

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5718
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.04.2025

IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT OF MALNUTRITION

5718. PROF. SOUGATA RAY:

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

- (a) whether the Government has any Protocol for Identification and Management of Malnutrition in children of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof?
- (c) whether over 32% of the children below aged five years in the country are underweight;
- (d) if so, the details thereof, State wise; and
- (e) the details of the steps being taken to ensure the minimum weight and other parameters of children?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (e) 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.

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.

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. The community-based approach involves timely detection and screening of children with severe acute malnutrition in the community, management for those without medical complications with wholesome, local nutritious foods at home and supportive medical care. The CMAM protocol includes an appetite test and screening process for children aged 6 months to 6 years who are severely acute malnourished (SAM) or severely underweight (SUW). Post-screening, such children are referred to Nutrition Rehabilitation Centers (NRC) or hospital facilities for further care. The steps involved under CMAM protocol are as follows:

- Step-1: Growth monitoring of children
- Step-2: Appetite Test for SAM Children
- Step-3: Medical Assessment of SAM children
- Step-4: Decide level of care of malnourished children
- Step-5: Nutritional Management
- Step-6: Medical Management
- Step-7: Nutrition, Health Education and counseling including WASH practices
- Step-8: Visit by Anganwadi worker and referral
- Step-9: Duration of Monitoring
- Step-10: Follow-up Care

Mission Poshan 2.0 empowers the frontline functionaries by providing them with smartphones. IT systems have been leveraged to strengthen and bring about transparency in nutrition delivery support systems at the Anganwadi centres. The 'Poshan Tracker' application was rolled out on 1st March 2021 as an important governance tool. The Poshan Tracker facilitates monitoring and tracking of all Anganwadi centers, Anganwadi workers and beneficiaries on defined indicators. 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.

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.
