

one day) without compromising OPV coverage? In addition, a sensitive surveillance system (not in place at present) is necessary to identify areas with poor coverage levels otherwise the follow-up campaigns will be needed early. We are of the opinion that a universal measles mass campaign may not be feasible and cost-effective in a vast country like India.

All the measles immunization strategies (one dose at 9 months of age, two-dose policy, mass campaign) have some limitations. The best will be to utilize them in a balanced way keeping in view the epidemiolo-

gy of measles. That is what we have proposed in our paper.

**Jagvir Singh,
K.K. Datta,**

*National Institute of
Communicable Disease,
22, Shamnath Marg,
Delhi 110 054.*

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Dietary Practices and Beliefs in Adolescent Girls-An Urgent Need to Maximize Female Literacy

The recent publication on this topic(1) has once more confirmed the gender discrimination against girl child more so in lower socio-economic status. In our state of Rajasthan, a study of rural areas revealed that 73.7% of adolescent girls belonging to poor socio-economic status suffered from chronic energy deficiency due to inadequate intake of calories and proteins(2).

Such suboptimal practices and beliefs become more significant for to be born generations because what these adolescent girls practice and believe is reflected during their own motherhood creating a perpetual cycle of negative gender bias towards girls throughout their life. It has already been pointed out(3) that lack of economic resources is not a major constraint but correct dietary practices are to be incor-

porated by means of health education of family and community including various health functionaries.

In my opinion the only way to change the gloomy situation is to achieve a maximum female literacy rate. The example of Kerala has shown the right way to improve the overall health of individuals and community. Sadly gender bias also exists against educating the girls. This can be effectively dealt with by dedicated efforts and organized co-operation between Government and various voluntary groups (success of pulse polio immunization is the example of such harmony).

Ravi Goyal,

*246, Shopping Center, Kota
324 007, Rajasthan*

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