

DIVERSITY STATEMENT
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I am deeply committed to diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) in academia, drawing upon my personal experiences. As a first-generation college graduate and a person of color belonging to the lowest socioeconomic stratum in Indian society, I have firsthand experience with the challenges that underrepresented minorities encounter, not just within academia but throughout social life. Given my background, I am well-positioned to contribute to the university's DEI efforts through my research, teaching, mentorship, and advocacy for equity.

Originating from India's lowest socioeconomic strata, I've encountered various forms of discrimination for fundamental rights, including education, access to the labor market, and social capital. My experiences of mistreatment by high-caste teachers and housing challenges due to caste-based prejudice by high-caste landlords towards low-caste tenants underscored these disparities. Yet, I've benefited from vital public policies like food subsidies for low-income families and competitive government scholarships, enabling education and food for my family. With the scholarship money, I became the first from my village to pursue higher US education. Such assistance fuels my drive to do research and teaching examining policy impacts on health, human capital, and welfare, expanding opportunities for underrepresented populations. During visits to my hometown in India, I often talk at a local school about higher education and my journey to the US. My journey embodies resilience and motivates research into similar initiatives for marginalized communities. Before grad school, I worked at construction sites, which helped me develop insights into daily-wage laborers' challenges, shaping my perspective on bringing real-life experiences into research and then into policies. Inclusivity remains my driving force, propelling meaningful contributions to the economic discourse.

I was recently chosen as a Diversity Scholar at American University's Public Policy Department, where I had the opportunity to spend a week with scholars from other diverse backgrounds, including Native Americans, Blacks, and Hispanics. Interactions with them provided new perspectives on the inclusion of voices of diverse and under-representative communities in academia.

As a person of color and a First-Generation advocate, I deeply grasp the imperative of fostering inclusivity. Actively, I engage in diversity initiatives: mentoring First-Gen students, mentoring two undergrad students in their capstone project, and representing peers in faculty and Ph.D. selection panels. Through these roles, I aim to attract diverse talents to economics, honing skills to implement DEI measures in hiring. I mentor in the NextGen Population program, backed by NICHD and the Population Association of America (PAA), nurturing a diverse cohort of future scholars.

In my research, I bolster Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion by investigating technology's race, geography, and gender-based variations. In the US, pronounced disparities in high-speed broadband access rooted in race, rural locale, and gender emerged—likewise, my analysis probes caste-driven disparities in India's green revolution, favoring higher castes. Future pursuits encompass investigating disability-linked internet access, utilizing restricted Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) data.

My personal encounters, unwavering DEI commitment, and research orientation empower me for vital contributions to academic diversity and inclusion. I am devoted to cultivating inclusiveness, aiding underrepresented peers, and harmonizing diverse outlooks within economics and public policy. Collaborative prospects with diverse colleague enthuse me, propelling affirmative transformation and advancing equity.