

ASSESSING NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 5 YEARS IN POVERTY STRICKEN AREAS IN MATALE & KANDY DISTRICTS

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Assessment of nutritional status of an individual is important for the productivity of the country. This study was carried out to identify the malnutrition status of children under age 5 years and the food security in those households in poverty stricken areas in Matale and Kandy districts. The study sample consisted of 168 families having 52 children below 5 years of age. An interviewer-administered, pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect information on nutritional status and food security. Anthropometric indicators such as age, height and weight were measured. Anthropometric and food frequency data were analyzed by WHO (World Health Organization) Anthropometric Software and partial least square regression in Minitab, respectively. Malnutrition status in Kandy and Matale districts was compared by two sample Welch's t-test. Results revealed that the prevalence of under weight, stunting and wasting in poverty stricken areas of Kandy were 23.1, 61.5 and 7.7% respectively. However, in poverty stricken areas of Matale, it was observed 69.2, 84.6 and 11.5% respectively. The prevalence of wasting and underweight were lower, and stunting was higher than there of national average in Kandy. In Matale, stunting and underweight were higher and the wasting was lower than national average. According to food consumption score, prevalence of poor, borderline and acceptable food security status in Kandy were 11.1, 7.4, 81.5%, respectively where as in Matale, 7.2, 7.2 and 85.5% were observed respectively. However, the malnutrition status assessed was not significantly differed ($p>0.05$) between two districts. Income and education level of household owner had a significant influence ($p<0.05$) on food consumption score in both the districts. Therefore it can be concluded that malnutrition and food security problems exist both in Matale and Kandy districts.

Keywords: Anthropometric, Children, Food consumption score, Malnutrition, Poverty