

Natasha Jha

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Employment

Postdoctoral Research Associate	Sep 2023 - present
Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame	
Research Associate	2016-2018
Indian School of Business	
Research Analyst	2014-2016
Barclays Shared Services	

Education

Ph.D., Applied Economics and Management	2018-2023
Cornell University	
M.S., Applied Economics and Management	2021
Cornell University	
M.A., Economics	2012-2014
Delhi School of Economics	
B.A., Economics	2009-2012
University of Delhi	

Research Interests

Development Economics, Labor Economics, Environmental Economics

Peer-Reviewed Publications

- (1) Chaudhuri, K., Jha, N., Nilayamgode, M., & Suryanarayana, R. (2023). "Alcohol Ban and Crime: The ABC's of the Bihar Prohibition". *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 72(4), 2024.
[Link to paper](#)

Working Papers

- (1) Show Me the Dowry: How Traditional Customs Affect Education in Rural India. *Job market paper*
This study examines the impact of a law that increased penalties for dowry on educational attainment in rural India using data from the Rural Economic and Demographic Survey. A difference-in-differences approach reveals that the law effectively reduced dowry payments, but also female education, with the decline in female education being most pronounced in communities with higher dowry prevalence. Since dowry payments signal adherence to traditional values, after anti-dowry laws, families must come up with an alternative signal. Consequently, lowering female education becomes the alternative signal showing adherence to tradition. Hence, while the anti-dowry law combats an exploitative system, it inadvertently reduces female education.

(2) Agriculture and Arsenic: Can Over Extraction of Groundwater Make us Sick?

This paper draws attention to an overlooked impact of irrigation technology, namely Arsenic contamination of groundwater. Using historical geological variation in aquifer depth to instrument for groundwater irrigation, the paper finds higher community level Arsenic exposure in water abundant districts across India. Water abundant districts have 70% more habitats with arsenic exposure greater than safety levels. Historical deep tubewell groundwater extraction for irrigation appears as a primary driver for arsenic release in water sources over alternate pathways such as fertilizer or pesticide usage.

(3) Minimum Support Prices in Indian Agriculture: Supporting Whom and at What Price?, with Shilpa Aggarwal, and Ishani Chatterjee. *Manuscript in preparation for submission*

Distortions introduced by price-controls may be underestimated if controls are captured for uses beyond fixing market failures. We study India's minimum support prices (MSP) for food grains, and find that the central government announces a higher MSP for a crop when a larger area under cultivation for that crop is slated to go for state elections. Since the government's procurement price is the same across states, this blunt instrument is used more when other policy instruments are unavailable, i.e., when the incumbent state government is unaligned with the center. Higher MSP directly reduces welfare by increasing consumer prices.

(4) Gender Differences in Tertiary Healthcare Utilization: Evidence from India, with Tarun Jain and Revathy Suryanarayana. *Manuscript in preparation for submission*

Work in Progress

(1) Job Amenities and Misallocation of Talent, with Patrizio Piraino, and Martin Abel.

(2) Impact of Early Childhood Education in Nepal, with Lindsey Buck, Rachel Cohen, Nishith Prakash, Mridul Mishra, Shwetlana Sabarwal, and Deepak Saraswat.

(Authors listed alphabetically with equal contributions for all papers)

Fellowships and Awards

(1) Tata-Cornell Scholar, Annual Assistantship Award (\$35,000) 2019 - 2023

Policy Writing

(1) [Arsenic and Agriculture: Is Our Growing Dependence on Groundwater Irrigation Poisoning Our Water?](#) Blog post for Tata-Cornell Institute, September 2023.

(2) [Thinking About Soil from the Farmers' Perspectives](#) Blog post for Tata-Cornell Institute, April 2021.

Teaching Experience

(1) Teaching Assistant - Contemporary Controversies in the Global Economy 2023
Prof. Chris Barrett, Cornell University

(2) Teaching Assistant - Better Decisions for Life, Love and Money 2022
Prof. Robert Frank, Prof. Ted O'Donoghue, Prof. Jay Russo, Prof. William Schulze, Prof. Suzanne Shu, Cornell University

(3) Teaching Assistant - Applied Econometrics
Prof. Brian Dillon, Cornell University

2019

External Conference Presentations

2023: Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Fall Conference

2022: Pacific Conference for Development Economics, Midwest International Economic Development Conference, 21st Summer School in International and Development Economics, North East Universities Development Consortium

2018: North East Universities Development Consortium, Southern Economic Association Meeting, International conference on South Asian Economic Development

2017: Winter School, Delhi School of Economics, Human Capital Workshop, Indian School of Business

Professional Service

Journal Referee

American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Development Studies, The World Bank Economic Review, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, China Economic Review, Economics of Education Review, Economic Modelling, PLOS ONE

Department and University Service (Cornell University)

(1) Member Graduate Students for Gender Equity in Economics, Cornell University

2022

Technical Skills

(1) **Languages/Software:** STATA, SAS, Python, R, Microsoft Office, \LaTeX , QGIS, VBA

(2) **Tools:** Panel Data Econometrics, Causal Inference, Applied Statistics, Machine Learning

References

Christopher B. Barrett
Stephen B. & Janice G. Ashley Professor of
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