

Dr Katsushi Imai, a Faculty Associate of BWPI has secured the research grant from the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) entitled "On the Change of Poverty and Undernutrition in Rural India" (£59, 473, 1st April 2010-31st March 2011). Overseas collaborators/ consultants are Prof. Raghav Gaiha (University of Delhi), Prof. Raghendra Jha (Australian National University) and Dr. Veena S. Kulkarni (Arkansas State University). Woojin Kang at SoSS will work as a research officer for the project.

The main objective is to shed new light on the empirical puzzle: why per capita calorie consumption has declined across all households with different income levels in both rural and urban areas despite high rates of income and consumption growth in recent India (Deaton and Dreze, 2008). They argue that 'the calorie Engel curve', which plots per capita total calories or cereal calories and household per capita expenditure, has shifted consistently downwards during 1983-2005, based on National Sample Survey (NSS) data. However, if we focus on the rural wage earners, the possibility of poverty nutrition trap exists, that is, the labour productivity and wage rates are affected by nutritional intakes and thus those undernourished tend to be trapped in poverty. We will investigate why calorie intake declined over time (and why the improvement of anthropometric indicators has been slow) and whether it is largely due to decline of the calorie requirement. Also examined are the effects of activity intensities, poverty interventions, such as, Rural Public Works, and other determinants of calorie requirements, on calorie intakes by linking three different survey data, that is, NSS, NFHS and NCAER data in the recent three rounds, in 1992-4, 1998-2000 and 2004-6.