

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1048
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05.12.2025

HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

1048. DR. LATA WANKHEDE:
DR. D. PURANDESWARI:
SHRI ATUL GARG:
SHRI RAJESH VERMA:
SMT. SHAMBHAVI:

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

- (a) whether the Government has assessed the current status of malnutrition, health/education among children, particularly girls, in the country, State/UT-wise, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of the steps being taken to improve nutrition, healthcare/early childhood development under schemes such as Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and Poshan Abhiyaan during the last three years;
- (c) whether the Government has implemented any measures to prevent child marriage, ensure girl child education and reduce gender-based disparities, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the details of initiatives undertaken to promote women's empowerment/safety/economic participation, particularly in rural and semi urban areas; and
- (e) whether the Government has formulated any long-term strategies to ensure holistic development, protection/welfare of women and children in the country, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a) Various rounds of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare in the entire country on sample basis 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
Poshan Tracker (October 2025) ***	33.54	14.41	5.03

* Under 4 years

** Under 3 years

*** Under 5 years

The analysis of the above NFHS data and the Poshan Tracker data shows improvement in malnutrition indicators in children across the country. The State/UT wise data from Poshan Tracker, on Stunting, wasting and underweight is available at the link: <https://www.poshantracker.in/statistics>.

(b) To address the challenge of malnutrition, 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). 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.

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 the Mission by establishing cross cutting convergence amongst more than 18 Ministries/Departments.

Under the Mission, 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, 2013. 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 (Calcium, Zinc, Iron, Dietary Folate, Vitamin-A, Vitamin-B6 and Vitamin B-12).

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.

The Suposhit Gram Panchayat Abhiyaan was launched last year with an aim to improve nutritional outcomes and well-being through strengthened nutrition services, community participation, and multi-stakeholder convergence. The top 1000 Gram Panchayats will be awarded an incentive of 1 lakh. These incentives will be utilized to motivate the Anganwadi workers & helpers to help improve service delivery, and as an incentive to the Gram Panchayat to improve community mobilization & increase enrollment and help nutrition related initiatives.

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.

Under the Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi (PBPB) initiative, the Ministry is imparting training to all the officials and field functionaries in the States/ UTs through a cascading model of training, wherein Master Trainers (namely, District Officers, Block Coordinators and Supervisors) are trained, and the master trainers further train all Anganwadi Workers in the field. As on 30th November 2025, 8,95,814 AWWs have been trained across the country.

Further, 2 lakh Anganwadi Centres have been approved to be upgraded as Saksham Anganwadis for improved nutrition delivery and for imparting early childhood care and development. Saksham Anganwadis are provided with better infrastructure than the conventional Anganwadi Centres

which includes internet/Wi-Fi connectivity, LED screens, water purifier/installation of RO Machine and smart learning equipments.

Poshan Tracker an ICT tool has been implemented for monitoring and tracking of all AWCs, AWWs and beneficiaries on defined indicators. Technology under Poshan Tracker is being leveraged for dynamic identification of stunting, wasting, under-weight prevalence among children. It has facilitated near real time data collection for Anganwadi Services such as, daily attendance, ECCE, Delivery of Hot Cooked Meal (HCM)/Take Home Ration (THR-not raw ration), Growth Measurement etc. The App also offers counselling videos on key behaviours and services which help disseminate messages on birth preparedness, delivery, post-natal care, breastfeeding, and complementary feeding.

(c) to (e): The details of initiatives undertaken to promote women's empowerment/safety/economic participation by Ministry of Women and Child Development are as under:

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA) has been enacted to prevent and curb child marriages and to take punitive action against those associated with the solemnisation of child marriages. Since, the enactment of The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) 2006, the prevalence of child marriage in the country has reduced to almost half from 47 % in National Family Health Survey (NFHS)- 3 (2005- 06) to 23.3% in NFHS-5 (2019-21). This shows that the law has a strong effect in prevention of child marriages in the country.

Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) implements the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) component under the umbrella scheme of 'Mission Shakti', wherein creation of awareness on matters pertaining to gender equality and discouraging child marriage is an important focus area.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) under the Ministry also undertakes awareness programs and consultations with stakeholders from time to time in this regard. The National Legal Services Authority with its States and District arms also creates awareness about the ill- effects of child marriage.

The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has issued a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to its functionaries for effective prevention of child marriages in coordination with the statutory officers and other authorities. It also has a dedicated helpline 15100 which provides free legal aid to the specified sections of citizens including women and children.

The Ministry launched 'Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat' campaign on last year which focuses on making India child marriage free. It is one of the most important imperatives to promote education, skilling, enterprise and entrepreneurship among girls and women to realise the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' through 'whole of government' and 'whole of society' approach, including the civil society organisations. Under the campaign, a portal '<https://stopchildmarriage.wcd.gov.in>' has been launched to support the States and UTs in raising awareness against child marriage and for

effective reporting and prevention of incidences of child marriage. The portal also has facility to provide information to citizens about Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs) of all States/UTs. The portal has information of more than 38000 CMPOs which is accessible by the public.

In addition, the Ministry has introduced Child Helpline with short code 1098, a toll-free 24*7*365 telephone emergency outreach service for children in crisis.

Shakti Sadan Scheme under the overarching Mission Shakti, erstwhile Schemes of Swadhar Greh for women in difficult circumstances and Ujjawala Home for Prevention of Trafficking have been merged and known as Shakti Sadan which is an Integrated Relief and Rehabilitation Home for women in distress situations including trafficked women. The Scheme is a demand driven Centrally Sponsored Scheme, under which funds are released directly to the States/UTs for implementation of the scheme. It aims at creating a safe and enabling environment for the women in distress situations, to enable them to overcome the difficult circumstances. Presently, 407 Shakti Sadans are functional across the country.

Sakhi Niwas Scheme (Working Women Hostel) under the overarching Mission Shakti, is a demand driven Centrally Sponsored Scheme, under which funds are released directly to the States/UTs for implementation of the scheme. The scheme aims to promote availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women in urban, semi-urban and also in rural areas where employment opportunity for women exists. Under the Scheme, financial assistance is provided for running of Sakhi Niwas in rented premises for working women and for those women who are under training for job. Provision of Day Care Centre for children of the residents of the Sakhi Niwas is an important aspect of the scheme. Presently, 531 Sakhi Niwas are functional across the country.

The SANKALP: HEW (Hub for Empowerment of Women), has been introduced on 1st April 2022, under the umbrella Mission Shakti, which functions as a Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) for all components of Mission Shakti. It serves as a single window system to bridge the information and knowledge gap regarding schemes and facilities available for women as well as guide them to avail the benefits and entitlements.

Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW), a component under Samarthya, sub-scheme of 'Mission Shakti' is functioning as a Project Management Unit (PMU) for monitoring and supervisory unit of Mission Shakti Scheme. The HEW centres also engage in widespread outreach and awareness through organising awareness activities, camps, and campaigns to disseminate information related to women centric schemes, programmes, policies and legislations. SANKALP: HEW is being implemented in all States/UTs except the State of West Bengal. State SANKALP: HEWs are functional in 35 States/UTs and District SANKALP: HEWs are functional in 742 districts.
