

## **Gender Composition of Children and Sanitation Behavior in India**

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**Area: CPP, ESS**

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### **Abstract**

Open Defecation has been linked to various public health issues and has gained significant policy attention. Investing in adoption of better sanitation has also been advocated on the grounds of providing women with privacy and protection from potential harassment. Nonetheless, previous research has shown that due to son-biased preferences, households in India under-invest in outcomes for their female children. Linking the gender composition of children in Indian households to their sanitation behavior I find that, households reduce open defecation in presence of female children. Reduction in Open Defecation ranges from 7-14% in urban and 3-7% in rural areas, respectively. Various heterogeneity analysis suggest that the reduction in OD is driven by households facing a potentially high cost of harassment related to the female children. The findings in this paper provide a new first stage association between gender composition of children and sanitation behavior and also contribute to the economic literature on decision making in households belonging to developing countries.

### **Speaker Profile**

Deepak is a third year PhD Economics student at University of Connecticut (UConn), USA. His research interests are in applied microeconomics, development, labor and behavioral economics. His ongoing work includes effect of goal setting on student performance, effect of criminally accused politician on composition of crime and economic outcomes, job loss and marital dissolution in US, and labor market impacts of academic probation in US. Before UConn, Deepak obtained MSc From University of Essex (UK) and worked with Jameel Poverty Action Lab (South Asia) as a Research Manager.