

Association of Socioeconomic Factors with Nutritional Status among Women of Reproductive Age in India: A Systematic Review

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Abstract: Although a nominal reduction in malnutrition in women has been seen over the last decade, yet the nutritional status of Indian women has been adversely influenced by socioeconomic inequalities. The optimal quantity and quality of women' diet have been found directly associated with the socioeconomic status. Previous studies have identified specific or few socioeconomic factors affecting nutritional status among women in specific regions of India. However, it is necessary to identify and eliminate the specific factors prevalent in different socioeconomic strata that delineate the nutritional status of women of reproductive age and the health of future generation. The present review aims to assess the association of socioeconomic inequalities on the nutritional status of women of reproductive age across different settings of India. The literature search was performed using the PubMed, Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar databases. A total of twenty-six (n=26) studies were included in this review. The results of the review reveals that the low socioeconomic status of women limits the intake of nutrient-rich diets like green leafy vegetables, fruits, pulses, dairy products and meat/fish/eggs., which contain various essential macro- and micro-nutrients. On the contrary, women hailing from the high socioeconomic status are prone to high intake of fat-rich diet. Maternal income, occupation, education and nutritional awareness were the major contributory factors that affect the dietary diversity and adequacy, intake of the nutrient-rich and supplementary diets. Consequently, it leads to malnutrition and other nutrient-disorders among women belonging to low and high socioeconomic strata. Discerning the specific socioeconomic factors associated with nutritional status of women is imperative to create new sustainable health interventions and better implementation of existing ones.

Keywords: Dietary intake; Nutritional status; Socioeconomic Status; Women of reproductive age group; India.