

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1570**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 28.07.2023

**INQUIRY ON DEATHS OF MALNOURISHED CHILDREN**

1570. SHRIMATI RAJASHREE MALLICK:

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

- (a) whether the Government has conducted any inquiry through the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) regarding the deaths of children due to malnutrition in the country during the last three years and the current year;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the effective steps taken by the Government to make the country malnutrition free and to ensure that no such deaths occurs ahead?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) & (b) Malnutrition is not a direct cause of death among children. However, it can increase morbidity and mortality by reducing resistance to infections. The overall under five mortality rate has reduced from 49.7 (NFHS-4) to 41.9 (NFHS-5) deaths per thousand live births. No States have reported any direct deaths due to malnutrition. No such enquiry has been made by Government through the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).

(c) The Government has accorded high priority to the issue of malnutrition and is implementing several schemes like POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anganwadi Services, Scheme for Adolescent Girls, under Mission Poshan 2.0 and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) under Mission Shakti, as direct targeted interventions to address the problem of malnutrition in the country.

POSHAN Abhiyaan launched on 8th March 2018, aims to achieve improvement in nutritional status of Adolescent Girls, Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers in a time bound manner by adopting a synergised and result oriented approach. The Abhiyaan has been rolled out across 36 States/UTs.

Further, the efforts under the Supplementary Nutrition Programme under Anganwadi Services and POSHAN Abhiyaan have been rejuvenated and converged as 'Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0' (Mission Poshan 2.0). It seeks to address the challenges of malnutrition in children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers through a strategic shift in nutrition content and delivery and by creation of a convergent eco-system to develop and promote practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity.

Poshan 2.0 focuses on Maternal Nutrition, Infant and Young Child Feeding Norms, Treatment of MAM/SAM and Wellness through AYUSH. It rests on the pillars of Convergence, Governance, and Capacity-building. POSHAN Abhiyaan is the key pillar for Outreach and will cover innovations related to nutritional support, ICT interventions, Media Advocacy and Research, Community Outreach and Jan Andolan. Steps have been taken to improve nutritional quality and testing in accredited labs, strengthen delivery and leverage technology under the 'Poshan Tracker', a robust ICT enabled platform to improve governance with regard to monitoring of provisioning of supplementary nutrition for prompt supervision and management of services.

Under Poshan 2.0, focus is on diet diversity, food fortification, leveraging traditional systems of knowledge and popularizing use of millets. Nutrition awareness strategies under Poshan 2.0 aim to develop sustainable health and well-being through regional meal plans to bridge dietary gaps.

Further, greater emphasis is being given on the use of millets (coarse grains) for preparation of Hot Cooked Meal and Take Home rations (not raw ration) at Anganwadi centres for Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers and Children below 6 years of age, as millets have high nutrient content which includes protein, essential fatty acid, dietary fibre, B-Vitamins, minerals such as calcium, iron, zinc, folic acid and other micro-nutrients thus helping to tackle anemia and other micro-nutrient deficiencies common among women and children. Under Supplementary Nutrition Programme of Mission Poshan 2.0, only fortified rice is being allocated to States/UTs.

The estimated number of wasted children under 5 years of age is obtained under National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. As per the recent report of NFHS-5 (2019-21), wasting has reduced from 21.0% (NFHS-4, 2015-16) to 19.3%. As per data recorded in Poshan Tracker ICT application, close to 7 crore children were measured in June 2023 of which 7% were wasted, which is lower than NFHS.

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