



**UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK & CPRHE/NIEPA RESEARCH PROJECT  
WIDENING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES**

**REPORT: NOVEMBER 2023 VISIT TO NEW DELHI**

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## Purpose of visit

This visit spanned 9-24 November 2023, and the primary purpose of the visit was to prepare for and conduct the Research Methodology Workshop 1 (RMW1) for Phase 1 of the WAHEI project. This workshop built on the pilot study and long-term development of the project design and instruments and involved the State Research Teams for the project travelling to Delhi from their respective states for the meeting on 16-17 November 2023. The visit also included meetings with various project contacts, a talk delivered at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), preparation and follow-up activities relating to RMW1, and a one-day visit to O. P. Jindal Global University.

## Day 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> November

### Arrival and meeting with Dr Manika Bora, O. P. Jindal Global University

From 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> November, Dr Henderson travelled to Delhi and settled in. On 12<sup>th</sup> November, Dr Henderson met with Dr Manika Bora, Assistant Professor at O. P. Jindal Global University, and former member of the Consultative Group for the previous Fair Chance Foundation project. The discussion ranged around current developments in higher education and the academic profession in India. In particular, due to data arising from the study about violence against faculty members in rural/semi-urban colleges in Haryana, the discussion touched on the phenomenon of violence perpetrated against faculty members in retaliation for e.g. colleges enforcing regulations or picking up on cheating. Finally, the meeting included planning for Dr Henderson's visit to O. P. Jindal Global University on 21<sup>st</sup> November. In the evening of 12<sup>th</sup> November, Dr Nidhi S Sabharwal kindly invited Dr Henderson to her home for a Diwali celebration.

## Day 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> November

### Preparations for Research Methodology Workshop 1 (RMW1) and meetings at NIEPA



Image 1: Preparing the venue for RMW1

From 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> November, the WAHEI team prepared for RMW1, led by Dr Sabharwal and Dr Henderson with the assistance of NIEPA-based Junior Project Consultant for WAHEI, Ms Arushi Painuly. This included preparing the presentations about the project and the methodology for the State Research Teams (SRTs), finalising the pack of materials to be shared with team members, and discussing the nature of the event. In addition, Dr Sabharwal had prepared the chapter scheme for the SRTs' reports, which Dr Henderson reviewed and this was then finalised. Further work conducted over these days included updating the surveys, codebooks and codesheets after a final check was conducted by Ms Painuly. Finally, Dr Henderson completed the Ethical Approval Application Resubmission for the Phase 1 study ready to submit after RMW1, following some clarifications from Dr Sabharwal.

On 13<sup>th</sup> November, Dr Henderson and Dr Sabharwal met with Prof Pradeep Misra, Director of the Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education (CPRHE), of the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) and renewed thanks for the hospitality shown by CPRHE and for the support with the RMW1. Prof Misra responded by welcoming Dr Henderson back to CPRHE, and organising for Dr Henderson to participate in a one-hour interaction with the Master's students on the new Master's programme on 15<sup>th</sup> November. Prof Misra also shared news of his forthcoming book, to be published by Routledge in December.

On 14<sup>th</sup> November, Dr Henderson and Dr Sabharwal with Prof Misra met with Prof Shashikala Wanjari, the VC of NIEPA. During their interaction, Dr Henderson presented Prof Wanjari with a token of thanks from Warwick, in the form of a small plaque. Prof Wanjari warmly welcomed Dr Henderson to NIEPA and showed interest in the WAHEI project, which was much appreciated.



*Image 2: Left to right: Dr Nidhi S. Sabharwal, Dr Emily F. Henderson, Prof Shashikala Wanjari, Prof Pradeep Misra*



*Image 3: Dr Emily F. Henderson meeting with Prof Kumar Suresh*

Following this meeting, Dr Sabharwal introduced Dr Henderson to Mr Nishant Sinha, the Finance Officer and Registrar I/c (In charge) at NIEPA. Dr Henderson thanked Mr Sinha profusely for his support with the administrative processes for WAHEI. Lastly, Dr Sabharwal and Dr Henderson met with Prof Kumar Suresh, Director (Planning and Development) and Head, Department of Educational Administration at NIEPA. Prof Suresh, an expert in educational administration and management, provided a detailed explanation of how previous attempts to integrate equal opportunities in educational institutions have worked. At the end of the meeting, Dr Henderson thanked Prof Suresh for his support for the project. In parting, Prof. Suresh expressed a welcome interest in receiving more information about the WAHEI project as it progresses.



On 15<sup>th</sup> November, Dr Garima Malik, Assistant Professor, CPRHE/NIEPA, hosted a Q&A session between Dr Henderson and the students enrolled on the first MA in Education and Development cohort at NIEPA. The discussion included the meaning of development in the Indian and international contexts, including what the concept of 'global' brings to the question of development. Dr Henderson discussed the implications of 'global' being to discuss development across all countries. The discussion then ranged to the research that Dr Henderson and the team conducted in Haryana for Fair Chance Foundation project 1.



Image 4: Dr Henderson discussing with the MA Education and Development cohort, hosted by Dr Malik



Image 5: Dr Henderson, Dr Malik and the MA Education and Development cohort

Dr Henderson engaged in an interactive discussion with the students, encouraging them to conduct an analysis of the dynamics of education and gender in the state. Finally, the discussion moved to an advice session on applying for PhD programmes in the UK and considerations that students should be aware of. The session concluded with thanks all round and a group photo.

## Day 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> November

### Research Methodology Workshop 1 (RMW1)

The RMW1 spanned two full days of scheduled activities, with SRTs arriving the preceding night, and was presided over by Dr Sabharwal and Dr Henderson. NIEPA-based Junior Project Consultant Ms Arushi Painuly was also co-ordinating the event, and Ms Ragini Khurana, Warwick-based project Research Assistant, was in India at the time and assisted with the event. In addition, the event was supported by faculty members, project consultants and staff members. The workshop began with a warm welcome from the CPRHE Director, Prof Pradeep Misra, who welcomed the SRTs and gave an introduction to the types of activity conducted within CPRHE, and delivered a



Image 6: Prof Pradeep Misra welcoming the attendees of RMW1 along with Dr Henderson and Dr Sabharwal

supportive message about the WAHEI project work. Dr Sabharwal and Dr Henderson complemented the welcome with opening words about the schedule, and all SRTs introduced themselves. There was an informal initial discussion about queries and thoughts about the project.

The RMW1 was attended by:

Assam: Gauhati University Team

- Professor Polly Vauqueline, Gauhati University
- Dr. Chitrangkita Gayan, Rupahi College
- Dr. Bornali Borah, Gauhati University

Chhattisgarh: Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University

- Dr. Devdas Banjare, Fanikeshwar Nath Govt. College

Haryana: Kurukshetra University Team

- Professor Rajeshwari, Kurukshetra University
- Dr. Gulshan Mehra, Maharshi Dayanand Govt. Girls College
- Dr. Kanwaljeet Viridi, KVA DAV College for Women

Kerala: University of Calicut Team

- Dr. Abdul Gafoor K, University of Calicut
- Dr. Manoj Praveen G, University of Calicut
- Dr. Ashkarali P, CHMKM Govt Arts and Science College Tanur

Maharashtra: Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University Team

- Dr. Krutika Vijaykumar Khandare, Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University
- Dr. Vishnu Wamanrao Patil, Deogiri College

Odisha: Utkal University

- Dr. Smita Nayak, Utkal University
- Dr. Paramananda Naik, Utkal University
- Dr. Hiranmayee Mishra, U. N. Autonomous College

Apologies were sent by:

- Dr. Lukeshwar Singh Gajpal, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University
- Dr. Shailendra Kumar, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University (Chhattisgarh, India)
- Professor Dhanashri Jayant Mahajan, Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University

The first day proceeded with a presentation about the WAHEI project background, rationale and design, delivered by Dr Henderson and Dr Sabharwal. Following this, the research instruments were introduced, with the team talking through the RMW1 instrument pack and fieldwork manual with the SRTs. On the first day, Dr Henderson also introduced the diary method aspect of the study, which was met with significant enthusiasm from the SRTs. The SRTs themselves completed the first diary entry in order to discuss the expected content and to further develop the concept of higher education (HE) outreach.



*Image 7: Attendees of RMW1 engage with the WAHEI project presentations.*



*Image 8: Ragini Khurana working with the SRTs to complete the interactive coding activity*

On the second day, the SRTs delivered the presentations they had prepared on the selected State Universities and Government Colleges. The presentations were rich and informative and included valuable contextual detail and analysis of the institutions and regional details. The presentations also enriched the conceptual discussion of HE outreach and many of the different faculty members took note of useful information provided from other presentations. Overnight the faculty members had been requested to complete the Faculty Member Survey and the Undergraduate Student Survey in order to bring any feedback to the team. A detailed discussion of the surveys ensued coordinated by Dr Sabharwal and many important modifications, additions and clarifications were brought to the surveys and other instruments through the discussions. Dr Sabharwal also led an interactive exercise where SRTs began to complete the codesheet with the first part of the survey.

Then Dr Henderson conducted a practice interview staged in front of the group with one of the SRT members. The interview was a rich experience as it led to further integration of notions of HE outreach within the whole group, and also facilitated a discussion of best practice in conducting research interviews. Dr Henderson also facilitated a practice FGD where SRT members pretended to be student participants, which led to a rich discussion of how to conduct FGDs. The day concluded with discussions of next steps in terms of timeline and budget queries, and a warm vote of thanks from all participants.



*Image 9: Dr Henderson conducting a practice interview with Dr. Manoj Praveen G, from the Kerala SRT*



*Image 10: RMW1 attendees conclude the workshop with a round of applause*

Overall the RMW1 was a great success, with substantial learning on all sides and already early signs of impact in terms of (i) conceptual development and clarity about HE outreach in India, (ii) internalising of HE outreach as a priority and as a value of the academic profession, (iii) methodological learning and innovation especially through the enthusiastic reception of the diary method aspect, (iv) specific intentions about ideas for HE outreach based on the learning from the other SRTs. Following the successful completion of RMW1, Dr Sabharwal kindly hosted Dr Henderson for a dinner and debrief in her home.

## Day 20<sup>th</sup> November

### Follow-up from RMW1

On 20<sup>th</sup> November, Dr Sabharwal, Dr Henderson and Ms Painuly began to conduct the follow-up work from RMW1, including processing the notes from the RMW1 and discussing how to go about the next steps of the process. Dr Sabharwal and Dr Henderson met to discuss the fieldwork stage of Phase 1, the project timeline and the publication plan.

Dr Henderson also met with Prof Vineeta Sirohi. Professor Sirohi is a Professor in the Department of Educational Administration at NIEPA in New Delhi. She is an expert in Educational Psychology, Organizational Behaviour, Educational Management, Skill Development, and Vocational Education. The



discussion included updates on Prof Sirohi's recent trip to Australia and the associated research and ongoing publications. From Dr Henderson's side, she updated Prof Sirohi on the development of the WAHEI project and on the formation and next steps for the Doctoral Education and Academia Research Centre that has been recently founded at Warwick.

## Day 21<sup>st</sup> November

### Visit to O. P. Jindal Global University

On 21<sup>st</sup> November, Dr Henderson visited O. P. Jindal Global University (JGU), facilitated by Dr Manika Bora. The purpose of the visit was to visit the state of Haryana (the research context of the first Fair Chance Foundation project), to learn more about the private sector in Indian HE, to discuss the WAHEI project with higher education experts at JGU and to renew the potential for collaboration with Dr Bora, who was involved in the previous project as a member of the Consultative Group. The day began with a campus tour followed by lunch with Dr Bora, and a discussion of data excerpts from the first project about gendered spatial HE choices in Haryana, which form the basis of a publication that Dr Henderson is leading on.

Following this, Dr Bora facilitated a group discussion with the following colleagues, based in the International Institute for Higher Education Research and Capacity Building (IIHEd), at Jindal Global University:

1. Dr Deepak Maun, Associate Professor
2. Dr Reshma Vats, Assistant Professor
3. Ms Gauri Khanna, PhD Student

The discussion ranged across issues of gendered HE access in Haryana and beyond, considering intersecting inequalities and current concerns such as employability. The discussion also connected issues in the academic profession with issues of HE access, due to Ms Khanna's doctoral study topic on gender and the academic profession in India. Also discussed was the topic of the WAHEI project, namely HE outreach and the potential for faculty members to engage in HE outreach. It was considered that this may pose an issue as faculty members are not necessarily held in high esteem in community settings, so how would HE outreach gain traction? The rich discussion concluded with a vote of thanks and a group photo. Following this, Dr Bora kindly hosted Dr Henderson at her home for dinner and Dr Henderson returned to Delhi in the evening.



Image 11: Dr Bora on the JGU Campus



Image 12: Group discussion at JGU



Image 13: Members of the JGU group discussion outside the campus

## Day 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> November

### Project planning and meetings at NIEPA, NIEPA Colloquium, departure

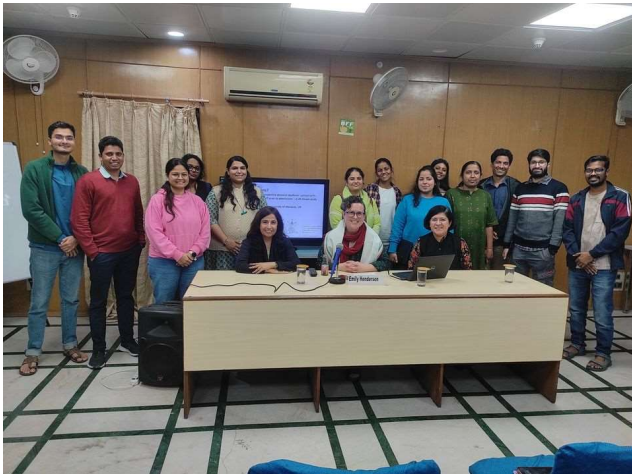
On 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> November, Dr Sabharwal, Dr Henderson and Ms Painuly worked intensively to address the feedback and suggestions from the SRTs at the RMW1. Work on the participant profiles, diary and other documents was completed, with amendments to the fieldwork manual and surveys/codebooks/codesheets to be completed in the following weeks.



Image 14: Dr Sabharwal, Dr Henderson & Ms Painuly

On 22<sup>nd</sup> November, Dr Henderson delivered a presentation in the NIEPA Colloquium seminar series, based on her research on doctoral admissions at Warwick ([www.warwick.ac.uk/padc](http://www.warwick.ac.uk/padc)). The event was presided over by Prof Sudhanshu Bhushan and Dr Manisha Priyum and Dr Sabharwal and was attended by NIEPA faculty and doctoral students. Prof Manisha Priyum is a Professor of Education Policy at NIEPA in New Delhi. She is an expert in education policy, development, and politics from a comparative perspective. Prof Bhushan is a Professor and the Head of the Department of Higher & Professional Education at NIEPA in New Delhi. He is an expert in Internationalization of Higher Education, Policy Issues in Higher Education, and Educational Planning. Dr Henderson was welcomed and felicitated with a ceremonial cloth. The talk, entitled “Access to admissions? Inclusivity implications of prospective doctoral students contact with faculty and administrative staff prior to admissions”, was met with enthusiasm by the audience,

many of whom had direct knowledge of UK doctoral admissions. Following the talk, Dr Henderson engaged in informal discussion during the tea with the doctoral students, learning about their diverse fascinating topics, and a group photo was taken.



*Image 15: Dr Henderson with attendees from the NIEPA Colloquium talk*



*Image 146: Dr Henderson is felicitated by Prof Bhushan*

On 22<sup>nd</sup> November, Dr Henderson met with Ms Sharmila Rathee, Delhi University, who was a member of the Consultative Group of the first Fair Chance Foundation project. Dr Henderson updated Ms Rathee about the WAHEI project and a discussion ensued of changing attitudes towards women's employability in Haryana, meaning that choices about HE are being made in a slightly different frame. On 23<sup>rd</sup> November, Dr Sabharwal kindly invited Dr Henderson to her home for a farewell dinner and visit debrief. On 24<sup>th</sup> November, Dr Henderson departed and returned to the UK after a highly productive visit.