Transnational Research Group

Poverty and Education in India

Annual Report 2015
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The third year of the Transnational Research Group “Poverty and Education” in India was in many ways a year of particular progress and transition: in 2015 our first cohort of PhD students went on their last archival research trips, and are now in the final stage of their theses which are to be submitted in the course of 2016. We are very much looking forward to the completion of the theses and wish the students the best of luck for this crucial year of their fellowship. There is still another cohort of PhD fellows who only started in the second year of the TRG and will complete in 2017, but in general the initial focus of the Transnational Research Group on co-supervising PhD students will gradually become less prominent in our work as the TRG has only a five-year funding period. For the remaining period we have collectively decided instead to shift the emphasis of our collaboration towards shorter postdoctoral research projects and towards a major collaborative research project of the TRG’s principal investigators. The collaborative project is on key moments and developments in the history of education and educational policy towards the poor in India during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As one outcome of this project we intend to publish online a major scholarly edition of key sources. This edition will be accompanied by series of articles and working papers on the new source material.

The TRG is primarily a co-operation between individual academics from Britain, Germany and India, and is institutionally based on a partnership programme between the German Historical Institute London and the American Institute of Indian Studies in Delhi. However, we are very pleased to be able to say that the TRG-office in Delhi was also instrumental in assisting the Max Weber Foundation, the umbrella organisation to which the German Historical Institute London belongs and by which the TRG is funded, to open its own Branch Office in Delhi in December 2014. We marked this achievement with a seminar and research meeting in February 2015. It was a particular pleasure that the outgoing President of the Max Weber Foundation, Professor Heinz Duchhardt, and the Chief Executive Director, Dr Harald Rosenbach were able to attend the opening ceremonies. I would like to take this opportunity and thank Professor Duchhardt and Dr Rosenbach and all members of staff in Bonn, Delhi and London who have not only contributed to the successful running of the TRG, but also to the completion of this long-drawn-out process of opening the Max Weber Foundation Branch Office in Delhi for their continuous help and engagement.

The India Branch Office of the Max Weber Foundation in Delhi will serve as the administrative hub for a new collaborative project to which this Transnational Research Group will also contribute – an International Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, which the German Ministry for Education and Research has initiated as a collaborative German-Indian research programme under a joint German and Indian directorship. TRG members from German and Indian universities and research institutions are also involved in this new project which has received funding from the German ministry for a trial period of two years. It remains to be seen whether this new project will take off and reach a main funding phase of up to ten years. However, we note with satisfaction that the TRG has contributed to explore also new avenues of international cooperation in the field of humanities and social sciences. I very much hope this will continue.
I

General Report

Indra Sengupta, Academic Coordinator
The Transnational Research Group (TRG) “Poverty Reduction and Policy for the Poor between the State and Private Actors: Education Policy in India since the Nineteenth century” at GHI London, which is funded by the Max Weber Stiftung, has been active since 1 January 2013. The TRG has an inter-disciplinary research agenda focusing on seven designated research areas, to be studied by senior scholars and junior researchers from the disciplines of history, education, and educational sociology: 1) Nineteenth and twentieth-century global educational reform movements and their impact on universal schooling in India; 2) The quest for universal elementary/school education, the private sector and edu-business; 3) Caste discrimination and education policy; 4) Industrial restructuring, informalization, and their consequences for access to elementary education; 5) Adult education and the popularisation of practical scientific knowledge; 6) Industrial and technical institutions and the resignification of manual labour; 7) The impact of schooling on life histories.

Two new postdoctoral fellows, Mili and Smita Gandotra, joined the TRG in the report year; both were based at the King’s College London. Smita Gandotra had to terminate her fellowship one month before the end, due to reasons related to leave from employment in India. Two postdoctoral fellows left the programme: Sunandan K. N. left the TRG at the end of June this year to join the Azim Premji University as a lecturer. Kaustubh Mani Sengupta’s fellowship ended in October this year. He has been appointed lecturer at Bankura University.

No further fully-funded PhD grants were awarded in the report year. In their place, a short-term research grant for archival research in Britain for a period of 2-4 months was introduced. Akash Bhattacharya (JNU) and Vikas Gupta (Delhi University) were awarded the grant for 4 and 3 months respectively. Vikas Gupta availed of the grant in the current year while Akash Bhattacharya will start the fellowship in 2016.

In the report year, four visiting fellowships of 1-2 months each at GHI London were awarded. Two of these were awarded to Janaki Nair from JNU, Pradip Kumar Datta (University of Delhi), and Sarada Balagopalan from CSDS/Rutgers University respectively. A new feature of the visiting fellowships in the current year was the award of a junior visiting fellowship to an early-career scholar. The junior fellowship was awarded to Manish
Jain (Ambedkar University). Pradip Datta and Manish Jain will join the fellowships next year. For the first time the TRG/MWS Branch Office in Delhi became host to the Gerald D Feldman fellows of the Max Weber Stiftung. Eva Ehninger from the University of Bern became the first Feldman fellow to be hosted by the TRG in Delhi.

The fellowship scheme of the TRG was revised at the meeting of the group in November this year. It was decided that in the final two years of the TRG the following fellowships would be awarded: postdoctoral fellowships, albeit for 6-12 months, short-term (2-4 months) archival research grants for PhD scholars to the UK, and visiting fellowships of 1-2 months for both early-career and established scholars at the GHI London. The new round of fellowships has been advertised and selections will take place in early 2016.

Of the other research projects of the TRG, field work and oral interviews of the pilot study of the oral history project Documenting the lives of the urban poor with a specific reference to the links between poverty and education: a set of interviews (Janaki Nair, JNU) was completed. The data has been provisionally stored both electronically and physically at the TRG office in Delhi, pending final archiving. Some of the research assistants who conducted the interviews have agreed to write research articles based on the data collected. These, along with excerpts from the interviews and an introduction by the Principal Investigator, will be published shortly on the website. Further TRG projects, such as Schooling, Disadvantage and Privilege: Choices, strategies and practices of poor and middle class families (Geetha Nambissan, JNU), and Documenting Aakash – the android-based tablet computer project (Jahnavi Phalkey) have made substantial progress.

The new project Key Moments of Education Policy towards the Poor, a series of smaller projects spearheaded by several Principal Investigators of the TRG and coordinated by Jana Tschurenev, TRG postdoctoral fellow at CeMIS Göttingen, took off in the report year. The common aim of the project is to question established chronologies of educational developments for the poor and the disempowered in modern India (see report by Jana Tschurenev). Four research associates and two research assistants were appointed in India and Germany respectively.
The first batch of the TRG’s online Working Paper Series, which deals with the problems of poverty and education in contemporary India, and is simultaneously published on the TRG website and www.perspectivia.net is now complete, with a total of 6 papers published. The papers, which will subsequently be published in an edited volume, can be accessed under the following links:

www.ghil.ac.uk/trg_poverty_and_education/publications.html

www.perspectivia.net/publikationen/trg-working-papers

In the report year the workshops of the TRG were integrated into broader research platforms that provided the TRG fellows the opportunity to engage with international scholars working on the theme and showcase their research in international contexts. In February, the fellows presented their research projects to a wide audience at a seminar and panel discussion that took place in Delhi on 14 February 2015. This was a part of the official launch of the India Branch Office of the Max Weber Stiftung, through which the TRG’s project is run in Delhi. Several TRG fellows organised and presented their research at a TRG Round Table at the Society for the History of Children and Youth Conference in Vancouver on 24-26 June 2015 (see report by Arun Kumar). The TRG continued to provide intensive research guidance to the fellows: the new entrants to the programme were given the opportunity to present and discuss their work with all Principal Investigators and fellows at a TRG internal workshop in Delhi on 13 February 2015. The group met again in Delhi in November this year for a comprehensive workshop to discuss the progress of the research projects of the PhD and postdoctoral scholars. Comments and feedback provided by the group as a whole remain an important feature of the group’s work, which has proved to be much valued by the fellows, especially on the PhD level. The Key Moments project was also intensively discussed at these workshops.

In addition to the TRG internal workshops the big event of the year was the seminar and panel discussions organised to celebrate the launch of the MWS India Branch Office in February 2015 (see report by Divya Kannan). The one-day event, which consisted of two TRG panels on the individual research projects and the Key Moments project respectively,
and a broad panel on Education for the Poor: The Politics of Poverty and Social Justice, was very well attended by academics and researchers from the field from prominent universities and research institutes in Delhi. The speakers included Marcelo Caruso (Institute of Education Studies, Humboldt University, Berlin), Kalpana Kannabiran (Council for Social Development, Hyderabad), Krishna Kumar (Department of Education, University of Delhi) and Crain Soudien (School of Education, University of Cape Town). The keynote lecture that followed was delivered by Carlos Alberto Torres, Professor of Education and Director, Paulo Freire Institute, University of California, Los Angeles.

The TRG lectures continued in the report year. On 27 May Manish Jain (Ambedkar University, Delhi) gave a talk at CeMIS Göttingen on ‘Character, Citizenship and Civics in Late Colonial India (1918-1947)’. On 26 November TRG Principal Investigator Rupa Viswanath (CeMIS Göttingen) gave a talk at the India International Centre Delhi on ‘Hard Lessons: Poverty, Caste and Education in South India’. The latter was part of the TRG workshop in Delhi.

The Branch Office of the Max Weber Stiftung in Delhi was formally registered as a legal entity with the permission to conduct research in India. It also got an independent bank account. Finally, with the successful bid of a consortium led, among others, by the Max Weber Stiftung/ GHIL, the TRG became a part of the newly established, BMBF-funded centre for advanced studies ICAS (International Centre of Advanced Studies) in Delhi, within the modular structure of the overarching research theme Metamorphosis of the Political. Through the establishment of ICAS, which shares the TRG’s administrative office in Delhi, the Delhi Branch Office of the Max Weber Stiftung and the TRG acquired a programme officer, Himanshu Chawla. Rohan Seth, the TRG’s office manager, will in addition act as office manager for ICAS. These two positions will be shared equally by the TRG and ICAS. The TRG works closely with ICAS, whose Deputy Director Dr Elvira Graner shares the office of the Max Weber Stiftung and is affiliated to the group.
II

Project Reports
A Script for the Masses? Pedagogic Practices and Didactic Traditions among Sylhetis

Debarati Bagchi, Postdoctoral Fellow

Project Synopsis

My postdoctoral research explores the proliferation of printed texts in Sylheti-Bangla written in the Sylhet Nagri script commonly known to be popular among the ‘poor rural Muslims’, especially women, in the Sylhet-Cachar region. Fallen into disuse eventually, the script had an interesting career in the colonial world of print capitalism. Before coming to print, circulation of the texts depended on copying and recopying by hand among the readers. Once brought to print, the alphabets were standardised. The very facts that Nagri was brought out of the confinements of the pre-print networks of circulation, standardised and made suitable as printed letters, speaks of the emerging interest of the educated literati in popularising the script from 1870s onwards. And it was marketed solely on the basis of its ‘simplicity’. The standard claim was that this script was less complex than the standard Bengali script and phonetically closer to spoken Sylheti. Its entire pedagogic endeavour was to bridge the gap between the written (lekhya bhasha) and the spoken (kathya bhasha) and thereby meeting one of the preconditions of democratisation of education – the concern for reaching out to a larger mass. During the late nineteenth-early twentieth century, quite a good number of texts were published in the Sylhet Nagri characters. However, the script never got inserted in the curricula of any school, pathsala or madrasa. A study of these texts therefore allows us to look into pedagogic practices beyond the ambit of institutional and formal education.

In a way, this project is thus an exploration of the idea of ‘mass literacy’ outside the already formalised colonial school based education system. It involves a study of these texts to understand what kinds of ideas and knowledge were circulated and how the plebeian was ‘incorporated’ in these pedagogic practices. It tries to trace back the networks of circulation and consumption. Also, the research relies on recollections and memories about the rituals and practices of reading and efforts of preserving the texts. My method is thus archival and ethnographic, antiquarian as well as contemporary. The research addresses a few overarching questions that are crucial for a wider and critical understanding of the notion of teaching and disciplining of the poor: how the script enabled a kind of ‘literacy of the poor’, how the texts
led to the constitution of a plebeian communicative network by creating a moral ethical world and what kind of subject formation was facilitated by the moral teachings embedded in the texts. It aims to understand how these texts helped constitute a new public, creating a new social world shaped and educated by the texts.

**Work done in Report Year**

**Field Research:**
I have spent two and a half months in Bangladesh both for ethnographic and archival research. I met a few people in Dhaka and Sylhet who can still read the script or preserve interesting memories of reading practices. There is a recent upsurge in archiving, reprinting and reviving the Sylhet Nagri texts. During my visit to Bangladesh, I have tried to follow the trail of these efforts. ‘Utso’, a publication house that specializes in books on Sylhet, was making a documentary film on Sylhet Nagri. While in Bangladesh, I accompanied their documentary team to the interiors of the district and observed the interviewing and shooting very closely.

To complement my ethnographic research, I have started my work at the library of Kendriya Muslim Sahitya Sansad in Sylhet and consulted periodicals like *Srihatta Sahitya Parisat Patrika, Al Islah* and *Nao Belal* for the period covering 1930s and 1940. I have chiefly consulted articles dealing with Sylhet Nagri in particular and the question of Sylheti vis-à-vis Bengali language in general.

In Kolkata I worked at the (a) School of Cultural Texts and Records, Jadavpur University, to consult their collection of Sylhet Nagri texts as well as photographs, field recordings and video footage of people from villages of Cachar who could still read and write the script, (b) Jyotindramohan Collection of the National Council of Education, Bengal to consult periodicals and books published from Sylhet, (c) National Library to consult a few late nineteenth – early twentieth century periodicals.

**Reading of Texts:**
After developing a preliminary overview of the Sylhet Nagri texts, I have tried to tentatively catalogue them under a few overarching genres.
Initially, I have selected a few texts representative of each genre to formulate and substantiate the chief research questions that my project aims to address. Through a nuanced reading of these texts, I try to unravel how they initiated people in particular ways of living and being, educate them about what is proper and what is inappropriate behaviour. Apart from the content of these texts, I also carry out a scrutiny of the title pages, advertisement pages, publishers’ notes (with a list of publications) and appendix that often reveal a few significant dimensions about the authorship, readership and circulation.

**Publications, conferences attended, talks relevant to project**


**PROJECT SYNOPSIS**

The project focuses on a diverse body of instructional literature for women, which began to appear in the 1870s in Hindi. This corpus of didactic novels, advice books, conduct manuals, instructive tales, moral essays and journals, presents us with a rich archive from which to track the debate on women’s education in colonial north India. The term *stri shiksha* (women’s education) occurs fairly frequently as a title in this literature. My project is invested in understanding the contours the term *stri shiksha* takes between the years 1870 and 1930. The term came to be used first in response to, and later contradistinction from, the colonial government’s policy on female education, its establishment of girls’ schools, and promotion of a culture of textbooks.

**WORK DONE IN REPORT YEAR**

During the period January to November 2015, I have conducted archival research at the British Library, London. This research has unfolded at multiple levels.

I have assessed the first textbooks published for women by the Government Press in Allahabad in the 1860s and 1870s. I have also been assessing colonial records on female education. The colonial government’s investment in female education for the period under consideration remained sporadic and uneven, and received severe setbacks in the 1880s, when they withdrew funds from female schools. Scholarly assessments of these records have more often than not focussed on statistical returns. For instance, in 1883, the year when a major educational review was undertaken, the percentage of girls and women under instruction in the North Western Provinces was much lower than the national average of 0.25%. My particular focus has been the ‘Progress of Education’ reports, filed by the various Directors of Public Instruction. These reports present a more complex picture of what was unfolding at the ground level. Many different kinds of people - colonial officials, the native intelligentsia and missionaries - were invested in female education, and these investments took multiple and fairly inventive forms. Textbooks for girls and women were written within this environment and published by both the Government Press and by smaller presses from Bareilly, Agra and Aligarh. Colonial records partially register how these textbooks were circulated, when and how they were used in schools, whether they may have circulated more widely, and the reasons why they may have been replaced as curricula changed and the meaning of ‘education’ shifted.

As the work progressed, smaller case studies presented a more differentiated
picture on female education. I decided to focus on Bareilly. This focus enabled me to distil a narrative from a non-canonical and relatively small location, where initiatives in female education by a small voluntary association (comprising Hindus and Muslims) was significant. Bareilly has a long history of sectarian conflict. It is against this backdrop of a fractious social environment that the composite character of the Rohilkhand Literary Society (RLS) gains significance. The RLS was established as a voluntary association in 1865. By 1869, when it began to print books for women, its membership had grown to 46.

The RLS’s initiative and enterprise in the matter of female education took shape in the 1870s, when they printed seven books for women. These books went into multiple reprints and were priced cheaply; some of them were distributed from the Government Book Depot in Allahabad. The books vary greatly in content, idiom and format. Therefore, although colonial policy dictated to some extent the pace and the initiative towards print culture for women, the character of the books in circulation was decided at a more local and immediate level.

The Bareilly books reflect the composite character of the voluntary association in an acute manner - they draw upon Avadhi, Sanskrit, Perso-Arabic, English and Bengali sources. *Stri shiksha* aligns differently and is inflected in distinctive ways within each source tradition. The multiplicity of models presented here is a function of the search for an appropriate ‘textbook’ idiom for women’s education; it is also crucially tied to the experimental early stages of female schools in the 1870s.

By the 1880s, educational initiatives received a severe setback in Bareilly, as they did across the North Western Provinces. The books have survived, and remind us of the print culture within which the first generation of women readers was fashioned in this region.

**Publications, Conferences Attended, Talks Relevant to Project**


‘*Stri Shiksha: Towards a Conceptual History*, Fifth TRG Poverty and Education in India Workshop, New Delhi, 25-28 November 2015.

I have drafted my findings on the Rohilkhand Literary Society, Bareilly, into a journal article, under review with the *Indian Economic and Social History Review*. 
My postdoctoral project ethnographically explores how Employee Training Programs (ETPs) are deployed by organized retail and service industries in Kolkata, India as pedagogical sites for fashioning an emergent urban worker-subjectivity amongst underclass urban youth employees. Since the collapse of Kolkata’s industrial bases, entry-level jobs in the rapidly expanding organized retail and service industries offer the best hopes for formal employment for the city’s under-privileged youth populations. Unlike the mechanical/cognitive skills required in industrial factories, service work in spaces such as shopping malls, high-end cafes or multi-cuisine restaurants today increasingly utilize the workers’ generalized social skills. What ETPs strive for is a complete re-making of the worker-subjectivity by inculcating the ideals and practices of global consumerism that the workers are then expected to convey to customers in service spaces. Simultaneously, ETPs seek to erase the visible traces of the workers’ socio-economic vulnerabilities from their bodies, deportments, speech patterns or forms of social interaction.

Drawing on ethnographic research in three organized retail institutions in Kolkata, I suggest that the consumer citizenship norms emphasized by ETPs generate unanticipated frictions between the social realities of urban youth labour and aspirations for consumerism. For workers, low wages, diminishing employment securities or exhausting working conditions rub uneasily against the ‘dream-world’ of commodities and images of the capitalist good-life that ETPs teach them to aspire for. This abiding tension offers me a productive lens to read the uneven assimilation of underclass youth populations in India within networks of global consumerism. My research investigates how corporate institutions like ETPs mobilize a disciplined post-industrial labour by modulating subjective desires and fantasies for consumerist life-styles amongst India’s urban poor. Moreover, I ask what kinds of urban subjectivities are being produced at the fault-lines between pervasive global consumerist cultures and persistent post-colonial conditions of social inequalities in contemporary Indian cities.

WORK DONE IN REPORT YEAR

I began the postdoctoral fellowship with the TRG in September 2014. The following is a report of the work done from January – December 2015.

January - February 2015
Drawing up of Research Plan for 2015: During this period, I was based
in CeMIS, Göttingen. I was mainly concerned with editing and preparing two articles (one co-authored) for submission. Along with this I was preparing a plan of research for my upcoming fieldwork in India in 2015. I also presented my project proposal and initial research findings at the TRG workshop in New Delhi in February.

**March – May 2015**

I did extensive fieldwork during this period on ETPs connected with the retail and service industries in Kolkata. Apart from participant observation of several ETP sessions in detail and collating teaching materials used for the ETPs, I also interviewed nine female and six male student participants in ETPs. In addition I had the opportunity to conduct semi-structured interviews with five training managers who were in charge of conducting ETP sessions.

**June – December 2015**

I was based in CeMIS, Göttingen and utilized this period to prepare to complete the final revisions for my upcoming publications. In addition I also had the opportunity to present my TRG project at several venues, including at the TRG workshop held in New Delhi in November 2015. I will now highlight some of the key publications and presentations that I was involved with during this period.

New Research: Since March 2015, I have initiated a new research project on the proliferation of training institutes ranging from Film and Television Acting Schools, Modeling Academies, Air Hostess Training Institutions that impart professional grooming and acting skills to mostly young women entering the leisure and entertainment industry in Kolkata. From interviews conducted from March to May 2015, I came to know that many of the female students come to these institutes for short-term courses (ranging from 3 – 6 months) hoping to find employment in television serials, anchors for television programs, low to medium budget modeling assignments or employment in the retail and hospitality sectors. Often coming from small towns and rural regions of West Bengal, these students are given a variety of training ranging from voice modulation, soft-skill training regarding physical appearances, fashion trends and acting skills to prepare them for finding a foothold in the city’s expanding entertainment industries. Through life-history interviews, I intend to use this research to reflect upon how conditions of post-industrial work is creating a specific kind of gendered and precarious labor-force for certain niche employment.
Publications, conferences attended, talks relevant to project

Publications:


Finally, I have submitted for review an essay ‘The Caste Complaint: New labor for New Town?’ to the journal American Anthropologist.

Conferences and talks:

‘Transforming Work: Training Programs and Retail Worker-Identity in Contemporary Kolkata’, Fourth TRG Poverty and Education in India Workshop, New Delhi, 13 February 2015.


‘Politics as Nostalgia or Death of the Properly Political? – Re-framing Student Politics in Contemporary Kolkata’ presented in CeMIS Workshop, Marginality and the Politics of Mediation organized by Dr. Devika Bordia and Dr. Uday Chandra, 3-4 July 2015.

My study examines the guiding ideas of pedagogy in Indian policy texts that have been adopted by the central government as part of strategies to reform the provision of education for the poor. The child-centred approach characterizes these pedagogical reforms of the last two decades, and is manifested in terms including 'child centered education', 'child friendly', and 'activity based learning'. This study traces their origins and interpretation as social-scientific theories in order to evaluate their influence on the conceptualisation of teachers' work. It also examines what the emergence of these guiding ideas means for teaching expertise, given a philosophical understanding of the nature and role of teachers' professional judgments.

In this first half of the postdoc, I have worked on developing a conceptual framework for the study using the relevant literature in philosophy and education, besides teacher education blueprints in comparative contexts (e.g. England). This sets the stage for analysing policy documents on pedagogy and teachers' education – the main focus of the study.

I have also studied ideas related to science and scientism in pedagogy in the philosophical literature. Leading from this, I have begun to explore the generative context of ideas surrounding teaching techniques, teachers' practical knowledge, and the place of ethics therein. I aim to link this context to the interpretations of the terms found in Indian policy documents (e.g. child-centred education, progressive education, activity based learning) and in the education literature and in philosophy.

I have begun to use this framework to analyse policy documents, focusing on discussions of effective teaching, teaching methods, classroom activities, and learning materials therein. These include central and state governments blueprints for teachers to use in planning and conducting les-
sons (usually a series of instrumental steps to achieve a set of goals), and guidelines for teacher recruitment and education-related policies.

The themes the analysis is taking forward include a) the nature of socio-scientific thought illustrated in these documents; b) illustrations of differentiation and relations between techniques for teaching and the emphasis on practical engagement and practical knowledge for teaching; c) an emergent dominant view of professional knowledge for teaching.

I have been on maternity leave since July 2015.

WORKSHOPS ATTENDED

London Expertise Group (supported by the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain), various meetings, London.

Gender, Education, and Inequality in Colonial India

JANA TSCHURENEV, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW AND COORDINATOR OF THE COLLABORATIVE PROJECT – KEY MOMENTS OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY TOWARDS THE POOR

PROJECT SYNOPSIS

My postdoctoral project contributes to the TRG’s collaborative research on “Key Moments of Educational Policy towards the Poor.” It focuses on changing educational regimes in regard to gender relations, from the 1820s to the 1930s. The core issue is women’s agency in education. How does the field of education change, when women emerge as educational activists, experts, and policy-makers? How does that affect processes and structures of educational decision-making? The other aspect of this is to look at women as teachers – from kindergarten to higher education. Changes in educational provision and control, the project assumes, are entangled with changes in the order of gender, sexuality, and reproduction.

Each chapter of the envisioned book monograph explores the emergence of a new constellation of educational ideas and institutions for girls and women, from the 1820s to the 1940s, on regional levels (Bengal, Maharashtra), as well as in the emerging domain of nationalist educational politics and policies. Five case studies have been selected for analysis:

1. The debates about ‘native female education’ in the 1820s in Bengal, and the work of missionary women;
2. Women’s education and the low-caste movement in Maharashtra, 1850s-1880s;
3. Competing projects of high-caste Hindu widows’ education and their implications for the emergence of professional ‘care-work’ (1880s-1890s);
4. Campaigns of national women’s organisations for the inclusion of girls into compulsory primary education schemes, and the start of literacy campaigns for adult women (1920s-1930s);
5. Developments in Early Childhood Care and Education, connected with women’s organisations ‘welfare’ work towards laboring and rural women (1930s-1940s).

The project looks at gender and education from an intersectionality perspective. It analyses the gender politics of educational projects and debates in relation to other power relations, along the lines of caste, class, and colonialism/imperialism.
Moreover, it will take into account questions of changing notions of life-cycles, and debates about girlhood and widowhood as crucial to the development of ‘female education’.

Looking at gender and education in this way can contribute to a better understanding of educational policy towards the poor in a double sense: on the one hand, it relates poverty and deprivation to complex matrix of difference and subordination in society and analyses the gendered nature of some policies towards ‘the poor’. On the other hand, an intersectionality perspective on - in a broad sense - feminist politics of education would explore the effects of those for girls and women disprivileged in terms of caste and class. Such an analysis could thus work as a critical contribution to social histories of education of ‘the poor’, as well as a corrective to history of women’s education which disregards differences among women, and the potentially harmful effects of an elitist feminist politics.

On 27 May 2015, I organised a lecture with Manish Jain, Delhi, at CeMIS in Göttingen, on ‘Character, Citizenship and Civics in Late Colonial India (1918-1947)’. Moreover, I participated in the discussions of the working group “Critical Caste Studies”, initiated by Gajendran Ayyathurai at CeMIS. Together with Alva Bonaker and Arun Kumar, I am currently preparing the international and interdisciplinary workshop Young South Asia Scholars Meet: Transformations of the Political, Göttingen, 2016.

**Publications, conferences attended, talks relevant to project**

**Publications:**

Conferences, workshops and talks:

‘Gender, Inequality and Education’ (with Preeti, and Malini Ghose), Inauguration of the Branch Office of the Max Weber Foundation, New Delhi, 14 February 2015.

‘Between patriarchy, imperialism, and women's empowerment: Women and education in colonial India (1820s-1880s)’, at the Conference Gender and Empire, Exploring Comparative Perspectives and Intersectional Approaches, Cologne, 23-26 September 2015.


Public Lecture: ‘Popular Education and Imperial Civilising Mission in the 19th century India’, Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies, JNU, Delhi, 18 November 2015.

Introduction to ‘Key Moments of Educational Policy for the Poor’ and Presentation on ‘Gender, Inequality, and Education’, Fifth TRG Poverty and Education in India Workshop, New Delhi, 25-28 November 2015.

More than Food for Schools? 
Local Perceptions in Defining and Shaping the Benefits of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Delhi

Alva Bonaker, PhD Scholar

PROJECT SYNOPSIS

This PhD research focuses on the Indian Mid-Day Meal Scheme - the largest school feeding programme in the world. Under the official term ‘National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education’, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS), as it is commonly referred to, was launched in 1995 with the objectives to enhance enrolment, retention and attendance in schools while simultaneously improving nutritional levels among children and encouraging social change in classrooms and beyond. Since 2001 students of all Indian public and aided primary schools (later also upper primary schools) have to be provided with a hot-cooked meal.

In a qualitative case study based in Delhi, I am tracing the question “How do parents, teachers, students and local communities understand the MDMS, and to what extent do they exert control over its effects?”. To approach this question I analyse what means are available for them to do this, and how their understandings of the scheme and definition of its benefits differ from those of policy makers and higher-level officials. I aim to examine how this governmental welfare programme is seen by those who are meant to benefit from it, how they define its benefits and to what extent they shape the scheme and its outcomes themselves. Furthermore, I am analysing in what role these people see themselves in relation to the scheme and what that reveals about their relation towards each other as well as about their notion of “the state” and how they relate to it.

The case study focuses on children from very poor migrant families (most of them being Pamariya Muslim families from Bihar and low caste Hindus from Rajasthan) who live in two adjacent slums, night shelter homes (‘Renbasseras’), under the fly-over or on the streets in South Delhi. I conduct participant observation and semi-structured interviews in their homes, at an education NGO that works with them, at the two MCD schools into which many of the children have been enrolled, as well as at the NGO that cooks the food for these schools.

Work done in report year

I have spent half of this year in Götingen, where I focused on my literature analysis. In order to sharpen the conceptual and methodological focus of my project, I critically engaged with literature on the state, bio-politics and state-society relations which
I summarised and related to my work in a literature review. In a CeMIS reading group format I participated in discussions on academic discourses relevant for ethnographic research and also attended colloquium talks and workshops.

My fieldwork in Delhi was split into one phase of two months (March and April) and a second, long stretch of research starting from August 2015. During the first phase, besides attending the TRG workshop and inauguration of the Max Weber Foundation branch office in Delhi and the conference on Education in Delhi: Marginalisation, Diversity and Schools at Ambedkar University, Delhi, I acquired the official research permission from the Municipal Cooperation of Delhi (MCD) and conducted preliminary field research. In daily visits to the educational NGO I observed their activities, their lunch time and talked to the children (including recording individual small interviews in order to collect their profiles) and asked them some school- and food-related questions. This was also a good exercise to test my questions and see how the children react to the recording.

Since mid-August 2015 I have been visiting the two selected schools three times a week including the NGO on three afternoons where I continue the profiling and observations. At the schools I observe food-related processes and talk to students, teachers, principals and distribution helpers. I focus on one class specifically for a few days and talk to five
to ten students of that class individually in semi-structured interviews (which will add to 75 school children interviews). Overall, with these interviews I try to understand what the MDMS means to them in the context of their school experiences, food preferences and practices as well as their involvement in food-related work.

In addition to talking the children, I also conduct an interview with the teacher of the class and the internship teacher, in case there is one, in the class. In these conversations I am trying to find out in what terms they talk about the scheme, what they see as main benefits and problems, what they know about the programme and what they think about it in relation to the government. Moreover, I am interested in whether and how the teachers relate the MDMS to their teaching and how they see their own role in the process.

I also meet school-going as well as non-school-going street children of this area during different times of the day in order to be able contextualise the MDMS within the broader picture of the nutritional situation, schemes and systems as well as food practices and culture that shape the lives of children from very poor backgrounds. In the next step, I will increase my contact with parents from children of different socio-economic backgrounds and start conducting interviews with them as well.

**Publications, conferences attended, talks relevant to project**

‘More than Food for Schools? Local Perceptions in Defining and Shaping the Benefits of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Delhi’, at the inauguration of the Max Weber Foundation Branch Office India, Delhi, 14 February 2015.

Conference attended: *Education in Delhi: Marginalisation, Diversity and Schools* at School of Education Studies, Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD), 18-20 March 2015.

What Inclusion Leaves Out: The "Life-Worlds" of Dalit Women in Educational Policy Making in Contemporary India

Malini Ghose, PhD Scholar

Project synopsis

My research examines the creation of narratives and discourses around contemporary Indian educational policies and their subjects – primarily women and girls from marginalised communities. The objectives of the research are to examine the historical, political, and lived dynamics that shape – and complicate – the categories, imperatives and assumptions of policy-making.

By embedding policy debates and practices in ethnographic life histories, I hope to illuminate the ‘big picture data’ generated by the Indian state. The research will interrogate the many binaries – for example included/excluded, powerful/powerless, and structure/agency – through which policies and lives are typically examined.

The take-off point of my research is the 1986 National Education Policy and the Mahila Samakhya (or Education for Women’s Equality) programme that was initiated by the Government of India in 1989 to operationalize an important conceptual shift – from welfare to empowerment – in the formulation of the purposes of women’s literacy and education. My research is located in Chitrakoot and Banda districts in Uttar Pradesh (U.P.), which were amongst the first districts where the Mahila Samakhya programme was launched and my primary methodological approach entails gathering oral life and family histories of Dalit women who were part of educational interventions launched by Mahila Samakhya in the early 1990s. My research also explores the other connected non-state institutions that have played significant roles in shaping women’s life trajectories.

A woman’s words.

Image by courtesy of Malini Ghose
My research examines the following three sets of questions:

1. The production of new subjects: What meanings do women assign to education and in what ways has education enabled new subjectivities to evolve? How do others in the community and in the family perceive educated Dalit women? What has education enabled or foreclosed in the terms of life choices and aspirations?

2. Relations to dominant discourses and institutions: In what ways do Dalit women’s narratives relate to and diverge from the prevailing dominant discourses around education for marginalised and excluded communities? How do ‘target populations’ as both subjects and objects of policy, fashion discourses, policies and institutions in their own ways, by bringing with them their own expectations, understandings and politics?

3. Intergenerational effects on children and families: What has educational access meant for the next generations in their families in terms of their educational opportunities and life-chances?

**WORK DONE IN REPORT YEAR**

Fieldwork: Since September 2014, a significant focus of my work has been conducting field research in Chitrakoot and Banda Districts (Uttar Pradesh). In the initial phase of my research I met several key local informants and women to begin to pingmap the diversity of women’s life courses. This process revealed three broad pathways in terms of the role of education in women’s lives: One group, comprised women who were engaged with (or had recently stopped) agricultural and other wage work; the second were working with non-governmental organisations, many having grown out of MS; and a third group were women who were low-end functionaries of government health and education programmes.

Subsequently, I have conducted in-depth interviews with my research subjects and their family members. I have been a participant observer at
their homes and places of work. I have also observed events organized by local women’s organisations. In addition I have interviewed local functionaries of the Mahila Samkahya programme, former teachers from non-governmental educational initiatives related to my research, as well as other informants on local Dalit politics, development and educational issues.

Archival research and gathering documents: The second aspect of my fieldwork was to gather reports and other records. I did this at the district office of Mahila Samakahya, and the offices of local women’s organisations. I have gathered a collection of copies of a local newspaper produced by Dalit women that I propose to analyse in the course of my research. I have also collected policy documents from various libraries and institutions in Delhi, Lucknow and the U.K.

Interviews with policy experts: I have conducted some initial interviews with policy-makers working at the state level (Uttar Pradesh), nationally and internationally on issues related to gender and education in Delhi, Lucknow and the UK. I plan to continue the policy-related work in the coming year.

Organising field material: I have also spent some time organising my field material and developing a chapter outline. The ‘subjects’ I have finally selected are grouped according to the three pathways mentioned above and the chapterisation framework, I am presently working with, follows this structure as well. I propose to develop each chapter around 3 to 5 detailed life histories, which will then open up discussions on larger macro issues.

**Publications, conferences attended, talks relevant to project**


‘It’s a complicated story, Didi: Scripting educational journeys’, Conference on Gender Relations and Rising Inequalities, University of East Anglia, 6-8 July 2015.

Recasting the Self: Missionaries and the Education of the Poor in Kerala, 1854-1956

Divya Kannan, PhD Scholar

Project synopsis

This research is intended at writing a history of education of the labouring poor in late nineteenth and twentieth century Kerala. It seeks to understand the various notions of labour and poverty that were sought to be imparted through education to the so-called lower and untouchable castes in the region. However, the study looks beyond the formal definition of schooling and takes into account the larger socio-political processes that went into the education of the poor. It will analyse various sources of those involved in the process such as Protestant missionaries, social reformers, political organisations and other state actors.

The objective is also to look at varying notions of poverty perpetuated through education by both state and non-state actors. Textbooks, agricultural and industrial education and technical education have been some of the avenues through which children of lower castes were brought face to face with changing societal notions and power structures. The Ezhavas (currently listed as Other Backward Classes) unlike the Pulayas (former untouchable castes) have had a different trajectory vis-a-vis education. They have been involved in various social reform movements and educated sections have engaged in widespread public debates to influence provision of education. On the contrary, given the widespread existence of poverty and deprivation among the Pulayas, educational progress has been slow. They were not allowed access to government schools until the early decades of the twentieth century and state apathy combined with feudal forces have laid down far too many obstacles for them. This study will seek to understand these different histories to understand debates on society and education. It will also explore the history of education and its intersections with class, race and gender in the colonial period.

This study seeks to make use of the archives of missionary societies which worked in the field of Kerala since the 19th century. Their writings provide varied details about the everyday lives of their labouring class converts. Linking this to questions of identity, community consciousness and emergent social reform, the study shall locate missionary education and its implications in the region’s socio-political history. Pedagogical techniques, differentiated curriculum for males and females and the impact of schooling on the communities shall be discussed. Missionary education shall be problematised to link it to the wider framework of imperial politics.
**Work done in report year**

I am in the final stages of completing my project and organising it around core themes relevant for the study.

**Publications, conferences attended, talks relevant to project**

**Publications:**


**Conferences and Workshops:**

PhD Project presentation at the inauguration of the Branch Office of the Max Weber Foundation, New Delhi, 14 February 2015.


'Saving Our Sisters': Female education and the London Missionary Society in Nineteenth Century South India', Conference on *Gender and Empire: Exploring Comparative Perspectives and Intersectional Approaches*, University of Cologne, 23-26 September 2015.

'Recasting the Self: Missionaries and the Education of the Poor in Kerala, 1854-1956', Fifth TRG *Poverty and Education in India* Workshop, New Delhi, 25-28 November 2015.
Discourses of New Public Management (NPM) that arose through the late 1970s in the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) led to a series of concerted reforms in education. This led to new forms of partnerships between the State and the private sector. Principles of public management emphasising performance and outcomes popular in the corporate industrial sector were imported as alleviatory measures into the public school system. These new modes of reform drawing from the private sector significantly altered structures of school management, school processes and most notably teachers’ work as the school came to be imagined as an important unit in preparing students for labour markets in a competitive global economy.

Private actors have facilitated technical and managerial changes within schools through alternative certification programmes and use of technological aids in the classroom. They have also actively been pushing their reform agenda in national and global educational policy forums through the backing of important political and corporate financial networks. Increasingly, these typologies of reform are being imported into later developing countries, including India, as effective measures of repairing an increasingly maligned public school system. The modes through which these discourses of reform are interfacing with educational reforms in the context of a postcolonial country such as India present a complex picture today.

The focus of this research study is to examine global discourses of public management reform advocated by a range of private actors and the complex nature of its interface with the heterogeneous government schooling system in India. The consequent changes that these reforms impose on the school will be examined through the lens of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) that are one of the key modes through which markets are entering elementary education in the country. Teacher training programmes are an emerging form of PPPs that are seen as central towards improving school outcomes. Apart from a survey of the range and nature of teacher training PPPs, the study will examine the ‘Teach for India’ (TFI) intervention, one significant PPP in teacher training that seeks to address educational inequity in teaching-learning transactions in the classroom.

**Work done in report year**

Following from the fieldwork initiated last year which involved some observations at a municipal school...
site where the intervention ‘Teach for India’ (TFI) is working, this year I focused on conducting in-depth interviews with TFI Fellows, TFI Program Managers, TFI Alumni and some government school teachers.

Considering the difficult nature of accessing and studying Public-Private Partnerships within schools, in-depth interviews with various participants and stakeholders associated with the TFI intervention as well as the government were seen as one mode of entry into understanding these contested school sites where new forms of engagement with various private actors is being forged.

A detailed interview schedule was developed focusing on a range of themes such as socio-educational background of the TFI Fellows, organisational training practices, organisational support structures, curriculum and transaction within classrooms and interaction with the government school staff, community and children. This interview schedule provided a framework for interviewing TFI Fellows in a focused manner. During the course of the interviews, where new questions and ideas emerged – these were then suitably incorporated and integrated within the interview schedule.

Interview schedules with certain common overarching themes were developed for different groups whom I sought to interview. These groups included TFI Program Managers, TFI Senior Management Heads, TFI Alumni, government school principals and government school teachers. Close to 35 detailed interviews were conducted over the past year. The focus of the study at present is to transcribe these interviews and use an extensive coding process to separate overarching themes and sub-themes in order to conceptualise frames of description and analysis suitable to formulate chapters on the programme, its participants and its nature of work within the school education landscape in Delhi.

**Publications, Conferences Attended, Talks Relevant to Project**

'Marketisation, Managerialism and School Reforms: A Study of Public Private Partnerships in Elementary Education in Delhi', Fourth TRG Poverty and Education in India Workshop, New Delhi, 13 February 2015.

"Teach for India": New Models of Educational Reform', Fifth TRG Poverty and Education in India Workshop, New Delhi, 25-28 November 2015.
My thesis is about the poor and their education in colonial India. It enquires into the nature of education which was imparted to ‘educate’ poor children, who were deemed unfit for book-centred, “proper” schooling, in didactic institutions such as industrial, reformatory and factory schools, rural schools, orphanages, children’s homes, workhouses, and railway workshops set up by Christian missionaries, ‘natives’, and colonial masters. The thesis also analyses facets of failure and success of the stated objectives of these institutions which was to produce a modern, disciplined, and semi-skilled work force out of what was regarded as an unruly, indolent class of low castes and untouchables, artisans and workers, peasants, beggars, vagrants, juvenile offenders, fakirs, gamblers, thieves, and criminal tribes.

**WORK DONE IN REPORT YEAR**

As this was the third year of my D. Phil, I focussed on writing chapters. My thesis is divided into eight chapters. In the report year, I wrote three chapters: Ch. 1. Occupation as tradition: childhood, community and the learning process; Ch. 2. Imagining new lives and work: Life in and after Industrial School; and Ch.3. Ratan Lal goes to school: peasant lives and educational access. My supervisors have commented on all three chapters. I also engaged in further archival research. In Delhi, I worked at the National Archives of India, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, the Marwari Library, and the Arya Samaj Library. I also undertook several archival trips to Lucknow, Delhi, and

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### Primed to Labour: ‘Education’ in Industrial and Artisan Schools of Colonial India, 1880-1930

**Arun Kumar, PhD Scholar**

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![Punishments of Master Saheb, 1920s](Madhuri Varsh Khand 1)
and Benares to mine some of the rare books possessed by Arya Samaj libraries, the Nagari Pracharani Sabha, and the Marwari Associations in these cities.

**Publications, conferences attended, talks relevant to project**

‘The Escape from Poverty: Artsisans and the City Poor in the Lucknow Industrial School (1880s-1910s)’, International Conference *Skill Development and Social Transformation in India*, University of Oxford, 12-13 January 2015.


PhD Project presentation, Inauguration of the Branch Office of the Max Weber Foundation, New Delhi, 14 February 2015.


My research project focuses on the school education of women (especially of poor and the underprivileged members among the Hindus, although comparison will be made with other communities) in the United Provinces between 1854 and 1920. It explores the educational development and the reasons for the interest among people in girls’ education in particular, especially in the latter part of the 19th century. It is an attempt to answer questions such as the following: 1) in what ways were the education of women necessitated by the altered social and economic transformations in late 19th century United Provinces? 2) Which special groups and classes benefitted from the new efforts? 3) Were there perceptible differences in the programs that aimed at reaching the marginalized among the girls and women, and, if so, why? 4) What was the need or agenda to educate women felt by missionaries, the colonial state or people of the United Provinces? 5) Was there any connection between women’s education and reform, or modernity and the economic, social and cultural uplift of women? 6) What were the challenges and prejudices that came with the progress of female education?

Comparisons will be made between boys’ and girls’ education through debates regarding the curriculum, funding, special schools or co-education, compulsory education and creation of demand of female education through the grant of privileges.

The connection between women’s education and changes in society will be analysed through exploration of changes in the home and outside the home due to the education of women.

The attitudes of the colonial state, the people of United Provinces (different castes, classes and various reforms association), missionaries (different types of missions) and women themselves towards education will be analysed.
Work done in report year

In the report year, I worked in the British Library (India Office Records), archives at SOAS, in Birmingham, Oxford. I looked at various primary and secondary sources on education and women in these archives and libraries. In the British Library, I looked at vernacular tracts, textbooks and manuscripts written for women and their education. Archives at SOAS and its special collection on missionary records, Birmingham (Church Missionary Society), and Oxford (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel) proved good sources of missionary efforts to educate women. These new sources helped me to see my project from a different perspective, outside of the colonial and vernacular imaginations. Since February 2015, I have focused on writing my thesis, for which I used secondary literature at the central library at JNU, New Delhi. Since July this year, I have been re-organizing my primary sources, reading secondary sources and writing. I have also written a first draft of the thesis and got a one year extension to complete my PhD. I am reworking earlier drafts of all chapters of my thesis. I presented one of the reworked chapters at the TRG Delhi workshop in November 2015.

Publications, conferences attended, talks relevant to project


‘Educating Rural Girls of United Provinces in the late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries’, presented as part of TRG panel in Eight Biennial Conference of Society for the History of Children and Youth, British Columbia University, Vancouver, Canada, 24-26 June 2015.

‘Educating Sanitation and Hygiene: Women in United Provinces (1880-1930)’, Graduate Seminar of Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 15-16 September 2015.

III

Special Project Reports
Key Moments of Education Policy towards the Poor

Collaborative Research Project
Jana Tschurenev, Academic Coordinator,
Key Moments of Education Policy towards the Poor

Project Synopsis

Since 1 November 2014, the TRG has developed a collaborative research project which aims to shed new light on the development and transformation of educational policy towards ‘the poor’ in modern India. The scope of the project includes the history of mass education and literacy, as well as histories of education of particular marginalized groups.

The main objectives of the project are:

• To supplement individual case studies and facilitate exchange and collaboration within the TRG, and with other researchers, under a common topic; for this purpose, several workshops and an international conference are envisaged;
• To identify, in the process and as a result of the project, key moments of education policy directed at the ‘poor’ in the 19th and 20th centuries;
• To create an open electronic resource depository consisting of a multilingual collection of digitized documents on “Key Moments of Education Policy towards the Poor”, including (1) Official reports and publications from the central as well as provincial/state levels; (2) reports and publications by social reform movements, non-state and private educational bodies; (3) Media coverage of key policy debates; (4) sources on curricula, students, and teachers, which shed light on the workings of particular educational institutions, and on life histories.

Histories of education in colonial and independent India are often structured around policies, which are linked to crucial shifts in the educational landscapes, such as educational expansion and the incorporation of the hitherto formally uneducated into existing institutions. While tendencies towards inclusion and democratization are
part of the history which leads to the Right to Education Act of 2009, the “Key Moments” project starts from the assumption that every new educational constellation, or educational regime, may have quite contradictory effects on “the poor”, or on particular disprivileged groups. As many researchers in the fields of history and sociology of education have pointed out, modern education systems can be seen, on the one hand, as contributing to the reproduction of the existing social order, as a means of social disciplining and of keeping the poor “in their place”. On the other hand, they can also function as important agencies of social change and transformation, and open up individual opportunities. Hence, we will look at each identified “key moment” of educational policy from different angles, and analyse its reproductive and transformative, disciplinary and emancipatory implications.

While we are taking established chronologies of education as a starting point, it will be part of the collaborative research process, of an interplay of empirical results and theoretical discussions in the group, to both identify and define “key moments”, from the perspective of the education of “the poor.”

**SUB-PROJECTS**

Several principal investigators of the group are participating in the collaborative venture with their own respective sub-project. These sub-projects are either organized around one structural category of inequality (caste, gender, labour), or they trace histories of ‘mass education’ and the limitations of these histories. Other topics, such as religion, will be part of the collective analysis.

At the moment, the sub-projects are:

- Indigenous and Rural Education (Neeladri Bhattacharya)
- Gender, Education, and Inequality (Jana Tschurenev)
- Caste and the Politics of Education Policy, Institutions and Practices: A Study of Dalits in India (Geetha B. Nambissan)
- Education and Labour (Ravi Ahuja)
- Compulsory Education (Sarada Balagopalan)
- Technical Solutions for the Education of the Masses (Jahnavi Phalkey)
**Work done in report year**

During the first year, the main work was to identify, locate and collect relevant source materials in archives in India (Delhi, Lucknow, Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai) and in the British Library. Several qualified Research Associates (Paulami Biswas, Shreya Gupta, Harsh Kapoor, Shourjendra Mukherjee and Shweta Shetty) have been employed to facilitate this process. The process of identifying and collecting relevant source material will continue next year, while we will also start to focus on translation and preparation of critical online editions.

The project has been presented at the MWF Branch Office Inauguration, Delhi, 14 February 2015, and the TRG workshop, 25-28 November 2015. In the last meeting, the conceptualisation and technical requirements were discussed, and the doctoral students and post-doctoral fellows were invited to participate. Working groups consisting of the contributing investigators and other TRG members are being set up, to facilitate exchange within the TRG on the topic of identifying “key moments” of educational policy towards the poor.
IV
Final Reports
I joined the Transnational Research Group in January 2013. Analysing the debate on educational reform processes in Keralam in the 1990s and 2000s, my project attempted to understand the role of the dichotomous conceptualizations of mind and body and mental and manual labour in reproducing the colonial-Brahmanical notions of knowledge. This unsettled debate regarding the educational practices in Keralam brings out the various aspects of the contemporary crisis of the colonial-Brahmanical model of knowledge production. I argue that though the problem of this model is recognized at various points of the debate, the fundamental of this model is kept intact or even reinforced by various stakeholders of the educational reform processes.

My research explored the deployment of the dichotomy of mental and manual labour in the domain education in two interconnected and interacting locations: the first one is the domain of curriculum development where the main actors are policy makers and experts; the second location includes classroom and home where the object of analysis is experiences of children from different sections of the society. When we analytically juxtapose these two locations what emerges is a hierarchy of modes of experiencing and a disjunction faced by the students from the marginalized groups.

The project involved both ethno-graphic and archival research. As the first part the project I conducted six month field work which included ethnographic and archival studies. I started my ethnographic work by interviewing the main actors in the curriculum reform process in the 1990s and 2000s. This included the experts and faculty in S.C.E.R.T, school teachers who were part of the state level syllabus and curriculum reform workshops and faculty in various District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) who had crucial role in the reform process. As a continuation of this, I interviewed around 50 school teachers in Palakkad and Malappuram Districts who have teaching experience both in the old and new curriculum. The second part of the ethnographic work included field work in two Dalit Colonies and in 4 schools where the Dalit students from these two colonies were enrolled. I conducted interviews with three generations of Dalit families and collected their narratives about their schooling experience, their ex-
expectations from education and their criticism regarding the educational reforms. I also interviewed Dalit scholars and activists for their analysis of education system in general and the educational reform process in particular.

As part of the archival work, I collected various reports of educational committees constituted in this period, minutes and reports of state level workshops, handbooks and notes for Block and district level teachers training programs from the S.C.E.R.T library. I collected articles written in journals and newspapers defending and opposing the reform process for analyzing how the concept of mental and manual labour and caste discrimination played out in these debates. I have also collected textbooks published for the old and new curriculum.

From the archival and field data I developed two papers: the first one analyzed the underlying caste hierarchy in policy making and the second one analyzed the effect of caste at the epistemological level which was visible through pedagogic practices. The following sessions summarizes the arguments in these two papers.

**Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice**

In 1997 the left front government came to power in Kerala and this government took an initiative to introduce major changes in the education sector. This was an attempt to address the demands raised by the left students’ and teachers’ unions, Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishad (KSSP) and other similar left oriented organizations and individuals. The curriculum reform was part of this initiative. Contrary to the content of the curriculum statement which underscored the importance of democratic decentralization, locatedness of knowledge and learning as a move from particular to abstract, the curriculum making was a top-down process with a theory to practice approach. The curriculum approach paper which introduced basic theoretical and ideological issues was prepared by experts - the left intellectuals associated with KSSP - and at the same time was presented as the initiative of SCERT.

Around 40 experts – again who were all left oriented teachers, activists and intellectuals – discussed the approach paper to form a detailed cur-
Keynote speaker Carlos Torres (UCLA) and Andreas Gestrich (Director, GHIL)

Panel discussion ‘Education for the Poor: The Politics of Poverty and Social Justice’ with panellists (l-r) Geetha B. Nambissan (JNU), Marcelo Caruso (HU Berlin), Kalpana Kannabiran (Council for Social Development Hyderabad), Krishna Kumar (University of Delhi), Crain Soudien (University of Cape Town)
riculum statement which was then presented at various district and block level meetings of teachers and activists. Considering the comments and suggestions in this meeting, a state level expert committee formalized the final version of the curriculum. A school teacher – who is also a member of the teachers union associated with the CPI(M) – explained the way the block level discussions were conducted.

The teachers who participated in the discussion raised many practical questions. Many of them pointed out that while preparing the curriculum the real classroom situation was not sufficiently taken into account. The state level experts, however, considered this as an attitude problem, i.e. teachers’ reluctance for change and their lack of motivation. They thought that ‘it is fine as far as the theoretical issues are sorted out; the practical problems could be addressed later.’ If you check the draft curriculum presented in these discussions and the final versions you will see very little difference which means the suggestions from the teachers were not included.

The words of the one of the experts who participated in this workshop explain the conceptualization of the reformers regarding theory and practice. In an interview he described an event in the workshop for textbook creation: “We were almost finishing the design of Malayalam text books when the Director of the program brought an outside person, who was an Adivasi and social activist. The activist evaluated the texts and thoroughly criticized it for its upper-caste language. Then we recognized that we have to start again from the beginning.” This cannot be a surprise looking into the caste characteristics of the committee. Out of the forty members, 35 were from upper caste and 33 of them men. To my question whether this Adivasi activist was included in the further deliberation he said that “Oh no, but we consulted with some of the Dalit and Adivasi activist and incorporated some of their view after critical scrutiny.”

The above conversations allow us to explore the dominant ideas that determine not only the curriculum development process but the concept of knowledge production in general. In this conceptualization, knowledge is a disembodied object which could exist without human presence and which could be exchanged like any other object. Written form is the most appropriate form of knowledge though other forms like spoken word can carry knowledge but less acu-
rately. Knowledge is representation of outside reality but in practical purpose it can even substitute this reality. Since knowledge is an object that has to be produced knowledge production and knowledge transfer became two separate activities. The objective of teaching or education in general is to transfer of already produced knowledge and the production of knowledge is generally marked under the category of research.

The educational institutions and practices in postcolonial India were more or less a continuation of the colonial practices especially in their concept of knowledge production and knowledge transfer. The plans and priorities in institution building in the education sector reflected the hierarchical series of knowledge constructed in the colonial period: a series with knowledge at the top and ignorance at the bottom. Paralleling to this notion the government established research institutions and universities as the highest level of knowledge and at the bottom adult education programs to open schools for the illiterate and uncivilized majority who were not yet qualified to be the full-citizens of the new nation.

The objective of general education even in its most radical interpretations is to develop critical mind. The training in mental labour is the preferred practice in education. Those who are not qualified enough to engage in mental labour could move into the domain of manual labour through vocational training. Here the image is that the general education aims a larger purpose of disseminating knowledge where the material pursuit of employment or vocation is secondary. Those who are with lesser intelligence and those who are not capable of entering that world of knowledge may be trained in manual labour.

The second concept is regarding the relation between knowledge and language. In the context of schooling in India, the issue of practice of language in school is mainly discussed in debates on education policy as a question of medium through which knowledge is to be transferred. In the current practices in school, reading and writing are the two fundamental activities. Both activities are based on language skill. Furthermore, language is considered a vehicle of thought and knowledge, or language is representational in the sense that it represents the outside reality. Hence reading and writing in school are not two activities for their own sake - unlike say singing - but they are part of a process of transferring knowledge from one person to another, most of the time from a teacher to a student. From the field work data I
argued that both these above conceptualizations of knowledge helps in producing a hierarchy in classroom situation, in most of the cases which is further translated into hierarchical caste practices.

**Inhabiting Two Worlds: Dalits and School Education in Keralam**

In the second paper I analyzed the question of experience and knowledge and its connections to the hierarchical practices of caste. In this paper I attempted to establish a connection at the epistemological level between the practices outside the school and within the classroom. In other words, the research focused on the varied modes of experiencing associated with learning both inside and outside of the school and argues that the question of marginalization in schools should be understood as a process of privileging one particular mode of experiencing in the formal educational system over different other modes.

I use the term mode of experiencing in a particular sense: it includes the activities of sensory organs, bodily dispositions towards the outside world and reflection to the senses not just as thoughts but as different forms of actions. I attempt to map these activities experiencing and to explain the varied aspects involved in different modes of experiencing. How are the acts of sensing, its processing and reflection on these senses determined by the location of the individual? What kind of experiencing is privileged in the current form of learning in school? How is it different from the experiencing of Dalit students at home?

In a Dalit household, both parents and children are engaged in various activities through which the child is trained in a particular way of sensing the outside world. This process of sensing can be understood neither based on the Western model in which the visual and aural senses are privileged nor the ‘five sense model’ which is prominent in many Western and non-Western philosophies. David Howes points out that the relation between the senses is a social relationship and it is socially constructed. The disposition of the body towards the external world and the processing of sensation or sensing process are determined by social and cultural factors. Further, it is not just the five senses but many other parts of the body are part of the sensing process. Paul Stoler, in his work *Sensuous Scholarship* explains that the Songhay of Mali and Niger consider the stomach as a sensory organ and eat-
ing a process of knowing the world. “Songhay sorcerers and griots learn about power and history by eating,” by which he means that it is through senses developed by eating they attempt to categorize different powers and different pasts. In many of the artisanal cultures in different parts of the world, the hand is considered as a sensing and even thinking organ. Sundar Sarukkai points out that in many Indian traditions the mind is considered an independent sensing organ. Hence the five sense theory is only one among many ways of understandings about sensing process and they are many other views in which stomach or mind or hand could be a sensing organ.

Through the analysis of Dalit students’ struggle to inhabit two distinct worlds (worlds at home and school), I attempt to understand why many of them ‘fail’ in the domain of knowledge production. The world they were primarily occupying is a place of continuous action which privileged co-ordination than expertness and where the performative element of language was more prominent than the representative format. In school, the activities were specialized and discrete, and knowledge was supposed to be possessed by the individual student and language was considered a neutral carrier of this knowledge. The struggle of Dalit students to inhabit two distinct worlds is a struggle to cope with two distinct mode of experiencing.

In an upper caste home, a child receives various forms of indirect training in creating a hierarchy of senses. Most of the children in these households associate taste and smell with eating and touch as part of expressing intimacy, love or friendship, whereas visual and aural sensing are considered a part of learning. Here the process of separation of visual and aural senses from other senses is not just an articulation of different roles of different senses, but the former is considered more important than the latter. Observation is considered as the most important part of learning. Observation includes seeing and hearing but completely excludes touching, smelling or tasting. The basic aim of learning at school is not just to improve the observational capacities but to train the student to objectify what they see and hear into language. Reading and writing are the basic activities at school which are practices of objectification and which are dependent more on visual sensing. The response of the students to the visual or aural sense or the processing of these senses is supposed to be taking place ‘in language’. This means that the students
can respond either through speech or through writing. Any other forms of bodily action are not considered as proper response.

The research used existing literature in sensory anthropology and in phenomenology to analyze the everyday practices at home and school which include various modes of experiencing and learning processes. By elaborating on the various aspects of sensing practices through which experiences are formed, I argued that the disjuncture experienced by a Dalit student between the world at home and at school is because of the privileging and authorizing of certain modes of experiencing over others.

**Conference Presentations**

During the fellowship period I attended various workshops and conferences and presented the research. In addition to the workshops organized by TRG at Gottingen, London and New Delhi, I presented papers related to my research in TRG in the following conferences:

Annual Conference of Comparative Education Society of India, Kolkata, 28-30 December 2013

Winter Academy on *Inequality, Education and Social Power* organized by Forum for Trans-Regional Studies, Berlin 16-25 November 2014

Society for the History of Children and Youth Biennial Conference, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 24-26 June 2015

Annual conference of Japanese Association of South Asian Studies, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, 26-27 September 2015.

**Conference Organisation**

As part of the research I organized a two day National workshop on *Caste, Experience and Poverty of Education* at Manipal University in December 2014. The objective of the workshop was to develop a conceptual framework for understanding the intersecting domains of caste practices and practices of knowledge production. The workshop dealt with the different aspects of experience and knowing in relation to caste, both in the institutional context and in the daily life practices from the region of South India. The workshop discussed these issues in relation to various models of knowledge transfer including modern school education and informal methods of exchanges.
2

Education, Vocational Training and Refugee Settlements in West Bengal, 1947-1971

KAUSTUBH MANI SENGUPTA, POST-DOCTORAL FELLOW

PROJECT REPORT

The project studies the role of education and vocational training in the lives of the refugees who settled in West Bengal after the partition of British India in 1947. The study focuses on two sites of concentration of the refugees—first, the refugee ‘colonies’ which were built and maintained by the refugees themselves, and second, the government-run refugee camps. It looks at the way schools were established and maintained, the problems encountered by the residents, the rationale behind vocational training institutes, and the role of the government in the rehabilitating the refugees. The category of ‘refugee’ was not a homogeneous one; class, caste or gender identity of a person often determined his/her status as a refugee. Rehabilitation schemes drew clear correlation between occupation and caste. The refugees of the colonies belonged to a distinctly different class than those who were forced to take shelters in various government camps. These internal differences among the refugee population also shaped their approach towards education. A discussion of education, vocational training and occupation leads us to the crucial link between the discourse of rehabilitation and development in the initial decades of independent India.

I. EDUCATION IN THE COLONIES

The colony residents were mainly from the upper caste and were generally well-off before partition. In their world-view, standard school-college education was the only way to move out of their present situation. Lack of education was more harmful than the actual material poverty which they faced during these years. The sense of nostalgia for a place which they had to leave always imagined a past of respectability associated with one’s education and position in the society. Most of the upper caste people coming from the eastern part of Bengal had prized education as a means of earning livelihood for centuries.

The present inhabitants of the colonies remember the past struggle as one of triumph, carving out a place of their own in the city. Education played a significant role in establishing themselves, not only in economic terms but also in the social ladder. The physical features of the colonies also give a sense of this sentiment. The main structures that came up once a colony was established were the markets, a temple and a school. This was the pattern in almost every colony.

I studied the ways in which the schools were established in various colonies, the differences in these
stories, the modes of acquiring land, fund, teachers, building materials and the recognition from the education department of the government. Funds were collected from the residents of the colony, or the colony co-operative. In the case of the Sammilita Udbastu Bidyalaya, students from the colony spread throughout the city to collect the money in boxes. In the case of school land, sometimes an existing structure would be repaired; at other, a new space would be cleared out. Most of these colonies came up on somebody else’s land, thus the name jabardakhal colony [forcefully acquired colony]. To establish a school was often a territorial claim, legitimising the space of the colony, or, as Manas Ray mentions, giving the locality a ‘moral sanction’. In case of colonies managed by co-operative societies constituted by their own members and with government recognition from the beginning, land for schools and colleges was earmarked in their initial lay-out and distribution of plots. In Madhyamgram-Nababarrackpore area in North 24 Paraganas district, as many as 6 schools were established within a span of ten years, between 1950 and 1960. The school became the site for collective action; it captured the united spirit of the colony residents. It was not only a successful project which was achieved now; rather it promised a secured future as well. This belief in education as cultural capital comes from the experience of the colonial past. Colonial pedagogy and the discourse propagated by the Bengali text-books portrayed the picture of an ‘ideal’ obedient boy who succeeds in life in contrast to his antithetical figure. Curiously, this pedagogic enterprise mirrored a version of the ‘civilizing mission’ of the colonial state and the ways through which it wanted to build up a colonized population of obedient servants. The ideal vision of childhood and children in post-partition period was, in a sense, a continuation of colonial politics. Colonial education system destabilized the earlier networks of pathshalas or indigenous schools where formal education was imparted to poor children who were simultaneously learning the trade of their parents. Colonial policies favoured the elites, and produced the discursive division between mental and manual labour. This construction of childhood played an important part in the rehabilitation project of the bhadralok refugees. The presence of a large numbers of school teachers, lawyers, salaried professionals among the early refugees gave the refugee colonies a distinct class as well as caste identity. The refugees were eager to preserve their cultural capital, and thus almost all the refugee colonies had a school coming up within a few months.
II. Education and Training for Vocation: Refugee Rehabilitation Schemes of the Government

The government opened up schools, colleges and technical institutes for the refugees, provided students with stipends, and gave loans to the existing institutions to expand their facilities. The state government decided to open free primary schools wherever there was a concentration of refugees with a fair number of children of school-going age. The minimum number of students was decided to be 90. For the maintenance of these schools, there was a provision for non-recurring grant to buy school equipment and teaching appliances. Recurring grants were provided for the salaries of teachers, house rent for the school building, and accommodation for single women teachers.

However, the various efforts of the government often fell short of what it promised. Government-run schools lacked proper infrastructure and trained teachers. Various refugee organisations and the political members of the Left parties constantly criticised the Congress-led government for not being able to carry out a rehabilitation policy satisfactorily. Debates about scarcity of land, and hence the policy of dispersal to other states of India were vehemently opposed by them. The return of the migrants from these areas, most importantly the failure of the Dandakaranya scheme, strengthened the voice of the opposition. This general scenario was intricately linked with the way education and vocational training schemes were viewed by the government.

Colonial past lingered on in the rehabilitation discourse of the post-colonial nation state as well. Post-colonial governmentality carefully deployed the registers of class, caste and gender while proposing and implementing various policies of rehabilitation for the refugees. In this, the pedagogic vision of colonialism and its attendant features regarding the suitability of character for school education and vocational training played an important part. The situation in the government camps was different from the refugee colonies. The most vulnerable and downtrodden refugees took shelter in the camp. The nature of knowledge to be imparted to the inmates of the camp was determined by the job market, often altering the traditional vocation of these groups of people. This project looks at various training programmes, role of government as well as voluntary associations in implementing these programmes and how far they were successful in improving the dire situation.
The poor migrants from East Pakistan were sent off to various relief camps and then to government colonies spread across the state and outside it. There were agricultural colonies where refugees were supposed to cultivate the land and get their subsistence from it. The government tried to categorize the refugee groups according to their erstwhile profession and caste while sending them off to various camps and colonies. I studied the various schemes of vocational training, the different trades that were taught, places where the institutes were opened, the amount of stipend paid, the period of training and the ways in which the finished products were marketed. Apart from general training in cottage industries and handicrafts, in weaving, tailoring, welding, pottery, etc. there were specific courses designed for women inmates of the refugee camps and homes.

Rehabilitation of women caught special attention of the bureaucrats and social workers. One of the chief aims of the committee for the reorganisation of the homes for the displaced persons was to make women self-sufficient. The committee specifically looked into the ways women could gain employment through proper training. But they had their assumptions regarding the class of women who were thought proper for the vocational training schemes. I have studied carefully the proposals of the Central Advisory Committee which sought to train the women of the Homes and Infirmaries in various crafts so that they could gain an occupation. The reading of the propositions put a question to the discourse of emancipation of women in post-partition period and complicates our understanding of the position of women in the Bengali society. Class character of the refugee women determined their ability of learning and training. I show how these training courses clearly articulated the terms in which the women were to be a part of the working group in the city. The creation of a space for working women was circumscribed by a particular idea of the private—a hotel or the residence of a wealthy person; they could participate in the domain of the workforce in terms of the boundaries etched by the state.

Another specific set of programme was instituted with respect to the rehabilitation of the agricultural families. The idea, in this case, was to provide a piece of land to these families and the job of rehabilitation would be half-done. In their recommendations for these families, the Committee recommended that families with agricultural background should be given land in the western part of the state. They were aware that there was a »
chance of resistance from the agriculturalist families in following this scheme of things. But the Committee opined that even if there were some objections mentioning that the boys from these families were not getting a proper education, those should not be taken into account, as families from agricultural background were not to be settled as non-agriculturalists. This rigid classificatory principle was severely criticised by the Left. In the Legislative Assembly, the minister for rehabilitation was constantly pestered by the opposition regarding this principle of rehabilitation. In fact, the ministers’ report of 1954 also pointed to this direction when it mentioned that even among the non-agriculturalist displaced families, some lived as intermediaries on land in East Bengal, and thus they had no previous experience of any trade or occupation. These various rehabilitation schemes point to the ways in which the government pursued the refugee problem in a mechanical manner.

III. Refugees, Employment and the Informal Sector

The last part of the project looks at the variety of ways the refugees became a part of the urban workforce in post-partition West Bengal. People got employment in the interstices of informal economic sector. Education and some form of training in any trade helped enormously in the rehabilitation of this group. Collating information from a wide range of sources like autobiography, newspaper reports, classified advertisements, government publications, private papers of various people and organization, and reports prepared by non-governmental organizations, I elaborate how education aided in acquiring a vocation. For instance, advertisements from young male refugee frequently appeared asking for a job as a private tutor and lodging in some wealthy household. Similarly, people asked for refugee males who would teach their children and stay with them.

Many small-scale industries specifically recruited the refugees. They were ready to train them for the job. The informal sector of hawkers and peddlers burgeoned in this period. Life-stories shed interesting light on this phenomenon. Autobiographies written by the refugees give us a glimpse of these various activities. I will look at some of these writings to study the various modes of employment. As is evident from the fact that they wrote their autobiography, each of them valued education and had some literary ambitions. Through their writings one can get a glimpse of the changing situation of Calcutta
Welcome speech by Heinz Duchhardt, outgoing President, Max Weber Stiftung

Harald Rosenbach, Executive Director, Max Weber Stiftung, with members of the TRG
and West Bengal. These stories also give us an idea of the effect of the schemes of the government; how did people react to them, what problems did they face, what was the condition in various camps, what were the modes of resistance, etc. We find people leaving the wretched camps for uncertain future in the cities. Again, some would stay back in the hope of a better future. Let me briefly recount the story of Sadananda Pal. Pal was born in a family of potters in East Bengal. He came to West Bengal before his parents migrated. He was supposed to set up the family on this side of the border, and then the entire family would migrate. He, along with his brothers, tried their hand in various trades, but could not establish themselves. They were in a better condition than the camp-dwelling refugees, and found a place to stay on the eastern fringes of Calcutta. They had some capital to start a business, knew certain people who could help them. But these were often not enough to sustain them in the new land. Pal, among other things, worked as a tailor, learned to make sweets, hawked betel leaf, set up a stationary shop. He ultimately moved back to his ancestral profession, and started making pots on a small scale.

He faltered on these activities, could not learn the tricks of the trade enough to continue with one business. He was often short of capital. But he kept on trying various ventures to make a living. The urban informal economy gave him the opportunity to try his hands in different jobs. Pal did not like his ancestral profession. This made him look for other avenues of income. He had many obstacles. He did not know his way around the city, knew very few people in West Bengal, and had to compete with established shops when he opened his own stationary shop. His condition was not as bad as those refugees who had to take shelter in government camps and rely on the doles. On the other hand, he was not a part of the early migrants who could establish colonies in and around Calcutta. He thus occupies an interesting place in the narratives of rehabilitation of refugees in post-partition West Bengal. Government accounts or community-memories do not have space for these individual voices. But they open up a new dimension of the process of rehabilitation where individuals had to negotiate with a range of actors, identities, and situations to make their space.

Post-partition period was a critical phase in the biography of the new nation as well. The refugees as well as the government—both were trying to work out a way to move ahead, leaving behind the tumultuous last few years. This project captures these in-
itial anxieties and negotiations. The project, on one hand, tries to focus on local issues and etch out a dense picture of various processes related to educational institutions and policies, and on the other, wants to open up a crucial but neglected aspect of partition studies. Also, it seeks to look into the way the refugees tried to make a mark on the map of the city, where a tangled web of land-locality-finance/cultural capital operated in creating the educational space.

**Publication, conferences attended, talks relevant to project**

**Publication:**


**Presentations and Talks:**


‘Education and Vocational Training as part of the Regime of Rehabilitation in West Bengal’, Third TRG Poverty and Education in India Workshop, London, 7-9 July 2014.


V

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP REPORTS
The opening of the branch office of the Max Weber Foundation (MWF) in New Delhi on 14 February 2015 marked a fresh approach to research on the intersection between education policy and poverty reduction. The meeting took place at the India International Centre in New Delhi. Indra Sengupta (Academic Coordinator, TRG, German Historical Institute London) launched the event with an introduction to the Transnational Research Group on Poverty and Education (TRG). Next, Andreas Gestrich (Director, GHIL) gave an account of the group’s research objectives. The TRG, he said, was established as part of a larger academic collaboration with generous funding from the Max Weber Stiftung. It is a joint initiative of the GHIL and its partner institutions: the Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS, Göttingen), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU, New Delhi), King’s College London (KCL), and the Centre for Studies of Developing Societies (CSDS, New Delhi). It seeks to combine scholarship across the social sciences in order to explore questions concerning education and the nature and consequences of its provision by both public and private players in India from the nineteenth century onwards. The five-year project offers doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships as well as short-term grants.

The first panel of the day, which was chaired by Indra Sengupta, saw four TRG Fellows present their work-in-progress. The panel elicited a lively debate, which indicated that education continues to remain an ideological and emotionally charged subject for all. Arun Kumar (CeMIS, Göttingen) and Divya Kannan (JNU, Delhi) gave brief presentations of their on-going Ph.D. research projects, which are based on missionary archival sources, as missionaries were the earliest providers of education to the labouring poor. K. N. Sunandan (CSDS/TRG, Delhi) and Alva Bonaker (CeMIS, Göttingen), whose postdoctoral and Ph.D. projects respectively explore contemporary schooling practices that determine ‘manual’ and ‘mental’ labour, and government schemes such as the Mid-Day Meal

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1 This report first appeared in the German Historical Institute London Bulletin, Vol. 37, No. 2, November 2015, pp. 116-21
Programme, highlighted the role of the state and civil society in education. The presentations provoked a discussion on the importance of constructing the poor as a historical category. Questions were raised regarding the need to distinguish varying categories of the poor so as to formulate policies addressing specific concerns of inequality and exclusion.

The following panel presented a new and significant initiative of the TRG, ‘Key Moments of Education Policy towards the Poor’. The panel was chaired by Rupa Viswanath (Göttingen). The Key Moments project, undertaken by some of the Fellows and Principal Investigators of the TRG, concentrates on major shifts/phases of change and continuity in the history of mass education in India from the 1820s to the present. The aim of the project is to move away from a mere chronological mapping of educational policies. The project is coordinated by Jana Tschurenev (CeMIS, Göttingen). Neeladri Battacharya (JNU, Delhi), a Principal Investigator, briefed the audience on the importance of writing histories from a bottom-up view and expanding the researcher’s archival focus by including non-official sources. He posed the question of social scientists and those concerned working towards an archive that will not exclude the poor and their issues. The questions, he said, were straightforward. For example: how did the poor actually experience the classroom, if any; and what happened to the poor during schooling? Based on such an inter-sectional approach, the Key Moments project will focus on a number of broad themes: indigenous and rural education, gender and inequality, caste and politics, religious and vocational education.

Jana Tschurenev explained three ‘key moments’ during the colonial period with regard to education provision. During the first one, in the 1820s, education for women was primarily carried out by missionary societies. By the 1880s, with shifts in public opinion on women’s education and emergent nationalist discourses, several female public educators such as Pandita Ramabai in Maharashtra came to prominence, and a move towards the professionalization of certain occupations occurred. Later, these tended to perpetuate gendered notions of work, which were attempts to transfer ‘care’ and ‘nurture’, perceived as innately ‘womanly’ traits, from the domestic to the public sphere.

Preeti’s (JNU, Delhi) presentation outlined the multiple ways in which certain jobs, particularly midwifery, were professionalized in the coloni-
al United Provinces, which include parts of present-day northern India. Those involved in public deliberations sought to ‘educate’ women on matters of health and hygiene in a scientific manner, and train traditional midwives (dais) as professionals. They evoked varying representations of indigenous women’s work for women, pitting them against Western, female, medical missionaries. Initially, groups of dais resisted these attempts by the colonial administration and missionary establishments.

Malini Ghose’s (CeMIS, Göttingen) paper highlighted the need to destabilize the sweeping generalizations often made with regard to educational developments. She pointed out the necessity of viewing rupture or disturbance as a framing device. Tracing the life histories of Dalit women in rural Bundelkhand, she showed how individual life-stories rupture macro-studies that may fail to account for failures and problems in the system. She discussed various educational policy shifts in India from the 1990s on to understand how marginalized subjects are constructed and transformed through them.

Members of the audience pointed out that the Key Moments project had to separate schooling from education in order to gain better analytical clarity. It was also suggested that the question of language needed to be examined more closely, especially in post-independent India, to understand why a large number of children still do not attend school, despite legislation and policy formulations. A couple of possible problems were particularly highlighted: for example, how to map out this research in a non-linear way, since chronological narration seemed inevitably to take precedence; and how to bring together a range of inter-sectional approaches to determine the parameters of a ‘key moment’.

The afternoon session, ‘Education for the Poor: The Politics of Poverty and Social Justice’, chaired by Geetha B. Nambissan (JNU, Delhi) saw the coming together of perspectives from inside and outside the Indian context. The speakers were Marcelo Caruso (Institute of Education Studies, Humboldt University, Berlin), Kalpana Kannabiran (Council for Social Development, Hyderabad), Krishna Kumar (Department of Education, University of Delhi), and Crain Soudien (School of Education, University of Cape Town). Marcelo Caruso spoke at length about the construction of poverty as a discourse from the mid fifteenth century on, and the attempts made to school the poor into prevalent social and labour
Neoliberalism, Globalization Agendas and Banking Educational Policy: Is Popular Education an Answer?

A lecture by Carlos Alberto Torres

Discussing the tensions between the global and the local, this lecture offers a description of cosmopolitan and local competing globalization agendas. Three agendas, as ideal types, are highlighted: the Hyper-Globalizers, Skeptics and Transformationists. After explaining the competing agendas for globalization and norms and their potential impacts in education, three main claims are made in this lecture. The first one is that the dominant technocratic rationale in policy making, which is part and parcel of a neoliberal regime, constitutes a form of banking education so brilliantly criticized by Paulo Freire. This technocratic rationale is based on instrumental rationality discussed by Max Weber, Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas. A second claim is that there is a great potential for challenging the intellectual narratives and praxis of neoliberal education in the new approach of a global citizenship education portrayed in the First Global Educational Initiative announced by the U.N. General Secretary and currently being implemented by UNESCO. The final claim is a question: could popular education be an answer to the growing inequality, poverty, and lack of solidarity in the contemporary world?

Saturday, 14 February 2015, 5:30 pm

India International Centre Annex
Lecture Room II
40 Max Mueller Marg
Lodhi Estate
New Delhi 110003

How do the children of the poor fare in the system? This was the question that Krishna Kumar asked in his presentation. He said the need of the hour was to integrate two theoretical domains in our understanding: the conceptual and the social. In order to engage with poverty, we will have to account for various philosophical positions that defined poverty in different ways. This, he elaborated, was key to understanding the experience of children inside the classrooms. He cited Gandhi and Tagore’s ideas as two examples of varying educational systems.

Kalpana Kannabiran took the argument in a slightly different direction by presenting her experiences as both a lawyer and activist in India. Even after a decade, the goal of universal elementary education is far from being achieved in India. She said the context in which everyday opportunities of life exist is suffused with law. Drawing on examples from her work amongst tribal communities, particularly the Chenchus, in Andhra Pradesh, she argued that the right to life and liberty, enshrined in Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, is often in a state of suspension in tribal areas. This brought home forcefully the fact that judicial mechanisms cannot be viewed in isolation from education.
South Africa, he said, was occurring on three inter-related axes: first, the fault of the past; secondly, the failure of the current new elites to incorporate changes; and lastly, a tendency by dominant discourses to blame the poor themselves for all their shortcomings. Soudien explained that the emergence of a newly affluent black middle class did not lead to a natural sympathizing with the problems of the disprivileged. Understanding psycho-social and spatial experiences of poverty was key to engaging with prevalent capacities of local children and connecting them with global realities.

Geetha B. Nambissan started off the discussion by flagging some important issues. She raised the important question of whether we have depoliticized poverty by concentrating excessively on social justice. At a time when new groups, hitherto discriminated against and excluded, are staking claims to educational resources, re-conceptualizing the category of ‘justice’ is necessary in order to challenge neoliberal thinking. A lively discussion ensued, which included questions such as what constituted the ‘public’ and the dangers of neoliberal policies adopted by universities that were, in effect, perpetuating old and new forms of privilege.

The ceremonial inauguration of the new branch office took place in the evening in the form of a keynote lecture. Heinz Duchhardt (outgoing President of the Max Weber Stiftung, Bonn) spoke about the institution’s history, emphasizing its role in extending bilateral and multilateral relations through academic collaborations. Sudha Pai (Rector, JNU) stressed the advantages of such mutual cooperation and highlighted how JNU, as a central university, has been attempting to formulate strategies to deal with mass education through inclusive policies. The CSDS’s director, Sanjay Kumar, spoke about its involvement in the TRG projects, especially with regard to the issues of inclusion and equity in school education in contemporary India.

The highlight of the inauguration was the keynote lecture presented by Carlos Alberto Torres (Professor of Education and Director, Paulo Freire Institute, University of California, Los Angeles), well known for his extensive research on comparative and international development education. In his paper, ‘Neoliberalism, Globalization Agendas, and Banking Educational Policy: Is Popular Education an Answer?’, Torres presented the challenges to university education and tensions between the local and global
along three axes: the first comprised elements of instrumental rationality, a dominant strand of neoliberalism manifested via banking education; the second concerned the challenges for global education; and thirdly, he asked provocatively whether education could be popular if it lacked equality and access? Neoliberalism, argued Torres, has been the new ‘common sense’ for at least three generations now, and has gained a moral and intellectual hegemony. It has had an immensely troubling impact on university education. He argued that the contemporary economic rationale behind ranking models to assess the quality of education were strategically positioned markers. He elaborated on the pitfalls of such a system, which also tended to be technocratic in nature.

The discussion dwelt on the pressing question of creating a model in which educational resources could be redistributed. This evoked multiple responses at the gathering, with some considering it rather utopian at this stage. Yet there was a general consensus that the state’s role had to be substantially restructured in order to transfer resources from private hands to the people. Following Paulo Freire, many felt that de-politicization had to be curbed by incorporating new participatory mechanisms. He advanced his idea of the ‘Global Commons’ as a project of developing global citizenship education, predicated on global peace. A successful intervention in university education for the people would require citizenship and democracy to be reformulated simultaneously. The speaker appealed to everyone to join the long, silent revolution on global citizenship.
A number of PhD and postdoctoral fellows of the TRG took part in a roundtable session at the Society for the History of Children and Youth Conference in Vancouver. The session was titled ‘Growing up inside and outside of Classrooms: Schooling and the Poor Child in Colonial India’. The participants were Arun Kumar (Göttingen), Divya Kannan (Delhi), Kaustubh Sengupta (Delhi), Preeti (Delhi), and Sunandan K. N. (Delhi).

The aim of the panel was to explore how schooling came to constitute a major role in moulding the childhood of the poor classes by the late nineteenth century in colonial India. Schooling came to be imagined both as ‘protecting’ the poor child from exploitative labour regimes and preparing her or him for certain other types of labour regimes. This constitution of schooling as part of poor children’s growing-up was produced by both the demands of indigenous communities and the colonial state.

The roundtable started with Arun Kumar’s presentation titled ‘Schooling the Poor’, which problematised the romantic relationship of schooling and labour. He argued that schooling and child labour co-existed in didactic institutions like industrial schools, reformatory schools, and factory schools in colonial India at the end of the nineteenth century. In particular, he focused on factory schools in the Bombay mills and showed that, while there was recognition of the idea of poor childhood, this idea was informed by the logic of family demands, the children’s own conception of work and wage, labour market requirements, and societal ethics. Schooling of the poor factory children itself became a mechanism for producing and reproducing child labour.

Divya Kannan’s paper was titled ‘Schools, Society and Slavery in Nineteenth Century South Travancore: The Female Boarding Schools of the London Missionary Society’. The paper explored the ways in which Victorian and missionary ideas of femininity and domesticity were sought to be imparted to young outcaste girls in the region. It analysed the tensions and contradictions of such an educational project, which was marked by race and class divisions. A gendered missionary education aimed at keeping outcaste girls away from agriculture but grappled to enforce it, given the realities of caste structures in Travancore. Discourses on education of the poor had to engage with questions of civil rights and modernity.

Kaustubh Mani Sengupta spoke on ‘Educating the Children in the Refugee Colonies and Camps in post-partition Calcutta’. The paper looked at the role of education of the refugees in
post-partition West Bengal. Sengupta distinguished between the educational initiatives taken by the colony and camp residents respectively. The upper-caste colony residents established schools on their own initiative, as they believed that only proper education could put an end to their plight as displaced refugees. However, for the camp refugees, the government placed more emphasis on vocational training than normal school curricula. The paper thus showed how caste, class and gender determined the fate of education of the refugee children as postcolonial governmentality continued to be informed by the pedagogic vision of colonialism, which focused on character as the determinant of suitability for school education and vocational training respectively.

Preeti gave a paper on 'Educating Rural Girls of United Provinces in the late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries'. The paper dwelt on the education of the girl child and women of the United Provinces and the ways in which childhood linked the two categories – women and female child. Her paper explored efforts, debates and discourses of different groups of educators, such as colonial officials, missionaries, indigenous elites, and women themselves to educate the rural women of the United Provinces. The paper argued that only zenana missionaries paid attention to the education of rural women. The politics of not giving attention to the education of rural women was explored through vernacular tracts, association reports, and officials’ records.

Analysing the vernacular literature and colonial documents related to the reform movement of Nampoothiris in Malabar in the first half of the twentieth century, Sunandan K. N. explored the attempts to redefine spaces by the community and how the children negotiated these transformations. The Nampoothiri Vidyalayas (schools), he argued, were a particularly interesting location to understand how gendered rituals related to children were now explained based on scientific theories, and how purity was explained in terms of hygiene.

The discussion that followed raised a number of issues which were not touched directly in the presentations. These included questions such as the categories of western and non-western childhood. How are these categories relevant in studying the childhood in South Asian context? What specific role does caste play in Indian childhood? Other questions related to similar processes that were on work in other parts of the British Empire, such as utilising child labour by restricting the movements of juveniles from one place to the other in colonial Zimbabwe. Further questions related to the role of social reform and claims of modernity in simultaneously shaping the caste question and childhood.
VI

Events
1

TRG Workshops and Conferences

13 February 2015

Fourth TRG Poverty and Education in India Workshop, New Delhi

Welcome and Introduction

Vidya KS: Marketisation, Managerialism and School Reforms: A Study of Public-Private Partnerships in Elementary Education in Delhi

Smita Gandotra: Stri Shiksha: Towards a Conceptual History

Debarati Bagchi: ‘A Script that Needs no School’: The Many Worlds of Sylhet Nāgarī

Saikat Maitra: Transforming Work: Training Programs and Retail Worker-Identity in Contemporary Kolkata

Key Moments: Project Presentation by Jana Tschurenev, followed by discussion
14 February 2015

Official Opening of the Max Weber Stiftung India Branch Office, India International Centre, New Delhi

Talking about the TRG Poverty and Education in India

Introducing the Transnational Research Group
(Chair: Indra Sengupta (TRG/GHIL)
Andreas Gestrich (GHIL)

Brief Presentations by TRG Scholars and Fellows:
Arun Kumar (Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Göttingen)
Divya Kannan (Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, New Delhi)
Sunandan K. N. (Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and TRG, New Delhi)
Alva Bonaker (Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Göttingen)

Key Moments of Education Policy towards the Poor
Chair: Rupa Viswanath (Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Göttingen)
General Introduction: Neeladri Battacharya (Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)

Key Moments Project: Gender, Education and Inequality in India
Jana Tschurenev (Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Göttingen)
Preeti (Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)
Malini Ghose (Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Göttingen)

Panel Discussion on Education for the Poor: The Politics of Poverty and Social Justice
Chair and moderator: Geetha B. Nambissan (Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)

Carlos Torres, UCLA, giving the Keynote lecture...
Panellists:

Marcelo Caruso (Institute of Education Studies, Humboldt University of Berlin)

Kalpana Kannabiran (Council for Social Development, Southern Regional Centre, Hyderabad)

Krishna Kumar (Department of Education, University of Delhi)

Crain Soudien (School of Education, University of Cape Town)

Evening Programme: Ceremonial Launch of the Max Weber Stiftung Branch Office, New Delhi/ TRG Poverty and Education

Brief addresses by Andreas Gestrich (Director, GHIL), Heinz Duchhardt (President, Max Weber Stiftung, Bonn), Sudha Pai (Rector, Jawaharlal Nehru University), Sanjay Kumar (Director, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies Delhi)

Keynote Lecture

Carlos Alberto Torres (University of California, Los Angeles): Neoliberalism, Globalization Agendas and Banking Educational Policy: Is Popular Education an Answer?

25-28 November 2015

Fifth TRG Poverty and Education in India Workshop, New Delhi

25 November 2015


Alva Bonaker: More than Food for Schools? Local Perceptions Defining and Shaping the Benefits of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme in Delhi


Jana Tschurenev: Introduction to “Key Moments” and Presentation on Gender, Inequality, and Education

Neeladri Bhattacharya: Indigenous Education

Geetha Nambissan: Caste and the Politics of Education Policy

Ravi Ahuja: Education and Industrial Labour

Sarada Balagopalan: Compulsory Education
26 November 2015

Jahnavi Phalkey: Technological Solutions for Mass Education

General Discussion: State of Research on Key Moments

Discussion on the core objectives and basic structure of the Online Resource Depository (short introduction by Jana Tschurenev)

Vidya K S: Marketisation, Managerialism and School Reforms: A Study of Public-Private Partnerships in Elementary Education in Delhi

Saikat Maitra: Transforming Work. Training Programs and Retail Worker-Identity in Contemporary Kolkata

Keynote Lecture: Rupa Viswanath: Hard Lessons: Poverty, Caste and Education in Colonial South India

27 November 2015

Smita Gandotra: Stri Shiksha. Towards a Conceptual History

Preeti: Schooling Women. Debates on Education in the United Provinces (1854-1930)

Debarati Bagchi: A Script for the Masses? Pedagogic Practices and Didactic Traditions among the Sylhetis

Arun Kumar: Primed to Labour. ‘Education’ in Industrial and Artisan Schools of Colonial India (1860s-1940s)

Divya Kannan: Recasting the Self: Missionaries and the Education of the Poor in Kerala, 1854-1956

Business Meeting

28 November 2015

Pls: Business Meeting

Fellows: Project Discussions

Hard Lessons: Poverty, Caste and Education in South India, talk by Rupa Viswanath, 26 November 2015, India International Centre, New Delhi
27 May 2015:  
**Seminar Lecture**

Manish Jain (Ambedkar University, Delhi)

Character, Citizenship and Civics in Late Colonial India (1918-1947)

From early twentieth century, there was a worldwide interest in civics, citizenship training and building ‘character’. This paper examines the overlapping concerns about citizenship and character in late colonial India, in the period after First World War to attainment of political independence in 1947. It asks, what were the different nuances of character in this period and how did they relate to citizenship and discussions about government and democracy. What were the personal and gendered connotations of character? What were its implications for pedagogic relationship and order within school and social and political order outside the school? This paper traces and discusses the colonial and national roots and framings of different hues of concerns under the rubric character in the discourse of civics and citizenship. For this purpose it examines textbooks of civics in colonial India, school reports, school magazines, books for school teachers and few speeches of nationalist leaders.

Venue: CeMIS, Göttingen

26 November 2015:  
**Public Lecture**

Rupa Viswanath (CeMIS, Göttingen)

Hard Lessons: Poverty, Caste and Education in South India

It is a truism that education is a necessary if insufficient condition for social mobility.

But how were conflicting visions for what mobility should include adjudicated in the social and political worlds of 19th and early 20th century Dalit pupils in elementary and agricultural schools in Madras Presidency? What different forms did segregation in schooling take, and what were their effects? What kind of schooling were deemed essential, or not, to progress and emancipation? Finally, to whom did such question even matter, and why? Drawing on her recently published monograph, The Pariah Problem: Caste, Religion and Social in Modern India, Rupa Viswanath’s paper will consider answers to these questions as a means to understanding the legacies of this period for the problems and politics of education and caste in the present day.

Venue: India International Centre, Delhi
3
Other events

24-26 June 2015

Society for the History of Children and Youth, Eighth Biennial Conference, Vancouver

Round Table: Growing up inside and outside of Classrooms: Schooling and the Poor Child in Colonial India

Chair: Satadru Sen, City University of New York

Arun Kumar: Schooling the Poor Child: A Dialogue between the Global Poor and the Local Poor in Colonial India

Divya Kannan: Schools, Society and Slavery in Nineteenth Century South Travancore: The Female Boarding Schools of the London Missionary Society

Kaustubh Mani Sengupta: Educating the Children in the Refugee Colonies of post-partition Calcutta

Preeti: Educating the Rural Girls of the United Provinces in the late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

Sundandan KN: The New Claims of Ritual Domination: Nampoothiri Children in the Special Schools

7 July 2015:

Student Colloquium

Vikas Gupta (Delhi)

Modernity, inequality and education in colonial India: a study of structures, ideas, interventions and interlocutors

Venue: German Historical Institute London
VII

Publications


Phalkey, Jahnavi and Chattapadhyay, Sumandro, 'The Aakash Tablet and Technological Imaginaries of Mass Education in Contemporary India', in, History and Technology (forthcoming, 2016)


**TRG Poverty and Education Working Paper Series**


Khan, Farida Abdullah, 'Mathematics and its discontents: How well does Mathematics pedagogy serve the children of the poor?' in TRG Poverty and Education Working Paper Series, No. 5


Majumdar, Manabi, 'The Shadow Education System and New Class Divisions in Education', in TRG Poverty and Education Working Paper Series, No. 2.

www.ghil.ac.uk/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecuredl&u=0&file=fileadmin/redaktion/dokumente/trg_india/Paper%202%20Manabi%20Majumdar.pdf&t=1450271837&hash=4d54ae974d553dbaaa4a7955f40d6240f64db0c0; www.perspectivia.net/publikationen/trg-working-papers/majumdar_shadow (last accessed 15.12.2015)

Manjrekar, Nandini, 'The Neighbourhood and the School: Conflict, Educational Marginalisation and the State in Contemporary Gujarat' in TRG Poverty and Education Working Paper Series, No. 6


Nambissan, Geetha B., 'Poverty, Markets and Elementary Education in India', in TRG Poverty and Education Working Paper Series, No. 3

VIII
People
**Principal Investigators**

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Rupa Viswanath             CeMIS, University of Göttingen

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Mili                       King’s India Institute, Kings College London  
Kaustubh Mani Sengupta     Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi (until October 2015)

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Preeti                     Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi  
Vidya K.S.                 Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi
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