

ABSTRACT

The nutritional status of women in India is dismally low. This has serious repercussions for the society and the economy. This is due to multiple factors such as gender bias, repression, low economic and social status etc.

This study has used India Human Development Survey, 2005 to study the trend and the factors influencing the BMI of women between 20 to 40 years of age in India. Quantile regression has been used to study the effect of various factors on women belonging to different quintiles of BMI. Here variables like per capita income, consumption and wealth have been taken as main determinants influencing the health status. All three have significant effect on BMI instead of the fact that they are closely related to each other. Expenditure on food and dietary diversity also remain important indicators of BMI of women due to their direct impact on the health of a person.

Other socio-economic variables, social infrastructural variables and women empowerment variables are also taken into consideration. Women occupation dummies have shown some interesting results. It shows that women who do not work have better BMI in India than those who work in agricultural sector and as regular salaried workers. Women in the top two quintiles of autonomy index have shown significantly better BMI in the middle quintiles.