

Undernutrition among Bauri Pre-School Children of Nituria Block, Purulia District, West Bengal, India

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ABSTRACT Childhood undernutrition is a major global health problem, especially in developing countries like India. It leads to increased morbidity and mortality among children. Our study assessed the prevalence of undernutrition among 2-6 year old pre-school children of Bauri caste of Nituria Block, Purulia, West Bengal, India. A community based cross sectional study was conducted among 219 pre-school children in five different villages. Height and weight measurements were made following standard techniques. Height-for-age (HAZ), weight-for-age (WAZ) and weight-for-height (WHZ) <- 2 z-scores were used to assess stunting, underweight and wasting, respectively, following the NCHS Guidelines. Severity of undernutrition was evaluated on the basis of classification of WHO recommendations. Result revealed that the mean HAZ, WAZ and WHZ were less than (negative value) those of NCHS for both sexes at all ages. Values ranged from -0.91 (HAZ for boys aged 5 years) to -2.05 (WAZ for girls aged 2 years). The overall (age and sex combined) rates of stunting, underweight and wasting were 37.0 %, 48.4 % and 21.5%, respectively. The present study clearly demonstrated that the nutritional situation of these children was serious.