

## **Seminar Announcement**

Speaker: Ashmita Gupta

Affiliation: Wageningen University, Netherlands

Date: 9th March, 2018

Time: 2:00pm - 3:00pm

Venue: Indian Statistical Institute, 110 Nelson Manickam Road, Aminjikarai, Chennai.

Title: Female labor as insurance: Trade Liberalization and Female Labor Force Participation in India

Abstract:

In this paper, we are interested in looking at the changes in female labor supply in a context of rising poverty, and study India's trade liberalization in the 1990s, which lead to increased poverty in rural areas (Topalova 2007, 2010). We study whether female labor supply was used by households to cope with the negative income effects of liberalization. We find that in the poorest 50% of districts, tariff cuts indeed increased labor supply. Yet among the very poorest quartile of districts this is driven by men employed in public works. Since the public works programs in the 1990s were mostly targeted to the lowest income quartile (Dutt et al 2008), this option was not available to household in less poor districts. Indeed, in the second-poorest quartile of districts women increased participation in unpaid agricultural work, and are less likely to primarily engage in domestic duties. Since most of the increase occurs among women who are less educated and belong to lower social status, we conclude that their labor supply is used as an insurance against negative income shocks.