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**Nutritional information and healthiness of ready-to-eat/cooked packaged food products available for children in Sri Lanka and attitudes of parents living in Western province toward purchasing**

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As a result of drastic changes in dietary habits and lifestyles, overweight and obesity among schoolchildren in Sri Lanka have more than doubled in the last decade. Research show that a substantial percentage of urban schoolchildren tend to consume excessive amounts of processed foods on daily basis. Children's food purchases and choices are primarily depend on parents/guardians. Thus, the present study is carried out to assess the nutritional content and healthfulness of ready-to-eat (RTE) and ready-to-cook (RTC) packaged foods available in Sri Lankan supermarkets, and parental attitudes toward purchasing them. The Nutrient Profile Model (NPM) for Sri Lanka was used to evaluate RTE/RTC foods and nonalcoholic beverages as they are more likely to be part of a healthy or less healthy diet based on the nutritional information on the package. In total, 192 products were collected and categorized into highly consuming five broad food categories; (i) ready-to-eat cereal, fine bakery wares, and confectionery products (ii) ready to eat savouries (iii) sugary beverages (iv) milk and dairy products and (v) prepared/ready-to-cook foods, to collect nutritional information. Among collected food products, 29 (15%) products were unable to evaluate due to incomplete nutritional labelling while all the tested food products were unable to be recognized as healthier for marketing. Moreover, among 26 (13.54%) products that carried health and nutrition-related claims, 19 (73.7%) were recognized as less healthy, while others were unable to evaluate due to the absence of nutritional information. A descriptive research design was used to identify the factors influencing parents' purchasing behaviour towards RTE/RTC food products. Using an online questionnaire, a sample size of 151 parents/guardians living in Western province who had one or more children, between the ages of 3-13 were selected using a stratified random sampling method. Results of the multiple regression model analysis revealed that the monthly household income, children's influence/preference, and commercial aspects are positively influenced ( $p < 0.05$ ) by the parent's purchasing behaviour. Even though, parents' opinion was negatively influenced ( $p < 0.05$ ) the parent's purchasing behaviour toward RTE/RTC food products. The findings suggest that effective policies should be implemented to increase the relative availability of healthier ready-to-eat packaged foods, as well as to improve the provision of nutritional labelling.

**Keywords:** multiple regression module, nutrition profiling module, purchase intentions, ready-to-eat food