

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3035
TO BE ANSWERED ON 26.03.2025

MALNUTRITION AMONG CHILDREN IN THE COUNTRY

3035. SHRI UPENDRA KUSHWAHA:

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

- (a) Whether a large number of the children in Bihar and other States of the country are becoming stunted and emaciated due to malnutrition despite continuous efforts by the Central Government;
- (b) If so, the State-wise details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken by Government to address this issues?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) Under the 15th Finance Commission, various components like Anganwadi services, Poshan Abhiyaan and Scheme for Adolescent girls (of 14-18 years in Aspirational Districts and North-Eastern region) have been subsumed 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, rolled out across the country including Bihar. The responsibility for implementation of various activities within the Scheme lies with the States and UTs.

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, anaemia 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.

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 Anganwadi's 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 Anganwadi's 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.

The malnutrition indicators for children under 5 years as per NFHS-5 (2019-21) report in the State of Bihar are: Stunting as 42.9%, wasting as 22.9% and Underweight as 41%.

Whereas, the malnutrition indicators for children under 5 years in the State of Bihar as per the data of Poshan Tracker for the month of February 2025 are stunting as 47.33%, Wasting as 9.58% and Underweight as 24.09%.

The State-wise malnutrition status of children (0-5 years) is provided at **Annexure**.

ANNEXURE REFERRED IN REPLY TO PART (b) OF RAJYA SABHA QUESTION NO. 3035 REGARDING “MALNUTRITION AMONG CHILDREN IN THE COUNTRY” ASKED BY SHRI UPENDRA KUSHWAHA

State wise details of malnutrition indicators for children age (0 - 5 years) from Poshan Tracker for the month of February 2025 are as follows:

S. No.	State	Stunted%	Wasted%	Underweight%
1	Andhra Pradesh	18.27	4.83	7.91
2	Arunachal Pradesh	37.18	4.54	10.76
3	Assam	42.79	4.12	16.41
4	Bihar	47.33	9.58	24.09
5	Chhattisgarh	26.2	6.96	13.35
6	Goa	7.51	1.1	2.46
7	Gujarat	36.53	7.95	19.84
8	Haryana	27.63	4.17	8.38
9	Himachal Pradesh	19.47	2.07	6.31
10	Jharkhand	43.91	6.39	19.14
11	Karnataka	41.2	3.68	17.61
12	Kerala	37.05	2.93	10.3
13	Madhya Pradesh	46.6	7.04	25.42
14	Maharashtra	44.45	3.8	14.63
15	Manipur	9.69	0.66	2.77
16	Meghalaya	19.02	0.92	4.21
17	Mizoram	29.53	2.49	6.44
18	Nagaland	31.15	5.61	7.26
19	Odisha	28.95	2.98	11.88
20	Punjab	20.67	3.5	6.49
21	Rajasthan	38.57	6.31	18.67
22	Sikkim	10.26	2.04	2.02
23	Tamil Nadu	13.76	3.46	6.4
24	Telangana	33.39	5.25	15.44
25	Tripura	41.35	6.99	17.28
26	Uttar Pradesh	48.72	4.34	19.76
27	Uttarakhand	23.76	2.4	6.21
28	West Bengal	35.22	6.57	11.01
29	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	8.33	2.11	3.62
30	Dadra & Nagar Haveli - Daman & Diu	38.15	2.47	14.46
31	Delhi	42.9	2.51	17.81
32	J&K	14.32	1.28	3.47
33	Ladakh	10.31	0.19	1.54
34	Lakshadweep	40.62	11.86	22.17
35	Puducherry	41.13	7.36	13.22
36	UT-Chandigarh	26.77	1.66	9.21
	Total	39.09	5.35	16.6