Chapter Six: Significance of the Study

The present study had explored the seven areas and the result provides a wide area of scope in different fields. The findings of the present study have various practical approaches for educators, health experts, stakeholders, government and common masses for the welfare of the society. However much has been done by the government but much remains to be done for health, nutrition and education for children. Various goals, plans, strategies objectives and activities were undertaken to improve nutritional status of children, increasing girl child education in school, reducing dropout rates, IMR, MMR and so on and still more to be done in this aspect. The chapter comprised of two sections, first one elaborates the significance of present findings and second section points out limitations of the study.

Significance of the Study

Nutritional awareness of mother and socio economic status. The finding of the study showed the strong relationship between Nutritional Awareness of Mother and socio economic status of the family. The SES with higher parental education, better occupation and greater income invests more in their child development. The Nutritional Awareness of Mother is also influenced by SES of the family. More affluent family have mother with more awareness of nutrients, cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation. Thus children get more hygienic environment to develop with less risk of sanitation-related diseases like cholera, typhoid, schistosomiasis, and trachoma-a disease that causes irreversible blindness, and currently affects most of the children of unhygienic environment. The pervasive poverty in India aggravates basic and modern health risks to child development which is burden to future investment. The child morbidity under five must be reduced with well-equipped mother and better SES. Thus above discussion helps in developing various plans and schemes to eradicate poverty and malnutrition and to reach to poorest sections of society to have aware mother regarding nutrients and have security of food for themselves and their growing children. The upliftment of very low SES of
family is also required for the well-being of the society as well for the proper development of child.

The present finding that the strong relationship between Nutritional Awareness of Mother and socio economic status helps in developing various plans and schemes to eradicate poverty and malnutrition and to reach to poorest sections of society to have aware mother regarding nutrients and have security of food for themselves and their growing children. The upliftment of very low SES of family by enabling them to access to food by creating employment in private sectors is another way to eradicate malnutrition. This finding also helps stakeholders, government and NGO to develop various plans and schemes to create employment for disadvantaged section of the society and to eradicate poverty and malnutrition in child to some extent.

**Nutritional awareness of mother and nutritional status of the child.** The second finding of the study (significant association between nutritional awareness of Mother and Nutritional Status of the child) is the requirement for the healthy child development. The Nutritional Awareness of Mother in context to seven dimensions are mother’s understanding about knowledge of food and nutrients, health benefits of nutrients /food, cooking procedure, appliance usage, cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation, healthy food habits and preservation of food helps in providing better nutritional status to the child. Nutritional awareness of mother implies that the mothers have basic preliminary knowledge about proper growth and development of the child. As mother have the basic knowledge of various nutrients, healthy benefits and child care practices and personal hygiene besides preparation of food, what appliances used in cooking and how to preserve cooking food and fresh food enhances the wellbeing of child. Most of the children benefits from this quality of mother and children are growing well in context to weight for height, weight for age, and height for age. For example if mother has knowledge that vitamin A is important for child and 2 or 3 capsules a year is given to those child which is deficient in that micronutrient can reduce chance of dying from diarrhea by 40%, measles by 50% and cut the overall risk of death by about 25%. This information if known to mother they provide better opportunities for the child
development. Secondly, knowledge of the cheap alternative food full of essential nutrients must provide nutrient rich food. For example drumsticks are rich in iron, those who have access to drumstick may eat and those who have not may eat fresh leaves or dry leaves with simply water. This may be a very good source of iron supplement. It is heartening to note that people in Kolkata take drumsticks even without realizing that it is a potential source of iron. In spite of this it is not difficult to find people particularly female deficient in iron even in some well to do families.

The second finding of the study emphasizes the need of free campaign and demonstrations of cheap alternative food, and available nutrients to disseminate information among common masses and development of society free of malnutrition related diseases. These programmes may also play part in mobilizing social demand for various services and also generate pressure for policies. More volunteers and part time social worker interact with common masses to protect their health and nutrition and to access to nearby health facility. Various services may run by health sectors and ministry to alleviate poverty with sufficient coverage and measurable effect for the welfare of the society

Nutritional awareness of mother and cognitive development of child. The third finding (Nutritional Awareness of Mother and Cognitive Development of Child) showed importance of mother’s awareness regarding cognitive development of child. Nutritional Awareness of mother showed strong association with the variables Socio economic status, nutritional status and also has significant association with Cognitive Development of the child. The higher the SES of a family, the higher is the mother’s awareness about the nutrition of the child. Further it means that more financially strong the mother is more and more she is aware about the nature of nutrition and its need for the child. The mother in the family is the principal care taker of the child due to her position, natural attachment, proximity and a great natural resource of child nourishment. The cognitive development of child may be considered foundation of wellbeing of society and mother plays a great role here. The more aware mother is boon to society as they are nurturing the future of society and human capital. The wellbeing of society
depends on healthy, infection free, and well-nourished child with little or zero percentage of stunted, wasted and underweight children. Thus well-nourished child have proper development of brain with high IQ and better educational achievements. During early years of life if the high quality of child care is given than better social and cognitive development took place. In the early periods of life of child the nutrients plays important role and its lack hampers the growth. The bases of future outcomes are laid in early upbringing of child whether academically or financially. The educational background, social and professional involvement, and understanding of various fine social academic and liberal issues of the mother influence the cognitive development of child. As a result even at early stage the child get opportunity for exposure conducive to rapid cognitive growth. In this area the perception of colour, information related to surroundings, comprehension, visual perception, object vocabulary, conceptual skill and memory of child increases. A rapid early cognitive development of child is factor promising significant contribution to society welfare. The more the mother knows about nutrition more the child is healthy the more sound mind he is.

The third finding give importance to spouses who must be better trained and access to child health care for better future and also useful for policy makers to better promote change and improve wellbeing of children by providing nutrition intervention. It emphasize the importance of training of female and all round sound education system for female child promising fully aware mother to deliver children with highly developed cognitive abilities.

**Nutritional status, cognitive development and gender.** The fourth finding of the study showed nutritional status, cognitive development with respect to gender. This study also shows boys excels in first two upper categories, whereas the girls dominate in below normal category of cognition and nutritional status. The possible reason for this may be genetical (remotely) or better attention to boys than girls by the society in general. In second and third category of TCDS still girls have lower level of cognitive development than boys. It may be due to negligence of girl child in nutrition, breast feeding, caring and rearing for desire of boys to run their family. In most society men and
boys are served meals first and given more priority than girls, so girls are neglected. Thus the importance of role of girl as women in the social and economic development of the country must be recognized by all of us. Educated female child will one day be the great boon to the society and as mothers with high level of nutritional awareness so this finding need for awareness campaign to change mind set of common peoples regarding girl child and promoting education for girls. The various awareness programmes are running by government and still more stimulating and thought provoking messages are needed. Thus educating girls solve various problems as lowering population growth, increasing family income, reducing gender inequalities, reducing IMR, MMR etc. It is unfortunate that girls are discriminating in various aspects so special concentration is given to efforts to improve girl education and opportunities.

The fourth finding of the study make society conscious of girl child wellbeing and may motivates the government to play great role through providing best educational institutions for the education of female child and female children in general. The local trained literacy facilitators may be appointed to inform women especially mother and would be mother about personal cleanliness, sanitation, nutrition, child rearing, feeding and care of children for the wellbeing of the society.

**Nutritional status, cognitive development and habitat.** The fifth finding of the study that the nutritional status and cognitive development of child varies with habitat also gives importance on the place where child born and brought up. The most sub urban families struggle to find affordable, safe, clean, healthy and stable housing for their child and family to live in. Their income is inconsistent and varies based on the season and demand for employment. Thus even with both mother and father are earners, income is often insufficient for meeting basic household and dietary requirements. The children of this family showed emotional problems, including symptoms of depression, anxiety, elevated behavior problems, like aggression, lying, and deceitfulness and low cognition. In all aspects the people of suburban are in disadvantaged position, thus there is the need of poverty eradication, especially women poverty eradication so that the society is
flourished with economic and social development by creating various avenues for women empowerment.

This present finding motivates the *policy makers and stakeholders* to enable the people of suburban area to provide opportunities and facilities to feed themselves by involving them in income generating activities like work in small industries and handicrafts. Thus there is the need of employment generation for the people on regular basis by opening of various manufacturing unit. By this way their economic conditions in homes improves and have access of proper nutrients to feed their children.

**Socio economic status, nutritional status, and nutritional awareness of mother on cognitive development.** The sixth finding of research work has attempted to model impact of SES, child nutritional status, and Nutritional Awareness of Mother on cognitive development of preschool children. The result obtained amounts to a significant contribution through the above models in the area of cognitive development of children. The finding showed that socio economic conditions of the family had stronger, impact than nutritional status of the child and nutritional awareness of the mother on predicting cognitive development of child. The finding highlights the importance of Socio economic status of family in respect to parental education and parental income and awareness of mother in respect to food habits, cleanliness and sanitation, preservation of food, knowledge of nutrients cooking food, and preservation of food and there by motivates society to equip mothers with such awareness and related facilities. Making society conscious of this responsibility comes directly from this study. Thus the model is developed taking impact of socio economic status of the family, nutritional status of the child and nutritional awareness of the mother on predicting cognitive development of child. In this study the SES is stronger variable in comparison to nutritional awareness of mother in predicting the cognitive development of child and NS (WFH), (WFA), & (HFA) affect the CDS of child only in below average category of children with wasting, stunted and underweight, whereas in normal and above normal category NS does not affect cognitive development of child. Thus the present research work findings provide
more concern to development of disadvantaged section of society and their wellbeing of child for proper development of cognition.

This finding may be useful for educators to predict the cognitive development of child by knowing only SES of the family and nutritional awareness of mother. It may be a great help to stakeholders and policy makers to improve cognition of child by providing various nutrient supplements at critical stage of development of children.

Socio economic status, nutritional awareness of mother on the child nutritional status. The seventh finding of this research work developed a model which predicts the nutritional status classification of the child by merely knowing SES of family and nutritional awareness of mother. Multiple logistic regression model established enables classification of children based on only nutritional awareness of mother and socioeconomic status in to three categories with respect to Nutritional status in 99.3% cases. To improve the low level of accuracy of prediction some more independent variables need to be included in the model. These new independent variables may be like race, ethnicity, sex, habitat etc. may be investigated and finally listed. This may be the area of further research.

This finding may be useful for stakeholders, NGO, Educators and teachers to predict nutritional status classification of children for further various activities and implementation of nutritional programmes.

Summary

The socio economic conditions of the family and nutritional awareness of the mother has positive role on cognitive development of child, which highlights the importance of awareness of mother in respect to food habits, cleanliness and sanitation, preservation of food, knowledge of nutrients cooking food, and preservation of food and there by motivates society to equip mothers with such awareness and related facilities. Making society conscious of this responsibility comes directly from this study. It emphasize the importance of training of female and all round sound education system for female child promising fully aware mother to deliver children with highly developed cognitive
abilities. The government has a great role to play through providing best educational institutions for the education of female child and female children in general. Educated female child will one day be the great boon to the society and as mothers with high level of nutritional awareness. It helps in developing nutrition intervention programme for preschool children. It also helps in development of nonformal mass educational programme for young girls to disseminate necessary information regarding nutrients.

The study helps in making full proof model for predicting cognitive development of the child merely on the basis of Nutritional Awareness of Mother (TNAM) and Socio Economic Status (TSES). This study also throws light on the wellbeing of the society measured in terms of socio economic status in this present research work. It is one of the good indicators for health, we should aspire to strive for poverty elimination through national programme and development plans of the government. It helps in developing various schemes and programmes to improve mother’s nutritional awareness. It is also important at national level poverty removal programme by government and other agencies and development of opportunities of employment and education at national level. It also emphasize promotion of health and prevention of disease, of age groups 3-4 years old child with special focus on common intake of balanced nutrition, public health and cleanliness of surroundings. The present drive for nationwide cleanliness campaign lead by our prime minister is a great Philip to this end. It motivates the young mothers and their spouse better access to child care and incorporating the right interventions at right stage. Mothers should be taught the importance of early treatment of sick children and regularly weight checkups of 1-5 years old to avoid the vicious cycle of infection, malnutrition etc. It helps in providing importance to source of nutrients and various cheap alternatives to the mother, the prime care giver in Indian society. A programme where variety of foods, which are available and are within the reach of the common man, can be selected to formulate nutritionally adequate diets and this information must be disseminate among mothers. So they are able to provide nutrient rich diet to their children under their budget. In India, there are four accepted basic food groups, with a variety of food preparations and culinary practices. Different cereals are used as staple food, apart from a variety of cereal /pulse combinations with cooking oils and fat of various kinds in
different regions of India. Various attempts may also be made to formulate health promoting recipes and diets which are region- and culture specific and must be known to mothers through informal means to provide proper growth and development to their children. Thus the nation will be able to eradicate malnutrition related diseases, kwashiorkor, marasmus, obesity, etc. It helps in developing nutrition intervention programme for preschool children for their proper growth and development.

Appropriate dietary modifications should be done to ensure increased calorie & iron intake as per the recommendations. Use of inexpensive, culturally acceptable nutritious recipes should be promoted and demonstrated. It emphasise the importance of development of nonformal mass educational programme for young girls to disseminate necessary information regarding nutrients. Multiple logistic regression model established enables classification of children based on only nutritional awareness of mother and socioeconomic status in to three categories with respect to Nutritional status in 99.3% cases. This study will be able to draw attention to support strong national policies supporting women education and nutrient awareness, health care and hygiene of the mother and child. The study will be able to motivate other researchers to do further work in this field and help to eradicate malnutrition which is responsible for one third of deaths among children under five years especially in developing countries including India. This study may be extended to cover larger cross sections of the populations.
Delimitation of the Study

- The study was confined to only Kolkata due to economy and time constraint.
- Due to incomplete and inaccurate response by the Mother in the questionnaire form about cases of 60 children were rejected during scrutiny.
- The data collected rely on reported responses given by mother during survey on SES and feeding practices of their child, there is no way to ascertain hundred percent accuracy of the response.
- The genetic factors which may play role in birth weight and cognitive development fall beyond the scope of this study.
- Many interesting statistical results obtained infer about only selected study region of Calcutta city, it cannot be generalize for the Country.