PREFACE

Birth weight is a powerful predictor of infant growth and survival. Infants born with Low Birth Weight (LBW) begin life immediately disadvantaged and face extremely poor survival rates. Moreover a child born with low birth weight has in later life a greater risk of illness and premature death from degenerative diseases. Low birth weight is a reasonably well-defined problem caused by factors that are potentially modifiable.

As indicated in the earlier studies conducted in other countries low birth weight children grow up to be “undernourished” and “stunted” children and adolescents and ultimately undernourished women of child bearing age. Low birth weight is also observed to be perpetuating an intergenerational cycle of poverty, under nutrition and nutritional disorders.

At present data pertaining to the above are not available in Kerala situation. Moreover there is an urgent need to answer basic questions about the prevalence and prevention of low birth weight and its devastating sequelae from the nutritional point of view. The present study may highlight the urgent need to find answers on sustainable practices to improve the nutritional status of children of low birth weight, which may also require behavioral changes within households.