Preamble

The period between the state of weaning and the 5th birthday is nutritionally the most vulnerable segment of human lifecycle. The children between the age of 1-5 are known as preschool children, the age group most susceptible to protein energy malnutrition (PEM). Extensive work has been done on the nutritional status of preschool children suffering from PEM (Jelliffe, 1966, Alleyne et al, 1978, Bhattacharyya, 1986, Waterlow, 1993, and Gupta, 2000). Significant studies have been carried out on the hair morphology and its physical properties in PEM.

However, little work has so far been done on the ultrastructural topography and on physical properties of hair of preschool children in PEM. Therefore, the inadequacy of the available information made us interested in further elucidation of the existing lacuna in our knowledge.