CLIMATE CHANGE AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS: EVIDENCE FROM INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The exacerbating effects of climate change leaves lasting effects on various dimensions of life – economy, health, society, and so on. It is vital to understand various channels of impacts of climate change that hinder growth, development and pose a threat to human life. Keeping the lens on health impacts of climate change, several studies has broadened our understanding regarding the influence it exerts on human health and nutrition through various channels. This paper aims to understand the direct effects of climate change on individual nutritional status in India. Employing a reduced form specification, this study analyses the relationship between body mass index (BMI) – taken as an indicator of individual nutritional status, and climate – captured through mean temperature and precipitation, among women from 20 Indian states. The study uses NFHS-4 data corresponding to 2015-16 for data on BMI, and uses temperature and precipitation data over the period 1986-2015 as climate. Results suggest that mean temperature and BMI exhibit a U-shaped relationship, after controlling for other individual and household characteristics that might affect BMI. The study also attempts to analyze the relationship for different regions of India, as well as for rural and urban areas separately.

Keywords*:* Climate Change, Temperature, Nutrition, BMI, Women

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