

An Analysis of Food and Nutrient Intake of Rural Preschool Children in Punjab

Kiran Grover and Inderjit Singh

Department of Food and Nutrition, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, Punjab, India

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ABSTRACT A sample of 150 preschool children spreading over 24 villages, 12 blocks, 6 districts and 3 agro-climatic regions i.e. sub-mountain (RI), central plains (RII) and south-western (RIII) were selected. The food and nutrient intake of the subjects were compared with their respective SDI (ICMR, 1984) and RDA (ICMR, 2000). The diet of rural preschool children was found to be imbalanced with plenty intake of milk and milk products and low intake of cereals, pulses and green leafy vegetables. The data of present study revealed that the requirement of macronutrients was adequately met with the intake of milk. The intake of protein and fat of rural preschool children was one and a half to two times of RDA in all the regions. Further, intake of energy was adequate in RI (103%) and nearly adequate in RII (89%) and RIII (88%). Whereas the intake of iron, ascorbic acid and niacin was inadequate. The study highlighted that the intake of food and nutrient by rural preschool children of sub-mountain region (RI) was significantly higher than those of southwestern region (RIII).