Recap of the session

• 4 excellent and insightful contributions
• Cover a broad range of topics
  • RCT of an intervention to increase teachers’ support for women’s rights through a visual narrative and gender rights curriculum (Mehmood, Naseer and Chen 2022; Pakistan)
  • Analysis of the intersectionality of caste, class and gender; pluralistic ignorance (Dasgupta and Datta 2022; India)
  • Validation study of the G-NORM (Gender Norms) scale to measure gender norms (Sedlander et al. 2022; Nepal)
  • Analysis of the relationship between gender role attitudes and employment outcomes / between mobility constraints and sexual harassment in public spaces (Mancini and Orlando 2022; Pakistan)
• Common thread: novel measures of gender role attitudes/social norms on gender
  • Survey measures of gender attitudes, Implicit Association Tests (gender IAT) and revealed preference measures (i.e., teachers’ willingness to sign petitions, students’ behavior in strategic games)
  • Vignettes
  • G-NORM scale
  • Specialized modules in multi-topic household surveys
• Testimony of recent progress towards the measurement of gender role attitudes and social norms on gender
Reflections on policy implications

• Even short interventions can shift gender role attitudes and behaviors
  • A one-time movie screening + discussion + Q&A (< 5 hours in total) in Pakistan was able to affect teachers’ and students’ attitudes on gender and students’ behaviors in strategic games 10 months post interventions
  • Points to the important role of TV/social media

• Need to engage men and boys
  • Study in Peshawar shows husbands, fathers and fathers in-law are the key decision makers on women’s work, education and marriage decisions

• Intersectionality matters and requires consideration in development programming
  • Studies for Nepal and India both show that gender norms vary significantly by caste, wealth, etc.

• Collectively, the studies (and related literature) suggest that we may have to rethink how we roll out and target development programs
  • More ‘big push’ interventions that can lead to a new (more egalitarian) equilibrium
  • Though this may conflict with other principles, e.g., equitable geographic targeting
Areas for future research

• How to avoid social desirability bias in surveys in contexts with traditional norms?
  • Evidence that women often respond negatively to survey questions about “work” and “employment” (even if engaged in these activities) if there is stigma attached
  • May lead to an overestimation of the relationship between social norms and employment (or other relevant outcomes)

• What norms are binding for specific outcomes?
  • Different norms can produce similar outcomes (e.g., male breadwinner model, female seclusion → employment)

• Who is the ‘reference group’ for a given social norm? Does it change with media access?

• At what ages are norms most malleable? What is the best age to intervene?
  • Recently, a lot of emphasis on adolescents. What about younger children?

• What is the relationship between legislative reforms and social norms change?
  • Suggestive evidence that laws ‘lead’ social norms, but legislative reforms often also reflect societal change
  • Is enforcement the missing link?

• Why are regressive gender norms more binding for some outcomes than others?
  • Recent South Asia Economic Focus chapter ‘Reshaping Norms’ argues that regressive gender attitudes have not been a binding constraint for women’s educational attainment (in several South Asian countries)
  • What makes education so different from employment?