

# Impact of Maternal Labor Force Participation on Child Nutrition: Analysis of DHS data from Cambodia

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## Abstract

Reducing child malnutrition and improving child health are key tasks for developing countries. In the case of Cambodia, owing to continuously high economic growth, national GDP is increasing and living standards are improving. Manufacturing is the leading industry in the Cambodian economy, and the garment and shoe industries are particularly important as they continue to expand. Many women are contributing to the economic growth by working in factories. However, Cambodia is still categorized as one of the Least Developing Countries and continues to face the problem of child malnutrition. Therefore, an investigation about the relationship between maternal labor force participation and child nutrition provides an analytical basis with important implications for improving child nutrition and reducing poverty.

In this study, we explore the effect of maternal labor force participation on the nutritional status of Cambodian children under five years of age, based on datasets from four Cambodia Demographic and Health Surveys (CDHS): 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2014. To examine this, we employ the Propensity Score Matching (PSM) technique in the empirical analysis.

To evaluate child nutritional outcomes, we use two anthropometric measures in this study; height for age z-score and weight for age z-score. From the estimation results of the PSM analysis, we found that maternal work, especially in the non-agricultural sector, has a significant impact on a child's height and weight.