



India's Fight Against Anemia

For Prelims: Anemia- Causes & Impact, [Anaemia Mukht Bharat](#) , [6X6X6 strategy](#), [National Family Health Survey-5](#), Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan.

For Mains: Women and Child welfare, Key Health initiatives.

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** released a progress update on the [Anemia Mukht Bharat \(AMB\)](#) campaign, highlighting India's sustained efforts to combat anemia, a major public health challenge.

What is Anemia Mukht Bharat (AMB) Campaign?

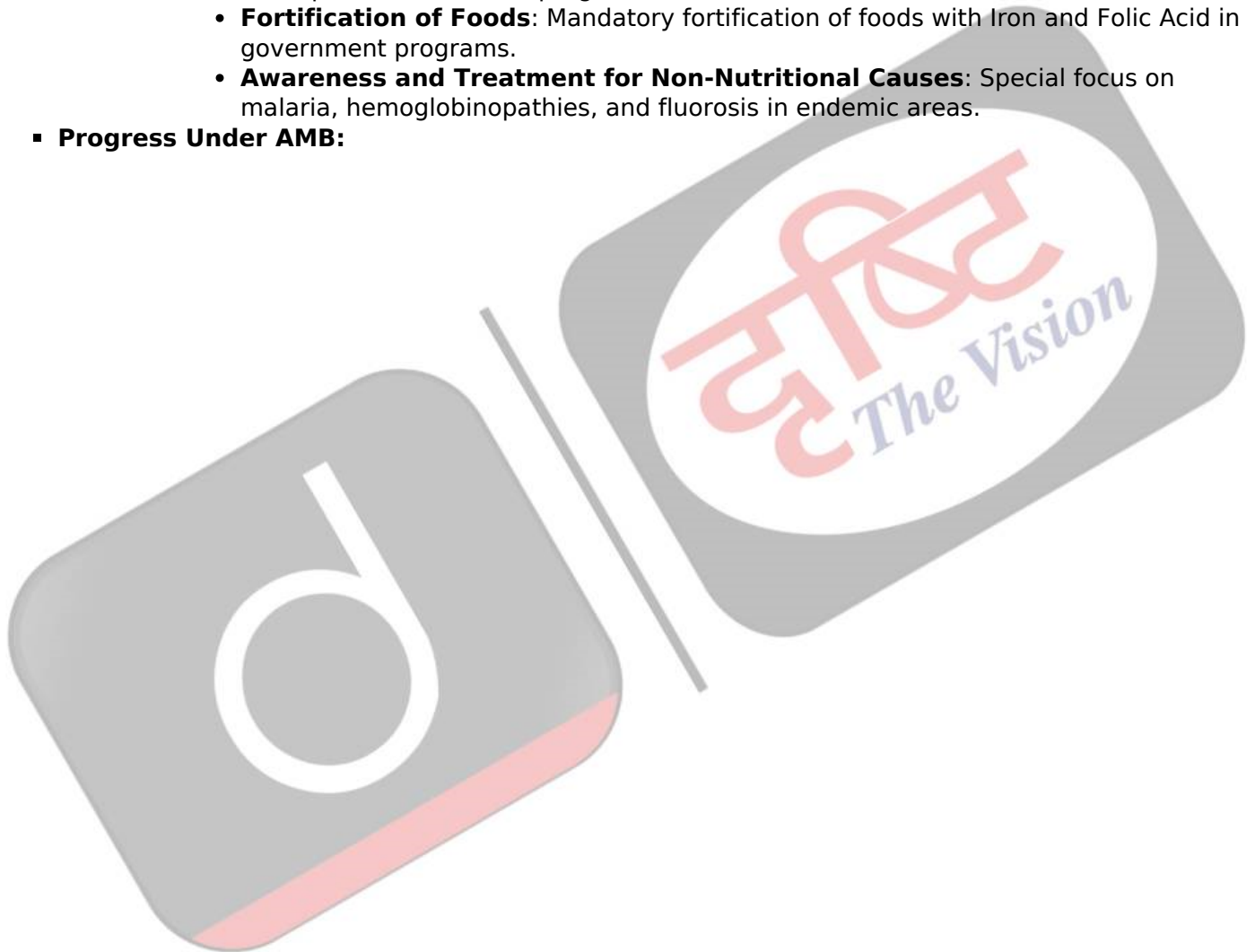
- **About:** It was **launched in 2018** with the aim to **reduce anemia through a [6x6x6 framework](#)**. It highlights major statistics from **NFHS-5**, including **67.1% of children and 59.1% of adolescent girls** being anemic.
 - The **6x6x6 framework** targets **6 vulnerable groups** with **6 key interventions** through **6 institutional mechanisms** to reduce anemia prevalence.



◦ **6 Key interventions:**

- **Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation:** Age-appropriate Iron-Folic Acid (IFA) supplements are provided, with biweekly IFA syrup for children aged 6-59 months and weekly tablets for other groups.
- **Deworming:** Biannual deworming for children and adolescents (1-19 years) and antenatal deworming for pregnant women.
- **Behavior Change Campaigns:** Year-round campaigns focusing on key behaviors to combat anemia.
- **Anemia Testing and Treatment:** Use of digital methods for anemia screening, with special attention to pregnant women and adolescents.
- **Fortification of Foods:** Mandatory fortification of foods with Iron and Folic Acid in government programs.
- **Awareness and Treatment for Non-Nutritional Causes:** Special focus on malaria, hemoglobinopathies, and fluorosis in endemic areas.

▪ **Progress Under AMB:**



Progress Highlights Under

Anemia Mukht Bharat

(FY 2024-25, Till Q2)



Children

(6–59 months)

4.7 Crore children received 8–10 doses of Iron-Folic Acid (IFA) Syrup every month.



Children

(5–9 years)

4.9 Crore children received 4–5 IFA Pink tablets monthly.



Adolescents

(10–19 years)

5.9 Crore adolescents were given *4–5 IFA Blue tablets* each month.



Pregnant Women

1.5 Crore received *180 IFA Red tablets* during *Antenatal Care (ANC)*.



Lactating Women

0.9 Crore received *180 IFA Red tablets* during *Postnatal Care (PNC)*.



Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation (WIFS)

■ 5.29 Crore adolescents (in-school boys & girls + out-of-school girls) received weekly supervised IFA tablets till November 2024.



National Deworming Day (NDD) – February 2024 Round

■ 28.09 Crore children and adolescents (1–19 years) were covered.
■ Achieved 91.05% coverage against State targets.

What is Anemia?

- **About: Anemia** is a condition primarily caused by **iron deficiency**, leading to **low hemoglobin levels** and reduced **oxygen supply to organs**, resulting in **fatigue, weakness**, and impaired physical and cognitive function.
 - According to the **WHO**, **women in the reproductive age group** and having haemoglobin levels **lower than 12 grams per decilitre (g / dL)**, as well as **children under 5** with haemoglobin levels **lower than 11.0 g / dL** are considered **anaemic**.

WAYS TO TACKLE ANAEMIA

CAUSES



Iron and nutritional deficiency
Blood loss during menstruation
Worm infections of the intestine
Chronic kidney ailments, hypothyroidism and endocrine abnormalities
Body unable to absorb iron due to medical reasons



SYMPTOMS

Weakness, fatigue, shortness of breath, giddiness, headache, Increased heart-beat, pale and dry skin and irritation in mood.

TREATMENT FOR ANAEMIA

Proper balanced diet. Vegetables rich in iron include spinach, carrots, radish, beetroots, tomatoes, potatoes and green leafy vegetables. Fruits like bananas, apples, pomegranate, sapota. Iron supplements only under medical advice. In some cases, blood transfusion.



HOW TO DIAGNOSE








- Blood tests to detect the blood components
- RBC and WBC count
- Complete Blood Picture (CBP) Test
- Bone marrow exam to find iron storage capacity of body



- **Vulnerability & Impact:** Children under 5 (especially those under 2 years), adolescent girls, menstruating women, and pregnant and postpartum women are more vulnerable.
 - Anemia causes **Impair cognitive and motor development** in infants and early children. In adults, it **decreases work capacity**. During pregnancy, it can **lead to perinatal loss, prematurity, and low birth weight babies**.
- **Extent in India and Globally:** Globally, **40% of children (6-59 months)**, **37% of pregnant women**, and **30% of non-pregnant women (15-49 years)** are affected by anemia.
 - In 2019, anemia caused a loss of 50 million years of healthy life, primarily due to **iron deficiency, thalassemia, sickle cell trait, and malaria**.

Status of Anemia in India as per the **National Health Survey – 5 (2019-2021)**

Groups	Anaemia Rate (%)
Men (15–49 years)	25%
Women (15–49 years)	57%
Adolescent boys (15–19 years)	31.1%
Adolescent girls (15–19 years)	59.1%
Pregnant women (15–49 years)	52.2%
Children (6–59 months)	67.1%

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- **WHO Response:** WHO has included anemia reduction as one of the 6 key targets in the [Global Nutrition Targets](#) and the [UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).
 - At the **2021 Nutrition for Growth Summit**, WHO committed to developing a **multisectoral framework** for anemia prevention, diagnosis, and management, alongside [UNICEF's Anaemia Action Alliance](#).
 - **WHO Global Nutrition Targets for 2025 (6 Key Goals):**
 - Reduce **stunting** in children under 5 by 40%
 - **Reduce anemia** in women of reproductive age by 50%
 - **Reduce low** birth weight by 30%
 - Reduce childhood **wasting** to below 5%
 - Increase **exclusive breastfeeding** in the first 6 months to 50%
 - Prevent childhood **obesity**.

What are India's Key Initiatives to Combat Anemia?

- [Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan \(PMSMA\)](#)

- [Health Management Information System \(HMIS\)](#)
- [Mission Utkarsh](#)
- [National Health Mission](#).
- **Mother Child Tracking System (MCTS):** This **tracks and reports cases of anemia**, especially among pregnant women.
- **Blood Bank Operations:** Strengthening blood banks in district hospitals to address severe anemia complications.





Government Initiatives to Combat Anemia in Women & Children



Nutrition-Based Interventions

- ✓ **Fortified Rice Distribution**
Supplied via Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM-POSHAN) Scheme, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme, and other welfare schemes in all states/UTs (enriched with Iron, Folic Acid, and Vitamin B12).
- ✓ **Village Health & Nutrition Days (VHSNDs)**
Monthly outreach at Anganwadi Centres for maternal and child nutrition services.

Maternal Health Schemes

- ✓ **Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN)**
Free, respectful, quality care for all women and newborns at public health facilities.
- ✓ **Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK)**
Free delivery (including C-sections), medicines, tests, diet, transport, and blood for all pregnant women.
- ✓ **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)**
Free specialist antenatal care on the 9th of every month, including anaemia screening.
- ✓ **Extended PMSMA**
Incentives for tracking and supporting high-risk pregnancies with 3 additional ANC visits.
- ✓ **Optimized Postnatal Care**
Focus on detecting danger signs post-delivery; ASHAs incentivized for referrals.

Health Infrastructure & Outreach

- ✓ **Outreach Camps**
Health services in tribal & hard-to-reach areas; focus on tracking high-risk pregnancies.
- ✓ **Strengthening Facilities**
Functional First Referral Units, blood storage, Obstetrics High Dependency Units, and Intensive Care Units in high-load hospitals.

Awareness & Education

- ✓ **Mother and Child Protection Cards (MCH) and Safe Motherhood Booklets**
These give pregnant women information on diet, danger signs, and schemes.
- ✓ **Information Education and Communication (IEC) Campaigns**
Mass & social media campaigns to promote nutrition, health practices, and service uptake.

Research Initiatives

- ✓ The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) drives nationwide, solution-oriented research on anemia through its National Health Priority Program, funding scalable interventions and informing policy to improve health outcomes.



Conclusion:

India's resolve to eliminate anemia reflects its broader commitment to inclusive and preventive public health. The **Anemia Mukh Bharat strategy** has made significant strides in reaching women, children, and adolescents through Iron-Folic Acid supplementation, deworming, etc. By focusing on the most vulnerable like girls, mothers, and young children, India is actively addressing the root causes of intergenerational malnutrition and promoting long-term human development.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the extent of the anemia burden in India and suggest effective strategies to address it, especially among vulnerable populations.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Which one of the following statements best describes the role of B cells and T cells in the human body? (2022)

- (a) They protect the body from environmental allergens.
- (b) They alleviate the body's pain and inflammation.
- (c) They act as immunosuppressants in the body.
- (d) They protect the body from the diseases caused by pathogens.

Ans: D

Q. Consider the following statements in the context of interventions being undertaken under Anaemia Mukh Bharat: (2023)

1. It provides prophylactic calcium supplementation for pre-school children, adolescents and pregnant women.
2. It runs a campaign for delayed cord clamping at the time of childbirth.
3. It provides for periodic deworming to children and adolescents.
4. It addresses non-nutritional causes of anaemia in endemic pockets with special focus on malaria, hemoglobinopathies and fluorosis.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) All four Interventions of Anaemia Mukh Bharat:

Ans: (c)

Mains

Q. Stem cell therapy is gaining popularity in India to treat a wide variety of medical conditions including Leukaemia, Thalassemia, damaged cornea and several burns. Describe briefly what stem cell therapy is

and what advantages it has over other treatments? **(2017)**

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/india-s-fight-against-anemia>

