

FOREWORD

Iron deficiency anaemia and malnutrition in India have assumed pandemic proportion affecting almost the entire population. Such a massive prevalence severely affects the human resources – the largest current economic base of the nation, as well as the future generations.

This monograph is an in-depth analysis based on the National Family Health Survey – 1998-99 (NFHS-2) data set carried out by ISEC on the prevalence of iron deficiency anaemia and malnutrition in India. Dr. Ramakrishna Reddy, an obstetrician, gynaecologist and a population scientist with considerable experience in matters related to public health, including primary health care in India has made the results of this rich survey data and its analysis for wider reading by academicians and policy makers. The data set under analysis relates to a huge sample – more than 79,000 women in their reproductive age (15-49 years) and their children below 3 years of age, numbering more than 24,000.

The study has been presented in two parts. The first part of the monograph presents a comprehensive review of the epidemiological aspects problem. It has a lucid description of the basic medical aspects as related to iron deficiency anaemia and malnutrition, as a background for the analysis. It has been written in a style appropriate for the easy understanding by the social scientists, besides explaining the critical health aspects.

The second part deals with the methodology adopted by the NFHS-2, its sample design and implementation. The procedures used in the measurements of iron deficiency anaemia and malnutrition have been described. Logical conclusions and comprehensive set of recommendations have been made to support the policy perspective, strategic planning for programme implementation and future data collection methodologies.

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