

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3756**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.08.2023

**NON-AVAILABILITY OF NUTRITION SCHEMES IN RURAL AREAS**

3756. DR. ALOK KUMAR SUMAN :

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

- (a) whether a large portion of rural women and children in the country are suffering from malnutrition due to unavailability of centrally sponsored schemes for providing nutrition there;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any initiatives to ensure the punitive measures for violating the norms in providing supplementary food to those women and children suffering from malnutrition;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the details regarding the death of women and children due to malnutrition in the country particularly in Bihar, UP and Odisha?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) & (b) 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 among children under 5 years and women in rural areas of country have improved as compared with NFHS-4 (2015-16). The prevalence of stunting has reduced from 41.2% in NFHS-4 to 37.3% in NFHS-5, wasting from 21.4% to 19.5%, underweight from 38.3% to 33.8% and underweight (BMI less than 18.5 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) among women of rural areas from 26.8% to 21.3% . Further, , 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 June 2023, as per which, 7% were wasted and 19% underweight, which is significantly lower than NFHS indicators.

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 throughout the country included rural areas of country.

(c) & (d) The provision of supplementary nutrition to children under 6 years of age, pregnant women and lactating mothers is provided as per nutritional norms. The scheme is a self-selecting scheme. All beneficiaries are free to register and avail nutrition from the Anganwadi Centres. The administration and implementation of the scheme including distribution of supplementary nutrition falls under the ambit of State Governments/UT administrations as the scheme is a centrally sponsored scheme. However, the Scheme Guidelines issued by the Government of India emphasizes that the States/UTs shall ensure the quality of Supplementary Nutrition provided with reference to the norms of food safety as well as nutrient composition and carry out periodic checks and get Supplementary Nutrition tested through the FSSAI owned/registered/ empanelled/ accredited laboratories for adhering to food quality standards and testing in accordance with Streamlined Guidelines issued by Central Government. Further, it has also been recommended that random testing be conducted by Anganwadi Services functionaries after receipt of stock at the AWC or at the Block level. Anganwadi Services functionaries i.e. CDPO or Supervisor shall draw the samples, as per the prescribed procedure and send the sample for testing to a FSSAI owned/registered/empanelled/NABL accredited laboratory. The District Nutrition Committee under the DM shall ensure periodic testing of Take Home Ration (THR, not raw ration) in randomly selected Anganwadi Centres.

To ensure last mile tracking of service delivery SMS alerts to beneficiaries has been introduced for delivery of THR. Also, a Poshan Helpline (14408) operationalised in November 2022 has been made available for beneficiaries for registering concerns.

(e) Malnutrition is not a direct cause of death among women and children. However, it can increase morbidity and mortality by reducing resistance to infections. No States/UTs have reported deaths due to malnutrition to the Ministry.

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