

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1059
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2020**

SCHEMES TO MITIGATE ANEMIA

1059. SHRI VISHNU DAYAL RAM:

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

- (a) the details of schemes/ programmes for mitigating cases of anemia and malnourishment among women and children;
- (b) whether certain shortcomings during implementation of the said schemes/ programmes have come to the notice of the Government during the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)**

- (a) The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched the Anemia Mukht Bharat strategy for prevention and treatment of Anaemia in Pre-School Children (6-59 months), Children (5-9 years), Adolescent Girls and Boys (10-19 years), Pregnant and Lactating Women and Women of Reproductive Age group (15-49 years) in programme mode through life cycle approach. The six interventions under Anemia Mukht Bharat strategy are as follows:

- Prophylactic Iron Folic Acid Supplementation
- Periodic Deworming
- Intensified Behaviour Change Communication Campaign including delayed cord clamping
- Testing and Treatment of Anemia using digital methods and Point of Care treatment
- Mandatory provision of iron folic acid fortified staple foods in safety net programmes
- Addressing non-nutritional causes of Anemia in endemic pockets, with special focus on malaria, hemoglobinopathies and fluorosis.

AMB strategy also has focuses on the following:

- i. Universal screening of Pregnant Women for Anaemia is a part of Ante-Natal Care and all Severely Anaemic mothers are line listed and followed up for comprehensive management at higher facilities.
- ii. In Malaria endemic areas, to tackle the problem of Anaemia due to Malaria particularly in Pregnant Women and Children, Long Lasting Insecticide Nets (LLINs) and Insecticide Treated Bed Nets (ITBNs) are distributed.

Further to prevent anemia and malnutrition among women and children, other initiative being undertaken are as follows:

- i. Promotion of appropriate Infant and Young Child Feeding practices that include early initiation of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding till 6 months of age and appropriate complementary feeding through ASHA worker at community and health care providers at health facilities.
- ii. Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs) are specialised hospital based unit to provide management and nutritional support to under-five Severe Acute Malnutrition children having medical complication.
- iii. Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Days (VHSNDs) and Mother and Child Protection Card are the joint initiatives of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and the Ministry of Women and Child Development for addressing the nutrition concerns in Children, Pregnant women and Lactating mothers. Nutrition education during VHSNDs helps to increase awareness on healthy and nutritious dietary practices (including iron rich food) and promotion of breastfeeding.
- iv. Mandatory promotion of intake of Double Fortified Salt (DFS) in ICDS, Mid-day meal and Public Distribution System (PDS).
- v. Janani Surksha Yojana (JSY), a national conditional cash transfer scheme incentivises women of low socio economic status for institutional delivery at public health facilities and assists her in fulfilling nutritional needs during pregnancy. Similarly, under Jananai Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK), all pregnant and lactating mothers and infants seeking treatment in public health facilities are provided food, drugs and transport, free of cost as an entitlement.
- vi. Under the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) systematic efforts are undertaken to detect nutrition deficiency including Anemia among children. Similarly, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) has launched several schemes to tackle malnutrition in the country including Anganwadi Services, Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG) and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojna (PMMVY) to improve the nutritional and health status of Children, Adolescent Girls, Pregnant and Lactating Women. The Anganwadi Services scheme provides supplementary nutrition for children 6 months to 3 years of age, pregnant and lactating mothers. Besides, for severely underweight children in the age group of 6 months to 6 years, additional food items as Take Home Ration are provided.

(b) and (c) As per the directions issued by Ministry of Home Affairs, under Disaster Management Act, 2005; all the Anganwadi Centres across the country were closed to limit the impact of COVID-19. During the consultation held with States/UTs in the month of July 2020, most of the States had also expressed their inability to open Anganwadi Centres in the light of increasing incidents of COVID-19. However, to ensure continuous nutritional support to Anganwadi beneficiaries, Anganwadi Workers and Helpers have been distributing supplementary Nutrition at the doorsteps of the beneficiaries. Further, Ministry of Women Child Development has issued necessary directions to the States/UTs to ensure distribution of food items and nutrition support by Anganwadi workers, once in 15 days, at the doorstep of beneficiaries. In addition, Anganwadi Workers and Anganwadi Helpers have been assisting the local administration in community surveillance, creating awareness or other works assigned to them from time to time.

Further, during the COVID-19 pandemic, there have also been challenges in service delivery of IFA supplementation in school going children and distribution of IFA tablets to out of school adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating mothers at VHSNDs. Similarly, service delivery in campaign approach for different activities such as National Deworming Day (NDD), Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight (IDCF) and Vitamin A Supplementation programmes were also got affected.

In order to address these challenges, the MoHFW has issued guidance notes to all the States and UTs regarding “Enabling Delivery of Essential Health Services during the COVID 19 Outbreak” on 14th April, 2020 and “Provision of Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health plus Nutrition services during and post COVID-19 pandemic” on 24th May, 2020 for continuation of service delivery amid COVID-19 pandemic.

As per these guidance notes, the States and UTs have been advised to ensure home distribution of Iron Folic Acid supplementation to the target age groups i.e. Pre-school Children 6-59 months, Children 5-9 years, adolescents 10-19 years, Pregnant and lactating Women in the containment zones.

In non-containment zones, it has been advised to undertake distribution of IFA supplements through the VHSNDs to be held in the staggered manner while ensuring all the personal protective measures and physical distancing norms by the frontline workers i.e. ASHAs/ANMs/AWWs.