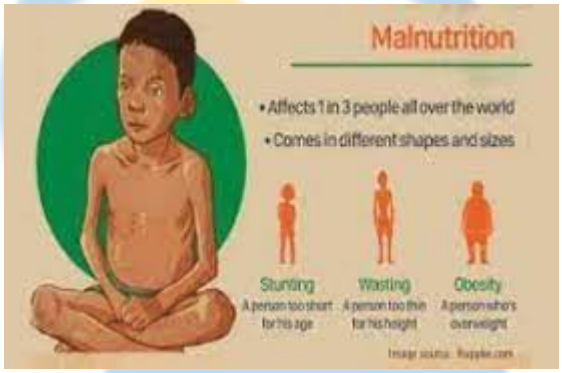
Date – 30 July 2022

Curbing malnutrition in india



- Recently the Ministry of Women and Child Development has set targets to curb malnutrition in India.

Targets set to curb malnutrition:

- Aim to reduce stunting and undernutrition (prevalence of underweight) by 2% per annum in children under 6 years of age.
- Prevention of undernutrition of children of 0 to 6 years of age and to reduce it at the rate of 6 percent i.e. 2% per annum.
- To reduce the prevalence of anemia in children aged 6 to 59 months at the rate of 9% per annum.
- To reduce the prevalence of anemia among adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating mothers in the age group of 15 to 49 years by 9% or 3% per annum.
- Anemia is a condition in which the number of red blood cells or its oxygen-carrying capacity is insufficient to meet the body's need for blood.

- This is highlighted in the NFHS-5 report which includes detailed information on key segments of the population, such as:
- Health and Family Welfare, Fertility, Family Planning, Infant and Child Mortality, Maternal and Child Health, Nutrition and Anemia, Morbidity and Health Care, Women Empowerment etc.

Findings of NFHS-5:

Data on stunted children:

- Meghalaya has the highest number of stunted children (46.5%), followed by Bihar (42.9%).
- Maharashtra has the highest rate of child wasting/disability among children at 25.6%, followed by Gujarat (25.1%).
- Jharkhand has the highest percentage (26%) of women between the ages of 15 and 49 who have a below normal body mass index (BMI).

Other Conclusions:

- The total fertility rate (TFR), the average number of children per woman, decreased from 2.2 nationally to 2.0 between NFHS -4 and 5.
- The overall Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) in the country has increased from 54% to 67%.
- Institutional births in India have increased from 79% to 89%.
- As per the report, stunting/dwarfism has come down from 4% to 35.5%, wasting has come down from 21.0% to 19.3% and underweight has come down from 35.8% to 32.1%.
- Women (15-49 years old) with a below normal body mass index (BMI) decreased from 22.9% in NFHS-4 to 18.7% in NFHS-5.

Malnutrition and related initiatives:

- Malnutrition is a condition that develops when the body is deprived of the vitamins, minerals and other nutrients it needs to maintain healthy tissue and organ function.
- Malnutrition occurs in people who are either malnourished or over-nourished.

Initiative:

- **POSHAN Abhiyaan:** The Government of India has launched the National Nutrition Mission (NNM) or POSHAN Abhiyaan to ensure "Malnutrition Free India" by the year 2022.
- **Anemia Mukt Bharat Abhiyan:** Launched in the year 2018, the mission aims to reduce the annual rate of anemia by one to three percentage points.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):** Rs 6,000 is directly transferred to the bank accounts of pregnant women to get better facilities for delivery.
- **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme:** It was launched in the year 1975 and the objective of this scheme is to provide food, pre-school education, primary health care, immunization, health check-up and other is to provide services.

Swadeep Kumar

Eleventh Agricultural Census (2021-22)

- Recently the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare launched the "Eleventh Agriculture Census (2021-22)."
- This calculation will benefit a huge and agricultural country like India in a big way.

Agricultural Census:

- Agriculture Census is conducted every 5 years, which is being delayed this time due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The entire census is conducted in three phases and the operational ownership for data collection is viewed as a statistical unit at the micro level.

- Based on the Agriculture Census data collected in three phases, the department presents three detailed reports analyzing trends on various parameters at all India and State/UT level.
- District/Tehsil level reports are prepared by the respective States/UTs.
- Agriculture Census is the main source of information on various agricultural parameters at a relatively small scale, such as the number and area of operational holdings, their size, class-wise distribution, land use, tenancy and cropping patterns etc.

Eleventh Census:

- Agriculture census work will start in August 2022.
- This is the first time that the data collection for the Agriculture Census will be done on smartphones and tablets, so that the data is available in a timely manner.

This includes:

- Access to digital land records such as land title records and survey reports.
- Collection of data through app/software using smartphone/tablet.
- Enumeration of all villages in non-land record states during Phase-I as done in land record states.
- Real time monitoring of progress and processing.
- Most of the states have digitized their land records and surveys, which will further accelerate the collection of agricultural census data.
- A database of operational holdings in the country will be created using a mobile app for data collection and use of digital land records.

Digital Agriculture:

- Digital agriculture is an information and communication technology (ICT) and data ecosystem that supports the development and delivery of timely targeted information and services to make farming profitable, sustainable while providing safe, nutritious and affordable food for all.

Example:

- Biotechnology agriculture is a range of equipment, including traditional breeding techniques that modify living organisms, or parts of organisms, to create or modify products; it involves the improvement of plants or animals or the development of microorganisms for specific agricultural uses.
- Precision farming (PA) is an approach where precise amounts of agricultural outputs are used to achieve increased average yield as compared to traditional farming techniques like agro-forestry, inter-cropping, crop rotation, etc. It is based on using digital agriculture information and communication technology.

- Digital and wireless technologies for data measurement, weather monitoring, robotics/drone technology etc.

The gain:

Agricultural Machinery Automation:

- It allows the inputs to be fixed and reduces the demand for manual labour.

Remote Satellite Data:

- Remote satellite data and in-situ sensors improve accuracy and reduce the cost of monitoring crop growth and land or water quality.
- Freely available and high quality satellite imagery dramatically reduces the cost of monitoring many agricultural activities. This could allow governments to move towards more targeted policies that pay (or penalize) farmers based on environmental consequences.

Traceability Technologies and Digital Logistics:

- These services provide the ability to streamline the agri-food supply chain while providing consumers with reliable information.

Administrative Objectives:

- In addition to monitoring compliance with environmental policies, digital technologies enable the automation of administrative processes for agriculture and the development of extended government services in relation to extension or advisory services.

Maintenance of Land Records:

- Using technology, a large number of holding data can be suitably tagged and digitized.
- This will not only help in better targeting but will also reduce the number of litigation for land disputes in the courts.

Government Initiatives for Digital Agriculture:

Agristack:

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has planned the creation of 'AgriStack', which is a collection of technology based interventions in agriculture. It will create an integrated platform to provide end to end services to the farmers in the agri-food value chain.

Digital Agriculture Mission:

- This initiative has been started by the government from the year 2021 to 2025 to promote projects based on new technologies like artificial intelligence, block chain, remote sensing and GIS technology, use of drones and robots in the agriculture sector.

Integrated Farmer Service Platform (UFSP):

- It is a combination of core infrastructure, data, applications and tools that enables seamless interoperability of various public and private IT systems in the agriculture ecosystem across the country.

UFSP performs the following roles:

- It acts as a central agency in the agriculture ecosystem (like UPI in e-payments).
- Enables registration of service providers (public and private) and farmer services.
- Enforces various rules and assumptions required during the service delivery process.
- Serves as a repository of all applicable standards, Application Programming Interface (API) and formats.
- To act as a medium of data exchange between various schemes and services to ensure the delivery of services to the farmers at a wider level.

National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGP-A):

- It is a centrally sponsored scheme, the scheme was launched in the year 2010-11 on a pilot basis in 7 states. Its objective is to promote rapid development in India through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for timely access to agricultural information to farmers.
- In the year 2014-15, the scheme was extended to all remaining states and 2 union territories.
- **Other digital initiatives:** Kisan Call Centre, Kisan Suvidha App, Krishi Bazaar App, Soil Health Card (SHC) Portal etc

Swadeep Kumar