

## Book Review

### FOOD AND NUTRITION—2nd Edition 1987 —by T. W. Wikramanayake,

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Sri Lanka.

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### FILLS A VOID IN THE SPHERE OF NUTRITION

While there are many publications on various aspects of Nutrition in South Asia, especially those from the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, India, there is a conspicuous dearth of up-to-date information by those who have been engaged in in-depth studies in Nutrition, in the Sri Lankan situation. 'Food and Nutrition' by Prof. T. W. Wikramanayake fills that void.

*Tropical Nutrition and Dietetics*—a fairly comprehensive book with 21 chapters, first published in 1938 by Lucius Nicholls, then Director of the Bacteriological Institute, Colombo and Lecturer on Nutrition, Ceylon Medical College, had been written, in the words of its author, "to give, as shortly as possible, the general principles of nutrition and dietetics and to collect under one cover the salient points of this scattered information". This book, later revised in its 4th edition by Sinclair and Jelliffe, in 1961, was the only book that provided some information on the local scene, till Prof. Wikramanayake's book "*Foods and Diets*" was published in 1980. Prof. Wikramanayake's book provided more detailed, useful, and up-to-date information on the subject, especially in the area of Biochemistry, Physiology, and foods used in this country. The second edition of this book entitled '*Food and Nutrition*' (1987) to quote the author, has "been revised and brought up-to date.....including chapters on vitamins, minerals, deficiency diseases, spices and condiments and the nutrition of the elderly. The new title, FOOD AND NUTRITION, is now more appropriate than the original one".

It is true to state that the author who has the training, qualifications, expertise and experience in the biochemical and physiological aspects of Nutrition, has also acquired a knowledge and interest in other areas such as Social, Community, and National aspects of Nutrition—vide chapter 26 on 'Nutrition and National Development'.

A thorough understanding of the physiology and biochemistry involved is necessary for a correct appreciation of the problems of nutrition, and for intervention procedures. Unfortunately we see unwise decisions being made due to a lack of understanding. Thus this book would serve as a most useful reference book to students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, in disciplines such as biochemistry, community medicine, community dentistry, medicine, obstetrics and above all paediatrics, to administrators and planners, and to those of us who play a role in the management of the day-to-day nutritional problems, be it clinical or social, curative, preventive or promotive. The author does not pretend to be the expert or specialist to deal with the clinical problems. He does not therefore deal comprehensively with patient management, or with the detailed signs and symptoms of nutritional diseases. These are mentioned only in outline. The learning situation for these aspects of Nutrition are both the hospital ward clinic, and the field—i.e. the dwelling house, the physical environment, and the socio-economic *milieu*. Such practical experiences must be supplemented by standard reference books which are available in the libraries, e.g. *Human Nutrition and Dietetics* by Davidson, Passmore, Brock and Truswell and WHO/FAO monographs and Technical Reports.

This book would also serve as a reference book to the layman who wants to be kept informed on the subject. It is gratifying to note that Sri Lankan children are taught the basics of Nutrition in the upper classes at school. This book should therefore serve as a valuable reference book in all school libraries. If this book is to meet such needs it should be translated, into Sinhala and Tamil.

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