

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1747
TO BE ANSWERED ON 21.12.2022

“MALNOURISHMENT FACED BY FEMALE STUDENTS”

1747 SHRI N.R. ELANGO

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

- (a) whether Government is cognizant that the Mid-Day Meal, or even the breakfast as mentioned in new National Education Policy (NEP) are not enough to battle malnourishment faced by female students; and
- (b) if so, the steps that are proposed to be taken by Government keeping in mind that female health should be of prime importance and care should be taken so that the right kind of nutrition is provided to female students?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b) Government has accorded high priority to the issue of malnutrition and is implementing several schemes/programmes of different Ministries/Departments through States/UTs to address various aspects related to nutrition. As informed by Department of School Education, Ministry of Education, the National Education Policy (NEP) envisages that nutrition and health (including mental health) of children will be addressed, through healthy meals and the introduction of well-trained social workers, counsellors, and community involvement into the schooling system. Further, as per the provisions of National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013, children studying in classes I-VIII and Bal-Vatika are entitled to one meal free of charge, every day except on school holidays, in all schools run by Local bodies, Government and Government aided schools so as to meet nutritional standards specified in the Act. Accordingly, one hot cooked meal is provided universally to all eligible children irrespective of gender on all working schooldays under PM POSHAN Scheme. The following nutritional content is prescribed in the Scheme:

S. N.	Items	Primary	Upper Primary
A. Nutrition norm per child per day			
1.	Calorie	450	700
2.	Protein	12 gms	20 gms
B. Food norms per child per day			
1.	Food grains	100 gms	150 gms

2.	Pulses	20 gms	30 gms
3.	Vegetables	50 gms	75 gms
4.	Oil & fat	5 gms	7.5 gms
5.	Salt & condiments	As per need	As per need

Ministry of Education has also informed that as per the Guidelines of the Scheme, salt fortified with Iron & Iodine i.e double fortified salt (DFS) should be used for cooking of mid day meal. In addition, Fortified Rice (Rice fortified with Iron, Folic Acid and B12) is used under the Scheme for improving the nutritional status of children. Further, it was informed that the scheme is implemented in partnership with the States and UTs. The overall responsibilities for providing cooked and nutritious hot cooked meal to the eligible children lies with the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations in accordance with the Guidelines laid down by the Central Government. Some States and UTs provide additional items such as milk, egg, fruits etc. to students from their own resources.

POSHAN Abhiyaan, a flagship scheme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development was launched in 2018 to address the challenge of malnutrition by adopting a synergised and result oriented approach. To ensure a holistic approach, all districts of States/UTs have been covered in the Abhiyaan. The goals of POSHAN Abhiyaan are to achieve improvement in nutritional status of Children from 0-6 years, Out of School Adolescent Girls (11-14 years), Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers, in a time bound manner.

Further, Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 (Mission Poshan 2.0) as an integrated nutrition support programme was announced in budget 2021-2022 to strengthen nutritional content, delivery, outreach and outcomes in all States/UTs with focus on developing practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity to disease and malnutrition. Poshan Abhiyan has been re-aligned under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 alongwith Anganwadi Services; Supplementary Nutrition Programme; and Scheme for Adolescent Girls (14-18 years) which is being implemented in Aspirational Districts and NER.

Government has taken steps to improve nutritional quality and testing, strengthen delivery and leverage technology under Poshan Tracker to improve governance. Streamlined Guidelines were issued on Quality Assurance, Roles and Responsibilities of Duty Holders, procedure for procurement, integrating AYUSH concepts and Data Management and Monitoring for transparency, efficiency and accountability in delivery of Supplementary Nutrition on 13.01.2021.
