

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:272

ANSWERED ON:24.04.2012

REPORT ON HUNGER

Baalu Thiru Thalikkottai Rajuthevar;Rajendran Shri C.

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recent reports by international agencies including International Food Policy Research Institute and the Planning Commission report based on the 66th round survey of the National Sample Survey Organisation have indicated decline in nutritional intake and prevalence of hunger, malnutrition and starvation in the country despite the operation of various nutritional programmes;

(b) if so, the details and salient features of such reports/survey thereof;

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(d) the steps including restructuring of the Public Distribution System taken/proposed to be taken to tackle the menace?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS)

(a) to (d): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO. 272 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 24.04.2012 IN THE LOK SABHA

(a) to (c): The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has brought out a Global Hunger Index (GHI) Report in October 2011. In this report, Index has been calculated for 122 countries and India ranks 67 out of 81 countries finally included in the calculation. The report states that India is among countries having highest prevalence of underweight in children younger than five. But nothing has been mentioned specially for India about decline in nutritional intake and prevalence of hunger, malnutrition and starvation in the country. It also does not give any details regarding lack of availability of food or access to food to the people in the country.

The 66th round survey of National Sample Survey Organisation indicates that at the all India level, daily protein intake has fallen from 60.2g to 55g per person in the rural sector and from 57.2g to 53.5g in the urban sector over the period 1993-94 to 2009-10. However, fat intake has shown a rising trend in the same period. At the all India level, the rise has been from 31.4g to 38.3 g in rural sector while in the urban sector, it has increased from 42g to 47.9 g. Other findings of the survey include, decline in share of cereal intake in total calorie intake since 1993-94 by nearly 7 percentage points in the rural sector and about 3.5 percentage points in the urban. The share of oils and fats has risen by 3 percentage points in both the sectors. The share of milk and milk products has grown by about 1.4 percentage points in the urban sector and 0.6 percentage points in the rural.

The Government has taken note of the GHI findings. However, the GHI findings do not take into account the most recent increase in the availability and distribution of food grains to the vulnerable sections of the population at subsidised prices during the period 2009 and 2011 through the Public Distribution System. The data on proportion of under-nourished pertains to the years 2005 to 2007. Data on child under weight is for the years 2004 to 2009. Data on child mortality is for the year 2009. It is based on three closely inter-related indicators which all reflect the status of health care and that too mainly in the case of children and not reflect the hunger or lack of access to food in the society. The data is not test checked or validated by any large scale primary field surveys.

(d) : The Government has been taking several measures to strengthen the nutritional levels of the most vulnerable sections of the population, particularly, pregnant and lactating mothers and children upto the age of six years through the Supplementary Nutrition Programme under ICDS, children in the primary and upper primary levels through the Midday Meal scheme, nutritional empowerment programme of girl children in the age group of 11-18 years through the Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (Sabla). Under Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY), introduced in 2010-11 on trial basis in 52 districts from all States/UTs, cash incentives are provided to pregnant and lactating mothers for improving their health and nutritional status. Under Annapurna scheme implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development, indigent senior citizens are provided 10kg of food grains per month, free of cost. Under the Emergency Feeding Programme (EFP) which is a food-based intervention implemented in the KBK districts of Orissa, targetted at old, infirm and destitute persons belonging to BPL households to provide them food security, cooked food is provided daily to EFP beneficiaries by the State Government. The allocation of food grains under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) families have also been increased through adhoc additional allocations during the last two years.

The National Nutrition Policy 1993 and the National Plan of Action on Nutrition 1995 advocates a comprehensive inter-sectoral strategy, which directly or indirectly affect dietary intake and nutritional status of the population, for combating the multifaceted problem of under nutrition and improving nutritional status for all sections of the society.

The Government has been taking several measures to streamline the Public Distribution System. These include the 9 Point Action Plan, action against possession of bogus ration cards, increased transparency in the functioning of TPDS, use of ICT tools such as computerization of TPDS operations, etc.