

Response of Health Outcomes to Health Infrastructure: Evidence from Bihar and Tamil Nadu

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Despite significant growth of health programmes, improvement in health outcome, indicators are uneven across in India in health infrastructure. This paper attempts to estimate the extent of variation in health infrastructure and its impact on health outcomes in Bihar and Tamil Nadu. The question is whether the public health system is significant in explaining health status of people. The study measures the response of health outcomes to improvement in health infrastructure. Data is largely drawn from Census of India, 2011 and Annual Health Survey, 2010-2011. Infant mortality and under-five mortality were taken as the outcome variable. Using different components of health infrastructure indicators, a health infrastructure index was constructed. The findings reveal that poor health infrastructure is a significant constraint in achieving better health outcomes. Like demand side factors, supply side factors play an important role in health care system. Besides, education of women improves health outcome indicators.

I Introduction

Investment in health for faster economic development is well documented in the literature. An effective health system is a means to achieve better health among people by improving health outcomes. Health systems deserve the highest priority in any endeavour to improve people's health since they provide the critical interface between life-saving interventions and the people who need them (Kathuria and Sankar 2005). Over the last two decades, significant economic achievements and social transformation have taken place in the country. Contrary to this, investment in health care has been accorded a low priority in policies and planning (Baru, *et al.* 2010). Till now there is no comprehensive state policy in India either at the national level or sub-national level. The present status of health service delivery has its root in the policy and practices during the British period (Banerji 1985). During 1940s a comprehensive health policy was suggested by Bhore Committee, but its recommendations were never

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