

Title: Social Networks, Gender Norms, and Women's Labor Supply: Experimental Evidence Using a Job Search Platform

Speaker: Nikita Sangwan, Indian Statistical Institute

Area: Economics

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Abstract:

Using a cluster randomized control trial, we study the role of women's social networks in improving female labor force participation. In the first treatment arm, a hyper-local digital job search platform service was offered to a randomly selected group of married couples (non-network treatment) in low-income neighborhoods of Delhi, India. In the second treatment arm, the service was offered to married couples and the wife's social network (network treatment), to disentangle the network effect. Neither couples nor their networks were offered the service in the control group. Approximately one year after the intervention, we find no increase in the wives' likelihood of working in either treatment group relative to the control group. Instead, there is a significant improvement in the husbands' labor market outcomes, including the likelihood of working, work hours, and monthly earnings, while home-based self-employment increased among the wives -- both in the network treatment group only. We argue that our findings can be explained by the gendered structure of social networks in our setting, which reinforces (conservative) social norms about women's (outside) work.

Speaker Profile:



Nikita Sangwan is a Visiting Assistant Professor at the Centre for Research on the Economics of Climate, Food, Energy and Environment (CECFEE), Indian Statistical Institute (Delhi) and an EfD Early Career Research Fellow. Her primary research interest is applying econometric methods to topics in the field of Agriculture, Environment, Gender, and Labor. Her research focuses on the gender-differentiated labor impacts of climatic shocks and the role of social safety nets in mitigating the adverse effects of such shocks. Her work also delves into the role of women's agency in enhancing the household's welfare. She recently worked on a Randomised Control Trial (RCT) in Delhi, India to understand how lowering job search costs and harnessing social networks can stem social constraints to women's employment. Currently, she is working with job-matching platforms to understand and address employer-employee mismatches in the labor market.

Webpage Link: <https://sites.google.com/view/nikitasangwan/home>