

ARE THERE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN MATH TEST SCORES?

A STUDY OF 8-11 YEAR OLDS IN INDIA

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to capture the Gender differences in Math scores for 8-11 year olds across India. The data provided by Indian Human Development survey (IHDS), 2005 reports the numerical (basic Maths), and literacy (reading and writing) skills for 8-11 year olds across different parts of rural and urban India and this data set is used for carrying out this study. The analysis is carried out using an ordered probit model based on gradation of performance in Maths scores after controlling for individual and household level characteristics.

Two types of grades are formed: one based on the current education system (absolute), i.e. we assume that a student who is 8 year old will belong to a certain class and can answer a certain question and the other is the comparison of students (relative) based on average performance in from the sample. The results show that the two approaches do not give very different results and the overall performance of the boys is relatively better than the girls. Time spent on studying including private tuitions even at this age seems to matter; Father's education more than mother's education, higher caste and economic status seem to have a positive impact on numerical attainment of these children. The limitation of the study lies in not accounting for school quality including teacher absenteeism or infrastructure in this analysis