

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1600
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.03.2025

STEPS TO CONTROL MALNUTRITION AMONG CHILDREN

1600 SHRI S. SELVAGANABATHY:

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

- (a) whether Government has taken note of the report prepared by the UN World Food Programme stating that 35.6 percent of Indian children are malnutrition and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the foodgrain yields commensurate with the target yields in order to control malnutrition and if so, the details thereof and, if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the details of average per capita consumption of food among the poor population; and
- (d) whether any action plan has been prepared to control malnutrition among children and if so, the details thereof and, if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SAVITRI THAKUR)

(a) to (d) The report, World Food Programme (WFP) India, Country Brief January 2025, states that India has made significant progress over the last few decades in food grain production and reduction in malnutrition rates. The report further states that for children below 5 years, 35% are stunted and 19% are wasted. For malnutrition details, WFP report has referred to NFHS-5 survey which was conducted for the period 2019-2021.

As per the Report of National Institute of Nutrition 2023, the average adult energy intake per person per day was 2152 Kcal for rural India and 2129 Kcal for urban India.

Statement of time series of yield of major agricultural crops upto 2023-24, as received from Economics, Statistics & Evaluation division of Ministry of Agriculture, is at Annexure.

Moreover, under the 15th Finance Commission, Ministry of Women and Child Development has subsumed various components such as Anganwadi services, Poshan Abhiyaan and Scheme for Adolescent girls (of 14-18 years in Aspirational Districts and North-Eastern region) under the umbrella Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 (Mission Poshan 2.0) to address the challenge of malnutrition. It is a Centrally Sponsored mission, where the responsibility for implementation of various activities lies with the States and UTs. This mission is a universal self-selecting umbrella scheme that is being implemented across the country.

Nutrition goes beyond mere eating of food; it requires proper digestion, absorption, and metabolism which are influenced by factors like sanitation, education and access to safe drinking water. As malnutrition requires a multi-sectoral approach involving dimensions of food, health, water, sanitation and education, it is crucial to effectively address the issue of malnutrition. It is being addressed under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 by establishing cross cutting convergence amongst 18 Ministries/Departments.

Under Mission Poshan 2.0 a new strategy has been made for reduction in malnutrition and for improved health, wellness and immunity through activities like community engagement, outreach, behavioral change, and advocacy. It focuses on Maternal Nutrition, Infant and Young Child Feeding Norms, treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM)/ Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) and wellness through AYUSH practices to reduce prevalence of wasting, stunting, and being underweight.

Under this mission, Supplementary Nutrition is provided to Children (6 months to 6 years), Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers and Adolescent Girls to beat the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition by adopting a life cycle approach. Supplementary nutrition is provided in accordance with the nutrition norms contained in Schedule-II of the National Food Security Act. These norms have been revised in January 2023. The old norms were largely calorie-specific; however, the revised norms are more comprehensive and balanced in terms of both quantity and quality of supplementary nutrition based on the principles of diet diversity that provides for quality protein, healthy fats and micronutrients.

Fortified rice is being supplied to AWCs to meet the requirement of micro-nutrients and to control anaemia among women and children. Greater emphasis is being laid on the use of millets at least once a week for preparation of Hot Cooked Meal and Take Home ration at Anganwadi centers.

Ministries of Women & Child Development and Health & Family Welfare have jointly released the protocol for Community Management of Malnutrition (CMAM) to prevent and treat severely acute malnutrition in children and for reducing associated morbidity and mortality.

Under this Mission, one of the major activities undertaken is Community Mobilization and Awareness Advocacy to educate people on nutritional aspects as adoption of good nutrition habit requires sustained efforts for behavioural change. State and UTs are conducting and reporting regular sensitisation activities under Jan Andolans during Poshan Maahs and Poshan Pakhwadas celebrated in the months of September and March-April respectively. Community Based Events (CBEs) have served as a significant strategy in changing nutritional practices and all Anganwadi workers are required to conduct two Community Based Events every month.

Under Mission Poshan 2.0, the 'Poshan Tracker' application was rolled out on 1st March, 2021 to facilitates monitoring and tracking of infrastructure and service delivery at Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) and beneficiaries on defined indicators. With "Poshan Tracker", real time data on malnutrition indicators is available every month. As compared to NFHS (sample size of approx 6.1 lakh households and survey done after every 5 or 6 years only), Poshan Tracker consistently measures approx. 8.5 crore children approximately each month revealing the real time nutritional status of beneficiaries.

Various rounds of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare since 1992-93 have shown improvement in malnutrition indicators in children across India. Details of these indicators for children since NFHS-1 to NFHS-5 are given below:

NFHS Survey	Stunting %	Underweight %	Wasting %
NFHS-1 (1992-93)*	52	53.4	17.5
NFHS-2 (1998-99)**	45.5	47	15.5
NFHS-3 (2005-6)***	48.0	42.5	19.8
NFHS-4 (2015-16)***	38.4	35.8	21.0
NFHS-5 (2019-21)***	35.5	32.1	19.3

* Under 4 years

** Under 3 years

*** Under 5 years

The above table gives a representative picture of malnutrition indicators among all children of 0-3 years, 0-4 years and 0-5 years age at the relevant time.

The projected population of all children up to 5 years in India for the year 2021 is 13.75 crores approximately (source: Population Projections for India and States 2011-2036, National Commission on Population, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare). However, only 7.49 crores children up to 5 years were enrolled in Anganwadis and registered on Poshan Tracker of the Ministry of Women & Child Development as per the February 2025 data. 7.25 crores of these children were measured on growth parameters of height and weight. 39.09% of them have been found to be stunted, 16.60% have been found to be underweight and 5.35% wasted.

Further, the projected population of all children in India up to 6 years for the year 2021 is approximately 16.1 crores. As per the February 2025 data of Poshan Tracker, 8.80 crores children (0-6 years) were enrolled in Anganwadis out of whom 8.52 crores were measured on growth parameters of height and weight. 37.75% of these children (0-6 years) have been found to be stunted and 17.19% children (0-6 years) have been found to be underweight.

The analysis of the above NFHS data and the Poshan Tracker data shows improvement in malnutrition indicators in children across India.

Annexure

ANNEXURE REFERRED IN REPLY TO PART (b) OF RAJYA SABHA QUESTION NO. 1600 FOR 12.03.2025 REGARDING “STEPS TO CONTROL MALNUTRITION AMONG CHILDREN” ASKED BY SHRI S. SELVAGANABATHY

All India Crop wise Estimates of Yield of Food grains during 2019-20 to 2023-24 are as follows:

All India: Crop-wise Yield

Source: DA&FW
Yield in Kg/Ha

Crop	Yield				
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Rice	2722	2717	2798	2838	2882
Wheat	3440	3521	3537	3521	3559
Maize	3006	3199	3387	3545	3351
Barley	2920	2796	3025	3044	3082
Jowar	989	1099	1092	1079	1162
Bajra	1374	1420	1430	1510	1453
Ragi	1747	1724	1396	1454	1375
Small Millets	809	781	857	898	935
Shree Anna /Nutri Cereals	1248	1322	1302	1364	1337
Nutri/Coarse Cereals	1991	2128	2251	2381	2283
Cereals	2772	2824	2899	2939	2945
Tur	859	914	861	814	827
Gram	1142	1192	1261	1172	1151
Urad	459	538	599	657	656
Moong	548	601	570	663	598
Lentil	847	1017	899	952	1028
Other Pulses	707	731	666	823	776
Total Pulses	823	885	888	902	881
Total Food Grains	2343	2394	2425	2494	2515