

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3187**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.08.2025

**RISING MALNUTRITION CASES IN WEST BENGAL**

3187. SMT. MAUSAM B NOOR:

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

- (a) whether Government is aware of rising malnutrition cases among children of West Bengal, as reported in recent ICDS data;
- (b) the corrective measures taken, including supplementary nutrition delivery and Anganwadi staff training; and
- (c) whether a special intervention plan is proposed for severely affected blocks?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) 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
Poshan Tracker Data (June 2025)***	37	15.9	5.4

\* Under 4 years

\*\* Under 3 years

\*\*\* Under 5 years

The above table about NFHS-1 to NFHS-5 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

Poshan Tracker data gives malnutrition details only about children 0-5 years who are enrolled in the Anganwadis and are measured for height and weight.

The total 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 7.36 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 June, 2025 data. 7 crores of these children were measured on growth parameters of height and weight. 37.07% of them have been found to be stunted, 15.93% have been found to be underweight and 5.46% wasted.

The analysis of the above NFHS data and the Poshan Tracker data shows improvement in malnutrition indicators in children across India. The State/UT wise data from Poshan Tracker, on Stunting, wasting and underweight is available at the link: <https://www.poshantracker.in/statistics>.

**(b) & (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, where the responsibility for implementation of various activities lies with the States and UTs. This mission is a universal self-selecting umbrella scheme where there are no entry barriers for any beneficiary to register and receive services. This mission is being implemented across the country including in all the districts of West Bengal.

The objectives of Mission are as follows:

- To contribute to development of human capital in the country;
- Address challenge of malnutrition;
- Promote nutrition awareness and good eating habits for sustainable health and wellbeing

Nutrition goes beyond mere eating of food; it requires proper digestion, absorption, and metabolism of nutrients. This process is 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 in a convergent manner. 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 Mission Poshan 2.0, Supplementary Nutrition is provided to Children (6 months to 6 years), Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers and Adolescent Girls. 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 and upgraded 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, (Cereal: Pulse ratio of at least 2:1), healthy fats and 7 essential micronutrients (Calcium, Zinc, Iron, Dietary Folate, Vitamin-A, Vitamin-B6 and Vitamin B-12). 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.

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Various steps have been taken up from time to time for improving the supplementary nutrition delivery and Anganwadi staff training in Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0. Following are some of the initiatives undertaken recently:

- Ministry vide notification dated 12th September, 2022 issued Integrated Nutrition Support Programme - Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan (2.0), Rules, 2022 to regulate the entitlements specified under the provisions of National Food Security Act, 2013 for every pregnant women and lactating mother, till six months after child birth and every child in the age group of six months to six years.
- District Nutrition Committee (DNC) chaired by the District Collector is envisaged as a critical mechanism for decentralized planning, implementation, and monitoring of nutrition interventions under Mission POSHAN 2.0. To strengthen and institutionalize the functioning of DNCs, specific Guidelines for District Nutrition Committees have been developed, including suggested data templates for regular review meetings. These guidelines aim to enhance multi-sectoral coordination, improve service delivery, and ensure targeted actions for improving the nutritional status of women and children at the district level.
- Poshan Tracker an ICT tool has been implemented for monitoring and tracking of infrastructure and service delivery at Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) and beneficiaries on defined indicators.
- For last mile tracking of Service Delivery, MWCD has developed Facial Recognition System (FRS) for the distribution of Take-Home Ration to ensure that benefit is given only to the intended beneficiary registered in Poshan Tracker. The FRS has been made mandatory for the distribution of THR from 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2025.
- To strengthen on-ground implementation, a supportive supervision module has been launched in Poshan Tracker for supervisors to monitor the working of Anganwadi centres under them. Dashboards with heat maps and analytics are available at block,

district, state, and national levels. These tools support timely decision-making, allow targeted interventions, and highlight data anomalies for correction.

- Under the Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi (PBPB) initiative, the Ministry is imparting training to all the officials and field functionaries in the States/ UTs through a cascading model of training, wherein Master Trainers (namely, District Officers, Block Coordinators and Supervisors) are trained and the master trainers further train all Anganwadi Workers in the field. As on 28 July 2025, 5, 71,667 AWWs have been trained across the country. In the State of West Bengal, a total of 42,522 AWWs have been trained.
- As on date, 2 lakh Anganwadi Centres have been approved to be upgraded as Saksham Anganwadis for improved nutrition delivery and for imparting early childhood care and development. Saksham Anganwadis are provided with better infrastructure than the conventional Anganwadi Centres which includes internet/Wi-Fi connectivity, LED screens, water purifier/installation of RO Machine and smart learning equipments. A total of 5,359 AWCs have been approved for upgradation to Saksham Anganwadi in the State of West Bengal.
- The Government has taken a policy decision to upgrade each Mini AWCs to a full-fledged Anganwadi Centre with one worker and one helper to help in carrying out the various responsibilities under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 including responsibilities related to Early Childhood Care & Education. Sanction for upgradation of 1,11,363 Mini-AWCs to main AWCs has been issued as on 08.07.2025.
- Ministry of Women & Child Development and Ministry of 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. The community-based approach involves timely detection and screening of children with severe acute malnutrition in the community, management for those without medical complications with wholesome, local nutritious foods at home and supportive medical care.
- To empower the Anganwadi workers and ensure optimal learning for all children, this Ministry has developed two curriculum frameworks - “Navchetana- National Framework for Early Childhood Stimulation for Children from Birth to Three Years, 2024” and “Aadharshila- National Curriculum for Early Childhood Care and Education for Children from Three to Six Years, 2024” under Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi programme. “Navchetna” is regarding holistic early stimulation, through responsive caregiving and opportunities for early learning, for optimal development of children. Whereas, “Adharshila” covers all domains of development including physical/motor, cognitive, language and literacy, socioemotional, cultural/aesthetic as well as positive habits.
- The Suposhit Gram Panchayat Abhiyaan was launched by the Hon’ble Prime Minister on 26th December 2024. The initiative by the Government of India aims to improve nutritional outcomes and well-being through strengthened nutrition services, community participation, and multi-stakeholder convergence. The top 1000 Gram Panchayats will be awarded an incentive of 1 lakh. These incentives will be utilized to motivate the Anganwadi workers & helpers to help improve service delivery, as an incentive to the Gram Panchayat to improve community mobilization & increase enrollment and help nutrition related initiatives such as development of Poshan Vatikas, SNP value addition, etc.

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