



## Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi

**For Prelims:** [Early Childhood Care and Education \(ECCE\)](#), [New Education Policy](#), [Integrated Child Development Services \(ICDS\)](#), [National Rural Health Mission](#), [Pulse Polio Immunization \(PPI\)](#).

**For Mains:** Role and Responsibilities of AWW, Issues Related to Anganwadi.

### Why in News?

The Union Minister for Women and Child Development introduced the government's flagship program '**Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi**', which will focus on **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)** at [anganwadis](#) across the country.

- ECCE is an important component of [Mission Saksham Anganwadi](#) and [Poshan 2.0](#) (Mission Poshan 2.0) and envisaged under the National Education Policy.

### What are the Major Highlights of the Program?

- The Ministry has allocated **Rs 600 crore for the training of Anganwadi Workers (AWW) to effectively implement ECCE.**
- The **National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD)** will provide the training for anganwadi workers.
- The objective of the program is to **transform anganwadi centers into not just nutrition hubs but also education-imparting centers.**
  - The ECCE program **will prioritize education in the mother tongue**, aligning with the principles of the [New Education Policy](#).
- Through the changes introduced by the "Poshan bhi, Padhai bhi" ECCE policy, **every child would be provided with at least two hours of high-quality pre-school instruction daily.**

### What are the Anganwadis?

- **About:**
  - **Anganwadi is a type of rural child care center** in India. It was established as part of the [Integrated Child Development Services \(ICDS\)](#) program.
  - Anganwadis play **a crucial role in providing basic health care, nutrition, and early childhood education** to children below the age of six.
    - The term "anganwadi" translates to "**courtyard shelter**".
- **Status:**
  - Close to **13.9 lakh operational Anganwadi centres across the country** are providing supplementary nutrition and early care and education to around **8 crore beneficiary children under the age of 6 years**, making it the **largest public provisioning of such services in the world.**
- **Role and Responsibilities of AWW:**
  - To organize **non-formal pre-school activities** in the anganwadi for children in the age

group **3-6 years** and to help in **designing and making of toys and play equipment of indigenous origin for use in anganwadi.**

- They serve as centers for the distribution of supplementary nutrition, such as **take-home rations or hot cooked meals, to children and pregnant/lactating women.** These provisions aim to address [malnutrition](#) and **improve overall health.**
- **To provide health and nutrition education, and counseling to breastfeeding/ Infant & young feeding practices to mothers.**
  - **AWW, being close to the locals, are expected to encourage married women to adopt family planning/birth control measures.**
- **AWWs shall share the information relating to births that took place during the month with the Panchayat Secretary/Gram Sabha Sewa whoever has been notified as Registrar/Sub Registrar of Births & Deaths in her village.**
- To guide [Accredited Social Health Activists \(ASHA\)](#) engaged under [National Rural Health Mission](#) in the delivery of health care services and maintenance of records under the ICDS Scheme.
- To identify the disability among children during her home visits and refer the case immediately to the nearest **PHC or District Disability Rehabilitation Centre.**
- To support in organizing [Pulse Polio Immunization \(PPI\) drives.](#)

▪ **Issues:**

- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Many Anganwadi centers lack **proper infrastructure, including basic amenities like toilets, clean water, and sufficient space for children to learn and play.**
  - Also, there is a shortage of trained staff, including anganwadi workers and helpers, in many Anganwadi centers.
- **Low Remuneration:** Anganwadi workers and helpers are often **inadequately compensated for their work.** Low remuneration can lead to demotivation and affect the quality of services provided. **It also hampers the recruitment and retention of skilled personnel.**
- **Limited Outreach:** In some cases, **Anganwadis fail to reach the most marginalized and remote communities,** leaving vulnerable children without access to crucial services. Inadequate transportation facilities and lack of awareness about the benefits of Anganwadis contribute to this issue.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the impact and effectiveness of Anganwadi services are **inadequate or underutilized.**
  - The **lack of robust monitoring can hinder the identification of areas** for improvement and the allocation of resources based on needs.

## Way Forward

- **Community-based Learning:** Foster community involvement by organizing local experts, retired teachers, and volunteers to conduct interactive learning sessions.
  - They can share their knowledge and skills with children through **storytelling, art and craft workshops, and practical demonstrations.**
- **Nutritional Gardening:** Promote the **establishment of small vegetable gardens at Anganwadi centers.** Children can actively participate in gardening activities, learning about nutrition and the importance of fresh, locally grown produce.
  - The harvested vegetables can be used in **preparing nutritious meals for the children.**
- **Nutrition-Focused Cooking Demonstrations:** Conduct regular cooking demonstrations for parents and caregivers, **showcasing healthy and affordable recipes using locally available ingredients.**
  - This encourages the adoption of nutritious cooking practices at home and reinforces the link between nutrition and overall development.

## 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)**

**Exp:**

- **National Nutrition Mission (POSHAN Abhiyaan) is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, GoI, which ensures convergence with various programmes like Anganwadi services, National Health Mission, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, Swachh-Bharat Mission, etc.**
- The goals of National Nutrition Mission (NNM) are to achieve improvement in nutritional status of children from 0-6 years, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers in a time bound manner during the next three years beginning 2017- 18. Hence, 1 is correct.
- NNM targets to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight of babies. Hence, 2 is correct.
- There is no such provision relating to consumption of millets, unpolished rice, coarse cereals and eggs under NNM. **Hence, 3 and 4 are not correct. Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**

**Source: IE**

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