GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2070
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05.08.2021

MALNUTRITION AMONG WOMEN AND CHILDREN

2070 SMT. PHULO DEVI NETAM:

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

(a) the prevalence of malnutrition among women and children in India, the amount by which it is greater or lesser than the global average, the details thereof;
(b) whether it is a fact that about 18 per cent of children under the age of five are facing wasted growth for the last two years, if so, the percentage by which it is greater than the global average, the details thereof;
(c) the number of children in India having less than average height; and
(d) the efforts being made by Government to overcome the above shortcomings, the details thereof including the achievements?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) to (c) The data on nutritional indicators is captured under the National Family Health Surveys (NFHS) conducted periodically by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. NFHS-4 was conducted in 2015-16 and a Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS) was conducted in 2016-18. The data for malnutrition as per NFHS-5 is available for only 22 States/UTs.

As per NFHS-4, 35.7% children under 5 years of age are **underweight** and 38.4% are **stunted** indicating a reduction from the previous data captured in NFHS-3 (2005-06), which reported 42.5% children under 5 years of age as **underweight** and 48% **stunted**. As per the Global Hunger Index (GHI) Report 2020, the prevalence of **stunting** among children under 5 years of age is 21.3%. CNNS conducted in 2016-18 (under the aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare) shows that India has made substantial improvement in prevalence of stunting as the prevalence has further reduced from 38.4% as per NFHS-4 to 34.7%.

Further, as per NFHS-4, 22.9% women (15-49 years of age) have chronic energy deficiency (BMI less than 18.5 kg/m^2) which is a decline from the previous NFHS-3 (2005-06) levels which reported 35.5% women having chronic energy deficiency.

The trends in **wasting** of children under 5 years has shown improvement and declined over the years from 21% (NFHS-4) to 17.3% (CNNS). As per the Global Hunger Index (GHI) Report 2020, the prevalence of **wasting** among children under 5 years of age is 6.9%.

(d) POSHAN Abhiyaan was launched on 8th March, 2018, with an objective to reduce malnutrition and achieve improvement in nutritional status of Children from 0-6 years, Adolescent Girls, Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers in a time bound manner.

For alleviation of malnutrition, Government has announced Mission Poshan 2.0 to strengthen nutritional content, delivery, outreach and outcomes with focus on developing practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity to disease and malnutrition. Steps have been taken to improve nutritional quality and testing in accredited labs, strengthen delivery and leverage technology under the 'Poshan Tracker', a robust ICT enabled platform to improve governance with regard to real time monitoring of provisioning of supplementary nutrition for prompt supervision and management of services.

Government has advised States/UTs to ensure that the quality of supplementary nutrition confirms to prescribed standards laid down under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and regulations made there under. States/UTs have been advised to promote use of AYUSH systems for prevention of malnutrition and related diseases. A programme to support development of Poshan Vatikas at Anganwadi centers to meet dietary diversity gap leveraging traditional knowledge in nutritional practices has also been taken up.

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