

Covid-19 and Malnutrition in Children

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Government has been receiving regular reports from the States on the prevailing scenario and activities undertaken during Covid-19 pandemic, though no formal study on impact of Covid-19 on malnutrition has been conducted.

During Covid-19, all Anganwadi Centres across the country were closed to limit the impact of the pandemic. However, to ensure continuous nutritional support to the beneficiaries, the Anganwadi Workers and Helpers distributed Supplementary Nutrition at the doorsteps of beneficiaries once in 15 days. In addition, they also assisted the local administration in community surveillance, creating awareness as well as other work assigned to them from time to time.

Government has taken measures to strengthen nutritional content, delivery, outreach and outcomes with focus on developing practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity to disease and malnutrition. Steps have also been taken to improve nutritional quality and testing, strengthen delivery and leverage technology to improve governance. Government has advised States/UTs to ensure that the quality of supplementary nutrition conforms to prescribed standards laid down under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and regulations made thereunder. States/UTs have also been advised to promote use of AYUSH systems for prevention of malnutrition and related diseases. A programme to support development of Poshan Vatikas at Anganwadi centers to meet dietary diversity gap leveraging traditional knowledge in nutritional practices has also been taken up.

Identification and management of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) is an on-going process. As per data made available by States/UTs, number of SAM children is less than 10 lakh now.

This information was given in a written reply by the Union Minister of Textiles, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani in Rajya Sabha today.

BY/TFK

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