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GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION: WHAT MOTIVATES PARENTS TO INVEST MORE IN SONS?

Abstract:

Gender discrimination exists in many different forms, and in many different countries and contexts. A wide body of empirical evidence suggests the existence and persistence of gender discrimination within the household. Boys receive preferential treatment from parents in terms of health and educational inputs. In this paper I map out and examine the existence and extent of gender discrimination in India among school going children (ages 4-18) and compare outcomes based on different types of household heterogeneities, such as size, income, location etc. I use child-specific data on enrolment and educational expenditures incurred for all children in the household, thereby making comparison both within and across households.

While the male bias exists in both the decision to enrol a child in school, and in the amount of money spent on their books, tuition etc, parents particularly favour first born children. Households in urban areas, and those that have fewer children tend to discriminate less in favour of boys. It also striking that as the number of children increases, parents have higher expectations of financial support in the future from their sons, suggesting that this expectation may be exacerbating the preferential treatment to boys.

Keywords:

education, gender discrimination, India

JEL Classification: I24, J16, D19