

Wide Spectrum of Nutritional Status of Children in Developing Countries

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Received: October 29, 2018; **Published:** November 23, 2018

Keywords: Nutritional Status; Undernutrition; Overnutrition

Health and nutritional status of children is a crucial parameter of any nation investment for progress and empowerment of its future manpower. Nutrition in first 1000 days of life (including intra-uterine life) is very crucial for adult effective manpower building. Malnutrition, especially severe malnutrition and prolonged duration malnutrition affects the physical growth and cognitive development that may increase susceptibility to various infections leading to indirect adverse impact on economic growth and development of nation. Unfortunately, majority of the developing worlds undernourished/malnourished children are from Asia and Africa. Approximately 46% of the India's populations under five years are malnourished (NFHS - 3). According to Global Hunger Index report (2013) India ranked 16th, which is a very serious situation in spite of many sectors India doing great job. India has progressed very fast, but the progress was not uniform across the nation. This might be the reason why still this development and progress has not impacted in improving the nutritional status of children. India being a huge continent with huge cultural, social and also difference in economic development, where religion, caste, creed plays a very important role indirectly may be the reason why India is lagging behind in improving nutritional status of children in comparison with other Asian nations who are having similar economic progress. In spite of declining trend of chronic childhood malnutrition in India, the concerns remain for its disproportionate burden on the poor due to unequal and focal socio-economic development, India is facing double jeopardy of malnutrition at one end and overweight/obesity at the other end at the same point of time. The long-term effect of malnutrition/undernutrition on a child who will be a future adult is a deep concern and must be looked by government to make a better healthy citizen of the future nation. Malnutrition may lead to low immunity of child and defence system against various diseases may be low. On the other hand, over-nutrition may lead to child

obesity and related long-term complications like early onset of increased blood pressure, Diabetes mellitus, coronary heart disease, overweight leading to orthopaedic problems and other respiratory illnesses. World Bank statistics says that malnutrition is responsible for 22% of India's burden of disease and contributes to an estimated adult productivity loss of 1.4% of gross domestic product (GDP). Malnutrition could be attributable to a lot of factors like occupational status, educational status, food and proper nutritional availability across years, various superstitious beliefs across nation, lack of awareness because of lack of education etc. Improving feeding practices, Exclusive breast-feeding promotion for at least six months, health awareness by health education activities, sanitation and hygiene awareness, sustained and continuous availability of all locally available and acceptable nutritious foods for all sections and regions of people and easy access to healthcare is some of the very important measures to fight and eliminate malnutrition.

Volume 1 Issue 5 December 2018

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