

## SAKSHAM PROJECT



### SUCCESS STORY: NUTRITION FELLOWSHIPS

## Addressing Knowledge and Capacity Gaps at Grassroots

“The Fellowship gave me an opportunity to understand and work towards improving mother-child nutrition, one of the major challenges faced by our country,” says Anju Sisodia from Batch 2014-16. “My biggest learning was, through focused interventions and a strategic approach one can tackle the gravest of issues.”

Undernutrition remains a critical development challenge in India. The problem is more pronounced among tribal communities who live in remote, hard-to-reach hamlets. Absence of experience-led professional competencies at grassroots, especially in tribal habitations, is an important constraint in fighting undernutrition. The Saksham Nutrition Fellowship, a two-year experiential learning program, seeks to mitigate this challenge by creating a cadre of trained professionals who closely engage with tribal communities and frontline workers on live nutrition projects. Fellows serve as catalysts for affirmative action at both systems and community levels.

Sandil Kale, CDPO in Dhanora explains, “Fellows are a great support to Anganwadis and ICDS Department in tribal areas. They provide inspirational leadership and intensive capacity building at grassroots to improve nutritional outcomes.”

After an induction training, Fellows are assigned to field locations to support grassroots program delivery by building capacities of frontline workers. They visit Anganwadis, Primary Health Centres, Sub-Centres and other grassroots institutions to closely work with a range of health and nutrition service providers. They also visit community members including mothers and children, care givers in the family, local leaders, members of women’s groups and Panchayati Raj Institutions to educate, sensitize and advocate for improved nutritional outcomes.

“I am at a loss for words to describe the learning I have acquired from this fellowship; it has completely changed the



Smile of Success: Fellows at their valedictory event



Learning is Fun: From a technical training session

way I thought about nutrition.” says Krishna Choudhary from Batch 2014-16, currently a Ph.D scholar at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

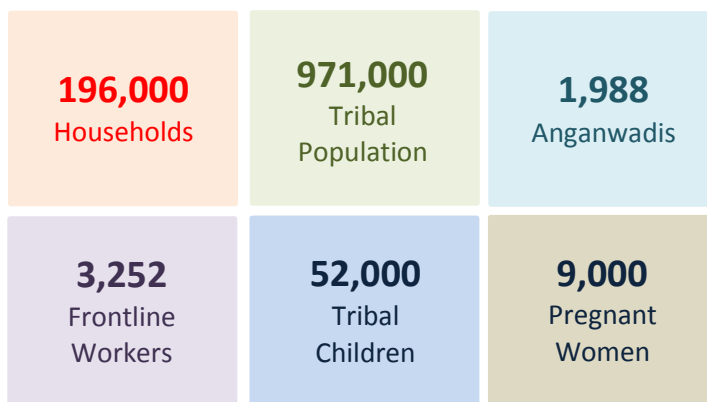
Fellows are mentored by Sulochana Thapar Foundation and given field support by a team of experienced coordinators. Periodic reviews, peer learning and experience sharing are part of their learning process.

## SUPPORTING POSHAN ABHIYAN

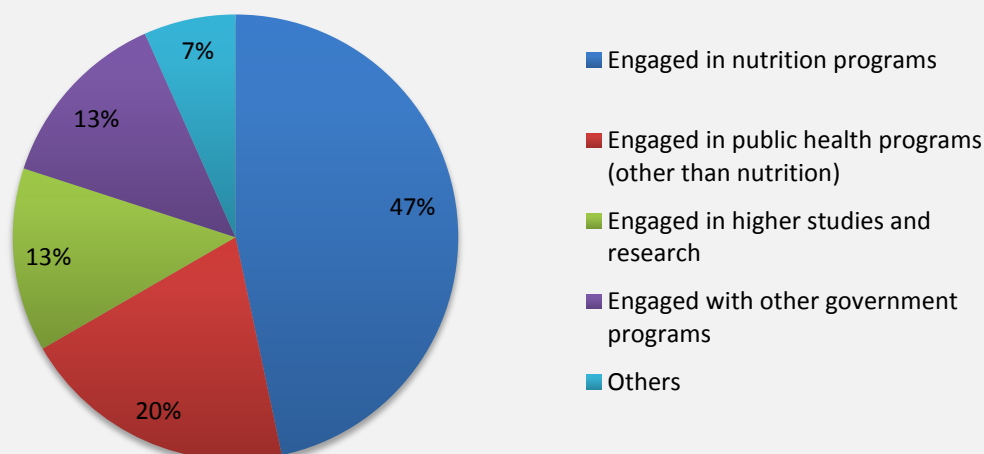
Saksham Fellows actively engage frontline workers to provide critical knowledge and skills required for effective program delivery, imbuing capacities through on-site handholding and mentoring. During the two years of their Fellowship, they provide intensive technical support for improving MIYCN knowledge, and skills for Behaviour Change Communication, micro-planning, prioritization, growth monitoring, counseling and supportive supervision. They provide technical assistance and capacity strengthening support at both the individual worker and ICDS sector levels.

The Nutrition Fellowship is a strategic program for system strengthening in remote tribal areas. This cost-effective model builds frontline technical capacities and helps improve community practices around nutrition while creating a cadre of trained professionals in child health and nutrition.

### REACH ACHIEVED BY FELLOWS



### POST-FELLOWSHIP ENGAGEMENT BY SAKSHAM FELLOWS



**“During the fellowship I was engaged in collecting and analyzing health policy information as well as training and counseling to strengthen program implementation at grassroots. I handled project management and undertook action research using qualitative and quantitative techniques. The fellowship helped me to think through problems in an analytical manner maintaining flexibility within a demanding schedule.”**

Dr. Atefh Ali, District Vaccine Logistics & Cold Chain Manager, UNDP (Fellow, Batch 2014-16)

### 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 blocks of Maharashtra and reaches out to more than 52,000 tribal children and their mothers, and 9,000 pregnant women. Saksham Nutrition Fellowship is one of the strategies implemented by the project for making experience-led professional competencies available at grassroots. For more information, please contact:

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