



Tropentag, September 11-13, 2024, hybrid conference

“Exploring opportunities ...
for managing natural resources and a better life for all”

Exploring the maternal factors affecting children’s nutritional status in urban areas of Bangladesh

MD. NAZMUL HOQUE, SADIKA HAQUE

Bangladesh Agricultural University, Agricultural Economics, Bangladesh

Abstract

With the growing urbanisation in Bangladesh, socio-demographic structure is changing similar as many other countries in the world, where women are increasingly joining to the labour force. Evidence shows that urban women have more opportunity to be employed, who have more access to economic resources, which may exert influences in household food consumption behaviour and care practices. At the same time, women in Bangladesh are also traditionally responsible for childcare and all other reproductive works at the household. Therefore, the study was conducted to identify the maternal factors which affect children’s nutritional status in urban areas in Bangladesh. To accomplish the study, primary data was collected from 1978 mothers about mother herself and her youngest child aged between 6 to 59 months. The child nutrition outcomes were calculated based on anthropometric z-scores for children under five, calculated using the 2006 WHO Child Growth Standards. The study found that 36% of urban children are stunted, 16% are underweight, 10% are wasted, while 33% of them are at risk of being overweight. From multinomial logistic regressions, the study found that mothers’ socio-economic status, educational qualification, nutritional knowledge, BMI, receiving antenatal care (ANC), status of empowerment, childcare support, and sanitation status - were the important factors influencing child nutritional status. Working mothers provided less breast feeding, and faced problems with complementary feeding, as they had to join at work after maternity leave. Most working mothers depended on female relatives to attend to their children or gave the responsibility to unprofessional domestic workers. The problems of urban working women that are emerging include triple burden of responsibilities living in a nuclear structure of family which need utmost importance to be given. In the structural rearrangement of urban and peri-urban settings, children’s physical and mental growth and development has become a critical concern, which is an overlooked component in Bangladesh. With this background, this study recommends introducing day care centers with trained staff, quality antenatal care services, inclusion of low-income mothers in the social safety net programme for the mothers living in urban and peri-urban Bangladesh.

Keywords: Antenatal care, maternal factors, stunted, urbanisation