

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3111**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.12.2024

**MALNUTRITION AMONG CHILDREN**

3111. SMT. RACHNA BANERJEE:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that India has been ranked as 105 out of 127 countries, falling under the serious category according to the Global Nutrition Report, 2024;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the data is available with the Government regarding malnutrition in India;
- (d) if so, the details thereof, indicating the present percentage of underweight and stunted children in the country;
- (e) whether the Government proposes to declare malnutrition as medical emergency to save children dying of hunger and malnutrition in the country;
- (f) If so, the details of the action plan formulated and steps taken/proposed to save children from malnutrition?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD  
DEVELOPMENT  
(SHRIMATI SAVITRI THAKUR)

(a) to (f): 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. Under 15th Finance Commission, Anganwadi services, Poshan Abhiyaan and Scheme for Adolescent girls (14-18 years in Aspirational Districts and North-East region) were subsumed under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 (Mission Poshan 2.0). Mission Poshan 2.0 seeks to address the challenge of malnutrition through improved nutrition content and delivery. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, where the responsibility of implementation lies with the States/UTs.

Under Mission Poshan 2.0 a new strategy has been made for reduction in malnutrition and for improved health, wellness and immunity through community engagement, outreach, behavioral change, and advocacy. The scheme 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.

Ministry of Women & Child Development and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare 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 Mission Poshan 2.0, one of the major activities undertaken is Community Mobilization and Awareness Advocacy leading to Jan Andolan to educate people on nutritional aspects. State and UTs are conducting and reporting regular sensitization activities under community engagement programmes during Poshan Maahs and Poshan Pakhwadas celebrated in the months of September and March-April respectively. Community Based Events (CBEs) have served as a significant strategy in changing nutrition practices and all Anganwadi workers are required to conduct two Community Based Events every month.

Nutritional support through Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) is one of the integral components of Mission Poshan 2.0, under which supplementary nutrition is provided to children (06 months to 6 years), pregnant women and lactating mothers (PWLM) and Adolescent Girls (14 to 18 years) in order to bridge the gap in the Average Daily Intake of nutrients as compared to the Recommended Dietary Allowances which are suggested for Indian population by the National Institute of Nutrition. The nutrition norms for supplementary nutrition are contained in Schedule-II of the National Food Security Act. In order to address the challenge of malnutrition more effectively, these norms have been revised recently to make them 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 essential micronutrients.

Further, only fortified rice enriched with essential micronutrients such as iron, folic acid, and vitamin B12 is supplied under the supplementary nutrition to meet the requirement of micro-nutrients and control anemia among women and children. Greater emphasis is also given on the use of millets for preparation of Hot Cooked Meal at least once a week and Take Home ration at Anganwadi centers for beneficiaries.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare implements the Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, Child, Adolescent Health and Nutrition (RMNCAH+N) strategy in a life cycle approach under National Health Mission (NHM). It includes interventions to address malnutrition among children across the country as mentioned below:

- Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs) are set up at public health facilities to provide in-patient medical and nutritional care to children under 5 years suffering from Severe Acute Malnourishment (SAM) with medical complications. In addition to curative care, special focus is given on timely, adequate and appropriate feeding for children; on improving the skills of mothers and caregivers on complete age-appropriate caring and feeding practices.

- Anaemia Mukht Bharat (AMB) strategy is implemented to reduce anaemia among six beneficiaries age group - children (6-59 months), children (5-9 years), adolescents (10-19 years), pregnant and lactating women and in women of reproductive age group (15-49 years) in life cycle approach through implementation of six interventions via robust institutional mechanism.
- Mothers' Absolute Affection (MAA) Programme is implemented to improve breastfeeding coverage which includes early initiation of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding for first six months followed by counselling on age-appropriate complementary feeding practices.
- Lactation Management Centres: Comprehensive Lactation Management Centres. (CLMC) are facilities established to ensure availability of safe, pasteurized Donor Human Milk for feeding of sick, preterm and low birth weight babies admitted in Neonatal Intensive Care Units and Special Newborn Care Units. Lactation Management Unit (LMU) are established for providing lactation support to mothers within the health facility for collection, storage and dispensing of mother's own breastmilk for consumption by her baby.
- Under National Deworming Day (NDD) albendazole tablets are administered in a single fixed day approach via schools and Anganwadi centres in two rounds (February and August) to reduce the soil transmitted helminth (STH) infestation among all children and adolescents (1-19 years).
- 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 including nutrition in convergence with Ministry of Women and Child Development.

The indicators for malnutrition like children being underweight, stunted or wasted have shown a steady improvement as per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. As per the 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%, while Wasting has reduced from 21.0% to 19.3% and Underweight prevalence has reduced from 35.8% to 32.1%.

As per the data of Poshan Tracker of the Ministry of Women & Child Development, for the month of October 2024, around 7.31 crores children up to 5 years were measured on growth parameters of height and weight. Out of whom, 38.9% were found to be stunted, 17% were found to be underweight and 5.2% children were found to be wasted. The levels of underweight and wasting in children as obtained from Poshan Tracker data are much less than those projected by NFHS-5.

Further, the Government released Streamlined Guidelines dated 13.1.2021 for greater transparency, accountability and quality in the nutrition support programme and service delivery. These guidelines emphasize on ensuring the quality of supplementary nutrition, highlight roles and responsibilities of duty holders, IT enabled data management and monitoring, leveraging of traditional knowledge through AYUSH, procurement and convergence for achieving good nutritional outcomes.

\*\*\*\*\*