

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *82
TO BE ANSWERED ON 08.12.2023

ANEMIA AND MALNUTRITION IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN

*82 DR. HEENA VIJAYKUMAR GAVIT:
DR. SHRIKANT EKNATH SHINDE:

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

- (a) the numbers of women suffering from anemia and children suffering from malnutrition in India;
- (b) the target of the Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0 scheme to address the said issues among women and children;
- (c) the measures taken to spread awareness about proper dietary habits for pregnant and lactating women to save them from anemia; and
- (d) the medically suggested measures taken to address nutritional deficiencies among the pregnant and lactating mothers and malnourished children?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) to (d) Statement is laid on the table of the House

Statement referred to in reply to Part (a) to (d) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. *82 by Dr. Heena Vijaykumar Gavit and Dr. Shrikant Eknath Shinde to be answered on 08.12.2023 regarding “Anemia And Malnutrition In Women And Children”

(a) The prevalence of anaemia in the country according to National Family Health Survey 5 (2019-21), among all women age 15-49 years is 57.0 % and among pregnant women age 15-49 years is 52.2 %. The prevalence of stunting, wasting, and underweight among children under 5 years in the country, according to National Family Health Survey 5 (2019-21) is as below:

Indicator	NFHS 5 (2019-21)
Percentage of children age 5 years who are stunted (Height-for-age)	35.5
Percentage of children age 5 years who are wasted (Weight-for-height)	19.3
Percentage of children age 5 years who are underweight (Weight-for-age)	32.1

As per the data of Poshan Tracker for the month of November 2023, around 7.44 crore children under 6 years were measured, out of whom 37.51% were found to be stunted and 17.43% were found to be underweight and were found to be wasted. The levels of underweight and wasting are much less than that projected by NFHS 5.

(b) Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 is an integrated nutrition support programme, to strengthen nutritional content, delivery, outreach and outcomes with focus on developing practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity to disease and malnutrition. It focuses on Maternal Nutrition, Infant and Young Child Feeding Norms, Treatment of MAM/SAM and Wellness through Ayush practices to reduce wasting and under-weight prevalence besides stunting and anaemia.

The objectives of Poshan 2.0 are as follows:

- To contribute to human capital development of the country;
- Address challenges of malnutrition;
- Promote nutrition awareness and good eating habits for sustainable health and well-being; and
- Address nutrition related deficiencies through key strategies.

(c) & (d). Under Poshan 2.0, focus is on diet diversity, food fortification, leveraging traditional systems of knowledge and popularizing use of millet. Dietary diversification in the Anganwadi platform encourages the consumption of micronutrient rich foods, viz., dark green leafy vegetables, lentils and vitamin C rich fruits. States/UTs have been advised to use fortified foods ingredients e.g., Fortified Wheat Flour, Fortified Rice, Double Fortified Salt and Fortified Edible Oil, under the Supplementary Nutrition Programme.

Further, to give high importance to issues around Anaemia, dedicated “Anaemia related themes have been undertaken by Ministry of Women & Child Development under Poshan Abhiyaan wherein around 6 crore activities on Anaemia have been reported so far. In the recently held Poshan Maah in September, 2023, more than 35 crore sensitisation activities have been reported, of which around 4 crore were focused around Anaemia. The Ministry took steps to encourage the adoption of millet across the country. So far, through Jan Andolans, more than 5 crore sensitisation activities have been conducted focusing on Millet promotion in last two years helping target beneficiaries to fight against anaemia through sensitisation and adoption of healthy, millet-based eating practices.

States/UTs have also been advised to promote use of AYUSH systems for prevention of malnutrition and related diseases. First ever **National protocol for Community Management of Malnutrition** in children was launched jointly by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare dated 10th October 2023 providing detailed steps for identification and management of malnourished children at the Anganwadi level, including decision-making for referral, nutritional management and follow-up care. Further, area wise *diet charts* for pregnant women and malnourished pregnant women in the reproductive age group has also been prepared and disseminated to States/UTs.

The key interventions of MoHFW to improve maternal and child health including nutritional deficiencies and anemia, *inter alia*, are:

- i. **Anemia Mukh Bharat (AMB)** strategy is implemented to reduce anemia among six beneficiaries age group - children (6-59 months), children (5-9 years), adolescents (10-19 years), pregnant and lactating women and in women of reproductive age group (15-49 years) in life cycle approach through implementation of six interventions via robust institutional mechanism. The steps taken to address the problem of anemia are:
 - o Prophylactic Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation in all six target age groups
 - o Intensified year-round Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) Campaign
 - o Testing using digital methods and point of care treatment, with special focus on pregnant women and school-going adolescents
 - o Addressing non-nutritional causes of anemia in endemic pockets with special focus on malaria, hemoglobinopathies and fluorosis
 - o Providing incentives to the ANM for identification and follow-up of pregnant women with severe anemia in high priority districts (HPDs)
 - o Management of severe anemia in pregnant women by administration of IV Iron Sucrose/Blood transfusion
- ii. **Monthly Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Day (VHSND)** is an outreach activity at Anganwadi centers for provision of maternal and child care including nutrition in convergence with the ICDS.
- iii. **MCP Card and Safe Motherhood Booklet** are distributed to the pregnant women for educating them on diet, rest, danger signs of pregnancy, benefit schemes and institutional deliveries.
