

Mary Shenk (PhD Anthropology, University of Washington) is an anthropologist and demographer with interests in marriage, family, kinship, fertility, mortality, and inequality. She has conducted field research on the economics of marriage and parental investment in urban South India, the causes of rapid fertility decline in rural Bangladesh, and the effects of economic development on wealth, social networks, and health in Bangladesh and China. Her current work focuses on illuminating the mechanisms that underlie the relationships between religiosity, fertility, and child outcomes, and understanding shifting patterns of marriage, fertility, and family systems with economic development and social change. She has published over 50 articles, and her work has been funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation, the U.S. National Institutes of Health, and the John S. Templeton Foundation.

Through her Fulbright-Nehru project, Dr. Shenk is conducting research in Birbhum District, West Bengal, India in collaboration with Saswata Ghosh at the Institute for Development Studies Kolkata (IDSK) and researchers at the Society for Demographic Health and Surveillance (SDHS). She will compare her findings with previous and contemporaneous work in Matlab *thana*, Bangladesh to understand how the economic, political, and policy histories of each place have diverged since the partition of Bengal over a century ago, and how these differences have shaped the demographic trajectories of each region. Her work will focus on variation between West Bengal and Bangladesh in terms of the timing and pace of economic development, local health concerns and mortality rates, access to and attitudes toward contraception, religion and religiosity, and sex ratios and son preference.

For more details please visit <https://anth.la.psu.edu/people/mks74/>