

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 257
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.08.2026

CHILDHOOD STUNTING AND MATERNAL MALNUTRITION

*257. DR. ASHOK KUMAR MITTAL:

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

- (a) The measurable reduction in childhood stunting and maternal malnutrition achieved nationwide under the upgraded Mission Poshan 2.0;
- (b) The total number of Anganwadi workers currently utilizing smartphones and the Poshan Tracker application for real-time beneficiary monitoring;
- (c) Whether digital tracking system has successfully eliminated fake beneficiaries and ensured targeted delivery of supplementary nutrition;
- (d) The details of the funds allocated to upgrade basic rural Anganwadi centres into modernized, early childhood learning Saksham Anganwadis; and
- (e) The steps taken to mandate the inclusion of locally sourced millets in diets?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI ANNPURNA DEVI)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (E) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 257 FOR ANSWER ON 12.08.2026 RAISED BY DR. ASHOK KUMAR MITTAL REGARDING CHILDHOOD STUNTING AND MATERNAL MALNUTRITION

(a) to (e): Various rounds of National Family Health Survey (NFHS) by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) have shown improvement in the prevalence of childhood stunting among children under 5 years across the country. The details in reduction from NFHS-3 to NFHS-6 are as below:

NFHS Survey	Stunting %
NFHS-3 (2005-06) ***	48.0
NFHS-4 (2015-16) ***	38.4
NFHS-5 (2019-21) ***	35.5
NFHS-6 (2023-24) ***	29.3

*** Under 5 years

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) monitors and keeps record of overall indicators relating to maternal health. The data on various indicators of maternal health are available at: <https://www.nfhsiips.in/nfhsuser/publication.php>.

Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) under Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0, has rolled out 'Poshan Tracker' digital application as an ICT based governance tool for near real time monitoring and reviewing of services being provided to beneficiaries. All Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) have been provided smartphones for using Poshan Tracker application and data entry related to services being provided to the beneficiaries under Mission Poshan 2.0. The Ministry releases funds to all States and UTs for procurement of Smartphones including a 2% buffer to be kept and maintained at the district level for smooth and uninterrupted data entry. As per scheme guidelines, smartphones beyond 4 years are eligible for replacement.

For targeted delivery of Supplementary Nutrition and elimination of fake beneficiaries, the MoWCD has introduced Facial Recognition System (FRS) in the Poshan Tracker Application for distribution of Take-Home Ration. For performing e-KYC and Aadhar face matching under FRS, OTP through the registered mobile number has to be taken only ONCE in the entire life cycle of a beneficiary. After this, the beneficiary just has to come to the Anganwadi centre to take their benefits and only simple face matching is required and this is done by Anganwadi worker through her phone in the offline mode also for 5 days in case there are any network or server issues. There is also a feature of nominating a person (Nominee Module) by the pregnant, lactating mother in case they are unable to come to the Anganwadi centre to take their benefit so that ease of living of beneficiary is enhanced. Beneficiary Module and Migration Module on Poshan Tracker also makes services delivery easier for beneficiaries. The Aadhaar based tracking has enabled proper identification of beneficiaries, prevention of leakages and eliminating entries of non-existing beneficiaries. As per the data available on the Poshan Tracker dashboard, 99.89% registered beneficiaries are already Aadhaar verified.

On account of transparent system-driven authentication and digital monitoring, uninterested/ghost/absent beneficiaries have been identified and removed from the system, leading to a rationalization of beneficiary numbers from 10.16 crore (April 2025) to 8.94 crore (July 2026) respectively. This has helped in enhanced targeted delivery of scheme benefits.

Under the Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0, two lakh Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) located in Government buildings have been approved for upgradation into Saksham Anganwadis to strengthen the delivery of nutrition services and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). Saksham Anganwadis are equipped with improved infrastructure, including LED screens, water filtration systems, Poshan Vatikas, ECCE learning materials and Building as Learning Aid (BaLA) paintings. As on 6th August 2026, a total of ₹836.2719 crores has been released to the States and UTs for the upgradation of these Anganwadi Centres into Saksham Anganwadis.

Following steps have been taken by the MoWCD to improve the dietary diversity and availability of essential micronutrients under the supplementary nutrition program:

- Under the Mission Poshan 2.0, States and UTs have been advised to suitably integrate millets under supplementary nutrition program. Additionally, under Wheat Based Nutrition Programme (WBNP) and Scheme for Adolescent Girls, foodgrains including millets are allocated to States and UTs at subsidised rates through the Department of Food & Public Distribution for preparation of supplementary nutrition under the Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0.
- Under this Mission, Supplementary Nutrition is provided to Children (6 months to 6 years), Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers and Adolescent Girls in accordance with the nutrition norms contained in Schedule-II of the National Food Security Act, 2013. 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 (Calcium, Zinc, Iron, Dietary Folate, Vitamin A, Vitamin-B6 and Vitamin B-12).
- To improve acceptability and consumption of Supplementary Nutrition, States and UTs have been given full flexibility to design menus and recipes based on local food habits, cultural preferences and availability of indigenous ingredients. Supplementary nutrition incorporates locally available cereals, millets, pulses, vegetables, nuts and other nutrient-rich foods, thereby promoting dietary diversity while ensuring greater acceptance among beneficiaries.
- The Ministry has issued Comprehensive Guidelines for Supplementary Nutrition on 14th July 2026 which emphasize on improving the quality, diversity and acceptability of Supplementary Nutrition, adherence to prescribed nutritional norms and quality standards.
- One of the major activities undertaken under Mission Poshan 2.0 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 Maah and Poshan Pakhwada, celebrated in the months of September and March-April respectively. Various editions of Poshan Maah and Poshan Pakhwada have emphasized diet diversity, with a particular focus on promoting the use and consumption of millets. More than 150 crore Jan Andolan activities have been conducted since 2018 through 16 Jan Andolans, each helped sensitizing not only the target beneficiaries but communities at large.

- Community Based Events (CBEs) have served as a significant strategy in changing nutritional practices and all Anganwadi workers (AWWs) are required to conduct two Community Based Events every month. So far, around 10.5 crore CBEs have been reported on Poshan Tracker from April 2022 to June 2026.
- To encourage diet-diversity and consumption of wholesome local produce, Poshan Vatikas have been developed at Anganwadi Centres (AWCs). Poshan Vatikas or Nutri-gardens are being set up under Mission Poshan 2.0 at Anganwadi Centers across the country to encourage consumption of local and seasonal fruits, vegetables, thereby improving diet-diversity and increase the intake of micronutrients.
