

An Indian-Australian research partnership

Project Title:

Project Number

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Research Academy Themes:

Highlight which of the Academy's Theme(s) this project will address?

(Feel free to nominate more than one. For more information, see www.iitbmonash.org)

1. Advanced computational engineering, simulation and manufacture
2. Infrastructure Engineering
3. Clean Energy
4. Water
5. Nanotechnology
6. Biotechnology and Stem Cell Research

7. Humanities and Social Sciences

The research problem

Life expectancy in India is among the lowest in the developing world. This is despite great improvement in overall education and relatively high economic growth over the last three decades. A major contributor to poor population health and burden of disease is less than expected gains in child and maternal health outcomes. India's children experience one of the highest incidences of infectious disease in the world. The level of malnutrition including stunting and under-nutrition is higher than in many Sub-Saharan countries. At the same time, increasing number of children are obese. Thus India is simultaneously experiencing health problems

associated with both affluence and poverty.

The poor health condition of Indian children is accompanied by or associated with poor reproductive health among women. Access to and use of antenatal care, postnatal care and contraception and abortion is not only low but also uneven across India. Further improvements in child and maternal health are dependent on developing and implementing appropriate and effective policies and programme interventions. This in turn is dependent on most up to date, critical and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the proximate and underlying social, economic, cultural and policy determinants of child and reproductive health. This project thus will address a major developmental and health issue that India needs to successfully address to improve overall population health. The study will be a 2 year longitudinal study that will collect data at 4 points in time from children in the 0-5 age group across social class.

Project aims

This project is built around the following aims:

- 1) To examine the nature and pattern of growth among children across social class
- 2) To explore the role of cultural values and norms, access to health care and gender inequality with respect to the growth of children
- 3) To investigate the patterns and causes of variations in immunization among children
- 4) To record mothers overall health including psychological and reproductive health, (access to and use of antenatal and postnatal health services, contraception and abortion) and its relationship to child health and growth.

Expected outcomes

The project will lead to new understanding and knowledge on the cultural, social, economic and policy drivers of child growth and maternal health.

How will the project address the Goals of the above Themes?

The project falls under the theme 'Humanities and Social Sciences'. The project will be supervised by a team of researchers with expertise in reproductive health, gender, demography, social psychology, economics and sociology. The project will use quantitative and qualitative methods to address the research questions.

Capabilities and Degrees Required

List the ideal set of capabilities that a student should have for this project. Feel free to be as specific or as general as you like. These capabilities will be input into the online application form and students who opt for this project will be required to show that they can demonstrate these capabilities.

The students will have completed a Masters in Sociology/Psychology or any relevant social science discipline from a top university/institute with a strong/excellent academic record. Demonstrated ability to apply relevant theoretical perspectives and employ methodological approaches will be essential. Prior research experience in the social sciences will be desirable.

Potential Collaborators

Associate Professor Mrinmoyi Kulkarni

Assistant Professor Rama Pal

Monash researchers met with Associate Professor Kulkarni in February this year. This application was prepared collaboratively, and we look forward to working together.

Please provide a few key words relating to this project to make it easier for the students to apply.

Child growth; malnutrition, maternal health; reproductive health; antenatal and postnatal health; gender; women's autonomy and empowerment