



Advancing Nutrition: RajPusht's Strategy for Transformative Change Through SBC



This document has been developed under RajPusht, a seven-year collaborative programme of the Government of Rajasthan and the Children's investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), implemented by IPE Global. It aims to accelerate reduction in low birthweight and wasting in five tribal districts of the state.

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Advancing Nutrition: RajPusht's Strategy for Transformative Change Through SBC



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Rajasthan's Nutrition Challenge: Progress Amidst Complexity

Rajasthan, one of India's largest and most diverse states, continues to grapple with high malnutrition rates, especially among women and children. Despite decades of progress and government efforts, challenges persist

due to poverty, social norms, healthcare gaps, and regional disparities. However, recent trends show gradual, yet promising signs of improvement.

Indicator	NFHS-4 (2015-16)	NFHS-5 (2020-21)	Change / Observation
 Prevalence of low birthweight	21%	18%	While there was a marginal decrease, low birthweight remains a significant challenge with nearly 2 in 10 infants still affected.
 Children (under 5) Wasting	23%	18%	Acute malnutrition has improved, yet more targeted action is needed.
 Underweight Women (15-49 years)	28%	26%	A modest decrease signals progress, but the numbers are still worrisome.
 Anaemia in Women (15-49 years)	53%	55%	A slight rise underscores the ongoing need for dedicated efforts.
 Antenatal Care (ANC) Compliance (4+ visits)	36%	44%	Increased ANC coverage; however, over 50% of the pregnant women are still getting less-than-optimal care from skilled providers.

RajPusht: Transforming Nutrition Through Behaviour Change in the First 1,000 Days

RajPusht, a joint effort by the Government of Rajasthan and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), implemented by IPE Global, is on a mission to combat low birthweight and wasting in the state. Through a contextualised cash-plus programme, combining cash transfers with a tailored Social & Behaviour Change (SBC) strategy, the programme empowers pregnant and lactating mothers to make healthier dietary choices during pregnancy and adopt lasting nutritional practices for themselves and their families.

The first 1,000 days—from conception to age two—are crucial for a child's health, growth, and development. Poor nutrition during this period can lead to stunting, impaired immunity, and lifelong challenges. RajPusht tackles these issues by developing a locally relevant SBC strategy and delivering it through a mix of revitalised institutional platforms, community-based mid-media activities and digital media.

By engaging families and communities, SBC promotes practices like maternal nutrition, exclusive breastfeeding, and timely complementary feeding, while addressing cultural barriers and shifting mindsets.

RajPusht's focus on pregnancy ensures healthier birth outcomes, reducing incidence of low birth weight and breaking the cycle of malnutrition.

Key priorities include

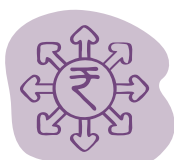
Maternal Nutrition

Ensuring macro and micro nutrients intake by mothers.

Child Nutrition

Encouraging early initiation and exclusive breast feeding for first six months, followed by nutrient rich complementary feeding.

Key Focus Areas



Expanding Cash Transfer Reach

Enhancing the implementation of the Government of India's cash transfer programme, viz., the **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)** through the introduction of a supplementary State programme called the **Mukhya Mantri Matritva Poshan Yojana (MMMPY)**. This ensures that second-time mothers receive in-pregnancy cash transfers during both their first and second pregnancies.



Promoting Maternal Nutrition

Building a supportive environment for maternal nutrition through comprehensive, multi-layered **Social & Behaviour Change** strategies.

- Improved PMMVY implementation across all districts, boosting Rajasthan's enrollment rank from 19th in 2018 to 4th in 2019.
- Established the State Technical Support Unit (TSU) for stakeholder training and monitoring, with Rajasthan's model featured as a NITI Aayog case study.
- Pioneered a team incentive structure for frontline workers under PMMVY, making Rajasthan the first state to do so.
- Launched a statewide SBC strategy in 2018 aligned with PM's POSHAN Abhiyan, positioning Rajasthan as a national leader.

Phase 1 (2017-Jan 2020)

Phase 2 (Jan 2020-Present)

- Launched a cash-plus programme, blending cash transfers with SBC interventions for second-time mothers and supported its implementation.
- Introduced a paperless digital system for cash transfers, a first-of-its-kind integration between the health and WCD databases.
- Created a concurrent monitoring framework to track nutrition outcomes.
- Focused on developing institutional capacities through trained resources deployed across multiple levels.

- Cash plus programme scaled up across the state by the Government of Rajasthan due to strong early results. RajPusht provided technical support in the expansion.
- Deployed resources across 28 districts for 20 months to boost scheme expansion.
- Integrated PMMVY with the state scheme, extending maternity benefits up to INR 8,000.

Phase 3
(Nov 2022-Present)



Programme Reach Until 2025

State-wide



3,000,000
women
received cash
benefit



65,000 AWW and
16,500 ANMs
trained to impact
nutrition counselling



910,000
men reached
via digital media
campaign

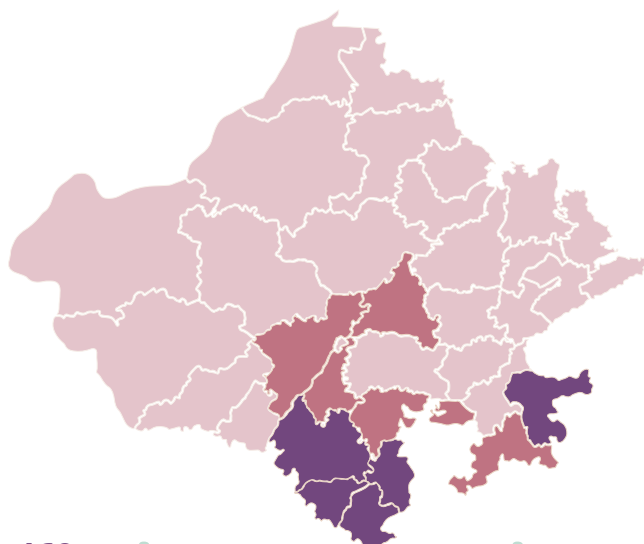
Across 10 districts



11,700 ASHA
Sahyogini conducted



169,508 community
meetings conducted



Across 5 focus districts



409,448
births
digitally
weighed



490,460
pregnant
women
monitored and
counselled at
homes



474,537
children
under 3
years of age
monitored



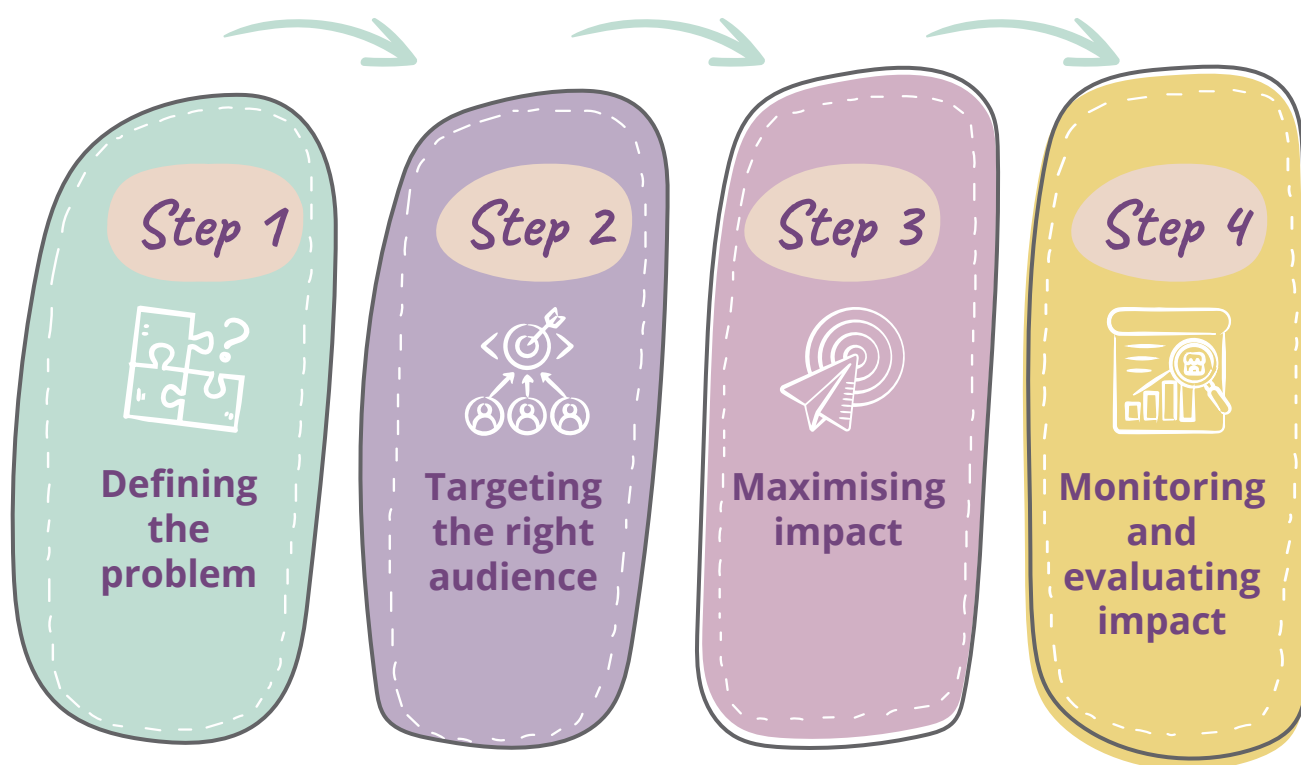
638,736
households
reached

Impact between 2022 and 2025:

- Cash use for food increased from **32% to 89%**
- Pregnant women gaining gestational weight of over 6 kgs increased from **25% to 63%**
- **35% reduction** in prevalent myths and taboos surrounding maternal nutrition
- **Significant improvement in maternal nutrition awareness:**
 - Women: **61% to 83%**
 - Men: **18% to 62%**
 - Frontline workers (FLWs): **71% to 85%**
- **Enhanced maternal and child health practices:**
 - Women consuming 5+ food groups increased from **32% to 80%**
 - Exclusive breastfeeding rates rose from **46% to 71%**
 - Children eating diverse diets grew from **20% to 68%**

This document captures the design and implementation journey of the RajPusht SBC strategy, offering practical insights for programmes looking to replicate or adapt this approach. Organised around key SBC

steps, it provides a comprehensive guide from problem identification to monitoring and evaluation. Real-world examples from RajPusht showcase successes, challenges, and valuable lessons learned at each stage.





Step 1

Defining the Problem: Understanding Your Audience and Overcoming Barriers

To drive meaningful behaviour change through SBC, the first step is understanding the problem, audience, and barriers. This foundational phase identifies the behaviours to address, the factors influencing them, and the obstacles standing in the way.

The goal is to uncover actionable insights that shape effective interventions. By exploring the audience's sociocultural context, economic realities, and perceptions, programme designers can craft messages that truly resonate. Tackling barriers like knowledge gaps, resource shortages, and deep-rooted norms ensures solutions target root causes, not just symptoms.

Conducting surveys, focus groups, and interviews for formative research.



Analysing social, economic, and cultural factors driving behaviour.



Studying stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs.



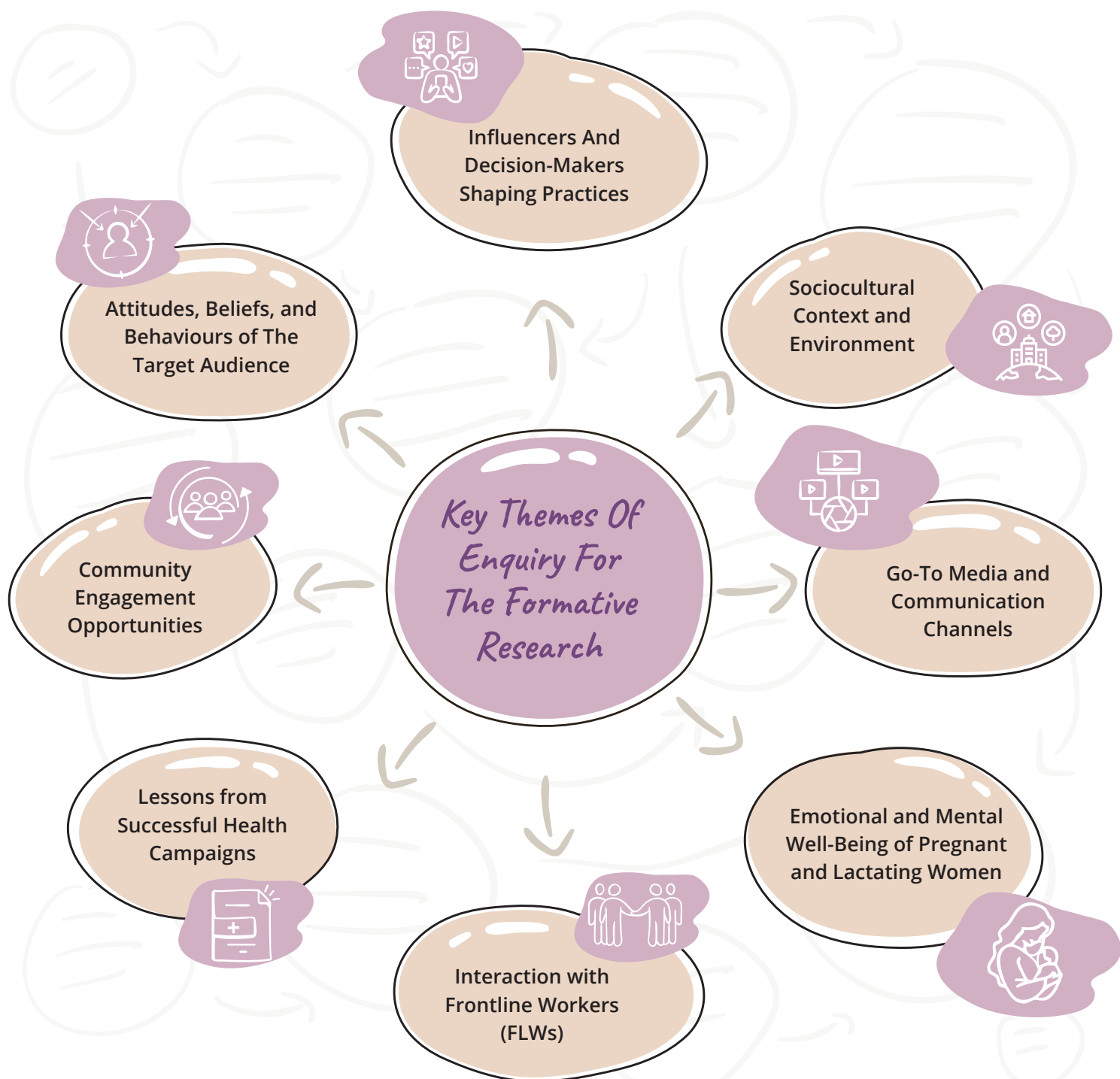
Identifying barriers such as cultural resistance, lack of knowledge, and limited resources.



*Key
Activities*

RajPusht in Action

RajPusht partnered with leading research organisations¹ to deeply understand the problem and its audience. During the formative phase, the research explored not just existing practices but also communication channels, key decision-makers, influencers, and barriers to change. The figure below highlights the core themes that guided this critical phase of inquiry.



¹ Research partners included - IIHMR, Sight and Life, Kantar, and Final Mile

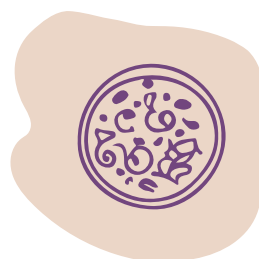
Findings from the formative phase

Formative research found worrisome gaps in protein, micronutrients and energy among mothers. Children had insufficient energy and protein intake.



Pregnancy Treated as Routine

Pregnant women often receive no special care or attention.



Women Eat Last and Least

Their health takes a backseat, even during pregnancy.



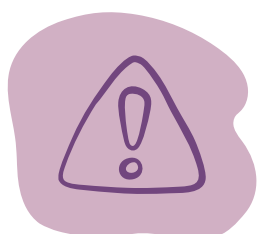
Infants Treated Like Adults

As risk perception decreases, feeding decisions are based heavily on child feedback, mirroring adult eating habits.



Rigid Meal Patterns

Fixed family meal schedules (twice daily) dictate eating times for pregnant women and children, often controlled by mothers-in-law.



Risk Perception Fades

Families are highly cautious during an infant's first 6 months but become lax after complementary feeding begins.



Mothers Overcompensate

Mothers in the early days after the birth of the child rely on external milk, fearing their breast milk isn't enough for their babies.



Step 2

Targeting the Right Audience: Crafting Messages and Choosing Channels

Audience segmentation is a powerful tool in any SBC strategy that allows programme designers to divide the target population into specific groups based on factors like age, gender, socio-economic status, cultural practices, and geography. This approach ensures interventions are tailored to each group's unique context, needs, and behaviours, leading to more effective and engaging campaigns.

Effective segmentation doesn't just focus on the primary audience, it also looks at secondary and tertiary groups that influence behaviour. For example, in maternal and child nutrition, while pregnant and lactating women are the primary audience, their behaviours are shaped by family members, health workers, and community leaders. By understanding the needs and motivations of these groups, SBC strategies can create more impactful messages.

Once the segments are identified, the next step is to craft messages that are culturally relevant, relatable, and tailored to each group. Whether through interpersonal communication, community outreach, or mass media, customising the message delivery method ensures maximum engagement and behaviour change.



RajPusht in Action

For RajPusht's SBC strategy to drive real behaviour change, audience segmentation was key. By identifying distinct groups and tailoring messages to their unique needs, behaviours, and socio-cultural contexts, the programme ensured its communication resonated deeply, leading to more impactful shifts in behaviour.

The Socio-Ecological Model helped pinpoint not just primary target groups, but also key stakeholders influencing decisions around food intake and feeding practices. Each audience segment played a unique role in shaping the behaviours RajPusht aimed to influence, and the communication strategy was crafted with specific outcomes for each.

To maximise reach and relevance, RajPusht selected SBC platforms based on audience access and preferences. Digital media effectively reached migrant men in Southern Rajasthan, while community events in busy areas like markets targeted a broader audience, including adolescents, elderly women, and men. For pregnant women, personalised one-on-one communication delivered self-care advice based on their individual needs. This strategic blend of platforms ensured wide engagement and meaningful impact across diverse groups.



Audience, platforms, and key messages

Primary Audience

Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW)

Home-based counselling

Individual counselling by ANMs

Counselling by Anganwadi Workers

PLA-powered community meetings



- Attend antenatal check-ups on time and complete all visits.
- Use cash benefits wisely to ensure a diverse and nutritious diet.
- Aim for healthy weight gain during pregnancy.
- Take folic acid (first three months), iron and calcium supplement for 180 days.
- Opt for safe and reliable institutional delivery.
- Start breastfeeding early and continue exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months.
- Introduce complementary feeding after completion of 180 days.
- Prioritise purchasing wholesome food for your wife and child.
- Actively monitor, support, and encourage positive maternal health practices.
- Avoid junk food and promote healthy infant feeding habits at home.

Primary Audience

Husbands

Digital media



- Motivate son to actively care for his wife and child.
- Ensure daughter-in-law receives a nutritious diet and proper care.
- Say no to pre-lacteal feeds and support early breastfeeding.
- Ensure daughter-in-law practices exclusive breast feeding for first six months.
- Initiate nutrition-dense complementary feeding on time

Secondary Audience

Mothers-in-Law

Home-based counselling

PLA-powered community meetings



- Motivate son to actively care for his wife and child.
- Ensure daughter-in-law receives a nutritious diet and proper care.
- Say no to pre-lacteal feeds and support early breastfeeding.
- Ensure daughter-in-law practices exclusive breast feeding for first six months.
- Initiate nutrition-dense complementary feeding on time

Tertiary Audience

Communities and VHSNC

PLA-powered community meetings

Community-based events

Digital media



- Inspire families to adopt healthier, positive practices.
- Challenge and dispel myths and taboos rooted in community traditions.





Step 3

Maximising Impact: A Holistic Approach to Boost Reach and Engagement

In this step, we dive into a dynamic all-around strategy to amplify audience reach and deliver consistent messaging across a variety of platforms. This comprehensive approach ensures the target audience encounters the message in multiple formats and contexts, boosting its impact and the likelihood of influencing behaviour.

By seamlessly integrating traditional channels like radio and TV with modern platforms such as social media and mobile apps, we create a unified flow of information that keeps the audience engaged. The goal? To saturate the target environment with resonant messages that not only capture attention but also enhance recall and drive action.

A well-executed 360-degree strategy ensures the message is reinforced at every touchpoint, making it memorable and effective. It also allows us to connect with diverse audience segments by tailoring content to each platform. For example, social media can engage younger demographics, while community outreach may better connect with older or rural populations. Online and onsite mentoring of outreach teams can nudge improvement in skills and effective interpersonal communication.

While the tone and style of messaging might vary across these channels, maintaining a consistent core message is vital. This creates a cohesive narrative that inspires trust, fosters engagement, and ultimately drives the desired behavioural change.



Harness a Variety of Channels

Combine traditional platforms like TV, radio, and print with digital tools such as social media, SMS campaigns, and mobile apps. This ensures your message reaches a diverse audience with maximum coverage.



Customise Messaging for Each Platform

Tailor your content, tone, and format to fit the platform and audience. A catchy social media post might appeal to younger users, while a detailed print ad may resonate more with older demographics.

Maintain a Consistent Look and Feel

Use cohesive design elements, colours, and themes across all platforms to boost brand recognition and ensure your message sticks.



A Holistic Approach

Create Cross-Channel Synergy

Ensure all your communication efforts work together seamlessly. Each channel should complement and amplify the others, creating a unified and impactful message.



Engage Communities Directly

Incorporate community-driven efforts like focus groups, workshops, and peer-to-peer initiatives. These activities make your message more relatable, credible, and impactful.



Track Progress and Adapt

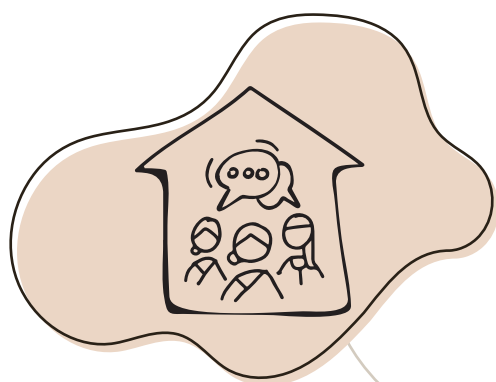
Continuously monitor engagement and feedback from each platform. Use these insights to refine your strategy and keep your messaging effective and relevant.



RajPusht in Action

RajPusht's Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) strategy was thoughtfully designed to inspire meaningful and lasting behaviour change by understanding and segmenting its diverse audience. This segmentation allowed RajPusht to craft tailored messaging that spoke directly to the unique needs, behaviours, and socio-cultural contexts of each group. By resonating deeply with its audience, the programme achieved significant shifts in behaviour, creating a lasting impact.

Each audience segment had a crucial role in the behaviours RajPusht sought to influence. The communication strategy focused on delivering specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and context specific outcomes for each group. Here's a closer look at the platforms utilised, their roles in the intervention, and the results they aimed to achieve:

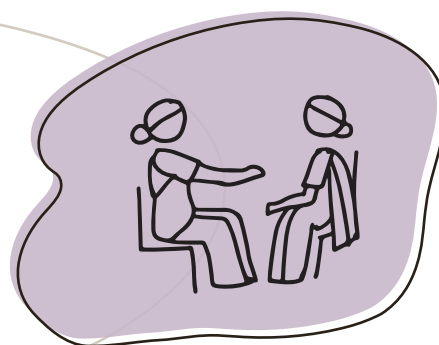


Home-Based Counselling by Anganwadi Workers

Trained facilitators, including Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and community mobilisers, conducted household visits to guide families on improving their nutritional health. **Leveraging digital tools for counselling and real-time monitoring**, facilitators ensured consistent and effective interactions. Women were also empowered with tools like weight trackers to monitor progress and make informed decisions.

Individual Counselling by ANMs

At Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) and sub-centers, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) provided personalised counselling during antenatal and postnatal checkups. **These sessions debunked common health myths**—such as concerns about weight gain during pregnancy—and promoted the inclusion of locally available nutritious foods in daily diets.



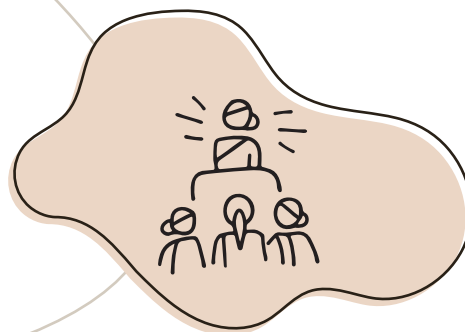
Counselling by Anganwadi Workers

Group counselling sessions, led by AWWs during events like Mother and Child Health Nutrition (MCHN) days, engaged not just mothers but entire families. These sessions emphasised dietary diversity, raised awareness about government **nutrition programmes**, and encouraged family support for maternal and child health.



Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) Community Meetings

Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) facilitated PLA sessions to reinvigorate Village Health, Sanitation, and Nutrition Committees (VHSNCs). These interactive village-level meetings provided a platform for discussing local nutrition challenges and collaboratively devising solutions, empowering communities to take collective action.

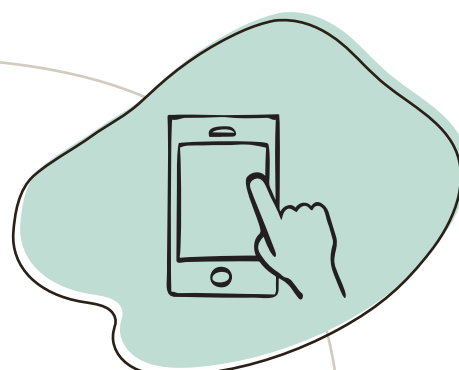


Community-Based Events

Through events like Garbhavastha Paramarsh Diwas and Annaprashan Diwas, organised in partnership with the Department of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), RajPusht connected with families in culturally meaningful ways. Activities such as street plays, puppet shows, Kala Jathas, and mobile van exhibitions brought nutrition messages to even the most remote or underserved areas.

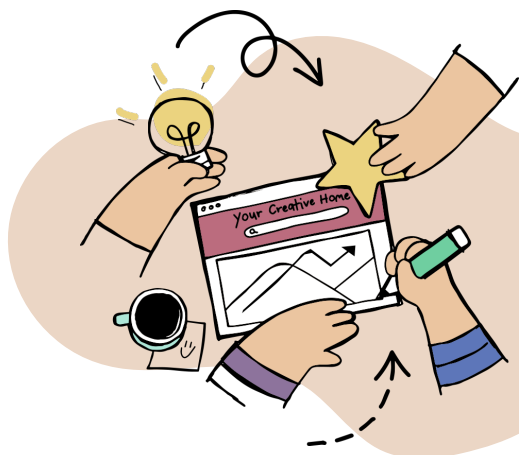
Digital Media

To extend its reach, RajPusht tapped into digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. A Network of WhatsApp (NOW) was developed to deliver targeted messages directly to beneficiaries, while frontline workers utilised creative digital assets to enhance outreach and engagement.



This comprehensive, 360-degree approach blended personalised interactions with broad community engagement, ensuring that RajPusht's SBC initiatives effectively transformed maternal and child nutrition behaviours across Rajasthan.

Testing Creatives



Testing creatives is a critical step in executing an effective SBC strategy. For the RajPusht initiative, this process was thoughtfully designed and carried out in two phases.

In the first phase, messages were crafted around compelling communication hooks. These messages formed the foundation for developing materials tailored to the selected communication channels. Once the initial designs were ready,

the focus shifted to validating their effectiveness through community engagement.

The testing phase was a dynamic, inclusive process that directly involved the community. Through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with selected participants, the creative concepts were assessed for their impact, resonance, and practicality. The evaluation centered on several key factors:

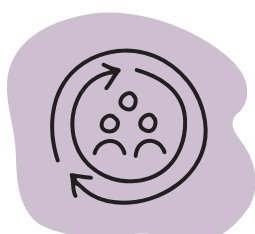
- **Engagement Quotient:** Are the messages captivating enough to hold the audience's attention?
- **Language and Cultural Relevance:** Does the target audience easily understand the language, and do the symbols resonate with local traditions?
- **Motivational Power:** Do the messages clearly highlight the benefits of adopting the desired behaviours?
- **Contextual Relevance:** Are the messages focused on driving the intended behaviour change while aligning with the communication goals?

By incorporating community feedback along with technical vetting by experts and Government Centre of Excellence (CoE), the testing phase ensured that the creatives were not only appealing but also actionable and culturally relevant. This approach laid a strong foundation for delivering impactful communication that truly connects with the audience.



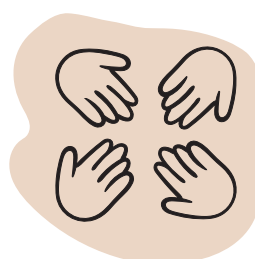
Digital Media Campaigns

In 2020, RajPusht launched an innovative digital media campaign to engage men in conversations about maternal and child nutrition. This pivot to digital came after mass media budgets were redirected toward COVID-19 relief efforts. Drawing inspiration from the blockbuster movie "Bahubali", the campaign reimaged its hero as a loving husband and father, encouraging men to champion maternal and child health.



10,000
Followers

The campaign, hosted on Facebook and amplified through YouTube and Google AdWords, struck a chord with audiences. During its first phase, it successfully built an online community dedicated to maternal health, gaining 10,000 followers and reaching over 805,000 people.



1,872
WhatsApp
groups

By 2022–23, the campaign grew with the launch of three creative initiatives: Asli Bahubali, Gauri Ke Kalu Ka Chashma, and Kya Aap Jaante Hain. These initiatives delivered 69 compelling creatives across platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. A significant milestone was the creation of the Network of WhatsApp (NOW), which now boasts 1,872 groups and 228,786 members—58% of whom are direct beneficiaries and 28% are community influencers.



74%
Audience
increased

The results speak volumes: between 2022 and 2025, exposure to social media among men in the target audience increased from 22% to an impressive 80%. Overall, RajPusht's digital outreach has reached over 2 million users on Facebook and Instagram.

Through engaging videos, comic skits, and informative posts, the campaign effectively debunked myths, fostered community action, and reinforced counselling efforts around maternal and child health. RajPusht's creative use of digital media not only expanded its reach but also built lasting awareness and advocacy for healthier families.



Step 4

Monitoring and Evaluating Impact

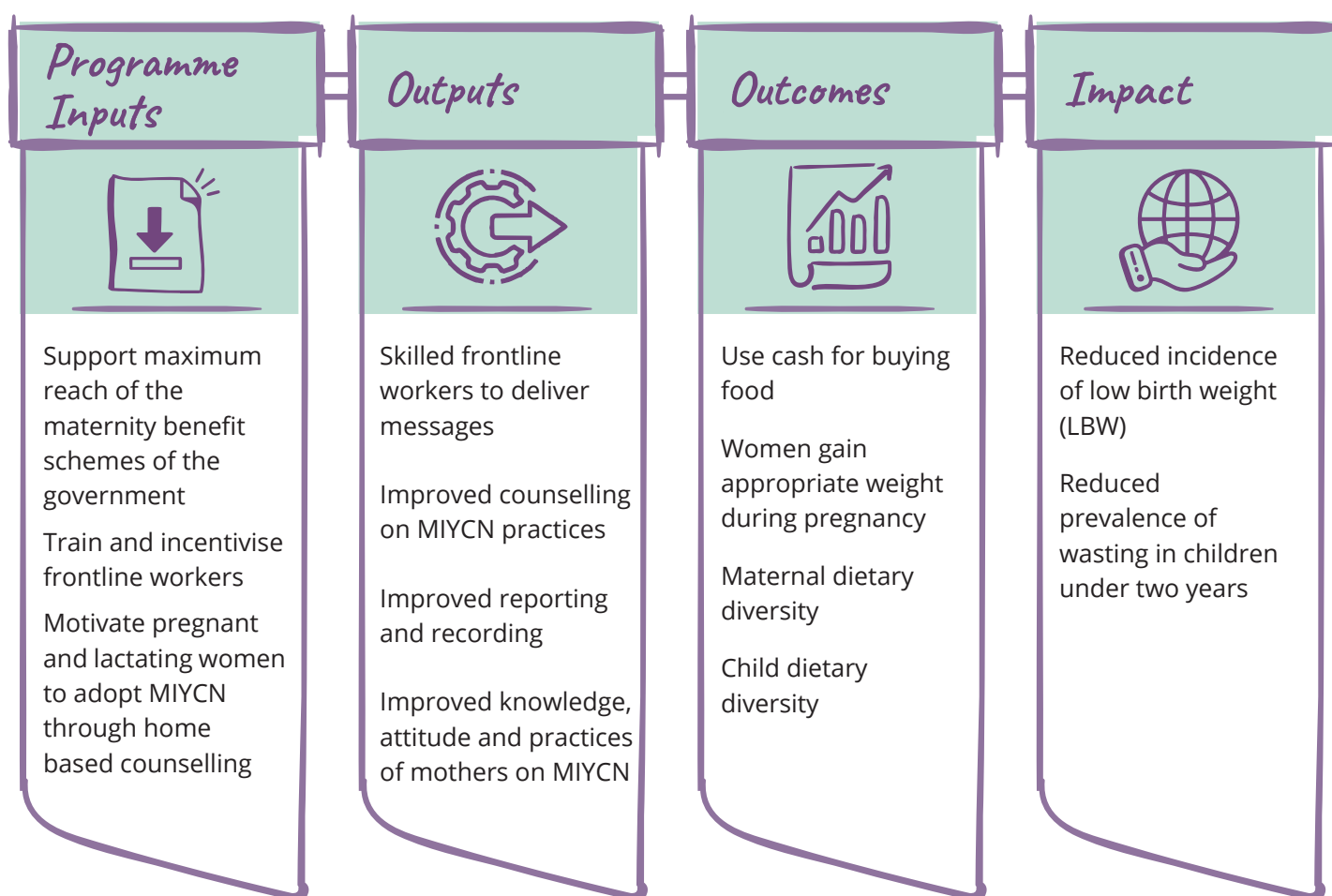
Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are vital for the success of any social and behaviour change programme. They track progress, measure impact, and guide adjustments to achieve goals. By setting clear, measurable indicators and collecting both quantitative and qualitative data—through surveys, interviews, focus groups, and real-time tools—programmes gain a full picture of their effectiveness.

Regular feedback loops ensure data isn't just collected but actively used to refine strategies in real time. For nutrition-focused initiatives like RajPusht, key indicators could include better maternal and child nutrition, increased community engagement, and shifts in nutrition-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. Continuous tracking keeps programmes responsive and impactful, aligning with the evolving needs of their communities.



RajPusht in Action

Monitoring Framework and Data Collection Systems



Project MIS

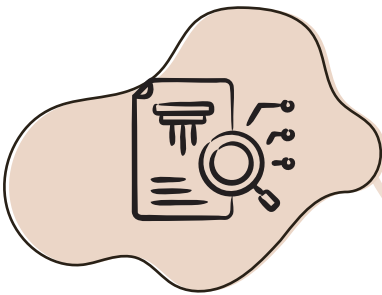
Concurrent Monitoring Survey

<i>From</i>	Pregnant and Lactating Women	Pregnant and Lactating Women; Husbands, Mothers-In-Law; Frontline Workers
<i>On</i>	Pregnancy Weight; Child Weight, Height and MUAC	Knowledge, Attitude and Practices; Outcome Indicators
<i>Frequency</i>	Trimester for Pregnant Women; 6 Monthly for Children	Every 6 Months
<i>By</i>	Programme Staff	Trained Investigators

RajPusht's SBC Journey: Key Insights for Lasting Impact

The RajPusht Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) strategy offers powerful lessons for tackling maternal and child malnutrition through a data-driven, inclusive, and culturally responsive approach. The design and implementation of this strategy provide key insights that can guide similar programmes, emphasising formative research, broad engagement, stakeholder collaboration, cultural sensitivity, and continuous monitoring for sustainable behavioural change.

The Power of Formative Research

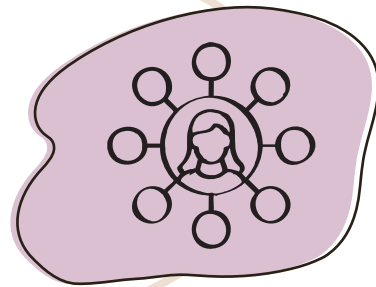


RajPusht's success hinged on comprehensive formative research and ongoing cross-sectional studies, which filled gaps in understanding maternal nutrition and Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices. These studies enabled interventions to address real-time needs, such as increasing male involvement in maternal and child health.

Lesson: Data-driven strategies remain adaptive and effective, responding to emerging challenges.

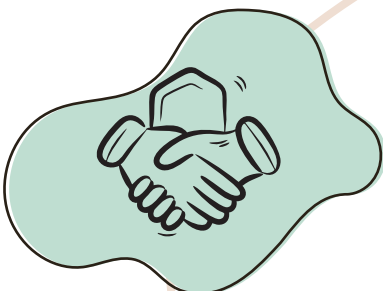
Expanding Influence for Lasting Change

By adopting a lifecycle approach, RajPusht expanded its target audience beyond pregnant and lactating women to include adolescent girls and married women—future influencers of behaviour. This forward-thinking approach ensures interventions create long-term, multi-generational impact.



Lesson: Broaden social networks to ground lasting change.

Joint Ownership Through Stakeholder Engagement



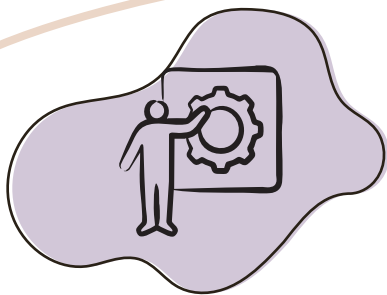
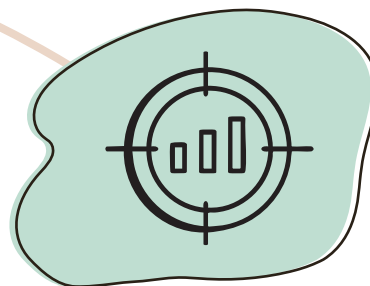
RajPusht's participatory approach involved key stakeholders, including government departments and public health workers, in collaborative strategy co-creation. This fostered a sense of shared ownership, ensuring smoother implementation and better alignment with community needs.

Lesson: Engaging stakeholders from the start builds stronger partnerships and ensures programmes resonate at every level.

Intersectoral Convergence for Broader Impact

By integrating efforts across Health, Women & Child Development, and other sectors, RajPusht dismantled silos and reached diverse groups through initiatives like PMMVY, POSHAN Abhiyaan, and the National Health Mission. This collaboration maximised outreach and strengthened impact.

Lesson: Leverage existing resources and initiatives to amplify reach and effectiveness.



Culturally Sensitive and Adaptable Strategies

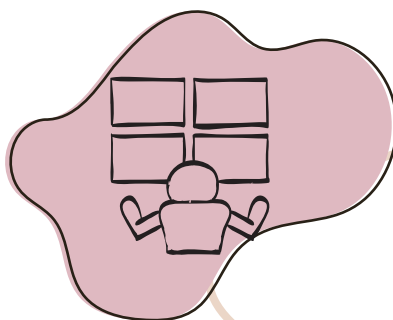
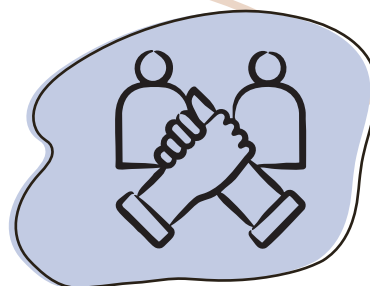
RajPusht tailored its approach to Rajasthan's cultural diversity, using focus group discussions to refine communication materials. This ensured messages resonated with local audiences.

Lesson: Continuously adapting strategies based on community feedback enhances engagement and success.

Addressing Challenges and Ensuring Collaboration

The programme faced challenges in managing cultural diversity and aligning departmental goals. Sustained collaboration required clear communication channels and a commitment to common objectives.

Lesson: Build strong, cross-sector relationships and conflict management systems to overcome hurdles and maintain focus on shared goals.



Sustaining Impact Through Continuous Monitoring

RajPusht's ongoing evaluations, including cross-sectional studies, allowed the programme to address emerging gaps, such as raising awareness about pregnancy weight gain. Regular monitoring ensured the programme stayed relevant and effective.

Lesson: Continuous feedback loops are essential for maintaining impact and ensuring long-term success.

RajPusht's SBC strategy serves as a model for effective, data-driven, and culturally responsive interventions in maternal and child nutrition. The insights gained highlight the importance of research, stakeholder engagement, intersectoral collaboration, and adaptability. Future programmes aiming to replicate or adapt this approach should prioritise gathering contextual data, fostering partnerships, and tailoring strategies to local cultures to drive lasting, scalable behaviour change. RajPusht proves that well-designed interventions can lead to meaningful, sustained improvements in maternal and child health outcomes.

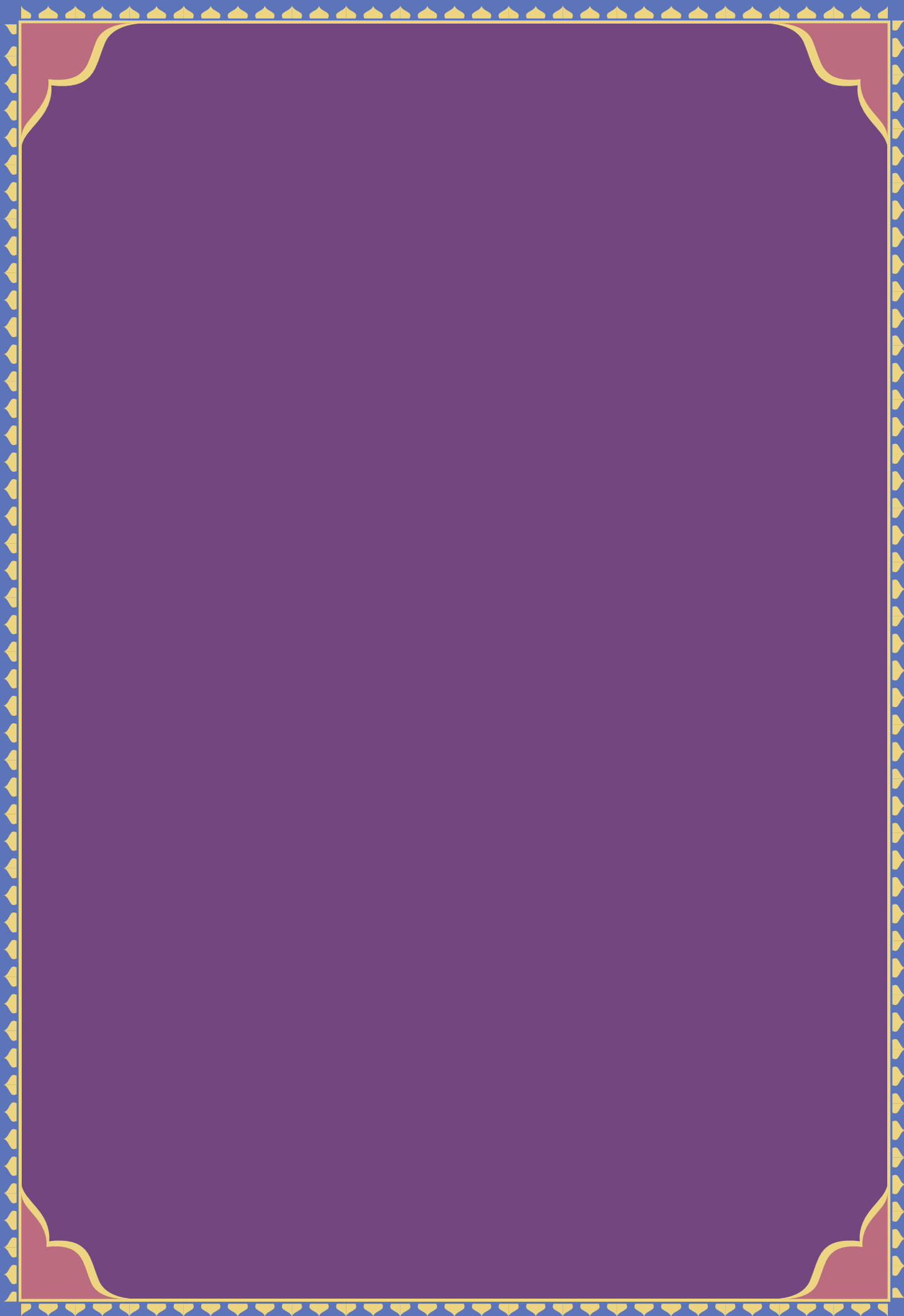
Notes

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Notes

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 28 rows of dashed lines on a light blue background, designed for note-taking.







This document is part of a knowledge series produced by RajPusht. RajPusht is seven-year collaborative programme of the Government of Rajasthan and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), implemented by IPE Global. It aims to accelerate reduction in low birthweight and wasting among children up to 2 years. It combines conditional cash transfer with a context-specific Social Behaviour Change (SBC) strategy using technology to motivate mothers to eat more and eat healthy.