

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:619
ANSWERED ON:18.05.2012
MALNUTRITION
Biswal Shri Hemanand

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

- (a) whether the United Nations Millennium Summit has set any targets to overcome malnutrition;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the initiatives being undertaken by the Government are adequate to meet the UN target;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the remedial steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) to (e) of LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 619 TO BE ANSWERED ON 18.05.2012 RAISED BY SHRI HEMANAND BISWAL REGARDING MALNUTRITION.

The United Nations Millennium Summit, 2000 adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration outlining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to reduce extreme poverty, hunger, illiteracy, gender in equality, diseases, environmental degradation etc. India is concerned with 8 MDGs with 12 targets which are sought to be achieved during the period 1990 to 2015.

The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) -1 is regarding Eradication of Extreme Poverty and Hunger, which have 2 targets namely, Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day and Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. The indicator for the second target is the prevalence of underweight children under three years of age. Thus from the estimated 52% in 1990, the proportion of underweight children below 3 years is required to be reduced to 26% by 2015. All-India trend of the proportion of underweight children below 3 years of age of shows India is going slow in eliminating the effect of malnourishment as the prevalence of underweight is 40 percent as per the National Family Health Survey, 2005-06.

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 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.

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), National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Rajiv Gandhi Schemes for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) namely SABLA, Indira Gandhi MatritvaSahyogYojna (IGMSY) as Direct targeted interventions. Besides, indirect Multi-sectoralinterventions 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 including ICDS have been expanded / universalized just before or during the Eleventh Five year Plan, hence, the results are likely to be visible after some time

Further, some of the recent decisions by the Government 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.

In addition, the proposed National Food Security Bill, will also contribute towards food security. With the continuing attention to nutrition, the targeted interventions and the cumulative effect of various schemes including new schemes, the undernutrition levels are expected to show a declining trend. This is also evident from some of the recent surveys such as a study conducted by National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) in Madhya Pradesh in 2010 where in the prevalence of underweight children under 5 years of age in rural was 51.9 per cent compared to 62.7% in rural areas as per the NFHS-3 survey in 2005-06. Also the HUNGaMA survey which indicates a reduction in the prevalence of child underweight from 53 per cent (DLHS, 2004) to 42 per cent representing a 20.3 per cent decrease over a 7 year period in the 100 focus districts.