MANASWINI RAO

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Doctoral Studies

University of California, Berkeley
PhD, Agricultural and Resource Economics, Expected completion May 2020
DISSERTATION: "Essays in Empirical Institutional Economics"

PRIMARY FIELDS: Development Economics
SECONDARY FIELDS: Political Economics, Applied Econometrics

Professor Aprajit Mahajan
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Prior Education

University of California Berkeley	Master of Public Policy	2010
B.M.S College of Engineering (V.T.U), India	B.Engg. (Comp Sc. and Engg.)	2004

Grants, Fellowships, and Awards

2019	The Jean O. Lanjouw Memorial Endowment ($757); UC Berkeley Conference Travel Grant ($ 900)
2018	IRLE Graduate Student Award (w/ Vaishnavi Surendra) ($6000)
2017	ATAI Grant (w/ Xavier Gine, Aprajit Mahajan, Anup Malani) ($233,565)
2017	IGC Grant for Judicial Efficiency and Economic Outcomes (Aprajit Mahajan (PI)) (£50,000)
2015	Levin Family Fellowship (w/ Fiona Burlig and Louis Preonas) ($ 50,000)
2015	Maharaj Kaul Research Travel Grant ($ 1000)
2014	Post Primary Education Initiative Exploratory Grant (w/ Bastien Michel and Bhavya Srinivasan) ($ 10000)
2013	USAID DIV Award Pilot Stage, (w/ Emily Breza, Arun Chandrasekhar, and Ashish Shenoy) ($ 99,632)
2009-2010	Berkeley International Office Fellowship
2009	Jacob K. Javits Summer Fellowship

Teaching

UC Berkeley	Dept. ARE and Public Policy (joint), *International Economic Development (Master)* Alain de Janvry and Bruce Wydick	2017
UC Berkeley	Dept. ARE and Economics (joint), *Economic Development (Undergraduate)* Aprajit Mahajan	2016
UC Berkeley	Dept. Economics, *Intermediate Macroeconomic Analysis (Undergraduate)* Steven Wood	2010
UC Berkeley	Dept. Economics, *20th Century Economic History (Undergraduate)* Brad DeLong	2009

Research Papers	**"Judges, Lenders, and Bottomline: Court-ing Economic Growth in India"** (JOB MARKET PAPER) Abstract. Courts are considered as an important institution in the functioning of markets. Yet, there is limited causal evidence showing this relationship. This paper estimates the causal effects of court performance on formal sector firm growth using novel data comprising of the universe of 6 million case records over 9 years across 195 district courts in India. Taking advantage of the granular data, I construct a robust measure of court performance, both at the level of the district court as well as at the level of caseload involving specific firms that I am able to match with a sample dataset on firms. These measurements enable me to show that higher court performance positively affects lending behavior in local credit markets. This is because timely resolution of litigation supports lenders and acts as a deterrent against non-repayment to borrower firms. As a result, this relaxes the credit constraints firms face, expanding production and improving profits. To demonstrate these effects as causal, I exploit plausible exogenous variation in judge occupancy, arising out of a system of rotating transfers of judges and existing vacancies, to instrument for the potentially endogenous court performance. Finally, I show positive complementarities between better courts performance and legal reforms by using the examples of industrial-labor relations and changes in bankruptcy procedure.
Research in Progress	**"Mission Kakatiya: Impact Evaluation of Minor Irrigation Tank Rehabilitation in Telangana"** with Xavier Gine, Aprajit Mahajan, Anup Malani *Pre-analysis plan filed with the AEA RCT Registry* (#AEARCTR-0001821). Abstract. We evaluate the effects of rehabilitating local village level irrigation tanks on agricultural outcomes using a combination of observational and experimental approaches. Tank irrigation is a common (and climate friendly) mode of irrigation in Southern and Western India, which is based on impounding the surface run-off during rainy season for later use. However, since these are common pool resources, a lack of periodic upkeep had led to excessive silting and therefore, lowered capacity. Mission Kakatiya is a state-wide program in Telangana that aims to rehabilitate over 45000 tanks across the state in multiple phases. We make use of the staggered roll-out of earlier phases to study the impacts and understand the context of implementation in a differences-in-difference framework using a sample of 750 tanks. Further, we validate the findings using an experimental approach where we randomize the order of rehabilitation on a set of 92 tanks. **"The Power of Agency: Evidence from India"** with Xavier Gine, Aprajit Mahajan, Anup Malani *Pre-analysis plan filed with the AEA RCT Registry* (#AEARCTR-0004336). Abstract. Community-driven development (CDD) emphasizes a "bottom-up" approach focusing on community control over planning and implementation decisions to improve development outcomes. We propose to assess the value of community participation in choosing the location and implementation of local infrastructure projects by comparing a participatory "bottom-up" approach to the standard "top-down" planning and implementation where the community only plays a limited role. The context for the study is the construction of minor irrigation channels in the command area of small irrigation tanks in Telangana. The government has recently launched a program to rehabilitate the storage capacity of the tanks but has left the distribution of water from the tank to plots in the command area to the farmers. The research project thus varies the extent of community involvement over the choice and implementation of field channels and assesses its impact on irrigation resource allocation, agricultural outcomes, and continued maintenance. **"Gender Wage Gap in Agricultural Labor Markets in Rural India"** with Vaishnavi Surendra Abstract. We explore the determinants of gender wage gap in the agricultural labor markets in India and examine the role of social norms in perpetuating it. We use multiple approaches to address these questions including analyzing secondary data from ICRISAT VDSA Panel, collecting primary data via surveys to elicit expectations and behavioral parameters to complement the former data source, and finally in a related project, investigate the role gender norms in influencing such behavior perpetuating the wage gap and other labor market outcomes through a lab-in-field experiment.

Prior	**UC Berkeley**, Graduate Student Researcher	
Employment	(Profs Aprajit Mahajan, Alain de Janvry, Elisabeth Sadoulet, Supreet Kaur)	2014 - Present
	The World Bank, Consultant	2018
	J-PAL South Asia, Senior Research Manager (position at the time of exit)	2010 - 2014
	The Asian Development Bank, Consultant	2009-10
	Janaagraha, Associate	2006-08
	Infosys Ltd, Software Engineer	2004

Talks

2019	NEUDC; UC Berkeley Development Econ Seminar Series; ARE Dept. Seminar
2018	UC Berkeley Development Lunch Series
2017	J-PAL South Asia Annual Staff Meet; Intro to Probability and Statistics (DAKSH)
2014	Dept. of Agriculture, Government of Tamil Nadu, India
2013	Impact Evaluation of Population, Health and Nutrition Programs, PHFI, New Delhi, India

Activities

2015 - 2019	Leadership Board, Women in Economics at Berkeley
2018 - 2019	ARE PhD Admissions Committee Student Member
2015 - 2016	Organizer, Dept. Coffee Hour

Languages   English (proficient), Hindi (proficient), Kannada (native), Tamil

Skills   R (proficient), Stata (proficient), Python (Intermediate), C++, Java