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WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AND CHILD NUTRITIONAL STATUS: THE CASE OF INDIA

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Over the last few decades, India started to experience great economic growth. However, levels of child under nutrition did not decrease, and are still among the highest in the world. Economic growth normally comes accompanied of increased employment opportunities, especially for women who have children. Previous studies suggest that female employment is linked to better child health and nutrition, but this association is not fully understood, especially within the context of economic growth, nutritional transition and considering cultural constraints. This study aims to examine the association between a range of aspects of female employment and child nutritional status. Data was obtained from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) from 1998 and 2005. Children were classified as stunted or wasted, according to the WHO Growth Curves. Multilevel logistic regression was performed using STATA 13. From 30% of mothers employed in both years, more than half were classified with some form of malnutrition, with significant differences from mothers who are not working for both years. When controlled by sociodemographic characteristics, being employed or not was no longer associated with child nutritional status. The only characteristics of the mother, which remained in the model where maternal education and mother's BMI. Differences according to regions were identified when considering the percentage of employed women and women empowerment in each place. This study suggests that working mothers can be an important target for policies, and improving maternity leave and gender inequality can have an impact on nutrition for future generations in India and other emerging countries.

Biography

Stephanie Bispo is doing her PhD at the University of Southampton in Social Statistics and Demography. She was graduated in Nutrition in 2010 and then she joined the Urban Health Observatory at the School of Medicine at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil in 2010, where she worked as a research assistant until 2014. She completed her Master in Child and Adolescent Health at the same University in 2013. She has being a Consultant for the WHO in few projects since 2014.

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