

Athira Vinod

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Research Interests

Development Economics, Education Economics, Applied Microeconomics

Education

PhD Economics 2019 – 2023

University of Nottingham

Dissertation: Essays in Development and Education Economics

Supervisors: Richard Upward, Trudy Owens

MSc Development Economics (Distinction) 2017 – 2018

University of Birmingham

BA (Hons.) Economics (First Class) 2014 – 2017

Sri Venkateswara College, University of Delhi

Work Experience

Post-Doctoral Fellow Aug 2024 – Present

National Council of Applied Economic Research, New Delhi

Teaching Associate Sep 2023 – July 2024

University of Nottingham, United Kingdom

Graduate Teaching Assistant Sep 2020 – Aug 2023

University of Nottingham, United Kingdom

Research Intern June – Aug 2019

National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), New Delhi

Research Intern Oct 2016 – Mar 2017

Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Bharat, New Delhi

Working Papers

Affirmative action and private education expenditure by disadvantaged groups: Evidence from India

Under the Right to Education Act (2009), the Indian government mandated private schools to reserve 25% of primary school places for socioeconomically disadvantaged children. This study examines the policy's spillover effect on private schooling costs. Using household survey data and a difference-in-differences approach, it compares private school fees for disadvantaged children across two age cohorts and survey rounds. Findings show fees decreased by ₹223–₹844 (0.05–0.25 SD) post-policy. A 5% enrolment increase led to a fee reduction of ₹240– ₹470 (0.05–0.14 SD). The effects are driven by an increased supply of low-fee private schools facilitating cheaper private education for disadvantaged children.

Direct and indirect effects of affirmative action on the enrolment of disadvantaged groups in India

Using longitudinal school data from India, this paper examines enrolment trends of socially disadvantaged children post the Right to Education (RTE) Act, which mandated the reservation of 25% of private school places for such children. Post-RTE, a significant increase is observed in disadvantaged children attending private schools. Difference-in-differences analysis reveals greater increases in schools previously below the 25% quota, especially those participating in the reservation policy. The results are however driven by a 'substitution' of places, where private schools are replacing free places under the policy with fee-paying disadvantaged children.

Work in Progress

Changing returns to private schooling in India (with Shriyam Gupta)

Elected representative characteristics and economic development: causal evidence from reserved constituencies (with Trudy Owens and Richard Upward)

Awards and Scholarships

- Teaching Excellence Award for three consecutive years (2020-2023), School of Economics, University of Nottingham
- Best Presentation Award, Annual PhD Economics conference (2021-22), University of Nottingham
- Vice-Chancellor's Scholarship for Research Excellence (International) (2019-2023), University of Nottingham (awarded to top 4% of students)
- Martin Totty PhD Scholarship, School of Economics, University of Nottingham (2019-2023)

Conference and Seminar Presentations

- Nottingham Interdisciplinary Centre for Economic and Political (NICEP) Research Conference, University of Nottingham (May 2023)
- Oxford Development Economics Workshop, University of Oxford (Sept 2022)
- School Brown Bag, University of Nottingham (Oct 2021)
- Annual PhD Economics Conference, University of Nottingham (Sept 2020 & April 2022)

Courses and Training

- Advanced Methods for Policy Analysis and Evaluation, by Professor Johanna Rickne, University of Nottingham and Professor Olle Folke, Uppsala University (June 2021)
- Economics Graduate Teaching Assistant Workshop, The Economics Network (2019 and 2021)

Skills and Languages

- **Technical Skills:** STATA, LaTeX, ArcGIS, Microsoft Office
- **Languages:** English, Hindi, Malayalam, Japanese (basic)

Other Academic Activities

- Referee for the Journal of Development Studies
- Co-organizer of the PhD-Economics Virtual Seminar (2021-2022), an international platform for PhD candidates and early career researchers to present their research

References

Richard Upward

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United Kingdom

Trudy Owens

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Room B1, Sir Clive Granger Building,
University of Nottingham,
University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD,
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Oliver Morrissey

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