

REPORT ON POSHAN PAKHWADA 2026: MAXIMISING BRAIN DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIRST SIX YEARS OF LIFE

Date: 16th April 2026

Venue: Anganwadi, Daulah, Sohna, Gurugram

Time: 10:00 AM onwards

Event Type: Awareness Session

Mode of Activity: Offline

Target Group: Villagers and NSS Volunteers

Organized by: National Service Scheme (NSS), K.R. Mangalam University

Convenor & Event Coordinators: Dr. Neeraj Kumari, NSS Program Coordinator and Dr. Thomas Monteiro, NSS Program Officer

Student Coordinators: Kritima (B.Sc. (H) Forensic Science) and Anushri Sharma (B.A. (H) Psychology)

Resource Person: Dr. Kusum Malik, District FLN Officer, Nuh District, Haryana

Social Media Link:

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DXdvJHtDPI4/?igsh=MXZIZmxmcGVkc2ZzYQ==>

My Bharat link: https://mybharat.gov.in/orgeventmanagement/event_detail_nyf/MTU4MTIz

Introduction

The National Service Scheme (NSS), K.R. Mangalam University, organized an awareness session under Poshan Pakhwada 2026 on the theme “Maximising Brain Development in the First Six Years of Life” on 16th April 2026 at Anganwadi, Daulah, Sohna, Gurugram. The programme was conducted to spread awareness regarding the crucial role of nutrition, early stimulation, care, and a supportive environment in ensuring holistic brain development during the formative years of a child’s life. The session brought together community members, and NSS volunteers on a common platform to discuss the significance of early childhood care and nutrition. The event was conducted under the guidance of Dr. Neeraj Kumari, NSS Program Coordinator, and Dr. Thomas Monteiro, NSS Program Officer. Dr. Kusum Malik, District FLN Officer, Nuh District, Haryana, graced the session as the resource person and shared valuable insights on the importance of the first six years in laying the foundation for lifelong learning, health, and emotional well-being. This program align with SDG 3: **Good Health and**

Well-being, mainly focusing on early childhood health, nutrition, and emotional well-being to ensure healthy growth and development.

Objectives

- To create awareness about the importance of nutrition and early childhood care in brain development during the first six years of life.
- To sensitize parents, caregivers, and community members about age-appropriate feeding practices, responsive caregiving, and early stimulation.
- To promote the role of Anganwadi centres and community support systems in strengthening child health and development.
- To encourage NSS volunteers to participate in awareness generation related to child nutrition, health, and family well-being.
- To support the vision of Poshan Pakhwada through community outreach and behaviour-change communication.

Content

The session began with a warm welcome to the resource person, community members, Anganwadi staff, and NSS volunteers. The programme was introduced by the organizing team, who highlighted the purpose of Poshan Pakhwada and the relevance of the chosen theme. During her address, Dr. Kusum Malik explained that the first six years of life are critical for rapid brain growth and the overall physical, cognitive, language, and socio-emotional development of children. She emphasized that adequate nutrition, breastfeeding, immunization, proper hygiene, timely health check-ups, emotional bonding, and a stimulating learning environment together shape the developmental outcomes of a child.

The resource person elaborated on the importance of balanced nutrition for pregnant women, lactating mothers, infants, and young children. She discussed essential food groups, growth monitoring, and the prevention of malnutrition. She also stressed that parenting is not limited to feeding alone; talking to children, playing with them, reading, storytelling, and responding to their emotions are equally important for healthy brain development. The session addressed common misconceptions about child nutrition and gave practical suggestions that families can adopt in their everyday lives using locally available resources.

The event also focused on community-level awareness and the role of Anganwadi centres in delivering nutrition and early childhood support services. NSS volunteers interacted with the audience, helped in community mobilization, and supported the smooth conduct of the programme. The session encouraged active participation, and attendees listened with interest and engaged in discussion related to child care practices, developmental milestones, and the importance of timely intervention. The programme served as a meaningful outreach initiative that connected academic social responsibility with a vital public health concern.

Conclusion

The session concluded successfully with a message of collective responsibility toward ensuring healthy and stimulating early childhood environments. The speaker reiterated that nutrition, love, care, and learning opportunities in the first six years are fundamental to a child's future growth and success. The organizers expressed gratitude to Dr. Kusum Malik for delivering an informative and impactful session, and thanked the Anganwadi centre, participants, and NSS volunteers for their enthusiastic involvement. The activity proved to be highly relevant and beneficial in promoting awareness under Poshan Pakhwada 2026.

Event Outcomes

- Increased awareness among caregivers and community members regarding the importance of nutrition and early stimulation in the first six years of life.
- Better understanding of the role of parents, Anganwadi workers, and community support in ensuring holistic child development.
- Strengthened engagement of NSS volunteers in community outreach related to nutrition, health, and child well-being.
- Reinforcement of the objectives of Poshan Pakhwada through meaningful awareness generation at the grassroots level.
- Encouraged families to adopt positive health, hygiene, and caregiving practices for children.



Photo 1: The expert explaining about the proper diet to mother and child



Photo 2: The expert explaining the cure from malnutrition



Photo 3: NSS volunteer explaining about different types of healthy food through poster



Photo 4: NSS volunteer explaining the adverse effect of unhealth food



Photo 5: A group photograph of NSS volunteers, event coordinators and resource person

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