



DATA FOR DEVELOPMENT

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

The Association between Parents' Height and Sons' Height: Findings from India Human Development Survey (IHDS), 2011–12

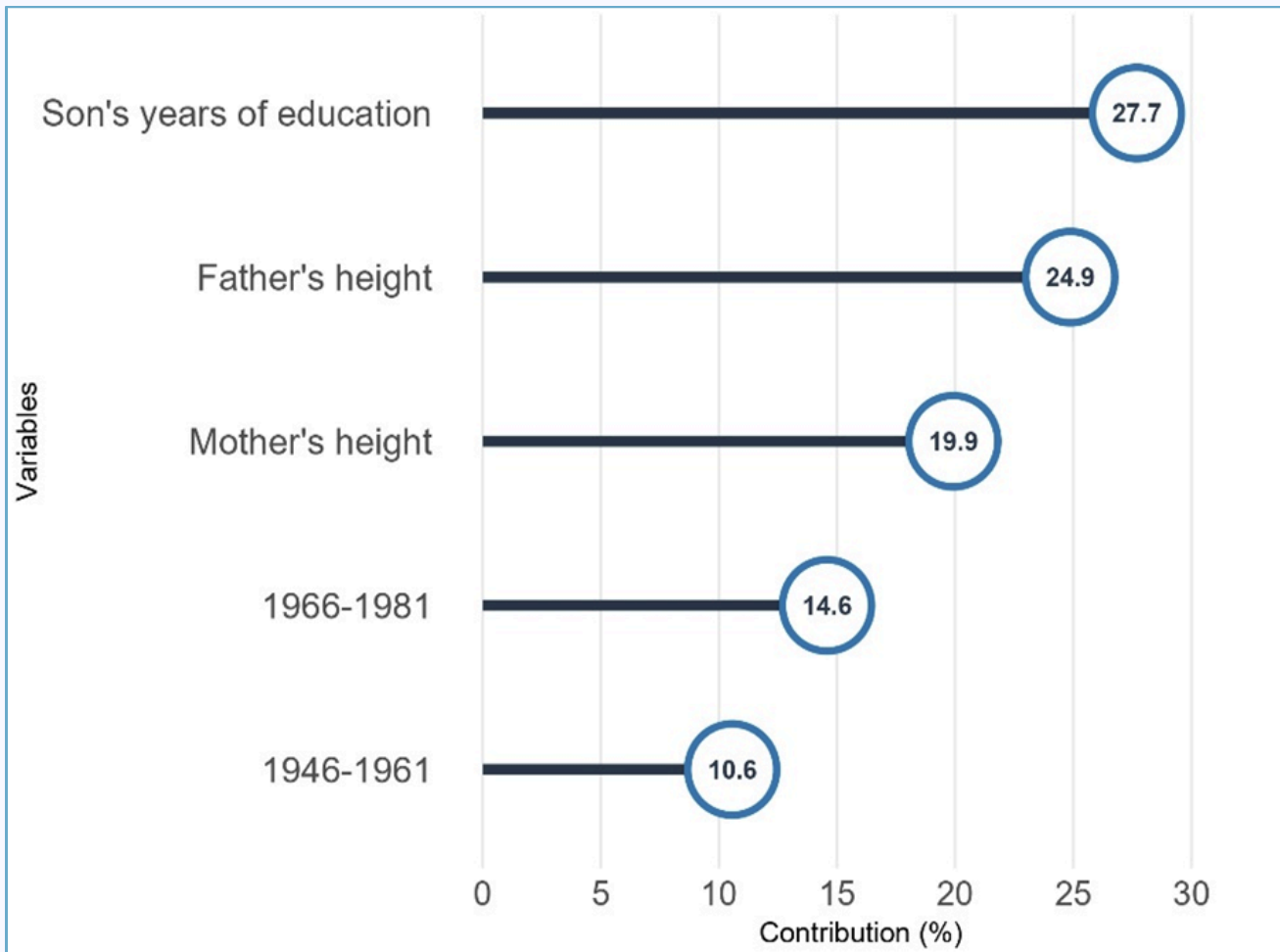
Milan Das



Despite increasing average heights in India, intergenerational height associations remain under-researched. This study analyses 4,939 parent-son pairs from the India Human Development Survey Round II (2011–12) to examine relationships between parental and sons' height across socioeconomic groups. The results show a strong and significant association, with each additional year of a son's education linked to a 1.22–1.30 cm increase in height across quantiles.

Multivariate decomposition analysis indicates that 73% of the height gap between non-poor and poor households is explained by differences in observed characteristics (the endowment effect), with parental height and sons' education emerging as primary contributors. The findings indicate that height disparities are driven primarily by differences in family characteristics- particularly parental height and educational attainment rather than differential returns to these characteristics. This highlights the critical importance of addressing educational inequalities and intergenerational health factors to reduce height disparities across socioeconomic groups in India.

Figure 1: Decomposition of son's height by poor and non-poor groups



Source: Author's calculations based on IHDS II (2011-12)



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About the Author



Milan Das is a Senior Project Officer at the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai. He holds a PhD in Population Studies from IIPS. His research interests span demography, education, fertility, childlessness, and family dynamics. His published work explores educational differentials in completed cohort fertility rates in India.

The Pathway from Domestic Remittances to Food Security in India: Is Agriculture a Mediator?

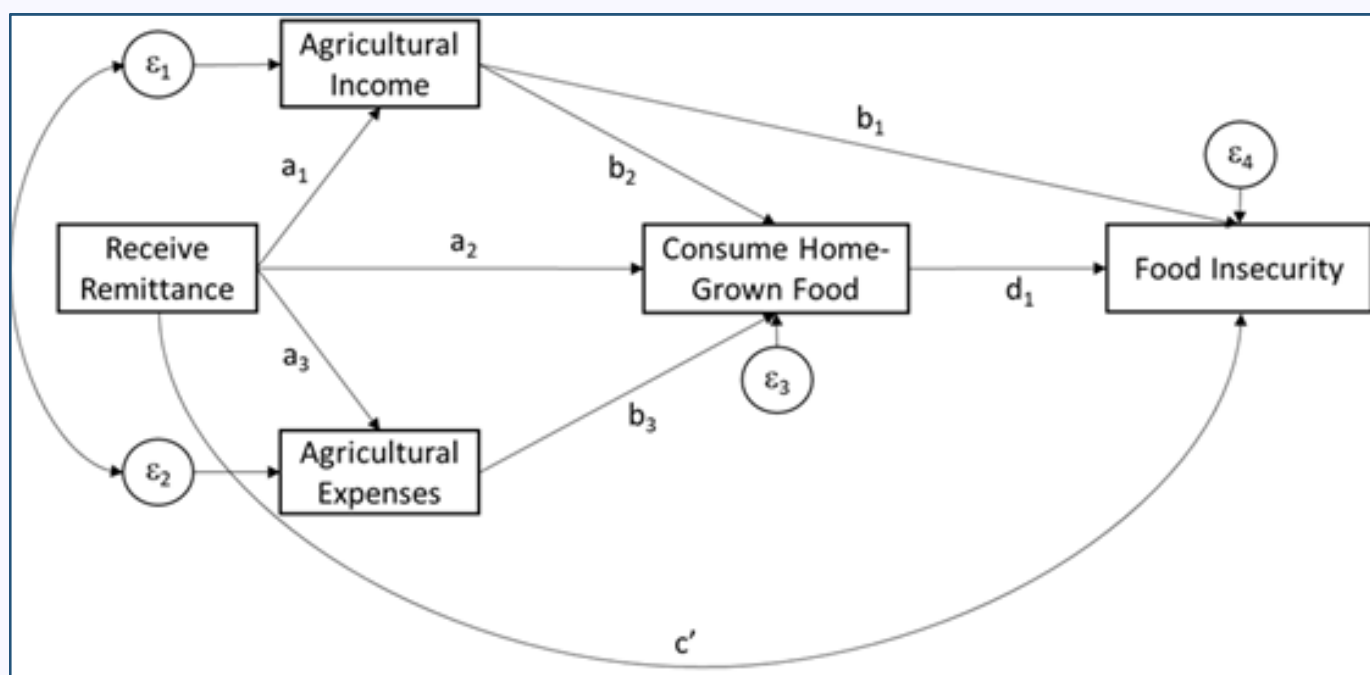
Reshma Roshania, Regine Haardörfer

Remittances sent by migrants to agricultural-origin households can improve food security through market purchases as result of increased income, improved production and consumption of home-produced food enabled by agricultural investments, or a combination of both. However, these mechanisms have largely remained hypothetical. Using two waves of the India Human Development Survey—Round I (2004–05) and Round II (2011–12)—the authors conducted a serial mediation analysis to examine how agricultural investments, production, and consumption of home-grown foods mediate the pathway from domestic remittances to food security.



The findings show that the total effects of remittances lower food insecurity; however, this is entirely explained by the market pathway, represented by the direct effect of remittances on food insecurity. These results challenge the prevailing policy narrative that migration reduces agricultural production. The study suggests that policies promoting crop diversification to enhance food security among rural smallholders should be sensitive to migration dynamics. For households engaged in migration, policy imperatives include strengthening rural markets—especially for women-headed households—and improving the affordability of healthy foods.

Figure 2: Path diagram of agricultural mechanisms of remittances and food insecurity



Source: Author's calculations based on IHDS I (2004-05) and IHDS II (2011-12)

Notes: Remittances predict agricultural income (path a_1), the likelihood to consume home-grown foods (path a_2), and agricultural investments (path a_3). Income and expenses related to agriculture predict the likelihood of consuming home-grown foods (paths b_2 and b_3). Since income and expenses in the previous year are bidirectional the residuals of the two variables covary. Food security is predicted by accessibility enabled by consumption of home-grown foods (path d_1), and food purchased through the market with agricultural income (path b_1) and remittance income (path c').



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Regine Haardörfer is a Professor in the Department of Behavioral, Social, and Health Education Sciences at the Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University. As a research methodologist, she has extensive experience in the analysis of social science data, including analysis of longitudinal, dyadic, and nested data. Her research interest is developing and applying advanced and innovative methodological approaches to advance behavioral sciences in public health.

Recent Publications Using IHDS Data

Ahsan, M. N., & Jain, U. (2026). Brothers, dowry, and spousal quality. *J Popul Econ*, 39(2), 24.

Lahiri, B. (2026). Credit Constraints and Labor Availability: Effects of MGNREGA on Household Income Diversification Across Microenterprise and Livestock Ownership. *Ecofconomics*, 8(1), A5.

Roshania, R. P., & Haardörfer, R. (2025). The pathway from domestic remittances to food security in India: is agriculture a mediator? *Agric & Food Secur*, 14(1), 49.

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 neighbourhoods across India. The first round of interviews were completed in 2004-05; the 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 are available via ICPSR. Fieldwork for IHDS-III was undertaken in 2022-24, and data is currently being cleaned and processed.

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

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