

Informed Citizens and Political Entry: Evidence from a Large Education Programme in India

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Abstract

We exploit a national school-building programme across India to examine whether increased access to education with accompanying increased involvement in programme implementation also increased citizens' entry into electoral politics in following years. We find that the programme significantly increased educational attainment among cohorts exposed to the programme during school-going age, with women seeing the largest gains. Treated constituencies also see 5-8% increase in the number of contesting candidates in subsequent state assembly elections. The additional candidates are overwhelmingly independents rather than from established political parties, and are also nearly all men, thus further widening the large existing gender gap in political representation in India.

Speaker Profile

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