

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3198
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.08.2025

NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

3198. SHRI JOSE K. MANI:

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

- (a) whether Government has conducted any recent survey on the nutritional status of women and children in the country;
- (b) if so, the key findings of such reports, especially in terms of stunting, wasting, and anaemia; and
- (c) the steps being taken under the POSHAN Abhiyaan to improve maternal and child nutrition outcomes?

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, 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.

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.

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.

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 of children measured in Anganwadis (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>.

In 2021, the World Bank conducted a survey in 11 priority states to assess the program's delivery of nutrition services. The findings demonstrated that the services delivered through the Poshan Abhiyaan – the receipt of relevant messages, home visits by the anganwadi worker, and attendance at community-based events – were associated with improved nutrition behaviors. The survey also found that the program's nutrition messages reached more than 80% of women, and that 81% of women practiced exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months. A third-party evaluation and impact assessment of Poshan Abhiyaan was conducted by NITI Aayog in 2020 and found its relevance to be satisfactory for tackling malnutrition in the country.
