

# Sangita Vyas

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## Education

PhD student in Economics, University of Texas at Austin, expected 2023.  
NSF Graduate Research Fellowship.

M.S. in Economics, University of Texas at Austin, 2019.

M.P.A. in Economics and Public Policy, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, 2013.  
High distinction on final qualifying exam for Economics and Public Policy.  
Woodrow Wilson School Dean's Fellow 2011-2012.

B.S. in Economics: Finance, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, 2007.  
Summa Cum Laude.

## Research

### Interests

applied micro; econometrics; public, development, and health economics

### Publications and requests for revision

Persistence of solid fuel use in rural north India. Forthcoming in *Economic & Political Weekly*. 2019. *with* Aashish Gupta, Nazar Khalid, Payal Hathi, Nikhil Srivastav, Dean Spears, and Diane Coffey.

Measuring open defecation in India using survey questions: evidence from a randomised survey experiment. *BMJ Open*. 2019. *with* Nikhil Srivastav, Divya Mary, Neeta Goel, Sujatha Srinivasan, Ajaykumar Tannirkulam, Radu Ban, Dean Spears, and Diane Coffey.

The association of early-life exposure to ambient PM2.5 and later-childhood height-for-age in India: An observational study. *Environmental Health*. 2019. *with* Dean Spears, Sagnik Dey, Sourangsu Chowdhury, Noah Scovronick, and Joshua Apte.

Coercion, construction, and 'ODF paper pe': Swachh Bharat according to local officials. *India Forum*. 2019. *with* Aashish Gupta, Nazar Khalid, Payal Hathi, Nikhil Srivastav, and Diane Coffey.

Sanitation and religion in South Asia: What accounts for differences across countries? *Journal of Development Studies*. 2018. *with* Dean Spears.

Switching to sanitation: Understanding latrine adoption in a representative panel of rural Indian households. *Social Science & Medicine*. 2017. *with* Diane Coffey and Dean Spears.

Understanding open defecation in rural India: Pollution, latrine pits, and untouchability. *Economic & Political Weekly (special article section)*. 2017. *with* Diane Coffey, Aashish Gupta, Payal Hathi, Dean Spears, and Nikhil Srivastav.

Disease externalities and net nutrition: Evidence from changes in sanitation and child height in Cambodia, 2005-2010. *Economics and Human Biology*. 2016. *with* Phyrum Kov, Susanna Smets, and Dean Spears.

An experiment with air purifiers in Delhi during winter 2015-2016. *PLOS ONE*. 2016. *with* Dean Spears and Nikhil Srivastav.

Revealed preference for open defecation: Evidence from a new survey in rural north India. *Economic & Political Weekly (special article section)*. 2014. *with* Diane Coffey, Aashish Gupta, Payal Hathi, Nidhi Khurana, Dean Spears, and Nikhil Srivastav. Reprinted in *Social Policy*, ed. Jean Drèze. 2016.

## Working papers

Child health impacts of coal: Evidence from India's coal expansion. Winner of the 2019 Parker Frisbie Publication Award, and PAA 2019 Best Poster Award.

Social disadvantage and life expectancy in nine Indian states. *with* Aashish Gupta and Payal Hathi.

Exclusive LPG use: Evidence from a panel survey in rural north India. *with* Aashish Gupta.

Changes in open defecation in rural north India: 2014-2018. *IZA Discussion Paper Series*. IZA DP No. 12065. *with* Aashish Gupta, Nazar Khalid, Devashish Deshpande, Payal Hathi, Avani Kapur, Nikhil Srivastav, Dean Spears, and Diane Coffey.

The effectiveness of index-based micro-insurance in helping smallholders manage weather-related risks. *with* Shawn Cole, Gautam Bastian, Carina Wendel, and Daniel Stein.

## Awards and fellowships

2020-2023. Provost's Graduate Excellence Fellowship.

2019 Parker Frisbie Publication Award for Child health impacts of coal: Evidence from India's coal expansion.

2019 Population Association of America Best Poster Award for Child health impacts of coal: Evidence from India's coal expansion.

2017-2020. Dean's Prestigious Fellowship Supplement.

2017-2020. National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship.

## Professional Experience

2013 - present: research fellow; r.i.c.e., a research institute for compassionate economics, India.

design and implement field research studies, analyze existing and self-collected datasets, and write academic and policy articles based on results.

2015 - 2016: co-PI with Diane Coffey, Dean Spears, and Sandip Sukhtankar; experimental partnership between J-PAL and the Government of Tamil Nadu.

experiment with strategies for promoting rural sanitation behavior change, budget of \$70,000 (INR 45 lakh).

2013: consultant; World Bank Water and Sanitation Program, India.

analyzed data and produced sanitation knowledge products such as working papers and research and policy briefs.

2009 - 2011: research associate for PI Shawn Cole; Centre for Microfinance, India.

coordinated an academic team researching the effectiveness of rainfall insurance through a randomized evaluation, and oversaw data collection and intervention implementation.

2007 - 2009: associate analyst; NERA Economic Consulting, New York.

calculated financial damages for litigation purposes in securities class action law suits.

## Professional Activities

### Conference organization

Purity, Untouchability, and Open Defecation: Starting a Conversation for a Swachh Bharat, conference hosted at Jawaharlal Nehru University by r.i.c.e. and the Indian Institute for Dalit Studies. September 2015. co-organized with Diane Coffey and Dean Spears.

### Invited seminars and conference presentations

**2019:** Indian Statistical Institute Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development (New Delhi), UT Applied Micro Lunch Seminar, North East Universities Development Consortium Conference, Sustainability and Development Conference, Council on Foreign Relations, Population Association of America, Indian Institute for Population Sciences (Mumbai)

**2018:** Southern Economics Association Annual Conference

**prior:** UNC Water and Health Conference, Jawaharlal Nehru University (Delhi), Gates Foundation, IFPRI (Delhi), Delhi School of Economics

### Journal refereeing

Economics and Human Biology; World Development; Environment and Development Economics; BMJ Open

### Media

TEDx, India. The surprising truth of open defecation in India. Over 1.5 million views.

"Cooking with gas not wood" *The Hindu*. August 2019. Also appeared in policy brief "Ujjwala 2.0: From access to sustained usage," by Collaborative Clean Air Policy Centre.

"Swachh Bharat Mission gains have come at a cost." *Hindustan Times*. January 2019.

"Seeing through Smoke." *The Caravan*. May 2017.

"A pit stop to change attitudes." *The Hindu*. February 2017.

"Bad air quality is a public problem, yet election campaigns in five states were silent on it." *Scroll*. February 2017.

"Not so clean." *Indian Express*. October 2016.

"Two years on, there has been little movement on a key goal of Swachh Bharat - ending open defecation." *Scroll*. October 2016.

"Why just focus on Delhi? It's high time that the government took air pollution in the rest of India seriously." *with* Diane Coffey. *Scroll*. March 2016.

"Swachh Bharat Mission must address untouchability." *Mint*. October 2015.

"Swachh Bharat Mission a misguided approach to ending open defecation." *Mint*. October 2015.

"How India's refusal to shed caste prejudices is undermining Swachh Bharat." *Scroll*. October 2015.

"How serious is the government about Swachh Bharat Mission?" *Ideas for India*. March 2015.

"Five more years of open defecation: Modi has just washed his hands of Swachh Bharat Mission in the budget." *Scroll*. March 2015.

"Not a clean sweep." *Indian Express*. January 2015.

"Swachh Bharat Mission: It's not just about building toilets." *Business Standard*. September 2014.

"Most rural Indians can afford a toilet but don't want one." *Business Standard*. June 2014.

"Toilets are urgently needed in rural India, but don't imagine they will reduce rape." *with* Diane Coffey, Aashish Gupta, Payal Hathi, and Dean Spears. *Scroll*. June 2014.

"How Bangladesh brought about a dramatic toilet revolution." *with* Aashish Gupta. *Business Standard*. March 2014.

"Why are children in India so short?" *Ideas for India*. August 2013.

"Building consensus on building latrines." *Mint*. August 2013.

TV appearances: Global Health Frontiers (January 2016), CNN-IBN (October 2014), NDTV (October 2014)

## Language skills

English: native; Hindi: proficient; Gujarati: proficient

## Computer skills

Stata; L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X

January 8, 2020