



Dr. Sanchari Roy, King's College, London, will speak on

The gendered crisis: Livelihoods and mental well-being in India during COVID-19

Co-authored with Farzana Afridi and Amrita Dhillon

[20 August 2021 (Friday): 5 PM IST]

Abstract: This paper studies the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the gendered dimensions of employment and mental health among urban informal-sector workers in India. First, we find that men's employment declined by 84 percentage points post-pandemic relative to pre-pandemic, while their monthly earnings fell by 89 per cent relative to the baseline mean. In contrast, women did not experience any significant impact on employment post pandemic, as reported by their husbands. Second, we document very high levels of pandemic-induced mental stress, with wives reporting greater stress than husbands. Third, this gendered pattern in pandemic-induced mental stress is partly explained by men's employment losses, which affected wives more than husbands. In contrast, staying employed during the pandemic is associated with worse mental health for women and their (unemployed) husbands. Fourth, pre-existing social networks are associated with higher mental stress for women relative to men, possibly due to the 'home-based' nature of women's networks.

Dr. Sanchari Roy is a Senior Lecturer in Development Economics at the Department of International Development, King's College, London. She did her undergraduate at Presidency College, Kolkata, postgraduate at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and Ph.D. at London School of Economics. Prior to joining King's, Sanchari was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Warwick and Lecturer in Economics at the University of Sussex. Sanchari's main area of research is development economics. In particular, her work focuses on examining the various types of constraints faced by developing countries in the process of poverty alleviation and economic development.



Dr. Kaustav Das, University of Leicester, will speak on
Exogenous Shock and Electoral Outcomes: Re-examining the Rational Voter Hypothesis

co-authored with Atisha Ghosh (Warwick) and Pushkar Maitra (Monash)

[24 August 2021 (Tuesday): 5 PM IST]

Abstract: Voter rationality implies voter choices should depend solely on the performance of contesting candidates and their political parties and should not respond to events outside the control of politicians (i.e. natural disasters or economic shocks). However, voter choices in these situations do reflect a degree of rationality as they can learn more about the abilities of the politicians from their responses to these shocks. Thus, to identify voter (ir)rationality we need a shock that does not allow voters to learn any new information about the politician. We first develop a simple theoretical model where shocks can have both a *responsive* characteristic, which allows the politician to respond, and a *non-responsive* characteristic, which politicians cannot respond to. We define voters to be irrational if electoral outcomes are affected by a shock that only has the non-responsive characteristic. We test this using data from the 1991 parliamentary elections in India. In the middle of the election phases, the leader of the main opposition party Indian National Congress (INC), was assassinated. This is a pure exogenous shock that did not allow the politicians to react in anyway. We show that this assassination significantly positively affected the electoral fortunes of INC, with voter sympathy coming into play. Our results are indicative of irrational behavior on the part of Indian voters.

Dr. Kaustav Das, is a Lecturer in University of Leicester. He did his undergraduate at Presidency College, Kolkata, postgraduate at Indian Statistical Institute, and Ph.D. at Penn State University. Koustuv 's research interests are in Game Theory, Strategic Experimentation, Bargaining and Industrial Organisation.