

## Aakanksha Melkani

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446 W. Circle Dr., Room 202, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

### EDUCATION

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**Michigan State University**, East Lansing, USA

Ph.D., Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics

*Expected August 2021*

*Committee:* Nicole Mason-Wardell (chair), Thomas Jayne, Robert Shupp, Jeffrey Wooldridge

*Dissertation:* “Essays on Agricultural Markets in Developing Countries”

**Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research**, India

M.Phil., Development Studies

*2014-2016*

**Punjab Agricultural University**, India

M.Sc., Agricultural Economics

*2012-2014*

**G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology**, India

B.Sc., Agricultural Sciences

*2008-2012*

### RESEARCH

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#### Job market paper

**Smallholder maize market participation and choice of marketing channel in the presence of liquidity constraints: Evidence from Zambia** (with Nicole Mason-Wardell, David Mather, Brian Chisanga, and Thomas Jayne) | first author. Working paper available [here](#)

#### Work in progress

Does reducing import-related transaction costs increase fertilizer imports? Evidence from a cross-country panel analysis (with Nicole Mason-Wardell, Maria Wanzala, and Saweda Liverpool-Tasie) | first author

Incentive for price arbitrage under discretionary versus rules-based agricultural policy: A comparison of the Zambian and South African maize markets. (with Thomas Jayne and Nicole Mason-Wardell) | first author

Policy support for sustainable agricultural intensification in Africa: Where are we 20 years on? (with Saweda Liverpool-Tasie)

#### Peer-reviewed publications

Melkani, A., and Kataria, P. (2015). The development-conservation trade-off facing Indian agriculture: Carbon costs of Punjab agriculture. *Agricultural Economics Research Review*, 28, 219-228. Available [here](#)

Melkani, A. (2014). Intensive agricultural practices of rice-wheat system in Punjab: Implications on costs and productivity. *Indian Journal of Economics and Development*, 10(2), 132-139. Available [here](#)

### ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

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**Paper presented at AAEA Annual Meeting, Chicago, 2017:** Female labor supply in a household decision making context: Evidence from ICRISAT-VDSA villages in India. Available [here](#)

**Poster presented at AAEA Annual Meeting, Washington D.C., 2019:** Market participation and choice of marketing channel under liquidity constraints: Evidence from the Zambian maize market. Available [here](#)

**Poster presented at AAEA Annual Meeting, 2020 (held online):** Does reducing import-related transactions cost increase fertilizer imports? Evidence from a cross-country panel analysis

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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### Graduate Research Assistant

*August 2016-present*

- Studied agricultural input and output markets in various sub-Saharan Africa countries using **cross-sectional, panel, and time-series econometric methods**
- Assisted in **designing the survey instrument, data cleaning, and report preparation** for the baseline survey of a **randomized-controlled trial** on agricultural extension methods in Tanzania
- Conducted a **review of agricultural policy documents** from multiple sub-Saharan African countries using the **FAOLEX database** to analyse government support of sustainable agricultural intensification

### Data Collection

- Worked as a **quality controller and master trainer** for the third wave of the national Rural Agricultural Livelihoods Survey (RALS) household panel data collection in Zambia.
- Designed, managed and conducted a **cost of cultivation** data collection exercise for 80 farm households in Punjab, India as a part of my Master's thesis

### Grant Writing

- Wrote the concept note and developed associated budget for the **lab-in-the-field** component of several grant proposals submitted to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, OCP Foundation, USAID, and USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

### Teaching

- **Teaching ABM 203 (Data Analysis for Agri-Food System)** at Michigan State University in Spring, 2021
- Held **weekly online office hours** for a class of >70 undergraduate students in fulfillment of my role as a **teaching assistant** for ABM 203 in Fall, 2020
- Graded homeworks, quizzes, and exams and gave **guest lectures** for classes of >70 undergraduate students, for ABM 203 (Fall 2017, Spring 2018, and Fall 2020) and EEM 260 World Food, Population and Poverty (Spring 2020). Used **D2L and TopHat** for sharing class material, grades, and feedback

## HONORS AND AWARDS

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Received an '**Honorable mention**' for the **best presentation/paper** during the **Graduate Research Symposium 2020** held by the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics, MSU, for the paper, "Smallholder maize market participation and choice of marketing channel in the presence of liquidity constraints: Evidence from Zambia"

Winner of the **R.T. Doshi Foundation Award for Best Presentation** during the **23rd Annual Conference of Agricultural Economics Research Association** (Mumbai, 2016) for the paper, "The development-conservation trade-off facing Indian agriculture: Carbon cost of Punjab agriculture"

Recipient of the **National Junior Research Fellowship** for meritorious students from the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR-JRF)** for the academic years 2012-2014

## SERVICE

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**Vice President - Graduate Student Organization** and member of the **Graduate Policy Committee** at the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics, Michigan State University (May, 2020 to present)

## ADDITIONAL SKILLS

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**Technical skills:** Proficient in STATA and L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X; Intermediate knowledge of R, Matlab, SPSS, and GAMS  
**Languages:** Hindi (native); English (fluent); Spanish (beginner); working knowledge of Punjabi and Bengali

## CITIZENSHIP AND VISA STATUS

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**Citizenship:** Indian

**Visa-status:** F-1 visa

## REFERENCES

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Nicole Mason-Wardell  
Associate Professor  
MSU, AFRE  
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Thomas Jayne  
Professor  
MSU, AFRE  
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Jeffrey Wooldridge  
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