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Title: Child Quantity-Quality Trade-off Revisited: Evidence from India

Improving access to education and health of children has been the long-term goals in the developing countries. However, in a developing country like India, there remains an enormous gap between school enrolment and schooling attainment of children from rich and poor households (Filmer and Pritchett 1998). Besides, the net enrolment rate in the upper primary level is far from being satisfactory and drop-out rates continued to be the major concern at all levels of education (GoI 2012). There may be several causes behind low schooling attainment of children namely, child labor in financially poor families, number of siblings, lower educational achievements of parents, caste, religion, social and cultural norms. In this study, I examine whether number of siblings could contribute to lower schooling attainment and poor health of children. Using the 2011 India Human Development Survey data and instrumental variable approach, I find, an extra child in a family, instrumented by twin births, on average, ceteris paribus, – i) lowers the average years of schooling by 0.12 years, ii) reduces the likelihood of school attendance by 3.6 percentage points, iii) increases the age standardized schooling index by 0.1 for girls when mothers have above average level of education, and iv) increases the chances for children being – underweight by 12.8 percentage points, and severely stunted by 11.9 percentage points – measures consistent with WHO child growth standards. The results are statistically significant at the conventional levels. I further find that the negative effects are larger in nuclear families compared to extended families. To my knowledge, this is the first study in India that examines the causal impact of fertility on both education and health of children. It improves earlier studies on schooling attainments using comprehensive data and carefully choosing instruments. Policies on quality education and health are in place.

References