

Food Coping Strategies, Determinants of Food Insecurity and Dietary Diversity of the Rubber and Coconut Estate Workers during Economic Crisis

Pathirana I.P.D.N. and Korale-Gedara P.M.*

Department of Agricultural Economics and Business Management,
Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

The current economic crisis in Sri Lanka has challenged the food and nutritional security of people, especially people who live in the estate sector. Though a few researches have assessed the vulnerability of certain communities, vulnerability of the estate sector, specially rubber and coconut dwellers has not been assessed so far. Against this background, the objective of this study is to assess the vulnerability of estate people to food and nutrition security using Coping Strategy Index (CSI) developed by Care International and World Food Program. The study collected data using a semi-structured questionnaire and a focus group discussion from a sample of estate workers in Lavant estate drawn using proportionate stratified random sample method. Subsequently determinants of coping strategy index examined using a linear regression analysis. To explore an association between Household Dietary Diversity Score and CSI correlation technique was used. The results revealed that eating less preferred food and cutting portion size were the mostly adapted strategies by households in both coconut and rubber sectors. Coping strategy index had a significantly negative relationship with sector and the income while significantly positive relationship with dependency ratio ($p < 0.05$). Drastic reduction of the consumption of imported food items such as milk and wheat was noted. These findings stress the importance of strengthening the social safety net to reduce food and nutrition implication of the economic crisis.

Key words: Coping strategy index, Economic crisis, Household dietary diversity score

*pradeepakg@agri.pdn.ac.lk