

POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN INDIA

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Background

- India poverty assessment program
- Question: what has happened to traditionally excluded groups during a period of rapid growth?
- Focus on Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and women – there are other major groups e.g.: Muslims, OBCs , people w/disabilities,
- Not a comprehensive review
- National Data – NSS, NFHS, and qualitative work
- Working with national entities and researchers
- Process as important as the product

Not just outcomes but processes

- Income poverty and inequality are elements of social exclusion but don't capture the essence
- Even where Gini coefficients do not show high levels of inequality, there could be serious exclusion of some groups
- Not just unequal opportunity but rules of exchange and practices that “keep groups out”
- But hard to capture processes
- And aggregate data do not capture heterogeneity

Global dimensions

- Examples
 - Roma in Europe
 - Migrant workers
 - Caste in India and Nepal
 - Brazil – people of African descent; residents of favelas
 - LAC – Indigenous people (IP)
- Common features
 - Stigma and stereotyping
 - Historical underpinnings
 - Some identifying characteristic like race, caste, religion, region
 - Often poor access to assets, markets, services
 - Low voice in decision-making

Outline of Presentation

- Look at some of the starkest markers of exclusion
- Yet telling a story of complexity and nuance
- Scheduled Tribes/Adivasis
 - Poverty and deprivation
 - Excess mortality of tribal children
- Scheduled Castes/Dalits
 - Labor market outcomes
- Women
 - Health and survival outcomes
 - Physical insecurity
 - Disadvantage in the labor market

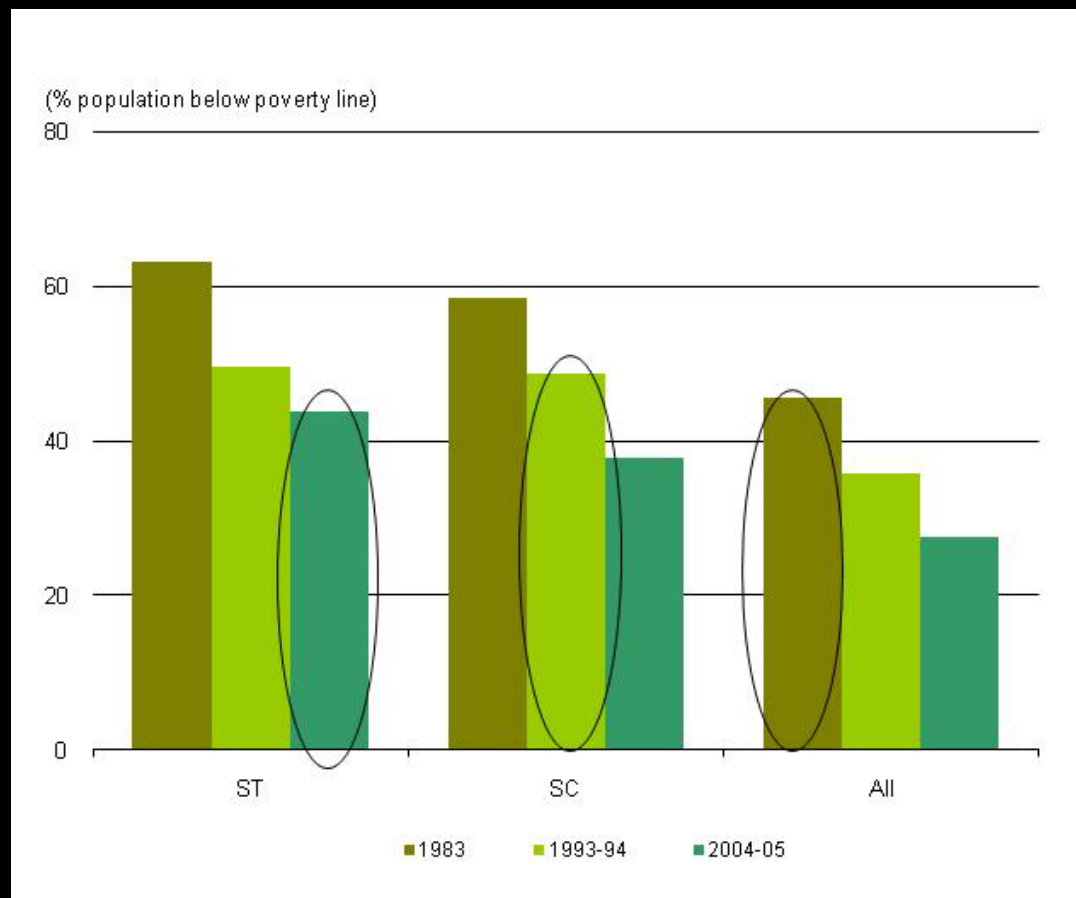
Scheduled Tribes

“There has been a systemic failure in giving the tribals a stake in the modern economic processes that inexorably intrude into their living spaces. The alienation built over decades is now taking a dangerous turn in some parts of our country.”

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, November 2009

Poverty has fallen for all: But Scheduled Tribes (STs) in 2004/05 were 20 years behind the average population

- Relatively slower declines in poverty meant that concentration of STs in the poorest deciles of the population increased
- In most states with high tribal populations, poverty rates for STs were higher than the average tribal poverty rate across the nation as a whole (e.g. Orissa - 75%)



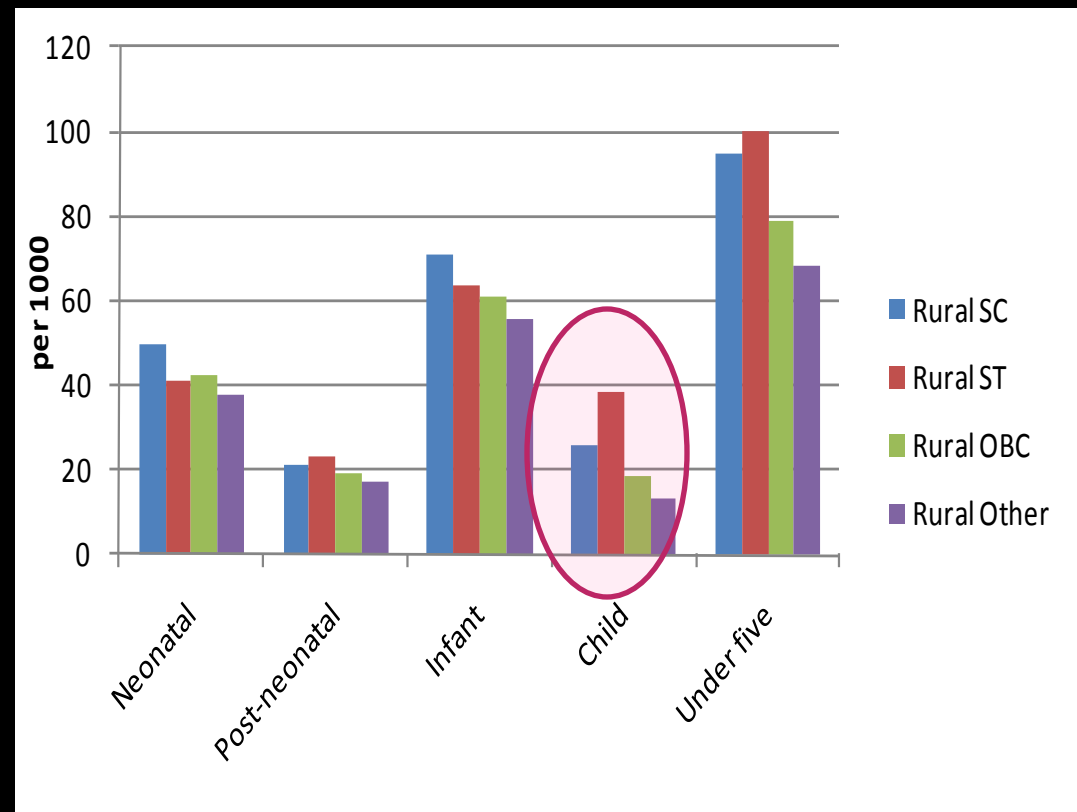
Source: Staff estimates based on NSS and official poverty lines

Child Mortality: Stark marker of tribal deprivation

- STs have higher child mortality rates than the rest of the population - nearly 96 tribal children dying for every 1000 births, compared to under-five mortality of 74 per 1000 for the average Indian child (NFHS, 2005)
- ST children make up nearly 12% of all children below the age of 5 in rural areas; but account for 23% of all deaths between age 1 and 5 i.e. a disproportionate number of children dying in rural areas, are tribal children
- Child mortality rates have stagnated among STs in rural areas over successive NFHS rounds

Tribal children start to fall behind after the age of one

- Breaking down under-5 mortality by age, we find that tribal children are on par with others at birth, but fall well behind by the time they are five years old
- This divergence is more striking when compared with SC children who also face disadvantages



Scheduled Castes (SC)

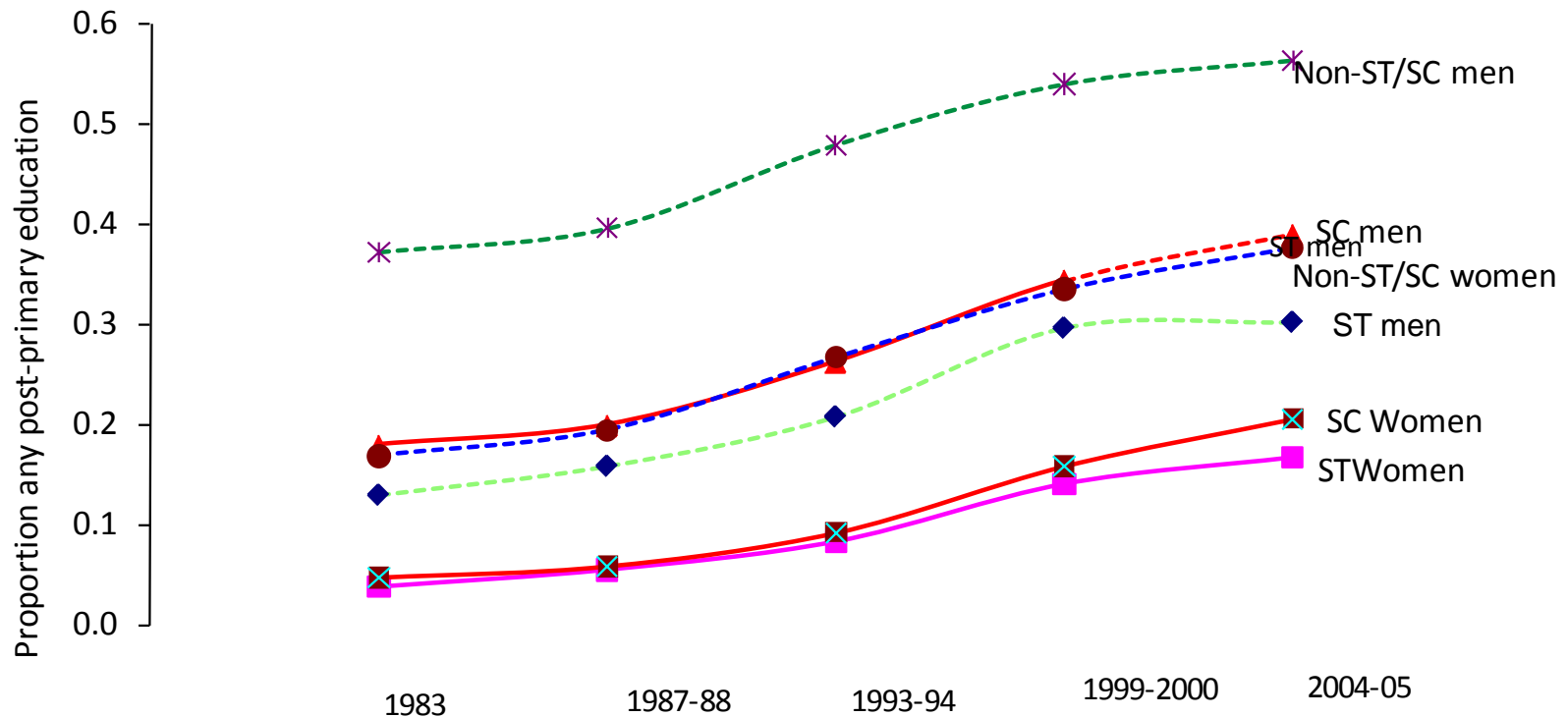
“A man of low caste who through covetousness lives by the occupations of a higher one, the king shall deprive him of his property and banish [him]”

The Laws of Manu

Impressive expansion in post primary education for SC (men)

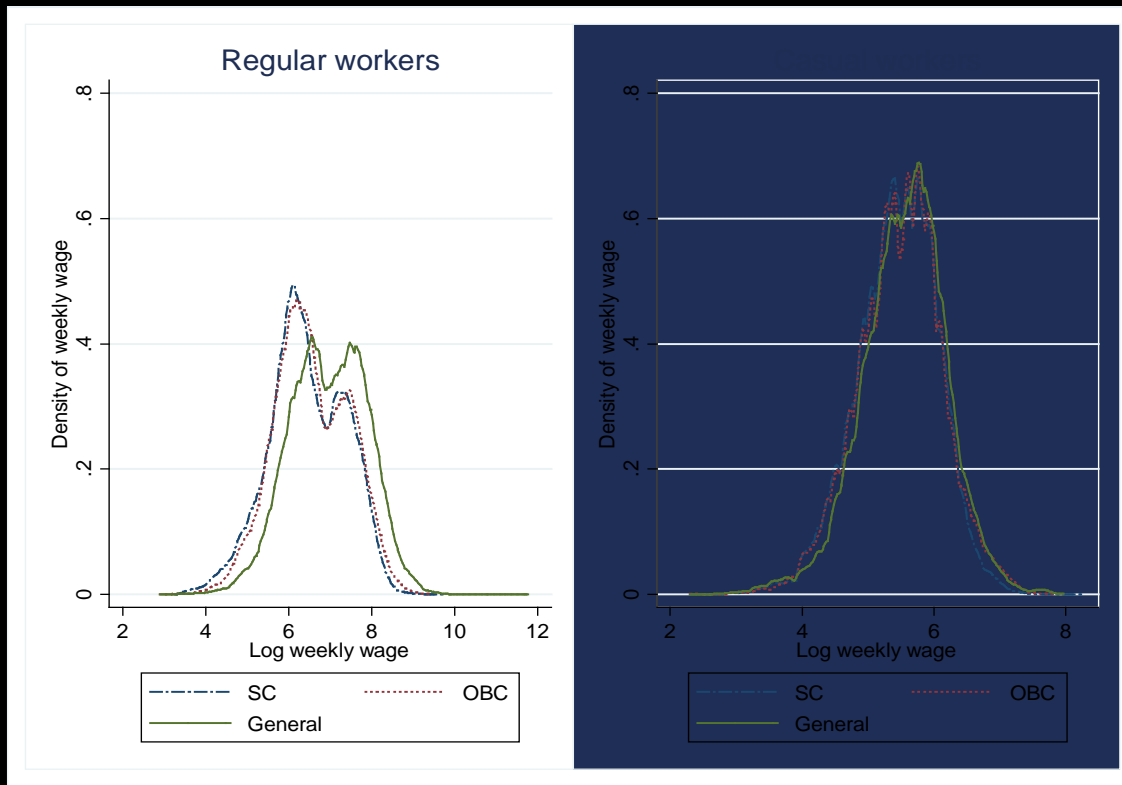
India: Change in post-primary education by caste and gender, 1983-2005

Calculations based on NSS thick rounds for working age population



- Belief systems still affect outcomes such as performance in schools
- Ethnographic evidence points to isolation of SC children in the classroom

More likely to be employed, but significant wage differentials between SC and other men



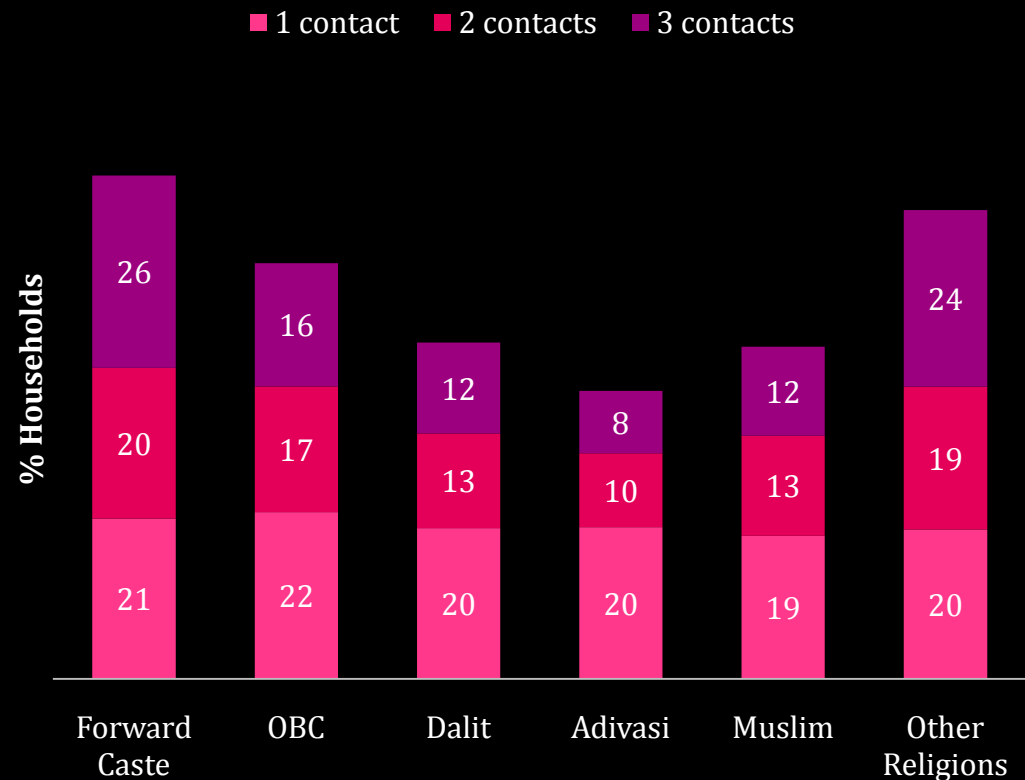
- 59% of the gap cannot be explained by endowment (education, age etc.)
- Wages are probably influenced by occupation more than anything else
- SCs are concentrated in low-end jobs - even in the public sector
- Recent work suggests subtle stereotyping in private hiring

Source: Staff calculations based on NSS 2004-05 data

SC entrepreneurship: Taking off, but stuck mostly in low end, informal enterprises

- Small labor market transition for Dalit men over time - out of casual labor into self-employment
- Higher levels of education associated with withdrawal from casual labor for all men
- BUT...the multiplied effects of caste and education suggest that an increasing supply of educated SC men may be leading to “rationing” of reserved, salaried jobs
- Almost half of self-employed SC men engage in manual trade
- Poor access to networks and credit

Scheduled Castes have few contacts in the formal sector



Source: Desai et al, 2004-05

So, is it all about opportunity?

- Experimental studies in the US sent resumes of applicants with Black, Latino and White names with equal resumes to entry level jobs showed huge discrimination
- India - Hoff and Pandey (2004) undertook a controlled experiment with Dalit junior high school students in a village in Uttar Pradesh that involved three tasks of solving mazes. In the first, the caste of students was not publicly revealed. In the second setting, the caste of each subject was publicly announced. In the third, students were separated into high and low caste (SC) groups and then caste of each group was revealed.
 - No statistically significant difference in performance when caste is not known
 - Gap becomes significant when caste is made salient – the announcement reduces the average number of mazes solved by SC subjects by 23 percent.

Recent work in India suggests subtle stereotyping in private sector hiring

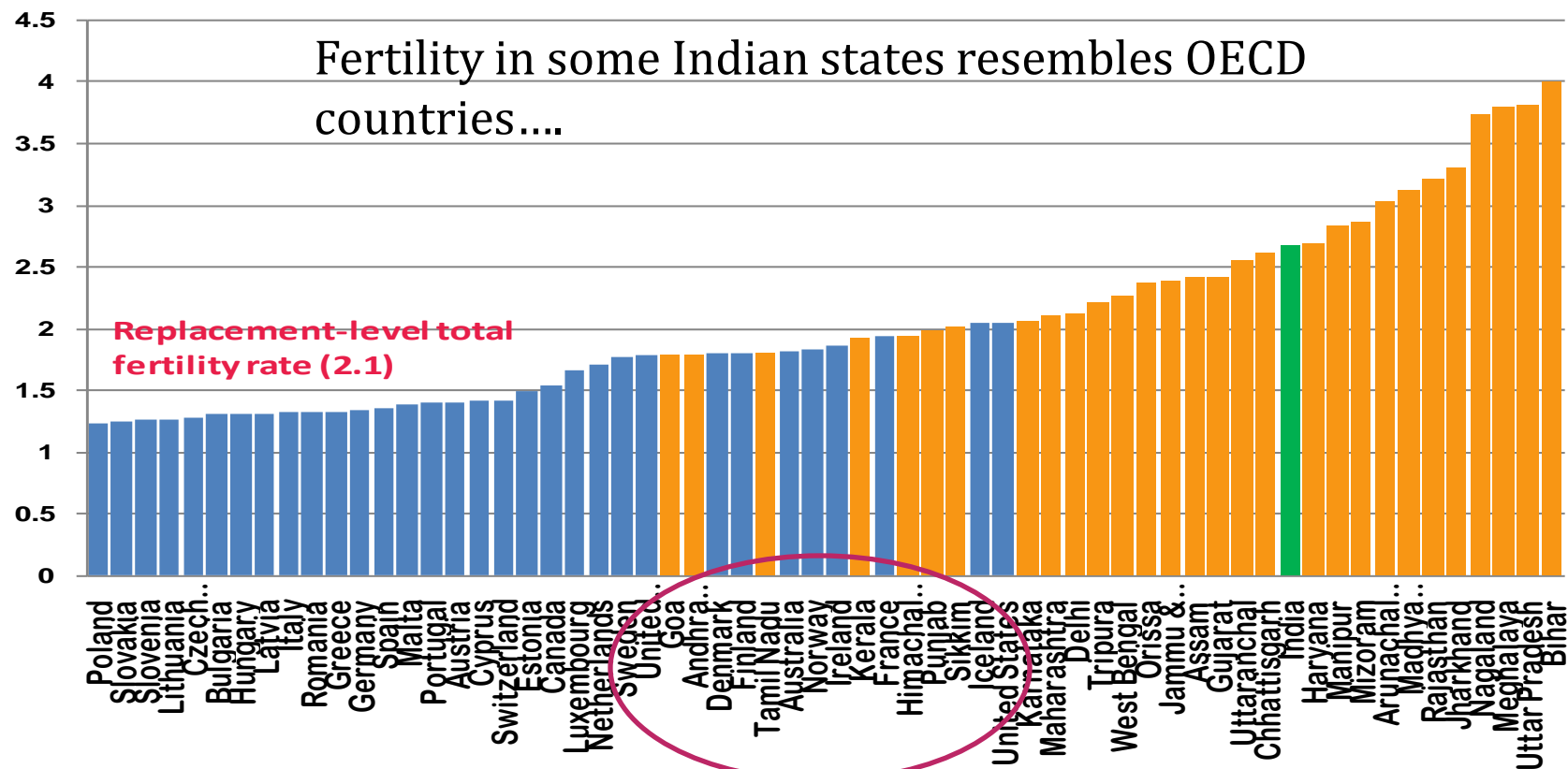
- Deshpande and Newman (2009) found that prospective hiring managers almost universally asked questions about family backgrounds during employment interviews. “Non-reservation” (upper caste) students can offer biographies that are much closer to the upper-middle class, professional ideal.
- Dalit students perceive a hidden agenda in family background questions, but for upper caste students the same questions are innocuous or sensible inquiries from a human resources perspective.

Women

A barren wife may be superseded in the eighth year; one whose children have died in the tenth; one who bears [only] daughters in the eleventh; but one who says unpleasant things [may be superseded] immediately.

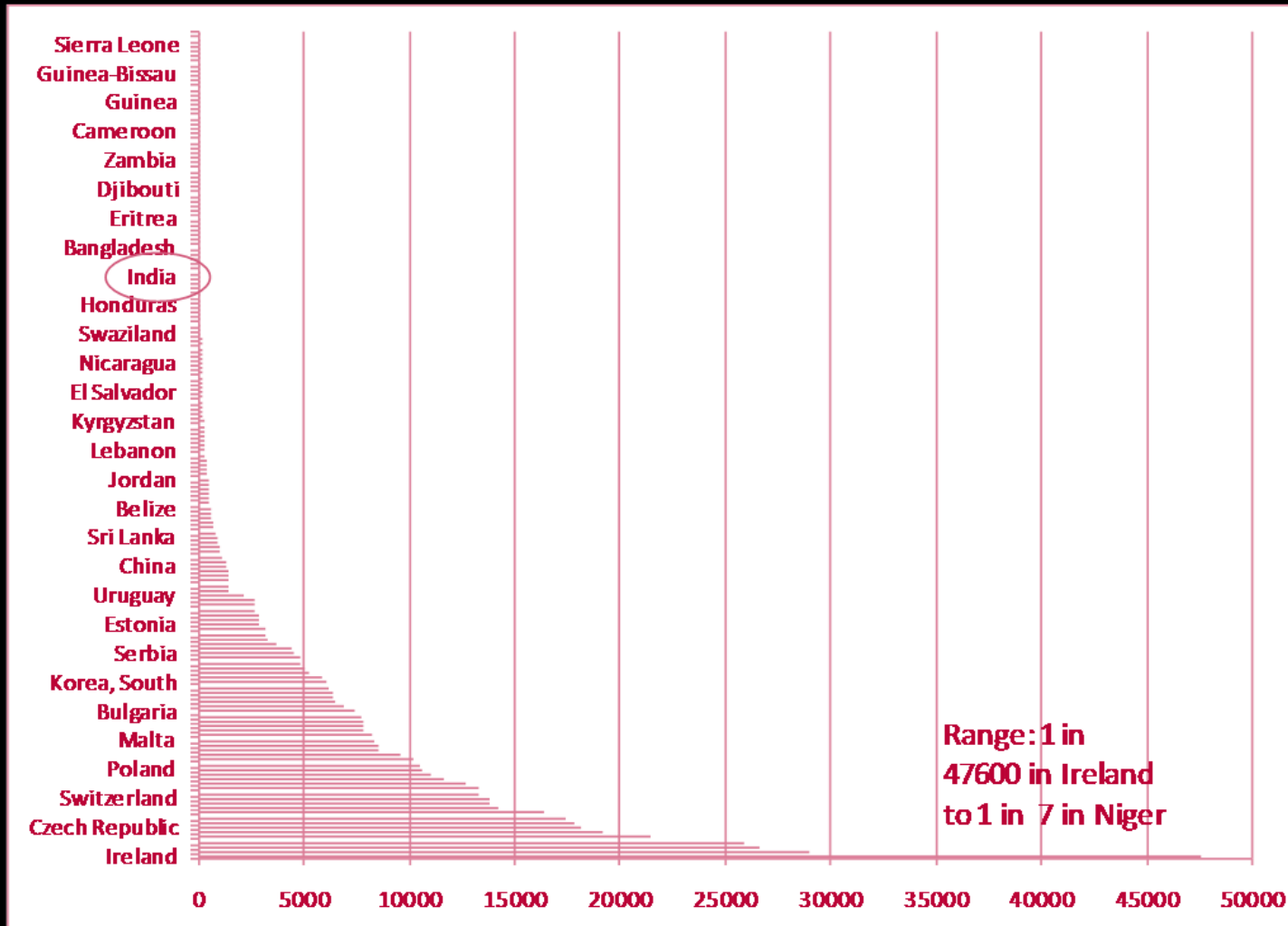
The Laws of Manu IX, 81

Huge gains in human development, in voice and visibility



Source: DHS, Eurostat, StatCan, AUSSTATS, NFHS 2005

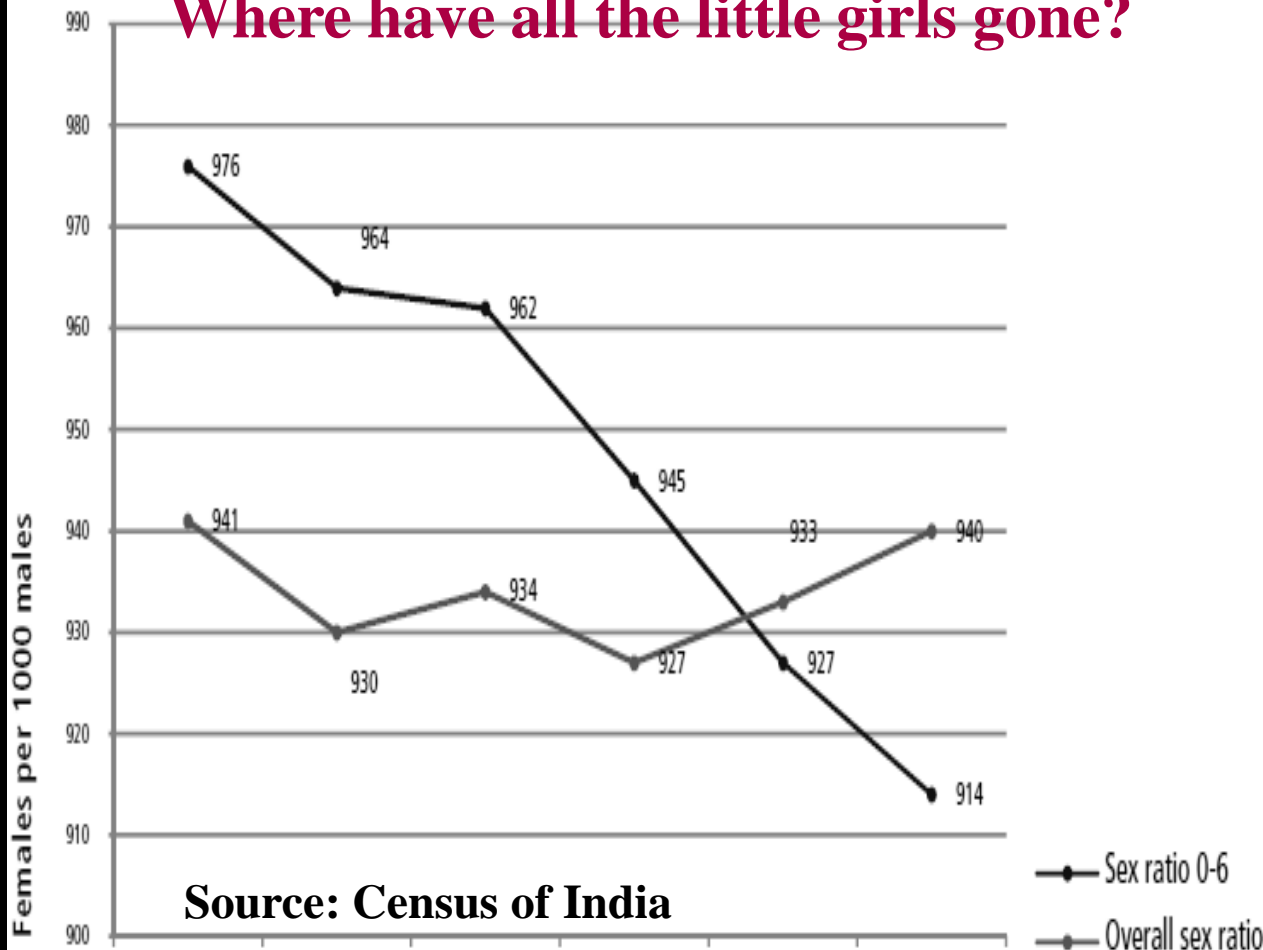
Yet, the risk of dying in childbirth in India is higher than in Swaziland or Honduras



Source: Population Reference Bureau (2008)

Shocking news of more missing girls when this work had been completed.....

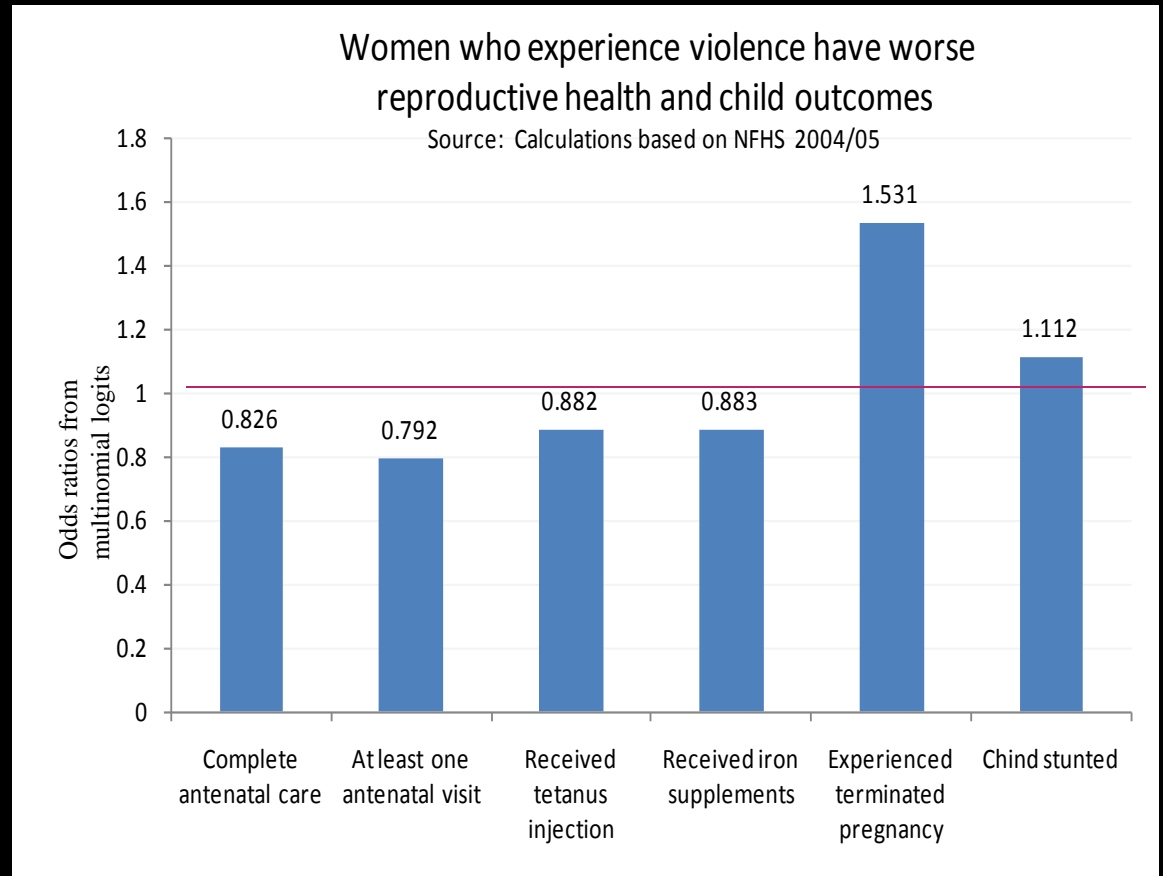
Where have all the little girls gone?



- Census 2011 shows declining child sex ratios
- And worsening in states which had earlier not been affected by egregious son preference
- Symptomatic of wider deprivation

Is violence a “significant omitted variable” that explains poor reproductive health outcomes?

- Only half of all women receive three or more antenatal care visits
- Over 1/3 of Indian women reported having experienced spousal violence at some point, and about one-fourth had experienced violence in the year previous to the NFHS 2005-06
- Spousal violence is correlated with poor access to maternal health and poor child health outcomes

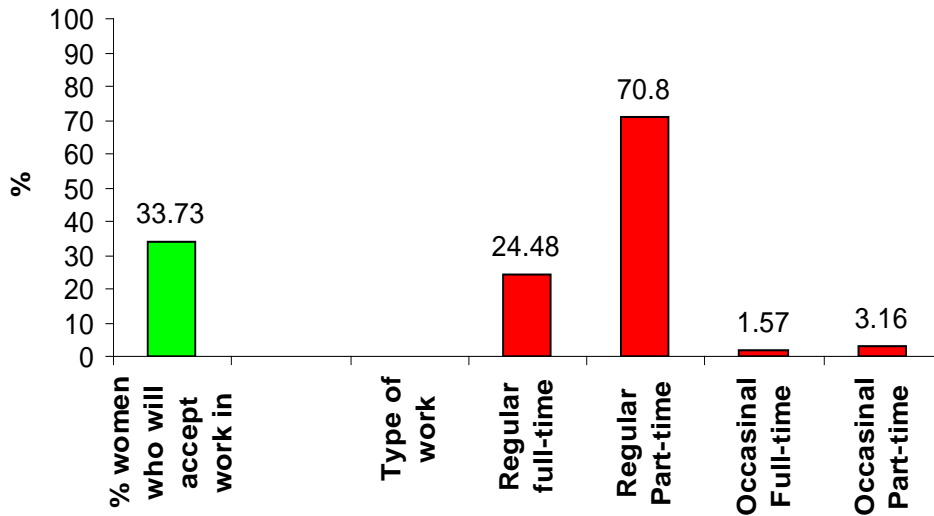


Source: Staff calculations based on NFHS 2005-06 data

Women's labor force participation rates have been flat over time

Aspiring to work outside their homes

Aspirations of women doing only domestic work
Authors' calculations using NSS 61st Round - 2004/05



- Women's visibility in the urban, high-end labor market is much greater than it was a decade ago, but far from generalizable
- LFP of women (15-59 yrs) steady at about one-third of population; stagnation driven by rural areas
- Huge diversity by states and by caste and tribal status

**Transformation is
inherently political and
implementation deeply
complex**

Policy responses

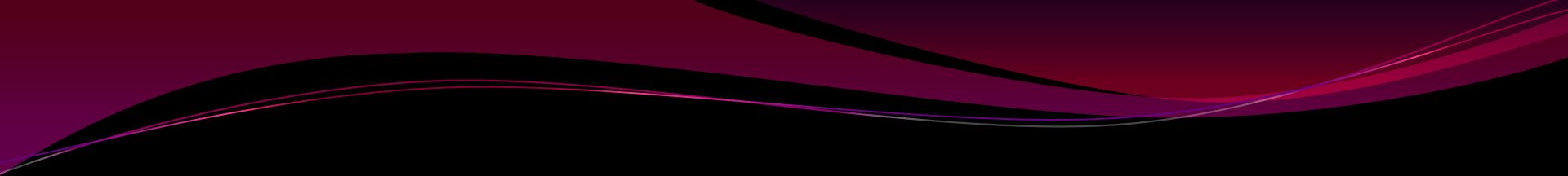
- Constitutional
 - Reservations in publicly funded education and public employment
- Legal
 - Laws against violence and “atrocities” and for equal opportunity
- Administrative
 - Targeted programs in health, education and social protection
- But implementation is a huge challenge

Case in point: Excess mortality of adivasi children in India

- Institutional reasons
 - High absenteeism among health and education providers
 - Health surveillance in tribal areas is not easy for other reasons as well (e.g.: migration)
 - Overall administration of tribal areas suffers from the same problems as the health system, so monitoring is weak
- Beyond health systems
 - Land and forests – livelihoods
 - Little voice and control over their own development

Voice and accountability

- Excluded groups often have low voice and political clout
- Elite capture – “creamy layer”
- No easy solutions but there are many successful initiatives backed by political will and national consensus



You have now a way of bringing about change, an improvement in your life conditions. That way is through political action, through appropriate laws. . . . You must rid yourselves of internal divisions and organize strongly.

B. R. Ambedkar (1933)