

# AKANKSHA ARORA

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## EDUCATION

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University of California, Santa Barbara PhD Economics	Expected June 2026
University of Texas at Austin MS Economics	May 2019
Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi MA Economics	Apr 2009
Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi BA (Honours) Economics	Apr 2007

## WORKING PAPERS

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### **[Job Market Paper] Returns to Education in the Marriage Market: Access to Education, Age at Marriage and Assortative Matching in India**

*Using staggered school construction across Indian districts, I estimate the effects of increased school access on women's educational attainment and marriage outcomes. An additional school per 1,000 school-age children increases women's schooling by 0.12 years. Exposure to school construction also delays marriage by 0.04 years, reduces the spousal age gap by 0.03 years, and lowers the probability of child marriage by 0.3 percentage points. Marriage markets have become increasingly stratified at the bottom of the education distribution, while assortative mating has weakened at higher education levels. School construction contributes to these trends by strengthening educational sorting: each additional school raises the assortative mating index by 1.4 percent. Back-of-the-envelope calculations imply that school expansion accounts for approximately 28 percent of the observed rise in assortative mating. These findings suggest that education expansion amplified stratification in marriage markets instead of mitigating it.*

### **Workfare, Marriage and Women's Fertility: Evidence from India**

*I estimate the effect of an expansion in employment opportunities available to women in India on their marriage and fertility choices. While overall female labour force participation in India has stagnated at very low levels, women's participation in the workfare program, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, is fairly high. Using the staggered adoption of this workfare program across Indian districts for identification, I estimate whether the program had an effect on rates of marriage, fertility and sex ratio at birth. In my analysis, conditional on district covariates interacted with time in an age-adjusted model, the introduction of the workfare program led to 7.6 fewer marriages per 1000 women (3.6 fewer marriages based on the heterogeneity-robust estimator). Conceptions ending in live births per 1000 women fell by 19.1 in the 20-24 age group but rose by 15.5 in the 25-29 age group, indicating a shift towards later childbearing which may potentially reduce overall fertility in the long-run.*

### **School Construction, Household Formation, and Intergenerational Outcomes in India**

*I estimate the effects of large-scale school construction in India on women's fertility and their children's human capital outcomes. For identification, I exploit the staggered expansion of school construction across Indian districts and cohorts, linking school construction exposure during childhood to individual and*

*household level outcomes from the Demographic and Health Surveys. By tracing the effects of educational expansion from parental human capital to fertility behavior and child outcomes, this paper provides new evidence on the long-run returns to education policy. The analysis also sheds light on how changes in assortative mating and household formation shape intergenerational mobility and inequality in developing country contexts.*

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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### University of California, Santa Barbara

Sep 2019 - Jun 2026

*Teaching Assistant/Associate for following courses:*

- Econ 1: Principles of Microeconomics (Fall 2019, Winter 2020, Spring 2020, Fall 2021, Winter 2022, Fall 2022, Fall 2023)
- Econ 114B: Economic Development (Fall 2020, Winter 2021, Summer 2022, Summer 2024)
- Econ 114A: Economic Development (Spring 2024, Fall 2024)
- Econ 100B: Intermediate Microeconomic Theory (Spring 2021)
- Econ 10A: Intermediate Microeconomic Theory (Summer 2021, Winter 2023)
- Econ 101: Intermediate Macroeconomic Theory (Spring 2022, Winter 2024, Winter 2025, Spring 2025)
- Econ 2: Principles of Macroeconomics (Spring 2023)
- Globl 130: Global Economy and Development (Fall 2025) – **Associate**
- Econ 140A: Introduction to Econometrics (Spring 2026)

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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### University of California, Santa Barbara

Jun 2023 - Sep 2023

*Research Assistant for Kelsey Jack - Conducted data analysis for randomized control trial in Ghana*

- Targeting Subsidies through Price Menus: Menu Design and Evidence from Clean Fuels: RCT in Ghana studying the cost-effectiveness of non-linear price subsidies for LPG cylinders.

### University of Texas at Austin

Sep 2018 - May 2019

*Research Assistant for Tom Vogl - Conducted data analysis using DHS & WFS data*

- Malthus in Africa? Positive and Preventive Checks on Population in a Changing Climate: This study analyzes the impact of short-term weather shocks and long-term climate change on fertility and infant mortality in Africa utilizing data from Demographic and Health Surveys & World Fertility Surveys.

### Princeton University

Mar 2016 - May 2017

*Research Specialist for Jeremy Shapiro - Managed multiple randomized control trials in Kenya and conducted data analysis*

- Benchmarking Aid Programs: A Preference-Based Approach: The study develops a replicable methodology to elicit the valuation of different types of in-kind aid programs relative to direct cash transfers from recipients.

- The Impact of Recipient Preferences on Aid Effectiveness: The study investigates the welfare impact of incorporating recipient preferences in the allocation of aid resources by randomly allocating subjects to receive either aid programs or their cash transfer equivalent.
- The Impact of Mental Health Support and Cash Transfers on Intimate Partner Violence: A randomized controlled trial to assess the differential and joint impact of the Problem Management Plus mental health support program and cash transfers on intimate partner violence and household welfare outcomes.
- The Impact of Digital Financial Services: BMGF-funded study to investigate the impact of expanding access to services on the M-Pesa rails among marginalized populations in Kenya using an encouragement design randomized controlled trial.

### **J-PAL South Asia**

Nov 2013 - Jun 2015

*Research Associate for James Berry & Priya Mukherjee - Managed randomized control trials on education in India, conducted data cleaning and analysis*

- Pricing of Education Services in Urban India – Demand, Use and Impact: The study aims to characterize the market for private tutorial services by estimating the screening and sunk-cost effects of prices on take-up and utilization.
- The Effects of Social Identity on Aspirations and Learning Outcomes – A Field Experiment in Rural India: A behavioural field experiment that utilizes priming to examine the impact of caste and gender identity salience on aspirations and learning outcomes.

### **J-PAL South Asia**

Sep 2011 - Feb 2012

*Research Associate for Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Dufló, Clément Imbert & Rohini Pande - Managed fieldwork on a randomized control trial on voter information campaigns in India*

- Entry, Exit and Candidate Selection – Evidence from India: The study examines the effect of a voter information campaign on likelihood of incumbents standing for re-election for village council positions and their electability.

### **Indian Statistical Institute, Delhi**

Jan 2010 - Oct 2010

*Research Assistant for E. Somanathan - Managed fieldwork and conducted data analysis*

- Are Embankments a Good Flood-Control Strategy? A Case Study of the Kosi River: An impact assessment of the 2008 floods caused by the River Kosi embankment breach on labour and agricultural market outcomes.

### **Delhi School of Economics**

Jul 2009 - Dec 2009

*Research Assistant for Rohini Somanathan - Assisted with fieldwork and data cleaning*

- School Meals and Classroom Effort – Evidence from India: Delhi Directorate of Education funded impact evaluation of the mid-day meal scheme on attendance & cognitive functioning of students.

## **OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE**

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### **Evidence Action - Deworm the World**

Jun 2012 - Oct 2013

*Data Coordinator*

Developed monitoring and evaluation framework and conducted data analysis for school-based deworming program scale-up

**American Express**  
*Business Analyst*

Nov 2010 - Mar 2011

Developed predictive models to estimate and profile consumer spending in various industry segments

**ICICI Bank**  
*Analyst (Intern)*

May 2008 - Jul 2008

Developed propensity score models to enhance effectiveness of cross-selling of financial products

## TECHNICAL SKILLS

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<b>Proficient</b>	Stata, L <sup>A</sup> T <sub>E</sub> X
<b>Intermediate</b>	R, SAS, SQL, QGIS

## LANGUAGES

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<b>Fluent</b>	English, Hindi, Punjabi
<b>Basic</b>	French

## WORK AUTHORIZATION

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<b>Citizenship</b>	India
<b>US Work Authorization</b>	F-1 OPT