To whom it may concern:

I am delighted to strongly recommend Vikas PD Gawai for all faculty positions in economics, applied economics, and public policy, and other related fields. He is a technically skilled scholar working at the intersection of technology, health, human capital, and social well-being and has developed a novel research agenda to work both in the US and India.

I have known Vikas since he started working for me and my co-author (Valentina Duque) as a Research Assistant in September 2020. So, I have known Vikas long enough that I feel very comfortable commenting on his work and research trajectory. I am glad that he has continuously worked with us since then, first as an RA and then as a co-author for several projects. I also hope that we will maintain the collaboration with me in other future works.

He started working on a project of mine analyzing data on early life exposure to the Great Depression on later life mortality in the US. He was involved in cleaning and analyzing the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) data matched with 1940 Census data in the US. Later, he also worked on cleaning and analyzing the 1% Census data from 1950 to 1980 for the same project. He gained expertise in working with these complex and big data sets, including HRS and the Census data in the US.

To extend this work for a better measurement of the Great Depression at the granular level, Vikas found a unique dataset of the yearly county-level bank deposits in the US for pre- and post-Great Depression. Vikas showed us some interesting statistics in the data, including the geographic and temporal variation in the bank deposits. Valentina and I were super excited to learn about this unique dataset. We were convinced that this would make a remarkable contribution to the literature and to our understanding of the long-term effects of the Great Depression. We then also collaborated with others (Jason Fletcher and Hamid N.). This joint work of ours is under review in a health economics journal.

While working on this, Vikas mentioned to me that he is interested in evaluating the largest agricultural technology shock in the developing world (Green Revolution) to understand the effects after several decades. To our surprise, Vikas found that the literature is scarce to know much about the long-term impact of this massive technology shock from the developing world, specifically at the micro-level, primarily due to the lack of data. I was familiar with the data for India that could be useful in answering this type of question. This further translated into the research question: whether early life exposure to the Green Revolution affects later-life health and aging-related outcomes. We decided that Vikas would lead this project, and Valentina and I would support Vikas in all possible ways. When we started working on the project, we encountered various problems. For instance, the district boundaries of India changed over several decades, and there was no readily available official data on this crosswalk. Vikas spent a remarkable amount of time compiling this data, which is also one of the contributions we make to the research community. We later collaborated with the data team at the University of Southern California for restricted access to the data. We find a significant heterogeneous effect of the Green Revolution on later life cognitive function, education, and health. This paper is near completion, and we are hoping to publish this in a top economics journal. This work has been supported by the NIH funding.

While working on the Green Revolution project, we realized that not only is the long-term impact of the Green Revolution less known but also the intergenerational effects of the Green Revolution are not understood well. So, we started thinking about this in detail, and Vikas came up with another idea to evaluate the parental early-life exposure to the Green Revolution also affects their children's human capital. you know using the using the test scores data we started working on this second project about green revolution where we we are in process combining data of over 2 million children and their parents exposure to the green revolution and answer this research question doctor

The first main contribution of the job market paper is Vikas’s ability to provide answer to a unique research question that was understudied for the one of the most vulnerable population.