Definitions, as per World Health Organization

- **Stunting** is defined as low height-for-age, and is an outcome of gross undernutrition and persistent infection in the first 1000 days of a child's life.

- **Wasting** is defined as low weight-for-height, and often indicates recent and severe weight loss, although it can also persist for a long time.

- **Underweight** refers to children with low weight-for-age. A child who is underweight may be stunted, wasted, or both.

- **Overweight/Obesity**: Overweight and obesity are defined as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that may impair health. It is measured as excessive weight-for-height (for children under 5) or as raised BMI for age (for children over 5 years, adolescents and adults)

Types of malnutrition and reference measures, India, CNNS 2016-2018:

Targets have been set by Government of India's POSHAN Abhiyaan to reduce stunting in children 0-6 years (by 2% per year), reduce underweight prevalence in children 0-6 years (by 2% per year), reduce anemia prevalence in children 6-59 months, women and adolescent girls 15-49 years (by 3% per year) and reduce low birth weight (by 2% per year).
Key Findings from the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS) 2016-2018, India:

- **STUNTING**: 35% of Indian children aged 0-4 years are stunted. Stunting prevalence is 37% in rural areas and 27% in urban areas. Children in the poorest wealth quintile (49%) are more likely to be stunted compared to those in the richest quintile (19%).

- **WASTING**: 17% of Indian children aged 0-4 years are wasted. Wasting prevalence is 17.6% in rural areas and 16.3% in urban areas. Children in the poorest wealth quintile (21%) under 5 years of age are more wasted than those in the richest quintile (13%).

- **UNDERWEIGHT**: 33% of Indian children aged 0-4 years were underweight. Underweight prevalence is 36% in rural areas and 26% in urban areas. Children in the poorest wealth quintile (48%) under 5 years of age are more underweight than those in the richest quintile (19%).

**References:**

**How can this inform your work?**

Journalists play a key role in raising awareness on health and development issues. Malnutrition, in all its forms, including undernutrition (wasting, stunting, underweight), causes irreversible physical and mental damage to children.

Malnutrition places an immense human and economic toll at the individual, household, community and national level. Through evidence-based reportage, journalists can inform the public on strategies to prevent stunting, wasting and underweight.

**Project SANCHAR** is aimed at building capacity and facilitating the adoption of practices to use or draw on evidence in public health communication and practice. To facilitate this, SANCHAR collates and provides data from scientifically validated sources, from national datasets in easily interpretable formats, and accessible visuals that can be downloaded easily.