

An Indian-Australian research partnership

Project Title: Exploring gender and ethnic dimensions of malnutrition

Project Number HSS0645

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Humanities and Social Sciences

Research Academy Themes:

Highlight which of the Academy's Theme(s) this project will address?

(Feel free to nominate more than one. For more information, see www.iitbmonash.org)

1. Advanced computational engineering, simulation and manufacture
2. Infrastructure Engineering
3. Clean Energy
4. Water
5. Nanotechnology
6. Biotechnology and Stem Cell Research
- 7. Humanities and Social Sciences**

The research problem

Malnutrition (Maternal and child) continues to be high in India despite significant economic growth and public expenditure. It is among the highest in the world, and trends and predictions indicate that child malnutrition will remain high in South Asia in the next few decades even compared to sub-Saharan Africa and other impoverished regions. Scholars point to factors related to family structure, kinship relations, gender inequalities, migration, household economies, and inefficient public institutions for this state of affairs.

However not much is known about how family and kinship mediate gender inequalities to affect child malnutrition in specific ways – both positively and negatively. A few studies indicate that even within relatively poor households kinship practices work around specific gender inequalities to mitigate malnutrition, while in other cases despite relative affluence, inability of women to make household distribution decisions affects child nutrition adversely. Such family and kinship structures and practices are influenced by ethnicity (religion, caste, language, tribe), class, and migration status. This project seeks to test out some hypotheses relating to the interaction and linkages between gender inequalities, class, ethnicity, and migration in a specific rural or urban location in India, so that better insights emerge on the nature and occurrence of child malnutrition. This will in turn enable us to design better public and private initiatives to tackle this problem.

Project aims

This project is built around the following aims:

- 1) To examine the nature and occurrence of malnutrition among children by different social categories
- 2) To explore the relative role of gender inequality vis-a-vis other kinds of inequalities and unequal access related to class, ethnicity, migration, and regional origin
- 3) To understand family and kinship practices which affect child malnutrition
- 4) To draw policy insights for better design and targeting of child malnutrition policies and strategies

Expected outcomes

The project hopes to attain a better understanding of the relationship between child malnutrition and gender inequalities in a context of diversity of family and kinship structures.

How will the project address the Goals of the above Themes?

The project falls under the theme 'Humanities and Social Sciences'. The project will be supervised by a team of researchers with expertise in sociology, demography, gender, and development studies. The project will use quantitative and qualitative methods in carrying out the study.

Capabilities and Degrees Required

List the ideal set of capabilities that a student should have for this project. Feel free to be as specific or as general as you like. These capabilities will be input into the online application form and students who opt for this project will be required to show that they can demonstrate these capabilities.

The students will have completed a Masters in Sociology, Anthropology or in any relevant social science discipline from a top university/institute with a strong/excellent academic record. Interest or motivation in gender related themes is preferred. Demonstrated ability to apply relevant theoretical perspectives and employ methodological approaches will be essential. Prior research experience in the social sciences will be desirable.

Potential Collaborators

Professor D.Parthasarathy

Professor Satish Agnihotri

Monash researchers met with Professor Parthasarathy in February this year. This application was prepared collaboratively, and we look forward to working together.

Please provide a few key words relating to this project to make it easier for the students to apply.

Child malnutrition, gender inequality, family and kinship, migration, ethnicity