

# ***Intergenerational Effects of Women's Status: Evidence from Joint Indian Households***

BY

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3600 Market Street, Suite 560 (5<sup>th</sup> floor) • Philadelphia, PA 19104



**DIANE COFFEY** is a demographer who studies social influences on health in India, specifically the intergenerational transmission of poor population health resulting from India's exceptionally poor maternal nutrition. Her research traces links among gender, stratification, and poor birth, childhood, and adult health outcomes. She has also studied the causes and consequences of poor sanitation in India. Diane is currently a Visiting Researcher at the Indian Statistical Institute in Delhi, and a Visiting Fellow at Princeton University.

## **About the Lecture:**

Diane Coffey studies the intergenerational effect of women's social status on the health of their children. In studying differences among cousins within households, she finds that children of lower-ranking mothers are shorter than children of higher-ranking mothers. She argues that this effect is, in part, due to differences in maternal nutrition. As evidence of this mechanism, she documents effects of being a lower-ranking mother on post-partum BMI and birth weight in newly collected data, and on neonatal mortality in national data. Because the relatives who arrange the marriages that she studies do not take the groom's age rank among brothers into consideration, more disadvantaged mothers are not more likely to be married to younger brothers. She shows that women whose marriages assign them lower social rank are not disadvantaged in health, height, or human capital before marriage and that the difference in social status that she exploits emerges after marriage. She verifies that the results are not due to pre-marriage differences between fathers or mothers; are not caused by endogenous household dissolution; and are only present among children of higher- and lower-ranking mothers living together in a joint household, but not among the children of brothers living in separate households.

## **About CASI**

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