

Food Consumption Pattern and Nutritional Status of Women in Orissa: A Rural-Urban Differential

Nihar Ranjan Rout

*Post-Graduate Department of Population Studies, Fakir Mohan University,
Balasore 756 019, Orissa, India
E-mail: nihar_rout@rediffmail.com*

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ABSTRACT As per the estimates of National Family Health Survey, Orissa lies far behind the national average in terms of many important aspects of nutrition. The problem is definitely more acute in case of the women staying in rural areas. This paper tries to find out the variation in food consumption and nutritional status of women in the state in rural and urban areas against different background variables. It also attempts to capture the difference between standard and actual level of food intake among different groups of women. The current study is based on NFHS – II data, which comprised of 4425 ever married women in the age group 15 – 49. As expected, a profound variation in nutritional status was observed between the rural and urban women in Orissa. 33 percent of urban women and 48.6 percent of rural women were found to be in the low BMI group. As far as food consumption was concerned, urban women enjoyed a better position in all the food items. Nutritional status was found to be positively related with education of respondent, education of husband, household standard of living, occupation of husband. However, the variation in nutritional status was not found to be very high between different categories of any explanatory or background variable in rural areas. Most of the rural women when categorized were found to be taking less food than their requirement. All these clearly suggest a condition of emergency for improving the nutritional status of women in Orissa, especially in the rural areas.