



INDIA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

Special Issue on Gender

November 2019



IHDS Brings Gender Issues to the Fore

This issue marks the third anniversary of the IHDS newsletter! And we want to celebrate this special occasion with you, our proud community of users, academics and researchers. Thank you for traversing this momentous journey with us, while sharing your research and insights on a vast array of themes, based on data collected and curated by IHDS over two waves spanning the years 2003-04 to 2011-12.

The IHDS has been witness to a period of far-reaching social and economic change in India. In this Anniversary edition of the newsletter, we focus on the critical theme of gender, bringing to

the fore some path-breaking research on how issues of education, employment and marriage have impacted the lives of women in the country.

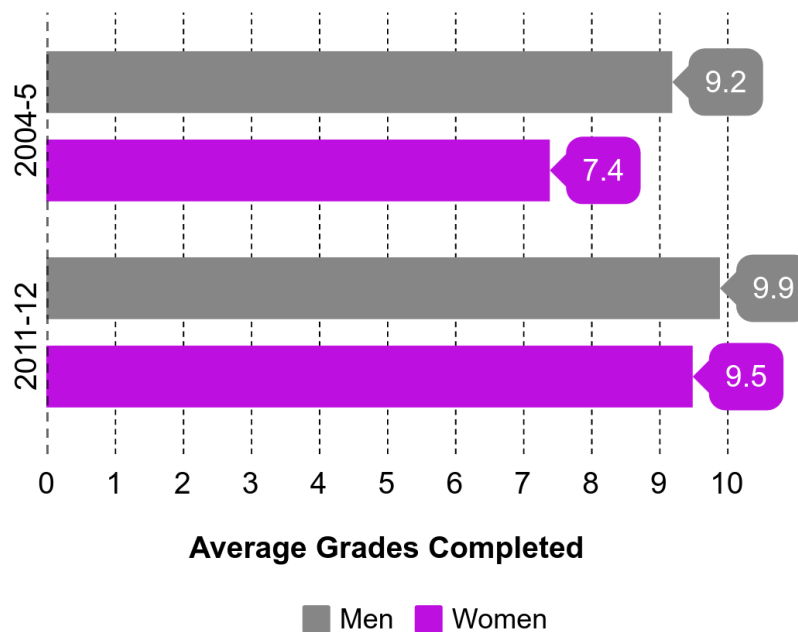
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I. Gender gap in education is closing

IHDS has found consistent evidence that women's education rates have been significantly increasing between waves 1 and 2 of the survey (Afridi and Barooah 2017 [Link](#)).

Educational Attainment - men and women ages 18-24



Source: IHDS Team Calculations.

1) Desai, Sonalde and Amit Thorat. 2013. "Social Inequalities in Education," in Sambit Basu (ed.), *India Infrastructure Report, 2012: Private Sector in Education*. New Delhi: Routledge, pp. 44-52. [Link](#) See Figure 4.2 above.

2) White, Gregory, Matt Ruther, and Joan Kahn. 2015. "Educational inequality in India: An analysis of gender differences in reading and mathematics." *Working Paper No. 2016.2*. [Link](#)



II. IHDS documents lower levels of decline in women's work participation than NSS but it finds that education is not consistently associated with higher work participation.

While National Sample Surveys have documented striking decline in women's work participation, particularly in rural India, IHDS data surveys are designed to probe into women's actual activities and capture a higher level of labour force participation. Desai and Joshi (2019) demonstrate how the definition of work matters, particularly when studying women's work. As measured by IHDS decline in women's work participation is far smaller than that measured by NSS.

However, Chatterjee et al. (2018) also document that higher education is not always associated with higher levels of employment and women with moderate levels of education are less likely to participate in the labour force than their uneducated sisters.

Table 1 Work participation rates of rural men and women in 2004–2005 and 2011–2012

	National Sample Survey ^a			India Human Development Survey ^b		
	Any work	Family-based work	Wage work	Any work	Family-based work	Wage work
All men						
2004–05	54.6	38.3	26.4	54.1	36.9	24.5
2011–2012	54.3	33.1	28.0	53.4	32.4	26.6
Men ages 25–64						
2004–05	96.5	68.6	46.8	91.9	61.0	44.6
2011–2012	96.1	58.9	49.6	90.0	54.7	47.0
All women						
2004–05	32.7	23.9	13.7	38.4	30.9	13.0
2011–2012	24.8	15.7	11.7	36.5	27.5	13.6
Women ages 25–64						
2004–05	56.8	41.6	23.9	66.0	53.1	23.6
2011–2012	42.8	26.9	20.6	63.8	48.2	24.9

^aNSS WPR based on Usual Status (US + PS) definition

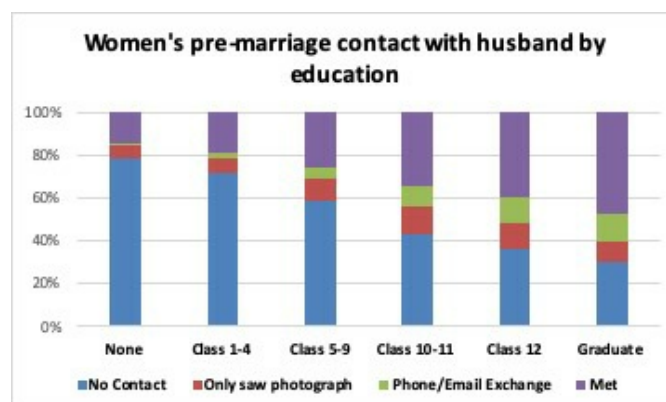
^bIHDS WPR based on whether respondent contributed at least 240 h total in household farm, business or wage work. Individuals who regularly take care of any livestock are also coded as working

1) Desai, Sonalde and Omkar Joshi. 2019. "The Paradox of Declining Female Work Participation in an Era of Economic Growth." *Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 62(1): 55-71 [Link](#).

2) Chatterjee, Esha, Sonalde Desai, and Reeve Vanneman. 2018. "Indian Paradox: Rising Education, Declining Women's Employment." *Demographic Research*, Volume 38, Article 31, Accessed on April 26, 2018. [Link](#)

III. Arranged marriages continue to hold their sway but educated women increasingly get more input in selecting their husbands

In spite of sharply rising education, few Indian women (and men) have complete autonomy over their marriage decisions. However, college educated women are more likely to be consulted in selecting their partners than women without college education.



1) Banerjee, Manjista. "Are the Young and the Educated More Likely to Have "Love" than Arranged Marriage? A Study of Autonomy in Partner Choice in India," in Pallavi Choudhuri, Sonalde Desai, and Amaresh Dubey (eds.), *India's Social and Economic Transformation in 21st Century*, New Delhi: Routledge. Forthcoming.

2) Allendorf, Keera, and Roshan Pandian. 2016. "The Decline of Arranged Marriage? Marital Change and Continuity in India." *Population Development Review*, September;42(3):435-464. [Link](#)



Selected Publications on Gender Themes Using IHDS

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- Chakrabarti, Ankita. 2019. "Understanding Female Autonomy in India through Their Family Headship Status." *Journal of Population and Social Studies*, 27(3): 266–285, Accessed on 26 July 2019. [Link](#).
- Siddique, Zahra. 2019. "Does a fear of violence affect female Labour Supply in India?," *Ideas for India*. Accessed on March 6, 2019. [Link](#).
- Agarwal, G. 2018. "Improving school attendance for adolescent girls - Evidence from a policy experiment in Delhi's public schools." *Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi*. [Link](#).
- Kaul, Tara. 2018. Intra-household allocation of educational expenses: Gender discrimination and investing in the future. *World Development*, 104, 336-343. [Link](#).
- Ojha, M. 2017. "Gender gap in schooling: Is there a role for Health Insurance?," Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. [Link](#).
- Sethi, R. 2018. "Young Brides and Social Ties." Hyderabad, Indian School of Business. [Link](#).

- Ray, T., A. R. Chaudhuri, & K. Sahai, K. 2017. *Whose Education Matters? An Analysis Of Inter Caste Marriages In India*. Discussion Paper 17-05. Economics and Planning Unit. Delhi: Indian Statistical Institute. [Link](#).
 - De Mattos, F. B., & S. Dasgupta. 2017. “MGNREGA, paid work and women’s empowerment.” *ILO Employment Working Paper No. 230*. Employment Policy Department. International Labour Organization, ILO. International Labour Office, Geneva, Switzerland. [Link](#).
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- Desai, Sonalde. “Squandering the Gender Dividend.” *The Hindu*. June 12 2019. [Link](#).
- Singh, Amanjeet and Anubhav Chakraborty. “Bad Working Conditions Keep Many Women away From Joining Labour Force in India,” *India Times*, 19 May 2019. [Link](#).
- Desai, Sonalde. “A Strange Paradox for Indian Women.” *The Hindu*. 7 March 2019. [Link](#).
- India Today Web Desk. “How Can the Education and Health of the Girl Child be Prioritised?,” *India Today*, 24 January 2019. [Link](#).
- Salve, Prachi. “Why rural women are falling out of India’s workforce at faster rates than urban women”, *IndiaSpend*, 9 January 2019. [Link](#).
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- Khan, Fatima. “Illiterate Married Indian Women Better Employed than Educated Married Women: US study”, *The Print*, 27 November 2018. [Link](#).
- Mishra, Santanu. “Indian Girls Have Degree but No Jobs: International Day of the Girl Child 2018”, *India Today*, 11 October 2018. [Link](#).
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- Pia, Nitin: “Inter-caste Marriages Are Good for Health of Indians. That’s what DNA Testing Tells Us”, *The Print*, 20 September 2018. [Link](#).
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- Mehrotra, Karishma: “Uneducated, Unmarried Women Have Less Access to Mobiles: Study”, *The Indian Express*, 11 September 2018. [Link](#).
 - Bhandare, Namita. “As Indian Women Leave Jobs, Single Women Keep Working. Here’s Why”, *India Spend*, 23 June 2018. [Link](#).
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 - Mehta, Anupma. “Laadli races up literacy ladder in Himachal.” *The Tribune*. 22 August 2016. [Link](#).
 - Desai, Sonalde. “Jobless Growth is Located Largely in the Female Half of the Population.” *Economic Times*. 28 June 2011. [Link](#).
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