

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3330
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17TH DECEMBER, 2021**

STUNTING AND WASTING AMONG CHILDREN

3330. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SINGH:

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

- (a) the reasons for high prevalence of stunting and wasting among children in the country;
- (b) the steps taken by the Government for reducing stunting and wasting of children in the country;
- (c) whether stunting is observed in children who do not suffer from wasting; and
- (d) if so, the reasons of prevalence of stunting without wasting?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY
WELFARE
(DR. BHARATI PRAVIN PAWAR)**

(a) & (b): As per NFHS-5 (2019- 21) factsheets, the nutrition indicators for children under five years have improved as compared to NFHS-4 (2015-16) wherein, stunting has reduced from 38.4% to 35.5% and wasting has reduced from 21.0% to 19.3%.

As per inputs received from the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), 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. Ministry of Women and Child is implementing POSHAN Abhiyaan, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, Anganwadi Services and Scheme for Adolescent Girls under the Umbrella Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS) as direct targeted interventions to address the problem of malnutrition in the country.

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. Guidelines were issued for transparency and accountability in delivery of supplementary nutrition and to track nutritional outcomes on 13.01.2021.

Further, Mission Poshan 2.0, an integrated nutrition support programme has been announced in budget 2021-2022 for all States/UTs. It seeks to strengthen nutritional content, delivery, outreach

and outcomes with focus on developing practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity to disease and malnutrition.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has been implementing RMNCHA+N strategy under National Health Mission (NHM), with programmes and strategies to improve the nutritional status of different age groups with focus on preventive aspects of undernutrition, which include,

- Early initiation of breastfeeding within an hour of child birth, exclusive breastfeeding for first six months and appropriate Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices are promoted under Mothers' Absolute Affection (MAA).
- 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 months of life.
- Biannual Vitamin A supplementation (VAS) for children of 9 to 59 months age.
- 'Anemia Mukh Bharat (AMB)' for prevention of anaemia through IFA supplementation and treatment of anaemia through life cycle approach i.e. in children, adolescents, pregnant and lactating women, and women of reproductive age group.
- National De-worming Day 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.
- 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.
- Treatment of under-five year sick Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) children at special units called the Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs), set up at public health facilities.

(c) & (d): As per National Family Health Survey India Report-4 (2015-16), Stunting, or low height-for-age, is a sign of chronic undernutrition that reflects failure to receive adequate nutrition over a long period. Stunting can also be affected by recurrent and chronic illness. Wasting, or low weight-for-height, is a measure of acute undernutrition and represents the failure to receive adequate nutrition in the period immediately before the survey. Wasting may result from inadequate food intake or from a recent episode of illness causing weight loss.

Wasting and stunting can co-exist in the same setting and occur in the same child. Both manifestations of acute and chronic undernutrition share common risk factors, including infection, poor infant and young child feeding practices, inadequate diet and food insecurity, and poor maternal health and nutrition.