

Progress of Inequality in Age at Death in India: Role of Adult Mortality

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Abstract

India has seen a reduction in infant and child mortality rates for both the sexes since the early 1980s. However, a decline in mortality at adult ages is marked by significant differences in the subgroups of sex and regions. This study assesses the progress of inequality in age at death with the advances in mortality transition during 36 years period between 1981–1985 and 2012–2016 in India, using the Gini coefficients at the age of zero (G_0). The Gini coefficients show that in the mid-2000s, women outpaced men in G_0 . The reduction in inequality in age at death is a manifestation of the process of homogeneity in mortality. The low G_0 is concomitant of high life expectancy at birth (e_0) in India. The results show the dominance of adult mortality over child mortality in the medium-mortality and low-mortality regimes. Varying adult mortality in the subgroups of sex and variance in the mortality levels of regions are the predominant factors for the variation in inequality in age at death. By lowering of the mortality rates in the age group of 15–29 years, India can achieve a high e_0 that appears at high demographic development and the narrow sex differentials in e_0 and G_0 in a short time. Men in the age group of 15–29 years are the most vulnerable subgroup with respect to mortality. There is an immediate need for health policies in India to prioritise the aversion of premature deaths in men aged 15–29 years.

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