

Poshan Abhiyaan

[UPSC Notes]

What is Poshan Abhiyaan?

Poshan Abhiyaan was launched on 8 March 2018 from Jhunjhunu, the district of Rajasthan. Poshan Abhiyaan, or the National Nutrition Mission, is the Government of India's flagship program to improve nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children from 0 to 6 years of age.

The Poshan Abhiyaan scheme plays an important role in tackling malnutrition and providing cooked meals to children. This scheme replaced the national program for mid-day meals in schools or mid-day meal schemes.

Features of Poshan Abhiyaan

PM POSHAN is a centrally sponsored scheme that has been launched for a period of five years, from 2021-22 to 2025-26, with a budget of Rs 1.31 trillion.

The centre bears the entire cost of the food grains, their transportation, and management, under the scheme, but the components such as cooking costs and payment to cooks and workers are split in a 60:40 ratio with the state.

Coverage

The Poshan Abhiyaan 2021 aims to benefit about 11.80 crores and the children studying in 11.20 lakh schools in the country. Under this scheme, mid-day meals have been extended to the children of Balvatika in addition to the children studying in classes 1 to 8 in government and government-aided schools in the country.

The extension of mid-day meals to pre-primary students was a key recommendation of the National Education Policy 2020.

Vocal for Local for Atmanirbhar Bharat

PM Poshan will involve Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) and Women Self Help Groups in the implementation of the scheme to support vocal for local and to fulfill the objectives of the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

Social Audit

To check the implementation of the scheme, social audits will be made mandatory for each school in every district. It would engage University and college students to monitor the implementation of the scheme through the field visit.

Nutritional Garden

It will promote the development of nutrition gardens in the school, which will be used to provide additional micronutrients to the students. The school will also be encouraged to organize cooking competitions and design the menu on the basis of the vegetables available in local markets.

Supplementary Nutrition

The scheme has the provision for the state or district having a high prevalence of anaemia to include any supplementary item. If the state wants to include local vegetables or any other nutritional food such as milk or fruit, they can include them with the centre's approval.

Tithi Bhojan

The scheme has also included the concept of Tithi Bhojan, in which the students from the private schools will be encouraged to share their meals with the children from the marginalized section at least once a month voluntarily. Tithi bhojan is a community participation program in which people provide special food to the children on special occasions or festivals.

Nutrition Expert

A nutrition expert is to be appointed in each school whose responsibility is to regularly conduct check-ups such as - Body Mass Index (BMI), weight, hemoglobin levels, etc.

Poshan Tracker App

An App was launched to strengthen and bring transparency to nutrition delivery services. It enables real-time monitoring and tracking of all Anganwadi centres (AWC), Anganwadi workers (AWW), and beneficiaries.

5 Pillars of Poshan Abhiyaan

Poshan Abhiyaan or National Nutrition Mission has five pillars are-

Pillar-1. Poshan Abhiyaan ICDS-Common Application Software (CAS)

The Poshan Abhiyaan ICDS-CAS is a mobile-based app that assists the field workers in delivering the services and monitoring the programs at the Anganwadis across the state

and national levels. The Abhiyan also plans to use IT to enable the Call Centre to strengthen citizens' engagement in nutrition.

Pillar-2. Convergence Action Planning

This includes the development and operationalization of a Convergence Nutrition Action Plan at state, district, and block levels to promote coordinated and cross-sectoral efforts to improve nutrition outcomes.

It includes all critical line departments that contribute to nutrition outcomes, such as water and sanitation, rural development, health and family, and education.

Pillar-3. Capacity Building of Poshan Abhiyaan ICDS officials/functionaries through the Incremental Learning Approach (ILA)

Anganwadi workers are working in a capacity-building program using the existing supervisor's meetings.

Pillar-4. Jan Andolan (Behaviour Change Communication and Community Mobilisation)

This means generating the strategy to focus on developing and operationalizing mass media and community-based multi-sectoral campaigns to create awareness among the beneficiaries on key technical areas, which include antenatal care and breastfeeding, complementary feeding, growth monitoring and promotion, immunization and Vitamin A, anaemia prevention, diarrhoea management, hygiene and sanitation practices.

It also focuses on involving multiple stakeholders, including health and family welfare, drinking water and sanitation, school education, rural development, Panchayati raj institutions, and self-help groups (SHG).

Community-based events (CBEs) and prioritized home visits-

Community-based events and prioritized home visits to celebrate critical milestones in the lives of pregnant women and children under the age of two are the solutions to nutrition behavior change, as is systematically engaging husbands in the dialogue.

Pillars-5. Performance Incentives

In addition to capacity building, improving service delivery should also be planned.

National Nutrition Mission - Poshan Maah

Poshan Maah of Poshan Abhiyaan 2021 was celebrated in September. The main purpose was to create awareness about the nutritional importance among the people, and the main focus of the Poshan Maah was on social as well as behavioral change and communication, which helped to build awareness through assertive dialogue and thereby educated a lot of people in the way of communication about the nutritional importance.

- The POSHAN MAAH is mainly based on antenatal care, optimal breastfeeding, anaemia, growth monitoring, i.e. height, girls' education, diet, hygiene, sanitation, eating healthy, etc.
- Over 120 million women, 60 million men, and 130 million children were reached out for the implementation of Poshan Maah. It was a successful event and reached more than 30 crore people in just 30 days.

Targets of Poshan Abhiyaan

The Poshan Abhiyaan aims to target the following -

- Reduce stunting by 2% annually. (The target of the mission is to bring down stunting in children 0 to 6 years, from 38.4% in 2016 to 25% by 2022).
- Reduce under-nutrition by 2% annually
- Reduce anaemia by 3% annually
- Reduce low birth weight by 2% annually.

Importance of Poshan Abhiyaan

The tagline of the PM Poshan Abhiyaan is Sahi Poshan Desh Roshan, which means that this program aims to provide adequate nutrition to infants, pregnant ladies, and lactating mothers. Poshan Abhiyaan is a great scheme that helps to eradicate the micronutrient and malnutrition problems in the youth of India. It also helps in achieving the targets of sustainable development goals such as zero poverty, no hunger, good health, well-being, etc.

The POSHAN (Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition) Abhiyan directs the country's attention toward the problem of malnutrition and addresses it in a mission mode.

Need to introduce millets in Poshan Abhiyaan

Millets, which include Jowar, Bajra, and Ragi come with a good amount of nutrients including proteins, dietary fibre, B vitamins, calcium, iron, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, and copper. They are also a powerhouse of antioxidants that provide us with impressive health benefits, making them an ideal choice for improving the nutritional outcome of children. Millet also addresses issues related to national security, malnutrition, etc.

India's post-resolution to declare 2023 as the International Year of Millets has been adopted by the United Nations general assembly.

