

Targeting Transfers to Mahadalits in Bihar

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Scheduled Castes and Tribes: A quick intro

- Historically disadvantaged groups identified for constitutionally mandated affirmative action
- Scheduled Castes (SC): lowest castes; 'untouchables' (esp. in the South)
- Scheduled Tribes (ST): geographically isolated groups
- lists of groups essentially unchanged since Government of India Act 1935
- Separate lists for each state
- a state can have anywhere between 20+ to 100+ castes scheduled; Bihar has 22
- Fraction of India's population: SC 16.6%; ST 8.6%

The research project: overview

- The Government of Bihar designated a subgroup of the Scheduled Castes (SC) as *Mahadalit*, the most oppressed.
- Appointed a Mahadalit 'change agent', the *Vikas Mitra* in each Panchayat of the state.
- Vikas Mitras are tasked with helping people gain better access to social welfare programmes.
- We conduct a household survey, and ask who benefits from the Vikas Mitra
 - Does belonging to the same caste as the Vikas Mitra matter?
- Funded by IGC Bihar.

The research project: overview

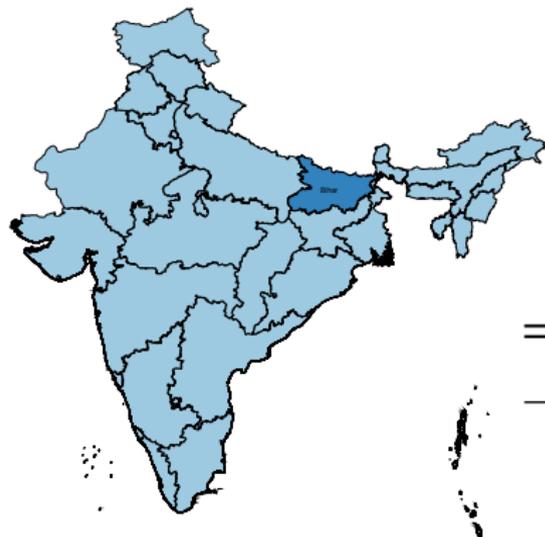
■ Motivation

- Hard to reach the worst off amongst the poor and historically disadvantaged populations: Lanjuow & Ravallion (1999), Thorat & Lee (2005); Badiani, Dercon, Krishnan (2006)
- Controversies in affirmative action policies in India: Rao (2009)
- Literature suggests caste identity matters for access to public goods and government programmes: Besley et al (2004), Banerjee & Somanathan (2007)

■ Contribution

- Look at hierarchy *within* SCs
- Shed light on pros and cons of an innovative policy of affirmative action.

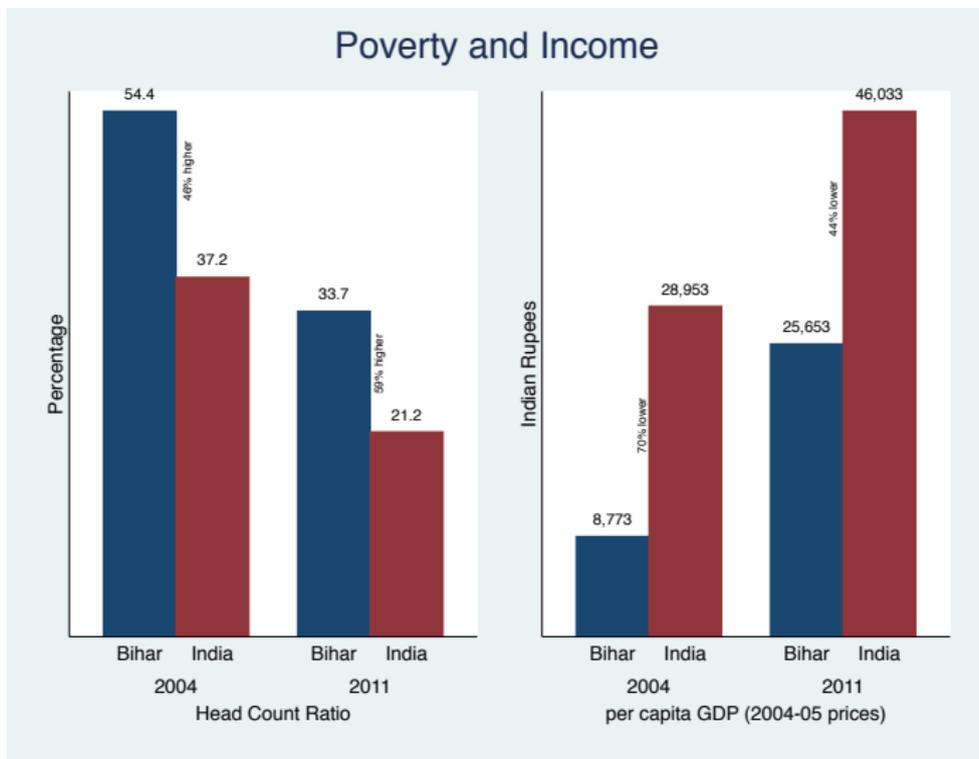
Bihar vs. India: some numbers



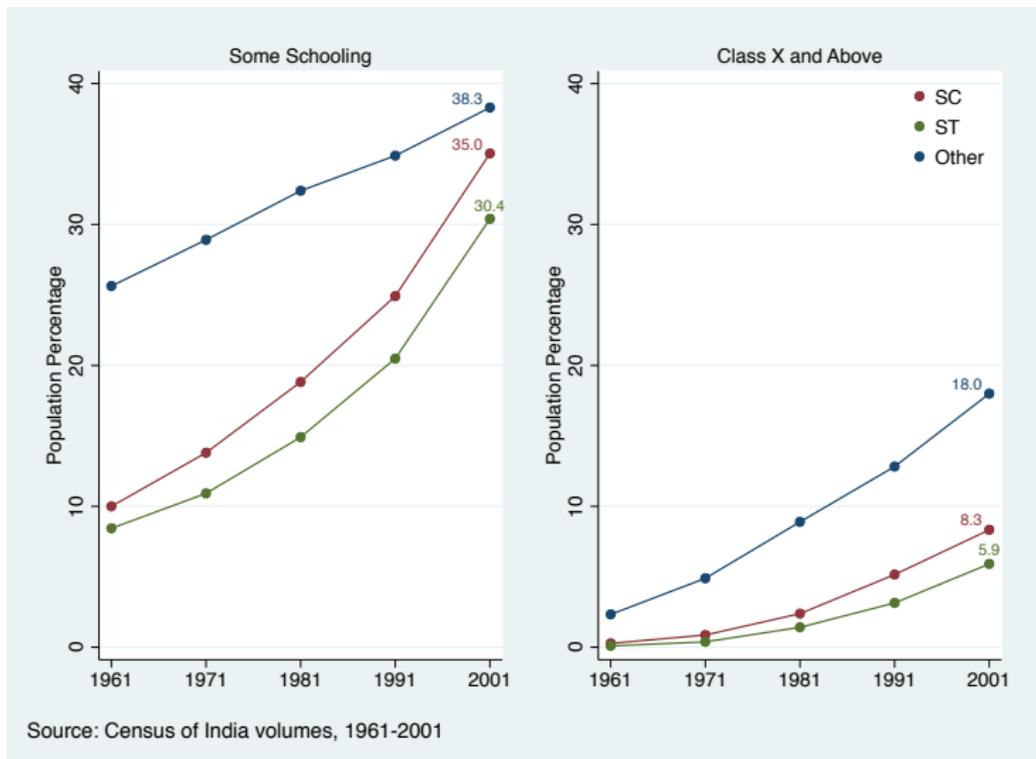
Measure	Group	India	Bihar
Population (mill.)	Total	1,210	104
	SC	201	17
Rural (%)	Total	68.9	88.7
	SC	76.4	92.6
Literacy (%)	Total	73.0	61.8
	SC	66.1	48.6

Source: Census of India 2011

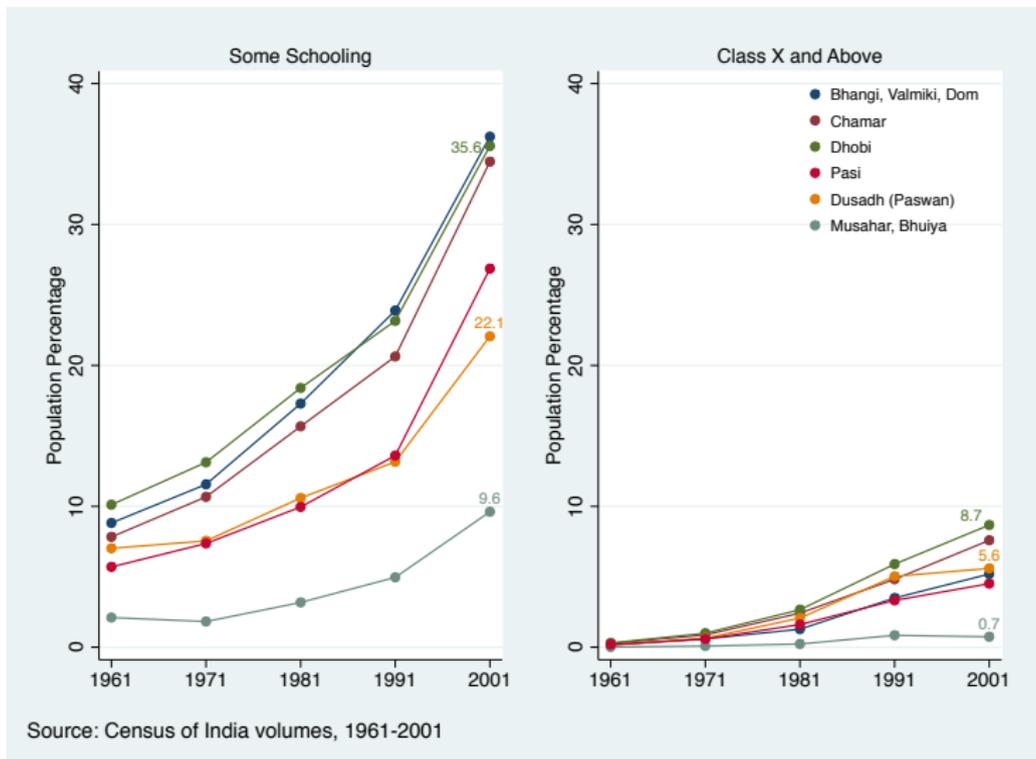
Bihar vs. India



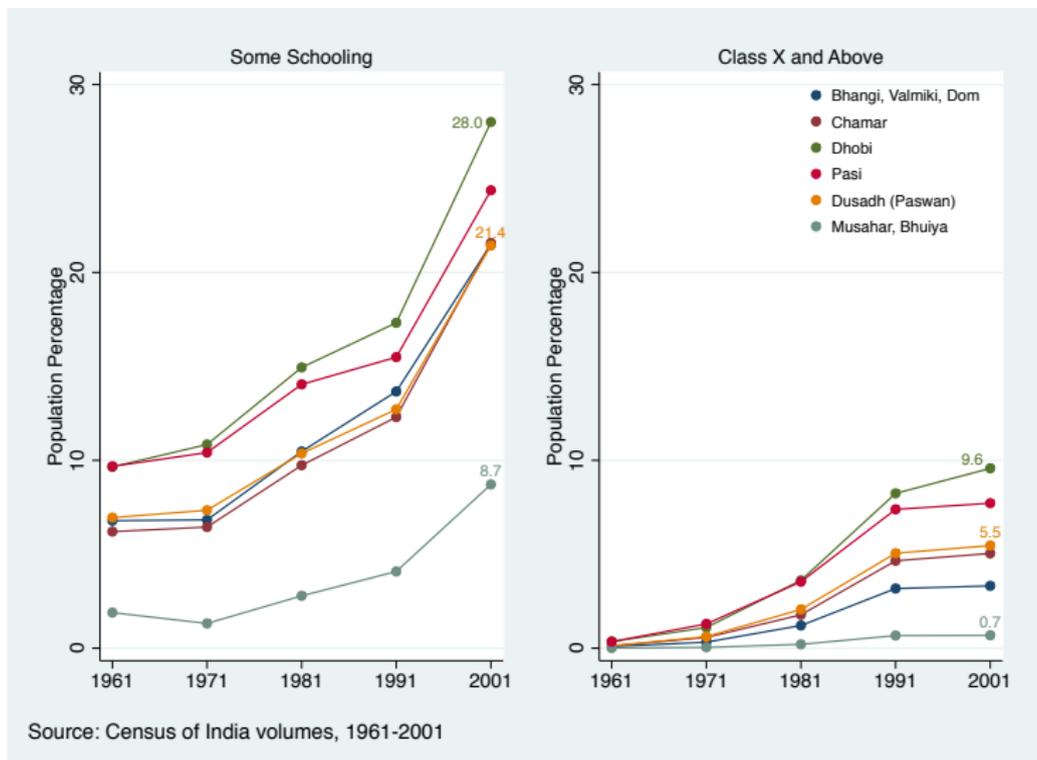
Inequalities in education: scheduled groups vs. others



Inequalities within major North Indian SCs



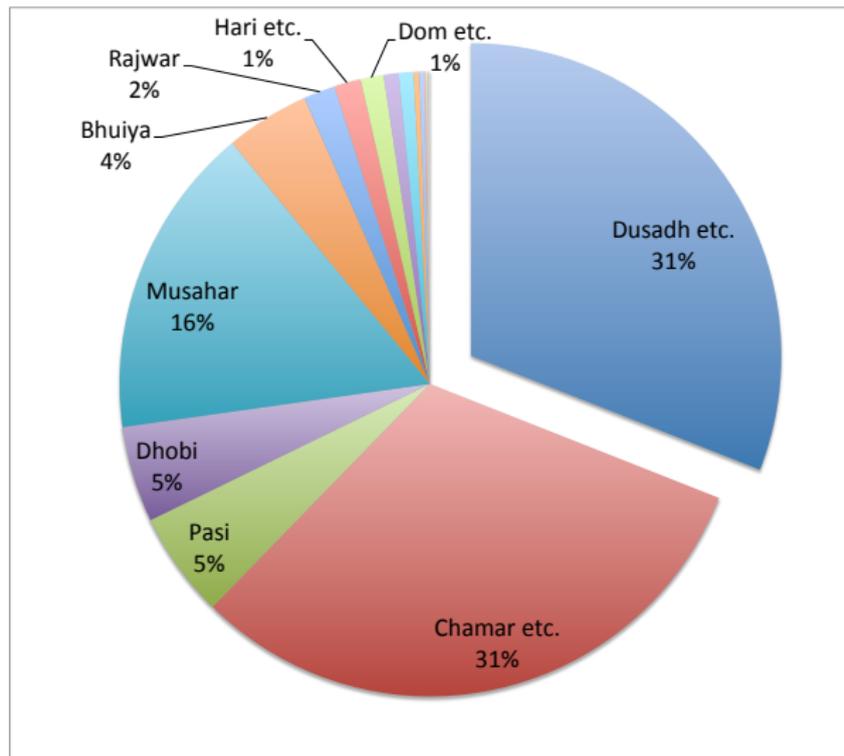
Bihar: inequalities within the SCs



The mahadalit mission

- 2007: Bihar State Mahadalit Commission set up to
 - “identify the castes within Scheduled Castes who lagged behind in the development process.”
 - “study [their] educational and social status and suggest measures for upliftment of these castes.”
- 2008: Bihar Mahadalit Vikas Mission to implement programmes for Mahadalits
- 2008-2009: Classification of 21 castes in three stages
 - 2008: 18 castes, 28% of Bihar's SC population
 - 2008 later: Dhobi and Pasis (+10%)
 - 2009: Chamars (+31%)

Bihar: who are the mahadalits?



Programmes directed at Mahadalits

	Programme	Description	Beneficiaries till 2012-13 (thousands)	
1.	Mahadalit Awas Bhoomi Yojana	3 decimals (1300 sq. ft.) of homestead land	170.3	HHs
2.	Mukhyamantri Mahadalit Radio Yojana	Coupons redeemable for radios	631.0	HHs
3.	Mahadalit Toilet Construction Scheme	Govt covers beneficiary contribution to have toilet built under Lohia Swacchata Yojana	236.0	HHs
4.	Dashrath Manjhi Kaushal Vikas Yojana	vocational training courses	16.0	persons
5.	Cash transfers in schools	Scholarships, money for uniforms, etc.	NA	
6.	Vikas Mitra	"change agent" to link Mahadalit families with govt welfare programmes	9.4	persons

Recruitment Rules

- One per Gram Panchayat (rural) or ward cluster (urban)
- Numerically largest Mahadalit caste of Panchayat or ward cluster
- 50% reservation for women; age 18-50 years
- Appointed in 4 rounds in 2010-11
 - Round 1: Class X for both genders.
 - Round 2: Class VIII for women; no change for men.
 - Rounds 3 & 4: Class V for men; Literacy for women.
 - Those hired in Rounds 2-4 expected to pass Class X in three years.

Contract

- 11 month contract @ Rs. 5,000 per month
- Weekly Block meetings; progress report submissions
- Assistance in Mahadalit programmes and most government social welfare programmes
- Other activities (census, ...)

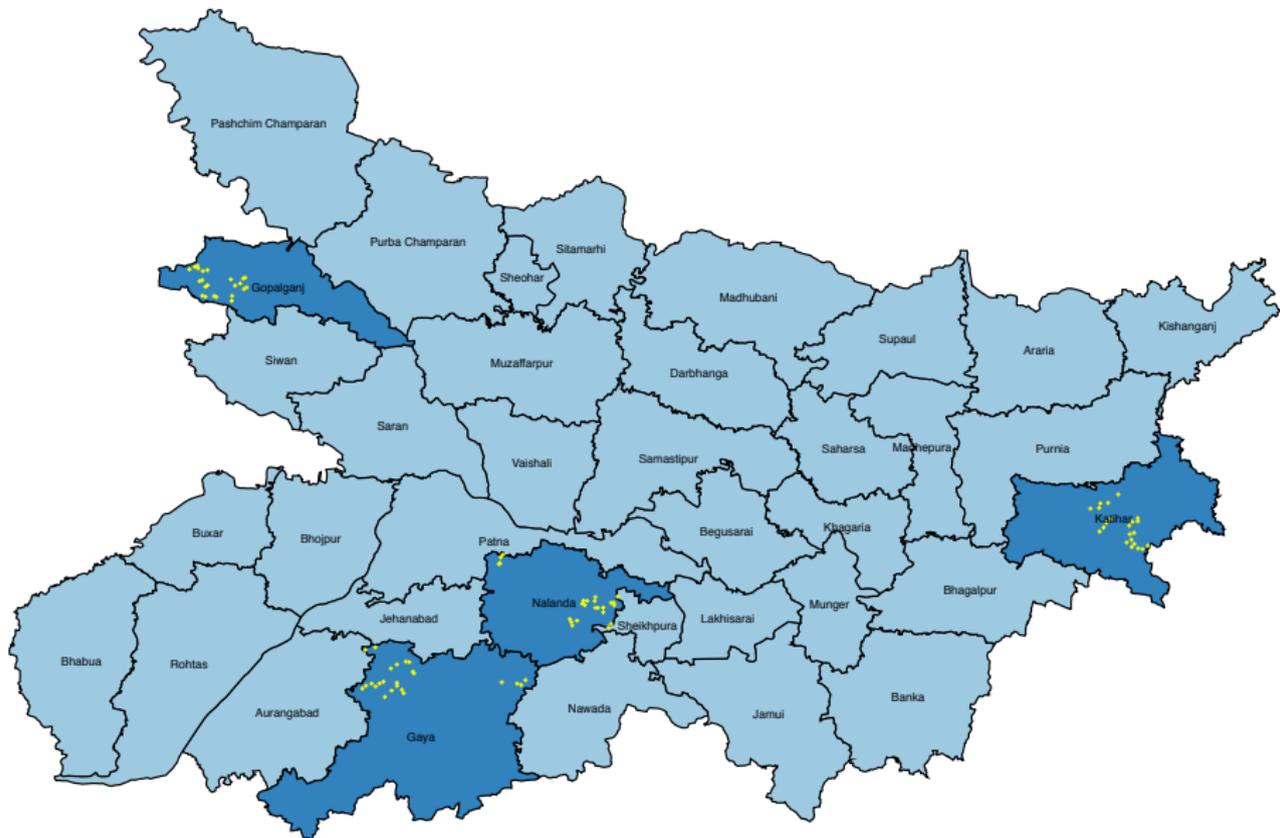
Survey design: Background

- Vikas Mitra is appointed from the largest Mahadalit caste of Panchayat or ward cluster
- Households of Vikas Mitra's caste may have better access to programmes because of the political salience of their caste
- strategy: work with Panchayats where the numerical strength of the two largest Mahadalit castes is most similar
- isolate a local treatment effect of belonging to the same caste as Vikas Mitra
- compute: $Gap_{ij} = \frac{X_i - X_j}{X_i + X_j}$
- data required: populations of individual Mahadalit castes at Panchayat level

Survey design

- household and panchayat survey: spring 2013
- data on number of HHs of individual Mahadalit castes at Panchayat level taken from official submissions to BMVM prior to appointment of Vikas Mitras
- 4 districts: 3 for which some data was available, plus Gaya
- 3 blocks per district, with greatest degree of fractionalisation in Vikas Mitra castes
- 12 panchayats from selected blocks, stratified by Vikas Mitra caste, and within the stratum, sampled to have lowest values of Gap_{ij}
- 4 districts \times 12 panchayats = 48 Vikas Mitras
- 48 households per panchayat + some ST households
- 2,400 households; 57% Mahadalit

Sample districts and villages



Vikas Mitras: caste, gender and education

Vikas Mitra Sample Characteristics

Caste	Gender		Education Levels				
	M	F	Primary	Middle	Class X	High Sch	Grad
Chamar	11	9	0	0	5	11	4
Musahar	8	10	1	3	9	4	1
Pasi	3	3	0	2	2	1	1
Others	4	0	0	0	0	3	1

Government programmes in the survey

Programme	Description	Eligibility	New Beneficiaries	Helped by VM (%)
Indira Awas Yojana (IAY)	Rs. 45,000 house construction subsidy	BPL	235	46.81
Mukhyamantri Mahadalit Radio Yojana	Rs. 400 coupon redeemable against radio distributed at govt camp	Mahadalit	257	57.59
Social security pensions	old age, widow and disability pensions; monthly stipend of Rs. 200 - 500	BPL or income cutoff	127	14.96
Toilet Construction	pit toilet constructed for a nominal contribution (none for Mahadalits)	All	122	3.28
Scholarships	monthly stipend of Rs. 50 - 150	SC, ST, OBC	367	3.00
Mukhyamantri Poshak Yojana	annual stipend of Rs. 400 - 1,000 for school uniform	All	528	1.33
Mukhyamantri Cycle Yojana	one time grant of Rs. 2,500 in high school for bicycle	All	182	0.00

BPL scoring system

- 13 dimensions; scored 0-4 each, summed to 0-52.
- BPL families = score \leq 13

Scoring Criteria:

Asset Ownership:

- ✓✓ Operational land size
- ✓ House structure
- ✓ Consumer durables
- × Clothing

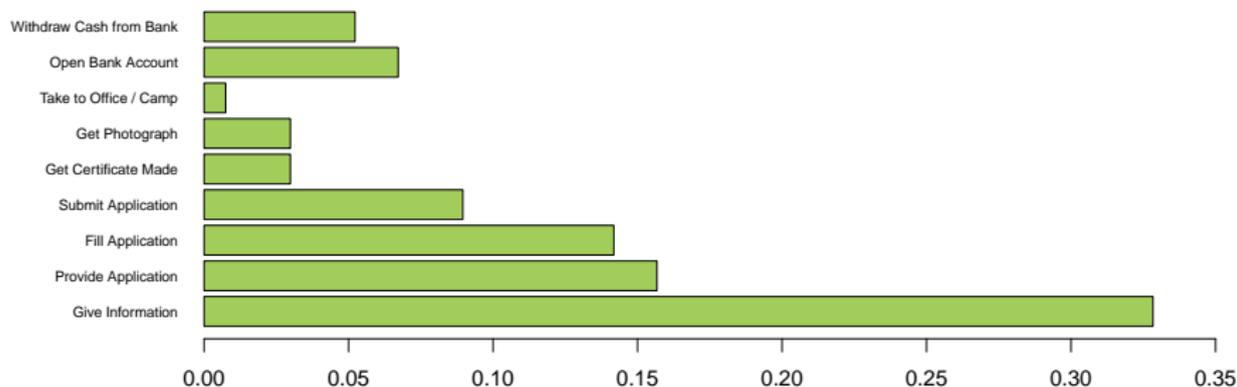
Education and Occupation:

- ✓✓ Highest adult education
- ✓ Schooling and employment of children
- × Bonded, female or child labour
- ✓ Means of livelihood

Others:

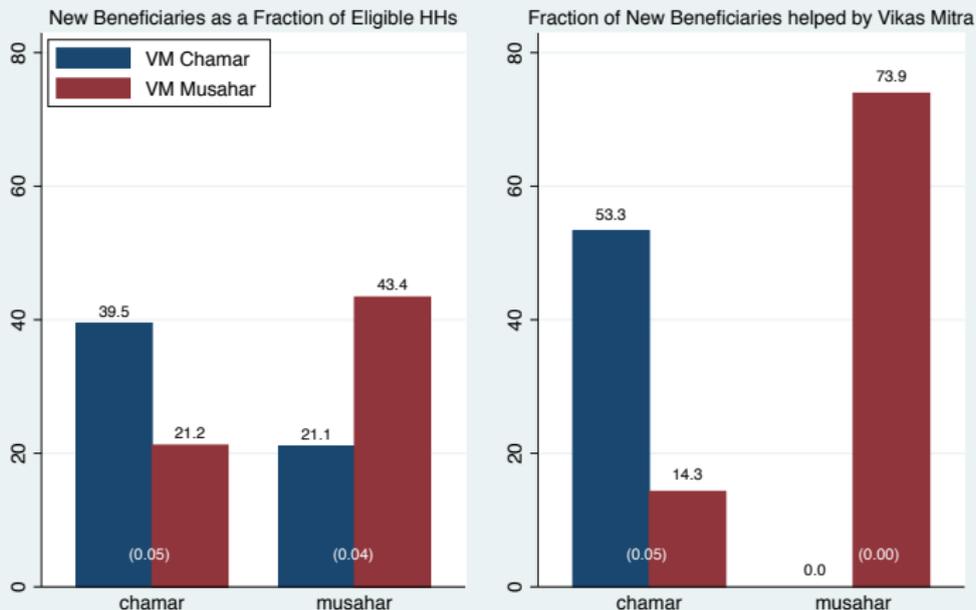
- ✓ Food security
- ✓ Sanitation
- × Type of indebtedness
- × Reason for migration
- × Need for govt assistance

Indira Awas Yojana: How did the Vikas Mitra help?



Vikas Mitra benefits: Caste preference?

Indira Awas Yojana (IAY): Access by Beneficiary Caste



Note: Numbers in parentheses are p-values from a one-sided hypothesis test of difference of means

Vikas Mitra benefits: Caste preference?

