The LEAPS Report
The Household Perspective

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The View from Above: Common Beliefs about Education

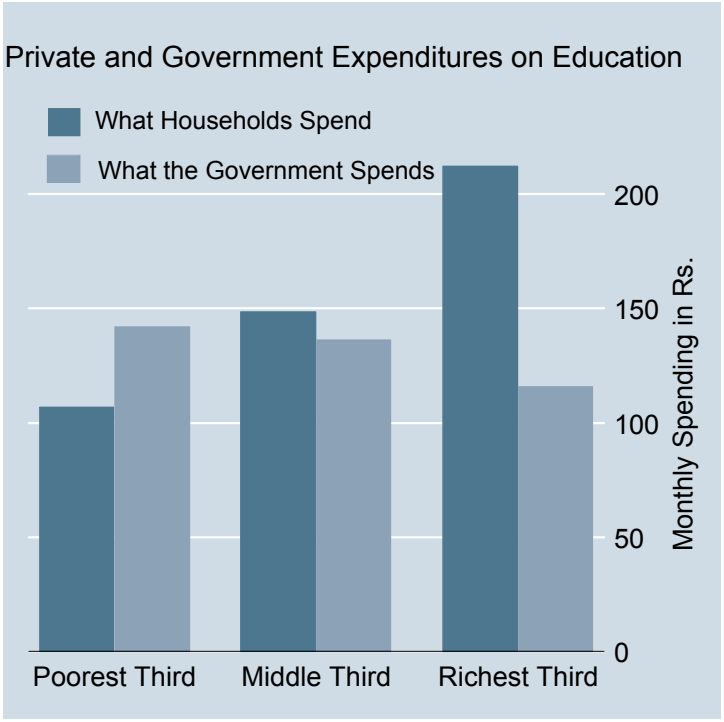
- Households do not “care” about education for their children.
  - They do not value education
  - They make small investments
  - They keep children out of school so that they can work
  - Investments in female education are much lower
- Therefore, households must be “cajoled” and “incentivized” to send their children to schools

The view from below: The data speaks

- Five facts about what households know and what households do from the LEAPS surveys

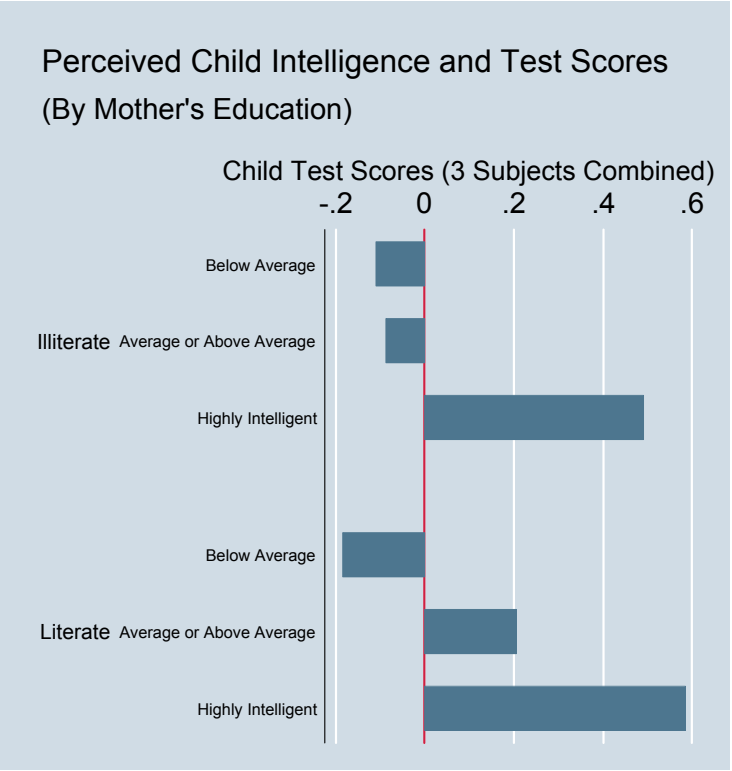
Fact 1: Parents are investing heavily in their children's education

- Households are spending on their children's education
  - Among the richest third rural households, spending is greater than that of the government
  - Even among the poorest third, households are spending substantially on children's education



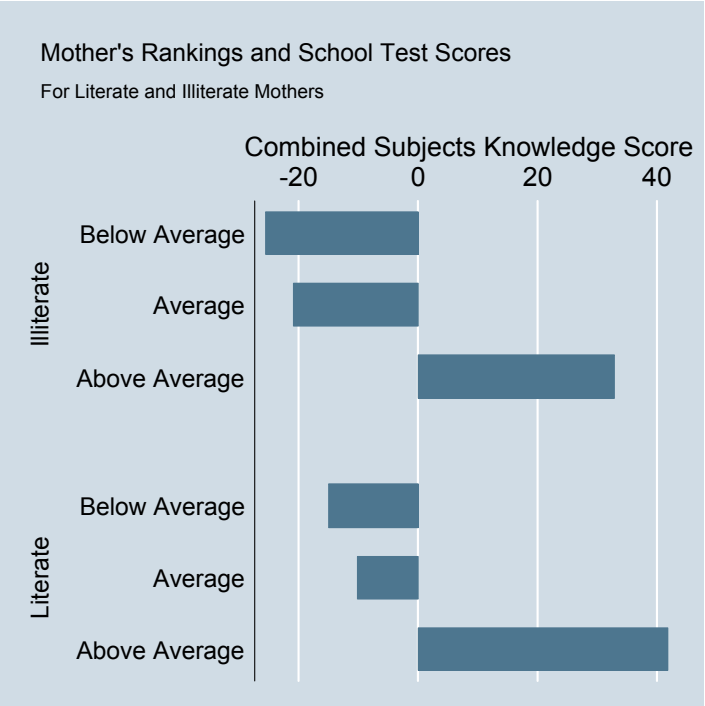
Fact 2: Parents are reasonably well informed

- We asked parents to tell us which children they thought were “more” intelligent
- Children ranked as more intelligent by parents reported far higher test-scores
- Results are identical for literate and illiterate mothers (and fathers)



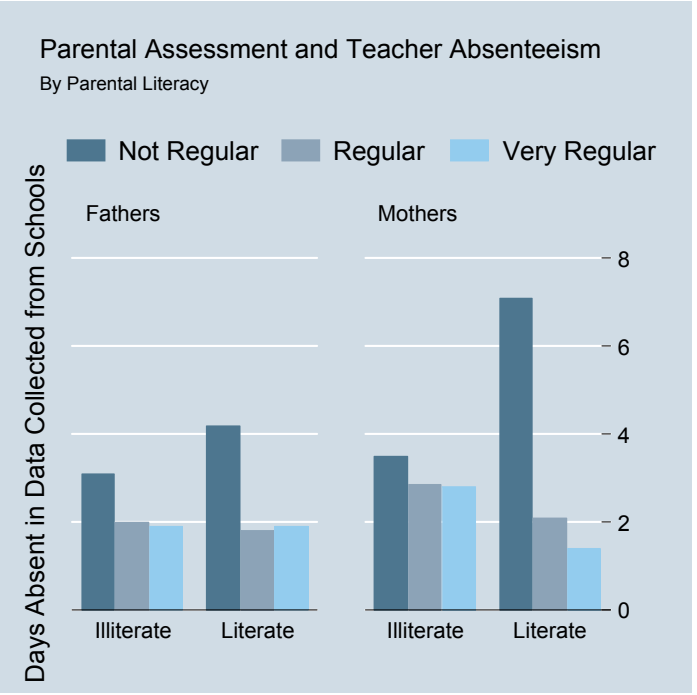
Fact 2: Parents are reasonably well informed

- We asked parents to tell us which schools they thought were better
- Schools ranked as better by parents reported far higher test-scores
- Results are identical for literate and illiterate mothers (and fathers)



Fact 2: Parents are reasonably well informed

- We asked parents to tell us which teachers they thought were regular
- Teachers assessed as regular by parents had lower reported absenteeism
- Results are similar for literate and illiterate fathers
  - Literate mothers are the most accurate

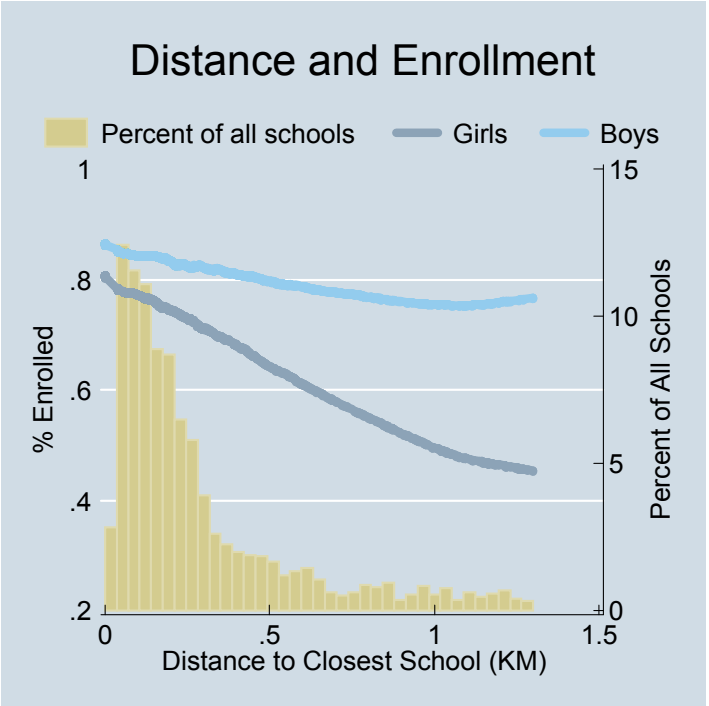


Fact 3: Yet parents discriminate

- Two main types of discrimination
  - Girls are far less likely to travel “farther” to school
  - Educational investments on children perceived as “less intelligent” by parents are much lower

The distance penalty

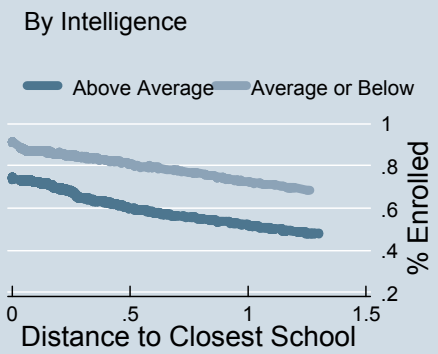
- Most children live within 300 meters of a school
- Yet, the size of the distance penalty is large for girls
- Enrollment drops by 20% *points* every 500m a school is farther from home

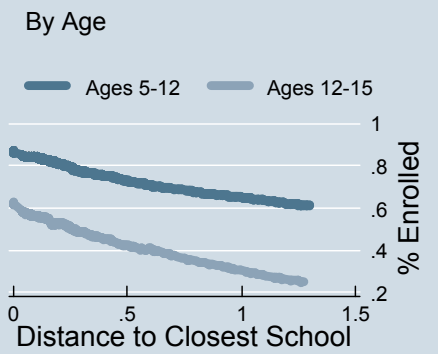


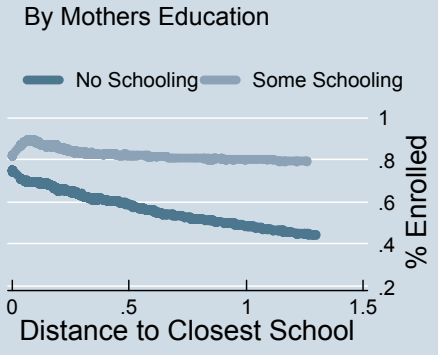
The distance penalty: mitigating factors

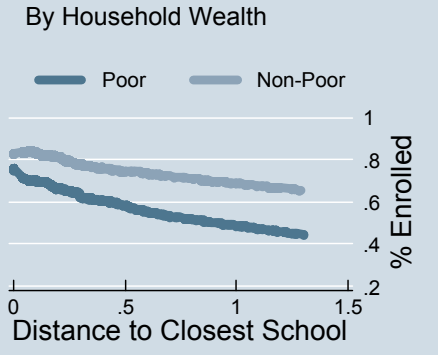
- Nothing decreases the distance penalty for girls
  - Except for mother's education

Distance and Enrollment For Girls









The distance penalty: mitigating factors

Table 4.1: Household and Child Characteristics, Enrollment, and the Distance Gradient

	Boys		Girls	
	Likelihood of Enrollment	**Effect of Distance on Enrollment**	**Likelihood of Enrollment**	**Effect of Distance on Enrollment**
Child Intelligence	Increases	Reduces the distance penalty	Increases	No Change
Child in teenage years	Decreases	No Change	Decreases	No Change
Household Wealth	Increases	No Change	Increases	No Change
Educated Adult Female in Household	Increases	No Change	Increases	Reduces the distance penalty

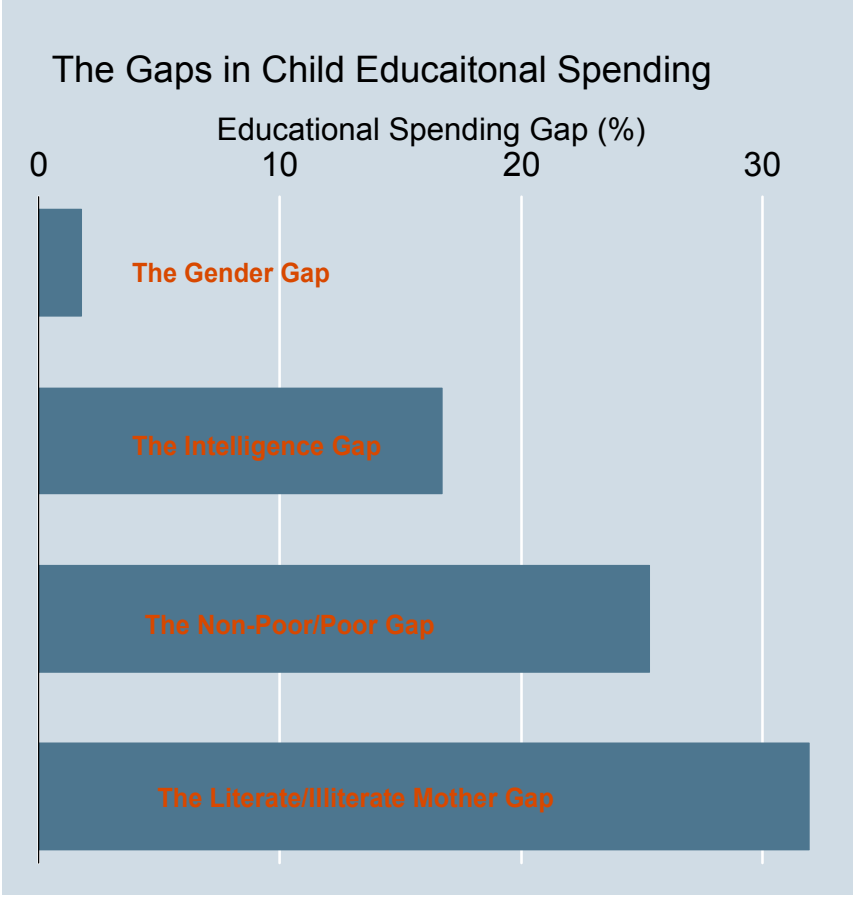
- We do not understand what drives the distance-penalty, but this is a first order issue
  - It accounts for 60% of the enrollment difference between boys and girls

Do parents discriminate?

- Much has been said about gender discrimination.
- What about *other forms* of discrimination?
- How do parents allocate educational investments across children?

Choosing winners

- Parents rank children very easily
- And are investing a lot more in children they think are “more intelligent”
- Parents “pick” winners and invest in them



Parental Heterogeneity

	Goes to Closest Eligible			Bypasses				
	Not Enrolled	Public School	Private School	Public for public	Private for Public	Public for Private	Private for Private	Total
Number of Observations	1,369	827	414	668	1,443	386	421	5,528
% of all children	24.76	14.96	7.49	12.08	26.1	6.98	7.62	100

- Given the distance penalty, one automatic conclusion is that
  - Children go to the closest school
- But that is incorrect
  - Some parents care about distance, others about quality and others about cost
- Any policy effect depends on what proportion of each type of household are in the village

Adding it up

- Two things that are clear
  - Figuring out how to get children from “farther” away, especially girls, to school is critical
  - Education for all has to mean a focus on children who are not receiving adequate investments at home
    - Which is largely about improving the quality of government schools

Adding it up

- What is not clear
  - Given large parental investments, any policy effect will depend on how parents respond.
  - We *cannot* predict this from the data since different parents are different
- Programs have to be evaluated on a pilot basis with careful data on household responses