

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5704
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.04.2025

POSHAN ABHIYAAN

5704. Shri Dilip Saikia:
Shri Lumbaram Choudhary:
Shri Dineshbhai Makwana:
Shri Jaswantsinh Sumanbhai Bhabhor:
Shri Alok Sharma:
Shri Chintamani Maharaj:
Dr. Bhola Singh:
Shri Bhojraj Nag:
Shri P C Mohan:
Dr. K Sudhakar:
Smt. Himadri Singh:
Shri Bidyut Baran Mahato:
Shri Praveen Patel:
Ms Kangna Ranaut:
Smt. Mahima Kumari Mewar:
Smt. Shobhanaben Mahendrasinh Baraiya:
Shri Gajendra Singh Patel:
Shri Anurag Sharma:
Dr. Hemant Vishnu Savara:
Smt. Kamlesh Jangde:
Dr. Rajesh Mishra:
Smt. Smita Uday Wagh:
Shri Dharambir Singh:
Shri Yogender Chandolia:

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

- (a) the details of the steps taken to improve maternal and child nutrition under the Poshan Abhiyaan scheme State-wise particularly in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh;
- (b) whether there has been an assessment of the scheme's impact on malnutrition rates in the country including said State, if so, the details thereof along with findings regarding improvements therein;
- (c) the new strategies implemented to enhance the effectiveness of Poshan Abhiyaan in underdeveloped regions particularly in said State;

- (d) the details of the steps being taken to ensure the sustainability of the Poshan Abhiyaan scheme;
- (e) whether any challenges are being faced in implementing the Poshan Abhiyaan scheme, if so, the details of the remedial steps being taken in this regard; and
- (f) whether the Government has taken any measures to strengthen nutrition delivery mechanism/monitoring in tribal and rural areas of Maharashtra?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (f) 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 and UTs. This mission is a universal self-selecting umbrella scheme where there are no entry barriers for any beneficiary to register and receive services. This mission is being implemented across the country including in the underdeveloped, tribal and rural areas of Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh.

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

Nutrition goes beyond mere eating of food; it requires proper digestion, absorption, and metabolism of nutrients. This process is 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 in a convergent manner. It 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 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 under 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.

To further enhance the efficiency of the programme, various initiatives have been taken up from time to time. Following are few initiatives undertaken recently:

- Suposhit Gram Panchayat Abhiyaan: 1000 Suposhit Gram Panchayats will be selected and an incentive of Rs. 1 Lakh each will be given to them under Suposhit Gram Panchayats Abhiyaan to motivate Gram Panchayats and Anganwadi functionaries to take proactive measures in improving nutrition through provision of incentives.
- Poshan Tracker has been implemented for monitoring and tracking of infrastructure and service delivery at Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) and beneficiaries on defined indicators.
- Face authentication module: For last mile tracking of Service Delivery, MWCD has developed two-factor authentication mechanisms for the distribution of Take Home ration to ensure that benefit is given to the intended beneficiaries registered in Poshan Tracker. Regular follow-up is being done with States/UTs for its 100% adoption. The successful implementation of this module would ensure that THR reaches intended beneficiaries, which would ultimately improve the nutritional outcomes of the beneficiaries.

- The PM JANMAN Mission launched by Ministry of Tribal Affairs aims for targeted development of 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) residing in 18 States and a UT. This Mission focuses on 11 critical interventions related to 9 key Ministries including Ministry of Women and Child Development. As on date, a total of 2139 AWCs has been approved for construction under PM JANMAN across the country. Till now, 17.16 crore and 6.48 crore has been released to Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh respectively.
- Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched Dharti Aaba Janjati Gram Unnat Abhiyan (DAJGUA) aimed at improving the socio-economic condition of tribal communities by adopting saturation coverage of tribal families in tribal majority areas and aspirational block ST villages. The intervention of Ministry of Women and Child Development involves establishment of 2000 new Saksham AWCs and upgradation of 6000 existing AWCs into Saksham AWCs from FY 2024-25 to FY 2028-29.

In 2021, the World Bank conducted a survey in 11 priority states (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh) with the highest rates of anemia and stunting. The aim of this survey was to assess the program's delivery of nutrition services, whether the nutritional knowledge of beneficiaries had improved and if they had adopted more appropriate nutrition and feeding practices.

The findings demonstrated that the services delivered through the Poshan Abhiyaan – the receipt of relevant messages, home visits by the anganwadi worker, and attendance at community based events – were associated with improved nutrition behaviors. The survey also found that the program's nutrition messages reached more than 80% of women, and that 81% of women practiced exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months.

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 7.49 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 February 2025 Poshan Tracker data. 7.25 crores of these children were measured on growth parameters of height and weight. 39.09% of them have been found to be stunted, 16.60% have been found to be underweight and 5.35% 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 February 2025 data of Poshan Tracker, 8.80 crores children (0-6 years) were enrolled in Anganwadis out of whom 8.52 crores were measured on growth parameters of height and weight. 37.75% of these children (0-6 years) have been found to be stunted and 17.19% 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.
