

ABSTRACT

A livelihood program conducted in Batticaloa district by ChildFund Sri Lanka provided financial assistance to poor families under certain condition for enhancing their livelihood practices. Nutritional impact of this program was still unknown. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the impact of the livelihood program on economic level and food availability of household as well as nutritional status of children in the program participant's household. The study was a cross sectional study and a sample of 200 households of the program beneficiaries were selected from Batticaloa district by using convenience sampling method. An interviewer administrated questionnaire was used to collect data both before and after the livelihood program. The data included demographic information, availability of livestock and food items obtained from their own livestock in the household, anthropometric measurement (weight and height) of 2-7 year old children and frequency of consumption of commonly consumed food items by the study population. Results of the study showed that monthly income of program participant's households had been increased and also average food production and consumption of food items obtained from their own livestock (milk and egg) were increased after the program compared with situation before the program. Further, cattle rearing ($P=0.007$) and small scale business ($P=0.0001$) had significant contribution to household's monthly income. In this study, prevalence of under-nutrition among 2-7 year old children increased after the livelihood program compared to the situation before the program. The study concluded that livelihood program was successful to improve household economic level and availability of livestock related food items in the household but there was no improvement on nutritional status of 2-7 year old children. It can be suggested that other nutrition intervention program like nutrition education and awareness programs should be combined with the livelihood program in future to improve nutritional status of children.

Key words: 2-7 year old children; economic level; food availability; livelihood practices; nutritional status