

Shonel Sen

Dual-Ph.D. Candidate in Applied Economics and Demography; The Pennsylvania State University.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Email: shonelsen@gmail.com

Website: www.shonelsen.weebly.com

Phone: +1 612.559.9374

Current Address: Apt28D, 10 Vairo Boulevard, State College, PA 16803, USA.

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Date of birth: 30 November 1984

Citizenship: Indian

Languages: English, Bengali, Hindi.

EDUCATION:

Dual-Ph.D. (ABD) in Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Economics (AEREC) & Demography,
Pennsylvania State University, USA, 2009-2013 (Expected). [GPA of 3.84 on 4]

Master of Arts in Economics (Gold Medalist 1st Division with 1st Rank),
Jadavpur University, India, 2006-2008. [GPA of 9.45 on 10]

Bachelor of Arts in Economics (Honors 1st Division),
Jadavpur University, India, 2003-2006. [GPA of 9.29 on 10]

FIELDS of CONCENTRATION: Primary:- Development & Regional Economics; Demography; Public Policy.

Secondary:- Health & Behavioral Economics; Environmental Economics.

COMPUTER SKILLS: Stata, Matlab, SPSS, ArcGIS, Geoda, UCINET, C++, MS Office.

WORKING PAPERS:

“Economic Incentives to Manage Above Replacement Fertility: Simulating the Quantity-Quality Tradeoff” - static analysis testing the Quantity – Quality model of fertility with various functional forms under different policy experiments.

“Model of Childbearing with Two-sided Altruism in Developing Countries: A Calibration Exercise” - dynamic model of inter-generational transfers incorporating child labor and lack of old age security which influences fertility decision making.

“Raising Quality to Reduce Quantity: Testing the Tradeoff with Evidence from India” - empirical analysis with DHS 2005-06 data to estimate how raising quality (health and education) of children may offset propensity to have more children.

WORK IN PROGRESS:

“Incentives for Healthy Behavior: Experimental Approach to Reduce Obesity” - ongoing interdisciplinary project targeting health issues, primarily obesity, among the PSU staff and employees using behavioral tools in experimental economics.

“Cost of Congestion: A Socioeconomic Study of Street Vending in Kolkata” - project at Global Change Program with report for Kolkata Municipal Corporation and working paper in collaboration with Prof. J.Roy, Jadavpur University.

OTHER RESEARCH:

Group project on ***“Performance of Small-Scale Garment Industry in West Bengal: A Case Study in The Post Liberalisation Era”*** as B.A. dissertation under the supervision of Prof. A.Dhar, Economics Department, Jadavpur University.

Project entitled ***“An Analysis of Household Preference Ordering for Environmental Services: Case Study of Kolkata”*** under the supervision of Prof. J.Roy, Economics Department, Jadavpur University for Summer 2007.

HONORS & AWARDS:

Gold Medal from Jadavpur University for 1st position distinction in Master of Arts in Economics, 2008.
S. K. Mitra Memorial Gold Medal for securing highest aggregate marks in Master of Arts in Economics, 2008.
Sandor Fellowship in Environmental Economics 2008-2009 from Economics Department, University of Minnesota.
Graduate Fellowship for 2009-2010 from University Graduate School, The Pennsylvania State University.
2012 Future Leaders Forum Fellowship from the Association for International Agriculture and Rural Development.
Graduate Student Travel Awards from CAS Grant and AESE Program, The Pennsylvania State University, 2012-2013.
Population Reference Bureau (PRB) Policy Communications Fellowship for 2012-2013.
President and founding member of the Penn State Graduate Economics Association 2012-2013.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Fall 2012, Fall 2011: Teaching Assistant, PSU for Agribusiness Management and Community, Environment & Development, AGBM 338: Agribusiness in Global Economy & CED 450: International Development, Renewable Resources and the Environment.
Spring 2011: Teaching Assistant, PSU for Agribusiness Management, AGBM 102: Economic Food Systems & AGBM 338: Agribusiness in the Global Economy.
Summer 2009: Teaching Assistant, UMN for Economics, ECON 1102: Principles of Macroeconomics.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:

Spring 2013, Spring 2012, Fall 2010: Research Assistant at PSU for AEREC; Supervisor: Prof. D. Abler, Ph.D.
Summer 2012: Research Assistant at Temple University; Supervisor: Prof. K. Das, Ph.D.
Summer 2011: Research Associate at JU for Global Change Program; Supervisor: Prof. J. Roy, Ph.D.
Summer 2010: Intern at JU for Global Change Program; Supervisor: Prof. J. Roy, Ph.D.

PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS & CONFERENCES:

Poster presented at 18th Agricultural Sciences Research Expo, 14Mar2012 and 27th Annual Graduate Exhibition, 25Mar2012.
Participated at 48th Annual Conference of the Association for International Agriculture and Rural Development, 3-6Jun2012.
Paper presented at Population Reference Bureau's 25th Policy Communications Fellowship Workshop, 6-17Aug2012.
Paper and Poster presented at the Population Association of America Annual Meeting, 11-13Apr2013.
Forthcoming Presentations at Conferences for Northeast Agricultural and Resource Economics Association, 23-25Jun2013; Agricultural & Applied Economics Association, 4-6Aug2013; American Sociological Association, 10-13Aug2013.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS: PAA; AAEA; AEA; PRI; AIARD; NAREA; Gamma Sigma Delta – Honor Society.

REFERENCES:

- Prof. David Abler, AEREC&Demography, Pennsylvania State University. (Email: d-abler@psu.edu, Ph: 814-863-8630)
- Prof. Spiro Stefanou, AEREC, Pennsylvania State University. (Email: SpiroS@psu.edu, Ph: 814-863-8635)
- Prof. Edward Jaenicke, AEREC, Pennsylvania State University. (Email: tjaenicke@psu.edu, Ph: 814-865-5282)
- Prof Joyashree Roy, Economics, Jadavpur University, India. (Email: joyashreeju@gmail.com, Ph: 91-33-64147760)

DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS:

Ph.D. thesis on theoretical extensions and empirical testing of Quantity – Quality model of Fertility with 3 main essays.

Essay 1: “Economic Incentives to Manage Above Replacement Fertility: Simulating the Quantity-Quality Tradeoff”

The paper applies the Quantity-Quality model to speed up the demographic transition and investigates incentives for curbing high fertility behavior in developing nations to ease the burden of a rapidly growing population. My static analysis contributes to the existing literature by testing the Q-Q model for well-known functional forms, such as the Cobb-Douglas, Leontief and Stone Geary utility functions. Using simulations with data from India, I estimate income and price elasticities for the different forms of household utility to demonstrate their effect on household decision making with regard to child bearing and educational investments. I also run comparative static exercises to analyze the outcome of policy experiments on fertility and schooling and test the hypothesis that policy initiatives may not always yield anticipated results; one of the key findings is that simply subsidizing qualitative improvements in children (reducing cost of education alone without other investments in family planning etc.) may be insufficient to trigger the Q-Q tradeoff that may curtail above replacement TFR. Reduction in parent’s out-of-pocket childcare costs to increase quality, in absence of other programs, may prompt greater childbearing as children are now cheaper to raise.

Essay 2: “Model of Childbearing with Two-sided Altruism in Developing Countries: A Calibration Exercise”

Social, economic and institutional characteristics differ greatly between developing countries but we can identify some common factors that may cause high levels of childbearing and rapid population growth. This paper incorporates child labor and old age security into the dynamic Quantity-Quality model of fertility and extends the earlier economic modeling to 3 time periods and 3 generations with bi-directional gifts and bequests. By constructing a structural OLG model with a dynastic utility function I examine how intergenerational altruism affects the individual decision maker’s choice of fertility and investment in their children. This study is important for three reasons: first, old age dependence and child-labor are highly prevalent in most developing economy family structures but previous studies do not look at the simultaneous presence of both factors in fertility choice; second, I calibrate parameters to solve for the household decision variables after tracing consumption, fertility, transfers to elderly, schooling and child labor behavior from 1967 to 2007 and finally I conduct comparative statics exercises to test policy instruments like conditional cash transfer’s to boost investment in health and education, midday meal schemes to raise school attendance and fertility reduction subsidies. Reliance on one’s offspring for contributing to household income via child labor earnings and expectation of financial support after retiring in the absence of social security are major motivations for greater child bearing; so policy reforms and interventions affecting fertility alone will be ineffective without provision of appropriate social safety nets.

Essay 3: “Raising Quality to Reduce Quantity: Testing the Tradeoff with Evidence from India”

India is the second most populous country in the world and is currently undergoing the demographic transition with the average number of children per woman gradually declining. However the fertility rate is still above replacement level and rapidly growing population is a major challenge to sustainable development. Earlier empirical studies on the Quantity-Quality tradeoff just explore how greater number of children is usually associated with lower levels of quality but the current analysis examines the reverse direction of causality using the nationally representative sample for 2005-06 from the Demographic Health Survey (NFHS-3). Using desired number of children as an indicator of fertility preference, I use multinomial ordered responses to predict the most effective target variables; these can guide the creation of feasible and effective policy instruments that can be implemented to incentivize smaller family sizes. Preliminary results from Probit analysis of the data suggest that increasing quality level (health and education) of children may in the long run reduce the demand for child quantity as income-earning potential and the probability of survival to adulthood for children increases, this in turn will offset the parent’s propensity to have greater number of children to recompense for future uncertainty. In addition, I present evidence that in spite of a decline in infant mortality, increased use of contraception and rise in the average age at marriage; gender bias and son preference still exists and acts as a major barrier to a more rapid decline in fertility.