

Nutritional Status of Pre-School Children in Manmunai South West (Paddipalai) Divisional Secretariat Area of Batticaloa

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This study was conducted with the aim of assessing nutritional status of pre-school children at Paddipalai Divisional Secretariat area of Batticaloa District which is one of the war affected area in Sri Lanka. A sample of 150 subjects was selected from pre-schools through multi stage sampling techniques. Anthropometric measurements of Weight, Height, Mid Upper Arm Circumference, Hip and Waist were performed using standardized procedure on the preschool children. From those measurements anthropometric indices of Height-for-age, Weight-for-height, and Weight-for-age were generated. Information on socio-economic characteristic of household and dietary pattern of children was gathered by an interview using food frequency questionnaire. Study revealed that, nearly 70% of children's families receiving food aids or food stamps from government. Most of their parent's income level was under the poverty level of Rs.3000 per month. About 72.2% of the parent's education level was below the G.C.E (O/L) and rate of literacy of them around 27%. The student's meat intake frequency was monthly basis and they consume egg, milk and fruit at fortnight basis. Children showed a considerable risk for being stunted (65%), wasting (61%) and underweight (80%). It is also found that, girls had higher nutritional risk than boys. It is concluded that, the nutritional status of pre-school children in the Paddipalai Divisional Secretariat in Batticaloa district is very poor and civil unrest, unfavorable climatic changes are associated with malnutrition of children.

Keywords: Malnutrition, Anthropometric measurement, Stunt, Wasting.