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## Contents

S. No	Chapters	Page No.
1.	Effect of Pupil-Teacher Ratio on Teacher Workload in Public Primary Schools in Mwingi North Sub-County Kenya <i>(Kyambi Fredrick David, Redempta Maithya and Selpher K.)</i>	01-25
2.	Concept of Ecosystem Services: A New Approach to Understand Nature <i>(Abhay Sharma, SK Bhardwaj and Abha Sharma)</i>	27-51
3.	Climate Change: Effects, Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies for Indian Agriculture <i>(Amaresh Pradhan, Somanath Nayak and Himansu Sekhar Gouda)</i>	53-76
4.	Therapeutic Potential of Functional Foods <i>(Dr. Mohd Iqbal Bhat and Dr. Mohammad Raies-UL-Haq)</i>	77-98
5.	Management of Compound Fractures of Tibia <i>(Dr. Kamal Kumar Arora and Dr. Priti Chaudhary)</i>	99-120
6.	Trade in Marine Fisheries in India <i>(R. Asha, K. Umadevi and S. Shrine)</i>	121-142
7.	Study on Online Marketing Strategies used by Women in Self Help Groups in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu <i>(Dr. J. Christopher)</i>	143-155
8.	Agricultural Chemicals <i>(Nisha L.N and R. Kanagarajan)</i>	157-172
9.	Soil Biology and Biochemistry <i>(Dr. Swarnima Shrivastava, Dr. S.K. Verma and Dr. S.K. Trivedi)</i>	173-188



## Chapter - 4

### Therapeutic Potential of Functional Foods

Dr. Mohd Iqbal Bhat and Dr. Mohammad Raies-UL-Haq

#### Abstract

The health and wellness of an individual is largely an outcome of the consumption of adequate nutritious foods. Earlier it was perceived that food serves only the purpose of basic nutrition but this notion has changed over last few decades or so and hence a lot of contemplation is being laid on the functional attributes of various foods that are directly linked to the health benefits. Based on large scientific evidences, a critical link has been establishment between diet and health and hence nutrition is seen a promising way to mitigate the prevailing health complication of modern society. Natural foods or foods enriched or fortified with specific biologically active ingredients like probiotic, prebiotic and peptides, called functional foods are being development and used so as to bring out a particular physiological response. The idea of functional food not only serves the necessity for living but also contributes towards the mental and physical well-being of an individual with enhanced physiological functions. A plethora of studies have shown that functional food consumption can be used as basic strategy for the prevention of chronic diseases which have a direct link with the diet. As a result, functional food science has gained considerable momentum due to increase in health issues across the globe especially in developed countries and therefore such alternative methods are being explored to addresses various health issues and functional foods have come a long way to mitigate the such problems with easy availability to general public. The purpose of present chapter is to give a comprehensive overview of functional food and their claimed beneficial effects on the host health.

**Keywords:** functional foods, probiotics, prebiotics, bioactive peptides, human health

#### Topics covered

- Introduction
- Functional foods concept

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