

## Does better Accessibility Ensures Equity in health and health care?

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### **Abstract**

Accessibility of health services reflects health system progress, equity and sustainable development. The right to the highest attainable standard of health should be the cornerstone of any consideration of health and human rights. This can be achieved through universal access only. Though tremendous progress has been made in recent decades in India but still there exists a wide disparity in access of basic health care facilities which leads to inequity in health and health care. The poor access to health care is not distributed randomly; lower income and rural people are generally the most disadvantaged. The poorest 20 percent of Indians have more than double the mortality rates, fertility rates and under-nutrition levels of the richest 20 percent. It appears that those health system that direct their resources and energies to address the health needs of the poor have better overall health status but there are growing evidences points to the occurrence of inequities in health and health care and the persistence of the *inverse equity hypothesis* which states that new interventions will initially benefit those of higher socio-economic status and only later do they reach the poor. The present study is divided into two parts; first section reviews the concept of accessibility and equity in terms of health and health care, while the second section focuses on trends of accessibility of public health facility. The study also attempts to assess trends in inequities in selected indicators of health status and health service utilization in Uttar Pradesh using data from the National Family Health Surveys of 1993-94, 1998-99 and 2005-06.

Data from three rounds of National Family Health Surveys have been analysed for assessing inequities in health/healthcare using quintile ratios and concentration curves/indices. The findings indicate that in most of the selected indicators there are pro-rich inequities and they have been widening during the period under consideration. It is also observed that the publicly provided services for some of the selected interventions (e.g. institutional delivery of child) benefit the non-poor more than the poor. The study concludes that, widening trend in access and inequity may bear the risk of delaying national and regional targets of Millennium Development Goals.

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