

SEEMA JAYACHANDRAN

Department of Economics & School of Public and Intl. Affairs
Princeton University
126 Julis Romo Rabinowitz Building
Princeton, NJ 08544

email: jayachandran@princeton.edu
web: seemajayachandran.com
phone: (609) 258-8060

Academic Employment

2022–present Professor of Economics & Public Affairs, Princeton University
 Director, Research Program in Development Economics, Princeton University
2018–2022 Professor, Department of Economics, Northwestern University
2011–2018 Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Northwestern University
2006–2011 Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Stanford University
2004–2006 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Postdoctoral) Scholar in Health Policy Research,
 University of California, Berkeley

Other Current Positions

Co-Director, Development Economics Program, National Bureau of Economic Research (2019–)
Chair of Gender Sector (2018–) & Board of Directors (2012–), Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab
Board of Directors, Bureau for Research and Economic Analysis of Development (2012–)
Co-Editor, American Economic Review: Insights (2024–)
Committee on Population, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, & Medicine (2022–)
Economic Advisory Council, Millennium Challenge Corporation (2025–)
Board of Directors, CARE (2021–)
Advisory Council, Rainforest Trust (2024–)
Research Council, GiveWell (2024–)

Education

2004 Ph.D., Harvard University, Economics
1999 A.M., Harvard University, Physics
1995 M.A., University of Oxford, Physics and Philosophy
1993 S.B., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Electrical Engineering

Past Positions

Committee on Honors and Awards, American Economic Association (2021–2024)
Co-Editor, American Economic Journal: Applied Economics (2018–2024)
Research Fellow, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), (2018–2023)
Contributing writer, New York Times, Economic View column (2017–2021)
Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution (2019–2021)
Co-Director, NBER Gender in the Economy Study Group (2020)
Visiting Scholar, King Center on Global Development, Stanford University (2019–2020)
Co-Chair, J-PAL Health Sector (2012–2018)
Board of Reviewing Editors, Science (2016–2018)
Co-Editor, Journal of Human Resources (2012–2016)

Visiting Associate Professor, Department of Economics, MIT (2014–2015)
 Consultant, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago (2011–2015)
 Visiting Scholar, Department of Economics, Harvard University (2010–2011)
 Co-Chair, Working Group on Loan Sanctions, Center for Global Development (2009–2010)
 Management consultant, McKinsey & Company (1995–1997)

Affiliations

National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), Research Associate
 Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), Affiliate
 Bureau for Research and Economic Analysis of Development (BREAD), Fellow
 Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR), Research Fellow
 Center for Global Development, Non-Resident Fellow
 CESifo, Research Network Fellow

Published and Forthcoming Papers

- “Informing Mothers about the Benefits of Conversing with Infants: Experimental Evidence from Ghana,” (with P. Dupas, C. Falezan, and M. Walsh), forthcoming at American Economic Journal: Economic Policy
- “Money (Not) to Burn: Payments for Ecosystem Services to Reduce Crop Residue Burning,” (with K. Jack, N. Kala, and R. Pande), American Economic Review: Insights 7(1), March 2025, pp. 39–55
- “Redesigning Payments for Ecosystem Services to Increase Cost-Effectiveness,” (with S. Izquierdo-Tort and S. Saavedra), Nature Communications, 15:9252, 2024
- “Ten Facts about Son Preference in India,” India Policy Forum 2023, volume 20, 2024
- “Environmental Externalities and Free-Riding in the Household,” (with K. Jack, F. Malagutti, and S. Rao), Journal of Development Economics, 170, 2024
- “A Mother’s Voice: Impacts of Spousal Communication Training on Child Health Investments,” (with M. Björkman Nyqvist and C. Zipfel), Journal of Development Economics, 168, 2024
- “Detecting Mother-Father Differences in Spending on Children: A New Approach Using Willingness-to-Pay Elicitation,” (with R. Dizon-Ross), American Economic Review: Insights 5(4), December 2023, pp. 445-459
- “The Mortality Effects of Winter Heating Prices,” (with J. Chirakijja and P. Ong), Economic Journal 134(657), January 2024, pp. 402-417
- “Think Globally, Act Globally: Opportunities to Mitigate Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Low- and Middle-Income Countries,” (with R. Glennerster), Journal of Economic Perspectives 37(3), Summer 2023, pp. 112-136
- “The Inherent Trade-Off Between the Environmental and Anti-Poverty Goals of Payments for Ecosystem Services,” Environmental Research Letters 18(2), February 2023, 025003
- “Greater than the Sum of the Parts? Evidence on Mechanisms Operating in Women’s Groups,” (with L. Diaz-Martin, A. Gopalan, and E. Guarnieri), World Bank Research Observer, 38(1), February 2023, pp. 1-35
- “Using Machine Learning and Qualitative Interviews to Design a Five-Question Survey Module for Women’s Agency,” (with M. Biradavolu and J. Cooper), World Development, vol. 161, January 2023
- “How Economic Development Influences the Environment,” Annual Review of Economics, volume 14, 2022, pp. 229-252

- “Improving Willingness-to-Pay Elicitation by Including a Benchmark Good,” (with R. Dizon-Ross), American Economic Association Papers and Proceedings, 112(5), May 2022, pp. 551–555
- “Reshaping Adolescents’ Gender Attitudes: Evidence from a School-Based Experiment in India,” (with D. Dhar and T. Jain), American Economic Review, 112(3), March 2022, pp. 899–927
- “Microentrepreneurship in Developing Countries,” Handbook of Labor, Human Resources and Population Economics, November 2021
- “Social Norms as a Barrier to Women’s Employment in Developing Countries,” IMF Economic Review, 69(3), September 2021, pp. 576–595
- “Intergenerational Transmission of Gender Attitudes: Evidence from India,” (with D. Dhar and T. Jain), Journal of Development Studies, 55(12), September 2019, pp. 2572–2592
- “Changing Family Attitudes to Promote Female Employment,” (with J. Dean), American Economic Association Papers and Proceedings, 109, May 2019, pp. 138–142
- “Self-Selection into Payments for Ecosystem Services Programs,” (with K. Jack), Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 116(12), March 19, 2019, pp. 5326–5333
- “Firm Growth and Corruption: Empirical Evidence from Vietnam,” (with J. Bie, E. Malesky, and B. Olken), Economic Journal, 129, February 2019, pp. 651–677
- “The Price Effects of Cash Versus In-Kind Transfers,” (with J. Cunha and G. De Giorgi), Review of Economic Studies, 86(1), January 2019, pp. 240–281
- “The Causes and Consequences of Increased Female Education and Labor Force Participation in Developing Countries,” (with R. Heath), Oxford Handbook of Women and the Economy, eds. S. Averett, L. Argys and S. Hoffman. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018)
- “Why Are Indian Children So Short? The Role of Birth Order and Son Preference,” (with R. Pande), American Economic Review, 107(9), September 2017, pp. 2600–2629
- “Cash for Carbon: A Randomized Trial of Payments for Ecosystem Services to Reduce Deforestation,” (with J. De Laat, E. Lambin, C. Stanton, R. Audy, and N. Thomas), Science, 357(6348), July 2017, pp. 267–273
- “Mothers Care More, But Fathers Decide: Educating Parents about Child Health in Uganda,” (with M. Björkman Nyqvist), American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings, 107(5), May 2017, pp. 496–500
- “Fertility Decline and Missing Women,” American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 9(1), January 2017, pp. 118–139
- “Friendship at Work: Can Peer Support Catalyze Female Entrepreneurship?” (with E. Field, N. Rigol, and R. Pande), American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, 8(2), May 2016, pp. 125–153
- “The Roots of Gender Inequality in Developing Countries,” Annual Review of Economics, vol. 7, 2015, pp. 63–88
- “Governance Challenges in Education and Health Care in Developing Countries,” in S. Asefa and W.-C. Huang (eds.), The Political Economy of Good Governance, W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2015, pp. 93–110.
- “Does Contraceptive Use Always Reduce Breastfeeding?” Demography, 51(3), June 2014, pp. 917–937
- “Incentives to Teach Badly: After-School Tutoring in Developing Countries,” Journal of Development Economics, 108, May 2014, pp. 190–205
- “Liquidity Constraints and Deforestation: The Limitations of Payments for Ecosystem Services,” American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings, 103(3), May 2013, pp. 309–313

- “Why Do Mothers Breastfeed Girls Less Than Boys? Evidence and Implications for Child Health in India,” (with I. Kuziemko), Quarterly Journal of Economics, 126(3), August 2011, pp. 1485-1538
- “Do Traditional Institutions Constrain Female Entrepreneurship? A Field Experiment on Business Training in India,” (with E. Field and R. Pande), American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings, 100(2), May 2010, pp. 125-129
- “Modern Medicine and the 20th-Century Decline in Mortality: Evidence on the Impact of Sulfa Drugs,” (with A. Lleras-Muney and K. Smith), American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 2(2), April 2010, pp. 118-146
- “Air Quality and Early-Life Mortality: Evidence from Indonesia’s Wildfires,” Journal of Human Resources, 44(4), Fall 2009, pp. 916-954
- “Life Expectancy and Human Capital Investments: Evidence from Maternal Mortality Declines,” (with A. Lleras-Muney), Quarterly Journal of Economics, 124(1), February 2009, pp. 349-397
- “The Jeffords Effect,” Journal of Law and Economics, 49(2), October 2006, pp. 397-425
- “Selling Labor Low: Wage Responses to Productivity Shocks in Developing Countries,” Journal of Political Economy, 114(3), June 2006, pp. 538-575
- “Odious Debt,” (with M. Kremer), American Economic Review, 96(1), March 2006, pp. 82-92

Working Papers

- “Moving to Opportunity, Together” (with L. Nassal, M. Notowidigdo, M. Paul, H. Sarsons, and E. Sundberg), December 2024
- “The Negligible Effect of Free Contraception on Fertility: Experimental Evidence from Burkina Faso” (with P. Dupas, A. Lleras-Muney, and P. Rossi), January 2025, conditionally accepted at American Economic Review
- “What Works to Enhance Women’s Agency: Cross-Cutting Lessons from Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Studies,” (with W. Chang, L. Diaz-Martin, A. Gopalan, E. Guarnieri, and C. Walsh), July 2020
- “Attending Kindergarten Improves Cognitive but Not Socio-Emotional Development in India,” (with J. Dean), February 2020

Op-Eds and Other Writing for a General Audience

- “How to Get More Bang for Your Climate-Change Buck,” (with R. Glennerster), Foreign Affairs, February 14, 2024
- “Ten Facts about Son Preference in India,” , VoxDev, December 2023
- “Does Empowering Women to Communicate at Home Improve Child Health Outcomes?,” (with M. Björkman Nyqvist and C. Zipfel), VoxDev, September 2023
- “Reducing Air Pollution: Evidence From Payments to Reduce Crop Burning in India,” (with K. Jack, N. Kala, and R. Pande), VoxDev, March 28, 2023
- “How to Get Farmers to Not Burn Crop Residue,” (with K. Jack, N. Kala, and R. Pande), Indian Express, October 13, 2021
- “Universal Paternity Leave Needs More Than New Laws for a Push,” New York Times, June 25, 2021
- “Financial Rewards for College Students Could Help Curb the Pandemic,” New York Times, December 29, 2020
- “Rent, Don’t Buy,” Anthropocene Magazine, Issue 5, August 2020

- “Helping Microenterprises Grow: What Works and What Doesn’t,” VoxDev, June 2, 2020
- “Social Programs Can Sometimes Turn a Profit for Taxpayers,” New York Times, July 10, 2020
- “How a Raise for Workers Can Be a Win for Everybody,” New York Times, June 18, 2020
- “When a Disappointment Helped Lead to a Nobel Prize,” New York Times, November 29, 2019
- “Founders of Successful Tech Companies Are Mostly Middle-Aged,” New York Times, August 29, 2019
- “Why a Tax the U.S. Hasn’t Embraced Has Found Favor in Much of the World,” New York Times, May 17, 2019
- “Unable to Post Bail? You Will Pay for That for Many Years,” New York Times, March 1, 2019
- “Lottery-Like Prizes Coax Savings. What’s the Risk in Expanding Them?” New York Times, December 21, 2018
- “Growing out of Corruption,” (with J. Bie, E. Malesky and B. Olken) VoxDev, April 20, 2018
- “Think Positive, Climb Out of Poverty? It Just Might Work,” New York Times, July 13, 2018
- “Family Dynamics and Water Conservation: Evidence from Zambia,” (with K. Jack) VoxDev, April 20, 2018
- “Gender Differences in What Development Economists Study,” (with J. Daubenspeck), World Bank Development Impact Blog, March 20, 2018
- “Unwanted: 21 Million Girls,” Indian Express, February 24, 2018
- “Using the Airbnb Model to Protect the Environment,” New York Times, December 29, 2017
- “Why Public Health Insurance Could Help, Even If You Don’t Want It,” New York Times, September 29, 2017
- “Forest Conservation in Uganda: Using Financial Incentives to Avert Climate Change,” VoxDev, September 28, 2017
- “Odds Are You’re Measuring Son Preference Incorrectly,” World Bank Development Impact Blog, June 19, 2017
- “A Friend’s Support Can Make Women Better Entrepreneurs,” (with E. Field, R. Pande, and N. Rigol), HBR.org, June 2015
- “Son Preference Drives India’s High Child Malnutrition Rates,” (with R. Pande), VoxEU, May 5, 2015
- “The Impact of In-kind and Cash Transfers on Local Prices,” (with J. Cunha and G. De Giorgi), Policy in Focus, 2015, 11(1)
- “Does Economic Development Mean Less Discrimination Against Women? If Only It Were That Simple” Milken Institute Review, January 2015
- “The Youngest Is Hungriest,” (with R. Pande), New York Times, Aug. 10, 2014
- “Tell Us What You Really Think: Measuring Gender Attitudes in Haryana,” (with D. Dhar and T. Jain), Ideas for India, July 18, 2014
- “Choice Not Genes: Probable Cause for the India-Africa Child Height Gap,” (with R. Pande), Economic and Political Weekly, 48(34), August 2013, pp. 77-79
- “Cutting Down Trees for Emergency Cash: Why Access to Credit Can Make PES Programs More Effective,” Climate-Eval.org, May 13, 2013
- “Evaluating a Payments for Ecosystem Services Program in Uganda,” Climate-Eval.org, April 22, 2013
- “Loan Sanctions: A New Tool for Diplomacy?” (with M. Kremer), washingtonpost.com, Feb. 7, 2007
- “A Dictator’s Crippling Debt,” (with M. Kremer), Harvard Magazine, July 2003

“Make Odious Debt Too Risky to Issue,” (with M. Kremer), *Financial Times*, May 9, 2003

“Odious Debt,” (with M. Kremer), *Brookings Review*, Spring 2003

“A World of Junk-Status States,” (with M. Kremer), *Guardian*, Aug. 19, 2002

“Odious Debt,” (with M. Kremer), *Finance and Development*, June 2002

Awards and Honors

2022	Named to Vox Media’s inaugural “Future Perfect 50 List” (“visionaries that have made an impact in their fields to improve lives now and in the future”)
2018	Sustainability Science Award, Ecological Society of America (for greatest scholarly contribution on ecosystem sustainability published in the previous 5 years)
2011	Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellow
2011–2016	National Science Foundation CAREER Award
1997–2000	National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship (Physics)
1993–1995	Marshall Scholar
1993	Phi Beta Kappa

Professional Service

Program Committee for AEA Annual Meetings, January 2022; NBER Summer Institute, Development Economics, July 2017, 2019-present; Econometric Society North American Winter Meeting, January 2016; Econometric Society World Congress 2015; NBER Development Program Meeting, October 2014; Econometric Society North American Winter Meeting, January 2014; AEA Annual Meetings, 2013; Econometric Society North American Summer Meeting, June 2012; BREAD Conference, Yale University, May 2012; Econometric Society North American Winter Meeting, January 2012

Co-organizer, CESifo Venice Summer Institute Workshops (Gender in the Developed and Developing World, June 2019; Malnutrition in South Asia, July 2011)

Co-organizer, Stanford Institute in Theoretical Economics Conferences (Development Economics, August 2017; Growth and Development, August 2009; Health and Economic Development, June 2006)

Jury Member, Infosys Prize in Economics (2024)

Mentor, Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) Mentoring Workshop for Junior Faculty, January 2012

Faculty instructor, J-PAL Executive Training Course (Indonesia 2008, Uganda 2012, India 2013)

University service: Program Review Committee, Northwestern, 2021-2022; Committee on Honorary Degrees, Northwestern, 2018-2021; Faculty speaker at Alumni Relations and Development events, Northwestern, 2017-2020; Advisory Board, Program on Equality Development and Globalization Studies, Northwestern, 2012-2014

Departmental service: Senior Faculty Search Committee, Princeton Economics (2023–); Faculty Steering Committee, Griswold Center for Economic Policy Studies (2024–); Internationalization Planning Committee, Princeton SPIA (2022-2023); Applied Micro Hiring Committee, Northwestern (2011-2017; 2020-2022); Planning Committee, Northwestern (2015-2017); Ad Hoc Committee on the Graduate Program, Northwestern (2016-2017); Junior Faculty Recruiting Committee, Northwestern (2011-2014); Junior Faculty Recruiting Committee, Stanford (2007-2010), Graduate Program Committee, Stanford (2007-2008)