

Chapter-1

Introduction and Objectives

Across the world, the problem of malnutrition has been perceived as the most dangerous and menacing factors towards ensuring a decent and secure livelihood. The situation has gone further worse for some African and South East Asian countries. The problem of malnutrition has got social, political, technical and motivational dimensions as well.

Education being the basic driving force for any economic and social process per se, the school going children need to be focussed and attended comprehensively so that they can grow up themselves as the healthy citizens having belligerent mind and body. But unfortunately, almost 80% of the school going children in India are suffering from derelict impact of malnutrition leading to poor performance, malfunctioning, stunted growth, vulnerable to diseases and morbidity and so on.

The apparent stagnation of agricultural productivity, unabated erosion of natural resources, lost of biodiversity; global warming, environment pollution, climate change and unrestricted population growth are all moving across the problem of poverty impoverishment and malnutrition and their ecological exodus.

Malnutrition is not only a biological phenomena, it is a synergy of biophysical as well as social process. Access to food, sufficient and nutritionally rich is also one of the discerning factors that impacts heavily on the nutritional aspects on the school children. The analysis of malnutrition thus needs a complex framework gridding all the cognate factors like size of holding, parental education, food intake volume, energy intake, chronological age, ill behaviour of agriculture, information seeking behaviour, medical and health care and so on.

The educational performance is a strong and organic component of nutritional management and level of school children. The level of nutrition figures up mental alertness, physical fitness and motivational preparedness of a child in a teaching learning environment. The neuro cells are operationally and functionally supported by nutritional supplements which would ultimately help built up analytical acumen and passionate expression in a child. While 80% of the children in India are very much vulnerable and prone to nutritional deficiency in different dimensions and at different levels, this problem has a colossal dimension. The covalence between nutrition and education has got far laying consequences on the present and future of the nation.

In the introduction part, a background information has been also been provided to justify the selection of the topic of the thesis and subsequent to it the objective will be framed up for the onward progress of the thesis work.

The imbalance between the global supply and demand for food has been building up over a period of two decades. The success of the green

revolution and the resulting complacency led to a steady decline in public investment in agriculture in several developing economies.

Consequently, the chasm between the growth rate of overall GDP and that from agriculture has been increasing, particularly in fast growing economies like China and India. This explains, on the other hand, rising demand for food, especially for milk, meat, vegetables and fruits, and, on the other hand, slows growth in the supplies of food grains. The large-scale diversion of cereals to ethanol production as much as one-third of maize produced in crude oil prices has aggravated the demand-supply imbalance for food to crisis proportions.

Ten years after the 1996 World Food Summit (WFS) in Rome, which promised to reduce the number of undernourished people by half by 2015, there are more hungry people in the developing countries today-820 million than there were in 1996. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the UN estimates that far from decreasing, the number of hungry people in the world is currently increasing at the rate of four million a year, whereas meeting the summit pledge would require reducing the number of undernourished by 31 million every year until 2015.

The soaring food prices have pushed in an additional 100 million people in the hunger trap across the world. The current crisis has been triggered by a confluence of factors including increased use of food grains for bio-fuels. Surging demand for agricultural products due to population and economic growth and inadequate supply of cereals-the lowest in 3 decades. In spite of the increase in world cereal production in 2007, supplies are not sufficient to meet demand without a sharp draw-down of stocks, the main reason for

the drop in the stock-to-use ratio. The ratio of wheat forecast or falls to 22.9% well under the 34% level observed during the first half of the decade.

OBJECTIVES

General objectives:

Assessment of nutritional level of school going children (primary), in terms of agro-economic and psychological variables.

Specific objectives:

- I. A general assessment of nutritional level of school going children (primary), pertaining to 6-14 age category as dependent variable.
- II. An assessment of the agro-economic and psychological variables characterizing the primary respondents as independent variable.
- III. To assess the interrelationship, both at inter and intra level, between the dependent and independent variables.
- IV. To derive some strategic implication from the study for subsequent application towards mitigating the problem on nutrition management in a broader perspective.