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Deore C.R.
J.E.S.s. A.S.C. College
Nandurbar Maharashtra,
India.

Socio- Economic Condition of The Respondents and Malnutrition; -A Case Study of Nandurbar District Maharashtra.

Deore C.R.

Abstract

Food security is often defined as access by all people at all times to sufficient food required for a healthy and active life. It is now widely accepted that most of the under nutrition in developing countries is due to inadequate intake of both protein and energy. Alternatively, food Security means the physical availability of food at market or community level, accessibility at household level and affordability at quantity consistent with an active and healthy life. "Hunger and malnutrition are unacceptable in a World that has both the knowledge and the resources to end this human catastrophe" and recognized that access to nutritionally adequate and safe food is a right to each individual. The world conference of Human Rights emphasized the need to ensure that everyone enjoyed a right to food. It was argued that the most of the rural and urban population do not have enough purchasing power to meet their calorie norms.

Child under nutrition has enormous consequences for child and adult morbidity and mortality. In addition, under nutrition reduces productivity, so that a failure to combating malnutrition effectively diminishes the potential for economic growth. Poverty is often stated to be the very root cause of malnutrition.

Keywords: Nandurbar, Malnutrition, Food security, Economists and social scientists.

Introduction

The impact of targeting the PDS on food security was discussed too. The three broader aspects of food security i.e. food availability, food distribution and food accessibility, became the major areas of research and debates. It should be mentioned here that food security at the household level and intra-household food allocation, which is determined by many factors including gender norms, formed a negligible part of these debates. One can mention about the household livelihood security model, which allows for a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the relationships among the political economy of poverty, malnutrition and the dynamic and complex strategies that the poor use to negotiate survival. The model places emphasis on household actions, perceptions, and choices. Regarding the physical availability of food security, it was argued by some that the change in the cropping pattern in favour of non-food crops led to more risks and increased impoverishment of the small and marginal farmers, and decreased food availability per capita.

This was countered by the argument that such a shift would lead to higher returns for small and marginal farmers, more exports due to increased competitiveness and would be compatible with the change in tastes and preference of both the rural and urban consumers (Patnaik, 1997; Radhakrishna, 1996). However, one should also take into account the vulnerability aspect (which covers external factors affecting food security viz. natural and man-made disasters), and sustainability aspect (which involves attention to the conservation and enhancement of natural resources like land, water, forests and biodiversity) of food security while addressing the availability of food.

Food insecurity always leads to malnutrition that is reflected by the deteriorated health standard of the victim. Many a times this leads to permanent disability and death.

Correspondence:

Deore C.R.
J.E.S.s. A.S.C. College
Nandurbar Maharashtra,
India.

Methodology

Interviews were conducted with the family members of the deceased and children having malnutrition of grade III and IV to study the socio-economic condition of the parents. The findings of the study gave us various reasons responsible for the death of the children and undernourishment. Information about caste, type of family no, of family members, occupation of head of house hold and monthly income of the family, agriculture land ownership, crop grown during last one year, were gathered. Questions were asked about source of health care services availed by the family and access to public health care services in the area. Information about status of public distribution system (PDS) in the villages, services provided by AWWs (in case the deceased was beneficiary of ICDS), dietary habits of the family, use of forest produce, mode of consumption etc. was also collected.

Result and Discussion;

Socio-economic and Demographic profile of the Respondents:

1) Caste-wise composition

As a presented in the table below (Table 4.1) almost all the respondents were belonging scheduled tribes (99.4 %) and only 0.6 % were from scheduled caste. Thus, as far as caste wise distribution them belonged to Scheduled tribe and all the respondents were from the weaker section of the society.

Table 1: Caste-wise compositions of the Respondents.

No	Type of Caste	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Schedule Tribe	356	99.4
2	Schedule Caste	02	0.6
3	Others	00	00
	Total	358	100

Source: Field Data

2) Composition of the type of family of respondents:

The families of the tribal population are mostly nuclear. As per the tribal custom as soon as the son gets married, he starts living separately from the parents. However, it has been observed that if there is a joint family the risks related to health, economy and other socioeconomic problems is reduced. We tried to find out the family type of the respondents and observed that around 75 % of them were having nuclear family. This may be considered as one of the factors where in the people are supposed to tackle problems related to food security alone.

3) Age of the Respondents:

During the present study it was found that majority of the respondents belonged to middle and old age (66.5 %). Detailed analysis (Fig. 5.1) shows that 25% of the respondents were between age group of 18 to 30 years, whereas around 48 % respondents belong to age group of 31- 45 years. Respondent of the age group 46 – 60 years were nearly 19 % while the rest (8.4 %) were of 60 years and above.

4) Occupation of the Head Of the family:

The respondent of the present study were farmers (98 %) and rest (1.4 %) were associated with agriculture indirectly. As seen from the table given below (Table.4.3) it is observed that only 0.6 % of the respondent were having

regular source of income in the form of service. Thus, agriculture is the major source of livelihood for the respondents of the present study. However, the farmers become farm labors (91 %) after monsoon as they practice dry farming and the area do not have assured sources of irrigation.

Table2: Major Occupations of the Respondents’

No	Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Agriculture	341	95.3
2	Farm Labor	4	1.1
3	Service	2	0.6
4	Agriculture and Self Employed	06	1.6
5	Agriculture and Service	1	0.2
6	Forest labor	4	1.2
	Total	358	100

Source: Field Data

Normally in our country agriculture and animal husbandry activities go hand in hand with each other. Surprisingly during the present study of Nadurbar district it was found that only 0.6 % of the total respondents were practicing animal husbandry activity. There were 1.4 % respondents working as forest labors.

The occupational pattern of the respondent indicates the dependence on agriculture and it also suggests that agriculture is not a very productive source of income as more 91 % of the respondents become agricultural labors after monsoon is over.

The minor occupation (Table 4.4) in which the respondents are associated indirectly, indicates the lack of infrastructure facilities and opportunities for earning. As can be seen from the table almost 91 % of them opt for agricultural labor and 4 % have no minor occupation at all. A very few respondents were associated with animal husbandry and small business activity. About 2 % of them are working as forest labour.

The occupational pattern of the respondents alerts the planner for a dire need of developing infrastructural facilities and improving the employment opportunities available in the tribal part of the most developed state of the country.

Table 3: Minor Occupations of the Respondents.

No	Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage of respondents
1	No minor occupation	14	3.9
2	Animal Husbandry	8	2.2
3	Agriculture labor	325	90.8
4	Small Business	2	0.6
5	Forest labor	6	1.7
6	Others	3	0.8
	Total	358	100

Source: Field Data

5) Annual income of Respondent

The information collected from the respondent regarding the annual income is presented in (Table 4.5) given below. The table clearly indicates that there is increase in the annual income of respondents over a period of six years.

Whereas during 2000 -2001, the total number of respondent families having their annual income less than Rs. 11,000/- was 274 (77%), in 2005 -2006 the same was found to be 52.8%. Thus, by calculating the annual income of the respondent, we find that there is a reduction in the number of BPL families over a period of six years from 2000-2001 to 2005-2006. Of course, when we cross examined the respondent regarding possession of BPL card, we found that only 4 respondents (1%) were not having BPL card. Thus, there is a wide gap between the number of actual

BPL families and families holding BPL card. The income that we calculated here is based on information provided by the respondent and there are all chances that it is partially correct on the lower side that is they have given less than the actual income. In ordered to nullify the effect of inflation on the income and to find out real increase in the income of respondent, we calculated real income of the respondent using standard methods. The result of the same of given in the table below

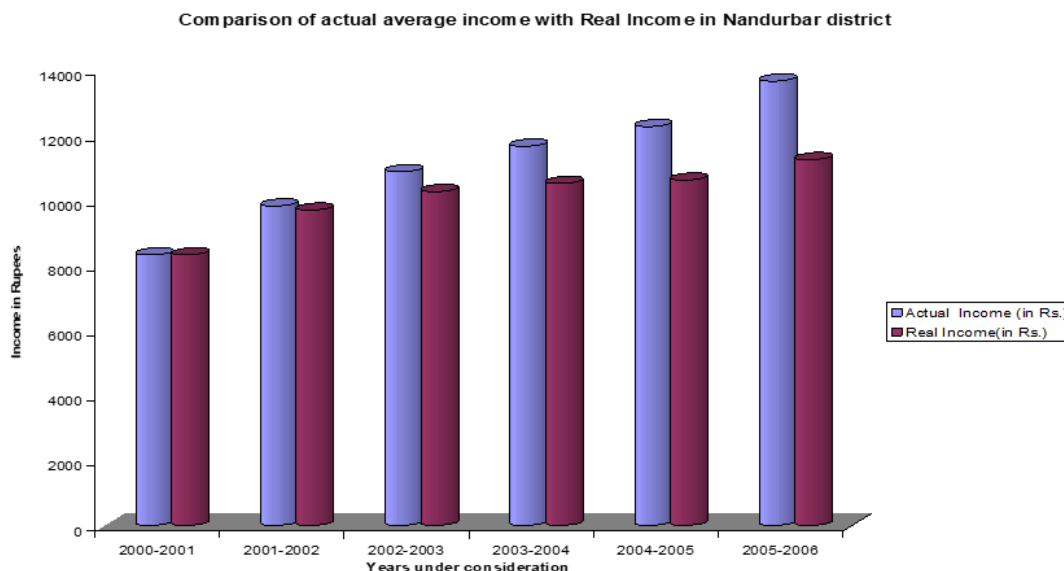


Fig. 1: Comparison of Actual average income with the real income in Nandurbar District.

As stated earlier the present work was under taken in two talukas of Nandurbar district namely Dhadgaon and Akkalkuwa. During the analysis of the data, we noticed that despite both the talukas are dominated by the tribal population and both have almost same type of infrastructural facilities and difficulties in living, as far as average annual income of the respondents is concerned, the respondents from Akkalkuwa are more resourceful than that of Dhadgaon (Table No. 4.7). Over the entire period of six years the respondents from Akkalkuwa taluka had more average annual income than their counter parts in Dhadgaon taluka. Similar differences were also noticed from the figures of real income.

6) Families below Poverty Line (BPL):

In order to identify poor families to be assisted for development, Government of India had categorized the household into those living Below Poverty Line and other living Above Poverty Line. The line of distinction was earlier made with reference to annual income of families from all the sources. The families whose annual income is Rs. 11,000/- or less from all sources are consider to be those living Below Poverty Line (BPL). Such families are given preference in various developmental scheme implemented and funded by Government of India and / or respective State Government. They are also provided food grains at a highly subsidies rate under PDS. Recently the Government has fixed certain other criteria to define the families living under poverty line include. These criteria include possession of agriculture land, types of holding, ownership of house, nature of house, source of livelihood,

possession of consumer goods like electric fan, T.V, Cycle, etc. It has been observed that many a times the annual income of the family is more than Rs. 11,000/- per year but families are unable to purchase food to meet their daily requirements. This happens because of inflation that results in increased price of grains in the open market and increased average family size. Inability of the families to purchase grains from the open market despite the having income more than Rs. 11,000/- , forces people include their name in the list of families Below Poverty Line.

During the present study it was found that only 0.11 % of the families have reported to be living Above Poverty Line (APL) while rest 98.9 % were living Below Poverty Line (BPL)(Table.4.8). The information presented above indicates that the respondents are very poor. However, if you look at the income of respondent, we find only 53.9 % living Below Poverty Line. Thus, there is a wide gap between actual income of the respondent and the income declared by them for the purpose of getting into Below Poverty Line list. However, during our personal visit, we found that most of the families (96 %) are living in a very miserable condition and they do not have surplus money to buy food grains form the open market

Table: 4. Families Below Poverty Line

No	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
1	BPL	354	98.9
2	APL	4	1.1
	Total	358	100.00

Source: Field Data

7) Number of earning members in the family

Normally in tribal communities both male and female member of the family are earning. They share each and every work including agriculture and labour. More ever, when they migrate in search of livelihood, the young couple or adult members of the family does the labour works. In tribal community, therefore, there are no gender biases as far as work and earning is concerned. During the study it was found that 78 % of the respondents had only one earning member per family while there were 28.4% household having 2 earning member per family. Rarely 0.8% household had 3 earning member per family. The response obtained from the tribal area of Nandurbar district dose not match with the generalization that almost all the members of the family are engaged in one or the other type of earning activities. It might be due to fact that they do not have ample opportunities for work in the nearby area.

If we look at the occupation, the income, number of earning members in the family and average family size (5.6) it is quite natural that they be put under below poverty line. This situation makes them vulnerable to insecurity of food. If natural resource upon which they were highly dependant are not restore. In the absences of ample natural resources and the dependence on rain fed agriculture external intervention are must.

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