

# Janhavi Nilekani

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## EDUCATION:

### Doctoral Studies:

**Harvard University**, Cambridge, USA, 2010-2011, 2012-present

Ph.D. Candidate in Public Policy

Expected Completion Date: May 2018

Thesis Title: "Essays in Development and Environmental Economics"

### Undergraduate Studies:

**Yale University**, New Haven, USA, 2006-2010

Bachelor of Arts *cum laude* in Economics (with distinction) and International Studies (with distinction)

**London School of Economics**, London, UK, Summer School Program 2008

## REFERENCES:

Professor Rohini Pande

Harvard Kennedy School

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Professor Robert Stavins

Harvard Kennedy School

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## RESEARCH AND TEACHING FIELDS:

Development economics, Environmental economics

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Fall 2017 Rethinking Financial Inclusion (Executive Education), Harvard Kennedy School,  
Teaching Fellow for Prof. Asim Khwaja

Spring 2015 Rethinking Financial Inclusion (Executive Education), Harvard Kennedy School,  
Teaching Fellow for Prof. Asim Khwaja and Prof. Rohini Pande

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE/OTHER EMPLOYMENT:

2011-2012 Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) South Asia, Research Associate

2008-2010 Yale University, Research Assistant for Professor Thad Dunning

2009 Yale University, Research Assistant for Professor Mushfiq Mobarak

2007 Godrej Consumer Products Ltd., India, Summer Research Analyst

## **WORKS IN PROGRESS:**

“Driving Down Demand for Diesel: Does a Bus Driver Training and Incentive Program Increase Fuel Efficiency?” (Job Market Paper).

Road transport is a major source of both greenhouse gas emissions and local air pollution. Large vehicles cause disproportionate damages. Research and policy prioritize improving vehicle quality rather than changing driver behavior, even though driving techniques substantially affect fuel consumption and emissions. I conducted a field experiment in Karnataka, India, randomly assigning public sector bus drivers to two interventions: a training program on safe and fuel efficient driving, and a financial incentives scheme for achieving fuel efficiency targets. The training program increased fuel efficiency in the short term for four months and had no effect thereafter. The incentives scheme increased fuel efficiency for a twelve month period. I find no evidence of any complementarities between training and incentives. Training increased fuel efficiency by a marginally significant 0.0186 kilometers per liter for four months, which saved 0.19% of baseline fuel consumption over twelve months, and had a cost-effectiveness of 3.12. Incentives increased fuel efficiency by a statistically significant 0.0168 kilometers per liter for twelve months, which saved 0.35% of baseline fuel consumption, and had a cost-effectiveness of 4.22. Along with the high return on investment from fuel savings, the interventions generated positive externalities from reduced vehicle emissions.

“Evaluating Potential Particulate Matter Control Policies for Indian Industrial Plants” with Santosh Harish.

Using survey data of 700 small and medium Indian industrial plants, we empirically estimate the aggregate abatement and costs from several potential particulate matter pollution control policies. We create a static model that treats each firm as a compliant risk-neutral cost-minimizing agent that selects abatement technologies and operating practices in order to minimize expected abatement costs, subject to regulatory constraints. We estimate aggregate outcomes under a variety of potential policies.

“Personality Traits and Absenteeism: An Analysis of Public Sector Bus Drivers in India”.

## **PUBLICATIONS:**

Greenstone, Michael, Janhavi Nilekani, Rohini Pande, Nicholas Ryan, Anant Sudarshan, and Anish Sugathan. 2015. “Lower Pollution, Longer Lives: Life Expectancy Gains If India Reduced Particulate Matter Pollution.” *Economic and Political Weekly* L (8): 40–46.

India’s population is exposed to dangerously high levels of air pollution. Using a combination of ground-level in situ measurements and satellite-based remote sensing data, this paper estimates that 660 million people, over half of India’s population, live in areas that exceed the Indian National Ambient Air Quality Standard for fine particulate pollution. Reducing pollution in these areas to achieve the standard would, we estimate, increase life expectancy for these Indians by 3.2 years on average for a total of 2.1 billion life years. We outline directions for environmental policy to start achieving these gains.

Dunning, Thad and Janhavi Nilekani. 2013. “Ethnic Quotas and Political Mobilization: Caste, Parties, and Distribution in Indian Village Councils.” *American Political Science Review* 107.1: 35-56.

Ethnic quotas are often expected to induce distribution of material benefits to members of disadvantaged groups. Yet, the presence of an ethnic quota does not imply that political mobilization takes place along ethnic lines: Cross-cutting affiliations within multi-ethnic party organizations may lessen the tendency of politicians to target benefits to particular ethnic groups. In this article, we evaluate the impact of quotas for the presidencies of village councils in India, a subject of considerable recent research. Drawing on fine-grained information from surveys of voters, council members, presidents, and bureaucrats and using a

natural experiment to isolate the effects of quotas in the states of Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Bihar, we find weak distributive effects of quotas for marginalized castes and tribes, but suggestive evidence of the importance of partisanship. We then use survey experiments to compare the influence of party and caste on voting preferences and expectations of benefit receipt. Our results suggest that especially when politicians have dynamic political incentives to allocate benefits along party lines, cross-cutting partisan ties can blunt the distributive impact of ethnic quotas.

**PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND SERVICES:**

2009-present Trustee, Arghyam  
Philanthropy: Live Love Laugh Foundation; Bangalore Birth Network  
Referee: Environment and Development Economics

**HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND GRANTS:**

2017 Research Grant from Pershing Square Venture Fund for Research on the Foundations of Human Behavior, Harvard  
2015 Research Grants from Weiss Family Program Fund (Fall), Harvard; Lab for Economic Applications and Policy, Harvard; Weiss Family Program Fund (Spring), Harvard; J-PAL Governance Initiative, MIT; Sustainability Science Program, Harvard  
2014 Research Grant from Sustainability Science Program, Harvard  
2014-2015 Giorgio Ruffolo Doctoral Research Fellow in Sustainability Science, Harvard  
2013-2014 Giorgio Ruffolo Doctoral Research Fellow in Sustainability Science, Harvard  
2010 Ronald Meltzer/Cornelia Awdziejewicz Economic Award for Economics senior essay, Yale  
2010 Yale College Latin Honors Roll; Distinction in the Major, Economics Department; Distinction in the Major, International Studies Department, Yale  
2009 James Tobin Summer Research Opportunity Award, Yale  
2008 Development and Democracy Fellowship, Yale

**OTHER:**

Software: Stata, MATLAB, LaTeX  
Languages: Hindi (Fluent), Kannada (Fluent), Marathi (Conversational)  
Citizenship: India