

# 'Rural sanitation improves but anaemia a concern'

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THE latest report of the Food Insecurity Situation in Rural India has revealed that while the stunting in children, access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation facilities have improved, the prevalence of anaemia has worsened in rural India. The report, first prepared by the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation and the World Food Programme in 2001, has also pointed out that calorie intake has remained stagnant in the

last decade with about 13 per cent of the rural population consuming less than 1,890 Kcal/day.

The report, released on Friday, revealed that the proportion of stunted children (6-35 months old) has declined by about eight per cent to 40.70 in the six years till 2005-06. In fact, Assam, Bihar, Haryana, MP, Rajasthan and UP, which earlier had over 50 per cent stunted children, has improved their situation.

However, during the same period the proportion of anaemic children went up by about six per cent to 81.20.

According to the report, the situation has worsened in MP, UP, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, all of which slipped from High to Very High levels.

In fact, the proportion of anaemic women aged between 15 and 49 has also gone up by about four per cent from the 53.90 per cent as the situation worsened in Rajasthan, Haryana, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh, all of which slipped from moderate (43.4-53.5 per cent) to high (53.6-63.8 per cent) levels.

However, on the positive side, the

report points out that people without access to safe drinking water has declined from 44.5 per cent in 1991 to 26.8 per cent in 2001. Similarly, the percentage of rural households without access to toilet facilities within the premises declined from 90.52 per cent to 78.08 per cent in the same period.

According to the composite index, prepared using indicators from the Census and National Family Health Survey 2005-6, Jharkhand has the highest level of food insecurity, followed by Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Gujarat.