

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 158
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.12.2022

GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

158. SHRI SANDOSH KUMAR P:

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

- (a) whether Government is planning to initiate any urgent intervention to improve the status of child nutrition in the country considering the continuous decline of the rank of India in the Global Hunger Index;
- (b) whether the Ministry is aware of the 'child wasting rate' in the country which is considered as the highest in the world; and
- (c) if so, the details of the future plans that the Ministry is planning to undertake in order to reduce child wasting in the country?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) Global Hunger Index (GHI) does not reflect India's true picture as it is a flawed measure of 'Hunger'. It should not be taken at face value as it is neither appropriate nor representative of hunger prevalent in a country. Out of its four indicators, only one indicator, i.e., undernourishment, is directly related to hunger. The two indicators, namely, Stunting and Wasting are outcomes of complex interactions of various other factors like sanitation, genetics, environment and utilisation of food intake apart from hunger which is taken as the causative/outcome factor for stunting and wasting in the GHI. Also, there is hardly any evidence that the fourth indicator, namely, child mortality is an outcome of hunger. Data used in the GHI report are sourced from international agencies which are not updated as per the latest data available in the country.

Data on Nutritional Indicators in the country is captured periodically under the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. As per the recent report of NFHS-5 (2019-21), the nutrition indicators for children under 5 years have improved as compared with NFHS-4 (2015-16). Prevalence of wasting has reduced from 21.0% to 19.3%.

The Government has accorded high priority to the issue of malnutrition and is making serious efforts to improve the nutritional status of children in the country. POSHAN Abhiyaan, a flagship scheme of the Government was launched in 2018 to address the malaise of malnutrition by adopting a synergised and result oriented approach. Further, to address various policy and systemic needs, the Integrated Child Development Scheme and Anganwadi Services schemes were re-evaluated in respect of programme design, implementation process, outcome and impact and for re-assessing the relevance of the programme in achieving its aims and goals. The efforts under the Supplementary Nutrition Programme under Anganwadi Services, Scheme for Adolescent Girls and POSHAN Abhiyaan have been re-aligned as 'Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0' for maximizing nutritional outcomes.

Under Poshan 2.0, focus is on diet diversity, food fortification, leveraging traditional systems of knowledge and popularizing use of millets. Nutrition awareness strategies under Poshan 2.0 aim to develop sustainable health and well-being through regional meal plans to bridge dietary gaps. Strategy of Jan Andolan, has been developed to strengthen convergent actions across multiple stakeholders with focus on exclusive breast-feeding, complimentary feeding, growth monitoring, prevention of diarrhoea, hygiene, water and sanitation, anemia prevention, importance of Poshan Vatikas for cultivation of local vegetables, medicinal plants/herbs and fruits at the community level, etc. Poshan Abhiyaan provides a strong platform for targeted home visits, community-based events (CBEs) and growth monitoring with greater emphasis placed on home visits to promote maternal, infant and young child nutrition practices.
