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Effects of Educational Assortative Matching on Women's Fertility in India

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Abstract

Fertility rates in India have fallen significantly during the last few decades. Existing literature has overtly focused on and established the negative association between women's education and fertility but mostly overlooks husbands' position. However, fertility decisions are increasingly jointly made by the spouses, and the Indian marriage market is highly assortative over education. Existing literature categorises educational assortative matching into three types – *hypergamy* (where wife less educated than husband), *homogamy* (equally educated spouses) and *hypogamy* (wife more educated). This study investigates the effect of these three marriage types on fertility. Using data from the NFHS-5 database, we focus on a reduced-form analysis and employ the Poisson regression technique to demonstrate that women in homo- and hypogamy exhibit significantly lower fertility compared to those in hypergamy. These negative effects persist across education levels of husbands but are stronger among older generations of women. Our findings complement existing literature on the negative association between women's education and fertility.

Keywords: Educational assortative mating, Hypergamy, Homogamy, Hypogamy, Fertility, India.

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