



Clarification regarding cash transfers and Aadhaar card requirements under ICDS

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Reports have appeared in some newspapers and media channels regarding Cash transfers under the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme) Scheme of the Ministry of Women & Child Development and making Aadhaar mandatory for benefits under the programme. It has also been reported that for children aged up to six years, Government has decided to replace the provision of dry ration under ICDS with cash transfers. However, this is factually incorrect. It is therefore, clarified that:

- Under ICDS, Supplementary Nutrition is provided in the form of Take Home Ration (THR) to children 6-36 months' age group (including malnourished children) and Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers. But for children between 3-6 years age group, Hot Cooked Meal is provided at the Anganwadi Centres. The Hot Cooked Meals will continue for the age group of 3 to 6 years. However, there is no plan at present to substitute this with cash transfers.
- There have also been complaints about the quality of Take Home Rations (THR). Therefore, the Government is considering ways to improve the system and to make it more transparent. It is also exploring the possibility of Conditional Cash Transfer in lieu of THR in select districts as a pilot as one of the options. However, a final decision is yet to be taken in this regard.
- Under Section 39 of the National Food Security Act, 2013, MWCD is mandated to notify the Supplementary Nutrition (Under ICDS) Rules. These Rules were framed and notified for the first time on 08.06.2015. Under Section 8 of the NFSA, a beneficiary is entitled to Food Security Allowance if he/she is not provided the food under the NFSA. This clause relating to Food Security Allowance has now been incorporated in the SNP Rules which were notified on 20.02.2017. Payment of Food Security Allowance is mandated by the NFSA, 2013 and it has nothing to do with the Conditional Cash Transfer in lieu of SNP.

No one to be deprived of benefits under ICDS for lack of Aadhaar

- Considering the effectiveness of Aadhaar in curbing leakages and bringing transparency in delivery system, the Government has recently issued orders to use Aadhaar in several welfare schemes funded from the Consolidated Fund of India.
- While these orders require beneficiaries of these programs to give their Aadhaar number, it has also been ensured that no one is deprived of the benefits for want of Aadhaar. It has been made incumbent on the departments under Regulation 12 of Aadhaar (Enrolment and Update) Regulations 2016 to provide Aadhaar enrolment facilities to their beneficiaries so that no one is deprived of the benefits for lack of Aadhaar.
- For children upto age of six years, Birth Certificate or any of the specified documents such as production of request for enrolment under Aadhaar or slip issued thereof, Bank pass book, Voter ID card, Ration Card, Kisan photo pass book, Pan card, MGNREGS job card, etc. can be produced as proof of relationship of child with the parent/legal guardian, etc.
- It has also been provided that till Aadhaar number is assigned to such individual, the benefit will continue to be given based on alternate means of identification. For example, under the Integrated Child Development Scheme, the Anganwadis have been asked to collect the Aadhaar number of the children beneficiaries and in case a child does not have Aadhaar, the ICDS functionary will be required to provide enrolment facilities to her and till Aadhaar number is assigned to her, the benefits will be continued to be given to her.

In a large number of cases filed by different parties including Government of Maharashtra before the Hon'ble Supreme Court, on 03.03.2017, the Attorney General stated that the policy of the Government would be covered in the affidavit for which he has sought time.

NB/UD

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