

6. 30% of Poshan Abhiyaan Funds used

Prelims Level: Governance- Schemes.

Mains Level: GS-II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector or Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Why in News?

- The State governments and the Union Territories utilised a mere 30% of the funds released under the Poshan Abhiyaan, or the National Nutrition Mission, since it was launched in 2017.

About POSHAN Abhiyaan:

- POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission) was launched by the government on March 8, 2018.
- It is implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- The Abhiyaan targets to reduce stunting, under nutrition, anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively.
- The target of the mission is to bring down stunting among children in the age group 0-6 years from 38.4% to 25% by 2022.
- POSHAN Abhiyaan aims to ensure service delivery and interventions by use of technology, behavioural change through convergence and lays-down specific targets to be achieved across different monitoring parameters.
- It is meant to benefit more than 10 crore people and was launched after a Cabinet decision on December 1, 2017, with a total budget of ₹9,046.17 crore for three years, 50% of which is through budgetary support, which 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 without legislature.
- The remaining 50% is from the World Bank or other multilateral development banks. As a result, the Centre's total share will be ₹2,849.54 crore.
- Under the Abhiyaan, Swasth Bharat Preraks will be deployed one in each district for coordinating with district officials and enabling fast and efficient execution of the Abhiyaan across the country.
- Swasth Bharat Preraks would function as catalyst for fast tracking the implementation of the Abhiyaan.

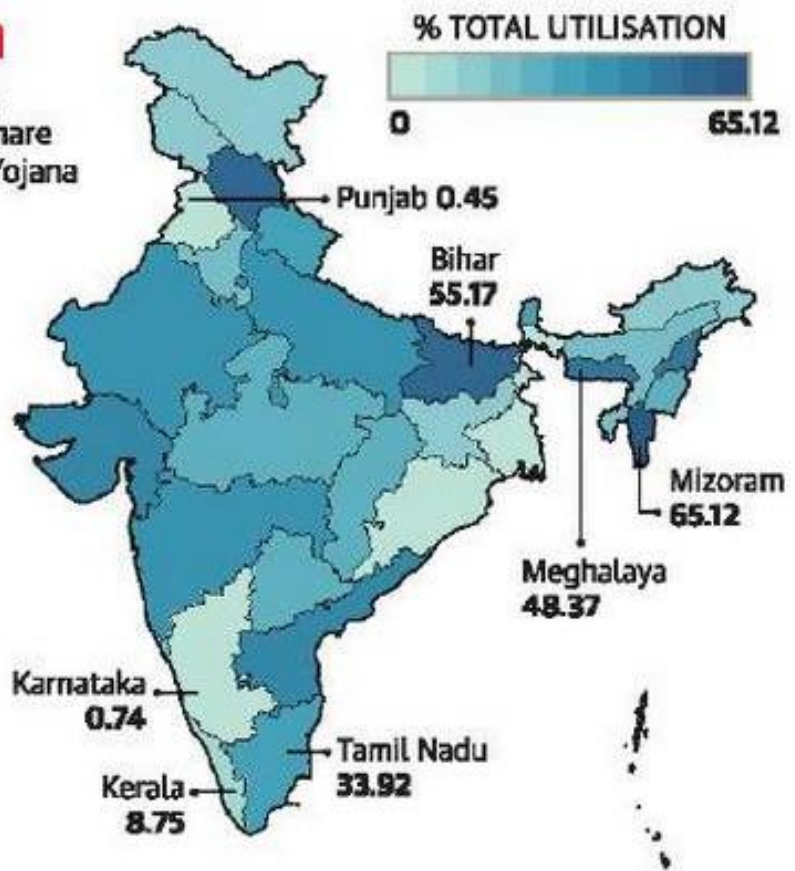
Long road to health

Between 2018 and October 31, 2019, Mizoram has utilised the maximum share of funds released under the Poshan Yojana while Punjab has utilised the least

■ The average utilisation in the country is 29.97%

■ 32 States and UTs have utilised less than half of the funds released between 2017 and October 21, 2019

■ The three States which received the most funds between 2017 and October 31, 2019, are Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar



Are the Funds Used?

- Barring Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Himachal Pradesh and Bihar, none of the governments used even half of the sum granted in the past three years, according to an analysis of the data shared in Parliament.
- According to the information given by Minister for Women and Child Development in the recent session of Parliament, a total of ₹4,283 crore was disbursed by the Centre to different States and Union Territories.
- Of this, ₹1,283.89 crore was utilised until October 31, 2019, or only 29.97% of the funds granted. Figures were not available for 2017-2018 as the scheme was launched at the end of the fiscal.

Important Stats of the Report:

- The five best performers were Mizoram (65.12%), Lakshadweep (61.08%), Bihar (55.17%), Himachal Pradesh (53.29%) and Meghalaya (48.37%).
- The worst five performers were Punjab (0.45%), Karnataka (0.74%), Kerala (8.75%), Jharkhand (13.94%) and Assam (23.01%).

- During 2019-20, funds were released for 19 States, though 12 of them had used less than a third of the funds released in the previous two years.
- The CNNS, released by the Ministry of Health and Welfare in October, showed that 35% of children under the age of 5 are stunted and in this age group, 17% are wasted (low weight for height) and 33% underweight (low weight for age).

Way Forward:

- It is, thus, expected that utilisation will increase over years. A number of activities had a slow start but are now picking up. These include the Integrated Child Development Services-Common Application Software (ICDS-CAS) meant to monitor anganwadis.
- However, given the stiff targets, translating the activities into outcomes will be critical, and that remains to be seen.

