

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1280
TO BE ANSWERED ON 08.12.2021

SCHEME FOR MONITORING NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF CHILDREN

1280 SHRI S. SELVAGANABATHY:

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) whether schemes are now available for monitoring the nutritional status of school going children; and
- (c) whether Government will consider extending the POSHAN Abhiyaan scheme to all the schools atleast at the primary level, if no specific scheme is available?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) to (c) Malnutrition is a multi- faceted problem. Key reasons for malnutrition in early life are early marriage, faulty and sub-optimal infant and young child feeding practices, childhood illnesses and low birth weight. The nutritional status of the population is outcome of complex and inter-related set of factors and needs a multi-pronged approach.

Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) Scheme earlier known as 'National Programme for Mid-Day Meal in Schools' is one of the foremost rights based Centrally Sponsored Schemes. This Scheme covers all school children studying in Classes I-VIII in Government and Government-Aided Schools. There is also evidence to suggest that apart from enhancing school attendance and child nutrition this scheme has an important social value and fosters equality.

Schedule II of the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 mandates provision of hot cooked meal containing 450 calories and 12 gms protein for primary and 700 calories and 20 gms protein for upper primary class children under this scheme. The scheme also provides cooking cost of ₹ 4.97 for primary and ₹ 7.45 for upper primary per child per day on all working days for meeting the cost of pulses, vegetables, edible oil and condiments.

As envisaged in the Guidelines, every State/UT has a specific weekly menu. Further, school managements are also encouraged to seek local support for drawing out varied, but wholesome and nutritious menus using locally available and culturally

acceptable food items. All States and UTs are further encouraged to adopt ways to develop a menu that reflects local taste and local produce that is different on different days.

Apart from providing hot cooked meal/Food Security Allowance (FSA), Department of School Education and Literacy has taken several steps as mentioned below:

- Hot cooked meal/FSA is being provided during drought (districts declared drought) and during Pandemic period.
- Setting up of School Nutrition (Kitchen) Gardens in every school, for the inclusion of nutritious green leafy vegetables and fruits in the diet of the school children.
- Provision of supplementary nutrition viz. eggs, fruits, chikkis etc. in the aspirational districts and districts with higher prevalence of anemia (as per NFHS data) under flexi component of the scheme.
- Inclusion of millet's in the meal under PM POSHAN. (Advisory has been issued to States and UTs)
- Inclusion of 'Ayurvedic products/items' in the meal of PM POSHAN.
- Provision of full meal/additional items under 'Tithi Bhojan' (An initiative in which the community provides meal/additional food items etc. on birthdays, anniversary, days of National importance etc.).
- Health check-up of school children are being carried out under Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. Provision of Deworming medicines biannually under National Deworming day, and provision of Iron and Folic Acid tablets under WIFS (Weekly Iron & Folic Acid Supplementation). These activities are being carried out in convergence with Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- Apart from these some of the States and UTs are also providing additional food items viz., eggs, fruits, milk etc. from their own State/UT budgets.
