

What people eat affects their nutritional status, but understanding why people eat what they eat is not simple. It is a complex issue involving a myriad of factors. (Sanjur,1982). Most of the studies done on the factors that influence nutritional status of children have dealt with the mainstream populations. For example the study by Greer &Thorbecke (1986) addressed food poverty and consumption patterns in Kenya in general. Some factors associated with under-nutrition are population-specific, and hence there is a need to do similar studies on this special group of tea plantation estate households. Those studies that have been done in the plantation estates were found to have investigated variables such as price of foodstuffs, income of household, culture, food preference, among others. Also, there was need to investigate other variables such as the availability of land for own production, time available for household work, accessibility to food sources and availability of fuel for food preparation. The purpose of the study was, therefore, to investigate these factors among tea plantation households and their impact on nutritional status. The objectives of the study were to identify the demographic and social economic factors, to explore the food consumption habits, to determine the factors that affect the nutritional status, to identify the relationships among selected demographic and social-economic factors and the nutritional status of children of resident and non-resident households of Mabroukie Tea Plantation Estate. This study used a descriptive study design. The population included all residential and non residential households of Mabroukie Tea Plantation Estate of Limuru Division having at least one child between 3-6 years of age. A sample of 98 resident workers and 101 non-resident workers was drawn using the stratified random sampling method. The results of the study showed that most of the respondents had only attained education up to primary level. It was also established that workers had limited time for household work and that most childcare centres did not have a centralized feeding programme. Residents mainly depended on earnings from plantation work while non-residents had more diversified sources of income. On the nutritional status, 48.1 % of all the children were stunted and the majority of the stunted were from the resident households; 33.7% were underweight with more than half being from the resident community. There were more children who were wasted from among the nonresident households (9.6%) than among the resident households (6.5%). There was found to be no significant relationship between availability of time for household work and the nutritional status of children of resident and non-resident households of Mabroukie Tea Plantation Estate. However, size of land for own production, accessibility to food sources and adequacy of cooking fuel were found to be significantly related to the nutritional status of the children in the study. Implications of the study are discussed and recommendations for action and further research are made.