

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2097
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.09.2020**

MALNUTRITION IN SCHOOL CHILDREN

2097. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:
SHRI SYED IMTIAZ JALEEL:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that malnutrition in children is increasing with each passing year especially during the current time due to non-availability of health facilities and closure of schools for a prolonged period and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether there is any scheme to monitor malnutrition status in school children, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to extend Poshan Scheme in schools to monitor the status of school children: and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and further steps taken or being taken by the Government to monitor malnutrition among school children?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d) The nutritional status of children is monitored through National surveys conducted periodically by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The recently conducted Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS) (2016-18) captures the data on nutritional status of school going children. As per this survey, 21.9% children are stunted and 35.2% are underweight in the age group of 5 – 9 years and 24.1% children are underweight in the age group of 10-19 years.

In order to improve the nutritional status of school going children, the National Programme of Mid-Day Meal in Schools is implemented by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, wherein one mid-day meal is provided to children as per the nutritional standards provide in the Schedule-II of the National Food Security Act, 2013. Presently, as it is not possible to provide hot cooked meal under the prevailing circumstances (COVID-19), States/UTs have been advised to provide Food Security Allowance (FSA) comprising of food grains, pulses, oil, etc., (equivalent to cooking cost) to all eligible children until such time their schools are closed due to aforesaid pandemic.

Further, the Anemia Mukht Bharat strategy under National Health Mission (NHM) provides services for prevention and treatment of anaemia in children (5-9 years) and adolescent girls and boys (10-19 years). Under this scheme, prophylactic iron and folic acid (IFA) supplementation, periodic deworming, testing and treatment of anemia using digital methods and point of care treatment are done through school platform along with addressing non-nutritional causes of anaemia in endemic pockets with special focus on malaria, haemoglobinopathies and fluorosis.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, due to challenges in service delivery of IFA supplementation in school going children and adolescents, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued guidance notes to all the States/UTs regarding "Enabling Delivery of Essential Health Services during the COVID 19 Outbreak" and "Provision of Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health plus Nutrition services during and post COVID-19 pandemic" for continuation of service delivery amid COVID-19 pandemic. As per these guidance notes, the States/UTs have been advised to ensure home distribution of IFA to the target age groups including Children 5-9 years and adolescents 10-19 years in the containment zones. In non-containment zones, it has been advised to undertake distribution of IFA supplements through the Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Days in the staggered manner while ensuring all the personal protective measures and physical distancing norms by the frontline workers, i.e., ASHAs/ANMs/AWWs.
