

VAISHNAVI SURENDRA

vaishnavi.s@gmail.com | www.vaishnavisurendra.com | LinkedIn | Google Scholar | ORCID

SUMMARY

Applied Economist and Researcher specializing in causal inference and experiment design in international development, climate adaptation, and market contexts. Published in top journals and partnered with global institutions to deliver 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

An international development non-profit that designs, tests and scales digital advisory services that help smallholder farmers manage risks, increase incomes and build climate resilience.

- Led interdisciplinary research and co-developed a **digital weather-forecasting system** reaching **50K+ farmers**, demonstrating a **3x benefit-cost ratio** and improvements in decision-making and climate resilience.
- **Secured external funding** and led **randomized experiments, A/B tests, surveys** and qualitative research to evaluate adoption and inclusivity, informing large-scale rollout and policy engagement.
- **Supervised research associates** in causal inference, data preprocessing and experimental design; developed standardized survey & data systems to supporting multi-site studies and reproducible research.

University of California, Berkeley, *Postdoctoral Scholar, Graduate Student, Research & Teaching Assistant*

2014-2021

- Applied causal inference and large-scale data analysis in **Gates Foundation-funded** research on women's self-help groups in India, showing that stronger program capacity, driven by effective community resource personnel, improved group performance and **resilience to economic shocks**.
- First to empirically demonstrate that **informal lenders** in India channel funds from banks to rural borrowers, using **econometric analysis of financial and geospatial data** to inform policies on financial inclusion.
- Organized initiatives **advancing diversity and inclusion** in economics through the Women in Economics at Berkeley, and the inaugural Graduate Student Summit for Diversity in Economics.

The World Bank, *Consultant & Research Collaborator*

2015-2019

- Collaborated on an **8000-household randomized evaluation** of the India's National Rural Livelihoods Mission in the state of Bihar (**>10 million state beneficiaries**), demonstrating reduced indebtedness and increased women's self-employment; led econometric analysis and co-authored a peer-reviewed publications and policy briefs.

Centre de Sciences Humaines, *Research Assistant*

2012-2014

A multidisciplinary research centre based in New Delhi that explores social, economic and political transformations in India and South Asia for academic and policy audiences.

- Built a household-panel dataset spanning seven decades of surveys in a village in India, enabling analysis of **long-term structural, economic, and social change**.
- Conducted data quality checks for India's 2011 **Socio-Economic Caste Census (>1.2 billion records)** while consulting for the Ministry of Rural Development and the Planning Commission; contributed to designing inclusion and exclusion criteria for social protection programs benefiting millions.

EDUCATION

University of California, Berkeley, *Ph.D. in Agricultural and Resource Economics*

2020

London School of Economics and Political Science, *MSc. in Economics*

2012

Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, *5 year Integrated MA in Economics (Bachelors & Masters)*

2011

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*.

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

For additional research papers, funding secured, and public research communication, see www.vaishnavisurendra.com