

CONNECTING THE DOTS: 21-04-2018

'Connecting the Dots': It is an initiative by Team Oracle IAS, where we give a topic to the students in the mornings of Saturday/Sunday. We post our article/views on the topic in the evening.

Objectives:

1. To explain a tough topic by simplifying and breaking it into easily understandable parts.
2. To inculcate the habit of notes making in the students.
3. To explain by example how notes should be made.
4. To help you keep your notes updated.

Malnutrition: National Nutrition Strategy

In the recent past, there has been a renewed discussion around nutrition in India. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had released the **National Health Policy, 2017**. It highlighted the negative impact of malnutrition on the population's productivity, and its contribution to mortality rates in the country. In light of the long term effects of malnutrition, across generations, **the NITI Aayog released the National Nutrition Strategy**. This post presents the current status of malnutrition in India and measures proposed by this Strategy.

What is malnutrition?

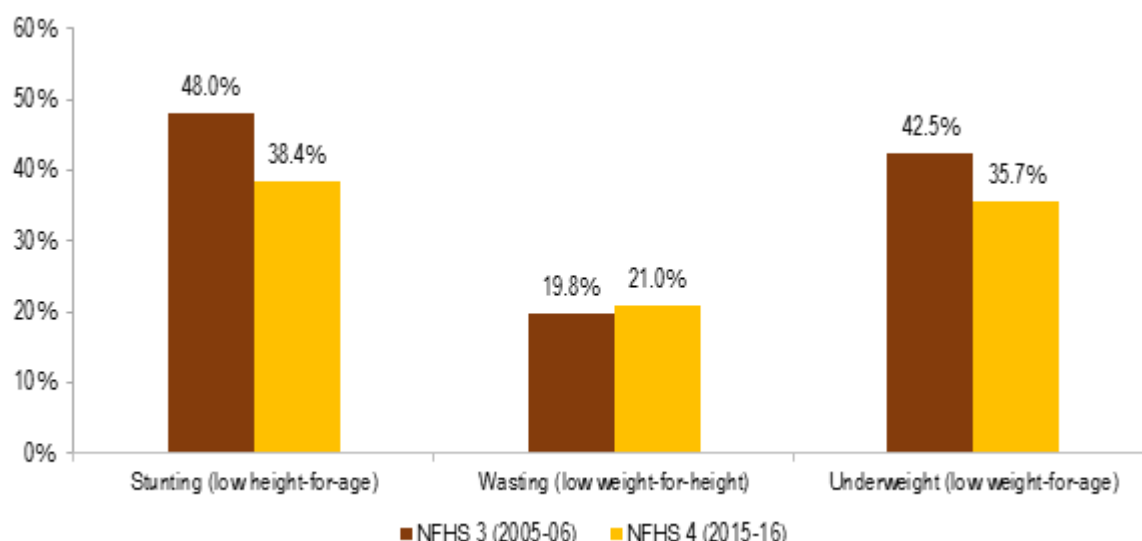
Malnutrition indicates that children are either too short for their age or too thin. Children whose height is below the average for their age are considered to be stunted. Similarly, children whose weight is below the average for their age are considered thin for their height or wasted. Together, the stunted and wasted children are considered to be underweight – indicating a lack of proper nutritional intake and inadequate care post childbirth.

CONNECTING THE DOTS: 21-04-2018

What is the extent of malnutrition in India?

India's performance on key malnutrition indicators is poor according to national and international studies. According to UNICEF, India was at the 10th spot among countries with the highest number of underweight children, and at the 17th spot for the highest number of stunted children in the world.

Malnutrition affects chances of survival for children, increases their susceptibility to illness, reduces their ability to learn, and makes them less productive in later life. It is estimated that malnutrition is a contributing factor in about one-third of all deaths of children under the age of 5. .



Malnutrition in children under 5 years (2005-06 and 2015-16)-NFHS

Over the decade between 2005 and 2015, there has been an overall reduction in the proportion of underweight children in India, mainly on account of an improvement in stunting. While the percentage of stunted children under 5 reduced from 48% in 2005-06 to 38.4% in 2015-16, there has been a rise in the percentage of children who are wasted from 19.8% to 21% during this period. A high increase in the incidence of wasting was noted in Punjab, Goa, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Sikkim.

CONNECTING THE DOTS: 21-04-2018

The prevalence of underweight children was found to be higher in rural areas (38%) than urban areas (29%). According to WHO, infants weighing less than 2.5 Kg are 20 times more likely to die than heavier babies. In India, the national average weight at birth is less than 2.5 Kg for 19% of the children. The incidence of low birth-weight babies varied across different states, with Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh witnessing the highest number of underweight childbirths at 23%.

Further, more than half of India's children are anaemic (58%), indicating an inadequate amount of haemoglobin in the blood. This is caused by a nutritional deficiency of iron and other essential minerals, and vitamins in the body.

Is malnutrition witnessed only among children?

No. Among adults, 23% of women and 20% of men are considered undernourished in India. On the other hand, 21% of women and 19% of men are overweight or obese. The simultaneous occurrence of over nutrition and under-nutrition indicates that adults in India are suffering from a dual burden of malnutrition (abnormal thinness and obesity). This implies that about 56% of women and 61% of men are at normal weight for their height.

What does the National Nutrition Strategy propose?

Various government initiatives have been launched over the years which seek to improve the nutrition status in the country. These include the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), the National Health Mission, the Janani Suraksha Yojana, the Matritva Sahyog Yojana, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, and the National Food Security Mission, among others. However, concerns regarding malnutrition have persisted despite improvements over the years. It is in this context that the National Nutrition Strategy has been released.

Key features of the Strategy include:

- The Strategy aims to reduce all forms of malnutrition by 2030, with a focus on the most vulnerable and critical age groups. The Strategy also aims to assist in achieving the targets identified as part of the Sustainable Development Goals related to nutrition and health.

CONNECTING THE DOTS: 21-04-2018

- The Strategy aims to launch a National Nutrition Mission, similar to the National Health Mission. This is to enable integration of nutrition-related interventions cutting across sectors like women and child development, health, food and public distribution, sanitation, drinking water, and rural development.
- A decentralised approach will be promoted with greater flexibility and decision making at the state, district and local levels. Further, the Strategy aims to strengthen the ownership of Panchayati Raj institutions and urban local bodies over nutrition initiatives. This is to enable decentralised planning and local innovation along with accountability for nutrition outcomes.
- The Strategy proposes to launch interventions with a focus on improving healthcare and nutrition among children. These interventions will include: (i) promotion of breastfeeding for the first six months after birth, (ii) universal access to infant and young child care (including ICDS and crèches), (iii) enhanced care, referrals and management of severely undernourished and sick children, (iv) bi-annual vitamin A supplements for children in the age group of 9 months to 5 years, and (v) micro-nutrient supplements and bi-annual de-worming for children.
- Measures to improve maternal care and nutrition include: (i) supplementary nutritional support during pregnancy and lactation, (ii) health and nutrition counselling, (iii) adequate consumption of iodised salt and screening of severe anaemia, and (iv) institutional childbirth, lactation management and improved post-natal care.
- Governance reforms envisaged in the Strategy include: (i) convergence of state and district implementation plans for ICDS, NHM and Swachh Bharat, (ii) focus on the most vulnerable communities in districts with the highest levels of child malnutrition, and (iii) service delivery models based on evidence of impact.

Food for thought

What do you understand by:

- Double Burden of malnutrition
- Asian Enigma
- Hidden Hunger

Contact us (send feedback to):

1. Mail : oracleias.ddn@gmail.com
2. Phone : 09997453844(Hemant Sir)
3. Website : www.oracleias.org

ORACLEIAS