



Welcome to the India Human Development Survey Forum

November 2023

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

A View from the Ground: Interviewer Perspective on Data Collection



We are delighted to present the seventh anniversary issue of the IHDS newsletter this month. In this issue, we introduce you to some of the most important people shaping this survey, our female interviewers. Meet sisters Priyanka and Jyoti, who are part of our survey team. Come, let's find out what motivates them; **what challenges they face; and how they navigate the task of extracting crucial information from the survey respondents.**

Here is the tale of the two sisters:

Their father was always passionate about social work, which motivated them to pursue something in this field. Priyanka reveals, "This led me to enrol for an MA in Social Work and eventually work as a surveyor in a research project. Being called for another project subsequently re-affirmed my belief in my capabilities. **I strive to deliver excellent results, leveraging my skills in persuading people, simplifying complex questions, and using practical reasoning to gain the respondents' cooperation during interviews.**

"Working as a surveyor has facilitated my growth, pushing me out of my comfort zone. I've learned the art of meaningful conversation. I used to hesitate in speaking before, especially with strangers. However, **being a surveyor has transformed me, allowing for confident interactions from the outset.** Ruchi ma'am [Senior Research Analyst, Ruchi Jain] from the NCAER Team consistently appreciates my efforts, boosting my morale and inspiring me to continue excelling in my work.



Concurring with her sister, Jyoti asserts, **"I actually cherish the time spent interacting with families. Each household offers unique insights and stories, enriching my experience.**

"This role has immensely contributed to my personality development, earning me respect not only in households but also within my family and community, and among colleagues. It offers me a sense of belonging, dignified independence, and financial freedom."



Both the surveyors, however, aver that a key challenge is earning people's trust, assuring them that the interviewers are from a legitimate research entity and not involved in any fraudulent activities. Priyanka contends, "Patience is crucial in addressing these concerns, and our identification, proof, and introductory materials aid in explaining our work. Another challenge is the presumptions about our relationships, especially when we work in pairs, and our fellow interviewer happens to be a male colleague. The respondents often assume that we have familial ties, but we need to emphasise that **men and women can work together professionally without being related to each other. Gender stereotypes should not limit career choices.** Thankfully, my family supports my decisions and does not restrict my interactions or work with men."

According to Jyoti, one of the main challenges for a female surveyor is managing timetables and working odd hours. She points out, **"Safety becomes a concern, especially during late hours. It's essential for us to prioritise safety and avoid work after sunset.** Communities also prefer interviews conducted in daylight hours. Fortunately, my husband and in-laws are supportive and understand the demands of my job. They encourage me to pursue my aspirations, even when my work entails extensive travel, late hours, or challenging circumstances. Interviewing different households alongside my sister has been an intriguing and exciting experience for us."

For Priyanka, however, data collection and surveying are secondary career options, as her long-term goal is to secure a government job. But she is well on target to achieve this goal, suggesting that **working as a surveyor has broadened her horizons, equipping her with valuable skills that will undoubtedly benefit her in her future** role as a government employee.



Priyanka Vanya
Field Surveyor



Jyoti Vanya
Field Surveyor

Thank you, Priyanka, Jyoti, and countless other interviewers who make such a vital contribution to the IHDS. We continually learn from your experiences and strive to consistently enhance our survey processes in order to obtain comprehensive and relevant information from our target audience. **This Anniversary issue of the IHDS newsletter is thus dedicated to all our diligent and hard-working surveyors.**



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 neighborhoods 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 again through ICPSR. IHDS 3 is currently in the field.

IHDS 3 has been jointly organized by researchers from the University of Maryland, the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), Indiana University and the University of Michigan. 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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