

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**LOK SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO. \*151**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 16.12.2022

**“ANEMIC WOMEN IN REPRODUCTIVE AGE GROUP”**

\*151 SHRI T. R. BAALU

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

- (a) whether India accounts for almost a quarter of the stunted children worldwide and the country's share of anemic women in the reproductive age group is a substantial one-third of the global numbers;
- (b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (c) the measures taken/being taken by the Government keeping in view the fact that India's food policies have not succeeded in responding adequately to the growing nutrition needs of the people and meet the challenges of the changing times?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House

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**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (A) TO (C) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 151 BY SHRI T. R. BALLU TO BE ANSWERED ON 16.12.2022 REGARDING “ANEMIC WOMEN IN REPRODUCTIVE AGE GROUP”**

(a) & (b) India has shown improvement in the prevalence of stunting among children. The estimated number of underweight, malnourished and severely malnourished children under 5 years of age is obtained under National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. As per the recent report of NFHS-5 (2019-21), the nutrition indicators for children under 5 years have improved as compared with NFHS-4 (2015-16). The prevalence of Stunting among the children under 5 years as per NFHS 5 survey has reduced from 38.4% to 35.5%. Further, the prevalence of anaemia among all women of reproductive age group 15-49 years in the country as per the National Family Health Survey 5 (2019-21) is 57 percent. Government has accorded high priority to the issue of malnutrition and is making serious efforts to address this issue. The efforts under the Supplementary Nutrition Programme under Anganwadi Services and POSHAN Abhiyaan have been rejuvenated and converged as ‘Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0’ (Mission Poshan 2.0). It seeks to address the challenges of malnutrition in children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers through a strategic shift in nutrition content and delivery and by creation of a convergent eco-system to develop and promote practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity.

Poshan 2.0 focuses on Maternal Nutrition, Infant and Young Child Feeding Norms, Treatment of MAM/SAM and Wellness through AYUSH. It rests on the pillars of Convergence, Governance, and Capacity-building. POSHAN Abhiyaan is the key pillar for Outreach and will cover innovations related to nutritional support, ICT interventions, Media Advocacy and Research, Community Outreach and Jan Andolan. Steps have been taken to improve nutritional quality and testing in accredited labs, strengthen delivery and leverage technology under the 'Poshan Tracker', a robust ICT enabled platform to improve governance with regard to real time monitoring of provisioning of supplementary nutrition for prompt supervision and management of services. Government released Streamlined Guidelines dated 13.1.2021 for greater transparency, accountability and quality in the nutrition support programme and service delivery. These guidelines emphasize on ensuring the quality of supplementary nutrition, highlights roles and responsibilities of duty holders, IT enabled data management and monitoring, leveraging of traditional knowledge through AYUSH, procurement and convergence for achieving good nutritional outcomes.

Under Poshan 2.0, focus is on diet diversity, food fortification, leveraging traditional systems of knowledge and popularizing use of millets. Nutrition awareness strategies under Poshan 2.0 aim to develop sustainable health and well-being through regional meal plans to bridge dietary gaps. A programme to support development of Poshan

Vatikas at Anganwadi centers to meet dietary diversity gaps leveraging traditional knowledge in nutritional practices has also been taken up. Further, the Government of India has launched Anemia Mukht Bharat (AMB) strategy with the target to reduce anemia in women, children and adolescents in life cycle approach. The 6x6x6 strategy under AMB implies six age groups, six interventions and six institutional mechanisms. The six interventions under Anemia Mukht Bharat strategy include, Prophylactic Iron Folic Acid Supplementation, Periodic de-worming, Intensified year-round Behaviour Change Communication Campaign, Testing and treatment of anemia, using digital methods and point of care treatment, Convergence and coordination with other line departments and ministries for strengthening implementation etc

(c) It is incorrect to state that India's food policies have not succeeded in responding adequately to the growing nutrition needs of the people. To address the challenges of malnutrition and anaemia in women and children arising due to deficiency of micro nutrients like Iron, Folic Acid and Vitamin B-12, under Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) of Anganwadi Services, Fortified Rice is being allocated to State/UTs from second quarter of 2021-22. From the 3rd quarter of FY 2021-22 onwards, only Fortified Rice is being allocated to all the State/UTs. So far, under SNP, this Ministry has allocated 731962 MTs of Fortified Rice in FY 2021-22 and 938207 MTs of Fortified rice up to third quarter of FY 2022-23 to all the States/UTs. Further, more emphasis is being given on the supply of millets for preparation of Hot Cooked Meal and Take Home rations at Anganwadis for Pregnant Women, Lactating mothers and children below 6 years of age, as millets are highly nutritious and are known to have high nutrient content which includes protein, essential fatty acid, dietary fibre, B-Vitamins, minerals such as calcium, iron, zinc, folic acid and other micro-nutrients thus helping to tackle anaemia and other micro-nutrient deficiencies common among women and children. It may also be noted that as per the Mission Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0 guidelines, millets need to be mandatorily supplied at least once a week and suitably integrated in THR and HCM in a palatable form.

The issue of food security at the household level has been addressed by the Government by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food grains at subsidised rates. With a view to achieve nutrition security in the country, Government of India approved for supply of fortified rice throughout the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman-PM POSHAN [erstwhile Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDM) and Other Welfare Scheme of Government of India in all States and Union Territories (UTs). Further, even during COVID pandemic, free ration was provided to 80 crore people under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana.

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