

**Scheme for monitoring nutritional status of children**

1745. SHRI N. GOKULAKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that malnutrition is a serious problem affecting the health of the children;
- (b) what schemes are now available for monitoring the nutritional status of school going children;
- (c) if no specific scheme is available, whether Government would consider extending the POSHAN Abhiyaan scheme to the schools at least at the primary level; and
- (d) as the ICDS-CAS scheme is a name based beneficiary tracking scheme, whether Government would consider a similar scheme for nutritional status monitoring among the school children?

THE MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI): (a) to (d) Malnutrition is a complex and multi-dimensional issue, affected mainly by a number of generic factors including poverty, inadequate food consumption due to access and availability issues, inequitable food distribution, improper maternal infant and child feeding and care practices, inequity and gender imbalances, poor sanitary and environmental conditions; and restricted access to quality health, education and social care services.

The Government has accorded high priority to the issue of malnutrition and is implementing several schemes/programmes of different Ministries/Departments through States/UTs to address various aspects related to nutrition. This Ministry is implementing Anganwadi Services, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana and Scheme for Adolescent Girls under the Umbrella Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS) as direct targeted interventions to address the problem of malnutrition in the country.

Government has set up POSHAN Abhiyaan on 18.12.2017. The goals of POSHAN Abhiyaan are to achieve improvement in nutritional status of Children from 0-6 years, Adolescent Girls, Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers in a time bound manner with fixed targets as under:—

Sl. No.	Objective	Target
1.	Prevent and reduce Stunting in children (0- 6 years)	@ 2% p.a.
2.	Prevent and reduce under-nutrition (underweight prevalence) in children (0-6 years)	@ 2% p.a.
3.	Reduce the prevalence of anaemia among young children (6-59 months)	@ 3% p.a.
4.	Reduce the prevalence of anaemia among women and adolescent girls in the age group of 15-49 years.	@ 3% p.a.
5.	Reduce Low Birth Weight (LBW).	@ 2% p.a.

The Abhiyaan aims to reduce malnutrition in the country in a phased manner, through a lifecycle approach, by adopting a synergised and result oriented approach. The Abhiyaan has mechanisms for timely service delivery and a robust monitoring as well as intervention infrastructure. The major activities undertaken under this Abhiyaan are ensuring convergence with various other programmes; Information Technology enabled Common Application Software for strengthening service delivery and interventions; Community Mobilization and Awareness Advocacy leading to Jan Andolan to educate the people on nutritional aspects; Capacity Building of Frontline Functionaries, incentivizing States/UTs for achieving goals etc.

Further, in order to improve the nutritional status of school going children, the National Programme of Mid-Day Meal in Schools is implemented by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, wherein one Mid-Day Meal is provided to children as per the nutritional standards provided in the Schedule-II of the National Food Security Act, 2013.

The nutritional status of children is monitored through National surveys conducted periodically by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The recently conducted Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS) (2016-18) captures the data on nutritional status of school going children. As per this survey, 21.9% children are stunted and 35.2% are underweight in the age group of 5-9 years and 24.1% children are underweight in the age group of 10-19 years.