



INDIA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

October 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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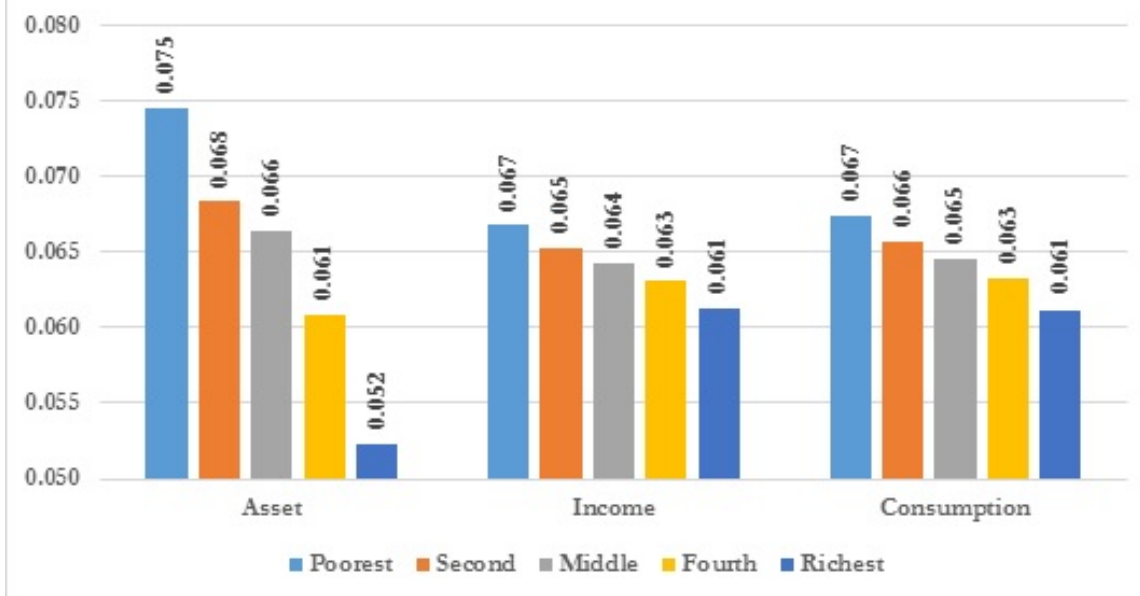
A closer look...

Economic Status and Adult Mortality in India: Is the Relationship Sensitive to Choice of Indicators?

by **Debasis Barik, Sonalde Desai and Reeve Vanneman**

What is the best way of measuring economic status? Income, consumption or wealth? National Sample Surveys have chosen to measure consumption expenditure, whereas National Family Health Surveys use an index of wealth based on ownership of consumer durables. The IHDS collects information on all three, allowing us to examine whether the relationship between economic status and adult mortality is sensitive to the choice of indicators. In a forthcoming paper in *World Development*, Debasis Barik, Sonalde Desai and Reeve Vanneman find that the answer to this question is complicated by reverse causation. Although access to economic resources reduces the probability of death, poor health may affect both economic status and mortality. Chronically ill individuals may have lower income in the years preceding death; illness may also increase consumption expenditure due to health care costs in the years preceding death. Thus, both these short-term measures show a lower correlation with the probability of death in the seven years between IHDS-I and II. In contrast, the asset index consisting of ownership of consumer durables collected over a lifetime is less sensitive to the underlying illness and shows a stronger relationship with mortality.

Predicted probability of death by economic status



[Full Paper Here](#)



DEBASIS BARIK is an Associate Fellow at National Council of Applied Economic Research, working with the Indian Human Development Survey (IHDS) project. His research interests are in the areas of public health, demography, migration, gender and social security. His dissertation was centred on the health and economic implications of ageing population in Indian states. His current research focuses on health and health systems.

User Paper

Caste and Regional Influences on the Practice of 'Untouchability' in India

By Vani Kant Borooh

This paper uses IHDS data to study the nature of households in India that admit to 'practising untouchability', and contrasts such households with those that claim to not having any members who 'practised untouchability'. The economic, social and demographic data available in the IHDS makes such a contrast between the two different household types possible. The paper estimates the likelihood of a household practising untouchability conditional upon the values, pertaining to it, of a number of relevant factors – *inter alia* its social group; its main source of income; the highest educational level of its members; its urban–rural location; and its region of residence. The central message of the analysis, however, is that the practice of untouchability was determined more by the region in which a household was located than by the caste to which it belonged. This implies that while, irrespective of region, a clear caste hierarchy was always inherent in the practice of untouchability—with Brahmins being most likely to engage in such a practice, followed by the forward castes, and the OBCs bringing up the rear—the extent of this practice depended upon where the households resided. To put it differently, in regions where untouchability was practised widely (for example, the Central region), every caste had a high probability of practising untouchability; in regions where the practice of untouchability was less pervasive (for example, the Western region), every caste had a low probability of practising untouchability. The upshot was that in terms of inequality in the distribution of probabilities of practising untouchability, 81 per cent could be explained by a division of households by region and only 19 per cent was due to the households' castes.

Table 1: Predicted and Marginal Probabilities of Households Practising Untouchability: Social Group and Region

Panel	Conditioning Variable	Practising Untouchability				
		1	2	3	4	5
		Probability	Marginal Probability	SE	z value	Pr> z
1	By Social Group of Household: All India					
	Brahmin [R]	0.520				
	Forward Caste	0.371	-0.149	0.015	-10.1	0.00
	Other Backward Classes	0.346	-0.174	0.014	-12.2	0.00
2	By Social Group of Household: North					
	Brahmin [R]	0.553				
	Forward Caste	0.451	-0.102	0.024	-4.3	0.00
	Other Backward Classes	0.255	-0.297	0.024	-12.2	0.00
3	By Social Group of Household: Central					
	Brahmin [R]	0.688				
	Forward Caste	0.593	-0.095	0.022	-4.3	0.00
	Other Backward Classes	0.518	-0.169	0.019	-9.1	0.00
4	By Social Group of Household: East					
	Brahmin [R]	0.326				
	Forward Caste	0.203	-0.123	0.031	-4.0	0.00
	Other Backward Classes	0.402	0.076	0.031	2.4	0.02
5	By Social Group of Household: West					
	Brahmin [R]	0.359				
	Forward Caste	0.156	-0.202	0.039	-5.2	0.00
	Other Backward Classes	0.169	-0.190	0.039	-4.9	0.00
6	By Social Group of Household: South					
	Brahmin [R]	0.487				
	Forward Caste	0.251	-0.236	0.043	-5.6	0.00
	Other Backward Classes	0.256	-0.231	0.040	-5.7	0.00

Full Paper Here



VANI KANT BOROOAH is Emeritus Professor at the University of Ulster, having held the Chair in Applied Economics there from 1987 till 2013. He is a past President of the European Public Choice Society and of the Irish Economic Association and was also Honorary Professor of Economics at the University of Queensland. He was elected a Member of the Royal Irish Academy in 2006 and served as its Secretary from 2013 till 2015. His most recent publications are: *Europe in an Age of Austerity* (Macmillan Palgrave, 2014); *Caste, Discrimination, and Exclusion in Modern India* (Sage, 2015); and *Education in a Divided Society* (Macmillan Palgrave, 2015), *Votes, Parties and Seats: a Quantitative Analysis of Indian Parliamentary Elections* (Macmillan Palgrave, 2016), and *The Progress of Education in India* (Macmillan Palgrave, 2017) and *Health and well-Being in India* (forthcoming Macmillan Palgrave, 2018).

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 - Bhandre, Namita, Indiaspend. “Discrimination, norms, family issues or safety? Why Indian women are quitting jobs”, *Hindustan Times*. August 5, 2017. [Link](#).
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Recent Publications Using IHDS

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 - Chatterjee, S. (2017). “Do Private Tutors Enhance English Language Ability? Regression Discontinuity Evidence from a Policy Experiment in India”, *Bulletin of Economic Research*, DOI: 10.1111/boer.12142. Accessed online September 16, 2017. [Link](#)
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 - Rajani, Ishita (2017). “Essays on Politics, Health and Development”. A PhD dissertation in The Faculty of the Department of Economics, Princeton University. Accessed online August 31, 2017. [Link](#)
 - Manor, J. (2017). “Cross-currents: State-Level Politicians’ Conflicting Views of Urban India”, in N. Jayaram (ed.), *Social Dynamics of the Urban: Studies from India* (pp. 203-215). New Delhi: Springer India. DOI: 10.1007/978-81-322-3741-9_12. Accessed online August 31, 2017. [Link](#)
 - Chakraborty, Tanika, Anirban Mukherjee, Swapnika Reddy Rachapalli and Sarani Saha. (2017). “Stigma of Sexual Violence and Women’s Decision to Work”. *IZA DP No. 10934*, Discussion Paper Series (August, 2017). Accessed online August 29, 2017. [Link](#)
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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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