



AMRITA
VISHWA VIDYAPEETHAM

SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL & BEHAVIOURAL
SCIENCES
AMRITAPURI

Ph.D. OPPORTUNITY IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES | TRANSFORMING AGROFORESTRY IN TRIBAL INDIA

Ph.D. RESEARCH PROJECT

Agroforestry sits at the intersection of two of the defining challenges of our time: lifting rural communities out of poverty and restoring degraded landscapes.

In the tribal regions of Odisha, India, the WADI programme has planted millions of mango and cashew trees. But there is a scientific puzzle: in some villages, 96% of trees thrive. In others, only 30% survive. Why?

We are looking for a driven PhD Scholar to join Associate Professor Victoria Ustenko and a multidisciplinary team to solve this mystery and co-design the future of Indian agroforestry.

SWIPE RIGHT 



THE PROJECT

Improving Smallholder Agroforestry Outcomes in Tribal Odisha

This isn't just an observational study. You will analyze rich survey data from hundreds of households, uncover the drivers of success, and then co-design and pilot real-world interventions to help low-performing farmers succeed.

WHAT YOU WILL DO:

Operationalize the Daya-Dama-Dana model (Compassion toward living beings, Restraint in consumption, and Generosity toward the commons)

- Analyse rich, large-scale datasets from hundreds of farmer households
- Identify key household and community drivers of agroforestry success
- Co-design and pilot interventions with farmers and field partners
- Contribute to evidence-based improvements in one of India's largest agroforestry initiatives supported by NABARD

WHY THIS Ph.D. STANDS OUT

- **Real-world impact:** Work directly with WADI programme partners
- **From data to action:** Move beyond analysis to designing and testing interventions
- **Global collaboration:** Emerging partnership with Tel Aviv University
- **Policy relevance:** Your findings feed into large-scale implementation and decision-making

WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

- **Education:** Master's degree in Economics, Development Studies, or a Quantitative Social Science discipline
- **Skills:** Strong grounding in statistical analysis (Regression, Multilevel modelling) and comfort with R, Stata, or Python
- **Spirit:** A researcher who is as comfortable with econometric datasets as they are with rural fieldwork

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1 Full-Time Position

Application Deadline: **14th July 2026**

Ready to make an impact?



**READY
TO
APPLY?**

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