DATA FOR DEVELOPMENT

India Human Development Survey Forum | September 2025
A monthly update of socio-economic developments in India by the IHDS research community.

Asset Index as an Indicator of Household Permanent Income in India: Comparison with Total Expenditure and Income
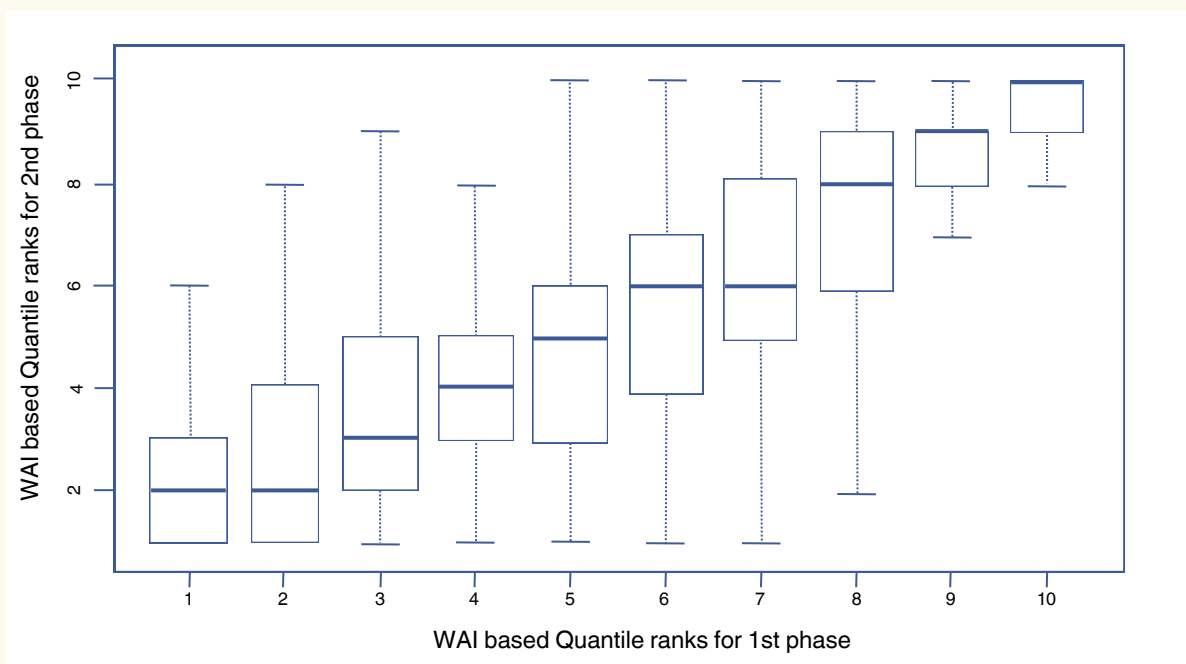*Soumyajit Bhar*

This paper compares three common measures of household economic status —income, total consumption expenditure, and an asset index—to evaluate which serves as a better proxy for permanent income. Using both waves of the India Human Development Survey (2004–05 and 2011–12), a weighted index is constructed through Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and inter-and intra-measure comparability is assessed using quintile rankings and rank correlations. The findings show that while all three measures are moderately correlated, the asset index consistently outperforms income and expenditure in maintaining households' relative economic positions over time. The asset index also exhibits stronger correlation with long-term status indicators, such as education, and better explains health outcomes like child stunting. These findings highlight the robustness and utility of asset indices as proxies for permanent income, particularly in settings where reliable income or expenditure data are scarce.

Figure 1: Boxplots of Asset Index Quintiles across Phases

y-axis: WAI based Quantile ranks for 2nd phase
x-axis: WAI based Quantile ranks for 1st phase

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About the Author

Soumyajit Bhar

Soumyajit Bhar is an Assistant Professor at the School of Liberal Studies, BML Munjal University, India. He holds a Ph.D. in Sustainability Studies from ATREE. His research focuses on socio-psychological drivers of consumption, environmental impacts, and sustainability transitions, integrating environmental studies, economics, and design in interdisciplinary teaching and scholarship.

Exploring the Intersectional Dynamics of Co-morbidities and Risk Factors Among the Older Population in India

Kashfi Nigar & Praveen Kumar Pathak

India's older population is projected to rise from 8% in 2011 to 16% by 2036, intensifying the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and co-morbidities (having more than one chronic disease), thus underscoring the need for healthier ageing policies. Contextual factors, driven by demographic shifts and shrinking family sizes, significantly shape elderly health. Using data from the India Human Development Survey, 2012 (IHDS-II), this study employed univariate, bivariate, and logistic regression analyses to examine demographic, socio-economic, lifestyle, and contextual determinants of co-morbidity among older Indians. Results indicate that about 7% of older adults experience co-morbidities, with prevalence notably higher among non-poor older women living alone or in joint families, and non-poor older men living alone. Multivariate models highlight that the odds of co-morbidity were significantly higher among those in nuclear families and in the North, Central, and Southern regions. The results underscore the need for targeted health interventions addressing multimorbidity, particularly for non-poor older adults living alone and women across diverse family arrangements.

Ageing burden in India
Greater Burden of NCDs & Co-morbidities

2011	**8%**
2036	**16%**

Doubling in just 25 years

7% of older population in India suffer from co-morbidities
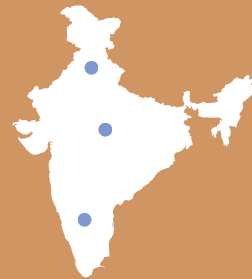
Contextual Factors

Shrinking family size

Demographic shift

Regional Hotspot

Higher Risk
North India
Central India
South India

Non-poor women living alone/jointly = higher risk

Non-poor men living alone = higher risk

Source: Nigar, K., & Pathak, P. K. (2025). Exploring the intersectional dynamics of co-morbidities and risk factors among the older population in India. *Arch Public Health*, 83, 208.

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About the Authors

Kashfi Nigar
Kashfi Nigar is a Research Scholar in Geography at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Her research focuses on population health, urban geography, and disease burden among the elderly in India. She has contributed to research projects, conferences, and publications using nationally representative survey data.

Praveen Kumar Pathak
Praveen K. Pathak is a Professor of Geography at the Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His research focuses on regional planning, human development, and spatial inequalities with special attention to social networks and demographic behaviour in India. He employs mixed methods and large survey data to examine regional disparities and development processes.

Publications List
Recent Publications using IHDS Data

Gupta, S. (2025). Who Cares? Unpaid Labor, Human Capital and Inequality in India. American Journal of Student Research, 3(4), 198-204. **Link**.

Mishra, S. (2025). Does the Political Elite Influence Children's Learning Outcomes? Economic & Political Weekly, 60(34). **Link**.

Preeti, & Diwakar, B. (2025). Spatial income inequality in Rajasthan using small area estimation model. Review of Regional Research. **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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Thank you for your support.