

Status of Malnutrition in India with Special Reference to Deficiency of Iron, Iodine and Vitamin A

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Abstract—It is estimated that around two billion people in the world are deficient in one or more micronutrients. For a developing nation like India, malnutrition is a challenge which adversely affects the quality of human resource. During last two decades, India has experienced sustained economic growth and has managed to considerably reduced the poverty levels. However, reduction in malnutrition and its manifestations have not been tackled significantly. Deficiency of nutrients like iodine, iron and vitamin A not only affect the health but are also projected to cost around 0.8-2.5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2016, around 0.5% of total deaths in India were due to nutritional deficiencies. Besides national surveys, various studies carried out in India have reported high burden of anemia. The National Nutrition Anemia Prophylaxis Programme was launched in 1970 to prevent nutritional anemia and was reframed from time to time to cure anemia in Indian population. As per the estimates of the World Health Organization (WHO), globally vitamin A deficiency was affecting about a third of children aged 6-59 months, with prevalence rates as high as about 50 per cent in Southeast Asia. In India, the entire population is prone to Iodine deficiency disorders due to the deficiency of iodine in soil. Although, Indian government has taken significant initiatives like National Nutrition Mission (NNM)/ Poshan Abhiyaan to address malnutrition through convergent use of technology and a targeted approach, more efforts are required to effectively eliminate the problem of nutritional deficiency in the country.

In this paper we have reviewed the current status of malnutrition and the counteractive programmes and policies introduced by Indian Government particularly with respect to iodine, iron and vitamin A deficiencies in India.

Keywords: Malnutrition, India, Policies, Iron, Iodine, Vitamin A.