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**Longitudinal Impact of Food Supplementation Program in
Early Childhood on Academic Achievement among Children
in India: Evaluating the Integrated Child Development
Scheme**

Kriti Vikram

National University of Singapore

Undernutrition continues to be a pervasive problem in India with 38% of its children stunted and 36% underweight in 2015. The government of India has implemented the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) to provide adequate nutrition to young children, especially for those in the most disadvantaged groups. There is mounting evidence that links undernutrition at early ages with cognitive and economic disadvantages later in life. Furthermore, early childhood nutritional interventions have been shown to be associated with human capital gains. In this paper, I investigate the medium-term impact of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) in early childhood on subsequent reading and arithmetic achievement among children in India. There are no nationally representative studies in India that have investigated the impact of ICDS on cognitive outcomes. Utilizing data from the two waves of the India Human Development Survey, results show that ICDS has a positive impact on cognitive achievement and that girls stand to benefit the most from it in this highly gendered society.