On the Poshan Tracker

> **Source**: This post is based on an article titled "Mother, child and the Poshan Tracker," which was published in The Indian Express on November 6, 2023.
>
> **UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2 - Social Justice – Issues relating to poverty and hunger.
>
> **News Summary:** The article explores the notable features and significance of the Poshan Tracker, a pioneering initiative in the field of nutrition monitoring. It also addresses the challenges that must be addressed to ensure its effectiveness and provides suggestions for overcoming these challenges.

Q1. How does the Poshan Tracker, an extensive mobile-phone nutrition monitoring system, contribute to enhancing transparency and accountability in nutrition service delivery, and what are the key challenges associated with its implementation?

The Poshan Tracker: Revolutionizing Nutrition Monitoring

Introduction: The Poshan Tracker signifies a significant leap in the realm of global health, being the most extensive mobile-phone nutrition monitoring system ever launched. Developed as part of the Poshan 2.0 guidelines, it is an ICT-enabled platform aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability in delivering nutrition services.

Key Features:

Last-mile Delivery: The Poshan Tracker plays a vital role in ensuring the efficient delivery of nutritional services.

Real-time Feedback: By establishing a real-time feedback loop for frontline workers, it enhances their ability to prevent malnutrition by targeting and monitoring ICDS services more effectively.

Precursor for Investments: It paves the way for targeted investments in healthcare for women and children, thereby contributing to their well-being.

Significance of the Poshan Tracker:

Universal Uptake: The application is widely adopted by Anganwadi workers across all states and union territories.

Massive Scale: With over 50% of the country's children being monitored in real-time and 94% of beneficiaries Aadhar verified, the Poshan Tracker operates on a massive scale.

Holistic Coverage: The Poshan Tracker captures a broader range of indicators, including Anganwadi infrastructure, beneficiaries of take-home rations and hot cooked meals, and nutritional outcomes.

Granularity: The system provides highly detailed data, addressing variations in malnutrition rates by offering household-level insights.

Enhanced Utilization: It ensures that beneficiary-specific data is available for local decision-makers in real-time.

Accuracy: The app automatically calculates nutritional levels based on WHO growth charts, reducing manual calculation errors.

Timeliness: By eliminating paper-based reporting, it enables the real-time transmission of data, facilitating quicker retrieval and analysis.

Challenges Associated with the Poshan Tracker:

Data Quality: Concerns regarding data quality pose a significant obstacle to using nutrition monitoring data for informed policies.

Limited Window of Data Utilization: Policy-makers typically prioritize more recent data, placing less value on information that is 3-5 years old.

Recommended Actions:

Feedback Mechanisms: The Poshan Tracker should be updated based on feedback from Anganwadi workers, ensuring that it remains user-friendly.

Skill-building and Technical Assistance: To sustain this monitoring system, investments in skill-building and technical support are essential.

Investments in Service Delivery: Adequate investments in delivering essential services must accompany efforts to combat malnutrition effectively.

On Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

News: The article focuses on the global commitment to address the issue of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) during India's G20 presidency. It emphasizes the importance of research, prevention, and equitable access to treatments in the fight against AMR. The article underlines the need for both global and local actions, including enhanced surveillance, responsible use of antibiotics, and international collaboration.

Q2. What are the implications of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), and what initiatives and international agreements are being employed to combat this global health threat, with a specific focus on India's role and strategies in addressing AMR?

Implications of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR):

High Mortality: AMR is responsible for approximately 4.95 million deaths each year.

Health Threat: It poses a significant challenge to the treatment of infectious diseases, cancer care, and transplant success due to the increased difficulty in managing infections resistant to antibiotics.

Initiatives to Address AMR:

National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (2017-21): This plan emphasizes the role of sanitation initiatives like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in indirectly reducing the need for antibiotics by preventing infections.

The National Health Policy 2017: It provides specific guidelines for the responsible use of antibiotics, including restrictions on over-the-counter sales and limitations on antibiotic usage in livestock to control the misuse and overuse of antibiotics.

Adoption of the Muscat Manifesto: The manifesto highlights the need for enhanced political commitment to implementing One Health actions to control AMR. India has pledged to reduce antimicrobial usage in agriculture by up to 50% by 2030 and stop using medically important antimicrobials in animals and food production.

Reporting to WHO GLASS: India is strengthening the engagement of its private sector in reporting antimicrobial use and resistance to the WHO Global Antimicrobial Resistance and Use Surveillance System (GLASS).

Delhi Declaration and Its Role in Tackling AMR:

The Delhi Declaration is an agreement among countries during India's G20 presidency, focusing on strengthening health systems to address health challenges, including AMR. It will aid in tackling AMR by:

Unified Approach: Committing to the One Health approach, which is essential for addressing the complex issue of AMR and enhancing pandemic preparedness.

Prioritizing AMR: Aiming to reduce the estimated 4.95 million deaths associated with AMR, which is comparable to diseases like HIV/AIDS.

Supporting Low-Income Countries: Striving to provide equitable access to medical resources, especially for countries with higher AMR death rates, such as those in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Implementing National Action Plans: Encouraging the adoption and implementation of National Action Plans, drawing from India's efforts like the NAP-AMR for research and surveillance.

International Collaboration and Funding: Proposing an international funding mechanism for AMR research and development and advocating patent reforms to make treatments more affordable.

Actions to Combat AMR:

Reform Antibiotic Patents: Explore patent reforms that balance innovation and affordability of new antibiotics, considering models like the Medicines Patent Pool.

Engage Academia and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs): Involve academic institutions and civil organizations in research, education, and policy advocacy for AMR containment.

Support Global Health Infrastructure: Commit to ensuring equitable access to medical resources in Low- and Middle-Income Countries, acknowledging the shared risks posed by AMR.

Public Education: Increase public awareness about the risks associated with the overuse of antibiotics.