

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3837
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05.04.2023

AWARENESS ON MALNUTRITION AMONG WOMEN AND CHILDREN

3837. SMT. MAMATA MOHANTA:

Will the Minister of Women and Child Development be pleased to state:

- (a) how many districts of various States of our country have been identified as having large number of malnourished children during the last three years, district wise, State-wise and year-wise;
- (b) How many children and women have died due to malnutrition in these areas during this period;
- (c) whether Government has organized any massive awareness campaign and other necessary activities in those States and also in other places in order to educate people how to cope with malnourished food;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, what are the other steps Government has taken to overcome this problem?

ANSWER

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

(a) For estimating the number of malnourished children under 5 years of age in the country a nationwide periodic survey is conducted by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare which is known as the National Family Health Survey (NFHS). The recently released report of NFHS-5 (2019-21) has reflected a decline in key nutrition indicators as compared to NFHS-4 (2015-16). The State-wise number of districts with Prevalence of Underweight, Stunting, and Wasting in children higher than national average as per NFHS-5 (2019-21) is **Annexed**.

(b) Malnutrition is not a direct cause of death among children. However, it can increase morbidity and mortality by reducing resistance to infections. No States have reported any direct deaths due to malnutrition.

(c) to (e) 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. POSHAN Abhiyaan was launched on 8th March 2018 throughout the country, including the rural and tribal areas, to achieve improvement in nutritional status of Children under 6 years, Adolescent Girls, Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers in a time bound manner by adopting a synergised and result oriented approach. A novel feature of POSHAN Abhiyaan has been its focus on social and behavioural change communication (SBCC) thus paving way for a mass movement to promote transformative change, referred to as Jan Andolan.

Under Poshan Abhiyaan, Community Based Events or CBEs have served as a significant strategy in changing nutrition practices. CBEs help to celebrate critical milestones in the life of pregnant women and children below two years of age. The gatherings serve as a platform for disseminating essential messages and to counsel pregnant and lactating women, and their husbands/mothers-in-law on appropriate nutrition and health behaviour. The events are organised every month at Anganwadi centres (AWC) and primarily focus on promotion of maternal nutrition (Godh bhara) and/ or initiation of appropriate complementary feeding (Annaprasan). So far, close to 3.70 crore CBEs have been held across the country

At the national level, the Rashtriya Poshan Maah is celebrated in the month of September across the country, while Poshan Pakhwada is celebrated in the month of March. Themes have included overall nutrition, hygiene, water and sanitation, anemia prevention, importance of breastfeeding, growth monitoring, role of Poshan Panchayats, AYUSH for wellbeing, Yoga for Health, importance of Poshan Vatikas for cultivation of local vegetables, medicinal plants/herbs and fruits at the community level, Poshan ke Paanch Sutra, cycle rallies, defeat diarrhoea campaigns, Nukkad Natak/Folk Shows, Self Help Group meetings, etc. In the last Poshan Maah 2022, the focus was especially on triggering Gram Panchayats to serve as platforms for dissemination and awareness generation on nutrition and good health. So far more than 60 crore activities have been conducted across the country.

The efforts under Supplementary Nutrition Programme, POSHAN Abhiyan, Anganwadi Services and Scheme for Adolescent Girls have been re-strategised as Mission Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0 (Mission Poshan 2.0). Mission Poshan 2.0 is designed to address the issue of malnutrition through transparency, accountability, balanced diets, diet diversity and quality, greater grassroots involvement and last-mile delivery of services supported by key strategies, viz., corrective strategies to address nutrition related deficiencies, nutrition awareness strategies to develop good eating habits for sustainable health and well-being, strategies for communication and development of green eco-systems such as Poshan Vatikas at or near Anganwadi Centres, wherever possible and in Government led schools and Gram Panchayat lands where benefits can easily be given to women and children. 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. Further, greater emphasis is being given on the use of millets for preparation of Hot Cooked Meal and Take Home rations (not raw ration) at Anganwadi centres for Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers and Children below 6 years of age, as millets have high nutrient content which includes protein, essential fatty acid, dietary fibre, B-Vitamins, minerals such as calcium, iron, zinc, folic acid and other micro-nutrients thus helping to tackle anemia and other micro-nutrient deficiencies common among women and children. Further, under Mission Poshan, only fortified rice is being allocated to States/UTs.

Annexure

State-wise number of districts with Prevalence of Underweight, Stunting, Wasting in children higher than national average as per NFHS-5 (2019-21)				
S. No.	State	Number of Districts		
		Stunted	Underweight	Wasting
1.	Andaman & Nicobar	0	1	1
2.	Andhra Pradesh	3	4	3
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	3	0	2
4.	Assam	18	17	19
5.	Bihar	33	35	30
6.	Chandigarh	0	0	0
7.	Chhattisgarh	13	13	14
8.	Dadra Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	1	1	2
9.	Delhi	2	0	1
10.	Goa	0	0	1
11.	Gujarat	24	28	29
12.	Haryana	01	1	1
13.	Himachal Pradesh	3	1	3
14.	Jammu & Kashmir	1	2	9
15.	Jharkhand	19	22	16
16.	Karnataka	13	16	12
17.	Kerala	0	0	2
18.	Lakshadweep	0	0	0
19.	Ladakh	1	0	0
20.	Madhya Pradesh	26	27	24
21.	Maharashtra	20	27	28
22.	Manipur	0	0	0
23.	Meghalaya	9	0	2
24.	Mizoram	1	0	0
25.	Nagaland	4	2	6
26.	Odisha	11	16	13
28.	Puducherry	1	1	0
29.	Punjab	2	0	0
30.	Rajasthan	9	7	13
30.	Sikkim	0	0	1
31.	Tamil Nadu	0	1	4
32.	Telangana	9	16	19
33.	Tripura	2	1	3
34.	Uttar Pradesh	54	39	29
35.	Uttarakhand	0	0	0
36.	West Bengal	7	10	13
	Total	290	288	300
