



INDIA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

April 2017



Welcome to the India Human Development Survey Forum

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

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A closer look...

The Multi-dimensionality of Development and Gender Empowerment: Women's Decision-Making and Mobility in India

By Lekha Subaiya and Reeve Vanneman

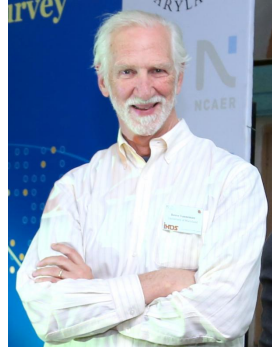
The relationship between development and gender empowerment remains unclear, especially in low-income societies where economic growth has often not brought about any noticeable change in gender relations. The paper argues that this is largely due to the multi-dimensional nature of both concepts so that different aspects of development may have quite different relationships with different aspects

Lekha Subaiya is currently working as Assistant Professor, Population Research Centre, at the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bangalore. Her areas of specialisation are Demography and Stratification. She holds a PhD in Sociology from University of Maryland, College Park. Her primary interests are in the fields of demography and stratification with a focus on gender, ageing and family dynamics.



Reeve Vanneman is Professor of Sociology at University of Maryland, College Park. He is a stratification sociologist whose recent research focuses on changing gender inequalities in the United States and India. He teaches general survey courses

of empowerment. The authors use longitudinal data from the India Human Development Survey (IHDS) on 20,507 women aged 15-49 years, who were interviewed at two points in time, 2004-2005 and 2011-2012, to map the relationships between change in important aspects of India's development with that of women's autonomy over household decision-making and their own mobility. Findings from cross-sectional, over time as well as fixed effects methods consistently show that education has an empowering effect while economic advancement has a more conservative effect on gender empowerment.



on stratification and inequality at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, as well as more specialised courses on homelessness and research methods for undergraduates. In the 1990s, he developed the India district database, a publicly available database of the district level Census and agricultural data. By estimating totals for a consistent set of districts between 1961 and 1991, those data provided a basis for investigating changes across the great geographical diversity of India, and have been used extensively by researchers working on these topics. He is one of the principal investigators for IHDS-I and II.

Full paper here

Change in women's decision-making ability, autonomy and mobility between 2004-05 and 2011-12, IHDS

| | 2004-05 2011-12 | | Not empowered in 2011-12 | | Empowered in 2011-12 | |
|---|-----------------|--------|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| | | | Remained Disempowered | Became Disempowered | Became Empowered | Remained Empowered |
| Has most say in the household on what to do when a child is ill | 27.70% | 25.10% | 54.70% | 20.20% | 17.60% | 7.50% |
| Does not need permission to go to the local health centre | 22.80% | 18.00% | 63.90% | 18.00% | 13.30% | 4.80% |
| Can go alone to the local health centre | 64.80% | 71.70% | 13.10% | 15.20% | 22.20% | 49.60% |

Looking at a cross section of women at two points in time hides the substantial change experienced by individual women over time within each dimension of empowerment.

Economic Growth Does Not Increase Social Mobility

IHDS documents tremendous economic development with rising education and declining poverty. However, it does NOT show evidence of greater social mobility. Using IHDS, Azam and Bhatt (2015) document that the education of sons depends on that of their fathers, and this relationship seems fairly constant since the 1940s. Asher, Novosad and Rafkin (2017) combine IHDS with the Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) to come to a similar conclusion, though they find slightly greater attainment for the sons of Dalits and Adivasis, suggesting a slight convergence between social groups. Singh and Motiram (2012) compare the occupational attainment of sons and fathers and come to a similar conclusion, that it is difficult to attain upward mobility for sons whose fathers hold low-skilled and low-paying occupations. Moreover, this escape is even more difficult for Dalit and Adivasi men. As they note, "The apple does not fall far from the tree."

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- Singh, Ashish, and Sripad Motiram. 2012. "How Close Does the Apple Fall to the Tree?" *Economic & Political Weekly* 47(40): 56-65. [Link](#)

IHDS in the News

- Desai, Sonalde and Anupma Mehta, "No Economy for Women", *The Hindu*, March 8, 2017. [Link](#)
- Bhattacharya, Primit, "How a Harvard Economist Can Help Us Understand

the Appeal of Modi's Note Ban", *Live Mint*, March 15, 2017. [Link](#)

- Venkataraman, Ayesha and Nida Najar, "Here Comes the Bride. Now Count the Rest", *The New York Times*, February 22, 2017. [Link](#). Also in *Today*, February 23, 2017. [Link](#)
- Dasgupta, Kumkum, "On Gender Crime, Is Uttar Pradesh the Worst State?", *Hindustan Times*, February 21, 2017. [Link](#)



Recent Publications Using IHDS

- Jacob, Nikita, (2017). "Marital Unions and Human Capital Formation". PhD Thesis, Department of Economics, University of Essex. Accessed online March 4, 2017. [Link](#)
- Chatterjee, Somdeep. (2017). "Getting Girls to Schools! Assessing the Impacts of a Targeted Program on Enrollment and Academic Performance". *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy*. 20160248, ISSN (Online) 1935-1682, ISSN (Print) 2194-6108, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/bejeap-2016-0248>. Accessed online February 21, 2017.
- Rao, Narasimha D., and Kevin Ummel, (2017). "White Goods for White People? Drivers of Electric Appliance Growth in Emerging Economies", *Energy Research & Social Science*, Vol. 27, May 2017, pp. 106–16. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2017.03.005>. Accessed online March 25, 2017.
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- Saikia, Nandita and Purushottam M. Kulkarni, (2017). "An Assessment of India's Readiness for Tracking SDG Target on Health and Nutrition" *ORF Occasional Papers- 108*, February 2017. Accessed online March 18, 2017.
- Shankar, Bhavani, Sutapa Agrawal, Amy R. Beaudreault, Laxmaiah Avula, Reynaldo Martorell, Saskia Osendarp, Dorairaj Prabhakaran, and Mireille Seneclauze Mclean, (2017). "Dietary and Nutritional Change in India: Implications for Strategies, Policies, and Interventions". *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. Published online 17th March 2017. ISSN: 1749-6632 (DOI: 10.1111/nyas.13324). URL <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/nyas.13324>. Accessed online March 18, 2017.

About IHDS

The India Human Development Survey (IHDS) is a nationally representative, multi-topic survey of

IHDS has been jointly organised by researchers from the [University of Maryland](#) and the [National](#)

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.

[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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