

due to diarrhoea. Formulation of effective strategies for increasing the practice of exclusive breast-feeding in early infancy is recommended.

¹International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B), GPO Box 128, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh

²Department of International Health, The Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health, Baltimore, MD 21205, MD, USA



BRAC's Rural Development Programme and Child Nutrition

Masuma Khatun¹, Abbas Bhuiya², A.M.R. Chowdhury¹, and S.M. Ziauddin Hyder¹

Objective: Explore the effect of the BRAC's rural credit programme on the nutritional status of children aged 6-72 months.

Methodology: Mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) of 1,518 children aged 6-72 months were recorded from the first round survey of the BRAC-ICDDR,B Joint Research Project in Matlab. Data were collected during April-August 1995 using a four-cell study design. Measurements were taken using a TALC MUAC tape. Apart from intra-cell comparison, these children were also compared with similar data from a baseline survey done in 1992. Both bivariate and multivariate analyses of data were done.

Results: The prevalence of protein-energy malnutrition (PEM) was significantly lower among the children of the BRAC members compared to those of the non-members ($p < 0.01$). During the pre-intervention period, the prevalence of severe PEM was found to be similar among these two groups. After three years of the BRAC intervention, it decreased from 15.4% to 8.7% among the children of the BRAC member households ($p < 0.05$). However, among the non-member households, the prevalence remained unchanged (15.8%). In the bivariate analysis, children of the older members (25 months or more) and of the borrowers of the larger loan (Tk 7,500.00) were significantly better-off compared to other categories. However, after controlling for background indicators, sex and age of the children, year of schooling of the mothers, the number of living children, age of the mothers, and the per capita monthly expenditure were the significant predictors of nutritional status of children.

Conclusion: Three years of involvement in the BRAC's development activities are probably too a little time to have a significant measurable effect on the children's nutritional status. However, the results of the study showed a numerical trend in the improvement of the nutritional status of children of the BRAC member households.

¹Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), 75 Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh

²International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B), GPO Box 128, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh