

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6024

ANSWERED ON:03.05.2013

DEATH DUE TO MALNUTRITION

Abdulrahman Shri ;Biju Shri P. K.;Gandhi Shri Dilip Kumar Mansukhlal;Gowda Shri D.B. Chandre;J Helen Davidson;Rajesh Shri M. B.;Sampath Shri Anirudhan;Singh Shri Sukhdev;Singh Smt. Meena

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

- (a) the number of deaths of children due to malnutrition reported in the country during each of the last three years and the current year, State/UT-wise;
- (b) whether the Government/National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has conducted any study to ascertain the causes of the deaths of children due to malnutrition;
- (c) if so, the details and the findings thereof;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to take any assistance from international organizations in this regard;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the appropriate action taken or proposed by the Government/NCPCR to control this menace?

Answer

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

(a): Data on the number of deaths due to malnutrition in the country is not maintained centrally. However, as per the survey on 'Causes of Death – 2001-03 in India' by Registrar General of India, nutritional deficiencies are responsible for only 2.8% death of children aged 0-4 years and 1.8% in the age group 5-14 years. Some of the major causes of death of children below 4 years are perinatal conditions (33%), respiratory infections (22%), diarrheal diseases (14%), other infections and parasitic diseases (11%), accounting for 80% of the deaths in this age group. Malnutrition is not a direct cause of death but contributes to increased morbidity and mortality by reducing resistance to infections.

(b) & (c): National Commission for Protection of Child Rights NCPCR has not conducted any specific study on malnutrition deaths of children in the country and therefore question of findings does not arise.

(d) & (e): Assistance from International organizations are taken as per approved country Programme documents and action plans or against approved projects as per need and approvals.

(f): As per the National Family Health Survey-3 (NFHS-3), prevalence of underweight has declined from 42.7% in 1998-99 (NFHS-2) to 40.4% in 2005-06 (NFHS-3) for children below 3 years of age.

The problem of malnutrition is complex, multi-dimensional and inter-generational in nature. 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 in the country 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(MDM), Rajiv Gandhi Schemes for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) namely SABLA, Indira Gandhi MatritvaSahyogYojna (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), Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan, National Rural Drinking Water Programme etc. Several of the schemes namely, ICDS, NRHM, MDM, SGSY have been expanded post 2005-06. All these schemes have potential to address one or other aspect of Nutrition.

Nutrition has been receiving attention at the highest levels. Recent decisions of Government inter alia, include(i) strengthening and

restructuring of the ICDS with special focus on pregnant and lactating mothers and children under three. (ii) a multi-sectoral programme to address the maternal and child malnutrition in selected 200 high-burden districts. (iii) A nationwide information, education and communication campaign (iv) bringing in strong nutrition focus in Ministries dealing with Health, Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation, School Education, Agriculture and Food & Public Distribution. (v) programmes such as the ICDS and Midday meal shall use iron fortified iodized salt (Double fortified salt).

The proposed National Food Security Bill, introduced in the Lok Sabha will also contribute towards food security. Government has announced a pilot programme on Nutri-Farms for introducing new crop varieties that are rich in micro-nutrients such as iron-rich bajra, protein-rich maize and zinc- rich wheat.