

Dear AMIE Committee,

I am writing to apply for **Job Market Candidate** to benefit from various initiatives at AMIE. I am a fifth-year Ph.D. student in the Applied Economics department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I received my master's in economics from the same university. During this time, I took advanced Ph.D. courses, including microeconomics, macroeconomics, econometrics, health policy, and health economics.

I am an applied microeconomist focusing on health, human capital, and technological policies. My research evaluates public policies and quantifies their effects on multiple dimensions, including health, human capital, inequality, and outcomes related to vulnerable and disadvantaged populations across rich and poor countries. I use a variety of data sources and advanced empirical methods to provide causal evidence. My career goal is to research people throughout the world for public policies for the disadvantaged. I want to inform the effectiveness of policies that have actual impacts on the lives of less advantaged people across rich and poor countries.

I contribute to diversity in academia and within the field of Social Science through various aspects of my personal background and experiences. Firstly, my social experience is marked by belonging to the lowest socio-economic stratum of Indian society, also known as *untouchables*, which exposed me to direct and indirect instances of discrimination throughout my life. Some of the incidences were during our struggle to secure rented housing due to our family's lack of residential property. Landlords often denied us housing after asking for our last name, which typically signifies the caste to which we belong. Most of my and my siblings' education was possible due to various competitive scholarships, including the one that helped me to pursue an MS in Economics abroad. Secondly, as an individual of color and a member of the First-Generation community, I recognize the significance of fostering inclusivity. I have actively engaged in initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion, serving as a mentor for First-Generation undergraduate students and representing students on committees responsible for faculty and Ph.D. student recruitment. By participating in these activities, I contribute to a more inclusive academic environment that values and embraces individuals from diverse backgrounds. Lastly, I bring diversity through my approach to research, which is informed by real-life experiences and aims to address pertinent questions. Prior to entering graduate school, I worked at construction sites in India, where I interacted with daily-wage workers and understood their real-life problems. These experiences have enabled me to develop critical perspectives on labor policies and assess their effectiveness on the ground. By incorporating the concerns of both the workers I encountered and my own personal observations, I aspire to conduct research that reflects the realities and issues faced by marginalized individuals in society.

In my job market paper, I study how broadband technology affects the mental health of older adults in the US. This research has policy implications for underserved geographic areas and for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations. Results suggest strong positive effects on mental health. I explore some channels, like social connectedness and health literacy, and technological improvements in the local hospitals. This evidence calls for policy interventions for investing in these channels to mitigate mental health-related issues among older adults. In my second paper, I focus on studying the effects of early life exposure to an agricultural policy of the Green Revolution (an agricultural policy that affected millions of children and families across the world) in India on cognitive outcomes and intergenerational human capital. The preliminary finding shows that early life exposure to the Green Revolution was significantly important for later life human capital and cognitive outcomes, especially for women and low castes.

Lastly, I would like to add that I am extremely interested in applying to AMIE, as AMIE comprises leading scholars across the fields that my research relates to. Being in such an active environment would be highly beneficial for my research, and I am sure it would also lead to potential collaborations. I have included in my application my CV. The faculty member for my reference is Prof. Jeremy Foltz (UW-Madison) (email-

jdfoltz@wisc.edu). I believe the feedback during AMIE will help greatly in my career and in my job market. I thank you for your consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Vikas PD Gawai, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Email: gawai@wisc.edu