The Public Defense
of the Doctoral Thesis in Economics

by

Suparna Das

on

Essays in Development Economics
with Special Emphasis on Gender Inequalities

will be held on

Tuesday, March 5, 2019 at 1.00 pm.

in the

Quantum Room (101)
Nádor utca 15, Budapest 1051

Central European University
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The doctoral thesis is available for inspection
at the CEU Department of Economics and Business
Abstract

This thesis consists of three single-authored chapters on gender related issues with particular reference to India.

The first chapter employs a theoretical and empirical approach to understand the household demand for education of children and identifies their constraints that cause girls’ lower participation in school education compared to boys.

The second chapter is an empirical research which examines women’s intra-household status with respect to their fertility output, in other words, whether having at least a son can influence women’s bargaining status in different household matters, such as resource allocation, autonomy and childbearing.

The third chapter uses district-year wise panel data on India to examine whether there is any empirical relationship between the biased sex ratio and rising crime against women. This study also addresses the puzzle that in spite of being scarce in number, women are often treated with disrespect and violence in Indian society.

Chapter 1: An economic analysis of gender gap in household demand for education: Evidence from India

Education plays a crucial role in building tomorrow’s human capital, and thus it is an important tool for economic growth and development. Followed by second Millennium Development Goal’s (MDG) (2000) call for achieving universal school education by 2015, extensive government initiatives with special emphasis on girls were undertaken in India. The access to education has shown tremendous progress and become successful to bring almost all potential pupils to primary (standard I-V) school. However, starting from the elementary (standard VI-VIII) level onwards the gender gap in enrollment persists and widens with level of education in India. This paper quantifies the gender difference in enrollment decision for children and provides a theoretical structure to the underlying demand side factors that influence parents to keep girls out of the post-primary education system compared to boys. The analysis uses the 2nd round dataset of India Human
Development Survey (IHDS), published in 2012. This paper finds significant gender gap in enrollment, and a girl child is on average 3.6 per cent less likely to continue schooling compared to a boy. The enrollment probability of girls worsens with higher birth order, an eldest sister has significantly 5.2 per cent lower probability to continue school education compared to an eldest brother, keeping other things same. Further, it also finds that beyond age of 14 when children are not anymore entitled to get free, compulsory education under Right to Education (RTE), girls' enrollment probability gets lower, such as a girl above age of 14 years is 7.8 per cent less likely to continue schooling and if she is the eldest sister among siblings her probability to discontinue becomes as large as 11 per cent (significantly) compared to similar boys. Labor market variables, especially returns to education and variability in wages play crucial and significant roles in schooling decision of children. Parents' reciprocity expectation, household responsibilities at adolescent years, and cost of education are also found responsible for lower enrollment of girls compared to boys.

**Chapter 2: Impact of ‘Having a Son’ on Women’s Intra-household Status: Evidence from India**

In intra-household settings, individual bargaining power is crucial for positions and control over decisions that influences resource allocation and individual well-being. Bargaining power may differ between men and women for various reasons, generally due to unequal social norms; and differential access to education, occupation and asset holding or income. Patriarchal societies often put higher values to having a son than having a daughter. The preference for son comes from the perception of higher utility gain from son(s) compared to daughter(s). If it is so, then individual's fertility outputs can play an important role in bargaining power. Also, in such societies with prevalence of patriarchy and preference for son, child-bearing and childcare are considered to be women's virtue and sole responsibility. Thus, fertility output may play more important role for women's bargaining power than men. This paper examines whether having a son has any implications in women's intra-household bargaining power and their say in different decision makings in the family. The paper primarily uses the data from sample of couples from National Family and Health Survey (NFHS) of fourth round (2015) on India. The estimations from probit regressions show that women with at least a son are significantly more likely to have a say; on average 2 - 4 per cent higher say in different decision-making in household, compared to women with no son.
And women with first born son have around 1 per cent higher say in decisions compared to women with first born daughter. However, having son does not significantly change husbands' views towards women's intra-household say, in general.

**Chapter 3: The Co-existence of Biased Sex Ratio and Crime against Women in India: Examining the Causality**

Preference for son has deep historical roots in India and is evident in its highly skewed sex ratios. The country has recently been on news often for heinous rape incidences. It registers 27 per cent annual growth rate in crime against women in 2013. The economic theory indicates that the scarcity of girls should make the girls dearer to society, but the reality is opposite in India. It creates a puzzle that in spite of the scarcity India still doesn’t value their women. Instead, the statistics show that crime against women increasing at higher rate compared to overall crime. Therefore, it becomes interesting to explore the puzzle and to examine whether this coincidence of pro-male biased sex ratios and higher crime on women bears any empirical relationship in case of India. The paper uses data from Census and National Crime Records Bureau for the analysis. The district-year panel analysis found that there is a significant negative relation between sex ratios and crime against women. It is found that increase in 1 female in the population of 1000 males, that is 1 unit increase in the youth sex ratio in favor of female will decrease the crime against women by 0.53 per cent, keeping other things same. Further, it is also found that the impact of sex ratios is highest on domestic violence, followed by kidnapping compared to other crime against women.
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Research Interest: Development Economics, Applied Microeconomics, Gender Inequalities, Poverty and Gender Budgeting

Teaching Interest: Development Economics, Economic Growth and Development, Gender Economics, Labor Economics, Microeconomics, Econometrics

Academic Qualifications

2013 – Expected March, 2019
PhD in Economics in Central European University, Budapest, Hungary
Dissertation Title: Essays in Development Economics with Special Emphasis on Gender Inequalities

2000 – 2002
M.A. in Economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

1997 – 2000
B.Sc. in Economics (Hons.), Statistics, Mathematics from Calcutta University, Kolkata, India.

Teaching Experience:

Lecturer in Economics – Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary
Fall 2018 Development and Economic Growth

Lecturer in Economics – Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary
Fall 2017 Development and Economic Growth

Instructor in Economics – Asian University for Women, Chittagong, Bangladesh
Fall 2016 Development Economics, Gender Economics.
Spring 2017 Labor Economics, Microeconomics for Development.

Module Leader – Milestone Institute, Budapest, Hungary
10/2015 – 02/2016 Two modules: Development Economics, Environmental Policy

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Winter 2018 Business Economics, TA for Professor Marc Kaufmann
Professional Experience:

10/2011 – 02/2012 Consultant – United Nations World Food Programme, New Delhi, India
04/2011 – 09/2011 Research Consultant – Micro Insurance Academy, New Delhi, India
04/2010 – 03/2011 Programme Officer – Aagaz Foundation, The Hunger Project, New Delhi, India
10/2008 – 03/2010 Research Officer – Indian Institute Of Public Administration, Delhi, India.
02/2007 – 09/2008 Executive – Confederation Of Indian Industry, Delhi, India.
12/2004 – 01/2007 Research Officer – Indian Institute Of Public Administration, Delhi, India
01/2003 – 9/2003 Research Associate - National Council Of Applied Economic Research Delhi, India

List of Publications:


Aasha Kapur Mehta , Suparna Das and Trishna Satpathy. Entry into Poverty and Escape from it: Some Issues in the context of Micro credit (Paper presented at the MSSRF International
Seminar on Human Centred Sustainable Development Paradigm from August 7th to 10th 2005, Chennai).

Roy, Jayanta and Das, Suparna (2007). “Asian Economic Integration: Agenda for East Asia Summit”, 02 November [A CII paper for discussions for the CEOs Roundtable to be held in Singapore].


**Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships:**

2018/19 CEU Write-Up Grant for Dissertation finalization.

2017/18 Global Teaching Fellow at Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary.

2016/17 Global Teaching Fellow at Asian University for Women, Chittagong, Bangladesh.

2013-2016 CEU Full Doctoral Fellowship

**Conferences/Seminars/Training Program:**


Presented a paper on “An Economic Analysis of Demand Side Constraints for Girls’ Education in India” in the International Conference on ‘Inclusive Quality Education: Towards Sustainable Development Goal 4’ on 18th June, 2017 organized by the Institute of Social Sciences at India International Center, New Delhi, India.


**Software/ Programming skills:**

Working knowledge in: STATA, R, Matlab, SPSS, Eviews, Gephi, LateX, MS Office.