

# Technology for the Empowerment Women and Children

Mains Syllabus: GS II - Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

## Why in the News?

Over the last decade, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has strengthened access to nutrition, education, legal safeguards, and essential entitlements.

# How are technology used in government schemes for women empowerment?

- **Modernization of Schemes** Saksham Anganwadi initiative, designed to modernise and empower over 2 lakh Anganwadi centres across India.
- Effective Service Delivery These centres are being upgraded with smart infrastructure, digital devices, and innovative learning tools, enabling more effective delivery of nutrition, healthcare, and pre-school education services.
- **Evidence-Based Policy Interventions** The integration of services provided by 14 lakh Anganwadi centres across the nation with the Poshan Tracker has enabled real-time data entry, performance monitoring, and evidence-based policy interventions.
- Capacity Building of Anganwadi Workers By equipping Anganwadi workers with smartphones and comprehensive training, the initiative ensures quality service delivery at the last mile.
- **Reduces Leakages** Facial recognition system has been introduced in Supplementary Nutrition Programme to ensure that eligible beneficiaries alone receive nutrition support.
- Bridges Rural Urban Divide Poshan Tracker reimagines Anganwadi centres as digitally empowered community hubs that bridge the urban-rural divide.
- Ensures Safety and Support The SHe-Box portal provides single-window access to every woman to lodge complaints under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.
- **Integrates Assistance to Women** Mission Shakti dashboard and mobile app provide integrated assistance to women in distress, connecting them to the nearest one-stop centre, now operational in nearly every district.
- **Promoting Positive Reinforcement for Daughters** Under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) cash benefits are provided through direct benefit transfer.
- PMMVY is a fully digital programme leveraging Aadhaar-based authentication, mobilebased registration, doorstep assistance from Anganwadi/ASHA workers, and real-time dashboards.
- **Economic Empowerment** Government eMarket Place (GeM) enables women and self help groups to sell their products online.

#### What are the outcomes?

- **Increase in Sex Ratio at Birth** The latest reports from the Health Management Information System of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) reveal that the Sex Ratio at Birth has increased from 918 (2014-15) to 930 (2023-24).
- **Decline in Maternal Mortality Rate** It has declined to 97 per 1,000 births (2018-20) from 130 per 1,000 births (2014-16).
- **Child Protection and Welfare** Under the Juvenile Justice Act (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, the Ministry has strengthened the adoption ecosystem through the CARINGS portal (Child Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System).
- **Strengthening Supervisions** Digitisation has also improved monitoring of child care institutions, foster care placements, and statutory support structures under the Act.
- Platforms developed by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights are tracking violations of child rights.
- **Better Coordination** The Mission Vatsalya dashboard strengthens convergence and coordination among various child welfare stakeholders.

# What are the challenges in using technologies for women empowerment?

- Lack of Access to Digital Devices Women face economic constraints that limit their ability to afford smartphones, computers, or reliable internet access.
- Inadequate Digital Literacy Data from the 78th round of the National Sample Survey 78th indicates that only 21% of all women above the age of 15 having some form of digital literacy.
- This reduces their ability in harnessing benefits provided by digitalized schemes.
- **Infrastructure Limitations** Poor or non-existent infrastructure (electricity, reliable internet service) in rural or remote areas disproportionately affects women who often have less mobility to access public tech facilities.
- Online Harassment and Discrimination Women often face specific threats online, including harassment, privacy breaches, stalking, and non-consensual sharing of images, which can deter them from using digital platforms.

### What lies ahead?

- Capacity development of women through digital literacy program and hand on training can enhance their ability to directly access digital services.
- Strengthening public digital infrastructures in remote places like hilly, terrain and rural places.
- Use of advanced technologies like artificial intelligence, big data to make government schemes proactive and reduce exclusion of beneficiaries and make them inclusive.

### **References**

The Hindu | Using tech to empower women and children

