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Socio-Economic and Cultural Aspects Affecting the Nutrition of Children under Age of Five in the Rural Area of Sudan

MUNA ALI ABDALLA¹, SAAD ABDEL RAHMAN SULIEMAN², ABDELGADER H. KHATAB³

¹*Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Institute of Organic and Biomolecular Chemistry, Germany*

²*Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Institute of Plant Nutrition, Germany*

³*University of Khartoum, Dept. of Food Science and Technology, Sudan*

Abstract

In Sudan, more than 60% of the population live in rural areas lacking the basic services and over-burdened by poverty particularly woman and children. This study was carried out in three villages of Al-Fau rural area. The community mainly consists of farmers of semi-nomadic nature who own different sizes of herds and agricultural land; they are the farmers of the Arabic pedigree. The rest of the community are workers from western Sudan and were brought from their original areas to enhance the nomad settlement strategy of the Sudanese government in the mid seventies. Various techniques and sampling methodologies were done to collect the relevant data about socio-economic cultural status and nutrition of children under age of five. These data gathering techniques include questionnaire, in which information was collected about socio-economic status of the family, level of education, occupation and age of parents were recorded. Income level of the family was assessed. This was done by recording the members of family and the facilities available such as refrigerator, television, telephone, transport, land holding, occupation and other sources of income. Women were asked about the social norms affecting mother and child nutritional and health status, as well as the feeding habits of the children.

The results revealed that most of the community members practice subsistence farming and the area suffers as all other rural areas from seasonality, physical weakness and sickness. It is also found that only 20% of the children's families have their own farms, 36% have their own livestock and 44% have both. Moreover, it was recorded that all markets of the studied area were very poor lacking fresh vegetables and fruits with some handicrafts and other commodities, which attributed to the low purchasing power, since most of the families depend on their storage which consist of sorghum, milk and dried okra. In addition to the illiteracy (76.7% of the mothers and 54% of the fathers), the lack of nutritional diversity were found the main reasons for nutritional anaemia for 65.3% of the children.

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