

TACKLING MALNUTRITION

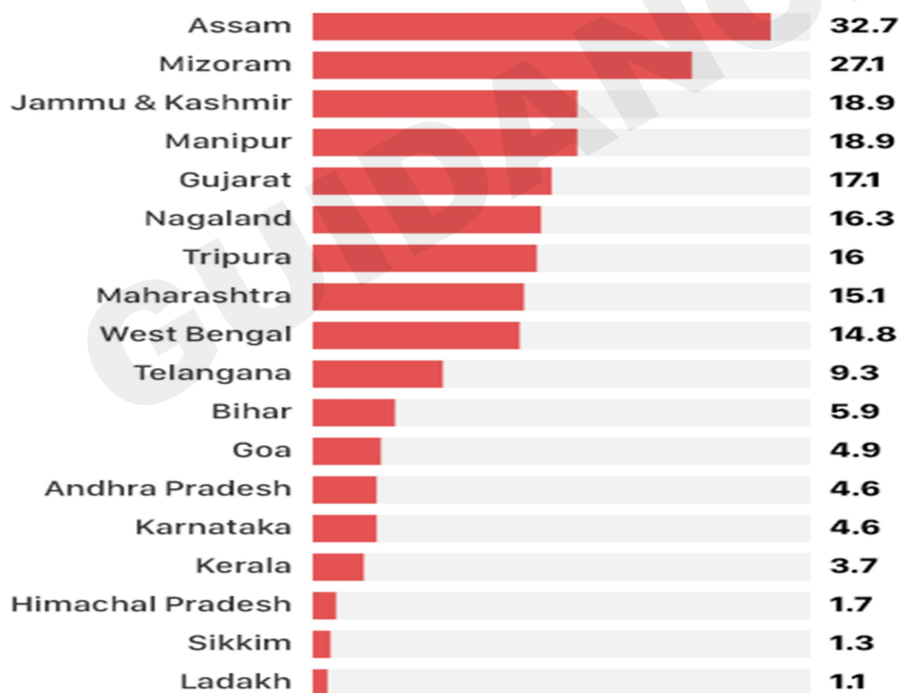
Syllabus- GS 2: issues related to health, malnutrition, hunger, poverty

Why in news?

- ❖ National Family Health Survey (NHFS)-5 shows *negligible gains in the nutritional outcomes of under five children*.
- ❖ Even now 35.5% of under five children are stunted, and 19.3% are wasted.
- ❖ Childhood anaemia has worsened from NFHS -4.
- ❖ Anaemia among adolescent girls and women aged between 15-49 years also worsened.

ANAEMIA PREVALENCE AMONG CHILDREN (UNDER 5 YEARS)

% INCREASE FROM 2015-16 TO 2019 - 20



Source: National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-20) phase-1 report covering 17 states and 5 UTs

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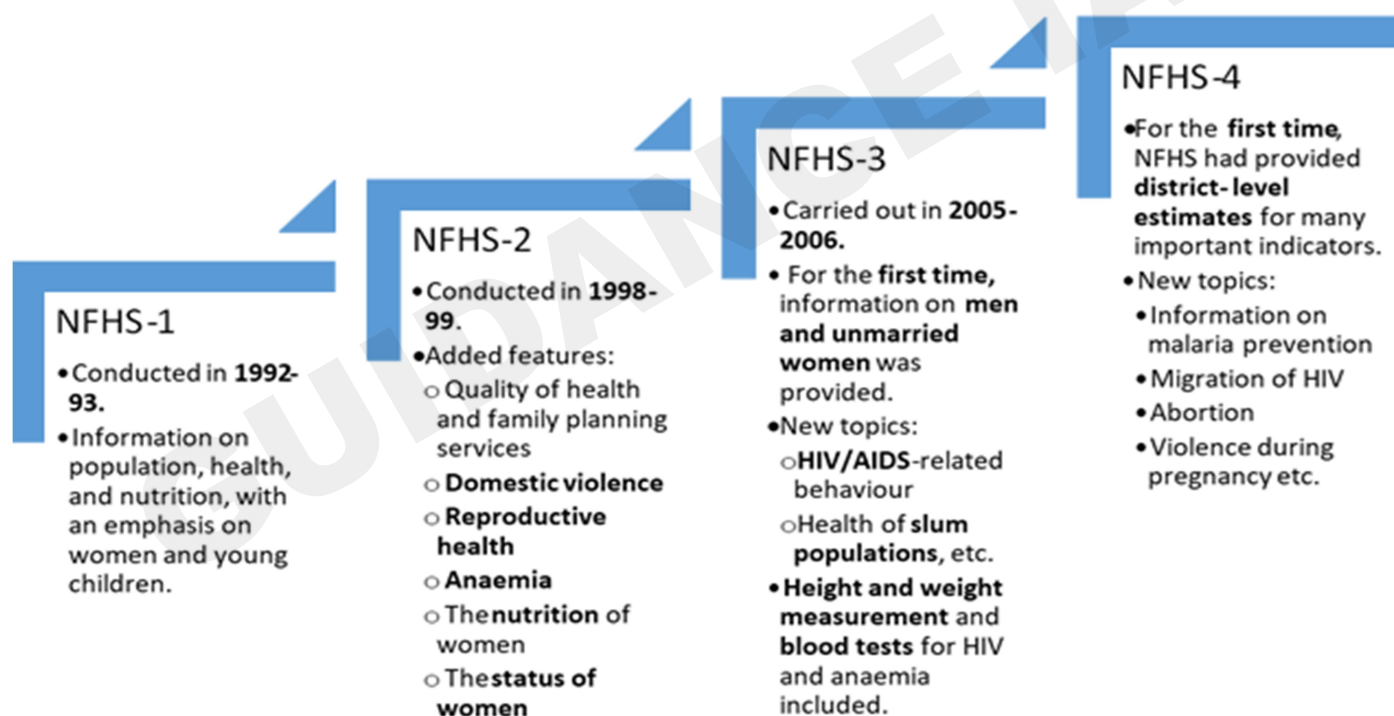
MALNUTRITION defined by WHO as the deficiencies or excess in nutrient intake, imbalance of essential nutrients or impaired utilization. Malnutrition comprises of underweight, overweight and obesity as well as diet related non communicable diseases.

Undernutrition manifests in 4 forms:

- ✚ Wasting
- ✚ Stunting
- ✚ Underweight
- ✚ Micronutrient deficiencies

About NFHS:

- ❖ The main objective of successive rounds of the NFHS is to provide reliable and comparable datasets on health, family welfare and other emerging issues.
- ❖ Four rounds of NFHS (1992–93, 1998–99, 2005–06 and 2015–16) have been successfully completed in India.
- ❖ All the rounds of **NFHS** have been conducted by the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, as the national nodal agency.



NHFS-5 REPORT

- ✚ **Child nutrition indicators show a mixed pattern across states:** While the situation improved in many States/UTs, there has been minor deterioration in others. Drastic changes in respect of stunting and wasting are unlikely in a short period.
- ✚ **Anaemia among women and children continues to be a cause of concern:** More than half of the children and women are anaemic in 13 of the 22 States/UTs. It has also been observed that anaemia among pregnant women has increased in half of the States/UTs compared to NFHS-4, in spite of substantial increase in the consumption of IFA tablets by pregnant women for 180 days or more.
- ✚ **For both women and men, there is a lot of variation in the high or very high random blood glucose levels across States/UTs:** Men are more likely to have slightly higher blood glucose levels in the range of high or very high compared to women. The percentage of men with high or very high blood glucose is highest in Kerala (27%) followed by Goa (24%). Prevalence of elevated blood pressure (hypertension) among men is somewhat higher than in women.
- ✚ **Poor Performance in Dealing with Anaemia:** The incidence of anaemia in under-5 children (from 58.6 to 67%), women (53.1 to 57%) and men (22.7 to 25%) has worsened in all States of India (20%-40% incidence is considered moderate).
- ✚ Barring Kerala (at 39.4%), all States are in the “severe” category.
- ✚ **Performance of Malnutrition Indicators:** The three indicators of malnutrition, stunting (low height-for-age), wasting (low weight-for-height) and underweight (low weight-for-age), show an overall improvement.

However, this overall improvement creates an anomaly as in Phase 1 of the NFHS-5, several States revealed a worsening in one or more of these indicators, whereas in Phase 2, none of the States showed a worsening.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN THE DIRECTION OF TACKLING MALNUTRITION:

- ✓ *Poshan Abhiyan(2018).*
- ✓ *Anaemia Mukh Bharat Abhiyan(2018).*
- ✓ *National Food Security Act (2013).*
- ✓ *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana(2010).*
- ✓ *Mid-Day Meal Scheme(1995).*
- ✓ *Integrated Child Development Scheme(1975).*

Way forward:

- ❖ Continue monitoring exclusive breastfeeding till the infant is 6 months old, along with recording of timely initiation of complementary feeding with soft gruel.
- ❖ Ensuring take home ration for under 3 children through regular supply of supplementary nutrition from ICDS.
- ❖ Capturing the regularity and quantity of dry rations supplied to Aanganwadi centres and Schools for mid-day meals.

- ❖ Over sight mechanism development through live web based monitorable data of the movement of dry rations to Aanganwadis and schools /or through parents and teachers monitoring and feedback mechanism over the serving of hot, cooked meals.
- ❖ Procurement of locally available vegetables, millets, grains – ensuring and providing eggs beyond socio-political reasons for the needy children and adolescent girls, lactating and pregnant mothers.
- ❖ Since **National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau** was shut down so, formation of such regulatory and monitoring body to know how many families can afford to cook and what they are cooking.
- ❖ Ensuring real time monitoring of **PDS** in all the states.
- ❖ Both **Poshan Abhiyan** and **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna yojana** needs to be monitored with the help of community to ensure sustainable nutrition supply.
- ❖ Progress and happenings of the field must reach timely too programme managers and policymakers for timely action.