

Speaker:

Ritwik Banerjee (Indian Institute of Management Bangalore)

Date and Time:

September 27th, 2023 (Wednesday); 3:00 PM

Venue:

Econometrics lab (room no 402), Fourth floor,
Department of Economics, Rahul Bajaj Technology
Innovation Centre

**Title:**

Affirmative Action and Application Strategies: Evidence from Field Experiments in Colombia

Abstract:

Affirmative action changes incentives at all stages of the employment process. In this paper, we study the effects of affirmative action statements in job ads on i) the effort expended on the application process and ii) the manifestation of emotions, as measured by the textual analysis of the content of the motivation letter. To this end, we use data from two field experiments conducted in Colombia. We find that in the Control condition, women spend less time in the application process relative to men. Besides, female motivation letters exhibit lower levels of emotion, as measured by valence, arousal, and dominance. However, those differences vanish in the affirmative action treatment when we announced to job-seekers that half of the positions were reserved for women. In the Affirmative Action condition, the time dedicated by women significantly increased and the motivation letters written by the female candidates showed a significant increase in the expression of positive emotions. The results indicate that affirmative action policies can have significant encouraging effects on both effort and appeal of job applications of women, thereby reducing the gender gap in these outcomes.

About the speaker:

Ritwik Banerjee is an Associate Professor of the Economics area at Indian Institute of Management Bangalore. His primary research area is at the intersection between Behavioural and Development Economics and he extensively uses Experimental Methods for his research. Some of the topics he has investigated or is currently investigating are corruption, inequality, education and discrimination. His research has been published in peer-reviewed journals such as Games and Economic Behavior and Journal of Public Economics. Prior to his current assignment, he has worked as Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Aarhus University, Denmark with an independent grant from the Social Science Research Council of Denmark. He was an Academic Visitor at the Research Department of Federal Reserve, Chicago during the summer of 2012, a Visiting Scholar at the Economics Department, Harvard University in Spring 2015, Visiting Scholar at UNU WIDER, Helsinki in Spring 2019, Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Excellence Fellow, University of Berkeley in Fall 2019 and a Humboldt Fellow, University of Goettingen, Germany. He has also served as a Consultant at the World Bank in Washington DC and as a Research Associate at ICRIER, New Delhi.