

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *379
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.12.2024

“NUTRITIONAL FOOD FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN”

*379. SMT. MALVIKA DEVI:

Will the Minister of Women and Child Development be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken by the Ministry to ensure nutritional food for children especially in the rural and tribal areas during their mid day meals;
- (b) whether any steps are being taken to ensure the dietary requirements of pregnant and lactating mothers in rural and tribal areas to prevent malnutrition in young infants; and
- (c) if so, the details there of?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI ANNPURNA DEVI)

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

Statement referred to in reply to Parts (a) to (c) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 379 to be answered on 20.12.2024 regarding “Nutritional Food for Women and Children”asked by Shrimati Malvika Devi.

(a) to (c) Under the 15th Finance Commission, various components like Anganwadi services, Poshan Abhiyaan and Scheme for Adolescent girls (of 14-18 years in Aspirational Districts and North-Eastern region) have been subsumed under the umbrella Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 (Mission Poshan 2.0) to address the challenge of malnutrition. It is a Centrally Sponsored mission, where the responsibility for implementation and day-to-day execution of activities lies with the States and UTs. Mission is a universal self-selecting umbrella scheme that is being implemented across the country including rural and tribal areas.

Nutrition goes beyond mere eating of food; it requires proper digestion, absorption, and metabolism which are influenced by factors like sanitation, education and access to safe drinking water. As malnutrition requires a multi-sectoral approach involving dimensions of food, health, water, sanitation and education, it is crucial to effectively address the issue of malnutrition. The challenge of malnutrition is being addressed under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 by establishing cross cutting convergence amongst 18 Ministries/Departments.

Under Mission Poshan 2.0 a new strategy has been made for reduction in malnutrition and for improved health, wellness and immunity through activities like community engagement, outreach, behavioral change, and advocacy. It focuses on Maternal Nutrition, Infant and Young Child Feeding Norms, treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM)/ Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) and wellness through AYUSH practices to reduce prevalence of wasting, stunting, anaemia and being underweight.

Under this mission, Supplementary Nutrition is provided to Children (6 months to 6 years), Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers and Adolescent Girls to beat the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition by adopting a life cycle approach. Supplementary nutrition is provided in accordance with the nutrition norms contained in Schedule-II of the National Food Security Act. These norms have been revised and upgraded last year. The old norms were largely calorie-specific; however, the revised norms are more comprehensive and balanced in terms of both quantity and quality of supplementary nutrition based on the principles of diet diversity that provides quality protein, healthy fats and micronutrients.

Fortified rice is being supplied to AWCs to meet the requirement of micro-nutrients and to control anaemia among women and children. Greater emphasis is being laid on the use of millets for preparation of Hot Cooked Meal at least once a week and Take Home ration at Anganwadi centers.

Ministries of Women & Child Development and Health & Family Welfare have jointly released the protocol for Community Management of Malnutrition (CMAM) to prevent and treat severely acute malnutrition in children and for reducing associated morbidity and mortality.

Under this Mission, one of the major activities undertaken is Community Mobilization and Awareness Advocacy leading to a Jan Andolan to educate the people on nutritional aspects. State and UTs are conducting and reporting regular sensitisation activities under community engagement programmes during Poshan Maahs and Poshan Pakhwadas celebrated in the months of September and March-April respectively. To give high importance to issues around anaemia, dedicated anaemia related themes have been undertaken by Ministry of Women & Child Development under Poshan Abhiyaan. Community Based Events (CBEs) have served as a significant strategy in changing nutritional practices and all Anganwadi workers are required to conduct two Community Based Events every month.

Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) Scheme, under Ministry of Education, is one of the foremost rights based Centrally Sponsored Schemes implemented in partnership with States and UTs providing one hot cooked and nutritious meal to the eligible children. This scheme is implemented across the country including rural and tribal areas and covers all children of Balvatika (just before class I) and Classes I-VIII studying in Government and Government-Aided Schools. The objectives of the Scheme are to address two of the pressing problems for majority of children in India, viz. malnutrition and education by:

- i. Improving the nutritional status of children studying in Bal Vatika (just before class I) and classes I–VIII in Government and Government-Aided Schools without any discrimination.
- ii. Encouraging poor children, belonging to disadvantaged sections, to attend school more regularly and help them concentrate on classroom activities.
- iii. Providing nutritional support to children of elementary stage in drought / disaster affected areas during summer vacation and disaster times.

The overall responsibility for smooth functioning of the scheme including providing hot cooked and nutritious meal to the eligible children lies with the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. The Government of India has issued detailed guidelines on quality, safety and hygiene to ensure serving of good quality meal under the Scheme to all the States/UTs. These guidelines are available on official website <https://pmposhan.education.gov.in>.
