

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3185
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.08.2025

FACIAL RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY FOR PM-POSHAN

3185. SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA:

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

- (a) the details of measures taken by Government to increase internet access for Anganwadi workers, considering notification mandating Facial-Recognition Technology (FRT) for POSHAN application;
- (b) the rationale for mandating FRT;
- (c) steps taken to ensure FRT does not exclude children, owing to rapid appearance changes with ageing;
- (d) whether the mandate complies with three-fold test developed under K.S. Puttuswamy vs Union of India by Supreme Court, and if not, reasons therefor; and
- (e) whether any authority has been appointed to resolve technical issues faced by Anganwadi workers to comply, if so, details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SAVITRI THAKUR)

(a) to (e) Face Recognition Module was developed in Poshan Tracker application and has been implemented in a step wise manner. It was first rolled out as a pilot in the month of August 2024 in 6 States/UTs. Based on feedback of pilot States/UTs various technical changes were made. Thereafter it was implemented pan India in the month of December 2024 but was not made mandatory for distribution of Take-Home Ration (THR). Since then, regular training are being held for States/UTs to perform facial recognition.

To verify a beneficiary through Aadhar identification eKYC is performed along with OTP with capturing of liveness image of the beneficiary. This onboarding process is performed once in a lifetime of the beneficiary on Poshan Tracker. Thereafter, for availing benefits of take-home ration on monthly basis only, face matching is done. Face matching can be performed both in online and offline mode. The offline mode feature has been developed keeping in consideration the areas with low connectivity. The feature has been made compatible for low end version phones as well. Bal Aadhar for children under 5 years of age doesn't contain biometric data;

therefore, for children aged upto 6 years, the FRS of the mother/father/guardian is being done and not that of the child.

FRS has been implemented for ensuring last mile tracking of delivery of take-home ration to the rightful beneficiary. It aims at empowering the beneficiary and making the Anganwadi system more transparent and accountable.

As on 13th August 2025, face capturing and e-KYC of 3.76 crore THR beneficiaries, out of the 4.89 crore eligible beneficiaries registered for Take Home Ration, which is almost 76.93%, has already been completed.

Regular trainings and handholding sessions have been conducted by NeGD State Coordinators. Further, field visits by officials of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, GoI. and regular meetings with State officials have also been conducted to understand and redress technical difficulties. Besides this, funds for data pack recharge at the rate of Rs. 2,000 per year are provided to the States and UTs for Anganwadi workers, supervisors and block coordinators.

Various Data Protection Safeguards related to privacy exist in FRS in line with the verdict under K.S. Puttuswamy vs Union of India by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. Some of the data protection safeguards are mentioned below:

- The data of the beneficiary, which is collected, is subject to all existing data protection protocols, which mandates purpose limitation, informed consent, and access restrictions.
- All requests and responses related to Face Verification are encrypted during transit, ensuring data is protected from interception or tampering.
- No images or data are stored permanently on the device. As a precautionary measure, all cached or temporary data is wiped automatically when the AWW logs out of the application.
- The private data is not publicly accessible; it is only available to authorized personnel solely for verification purposes.
- The Poshan Tracker application is typically used by Anganwadi Workers, and it is not open to the public or any unauthorized party. Access is role-based, logged and monitored to prevent misuse.
- Further, the application's internal database is encrypted, preventing access to sensitive information outside the app environment
- Face images are handled in encoded format within the app to ensure safe processing and transmission.

In pursuance of section 7 of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016, the Central Government, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has issued a notification dated 29th March, 2023 and notified that an individual desirous of availing the benefits under the Scheme shall be required to furnish proof of possession of Aadhaar number or undergo Aadhaar authentication.
