

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1531
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.02.2023

MALNUTRITION IN TRIBAL DOMINATED AREAS

1531. SHRI KANAKMAL KATARA:

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

- (a) the details of the steps taken to address the problem of malnutrition among children in tribal dominated areas of the country including Rajasthan;
- (b) whether the improvement in the situation has been upto the desired/anticipated level of the implementation of the schemes to improve the nutritional level amongst tribal children;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether the Government would consider to set up any monitoring mechanism or any Committee for creating awareness in this regard; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a) The Government has accorded high priority to the issue of malnutrition and is implementing several schemes like POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anganwadi Services, Scheme for Adolescent Girls and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) as direct targeted interventions to address the problem of malnutrition in the country covering rural, urban and tribal regions of the country.

POSHAN Abhiyaan launched on 8th March 2018, aims to achieve improvement in nutritional status of Adolescent Girls, Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers in a time bound manner by adopting a synergised and result oriented approach. The Abhiyaan has been rolled out across 36 States/UTs which also includes all districts including tribal dominated areas of Rajasthan.

POSHAN Abhiyaan being a multi-ministerial convergence mission also focuses on converting the agenda of improving nutrition into Jan Andolan through Community Mobilization/ Sensitisation and thus bringing nutrition-linked Behavioral Change across India. Under Jan Andolans, Poshan Maah and Poshan Pakhwada are celebrated annually in the month of September and March respectively. In the most recently held Jan Andolan viz. Poshan Maah, celebrated in September 2022, a total of 17.57 crore sensitisation activities on nutrition were reported from entire India. Out of the 182 Tribal Districts (as reported by MoTA), 88% of the Tribal Districts of India (161 nos.) have actively participated in Poshan Maah 2022 and have contributed to 18% of the total reported activities (3.17 crore). During Poshan Pakhwada 2022, total

reported activities were 2.96 crore, in which 85% of Tribal Districts of India (155 nos.) have participated while contributing to 12% of the total reported activities (35.84 lakh). In Rajasthan, approx 14,23,711 and 45,211 Jan Andolan based activities were carried out in all the 33 districts during Poshan Maah 2022 and Poshan Pakhwada 2022 respectively.

Further, Mission Poshan 2.0, an integrated nutrition support programme has been announced in budget 2021-2022 for all States/UTs including the state of Rajasthan. It seeks to strengthen nutritional content, delivery, outreach and outcomes with focus on developing practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity to disease and malnutrition. Steps have been taken to improve nutritional quality and testing in accredited labs, strengthen delivery and leverage technology under Poshan Tracker to improve governance.

(b) & (c) The data on nutritional indicators is captured under the National Family Health Surveys conducted periodically by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. However, the NFHS reports do not provide separate estimations for tribal dominated areas but State-UT wise data on nutritional indicators of tribal communities is provided under the survey. As per the recent report of NFHS-5, the prevalence of malnutrition among tribal children in the country has shown a declining trend, viz., the prevalence of stunting, wasting and underweight has reduced from 43.8%, 27.4% and 45.3% respectively in NFHS-4 to 40.9%, 23.2% and 39.5% respectively under NFHS-5. Malnutrition is a complex and multi-dimensional issue, affected mainly by a number of generic factors including inadequate food consumption due to economic and social factors, inequity and gender imbalances, poor sanitary and environmental conditions, etc. The data on nutrition indicators is covered under the National family Health Surveys conducted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

(d) & (e) Under the POSHAN Abhiyaan, IT systems have been leveraged to strengthen and bring about transparency in nutrition delivery support systems. The 'Poshan Tracker' application was rolled out by this Ministry on 1st March 2021 as an important governance tool. Technology under Poshan Tracker is being leveraged for dynamic identification of stunting, wasting, under-weight prevalence among children; and last mile tracking of nutrition service delivery. Further, under Poshan Abhiyan, for the first time, a digital revolution was ushered in when the Anganwadi Centres were equipped with mobile devices. The mobile application has also facilitated digitization and automation of physical registers used by AWWs that helps in improving their quality of work. Further, Streamlined guidelines were issued on 13.01.2021, covering several aspects such as quality assurance, roles and responsibilities of duty holders, procedure for procurement, integrating AYUSH concepts and Data management and monitoring through "Poshan Tracker" for transparency, efficiency and accountability in delivery of Supplementary Nutrition has been issued. Under these guidelines, the DM has been designated as the Nodal Point in the district for monitoring nutritional status and quality standards.

One of the major activities undertaken under POSHAN Abhiyaan is Community Mobilization and Awareness Advocacy leading to Jan Andolan to educate the people on nutritional aspects. Under the Abhiyaan, well-researched and designed communication plan & IEC materials have been developed and intensive Mass Media Campaigns are conducted through various mass media channels like radio, television and social media. An important focus has therefore been on 'Behaviour Change

Communication' or BCC to address inadequate and inappropriate infant and young child feeding practices, nutrition and care during pregnancy and adolescence.

Community Based Events or CBEs have served as a significant strategy in changing nutrition practices. CBEs help to celebrate critical milestones in the life of children below two years of age. The gatherings serve as a platform for disseminating essential messages on appropriate nutrition and health behaviour. The events are organised every month at the Anganwadi centres (AWC) and primarily focus on promotion of maternal nutrition (Godh bhara) and/ or initiation of appropriate complementary feeding (Annaprasan). Around 3.70 crore Community Based Events (CBEs) have been organized since the launch of the Abhiyaan in Anganwadi Centres

Also, through the use of Poshan Tracker, videos are disseminated, wherein the beneficiaries are counselled on nutrition related issues like breastfeeding, complementary feeding, infant and young child care. Poshan Tracker has embedded videos related to Infant and Young Child care and nutrition for educating the beneficiaries residing in rural, urban and tribal regions of the country.

At a national level, the *Rashtriya Poshan Maah* is celebrated in the month of September across the country while *Poshan Pakhwada* is celebrated in the month of March. Themes have included overall nutrition, hygiene, water and sanitation, anaemia prevention, importance of breast-feeding, growth monitoring, role of Poshan Panchayats, AYUSH for Well-being, 'Back to Basics – Yoga for Health', importance of Poshan Vatikas for cultivation of local vegetables, medicinal plants/herbs and fruits at the community level, Poshan ke Paanch Sutra, cycle rallies, defeat diarrhoea campaigns, Nukkad Natak/Folk Shows, SHG meetings, etc. More than 50+ crore activities have been carried out under Poshan Maah and Poshan Pakhwada across the country.
