

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1027
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22ND NOVEMBER, 2019**

UNICEF REPORT ON STUNTED CHILDREN

**1027. DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR:
SHRI MANNE SRINIVAS REDDY:
SHRI VINOD KUMAR SONKAR:
SHRI RAJA AMARESHWARA NAIK:
SHRI BHOLA SINGH:**

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the findings of the UNICEF's report titled "State of the World's Children 2019: Children, food and nutrition", if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the report suggest that 87 per cent of children in India are either stunted or wasted or underweight or combination of these, if so, the details thereof and the justification of the Government claims about the reduction in stunting and underweight children by 3.7 per cent and 2.3 per cent respectively during 2016 and 2018;
- (c) whether the schemes and programmes implemented by the Government to curb the above have had little impact on achieving its desired objectives, if so, the details thereof and the proposed steps likely to be taken to achieve its objectives;
- (d) whether the Government has noted that nearly 80 per cent children (6-23 months) in India do not receive minimum dietary diversity and there is a decline in calorie share of fruits and vegetables and a substantial lack of diet based on milk and milk products in India, if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (e) the steps taken/being taken to address the above issues by the Government?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)**

(a): Yes. The Government is aware of the findings of UNICEF's report titled "State of the World's Children 2019: Children, food and nutrition".

The salient findings of this report are as under:

- At least 1 in 3 children under 5 years of age is undernourished or overweight and 1 in 2 suffers from hidden hunger, undermining the capacity of millions of children to grow and develop to their full potential.

- The triple burden of malnutrition – undernutrition, hidden hunger and overweight – threatens the survival, growth and development of children, young people, economies and nations.
- The triple burden of malnutrition is driven by the poor quality of children’s diets: 2 in 3 children are not fed the minimum recommended.
- Globalization, urbanization, inequities, humanitarian crises and climate shocks are driving unprecedented negative changes in the nutrition situation of children around the world.
- Improving children’s nutrition requires food systems to deliver nutritious, safe, affordable and sustainable diets for all children.

(b) & (c): No. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India with support from UNICEF has conducted the first ever Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS), during year 2016 to 2018 in 30 States. The CNNS results highlight improvements by reduction in stunting (height for age), wasting (weight for height) and underweight (weight for age) in children below five years of age from 38.4% to 34.7%, 21.0% to 17.3% and 35.7% to 33.4% respectively in comparison to NFHS-4.

The Government of India has also launched POSHAN (Prime Minister Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment) Abhiyaan, to address malnutrition in India through convergence, behaviour change, IEC advocacy, training and capacity building, use of technology i.e. Common Application Software (CAS), innovations and demand generation.

(d) & (e): The Government is aware of the low percentage of minimum dietary diversity in children (6-23 months), and has started POSHAN Abhiyaan which focuses on educating families on the need for nutrition and motivating them on adopting these into their behaviour. The promotion of locally available nutritious food through various community based events (CBEs), exhibitions, rallies, workshops and meetings is one of the strategy under the POSHAN Abhiyaan.

The Government has also initiated various other advocacy and awareness campaigns including “Eat Right India” Campaign, which is built on the two broad pillars of 'Eat Healthy' and 'Eat Safe'.

Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Day (VHSND) platform is being used for creating community awareness on importance of balanced and healthy diet, and bringing desired changes in the dietary practices through group counselling sessions. The Government is also promoting use of fortified wheat flour, fortified rice, fortified oil and double fortified salt in supplementary nutrition under ICDS.

The Government of India is implementing Anganwadi Services a centrally sponsored flagship programme of the Government to improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age-group 0-6 years and to reduce the incidence of malnutrition. The scheme provides a package of six services i.e. Supplementary Nutrition, Pre School Non-formal Education, Nutrition and Health Education, Immunisation, Health checkups and referral services.

Government of India is also implementing various health and nutrition interventions under National Health Mission (NHM) which are as follows:

- Promotion of appropriate Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices that include early initiation of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding till 6 months of age and supplementary nutrition thereafter with continued breastfeeding upto to 2 years of age and beyond.
- “MAA- Mothers’ Absolute Affection” programme to improve breastfeeding coverage and appropriate breastfeeding practices.
- Micro-supplementation programmes for tackling micronutrient deficiency among vulnerable age groups such as pregnant women, under-five children and adolescents.
- Vitamin A supplementation (VAS) for children till the age of 5 years.
- ‘Anemia Mukht Bharat (AMB)’ for supplementation and treatment of anaemia in children, adolescents, pregnant and lactating women, and women of reproductive age group in programme mode through life cycle approach. This involves, bi-weekly IFA syrup supplementation to children 6 – 59 months, weekly IFA tablet supplementation to children 5 – 10 years and adolescents 10 – 19 years, and IFA tablets to pregnant and lactating women.
- National De-worming Day as a fixed day strategy to administer Albendazole tablets to all the children in the age group of 1-19 years through the platform of AWCs and Schools for good nutritional outcomes and prevention of anemia.
- Prevention of childhood illness such as diarrheal diseases which in turn prevents childhood malnutrition. Control of childhood diarrhoea is being carried out by conducting annual Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight (IDCF) and Defeat Diarrhoea Initiative.
- Under “Rastriya Bal Swasthya Karyakaram” (RBSK) children of 0 to 18 years of age are screened for selected health conditions classified into 4Ds - Diseases, Deficiencies, Defects and Developmental delay including screening for Severe Acute Mal-nutrition and provides free referral and treatment facilities for identified children.
- Mother and Child Protection Card is the joint initiative of the Ministry of Health & Family welfare and the Ministry of Woman and Child Development which addresses the nutrition concerns in children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- Treatment of sick children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) at special units called the Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs), set up at public health facilities.
- Home Based Care for Young Children (HBYC) has been launched to extend the community based care by ASHA workers with focus on improvement in child rearing practices, nutrition counseling and breastfeeding promotion till 15th month of life.

All these programs address one or other aspects related to nutrition and have the potential to improve nutritional outcomes in the country.