

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1823

ANSWERED ON:23.03.2012

**MALNUTRITION**

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of the very high prevalence of malnutrition in the country especially amongst children below five years of age as pointed out in the survey report on Hunger and Malnutrition (HUNGAMA Report);
- (b) if so, the details thereof indicating the number of women and children below five years reported to be suffering from malnutrition during each of the last three years and the current year, State wise;
- (c) whether the various schemes being run by the Government to tackle the problem of malnutrition have not yielded the desired results;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (e) whether the Government has constituted any Committee in this regard; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof along with the other steps taken/being taken by the Government to curb the malnutrition?

**Answer**

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

(a)to(f): As per the National Family Health Survey-3 (NFHS-3), 2005-06, 42.5% children under 5 years are underweight and 69.5 % are anemic. 35.6% of women in the age group of 15-49 years suffer from chronic energy deficiency (CED) (measured as low body mass index) and 55.3% are anemic. The latest available State-wise details of the underweight and anemic children and women are at Annex 1 to 3.

Separately and independently, the HUNGAMA Survey 2011, coordinated by an NGO, Nandi Foundation indicates a reduction in the prevalence of child underweight which has decreased from 53 per cent (DLHS, 2004) to 42 per cent representing a 20.3 per cent decrease over a 7 year period.

The approach to dealing with the nutrition challenges has been two pronged: Multi-sectoral approach for accelerated action on the determinants of malnutrition in targeting nutrition in schemes/programmes of all the sectors. As the multi-sectoral approach takes some time to show results and when implemented together, have a trickle down and horizontal effect to benefit the population over a period of time, other part of the approach is direct and specific interventions targeted towards the vulnerable groups such as children below 6 years, adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating mothers.

Malnutrition is manifestation of several underlying factors & causes and is complex, multi- dimensional and inter-generational in nature. The causes are varied and include inadequate consumption of food, frequent infections, lack of availability of safe drinking water and proper sanitation, illiteracy specially in women, poor access to health services, low purchasing power , socio-cultural factors such as early marriages of girls, lack of care during pregnancy and infancy, ignorance about nutritional needs of infants and young children etc.

The Government has accorded high priority to the issue of malnutrition and is implementing several schemes/programmes of different Ministries/Departments through State Governments/UT Administrations. The schemes/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. Several of the existing schemes/ programmes have been expanded / universalized just before or during the

Eleventh Five year Plan, hence, the results are likely to be visible after some time. The responsibility of implementation of most of the above schemes lies with State Governments/ UT Administrations who have been advised from time to time to set up State Nutrition Council and other mechanisms to address the issue.

Further, some of the recent decisions by the Prime Minister Council on India's Nutrition Challenges to improve the nutrition situation have been to (i) strengthen and restructure ICDS with special focus on pregnant and lactating mothers and children under three (ii) prepare a multi-sectoral programme to address the maternal and child malnutrition in selected 200 high-burden districts (iii) launch a nationwide information, education and communication campaign against malnutrition and (iv) bring strong nutrition focus in programmes in sectors like health, drinking water supply and sanitation, school education, agriculture, food & public distribution.

With the continuing attention to nutrition these targeted interventions and the cumulative effect of various schemes including new schemes which have been introduced, the malnutrition levels are expected to show a decline in the next NFHS survey as and when it is undertaken.