Nutrition education has been recognised as a potent tool for prevention and control of malnutrition all over the world. The present study aimed at developing nutrition communication package targeted towards initiating change in nutrition behaviour with a specific focus on PEM and Vitamin A deficiency. The package was executed and its effectiveness was tested in the community.

The study was undertaken in two selected slum areas of Mumbai, of which one area served as experimental group and the other one as control group. The study population included 320 mothers of pre-school age children and 10 Community Health Workers who were working in the experimental area. The study was carried out in four phases, viz. Situational analysis, Development of action plan for nutrition communication, Execution of nutrition communication actions and Evaluation. At each phase quantitative as well as qualitative methods of data collection were employed.

On the basis of systemic analysis, action plan for nutrition communication, consisting of development of modules for mothers and lesson plan for training Community Health Workers was formulated. Training and capacity building of Community Health Workers was undertaken to enable them to be effective facilitators. Community health workers and mothers participated in the process of development of modules. Participatory learning approach using innovative communication methods and group dynamics were used for effective communication of modules. The modules were executed and evaluated in the experimental group for their effectiveness. Integrated food-based activities were also carried out for the children.

Assessment of knowledge, skills and overall performance of CHWs showed that all the field workers were able to use appropriate communication skills and to address nutritional problems in the community and give practical guidance in difficulties expressed by mothers. The communication methods used to convey messages were
seen to be effective. The findings of the regular module sessions revealed that all the modules were well accepted and understood by the mothers.

The findings of the KAP of the mothers revealed that in the experimental group, mothers were better aware of nature of undernutrition and food-based actions to prevent and control the same. Change in knowledge about foods and preparations was also reflected in their attitudes and actual practices in the experimental group as compared to the control group. Significant change in intake of energy and protein while no significant change was observed in vitamin A intake and also the nutritional status of the children after the intervention period.

"Training Modules for Trainers" to train health workers were evolved as an outcome of the study. Nutrition communication modules, which were tested with the mothers were compiled for practical use for others in community. During the process of intervention, volunteers from the mothers' group were identified and mobilised who would act as "change agents" to initiate and support change in nutrition behaviour of people in the community.