

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2731
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.08.2023

STUNTED CHILDREN

2731. SHRIMATI APARUPA PODDAR:

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

- (a) whether about 8 per cent of children in the country are reported malnourished which nearly amounts to 47 lakh and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the proposal strategy and target to combat malnourishment in children and for their better growth in future in the country; and
- (c) the action taken so far to overcome the situation where half of young children under the age of four are reported underweight and stunted?

ANSWER

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

(a) The data on nutritional indicators is captured under the National Family Health Surveys (NFHS) conducted periodically by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The last round, NFHS-5, was conducted during 2019-21. As per NFHS-5, the prevalence of stunting, wasting and underweight among children under 5 years of age is 35.5%, 19.3% and 32.1%. However, as per data recorded in Poshan Tracker, ICT application for Mission Poshan 2.0, close to 7 crore children were measured in the country in the June 2023 as per which, 7% were wasted and 19% underweight, which is significantly lower than NFHS indicators.

(b) & (c) The Government has accorded high priority to the issue of malnutrition and is implementing several schemes 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 in women and children. Under Supplementary Nutrition Programme of Mission Poshan 2.0, only fortified rice is being allocated to States/UTs.
