

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:7028
ANSWERED ON:18.05.2012
MALNOURISHED CHILDREN IN RURAL AREAS
Das Shri Khagen

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

- (a) whether the fifty percent of children in rural areas are malnourished even when there is record production of foodgrains year after year;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether her Ministry has had any consultations with the Food Ministry so as to address this problem and supply cereals through Public Distribution System(PDS);
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Food Ministry has stopped supplying cereals through PDS;
- (f) if so, the details thereof; and (g) the steps taken by her Ministry to resolve this issue?

Answer

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

(a) to (g): As per the National Family Health Survey-3 (NFHS-3) 2005-06, the percentage of underweight children under 5 years is 42.5, while it is 45.6 in rural areas in the country.

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), National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Rajiv Gandhi Schemes for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) namely SABLE, 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 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.

The Department of Food and Public Distribution, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution has been allocating food grains through Public Distribution System (PDS) under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and various Others Welfare Schemes (OWS) such as Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Wheat Based Nutrition Programme, Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls(RESEAG)-SABLE, Annapurna Scheme and Emergency Feeding Programme of different Ministries/Departments of Government of India to provide food security and to ensure that people living below poverty line get adequate food grains at highly subsidized price. The Department of Food and Public Distribution continues to supply rice & wheat for TPDS and OWS through PDS. During the year 2012-13, a quantity of 543.08 lakh tons of food grains have been allocated to States/UTs under the TPDS and OWS.

Interaction between the different Ministries for their various schemes is an ongoing process. Consultations have been held with Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution concerning the National Food Security Bill which has been presented before the Parliament.