

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT**  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**QUESTION NO 30.11.2009**  
**ANSWERED ON**  
**MALNOURISHED CHILDREN .**

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Dr. Abhishek Manu Singhvi

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether 47 percent of India's children under the age of six years are malnourished;
- (b) If so, Government's reaction to the remark made during October, 2009 by Anne Jellema, Action Aid's International Policy Director based on the reports released during the designated World Food Day by the United Nations; and
- (c) With massive allocation of funds for Government run programmes for improving the nutrition of the children, why the situation is going further down instead of improving the extent and content of 'Nutrition' levels?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

(SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH)

(a), (b) & (c) No Sir. As per National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 3, (2005-06), the percentage of children below five years of age who are underweight in the country is 42.5%.

The Prevalence of under nutrition in children below three years has reduced from 43 as per NFHS 2 in 1998-99 to 40% as per NFHS 3 in 2005-06.

The problem of malnutrition is multi-dimensional and inter-generational in nature, the determinants of which include household food insecurity, illiteracy and lack of awareness especially in women, access to health services, availability of safe drinking water, sanitation and environmental conditions and purchasing power etc. Besides early age at marriage of girls, teenage pregnancies resulting in low birth weight of the newborns, poor breastfeeding practices, poor complementary feeding practices, ignorance about nutritional needs of infants and young children and repeated infections further aggravate the malnutrition amongst children. Tackling malnutrition amongst children requires an integrated approach. Prevention of early marriage, appropriate spacing in pregnancy, better Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices including exclusive breast feeding, age appropriate complementary feeding, better hygienic conditions, immunization, Vitamin A supplementation, deworming, Oral Rehydration, Zinc supplementation during diarrhea, timely and quality feeding for acute malnutrition conditions, improved nutrition for adolescent girls, prevention of anemia, improved food and nutrient intake during pregnancy and lactation, better information and awareness about nutritional needs & behaviors and prevention and control of diseases would need to be promoted for mitigating the impact of malnutrition. All these need to be addressed in a holistic manner by effective intersectoral coordination, convergence and improved systems of delivery of services under different schemes and programmes of central and state governments.