



## Report on National Nutrition Mission: NITI Aayog

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### Why in News

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Recently, the **NITI Aayog** has released “**Accelerating Progress On Nutrition In India: What Will It Take**”, the third progress report on the **National Nutrition Mission** or the **Poshan Abhiyaan**.

### Key Points

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- **National Nutrition Mission:**

- **Launched in 2018**, it is the Government of India's **flagship programme** to improve nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

It is backed by a **National Nutrition Strategy** prepared by the NITI Aayog with the goal of attaining "*Kuposhan Mukh Bharat*" or **malnutrition-free India**, by **2022**.

- **Aims:**

- To reduce **stunting, undernutrition, anemia** (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and **low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively**.
- To address the problem of **malnutrition** in a mission-mode.

- **50% of the total budget** comes from the **World Bank** or other multilateral development banks and the rest of the **50% is through Centre's budgetary support**.

The Centre's budgetary support is further divided into **60:40 between the Centre and the States, 90:10 for the north-eastern region and the Himalayan States** and **100% for the Union Territories (UTs)** without legislature.

- **Prevalence:**

- More than a third of children under five suffer from stunting and wasting and 40% of children between one and four are anaemic.
- Over 50% of pregnant and non-pregnant women were found to be anaemic, according to the **National Family Health Survey-4** released in 2016.

- **About the Report:**

- The **third progress report (October 2019-April 2020)** takes stock of the **roll-out status on the ground and implementation challenges** encountered at various levels through large scale datasets.

These datasets are the NFHS-4 and **Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS)**.

- The **initial Reports I and II**, focused majorly on the **mission's preparedness and implementation** by States and UTs, respectively.
- The **review report was drafted in March 2020** and **does not factor worsening poverty and hunger levels since then**, which are expected to have gone down further due to the **Covid-19**.

- **Concerns Highlighted:**
  - On stunting, **India's targets are conservative as compared to the global target** defined by the **World Health Assembly** (WHA), which is a prevalence rate of 5% of stunting as opposed to India's goal of reducing stunting levels to 13.3% by 2022.
  - The **target of reducing prevalence levels of anaemia among pregnant women** from 50.3% in 2016 to 34.4% in 2022 and **among adolescent girls** from 52.9% in 2016 to 39.66%, is also considered to be **conservative as compared to the WHA's target of halving prevalence levels**.
  - In the wake of the **pandemic**, experts warn that **deepening poverty and hunger may delay** achieving the goals defined under the Mission.
- **Suggestions:**
  - **On Stunting:**
    - To improve complementary feeding using both behaviour change interventions and complimentary food supplements in the **Integrated Child Development Services** (ICDS).
    - To work towards investments in girls and women (education during childhood, reducing early marriage and early pregnancy, improving care during and after pregnancy) along with other social determinants.
    - To improve water, sanitation, handwashing with soap and hygienic disposal of children's stools with other effective interventions.
  - **On Wasting:**
    - To include interventions that go beyond the treatment of **severe acute malnutrition** (SAM) and also address moderate wasting, have the potential to achieve larger declines in wasting.
    - To scale-up to reach facility-based treatment of SAM to all those needing in-patient care.
    - To urgently release a full strategy for prevention and integrated management of wasting nationally.
  - **On Anaemia:**
    - To scale-up scenario that focuses only on health sector interventions which will achieve modest improvements in anaemia among women of reproductive age.

## Way Forward

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- As the National Nutrition Mission continues to play an important role in India's endeavour against malnutrition, India needs to now **accelerate actions on multiple fronts**. The projections are optimistic, and will need to be **re-adjusted for the Covid-19 disruptions** to health and nutrition services.

- There is a need to quickly graduate to a **POSHAN-plus strategy** which apart from **continued strengthening the four pillars of the mission** (Technology, Convergence, Behavioral change and Capacity building), also requires a renewed focus on other social determinants in addition to addressing the governance **challenges of the National Health Mission (NHM) and ICDS** delivery mechanisms.

**Source: TH**