THE FACTORS AFFECTING FOOD SECURITY IN URBAN AREAS

V. K. Sharmila Indramali, P. A. C. P. Prathapa Arachchi, H. P. T. N. Silva
Department of Social Statistics, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka
prasadika.p.arachchi@gmail.com

Food Security is one of the major challenges the world faces today. Food Security is inherently interlinked with other current global challenges of economy and climate. Though Sri Lanka is an agricultural country where most of the people are involved in some form of food production or processing, food insecurity is still a major problem at household level where the average dietary intake of energy is below the minimum level. The main objective of this study is to identify the factors which affect the food security in urban setting. Cluster sampling method was used to select sampling units and people were interviewed using a structural questionnaire. The study was conducted by a randomly selected group of 285 people in 76 households at Maharagama area. Descriptive analysis was performed to summarize and present the sample composition along with the status of variables and indicators of relationship. Furthermore, regression analysis was carried out to model the relationship between calorie intake in urban settings and demographic factors such as gender, age, employment status, level of income, level of education, members of the family and the awareness of a nutritional diet. In conclusion, 53.32% of people in this area consume fewer amount of calories than the required level. Although the expenditure for food has increased, it does not affect the increase of daily calorie consumption. One of the main reasons is that 12.52% of the expenditure is for fast food with less nutrition. The study asserts the views that the majority in the area generally takes their meals from outside premises during weekends, which is one of the causes for less calorie consumption. This provides evidence about the food insecurity in urban areas. Moreover it has now become a threat to the economy of the country and therefore, identification of the factors related to the issue is essential to rectify this problem.

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