

CHINMAYA KUMAR

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Undergraduate Studies:

B.A. (Hons), Economics,
University of Delhi, 2008

Masters:

M.Phil, Development Studies,
University of Oxford (on Rhodes Scholarship), 2011

Graduate Studies:

University of Chicago, 2017 to present
Ph.D. Candidate in Public Policy
Thesis Title: Essays in Development Economics
Expected Completion Date: June 2023

References:

Professor Marianne Bertrand
University of Chicago
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Professor Christopher Blattman
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Professor Michael Kremer
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Teaching and Research Fields:

Primary fields: Development Economics, Behavioral Economics

Secondary fields: Labor Economics, Political Economy

Teaching Experience:

2022, 2021	Political Economy of Development (PhD) Teaching Assistant for Prof. James Robinson and Christopher Blattman
2020	Advanced Microeconomics (PhD) Teaching Assistant for Prof. Damon Jones
2020, 2019	Order and Violence (MPP) Teaching Assistant for Prof. Christopher Blattman

2018 Microeconomics (Undergraduate)
Teaching Assistant for Prof. Kerwin Charles

Research Experience and Other Employment:

2011-2016 International Growth Centre, India-Bihar, Country Economist

2008-2009 Center for Development Finance, Chennai, India, Research Associate

Research Grants:

2020-2022 NSF's Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant in Economics: \$ 25,000
2020-2022 J-PAL's Jobs and Opportunity Initiative: \$ 37,000
2019-2022 BFI's Development Economics Initiative: \$ 15,000
2018-2019 The Weiss Fund (with M R Sharan): \$ 31, 385
2018-2020 Rockefeller Grant for Technology and Governance (with M R Sharan through the IDFC Institute, Mumbai): \$ 300,000
2015-2017 International Growth Centre (with Pankaj Verma and Aaditya Dar): \$ 23,290
2014-2017 International Growth Centre Research Programme (with Sanjay Jain): \$ 20,173
2012-2013 International Growth Centre (with Maitreesh Ghatak and Sandip Mitra): \$ 22,387

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

Research Papers:

“Complaint Resolution Systems: Experimental Evidence from Rural India” (Job Market Paper)

Abstract: Solving agency problems involving multiple layers of government is difficult. Mid-level officials are often supposed to monitor lower-tiered officials. But they can misuse their power over subordinates for personal gains. We study if complaints from lower-tiered officials can be used to improve accountability of mid-level officials. Taking advantage of the introduction of a new complaint resolutions institution (with annual expenditure of \$6mn) in the state of Bihar, we run a field experiment involving 1629 low-caste local politicians. We randomize offers to file complaints regarding public good project initiation on behalf of politicians who face bureaucratic hurdles in implementing these projects. Our treatment leads to a 40 percentage points jump in complaint filing rate. It is extremely 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 jurisdictions by 23%. Our analysis suggests that the mere threat of

a formal complaint technology could cause project initiation in neighboring wards. Surprisingly, we find that treated representatives do not gain any electoral returns in the local elections that were held 2 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 India. Using secondary data on public goods from across 45,000 villages, private assets from over 17 million rural households, political candidacy data from over 300,000 local jurisdictions and a primary survey of nearly 8,000 households from Bihar, we study how political reservation affects inter-group disparities in the short- and long run. Using a regression discontinuity design framework, 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) dampens asset accumulation abilities of the dominant non-minority sub-castes in the short-run (d) has no efficiency consequences in the short-run and (e) 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 Paper(s) in Progress:

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

Abstract: Minorities are underrepresented in enterprise ownership and leadership positions in big firms. Why? This paper empirically investigates the role of one potential reason for this: discrimination against minority employers by subordinate workers. I embed a field experiment in recruitment of entry level workers by a set of firms based in India. The field experiment aims to answer two main research questions: 1) Do the minority employers face discrimination from below in labor markets? 2) What are the underlying motivations? I specifically test for two potential motives: attention-discrimination, social image concerns. Preliminary results show that applicants are 30% less likely to apply for jobs advertised by minority employers. I also find strong evidence for attention-discrimination against minority employers.

“Persistent Prejudice: De-Biasing and the Demand for News”, with [Christopher Blattman](#), [Leonardo Bursztyn](#), Kailash Rajah, Chris Roth

Abstract: Identity groups often hold incorrect and biased beliefs about competing groups. Examples include Democrats and Republicans in the US, or Israelis and Arabs in the Middle East. In India, the setting for this study, Hindu nationalists commonly believe that Muslims are untrustworthy, or that the Muslim population is growing so fast that their population will overtake Hindus. These beliefs may be persistent and difficult to correct. Why is that? One reason, we hypothesize, is that people exposed to information counter to their group identity may work to re-bias themselves by increasing their selective exposure--their consumption of biased news and information. We design an experiment in which we randomly provide Hindu respondents with information to correct a biased belief about Muslims, using informational videos. We first confirm that the videos shift their beliefs during the experiment. We then

examine their demand for new information—having been de-biased, are they more likely to seek information from a biased source?

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

Abstract: Misallocation of entrepreneurial talent can prevent the economy from achieving its growth potential. Minority groups face discrimination across multiple markets – capital, product, labor – that limits the entry and growth of minority run enterprises. This paper empirically investigates whether exposure to minority leaders at local level can help minority entrepreneurs overcome some of the barriers and improve the performance of their enterprises. Using a regression discontinuity design, we find that exogenous exposure to minority leaders results in a strong positive effect on the entry and growth of minority run enterprises: there is a 20% increase in the number of enterprises and a 27% increase in workers employed by minority owned enterprises. We find evidence for positive spillover effects on social groups closer to status hierarchy but no effects on his-status social groups. Using a primary survey of enterprises, we plan to uncover the underlying channels through which local leaders impact the performance of economic enterprises.

“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