

## Half Bottle Filled: Hygiene and Sanitation in India's Backyard

**Atanu Sengupta, Suchismita Mondal Sarkar and Sayantan Mukherjee**

*The parameters dealing with hygiene and sanitation are results of a number of micro-decisions that are taken by poor people (Banerjee and Duflo, 2011, 2019). The present study attempts to examine the consequences of such micro-choice decisions in terms of provision for sanitation and hygiene conditions for morbidity. It shows that the environmental living conditions are associated with morbidity. It also finds relation between personal hygienic behaviour of the individuals and occurrence of infection. In case of women, a close and significant relationship is found between the use of sanitary napkins in managing menstruation and proneness to infection.*

### I Introduction

A game that is often played in the muddy and dilapidated roads of rural India as also in urban conglomerates is the snake and ladder game. It has a hundred boxes printed on the card board starting from one. A small flat round dice is used to determine the fate of the player. The disk progresses by the face that appears on the upper part of the dice. The ladder means some additional progress while the snake means a fall from the position. The player who successfully combats the snakes and ladders wins the game.

In an underdeveloped world life of the poor is like a snake-ladder model. Shortage of income and resources for the poor further shrink other basic amenities of life. Health being one of the prime concern in this model, there are several reasons why a poor person is deprived of a modicum of facilities for life. Lack of opportunities for improving health is surely the basic failure. Behavioural researchers have shown that a person facing poverty fails to take logical decisions that he or she would have otherwise taken (Mullainathan and Shafir 2013). Poverty impedes proper cognitive functioning of an individual. He or she may even take wrong decisions on crucial health questions and even the choices regarding the health variables might get distorted. For example, he may

---

Atanu Sengupta, Professor, Department of Economics, Burdwan University, Burdwan 713104 West Bengal, Email: [sengupta\\_atanu@yahoo.com](mailto:sengupta_atanu@yahoo.com)

Suchismita Mondal Sarkar, Associate professor, Department of Economics, Burdwan University, Burdwan 713104, West Bengal, Email: [suchi\\_sarkar@yahoo.com](mailto:suchi_sarkar@yahoo.com)

Sayantan Mukherjee, Research Scholar, Department of Economics, Burdwan University, Burdwan 713104, West Bengal, Email: [sayantan.dodo@gmail.com](mailto:sayantan.dodo@gmail.com)