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## ECONOMICS AND FINANCE FOR SOCIETY INITIATIVE

*presents*

# EFSI SEMINAR SERIES

SESSION 4

## “WHAT'S THE WORTH OF A PROMISE? EVALUATING THE INDIRECT EFFECTS OF A PROGRAM TO REDUCE CHILD MARRIAGE IN INDIA.”



SPEAKER

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### ABSTRACT

One important dimension of Conditional Cash Transfer Programs apart from conditionality is the provision of continuous frequency of payouts. On the contrary, the Apni Beti Apna Dhan program, implemented in the state of Haryana in India from 1994 to 1998 offers a “promised” amount to female beneficiaries redeemable only after attaining 18 years of age if she remains unmarried. This paper assesses the impact of this long-term financial incentivization on outcomes, not directly associated with the conditionality. Using multiple datasets in a triple difference framework, the findings reveal a significant positive impact on years of education though it does not translate into gains in labor participation. While gauging the potential channels, we did not observe higher educational effects beyond secondary education. Additionally, impact on time allocation for leisure, socialization or self-care, age of marriage beyond 18 years, age at first birth, and post-marital empowerment indicators are found to be limited. This evidence indicates failure of the program in altering the prevailing gender norms despite improvements in educational outcomes. The paper recommends a set of complementary potential policy instruments that include altering gender norms through behavioral interventions, skill development and incentives to encourage female work participation.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Upasak Das is a Presidential Fellow of Economics of Poverty Reduction at the Global Development Institute at the University of Manchester. He is also an affiliate of the Centre for Social Norms and Behavioral Dynamics at the University of Pennsylvania. Prior to this, he was a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania and was an Assistant Professor of Economics at the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum. He received his Ph.D. from the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), Mumbai. His primary research interests include Development Economics, Social Norms, Political Economy, Health and Public Policy.



**THURSDAY, 29 APRIL 2021**  
**2:30 PM to 3:30 PM IST**

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