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Male Social Status and Women's Work

Female labor force participation varies significantly even among countries with similar levels of economic development. Recent studies have shown that gender norms can help explain these differences in women's work, but the channels through which norms impact women's employment decisions are not well understood. We present novel data on spouses' preferences and perceptions of community attitudes about female labor in rural India and document associations with female work. We find that the perceived social cost of women's work falls on men and that husbands' opposition to female labor is associated with their wives' lower take-up of employment.

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