

Chapter 18

CLIMATIC SHOCK, COMMUNITY CAPABILITY AND CHILDHOOD MALNUTRITION: CASE STUDY FROM THE INDIAN SUNDARBANS

Nilanjan Patra^{*}, PhD, MPhil, MSc, BSc

Department of Economics, Bangabasi Morning College, Kolkata, India

ABSTRACT

Childhood malnutrition is a wider problem in the developing countries. This paper tries to see if climatic shocks can affect childhood malnutrition and if the community has the capability to reduce malnutrition, among other factors. Here an analytical framework of childhood malnutrition under climatic shock is also developed. Method: The present study uses data from a primary survey in the Indian Sundarbans in 2012. The survey uses two-stage stratified random sampling technique. It collected data from 1,200 households on children age below six years. Bivariate and multivariate data analysis has been done. It uses three indicators of malnutrition—underweight, stunting and wasting. Results: Community capability can reduce malnutrition. Climatic shocks raise childhood malnutrition. Institutional delivery reduces malnutrition. Children from nuclear families and richer families are less likely to be malnourished. Children are more malnourished in the villages more away from the block headquarter. With increase in age group of children, they become more malnourished. Mother's malnutrition, idiosyncratic shocks in children also raise malnutrition in children. Children from minority religion and backward castes are more likely to be malnourished. Conclusion: With frequent climatic shocks in a climatically vulnerable region, resilience needs to be built up by the community to tackle the menace of malnutrition. For increased resilience, the community should use the resources available with them and try to increase its capability. This way, even without any external help, the community can reduce malnutrition.

Keywords: malnutrition, community capability, climatic shock, children, Sundarbans

^{*} Corresponding author: Nilanjan Patra, Dept. of Economics, Bangabasi Morning College, 19 Rajkumar Chakraborty Sarani, Kolkata-700009, India. E-mail: nilanjanpatra@gmail.com.