

Nutritional Anthropometry and Preschool Child Feeding Practices in Working Mothers of Central Orissa

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ABSTRACT The anthropometric measurements (height, weight and mid upper arm circumference) of children of working mothers in the age group of 12 to 60 months show a closeness in the values relating to urban and rural children although the males had higher values than females in all the age groups. The average Gomez percentage taking all the age groups combined were 91.59 and 86.95 in males against 95.54 and 91.99 in females in urban and rural children respectively. The mean Gomez percentage in relation to religion, caste, income, maternal education and mother's employment reveals a significant difference among Hindus and higher and middle caste children. Prevalence of malnutrition was observed among children of illiterate, lower income group and lower caste group mothers. The percentage of children under malnourished group varied from 21 to 27 as per Body-Mass index, 27 to 31 as per mid-arm circumference, 15 to 17 as per Doughtdale's index and 10 to 12 as per Gomez classification. Exclusive breast-feeding beyond six months resulted in a higher percentage of malnourished children in both urban and rural area. Differences are also observed with regard to total duration of breast-feeding and age of introduction of supplementary food. The results of the present investigation is encouraging with regards to the infant feeding practices and prevalence of malnourished children in comparison to Orissan average.