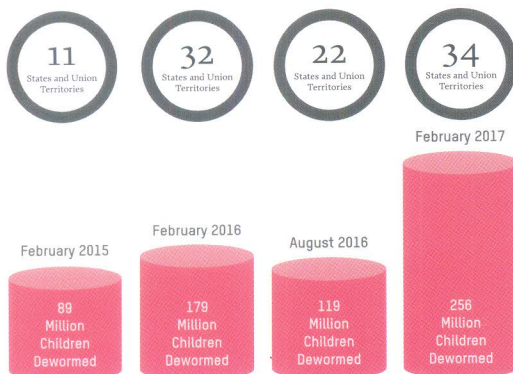




Scaling Up Private School Participation in National Deworming Day

Snapshot of National Deworming Day Coverage



* National target for August 2017 NDD round is 310 Million children

Background

National Deworming Day (NDD) is a Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India initiative aimed to control parasitic worm infections among children in the country. NDD is implemented as a fixed, single-day program, which aims to treat all children aged 1-19 for parasitic worms at their school or *anganwadi* (preschools) by teachers or *anganwadi* workers. Launched in February 2015 and now scaled up to all states and union territories in the country, the Government of India conducts NDD biannually in most states based on worm prevalence data¹.

Private School Engagement: NDD 2016 to NDD 2017

In order to meet the goal established by NDD to reach all children aged 1-19, inclusion of private schools is critical to program success. Twenty-nine percent of total school enrollments in India are in private schools, as per the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2014). Private schools in India cater to all sections of society, including children from weaker socio-economic communities.

Evidence Action led a strategic approach at the national and state level for inclusion of private schools through evidence and data collection of worm prevalence in select states, desk research on enrolments in the private sector, and reach of government school health programs in the same. NDD is the first program to include private schools in the national strategy. Sustained efforts have resulted in an increasing involvement of private schools over the last three NDD rounds.

In an attempt to bring private schools under the ambit of the program, Evidence Action, as the MoHFW's NDD technical assistance partner, initiated discussions at national and state levels in 2015 by drafting a private school inclusion strategy note. Subsequently, in December 2015, MoHFW directed states to include private schools in at least 10% of their NDD implementing districts during the February 2016 round. Based on encouraging results, learnings and experiences from the February 2016 round, Evidence Action drafted and MoHFW shared a guidance note on private school engagement with all participating states and union territories prior to the NDD August 2016 and February 2017 rounds.

NDD Private School Experiences

- In Rajasthan, prior to the February 2017 round, a state level meeting was held with private schools with high enrolment and multiple branches in the state. Similar meetings were held with Private School Associations in Telangana. This contributed to increased participation of the schools between NDD February 2016 and 2017 rounds. In Rajasthan, private schools coverage increased from 5.7 million to 6.3 million children, while in Telangana, coverage increased from 3 million to 3.6 million (as per state coverage report submitted to Government of India)

¹ The annual National Deworming Day round takes place on February 10 with a mop-up day on February 15. The second round is on August 10, with a mop-up day on August 17. As on 2017, 34 out of 36 states/UTs in the country are required to conduct biannual treatment rounds based on worm prevalence data.

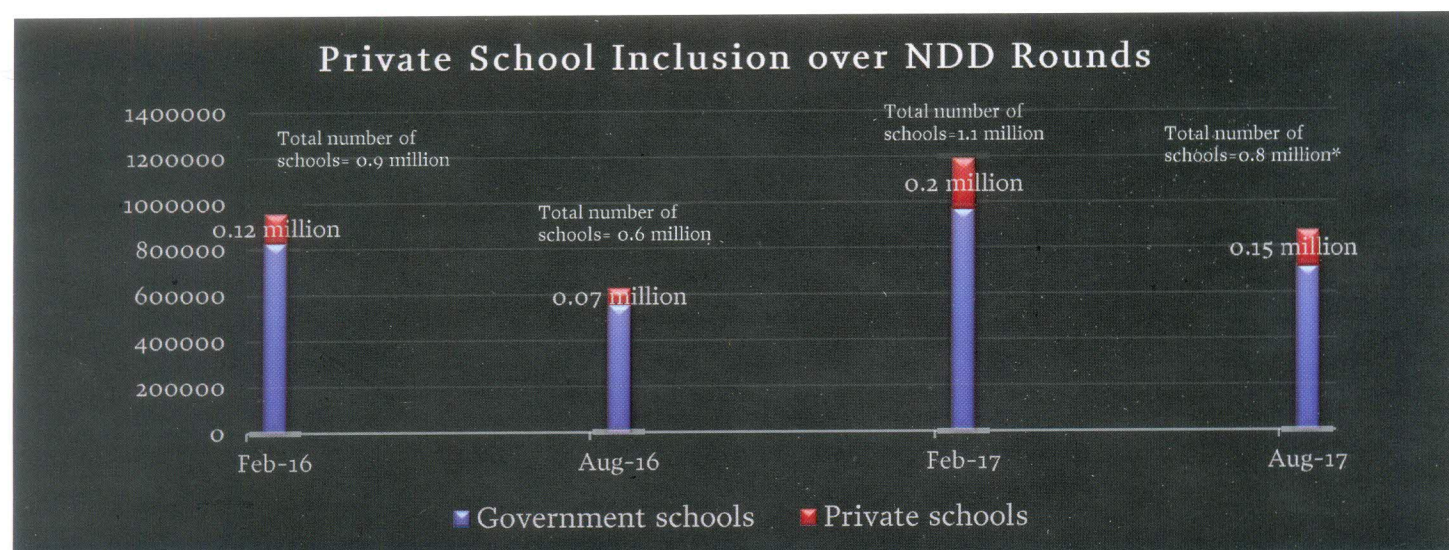
- States referred to the NDD financial guidelines for budgets towards private school inclusion, while Madhya Pradesh provided additional budgets for private school teachers at block trainings
- District administration demonstrated leadership in engaging private schools through District Coordination Committee Meetings (DCCM). Participation of private schools in DCCMs increased from 17 districts out of 38 NDD implementing districts (55% age) in NDD August 2016 to 39 districts out of 66 NDD implementing districts (70%) in NDD February 2017, in Telangana, Chhattisgarh, and Tripura.
- Effective platforms to advocate private school inclusion range from Private School Associations; parents teachers meetings, SMS alerts to parents, school circulars; WhatsApp messages, social media and information on NDD uploaded on websites.

Drug Availability for Private Schools: Because private school drug distribution cascade is similar to that of government schools, drug requirements for private schools are calculated based on state Education Departments' district information system for enrolment data.

Training Private School Teachers: Private school teachers are trained as per NDD guidelines in most states. To facilitate maximum participation in trainings, state governments and Evidence Action (in its technical assistance states) send SMS to reinforce the training date. In Telangana and Rajasthan, private school associations sent SMS to parents and school staff to boost awareness and build trust in the program. In Madhya Pradesh, the Education Department directed private schools to organize a second round of trainings in February 2016 and again in February 2017, after monitoring data showed poor attendance from private schools. In Rajasthan, the Health Department emailed training videos to high enrollment private schools in five districts. These contributed to higher coverage in private schools (5.7 million out of 6.9 million children) during NDD February 2016 round, the first-time private schools were included in NDD.

SMS Content:
National Deworming Day 10 Feb: All school children will be administered the safe and effective deworming tablet. Please send your child to school #WormFreeIndia

Sustained Efforts have Resulted in Increasing Involvement of Private Schools Over the Last Three NDD Rounds



Out of 32 states, all included some % of private schools except for Meghalaya

13 of 22 states included private schools

All 34 states included private schools

*Preliminary figures

Challenges, Lessons Learned, and Next Steps:

The challenges faced across states include:

- Lack of updated contact and enrollment database on private schools limits timely information sharing, training, and drug delivery to these schools
- Parental consent was cited in several states as the reason for private schools delaying or not conducting NDD
- Parents and schools have preconceived notions about free drugs provided by the government being of inferior quality
- There exists limited confidence in teachers' capacity to administer drugs, with requests from private schools, for deworming to be conducted by the Health Department
- Currently there is limited engagement from government health officials in urban areas, which have a high concentration of private schools

To address these constraints, Evidence Action is working with national and state-level stakeholders to bolster private school acknowledgement of and participation in the program through the learnings:

- Continued joint advocacy efforts by state Health and Education Departments for engagement of schools with high enrolment and Private School Associations through their participation at state level NDD Steering Committee Meetings
- Continued joint advocacy to teachers and parents by sharing Frequently Asked Questions to schools focusing on positive messages around safety of drugs and benefits of deworming
- Continued engagement of leadership at the district administration to strengthen participation at implementation level
- Increased participation of private schools in trainings and community awareness by leveraging technology platforms that have been successful for NDD, including SMS/WhatsApp/emails/ websites
- Continued investment in NDD communication campaign is necessary to improve awareness and recall over time among children enrolled in private schools and their parents.
- Continued engagement of parents through schools by sharing diary notes; SMS; WhatsApp; website uploads; parents teacher meetings, use of social media.

Additional insights from private school program implementation will be crucial to further assimilate learnings and strengthen outreach to these schools in upcoming rounds. Deworming children enrolled in private schools through NDD will contribute to high program coverage and reduced worm prevalence. With NDD being the first program to include private schools in the national strategy, these experiences will assist the reach of other child health and nutrition programs in the country as well as globally.



Voices from the Field



This is an important initiative led by the state department. Private schools should be part of National Deworming Day so that all children are dewormed. This is essential for their health.

Father Joseph Karl Lakra, Principal,
Holy Cross Senior Sec. School,
Baran Bazar, Raipur, Chhattisgarh



As a teacher in a private school, we have received training for National Deworming Day. We are aware of preventive measures from worm infections and the adverse event protocols if needed. Teachers play an important role in the deworming program.

- Praluru Srilekha, Teacher,
St. Alphonsus High School,
Secundrabad, Telangana