

## Social Integration and Exclusion

The human development discourse, which began with attention to such basic needs as health, education, and employment, has now expanded to include social integration and exclusion.<sup>1</sup> Households are not isolated units but are connected to others in patterns that create the fabric of social life. In recent years, more research has focused on these personal interconnections among households. Social scientists have explored how social networks channel information, norms, and even diseases across populations. Political scientists have emphasized how institutions—formal patterns of interconnections—can tell us more about development than the simple sum of population characteristics. Economists have incorporated these interpersonal connections into their work by redefining them as the social capital that people invest in, and later draw from when needed.

By nature, sample surveys select households as independent cases and so have had some difficulty incorporating these social connections into their research agenda. The IHDS is fortunate to have inquired into a rich variety of interpersonal connections that link households to their wider social context. The IHDS is the first national survey with such a range of questions. The survey presents a unique opportunity for understanding how social integration is related to human development in India.

The four sections of this chapter report results from each type of social integration investigated in the IHDS:

- (1) Membership in nine types of organizations,
- (2) Reports of conflicts in the local neighbourhood,

- (3) Crime victimization, and,
- (4) Network contacts with formal institutions, such as schools, the medical system, and the government.

These are not the only dimensions of inclusion/exclusion that are relevant to the human development discourse, but they are somewhat easier to measure in a large sample survey than others, such as cultural identity. It is also important to note that although this chapter focuses on some very specific aspects of social integration and exclusion, social exclusion is not limited to the topics discussed here. Other chapters have also documented different dimensions of exclusion, such as women's limited access to the public space (Chapter 10) and the exclusion of Muslims from formal sector jobs (Chapter 4).

Discourse on social exclusion has emerged from the literature on ethnic and cultural minorities and, hence, tends to focus on characteristics of individuals and households, such as religion or caste, in identifying social exclusion. While these factors are important, we find that for some indicators of interest, regional and community contexts play a far more important role than social or cultural background.

Network connections are the one exception in which household characteristics combine with local context to determine the extent of social relationships. For organizational memberships, village or neighbourhood conflict, and crime, what matters is the local context. Are there organizations locally available to join? Do local and state institutions function well? Is the village full of conflict? Is crime widespread in

<sup>1</sup> UNDP (2004).

the state? State level variations on these issues are especially striking—more so than for the development and family issues reviewed thus far. Further, there is no simple pattern to these state variations. Each type of social integration reveals its own ranking across states, and none of these are tightly connected to state patterns of wealth, education, or gender and family norms. Emerging from this review is an even richer appreciation of the extraordinary institutional diversity across India.

### ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

While informal social networks are important pathways of influence and advancement, the growth of civil society depends also on the spread of formal organizations. Non-government Organizations (NGOs), self-help groups, caste associations, and the like provide an institutional basis for bringing people together consistently over time to work for common goals. They can be the foundation of a healthy social and political order.

The IHDS asked households whether they were members of any of the nine types of formal organizations. Somewhat over a third (36 per cent) of Indian households reported being a member of at least one of these groups (see Table A.11.1a). The organizations vary widely in their reach. Caste associations and groups with a social, religious, or festival focus enlist about 14 per cent of Indian households, NGOs and development groups, only about 2 per cent (see Figure 11.1).

There is a moderate tendency for a household that is a member of one type of organization to have also joined others. A count of the number of types of organizations joined reveals that 18 per cent of households are members of just one type of organization. Another 11 per cent are members of two types, and another 7 per cent have joined three or more types of organizations. This count provides

a useful index for the extent of civic associations across India.

It is interesting to note that the membership of caste associations and religious and festival societies tops the list of organizational memberships. The survey items did not distinguish between different types of organizations within these broad categories. However, it would not come as surprise to people familiar with Indian society that social and religious institutions form an important avenue through which Indian households relate to the world around them.

Organizational density is strongly patterned along state boundaries. Membership is widespread in Assam and the North-East, and in the south, especially in Kerala, where more than 70 per cent of households are members of at least one organization (see Figure 11.2).

In contrast, only 6 per cent of Punjab households and 9 per cent of Uttar Pradesh households belong to any of the named organizations.

This statewide variation overwhelms variation by social position within states. As would be expected, richer and more educated households are more likely to be members of an organization, but the differences are quite small (for example, 40 per cent of households with a college graduate are organization members, while 29 per cent of households without any schooling are members).

Differences among castes and religions are negligible, and whatever differences exist are almost wholly attributable to geography. For instance, the higher membership rate of Adivasis is due to their concentration in the north-eastern states, where there is a high associational membership. Rural–urban differences are also minor compared with the state differences. A rural household is slightly more likely to be an organizational member (38 per cent) than an urban household (31 per cent), despite the lower levels of education and wealth in rural areas. Only a few types of organizations

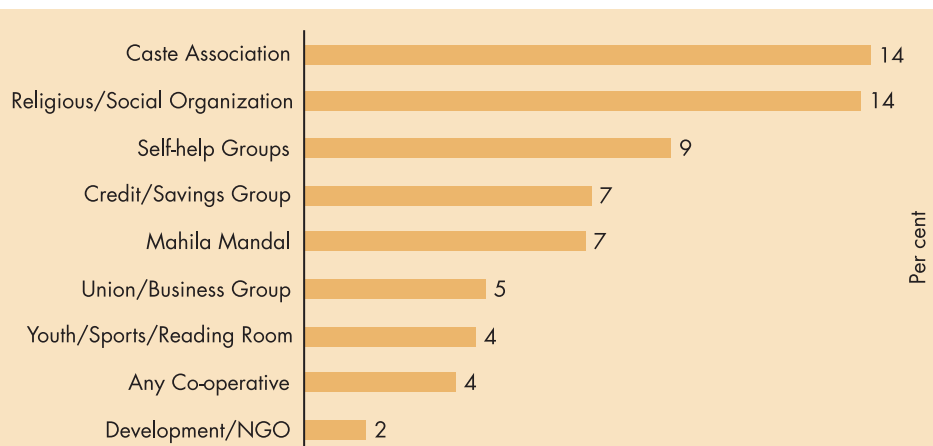


Figure 11.1 Membership in Different Organizations (in per cent)

Source: IHDS 2004–5 data.

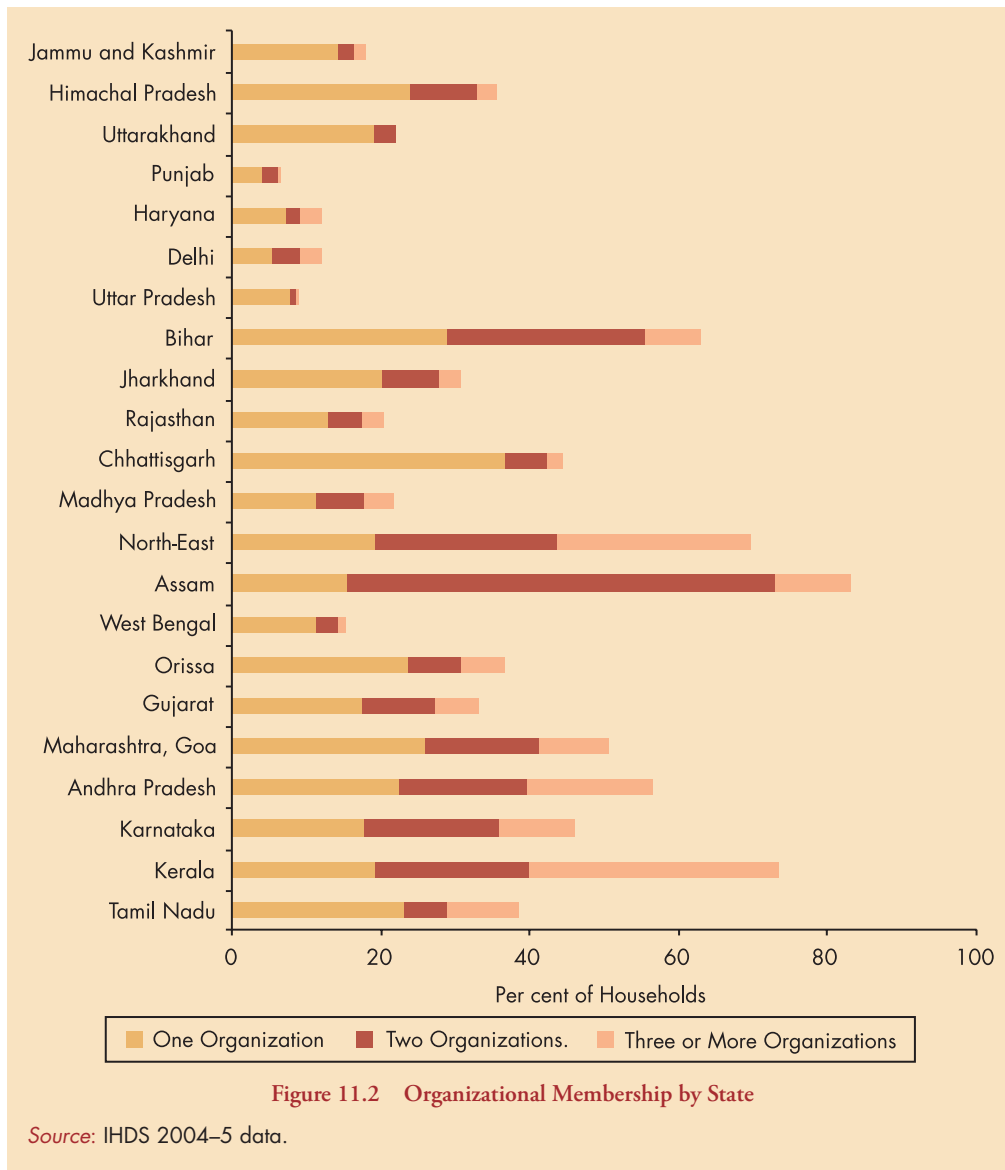


Figure 11.2 Organizational Membership by State

are more common in towns and cities—unions and business organizations, for instance.

State differences are particularly important for organizational memberships, although as we later show, they are somewhat less important for informal networks. Organizational memberships are most prevalent in Assam (83 per cent), Kerala (73 per cent), the north-eastern states (70 per cent), and Bihar (63 per cent). This greater importance of state location and lesser importance of social position for formal organizations should not be surprising. A household can usually join a formal organization only if that organization exists nearby, whereas, virtually all households throughout India have at least some potential access to a teacher, a health practitioner, or a government official, who form their informal networks. The geographic basis of most formal organizations produces the large state differences

observed. The importance of caste associations strengthens state-based patterns because some castes have widespread caste associations and others do not, and different castes are located in different areas.

**VILLAGE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CONFLICT**

Organizational memberships represent the positive side of social connections. But social relationships can have a negative side as well. The survey asked about two of these negative aspects: The presence of conflict within the village or urban neighbourhood, and levels of crime victimization. Both are again largely patterned by state differences; social position plays a negligible role. But the state patterns are not simply the opposite of the previously analysed positive aspects of social connections. Instead, local conflict and crime define their own patterns of state differences.

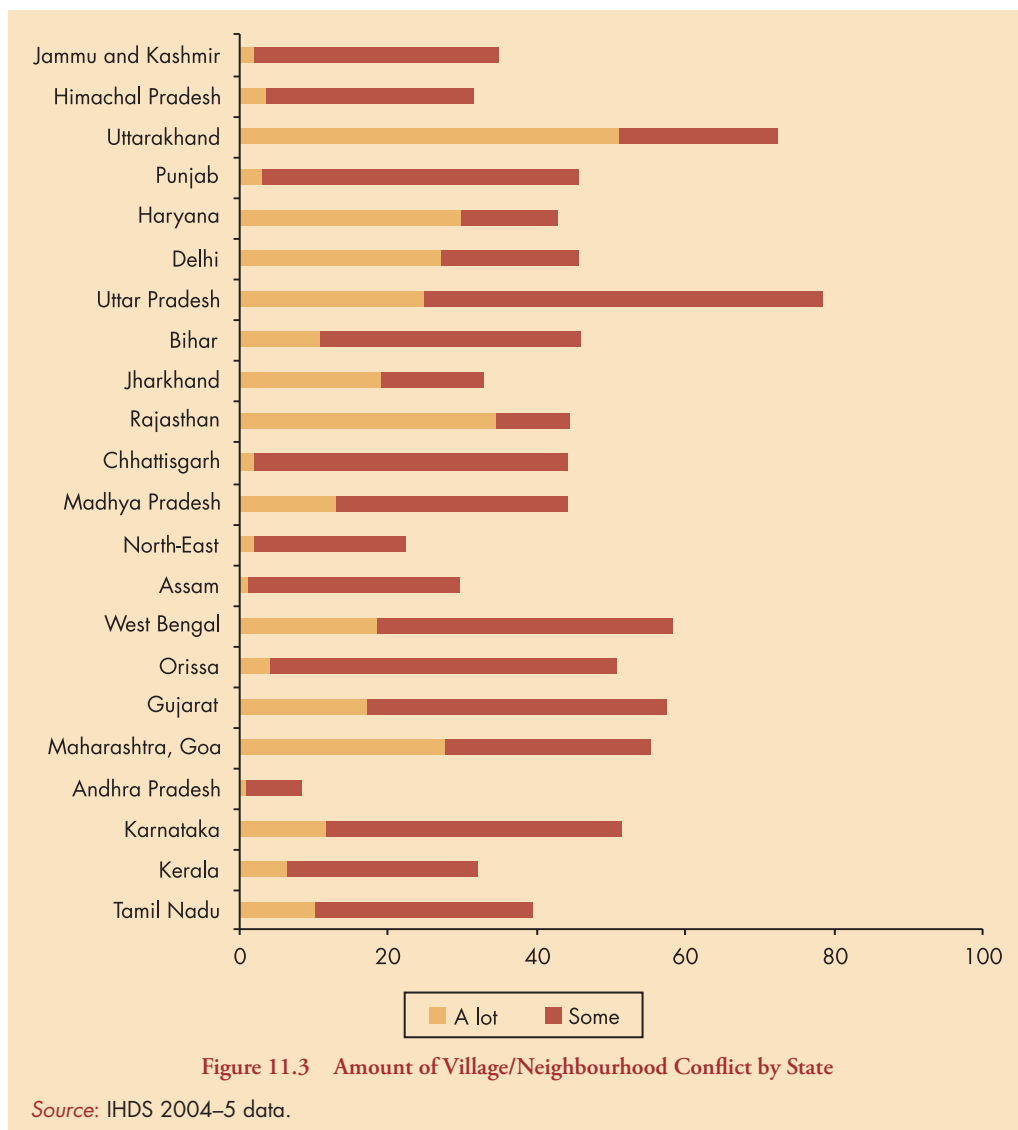
Almost half of Indian households (48 per cent) report that their village or neighbourhood has some or a great deal of conflict (see Table A.11.1a).<sup>2</sup> This varies from the 8 per cent reported in Andhra Pradesh to the 79 per cent reported in Uttar Pradesh (see Figure 11.3).

There is no obvious pattern to these state differences. Both poor (for example, Uttar Pradesh) and affluent (for example, Gujarat) states have high levels of conflict. States from the north, south, east, and west are found in both the high conflict and low conflict groups. Urban and rural parts of a state tend to have similar levels of conflict. Across India, there is almost no urban–rural difference in the reported levels of local conflict. However, state levels of conflict are somewhat correlated with the extent of organizational memberships. States with a rich array of formal organizations

tend to be states with less conflict. Causality probably works in both directions here. Conflict impedes the creation and success of formal organizations, but working together in formal institutional settings can also help reduce conflicts.

After these state differences are accounted for, few differences are found across social groups in their reports of local conflict. Christians, Sikhs, and Jains report slightly lower levels of local conflict (38 per cent) than forward caste Hindus (49 per cent), but all religious and caste differences virtually disappear when we look at differences within states. Differences across education, income, and occupation groups are even smaller.

The survey also asked whether there was much conflict among the communities and jatis living in the local area.<sup>3</sup> Compared to generalized village/neighbourhood conflicts,



<sup>2</sup> The English text was, 'In this village/neighbourhood, do people generally get along with each other, or is there some conflict, or a lot of conflict?'

<sup>3</sup> The English text was, 'In this village/neighbourhood, how much conflict would you say there is among the communities/jatis that live here? Lot of conflict? Some conflict? Not much conflict?'

fewer households (30 per cent) reported this specific type of conflict. Even among households reporting a lot of conflict within the village or neighbourhood, most (70 per cent) reported no community or jati conflict. Thus, while caste and religious conflicts contribute to local tensions, they are not the only or even the major source of local conflict.

**CRIME VICTIMIZATION**

Sample surveys of crime victimization have transformed the study of crime. Freed from the limitations of police reports, victim accounts are believed to provide a more complete picture of the level and spread of crime throughout a country. Some preliminary efforts at victimization studies have been undertaken in India, but the IHDS is the first national study

with standard victimization questions on theft, burglary, and assault.<sup>4</sup> About 4.6 per cent of Indian households reported a theft in the last year; 1.2 per cent reported a burglary; and 2.7 per cent reported an assault. Altogether, 6.7 per cent of households reported at least one of these crimes (Table A.11.1a). Given a lack of comparable benchmarks, IHDS results should be seen as being indicative but not definitive and be treated with caution.

These crime rates vary dramatically across the country. Bihar (24 per cent) and West Bengal (16.7 per cent) report far higher levels of crime than the rest of the country (Figure 11.4). At the opposite extreme, Andhra Pradesh (1 per cent), Gujarat (1.6 per cent), and Haryana, Maharashtra, and Uttarakhand (2.2 per cent) have the lowest crime rates.

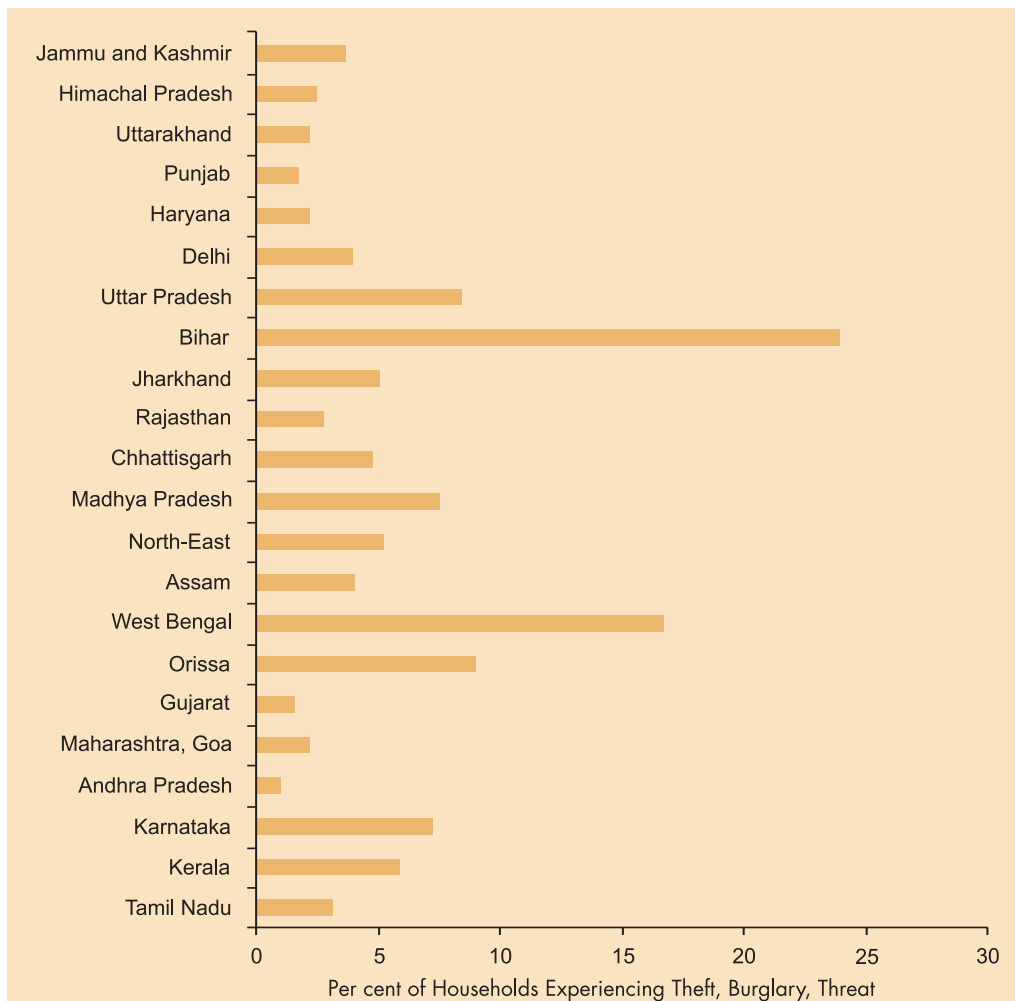


Figure 11.4 Crime Victimization in the Preceding Year by State

Source: IHDS 2004–5 data.

<sup>4</sup> The English texts were as follows:

‘During the last twelve months, was anything stolen that belonged to you or to somebody in your household?’

‘During the last twelve months, did anyone break into your home or illegally get into your home?’

‘During the last twelve months, did anyone attack or threaten you, or someone in your household?’

While these victimization rates reveal much higher levels of crime than found in the official police statistics (as is typical of victimization studies), they also suggest a very different geographic distribution of crime. The official statistics, for instance, rank Bihar and West Bengal as relatively low in crime. Besides the concentration of crime in the eastern part of India, crime rates tend to be higher in poorer states.

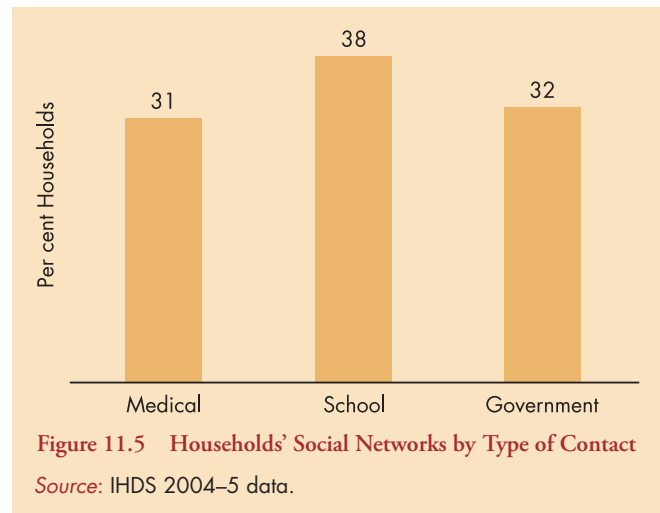
Consistent with the association of crime with state poverty, crime rates are higher in rural areas (7.3 per cent) than in urban areas (4.8 per cent). Some of this difference is a consequence of higher crime rates in the more rural states (for example, Bihar and Orissa). The higher crime rates are in the less developed villages (8.2 per cent) than in more developed villages (6.3 per cent), this is entirely a function of state variation. More of the less developed villages are in the high crime eastern states and the moderately high crime central states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

In contrast to the dramatic state differences, victimization is remarkably uniform across types of households within the states. While there is some difference by household income, with the poorest households reporting higher rates of victimization than the wealthiest households (7.5 per cent versus 4.6 per cent), this difference reverses when we look at crime rates within states. In any case, these income differences are smaller than what we would expect by chance. Similarly, Dalits report being crime victims slightly more often (8.8 per cent) than forward caste Hindus (5.5 per cent), but this difference reduces to 1.7 percentage points within states. The slightly higher victimization rate among Dalits results mostly from the higher concentration of Dalits in Bihar, West Bengal, and Orissa, where all castes and communities report higher crime.

### SOCIAL NETWORKS

Who people know and—perhaps more importantly—who knows them is an invaluable resource for any household. Good social networks are not only instrumental for getting ahead but are an end in themselves. One's own status in any community is defined by knowing and being known by other high status people. The survey asked households about their ties to three major institutions. Whether they had acquaintances or relatives who worked in education, the government, and medicine.<sup>5</sup> Across India, 38 per cent of households have ties to schools, 32 per cent have ties to the government, and 31 per cent have ties to some medical institution (Figure 11.5).

A household with ties to any one of these institutions is more likely to have ties to the others, so it is useful to



construct a scale from 0 to 3 measuring the extent of the household's social network. Forty seven per cent of households have none of the three network ties, 21 per cent have one, 16 per cent have two, and another 16 per cent have all three types of network ties.

The statewide variation in network ties is substantial (Figure 11.6).

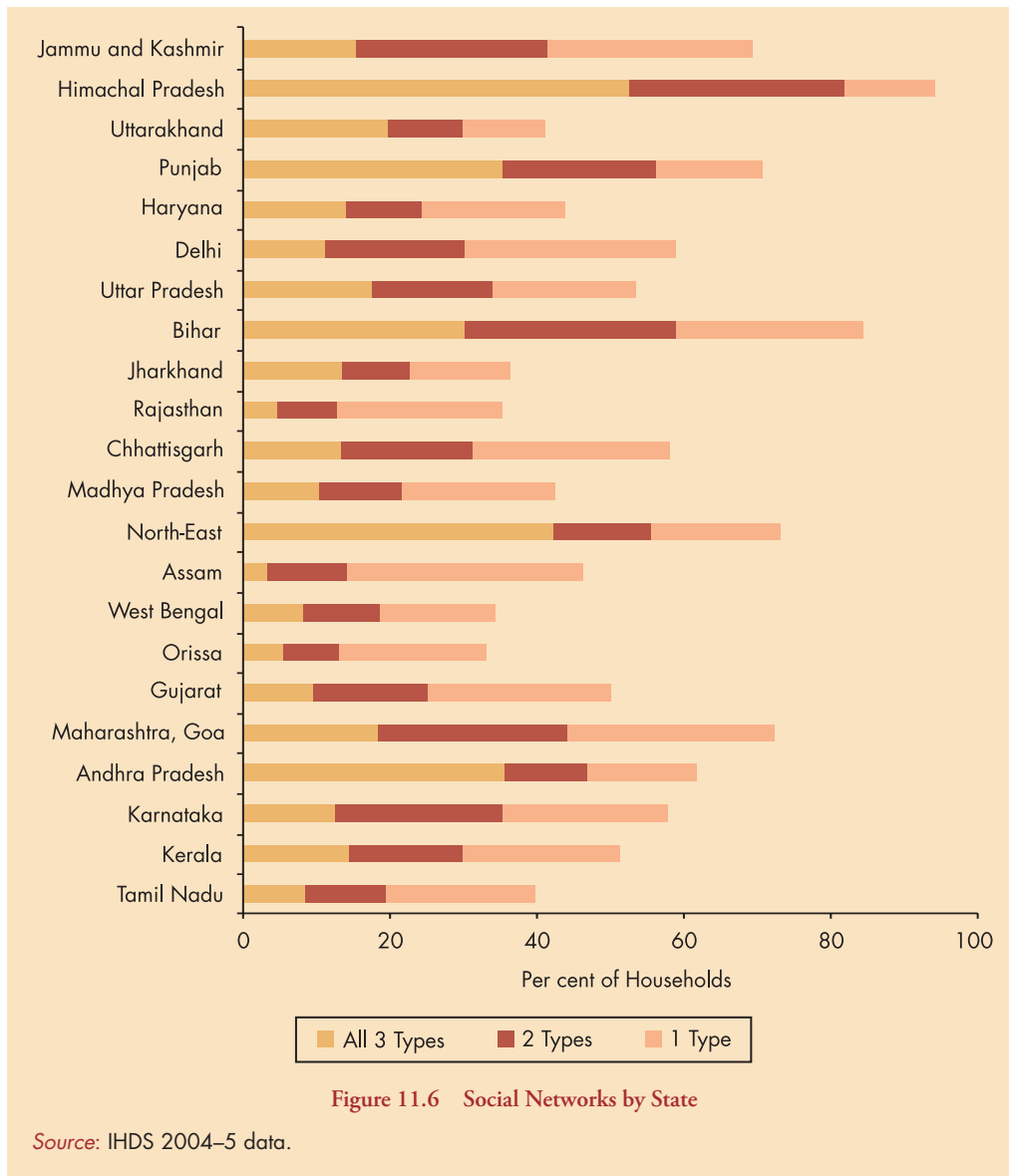
In Himachal Pradesh, more than three-quarters of the households have ties to at least one of these institutions, and the average number of ties is greater than two. On the other hand, in Orissa and Rajasthan, only about a third of households have any ties at all, and the average number of ties is just above 0.5. This fourfold difference is only slightly related to state wealth. While the fairly affluent states of Himachal and Punjab have high network densities, Bihar, which is among the poorest of states, also has high network density. And in relatively affluent Gujarat and Haryana, approximately half of the households have no network ties.

Network ties are almost as extensive in rural villages as in towns and cities. Urban households have, on an average, 1.2 network ties, only slightly above the 0.9 network ties of rural households (see Table A.11.1a). All this difference is due to the higher education and economic status of urban households. A rural household of the same educational and economic level as an urban household is likely to have even more network ties than its similar urban counterpart.

There are sharp differences among social groups (Figure 11.7) that follow the expected status hierarchy.

Forward castes have more contacts than OBCs, who have more contacts than Dalits, who have more than Adivasis. Most of these differences are attributable to the educational

<sup>5</sup> This type of social network question is known as a 'position generator' inquiry. The English text was, 'Among your acquaintances and relatives, are there any who ... are doctors, or nurses, or who work in hospitals and clinics? ... are teachers, school officials, or anybody who works in a school? ... are in government service?' (other than doctors, teachers, above).



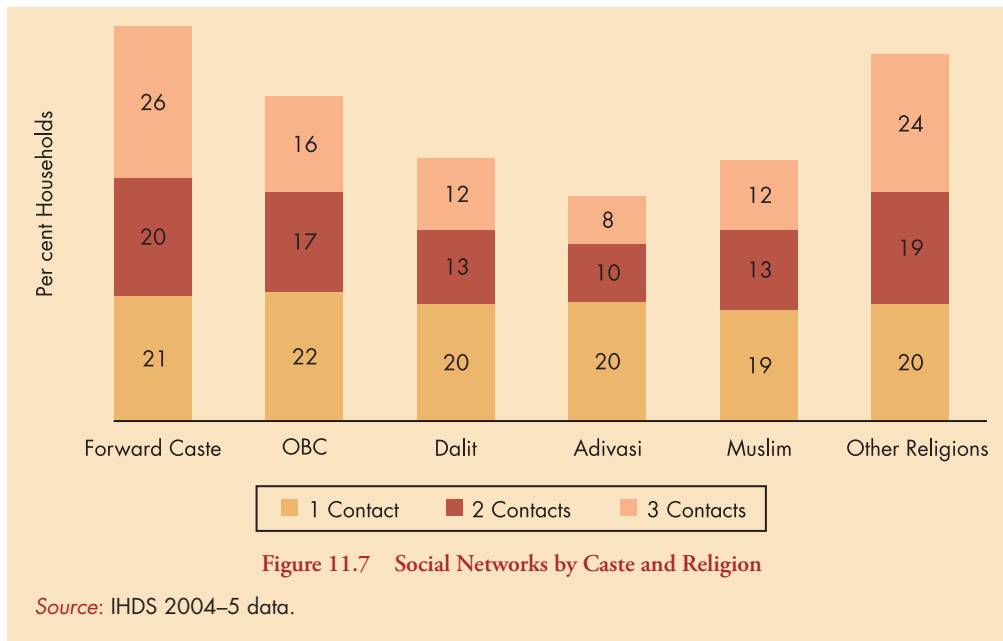
and economic differences among the groups; the exception are Adivasis, who have few contacts even when compared with educationally and economically equivalent forward caste Hindus. Muslims also have few contacts, not much different from Dalits—a low standing that remains low when compared with Hindus of equivalent education and economic position. However, minority religions other than Muslims are as well connected as forward caste Hindus.

Education, occupation, and income all have the expected relationships with social networks (see Table A.11.1a). Higher levels of status are consistently associated with more social contacts. Causality probably works in both directions here. More education and income enable a person to have more elite contacts, but better social networks also are an asset for getting into schools, finding better jobs, and earning more money.

While there are some similarities in the state patterns of informal networks and formal organizational memberships, there are also noticeable differences. Bihar and the North-East are high on both measures and West Bengal and Rajasthan low on both. But Punjab is high on informal social networks and low on formal organizations while Assam is the reverse. Neither state pattern is highly correlated with state differences in education, wealth, or family patterns. Differences in organizational densities probably follow the particular state histories of political and social mobilization that are at best loosely determined by the underlying social structure.

**DISCUSSION**

How do these indicators of social integration and exclusion fit into an analysis of human development? Some of these measures are important indicators of well-being in themselves.



Experiencing theft, burglary, and threats increase vulnerability and reduce a sense of security. Other indicators—such as social networks—are associated with an ability to access formal institutions such as schools, hospitals, or government services. Still others, like organizational membership, reflect the functioning of the civil society and the participation of households in the broader social structure.

Social exclusion plays an independent role in reducing access to services and negatively impacts individual outcomes. When a child from a well-connected household is sick, parents know how to find transportation, which doctor to see, and how to talk to the doctor. If they are themselves poorly equipped, either because of poverty or low education, they know whom to ask for help. This is reflected in health outcomes for their children. Children from households with connections to all three institutions—schools, medical systems, and government—have about 13 per cent lower mortality in the first year of life than households with no connections. This relationship is independent of caste and religion, household income, education, and place of residence.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, when they must borrow, well connected households are about 24 per cent less likely to borrow from

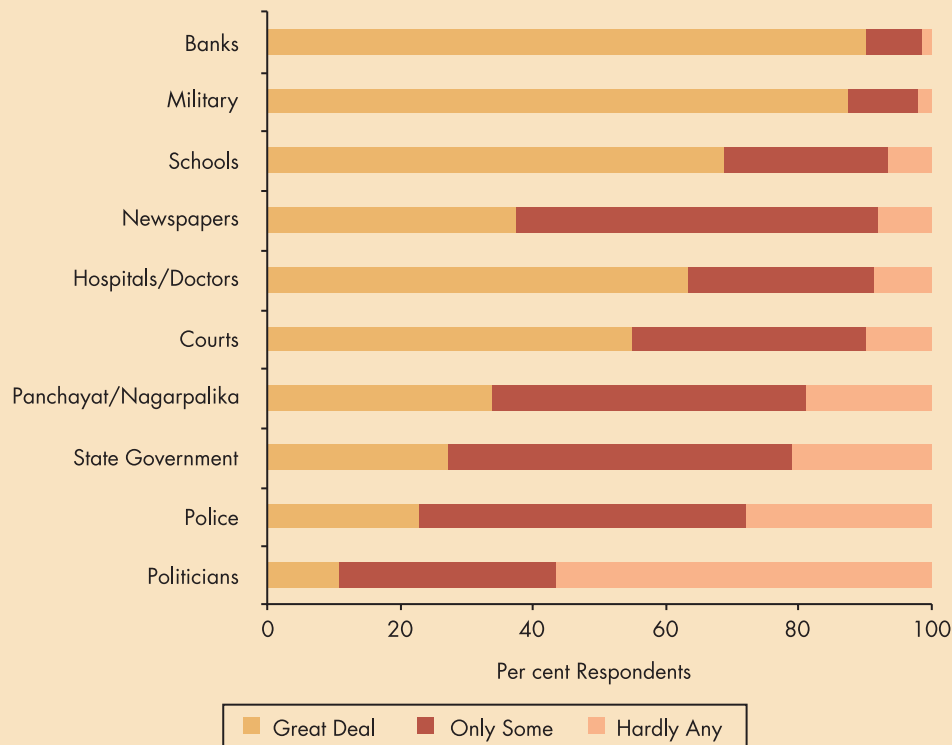
moneylenders (who generally lend at much higher interest rates than banks). Organizational membership is associated with a higher likelihood of obtaining a government loan for constructing a home, latrine, or improved stove. Households that are members of at least two organizations are 30 per cent more likely to receive such loans than those that are not members of any organization. Membership in three or more organizations boosts this difference to 68 per cent.

At the same time, the data presented in this chapter suggests that social context is far more important in patterning social exclusion than individuals' own characteristics, with social networks being a partial exception. For all indicators discussed above, place of residence and state play an important role in shaping social exclusion. For social networks, individual characteristics such as caste and religion also play a role. History, politics, and social structure all combine to create a climate in which civic organizations grow. A better understanding of why some areas are more hospitable to civic engagement than others will be extremely useful as more and more responsibilities devolve on local governments with an increasing focus on local control.

<sup>6</sup> All results in this paragraph are based on logistic regressions controlling for income, social group, household education, urban/rural residence, and state of residence.



Box 11.1 Trust and Confidence in Institutions



Studies of social capital have emphasized the subjective beliefs necessary to support strong networks of social ties and organizational memberships. Higher levels of confidence in the system's institutions and trust in one's fellow citizens facilitate the social interactions that build a strong civil society. The IHDS asked respondents how much confidence they had in 10 important institutions in Indian society ('a great deal of confidence', 'only some confidence', or 'hardly any confidence at all'). The analysis revealed that the principal division was between households that responded that they had 'a great deal of confidence' and households that responded otherwise.

The most confidence was reported for banks (90 per cent) and the military (87 per cent), followed by schools (69 per cent), hospitals/doctors (63 per cent), courts (55 per cent), newspapers (38 per cent), panchayats (34 per cent), the state government (27 per cent), police (23 per cent), and politicians (11 per cent).

Source: IHDS 2004–5 data.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Caste associations and social organizations dominate the list of association memberships.
- About 7 per cent of households reported experiencing theft, burglary, or harassment in the year preceding the survey.
- About 31–8 per cent households reported knowing someone working in a school, a medical centre, or government. These social networks are the largest among families living in Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, and the North-East.
- Social networks for Adivasi households are considerably more limited than those for other social groups.
- Households report the greatest confidence in banks and the military and the least confidence in police and politicians.

Table A.11.1a Social Integration, Social Networks, and Crime Victimization

	Percent of Households Reporting			Mean Number of Social Network Connections
	Membership in Any Organization	Village/ Neighbourhood Having Some Conflict	Victim of Crime/ Threat Last Year	
All India	36	48	6.7	1.0
<b>Maximum Household Education</b>				
None	29	48	7.8	0.6
1–4 Std	37	50	8.2	0.7
5–9 Std	37	47	6.6	0.9
10–11 Std	39	46	5.4	1.2
12 Std/Some college	42	48	5.8	1.4
Graduate/Diploma	40	48	5.8	1.8
<b>Place of Residence</b>				
Metro city	24	52	4.9	1.3
Other urban	34	45	5.1	1.2
Developed village	42	45	6.3	1.0
Less developed village	35	51	8.2	0.9
<b>Household Income</b>				
Lowest Quintile	32	51	7.5	0.7
2nd Quintile	36	49	8.2	0.8
3rd Quintile	35	46	6.9	0.9
4th Quintile	38	45	6.1	1.1
Highest Quintile	40	47	4.6	1.7
<b>Social Groups</b>				
Forward Caste Hindu	33	49	5.5	1.4
OBC	39	46	6.3	1.1
Dalit	35	51	8.8	0.8
Adivasi	42	43	5.3	0.6
Muslim	30	48	7	0.8
Other religion	45	38	5	1.3

Source: IHDS 2004–5 data.

Table A.11.1b Social Integration, Social Networks, and Crime Victimization by State

	Percent of Households Reporting			Mean Number of Social Network Connections
	Membership in Any Organization	Village/ Neighbourhood Having Some Conflict	Victim of Crime/ Threat Last Year	
All India	36	48	6.7	1.0
Jammu and Kashmir	18	35	3.6	1.3
Himachal Pradesh	36	31	2.4	2.3
Uttarakhand	22	72	2.2	0.9
Punjab	6	46	1.8	1.6
Haryana	12	43	2.2	0.8
Delhi	12	46	3.9	1.0
Uttar Pradesh	9	79	8.4	1.1
Bihar	63	46	24	1.7
Jharkhand	31	33	5	0.7
Rajasthan	20	45	2.8	0.5
Chhattisgarh	44	44	4.8	1.0
Madhya Pradesh	22	44	7.5	0.7
North-East	70	22	5.2	1.7
Assam	83	30	4.1	0.6
West Bengal	15	58	16.7	0.6
Orissa	37	51	9	0.5
Gujarat	33	58	1.6	0.8
Maharashtra, Goa	51	55	2.2	1.3
Andhra Pradesh	56	8	1	1.4
Karnataka	46	51	7.2	1.1
Kerala	73	32	5.9	1.0
Tamil Nadu	39	40	3.1	0.7

Source: IHDS 2004–5 data.