



## Meal Scheme Hit Due to Lockdown

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### Why in News

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Due to **Covid-19** lockdown, implementation of the **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is affected** in large pockets across Maharashtra.

#### Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Programme

- The programme provides **specific interventions** targeted towards the vulnerable groups including children below 6 years and women.  
Under it, **anganwadi centres** across India serve **nutritious meals (hot cooked meals)** to children and nursing mothers.
- It is being implemented by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**.
- It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** and provides **a package of six services** namely supplementary nutrition, pre-school non-formal education, nutrition & health education, immunization, health check-up and referral services.
- About 87 lakh children aged up to 6 years are beneficiaries of the scheme, they are served by nearly 90,000 anganwadis.

### Key Points

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- Anganwadis are closed due to lockdown and the **delivery of Hot Cooked Meals (HCM) has completely halted** in some pockets.
- In some areas of the State, beneficiaries are beginning to receive grocery supplies instead of Hot Cooked Meals (HCM). However, there are wide complaints of **inadequate supplies**.
- Even, the districts where **malnutrition is a recurring problem haven't received the grocery material**.  
On 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2020, ICDS Commissionerate ordered that the HCM be replaced by grocery packages.

- Where the material (grocery packages) has arrived there are **multiple operational problems**.
  - In many villages it's **not possible to go door-to-door**, houses are far apart.
  - It is being said that the government is not providing any additional funds for gloves and masks.
  - Beneficiaries are gathering at the anganwadi, which is hampering social distancing.
- Another dilemma is that the **grocery packages will most certainly be consumed by the entire household**. Women who are pregnant or lactating, could benefit the least as they're generally the last to eat.

**Source: IE**