



Concerns Related to Anganwadi Workers

For Prelims: [Anganwadi Services](#), [Integrated Child Development Services](#), [Centrally Sponsored Scheme](#), [Poshan tracker](#), [Accredited Social Health Activists](#), [National Rural Health Mission](#)

For Mains: Major Roles and Responsibilities of AWWs, Major Challenges Encountered by AWWs.

Source: TH

Why in News?

Anganwadi workers in Andhra Pradesh are on strike demanding better wages and benefits. The State government has invoked the **Essential Services and Maintenance Act (ESMA)**, 1971, against protesting Anganwadi workers and helpers.

- The order prohibits strikes by them for **six months in the State**, citing the impact of their ongoing indefinite strike on the [Integrated Child Development Services \(ICDS\)](#) at Anganwadi Centres.

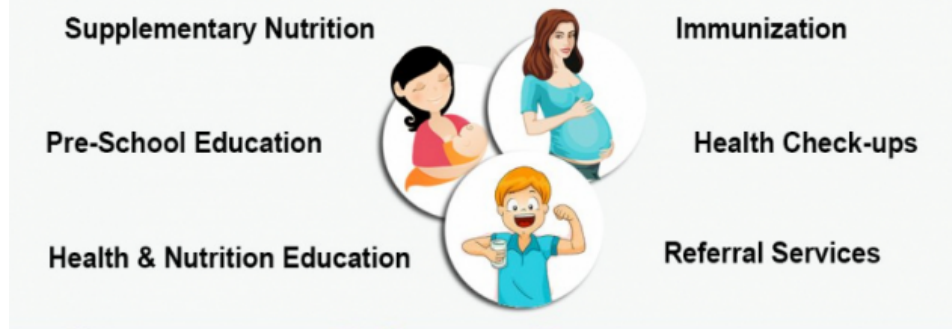
What are the Anganwadi Services and Role of Anganwadi Workers?

- **ICDS Scheme and Anganwadi:**
 - The **ICDS scheme** was launched in India on 2th October 1975. **It was renamed as Anganwadi Services and the services** are now offered as part of the **Saksham Anganwadi and [Poshan 2.0](#)**.
 - It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** implemented by the States/UTs providing early childhood care and development of the beneficiaries i.e **children in the age group of 0-6 years, pregnant women and lactating mothers** through a large network of **Anganwadi workers (AWW) and Helpers (AWH)**.
- **Services Provided by Anganwadi:**

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme



Serving Children of 0-6 years and Pregnant & Lactating Mothers



- It has been provided to all eligible beneficiaries, namely, children in the age group of 0-6 years, pregnant women and lactating mothers through the platform of Anganwadi Centres across the country.
 - Three of the services viz. **Immunization, Health Check-up and Referral Services** are related to health and are provided through **National Rural Health Mission & Public Health Infrastructure**.
- **Tracking of Anganwadi Services:** ICT platform [Poshan tracker](#) has been designed to capture real-time data on implementation and monitoring of Anganwadi Services across the country.
 - It provides a 360 - degree view of the activities of the **Anganwadi Centre (AWC)**, **service deliveries of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs)** and complete beneficiary management.
- **Major Roles and Responsibilities of AWWs:**
 - **Community Outreach and Mobilization:**
 - **Registering Beneficiaries:** Identifying and registering pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children under six years old who are eligible for ICDS services.
 - **Mobilizing Communities:** Encouraging community participation in Anganwadi activities, raising awareness about ICDS programs, and promoting healthy behaviors.
 - **Childcare and Early Childhood Education:**
 - **Managing Anganwadi Centers:** Ensuring the cleanliness and hygiene of the center, maintaining records, and preparing teaching materials.
 - **Providing Pre-school Education:** Conducting **age-appropriate play activities, storytelling sessions, and basic learning activities** to prepare children for formal schooling.
 - **Monitoring Growth and Development:** Regularly measuring **children's height and weight, identifying any developmental delays**, and referring them for further interventions if needed.
 - **Counseling Parents:** Providing guidance on childcare practices, child nutrition, and healthy habits.
 - **Health and Nutrition:**
 - **Distributing Supplementary Nutrition:** Providing **hot cooked meals, take-home rations, and [nutritional supplements](#)** to address malnutrition, especially among pregnant and lactating mothers and children under six years old.
 - **Conducting Health Check-ups:** Monitoring children's health for common illnesses, conducting basic health checkups, and referring them to health facilities if needed.
 - Also, to guide **[Accredited Social Health Activists \(ASHA\)](#)** engaged under **[National Rural Health Mission](#)** in the delivery of health care services.
- **Immunization:** Assisting healthcare personnel in organizing and facilitating immunization drives for children, ensuring timely vaccinations.
- **Raising Awareness:** Educating mothers and communities about health, hygiene,

[sanitation](#), and healthy child development practices.

What are the Major Challenges Encountered by AWWs?

- **Meagre Remuneration:** They are **not recognised government employees** and the monthly honorarium for Anganwadi workers is significantly lower than the minimum wage in many states, often falling between **Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 10,000**.
 - This makes it **difficult for them to meet their basic needs** and discourages them from dedicating their full attention to their work.
 - Delays in receiving their honorarium are also common, adding to their financial insecurity and hardship.
- **Overburdened with work and responsibilities:** Anganwadi workers are entrusted with a multitude of tasks. Also, State governments often assign them additional work like [Covid-19 related duties](#), **Census duties or implementation of govt schemes like [Ayushman Bharat](#)** without any additional monetary benefits.
 - This extensive workload often leads to burnout and hinders the quality of services they can provide.
- **Lack of Proper Training and Resources:** While Anganwadi workers undergo initial training, it often **falls short of adequately equipping them to handle the complex tasks they face daily**.
 - Additionally, Anganwadi centres frequently lack essential resources like **proper infrastructure, teaching materials, and medicines**, further hindering their ability to function effectively.
- **Lack of Social Recognition and Respect:** Anganwadi workers often face societal stigma and a **lack of recognition for their valuable contribution to the community**. This lack of respect can negatively impact their morale and motivation.

Way Forward

- **Elevated Compensation and Benefits:**
 - **Fair and timely salary** revisions aligned with cost of living.
 - Robust social security packages including **health insurance, provident fund, and maternity leave**.
- **Professional Growth and Recognition:**
 - **Dedicated career progression pathways** with promotion opportunities.
 - Regular, intensive training programs in **child development, health, nutrition, and early childhood education**.
 - Formalized qualifications and certifications acknowledging their expertise.
- **Enhanced Working Conditions and Resources:**
 - Optimal staffing levels with additional Anganwadi helpers to reduce workload.
 - **Modernised Anganwadi centers with improved infrastructure**, equipment, and learning materials.
 - Tech-enabled solutions for efficient **record-keeping, monitoring, and communication**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following are the objectives of 'National Nutrition Mission'? (2017)

1. To create awareness relating to malnutrition among pregnant women and lactating mothers.
2. To reduce the incidence of anaemia among young children, adolescent girls and women.
3. To promote the consumption of millets, coarse cereals and unpolished rice.
4. To promote the consumption of poultry eggs.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (d) 3 and 4 only

Ans: (a)

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