

Parliament Roundup on Nutrition

IN A GLANCE

NATIONAL NUTRITION WEEK & POSHAN MAAH 2021



Several questions related to nutrition services for women and children were answered by the Government of India (GoI) during the Monsoon Session of the 17th Lok Sabha (held between July and August 2021). This explainer reports on the emerging trends in funds allotted, released, and utilised as well as beneficiaries from 32 questions asked of the government.



Trend

Reduction in Funds Released and Utilised



Scheme

Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition (POSHAN) Abhiyaan

POSHAN Abhiyaan is the GoI's flagship scheme that aims to holistically address the prevalence of malnutrition in India through the use of technology, convergence, behavioural change, training, and capacity building [1]. The utilisation of funds under POSHAN Abhiyaan has been low. As on 31 March 2021, in the last three financial years, ₹5,313 crore had been released under POSHAN Abhiyaan, while ₹2,986 crore were utilised (56.2% of released funds were utilised).

Additionally, for FY 2020-21, the funds released under POSHAN Abhiyaan decreased by 97% from ₹1,843 crore in FY 2019-20 to ₹49 crore in FY 2020-21. In FY 2020-21, ₹3,700 crore was allocated for the scheme, which was a 9% increase from the previous year [1].

Scheme

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

The Integrated Child Development Services is GoI's flagship programme aimed at providing basic education, health, and nutrition services for early childhood development. In 2021, it was combined with POSHAN Abhiyaan to form Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0 [2].

In FY 2020-21 ₹17,252 crore (Revised Estimates or REs) was allocated. This was 3% lower than the REs for FY 2019-20, which was ₹17,705 crore [2].

[1] *Poshan Abhiyaan Budget Brief, Vol 13/Issue 4, Accountability Initiative, Centre for Policy Research (2021).*

[2] *Integrated Child Development Services Budget Brief, Vol 13/Issue 3, Accountability Initiative, Centre for Policy Research (2021).*

Funds released under ICDS decreased by 6 per cent from ₹16,814 crore in FY 2019-20 to ₹15,798 crore in FY 2020-21. Data reported on the quantum of funds released differed across the answers submitted.

As per Lok Sabha question 915 answered on 23 July 2021, under ICDS in FY 2020-21:

- ₹10,106 crore was approved for the Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) of which ₹8,963 crore was released (89% of the approved amount was released). Under SNP, Hot Cooked Meals (HCM) are provided to children aged three to six years for 300 days, and Take Home Ration (THR) are provided to children aged six months to three years, pregnant women and lactating mothers, and adolescent girls [2].
- For ICDS-General, ₹9,782 crore was approved of which ₹6,825 crore was released (70% of the approved amount was released). This component includes expenditure on salary for staff, honoraria for Anganwadi Workers and Anganwadi Helpers, among other things.
- Funds released under SNP for FY 2020-21 stood at ₹8,963 crore, which was 4 per cent higher than funds released in FY 2019-20 (i.e. ₹8,661 crore), but 4 per cent lower than funds utilised in FY 2019-20 (i.e. ₹9,295 crore).

However, as per Lok Sabha question 764 answered on 23 July 2021:

- SNP releases decreased by 3 per cent from ₹6,795 crore in FY 2019-20 to ₹6,625 crore in FY 2020-21.
- ICDS-General releases decreased by 20 per cent from ₹7,597 crore in FY 2019-20 to ₹6,111 crore in FY 2020-21.

Total funds released under ICDS in FY 2021-22 stood at ₹4,972 crore (till 30 June 2021). Out of this, ₹2,527 crore were released under SNP.

Scheme

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)

The Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) is Gol's maternity benefit scheme aimed at providing partial compensation for wage loss and improving health seeking behaviour of pregnant women and lactating mothers [3].

As on 16 July 2021, the total amount disbursed to beneficiaries under PMMVY since the inception of the scheme stood at ₹8,722 crore. The amount disbursed to beneficiaries decreased by 25 per cent from ₹3,317 crore in FY 2019-20 to ₹2,482 crore in FY 2020-21.

Funds released for PMMVY decreased by 51 per cent from ₹2,203 crore in FY 2019-20 to ₹1,079 crore in FY 2020-21. Similarly, funds utilised for PMMVY decreased by 32 per cent from ₹3,537 crore in FY 2019-20 to ₹2,422 crore in FY 2020-21. While PMMVY was merged under Samarthya, the allocation in 2021-22 is similar to the allocation for PMMVY alone in 2020-21. Budget Estimates (BEs) for Samrthya for FY 2021-22 were ₹2,522 crore. The allocations for PMMVY were:

- For FY 2018-19, BE was ₹2,400 crore, RE was ₹1,200 crore;
- For FY 2019-20, BE was ₹2,500 crore, RE was ₹1,300 crore;
- For FY 2020-21, BE was ₹2,500 crore.

At the start of FY 2020-21, ₹2,500 crore had been allocated for PMMVY, 9 per cent higher than the REs for FY 2019-20. However, the allocations remain the same as the FY 2019-20 BEs.[3]

[2] This particular question regarding the total number of ICDS beneficiaries registered in POSHAN Tracker app so far, was asked on 6 August 2021.

[3] Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana & Janani Suraksha Yojana Budget Brief, Vol12/Issue 5, Accountability Initiative, Centre for Policy Research (2020).

Scheme

National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)

The National Rural Health Mission is a sub-mission of the National Health Mission, which is Govt's largest public health programme. The BE allocations to NRHM for FY 2018-19 was ₹24,280 crore, ₹27,039 crore for FY 2019-20, ₹27,039 crore for FY 2020-21, and is ₹30,100 crore for FY 2021-22. Central assistance released to the states/Union Territories under NRHM has increased during the last three financial years from ₹24,128 crore in FY 2018-19, to ₹27,990 crore in FY 2019-20, and ₹28,506 crore in FY 2020-21.

Trend
Reduction in the Number of Beneficiaries



Scheme

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) reported that the total number of beneficiaries under ICDS as on 6 August 2021 (as per the POSHAN Tracker) stood at 964.19 lakh [2].

COVID-19 has affected ICDS provision. During the pandemic, as per the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Anganwadi Centres across the country were closed to limit the impact of COVID-19. However, to ensure continuous nutritional support to beneficiaries, Anganwadi Workers and Anganwadi Helpers distributed supplementary nutrition at the doorsteps of beneficiaries once in 15 days, and distributed medicines as per requirement.

For the quarter ending on 31st March 2021, 675.1 lakh children (aged 6 months - 6 years), 80.02 lakh pregnant women, and 86.03 lactating women received Supplementary Nutrition through ICDS.

Additionally, a number of states such as Manipur, West Bengal, Goa, and Telangana, could not provide Pre School Education (PSE) due to COVID-19. Nevertheless, for the quarter ending on 31st March 2021, 230.38 lakh children aged 3-6 years received PSE.

Scheme

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)

MWCD reported that the disbursement of maternity benefits to eligible beneficiaries under PMMVY has continued through the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the number of beneficiaries enrolled under PMMVY decreased by 9 per cent from 70.74 lakh women in FY 2019-20 to 64.27 lakh women in FY 2020-21. Additionally, the number of beneficiaries paid under PMMVY decreased by 28 per cent from 96.34 lakh women in FY 2019-20 to 75.32 lakh women in FY 2020-21.

Scheme

Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)

The Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) is a conditional cash transfer scheme which aims at reducing maternal and neonatal mortality by promoting institutional delivery among poor pregnant women [4]. As per the government, JSY beneficiaries across India decreased from 107.35 lakh in FY 2019-20 to 99.92 lakh in FY 2020-21 (provisional). This could be due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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[4] Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana & Janani Suraksha Yojana Budget Brief, Vol12/Issue 5, Accountability Initiative, Centre for Policy Research (2020).

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