

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 228
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 6TH MARCH, 2020
MALNUTRITION AND STUNTING AMONG CHILDREN**

***228. SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH:**

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

(a) whether as per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) IV around 38.4 per cent of children under 5 years of age are stunted in the country and there has been an increase in childhood wasting in 10 years, from 19.8 per cent to 21 per cent with acute malnutrition rising in the country, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(b) the details of interventions undertaken by the Government to address this issue;

(c) whether the Government is further seized of the fact that Micronutrient deficiencies or 'hidden hunger' remains high in the country;

(d) if so, whether the Government proposes to conduct a study on the prevalence of such conditions in the country by constituting a high level committee; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(DR. HARSH VARDHAN)**

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.228* FOR 6TH MARCH, 2020**

(a) to (c) Yes. As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) 2015-16, 38.4% of under-five children are stunted and 21% are wasted. Stunting has reduced from 48% in NFHS-3 to 38.4% in NFHS-4, however, wasting has increased from 19.8% in NFHS-3 to 21% in NFHS-4. One of the reason for slight increase is wasting while other indicator of malnutrition which has come down in NFHS 4 has been identified as seasonality.

The Government of India has initiated various interventions to address the issues of under-nutrition in the country. POSHAN (Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment) Abhiyaan has been launched to address malnutrition challenges in India by engaging all the important stakeholders through convergence. The goals of POSHAN Abhiyaan is to prevent and reduce stunting, underweight and low birth weight by 2% per annum and the reduction of anaemia by 3% per annum.

The Government of India has also launched several schemes under the aegis of Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) to tackle the malnutrition in the country including Aanganwadi Services, Schemes for Adolescent Girls (SAG) and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojna (PMMVY) to improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age group of 0-6 yrs. The Anganwadi services scheme provide a package of six services including Supplementary Nutrition, Pre School Non Formal Education, Nutrition and Health Education, Immunization, Health Checkups and Referral Services.

In addition to aforementioned interventions, Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health and Nutrition (RMNCAH+N) under National Health Mission (NHM) is also implemented to reduce malnutrition across the life cycle. The details of various health and nutrition interventions under National Health Mission (NHM) are as follows:

- Early initiation, Exclusive breastfeeding for first six months and Complementary Feeding are important for the prevention of malnutrition in under five children. The Mothers' Absolute Affection (MAA) program is being implemented to promote age appropriate IYCF practices while capacitating health care providers at the facility and community level as well as awareness generation of the mothers and care providers through mother's meeting,

- Home Based Care for Young Children (HBYC) has been initiated as an extension of Home Based Newborn Care (HBNC) to provide community based care by ASHA workers with focus on improvement in child rearing practices, nutrition counselling and breastfeeding promotion till 15th month of life.
- Sick children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) are being treated and managed for medical complications at special units called as Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs), set up at public health facilities.
- Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) is being supported to provide vaccination to children against life threatening diseases such as Tuberculosis, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Polio, Tetanus, Hepatitis B, Measles, Rubella, Pneumonia and Meningitis caused by Haemophilus Influenzae B. The Rotavirus vaccination has also been rolled out in the country for prevention of Rotaviral diarrhoea. Mission Indradhanush is targeted to immunize children who are either unvaccinated or partially vaccinated i.e. those that have not been covered during the rounds of routine immunization for various reasons.
- Biannual Vitamin A supplementation (VAS) rounds are being conducted for children from 9 months to 5 yr. of age group.
- National De-worming Day is being implemented as a fixed day strategy to administer Albendazole tablets to all the children in the age group of 1-19 years through the platform of AWCs and schools for good nutritional outcomes and prevention of anaemia.
- Prevention of childhood illness such as diarrheal diseases which in turn prevents childhood malnutrition. Control of childhood diarrhoea is being carried out by conducting annual Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight (IDCF) and Defeat Diarrhoea Initiative.
- ‘Anemia Mukht Bharat (AMB)’ for supplementation and treatment of anaemia in children, adolescents, pregnant and lactating women, and women of reproductive age group in programme mode through life cycle approach. This involves bi-weekly IFA syrup supplementation to children 6 – 59 months, weekly IFA tablet supplementation to children 5 – 10 years and adolescents 10 – 19 years and IFA tablets to pregnant and lactating women.
- Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Days (VHSNDs) are observed for provision of maternal and child health services and creating awareness on maternal and child care in convergence with Ministry of Women and Child Development. Health and nutrition education through mass and

social media is also promoted to improve healthy practices and to generate demand for service uptake.

- Mother and Child Protection Card is the joint initiative of the Ministry of Health & Family welfare and the Ministry of Woman and Child Development to addresses the nutrition concerns in children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- Under “Rastriya Bal Swasthya Karyakaram” (RBSK) children of 0 - 18 years of age are screened for selected health conditions classified into 4Ds - Diseases, Deficiencies, Defects and Developmental delays including screening for Severe Acute Mal-nutrition and provides free referral and treatment facilities for identified children.
- The Government is also promoting the use of fortified wheat flour, fortified rice, fortified oil and double fortified salt in public funded supplementary nutrition programmes.

All these programs address one or other aspects related to nutrition and have the potential to improve nutritional outcomes in the country.

(d) & (e) The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India with support from UNICEF has already conducted the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS), during 2016-18 in 30 States, covering the age group of 0-19 yrs. The objective of the CNNS was to assess the levels of under-nutrition, micronutrient level and Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) related risk factors in the children and adolescents.

The CNNS result indicate improvement in stunting from 38.4% to 34.7%, wasting from 21.0% to 17.3% and underweight from 35.7% to 33.4% among children below five years of age in comparison to NFHS IV. The deficiency of various micronutrients namely Vitamin A, Vitamin D, B12, Zinc, Iron and folic acid was also noted and this ranged from 13.8% to 31.8% in under five children.
