



PMMVY Implementation Concerns

For Prelims: [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana](#), [International Labour Organization](#), [Janani Suraksha Yojana](#), [POSHAN Abhiyaan](#)

For Mains: National Food Security Act, 2013, Social security for women and maternal health in India.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Despite maternity benefits being a legal entitlement under the [National Food Security Act \(NFSA\), 2013](#), the [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana \(PMMVY\)](#) faces significant implementation challenges, leaving millions of pregnant women without essential benefits.

What is PMMVY and its Concerns?

- **PMMVY:** The **PMMVY** is **Centrally Sponsored** scheme launched in 2017 under the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**, provides maternity benefits to eligible pregnant and lactating women.
 - However, government employees and those receiving similar benefits are not eligible.
- **Objectives:** PMMVY ensures maternal nutrition, promotes institutional deliveries, supports financial stability, and encourages the birth of girl children.
- **Key Features:** Provides **financial assistance** to support maternal health and nutrition.
 - **First child:** Rs 5,000 is provided, and additional benefits under [Janani Suraksha Yojana \(JSY\)](#) ensure that women receive around **Rs 6,000** in total.
 - **Second child (only if a girl):** Rs 6,000 is given to promote **gender equality** and discourage **female feticide**.
- **Concerns:**
 - **Restricted Coverage:** The scheme violates the **NFSA, 2013**, which mandates universal maternity benefits, by limiting benefits to only the **first two children**, with the second child covered only if it is a **girl**.
 - **Budget Cuts:** In **2023-24**, the **central government allocated just Rs 870 crore** for the scheme, only one-third of what was allocated in 2019-20.
 - Covering **90% of births** at Rs 6,000 each would require at least **Rs 12,000 crore**.
 - **Poor Implementation:** The scheme's effective coverage dropped from **36% in 2019-20 to just 9% in 2023-24**.
 - **Bureaucratic and Digital Hurdles:** The scheme is plagued by [Aadhaar-based verification issues](#), complex application processes and frequent software failures, making it difficult for **poor and digitally illiterate women** to access benefits.

Note: State-specific schemes outperform PMMVY, with Tamil Nadu (84%) and Odisha (64%) achieving higher coverage than PMMVY (<10%). They offer Rs 18,000 and Rs 10,000 per child, respectively, highlighting PMMVY's inefficiency.

What are the Provisions for Maternity Benefits Under NFSA?

- **NFSA 2013:** Aims to provide **food and nutritional security** by ensuring access to affordable food grains for a large section of India's population.
 - The Act marks a shift from **welfare-based to rights-based food security**, making the [Public Distribution System \(PDS\)](#) more structured and legally binding.
- **Maternity Benefits Under the NFSA, 2013:** All pregnant women (except those in the formal sector) are entitled to **Rs 6,000 per child** as maternity benefits.
 - **Maternity benefits** help ensure **proper nutrition, healthcare, and rest** for pregnant women, which is crucial for maternal and child health.

Note: Women in the **formal sector in India receive 26 weeks of paid maternity leave**, as per the **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017**.

- Globally, 51% of countries provide maternity leave of at least 14 weeks, the standard set by the [International Labour Organization \(ILO\) Maternity Protection Convention, 2000](#).

Way Forward

- **Grassroots Implementation:** Involve [Accredited Social Health Activists, Anganwadi workers, and Panchayati Raj institutions](#) to identify and assist eligible beneficiaries.
 - Extend benefits to **low-income workers in the informal economy**, as many are outside the scope of **paid maternity leave**.
 - Extend benefits to all pregnant women, as mandated by the NFSA instead of restricting it to the first child and second child.
- **Holistic Approach:** Ensure better linkage with JSY, [POSHAN Abhiyaan](#), and state maternity schemes (state models like Tamil Nadu and Odisha) to provide comprehensive maternal care.
 - Combine cash transfers with **free nutrition kits, antenatal care, and postpartum support** for better maternal and child health outcomes.
- **Monitoring:** Conduct regular independent audits to evaluate fund utilization and beneficiary reach.
- **Remove Digital Hurdles:** Introduce **alternative identity verification** to prevent exclusion due to Aadhaar-related issues.
 - Ensure payments are credited without delays by **integrating with Jan Dhan accounts** and **removing unnecessary bureaucratic approvals**.

Drishti Mains Question:

How does the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana contradict the provisions of the National Food Security Act, 2013? Suggest measures to align the scheme with NFSA.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. In order to enhance the prospects of social development, sound and adequate health care policies are needed particularly in the fields of geriatric and maternal health care. Discuss. **(2020)**

