

EDITORIAL

People are the basis of every society, and good physical, emotional and intellectual development of these people, rather than an increase in national wealth, is now widely accepted as the target for the true social and economic advance of communities and nations.

Successful progress from childhood to adulthood depends to a large extent on whether families and communities can provide children with good nutrition and a healthy environment and with the necessary care, encouragement and education to allow full and normal growth of body, mind and emotions. The close relationship which mothers form with their babies and young children is specially important in early period of infancy and childhood.

There are many factors which influence growth and development of children. Poverty, ignorance of proper food according to health needs, and inadequate health and social services in Pakistan are some of the impediments. Constant child bearing with little time between pregnancies, has dangerous effects on the health of mothers and children. This is demonstrated by low birth weight of babies, slower physical and mental growth, frequent illnesses and high deaths rate in infants.

Much could be done to improve human development in Pakistan through educational programmes which emphasize growing more food, the nutrition of the family, especially the feeding, weaning and care, of young children, environmental and personal sanitation and health care; money-earning skills, literacy; better home and farm management practices; and population/family life education.

Recently, a Nutritional survey was conducted in collaboration with UNICEF and PMRC-Research Centre, Ayub Medical College in District Abbottabad. It was observed that about 20% infants were UNDERWEIGHT for age and about 41% children aged 1-4 year were STUNTED. Whereas, about 13% children 1-4 years were found WASTED. Similarly, 15% and 14% adolescent girls and women were found STUNTED respectively.

In this issue an article on mother and child nutrition is worth reading. It tells the present status of nutrition in NWFP and what are the causes for malnutrition. The author, has suggested some strategies, proposals, and actions to be taken at different levels to alleviate the problem of malnutrition in children, adolescent and mothers.