Measuring the Effect of a Community-level Program on Women's Empowerment Outcomes: Evidence from India

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<td>Country</td>
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<td>Organizing Theme</td>
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<td>Status</td>
<td>The Evaluation is Complete but the project is ongoing</td>
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Abstract
This paper uses primary data from rural north India to show that participation in a community-level female empowerment program significantly increases access to employment, physical mobility, and political participation. The program provides support groups, literacy camps, adult education classes, and vocational training for rural women in several states of India; the data are from Uttarakhand. The paper uses instrumental variables and truncation-corrected matching on primary data to disentangle the program's mechanisms, separately considering its effect on women who work, and those who do not work but whose reservation wage is increased by participation. The analysis also finds significant spillover effects on non-participants relative to women in untreated districts. It finds consistent estimates for average treatment and intent to treat effects.

Gender Connection
Gender Focused Intervention

Gender Outcomes
Female labor force participation, intrahousehold bargaining, participation or voice in community; sexual abuse or harassment

IE Design
Instrumental Variable

Intervention
The program provides bi-weekly literacy camps, adult education classes and weekly vocational training. It also creates support groups on issues such as domestic violence and alcoholism. The objective of the program is to increase the empowerment of women. During the program, women were encouraged to participate in local politics, discussed the value of having a female child, and were provided support on issues like domestic violence, alcoholism, dowry and infanticide.

Intervention Period
1988-Present

Sample population
The sample is comprised of 487 Uttarakhandi women from 69 villages in six Uttarakhand districts, four with the program and two without.

Comparison conditions
Districts with no program

Unit of analysis
Individual level

Evaluation Period
Not discussed
### Results

The authors find a positive and significant treatment effect of the program on women's empowerment outcomes; participants are more likely to have access to outside employment, are have a 17 p.p. increase probability of having the ability to leave the house without permission and are 33% more likely to attend village council meetings. Even women who do not benefit from enhanced employment experience a greater ability to travel outside the home.

### Primary study limitations

The program may be placed in districts and villages that are inherently different from those without the program. Women who participate in the program may be systematically different than those who do not participate.

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### Reference(s)


### Link to Studies