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Research Fields **Primary:** Development Economics and Labor Economics
Secondary: Applied Microeconomics

Education **University of California, Santa Cruz, USA**
PhD in Economics 2025 (expected)
M.A. in Economics, Department of Economics 2020
University College London, London, UK
MSc Economics 2017
University of Delhi, Delhi, India
B.A. (Honors) Economics 2015

References **Professor Jonathan Robinson** **Professor Ajay Shenoy**
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Job Market Paper **[“Together in Search: Experimental Evidence from Coordinating Travel Among Women Job-Seekers in Urban India”](#)**, with Smit Gade
In many developing countries, barriers like safety concerns and traditional social norms limit women’s physical mobility. To navigate these barriers, women typically only travel with companions—which could limit their job search if the companions are unavailable. Coordinating travel with job-seeking women could help, but they may not know each other. We address this constraint in a field experiment in urban India. We match job-seeking women within neighborhoods and randomly vary whether they can coordinate their travel to factory interviews by scheduling them on the same date or on different dates. Matching and coordinating travel increases interview attendance by 85%. The effects are stronger for women who knew fewer women at baseline and reported feeling unsafe when traveling. The treatment also improves job search beyond the interview experiment: women are 78% more likely to visit prospective employers and make twice as

many trips. We present evidence showing that the effects on interview attendance and job search are driven by women coordinating their travel with each other and that matching without coordination has no effects.

Published and Working Papers **“Going the Extra Mile: Farm Subsidies and Spatial Convergence in Agricultural Input Adoption”**, with Shilpa Aggarwal, Dahyeon Jeong, Naresh Kumar, David Sungho

Park, Jonathan Robinson, and Alan Spearot

Many countries subsidize agricultural inputs but require farmers to travel to retailers to access them, just as for normal purchases. What effect do travel costs have on subsidy take-up and input usage, particularly for remote farmers? We analyze Malawi’s Farm Input Subsidy Program (FISP), and show that though retail prices are close to uniform, travel-cost-adjusted prices are substantially higher in remote areas due to travel costs. Nevertheless, subsidy redemption is nearly universal and only modestly lower in remote areas, suggesting that these travel costs are not enough to dissuade redemption. We make use of a policy change in the 2017-18 to 2019-20 agricultural seasons which took centralized control of beneficiary selection and find that FISP substantially mitigates the sizeable remoteness gradient that exists for non-beneficiaries. Our results demonstrate that subsidy programs may narrow spatial inequities.

“Impacts of the COVID lockdown on household incomes: evidence from Punjab, India”, with Anirban Sanyal, and Nirvikar Singh, *Empirical Economics*, 2023

In response to the beginnings of the COVID-19 pandemic, India’s government instituted a severe nationwide lockdown in late March 2020. In this paper, we analyze household survey data on income from an Indian state, Punjab. We analyze the impacts of the pandemic and lockdown on total household income, as well as its components, including wages, business income, and transfers. This paper innovates in this area by using Poisson Pseudo Maximum Likelihood estimation to deal with the skewed distributions of various income components, as well as quantile regressions to examine differential impacts across the income distribution. We examine the differences between rural and urban households, differential impacts on female-headed and laborer households, and the time pattern of impacts. We find that rural households experienced more persistent income declines than urban households, and their wages suffered relatively more. Households with daily laborers were most badly affected, and this was especially true at the bottom of the income distribution.

“God is in the Rain: The Impact of Rainfall-Induced Early Social Distancing on COVID-19 Outbreaks”, with Ajay Shenoy, Bhavyaa Sharma, Guanghong Xu, Haedong Rho, and Kinpritma Sangha, *Journal of Health Economics*, 2022

We measure the benefit to society created by preventing COVID-19 deaths through a marginal increase in early social distancing. We exploit county-level rainfall on the last weekend before statewide lockdown in the early phase of the pandemic. After controlling for historical rainfall, temperature, and state fixed-effects, current rainfall is a plausibly exogenous instrument for social distancing. A one percent decrease in the population

leaving home on the weekend before lockdown creates an average of 132 dollars of benefit per county resident within 2 weeks. The impacts of earlier distancing compound over time and mainly arise from lowering the risk of a major outbreak, yielding large but unevenly distributed social benefit.

Works in Progress **“Enhancing Women’s Employment Outcomes: Mitigating Travel Cost and Information Barriers in Employer-Provided Creches”**, with Achyuta Adhvaryu, Anant Nyshadham and Smit Gade

Enabling women to engage in paid work and access stable employment is a critical global policy challenge. Research indicates that access to childcare facilities can increase women’s employment, yet uptake of such services remains low. Qualitative evidence suggests that high costs, transportation expenses when traveling with children, and concerns about the quality of childcare centers are the primary constraints that limit their utilization. We conduct a large-scale RCT with 1200 women in India in partnership with a large apparel manufacturing firm to address these constraints. We investigate whether subsidizing travel costs and providing quality information about the firm’s on-site free creche facilities improves women’s utilization of the facilities. We also investigate the second-stage effects on women’s labor market outcomes and children’s welfare.

“Understanding Gendered Differences in Job Search Behavior: Evidence from Urban India ”, with David Sungho Park and Monica Shandal

Existing literature and our initial descriptive work show that there exists gendered differences in job search behavior. Men typically search for longer and take more time to find a desirable job, whereas a majority of women report never finding a desirable job. 65% of women report not knowing where to look for job openings compared to 35% of men. In this paper, we use a combination of lab-in-the-field experiments and randomly vary job search costs to examine different mechanisms that can help explain the differences in job search behavior between men and women. We test whether women exhibit pessimistic beliefs about wage distribution, have lower reservation wages, experience lower wage distribution and high travel costs, or face informational constraints through a field experiment in India.

“The Girl on the Train: Effect of Delhi Metro Transit System on Women’s Employment”, with Moumita Das

Research suggests that restrictions on women’s physical mobility, associated with stigma and safety, can affect women’s decision to participate in the labor force and reduce access to a large proportion of jobs in many developing countries. This paper investigates the role of public urban rail transit, specifically the Delhi Metro Transit System, in improving employment outcomes for women in Delhi, India, by addressing some mobility concerns. Our empirical approach uses an event study design to explore spatial and temporal variation in access to Delhi Metro stations, which opened between 2002-2011. Utilizing Economic Census data from 1990-2013, we find that the establishments in areas with access to the Delhi Metro employ 10 to 12.2 percentage points more paid female workers per paid male worker. The effect is immediate and sustained after the introduction of the Metro. We find

evidence that the Metro influenced the composition of establishments in the area, leading to a higher proportion of female-friendly establishments that hire more women.

Research Grants	BMGF Global Grand Challenges (\$280,220)	2024
	UCSC Economics Department Research Grant (\$5100)	2024
	UCSC Center for Labor and Community Research Grant (\$7,267.47)	2024
	Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics - Pilot (\$14,901)	2024
	SurveyCTO Data Collection Research Grant (\$3376)	2024
	G2LM LIC Programme SRG (Phase VII) (€24,969)	2023
	UCSC Economics Department Research Grant (\$5000)	2023
	UCSC Blum Scholars Grant (\$4000)	2023
	Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics - Full study (\$35,010)	2023
	J-PAL GEA Initiative Travel/Proposal Development Grant (\$8040)	2022
	UCSC Economics Department Research Grant (\$5000)	2022
Fellowships, and Awards	UCSC Chancellor's Quarter Dissertation Fellowship, \$10,000	2025
	UCSC Teaching Assistant Award for Excellence in Teaching	2024
	UCSC Graduate Summer Writing Fellowship, \$6000	2023
	UCSC Teaching Assistant Award for Excellence in Teaching	2023
	UCSC Eileen Brooks Memorial Research Paper Award, \$2,200	2021
	UCSC Regents' Fellowship, \$15,000	2019
Research Assistantship	Jonathan Robinson (UCSC), Shilpa Aggarwal (ISB), and Alan Spearot (UCSC)	2020 – 2022
	Ajay Shenoy (UCSC)	2021
	Supreet Kaur (UC, Berkeley), Heather Scholfield (Wharton), and Christina Brown (Chicago)	2017-2019
Presentations	Good Business Forum, UC San Diego	2024
	Blum Scholar Research Presentations, UCSC	2024
	All California Labor Economics Conference	2024
	UCSC Brown Bag Seminar	2024
	UCSC Micro Workshop	2021-2024
Teaching Experience	ECON 1: Introductory Microeconomics	2 Quarters
	ECON 100A: Intermediate Microeconomics	4 Quarters, Summer 2023 (Instructor)
	ECON 100B: Intermediate Macroeconomics	1 Quarter
	ECON 113: Introductory Econometrics	3 Quarters
	ECON 120: Development Economics	1 Quarter
	ECON 139A: Economics of Ecommerce	1 Quarter
	ECON 217: Applied Econometric Analysis II	1 Quarter
Skills	Computer: STATA, QGIS, Python, R, MATLAB, ODK, SurveyCTO, L ^A T _E X	