

Scaling up Nutritional Progress in Aspirational Districts of India: Insights from a Data- Driven Tool to Ensure Last Mile Tracking

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Background & Rationale

“**The Aspirational Districts Program**” was is a unique initiative of **Government of India** launched in 2018 with the objective of expediting the transformation of **112 most backward districts across 28 states** through the convergence of government programmes and schemes

Objectives of ADP

- **Improving Socio-Economic Indicators:** improve key socio-economic indicators in the most underdeveloped districts of India
- **Promoting Inclusive Growth:** Ensure inclusive growth, benefiting all sections of society, especially marginalized populations
- **Reduce inter-district multidimensional inequality:** ADP aims to address the multidimensional inequalities among districts

Three Pillars of ADP

Competition

Fosters accountability on district governments for final outcomes (instead of inputs) using high-quality data

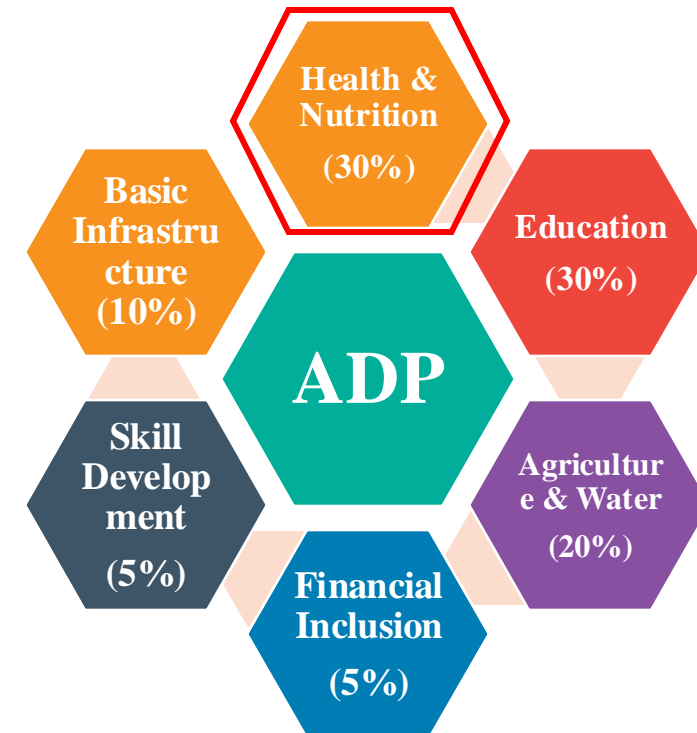
Convergence

Creatively brings together the horizontal and vertical tiers of the government

Collaboration

Enables impactful partnerships between government, philanthropy and civil society

Themes & Weightage

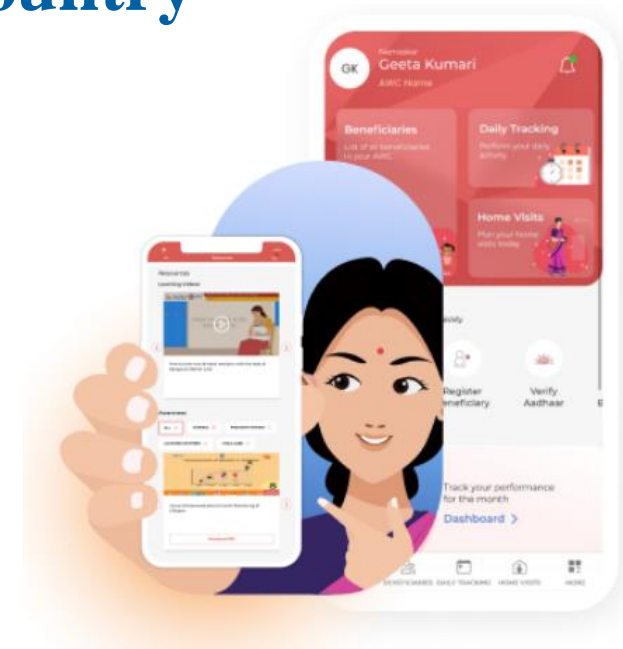


The Government of India's 'POSHAN Tracker' launched in 2021, is the largest mobile phone-based nutrition surveillance system in the country

A key aims to dynamic detection of stunting, wasting and underweight prevalence among children of 0-6 years and last mile tracking of nutrition service delivery offered by Anganwadi Centers

To achieve the targets set by POSHAN Abhiyaan under National Nutrition Mission (NNM), to reduce different form of undernutrition in the country by 2% per annum focusing on 'Mission 25'

Provide essential nutrition service offered by Anganwadi Centers- including supplementary food, Hot Cooked Meal (HCM), and Take Home Ration(THR) to children, women and adolescent girls across the country, especially focusing on **Aspirational Districts** and **North East region** to ensure last mile tracking



Beneficiary reach under POSHAN Abhiyaan



Pregnant Women
69,42,239



Lactating Mothers
42,54,195

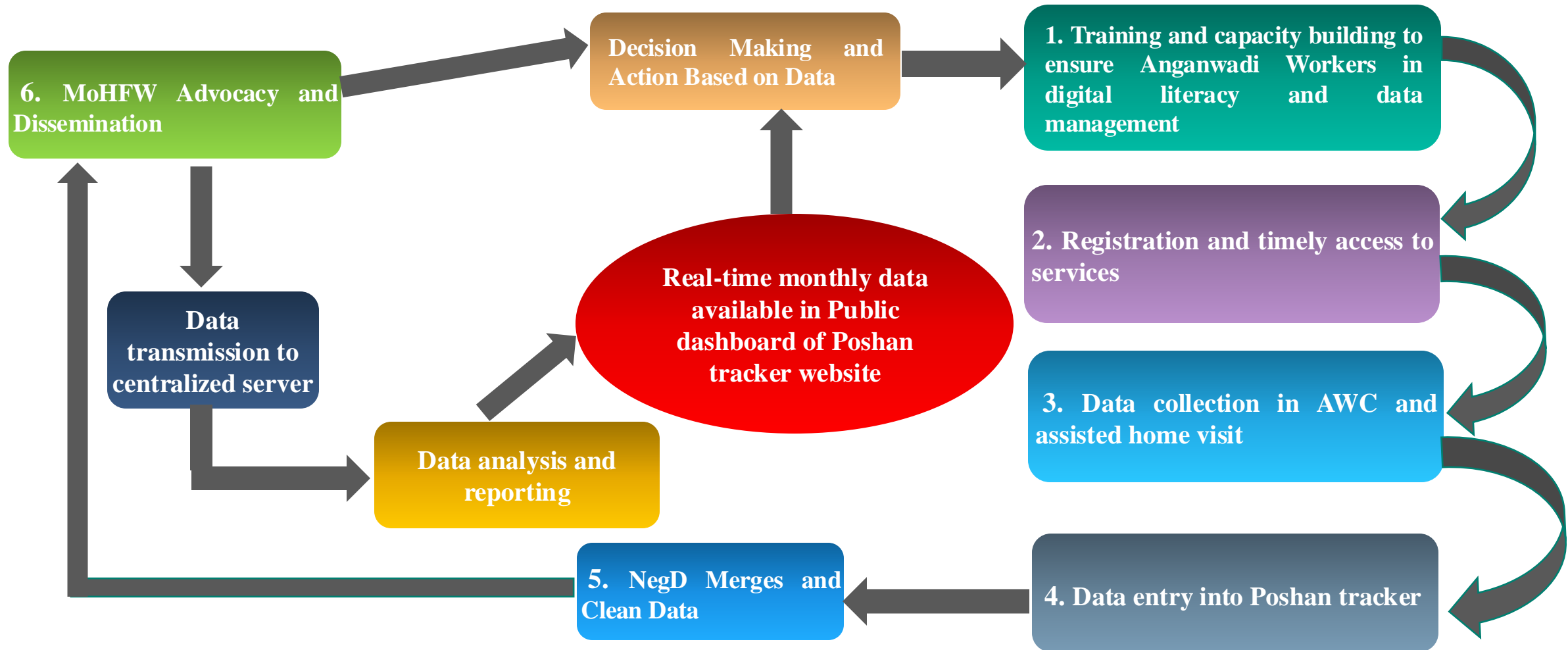


Children (0-6 Years)
8,86,82,179



Adolescent Girls
23,17,707

Overview of the operational cycle of Poshan Tracker



Objectives

To assess real-time change and track progress in child malnutrition indicators across aspirational districts of India, and identify gaps in targeted interventions

a.

**Changes in stunting
across aspirational
districts of India**

c.

**Changes in underweight
across aspirational
districts of India**

b.

**Changes in wasting
across aspirational
districts of India**

Methods

Poshan Tracker (2024)

- The study utilized data from the Poshan Tracker to explore how real-time monitoring enhances the delivery of nutritional services in India. The data, covering all states, UT's and their respective districts, was available from February 2023 to September 2024, offering insights across multiple regions

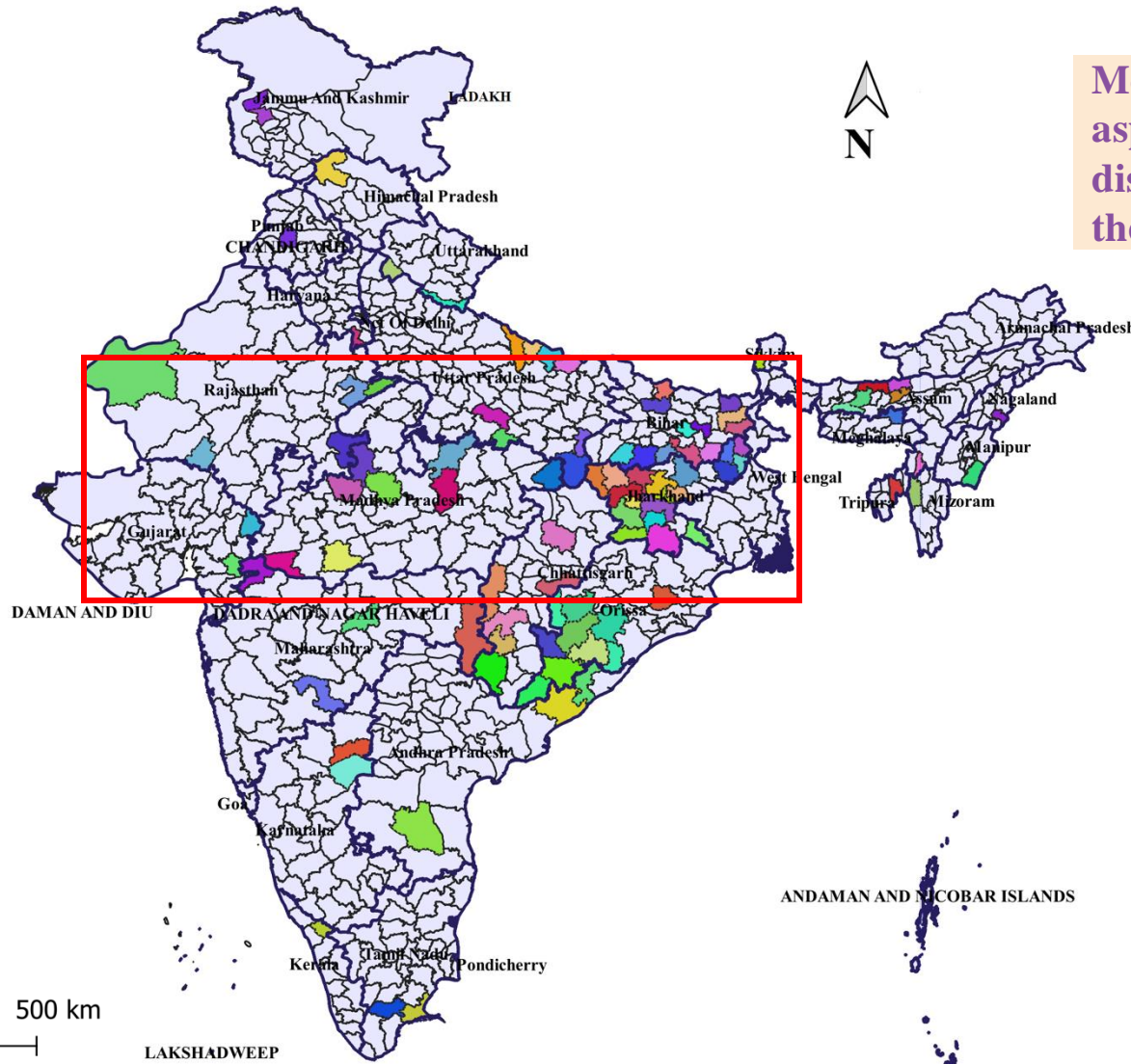
NFHS-5 (2019-21)

- Additionally, anthropometric data from NFHS-5 (2019-21) was utilized to ensure comparability, focusing on children under 5 years who were measured at least once at an AWC within the past year

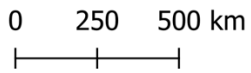
Analysis

- We estimated annualized aspirational districts level and their respective state-level changes of child malnutrition indicators between two datasets to determine the average absolute change in percentage points between 2021 to 2024
- Benchmarking these changes aligning with POSHAN Abhiyaan target of a 2% annual reduction (6% between 2021 to 2024) in stunting and underweight by 2022 and following that by Mission 2025. A similar 2% per year target also assuming for wasting in the absence of a national benchmark

State-wise list of Aspirational Districts in India

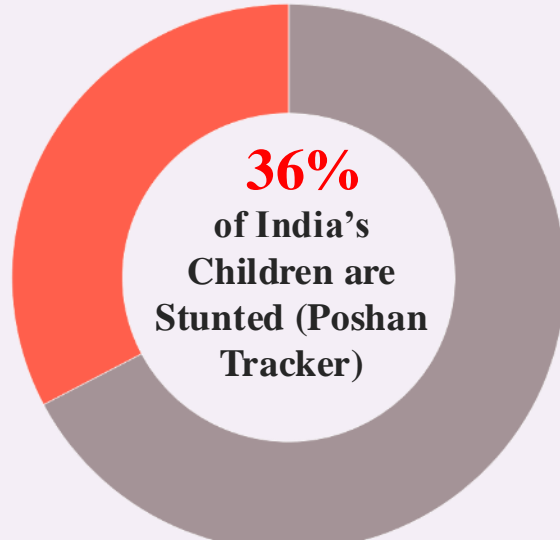
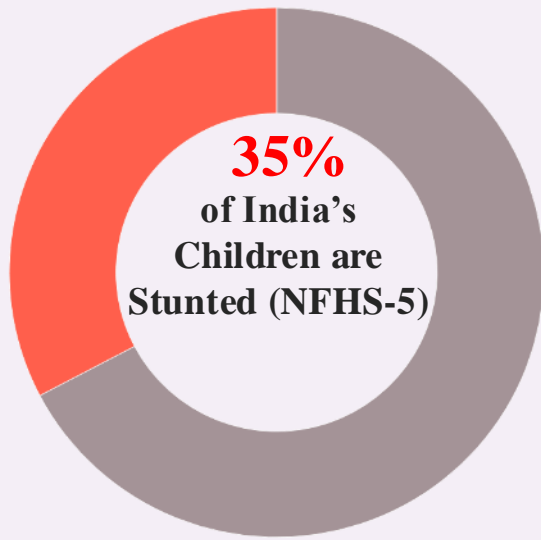


State	No. of Aspirational districts
Jharkhand	19
Bihar	13
Chhattisgarh	10
Odisha	10
Madhya Pradesh	8
Uttar Pradesh	8
Assam	7
Rajasthan	5
Maharashtra	4
Andhra Pradesh	3
Telangana	3
Gujarat	2
Jammu & Kashmir	2
Karnataka	2
Punjab	2
Tamil Nadu	2
Uttarakhand	2
Arunachal Pradesh	1
Haryana	1
Himachal Pradesh	1
Kerala	1
Manipur	1
Meghalaya	1
Mizoram	1
Nagaland	1
Sikkim	1
Tripura	1



LAKSHADWEEP

Results: Stunting in India



Contribution of Aspirational districts to India's stunting rates:

NFHS-5 18.2 %

Poshan Tracker 17 %

Major stunting states and Aspirational districts' contribution (Poshan Tracker) :

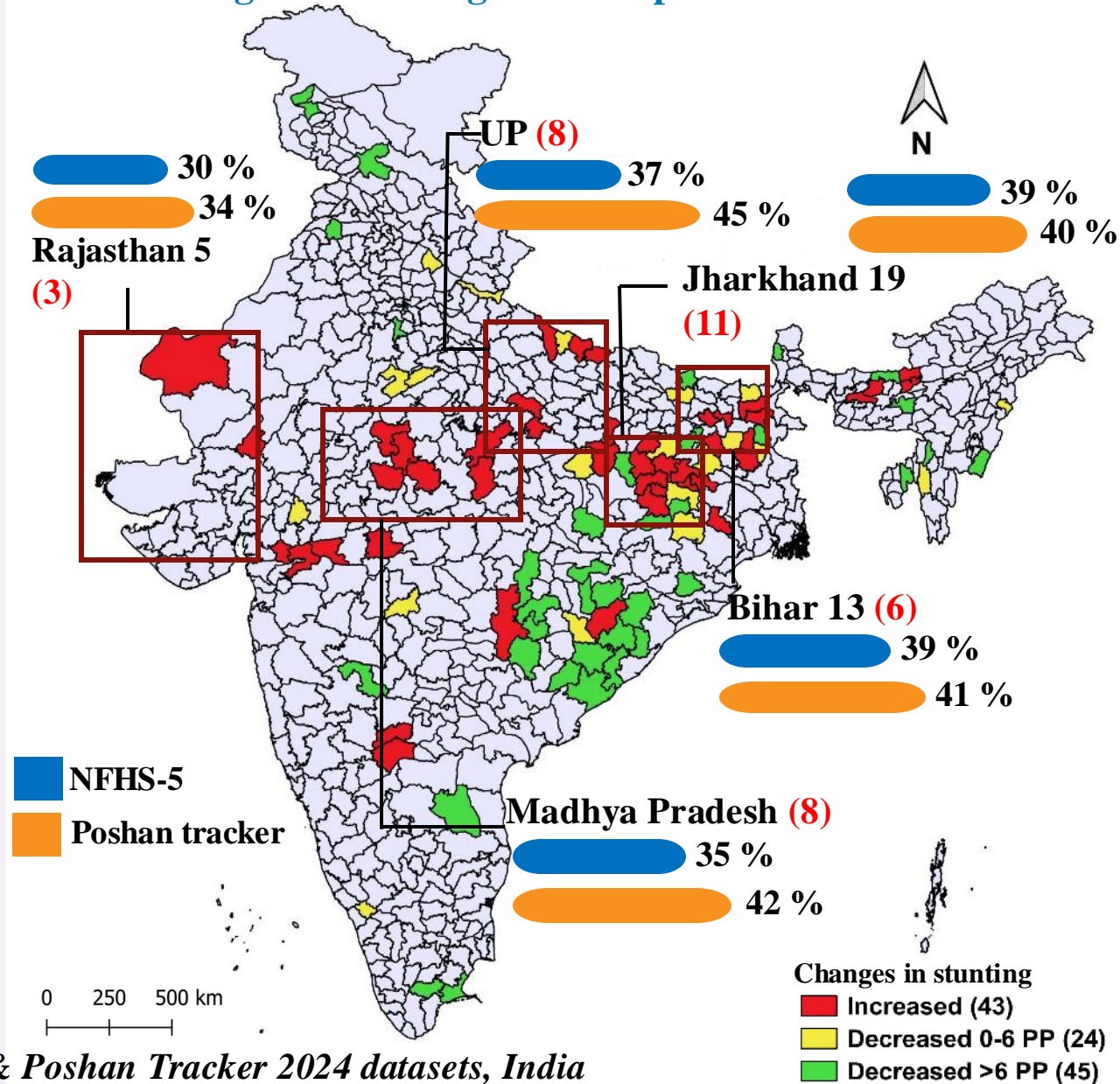
UP: 45% for state & 37% contributed by ADs

Bihar: 41% for state & 43% contributed by ADs

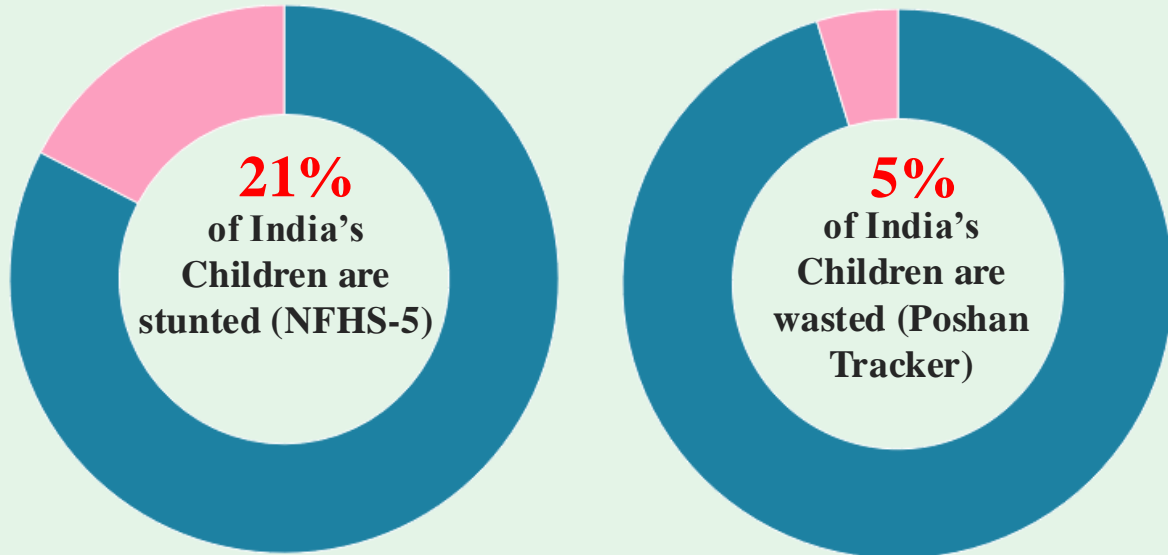
Jharkhand: 40% for state & 84% contributed by ADs

Source: *Computed from NFHS-5 (2019-21) & Poshan Tracker 2024 datasets, India*

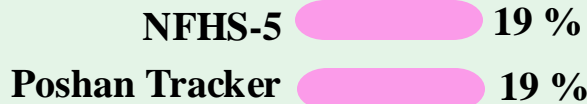
Changes in Stunting across Aspirational Districts of India



Results: Wasting in India



Contribution of Aspirational districts to India's wasting rates:

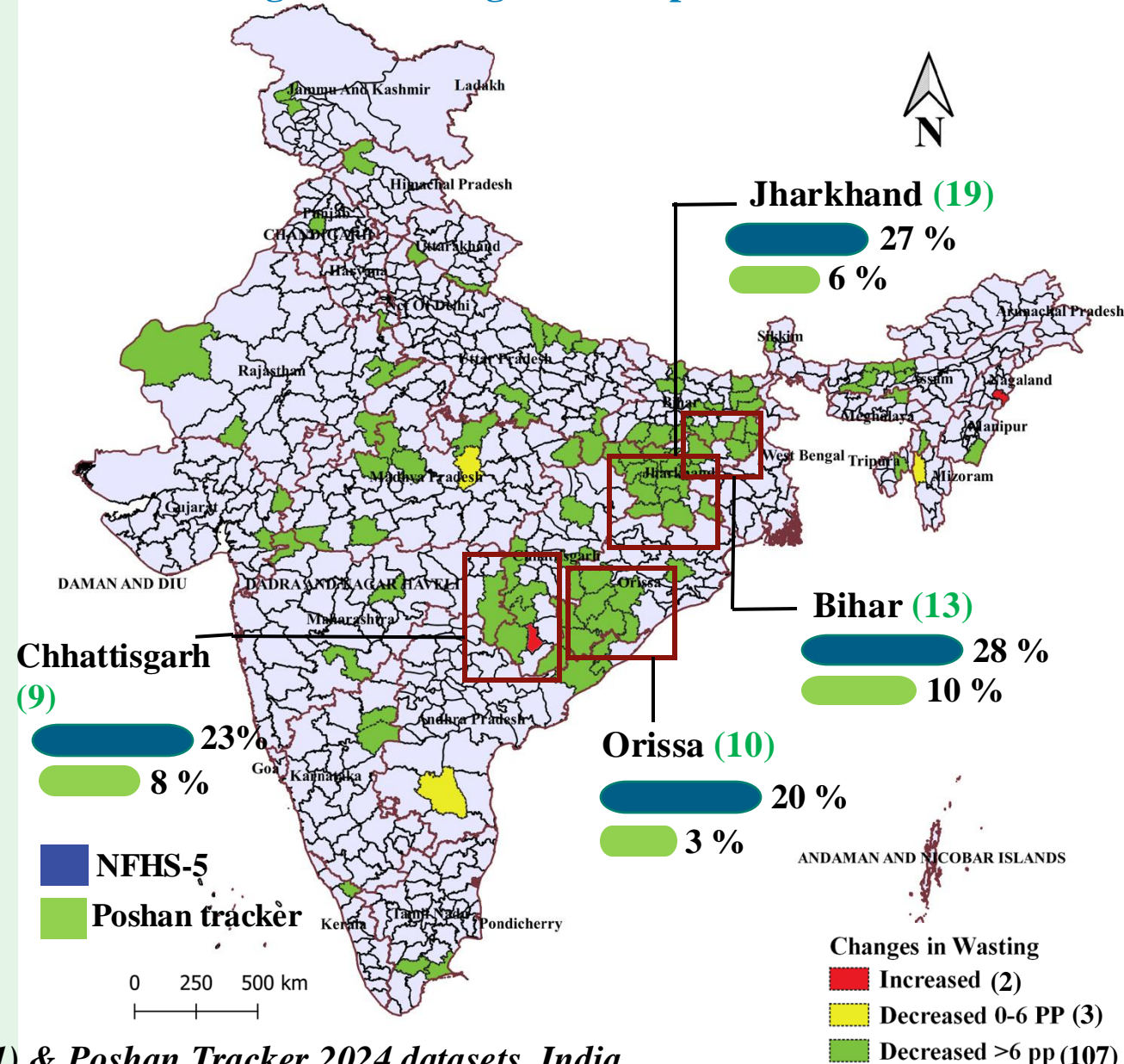


Major wasting states and Aspirational districts' contribution (Poshan Tracker) :

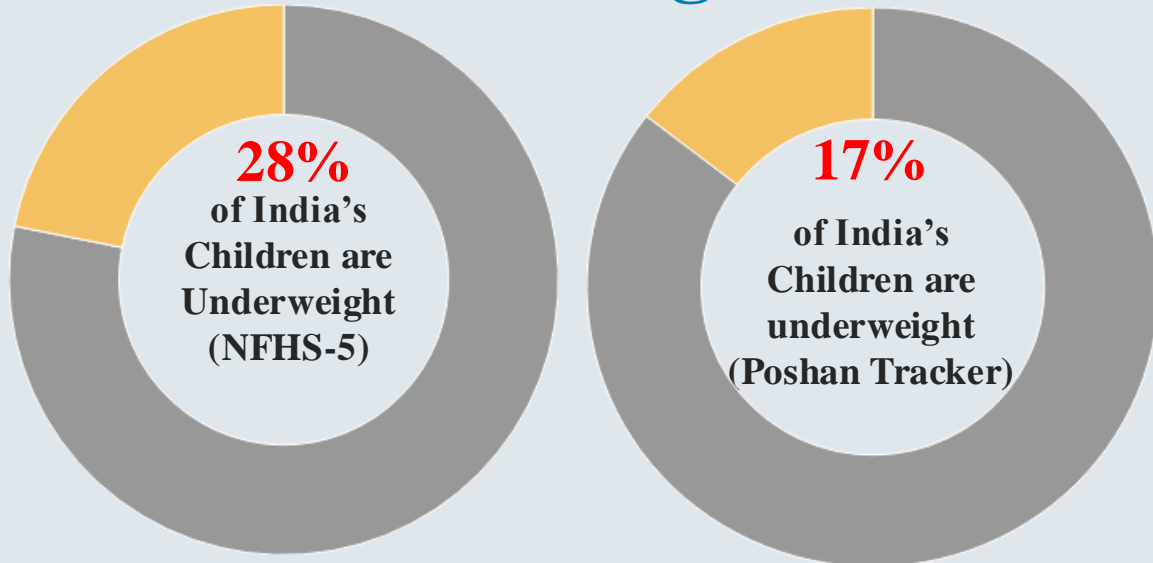
- Bihar:** 10% for state & 30% contributed by ADs
- Chhattisgarh:** 8% for state & 26% contributed by ADs
- Jharkhand:** 6% for state & 85 % contributed by ADs

Source: Computed from NFHS-5 (2019-21) & Poshan Tracker 2024 datasets, India

Changes in Wasting across Aspirational Districts of India



Results: Underweight in India



Contribution of Aspirational districts to India's underweight rates:

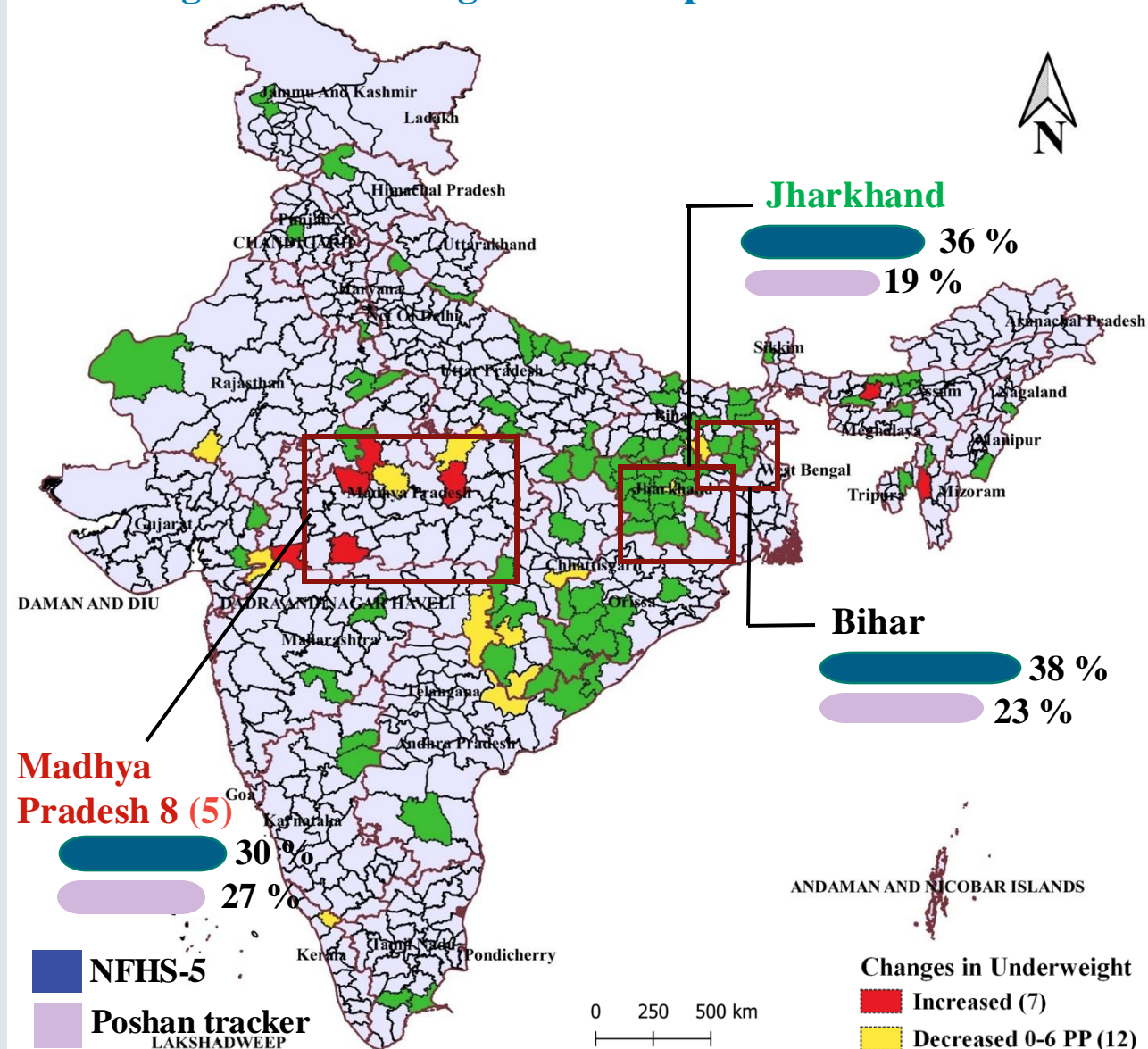


Major underweight states and Aspirational districts' contribution (Poshan Tracker) :

- MP:** 27 % for state & 31% contributed by ADs
- Bihar:** 23 % for state & 36% contributed by ADs
- Jharkhand:** 19 % for state & 83 % contributed by ADs

Source: Computed from NFHS-5 (2019-21) & Poshan Tracker 2024 datasets, India

Changes in Underweight across Aspirational Districts of India



Implications

- ❑ By providing a comprehensive real-time analysis of malnutrition indicators, Poshan Tracker uniquely highlights **Stunting as a key malnutrition indicators** that have lifelong consequences have remained highly prevalent in Aspirational Districts of India
- ❑ Reflection and investment in **rigorous deliverance of essential nutrition services** by AWC's and what **fundamental factors** continue to be unaddressed by current policy approaches need to be strengthened
- ❑ Future research work should focus on the higher prevalent state specific approaches with **incorporating social dimensions**, such as **caste-specific malnutrition reporting** in the POSHAN Tracker and overlapping future rounds of Health surveys will help to ensure that nutrition interventions reach the last mile and benefit vulnerable populations
- ❑ Adopting an integrated **'life-course approach'** to ensures sustained delivery of nutrition services for women and children at various life stages will helping to alleviate later life nutritional distress and morbidity

Thank You