

**Economics
Seminar
Series
2019**



**SOUTH ASIAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS**

Seminar
***Electoral Cycles in Crop Residue Burning:
Evidence from India***

Dr Shampa Bhattacharjee
Department of Economics
Shiv Nadar University

Date: September 12, 2019
(Thursday)
Time: 2:30 p.m.
Venue: Multipurpose Hall, Mezzanine Floor
Akbar Bhawan, Satya Marg,
Chanakyapuri, New Delhi

All are Welcome

ABSTRACT

Open burning of crop residue is a common practice in many developing countries and leads to air pollution which has many adverse effects on health. However, there is scant evidence on the determinants of crop residue burning (CRB). In this paper, we look at the political economy of CRB; in particular, whether CRB incidence is related to electoral cycles in India. Using the fact that state elections in India are not perfectly synchronized, we test whether temporal proximity to the year-month of state legislative assembly elections influences the extent of crop residue burning. We find that intensity of CRB significantly increases before elections. We also find that the increase in CRB in election years is more pronounced in state assembly constituencies where the margin of victory is relatively narrower or in other words electoral competition is high. Our findings suggest that political incentives are at work behind the continued open burning of crop residue.