partnership with the Government of Rajasthan to support girls and women for a better future. Our journey in Rajasthan, for RajPusht, started in 2017, and today we stand with immense pride and excitement as we witness the remarkable achievements and transformative impact for hundreds and thousands of mothers and children. We are grateful for the opportunity to support the vision of Government of Rajasthan and their leadership. We also extend our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to the Government officials for championing the cause and for unwavering support.

When we embarked on this journey, we recognized the urgent need to support health and nutritional interventions to improve outcomes for children in Rajasthan. Our shared commitment stemmed from the firm belief that every child deserves the opportunity to lead a healthy and prosperous life. As we celebrate these achievements today, let us collectively strive to make these success stories become the norm, rather than the exception.



**MANJULA SINGH**



**Manjula Singh**

Executive Director,  
Children's Investment Fund Foundation  
(CIFF)

# MESSAGE

It is with great pleasure and a deep sense of fulfilment that I introduce this captivating coffee table book, a collection of success stories that vividly narrate the remarkable journey of RajPusht, in collaboration with the Government of Rajasthan with support from Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), in combating wasting and low birth weight among children in the state. RajPusht combines cash transfers with a context-specific Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) strategy to motivate mothers to eat 'more' and 'nutritious' food during pregnancy.

This year, as we celebrate 25 years of IPE Global, it is a moment of pride as we witness the stories that have the power to inspire and transform. We stand committed to continue inspiring others to join us in this noble cause, amplifying our reach and accelerating progress towards a healthier Rajasthan.



**M K PADMA KUMAR**



**M K Padma Kumar**

Chief Operating Officer,  
IPE Global







## About RajPusht



RajPusht aims to reduce the prevalence of low birth weight and wasting in five selected districts of Southern Rajasthan. It focuses on two critical and complementary channels for improved maternal outcomes: providing multi-tiered behaviour change communication to pregnant and lactating mothers and their families while also providing resources at the household level through cash transfers, empowering women to enact on the received advice, shifting the power of informed nutrition decisions to women. It combines cash transfers with a context-specific Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) strategy to motivate mothers to eat 'more' and 'nutritious' food during pregnancy.

The Poshan Champions are a cadre of field level functionaries developed under the project who reach out to pregnant and lactating women using digital and manual job aids.

PC App is a mobile based counselling application, developed under RajPusht, is being used by the 200 Poshan Champions to deliver simple, visual, targeted messages to women at their household.

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राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण स्वास्थ्य मिशन, जिदेशालय चिकित्सा, स्वास्थ्य एवं प. क. सेवाएं (आई.ई.सी.), राजस्थान, जयपुर  
सेवा तथा अधिक जानकारी के लिए स्वास्थ्य कार्यकर्ता/आशा/ए.एन.एम. अथवा अपने नजदीकी स्वास्थ्य केंद्र से संपर्क करें।



सुस्त से चुस्त.

सौलिक बल  
बच्चों के दूध के अवकाश की मात्रा बढ़ाने की...

हर हफ्ते नियमित नीली गोली और पोषिक आहार लेने से हमारे  
आयरन की मात्रा बढ़ गई और हम बने हर तरह से तेज और चुस्त

विद्यालय जाने वाले किशोर-किशोरी (10-19 वर्ष) हेतु WIFS कार्यक्रम के दिशा

- 10-19 वर्ष के स्कूल जाने वाले किशोर-किशोरी को IFA की एक नीली गोली साप्ताहिक रूप से दी जाएगी।
- IFA की नीली गोली स्कूल/कक्षा अध्यापक की निगरानी में प्रत्येक सोमवार को दी जाएगी।
- यदि किसी कारणवश सोमवार को IFA की गोली नहीं दी जा सकती तो अगले दिन यानी मंगलवार को दी जाएगी।
- भूखे (खाली) पेट IFA की गोली न दी जावे एवं भोजन/भारत के बाद ही IFA गोली दी जावे।
- गोली खाने से 1 घंटे पहले और 1 घंटे बाद तक दूध, चाय व कोफ़ी नहीं लेनी चाहिए।
- यदि किसी बालक-बालिका को गोली खाने के बाद कोई प.सानी हो जैसे :- सिर दर्द, भिचलाना/घबराहट अथवा उल्टी हो तो घबराने की आवश्यकता नहीं है, यदि उक्त समस्या सोमवार से 2 से 4 सप्ताह तक लगातार रहती है, तो नजदीकी डॉक्टर को अवश्य दिखावे।
- IFA की गोली के सेवन से मल का रंग काला हो सकता है, घबराने की आवश्यकता नहीं है।
- विद्यालय के प्रत्येक अध्यापक/अध्यापिका भी स्वयं प्रत्येक सोमवार को IFA की नीली गोली का सेवन करें।
- IFA की गोली सेवन का रिकॉर्ड रजिस्टर में रखें।
- प्रत्येक किशोर-किशोरी को गोली सेवन का रिकॉर्ड व्यक्तिगत अनुपालना कार्ड में किया जाना है।

रिपोर्टिंग:-

- विद्यालय के अध्यापक/अध्यापिका के द्वारा प्रतिमाह रिपोर्ट नोडल स्कूल/ब्लॉक शिक्षा अधिकारी तारीख तक प्रस्तुत की जाएगी।
- ब्लॉक शिक्षा अधिकारी के द्वारा रिपोर्ट खण्ड स्तर पर BCMO एवं जिला स्तर पर जिला शिक्षा अधिकारी को माह की 7 तारीख तक भेजी जावे।
- प्रत्येक विद्यालय द्वारा क्वालिटी मानिट्रिंग टूल (QMT) फॉर्मेट में नियमित रिपोर्ट भेजी जावे।

दवा की उपलब्धता:-

- WIFS टेबलेट सप्ताह होने से पूर्व ही BEO के द्वारा BCMO को सूचित किया जाए।

असामयिक प्रबंधन/दुष्प्रभाव:-

- दवा से सम्बन्धित किसी प्रकार के दुष्प्रभाव की शिकायत की अवस्था में प्रबन्धन हेतु विद्यालय से नजदीकी स्वास्थ्य अधिकारी का सम्पर्क नम्बर विद्यालय पर अवश्य रखें एवं सूचित करें।

ANM का सम्पर्क सूत्र:-

चिकित्सा अधिकारी का सम्पर्क सूत्र:-



The background features a large, abstract geometric composition. A large gold rectangle occupies the top-left and middle-left portions of the frame. To its right, a white square is positioned, partially overlapping the gold rectangle. Below the white square, a vertical gold rectangle extends towards the bottom. The overall design is minimalist and modern, using a palette of gold and white.

# MAKING TRANSFORMATIVE CHOICES

**THE POWER OF CHANGE:**  
**A PATH TO HEALTHY MOTHERHOOD**  
**THROUGH NUTRITIOUS CHOICES**



Neha, from Pratapgarh loved junk food and continued having it during her first pregnancy, resulting in low birth weight child weighing two kilograms. After her childbirth, Neha faced several health issues and the child had development issues - slow learning and comprehension. Eight years later, when Neha was pregnant with her second child, she was introduced to the Poshan Champion from RajPusht. During her sessions with him, Neha shared the challenges of her first child. The Poshan Champion, with the aid of PC App then explained the adverse effects of junk food and emphasised the importance of a nutritious diet during pregnancy. Determined to make a change, Neha sought guidance from the Poshan Champion. She wholeheartedly followed the advice, adopting a balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, protein-rich foods, whole grains, and dairy products. A happy Neha delivered a healthy baby weighing three kilograms. The 18-month old child is meeting all developmental milestones.



I will do whatever you say, but I want a healthy baby. If I want a champion in life then I will have to put an end to junk food.

Beneficiary

## SUPPORTING MOTHER AND CHILD: A PATH TO HEALTHIER PARENTING

The Poshan Champion met Foranta Mahavir and her husband in their hometown Baran, when she was in her last trimester of pregnancy. In search of work and livelihood, Foranta kept traveling and did not get proper rest and care during her pregnancy. As a result, her child was born with low birth weight of 2.1 kgs. Although the PC began counseling sessions, she left Baran to return only after nine months. On her return, the PC once again contacted Foranta. She had not initiated complementary feeding to her nine-month-old child. When measured on the anthropometry, the child was found to be in the wasted category. Using tools such as PC App, posters, and animation films, the Poshan Champion counseled the parents on optimal feeding practices.. She was encouraged to initiate semi-solid food along with breastfeeding and age-appropriate consistency, frequency, quantity, and quality of food intake for the child. Intervening at the right time, the Poshan Champion helped Foranta's child to recover. The child's health; her weight has increased from 5600 grams to 7650 grams in the last 11 months.



  
The baby should be introduced to complementary feeding at 6 months. But the beneficiary stated that she exclusively breastfed child till 7 months.

Poshan Champion





**FATHER-IN-LAW'S WISDOM:  
BENA'S PATH TOWARDS ENSURING HEALTH  
FOR HERSELF AND HER CHILDREN**



An significant wind of change in Rajasthan. Bena's greatest familial support was her father-in-law. With only a year's gap between her two children, Bena from Udaipur faced several health issues. During her second pregnancy, the Poshan Champion enrolled her under RajPusht, and regular counseling followed. Bena's father-in-law was part of the counseling sessions on maternal nutrition, ensuring exclusive breastfeeding and timely initiation of complementary feeding. He was very enthusiastic and always asked the PC many questions about the health of the mother and children.

He further ensured that Bena and her children visited the AWC for her regular checkups and immunisation of the children. The visits gave her more understanding of nutrition and related schemes discussed by the ANM and group sessions by the Anganwadi workers. In one of the sessions, the the ASHA discussed the basket of choices on contraception, which helped her choose the best fit for her. Today Bena and her kids are healthy and happy thanks to the support of her father-in-law.



If you do not maintain atleast three-year gap between two children, they will not be healthy.

Father in Law



A photograph of two newborn twin girls sleeping peacefully on a green surface. They are covered with colorful, patterned blankets. The girl on the left is wearing a white blanket with red and yellow floral patterns, while the girl on the right is wearing a green and white patterned blanket. Both girls have dark hair and are wearing black wristbands. The background is a solid green surface.

**FROM STRUGGLE TO SUCCESS:**  
**A STORY OF TWIN GIRLS' ROAD TO RECOVERY**



Manju, from Banswara district, gave birth to severely malnourished twin girls with a low birth weight of 1.4 kg each. Despite the doctor's referral to the Special Newborn Care Unit (SNCU), Manju's family did not agree to provide institutional care to the children. They repeatedly said that the newborns were not sick and there was no need for the intervention. The ASHA and Poshan Champion intervened, dispelling misconceptions and emphasising the SNCU's benefits for the growth and development of the twins. Through counseling, Manju's husband persuaded his parents, and the twins received essential care at the SNCU, which improved their health. Following their discharge the Poshan Champion made continuous home visits to ensure the well-being of the twins and the mother, emphasising on exclusive breastfeeding and optimal nutrition. Within three weeks, the twins were on the path to recovery and weighed 1930 grams and 2010 grams, and displayed overall improvement in Health.



I am happy that with support from Ganesh bhaiya (PC), I took the correct decision of taking my twin daughters, who were born weak, to SNCU.

Beneficiary





A large, stylized number '2' is positioned on the right side of the image. The top half of the '2' is white, while the bottom half is orange, matching the background color. The number is thick and blocky.

**NURTURING TOGETHER  
FOR BETTER NUTRITION**

## NOW PARENTS KNOW THE BEST: EQUIPPING BOTH PARENTS WITH KNOWLEDGE ON NUTRITION



Jaya of Dungarpur district, experienced severe nausea and vomiting in the first three months of her pregnancy. Eating food was the most challenging task for her. This greatly impacted her health and the health of the twins she was expecting. Jaya's husband was mindful of the situation and highly supportive. As Jaya entered the fifth month, she was advised complete bed rest. Stepping up, her husband took charge of all the household tasks, providing support during this critical time.

While Jaya delivered twins in her seventh month without any complications, the twins were low birth weight. The Poshan Champions, with the support of PC App and Poshan Card, highlighted the importance of kangaroo care, exclusive breastfeeding, and highly nutritious food for the mother. With regular follow-up by the PC and the parents' efforts, the twins showed an optimal weight gain of 5500 gms and 4100 gms in six months.



  
I counseled the parents on kangaroo care,  
exclusive breast feeding and optimum nutrition  
for lactating mother.  
Poshan Champion



# ENSURING HEALTHY PREGNANCY THROUGH INCLUSIVE SUPPORT



Sunita, from Pratapgarh district, could not access the benefits of Government schemes due to lack of awareness. When she was expecting her first child, the Poshan Champion found that Sunita was not registered in the Anganwadi centre and had no antenatal checkups. After the first round of counseling and establishing the importance of antenatal check-ups and the services provided there, Sunita registered and met the ANM. Through the Poshan Card Sunita, her husband, and mother-in-law got information on locally available nutritionally rich food. The Poshan Champion tracked her weight gain and ensured that she availed all the necessary immunisation and check-ups during pregnancy. Sunita delivered a healthy three kilogram baby. Today, the child is 18 months old healthy and achieving age-appropriate developmental milestones.



By ensuring an conducive environment, we can  
ensure a healthy champion.

Poshan Champion

# NURTURING MATERNAL HEALTH THROUGH SUPPORTIVE NETWORK

Kavita belongs to the Sahariya tribe from Baran district. She had a difficult pregnancy, and her diet had several restrictions due to misconceptions. The Poshan Champion registered Kavita in her ninth month of pregnancy and she had not met the milestones of weight gain. Kavita delivered a low birth weight baby of 2150 grams. Seeing the child and Kavita's condition the family was extremely worried. The PC along with ASHA and AWW, counseled Kavita, her husband, and mother-in-law. The videos shown by the PC detailed important points that needed to be included in things she could eat to recover her health and save the child from getting into the wasted category. All three worked as a team to attain the target of a healthy mother and child. In 11 months the child weighs 5750 grams.



Your child is not sick, but is weak. It is important to provide proper care and ensure the child's well-being. By taking special care of the mother's eating habits, the child can become normal and healthy.

Poshan Champion





**NURTURING LIFE:  
OVERCOMING COMMUNICATION BARRIERS  
FOR MATERNAL NUTRITION**

Priyanka from Dungarpur district lives on one of the tilas (hillocks). She is full of life but cannot hear the sounds of nature due to her hearing impairment. When Priyanka was pregnant with her first child, her husband and mother-in-law took excellent care of her. While she regularly went for her MCHN day check-up in the anganwadi centre, her mother-in-law always accompanied her and carefully heard all the information. With the help of illustrations in the Anganwadi Marghdarshika and the posters, the Anganwadi worker told Priyanka the things she needed to remember. In the series of discussions with the AWW, Priyanka's mother-in-law acknowledged the importance of fresh and nutritious food, and created a kitchen garden, ensuring a continuous supply of fresh produce for Priyanka and the entire family. With the AWW's and mother-in-law's combined efforts, Priyanka had a smooth and healthy pregnancy with an 11 kg weight gain. She delivered a healthy baby weighing 2.7 kg at birth. The child is eight months old and has benefitted from exclusive breastfeeding. With the dietary rich complimentary feed being provided, the child is thriving.



The AWW and PC visited our home and provided counseling to my daughter-in-law, but due to hearing impairment, she couldn't understand. However, I took the initiative to understand the counseling myself, and then I used sign language to effectively communicate to her about the significance of consuming the right food during pregnancy.

Mother in law



A large, dark blue, stylized number '5' is positioned on the right side of the slide, partially overlapping the text area. It has a thick, blocky appearance with a white outline.

# **FIELD-LEVEL HEROES AS CATALYSTS**

# EMPOWERING MOTHERS, ENRICHING LIVES

Sangeeta, an ANM from Baran, has become a beacon of success showcasing the remarkable impact that specialised care and support can have on low birth weight infants. She leverages her extensive training in maternal and child nutrition received under RajPusht, to make a difference in the lives of low birth babies. Sangeeta's commitment extends beyond her responsibilities, as she works closely with ASHA Sahyoginis and conducts home visits alongside them. With her expertise, she empowers these families by educating them on crucial practices such as kangaroo care, exclusive breastfeeding, early days care, and hygiene. Through her unwavering dedication, she also ensures the low birth weight register is always updated, meticulously monitoring the progress of these infants. By collaborating closely with ASHAs and the Anganwadi Workers (AWW), Sangeeta actively engages with mothers of LBW infants during Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN) days, strongly emphasising promoting optimal growth and development. Through her exceptional support and guidance, Sangeeta creates a nurturing environment where LBW infants and their families both at home and AWC thrive. She serves as an inspiration for the community.



I undertake joint home visits with ASHA Sahyogini. I also provide support to other ANMs from neighbouring villages for facilitating Kangaroo care and ensuring breast feeding so that the child is healthy and remains in green zone.

ANM



# BUILDING TRUST, TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES



Lalita, an ASHA Sahyogini from Baran, exudes immense passion for her work. She has fought all odds and community reluctance to tirelessly support women throughout their pregnancies, establishing a deep sense of trust among community members. Under the RajPusht project interventions, Lalita was introduced to Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) techniques. This helped Lalita engage with community in identifying and prioritising maternal and child nutrition issues collectively. The RajPusht Project has played a crucial role in equipping Lalita with the necessary skills and knowledge to provide targeted counseling on nutrition, dispelling prevailing myths and taboos, and raising awareness about Government schemes related to maternal and child health and nutrition during designated MCHN days. Through her relentless efforts, Lalita has achieved remarkable results, including increased vaccination rates and, timely registration of births. She also protects vulnerable girls from the detrimental effects of early marriages.



I consider this village not just as a village, but as my extended family. Within the village, there are sons, daughters, mothers-in-law, fathers-in-law, and I consider all of them as my own family members.

ASHA Sahyogini

# OVERCOMING COMMUNICATION BARRIERS FOR MATERNAL NUTRITION

TejKumari, an Anganwadi worker hailing from Baran, has undergone comprehensive training in nutritional counseling as part of the RajPusht project. She has also been provided with culturally appropriate informational materials, including posters and a Marghdarshika developed under RajPusht. TejKumari's enhanced skills have equipped her with the essential knowledge and skills to effectively communicate with eligible women, guiding them in accessing and utilising the benefits of cash transfer schemes. She proactively educates pregnant women, their families, and the entire community on the advantages of cash transfer schemes in enhancing maternal nutrition. She establishes trust and acceptance within the community by engaging community leaders and local influencers in endorsing these programmes. Collaborating with local NGOs, women's groups, and community-based organisations, she leverages their networks and expertise to identify eligible beneficiaries and provide assistance throughout the application process. Full of determination, she not only shares progress reports and success stories but seeks guidance from her seniors to enhance her role delivery. Through her efforts, the promotion of cash transfer schemes for maternal nutrition has been strengthened, ensuring improved access to financial support for pregnant women and ultimately leading to enhanced maternal and child health outcomes.



I was quite uncertain when I had to guide pregnant mothers on their eating habits. However, through training and the utilization of the Rajpusht booklet, I gained the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively counsel them.

Anganwadi Worker





**FROM DISABILITY TO AN INSPIRATION:  
ENSURING MATERNAL AND CHILD WELL-BEING**



Pratapgarh district is characterised by a hilly terrain, presenting challenges in delivering fresh produce to rural households. Despite her own physical disability, Nathi Bai, an Anganwadi Worker from Pratapgarh, has actively promoted the cultivation of kitchen gardens within households. This initiative aims to ensure a nutritious diet for pregnant and lactating women and promote healthy eating habits. With the strengthening of Village Health, Sanitation, and Nutrition Committees (VHSNCs) through Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) techniques under RajPusht project, Nathi Bai effectively utilises this platform to educate families, especially pregnant women and lactating mothers, about the benefits of developing kitchen gardens.

Nathi Bai also advocates for the distribution of seeds to households by engaging with the Sarpanch and Ward Panch. Additionally, she assists families in preparing delivery kits and contact information for ambulance services. This comprehensive approach ensures that mothers are well-prepared for childbirth and have the necessary resources readily available. Nathi Bai's unwavering dedication and holistic approach have transformed the dietary habits of rural households in her area and empowered mothers with the knowledge and resources they need for a healthier future.



It is highly encouraged to promote more number of kitchen gardens to facilitate easy access to affordable vegetables. By consuming vegetables from their own kitchen gardens, pregnant women can achieve a weight gain of 10-12kg, and all children born will have a birth weight above 2.5 kg.

Anganwadi Worker





# ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	-	Ante Natal care
ANM	-	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
ASHA	-	Accredited Social Health Activist
AWC	-	Anganwadi Centre
AWW	-	Anganwadi Worker
IEC	-	Information, Education and Communication
IFA	-	Iron Folic Acid
LBW	-	Low Birth Weight
MCHN	-	Maternal, Child Health and Nutrition
PC	-	Poshan Champion
PC App	-	Poshan Champion Application
PLA	-	Participatory Learning and Action
SBCC	-	Social Behaviour Change Communication
SNCU	-	Special Newborn Care Unit
VHSNC	-	Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Committee







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