



Malnutrition among Pre-School Children

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As per the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau (NNMB) third repeat survey report, 2012 for ten Indian States, 0.5% of children aged 1-5 years suffer from Vitamin-A deficiency manifested as Conjunctival Xerosis; and as per National Family Health Survey- 4 (2015-16) report, 58.4% children below five years suffer from anaemia.

The main reasons for these micronutrient deficiencies are poor dietary intake, repeated infections, poor complementary feeding practices, and lack of adequate sanitation and hygiene practices.

The steps taken by the Government to address the problem of malnutrition among children are as follows:

1. Promotion of appropriate infant and young child feeding practices that include early initiation of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding till 6 months of age through ASHA worker and health care provider at health facilities. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare recently launched "MAA" programme to provide impetus on capacity building of the health workers on lactation management at both community and facility levels and 360 degree IEC campaign to create awareness regarding breastfeeding.
2. Management of malnutrition and common neonatal and childhood illnesses at community and facility level by training service providers in IMNCI (Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illnesses) training.
3. Treatment of sick children with severe acute malnutrition at special units called the Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs), set up at public health facilities. Presently 965 such centres are functional in 26 States and UTs.
4. Vitamin A supplementation for children aged 6 months to 5 years.
5. Village Health and Nutrition Days and Mother and Child Protection Card are the joint initiative of the Ministries of Health & Family welfare and the Ministry of Woman and Child for addressing the nutrition concerns in children, pregnant women and lactating mothers. Monthly Village Health and Nutrition Days (VHND) are monthly days held at village level in Anganwadi centre to increase the awareness and bring about desired changes in the dietary practices including the promotion of breastfeeding.
6. 'National Iron Plus Initiative' has been launched as an effective strategy for iron folic acid supplementation and treatment of anaemia in children, adolescents, pregnant and lactating women, in programme mode through life cycle approach.
7. Promotion for intake of iodised salt under National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme
8. Under the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) and Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK), systematic efforts are undertaken to detect nutrition deficiency among children and adolescents respectively.
9. Supplementary Nutrition in form of hot-cooked meals and take-home ration provided to children aged 6 months to 6 years under Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme, Growth monitoring of children aged 0-5 years on a monthly basis at Anganwadi Centres
10. Mid-day meal for all students under the Government and Government aided schools.

The Minister of State (Health and Family Welfare), Sh Faggan Singh Kulaste stated this in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha here today.

MV/LK

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