

Government Schemes for Children in India, Launch Year, Objective

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Children constitute a vital section of India's population and are the foundation of the country's future human capital. Recognising this, the Government of India has introduced several schemes aimed at ensuring their health, nutrition, education, protection, and overall development.

These initiatives are based on constitutional provisions such as Article 21A (Right to Education), Article 24 (prohibition of child labour), Article 39(e) and 39(f) (protection and development of children), and Article 45 (early childhood care and education).

Nutrition and Health Schemes

Nutrition and health schemes for children in India aim to ensure early-life nutritional security, reduce malnutrition, and improve overall physical and cognitive development, thereby strengthening human capital formation.

Integrated Child Development Services Scheme

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme is a flagship government programme providing holistic development to children under six, pregnant women, and lactating mothers.

- **Launch Year:** 1975
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Women and Child Development
- **Type:** Centrally Sponsored Scheme
- **Aim:** To reduce malnutrition, mortality, and school dropout rates by providing six key services including supplementary nutrition and preschool education via local Anganwadi centers.

Six Core Services Provided: ICDS offers an integrated package of services delivered primarily through Anganwadi centres:

- **Supplementary Nutrition:** Providing meals and food to bridge the nutritional gap.
- **Pre-school Education:** Non-formal education for children aged 3-6 years.
- **Nutrition and Health Education:** Education for mothers and women (15-45 years).
- **Immunization:** Delivered in coordination with the health department.
- **Health Check-ups:** Regular monitoring of health status.
- **Referral Services:** Referring children or women with health issues to specialized care

ICDS has now been revised and subsumed under '**Mission Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0**'.

POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission)

POSHAN Abhiyaan is India's flagship national mission to improve nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers.

- **Launch Year:** 2018
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Women and Child Development
- **Type:** Centrally Sponsored Scheme

Objectives:

- Prevent and reduce Stunting in children (0- 6 years)
- Prevent and reduce under-nutrition (underweight prevalence) in children (0-6 years)
- Reduce the prevalence of anemia among young Children(6-59 months)
- Reduce the prevalence of anemia among Women and Adolescent Girls in the age group of 15-49 years
- Reduce Low Birth Weight (LBW)

Mission Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0

Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 is an Integrated Nutrition Support Programme. It is a restructured scheme consisting of the following sub-schemes ICDS, POSHAN Abhiyaan, Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG) and National Creche Scheme.

- **Launch Year:** The scheme has been approved by the Government of India for implementation during the 15th Finance Commission period 2021-22 to 2025-26.

- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Women and Child Development
- **Aim:** To address the challenges of malnutrition in children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers through a strategic shift in nutrition content and delivery and by creation of a convergent eco-system to develop and promote practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity.

Objectives

- To improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age-group 0-6 years
- To lay the foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child
- To reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school dropout
- To achieve effective co-ordination of policy and implementation amongst the various departments to promote child development

PM POSHAN Scheme (formerly Mid-Day Meal Scheme)

It provides nutritional meals to each and every child of Bal Vatika (pre-primary or before class I) and the children studying in classes I to VIII.

- **Original Launch Year:** 1995 (Mid-Day Meal Scheme)
- **Renamed Year:** 2021
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Education

The **main objectives of the PM POSHAN Scheme** are to tackle two of the important issues for majority of children in India, hunger, and education, by:

- Improving the nutritional status of eligible children in Government and Government aided schools.
- Encouraging the poor children, coming from the disadvantaged sections, to attend school more regularly and help them concentrate on classroom activities.
- Providing nutritional support to the children of the elementary stage in drought-affected during summers as well as disaster affected areas.

Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram

Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) is a program to improve the overall quality of life of children and provide comprehensive care to all the children in the community.

- **Launch Year:** launched in February, 2013 under National Rural Health Mission.
- This program involves screening of children from birth to 18 years of age for four Ds- Defects at birth, Diseases, Deficiencies and Development delays, spanning 32 common health conditions for early detection and free treatment and management, including surgeries at tertiary level.
- Children diagnosed with identified health conditions are provided early intervention services and follow-up care at the district level.
- The establishment of the District Early Intervention Centre (DEIC) is also one of the components of the RBSK.
- The programme is monitored through the Health Management Information System of NHM and periodic visits to the states by central and state level teams.

Education-Focused Schemes

Education-focused schemes for children in India aim to ensure universal access to quality schooling, foundational learning, and inclusive development, in line with the Right to Education and the National Education Policy 2020.

Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009

A landmark legislation making education a fundamental right for children aged 6–14 years.

- Mandates 25% reservation in private schools for disadvantaged groups
- Ensures free and compulsory education
- Establishes norms for teacher-student ratio and infrastructure

Samagra Shiksha Scheme

The Samagra Shiksha scheme is an integrated scheme for school education covering the entire gamut from pre-school to class XII.

- **Launch Year:** 2018
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Education
- **Aim:** To ensure that all children have access to quality education in an equitable and inclusive classroom environment which takes care of their diverse background, multilingual needs, different academic abilities and make them active participants in the learning process.

Objectives:

- Implementing the recommendation of NEP 2020;
- Supporting States & UTs in implementing RTE Act, 2009;
- Focus on Early Childhood Care and Education;
- Emphasis on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy;
- Thrust on Holistic, Integrated, Inclusive and activity based Curriculum and Pedagogy;
- Provision of quality education and enhancing learning outcomes of students;
- Bridging Social and Gender Gaps in School Education;
- Ensuring equity and inclusion at all levels of school education;
- Strengthening and up-gradation of SCERTs/SIE and DIETs;
- Ensuring safe, secure and conducive learning environment and minimum standards in schooling provisions;
- Promoting vocationalisation of education

NIPUN Bharat Mission

- Launch Year: 2021
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Education

Objectives and Features:

- To ensure foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3

- To strengthen early learning outcomes in primary education
- To improve reading, writing, and basic arithmetic skills
- To support competency-based learning at foundational level

PM SHRI Schools (2022)

- **Launch year:** 2022
- **Type:** Centrally Sponsored Schemes
- **Implementation Tenure:** Five years, from 2022-23 to 2026-27.
- **Aim:** To upgrade over 14,500 existing schools to serve as model institutions showcasing the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Key Features of PM SHRI Schools: PM SHRI Schools are model schools under NEP 2020 with focus on:

- Smart infrastructure: smart classrooms, computer labs, science labs, Atal Tinkering Labs
- Competency-based learning with real-life application of knowledge
- Green initiatives like solar energy, water conservation, and waste management
- Experiential, inquiry-based, and learner-centred teaching methods

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)

- **Launch year:** 1997-98
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Tribal Affairs
- **Aim:** To provide free, quality residential education to Scheduled Tribe (ST) children from Class VI to XII in remote areas. The schools focus not only on academic education but on the all-round development of the students.
- **Objective:** To bridge the educational gap between tribal and non-tribal populations by offering CBSE-based instruction integrated with holistic development, including sports, culture, and skill training.
- **Target Population:** Blocks with >50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons
- **Management:** Managed by the National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS).

Girl Child Empowerment Schemes

Girl child empowerment in India focuses on improving survival, education, and financial security of girls through targeted government schemes and social interventions.

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao

- **Launch year:** 2015
- **Nodal Ministry:** It is a national initiative run jointly by the Ministry of Women & Child Development (MoWCD), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoH&FW) and Ministry of Human Resources Development (MoHRD)
- **Aim:** To address the declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR), prevent gender-biased sex-selective elimination and promote the survival, protection and education of the girl child.

Objectives:

- Improve the child sex ratio
- Ensure gender equality and women empowerment
- Prevent gender-biased, sex selective elimination
- Ensure survival and protection of the girl child
- Encourage education and participation of the girl child

The scheme is divided into three components -

1. Advocacy campaigns were launched to address the issue of declining CSR and SBR; (2)
2. Multi-sectoral interventions were planned and are being implemented in gender-critical districts across the country; and
3. A financial incentive-linked scheme—Sukanya Samriddhi scheme—was launched to encourage parents to build a fund for female children.

Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana Scheme (SSY)

The Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY) is a small deposit-saving scheme targeted at parents of girl children. It offers parents the option to open a savings account per girl child (under the age of 10 years) and allows parents to make deposits in the account for a period of 15 years. The girls can commence account operations at the age of 10 years and have the option of making withdrawals at the age of 18. The goal of this scheme is to challenge the burden mindset of parents and offer financial security to female children.

- **Launch year:** Launched in 2015 as part of the “**Beti Bachao Beti Padhao**” campaign.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs).

Key Features:

- **Eligibility:** Parents or legal guardians can open an account for a girl child before she turns 10 years old.
- **Account Limit:** Only one account per girl child is permitted, with a maximum of two accounts allowed per family (three in case of twins/triplets).
- **Investment Tenure:** Deposits are required for 15 years from the date of opening, although the account matures after 21 years.
- **Minimum/Maximum Deposit:** Minimum ₹250 up to a maximum of ₹1.5 lakh per financial year.
- **Interest Rate:** The government sets the interest rate quarterly, which is currently 8.2% per annum.
- **Tax Benefits:** Deposits, interest earned, and maturity proceeds are tax-exempt under Section 80C and Section 10 of the Income Tax Act.
- **Withdrawal/Closure:** Partial withdrawal up to 50% is allowed for higher education after the girl turns 18. The account can be closed after marriage if she is 18 or older, or upon turning 21.
- **Where to Open:** Accounts can be opened at any India Post office or authorized commercial bank branches

Child Protection and Welfare Schemes

Child protection in India is based on a rights-based framework, aiming to ensure safety, rehabilitation, and rehabilitation of children in vulnerable situations. These schemes are primarily implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in coordination with other stakeholders.

Mission Vatsalya (2022)

Mission Vatsalya is a centrally sponsored scheme that replaced and restructured the earlier Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS).

Key Features:

- Strengthens child protection services at district and state levels
- Focus on prevention, rescue, protection, and rehabilitation of children in need of care and protection
- Provides both institutional care (Child Care Institutions) and non-institutional care (foster care, sponsorship, adoption)
- Establishes a structured framework for Juvenile Justice system implementation

CHILDLINE 1098

CHILDLINE 1098 is a 24×7 emergency outreach helpline service for children in distress.

Key Features:

- Operates under the Ministry of Women and Child Development
- Provides immediate assistance to children facing abuse, exploitation, trafficking, neglect, or abandonment
- Enables rescue and linkage to rehabilitation services through coordination with police, hospitals, and Child Welfare Committees

PENCIL Portal

PENCIL Portal (Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labour) is a national online platform to support the elimination of child labour.

Key Features:

- Facilitates real-time monitoring and reporting of child labour cases
- Connects district administrations, NGOs, and citizens on a single platform
- Supports enforcement of the National Child Labour Project and related legal provisions
- Promotes transparency and accountability in child labour eradication efforts

Bal Swaraj Portal (NCPCR)

Bal Swaraj Portal is developed by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) to track children in need of care and protection.

Key Features:

- Tracks rescue, rehabilitation, and restoration of children
- Maintains a database of children in Child Care Institutions (CCIs)
- Helps monitor post-rescue care, education, and reintegration into society
- Strengthens data-driven child protection governance

PM CARES for Children (2021)

PM CARES for Children was launched to support children who lost both parents or legal guardians due to COVID-19.

Key Features:

- Provides financial assistance for education and livelihood support
- Covers health insurance under Ayushman Bharat scheme
- Monthly stipend support during minority period
- A corpus fund is created for each child, accessible at the age of 18 years
- Aims to ensure long-term rehabilitation and social security

Child Labour Eradication Initiatives

Child labour eradication in India is pursued through a comprehensive framework combining rehabilitation-based schemes, coordinated rescue operations, and international labour standards, aimed at ensuring both prevention and reintegration of affected children.

National Child Labour Project (NCLP)

National Child Labour Project was earlier a dedicated scheme for rehabilitation but has now been integrated under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (since 2021).

- Establishes Special Training Centres (STCs) for rescued children (9–14 years)
- Provides bridge education, vocational training, and nutrition support
- Aims to mainstream children into formal schooling system
- Ensures holistic rehabilitation through education-based integration

Operation Muskaan / Operation Smile

These are time-bound rescue operations led by the Ministry of Home Affairs in coordination with state police.

- Focus on rescuing missing, trafficked, and exploited children
- Often conducted as nationwide drives
- Ensures immediate protection and linkage to child welfare services

International Commitments

India has aligned its child labour framework with global standards through ratification of key ILO conventions:

- **ILO Convention No. 138:** Sets minimum age for employment

- **ILO Convention No. 182:** Prohibits worst forms of child labour, including slavery, trafficking, and hazardous work

These commitments strengthen India's global accountability and policy convergence.

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