

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 794
TO BE ANSWERED ON 08.02.2023

IMPACT STUDY OF POSHAN ABHIYAAN

794 SMT. PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has conducted a detailed State-wise study of the performance/impact of the Poshan Abhiyaan and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether it is a fact that ICDS is not reaching as many as stated in the Performance Report by NITI Aayog women and children due to governance challenges, financing, and infrastructure gaps;
- (c) the steps taken to ensure convergence of programs and services to handle malnutrition in the country; and
- (d) the steps taken to encourage complementary feeding?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

- (a): NITI Aayog was mandated to conduct monitoring and evaluation periodically to assess the progress and impact of the programme. In the report *Preserving Progress on Nutrition in India: Poshan Abhiyaan In Pandemic Times* NITI Aayog assessed the implementation of POSHAN Abhiyaan since its inception and also analysed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on nutrition and health services. Following are the key findings of the report:
 - Poshan Abhiyaan has helped to bring a strong focus on improving nutrition outcomes during the first 1,000 days.
 - Poshan Abhiyaan has enabled a nation-wide jan-andolan catalysing nutrition related behaviour change at scale for positive impact on feeding and health care practices.
 - Poshan Abhiyaan demonstrated that the processes for inter-sectoral convergence are effectively operationalized through in place institutional mechanisms at multiple levels.
 - Poshan Abhiyaan showed that technology can be leveraged for real time monitoring of large scale health and nutrition programmes.
 - Poshan Abhiyaan supported the resilience of health and nutrition systems during covid-19 pandemic.
- (b) & (c): NITI Aayog had undertaken a study to evaluate the implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes in Women & Child Development Sector including Anganwadi Services Scheme. The following steps have been undertaken by the Government to remove infrastructural gaps and governance challenges under the scheme:

- i. Under Saksham Anganwadi, across the country 2 lakh Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) (40,000 AWCs per year) would be strengthened and upgraded for improved nutrition and early childhood care and education delivery. This year 40,000 AWCs have been identified in Aspirational districts for upgradation. into Saksham Anganwadis with better infrastructure including internet/wifi connectivity, LED screens and smart learning and audio-visual aids and child-friendly learning equipment.
- ii. Under Swacchta Action Plan (SAP), funds have been released to States/UTs for construction of toilets and providing drinking water facilities.
- iii. States/UTs have been advised to take up the matter of installation of rainwater harvesting in Government owned Anganwadi buildings.
- iv. Further, in convergence with Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, efforts are being undertaken to ensure that clean drinking water is provided to Anganwadi Centres through pipelines.
- v. Also, a total of 50,000 AWCs (@10,000 AWCs per year) would be constructed under convergence with MGNREGS for a five year period ending FY 2025-26. In convergence with MGNREGS, the cost norms for construction of AWCs have been revised to @12 Lakh per AWC.
- vi. Grants are sanctioned for purchase of furniture, equipment, etc.
- vii. Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) have been provided with Smart Phones for efficient service delivery.

A total of Rs. 20,263.07 cr has been earmarked for Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 in the BE for the current FY 2022 -23. Sufficient funds have been allocated for implementing various components under the scheme. The budget allocation has been increased from the previous financial years, based on the requirements by States/UTs.

As far as governance issues are concerned, in order to make the programme more effective and to ensure that all benefits including supplementary nutrition should reach to the intended beneficiaries, Government has taken steps to strengthen nutritional content, delivery outreach and outcomes with focus on developing practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity to disease and malnutrition. Steps have been taken to improve nutritional quality and testing in accredited labs, strengthen delivery and leverage technology to improve governance.

In this regard, Streamlined guidelines were issued on 13.01.2021, covering several aspects such as quality assurance, roles and responsibilities of duty holders, procedure for procurement, integrating AYUSH concepts and Data management and monitoring through “Poshan Tracker” for transparency, efficiency and accountability in delivery of Supplementary Nutrition has been issued. Under these guidelines, the DM has been designated as the Nodal Point in the district for monitoring nutritional status and quality standards.

Further, a robust ICT enabled platform named Poshan tracker has been designed to capture near real-time data on implementation and monitoring of Anganwadi Services across the country. The Poshan Tracker management application monitors activities at the Anganwadi Centre (AWC) including service deliveries of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and thereby facilitates complete beneficiary management. Around 10.10 beneficirira are registered under the Poshan Tracker and approx 88% are Aadhar vrified.

POSHAN Abhiyaan launched on 8th March 2018 is a multi-ministerial convergence mission with the vision to ensure attainment of malnutrition free India. POSHAN Abhiyaan provides a platform to converge the activities of various stakeholders towards attaining the goal of 'Suposhit Bharat'. Under POSHAN Abhiyaan the high impact interventions of 18 Ministries/Departments have been mapped, especially during the first 1,000 days of child life since conception. Each Converging Ministry/Department prepares an action plan related to nutrition and integrates it in their ongoing activities. To ensure effective Convergence at State level, the Chief Secretary is required to chair the Convergence Action Plan (CAP) meeting on quarterly basis. Similarly, DC/DMs also need to take CAP meetings on quarterly basis.

- (d) One of the most important service under Anganwadi Services is Supplementary Nutrition which is being provided to all the beneficiaries registered at the Anganwadi Centre. Lactating mothers and children from the age group of 6 months to 3 years are provided Take Home Ration (not raw ration)

Further, Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 has brought 3 important programmes /schemes under its ambit, viz., Anganwadi Services, Scheme for Adolescent Girls and Poshan Abhiyaan. The Common Core of Poshan 2.0 focuses on Maternal Nutrition, Infant and Young Child Feeding Norms, Treatment of MAM/SAM and Wellness through AYUSH. Important planks of a Corrective Strategy supported by Behaviour Change Communication include focus on Early and Exclusive Breast feeding in 0-6-month-old infants with Complementary Feeding (first 1000 days)

Under POSHAN Abhiyaan, one of the major activities undertaken is Community Mobilization and Awareness Advocacy leading to Jan Andolan to educate the people on nutritional aspects. Community Based Events or CBEs have served as a significant strategy in changing nutrition practices. CBEs help to celebrate critical milestones in the life of pregnant women and children below two years of age and to disseminate critical information on inter alia, right time to ensure complementary feeding and appropriate complementary feeding with diet diversity. Close to 3.70 crore Community Based Events have been held under the Abhiyan.

IEC material in the form of videos, pamphlets, flyers etc in regional languages have been developed around the critical themes. At the national level, *Rashtriya Poshan Maah* is celebrated in the month of September across the country while *Poshan Pakhwada* is celebrated in March. Over the years, themes have included overall nutrition, hygiene, water and sanitation, anemia prevention, importance of breast-feeding, complementary feeding etc. In Poshan Maah 2022, close to 2.17 lakh activities on awareness of Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices and 1.81 lakh consultation camps on appropriate breast-feeding practices were conducted across the country.

Further, all the Anganwadi workers of the State have been trained in different modules under the capacity building component of POSHAN Abhiyaan. Some of the key modules, include identification and care of a weak newborn baby, complementary feeding, diet diversity, timely initiation of complementary feeding, importance of diet diversity in complementary feeding, ensuring complementary feeding improves over time etc, ensuring exclusive breastfeeding, supporting mothers with issues in breastfeeding etc.

Anganwadi Workers are also mandated to conduct at least 4 Ante-Natal Care Visits. Incentives are given to the Anganwadi worker, for completing at least 60% of home visits to Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers and children upto two years of age. During the Home-visits, counseling is provided to the women on inter alia, initiation of complementary feeding and other Infant and Young Child Feeding practices.
