

INSEE LECTURE SERIES

Environmental Justice and the Covid-19 Pandemic: Evidence from New York State

by

Neha Khanna

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Chaired by

Sarath Guttikunda

Urban Emissions India

August 31st, 2021 6:00-7:30 pm IST

The decline in human mobility and socioeconomic activities during the COVID-19 pandemic has been accompanied by reports of significant improvements in air quality. We evaluate whether there was a uniform improvement in air quality across neighborhoods, with a special attention to race. We focus on New York state, an early epicenter of the pandemic in the United States. Using a triple difference-in-differences, we find the lockdown decreased disparity in air quality between census tracts with high and low shares of non-white population in rural New York, whereas the racial gap remained unchanged in urban areas.

About the Speaker



Professor Neha Khanna (INSEE life member) is an environmental economist focusing on air quality in the US. Her work has focused on climate change, global oil markets, the EKC, conspicuous consumption and environmental status signaling and voluntary self-regulation. She serves on the Board of Directors for the [AERE](#) and is President-Elect of [NAREA](#). She has served on the American Statistical Association's *Committee on Energy Statistics*, on the editorial boards of *Contemporary Economic Policy* and *Ecological Economics* and as Editor *Agricultural and Resource Economics Review*. She received the coveted *SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities* and *NAREA Distinguished Member Award*. She has published in *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, *Journal of Law and Economics*, *Land Economics*, *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *Environmental and Resource Economics*, *Ecological Economics* and *Economics Letters* among others. She has a Ph.D in Agricultural Economics from Cornell University and a Masters in Economics from Delhi School of Economics.

About the Chair



Dr. Sarath Guttikunda (INSEE life member) is a chemical engineer, atmospheric scientist, TED fellow, and founder of Urban Emissions (India). His main research interest is air quality analysis and finding ways to bridge the gap between science and policy. He is the developer of the SIM-air family of tools used for air pollution knowledge assessments (APnA) city program showcasing emissions, pollution, and source contribution information for 50 airsheds in India. In 2016, Dr. Guttikunda was part of the team that launched the only air quality forecast platform for all of India. He was a member of India's AQI formulation committee (2014) and WHO's air quality guidelines development group (2016-2020). He was a keynote speaker at the 8th biennial conference of INSEE in 2016. He has a Ph.D in Chemical Engineering and Environmental Policy from the University of Iowa and a B.Tech (Hons) from IIT Kharagpur.

[Zoom Meeting Link](#)

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