

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1148
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05.12.2025

ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILD WELFARE INDICATORS

1148. SHRI AASHTIKAR PATIL NAGESH BAPURAO:

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

- (a) the details of the challenges faced by women and children in the Hingoli district of Maharashtra, particularly in the areas of malnutrition among children and adolescent girls, limited availability of functioning Anganwadi centres in remote and tribal pockets, inadequate access to maternal healthcare and nutritional support for pregnant and lactating women and rising cases of child marriage and school dropouts among girls in certain rural blocks;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to conduct a comprehensive assessment of women and child welfare indicators in said district to identify gaps in service delivery under Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS), Poshan Abhiyaan and other central schemes; and
- (c) the details of the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to strengthen Anganwadi infrastructure, improve nutritional services/enhance outreach activities for women and children in the said region?

ANSWER

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

(a) 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 including rural and tribal districts of Maharashtra. 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

The status of malnutrition among children and other information related to Anganwadi services in Hingoli district and other tribal districts of Maharashtra is available at the link: <https://www.poshantracker.in/statistics>

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. 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 Central Government launched 'Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat' campaign on 27th November 2024 which focuses on making India child marriage free. 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.

Further, the key reasons for Out-of-School Children (OoS) dropping out as identified by States/UTs include migration, socio economic condition of families, domestic responsibilities on children, poor health of children etc. Various efforts have been made to reduce school dropout by the Department of School Education and Literacy as below:

Samagra Shiksha, an integrated scheme for school education is being implemented since 2018-19 covering the entire gamut from pre-school to class XII. The scheme has also been aligned with the recommendations of NEP 2020 to ensure that all children have access to quality education with an equitable and inclusive classroom environment which should take care of their diverse background, multilingual needs, different academic abilities and make them active participants in the learning process. In order to reduce dropout, the scheme includes the provision of opening and strengthening of new schools up to senior secondary level; construction of school buildings and additional classrooms; setting up, up-gradation and running of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas; setting up of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Avasiya Vidyalayas; free uniforms, free text books, transport allowance and undertaking enrolment & retention drives, construction of hostels under Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan for unsaturated ST population, reimbursement under RTE Act, various qualitative components, strengthening of teacher education and strengthening of DIETs/BRCs/CRCs, provision of ICT and digital interventions. Government has also taken initiatives such as Vidya Samiksha Kendra (VSK) and implementation

of Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) ID to monitor the drop out and other education indicators.

In addition, support is provided through special training for age-appropriate admission of Out of School Children and for the training of residential as well as non-residential older children. The provision of seasonal hostels or residential camps, special training centres at worksites, transport/escort facility are also available for bringing Out of School Children to the formal schooling structure. Financial assistance upto ₹ 2000 per annum is being provided for Out of School Children of age group of 16-19 years, belonging to socio economically disadvantaged groups, for completing their education through NIOS/SIOS, for accessing course materials and certification. Under the student-oriented component for the children with special needs of the scheme, financial assistance is provided for identification and assessment of children with special needs, aids and appliances, braille kits and books, appropriate teaching learning material and stipend to girl students with disability etc. All States/UTs including Maharashtra have been directed to reduce the dropout rate and number of Out of School Children (OoSC). States/UTs have also been requested to participate in “Bringing Children Back to School” campaign with the full and active engagement of School Management Committees and community involvement through Panchayati Raj Institutions.

(b) The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India. It provides report on fertility, infant and child mortality, the practice of family planning, maternal and child health, reproductive health, nutrition, anaemia, utilization and quality of health and family planning services. 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 from 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 including Maharashtra.

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. A third-party evaluation and impact assessment of Poshan Abhiyaan was conducted by NITI Aayog in 2020 and in 2025 and found its relevance to be satisfactory for tackling malnutrition in the country.

(c) Various steps have been taken up from time to time to improve infrastructure and ensure uninterrupted nutrition delivery under Mission Poshan 2.0. Following are some of the initiatives undertaken:

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has taken **various steps to address the challenges related to malnutrition which are being implemented in all States and UTs including Hingoli and other districts of Maharashtra:**

- Under this Mission, Supplementary Nutrition is provided to Children (6 months to 6 years), Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers and Adolescent Girls to address 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 centres.
- 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 Ministry has issued Integrated Nutrition Support Programme- Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan (2.0), Rules, 2022 on 12th September 2022 to regulate the entitlements specified under the provisions of National Food Security Act, 2013 for every pregnant woman and lactating mother, till six months after child birth and every child in the age group of six months to six years.

- 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. A total of 14,745 Anganwadis have been approved for upgradation to Saksham Anganwadis in the State of Maharashtra.
- The Government has taken a policy decision to upgrade each Mini AWCs to a full-fledged Anganwadi Centre with one worker and one helper to help in carrying out the various responsibilities under the Mission Poshan 2.0 including responsibilities related to Early Childhood Care & Education. Out of 1,16,852 Mini-AWCs in 23 States/UTs, sanction for upgradation of 1,11,363 Mini-AWCs in 21 States/UTs has been issued till date.
- 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, opening and closing of AWCs, daily attendance of children, ECCE activities, 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.
- 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 2500 AWCs have been approved for construction under PM JANMAN across the country. A total of 178 number of AWCs have been approved for construction under PM JANMAN in the State of Maharashtra.
- 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.
- 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. A total of 88,652 number of Anganwadis have been trained under the initiative in the State of Maharashtra.

- Community Based Events (CBEs), held twice a month at each Anganwadi Centre, strengthen community engagement and promote better nutrition practices. These events celebrate key milestones for pregnant women and young children and spread awareness on complementary feeding, diet diversity, anaemia, WASH and public health. Since 2018, 8.82 crore CBEs have been conducted.
- Jan Andolans, through Poshan Maah (September) and Poshan Pakhwada (March/April), have driven mass nutrition awareness with over 150 crore activities since 2018. The 8th Rashtriya Poshan Maah (2025), launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in Madhya Pradesh, focused on themes such as obesity, ECCE, IYCF, men's involvement, vocal-for-local foods and digital convergence. This edition alone saw 14.33 crore activities across all States/UTs in partnership with more than 18 Ministries.
- Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Days (VHSNDs) are observed by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in convergence with Ministry of Women and Child Development for creating mass awareness on maternal and child health services including nutrition. It's a community platform, connecting the community and health systems and facilitating convergent actions. It attempts to bring health, early childhood development, nutrition and sanitation services to the doorstep and promote community engagement for improved health and wellbeing.
