



Food Insecurity Among People living in Informal Settlements of Nepal: Insights from Kathmandu and Pokhara Valley

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Background



- Nepal ranks 68th out of 127 countries, with a score of 14.7, indicating a moderate level of hunger in the Global Hunger Index (2024).
- Nepal's constitution and the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty Act (2018) recognize food security as a fundamental right. (Food Security Atlas, 2019)
- The Government of Nepal (GoN) aligns with Sustainable Development Goals to eradicate hunger, improve nutrition, and ensure sustainable food production. (Food Security Atlas, 2019)
- Poverty is one of the important determinants of food insecurity and poor nutrition. (Nepal Nutrition and food security portal)
- Natural disasters (earthquakes, landslides, floods) and economic instability exacerbate food insecurity. (Disaster and Climate Change)



Background



- Food security consists of four key dimensions: Availability, Access, Utilization, Stability. (Four Pillars of the food security)
- Poor nutrition and food insecurity have remained challenges and impairments to development in Nepal. (Food Security Atlas, 2019)
- Rapid rural-to-urban migration increases informal settlements in Kathmandu and Pokhara Valley. (MDM Informal Settlement Assessment)
- Food insecurity is a significant public health concern in Nepal's urban informal settlements. (MDM Informal Settlement Assessment)
- These communities face inadequate access to food, poor living conditions, and limited health services. (MDM Informal Settlement Assessment)



Objective



To assess the prevalence and determinants of food insecurity among people living in informal settlements.

Methodology

Study design: Cross-sectional study and we adopted quantitative method.

Study site: Informal settlement in Kathmandu and Pokhara

Study population: people living in informal settlements in Kathmandu and Pokhara.

Sampling procedure: Purposive selection of cities followed by random selection of informal settlements in each city and selecting study population from informal settlements using simple random method.

Tools used to assess (Household Food Insecurity Access Scale)

Data Analysis: Descriptive analysis and binary logistic regression was done to examine associations between food security and socio-economic variables using SPSS 25.

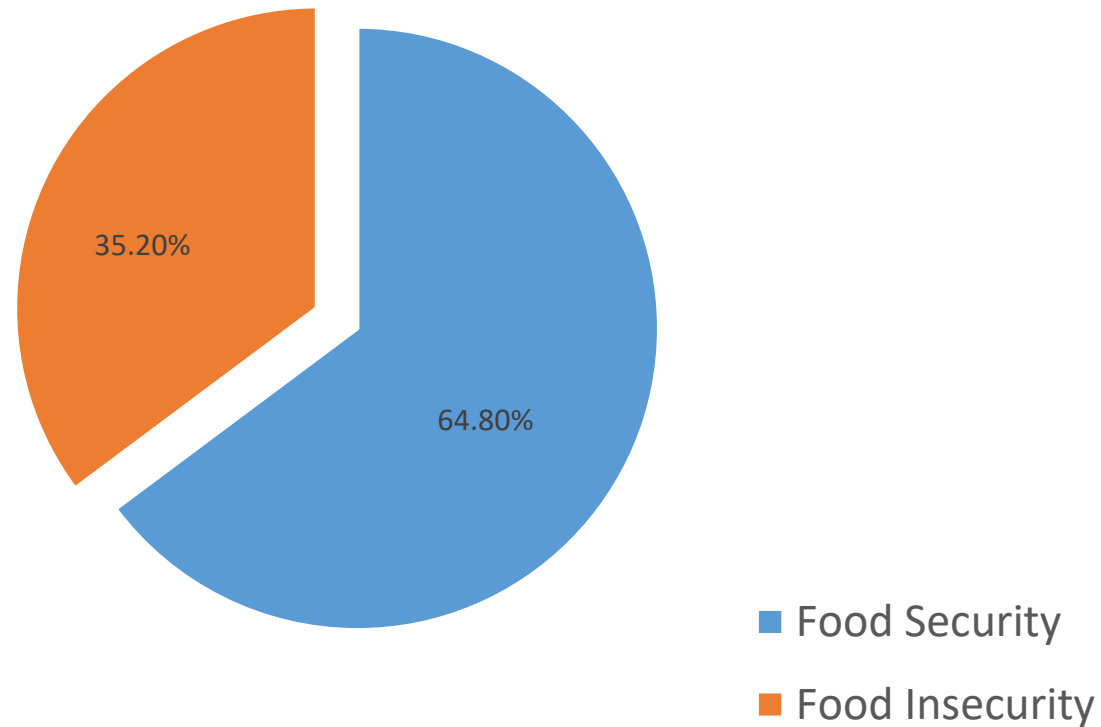


Results

Sociodemographic findings

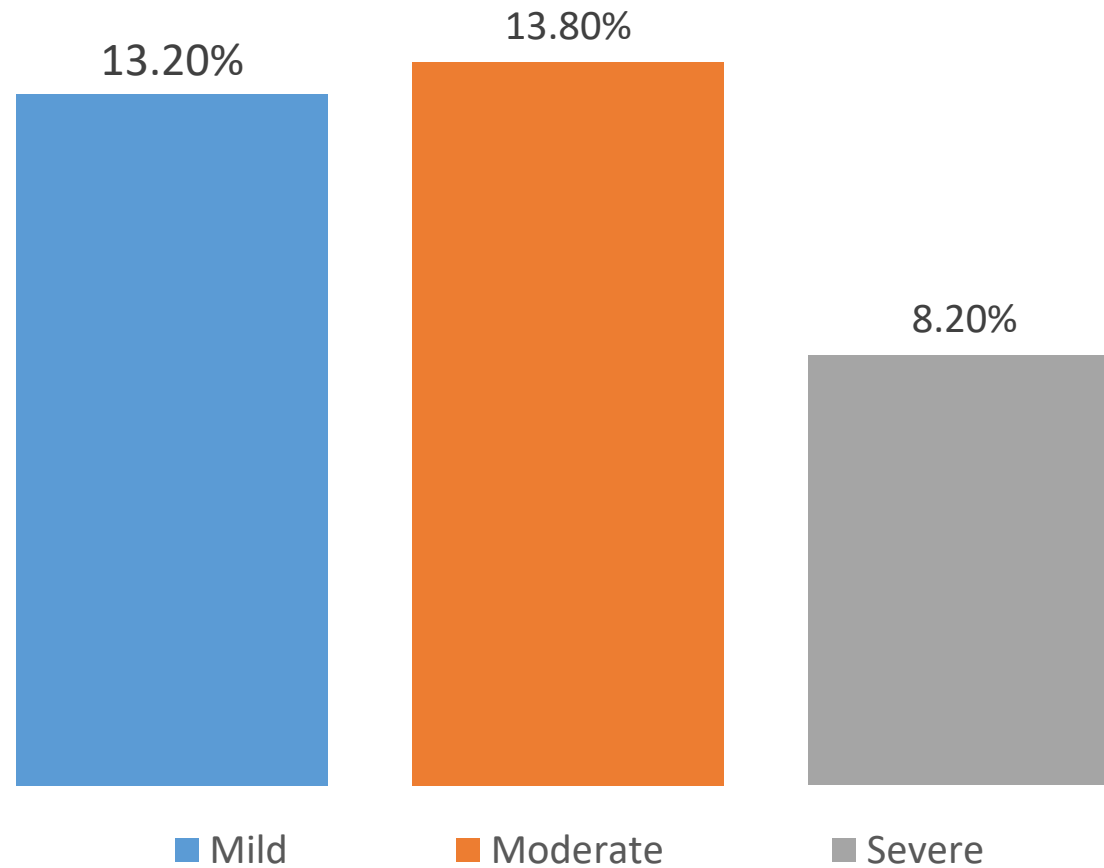
| Sociodemographic Characteristics | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 509 | 25.3 |
| Female | 1500 | 74.7 |
| Age (Years) | 43.07 ± 14.84 (Mean±SD) | Min19, Max 98 |
| ≤19 | 49 | 2.4 |
| 20-24 | 353 | 17.6 |
| 25-29 | 484 | 24.1 |
| 30-34 | 458 | 22.8 |
| 35-39 | 338 | 16.8 |
| ≥40 | 327 | 16.3 |
| Ethnicity | | |
| Brahmin/Chhetri | 334 | 16.6 |
| Janajati | 1077 | 53.6 |
| Dalit | 540 | 26.9 |
| Thakuri | 23 | 1.1 |
| Muslim | 18 | 0.9 |
| Prefer not to say | 17 | 0.8 |
| Religion | | |
| Hindu | 1372 | 68.3 |
| Buddhist | 354 | 17.6 |
| Christian | 269 | 13.4 |
| Muslim | 14 | 0.7 |
| Educational status | | |
| Illiterate | 778 | 38.7 |
| Literate | 1231 | 61.3 |

Prevalence of Food Insecurity



Among the total households (n=2009), 64.8% households had food security (n=1301) and 35.2% had food insecurity (n=708).

Category of Food Insecurity



Association between food insecurity and different variables

| Variables | OR (95% CI) (Unadjusted) | OR (95% CI) (Adjusted) |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Family type | Ref | Ref |
| Living alone | 1.16 (0.69-1.96) | 0.98 (0.57-1.69) |
| Nuclear family | 1.33 (0.33-5.35) | 1.16 (0.93-1.43) |
| Extended family | 1.02 (0.60-1.76) | 1.31 (0.35-4.92) |
| Job type | | |
| Formal | Ref | Ref |
| Informal | 1.98 (1.46-2.69) | 1.72(0.54-1.97) |
| Unemployed | 1.41 (1.05-1.88) | 1.34 (1.08-1.65) |
| Monthly income (NRs.) | | |
| <10000 | Ref | Ref |
| 10001-20000 | 1.05 (0.74-1.49) | 1.90 (1.35-2.68) |
| 20001-25000 | 0.58 (0.38-0.87) | 2.04 (1.63-2.54) |
| >25000 | 0.49 (0.35-0.70) | 1.14 (0.84-1.55) |
| Education | | |
| Illiterate | Ref | Ref |
| Primary | 0.89 (0.69-1.14) | 0.97 (0.74-1.25) |
| Secondary | 0.67 (0.53-0.84) | 0.80 (0.63-1.01) |
| Higher secondary | 0.53 (0.38-0.75) | 0.65 (0.45-0.92) |
| University | 0.40 (0.19-0.81) | 0.47 (0.23-0.98) |

Conclusion

Addressing food insecurity in urban informal settlements requires:

- **Multi-sectoral collaboration** involving government, NGOs, and communities
- **Policy advocacy** to improve access to food and social services
- **Targeted support programs** focusing on:
 - Formal employment pathways
 - Enhanced emergency preparedness during floods.



Acknowledgements

- The UKRI GCRF Accountability for Informal Urban Equity Hub is a multi-country Hub which we call ARISE. The Hub works with communities in slums and informal settlements to support processes of accountability related to health. It is funded through the UKRI Collective Fund.
- I would like to acknowledge PHASE Nepal, LSTM and all Research team for the contribution and successful completion of this project.
- I appreciate the role of all the participants in research and special thanks to NHRC for providing this platform for presenting this research.

Researcher's bio



Anjita Khadka is a Registered Nurse with over 10 years of professional experience across diverse fields, including clinical and community nursing, rehabilitation, nutrition and research. She is currently serving as a Research Associate at PHASE Nepal.

THANK YOU