

INTERNSHIP REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION

As part of my dissertation, during my internship at NITI Aayog, I was fortunate to work within the Women and Child Development vertical, where I focused my efforts on the crucial issue of nutrition, with a particular emphasis on addressing the widespread problem of anaemia. This report provides a comprehensive overview of my experiences, the objectives I aimed to achieve, the organizational profile of NITI Aayog and its Women and Child Development division, the key services and initiatives they provide, the specific activities and projects I was involved in, and the valuable insights and learnings I gained throughout this enriching and impactful internship experience.

2. OBJECTIVES OF INTERNSHIP

The primary objectives of my internship during my tenure at NITI Aayog were:

- Assess the effectiveness of behaviour change communication strategies aimed at reducing the prevalence of anaemia in India
- Conduct day-to-day activities involving:
 - ❖ Data analysis related to Anaemia
 - ❖ Creation of graphs and charts on anaemia-related data
 - ❖ Updating state-level data on Anganwadi centres, water availability, and sanitation facilities

3. ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

- **ABOUT**

NITI Aayog, the National Institution for Transforming India, is the premier policy think tank of the Indian government. Established in 2015, it replaced the erstwhile Planning Commission with the aim of fostering cooperative federalism and providing a collaborative platform for the central and state governments to work towards the country's development.

Chaired by the Prime Minister, NITI Aayog's composition includes the Chief Ministers of all states, Lt. Governors of Union Territories, and eminent experts from various fields. Its key objectives are to formulate policies and programs for the effective implementation of the national development agenda, promote the active participation of states, and provide strategic and long-term policy frameworks.

At the heart of NITI Aayog's mission is the idea of cooperative and competitive federalism. The think tank encourages states to work together, share best practices, and learn from one another. But it also fosters a healthy sense of competition, where states are motivated to outperform each other in terms of development outcomes.

The scope of NITI Aayog's work is truly impressive. From healthcare and education to agriculture and technology, the institution has its fingers in every pie. It acts as a knowledge hub, generating cutting-edge research and evidence-based insights to guide policymaking. And through its flagship "Aspirational Districts" program, it's working tirelessly to uplift India's most underdeveloped regions.

But NITI Aayog is more than just a think tank – it's a catalyst for change. The institution's extensive partnerships with international organizations, research institutions, and private sector entities allow it to leverage global best practices and mobilize resources for its transformative initiatives.

My internship experience with was under the Women & Child Development wing of this esteemed organisation and this was an amazing opportunity for me at such an early stage in my career.

- **VISION - Women & Child Development Vertical**

The vision of the Women and Child Development (WCD) Division is to provide policy inputs for gender empowerment and improve the nutritional outcomes of women and children. The Division designs strategic and long-term policy and programme frameworks and initiatives for improving the nutrition of women and children, and monitors their progress and their efficacy. It provides advice and encourages partnerships between key stakeholders and international and national think tanks, educational and policy-research institutions. The Division also maintains a state-of-the-art resource centre on nutrition.

- **Projects undertaken by Women & Child Development wing**

- Piloting models on delivering health services in an integrated manner in urban areas using PPP model
- Development of National Gender Index
- Intensified nutrition strategy in high-burden districts
- Improving dietary diversity by introducing Nutri-cereals in diets
- Developing Himachal Pradesh's action plan to combat malnutrition
- Intervention package for early childhood care and creche
- Develop behaviourally informed narratives to promote health and nutrition
- Disseminate behaviour-change narratives through the Poshan Gyan platform to reach partners, frontline workers and end-users
- Research and design interventions to improve health- and nutrition-related behaviours
- Strategy paper on how to leverage behaviour science for social development
- Nutri-garden project in three Aspirational Districts

- **Upcoming Projects of Women & Child Development wing**

- Assessment of existing geriatric wellness programmes and development of a special programme for elderly healthcare.
- Analysis of the impact of girl education promotion measures in different states on the improvement of the age of marriage

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE OF NITI AAYOG (as of 08/06/2023)

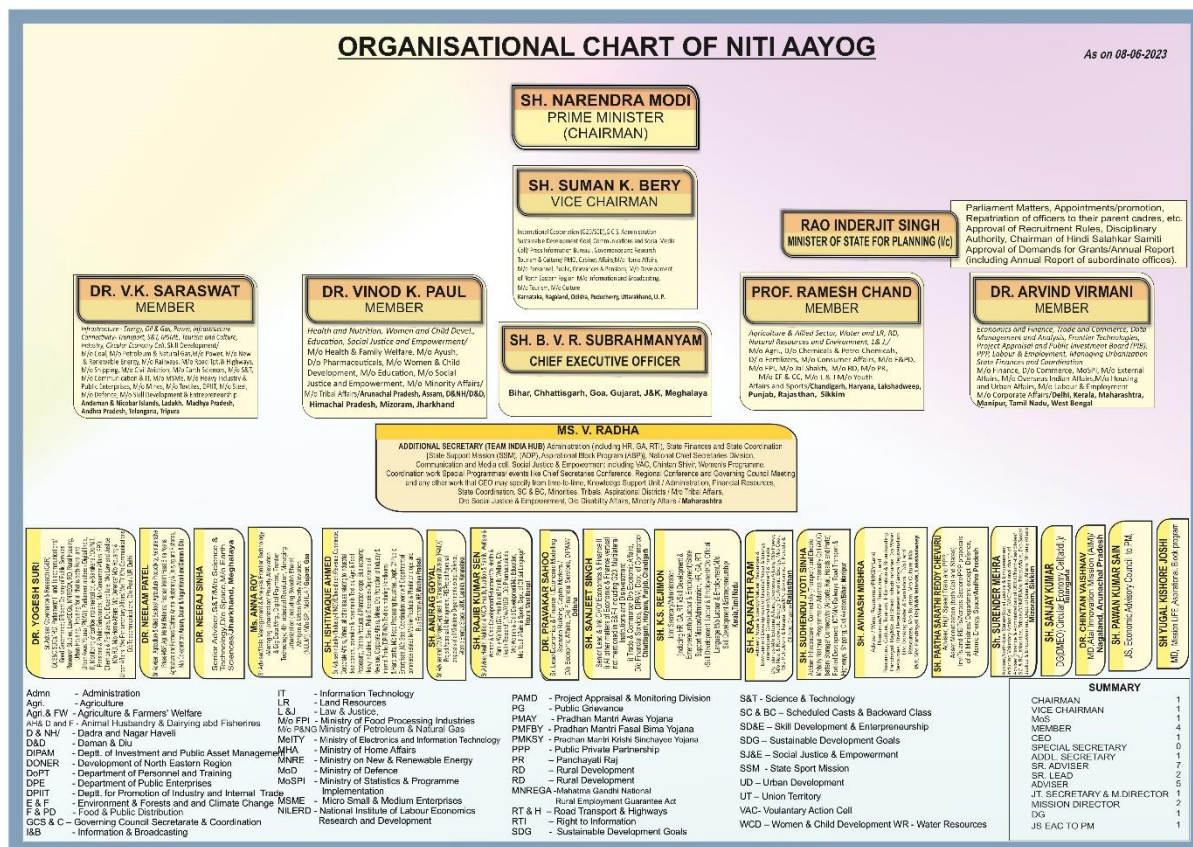


Figure: Organisation Structure of NITI AAYOG (Source: niti.gov.in)

4. SERVICES OFFERED BY NITI AAYOG

The key services and initiatives offered by Women & Child Development wing of NITI Aayog comprises of:

- Providing policy inputs and strategic guidance for gender empowerment and improving nutritional outcomes for women and children in India.
- Evaluating and providing recommendations on evolving policies, strategies, and programs related to women and child development.
- Engaging with the Ministry of Women and Child Development to examine current policies and schemes, and suggest improvements or mid-course corrections.
- Conducting research and generating evidence-based insights in collaboration with research organizations and development partners on issues like gender, nutrition, and early childhood development.
- Analysing and providing comments on various women and child development schemes, programs, and projects through appraisal of Project Progress Reports (PPRs), Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) proposals, and Cabinet Notes.
- Maintaining a state-of-the-art resource centre on nutrition to support policymaking and program implementation.
- Establishing partnerships with organizations like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Ashoka University, International Food Policy Research Institute, and Bernard van Leer Foundation to leverage expertise and resources for initiatives like the Behavioural Insights Unit, Poshan Abhiyaan monitoring, and early childhood care and education.
- Undertaking current and upcoming projects such as piloting integrated health service delivery models, developing a National Gender Index, intensifying nutrition strategies in high-burden districts, and leveraging behavioural science for social development.

5. KEY ACTIVITIES / PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN

1. Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) Strategy Assessment:

The main project involved evaluating the effectiveness of BCC strategies to combat Anaemia. This included reviewing existing literature, analysing data from pilot programs, and synthesizing findings to recommend effective strategies.

2. Data Analysis and Visualization:

I was responsible for understanding complex datasets related to Anaemia prevalence and creating graphical representations. This task involved using statistical tools to interpret trends and outcomes.

3. State Data Updates:

Another significant aspect of my internship was updating state-level data related to Anganwadi centres, water availability, and sanitation facilities. This required meticulous attention to detail and adherence to government protocols for data handling.

6. KEY LEARNINGS FROM INTERNSHIP

1. Policy Formulation

Understanding how policies are formulated at a national level and the role of empirical evidence in decision-making processes.

2. Data Handling & Analysis

Enhancing skills in data interpretation, statistical analysis, and visualization tools such as Excel and statistical software.

3. Interdisciplinary Collaboration:

Learning to collaborate with diverse teams including consultants, researchers, and government officials to achieve project goals effectively.

4. Understanding Public Health Challenges:

Gaining insights into the complexities of public health challenges in India, particularly related to nutrition and maternal health.

7. CONCLUSION

The internship at NITI Aayog provided me with invaluable practical experience in public policy and health research. It deepened my understanding of nutrition-related issues and equipped me with essential skills in data analysis and policy evaluation. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to impactful projects and look forward to applying these learnings in my future career endeavours.

8. REFERENCES

- ✓ <https://www.niti.gov.in/verticals/women-and-child-development>
- ✓ https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-06/ORGANISATIONAL-CHART-OF-NITI-AAYOG-as-on-08-06-2023_0.pdf