

INDIA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

August 2019

Welcome to the India Human Development Survey Forum

A monthly update of socio-economic developments in India by the IHDS research community

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In this issue...

The India Human Development Survey (IHDS) continues to engage and inspire researchers throughout the world because of the vast array of data it offers through its spectrum of education, health, economy, family, and gender modules for both urban and rural samples across the country. This edition of the IHDS newsletter covers two of the quintessential research areas that define socio-economic outcomes in India—livelihoods and gender.

- *The first paper uses data from IHDS and night-light intensity to show that diversification of livelihoods, especially in non-agricultural occupations, can help attain better nutrition outcomes and dietary diversity while also mitigating poverty and enhancing farm incomes.*
- *In the second paper, the author examines the issue of gender inequality and power dynamics at the household level. Based on an exploration of IHDS-II results, she finds that women in the higher age bracket and those not in marital union have a greater opportunity for achieving autonomy and becoming heads of their households.*
- **Recent publications using IHDS**

Research Findings Based on IHDS Data

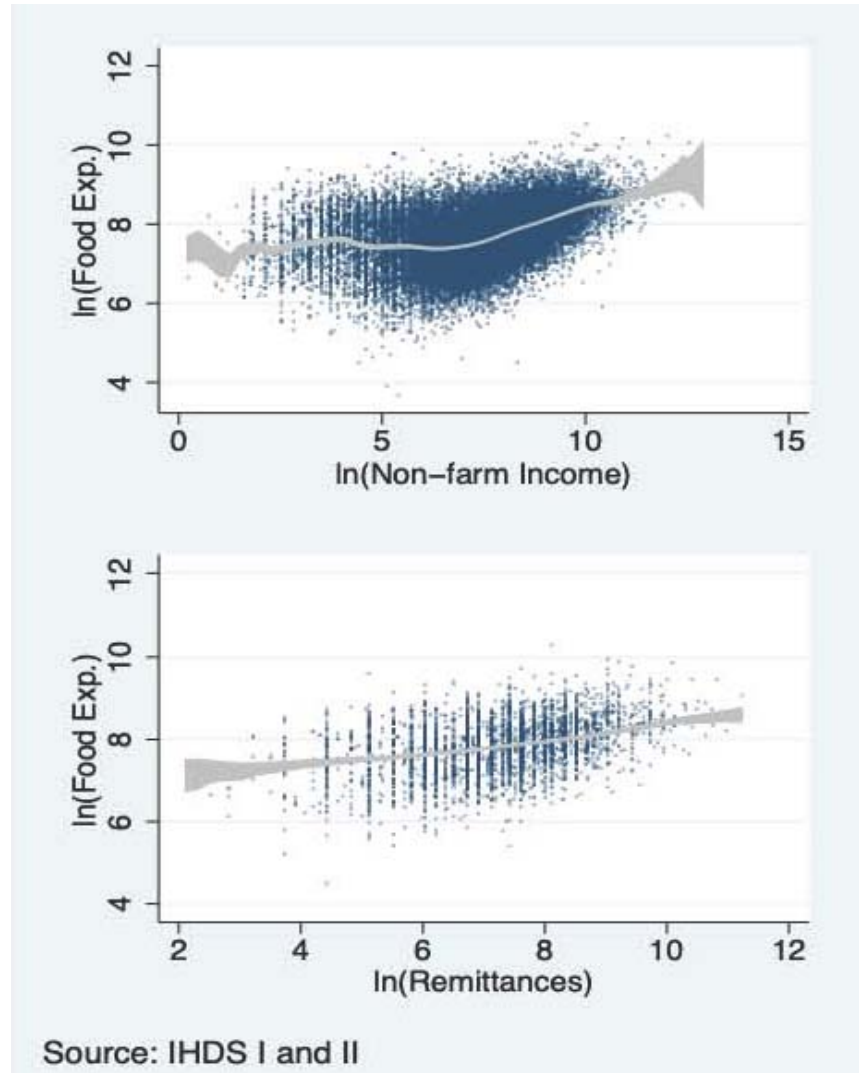
Does Non-farm Income Affect Food Security? Evidence from India

Sumit Mishra and Andaleeb Rahman

Livelihood diversification through greater non-farm activities has been considered as an important mechanism to propel growth, lower rural poverty, and augment farm income across developing countries. However, little is known about its implications for nutritional outcomes such as dietary diversity. Using the nationally representative India Human

Development Survey (IHDS) of rural households in India, and night-time light intensity as an instrumental variable (IV) for non-farm income, the authors show that engaging in non-agricultural livelihoods has a positive effect on overall food expenditure, especially on non-cereal items, enabling greater dietary diversity. These findings have crucial policy implications for nutrition transition in India, where agricultural incomes have been stagnant during the last decade. The findings in the paper further contribute to the existing knowledge of agriculture-nutrition pathways.

Figure 1: Non-parametric associations with consumption indicator



Source: IHDS I and II

[Full Paper Here](#)



Sumit Mishra is an Assistant Professor of Economics at the Institute for Financial Management and Research, Sri City. His primary research interests are development economics, political economy, and public economics. Currently, his research explores the relationship between social and regional imbalances—geography and state capacity. Sumit is also working on the issue of structural transformation in India.



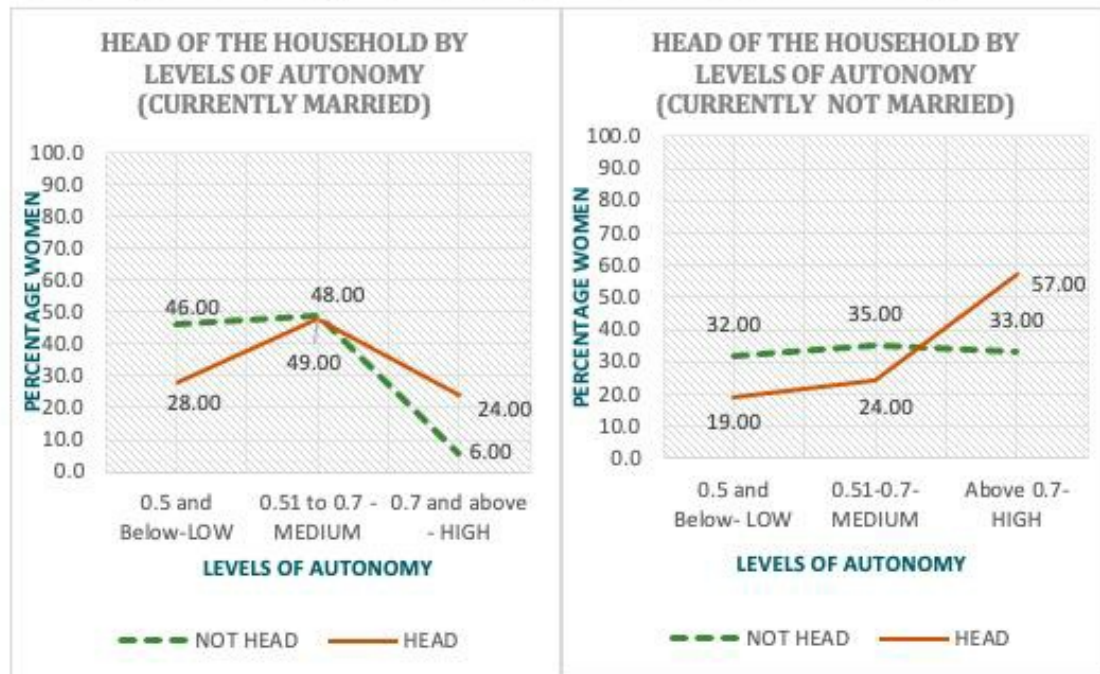
Andaleeb Rahman is a Post-doctoral Associate at Cornell University. His research interest lies in understanding the process of economic development. Trained as an applied economist, Andaleeb's current work can be organised around three sub-themes: food systems, rural-urban transitions, and ethnic politics.

Understanding Female Autonomy in India through Their Family Headship Status

Ankita Chakrabarti

The sex of the head of the household can provide insights into gender inequality and power dynamics that exist at the household level. Leadership positions are still rarely given to a female in the Indian society. The hierarchy of authority in the household is based on age (privileging the older) and gender (privileging the men). Marriage is still the most important rite of passage in a woman's life in India and it is also a medium through which autonomy is realised. This paper explores how women realise ways to achieve headship in the family in an otherwise male-dominated household. Data for the paper was obtained from the India Human Development Survey (IHDS)-II, conducted during 2011-12, which sampled 39,523 ever-married women, aged 15 years and above. Autonomy indices were developed to show active decision-making power in the household. In addition, how headship status influences levels of autonomy was explored by employing multinomial logistic regression. The findings showed that decision-making abilities were distinguishable for women without spouses as compared to those who were married. Headship in India is certainly not based on economic considerations. Most of the female heads are older and are mainly ceremonial. Regions play a very important role with respect to the prevailing marriage patterns. Societies in both the northern and central parts of India showed low levels of autonomy among their women. Hence this paper has argued that autonomy and the opportunity to be the head of the household are greater for women when they are not in marital union and when they are in the higher age bracket.

Percentage of women by their headship status and levels of autonomy



[Full Paper Here](#)



interests include gender studies, sexuality studies, gender relations, public health and family demography. Currently, she is working on healthcare access among the transgender population in India. She is also actively involved with the Civilian Welfare Foundation, an NGO working with the transgender population, alternative education for slum children, and disability sports. She is a post-graduate in Geography with specialisation in population studies. She has also pursued MPhil from JNU, with her subject being the status and autonomy of female-headed households in India.

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About IHDS

The India Human Development Survey (IHDS) is a nationally representative, multi-topic survey of 41,554 households in 1503 villages and 971 urban neighbourhoods across India. The first round of interviews was completed in 2004-05; data are publicly available through ICPSR. A second round of IHDS re-interviewed most of these households in 2011-12 (N=42,152) and data for the same can be found here.

IHDS has been jointly organised by researchers from the University of Maryland and the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi. Funding for the second round of this survey is provided by the National Institutes of Health, grants R01HD041455 and R01HD061048. Additional funding is provided by The Ford Foundation, IDRC and DFID.



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