

Kunal Mangal

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Visiting Fellow, Centre for Sustainable Employment at Azim Premji University 2021 - 2023
Supported by the Weiss Fund Postdoctoral Fellowship

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Public Policy, Harvard University 2021
Dissertation: "Essays in the Economics of Public Sector Recruitment in India"
Fields: Labor Economics, Development Economics

B.A in Economics, Mathematics, and International Studies, University of Arizona 2012
Honors: Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa

PUBLICATIONS

Research Papers

"How much are government jobs in developing countries worth?" (Forthcoming at the *World Bank Economic Review*)

Abstract: Government jobs in developing countries are valuable not just because they pay relatively higher wages, but also because they provide many valuable amenities. How does the value of these amenities compare with the nominal wage itself? The observed search behavior of candidates preparing for competitive exams for government jobs is used to infer a lower bound on the total value of a government job, including amenities. Based on a sample of 147 candidates preparing for civil service exams in Pune, India, the amenity value of a government job is estimated to comprise at least two-thirds of total compensation. The high amenity value is not driven by misinformed beliefs about the nominal wage, nor by a high value placed on the process of studying itself. Insights from focus group discussions help explain which government job amenities are most valued in this setting.

"The Long-Run Costs of Highly Competitive Exams for Government Jobs" (Forthcoming at the *Journal of Development Economics*)

Abstract: Public sector recruitment exams can be highly competitive. Does this competition encourage candidates to develop generalizable skills, or do investments in exam preparation burden candidates who fail to get selected? I address this question by studying the impact of a partial public sector hiring freeze in the state of Tamil Nadu, India on male college graduates. The hiring freeze eliminated 86% of the usual vacancies. This increased the applicant-to-vacancy ratio for the remaining posts. Cohorts that were exposed to the hiring freeze delayed full-time employment, most likely in order to invest more time in exam preparation. A decade after the hiring freeze ended, the affected cohorts demonstrate a lower earning capacity, have delayed household formation, and appear more likely to remain unemployed. Together, these results suggest that highly competitive exams encourage candidates to make investments that are ultimately unproductive.

Policy Reports

Mangal, Kunal (2023). "The Indian Labor Market Through the Lens of Public Sector Recruitment: Insights from the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission to Inform Labor Market Policy and Improve Recruitment Practice." Centre for Sustainable Employment, Azim Premji University.

Bloesch, Justin, Kunal Mangal, and Niharika Singh. "How Labor Market Tightness and Job Search Activity Changed in the First Year of COVID-19: Evidence from an Indian Job Portal." G2LM|LIC Policy Brief No. 54 (December 2022). [Access data here](#)

Review of Economics and Statistics 100th Anniversary Article Series

The following articles are non-peer-reviewed pieces written in commemoration of the *Review of Economics and Statistics* 100th anniversary:

Khawaja, Asim I., and Kunal Mangal. "Review of Economics and Statistics over the Past 100 Years: A Counting Exercise." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 100, no. 2 (2018a): i-v.

Khawaja, Asim I., and Kunal Mangal. "Review of Economics and Statistics over the Past 100 Years: Authorship." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 100, no. 3 (2018b): i-v.

Khawaja, Asim I., and Kunal Mangal. "Review of Economics and Statistics over the Past 100 Years: Content." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 100, no. 4 (2018c): i-vi.

Khawaja, Asim I., and Kunal Mangal. "Review of Economics and Statistics over the Past 100 Years: Content Explorer." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 101, no. 1 (2019): i-iii.

GRANTS

G2LM LIC Special Call on COVID-19 (\$19,360)	2020
Harvard GSAS Professional Development Grant (\$2,500)	2020
Weiss Fund for Development Economics (\$4,376)	2017
Harvard South Asia Institute Winter Session Grant (\$1,000)	2016

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

Presentations: ISI Delhi Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development (2022); PacDev (2022); Canadian Economic Association (2021); Society of Labor Economics (2021); University of Arizona, AREC Department (2020); NEUDC (2020)

Referee Service: Indian Economic Review

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

Evidence for Policy Design, Research Fellow	2013-2015
Centre for Microfinance, Research Associate	2012-2013

Last Updated: July 2024