

## EDUCATION

**University of California, Berkeley***Ph.D. in Agricultural and Resource Economics**Berkeley, CA**2020***London School of Economics and Political Science***MSc. in Economics**London, United Kingdom**2012***Indian Institute of Technology, Madras***5 year Integrated MA in Economics (Bachelors & Masters)**Chennai, India**2011*

## EXPERIENCE

**Precision Development (PxD)***Postdoctoral Researcher & Research Collaborator**Boston, MA & Berkeley, CA**2021-2025*

- Led the development and launch of a tailored, digital, weather forecast product, reaching 50,000+ coffee farmers in India.
- Led research on weather forecasts and gender inclusivity in digital services for Indian smallholder farmers, developing and implementing lab-in-the-field experiments, A/B tests, and qualitative studies for service design & evaluation.
- Secured grants, contributing to funding sustainability for key projects.
- Mentored research assistants in research design, data analysis, and fieldwork; participated in hiring junior research staff.
- Published blogs, reports, and white papers; presented at conferences & stakeholder meetings.

**University of California, Berkeley***Postdoctoral Scholar, Graduate Student, Research & Teaching Assistant**Berkeley, CA**2014-2021*

- Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation (2020-21) to conduct research on women's self-help groups in India as a postdoc.
- Dissertation research on credit markets in rural India involved geospatial analysis & advanced econometrics.
- Taught seven undergraduate courses as Graduate Student Instructor (GSI), including microeconomic theory & environmental economics.
- Served as Head GSI for Econ 1 (three times), managing 12 GSIs and developing course material for 800+ students.
- Leadership board member of [Women in Economics at Berkeley](#), & organizing committee for the first [Graduate Student Summit for Diversity in Economics](#).

**The World Bank***Consultant**Washington, D.C**2015-2019*

- Collaborated on the impact evaluation of Bihar's flagship self-help group lending program (consulting for Dr. Vijayendra Rao, DECRG).
- Led econometric analysis, producing reports & co-authoring a journal publication.

**Centre de Sciences Humaines***Research Assistant**New Delhi, India**2012-2014*

- Assisted Professors Nicholas Stern (LSE) & Himanshu (JNU) in a seven-decade village study in Uttar Pradesh.
- Conducted data consistency checks for India's Socio-Economic Caste Census (2011), consulting for India's Ministry of Rural Development & Planning Commission.
- Contributed to designing inclusion/exclusion criteria in social protection programs for India's Planning Commission.

## PUBLICATIONS AND WORKING PAPERS

- Hoffmann, Vivian, Vijayendra Rao, **Vaishnavi Surendra**, and Upamanyu Datta. 2021. "Relief from Usury: Impact of a Self-Help Group Lending Program in Rural India," *Journal of Development Economics*, 2021, Vol 148.
- **Surendra, Vaishnavi**. 2025. "The Moneylender as Middleman: Formal Credit Supply and Informal Loans in Rural India," *Revision requested, The Review of Financial Studies*.
- Attanasio, Orazio, Anjini Kochar, Aprajit Mahajan, and **Vaishnavi Surendra**. 2023. "Risk Sharing, Commitment Constraints, and Self-Help Groups," *NBER Working Paper No. 31245*.
- **Surendra, Vaishnavi**, Shawn Cole, and Tomoko Harigaya. 2025. "Weathering Climate Change: How Farmers Learn from Forecast Outcomes," *Working Paper*.
- **Surendra, Vaishnavi**, Shawn Cole, and Tomoko Harigaya. 2025. "Customizing Weather Forecasts for Climate Change Adaptation in Rural India," *Working Paper*.
- **Surendra, Vaishnavi**. 2024. "Self-Help Groups and Women's Employment in Rural India," *Working Paper*.

## SOFTWARE &amp; LANGUAGES

R (proficient), Stata (proficient), Python (intermediate), Dedoose (proficient)  
 English (fluent), Hindi (fluent), Tamil (native), Telugu (basic)

## INVITED TALKS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (2020 ONWARDS)

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- 2025 WEFIDEV-RFS-CEPR Conference on Finance and Development (London School of Economics)
- 2024 Association of Environmental and Resource Economists Summer Conference, Advances with Field Experiments (London School of Economics), Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting, 19th Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development (ISI-Delhi)
- 2023 NBER-ISB Conference on Economic Policy and the Indian Economy, 18th Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development (ISI-Delhi), Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting, IFPRI (FNP Brown Bag Seminar), Workshop on Risk and Vulnerability (IIT Bombay)
- 2022 ASSA Annual Meeting, PacDev (UC San Francisco), CSAE Conference (Oxford University), NEUDC (Yale University), SEA Annual Meeting
- 2021 PacDev (UC San Diego), NEUDC (Boston University), Webinar series in Finance and Development (WEFIDEV), Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting
- 2020 Webinar series in Finance and Development (WEFIDEV), NEUDC (Dartmouth University), Center on Food Security and the Environment, Stanford University

## MEDIA AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

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Blog: “Customized Weather Forecasts for Improved Farmer Decision Making”  
Blog: “Brewing better weather services for Indian coffee farmers”  
Blog: “Leveraging Women’s Groups to Bridge Gender-Specific Information Gaps in India”  
Blog: “Facilitating risk-sharing through self-help groups in Bihar”  
Blog: “Are moneylenders financial intermediaries?”  
Podcast: “Moneylenders and Formal Banking”

## REFEREEING SERVICE

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*American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, Economic Development and Cultural Change, Empirical Economics, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Human Resources, Journal of Public Economics, World Development, World Bank Economic Review*

## RESEARCH FUNDING, FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS

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*J-PAL King Climate Action Initiative Pilot Grant (with Shawn Cole, Tomoko Harigaya); the iCARE Innovation Foundation (via Precision Development); the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (for a one-year postdoc at UC Berkeley); the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund (via Precision Development); the Jean O. Lanjouw Memorial Endowment Grant; UC Berkeley Conference Travel Grant; ARE Travel Grant, IRLE Graduate Student Research Grant (with Manaswini Rao); the Dennis J. Aigner Endowed Graduate Support Fund; Maharaj Kaul Memorial Research Travel Grant; UC Berkeley Graduate Division Summer Grant; Marjorie Deane Financial Journalism Foundation Studentship (London School of Economics); MITACS Globalink Scholarship (University of British Columbia)*

## REFERENCES

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PROF. SHAWN COLE <a href="mailto:scole@hbs.edu">scole@hbs.edu</a> Professor Harvard Business School	PROF. APRAJIT MAHAJAN <a href="mailto:aprajit@berkeley.edu">aprajit@berkeley.edu</a> Associate Professor ARE, UC Berkeley	PROF. VIVIAN HOFFMANN <a href="mailto:V.Hoffmann@cgiar.org">V.Hoffmann@cgiar.org</a> Senior Research Fellow & Associate Professor IFPRI & Carleton University	DR. TOMOKO HARIGAYA <a href="mailto:tharigaya@precisiondev.org">tharigaya@precisiondev.org</a> Chief Economist & Director of Research Precision Development (PxD)
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