



CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

(Under the aegis of Govt. of India (ICSSR) and Govt. of Kerala.)



13th B.G.Kumar Lecture

on

Is India a Land of Opportunity?

to be delivered by

Professor Kunal Sen

Director, UNU-WIDER, Helsinki, Finland

Monday, the 21st of November 2022, 03.30 P.M.

Link to the event: <https://bit.ly/3HVaRG8>



Bhaskar Gopalakrishna Kumar was an Associate Fellow at the CDS during 1990-93. His untimely death robbed the profession of a promising independent-minded economist. Educated at The International School, Geneva, Calcutta Boys' School and St. Stephen's College, Delhi, graduate work took 'Gopu' to Leeds, Cambridge and Oxford, where he was a student of Amartya Sen. His work spanned the Kerala development experience, agricultural price-setting in India and population studies. He had published internationally very early on. Among the distinctions he earned was the Stevenson Prize at Cambridge.

The B.G.Kumar Lectures are made possible by a generous contribution from Gopu's family, who instituted an endowment at CDS.



Kunal Sen is Director of UNU-WIDER and Professor of Development Economics in the Global Development Institute at The University of Manchester. Previously he has been Joint Research Director for the Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre. In addition, Professor Sen has substantial experience

serving in advisory roles with national governments and bilateral and multilateral development agencies including the UK Department for International Development (DFID), Asian Development Bank (ADB), and International Development Research Centre (IDRC). He has worked extensively in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and South-east Asia.

Professor Sen holds a PhD degree in Economics from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. He has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals and is the co-editor of *Deals and Development: The Political Dynamics of Growth Episodes* (2018; co-author of *The Political Economy of India's Growth Episodes* (2016) and *Out of the Shadows: The Informal Sector in Post-Reform India* (2016); and author of *Trade Policy, Inequality and Performance in Indian Manufacturing* (2008). He has been awarded the Sanjaya Lall Memorial Prize and the Dudley Seers Memorial Prize for the excellence of his research.

Professor Sen's research is in the interface of international development and political economy. His principal areas of research have been on inclusive growth, political economy, and the analysis of poverty and social exclusion in developing countries. His research in each of these areas has been internationally recognized and has had a strong impact on both academic research and on policy. Professor Sen has previously served as Chair (President) of the British Association of South Asian Studies (BASAS), one of the world's leading academic societies on South Asian studies.

Abstract: Social mobility — defined as the ability to move from a lower to a higher level of education or occupational status, or from a lower to a higher social class or income group — is the hope of economic development and the mantra of a good society. In this lecture, I will look at patterns and drivers of social mobility, and ask whether India is a land of opportunity, where all people should have a roughly equal chance of success regardless of the economic status or social status of the families into which they were born. First, I examine multigenerational educational and occupational mobility in India, using a nationally representative data set the India Human Development Survey that contains information about education and occupation for three generations. I find that mobility has increased over generations for education, but not for occupation. I also find that there are stark differences across social groups, with individuals belonging to socially disadvantaged communities lagging behind in social progress. I next examine the drivers of mobility in rural India, with a focus on traditional institutions such as caste. I explore empirically how dominance of a particular social group (caste-religious groups) in the community impacts the educational and occupational mobility of individuals from different social groups in India. In particular I explore whether mobility outcomes for individuals belonging to lower castes are impacted when they live in villages that are dominated by their own communities and when they live in villages dominated by other communities. I find strong evidence of the proximity and enclave effects for particular social groups in India.

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