



## Anganwadi Services

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### Why in News

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**Right to Food Campaign** has given a memorandum to the Minister for Women and Child Development to resume **provision of hot-cooked meals and ensure implementation of anganwadi services.**

### Key Points

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- **Recommendations:**
  - The memorandum suggested that **anganwadi services** (like community-managed growth monitoring, supplementary nutrition, **immunisation**, etc.) should be delivered either within the **day care centres** or **at the houses of the beneficiaries.**
  - It also recommended a **comprehensive package of cooked food and dry rations.**
  - It also sought **protective gear for frontline health workers** such as **Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA)** and anganwadi workers.
- **Background:** Following the nationwide **lockdown** on March 25, the **Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)** implemented at anganwadis was **discontinued.**
  - It impacted nearly 14 lakh anganwadis and over 8 crore beneficiaries (children under six years and pregnant women and lactating mothers)
  - The Ministry of Women and Child Development asked State governments and Union Territories to extend **food security** allowance to each beneficiary.
  - According to the POSHAN COVID-19 Monitoring report for India compiled in June 2020, by **UNICEF, World Food Programme** and the **World Bank**, 10 of the 14 most populous States **did not conduct community management of acutely malnourished children** and **eight States were unable to measure growth parameters of children under six years.**

### Right to Food

- The Right to Food is recognized as a part of **Right to Life and Personal Liberty (Article 21)** by the **National Human Rights Commission**.
- **The Directive Principles of the State Policy in Article 39a**, requires the State to direct its policies towards securing that all its citizens have the right to an adequate means of livelihood.
- **The National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013**, gives the right to food but it is not universal.
  - It legally entitles up to **75%** of the rural population and **50%** of the urban population to receive subsidized food grains under the Targeted Public Distribution System.
- In **People's Union for Civil Liberties v. Union of India & Others** case (2001), the Supreme Court explicitly established a constitutional human **right to food** and determined a **basic nutritional floor** for India's impoverished millions.

### Anganwadi

- Anganwadi is a **centrally sponsored scheme** implemented by the States / UTs which serves as a rural child and maternal care centre in India.
- It was started by the Government of India In 1975 as part of **the Integrated Child Development Services program** to combat **child hunger and malnutrition**.
- Anganwadi centres provide a package of six services: **supplementary nutrition, pre-school non-formal education, immunisation, health check-up, nutrition and health education, and referral services**.
- The beneficiaries under the Anganwadi Services Scheme are identified on the basis of **Aadhaar**.

### Way Forward

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At a time when India is battling with Covid-19 it must take into consideration the **impact of the pandemic on children** and **higher food prices in pandemic**, and ensure accessibility to nutrition, growth monitoring and health services to every beneficiary.

**Source: TH**