

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *66
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.02.2025

MALNUTRITION FREE INDIA

*66. DR. PRASHANT YADAORAO PADOLE:

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

- (a) whether any target had been fixed by the Government to make India malnutrition-free by 2022 under the Poshan Abhiyan or National Nutrition Mission;
- (b) if so, the details of the achievements made by the Government through the said campaign along with the difficulties faced in the completion of the said campaign;
- (c) the details of the mechanism in place to check serious issues like malnutrition in Bhandara-Gondia Parliamentary constituency in Maharashtra; and
- (d) the details of the funds provided so far by the Government to Bhandara and Gondia districts under the said campaign?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI ANNPURNA DEVI)

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

Statement referred to in reply to Parts (a) to (d) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 66 to be answered on 7.02.2025 regarding “Malnutrition Free India”

(a) to (d) Poshan Abhiyaan, an overarching scheme for holistic nourishment was launched on 8th March 2018 to improve nutritional outcomes for children, adolescents, pregnant women and lactating mothers. 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 of various activities lies with the States. This mission is a universal self-selecting umbrella scheme that is being implemented across the country including Bhandara-Gondia parliamentary constituency in Maharashtra.

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, and being underweight.

The objectives of Mission are as follows:

- To contribute to development of human capital in the country;
- Address challenge of malnutrition;
- Promote nutrition awareness and good eating habits for sustainable health and wellbeing

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 in January 2023. 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 for 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 at least once a week for preparation of Hot Cooked Meal 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 to educate people on nutritional aspects as adoption of good nutrition habit requires sustained efforts for behavioural change. State and UTs are conducting and reporting regular sensitisation activities through Jan Andolans 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 nutritional practices and all Anganwadi workers are required to conduct two Community Based Events every month.

Various rounds of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare since 1992-93 have shown improvement in malnutrition indicators in children across India. Details of these indicators for children since NFHS-1 to NFHS-5 are given below:

NFHS Survey	Stunting %	Underweight %	Wasting %
NFHS-1 (1992-93)*	52	53.4	17.5
NFHS-2 (1998-99)**	45.5	47	15.5
NFHS-3 (2005-6)***	48.0	42.5	19.8
NFHS-4 (2015-16)***	38.4	35.8	21.0
NFHS-5 (2019-21)***	35.5	32.1	19.3

* Under 4 years

** Under 3 years

*** Under 5 years

The above table gives a representative picture of malnutrition indicators among all children of 0-3 years, 0-4 years and 0-5 years age at the relevant time.

The projected population of all children up to 5 years in India for the year 2021 is 13.75 crores approximately (source: Population Projections for India and States 2011-2036, National Commission on Population, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare). However, only 7.50 crores children up to 5 years were enrolled in Anganwadis and registered on Poshan Tracker of the Ministry of Women & Child Development as per the December 2024 data. 7.18 crores of these children were measured on growth parameters of height and weight. 39.68% of them have been found to be stunted, 17.22% have been found to be underweight and 5.5% wasted.

Further, the projected population of all children in India up to 6 years for the year 2021 is approximately 16.1 crores. As per the December 2024 data of Poshan Tracker, 8.82 crores children (0-6 years) are enrolled in Anganwadis out of whom 8.43 crores were measured on growth parameters of height and weight. 38.32% of these children (0-6 years) have been found to be stunted and 17.82% children (0-6 years) have been found to be underweight.

The analysis of the above NFHS data and the Poshan Tracker data shows improvement in malnutrition indicators in children across India.

IT systems have been leveraged to strengthen and bring about transparency in nutrition delivery systems at the Anganwadi centres. The 'Poshan Tracker' application was rolled out on 1st March, 2021 as an important IT governance tool. It facilitates monitoring and tracking of infrastructure and service delivery at Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) and beneficiaries on defined indicators. Poshan Tracker is available in 24 languages including Hindi and English. It has facilitated near real time data collection for Anganwadi Services. Anganwadi workers are mandated to measure height and weight of all children (0-6 years) once a month. On the basis of height and weight data entered by Anganwadi workers, the Poshan Tracker is being leveraged for regular identification of stunting, wasting, under-weight prevalence among children as per WHO standards.

Funds under the Mission Poshan 2.0 are released to the States/ UTs. For the FY 2024-25, as on 31st January, 2025, Rs. 871.83 crores have been released to the State of Maharashtra under Mission Poshan 2.0.
