

Diversity Statement

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I view diversity and inclusion as inseparable from the goals of academic research—to expand knowledge, challenge assumptions, and improve the world through evidence. My commitment to these values has taken shape through both my scholarship and my public life, particularly in advancing LGBTQ+ visibility in economics and in Indian society more broadly.

In 2022, my partner Utkarsh and I filed a case before the Supreme Court of India, along with other petitioners, seeking the legal recognition of same-sex marriage. Utkarsh also appeared as one of the lawyers in the proceedings. The case, heard by a constitutional bench over several weeks, was among the most significant litigations on LGBTQ+ rights in India since decriminalization. We have since engaged in public outreach to broaden understanding of the legal and social questions surrounding equality and family law (for example, media coverage in *Associated Press*, *BBC*, *The Indian Express*, *India Today*, and *Aaj Tak*). The bench of five judges delivered a 3-2 split verdict in 2023: the Chief Justice and the second-most senior judge recognized civil union and adoption rights for same-sex couples and transgender individuals, but these views were overruled by the majority. Although the judgment did not extend marriage rights, the proceedings helped consolidate networks of queer activists, lawyers, and researchers working toward future legal and policy reform.

This public advocacy has shaped how I approach diversity within academia. I believe inclusion must go beyond representation to changing the everyday structures of support and visibility. To that end, I co-founded and co-organize the *LSE QueerConf*, the first UK-based academic conference dedicated to queer PhD students in economics. Each year, the conference brings together over forty participants for research presentations, mentoring, and candid conversations about navigating the profession as queer scholars—an underrepresented community in economics. With external funding, we have supported students from South Asia, Latin America, and across Europe and the United States to attend. Faculty mentors participate both as discussants and as allies, fostering dialogue across career stages. The success of QueerConf has convinced me that institutional efforts toward inclusion can tangibly change who sees themselves as belonging in economics.

As a faculty member, I will continue to integrate these commitments into my teaching, mentoring, and community engagement.