

Deaths of children due to Malnutrition

153. SHRIMATI MAIMOONA SULTAN:
Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it was revealed at the recent Non-Aligned Summit in New Delhi that at least ten million children died every year from several malnutrition;

(b) if so, what is the estimated average number of children who die of such malnutrition in India every year; and

(c) what steps¹ are contemplated to save these children from malnutrition under the Sixth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI): (a) During the recent Non-Aligned summit in New Delhi it was revealed that hunger and under-nourishment are permanent conditions of life for more than 1/5 of the population of the under-developed world, some 15 per cent of the world population.

(b) No estimate is available of the number of children dying of malnutrition. However, malnutrition is one of the causes of high infant mortality in India which was estimated at 127 per thousand live births in 1978. Malnutrition due to deficiencies of protein and calories coupled with infections, gastrointestinal diseases, communicable diseases, and unhealthy living condition are the other factors of high child mortality.

(c) In order to overcome the problem of malnutrition among children the Government of India is implementing the following Nutrition Programmes through the various Ministries:

1. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare:

(i) Prophylaxis programme against Vitamin A deficiency through the distribution of a massive dose of Vitamin A solution to the children in the age group 1-6 years. During the 6th Five Year Plan it is proposed to cover 12.5 crores children under the programme.

(ii) Prophylaxis Programme against Nutritional Anaemia among children and expectant and nursing mothers through the distribution of Iron and Folic acid tablets. During the Sixth Five Year Plan it is proposed to cover 6.0 crores of children and an equal number of women under the programme.

2. Ministry of Education and Culture:

The Ministry of Education is implementing the Mid Day-Meals Programme for the benefit of Primary School going children. Present coverage under the CARE assisted programme under the indigenous programme is about 6 million children.

8. Ministry of Social Welfare:

(i) Special Nutrition Programme for the benefit of children below six years of age and expectant and nursing mothers in urban slums, tribal and backward rural areas. Present coverage is about 60,000 beneficiaries.

(ii) Balwadi Nutrition Programme for the benefit of children in the age group 3-5 years. Present coverage is about 2.29 lakh children.

(iii) Integrated Child Development Services Scheme. The Scheme provides a package of services such as supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check up, referral services and health and non-formal education to children, expectant and nursing mothers in the backward rural, tribal area and urban slums. It is proposed to cover 1000 blocks by the Sixth Five Year Plan.