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Education

- 2014 - 2020** Ph.D. in Economics, Georgetown University
M. A. in Economics, Georgetown University
- 2010 - 2012** M. A. in Economics, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi
- 2007 - 2010** B. A. (H) in Economics, Shri Ram College of Commerce, University of Delhi

Research Fields

Development Economics, Applied Microeconomics

Dissertation Committee: Garance Genicot, Shareen Joshi, Martin Ravallion

Awards

- 2019** Maloof Fellowship, Department of Economics, Georgetown University
- 2019** Conference Travel Grant, Georgetown University
- 2017** Summer Research Fellowship, Georgetown University
- 2014 - 2020** Graduate Scholarship, Georgetown University
- 2012** National Eligibility for Lectureship in Economics, University Grants Commission in India
- 2011** Krishna Raj Summer Research Fellowship, Delhi School of Economics

Teaching

- 2019, 2018,** *Head Teaching Assistant*, Georgetown University
- 2017** Poverty and Inequality (Undergraduate)
- 2015-2018** *Teaching Assistant*, Georgetown University
Senior Honor Thesis in Political Economy (Undergraduate)
Program Evaluation (Undergraduate)
Introduction to Econometrics (Undergraduate)
Econometrics (Graduate)

Publications

[*A Retrospective Impact Evaluation of the Tamil Nadu Empowerment and Poverty Alleviation \(Pudhu Vaazhvu\) Project*](#), The Journal of Development Studies, 51(9): 1210-1223 (with Nishtha Kochhar and Nethra Palaniswamy)

Job Market Paper

[*The Precocious Period: Impact of Early Menarche on School Enrollment in India*](#)

This paper studies the impact of early onset of menstruation (menarche) on school enrollment in India, where menarche has immense socio-cultural importance. Estimates based on a difference-in-differences model show that starting menses before age twelve decreases school enrollment by 13%. While understanding the role of menarche—a universal biological event for all women—in determining education is a critical end in itself, it also has implications for the effect of early nutrition on girls' well-being. Better-nourished girls typically reach menarche earlier, and if menarche impedes schooling, their gains due to better nutrition may be undercut. The effect of menarche on school enrollment is higher if girls live in communities with a low average perception of safety among children, or if they belong to social groups with restrictive gender norms. Therefore, policy responses to higher dropout rates among adolescent girls should address their safety concerns and challenge gender-based cultural norms. At the same time, dropout rates are lower in communities with higher expected wages for female-dominated professions. The findings of this paper indicate that it is the interaction between cultural norms and the local economic opportunities that drive female education.

Working Papers and Research in Progress

Does Marriage Market Respond to Natural Disasters? The Impact of Flooding of River Kosi in Bihar, India (with Nishtha Kochhar) [*Draft available upon request*]

While the frequency of extreme floods is increasing with increased climate variability, little is understood of the demographic responses to such events. This paper studies the effect of the flooding of river Kosi on local marriage markets. We exploit the variation in the timing of marriage and exposure to floods to use a difference-in-differences approach, and show that Kosi floods reduced men's age at marriage by almost a year and women's age at marriage by over three months. Kosi floods also decreased secondary school completion rate of married men and women. As a consequence of Kosi floods, married women were less likely to participate in labor markets. In India, where dowry is the traditional marriage payment norm among Hindus, credit constrained families may marry their sons at a younger age as a result of an economic shock induced by a natural disaster. Relatedly, our results are more pronounced among Hindu households and among landless households.

The effect of direct facility financing, autonomy, community engagement, supervision, and performance-based payments in strengthening primary health care: a large scale quasi-experimental trial in Nigeria (with

Eeshani Kandpal, Benjamin Loevinsohn, Elina Pradhan, Opeyemi Fadeyibi, Kevin McGee, Oluwale Odutolu, Gyorgy Bela Fritsche, Emmanuel Meribole, Christel MJ Vermeersch)

Nigeria has among the world's highest rates of maternal and infant mortality rates despite having adequate physical infrastructure and human resources. Nigeria States Health Investment Project (NSHIP), a results based financing (RBF) intervention, was designed as response to the limited accountability of health care workers in Nigeria, typically seen as one of the primary causes behind Nigeria's under performance on health front. RBF links financing to agreed-upon improvements in key indicators of quality and quantity of health. We find significant improvements in access and utilization of care, along with some improvements in structural and process quality of care. Importantly, NSHIP increased skilled birth attendance rate by fifteen percent and institutional delivery rate by thirteen percent over the baseline average. The increase in institutional delivery rate was entirely driven by an increase in the uptake of public health care that displaced the demand for private health care. The impacts on skilled birth attendance and institutional delivery rates were exclusively driven by the increased uptake among those households who were in the middle of the wealth distribution. This suggests that the constraints in the health care sector do not stem only from limited capacity of the health facilities, but also from the financial constraints of the potential patients. These results demonstrate that NSHIP could leverage RBF to effectively utilize additional financial resources and improved accessibility and quality of health care offered by the existing infrastructure.

The intra-household allocation of children's time in four developing countries (with Milan Thomas)

We study children's time use patterns in Ethiopia, India, Peru, and Vietnam, using the Young Lives Longitudinal study. We develop a framework that describes how children's time use varies within the household, and show empirically that intra-household patterns reflect the relative productivity of children's time spent on work, study, and leisure. Investigating intra-household differences in time use using household fixed effects regressions, we document a large leisure deficit for girls, highlighting a gender gap that has received little attention. We then analyze the leisure gap and find that it emerges at an early age, and is widely spread along the wealth distribution. Our findings relate to the literature on time poverty of women in developing countries, and have implications for promoting gender equality under Sustainable Development Goal target 5.4 on unpaid care and domestic work.

Conference and Seminar Presentations

- 2019** WGD (VTech), MEA (St. Louis), WADES (CGD), SAGE (GWU), MWIEDC (UW, Madison), GCER (Georgetown), IDInsight (New Delhi), Brookings (New Delhi), Towson University, EMCON (UChicago), SDC (UM, Ann Arbor), SEA (Fort Lauderdale), IFPRI (Washington DC)
- 2018** 2018: SDC (UM, Ann Arbor), SANEM-World Bank North America Discussion Forum (Washington DC)

Work Experience

- 2019** Research Assistant, Department of Economics, Georgetown University
Research Manager: Garance Genicot
- 2017 - 2018** Consultant, The Development Research Group, World Bank
Project Manager: Eeshani Kandpal
- 2016, 2012 - 2014** Consultant, The Development Research Group, World Bank
Project Manager: Vijayendra Rao
Social Observatory for Rural Livelihoods Projects in India

Professional Activities

Co-chair of Economics Graduate Student Organization, Georgetown University (2017-18)
Reviewer: Economic Development and Cultural Change, Journal of South Asian Development, Review of Labour Economics and Industrial Relations

Other Information

Specific Computer Skills: Stata (Advanced), ArcGIS (Intermediate), Survey Solutions (Intermediate), Lives Saved Tool (Intermediate), R (Basic), CSPro (Basic)

Languages: English (Native), Hindi (Native), Punjabi (Spoken), Urdu (Spoken)

Field Work Experience: Chhattisgarh (India), Delhi (India), Haryana (India), Odisha (India), Rajasthan (India), Tamil Nadu (India), Uttar Pradesh (India), Campeche (Mexico)

Personal: Indian citizen on F1 (student) visa

References

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