

Population as a factor of Malnutrition in India

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Abstract

India, now the world's most populous nation, faces a dual challenge of rapid population growth and pervasive malnutrition, disproportionately affecting its most vulnerable populations—children and women. Despite decades of interventions, India ranks alarmingly low on the Global Hunger Index, with persistent issues of child wasting, stunting, and underweight children, alongside rising undernourishment rates. This article explores the intricate nexus between population dynamics and malnutrition, emphasizing the critical need for holistic strategies to ensure food security, address socio-economic disparities, and break intergenerational cycles of hunger.

Government initiatives such as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), POSHAN Abhiyaan, and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana provide a foundation for tackling malnutrition through nutritional support, healthcare, and community mobilization. However, challenges in implementation, resource allocation, and awareness persist. The article advocates for integrated population policies, sustainable development practices, and grassroots empowerment to mitigate malnutrition's far-reaching effects on health, education, and economic productivity.

A nation's commitment to eradicating hunger is both a moral imperative and a cornerstone of sustainable development. This study underscores the urgent need for collaborative global and local efforts to combat malnutrition, ensuring every child and citizen has the opportunity to thrive in a food-secure future.

Keywords: Malnutrition, Population Growth, Food Security, Child Nutrition, Sustainable Development

Introduction

“We know that a peaceful world cannot long exist, one-third rich and two-thirds hungry.”

– Jimmy Carter, 39th president of the United States.

The world population is increasing at an alarming rate! India has already become the country to have the highest global population, which was predicted to happen by 2050. The quality of life is lowered by this overpopulation, which can also have an impact on other social and environmental factors. The effects of overpopulation include malnutrition, pollution, congested living conditions, and a lack of health care facilities, all of which increase a community's risk of infectious diseases.

Without a doubt, the world's first priority at present should be the future of our food supply. It is widely known that the globe, with a current population of 8.1 billion, is already overpopulated and that in 2050, any one can easily guess, there will be more than 10 billion people on the planet. Regardless of what steps we take today, this is bound to happen. Only if we take smart action, this situation could be much stable after 2050⁽¹⁾.

The majority of people are aware of the negative effects of overpopulation on the environment and society but not its negative effects on health.

According to principle enough food is produced worldwide to feed more than the global population. But according to a UNICEF report published in 2019 more than 820 million people go hungry each year².

Overpopulation and poverty are two major factors that contribute to hunger. This involves interactions among a group of social, political, demographic, and societal factors. People living in poverty frequently face household food insecurity, use inappropriate care practices, live in unsafe environments that have low access to quality water, low sanitation, hygiene and inadequate access or availability to health services and education. Conflict is also a key driver of severe food crises. This includes famine—a fact officially recognized by the UN Security Council in May 2018⁽³⁾.

¹ Growing Global Overpopulation and Migration are Destabilizing our World, Gioietta Kuo, <https://mahb.stanford.edu/library-item/growing-global-overpopulation-migration-destabilizing-world/>

² <https://www.worldhunger.org/world-hunger-and-poverty-facts-and-statistics/> retrieved on 12 Jan, 2023 at 2pm

³ <https://www.unwater.org/publications/world-water-development-report-2020/> retrieved on 2 Jan 2023 at 4pm

Apart from malnutrition, effects of overpopulation on human health are:**1. Increased Risk of Infections**

Infections and overpopulation are closely related. The risk to human health increases with population density because airborne infections can spread more quickly. Numerous infectious diseases have emerged as a result of concerns like urban overcrowding and environmental changes brought on by population growth. Increased antibiotic resistance turns out to be an unanticipated issue for diseases like:

- Tuberculosis,
- Malaria,
- Cholera,
- Dengue fever;

2. Rise of Water Contaminated Diseases

Polluted water resources are a result of overpopulation. Diseases caused by contaminated water cost the lives of people every year. In a more crowded environment, the viruses propagate more quickly, allowing dangerous mutations to proliferate and contaminate the water supply.

3. Respiratory Problems

There is a rising worry about the effects of overpopulation brought on by increased traffic on the health of those who commute by car. Children are more affected than adults by air pollution. As a result of today's deteriorating air quality, the majority of people experience respiratory issues like:

- Asthma,
- Lung cancer,
- Chest pain,
- Congestion,
- Throat inflammation,
- Cardiovascular disease,
- Respiratory diseases;

4. Increased Risk of Skin Cancer

Population growth has also contributed to the thinning of the ozone layer. Increased exposure from the sun's damaging ultraviolet (UV) radiation may result in skin conditions like skin cancer and early aging of the skin. The effects of UV radiation include cataracts and blindness. Most significantly, it impairs the immunological system of humans.

5. Various Other Health Hazards

People are moving to the cities in larger numbers every day in search of jobs and wealth. Concentrated energy consumption increases air pollution, which has a significant impact of overpopulation on human health and lead levels in metropolitan air are elevated due to automotive emissions. Numerous health risks, including cancer, neurological disorders, congenital malformations, etc., are caused by large amounts of uncollected garbage.

All other significant issues are primarily caused by overpopulation. Governments are increasingly unable to expand their health care facilities and systems due to population increase.

United Nations on Hunger and Population growth

In order to maintain overall good health, one must consume enough calories per day and a variety of foods to meet supplemental nutritional demands. Undernourishment is a major risk factor for death and other adverse health effects, especially in children and mothers.

As one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals the General Assembly of United Nations in 2015 has established a global goal to "eliminate hunger by 2030". At present, we are a long way from achieving this goal.

The very first international conference specifically on food security and nutrition was held at Hot Springs, US in 1943. It mainly expressed its concern on world food security, established an interim commission on food security and nutrition, and expressed the need for founding a permanent commission specifically dealing with the short-term and long-term negative consequences brought by malnutrition⁴.

The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) was established in the year of 1945. The first founding goals are to sustainably improve the efficiency of agricultural systems, as well as to substantially increase the overall food supply for the world population. Strategically, it approaches to the allocation of natural as well as artificial resources such as fishery, forestry, vegetation, etc. It also closely links to the elimination of rural poverty by tackling its goal to smallholder farmers. (It also pays its attention to the smallholder farmers with their family-based farms which takes approximately 90% of the farmers in the world.) Since its foundation, the FAO has always worked closely with governments, institutions, organizations, providing expertise and strategic advice to ensure the productivity and sustainability of food supply⁵.

The World Food Conference convened by the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 3180 on November 16th, 1974. This resolution was further endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 3348. The thesis of the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of

⁴ FAO, <http://www.fao.org/3/p4228e/p4228e04.htm> retrieved on 12 Jan 2023 at 1pm

⁵ FAO, Strategic Objectives, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mg994e.pdf> retrieved on 21 Jan 2023 at 2pm

Hunger and Malnutrition stated, "Every man, woman and child has the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition in order to develop fully and maintain their physical and mental faculties." The declaration expressed its strong concern from the international community by tackling food security issue with international human rights and geopolitical factors within a region, to achieve the physical and mental wellness of individuals⁶.

The international community has expressed its strong concern in the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN) that took place in Rome, Italy in the year of 2014. The final outcome of this Conference was the Rome Declaration on Nutrition, as well as the Framework for Action as a guidance for its implementation. In the declaration, it recognizes the negative consequences possibly caused by malnutrition onto individuals, market and society. It emphasizes the necessity of eradicating world hunger for future sustainable development. It also urges international and different forms of governmental intervention into the food system to further ensure sufficient food supply for all⁷. The Rome Declaration on Nutrition serves also as a guideline for the future relative declarations and resolutions.

The UN General Assembly listed the eradication of world hunger as well as poverty in its Millennium Development Goals. It specified its detailed goal in 1.C that is "Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger"⁸. It resulted in a significant fall in the percentage of undernourished people, from 23.3 percent in 1990-1992 to 12.9 percent in 2014-2016⁹.

6. The "Zero Hunger Challenge" (ZHC) was launched by the former United Nations Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon, supported by the Food and Agricultural Organisation, World Food Programme, International Fund for Agricultural Development, UN Children's Fund, the World Bank and Bioversity International. The ultimate goal for this challenge is to fully eradicate malnutrition. It is detailed into 5 main goals, namely,

- a. All food systems are sustainable from production to consumption.
- b. An end to rural poverty: double small-scale producer income and productivity.
- c. Adapt all food systems to eliminate loss or waste of food,
- d. Access adequate food and healthy diets, for all people, all year round,
- e. And end to malnutrition in all its forms.

⁶ OHCHR, Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/EradicationOfHungerAndMalnutrition.aspx> retrieved on 21 Jan 2023 at 3pm

⁷ Rome Declaration on Nutrient, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ml542e.pdf>, 2014 retrieved on 21 Jan 2023 at 3.30 pm

⁸ Millennium Development Goals, <https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml> retrieved on 22 Jan 2023 at 8pm

⁹ The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015, [https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20\(July%201\).pdf](https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20(July%201).pdf) retrieved on 22 Jan 2023 at 8.30 pm

This challenge was set to be more "people centered", implementing with social justice and basic human rights as the guideline. It pointed out that this goal would not be fully achieved in isolation, hence, international cooperation for the benefit of the people is an essential element¹⁰.

In 2015, United Nations Member States adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in which the eradication of world hunger was listed as a single goal (Goal 2).

- 1) By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.
- 2) By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons.
- 3) By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small- scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.
- 4) By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.
- 5) By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.
 - i) Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries.
 - ii) Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round.
 - iii) Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility.

¹⁰ Zero Hunger Challenge, UN, <https://www.un.org/zerohunger/node/20> retrieved on 22 Jan 2023 at 10pm

It is detailed in five more goals, targeting on the elimination of world hunger and diseases brought by micronutrient deficiencies. It also aims the completion of sustainable farming, genetically-diverse seeds, plants, as well as the productivity of agriculture. It has pointed out three main approaches for implementation, which include increasing investment in agricultural market, preventing restrictions in agricultural trade, and adopting several measures to ensure the stabilization of food commodity market all the time¹¹.

India's Scenario

According to UNICEF, approximately 60,000 babies were born on January 1st 2021 throughout India, which placed it as the nation with the most births that day globally. India's most recent achievement to become world's most populated nation was also made possible by this record-breaking number¹². India become the world's most populous country this year – surpassing China, which has held the distinction since at least 1950, when the United Nations population records begin. The UN expected that India to overtake China in April, though it has already reached this milestone since the UN estimates projections¹³. The rapidly growing population will pose a crisis in terms of food security in India. This will have a bad impact on the elderly as well as the children from 6 months to 6 years as they do not get the necessary nutrition so that a child cannot grow in a good way and various illnesses can occur after the child grows up.

As the population grows, the amount of food required to adequately feed people is increasing. Food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to adequate, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs for an active and healthy life (WHO)¹⁴.

The persistent issue of child malnutrition in India, as highlighted by the 1992–1993 National Family Health Survey (NFHS), reflects a multifaceted challenge within the public administration. The alarming statistics revealed that over half of children under the age of four were underweight and stunted, indicating chronic malnutrition. Additionally, every sixth child exhibited signs of wasting, showcasing acute malnutrition.

Several factors contribute to this problem, including inadequate access to nutritious food, insufficient healthcare, poor sanitation, and socioeconomic disparities. The public

¹¹ Sustainable Development Goals, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger/> retrieved on 19 Jan, 2023 at 4.30 pm

¹² "How India's Record-Breaking Population Will Shape the World" by Astha Rajvanshi published in "Time" magazine JANUARY 20, 2023

¹³ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2023/02/09/key-facts-as-india-surpasses-china-as-the-worlds-most-populous-country/> retrieved on 10 Jan at 4pm

¹⁴ [https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=79927§ion=6.1#:~:text=As%20the%20population%20grows%2C%20the,life%20\(WHO%2C%20n.d.\).](https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=79927§ion=6.1#:~:text=As%20the%20population%20grows%2C%20the,life%20(WHO%2C%20n.d.).) Retrieved on 25 Jan 2023 at 4pm

administration faces the complex task of addressing these root causes through policy interventions, healthcare infrastructure improvements, and targeted social welfare programs.

Efforts to combat child malnutrition require a holistic approach, involving collaboration between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities. Nutritional education, healthcare services, and support for vulnerable populations are crucial components of any comprehensive strategy.

Over the years, addressing child malnutrition has likely evolved as a key focus in India's public health policies. Continuous monitoring and adaptation of interventions are essential to make a meaningful impact on improving child nutrition and breaking the cycle of intergenerational malnutrition.

Otherwise all these conditions could be attributed to the prevalence of chronic malnutrition in children.

India still has one of the highest rates of child malnutrition in the world, despite decades of investment to address this problem. India ranks 94th out of 107 nations in the Global Hunger Index (2020), which is based on the population's overall undernourishment, child stunting, wasting, and child mortality. This rank was dropped in 2021 to 101 and then has slipped 6 positions in 2022. According to 2022 Global Hunger Index, India ranks 107th out of 121 countries with a score of 29.1, India has a level of hunger that is serious.

Hunger levels are rising day by day around the world. As many as 828 million people – or 10 percent of the world's population – go to bed hungry each night, 46 million more than the previous year, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).¹⁵

15% of all diseases in India are brought on by the scourge of maternal and child malnutrition.

The prevalence of underweight, stunted, and wasted children under five was reported to be 35.7, 38.4, and 21.0 percent, respectively, in the fourth round of the NFHS, which was conducted in 2015–2016. But, India's performance in undernourishment – Prevalence of undernourishment has also risen in the country from 14.6% in 2018-2020 to 16.3% in 2019-2021. It implies that 224.3 million people in India (out of 828 million globally) are considered undernourished. Again India's performance in child wasting – India's child wasting rate (low weight for height), at 19.3%, is worse than the levels recorded in 2014 (15.1%) and even in 2000 (17.15%).¹⁶

¹⁵ Report published on *Al Jazeera* "Why do more than 800 million people live in hunger?" By Hanna Duggal and Mariam Ali on 28 May 2023

¹⁶ Global Hunger Index 2022 Report

However, according to the data from the fifth round of NFHS (2019-2021) from the 22 states surveyed so far, only nine showed a decline in the number of stunted children, 10 in wasted children and six in underweight children.

Measures to Take

Some of these measures which can help minimize the effects of overpopulation include:

- Establishing laws and regulations governing birth control.
- Educating the public about family planning.
- Making birth control options available to everyone.
- Spreading awareness of population growth.

Government Schemes

According to studies, India loses up to 4% of its gross domestic product and 8% of its productivity due to child malnutrition.¹⁷

Commensurate with global and regional trends, India continues to show a reduction in stunting and recorded 1.6 crore fewer stunted children under five years in 2022 as compared to 2012, according to the Joint Malnutrition Estimates (JME) released by UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank.¹⁸ However, wasting continues to remain a concern and so does growing levels of obesity.

The government of India has many schemes aimed at combating child malnutrition in India. Among them the most important tool for tackling the problem of child malnutrition in India is the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). In addition to pre-school education, it provides a supplemental nutrition programme, growth monitoring and promotion, nutrition and health education, immunisation, health check-ups, and health referrals.

The primary beneficiaries of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme are children below Six years, as well as pregnant and lactating women.

In order to promote nutrition among children, expecting women, and lactating mothers, India established the POSHAN Abhiyaan in 2017. With a view to achieve the second Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), which is to eradicate hunger and achieve food security and enhanced nutrition.

¹⁷ *Child malnutrition in India: A systemic failure*, By Subhomay Saha, Rashi Singh Published in *Down to Earth* on: Thursday 15 April 2021

¹⁸ *India sees reduction in stunting; but wasting, obesity are concerns: report*, by Jagriti Chanda published in *The Hindu* on May 28, 2023

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

The scheme launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development on 2nd October 1975 is one of the world's largest and unique programs for initial childhood care and development.

The scheme targets vulnerable groups that include children of age 0-6 years, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

It offers a package of six services, namely supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-up, nutrition & health education, preschool non-formal education and referral services.

National Health Mission (NHM)

The National Health Mission (NHM) is a comprehensive healthcare initiative launched by the Government of India in 2013. It amalgamated two existing programs, the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and the National Urban Health Mission (NUHM), aiming to address health disparities and strengthen the overall healthcare system in the country.

Key objectives of the National Health Mission include:

- 1. Improving Health Infrastructure:** NHM focuses on enhancing healthcare infrastructure, particularly in rural and urban areas, by upgrading existing facilities and building new ones. This includes the establishment of sub-centers, primary health centers, and community health centers.
- 2. Human Resource Development:** NHM emphasizes the training and capacity building of healthcare personnel, including doctors, nurses, and community health workers, to improve the quality of healthcare services.
- 3. Maternal and Child Health:** One of the primary goals is to reduce maternal and child mortality rates. NHM implements various programs and initiatives to ensure safe pregnancies, deliveries, and postnatal care, as well as addressing childhood illnesses.
- 4. Disease Control and Prevention:** NHM addresses the control and prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases. This includes immunization campaigns, vector control programs, and awareness initiatives.
- 5. Family Planning:** The mission works towards promoting family planning and reproductive health services, aiming to provide accessible and affordable services to all.
- 6. Community Participation:** NHM encourages community involvement and local participation in healthcare decision-making. This is seen as crucial for the success and sustainability of health programs.

The National Health Mission operates at both the national and state levels, allowing for flexibility in implementation to address regional health challenges. It plays a pivotal role in

improving the overall health outcomes and healthcare delivery mechanisms across the diverse landscape of India.

Mid-Day Meal Scheme

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) is a government initiative in India that aims to improve the nutritional status of school children and encourage regular school attendance. Launched in 1995, the program provides cooked meals to students in primary and upper-primary classes in government and government-aided schools.

Key features of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme:

- 1. Nutritional Support:** The primary objective is to enhance the nutritional intake of school children, addressing malnutrition and promoting overall well-being.
- 2. School Attendance:** By providing a nutritious meal, the scheme aims to attract children to school and reduce drop-out rates. It recognizes that hunger can be a significant barrier to regular attendance.
- 3. Social Equality:** The program contributes to social equity by ensuring that children from all socio-economic backgrounds receive a nutritious meal, irrespective of their financial status.
- 4. Local Community Involvement:** MDMS often involves the local community in the implementation process, including parents, teachers, and community members. This not only facilitates better program management but also fosters a sense of ownership.
- 5. Menu Diversification:** The menu typically includes locally sourced and culturally acceptable food items. This ensures that the meals are both nutritious and palatable, catering to local dietary preferences.
- 6. Health Check-ups:** Some states incorporate health check-ups and deworming initiatives alongside the Mid-Day Meal Scheme to address the broader health needs of school children.

While the Mid-Day Meal Scheme has contributed significantly to increased school enrollment and improved nutritional status, there have been challenges such as issues related to the quality of food, infrastructure, and monitoring. Continuous efforts are made to address these challenges and enhance the effectiveness of the program, emphasizing the importance of school-based nutrition in the overall development of children.

Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojna (IGMSY)

The Matritva Sahyog Yojna centrally sponsored scheme implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2010 is a Conditional Maternity Benefit (CMB) Scheme.

This was launched for pregnant and lactating women to improve their health and nutrition status by providing cash incentives. Moreover, IGMSY aimed to raise awareness about health and nutrition among pregnant and lactating women through educational programs and counseling.

National Nutrition Policy 1993

The National Nutrition Policy adopted under the Ministry of Women and Child Development is a flagship program to improve nutritional outcomes in children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

The scheme aims to reduce stunting and wasting by 2% a year among children and anemia by 3% a year among children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

Here are some key aspects of the National Nutrition Policy (NNP) 1993:

1. Holistic Approach: The policy took a comprehensive and integrated approach to nutrition, recognizing that addressing malnutrition requires a multi-sectoral effort involving health, education, food, and social welfare.

2. Primary Focus on Vulnerable Groups: It placed special emphasis on vulnerable groups, such as pregnant and lactating women, infants, and young children, who are particularly susceptible to malnutrition.

3. Food and Nutrition Security: The NNP aimed to ensure food and nutrition security for all segments of the population, with a focus on promoting balanced diets and addressing micro-nutrient deficiencies.

4. Promotion of Breastfeeding: Recognizing the importance of breastfeeding for infant health, the policy advocated for promoting and supporting breastfeeding practices.

5. Community Participation: The involvement of communities and local authorities was considered crucial for the successful implementation of the policy. It encouraged community participation in planning and executing nutrition-related programs.

6. Awareness and Education: The NNP underscored the significance of awareness and education in addressing nutritional issues. It aimed to create awareness about the importance of nutrition and promote behavior change for healthier dietary practices.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana

The scheme was launched in 2017, and its implementation is monitored through the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana-Common Application Software (PMMVY-CAS).

Under the scheme, Rs. 6,000 is transferred to the bank accounts of pregnant women and lactating mothers to avail better facilities and is eligible for the family's first child.

Through facilitating interdepartmental convergence, real-time monitoring, intensive health and nutrition services for the first 1,000 days, and Jan Andolan (community Mobilisation), POSHAN Abhiyaan seeks to reduce malnutrition among children.

The Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana is a crucial step toward improving maternal and child health outcomes in India by addressing financial barriers that pregnant and lactating women may face. It plays a significant role in supporting women during a critical phase of their lives and promoting the overall well-being of mothers and children.

Government schemes introduced to combat malnutrition among children can have significant impacts, including improved Health Outcomes, Reduced Mortality Rates, Enhanced School Performance, Economic Benefits, Break the Cycle of Poverty, Social Equity, Community Empowerment etc. Proper nutrition is crucial for the physical and cognitive development of children. Government schemes that targeting malnutrition can lead to improved health outcomes, reducing the prevalence of stunted growth, underweight children, and micronutrient deficiencies. It is well known that malnutrition contributes to high child mortality rates, especially in developing countries. Effective government interventions can lower mortality rates by ensuring children have access to nutritious food, healthcare services, and essential supplements. Malnourished children often face cognitive impairments that affect their ability to learn and perform well in their day to day life. Government schemes that aimed at combating malnutrition among children have the potential to yield significant social, economic, and health benefits, contributing to the well-being and development of future generations.

Conclusion

“Close to a billion people – one-eighth of the world’s population – still live in hunger. Each year 2 million children die through malnutrition. This is happening at a time when doctors in Britain are warning of the spread of obesity. We are eating too much while others starve.”

– Jonathan Sacks, jewish scholar.

In conclusion, the intricate relationship between population dynamics and malnutrition in India underscores the complexity of addressing nutritional challenges. Rapid population growth poses considerable pressure on resources, affecting food security and perpetuating the cycle of malnutrition, particularly among vulnerable groups. As the nation strives for sustainable development, it becomes imperative to adopt comprehensive strategies that integrate population policies with nutrition interventions. Empowering communities with education, healthcare, and family planning initiatives is essential to break the link between population and malnutrition. Only through a concerted effort, involving both policymakers and grassroots communities, can India pave the way for a healthier and more nourished future for its people.

A nation's duty towards its hungry citizens is a reflection of its commitment to the principles of justice, equality, and human rights. The imperative to eradicate hunger goes beyond benevolence; it is an essential element of sustainable development and societal well-being. By prioritizing policies that ensure universal access to nutritious food, addressing socio-economic disparities, and responding effectively to emergencies, a nation fulfills its responsibility to nourish and uplift its citizens. The journey toward a world without hunger demands not only global collaboration but also the unwavering dedication of each nation to build a future where no one is left behind, and every citizen can partake in the prosperity of a well-fed and thriving society.

Moreover, the plight of millions of children going hungry every day demands not just our attention but also a collective and urgent response. As global citizens, we bear a profound responsibility to address this humanitarian crisis. It is incumbent upon us to advocate for equitable policies, support initiatives that ensure access to nutritious food, and work towards eliminating the systemic factors that perpetuate childhood hunger. By fostering awareness, fostering empathy, and actively engaging in efforts to alleviate hunger, we can contribute to a world where every child has the opportunity to thrive, unburdened by the devastating consequences of hunger. Our responsibility is not merely a moral obligation; it is a shared commitment to shaping a future where no child goes to bed hungry, and every child can realize their full potential.

“We are a country that prides itself on power and wealth, yet there are millions of children who go hungry every day. It is our responsibility, not only as a nation, but also as individuals, to get involved.”

– Lesley Boone, actress and social activist.