

October 2018 Visit Report



University of Warwick, School of Law & Centre for Education Studies

# A Fair Chance for Education: Gendered Pathways to Educational Success in Haryana

## October 2018 Visit Report

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## 1. Summary of Visit Activities

Renu Yadav and Sharmila Rathee arrived to the University of Warwick on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2018 evening, welcomed by Anjali Thomas, and Nidhi Sabharwal arrived on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2018 evening.

On the Monday 8<sup>th</sup> morning the visitors were shown around the Law School and the Centre for Education Studies (CES). The tour ended with a meeting with Emma Smith, Head of Department in CES. Renu met with Justine Mercer from CES who works on gender and leadership in education. The visitors and the project team had lunch at the Radcliffe Conference Centre, followed by a **project meeting**. Thereafter, Nidhi, Emily, and Anjali discussed Anjali's fieldwork and her research fellow position at NIEPA. In the evening, Sharmila and Renu dined with colleagues from the Law School and Prabhuling K. Navadgi, Additional Solicitor General of India, who also happened to be visiting Warwick at the same time.

On the Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> morning, Renu, Nidhi and Sharmila met with Pontso Moorosi, who works on leadership and education, and with IAS Postdoctoral Fellow Anirudh Rana. The three visitors then presented their research in a **seminar on 'Challenges to Inclusion in Indian Education'**, supported by the Institute for Advanced Studies, the School of Law Centre for Human Rights in Practice, as well as CES. The seminar was chaired by Alison Struthers (Law). This was followed by a **reading meeting** during which the visitors and project team shared some thoughts about various readings on 'participatory research' which had been prepared in advance.



*Meeting with the Fair Chance Foundation*

On the Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>, the visitors and the project team headed to London for a **Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) event** where Renu, Nidhi, Sharmila, Anjali and Nikita, presented their research as part of the International Research and Researchers network

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events programme; the event was chaired by two of the network convenors, Emily from the project team and Josef Ploner from the University of Hull. This was followed by an afternoon tea **meeting with the Fair Chance Foundation**.

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> morning consisted of a **data analysis workshop** where the visitors and the team analysed some of the data collected during the pilot stage of the project. This was followed by a **supervision activity** in the afternoon where the visitors gave some feedback to CES PhD students presenting their research.

Finally on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> October, the visitor's attended Emily's **class on Postcolonial Theory**, engaging in a discussion with the students. This was followed by a farewell dinner hosted by Ann.

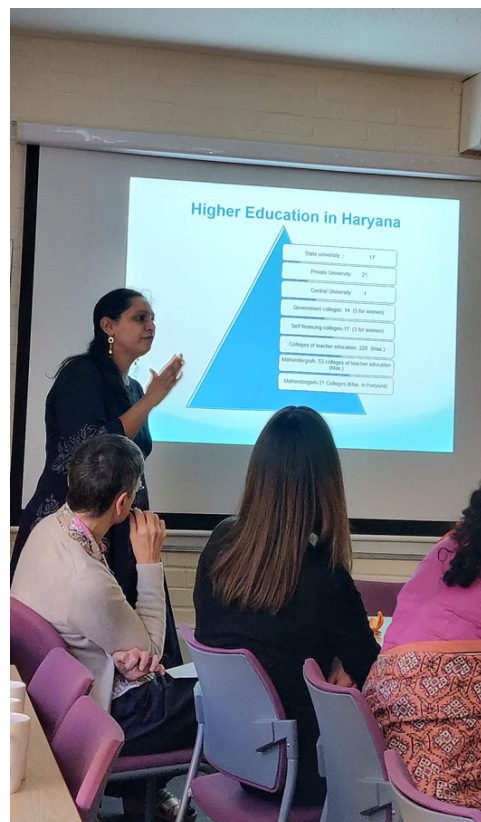
### 2. Key Points from Project Meeting

The project meeting (Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October) was attended by Renu Yadav, Nidhi Sabharwal, Sharmila Rathee, Ann Stewart, Emily Henderson, Anjali Thomas, Nikita Samanta, as well as Julie Mansuy. The meeting reviewed the schedule of activities for the week; discussed Anjali's fieldwork and Nikita's new arrival within the Law School; the future of the project, in particular the 'programme of action'.

### 3. Seminar on 'Challenges to Inclusion in Indian Education'

The seminar (9<sup>th</sup> October) on 'Challenges to Inclusion in Indian Education' was hosted by the Centre For Education Studies, the Centre for Human Rights in Practice and the Centre for Advanced Studies. Renu Yadav from Central University Haryana presented her research on 'Gender Mapping in Higher Education' and discussed the various challenges faced by women in Higher Education in Jammu. Nidhi Sabharwal from NIEPA presented her findings from her project on 'Student Diversity and Social Inclusion'. Her findings highlight the challenges in promoting diversity and inclusion on campuses in India. Sharmila Rathee from University of Delhi presented findings from her doctoral research on the areas of social class in education and the experiences of school children from economically weaker backgrounds.

The seminar was very well attended attracting a diverse audience. It was also very well received with lively discussions after each presentation.



*Renu Yadav Presenting at the 'Challenges to Inclusion in Indian Education' Seminar*



## Challenges to Inclusion in Indian Education

*Tuesday 9th October 2018, 1–2:30PM*

*S2.09 Warwick School of Law, Social Studies*

**WARWICK**  
LAW SCHOOL



**Dr Renu Yadav (Central University Haryana) on 'Gender Mapping in Higher Education: Making Women 'Saksham''**



**Dr Nidhi Sabharwal (NIEPA) on 'Student Diversity and Social Inclusion: An Empirical Analysis of Higher Education Institutions in India'**



**Ms Sharmila Rathee (University of Delhi) on 'Social Class in Education: Experiences of students from Economically Weaker Section in an Elite Private School in Delhi'**

**Chair: Dr Alison Struthers (Warwick Law School)**



This seminar is organised by the Fair Chance for Education Project and is supported by the Centre for Education Studies, the Centre for Human Rights in Practice, and the Institute for Advanced Studies.

*Poster for 'Challenges to Inclusion in Indian Education' Seminar*



#### **4. Reading Meeting**

The aim of the meeting was to share and then use publications on participatory research methods as a basis for discussion. Anjali in consultation with our visiting colleagues identified 5 readings which were shared in advance among the group. Readings ranged from participatory action research in public schools in Haryana; a study of women's safety in public spaces in Rohtak, Haryana; working with teams of 'insider' researcher in qualitative research in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa; and two more general, critical analyses of knowledge generation in contexts of unequal power relationships. Both addressed the meaning of participation within research that focuses on Global South and post-colonial contexts. The group used the readings to consider power relations within participatory research methods with particular reference to our project. We discussed the complex web of power relations that exist among those involved in the project. It is based within a Global North institution (both Principal Investigator and Co Investigator employed there) yet relies on a wide range of collaborations in Haryana in particular. We discussed the strategies adopted to try to make the project as participatory and consultative as possible within these confines via the institutional partners, the Research Advisory Group and the Consultative Group, while recognising the limitations. We related these back to the issues raised in the readings particularly the article which critiques participatory development as a form of neo imperialism and postcoloniality. We recognised that the action-oriented focus of our project raised particular challenges in this context. Anjali described the methods that she has chosen to use for her fieldwork which we agreed were very appropriate for our project.

#### **5. Society for Research into Higher Education event**

On 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018 Emily Henderson organised a seminar at Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) on Higher Education in India: Institutional and Social Hierarchies. Our Project partner Nidhi Sabharwal presented a paper on the Indian Higher education system and the changes it has been experiencing in recent years. She gave particular attention to issues of massification and institutional preparedness to handle a more diverse and inclusive student body. The second presentation was made by our doctoral student Anjali Thomas on the different student experiences of inequalities from Higher Education Institutions in India. Her presentation explored experiences of caste-based discrimination and prejudices and linked these with social media blogs and discourses by students in Indian Universities on Caste-based discrimination, student suicides and the #metoo and #himtoo movement in Indian academia.

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*SRHE Event in London*

These two presentations were followed by a panel of speakers including Sharmila Rathee, Renu Yadav and Nikita Samanta. Sharmila presented a paper on Social Identity, Stigma and In-group Identification experiences by students from Scheduled caste and disability groups. She suggested that as reactions to threatened identity events, members of stigmatized and devalued groups may engage in various social identity processes to protect identity and maintain sense of security. Nikita drew from her personal experience of working with India's largest philanthropic initiative and premier institution of higher education to talk about challenges to popularising liberal education in India, especially for women, and the experience of helping set up a unique and multidisciplinary institution in the National Capital Region. Renu talked about Leadership in Higher Education and the experiences of women engaged in leadership positions in University and colleges of Haryana. She argued that family support, especially relationships with marital household, was found as major positive contributing factor in managing work life balance in middle class families. Her study also found that networking for professional growth and biased perception of higher authorities were main challenges in accepting administrative roles in higher education institutions of Haryana.

All the presentations generated much interest from the participants. Both the presenters and all three of the panellists were asked a number of questions about different facets of higher education in India, such as privatisation, growth of private universities, student experiences, student politics and institutional preparedness to address the needs of an increasingly diverse student body. After the final round of questions and answers, the participants were divided into three groups and asked to discuss how the presentations changed



*Nikita Samanta Presenting at SRHE*

their perceptions about higher education in India and how the experiences and content of the presentations were similar and different from their own experiences and observations in their respective higher education institutions. This generated a lively discussion among the participants and the Fair Chance for Education team.

### **6. Meeting with the Fair Chance Foundation**

The group (our visitors and the Warwick team) were invited to join our funder Sumir Karayai and his colleague William Edmondson for afternoon tea at the St Pancras Hotel in London. We all enjoyed the cakes, tea and other refreshments while sharing experiences and updates on the project in a relaxed environment. We all greatly appreciated Sumir and Will's hospitality and their continuing interest in the project.

### **7. Data analysis workshop**

A data analysis workshop took place on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018. It was organised to discuss some of the interview transcripts from the pilot study. Present were the visitors, the project team members and Somak Biswas, a PhD student in History who completed the transcription of the interviews. Having signed a confidentiality agreement, four interview transcripts were given in hard copy to the three visitors and the two PhD students; these transcripts were collected after the workshop to ensure data security. The workshop participants were asked in advance to read their assigned transcript and to summarise the background information of the participant. The following discussion focused on where gender emerged in each transcript, how the family was referred to, and – in anticipation of narrative analysis – the degree to which participants included anecdotes and narratives within their responses. One woman student and one man student were covered from each case study college. Somak was invited to contribute to the discussion, given his overview of the whole data set from the transcription process.

Transport emerged as a major issue affecting access to higher education, in terms of regularity of transport, type of transport, and perceptions of safety in relation to transport. There were also questions raised in relation to subject of study, with a preference shown for sciences in terms of desirability. Some students were excluded from pursuing sciences due to the availability of subjects at school level. Science tends to be taught in English and is therefore also layered with further esteem. There were discussions of extra-curricular activities, in terms of the cadet corps and other opportunities, which are seen as desirable as some are credit-bearing, some involve activities beyond the college campus, and some lead to reservations in jobs so have an employability angle. In relation to family, sibling position was raised as an important issue. Immediate family members, the peer group and neighbours were perceived as important influences for access to higher education, choice of college and discipline. Other issues emerged at an individual level for participants, such as parents' expectations that their children will exceed their own level of education, and eg. an elder sister being a trailblazer in the family, which then opened up a pathway for the younger sister. Furthermore participants displayed interesting views in relation to gender and higher education which will also need to be analysed in addition to their accounts of their own lives. Finally there was varied scope for narrative analysis as some participants frequently used anecdotes while others gave more factual answers. In general it was perceived that the pilot



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phase data was rich and was a promising source of initial information relating to the overall project aims.



*Data Analysis Workshop at the University of Warwick*

### 8. Supervision activity

On 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018, the visitors were also introduced to five doctoral students from the Centre for Education Studies at the University of Warwick. The purpose of this meeting was to share and showcase the diverse PhD research studies and how students face different kinds of challenges and use innovative methods in their respective doctoral research studies. Krystal Douglas from UK talked about her research on Friendships, Networks and Aspirations to Higher Education. She gave the group a glimpse of one of the participatory activities she has conducted with her participants who are school students involving maps and labels to study networks, mobility and knowledge about higher education. This was followed by an interesting presentation by Anar Mukhtarova from Kazakhstan on the Kazakh higher education system and leadership practices of women heads of department in the Universities of Kazakhstan. The next presentation was by Tongtong Zhao from China on her largely quantitative Investigation into gender differences in participation in higher education in Cameroon. This was followed by a brief presentation by Xuemeng Cao from China who is using a qualitative diary method to study how Chinese International students in Taught Masters Social Science courses in UK are Enhancing their Employability. The Final Presentation was by Humeyra Guleryuz Erken from Turkey whose quantitative research is comparing the Attitudes towards Respect Among Secondary School Students in Turkey and England. The three visitors were very interested in all five of the presentations and asked very engaging questions. There was a very passionate and lively discussion at the end of each

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presentation. The PhD students also asked the visitors about their understanding of the Indian Higher education system and issues of caste and gender inequalities in India. It was a very interesting exercise and the PhD students later reported that they found that they enjoyed the exercise and that they felt that it was beneficial to them in terms of developing ideas and knowledge about International and Indian educational concerns.

### 9. Class on Postcolonial Theory



*Sharmila Rathee Answering Questions in Emily Henderson's Class*

On Friday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018, the final official day of the visit, Sharmila Rathee, Nidhi Sabharwal and Renu Yadav along with PhD student Anjali Thomas joined Emily Henderson's MA class (Module EQ923 Understanding Global Education and International Development). The session was on postcolonial theory and global education, and involved a mixture of lecture-style content and interactive elements. The visitors were able to observe the session to see how Master's level teaching works in the UK. Secondly, the final half hour slot of the session was reserved for the visitors to contribute a Q&A to the session. Firstly, each visitor gave a short reflection based on their impressions from the session. Some of the class discussion had focused on oral traditions as opposed to written traditions, and one of the visitors referred to the oral traditions that are also prevalent in the indigenous population of India (Adivasis). The session had also incorporated a substantial discussion of the English language as a dominant global force which has colonial overtones. The visitors also reflected on the relevance of this discussion in the Indian context, where the differing status of English, Hindi and regional languages across social groups and regions of India impacts on the ways in which the education system is organised and how learning and teaching are enacted. One of

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the visitors also reflected on the hybrid nature of some educational institutions, where for example a school may be based on the work of an Indian philosopher but operate using pedagogy or materials developed in the US. Some students also asked questions to the panel and regrettably the session was over too soon!

### 10. Next Steps

The next steps for the project include Anjali going on her fieldwork research between October 2018 and April 2019. Emily will also be visiting India in February 2019 which will include a Consultative Group Meeting. Ann will travel to India as well, but later in the year, and that visit will comprise a Research Advisory Group Meeting. Regarding the pilot phase data, the analysis is ongoing.