

## SAKSHAM PROJECT



### SUCCESS STORY: **GADCHIROLI**

## Vision for Future

### Gram Panchayats draw-up roadmap for improving nutrition

Manik Pendam, President of Delanwadi Gram Panchayat was pleased to see the success of “Healthy Mother and Child” competition in his village. “We were so worried after knowing the status of malnutrition in our village,” he said. “We failed to create awareness on nutrition for so many years. But I am glad that we are doing it now.”

Pendam’s voice was echoed by 18 Gram Panchayats in the left-wing extremism affected Gadchiroli district. They came together to discuss and create a shared vision for their villages, identifying development themes like health, sanitation, livelihood, education and infrastructure with special focus on mother-child nutrition.

Nearly 40 percent of Gadchiroli’s population is tribal, a social group that is among the poorest and nutritionally most deprived. The district’s economy is predominantly agrarian, with nearly 81 percent workforce engaged in that sector. Just about 18 per cent families live in *pucca* houses. The National Family Health Survey-4 (Rural, 2015-16) reports a prevalence of 30.9 percent stunting, 46.7 percent wasting, and 40.2 per cent underweight among children below five years in Gadchiroli.

Addressing a gathering of Gram Panchayat functionaries in Dhanora, Yashwant Bhand, the Block Development Officer said “This approach of strengthening Gram Panchayats to improve mother-child nutrition boosts your participation in Poshan Abhiyan. In times to come, this will be adopted by every Gram Panchayat in Dhanora and you will be role models for Jan Andolan under Poshan Abhiyan.”

The leadership for change came from within and outside Gram Panchayats – Presidents, elected members of subject committees, village elders and leaders of Self-Help Groups. Gouri Somnani, President of Vairagad Gram Panchayat made her first ever visit to an Anganwadi and exclaimed “We never realized that we could inspect functioning of Anganwadis.

We will now regularly monitor Anganwadi services and provide required support.”

Somnani’s deputy, Shriram Ahirkar was pleased to learn about the role Gram Panchayat can play in the functioning of the ration shop (PDS) in his village. He said, “For so long, updating ration cards to ensure distribution of food grains to people was such a tough task. We are now happy that we have a committee to oversee the same and to coordinate the functioning of the shop. We are now able to monitor the shop in our village.”



Panchayat members and village functionaries after a planning meeting in Armori

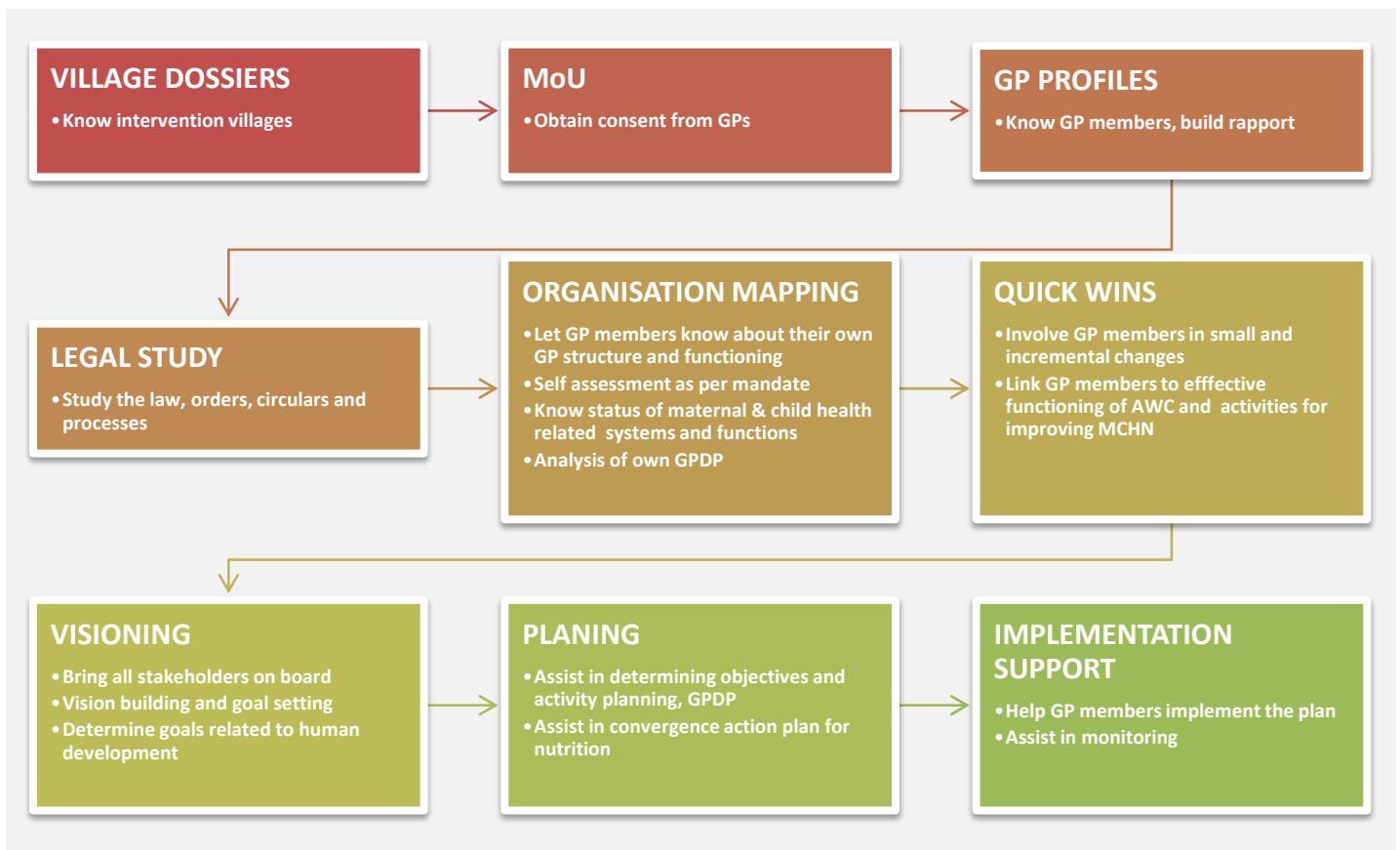


**Gadchiroli District**

## SUPPORTING POSHAN ABHIYAN

The strategy behind strengthening Gram Panchayats is aimed at leveraging multi-sectoral commitment to improve mother-child nutrition through community leadership, thus providing stimulus to Jan Andolan under Poshan Abhiyan. Prior to visioning, Panchayat functionaries went through an organizational mapping, preparing detailed member profiles and a dossier showing current status of human development in their villages. Implementation of the Gram Panchayat strengthening program will result in institutionalization of a sustainable, community-led supervision and monitoring mechanism at grassroots for improving mother-child nutrition.

Blocks	2	Armori	Aheri
Gram Panchayats	18	9	9
Villages	62	26	36
Villages under PESA	59	23	36
Wards	55	25	30
Gram Panchayat Members	166	82	84
Gram Panchayat Profiles	18	9	9
Panchayat Member Profiles	158	81	77
MoU signed with Panchayats	18	9	9
Organizational Mapping	9	7	2
Visioning	2	2	0



**“We never imagined we can take up mother-child nutrition in our Gram Panchayat Development Plan. We will now definitely include health and nutrition as our priority in the upcoming plan.”**

Vaishali Dondarwar, President Kojabi Gram Panchayat

### ABOUT SAKSHAM PROJECT

The Saksham project is collaboratively funded by Sulochana Thapar Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The project is implemented in 16 high-burden tribal blocks of Maharashtra and reaches out to more than 52,000 children, their families, and 9,000 pregnant women. Leveraging grassroots multi-sectoral commitment for improving mother-child nutrition is a key strategy implemented by the project. For more information, please contact:

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