J-PAL
ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL POVERTY ACTION LAB

GUIDE 1: WOMEN AS POLICYMAKERS

Thinking about measurement and outcomes

This case study is based on "Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India," by Raghabendra Chattopadhyay and Esther Duflo (2004a), Econometrica 72(5), 1409-1443.

J-PAL thanks the authors for allowing us to use their paper.

DESCRIPTION

India amended its federal constitution in 1992, devolving power to plan and implement development programs from the states to rural councils, or Gram Panchayats (Panchayats). The Panchayats now choose what development programs to undertake and how much of the budget to invest in them. The states are also required to reserve a third of Panchayat seats and Panchayat chairperson positions for women. In most states, the schedule on which reserved seats (quotas) and positions cycle among the Panchayats is determined randomly. This creates the opportunity to rigorously assess the impact of quotas on politics and government: Do the policies differ when there are more women in government? Do the policies chosen by women in power reflect the policy priorities of women? Since randomization was part of the Indian government program itself, the evaluation planning centered on collecting the data needed to measure impact. The researchers' questions were what data to collect, what data collection instruments to use, and what sample size to plan for.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To explore the issues that have to be resolved when deciding what questions to ask and what data to collect. Consider the need and purpose of a policy. Use that discussion to drive the evaluation (rather than the reverse).

Subjects covered: Measuring a program or policy, logical framework, defining a hypothesis, selecting indicators,

GENERAL GUIDANCE

The context of the evaluation being used in this case study is somewhat complicated. Nonetheless, the details are not as relevant for the case. The main point is that quotas for women were instituted in a random fashion at the Village Council level (also, see "spotlight" below).

RANDOMIZED QUOTAS IN INDIA: WHAT CAN THEY TEACH US?

You may need to explain what quotas are. Here is a primer:

Spotlight on Political Quotas for Women

Political quotas are voluntary or legally mandated gender quotas in politics and government.

With voluntary quotas a political party decides on its own to impose a quota for women. Voluntary quotas often target the nominating stage. The (internal) rule ensures that, say, 20 or 30 percent of the party's candidates are women.

The quotas are legally mandated, often by the country's constitution or the electoral law, and so regulate the activities of all political parties. Legal quotas often target the electoral stage. The law ensures that, say, 20 or 30 percent of seats in the assembly are reserved for women. This may mean, for example, that parties in the reserved constituencies, the parties can field only women candidates. Most countries that adopt gender quotas do so on the understanding that the quotas are temporary, to be remove just as soon as barriers to women's participation in politics are removed.

Gender quotas, whether legally mandated or voluntary, have usually been followed by dramatic increases in the political representation of women. Rwanda, for example, jumped from 24th place in the "women in parliament" rankings to first place (49%) after the introduction of quotas in 1996; Costa Rica jumped from 25th place in 1994 to third place (39%) in 2006. Similar changes have been seen in Argentina, Burundi, Iraq, Mozambique, and South Africa. Seventeen of the top 20 countries have some form of quota. The trend holds at sub-national levels. India, for example, has 10% women at the national level, but 33% at the local level where there are quotas.

Discussion Topic 1

Gender quotas in the village councils

(20 minutes)

1. What were the main goals of the Village Councils?

   Decentralized government, in particular to improve the delivery of public goods and service in the rural areas.

2. Women are underrepresented in politics and government. Only 10% of India's national assembly members are women, compared to 17% worldwide.

   Does it matter that women are underrepresented? Why and why not?

   Yes (see #3 below)

   No, if:

   Men and women have the same preferences

   Panchayats exercise no power

   Perfect democracy (leaders' decisions reflect will of entire community)

   This question attempts to draw out the need for the panchayat system. What are the assumptions that go into why a quota system would be socially beneficial?

3. What were the framers of the 73rd amendment trying to achieve when they introduced quotas for women?

   They were worried that the newly empowered Panchayats would marginalize traditionally disadvantaged groups, such as women.

WHAT DATA TO COLLECT

Discussion Topic 2

Using a logical framework to delineate your intermediate and final outcomes of interest

(30 minutes)

1. Brainstorm the possible effects of quotas: positive, negative, and no effects.

   Sample answers:

   Positive effects: A wider array of issues and needs (particularly those important to women) are addressed by the Village Council, more women become involved in politics and community leadership, community perceptions of women improve, women achieve higher status and better treatment

   Negative effects: Qualified men are denied positions or no longer participate in politics; there may be community backlash against the quotas

   No effects: though women are elected, the men in the household (fathers, husbands) still dictate the women's preferences.

If they have covered this in question DT1.5, you can skip the next question.

2. What evidence would you collect to strengthen the case of those who are for or against quotas? For each potential effect on your list, list also the indicator(s) you would use for that effect. For example, if you say that quotas will affect political participation of women, the indicator *could be "number of women attending the General Assembly."*

   Sample answers:

   A wider array of issues and needs are addressed by the Panchayat:

   - Percentage of budget spent on education and health concerns

   More women become involved in politics and community leadership:

   - Number of women attending the General Assembly
   - Number of women running for office
   - Number of women winning elections
   - Number of women in nonpolitical community leadership roles

   Community perceptions of women improve:

   - Number of community members satisfied with female leadership
   - Number of community members willing to vote for a woman

Qualified men are denied positions or no longer participate in politics:

- Number of men who state they will no longer participate in politics due to quota system

Community backlash against the quotas:

- Number of community members dissatisfied with the quota system

MULTIPLE OUTCOMES ARE DIFFICULT TO INTERPRET, SO DEFINE A HYPOTHESIS

Discussion Topic 2, continued

(15 minutes)

3. What might be some examples of key hypotheses you would test? Pick one.

   Sample Answer: something general such as "Quotas will change the types of goods invested in to reflect the preferences of women"

4. Which indicators or combinations of indicators would you use to test your key hypothesis?

   Sample answer: GP investments; preferences by gender

USE A LOGICAL FRAMEWORK TO DELINEATE INTERMEDIATE AND FINAL OUTCOMES

For this section, COMBINE questions 5-7. Revisit the outcomes discussed and try to figure out which are intermediate outcomes and which are final outcomes. Some outcomes may be prerequisites for others, and for other pairs of outcomes, causation could go in both directions. Identify those. Try to draw a flow chart that places these outcomes in the right place. You should also revisit the "assumptions" discussed in DT1.1 and DT1.2. What evidence would you want to collect to show that those assumptions in fact hold?

Discussion Topic 2, continued

(30 minutes)

5. What are the steps or conditions that link quotas (the intervention) to the final outcomes?

   Answer: See Figures 1 and 2

6. Which indicators should you try to measure at each step in your logical framework?

   Answer: See Figures 1 and 2

7. Using the outcomes and conditions, draw a possible logical framework, linking the intervention and the final outcomes.

   Sample answer: See Figure 2

FIGURE 1
A Possible Logical Framework

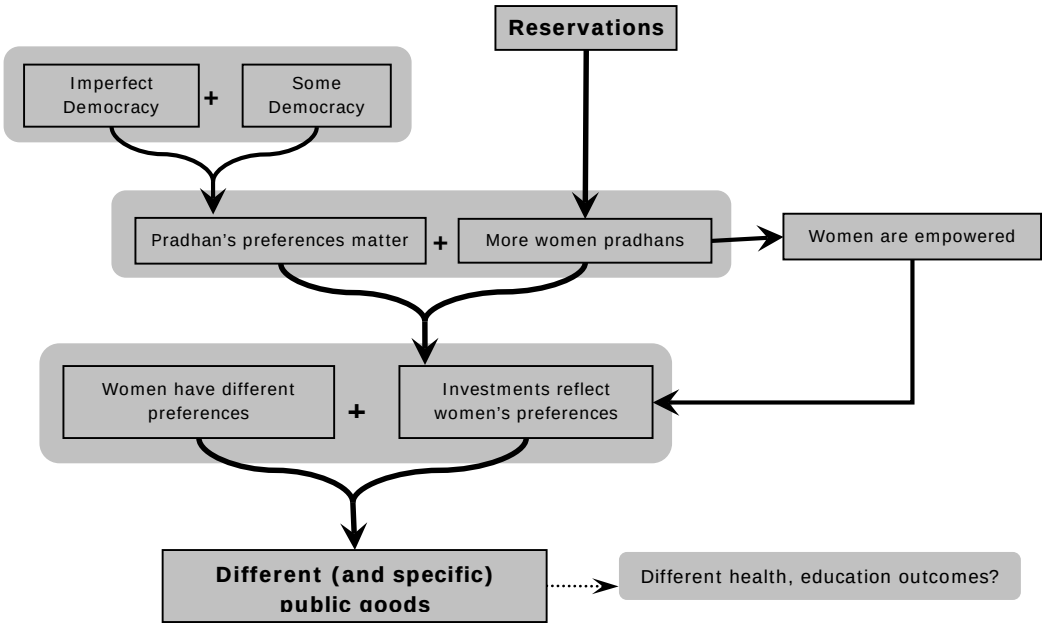

FIGURE 2
Model with Indicators

Needs	Input	Output	Outcome	Impact (primary outcome)	Long-term Goal
Women have poor health and low levels of education. Their needs are not represented in local government	Reserved seats for women leaders	More local women leaders	Women more engaged and more directly involved in political decision making	Different public goods. Better education and health outcomes	Gender equality in health, education. Quotas no longer necessary?
INDICATORS:					
		Gender of leader	Budget allocations change. Female attendance in council meetings.	Literacy level. BMI for girls, boys.	