



DATA FOR DEVELOPMENT

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

Confidence or Corruption? Assessing the Impact of Political Connections on Confidence in Public Institutions in India

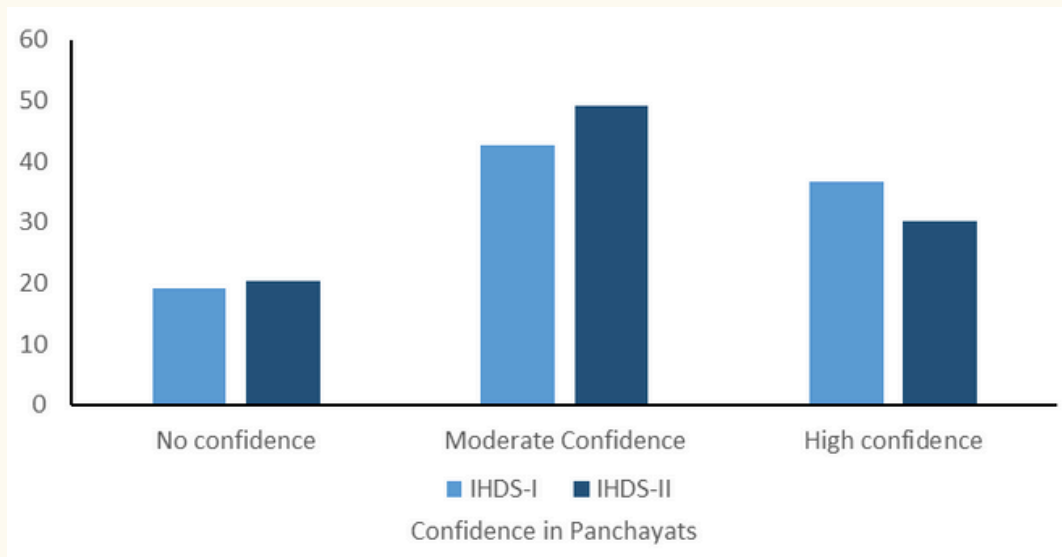
Gauri Sreekumar & Sabuj Kumar Mandal



While socio-economic factors affecting household confidence in public institutions are documented in the literature, there is a lack of empirical research on whether political connections increase this confidence in public institutions and the mechanisms involved. This study examines the effect of political connections on households' confidence in three public institutions - the panchayat (local government), politicians and state government. Using two rounds of nationally representative household-level panel data from the India Human Development Survey

(2004–05 & 2011–12) and employing a Fixed Effects Ordered Logit model, we find that households' political connections significantly increase their confidence in panchayats when a household member or somebody close to the household is a panchayat official. We explain this relationship by political elite capture where households with political connections receive greater support from the government compared to other households lacking such connections. We also account for the endogeneity of political connections using Lewbel IV method. The findings suggest a need for policies that promote equal access and greater political participation to achieve trust in public institutions.

Figure 1: Effect of political connections on households' confidence in the Panchayat



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About the Authors



Gauri Sreekumar

Gauri Sreekumar recently completed PhD (Economics area) from Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras. She is currently working on economics of climate change adaptation and sustainable development, focusing on the intersection of climate shocks, migration decisions and household resilience. Her work delves into how households adapt to environmental stressors, the role of social and political networks in migration decisions, and the broader socioeconomic implications of climate-induced mobility.



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Sabuj Kumar Mandal is an Associate Professor at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Madras, specializing in environmental and resource economics, econometrics, and economic theory. He is an applied economist with research interests in the fields of environmental sustainability, including energy efficiency, climate change adaptation, and the economic valuation of ecosystem services. His scholarly contributions are widely recognized, evident in numerous publications in esteemed journals both national and international journals. He obtained his PhD from the Institute for Social and Economic Change, University of Mysore.

Effects of Diffusion and Education on Women’s Fertility in India

Nandan Jha & Neena Banerjee

This paper studies effects of education and diffusion of information on fertility choices of women in India. Diffusion through social learning implies women’s exposure to mass media, membership of social groups, social network, and the presence of other married women in the household. Social influence entails gender roles in the household, women’s financial autonomy, and power relationships among spouses in the household. Results from the negative binomial regression models run on the India Human Development Survey Panel data show that education influences



women’s fertility. Greater exposure to mass media and access to social networks that measure social learning diffusion variables lead to lower fertility. Sharing a household with other married women has a positive influence on women’s fertility. Social influence channels of diffusion, particularly power relations in household, leads to higher fertility. Diffusion also interacts with women’s education in influencing their fertility.

Table 1: Marginal Analysis for Statistically Significant Interactions from Negative Binomial Interactive Effects Regression Model on Relationship Between Women’s Education and Social Learning & Social Influence Diffusion Variables (at mean and specific years of education)

Contrasts / Marginals	Contrast / Coeff.	Delta-method Std. Err.	Bonferroni P-value
Average education and reads newspaper vs Average education and doesn’t read newspaper	0.004	0.001	0.000
Average education and watches TV vs Average education and doesn’t watch TV	0.003	0.001	0.011
Average education and self help group member vs Average education & isn’t self help group member	0.003	0.001	0.001
Average education and have acquaintances in Government vs average education and doesn’t have acquaintances	0.004	0.001	0.003
Average education and have acquaintances in Government vs Average education and have acquaintances in Medical Profession	0.003	0.001	0.008
Average education and Have acquaintances in Government vs Average education and have acquaintances in Education Profession	0.003	0.001	0.005

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Nandan Jha is an Associate Professor at Valdosta State University, USA. He holds a PhD in Public Policy from UNC Charlotte, USA and an MA and an MPhil in Economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. His research interests are in urban policy, local governments, and economics of secondary and post-secondary education.



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Publications List

Recent Publications using IHDS Data

Chatterjee, Somdeep, Shiv Hastawala & Jai Kamal. “Lighting the path to learning: Can electricity boost children’s test scores?”, Ideas for India, April 23, 2025. [Link](#).

Clément, M., Levasseur, P., & Seetahul, S. (2025). Sex ratio and fertility preferences in India: A longitudinal analysis. *World Development*, 192, 107046, ISSN 0305-750X. [Link](#)

Gupta, D., & Bhagat, R. B. (Forthcoming, 2025). Temporary and Seasonal Migration. In A. Mistri, M. S. Reja, & B. Das (Eds.), *Migration Studies: The Fundamentals* (1st Edition ed., pp. 93-102). Routledge. [Link](#)

Khan, M. N. (2025). The Gini Index’s Dynamics as a Reflection of India’s Income Inequality. *Asian Business Research Journal*, Eastern Centre of Science and Education, 10(5): 1-11. [Link](#)

Pandoh, A., & Singh, A. (2025). Examining wage inequality among women in India: A multidimensional analysis of socio-economic disparities. PLoS ONE, 20(4): e0320940.
[Link](#)

About IHDS

The India Human Development Survey (IHDS) began as a nationally representative, multi topic survey of 41,554 households in 1,503 villages and 971 urban neighborhoods across India. The first round of interviews were completed in 2004-05; Data is publicly available via ICPSR. The second round re-interviewed most of these households in 2011-12 (N=42,152) and data for the same is available via ICPSR. Fieldwork for IHDS 3 was undertaken in 2022-24 and data is currently being cleaned and processed.

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

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