



INDIA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

January 2018

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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We would like to wish the entire IHDS community a very Happy New Year. Looking forward to an even more fulfilling year of research and engagement with IHDS in 2018!

In this issue...

- A paper using data from IHDS-I and IHDS-II finds *that rapid mobile phone diffusion creates an opportunity to improve people's access to healthcare in rural India, but it also creates new forms of marginalisation among poor rural households.*
- Researchers working with IHDS data *examine the relationship between conspicuous consumption and subjective economic well-being (SEWB) using several empirical strategies.*
- Media Mentions
- Recent publications using IHDS

Research Findings Based on IHDS Data

The struggle for digital inclusion: phones, healthcare, and marginalisation in rural India

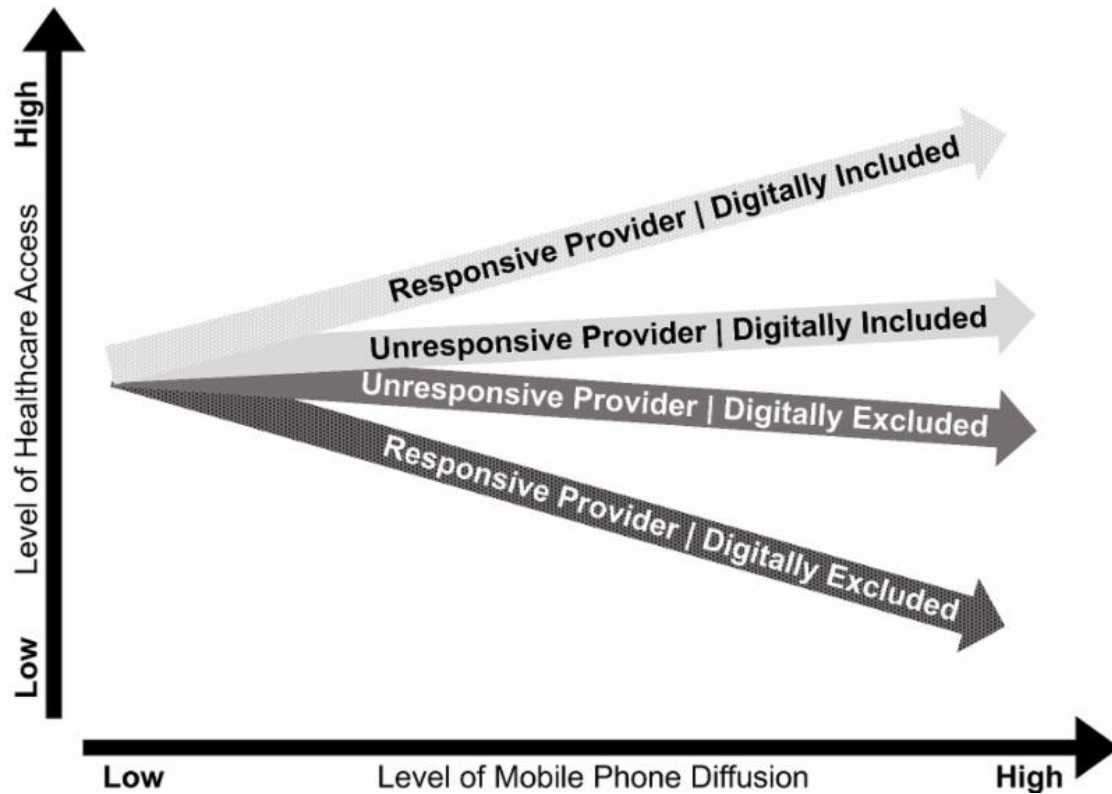
by M.J. Haenssger

The gains from digital technology diffusion are deemed essential for international development, but they are also distributed unevenly. Does the uneven distribution mean that not everyone benefits from new technologies to the same extent, or do some people experience an absolute disadvantage during this process? The author explores this question through the case study of curative healthcare access in the context of rapid mobile phone uptake in rural India, thereby contributing to an important yet surprisingly under-researched aspect of the social implications of (mobile) technology diffusion.

Inspired by a previous analysis of cross-sectional data from rural India, the author hypothesises that health systems increasingly adapt to mobile phone users where phones have diffused widely; this adaptation will leave poor non-adopters worse off than before and increases healthcare inequities. He uses a panel of 12,003 rural households with an illness in 2005 and 2012 from the Indian Human Development Survey (IHDS) to test this hypothesis. Based on village-cluster robust fixed-effects linear probability models, he finds that (a) mobile phone diffusion is significantly and negatively linked to various forms of rural healthcare access, suggesting that health systems increasingly adapt to phone use and discriminate against non-users; that (b) poor rural households without mobile phones experience more adverse effects compared to more affluent households, which indicates a struggle and competition for

healthcare access among marginalised groups; and that (c) no effects emerge for access to public doctors, which implies that some healthcare providers are less responsive to mobile phone use than others.

Overall, the findings in the paper indicate that the rural Indian healthcare system gradually adapts to increasing mobile phone use at the expense of non-users. The author concludes that rapid mobile phone diffusion creates an opportunity to improve people's access to healthcare in rural India, but it also creates new forms of marginalisation among poor rural households.



Note: Comparing prevalence of morbidity and energy spending (times) to the national average, by basic services, vehicle ownership and living space in India for 2005 and 2012.

[Full Paper Here](#)

Marco J. Haenssgen is a social scientist, currently based at the Centre for Tropical Medicine and Global Health and the Saïd Business School at the University of Oxford. His research involves marginalisation and health behaviour in the context of development and technological change. His interdisciplinary work has been published across the medical and social sciences in journals like *World Development*, *Health Policy and Planning*, and *Social Science & Medicine – Population Health*. Marco's current projects focus on popular medicine use, how people understand antibiotics and illness, their constraints in accessing healthcare, and the intended and unintended consequences of interventions related to antimicrobial resistance (a current global health priority). Aside from research, Marco also has experience in aid evaluation, intergovernmental policy making, and management consulting. He has a BSc in general management from the European Business School, and an MPhil and DPhil in international development from the University of Oxford.



'I show off, so I am well off': Subjective economic well-being and conspicuous consumption in an emerging economy

By Saravana Jaikumar, Ramendra Singh and Ankur Sarin

Conspicuous consumption may be explained by the need to signal higher social status in a society.

However, whether this consumption actually translates into an improved perception of well-being remains unexamined. In the emerging economy context, the authors argue that conspicuous consumption may play the role of elevating one's own perception of economic well-being. Further, they hypothesise the effect to be higher for the households in the 'bottom of the pyramid' (BOP). Using data from a panel of 34,621 households from the India Human Development Surveys (2004 and 2011), the paper examines the relationship between conspicuous consumption and subjective economic well-being (SEWB) using several empirical strategies. The results support the authors' hypotheses that higher conspicuous consumption may result in improved SEWB and that the effect is higher for households in the BOP. Their findings contribute to the domain of conspicuous consumption and BOP in emerging markets. Further, their results have significant marketing and policy implications.

Effect of Conspicuous Consumption on SEWB: Comparing BOP vs others

| Explanatory variables | Dependent variable: SEWB | | |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| Share of conspicuous consumption | .309*** (.039) | .506*** (.128) | .279*** (.106) |
| BOP (1=yes) | .069*** (.026) | -.056 (.035) | -.629*** (.077) |
| BOP * Share of conspicuous consumption | .476*** (.146) | .158 (.189) | .417** (.177) |
| Year (1=2011) | -.345*** (.011) | -.178*** (.025) | -.301*** (.028) |
| State mean income (log) | -.067*** (.019) | .033 (.045) | .023 (.046) |
| Income inequality (Gini) | 1.586*** (.128) | 1.517*** (.293) | 1.050*** (.309) |
| Urban (1=yes) | -.235*** (.012) | -.326*** (.032) | -.162*** (.031) |
| Metro (1=yes) | -.044** (.019) | -.008 (.048) | -.002 (.041) |
| No. of members in household | -.003 (.002) | .036*** (.005) | .005 (.004) |
| Education | .012*** (.001) | .012*** (.003) | .021*** (.003) |
| Income (log) | .234*** (.007) | .005 (.020) | .004 (.018) |
| Household assets (log) | .055*** (.001) | .065*** (.003) | .054*** (.003) |
| Social group | | | |
| Observations | 67,420 | 12,633 | 12,583 |
| No. of households | 34,576 | 10,483 | 10,414 |

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

(1) - Low-Income (BOP) vs. Rest of the households within each state

(2) - Low-Income (BOP) vs. Penultimate 10 percentile (11 – 20) in terms of income within each state

(3) - Low-Income (BOP) vs. Top 10 percentile (91 – 100) in terms of income within each state

✓ indicates that social group effects are accounted for in the model.

Full Paper Here



Saravana Jaikumar is Assistant Professor in the Marketing Group at Indian Institute of Management Calcutta, India. His research work has been published in reputed international journals including *Journal of Advertising Research*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Marketing Letters* and *Journal of Product and Brand Management*. His ongoing research work includes evaluation of pharmaceutical price regulation in India, entrepreneurship and well-being in subsistence marketplaces, insurance and consumption smoothing in emerging economies, and ill-effects of income inequality. His primary research interests include issues at the nexus of public policy and marketing, and subsistence marketplaces. He obtained his PhD from IIM Ahmedabad and MBA from Cardiff Business School.



Ramendra Singh is Associate Professor in the Marketing Group at Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Calcutta, India. His research has been published in reputed international journals such as *Journal of Business Research*, *Marketing Theory*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, and *Industrial Marketing Management*. He has worked for several years in sales and marketing positions in various organisations including Indian Oil Corporation, Exxon Mobil, SRF Limited, and ICICI Bank. He obtained his PhD from IIM Ahmedabad, India, and MBA from the Xaviers Labour Research Institute (XLRI), Jamshedpur, India.



Ankur Sarin is a faculty member in the Public Systems Group at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad, India. His past works include investigations of the effects of social and economic inequality on welfare outcomes of children and understanding the influence of technology on the social and economic life of the marginalised. Recently, he has been working on making the Right to Education an instrument not only for increased access to education, but also one that promotes a more inclusive education system as part of the institute's Right to Education Resource Center (www.rterc.in). He has a PhD in Public Policy from the University of Chicago and prior to joining IIM Ahmedabad, he was a Researcher at Mathematica Policy Research, Princeton.

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Recent Publications Using IHDS

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 - Mishra, S., and A. Rahman. (2017). *Does non-farm income affect food security? Evidence from India*. Working Paper. Retrieved on December 16, 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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