

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1223**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.02.2024

**MALNUTRITION IN CHILDREN**

1223. DR. SHRIKANT EKNATH SHINDE:  
DR. SUJAY RADHAKRISHNA VIKHE PATIL:  
SHRI UNMESH BHAIYYASAHEB PATIL:  
DR. KRISHNA PAL SINGH YADAV:  
PROF. RITA BAHUGUNA JOSHI:  
DR. HEENA VIJAYKUMAR GAVIT:

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

- (a) the manner in which the Government has effectively addressed the issue of child malnutrition and ensured the nutritional well-being of children,
- (b) the manner in which the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme has contributed to the overall health and development the country; and
- (c) the details on the usage of technology by the Government to enhance the delivery of its services and improve outreach to beneficiaries?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (c) The Government has accorded high priority to the issue of malnutrition and is implementing several schemes/programmes of different Ministries/Departments through States/UTs to address various aspects related to nutrition. In the 15th Finance Commission, components of nutritional support for children below the age of 6 years, pregnant women and lactating mother, Adolescent Girls (14 – 18 years); Early Childhood Care and Education [3-6 years]; Anganwadi infrastructure including modern, upgraded Saksham Anganwadi, POSHAN Abhiyaan and Scheme for Adolescent Girls have been reorganized under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 (Mission Poshan 2.0). Mission Poshan 2.0 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 anemia.

Under Mission Poshan 2.0, Supplementary nutrition is provided to beneficiaries 300 days in a year through the network of 13.97 lakh AWC located across the country for bridging the gap in the intake as compared to the recommended dietary intake. Only fortified rice is being supplied to AWCs to meet the requirement of micronutrient

and control anaemia among women and children. Greater emphasis is being given on the use of millets for preparation of Hot Cooked Meal and Take Home rations (THR – not raw ration) at Anganwadi centers for Children below 6 years of age, Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers.

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.

Steps have been taken to improve nutritional quality and testing in accredited labs, strengthen delivery and leverage technology under Poshan Tracker to improve governance. States/UTs have been advised to promote use of AYUSH systems for prevention of malnutrition and related diseases. A programme to support development of Poshan Vatikas at Anganwadi Centers to meet dietary diversity gap leveraging traditional knowledge in nutritional practices has also been taken up.

Under Poshan 2.0, one of the major activities undertaken is Community Mobilization and Awareness Advocacy leading to Jan Andolan to educate the people on nutritional aspects. IEC materials in the form of videos, pamphlets, flyers etc., in regional languages have also been developed around critical themes. Social & Behavioral Changes have been inculcated through conducting Community Based Events, Poshan Maah and Poshan Pakhwada in convergence with various Ministries/ Departments and other stakeholders. So far, more than 90 crore sensitization activities have been reported by States/ UTs under community engagements programmes through 11 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 nutrition practices. CBEs help to celebrate critical milestones in the life of pregnant women and children below two years of age and to disseminate critical information on inter alia, right time to ensure appropriate complementary feeding with diet diversity. Close to 3.70 crore Community Based Events have been held so far.

IT systems have been leveraged to strengthen and bring about transparency in nutrition delivery support systems at the Anganwadi centres. The 'Poshan Tracker' application was rolled out on 1st March, 2021 as an important governance tool. The Poshan Tracker facilitates 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.

Further, under Poshan 2.0, for the first time, a digital revolution was ushered in when the Anganwadi Centres were equipped with mobile devices. The mobile application has also facilitated digitization and automation of physical registers used by AWWs that helps in improving their quality of work. Poshan Tracker is available in 22 languages including Hindi and English. It has facilitated near real time data collection for Anganwadi Services such as, daily attendance, ECCE, Provision 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. States/UTs can see their progress on various indicators on the Poshan Tracker dashboard on monthly basis and can make course correction wherever required.

In addition, Ministry of Women & Child Development and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare jointly released the protocol for Community Management of Malnutrition (CMAM) to prevent and treat severe acute malnutrition children thereby reducing associated morbidity and mortality. The community-based approach involves timely detection and screening of children with severe acute malnutrition in the community, management for those without medical complications with wholesome, local nutritious foods at home and supportive medical care. Those malnourished children who have medical complications are referred for facility-based care.

The indicators for malnutrition like underweight, stunting and wasting have shown a steady improvement in National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. As per the recent report of NFHS-5 (2019-21), the nutrition indicators for children under 5 years have improved as compared with NFHS-4 (2015-16). Stunting has reduced from 38.4% to 35.5%, while Wasting has reduced from 21.0% to 19.3% and Underweight prevalence has reduced from 35.8% to 32.1%.

As per the data of Poshan Tracker for the month of December 2023, around 7.44 crore children under 6 years were measured, out of whom 36% were found to be stunted and 17% were found to be underweight and 6% children under 5 years were found to be wasted. The levels of underweight and wasting obtained from Poshan Tracker are much less than that projected by NFHS 5.

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