

Vedarshi Shastry

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I am a graduate student in economics at Ashoka University. My primary interests are learning and working on research problems in the domains of inequality, education, agriculture, and health. I enjoy reading philosophy, and pursue my hobbies in computer science and astronomy in my free time. I love learning, no matter what the topic is.

Education

Aug 2019 – Present **Ashoka University** – Sonapat, India
M.A Economics

GPA: 3.11/4.00

Coursework undertaken:

- *Foundational graduate courses:* Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Statistics, Quantitative Techniques
- *Elective courses:* Health Economics, Agricultural Economics, Advanced Econometrics, Economics of Discrimination, Networks (Advanced Microeconomics)

July 2016 – April 2019 **Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies** – Mumbai, India
B.Sc Economics

GPA: 3.03/4.00

Coursework undertaken: Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Econometrics, Time Series Econometrics, Industrial Organisation, Environmental Economics, Operations Research, Financial Economics

Research experience

Dec 2020 – Present **Farmers' climate change perceptions and seed adaptations in Latin America**
Co-author: Vaibhav Chaudhary, CCAFS, CGIAR.

Co-authoring a research paper studying the impact of farmers' perceptions of climate change and risk on seed choices as adaptive behaviour in Latin America (Peru, Bolivia, Colombia).

The study proposes a novel mixed-method strategy, collecting primary data through surveys and choice games as experiments for further econometric analysis.

- Jan – May 2021 **Decomposing medical expenditure and utilisation by caste in India**
Mentor: Prof. Ashwini Deshpande, Ashoka University
Applied the Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition methodology towards medical expenditure and public healthcare utilisation in India by caste groups. The results suggested the presence of unobservable discrimination in the healthcare infrastructure against backward castes.
The dataset used was IHDS 2004-05, 2011-12 for analysis in Stata. This project was undertaken as a term paper for a course in the Economics of Discrimination.
- Jan – May 2021 **Building a network of citations and co-authors in economics**
Undertook a group project to build a network of citations and co-authors from research papers published in economics. The analysis was conducted using Python, and data was pulled from RePEc publisher archives & JSTOR Data for Research. The main libraries used were `tethne` and `networkx` and supplementary visualisation using `pandas`, `numpy`, `plotly`, `matplotlib`, `seaborn` etc. Topic modeling was conducted using the LDA algorithm and visualisation of 'important players' in the graph through clustered components and eigenvector centrality.
- Aug – Dec 2020 **The effects of schooling incentives on household health in India**
Mentor: Prof. Aparajita Dasgupta, Ashoka University
Applied a difference-in-differences (DiD) estimation using IHDS 2004-05, 2011-12 longitudinal panels in Stata. The study looked at the effects of schooling incentives in India (mid-day meals and Right to Education Act, 2009) on the health indicators of other household members. The results suggested a positive spillover towards younger siblings. No evidence was found for an improvement in parents' health.
The project was completed as a term paper for a course in Health Economics.
- Aug – Dec 2020 **The impact of alcohol use on academic performance, health, and drug use in college students**
Mentor: Prof. Anisha Sharma, Ashoka University
Estimated the effects of alcohol use on GPA, physical & mental health, and marijuana use for college students in the USA. Employed a regression discontinuity IV model in Stata using public data from 4 waves of Harvard CAS (Consumption of Alcohol Study) between 1993-2001, to make a causal claim.
The project was completed as a term paper for a course in advanced econometrics.
- June – Dec 2020 **Parental and social influence through institutions on inequality**
Mentor: Prof. Bhaskar Dutta, Ashoka University
Developed an abstract, theoretical model to demonstrate how inherited wealth and access to institutions such as education contribute to inequality. Derived an analytical solution for possible inequality convergence in the case of 2 individuals.

- July 2018 – April 2019 **Rationality among the commons: experiments in Keynesian p-Beauty contests**
Mentor: Prof. Kiran Limaye, NMIMS University
This project was submitted towards an undergraduate dissertation on rationality in Keynesian p-Beauty contests. The study involved conducting primary experiments with undergraduate students over a sample size of 120 and collated data on rationality and social learning. These results were compared with simulated learning models written in R as an evidence for k-level rationality. The paper was further recommended for publication in the university's annual research compendium.
- Feb – April 2019 **A time series analysis of the Indian demonetization of 1978**
Mentor: Prof. Shreya Biswas, NMIMS University
Applied the empirical analysis strategy from (Perron, 1989, "The great crash...") in the Indian context using the demonetisation of 1978 as a structural break. The analysis was conducted through R programming to replicate results from the original paper.
- Dec 2017 – April 2018 **Virtual economies: a new world** Mentor: Prof. Boishampayan Chatterjee, NMIMS University
Conducted a systematic literature review on virtual economies and their applications to microeconomic and macroeconomic fundamentals. This paper was presented as a seminar paper towards completion of the second year of the undergraduate degree.

Work experience

- April – June 2018 **Writing Fellow | YES Foundation** – Mumbai, India
Worked as a writing fellow with YES Foundation to write content for Access Life Assistance Foundation, India- a child cancer support organisation. Prepared case studies published in the 2018 annual report, and drafted content for the organisation's website.
The work involved research, formulating questionnaires, transcribing interviews, and drafting case studies.
- Sept - Nov 2017 **Research Intern | Praja Foundation** – Mumbai, India
Pursued a group research study on the public transport system and its governance in Mumbai. The work involved formulating a questionnaire on willingness to pay for transport, and collected primary data at 2 different locations in the city. Applied intensive factor analysis to set priorities for policy targeting - cleanliness, security, seating, and infrastructure.
- May – June 2017 **Banking Intern | Federal Bank** – Mumbai, India
Worked in the banking retail department, providing analytical reports concerning the financials and eligibility of credit applicants. Learned the intricacies of banking while working with the asset, treasury, and SME departments.

Technical skills

Programming languages

Advanced proficiency in: Stata, R, Python

Familiar with: MATLAB, C

Software & Packages

GIS, Excel, LaTeX, Git, Linux systems

Languages

Fluent in: English, Hindi

Basic understanding: Marathi, French

References

1. Prof. Bharat Ramaswami

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2. Prof. Anisha Sharma

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