

Sonali Jha

Instructor of Record and Ph.D. Candidate (ABD)

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San Jose, California

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Mass Communication. *Defense: February 2027.*

Media Arts and Studies, Scripps College of Communication, Ohio University.

Dissertation: *“Framing Awareness: Assessing the Effectiveness of Anti-Trafficking Intervention Programs in India.”*

Master of Arts, English Studies, August 2020.

Central University of Jharkhand, Ranchi, India.

Thesis: *“Reframing the lenses: Climate Change as a mainstream issue.”*

Bachelor of Arts, English Literature, June 2018

Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2025-present

Instructor of Record. *Ohio University, Athens, Ohio*

Courses Taught:

COMS 1030: Fundamentals of Public Speaking (Online) (Spring 2026, Fall 2026)

MDIA 4120: Advanced Social Media (Online) (Fall 2025, Fall 2026)

MDIA 2010: Media Analysis and Criticism (Spring 2025)

MDIA 2113: Social Media Introduction (Fall 2023, Spring 2024, Summer 2024 (online), Fall 2024, Summer 2025 (online), Summer 2026)

2024-present

Researcher and Member. IMPACT (Information and Messaging for Prevention, Awareness, Control, and Treatment) Lab. Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.

2022-2023

Teaching Assistant. *Ohio University, Athens, Ohio*

Courses Assisted:

MDIA 2011: The Business of Media (130 students, Spring 2023)

MDIA 1010: Evolution of Media (195 students, Fall 2022)

APPLIED AND COMMUNITY-ENGAGED APPOINTMENTS

2026-present

Research Intern, Experiencer/Survivor's Speak Campaign.

MISSEY, Oakland, California

- Track inquiry, engagement, and event participation data for survivor-centered outreach campaigns.

- Support strategic communications elevating survivor experiences and priorities in campaign design.
- Conduct semi-structured interviews with survivors; author memos on ethical safeguards for vulnerable-youth research.

TEACHING INTERESTS

Introductory: Critical Media Analysis, Media and Cultural Identity, Gender and Media, and Research Methods in Communication.

Advanced: Human Rights and Social Justice; Digital Activism; Research Methods; Media and Migration; and Advertising and Storytelling.

PUBLICATIONS IN PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS

Jha, S., & Memon, A. (2026). Human trafficking trends in Ohio: National hotline data analysis and COVID-19-related changes (2007–2024). *Public Health Reports*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00333549261460010> (Impact Factor: 2.8)

Kondam, N. R., & **Jha, S.** (2026). Productivity Narratives and the Marginalization of Ethics: A Content Analysis of Academic Influencer Discourse on AI Tools on Instagram. *Online Media and Global Communication (OMGC)*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/omgc-2026-0012> (Cite Score: 3.7 (2025, Scopus))

Shah, T. M., **Jha, S.**, & Shah, J. M. (2025). Justice denied! COVID-19 and human trafficking in India and the USA. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2025.2452541> (Impact Factor: 1.3)

EDITED BOOKS

Shah, T. M., & **Jha, S.** (Eds.). (2026). *The gendered self: LGBTQ+ narratives in global media* (Vol. 2). [Vernon Press](#).

Shah, T. M., & **Jha, S.** (Eds.). (2025). *The gendered self: LGBTQ+ narratives in global media* (Vol. 1). [Vernon Press](#).

BOOK CHAPTERS

Jha, S., & Kondam, N. R. (Forthcoming, 2026). Student suicides in contemporary Indian newspapers: A framing analysis. In *Academic Burnout: Mental Health Among Scholars and Researchers*. Vernon Press.

Jha, S. (2025). Liberating narratives: Gender intersectionality in Indian OTT platform. In S. Jha & T. M. Shah (Eds.), *The gendered self: LGBTQ+ narratives in global media*. Vernon Press.

Jha, S. (2024). Unveiling Sudan's youth: Weaving narratives, humanitarian tales, and the unfolding rights agenda in Sudan. In T. M. Shah (Ed.), *Children and youth as 'sites of resistance' in armed conflict*. Emerald Publishing.

Jha, S., & Chumbow, M.-M. (2024). Capturing resistance: Unveiling visual narratives of youth activism in the Israel-Palestine 2023 conflict through media posted on Instagram. In T. M. Shah (Ed.), *Children and youth as 'sites of resistance' in armed conflict*. Emerald Publishing.

Jha, S., & Shah, T. M. (2024). The impact of OTT media on comedy in India: Changing trends and new opportunities. In N. Kalorth (Ed.), *Advances in media and communication research: Exploring the impact of OTT media on global societies*. IGI Global.

Jha, S., & Shah, T. M. (2023). Tales of trafficking on screen: The case of Lakshmi and The Kerala Story. In *Indian contemporary films and societal reflection* (pp. 308–319). Adamas University.

JOURNAL SUBMISSIONS

Jha, S. (under review). Reels, Identity, and Language: How Influencers Promote Culture on Instagram. *Creator and Influencer Studies*. Submitted August 2026.

Jha, S., & Memon, A. (under review). Human Trafficking Survivors' Reintegration After Residential Programs: An Ecological Qualitative Study. *Journal of Human Trafficking*. Submitted April 2026.

Kondam, N. R., & **Jha, S.** (under review). Pressured to Succeed: Digital Discourses on Mental Health and Student Suicides in Kota through Reddit and YouTube. *Sage Open*. Submitted August 2026.

Jha, S., & Memon, A. (under review). Knowledge, awareness, and attitudes of human trafficking and their predictors at Mid-Western University. *PLOS ONE*. Submitted August 2026.

Jha, S., LaPoe, B., Dodia, P., LaPoe, P. (under review). Comparing health communication social media engagement: Strategies of doctors and healthcare influencers on Instagram. *Journal of Public Interest Communications*, Submitted December 2025.

ACADEMIC HONORS: GRANTS and AWARDS

Original Work Grant, Graduate Student Senate, Ohio University (2026-2027)
Awarded \$750 to support a research project.

Terrie Temkin Prize for Commitment to Excellence in Nonprofit Leadership,
Scripps College of Communication, Ohio University — \$2,000 (2025)

Outstanding Research Award (*Honorable Mention*) (2025)

Awarded to a PhD student at Ohio University for the quality of ongoing research and conference acceptances.

International Travel Award & Individual Award (2025)

Awarded \$1500 to support academic research and conference presentation.

Don Flournoy Dissertation Completion Fellowship (2025)

Awarded \$7,500 for the 2025–2026 academic year, Ohio University.

Original Work Grant, Graduate Student Senate, Ohio University (2025-2026)

Awarded \$750 to fund the project “Comprehensive Care Model for Human Trafficking Survivors: A Qualitative Inquiry with Ecological and Social Justice Framework.” (*Top review scorer*)

Faculty Professional Development Funds, Scripps College of Communication (2025–2026)

Awarded \$750 to support the project “*The Economic and Social Impact of Craft-Based Labor in Tribal Communities: The Case of Bipnoi's Artisans*,” Ohio University.

Allushuski Fellowship, Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies Program (2024–2025)

Awarded \$1,000 for research support. Included invitations to participate in undergraduate capstone projects and to deliver a public lecture as part of the WGSS colloquium at Ohio University.

ICPSR Summer Program Scholarship (2024)

Scholarship recipient in *Public Administration, Public Policy, and Public Affairs*, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Outstanding Instructor of Record, Ohio University (2023–2024)

Awarded for excellence in undergraduate course instruction.

Laura Bassi Scholarship (2024, Declined)

Awarded \$2,500 in editorial assistance for dissertation research on underrepresented topics within Media Studies.

INVITED TALKS

“*Agnotology, Media & Ignorance in Digital Societies*” Guest Lecture for MDIA 4011: Media and Digital Divide (March 2026), Ohio University. An invited lecture exploring how digital systems produce ignorance through data loss, deletion, and unequal preservation.

“*Research Mapping Speech Orders*.” Guest Instructor for COMS 1030: The Fundamentals of Public Speaking (March 2026), Ohio University. Taught three class sessions on research mapping and speech organization.

“Agnotology, Media, and Human Trafficking.” Guest Lecture for MDIA 2010: Media Analysis and Criticism (November 2025), Ohio University. Invited lecture on agnotology, featuring three case studies on ignorance in advertising.

“Ignorance: Challenges for Anti-Human Trafficking Interventions in Indigenous Regions of India.” (April 2025), Ohio University. Invited talk based on dissertation research on how institutional ignorance and cultural erasure hinder anti-trafficking efforts in indigenous India, delivered for the WGSS Allushuski.

“Studying Mental Health Crises and Suicides in Kota, India: Using Reddit and YouTube Data.” Guest Lecture for WGSS 4800: *Capstone in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies* (February 2025), Ohio University. Invited lecture on research methodology and presentation skills for a senior capstone seminar.

“Capturing Resistance: Unveiling Visual Narratives of Youth Activism in the Israel-Palestine 2023 Conflict through Media Posted on Instagram.” Invited talk for the SMART Dialogue Series, an interdisciplinary research platform (October 2024). Based on a chapter in *Children and Youth as ‘Sites of Resistance’ in Armed Conflict* (Emerald Publishing).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) Summer Program in Quantitative Methods

Completed Network Analysis I: Introduction with a final grade of A-, equivalent to three graduate-level credit hours.

PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PAPER

Jha, S., & Memon, A. (2026, November). Comprehensive care model for human trafficking survivors: A qualitative inquiry with ecological and social justice framework. Paper presentation, National Communication Association (NCA), New Orleans.

Jha, S. (2026, June). Framing Awareness: Assessing the Effectiveness of Anti-Trafficking Intervention Programs in India. International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) Annual Conference, Galway, Ireland.

Jha, S., & Memon, A. (2025, November). Knowledge, awareness, and attitudes of human trafficking and their predictors at Mid-Western University. American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting and Expo, Human Rights Forum, Chicago, IL.

Jha, S., & Memon, A. (2025, November). Comprehensive care model for human trafficking survivors: A qualitative inquiry with ecological and social justice

framework. American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting and Expo, Human Rights Forum, Chicago, IL.

Jha, S. (2025, November). Framing awareness: Assessing the effectiveness of anti-trafficking intervention programs in India. Paper presentation National Communication Association (NCA) 111th Annual Convention, Denver, CO.

LaPoe, B., LaPoe, V. & **Jha, S.** (2025, November). “I’m tired of sitting on committees while people die”: Designing trust to find missing and murdered Indigenous women and people effectively. Paper presentation, National Communication Association (NCA) 111th Annual Convention, Denver, CO.

Jha, S. (2025, October). The role of regional language content in fostering cultural pride and identity: A study of Maithili influencers in India. Paper presentation at the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR 2025) annual conference, Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), Campus Gragoatá, Niterói, Brazil.

Jha, S. (2025, September). AI and sextortion: Student vulnerability, awareness, and prevention. Paper presented at the 22nd Annual International Human Trafficking & Social Justice Conference.

Jha, S., & Kondam, N. R. (2025, August). Student suicides in contemporary Indian newspapers: A framing analysis. Paper presented at AEJMC Conference, San Francisco, USA.

Jha, S. (2025, July). Uranium Mining's Impact on Rural Communities in Jadughoda: A Mixed Method Approach. Paper presented at the IAMCR 2025 Pre-Conference *Digital Economy, Communication and Rural Development – Retrospective, Reflection and Praxis*, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Jha, S., & Memon, A. (2024, October). A time series analysis of human trafficking cases at Ohio State: National human trafficking data (2007–14 to 2021). Paper presentation at the Annual Conference of the American Public Health Association (APHA), Minneapolis, MN.

Jha, S. (2024, July). Silver screens, dark shadows: Decoding the impact of cinematic narratives on NGO initiatives to combat human trafficking in the USA and India. Paper presentation at the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), Christchurch, New Zealand.

Jha, S., & Shah, T. M. (2024, June). Voices against trafficking: Indian activists’ narratives in India, a YouTube podcast analysis. Paper presentation at the International Communication Association (ICA) annual conference, Gold Coast, Australia.

Jha, S., & Shah, T. M. (2024, March). Can social media visibility influence policies in anti-trafficking initiatives? Paper presentation at the North Central Sociological Association (NCSA) annual meeting, Columbus, OH.

Jha, S., Dodia, P., & LaPoe, B. (2023, November). Comparing social media engagement: Strategy of doctors and healthcare influencers on Instagram. Paper presentation at the National Communication Association (NCA) annual convention, National Harbor, MD.

Jha, S., Shah, T. M., & Dodia, P. (2023, August). Study of gendered portrayals of sexual minorities in Indian cinema and its diaspora: Intersectionality and media representations. Paper presentation at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) annual conference, Washington, DC.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATES

- Certificate in Mixed Methods Research, Ohio University
- War and Peace Studies Graduate Certificate, Ohio University
- Graduate Certificate in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Ohio University
- Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) Summer Program in Quantitative Methods, University of Michigan
- Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) Teaching Academy Certification (Attended), Ohio University

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC SERVICE

Member Spotlight, Quarterly Meeting, Global Association of Human Trafficking Scholars (September 2026). Presented dissertation research on anti-trafficking prevention and institutional ignorance in Adivasi communities in Khunti district, Jharkhand.

Conference Reviewer — NCA (2024–2026); IAMCR (2024–2026); AEJMC (2024–2025); APHA, Committee on Women's Rights (2024–2025); AoIR (2026). Extended abstracts, full paper manuscripts, and panel sessions.

Manuscript Reviewer — Human Trafficking and Health Care Compendium, HEAL Trafficking with the Minnesota Department of Health (2025–2026); Contemporary Justice Review, Taylor & Francis (2024); Children and Youth in Armed Conflict, two-volume series, Emerald Publishing (2024); The Rise of Over-the-Top (OTT) Media and Survival Strategies and Transformations of the Global Media Industry, IGI Global (2023).

Session Chair, *Strategic Communication: Research in Advertising and Disaster Communication* (Paper Session), National Communication Association (NCA) 2025 Annual Convention.

PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

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| <p>Feb 2025-July 2025
Athens, Ohio, U.S.</p> | <p>Graduate Assistant / Project Coordinator, Ohio University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated workflows and weekly communication among project directors and six faculty contributors to ensure timely delivery of course content. • Organized and built a self-paced Canvas course structure, integrating instructional materials, edited videos, and assessments supporting inclusive teaching practices. |
| <p>May 2024-August 2024
Athens, Ohio, U.S.</p> | <p>Social Media Intern, Social Enterprise Ecosystem (SEE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed and executed a comprehensive social media strategy to enhance brand visibility and audience engagement. • Authored and designed digital content, increasing follower growth and interaction rates across key platforms. • Analyzed social media metrics to evaluate campaign effectiveness and inform data-driven strategy adjustments. |
| <p>Nov 2021-Apr 2022
Pune, India</p> | <p>Junior Content Writer, Bright Brain Marketing Technologies,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researched, authored, and optimized digital content to engage target audiences and support client growth objectives. • Synthesized market research and performance analytics to develop evidence-based content strategies. |
| <p>Jan 2021-Apr 2022
Jamshedpur, India</p> | <p>Freelance Content Writer, Academy of Fashion and Arts,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnered with the academy to design pedagogical materials and strategic external content, aligning academic offerings with market outreach. • Researched, wrote, and structured foundational website content, establishing the company's primary digital presence and brand narrative. • Delivered a 30% growth in enrollment sales by translating academic programs into compelling value propositions for prospective students. • Managed the full content lifecycle, from research and conceptualization of academic modules to writing and editing public-facing marketing collateral. |
| <p>Oct 2020-Jun 2021
Bengaluru, India</p> | <p>Technical Content Writer, Pietech Solution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided strategic advisory on marketing initiatives and content direction based on comprehensive analysis of consumer data and competitive landscapes. |

- Led editorial oversight for the content team, establishing and enforcing guidelines for accuracy and brand voice.
- Leveraged research insights to drive content strategy that achieved a 25% boost in consumer engagement metrics.

Jul 2020- Sept 2020
Noida, India

Content Developer Intern, *Stratupflux*

- Engineered SEO-driven content strategies for client websites, conducting keyword and topic research to maximize audience reach and engagement across fashion, lifestyle, and healthcare verticals.
- Spearheaded the development and execution of a social media content calendar, managing daily operations to build a cohesive online brand identity.
- Authored a portfolio of public-facing articles and blog posts, demonstrating the ability to distill specialized topics into accessible content.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS/MEMBERSHIPS

Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR)

National Communication Association (NCA)

Global Association of Human Trafficking Scholars (GAHTS)

International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)

ACADEMIC VOLUNTEER WORK

President, Sociological Action Network Club, Ohio University (2024–2025)

- Managed social media and website to ensure consistent communication and member engagement.
- Created and organized a lecture series to help students network and access opportunities such as conferences, funding, and academic resources.
- Launched a fundraising campaign to establish an endowment for future student initiatives and scholarships.

Community Teaching (2016-2018)

- Taught and trained underprivileged students of slum areas at the community center, Banaras, India.

LANGUAGES SKILLS

Proficient in Maithili (Mother Tongue), fluent in English and Hindi for both academic and professional contexts.

RESEARCH TOOLS AND SKILLS

Methodological Expertise: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed-Methods Research Design

Statistical Software & Programming: R, SPSS, MAXQDA, Python, NodeXL

Productivity & Data Visualization: Advanced proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite (Excel, PowerPoint, Word), Canva, and Google Suite.

Last Updated: September 15, 2026