Intensive Nutrition Education Programme for Adolescent Girls

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Objective: Assess the achievements of the adolescent girls who received intensive nutrition education, including supplementation, aiming at bringing about sound nutritional practices.

Methodology: In one of the thanas, the BRAC's non-formal and primary education (NFPE) schools incorporated health and nutrition education, monthly monitoring of weight, height and mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC), and daily food supplementation (600 calories/day) for the adolescent girls, in addition to the normal curriculum. These activities covered the girls for the total school period of 3 years, and were provided by the female community health workers and the NFPE school teachers.

Results: The mean age of the adolescent girls was 13.4±0.69, and the mean age of menarche was 13.2±0.77. As a group, the mean increase in MUAC was 2.24 cm, and the mean increase in weight and height was 4.52 kg and 5.51 cm respectively. The girls exiting supplementation after two years had better weight gain than the girls of the same age entering supplementation. For example, girls entering at age 10 years exited at age 12 years with a weight of 32.23 kg which was greater than the entry weight of 12-year old girls at 30.5 kg.

Conclusion: Girls receiving two years of intensive nutrition education and supplementation had better weights and were taller, and therefore, an improvement in the growth indicator can be achieved among the adolescent girls with these interventions. Programmes aiming at improving the women's nutritional status, and thereby, their infants should consider focusing on the adolescents as future mothers.

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Effect of Women-Focused Development Programme on Nutritional Status of Rural Women

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Objective: Assess the effect of women-focused development programme on the nutritional status of women measured by the body mass index (BMI).

Methodology: Anthropometric measurements and socioeconomic information of 1,597 women aged 15-55 years were obtained from eight villages of Matlab thana, through the BRAC-ICDDR,B Joint Research Project during April-August 1995. BMI of <16 was used as a cut-off point for severe chronic energy deficiency. The association between the proportion of women with BMI of <16 and the BRAC membership status (categorized as BRAC member poor, BRAC non-member poor and rich) was explored in both bivariate and multivariate analyses. In the multivariate analysis, the effect of age, parity, and education of women was controlled.

Results: According to the multivariate analysis, age, parity, and BRAC membership status of the households showed a significant association with the proportion of severely malnourished women. In the comparative sense, the BRAC-member women had a 35% more chance of being severely malnourished, whereas the BRAC-non-member poor women had a 64% more chance of being severely malnourished than the women from the rich households.

Conclusion: The development programme focused on women has a positive impact on the women’s nutritional status.

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