

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 478
TO BE ANSWERED ON 03.12.2025

NUTRITION DATA DISCREPANCIES

478. SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that there exist a significant difference between malnutrition data on wasting, stunting, underweight and micronutrient deficiencies collected through the POSHAN Tracker and that reported through the National Family Health Survey (NFHS);
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for such discrepancy, State-wise; and
- (c) if not, the details of how Government reconciles the two data sources and ensures reliability of nutrition data for programme design and monitoring?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c): The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) are nationwide surveys conducted by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare with an objective to provide periodic data on population and health indicators as well as data on emerging issues in health and family welfare. NFHS aims to provide essential information that would assist policymakers and programme managers in setting benchmarks and examining progress over time in India's health sector. NFHS employs statistical sampling techniques, which uses standardized questionnaires, sample designs and field procedures to collect data by interviewing respondents. The NFHS-5 covered 6.36 lakh sample households across the country, and interviewed 724115 women and 101839 men to collect information on population and household profiles; marriage and fertility; infant and child mortality; current use and unmet needs of family planning; maternal and child health; nutritional status and anaemia among children and adults etc.

The 'Poshan Tracker' application was rolled out in 2021 as an important digital governance tool under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 of the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Poshan Tracker facilitates monitoring and tracking of Anganwadi Centres, Anganwadi Workers and beneficiaries on several operational parameters. Number of beneficiaries in Poshan Tracker is 8,87,69,382 (including Pregnant women, Lactating Mothers, Adolescent Girls, and Children-0-6 years) as in October 2025. Poshan Tracker has facilitated

near real time data collection for Anganwadi Services such as daily attendance, Early Childhood Care and Education, distribution of Hot Cooked Meal /Take Home Ration, Growth Measurement etc. Poshan Tracker is also leveraged for identification of stunting, wasting, under-weight prevalence among children for management and improvement in their nutritional indicators.

On account of primary objective and methodology adopted for collecting the data, NFHS may be classified as statistical sample survey, whereas Poshan Tracker is an example of administrative data. Statistical estimates based upon sample surveys may suffer from sampling errors and non-sampling errors. Similarly, administrative data have been known to suffer from data gaps due to coverage, measurement, training etc. The difference observed in malnutrition data collected through NFHS and POSHAN Tracker may be attributed to peculiarities in the method and purpose of data collected through sample survey and administrative systems. The insights provided by both data sources are utilized by the government to design, implement and monitor programmes for improvements in nutritional status of women and children in the country.

Details of malnutrition indicators in children across India from various rounds of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) since 1992-93 and from Poshan Tracker (October 2025) 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 (2005-06)*** | 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 (October 2025)*** | 33.54 | 14.41 | 5.03 |

* Under 4 years

** Under 3 years

*** Under 5 years

Further details are available in public domain at the weblink-

<https://mohfw.gov.in/?q=en/statisticsdivisionsurvey>

<https://dhsprogram.com/data/available-datasets.cfm>

<https://www.poshantracker.in/statistics>
