

Vishali Sairam

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Consultant and Data Scientist with academic background in Economics and Public Policy, and experience working at the intersection of Technology and Development. Experienced in managing projects and collaborating effectively across diverse, multidisciplinary teams.

Education

Master of Public Policy (MPP), Hertie School, Berlin, Germany (2019 - 2021)

Concentration: Policy Analysis and Quantitative Methods

Fully funded through the Helmut Schmidt Scholarship (DAAD)

Integrated Master's (MA) in Development Studies, Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, India (2012 - 2017)

Minor: Economics

Professional Experience

World Bank

Consultant, Poverty and Equity Team

Mar 23 - Present

- Leading the development of **India State Profiles, integrating multiple survey and administrative datasets** into **interactive dashboards** to support evidence-based decision-making at state and district levels.
- Created and maintaining **India Poverty and Equity Team SharePoint** pages with multiple access settings, writing the content and designing the layout of the site. This platform serves as an introduction to our work for a non-technical audience.
- Led project with external partners to **scrape administrative data** from multiple sources, streamline data collection, and **create dashboards** on welfare in India using PowerBI
- Contributed to creating **vulnerability indices, CEQ studies and studies to evaluate welfare schemes**, incorporating financial analysis and household surveys for Economic Ministry
- Conducted **GIS-based labour market analysis**, identifying economic clusters and their connectivity to hinterlands using nightlight data, road density, intersections, and land-use patterns (with Google Earth, OpenStreetMaps, QGIS, and R)

Saksham AI (earlier BlendNet AI)

User Experience Researcher

Apr 23 - July 23

BlendNet AI is a startup under Microsoft Research looking to integrate an AI powered Teaching Assistant into the existing cloud edge-satellite platform ([Link](#))

- Led the UX strategy** for VEDA, a LLM powered personalized teaching assistant by identifying user personas, crafting user journeys
- Identified, streamlined and integrated relevant content** from across Government and Private data sources into the model

Microsoft Research India

Research Intern (Data Science)

Aug 22 - Mar 23

Worked on the pilot deployment of the BlendNet project - a cloud edge- satellite platform to deliver content to areas with intermittent internet. I collaborated with software engineers, UI/UX Designers, Product Managers and Analytics team at Microsoft India implement digital distribution solutions, aligning with policy goals for underserved populations.

- Managed the pilot deployment of BlendNet for **~68K users and 250 retailers** with external partners, field staff and Microsoft
- Developed and maintained ETL CI/CD pipelines** in Azure to collect, transform and load different types of data (user, telemetry and orders) from users and retailer applications into SQL databases ensuring data interoperability
- Developed and maintained dashboards** on PowerBI using collected data to support real-time decision-making and monitoring
- Collaborated on **design of survey instrument** for obtaining retailer and user feedback during and post deployment
- Co-authored paper** on [BlendNet deployment](#) (published in **ACM COMPASS 2024**)

Centre for Digital Governance, Hertie School Berlin

Research Project Manager

Aug 21 - Apr 22

Worked with Joanna Bryson (Professor of Ethics and Technology, Hertie School) and researchers across EU. Key projects:

- Co-authored paper** ([link](#)) on economic insecurity and trust (selected for European Political Science Association 2022, Prague and Intl Conference on Social Dilemmas 2022, Copenhagen)
- Led behavioural economics experiments** for project on human-robot interactions, overseeing participant recruitment, testing, and data management, collaborating with software and administrative teams ([Link to paper](#))
- Assisted on a project examining value capture by GAFAM investments in EU, focusing on quantitative analysis and policy implications (with Helena Malikova, EU DG-COMP)

Athena Infonomics

May 17 - Mar 18

Associate

- **Coordinated field research and data analysis** for projects aimed at improving sanitation usage in Ghana in collaboration with World Bank ([Link](#))
- Designed and validated survey instruments for data collection from individuals and financial institutions, using ODK
- Worked on project proposals, grant proposals and business development activities in the area of Health, Education and Sanitation

Mar 18 - Mar 19

Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIM-B)

Research Associate

- **Primary contributor to two projects for the Ministry of Urban Development**, Government of India - a. Analyzing citizen feedback of 20 Infrastructure Projects for Smart Cities Mission, b. Policy Note on citizen engagement in Indian Infrastructure Projects
- As part of Directors Team - a) Handling **external communication and PR**, b) Creation of communication (ex: newspaper reports) and presentation material, c) Operational support in organizing meetings and workshops
- **Teaching Assistant** for courses on Infrastructure Financing and Development in India

Academic Experience

Teaching Assistant, Causal Inference, Hertie School

Feb 22 - May 22

- Planned and taught bi-weekly interactive lab sessions focusing on the practical application of causal inference methods in Social Sciences using R with Professor Will Lowe to Master of Data Science for Public Policy students

Research Assistant, Hertie School Data Science Lab

Dec 20 - June 21

- Worked on NLP project to identify climate change advocacy in UNSC speeches across different countries with Professor Slava Jankin and Dr. Hannah Bechara

Publications

- **Vishali Sairam**, Apurv Mehra, Kashish Mittal, BlendNet: An Assisted Digital Distribution Platform for Underserved Population. **Accepted to ACM SIGCAS/SIGCHI Conference on Computing and Sustainable Societies, 2024**
- Vishali Sairam, Vincent Heddesheimer & Joanna Bryson. (2022). Economic Insecurity Increases Polarization and Decreases Trust. [10.31235/osf.io/cmfvb](https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/cmfvb). **(selected for European Political Science Association 2022, Prague and Intl Conference on Social Dilemmas 2022, Copenhagen)**
- Literature Review and data collection for book on political economy authored by Dr. S. Narayan, former Chief Economic Advisor, Govt of India ([ISBN-100199488177](#))

References

- Nishtha Kochhar, Economist, World Bank (nkochhar@worldbank.org)
- Joanna Bryson, Professor of Ethics and Technology, Hertie School (bryson@hertie-school.org)
- Apurv Mehra, Founder, BlendNet.ai (apurv@blendnet.ai)