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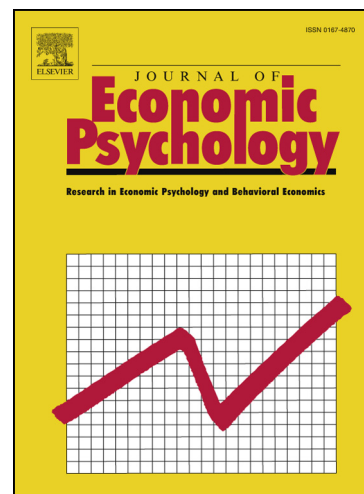
Gender and Distributional Preferences: Experimental Evidence from India

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Title: Gender and Distributional Preferences: Experimental Evidence from India

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1. Introduction and background

Fairness principles have been invoked to explain the observed departures from game-theoretic predictions of payoff-maximization in a variety of experimental games in the lab and field. Fehr and Schmidt (1999) state, “by now we have substantial evidence suggesting that fairness motives affect the behaviour of many people” (p. 817). However, there remains considerable heterogeneity in views about fairness and what constitutes a just outcome in different contexts (see Konow (2003) for an analysis of positive and normative theories of distributive justice).

In this paper, we use a modified version of a dictator game with a production stage preceding the distribution stage, to experimentally examine the effect of two broad factors on the allocation choices of dictators, (a) distributional preferences, and (b) gender. In our lab experiment, following Konow (2000) and Frohlich, Oppenheimer and Kurki (2004), both subjects in the pair are assigned a cognitive task to be completed individually, without prior knowledge of their role as dictator or recipient. The endowment to be allocated is the sum of performance-based earnings of both subjects. The dictator decides how much of the endowment to keep for herself after learning about her and the paired recipient’s earnings and gender. Since we have multiple types of pairs with dictators and recipients earning either equally or unequally, we use that variation to discuss motivations for distributive behaviour. Further, since we observe the gender of the dictator and also convey information

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