

June 17, 2019

Dear Author,

The review of your revised submission to *Demography* (MS# 2018-184) “Birth Spacing in the Presence of Son Preference and Sex-Selective Abortions: India’s Experience over Four Decades” is now complete. After consulting with three reviewers and a Deputy Editor we have decided to give you the opportunity to revise and resubmit your manuscript. If you do revise and resubmit your paper, it may be sent back to one of the original reviewers (R2) and potentially a new reviewer. Please note we received one recommendation to reject but the recommendation from a Deputy Editor was to give the author one more chance to revise the paper, and we concur.

Detailed “Comments to the Author(s)” prepared by the referees are attached. Below we provide a summary of comments from the reviewers and deputy editor:

The reviewers and deputy editor were mixed in their assessment of the revised manuscript. The author should be commended for the extensive revision of the original paper; however, several serious issues remain; and many of these were raised in our last decision letter. July 31, 2019.

First, greater explanation of the unique contributions of this study is needed. As the reviewers note, the literatures in the areas of son preference and birth spacing, for example, are extensive, and clearer and more compelling motivations for the work should be provided.

Second, the paper lacks a conceptual framework to organize (and motivate) the analysis. Following on the comments of one reviewer, one suggestion would be to focus on the role of women’s education, with a more thorough description of the context of changing education in India over the last half century and clearly lay out a framework for the mechanisms through which birth spacing is affected by educational expansion.

This relates to a third issue, which is space limitations and decisions regarding what to include in the manuscript. In the last decision letter you were asked to “reorganized to focus on the most important issues.” Although the author has done a good job of focusing the paper in the revision, there are still questions about lack of detail in some places and perhaps too much in others. One suggestion is to drop the analysis on regional differences and focus the paper more centrally on the topic of maternal education, for example (as noted above).

Overall, the paper is methodological solid with results that are generally interesting to demographers; however, it needs to tell a more compelling story to readers who are (and are not) familiar with these literatures.

Based on evaluative criteria used by the journal the manuscript received middling scores with the lowest assigned to theory/conceptual contribution (see above); the highest for writing style.

[Type text]

In addition to these comments, the authors should carefully consider each of the additional points raised by the reviewers.

If you do decide to revise and resubmit your manuscript, we ask that you send us a revised version of the paper, together with a memo detailing the changes that you have made in response to the reviews. In that memo, include a point-by-point description of how you have addressed the comments and suggestions. It is possible that you will disagree with some of those comments, or choose to not follow a specific recommendation. If so, explain why.

Please submit a revised version of your paper within six months. Papers submitted to *Demography* should have no more than approximately 8,000 words (including the abstract and notes, but excluding references) and no more than 10 total tables and figures. The revised manuscript, in PDF format, and the response from authors should be submitted online using our electronic submission process. The URL is <http://editorialexpress.com/demography>. *Please make sure not to include any identifying information in the revised manuscript or response to editors and referees.*

NOTE: If you have any questions about the submission process please contact Yiwen Wang (Editorial Assistant, Demography Editorial Office, at the University of Texas at Austin) at [demography@utexas.edu](mailto:demography@utexas.edu). Please note that the journal has transferred to U. Texas and that manuscripts under review prior to April 30, 2019 are still being handled by the Penn State editors and their team.

For detailed information regarding the preparation of manuscripts for *Demography*, including information on matters of style, visit Springer's *Demography* website at: [www.springer.com/13524](http://www.springer.com/13524). Click on "Instructions for Authors" on the menu in the right hand column.

Thank you very much for submitting your paper to *Demography*.

Best wishes,

Stephen Matthews

John Iceland

Jennifer Van Hook

Handwritten signatures of the three editors: Stephen Matthews, John Iceland, and Jennifer Van Hook.