

I have thirsted to understand gender and the various issues which surround this identity, always. This urged me to study BSc Psychology and MA Development Policy and Practice to understand myself better and enable me to relate with others. This thirst has continued ever since and has helped me choose this Joint Doctoral Program to be awarded by the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (IITK) and the University of Manchester. I am particularly interested in this PhD project owing to my ardent interest and commitment to make better policies and implementation strategies that would undo the “othered” category. With this in mind, the research project which I propose will look at the entrepreneurial experiences of the LGBTIQA+ people in India and the United Kingdom (UK). This is because of the rising animosities, prejudice, discrimination and harassment that LGBTIQA+ people especially the trans and gender non-conforming (TGNC) people are subjected to. They are unable to hence leave a decent-living. This is a point of departure to lead this comparative study in the UK and India. Also, the absolute necessity for environmentally and climate friendly ways to do business will be looked at in this project.

My interest on society, policy-making and the aspects surrounding them such as climate change is justified through my article on climate change which was published in 2009. My media appearances in the Education Times supplement of The Times of India daily over two consecutive years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 out of a huge competition within the state of Tamil Nadu, is evident to my competitive edge. Besides, I participated in this competition to influence change for the betterment of our society. I have also participated in Harvard University’s World Model UN in 2007 which took place in Geneva. Hence, I have always been a person who cares for the environment and society and have voiced about the same at various forums. I have learnt French and Mandarin whilst pursuing my BSc in Psychology from the University of Madras.

Upon completion of my BSc in Psychology I was self-employed for a few years as an edupreneur. Packed with this experience, I realised that I am more passionate about research. I chose to research on topics such as gender and sexuality as I am myself a non-binary person and inquisitive in understanding and helping the ‘othered’ others like me. To facilitate my passion for research, after my BSc Psychology and entrepreneurial experience, I pursued an MA in Development Policy and Practice from Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD). During my MA I sought to understand the demographic dividend that India currently boasts and the ways in which more inclusive policies could contribute towards a better economy. I have since had an interest in such aspects like gender & sexuality, migration and housing and migration and health. My MA thesis introduced me to various research methods.

My flair for languages can be evidenced in my CV. Hence, I am willing to learn new languages as I am quick-learner. Being a quick-learner, I am confident that I can learn those required skills and make me a better candidate for the project. I am extremely interested and committed to excellence in teaching and researching and adhering with the established university research standards. My background in Psychology and Development Studies make me an ideal candidate for this PhD position. I am also well-versed with quantitative skills such as SPSS, STATA and R. My research experience with Bharathidasan University as a Project Fellow till date has provided me with a great deal of experience to deal with quantitative datasets, participatory research methods and other qualitative methods like ethnography. At Bharathidasan University, the major project I work for is on investigating the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) related issues of over 20,000 households in urban and peri-urban areas of eight agro-climatic districts of Tamil Nadu, India. Other projects I was involved in were, for instance, the project on self-employment of rural women in Tamil Nadu which involved large datasets as well. I was a part of a three-member team where, I co-ordinated with an NGO for data processing and analysis. Hence, I am a great team player and can also work autonomously. As a Project Fellow, I also currently teach MA students at the university.

I hope my sojourn as a candidate in the Joint Doctoral Program to be awarded by the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (IITK) and the University of Manchester will concur with “Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail” as said by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Thank you.

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