

Introducing

Sridhar Telidervara

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Prof. Sridhar Telidevara did his doctoral studies at SUNY Buffalo, USA. His academic research encompasses wide-ranging topics, including applied microeconomics, Consumer Behavior, the performance of dairy cooperative societies, and Governance and Local Development. The nature of research involves both theoretical and empirical modelling, including calibration of empirical data to theoretical models. He has taught management graduates for over a decade and is involved in several different collaborative centers for research and education at the Development Management Institute, where he works.

You have varied research interests in fields like applied microeconomics, consumer behavior, the performance of dairy cooperative societies, and governance and local development. Could you tell us a bit more about this research of yours?

Thank you for providing me a beautiful platform to share my research interests. I have a PhD from SUNY Buffalo in Economics and have worked with management schools in India since I completed my PhD. Two simple principles guide my research. First is the uniqueness of the data, and the second is that the underlying relationships I explore in my research are fundamental. My studies use quantitative or qualitative approaches to standard methods and data analysis tools. To elaborate further, what I mean by "the uniqueness of data" is that the data,



either primary or secondary, is collected for the first time and has not previously been used for analysis.

My research on consumer behavior challenges the conventional idea that satisfaction always precedes loyalty. I argue that brand loyalty can mediate satisfaction, making the relationship between these variables endogenous. I do so by using data from student perceptions of online and offline preparatory programs for an MBA course. In my study about dairy cooperative societies, my research emphasizes member affinity with each other and the dairy activity for a sustainable enterprise. I use Granovetter's "The Strength of Weak Ties," which suggests that even weak connections among

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members help build good relationships. This enables transparency, trust, cooperation, coordination, and accountability, all critical ingredients for effective governance at the local level.

All my research is exploratory with the intent to provide actionable insights. My most recent research, "Community Participation for the Success of Mass Movement: A Study of Toilet Use in Bihar," focuses on identifying the deep-rooted behavioral factors impeding the actualization of open defecation-free villages. Currently, I am working on operations of Cluster Level Federations (CLFs) of the State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM), intending to understand

the complementarities with Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI, Local Governments) for better governance for local development.

You have been at the Development Management Institute (DMI) in Patna, India, since 2018. Can you briefly tell us about DMI's work and your role there?

DMI was established to empower grassroots by focusing on social transformation - improved social structures and capabilities – signifying the actualization of individuals, households, and communities in enhancing their economic and social well-being. DMI engages in research and evidence-based policy advocacy through its three Collaborative Action, Research, and Education (CARE) centers: Collectives and Commons, Well-being and Livelihoods, and Leadership and Governance. We also plan to set up a Center for Governance for Local Development. Recent research conducted through the CARE centers has focused on the status of returning migrants during and after COVID-19 in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, direct or in-direct mayoral elections, revisiting definitions for Urban Local Body Classification, and socioeconomic impact assessment of various development interventions.

It's a great opportunity to be with DMI, as the institute provides excellent teaching, research, consultancy, and training opportunities. I also have a lot of administrative responsibilities – I coordinate our Competency Enhancement Programs, IT systems, and admissions to the Post-Graduate Program in Development Management. I am also a member of several committees.

Finally, as your research spans a wide array of subjects, where do you see the most exciting opportunities for future research and exploration in your areas of expertise?

Public good provision and service delivery is an interactive game influenced by the competing interests of the stakeholders. While institutions and provisions for women's representation and reservations for underprivileged cross-sections exist, India remains a developing nation. To progress, institutions must translate intent into action, achieve intended outcomes, and consider local community conditions.

I am researching to write an edited book on the *Ethical Character of Public Good Provisioning and Service Delivery*. Ethical character is highly relevant for governance and local development. Cooperation and collaboration for collective action and participatory processes are possible only if morals and ethics moderate self-interests and rationality. The book will discuss various schemes and their implementation, including Direct Benefit Transfers, the Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Education, Piped Potable Water for Households, and Irrigation schemes for Agriculture. The Direct Benefit Transfers during COVID-19 helped people experiencing poverty, but there are still concerns about corruption and leakages in the system. For instance, an irrigation scheme – more-crop-per-drop – in one of the states had the assets geotagged, yet, in some parts, the scheme remained only on paper, but still made payments to the accounts of the beneficiaries. The third-party service-providing agency forged the identities of some of the beneficiaries, and the monitoring agency failed to verify the actual beneficiaries. There is also a concern that the Customer Service Points in rural areas, where the beneficiaries access the money, exert pressure for side payments. The beneficiaries' capabilities are still incomplete, per the broader definition of Martha Nussbaum's capabilities. There are many road-blocks in the developmental process, and explaining them is the book's objective.



Photo: A gift that was given to GLD from Sridhar when he visited Gothenburg. It represents his organization Development management Institue, Patna.

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