

Max Weber Foundation Transnational Research Group - India

**“Poverty Reduction and Policy for the Poor between the State and Private Actors:
Education Policy in India since the Nineteenth Century”**

The Transnational Research Group will host an international conference on

**Poverty and Education from the Nineteenth Century to the Present:
India and Comparative Perspectives**

Venue: German Historical Institute London, 17 Bloomsbury Square, London
King's College London, Strand, London

Date: 27-29 September 2017

The Transnational Research Group on Poverty and Education in India would like to mark the end of its five-year funding period by discussing processes studied by the group in India in a wider comparative and interdisciplinary perspective. Research within the TRG concentrated primarily on seven designated research areas, namely on 1) nineteenth- and twentieth-century global educational reform movements; 2) the role of the private sector and of edu-business in the quest for universal elementary/school education; 3) caste discrimination and education policy; 4) the consequences of industrial restructuring, informalization of labour for access to elementary education; 5) education of the rural poor; 6) adult education and the popularisation of practical scientific knowledge; 7) the resignification of manual labour in industrial and technical institutions; 8) the impact of schooling on life histories.

This conference proposes to look at the overall topic of “Poverty and Education” in a way which allows us to look at themes which cut across some of these research areas and lend themselves to international comparisons. The following broad topics are suggested, which can be broken down into two or three subpanels of the conference:

1. “Poverty and education in nineteenth- and twentieth-century **intellectual and scholarly debates**”. Panels could focus on
 - poverty and education as a topic of educational theory and ‘surrounding’ anthropological (e.g. on equality), sociological (e.g. on social inclusion and mobility) and political (e.g. on democracy) discourses;
 - what sort of education and knowledge is most beneficial for the poor / render the most beneficial for society at large (eg. ‘Reformpädagogik’;
 - debates on vocational training, Kerschensteiner etc.) and educating the rural poor;
 - the intellectual foundations of specific didactics for the poor and empirical classroom research;
 - the emergence of an international discourse and of international experts on this topic, its institutions and comparative research agendas.
2. **Actors ‘from above’**: Subpanels could focus on
 - the particular framework (e.g. nation building) in which ‘the state’, i.e. politicians and civil servants function as major actors in extending compulsory schooling
 - on the steps through which they tried to implement it and on the type of results they envisaged;
 - the rise of edu-business, its commercial strategies and institutional links to academia and politics

- technical solutions to mass education;
 - social and political reform movements as important agents in the education of the poor, frequently critical of both the state and commercial education, but also frequently interacting with both of them.
3. **Actors 'from below'**: Subpanels could focus on
- Social movements for education of the poor;
 - lower class/lower caste experiences with schooling;
 - their expression of needs and experiences of failures and success;
 - gender perspectives and female emancipation through schooling;
 - the rural poor
 - neighbourhoods and schools
 - technology and education
 - alternative education for the poor
4. Education of the poor and the **professionalization of jobs, formalisation of vocational training** / requirements for professional careers. Subpanels could focus on
- the formalisation of vocational training;
 - formal qualifications and the geographical transferability of skills/new career paths through spatial mobility
 - new forms of exclusion of the poor through formalisation of vocational training;
 - changing social relations / hierarchies on shop floor

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