

Vijayendra Rao

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Current Positions & Affiliations

- Lead Economist, Development Economics Research Group, The World Bank (1999–2026)
- Chair, Advisory Committee, Boundaries, Membership and Belonging Program, CIFAR (2019–present)
- Distinguished Scholar-Practitioner in Residence, Buffett Institute for Global Affairs, Northwestern University (starting in 2026)
- Non-Resident Fellow, Center for Global Development (2024–present)
- Research Associate, CAGE, University of Warwick (2010–present)
- Life Member, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore (2009–present)

Education

- Ph.D. in Economics, University of Pennsylvania, 1990
- B.A. in Economics (with Statistics and Sociology), St. Xavier's College, University of Bombay, 1984

Honors

- Elected Fellow, International Economics Association (2021)
- Aguiar Award for Best Student in the Arts and Humanities, St. Xavier's College, 1983

Selected Publications

- *Inducing Agency: How Women's Groups Catalyzed a Cultural Transformation in Bihar* (forthcoming, Cambridge University Press)
- *Oral Democracy: Deliberation in Indian Village Assemblies* (Cambridge University Press, 2018)
- *Localizing Development: Does Participation Work?* (World Bank Policy Research Report, 2013)
- *World Development Report 2006: Equity and Development* (co-author, World Bank & Oxford University Press, 2005)
- "Qualitative Analysis with Large-N: A New Method with an Application to Aspirations in Bangladesh," *Economic Journal* (forthcoming)
- "Money vs Kudos: Incentivizing Local Politicians in India," *Journal of Public Economics*, 2023
- "Fractal Inequality in Rural India," *Oxford Open Economics*, 2022
- "Deliberative Democracy in an Unequal World: Text-as-Data from Village Assemblies in South India," *American Political Science Review*, 2019

Selected Grants

- Knowledge for Change Program (World Bank) – Machine Learning Methods for Well-Being (USD 200,000, 2021–23)
- World Bank Research Department – Village Democracy in India (USD 130,000, 2020–22)
- SAFANSI Trust Funds – Social Observatory (USD 2.5 million, 2012–18)

Selected Keynotes

- Hopkins India Conference, Johns Hopkins University, 2025
- Pune Public Policy Festival, 2024
- Bangalore Literature Festival, 2020
- Sustainability & Development Conference, University of Michigan, 2019
- Harvard University Conference on Social Inclusion & Poverty Eradication, 2016
- Oxford Forum for International Development, 2013