

Nutritional Need Assessment of Member Families of a Family Helper Project with Women as Indicators of Household Nutrition

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ABSTRACT In developing countries programmes have been designed both by government and voluntary agencies for the upliftment of poverty with a view to improve the nutrition and health of the household. Kiriya Pushpa is one such centre which has designed such programmes and is helping a total of 900 families under the scheme of family helper project. In order to make the programme more specific, a nutritional need assessment was carried out among the member families by measuring the somatic and dietary status of women as indicators of family nutrition. The somatic and dietary status of women representing 500 households indicated an overall normal body size mean [BMI] of 22 with lower mid upper arm muscle circumference [MUMAC – 90 -70%] and increased waist to hip ratio (WHR) indicating obesity in ninety-seven percent of women. Men were found to be indulging in smoking and alcoholism excessively. Frequency of food use and food expenditure pattern reflected lack of diversity in the food intake, dietaries being predominantly cereals with low amounts of other nutrients, irrespective of WHR categories. However, anthropometric measurements except for height showed an increasing trend with age gradient particularly in WHR. It is probable that increased WHR may be a cumulative effect of long term malnutrition. The most pressing need is to design income generating, education and training programmes keeping in view the target groups-adolescent girls, boys and men to improve household nutrition.