

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION. 4678
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.03.2026

STUNTING, WASTING AND ANAEMIA AMONG CHILDREN

4678. COM. SELVARAJ V:
SHRI SUBBARAYAN K:

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note that NFHS data continues to show high levels of child stunting, wasting and anaemia despite decades of Integrated Child Development services (ICDS) implementation;
- (b) if so, the reasons for malnutrition along with the efforts taken to address the malnutrition; and
- (c) whether the Ministry has evaluated and identified that the under-funding and outsourcing have weakened the programme, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c): 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 (2005-06)***	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

As per National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21), percentage of children age 6-59 months classified as having anaemia is 67.1.

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 scheme where the responsibility for implementation of various activities lies with the States and UTs. This Mission includes beneficiaries; children under 6 years of age, pregnant women, lactating mothers and adolescent girls (age 14-18 years in Aspirational Districts and North-Eastern region) in the country. Supplementary Nutrition is provided to these beneficiaries in accordance with the nutrition norms contained in Schedule-II of the National Food Security Act, 2013, with special provisions for undernourished children.

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, behavioural change and advocacy. It focuses on Maternal Nutrition, Infant and Young Child Feeding practices, treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM)/ Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) and wellness through AYUSH practices to reduce prevalence of wasting, stunting, anaemia and underweight. Further, a Protocol for Management of Malnutrition in Children has been jointly released by Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2023.

One of the major activities under the Mission is Community Mobilization and Awareness Advocacy to educate people on nutritional aspects. State and UTs are conducting and reporting regular sensitisation activities under Jan Andolans during Poshan Maah and Poshan Pakhwada celebrated in the months of September and March-April respectively. Also, 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. A total of 9.8 crore CBEs has been conducted from 2018 to February 2026 and more than 150 crore Jan Andolan activities have been conducted since 2018 through 15 Jan Andolans.

A third-party evaluation and impact assessment of Poshan Abhiyaan was conducted by NITI Aayog in 2020 and has found its relevance to be satisfactory for tackling malnutrition in the country. Niti Aayog has also got conducted outcome-based evaluation of Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 in 2025. Evidence from institutional assessments and household surveys indicated that in its current form, Mission Poshan 2.0 represents the Government's latest effort to holistically combat malnutrition and promote child development, by building on past programs with a converged and strengthened approach. Further, digitalization has had a multi-dimensional impact on nutrition monitoring, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), beneficiary authentication, and service delivery efficiency. Nationwide awareness campaigns, such as Poshan Maah and Poshan Pakhwada, have enhanced community participation in nutrition-related initiatives, fostering improved knowledge and behavioural changes toward maternal and child nutrition.
