

Panel 1.A : Demography, Health and Well being

Does co-residence with children lead to better access to medical care for elderly in India? Exploratory analysis from LASI Wave 1

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In South Asian countries, including India, older adults often live with their children who can offer them financial and physical support. Insufficient income, limited access to social security benefits, and the high cost of living and health care often force them to depend and co-reside with their children. Given the increasing frailty and morbidity episodes, the elderly population needs better access to geriatric care for healthy ageing process. This study, using Propensity Score Matching (PSM) method on unit-level data from the LASI Wave 1 (2017-18), confirms that living with children improves healthcare access for the elderly population as a whole. However, a gender disparity exists in access to curative health care, when they suffer from any morbidity or disability; women aged 69 and older do not experience any better access to care when cohabiting with their offspring, though their male counterparts do.

Understanding Subjective Well-Being Among Older Indian Adults: A Cantril Ladder Analysis

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As India experiences a demographic shift with an increasing number of older adults, a comprehensive understanding of their well-being remains limited. This study addresses this gap by employing the Cantril Ladder, a globally recognized evaluative measure of life satisfaction, which has not been extensively explored in the Indian context. Utilizing data from Wave 1 (2017-18) of the Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI), this cross-sectional descriptive study examines life satisfaction and well-being among Indian adults aged 45 years and above. The study explores key demographic, health, and social determinants influencing well-being, with a particular focus on variations across age, gender, living arrangements, and geographic regions. The findings reveal that India's average Cantril Ladder score categorizes the older adults as "struggling," a trend comparable to several African nations. Notably, significant disparities emerge across different states, with Madhya Pradesh and Odisha reporting the lowest life satisfaction scores, while Meghalaya records the highest. These regional variations highlight the role of socio-economic conditions and infrastructural disparities in shaping well-being outcomes.

Furthermore, the study highlights cognitive health and mental well-being as crucial determinants of life satisfaction among older adults. The observed rural-urban divide reinforces the impact of infrastructural access and healthcare availability on overall well-being. The findings emphasize the complexities of assessing well-being in a socioeconomically and culturally diverse ageing population. Additionally, the study calls for a more in-depth examination of economic factors influencing life satisfaction, particularly in lower-income states where older adults are more vulnerable.

Given these disparities, the study advocates for targeted social and financial policies to enhance the well-being of India's ageing population. Strengthening mental health services and implementing economic support mechanisms could contribute to bridging these gaps. The study throws light to the necessity for a better policy approach that considers the heterogeneity of ageing experiences across Indian states. By providing empirical insights into the determinants of well-being among older Indian adults, this study contributes to the broader discourse on ageing and life satisfaction in developing economies.

When Do We Bury Our Close Kin? Understanding The Kinloss Over Life Course in India

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Mortality profoundly shapes human experience, yet its relational and experiential dimensions remain underexplored. This study pioneers the investigation of mortality from an experiential perspective in India, where data on familial mortality is scant. By analysing data from the fifth Demographic and Health Survey of India, we identified the deceased individuals from the households by matching the background characteristics. The study uses a non-parametric period life table approach to investigate the timing and probability of relational loss, such as the death of parents, spouses, and children, across different life stages and wealth groups. Findings reveal that, on average, individuals experience parental loss around age 33, with fathers dying earlier than mothers. The cumulative risk of these losses rises with age and varies significantly by gender, with women facing higher risks of widowhood; by age 70, 36% of women have lost their husbands compared to only 9% of men who have lost their wives. Wealth disparities are pronounced, with the poorest experiencing relational losses significantly earlier and more frequently than the richest. For instance, the poorest are twice as likely to lose a parent by age 25 and 2.8 times more likely to lose a child by age 65. This study highlights the probability of kin loss at each age and its socioeconomic differentials, offering a nuanced understanding of the impact of mortality on life course trajectories. By quantifying these patterns, this research provides insights into the unequal burden of kinship disruptions, emphasizing the importance of policies that address socioeconomic disparities in familial support systems and bereavement resources.

Panel 1.B : Gendered Lives

Intersecting Identities: Caste, Women's Empowerment, and Household Food Security in East India

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This study critically examines how intersecting identities of caste and gender shape the impact of women's empowerment on household food security in India. Using household panel data (2010-2014) from semi-arid regions collected by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), we find that women's empowerment significantly improves household food security, as measured by per-day calorie consumption. Our results highlight the disparities in empowerment outcomes across caste groups, with Forward Castes (FC) women showing higher levels of empowerment compared to other caste groups. Across caste groups, the effect of women's empowerment on household food security is strongest among FC, followed by Other Backward Caste (OBC). When focusing solely on resource ownership, only FC exhibit a significant positive impact on household food security. The effect of women's agency on household food security is highest among FC and OBC. Schedule caste (SC) shows no significant effects, while Schedule Tribe (ST) exhibits a significantly negative effect. These findings expose the compounded vulnerabilities of caste and gender, where entrenched norms limit women's ability to overcome food insecurity. Caste-based stratification mediates access to resources and empowerment opportunities, reinforcing systemic inequities. Dalit women face dual marginalisation, as both caste and gender norms restrict their resource ownership and agency. While FC women have higher resource ownership compared to, discriminatory norms could hinder the potential of SC, ST, and OBC women's ability to achieve empowerment.

Barricaded Love, Policed Choices: Caste-mediated patriarchy and State Intervention(s) in Transgressive Hypogamous Marriages

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States are known to mirror the social contexts in which they operate. In a complex society like India with deeply rooted hierarchical institutions like caste and patriarchy, the state is bound to reflect some of those tendencies and biases, if not in its foundational principles, then certainly in its everyday functioning. Existing literature shows that not just Indian society but the Indian state as well, with its foundational promises of securing equality and fraternity has to date remained deeply casteist in its existence and operation. As an extension to this, based upon my ongoing field study on the caste-transgressive marriages in the north Indian state of Haryana and neighboring states, I argue that despite modern constitutional promises, the state reifies caste-mediated patriarchy by reinforcing and re-emphasizing not only women's 'inability' to choose marital partners for themselves but also by putting men from marginalized caste identities at the risk of institutional persecution. I also underline the state as a site of paradox wherein its progressive initiatives are thwarted by its inability to distance and de-root itself from socially sanctioned hierarchical norms and beliefs. I argue that such norms which define the contours of marital relations in Indian society have been deeply absorbed by the state's law and order and adjudicating machinery. As a part of my study, I look specifically at the police and law courts' dealing with caste transgressive marriages in Haryana, which vary significantly in caste hypogamous and hypergamous unions..

For this work, I conduct life history interviews with inter-couples and in-depth interviews with several other stakeholders including police officials, social activists, and lawyers. Some observational insights from my visits to some of the state-run safe houses for these vulnerable couples are also included. Lastly, as an upper-caste female researcher, I reflect on my positionality in undertaking this research and how it has advantaged or disadvantaged my access to the field in several ways



“You can count on me”: Support network and Unpaid Childcare Burden of Domestic Workers and Sex Workers in Kolkata, India

Srimanjori Guha, CDS, Trivandrum

Multiple studies in India have focused on the interrelationship between women’s paid and unpaid work and women’s time in managing unpaid domestic responsibilities including childcare activities. In contrast, only a limited number of studies have explored the different support systems available to women workers, to manage their unpaid childcare responsibilities. In this context, the study analyses the role of kin and non-kin networks in sharing the unpaid childcare burden of women informal workers in Kolkata, India. It focuses on women domestic workers, and women sex workers to understand how the occupational identity of women can influence the support network available to them. Following the “care diamond” framework, through semi-structured interviews with the workers, it analyses the available support from various formal and informal kin and non-kin networks such as families, communities, NGOs and collectives and highlights the hidden cost of dependency on familial networks. While the study acknowledges that female kin is imperative in managing childcare responsibilities across occupations, occupational identity becomes critical in the availability of such support. For instance, the flexibility of work timings and proximity of work spaces may allow domestic workers to balance their paid work with unpaid care, which may not be the case for sex workers due to volatile work timings and work spaces. Further, the occupational stigma associated with sex workers might restrict support from female kin, unlike the domestic workers who are essentially involved in a “feminine” and “socially acceptable occupation”. Further, support from the community and access to paid childcare is available in the case of full-time sex workers, unlike domestic workers. In this context, the study highlights the state’s failure to implement childcare support schemes and the importance and limitations of alternative formal institutions such as NGOs and collectives in providing support for childcare management across occupational groups. The alternative institutions have followed a bottom-up approach and taken into consideration the unique needs and crises of the informal workers such as the need for full-time hostel facilities for children of sex workers or tuition-cum creche facilities for the children of the domestic workers and formulated initiatives accordingly. Hence, we advocate for future state policies and schemes for childcare support for each group of informal workers in accordance with the need that arises from their occupational identities.

Panel 2.A : Unravelling Causality

Compulsory Education and Caste Inequality in Western India, 1881-1931

Meeta Kumar, DSE, Delhi.

The colonial government of India introduced a 'modern' system of school education in India by the mid-nineteenth century, yet gains in literacy were small during the colonial period. The largest gains in literacy were, in fact, experienced in the Princely States of Cochin, Travancore and Baroda. Not only did overall literacy increase much more in these states, gains that accrued to the traditionally discriminated castes were far more in these states than anywhere else in the country. This paper documents literacy differentials across castes in Western India, with a focus on Baroda, using census data.

Compulsory primary education was introduced in Baroda at the turn of the last century, alongside a set of free schools for children belonging to the so called 'depressed' castes, typically ostracized from regular schools. We compare literacy rates for specific caste groups in Baroda to those in Bombay, using a difference-in-difference framework to evaluate Baroda's remarkable compulsory education policy. We find that Baroda's policy, which combined public provision of schools and compulsion, resulted in relatively greater literacy gains to the 'lower castes' than to the 'upper castes'. Literacy differentials across the caste hierarchy remained large in Baroda, but they were significantly narrower than those that obtained in Bombay.

Assessing the Impact of Conditional Cash Transfers on Early Marriage: A Case Study of the Kanyashree Prakalpa

Panchali Roy, IIT Patna, Patna

Programs that have cash transfers contingent on some predetermined conditions are known to influence development outcomes and have been used to address societal issues that hinder women's educational and developmental progress. One such program, the Kanyashree Prakalpa (KP), implemented in West Bengal, India, is designed to increase school enrolment among girls and hence reduce the likelihood of early marriage. However, even a decade after the implementation of the scheme, there is little sign of a decline in the early marriage rate (41.6%) among girls, as reported in the fifth round of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5). In fact, the state has the highest incidences of early marriage in India. This deepening fault line between policy and outcome motivates an assessment of the effectiveness of the scheme. The study uses several rounds of NFHS data to account for the launch year of KP and the age of beneficiaries as an identification strategy. Using the double difference framework, it is found that in the post-KP period, the likelihood of early marriage increases by 49%. When examining the subset of girls belonging to households of poorer wealth quintiles, the likelihood becomes 80%. These outcomes underscore the possibility of the financial incentive offered, while well-intentioned, being inadvertently used as marriage expenses or dowries. This counteracts its goal of preventing early marriages, highlighting its limited impact within a complex socio-economic framework and limited availability of economic opportunities.



Homes of Harm: Spousal Violence and Child Malnutrition in India

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This paper investigates the causal impact of intimate partner violence experienced by mothers on the nutritional status of their children aged below five years in India. To address the possibility of endogeneity, we instrument spousal violence with the district level presence of an All-Women Police Station. Using detailed datasets from the fourth and fifth rounds of the National Family Health Survey, we find evidence that violence experienced by mothers at the hands of their partners significantly increases the likelihood of their children being malnourished. The intergenerational health effects of violence are pronounced in terms of increased chances of stunting and underweight by 35.6 pp and 26.9 pp, respectively. In exploring the mechanism, we find that IPV affects child health via the deficit response of a mother in breastfeeding, which is triggered by poor maternal health and less empowerment. We also find evidence of neighbourhood effects of violence on child malnourishment.

Panel 2.B : Mapping Lived Experiences

Autism, Technology, and Communication: Assessing the Parental Perceptions on AAC among the Families of Children with ASD in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

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In today's technologically advanced society, the impact of technology on interpersonal relationships spans across all facets of life, including families with autistic children. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) often presents challenges in social connectivity, particularly among nonverbal individuals. This study explores the parental perceptions on the role of technology, specifically the Avaz app; an augmentative and alternative communication tool, in facilitating and enhancing communication, interpersonal dynamics and intimacy within families of nonverbal autistic children in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. Employing ethnographic methods, the research delves into how parents utilize technology to forge new paths of communication and connection with their autistic children. By examining the experiences and practices of these families, this paper aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the intersection between technology, communication, and familial relationships in the context of autism.

Examining Tamil Nadu's Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam Scheme for NCD Care and Health Worker Roles in Eriyur Block of Dharmapuri District

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Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) have emerged as a significant public health challenge in India, particularly in rural areas. The utilization of PHCs for NCD care remains suboptimal, with many patients, especially rural patients, not adhering to regular follow-up visits and medical checkup. This study delves into the role of health workers working under Tamil Nadu's Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam (MTM) Scheme for NCD care, focusing on Eriyur Block in Dharmapuri District, Tamil Nadu. The MTM scheme, introduced by the Tamil Nadu government, is a pioneering initiative aimed at bringing healthcare services to the doorsteps of the people, particularly for the prevention and management of NCDs. The MTM program's field functionaries, including Mid-Level Health Providers (MLHPs) and Women Health Volunteers (WHVs), play a crucial role in ensuring continuous monitoring and follow-up care for NCD patients. However, there are concerns about the effectiveness of this program, particularly regarding the screening quality provided by MLHPs and WHVs, and the availability of health workers at PHCs to support the program's objectives. The primary aim of this research is to identify the accessibility patterns and understand the utilization patterns of NCD services at the Primary Health Centre (PHC) level and to assess the service delivery of the MTM program in the Eriyur Block. Additionally, the study will analyse the availability of health workers at PHCs and the field functionaries of the MTM program, who are responsible for providing NCD care.

This research adopts Case Study method by collecting Primary Data through Structured Interview Schedule with selected patients, MLHPs, and WHVs, who will be chosen using a multi-stage sampling technique. The qualitative data will be analysed using thematic analysis to identify key themes related to the accessibility and availability of NCD care services, the effectiveness of the MTM program, and the challenges faced by health workers in delivering these services. The findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing NCD management at the grassroots level, enabling policymakers and healthcare providers to implement targeted interventions to improve accessibility, availability, and quality of care for NCD patients in rural India.



State Manufactured Social Capital: A Case Study of JEEVIKA in Bihar

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The social capital theory has gained popularity in the academic discourse since the 1990s in the writings of Putnam, Coleman, Fukuyama, John Harris, Bourdieu, Foley and Edwards, Hyden, M. Portilla, Anirudh Krishna and many others. An interesting fact about social capital theory is its sudden appearance in the neoliberal development paradigm as an alternative to the state's role in development. The context of the emergence of this concept was the withdrawal away of the state or the depoliticization of development discourses in the Western world; however, in the case of India, this concept has come up with the politicisation of the development process, and here, the state plays a significant role in manufacturing and constructing social capital. The state creates an environment to manufacture, grow, and sustain social capital in India. Here, state and social capital go simultaneously to ensure the grassroots development of the local communities. This paper has proposed this central argument with the empirical reference point of the JEEViKA project in Bihar. Bihar is one of the poorest states in India, and its socio-economic development indicators are at the lowest in various development reports published at the national and state levels. The widespread poverty at the state level provides a fertile ground for the government to come up with specific robust and substantive policy solutions to overcome all such hardships, and they came up with the policy of JEEViKA with the help of the World Bank in the year 2006. This program is based on generating a vibrant network of self-help groups at the grassroots level, which further mobilise at the level of village organisations and cluster-level federations. In this context, this paper tells the story of manufacturing social capital by the state from the top by providing suitable structure and resources to function this project in Bihar. Primary sources (Fieldwork-based data) and secondary sources (NRLM data, World Bank, and other developmental reports) are used to develop the argument here. In the end, I propose the context- oriented social capital theory, which has advanced over the existing theory of social capital.

Panel 3.A : Labour and Enterprise

Social Capital, Human Capital and Occupational Attainment in India: an Investigation using the IHDS data

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The labour market gains from human capital accumulation materialize by promoting one's entry into lucrative occupations that lie on a higher rung of the social status ladder. This proposition is in adherence to the famous human capital theory framework that posits better labour market outcomes for individuals with greater educational attainment, labour market experience and on-the-job training. However, in a socially stratified society such as India, a host of other factors namely an individual's social identity, region of residence, gender, intergenerational transfers of ability and human capital, social capital etc. tend to mediate with the accumulated human capital and consequently, end up having a strong say in an individual's occupational destination. This study attempts to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the factors contributing towards the occupational attainments of individual workers. To this end, we use rich datasets from the India Human Development Survey (IHDS-II) and we make use of the bivariate and multinomial probit models to gauge the impact of human capital accumulation, social identity, household characteristics and social network ties on the occupational attainments of workers. The results confirm that human capital accumulation leads to favourable outcomes in the labour market. However, the signs and significance of the coefficients representing social identity hint at the fact other explanations of discrimination cannot be completely discarded. We also learn that aside from human capital, social capital proxied by social network ties both within as well as outside one's community made available through information on household members' acquaintances with members of socially valued professions is a significant determinant of an individual's occupational destination. Furthermore, within community social network ties are found to be more potent in affecting the probability of attaining occupations that are lucrative and lie on a higher rung of the social status ladder. The results emphasize the role of human capital as well as social capital for propelling entry into white-collar occupations. Still, they bring to light social identity as a barrier towards the attainment of better labour market outcomes

Influence of enterprise factors in determining the sanctioned PMMY credit: A study on Micro-enterprises

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The microenterprise sector is significantly contributing to the growth of self-employment opportunities and raising household incomes in developing nations. The enterprise sector comprises a range of low-investment manufacturing, service, and trading activities. In India, almost 90% of the population engages in micro, small, and medium-sized businesses, suggesting that this sector could take over agriculture as the nation's main source of income. Although the cost of investing in microenterprises may be lower than that of small, medium, and large businesses, working capital is still necessary in this sector. Due to a lack of knowledge about government financial aid programs and the communication gap between bank officials and entrepreneurs, the majority of micro-entrepreneurs rely on private moneylenders, friends, and family.

The study's objective was to analyze the enterprise, banking, and microentrepreneurial variables that influence access to Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana loans. Using a standardized questionnaire schedule, 304 samples of PMMY beneficiaries were collected for the study, which was based on primary sources. Among the characteristics of entrepreneurs, the study indicated that gender and districts were significant, but that entrepreneur age, social class, region, marital status, education, and business experience were not major drivers. Enterprise size, age, working hours, ownership, and workplace were not vital variables, but enterprise investment level, workforce, and enterprise type were. Comparably, when it came to determining access to PMMY loans, enterprise banking characteristics including collateral security and bank transactions were important, but bank type, CIBIL score, and bank savings were not. According to the study, banks need to provide loans to women and extend such loans to additional districts, such as Bagalkote, Haveri, Gadag, and Koppal. Additionally, the research recommended that banks should lend more to manufacturing and trading businesses.

Women Workers and Employment Guarantee in Urban Rajasthan

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Extended Abstract: The livelihood crisis during the lockdowns of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 exposed the immense precarity of the informal sector low-wage workers in India. The employment guarantee scheme, MGNREGA, emerged as a critical safety net during that time for rural households, as was evident from the increased reliance on it during 2020 and 2021 (Afridi et al., 2022). However, such a safety net was not available for workers residing in urban areas. In September 2022, Rajasthan Government launched the Indira Gandhi Rozgar Guarantee Yojana-Urban (IRGY) in Rajasthan. Based on the lines of MGNREGA, which is limited to rural households, IRGY was launched to guarantee 125 days of wage employment in a year to every urban household in local public works. While extensive literature discusses the impact of MGNREGA on rural workers, especially women, and its role as a safety net (see, for example, Khera & Nayak, 2009; Narayan, 2022), there is little evidence on what role could an employment guarantee play in the urban informal economy.

Based on two rounds of surveys of 400 households in 20 urban slums in two cities of Rajasthan-Jaipur and Udaipur, this paper is one of the early attempts to empirically assess the impacts of the program. Using multivariate logistic regression analysis, the paper first identifies the determinants of participation in the program. It finds that at the given program wage rate of Rs.285 per day, women are more likely than men to participate in it. Among them, a subsection of women who are out-of-the-labour-force (currently engaged in housework) are most likely to participate. The findings indicate that IRGY facilitates women's entry or re-entry into the urban labor force by offering flexible employment close to home and provides a fallback option for those already engaged in informal labor. While IRGY has yet to address several challenges and cannot single-handedly resolve the structural issues of job scarcity or low female labor force participation rates, it holds potential to address specific gender-related concerns in the urban informal labor market.

Panel 3.B : Fiscal Dynamics

Intergovernmental transfers and Subnational revenue sources: A case of Kerala

Adith S Karthik, University Of Kerala, Trivandrum

Fiscal federalism as an economic concept deals with the decision-making process of allocating functions and revenue sources among various tiers of government. Wallace E. Oates (1999) defined it as “Fiscal Federalism is concerned with understanding which functions and instruments are best centralized and which are best placed in decentralized levels of government. This concept applies to all forms of government: unitary, federal and confederal”. The literature on fiscal federalism attempts to lay a framework for the following elements;(i) Allocating expenditure and revenue responsibilities among different tiers of government (ii) Adopting strategies to cap excessive spending and borrowing at each level of government (iii) Designing a revenue-sharing mechanism to equalize disparities in fiscal resources and fiscal needs (fiscal imbalances), both over time and across jurisdictions. In most of the federal nations the federal government having a comparative advantage in tapping resources and monitoring intergovernmental competition to control free riding, must be vested with the authority to collect and administer most of the broad-based taxes. On the other hand, sub-central governments having the ability to alter public service according to the needs of the receivers are assigned with majority of the expenditure responsibilities. Besides the above-mentioned imbalance among different tiers of government (vertical imbalance), differential subcentral capacities to generate revenue and provide services create a horizontal imbalance in the economy. This inherent issue of fiscal gap in federalism is often addressed using fiscal transfers among the government. The mentioned revenue-sharing mechanism (often called as intergovernmental transfers) serves as a middle ground enabling the federal government to maintain oversight of the public financing system, while also providing means to allocate funds to state and local governments. Thus, the economic responsibility of intergovernmental transfers is (i) closing the fiscal gap or imbalances (ii) establishing horizontal equity across federal units (iii) offsetting the inter-jurisdictional cost and benefit spillover. The study attempts to trace the impact of intergovernmental transfers on subnational revenue sources. Since central transfers are the second most important source of revenue, contributing around 3- 4 per cent of the GSDP of Kerala, variations in the central transfers are very vital.

Financial Concurrence Of Public Spending On Education In India

Anjalikrishna Sudhakaran, GIFT, Trivandrum

This paper addresses the critical issue of resource allocation in India's public education system, focusing on the roles of both central and state governments. The paper explores the "flypaper effect," which investigates how federal transfers affect state expenditures on education. Through an analysis of 17 major Indian states from 2010-11 to 2021-22, the research identifies whether central government spending complements or substitutes state expenditures. The study uses static panel data analysis methodologies: Pooled, Fixed effects (FEs) and Random Effects (REs) models to understand the relationship between state revenue, conditional and unconditional transfers, and their impacts on educational spending. The findings suggest that higher education-indexed states exhibit a substitution effect. Meanwhile, low education-indexed states show a strong reliance on central transfers. The paper calls for better financial concurrence and localized education policies to ensure equitable and effective public education financing across states.

How Efficient Are Our States? An Analysis Of Public Expenditure Efficiency Among Indian States

Gopika G, GIFT, Trivandrum

This paper analyses the efficiency of public expenditure across 28 states in India from 2000 to 2019 using a composite public sector performance (PSP) index and data envelopment analysis. The PSP index includes two key components: Opportunity indicators and Musgravian indicators. And a single input-oriented variable returns to Scale DEA is done to analyze the efficiency and total revenue expenditure as a share of GDP is taken as the input. The results show significant differences in the efficiency ie, PSP score among states, with Goa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu performing the best while Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram rank the lowest. The DEA analysis suggests that on average, Indian states could reduce their public spending by 60% and still achieve similar output levels.

Panel 4.A : Rural Realities

Sources of Funds and Choice of Expenditure of Rural Local Governments in India

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India has a federal structure with three tiers of government - union, states and local bodies (rural and urban). With a total of 267,510 rural local governments, also known as Panchayats, India accounts for nearly 40 percent of the subnational governments of the world. Following the 73rd amendment to the Constitution of India in 1993, there was a clear enunciation of the responsibilities of the Panchayats and each state government was expected to assign responsibilities to the third tier. In this context, two issues are studied in this paper: the sources of funds for panchayats, and then their subsequent expenditure into different sectors based on these sources. A new dataset from the portal of eGramSwaraj for the year 2023 is analyzed in this regard. The own resource raising capabilities of panchayats have remained limited. In order to fund their expenditure, Panchayats have been primarily reliant on tied and untied grants. While tied grants can only be used for drinking water and sanitation projects, Panchayats have freedom to spend untied funds and own resources at

their discretion. The utilization patterns observed in these discretionary funds is supposed to reflect the local priorities. The analysis shows that panchayat's characteristics such as population size and urban proximity plays a major role in determining their own resource raising abilities. Further, the intergovernmental grants that panchayats receive crowds-in more own resources for panchayats. The planned expenditure of panchayats using their discretionary funds shows priorities towards core issues such as roads and drinking water, instead of welfare activities. Additionally, the tied grants crowds-in discretionary spending in sectors other than drinking water and sanitation.

Disparities Within: Village-Level Evidence of Uneven Development in Karnataka

Mohammed Hashim, Krea University, Sricity

This study investigates regional disparities within Karnataka, a leading Indian state in economic growth, to understand how economic reforms have influenced intra-state inequality. While Karnataka has benefited on reforms, primarily through its tertiary sector, benefits of growth appear unevenly distributed, with northern regions, particularly the Hyderabad-Karnataka area, lagging significantly behind the state's southern regions. Using village-level data on consumption expenditure and poverty rates from the SECC (Socio Economic and Caste Census), this paper provides a granular analysis of regional inequality. Results highlight stark contrasts in economic outcomes, with higher poverty rates and lower consumption levels in northern Karnataka. Additionally, a review of historical and policy contexts reveals the persistence of structural and geographic disadvantages despite targeted government initiatives, such as the Special Development Plan and the constitutional amendment under Article 371(J). By focusing on village-level indicators, this study contributes to literature on regional inequality in India, shedding light on the nuances of economic disparities within states. These findings reiterate the need for more effective policy interventions to address deep rooted regional imbalances and promote equitable development

Are the Monetarily and Multidimensionally Poor Populations Homogeneous?

Evidence on Poverty Mismatch and Overlap from Rural Bihar.

Ogbonna Amarachi Onyeyirichi, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Coimbatore

This study/chapter investigates the mismatches and overlaps in rural monetary and multidimensional poverty using primary data from two rural communities in Bihar, India. Measuring poverty with FAO's rural multidimensional poverty index and the price updated Tendulkar rural poverty line, the current study adopts Kendall's correlation, cross-tabulation, and the multivariate general linear model to address three objectives. The first objective is to establish the correlation between rural, monetary and multidimensional poverty measures. The second is to examine the mismatches and overlaps in both measures. The third is to identify the sociodemographic factors determining the mismatches and overlaps in both measures. The study finds that rural monetary and multidimensional poverties are weakly and insignificantly correlated, which means that rural monetary poverty minimally effects rural multidimensional poverty. The study's results also show that only 40.3% of people from both villages are non-poor by both measures, while 1.7% of the same are poor by both measures, thus showing that the overlap of both measures in identifying the poor is minimal. In terms of mismatches, 57.1% of the population are poor only in monetary terms while 0.8% are poor only in multidimensional terms. The last finding of this study is that household demographic factors do not determine multidimensional poverty mismatches and poverty overlaps but, three household demographic factors – caste, religion, and household head's income – determine mismatches in monetary poverty. These findings imply that, in the rural, Indian context, monetary and multidimensional poverty measures are complementary and so they must be jointly considered when formulating pro-poor policies and designing anti-poverty programs.

Panel 4.B : Regional Disparities and Development

Rules of Origin in India's Trade Agreements: Introducing a New Dataset and Severity Index

Himanshu Jaiswal, IGIDR, Mumbai

In Free Trade Agreement (FTA), two or more countries negotiate many provisions to facilitate trade flows between the contracting parties. In these negotiations, one of the most important issues is Rules of Origin (RoO) which are the rules or regulations. To get preferential treatment under an FTA framework, these RoO must be fulfilled by the products. RoO are two types, one related to the manufacturing rules (called Product Specific Rules) and others are related to administrative rules (Regime-wide Rules). And, both of these must be fulfilled. Prima facie, they act like enablers of an FTA but they may nullify the trade gains if they get more stringent. India has negotiated and is negotiating many trade agreements with its trading partners. At the same time, India has a long-standing issue, against these trade deals, related to their underutilization. To make trade deals fully efficient, an informed approach behind the factors of underutilization must be taken because among many, the severity of RoO is also a factor behind the underutilization of FTAs. Since there is a lacuna of data for RoO, this article fills that gap. In this article, the severity of RoO of India's FTAs is being determined using a novel dataset for India. This dataset has a detailed information for each product at HS-6 digit, negotiated under a deal; and regime wide rules for each agreement as well. Taking 15 active agreements, a severity index is calculated which is composed of several sub-indices- PSR index, Compliance Index and Facilitation Index. Afghanistan trade deals turns out most severe of all while India-Thailand EHS is most liberal trade regime.

Capabilities and Regional Disparities: An Economic Complexity-Based Analysis of Indian States

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This study assesses economic development among Indian states utilising the Economic Complexity Index (ECI) based on industry data from 18 states spanning 2000 to 2021. The findings reveal that states with greater industrial diversity and fewer dominant industries, such as Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and New Delhi, exhibit enhanced economic complexity and development. Conversely, states such as Assam, Bihar, and Odisha consistently occupy lower ranks. Kendall's rank concordance test indicates an absence of convergence among ECI rankings, as lower-performing states do not bridge the divide with more complex economies, highlighting persistent regional disparity. Regression research indicates that ECI, energy consumption, transportation infrastructure, and education expenditure significantly boost state domestic product (SDP), particularly in coastal states, demonstrating a significant benefit. The research underscores the importance of investing in social overhead capital (SOC) in underdeveloped areas to enhance capacity development, draw industrial investment, and reduce regional inequalities. Thus, the study comprehensively explains India's economic complexity and developmental dynamics.

Determinants of CO₂ Emissions Convergence Post-1990: A Study of Annex-1 and Non-Annex Countries

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This study examines the β -convergence of CO₂ per capita emissions for a global sample of 105 countries, subdivided into 24 Annex 1 and 81 non-Annex countries from 1990 to 2019 by addressing two important econometric issues: cross-sectional dependence and model uncertainty, which are often overlooked in the existing scholarship. Cross-sectional dependence arises from shared global factors, such as trade, technological innovation, etc., that affect cross-sectional units in the panel. Model uncertainty, on the other hand, stems from the challenge of selecting the most appropriate determinants for analyzing convergence dynamics, given the multifaceted nature of cross-country emissions. By employing a combination of the Cross-Sectionally Augmented Auto-Regressive Distributed Lagged (CS-ARDL) model and Bayesian Model Averaging (BMA), the study tackles these econometric issues. Failing to account for these issues can result in biased estimates, inconsistency, and invalid statistical inferences. We found both absolute and conditional β -convergence, highlighting the role of initial emission levels and additional country-specific factors (or determinants) that influence CO₂ per capita emissions growth trajectories. To identify the key determinants of CO₂ per capita emissions convergence, we divided our analysis into two parts: first, performing CS-ARDL regression with five commonly used determinants from the related literature, and second, using BMA to select relevant determinants from 15 variables spanning economic, environmental and institutional domains for incorporation into the CS-ARDL regression. Our results, based on both methods, identify several determinants of CO₂ per capita emissions convergence. GDP per capita and primary energy consumption per capita emerge to be the most significant determinants, with higher income and fossil fuel consumption linked to increased CO₂ emissions growth. By contributing empirical evidence from a global sample and tackling important econometric issues, the study offers robust and reliable insights into the dynamics and determinants of CO₂ emissions convergence.

