

Child malnutrition

***384. MISS MABEL REBELLO:** Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 47 per cent of child population suffers from severe malnutrition in India, as reported by UNICEF;

(b) whether Government have any plan to address this problem;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government have ever conducted any specific studies or asked any social or academic units to do so;

(e) if so, what are the results of these studies; and

(f) the remedial measures Government propose, to rectify this sad state of affairs?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (f) The World Summit for Children, 1990 had laid down the goal of reduction in moderate and severe malnutrition among under-five children, between 1990 and 2000 by half. For India the underweight prevalence declined by 6.4% as compared to the decline of 4% for developing countries.

According to UNICEF's publication titled "Progress since the World Summit for Children—a statistical review," 47% of under five children are underweight in India.

According to studies, there is a declining trend in prevalence of underweight in children under five years as given in Statement (see below). However, the problem of malnutrition is multi-dimensional and inter-generational in nature, which needs to be tackled through holistic and coordinated interventions in areas of nutrition, food security, sanitation and safe drinking water, health & family welfare, and poverty alleviation. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme, which aims at holistic development of children in the age group of 0-6 years and pregnant and lactating mothers, is the largest and most comprehensive intervention providing a package of services in the areas of supplementary nutrition, pre-school education, immunization, health check-up, referral services and nutrition & health education. Evaluation of ICDS has shown that its impact has been significant in reducing IMR and levels of malnutrition.

Another major initiative in the form of National Nutrition Mission is being launched to ensure a holistic and coordinated intervention to combat malnutrition. The Mission will be headed by the Prime Minister and its Executive Committee, to aid and advise the Mission, will be headed by the Human Resource Development Minister. As the first intervention under the aegis of the Mission, the Government is providing special additional central assistance of Rs. 110 crore in the current year for a pilot project in 51 districts where malnutrition is widely prevalent. This project would be anchored in Anganwadi Centres where nutrition, health education, health & family welfare interventions would be provided.

Also the activities of Food and Nutrition Board (FNB) and National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) have been restructured to strengthen focus on nutrition and health education. The Plan funds for such activities during the current year under FNB have been substantially increased from about Rs. 4 crore to Rs. 13 crore and that for NIPCCD from Rs. 2.5 crore to Rs. 6 crore.

Statement

Results of studies conducted

Sl. No.	Name of the Organisation	Year	Prevalence(%) of under nutrition in children (1-5 years) moderate & Severe	
1.	National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau, 1975-79 Indian Council of Medical Research		77.0	38.0
2.	National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau, 1988-90 Indian Council of Medical Research		68.6	26.6
3.	International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai*	1992-93	52.0	20.0
4.	Department of Women and Child Development, GOI**	1995-96	49.2	20.3
5.	International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai*	1998-99	47.0	18.0

*Refers to National Family Health Surveys 1 and 2, covering children under 3 years only.

**India Nutrition Profile, 1998, DWCD, GOI

Note: In the current Rapid Household Survey of the Reproductive & Child Health Programme being done by Department of Family Welfare, measurement of weight of children below six years of age has been included.