

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 133**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 21.06.2019

**MALNOURISHMENT**

133. SHRI HARISH DWIVEDI:

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

- (a) whether the incidence of malnutrition among women is higher as compared to men in the country;
- (b) if so, the details in this regard along with the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the number of women and children suffering from malnutrition has declined as a result of the efforts made by the Government; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) & (b) As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) – 4 (2015-16) conducted by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, among women (15-49 years) 22.9% are underweight as compared to 20.2% men (15-49 years) being underweight.

Under-nutrition is a complex and multi-dimensional issue, affected mainly by a number of generic factors including poverty, inadequate food consumption due to access and availability issues, inequitable food distribution, improper maternal infant and child feeding and care practices, inequity and gender imbalances, poor sanitary and environmental conditions; and limited access to quality health, education and social care services. The situation is further compounded by increased nutritional needs of women during specific stages in the life cycle.

(c) & (d) As a result of the concerted efforts of the Government, the level of malnutrition among women and children has reduced in the country as is evident from the report of National Family Health Survey (NFHS) – 4 (2015-16), which shows reduction from the previous NFHS-3 (2005-06) levels.

As per the report of National Family Health Survey (NFHS) – 4 conducted by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2015-16, 35.7% children under 5 years of age are underweight and 38.4% are stunted indicating a reduction from the previous NFHS – 3 conducted in 2005-06, which reported 42.5% children under 5 years of age as underweight and 48% stunted. Further, 22.9% women (15-49 years of age) have chronic energy deficiency (BMI less than 18.5) which is a decline from the previous NFHS-3 levels which reported 35.5% women having chronic energy deficiency.

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