

Title: Adapting to Flood Risk: Evidence from a Panel of Global Cities

Speaker: Vaidehi Tandel, University of Manchester

Area: Public Policy

Date: 27.03.2024, Venue: P21 @ 2.30PM

Abstract:

Urban flooding poses danger to people and places. We construct a global city data set on floods, precipitation, population and night-time luminosity that covers the years 2012 to 2023. We show that floods are associated with a decline in urban economic activity and the impact is starker for cities in low- and lower middle-income countries. Over time, the death toll from floods is declining. People can adapt to flood risk by moving to safer areas or by investing in private self-protection. Places can offset some of the risk through urban planning and infrastructure investment. We test several flood risk adaptation hypotheses. Cities with more past experience with floods suffer less from flooding. Floods cause lesser damage to economic activity in cities with high levels of critical infrastructure. In richer countries, population growth is lower in cities that suffer from more intense floods and dams protect economic activity from floods. In poorer countries, cities protected by dams experience faster population growth, but we find no evidence of dams protecting economic activity.

Speaker Profile:



Prof. Vaidehi Tandel an economist working in the areas of urban economics, political economy, and public finance with a focus in India.

Currently, she is a Lecturer in Real Estate and Urban Economics at the University of Manchester. Previously, she was a Lecturer at the Henley Business School in University of Reading. She was Junior Fellow at IDFC Institute – a public policy think tank based in Mumbai – for six years. At IDFC, she worked on issues pertaining to India's urbanisation and affordable housing.

She was also a Postdoctoral Visiting Scholar at Columbia University, New York.

Her papers have been published in Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Urban Economics, Journal of Regional Science, Environment and Urbanisation, BMJ Open, among others. Her research has been featured in The Financial Times, The New York Times, The Straits Times, Livemint and others. She have featured in two BBC podcasts ([here](#) and [here](#)) where I discuss the impact of COVID-19 and the future of cities.

Her current work looks at the politician-builder nexus in Mumbai, agglomeration economies in India, and climate change and adaptation across cities in developing countries.

Webpage Link: <https://sites.google.com/view/vaidehitandel/home>