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Impact of flagship programmes on food security in India

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Statement of the Problem: An integrated child development service is a scheme started in India in 1975. It was identified as one of the three flagship programmes in India to ensure food security in rural, tribal and urban slums. The present study was undertaken to analyse the impact of the programme in ensuring food security to the beneficiaries.

Methodology: A sample of 640 children from different clusters of the scheme serving about 25 villages was selected for the study. The children were assessed for nutritional status and health. Through anthropometric measurements and compared with standard measurements. The nutritional status of the children was evaluated through indices like Mc Laren classification of height, Rao index of malnutrition and Gomez classification of Weight.

Findings: The results indicated that the children were ensured of food security as the supplementary diet given to them met their energy and protein requirements. Mc Laren classification indicated that the children with normal nutritional status were high. Since height is an indicator of long term malnutrition, the normal level of the children shows that the children's are provided food security through the ICDS programme. Rao's index which considers weight and height projected that 48% girls and 34% boys were normal while 50% girls and 62% boys were suffering from PEM. Since weight is an indicator of short term malnutrition, it can be assumed that these children could have had short term health effects, which is a criterion to be taken into consideration. The evaluation based on Gomez classification indicated that 39% and 36% of girls and boys respectively were normal while 47% and 51% of girls and boys were in grade I malnutrition. About 13% in either sex were in Grade II while only 1% of girls were in Grade III.

Conclusion & Significance: A comparison of the present results with the earlier research done over three decades has reported malnutrition at different grades. No regional data is available in literature for comparison. Similar results were reported by few studies at national level. All studies have reported improvement in nutritional status of pre-school children in rural, urban and tribal ICDS centers.

Biography

M Sai Leela is a graduate in Nutrition and a Doctoral degree in Anthropology and a career spanning 26 years of undergraduate teaching. She has undertaken three research projects at different levels of her career. One of them was sponsored by Department of Environment, Govt. of India; a second one was under the aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, sponsored by World Bank and Multi-Disciplinary. A minor project sponsored by University Grants Commission, Govt. of India was undertaken. All research projects were related to Nutrition.

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