

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 20
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.02.2024

UNUTILIZED FUNDS UNDER POSHAN ABHIYAAN

20. SHRI RITESH PANDEY

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

- (a) Whether the Government has taken cognizance of the gross underutilization of allocated funds under the Poshan Abhiyaan, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (b) The quantum of funds remaining unutilized under the scheme since 2018, State/UT-wise and year wise along with the percentage decline based on the five indicators mentioned in the scheme;
- (c) Whether the Government is contemplating a policy under the scheme that binds the States/UTs to increase their spending to accomplish set targets, if so, the details and if not, reasons therefor;
- (d) Whether the Government intends to analyze the success of the scheme in the districts which witnessed improvements as well as reversal to synergize further implementation of the scheme; and
- (e) Whether the Government plans to modify the district prioritisation method to address the problem of district inequality and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (e) Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 (henceforth 'Mission Poshan 2.0') is an Integrated Nutrition Support Programme that was launched in 2021 for all the States/UTs and Districts of the country to address the challenging situation of malnutrition in children, adolescent girls, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. The mission aims at developing India's human capital and integrates three existing schemes (Anganwadi Services, Poshan Abhiyaan and Scheme for Adolescent Girls), adopting a lifecycle approach to malnutrition reduction

Poshan 2.0 is a Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and is implemented by the States/Union Territories (UTs). The budget allocation for the schemes is finalised based on inputs received from the States/UTs regarding their requirements and the trend of expenditure over the previous years. Further, under CSS, States/UTs are required to contribute their corresponding share of funds, incur a minimum of 75% expenditure of total available funds and submit the Statement of Expenditure (SoE)/ Utilization Certificates to enable the Ministry to release the central share of funds. Wherever the above conditions are not met, release of the central share gets

affected/delayed resulting in unspent balance at the end of the financial year. Nevertheless, smooth functioning and proper implementation of the schemes, including utilization of funds, is reviewed periodically through meetings/video conferences with States/UTs and field visits. The Central Government has been persistent in its efforts to ensure optimum utilisation of funds towards the cause.

The estimated number of underweight, malnourished and severely malnourished children under 5 years of age is obtained under National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. As per the recent report of NFHS-5 (2019-21), the nutrition indicators for children under 5 years have improved as compared with NFHS-4 (2015-16). Wasting has improved from 21% (NFHS-4) to 19.3 % (NFHS-5), Under-weight has improved from 35.7% (NFHS-4) to 32.1% (NFHS-5) and stunting has improved from 38.4% (NFHS-4) to 35.5% (NFHS-5).

Moreover, as per the data of Poshan Tracker for the month of December 2023, around 7.44 crore children under 6 years were measured, out of whom 36% were found to be stunted and 17% 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.

For ensuring effective implementation and smooth operationalisation of Poshan 2.0, the Ministry has issued Operational Guidelines on 01.08.2022 to all the 36 States/UTs covering all the districts of the country. Moreover, streamlined guidelines were also issued for transparency and accountability in delivery of supplementary nutrition and to track nutritional outcomes on 13.01.2021. A third-party evaluation of all Centrally Sponsored Schemes in Women and Child Development Sector including Anganwadi services, POSHAN Abhiyaan was conducted by NITI Aayog in 2020. The evaluation found the relevance of Anganwadi Services scheme & POSHAN Abhiyaan satisfactory.

Under Poshan 2.0 costing has been earmarked under various components. Moreover, procurement of Smartphones and Growth Monitoring Devices, such as Infantometer, Stadiometer, Weighing Scale etc., are one of the key components under the Mission, wherein, fund utilization can be maximized. In this regard, fresh guidelines have also been issued in January 2023 giving revised technical specifications for procurement of Growth Monitoring Devices by the States/UTs. Incentives are also earmarked for Anganwadi Workers undertaking 80% targeted growth measurements and 60% targeted home visits every month. These are monitored through the ICT application, Poshan Tracker, which captures the data of key services delivered across the country. Technology under the Poshan Tracker is also being leveraged for dynamic identification of stunting, wasting and underweight prevalence among children and last mile tracking of nutrition service delivery. Poshan Tracker enables near real-time monitoring on defined indicators. States/UTs can see their progress on various indicators on the Poshan Tracker dashboard on monthly basis and can make course correction wherever required.
