

Vulnerability of the Households in Marginalized Urban Communities to Food Insecurity in the Face of Soaring Food Inflation in Sri Lanka; An Insight from the Poornawatta West GN Division in Kandy District

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With the ongoing economic crisis in Sri Lanka, people are in a dire struggle to meet their daily household food requirements. There is a lack of evidence-based information on the actual status of food insecurity among marginalized populations of the country. Study, with reference to an economically marginalized urban community in the Kandy district, attempted to provide an insight into the extent to which such urban communities are vulnerable to food insecurity in the face of persistent food price inflation in Sri Lanka. The study was conducted in the Mahaiyawa MC block of the Poornawatta West GN division. Hundred and ten households were randomly extracted for the survey. Study attempted to assess the scope and severity of food insecurity of the households in the target population. Next, the study attempted to investigate any association between different socio-demographic factors and the severity of food insecurity pertaining to the study population. Finally, the study examined the coping responses of the households in the face of increasing food prices and their declining food purchasing power. According to the results, 82.5% of the Mahaiyawa MC population is moderately or severely vulnerable to household food insecurity. Study revealed that households headed by less-educated or female adults are significantly more vulnerable to food insecurity than the rest. Study reports a drastic reduction in the daily intake of essential food groups by the households of the study population. A number of strategies employed by the households to cope with rising food prices were revealed. Increased household food production, decreased quality and quantity of daily meals, changed food purchasing patterns, and reduced food waste were among the changes triggered by such coping strategies.

Keywords: Coping strategies, Food inflation, Household food insecurity

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