

# Natasha Jha

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[natasha-jha.github.io](https://github.com/natasha-jha)

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## Employment

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

## Education

<b>Ph.D., Applied Economics and Management</b>	2018-2023
Cornell University	
<b>M.S., Applied Economics and Management</b>	2021
Cornell University	
<b>M.A., Economics</b>	2012-2014
Delhi School of Economics	
<b>B.A., Economics</b>	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 rural households' educational attainment in India, using data from the Rural Economic and Demographic Survey. A difference-in-differences approach reveals that the law reduced dowry payments and female education, with the decline in female education being most pronounced in communities with higher dowry prevalence. This suggests that dowry payments signal adherence to tradition, and reducing female education serves as an alternative signal in the absence of dowry. Hence, while the law combats an exploitative custom, it inadvertently depletes female human capital.

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

This paper draws attention to an overlooked prospective 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. Combining insights from hydrology, historical deep tubewell groundwater extraction for irrigation appears as a primary driver for arsenic release in water sources over alternate pathways related to arsenic exposure caused by contemporary farming practices such as fertilizer or pesticide usage.

(3) **Gender Differences in Tertiary Healthcare Utilization: Evidence from India**, with Tarun Jain and Revathy Suryanarayana. *Submitted*

We examine gender differences in access to and service within a publicly financed tertiary healthcare program in Andhra Pradesh India. We use claim-level administrative data from the program to estimate gender differences in access and services. We classify the distance the patient travels as access variables and the time for claim authorization, treatment, and discharge, as well as the amount approved and paid as service variables. We use a regression framework to control for the influence of other patient characteristics, the type of procedure, hospital, and quarter of treatment in making gender comparisons.

(4) **Minimum Support Prices in Indian Agriculture: Supporting Whom and at What Price?**, with Shilpa Aggarawl, and Ishani Chatterjee. *Submitted*

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.

## **Work in Progress**

- (1) Job Amenities and Misallocation of Talent, with Patrizio Piraino, and Martin Abel.
- (2) Shaping Future Success: Evidence from an Early Childhood Human Capital Formation Intervention, with Lindsey Buck, Rachel Cohen, Nishith Prakash, Shwetlana Sabarwal, and Deepak Saraswat.
- (3) Women's Agency in the Manufacturing Sector, with Carolina Castilla, and Tarana Chauhan.

(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 2019  
*Prof. Brian Dillon, Cornell University*

## 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, Economic Letter, 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,  $\text{\LaTeX}$ , QGIS, VBA
- (2) **Tools:** Panel Data Econometrics, Causal Inference, Applied Statistics, Machine Learning

## References

Christopher B. Barrett  
Stephen B. & Janice G. Ashley Professor of  
Applied Economics and Management  
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Applied Economics and Management  
Cornell University  
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