

UC SANTA BARBARA

Department of Political Science

Comparative Politics & Political Economy Webinar Series

OCT
21



Thursday, 10/21 | 12:30 to 1:30pm

Nirvikar Jassal

**GENDER, VIOLENCE, AND TRIAGE: AN
EMPIRICAL AND TEXT AS DATA ANALYSIS
OF CRIME IN INDIA**

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Abstract: Are women hindered vis-à-vis accessing justice? I provide evidence of institutional triage in which particular complaints are disadvantaged when passing through nodes of a justice system in which multiple administrators utilize discretion to discriminate. Using an original dataset of roughly half a million Indian crime reports, merged with court files, I find that women's complaints are significantly more likely to be delayed and dismissed at the police station and courthouse compared to men. Suspects that female complainants accuse of crime are less likely to be convicted and more likely to be acquitted, an imbalance that persists even when accounting for cases of violence against women (VAW). The application of machine learning to cases reveals—contrary to intuitions of policymakers or judges—that VAW, including the extortive practice of dowry, are not “petty quarrels,” but may involve starvation, poisoning, and marital rape. To make a causal claim about the impact of complainant identity on outcomes, I utilize a matching technique that uses high-dimensional text data; it underscores why those who suffer from cumulative disadvantage in society may be likely to face challenges whilst seeking punitive justice via formal state institutions.

Bio: Nirvikar Jassal is a postdoctoral fellow at Stanford's King Center on Global Development. His research focuses on gender, sexual violence, ethnic conflict and hate crime, and policing with a regional focus on South Asia. His work has appeared in the *American Political Science Review*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, and *Asian Survey*. He completed his PhD from the University of California—Berkeley in 2020, and previously worked at the Council on Foreign Relations and New York City government.