

# Chinmaya Kumar

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## Research Experience and Other Employment

- 2023- Azim Premji University, Assistant Professor of Economics
- 2011-2016 International Growth Centre, India-Bihar, Country Economist
- 2008-2009 Center for Development Finance, Chennai, India, Research Associate

## Education

### *Graduate Studies*

University of Chicago, 2017 to 2023  
Ph.D. in Public Policy  
Thesis Title: Essays in Development Economics

### *Previous Studies*

MPhil. in Development Studies, University of Oxford, 2011  
B.A.(H) in Economics, University of Delhi, 2008

## Research Grants

- 2025-2027 Center for Study of Indian Economy for the State of Welfare State Initiative (with Rajendran Narayanan): \$ 220,000
- 2020-2024 J-PAL's Jobs and Opportunity Initiative: \$ 37,000
- 2018-2020 Rockefeller Grant for Technology and Governance (with M R Sharan through the IDFC Institute, Mumbai): \$ 300,000
- 2019-2023 NSF's Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant in Economics: \$ 25,000
- 2019-2022 BFI's Development Economics Initiative: \$ 15,000
- 2018-2019 The Weiss Fund (with M R Sharan): \$ 31,385
- 2015-2017 International Growth Centre (with Pankaj Verma and Aaditya Dar): \$ 23,290
- 2012-2013 International Growth Centre (with Maitreesh Ghatak and Sandip Mitra): \$22,387

## Research Papers

### *“Selection, Sorting and Discrimination in Labor Supply Decisions: Experimental Evidence from India”*

**Abstract:** Minorities are underrepresented in enterprise ownership and leadership positions. This paper investigates one potential cause: discrimination against minority employers by subordinate workers. Using a field experiment in the hiring process of a private Indian firm, I examine whether minority employers face bias in the quantity and quality of job applicants. The experiment randomized employer identity (minority vs. non-minority) and the disclosure of reference checks to test for social image concerns as a motive for discrimination. Results show that applicants assigned to a minority employer were 2.8 percentage points (10%) less likely to accept interview offers, and the average quality of applicants—measured by educational attainment—was significantly lower. I find no evidence that social image concerns drive this discrimination, as reference checks had no differential effect. Heterogeneity analysis reveals that non-minority workers disproportionately discriminate against minority employers, while minority workers exhibit less bias.

### *“Complaint Resolution Systems: Experimental Evidence from Rural India” (with M.R. Sharan)*

**Abstract:** We study whether access to complaint resolution systems can resolve hold-up problems in implementing public good projects. We run a field experiment involving 1629 low-caste local representatives who were unable to start public goods projects in their constituencies due to bureaucratic hurdles. We randomize offers to file complaints regarding public good project initiation on their behalf and track its effects. Our treatment leads to a 40 percentage points jump in complaint filing rate and is effective in improving project implementation: treated constituencies see a 26% rise in public good projects. We also find that the treatment increases project initiation in neighboring constituencies by 23%. Our analysis suggests that the mere threat of a formal complaint technology could cause project initiation in neighboring wards. However, resolution rates go down when multiple complaints are filed against the same higher bureaucrat. Surprisingly, treated representatives did not gain any electoral returns in the local elections held two years after the treatment.

### *“The Distributional Consequences of Political Reservation” (with M. R. Sharan)*

**Abstract:** A key goal of affirmative action policies is to reduce disparities between disadvantaged minority groups and others. We study one such policy: mandated political representation in favor of low caste (Scheduled Castes/SC) groups in Bihar, India. Using a regression discontinuity design framework, we study how political reservation affects inter-group disparities in the short- and long-run. We show that political reservation in favor of SCs for the post of local government head (a) lowers SC-non-SC disparities in access to public goods in the short-run (5 years later) and long-run (13 years later), (b) lowers inter-group private asset inequality modestly in the short-run and substantially in the long-run (c) has no efficiency consequences in the short-run and (d) increases political participation and presence of low caste members in local government in the long-run. Turning to mechanisms, we show that government programs are better targeted towards low castes in reserved constituencies. Our results suggest a virtuous cycle between political representation and resource access, which reap significant benefits for minority groups in the long run.

## Research Papers in Progress

*"Why do Firms Hire Migrant Workers?: Evidence from India," With Varun Kapoor*

*"Persistent Prejudice: De-Biasing and the Demand for News," with Christopher Blattman, Leonardo Bursztyn, Kailash Rajah, Chris Roth*

*"Leader Led Growth: Social Identity and Performance of Economic Enterprises in Rural India," with M. R. Sharan*

*"Strengthening Citizen Led Monitoring: Experimental Evidence from India," with Aaditya Dar and M R Sharan*

*"Bargaining Out of Poverty? Experimental Evidence on Income Shocks and Pricing Behavior of Microentrepreneurs in India", with Varun Kapoor*

## Pre-Doctoral Publications

*"Cash versus Kind: Understanding the Preferences of the Bicycle-Programme Beneficiaries in Bihar", (with Maitreesh Ghatak and Sandip Mitra). Economic and Political Weekly of India, Vol. 51, Issue No. 11, 12 Mar, 2016, p. 51-60.*

## Professional Activities

Presentations    NEUDC 2022, IGC Growth Week 2013, IGC South Asia Growth Conference 2013

Discussant       American Economic Association: ASSA 2021 Annual Meeting, NEUDC 2019