

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2244
TO BE ANSWERED ON 15.12.2023

ANEMIC WOMEN REPRODUCTIVE AGE GROUP

2244 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) The 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. In the 15th FC, components of nutritional support for children below the age of 6 years, pregnant women and lactating mother, Adolescent Girls (14 – 18 years); Early Childhood Care and Education [3-6 years]; Anganwadi infrastructure including modern, upgraded Saksham Anganwadi, POSHAN Abhiyaan and Scheme for Adolescent Girls have been reorganised under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 (Mission Poshan 2.0). Mission Poshan 2.0 focuses on Maternal Nutrition, Infant and Young Child Feeding Norms, Treatment of MAM/SAM and Wellness through Ayush practices to reduce wasting and under-weight prevalence besides stunting and anaemia.

The objectives of Poshan 2.0 are as follows:

- To contribute to human capital development of the country;
- Address challenges of malnutrition;
- Promote nutrition awareness and good eating habits for sustainable health and well-being; and
- Address nutrition related deficiencies through key strategies.

Steps have been taken to improve nutritional quality and testing in accredited labs, strengthen delivery and leverage technology under Poshan Tracker to improve governance. States/UTs have been advised to promote use of AYUSH systems for prevention of malnutrition and related diseases. A programme to support development of Poshan Vatikas at Anganwadi Centres to meet dietary diversity gap leveraging traditional knowledge in nutritional practices has also been taken up.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) implements Anemia Mukht Bharat (AMB) strategy to reduce anemia among six beneficiaries age group - children (6-59 months), children (5-9 years), adolescents (10-19 years), pregnant women, lactating women and in women of reproductive age group (15-49 years) in life cycle approach through implementation of six interventions via robust institutional mechanism. The key interventions of MoHFW to improve maternal and child health including nutritional deficiencies and anemia, *inter alia*, are Prophylactic Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation; deworming; intensified year-round Behaviour Change Communication Campaign for improving Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation; encouraging increase in intake of iron-rich food through diet diversity/quantity/frequency and/or fortified foods with focus on harnessing locally available resources; testing of anaemia using digital methods and point of care treatment; addressing non-nutritional causes of anaemia in endemic pockets with special focus on malaria, hemoglobinopathies and fluorosis.

As per the National Family Health Survey 5 (2019-21) conducted by the Ministry of Health & family Welfare, the prevalence of stunted children under five years in the country is 38.4%. Moreover, 57.0% of all women age 15-49 years are anemic.

As per the data of Poshan Tracker for the month of November 2023, around 7.44 crore children under 6 years were measured, out of whom 37.51% were found to be stunted and 17.43% were found to be underweight and 6% children under 5 years were found to be wasted. The levels of underweight and wasting are much less than that projected by NFHS 5.
