

Household food security status of rural poor in Batticaloa District: Based on Coping Strategies Index

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Abstract

Relevant and consistent with the recent growing interest on food security, this study seeks to assess household food security of rural poor in Batticaloa district. This study was done in three D. S. divisions and 180 samples were taken. Frequency distribution and descriptive statistics were used to depict the socio economic status of the respondents. Food security was measured using Coping Strategies Index score. Results revealed that mean size of the household was 4 and average monthly income was Rs. 13587. 57. It was found that Coping behaviours such as rely on less preferred and less expensive foods was common in most households followed by purchase food on credit and limit portion size at meal times. Rice and rice based products were consumed at the rate of 310g per day per head and vegetables at the rate of 81.3g per day per head. 58.5% of the households were in moderate food insecure condition. Only 25.2% of the households were in food secure condition, while the rest were in food insecure condition. Comparably higher percentage of food insecure condition was observed in Porativupattu D. S. division. Spearman's correlation showed that coping strategies were significantly ($p < 0.01$) correlated to the cumulative Coping Strategies Index scores of households except the coping strategies of sending household members to beg and skip entire days without eating. The strong and positive correlation of the coping strategies to the cumulating score implies households continued to apply the coping strategies despite using their income and consumption of food from their own production and it was evident that as Coping Strategies Index scores increased, households relied more often on the coping strategies showing high level of food insecurity. Therefore, strategic policies should be implemented to improve the food security awareness among the rural household in Batticaloa district.

Keywords: Coping behaviors, Coping strategies index, food security