

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *102
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4.12.2024

MALNOURISHED CHILDREN IN THE COUNTRY

*102. SHRI SANJAY SINGH:

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

- (a) whether Government had set a target to free the country from malnutrition by 2022 under the Poshan Abhiyan 2018, if so, whether the target has been achieved, and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (b) the number of malnourished children in the country and whether the number of malnourished children has increased continuously over the years, if so, State-wise details thereof; and
- (c) the number of children died of malnutrition in the last three years, State-wise and year-wise details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI ANNUPURNA DEVI)

(a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to Part (a) to (c) of Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 102 to be answered on 4.12.2024 regarding “Malnourished children in the country”

(a) and (b) Poshan Abhiyaan was launched in March 2018 with the goal to reduce, with the support of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, stunting, being underweight among children, low-birth weight among infants and anaemia in children, adolescents and women.

Under the 15th Finance Commission, various components like Anganwadi services, Poshan Abhiyaan and Scheme for Adolescent girls (of 14-18 years in Aspirational Districts and North-Eastern region) have been subsumed under the umbrella Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 (Mission Poshan 2.0) to address the challenge of malnutrition. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, where the responsibility of implementation and day-to-day execution of activities is with the States and UTs. The objectives of Mission Poshan 2.0 are as follows:

- To contribute to the development of human capital in the country;
- Address challenge of malnutrition;
- Promote nutrition awareness and good eating habits for sustainable health and wellbeing

Nutrition goes beyond mere eating of food; it requires proper digestion, absorption, and metabolism which are influenced by factors like sanitation, education and access to safe drinking water. As malnutrition requires a multi-sector approach involving dimensions of food, health, water, sanitation and education, it is crucial to effectively address the issue of malnutrition. The challenges of malnutrition is being addressed under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 by establishing cross cutting convergence amongst 18 Ministries/Departments.

Under Mission Poshan 2.0 a new strategy has been made for reduction in malnutrition and for improved health, wellness and immunity through activities like community engagement, outreach, behavioral change, and advocacy. It focuses on Maternal Nutrition, Infant and Young Child Feeding Norms, treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM)/ Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) and wellness through AYUSH practices to reduce prevalence of wasting, stunting, anaemia and being underweight.

Under this scheme, Supplementary Nutrition is provided to Children (6 months to 6 years), Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers and Adolescent Girls to beat the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition by adopting a life cycle approach. Supplementary nutrition is provided in accordance with the nutrition norms contained in Schedule-II of the National Food Security Act. These norms have been revised and upgraded last year. The old norms were largely calorie-specific; however, the revised norms are more comprehensive and balanced in terms of both quantity and quality of supplementary nutrition based on the principles of diet diversity that provides quality protein, healthy fats and micronutrients.

Fortified rice is being supplied to AWCs to meet the requirement of micro-nutrients and to control anaemia among women and children. Greater emphasis is being laid on the use of millets for preparation of Hot Cooked Meal at least once a week and Take Home ration at Anganwadi centers.

Ministries of Women & Child Development and Health & Family Welfare have jointly released the protocol for Community Management of Malnutrition (CMAM) to prevent and treat severely acute malnutrition in children and for reducing associated morbidity and mortality.

Under Mission Poshan 2.0, one of the major activities undertaken is Community Mobilization and Awareness Advocacy leading to a Jan Andolan to educate people on nutritional aspects. State and UTs are conducting and reporting regular sensitisation activities under community engagement programmes during Poshan Maahs and Poshan Pakhwadas celebrated in the months of September and March-April respectively. Community Based Events (CBEs) have served as a significant strategy in changing nutritional practices and all Anganwadi workers are required to conduct two Community Based Events every month.

Various rounds of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare since 1992-93 have shown improvement in malnutrition indicators in children across India. Details of these indicators for children since NFHS-1 to NFHS-5 are given below:

NFHS Survey	Stunting %	Underweight %	Wasting %
NFHS-1 (1992-93)*	52	53.4	17.5
NFHS-2 (1998-99)**	45.5	47	15.5
NFHS-3 (2005-6)***	48.0	42.5	19.8
NFHS-4 (2015-16)***	38.4	35.8	21.0
NFHS-5 (2019-21)***	35.5	32.1	19.3

* Under 4 years

** Under 3 years

*** Under 5 years

The above table gives a representative picture of malnutrition indicators among all children of 0-3 years, 0-4 years and 0-5 years age at the relevant time.

The projected population of all children up to 5 years in India for the year 2021 is 13.75 crores approximately (source: Population Projections for India and States 2011-2036, National Commission on Population, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare). However, only 7.54 crores children up to 5 years are enrolled in Anganwadis and registered on Poshan Tracker of the Ministry of Women & Child Development as per the October 2024 data. 7.31 crores of these children were measured on growth parameters of height and weight. 38.9% of these children have been found to be stunted, 17% children have been found to be underweight and 5.2% wasted.

Further, the projected population of all children in India up to 6 years for the year 2021 is approximately 16.1 crores. As per the October 2024 data of Poshan Tracker, 8.82 crores children (0-6 years) are enrolled in Anganwadis out of whom 8.55 crores were measured on growth parameters. 37% of these children (0-6 years) have been found to be stunted and 17% children (0-6 years) have been found to be underweight.

The analysis of the above NFHS data and Poshan Tracker data shows improvement in malnutrition indicators in children across India.

The State wise details of malnourished children in the country as per Poshan Tracker are at Annexure-I.

(c) The data of death/mortality is maintained by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoH&FW). It is further stated that malnutrition is not a direct cause of death in children.

ANNEXURE REFERRED IN REPLY TO PART (b) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 102 FOR 4.12.2024 REGARDING “MALNOURISHED CHILDREN IN THE COUNTRY” ASKED BY SHRI SANJAY SINGH

The details of malnourished children (0 – 5 years) in the country as per Poshan Tracker as on October 2024 are as follows:

India	Stunted %	Wasted %	Underweight %
	38.9	5.2	17

The State wise details of malnourished children (0 - 5 years) in the country are as follows*:

State	Stunted %	Wasted %	Underweight %
Andhra Pradesh	22.6	5.3	10.8
Arunachal Pradesh	32.8	4.2	9.6
Assam	42.4	3.8	16.4
Bihar	43.8	9.2	22.9
Chhattisgarh	21.5	7	13.1
Goa	4.1	0.6	1.7
Gujarat	40.8	7.8	21
Haryana	28.2	4.1	8.7
Himachal Pradesh	18.4	1.7	6.3
Jharkhand	43.8	6.2	19.3
Karnataka	39.7	3.2	17.1
Kerala	34.4	2.3	9.5
Madhya Pradesh	46.5	7	26.5
Maharashtra	47.7	4.1	16.5
Manipur	7.7	0.3	2.6
Meghalaya	18.2	0.4	4.5
Mizoram	26.7	2.3	5.9
Nagaland	28	5.3	6.6
Odisha	29.1	2.9	12.8
Punjab	18.4	3	5.9
Rajasthan	36.6	5.5	17.7
Sikkim	9.2	1.5	1.7
Tamil Nadu	13.4	3.6	7.1
Telangana	32.6	5.6	16.2
Tripura	40.5	6.3	16.6
Uttar Pradesh	48	3.9	19.4
Uttarakhand	21	1.5	5.4
West Bengal	38	7.5	13

State	Stunted %	Wasted %	Underweight %
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	8.7	2.3	3.9
Dadra & Nagar Haveli - Daman & Diu	35.9	3.4	16.1
Delhi	41.9	3	20.6
J&K	12.1	0.7	3
Ladakh	11	0.2	2
Lakshadweep	46.5	11.9	25.1
Puducherry	40.2	6.8	13
UT-Chandigarh	26.3	1.8	11.9

* Data is for the month of October 2024 from Poshan Tracker
