

Ministry of WCD launches 8th Poshan Pakhwada with focus on Maximizing Brain Development in the First Six Years of Life

Union Minister Smt. Annpurna Devi underscores the criticality of the first 1,000 days for brain development, physical growth, and overall well-being

Poshan Maah and Poshan Pakhwada have taken the shape of a true Jan Andolan, with crores of activities taking place across the country: Smt. Annpurna Devi

Our children are the future of the nation and will carry forward the resolve of a Viksit Bharat. Ensuring that they receive better nutrition is a responsibility we must all take forward together as a Jan Andolan: Smt. Annpurna Devi

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Since the launch of Poshan Abhiyaan in 2018, sustained efforts under the Jan Andolan have led to over 150 crore sensitisation activities and more than 9.8 crore community-based events across the country. Building on this momentum, Poshan Pakhwada 2026 aims to further strengthen awareness and collective action towards improved nutrition, early childhood development, and better outcomes for children, in line with the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

In continuation of this national movement, the Ministry of Women and Child Development launched the 8th edition of Poshan Pakhwada at Vigyan Bhawan today (April 9, 2026) , marking the commencement of a nationwide campaign from April 9 to April 23, 2026.



The launch event was graced by Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt. Annpurna Devi, in the august presence of Minister of State in the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Smt. Savitri Thakur and Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Shri Anil Malik, along with representatives from partner Ministries and stakeholders from across States and Union Territories.

The theme for Poshan Pakhwada 2026 is “Maximizing Brain Development in the First Six Years of Life”, recognising that early childhood, particularly the first 1,000 days is critical for brain development, physical growth, and overall well-being. Scientific evidence indicates that over 85% of brain development occurs by age 6, underscoring the importance of optimal nutrition, responsive caregiving, and early learning.



Addressing the gathering, Union Minister Smt. Annpurna Devi emphasized that “Poshan Maah and Poshan Pakhwada have taken the shape of a true Jan Andolan, with crores of activities taking place across the country. Our Anganwadi workers, Anganwadi helpers, and ASHA Didis are diligently carrying forward the Prime Minister’s vision and goals to every household with collective efforts to bring them to fruition. The mandate of the Ministry of Women and Child Development is extensive, and we are reaching every household and every child across the country. Today, with over 14 lakh Anganwadi centres, our Anganwadi Didis are reaching pregnant mothers, lactating mothers, adolescent girls, and children, come rain or shine and serving nearly 8.9 crore beneficiaries.” “Our children are the future of the nation and

will carry forward the resolve of a Viksit Bharat. Ensuring that they receive better nutrition is a responsibility we must all take forward together as a Jan Andolan,” she added, urging States to learn from one another, adopt and adapt best practices, and encourage stronger performance within districts, especially in aspirational districts. She also emphasised that Poshan is a continuous process and called for greater time, care, and community participation to support the overall and mental development of children.

Minister of State ,Smt. Savitri Thakur addressed the gathering saying, ‘Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, 8 Poshan Maahs and 7 Poshan Pakhwadas have been organised since 2018. This reflects the Government’s commitment and dedication towards improving nutrition outcomes in the country.’ Highlighting the theme of Poshan Pakhwada 2026, “Maximizing Brain Development in the First Six Years of Life,” she emphasised that this period is critical, as over 85 percent of brain development occurs in the early years, with the first 1,000 days being especially important. She noted the need to move beyond nutrition alone and focus equally on responsive caregiving and early learning to ensure holistic child development.

The Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development ,Shri Anil Malik highlighted the critical importance of ‘Poshan’ or nutrition. Emphasising the need for informed dietary practices, he recalled that Hon’ble Prime Minister has time and again underscored the importance of healthy eating habits, including reduced consumption of oil and a focus on nutritious food.



During the launch event, key initiatives highlighting early childhood care and development were showcased, including the distribution of Vidyarambh certificates and the screening of an audio-visual film depicting a day in the life of an Anganwadi Worker, showcasing service delivery and early childhood support at Anganwadi Centers.



Joint Secretary ,Ms. Radhika Jha rendered the Vote of Thanks, expressing gratitude to all dignitaries and stakeholders, and conveying special appreciation to field functionaries of Anganwadi services , noting that it is through their tireless efforts that the vision of a Viksit Bharat is being realised.

Poshan Pakhwada 2026 (9th April to 23rd April 2026) is being observed as a nationwide campaign aimed at promoting nutrition awareness, improving early childhood care and development, and strengthening community participation under Mission Poshan 2.0.

On the inaugural day, the programme was telecast live through the NIC Webcast platform (<https://webcast.gov.in/mwcd>) and the Ministry’s YouTube channel, enabling participation from more than 4.2 lakh stakeholders, field functionaries, and citizens across the country.

All Ministries and Departments of the Government of India, in convergence with States/UTs, along with Anganwadi Centres across the country, are organizing a wide range of activities to sensitise communities on key focus areas under this year’s theme, including:

1. **Maternal and Child Nutrition** – Promoting optimal nutrition during pregnancy, exclusive breastfeeding, and age-appropriate complementary feeding.
2. **Early Stimulation for Brain Development (0–3 years)** – Encouraging responsive caregiving and early learning interactions.
3. **Play-Based Education in Early Years (3–6 years)** – Supporting holistic development and school readiness.
4. **Role of Parents and Community in Minimising Screen Time** – Promoting healthy habits and active engagement.
5. **Strengthening Anganwadi Centres through Community Participation** – Enhancing infrastructure and service delivery through Jan Bhagidari and CSR.

During the Pakhwada, Anganwadi Centres nationwide are hosting awareness sessions, conducting home visits, organizing Poshan Melas, providing counselling on maternal nutrition and infant feeding, demonstrating play-based learning, and implementing community activities to encourage active lifestyles and limit screen time.

The campaign mobilizes Anganwadi Workers, ASHAs, ANMs, Self Help Groups, teachers, Panchayati Raj Institutions, and communities, reinforcing the Jan Andolan approach and encouraging collective action towards improved nutrition and child development outcomes.

Poshan Pakhwada continues to serve as a platform for community participation and behaviour change, ensuring that every child receives proper nutrition, care, and early learning opportunities during the most critical years of life.

आज नई दिल्ली स्थित विज्ञान भवन में मिशन पोषण 2.0 के अंतर्गत 8वें पोषण पखवाड़ा 2026 का शुभारंभ किया।

माननीय प्रधानमंत्री श्री @narendramodi जी के कुशल मार्गदर्शन में यह अभियान 9 से 23 अप्रैल तक देशभर में मनाया जाएगा।
इस वर्ष की थीम “जीवन के पहले छह वर्षों में मस्तिष्क के विकास को... pic.twitter.com/TWhuRSdniH

— Annpurna Devi (@Annapurna4BJP) April 9, 2026

नया होम विज़िट शेड्यूलर हर आंगनवाड़ी दीदी के साथ है।

Home Scheduler on Poshan Tracker Application was launched at the inaugural event of the 8th edition of Poshan Pakhwada 2026.#First6YearsOfLife@PMOIndia | @Annapurna4BJP | @savitrii4bjp | @PIBWCD pic.twitter.com/PLazNXFjND

— Ministry of WCD (@MinistryWCD) April 9, 2026

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