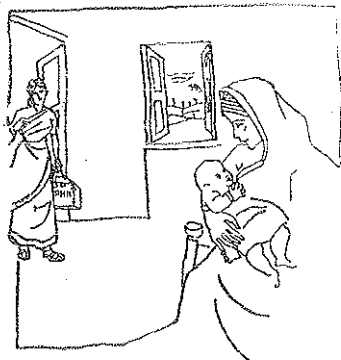




Applied Nutrition Programmes

by

Ruth G. MacIntosh

NUTRITION is a subject of vital concern in India to-day. With the associated problem of food supply it daily makes newspaper headlines and figures frequently in speeches by political, social and educational leaders from the Lok Sabha to the smallest village school. India is aware of the problem and her leaders know the answer. Unified action by people all over the country is needed to overcome this great threat to India's progress.

The Applied Nutrition Programme is an attempt by the Government of India in association with the State Governments and the United Nations Organisations, UNICEF, WHO and FAO to initiate this country-wide action.

The first long term approach to the problem of nutrition began in Orissa in 1959. This experimental project aimed at preventing malnutrition by encouraging the local production and consumption of protective foods. Demonstration of special nutritional needs was provided through a supplementary feeding scheme for expectant and nursing mothers, infants and pre-school children. Similar projects were undertaken in Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Madras. These pilot projects pointed out the fundamental need for education and training in all aspects of food production, preparation and consumption, and a plan of operations for an All-India Applied Nutrition Programme was developed and signed in February, 1963.

This programme is essentially an educational programme. It has now been taken up in ten States and it is expected to extend to the rest of the country during the Fourth Five Year Plan. The Applied Nutrition

Programme aims through the avenues of food production and education to achieve the desired pattern of food consumption for the maintenance of good health.

Food Production

The First Five Year Plan stressed the development of agriculture as basic to national development. During the Second and Third Five Year Plans, stress was laid also on industrial development. A large portion of development funds has also been required for progress in education and social development.

As the country now begins the Fourth Five Year Plan, it is again realised that much effort must be made in agricultural production. Increased food production in recent years has been nullified by greater

Miss Ruth G. MacIntosh has just completed her assignment in India as Nutritionist/Home Economist of the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations. We hope our members will be interested in and benefited by this article.

—EDITOR

increase in population so that the country today is still largely dependent on import of foods from other countries. Intensive agricultural development projects, irrigation, production of fertilizers etc. will all be encouraged during the Fourth Five Year Plan. Since so many of India's people live on small holdings and earn their livelihood as farmers,



New skills learned by children in the school garden will lead to better health for village families

plans for improvement in agriculture must also be developed by means of simple projects which have meaning for village people. Under the Applied Nutrition Programme, communities are being encouraged to grow more fruit and vegetables for their own use in school gardens, in home and community gardens. Wells and pumps are provided as needed to water the crops. Seeds of improved varieties are made available and new and efficient garden tools are introduced. Village groups are being assisted in rearing poultry by more economic methods. Community fish tanks are also being built and old ones cleared and stocked with fingerlings. Fish thus produced is not only providing necessary protective food but also

bringing additional income to the Panchayat.

Nutrition Education

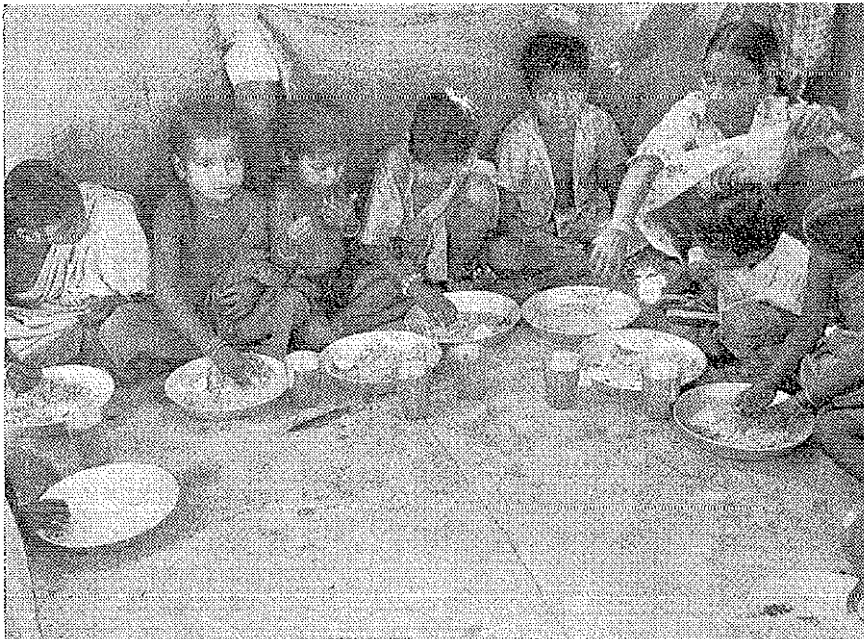
In order that village people may appreciate the real purpose of these projects a programme of nutrition education must go along with the food production. This education must be carried out in schools, in health centres, in rural extension centres and through village level workers among the individual village families. *Nutrition Education* cannot be confined to villages. A thorough knowledge of the relationship of food to health must become part of *general education*. All schools and training institutions must help to develop this understanding. Schools of nursing are in

a particularly good position to influence this spread of nutrition information. Nurses have direct contact with many people at a time when health is uppermost in their minds. Sound practical advice at this time will have a good chance of being understood and accepted.

Food Consumption

Production of the right foods and understanding of their value are important factors in bringing about a desired pattern of food consumption but they do not automatically bring this change. Many social and economic factors go into the development of a change of *food habits*. Habits are strongly resistant—particularly so in India with a social pattern developed over centuries and a history of famine and food shortage. It is a challenge for all young people in India to-day to help break the undesirable food practices of the past and to replace them with new practices which are both acceptable and conducive to good health. It must be remembered that many traditional practices are sound and should not be discarded without thought. A thorough knowledge of the nutritional value of common foods, the foods available in a community and the cultural and social customs prevailing in the community—are all required by anyone who attempts to change food habits.

With so much to be learned the goals of the Applied Nutrition Programme will not be reached for many years but noticeable progress has already been made. Each citizen, each teacher, or each nurse can best contribute to this programme by choosing and eating carefully selected meals to maintain their own health. The sum of these individual actions will finally result in a healthy nation.



Well chosen School meals are an excellent way of developing new food habits

NOTICE

ATTENTION : MEMBERS—MADRAS STATE BRANCH

The Thirteenth Biennial Conference of the Branch will be held on October 22 and 23, 1965, at Scudder Memorial Hospital, Ranipet, N. Arcot District, Madras State.

Our Patron, Maharani Sahiba of Mysore, wife of the Governor of Madras will inaugurate the Conference.

Conference Theme : COMMUNICATION. (Ref. July 1965 Nursing Journal of India).

For Registration Forms and further particulars please write to ;

Mr. M. Theophilus,
Registration Secretary,
Scudder Memorial Hospital,
Ranipet, N. Arcot Dist., Madras State.

M. THEOPHILUS

Ag. Secretary, Madras State Branch, TNAI