



DAILY EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

TOPIC

**USING TECH TO EMPOWER WOMEN
AND CHILDREN**

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USING TECH TO EMPOWER WOMEN AND CHILDREN

In Context

- The editorial highlights the significant role of technology in integrating and empowering various initiatives under the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) in India.
 - ♦ This digital transformation aligns with the government's vision of a “**digitally empowered India**” and the broader goal of “**Viksit Bharat@2047**”.

Key Dimensions of the Transformation

- **Digital Public Infrastructure and Real-Time Governance:**
 - ♦ The **Poshan Tracker** enables real-time data entry, performance monitoring, and evidence-based policy interventions across Anganwadi centres, streamlining record-keeping and reducing manual errors.
 - ♦ **Anganwadi workers** are equipped with smartphones and trained in digital tools, ensuring last-mile delivery and monitoring of services.
- **Modernisation of Anganwadi Centres:**
 - ♦ The **Saksham Anganwadi initiative** aims to upgrade over 2 lakh centres with smart infrastructure and digital devices, enhancing the quality of nutrition, healthcare, and pre-school education.
- **Targeted Welfare and Financial Inclusion:**
 - ♦ **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)** uses a fully digital, Aadhaar-based system for registration and benefit transfers, ensuring transparency and reducing leakages.
 - ♦ The use of facial recognition in the Supplementary Nutrition Programme further minimises the risk of ineligible beneficiaries receiving support.
- **Women's Safety and Legal Empowerment:**
 - ♦ **SHe-Box portal** provides a single-window online platform for lodging and tracking complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace, ensuring timely redressal.
 - ♦ **Mission Shakti** dashboard and app connect women in distress to the nearest support centre, integrating assistance and improving response times.
- **Child Protection and Adoption Ecosystem:**
 - ♦ The **CARINGS portal** streamlines and digitises the adoption process, making it more transparent and accessible.
 - ♦ Mission Vatsalya dashboard and platforms by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights enable better monitoring of child care institutions and rights violations.
- **Tangible Outcomes:**
 - ♦ Sex Ratio at Birth improved from 918 (2014-15) to 930 (2023-24).
 - ♦ Maternal Mortality Rate declined from 130 (2014-16) to 97 per 1,000 births (2018-20).
 - ♦ Over 10.14 crore beneficiaries (pregnant women, lactating mothers, children under six, adolescent girls) are registered on the Poshan Tracker.

Strengths

- **Transparency and Accountability:** Digital systems reduce corruption and leakages by enabling direct benefit transfers and real-time monitoring.
- **Inclusivity:** Technology bridges the urban-rural divide, ensuring that even remote populations have access to government services.
- **Empowerment:** Women and children are not just recipients but are positioned as potential leaders and change-makers.

Challenges

- **Digital Literacy:** Older Anganwadi workers may struggle with new technology, preferring traditional record-keeping methods.
- **Language Barriers:** Software interfaces often default to English, which may not be accessible for all frontline workers.

- **Technical Limitations:** Issues like lack of auto-update or delete options in the Poshan Tracker can hinder data accuracy and correction.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Reliable internet and electricity are still inconsistent in some rural areas.

Way Forward

- **Capacity Building:** Continuous training for Anganwadi workers in local languages.
- **User-Centric Design:** Customising digital tools to be more intuitive and regionally adaptable.
- **Infrastructure Investment:** Ensuring robust digital and physical infrastructure in rural areas.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Regularly updating digital platforms based on user feedback from the ground.

Source: TH

Mains Practice Question

[Q] Discuss how the integration of digital technology in the Ministry of Women and Child Development's programmes has transformed service delivery and empowerment outcomes for women and children in India.

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