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Global Scenario of Malnutrition and Government Initiatives of India

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Abstract

Malnutrition can take many forms and as such presents a large scale and complex problem across the world. It affects most of the global population. Irrespective of location, age wealth or gender. Indian government has taken initiatives regarding prevention of malnutrition i.e. Integrated child development scheme (ICDS), Mid Day Meal Programme (MDM), Pradhan Mantri Matritva Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), Special Nutrition Program (SNP), Wheat Based Supplementary Nutrition Programme and World Food Programme Project.

Key Word: Malnutrition, Global Scenario, Government Initiatives

Introduction

Malnutrition is a global health issue with several different forms. It has been observed that one or more forms of malnutrition can appear in a single country and/or in a specific population group. Poor eating habits and inadequate nutrient intakes represent most important factors that lead to malnutrition, which affects especially low and middle income regions people. This is because, in these countries, low socioeconomic status limits the ability to afford nutritional food sources and increased health care costs.

According to world health organization (WHO), refers to deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and or nutrients. (Narayan,)

Global scenario of under nutrition:-

Under nutrition affects over 2 billion people. Globally it is estimated that around 25% of all children in low and middle income countries are permanently stunted in

their physical growth and cognitive development compared to 40% in 1990. Global wasting prevalence has reduced in this time from 9% to 8% and underweight rates from 25% to around 16% of all children

According to the Global Hunger Index 2017, India ranks 100 out of 119 countries. The prevalence of malnourished children in India is nearly double that in Sub-Saharan Africa and affects the mortality rate, productivity, and economic growth. Every year near about half of children in India are malnourished and almost a million children die before reaching one month of age. In India 43% of children under 5 years are underweight and 48% are stunted due to severe malnutrition out of every 10 children are stunted.

Report of National Health and Family Survey, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, and WHO have highlighted that rates of malnutrition among adolescent girls, pregnant and

lactating women and children are alarmingly high in India. Factors responsible for malnutrition in the country include mother's nutritional status, lactation behavior, women's education and sanitation. These affect children in several ways including stunting, childhood illness and retarded growth. Although India has nominally reduced malnutrition over the last decade and several government programs are in place, there remains a need for effective use of knowledge gained through studies to address under nutrition, especially because it impedes the socio-economic development of the country. (Narayan)

Global nutrition report 2020: Action on equity to end malnutrition

This year global nutrition report uses the concept of nutrition equity to elucidate these inequities and show how they determine opportunities and barriers to attaining healthy diets and lives, leading to unequal nutrition outcomes. The report examines the global burden of malnutrition with an equity lens to develop a fuller understanding of nutrition inequalities.

Almost a quarter of all children under 5 years of age are stunted. At the same time overweight and obesity are increasing rapidly in nearly every country in the world, with no signs of slowing. Progress is too slow to meet the global targets. New analysis shows that global and national patterns mask significant inequalities within countries and populations, with the most vulnerable groups being most affected. Nutrition outcomes also vary substantially across countries. Underweight is a persisting issue for the poorest countries and can be ten times higher than in wealthier countries. Overweight and obesity prevail in wealthier

countries at rates of up to five times higher than in poorer countries. This report finds strong urban rural divide and even larger differences across communities. In children under 5 years of age wasting can be up to nine times higher in certain communities within countries four times higher in stunting and three times higher in overweight and obesity. (UNICEF DATA MAY 2020 <https://data.unicef.org>).

The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to food insecurity and increasing hunger worldwide while also contributing to increases in overweight and obesity due to lower physical activity related to lockdown. Experts estimate that the prevalence of moderate and severe wasting could increase by 14% due to COVID-19, and coupled with reductions in nutrition and health service coverage, could result in over 128,000 additional deaths among children under 5 in 2020 alone.

National scenario of under nutrition:-

It is well evident that India is among the worst performers not only in terms of having highest stats of undernourished children also in dealing with this malnutrition. The reason of it being ranked at number 5 position amongst countries with the weakest commitment to ending child malnutrition (<http://dspace.hulibrary.ac.in>)

Nutrition is a core pillar of human rights and development under nutrition. Today's children are citizens of tomorrow, which is why it is extremely important to ensure proper health care facilities as well as adequate nutritional intake for the children. It is now globally acknowledged that investment in human resource development is a pre requisite for all

nation. India is a home to more than one billion people of which 42% are children. Nineteen percent of world's children live in India. Since 1947 India has made substantial progress in human development. Still the manifestations of malnutrition are at unacceptable levels

(<http://dspace.hmlibrary.ac.in>)

Combating malnutrition is still one of the greatest global health challenges. Some vulnerable population groups such as infants, children and the elderly are most at risk from malnutrition. The first 1000 days from the conception to child's second birthday have been considered as a unique window of opportunity to optimize nutrition in early life, with long-term benefits. However, there is still a long way for us to tackle malnutrition, despite the advances in science and technology in the 21st century. (Zeng Fei Ma et.al.)

Government Initiatives of Malnutrition in India

Integrated child development scheme (ICDS)

Anganwadi centre's (AWC) Anganwadi is a type of rural child care centre in India started by the Indian government in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program to combat child hunger and malnutrition. It is funded partly by the Central government of India and partly by the UNICEF. Anganwadi means "courtyard shelter" in Indian languages. Its aim to provide basic health care to preschool children under 6 years of age and to their mothers. Activities including contraceptive counseling and supply nutrition education and supplementation. Anganwadi workers (AWW) Anganwadi workers support and

execute activities of Anganwadi centres. They offer education about nutrition, especially among pregnant women, including how to breast feed. They also inform parents about family planning and child growth and development. They keep track of beneficiaries, especially those categorized as malnourished.

Anganwadi centres provide immunizations, health check-ups, referral, preschool education, nutritious food and informal education under this scheme, supplementary nutrition is one of the six services provided under the ICDS for (Children below 6 years: pregnant and lactating mother). It is primarily to bridge the gap between the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) and the Average Daily Intake.

Pradhan Mantri Matritva Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):-

In 2010 India launched another program, "Pradhan Mantri Matritva Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)". Previously it was called "Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY)". The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) launched it as part of ICDS after the evaluation of ICDS report in 2011 called for improving the nutrition of pregnant mothers. This maternity benefit program is a cash transfer scheme for pregnant and lactating women of 19 years of age or above for the first live birth. It provides partial wage compensation to women for wage-loss during childbirth and childcare. In 2013, India placed the scheme under the National Food Security Act (2003) to provide a cash maternity benefit of US\$87. Studies suggest, however that eligibility and other conditions exclude a large number of women from receiving their

entitlements. There is need for the ICDS program to be redirected towards the younger children (0-3 years) and the most vulnerable population segments in states and districts with greater prevalence of under nutrition. It would be prudent to consider emphasizing infant and young child feeding and maternal nutrition during pregnancy and lactation. Doing so could bridge the gap between the policy intentions of ICDS and its actual implementation. Many of these gaps in the ICDS, including the IGMSY, can be filled with a regular schedule of workshops and through sensitization to the importance of lactating mothers, mothers with children under 5 years age and school going children, and teachers of primary schools.

Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDM)

In 1995, the Central Government started the National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, popularly known as the Mid-Day Meal scheme (MDM), to improve the nutritional status and enhance enrolment and school Attendance of children. Implementation of MDM has been successful throughout (Narayan J.)

Special Nutrition Program (SNP)

The programme was launched way back in 1970-71 for the same target group in ICDS i.e. children below 6 years age and expectant and nursing mothers. The programme is confined to tribal areas and slums. Main activity under this programme is to provide supplementary feeding to the beneficiaries for 300 days in a year. Under this

programme every child is to receive 300 calories and 8 to 15 Gms of protein and every pregnant and lactating mother 500 calories and 20 to 25 Gms of protein per day. (www.fao.org)

Wheat Based Supplementary Nutrition Programme

World food programme-UN provides food-stuffs so that supplementary nutrition to children and popularizing wheat intake. Min of food places at the disposal of the department of women and child development about 100 thousand tons of wheat from the central reserves annually and that department, in turn, sub-allocates this wheat among states which utilize the wheat mostly to produce wheat based ready-to-eat nutrition supplements. (www.fao.org)

World Food Programme Project

World food programme-UN provides food-stuffs so that supplementary nutrition could be provided through the projects supported by them. WFP-India project has been extended from time to time and the present extension would last till the end of March 1995. WFP currently supports 12 projects in India, with a total commitment of 292 million dollars worth of food aid. The major part of WFP's assistance to India supports projects in forestry, irrigation and supplementary nutrition. The WFP provides soya fortified bugler wheat, corn soya blend and edible oil to benefit about 2.1 million pre-schoolchildren, expectant and nursing mothers. (www.fao.org)

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