

# Impact of child care strategies on health and nutritional status of children in peri-urban Punjab

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Received: 11.06.2013; Revised: 08.09.2013; Accepted: 06.10.2013

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■ **ABSTRACT** : The present study was undertaken to assess the impact of child care strategies on health and nutritional status of children in Peri-urban Punjab. The sample consisted of 920 children (aged 1-3 years) belonging to low socio-economic status families. The sample was further sub-divided into two sub-samples namely children of working mothers (n=460) and children of non-working mothers (n=460). The sample of children of working mothers was further sub-divided on the basis of the various child-care strategies observed for the care of the child during working mother's absence. Accordingly, four child-care settings were observed namely care by grandparents (n=200), siblings (n=160), adults other than grandparents (n=45) and anganwadi workers (n=55). Anthropometric measurements *i.e.* body weight (kg) and height (cm), head and chest circumference (cm) were taken of each child to assess his/her physical development and nutritional status of the infants. Nutritional status was assessed as per Gomez and Waterlow's classification. The results revealed that the physical development outcomes of children cared by non working mothers were significantly better than children cared by working mothers. Prevalence of Grade-II malnutrition was higher in children of working mothers. Situation was worst in cases where children were cared by preteen siblings.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Child care strategies, Working mothers, Socio-economic status

■ **HOW TO CITE THIS PAPER** : Kaur, Gurupdes, Kaur, Parminder and Jaswal, S. (2013). Impact of child care strategies on health and nutritional status of children in peri-urban Punjab. *Asian J. Home Sci.*, **8** (2): 539-543.