

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1011
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25.07.2025

CHILD MALNUTRITION

1011. SHRI SRIBHARAT MATHUKUMILLI

Will the Minister of Women and Child Development be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry has reviewed the findings of NFHS-5, which indicate that approximately 35% of children under five are stunted and 19% are wasted, despite decades of operation of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether any assessment has been undertaken to identify implementation bottlenecks in ICDS, particularly with regard to Anganwadi worker training, infrastructure gaps, and actual coverage of eligible children and mothers and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether there is a measurable gap between the nutritional services provided through Anganwadi Centres and the dietary requirements needed to address chronic undernutrition in early childhood and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the details of the steps being taken to strengthen last mile-delivery, improve service quality, and align ICDS with the objectives of POSHAN Abhiyan to reduce malnutrition in a time-bound manner?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SAVITRI THAKUR)

- (a) 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 7.36 crores children up to 5 years were enrolled in Anganwadis and registered on Poshan Tracker of the Ministry of Women & Child Development as per the June, 2025 data. 7 crores of these children were measured on growth parameters of height and weight. 37.07% of them have been found to be stunted, 15.93% have been found to be underweight and 5.46% wasted.

The analysis of the above NFHS data and the Poshan Tracker data shows improvement in malnutrition indicators in children across India. The State/UT wise data on Stunting, wasting and underweight of June, 2025 as per Poshan Tracker data is placed at Annexure I.

In 2021, the World Bank conducted a survey in 11 priority states to assess the program's delivery of nutrition services.

The findings demonstrated that the services delivered through the Poshan Abhiyaan – the receipt of relevant messages, home visits by the anganwadi worker, and attendance at community-based events – were associated with improved nutrition behaviors. The survey also found that the program's nutrition messages reached more than 80% of women, and that 81% of women practiced exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months. A third-party evaluation and impact assessment of Poshan Abhiyaan was conducted by NITI Aayog in 2020 and found its relevance to be satisfactory for tackling malnutrition in the country.

(b) 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 mission, where the responsibility for implementation of various activities lies with the States and UTs. This mission is a universal self-selecting umbrella scheme where there are no entry barriers for any beneficiary to register and receive services. This mission is being implemented across the country.

The objectives of Mission are as follows:

- To contribute towards 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 of nutrients. This process is influenced by factors like sanitation, education and access to safe drinking water. As malnutrition requires a multi-sectoral approach involving dimensions of food, health, water, sanitation and education, it is crucial to effectively address the issue of malnutrition in a convergent manner. It 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 mission, 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 in January 2023. 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 for quality protein, healthy fats and micronutrients.

(c) Under Mission Poshan 2.0, Supplementary Nutrition is provided to Children (6 months to 6 years), Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers and Adolescent Girls. 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 in January 2023. 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 for quality protein, (Cereal: Pulse ratio of at least 2:1), healthy fats and 7 essential micronutrients (Calcium, Zinc, Iron, Dietary Folate, Vitamin-A, Vitamin-B6 and Vitamin B-12). 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 at least once a week for preparation of Hot Cooked Meal and Take-Home Ration at Anganwadi Centers.

(d) Various steps have been taken up from time to time to ensure uninterrupted nutrition delivery under Poshan 2.0. Following are some of the initiatives undertaken recently:

- Ministry vide notification dated 12th September, 2022 issued Integrated Nutrition Support Programme - Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan (2.0), Rules, 2022 to regulate the entitlements specified under the provisions of National Food Security Act, 2013 for every pregnant women and lactating mother, till six months after child birth and every child in the age group of six months to six years.
- District Nutrition Committee (DNC) chaired by the District Collector is envisaged as a critical mechanism for decentralized planning, implementation, and monitoring of nutrition interventions under Mission POSHAN 2.0. To strengthen and institutionalize the functioning of DNCs, specific Guidelines for District Nutrition Committees have been developed, including suggested data templates for regular review meetings. These guidelines aim to enhance multi-sectoral coordination, improve service delivery, and ensure targeted actions for improving the nutritional status of women and children at the district level.
- As on date, 2 lakh Anganwadi Centres have been approved to be upgraded as Saksham Anganwadis for improved nutrition delivery and for imparting early childhood care and development. Saksham Anganwadis are provided with better infrastructure than the conventional Anganwadi Centres which includes internet/Wi-Fi connectivity, LED screens, water purifier/installation of RO Machine and smart learning equipments.
- The Government has taken a policy decision to upgrade each Mini AWCs to a full-fledged Anganwadi Centre with one worker and one helper to help in carrying out the various responsibilities under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 including responsibilities related to Early Childhood Care & Education. Sanction for upgradation of 88,716 Mini-AWCs has been issued till date.
- Poshan Tracker an ICT tool has been implemented for monitoring and tracking of infrastructure and service delivery at Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) and beneficiaries on defined indicators.
- For last mile tracking of Service Delivery, MWCD has developed Facial Recognition System (FRS) for the distribution of Take-Home Ration to ensure that benefit is given only to the intended beneficiary registered in Poshan Tracker. The FRS has been made mandatory for the distribution of THR from 1st July, 2025.
- The PM JANMAN Mission launched by Ministry of Tribal Affairs aims for targeted development of 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) residing in 18 States and a UT. This Mission focuses on 11 critical interventions related to 9 key Ministries including Ministry of Women and Child Development. As on date, a total of 2500 AWCs have been approved for construction under PM JANMAN across the country.

- Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched Dharti Aaba Janjati Gram Unnat Abhiyan (DAJGUA) aimed at improving the socio-economic condition of tribal communities by adopting saturation coverage of tribal families in tribal majority areas and aspirational block ST villages. The intervention of Ministry of Women and Child Development involves establishment of 2000 new Saksham AWCs and upgradation of 6000 existing AWCs into Saksham AWCs from FY 2024-25 to FY 2028-29.

ANNEXURE REFERRED IN REPLY TO PART (a) OF LOK SABHA QUESTION NO. 1011 FOR 25.07.2025 REGARDING “CHILD MALNUTRITION” ASKED BY SHRI SRIBHARAT MATHUKUMILLI

State wise details of malnutrition indicators of children (0-5 years) in the country for June, 2025 from Poshan Tracker data are as follows:

S. No.	State	Stunting%	Wasting%	Underweight%
1	Andhra Pradesh	18.43	4.97	7.68
2	Arunachal Pradesh	38.38	5.18	11.65
3	Assam	42.94	4.50	16.88
4	Bihar	42.68	9.31	20.98
5	Chhattisgarh	27.10	7.77	14.23
6	Goa	6.18	0.78	1.96
7	Gujarat	32.72	7.28	18.41
8	Haryana	23.41	3.83	7.85
9	Himachal Pradesh	19.68	2.41	6.88
10	Jharkhand	43.26	6.68	19.13
11	Karnataka	39.05	3.18	16.50
12	Kerala	35.75	3.20	10.18
13	Madhya Pradesh	42.09	8.19	24.82
14	Maharashtra	39.68	4.01	14.80
15	Manipur	9.27	0.67	2.69
16	Meghalaya	20.73	1.11	5.14
17	Mizoram	27.33	2.98	6.33
18	Nagaland	28.91	6.08	7.00
19	Odisha	27.91	3.21	11.63
20	Punjab	17.14	2.95	5.12
21	Rajasthan	36.10	6.49	17.57
22	Sikkim	7.89	1.95	1.69
23	Tamil Nadu	14.23	3.54	6.29
24	Telangana	36.24	5.93	17.00
25	Tripura	41.52	7.68	18.01
26	Uttar Pradesh	48.83	5.04	19.96
27	Uttarakhand	23.52	2.47	6.31
28	West Bengal	32.09	4.75	9.00
29	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	6.62	1.66	2.93

30	Dadra & Nagar Haveli - Daman & Diu	38.61	3.56	17.45
31	Delhi	30.63	3.81	15.35
32	J&K	15.94	1.55	4.05
33	Ladakh	12.28	0.25	1.98
34	Lakshadweep	44.83	11.62	22.54
35	Puducherry	40.88	6.40	12.20
36	UT-Chandigarh	22.27	5.34	14.69
	Total	37.07	5.46	15.93
