

and increases with household size. Perhaps, among the poor households, childcare is adversely affected when the mother works.

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As pointed out earlier, although economic growth resulted in a decline of poverty, it has not translated into commensurable improvements in food energy intake or nutritional well-being. Even before food energy needs are met, the consumption basket of the poor is getting diversified; shifting away from food to non-food items; from cereals to non-cereals within the food group; and from coarse to fine cereals within the cereals group. Given these ongoing trends, a substantial expansion of the incomes of the poor is essential for tackling the food gap of the poor. While food-based interventions play a supplementary role, pro-poor growth alone can eliminate chronic food insecurity in the long run.

The estimates of malnutrition show that, about 50 per cent of rural children are malnourished, of which

about 20 per cent are severely malnourished. The cost of malnutrition to the GDP of India was estimated at between 3 and 9 per cent. Moreover, it is a channel for inter-generational transmission of poverty. Generally the risk of child malnutrition is high among the poor households where mothers have poor nutritional levels. It is crucial that the existing feeding programmes need to target the severely malnourished children as well as pregnant women and lactating mothers. Employment oriented food-for-work programmes may be the principal instrument to eradicate moderate malnutrition.

I have been informed that the Institute has undertaken the third round of the National Family Health Survey, which will provide more information on malnutrition and on their proximate causes. This will provide rich database for identifying policy instruments for reducing malnutrition. I hope some of the students graduating today will undertake studies in this neglected area of research.

World Population Day, 2006

The world population day for the year 2006 was observed at the Institute on July 11. A half a day symposium was organized on "Youth in India: Perspectives and Challenges". Eminent speakers, Dr. Evelet Sequeira, Consultant, UNICEF, Mumbai, Dr. R C Datta, Dean, Tata Institute for Social Sciences, Mumbai and Ms. Shabana Patel, President, Network of HIV positive persons in Maharashtra, Thane, were invited to speak on this occasion. Various aspects of youth in India were highlighted by each speaker.

Dr. H C Srivastava, Acting Director and Head, Dept. of Development Studies welcomed the guests and talked about the importance of observing July 11 as the World Population Day. Dr. Datta spoke on the 'Livelihoods, employment and sustainable development: an initiative towards improving skills and employability of people'. Ms. Shabana Patel shared her experiences about the HIV positive people in a lucid manner. She emphasized that accepting HIV positive people will prevent the spread of AIDS. Dr. Ram, Dept. of Fertility Studies, IIPS, has spoken about the current IIPS project, 'Youth in India: Situation and needs study' Dr. S K Singh, Dept. of Mathematical Demography & Statistics, IIPS has talked about 'Youth and HIV in India' with some empirical evidences. The symposium was concluded by vote of thanks proposed by Dr. A P Deshpande.