

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.851
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.02.2025

INITIATIVES FOR THE WELFARE OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

851. SHRI DHARAMBIR SINGH:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the current status of malnutrition and anemia among women and children in India along with the steps being taken to address these issues effectively;
- (b) whether any measures are being implemented to ensure the safety and empowerment of women especially in rural and underserved areas and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has introduced any new schemes or programmes to promote the education and skill development of girls to enhance their participation in the workforce and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the details of the steps being taken to prevent child labour and ensure access to education and healthcare for all children; and
- (e) whether the Ministry is collaborating with State Governments and NGOs to implement innovative approaches for the holistic development of women and children and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a) Various steps have been taken by the Government to address the issues of malnutrition and anemia among women and children in India, details of which are as under:

(i) Under Mission Saksham Anganwadi & 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 scheme, 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.

(ii) 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.

(iii) 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.

(iv) Under this Mission, one of the major activities undertaken is Community Mobilization and Awareness Advocacy leading to a Jan Andolan to educate 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. 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.

The malnutrition indicators for children under 5 years as per the data of Poshan Tracker for the month of December 2024 are: Stunting as 39.68%, Wasting as 5.5% and Underweight as 17.22%.

(v) The Government of India implements Anaemia Mukh Bharat (AMB) programme in 6X6X6 strategy to reduce the prevalence of anaemia among six beneficiary groups - Children 6-59 months, Children 5-9 years, Adolescents (10-19 years), Women of reproductive age (15-49 years), pregnant women and lactating mothers in lifecycle approach through six interventions - Prophylactic Iron and Folic Acid supplementation (IFA Syrup is provided biweekly to children 6-59 months, IFA Pink is provided weekly to children 5-9 years, IFA Blue is provided weekly to adolescents (10-19 years), IFA Red is provided weekly to Women of Reproductive age group and IFA Red tablets (daily for 180 days) are provided to pregnant women and lactating mothers), Deworming, Intensified year-round behaviour change communication campaign, Testing of anaemia using digital invasive haemoglobinometer and point of care treatment, Mandatory provision of iron and folic acid fortified foods in public health programmes, addressing non-nutritional causes of anaemia in endemic pockets, with special focus on malaria, haemoglobinopathies and fluorosis, via robust institutional mechanism.

Details of women suffering from anaemia are released under National Family Health Survey (NFHS), which is conducted by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. As per National Family Health Survey 5 (2019-21), the prevalence of anaemia among all women aged 15-49 years is 57 percent in the country.

(b) to (e) The Government gives utmost priority to the safety, security and empowerment of women in the country. To this end, the Government has adopted multi-pronged approach to address the needs of women on a life-cycle continuum basis for their educational, social, economic and political empowerment so that they become equal partners in fast paced and sustainable national development. This 'Women led development' is essential for realising the goal of a developed India, or 'Viksit Bharat', by 2047.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development releases funds directly to States/UTs under its various schemes. It does not release any funds to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The Ministry is implementing Centrally Sponsored Schemes in the country for the welfare and holistic development of women and children, which are clubbed into three verticals, viz. (1) Mission Shakti, for safety, protection and empowerment of women; (2) Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0 for improving nutrition & health indicators in the country; and (3) Mission Vatsalya, for protection and welfare of children. The details of the schemes for welfare and empowerment of women under Mission Shakti are as under:

Mission Shakti: It aims at strengthening interventions for women safety, security and empowerment. It seeks to focus on proposing strategies for improving convergence across Ministries/ Departments and at different levels of governance. Mission Shakti comprises of two sub-schemes 'Sambal' and 'Samarthya' for safety and security of women and empowerment of women respectively.

The "**Sambal**" sub-scheme is for safety and security of women. It has the components of One Stop Centres (OSCs), Women Helpline (WHL), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) and Nari Adalat.

- a. **One Stop Centres (OSCs)-** An institution located at district level offering under one roof immediate help to women in distress such as temporary shelter, medical & police assistance, counselling and legal support.
- b. **Women Helpline (WHL)-** The Women Helpline 181 provides toll-free 24-hours telecom service to women seeking support and information. It is also integrated with Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) 112 for all emergency services and integration with all One Stop Centres is in progress.
- c. **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)-** BBBP is a mindset change program helping in generating awareness for valuing the girl child through multi-sectoral interventions.
- d. **Nari Adalat-** An experimental platform providing women with an alternative Grievance Redressal Mechanism at Gram Panchayat level by negotiation, mediation, and reconciliation with mutual consent for speedy, accessible, and affordable justice. It has been piloted in 50 Gram Panchayats each of Assam and UT of Jammu & Kashmir.

The "**Samarthya**" sub scheme is for empowerment of women. It has the components of Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), Shakti Sadan, Sakhi Niwas, Palna and SANKALP: Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW).

- a. **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)-** PMMVY is a Centrally Sponsored Maternity Benefits Scheme under which cash incentives of ₹5,000/- is provided directly to the Bank/Post Office account of the beneficiary in Direct Benefit

- Transfer (DBT) mode for first child. Cash incentive of ₹6,000/- is also provided under PMMVY to eligible beneficiaries for second child being a girl child.
- b. **Shakti Sadan-** Shakti Sadan is an Integrated Relief and Rehabilitation Home for the women in distress situations and difficult circumstances.
 - c. **Sakhi Niwas-** The Sakhi Niwas Scheme (Working Women Hostel) is a demand driven centrally sponsored scheme, under which funds are released directly to the States/UTs and aims to promote availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women in urban, semi-urban and even rural areas where employment opportunity for women exist.
 - d. **Palna-** Palna scheme through day-care crèche facilities provides safe and secure place for the children. Creche services formalise the child care facilities hitherto considered as part of domestic work and uses Aanganwadi infrastructure for ensuring delivery of care facilities till the last mile
 - e. **SANKALP: Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW)-** The SANKALP: HEW serves as a vehicle to bridge the information and knowledge gap regarding schemes and facilities available for women. It also serves as a Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) for all components under Mission Shakti.

The Government has taken various measures and have made efforts to prevent child labour which include legislative measures, rehabilitation strategy, providing right to free education and general socio-economic development. The Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 administered by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, inter-alia covers complete prohibition of work or employment of children below 14 years of age in any occupation or process and prohibition of adolescents in the age group of 14 to 18 years in hazardous occupations and processes. It also provides for stricter punishment for employers for violation of the Act and made the offence as cognizable.

As per Section 2(14)(ii) and (ix) of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (JJ Act) (as amended in 2021), a child who is found working in contravention of labour laws for the time being in force or is found begging, or living on the street and who is found vulnerable and is likely to be inducted into drug abuse or trafficking is included as a “child in need of care and protection”, among others.

The JJ Act, 2015 mandates a security net of service delivery structures to provide Institutional and non-Institutional care to these children. The primary responsibility of execution of the Act, as such, lies with the State/UTs. Ministry of Women and Child Development is implementing Mission Vatsalya Scheme for care, protection, rehabilitation and reintegration of children in difficult circumstances. Under Mission Vatsalya, financial assistance is provided to State Governments/UT Administrations, for, inter-alia, undertaking a situational analysis of children in difficult circumstances, for setting up and maintenance of various types of Child Care Institutions (CCIs) for providing various rehabilitative services through institutional and non-institutional care.
