

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2642
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.08.2023

STATUS OF MALNUTRITION IN INDIA

2642. SHRI SRIDHAR KOTAGIRI:
SHRIMATI RANJEETA KOLI:
DR. MANOJ RAJORIA:
SHRI SUMEDHANAND SARASWATI:

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

- (a) whether India still has the highest number of cases of child malnutrition in the world and if so, the details and the current situation of malnutrition in the country;
- (b) whether the situation of malnutrition has largely improved in the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has reviewed the activities of Poshan Abhiyan for reducing stunting, undernutrition, anaemia, low birth weight etc. in children and if so, the details and the outcome thereof;
- (d) the details of budget allocated for addressing the challenge of malnutrition/wasting in children;
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to invest in capacity of Anganwadi, ASHA functionaries; and
- (f) the policies being adopted/additional efforts undertaken by the Government for resolving/ addressing this problem/challenge of malnutrition in children?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) The data on nutritional indicators is captured under the National Family Health Surveys (NFHS) conducted periodically by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The last round, NFHS-5, was conducted during 2019-21. As per the 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 has reduced from 38.4% in NFHS-4 to 35.5% in NFHS-5, wasting from 21.0% to 19.3% and underweight from 35.8% to 32.1%.

Under Poshan Abhiyan scheme of the Ministry, IT systems have been leveraged to strengthen and bring about transparency in monitoring nutrition status of beneficiaries under the scheme and nutrition delivery support systems at the Anganwadi Centres. The 'Poshan Tracker' application was rolled out on 1st March

2021 as an important governance tool. The Poshan Tracker facilitates monitoring and tracking of all AWCs, AWWs and beneficiaries on defined indicators. Technology under Poshan Tracker is being leveraged for dynamic identification of stunting, wasting, under-weight prevalence among children. For enhanced monitoring, the Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) have been technology empowered with smartphones (nearly 11 lakh). Further, to promote regular growth measurement, 12.5 lakh Growth Measurement Devices have been procured by States/UTs for Anganwadi Centres. These include Infantometer, Stadiometer, Weighing Scale for Mother and Infant, Weighing Scale for Child

As per data recorded in Poshan Tracker, ICT application for Mission Poshan 2.0, close to 7 crore children were measured in the country in the month of June itself, of which, 7% were wasted and 19% underweight, which is significantly lower than NFHS indicators.

(d) Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 (Mission Poshan 2.0) is an Integrated Nutrition Support Scheme which encompasses Anganwadi Services, Poshan Abhiyan and Scheme for Adolescent Girls. For the FY 2023-24, Rs 20,554,31 crore has been allocated for the Mission.

(e) Capacity building of frontline functionaries is critical in enhancing their effectiveness. Under Mission Poshan 2.0, focus is given on building the capacity of front-line functionaries for effective and consistent service delivery. Approx. 10.22 lakh Anganwadi Workers have been successfully trained. Capacity building of ASHAs is also a continuous process and periodic trainings are conducted by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare under the National Rural Health Mission to equip them with necessary knowledge and skills to act as a 'bridge' between the rural people and health service outlets

Also, recently the Government has launched the Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi (PBPB) programme, which is a path breaking ECCE program to help India develop world's largest, universal, high-quality pre-school network at Anganwadi Centers in alignment with the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Under the programme, steps have been taken to bolster early childhood care and education and good nutrition practices through development and use of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) and locally available toys for learning at AWCs. Under the programme there is special focus on capacity building trainings for ICDS functionaries on (i). Promoting early stimulation for the first 1000 days and ECCE for children 3-6 years of age, (ii). developing ECCE understanding of Anganwadi Workers, (iii). emphasizing developmental domains (socio-emotional-ethical, physical and motor, cognitive, etc., and the development of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), and (iv). reinforcing nutrition knowledge of Anganwadi Workers.

(f) 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, under Mission Poshan 2.0 and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) under Mission Shakti, as direct targeted interventions to address the problem of malnutrition in the country.

Mission Poshan 2.0 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 monitoring of provisioning of supplementary nutrition for prompt supervision and management of services.

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.

Further, greater emphasis is being given on the use of millets (coarse grains) for preparation of Hot Cooked Meal and Take Home rations (not raw ration) at Anganwadi centres for Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers and Children below 6 years of age, as millets 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 anemia and other micro-nutrient deficiencies in women and children. Under Supplementary Nutrition Programme of Mission Poshan 2.0, only fortified rice is being allocated to States/UTs.
