Do Remittances Increase Women’s Autonomy? Evidence from India

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# Abstract

An emerging interdisciplinary literature explores the transformation of prevailing gender norms as communities experience emigration and associated inflows of remittances. This paper focuses on a key gender norm, namely women’s decision-making autonomy within the household. Using data from the 2011 round of the India Human Development Surveys, we investigate the impact of remittances on the extent to which women contribute to decisions like major purchases, number of children, and health care decisions, as well as the extent to which women must obtain permission to visit family, go shopping, or travel using transit. Given the absence of a dynamic panel that tracks the same households over time, as well as difficulties obtaining valid instruments, we employ covariate-balancing methods in order to isolate a causal effect for remittances.

**Keywords:** Remittances, Gender Norms, Migration