



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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Department of Economics
Yale University
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Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I am writing to apply for the position of Assistant Professor at the Department of Economics at Yale University. I am currently completing my Ph.D. in Public Policy (Economics) at the Harvard Kennedy School, where my primary fields are development economics and labor economics. I have enclosed my curriculum vitae and other supporting documents. Letters from my advisors will be sent separately.

My job market paper, “Familiar Strangers: Evidence from Referral-Based Hiring Experiments in India,” examines how network-conscious hiring of underrepresented workers can improve firm productivity as well as worker labor market prospects in frictional labor markets. Partnering with a large manufacturing firm in Delhi, I experimentally reallocated referral opportunities to historically disadvantaged workers. This intervention increased their representation by 62%, reduced turnover by 41%, and raised output by 0.09 standard deviations, with no evidence of the short-run cohesion costs typically associated with diversity interventions. I complement this experiment with lab-in-field and vignette experiments to isolate mechanisms, and develop a dynamic model of belief updating. Together, these results show how network-conscious hiring can turn labor market segmentation from a source of inefficiency into an opportunity for inclusion.

More broadly, my research agenda investigates how frictions in developing economies — such as unequal access to networks, limited mobility, and weak outside options — shape labor market trajectories. In other ongoing work, I study informal credit networks, the formation of human and social capital, and the implementation of welfare programs. Looking ahead, I plan to extend my research agenda by testing interventions that help insure populations in these settings against climate risks and adjust to a post-AI economy.

Teaching has been a central and rewarding part of my academic career. At Harvard, I have served as a teaching fellow for courses in development, trade and spatial economics, consistently receiving excellent evaluations, as detailed in my teaching statement. I would be excited to contribute to your department’s teaching mission by offering both core courses in microeconomics, development, and labor, as well as other applied microeconomics and applied econometrics courses.

I am deeply enthusiastic about the prospect of joining your faculty and contributing to its vibrant research and teaching community. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kartik Srivastava