

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2071
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.12.2025

PM POSHAN AND SAKSHAM ANGANWADI

2071. ADV. CHANDRA SHEKHAR:

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

- (a) the reason for one-third of Indian children remaining stunted despite the PM POSHAN Scheme and Saksham Anganwadi initiatives running for years in the country;
- (b) whether an independent impact assessment of these schemes has been conducted post-Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2025 release;
- (c) if so, the details of the findings and corrective actions suggested; and
- (d) if not, the reasons for such glaring oversight?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d): Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) Scheme is one of the foremost rights based Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented in partnership with the States and Union Territories (UTs) for providing one hot cooked and nutritious meal to all children studying in Bal Vatika (just before class-I) and classes I to VIII of Government and Government-aided schools. The Scheme covers about 11 crore children in more than 10.35 lakh schools in all the States/ UTs. The overall responsibility for providing hot cooked and nutritious meal to the eligible children lies with the State Governments and Union Territory (UT) Administrations. There is a provision of 5% of total recurring budget as the flexi component to be used by the States/UTs as per their requirement. It may be used for setting up of School Nutrition Gardens and provision of Supplementary Nutrition interventions viz., Chikki, Eggs, Milk, Fruits and additional food items etc. in identified districts. The States and Union Territory Administrations are encouraged to decide menu suitable to the local conditions within the prescribed nutrition and food norms and to procure locally grown food items like millets, vegetables, condiments etc.

During the celebration of Shiksha Saptah more than 2 crore meals were provided under Tithi Bhojan. Overall, about 6.43 crore students studying in 5.77 lakh schools were benefitted under Tithi Bhojan across the country. The School Nutrition Gardens (SNGs) have been set up in more than 6.28 lakh schools under the Scheme.

In order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the scheme, Government approved several initiatives including 'Vocal for Local' under which States and UTs are encouraged to decide menu suitable to the local conditions within the prescribed nutrition and food norms and to procure locally grown food items like millets, vegetables, condiments etc. from Farmers' Producers Organizations, Federation of Women's Self-Help Groups etc. so as to promote local employment generation and economic development while simultaneously improving the nutrition standards. The Government of India has issued detailed guidelines to improve the implementation of the scheme to all the States/UTs. These guidelines are available on official website <https://pmposhan.education.gov.in>.

To address the challenge of malnutrition, Anganwadi services, Poshan Abhiyaan and Scheme for Adolescent girls (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 open to all eligible beneficiaries, i.e., Children under 6 years of age, pregnant women, lactating mothers till 6 months after childbirth and adolescent girls (14-18 years of age) in Northeastern States and Aspirational Districts of the country. The Mission is being implemented across the country.

Global Hunger Index is published by 3 Non-Government Organizations (viz., Welt Hunger Hilfe of Germany, Concern Worldwide of Ireland and Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict of Germany). It is a flawed measure of 'Hunger' and does not reflect India's true position. Three out of four of its constituent indicators namely, Stunting, Wasting and Under Five Mortality Rate are actually related to health and nourishment levels of children. They cannot be projected to reflect prevalence of hunger in the overall population. Only one indicator, Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU), is directly related to hunger, and even this indicator suffers from significant methodological and data limitations. Owing to the probabilistic nature of its estimation and uncertainties in underlying parameters, the precision of PoU estimates is generally low. The other two indicators, viz., stunting and wasting, are not measures of hunger, but outcomes of multiple complex factors including sanitation, environmental conditions, disease burden, maternal health, genetics, and food utilisation. Similarly, the fourth indicator, i.e., Under Five Mortality Rate, is influenced by a wide set of determinants such as access to healthcare, immunisation coverage, sanitation and hygiene, safe drinking water, and overall socio-economic conditions. In view of these shortcomings, the methodology adopted by GHI is 'flawed' and it cannot be taken to reflect hunger in the overall population. Under Mission Poshan 2.0, these key indicators like stunting and wasting along with underweight among children are being monitored through Poshan Tracker.

Further, 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.

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) to assess the program's delivery of nutrition services. The findings demonstrated that the services delivered under 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 also in 2025 for Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 and has found its relevance to be satisfactory for tackling malnutrition in the country

In order to effectively address the issue of malnutrition a multi-sectoral approach involving dimensions of food, health, water, sanitation and education is crucial. It is being addressed under the Mission by establishing cross cutting convergence amongst more than 18 Ministries/Departments.

Under this Mission, Supplementary Nutrition is provided to Children (6 months to 6 years), Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers and Adolescent Girls (14-18 years) in accordance with nutrition norms contained in Schedule-II of the National Food Security Act, 2013. These norms have been revised in January 2023. 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 and recommend provision of quality protein, healthy fats and 7 essential micronutrients (Calcium, Zinc, Iron, Dietary Folate, Vitamin A, Vitamin-B6 and Vitamin B-12).

Fortified rice is being supplied under supplementary nutrition programme to meet the requirement of micro-nutrients among women and children. Greater emphasis is 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 Protocol for Management of Malnutrition in Children to prevent and treat severely acute malnutrition in children and for reducing associated morbidity and mortality.

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 in the whole country including tribal and remote areas. 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), 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.

Under this Mission, one of the major activities undertaken is Community Mobilization and Awareness Advocacy to educate people on nutritional aspects as adoption of healthy eating habits 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. Additionally, 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.

Two 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.

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.
