

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2277
ANSWERED ON:23.11.2010
NUTRITIONAL SCARCITY
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Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the prices of foodgrains in the last few months have increased manifold in the country and millions of families living in rural areas are unable to afford the same;
- (b) if so, whether severe food and nutritional scarcity in the country have affected almost half of the children under three years of age and more than one-third of women;
- (c) if so, whether any integrated approach has been formulated to achieve food and nutritional security in the country; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K. V. THOMAS)

(a): The prices of food grains such as rice, wheat, pulses have not increased manifold in the country as observed in the retail prices of the foodgrains such as rice, wheat and pulses in 4 metros viz. Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkatta and Chennai are given in Annexure I. However, Government has taken steps to protect poor sections of society through Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and Antodaya Anna Yojna (AAY). Under the TPDS, wheat, rice, coarse grains and kerosene are allocated to State Governments /UTs for distribution through the Fair Price Shops. The off take of wheat and rice under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has been going up. For TPDS, wheat and rice off take have gone up from 313.69 lakh tonnes in 2006-07 to 424.03 lakh tonnes in 2009-10. During the period 2010-11(up to July 2010), 141.53 lakh tonnes of wheat and rice has been allocated under TPDS.

The Central Issue Price for rice and wheat has not been revised since 2002. For wheat it remains at Rs 4.15 per kg for BPL and Rs 2 per kg for AAY. For rice, it is Rs 5.65 per kg for BPL and Rs 3 per kg for AAY.

(b): As per National Family Health Survey –III (2005-06), the percentage of underweight children below 3 years of age is 40.4 per cent and the percentage of women with BMI less than 18.5 is 35.6 per cent.

(c) & (d): The Government accords high priority to the overall 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.

The interventions to address nutrition challenges in India mainly stem from the National Nutrition Policy and the National Plan of Action on Nutrition which envisage direct and indirect interventions. Some of the programmes/schemes are:

(i) The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme provides a package of six services namely supplementary nutrition, pre-school non-formal education, nutrition & health education, immunization, health check-up and referral services for women and children. Three of the services namely immunization, health check- up and referral services are delivered through the public health system of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

(ii) National Rural health Mission (NRHM) has interventions such as the Reproductive & Child Health Programme which include Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) to promote institutional deliveries, immunization, specific programmes to prevent and combat micronutrient deficiencies including Iron & Folic Acid supplementation etc. the National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control programme focuses on consumption of Iodized salt to prevent iodine deficiency.

(iii) The recently introduced Rajiv Gandhi Schemes for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG), namely SABLA would provide a package of services including health and nutrition to adolescent girls in the age group of 11 -14 years for out of school girls and 15-18 years for all girls for nutrition in 200 districts as a pilot.

(iv) A new scheme, the Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) – The CMB Scheme would provide a better enabling environment for improved health and nutrition to pregnant and lactating mothers and support for providing early & exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life on pilot basis in 52 districts initially

(v) The Mid Day Meal in Schools by Department of School Education and Literacy has a provision for providing meals to children studying in class I to VIII in Government, Government aided, local body schools etc.

(vi) Availability of essential food items at subsidized cost through Targeted Public Distribution System, Antyodaya Anna Yojna.

(vii) Provision for safe drinking water supply and sanitation under the Total Sanitation Campaign.

(viii) Employment and income generation schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS), National Rural Livelihood Mission

(ix) Other schemes such as the National Agriculture Development Programme, National Horticulture Mission 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.