Mission POSHAN Abhiyaan and Mission Poshan 2.0

Mains: *GS II – Health*

Why in News?

The Poshan 2.0 has been a significant milestone in ensuring the better health and nutrition to the children and women in India.

What is POSHAN Abhiyaan?

- **POSHAN Abhiyaan** – Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment (POSHAN).
- It is India's flagship National Nutrition Mission aimed at improving nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and adolescent girls.
- **Funding mechanism** – It is a centrally sponsored scheme.
- Initially, it involved a 50:50 sharing ratio between the Center and States.
- Later modified to 60:40 for states, 90:10 for special category states, and 100% for UTs without legislatures, making it a centrally sponsored program.
- **Launched on** – 8 March 2018.
- **Approach** – It represents a paradigm shift from a welfare-oriented approach to a comprehensive, lifecycle-based strategy.
- This approach recognises nutrition as a key driver of human capital development, economic growth, and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Key goals** – The mission places special emphasis on the first 1,000 days—from conception to 2 years—as a critical window for ensuring optimal physical and cognitive development.

What is the background and policy framework?

- **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), 1975** – Provided a foundation for supplementary nutrition, health services, and early childhood care through Anganwadi Centres.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), 2017** – Introduced maternity benefits through direct cash transfers to support maternal health.
- **National Nutrition Strategy, 2017 (NITI Aayog)** – Emphasised convergence, monitoring, and community engagement.
- **POSHAN Abhiyaan, 2018** – Brought multiple ministries together under a unified framework with measurable targets.
- **Mission Poshan 2.0 (2021-22)** – Consolidated various schemes into a single integrated structure to improve efficiency and outcomes.

- This framework reflects a shift towards convergence across sectors such as health, sanitation, education, and women's empowerment.

What are the key features of POSHAN Abhiyaan?

- **Convergence Approach** – Integrates efforts of over 26 ministries and departments.
- **Lifecycle and Preventive Strategy** – Focus on maternal, infant, and adolescent nutrition.
- **Technology-Driven Monitoring** – Use of Poshan Tracker for real-time data collection.
- **Jan Andolan (People's Movement)** – Community mobilisation through campaigns like Poshan Maah and Poshan Pakhwada.
- **Targeted Interventions** – Focus on reducing stunting, wasting, anaemia, and low birth weight.
- **Focus on First 1,000 Days** – Critical period for child development.

What are the Key structural reforms in Poshan 2.0?

- **Poshan 2.0** – It is announced in the Union Budget 2021–22.
- It aims to streamline and strengthen nutrition delivery by subsuming:
  - Anganwadi Services
  - Scheme for Adolescent Girls
  - POSHAN Abhiyaan
- **Unified Framework** – Integration of multiple schemes for better coordination.
- **Improved Nutritional Norms** – Shift from calorie-centric to balanced, diverse diets rich in micronutrients.
- **Focus on Quality and Outcomes** – Emphasis on maternal nutrition, IYCF practices, and management of SAM/MAM.
- **Infrastructure Strengthening** – Upgradation of Anganwadi Centres into Saksham Anganwadis.
- **Integration of AYUSH Practices** – Promoting holistic wellness.

What are the major components of mission Poshan 2.0?

- **Nutrition Support –** Supplementary nutrition for children (6 months–6 years), pregnant women, lactating mothers, and adolescent girls as per NFSA, 2013.
- Revised norms (2023) ensure diet diversity, quality protein, healthy fats, and essential micronutrients.
- Special provisions for Severely Acute Malnourished (SAM) children, including referral to Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs).
- Community-Based Management of Malnutrition (CMAM) for children without medical complications.
- Establishment of Poshan Vatikas (nutri-gardens) to promote local, nutritious food.
- Growth monitoring, screening, and home-based care by Anganwadi Workers.
- **Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) –** Aligned with *National ECCE Policy (2013) and NEP 2020* (5+3+3+4 framework).
- Focus on play-based, activity-based learning for children aged 3–6 years.
- Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi initiative to improve ECCE quality through infrastructure and

training.
- **Capacity building**:
  - Over 41,000 State Level Master Trainers.
  - Over 10 lakh Anganwadi Workers trained.
- **Key frameworks:**
  - **Navchetana (0–3 years)** – Early stimulation through caregiver engagement.
  - **Aadharshila (3–6 years)** – Curriculum with 130+ activities based on developmental domains.
- Integration with *Poshan Tracker* for digital content delivery (videos, voice notes, PDFs).
- Introduction of *Vidyarambh ECCE certificates* for school readiness.
- Co-location of Anganwadi Centres with primary schools for smooth transition.
- **Saksham Anganwadi –** Upgradation of Anganwadi Centres with modern infrastructure:
  - LED screens, smart learning tools, water purifiers.
  - Nutri-gardens and improved facilities.
- Around 2 lakh centres sanctioned for strengthening.
- Over 2.9 lakh centres co-located with schools to ensure continuity in education.

What is the significance of the programme?

- **Human Capital Development** – Improved nutrition leads to better health, learning, and productivity.
- **Reduction in Malnutrition** – Targeted reduction in stunting, wasting, and anaemia.
- **Women Empowerment** – Focus on maternal health and nutrition.
- **Early Childhood Development** – Integration of nutrition with education enhances cognitive outcomes.
- **Community Ownership** – Jan Andolan approach ensures behavioural change.
- **Support to SDGs**: Contributes to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Health), and SDG 4 (Education).
- **Governance Innovation:**
  - **Poshan Tracker (2021) –** Real-time monitoring of over 14 lakh Anganwadi Centres and ~9 crore beneficiaries.
  - Tracks attendance, nutrition delivery, and ECCE activities.
  - **Aadhaar Integration & Facial Recognition System (FRS) –** Ensures transparency and prevents leakages.
  - **Home Visit Scheduler (2026) –** Automated scheduling of 23 structured visits for pregnant women and children (0–3 years).
  - Provides customised counselling and activity-based guidance.
- **Grievance Redressal Mechanism:**
  - Helpline (1515) available in multiple languages.
- **Recognition**:
  - Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration (2024).

What are the achievements and challenges?

- **Achievements**

    - Near real-time monitoring of service delivery.
    - Coverage of millions of beneficiaries through Anganwadi network.
    - Massive community mobilisation with over 150 crore activities under Jan Andolan.
    - Improved convergence across ministries and schemes.
    - Strengthened ECCE framework and school readiness initiatives.
- **Challenges**
    - Persistent malnutrition indicators in certain regions.
    - Implementation gaps across states due to capacity constraints.
    - Digital divide affecting effective use of Poshan Tracker in remote areas.
    - Behavioural change remains slow in areas like dietary practices and hygiene.
    - Infrastructure gaps in some Anganwadi Centres.
    - Hidden Hunger – Micronutrient deficiency despite adequate calories
    - Intergenerational Cycle of Malnutrition – Undernourished mother leds to low birth weight child leads to lifelong disadvantage.

What steps could be taken further?

- **Strengthen Last-Mile Delivery** – Focus on capacity building of Anganwadi Workers and infrastructure gaps.
- **Enhance Behavioural Change Strategies** – Deepen community engagement and awareness.
- **Leverage Technology Further** – Improve digital access and data utilisation for policy decisions.
- **Focus on Quality of Nutrition** – Ensure consistent supply of diverse and fortified foods.
- **Inter-sectoral Convergence** – Strengthen coordination across health, education, and sanitation sectors.
- **Targeted Interventions** – Focus on high-burden districts and vulnerable populations.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation** – Continuous assessment for evidence-based policy refinement.

What lies ahead?

- POSHAN Abhiyaan and its evolution into Mission Poshan 2.0 represent a comprehensive and integrated approach to tackling malnutrition in India.
- By combining nutrition, health, education, technology, and community participation, the mission lays a strong foundation for building a healthy and productive population.
- Sustained efforts in convergence, governance innovation, and behavioural change will be crucial in achieving the vision of a “Viksit Bharat” by 2047.
- Since it is a centrally sponsored scheme the success depends on the state capacity and, local governance.
- There should be competitiveness and cooperative federalism among the states.
- Nutrition is not just a health issue, but a multi-dimensional development issue.
- It is linked with poverty, gender inequality, sanitation, and food systems.

Reference

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