

**IDSK
SEMINAR**

Are gender norms systematic to caste institutions? Examining preferences through a social experiment in North Indian villages

Speaker

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Abstract:

This paper examines how traditional institutions like caste interact with socio-economic status to shape the perception of gender roles and attitudes around female labour force participation. The authors use third party vignettes to directly test the validity of the hypothesis that lower castes have more egalitarian gender norms and lower acceptance of restrictions on female autonomy. They find a negative wealth effect on conservative attitudes towards gender that are systematic to caste groups. Furthermore, they find land ownership has a distinct impact on the conservative gender attitudes compared to other assets. Thus, they find that the relationship between conservative gender norms and caste- is in turn influenced by the economic status of households- measured by land or asset ownership. Exploiting a simple social experiment, they document a mismatch between actual and perceived peer support toward female work, that varies by caste and class status. Particularly, within the lower wealth quintile, scheduled caste men are likely to overestimate conservative attitudes of the peer group, compared to the general caste category. Lastly, they find no robust relationship between an individual's conservative attitude and his/her propensity to overestimate conservative attitude amongst their peers.

Sd/-

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