

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5253

ANSWERED ON:10.12.2010

COMBATING HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION

Adsul Shri Anandrao Vithoba;Jeyadural Shri S. R.;Mcleod Smt. Ingrid

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

- (a) whether India is on top of the heap among Commonwealth countries as home to the highest number of underweight children;
- (b) if so, the response of the Union Government thereto;
- (c) whether India is one of seven Commonwealth countries that are not showing adequate progress on Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1;
- (d) if so, the facts thereof;
- (e) the progress achieved by India for combating hunger and malnutrition among children;
- (f) whether present pace is enough to achieve the target of hunger and malnutrition by 2015; and
- (g) if not, the steps taken by the Union Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH)

(a) to (g): As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3), 2005-06, 42.5% children under 5 years are underweight in the country. The prevalence of underweight children below three years of age has declined from 42.7 per cent in 1998-99 (NFHS-II) to 40.4 per cent in 2005-06-(NHFS III). Though there has been an improvement in prevalence of underweight children, the progress has been slow.

The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) -1 is regarding eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, which targets to halve by 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. The problem of malnutrition is complex, multi-dimensional and inter-generational in nature, and cannot be improved by a single sector alone. Poverty and hunger along with household food insecurity, illiteracy and lack of awareness especially in women, access to health services, availability of safe drinking water, sanitation and proper environmental conditions are some of the determinants of malnutrition. Infact, improvement in malnutrition is linked to achievement of six of the Millennium Development Goals

The Government accords high priority to the issue of malnutrition, particularly, in respect of children, adolescent girls and women and has been implementing several schemes/programmes of different Ministries/Departments through State Governments/UTs. These schemes, interalia, include Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) of Ministry of Women and Child Development, National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Mid Day Meals Scheme of Ministry of Human Resource Development, Drinking Water & Total Sanitation Campaign, National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS) of Ministry of Rural Development & Targeted Public Distribution System of Department of Food & Public Distribution etc.

Several of the schemes namely, ICDS, NRHM, Mid Day meal (MDM), National Rural Livelihood Mission have been expanded to provide for increased coverage and improved services to the people which would further improve the nutrition situation and move towards achieving the MDGs.