

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3186**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 30.03.2022

**“IMPROVING NUTRITIONAL LEVELS OF THE POPULATION”**

3186 SHRI S. SELVAGANABATHY:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government agrees with the view that improving the overall nutritional levels of the population requires more substantial Government intervention on the food front;
- (b) if so, what initiatives have been taken/is being taken by Government keeping in view the fact that nutrition levels are majorly affected by the education level of women and income of households; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) Malnutrition is a multi- faceted problem. The important determinants are inadequate food, level of poverty leading to low purchasing power, poor socio-economic status of women, female illiteracy, high rate of population growth and low access of population to health education, safe drinking water, environmental, sanitation, hygiene and other social services. Key reasons for malnutrition setting 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 requires convergent efforts.

(b) to (c) 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. Government is implementing POSHAN Abhiyaan, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, Anganwadi Services 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.

POSHAN Abhiyaan launched on 8th March 2018, aims to reduce malnutrition in the country by adopting a synergised and result oriented approach. Mission Poshan 2.0, an integrated nutrition support programme has been announced in budget 2021-2022 for all States/UTs. It seeks to strengthen nutritional content, delivery, outreach and outcomes with focus on developing practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity to disease and malnutrition.

Under the Wheat Based Nutrition Programme (WBNP), food grains (wheat/rice/Millet) are allocated at subsidized rates under NFSA to the States/UTs for preparation of supplementary food under Anganwadi Services. As envisaged in the Hon'ble Prime Minister's Address on 75th Independence Day, Fortified Rice have to be provided through every Government Scheme by the year 2024, therefore, From the 2nd quarter of FY 2021-22 under WBNP, Fortified Rice in lieu of Standard Rice has been allocated to all the State/UTs which helps in fighting malnutrition and anemia in women and children arising due to deficiency of micronutrients like Iron, Folic Acid and Vitamin B-12.

POSHAN Scheme is a centrally sponsored scheme implemented in partnership with the States and UTs. The overall responsibilities for providing cooked and nutritious mid-day meal to the eligible children lies with the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations in accordance with the Guidelines laid down by the Central Government. Children in the age group of 6 months to 3 years, age group 3 to 6 years and pregnant women and lactating mothers are provided Take Home Ration or Hot Cooked Meals under Anganwadi Services Scheme. States and UTs determine their recipes according to local needs and as per nutritional norms specified under Schedule II of the National Food Security Act, 2013.

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