

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3275
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05.08.2022

“MALNUTRITION AMONG WOMEN”

3275 SHRIMATI POONAM MAHAJAN:

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

- (a) whether the incidence of malnutrition among women is higher as compared to men and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether the incidence of malnourishment among children is largely under-reported in many parts of the country and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the details of efforts made by the Government to reduce malnutrition among women and children in the country?

ANSWER

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

(a) Malnutrition is a complex and multi-dimensional issue, affected mainly by a number of generic factors including poverty, inadequate food consumption due to access and availability issues, improper maternal infant and child feeding and care practices, inequity and gender imbalances, poor sanitary and environmental conditions etc

As per the recently released report of the National Family Health Survey 5 (NFHS 5, 2019-21) the incidence of malnutrition among women when compared with NFHS 4 (2015-16) data indicates an improvement of 4.2 percentage points in the malnutrition rate among women as compared to men where a 4 percentage point change is observed. The details are tabulated below:

Women aged 15-49 years with Body Mass Index (BMI) below normal (BMI <18.5 kg/m²)		Men aged 15-49 years with Body Mass Index (BMI) below normal (BMI <18.5 kg/m²)	
NHFS 4 (2015-16)	NHFS 5 (2019-21)	NHFS 4 (2015-16)	NHFS 5 (2019-21)
22.9	18.7	20.2	16.2

(b) 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). Stunting has reduced from 38.4% to 35.5%, Wasting has reduced from 21.0% to 19.3% and Underweight prevalence has reduced from 35.8% to 32.1%. Further, Under Poshan Abhiyan, 'Poshan Tracker' application was rolled out on 1st March 2021, as an important governance tool. Technology under Poshan Tracker is being leveraged for dynamic identification of stunting, wasting, under-weight prevalence among children across the country.

(c) POSHAN Abhiyaan was launched on 8th March 2018 with an aim to achieve improvement in nutritional status of Children under 6 years, Adolescent Girls, Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers in a time bound manner by adopting a synergised and result oriented approach. POSHAN Abhiyaan addresses malnutrition issues across the nation through components like ICT Application, Convergence, Community Mobilization, Behavioural Change & Jan Andolan, Capacity Building, Incentives and Awards, and Innovations. The Abhiyaan has been rolled out in all the 36 States/UTs covering all Districts across the country. The five key components critical for health and well-being or 'Poshan ke Paanch Sutra' are communicated under the Abhiyan. The messaging focuses on the importance of the first 1,000 days of a child, referred to as the "window of opportunity", importance of diarrhoea management, locally-available nutritious food, sanitation and hygiene and anaemia prevention.

Further, the efforts under the Supplementary Nutrition Programme under Anganwadi Services and POSHAN Abhiyaan have been rejuvenated and converged as 'Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0'. It seeks to address the challenges of malnutrition in children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers through a strategic shift in nutrition content and delivery and by creation of a convergent eco-system to develop and promote practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity. The Anganwadi Services, Scheme for Adolescent Girls and Poshan Abhiyaan have been re-aligned under 'Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0' for maximizing nutritional outcomes.
