

**Department of Food Science and Nutrition,
Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati University, Ajmer
Report of the Visit to the Anganwadi Centre , Village Nedaliya ,
Near Budha Pushkar Ajmer on 1st October 2026**

Date of Visit: 1 October 2026

Venue: Anganwadi Centre, Village Nedaliya, near Budha Pushkar, Ajmer

Organized by: Department of Food Science and Nutrition in collaboration with National Service Scheme (NSS) Units I, II & III

In compliance of the directions received from the Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India regarding the 9th Rashtriya Poshan Maah (National Nutrition Month) to be celebrated from 9th September to 8th October 2026 and an email received from the Regional Directorate of NSS, Jaipur and a letter from the Department of Higher Education (Group IV-A), Government of Rajasthan, Jaipur.

Theme: “Hamari Anganwadi Hamari Zimmedari”

1. Introduction

The Department of Food Science and Nutrition, in collaboration with the National Service Scheme (NSS) Units I, II and III, organized a community nutrition outreach visit to the Anganwadi Centre at Village Nedaliya, near Budha Pushkar, Ajmer on 1 October 2026. The visit was organized as part of the activities under Rashtriya Poshan Maah (National Nutrition Month), with the theme “Hamari Anganwadi Hamari Zimmedari”.

Village Nedaliya is an adopted village of the University, and the Anganwadi Centre was selected as the focal point for community-based nutrition and health awareness activities. The programme aimed to strengthen the role of the Anganwadi Centre as a centre for nutrition education, child growth and development, dietary diversity, local food utilization and community participation.

The programme emphasized the importance of collective responsibility towards improving the nutritional well-being of children and promoting healthy dietary practices at the household and community levels.

2. Objectives of the Visit

The major objectives of the visit were:

1. To create awareness among children, Anganwadi staff and the community regarding the importance of balanced and nutritious diets.
2. To assess the nutritional status of children attending the Anganwadi Centre.
3. To promote dietary diversity and emphasize the importance of adequate protein intake.
4. To encourage the use of locally available, affordable and culturally acceptable foods.
5. To create awareness regarding the nutritional benefits and appropriate use of millets.

6. To promote the incorporation of pulses, millets and seasonal vegetables into the Anganwadi food programme.
7. To provide guidance for a weekly rotating snack menu based on locally available nutritious foods.
8. To promote awareness regarding the Special Nutrition Programme (SNP) and display of the menu for better community understanding.
9. To encourage healthy eating habits through practical demonstrations and nutrition games.
10. To provide educational and supportive materials to children.
11. To strengthen community participation in Anganwadi-based nutrition and early childhood care activities.

3. Major Activities Conducted

3.1 Nutrition Education and Awareness

A nutrition education session was conducted for the children and Anganwadi staff. Students of the Department explained the importance of a balanced diet, adequate energy and protein intake, micronutrients, dietary diversity and healthy eating habits in simple and child-friendly language.

The participants were encouraged to consume a variety of foods from different food groups and to understand the importance of including cereals/millets, pulses, vegetables, fruits, milk and milk products, nuts and other locally available nutritious foods in the daily diet.

Special emphasis was given to the role of good nutrition during early childhood for growth, immunity, cognitive development and overall health.

3.2 Assessment of Nutritional Status of Children

The nutritional status of children attending the Anganwadi Centre was assessed by the students under the guidance of faculty members.

Appropriate anthropometric parameters were considered for assessment, wherever feasible, and the importance of regular monitoring of children's growth was explained. The activity helped students understand the practical application of nutritional assessment techniques in a community setting.

The exercise also highlighted the importance of early identification of children who may be at nutritional risk so that timely guidance and appropriate referral can be undertaken.

3.3 Promotion of Dietary Diversity

A special awareness campaign on dietary diversity and protein-rich foods was conducted.

The children and Anganwadi staff were made aware of affordable protein sources that can be incorporated into regular meals, including:

- Pulses
- Beans and legumes
- Milk and milk products
- Groundnuts and other nuts
- Soy-based foods
- Cereals combined with pulses
- Locally available protein-rich foods

The importance of combining different food groups to improve the overall nutritional quality of meals was emphasized.

3.4 Promotion of Local Foods

The programme emphasized the use of locally available and seasonal foods as an important strategy for improving dietary diversity and making nutritious foods affordable and accessible.

The participants were encouraged to make greater use of locally available cereals, millets, pulses, seasonal vegetables, fruits, groundnuts and other traditional foods.

The approach aimed to demonstrate that nutritious diets can be prepared using simple, economical and easily accessible ingredients.

3.5 Awareness Regarding Millets

A dedicated nutrition education activity was conducted on millets, highlighting their nutritional and cultural importance.

The participants were introduced to commonly consumed millets such as bajra and were encouraged to include millets in regular meals and snacks.

The discussion highlighted the role of millets as nutritious cereal alternatives and their potential contribution to dietary diversity. Traditional millet-based preparations were also discussed as practical options for children and families.

3.6 Weekly Snack Menu Rotation

A weekly rotating snack menu was planned and discussed for the Anganwadi Centre. The menu emphasized variety, nutritional adequacy and the use of locally available ingredients.

The proposed approach focused on incorporating:

- Millets
- Pulses and legumes
- Seasonal vegetables
- Groundnuts and other locally available ingredients
- Traditional nutritious preparations

The rotation of snacks was encouraged to avoid monotony and to provide children with a wider variety of nutrients and food experiences.

3.7 HCM Menu Planning

Guidance was provided regarding the preparation of diverse Hot Cooked Meals (HCM) using locally available ingredients.

Special emphasis was given to the inclusion of millets, pulses and seasonal vegetables in the meals. The importance of maintaining variety, nutritional adequacy, acceptability and hygiene while planning meals for children was discussed.

The activity also demonstrated how locally available ingredients can be incorporated into simple and nutritious preparations suitable for Anganwadi beneficiaries.

3.8 SNP Menu Board Display

A Special Nutrition Programme (SNP) menu board was displayed at the Anganwadi Centre.

The menu board was intended to improve transparency and awareness regarding the food and snacks provided at the centre. It also served as a useful educational tool for children, parents, Anganwadi workers and the community.

3.9 Distribution of Homemade Bajra Ladoos

As part of the nutrition promotion activity, homemade Bajra and Ragi ladoos were prepared and distributed among the children and staff of the Anganwadi Centre.

The activity demonstrated how traditional and locally available ingredients can be used to prepare nutritious and acceptable food products. It also provided a practical example of incorporating millet into a child-friendly food preparation.

3.10 Distribution of Educational Materials

Educational materials, including copies, pencils and erasers, were distributed among the children attending the Anganwadi Centre.

The initiative was intended to encourage children's participation in learning activities and create a positive and supportive environment at the Anganwadi Centre.

3.11 Nutrition Games and Interactive Activities

Nutrition games and interactive activities were organized to make nutrition education interesting and engaging for children.

The activities were designed to introduce basic concepts such as:

- Healthy and nutritious foods
- Different food groups
- Importance of fruits and vegetables
- Protein-rich foods
- Importance of variety in the diet
- Local and traditional foods

The interactive approach helped children learn nutrition concepts in an enjoyable and participatory manner.

4. Participation

The visit was conducted under the guidance and participation of:

- Prof. Ritu Mathur, Head, Department of Food Science and Nutrition
- Prof. Monica Bhatnagar, Head, Department of Microbiology, Convenor, NSS, MDS University, Ajmer
- Prof. Bharti Jain, Former Head, Department of Food Science and Nutrition
- Mrs. Poonam Pareek, Guest Faculty, Department of Food Science and Nutrition
- Mrs. Kshipra Jain, Guest Faculty, Department of Food Science and Nutrition
- Ms. Jaya Chandawat, Guest Faculty, Department of Food Science and Nutrition

Approximately 70 students of the Department of Food Science and Nutrition who were also NSS volunteers, actively participated in the programme.

The involvement of faculty members and students ensured effective organization of the activities and provided students with valuable hands-on experience in community nutrition education and outreach.

5. Role of Students/ NSS Volunteers

The participating students played an active role in implementing the programme. Their responsibilities included:

- Conducting nutrition education activities.
- Interacting with children and Anganwadi staff.
- Assisting in nutritional assessment of children.
- Explaining dietary diversity and protein-rich foods.
- Promoting the use of millets and local foods.
- Assisting in menu planning.
- Displaying the SNP menu board.
- Organizing nutrition games.
- Distributing educational materials and homemade bajra ladoos.
- Creating an interactive and child-friendly learning environment.

The visit provided students with an opportunity to translate their theoretical knowledge of nutrition into practical community-based activities.

6. Key Messages Conveyed

The following key nutrition messages were emphasized during the programme:

- A balanced and diverse diet is essential for healthy growth and development.
- Children require adequate energy, protein, vitamins and minerals for proper growth.
- Pulses, millets, milk, groundnuts and other locally available foods can contribute to a nutritious diet.
- Seasonal and locally available foods should be utilized to improve dietary diversity.
- Millets can be incorporated into traditional as well as innovative food preparations.
- Regular growth and nutritional monitoring of children is important.
- Nutritious food can be prepared economically using locally available ingredients.
- Community participation is essential for strengthening Anganwadi-based nutrition programmes.
- Nutrition education should begin early and should involve children, caregivers and the wider community.

7. Outcomes of the Programme

The visit successfully provided a platform for community-based nutrition education and practical learning.

The major outcomes included:

1. Increased awareness regarding balanced diets and dietary diversity.
2. Greater understanding of protein-rich foods among the participants.
3. Promotion of millets and other locally available nutritious foods.
4. Practical exposure of students to community-based nutritional assessment.
5. Development of a diverse weekly snack menu for the Anganwadi Centre.
6. Display of the SNP menu for greater awareness and transparency.
7. Demonstration of a nutritious traditional millet-based preparation through homemade bajra ladoos.
8. Increased interaction between university students, faculty members and the Anganwadi community.
9. Promotion of nutrition learning among children through games and interactive activities.
10. Strengthening of the University's community outreach activities in its adopted village.

8. Conclusion

The visit to the Anganwadi Centre at Village Nedaliya, near Budha Pushkar, Ajmer, was a meaningful community outreach initiative organized under Rashtriya Poshan Maah with the theme “Hamari Anganwadi Hamari Jimmedari.”

The programme effectively combined **nutrition education, nutritional assessment, dietary diversity promotion, millet awareness, local food utilization, menu planning, nutrition games and distribution of educational and nutritious materials.**

The active participation of faculty members and 64 students of the Department of Food Science and Nutrition contributed significantly to the success of the programme. The visit also provided students with valuable practical exposure to community nutrition interventions and demonstrated the important role of Anganwadi Centres in promoting nutrition, health, child development and community participation.

The programme reinforced the message that **ensuring good nutrition among children is a shared responsibility of families, communities, educational institutions and Anganwadi centres.** Such collaborative initiatives can contribute meaningfully towards building healthier communities and strengthening community-led nutrition action.

The visit concluded with a commitment to continue nutrition awareness, education and community outreach activities in the adopted village.



