



**EVALUATION
REPORT**

Evaluation of Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana

Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment

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1. Executive Summary

Background of the Scheme

The aging population phenomenon is a global challenge that demands focused policy responses. In India, a country with a vast and diverse populace, this demographic shift is marked by an increase in the elderly population, rising from 5.6% in 1961 to an expected 20% by 2050. Industrialization, urbanization, and a move towards nuclear families have altered the social landscape, impacting the elderly. The majority of India's elderly, about 71%, reside in rural areas, presenting distinct challenges, especially in healthcare accessibility.

In response to these trends, the Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY) was launched by the Government of India on April 1, 2017. Targeting senior citizens from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households suffering from age-related disabilities, RVY aims to improve their quality of life by providing physical aids and assisted-living devices fully funded by the Central Government. This initiative reflects a commitment to address the challenges faced by India's aging population, emphasizing quality, diversity of needs, empowerment, extensive coverage, and post-distribution support to ensure the effectiveness of the aid provided. As projections show a significant rise in the elderly population and their needs, RVY's comprehensive approach seeks to cater to their diverse conditions, aiming for an inclusive support system that enhances their independence and societal participation.

Implementation Mechanism

At the apex, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJ&E) provides overarching guidance, financial resources, and policy direction, while technical support comes from ALIMCO, which sets device specifications and oversees quality. The state-level responsibilities are managed by the Social Welfare Department, identifying beneficiaries with a focus on rural and backward areas, and prioritizing those in shelter homes.

At the district level, a dedicated committee led by the District Collector manages the scheme's local implementation and monitoring. This committee comprises key figures, including the Chief Medical Officer, the District Social Welfare Officer, and, in urban areas, the Municipal Commissioner, ensuring a comprehensive approach to beneficiary selection and aid distribution.

The scheme's operational framework is marked by a collaborative approach, emphasizing beneficiary identification, camp organization for distribution, and post-distribution activities. Initially, beneficiaries are identified meticulously, leveraging data from those receiving Old Age Pension under the NSAP or similar schemes, ensuring a targeted approach. ALIMCO then organizes camps in phases—assessment, distribution, and post-distribution—to ensure the aids reach the intended recipients effectively and efficiently.

During these camps, beneficiaries are assessed by professionals, prescribed necessary assistive devices, and given tokens for aid collection. The distribution process involves expert-led fitment sessions, quality checks, and the physical handing over of aids, with every step designed to adhere to the highest standards. Following the distribution, comprehensive lists of beneficiaries and distributed devices are uploaded online for transparency, and a sample checking mechanism ensures service quality and beneficiary satisfaction. A toll-free number facilitates feedback and post-camp service inquiries, establishing a continuous support channel for beneficiaries. This detailed mechanism underscores the commitment to efficiently addressing the needs of India's elderly BPL population, ensuring they receive the support and aid essential for improving their quality of life.

Present Status and Coverage

Initially allocated Rs. 1.5 crore in 2017-18, the scheme's budget dramatically increased to Rs. 106.51 crore in 2018-19, indicating a significant scale-up. A notable absence of budget in 2019-20 was followed by consistent funding in the subsequent years, with a notable increase to Rs. 88.8398 crore in 2022-23, signalling a phase of expansion or enhanced operational scope.

The scheme's financial trajectory reveals an adaptive strategy, responsive to assessments and socio-economic factors, ensuring full utilization of allocated funds towards the welfare of the elderly. State-wise data highlights an impressive coverage of 315,257 beneficiaries, with a gender disparity favouring males (58%) over females (42%). This distribution suggests a need for better access for female beneficiaries, despite surpassing the minimum objective for female inclusion.

Coverage across social categories shows effective reach to General and OBC categories, aligning with their demographic shares, while SC and ST categories, slightly underrepresented, exhibit a commitment to equitable access. However, there's room for enhanced gender parity and targeted outreach to bridge representation gaps further.

National coverage stands at approximately 0.30%, with significant variances across states and union territories, highlighting both achievements in certain regions and potential for expansion in others. The scheme's implementation reveals the complexity of scaling nationwide, underscoring the need for improved awareness, coordination, and refinement of beneficiary identification and distribution processes. Addressing these challenges is crucial for expanding RVY's impact and ensuring equitable benefits for India's aging population.

Locations covered for the evaluation study

The study employed purposive sampling and random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to select key informants, while random sampling was employed for surveys among beneficiaries. The mixed-method approach justified this sampling strategy as it allowed the study to cover a broad spectrum of experiences and perspectives while ensuring representation of all the relevant sections of the population. State wise coverage of samples for the study as proposed by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is as below:

Region	State/UT	District (Proposed Sample Size)
Central Region	Chhattisgarh	Dantewada (7), Bilaspur (93)
	Madhya Pradesh	Chhatarpur (83), Sehore (94), Sagar (401), Guna (33)
Eastern Region	Bihar	Purnea (13), Nawada (173)
	Jharkhand	Bokaro (259), West Singhbhum (39)
	Odisha	Dhenkanal (76)
North-Eastern Region	Arunachal Pradesh	West Siang (85)
	Assam	Barpeta (277), Darrang (48)
	Manipur	East Imphal (410)
	Meghalaya	West Khasi Hills (377)
	Nagaland	Tunesang (48)
	Sikkim	West Sikkim (121)
	Tripura	West Tripura (306)
Northern Region	Delhi	East Delhi (137)
	Haryana	Yamunanagar (39), Mewat (63)
	Himachal Pradesh	Chamba (17)
	Jammu & Kashmir	Rajouri (144)
	Punjab	Moga (18), Bathinda (201)
	Rajasthan	Jaipur (795), Bharatpur (88)
	Uttar Pradesh	Prayagraj (2470), Kanpur Nagar (53), Ballia (750), Mirzapur (384)
	Uttarakhand	Bageshwar (150), Nainital (4)
Southern Region	Andaman & Nicobar	Andaman Nicobar (51)
	Andhra Pradesh	Vijaynagarm (41), Nellore (276)
	Karnataka	Yadgir (61), Shivmoga (5)
	Kerala	Wayanad (57), Kasaragod (137)
	Tamil Nadu	Virudhunagar (23)
	Telangana	Rangareddy (167), Karimnagar (67)
Western Region	DNH & DD	Daman and Diu (83)
	Goa	South Goa (211)
	Gujarat	Bharuch (129)
	Maharashtra	Ahmednagar (5610), Nanded (515), Ratnagiri (391)

Perspective of Beneficiaries

Gender Dynamics and Social Inclusion: The gender distribution of RVY beneficiaries unfolds a narrative of both progress and disparity. While some states shine with exemplary gender parity, ensuring women's substantial access to the scheme's benefits, others lag, spotlighting areas where concerted efforts could bridge the gap. The higher representation of women in states like Puducherry and Meghalaya contrasts sharply with the lower figures in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, suggesting a multifaceted challenge influenced by social norms, awareness levels, and accessibility to the scheme. This variance underscores the necessity of targeted outreach and sensitization campaigns to dismantle barriers and foster an inclusive environment where elderly women can equally benefit from the scheme.

Age and Disability: RVY's impact is profoundly felt across various age groups, with a marked focus on those in their later years. The scheme's ability to cater to a wide age spectrum, ensuring even centenarians receive support, is a testament to its comprehensive approach. Moreover, the focus on multiple disabilities emphasizes the scheme's understanding of the compounded challenges faced by this demographic, striving to ensure that aids and appliances enhance the quality of life for the elderly, irrespective of the complexity of their needs.

The Challenge of Accessibility and Quality: While the scheme's broad reach and positive impact on independence and social interactions are commendable, the feedback on aid quality and effectiveness reveals areas for improvement. The voices of beneficiaries experiencing difficulties with the aids or those citing a need for advanced mobility solutions like battery-operated wheelchairs highlight the importance of continual assessment and adaptation. Addressing these challenges requires not just a feedback mechanism but a responsive system ready to evolve and incorporate technological advancements that can significantly enhance the beneficiaries' independence and quality of life.

Perspective of District Administration

Geographical Reach and Awareness: The scheme's geographical coverage is commendable, extending to both rural and urban areas across numerous districts. The organization of awareness camps in all blocks indicates a concerted effort to disseminate information about RVY. Yet, challenges such as low awareness and logistical hurdles in certain areas hint at the need for more targeted and innovative awareness-raising strategies. Recommendations for improvement include the annual organization of camps and better coordination with ALIMCO, emphasizing the need for ongoing engagement and information dissemination.

Implementation Process and Challenges: The implementation timeline, from planning to execution, showcases a well-structured approach involving multiple stakeholders. This methodical process ensures thorough preparation and effective delivery of the scheme's benefits. However, the formation of district-level committees, as recommended, has been inconsistent, suggesting a gap between guideline and practice. Addressing this gap could streamline the beneficiary selection process and enhance scheme monitoring.

Logistical and Coordination Challenges: Logistical challenges, particularly concerning venue selection and transportation for beneficiaries, underscore the complexities of organizing RVY camps. Recommendations to engage local communities in the venue selection process and develop partnerships for transportation arrangements highlight the importance of local involvement and support in overcoming these obstacles.

Coordination challenges, while minimal, point to the need for enhanced support systems, especially in areas affected by security concerns or logistical constraints. The effective role of District Social Welfare Officers in coordinating efforts with NGOs and ALIMCO is a positive aspect, suggesting that strengthening these partnerships could further improve the scheme's implementation.

Perspective of Senior Citizens' Association

Awareness and Perception: The awareness level among Senior Citizen Associations about RVY indicates a significant gap in information dissemination. With a large majority being not informed or only slightly informed, it highlights an urgent need for targeted awareness campaigns. These campaigns should aim to educate senior citizens about how they can benefit from the scheme, focusing on both the availability of assistive devices and the process to access these benefits. Despite the low level of awareness, among those who are familiar with the scheme, there is a recognition of its value, particularly for seniors facing health challenges and economic constraints. This positive perception among the informed underscores the potential impact of RVY if more seniors were made aware of and could access its benefits.

Impact on Social Engagement: The associations note a positive impact on the social engagement of beneficiaries who have received assistance from RVY. Assistive devices like hearing aids have significantly improved the quality of life for many seniors, enabling them to participate more actively in community events and conversations. This increased engagement not only enhances the well-being of the elderly but also contributes to a more inclusive society where seniors can remain active and connected with their communities.

Challenges in Accessibility: Despite its intentions, RVY faces challenges in ensuring that its benefits are accessible to all eligible seniors. The distribution of aids primarily through camps may limit reach, particularly in remote areas where awareness is low, and logistics are challenging. The associations suggest diversifying communication channels and considering alternative distribution methods, such as leveraging local health centres or direct delivery systems, to ensure broader and more inclusive access. Additionally, there's an emphasis on the potential of district social welfare offices to raise awareness at the grassroots level, indicating a need for more localized and village-level information campaigns.

Challenges and Recommendations

Lack of Awareness about the scheme

Many senior citizens and community members remain uninformed about the RVY scheme, which critically affects its reach and overall effectiveness. The survey data indicates a significant portion of the target audience is unaware of the available benefits, leading to underutilization of the scheme. This lack of awareness stems from insufficient information dissemination and engagement strategies, which fail to effectively communicate the scheme's purpose and benefits.

To address the awareness gap, it is vital to employ a multi-channel communication strategy that includes local media, social media, direct community outreach, and collaborations with local NGOs and health workers. Utilizing these diverse channels will ensure comprehensive coverage and information dissemination, reaching all segments of the population, particularly those in remote or traditionally underserved areas. For instance, social media campaigns can be tailored to younger family members who can pass information to elderly relatives, while community outreach programs can directly engage senior citizens in a format they find accessible and trustworthy.

Additionally, partnering with ASHA workers and local Primary Health Centres (PHCs) can significantly amplify the reach of awareness campaigns. These health workers are often trusted figures within their communities and can effectively communicate the benefits and logistical details of the assessment and distribution camps, potentially increasing turnout at these events. This approach not only leverages existing health infrastructure but also ensures that information reaches the most isolated and vulnerable segments of the elderly population.

Moreover, ALIMCO should proactively establish contacts with all the old age homes in each district prior to organizing assessment camps. This outreach should include providing detailed information about the camps and considering the feasibility of on-site visits to these homes for assessment and distribution of aids. By bringing services directly to old age homes, ALIMCO can significantly ease the participation of residents who might face mobility or transportation challenges, ensuring that the benefits of the scheme are accessible to a broader and more inclusive beneficiary base. Such targeted outreach efforts would not only fill critical information gaps but also enhance the overall effectiveness and impact of the RVY scheme.

Accessibility Challenges

Accessibility to distribution camps remains a significant barrier, particularly in remote or underserved areas, making it challenging for all eligible beneficiaries to access the scheme. This issue is exacerbated for individuals with severe mobility limitations or those residing in locations far from typical camp sites, preventing them from benefiting from the scheme.

To enhance accessibility, the scheme should adopt alternative distribution methods. Strategies such as partnering with primary healthcare centres for local distribution and implementing home-based deliveries could significantly extend the scheme's reach. These alternatives would not only cater to those with severe mobility issues but also ensure that no eligible senior citizen is excluded due to geographical or transportation barriers. For example, home-based deliveries could be coordinated through existing healthcare services to provide not just more accessible distribution but also integrate health check-ups, thereby offering a holistic approach to elder care.

Inadequate Community Engagement

The engagement of the community in promoting and facilitating the RVY scheme is limited, largely due to significant awareness gaps. This shortfall in community participation limits the scheme's visibility and acceptance within local contexts, which are critical for its successful implementation.

Organizing regular assessment camps at the village level and involving local leaders and community organizations in promoting the scheme could substantially increase community engagement. By leveraging the influence and networks of local leaders, the scheme can be more effectively tailored to meet local needs and preferences, thereby enhancing both its visibility and impact. Such localized engagement would also foster a sense of ownership and trust in the program, facilitating smoother implementations and greater beneficiary satisfaction.

Coordination Challenges

Discrepancies in coordination among implementing agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders have been reported, affecting the scheme's implementation efficiency across various regions. Effective coordination is essential for ensuring that the program's resources are used optimally and that activities are conducted smoothly without overlap or conflict.

A structured coordination mechanism is crucial for the success of RVY. This should include establishing regular communication and coordination meetings, creating a robust strategy for information sharing, and developing a conflict resolution framework to handle any issues that arise. Ensuring that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and how they fit into the larger scheme operations, will improve operational efficiency and effectiveness. For example, creating regional coordination hubs that regularly bring together local implementers for training and updates could enhance alignment and responsiveness to local challenges.

Logistical Challenges

Significant logistical challenges exist, particularly in the selection of appropriate venues for camps and arranging transportation for beneficiaries to attend these events. These logistical concerns are magnified in rural and remote areas where transportation and suitable venue availability are limited.

The previous guidelines of the Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana included specific provisions for beneficiary transportation to assessment and distribution camps, which are notably absent in the current guidelines. To address this gap and ensure accessibility for all beneficiaries, especially those from remote areas, it is recommended to reintroduce transportation provisions. Specifically, administrative expenses should include a flat rate of 10% of the camp's total value for administrative costs, with an additional transportation allowance of Rs. 250.00 per beneficiary. This adjustment will ensure that all eligible seniors can attend the camps necessary to receive their aids, enhancing the scheme's overall effectiveness and reach.

Delay in Distribution

Delays in the distribution of assistive devices from the point of beneficiary identification to the actual delivery can significantly hinder the timely provision of aid under the Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana. These delays often result from bureaucratic hurdles within the administrative processes. Prolonged wait times can lead to a degradation in the health and quality of life of the beneficiaries, who may rely on these aids for basic mobility and daily activities. Such delays can also erode trust in the effectiveness of the scheme and discourage potential beneficiaries from participating.

Inadequate Training for Users

A significant challenge in the RVY scheme is that beneficiaries often receive assistive devices without adequate instructions on how to use them effectively. This lack of proper training can lead to underutilization or misuse of the devices, which in turn diminishes the potential benefits.

Without the necessary knowledge to operate these devices correctly, seniors might experience accidents, further health complications, or simply abandon the use of aids.

It is crucial to implement comprehensive training sessions for beneficiaries as part of the distribution process. This training should cover all aspects of device operation, maintenance, and safety. By providing these instructions through user-friendly manuals and interactive video tutorials, which can be accessed directly on the beneficiaries' mobile devices, the scheme can ensure that seniors are not only receptive to using the aids but are also fully equipped to do so safely and effectively. Offering follow-up training sessions and creating a helpline for addressing any post-distribution inquiries or difficulties can further ensure that beneficiaries continue to use their aids properly. This approach not only maximizes the functional impact of the devices but also promotes a longer-term adoption and better quality of life for the elderly beneficiaries.

Need for introducing new items in the scheme

Expanding the range of assistive devices available through the Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana is crucial for better addressing the comprehensive needs of the elderly population. Including battery-operated wheelchairs in the scheme would provide significant mobility support to those with severe disabilities, enabling greater independence and ease of movement. Additionally, introducing ergonomic furniture such as chairs and beds specifically designed to provide comfort and support for arthritis sufferers could greatly enhance their daily living conditions.

Adaptive clothing designed with Velcro closures and elastic bands would accommodate those with limited dexterity, making dressing less of a challenge and promoting self-reliance. Furthermore, incorporating cognitive aids like memory devices can assist seniors with memory impairments in managing daily tasks, medication schedules, and important dates, thereby enhancing their mental agility and overall cognitive function. Therapeutic activity kits, including puzzles and games, could help maintain or even improve cognitive functions, adding a valuable dimension to their mental health care.

The introduction of home modification supports, such as ramps, grab bars in bathrooms, and safety rails on stairs, would make living spaces safer and more accessible, particularly for those with limited mobility. Fall prevention kits, featuring items like non-slip mats, specialized footwear, and hip protectors, would further reduce the risk of falls.

Additionally, adjustable focus eyeglasses would cater to the varying visual needs of the elderly, allowing users to adjust focus for near and distant vision. This adaptability is essential for ensuring that visual aids meet the specific and changing requirements of the aging eye.

By incorporating these enhancements, the Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana would significantly improve the quality of life for the elderly population. Each new addition would not only meet a specific need but also integrate seamlessly to provide a holistic support system that respects the dignity and enhances the independence of every senior citizen it serves.



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