



COVER STORY | SMART INDIANS

## Gita Gopinath

The Smart Economist - 41 years | Harvard

PRAGYA SINGH

Mysore-born Gopinath was 38 when she got tenure in the economics department at the Harvard University in 2010, the first Indian woman to do so. That's when the graduate from Lady Shriram College in Delhi and the Delhi School of Economics major, who moved to the University of Washington in 1996, started building up a reputation as an economist of some influence. Gopinath's PhD thesis, which she wrote at Princeton University a few years later, was mentored by luminaries like Ben Bernanke (now chairman of the Federal Reserve) and Kenneth Rogoff (a former director of research at the IMF). In 2011, she was chosen as one of the Young Global Leaders by the World Economic Forum.

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Gopinath herself may have avoided the limelight, but no such luck for her work—on fiscal growth policy, especially in the light of the recent global financial meltdown. Her work covers business cycles as well as crises in emerging economies. She has also been an active participant in one of the more closely followed debates of the last few years: whether countries on the brink of default, such as Greece, should undertake austerity measures. Earlier in 2013, France's decision to raise the value-added tax and cut payroll taxes as a way to counter the slowing economy was credited to Gopinath's work in 2011. The ideas too, you can be sure, will be in evolution.

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