VAISHNAVI SURENDRA

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SUMMARY

Applied Economist and Researcher specializing in causal inference and experiment design. Experienced in designing large-scale decision systems for development, market and climate adaptation contexts. Published in top journals and collaborated with global institutions to translate research into scalable, data-driven policy and product solutions.

SKILLS

Causal Inference • Experiment Design • Econometrics • Machine Learning • R • Python • Stata • Cross-functional Collaboration

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Precision Development (PxD)

Postdoctoral Researcher & Research Collaborator

2021-2025

Instrumental in design and development of a **digital weather-forecast system** reaching **50,000+ farmers**, improving decision-making and climate resilience; secured external funding and designed randomized experiments, surveys, and A/B tests to evaluate adoption and inclusivity; demonstrated a **3x benefit-cost ratio** and translated empirical findings into product and policy design; **mentored research teams** and built reproducible data systems for large-scale studies.

University of California, Berkeley

Postdoctoral Scholar, Graduate Student, Research & Teaching Assistant

2014-2021

Gates Foundation-funded postdoctoral research on women's self-help groups in India applying causal inference to show that institutional capacity strengthened households' resilience to economic shocks; dissertation research combined econometrics, and financial and geospatial data to provide the first empirical evidence that informal lenders in India borrow from formal banks to on-lend to rural borrowers; led teaching teams (12 graduate student instructors, 800+ students) and organized initiatives advancing diversity in economics in academic leadership roles.

The World Bank

Consultant & Research Collaborator

2015-2019

Collaborated on an **8000-household randomized evaluation** of Bihar's rural livelihoods program (>10 million beneficiaries); led econometric analysis and co-authored a peer-reviewed publication informing policy design.

EDUCATION

MSc. in Economics

University of California, Berkeley

Berkeley, CA

Ph.D. in Agricultural and Resource Economics

London, United Kingdom

London School of Economics and Political Science

2012

Indian Institute of Technology, Madras

Chennai, India

5 year Integrated MA in Economics (Bachelors & Masters)

2011

2020

SELECT PAPERS

"Relief from Usury: Impact of a Self-Help Group Lending Program in Rural India," with Vivian Hoffmann, Vijayendra Rao, Upamanyu Datta. *Journal of Development Economics*, 2021, Vol 148.

"The Moneylender as Middleman: Formal Credit Supply and Informal Loans in Rural India". Revision requested, The Review of Financial Studies.

"Risk Sharing, Commitment Constraints, and Self-Help Groups," with Orazio Attanasio, Anjini Kochar, Aprajit Mahajan. NBER Working Paper No. 31245.

'Weathering Climate Change: How Farmers Learn from Forecast Outcomes," with Shawn Cole, Tomoko Harigaya. Working Paper.