



Public Lecture

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Economics and Planning Unit

Speaker:

**Karthik
Muralidharan**

VENUE

AUDITORIUM

ISI (DELHI CENTER)

APRIL 4, 2018

3: 30 P.M. – 5 P.M.

Chair: Shamika Ravi
(member, PMEAC and
Research Director,
Brookings India)

Discussant: Abhiroop
Mukhopadhyay
(Associate Professor,
ISI, Delhi)

General Equilibrium Effects of (Improving) Public Employment Programs: Experimental Evidence from India

ABSTRACT:

A public employment program's effect on poverty depends on both program earnings and market impacts. We estimate this composite effect, exploiting a large-scale randomized experiment across 157 sub-districts and 19 million people that improved the implementation of India's employment guarantee. Without changing government expenditure, this reform raised low-income households' earnings by 13%, driven primarily by market earnings. Real wages rose 6% while days without paid work fell 7%. Effects spilled over across sub-district boundaries, and adjusting for these spillovers substantially raises point estimates. The results highlight the importance and feasibility of accounting for general equilibrium effects in program evaluation.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER:

Karthik Muralidharan holds the Tata Chancellor's Chair in Economics at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). Born and raised in India, Prof. Muralidharan earned a bachelor's degree in economics from Harvard University (summa cum laude), an M.Phil. in economics from Cambridge University, and a Ph.D. in economics from Harvard University.

His research spans development, public, and labor economics; has been published in leading economics journals including the American Economic Review, Quarterly Journal of Economics, and Journal of Political Economy; and been featured in global media outlets including the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Financial Times, and the Economist in addition to several leading Indian newspapers.

He is a Research Associate of the NBER, on the Board of Directors of the Poverty Action Lab at MIT where he is co-chair of the education research program, and a Fellow and Board Member of the Bureau of Economic Analysis of Development (BREAD). He is actively involved in policy advising and capacity building in India at both the central and state-government level.