

Milestone Volume

BUDGET BRIEFS

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Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 GoI, 2023-24

In Financial Year (FY) 2021-22, the Government of India (GoI) restructured the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), POSHAN (Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment) Abhiyaan, and the Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG) into **Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0**, also known as Poshan 2.0.

Data on approved budgets for Poshan 2.0 were unavailable at the time of writing.

This brief uses government data to analyse:

- Required funds, allocations, and releases;
- Governance, including human resources;
- Changes in coverage; and
- Outcomes.

Cost share and implementation:

For the Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP), funds are shared equally between GoI and state governments. For other components, funds are shared in a 60:40 ratio, and salaries are shared in a 25:75 ratio. For Hima-layan and North Eastern Region (NER) states, the ratio is 90:10.

HIGHLIGHTS

₹ 25,449 cr

GoI allocations for Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) in FY 2023-24

₹ 20,554 cr

GoI allocations for Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 in FY 2023-24

SUMMARY & ANALYSIS

- For Financial Year (FY) 2023-24 Budget Estimates (BEs), GoI has allocated ₹20,254 crore for Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0. This is 1 per cent higher than FY 2022-23 Revised Estimates (REs), which stood at ₹20,263 crore.
- Aadhaar linking was mandated for women and adolescent girls. As on 31 July 2022, only 53 per cent of eligible citizens were linked and verified to Aadhaar.
- The number of eligible citizens availing SNP have declined by 3 per cent to 951 lakh between March 2017 and June 2022. Over the same period, the number of children receiving Pre-School Education (PSE) services declined by 11 per cent to 303 lakh.
- Several sanctioned posts remain vacant for Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs), Lady Supervisors (LSs), Anganwadi Workers (AWWs), and Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs). As on 30 June 2022, 31 per cent posts for CDPOs and 35 per cent for LSs were vacant. This figure stood at 9 per cent for both AWWs and AWHs.
- Prior to the launch of the scheme, India showed slow progress in improving dietary diversity among children aged 6-23 months. Between the fourth (2015-16) and fifth rounds (2019-21) of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), the percentage of children (aged 6-23 months) receiving minimum dietary diversity increased by only 1 percentage point.

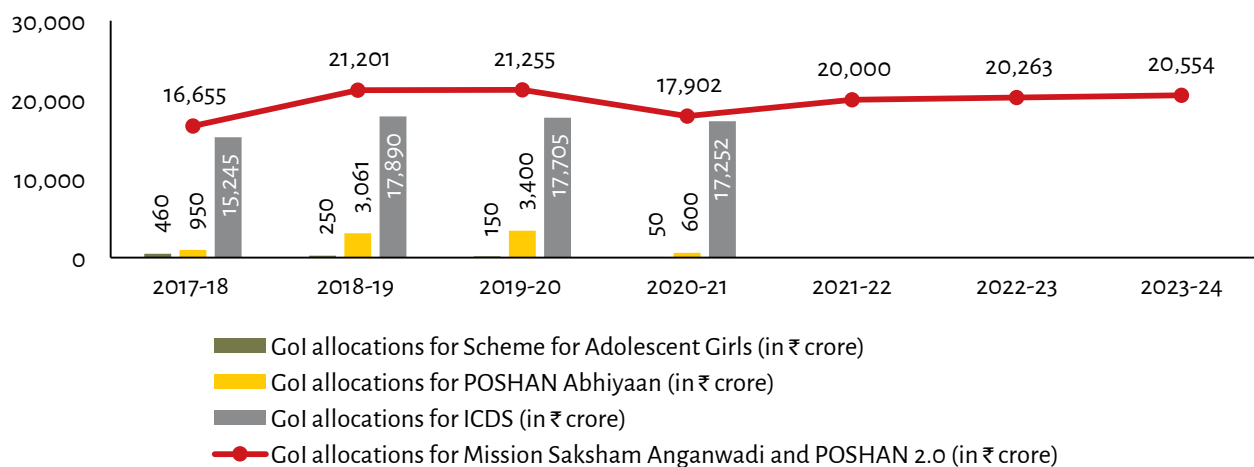
- In Financial Year (FY) 2021-22, Government of India (GoI) restructured the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), POSHAN (Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment) Abhiyaan, and the Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG) into Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0, also known as Poshan 2.0.
- The restructured mission consists of the following sub-schemes:
 - Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) for children (0-6 years), pregnant women and lactating mothers, and adolescent girls (14-18 years);
 - Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE);
 - Anganwadi Infrastructure including upgraded Saksham Anganwadis; and
 - Poshan Abhiyaan.
- Poshan 2.0 aims to redress some of the challenges identified with the existing schemes, including inadequate nutrition quality and delivery, weak community ownership, poor implementation, the absence of an integrated approach to nutrition security, and an insufficient focus on diet diversity, traditional wisdom in nutrition practices, and behaviour change.
- A five-year roadmap for the Mission is as follows:
 - In the short term (6-12 months), the Mission hopes to focus on Aadhaar seeding of eligible citizens, resource readiness of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), governance including setting up of District Nutrition Committees and Poshan Panchayats, promoting dietary diversity, and robust data management.
 - In the medium term (1-3 years), the scheme plans to strengthen convergence, frontline worker capacity, diet diversity through Poshan Vatikas, and Behaviour Change Communication campaigns.
 - In the long term (3-5 years), the Mission aims to upgrade 2 lakh AWCs as Saksham Anganwadis and construct *pucca* AWCs in lieu of semi-*pucca* and rented AWCs, and foster proactive community ownership of the programme.

TRENDS IN FINANCES

GoI Allocations

- For Financial Year (FY) 2023-24 Budget Estimates (BEs), GoI has allocated ₹25,449 crore to the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), a 6 per cent increase from the previous year's Revised Estimates (REs), which stood at ₹23,913 crore. In FY 2022-23, till December, ₹16,490 crore or 69 per cent of the year's REs had been spent.
- Poshan 2.0 is the largest scheme of the Ministry. For FY 2023-24 BEs, ₹20,254 crore has been allocated to the scheme. This is 1 per cent higher than previous year's REs, which stood at ₹20,263 crore.
- However, allocations remain 3 per cent lower than the sum of the allocations for the sub-schemes made four years prior. For instance, in FY 2019-20 REs, combined allocations for the sub-schemes stood at ₹21,255 crore – ₹701 crore more than allocations for Poshan 2.0 in FY 2023-24.
- There were also differences between projected demand by the Ministry and allocations for the scheme. In FY 2021-22, allocations were ₹6,825 crore less or 75 per cent of the projected demand by MWCD. In FY 2022-23, however, MWCD requested ₹20,258 crore for the scheme, which was ₹6,672 crore less than the projected demand for the previous year. Allocations stood at ₹20,263 crore, exceeding the projected demand by ₹5 crore.

1% INCREASE IN ALLOCATIONS FOR MISSION SAKSHAM ANGANWADI AND POSHAN 2.0 IN 2023-24



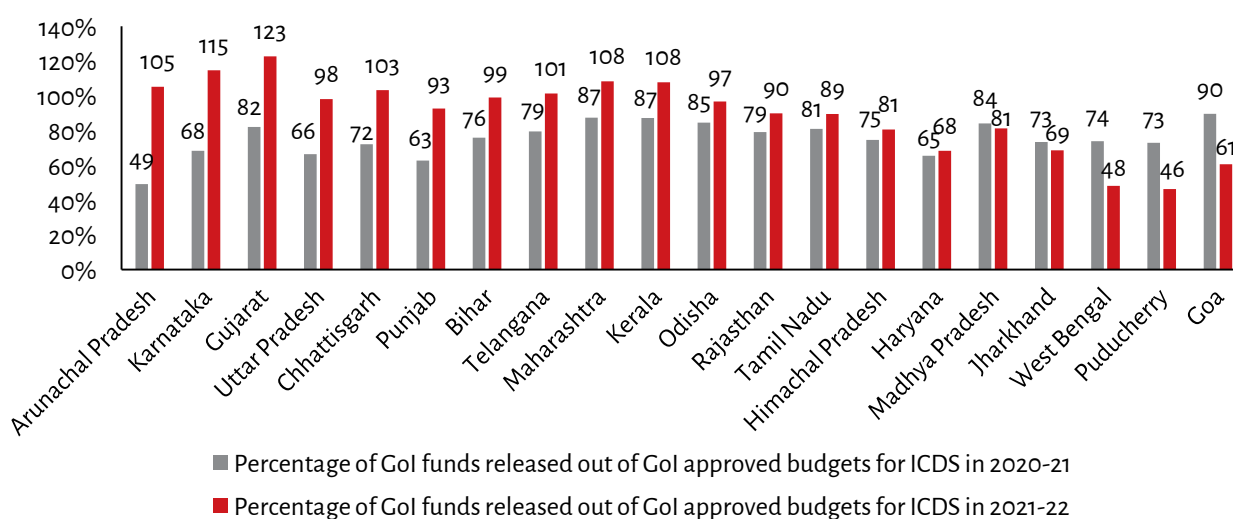
Source: Union Expenditure Budget, Volume 2, MWCD, FY 2018-19 to FY 2023-24. Available online at: <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in>. Last accessed on 1 February 2023.

Note: Figures are in crores of Rupees and are Revised Estimates (REs), except for FY 2023-24 which are Budget Estimates (BEs).

Gol Releases

- There have been improvements in the release of funds in FY 2021-22, compared to the previous years. In FY 2019-20, ₹16,814 crore or 84 per cent of the Gol approved budget was released. This decreased to ₹15,798 crore or 76 per cent of the approved budget for FY 2020-21. In FY 2021-22, however, while approved budgets decreased compared to the previous year, Gol released ₹18,203 crore or 94 per cent of its approved budgets.
- There are, however, state variations. In FY 2021-22, releases exceeded approved budgets in nine states and Union Territories (UTs), including Gujarat (123 per cent), Karnataka (115 per cent), and Maharashtra (108 per cent). Conversely, less than 70 per cent funds were released in Jharkhand (69 per cent), Haryana (68 per cent), Goa (61 per cent), West Bengal (48 per cent), and Puducherry (46 per cent).

APPROVED BUDGETS RELEASED INCREASED IN 2021-22, COMPARED TO 2020-21



Source: Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 193, answered on 3 August 2022. Available online at: <https://pqars.nic.in/annex/257/AS193.pdf>. Last accessed on 14 December 2022.

- Release of funds has been slow in FY 2022-23. Till 14 December 2022, ₹10,878 crore or 43 per cent of GoI allocations had been released for Poshan 2.0.
- Data on expenditures is unavailable since FY 2021-22.
- While the schemes have been restructured, fund flows continue to follow a similar pattern. The next part of this section thus looks at the SNP and erstwhile POSHAN Abhiyaan in greater detail.

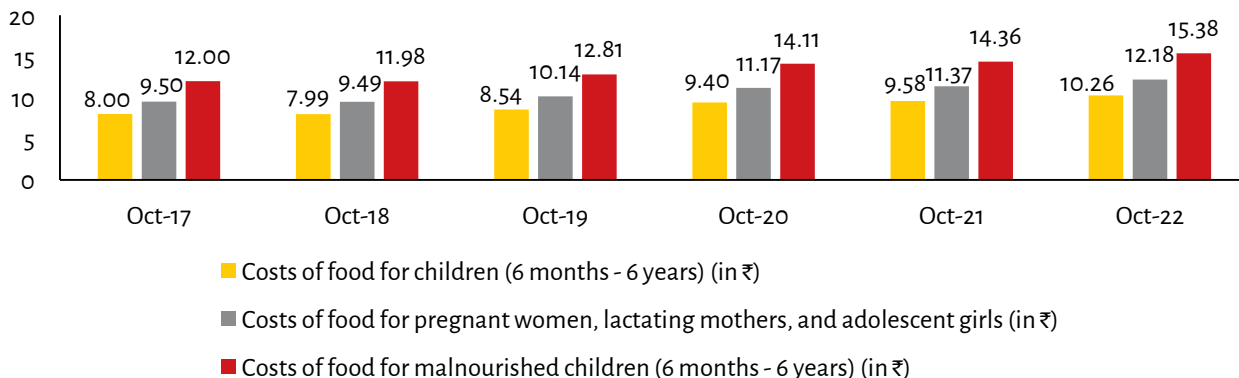
Supplementary Nutrition Programme Costs

- Like the erstwhile scheme, two types of food are provided under the SNP. a) Hot Cooked Meals (HCM) are provided to children aged three to six years for 300 days (or 25 days per month) in two servings – morning snacks and a meal – based on their malnutrition levels; b) Take Home Ration (THR) are provided to children aged six months to three years, pregnant women, and lactating mothers through AWCs. For severely malnourished children, additional THR is to be provided. In addition, SNP is also provided for adolescent girls in Aspirational Districts and states in the North Eastern Region (NER).
- There are significant gaps between the estimated cost for supplying SNP and actual allocations. There are two ways to measure these gaps. First, by estimating the required cost to deliver SNP at 100 per cent coverage using updated estimated population figures and comparing them to actual allocations. Second, by studying what SNP budgets would look like if they accounted for changes in per person cost due to inflation. Findings from both have been shown below.
- Estimated required funds at ‘full coverage’ i.e. 100 per cent of the estimated target population were arrived at by multiplying the estimated target population by the GoI defined unit cost. The size of the target population in 2022 has been estimated by using the natural growth rate to update population figures year-on-year, state-wise. Birth rates have been used from Sample Registration System (SRS) data from 2020 to estimate the number of pregnant women, who are part of the target population.
- Data on approved budgets were unavailable for FY 2022-23. Thus, for each state, the total approved budget for SNP has been estimated using FY 2021-22 GoI shares and assuming that the state contributed its entire share. These estimated figures have been considered as a proportion of the required costs. This method, however, does not account for states adding extra funds over and above their share. Further, it does not include costs for extended SNP services provided by states, such as Karnataka providing HCM to pregnant and lactating mothers.
- In FY 2022-23 at full coverage, it was estimated that ₹45,198 crore was required to fund SNP. Total approved budgets for FY 2021-22 (using both GoI and state shares), however, stood at ₹17,392 crore. It is likely that this gap persisted in FY 2022-23, given allocations for Poshan 2.0 only increased by 1 per cent between the two FYs.

SNP Unit Costs Adjusting for Changes in Food and Beverage Prices

- In September 2017, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the proposal for the revision of cost norms with annual cost indexation for SNP. As per these revised norms, per day costs of SNP are ₹8 for children, ₹9.5 for pregnant women, lactating mothers, and adolescent girls, and ₹12 for severely malnourished children. No changes have been made to these norms since 2017, including in the new guidelines for Poshan 2.0.
- Adjusting for changes in food and beverage prices in India, unit costs should have increased by 28 per cent from October 2017 to October 2022. Accounting for this to index costs for SNP, the per day costs as of October 2022 would be ₹10.26 instead of ₹8 for children, ₹12.18 instead of ₹9.5 for pregnant women, lactating mothers, and adolescent girls, and ₹15.38 instead of ₹12 for severely malnourished children.

ADJUSTING FOR CHANGES IN FOOD PRICES, PER DAY UNIT COSTS FOR SNP IN OCTOBER 2022 SHOULD BE 28% HIGHER THAN IN OCTOBER 2017

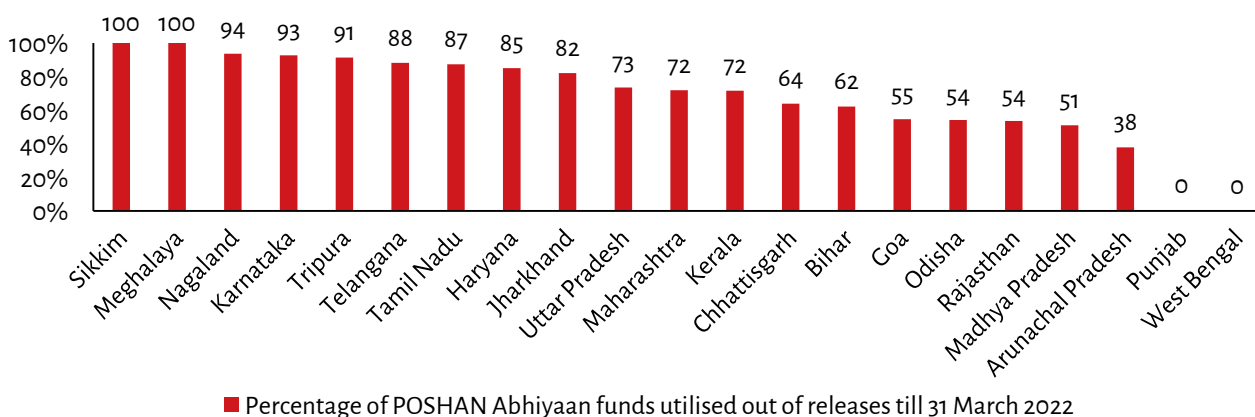


Source: (1) SNP unit costs, 2022-23 from Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 guidelines. Available online at: <https://wcd.nic.in/acts/guidelines-mission-saksham-anganwadi-and-poshan-2.0>. (2) Food and beverage inflation from Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Available online at: <https://www.mospi.gov.in/>. Last accessed on 28 December 2022.

POSHAN Abhiyaan Releases and Expenditures

- POSHAN Abhiyaan was operational till March 2022. Past trends indicate that releases and expenditures were low.
- The total allocations for the scheme since its inception stood at ₹10,111 crore till FY 2020-21. For FY 2021-22, no new allocations were made and previous unspent funds were to be utilised.
- However, not all allocations were released. From the inception of the scheme till March 2022, ₹5,403 crore had been released by Gol, accounting for 52 per cent of the total allocations.
- Utilisation, in fact, was even lower. Till 31 March 2022, ₹3,753 crore or 66 per cent of total Gol funds released had been spent.
- There were state variations in the spending of POSHAN Abhiyaan funds. The percentage of POSHAN Abhiyaan funds utilised out of Gol releases till 31 March 2022 was above 90 per cent in Sikkim (100 per cent), Meghalaya (100 per cent), Nagaland (94 per cent), Karnataka (93 per cent), and Tripura (91 per cent).

66% OF FUNDS RELEASED FOR POSHAN ABHIYAAN SPENT TILL 31 MARCH 2022



Source: Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 966, answered on 22 July 2022. Available online at: <http://164.100.24.220/loksabhaquestions/annex/179/AU966.pdf>. Last accessed on 14 December 2022.

- In contrast, less than 60 per cent had been spent in 10 states and UTs. These included Goa (55 per cent), Odisha (54 per cent), Rajasthan (54 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (51 per cent), Arunachal Pradesh (38 per cent), Punjab (0 per cent), and West Bengal (0 per cent).

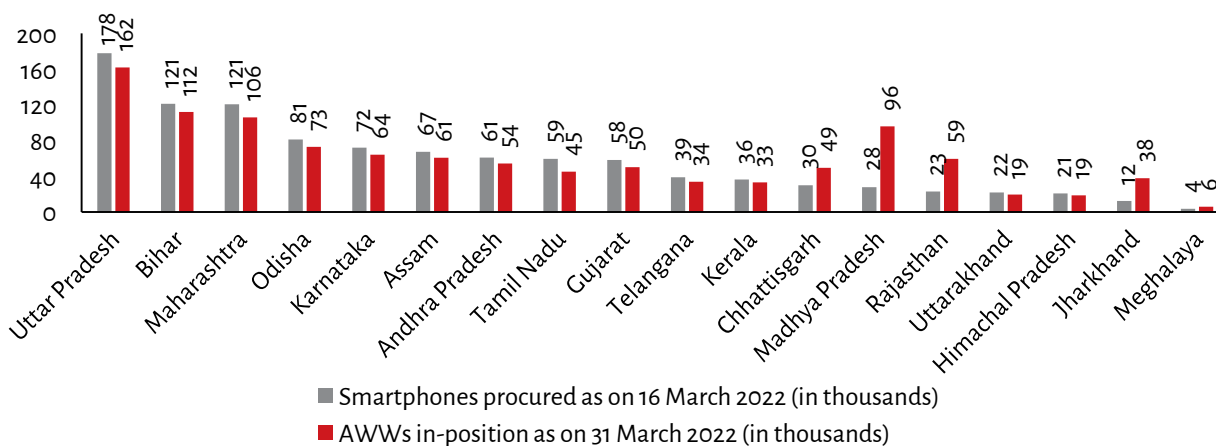
GOVERNANCE

- There are several governance initiatives to ensure scheme efficiency, community participation, and to strengthen delivery. These include the use of Poshan Tracker, the establishment of Poshan Panchayats, convergence across departments and ministries, and feedback and evaluation.

Poshan Tracker

- Launched in March 2021, Poshan Tracker aims to serve as a job-aid to Anganwadi Workers (AWWs). It acts as a real-time monitoring and recording tool for services delivered and child growth. It is meant to facilitate continuous evaluation and timely interventions by the Ministry, states, and districts; provide feedback to programme managers; and document scheme impact.
- AWWs are equipped with smartphones to input beneficiary data into Poshan Tracker. As of March 2022, 11.04 lakh smartphones had been procured for AWWs, accounting for 84 per cent of AWWs.
- There were state variations in the smartphones procured for AWWs. As of March 2022, several states had procured more smartphones than in-position AWWs, including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Maharashtra. On the other hand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Jharkhand procured fewer smartphones than their in-position AWWs. Other states like Haryana, Punjab, and West Bengal had not procured any smartphones for AWWs as on 16 March 2022.

SMARTPHONES PROCURED FOR 84% OF IN-POSITION AWWs TILL 31 MARCH 2022



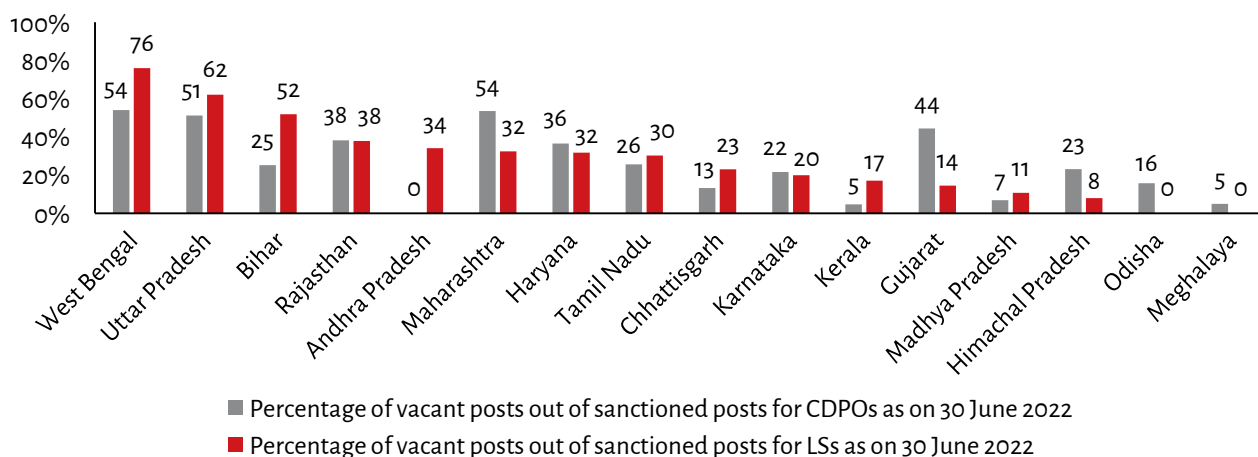
Source: (1) State- and UT- wise status report of smartphone procurement for AWWs from Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1756 answered on 16 March 2022. Available online at: <https://pqars.nic.in/annex/256/AU1756.pdf>. (2) Sanctioned and in-position posts for AWWs and AWHs on 31 March 2022 from Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No.3396 answered on 5 August 2022. Available online at: <http://164.100.24.220/loksabhaquestions/annex/179/AU3396.pdf>. Last accessed on 23 November 2022.

Vacancies

- There are several sanctioned posts for Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs), Lady Supervisors (LSs), AWWs, and Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs) that are vacant. Trends have remained unchanged over time.
- As on 30 June 2022, 31 per cent and 35 per cent sanctioned posts were vacant for CDPOs and LSs, respectively. Similarly, 9 per cent of sanctioned posts were vacant for both AWWs and AWHs.

- More than 50 per cent of CDPO posts were vacant in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. Vacancies for LSs were high in West Bengal (76 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (62 per cent), and Bihar (52 per cent), whereas Odisha and Meghalaya had no vacant posts.

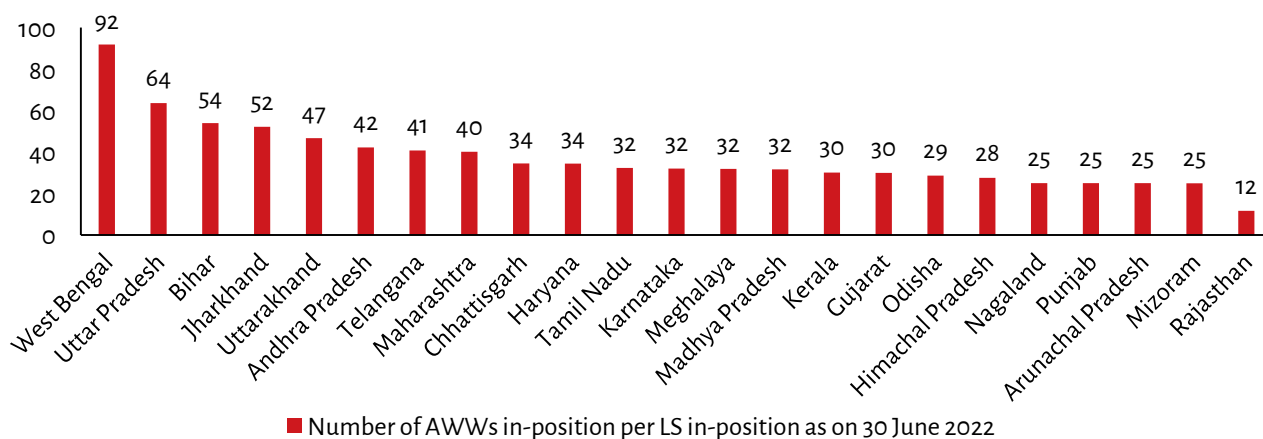
CDPOs AND LSs VACANCIES WERE HIGH ACROSS STATES AS ON 30 JUNE 2022



Source: RTI response by MWCD, dated 3 January 2023.

- Vacancies reflect in the monitoring load of both these mid-level managers. LSs are supposed to monitor and support 25 to 30 AWWs, while CDPOs have to manage all LSs in their project.
- The number of AWWs per LS exceeded 50 in states like West Bengal (92), Uttar Pradesh (64), and Bihar (54). In contrast, the number of AWWs per LS was 25 or less in Arunachal Pradesh (25), Mizoram (25), and Rajasthan (12).

25 STATES HAD MORE THAN 25 AWWs PER LS



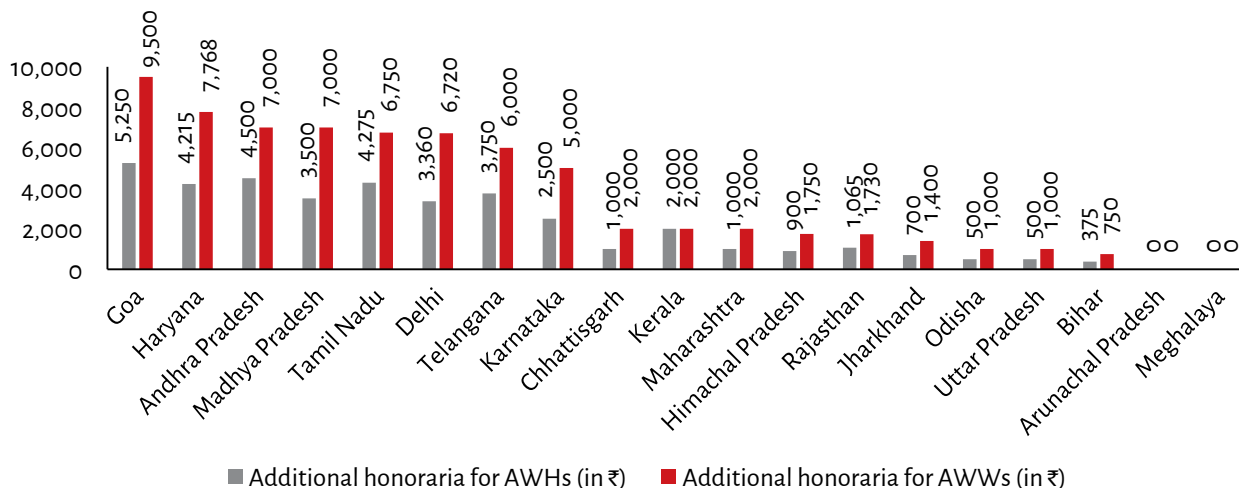
Source: RTI response by MWCD, dated 3 January 2023.

AWW Honoraria

- AWWs and AWHs receive a monthly honorarium from Gol of ₹4,500 and ₹3,000 at main AWCs. In Mini-AWCs, they are paid ₹3,500 and ₹2,250, respectively. As on 1 April 2021, performance linked incentives have been introduced. AWWs can receive ₹500 per month, and AWHs can receive ₹250 per month.

- In addition, many states augment the honorarium to AWWs and AWHs. Goa (₹9,500 and ₹5,250), Haryana (₹7,768 and ₹4,215), and Andhra Pradesh (₹7,000 and ₹4,500) provide significant additional honoraria. In contrast, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya provide no additional honoraria.

GOA PROVIDES MORE THAN DOUBLE THE MONTHLY HONORARIUM ADDITIONALLY



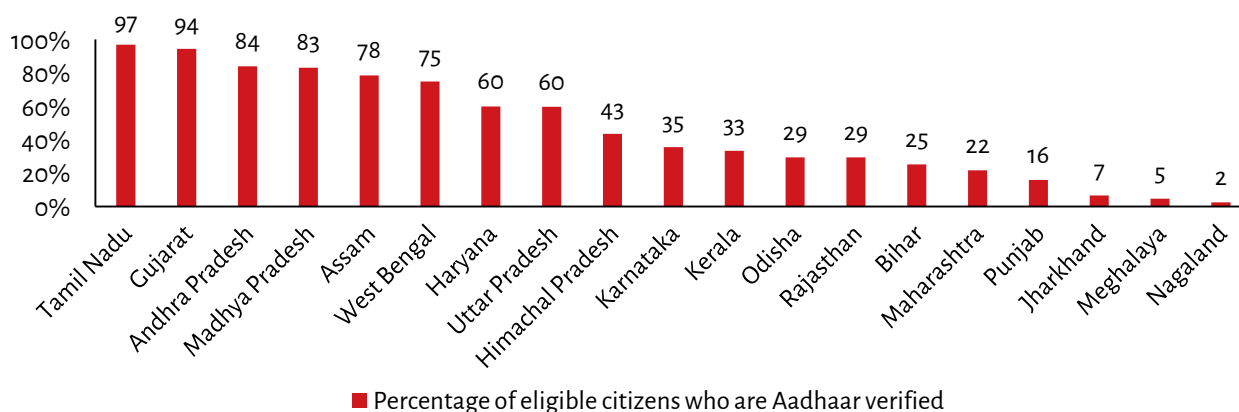
Source: Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 3184, answered on 30 March 2022. Available online at: <https://pqars.nic.in/annex/256/AU3184.pdf>. Last accessed on 14 December 2022.

COVERAGE

Aadhaar Verified Eligible Citizens

- As per Poshan 2.0 guidelines, it is necessary for eligible citizens to register using the Aadhaar identification in order to avail scheme benefits. While children can access the scheme using mother's Aadhaar card, adolescents, pregnant women, and lactating mothers need to have their own Aadhaar cards.
- Not all Aadhaar cards, however, have been verified. As on 31 July 2022, 53 per cent of eligible women and children were linked and verified to Aadhaar. There were state variations in the percentage of Aadhaar verified eligible citizens. The percentage of Aadhaar verified women and adolescent girls since the inception of the scheme were highest in Tamil Nadu (97 per cent), Gujarat (94 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (84 per cent), and Madhya Pradesh (83 per cent).

53% OF ELIGIBLE CITIZENS WERE AADHAAR VERIFIED AS ON 5 AUGUST 2022



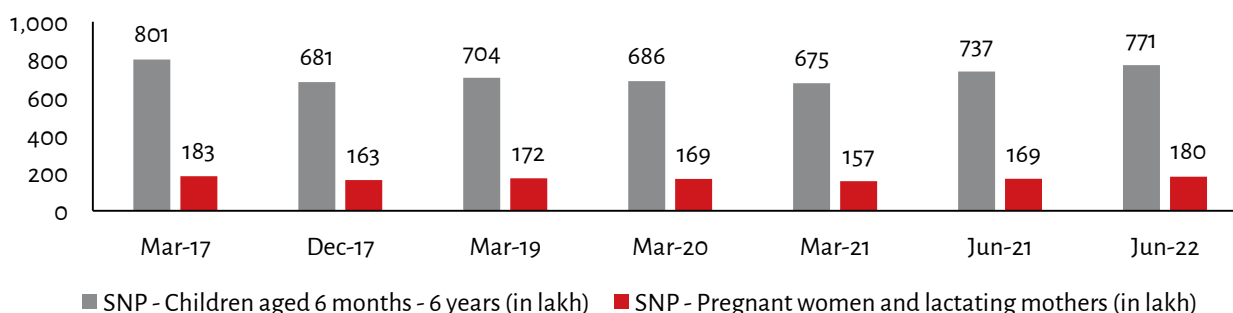
Source: Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 3303 answered on 5 August 2022. Available online at: <http://164.100.24.220/loksabhaquestions/annex/179/AU3303.pdf>. Last accessed on 23 November 2022.

- In contrast, this figure was less than 25 per cent in Maharashtra (22 per cent), Punjab (16 per cent), Jharkhand (7 per cent), Meghalaya (5 per cent), and Nagaland (2 per cent).
- No data exist publicly on whether people have been denied SNP for not having Aadhaar card verification.

SNP Coverage

- Data on service provision are available from three sources: a) the fifth round of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) in 2019-21, b) the scheme Management Information System (MIS), and c) the online real-time Poshan Tracker.
- As per NFHS-5 (2019-21), 66 per cent of pregnant women utilised supplementary food (THR and HCM) under ICDS. However, there were state variations. The highest percentage of pregnant women were provided supplementary food in Odisha (96 per cent), Goa (90 per cent), Uttarakhand (86 per cent), and Chhattisgarh (86 per cent). Less than 50 per cent of pregnant women in Maharashtra (49 per cent), Bihar (44 per cent), and Nagaland (23 per cent) received supplementary nutrition.
- As per the scheme MIS, the number of eligible women and children availing SNP services increased by 5 per cent between June 2021 and June 2022. However, it is important to note that between March 2017 and March 2021, the number of women and children availing SNP services had declined by 19 per cent. In fact, despite a 5 per cent increase between June 2021 and June 2022, the total number of children availing SNP is still lower than those in March 2017.

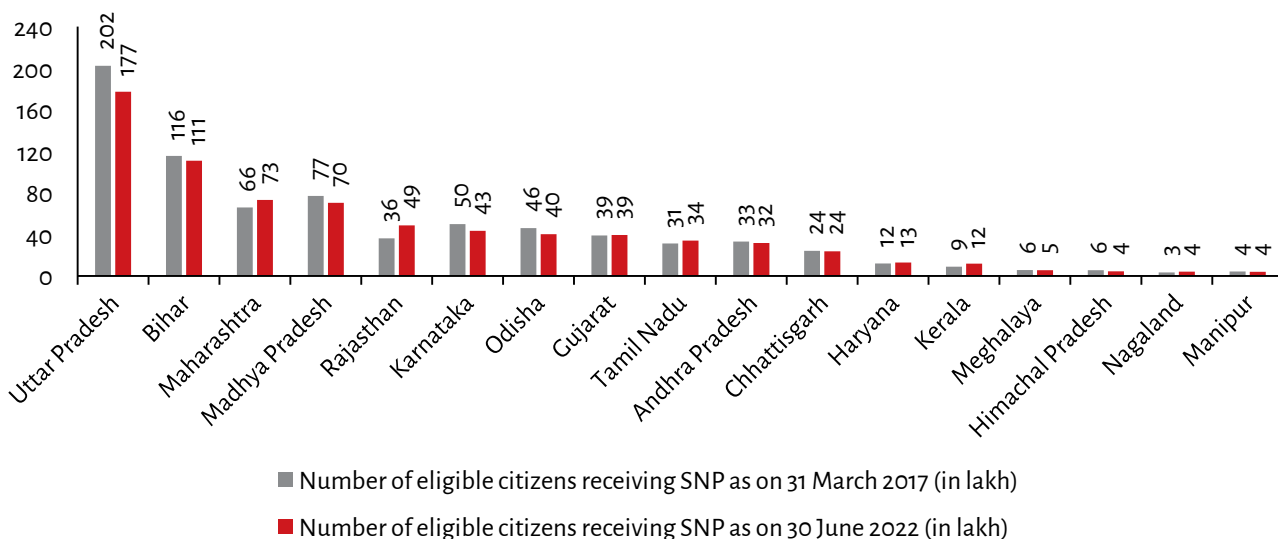
ELIGIBLE CITIZENS AVAILING SNP SERVICES INCREASED BY 5% BETWEEN JUNE 2021 AND JUNE 2022 BUT REMAINED LOWER THAN MARCH 2017 FIGURES



Source: (1) Eligible citizens in March 2015 to December 2017 from Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2440, answered on 9 March 2018. Available online at: <http://164.100.24.220/loksabhaquestions/annex/14/AU2440.pdf>. (2) Eligible citizens in March 2019 from RTI response by MWCD, dated 14 June 2019. (3) Eligible citizens in March 2020 from Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2204, answered on 23 September 2020. Available online at: <http://164.100.24.220/loksabhaquestions/annex/174/AU2204.pdf>. (4) Eligible citizens in March 2021 Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 3068, answered on 6 August 2021. Available online at: <http://164.100.24.220/loksabhaquestions/annex/176/AU3068.pdf>. (5) Eligible citizens as on 30 June 2021 and 30 June 2022 from Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 477, answered on 9 December 2022. Available online at: <https://pqals.nic.in/annex/1710/AU477.pdf>. Last accessed on 14 December 2022.

- In terms of absolute numbers, there was a decline from 983 lakh as on 31 March 2017 to 951 lakh as on 30 June 2022. A state-wise comparison between March 2017 and June 2022 finds that states with the highest decline were Uttar Pradesh (25 lakh), Madhya Pradesh (7 lakh), Karnataka (6 lakh), and Odisha (6 lakh).
- Over the same time period, there were increases in Rajasthan (12 lakh), Maharashtra (7 lakh), and West Bengal (6 lakh).

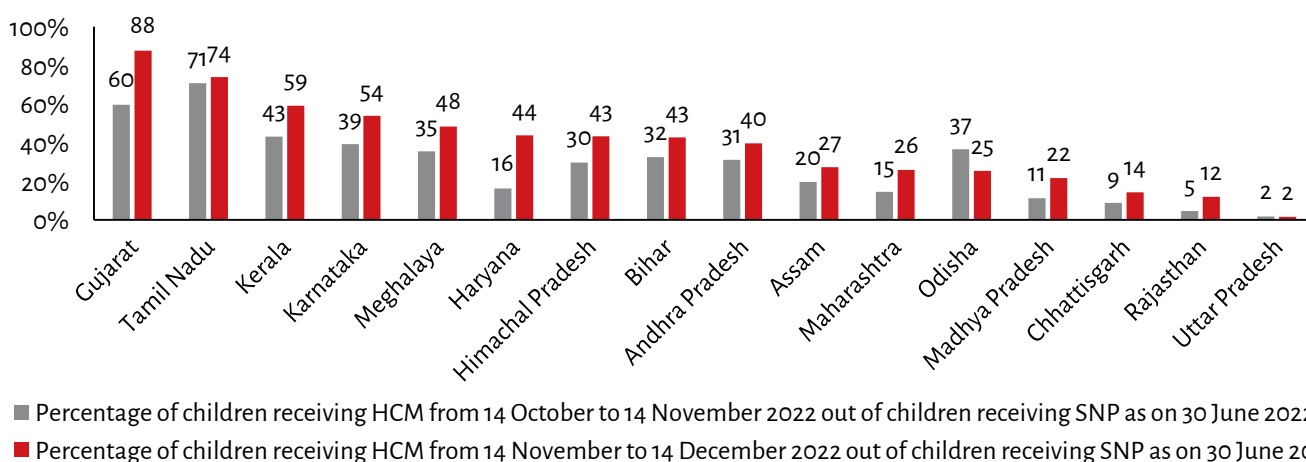
THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE CITIZENS RECEIVING SNP DECLINED FROM 983 LAKH TO 951 LAKH BETWEEN MARCH 2017 AND JUNE 2022



Source: (1) Eligible citizens in March 2017 from Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2440 answered on 09 March 2018. Available online at: <http://164.100.24.220/loksabhaquestions/annex/14/AU2440.pdf>. (2) Eligible citizens as on 30 June 2021 and 30 June 2022 from Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 477, answered on 9 December 2022. Available online at: <https://pqals.nic.in/annex/1710/AU477.pdf>. Last accessed on 14 December 2022.

- The number of children receiving SNP were compared with the number of meals provided as per Poshan Tracker data, assuming each child received 25 HCMs per month (as specified by norms).
- Across India, 24 per cent of estimated eligible children received HCMs for the full duration of the month from 14 October 2022 to 14 November 2022. This figure stood at 33 per cent for the month between 14 November 2022 and 14 December 2022.

33% CHILDREN (3 – 6 YEARS) RECEIVED HCM BETWEEN NOVEMBER TO DECEMBER 2022



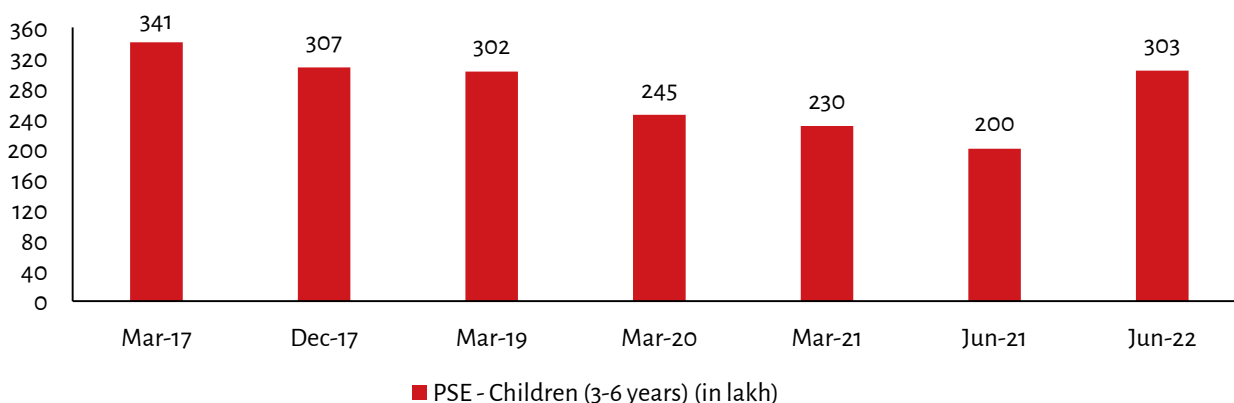
Source: (1) Eligible citizens in March 2017 from Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2440 answered on 09 March 2018. Available online at: <http://164.100.24.220/loksabhaquestions/annex/14/AU2440.pdf>. (2) Eligible citizens as on 30 June 2021 and 30 June 2022 from Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 477, answered on 9 December 2022. Available online at: <https://pqals.nic.in/annex/1710/AU477.pdf>. Last accessed on 14 December 2022.

- There were state variations in the percentage of children (3–6 years) receiving HCM between the two periods, i.e., between October to November 2022 and November to December 2022. Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala had the highest percentage of children receiving HCM in the two periods. Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, on the other hand, had the lowest percentage of children receiving HCM between October to November 2022 and November to December 2022.

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) and Pre-School Education (PSE) Services

- Poshan 2.0 is designed to promote holistic development of children under six years of age through improved ECCE content. The goal is cognitive, emotional, social, and intellectual development of the child to make all pre-schooler's school ready and for seamless integration of children aged 5-6 in Grade 1 as per the National Education Policy, 2020.
- The number of children receiving PSE services declined by 11 per cent between March 2017 and June 2022. Between June 2021 and June 2022, however, there was a 51 per cent increase in the number of children receiving PSE services, from 200 lakh to 303 lakh, likely due to PSE resuming after the pandemic. Despite this increase, the number of children receiving PSE remains lower than in 2017.

CHILDREN RECEIVING PSE INCREASED BY 51% BETWEEN JUNE 2021 AND JUNE 2022 BUT THIS FIGURE WAS STILL LOWER THAN IN MARCH 2017



Source: Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 477, answered on 9 December 2022. Available online at: <https://pqals.nic.in/annex/1710/AU477.pdf>. Last accessed on 14 December 2022.

Jan Andolan

- With the launch of POSHAN Abhiyaan in 2018, Poshan Maah and Poshan Pakhwada are celebrated annually in September and March, respectively. Several activities are held during this period for behavioural change communication and community mobilisation on issues of health and nutrition. Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), village organisations, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), frontline workers, etc., are involved in Jan Andolan activities.
- In the pandemic years of FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22, 1,544 lakh and 2,254 lakh Jan Andolan activities were conducted, respectively. The number of activities, however, declined in FY 2022-23, compared to the previous year by 22 per cent. This decline was despite the pandemic abating and a resumption of normal activities at AWCs.
- Similarly, Poshan Maah activities decreased in 18 states and UTs. For instance, they declined 40 per cent in Maharashtra, 39 per cent in Uttar Pradesh, and 16 per cent in Bihar. In contrast, activities increased in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu by 65 per cent and 31 per cent, respectively.

Poshan Vatikas

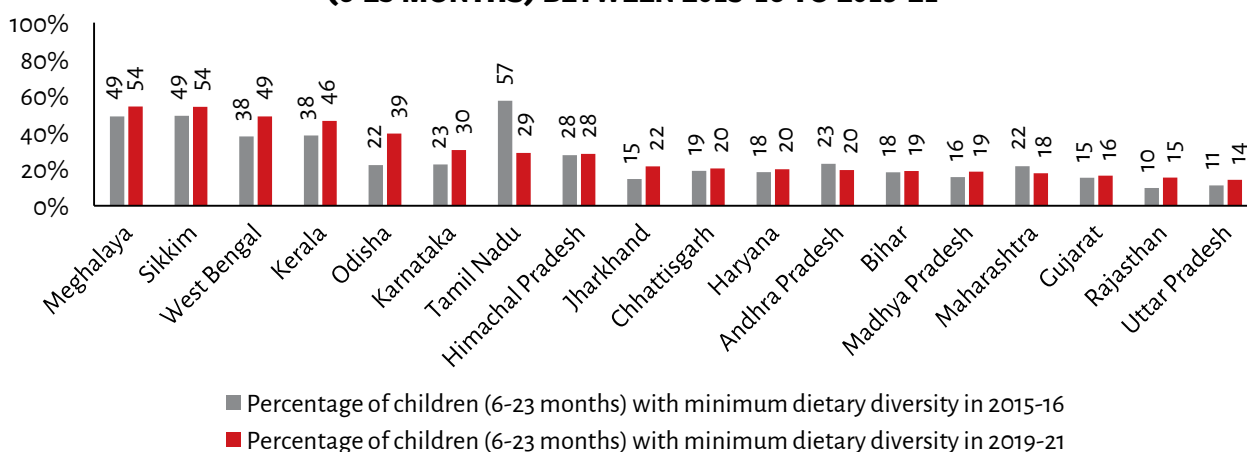
- Poshan Vatikas aim to support food and nutrition requirements of eligible citizens through kitchen and nutri-gardens in AWCs, government schools, and other government properties.
- As of September 2022, MWCD, along with the Ministry of AYUSH, had set up Poshan Vatikas in over 4.37 lakh AWCs or 31 per cent of operational AWCs.

OUTCOMES

Dietary Diversity

- Under the restructured scheme, there is an emphasis on balanced diets rather than calorie intake through THR and HCM. Data on malnutrition, dietary diversity, and related indicators are available for all states and UTs from NFHS-4 (2015-16) and NFHS-5 (2019-21). Minimum dietary diversity is defined as the consumption of at least four (out of eight) food groups such as breastmilk, legumes and nuts, dairy products, eggs, etc. In 2019-21, this criterion was fulfilled for 23 per cent of children aged 6-23 months, a 1 percentage point increase from 2015-16.
- There were state variations. In 2015-16, a greater proportion of children in Tamil Nadu (57 per cent), Sikkim (49 per cent), and Meghalaya (49 per cent) achieved minimum dietary diversity. This figure was lower in states such as Gujarat (15 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (11 per cent), and Rajasthan (10 per cent).
- In 2019-21, 54 per cent of children achieved minimum dietary diversity in Meghalaya, the highest across states and UTs. Minimum dietary diversity, however, declined substantially for children in Tamil Nadu from 2015-16. Gujarat (16 per cent), Rajasthan (15 per cent), and Uttar Pradesh (14 per cent) continued to exhibit low dietary diversity for children aged 6-23 months.

DIETARY DIVERSITY IMPROVED BY ONLY 1 PERCENTAGE POINT AMONG ALL CHILDREN (6-23 MONTHS) BETWEEN 2015-16 TO 2019-21



Source: (1) NFHS-4 India report. Available online at: <http://rchiips.org/nfhs/NFHS-4Reports/India.pdf>. (2) NFHS-5 India report. Available online at: http://rchiips.org/nfhs/factsheet_NFHS-5.shtml. Last accessed on 14 December 2022.