

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:744  
ANSWERED ON:25.11.2011  
FAO REPORT ON MALNUTRITION  
Dhurve Jyoti

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

- (a) whether a report of Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) has indicated that nearly 51 percent of the world's undernourished children are from South Asia;
- (b) if so, the details thereof indicating the percent share of India therein;
- (c) whether India has a large number of malnourished children in comparison to other countries of the world;
- (d) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to overcome the problem of malnutrition?

**Answer**

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

a) to (e): An article 'Meeting Food Needs in the 21st century : How many and who will be at risk' mentions that about 160 million children under five years of age in the developing world are malnourished and that a little more than 51 percent of them live in South Asia, 22 percent in East Asia, and about 20 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa.

As per "the State of the World's Children Report, 2011" by UNICEF, 42% children under five years in South Asia and 43 % children in India are underweight. As per the National Family Health Survey-3, 2005-06, also 42.5 % of children under 5 are underweight in India. The status of malnutrition in children in some of the countries is Annexed.

The problem of malnutrition is multi-dimensional and inter-generational in nature, the determinants of which include 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 and adequate purchasing power etc. Besides, early age at marriage of girls, teenage pregnancies resulting in low birth weight of the newborns, poor breastfeeding practices, poor complementary feeding practices, ignorance about nutritional needs of infants and young children and repeated infections, also aggravate the malnutrition amongst children.

The Government has accorded priority to the issue of malnutrition and is implementing several schemes /programmes of different Ministries/Departments through State Governments/UT Administrations. These programmes include the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme, National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Mid Day Meal Scheme, Rajiv Gandhi Schemes for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) namely SABLA, Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojna (IGMSY) as Direct targeted interventions. Besides, indirect Multi-sectoral interventions include Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), National Horticulture Mission, National Food Security Mission, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Total Sanitation Campaign, National Rural Drinking Water Programme etc. All these schemes have potential to address one or other aspect of nutrition. Along with the new schemes/programmes, several existing schemes/programmes have been expanded universalized just before or during the Eleventh Five year Plan. The results of these interventions would be visible after some time.

The State Governments/ UT Administrations have a crucial role to play in addressing malnutrition and its causes as they implement most of schemes for direct and indirect interventions addressing malnutrition. That is why, they (State Governments/ UT Administrations) have been requested to expedite the setting up of the State Nutrition Council under the chairmanship of respective Chief Minister with the coordination mechanisms both at the State and District level.