

ECON 460: Women, Work, and the World Economy

Reading Guide:

“Why Are Indian Children So Short? The Role of Birth Order and Son Preference”

Read the entire article. Pay attention to their use of data to test their hypotheses: the data sets that they use, and their empirical specifications. Read the whole article carefully, but you can skim the paragraphs (which are sprinkled throughout the body of the paper) describing their extensive robustness checks.

After reading the article, you should be able to answer the following questions:

1. What is **stunting**? How is it calculated?
2. How do rates of child stunting compare between India and Sub-Saharan Africa?
3. How do they vary with income within each region?
4. How does stunting vary with birth order in India?
5. What is Professor Jayachandran and Professor Pande’s main hypothesis? What cultural phenomenon do they believe explains the prevalence of child stunting in India?
6. Why are eldest sons so important in India?
7. What data sets do Professor Jayachandran and Professor Pande use in their analysis? What types of information do these data sets contain?
8. What data is summarized in Figure 2, and what is the main empirical takeaway?
9. What do we learn from Table 2? What regression specifications do the authors estimate, and what are their results?
10. How does a “mother fixed effects” specification address concerns about omitted variable bias (in this context)? Who is being compared to whom in such an analysis?
11. How do first-born children compare to subsequent children in terms of the investments that parents make in their health? Do these patterns differ between India and Sub-Saharan Africa?
12. What are the three subpopulations within India where the authors expect to observe less son preference?
13. How would you summarize the empirical results presented in Table 4?
14. According to the authors, what are the implications of son preference for girls?