



## Summary

To evolve appropriate interventions to combat the problem of malnutrition of children it is essential to assess not only the magnitudes of the problem, but also the factors affecting it.

A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out in the DDHS area Ambalangoda to assess the nutritional status and some selected factors affecting it among children of 1-5 years of fishing families residing in the DDHS area Ambalangoda. The study population consisted of 189 children of 1-5 years and included all of them in to the study

An interviewer administered questionnaire was used to collect relevant data from mothers of children of 1-5 years. Measurements of height and weight were taken from each child. Weight for age, height for age and weight for height were used as indicators of nutritional status.

Association between the nutritional status and some selected influencing factors were elicited using chi-square test of significant. The study revealed that the prevalence of underweight was 31% while stunting and wasting were 23% and 11.3% respectively.

Of the socio demographic factors ability of father to read and understand a written document was found to be significantly associated with stunting. Mother's ability to read and understand written document was found to be significantly associated with underweight and wasting.

Father's habit of smoking was significantly associated with underweight and stunting of children, while his alcohol consumption was significantly related to children being underweight, stunting and wasting.

Frequent quarrels and family disputes were associated with all three forms of under nutrition; stunting, wasting and underweight at a higher level of significant

Method of disposal of child excreta was also associated with underweight of children significantly. More than one third of the population was suffering from upper respiratory tract infections during preceding three weeks of the study.

Males were found to be more undernourished than females. No <sup>significant</sup> association was found existing between the level of education of parents and the nutritional status of children

A well planned counseling services and health education programmes aimed at the elimination of the contributory factors will be beneficial in improving the nutritional status of this particular study population.