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Theradapuzha Varghese Ninan

Education

University of Washington — Seattle, USA
Ph.D. Economics — 2019 - 2025 *(expected)*
M.A. Economics — 2019 - 2021

Jawaharlal Nehru University — New Delhi, India
M.A. Economics — 2015 - 2017

St. Stephen's College — New Delhi, India
B.A.(Honours) Economics — 2011 - 2014

Field

Primary: Development Economics, Environmental Economics
Secondary: Health Economics, Education Economics, Experimental Economics

References

Rachel Heath (Chair)
Associate Professor of Economics
University of Washington

Alan Griffith
Assistant Professor of Economics
University of Washington

Emma Riley
Assistant Professor of Economics
University of Michigan

Yael Jacobs (teaching)
Assistant Teaching Professor of Economics
University of Washington

Grants Fellowships Awards

Weiss fund for Development Economics ($49,660 with Ananya Diwakant) 2024

Grover and Greta Ensley Fellowship in Economic Policy, University of Washington 2024

Fritz International Fellowship for Graduate research, University of Washington 2023

Provost Richards' Fund for Graduate Students, University of Washington 2019, 2020

National Eligibility Test and Junior Research Fellowship in Economics, India 2018

Ranjan Roy Memorial Fellowship for most meritorious student (rank 1) at Centre for Economic Studies and Planning (CESP), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi 2017

EXIM Bank Scholarship for securing rank 1 in first year at CESP, JNU, Delhi 2016-17

A N Bhat Memorial Prize for securing rank 1 in first year at CESP, JNU, Delhi 2016

Teaching

Investment, Capital and Finance (Instructor)	Summer 2024
Investment, Capital and Finance (TA)	Winter 2024
Introduction to Microeconomics (Instructor)	Winter 2022, Summer 2022
Introduction to Microeconomics (TA)	Autumn, 2024, Autumn 2023, Autumn 2021
Introduction to Macroeconomics (TA)	Winter 2020, 2021, Autumn 2020, Spring 2021
Applied Microeconometrics (TA)	Autumn 2023
Economic Issues in Developing Countries (Grader)	Autumn 2023

Employment

Dunnhumby India — June 2017 - June 2018
Analyst — *Gurgaon, India*

Analyst Intern — May 2016 - July 2016
Dunnhumby India — *Gurgaon, India*

Research Experience

Research Assistant, University of Washington — Mar - June 2022 & Aug 2022- Sep 2023
For Prof Emma Riley — *Seattle, WA*
Analysed the data for 3 large scale randomised control trials in Uganda and Tanzania

Research Associate — June 2018 - June 2019
For Prof E. Somanathan, Indian Statistical Institute — *New Delhi, India*
Conducted fieldwork and analysed the data for a large field project in rural India

Job Market Paper

Cooking Up Success: How Access to Clean Stoves Boost Children's Learning
This paper looks at the impact of gaining access to liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) as a fuel for cooking on the learning outcomes of children. Using administrative data on the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana-the world's largest clean cooking transition program and nationally representative data on foundational learning from India, I find that an increase in LPG access leads to improved learning outcomes for both reading and math ability. Specifically, the papers finds that a 30-percentage point increase in LPG access leads to an improvement in overall learning of 0.1 standard deviations. Both reading and math ability improved in areas with high intensity of PMUY. I find evidence for these effects to be driven by an increase in school attendance.

Working Papers

When Tradition Pollutes: Health and Environmental Costs of Multi-Generational Living in India
This paper explores the link between a multi-generational traditional household structure and use of solid fuels for cooking in a patriarchal society by looking at the effect of the father-in-law's death on the choice of household cooking fuel in India. Using a difference in differences model with household fixed effects, I find that the probability of using biomass exclusively for cooking is lower by about 6 percent in households where a co-residing father-in-law died compared to a household where they did not. I also find that the probability of collecting every major fuel is lower as well. I find evidence for this effect to be driven primarily by the father in law's preference for food that is cooked in the traditional way. This gives the first causal estimate of the effect of traditional household structures on cooking fuel choice and thus women's health.

Electric stoves as a solution for household air pollution: Evidence from rural India (with E Somanathan, Marc Jeuland, Eshita Gupta, Utkarsh Kumar, Rachit Kamdar, Vidisha Chowdhury, Suvir Chandna, Michael Bergin, Karoline Barkjohn, Christina Norris, T. Robert Fetter, Subhrendu Pattanayak)
We collected minute-by-minute data on electricity availability, electric induction stove use, and kitchen and outdoor particulate pollution in a sample of rural Indian households for one year. Using within household-month variation generated by unpredictable outages, we estimate the causal effects of electricity availability and electric induction stove use on kitchen PM2.5 concentration at each hour of the day. Electricity availability reduces kitchen PM2.5 by up to 50 $\mu g/m^3$, which is between 10 and 20 percent of peak concentrations during cooking hours. Induction stove use instrumented by electricity availability reduces PM2.5 in kitchens by 200-450 $\mu g/m^3$ during cooking hours.

Work in Progress

Intrahousehold differences in perceived health risks of using solid fuels for cooking (with Ananya Diwakant)
RCT with baseline survey and intervention completed
Household air pollution (HAP) caused an estimated 3.2 million deaths in 2020. One potential reason for the continued use of solid fuels could be limited awareness about health risks. Notably, since women's exposure to HAP is much higher than men's as they are often the primary cooks, it is possible that such lack of awareness is more pronounced for men. Our study proposes to first measure the differences in the subjective beliefs held by the household head and the primary cook about the health risks of cooking with solid fuels. We then conduct a cluster RCT where either the household head or the primary cook will be given information about the actual health risks of using solid fuels.The content of the information will be varied between treatments in order to test whether household heads prioritize the health of children over primary cooks. Through this study we aim to understand how such an information intervention affects household members' beliefs, fuel usage, and health outcomes.

The Perverse Effects of the Right to Education Act in India

Academic Service

Referee for Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization
Student referee for PACDEV 2023

Languages

English (native), Hindi (native) and Malayalam (native)

Software Skills

Stata, LaTeX, R, SQL, MS Office