

Diet and Nutritional Status of Rural Preschool Children in the State of Orissa

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ABSTRACT The data on diet and nutritional status of preschool children at State level is available, however the same is not available at district level for planning appropriate action programmes at that level. Hence in keeping view of this objective the present paper focused on to assess the diet and nutritional status of rural preschool children at district level in the State of Orissa. This study was conducted in rural areas of 30 districts in the State of Orissa. Dietary history was obtained from 1,605 preschool children and about 6,803 children (1-6 Yrs) were covered for anthropometry and clinical examination. The data revealed that the mean intakes of majority of foods except cereals and millets, roots and tubers and vegetables were below the recommended dietary intakes in both the age groups of preschool children. Similarly, in general, the intakes of majority of nutrients were below the RDA. The overall prevalence of Kwashiorkor and Marasmus was 1.1% each. The prevalence of Bitot's spots was 2.7%. About 63% of preschool children were stunted and underweighed. Majority of preschool children was subsisting on inadequate diets and the diets were grossly deficient of micronutrients such as riboflavin, vitamin A and iron. The poor dietary intakes are reflected by higher prevalence of stunting and underweight.