

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2889
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.03.2023

AWARENESS ON MALNUTRITION

2889. SHRI SUNIL BABURAO MENDHE:
SHRI GIRISH CHANDRA:

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

- a. the manner in which women are being made aware and educated on malnutrition in the rural parts of the country; and
- b. the manner in which education is being spread and knowledge is being imparted on malnutrition to the villagers especially in rural and tribal districts of Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh?

ANSWER

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

(a) Government has accorded high priority to the issue of malnutrition and is implementing several schemes/programmes of different Ministries/Departments through States/UTs to address various aspects related to nutrition. POSHAN Abhiyaan was launched on 8th March 2018 throughout the country, including the rural and tribal areas, to achieve improvement in nutritional status of Children under 6 years, Adolescent Girls, Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers in a time bound manner by adopting a synergised and result oriented approach. A novel feature of POSHAN Abhiyaan has been its focus on social and behavioural change communication (SBCC) thus paving way for a mass movement to promote transformative change, referred to as Jan Andolan. 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.

Under Poshan Abhiyaan, 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 pregnant women and children below two years of age. The gatherings serve as a platform for disseminating essential messages and to counsel pregnant and lactating women, and their husbands/mothers-in-law on appropriate nutrition and health behaviour. The events are organised every month at Anganwadi centres (AWC) and primarily focus on promotion of maternal nutrition (Godh bhara) and/ or initiation of appropriate complementary feeding (Annaprasan).

At the 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, anemia prevention, importance

of breastfeeding, growth monitoring, role of Poshan Panchayats, AYUSH for wellbeing, 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, Self Help Group meetings, etc. In the last Poshan Maah 2022, the focus was especially on triggering Gram Panchayats to serve as platforms for dissemination and awareness generation on nutrition and good health.

(b) In the State of Uttar Pradesh, following initiatives have been taken in the rural and tribal areas to spread awareness on the issues related to malnutrition:

- i. **Community based Events (CBEs)** like *Annaprashan*, Godh bharaai, Suposhan diwas, WASH Day are organised to create awareness on nutrition to children and women.
- ii. **Health and Nutrition Education** sessions are organized at AWCs to create nutrition related awareness among community and bring about improvement in the nutritional status of women and children.
- iii. **Mothers Group Meetings** are held at AWCs every month with participation of mothers of children attending the AWCs.
- iv. **Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Days** are organized, during which health checkups are conducted and health and nutrition services are provided to children and women beneficiaries in coordination with line departments.
- v. In order to improve the skills of the AWWs and improve the quality of services delivered during home visits, a **Poshan Manual “Saksham”** is provided. This manual serves as an effective aid for the AWWs in counseling pregnant women and lactating mothers on health and nutrition issues, growth monitoring and its importance and counseling during home visits.
- vi. **Poshan Pathshalas** are organized through webcast to create awareness on nutrition related issues among beneficiaries and community. The topics include Early initiation of breastfeeding, Exclusive breastfeeding and supplementary nutrition.

Further, in the State of Maharashtra, following initiatives have been taken to spread awareness on the issues related to malnutrition:

- i. Meeting of Pregnant Woman and Lactating Mothers are held at Anganwadi level in which health and nutrition counseling is done with the help of Health department.
- ii. “Poshan Maah” is celebrated in the month of September to ensure the awareness of Hygiene and Nutrition among the society, in which rallies are organized with hoardings, flex and banners.
- iii. To spread the importance of exclusive breast feeding “Stanpan Saptah (Breast feeding week)” is celebrated in the Month of August.
- iv. Exhibition of economically affordable recipes is organized to spread awareness on the nutritional values of vegetables.
- v. Hand wash days are celebrated at Anganwadi centers to spread the awareness of the hygiene.
- vi. Community based events are organized to spread the knowledge of vaccination, nutrition and hygiene.
- vii. Home visits are undertaken by Anganwadi Worker and Supervisor along with the health staff to counsel mothers and family members.
