

# Can free bikes close the education gender gap in India?

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*The International Growth Centre investigates whether cycling to school increases secondary school enrolment for girls in the northern Indian state of Bihar.*

In 2007, the government of Bihar launched a scheme to provide every schoolgirl aged 14 with money to buy a bike. With government spending on the programme already exceeding 174 crore rupees, the [International Growth Centre \(IGC\)](#) decided to investigate whether the initiative encouraged more girls to stay in school. The following video describes the 'difference-in-difference-in-difference' approach used by IGC researchers to determine the impact of the bike scheme.

Preliminary research results suggest that giving free bikes to girls has helped to bridge the education gender gap in Bihar by between 20 and 25 per cent. In many Bihari schools, there used to be approximately 100 boys for every 60 girls. The IGC study shows that since the bicycle programme was introduced, the number of girls for every 100 boys has increased to 70. In the ongoing second phase of research, IGC researchers are using GPS data to map the girls' routes from home to school to determine whether the bike scheme has had a greater impact on the enrolment figures of girls who live further away from their school.

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