

## **CHILD NUTRITION: VICTIMIZATION AND PROMISING SOLUTIONS**

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### **Abstract**

*Good nutrition is necessary for the development of the brain and the body before a child is born and in the early years of life. Eating the right nutrients at the right time during growth increases a child's potential. Yet, the physical, behavioural and cognitive development of too many children is threatened by inadequate nutrition. Even as obesity has emerged as a major public health threat, researchers are learning how income, food access, physical activity and family interact to increase the likelihood of childhood obesity. While there are some early indications that living in poverty compounds the social, emotional and health risks it is clear that both individuals and society will pay a significant price in financial costs and in human suffering if the trend toward obesity is not reversed. This paper contains the importance of nutrition. Different victimizations with child nutrition and the role of govt in providing promising solutions in that area.*

**Key Words:** *Child Nutrition*



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### **THE IMPORTANCE OF NUTRITION**

Every child develops and grows at her/his own pace and in her/his own time through reaching the various developmental milestones. Children's growth and development do not occur in a linear fashion, but are influenced by each child's environment, nutrition and parental care. These factors play a critical role in a child reaching her/his full potential. Recent evidence indicates that good nutrition, particularly in early childhood, is critical to the positive health outcomes of children. In fact, children's nutritional status can be viewed as a good proxy indicator of a community's state of health. The nutritional status of a child is usually described in terms of anthropometry, i.e. body measurement, such as weight, in relation to age or height, which is reflective of the degree of underweight or wasting of that child.

45% of children worldwide are undernourished. We're working to change that statistic by reaching at-risk pregnant women, new mothers and children under five with the vitamins and minerals that are essential to a child's survival and ability to thrive

## **Victimization**

Diet influences all facets of a child's growth: physical, mental, cognitive, and psychosocial. Brain development can be restricted by even mild malnutrition but chronic under-nutrition can lead to life-long cognitive limitations and behavioural impairments.

- Malnourished children often exhibit extreme behaviours that can be aggressive or passive, anxious or apathetic, withdrawn, or characterized by irritability. Continuous low nutritional intake may have a negative effect on critical development stages including parent-child interaction, attachment, play, and learning.
- Poor nutrition weakens the body's ability to fight off common infections leading to longer absences from school and increased medical costs.
- Overweight children are stigmatized by their peers and sometimes even by parents and teachers, leading to low self-esteem, negative body image and depression. This can affect their ability to socialize well with others and to feel comfortable in a classroom setting.
- Overweight children and adolescents have an increased frequency of risk factors for heart disease, such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure, compared to children with a healthy weight. For the same reason, Type 2 diabetes, previously considered an adult disease, has increased dramatically in children and adolescents.
- Healthy mothers are fundamental to the growth and development of their children. Many nutrition programs target expecting and parenting mothers to ensure children are born healthy and receive the nutrition they need early in life.

## **Promising solutions**

### **Make sure your child eats plenty of healthy food and drinks water every day**

You can help your child develop good eating habits by modelling good eating yourself. Also, have your help with meal preparation as much as possible. It is quality time together and your child is learning.

### **Keep junk foods to a minimum**

Birthday cake at a party is fine, but cake and ice cream every day is not. Empty calories in soft drinks and fatty foods promotes obesity, which causes all kinds of health problems.

## **Food**

Usually a fortified food ration (e.g., corn soy blend (CSB)) provided for the target beneficiary (usually with a family food ration).

## **Role of Govt in child nutrition**

### **Midday meal scheme in Indian schools**

Akshaya party foundation runs the world's largest NGO-run midday meal programme serving freshly cooked meals to over 1.3 million school children in government and government-aided schools in India. This programme is conducted with part subsidies from the Government and partly with donations from individuals and corporations. The meals served by Akshaya Patra complies with the nutritional norms given by the government of India and aims to eradicate malnutrition among children in India.

### **Integrated child development scheme**

The Government of India has started a program called Integrated Child Development Services in the year 1975. ICDS has been instrumental in improving the health of mothers and children under age 6 by providing health and nutrition education, health services, supplementary food, and pre-school education. The ICDS national development program is one of the largest in the world. It reaches more than 34 million children aged 0–6 years and 7 million pregnant and lactating mothers. Other programs impacting on under-nutrition include the National Midday Meal Scheme, the National Rural Health Mission, and the Public Distribution System (PDS). The challenge for all these programs and schemes is how to increase efficiency, impact and coverage.

### **National Children's Fund**

The National Children's Fund was created during the International Year of the Child in 1979 under the Charitable Endowment Fund Act, 1890. This Fund Provides support to the voluntary organisations that help the welfare of kids.

### **National Plan of Action for Children**

India is a signatory to the 27 survival and development goals laid down by the World Summit on children 1990. In order to implement these goals, the Department of Women & Child Development has formulated a National Plan of Action on Children. Each concerned Central Ministries/Departments, State Governments/U.Ts. and Voluntary Organisations dealing with women and children have been asked to take up appropriate measures to implement the Action Plan. These goals have been integrated into National Development Plans. A Monitoring Committee under the Chairpersonship of Secretary (Women & Child Development) reviews the achievement of goals set in the National Plan of Action. All concerned Central Ministries/Departments are represented on the Committee. 15 State Govts.

have prepared State Plan of Action on the lines of National Plan of Action specifying targets for 1995 as well as for 2000 and spelling out strategies for holistic child development.

### **National Rural Health Mission**

The National Rural Health Mission was created for the years 2005–2012, and its goal is to improve the availability of and access to quality health care by people, especially for those residing in rural areas, the poor, women, and children.

The subset of goals under this mission are:

- Reduce infant mortality rate (IMR) and maternal mortality ratio (MMR)
- Provide universal access to public health services
- Prevent and control both communicable and non-communicable diseases, including locally endemic diseases
- Provide access to integrated comprehensive primary healthcare
- Create population stabilisation, as well as gender and demographic balance
- Finally, to promote healthy life styles

### **Other promising solutions at different stages**

#### **0 – 6 months**

- ❖ Enjoy time with your baby
- ❖ Breastfeeding is best for your baby for the first 6 months
- ❖ Clean your baby's mouth regularly
- ❖ Take your baby to the clinic regularly

#### **6 – 12 months**

- ❖ Enjoy time with your baby
- ❖ From 6 months start giving your baby small amounts of solid foods
- ❖ Increase your baby's meals to 5 times a day
- ❖ Continue breast-feeding your baby
- ❖ Offer your baby clean safe water regularly
- ❖ Teach your baby to drink from a cup
- ❖ Take your baby to the clinic every month

#### **1 – 7 years**

- ❖ Encourage children to eat a variety of foods
- ❖ Feed children five small meals a day
- ❖ Make starchy foods the basis of a child's main meals
- ❖ Children need plenty of vegetables and fruit every day

- ❖ Children need to drink milk every day
- ❖ Children can eat chicken, fish, meat, eggs, beans, soya or peanut butter every day
- ❖ If children have sweet treats or drinks, offer small amounts with meals
- ❖ Offer children clean, safe water regularly
- ❖ Take children to the clinic every 3 months
- ❖ Encourage children to play and be active

### Conclusions

A healthy diet helps children to grow and learn. It also helps prevent obesity and weight-related diseases, such as diabetes and other harmful diseases which creates hindrance in the overall development of the child . So it is important for the parents as well as the teachers in the school to take care about the nutritious and healthy diet of the child. From the birth to two years of age it is very important to take care of the child developmental needs and provide them the promising solutions where necessary. From the above discussion we conclude that there are various Govt agencies which are taking part in the child nutrition and save the children from mal nutrition.

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