

## Household Food Security and Nutritional Status of Preschool Children

R. P. M. Sandamali<sup>1</sup>, R. J. Kamal<sup>2</sup> and K. D. R. R. Silva

Household food security is the ability of the household to secure sufficient food to provide for all the nutrient requirements for all members of the household. Household food security is a critical variable that affects nutritional status of preschool children. The present study was carried out to examine the household food security status and its relationship to malnutrition of preschool children.

A sample of 150 preschool children aged between 3 – 5 years was recruited from Polpithigama divisional secretariat in the Kurunegala district. Anthropometric measurements were taken and Z scores were calculated. Mothers or caretakers were interviewed using a questionnaire to obtain information on socio-demographic characteristics of the households. U.S Core Food Security Model was used to measure household food security

Prevalence of different household food security status such as food secure, food insecure without hunger, food insecure with moderate hunger and food insecure with severe hunger among households were 24%, 51.3%, 18.7% and 6% respectively. The prevalence of underweight, wasting and stunting were 34.7%, 26% and 7.3% respectively. Prevalence of underweighted and wasted children were higher in food insecure households than in food secure households. Paternal employment and family income was significantly higher among food secure households than food insecure households.

The high prevalence of acute malnutrition among preschool children in food insecure households indicated short term food deprivation in food insecure households. Food insecurity worsened the nutritional status of preschool children of households.

**Key Words:** Household food security; Pre-school children; Anthropometric measurements; Malnutrition; Core Food Security Model.

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of Applied Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, Makandura, Gonawila, Sri Lanka. E-mail: jahanrjk@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup> E-mail: jahanrijk@yahoo.com