

# Nitin Kumar Bharti

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## ACADEMIC POSITION

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- 2022- **Postdoctoral Associate**  
*New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD), Division of Social Science and Public Policy*
- 2023- **Coordinator for South and South East Asia**  
*World Inequality Lab(WIL), Paris School of Economics(PSE)*

## EDUCATION

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- 2018-2022 **PhD in Economics**  
*Paris School of Economics (PSE) & University of Namur*  
Dissertation: “Essays on Socio-Economic Inequality and Development in India and China: A Historical & Institutional Perspective”  
Advisors: [Thomas Piketty](#) & [Guilhem Cassan](#)
- 2016-18 Master in Analysis & Policy in Economics  
*Paris School of Economics (PSE)*
- 2007-11 Bachelor in Technology (Civil Engineering)  
*Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (IIT-KGP)*

## RESEARCH FIELDS

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INTERESTS Applied Microeconomics (Political and Development Economics)  
Economic History (Education and Inequality)

## RESEARCH WORK

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*(Abstracts are on the last page)*

### PUBLISHED ARTICLE

- **The Early Origins of Judicial Stringency in Bail Decisions: Evidence from early-childhood Exposure to Hindu-Muslim Riots in India**  
*Co-author: [Sutanuka Roy](#)*  
*Status: [Journal of Public Economics, Vol 221, May 2023](#)*

### JOB MARKET PAPER

- **Justice for All? The Impact of Legal Aid in India**  
*Co-author: [Jonathan Lehne](#)*  
*Status: [Draft](#) (Submitted)*

## WORKING PAPERS

- **The Making of China and India in 21st Century: Long-Run Human Capital Accumulation from 1900 to 2020**  
*Co-author:* Li Yang  
*Status:* Copyedited Draft (NEUDC 2024 Accepted)
- **Income and Wealth Inequality in India, 1922-2023: The Rise of the Billionaire Raj**  
*Co-author:* Lucas Chancel, Thomas Piketty, Anmol Somanchi  
*Status:* *WID.world Working Paper N° 2024/09 (Submitted)*
- **Science on the Move: How Experiential Learning Shapes Human Capital?**  
*Co-authors:* Samreen Malik, Abhiroop Mukhopadhyay and Nishith Prakash  
*Funding:* JPAL and NYUAD  
*Status:* Draft (NEUDC 2024 Accepted), AEA Registry
- **Clean Air in the Classroom: Environmental Inputs and Human Capital Formation**  
*Co-authors:* David S Blakeslee, Samreen Malik, Talha Naeem, and Torsten F Walter  
*Funding:* International Growth Center (IGC) and NYUAD  
*Status:* Preliminary draft, AEA Registry
- **Dynamics of School Expansion and Inter-Caste Marriages in India**  
*Co-authors:* Luca Maria Pesando, Koyel Sarkar, Neha Bailwal  
*Status:* Preliminary Draft, Slides
- **Wealth Inequality, Caste and Class in India 1960-2012**  
*Status:* *WID.world Working Paper N° 2018/14*

## WORK-IN-PROGRESS

- **Enhancing Educational Opportunities: English and Life Skills Training for Underprivileged Girls**  
*Co-authors:* Asad Islam, Maria Cotofan, Aniruddha Talukdar and Imrul Kayes  
*Funding:* Echidna Giving  
*Status:* Baseline survey in 205 schools covering 13K done
- **Harnessing Systemic Enablers for Large-Scale Pedagogical Adoption in Bihar**  
*Co-author:* Samreen Malik  
*Funding:* NYUAD  
*Status:* Baseline covering 150 schools, 15K students, and 900 teachers done
- **Natural Disasters, Land Markets, and Inter-Religious Dynamics: Evidence from Bihar**  
*Co-authors:* Oliver Vanden Eynde and Balasai Vanukuri  
*Status:* Analysis phase, expected draft by mid-2025
- **Human Capital & Global Productivity Convergence 1800-2100**  
*Co-authors:* Amory Gethin, Thanasak Jenmana, Zhexun Mo, Thomas Piketty, Li Yang  
*Status:* Analysis phase, expected draft by mid-2025
- **Asia Consumption Inequality 1980-2024**  
*Sehyun Hong, Thanasak Jenmana, Zhexun Mo, and Li Yang*  
*Status:* Analysis phase, expected draft by mid-2025
- **Education and Inter-generational Mobility: Evidence from India**  
*Veda Narasimhan and Anukriti Ranjan*  
*Status:* Analysis phase, expected draft by mid-2025

## TEACHING & RELEVANT ACTIVITIES

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Teaching Fall 2024	Introduction to Econometrics Undergraduate Program at New York University, Abu Dhabi
Teaching 2019-22	Introduction to Economic History Graduate Program at Paris School of Economics, Paris
Teaching 2021	Applied Econometrics Graduate Program at University of Namur, Namur
Research Assistant Oct'17-Jan'18	Farm Subsidy in Haiti <i>Supervisors:</i> <a href="#">Jeremie Gignoux</a> and <a href="#">Karen Macours</a>
Research Assistant Sep'16-Jun'17	Income Inequality in India <a href="#">World Inequality Lab</a> , Paris, France <i>Supervisors:</i> <a href="#">Thomas Piketty</a> and <a href="#">Lucas Chancel</a>
Research Assistant Jan'16-Sep'16	Conflict and Politics <a href="#">Asian Development Research Institute</a> , Patna, India <i>Supervisors:</i> <a href="#">Oliver Vanden Eynde</a> , <a href="#">Clement Imbert</a> and <a href="#">Nishith Prakash</a>
Research Assistant Jan'15-Oct'15	Indian Rural Development Programmes Princeton University (based at New Delhi, India) <i>Supervisors:</i> <a href="#">Oliver Vanden Eynde</a> and <a href="#">Jacob N. Shapiro</a>
Business Analyst Jun'11-Jul'13	HSBC Global Analytics Center HSBC, Kolkata, India

## REFERENCES

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[Thomas PIKETTY](#)  
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## POLICY REPORTS

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- “Towards Tax Justice and Wealth Redistribution in India”, (with Lucas Chancel, Thomas Piketty, Anmol Somanchi) *Economic & Political Weekly*, 2024
- “Wealth Inequality in India 1961-2012”, *Ideas For India*, 2019
- “Tackling Inequality in India”, (with Lucas Chancel) *World Inequality Lab, Issue Brief* 2019/2.

## SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

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- 2024 North East Universities Development Consortium (NEUDC at Northeastern University); The World at a Turning Point: Cornell Conference on Development Economics and Law (Cornell University); Chinese Economic Society Conference (Hangzhou), Conference on India-China (University of Namur); Development Economics Workshop (Durham University Business School), CRED Workshop (University of Namur);
- 2023 Penang International Conference on New Labour Regimes in Southeast Asia (Malaysia); Lunch Seminar (Thammasat University); 18th Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development (Indian Statistical Institute, New Delhi); CRED Workshop (University of Namur)
- 2022 100 Years of Economic Development (Cornell University); 17th Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development (Indian Statistical Institute, New Delhi)
- 2021 Young Economist Symposium (Princeton University); CAGE Summer School (Univ of Warwick); 16th Applied Econometrics Conference (Hitotsubashi University); Applied Economics Lunch Seminar (PSE); Doctoral Workshop in Economics; Louvain la neuve (Louvain); ZHCES Seminar Series (JNU, Delhi); Virtual Inequality Brownbag Series (PSE, Univ of Michigan, LSE); CRED Workshop (University of Namur); Economic History Seminar (PSE)
- 2020 Applied Economics Lunch Seminar (PSE); CRED Workshop (University of Namur)
- 2019 Conference on India-China (University of Warwick); 15th Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development (Indian Statistical Institute, New Delhi)
- 2018 14th Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development (Indian Statistical Institute, New Delhi)

### **“The Early Origins of Judicial Stringency in Bail Decisions: Evidence from early-childhood Exposure to Hindu-Muslim Riots in India”** *with Sutanuka Roy*

We estimate the causal effects of judge’s exposure to communal violence during early childhood on the pretrial detention rates in their cases. We exploit novel administrative data on judgments and detailed resumes of judicial officers born during 1955-1991. Our baseline result is that judges exposed to communal violence between the ages 0- and 6 are 16 percent more prone to deny bail than the average judge. Heterogeneity analyses show that the impact is stronger for the experience of riots between the ages 3- and 6 years. We further find that the observed judicial stringency is driven by childhood exposure to riots with a higher duration of state-imposed lock-downs and low riot casualties. This result is consistent with the hypothesis that early childhood exposure to effective state intervention in social disorder generates a persistent effect on support for the state.

### **“Justice for all? The impact of legal aid in India”** *with Jonathan Lehne*

We study the effect of legal aid in Indian prisons. We evaluate a national policy to establish legal aid clinics in every prison in India by collecting the opening dates of over 750 prison legal aid clinics and matching these to (i) data on over 11 million criminal cases and (ii) prison population statistics. Our empirical strategy exploits the staggered roll-out of legal aid clinics in a difference-in-differences design. We find that defendants with access to legal aid are more likely to receive a definitive judgment, get a favorable outcome, and face a higher chance of acquittal relative to conviction. The latter is driven by an increase in the share of cases that are dismissed early in the trial. In line with a declining conviction rate, we find a reduction in the number of convicts at the prison level within three years of a clinic opening.

### **“The Making of China and India in 21st Century: Long-Run Human Capital Accumulation from 1900 to 2020”** *with Li Yang*

This paper examines long-run human capital accumulation as an explanation for the growing economic divergence between China and India witnessed from the 1980s onward. By integrating a wide array of historical and educational reports and surveys, we have compiled a novel dataset covering the past 120 years, detailing trends in human capital accumulation in both countries. Utilizing this comprehensive dataset, we establish a comparative framework to analyze the educational development strategies of China and India and evaluate their long-term impacts on inequality and economic development. We show that the development of modern education in China and India diverged along several key dimensions. China adopted a bottom-up approach, prioritizing quantity over quality. Conversely, India implemented a top-down strategy, gradually expanding its educational system while also seeking to maintain quality. Additionally, compared to India’s educational system, China’s system features more diversified secondary and tertiary education, with a strong emphasis on vocational education, teacher training, and engineering. As a result of these divergent strategies, educational inequality is much higher in India, accounting for one-quarter of observed wage inequality, compared to 5-12% in China. Ironically, India has a larger share of tertiary-educated graduates in combination with a significant illiteracy rate, whereas China has a much larger share of primary, secondary, and vocational graduates. High illiteracy in India hinders structural transformation by trapping many in low-productivity agriculture, while tertiary education in the humanities and accounting has tended to foster service sector growth. Conversely, China’s better mix of engineering and vocational graduates has produced human capital well-suited for manufacturing sector growth.

**“Income and Wealth Inequality in India, 1922-2023: The Rise of the Billionaire Raj”** with *Lucas Chancel, Thomas Piketty, Anmol Somanchi*

We combine national income accounts, wealth aggregates, tax tabulations, rich lists, and surveys on income, consumption, and wealth in a consistent framework to present long run homogeneous series of income and wealth inequality in India. Our estimates suggest that inequality declined post-independence till the early 1980s, after which it began rising and has skyrocketed since the early 2000s. Trends of top income and wealth shares track each other over the entire period of our study. Between 2014-15 and 2022-23, the rise of top-end inequality has been particularly pronounced in terms of wealth concentration. By 2022-23, top 1% income and wealth shares (22.6% and 40.1%) are at their highest historical levels and India’s top 1% income share is among the very highest in the world. In line with earlier work, we find suggestive evidence that the Indian income tax system might be regressive when viewed from the lens of net wealth. We emphasize that the quality of economic data in India is notably poor and has seen a decline recently. It is therefore likely that our results represent a lower bound to actual inequality levels. We call for improved access to official data and greater transparency to enhance the study of inequality and enable evidence-based public debates.

**“Science on the Move: How Experiential Learning Shapes Human Capital?”** with *Samreen Malik, Abhiroop Mukhopadhyay and Nishith Prakash*

While many developing economies have made progress in providing access to education, the provision of quality education that delivers life-long learning, learning-how-to-learn, and developing the ability to apply knowledge to unfamiliar circumstances is essentially absent. In collaboration with the Agastya Foundation, we conducted a randomized controlled trial in public schools in Uttar Pradesh (India) to evaluate an intervention that provides – discovery-based pedagogy in science topics – in 68 “treatment” schools, which are then compared to 64 “control” schools. We find that treated students show remarkable improvement relative to control students: intrinsic factors (curiosity, self-confidence, aspirations, self-efficacy) improved in the range of 0.12 - 0.18 sd, and simultaneously, the perception of barriers reduced by 0.22 sd. Student engagement in science increased in the range of 0.17 - 0.20 sd, and their general engagement in school increased by 0.22. Finally, we find that test scores improved by 0.22-0.31 sd. Our results highlight the importance of adopting child-centric pedagogical practices as an important tool to improve educational quality.

**“Clean Air in the Classroom: Environmental Inputs and Human Capital Formation”** with *David S Blakeslee, Samreen Malik, Talha Naeem, and Torsten F Walter*

Poor air quality has become endemic in many parts of the world due to its negative impact on health and cognitive abilities, with several developing countries shutting down their education and economic activities for weeks when air quality is bad. Early exposure to bad air quality could limit one’s potential (Prunicki et al., 2021). While improving outdoor air quality is costly and requires collective action from numerous stakeholders, improving indoor air pollution (IAP) may not only aid in mitigating some of the negative impacts of exposure to bad air quality but also serve as a relatively cheap and feasible policy alternative to shutting down education and economic activities. However, our understanding of the effectiveness of improving IAP, particularly its impact on children’s cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes, remains limited. To explore this, we design a randomized field experiment in a private school network in and around Lahore – one of the most polluted cities in Pakistan – through which we provide randomly selected schools in the network with air purifiers and monitors to investigate whether improved IAP impacts young children’s health, cognitive, and non-cognitive outcomes and how those effects change with continuous exposure versus intermittent exposure with school breaks.

**“Dynamics of School Expansion and Inter-Caste Marriages in India”** *with Co-authors: Luca Maria Pesando, Koyel Sarkar, Neha Bailwal*

Educational institutions are considered an essential instrument of socio-economic change; however, whether it affects the traditional norms of social inter-mixing remains an empirical question. Caste endogamy, i.e., individuals marrying within the same caste, continues to remain the strongest pillar of the caste system, as the rate of inter-caste marriages (ICM) increased marginally from around 10% in the 1980s cohort to 14% in the 2020 marriage cohort. We study whether historical dynamics of school expansion in rural India had any causal impact on the increase in ICM exploiting variation in school openings across different locations at different times. Using geospatial information from three large-scale datasets, the District Information System for Education (DISE), the Indian Census 2011, and the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2014-15 and 2019-21, we find one 1 standard deviation (SD) change in school openings (per village) increases ICM by 6%. Exploring the underlying mechanisms, we do not find completed years of education to be the driver, suggesting contact theory to be the likely mechanism. The results suggest that modern educational institutions can be a driver of breaking the rigid traditional norms in India, albeit their relevance may be lower than in other low- and middle-income countries.

**“Wealth Inequality, Caste and Class in India 1960-2012”**

I combine data from wealth surveys (NSS-AIDIS) and millionaire lists to produce wealth inequality series for India over the 1961-2012 period. I find a strong rise in wealth concentration in recent decades, in line with recent research using income data. E.g. the top 10% wealth share rose from 45% in year 1981 to 68% in 2012, while the top 1% share rose from 27% to 41%. Next, I gather information from censuses and surveys (NSS AIDIS and consumption, IHDS, NFHS) in order to explore the changing relationship between class and caste in India and the mechanisms behind rising inequality.