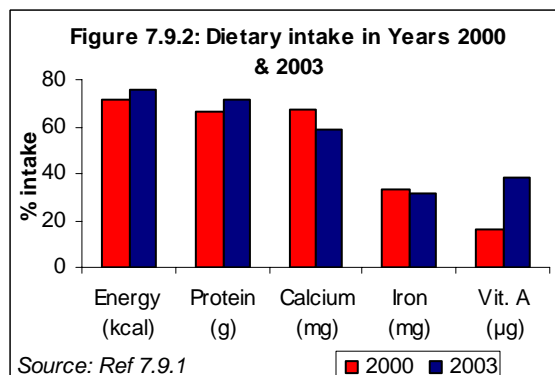
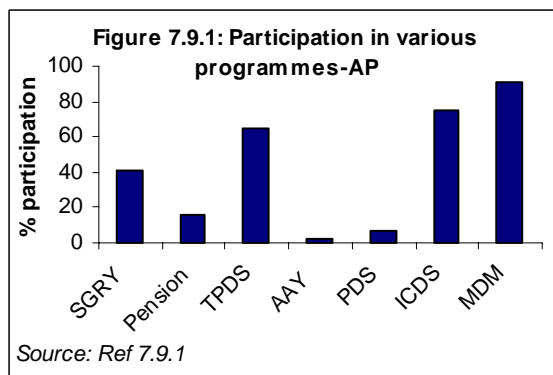


7.9 MANAGEMENT OF FOOD SCARCITY DURING DROUGHT

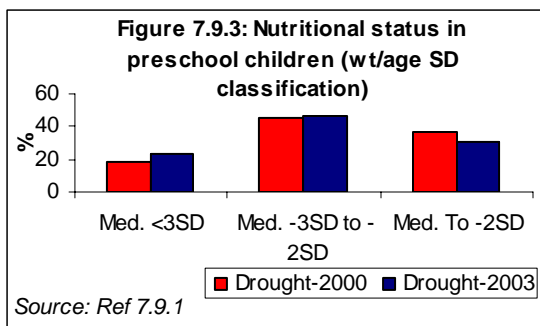
In the vast Indian subcontinent natural calamities like drought / floods occur in one or the other region every year. Programmes to combat the immediate impact of drought or floods are relatively easier to implement as compared to the long term measures to combat the adverse effects these have on agricultural production, agro based industrial production, rural unemployment, migration to urban areas, decrease in purchasing power, reduced household food security and increase in the prevalence of undernutrition, morbidity and mortality in the community.

During the first three years of the new millennium, different states had experienced recurrent drought due to delay in the onset of monsoon, or inadequate rainfall. In 2002 due to failure of Southwest monsoon nine States i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Orissa were declared as drought affected by the Government of India. The National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad carried out a rapid survey in two drought-affected districts in each of the nine states in May and June 2003, to assess the impact of drought. Data from the survey showed that in all the affected districts there was deficient rainfall, reduction in the area under cultivation, reduction in the yield of all agricultural produce. All the districts had received additional inputs under food for work programme and additional rations through PDS; wherever required efforts were made to supply cattle feed, drinking water and essential medicines.

Coping strategy of households include use of savings, selling assets, borrowing, seeking employment under the food for work programme, improved utilisation of PDS, increasing consumption of low cost foods, increasing participating in the supplementary feeding programme under ICDS and mid day meal. Data from the NNMB drought surveys indicate that none of the families surveyed had consumed less than 500 calories / day (indicating acute starvation). However drought conditions resulted in some reduction in dietary intake especially of pulses and vegetables in the worst affected districts. In most of the districts there was some increase in the prevalence of undernutrition especially among the under privileged segment of population and landless labourers. Data from

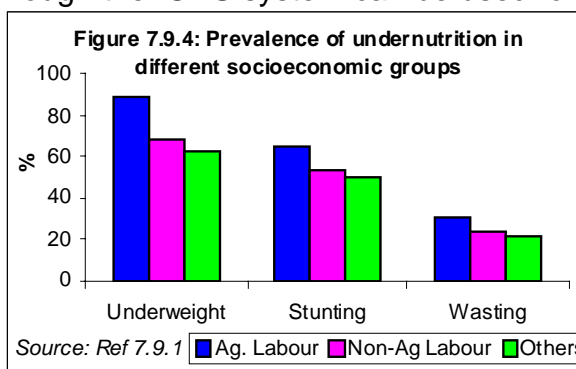


Andhra Pradesh which had suffered drought in three consecutive years is shown in Figures 7.9.1-7.9.4. These data suggest that the system for early recognition of drought and initiation of effective measures to counteract its adverse consequences, prevent acute and severe undernutrition; but they are not very effective in preventing aggravation of pre existing undernutrition during drought.



The Tenth Plan envisaged that efforts should be made to monitor rainfall data to provide early warning of drought. Monitoring agricultural production should provide information about impending food insecurity. In drought-prone areas intensive monitoring of the nutritional status of pre-school children based on ICDS reporting system can help to assess the severity of the problem at block level. Timely relief measures can be organised based on these data. Apart from other process indicators for monitoring the relief operations, monitoring the nutritional status of pre-school children through the ICDS system can be used for assessing the out reach, adequacy and impact of relief measures.

During the Eleventh Plan period, it might be possible to fine tune action plans to meet the food and nutrition needs during drought / floods and natural calamities taking into account the lessons learnt from past experience.



References

7.9.1 NNMB National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau. 2000-2003. *NNMB Reports*: National Institute Of Nutrition, Hyderabad